

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 1 of 54

[2- Tigers beat Tiospa Zina, reclaim top spot in region](#)

[3- VB Stat Sheet](#)

[4- Rounds Report: South Dakotans Encouraged to Share Input on EPA's Renewable Volume Obligation Proposed Rule](#)

[4- Bowling Scores](#)

[5- Thune, Schatz Introduce Legislation to Improve Weather Forecasting Models](#)

[6- Noem Administration Receives Nearly \\$2 Million in Grants for School Security](#)

[7- Week 7 Coaches Poll Results](#)

[8- Weather Pages](#)

[11- Daily Devotional](#)

[12- 2019 Groton Events](#)

[13- News from the Associated Press](#)



Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

Wednesday, October 16, 2019

LifeTouch Pictures Groton Area Elementary School
12:30pm- 2:50pm: MathCounts at Warner High School

Thursday, October 17, 2019

LifeTouch Pictures Groton Area High School
1:30am- 8:30pm: Parent/Teacher Conferences
GHS Gymnasium, Groton Area Elementary School
3:30pm: Cross Country: Varsity Regions @ Webster Golf Course
6:00pm Financial Aid Night at Groton Area High School Computer Lab

Friday, October 18, 2019

Faculty Inservice Groton Area Elementary School, Groton Area High School
No School Groton Area Elementary School, Groton Area High School
7:00pm: Football: Boys Varsity Game @ Moberidge-Pollock High School

Saturday, October 19, 2019

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.: Groton Pumpkin Fest
Oral Interp at Florence High School
Robotics at GHS Gymnasium

Volleyball: Girls Varsity Tournament at Milbank High School

8 a.m.: Groton Area vs. Clark/Willow Lake at Milbank High School Armory (west court)

11 a.m.: Groton Area vs. Aberdeen Christian at Milbank High School Armory (west court)

Next match at 1:30 p.m. with the third place match at 3:30 p.m. and the championship match at 4:30 p.m.

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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Tigers beat Tiospa Zina, reclaim top spot in region

Groton Area's volleyball team traveled to Agency Village Tuesday night and came home with a 3-0 win over Tiospa Zina. The match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Dakota Risk Management, Groton American Legion Post #39, Milbrandt Enterprises Inc., C & B Operations and Weber Landscaping.

Groton Area has taken over the top spot of the region after falling to second for about a week. The Tigers, now 18-4, are first with Roncalli second at 17-6.

There was a nice chat with Coach Chelsea Hanson which you can listen to by [clicking here](#). You can watch the match by [clicking here](#).

Groton Area jumped out to a 3-0 lead and scored the last five points of the game to win, 25-10. Nicole Marzahn had the game winning ace serve. Payton Colestock led the way in digs with six in the first game while Indigo Rogers led in kills with four. Kaylin Kucker and Nicole Marzahn each had two ace serves.

Groton Area scored the last 10 points of the second game, taking a two-point lead at 15-13 and finishing with a 25-13 win. Eliza Wanner had the game winning kill. She led the attacks in that game with five kills while Todyn Glover had five digs and Indigo Rogers had three ace services. The third game was challenging for the Tigers. It was tied at 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 with five lead changes sprinkled in that part of the game. Then Tiospa Zina had a 14-12 lead when the game was stopped when the officials realized that the Wambdi had the wrong person serving. When all was said and done, the Wambdi lost their points for that server and Groton Area picked up those points and the Tigers then held a 14-12 lead. The game was tied at 17, 18, 20, 21 and 22 before the Tigers finished it off with a 25-22 win as Nicole Marzahn had the game winning kill. This game was tied more times than any other game this season. Marzahn led the way with six kills in the third game and Wanner had two ace serves.

For the match, Nicole Marzahn led the Tigers in the match with 11 kills, 12 digs, three ace serves and scored 14 points. Eliza Wanner had nine kills, three ace serves, 10 digs and scored 12 points. Indigo Rogers had five kills, three ace serves, 15 digs and scored eight points. Stella Meier had two kills, one dig, one block and scored three points. Madeline Flihs had two kills, seven digs and scored two points. Todyn Glover had two ace serves, 16 digs, one assist and scored two points. Payton Colestock had 15 digs and one assist. Kaylin Kucker had 27 assists, two ace serves, one dig and scored two points.

Groton Area won the junior varsity match, 25-16 and 25-14, and the Tigers also won the C match, 25-15 and 15-11.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 3 of 54

NCAA Box Score - Individuals

VB TZ Stat Sheet

#	Player	SP	Attack					Set		Serve		
			K	K/Set	E	TA	Eff	A	A/Set	SA	SA/S	SE
2	Allyssa Locke	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	-	0	0.00	0
3	Kenzie McInerney	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	-	0	0.00	0
4	Nicole Marzahn	3	11	3.67	1	27	0.37	0	0.00	3	1.00	1
5	Tadyn Glover	3	0	0.00	1	1	-1.00	1	0.33	2	0.67	0
6	Stella Meier	3	2	0.67	1	6	0.17	0	0.00	0	0.00	0
7	Indigo Rogers	3	5	1.67	6	22	-0.05	0	0.00	3	1.00	1
8	Megan Fliehs	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	-	0	0.00	0
9	Payton Colestock	3	0	0.00	2	3	-0.67	1	0.33	0	0.00	1
10	Madeline Fliehs	3	2	0.67	3	16	-0.06	0	0.00	0	0.00	0
11	Eliza Wanner	3	9	3.00	6	41	0.07	0	0.00	3	1.00	1
12	Kaylin Kucker	3	0	0.00	2	3	-0.67	27	9.00	2	0.67	1
13	Grace Wambach	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	-	0	0.00	0
14	Brooklyn Gilbert	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	-	0	0.00	0
Tigers		3	29	9.67	22	119	0.06	29	9.67	13	4.33	5
Opponents		3	15	5.00	27	132	-0.09	-	-	3	1.00	5

#	Player	SP	Dig			Block			Scoring		
			RE	Dig	Dig/S	Blk	Blk/S	BE	BHE	Pts	Pts/S
2	Allyssa Locke	0	0	0	-	0	-	0	0	0	-
3	Kenzie McInerney	0	0	0	-	0	-	0	0	0	-
4	Nicole Marzahn	3	0	12	4.00	0	0.00	0	0	14	4.67
5	Tadyn Glover	3	0	16	5.33	0	0.00	0	0	2	0.67
6	Stella Meier	3	1	1	0.33	1	0.33	1	0	3	1.00
7	Indigo Rogers	3	0	15	5.00	0	0.00	0	0	8	2.67
8	Megan Fliehs	0	0	0	-	0	-	0	0	0	-
9	Payton Colestock	3	1	15	5.00	0	0.00	0	0	0	0.00
10	Madeline Fliehs	3	0	7	2.33	0	0.00	0	0	2	0.67
11	Eliza Wanner	3	0	10	3.33	0	0.00	0	0	12	4.00
12	Kaylin Kucker	3	1	14	4.67	0	0.00	0	0	2	0.67
13	Grace Wambach	0	0	0	-	0	-	0	0	0	-
14	Brooklyn Gilbert	0	0	0	-	0	-	0	0	0	-
Tigers		3	3	90	30.00	1	0.33	1	0	43	14.33

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 4 of 54

Rounds Report: South Dakotans Encouraged to Share Input on EPA's Renewable Volume Obligation Proposed Rule

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that it is now seeking public comment on expanding biofuel requirements beginning in 2020 to make sure that 15 billion gallons of ethanol are blended into the nation's fuel supply. I encourage South Dakotans to review the proposed rule and share their input during the public comment period.

Last month, I met with President Trump at the White House to discuss the importance of corn and corn ethanol to South Dakota's economy. Over the past several years, farmers and ethanol producers have suffered due to the EPA's issuance of Small Refinery Waivers. At our meeting, I encouraged the administration to restore the integrity of the Renewable Fuel Standard. Today's proposed rulemaking is a first step toward making sure the federal government lives up to its obligations to blend 15 billion gallons of ethanol into the total fuel supply. I will be closely reviewing the rule to make certain the deal lives up to the president's promises to America's farmers and ethanol producers.

The proposed rule will be available to the public at <http://www.regulations.gov>, Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2019-0136.

Groton Coffee Cup League

Oct. 15 Team Standings: Biker Chix 16, James Valley 15, Ten Pins 9, Kens 8.

High Games: Joyce Walter 188, Sam Bahr 170, Vickie Kramp 161.

High Series: Joyce Walter 468, Vickie Kramp 452, Sam Bahr 402.

Conde National League

Oct. 14 Team Standings: Mets 17, Pirates 14½, Cubs 12, Braves 11½, Tigers 10, Giants 7.

Men's High Games: Lance Frohling 198, 195, 178; Russ Bethke 179, 176, 172; Larry Frohling 179, 172; Ryan Bethke 160.

Men's High Series: Lance Frohling 571, Russ Bethke 527, Larry Frohling 491.

Women's High Games: Joyce Walter 177, Vickie Kramp 175, Michelle Johnson 157.

Women's High Series: Joyce Walter 477, Vickie Kramp 461, Michelle Johnson 452.

Thune, Schatz Introduce Legislation to Improve Weather Forecasting Models

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sens. John Thune (R-S.D.) and Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii), members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, today introduced the Learning Excellence and Good Examples from New Developers (LEGEND) Act, legislation that would require the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to make certain operational models publicly available and utilize any innovations to improve the models that are developed as a result of public collaboration.

“The livelihoods of farmers and ranchers in my state often depend on forecasting accuracy, so it’s important that we find innovative ways to improve government forecasting capabilities,” said Thune. “This legislation, which builds off my work to improve weather forecasting throughout my time serving on the Commerce Committee, makes NOAA’s current and future models more accessible to outside experts—including scientists and engineers in academia— who can provide new insights to improve existing forecasting models.”

“In a place like Hawai’i, NOAA models provide vital warning for hurricanes, king tides, and tsunami,” said Schatz. “Making the code for these models open source will make it easier for experts to partner with NOAA to improve forecasts and keep our communities safe.”

On January 7, 2019, the National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act of 2018 included a requirement for the U.S. Weather Research Program to establish the Earth Prediction Innovation Center (EPIC), which was intended to advance weather modeling and improve the translation of forecasting research into operational models by leveraging private sector innovations. When fully established, EPIC would provide a platform for stakeholder collaboration to improve operational models and greatly advance NOAA’s forecasting skill.

The LEGEND Act would clarify and strengthen the efforts of EPIC through the following provisions:

- Make Certain Operational Models Publicly Available

Stakeholders currently do not have access to the operational models developed by NOAA. The bill would require the agency to make its operational models open source by publically posting the source code, including information about the models and the data they use. This includes the data used for current operational forecasts and a description of intended model outputs.

- Review Models and Leverage Innovations

EPIC is intended to promote collaboration with the private sector. LEGEND strengthens this by mandating periodic reviews and adoption of innovations and improvements to the operational models made by parties outside NOAA.

- Report on Implementation

This bill also requires NOAA, within one year, to submit a report on the implementation of LEGEND’s mandates.

Noem Administration Receives Nearly \$2 Million in Grants for School Security

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Kristi Noem today announced that South Dakota received three grants totaling almost \$2 million to help South Dakota school districts prevent and address threats of violence.

The South Dakota Department of Public Safety (DPS) received the grants from the Bureau of Justice Assistance's STOP School Violence Program. The program is part of the U.S. Department of Justice.

"Our number one priority is the safety of the next generation," said Noem. "These grants will be incredibly beneficial in our schools and better equip us to provide resources and training in the areas of violence prevention and threat recognition. While we hope our schools never experience violence, it is important we equip them with the resources they need to enhance safety and prepare teachers and students to recognize potential threats."

There are three different grants:

\$998,000 – This grant will allow the state to establish a School Safety Resource Center. The center can help distribute best practices for school safety, requests for training for threat recognition, training in establishment of threat adjudication teams, and requests for physical security assessments for K-12 school building.

\$500,000 – This grant will focus on establishing prevention and mental health training programs in conjunction with mental health professionals.

\$500,000 – This grant will focus on technology and threat assessment solutions for safe schools programs.

DPS Cabinet Secretary Craig Price said the programs will be administered by the state Office of Homeland Security and new staff members will be hired to oversee the programs. He said implementation of the grants will start soon.

"Our goal is to provide the tools for K-12 schools to implement preventive measures in their districts," said Price. "These grants will help schools not only in the areas of threat recognition, but also working with schools to implement a wholesale approach to school safety."

The grant money cannot be used to purchase weapons, equipment, or fund salaries for School Resource Officers.

South Dakota agencies that supported DPS with submitting the state's grant proposal included the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency, SD Attorney General's Office's Division of Criminal Investigation; SD Department of Social Services' Division of Behavioral Health, SD Department of Education, Associated School Boards of South Dakota, School Administrators of South Dakota, SD Parent Teacher's Association, SD Association of School Resource Officers, SD Sheriff's Association, SD Police Chiefs Association and Vermillion Police Department.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 7 of 54

Week 7 Coaches Poll Results

11AAA

1. SF Roosevelt 6-1 (11) 73
2. SF Lincoln 6-1 (5) 71
3. Brandon Valley 5-2 48
4. O'Gorman (1) 5-2 32
5. Harrisburg 5-2 31

11AA

1. Pierre (17) 7-0 85
 2. Brookings 6-1 68
 3. Huron 4-3 42
 4. Mitchell 4-3 38
 5. Sturgis 2-5 16
- Others: Yankton 3

11A

1. Tea Area (9) 6-1 75
 2. Dell Rapids (6) 7-0 73
 3. Madison (1) 4-3 46
 4. Canton (1) 5-2 36
 5. Dakota Valley 4-3 13
- Others: Lennox 6, West Central 4

11B

1. Bridgewater-Emery/Ethan (10) 7-0 78
 2. Winner (7) 8-0 74
 3. Webster Area 7-0 37
 4. McCook Central/Montrose 6-1 17
 4. St. Thomas More 6-1 17
- Others: Mt Vernon/Plankinton 16, Mobridge-Pollock 6, Sioux Valley 3, Sisseton 3

9AA

1. Viborg-Hurley (13) 7-0 69
 2. Bon Homme (1) 7-1 54
 3. Deuel 6-1 31
 4. Hamlin 6-2 21
 5. Baltic 5-2 16
- Others: Lemmon-McIntosh 8, Arlington/Lake Preston 7, Parker 4

9A

1. Canistota-Freeman (12) 7-0 68
 2. Sully Buttes (2) 7-0 55
 3. Britton-Heccla 6-0 42
 4. Gregory 6-1 19
 5. Howard 6-1 18
- Others: Warner 3

9B

1. Colman-Egan (11) 7-0 63
 2. Wolsey-Wessington (3) 5-2 51
 3. Dell Rapids St. Mary 6-1 46
 4. Harding County 6-1 28
 5. Langford Area 5-2 8
- Others: Herreid/Selby Area 7, Faulkton Area 6, Scotland 3

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 8 of 54

Today



Mostly Cloudy

High: 47 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 33 °F

Thursday



Mostly Sunny

High: 62 °F

Thursday
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 46 °F

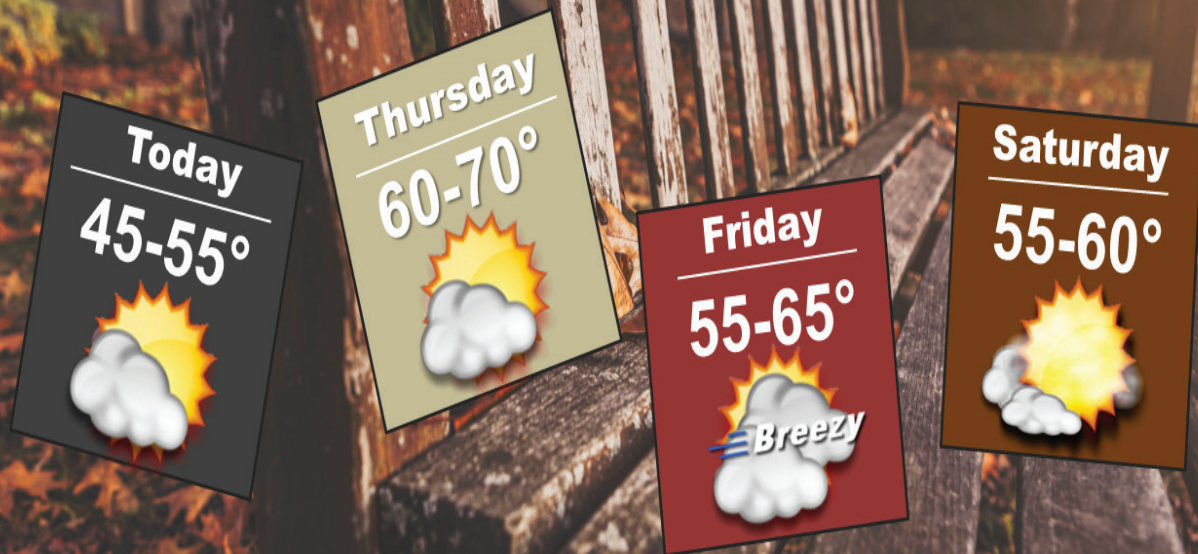
Friday



Partly Sunny

High: 61 °F

Seasonable Temps, Dry



 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 10/16/2019 5:05 AM Central

Published on: 10/16/2019 at 1:08AM

Temperatures will continue to warm through Thursday, and then stay near where they should be for mid-October through at least the first half of the weekend. Next good chance for precipitation arrives Sunday.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 9 of 54

Today in Weather History

October 16, 1980: A squall line packing damaging winds developed across portions of central South Dakota and raced into Minnesota during the afternoon and evening. The line of thunderstorms developed around 2 pm CDT and moved east and northeast at over 50 miles an hour. A large portion of southeast South Dakota was belted with winds of 50 to 70 miles an hour. Yankton reported winds of 60 to 70 mph while Sioux Falls was hit with a 62 mile an hour gust. Considerable damage was done in southeast South Dakota to trees, farm structures, and small buildings. Damage estimates were 100 to 200 thousand dollars. By late afternoon the thunderstorms were roaring through southwest Minnesota. Numerous outbuildings and many trees were downed or damaged. In Redwood County, two combines and a 24-foot travel trailer were tipped over and damaged.

1913 - The temperature in Downtown San Francisco soared to 101 degrees to equal their record for October. (The Weather Channel)

1937 - An unlikely winter-like storm produced as much as ten inches of snow in Minnesota and Iowa.

1944: The 1944 Cuba – Florida hurricane, also known as the Pinar del Rio Hurricane, struck western Cuba on this day as a Category 4. This storm killed an estimated 300 people in Cuba and nine in Florida. This hurricane is currently the 7th costliest U.S. Atlantic hurricane, with an estimated \$46.9 billion (2015 USD) in damages.

1987 - Ten cities in the southeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. The low of 34 degrees at Augusta GA marked their third straight morning of record cold. A cold front brought showers and thunderstorms to parts of the central U.S. Lightning struck a bull and six cows under a tree near Battiest OK. (The National Weather Summary)

1988: An F2 tornado carved a 6 mile long, east-northeast path through a mostly rural area of north-central Indiana. The extremely slow-moving tornado touched down 1.5 miles north of Nappanee, just 300 yards north of a high school, and shortly after that moved through a subdivision where 11 homes sustained damage.

1988 - Late afternoon thunderstorms produced severe weather in southwestern Lower Michigan and northern Indiana. One thunderstorm spawned a tornado north of Nappanee IN which caused half a million dollars damage. Six cities in California reported record high temperatures for the date. The afternoon high of 100 degrees at Red Bluff CA was the latest such reading of record for so late in the autumn season. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Heavy snow blanketed the foothills of Colorado. Up to three inches was reported around Denver. Echo Lake was buried under nineteen inches of snow. Temperatures again warmed into the 80s and lower 90s in the eastern and south central U.S. Thirteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Atlantic City NJ with a reading of 84 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1999: Hurricane Irene moved across the Florida Keys producing heavy rainfall, strong winds, and high waves. A gust 102 mph was reported in Big Pine Key.

2007: A blinding sandstorm in the high desert north of Los Angeles wreaks havoc with local traffic causing a highway pileup involving dozens of vehicles. Two people die, and 16 are injured as a result of the storm, which reportedly raised dust to 1000 foot high.

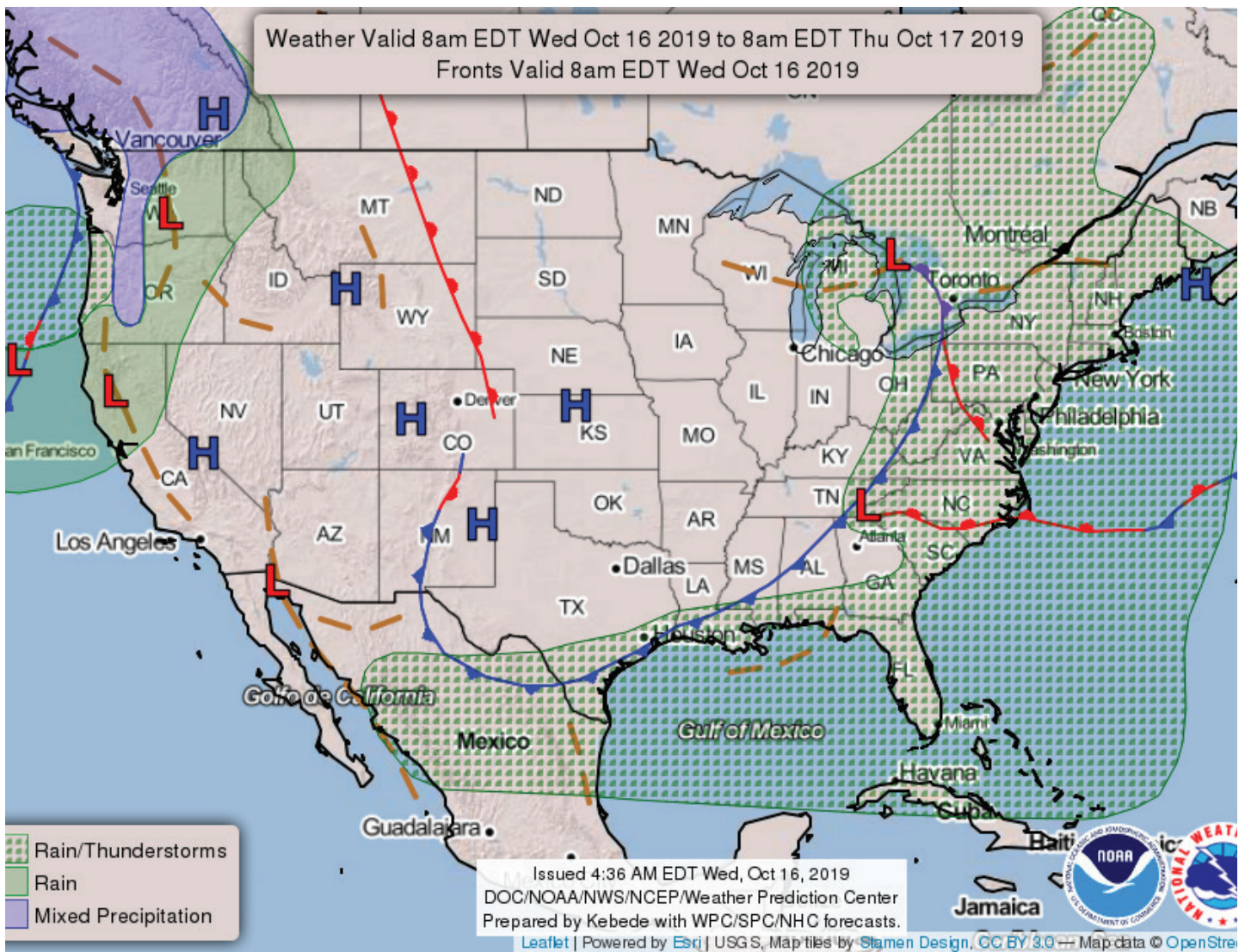
Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 10 of 54

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 42 °F at 4:58 PM
Low Temp: 32 °F at 3:12 AM
Wind: 25 mph at 11:43 AM
Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 90° in 1991
Record Low: 19° in 1976
Average High: 58°F
Average Low: 33°F
Average Precip in Oct.: 1.09
Precip to date in Oct.: 1.27
Average Precip to date: 19.57
Precip Year to Date: 26.29
Sunset Tonight: 6:49 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:51 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 11 of 54



LITTLE THINGS

An aircraft mechanic was completing his final inspection before a plane's departure. Having made major repairs, he was satisfied that everything was ready. Then he noticed a small drip of water coming from the lavatory. It did not seem serious since it was so small, so he cleared the plane for take-off.

As the plane climbed to its flying altitude, the drip became a little larger. The water began to freeze, and a large piece of ice was formed. Finally, it broke loose, hit an engine and destroyed it. The plane was then forced to make an emergency landing. Although no one was injured, it caused serious and unnecessary damage, and there was a great loss of time. The repair to the plane cost much more than it would have cost if it had been taken care of when it was first noticed.

So it is with sin. It usually begins with a small, stray thought or an unhealthy desire. We allow a vision or idea to grow, expand and develop, and it eventually overwhelms us, and the temptation leads to sin.

God's Word contains an important promise: "With every temptation, He will provide a way out." How marvelous are His power and protection! No matter how difficult the choice may be – if we ask and look for and search thoroughly, we will find His "escape route."

When tempted, we must turn to Him and claim victory in His Name.

Prayer: Father, we cannot live without being tempted, but we can avoid sinning if we trust, obey, and rely on You and in Your Word. Give us victory over sin! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: James 1:13-15 And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 12 of 54

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)

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 13 of 54

News from the Associated Press

Tuesday's Scores By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Aberdeen Central def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-12, 20-25, 26-24, 25-20
Aberdeen Christian def. Britton-Hecla, 25-11, 25-12, 25-14
Aberdeen Roncalli def. Mobridge-Pollock, 25-9, 25-14, 25-20
Alcester-Hudson def. Irene-Wakonda, 17-25, 25-21, 27-25, 20-25, 15-13
Avon def. Tripp-Delmont/Armour, 25-27, 25-19, 25-9, 25-23
Belle Fourche def. Spearfish, 18-25, 26-24, 20-25, 25-22, 15-11
Beresford def. Tea Area, 25-13, 25-22, 20-25, 25-17
Bison def. McIntosh, 25-22, 25-6, 25-15
Brandon Valley def. Brookings, 19-25, 26-24, 25-15, 25-9
Bridgewater-Emery def. Colman-Egan, 25-22, 26-24, 25-23
Burke def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-9, 18-25, 26-24, 22-25, 15-7
Castlewood def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 18-25, 25-17, 25-18, 25-27, 15-10
Chester def. West Central, 25-16, 25-17, 25-9
Clark/Willow Lake def. Flandreau, 25-21, 20-25, 26-24, 25-20
Corsica/Stickney def. Mitchell Christian, 27-25, 25-18, 25-20
Dakota Valley def. Lennox, 25-8, 25-21, 25-21
Dell Rapids St. Mary def. Centerville, 25-9, 25-11, 25-9
Deubrook def. Dell Rapids, 21-25, 25-19, 25-7, 25-19
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Deuel, 25-19, 25-18, 25-16
Estelline/Hendricks def. Florence/Henry, 25-10, 25-20, 24-26, 25-9
Ethan def. Howard, 25-13, 25-14, 25-18
Faith def. Dupree, 25-16, 25-9, 25-9
Faulkton def. Herreid/Selby Area, 25-19, 25-16, 25-10
Freeman def. Oldham-Ramona/Rutland, 25-21, 25-14, 25-16
Gayville-Volin def. Canton, 25-16, 25-21, 25-18
Gregory def. Colome, 25-23, 25-19, 25-20
Groton Area def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 25-10, 25-13, 25-22
Hamlin def. DeSmet, 25-5, 25-20, 25-21
Hanson def. Menno, 25-16, 25-11, 25-21
Huron def. Harrisburg, 25-13, 25-22, 18-25, 25-20
James Valley Christian def. Sanborn Central/Woonsocket, 25-19, 24-26, 24-26, 25-12, 16-14
Lemmon def. Grant County, N.D., 25-14, 26-28, 25-12, 25-22
Madison def. Milbank Area, 25-17, 25-19, 25-20
McCook Central/Montrose def. Garretson, 25-18, 18-25, 25-22, 25-15
Miller def. Platte-Geddes, 25-11, 25-15, 25-14
New Underwood def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-18, 25-17, 25-14
Parker def. Canistota, 25-16, 25-10, 23-25, 25-13
Ponca, Neb. def. Vermillion, 25-7, 25-17, 23-25, 25-21
Potter County def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, 25-19, 25-17, 27-25
Rapid City Central def. Sturgis Brown, 21-25, 25-15, 25-13, 25-8
Rapid City Stevens def. Douglas, 25-16, 25-16, 26-24
Scotland def. Bon Homme, 25-20, 21-25, 25-18, 32-30
Sioux Falls Christian def. Tri-Valley, 25-18, 25-12, 25-13

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 14 of 54

Sioux Valley def. Arlington, 25-22, 25-20, 25-21
Valentine, Neb. def. Todd County, 25-6, 25-12, 25-8
Wagner def. Parkston, 25-10, 25-21, 25-13
Warner def. Redfield, 22-25, 25-9, 25-10, 25-17
Watertown def. Pierre, 25-19, 25-13, 25-15
Waubay/Summit def. Wilmot, 25-11, 25-10, 25-7
Webster def. Langford, 21-25, 25-14, 25-14, 25-20
Wessington Springs def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-18, 21-25, 25-10, 25-23
Winner def. Chamberlain, 25-20, 25-8, 25-19
Wolsey-Wessington def. Highmore-Harrold, 24-26, 25-18, 25-19, 25-18
Yankton def. Mitchell, 25-22, 25-16, 25-23

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

04-12-14-35-70, Mega Ball: 2, Megaplier: 2

(four, twelve, fourteen, thirty-five, seventy; Mega Ball: two; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$65 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$100 million

Woman dies in 2-vehicle accident in NE South Dakota

CLARK, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a 29-year-old woman from Clark has died in a two-vehicle crash in northeastern South Dakota.

The Clark County sheriff identifies the victim as Brittany Monson.

The crash happened Tuesday morning on U.S. Highway 212 east of Clark. Monson was driving an SUV that collided head-on with a pickup.

KXLG Radio reports the other driver was taken to a Watertown hospital with undisclosed injuries.

Authorities are investigating.

Information from: KXLG-FM, <http://www.mykxlg.com>

South Dakota Prep Polls

By The Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Prep Media football polls for the week of Oct. 14 are listed below, ranking the top-five teams in each class. First-place votes received are indicated in parentheses.

Class 11AAA

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs	
1. Sioux Falls Roosevelt	(19)	6-1	99	1	
2. Sioux Falls Lincoln	(1)	6-1	81	2	
3. Brandon Valley -	5-2	52	4		
4. Harrisburg -	5-2	40	3		
5. Sioux Falls O'Gorman -	5-2	28	5		

Others receiving votes: None.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 15 of 54

Class 11AA

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Pierre (20)	7-0	100	1	
2. Brookings	-	6-1	80	2
3. Mitchell -	4-3	59	3	
4. Huron -	4-3	41	4	
5. Sturgis -	2-5	16	5	

Others receiving votes: Yankton 4.

Class 11A

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Tea Area (19)	6-1	99	1	
2. Dell Rapids (1)	7-0	81	2	
3. Madison -	4-3	55	4	
4. Canton -	5-2	44	5	
5. Dakota Valley -	4-3	15	3	

Others receiving votes: Lennox 4, Tri-Valley 2.

Class 11B

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Bridgewater-Emery-Ethan	(19)	7-0	99	1
2. Winner (1)	8-0	81	2	
3. Webster Area -	7-0	57	3	
4. St. Thomas More	-	6-1	37	4
5. Mount Vernon-Plankinton	-	5-2	23	5

Others receiving votes: McCook Central-Montrose 3.

Class 9AA

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Viborg-Hurley (22)	7-0	98	1	
2. Bon Homme (2)	7-1	75	2	
3. Deuel -	6-1	66	4	
4. Hamlin -	6-2	37	5	
5. Baltic -	5-2	18	RV	

Others receiving votes: Parker 5, Arlington-Lake Preston 1.

Class 9A

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Canistota-Freeman (10)	7-0	90	2	
2. Sully Buttes (10)	7-0	89	1	
3. Britton-Hecla -	6-0	59	3	
4. Howard -	6-1	36	4	
5. Gregory -	6-1	24	5	

Others receiving votes: Warner 2.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 16 of 54

Class 9B

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Colman-Egan	(21)	7-0	100	1
2. Dell Rapids St. Mary	(2)	6-1	73	2
3. Wolsey-Wessington	-	5-2	63	3
4. Harding County -	6-1	44	4	
5. Langford Area -	6-1	8	NR	

Others receiving votes: : Herreid-Selby Area 7, Scotland 5.

Sheriff: Still unknown how Wyoming teen knew her killer

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Detectives are still trying to find out how a Wyoming girl met the 17-year-old charged with killing her in his basement in South Dakota, the sheriff overseeing the investigation said Tuesday.

Meade County Sheriff Ron Merwin said Shayna Ritthaler, 16, was shot once in the head by the defendant, who is charged as an adult with second-degree murder. The Associated Press isn't naming the defendant because his lawyer is trying to get the case moved to juvenile court.

The defendant isn't cooperating with investigators, but they believe he drove to Ritthaler's hometown of Moorcroft, Wyoming, to pick her up, Merwin said. Moorcroft is about 70 miles (113 kilometers) west of Sturgis, which is near the boy's house.

The victim's and defendant's cellphones are being examined for possible clues, the sheriff said.

Ritthaler's body was found Oct. 7 in the basement of the defendant's home, where he lived with his mother, authorities said.

Michele Bordewyk, the acting Meade County state's attorney, said in court last week that the defendant shot the victim during an argument.

Defense attorney Steven Titus, of Gillette, Wyoming, said last week that he would ask for the case to be returned to juvenile court and that his client will plead not guilty at his next court appearance, which is scheduled for Oct. 17.

The body was found when authorities executed a search warrant at the request of the Lawrence County Sheriff's Office, which was working with investigators in Wyoming, the sheriff's office said.

Pennington County hit with IRS penalties

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Internal Revenue Service has hit Pennington County with more than \$87,000 in penalties for mishandling payroll taxes.

The Rapid City Journal says county auditor Cindy Mohler has asked the Pennington County Commission to authorize payment of the penalties. The commission is scheduled to consider the request Tuesday.

The IRS imposed the penalties this month after examining the county's employment tax records from 2016 to 2018. Officials say the penalties are the result of a longstanding payroll-tax practice.

Mohler says county employees have the option of being paid twice a month, instead of monthly. The IRS says the county wrongly did not withhold payroll taxes from the mid-month checks. Instead, the county waited until the end of each month to withhold payroll taxes from employees' total monthly pay.

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

Airman stationed at Ellsworth Air Force Base found dead

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Authorities are investigating the death of an airman stationed at the Ellsworth Air Force Base.

Col. David Doss says the active-duty military member was assigned to the 28th Bomb Wing stationed at the base. The airman was found dead on Monday at an off-base residence.

The airman's name has not been released.

Toxic PCBs linger in schools; EPA, lawmakers fail to act

By TAMMY WEBBER and MARTHA IRVINE Associated Press

MONROE, Wash. (AP) — At first, teachers at Sky Valley Education Center simply evacuated students and used fans to clear the air when the fluorescent lights caught fire or smoked with noxious fumes. When black oil dripped onto desks and floors, they caught leaks with a bucket and duct-taped oil-stained carpets.

Then came the tests that confirmed their suspicions about the light ballasts.

"Sure enough ... it was PCB oil," said Cynthia Yost, who was among teachers who sent pieces of carpet and classroom air filters to a lab. Tests found elevated levels of the toxic chemicals, used as coolant in the decades-old ballasts that regulated electrical current to the lamps.

Millions of fluorescent light ballasts containing PCBs probably remain in schools and day care centers across the U.S. four decades after the chemicals were banned over concerns that they could cause cancer and other illnesses. Many older buildings also have caulk, ceiling tiles, floor adhesives and paint made with PCBs, which sometimes have been found at levels far higher than allowed by law.

Yet the Environmental Protection Agency has not attempted to determine the scope of PCB contamination or assess potential health risks, in large part because of lack of funding, political pressure and pushback from industry and education groups, according to dozens of interviews and thousands of pages of documents examined by The Associated Press.

Members of Congress who promised three years ago to find money to help address PCBs and other environmental problems in the nation's schools never introduced legislation.

And an EPA rule that would have required schools and day cares to remove PCB-containing ballasts moved slowly under the Obama administration, then was quashed by President Donald Trump within days of his inauguration.

That was the final straw for Tom Simons, a former EPA regulator who worked for years on the rule and said getting rid of ballasts was the least the EPA could do to protect children.

"We thought it was a no-brainer: There are millions out there. These things are smoking and dripping, so let's put this through," said Simons, who retired shortly after Trump took office.

For decades, the presence of PCBs in schools flew under the radar.

States, cities and environmental agencies focused on removing them from lakes, rivers and toxic waste sites because most exposure to PCBs is believed to come from people's diet, including fish from contaminated waterways, and because PCBs do not break down easily. Studies have linked them to increased long-term risk of cancer, immune and reproductive system impairment and learning problems.

PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, are mixtures of compounds manufactured by Monsanto Co. and widely used as coolants and lubricants in electrical equipment until they were banned in 1979.

By then they were in transformers, air conditioners, adhesives, carbonless copy paper and billions of fluorescent light ballasts in schools, hospitals, homes, offices and commercial and industrial buildings. They also were ubiquitous in the environment and building up in human bodies.

Nobody worried about schools.

Then a 2004 study by Harvard health professor Robert Herrick identified the widespread use of PCBs as a plasticizer in caulk in schools built before 1980, estimating that as many as 14 million students and 26,000 schools could be affected. The EPA had not been aware of its use in caulk before then, Simons said.

The EPA later found that the chemicals can move from building materials into the air and dust, where they can be inhaled or ingested. They also can be absorbed by walls and other surfaces as an ongoing source of exposure.

Regulators also discovered that old fluorescent light ballasts remained a potentially widespread source of PCB contamination. The EPA had allowed the ballasts to remain in use because chemicals were in enclosed capacitors that experts thought would last only about 12 years. But it turns out they can last a half

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 18 of 54

century or longer, said Simons.

The older they are, the more likely ballasts will leak, catch fire or smoke. And that has happened repeatedly in schools, office buildings, restaurants and factories in recent years, according to reports reviewed by the AP.

But the EPA has mostly voluntary guidelines, including recommended indoor air limits for PCBs that it says should protect children from health problems.

The agency does not require — or encourage — schools to test for PCBs, so few do. If they are found in materials such as caulk, schools could be forced to undertake expensive cleanups when many are struggling to keep basic infrastructure intact and meet educational needs. Drawing attention to the issue also risks alarming parents.

PCBs are illegal in building materials in concentrations exceeding 50 parts per million — a threshold set by the EPA decades ago based on how much contaminated material could affordably be removed rather than health risks.

Rather than fostering “a very confusing and fearful situation,” the EPA should recommend that schools test classroom air for PCBs, then identify and address specific sources if the results are elevated, said Keri Hornbuckle, a civil and environmental engineering professor at the University of Iowa and one of the nation’s top researchers of PCBs in schools.

“There is a good reason PCBs were banned, so ... let’s remove the worst cases and where (kids) are most vulnerable and have the highest exposure,” she said. “But you have to have the data.”

Whether PCBs are addressed often is determined by ZIP code.

In California’s wealthy Santa Monica-Malibu School District, parents, including model Cindy Crawford, sued to force the district to address PCBs after tests of caulk found levels up to 11,000 times the 50 ppm threshold. The district ultimately agreed to get rid of PCBs. It has torn down a middle school and continues to remove them from other buildings.

In Hartford, Connecticut, the ending was far different. John C. Clark Elementary and Middle School, in a largely low-income African American neighborhood, was permanently closed in 2015 after PCBs were found and the city could not afford to remove them. The city has sued Monsanto and a company that manufactured caulk to recover the costs.

“It was the crown jewel of the neighborhood,” Steven Harris, a former city council member and grandfather, said as he walked the deserted school grounds. “Our school board is doing the best they can. The reality is we don’t have a lot of money. And it’s going to take money to fix this problem.”

Monsanto, now owned by Bayer Crop Sciences, has denied responsibility in lawsuits involving several school districts, saying it did not manufacture the building materials or components that contained PCBs.

Concerns over schools like Hartford’s are one of the issues that ultimately kept the EPA from taking stronger steps to address PCBs.

The agency, which originally recommended that schools test for the chemicals, was warned by the Association of California School Administrators that forcing schools to remove PCBs could create “a civil rights issue” if low-income minority schools could not afford it. What’s more, many of those schools have other environmental problems — including lead, asbestos and mold — that could be higher priorities.

So instead, the EPA developed guidance that promotes vigilant cleaning and better ventilation and suggests schools could cover materials suspected of containing PCBs until the buildings are renovated or razed.

But the recommendations were released quietly on the agency website to avoid publicity that might frighten the public, according to former EPA officials who said the agency was hamstrung by a problem that could cost billions of dollars. There are no rules requiring school officials to tell parents if they find or suspect their buildings have PCBs.

Judith Enck, administrator of the EPA’s Region 2 under Obama, said the EPA bowed to intense political pressure.

“The debate was never based on science and health. It was ‘We don’t want the grief from schools, and

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 19 of 54

it's a lot of work and we have other priorities," said Enck, who led an effort to get ballasts out of New York City schools. "I disagreed."

A bill introduced in 2010 by three New York congressmen aimed at funding school PCB cleanups was withdrawn after New York City officials agreed to replace aging ballasts. Sen. Ed Markey of Massachusetts released a report outlining PCB risks in October 2016 — a month before Trump's election — and said he would introduce legislation to help with PCB cleanup and other school environmental problems, but never did. His office did not respond to multiple AP interview requests.

It was clear that PCBs were so widespread that cleanup would overwhelm schools without a huge financial commitment from Congress, said Tom Huetteman, the former assistant director of the PCBs program at EPA Region 9, based in San Francisco.

But he said the EPA's guidance outlined important steps schools could take to reduce exposure regardless of their finances.

"It would be great if there was zero exposure in schools, but that's not the world we live in," Huetteman said.

Current EPA officials said in written responses that the agency's recommended precautions are usually effective, but the steps might not adequately reduce exposure in every school. It also said the agency is "actively identifying" money for a program targeting school environmental hazards.

The EPA decided that dealing with old PCB-containing light ballasts was easier and hurried to adopt the rule that would have required schools and daycares to remove them before Obama's second term ended, only to fall short. It was killed as part of a wider regulatory rollback under Trump.

The agency had advised schools to get rid of ballasts in 2001 — two years after a ballast failure sparked a fire at a Southern California high school and improper cleanup of a ballast leak exposed people to PCBs at an Oregon school. The agency made the same recommendation again in 2010, when it was clear ballasts remained a problem.

But the EPA in 2015 estimated that there still were 2.6 million PCB-containing ballasts in schools and a half-million in day cares, with up to 70 percent of them likely leaking. Almost 40 million more were in buildings such as hospitals, public housing and offices.

New York City public schools replaced hundreds of thousands of ballasts in almost 900 schools between 2013 and 2016, after being sued by parents who had become alarmed when failing ballasts were found throughout the district, even leaking oil onto a student.

In Los Angeles, officials last year finished removing 14,220 PCB-containing ballasts from about 750 schools, officials said.

Many school districts now have replaced fluorescent light ballasts through energy-savings partnerships with utilities. And the Department of Energy phased out production of the light tubes used in the ballasts that used PCBs.

But a surprising number of suspect ballasts still are in use, especially in urban, rural and low-income districts with older buildings, and in the Midwest and South, experts said.

In Detroit, about 2,500 old light fixtures likely to contain PCBs were found in six schools, and will be removed by April, according to the EPA. Another 750 ballasts will be removed from five recreation centers.

But even if old ballasts are removed, the schools still could be contaminated with lingering PCBs. Without testing, no one would know. To save money, some school districts just swap out the old fluorescent tubes with LED bulbs and keep the ballasts or PCB-stained fixtures.

Many school officials and fire departments don't know if any of their ballasts contain PCBs, which must be handled as hazardous waste. Often, they just clear the smoke after a ballast failure and allow the kids back in the classroom, the AP found when investigating incident reports.

When firefighters were called to an elementary school in Buckhannon, West Virginia, this past May, Lt. Linn Baxa was not surprised to discover that a PCB-era fluorescent light ballast was smoking.

"We go on calls for light ballasts like that three or four times a year," he said. "They're still around here

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 20 of 54

in a lot of older buildings.”

That’s troubling to Hornbuckle.

“There’s no reason that a school should have PCB-containing light ballasts in it anymore,” she said. “It’s my opinion that it should not be legal to have such a potential risk waiting in a schoolroom.”

The EPA says it’s focusing resources in other areas rather than reviving the rule.

Proving PCBs caused specific illnesses is likely impossible because problems can take years to develop, people are affected differently, and not everyone who’s exposed will get sick, experts say.

But exposure still is a big worry for many parents of students who attend schools with contamination.

In Monroe, Washington, a town of about 19,000 nestled in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains, a lawsuit was filed last year on behalf of Sky Valley teachers, students and parents who believe they were sickened by PCBs and, possibly, even more toxic dioxins and furans that can form during PCB combustion. It names the school district, county health department, Monsanto and companies that mixed PCBs into other products.

The lawsuit alleges that more than 100 ballasts likely had failed in the three years before an April 2014 memo from the Sky Valley principal responding to complaints about ballast failures at Sky Valley.

“Our building is quirky and old and sometimes a problem. But it is ours. And it is safe,” she wrote.

The lawsuit alleges the district had never tested for PCB contamination and had not followed a state policy to regularly inspect old light fixtures, though it had known since at least the year 2000 that many contained PCBs.

One mom, Donya Grant, compiled a spreadsheet of dozens of students, teachers and parents with their symptoms and illnesses. Headaches and nausea are among symptoms reported during ballast burnouts investigated by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. Studies have also associated PCB exposure with increased risk of thyroid problems and early puberty, among other problems.

“Even though I don’t know as much as the scientists do, I do know that when I look at those symptoms that I can say, ‘Check, check, check — we have experienced those,’” said Grant, who now home schools three of her four children. All of them have had health issues of one sort or another — nosebleeds, migraines and brain fog — after spending time at Sky Valley. Her youngest daughter and some of her classmates experienced the start of menstruation as young as age 6.

The Monroe school district, which owns Sky Valley Education Center, said in a statement that recent sampling found no elevated levels and noted that nobody involved in the lawsuit “has produced a diagnosis or opinion from a licensed physician finding that their claimed injuries are the result of exposure to PCBs or related substances” at the school. The district also said that it removed PCB-containing caulk and contaminated light fixtures and has encapsulated other sources.

Monsanto said there is no proof PCBs cause significant health problems, especially at the levels found in building materials and light ballasts.

Still, former EPA toxicologist Mark Maddaloni said it’s crucial to reduce PCBs in schools because children are more vulnerable and continued exposure begins to “chisel away at the margin of safety.”

What’s more, a recent study that found schools can be a greater source of PCBs to children than food and outdoor sources, even toxic waste sites, said Hornbuckle, who led the study funded by the federal government’s National Institute of Environmental Health Services.

Herrick, the Harvard professor, said neither Congress nor the EPA have stepped up to create a “coherent national policy” on PCBs, as they did to a greater extent for asbestos and lead contamination.

“They intentionally dodged their responsibility to put some sort of framework around the problem,” said Herrick, who retired last year. “I think it’s because they don’t want the answer.”

Webber reported from Hartford, Connecticut, Chicago and Washington, D.C. Irvine reported from Hartford, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Monroe, Washington.

Follow Tammy Webber on Twitter: @twebber02 and Martha Irvine on Twitter: @irvineAP

Kim rides horse on sacred peak, vows to fight US sanctions

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea released a series of photos Wednesday showing leader Kim Jong Un riding a white horse to a sacred mountain he has often climbed before making key decisions. Near the mountain, Kim reportedly vowed to overcome U.S.-led sanctions that he said had both pained and infuriated his people.

The images and Kim's rhetoric appeared aimed at bolstering his leadership at home as the North tries to pressure the United States into making concessions in nuclear diplomacy.

The photos showed a bespectacled Kim wearing a long, light-brown coat and riding on horseback up snow-covered Mount Paektu. The mountain, the highest point on the Korean Peninsula, is sacred to North Koreans, and both it and the white horse are symbols associated with the Kim family's dynastic rule.

Kim previously visited Mount Paektu before executing his powerful uncle in 2013 and entering into diplomacy with South Korea and the U.S. in 2018.

The photos were released by the North's official Korean Central News Agency, or KCNA, days after North Korea's first nuclear talks with the U.S. in more than seven months fell apart.

South Korean media quickly speculated that Kim may be considering a new strategy in his dealings with the U.S. because he's previously demanded that Washington come up with new proposals to salvage the stalemated diplomacy by the end of December.

"He, sitting on the horseback atop Mt Paektu, recollected with deep emotion the road of arduous struggle he covered for the great cause of building the most powerful country with faith and will as firm as Mt Paektu," KCNA said.

North Korean documents say Kim's grandfather and national founder Kim Il Sung had an anti-Japan guerrilla base on Paektu's slopes during Japan's 1910-45 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula. The official biography of Kim Jong Un's father, Kim Jong Il, says the second-generation leader was born on Paektu when a double rainbow filled the skies.

The white horse is also a propaganda symbol for the Kim family, which has ruled North Korea for seven decades with a strong personality cult surrounding family members. State media have occasionally shown Kim, his sister and his father riding white horses. The symbolism goes back to Kim Il Sung, who according to the North's official narrative rode a white horse while fighting Japanese colonial rulers.

There have been other horse-riding leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, who was photographed riding a horse bare-chested, and Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, who took part in horse races and erected a massive monument featuring his likeness atop a golden horse.

KCNA said Kim also visited nearby construction sites in Samjiyon County and complained about U.S.-led U.N. sanctions imposed on his country because of its nuclear and missile programs.

"The situation of the country is difficult owing to the ceaseless sanctions and pressure by the hostile forces and there are many hardships and trials facing us," Kim was quoted as saying. "But our people grew stronger through the trials and found their own way of development and learned how to always win in the face of trials."

Kim also said "the pain the U.S.-led anti-(North Korea) hostile forces inflicted upon the Korean people ... turned into their anger," according to KCNA. "No matter what persistent efforts the enemy make, we can live well with our own efforts and pave the avenue to development and prosperity in our own way."

North Korea has been slapped with 11 rounds of sanctions since 2006. The sanctions have been toughened since 2016, when Kim began conducting a series of high-profile nuclear and missile tests, and they include a full ban on key exports such as coal, textiles and seafood and a significant curtailing of oil imports.

During his second summit with President Donald Trump in Vietnam in February, Kim demanded the United States lift the newer and more biting sanctions in return for dismantling his main nuclear complex, a limited denuclearization step. Trump rejected that, and the summit collapsed without reaching any deal. The two leaders held a brief, impromptu meeting at the Korean border in late June and agreed to resume talks.

Their negotiators met in Sweden earlier this month for the first time since the Vietnam summit, but the

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 22 of 54

talks broke down again. North Korea blamed the U.S. for the breakdown and threatened to resume nuclear and long-range missile tests.

North Korea's lifting of its self-imposed moratorium on major weapons tests would be a blow to Trump's reelection campaign, as the president has boasted that the moratorium is a big foreign policy achievement.

Some experts say North Korea is not likely to carry out its threat to restart nuclear and long-range missile tests because that could scuttle diplomacy with Trump and dim the chances of winning sanctions relief.

Trump has downplayed the significance of North Korea's recent series of short-range missile tests. But the European members of the U.N. Security Council earlier this month urged Pyongyang to abandon all weapons of mass destruction and engage in "meaningful negotiations" with the United States.

Associated Press writer Kim Tong-hyung contributed to this report.

Takeaways: Warren under fire, 70s club ignores the age issue

BY NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

A dozen Democratic presidential candidates participated in a spirited debate over health care, taxes, gun control and impeachment. Takeaways from the three-hour forum in Westerville, Ohio:

WARREN'S RISE ATTRACTS ATTACKS

Sen. Elizabeth Warren found Tuesday that her rise in the polls may come with a steep cost. She's now a clear target for attacks, particularly from more moderate challengers, and her many plans are now being subjected to much sharper scrutiny.

Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar and South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg slammed her for not acknowledging, as Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders has, that middle-class taxes would increase under the single-payer health plan she and Sanders favor.

"At least Bernie's being honest with this," Klobuchar said.

"I don't think the American people are wrong when they say what they want is a choice," Buttigieg told Warren. His plan maintains private insurance but would allow people to buy into Medicare.

Candidates also pounced on Warren's suggestion that only she and Sanders want to take on billionaires while the rest of the field wants to protect them. Former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke told Warren it didn't seem as though she wanted to lift people up and she is "more focused on being punitive."

And they piled onto her signature proposal, a 2% wealth tax to raise the trillions of dollars needed for many of her ambitious proposals. Technology entrepreneur Andrew Yang noted that such a measure has failed in almost every European country where it's been tried.

Sen. Kamala Harris of California even went after Warren for not backing Harris' call for Twitter to ban President Donald Trump.

THAT 70s SHOW

The stage included three 70-something candidates who would be the oldest people ever elected to a first term as president — including 78-year-old Sanders, who had a heart attack this month. Moderators asked all three how they could do the job. None really addressed the question.

Sanders invited the public to a major rally he's planning in New York City next week and vowed to take the fight to corporate elites.

Biden promised to release his medical records before the Iowa caucuses next year and said he was running because the country needs an elder statesman in the White House after Trump.

Warren, whose campaign has highlighted her hours-long sessions posing for selfies with supporters, promised to "out-organize and outlast" any other candidate, including Trump. Then she pivoted to her campaign argument that Democrats need to put forth big ideas rather than return to the past, a dig at Biden.

ONE VOICE ON IMPEACHMENT

The opening question was a batting practice fastball for the Democratic candidates: Should Trump be

impeached?

They were in steadfast agreement. All 12 of them. Largely with variations on the word "corrupt" to describe the Republican president.

Warren was asked first if voters should decide whether Trump should stay in office. She responded, "There are decisions that are bigger than politics."

Biden, who followed Sanders, offered a rare admission: "I agree with Bernie."

The only hint of dissonance came from Rep. Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii, who was one of the last Democratic House members to back an impeachment inquiry. She lamented that some Democrats had been calling for Trump's impeachment since right after the 2016 election, undermining the party's case against him.

KLOBUCHAR: MINNESOTA NOT-SO-NICE

Klobuchar has faded into the background in previous debates, but she stood out on the crowded stage. She also went on the attack. She chided Yang for seeming to compare Russian interference in the 2016 election to U.S. foreign policy. But her main barbs were reserved for Warren. "I appreciate Elizabeth's work but, again, the difference between a plan and a pipe dream is something you can actually get done," she said.

After Warren seemed to suggest other candidates were protecting billionaires, Klobuchar pounced. "No one on this stage wants to protect billionaires," Klobuchar said. "Even the billionaire doesn't want to protect billionaires."

That was a reference to investor Tom Steyer, who had agreed with Sanders' condemnation of billionaires and called for a wealth tax — despite the fact that his wealth funded his last-minute campaign to clear the debate thresholds and appear Tuesday night.

Klobuchar also forcefully condemned Trump's abandonment of the Kurds in Syria.

BOOKER THE PEACEMAKER

New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker has been trying to campaign on the power of love and unity. It hasn't vaulted him to the top of the polls, but it drew perhaps the biggest cheers from the crowd Tuesday night.

As candidates bickered over their tax plans, Booker shut it down. "We've got one shot to make Donald Trump a one-term president and how we talk about each other in this debate actually really matters," he said. "Tearing each other down because we have a different plan is unacceptable."

Later, as candidates tussled over foreign policy and Syria, Booker again tried to bring the debate back to morals. "This president is turning the moral leadership of this country into a dumpster fire," he said, before launching into a furious condemnation of Trump's foreign policy.

The New Jersey senator's inability to break out of the pack has puzzled Democrats who long saw him as a top-tier presidential candidate.

Study: 'Medicare for All' not only way to universal coverage

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Health care memo to Democrats: There's more than one way to get to coverage for all.

A study out Wednesday finds that an approach similar to the plan from former Vice President Joe Biden can deliver about the same level of coverage as the government-run "Medicare for All" plan from presidential rival Bernie Sanders.

The study from the Commonwealth Fund and the Urban Institute think tanks concludes that the U.S. can achieve a goal that has eluded Democrats since Harry Truman by building on former President Barack Obama's health care law.

Health care has sparked sharp exchanges in the Democratic presidential debates, and Tuesday night was no exception. Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren was challenged for being unwilling to say whether her support for Medicare for All would translate to higher taxes for the middle class. Warren said "costs"

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 24 of 54

would be lower, but Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota suggested that was a dodge.

"I'm sorry, Elizabeth," said Klobuchar. "I think we owe it to the American people to tell them where we're going to send the invoice." She urged Democrats not to "trash Obamacare" but build on it.

The study suggests such heated discussions may have more to do with differences over the scope and reach of government than with the ultimate objective of providing universal coverage.

"A goal that they all share — universal coverage — can be reached in different ways," said Sara Collins, the Commonwealth Fund's vice president for coverage and access.

The researchers modeled a range of health care overhaul scenarios from tweaks to Obama's law to a full government-run single-payer plan like Sanders is proposing. Collins said the options studied are not carbon copies of the candidates' proposals, partly because many details are still in flux. However, they are generally similar.

The study found that a full government-run plan like Sanders' would cover all U.S. residents, including people in the country without legal authorization. That adds up to more than 30 million currently uninsured people.

However, it would increase U.S. health care spending because of generous benefits with no copays and deductibles. Expanded benefits would include home and community-based long-term care services. Assuming the plan was fully effective in 2020, total U.S. health spending would grow by nearly \$720 billion.

The federal government, which would take on costs now paid by employers and individuals, would have to raise nearly \$2.7 trillion more in revenue in 2020. Such amounts would require a mix of broad-based taxes, the researchers said, although the report steered clear of how the plans would be financed.

"It is a big lift to get this kind of money, for sure," said John Holahan, a top Urban Institute health policy expert.

A Kaiser Family Foundation poll out this week found slippage in public support for Medicare for All. Fifty-one percent support such a government-run approach, down 5 percentage points since April. Opposition has risen significantly, from 38% in April to 47% in the latest survey.

The Commonwealth Fund-Urban Institute study also modeled options resembling the plan that Biden is pushing.

It starts with more generous subsidies for "Obamacare" plans and Medicaid expansion in states that have so far refused it. Then it adds a "public option" plan based on Medicare. People with employer coverage would be able to pick the public plan. There would be a mechanism to sign up all those eligible for coverage.

Such an approach would reduce the number of uninsured by about 80%, the study estimated. That would still leave nearly 7 million U.S. residents without coverage, mainly people who don't have legal permission to be in the country. Under Biden's plan taxpayer subsidies would only be available to U.S. citizens and legal residents.

Employer coverage would decline by about 10% as some low-income workers switch to the public option.

Assuming the plan was fully effective in 2020, total U.S. health care spending would decline by about \$20 billion, a relatively small amount considering the nation's tab is now more than \$3.5 trillion a year. The decline would be partly due to the public option paying hospitals and doctors less than what private plans do now.

The federal government would have to raise from \$108 billion to \$147 billion more in 2020 to cover the additional cost of expanding subsidized coverage options, a fraction of the cost of Medicare for All.

South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg's plan overlaps in many details with Biden's.

The two think tanks are nonpartisan research organizations that have long supported expanded coverage. Their health care work is particularly influential with policymakers on the political left.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. DEBATE RIVALS ASSAIL ELIZABETH WARREN

Democratic presidential hopefuls accuse the Massachusetts senator of ducking questions about the cost of Medicare for All and her signature "wealth tax" plan.

2. IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY REVEALING NEW DETAILS

The testimony from witnesses, mainly officials from the State Department and other foreign policy posts, is largely corroborating the account of the government whistleblower.

3. TURKEY DEFIES NATO ALLIES IN SYRIA

Turkey's president resists growing pressure and sanctions for a cease-fire in northern Syria as Russia says it is working to prevent a conflict between advancing Turkish and Syrian government forces.

4. AP: TOXIC PCBs LINGER IN SCHOOLS

Tens of thousands of schools may be contaminated with the banned chemicals, yet the U.S. government hasn't determined the scope of the problem or come up with a plan or funding to mitigate the potential risks.

5. MEDICARE FOR ALL, WITH A TWEAK

Two nonpartisan think tanks find that building on Obama's health law can deliver near-universal coverage.

6. CHINESE SNOOPING TECH SPREADS

A video surveillance system with facial recognition by Huawei is being rolled out across hundreds of cities around the world, particularly in poorer countries with weak track records of human rights or data protection.

7. HONG KONG LAWMAKERS THWART LEADER'S ADDRESS

Furious pro-democracy lawmakers twice force Carrie Lam to stop delivering a speech laying out her policy objectives and then clamor for her resignation.

8. NO BREAKTHROUGH IN BREXIT TALKS

EU and British negotiators fail to reach a consensus during a frantic all-night session and will continue seeking a compromise on the eve of a crucial EU summit.

9. WHO REIGNED AT DOVE AWARDS

Grammy-winning singer Lauren Daigle wins artist of the year, song of the year and pop/contemporary album of the year.

10. A WIN 86 YEARS IN THE MAKING

The Washington Nationals ride a big first inning and Patrick Corbin's pitching to sweep St. Louis and advance to the World Series.

House Democrats not easing up on their impeachment probe

By LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK and LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The impeachment inquiry is revealing vivid new details about the high-level unease over President Donald Trump's actions toward Ukraine and those of his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani as the swift-moving probe by House Democrats shows no signs of easing.

The testimony from the witnesses, mainly officials from the State Department and other foreign policy posts, is largely corroborating the account of the government whistleblower whose complaint first sparked the impeachment inquiry, according to lawmakers attending the closed-door interviews.

One witness, former White House aide Fiona Hill, testified that national security adviser John Bolton was so alarmed by Giuliani's back-channel activities in Ukraine that he described him as a "hand grenade who is going to blow everybody up."

Another, career State Department official George Kent, testified Tuesday he was told by administration officials to "lay low" on Ukraine as "three amigos" tied to the White House took over U.S. foreign policy

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 26 of 54

toward the Eastern European ally.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, despite intensifying calls from Trump and Republicans to hold a formal vote to authorize the impeachment inquiry, showed no indication she would do so. She said Congress will continue its investigation as part of the Constitution's system of checks and balances of the executive.

"This is not a game for us. This is deadly serious. We're on a path that is taking us, a path to the truth," Pelosi told reporters after a closed-door session with House Democrats.

With Ukraine situated between the United States' Western allies and Russia, Pelosi noted the inquiry raises fresh questions about Trump's relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"All roads seem to lead to Putin with the president," she said.

Democratic leaders had been gauging support for a vote to authorize the impeachment inquiry after Trump and Republicans pushed them for a roll call. Holding a vote would test politically vulnerable Democrats in areas where the Republican president is popular.

Trump calls the impeachment inquiry an "illegitimate process" and is blocking officials from cooperating.

But several Democratic freshmen who are military veterans or had careers in national security before joining Congress spoke up during the meeting Tuesday, warning Pelosi and her leadership team a vote was unnecessary and would be playing into Republicans' hands, according to a person granted anonymity to discuss the private session.

The inquiry is moving quickly as a steady stream of officials appears behind closed doors this week, some providing new revelations about the events surrounding the July 25 phone call between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. It is on that call that Trump urged Zelenskyy to investigate a firm tied to political rival Joe Biden's family and Ukraine's own involvement in the 2016 presidential election.

In a daylong session Tuesday, House investigators heard from Kent, who was concerned about the "fake news smear" against the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, whom Trump recalled in May, according to emails obtained by The Associated Press.

Kent told the lawmakers that he "found himself outside a parallel process" and had warned others about Giuliani as far back as March. He felt the shadow diplomacy was undermining decades of foreign policy and the rule of law in Ukraine and that was "wrong," said Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-Va.

Connolly said Kent described the results of a May 23 meeting at the White House, organized by Trump's acting chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney, where three administration officials — U.S. ambassador Gordon Sondland, special envoy Kurt Volker and Energy Secretary Rick Perry — declared themselves the people now responsible for Ukraine policy.

"They called themselves the three amigos," Connolly said Kent testified, and they said as much to Zelenskyy in Ukraine when they visited.

Kent also told them that Trump, through the Office of Management and Budget, which Mulvaney previously led, was holding up military aid to Ukraine while pressing Zelenskyy to investigate a company linked to Biden's son.

"He was clearly bothered by the role Mr. Giuliani was playing," Connolly said.

In 10 hours of testimony Monday, Hill, the former White House aide who was a top adviser on Russia, recalled to investigators that Bolton had told her he was not part of "whatever drug deal Sondland and Mulvaney are cooking up," an apparent reference to talks over Ukraine.

She testified that Bolton asked her to take the concerns to National Security Council lawyer John Eisenberg.

As White House lawyers now try to learn more about the handling of the Ukraine call, Eisenberg is coming under particular scrutiny, said one White House official. He was both the official who ordered that the memorandum of the call be moved to a highly-classified system, and the one who involved the Justice Department in a complaint from the CIA general counsel. The latter caught the attention of the president, according to the official.

Giuliani said Tuesday he was "very disappointed" in Bolton's comment. Bolton, Giuliani said, "has been called much worse."

Giuliani also acknowledged he had received payments totaling \$500,000 related to the work for a company operated by Lev Parnas — who, along with associate Igor Fruman, played a key role in Giuliani's efforts to

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 27 of 54

launch a Ukrainian corruption investigation against Biden and his son Hunter. The two men were arrested last week on campaign finance charges as they tried to board an international flight.

Trump's team won't comply with the Democratic inquiry. Giuliani and Vice President Mike Pence became the latest officials refusing to cooperate, saying through their lawyers they would not provide information requested by House Democrats as part of the impeachment inquiry.

The chairman leading the impeachment investigation, Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., said the stonewalling simply bolsters the charge that Trump is obstructing Congress.

"The case for Congress continues to build," Schiff said. He said Defense Secretary Mark Esper told investigators Sunday that he would comply with a subpoena request, only to be "countermanded" by a higher authority, likely Trump.

Sondland, whose text messages with other diplomats are part of a cache released by Volker and made public earlier this month, is scheduled to appear for an interview Thursday.

The interviews Monday and Tuesday, like the others conducted by House impeachment investigators, took place behind closed doors. Republican lawmakers have aimed their ire at the process, saying witnesses should be interviewed out in the open.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Democrats were trying to "cancel out" Trump's election with the march toward impeachment.

Five more officials are scheduled this week, mostly from the State Department, though it is unclear if they will all appear.

Michael McKinley, a former top aide to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo who resigned last week, is scheduled to testify Wednesday. McKinley, a career foreign service officer and Pompeo's de facto chief of staff, resigned Friday, ending a 37-year career.

Once Democrats have completed the probe and followed any other threads it produces, they will use their findings to help determine whether to vote on articles of impeachment.

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller, Michael Balsamo, Eric Tucker, Matthew Lee, Padmananda Rama, Andrew Taylor and Alan Fram in Washington and Jonathan Lemire in Dallas contributed to this report.

Analysis: Elizabeth Warren growing into front-runner status

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

WESTERVILLE, Ohio (AP) — The question was inevitable. Elizabeth Warren's answer was the same. And her rivals seized on it.

For the second consecutive debate, Warren refused to say whether middle-class Americans would pay higher taxes under her proposed "Medicare for All" plan. It was a glaring dodge for a candidate who has risen to the top of the Democratic field by unveiling detailed policy proposals and selling them with a folksy flair.

And it was one of nearly half a dozen issues on which Warren found herself defending the broad ambition she has laid out to remake the American economy and rebalance the nation's wealth. More moderate candidates, including Joe Biden, Pete Buttigieg and Amy Klobuchar, cast Warren as unrealistic and vague.

How Warren handles that criticism, which was abundant Tuesday and is likely to escalate in the coming weeks, will be a central test of whether she can maintain her standing.

"Warren has done a good job at remaining steady despite the arrows in her direction, but she is still missing answers to core questions about her plans," said Bill Burton, a Democratic strategist who worked for former President Barack Obama.

While Warren has surged into the upper tier of candidates with former Vice President Biden and Sen. Bernie Sanders, her liberal, government-funded policies have become subject to added scrutiny, prompting concerns about whether her views are out of the mainstream and would imperil Democrats' chances in the general election against President Donald Trump.

Warren's more moderate Democratic rivals sought to make that case aggressively in Tuesday's debate

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 28 of 54

in Ohio.

Former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke suggested she was too focused on tearing people down. New York businessman Andrew Yang said her signature wealth tax has failed across Europe. Biden said she was being vague on the cost of her signature plans.

Indeed, it was her refusal to clarify how she would pay for her government overhaul of health care that drew the most sustained criticism from a range of candidates.

"Your signature, senator, is to have a plan for everything but this," said Buttigieg, the mayor of South Bend, Indiana. "I don't understand why you believe the only way to deliver affordable insurance to everybody is to obliterate private plans."

Minnesota Sen. Klobuchar said Warren's obfuscating was all the more obvious because Bernie Sanders — whose Medicare for All bill Warren supports — has conceded that middle-class taxes would go up, though he contends the increases would be offset by lower health care costs.

"At least Bernie's being honest here," Klobuchar said. "I'm sorry, Elizabeth, but you have not said that. We owe it to the American people."

Again and again, Warren fell back to a practiced line, promising overall costs wouldn't go up on the middle class.

"Costs will go down," she insisted over and over.

Warren's advisers insist overall health care costs are the more salient issue at play and grouse that focusing on the policy's impact on taxes is an oversimplification.

Yet Warren's resistance to spelling out what taxes would look like under her proposal suggests she sees political risk — both in the primary and in a general election — in going on the record in favoring a tax hike.

Republicans quickly pounced on her repeated sidestepping in Tuesday's debate.

"Elizabeth Warren is lying. Period," Republican National Committee Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel tweeted. "Taxes would go up on EVERYONE to fund this socialist government takeover of health care. Bernie admits it. Why can't she?"

Trump has used Warren's and Sanders' liberal positions to cast the entire Democratic field as socialists, seeking to appeal to moderate Republicans and independents who may be turned off by the president but are wary of pricey, government-run policies.

Trump's campaign flew a banner over the Ohio debate that read: "Socialism destroys Ohio jobs. Vote Trump."

The pressure on Warren from within her own party reflects a broader challenge for Democrats as they work through the messy process of unifying behind one candidate to take on Trump next year. Many Democratic voters like her calls for big, bold ideas. But they fear she might be too liberal to attract the broad coalition needed to deny Trump a second term.

Warren's allies concede that her campaign is a work in progress.

"Elizabeth Warren was treated like the front-runner," said Adam Green, a top Warren supporter and co-founder of the Progressive Change Campaign Committee, adding that she showed strength in the face of aggressive attacks.

He added, "I expect those skills to be more on display in future debates as she grows into a front-runner status."

Editor's Note: Chief political writer Steve Peoples has covered presidential politics for the AP since 2011. Follow him at <https://twitter.com/sppeoples>

Turkey defies its NATO allies in Syria, as Russia steps in

By ELENA BECATOROS undefined

AKCAKALE, Turkey (AP) — Russia said it was working to prevent a conflict between advancing Turkish and Syrian government forces on Wednesday, as Turkey's president defied growing pressure and sanctions from Western allies for a cease-fire in northern Syria.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 29 of 54

Russia has moved quickly to further entrench its leadership role in the region after U.S. President Donald Trump ordered the pullout of American forces in northeastern Syria. The American move effectively abandoned the Kurdish fighters who were allied with the U.S. and cleared the way for Turkey's invasion aimed at crushing them.

America's abrupt reversal pushed the Kurds to strike a deal with the Russia-backed government of Syrian President Bashar Assad, inviting its forces to return to regions of northern Syria it had abandoned at the height of the eight-year-old civil war.

On Wednesday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that Russia is committed to ensuring security in the region as it works to mediate between the Syrian government and Turkey.

Russia already announced that it had deployed troops to the flashpoint town of Manbij to keep apart advancing Syrian government and Turkish-led forces.

Moscow will also continue to encourage Syria's Kurds and government to seek rapprochement following the U.S. withdrawal, Lavrov said in remarks carried by Russian news agencies.

Lavrov also blamed the United States and Western nations for undermining the Syrian state, saying this pushed "the Kurds toward separatism and confrontation with Arab tribes."

During a visit to Iraq last week, Lavrov met with the leaders of the Kurdish autonomous region and said that Moscow is sympathetic to their need for autonomy.

Now in its eighth day, Turkey's offensive against Kurdish fighters has increasingly strained relations with its NATO allies.

Late on Tuesday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed he would not accept a cease-fire in northern Syria, despite growing pressure from the U.S. and Europe.

Speaking to a group of journalists late Tuesday on his return from a trip to Azerbaijan, Erdogan said Turkey would only consider a ceasefire once it had cleared the border region of Kurdish fighters that it considers a threat for links to an insurgency within its own territory.

"It is not possible for us to declare a cease-fire until it is cleared," the pro-government Yeni Safak newspaper quoted Erdogan as saying.

Erdogan's comments came as Washington, which has announced limited sanctions on Turkey, said U.S. Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and national security adviser Robert O'Brien are traveling to Ankara on Wednesday to try and negotiate a stop to the fighting in Syria's northeast.

Trump had announced on Monday new sanctions to try to pressure Turkey to accept a cease-fire.

But Erdogan told journalists that he had rejected U.S. offers to mediate. Referring to Syrian Kurdish fighters, he said: "We would never sit around (the negotiating) table with a terror organization."

He also said Turkey was "not concerned" by the sanctions.

On Tuesday, the Kremlin said Erdogan accepted an invitation to visit Russia in the "nearest days," without providing further details.

France has suggested it will also work more closely with Russia in Syria.

French Foreign Minister Jean Yves Le Drian said in an interview on French television channel BFM Wednesday that France is notably now looking to Russia, given their "common interests" in defeating the Islamic State group in Syria.

He called on European and other members of the coalition fighting the IS in Syria to regroup as the U.S. appeared to abdicate its leadership role in the region.

___ Associated Press writer Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Turkey, contributed to this report.

Chaos as Hong Kong lawmakers thwart leader's annual address

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Calling her "the mother of the mafia police," yelling pro-democracy lawmakers twice forced Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam to stop delivering a speech laying out her policy objectives Wednesday and then clamored for her resignation in chaotic scenes that caused her to walk out of the legislature.

Lam was able to deliver the annual address more than an hour later by video, but the hostile reception

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 30 of 54

inside the Legislative Council marked a slap in the face for the embattled chief executive grappling with anti-government protests now in their fifth month.

When Lam started delivering the speech, she was shouted down by chanting pro-democracy lawmakers who held aloft placards showing her waving with hands colored blood-red. They also used a projector to light up Lam's face and the wall behind her with protesters' key demands.

Lam left the chamber and then came back about 20 minutes later to try again, only to be met with further fury. One legislator brandishing a placard climbed onto a desk. Again, the council president stopped the session and Lam left. One lawmaker wearing a paper mask showing the face of Chinese President Xi Jinping tossed a placard as Lam walked out.

Finally, 75 minutes after the previously scheduled start of the lengthy address, Lam delivered it via video link, with China's yellow-starred red flag to her right and Hong Kong's flag on her left.

Describing the semi-autonomous Chinese territory as going through "major crisis," Lam said: "People are asking: Will Hong Kong return to normal?"

She appealed for its 7.5 million citizens to "cherish the city," warning that "continued violence and spread of hatred will erode the core values of Hong Kong."

Standing ramrod-straight, she then launched into a dry and detailed explanation of plans to tackle Hong Kong's shortage of affordable housing, a long-standing source of discontent, and other welfare issues. With its focus on such minutiae as building new tunnels and freeing up land for development, the 50-minute speech titled "Treasure Hong Kong our home" only fueled criticism that Lam is deaf to protesters' concerns about the future of the territory's freedoms, unique in China.

In a subsequent news conference, Lam again made clear that she wouldn't resign and insisted there has been no erosion "whatsoever" of Hong Kong's freedoms.

"Hong Kong is still a very free society," she said.

Even before Lam delivered her speech, one of the protesting lawmakers, Claudia Mo, dismissed it as a "shame and a sham" and said the chief executive had lost all authority.

"She is just a puppet on strings, being played by Beijing," Mo said at an impromptu news conference with other lawmakers outside the chamber after they successfully thwarted Lam's address there.

They played a recording on a small loudspeaker they said was the sound of police tear-gassing protesters and of protesters' wails.

"These are the voices of people screaming and they are just ordinary Hong Kong people," said lawmaker Tanya Chan. "Please, please, please Mrs. Carrie Lam, don't let us suffer any more."

She and others called for Lam's resignation. "This is the only way that we can have a good future," said Chan.

Pro-Beijing legislators condemned the disruption, among them Martin Liao, who called it "totally unforgivable."

Lam had been bracing for trouble in the chamber as her government battles the protests that started in June over a contested extradition bill and have snowballed into a sustained anti-government, anti-police and anti-China movement.

The widespread use of tear gas by riot-control squads and 2,600 arrests, widely decried as heavy handed, have triggered public disgust with the 30,000-strong police force once considered among Asia's finest. Hardcore black-clad and masked protesters have responded with widespread vandalism of China-linked businesses, subway stations and other targets, and attacked police with gasoline bombs and other weapons.

This month, two police shootings that injured teenage protesters, the stabbing of a police officer, and the detonation of a small, remote-controlled bomb close to police officers ratcheted up violence to levels unprecedented since the former British colony reverted to Chinese rule in 1997.

Saying rioters are "spreading chaos and fear," Lam appealed for order and sought to end her address on a positive note. Her Facebook profile was updated before she spoke, with a photo of a smiling Lam against a backdrop of a rainbow over Hong Kong's harbor.

"We have to put aside differences and stop attacking each other," she said. "I thoroughly believe that Hong Kong will be able to ride out this storm and move on."

Brexit talks don't get breakthrough, continue on summit eve

By RAF CASERT and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — European Union and British negotiators failed to reach a breakthrough in Brexit talks during a frantic all-night session and will continue seeking a compromise on the eve of Thursday's crucial EU summit.

An EU official, who asked not to be identified because the negotiations were still ongoing, said Wednesday that "discussions continued until late in the night and will continue today."

Both sides were hoping that after more than three years of false starts and sudden reversals, a clean divorce deal for Britain leaving the bloc might be sketched out within the coming hours.

Even though many questions remain, diplomats made it clear that both sides were within touching distance of a deal for the first time since a U.K. withdrawal plan fell apart in the British House of Commons in March.

But talks saw no deal materializing between experts from both sides holed up late into the night at EU headquarters in Brussels.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's office said the negotiations had been "constructive" and would continue.

Johnson is eager to strike a deal at an EU summit starting Thursday that will allow for the U.K. to leave the bloc in good order on the scheduled date of Oct. 31, fulfilling his promise to get Brexit done, come what may.

But both sides say gaps remain over plans for keeping goods and people flowing freely across the Irish border, the thorniest issue in the talks.

An open border between EU member Ireland and the U.K.'s Northern Ireland underpins both the local economy and the 1998 peace accord that ended decades of Catholic-Protestant violence in Northern Ireland. But once Britain exits, that border will turn into an external EU frontier that the bloc wants to keep secure.

The big question is how far Johnson's government is prepared to budge on its insistence that the U.K., including Northern Ireland, must leave the European Union's customs union — something that would require checks on goods passing between the U.K. and the EU, including on the island of Ireland. Ireland and other EU members say any checks in Ireland are unacceptable.

The alternative is to have checks between Britain and Northern Ireland. But Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party, the party that props up Johnson's minority government, strongly opposes any measures that could loosen the bonds between Northern Ireland and the rest of the U.K.

Even if there is a deal, it must be passed by both European lawmakers and Britain's Parliament, which rejected — three times — the agreement struck by his predecessor, Theresa May.

Pro-Brexit Conservative lawmaker David Davis said success rests on the stance of the DUP.

He said that "if the DUP says 'this is intolerable to us' that will be quite important."

This week's EU leaders' meeting — the last scheduled summit before the Brexit deadline — was long considered the last opportunity to approve a divorce agreement. Johnson insists his country will leave at the end of the month with or without an agreement, although U.K. lawmakers are determined to push for another delay rather than risk a chaotic no-deal Brexit.

They have passed a law that compels the government to ask the EU to postpone Brexit if there is no deal in place by Saturday.

Johnson insists he won't do that — but also says he will obey the law. It's unclear how the two statements can be reconciled.

Lawless reported from London.

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

Chinese snooping tech spreads to nations vulnerable to abuse

By DUSAN STOJANOVIC Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP) — When hundreds of video cameras with the power to identify and track individuals started appearing in the streets of Belgrade as part of a major surveillance project, some protesters began having second thoughts about joining anti-government demonstrations in the Serbian capital.

Local authorities assert the system, created by Chinese telecommunications company Huawei, helps reduce crime in the city of 2 million. Critics contend it erodes personal freedoms, makes political opponents vulnerable to retribution and even exposes the country's citizens to snooping by the Chinese government.

The cameras, equipped with facial recognition technology, are being rolled out across hundreds of cities around the world, particularly in poorer countries with weak track records on human rights where Beijing has increased its influence through big business deals. With the United States claiming that Chinese state authorities can get backdoor access to Huawei data, the aggressive rollout is raising concerns about the privacy of millions of people in countries with little power to stand up to China.

"The system can be used to trail political opponents, monitor regime critics at any moment, which is completely against the law," said Serbia's former commissioner for personal data protection, Rodoljub Sabic.

Groups opposed to Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic say police are leaking video of protests to pro-government media, which publish the images, along with the identities of participants. Vucic himself has boasted the police have the capability to count "each head" at anti-government gatherings. During a recent rally, protesters climbed up a pole and covered a camera lens with duct tape scrawled with the word "censored."

Serbian police deny any such abuse of the Huawei system, which will eventually encompass 1,000 cameras in 800 locations throughout Belgrade. Huawei said in a statement that it "complies with all applicable laws and regulations" in Serbia and anywhere else it does business.

While facial recognition technology is being adopted in many countries, spurring debate over the balance between privacy and safety, the Huawei system has gained extra attention due to accusations that Chinese laws requiring companies to assist in national intelligence work give authorities access to its data.

As a result, some countries are reconsidering using Huawei technology, particularly the superfast 5G networks that are being rolled out later this year.

Still, Huawei, which denies accusations of any Chinese government control, has had no trouble finding customers eager to install its so-called Safe Cities technology, particularly among countries that China has brought closer into its diplomatic and economic orbit.

Besides Serbia, that list includes Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Angola, Laos, Kazakhstan, Kenya and Uganda, as well as a few liberal democracies like Germany, France and Italy. The system is used in some 230 cities, exposing tens of millions of people to its screening.

In a promotional brochure, Huawei says its video surveillance technology can scan over long distances to detect "abnormal behavior" such as loitering, track the movement of cars and people, calculate crowd size and send alerts to a command center if it detects something suspicious. Local authorities can then act upon the information they receive.

In one case advertised on its website, the company says a suspect in a hit-and-run accident in Belgrade was later discovered in China with the help of face recognition data shared by the Serbian police with their Chinese counterparts.

In view of the cybersecurity accusations leveled by the U.S. and international rights groups against Huawei, the relationship between China and countries that use the company's technology is coming under renewed scrutiny.

China's influence in Serbia, a European Union candidate that Beijing views as a gateway to the continent, has significantly expanded in recent years through Beijing's global Belt and Road investment programs. The populist Serbian regime has been keen to develop closer ties and the country's fragile democracy allows China's economic interests to grow relatively unchecked, without raising too many questions about human rights, environmental standards or transparency.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 33 of 54

China's state investment bank has granted billions of dollars in easy-term loans to build coal-powered plants, roads, railroads and bridges. Chinese police officers even help patrol the streets of Belgrade, a security presence officially billed as assisting the growing number of Chinese tourists who visit the city.

It's a similar story in Uganda, where China has invested heavily in infrastructure like highways and a hydropower dam on the Nile.

When longtime President Yoweri Museveni launched a \$126-million project to install Huawei facial recognition systems a year ago, he said the cameras were "eyes, ears and a nose" to fight rampant street crime in the sprawling capital, Kampala. Opposition activists say the real goal is to deter street protesters against an increasingly unpopular government.

"The cameras are politically motivated," said Joel Ssenyonyi, a spokesman for the musician and activist known as Bobi Wine who has emerged as a powerful challenger to Museveni. "They are not doing this for security. The focus for them is hunting down political opponents."

In neighboring Kenya, the government has also renewed its focus on public safety after a spate of extremist attacks. It has been pushing to register people digitally, including by recording DNA, iris and facial data. To do so, it turned to China, which helped finance the installation of surveillance cameras in Kenya as far back as 2012.

The Kenyan government wants to pool into one database all the information from public and private CCTV cameras, including those with facial recognition technology, a move that activists warn would vastly expand its surveillance powers in a country that does not have comprehensive data protection laws.

A growing number of countries are following China's lead in deploying artificial intelligence to track citizens, according to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The group says at least 75 countries are actively using AI tools such as facial recognition for surveillance — and Huawei has sold its systems in 50 of those countries, giving it a far wider reach than competitors such as Japan-based NEC and U.S.-based IBM.

"It's very unclear what safeguards are being put in place," said Steven Feldstein, a Carnegie Endowment fellow who authored a report on the issue. "Where are images being stored? How long are they being stored for? What kind of accountability procedures will there be? What type of operations will be linked to these surveillance cameras?"

Huawei said in an emailed statement that it "complies with all applicable laws and regulations in our countries of business. This is the most fundamental principle of our business operations. We are dedicated to bringing people better connectivity, eliminating digital gaps, and promoting the sustainable development of our societies and economies."

In Belgrade's bustling downtown Republic Square, high-tech video cameras are pointed in all directions from an office building as pedestrians hurry about their everyday business.

With public authorities disclosing little about how the cameras work, a rights group has set up a tent to ask pedestrians whether they know they are being watched.

"We don't want to be in some kind of Big Brother society," said rights activist Ivana Markulic. "We are asking: Where are the cameras, where are they hidden, how much did we pay for them and what's going to happen with information collected after this surveillance?"

Associated Press writers Jovana Gec in Belgrade, Serbia; Rodney Muhumuza in Kampala, Uganda; Tom Obula in Nairobi, Kenya, and Matt O'Brien in Providence, Rhode Island, contributed to this report.

Nats sweep Cards; DC in World Series for 1st time since '33

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Sports Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the Washington Nationals moved a party 86 years in the making from their ballpark's infield to a booze-filled clubhouse, manager Dave Martinez paused near the dugout and thrust the silver NL Championship Series trophy overhead, to the delight of loud, delirious fans still in the stands.

Who would have thought this was possible five months ago, when the team was flailing, trade talk was

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 34 of 54

swirling around Washington and folks figured Martinez's job was in jeopardy?

From 19-31 during a mediocre May to the Fall Classic in an outstanding October — and the city's first World Series appearance since 1933.

Extending their stunning turnaround, the wild-card Nationals got RBIs from middle-of-the-order stars Anthony Rendon and Juan Soto in a seven-run first inning Tuesday night, and Patrick Corbin's 12-strike-out performance plus a trio of relievers helped hold on to beat the St. Louis Cardinals 7-4 in Game 4 to complete a sweep in the NLCS.

"Often, bumpy roads lead to beautiful places," said Martinez, who underwent a heart procedure in September, "and this is a beautiful place."

Right from the first inning Tuesday, most in a sellout crowd of 43,976 rose from their seats to applaud or yell or twirl their red towels, to chant "Let's go, Nats!" and "M-V-P!" and various players' names, enjoying every moment of that game-deciding outburst.

And then, a couple of hours and several innings later, as Tanner Rainey, Sean Doolittle and Daniel Hudson were protecting a shrinking lead, those same spectators stood and shouted and reveled some more.

"I just kept counting down: We're 12 outs from the World Series. We're nine outs from the World Series," shortstop Trea Turner said. "Six. Three."

Now the Nationals get plenty of time to rest and set up their so-far terrific rotation before beginning the last series of the season against the Houston Astros or New York Yankees in a week. Houston leads the best-of-seven AL Championship Series 2-1 after winning Game 3 at New York 4-1 Tuesday.

The Nationals became the fourth team to reach the World Series after being 12 games under .500.

"We think we can compete with any team, any time," NLCS MVP Howie Kendrick said. "People always get caught up in the things that are on paper, but the reality of it is you have to go out and play. Once we get out on the field, anything can happen."

The last time the World Series came to the nation's capital, more than eight decades ago, the Washington Senators lost to the New York Giants in five games. Have to go even further back, to 1924, for the city's lone baseball championship, when the Senators defeated the Giants.

The Senators eventually left, and the town didn't have a major league team at all for more than three decades until the Montreal Expos — who were founded in 1969 and never made it to the World Series — moved to Washington in 2005.

The Nationals had never managed to advance in the postseason since arriving, going 0-4 in the NLDS over the last seven years, including three Game 5 losses at home.

First baseman Ryan Zimmerman, the Nationals' first draft pick in Washington, was there for all of that heartache.

"Sometimes," he said, "you got to wait for good things."

This month alone, the Nationals beat the Milwaukee Brewers in the NL wild-card game after trailing 3-1 heading to the eighth, and eliminated the league-best Los Angeles Dodgers in Game 5 of the NL Division Series after trailing 3-1 heading to the eighth again.

Then came this lopsided dismissal of the NL Central champion Cardinals, who were outscored 20-6 in the series.

"Of course, we could've played better," said St. Louis first baseman Paul Goldschmidt, who was 1 for 16 with nine strikeouts in the NLCS, "but we didn't."

Corbin, a left-handed pitcher signed with \$140 million of the money that became available last offseason when Bryce Harper left town to join the Philadelphia Phillies, was not quite the equal of Washington's other starters in the series.

Still, he did become the first pitcher to strike out 10 batters in the first four innings of a postseason game and earned the win after allowing four runs in five innings.

Then Martinez turned to his NL-worst bullpen, such a problem for so much of this season.

After Rainey got three outs, and Doolittle got five, Hudson came in for his fourth save in four chances this postseason. It wasn't easy, though: After replacing Doolittle with two outs in the eighth, Hudson hit his first batter and walked his second, bringing pinch-hitter Matt Carpenter to the plate as the go-ahead

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 35 of 54

run with the bases loaded.

Carpenter, a career .481 batter with the bases full, grounded out to second baseman Brian Dozier, a defensive replacement who briefly lost the ball before gathering it and throwing to first to end that inning.

Hudson finished things with a perfect ninth, getting Tommy Edman on a fly ball to center field to end it, and red fireworks went off around the stadium.

Corbin got this evening started with a 1-2-3 top of the first, striking out all three Cardinals with a high, 95 mph fastball, a real contrast to the off-speed stuff Stephen Strasburg used for his own dozen Ks a night earlier.

In the bottom half, Washington put up those seven runs, all charged to rookie Dakota Hudson, who lasted all of 15 pitches — doing to the Cardinals what they did in the previous round, when they scored 10 to open Game 5 of the NLDS against Atlanta.

All the heartache of playoffs past seemed to dissipate during an evening that only briefly was tense for the home team and its supporters: In the fifth, a juggled Cardinals lineup finally awoke, scoring three runs — one more than the team managed to produce in Games 1-3 combined — to get within 7-4.

With a man on second and the tying run in the on-deck circle, Corbin came through, striking out St. Louis' 3-4 hitters, Paul Goldschmidt and Marcell Ozuna, with sliders.

After becoming comeback specialists, the Nationals never trailed against the Cardinals. And dating to the final week of the regular season, Washington has won 16 of its past 18 games.

"We proved — and this doesn't require advanced sabermetrics," Cardinals manager Mike Shildt said, "you have to get a lead to win a game."

UP NEXT

Cardinals: Their next game will come in spring training, an exhibition at home in Jupiter, Florida, on Feb. 22.

Nationals: They will play Games 1 and 2 of the World Series at the AL team's stadium, because both the Astros (107) and Yankees (103) won more games than Washington's 93 in the regular season. Games 3, 4 and, if necessary, 5 will be at Nationals Park. Washington did not face either Houston or the Yankees in interleague play in 2019.

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AP FACT CHECK: Dems debate on guns, Syria, health care

By HOPE YEN and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A dozen Democrats seeking the presidency tussled Tuesday night in a debate packed with policy, flubbing some details in the process.

Several gave an iffy explanation of why they're not swinging behind a bold proposal to make people turn over their assault-style weapons. Sloppiness also crept in during robust exchanges over foreign policy, health care, taxes and more.

How some of their claims from Westerville, Ohio, stack up with the facts:

JOE BIDEN: "I would not have withdrawn the troops, and I would not have withdrawn the additional 1,000 troops that are in Iraq, which are in retreat now, being fired on by Assad's people."

THE FACTS: The former vice president is wrong. There is no evidence that any of the approximately 1,000 American troops preparing to evacuate from Syria have been fired on by Syrian government forces led by President Bashar Assad. A small group of U.S. troops came under Turkish artillery fire near the town of Kobani last week, without anyone being injured, but there is no indication that Syrian troops have shot at withdrawing Americans.

Also, Biden was addressing the situation in Syria, not Iraq.

PETE BUTTIGIEG: "On guns, we are this close to an assault weapons ban. That would be huge."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 36 of 54

AMY KLOCHUBAR: "I just keep thinking of how close we are to finally getting something done on this."

THE FACTS: No, the U.S. is not close to enacting an assault-weapons ban, as Buttigieg claimed, nor close on any significant gun control, as Klobuchar had it. Congress is not on the verge of such legislation. Prospects for an assault-weapons ban, in particular, are bound to remain slim until the next election at least.

Legislation under discussion in the Senate would expand background checks for gun sales, a politically popular idea even with gun owners. But even that bill has stalled because of opposition from the National Rifle Association and on-again, off-again support from Trump. Democrats and some Republicans in Congress say they will continue to push for the background checks bill, but movement appears unlikely during an impeachment inquiry and general dysfunction in Congress. And Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has made it clear he won't move forward on gun legislation without Trump's strong support.

Buttigieg was citing the chance for an assault-weapons ban as a reason for not supporting the more radical proposal by Democratic presidential rival Beto O'Rourke to force gun owners to give up AR-15s and other assault-style weapons. Klobuchar spoke in a similar context.

ELIZABETH WARREN: "The data show that we've had a lot of problems with losing jobs, but the principal reason has been bad trade policy. The principal reason has been a bunch of corporations, giant multinational corporations who've been calling the shots on trade."

THE FACTS: Economists mostly blame those job losses on automation and robots, not trade deals.

So the Massachusetts senator is off.

Let's start by acknowledging that the U.S. economy has been adding jobs, just that the nature of those jobs has changed as factory work and other occupations have become less prevalent.

Trade with China has contributed to shuttered factories and the loss of roughly 2 million jobs, according to research published in 2014.

But the primary culprit that accounted for 88% of factory job losses between 2000 and 2010 was automation, according to researchers at Ball State University.

Job figures show that the outbreak of the Great Recession in late 2007 also contributed to manufacturing's decline.

Warren is basing her claim that trade policy mattered more than automation on research from the Upjohn Institute that suggests relatively modest productivity gains in manufacturing outside of the computer and electronics sectors, a sign to those researchers that trade policy mattered more for job losses.

But there is also a bigger threat from automation for workers outside factories. These are secretaries, bookkeepers and a wide array of professions. Automation can displace these workers and put downward pressure on their wages, forcing them to find other jobs.

WARREN: Buttigieg's Medicare buy-in option is "Medicare for all who can afford it."

THE FACTS: Warren ignored the fact that Buttigieg would provide subsidies to help people pay premiums for the plan.

She was jabbing at Buttigieg's proposal to create an optional health insurance plan based on Medicare. Individual Americans could join it, even those covered by employer plans.

Buttigieg calls it "Medicare for all who want it."

His plan tracks with Biden's health care proposal. Biden would also provide subsidies for those who pick his "public option."

Details are unclear on who would get financial assistance, and how much that would be. But Buttigieg and Biden have said they want to provide help to a broader cross section of Americans than are currently helped by the Affordable Care Act.

KAMALA HARRIS: "Five million assault weapons are on the streets of America today."

THE FACTS: The California senator's statistic on the number of AR- and AK-style firearms is not accurate. Even the gun industry estimates there are now 16 million "assault weapons" in circulation in the United States today. In 1994, President Bill Clinton enacted an assault weapons ban, at a time when there were

an estimated 1.5 million of them in circulation. Current owners were allowed to keep them, however, and once the ban expired a decade later, sales resumed and boomed.

WARREN: "Mueller had shown to a fare-thee-well that this president obstructed justice."

THE FACTS: That's not exactly what special counsel Robert Mueller showed.

It's true that prosecutors examined more than 10 episodes for evidence of obstruction of justice, and that they did illustrate efforts by President Donald Trump to stymie the Russia investigation or take control of it.

But ultimately, Mueller did not reach a conclusion as to whether the president obstructed justice or broke any other law. He cited Justice Department policy against the indictment of a sitting president, and said that since he could not bring charges against Trump, it was unfair to accuse him of a crime. There was no definitive finding that he obstructed justice.

JULIAN CASTRO, former U.S. housing secretary: "Ohio, Michigan, and Pennsylvania actually in the latest jobs data have lost jobs, not gained them."

THE FACTS: Nope.

Figures from the Labor Department show that the former Housing and Urban Development secretary is wrong.

Ohio added jobs in August. So did Michigan . Same with Pennsylvania .

So Castro's statement is off.

However, these states still have economic struggles. Pennsylvania has lost factory jobs since the end of 2018. So has Michigan . And Ohio has shed 100 factory jobs so far this year.

Associated Press writers Robert Burns, Josh Boak, Matthew Daly, Lisa Marie Pane, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, Eric Tucker and Amanda Seitz contributed to this report.

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Fort Worth chief: 'absolutely no excuse' for woman's killing

By JAKE BLEIBERG and JILL BLEED Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — The furor Tuesday over the killing of a black woman by a white Fort Worth officer became increasingly about a gun pointed at a bedroom window. But the police chief and activists said the focus was on the wrong gun.

Officer Aaron Dean was arrested on a murder charge Monday in the slaying of Atatiana Jefferson. Police released an arrest warrant Tuesday quoting the victim's 8-year-old nephew as saying Jefferson had pulled out a gun after hearing suspicious noises behind her house.

Black politicians and others criticized the police and the media for bringing up Jefferson's weapon, angrily accusing the department of trying to deflect blame onto an innocent victim.

"The Fort Worth Police Department is going about the task of providing a defense for this officer," said Lee Merritt, an attorney for the Jefferson family.

Interim Police Chief Ed Kraus himself declared there was "absolutely no excuse" for the killing and said Jefferson behaved as any Texas homeowner would have on hearing a prowler. It wasn't clear from the warrant whether Dean even saw her weapon through the glass.

The killing early Saturday shocked people across the U.S. and led many black people to wonder once more whether they are no longer safe from police in their homes. Earlier this month, a white former Dallas officer was convicted of murder and sentenced to 10 years in prison for killing a black neighbor in his own apartment. She said she mistook his place for hers and thought he was an intruder.

Dean, 34, resigned and was arrested Monday for firing a single bullet through a windowpane while investigating a neighbor's report about the front door being left open at Jefferson's home. Jefferson was

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 38 of 54

staying up late, playing video games with her nephew.

Police bodycam video showed Dean making his way around the side of the house into the backyard in the darkness and opening fire a split second after shouting at the 28-year-old Jefferson to show her hands. He did not identify himself as a police officer.

In the arrest warrant, Jefferson's nephew said his aunt had taken a gun from her purse and pointed it at the window. Over the weekend, the Police Department also stirred anger by releasing images of the gun inside the home.

State Rep. Harold Dutton, a black Democrat from Houston, blamed the media in part.

"Why would you publicize that Ms. Jefferson had a gun in her home?" he asked. "I'm sure the police told you that. But that was her Second Amendment right, and equally as important, it had nothing to do with the incident for which we are here about. Too often, you, the media, have been complicit in throwing dirt on the victim while ignoring the real culprit, current law enforcement."

State Rep. Nicole Collier, a black Democrat from Fort Worth, likewise complained about the tendency to focus on things that could exonerate police officers, "like showing marijuana or showing a handgun when people are rightfully in their own home."

After the deadly shooting last year in Dallas, police reported finding marijuana in the dead man's apartment in what was decried by some as an attempt to smear the victim.

In the Fort Worth case, the arrest warrant notes that the other officer at the scene told authorities she could see only Jefferson's face through the window when Dean fired. Dean's own bodycam video showed that the view through the glass was obstructed by the reflection from his flashlight.

Merritt questioned whether Dean saw a gun at all, noting that the window was covered by blinds, it was dark outside, and Dean never said "gun" before firing, as officers are trained to do.

"Why do people keep weapons in their homes? Well, maybe, when there's someone prowling around in the back at 2 a.m. in the morning, you may need to arm yourself," Merritt said. "It is only appropriate that Miss Jefferson would have a weapon in that situation."

The gun was "irrelevant," Mayor Betsy Price said Monday.

"Atatiana was in her own home, caring for her 8-year-old nephew. She was a victim," she said.

Dean resigned without talking to internal affairs investigators, and what he saw and why he opened fire remained unclear. His attorney did not immediately return messages for comment.

The police chief did not directly address the nephew's account of the gun at a news briefing Tuesday. Police spokesman Sgt. Chris Daniels said the information was included in court papers, so a judge would have a clear understanding of the facts of the case.

"Leaving out pertinent information could be seen as misleading; Judges DO NOT like that," Daniels said in an email.

Dean was held on \$200,000 bond and released after posting bail less than four hours after his arrest. The police chief said he would have been fired if he hadn't quit first. Police also referred the case to the FBI for possible federal civil rights charges.

Apparently close to tears, Kraus pleaded with the city of nearly 900,000 not to allow the killing to reflect badly on the entire department.

"The officers are hurting," he said. "They try hard every day to try to make this city better." He added: "I likened it to a bunch of ants building an ant hill, and then somebody comes with a hose and washes it away. And they just have to start from scratch."

Merritt said Fort Worth needs to change its "brutal culture of policing," and Price, the mayor, has called for a top-to-bottom review of the department.

Dozens of people crowded Fort Worth's City Council chamber and hundreds more shouted outside to call for justice for Jefferson.

The Fort Worth Star-Telegram reports about 60 people signed up to speak to the council at its Tuesday night meeting. Once the chamber's capacity was reached, about 200 others who could not make it inside shouted bitter protests outside City Hall to Fort Worth police and political leaders.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 39 of 54

Of the nine officer-involved shootings so far this year in Fort Worth, five targeted African Americans and six resulted in death, according to department data.

Nearly two-thirds of the department's 1,100 officers are white, just over 20% are Hispanic, and about 10% are black. The city is about 40% white, 35% Hispanic and 19% black.

Bleed reported from Little Rock, Arkansas.

Associated Press writers Nomaan Merchant in Houston contributed to this report.

For the latest updates: <https://www.apnews.com/a32bdccdae4849dd8bbbdf9956367b95>

Cole pitches Astros past Yankees 4-1 for 2-1 lead in ALCS

By MIKE FITZPATRICK AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Gerrit Cole is making his pitch to own this October.

A gritty Cole held the New York Yankees scoreless without his sharpest stuff, Jose Altuve sparked Houston at the plate and the Astros locked down a 4-1 victory Tuesday to take a 2-1 lead in the AL Championship Series.

Altuve and Josh Reddick homered early off Luis Severino, who labored into the fifth while keeping the Yankees close. But they never broke through against Cole, who grinded through seven innings to win his 19th straight decision despite walking five batters for the second time in his career.

"Just boiled down to making some good pitches under pressure," he said.

Cole escaped a bases-loaded jam in the first and stranded nine runners through five, improving to 3-0 with a 0.40 ERA in three playoff outings this year. Poised to become a prized free agent who could command more than \$200 million, he's putting together a dominant run that's beginning to rival some of baseball's greatest postseason pitching performances.

The 29-year-old right-hander, unbeaten in 25 starts since late May, allowed four hits and struck out seven. That ended a streak of 11 consecutive games with double-digit strikeouts — the previous big league record was eight. Cole led the majors with 326 Ks this season.

"I think he's the best pitcher in baseball right now," Astros manager AJ Hinch said. "Gerrit is locked in. And to see him do it on the big stage in a playoff game with the magnitude of this game, it was pretty awesome."

Game 4 in the best-of-seven playoff is scheduled for Wednesday night — but that could change. The gloomy weather forecast calls for a substantial rainstorm, potentially forcing a postponement that would likely alter pitching plans for both teams.

Gleyber Torres homered in the eighth off Houston reliever Joe Smith, one batter after replay umpires reversed a call and ruled Edwin Encarnación out at first base. That led to a little trash and a ball being thrown onto the field before public address announcer Paul Olden reminded fans not to toss any objects out of the stands.

Roberto Osuna got three quick outs in the ninth for a save.

"Two more to go," Osuna said. "I'm excited."

The bushy-haired Cole grew up in California rooting for the Yankees and was drafted by them 28th overall in 2008. He didn't sign, choosing instead to attend UCLA before the Pittsburgh Pirates selected him with the top pick in 2011.

Making his second career start at Yankee Stadium, he got away with several pitches in key situations. Other times, Cole flashed the filthy breaking balls and 98-100 mph heat that have made him so unhittable in October — and unbeatable since May.

His winning streak is the longest by a pitcher in one year since Rube Marquard began 19-0 for the 1912 New York Giants.

"He's exceptional. And he gets better and better and better," Hinch said. "Once he found his curveball,

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 40 of 54

it was pretty lights out. I think he finished his outing as strong as ever.”

After rolling to a 7-0 victory in the series opener, the Yankees — the highest-scoring team in the majors this season — have totaled three runs on two homers in the last 20 innings.

“It’s obviously a little frustrating we weren’t able to break through with him,” manager Aaron Boone said. “But I think up and down we gave ourselves a chance. And anytime you’re facing a guy like that, you want that kind of traffic. And we had that in several innings. He made big pitches when he had to.”

With two on in the fifth and the Astros clinging to a 2-0 lead, Didi Gregorius lofted a high fly that Reddick caught at the right field fence.

“The emotions kind of followed the flyball, right?” Cole explained. “So it was kind of like low, to freaking out, to not so worried anymore.”

The three-time All-Star finally found his rhythm after that, retiring his last seven batters with three strikeouts.

He called his early fastball command “spotty,” but his ability to pitch out of trouble prevented a lively sellout crowd of 48,998 from really ever letting loose.

“I mean, we just had to work it,” Cole said.

Gregorius also grounded out with the bases loaded to end the first.

“Most of the game was on me,” he said. “I didn’t come through, so I was the one that failed, not the whole team.”

Houston got a rally going in the seventh against scuffling reliever Adam Ottavino. George Springer walked and went to third when Altuve executed a perfect run-and-hit single through the right side.

After savvy baserunning by Springer to stay in a rundown long enough to get runners to second and third, Altuve scored on Zack Britton’s wild pitch. Yuli Gurriel made it 4-0 with a sacrifice fly.

LET’S GET IT STARTED

The 5-foot-6 Altuve connected on Severino’s third pitch for his fourth homer of these playoffs, extending his postseason hitting streak to 12 games dating to last year.

“I think everybody knows I like swinging the bat,” he said. “I don’t like wasting too much time on home plate.”

FAST COMPANY

Cole has 32 strikeouts in the playoffs while allowing just one run. He joined Astros teammate Justin Verlander (2013 with Detroit) and Kevin Brown (1998 for San Diego) as the only pitchers to whiff at least 30 and permit no more than one run in a three-game postseason span, according to STATS.

TRAINER’S ROOM

Yankees LF Giancarlo Stanton sat out for the second consecutive game because of a strained right quadriceps. He was replaced in the lineup by CF Aaron Hicks, who batted ninth in his first start since Aug. 3 due to a strained flexor near his right elbow. Brett Gardner shifted from center to left. Hicks went 0 for 2 with two walks.

OUT AT HOME

Plate umpire Jeff Nelson exited with a concussion after taking two foul balls off his mask, causing a 16-minute delay before the fifth inning. Kerwin Danley, who was at second base, went inside and changed into gear to work the plate. Mark Carlson switched from third to second and Marvin Hudson from left field to third. Severino was given additional time to warm up again, and the game proceeded with a five-man crew and no left field ump.

UP NEXT

Both teams were planning bullpen games Wednesday night, but a rainout would allow them to bring back the Game 1 starters on full rest in Game 4 if it gets pushed to Thursday.

Yankees right-hander Masahiro Tanaka beat Zack Greinke in the opener last Saturday at Houston, improving to 5-2 with a 1.32 ERA in seven career postseason outings. Tanaka has permitted only one run and four hits over 11 innings in winning both his playoff games this year, while Greinke is 0-2 with an 8.38 ERA in two starts.

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

Vivid details emerge on Ukraine as impeachment quickens

By **LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK and LAURIE KELLMAN** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The impeachment inquiry is revealing vivid new details about the high-level unease over President Donald Trump's actions toward Ukraine, and those of his personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, as the swift-moving probe by House Democrats showed no signs Tuesday of easing.

The testimony from the witnesses, mainly officials from the State Department and other foreign policy posts, is largely corroborating the account of the government whistleblower whose complaint first sparked the impeachment inquiry, according to lawmakers attending the closed-door interviews.

One witness, former White House aide Fiona Hill, testified that national security adviser John Bolton was so alarmed by Giuliani's back-channel activities in Ukraine that he described him as a "hand grenade who is going to blow everybody up."

Another, career State Department official George Kent, testified Tuesday he was told by administration officials to "lay low" on Ukraine as "three amigos" tied to the White House took over U.S. foreign policy toward the Eastern European ally.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi, despite intensifying calls from Trump and Republicans to hold a formal vote to authorize the impeachment inquiry, showed no indication she would do so. She said Congress will continue its investigation as part of the Constitution's system of checks and balances of the executive.

"This is not a game for us. This is deadly serious. We're on a path that is taking us, a path to the truth," Pelosi told reporters after a closed-door session with House Democrats.

With Ukraine situated between the United States' Western allies and Russia, Pelosi noted the inquiry raises fresh questions about Trump's relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"All roads seem to lead to Putin with the president," she said.

Democratic leaders had been gauging support for a vote to authorize the impeachment inquiry after Trump and Republicans pushed them for a roll call. Holding a vote would test politically vulnerable Democrats in areas where the president is popular.

Trump calls the impeachment inquiry an "illegitimate process" and is blocking officials from cooperating.

But several Democratic freshmen who are military veterans or had careers in national security before joining Congress spoke up during the meeting Tuesday, warning Pelosi and her leadership team a vote was unnecessary and would be playing into Republicans' hands, according to a person granted anonymity to discuss the private session.

The inquiry is moving quickly as a steady stream of officials appear behind closed doors this week, some providing new revelations about the events surrounding the July 25 phone call between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. It is on that call that Trump urged Zelenskyy to investigate a firm tied to political rival Joe Biden's family and Ukraine's own involvement in the 2016 presidential election.

In a daylong session Tuesday, House investigators heard from Kent, who was concerned about the "fake news smear" against the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, whom Trump recalled in May, according to emails obtained by The Associated Press.

Kent told the lawmakers that he "found himself outside a parallel process" and had warned others about Giuliani as far back as March. He felt the shadow diplomacy was undermining decades of foreign policy and the rule of law in Ukraine and that was "wrong," said Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-Va.

Connolly said Kent described the results of a May 23 meeting at the White House, organized by Trump's acting chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney, where three administration officials — U.S. ambassador Gordon Sondland, special envoy Kurt Volker and Energy Secretary Rick Perry — declared themselves the people now responsible for Ukraine policy.

"They called themselves the three amigos," Connolly said Kent testified, and they said as much to Zelenskyy in Ukraine when they visited.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 42 of 54

Kent also told them that Trump, through the Office of Management and Budget, which Mulvaney previously led, was holding up military aid to Ukraine while pressing Zelenskiy to investigate a company linked to Biden's son.

"He was clearly bothered by the role Mr. Giuliani was playing," Connolly said.

In 10 hours of testimony Monday, Hill, the former White House aide who was a top adviser on Russia, recalled to investigators that Bolton had told her he was not part of "whatever drug deal Sondland and Mulvaney are cooking up," an apparent reference to talks over Ukraine.

She testified that Bolton asked her to take the concerns to National Security Council lawyer John Eisenberg.

As White House lawyers now try to learn more about the handling of the Ukraine call, Eisenberg is coming under particular scrutiny, said one White House official. He was both the official who ordered that the memorandum of the call be moved to a highly-classified system, and the one who involved the Justice Department in a complaint from the CIA general counsel. The latter caught the attention of the president, according to the official.

Giuliani said Tuesday he was "very disappointed" in Bolton's comment. Bolton, Giuliani said, "has been called much worse."

Giuliani also acknowledged he had received payments totaling \$500,000 related to the work for a company operated by Lev Parnas — who, along with associate Igor Fruman, played a key role in Giuliani's efforts to launch a Ukrainian corruption investigation against Biden and his son Hunter. The two men were arrested last week on campaign finance charges as they tried to board an international flight.

Trump's team won't comply with the Democratic inquiry. Giuliani and Vice President Mike Pence became the latest officials refusing to cooperate, saying through their lawyers they would not provide information requested by House Democrats as part of the impeachment inquiry.

The chairman leading the impeachment investigation, Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., said the stonewalling simply bolsters the charge that Trump is obstructing Congress.

"The case for Congress continues to build," Schiff said. He said Defense Secretary Mark Esper told investigators Sunday that he would comply with a subpoena request, only to be "countermanded" by a higher authority, likely Trump.

Sondland, whose text messages with other diplomats are part of a cache released by Volker and made public earlier this month, is scheduled to appear for an interview Thursday.

The interviews Monday and Tuesday, like the others conducted by House impeachment investigators, took place behind closed doors. Republican lawmakers have aimed their ire at the process, saying witnesses should be interviewed out in the open.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Democrats were trying to "cancel out" Trump's election with the march toward impeachment.

Five more officials are scheduled this week, mostly from the State Department, though it is unclear if they will all appear.

Michael McKinley, a former top aide to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo who resigned last week, is scheduled to testify Wednesday. McKinley, a career foreign service officer and Pompeo's de facto chief of staff, resigned Friday, ending a 37-year career.

Once Democrats have completed the probe and followed any other threads it produces, they will use their findings to help determine whether to vote on articles of impeachment.

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller, Michael Balsamo, Eric Tucker, Matthew Lee, Padmananda Rama, Andrew Taylor and Alan Fram in Washington and Jonathan Lemire in Dallas contributed to this report.

Fearing US abandonment, Kurds kept back channels wide open

By MATTHEW LEE and SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When Syria's Kurdish fighters, America's longtime battlefield allies against the Islamic State, announced over the weekend that they were switching sides and joining up with Damascus and Moscow, it seemed like a moment of geopolitical whiplash.

But in fact, the move had been in the works for more than a year. Fearing U.S. abandonment, the Kurds opened a back channel to the Syrian government and the Russians in 2018, and those talks ramped up significantly in recent weeks, American, Kurdish and Russian officials told The Associated Press.

"We warned the Kurds that the Americans will ditch them," Russia's ambassador to the European Union, Vladimir Chizhov, told Russia's Tass news agency on Monday.

The switch in allegiances is a stark illustration of how American foes like Russia and Syria are working steadily to fill the vacuum left by President Donald Trump's retreat in the region. It also betrays the anxiety that U.S. allies across the globe now feel in the face of Trump's seemingly impulsive foreign policy decisions, which often come as a surprise to allies and critics alike.

When Trump announced Oct. 6 that he was pulling American troops back from northeastern Syria, paving the way for an assault by Turkey, the Kurds knew exactly where to turn.

Syria's Kurds have publicly acknowledged courting the Syrian government and its allies over the past year. But much of the back-channel diplomacy, including the most recent talks, happened behind the scenes.

Discussions between the Kurds, the Syrian government and Moscow began early last year as the Kurds grew nervous that the Americans would leave them in the lurch, Kurdish officials said. Pulling U.S. troops out of northeastern Syria would leave the Kurds directly in Turkey's line of fire, because the Americans served as something of a buffer between the two sides.

The Turks have long been eager for an opportunity to go into Syria and flush out the Kurdish fighters, whom they consider terrorists. Turkey says the group is an offshoot of a Kurdish guerrilla group known as the Kurdistan Workers' Party, which has waged a decades-long insurgency inside Turkey.

As Turkey spoiled for a fight, the Kurdish fighters were losing confidence in their alliance with the Americans. For five years, the Kurds had fought alongside U.S. soldiers and were vital to defeating the Islamic State group — something Trump repeatedly touts as a signature achievement of his presidency.

After all that, would the Americans really abandon them?

Trump sent signals they would, venting regularly about U.S. troops in Syria and wondering why U.S. soldiers were in the Middle East at all. The relationship with the Americans was wobbling.

Sensing an opportunity, Moscow reached out to the Kurds and asked them to forgo their alliance with the United States. Kurdish officials rejected the outreach publicly, saying they were sticking with the Americans.

What happened next was, in many ways, a turning point. Turkey launched a military operation — with the blessing of Russia — in Afrin, a Kurdish area of northwestern Syria. The Kurds complained that the U.S. was standing by doing nothing while they took hit after hit from Turkey.

Afrin has major significance to the Kurds. It's one of the first Kurdish areas to rise up against Syrian President Bashar Assad and back self-rule, a base for senior fighters who pioneered the alliance with the Americans and a key link in their efforts to form a contiguous entity along Turkey's border.

The back-channel discussions heated up.

In one of the first high-level meetings in Russia, a Kurdish delegation flew to Moscow in November 2018, where on the same day a Turkish senior security delegation was present. At the time, Arab newspapers reported that Turkey had proposed a 30-kilometer (19-mile) deep safe zone along the border. Russia argued for a 5- to 9-kilometer (3- to 5-mile) zone, but the Kurdish delegation rejected it.

Days after, the same delegation, headed by a Kurdish militia leader, flew to Damascus, where it reportedly met with the Syrian intelligence chief and other senior security officials in the presence of a high-level Russian delegation. The secret meeting was reported by a veteran Syrian reporter at Ashraq al-Awsat, a Saudi-owned newspaper, who said the Kurdish delegation told Damascus they did not want to repeat the Afrin mistake and were ready to show flexibility.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 44 of 54

The meeting resulted in the first cooperation between the Kurdish group and the Syrian government — at least in public. And it signaled the fraying ties with the U.S.

The Kurdish militia invited the Syrian government to send in troops to protect another Kurdish-held area, Manbij, where the U.S. had a presence. The move would have undermined U.S. power and influence in the area, but the Syrians ultimately pulled back, to a Russian base nearby, according to AP journalists who traveled to the area.

In December 2018, Trump — against the advice of his senior policy advisers — announced that he was going to pull all American troops out of Syria. The surprise announcement prompted the resignations of Defense Secretary James Mattis and Brett McGurk, the special envoy for the counter-IS campaign.

Even though Trump's national security team managed to delay the withdrawal, the Kurds were concerned enough to expand their contacts with Damascus and Moscow.

A U.S. official said the Kurds described it as an insurance policy to guard against Turkey in the event the U.S. left. The official said the Kurds preferred to deal with the United States on military issues and on matters related to civilian governance and reconstruction, but they determined it was unwise to count on support from Washington alone.

He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

After Mattis and McGurk resigned, senior Kurdish official Ilham Ahmed said the Kurds presented Moscow with a framework for possible talks with Damascus. The plan's 11 points included the recognition of Syria's territorial integrity and the inclusion of Kurdish-led forces within the Syrian army.

In return, the Kurds would get a political agreement establishing a decentralized Kurdish state, which would give them some level of self-governance. But the proposal never went anywhere.

The deal the Kurds' struck this weekend with Syria and Russia was negotiated in Aleppo and finalized in Damascus, said Razan Hiddo, a senior Kurdish official. Kurdish forces will work side by side with the Syrian army to try to ward off the Turkish offensive, which began swiftly last week after Trump told Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan that U.S. troops would no longer be in the way.

Hiddo told the AP that the first part of the agreement will see Syrian forces deploy in the city of Manbij and be followed by Kobani — a strategic decision to keep the Turkish offensive from expanding west.

Another Kurdish official, Badran Ciya Kurd, said the deal applies only to military protection and was forced upon the Kurds once they determined that Trump's decision could not be swayed.

"After we found that the U.S. decision is unwavering, we had to look into other options," he said.

On Tuesday, the results of the back channel were on clear display: Russia moved to fill the void left by the United States in northern Syria, deploying troops to keep apart advancing Syrian government forces and Turkish troops.

Syrian troops waved flags after they rolled into Manbij.

Trump, meanwhile, has dug in on his decision to pull out the troops, believing it fulfills a key campaign promise and will be a winning issue in the 2020 election, according to three White House officials and Republicans close to the White House.

It's not a new issue for the president: He rallied around it in 2016 and, during his term, repeatedly urged bringing the troops home only to be talked out of it by moderating forces like Mattis and his former chief of staff, John Kelly.

But those guardrails are gone, and the issue never left Trump's mind. He has told aides that the chants of "Bring them home!" from his rally crowds, including one in Minnesota earlier this month, are evidence that the decision is popular with his base — a key demographic as he heads into the 2020 election.

Russia and Syria, meanwhile, are in a strong position to fill the vacuum left by Trump.

Last week, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was asked about how both the Syrians and the Kurds were looking for Russia to step in as a mediator.

Lavrov made no promises, but said, "We'll see what we can do."

___ El Deeb reported from Beirut. Associated Press Writer Jonathan Lemire in Washington contributed to this report.

Bomb scare at Montana school turns out to be false alarm

By AMY BETH HANSON Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — Authorities evacuated an elementary school in Montana on Tuesday after officials found what they thought were the remnants of a homemade bomb that exploded, but it turned out to be a plastic bottle filled with nuts and bolts left in the schoolyard.

School officials in Helena made the discovery shortly before classes began at Rossiter Elementary School. They blocked off the area and called 911, Lewis and Clark County Sheriff Leo Dutton said.

An investigation found the plastic bottle wrapped in black electrical tape was full of washers, nuts and bolts, along with a non-flammable unidentified liquid, Dutton said. There was no detonator.

A homeless person found the bottle at a construction site and left it at the playground, Dutton said. No threat had been made against the school, and there were no injuries or damage.

"Pretty much it's solved," Dutton said. "We know who put it there and it wasn't malicious. It did look like a bomb. The school acted appropriately."

The 490 students walked to a nearby location where they could be picked up by their parents, Superintendent Tyler Ream said. School buses kept them warm.

Police closed the school and searched the grounds for additional devices. Thousands of students across Helena and East Helena were kept inside while authorities did the sweep, authorities said.

Searches also were conducted at the state Capitol and government buildings, Dutton said.

Deputies who responded to the 911 call initially believed it was a bomb, Dutton said. "They were looking at a debris field, what looked like a debris field," he said.

"It wasn't until we could get the bomb squad in there and the evidence team that we learned exactly what it was," Dutton said. "You wouldn't expect any patrol deputy to pick it up and look at it and possibly injure himself or others."

Classes were scheduled to resume Wednesday, said Ream, who planned to meet with teachers and staff to discuss how they would explain the events to the children.

"The really important message is if you see something and you don't think it's safe, tell somebody," Ream said, adding it may be difficult to explain the initial concern to a 5-year-old.

Helena is a small city of about 30,000 people in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. The school is in a neighborhood just north of the city's center.

This story clarifies that the students walked to the evacuation site.

As NBA-China tweet rift continues, James enters spotlight

By TIM REYNOLDS and GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writers

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. (AP) — LeBron James has stepped into the spotlight of the now-strained relationship between the NBA and China with his comments about the league executive who started the ongoing fallout with what James derided as a "misinformed" tweet. Politicians, human rights groups and ordinary fans on social media have criticized the outspoken superstar, questioning the motivation of James' comments.

James spoke out Monday, his seven-minute session with reporters putting him squarely in the center of the ongoing international schism. Houston general manager Daryl Morey was "not really educated on the situation," James asserted, when he sent out that since-deleted Oct. 4 tweet showing support for Hong Kong's pro-democracy protests.

On Tuesday, James acknowledged the criticism — and said he expected that it would be coming.

"Obviously, it's a tough situation that we're all in right now, ... I think when an issue comes up, if you feel passionate about it or you feel like it's something you want to talk about, then so be it," James said. "I also don't think that every issue should be everybody's problem as well."

Monday's comments unleashed an immediate backlash against James, who has often spoken out on social and political matters, with some expressing dismay that this time he seemed to be more concerned about protecting his own brand and financial interests in China, where he enjoys enormous popularity.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 46 of 54

"I've always been welcomed with open arms," James said. "I've been to China probably 15 to 20 times ... to have this beautiful game that we all love to be able to bring people together in the most positive way."

That is not the case right now. James was in China for the two games last week between his Los Angeles Lakers and the Brooklyn Nets that were played under most unusual circumstances — with no pregame or postgame media sessions, first by decree of the Chinese and then from the NBA, and with several major league Chinese partners pulling their support of the exhibitions.

With the Lakers and Nets now home, the rift and debate about what the league should have done continues, reinvigorated by James speaking out.

"The situation ... has flared up again," said Matt Powell, a sports business analyst at research firm The NPD Group. "LeBron is getting a lot of criticism on social media."

It wasn't limited to the Twitter world, either.

Protesters in Hong Kong on Tuesday trampled on James' jerseys, burning one, and threw basketballs at a photo of the four-time NBA MVP — a global sports icon whose image has taken a clear hit.

Among James' comments Monday night, his first publicly shared thoughts on the matter: "So many people could have been harmed, not only financially but emotionally, physically and spiritually" by Morey's tweet.

That fanned the fallout fire, including from U.S. lawmakers who said they believed the NBA's primary goal had been to protect the league's massive financial interest when it comes to its relationship with China instead of more vigorously defending Morey's right to free speech.

Sen. Rick Scott of Florida, a frequent critic of James, tweeted both Monday night and again Tuesday morning about the NBA star's comments, accusing him of "kowtowing to Communist China." The office of Sen. Ben Sasse of Nebraska also tweeted at James, saying "you're parroting communist propaganda."

Morey has not apologized, and has not said anything publicly since two tweets on Oct. 6 attempting to clarify his thinking.

At a media availability on Tuesday, several Rockets players and coach Mike D'Antoni declined to say much of anything about James' comments.

"I haven't seen it," Rockets star guard James Harden told reporters.

Rockets center Tyson Chandler, who was James' teammate on the Lakers last season, also passed on expressing an opinion.

"I think again everybody's thoughts are their own," Chandler told reporters. "I think LeBron's (are) his, Daryl's (are) his and I like to stay out of people's thoughts."

Teammate forward Thabo Sefolosha, who was born in Switzerland and is in his first year with the Rockets, did touch briefly on the free-speech issue. "Everybody is entitled to their opinion, entitled to what they want to say. That's the beauty about this country."

China is considered the fastest-growing market for Nike, with whom James has a lifetime endorsement deal. In the most recent fiscal year, its revenue from China jumped 21% from the previous year, while overall, sales in China made up 16% of Nike's total revenue.

James has often spoken out on issues he feels passionate about. When he played in Miami, he and other Heat players wore hoodies in reaction to the death of Trayvon Martin — an unarmed black teen who was wearing a hoodie when he was shot dead by a neighborhood watch volunteer in Florida in 2012.

He also has supported Colin Kaepernick, the former San Francisco 49ers quarterback who began kneeling during the national anthem in an effort to raise awareness of racial oppression and police brutality. He's a frequent critic of President Donald Trump, campaigned for 2016 Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton and most recently sat with California Gov. Gavin Newsom as the Democrat signed into law a bill that will allow college athletes in that state to hire agents and make money from endorsement deals.

Newsom signed that bill while appearing on a special episode of HBO's "The Shop: Uninterrupted" — part of James' off-court business empire. James is also the founder of a school for inner-city kids in his hometown of Akron, Ohio.

James said his reaction to Morey's tweet, which read "Fight For Freedom: Stand With Hong Kong" before it was deleted within hours as the Chinese backlash grew, was not about its substance. Rather, he wrote, it was his belief that the Rockets' executive did not consider the ramifications — or the timing, while he

and his teammates were in China.

"My team and this league just went through a difficult week. I think people need to understand what a tweet or statement can do to others. And I believe nobody stopped and considered what would happen. Could have waited a week to send it," he wrote on Twitter.

___ Reynolds reported from Miami. AP Sports writers Kristie Rieken in Houston and John Leicester in Hong Kong, and AP Retail Writer Joseph Pisani in New York contributed to this report.

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

Felicity Huffman starts serving prison time in college scam

By JOCELYN GECKER Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — "Desperate Housewives" star Felicity Huffman — aka inmate No. 77806-112 — reported Tuesday to a federal prison in California to serve a two-week sentence in a college admissions scandal that underscored the lengths some wealthy parents will go to get their children into top universities.

Huffman's husband, actor William H. Macy, dropped her off at the Federal Correctional Institution, Dublin, a low-security prison for women in the San Francisco Bay Area, according to TASC Group, which represents Huffman.

The prison has been described by media as "Club Fed," making its way onto a Forbes list in 2009 of "America's 10 Cushiest Prisons." It has housed well-known inmates in the past, including "Hollywood Madam" Heidi Fleiss.

Once inside the prison, Huffman will share a room and open toilet with three other inmates, according to a TASC Group publicist who declined to be named in accordance with company policy. The person said the actress will be subjected to five bed checks a day while having access to a gym, library and TV room.

Sally Swarts, a spokeswoman for the prison, said she could not provide specific information on Huffman but noted that everything in the inmate handbook would apply to the actress.

It says inmates are assigned khaki pants, blouse and brown T-shirt with a nametag that must be displayed all the time. Wakeup on weekdays is 5 a.m., with breakfast at 5:30, and beds must be made by 6. Inmates who have been medically cleared typically work in food service, a maintenance shop or as a unit orderly.

Huffman, 56, "is prepared to serve the term of imprisonment Judge (Indira) Talwani ordered as one part of the punishment she imposed for Ms. Huffman's actions," the TASC Group said in a statement that provided no further details.

A federal judge in Boston sentenced Huffman last month to 14 days in prison, a \$30,000 fine, 250 hours of community service and a year's probation after she pleaded guilty to fraud and conspiracy for paying an admissions consultant \$15,000 to have a proctor correct her daughter's SAT answers.

The Emmy-award winning actress tearfully apologized at her sentencing, saying, "I was frightened. I was stupid, and I was so wrong."

The judge noted that Huffman took steps "to get one more advantage" for her daughter in a system "already so distorted by money and privilege."

Huffman was the first parent sentenced in the scandal, which was the biggest college admissions case ever prosecuted by the Justice Department.

A total of 51 people have been charged in the case. Many of the parents are accused of paying William "Rick" Singer, an admissions consultant at the center of the scheme, to bribe exam administrators to allow someone else to take tests for their children or to correct their answers, authorities say. Others are accused of paying Singer to bribe coaches in exchange for helping their children get into schools as fake athletic recruits.

Huffman paid \$15,000 to boost her older daughter's SAT scores. Singer, who has pleaded guilty, was accused of bribing a test proctor to correct the teenager's answers.

The amount Huffman paid is relatively low compared with other alleged bribes in the scheme. Some parents were accused of paying up to \$500,000.

Catalan protesters, police clash for second straight night

By ARITZ PARRA and RENATA BRITO Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Violent clashes erupted for a second night in Barcelona between police and protesters angry about the conviction of a dozen Catalan separatist leaders, as Spain launched an investigation Tuesday into an activist group organizing the demonstrations.

Thousands of people held vigils near the Spanish government offices in Catalonia's four provinces. But the gatherings turned into melees, with protesters hurling firecrackers and other objects at anti-riot officers and kicking temporary fences around the official buildings.

In Barcelona, protesters sang the Catalan anthem and shouted "The streets will always be ours" and "Independence," while they called Spanish police "occupying forces" and urged them to leave Catalonia. Demonstrators erected improvised barricades with trash bins, fences and piles of cardboard that they set on fire.

The greatly outnumbered riot police went in with shields and batons striking protesters in their path. They hit people on the legs mostly and fired foam-type anti-riot bullets that dispersed the crowds.

There were also clashes in Girona, Lleida and Tarragona as well as smaller towns across Catalonia.

In a statement late Tuesday, the office of the Spanish prime minister said protesters were causing "damage" and "vandalism," and accused "groups who use street violence to break coexistence in Catalonia" of coordinating the rioting.

Most impromptu protesters were responding to an online campaign by Tsunami Democratic, a loose, leaderless grassroots group that uses encrypted messaging apps to call for peaceful disobedience.

Spain's caretaker interior minister, Fernando Grande-Marlaska, said authorities were investigating the group.

Vigils on Tuesday evening were initially called by ANC and Omnium, two grassroots pro-secession groups whose leaders Jordi Sánchez and Jordi Cuixart were sentenced Monday to nine years in prison for sedition.

In written answers to questions sent to Sánchez in prison, the activist-turned-politician defended the non-violent nature of the Catalan independence movement.

"The risk of frustration is always there among certain people when there is a movement so big of millions," Sánchez wrote. "But I don't see any future for violence. We don't practice it, nor do we defend it."

Seven politicians were also given prison terms of around a decade in Monday's Supreme Court ruling and three more were fined for disobeying the laws as they pushed ahead with a banned referendum on Oct. 1, 2017, and briefly declaring independence based on its results before Spain crushed the defiance.

On Tuesday, protesters also blocked highways, smaller roads and railway tracks for brief periods following an attempt to besiege Barcelona's international airport Monday night that left thousands of travelers stranded. Many, desperate to catch their flights, were forced to walk with their luggage on highways and across fields.

The airport authority said 110 flights were canceled Monday and 45 Tuesday, when nearly 1,000 operated normally.

Officials said six people had been arrested — three on Monday and three on Tuesday. More than 170 people were reported injured, including about 40 police officers and a protester who lost an eye.

The court's ruling Monday also barred the 12 convicted Catalan separatists from holding public office. That has an immediate impact in the upcoming Nov. 10 Spanish election because six of them were planning to run as candidates to the national parliament.

The verdict is likely to be a central issue in the election campaign but "it is unlikely to substantially alter the electoral outlook unless the situation worsens significantly in the region," said Antonio Barroso, a political risk analyst with the London-based Teneo consulting firm.

He said Catalan separatist politicians wanted to use the backlash against the ruling to woo pro-independence voters to the polls.

Others have feared that swelling support for Catalan separatism because of the sentences could make the next political term even more key to either breaking the deadlock with separatists or making it a

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 49 of 54

chronicle problem.

Spain's caretaker prime minister and Socialist leader, Pedro Sánchez, who won the April election but failed to get support for a minority government, is hoping to remain in office.

Even from the early hours after the Supreme Court ruling was issued, very different views emerged from Madrid and Catalonia. While Sánchez called for beginning a "new phase" and urged Catalan separatists to abide by the law, the ruling invigorated the wealthy region's independence movement, with many of its leaders making new calls to work toward effective secession or repeating the slogan "we will do it again."

Cuixart told The Associated Press by email via his lawyer that he and the others sentenced by the Supreme Court will take their case to the European Court of Human Rights.

"We have the moral obligation to denounce (Spain's) authoritarian drift and appeal to European citizens to defend human rights," Cuixart wrote Tuesday.

The Catalan regional president, Quim Torra, said secessionists won't give up their fight.

"A referendum is the most positive solution for solving this situation," he told foreign reporters in Barcelona on Tuesday.

The caretaker Spanish foreign minister, Josep Borrell, soon due to become the European Union's top diplomat, said the court's ruling would not resolve the underlying political problems. Only dialogue "in the framework of the constitution" could do that, he said. Spain's constitution says the country is indivisible.

"Yesterday, today and tomorrow it is and remains a political problem that has to be solved," Borrell told foreign reporters, adding that Catalan separatists shouldn't ignore Catalans like him who are against independence.

Protests are likely to extend throughout the week. A three-day student strike begins Wednesday in the region, and a worker's union has called a separate strike for Friday.

Associated Press writer Renata Brito reported in Barcelona and AP writer Aritz Parra reported from Madrid. AP writer Ciarán Giles in Madrid contributed to this report.

Russia seeks to cement its role as power broker in Syria

By **LETERIS PITARAKIS** and **BASSEM MROUE** Associated Press

CEYLANPINAR, Turkey (AP) — Russia moved to fill the void left by the United States in northern Syria on Tuesday, deploying troops to keep apart advancing Syrian government forces and Turkish troops. At the same time, tensions grew within NATO as Turkey defied growing condemnation of its invasion from its Western allies.

Now in its seventh day, Turkey's offensive against Kurdish fighters has caused tens of thousands to flee their homes, has upended alliances and is re-drawing the map of northern Syria for yet another time in the 8-year-old war.

Russia moved quickly to further entrench its role as a power broker after U.S. President Donald Trump ordered the pullout of American forces in northeastern Syria. The American move effectively abandoned the Kurdish fighters who were allied with the U.S. and cleared the way for Turkey's invasion aimed at crushing them.

Desperate for a new protector, the Kurdish administration struck a deal with the Russia-backed government of Syrian President Bashar Assad, whose forces on Sunday began moving into Kurdish-administered areas to shield them against Turkey.

Syrian troops waved flags after they rolled into Manbij, a flashpoint town west of the Euphrates River that Turkey had been aiming to capture and wrest from Kurdish control. Video by Russian journalists with the troops showed what appeared to be an abandoned outpost where U.S. forces had been stationed.

A U.S. military spokesman, Col. Myles B. Caggins, confirmed U.S. troops had completed their pullout from Manbij. During the withdrawal, contacts were kept open with the Turks and Russians to ensure the several hundred American forces there got out safely, U.S. officials said.

U.S. troops have had outposts in Manbij since 2017, when they went in to avert a battle over the town

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 50 of 54

between Turkish and Kurdish fighters.

Now Russia was playing that role. Outside Manbij, Russian troops patrolled front lines between Turkish and Syrian army positions to keep them apart, Russia's Defense Ministry said.

"No one is interested" in fighting between Syrian government troops and Turkish forces, said Alexander Lavrentyev, Moscow's envoy for Syria. Russia "is not going to allow it," he told Russian state news agencies.

Kelly Craft, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, told reporters Washington is "deeply concerned" that Russian troops are patrolling between the two sides.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu spoke to U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper to discuss "issues of mutual interest in the context of situation in Syria," the Russian Defense Ministry said in a brief statement, without elaborating.

Russia has been a staunch ally of Assad for decades and entered the Syrian conflict in 2015, providing air power that eventually turned the tide of the war in his favor. The Russian military has shipped weapons to Damascus, trained thousands of troops and put its advisers in key Syrian military units.

In the first week of the Turkish assault, at least 154 fighters from the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces have been killed, as well as 128 fighters from Turkish-backed Syrian factions, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a monitor of the war. It said at least 69 civilians have been killed in Syria. Turkey says six of its soldiers have died, as well as at least 20 Turkish civilians killed by Kurdish mortar fire across the border.

Despite the Syrian and Russian deployments, Turkey insisted it would capture Manbij. Asked on Sky News if Turkey's military was willing to fight Assad's army, Vice President Fuat Oktay said, "We hope it's not going to happen, but again we are determined to get control over Manbij."

Mortar fire from Manbij killed two Turkish soldiers and wounded seven others, the Turkish Defense Ministry said. An Associated Press team later saw up to 200 Turkish troops along with armored vehicles crossing near Manbij and Kobani, a border town that is not yet secured by Syrian forces. Farther east on the border, Turkish and Kurdish forces were in heavy battles over the town of Ras al-Ayn, captured by Turkish troops days earlier.

A U.S. official said the approximately 1,000 U.S. troops being withdrawn from northern Syria will reposition in Iraq, Kuwait and possibly Jordan. The U.S. forces in Iraq could conduct cross-border operations against the Islamic State group in Syria as they did before creating the now-abandoned partnership with Syrian Kurdish-led forces, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive planning for a U.S. pullout.

After opening the way for the Turkish assault with its pullout, Washington is now trying to restrain its fellow NATO member.

Trump on Monday announced sanctions aimed at Turkey's economy. The U.S. called on Turkey to stop the offensive and declare a cease-fire, while European Union countries moved to broaden an arms sale embargo against their easternmost ally.

Trump was sending Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and national security adviser Robert O'Brien to Ankara to try to begin negotiations to stop the fighting. Pence said Trump spoke directly to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who promised not to attack the border town of Kobani, which in 2015 saw the Islamic State group's first defeat in a battle by the U.S.-backed Kurdish fighters.

Erdogan made clear, however, that he had no intention of halting the Turkish offensive. "They say 'declare a ceasefire.' We could never declare a ceasefire," he told reporters.

The U.N. Security Council planned a closed meeting Wednesday on the situation, requested by Germany and other EU members. "Everybody hopes that ... we can do something to bring back the parties to the peace process," said the current Security Council president, South Africa's U.N. Ambassador Jerry Matjila.

NATO ambassadors also will meet on Wednesday in Brussels on Turkey's offensive, said alliance Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg.

Erdogan defended Turkey's offensive in a column in the Wall Street Journal, urging the international community to support Ankara's effort to create what it calls a resettlement "safe zone" for refugees in

northeastern Syria, or “begin admitting refugees.”

“Turkey reached its limit,” Erdogan wrote of the 3.6 million Syrians in his country. He said Turkey’s warnings it would be unable to stop refugee floods into the West without international support “fell on deaf ears.”

Turkey said it invaded northern Syria to create a zone of control the entire length of the border and drive out the Kurdish fighters, which it regards as terrorists because of their links to Kurdish insurgents in Turkey.

Instead, after the Kurds’ deal with Damascus, a new de facto carving up of the border appeared to be taking shape.

Turkish forces control the beginnings of a truncated zone roughly in the center of the border about 100 kilometers (60 miles) long between the towns of Tel Abyad and Ras al-Ain.

Syrian government troops were moving into or increasing their presence in areas on either side of that enclave, including Manbij to the west and the cities of Qamishli and Hassakeh in the far northeastern corner of Syria.

Though they gain protection from the Turks by the deal with Damascus, the Kurds risk losing the virtual self-rule they have enjoyed across the northeast — the heartland of their minority community — ever since Assad pulled his troops from the area seven years ago to fight rebels elsewhere.

The U.N. humanitarian aid coordinator said at least 160,000 civilians in northeastern Syria have been displaced amid the Turkish operations.

Mroue reported from Beirut. Associated Press writers Nataliya Vasilyeva in Moscow, Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations and Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Turkey, contributed.

New study: Opioid crisis cost US economy \$631B over 4 years

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

The opioid crisis cost the U.S. economy \$631 billion from 2015 through last year — and it may keep getting more expensive, according to a study released Tuesday by the Society of Actuaries.

The biggest driver of the cost over the four-year period is unrealized lifetime earnings of those who died from the drugs, followed by health care costs.

While more than 2,000 state and local governments have sued the drug industry over the crisis, the report released Tuesday finds that governments bear less than one-third of the financial costs. The rest of it affects individuals and the private sector.

The federal government is tracking how many lives are lost to the opioid crisis (more than 400,000 Americans since 2000), but pinning down the financial cost is less certain.

A U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report from found the cost for 2013 at \$79 billion. That’s less than half the cost that the latest report has found in more recent years. The crisis also has deepened since 2013, with fentanyl and other strong synthetic opioids contributing to a higher number of deaths. Overall, opioid-related death numbers rose through 2017 before leveling off last year at about 47,000.

A study published in 2017 by the White House Council of Economic Advisers estimated a far higher cost — just over \$500 billion a year. The new study notes that the White House one used much higher figures for the value of lives lost to opioids — attempting to quantify their economic value rather than just future income.

The actuaries’ report is intended partly to help the insurance industry figure out how to factor opioid use disorder into policy pricing.

It found that the cost of the opioid crisis this year is likely to be between \$171 billion and \$214 billion. Even under the most optimistic scenario, the cost would be higher than it was in 2017.

The study was released just ahead of the first federal trial on the opioid crisis, scheduled to start next week in Cleveland where a jury will hear claims from Ohio’s Cuyahoga and Summit counties against six companies. The counties claim the drug industry created a public nuisance and should pay.

The report found that criminal justice and child-welfare system costs have been pushed up by the opioid

epidemic.

Most of the added health care costs for dealing with opioid addiction and overdoses were borne by Medicaid, Medicare and other government programs, according to the report. Still, the crisis rang up \$18 billion in commercial insurance costs last year. Lost productivity costs added another \$27 billion.

Businesses have begun noticing. Last week, a small West Virginia home improvement company, Al Marino Inc., filed a class-action lawsuit against several companies, claiming the opioid crisis was a reason its health insurance costs were skyrocketing.

Still, the biggest cost burden fell on families due to lost earnings of those who died. Those mortality costs alone came to more than \$72 billion last year, the report said.

Members of a committee representing unsecured creditors helping guide opioid maker Purdue Pharma's bankruptcy process have been calling for money in any settlement to go toward to people affected by the crisis and not just governments.

George Conway donates to Trump's GOP primary challenger

By HUNTER WOODALL Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — The husband of White House counselor Kellyanne Conway has donated to one of President Donald Trump's Republican primary challengers.

According to Federal Election Commission filings, George Conway donated \$5,600 to former Illinois congressman Joe Walsh's 2020 run on Aug. 30.

Conway, an attorney, has been critical of Trump during his presidency. In March, Trump tweeted that Conway is "a stone cold LOSER & husband from hell!" For his part, Conway has questioned the president's mental health and described Trump's presidency as "maddening to watch."

In addition to Walsh, former Massachusetts Gov. Bill Weld and former South Carolina governor and congressman Mark Sanford are also running against Trump in the Republican presidential primary.

Several states have decided to cancel their Republican primaries ahead of the 2020 election, an effort that helps smooth Trump's path to reelection.

Asian shares rise after Wall Street gain on solid earnings

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares were higher Wednesday after a gain on Wall Street boosted by healthy earnings reports from U.S. companies.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 rose 1.6% in morning trading to 22,554.05, while Australia's S&P/ASX 200 gained 1.0% to 6,720.10, while South Korea's Kospi added 0.6% to 2,079.39. Hong Kong's Hang Seng was up 0.5% at 26,638.14, while the Shanghai Composite edged up nearly 0.2% to 2,996.50.

Stocks notched solid gains on Wall Street on Tuesday as investors welcomed surprisingly good quarterly results from some of the nation's biggest companies.

Strong earnings from UnitedHealth Group, JPMorgan Chase and other companies helped power the market's broad gains, erasing modest losses from a day earlier.

Investors are looking to the wave of quarterly report cards due out over the next few weeks to give them a clearer picture of what impact the trade war between the U.S. and China is having on corporate profits and the broader economy.

"Global market sentiment was seen picking up a notch overnight with Wall Street gaining on earnings despite the uncertainty that persists on U.S.-China trade," said Jingyi Pan, market strategist with IG in Singapore.

"Breaking news of China threatening to retaliate if U.S. passes the Hong Kong bill and the IMF's latest downgrading of the global growth forecast appear to be doing little to the trading action so far this morning, but remains items highlighting the uncertainty in outlook."

The encouraging earnings reports came with a spate of surprisingly good forecasts for the rest of the year, which helped ease concerns about a slowdown due to the costly trade conflict.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 53 of 54

The S&P 500 index climbed 29.53 points, or 1%, to 2,995.68. The benchmark index is now 1% below its all-time high set in July.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 237.44 points, or 0.9%, to 27,024.80. The Nasdaq gained 100.06 points, or 1.2%, to 8,148.71. Small-company stocks also bounced back after leading the decline a day earlier. The Russell 2000 index picked up 17.87 points, or 1.2%, to 1,523.30.

On Friday, the U.S. agreed to suspend a planned hike in tariffs on \$250 billion of Chinese goods that had been set to kick in Tuesday. Beijing, meanwhile, agreed to buy \$40 billion to \$50 billion in U.S. farm products.

The U.S. did not, however, cancel plans for more tariffs in December and the sticking points of intellectual property and trade secrets still hang over the dispute.

ENERGY:

Benchmark crude oil rose 13 cents to \$52.94 a barrel. It fell 78 cents to \$52.81 a barrel Tuesday. Brent crude oil, the international standard, rose 10 cents to \$58.84 a barrel.

CURRENCIES:

The dollar rose to 108.69 Japanese yen from 108.27 yen on Monday. The euro strengthened to \$1.1028 from \$1.1006.

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

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 16, the 289th day of 2019. There are 76 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 16, 1962, the Cuban missile crisis began as President John F. Kennedy was informed that reconnaissance photographs had revealed the presence of missile bases in Cuba.

On this date:

In 1793, during the French Revolution, Marie Antoinette, the queen of France, was beheaded.

In 1859, radical abolitionist John Brown led a group of 21 men in a raid on Harpers Ferry in western Virginia. (Ten of Brown's men were killed and five escaped. Brown and six followers were captured; all were executed.)

In 1901, Booker T. Washington dined at the White House as the guest of President Theodore Roosevelt, whose invitation to the black educator sparked controversy.

In 1916, Planned Parenthood had its beginnings as Margaret Sanger and her sister, Ethel Byrne, opened the first birth control clinic in Brooklyn, New York. (The clinic ended up being raided by police and Sanger was arrested.)

In 1934, Chinese Communists, under siege by the Nationalists, began their "long march" lasting a year from southeastern to northwestern China.

In 1968, American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos sparked controversy at the Mexico City Olympics by giving "black power" salutes during a victory ceremony after they'd won gold and bronze medals in the 200-meter race.

In 1969, the New York Mets capped their miracle season by winning the World Series, defeating the Baltimore Orioles, 5-3, in Game 5 played at Shea Stadium.

In 1978, the College of Cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church chose Cardinal Karol Wojtyla (voy-TEE'-wah) to be the new pope; he took the name John Paul II.

In 1987, a 58-1/2-hour drama in Midland, Texas, ended happily as rescuers freed Jessica McClure, an 18-month-old girl trapped in a narrow, abandoned well.

In 1991, a deadly shooting rampage took place in Killeen, Texas, as a gunman opened fire at a Luby's Cafeteria, killing 23 people before taking his own life.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 107 ~ 54 of 54

In 1995, a vast throng of black men gathered in Washington, D.C. for the "Million Man March" led by Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

In 2002, President George W. Bush signed a congressional resolution authorizing war against Iraq. The White House announced that North Korea had disclosed it had a nuclear weapons program.

Ten years ago: The government reported that the federal budget deficit for the just-ended fiscal year totaled an all-time high of \$1.42 trillion (a record which still stands). Agricultural officials said pigs in Minnesota had tested positive for the H1N1 virus, or swine flu, the first such cases in the U.S.

Five years ago: During a special congressional hearing on the Ebola crisis, Republican lawmakers pressed for a ban on travel to the U.S. from the West African outbreak zone; the White House resisted the idea and tried to tamp down fear as the pool of Americans being monitored expanded. Travis Ishikawa hit the first homer to end an NL Championship Series, a three-run drive that sent San Francisco to a 6-3 victory over the St. Louis Cardinals in Game 5.

One year ago: A Turkish official said police searching the Saudi Consulate found evidence that Saudi writer Jamal Khashoggi (jah-MAHL' khahr-SHOHK'-jee) had been killed there. President Donald Trump, in an Associated Press interview, criticized the global condemnation of Saudi Arabia over the disappearance of Khashoggi, describing it as a rush to judgment like the one he said had been aimed at Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Angela Lansbury is 94. Actor Peter Bowles is 83. Actor-producer Tony Anthony is 82. Actor Barry Corbin is 79. Sportscaster Tim McCarver is 78. Rock musician C.F. Turner (Bachman-Turner Overdrive) is 76. Actress Suzanne Somers is 73. Rock singer-musician Bob Weir is 72. Producer-director David Zucker is 72. Record company executive Jim Ed Norman is 71. Actor Daniel Gerroll is 68. Actor Morgan Stevens is 68. Actress Martha Smith is 67. Comedian-actor Andy Kindler is 63. Actor-director Tim Robbins is 61. Actor-musician Gary Kemp is 60. Singer-musician Bob Mould is 59. Actor Randy Vasquez is 58. Rock musician Flea (Red Hot Chili Peppers) is 57. Movie director Kenneth Lonergan is 57. Actor Christian Stolte is 57. Actor Todd Stashwick is 51. Actress Terri J. Vaughn is 50. Singer Wendy Wilson (Wilson Phillips) is 50. Rapper B-Rock (B-Rock and the Bizz) is 48. Rock singer Chad Gray (Mudvayne) is 48. Actor Paul Sparks is 48. Actress Kellie Martin is 44. Singer John Mayer is 42. Actor Jeremy Jackson is 39. Actress Caterina Scorsone is 39. Actress Brea Grant is 38. Actor Kyler Pettis is 27. Philadelphia Phillies outfielder Bryce Harper is 27. Tennis star Naomi Osaka is 22.

Thought for Today: "No persons are more frequently wrong, than those who will not admit they are wrong." — Francois, Duc de la Rochefoucauld, French moralist (1613-1680).

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