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"IN THE SWEETNESS OF FRIENDSHIP
LET THERE BE LAUGHTER, AND SHARING
OF PLEASURES. FOR IN THE DEW OF
LITTLE THINGS THE HEART FINDS ITS
MORNING AND IS REFRESHED."

-KHALIL GIBRAN



Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

Volleyball: Girls Varsity Match vs Redfield High School (Away) on Aug 29 at 6:00 PM
Redfield-Doland High School
Type: nonconference Opponent: Redfield High School
Comments: C and JV matches @ 6pm

**Varsity Match will be
livestreamed tonight on
GDILIVE.COM**

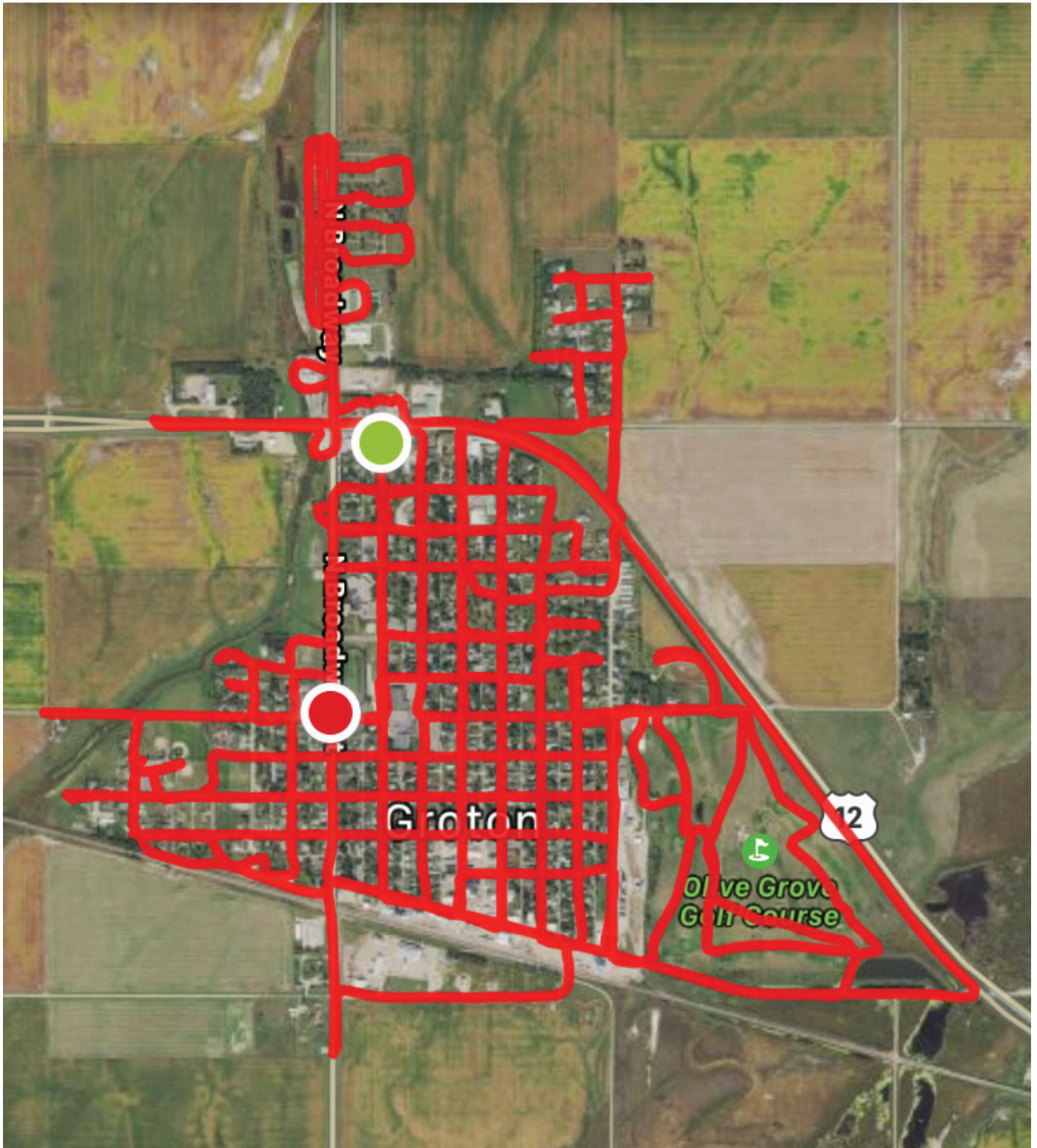
No School on Aug 30
Groton Area Elementary School, Groton Area High School

Football: Boys Varsity Game vs Ellendale/Edgeley-Kulm (Away) on Aug 30 at 7:00 PM
Ellendale High School
Type: nonconference Opponent: Ellendale/Edgeley-Kulm

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

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The City of Groton did adult mosquito control last night. Temperature was 65 degrees starting out and ending at 58 degrees. Wind was basically out of the south at 5 mph. About 7.5 gallons of Evolver 4x4 was used and 32 miles were driven.

South Dakota Electric Cooperatives Working Toward Solutions During Electric Services in Annexed Areas Legislative Interim Study

PIERRE, S.D. – The Electric Services in an Annexed Area Study Committee, chaired by Sen. Alan Solano (R-Rapid City), held its second meeting on Wednesday, August 28, 2019, at the State Capitol in Pierre, S.D. During the meeting, representatives of the electric cooperatives and investor-owned utilities presented responses to a series of research questions that were posed by the interim committee. Time was also allowed for public testimony and the meeting ended with a discussion regarding possible solutions to the issue of territorial takings by municipal utilities.

“We believe that, when given a chance, summer studies can be an effective means of addressing complex subjects and produce workable solutions,” said South Dakota Rural Electric Association General Manager Ed Anderson. “We also believe the important work of the committee and the integrity of the process is best served when participants on all sides of an issue are committed to working together to find solutions. We are committed to working with the committee to find a sustainable solution to a real problem.”

Current law allows municipal governments to expand their electric service boundaries and take territory from incumbent electric providers. Electric cooperatives and investor-owned utilities (IOU), on the other hand, must collaborate and agree upon changes in service territory between the two. These differences in state law favor government taking of private enterprise.

“This issue is not about annexation. As we said in the first hearing, we support annexation,” said Anderson. “Annexation and the taking of service territory of an incumbent utility are not tied together. There are too many examples of successful growth without a municipal electric system to think otherwise. The continued vitality of cities large and small all across South Dakota is important to electric cooperatives.”

The Electric Services in an Annexed Area Study Committee is now seeking to bring all parties together and find workable solutions to the inequities that exist in current state law.

“All parties are in agreement that we have very, very good high-quality electric service,” Sen. Solano said during the August 28 hearing. “Good people in South Dakota can sit down and work through a lot of things.”

In addition to Sen. Solano, the committee members are Rep. Thomas Brunner (R-Nisland), Vice Chair; Rep. Shawn Bordeaux (D-Mission); Rep. Kirk Chaffee (R-Whitewood); Rep. Spencer Gosch (R-Glenham); Rep. Tim Reed (R-Brookings); Sen. Lee Schoenbeck (R-Watertown); Sen. Susan Wismer (D-Britton); and Sen. Jordan Youngberg (R-Chester).

The next hearing of the interim committee will be held in October or November. To learn more about the Electric Services in an Annexed Area Study Committee, visit <https://sdlegislature.gov/Interim/Documents.aspx?Committee=216&Session=2019&tab=Detail>.

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.

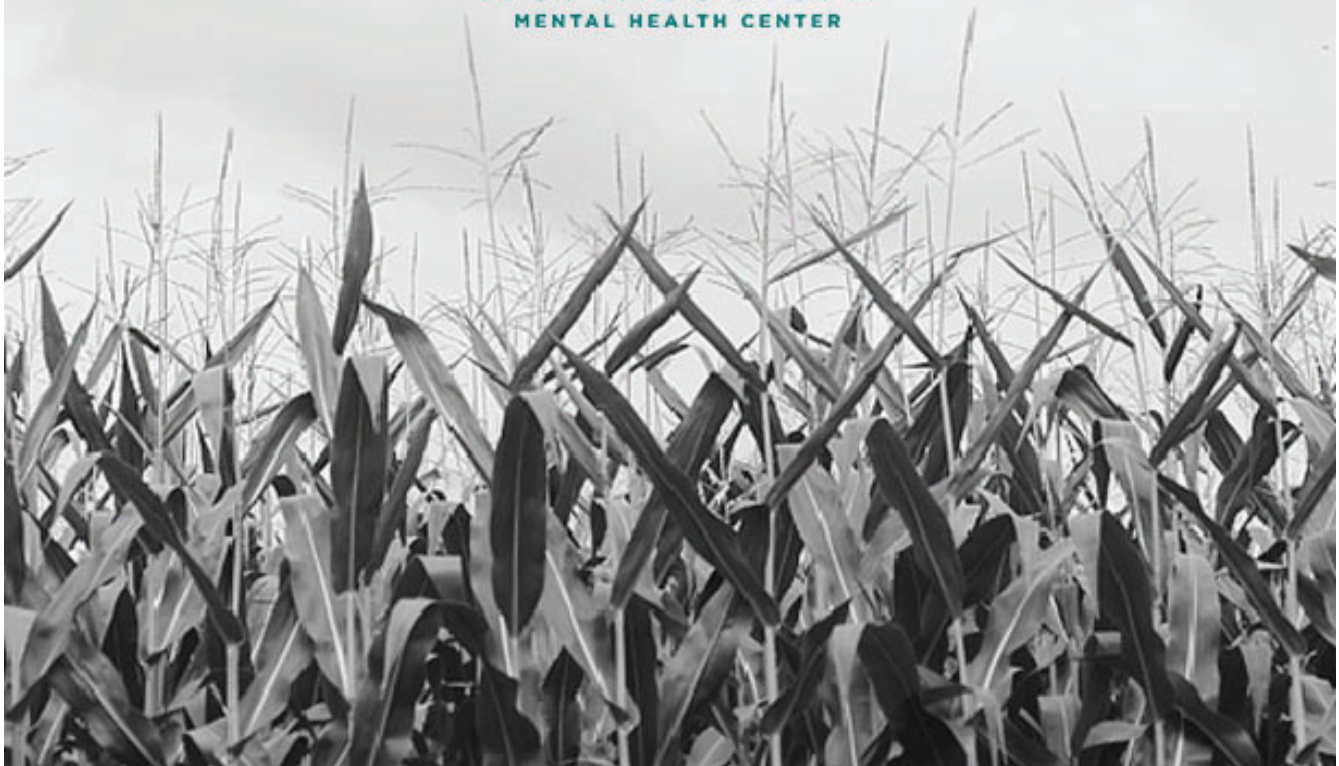
We're here to help.

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





*Adults and Students . . . come
learn what social issues are
involving our youth
in our community.*

Solutions **to** **Social Issues**

SPONSORED BY LOCAL CHURCHES

Youth Groups Welcome ~ Large Groups please RSVP 605/377-0709

Seminars are:

September 11 at United Methodist Church:

Drugs & Alcohol

October 9 at Groton Christian & Missionary Alliance Church:

Sex Trafficking and Date Violence

November 6 at Emmanuel Lutheran Church:

Suicide and Bullying

Light Meal at 5:45 p.m. ~ Seminar begins at 6:30 p.m.

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Today

Tonight

Friday

Friday
Night

Saturday



Sunny

High: 77 °F



Mostly Clear

Low: 49 °F



Increasing
Clouds

High: 71 °F



Slight Chance
Showers

Low: 53 °F



Partly Sunny

High: 71 °F

**Breezy Northwest Winds Today
Mostly Sunny with Highs in the 70s**



 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

ISSUED: 5:45 AM - Thursday, August 29, 2019, National Weather Service, Aberdeen

Published on: 08/29/2019 at 1:50AM

Today will feature mostly sunny skies with breezy northwest winds. High temperatures will climb into the 70s. High pressure over the region tonight will bring clear skies and light winds. Low temperatures will fall into the mid-40s, to the low 50s.

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Today in Weather History

August 1, 1978: A severe thunderstorm developed in west-central Beadle County during the afternoon hours and moved southeast. High winds near 80 mph and hail up to golf ball size pelted several counties along the storm path. Hail piled up to six inches deep and up to three feet in ditches. Hail remained visible in some areas up to thirty-six hours after the storm passed. Approximately 480,000 acres of crops were severely damaged or destroyed. Damage to crops and personal property were estimated to be nearly four million dollars.

August 1, 2000: A severe thunderstorm produced large hail up to golf ball size and damaging winds estimated at 90 to 110 mph across northeastern Wyoming and western South Dakota during the evening hours. The northern foothills of the Black Hills and the communities of Spearfish and Sturgis received the brunt of the storm. Considerable F0 and F1 wind damage (90 to 110 mph) occurred in and around Spearfish. The strong winds blew down trees, business and road signs, and damaged tents for the 60th Annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, destroying vendor merchandise and mobile homes.

1983: During the early afternoon hours, a strong microburst swept across Andrews Air Force Base in Washington, D.C. Although the base anemometer was not calibrated at extreme wind speeds, the peak gust hit 149 mph. It was reported that Air Force One, with President Reagan on board, landed less than 10 minutes before the peak gust.

1986: A powerful thunderstorm produced 100 mph winds and large hail in eastern Kansas and southwestern Missouri causing 71 million dollars damage, and injuring 19 persons. It was one of the worst thunderstorms of record for Kansas. Crops were mowed to the ground in places and roofs blown off buildings along its path, 150 miles long and 30 miles wide, from near Abilene to southeast of Pittsburg.

1962 - Hackberry, LA, was deluged with twenty-two inches of rain in 24 hours, establishing a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1965 - A national record for the month of August was established when 2.5 inches of snow fell atop Mount Washington NH. Temperatures in New England dipped to 39 degrees at Nantucket MA, and to 25 degrees in Vermont. For many location it was the earliest freeze of record. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Some of the most powerful thunderstorms in several years developed over the piedmont of North Carolina, and marched across central sections of the state during the late afternoon and evening hours. Baseball size hail was reported around Albemarle, while thunderstorm winds downed giant trees around High Falls. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Cool air invaded the north central U.S. Ten cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Bismarck ND with a reading of 33 degrees. Deerfield, a small town in the Black Hills of South Dakota, reported a low of 23 degrees. The remnants of Tropical Storm Chris drenched eastern Pennsylvania with up to five and a half inches of rain, and produced high winds which gusted to 90 mph, severely damaging a hundred boats in Anne Arundel County MD. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Evening thunderstorms produced destructive lightning in West Virginia. The lightning caused widespread damage, particularly in Doddridge County. Numerous trees were downed closing many roads. Fire companies had a difficult time tending to the many homes and trailers on fire. Anchorage AK reported a record 9.60 inches of rain for the month of August. The average annual precipitation for Anchorage is just slightly more than fifteen inches. Three day rainfall totals in northwest Missouri ranged up to 8.20 inches at Maryville. (The National Weather Summary)

2005 - Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Plaquemines Parish in southeastern Louisiana early on the 29th with maximum sustained winds near 125 mph, a strong category-three, and the third most-intense landfalling hurricane in U.S. history. The center of the hurricane passed just east of New Orleans, where winds gusted over 100 mph. Widespread devastation and unprecedented flooding occurred, submerging at least 80 percent of the city as levees failed. Farther east, powerful winds and a devastating storm surge of 20-30 feet raked the Mississippi coastline, including Gulfport and Biloxi, where Gulf of Mexico floodwaters spread several miles inland. Rainfall amounts of 8-10 inches were common along and to the east of the storm's path. Katrina weakened to a tropical storm as it tracked northward through Mississippi and gradually lost its identity as it moved into the Tennessee Valley on the 30th

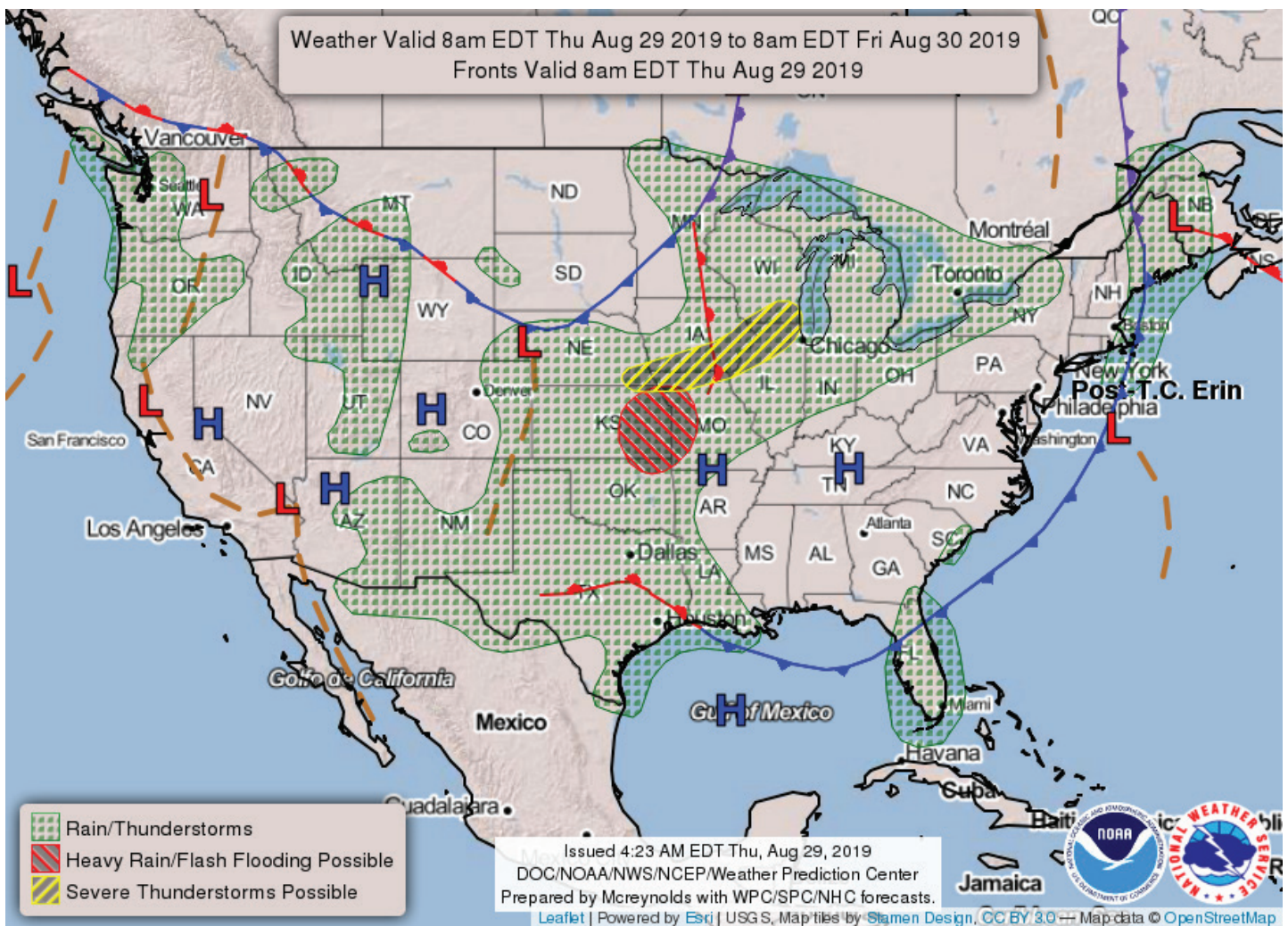
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 76 °F at 5:00 PM
Low Temp: 50 °F at 4:41 AM
Wind: 13 mph at 1:35 PM
Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 104° in 1961
Record Low: 30° in 1893
Average High: 79°F
Average Low: 53°F
Average Precip in Aug.: 2.19
Precip to date in Aug.: 3.01
Average Precip to date: 16.05
Precip Year to Date: 19.60
Sunset Tonight: 8:17 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:52 a.m.





FOR WANT OF PRAISE

One important responsibility that many husbands seem to neglect is giving praise to their wives. Their comments made to others are often critical, unkind, unnecessary and unbecoming.

The disgust of degrading ones wife is not whether or not the statements have any degree of truth in them, but what right does a husband have to criticize her publicly? What has he done to diminish the beauty and elegance of the bride he chose to marry? Has he been supportive and demonstrated sacrificial love? Where has the love of his life gone? And what did he do to impair the person he could not live without? How this must grieve God!

Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all, would be encouraging words to any wife. Set aside false measures of attainment for a moment and overlook flaws and faults. Kind words and husbandly help and support can solve most problems in a relationship. Wives do their very best only to be criticized and condemned and not offered love and help.

In my many years as a pastor and family counselor, a common denominator in failed relationships was criticism and condemnation. It did not matter what the root causes were, one or the other would seize on a symptom and enlarge it beyond any possible solution. How sad!

Consider the rewards of praise. We all need it. We all want it. The demands of managing a home and raising children are often dumped on the wife and when expectations are unmet, criticism begins, praise ends and families unravel unnecessarily. Lets reverse the process.

Prayer: Lord, may Your Spirit encourage husbands to search for ways to praise their helpmates and not hurt or harm them by wicked words. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 31:29 Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 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, 10 a.m. Sharp (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, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 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, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/14/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)

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News from the Associated Press

Former senator says cancer is in remission

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Former U.S. Senator Larry Pressler of South Dakota says he's been successfully treated for bladder cancer.

In an interview on KFGO , Pressler says the cancer is in remission following a series of surgeries and chemotherapy at John Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. He says he returns for a checkup every six months.

Pressler, who lives in Washington, says he'd like to return to the classroom and teach government-related classes at nearby George Washington University or Georgetown University. The 77-year-old Pressler served in the U.S. Senate between 1979 and 1997 and was one of the first Vietnam veterans elected to the Senate.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

02-08-31-33-34

(two, eight, thirty-one, thirty-three, thirty-four)

Estimated jackpot: \$91,000

Lotto America

10-11-15-46-52, Star Ball: 3, ASB: 2

(ten, eleven, fifteen, forty-six, fifty-two; Star Ball: three; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.65 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$113 million

Powerball

09-32-37-41-56, Powerball: 14, Power Play: 10

(nine, thirty-two, thirty-seven, forty-one, fifty-six; Powerball: fourteen; Power Play: ten)

Estimated jackpot: \$60 million

Corps official: Study needed of Missouri River flood options

NORTH SIOUX CITY, S.D. (AP) — An official with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said Wednesday a study is needed to consider changes to flood-control measures along the Missouri River south of Sioux City, Iowa.

Speaking after a U.S. Senate field hearing in North Sioux City, South Dakota, Brig. Gen. Peter Helmlinger noted such a study could call for actions such as changing the Missouri River channel in the Sioux City area to letting the river spread out and carry more water. Helmlinger is commander of the corps' Northwestern Division, which oversees the six Missouri River reservoirs and other flood control measures.

"That could be one of the recommendations of a lower river management study," Helmlinger said. "We have to increase the volume of water that can be carried safely down the river."

The Sioux City Journal reports that levees also could be rebuilt farther from the river to give the waterway more room.

Helmlinger said such a study would take three years and be delivered to Congress, which would decide how the proposals could be implemented.

"We need to do something different than simply rebuild the system as it is now," he said.

Helmlinger spoke after answering questions at a hearing headed by Sen. Mike Rounds of South Dakota. John Remus, chief of the corps' Missouri River Water Management Division in Omaha, also answered

questions.

At the hearing in the North Sioux City Council chambers, Rounds focused on whether the corps could adjust reservoir releases when wetter years were expected.

"When wet years do occur, we need to be able to manage them," Rounds said.

Remus said it's difficult to do pre-emptive releases from dams until after March 1, when most river ice has melted.

Sen. Cronin resigns; Noem appoints Rep. Lake to vacancy

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota state Sen. Justin Cronin has resigned, saying he needs to focus on his family, health and career.

The Gettysburg Republican announced his resignation Wednesday. Gov. Kristi Noem appointed Republican Rep. John Lake, a farmer and rancher from Gettysburg, to fill Cronin's Senate vacancy.

Cronin said it has been "the honor of a lifetime to represent District 23 in the statehouse," but he realized he needs "to take a step back."

Cronin has represented the district in the state Senate since 2017. He has served as vice chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee since the start of this year.

Previously, Cronin served in the South Dakota House, where he was assistant majority leader from 2011 until 2015.

Noem says she will seek public input in filling the House vacancy.

Jet-car speed racer Jessi Combs dies trying to break record

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Jet-car speed racer Jessi Combs, known by fans as the "fastest woman on four wheels," has died in a crash in Oregon's Alvord Desert while trying to break a speed record, local authorities said Wednesday.

Combs, 39, died Tuesday afternoon while racing in a dry lake bed in a desert in remote Harney County, sheriff's Lt. Brian Needham said in a statement. The cause is under investigation.

Terry Madden, Combs' teammate on the North American Eagle racing team, said in an Instagram post Wednesday that he was heartbroken and added a video collage of photos and video clips of Combs with various team members.

"She was the most amazing spirit that I have ever or will ever know," Madden wrote. "Unfortunately we lost her yesterday in a horrific accident, I was the first one there and trust me we did everything humanly possible to save her!!"

Combs was widely known in the niche sport of jet-car racing and was attempting to break the Women's Land Speed Record of 512 mph (823 kph) set in 1976 by Kitty O'Neil when she died. Jet cars are race cars propelled by jet engines.

She currently held the record as the fastest woman on four wheels — O'Neil piloted a three-wheeled vehicle — for a 398 mph performance in 2013 and had driven even faster in follow-up runs, but mechanical problems prevented those from making the record books.

In an Instagram post on Sunday, Combs indicated that she hoped to break O'Neil's record in the Oregon desert.

She wrote, "People say I'm crazy. I say, 'thank you.'"

In a statement, Combs' family said her "most notable dream was being the fastest woman on Earth."

Combs, who was born in Rapid City, South Dakota and lived in Long Beach, California, dabbled in snowboarding earlier in life and was also an accomplished artist and craftswoman, according to a biography on North American Eagle, her racing team.

She studied automotive design and fabrication and appeared as a host on Spike TV's Extreme 4X4 before a freak accident with a piece of heavy machinery that broke her spine.

After months of rehabilitation, Combs recovered and appeared on and guest hosted a number of TV

shows, including Discovery Channel's "Mythbusters" while honing her skills as a professional driver for movies and commercials.

The Alvord Desert is an extremely remote and sparsely populated region in southeastern Oregon, about 400 miles (643 kilometers) southeast of Portland.

A previous version of this story said Combs' land-speed four-wheel record was 393 mph. It is 398 mph.

This story has been corrected to show Combs was 39.

Follow Gillian Flaccus on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/gflaccus>

Noem requests additional disaster declarations for storms

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem is requesting two additional presidential disaster declarations for storm damage this spring and summer.

Noem made the request in letters to President Donald Trump. Both new requests are for help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to repair damage to public infrastructure.

One request says a preliminary damage assessment found about \$8 million in damage to public infrastructure in 25 counties and on two reservations. The preliminary damage assessment in the second request is \$3 million covering six counties and two reservations.

The requests are in addition to the disaster declaration approved by Trump in June. That declaration covered both public property and individual damage during spring snowstorms and flooding.

Work on that disaster declaration continues with at least \$43 million in damage being identified.

Tribe seeks to intervene on proposed DAPL expansion

By JAMES MacPHERSON Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe filed a motion Wednesday to intervene on a proposed expansion of the Dakota Access pipeline that would double the line's capacity.

The tribe, which led original opposition to the crude oil pipeline, petitioned for status as an intervenor in the case before the Public Service Commission arguing its "interests ... are not adequately represented."

North Dakota regulators have set a Nov. 13 public hearing on the proposed expansion. The public hearing, which was requested by the tribe and the Sierra Club, will be held in the south-central city of Linton, near where a pump station would go in to increase the line's capacity.

Texas-based Energy Transfer announced in June it plans to expand the pipeline's capacity from more than 500,000 barrels per day to as much as 1.1 million barrels. The pipeline has been moving North Dakota oil through South Dakota and Iowa to a shipping point in Illinois since June 2017.

Standing Rock attorney Timothy Purdon said if it's granted intervenor status, the tribe would be allowed to cross-examine the company and call witnesses.

Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Mike Faith said in a statement that the "proposed pipeline expansion magnifies the potential disaster in the event of an oil spill. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe looks forward to expressing its concerns during the upcoming PSC hearing."

The \$3.8 billion pipeline is less than a half-mile from the Standing Rock Reservation, beneath a Missouri River reservoir that is the tribe's water source.

Fears of an oil spill into the river sparked massive protests in 2016 and 2017, drawing thousands of pipeline opponents to North Dakota.

The company said the expansion would help meet the growing demand for oil from North Dakota, the nation's second-biggest oil producer behind Texas.

Energy Transfer is proposing additional pumping stations in the Dakotas and Illinois. The company needs permission from the North Dakota Public Service Commission for the expansion because some of the land

needed is outside of the pipeline's path.

Regulators hold hearing on disputed uranium mine

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A three-day hearing before federal regulators that began Wednesday aims to resolve a long-running dispute over the potential impact of a proposed uranium mine in South Dakota on sites of Native American cultural, historical and religious significance.

Powertech, a subsidiary of Canada-based Azarga Uranium, has been trying to develop the mine in Edgemont, along the southwest edge of the Black Hills, since 2009. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission granted the company a license to mine uranium for use in nuclear power plants in 2014, even though a dispute over the lack of an adequate cultural resources survey was still pending before the commission's Atomic Safety and Licensing Board.

The proposed mine would be located about 50 miles (80 kilometers) from the Pine Ridge Reservation. The Oglala Sioux Tribe has said it would encroach on traditional homelands and argues that the commission didn't sufficiently study the potential impact of the project on Native American burials grounds, artifacts and other cultural sites.

In written testimony submitted in advance of the licensing board hearing in Rapid City, the Oglala Sioux said any harm done to cultural resources, especially to burials and artifacts, "will be an irreparable injury to the very identity of the tribe," according to the Rapid City Journal .

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission has said regulators have done everything within their power to study the potential impact. Powertech, in its position statement, argued that the tribe hasn't cooperated with a plan to conduct an on-the-ground cultural resources survey at the proposed mine site. Powertech asserts that the tribe and other intervenors have sought only to "further delay the project's development."

If the board sides with the regulators and Powertech, the company could then seek the additional federal, state and local permits it needs to start mining.

The licensing board said it expects to issue its ruling by Nov. 29.

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

Gophers will send deep backfield at SDSU in opener

By DAVE CAMPBELL AP Sports Writer

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — When Rodney Smith went down with a season-ending knee injury in the second game of 2018, Minnesota turned to Mohamed Ibrahim as the lead ball carrier and enjoyed a seamless senior-to-freshman handoff of the backfield baton.

This year, those two will probably be passing it back and forth a lot more.

Smith, granted a medical redshirt, has returned with his 2,959 career rushing yards for a sixth season. Ibrahim, the second-leading freshman rusher in college football last year, has gladly made room for a widely respected player who became a mentor and unofficial coach while rehabbing last season.

"I'd say we are the tightest-knit group on the team. I'm sure everybody says that, but we truly have a bond that, off of the football field, you can see," Smith said. "We're there for each other off of the field when things go on. Injuries, we're all there. Surgeries, we all show up. Just to make sure that we're all taken care of."

When the Gophers take on South Dakota State in the opener Thursday night, they will surely send a steady stream of carries by both Smith and Ibrahim at the Jackrabbits in an attempt to establish their strength.

"They're game-breaker type guys," Jackrabbits coach John Stiegelmeier said, adding: "We're going to have to grab some cloth and gang tackle."

Another sophomore, Bryce Williams, had 502 yards and four touchdowns for Minnesota in 2018. Coach P.J. Fleck said he'll also look to play true freshmen Treyson Potts and Cam Wiley against South Dakota State. Not to be left out of the mix for 2019 is fifth-year senior Shannon Brooks, whose knee injuries have set him back the last two seasons and was still in rehab mode when fall camp began.

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"We need to have running backs in the Big Ten. If you ask any head football coach and say, 'I'll give you five to six running backs that can play,' I don't think there's anyone who would turn that down. As physical of a conference we're in, especially the teams that run the ball as much as we run the ball, you want to have depth," Fleck said.

The quartet of Smith, Brooks, Ibrahim and Williams has already logged a total of 1,328 carries, 6,503 yards, 52 touchdowns and 12 seasons over their careers. They'll likely all share the load in some undetermined way over the course of this fall.

"What we've described to them is, 'Guys, that means you're healthier. That means as a team, we're going to be better,'" Fleck said.

FCS MEMORIES

Border-state FCS schools have been challenging matchups for Minnesota. The practical driving distance to the game and excitement of playing at a Big Ten venue always lures thousands of fans of the opposition, and the 215-mile trip from Brookings, South Dakota, will be sure to bring plenty of supporters.

The Gophers lost two of three games this century against North Dakota State (27-21 in 2007 and 37-24 in 2011) and dropped their only matchup with South Dakota (41-38 in 2010). Even the wins were iffy, a 10-9 decision over North Dakota State in 2006 and a 16-13 victory over South Dakota State in 2009.

This year, the Jackrabbits are ranked third and fourth, respectively, in the two major preseason FCS polls.

"It's not something where we're going to walk into their stadium and be in awe of things," said Stiegelmeier, who has begun his 23rd year on the job.

BOX OFFICE BUMP?

Like many of their FBS peers, the Gophers have seen an attendance decline over the last decade, despite their move back to campus to open TCF Bank Stadium in 2009. The athletic department has begun several new initiatives to try to fill the buildings in the revenue-producing sports, and a 24-hour promotion of \$10 tickets last week for the South Dakota State game resulted in 7,127 seats sold.

NEW LOOK

The Jackrabbits replaced Taryn Christion, the program's all-time leading passer who's in training camp with the Dallas Cowboys, with redshirt freshman J'Bore Gibbs. They also have a new offensive coordinator, Jason Eck. The Gophers aren't exactly sure what to expect for plays and formations.

"You're scheming for ghosts," Fleck said.

STRONG STARTS

The Gophers have won 15 straight nonconference games and 19 of their last 20 nonconference home games, with the only loss on Sept. 3, 2015, a 23-17 decision against second-ranked TCU.

PLAYING UP

The Jackrabbits, who joined the FCS in 2004 from Division II, are 1-8 against FBS opponents. They won at Kansas 41-38 in the 2015 opener.

More AP college football coverage: <https://apnews.com/Collegefootball> and <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/ap-top-25-college-football-podcast/id1138957862?mt=2> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

Suspended sentence after toddler tests positive for THC

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls woman whose toddler who tested positive for THC, the active chemical in marijuana, won't spend any time behind bars unless she violates terms of her suspended sentence.

Thirty-one-year-old Tiffany Kelsey pleaded guilty to contributing to the abuse or neglect of a minor and failing to report a felony and was sentenced Tuesday to a year of suspended prison time as well as 60 days of electronic monitoring.

The Argus Leader reports Kelsey's attorney, Amber Eggert, says Kelsey had taken the 14-month-old child with her when she visited a friend who was known to have marijuana last January. Eggert says they believe the child ate a cookie made with marijuana. The toddler tested positive for THC when tested at

the hospital.

Lincoln County Deputy State's Attorney Amanda Eden says Kelsey exposed her child to a dangerous situation.

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

New rollback for climate-changing releases from oilfields

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Oil and gas companies would face looser controls on emissions of potent climate-changing methane gas under a proposal expected from the Trump administration as soon as Thursday, oil industry and environmental groups say. The government's plan would ease requirements on oil and gas sites to monitor for methane leaks and plug them.

The Environmental Protection Agency's move would be the latest in a series by the administration easing Obama-era emissions controls on the oil, gas and coal industries, including from methane leaks.

The oil and gas industry is the nation's primary source of methane emissions, according to the EPA, accounting for nearly one-third in 2016.

Methane is a component of natural gas that's frequently wasted through leaks or intentional releases during drilling operations. The gas is considered a more potent contributor to climate change than carbon dioxide, although it occurs in smaller volumes.

A study by the Environmental Defense Fund, an advocacy group, concluded that the oil and gas industry was emitting far more of the heat-trapping gas than is reported to the EPA.

Brazilian indigenous speak out as Amazon fires rage

By LEO CORREA, MARIO LOBAO and ANNA JEAN KAISER Associated Press

ALTAMIRA, Brazil (AP) — As fires raged in parts of the Amazon, Mydje Kayapo sat in a small boat looking out over the Curua River in the Bau indigenous reserve. The smell of smoke filled the air, and Kayapo was worried.

"The fire is coming closer and closer to our reserve," he told a visiting news team from The Associated Press. "Now it is about 20 kilometers (12 miles) away."

Kayapo, one of the Bau people's leaders, helps organize a village watch group to protect the community's lands from encroaching flames as well as illegal loggers, miners and others seeking to exploit the area. With fires spreading quickly to wide swaths of indigenous territories in recent weeks, his task has grown more critical.

So far in 2019, Brazil reported 83,000 fires, a 77% increase from the same period last year. Many of those were set in already deforested areas by people clearing land for cultivation or pasture.

With over 98% of Brazil's indigenous lands within the Amazon, the threat to groups like Kayapo's are particularly exposed.

According to Brazil's National Space Research Institute, an estimated 3,553 fires are now burning on 148 indigenous territories in the region.

"Just outside, our reserve is being heavily deforested. It's being badly destroyed," Kayapo said. "We indigenous people need to be united."

As a multitude of international players discuss how to develop and protect the Amazon, Kayapo and others find themselves on the front line of firefighting efforts and an ever-acrimonious feud with Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro.

Bolsonaro has come under harsh criticism for environmental policies that some say are weakening safeguards in the rainforest. He maintains Europeans are trying to infringe on his country's sovereignty, while also arguing that the demarcation of indigenous lands has hindered business interests.

On Tuesday, he reasserted his claims at a meeting of Amazon regional governors, arguing that reserves are being exploited by outsiders to halt the growth of Brazil's economy.

"Many reserves are located strategically, someone arranged this," Bolsonaro said, without noting who

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he was referring to. "Indians don't have a (political) lobby, they don't speak our language, but they have managed to get 14% of our national territory."

As rhetoric escalates, indigenous leaders have some of the most at stake.

Saulo Katitauru, a leader in the municipality of Conquista D'Oeste in Mato Grosso state, appeared woeful as he walked along the banks of the Sarare River.

"The non-indigenous do whatever they want and then put the blame on the Indian," Katitauru said, explaining that when his group reported a fire to authorities, a rancher said the tribe had set the blaze themselves.

This year, he said his indigenous group, the Nambikwara Sarare, felt the effects of farming and ranching expansion even more acutely and said inspectors were "not going after" the criminals.

"Some years ago there were a few (fires) but now there are more," Katitauru said. "With the Amazon burning, this is the largest (fire) that has ever happened and the smoke is coming here. Today the sky is clean, but two days ago it was full of smoke and hot."

In recent days, leaders of the Group of Seven industrial nations pledged to help protect the Amazon region with \$20 million in funds, in addition to a separate \$12 million from Britain and \$11 million from Canada.

At the same time, French President Emmanuel Macron has engaged in an increasingly personal feud with his Brazilian counterpart, while Chilean President Sebastián Piñera said Latin America countries "have sovereignty over the Amazon."

Leaders of all Amazon nations except Venezuela will meet Sept. 6 "to come up with our own unified strategy for preserving the environment, and also for exploration sustainable in our region," Bolsonaro said Wednesday.

Although Brazil's president and international players have dominated the discussion, some indigenous leaders appear to feel the most effective way to influence environmental preservation policies is to raise their own voices — or take matters into their own hands.

"I think this president doesn't know the constitution very well," said Kayapo, the leader from the Bau reserve. "We are resilient. If there is an invasion in our reserve, if they try to come here ... we will react against the Bolsonaro government and say: 'Not here. This reserve has an owner.'"

In an Aug. 24 video posted to YouTube, one indigenous woman wearing face paint and a headdress addressed the camera and also vowed to "resist for the sake of the forest, for our way of living."

"We from the Xingu River are connected to you, all together standing in defense of the Amazon," she said. "We are on the front line and we need your support, join our fight."

Associated Press journalist Leo Correa reported this story in Altimira, AP journalist Mario Lobao reported in Conquista D'Oeste and AP writer Anna Jean Kaiser reported from Rio de Janeiro.

Opposition surges against Boris Johnson's Parliament scheme

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Political opposition to Prime Minister Boris Johnson's move to suspend Parliament crystallized Thursday amid protests, legal action and a petition to block the move which has gathered more than 1 million signatures.

Johnson's maneuver gives his political opponents even less time to prevent a chaotic no-deal Brexit before the Oct. 31 withdrawal deadline. But the decision outraged critics and is serving as a unifying force for the disparate opposition, who have confirmed they will press on with measures to block a departure from the European Union without a deal despite Johnson's actions.

"We will seek to try and put through the appropriate legislation in this constrained timetable that the government has now put before us," said Barry Gardiner, the opposition Labour Party's spokesman on international trade.

Thousands packed College Green outside Parliament on Wednesday evening, waving EU flags and placards to express their anger. Smaller rallies took place in other towns and cities while 25 bishops from the

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Church of England released an open letter about their worries about the “economic shocks” of a no-deal Brexit on the poor and other vulnerable people.

A petition on a government website demanding that Parliament not be suspended has gotten more than 1 million signatures — guaranteeing that it will be considered for debate.

Legal challenges loom. Lawmakers already are asking a Scottish court to rule that suspending Parliament is illegal. Businesswoman Gina Miller, who won a ruling in the Supreme Court in 2017 that stopped the government from triggering the countdown to Brexit without a vote in Parliament, has another legal challenge in the works.

House of Commons leader Jacob Rees-Mogg dismissed the fury and described Johnson’s move as constitutional and proper.

“I think the outrage is phony and it is created by people who don’t want us to leave the European Union and are trying very hard to overturn the referendum result and don’t want the benefits of leaving the European Union,” he told the BBC.

“This is completely constitutional and proper,” he said. “There is going to be a lot of time to debate before October 31.”

The move has prompted ruptures across the political spectrum, including among members of Johnson’s Conservative Party. Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson, who has differed with Johnson in the past, resigned Thursday. Though the popular leader cited family reasons, the timing of such a decision following Johnson’s seismic move suggested that she disagreed with his tactics.

Others in the party are more obviously concerned. Senior Conservative lawmaker Ken Clarke was among those describing the suspension of Parliament as “absurd.”

“He has just given in to the fanatic element of his followers and decided to go hell for leather,” Clarke said. “I hope it will bring together the sensible majority of Parliament who will find some alternative.”

The outpouring of fury followed three years of tensions after the 2016 referendum on EU membership, in which 52% of voters favored withdrawing.

The EU is adamant it will not renegotiate the agreement struck with former Prime Minister Theresa May on the terms of Britain’s departure and the framework of future relations. Without such a deal, Britain faces a chaotic Brexit that economists warn would disrupt trade by imposing tariffs and customs checks between Britain and the bloc, send the value of the pound plummeting and plunge the U.K. into recession. May resigned in defeat after failing — three times — to secure Parliament’s backing for her divorce deal with the bloc.

Johnson has told European officials that it won’t be possible to agree a deal on Britain’s departure from the bloc without the removal of controversial language on a “backstop” aimed at avoiding the return of a border between EU member Ireland and Britain’s Northern Ireland. He said at the close of the G-7 summit in Biarritz, France, on Monday, that he was “marginally more optimistic,” of progress.

Meeting in Helsinki, Finland, European foreign ministers watched the drama unfold, but insisted they would stand by Ireland on the backstop issue. Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu said the recent events made a no-deal Brexit more likely.

“As a reality, I would say that,” Reinsalu said. “We have to prepare.”

Lorne Cooke in Helsinki, Finland contributed to this report.

Follow AP’s full coverage of Brexit and British politics at: <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>

China rotates new troops into Hong Kong amid mass protests

By **KEN MORITSUGU** and **YANAN WANG** Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — China’s military deployed fresh troops to Hong Kong on Thursday in what it called a routine rotation amid speculation that it might intervene in the city’s pro-democracy protests.

Video broadcast on China Central Television showed a long convoy of armored personnel carriers and

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trucks crossing the border at night and troops in formation disembarking from a ship. Earlier, scores of soldiers ran in unison onto trucks, which the state broadcaster said were bound for ports and entry points into Hong Kong. A handover ceremony was held before dawn.

"This time the task has a glorious mission. The responsibility is great. The job is difficult," an unnamed major said to troops before they departed. "The time for a true test has arrived!"

The official Xinhua News Agency said it was the 22nd rotation of the People's Liberation Army's garrison in Hong Kong. The previous one was in August 2018.

Nearly three months of fiery anti-government demonstrations have sparked concerns that the military will be deployed in the semi-autonomous Chinese city. The Hong Kong garrison earlier published a promotional video with scenes of soldiers facing off with people dressed like protesters.

Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman Ren Guoqiang told reporters in Beijing on Thursday that the demonstrators must abide by Hong Kong's laws.

A leader of 2014 pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong said the city's government is using the same tactics as five years ago.

"The government is just trying to threaten people with emergency law, with the entrance of the People's Liberation Army," Yvonne Leung said at a news conference.

A former British colony, Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997 under a "one country, two systems" framework, which promises the city certain democratic rights that are not afforded to the mainland. In recent years, however, some Hong Kong residents have accused Beijing of steadily eroding their freedoms.

The newly arrived Chinese troops have been educated on Hong Kong's laws and vowed to defend the nation's sovereignty, Xinhua said.

"We will firmly implement the guideline of 'one country, two systems' and the Basic Law and the Garrison Law of Hong Kong," Liu Zhaohui, the garrison's deputy chief of staff, said on CCTV.

The Garrison Law allows the Hong Kong-stationed troops to help maintain public order at the request of the city government. That has never happened, and Hong Kong authorities have said they can handle the situation themselves.

Troops stationed in Macao, another special administrative region, also completed a rotation Thursday.

The Xinhua report on the previous rotation in August 2018 did not mention "one country, two systems" or national sovereignty.

Wang reported from Beijing. Associated Press videojournalist Johnson Lai contributed to this report.

Farmers' loyalty to Trump tested over new corn-ethanol rules

By **STEVE KARNOWSKI, SCOTT McFETRIDGE and JULIE PACE** Associated Press

LACONA, Iowa (AP) — When President Donald Trump levied tariffs on China that scrambled global markets, farmer Randy Miller was willing to absorb the financial hit. Even as the soybeans in his fields about an hour south of Des Moines became less valuable, Miller saw long-term promise in Trump's efforts to rebalance America's trade relationship with Beijing.

"The farmer plays the long game," said Miller, who grows soybeans and corn and raises pigs in Lacona. "I look at my job through my son, my grandkids. So am I willing to suffer today to get this done to where I think it will be better for them? Yes."

But the patience of Miller and many other Midwest farmers with a president they mostly supported in 2016 is being put sorely to the test.

The trigger wasn't Trump's China tariffs, but the waivers the administration granted this month to 31 oil refineries so they don't have to blend ethanol into their gasoline. Since roughly 40% of the U.S. corn crop is turned into ethanol, it was a fresh blow to corn producers already struggling with five years of low commodity prices and the threat of mediocre harvests this fall after some of the worst weather in years.

"That flashpoint was reached and the frustration boiled over, and this was the straw that broke the

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camel's back," says Lynn Chrisp, who grows corn and soybeans near Hastings, Nebraska, and is president of the National Corn Growers Association.

"I've never seen farmers so tired, so frustrated, and they're to the point of anger," says Kelly Nieuwenhuis, a farmer from Primghar in northwest Iowa who said the waivers were a hot topic at a recent meeting of the Iowa Corn Growers Association. Nieuwenhuis said he voted for Trump in 2016, but now he's not sure who he'll support in 2020.

While Iowa farmer Miller saw Trump's brinkmanship with China as a necessary gamble to help American workers, the ethanol waivers smacked to him of favoritism for a wealthy and powerful industry — Big Oil.

"That's our own country stabbing us in the back," Miller said. "That's the president going, the oil companies need to make more than the American farmer. ... That was just, 'I like the oil company better or I'm friends with the oil company more than I'm friends with the farmer.'"

The Environmental Protection Agency last month kept its annual target for the level of corn ethanol that must be blended into the nation's gasoline supply under the Renewable Fuel Standard at 15 billion gallons (56.78 billion liters) for 2020. That was a deep disappointment to an ethanol industry that wanted a higher target to offset exemptions granted to smaller refiners. Those waivers have cut demand by an estimated 2.6 billion gallons (9.84 billion liters) since Trump took office.

At least 15 ethanol plants already have been shut down or idled since the EPA increased waivers under Trump, and a 16th casualty came Wednesday at the Corn Plus ethanol plant in the south-central Minnesota town of Winnebago. The Renewable Fuels Association says the closures have affected more than 2,500 jobs.

The 31 new waivers issued this month came on top of 54 granted since early 2018, according to the association. While the waivers are intended to reduce hardships on small oil refiners, some beneficiaries include smaller refineries owned by big oil companies.

The administration knows it has a problem. U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said at a farm policy summit in Decatur, Illinois, on Wednesday that Trump will take action to soften the effects. He would not say what the president might do or when, but said Trump believes the waivers by his EPA were "way overdone."

Geoff Cooper, head of the Renewable Fuels Association, said the heads of the EPA and Agriculture Department and key White House officials have been discussing relief, and said his group has been talking with officials involved in those conversations. He said they've heard the plan may include reallocating the ethanol demand lost from the exempted smaller refiners to larger refiners that would pick up the slack, but many key details remain unclear, including whether the reallocation would apply in 2020 or be delayed until 2021.

"Anything short of that redistribution or reallocation is not going to be well received by farmers, I'll tell you that," Cooper said.

The White House referred questions to the EPA, where spokesman Michael Abboud said that the agency would "continue to consult" on the best path forward.

Meanwhile, the oil industry has spoken out against some of the steps Trump has taken to try to appease the farmers, including allowing year-round sales of gasoline with more ethanol mixed in.

"We hope the administration walks back from the brink of a disastrous political decision that punishes American drivers. Bad policy is bad politics," Frank Macchiarola, a vice president for the American Petroleum Institute trade group, said in a statement.

Another example of the tensions came last week when the Agriculture Department pulled its staffers out of the ProFarmer Crop Tour, an annual assessment of Midwest crop yields, in response to an unspecified threat. The agency said it came from "someone not involved with the tour" and Federal Protective Services was investigating.

Despite farmers' mounting frustrations, there's little evidence so far that many farmers who backed Trump in 2016 will desert him in 2020. Many are still pleased with his rollbacks in other regulations. Cultural issues such as abortion or gun rights are important to many of them. And many are wary of a Democratic Party they see as growing more liberal.

Miller, too, says he's still inclined to support Trump in the next election.

Though Trump has inserted new uncertainty into Miller's own financial situation, he believes the president has been good for the economy as a whole. And as a staunch opponent of abortion, he sees no viable alternatives in the Democratic presidential field.

Chrisp, too, says he doesn't see an acceptable Democratic alternative. Still, he cautioned Republicans against taking farmers for granted.

"We're not a chip in the political game, though I'm certain there are folks who are political strategists who view us that way, but it's not the case," he said.

Brian Thalmann, who farms near Plato in south-central Minnesota and serves as president of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association, confronted Perdue at a trade show this month about Trump's recent statements that farmers are starting to do well again.

"Things are going downhill and downhill very quickly," Thalmann told Perdue.

Thalmann, who voted for Trump in 2016, said this week that he can't support him at the moment. He said farmers have worked too hard to build up markets and the reputation of American farm products and "I can't see agriculture getting dragged down the path it currently is."

Karnowski reported from Minneapolis and McFetridge from Des Moines. Associated Press writers John O'Connor in Decatur, Illinois; Candice Choi in New York; and Kevin Freking and Ellen Knickmeyer in Washington contributed to this report.

10 Democrats set for next debate as several others miss cut

By **BRIAN SLODYSKO** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Struggling Democratic presidential candidates are facing the bad news that they are not among the 10 who have qualified for the next debate, a predicament that is likely to spell doom for their campaigns.

Hours ahead of a midnight Wednesday deadline to qualify, New York Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand announced she was dropping out of the race after spending at least \$4 million on advertising in recent months to qualify.

Billionaire climate change activist Tom Steyer, Montana Gov. Steve Bullock and self-help guru Marianne Williamson were also among those missing September's debate, as were Colorado Sen. Michael Bennet, Hawaii Rep. Tulsi Gabbard and a handful of others.

To appear on stage in Houston next month, they had to hit 2% in at least four approved public opinion polls while securing 130,000 unique donors. Two new polls released Wednesday affirmed that they were all below the threshold.

The question shifted from who would qualify for the following debate to who would stay in the race.

"Our rules have ended up less inclusive ... than even the Republicans," Bullock said on MSNBC, referring to the thresholds set by the Democratic National Committee. "It is what it is."

The 10 candidates who qualified for September's debate are Joe Biden, Cory Booker, Pete Buttigieg, Julián Castro, Kamala Harris, Amy Klobuchar, Beto O'Rourke, Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren and Andrew Yang.

In a still-crowded Democratic field, not qualifying for the debate was expected to severely cripple a candidate's prospects. However, several have pledged to forge on in hopes of reaching the requirements in time for the next debate, in October.

Although earlier debates had lower thresholds, the DNC raised the stakes for the fall debates.

"We believe you need to show progress in your campaign," said Democratic Party spokeswoman Xochitl Hinojosa. "There hasn't been one candidate in 40 years who has polled under 2% the fall ahead of a primary and has gone on to be the Democratic nominee."

The DNC designed the requirements to bring order to an unwieldy field of more than 20 White House hopefuls, while elevating the role of online grassroots donors who are among the party's most fervent supporters.

In some ways, the party has succeeded. But the process has drawn complaints from those unlikely to make the cut. They argue that the rules are arbitrary and have forced candidates to pour money into ex-

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pensive online fundraising operations that can sometimes charge as much as \$90 for every dollar raised.

Bennet said the threshold favored Steyer, and a memo by his campaign accused the billionaire of trying to buy his way into the debate. "Other candidates have had to spend millions to acquire donors on Facebook, instead (of) communicating with voters and laying the groundwork to beat" President Donald Trump, the Bennet campaign memo stated.

Steyer, a late entry in the race, was the closest to qualifying but acknowledged Wednesday night that he too had fallen short.

"While I'm disappointed that I won't be on the debate stage in Houston this month, I'm excited by all the support you've shown us," he tweeted to supporters. "We started this campaign to get corporate influence out of politics, and I won't stop fighting until the government belongs to the people again."

In a separate letter to Democratic Party Chairman Tom Perez, Bennet's campaign asked how the DNC decided which polls to allow and questioned why Democrats were trying to narrow the field months before Iowa caucuses.

Yet Hinojosa, the DNC spokeswoman, said those who are upset have had ample time to build support and reach the thresholds. Instead, most have consistently polled at 1% or below.

"We are asking Democratic candidates to hit 2% in four polls. That is not a high threshold," said Hinojosa, who added the DNC is accepting the results from 21 polls.

Steyer and Gillibrand both poured millions of dollars into Facebook and TV ads to boost their standing in recent months. While Steyer met the donor threshold, he was one poll shy. Gillibrand was three polls away and had yet to lock in enough donors.

Gabbard was two polls away from qualifying, and Williamson was three polls away.

Several others who struggled had already chosen to drop out. Washington Gov. Jay Insee, Massachusetts Rep. Seth Moulton and former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper all recently ended their campaigns.

With no more than 10 participants, the September debate would be the first of the cycle held on a single night. Earlier debates featured 20 candidates split across two nights.

Biden, the race's early front-runner, said he would like the field to winnow even further.

"I'm looking forward to getting to the place, assuming I'm still around, that it gets down to a smaller number of people so we can have more of a discussion instead of one-minute assertions," the former vice president said Wednesday while campaigning in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Associated Press writer Bill Barrow in Spartanburg, S.C., contributed to this report.

Hurricane heads for Florida after brushing Caribbean islands

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Hurricane Dorian moved out over open waters early Thursday after doing limited damage in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, though forecasters warned it was becoming more dangerous while moving toward the northern Bahamas and Florida's east coast.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center said Dorian was expected to strengthen into a dangerous Category 3 hurricane as it stayed well to the east of the southeastern and central Bahamas over the next two days. The forecast called for the storm to pass near or over the northern Bahamas on Saturday and close in on Florida by Sunday afternoon.

The storm was a Category 1 hurricane Wednesday when it swirled through the islands of the northeastern Caribbean, causing power outages and flooding in places but doing no major damage.

"We're happy because there are no damages to report," said William Solís, the mayor of the small Puerto Rican island of Culebra. He said only one community lost power.

Dorian caused an islandwide blackout in St. Thomas and St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and scattered power outages in St. Croix, government spokesman Richard Motta said. The storm also downed trees and at least one electric pole in St. Thomas, he said, adding that there were no reports of major flooding.

"We are grateful that it wasn't a stronger storm," he said.

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There were no reports of serious damage in the British Virgin Islands, where Gov. Augustus Jaspert said crews were already clearing roads and inspecting infrastructure by late Wednesday afternoon.

Early Thursday, Dorian was centered about 150 miles (240 kilometers) north-northwest of San Juan. The U.S. National Hurricane Center said its top winds were blowing at 85 mph (140 kph) as the storm moved northwest at 13 mph (20 kph).

Dennis Feltgen, a Hurricane Center meteorologist in Miami, said earlier that Dorian would strengthen and could hit anywhere from South Florida to South Carolina.

"This will be a large storm approaching the Southeast," he said.

People in Florida were starting to get ready for a possible Labor Day weekend strike, with county governments along Florida's east-central coast distributing sandbags and many residents rushing to warehouse retailers to load up on water, canned food and emergency supplies.

"All Floridians on the East Coast should have 7 days of supplies, prepare their homes & follow the track closely," Gov. Ron DeSantis said in a tweet. Later Wednesday, he declared a state of emergency for the counties that could be in the storm's path.

Puerto Rico seemed to be spared any heavy wind and rain, a huge relief on an island where blue tarps still cover some 30,000 homes nearly two years after Hurricane Maria. The island's 3.2 million inhabitants also depend on an unstable power grid that remains prone to outages since it was destroyed by Maria, a Category 4 storm.

Ramonita Torres, a thin, stooped, 74-year-old who lives by herself in the impoverished, flood-prone neighborhood of Las Monjas in the capital of San Juan, was still trying to rebuild the home she nearly lost after Maria but was not able to secure the pieces of zinc that now serve as her roof.

"There's no money for that," she said, shaking her head.

Several hundred customers were without power across Puerto Rico, said Ángel Figueroa, president of a union that represents power workers.

Police said an 80-year-old man in the northern town of Bayamón died Wednesday after he fell trying to climb up to his roof to clear it of debris ahead of the storm.

Before the storm, President Donald Trump sent a tweet assuring islanders that "FEMA and all others are ready, and will do a great job."

He then added a jab at Puerto Rican officials who have accused his administration of a slow and inadequate response to Hurricane Maria: "When they do, let them know it, and give them a big Thank You — Not like last time. That includes from the incompetent Mayor of San Juan!"

The mayor, Carmen Yulín Cruz, tweeted that Trump needs to "calm down get out of the way and make way for those of us who are actually doing the work on the ground," adding that maybe he "will understand this time around THIS IS NOT ABOUT HIM; THIS IS NOT ABOUT POLITICS; THIS IS ABOUT SAVING LIVES."

Associated Press writers Adriana Gómez Licón in Miami and Mike Schneider in Orlando, Florida, contributed to this report.

S. Korean court sends Park, Samsung heir cases to new trials

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM** and **KIM TONG-HYUNG** Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea's top court on Thursday sent back jailed ex-President Park Geun-hye's corruption case to a lower court for separate trials on the charges on which she was convicted, a ruling that could increase her already-lengthy prison term.

The Supreme Court also ordered retrials for Park's confidante and Samsung's de facto chief, two other high-profile figures convicted in a 2016 scandal that saw millions of people rallying in the streets for months. Park, South Korea's first female president, was impeached by lawmakers in December 2016 and officially removed from office in March 2017.

An appellate court last year sentenced Park to 25 years in prison after convicting her of bribery, extortion, abuse of power and other charges together. That was an extension of a 24 year-year prison term

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set by a district court, which also handled Park's charges together.

But the Supreme Court ordered the Seoul High Court to deal with Park's bribery charge separately from other charges, based on a law requiring so for cases involving a president or other elected officials, even when the alleged crimes are committed together.

Local media said Park could face a lengthier prison term because courts handling a case with multiple charges typically don't impose the maximum sentence for each charge.

Park will remain in jail because the court did not overturn all her convictions, only the charges that it believed required a separate trial. And even in sending back the bribery charges to the lower court, the Supreme Court wasn't sending the case back with instructions to consider that she might be innocent.

Park, 67, has called herself a victim of political revenge. She has refused to attend her trials since October 2017 and didn't attend Thursday's court session.

Park was convicted of colluding with her longtime confidante, Choi Soon-sil, to take millions of dollars in bribes and extortion from businesses, including Samsung, while she was in office from 2013 to 2016. The two women were also convicted of taking bribes from some of those companies, including Samsung.

Park was earlier convicted of colluding with senior government officials to blacklist artists critical of her government to deny them state assistance programs. She also was convicted of passing on presidential documents with sensitive information to Choi via one of her presidential aides.

The scandal led to the arrests, indictments and convictions of dozens of high-level government officials and business leaders. Choi received a 20-year prison term and Lee Jae-yong, Samsung's billionaire heir and the vice chairman of Samsung Electronics, a suspended prison term.

The Supreme Court ordered the Seoul High Court to start new trials for both Choi and Lee. Observers said Choi could get an increased prison term and Lee a prison sentence at new Seoul High Court trials.

In 2017, Lee, the only son of Samsung's ailing chairman Lee Kun-hee, was sentenced to five years in prison for providing bribes to Park and Choi in return for government backing for his attempt to bolster his control over the Samsung group and other charges. But in early 2018, he was set free after the Seoul High Court overturned some of his convictions and suspended his sentence. His earlier imprisonment surprised many because South Korean courts had often showed leniency toward crimes by business tycoons.

Lee In-jae, who heads the legal team representing Lee Jae-yong, called the Supreme Court's decision "regrettable." He said it should be noted that some justices of the court expressed dissenting opinions about the bribery charges surrounding Lee Jae-yong.

Samsung Electronics released a statement saying it regrets "causing concern to (Korean) people" over the corruption case and that it wouldn't repeat past mistakes. The statement did not include specific comments on Thursday's decision.

Calls to Park's lawyer weren't immediately answered. Park didn't appeal her two previous prison sentences, and Thursday's court session was arranged after prosecutors appealed the initial verdicts in search of increased prison terms.

Park, a daughter of late President Park Chung-hee, was once the darling of conservatives in South Korea and dubbed by local media as the "queen of elections" for her ability to win tight elections. Her fall badly damaged conservatives in South Korea and helped her main liberal rival and current President Moon Jae-in win an easy victory in a by-election triggered by her early departure.

Park still has fierce supporters who stage rallies in downtown Seoul every Saturday calling for her release. On Thursday, more than a thousand of Park's supporters rallied outside the Supreme Court building, waving South Korean and U.S. flags and her photos and holding placards that read "Set free President Park Geun-hye who is innocent!"

She was elected president in late 2012, largely thanks to a wave of support from conservatives who remember her father as a charismatic leader who led South Korea's explosive economic growth. Liberals see her father as a ruthless leader who severely suppressed civil rights during his 1961-79 rule.

Park Geun-hye has been embroiled in two smaller scandals which led her to be sentenced to two years in prison for violating an election law and five years for abusing state funds. That meant she has faced the prospect of serving more than 30 years in prison.

Associated Press photographer Lee Jin-man contributed to this report.

Attacks by US extremists lead to push for anti-terror laws

By **ANDREW SELSKY** Associated Press

SALEM, Oregon (AP) — A white man opens fire at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, targeting Mexicans and killing 22 people. Another man kills 11 Jewish worshippers at a synagogue in Pittsburgh.

The two mass shootings and a presidential tweet put a spotlight on the idea of “domestic terrorism,” adding momentum to a debate about whether such attacks should be classified and tried in the same way as crimes against America by foreign extremist groups and their supporters. A Republican senator and a Democrat in the House of Representatives are drafting bills to do that while some Republicans call for a left-wing group to be designated a terrorist organization.

“Domestic terrorism is in our backyard and we need to call it and treat it under the law the same as other forms of terrorism,” said U.S. Sen. Martha McSally, an Arizona Republican who intends to introduce legislation when Congress returns in September.

McSally’s proposal would allow federal law enforcement to charge suspects with acts of domestic terror and add punishments for those crimes, including the death penalty.

Rep. Adam Schiff, a California Democrat, introduced legislation on Aug. 16 that he says is a “very high priority.”

“The goal is to put domestic terrorism at the same level of priority as ISIS- or al-Qaida-inspired terrorism, since Americans on American soil now are just as likely, if not more likely, to die at the hand of a domestic terrorist motivated by some hateful ideology like white supremacy,” Schiff said in a telephone interview.

Separately, two Republican senators are calling for an anti-fascist movement known as antifa to be designated as a domestic terrorist organization. The push comes after clashes between white supremacists and antifa in Portland, Oregon, which drew a tweet from President Trump suggesting domestic terrorism designation for antifa but not the white supremacists. Such a designation does not currently exist.

While a push to rethink what should be deemed terrorism gains some momentum, it has sparked concerns about infringement of constitutional rights. It’s also not clear whether the debate will be embraced in a bipartisan way, though McSally said this week that her bill has received “a lot of positive feedback ... from both sides of the aisle.”

Schiff said he hopes for “bipartisan support for an effort to put the full weight of the federal government behind the prosecution of people committing these hateful acts of domestic mass terror.”

Meanwhile, Republican Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas is working on “legal mechanisms” that would enable domestic terrorist organizations to be treated like those on the State Department’s list of foreign extremist groups, his spokeswoman Maria Jeffrey said in an email.

Cruz and Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-Louisiana, introduced a resolution on July 18 condemning antifa, and calling for it to be designated as a domestic terrorist organization.

As antifa activists prepared to square off against far-right demonstrators in Portland, Oregon, on Aug. 17, President Donald Trump tweeted that “major consideration is being given to naming ANTIFA an ‘ORGANIZATION of TERROR.’”

Currently, only foreign groups can be labeled terrorist organizations. The U.S. State Department maintains that list, currently comprising 68 groups — none of which is white supremacist. It is a crime for a person in the United States to knowingly provide “material support or resources” to a foreign terrorist organization.

Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Oregon, said he doesn’t believe Congress should enable the executive branch to designate groups as domestic terrorists.

“I wouldn’t trust this administration to exercise such power in an unbiased and judicious manner,” Merkley said.

The Anti-Defamation League says antifa hasn’t been accused of any murders, and that there is no comparison between the loosely organized movement and the white supremacist groups it sometimes clashes

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with. Antifa uses "unacceptable tactics" but rejects racism, while white supremacists use more extreme violence to intimidate minorities, the ADL said.

Schiff denounced Trump's tweet as "a disservice to our efforts to combat domestic mass terror."

"I see it as the same destructive political posturing we've come to expect from the president, that would argue white supremacists' hate is not the problem, antifa is the problem," Schiff said.

Mary McCord, who used to lead the Justice Department's National Security Division, said labeling domestic groups as terrorist organizations would infringe on First Amendment rights such as freedom of expression. Instead, she advocates making domestic terrorism a federal crime, which would enable prosecution for providing material support. Such support could include providing funds, a safe haven or weapons.

The most common international terrorism charge is providing material support, accounting for nearly half of federal terrorism-related prosecutions since Sept. 11, 2001, McCord said.

Schiff said his bill would allow the prosecution of providing material support to a domestic terrorist.

Jeanne Theoharis, a political science professor at Brooklyn College who has written several books on civil rights, worries about such a provision.

"What material support does is allow for going after people whose beliefs and associations are well outside the mainstream," Theoharis said. "It provides a way for the government to go after people whose politics they don't like."

AP writer Jonathan J. Cooper in Phoenix contributed to this report.

Follow Andrew Selsky on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/andrewselsky>

Asian markets sink after Wall Street recovery

By **JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer**

BEIJING (AP) — Asian stocks declined Thursday following Wall Street's rebound amid uncertainty about U.S.-Chinese trade tension.

Market benchmarks in Shanghai, Tokyo and Hong Kong declined.

Investors were looking for news about the outlook for U.S.-Chinese trade negotiations following confusion over President Donald Trump's conflicting statements about the status of talks.

Negotiators are due to meet in September but there has been no sign of progress. Investors worry the spiraling tariff war over trade and technology could tip the global economy into recession.

"Investors are growing more and more uncertain," said Hannah Anderson of JP Morgan Asset Management in a report.

Markets are less sensitive to each announcement of U.S. and Chinese tariff hikes, but "we will likely continue to see downward price action at the announcements of new measures," said Anderson.

The Shanghai Composite Index lost 0.2% to 2,886.83 and Tokyo's Nikkei 225 declined 0.5% to 20,377.97. Hong Kong's Hang Seng retreated 0.8% to 25,394.32.

South Korea's Kospi shed 0.2% to 1,936.70 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 was 5 points lower at 6,495.80. Benchmarks in Taiwan, New Zealand and Southeast Asia also retreated.

Wall Street closed broadly higher, recovering from the previous day's losses.

Retailers, health care and industrial companies notched solid gains. Financial and energy stocks also helped power the rally.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 0.7% to 2,887.94. The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 1% to 26,036.10. The Nasdaq gained 0.4% to 7,856.88.

Traders looking for safety snapped up U.S. government bonds. The trend drove long-term bond yields further below short-term ones. That inversion of the U.S. yield curve is a rare phenomenon that has correctly predicted previous recessions.

The yield in the 10-year Treasury fell below that of the two-year Treasury for a second day. The 10-year

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yield slid to 1.47%, down from 1.49% late Tuesday. The two-year dropped to 1.50% from 1.52%.

When the U.S. yield curve inverted earlier this month for the first time since 2007, it led to a broad market sell-off. This week, investors' reaction has been more muted.

U.S. economic growth slowed to an annual rate of 2.1% in the April-June quarter from 3.1% in the first quarter.

While an inverted yield curve has preceded every U.S. recession, it is not a signal that one is imminent. It has taken 14 to 34 months for past recessions to be following a yield curve inversion.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude lost 20 cents to \$55.58 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract gained 85 cents on Wednesday to close at \$55.78. Brent crude, used to price international oils, shed 35 cents to \$59.58 per barrel in London. It rose 90 cents the previous session to \$59.93.

CURRENCY: The dollar declined to 105.89 yen from Wednesday's 106.11 yen. The euro gained to \$1.1083 from \$1.1078.

Dorian aims for US, causes limited damage in Caribbean

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Hurricane Dorian caused limited damage in the northern Caribbean as it left the region Wednesday night, setting its sights on the U.S. mainland as it threatened to grow into a dangerous Category 3 storm.

Power outages and flooding were reported across the U.S. Virgin Islands, the British Virgin Islands and the Puerto Rican islands of Vieques and Culebra after Dorian hit St. Thomas as a Category 1 storm.

"We're happy because there are no damages to report," Culebra Mayor William Solís told The Associated Press, noting that only one community lost power.

Meanwhile, Dorian caused an island-wide blackout in St. Thomas and St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and scattered power outages in St. Croix, government spokesman Richard Motta told AP. In addition, the storm downed trees and at least one electric post in St. Thomas, he said, adding that there were no reports of major flooding.

"We are grateful that it wasn't a stronger storm," he said.

There were no immediate reports of damage in the British Virgin Islands, where Gov. Augustus Jaspert said crews were already clearing roads and inspecting infrastructure by late Wednesday afternoon.

Dorian had prompted U.S. President Donald Trump to declare a state of emergency Tuesday night and order federal assistance for local authorities.

At 11 p.m. EDT, Dorian was centered about 90 miles (145 kilometers) north of San Juan. The U.S. National Hurricane Center said its maximum sustained winds had increased to 85 mph (140 kph) as the storm moved northwest at 13 mph (20 kph).

The Hurricane Center said the storm could grow into a dangerous Category 3 storm as it pushes northwest in the general direction of Florida.

Dennis Feltgen, a Hurricane Center meteorologist in Miami, said Dorian may grow in size and could land anywhere from South Florida to South Carolina on Sunday or Monday.

"This will be a large storm approaching the Southeast," he said.

People in Florida were starting to get ready for a possible Labor Day weekend strike, with county governments along Florida's east-central coast distributing sandbags and many residents rushing to warehouse retailers to load up on water, canned food and emergency supplies.

"All Floridians on the East Coast should have 7 days of supplies, prepare their homes & follow the track closely," Gov. Ron DeSantis said in a tweet. Later Wednesday, he declared a state of emergency for the counties in the storm's path.

A hurricane watch and tropical storm warning remained in effect for Puerto Rico, with Dorian expected to dump 4 to 6 inches (10 to 15 centimeters) of rain with isolated amounts of 8 inches (20 centimeters) in the eastern part of the island.

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However, Puerto Rico seemed to be spared any heavy wind and rain, a huge relief to many on an island where blue tarps still cover some 30,000 homes nearly two years after Hurricane Maria. The island's 3.2 million inhabitants also depend on an unstable power grid that remains prone to outages since it was destroyed by Maria, a Category 4 storm.

Ramonita Torres, a thin, stooped, 74-year-old woman who lives by herself in the impoverished, flood-prone neighborhood of Las Monjas in the capital of San Juan, was still trying to rebuild the home she nearly lost after Maria but was not able to secure the pieces of zinc that now serve as her roof.

"There's no money for that," she said, shaking her head.

Several hundred customers were without power across Puerto Rico by Wednesday evening, according to Ángel Figueroa, president of a union that represents power workers.

Police said an 80-year-old man in the northern town of Bayamón died on Wednesday after he fell trying to climb up to his roof to clear it of debris ahead of the storm.

Dorian initially had been projected to brush the western part of Puerto Rico and the change in the storm's course caught some off guard in Culebra and Vieques, both popular tourist destinations.

Earlier, Trump sent a tweet assuring islanders that "FEMA and all others are ready, and will do a great job."

He added a jab at Puerto Rican officials who have accused this administration of a slow and inadequate response to Hurricane Maria: "When they do, let them know it, and give them a big Thank You — Not like last time. That includes from the incompetent Mayor of San Juan!"

The mayor, Carmen Yulín Cruz, tweeted that Trump needs to "calm down get out of the way and make way for those of us who are actually doing the work on the ground," adding that maybe he "will understand this time around THIS IS NOT ABOUT HIM; THIS IS NOT ABOUT POLITICS; THIS IS ABOUT SAVING LIVES."

Dorian earlier caused power outages and downed trees in Barbados and St. Lucia and flooding in islands including Martinique.

Associated Press writers Adriana Gómez Licón in Miami and Mike Schneider in Orlando, Florida, contributed to this report.

US, Mexico widen asylum crackdown to push back all migrants

By **MARÍA VERZA** and **NOMAAN MERCHANT** Associated Press

NUEVO LAREDO, Mexico (AP) — A Trump administration program forcing asylum seekers to wait in Mexico has evolved into a sweeping rejection of all forms of migrants, with both countries quietly working to keep people out of the U.S. despite threats to the migrants' safety.

The results serve the goals of both governments, which have targeted unauthorized migration at the behest of President Donald Trump, who threatened Mexico with potentially crippling tariffs earlier this year to force action.

Some people sent to wait in the Mexican border cities of Nuevo Laredo and Matamoros said they never requested asylum, including Wilfredo Alvarez, a laborer from Honduras. He crossed the Rio Grande without permission to look for work to support his seven children and was unexpectedly put into the program. He was sent back to Mexico with a future court date.

"We thought that if they caught us, they would deport us to our country, but it was not that way," Alvarez said. "They threw us away here to Mexico, but we are not from here and it's very difficult."

Others said they were never asked if they feared persecution in Mexico, despite U.S. government rules that say migrants should not be sent there if they face that risk.

U.S. border agents give each returned migrant a date for an immigration court hearing at tents set up near the border. But the Mexican government has bused hundreds of migrants to cities around 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) away, ostensibly for their safety. And there's no promise that Mexico will bring migrants back.

Instead, Mexico is offering to return many Central Americans to the Guatemala border, and others are choosing to leave at their own expense.

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A priest running a shelter in Nuevo Laredo called the process a form of “undercover deportation.” “It’s a way to send them to a country that’s not theirs and save money,” Aaron Mendez said. “And Mexico has not said one word.”

Two weeks after speaking to The Associated Press, Mendez was kidnapped by armed men who entered the shelter. He is still missing.

The effort to keep migrants in Mexico is officially called the “Migrant Protection Protocols,” but it’s better known as the “Remain in Mexico” program. Announced as a plan to crack down on asylum claims, it has been in effect since January and was expanded in July to the eastern end of the U.S.-Mexico border.

In that region, on one side of the border is South Texas’ Rio Grande Valley, where border agents apprehend more migrants crossing illegally than in any other section. On the other side is the state of Tamaulipas, known for its cartel-linked violence and corruption. Tamaulipas is the only U.S.-Mexico border state that the U.S. government warns Americans not to visit due to safety concerns.

The U.S. has said at least 32,000 people have been sent back. Mexico says around 5,500 people have been sent to Nuevo Laredo and 3,000 people to Matamoros.

Migrants in Mexican border cities said they were told they would receive help when they were sent back to Mexico, a promise that for many has not been kept.

Thirteen people told the Associated Press they were not asked for any information about their cases by U.S. border agents.

“They only asked for a name, a fingerprint, and then ‘out,’” said Blanca, a Guatemalan woman who was sent back to Nuevo Laredo in July with 15 relatives. Blanca asked that her last name be withheld due to fear that she would be harmed.

She said she was prepared to tell border agents that gang members had killed her sister, leading the rest of her family to flee. She brought paperwork documenting the attack, but said, “We couldn’t even show them.”

Jodi Goodwin, an immigration attorney in Harlingen, Texas, has agreed to represent for free 11 cases involving people waiting in Matamoros, including three families and a pregnant woman from Peru. Goodwin persuaded border agents on Sunday to allow the pregnant woman inside the U.S. as well as a woman accompanied by a baby with Down syndrome. The next day, she said, the pregnant woman had been sent back to Mexico.

In nearby Reynosa, human rights lawyer Jennifer Harbury has worked with Mexican attorneys to help waiting migrants obtain protective orders against people who have attacked them. In a recent blog post, Harbury said she had expected around 200 people to apply for orders. Instead, at least 500 people came in one day.

The lawyers were able to complete about 100 requests.

“When I left, people were grabbing at my sleeve and begging for help,” she wrote.

Even before the Remain in Mexico program, border agents forced migrants to wait in Matamoros and Nuevo Laredo for months at a time to seek asylum under a policy known as “metering.” The delays led many migrants to try to cross the Rio Grande illegally. Photos of a man and his daughter who drowned at the bank of the river in Matamoros shocked people around the world.

The two cities are dangerous, with consistent reports of migrants being kidnapped or shaken down for bribes.

The International Committee of the Red Cross warned of an “increasingly worrying picture” for migrants in the region, citing a lack of basic health services and protection measures, especially for children traveling alone. Mexico has offered migrants work permits and the bus rides to safer cities.

Adam Isacson, an expert with the Washington Office on Latin America, a research and advocacy group, said it was “virtually impossible” for many immigrants to return to the U.S. to continue their asylum cases. And if a migrant does not appear on the assigned date, an immigration judge can issue an order that could make it impossible for that person to re-enter for 10 years.

Isacson said Mexican officials may have thought the program would apply only to a few thousand people

and might have been stopped by U.S. courts, which have so far declined to do so. Instead, it has grown into one of the Trump administration's biggest tools to keep out migrants at the southern border.

The U.S. government is building tent courts in Laredo and Brownsville, where immigration judges will hold hearings by video. The first hearings are expected in September. The Department of Homeland Security would not commit to allowing observers to watch the hearings, saying that "heightened security measures" are necessary even though immigration court rules say that most hearings should be open.

Mendez, the missing priest, explained what he thought was the motive behind the entire process.

"What the U.S. wants is to get rid of Central Americans through a legal way," he said. "And it does it by giving out these documents."

Merchant reported from Houston. Associated Press contributor Juan Antonio Calderón provided reporting for this story.

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand ends once-promising presidential bid

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrat Kirsten Gillibrand dropped out of the presidential race Wednesday, abruptly ending a campaign that once looked poised to ride strong #MeToo credentials to formidability but instead collapsed amid surprisingly low polling and major fundraising struggles.

"I know this isn't the result that we wanted," the 52-year-old New York senator said in an online video in which she didn't endorse any other 2020 Democratic White House hopeful. "But it's important to know when it's not your time."

The decision came as Gillibrand failed to qualify for a debate coming next month in Houston by not hitting 2% in at least four approved public opinion polls while securing 130,000 unique donors — despite spending millions on online and TV ads to woo people contributing as little as \$1. That proved especially embarrassing since candidates who began the race with far lower national profiles, including businessman Andrew Yang, made it.

On the eve of Wednesday's qualifying deadline, Gillibrand sat down with her family and decided that if a pair of polls set to be released the following morning didn't help her meet the polling threshold, she'd drop out.

Both ultimately showed her at 0%.

To get to the U.S. House, Gillibrand had topped an incumbent Republican in a conservative part of upstate New York in 2007, and she was appointed to the Senate two years later, filling the seat vacated by Hillary Clinton. She later retained the seat during a 2010 special election, as well as in 2012 and 2018.

Vocal in the Senate on curbing sexual harassment and military sexual assault, and promoting equal pay for women and family leave, Gillibrand made those and her staunch defense of abortion rights the core of her presidential bid. She stood out in the packed Democratic presidential field by becoming the first to declare she'd only appoint judges to the Supreme Court who consider the landmark 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion nationwide settled law, though most of her competitors quickly followed suit.

Gillibrand also used her run to highlight systemic racism and white privilege, speaking on the subject frequently on issues such as mass incarceration, urban gun violence and maternal mortality rates for black women.

She initially hoped to stay in the race in a bid to qualify for October's debates, but her financial situation made that impossible. Gillibrand finishes with just \$800,000 left in her campaign bank account. That means she spent well over \$7 million, just since June 30.

A campaign aide said Wednesday that getting media coverage that could help boost Gillibrand's polling and fundraising had become too difficult. Gillibrand met with staff at her campaign headquarters in Troy, New York, on Wednesday afternoon to tell them her race was over.

After forming an exploratory committee in January and formally entering the race by calling President

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Donald Trump a “coward” in a March speech delivered near the New York City skyscraper bearing his name, Gillibrand began with \$10.5-plus million left over from her landslide 2018 Senate victory in her presidential campaign coffers.

That seemed like more than enough for the long haul. But Gillibrand was the first Senate Democrat in December 2017 to call for Minnesota Sen. Al Franken’s resignation amid numerous allegations of sexual misconduct, and she has said for months that that alienated donors and some voters in neighboring Iowa, which kicks off presidential primary voting with its caucuses Feb. 3.

Many of her Senate colleagues seeking the Democratic presidential nomination — including Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, Cory Booker of New Jersey, Kamala Harris of California and Bernie Sanders of Vermont — followed her lead in calling for Franken to step down before he quit in January 2018. But Gillibrand has faced the most questions about being too quick to condemn him.

Gillibrand said in July that she didn’t regret urging Franken’s resignation but argued that female senators were being blamed more than male ones for a decision that Franken himself ultimately made.

“Women are asked to hold accountable their colleagues. The men are not,” Gillibrand said. “It’s outrageous. It’s absurd.”

Harris tweeted moments after Gillibrand’s announcement that the New Yorker “is a brave voice on some of the most critical issues facing our country today — from childcare to sexual assault. She is a champion and I know she’s not done fighting for women and families everywhere.” Trump offered a tweet appearing to scoff at Gillibrand’s low polling.

A record 100-plus women were elected to Congress in 2018, and Gillibrand’s championing of the #MeToo movement under the slogan “Brave Wins” had seemed to provide a clear lane for 2020 success. Gillibrand touted being the nation’s first woman to seek the White House with young children, and the graduate of Dartmouth and UCLA law school looked on paper to initially have the strongest of 2020 resumes — making her fall from early favorite to also-ran all the more surprising.

During a Fox News town hall in June, Gillibrand said, “We want women to have a seat at the table,” and when moderator Chris Wallace responded, “What about men?” Gillibrand shot back with one of the most memorable lines of her campaign: “They’re already there — do you not know?”

As she continued to struggle for traction, though, questions about why Gillibrand was still running intensified. Asked in July if she hoped to be another candidate’s choice for vice president, Gillibrand wouldn’t rule it out.

“I’m running for president of the United States because I believe that I am the best leader to take this country forward,” she told The Associated Press during a bus tour in Michigan. “But I will always serve in all capacities because I am here to serve others.”

Campaigning Wednesday in South Carolina, former Vice President Joe Biden, the Democratic presidential field’s current front-runner, said of Gillibrand’s expertise on multiple issues, “If I’m lucky enough to be ... the person who gets elected, I’m going to her for help.”

The crowded Democratic presidential field of more than two dozen candidates had already begun to winnow before Gillibrand’s announcement. U.S. Rep. Eric Swalwell of California left the 2020 race in July, followed by former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton of Massachusetts earlier this month.

Associated Press writers Brian Slodysko and Julie Pace contributed to this report.

Bolsonaro says Amazon nations should decide region’s future

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO and CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA Associated Press

PORTO VELHO, Brazil (AP) — Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro said Wednesday that Latin America’s Amazon countries will meet in September to discuss both protecting and developing the rainforest region, which has been hit by weeks of devastating fires.

The Brazilian leader also escalated a deeply personal dispute with French President Emmanuel Macron,

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accusing him of portraying himself as “the one and only person” concerned about the environment.

Bolsonaro’s remarks pushed back at international allegations that, on his watch, the weakening of environmental safeguards in Brazil had set the stage for farmers, developers and others to set fires more aggressively this year as a way to clear land, much of it already deforested. They also highlighted the Brazilian government’s contention that some international offers of help to fight the fires were an infringement of Brazilian sovereignty over the region.

Macron and other European leaders argue the fires in the Amazon require a global response because of the ecosystem’s critical role in draining heat-trapping carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Macron criticized Bolsonaro for allegedly lying to him about his commitments to biodiversity, prompting the Brazilian to accuse the French leader of evoking his country’s colonial past.

On Wednesday, Bolsonaro said Germany and France had tried to “buy” Brazil’s sovereignty. The acrimony has sidelined a pledge of \$20 million from the Group of Seven nations to help protect rainforest in the Amazon, though Bolsonaro said he would accept “bilateral” aid and that Chile was sending four firefighting planes. Britain has pledged \$12 million and Canada has offered \$11 million.

Leaders of all Amazon nations except Venezuela will meet Sept. 6 “to come up with our own unified strategy for preserving the environment, and also for exploration sustainable in our region,” Bolsonaro said after meeting with Chilean President Sebastián Piñera in the Brazilian capital, Brasilia. The conference is to be in Colombia.

Latin America countries that contain Amazon rainforest “have sovereignty over the Amazon, that needs to be recognized always,” Piñera said.

A regional conservationist said “the ideal scenario” would be if the Amazon countries agree on how to preserve the region and receive robust international support in order to do it.

“Sovereignty is certainly a fundamental issue here,” said Roberto Troya, regional director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the WWF conservation group. But, he said, the issue can have a negative impact “if used as a shield to isolate and distort the reality of what’s going on on the ground.”

Six former Brazilian environment ministers met Wednesday with Rodrigo Maia, president of the lower house of congress, to demand stronger protections for the environment. The ministers said Brazil should accept international aid to fight the fires and accused Bolsonaro’s government of dismantling environmental institutions, according to the G1 news website.

Porto Velho, the capital of Brazil’s Amazon state of Rondonia, has been heavily affected by smoke from the fires.

Resident Graciela Martinez said it was important for the world to preserve the Amazon. But she questioned the surge of international concern and aid offers this year, saying fires have been common in the past.

“I suspect that there’s some kind of hidden interest behind it, because we had never seen this before. We’ve had bigger fires and it’s only now that we have this worldwide ruckus,” Martinez said.

Another resident, Geane Pereira de Souza, walked out of a hospital pushing a wheelchair carrying her teenage son. She said the Brazilian government has not done enough to protect the rainforest and that international help is needed.

“Any help is good and welcome,” she said. “The Amazon means everything to me. Some say it’s like the heart of the world.”

About 60% of the Amazon region is in Brazil. The vast Amazon also spans parts of Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana, an overseas region of France.

Bolivia, which shares a border with Brazil, is also struggling with fires, many of which got out of control in high winds after being intentionally set during an expansion of farming and ranching.

The fires started in July and have consumed 18,000 square kilometers (6,950 square miles) in the Bolivian Amazon and Santa Cruz, the country’s agro-industrial center, according to satellite images assessed by Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza, a Bolivian environmental group.

President Evo Morales said up to 30% of the burned area had been intact forest, while the rest was set on fire in the annual cycle of land-clearing.

Lingering smoke in the Amazon, meanwhile, is reportedly causing increased respiratory problems —

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particularly among children and the elderly — as fires in the region rage.

The number of people treated for respiratory issues increased sharply in recent days at the Cosme e Damia Children's hospital in Porto Velho, the capital of Brazil's Amazon state of Rondonia.

Fears over health impacts have been growing with the surge in fires, with more than 83,000 blazes documented by the country's National Space Research Institute since the start of the year. That's a 77% increase over the same period last year. About half of the fires occurred in the Amazon region, with most in the past month.

The state hymn of Rondonia takes pride in the region's famously beautiful skies. "Blue, our sky is always blue," it says. "May God keep it unrivaled, crystal, pure, and always keep it that way."

Some clouds and a blue sky were partly visible Wednesday. But then the haze settled again blanketing the horizon with thick smoke that covered the early morning red-blood sun.

Annual fires usually occur around August but this year people started them earlier, said Troya of the WWF. "Maybe the rule of law is not necessarily there," he said. "Probably people feel that they can do it without any consequence."

Associated Press writer Luis Andres Henao reported this story in Porto Velho and AP writer Christopher Torchia reported from Rio de Janeiro. AP writers Anna Jean Kaiser in Rio and Carlos Valdez in La Paz, Bolivia, contributed to this report.

26 killed in fiery attack on bar in southern Mexico

By MARK STEVENSON Associated Press

COATZACOALCOS, Mexico (AP) — Gang members burst into a bar, blocked all the exits and then started a fire that killed 26 people and injured about a dozen others, Mexican officials said Wednesday.

Authorities said the attack in the Gulf coast city of Coatzacoalcos late Tuesday apparently was overseen by a man who had been recently arrested but released.

"The criminals went in, closed the doors, the emergency exits, and set fire to the place," President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said at his daily morning news conference.

Veracruz state police said the attack targeted the "Bar Caballo Blanco," or "White Horse Bar." It advertised "quality, security and service," private rooms for \$7.50 "all night," "sexy girls" and a pole dance contest.

It is located just off a busy commercial street in Coatzacoalcos, a city whose main industry has long been oil and oil refining.

On Wednesday afternoon, relatives of the victims gathered anxiously outside state prosecutors' offices with photos that could be used to identify their loved ones.

Those who had confirmation sat weeping in plastic chairs.

Vanessa Galindo Blas, 32, said her husband died in the fire. She sat shouting: "He didn't deserve this. Why did they do this to me? I don't to be here. I want to be with you."

She said her 29-year-old husband, Erick Hernández Enriquez, worked as the DJ in the bar and left behind three children aged 4, 5 and 10.

"I don't know how to tell my children," Galindo Blas wept, as her sister-in-law, Vanesa Hernandez, held her and sobbed. "He worked honorably for his children — that was the only reason he was in that place."

Another victim at the ill-fated bar was Habib Ojeda Sierra, 23, a grocery store worker who left two children behind.

His aunt, Alicia Sierra, expressed the same disbelief that anyone could have sealed her nephew, who was asthmatic, inside a burning building.

"They are cowards who don't value human lives. Why didn't they let them out?" Sierra said outside the office where identifications of the bodies were being confirmed. "If they had some problem with the owner, why didn't they go after him?"

Among the dead were two Filipino sailors. Ramón Guzman, the agent for the ship Caribe Lisa, said the two men had gone on shore leave after their ship arrived from Houston, and did not return. They were

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among those confirmed dead at the bar.

"This is the most inhuman thing possible," López Obrador said.

"It is regrettable that organized crime acts in this manner," he said, adding, "It is more regrettable that there may be collusion with authorities."

López Obrador said local prosecutors should be investigated because "the alleged perpetrators had been arrested, but they were freed."

Gov. Cuitláhuac García identified the chief suspect as a man known as "La Loca" and gave his name as Ricardo "N" because officials no longer give the full names of suspects.

García said the man had been detained by marines in July, but was released after being turned over to the state prosecutor's office.

"In Veracruz, criminal gangs are no longer tolerated," García wrote of the attack, adding that police, the armed forces and newly formed National Guard are searching for the attackers.

In an interview with Milenio TV, García said 23 people had died at the bar and three more had succumbed to their injuries afterward. He said some of the remaining injured were in "very serious" condition and he left open the possibility that the death toll could rise.

"It was a planned, cunning attack against that bar and the people who were inside," he said. He added that businesses in the city have suffered similar fires. He said arrests were made in previous cases, but state prosecutors didn't act.

In a statement, Veracruz prosecutors denied having released anyone, saying "La Loca" had indeed been arrested on two occasions but then handed over to federal prosecutors.

"A tragedy should not be used to distort the facts nor confuse public opinion," the statement said.

The executive branch in Veracruz and the prosecutor's office have long been at odds, leading to complaints against prosecutor Jorge Winckler alleging omissions and obstruction, charges he has always denied.

Anti-crime activist and businessman Raul Ojeda said the attack had all the hallmarks of an unmet demand for extortion payments.

"They have been threatening all the businesses like that," Ojeda said. "The ones that don't pay close down or pay the consequences, as in this case."

He said the Zetas, Jalisco New Generation cartel and other local gangs are currently fighting for control of the city.

Photos of the scene showed tables and chairs jumbled around, with the bodies of semi-nude women lying amid the debris.

Veracruz prosecutors said the dead were 10 women and 16 men. There was no immediate word on the condition of the 11 wounded.

The attack came almost eight years to the day after a fire at a casino in the northern city of Monterrey killed 52 people. The Zetas drug cartel staged that 2011 attack to enforce demands for protection payments.

The Zetas, now splintered, have also been active in Coahuila. The Jalisco New Generation cartel also has a presence in the area and local journalists said "La Loca" is believed to be linked to that group.

Veracruz has suffered from high levels of organized crime for years. It was one of the first states where López Obrador deployed the country's new National Guard in April after 13 people were killed during a party in Minatitlán, 12 miles (20 kilometers) from Coahuila.

More recently, in early August, nine dismembered bodies were found in bags in the town of Maltrata.

According to the most recent government data, there are 2,500 guardsmen patrolling the state. They are among some 13,500 federal forces in Veracruz.

The attack, along with the killing of 19 people in the western city of Uruapan earlier this month, is likely to renew fears that the rampant violence of the 2006-2012 drug war has returned.

To the north in neighboring Tamaulipas state, 12 presumed criminals were killed in two clashes in the border city of Nuevo Laredo, across from Laredo, Texas.

A state official who was not authorized to discuss open investigations and spoke on condition of anonymity said seven died Tuesday after attacking state police and five more were killed after shooting at a military barracks.

Associated Press writer María Verza in Mexico City contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that the name of the dead DJ was Erick Hernández Enriquez.

UK's Johnson moves to suspend Parliament ahead of Brexit

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson maneuvered Wednesday to give his political opponents even less time to block a chaotic no-deal Brexit before the Oct. 31 withdrawal deadline, winning Queen Elizabeth II's approval to suspend Parliament. His critics were outraged.

Though Johnson previously had refused to rule out such a move, the timing of the decision took lawmakers — many of whom are on vacation — by surprise.

Johnson insisted he was taking the step so he could outline his domestic agenda, and he shot down the notion that he was curbing debate, saying there would be "ample time" to discuss Brexit and other issues.

Lawmakers reacted with fury, including John Bercow, speaker of the lower House of Commons, who was not told in advance of Johnson's plan.

"Shutting down Parliament would be an offense against the democratic process and the rights of parliamentarians as the people's elected representatives," Bercow said. "Surely at this early stage in his premiership, the prime minister should be seeking to establish rather than undermine his democratic credentials and indeed his commitment to Parliamentary democracy."

The main opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn wrote to the queen to protest "in the strongest possible terms on behalf of my party and I believe all the other opposition parties are going to join in with this."

The monarch, however, kept with her steadfast refusal to get involved in politics.

The House of Commons will convene from Sept. 3-10 and then was scheduled to go on a break until Oct. 9 — though lawmakers had suggested they might cancel that break and stay in session because of the Brexit crisis.

Johnson said he decided to ask the queen to give her speech that outlines the government's legislative agenda on Oct. 14, and she approved suspending Parliament for a total of 32 days between Sept. 12 and Oct. 14. That makes it unlikely the lawmakers would have enough time to pass laws blocking the U.K.'s withdrawal from the European Union without a negotiated divorce deal by Oct. 31.

"This is completely normal procedure," House of Commons leader Jacob Rees-Mogg told Sky News.

But shadow chancellor John McDonnell tweeted: "Make no mistake, this is a very British coup."

"Whatever one's views on Brexit, once you allow a Prime Minister to prevent the full and free operation of our democratic institutions you are on a very precarious path," he said.

Guy Verhofstadt, the European Parliament's chief Brexit official, called Johnson's move "sinister."

"As a fellow parliamentarian, my solidarity with those fighting for their voices to be heard," he tweeted. "Suppressing debate on profound choices is unlikely to help deliver a stable future EU-UK relationship."

The pound plunged on the news, down to \$1.2196 from almost \$1.2300 the previous day.

The EU is adamant it will not renegotiate the agreement struck with former Prime Minister Theresa May on the terms of Britain's departure and the framework of future relations. Without such a deal, Britain faces a chaotic Brexit that economists warn would disrupt trade by imposing tariffs and customs checks between Britain and the bloc, send the value of the pound plummeting and plunge the U.K. into recession. May resigned in defeat after failing — three times — to secure Parliament's backing for her divorce deal with the bloc.

Hundreds of people packed College Green outside Parliament, waving EU flags and placards to express their anger, while 25 bishops from the Church of England released an open letter about their worries about the "economic shocks" of a no-deal Brexit on the poor and other vulnerable people.

A petition on a government website demanding that Parliament not be suspended has gotten more than

100,000 signatures — guaranteeing that it will be considered for debate.

Lawmakers already are asking a Scottish court to rule that suspending Parliament is illegal. If that fails, pro-EU legislators are also planning to try to pass a law banning a no-deal Brexit, although the government has now sharply limited their time to do that.

Another option is to bring down the government with a no-confidence vote. That would spark a 14-day period in which Johnson could try to overturn the result. If he failed, there would be a general election — but the government believes it would not have to be held until after the Oct. 31 Brexit deadline.

During that key 14 days after a no-confidence vote, another lawmaker could try to win Parliament's backing in a vote. If they succeeded, Johnson should, in theory, have to step down and let the winner form a government.

But these rules were introduced in a 2011 law and have never been tested, leaving plenty of room for argument.

"If Parliament is suspended to suit Boris Johnson, it's not just going to be suspended from discussing Brexit. We could go to war," Labour spokeswoman on legal issues Shami Chakrabarti told the BBC. "People will work together to stop this unconstitutional suspension of Parliament and we will get greater unity on that even than on stopping a no-deal Brexit."

On Tuesday, opposition lawmakers declared that they would join forces to try to stop a departure from the EU without an agreement, setting up a legislative challenge to Johnson and his past promises to complete the divorce deal.

Some 160 lawmakers have signed a declaration pledging "to do whatever is necessary" to prevent Johnson from bypassing Parliament.

Johnson has told European officials it won't be possible to agree a deal on Britain's departure from the bloc without the removal of controversial language on a "backstop" aimed at avoiding the return of a border between EU member Ireland and Britain's Northern Ireland. He said at the close of the G-7 summit in Biarritz, France, on Monday that he was "marginally more optimistic," of progress.

Scott Lucas, a professor of international politics at the University of Birmingham, said Johnson's maneuver touched off the biggest crisis since the abdication of King Edward VIII to marry the divorced American socialite, Wallis Simpson.

"This is biggest constitutional crisis since the 1930s," Lucas said. "Even World War II didn't present a constitutional crisis because the coalition government and Parliament agreed the rules of the game."

It's also a potential economic crisis because of the projected drop in GDP, he added.

Johnson did earn support from one big backer: U.S. President Donald Trump. Just days after the two met at the G-7 summit, Trump reaffirmed his support by tweeting that the prime minister "is exactly what the U.K. has been looking for, & will prove to be 'a great one!'"

Associated Press writer Jill Lawless contributed.

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Ex-Pentagon chief Mattis says bitter politics threaten US

By ROBERT BURNS AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis is warning that bitter political divisions threaten American society, saying he views "tribalism" as a greater risk to the nation's future than foreign adversaries.

The retired Marine general, who resigned in December 2018 in a policy dispute with President Donald Trump, said he worries about the state of American politics and the administration's treatment of allies.

"We all know that we're better than our current politics," Mattis wrote in an essay adapted from his new book and published Wednesday by The Wall Street Journal. "Unlike in the past, where we were unified and drew in allies, currently our own commons seems to be breaking apart."

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Mattis said the problem is made worse by this administration's disregard for the enduring value of allies, which he alluded to in the resignation letter he gave Trump on Dec. 20.

"Nations with allies thrive," he wrote in the Journal essay, "and those without them wither. Alone, America cannot protect our people and our economy. At this time, we can see storm clouds gathering."

In an apparent reference to Trump, Mattis added: "A polemicist's role is not sufficient for a leader. A leader must display strategic acumen that incorporates respect for those nations that have stood with us when trouble loomed."

Mattis is breaking months of public silence as he promotes his new book, "Call Sign Chaos: Learning to Lead," which is scheduled to be published Sept. 3. He is to discuss the book in an appearance next Tuesday at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York.

Without citing Trump by name, Mattis suggested the administration and its strongest critics are engaged in destructive politics. He said he worries more about internal divisions in American society than about external threats.

"We are dividing into hostile tribes cheering against each other, fueled by emotion and a mutual disdain that jeopardizes our future, instead of rediscovering our common ground and finding solutions," he said.

"All Americans need to recognize that our democracy is an experiment — and one that can be reversed," he wrote, adding, "Tribalism must not be allowed to destroy our experiment."

A longtime colleague, Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was asked at a Pentagon news conference whether he agrees with Mattis that political tribalism in the U.S. is threatening democracy.

Dunford said he is careful to remain apolitical and would not make judgments about Trump. He said the military has managed to avoid politicization, despite a few lapses, during what he called "a very politically turbulent period of time" since Trump took office.

Regarding his reasons for leaving the Trump administration, Mattis offered a slightly more pointed explanation than he outlined in his resignation letter.

"When my concrete solutions and strategic advice, especially keeping faith with our allies, no longer resonated, it was time to resign, despite the limitless joy I felt serving alongside our troops in defense of our Constitution," he wrote.

Mattis, who had never met or spoken to Trump before the Republican president-elect interviewed him for the Pentagon job in November 2016, quickly became known as a leading voice of reason and stability in an administration led by an impulsive president unfamiliar with the tools of statecraft and dismissive of allies' interests.

Mattis resigned shortly after Trump announced he was pulling all U.S. troops from Syria. In Mattis' view this amounted to betraying the Syrian Kurdish fighters who'd partnered with American troops to combat the Islamic State group. Trump later backed away from his decision, allowing a portion of the U.S. force to remain in Syria in what the Pentagon sees as an effort to prevent a resurgence of the Islamic State group.

In his resignation letter, Mattis emphasized the value of allies and suggested that Trump had been ir-resolute and ambiguous in his approach to Russia and China.

Trump said after Mattis left Dec. 31 that the former Marine general had done a poor job managing the war in Afghanistan. He turned down Mattis' offer to stay at the Pentagon until February to ensure a smooth transition, instead telling Mattis to leave right away.

Georgia GOP Sen. Isakson to retire over health issues

By BEN NADLER and RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Republican Sen. Johnny Isakson's announcement Wednesday that he will retire at year's end because of health problems instantly raised Georgia's status as a must-watch 2020 battleground by ensuring both of its Senate seats will be on the ballot.

Isakson's pending departure after more than four decades in Georgia politics gives Democrats a surprise opening in a Southern state where the GOP's lock on statewide elections has shown signs of slipping. The

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state's junior senator, Republican David Perdue, is already a top target as he seeks reelection for the first time next year.

Isakson, 74, said he is leaving the job he loves because "mounting" health issues, including Parkinson's disease, are "taking their toll." He won a third term in 2016 and would have faced reelection in 2022.

"I have concluded that I will not be able to do the job over the long term in the manner the citizens of Georgia deserve," Isakson said in a statement. "It goes against every fiber of my being to leave in the middle of my Senate term, but I know it's the right thing to do on behalf of my state."

The November 2020 ballot in Georgia will now include a special election for the remaining two years of Isakson's term in addition to Perdue's race for another six-year term.

It's a doubly tantalizing target for Democrats who increasingly believe that Georgia, which has become less rural and less white in recent decades, stands on the verge of becoming a swing state after roughly two decades of leaning solidly Republican.

"Georgia is going to be a major decision maker in the reelection of Donald Trump and control of the U.S. Senate now," said Brian Robinson, a Republican political adviser in Georgia who served as communications director under former Gov. Nathan Deal.

It's an uphill battle for Georgia Democrats, who haven't elected a governor or U.S. senator since 1998. Bill Clinton was the last Democratic presidential candidate to win here, in 1992.

But statewide races have become more competitive in recent elections. Trump won Georgia by just over 5 percentage points in 2016, compared with his double-digit victory margins in other Deep South states. In last fall's race for Georgia governor, Republican Brian Kemp beat Democrat Stacey Abrams by just over 1% of the vote.

"This is yet another seat Republicans will need to defend next year in an increasingly competitive battleground," said Stewart Boss, a spokesman for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

Kemp gets to appoint Isakson's replacement, who will serve until the special election. Isakson plans to step down in December.

There will be no primary elections for seat, meaning the November 2020 contest will be open to qualified candidates from all political parties. That could significantly increase the likelihood of a runoff, required by Georgia law if no candidate receives over 50% of votes.

Former White House official Nick Ayers, who recently returned to Georgia, said in an email that he won't offer himself for the seat. Republican strategists say other potential candidates include Georgia Reps. Doug Collins and Tom Graves, and statewide officers such as Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan and Attorney General Chris Carr.

"This is a very short sprint to the 2020 election," Robinson said. "You're going to need somebody who's a proven fundraiser, has a good built-in network and already has some knowledge of the issues. That narrows the field somewhat."

Three Democrats have already declared their candidacy for Perdue's seat.

Abrams, who had been wooed to run against Perdue, "will not be a candidate" for Isakson's seat, a spokesman said on Twitter. She will instead continue to focus on voter access issues in Georgia and nationally.

As chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, Isakson has worked to expand programs offering more private health care choices for veterans. He said he plans to return to Washington when the Senate resumes next month. But deteriorating health will keep him from staying long.

Isakson was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2013. The chronic, progressive movement disorder often left him walking the Capitol's corridors with a noticeably slower, shuffling gate. After winning reelection in 2016, Isakson underwent surgery the following year to address spinal deterioration. At times, he has been in a wheelchair.

He's been recovering from a July fall at his Washington apartment that fractured four ribs. And Isakson revealed Wednesday that earlier this week he had surgery to remove a growth from one of his kidneys.

Fellow senators from both parties saluted Isakson's tenure. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., called Isakson "the gold standard" for the Senate. Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois, the Democratic whip, said Isakson is "one

of our best.”

Isakson, who made millions of dollars in real estate, first won election to the state legislature in 1976. His years as a Republican lawmaker when Democrats still dominated Georgia politics shaped him into an affable consensus builder — a style he clung to even as Congress became bitterly partisan, said former U.S. Rep. Jack Kingston, a Georgia Republican who worked with Isakson at both state and federal levels.

“There are a lot of times when you want to tell the other side to go to hell,” Kingston said. “Johnny always refrained from that. But he never was intimidated by those in power, whether it was Nancy Pelosi or Donald Trump.”

Bynum reported from Savannah, Georgia. AP Chief Congressional Correspondent Lisa Mascaro contributed from Washington.

Reality check: Dem attitudes on impeachment vary widely

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Impeach Trump? For Democrats, the answer is complicated.

While more than 130 House Democrats — more than half the caucus — have come out in favor of an impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump, according to a tally by The Associated Press, those numbers don’t reflect the whole story. The number of Democrats who would actually vote to recommend articles of impeachment, at this point, is significantly smaller.

The picture has been complicated further by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler’s insistence, beginning in late July, that the panel is already conducting impeachment proceedings. Since then, some Democrats have endorsed Judiciary’s work on impeachment without taking a position on whether to vote to begin an official inquiry.

The varying sentiments will be critical as Democrats decide the next steps this fall. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has repeatedly counseled caution, telling Democratic colleagues on a call last week that “the public isn’t there on impeachment” and the case needs to be as strong as possible.

A breakdown of where the Democrats stand:

THE RIGHT NOW DEMOCRATS

A handful of the most liberal Democrats in the caucus have been pushing for impeachment since Trump was elected. Texas Rep. Al Green has been lobbying to remove the president since 2017, and has already forced three impeachment votes on the House floor. The most recent vote, in July, failed by a lopsided 332-95 vote.

The right now group also includes the self-described “squad” of freshmen Democrats: Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan. Tlaib has introduced a resolution to begin the impeachment process; it has 17 co-sponsors.

THE PROCEED QUICKLY DEMOCRATS

Members of the House Judiciary Committee have been at the forefront of calls for an inquiry. The committee, which oversees impeachment and other hot-button issues like guns and immigration, often attracts some of the caucus’ most liberal members. Democrats on the panel were among the first to start pushing Pelosi last spring, with many saying after the release of former special counsel Robert Mueller’s report that the House needed to formally consider impeachment.

“Here in Judiciary we are on the front line,” Pennsylvania Rep. Madeline Dean said in May, after she called for an impeachment inquiry. “And I believe that our caucus is counting on us to inform them, day by day.”

The impeachment calls from the Judiciary committee in the spring were soon amplified by many Democrats in the most liberal districts.

THE RELUCTANT BUT SUPPORTIVE DEMOCRATS

As the list of inquiry supporters grew, some Democrats from less liberal districts joined the calls. But

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they were more cautious.

"I believe my constituents sent me to Congress, in part, because of my reputation for being thoughtful and deliberate," Virginia Rep. Jennifer Wexton, a freshman from a swing district, said in July. "I did not run for office with the purpose of impeaching the president, but I did take an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution."

Illinois Rep. Lauren Underwood hails from a district that supported Trump in 2016. "Let me be clear," she said in a statement this month supporting the Judiciary panel's investigation. "No one wins when Congress is compelled to investigate impeachment or bring about articles of impeachment. This is a tragedy for our country."

Others made clear that while they support an inquiry, they do not support impeachment, at least for now. "While they may sound the same, an impeachment inquiry is not the same thing as supporting impeachment," said California Rep. Harley Rouda, also a freshman from a swing district. "In fact, my hope is that opening an inquiry will allow Congress to gather the information we need to conclude these investigations without impeaching the president, which would only serve to further divide the country."

THE WAIT AND SEE DEMOCRATS

There are still more than 100 House Democrats who have not called for an inquiry. Many of them are following the lead of Pelosi, who is supportive of Nadler's committee but has repeatedly said they need to wait until the facts are in to hold any votes.

Among those still holding back is California Rep. Adam Schiff, the chairman of the intelligence panel. That committee is also investigating Trump and Russian intervention in the 2016 election.

Still, some of Pelosi's closest allies, and members of Democratic leadership, have called for an official investigation. New Mexico Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, third in line behind Pelosi, this month became the highest-ranking Democrat in the House to call for an inquiry.

THE NEVER EVER DEMOCRATS

Part of Pelosi's equation is protecting the most moderate Democrats in the caucus, many of whom helped win the House majority when they defeated Republicans in swing districts in 2018. While some of those members have cautiously called for an impeachment inquiry, others are firmly on the side of no.

Rep. Jeff Van Drew, a New Jersey Democrat who represents a district Trump won in 2016, said he has told Pelosi "numerous times" that he believes impeachment isn't warranted at this point. He said it would disenfranchise voters who supported the president, and would be a losing battle in the Republican-controlled Senate.

"You're not changing anything that people want changed, and it dies in the Senate," Van Drew said in July. "So what did you do? You tried to embarrass somebody or shame them, and it's not even going to work."

Michigan Rep. Elissa Slotkin, also from a swing district, said her constituents are skeptical.

"People in my district are wanting us to pass bills and they fear that if we go down this path of impeachment, we're not going to be working on the things that affect their lives, their pocketbooks, their kids," she said.

If Democrats pursue impeachment, Slotkin said, "we better have our act together."

US contractor sentenced in Iraq shooting seeks new trial

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A former State Department contractor sentenced to life in prison for his role in the 2007 shooting deaths of unarmed Iraqi civilians is asking for a new trial because of what he says is newly discovered evidence.

Lawyers for former Blackwater employee Nicholas Slatten said they received a State Department report two days before the Aug. 14 sentencing that they say casts doubt on prosecutors' argument that Slatten is prone to unprovoked violence.

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The document concerns a rescue mission of a downed aircraft that took place one week before the shooting in the case. Prosecutors invoked the earlier episode at Slatten's trial, saying "this man either takes unprovoked shots where no threat is present, or he urges other people to do that."

Slatten's lawyers say the document, which they received from a third party, shows Army forces reported incoming fire from Iraqi insurgents before Slatten and other Blackwater contractors arrived at the site.

"It forcefully rebuts the government's false narrative that Mr. Slatten shot his weapon at a building when no threats were present and provoked his teammates and the Army to do the same," Slatten's lawyers wrote in arguing for a new trial. "The government's failure to disclose the document and any other similar information, and its presentation of a misleading narrative at trial, require a new trial."

Defense lawyers say Slatten's sister received the document in an email from someone who worked for Blackwater in Baghdad in September 2007. The lawyers say they have no record of prosecutors having previously produced the document.

Slatten was convicted of first-degree murder last December in connection with a September 2007 massacre at a crowded Baghdad traffic circle. Prosecutors alleged that an unprovoked Slatten was the first to fire shots, killing 19-year-old Ahmed Haithem Ahmed Al Rubia'y, who was driving his mother to an appointment.

Slatten has said he was a victim of an "unjust prosecution" and that government lawyers cared more about producing a conviction than uncovering the truth of what happened in Baghdad 12 years ago.

At his sentencing hearing, he called the proceedings a "miscarriage of justice" that "will not stand."

Three other Blackwater contractors — Paul Alvin Slough, Evan Liberty and Dustin Heard — were found guilty at trial of charges including voluntary manslaughter and attempted manslaughter .

A spokeswoman for the U.S. attorney's office in Washington declined to comment Wednesday.

Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

Ethiopian fossil reveals face for ancestor of famed 'Lucy'

By MALCOLM RITTER AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A fossil from Ethiopia is letting scientists look millions of years into our evolutionary history — and they see a face peering back.

The find, from 3.8 million years ago, reveals the face for a presumed ancestor of the species famously represented by Lucy, the celebrated Ethiopian partial skeleton found in 1974.

This ancestral species is the oldest known member of Australopithecus, a grouping of creatures that preceded our own branch of the family tree, called Homo.

Scientists have long known that this species — *A. anamensis* — existed, and previous fossils of it extend back to 4.2 million years ago. But the discovered facial remains were limited to jaws and teeth. The newly reported fossil includes much of the skull and face.

It was described Wednesday in the journal *Nature* by Yohannes Haile-Selassie of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and co-authors.

The face apparently came from a male. Its middle and lower parts jut forward, while Lucy's species shows a flatter mid-face, a step toward humans' flat faces. The fossil also shows the beginning of the massive and robust faces found in Australopithecus, built to withstand strains from chewing tough food, researchers said.

The fossil was found in 2016, in what was once sand deposited in a river delta on the shore of lake. At the time the creature lived, the area was largely dry shrubland with some trees. Other work has shown *A. anamensis* evidently walked upright, but there's no evidence that it flaked stone to make tools, said study co-author Stephane Melillo of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany.

Experts unconnected to the new study praised the work. Eric Delson of Lehman College in New York called the fossil "beautiful" and said the researchers did an impressive job of reconstructing it digitally to help determine its place in the evolutionary tree.

With a face for *A. anamensis*, said Zeray Alemseged of the University of Chicago, "now we know how they looked and how they differed from the Lucy species."

William Kimbel, who directs the Institute of Human Origins at Arizona State University, said the discovery helps fill a critical gap in information on the earliest evolution of the *Australopithecus* group.

The study's authors said the finding indicates *A. anamensis* hung around for at least 100,000 years after producing Lucy's species, *A. afarensis*. That contradicts the widely accepted idea that there was no such overlap, they wrote.

Scientists care about overlap because its presence or absence can indicate the process by which one species gave rise to another. The paper's argument for overlap rests on its conclusion that a forehead bone previously found in Ethiopia belongs to Lucy's species.

But several experts, including Kimbel, were not convinced that conclusion is correct. So the question of just how Lucy's species arose from the older one remains open, Kimbel said in an email.

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OxyContin maker negotiating settlement worth a reported \$12B

By ANDREW WELSH-HUGGINS and SARAH SKIDMORE SELL Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Purdue Pharma would devote its profits to cleaning up the devastation wrought by opioids, and the controlling Sackler family would be out, under a \$10 billion to \$12 billion nationwide settlement taking shape at the negotiating table, according to published reports Wednesday.

The agreement, if it comes to pass, would resolve more than 2,000 lawsuits brought against the maker of OxyContin by state and local governments.

Under the proposal on the table, Purdue Pharma would file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy and transform itself into a "public benefit trust corporation," with all profits from drug sales and other proceeds going to the plaintiffs, news reports said, citing a document outlining the tentative agreement.

The Wall Street Journal said the arrangement would stay in place for seven to 10 years and would be overseen by trustees named by the bankruptcy court. Details of the proposed settlement were also reported by NBC and The New York Times.

The Sacklers would give up ownership of Purdue Pharma and contribute \$3 billion of their own money toward the total, the reports said. They would also sell another pharmaceutical company, Mundipharma, which would add \$1.5 billion to the settlement.

In addition, Purdue Pharma would supply its addiction treatment drugs free to the public.

It was not immediately clear whether the reconstituted company would continue to sell opioids. Purdue Pharma also makes laxatives, antiseptics and dietary supplements.

In a statement, the Stamford, Connecticut-based company did not confirm any of the details but said it sees little good in years of "wasteful litigation and appeals."

"Purdue believes a constructive global resolution is the best path forward, and the company is actively working with the state attorneys general and other plaintiffs to achieve this outcome," it said.

Paul Farrell Jr., a lead plaintiffs' lawyer representing local governments in the negotiations going on in Cleveland, said all sides remain under a gag order: "All we can confirm is that we are in active settlement discussions with Purdue."

Attorneys general representing several states also confirmed the accelerated negotiations.

"Our mission here has always been clear — make Purdue Pharma and the other manufacturers and distributors pay for what they did to Pennsylvania and its people, and put the Sackler family out of the opioid business for good," said Jacklin Rhoads, a spokeswoman for Pennsylvania's attorney general.

While the U.S. has many "public benefit corporations," creating one to settle a civil action would be a novel approach, said John Coffee, a law professor and director of the Center on Corporate Governance at Columbia Law School.

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In general, public benefit corporations have charters that dictate that they operate not to maximize profits for shareholders but to benefit some other purpose, such as a charity or research, he said. Coffee said that he has never heard specifically of a "public benefit corporation trust" and that it sounded like a hybrid — a business run by trustees.

The opioid overdose epidemic has killed more than 400,000 people in the U.S. since 2000 and torn apart communities. Purdue Pharma and other players in the industry have been barraged with lawsuits, with the first federal trial scheduled to start in Cleveland in two months.

Purdue has been cast by attorneys and addiction experts as a chief villain in the crisis. While its painkillers represent a very small piece of the opioid market, the lawsuits accuse it of playing a central role in creating demand for the drugs by downplaying OxyContin's addiction risks and pushing doctors hard to prescribe it.

New York Attorney General Letitia James said in a statement that the Sackler family "started a national fire" and has "made billions profiting from death and destruction."

The Sacklers were ranked America's 19th-richest family by Forbes magazine in 2016, with a net worth estimated at \$13 billion.

In March, Purdue and the Sackler family reached a \$270 million settlement with Oklahoma over the opioid scourge.

On Monday, an Oklahoma judge found Johnson & Johnson responsible for fueling the state's opioid crisis and ordered the maker of such familiar household products as Band-Aids and baby powder to pay \$572 million to help clean up the problem.

It was the first opioid lawsuit brought against the industry by a state to go to trial, and activists expressed hope the verdict would turn up the pressure on other companies to settle.

Members of the Sackler family are major philanthropists who have given money to cultural institutions around the world, including the Smithsonian Institution, New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art and London's Tate Modern. But in recent months, institutions have come under pressure to sever ties to the Sacklers and take the family name off their walls.

Sell reported from Portland, Oregon. Associated Press writers Mike Sisak in New York; Geoff Mulvihill in Cherry Hill, New Jersey; and Marc Levy in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, contributed to this report.

Shelter data pinpoints US destinations of asylum seekers

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A detailed snapshot of the recent surge of asylum-seeking families crossing into the U.S. from Mexico gives a sense of how they were treated after entering and where they settled.

Houston was the destination for 432 of 7,358 families briefly housed in a San Diego shelter from late October through June, 100 more than the second most popular spot, Los Angeles. The count reflects Houston's emergence as a primary gateway for immigrants, including many Central Americans.

The details about the migrants' destinations were extrapolated for The Associated Press from a survey of shelter migrant registration forms compiled by Tom K. Wong, an associate political science professor at University of California, San Diego.

A report on the survey was made public Wednesday that focuses on custody conditions and demographic characteristics of the asylum seekers who stayed at the shelter affiliated with the San Diego Rapid Response Network, a coalition of attorneys, advocates and civic groups.

U.S. authorities arrested or stopped nearly 800,000 people from October to June, making the snapshot of more than 17,100 adults and children who passed through San Diego a partial but still significant view of a surge that overwhelmed authorities and led to migrants being held in sometimes squalid conditions.

In another reflection of shifting demographics, Chicago, a longtime draw for Mexican immigrants, was the destination for only 76 families, ranking 21st with less than half the number of families headed to Nashville, Tennessee, and barely more than Fort Myers, Florida.

Dumas, a town of 15,000 people in the Texas Panhandle that is half Latino and has a large meatpack-

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ing plant nearby, was the destination for 56 families, more than Denver, Phoenix or Seattle. Other small cities that drew large numbers include Huntsville and Gadsden in Alabama and Chattanooga, Tennessee.

The coalition opened its shelter in late October, when U.S. authorities began releasing asylum-seeking families before they could arrange travel. Families were released with ankle monitors for heads of household and notices to report to authorities in destination cities while their cases wind through bottlenecked immigration courts.

Among San Diego asylum-seeking families, 31% reported problems with U.S. custody conditions, according to the study by Wong's U.S. Immigration Policy Center. Families were held an average of 3.4 days.

The most common complaints were about food and water, including insufficient infant formula, spoiled food and dirty water. Others reported issues with hygiene, including not having a toothbrush or toothpaste and lack of showers. Nearly half those who complained had issues related to sleep, overcrowding and confinement and cold temperatures.

The study found that one of every five heads of households had a primary language other than Spanish but nearly 90% of them were given legal instructions in Spanish. Other common languages include the Mayan dialects of K'iche', Q'eqchi and Mam, Vietnamese and Creole.

Guatemalans accounted for 48% of families served in San Diego, Hondurans made up 30%, El Salvadorans 8% and Haitians 5%.

"These findings raise serious due process concerns," said Kate Clark, director of immigration services at Jewish Family Service of San Diego. "If asylum-seeking families are not being given vital instructions about their immigration proceedings in a language they can read or understand, how can we expect them to navigate an already complex legal process that is increasingly stacked against them?"

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said that it provides the migrants three meals daily, drinks, unlimited snacks and hygiene products. Border Patrol Chief Carla Provost said last month that stations weren't designed for long-term custody and were occupied at "unprecedented and unsustainable" levels.

Customs and Border Protection, the Border Patrol's parent agency, contracts for translation services when officers cannot determine migrants' primary languages, said Ralph DeSio, a spokesman in San Diego.

San Diego County has allowed Jewish Family Service to run the shelter in a former courthouse for free. The shelter, which relies on state funding and private donations, houses up to 250 people, providing hot meals, showers and cots for one to three days.

The shelter's population has dropped as border arrests have fallen and the U.S. ramped up a policy to make asylum seekers wait in Mexico while their cases wind through U.S. courts. Mexicans are exempt from the policy.

Luz Viviana Perez, 53, said she spent more than two years on the run through her native Mexico, trying to escape an abusive partner who trailed her, knocked her teeth out and pressured their 17-year-old daughter to become a prostitute.

"We've been throughout Mexico, fleeing from place to place," she said Tuesday at the shelter with the 17-year-old and her 12-year-old daughter.

Perez is familiar with complaints about U.S. custody conditions but she had no complaints about her five days in a 30-person cell. The lights were always on but she said she ate four times daily and showered every other day.

This version corrects that Wong is an associate professor, not an assistant professor.

Facebook tightens political ad rules, but leaves loopholes

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Facebook is tightening its rules around political advertising ahead of the 2020 U.S. presidential election, acknowledging previous misuse. But it's not clear if it will be enough to stop bad actors from abusing its system.

The changes include a tightened verification process that will require anyone wanting to run ads pertain-

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ing to elections, politics or big social issues like guns and immigration to confirm their identity and prove they are in the U.S. Beginning in mid-September, such advertisers confirm their group's identity using their organization's tax identification number or other government ID.

The verified group name will be listed on the "paid for by" disclaimers that disclose the backers of ads. Facebook says it will verify this information against government records and will note in the disclaimer for confirmed ads that they're placed by a "confirmed organization."

That process won't apply to everyone, as Facebook says it would bar some smaller but legitimate groups from advertising. But a loophole that will allow small grassroots groups and local politicians to run political ads could also continue to allow bad actors to take advantage of the process.

Advertisers who don't have tax ID numbers, government websites or registrations with the Federal Election Commission will still be able to post ads by providing an address, verifiable phone number, business email and website. These advertisers won't get a "confirmed" designation. Previously, only a U.S. address was required. But it's not inconceivable that bad actors will find a way to spoof phone numbers and email addresses.

"We've acknowledged that these tools will not be perfect," Sarah Schiff, a Facebook product manager, said in an email. "But we are committed to making it more difficult for bad actors to misuse and abuse our platform" without penalizing smaller organizations.

Schiff also reiterated the company's calls for regulation of online political advertising. Critics have said that Facebook's attempts at self-regulation are merely a way for the company to pre-empt stricter government crackdowns.

Last month, Facebook was ordered to pay a \$5 billion fine to the Federal Trade Commission over privacy violations. It also faces a series of other investigations into its privacy practices in Europe and across the U.S., in addition to new investigations into its allegedly anticompetitive behavior, such as the social network's habit of buying would-be rivals like Instagram and blatantly duplicating features introduced by competing services.

While the company has beefed up its fight against misinformation and coordinated attacks by malicious nation-states, the same can be said for those trying to game its systems. After revelations that that Russians bankrolled thousands of fake political ads during the 2016 elections, Facebook and other social networks faced intense pressure to ensure that doesn't happen again.

In late 2017, Facebook said it will verify political ad buyers by requiring them to confirm their names and locations, the latter by receiving a postcard with a confirmation code at a U.S. address. Page administrators also had to be verified.

But critics said the rules were easy to evade. Last fall, for instance, Vice News was able to place ads on behalf of the likes of Vice President Mike Pence and the Islamic State, which were all approved by Facebook.

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Aug. 29, the 241st day of 2019. There are 124 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Aug. 29, 1944, 15,000 American troops of the 28th Infantry Division marched down the Champs Elysees (shahms ay-lee-ZAY') in Paris as the French capital continued to celebrate its liberation from the Nazis.

On this date:

In 1814, during the War of 1812, Alexandria, Virginia, formally surrendered to British military forces, which occupied the city until September 3.

In 1862, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing began operations at the United States Treasury.

In 1877, the second president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Brigham Young, died in Salt Lake City, Utah, at age 76.

In 1957, the Senate gave final congressional approval to a Civil Rights Act after South Carolina Sen.

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Strom Thurmond (then a Democrat) ended a filibuster that had lasted 24 hours.

In 1958, pop superstar Michael Jackson was born in Gary, Indiana.

In 1965, Gemini 5, carrying astronauts Gordon Cooper and Charles "Pete" Conrad, splashed down in the Atlantic after 8 days in space.

In 1966, the Beatles concluded their fourth American tour with their last public concert, held at Candlestick Park in San Francisco.

In 1972, swimmer Mark Spitz of the United States won the third of his seven gold medals at the Munich Olympics, finishing first in the 200-meter freestyle.

In 1982, Academy Award-winning actress Ingrid Bergman died in London on her 67th birthday.

In 1996, the Democratic National Convention in Chicago nominated Al Gore for a second term as vice president. Earlier in the day, President Bill Clinton's chief political strategist, Dick Morris, resigned amid a scandal over his relationship with a prostitute.

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast near Buras, Louisiana, bringing floods that devastated New Orleans. More than 1,800 people in the region died.

In 2008, Republican presidential nominee John McCain picked Sarah Palin, a maverick conservative who had been governor of Alaska for less than two years, to be his running mate.

Ten years ago: Funeral services were held in Boston for Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, who was eulogized by President Barack Obama; hours later, Kennedy's remains were buried at Arlington National Cemetery outside Washington. Eight people were found beaten to death at a mobile home in Glynn County, Georgia; family member Guy Heinze (hynz) Jr., who reported finding the bodies, was later convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole. Space shuttle Discovery and seven astronauts blazed into orbit on a flight to the international space station.

Five years ago: A federal judge threw out new Texas abortion restrictions that would have effectively closed more than a dozen clinics statewide in a victory for opponents of tough new anti-abortion laws sweeping across the U.S. (The Supreme Court later struck down parts of the Texas anti-abortion measure as an "undue burden" on access to abortion.)

One year ago: Sen. John McCain was remembered as a "true American hero" at a crowded service at the North Phoenix Baptist Church after a motorcade carried McCain's body from the state Capitol. Kanye West apologized on a Chicago radio station (WGCI) for calling slavery a "choice." The government reported that the economy had grown at a strong 4.2 percent annual rate in the April-June quarter, the best showing in nearly four years. Paul Taylor, a towering figure in American modern dance, died at a New York hospital at the age of 88.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Betty Lynn (TV: "The Andy Griffith Show") is 93. Movie director William Friedkin is 84. Actor Elliott Gould is 81. Movie director Joel Schumacher is 80. Actress Deborah Van Valkenburgh is 67. Former Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew is 64. Dancer-choreographer Mark Morris is 63. Country musician Dan Truman (Diamond Rio) is 63. Actress Rebecca DeMornay is 60. Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch (GOR'-suhch) is 52. Singer Me'Shell NdegeOcello (n-DAY'-gay-OH'-chehl-oh) is 51. Rhythm-and-blues singer Carl Martin (Shai) is 49. Actress Carla Gugino is 48. Rock musician Kyle Cook (Matchbox Twenty) is 44. Actor John Hensley is 42. Actress Kate Simses is 40. Rock musician David Desrosiers (Simple Plan) is 39. Rapper A+ is 37. Actress Jennifer Landon is 36. Actor Jeffrey Licon is 34. Actress-singer Lea Michele is 33. Actress Charlotte Ritchie is 30. Actress Nicole Gale Anderson is 29. MLB pitcher Noah Syndergaard (SIHN'-dur-gahrd) is 27. Rock singer Liam Payne (One Direction) is 26.

Thought for Today: "Be yourself. The world worships the original." — Ingrid Bergman (1915-1982).

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