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"THE CLEARER YOU ARE
WHEN VISUALIZING YOUR
DREAMS, THE BRIGHTER
THE SPOTLIGHT WILL BE
TO LEAD YOU ON THE
RIGHT PATH."

-GAIL LYNNE
GOODWIN



Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

Thursday, Oct. 24

7 p.m.: First Round Football Playoffs - Groton Area at Webster Area

Friday, Oct. 25

Volleyball hosting Milbank (C/JV matches start at 6 p.m. followed by the varsity match)

Saturday, Oct. 26

State Cross Country Meet at Huron
ACT Testing at GHS, 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 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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Schell gets 1,000th kill in Northwestern's win over Groton Area

Northwestern remained undefeated with a 3-0 win over Groton Area in volleyball action played Tuesday in Groton.

The match was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Hanlon Brothers, Bahr Spray Foam, DeHoet Trucking, Allied Climate Professionals, Milbrandt Enterprises, Professional Management Services, BaseKamp Lodge, John Sieh Agency and Groton Auto Works

Nicole Marzahn had nine kills while Eliza Wanner had six, Indigo Rogers had four and Kaylin Kucker had one. Kucker had 14 sets. Tadyn Glover led the team in digs with 25 followed by Wanner with 19 and Marzahn with 15. Kenzie McInerney had one block.

Junior Sydney Schell had her 1,000th career kill after getting 20 for the night. Hannah Schentzel had eight kills and two ace serves. Dani Watson had eight kills, one block and one ace serve. Madalyn Groft had two blocks and a kill. Chrissy Stoltenberg had a kill and a block. Ella Haven had six kills and three blocks and Tya Weideman had two ace serves.

Groton Area had two serving errors while Northwestern had one.

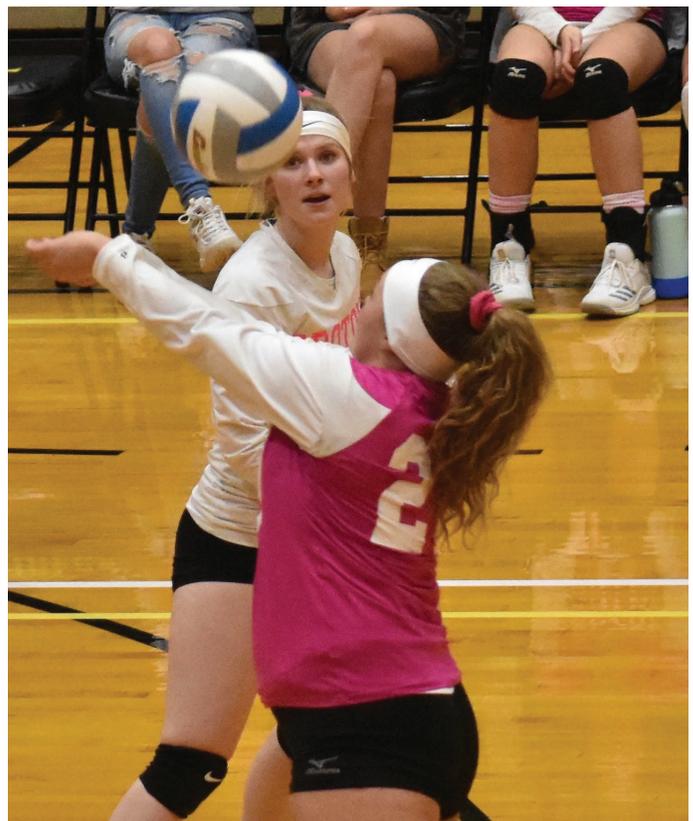
Game scores were 25-18, 25-10 and 25-13.

Northwestern won the junior varsity match, 25-12 and 25-19. Groton Area won the C match, 25-15, 22-25 and 15-13. The eighth graders won their match, 25-17, 25-22 and 25-22. The seventh graders also won their match, 25-7, 25-14 and 25-10.

- Paul Kosel



Madeline Flihs
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Kaylin Kucker and Tadyn Glover.
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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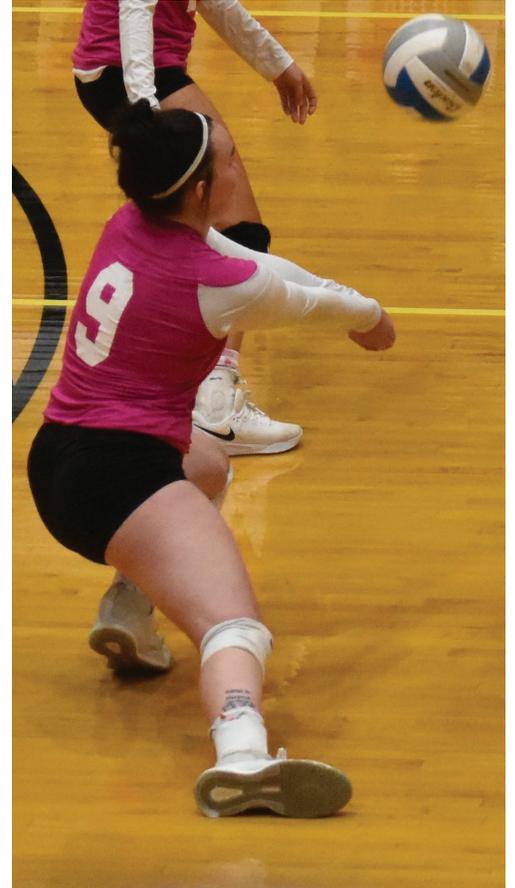
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Nicole Marzahn
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Stella Meier
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Payton Colestock
(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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Janice Hoffman was recognized last night by her grandchildren as one of the cancer survivors at the volleyball match. It was Fight Cancer night in Groton. The photo below features many items were sold with proceeds going to the American Cancer Society. (Photos by Paul Kosel)



Groton's Gear Heads in finals of Robotics Tournament

The first tournament of South Dakota's robotics season was held in Groton Saturday October 19. The beautiful weather allowed 18 teams to attend. The teams came from Mitchell (3), Harrisburg (5), Eureka (3), Sioux Falls (1), Grand Forks (1) and Groton (5).

Several of the robotics coaches agree that the first tournament of the season is their favorite. Why? The robotists are working hard on their robots all day to keep improving them or discussing on how to improve their game strategy and driving performance. The average total score of the first matches was 19 while the average total score of the quarter-final and semi-finals matches was 33. It was great to watch the improvement though the day.

How did the Groton teams do?

Gear Heads (Ethan Clark captain, Jackson Dinger, Axel Warrington, Kamryn Flihs) was defeated in the championship match and ended the day with a record of seven wins and two losses.

G.A.T. Wrenches (Noah Tullis captain, Corbin Reich, Adrian Knudsen) was defeated in the quarter finals by an alliance of two Groton teams (G-Force & Geek Squad). The alliances tied in their first match in the quarter finals and had to compete again to determine the winner. G.A.T. Wrenches ended the day with a record of four wins, five losses and one tie.

G-Force (Travis Townsend captain, Tannor McGannon, Dan Feist) was defeated in the semi-finals by the alliance that became the tournament champions. G-Force ended their day with a record of five wins, five losses and one tie.

Geek Squad (Nick Morris captain, Charlie Frost) was defeated in the semi-finals by the alliance that became the tournament champions. Geek Squad ended their day with a record of four wins, six losses and one tie.

Galaxy (River Pardick captain, Isaac Higgins, Garrett Schultz) was defeated in the first bracket of the elimination rounds and ended their day with a record of two wins and seven losses.

The Geek Squad received an honorable mention in the Awards because of their energy all day. Nick and Charlie were excited, happy and just a joy to watch because their autonomous was scoring every match and they did not know they even had one. But they can thank Ethan Clark of Gear Heads for slipping it into their programming when Nick had asked Ethan for help with a remote-control programming problem he could not solve. Thank You Ethan; great work! Wonderful spirit.

Tournament Champions were CapTen of Harrisburg and Double Trouble of Eureka. CapTen also received the Excellence Award (best combination of team, robot and engineering book). Double Trouble also received the Judges Award (the judges favorite). Cortex Destroyers of Mitchell received the Design Award (design process, documentation and understanding of the design and process). ROBO Chickens of Sioux Falls was the Skills Champion (scoring by them selves with no opponent, like free-throw contest).

The next robotics tournament for Groton is in Mitchell, November 9th.



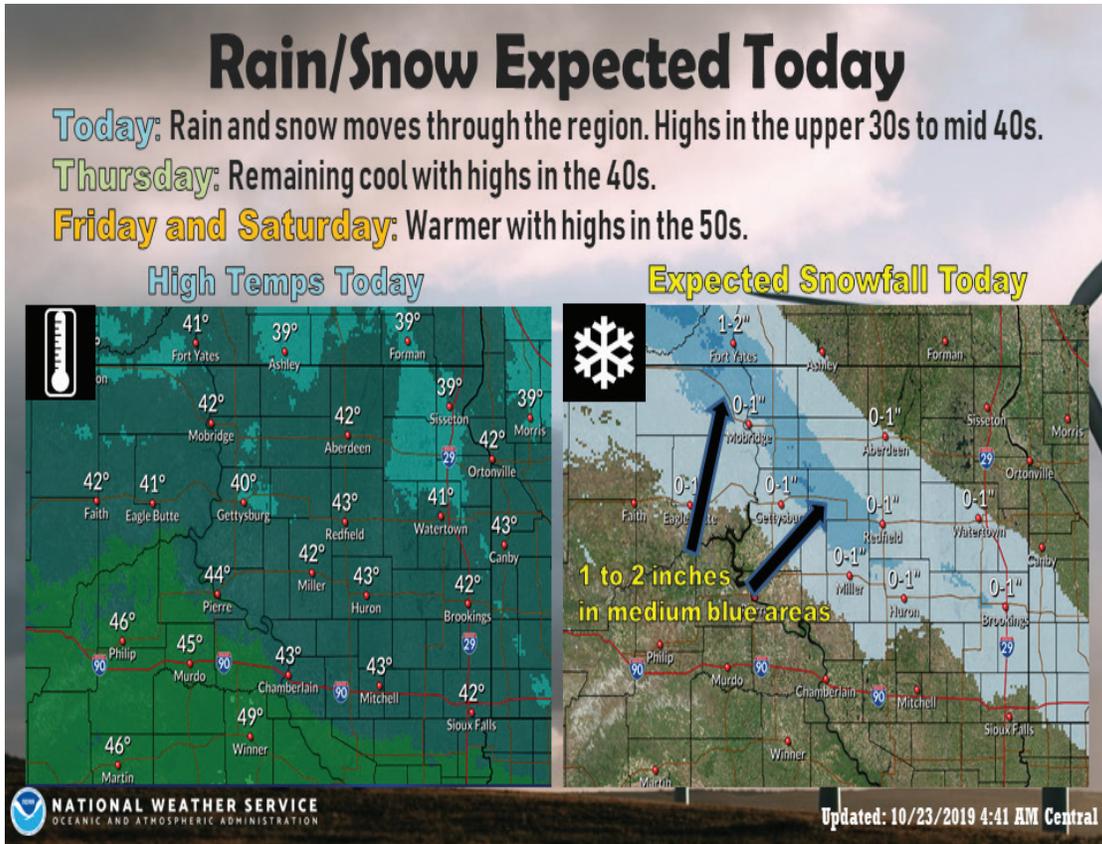
Pictured are the Gear Heads who took second at the Groton Robotics Tournament. They are Jackson Dinger, Ethan Clark and Axel Warrington. Not pictured is Kamryn Flihs.

(Photo from Amy Warrington's Facebook Page, taken by Weston Dinger)

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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
				
Chance Snow Showers then Partly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny
High: 42 °F	Low: 23 °F	High: 45 °F	Low: 29 °F	High: 54 °F



Published on: 10/23/2019 at 12:46AM

A compact low pressure system will generate light rain and snow across the region today. Not everyone will see precipitation out of this system. But those that do, could see a light accumulation of snow before the event is over later this afternoon. Generally cold conditions for late October should be expected today and Thursday. But, temperatures are forecast to warm back up in the 50s Friday and Saturday.

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Today in Weather History

October 23, 1995: A major fall storm hit Central and Northeast South Dakota and dropped from four inches to one foot of wet snow. The heavy wet snow combined with high winds gusting up to 50 mph snapped several thousand power poles and downed hundreds of miles of line in the counties of Buffalo, Hand, Spink, Roberts and Grant. In Day and Lyman Counties, a few poles were downed with some short lived power outages. Marshall County had no reports of damage or power outages. Several thousand people were left without power for several hours up to several days. Power was not restored to some people until the fourth of November. Portions of Interstate 90 and Interstate 29 were closed from the evening of the 23rd until the morning of the 24th leaving hundreds of motorists stranded. There were also numerous school delays and closings. Many trees and some crops were also damaged as a result of the weight of the snow and high winds. Some snowfall amounts included, 4 inches near Reliance, at Doland, and near Victor, 5 inches southeast of Stephan and at Sisseton, 6 inches south of Ree Heights and at Eden, eight inches at Waubay and Grenville, 9 inches at Clear Lake, 10 inches at Watertown, and 12 inches at Summit and Milbank. This storm was the third damaging storm to the rural electric cooperatives this year and has been called the worst natural disaster in the history of the rural electrics. The total damage estimated for the rural state electrics was \$9.5 million.

1091: The earliest known tornado in Britain, possibly the most severe on record, hit central London. The church at St. Mary le Bow was severely damaged. Four rafters, each 26 feet long were driven into the ground with such force that only four feet protruded above the surface. Other churches in the area were also demolished along with over 600 houses.

1878: One of the most severe hurricanes to affect eastern Virginia in the latter half of the 19th century struck on October 23, 1878. This storm moved rapidly northward from the Bahamas on October 22nd and hit the North Carolina coast late that same day moving at a forward speed of 40 to 50 mph. The storm continued northward passing through east central Virginia, Maryland and eastern Pennsylvania. The barometric pressure fell to 28.78". The five minute sustained wind reached 84 mph at Cape Henry. During the heaviest part of the gale, the wind at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina registered 100 mph. The instrument itself has finally blown away and therefore no further record was made.

1920: Famed research meteorologist Theodore Fujita, was born on this date in Kitakyushu City, Japan. Fujita, known as "Mr. Tornado" after developing the international standard for measuring tornado severity, also discovered microbursts.

1947: Fish fell from the sky in Marksville, LA. Thousands of fish fell from the sky in an area 1,000 feet long by 80 feet wide possibly due to a waterspout.

2015: On this day, Hurricane Patricia became the most powerful tropical cyclone ever measured in the Western Hemisphere as its maximum sustained winds reached an unprecedented 200 mph (320 kph) and its central pressure fell to 879 millibars (25.96 inches of mercury). Hurricane Patricia became the strongest Pacific hurricane on record shortly after midnight CDT early on Oct. 23. Air Force Hurricane Hunters had flown through the eye of Patricia and reported a sea-level pressure of 894 millibars as measured by a dropsonde inside the eye itself. Wind measurements suggested that the pressure measurement was not in the exact center of the eye and was probably not the absolute lowest pressure, prompting NHC to estimate the minimum central pressure at 892 millibars in its special 12:30 a.m. CDT advisory. Tropical cyclone strength comparisons are typically based on minimum central pressure. At 892 millibars, Patricia shattered the Eastern Pacific basin's previous record of 902 millibars set by Hurricane Linda in 1997. While a number of typhoons in the western North Pacific have been stronger, Patricia is now by far the strongest hurricane on record in any basin where the term "hurricane" applies to tropical cyclones – namely, the central and eastern North Pacific basins and the North Atlantic basin, which includes the North Atlantic Ocean itself plus the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea.

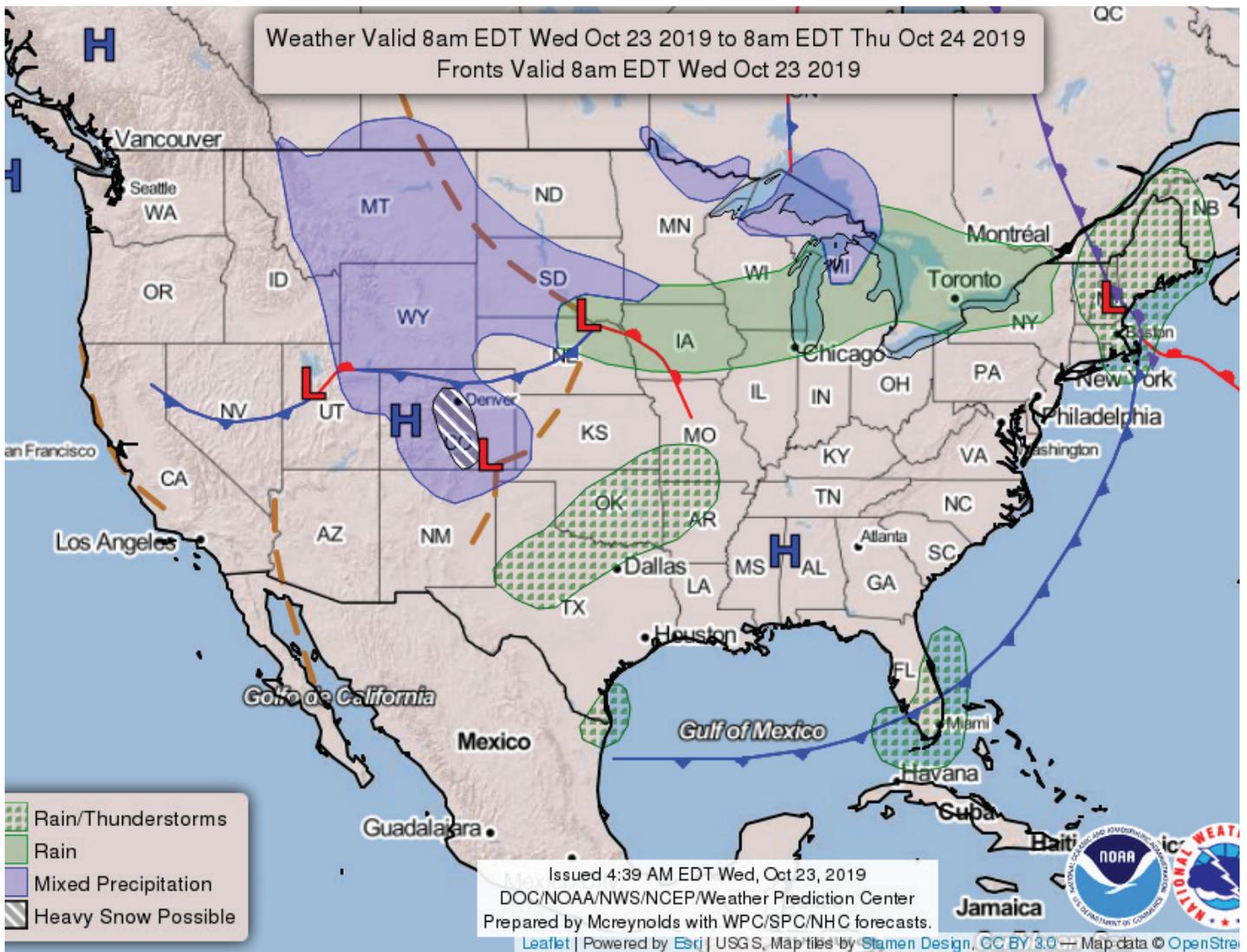
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 49 °F at 4:17 PM
Low Temp: 34 °F at 10:25 PM
Wind: 31 mph at 12:01 AM
Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 80° in 1963, 1915
Record Low: 5° in 1895
Average High: 54°F
Average Low: 30°F
Average Precip in Oct.: 1.55
Precip to date in Oct.: 1.55
Average Precip to date: 20.03
Precip Year to Date: 26.57
Sunset Tonight: 6:35 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:02 a.m.





THE RING BEAR

It was the first time he had been asked to be involved in a wedding. As he came down the aisle, he would take a step, turn his hands into claw-like instruments, grasp at the air, and growl like a bear, curl his lips, furrow his forehead, and lunge forward.

The people were laughing at such an unusual sight. When he got to the row where the bride's mother was sitting, she pulled him to the side and asked, "What are you doing?"

"Grrrrr," he growled. "I'm being a ring bear." Unfortunately, no one taught him how a "ring bear" behaved.

Parents and teachers have an obligation and responsibility to educate and encourage children to learn and behave appropriately. Often we place expectations on the young when they have no experience or have had no one to explain how they are to behave in certain situations. When they make mistakes or when things go wrong, we put the blame on them even if they have had no opportunity to learn proper behaviors.

That is the reason Solomon gave such wise guidance, "Listen to your father's experience..." True wisdom comes from God and parents must invest time with Him and in His Word if they are to prepare their children for the demands of life. Often we expect our children to know how to behave and what to do when we have neither taught them nor provided an example of godly behavior for them. That's why we have "Ring Bears."

Prayer: Grant us, Father, the willingness to accept our responsibility to faithfully teach our children "the way they should go." May our lives be their example. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 4:1-13 My children, listen when your father corrects you. Pay attention and learn good judgment.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 09/07/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/08/2019 Sunflower Classic at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/12/2019 St. John's Lutheran Luncheon
- 09/20/2019 Presbyterian Luncheon
- 09/28/2019 Granary Living History Fall Festival
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/31/2019 Trunk or Treat/Halloween on Main (Halloween)
- 11/09/2019 Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/07/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Holiday Party
- 12/07/2019 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- Bingo: every Wednesday at the Legion Post #39

2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 01/26/2020 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 04/04/2020 Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt, 10 a.m. Sharp (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 05/02/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
Groton Hosting State B American Legion Baseball Tournament
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/14/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

05-11-14-23-25, Mega Ball: 10, Megaplier: 4

(five, eleven, fourteen, twenty-three, twenty-five; Mega Ball: ten; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$82 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$120 million

Tuesday's Scores

By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Aberdeen Central def. Brookings, 25-15, 25-15, 25-18

Baltic def. Howard, 25-9, 25-5, 25-20

Bowman County, N.D. def. Lemmon, 25-21, 25-22, 25-20

Brandon Valley def. Yankton, 25-19, 25-17, 25-13

Burke def. Gayville-Volin, 25-19, 25-21, 25-14

Chester def. Sioux Valley, 25-17, 25-13, 25-14

Clark/Willow Lake def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 23-25, 25-15, 25-23, 26-24

Corsica/Stickney def. Avon, 14-25, 25-16, 23-25, 25-15, 15-12

Deubrook def. Oldham-Ramona/Rutland, 25-15, 25-16, 25-22

Elkton-Lake Benton def. Arlington, 25-9, 25-17, 25-15

Estelline/Hendricks def. DeSmet, 26-24, 25-9, 25-15

Faith def. Timber Lake, 21-25, 25-12, 25-11, 25-21

Freeman def. Hanson, 25-13, 25-22, 25-22

Garretson def. West Central, 25-21, 25-18, 25-20

Great Plains Lutheran def. Waubay/Summit, 25-15, 25-21, 25-14

Harrisburg def. Mitchell, 25-17, 25-14, 25-22

Highmore-Harrold def. Lyman, 25-13, 25-15, 25-13

Hitchcock-Tulare def. Sanborn Central/Woonsocket, 25-21, 25-19, 25-15

Irene-Wakonda def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-16, 25-22, 25-19

James Valley Christian def. Wessington Springs, 14-25, 25-19, 25-21, 25-17

Kimball/White Lake def. Platte-Geddes, 25-6, 25-17, 25-14

Langford def. Britton-Hecla, 25-15, 25-9, 25-8

Lead-Deadwood def. Douglas, 13-25, 25-9, 25-16, 25-17

Lennox def. Alcester-Hudson, 21-25, 25-21, 25-23, 25-22

Linton-HMB, N.D. def. Mobridge-Pollock, 25-21, 25-17, 25-21

Madison def. Dell Rapids, 25-11, 25-10, 25-23

Marty Indian def. Omaha Nation, Neb., 21-25, 26-24, 25-23, 26-24

McCook Central/Montrose def. Tea Area, 25-16, 25-18, 25-21

Milbank Area def. Waverly-South Shore, 26-24, 25-19, 23-25, 25-23

Northwestern def. Groton Area, 25-18, 25-10, 25-13

Parkston def. Bon Homme, 25-18, 25-19, 25-20

Philip def. Bennett County, 25-18, 25-19, 25-19

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Pine Ridge def. Red Cloud, 25-10, 25-6, 25-10
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-22, 25-19, 22-25, 25-8
Spearfish def. Hot Springs, 25-19, 25-22, 27-25
St. Thomas More def. Belle Fourche, 25-13, 22-25, 25-20, 25-22
Strasburg-Zeeland, N.D. def. Potter County, 25-21, 19-25, 25-19, 26-24
Tri-Valley def. Mt. Vernon/Plankinton, 25-22, 25-19, 25-19
Watertown def. Huron, 17-25, 25-18, 25-20, 25-19
Winner def. Wagner, 21-25, 25-19, 14-25, 25-16, 15-10
Wolsey-Wessington def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-17, 25-21, 25-11
Alliance Triangular
Alliance, Neb. def. Rapid City Christian, 26-24, 25-17
Kadoka Triangular
Kadoka Area def. Stanley County, 25-9, 25-16, 25-16
New Underwood def. Stanley County, 25-9, 25-17, 25-10
New Underwood def. Kadoka Area, 14-25, 25-22, 25-21, 21-25, 17-15
McLaughlin Triangular
Chamberlain def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, 25-19, 23-25, 25-9, 25-18
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte def. McLaughlin, 25-15, 25-21, 25-23

Board OKs expanded Dakota Access Pipeline pump station

CANTON, S.D. (AP) — Commissioners in a South Dakota county on Tuesday approved a conditional use permit for a pumping station needed for an expansion of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

The Lincoln County Board voted 4-1 in favor of the proposal. The station, expected to cost between \$30 million and \$40 million, would be built near Harrisburg in southeastern South Dakota.

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

The company also needs additional stations in North Dakota and Illinois.

The Lincoln County Planning Commission approved the project last month. But members of Dakota Rural Action, a South Dakota environmental group, appealed the decision to the county board.

Opponents warned of possible pollution, the Argus Leader reported.

Senior organizer Rebecca Terk of Dakota Rural Action told commissioners that the pumping station would increase risks of the pipeline developing leaks or a catastrophic blowout. She said that in turn would harm water supplies and farmland.

"It's not just about the pipe as a whole," Terk said. "It's about those imperfections that exist throughout the pipeline."

Supporters testified in favor of the project, including union representatives and Chris Studer, who represented the East River Electric Cooperative, which would sell electricity for the five pumps that would be at the facility.

Chuck Frey, a vice president of engineering for Energy Transfer, told commissioners the facility had been designed with a number of safeguards.

The site includes a 13,000-gallon tank to provide surge relief, automatic sensors that shut the facility down in case of fire, and sensors that monitor for leaks.

Commissioner David Gillespie cast the lone "no" vote. Gillespie questioned whether there would be enough security at the building to prevent someone from damaging it.

Last month, an administrative law allowed the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe to intervene on plans to expand the Dakota Access pipeline. North Dakota regulators have set a Nov. 13 public hearing in Linton, near where the pump station would go, on the proposed expansion.

The tribe led original opposition to the crude oil pipeline. The \$3.8 billion pipeline is less than a half-mile

from the Standing Rock Reservation, beneath a Missouri River reservoir that is the tribe's water source. Fears of an oil spill into the river sparked massive protests in 2016 and 2017, drawing thousands of pipeline opponents to North Dakota. Energy Transfer says the line is safe.

Energy Transfer says the expansion would help meet the growing demand for oil from North Dakota, the nation's second-biggest oil producer behind Texas. The company needs permission from the North Dakota Public Service Commission for the expansion because some of the land needed is outside of the pipeline's path.

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

Crashed plane, pilot's body found near Aberdeen

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have recovered the body of the pilot of a small plane that was found crashed near Aberdeen nearly two weeks after it went missing.

Brown County Chief Deputy Dave Lunzman says the body of 70-year-old Gerald Seliski of Hecla, South Dakota, was recovered Tuesday. Seliski was the only one on board. An autopsy is planned Wednesday.

Lunzman said Tuesday a hunter found the wreckage of the Cessna 172 about 3 miles north of Aberdeen Monday evening.

The plane departed Aberdeen Regional Airport for Oakes, North Dakota, on Oct. 9 but never arrived. The Civil Air Patrol has helped local officials from South Dakota and North Dakota search for the missing plane.

The National Transportation Safety Board tweeted Tuesday it would investigate the crash.

Hemp delivery driver arrested in SD indicted on drug charges

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Colorado man who said he was delivering hemp to Minnesota when he was arrested in South Dakota has been indicted by a grand jury after his load tested positive for THC, the component in marijuana that produces a high.

A grand jury in Jackson County, South Dakota, last month indicted Robert Herzberg, 41, of Red Feather Lakes, Colorado, on charges of intending to distribute marijuana and possessing more than 10 pounds (4.5 kilograms) of the drug. He also faces charges of ingesting marijuana and cocaine, according to court records. Herzberg is free on \$5,000 bond and due in court Nov. 6.

Herzberg told a state trooper he was delivering 300 pounds (136 kilograms) of hemp from Colorado to Minneapolis July 16 when he was pulled over for speeding on Interstate 90. He was arrested after the trooper found "two large white sacks that contained a green leafy substance that looked and smelled like raw marijuana" and field tested positive for the drug.

The Minnesota Hemp Association and the Colorado man who hired Herzberg to deliver the product told the Rapid City Journal that Herzberg was delivering hemp — not marijuana — to a CBD-oil processing company in Minnesota.

Prosecutors filed results from the South Dakota state lab that show Herzberg tested positive for THC and cocaine, as well as results from six plant samples that contained more THC than is allowed under federal law.

No amount of THC is legal under South Dakota law. But according to a May memorandum from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, states cannot block the transportation of hemp that contains 0.3% or less THC.

Defense attorney Matthew Kinney said he plans to speak with experts who can explain the reliability of THC testing and whether the amount of THC in a plant can increase over time.

Even if any of his load was above the federal limit, "you can't get high from this stuff" unless you smoke the entire bag, Kinney said.

Prosecutors also would have to prove that Herzberg knew the plant was marijuana, Kinney said. "My client thought everything was legal," Kinney said.

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

Teen accused of killing Wyoming girl waives speedy trial

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota teenager charged with fatally shooting a girl from Wyoming has waived his right to a speedy trial.

The Argus Leader says the waiver means the 17-year-old defendant gave up his right to have his case brought to trial in 180 days from his arraignment as specified under South Dakota law.

The teen has pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity in the shooting death of 16-year-old Shayna Ritthaler of Upton, Wyoming, whose body was found Oct. 7 in the basement of his home near Sturgis. The Associated Press isn't naming the defendant because his lawyer is trying to get the case moved to juvenile court.

Ritthaler had been listed as a runaway Oct. 3. Authorities are still investigating how Ritthaler and the boy knew each other.

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

Wells Fargo Foundation Donates \$9 Million to Local Housing Affordability, Neighborhood Revitalization Programs

SAN FRANCISCO--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Oct 22, 2019--

The Wells Fargo Foundation today announced \$9 million in grants to more than 60 nonprofits across the United States in support of large-scale neighborhood revitalization and housing affordability solutions. The Wells Fargo Foundation has donated 250 such grants since 2011 to local organizations through its Priority Markets Program.

"The cost burden of housing is taking a toll on nearly every community and these 62 nonprofits share Wells Fargo's focus of strengthening communities by bringing forward housing affordability solutions and local neighborhood revitalization efforts," said Eileen Fitzgerald, head of housing affordability philanthropy with the Wells Fargo Foundation. "As a leading supporter of housing affordability solutions, we have a unique opportunity to work together with nonprofits to make an even greater impact."

Presented to nonprofits from Alaska to Florida, the Wells Fargo Foundation grants are intended to serve as catalytic funding in support of neighborhood revitalization and are a key component of the recently announced Wells Fargo philanthropy strategy, which includes a \$1 billion commitment to address the housing affordability crisis over the next six years, and an increased focus on financial health and small business growth.

2019 grant recipients include:

Cook Inlet Housing Development Corporation (Anchorage, Alaska) Covenant House Alaska (Anchorage, Alaska) Foundation for Senior Living (Phoenix) Habitat for Humanity Fresno (Fresno, Calif.) Resources for Community Development (Berkeley, Calif.) Pueblo Unido Community Development Corporation (La Quinta, Calif.) Community of Friends (Los Angeles) Neighborhood Housing Services (Sacramento, Calif.) Volunteers of America (Sacramento, Calif.) Habitat for Humanity San Diego (San Diego) SVDP Management, Inc. (San Diego) Bridge Housing Corporation (San Francisco) Mercy Housing California (San Francisco) Rebuilding Together San Jose (San Jose, Calif.) Habitat for Humanity Santa Ana (Santa Ana, Calif.) Mercy House CHDO, Inc. (Santa Ana, Calif.) Cabrillo Economic Development Corporation (Ventura, Calif.) Self-Help Enterprises (Visalia, Calif.) Brothers Redevelopment, Inc. (Denver) Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (Denver) Tampa Bay Community Development Corporation (Clearwater, Fla.) Habitat for Humanity Panama City (Panama City, Fla.) Florida Home Partnership, Inc. (Ruskin, Fla.) Habitat for Humanity West Palm Beach (West Palm Beach, Fla.) Neighborhood Renaissance, Inc. (West Palm Beach, Fla.) CSRA Economic Opportunity Authority, Inc. (Augusta, Ga.) NeighborWorks Boise (Boise, Idaho) Northwest Real Estate Capital Corporation (Boise, Idaho) Women's Institute for Housing and Economic Development, Inc. (Boston) Enterprise Community Partners, Inc. (Columbia, Md.) Mary Harvin Transformation Center Community Development Corporation (Baltimore) Unity Properties, Inc. (Baltimore) City of Lakes Community Land Trust (Minneapolis) Project for

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Pride in Living, Inc. (Minneapolis)Community Housing Solutions of Guilford, Inc. (Greensboro, N.C.)DHIC, Inc. (Raleigh, N.C.)Habitat for Humanity Newark (Newark, N.J.)La Casa De Don Pedro, Inc. (Newark, N.J.)Saranam LLC (Albuquerque, N.M.)Nevada HAND, Inc. (Las Vegas)Common Ground Communities, Inc. (New York)Access (Medford, Ore.)Native American Youth and Family Center (Portland, Ore.)Northwest Housing Alternatives, Inc. (Milwaukie, Ore.)Tri-County Housing Development, Corporation (Harrisburg, Pa.)Housing Development Corporation of Rock Hill (Rock Hill, S.C.)Habitat for Humanity Sioux Falls (Sioux Falls, S.D.)Saint Joseph Catholic Housing, Inc. (Sioux Falls, S.D.)Rebuilding Together Nashville (Nashville, Tenn.)Foundation Communities, Inc. (Austin, Texas)Habitat for Humanity Austin (Austin, Texas)Habitat for Humanity Fort Worth (Fort Worth, Texas)Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County (Fort Worth, Texas)Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation (Houston)Neighborhood Recovery Community Development Corporation (Houston)Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (Arlington, Va.)Southside Community Development and Housing Corporation (Richmond, Va.)Habitat for Humanity Renton (Renton, Wash.)Bellweather Housing (Seattle)Acts Community Development Corporation (Milwaukee)Habitat for Humanity Jackson (Jackson, Wyo.)Jackson Hole Community Housing (Jackson, Wyo.)Grant recipients were selected based on their demonstrated ability to create positive outcomes and catalyze large-scale neighborhood revitalization.

Police respond to report of gunman at Rapid City mall

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City police arrested a man after receiving a report of a person with a gun at the Rushmore Mall.

Police say officers found the suspect in a mall parking lot Sunday and he appeared to be agitated. Authorities say he did not have a gun, but he refused to follow commands and gave officers a false name.

The Argus Leader says he was arrested on an outstanding warrant. Police say they found methamphetamine and a syringe in his car.

Lots of good terns: Bird ready to fly off endangered list

By **SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — After 34 years on the endangered species list, a tiny Midwestern bird is ready to fly free of federal protection.

Once hurt the by the damming of major rivers like the Missouri and before that diminished by hunting for feathers for hats, the interior least tern population has increased tenfold since 1985 to more than 18,000.

The number of nests has jumped from 48 to 480, said the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which on Wednesday morning planned to propose taking the bird off the list.

The delisting started six years after the service first suggested that the species has recovered and after a computer modeling showed the population will be stable.

Even conservationists and advocacy groups that often battle the Trump administration over what goes on and off the endangered list hailed the long-trek migrating bird's recovery as an environmental success story.

"Delisting is reasonable," Center for Biological Diversity endangered species director Noah Greenwald said. "It shows that when we actually pay attention and care, we can help species and reverse damage we've done in the past. We can undo part of the damage we've done to these rivers."

"All around it's a pretty good news situation," American Bird Conservancy president Michael Parr said.

After nearly being hunted to extinction for feathers for women's hats in the 1800s, the Midwestern population of least terns started doing better until after World War II, Fish and Wildlife Service recovery biologist Paul Hartfield said. But then dams, especially on the Missouri River, eliminated the riverside beaches that these tiny birds need.

Working with the Army Corps of Engineers, biologists concentrated on a smaller bird population in the lower Mississippi River. Changes in water management increased the size of islands and created new ones

in the river, making more places for the birds to nest and live, Hartfield said.

"The least tern in the Mississippi River exploded" from a few hundred birds in the 1980s to at least 10,000 now, he said.

Greenwald credited the Army Corps of Engineers but added "the tern has been recovered, but the ecosystem hasn't."

There are three populations of least terns in the United States. One in California is still on the endangered list, and the eastern one is doing fine.

Least terns are the smallest of terns, but they travel far. Hartfield said one bird was tagged in South Dakota and later was found in Japan.

"That's how strong a flyer they are," he said. "It's really a tough little bird."

They nest on the ground and feed on small fish and live quite long for their size, about 15 years, Hartfield said. These birds migrate every fall to the Caribbean and South America.

Greenwald, of the Center for Biological Diversity, said the least tern is a good example of how the endangered species law can work even as scientists warn of 1 million species going extinct in coming decades.

"We should be proud of ourselves for caring for it and protecting it," he said. "That shows that if we put our mind to it, we can stop the extinction crisis."

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears .

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

39 people found dead in truck container in southeast England

By GREGORY KATZ and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Police in southeastern England said 39 people were found dead Wednesday inside a truck container believed to have come from Bulgaria.

The truck, which is said to have entered Britain via the Welsh port of Holyhead on Saturday, was found by ambulance workers at Waterglade Industrial Park in Grays, a town just by the River Thames around 25 miles (40 kms) east of central London.

"This is a tragic incident where a large number of people have lost their lives. Our enquiries are ongoing to establish what has happened," Essex Police Chief Superintendent Andrew Mariner said. "We are in the process of identifying the victims, however I anticipate that this could be a lengthy process."

A 25-year-old-man from Northern Ireland has been arrested on suspicion of murder. He remains in custody. He has not been charged or identified.

A cordon has been put in place and access to and from the industrial park remains closed.

"We are working with Thurrock Council (the local authority) to mitigate against any impact our investigation scene will have locally," Mariner said.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson pledged in a tweet to work closely with Essex Police to establish exactly what happened.

"My thoughts are with all those who lost their lives & their loved ones," he said.

Police have not formally linked the deaths to people trafficking but a link is assumed because of the way the victims were crammed into the truck container.

The tragedy appears similar to the death of 58 migrants in 2000 in a truck in Dover. Smaller numbers of migrants have occasionally been found in trucks since then.

Bulgarian authorities said they could not yet confirm that the truck had started its journey from Bulgaria.

"We are in contact with our embassy in London and with British authorities," foreign ministry spokeswoman Tsvetana Krasteva said.

Jackie Doyle-Price, who represents Thurrock in parliament, tweeted that "people trafficking is a vile and dangerous purpose ... Let's hope they bring these murderers to justice."

Seamus Leheny, Northern Ireland policy manager for the Freight Transport Association, said the route

that had been used was “unorthodox” since it apparently involved traveling to the island of Ireland and then entering Britain via a ferry to a major passenger port in Wales.

He said that choice may have been influenced by increased security and checks in the major English port of Dover and the French port of Calais.

“People have been saying that security and checks have been increased at places like Dover and Calais, so it might be seen as an easier way to get in by going from Cherbourg or Roscoff, over to Rosslare, then up the road to Dublin,” he said.

“It’s a long way around and it’ll add an extra day to the journey.”

The diplomat took notes. Then he told a story.

By NANCY BENAC Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A secret cable. A disembodied voice. A coded threat.

William Taylor, a career diplomat, went behind closed doors in the basement of the Capitol on Tuesday and told a tale that added up to the ultimate oxymoron — a 10-hour bureaucratic thriller.

His plot devices were not cloak and dagger, but memos, text messages — and detailed notes.

His testimony was laden with precision — names, dates, places, policy statements and diplomatic nuance, not typically the stuff of intrigue. But from the moment Taylor revealed that his wife and his mentor had given him conflicting advice on whether he should even get involved, the drama began to unfold.

Their counsel split like this: Wife: no way. Mentor: do it.

The mentor won out — or the story would have ended there.

Instead, on June 17, Taylor, a West Point graduate, Vietnam veteran and tenured foreign service officer, arrived in Ukraine’s capital of Kyiv as the chief of mission. He had been recalled to service after the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine had been forced out. That alone offered foreshadowing of troubles to come.

And, soon enough, Taylor said in his written opening statement, he discovered “a weird combination of encouraging, confusing and ultimately alarming circumstances.”

The story Taylor related from there amounted to a detailed, almost prosecutorial, rejoinder to White House efforts to frame President Donald Trump’s actions in Ukraine as perfectly normal and unworthy of an impeachment investigation. With each documented conversation, he made it harder for the president to press his argument that there was no quid pro quo in which he held up military aid to advance his political interests.

Over three months, Taylor told legislators, he fought his way through a maze of diplomatic channels and rival backchannels as he tried to unravel the story behind the mysterious hold-up of \$400 million in U.S. military aid that Ukraine desperately needed in order to defend itself against the Russians.

First came mixed signals about whether Trump would follow through on his promise to invite Ukraine’s new president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, to meet with him in the Oval Office.

Taylor was told by other U.S. diplomats that Trump needed “to hear from” Zelenskiy before the meeting would be scheduled. And that Zelenskiy needed to make clear he was not standing in the way of “investigations.”

Next, Taylor wrote, there was “something odd:” Gordon Sondland, a Trump ally and U.S. ambassador to the European Union, “wanted to make sure no one was transcribing or monitoring” a June 28 call that the diplomats made to Zelenskiy.

Soon enough, Taylor was detecting that Zelenskiy’s hopes of snagging the coveted Oval Office meeting were contingent on the Ukrainian leader agreeing to investigate Democrats in the 2016 election and to look into a Ukrainian company linked to the family of Trump political foe Joe Biden.

“It was clear that this condition was driven by the irregular policy channel I had come to understand was guided by Mr. Giuliani,” Taylor said, referring to Rudy Giuliani, the former New York City mayor and Trump lawyer who was involving himself in Ukrainian affairs.

The dueling channels of communication were highly unusual.

Then things got more strange:

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Toward the end of a routine July 18 video conference with National Security Council officials in Washington, "a voice on the call" from an unknown person who was off-screen announced that the Office of Management and Budget would not approve any more U.S. security aid to Ukraine "until further notice."

"I and others sat in astonishment," Taylor recounted.

From there, Taylor made his way through a confusing web of conversations, text messages, cables and other contacts trying to figure out why this was happening.

His diplomatic parrying was punctuated by a detour to the front lines of the Russia-Ukraine fighting in northern Donbas, where Taylor witnessed firsthand "the armed and hostile Russia-led forces on the other side of the damaged bridge across the line of contact."

That frozen military aid was no mere abstraction.

"More Ukrainians would undoubtedly die without the U.S. assistance," Taylor wrote.

The diplomat was so troubled that he requested a private meeting with John Bolton when the national security adviser visited Kyiv in late August.

Bolton's counsel to Taylor: Send a "first-person cable" to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo laying out his concerns. Taylor took the advice and sent a secret cable describing the "folly" of withholding assistance.

He got no specific response.

He still couldn't explain to the Ukrainians why they weren't getting their aid.

And time was running out: If the assistance weren't delivered by Sept. 30, the end of the government's fiscal year, it would vanish.

In early September, the puzzle pieces began to fit together.

It wasn't just the Oval Office meeting that was contingent on Zelenskiy investigating Democrats, Taylor learned, it was the military aid.

Taylor said Sondland told him that if Zelenskiy didn't publicly announce the investigations, there would be a "stalemate."

He took "stalemate" to be code for holding up the assistance.

Taylor's text messages take the story forward:

"I think it's crazy to withhold security assistance for help with a political campaign," he wrote to Sondland.

Sondland waited five hours to respond with a clinical denial of any such contingency: "The President has been crystal clear no quid pro quo's of any kind." He reportedly talked to Trump before he sent the response.

The explanation didn't satisfy Taylor.

But, at last, on Sept. 11, Taylor got word that the hold on releasing the money had been lifted and the security assistance would be provided.

Taylor summed up his tale as "a rancorous story about whistleblowers, Mr. Giuliani, side channels, quid pro quos, corruption, and interference in elections."

Democrats found it riveting, with Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi of Illinois describing Taylor as "like a witness out of central casting."

White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham, though, dismissed it as part of a "coordinated smear campaign from far-left lawmakers and radical unelected bureaucrats waging war on the Constitution."

In the end, Taylor said he wished he could have told a different story altogether — a "positive, bipartisan one" about a "young nation, struggling to break free of its past."

AP writer Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report

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10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press *undefined*

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

1. TURKEY SIGNALS IT'S HOLDING BACK ON RESUMING SYRIA PUSH

Turkey's Defense Ministry says it will not resume its offensive against Kurdish Syrian fighters in northeast Syria following separate agreements reached with the U.S. and Russia.

2. HONG KONG PULLS CONTENTIOUS BILL

Authorities in the semi-autonomous Chinese city withdrew an unpopular extradition bill that sparked months of chaotic protests that have since morphed into a campaign for greater democratic change.

3. HOW A CAREER US DIPLOMAT DETAILED UKRAINE DEALINGS

With memos, text messages and detailed notes, William Taylor related a bureaucratic thriller to impeachment investigators on the mystery of the missing aid for Ukraine.

4. WHY TRUMP'S TWEET STRUCK A NERVE

The president's claim that the impeachment inquiry is "a lynching" strikes a painful chord for black people whose relatives died in racial violence.

5. GRUESOME DISCOVERY IN ENGLAND

Police in the southeastern town of Essex say 39 people were found dead in a truck container believed to have come from Bulgaria and a 25-year-old man from Northern Ireland was arrested.

6. WHAT HAS SHED LIGHT ON HOUSTON GANG WARFARE

Investigators say a federal ballistics database has helped link dozens of seemingly unconnected killings.

7. WHERE TRUMP IS HEADED

The president will be in Pennsylvania to show his support for the natural gas industry, making clear he sees his pro-industry policies as a boost to his chances of winning the battleground state.

8. GOOGLE TOUTS QUANTUM COMPUTING MILESTONE

The tech giant says an experimental quantum processor has completed a calculation in just a few minutes that would take a traditional supercomputer thousands of years, a finding that is facing pushback from competitor IBM.

9. HIGH-TECH RIVALS POSE THREAT TO A MEDICAL STAPLE

The stethoscope is being threatened by hand-held devices that rely on ultrasound technology, artificial intelligence and smartphone apps instead of doctors' ears.

10. NATIONALS STRIKE FIRST IN FALL CLASSIC

Juan Soto homers and hits a two-run double as Washington tags Gerrit Cole and the Houston Astros 5-4 in the World Series opener.

UK prime minister mulls early election over Brexit impasse

By DANICA KIRKA and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was weighing Wednesday whether to push for an early election or try again to pass his stalled European Union divorce deal, after Parliament blocked a fast-track plan to approve his Brexit bill before the U.K.'s scheduled departure from the bloc on Oct. 31.

Late Tuesday, lawmakers backed the substance of Johnson's divorce deal in principle, but rejected the government's plan to fast-track the legislation through Parliament in a matter of days, saying it didn't provide enough time for scrutiny.

The government is now waiting for the EU's response to its request for a three-month extension to the Brexit deadline. European Council President Donald Tusk said in a tweet that because of the vote he would recommend that the other 27 EU nations grant Britain a delay in its departure to avoid a chaotic no-deal exit in just eight days.

British Justice Secretary Robert Buckland told the BBC on Wednesday that Parliament's failure to break the logjam means "we are left with the option of a general election ... That seems to me to be the only

way to break this impasse.”

But some lawmakers urged Johnson to push on with passage of the bill, saying it could pass if lawmakers had time to study it properly.

“I would have thought it can be done in a matter of weeks,” said Richard Burgon of the opposition Labour Party.

Johnson won a major parliamentary victory on Tuesday when lawmakers in principle backed a Brexit plan, voting 329-299 a bill to implement the divorce agreement that Johnson struck with the EU last week. But minutes later, legislators rejected his fast-track timetable to pass the bill by 322 votes to 308, saying they needed more time to scrutinize it.

Without speedy passage of the bill, Britain won't be able to make an orderly exit from the bloc on Oct. 31, a central vow of Johnson's three-month-old Conservative administration.

House of Commons leader Jacob Rees-Mogg conceded Tuesday that “it is very hard to see how it is possible” to leave the EU with a deal on Oct. 31.

Johnson had grudgingly asked the EU to delay Brexit to comply with a law passed by Parliament ordering the government to postpone Brexit rather than risk the economic damage that could come from a no-deal exit.

All 27 other EU leaders must agree to an extension, which would be the third time Britain's departure date has been postponed.

Johnson has not abandoned his Brexit deal, which sets out the terms of Britain's departure from the EU after almost five decades of membership. It will form the centerpiece of his Conservative Party's campaign if there is an early election.

Johnson hopes an election will give his Conservatives a majority in Parliament so he can push through his plans.

“One way or another, we will leave the EU with this deal to which this House has just given its assent,” Johnson told lawmakers after Tuesday's votes.

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

Iraq official: US troops from Syria to leave Iraq in 4 weeks

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — U.S. troops withdrawing from northeastern Syria to Iraq are “transiting” and will leave the country within four weeks, Iraq's defense minister said Wednesday.

Najah al-Shammari made the remarks to The Associated Press following a meeting in Baghdad with visiting U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper, who arrived as Iraqi leaders chafed over reports the U.S. may want to increase the number of troops based in Iraq, at least temporarily.

Iraq's military said Tuesday that American troops leaving northeastern Syria don't have permission to stay in Iraq in a statement that appeared to contradict Esper, who has said that all U.S. troops leaving Syria would continue to conduct operations against the Islamic State group from Iraq to prevent its resurgence in the region.

He later added that the troops would be there temporarily until they are able to go home, but no time period has been set.

Esper said earlier on Wednesday that the U.S. has no plans to leave those troops in Iraq “interminably” and that he plans to talk with Iraqi leaders about the matter.

Al-Shammari said Esper traveled to Iraq based on an invitation from the Iraqis. In Wednesday's talks, he said the two sides agreed that the American troops crossing from Syria are “transiting” through Iraq and will then head to either Kuwait, Qatar or the United States “within a time frame not exceeding four weeks.”

The Iraqi minister said the planes that would transport the American troops out of Iraq have already arrived.

Esper's visit to Baghdad came a day after Russia and Turkey reached an agreement that would deploy

their forces along nearly the entire northeastern border to fill the void left after President Donald Trump's abrupt withdrawal of U.S. forces from the area, a move that essentially cleared the way for the Turkish invasion earlier this month.

It was unclear Wednesday what that means for U.S. forces.

Trump ordered the bulk of the approximately 1,000 U.S. troops in Syria to withdraw after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated in a phone call that his forces were about to invade Syria to push back Syrian Kurdish fighters whom Ankara considers terrorists.

The pullout largely abandons the Kurdish allies who have fought the Islamic State group alongside U.S. troops for several years. Between 200 and 300 U.S. troops will remain at the southern Syrian outpost of Al-Tanf.

Esper said the troops going into Iraq would have two missions, one to help defend Iraq against a resurgence of Islamic State militants and another to monitor and perform a counter-IS mission.

The U.S. currently has more than 5,000 American forces in Iraq, under an agreement between the two countries. The U.S. pulled its troops out of Iraq in 2011 when combat operations there ended, but they went back in after the Islamic State group began to take over large swaths of the country in 2014.

The number of American forces in Iraq has remained small due to political sensitivities in the country, after years of what some Iraqis consider U.S. occupation during the war that began in 2003. Iraqi leaders may privately condone more U.S. forces to battle IS, but worry if it's widely known that there will be backlash from the citizens.

U.S. troops in Syria fought for five years alongside Kurdish-led forces in northeast Syria and succeeded in bringing down the rule of IS militants — at the cost of thousands of Kurdish fighters' lives. Under the new agreement, much of that territory would be handed over to U.S. rivals.

The biggest winners are Turkey and Russia. Turkey would get sole control over areas of the Syrian border captured in its invasion, while Turkish, Russian and Syrian government forces would oversee the rest of the border region. America's former U.S. allies, the Kurdish fighters, are left hoping Moscow and Damascus will preserve some pieces of the Syrian Kurdish autonomy in the region.

Google touts quantum computing milestone

By **RACHEL LERMAN** and **MATT O'BRIEN** AP Technology Writers

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Google said it has achieved a breakthrough in quantum computing research, saying an experimental quantum processor has completed a calculation in just a few minutes that would take a traditional supercomputer thousands of years.

The findings, published Wednesday in the scientific journal *Nature*, show that "quantum speedup is achievable in a real-world system and is not precluded by any hidden physical laws," the researchers wrote.

Quantum computing is a nascent and somewhat bewildering technology for vastly sped-up information processing. Quantum computers might one day revolutionize tasks that would take existing computers years, including the hunt for new drugs and optimizing city and transportation planning.

The technique relies on quantum bits, or qubits, which can register data values of zero and one — the language of modern computing — simultaneously. Big tech companies including Google, Microsoft, IBM and Intel are avidly pursuing the technology.

"Quantum things can be in multiple places at the same time," said Chris Monroe, a University of Maryland physicist who is also the founder of quantum startup IonQ. "The rules are very simple, they're just confounding."

Google's findings, however, are already facing pushback from other industry researchers. A version of Google's paper leaked online last month and researchers caught a glimpse before it was taken down.

IBM quickly took issue with Google's claim that it had achieved "quantum supremacy," a term that refers to a point when a quantum computer can perform a calculation that a traditional computer can't complete within its lifetime. Google's leaked paper showed that its quantum processor, Sycamore, finished a calculation in three minutes and 20 seconds — and that it would take the world's fastest supercomputer 10,000

years to do the same thing.

But IBM researchers say that Google underestimated the conventional supercomputer, called Summit, and said it could actually do the calculation in 2.5 days. Summit was developed by IBM and is located at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee.

Google has not commented on IBM's claims.

Whether or not Google has achieved "quantum supremacy" or not may matter to competitors, but the semantics could be less important for the field of quantum research. What it does seem to indicate is that the field is maturing.

"The quantum supremacy milestone allegedly achieved by Google is a pivotal step in the quest for practical quantum computers," John Preskill, a Caltech professor who originally coined the "quantum supremacy" term, wrote in a column after the paper was leaked.

It means quantum computing research can enter a new stage, he wrote, though a significant effect on society "may still be decades away."

The calculation employed by Google has little practical use, Preskill wrote, other than to test how well the processor works. Monroe echoed that concern.

"The more interesting milestone will be a useful application," he said. ___O'Brien reported from Providence, Rhode Island.

Harris, colleagues seek Ukraine info via public records law

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Presidential hopeful Kamala Harris and two of her Democratic Senate colleagues are trying to force the Trump administration to release documents related to Ukraine and potential investigations into the president's domestic political rivals through the federal Freedom of Information Act.

Harris, of California, will join Richard Blumenthal, of Connecticut, and Sheldon Whitehouse, of Rhode Island, in filing a request Wednesday with the Department of Justice seeking documents related to Ukraine, China and various investigations into companies associated with Hunter Biden, the son of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden.

The request comes as the U.S. House of Representatives seeks its own information via its impeachment inquiry into Trump. The Trump administration routinely ignores requests from Congress for documents and witnesses, including from Democrats in the House who have subpoena power.

The three senators, all members of the Judiciary Committee, say they are turning to the public records law because of the Republican administration's resistance to sharing information.

But requests via the Freedom of Information Act can take months or even years to fulfill, meaning it's unlikely the senators will get documents soon, said Thomas Blanton, director of the National Security Archive and an expert in the Freedom of Information Act. He said Congress has a history of using the law to try to pry loose documents from the executive branch. The law also is frequently used by journalists.

Harris, a former California prosecutor, has achieved viral attention for her past questioning of Attorney General William Barr. As she tries to rise from the middle of the 2020 presidential pack to the top tier, the impeachment inquiry could offer her a fresh opportunity to garner attention.

She and four other senators seeking the Democratic nomination could be pulled away from the campaign trail if impeachment reaches a Senate trial. The others are Sens. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, Bernie Sanders of Vermont, Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota and Cory Booker of New Jersey.

The information request seeks communications to, from or with officials in the attorney general's office that include roughly 75 words or phrases, such as Giuliani, the last name of the president's personal attorney; Bill Taylor, the former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, who gave closed-door testimony to a House committee Tuesday; and Fraud Guarantee, the name of a company run by Giuliani associates who have been arrested on campaign finance violations.

The senators want documents showing communications between the attorney general's office and China or Ukraine regarding Trump's political rivals or any requests to investigate companies associated

with Hunter Biden.

The House impeachment probe was sparked by a whistleblower's complaint about a July phone call in which Trump told Ukraine's president he wanted "a favor." The White House later acknowledged in a rough transcript of the conversation that the favor was Trump's desire for Ukraine to investigate the Democratic National Committee's email hack in 2016 as well as the Ukrainian gas company Burisma, tied to Biden's family.

Hong Kong government withdraws bill that sparked protests

KELVIN CHAN Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong authorities on Wednesday withdrew an unpopular extradition bill that sparked months of chaotic protests that have since morphed into a campaign for greater democratic change.

Secretary for Security John Lee told the semi-autonomous Chinese city's legislature that the government had suspended the bill because it had resulted in "conflicts in society."

In order to clearly spell out the government's position, "I formally announce the withdrawal of the bill," Lee told lawmakers. Pro-democracy lawmakers immediately tried to question him but he refused to respond.

There are no signs that the withdrawal of the bill would dampen the protests, now in their fifth month. The rallies have snowballed into the city's biggest political crisis in decades, expanding to demands for universal suffrage and an investigation into allegations of police abuses, most recently including the spraying of a mosque and bystanders with high-pressure blue-dyed water from an urban assault vehicle.

The long-expected scrapping of the bill was overshadowed by the drama surrounding the release from a Hong Kong prison of the murder suspect at the heart of the extradition case controversy.

Chan Tong-kai, who completed a separate sentence for money laundering, told reporters after his release that he wished to turn himself in to authorities in Taiwan, where he's wanted for killing his pregnant girlfriend, Poon Hiu-wing.

Taiwan announced Tuesday it was willing to send a delegation to bring Chan back to the self-ruled island for trial, but Hong Kong rejected the offer, saying the suspect should be allowed to fly unaccompanied to turn himself in.

The controversy is rooted in the unwillingness of Hong Kong to recognize the legitimacy of the legal bodies in Taiwan, which communist leaders in Beijing consider a breakaway province.

China has refused all contact with the administration of Taiwan's directly elected President Tsai Ing-wen over her refusal to endorse Beijing's stance that the island is Chinese territory awaiting annexation. That appears to have compelled Hong Kong to reject cooperation with Taiwan over Taipei's insistence on a "mutual legal assistance" deal with Hong Kong that would require their institutions to deal with each other on an equal basis.

Tsai herself weighed in Wednesday on the Chan case, emphasizing that, although both the alleged perpetrator and the victim are from Hong Kong, Taiwan was willing to put Chan on trial if Hong Kong doesn't.

However, she said there was no possibility of Chan simply catching a flight to Taipei and insisted Taiwan would not sacrifice its sovereignty in handling the matter.

"I would like to explain that in this case, the murderer is a wanted subject in Taiwan. He is already a wanted criminal suspect in Taiwan with a warrant out for his arrest," Tsai said during a visit to the Taiwanese-held island of Kinmen just off the Chinese coast.

"Therefore, regarding this case, there is no issue of free travel or just being a backpacker. There is only the matter of arrest and no question of simply turning oneself in," Tsai said.

Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council said allowing a murder suspect to fly on his own would ignore passenger safety and that Hong Kong's approach would indulge Chan and make Hong Kong "a criminal paradise where murderers can walk around."

Chan, 20, returned to Hong Kong alone last year after traveling to Taipei with Poon on vacation. Her body was found later packed in a suitcase and dumped in a field, while Chan made off with her bank card, mobile phone and other valuables.

"I am willing, for my impulsive actions and things I did wrong, to surrender myself, to return to Taiwan to face sentencing and stand trial," Chan told reporters outside prison before being whisked away by van to an exclusive gated community beyond the media's reach

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam had repeatedly cited Chan's case as justifying the proposed amendments to the extradition legislation, saying he could not be sent to the self-ruled island because there was no extradition agreement in place.

But the proposal stoked widespread fears residents of Hong Kong, which has maintained its own independent courts since reverting from British to Chinese rule in 1997, would be put at risk of being sent into mainland China's Communist Party-controlled judicial system. Lam was forced to announce last month that she would drop the bill in the face of fierce opposition.

The protests have drawn international attention and Basketball Hall of Famer Shaquille O'Neal became the latest to weigh in. He defended Houston Rockets general manager Daryl Morey, whose swiftly deleted tweet supporting the movement set off a firestorm with Beijing, which tried to clamp down on the NBA.

"One of our best values here in America is free speech, we're allowed to say what we want to say and we are allowed to speak up about on injustices and that's just how it goes," O'Neal said on a TNT pregame show ahead of the season's opening night Tuesday. "Daryl Morey was right. Whenever you see something wrong going on anywhere in the world, you should have the right to say 'That's not right' and that's what he did."

___ Associated Press video journalist Taijing Wu in Taipei, Taiwan contributed to this report.

Turkey signals it's holding back on resuming Syria push

By SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey will not resume its offensive against Kurdish Syrian fighters in northeast Syria, the country's defense ministry signaled on Wednesday, following separate agreements reached with the U.S. and Russia.

The ministry said the U.S. had announced that the Syrian Kurdish fighters had completed their pullout from areas Turkey invaded earlier this month, as a five-day cease-fire allowing for the withdrawal expired Tuesday night.

The statement came the morning after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a separate deal for their forces to jointly patrol almost the entire northeastern Syrian border after the Kurdish withdrawal.

Under that deal, Turkey will maintain control over the region it holds since its incursion, an area which runs roughly 120 kilometers (75 miles) along the Turkish-Syrian border and spans a depth of about 30 kilometers (19 miles).

It also lets Russian and Syrian troops control the rest of the border, filling a void left by the U.S. troops' abrupt withdrawal.

"At this stage, there is no further need to conduct a new operation outside the present operation area," the ministry statement said.

However, Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said that Turkish forces would "neutralize" any Syrian Kurdish fighters they come across in areas that Turkey now controls.

"If there are terrorist remnants, we would clear them," Cavusoglu told Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency in a televised interview.

Cavusoglu said the deal with Russia would continue until a lasting political solution for Syria is reached. The border areas would be locally administered, mostly by Syrian Arabs, he added.

He also said that Turkey agreed not to conduct joint patrols in the Syrian city of Qamishli, because of Russian concerns that such a move could lead to a confrontation between Turkish troops and Syrian government forces, long present in the area.

The Turkish foreign minister added that he hoped the deal would lead to the return of Syrian refugees and renewed a call for international assistance to resettle refugees.

Esper arrives in Baghdad to discuss US troop deployments

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Defense Secretary Mark Esper arrived in Baghdad Wednesday, as chaos swirled along the Turkey-Syria border and Iraqi leaders chafed over reports the U.S. may want to increase the number of troops based in Iraq at least temporarily.

Esper has said that under the current plan, all U.S. troops leaving Syria will go to western Iraq and the military would continue to conduct operations against the Islamic State group to prevent its resurgence in the region. He later added that the troops would be there temporarily until they are able to go home, but no time period has been set. He said Wednesday that the U.S. has no plans to leave those troops in Iraq “interminably.”

Iraq’s military, however, said Tuesday that U.S. troops leaving Syria and heading to neighboring Iraq do not have permission to stay in the country, even as the American forces continue to pull out of northern Syria after Turkey’s invasion of the border region. Esper said Wednesday he plans to talk with Iraqi leaders about the matter.

Meanwhile, Russia and Turkey reached an agreement on Tuesday that would deploy their forces across nearly its entire northeastern border to fill the void left by President Donald Trump’s abrupt withdrawal of U.S. forces. It was unclear Wednesday what that means for U.S. forces.

Trump ordered the bulk of the approximately 1,000 U.S. troops in Syria to withdraw after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made it clear in a phone call that his forces were about to invade Syria to push back Kurdish forces that Turkey considers terrorists. The pullout largely abandons the Kurdish allies who have fought the Islamic State group alongside U.S. troops for several years. Between 200 and 300 U.S. troops will remain at the southern Syrian outpost of Al-Tanf.

Esper said the troops going into Iraq would have two missions, one to help defend Iraq against a resurgence of Islamic State militants and another to monitor and perform a counter-IS mission.

The U.S. currently has more than 5,000 American forces in Iraq, under an agreement between the two countries. The U.S. pulled its troops out of Iraq in 2011 when combat operations there ended, but they went back in after the Islamic State group began to take over large swaths of the country in 2014.

The number of American forces in Iraq has remained small due to political sensitivities in the country, after years of what some Iraqis consider U.S. occupation during the war that began in 2003. Iraqi leaders may privately condone more U.S. forces to battle IS, but worry if it’s widely known that there will be backlash from the citizens.

U.S. troops in Syria fought for five years alongside Kurdish-led forces in northeast Syria and succeeded in bringing down the rule of the Islamic State group there at the cost of thousands of Kurdish fighters’ lives. Under the new agreement, much of that territory would be handed over to U.S. rivals.

The biggest winners are Turkey and Russia. Turkey would get sole control over areas of the Syrian border captured in its invasion, while Turkish, Russian and Syrian government forces would oversee the rest of the border region. America’s former U.S. allies, the Kurdish fighters, are left hoping Moscow and Damascus will preserve some pieces of their autonomy dreams.

Trump claim brings new pain to relatives of lynching victims

By JAY REEVES Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Willie Edwards Jr., a black truck driver, was killed by Ku Klux Klansmen who forced him to jump off a bridge in Alabama in 1957. Two years earlier, white men had bludgeoned black teenager Emmett Till to death in Mississippi. No one went to prison for either slaying.

Both people died in racist lynchings, and relatives of each were aghast Tuesday after President Donald Trump compared his own possible impeachment to lynching — racist killings, often for the purpose of inciting terror, that took an estimated 4,400 black lives over roughly seven decades in 20 states, mostly

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in the South.

Made in a tweet that drew backing from some Republican supporters including Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, Trump's claim was ill-informed at best and racist at worst, they said. And it denigrated the fates of people who were hanged, beaten, shot, drowned, burned or battered to death because of the color of their skin, they said.

"Either he's very ignorant or very insensitive or very racist and just doesn't care," said 66-year-old Malinda Edwards, Willie Edwards' daughter.

Deborah Watts, a cousin of Till, called the president's tweet "insensitive and offensive."

"Lynching is the ultimate act of racial terror that resulted in the brutal murders, trauma and terrorism that my cousin Emmett and thousands of innocent black men, women and entire communities of color suffered for hundreds of years," she said.

Till, a 14-year-old African American from Chicago, was kidnapped, beaten and dumped in a river in 1955 after being accused of whistling at a white woman in a store. An all-white jury acquitted two white men of murder charges, although they later admitted the killing in a magazine interview. The FBI has yet to close a renewed investigation into his slaying.

In the case of Edwards' father, Klansmen killed the 24-year-old man after mistaking him for another black man who supposedly smiled at a white woman or made a pass in racially segregated Montgomery. An FBI review found that the killers kidnapped him off a roadside and forced him to plunge off a bridge into a river.

Three men were indicted in Edwards' slaying in 1976, but a judge dismissed the case because the indictment didn't state a cause of death. Subsequent investigations led to no prosecutions, and all the suspects are now dead.

The names of Edwards and Till are included on a national memorial to lynching victims that opened last year in Montgomery. Research by the nonprofit Equal Justice Initiative, which commissioned the memorial, documented some 4,400 racial terror lynchings in the United States from 1877 through 1950.

An untold number of other people also were lynched, but their stories were lost to time or official indifference. Janet Langhart Cohen says those cases include that of her distant cousin Jimmy Gillenwaters, who was lynched in Kentucky in the early 1900s.

Cohen, the wife of former Republican Sen. William Cohen of Maine, said Trump is one of too many racist whites who have shown a lack of respect for lynching victims and their descendants.

"He knows what he's doing. He knows how to hurt and divide," said Cohen, who wrote the play "Anne and Emmett" about an imaginary conversation between Till and Holocaust victim Anne Frank.

Facing an impeachment inquiry that he and supporters claim is illegal, Trump tweeted: "So some day, if a Democrat becomes President and the Republicans win the House, even by a tiny margin, they can impeach the President, without due process or fairness or any legal rights. All Republicans must remember what they are witnessing here — a lynching. But we will WIN!"

Edwards, who lives in Dayton, Ohio, said she feels sick in her stomach any time she hears the word "lynching," and Trump's tweet was no different. Trump's message was all the worse because it displayed indifference to the victims of actual lynchings and their descendants, Edwards said.

"It says to them that 'What happened to you is like nothing more than an investigation.' These are people who went through the most gruesome and heinous things that could be done to them," said Edwards.

Ballistics database helps bring Houston gang war into focus

By JUAN A. LOZANO and JOHN L. MONE Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Kenneth Roberson's lyrics chronicled the gang violence he saw in his hometown of Houston.

"Momma's crying, son is dying on this crime scene," he rapped. Those words became prophetic as the aspiring artist was killed during a September 2018 drive-by shooting that left his mother, Yvonne Ferguson-Smith, heartbroken.

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"I don't know how to move on," said Ferguson-Smith, who has started a nonprofit group called TEARS to help grieving mothers. "It's like he was speaking (in his songs) on his own death."

Roberson's killing, which had no witnesses, might have gone unsolved if not for a federal ballistics database that linked the 24-year-old's death to a series of fatal shootings that seem unconnected but that authorities say are part of an ongoing gang war in Houston that's claimed more than 60 lives the past six years.

The National Integrated Ballistic Information Network, or NIBIN, is a database of scanned bullet casings that has been around for two decades but in recent years has evolved from a purely forensic tool to one that generates leads for investigators. While it has been successful in cities like Houston, the network still faces challenges, including questions about the accuracy of the science behind it and whether it's being fully utilized by local agencies.

Harris County District Attorney Kim Ogg said the database is invaluable.

"NIBIN is how many of the (Houston) shootings were connected. Once it was brought to me, it was pretty clear this is a gang war," Ogg said.

Authorities say the shootings are part of a battle between two gangs: the 100 Percent Third Ward or 103, and the Young Scott Block, or YSB. The conflict has claimed the lives of gang members and others, including an 8-year-old boy.

Bullet casings recovered at crime scenes or test-fired from confiscated weapons are scanned at computer stations and images are uploaded to the database, managed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, or ATF. The database looks for possible matches with other bullet casings that have similar marks indicating they were fired from the same weapon.

Authorities can use potential matches to pursue leads from other cases not previously known to them. These leads can be investigated much more quickly than confirmed hits — information that must be verified by a firearms examiner and can take longer to complete.

"It takes cases that otherwise have gone unsolved ... and it breathes new life into them," said Fred Milanowski, special agent in charge of the ATF's Houston office.

Authorities say the database helped Houston police connect casings from Roberson's shooting, along with casings from two fatal shootings in November 2018, to one individual who remains jailed and is a suspect in four other killings.

Police say Roberson appeared to have been affiliated with the YSB gang. Ferguson-Smith said she doesn't believe her son was in a gang, but that he knew gang members and might have been killed because of that.

Ogg said gang-related cases can be difficult to prosecute because witness testimony can be an issue. She said some witnesses may have their credibility questioned because of their gang affiliations, while others might be afraid to testify for fear of retaliation.

"So objective evidence that doesn't require personal testimony ... it's a benefit to us as prosecutors, it's a benefit to the community," Ogg said.

NIBIN has helped Houston authorities make arrests in other crimes as well.

Levi Byrd said he was riding his horse, Freedom, in November 2016 through a partly rural neighborhood in south Houston when someone in a truck shot five times at him and his horse. Freedom was hit twice, dying instantly.

A 9 mm handgun seized two months later at a drug house was matched with shell casings found next to Freedom. A suspect was arrested and sentenced to 22 years in prison.

"Freedom was family," Byrd said. "For them to catch the killer, I felt justice was served."

In fiscal year 2019, NIBIN helped solve 68 shootings and lead to 36 arrests in the Houston area, while also resulting in 122 solved shootings and 95 arrests in San Antonio, according to the ATF.

The agency said that since March 2018, the database has played a critical role in an arrest or prosecution in 754 cases nationwide.

There are 215 NIBIN sites in 42 states around the country that have worked with more than 5,700 law enforcement agencies.

A 2017 report by the Police Executive Research Forum highlighted ATF-led task forces in Chicago, Denver and Milwaukee that use NIBIN. It found that while those cities continue to face "serious challenges with

gun violence," the task forces "are an innovative and promising approach for enhancing the investigation of gun crimes and identifying offenders."

Laurie Woods, a lecturer at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, and a former law enforcement officer, said the database should best be used as a generator of investigative leads, adding that while there can be a lot of commonalities between two bullet casings, "there's no absolute match."

Some studies in recent years have questioned the reliability of such firearms analysis or called for additional research into the subject.

Ogg said technology like NIBIN always should be partnered with "good old-fashioned gumshoe detective work."

A February report from the Department of Justice's Inspector General found budget and personnel shortages and lack of technical expertise might hinder the ability of law enforcement agencies to "effectively participate in the program."

For the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, which patrols parts of suburban Houston, NIBIN is worth the extra work it takes to scan bullet casings into the database while also responding to calls and processing other evidence.

"Finding a casing for us, I look at it as better than finding a fingerprint," said Dominic Sodolak, a crime scene investigator with the sheriff's office.

Follow Juan A. Lozano on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/juanlozano70>

Follow John Mone on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/JohnMone>

Leonard leads Clippers over LeBron and Lakers 112-102

By BETH HARRIS AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Kawhi Leonard hit seven straight shots in one stretch, creating a run for the Clippers that his new teammates quickly joined.

"It's a great sign of leadership," coach Doc Rivers said. "He talks with his game."

Leonard began a new career chapter Tuesday night, scoring 30 points to go with a strong bench effort in a 112-102 victory over LeBron James and the Lakers in the teams' season opener.

Leonard chose the Clippers because he wanted to come home and his family was on hand.

"All those emotions went through me again," he said.

Lou Williams added 21 points and Montrezl Harrell had 17 off the bench when the Clippers began their 50th season overall and 36th in Los Angeles as the once unlikely but now favorites to win the franchise's first NBA championship.

"It's one of 82 (games)," Rivers said. "Next question."

Leonard won his second NBA title last season in Toronto.

The Lakers showed off their new 1-2 punch of James and Anthony Davis. Davis scored 25 points, making 9 of 14 free throws, and James had 18.

"For us, we're both aggressive," Davis said. "Sometimes we kind of miss each other. I missed him a couple times and he missed me, so just trying to figure it out."

Danny Green outscored them both with 28 points, including seven 3-pointers, in the highest-scoring debut by a Laker in franchise history.

Leonard got it done without his personal recruit Paul George, sidelined indefinitely while rehabbing from a pair of offseason shoulder surgeries.

"It's just the first game of the season, so it's going to take the season and mistakes and success to get us on the same page," Leonard said.

Wearing a black tuxedo jacket and bow tie, George received a mixed reaction when introduced in the playoff-like atmosphere at Staples Center, where the Clippers were the home team for the first of four meetings in the arena the teams share.

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"Their fans were very loud early and I thought our fans took over from that point on," Rivers said. "It's great for the city."

The Clippers' reserves outscored the Lakers' bench, 60-19. Last season, Williams and Harrell were the NBA's highest-scoring reserve duo, and they picked up where they left off.

"This bench is going to be better this year than even last year," Rivers said.

It came down to the fourth quarter, and the Clippers dominated.

Tied 85-all, they opened with a 19-7 run to go up 104-92. Five different players scored and Leonard assisted on Maurice Harkless' 3-pointer.

James had three of the Lakers' six turnovers in the fourth, when Harkless and Leonard each blocked shots by Dwight Howard.

"That was just very careless and they capitalized off of it," James said.

With 4 ½ minutes left, Lakers fans chanted "Let's go, Lakers! Let's go, Lakers!" while others hit the exits.

"The NBA's back and everyone's trying to have the narrative of it's a rivalry game and it's a huge test," James said, "but I think both teams are not where they want to be. We have a lot of room to improve."

The Lakers erased a 14-point deficit in the third, led by Danny Green's 18 points. He capped a 15-0 run with his fifth 3-pointer before JaMychal Green's 3-pointer pulled the Clippers into an 85-all tie heading into the fourth.

The Clippers outscored the Lakers 40-29 in the second quarter, buoyed by 16 points from Leonard. He made seven straight shots on a variety of moves — pullups, fadeaways, a cutting dunk.

The Lakers raced to a 13-2 lead, their largest of the game. James scored over Leonard and he later heard "MVP! MVP!" chants while sinking his first free throws of the season.

The Lakers shot 53% from the floor in the first quarter, while the Clippers missed shots and had a basket by Williams taken away when the Lakers challenged a foul call on Howard.

The rivalry was on early with a male fan shouting "Go Lakers!" during the national anthem, drawing big cheers while Clipper fans booed.

"It was everything I expected," Davis said. "Very anticipated game and it was fun."

TIP-INS

Lakers: They fell to 43-29 all-time in season openers. ... G Rajon Rondo (sore right calf) sat out.

Clippers: They improved to 25-25 in openers all-time, but still trail the Lakers 3-2 when the teams meet in a season opener. ... G Rodney McGruder (right ankle sprain) missed the game.

WARNING FANS

As part of the NBA's crackdown on fan behavior this season, cards carrying a message from league security were on seats located courtside and the first couple rows back. They reminded that every fan is required to comply with the league's fan code of conduct and anyone who acts inappropriately may be subject to ejection and-or revocation of their tickets. The public address announcer reminded fans before both halves about minding their manners.

LEONARD'S GREETING

Leonard took to the mic to welcome Clippers fans to the game. He had to raise his usually low voice to be heard over the din, a mix of cheers from Clippers fans and boos from Lakers fans. "It's going to be a great season," Leonard said. "We're going to play hard every night. Let's get it going."

STARRY NIGHT

Famous faces came out, including Kate Hudson, Angela Bassett, Jeff Garlin, and athletes Lisa Leslie and Diana Taurasi of the WNBA, Joc Pederson of the Dodgers and soccer player Alex Morgan. Halsey performed outdoors at LA Live before the game and Ty Dolla \$ign rapped at halftime.

UP NEXT

Lakers: Return to Staples Center as the home team Friday against Utah. The Lakers are 25-12 all-time against the Jazz at home.

Clippers: Travel to Golden State on Thursday to open the Chase Center in San Francisco in another blockbuster matchup.

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

Soto, Nationals top Cole, Astros 5-4 in World Series opener

By BEN WALKER AP Baseball Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Juan Soto and the Washington Nationals quickly derailed the Cole Express.

A 20-year-old prodigy with a passion for the big moment, Soto homered onto the train tracks high above the left field wall and hit a two-run double as the Nationals tagged Gerrit Cole and the Houston Astros 5-4 Tuesday night in the World Series opener.

"After the first at-bat, I just said, 'It's another baseball game,'" Soto said. "In the first at-bat, I'm not going to lie, I was a little bit shaking in my legs."

Not even a history-making home run by postseason star George Springer — and another shot that nearly tied it in the eighth inning — could deter Washington.

Ryan Zimmerman, still full of sock at 35, also homered to back a resourceful Max Scherzer and boost the wild-card Nationals in their first World Series appearance — tres bien for a franchise that began as the Montreal Expos in 1969.

"They waited a long time," Nationals manager Dave Martinez said.

Otherworldly almost all season, Cole looked downright ordinary. Trea Turner singled on the second pitch of the game and the Nationals were off and running, ending Cole's 19-game winning streak that stretched back 25 starts to May.

"I didn't have my A-game tonight," Cole said.

Not what Cole or anyone else at Minute Maid Park expected, especially after he led the majors in strikeouts, topped the AL in ERA and finished second in the big leagues in wins to teammate Justin Verlander.

Cole had breezed through the AL playoffs, too.

Yet it was a further testament to an eternal truth about baseball: It doesn't matter what you do the whole season if you don't get it done in October.

"I think he's been so good for so long that there builds this thought of invincibility and that it's impossible to beat him," Astros manager AJ Hinch said. "So when it happens it is a surprise to all of us because we've watched for months this guy completely dominate the opposition."

Soto finished with three hits and a stolen base. Three days shy of his 21st birthday, the wunderkind left fielder also snared Michael Brantley's late try for a tying hit.

Relentless at the plate, he's already become one of those rare players — like Springer — who seems to turn pressure into production.

How's he do it? Better launch angle? Improved swing path?

Uh, not really.

"Sometimes I just put gum in my mouth," Soto said. "But most of the time, just take a deep breath and focus. It's just the pitcher and me."

"Everybody around, I forget about everybody around. It's just you and me," he said, adding, "try to enjoy it."

The MVP when Houston won its first crown in 2017, Springer set a record by connecting in his fifth straight Series game to make it 5-3 in the seventh. But reliever Daniel Hudson threw a fastball past rookie Yordan Alvarez with the bases loaded to end the inning.

In the eighth, Springer put a charge into a drive to deep right-center, and it appeared as though he might've hit a tying, two-run homer. Springer took a couple of hops out of the batter's box to watch, and had to settle for an RBI double when the ball glanced off the glove of a leaping Adam Eaton at the fence.

Heavily favored at the start, the 107-win Astros will try to get even Wednesday night when Verlander faces Stephen Strasburg in another matchup of aces.

Scherzer slipped in and out of trouble for five innings. But every time the stadium got rollicking, he found

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a way to get out of jams. There's a reason ol' Max has won three Cy Young Awards.

"We got old and young guys," Scherzer said.

Projected Game 4 starter Patrick Corbin threw a scoreless sixth for the Nationals. Springer connected off Tanner Rainey for his 14th career postseason home run before Hudson fanned Alvarez on three pitches.

Hudson retired José Altuve, and Sean Doolittle got Brantley on a lineout to strand Springer at second in the eighth. Doolittle then closed for a save to give the Nationals their seventh straight victory and 17th in 19 games dating to their September playoff run.

Leading the way was Soto, whose eighth-inning hit in the wild-card win over Milwaukee sent the Nationals on their path.

"He's got kind of the 'it' factor," Hinch said. "He's got the twitch. He's got fast hands. He's got no fear."

Soto looked overmatched when he fanned on Cole's 99 mph heater in the first inning. Turned out Soto was just getting warmed up.

He justified his place in the 4-spot, launching a leadoff drive in the fourth to make it 2-all. He became the fourth-youngest player to homer in the Series, behind Andruw Jones, Miguel Cabrera and Mickey Mantle.

The ball was later retrieved from the train tracks and donated by Soto for a long ride to the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown.

Washington took the lead in the fifth. Eaton hit a tiebreaking single and Soto doubled with two outs for a 5-2 advantage.

After the game, Soto agreed to donate his home run ball to the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown.

Zimmerman hit the first World Series homer in Nationals history, connecting in the second. He was the first player drafted by the team for the 2005 season.

"It's been a long ride," Zimmerman said.

Cole left after the seventh, getting a pat from Hinch in the dugout. Watching from the front row behind the plate was someone who also knows a lot about pitching — Astros executive, Texas great and Hall of Famer Nolan Ryan, the Ryan Express himself.

Yuli Gurriel put Houston ahead with a two-run double in the first.

UP NEXT

Nationals: Strasburg was 3-0 with a 1.64 ERA in the NL playoffs. He went 18-6 and set a career high for wins during the regular season.

Astros: Verlander is 0-4 with a 5.67 ERA in five World Series starts. He got this far with Detroit in 2006 and 2012 and the Astros in 2017.

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

Canada's Trudeau wins reelection but faces a divided nation

By **ROB GILLIES** Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Prime Minister Justin Trudeau begins his second term facing an increasingly divided Parliament and country, with his rock-star appeal from four years ago diminished by scandal and unmet expectations.

Trudeau was reelected in a stronger-than-expected showing in Monday's national elections. But while his Liberal Party took the most seats in Parliament, it lost its majority and will have to rely on an opposition party to get anything passed.

The prime minister struck a conciliatory note in an early morning address that forced the TV networks to break away from covering his Conservative rival, Andrew Scheer, who had just begun speaking to his own supporters.

"To those who did not vote for us, know that we will work every single day for you, we will govern for everyone," Trudeau said.

With results still trickling in, the Liberals had 157 seats — 13 short of the 170 needed for a majority in the 338-seat House of Commons — while the Conservatives had 121.

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While Trudeau claimed a "clear mandate," his party won fewer raw votes nationally than the Conservatives did and failed to win a single seat in the western provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, where the Conservatives dominated.

There is growing outrage in Alberta, home to the third-largest oil reserves in the world, over Trudeau's inability to get a pipeline built to the Pacific Coast.

"To Canadians in Alberta and Saskatchewan," he said after his victory, "know that you are an essential part of our great country. I have heard your frustration, and I want to be there to support you. Let us all work hard to bring our country together."

At the same time, Trudeau said Canadians elected a government that will fight climate change. That means he will keep a national carbon tax in place that has also angered western Canada.

In what was supposed to be a concession speech, Scheer said the results showed Trudeau was much weakened since his 2015 election, when pundits had predicted the beginning of another Trudeau dynasty. Trudeau's father, Pierre, was prime minister from 1968 to 1984, apart from a brief interruption in 1979-80.

"Conservatives have put Justin Trudeau on notice," Scheer said. "And Mr. Trudeau, when your government falls, Conservatives will be ready, and we will win."

Later, at a news conference, Scheer blamed Trudeau for division in the country, accusing him of pitting region against region.

"We have a divided country. It is essential for Justin Trudeau to take this seriously, to try to find common ground and stop attacking the energy sector," Scheer said. He said he will continue as Conservative leader.

Canada was also further divided by the electoral success of the separatist Bloc Quebecois in the French-speaking province of Quebec. The Bloc won 32 of the province's 78 districts, up from 10.

The party, however, didn't talk about separatism during the campaign and is not expected to seek a referendum on independence from Canada.

Trudeau, 47, prevailed after a series of scandals that tarnished his image as a liberal icon.

Old photos of him in blackface and brownface surfaced last month, and Trudeau was also accused of bullying his female attorney general into dropping the prosecution of a Canadian engineering company.

Also, environmentalists have accused him of betrayal for spending billions to buy the pipeline in a so-far unsuccessful bid to get the stalled project moving again. It has been held up by environmental opposition and court challenges.

"I'm surprised at how well Trudeau has done," Nelson Wiseman, a political science professor at the University of Toronto, said of the election results. "I don't think anybody expected Trudeau to get a majority, but they are not that far off."

Trudeau's Liberals are likely to rely on the New Democrats to form a new government. That will further alienate Western Canada because New Democrat leader Jagmeet Singh is against the pipeline project.

"If the frustration and alienation continue to mount it will pose a very serious challenge to national unity," Alberta Premier Jason Kenney warned. "I'm not going to let Justin Trudeau push me out of my country."

Singh disputed the notion the results show a broken Canada. More than 63 percent of Canada's voters chose progressive parties.

"The people in a lot of ways share so many values," Singh said.

Is the stethoscope dying? High-tech rivals pose a threat

By LINDSEY TANNER AP Medical Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Two centuries after its invention, the stethoscope — the very symbol of the medical profession — is facing an uncertain prognosis.

It is threatened by hand-held devices that are also pressed against the chest but rely on ultrasound technology, artificial intelligence and smartphone apps instead of doctors' ears to help detect leaks, murmurs, abnormal rhythms and other problems in the heart, lungs and elsewhere. Some of these instruments can yield images of the beating heart or create electrocardiogram graphs.

Dr. Eric Topol, a world-renowned cardiologist, considers the stethoscope obsolete, nothing more than

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a pair of "rubber tubes."

It "was OK for 200 years," Topol said. But "we need to go beyond that. We can do better."

In a longstanding tradition, nearly every U.S. medical school presents incoming students with a white coat and stethoscope to launch their careers. It's more than symbolic — stethoscope skills are still taught, and proficiency is required for doctors to get their licenses.

Over the last decade, though, the tech industry has downsized ultrasound scanners into devices resembling TV remotes. It has also created digital stethoscopes that can be paired with smartphones to create moving pictures and readouts.

Proponents say these devices are nearly as easy to use as stethoscopes and allow doctors to watch the body in motion and actually see things such as leaky valves. "There's no reason you would listen to sounds when you can see everything," Topol said.

At many medical schools, it's the newer devices that really get students' hearts pumping.

"Wow!" "Whoa!" "This is awesome," Indiana University medical students exclaimed in a recent class as they learned how to use a hand-held ultrasound device on a classmate, watching images of his lub-dubbing heart on a tablet screen.

The Butterfly iQ device, made by based by Guilford, Connecticut-based Butterfly Network Inc., went on the market last year. An update will include artificial intelligence to help users position the probe and interpret the images.

Students at the Indianapolis-based medical school, one of the nation's largest, learn stethoscope skills but also get training in hand-held ultrasound in a program launched there last year by Dr. Paul Wallach, an executive associate dean. He created a similar program five years ago at the Medical College of Georgia and predicts that within the next decade, hand-held ultrasound devices will become part of the routine physical exam, just like the reflex hammer.

The devices advance "our ability to take peek under the skin into the body," he said. But Wallach added that, unlike some of his colleagues, he isn't ready to declare the stethoscope dead. He envisions the next generation of physicians wearing "a stethoscope around the neck and an ultrasound in the pocket."

Modern-day stethoscopes bear little resemblance to the first stethoscope, invented in the early 1800s by Frenchman Rene Laennec, but they work essentially the same way.

Laennec's creation was a hollow tube of wood, almost a foot long, that made it easier to hear heart and lung sounds than pressing an ear against the chest. Rubber tubes, earpieces and the often cold metal attachment that is placed against the chest came later, helping to amplify the sounds.

When the stethoscope is pressed against the body, sound waves make the diaphragm — the flat metal disc part of the device — and the bell-shaped underside vibrate. That channels the sound waves up through the tubes to the ears. Conventional stethoscopes typically cost under \$200, compared with at least a few thousand dollars for some of the high-tech devices.

But picking up and interpreting body sounds is subjective and requires a sensitive ear — and a trained one.

With medical advances and competing devices over the past few decades, "the old stethoscope is kind of falling on hard times in terms of rigorous training," said Dr. James Thomas, a cardiologist at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago. "Some recent studies have shown that graduates in internal medicine and emergency medicine may miss as many as half of murmurs using a stethoscope."

Northwestern is involved in testing new technology created by Eko, a Berkeley, California-based maker of smart stethoscopes. To improve detection of heart murmurs, Eko is developing artificial intelligence algorithms for its devices, using recordings of thousands of heartbeats. The devices produce a screen message telling the doctor whether the heart sounds are normal or if murmurs are present.

Dennis Callinan, a retired Chicago city employee with heart disease, is among the study participants. At age 70, he has had plenty of stethoscope exams but said he feels no nostalgia for the devices.

"If they can get a better reading using the new technology, great," Callinan said.

Chicago pediatrician Dr. Dave Drelicharz has been in practice for just over a decade and knows the allure of newer devices. But until the price comes down, the old stalwart "is still your best tool," Drelicharz said.

Once you learn to use the stethoscope, he said, it "becomes second nature."

"During my work hours in my office, if I don't have it around my shoulders," he said, "it's as though I was feeling almost naked."

Follow AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner: @LindseyTanner

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Trump 2020 targeting Hispanic vote in nontraditional places

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

YORK, Pa. (AP) — President Donald Trump's reelection campaign is making contrarian appeals in the most unusual places, trying to win over Hispanic voters in states not known for them, like Pennsylvania.

His second campaign, far better financed and organized than his first, is pressing every potential tactical advantage, including trying to capture even small slivers of the Hispanic vote, hoping it adds up to the narrowest of winning margins.

"I think that you win campaigns with what we call 'tajaditos.' Little bits. You have to have a little bit of this and a little bit of that," said Bertica Cabrera Morris, a Cuba native and "Latinos For Trump" advisory board member. "You don't need everyone from every group, but you have to have a little bit of everything."

For many reasons, not the least of which is the president's hostility toward immigrants, it will be a difficult sell.

That was clear on a recent evening in York, Pennsylvania, when Karyme Navarro, 18, was filling out her first voter registration form but stopped on a question about party affiliation.

Mirna Orellana, a community organizer with the nonpartisan nonprofit "We Are Casa," who brought the form to Navarro's door, isn't allowed to advocate for any party. Still, she's seen the scenario enough to have an answer ready: "If you're Democrat, you're for Obama," she said in Spanish. "If you're Republican, you're for Trump."

Navarro nodded, then handed back the completed form. She had checked "Democratic."

Such exchanges are what Democrats are counting on — Hispanics so enraged by Trump's policies and anti-immigrant rhetoric that they'll turn out in force to deny him a second term.

Those on the front lines of Trump's effort concede that the president's anti-Hispanic fervor doesn't help. Still, they say many Hispanics will be won over by a strong economy and conservative social values. Similarly, Democratic activists say simply criticizing Trump often isn't enough to attract Hispanic support.

The reelection campaign's efforts are understandably focused on key swing states like Florida and Nevada and could also shore up Trump's hold on Arizona and Texas. Increased outreach may also have an effect in less obvious areas where Trump eked out a 2016 victory, though, like parts of Pennsylvania where the Latino population is booming and where his margin for error is slender.

"Latinos are moving out of the urban centers, moving away from the stronghold of the Democrats," said Jose Fuentes, a former attorney general of Puerto Rico who is advising the president's reelection effort and called Pennsylvania "a perfect example." "We're microtargeting those areas that can be successful for us."

That means locales like York, a city in the southern part of the state with a population around 45,000 famous for its York Barbells. It is nearly a third Hispanic, many with roots in Puerto Rico or the Dominican Republic. The city, heavily Democratic, is surrounded by solidly Trump country.

Fuentes said party officials have identified about a dozen areas nationwide to woo Hispanic, black and Asian voters and funded the training of 500-plus staffers who increased their recruiting efforts at local events.

Democrat Hillary Clinton beat Trump 66% to 28% among Hispanics nationally, but that was lower than the 71% Barack Obama won in 2012. President George W. Bush also captured more than 40% of the Hispanic vote in 2004, but his message was far more inclusive than Trump's.

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Hispanics make up only about 8% of Pennsylvania's population. Trump won the state — home to about 12.8 million people — by around 44,000 votes, or less than 1% of those cast, in 2016. Nearly 1 million Hispanics now live in Pennsylvania and the Pew Research Center estimated that, for the 2018 midterms, 501,000 statewide were eligible to vote — 10th largest in the nation.

AP's VoteCast data showed that 38% of Pennsylvania's Hispanics voted Republican in 2018 congressional races, but Democrats still easily won the Senate and governor's races.

Fuentes said a key to winning Hispanic support is tailoring messages to people who have ancestral roots in different parts of Latin America. Cubans are chiefly interested in U.S. relations with the island and with Venezuela, he said. For Puerto Ricans, it's recovery after the devastation of Hurricane Maria in 2017 and U.S. statehood questions. Mexicans tend to be most motivated by commercial relations, as are people from most of South America. Central Americans tend to be most focused on immigration policy.

Messages targeting those types of voters in specific areas can resonate, Fuentes added, even if the president's rhetoric sometimes doesn't.

"This president has his own style," Fuentes said. "But my line is he's been successful with it."

Trump seized on a coming "caravan" of Central American immigrants before Election Day 2018 and saw Democrats flip 41 House seats. But a Gallup poll released in July found that 27% of Americans named immigration the most important problem facing the U.S. — the highest ever measured for the issue. The Trump campaign highlighted that in emails to supporters, saying the president's "leadership and determination" can "Keep America Safe."

"We came legally and so did our forefathers. That means a lot to us, the rule of law," said Republican Texas state Sen. Pete Flores, a retired game warden of Mexican ancestry who represents a district that includes 460-plus miles (740-plus kilometers) of U.S.-Mexico border. In heavily Hispanic South Texas, Flores said Trump "has more support among regular folks than most people are letting on" because unemployment is so low.

Back in Pennsylvania, the same themes are playing out, said former Republican Rep. Lou Barletta, who lost last year's Senate race. As mayor of Hazelton in 2006, Barletta championed one of the nation's first ordinances forbidding landlords and employers from dealing with people in the country illegally — which was later blocked in federal court.

"I think when the president talks about securing the border, about how people who are here illegally need to go home (because) they committed crimes, they understand what he is talking about," Barletta said of the state's Hispanic voters.

The Democratic National Committee also has begun staffing up in key battleground states. Its chairman, Tom Perez, the son of Dominican immigrants, visited Pennsylvania last summer.

"It's important to expose that racism and hate, and it's a motivating factor, but it is not enough in a lot of cases," said Lizet Ocampo, political director for People For the American Way, a Washington-based progressive organization. She said, "Being good at immigration gets you in the door and then being good on all the other issues gets across the finish line."

A recent poll of eligible Hispanic voters nationwide by the Democratic polling firm Latino Decisions found that only 13% said they'd "definitely" vote for Trump in 2020, but there's also an enthusiasm gap for the other side: Less than 60% of respondents said they planned to participate in Democratic primaries.

Orellana, the organizer for "We Are Casa," which advocates for immigrant rights and has 100,000 members in Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania, says despite York being so heavily Hispanic, she still sees plenty of people in "Make America Great" hats.

"I can't even look them in the face," Orellana said. "It's like, 'How can you do that to your people?'"

Zuckerberg appears in Congress as Facebook faces scrutiny

By MARCY GORDON and BARBARA ORTUTAY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg is again appearing before Congress to face questions about his company's massive market power, privacy lapses and tolerance of speech deemed

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false or hateful.

Zuckerberg has been summoned to testify at a hearing Wednesday by the House Financial Services Committee on Facebook's plan to create a global digital currency, which has stirred opposition from lawmakers and regulators in the U.S. and Europe. But the full range of policies and conduct of the social media giant with nearly 2.5 billion users will be under the public glare.

It's the Facebook chief's first testimony to Congress since April 2018.

The company seems to spark public and official anger at every turn these days, from its shift into messaging services that allow encrypted conversations to its alleged anticompetitive behavior to its refusal to take down phony political ads or doctored videos.

Lawmakers from both parties and top regulators — including Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell — have criticized Facebook's plan for the new currency, to be called Libra. They warn that it could be used for illicit activity such as money laundering or drug trafficking.

Rep. Maxine Waters, the California Democrat who heads the Financial Services panel, this summer asked Facebook to not move forward with the currency and a digital wallet called Calibra that would be used with it. Waters has called Libra "a new Swiss-based financial system" that potentially is too big to fail and could require a taxpayer bailout.

Several high-profile companies that had signed on as partners in Facebook's governing association for Libra have recently bailed, spelling a potentially rough road for the project. But many experts don't believe it's doomed.

Zuckerberg, in written testimony prepared for the hearing, aimed to reassure lawmakers that his company won't try to evade financial regulators as it readies Libra.

Facebook "will not be a part of launching the Libra payments system anywhere in the world unless all U.S. regulators approve it," he said. That's a stronger statement than Facebook official David Marcus made to Congress in July, when he said the company will not activate Libra until it has "fully addressed regulatory concerns and received appropriate approvals." Marcus leads the Libra project.

Zuckerberg is striving to defend Libra and alleviate concerns that the currency could sidestep regulators. Analysts say Libra could avoid regulation and launch in countries where it's not getting pushback, but this doesn't appear to be Facebook's intention.

Instead, Zuckerberg is pushing an optimistic vision of Libra and what it could mean for people around the world who don't have access to bank accounts.

While some critics see the recent exodus of some Libra partners as evidence of the plan's likely failure, U.S. regulators appear to view it as enough of a threat that they are considering the possibility of the Fed launching its own competitor currency.

"At the Federal Reserve, we will continue to analyze the potential benefits and costs of central bank digital currencies, and look forward to learning from other central banks," Lael Brainard, a member of the Fed's board of governors, said in a speech last week.

There is concern among regulators that the massive reserve created with money used to buy the new currency could supplant the Fed and destabilize the financial system, and that consumers could be hurt by Libra losses.

Zuckerberg also played the China card in his remarks, urging regulators to act quickly "While we debate these issues, the rest of the world isn't waiting. China is moving quickly to launch similar ideas in the coming months," he said.

The Facebook CEO also has cited competition from China as a compelling reason against breaking up the company.

The Justice Department, the Federal Trade Commission and the House Judiciary antitrust subcommittee are all conducting investigations of Facebook and the other huge tech companies amid accusations of abuse of their market power to crush competition.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a leading Democratic presidential candidate, has advocated breaking up Facebook and other tech behemoths. She recently ran a fake political ad on Facebook taking aim at Zuckerberg

to protest the company's policy of not fact-checking politicians' speech or ads in the same way it enlists outside parties to fact-check news stories and other posts.

In a major speech last week at Georgetown University, Zuckerberg defended the company's refusal to take down content from its platform it considers newsworthy "even if it goes against our standards."

Facebook, Google and Twitter are trying to oversee internet content while also avoiding infringing on First Amendment rights. The pendulum has swung recently toward restricting hateful speech that could spawn violence.

Ortutay reported from San Francisco.

Pennsylvania's gas politics churn as Trump embraces industry

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

EXTON, Pa. (AP) — For a second time in three months, President Donald Trump is headed to Pennsylvania to promote his support for the natural gas industry, making clear that he sees his pro-industry policies as a boost to his chances of winning the battleground state.

As some of his leading Democratic opponents are calling for a fracking ban, Trump has been eager to cut a contrast, touting his support for a sector he says brings economic benefits to rural pockets and jobs to construction union workers.

But pipeline politics might not be so clear-cut.

In the suburbs that might be key to his path to victory, Pennsylvania voters have shown a growing opposition to the drilling and massive pipelines required to move its product across the state. Candidates in state and local races are increasingly hardening their stances on the industry. National polling shows growing skepticism of fracking, the process used in extraction.

While the issue is unlikely to be the one that turns a race already dominated by Trump's strong personality, a looming impeachment fight and accusations of racism, Trump's eagerness to promote the industry underscores his tight focus on shoring up his base of rural voters, even at the risk of alienating others.

Coming to the Pittsburgh conference gives Trump the ability to pitch to an industry and a region — western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio and West Virginia — that help make up "what some would call his base," said Dave Spigelmyer, the president of the Marcellus Shale Coalition, a trade group that is co-sponsoring the event.

"The president certainly recognizes what a critical role this country is playing in energy, and that this state and region are playing in energy," Spigelmyer said.

Several Democratic presidential candidates are taking their own political risks on the issue. Backed by environmentalists on the left, some candidates— including Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren — have broken from the party's past support for fracking to call for a nationwide ban. More centrist candidates, including former Vice President Joe Biden, have declined to go that far.

On Wednesday, Trump will speak to a conference in Pittsburgh, a corporate hub of activity in the Marcellus Shale, the nation's most prolific natural gas reservoir.

The visit follows an August rally at a massive ethane refinery being built northwest of Pittsburgh.

"This would have never happened without me and us," Trump said.

In 2016, Trump eked out a win in Pennsylvania — the first Republican presidential candidate to capture it since 1988 — by piling up support with Pennsylvania's rural areas and working-class whites.

Philadelphia's moderate suburbs, meanwhile, turned decisively against him. Some party officials have fretted that Trump will need to improve his suburban performance in 2020 to win Pennsylvania a second time.

The 350-mile (560-kilometer) Mariner East pipeline route traverses those suburbs, close to schools, ballfields and senior care facilities. The spread of drilling, compressor stations and pipelines has changed neighborhoods — and opinions.

"It's absolutely traumatic and I don't say that to exaggerate or cry wolf," said Carrie Gross, referring to the project that runs through backyards in her middle-class Philadelphia suburb of Uwchlan Township. "It's

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devastated my neighborhood.”

Houses in the area there were built some 30 years after workers laid an oil pipeline to carry oil from a Philadelphia-area refinery. Now, the pipeline and others laid along the same route carry highly volatile natural gas liquids — ethane, butane and propane — from western Pennsylvania’s drilling fields to the renovated refinery, much of it for export to Europe.

The project has drawn more than \$13 million in fines — primarily for polluting waterways from spills of drilling fluid and construction methods not approved by state regulators — and several temporary shut-down orders by state agencies.

Neighbors worry that a single leak would level the entire neighborhood. Warning signs stand perhaps 100 feet (30 meters) from a “Watch Children” sign, and the sound of clanging echoes throughout the neighborhood.

Industry officials embrace Trump as someone who understands the importance of natural gas to the nation’s economy, consumers and national security, and Trump’s administration has undoubtedly been good for the industry.

His appointees have moved to relax methane pollution standards, expand extraction on federal lands, boost the export of liquefied natural gas and restrict the ability of states to use federal permitting authority to block pipelines.

Spigelmyer said that the industry is improving its image, that it will be critical to a resurgence of manufacturing in America and that fracking is widely misunderstood.

“I think folks are starting to realize that our industry can produce energy in an environmentally responsible way and we’re doing it cheaply for consumers,” Spigelmyer said.

The industry has strong allies in organized labor that have seen a huge influx of work across the state while the plentiful fuel is heating more homes and feeding more power plants.

Still, an Associated Press-NORC poll in August found only 22% of Americans support increasing fracking while 45% oppose it. In 2014, just 31% registered opposition.

The number of Democrats in the state Legislature who oppose fracking is growing, and Democrats who dominate statewide offices have used the industry as a punching bag.

Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf has won twice while promising to make the natural gas industry pay its “fair share” — a reference to his efforts to get the Republican-controlled Legislature to impose an extraction tax on the industry. Democratic Sen. Bob Casey easily won reelection twice while sponsoring legislation to impose federal regulation that the industry opposes.

In his 2016 campaign, the state’s Democratic attorney general, Josh Shapiro, said it was time to “get tough” on frackers, and his office, as well as two county district attorneys in suburban Philadelphia, are investigating the Mariner East project.

Once a registered Republican, Gross says her experience with Mariner East has transformed her worldview.

The 37-year-old now backs candidates with the strongest stance on the climate. She voted for Democrat Hillary Clinton in 2016, the first time she strayed from a Republican presidential candidate, although she didn’t feel strongly about that decision, she said.

She does now.

“Bernie’s probably the best because he’s anti-fracking,” Gross said. “And Elizabeth Warren has come out in support, so she’s probably second.”

Other residents in the neighborhood are not necessarily as resolute as Gross. Some who live a stone’s throw from the pipeline say it hasn’t affected them. Some said that it had changed their political views, albeit in subtler ways, or that it might in the future.

Some said they felt abandoned by both Democrats and Republicans.

One of those is Pat Marron, a retired teacher whose backyard is a parking lot for work trucks and is across from an active pipeline construction site.

Marron and her husband aren’t against natural gas pipelines, but they are shocked that a volatile gas liquids pipeline is allowed to run between homes, she said.

Marron, a registered Democrat, and her husband, a registered independent, voted for Clinton in 2016 and won't vote for Trump in 2020. The pipeline has taken over their lives and is on their minds — "This consumes us," she said — and it could affect how they vote in 2020, she said.

"It's changed how I voted, especially in local elections, just trying to find anybody that I feel will help us," Marron said. "But we've seen that this is on a much bigger scale."

Follow Marc Levy on Twitter at www.twitter.com/timelywriter

Blood guacamole: In Mexico, avocados bring income, cartels

By MARK STEVENSON Associated Press

SAN JUAN PARANGARICUTIRO, Mexico (AP) — Small-scale avocado growers armed with AR-15 rifles take turns manning a vigilante checkpoint to guard against thieves and drug cartel extortionists in this town Michoacan state, the heartland of world production of the fruit locals call "green gold."

The region's avocado boom, fueled by soaring U.S. consumption, has raised parts of western Mexico out of poverty in just 10 years. But the scent of money has drawn gangs and hyper-violent cartels that have hung bodies from bridges and cowed police forces, and the rising violence is threatening the newfound prosperity. A recent U.S. warning that it could withdraw orchard inspectors sent a shiver through the \$2.4 billion-a-year export industry.

Some growers are taking up arms. At the checkpoint in San Juan Parangaricutiro, the vigilantes are calm but attentive. They say their crop is worth fighting for.

"If it wasn't for avocados, I would have to leave to find work, maybe go to the United States or somewhere else," said one of guards, Pedro de la Guante, whose small avocado orchard earns him far more than he would get from any other legal — or illegal — crop.

Luis, another guard who asked that his last name not be used out of fear of reprisals, lists the problems that came to the town with the avocado boom: extortion, kidnappings, cartels and avocado theft. "That is why we are here: We don't want any of that."

While Mexican avocado growers have for years lived in fear of assaults and shakedowns, the situation went international in mid-August when a U.S. Department of Agriculture team of inspectors was "directly threatened" in Ziracuaretiro, a town just west of Uruapan in Michoacan. While the agency didn't specify what happened, local authorities say a gang robbed the truck the inspectors were traveling in at gunpoint.

"For future situations that result in a security breach, or demonstrate an imminent physical threat to the well-being of APHIS personnel, we will immediately suspend program activities," the USDA wrote in a letter, referring to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Such a move could block shipments and devastate the industry that supplies U.S. consumers hungry for guacamole and avocado toast. It was only in 1997 that the U.S. lifted a ban on Mexican avocados that had been in place since 1914 to prevent a range of weevils, scabs and pests from entering U.S. orchards.

The Michoacan-based Avocado Growers and Packers Association published the warning letter from the USDA — an unusual move that some in Uruapan interpreted as a gesture aimed at making criminals aware they risk killing off the state's biggest money-making industry if U.S. inspectors stop approving exports. Neither the avocado association nor the USDA responded to requests for comment.

The police chief in a town in western Mexico's avocado belt describes what life is like living with the Viagras cartel. The chief asked that his name not be used. The Viagras are so thoroughly present that he doesn't venture into nearby Uruapan without a phalanx of armed bodyguards. The Michoacan-based cartel derives its unusual name from their founders' habit of combing so much gel into their hair that it stands up on end.

"They've done everything — extortions, protection payments. They've flown drones over us," said the chief. "They come in and want to set up (drug) laboratories in the orchards."

But the Viagras are now also the hunted. The vicious Jalisco New Generation cartel is trying to move into Michoacan on several fronts. In August, the cartel hung nine bodies from an overpass in Uruapan,

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and left 10 more corpses hacked up or dumped by the road. On the overpass they hung a banner saying: "Be a Patriot, Kill a Viagra."

Farther south, in the hotter, lime-growing region of Michoacan, Jalisco cartel gunmen ambushed and killed 13 state police officers in mid-October. The attack so terrified police that when they went to collect the dead officers' burned vehicles, they worked so hastily they left behind a crushed, charred, bullet-perforated skull.

Cartels, police and vigilantes alike are spooked by the Jalisco cartel onslaught.

In the cattle-ranching town of Tepalcatepec, which lies on the border with Jalisco state, heavily armed vigilantes — apparently in the employ of a local gang — mount a 24-hour guard in a sniper post atop a hill guarding against incursions by the Jalisco cartel. One vigilante with an assault rifle slung over his shoulder, who refused to give his name, came down from the hilltop to scare away a news photographer. "Clear out of here! Don't you know you have a .50-caliber (rifle) aimed at your head?"

As in much of Michoacan, the violence is largely hidden by a wave of apparent prosperity brought by fruit: miles of chain-link fencing enclose seemingly endless groves of avocado trees with limbs hanging heavy with the harvest. New packing plants seemingly go up overnight.

But Hipolito Mora, who founded the state's civilian armed self-defense movement in 2013, said appearances are deceptive. The new fruit packing plants had already been robbed at gunpoint three times in one week by thieves who apparently knew exactly when they would have cash on hand to pay farmers.

"If the business owners were to close their plants, the region's economy would come crashing down," said Mora, who is also a lime grower.

Mexico supplies about 43% of world avocado exports, almost all from Michoacan. The USDA has a near-permanent delegation of inspectors posted in Mexico.

A few weeks after the incident with the USDA inspectors, an avocado orchard manager and a worker were kidnapped at gunpoint in Ziracuaretiro, allegedly by municipal police. Seven officers are under investigation in the case, and the Ziracuaretiro police department was essentially disbanded.

Today, heavily armed state police patrol Ziracuaretiro and Mayor José Rodríguez Baca is worried. He has seven town policemen in jail, illegal loggers felling pine trees in his township and a potential economic crisis on his hands.

"This has everyone worried," Rodríguez Baca said of the U.S. warning and violence in his town. "If they close the door on us in the United States, everything would come crashing down."

His township shows the shortcomings of state and federal anti-crime strategies, in which police, the army and National Guard often come into troubled towns, make a show of force for a few weeks and then leave. State police had been assigned to patrol Ziracuaretiro earlier this year, before the U.S. inspectors were assaulted, but were withdrawn in July to attend another hotspot.

Avocado growers are feeling scared, alone and caught in the middle.

Carlos Martínez is a third-generation avocado grower whose 2.5-hectare (6-acre) grove in Ziracuaretiro can produce as much as 50 tons of avocados in a good year, worth about \$100,000.

"It is a question of crime and that affects us as third parties, and our customers," Martínez said. "We just wake up each morning hoping it doesn't happen to us."

Martínez hasn't had any shipments of avocados stolen yet — a common complaint in Michoacan — but he said thieves often steal avocados from the orchards. He, like most growers, had to put up chain-link fences and hire a guard. But it is the fear of kidnapping or the phone call demanding protection payments that worry him most.

"I don't answer phone calls from numbers I don't know," Martínez said.

In San Juan Parangaricutiro, De la Guante is an example of how avocados have lifted many in Michoacán out of poverty.

He was an itinerant farmworker before he planted avocados on a hectare (2.4 acres) of sandy land 11 years ago. That relatively small plot now yields as much as 10 tons of avocados. This year he was lucky to sell in August, when prices were high, at 40 pesos (\$2) a kilogram. That means De la Guante earned

at least \$15,000 this year.

Adriana Villicaña, a professor at Univa Catholic University in Uruapan, said the avocado boom has lifted thousands out of poverty.

"There are a lot of women working at packing plants, and a majority of them describe themselves as single mothers or single," Villicaña said.

However, the rising tide hasn't lifted all boats. The region's 15,000 or so avocado pickers earn an attractive wage for the region, but the job is seasonal and the physical demands of climbing trees with long poles to get the avocados mean few can work beyond age 45.

Villicaña, who also sits on the Uruapan citizen's safety advisory board, says the region's crime problem will be worse if the avocado industry collapses.

"If there were no avocados, where are they going to work?" Villicaña asked. "The most likely things is that they would hire themselves out to work for the criminals."

Asian stocks follow Wall Street lower after mixed earnings

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Asian stock markets followed Wall Street lower Wednesday after major companies reported mixed earnings and an EU leader said he would recommend the trade bloc allow Britain to delay its departure.

Benchmarks in Shanghai, Tokyo and Hong Kong all declined.

U.S. shares retreated, led by a tech sell-off, as investors weighed mixed earnings from McDonald's, Procter & Gamble and other big companies. That blunted investor optimism that had been fed by hopes for progress in settling a damaging U.S.-Chinese tariff war.

The president of the European Council, Donald Tusk, said he would recommend the other 27 nations in the trade bloc grant Britain's request for an extension to its Oct. 31 deadline to withdraw.

Britain wants a three-month delay until the end of January 2020. That was done after Parliament passed a law forcing Prime Minister Boris Johnson to seek the postponement.

"Alongside Brexit, the relatively mixed set of earnings out of the US overnight provides poor leads for Asia markets," said Jingyi Pan of IG in a report.

More results from Boeing, Caterpillar and other industrial names due Wednesday "could cap the gains for the S&P 500 index," said Pan.

The Shanghai Composite Index lost 0.1% to 2,950.73 and Tokyo's Nikkei 225 was off 8 points at 22,540.56. Hong Kong's Hang Seng retreated 0.5% to 26,661.36.

Seoul's Kospi declined 0.4% to 2,079.84 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 shed 0.2% to 6,655.20. Benchmarks in Taiwan, New Zealand and Southeast Asia also retreated.

On Wall Street, the benchmark S&P 500 index fell 0.4% to 2,995.99. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 0.2% to 26,788.10.

The Nasdaq, which is heavily weighted with technology stocks, bore the brunt of the selling, losing 0.7% to 8,104.30.

Investors have been shifting their focus to corporate earnings reports as they wait for developments in U.S.-Chinese trade negotiations. Investors were optimistic after President Donald Trump agreed to postpone a planned tariff hike following the latest talks in Washington. That helped the S&P 500 to turn in gains for the past two weeks.

Analysts came into this latest earnings season expecting profits to decline overall for companies in the S&P 500. But with about 15% of companies in the index reporting so far, results have been unexpectedly positive.

Earnings growth fell slightly in the first and second quarters, according to data from FactSet, which was better than Wall Street's expectation at the start of those reporting seasons.

A few large companies disappointed investors.

McDonald's slid 5% after reporting that third-quarter profit and revenue fell short of forecasts. It was

one of the big decliners among companies that rely on consumer spending.

Travelers led the financial sector slide. The insurance company sank 8.3% after it reported lower-than-expected earnings.

Biogen soared 26.1% after the biotechnology giant handily beat Wall Street's third-quarter profit and revenue forecasts. It also said it will ask regulators to approve a treatment for Alzheimer's.

Procter & Gamble rose 2.6% on its solid quarterly report card.

Microsoft dropped 1.5%. Visa and Mastercard also fell, shedding 3.2% and 4.8%.

Communications services stocks also helped pull the market lower.

Netflix led, dropping 4.1%. Facebook lost 3.9% following news that a state-level antitrust investigation into the social networking giant now has the backing of a bipartisan group of 47 attorneys general.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude lost 41 cents to \$54.07 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract gained \$1.97 on Tuesday to close at \$54.48. Brent crude, used to price international oils, retreated 32 cents to \$59.39 per barrel in London. It rose \$1.74 the previous session to \$59.70.

CURRENCY: The dollar declined to 108.30 yen from Tuesday's 108.46 yen. The euro retreated to \$1.1120 from \$1.1127.

2 guilty in \$1B fraud as feds auction Burt Reynolds Trans Am

By DON THOMPSON Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Two employees of a San Francisco Bay Area solar energy company pleaded guilty Tuesday to participating in what federal prosecutors say was a massive scheme that defrauded investors of \$1 billion.

While the company's owners have not been charged, they agreed to let the government auction their collection of 150 classic, performance and luxury vehicles, including a 1978 Pontiac Trans Am once owned by Burt Reynolds.

The replica of the car the late actor drove in "Smokey and the Bandit" and the other vehicles are to be auctioned Saturday, with online bidding already pushing the accumulated value past \$5.5 million.

Bidding on that Trans Am alone had topped \$65,000 by late Tuesday. The auction company said it had been driven less than 3,400 miles (5,472 kilometers).

It's the largest single-owner car collection ever auctioned by the U.S. Marshals Service. Chief Deputy U.S. Marshal Lasha Boyden of the Sacramento office called it "a stunning collection of vehicles" that also includes classic 1960s Ford Mustangs, 1990s Humvees and a 1960 Austin-Healey.

Pleading guilty Tuesday were certified public accountant Ronald Roach, 53, and general contractor Joseph Bayliss, 44, both of the Bay Area.

Roach's attorney, Christian Picone, declined comment. Bayliss' attorney, Tom Johnson, did not return a telephone message seeking comment. Both men agreed to cooperate in the ongoing investigation.

The two men admitted providing false reports that misled investors of DC Solar, owned by Jeffrey and Paulette Carpoﬀ of Martinez.

The owners have not been charged with any crime, said Lauren Horwood, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Attorney's Office in Sacramento, but their vehicles and numerous other assets were seized by the federal government as part of the investigation.

The owners agreed to allow the vehicles to be auctioned off because it is expensive to store them and they lose value the longer they sit idle, Horwood said.

The auction proceeds will go back to the owners if they are never convicted, but the proceeds will go to the victims if they are convicted and forfeit their belongings.

The Carpoﬀs' attorney, Malcolm Segal, said the couple have been cooperating with prosecutors.

"Mr. and Mrs. Carpoﬀ have authorized the government to sell well over \$75 million of their personal real estate, automobiles and other assets in the interest of the investors who may come up short when in time things settle," Segal said.

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Prosecutors alleged that the company engaged in \$2.5 billion in investment transactions between 2011 and 2018, costing investors \$1 billion in a classic Ponzi scheme.

The company based in Benicia, northeast of San Francisco, made solar generators mounted on trailers and marketed them as able to provide emergency power for cellphone companies or to provide lighting at sporting and other events.

However, purportedly to improve tax benefits, the investors never actually took possession of the generators, authorities said. Instead, they would lease the generators back to DC Solar, which would then provide them to other companies for their use.

"The investors, all national and internationally known companies, have to date greatly benefited by being able to claim financially significant tax and depreciation credits since making their investments," Segal said.

Authorities said the investors were supposed to be paid with the profits, but the generators never provided much income. Instead, prosecutors say early investors were paid with funds from later investors.

Roach, of Walnut Creek, admitted preparing financial documents to hide the pyramid scheme, and faces up to 10 years in prison when he is sentenced in January. He also pleaded guilty to securities violations.

Bayliss, of Martinez, admitted to preparing false reports showing thousands of solar generators that were sold to investors on paper but in fact did not exist.

He also admitted flying to Las Vegas to destroy evidence after federal investigators served search warrants at the company's headquarters and other locations in December. He faces up to five years in prison.

Trump likens House impeachment inquiry to 'a lynching'

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and JAY REEVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Stirring up painful memories of America's racist past, President Donald Trump on Tuesday compared the Democratic-led impeachment inquiry to a lynching, a practice once widespread across the South in which angry mobs killed thousands of black people.

The use of such inflammatory imagery to lash out at the House investigation into Trump's dealings with Ukraine triggered an outcry from Democratic legislators, some mild rebukes but also some agreement from the president's Republican allies and condemnation from outside the Washington Beltway. It also led to the unearthing of decades-old comments from some Democratic lawmakers, including now-presidential candidate Joe Biden, comparing the process of impeaching President Bill Clinton to a lynching.

Trump has spent recent days pressuring Republicans to give him stronger support in countering the impeachment investigation.

His tweeted suggestion that they "remember what they are witnessing here — a lynching" came a day after Trump said the GOP needs to "get tougher and fight" against the fast-moving inquiry into whether he tried to withhold U.S. military aid until Ukraine's government agreed to investigate Biden and his son.

The White House said Tuesday that Trump was not comparing impeachment to "one of the darkest moments in American history." Spokesman Hogan Gidley said Trump sent the tweet to point out what he feels is his continued mistreatment by the news media.

Trump, who has been complaining about unfairness in the impeachment process being led by House Democrats began his tweet: "So some day, if a Democrat becomes President and the Republicans win the House, even by a tiny margin, they can impeach the President, without due process or fairness or any legal rights."

Fighting back Tuesday night, Trump's reelection campaign tweeted out a 1998 video of then-Sen. Biden talking about President Bill Clinton's impending impeachment and saying, in part, "History is going to question whether or not this was just a partisan lynching."

Earlier in the day, Biden referred to Trump's lynching comparison as "abhorrent" and "despicable." Biden later tweeted that his own "lynching" reference 21 years ago "wasn't the right word to use and I'm sorry about that." But, he added: "Trump on the other hand chose his words deliberately today in his use of the word lynching and continues to stoke racial divides in this country daily."

During his presidency, Trump has repeatedly sought to advance his political interests by unleashing ra-

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cially inflammatory language.

Over the summer, he told four Democratic congresswomen of color to go back to their "broken and crime-infested" countries, although the four are U.S. citizens. Earlier in his presidency, Trump unleashed a firestorm by saying there were "very fine people" on both sides of a 2017 white supremacist rally and counterprotest in Charlottesville, Virginia, that resulted in the death of an anti-racism demonstrator.

The reference to a lynching struck a deep, painful chord for black people whose relatives died in racially motivated killings.

Malinda Edwards, whose father was forced to jump off an Alabama river bridge in 1957 by Klansmen who heard that he had smiled at a white woman, said Trump was making light of the horror experienced by victims.

"Either he's very ignorant or very insensitive or very racist and just doesn't care," Edwards, 66, of Dayton, Ohio, said of the president. Her father's name is now among those on a memorial in Montgomery, Alabama, honoring more than 4,000 lynching victims.

Janet Langhart Cohen told The Associated Press that Trump is among too many white people who have disrespected lynching victims and their descendants. Her distant cousin Jimmy Gillenwaters was lynched in Kentucky in the early 1900s.

Trump "knows what he's doing. He knows how to hurt and divide," said Cohen, the wife of former Republican Sen. William Cohen of Maine.

Bernice King, a daughter of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., tweeted that Trump's comparison "is a reflection of the very real trajectory of our nation and the very repugnant evil of racism, which still permeates both legislation and language in the United States."

Former Maryland Lt. Gov. Michael Steele, a black Republican, went a step further by tweeting a graphic black-and-white photo of a black man hanging from a tree and said: "This is a lynching. Trump this is not happening to you and it's pathetic that you act like you're such a victim."

Trump's closest Republican backers in Congress agreed with him, though others rejected his comparison.

"This is a lynching in every sense," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., who is close to Trump.

But Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., criticized Trump's "unfortunate choice of words," saying it's better to describe the impeachment process as "unfair."

Democrats expressed outrage that Trump would equate impeachment to a lynching and called on him to delete the tweet or apologize.

"That is one word no president ought to apply to himself," said Democratic Rep. James Clyburn of South Carolina, the highest-ranking African American in Congress. "That is a word that we ought to be very, very careful about using."

Added Rep. Bobby Rush, D-Ill., who is also black: "Do you know how many people who look like me have been lynched, since the inception of this country, by people who look like you. Delete this tweet."

Sen. Doug Jones, D-Ala., tweeted to Trump: "No sir! No, @realDonaldTrump: this is NOT a lynching, and shame on you for invoking such a horrific act that was used as a weapon to terrorize and murder African Americans."

The Congressional Black Caucus encouraged Trump to visit the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, also known as the "Lynching Museum."

Trump often tries to portray himself as the victim of any controversy he is embroiled in. His tweet came one day after he lashed out at critics of his now-rescinded plan to schedule a major international summit for 2020 at one of his own properties in Florida.

He complained about people who invoke the "phony emoluments clause" — a section in the Constitution that forbids presidents from receiving gifts or payments from foreign governments without the consent of Congress. The impeachment process is also in the Constitution.

An anonymous whistleblower's complaint that Trump was attempting to use his office for personal political gain during a July 25 phone conversation with Ukraine's president led House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to open the impeachment inquiry.

Trump insists he did nothing wrong, characterizing the conversation with Ukrainian President Volodymyr

Zelenskiy as "perfect" and arguing that sore-loser Democrats are still trying to overturn his 2016 election and deny him reelection next year.

Separately Tuesday, a U.S. appeals court in Atlanta was considering whether federal judges can order grand jury records unsealed in the mob lynching of two black couples. The young black sharecroppers were stopped along a rural road in 1946 by a white mob that dragged them out and shot them multiple times east of Atlanta. More than 100 people reportedly testified before a grand jury, but no one was ever indicted in the deaths of Roger and Dorothy Malcom and George and Mae Murray Dorsey.

Reeves reported from Montgomery, Alabama. Associated Press writer Bill Barrow contributed to this report from Atlanta.

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

Blackout Round 2? Californians brace for possible outage

By JOCELYN GECKER and CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Hundreds of thousands of California residents braced for another possible power outage as the state's two largest utilities warned that a return of dangerous fire weather could prompt shut-offs across the state.

The warning from Pacific Gas & Electric about a possible blackout Wednesday in Northern California prompted a feeling of resignation among residents and business owners and renewed rushes to stock up on emergency supplies.

"I think it's not panic per se, just 'Eh, we gotta do this AGAIN?'" said Kim Schefer, manager of Village True Value Hardware in Santa Rosa.

Schefer was busy Tuesday directing customers to gas cans and batteries as they prepared for what many see as a costly, frustrating new routine.

It would be the second blackout in two weeks for much of the state.

PG&E cut power to more than 2 million people across the San Francisco Bay Area in rolling blackouts from Oct. 9-12, paralyzing parts of the region in what was the largest deliberate blackout in state history. Schools and universities canceled classes and many businesses were forced to close.

PG&E gave 24-hour notice Tuesday to 189,000 customers, or roughly a half-million people, that it could begin a new round of precautionary shut-offs in 16 counties mostly in the Sierra foothills and north of the San Francisco Bay Area. The decision will be made Wednesday morning and the blackouts would begin Wednesday evening and last about 48 hours, the utility said.

Meanwhile Southern California Edison said it could cut power later in the week to about 132,000 customers in six counties.

The utilities say it's concerned that winds forecast to top 60 mph (97 kph) could throw branches and debris into power lines or topple them, sparking wildfires.

At Murphy's Irish Pub in Sonoma, co-owner Dermot Coll groaned at the thought of another power outage. The watering hole kept its doors open during the last 48-hour shut-off, but it wasn't easy because generator power to the walk-in coolers kept failing.

"We made it work, but it was a headache," Coll said. "We kept saying, 'Is this even worth it?'"

Coll said he fears that precautionary blackouts will become a regular occurrence now that fire season in California is a year-round phenomenon.

"It's going to be an annual event, I'm afraid. I hate to say it, but I believe it's probably true," he said.

PG&E has cast the blackouts as a matter of public safety to prevent the kind of blazes that have killed scores of people in California over the past several years, destroyed thousands of homes, and ran up tens of billions of dollars in claims that drove the company into bankruptcy.

California Gov. Gavin sent a sharply worded letter Tuesday to Bill Johnson, CEO of the utility, blaming the unprecedented mass outage earlier this month on the company's failure to maintain and upgrade its

equipment.

"I believe the unacceptable scope and duration of the previous outage — deliberately forcing 735,000 customers to endure power outages — was the direct result of decades of PG&E prioritizing profit over public safety," Newsom wrote, referring to the number of businesses and households affected, not the total number of people.

PG&E says the shutdowns are not about money.

The only goal "is to prevent a catastrophic wildfire," Johnson said in a Tuesday briefing.

A huge portion of California is under high fire risk amid unpredictable gusts and soaring temperatures this week. PG&E forecasters are also keeping an eye on another possible wind event that could lead to preventative blackouts over the weekend into early next week, Johnson said.

Southern California Edison said possible outages could start Thursday in Kern, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

In Sonoma, Coll said he dreads having to deal with another outage but said Murphy's would likely stay open again.

"People were looking for somewhere to go," he said. "One day sitting at home in the dark is tolerable, but by day two you're itching to get out of the house."

Customers used the opportunity to have a cold beer or two and complain about PG&E, he said.

Weber reported from Los Angeles. AP Writer Janie Har contributed from San Francisco.

Trump finds no simple fix in Syria, other world hotspots

By AAMER MADHANI and DEB RIECHMANN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's plan to reverse America's involvement in "endless wars" has run up against a difficult truth: When it comes to national security, rarely can a simple solution solve a complex problem.

After abruptly announcing last week that he would "bring our soldiers home" from Syria, Trump recalibrated, and his administration said it would instead redeploy more than 700 to western Iraq to help counter the Islamic State group.

And now his latest plan faces another wrinkle: The Iraqi military said Tuesday those U.S. troops don't have permission to stay in Iraq.

Meanwhile, Turkey and Russia announced Tuesday that they would jointly patrol most of the northeastern Syrian border with Turkey, underscoring the effects of the U.S. creating a power vacuum the Russians have been quick to fill.

In Washington, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, typically a strong Trump supporter, introduced legislation prodding the president to halt the withdrawal. But he counseled against economic sanctions on Turkey, lest the U.S. "further drive a NATO ally into the arms of the Russians."

"This self-inflicted Syria evacuation was not well thought out," said Michael Knights, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "Linking the practical to the strategic has become harder and harder for this administration, because there is no thinking from the top that connects these decisions down at the working level."

It's the latest example of Trump's from-the-gut approach to national security policy encountering roadblocks.

Trump's charm offensive with Kim Jong Un has failed to prod North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons program. His withdrawal from the Obama administration-brokered Iran nuclear agreement prompted Iran to breach limits on its enrichment and stockpiling of uranium. And the president's decision to negotiate with the Taliban to set the groundwork for withdrawing U.S. forces from Afghanistan has failed to stem the violence there.

As for Syria, Trump announced the U.S. withdrawal after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan made it clear in a phone call that his forces were about to invade to push back Syrian Kurdish fighters whom

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Turkey considers terrorists.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Tuesday he planned to talk to Iraqi leaders to work out details, adding that the U.S. has no plans to have the troops stay in Iraq "interminably." Esper is to speak with the Iraqi defense minister on Wednesday and said he would underscore that the aim is to pull U.S. soldiers out and "eventually get them home."

Hogan Gidley, the White House principal deputy press secretary, said Tuesday that Trump remains committed to bringing the troops back to the U.S.

Vice President Mike Pence echoed that assessment in speaking to conservatives at a dinner Tuesday in Washington, saying the U.S. will always be grateful to its Kurdish allies, but now that the military has achieved its objective, the president is "keeping his word to the American people" about bringing troops home.

Trump initially announced his intention late last year to begin withdrawing troops from Syria, a decision that prompted the resignations of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and Brett McGurk, special presidential envoy for the global coalition to defeat IS.

At the time, there were about 2,000 American troops deployed to Syria.

The U.S. pullout announced last week largely abandoned Syrian Kurdish allies who have fought the Islamic State group alongside U.S. troops for several years. Between 200 and 300 U.S. troops are to remain at the southern Syrian outpost of Al-Tanf.

McGurk this week accused Trump of approaching the decision without taking a long view of the reality on the ground.

"This is the problem of not having a national security process -- a process where, before a president says things, he would have some deliberation," McGurk said Monday at an event hosted by the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, a think tank in Washington.

As U.S. military convoys withdrawing from Syria for Iraq on Monday were pelted with potatoes and stones by angry Kurdish civilians, Trump played down U.S. responsibilities to the Kurds.

"We never agreed to protect the Kurds for the rest of their lives," Trump said. He added that the U.S. would keep the small contingency force in Syria to "protect the oil," but there was otherwise no reason to remain. Trump added that "maybe we'll have one of our big oil companies" go into Syria.

McGurk said Trump's suggestion that an American company would exploit the oil "raises very serious legal implications." The former diplomat added that the pullout of all but a contingency force has negated the Trump administration's influence in the area.

"That influence has evaporated from the moment Trump said leave in December, to cutting the force in half and now by cutting the force by whatever it is," McGurk said. "This is not deliberate policy, these are spasms."

Iraq's sensitivity over accepting more American troops on the ground is hardly surprising, said Knights, the Washington Institute analyst.

Calls for an American troop withdrawal intensified in 2017 after the Iraqi government declared victory against IS. Trump himself has claimed credit for defeating "the so-called caliphate."

Earlier this year, however, Trump angered both Iraqi politicians and Iranian-backed factions by arguing he would keep U.S. troops in Iraq and use it as a base to strike Islamic State group targets inside Syria as needed.

In February, Trump sparked more outrage when he said U.S. troops should stay in Iraq to monitor neighboring Iran.

The push by the Trump administration to put more U.S. troops on the ground in Iraq comes as Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi's government braces for more protests in Baghdad and elsewhere over corruption, high unemployment and subpar public services.

"The last thing that the Iraqi government needs right now is to turn attention to the presence of American troops," Knights said.

___ AP writers Darlene Superville in Washington and Qassim Abdul-Zahra and Zeina Karam in Baghdad contributed.

Lori Loughlin, other parents charged again in college scheme

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

BOSTON (AP) — “Full House” actress Lori Loughlin, her fashion designer husband and nine other parents faced new federal charges Tuesday in a scandal involving dozens of wealthy parents accused of bribing their children’s way into elite universities or cheating on college entrance exams.

A grand jury in Boston indicted the parents on charges of trying to bribe officials at an organization that receives at least \$10,000 in federal funding. In this case, they’re accused of paying to get their children admitted to the University of Southern California.

The charge of conspiracy to commit federal program bribery carries a maximum sentence of up to five years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. Prosecutors are pressuring those who have pleaded not guilty in the college admissions scandal to acknowledge their guilt.

A total of 35 wealthy and celebrity parents have been charged in the scheme that showed how far some will go to get their children into top universities like Stanford and Yale.

Some parents are accused of paying admissions consultant William “Rick” Singer to falsely portray their children as star athletes and then bribe college sports officials to get them admitted as recruited athletes. Others are accused of paying Singer to help cheat on their children’s SAT and ACT exams.

Singer has pleaded guilty and agreed to work with investigators in hopes of receiving a more lenient sentence.

Along with the new conspiracy charge, Massachusetts real estate developer John Wilson also was indicted on two new counts of substantive federal programs bribery. Prosecutors said Wilson paid Singer \$1 million in hopes of paying bribes to get two of his children into Stanford and Harvard.

It’s the second time prosecutors have added new charges for parents pleading not guilty in the case. In April, they added money laundering to the initial charges of fraud and conspiracy.

U.S. District Attorney Andrew Lelling said the latest charges stem from an ongoing investigation. In a statement, he said the new indictment will further his goal “to hold the defendants fully accountable for corrupting the college admissions process through cheating, bribery and fraud.”

Lawyers for Loughlin, who starred in the 1980s and ‘90s sitcom “Full House,” and her husband, Mossimo Giannulli, did not immediately respond to the charges. The couple is accused of paying \$500,000 to get their two daughters into USC as recruits on the crew team, even though neither participated in the sport.

Loughlin and Giannulli have pleaded not guilty.

The USC said Monday that the couple’s daughters are “not currently enrolled.” The university’s statement said it is “unable to provide additional information because of student privacy laws.”

Others indicted on the new charge include William McGlashan, who co-founded an investment fund with U2 singer Bono in 2017, and Robert Zangrillo, a prominent Miami real estate developer. McGlashan and Zangrillo were among four parents also indicted on new wire fraud charges Monday.

The 11 parents charged Tuesday are among 15 who are fighting the charges against them. Four other parents changed their not-guilty pleas Monday and were set to be sentenced next year.

An additional 15 parents already have pleaded guilty in deals with prosecutors.

Of the 10 parents sentenced so far, nine have received prison sentences, ranging from 14 days to five months. “Desperate Housewives” star Felicity Huffman was the first parent to be sentenced and is now serving her 14-day prison sentence.

Prosecutors on Tuesday also announced new charges against several former sports coaches and others accused of accepting bribes. The seven defendants are now charged with mail and wire fraud and conspiring to commit that fraud on top of racketeering conspiracy.

Among them are former Georgetown tennis coach Gordon Ernst and former USC athletics official Donna Heinel, accused of accepting bribes in exchange for admitting students as recruited athletes. They have pleaded not guilty.

Biogen reanalyzes studies, presses ahead on Alzheimer's drug

By **MARILYNN MARCHIONE** AP Chief Medical Writer

Biogen Inc. said Tuesday it will seek federal approval for a medicine to treat early Alzheimer's disease, a landmark step toward finding a treatment that can alter the course of the most common form of dementia.

The announcement was a surprise because the drug company earlier this year stopped two studies of the drug when partial results suggested it was not likely to be successful. The company now says a new analysis of more results suggest that the drug helped reduce a decline of thinking skills at the highest dose.

The drug, called aducanumab, aims to help the body clear harmful plaques from the brain. Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Biogen is developing it with a Japanese company, Eisai Co. Ltd.

More than 5 million people in the United States and millions more worldwide have Alzheimer's. Current drugs only temporarily ease symptoms and do not slow the loss of memory and thinking skills. Dozens of efforts to develop a drug to slow or reverse the course of the disease have failed.

The two studies tested aducanumab, given as monthly infusions, in more than 3,000 patients with mild cognitive impairment or early dementia due to Alzheimer's. The company said Tuesday that in one study, those given a high dose showed 23% less decline on one measure of thinking skills and smaller declines on other measures.

However, no details were given on how much that decline meant in absolute terms. For example, the company didn't say how much difference it made in practical matters, like whether patients were able to dress or feed themselves or live independently longer, just that these skills overall declined less for those on the high dose of the drug.

"It's a tricky question" whether the results are truly meaningful for patients until more details are known, said Dr. Ronald Petersen, a Mayo Clinic dementia specialist who has consulted for Biogen on the studies.

But filing for federal Food and Drug Administration approval "gives some hopes for patients and families that there may be disease-modifying therapies out there," he said.

The company said more details would be given at a conference in December, including on safety. The company said the most common side effects were inflammation in the brain, most of which did not cause symptoms or lasting problems, and headaches. The brain inflammation has been seen in other studies of Alzheimer's medicines that target the brain plaques.

"We're really encouraged by the information that they've provided today," the largest benefit so far for any experimental medicine, said Rebecca Edelmayer, a scientist at the Alzheimer's Association, which had no role in the studies.

Biogen said it would offer aducanumab now to patients enrolled in these and earlier studies of it.

Biogen shares were up more than 26% to \$281.87 Tuesday, but some on Wall Street remained skeptical.

Mizuho Securities USA analyst Salim Syed said he wants to know more about the FDA's involvement in Biogen's decision. He also said in a research note that it's still just a hypothesis that removing beta amyloid plaques can benefit Alzheimer's patients.

The company's announcement "does not guarantee approval and questions remain," he said.

AP Health Writer Tom Murphy in Indianapolis contributed reporting.

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Russia, Turkey seal power in northeast Syria with new accord

By **SUZAN FRASER** and **VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV** Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Russia and Turkey reached an agreement Tuesday that would cement their power in Syria, deploying their forces across nearly its entire northeastern border to fill the void left by President Donald Trump's abrupt withdrawal of U.S. forces.

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The accord caps a dramatic and swift transformation of the Syrian map unleashed by Trump's decision two weeks ago to remove the American soldiers.

U.S. troops in Syria fought five years alongside Kurdish-led forces in northeast Syria and succeeded in bringing down the rule of the Islamic State group there at the cost of thousands of Kurdish fighters' lives. Now much of that territory would be handed over to U.S. rivals.

The biggest winners are Turkey and Russia. Turkey would get sole control over areas of the Syrian border captured in its invasion, while Turkish, Russian and Syria government forces would oversee the rest of the border region. America's former U.S. allies, the Kurdish fighters, are left hoping Moscow and Damascus will preserve some pieces of their autonomy dreams.

Meanwhile, the Americans are stumbling out of Syria in a withdrawal that has proved chaotic, its extent and goals seeming to shift on the fly as they grasp to keep some influence on the ground.

In the latest hitch, Iraq's military said Tuesday the U.S. troops coming out of Syria do not have permission to stay in Iraq, contradicting U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper's statement a day earlier that they would remain there to fight the Islamic State group. Esper has also spoken of keeping some troops in eastern Syria to protect oil fields held by the Kurds.

Trump ordered the U.S. troop pull-out on Oct. 7 with little consultation with advisers and in the face of heavy criticism, even by Republican allies. It opened the way for Turkey to launch a long-threatened invasion of northeast Syria two days later to drive out the U.S.-allied Kurdish fighters. Vowing to get American soldiers out of the region and its "endless wars," Trump has said he sees no problem with Russia and Turkey taking over as power brokers.

The new accord was reached by Presidents Vladimir Putin of Russia and Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, after six hours of negotiations as they pored over maps of Syria in the Black Sea resort of Sochi.

"I believe that this agreement will start a new era toward Syria's lasting stability and it being cleared of terrorism. I hope that this agreement is beneficial to our countries and to our brothers in Syria," Erdogan said.

Under the 10-point deal, Kurdish fighters have 150 hours starting at noon Wednesday to withdraw from almost the entire northeastern border from the Euphrates River to the Iraqi border.

Russian and Syrian government forces would move in immediately to ensure the Kurdish fighters pull back 20 miles (30 kilometers) from the border. When the deadline expires on Oct. 29, joint Russian-Turkish patrols would begin along a 6-mile (10-kilometer) wide strip of the border.

The exception would be the region around the town of Qamishli at the far eastern end of the border, which has some of the densest Kurdish population. Russian and Turkish officials did not immediately say what the arrangement would be there.

Also, Turkey will keep sole control of the section in the center of the border that it captured in its invasion. It extends roughly 120 kilometers (75 miles) wide and 30 kilometers (20 miles) deep between the Syrian border towns of Tal Abyad and Ras al-Ayn.

A senior Kurdish official, Redur Khalil, confirmed his forces had entirely pulled out of that zone as required under a U.S.-brokered cease-fire.

That five-day-old pause in fighting expired on Tuesday evening, shortly after Khalil's announcement. There were no immediate reports of fighting resuming. But they traded accusations of violations down to its last moments.

Khalil said Turkish troops and their allies continued military operations in northeastern Syria outside that withdrawal zone.

Turkey's communications director, Fahrettin Altun, said just before the cease-fire expired that the fighters had not fully left. "The terrorists have another 15 minutes," he tweeted.

Turkey considers the Syrian Kurdish fighters as terrorists because of their links to Kurdish insurgents in Turkey. Erdogan had been infuriated by Washington's decision to ally with the Kurds against the Islamic State group, which empowered Kurdish self-rule ambitions. Erdogan has sought a "safe zone" along the border cleared of the fighters where Turkey could also settle many of the 3.6 million Syrian refugees currently on its soil.

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The border region, however, is the heartland of Syria's Kurdish minority. Kurds have feared a Turkish takeover would not only crush their self-rule but cause massive demographic change, as Kurdish civilians flee and mainly Arab Syrian refugees move in.

The new agreement limits Turkish patrols — alongside Russians — to the areas closest to the border while putting the rest under Russia and its ally, the Syrian government. That may prevent a massive flight of civilians but would be a heavy blow to Kurdish autonomy dreams. Still, the Kurds continue to hold large territories further south, including strategic oil fields.

The deal is also a mixed bag for Syrian President Bashar Assad. It returns Syrian government control over parts of the border, but it also consecrates Turkey's hold on a large chunk.

Assad has vowed to reunite all the territory under Damascus' rule. Assad spoke to Putin by telephone after the deal was announced. Earlier Tuesday, Assad said he was ready to support any "popular resistance" against Turkey's invasion "to expel the invader sooner or later."

Erdogan is "a thief," Assad told troops during a visit to the northwestern province of Idlib. "He stole the factories and the wheat and the oil in cooperation with Daesh and now is stealing the land," he said, using an alternate acronym for the Islamic State group.

Assad's visit to Idlib underlined Damascus' goal of regaining the border. Idlib is adjacent to a border enclave that Turkey captured several years ago in another incursion. Turkey also has observation points inside Idlib, negotiated with Russia, to monitor a cease-fire there between the government and opposition fighters and jihadi groups.

Isachenkov reported from Moscow. Associated Press writers Elena Becatoros in Istanbul, Kirsten Grieshaber in Berlin and Sarah El Deeb in Beirut contributed to this report.

Autoworkers from closed plants fight new GM contract

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — If they can close our plant, they can close yours, too.

That's the message from workers at three shuttered General Motors factories that didn't get new products under the tentative contract agreement reached last week between GM and the United Auto Workers, who have been on strike against the company across the U.S. for over six weeks now.

About 2,000 employees who once worked at GM transmission plants near Baltimore and Detroit and a small-car assembly plant in Lordstown, Ohio, will repeat that message this week as 49,000 union members vote on the new four-year deal.

Approval could end the walkout that has crippled GM's production and cost the company an estimated \$2 billion.

Most of the workers who lost their jobs at the three sites are scattered across the country after transferring to other GM factories, so they have a presence at just about all of the automaker's plants.

But few are holding out hope they can torpedo the contract, which comes with an \$11,000 signing bonus, pay raises and plenty of other economic goodies for the factories that are staying open.

John Sandquist Jr., who spent 25 years building cars at Lordstown near Cleveland, said he is not optimistic he will change other people's minds, but he will vote against the pact.

"Your plant can be shut down at any time," Sandquist said. "What the contract is lacking is the language to prevent this from happening again."

Like many of the 1,400 workers who built the compact Chevrolet Cruze before GM stopped making the cars at Lordstown last March, Sandquist took a transfer. He wound up in Bowling Green, Kentucky, where after the strike ends he will make the new mid-engine Chevy Corvette.

He questioned why union leaders agreed to let GM close the factories, wondering if corruption inside the UAW influenced the decision to side with the company.

"We were the sacrificial lamb in this one for the whole of the UAW," Sandquist said. "And we got screwed." In August, the FBI raided the suburban Detroit home of UAW President Gary Jones as part of a corruption

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probe. He has not been charged and has not commented on the raid. Earlier this month, Jones' successor as union regional director in Missouri was charged in a \$600,000 embezzlement scheme.

Ten other people — including six current or former UAW officials — have pleaded guilty in the probe over the past two years. The latest guilty plea came Tuesday.

At a meeting of factory-level union leaders in Detroit last week, Dan Morgan, bargaining chairman for the local in Lordstown, made a plea to vote the contract down, saying they should stay on strike until GM keeps the plants open.

Union spokesman Brian Rothenberg said bargainers did the best they could, getting the company to agree to early retirement and buyout offers for workers from the closed factories who didn't move to other GM plants.

Kristin Dziczek, vice president of labor and manufacturing at the Center for Automotive Research, an industry think tank, said she doesn't think there are enough workers from the closed plants to influence the others and get the deal voted down.

"This is like gerrymandering," she said. "They're spread throughout the system."

Also, she said, it will be difficult to overcome the economic benefits of the contract, which brings workers hired after 2007 up to the same pay as older workers in four years or less, gives temporary workers a path to becoming full time, gives workers lump-sum payments and lifts the \$12,000 cap on profit-sharing checks.

So far, a large assembly plant in Spring Hill, Tennessee, narrowly voted down the contract. But locals in Toledo, Ohio, at GM's technical center in Warren, Michigan, and at a metal stamping facility in Saginaw, Michigan, voted overwhelmingly in favor.

Voting wraps up on Friday, with the final tally to be released that evening. As of Tuesday, the deal was winning by more than 1,000 votes.

At Spring Hill, which has a large number of people who transferred from Lordstown, the plant closings were among many reasons that workers gave for voting down the contract 51% to 49%, said Mike Herron, union bargaining chairman at the plant.

They were also unhappy with the provisions that make temporary employees full time after three years of continuous service, and they objected to a cap of 2,000 workers who would get early retirement packages, Herron said.

The GM contract will serve as a template for negotiations with Ford and Fiat Chrysler. The union will probably pick the next company once the GM contract is ratified.

Under the deal, GM agreed to invest about \$7.7 billion in its factories, creating or keeping 9,000 jobs. It also extended a moratorium on outsourcing work, but it doesn't apply to GM joint ventures with other companies.

Of the \$7.7 billion, \$3 billion will go to GM's Detroit Hamtramck plant, which will make several high-end battery-powered pickup trucks and SUVs. One under consideration is a Hummer.

A total of \$1.5 billion will go to a factory in Wentzville, Missouri, to make pickups. A factory near Lansing, Michigan, will split \$1 billion with the plant in Spring Hill, where the company will turn out SUVs. And \$2 billion will go to refurbish other plants.

Critics complain the contract doesn't bring back any products from Mexico, which the union had sought.

US endorses tobacco pouches as less risky than cigarettes

By **MATTHEW PERRONE** AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — For the first time, U.S. health regulators have judged a type of smokeless tobacco to be less harmful than cigarettes, a decision that could open the door to other less risky options for smokers.

The milestone announcement on Tuesday makes Swedish Match tobacco pouches the first so-called reduced-risk tobacco product ever sanctioned by the Food and Drug Administration.

FDA regulators stressed that their decision does not mean the pouches are safe, just less harmful, and that all tobacco products pose risks. The pouches will still bear mandatory government warnings that they can cause mouth cancer, gum disease and tooth loss.

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But the company will be able to advertise its tobacco pouches as posing a lower risk of lung cancer, bronchitis, heart disease and other diseases than cigarettes.

The pouches of ground tobacco, called snus — Swedish for snuff and pronounced “snoose” — have been popular in Scandinavian countries for decades but are a tiny part of the U.S. tobacco market.

Users stick the teabag-like pouches between their cheek and gum to absorb nicotine. Unlike regular chewing tobacco, the liquid from snus is generally swallowed, rather than spit out. Chewing tobacco is fermented; snus goes through a steamed pasteurization process.

FDA acting commissioner Ned Sharpless said the agency based its decision on long-term, population-level data showing lower levels of lung cancer, emphysema and other smoking-related disease with the use of snus.

Sharpless added that the agency will closely monitor Swedish Match’s marketing efforts to ensure they target adult tobacco users.

“Anyone who does not currently use tobacco products, especially youth, should refrain from doing so,” he said in a statement.

Stockholm-based Swedish Match sells its snus under the brand name, General, in mint, wintergreen and other flavors. They compete against pouches from rivals Altria and R.J. Reynolds. But pouches account for just 5% of the \$9.1 billion-dollar U.S. market for chew and other smokeless tobacco products, according to Euromonitor market research firm.

And public health experts questioned whether U.S. smokers would be willing to switch to the niche product.

“Snus products have a bit of a challenge” among smokers who are used to inhaling their nicotine, said Vaughan Rees, director of Harvard University’s Center for Global Tobacco Control.

The U.S. smoking rate has fallen to an all-time low of 14% of adults, or roughly 34 million Americans. But smoking remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the U.S., responsible for some 480,000 deaths annually.

The FDA’s decision has been closely watched by both public health experts and tobacco companies.

Public health experts have long hoped that alternatives like the pouches could benefit Americans who are unable or unwilling to quit cigarettes and other traditional tobacco products. Tobacco companies are looking for new products to sell as they face declining cigarette demand due to tax increases, health concerns, smoking bans and social stigma.

The FDA itself also has much at stake in the review of snus and similar tobacco alternatives.

Congress gave the FDA the power to regulate key aspects of the tobacco industry in 2009, including designating new tobacco products as “modified risk,” compared with traditional cigarettes, chew and other products.

But until Tuesday, the FDA had never granted permission for any company to make such claims for its products.

The FDA is reviewing several other products vying for “reduced risk” status, including a heat-not-burn cigarette alternative made by Philip Morris International. While electronic cigarettes are generally considered less harmful than the tobacco-and-paper variety, they have not been scientifically reviewed as posing a lower risk.

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2 students charged with slur at University of Connecticut

By PAT EATON-ROBB Associated Press

STORRS, Conn. (AP) — Two University of Connecticut students have been charged with shouting a racial slur outside a campus apartment complex in an episode that was caught on video and has led to protests at the school.

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Jarred Karal, of Plainville, and Ryan Mucaj, of Granby, both identified by police as 21-year-old white men, were charged Monday with ridicule on account of creed, religion, color, denomination, nationality or race.

The charge is a misdemeanor that carries a possible sentence of up to a year in prison. Phone and email messages were left for the two students, who are due in court Oct. 30. It was not clear Tuesday whether they had lawyers to speak for them.

Police said the young men were among three people seen on the video walking through the parking lot of UConn's Charter Oak Apartment complex Oct. 11. Two of the three use the racial slur several times and laugh, police said.

"The investigation showed that the males walked back through the apartment complex after leaving a local business and played a game in which they yelled vulgar words," according to the police report. "As they walked through the parking lot, Mucaj and Karal switched to saying a racial epithet that was heard by witnesses. The investigation revealed the third male did not participate."

The slurs were recorded by an African American student from an apartment window and posted on social media.

That student told police he was not sure whether the students saw him or were directing the racial epithets toward him.

Karal told police the group was playing a game in which they would yell the word "penis." The first person who refuses to say the word loses, he said. They decided to change the game to shouting the racial epithet, he said.

"I sincerely apologize if we offended anyone," he told police, according to the affidavit. "This was not our intentions at all. We were acting dumb, idiotic and childish."

Mucaj told police he had had seven drinks at a bar and did not remember the episode, according to an arrest affidavit.

On Monday, student organizations and the school's chapter of the NAACP held a rally and march against racism in response to the slurs and another situation in which a student said she was the target of a racial slur at a party.

UConn President Thomas Katsouleas, who attended the rally, issued a statement in support of the arrests.

"It is supportive of our core values to pursue accountability, through due process, for an egregious assault on our community that has caused considerable harm," he said. "I'm grateful for the university's collective effort in responding to this incident, especially the hard work of the UConn Police Department, which has been investigating the case since it was reported."

The school declined to say whether the students were facing academic penalties, citing federal privacy law. Any student who violates the school's code of conduct can face discipline including probation, suspension or dismissal, spokeswoman Stephanie Reitz said.

Katsouleas has scheduled office hours Friday at the school's African American Cultural Center to meet with students who may wish to talk with him.

He also has announced a nationwide search for a chief diversity officer at the school, which has a student population that is 60% white and just 6% African American, according to U.S. Department of Education statistics.

Jimmy Carter hospitalized after fall at Georgia home

ATLANTA (AP) — Former President Jimmy Carter had another fall at his home in Plains, Georgia, fracturing his pelvis and going to the hospital for treatment and observation, a spokeswoman said Tuesday.

Carter Center spokeswoman Deanna Congileo described the fracture as minor. Her statement said that the 95-year-old was in good spirits at the Phoebe Sumter Medical Center after falling on Monday evening, and that he was looking forward to recovering at home.

This is the third time Carter has fallen in recent months. He first fell in the spring and required hip replacement surgery. Carter fell again Oct. 6 and despite receiving 14 stitches, traveled the same day to Nashville, Tennessee, to rally volunteers and, later, to help build a Habitat for Humanity home.

Carter is the oldest living former president in U.S. history. He and 92-year-old Rosalynn recently became

the longest married first couple, surpassing George and Barbara Bush, with more than 73 years of marriage.

The 39th president survived a dire cancer diagnosis in 2015, and last month, he matter-of-factly told an audience that they might be hearing his last annual Carter Center address. But even then, he was forward-thinking, expressing hopes that the center will become a more forceful advocate against armed conflicts, including "wars by the United States."

"I just want to keep the whole world at peace," Carter said.

This story has been corrected to show Carter traveled the same day as his last fall Oct. 6 to Nashville to rally volunteers for Habitat for Humanity.

Court weighing whether judge can unseal lynching records

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — A historian's effort to unseal grand jury records from the brazen 1946 lynching of two black couples on a Georgia riverbank prompted tough questions Tuesday in a federal appeals court, but the judges also suggested there might be another way to win release of the records.

The young black sharecroppers were traveling a rural road in the summer of 1946 when a white mob stopped the car beside the Apalachee River, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) east of Atlanta. The mob dragged them out, led them to the river's edge and shot them to death in a case that horrified the nation that year.

The FBI investigated for months and more than 100 people reportedly testified before a grand jury, but no one was ever indicted in the deaths of Roger and Dorothy Malcom and George and Mae Murray Dorsey at Moore's Ford Bridge in Walton County.

Historian Anthony Pitch wrote about the unsolved killings — "The Last Lynching: How a Gruesome Mass Murder Rocked a Small Georgia Town" — and continued his research after the book's 2016 publication. He learned transcripts of the grand jury proceedings, once thought to have been destroyed, were stored by the National Archives.

Pitch, died in June at age 80, before his case could be resolved, but his widow is continuing the fight, along with Laura Wexler, who wrote another book about the lynching and joined the case at the family's request.

A federal judge in 2017 granted Pitch's petition and ordered the records unsealed. But the U.S. Department of Justice appealed, citing the secrecy of grand jury proceedings.

A three-judge panel of the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled 2-1 in February to uphold the lower court's order. But the full court voted to rehear the case, and oral arguments before all 12 judges were held Tuesday.

The judges grilled lawyers on both sides Tuesday, making it unclear how they will rule on whether federal judges have inherent power to disclose grand jury records for reasons other than those specifically provided for in the rules governing grand jury secrecy.

But some of them indicated the Moore's Ford grand jury records would likely be released regardless of how they rule.

The Civil Rights Cold Case Records Collection Act — passed by Congress and signed in January by the president — provides for the review and release of government records related to unsolved civil rights cold cases. It establishes a national archive of those documents and establishes a Civil Rights Cold Case Records Review Board to handle the review and disclosure.

"It sounds like to me you have a winning argument" for release of the records under that law, Chief Judge Ed Carnes told Pitch's lawyer, Joseph Bell.

Bell noted that the legislation didn't pass until the litigation was well underway. He also pointed out after the hearing that the review board provided for in the law doesn't exist yet making it unclear when records could be released that way.

The lynching happened in 1946 after Roger Malcom, 24, had been jailed after stabbing and gravely

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injuring a white man, Barnett Hester, during an argument. A white farmer, Loy Harrison, paid \$600 to bail Malcom out on July 25, 1946. Harrison later said he was ambushed by a mob as he drove the Malcoms and Dorseys home.

Harrison, identified in an FBI report as a former Ku Klux Klansman and well-known bootlegger, wasn't hurt. He told authorities he didn't recognize anyone in the mob.

The investigation has been reopened and closed several times since the grand jury failed to indict anyone in December 1946. Students, researchers and activists have all tried to crack the case.

Rules governing grand jury secrecy include exceptions when records may be released. A 1984 ruling in the 11th Circuit, which set precedent, says judges may order their disclosure in "exceptional circumstances."

Specifically, the judges asked the lawyers ahead of Tuesday's arguments whether they should overturn the 1984 precedent. They also asked, if federal judges can grant disclosures beyond the defined exceptions, is "historical significance" an adequate reason?

Bell argued in a court filing before the hearing that the 1984 precedent shouldn't be overruled because it acknowledges the need for "exceptional circumstances." The historical importance and passage of time, as well as the fact that grand jury records have been released in other historically significant cases, supports the release of these records, he wrote.

Justice Department lawyer Bradley Hinshelwood countered in pre-hearing filings that Pitch's arguments would allow federal judges to use their inherent power to circumvent rules on disclosure of grand jury materials set by Congress and the Supreme Court.

The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press and 30 news organizations, including The Associated Press, submitted a brief in support of Pitch that the court rejected without explanation.

Winston, Howard top AP preseason All-America men's team

By JOHN MARSHALL AP Basketball Writer

Cassius Winston had a long list of accomplishments at Michigan State. He led the Spartans to Big Ten regular-season and tournament titles and into the Final Four. He was the Big Ten player of the year, an Associated Press All-American, one of the nation's best players.

No one would have blamed the gritty guard for bolting to the NBA. His place in Michigan State history was already secured.

But Winston wanted more, to add to his legacy in East Lansing, so he opted to return for his senior season.

Winston is the only consensus selection on The Associated Press preseason All-America team announced Tuesday, a day after Michigan State was ranked No. 1 in the AP preseason poll.

He is joined by high-scoring Marquette senior guard Markus Howard, Louisville junior forward Jordan Nwora, Seton Hall senior guard Myles Powell and Memphis freshman James Wiseman on the five-player team.

"He is the straw that stirs the drink and I think deserves all the attention he's been getting because he is a special player," Michigan State coach Tom Izzo said of his star player. "But I think he's handled it pretty well too with a lot of class and has worked hard."

Winston is rarely the tallest, fastest or most athletic player on the floor. He reportedly can't even dunk.

But the 6-foot-1 guard is often the best player out there.

Smart and able to see things before they develop, Winston has a feel for the game that allows him to beat players with more size and athleticism.

Winston has steadily progressed during his time in East Lansing, going from a reliable backup as a freshman to one of the nation's best floor leaders. He averaged 18.8 points and 7.5 assists as a junior, leading the Spartans to the Final Four for the eighth time under Izzo.

Now Winston is back for more, hoping to take the Spartans even deeper.

"You've got little taste of it. That's never enough," Winston said. "You want to take it another step further."

Like Winston, Howard and Powell considered leaving for the NBA after high-scoring junior seasons.

Both opted to stay and are expected to keep putting up big numbers.

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The 5-11, 175-pound Howard developed a knack for getting off shots against bigger players. Through an array of step-back 3-pointers and crafty drives to the basket, he finished fifth nationally with 25 points per game in 2018-19 and is the only NCAA player the past 20 years with two career 50-point games.

Howard was a second-team AP All-American last season and led the Golden Eagles to the NCAA Tournament.

Powell was an AP honorable mention All-American last season after averaging 23.1 points, 13th-best nationally, and leading the Pirates to the NCAA Tournament for the fourth straight year. The 6-2 guard was tabbed Big East preseason player of the year after deciding to return to school to become the first in his family to earn a college degree.

"I sit back and say for me to be the first one, no one can take that for me," he said. "I have five little brothers and sisters who look up to me, and I can set an example for them. For me to be the first to say that in my family is important."

Nwora joined teammate Steven Enoch in opting to return to Louisville, helping the Cardinals earn a No. 5 preseason ranking.

A 6-8 forward, Nwora raised his scoring average 11.3 points from his freshman season to 17 per game last year while leading Louisville in rebounding with 7.6. He also led the Cardinals with 77 3-pointers and made 37% percent from the arc as a sophomore.

The 7-1 Wiseman was widely regarded as the top prospect of the 2019 recruiting class and gave Penny Hardaway a huge boost in his second season as Memphis' coach by opting to play for his hometown college. Wiseman has good mobility for his size, can create his own shot and has been projected to be the No. 1 in pick in next year's NBA draft.

The Associated Press' 2019-20 preseason All-America men's basketball team, with school, height, year and votes from a 65-member national media panel (key 2018-19 statistics in parentheses):

Cassius Winston, Michigan State, 6-1, 185, senior, 65 of 65 votes (18.8 ppg, 3 rpg, 5.2 apg, 84.0 ft pct, 1.0 steals)

Markus Howard, Marquette, 5-11, 180, senior, 57 (25.0 ppg, 4.0 rpg, 3.9 apg, 40.3 3-pt fg pct, 89.0 ft pct, 3.5 3-pt fg/game, 1.1 steals)

Jordan Nwora, Louisville, 6-7, 225, junior, 47 (17.0 ppg, 7.6 rpg, 1.3 apg)

Myles Powell, Seton Hall, 6-2, 195, senior, 47 (23.1 ppg, 4.0 rpg, 2.9 apg, 36.0 minutes, 84.0 ft pct, 2.0 steals)

James Wiseman, Memphis, 7-1, 240, freshman, 32 (Memphis East HS: 25.8 ppg, 14.8 rpg, 5.5 blocks, 1.3 steals)

Others receiving votes: Kerry Blackshear Jr., Florida, 23; Cole Anthony, North Carolina, 10; Udoka Azubike, Kansas, 8; Jarron Cumberland, Cincinnati, 8; Tre Jones, Duke, 6; Sam Merrill, Utah State, 5; Devon Dotson, Kansas, 4; Charles Basse, Western Kentucky, 3; Mamadi Diakite, Virginia, 3; Anthony Edwards, Georgia, 1; Tyrese Maxey, Kentucky, 1; Reggie Perry, Mississippi State, 1; Payton Pritchard, Oregon, 1; Lamar Stevens, Penn State, 1; Isaiah Stewart, Washington, 1; McKinley Wright IV, Colorado, 1.

More AP college basketball: <https://apnews.com/Collegebasketball> and http://www.twitter.com/AP_Top25

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 23, the 296th day of 2019. There are 69 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 23, 1973, President Richard Nixon agreed to turn over White House tape recordings subpoenaed by the Watergate special prosecutor to Judge John J. Sirica.

On this date:

In 1707, the first Parliament of Great Britain, created by the Acts of Union between England and Scotland,

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held its first meeting.

In 1910, Blanche S. Scott became the first woman to make a public solo airplane flight, reaching an altitude of 12 feet at a park in Fort Wayne, Ind.

In 1915, tens of thousands of women paraded up Fifth Avenue in New York City, demanding the right to vote.

In 1925, talk show host Johnny Carson was born in Corning, Iowa.

In 1944, the World War II Battle of Leyte (LAY'-tee) Gulf began, resulting in a major Allied victory against Japanese forces.

In 1956, a student-sparked revolt against Hungary's Communist rule began; as the revolution spread, Soviet forces started entering the country, and the uprising was put down within weeks.

In 1983, 241 U.S. service members, most of them Marines, were killed in a suicide truck-bombing at Beirut International Airport in Lebanon; a near-simultaneous attack on French forces killed 58 paratroopers.

In 1984, BBC Television reported on the famine in Ethiopia; the story, which shocked viewers, prompted rock star Bob Geldof to organize "Band Aid," a group of celebrities who recorded the song "Do They Know It's Christmas?" for charity.

In 1987, the U.S. Senate rejected, 58-42, the Supreme Court nomination of Robert H. Bork.

In 1995, a jury in Houston convicted Yolanda Saldivar of murdering Tejano singing star Selena. (Saldivar is serving a life prison sentence.)

In 2001, the nation's anthrax scare hit the White House with the discovery of a small concentration of spores at an offsite mail processing center.

In 2006, former Enron CEO Jeffrey Skilling was sentenced by a federal judge in Houston to 24 years, four months for his role in the company's collapse. Eventually 10 years was cut off Skilling's prison sentence, and he was released to a halfway house in Aug. 2018.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama declared the swine flu outbreak a national emergency, giving his health chief the power to let hospitals move emergency rooms offsite to speed treatment and protect non-infected patients. Bank closings for 2009 surpassed 100, hitting 106 by day's end. The NBA and the referees union agreed on a two-year contract, ending a lockout of more than a month. Character actor Lou Jacobi died in New York at age 95.

Five years ago: Officials announced that an emergency room doctor who'd recently returned to New York City after treating Ebola patients in West Africa tested positive for the virus, becoming the first case in the city and the fourth in the nation. (Dr. Craig Spencer later recovered.) John "Bull" Bramlett, a former professional football and baseball player who was nicknamed the "Meanest Man in Football," died in Memphis, Tennessee, at age 73.

One year ago: Turkey's president demanded that Saudi Arabia identify those who ordered the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul and turn over the suspects for trial. A lottery ticket sold in South Carolina was the only one to match all six numbers drawn for the Mega Millions jackpot, which totaled \$1.537 billion - just short of the record for all U.S. lotteries. China opened the world's longest sea-crossing bridge, a 34-mile span connecting Hong Kong to the mainland. Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court, announced that she had been diagnosed with "the beginning stages of dementia, probably Alzheimer's disease."

Today's Birthdays: Movie director Philip Kaufman is 83. Soccer great Pele (pay-lay) is 79. Rhythm-and-blues singer Barbara Ann Hawkins (The Dixie Cups) is 76. Former ABC News investigative reporter Brian Ross is 71. Actor Michael Rupert is 68. Movie director Ang Lee is 65. Jazz singer Dianne Reeves is 63. Country singer Dwight Yoakam is 63. Community activist Martin Luther King III is 62. Movie director Sam Raimi is 60. Parodist "Weird Al" Yankovic is 60. Rock musician Robert Trujillo (Metallica) is 55. Christian/jazz singer David Thomas (Take 6) is 53. Rock musician Brian Nevin (Big Head Todd and the Monsters) is 53. Country singer-musician Junior Bryant is 51. Actor Jon Huertas is 50. Movie director Chris Weitz is 50. CNN medical reporter Dr. Sanjay Gupta is 50. Bluegrass musician Eric Gibson (The Gibson Brothers) is 49. Country singer Jimmy Wayne is 47. Actress Vivian Bang is 46. Rock musician Eric Bass (Shinedown) is 45. TV personality and host Cat Deeley is 43. Actor Ryan Reynolds is 43. Actress Saycon Sengbloh is

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42. Rock singer Matthew Shultz (Cage the Elephant) is 36. TV personality Meghan McCain ("The View") is 35. Rhythm-and-blues singer Miguel is 34. Actress Masiela Lusha (MAH'-see-el-la loo-SHA') is 34. Actress Emilia Clarke is 33. Actress Briana Evigan is 33. Actress Inbar Lavi is 33. Actress Jessica Stroup is 33. Neo-soul musician Allen Branstetter (St. Paul & the Broken Bones) is 29. Actress Taylor Spreitler is 26. Actress Margaret Qualley is 25. Actress Amandla Stenberg is 21.

Thought for Today: "Just be yourself — it's the only way it can work." — Johnny Carson (1925-2005).
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