

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 1 of 54

- [1- Jones makes All-State Soccer Team](#)
- [2- Nursing Center in Hudson Closing](#)
- [2- Groton FFA members headed to Indianapolis](#)
- [3- Legion Turkey Party Ad](#)
- [4- Two GHS Quartets representing GHS at All-State Chorus in Sioux Falls](#)
- [5- Junior Rural Economic Leadership and Development](#)
- [6- Columbia Community's Blood Drive Brings in 11 Volunteers](#)
- [7- Releases to slow up on James River](#)
- [8- Weather Pages](#)
- [11- Daily Devotional](#)
- [12- 2019 Groton Events](#)
- [13- News from the Associated Press](#)



Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

Friday and Saturday, Nov. 1 and 2
All State Chorus and Orchestra in Sioux Falls

Saturday, Nov. 2
Oral Interp Pumpkinstakes at Watertown

Sunday, Nov. 3
Turn clocks back one hour to return to Standard Time



Jones makes All-State Soccer Team

Senior Austin Jones was selected to the SDHSSCA All-State Soccer Team.

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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Nursing Center in Hudson Closing

Funding Shortfall Continues to Have Devastating Impact on Long Term Care

The Hudson Care and Rehab Center in Hudson, South Dakota, is closing its doors. The closure marks the sixth nursing center closure in the last year and a half.

"The closure of this nursing center is just the latest reminder that the crisis in long term care funding is sadly ongoing," said South Dakota Health Care Association (SDHCA) Executive Director Mark B. Deak. "We thank Governor Noem and the legislature for the significant progress we've made on Medicaid reimbursement, but we still have a long way to go to ensure nursing centers can keep their doors open to provide needed care for our elderly and disabled loved ones."

Most residents of the Hudson facility have already been transferred to other providers. Assisted living services associated with the center will remain available.

In addition to Hudson, recent long term care center closures in South Dakota have occurred in Sioux Falls, Huron, Madison, Mobridge, Tripp, Bryant, and Rosholt.

Even after recent increases in Medicaid reimbursement, nursing centers still lose an average of \$42.33 each day for each resident paying through Medicaid. Statewide, costs of unreimbursed care total more than \$48 million annually. A significant majority (53%) of the total resident population in nursing centers relies on Medicaid to pay for their care. In addition to the closures, this disparity fuels staffing challenges, including difficulty hiring caregivers and high turnover among nursing center staff.

Groton FFA members headed to Indianapolis

by Adam Franken

The Groton FFA Chapter will be traveling to the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, IN with six of the chapter officers: Caitlynn Barse, Tessa Erdmann, Tiara DeHoet, Samantha Pappas, Kansas Kroll, and Lane Krueger. The officers were given the first chance to fill the student spots to attend this trip. While at National FFA Convention, the students will be learning leadership and career skills while also working on personal growth to come back to GHS with ideas for growth in their chapter, school, and community. They will attend sessions with over 65,000 other FFA members and guests that feature top motivational speakers and National FFA Officers as well as hear from top government officials like the National Secretary of Agriculture. They will also attend leadership and career workshops put on by past National FFA Officers and top industry professionals. During the career fair they will get a chance to interact with hundreds of the top agriculture businesses in the nation, discovering career possibilities. This year we are also going to visit LG Seeds and receive a tour from one of their managers, taking an up close look at the seed industry.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 3 of 54

Groton Post No. 39 American Legion



Annual



Turkey Party

Saturday, Nov. 9, 2019

Starting at 6:30 p.m.

Groton Legion Post Home, 10 N. Main.

Turkey, Ham and Bacon
to be given away

FREE ADMISSION

**DOOR
PRIZE!**

Lunch served
by Auxiliary





(L to R): Julianna Kosel, Steve Paulson, Maddy Schuelke, Carter Barse

Photo from Groton Area Web Page

(L to R): Ashley Fliehs, Brad Freeman, Alexis Hanten, Noah Poor

Two GHS Quartets representing GHS at All-State Chorus in Sioux Falls

by Joe Schwan

Two quartets from Groton Area High School will be representing GHS in the SDHSAA All-State Chorus. The students are in Sioux Falls for two days of rehearsal ahead of the performance which will take place at 7:00 PM on Saturday, November 2 at the Premier Center in Sioux Falls. The 2019 All-State Chorus will be conducted by Dr. Andrew Last, Associate Professor of Music at Luther College. The concert, which will include a performance by the All-State Orchestra, will be aired on South Dakota Public Broadcasting. The full program for Saturday's concert can be found [here](#).



Junior Rural Economic Leadership and Development by Kiersten Sombke

On October 30th, high school students from Groton Area spent the morning learning about kindness, leadership, fiscal responsibility, and community involvement through a program funded by the South Dakota Farmers Union Foundation called Junior Rural Economic Leadership And Development (Jr. REAL). Speakers included: Charlotte Henley, Toby Kane, Malcom Chapman, and Gerri Eide.

Jr. REAL teaches students how to articulate techniques for civic responsibility, leadership development, and basic life budgeting skills. In a world that is all about apps that can help you send anonymous hurtful snap chats or texts, it is important to take a moment and focus on what makes each person special and the fact that we are all different is awesome! Groton Area Grades 9-12 spent the morning taking time to learn how kindness to self, others, and community is important.

The students also spent time thinking of community involvement projects and the opportunity an individual has throughout the day to impact others by a smile or saying hi (one second opportunities). When you have the ability to see the world from someone else's perspective, you not only open up opportunities for yourself, you gain the vision of how you can make an impact in your own hometown.

A special thanks to Groton High School for hosting the event and helping with organization. For more information about this or other programs offered by South Dakota Farmers Union Foundation please visit: www.sdfu.org or call 605-352-6761.

Columbia Community's Blood Drive Brings in 11 Volunteers

Columbia, SD – Columbia community hosted a blood drive with Vitalant, formerly United Blood Services, on October 22 at American Legion which helped collect a total of 11 units of blood products for patients in need.

A total of 11 individuals volunteered to donate blood and 11 individuals were able to donate at the Vitalant blood drive on October 22. There were two people who volunteered for the first time.

Vitalant expressed their gratitude to Cara Dennert, who coordinated the drive.

Vitalant strives to keep a 5-day supply of every blood type on the shelf at all times to be able to meet the needs of patients across the region. Donations from O-negative donors, the universal blood type, are especially important this time of year due to increased accidents and trauma cases.

Vitalant is the only blood provider to nearly 70 hospitals across the region. The blood supply is dependent on selfless donations from volunteer donors to ensure the lifesaving needs of the region are met.

About 30 percent of Vitalant's blood supply goes to cancer patients across the region and one in seven people entering the hospital will need blood. Those relying on blood in the region receive that lifesaving blood from Vitalant.

Donors can make a convenient appointment to give blood at www.bloodhero.com or by calling 877-25-VITAL. With each donation, donors receive a free total cholesterol test and earn points in Vitalant's donor rewards program. The next blood drive at this location is planned to be held on: May 14, 2020.

Blood donation takes about an hour from check-in to refreshments. Donors can save about 20 minutes by completing their Health History Questionnaire the day they donate on www.vitalant.org

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 7 of 54

Releases to slow up on James River

OMAHA, Neb. -- With below-normal temperatures observed and forecast in Jamestown, North Dakota, river ice downstream of Jamestown and Pipestem Reservoirs could form as soon as Nov. 11. To mitigate the risk of freeze-up ice jams or other ice-related flooding, the target combined release rate before ice-in is 800 cubic feet per second.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will be stepping down releases 200 cfs per day with the target combined release rate of 800 cfs achieved on Nov. 10, 2019. The table below details the current release schedule.

	Jamestown Dam Releases (cfs)	Pipestem Dam Releases (cfs)	Total Combined Release (cfs)
Sunday, Nov. 3	1,100	1,100	2,200
Monday, Nov. 4	1,000	1,000	2,000
Tuesday, Nov. 5	900	900	1,800
Wednesday, Nov. 6	800	800	1,600
Thursday, Nov. 7	700	700	1,400
Friday, Nov. 8	600	600	1,200
Saturday, Nov. 9	500	500	1,000
Sunday, Nov. 10	400	400	800

River ice forecasts will be continuously updated during this time. If conditions change and the forecast ice-in date shifts, combined releases will be held at 1,400 cfs until three days before the new ice-in date.

Combined winter releases are not expected to exceed 850 cfs; however, additional precipitation or higher than expected baseflow could necessitate higher release levels. Ice conditions in the entire James River basin will be continually evaluated throughout the winter. The Corps of Engineers will operate to minimize the risk of ice-related flooding, and adjustments to the releases will be made as needed.






Jamestown Dam is currently at a pool elevation of 1441.0 ft, over 25% into the flood pool, and rising. Inflows into the reservoir peaked on Oct. 30 and are dropping, currently near 2,100 cfs. Reservoir releases are 1,200 cfs.

Pipestem Dam is currently at a pool elevation of 1474.1 ft, about 41% into the flood pool, and dropping. The pool elevation peaked on Oct. 29 at 1475.0 ft, which was 43% into the flood pool. Inflows are holding steady near 800 cfs, and releases are 1,200 cfs.

The Corps of Engineers is coordinating with relevant agencies in North and South Dakota.




Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 8 of 54


Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
				
ostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Rain	Slight Chance Rain/Snow	Mostly Cloudy
High: 44 °F	Low: 27 °F	High: 43 °F	Low: 30 °F	High: 38 °F

Mild Today

Light winds, Dry Saturday

Today Mid 40s	Sunday Mid 40s	Monday Upper 30s
		
Light winds	Possible rain/snow	

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD
Updated: 11/2/2019 4:43 AM Central



Published on: 11/02/2019 at 12:45AM

Below average temps continue, though we should reach the mid 40s today and Sunday. Another system passes through Sunday giving us a chance for some rain/snow with little to no accumulation expected.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 9 of 54

Today in Weather History

November 2, 1961: A snowstorm began in western South Dakota and spread to the remainder of the state on November 2nd. Snowfall was relatively minimal, with 1 to 3 inches falling over most of the central and eastern parts of the state, but winds of 40 to 50 mph accompanied the storm in eastern South Dakota. Also, temperatures fell rapidly with the passage of a cold front with 24-hour changes of 40 to over 50 degrees. Huron dropped from 73 on the 1st to 21 only 24 hours later, a 52-degree drop.

November 2, 1972: Freezing rain caused up to 2 inches of ice to form on trees, bushes, wires, cars, and buildings. Many trees and utility lines were downed. Some of the most significant damage occurred from Tulare to Redfield and Doland and from Troy to Sisseton in Spink, Brown, Day, Grant, and Roberts Counties. Also, heavy snow up to 20 inches fell in south-central South Dakota. Some snowfall amounts include; 5.2 inches in Huron; 10 inches in Wessington Springs; 12 inches in Platte; 12.5 in Bonesteel and 19.5 inches in Gregory.

November 2, 1997: A low-pressure system over the Great Lakes produced winds of 50 to near 60 mph over much of northern and central South Dakota. In McLaughlin, high winds damaged a catwalk at the McLaughlin livestock auction. Half of the 400-foot walkway was tipped over by the winds. The winds, along with six-foot waves, destroyed an 85-year old 40 x 75-foot dance hall located on Medicine Lake, 15 miles northwest of Watertown. In Aberdeen, brick from a top portion of an abandoned building collapsed. There were also widespread reports of tree limbs blown down.

1743: Benjamin Franklin's "eclipse hurricane" unlocked the key to storm movement. Ben Franklin, at Philadelphia, PA, was prevented from viewing a lunar eclipse in a northeast rainstorm, but his brother, who was in Boston, saw it, though the rain began an hour later.

1946: A tornado hit Washington in Hempstead County in Arkansas, killing one.

1992: Another infamous November Great Lakes Storm brought windy conditions to Minnesota's Lake Superior shoreline. 70 mph winds caused waves to crash over 130-foot walls along the shore.

1992: Another infamous November Great Lakes Storm brought windy conditions to Minnesota's Lake Superior shoreline. 70 mph winds caused waves to crash over 130-foot walls along the shore.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 10 of 54

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 42 °F at 11:16 AM

Low Temp: 35 °F at 2:54 AM

Wind: 28 mph at 3:22 PM

Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 78° in 1903

Record Low: 0° in 1911

Average High: 48°F

Average Low: 26°F

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.03

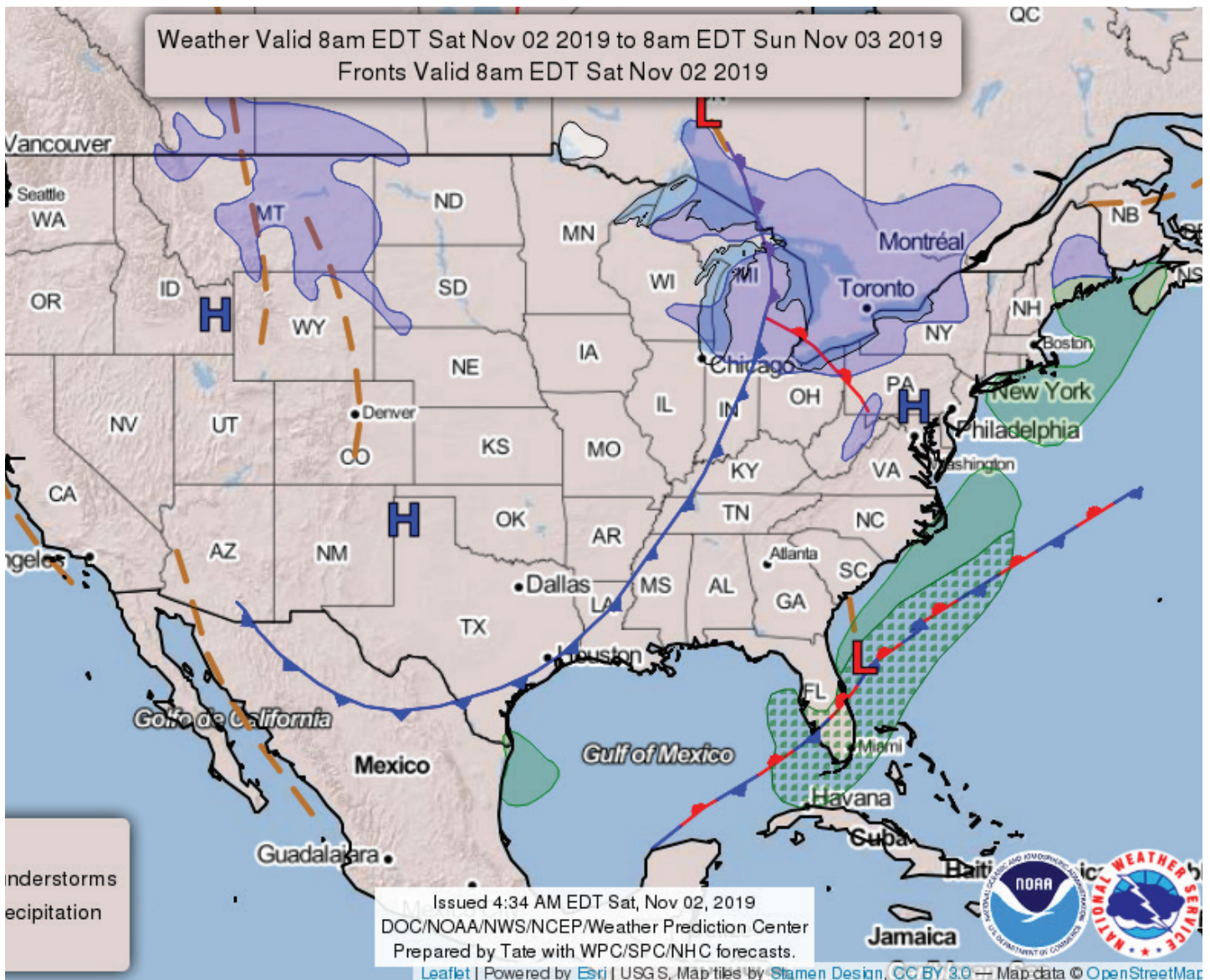
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 20.50

Precip Year to Date: 26.57

Sunset Tonight: 6:20 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:16 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 11 of 54



ANYTHING FOR YOU, GOD?

As he was saying his morning prayers, little Ben surprised his parents by praying, "Good morning, God. What can I do for You today?"

Often our prayers are focused on what we want God to do for us rather than us asking God what He wants us to do for Him.

Could it be that we have shaped God into the image of a bellhop that we would find in a hotel? We dial a number, place an order, and then wait at the door for someone to appear with our requests on a tray. Do we see prayer as the ultimate in heavenly room service?

One day Paul heard a voice saying, "Get up and go...and you will be told what to do!"

Our Lord sees a world full of people who need His love and salvation, grace and hope. And He has given us, His disciples, the responsibility to bring those who need Him, to Him. When we pray, we must first be willing to "get up and go" to serve Him before we "dial and want" for what we want. Remember: God's needs come before our wants.

Prayer: Lord, when we pray, let us first hear what You want from us and then make our requests known to You. May we always put Your priorities first. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Acts 9:6 Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 12 of 54

2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 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)

News from the Associated Press

Pet project brings puppies into juvenile detention center

By **ARIELLE ZIONTS** Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Humane Society workers hauled four cages with seven Husky puppies into the juvenile jail in Rapid City on a recent Wednesday where they found detained boys eager to give the animals baths and receive puppy kisses.

A 19-year-old said he didn't pay much attention to the family dogs growing up but now wants to have his own once he's released from jail.

"I think it will make me happy. It will show how I can take care of somebody or something," he said while surrounded by puppies inside the facility's gym.

The teen is one of a dozen boys who have been participating in Paws Forward, the jail's new weekly animal education program run by the Humane Society of the Black Hills that leaders say benefits both the boys and animals, the Rapid City Journal reported.

For the animals "it gets them definitely more social and out of their comfort zone" by being around a big group of people in a loud gym, said trainer Kay Kieper. "It builds their confidence up, it gets them less fearful of new things."

"This is a great program for the kids," said case worker Becky Elger. "It's fun, it's interactive, they get to do something where they get to care about an animal that doesn't necessarily know them" and they learn teamwork.

"The more they interact and see how dogs can benefit them, they slowly start to change and they become more empathetic and more compassionate. Like 'oh these dogs need love too, just like us,'" Kieper added.

The program isn't just about dogs. The Humane Society has also brought over cats, ferrets, guinea pigs and bearded dragons.

On that Wednesday, Kieper asked the boys what they remember learning about Huskies. They have different colored eyes and thick fur, they responded. Kieper shared that the dogs developed 3,000 years ago in Northeast Asia and were later brought to Alaska as sled dogs since they are fast and can handle cold weather.

The teens then broke into pairs, one shampooing a puppy in a pink or blue plastic kiddie pool, the other drying the dog off with a towel. They didn't complain when they had to clean the floors after the puppies had potty training accidents.

Once the hard work was done, they were able to use tennis balls, ropes, and squeaky toys to play with the dogs. But most of the teens preferred cuddling the puppies, cradling them like babies, carrying them over their shoulders, or holding them up over their heads.

The 19-year-old said he's learned how to read dogs' emotions and how to approach new animals. He said his favorite visit was from the ferrets, an animal he'd never seen before.

A 17-year-old who has a Husky-German shepherd mix at home said he plans to teach his dog how to sit and stay once he's released.

Another 17-year-old said it was "shocking" to hear Kieper share stories of how some of the shelter's animals were treated in the past. "They have needs just like anybody else" and animals can be abandoned just like humans can, he said.

Elger said the boys were chosen to participate in the program based on their good behavior. She said they tell their families about the animals during phone calls and are occasionally allowed to take photos with the pets and send them back home. Elger said the plan is to eventually expand the program to the entire jail, which houses girls and boys ages 10-21 who have been charged or convicted in South Dakota state court in or in federal jurisdictions from across the country.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 14 of 54

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

09-20-36-41-54, Mega Ball: 22, Megaplier: 2

(nine, twenty, thirty-six, forty-one, fifty-four; Mega Ball: twenty-two; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$118 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$150 million

South Dakota Keystone XL opponents point to N. Dakota spill

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

Opponents of the Keystone XL pipeline in South Dakota were making their case against a handful of water permits this week in a process so contentious that it is being extended to additional meetings next month. Now, those opponents are pointing to a major spill in North Dakota to bolster their case.

The South Dakota Water Management Board met for three days this week and two more earlier in October before deciding to add more days of testimony in December. The hearings have drawn engineers and experts, along with at least a dozen groups and people who said they would be affected by the pipeline's construction.

But in the midst of this week's hearings, the Keystone pipeline in North Dakota leaked an approximate 383,000 gallons (1.4 million liters) in the northeastern part of the state, affecting a wetland. The cause of the leak is under investigation; meanwhile, North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum has asked pipeline owner TC Energy to review its inspection and monitoring of the line.

"When we're sitting in a hearing room and people are saying these pipelines are safe, then this happens," said Faith Spotted Eagle, a member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe, which opposes the water permits.

TC Energy, which is also developing the Keystone XL, is applying for permits to tap the Cheyenne, White, and Bad rivers in South Dakota during construction. The water will be used for drilling to install pipe, build pump stations and control dust during construction. Two ranchers also applied for water permits to supply backup water to worker camps.

Though the state Department of Environment and Natural Resources has recommended approval, Keystone XL opponents view the permitting process as an opportunity to thwart the project — and the North Dakota spill as more reason to do so.

"Certainly it's another example of the poor quality of construction and problems that we have seen repeatedly not only with the Keystone 1 but with the overall practices of this company that wants to build another pipeline through our state," said Rebecca Terk, an organizer with Dakota Rural Action.

Sara Rabern, a spokeswoman for TC Energy, called it "unfortunate" that opponents would use the North Dakota spill to claim that Keystone XL will be unsafe.

"Our focus is and continues to safely build and operate a pipeline that delivers the energy we need each and every day," Rabern said. "While this incident is unfortunate, it demonstrates our ability to respond quickly to clean up and repair the release while limiting the impact to the environment and our stakeholders. That is and will continue to be our priority."

Opponents argue the pipeline construction will affect water supplies of several Native American tribes. Although the pipeline avoids any tribal land, it does affect water upstream of reservations. Tribal members also said they plan to raise how the pipeline construction may affect their spiritual practices and pose a threat to safety due to influxes of construction workers in small communities.

Pipeline opponents elsewhere have taken note of the Keystone spill, too. Opponents cited it in Minnesota as a reason against a proposed upgrade and expansion of Enbridge Energy's Line 3 in the northern part of the state. Winona LaDuke, an environmental activist from the White Earth reservation in northern Minnesota, said, "This latest spill proves once again that new pipelines are not necessarily safer."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 15 of 54

Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders tweeted Thursday that he would shut down the Keystone pipeline if elected.

Keystone XL is planned as 1,184-mile line from Alberta, Canada, to Nebraska that would carry up to 830,000 barrels of crude oil a day. In Nebraska, it would connect with other lines that go to Gulf Coast Refineries.

The company plans to begin construction next year, though its opponents in South Dakota have other plans.

"We have a ways to go," Terk said. "And three or four more days in December may not do it."

South Dakota inmate seeks stay from US Supreme Court

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota prison inmate is asking the U.S. Supreme Court to halt his execution next week.

Charles Rhines is sentenced to die in the 1992 slaying of a 22-year-old doughnut shop employee who interrupted him during a burglary. His execution is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. Monday.

Rhines asked the high court Friday to stay the execution on the grounds he hasn't been granted access to experts to evaluate his claims of cognitive and psychiatric impairments. The 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rejected that appeal last week.

Rhines, who is gay, also asked the high court to consider his claim that he was sentenced to death by jurors who had an anti-gay bias, an argument the high court has declined to hear before. The state has argued that jurors opted for death due to the chilling nature of the crime.

Separately, Rhines appealed a circuit judge's refusal to delay his execution on the grounds the pento-barbital in his execution doesn't meet the "ultra-short-acting" standard for lethal injection drugs in effect when he was convicted. The circuit judge said in his ruling Thursday that pentobarbital works as fast or faster than the drugs Rhines cited when used in lethal doses.

After 103-0 rout in SD playoff game, mercy rule considered

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota high school playoff football game that ended with the undefeated Pierre Governors walloping the winless Spearfish Spartans 103-0 have some people, including a state lawmaker, calling for a mercy rule.

Pierre led 42-0 after the first quarter, 75-0 at halftime and 96-0 after the third quarter. The Argus Leader reports that Pierre rested its starters early and played their fourth-string lineup for a good chunk of Thursday's Class 11AA quarterfinal game.

State Rep. Fred Deutsch, of Florence, says people have asked him for legislation to fix the problem.

The mercy rule calls for a running clock when games get out of hand. It's used in some South Dakota divisions, but not Class 11AA.

South Dakota High School Activities Association officials say they will recommend it again and look at the classification process.

North Dakota gov wants more monitoring after pipeline leak

By JAMES MacPHERSON Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum appealed to Keystone pipeline owner TC Energy to review its inspection and monitoring of the line after it leaked an estimated 383,000 gallons (1.4 million liters) in the northeastern part of the state.

Burgum spokesman Mike Nowatzki said the Republican governor spoke Thursday night to officials at the Calgary, Alberta-based company formerly known as TransCanada.

The conversation came two days after the company shut down the pipeline after the leak was discovered and affected about 22,500 square feet (2090 sq. meters) of land near Edinburg, in Walsh County.

Burgum said in a statement he "received assurance" from the company that the spill would be cleaned

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 16 of 54

up "as thoroughly and quickly as possible."

North Dakota regulators said some wetlands were affected, but not any sources of drinking water.

State Environmental Quality Chief Dave Glatt said the pipeline remained closed Friday and the cause of the spill was still unknown.

About 4,200 gallons (15898.26 liters) of crude oil has been recovered from the spill, Glatt said. He said workers were expected to dig up a portion of the underground pipeline within the next few days to inspect it.

"The company has the spill contained and nothing is moving off site," Glatt said.

Crude began flowing through the \$5.2 billion pipeline in 2011. It's designed to carry crude oil across Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and through North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri on the way to refineries in Patoka, Illinois and Cushing, Oklahoma.

It can handle about 23 million gallons (87.06 million liters) daily.

The pipeline spill and shutdown come as the company seeks to build the \$8 billion Keystone XL pipeline that would carry tar sands oil from Alberta, Canada, to refineries in Texas. The proposed Keystone XL pipeline has drawn opposition from people who fear it will harm the environment.

President Donald Trump issued a federal permit for the expansion project in 2017, after it had been rejected by the Obama administration.

Together, the massive Keystone and Keystone XL network would be about five times the length of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline.

Chronic wasting disease found in Bennett County

MARTIN, S.D. (AP) — State officials say chronic wasting disease in deer has spread eastward in South Dakota.

The state Game, Fish and Parks Department said Friday samples collected from a sick deer found near Martin in Bennett County confirmed the animal was in the late stages of the disease.

The agency says it's the first confirmed case of chronic wasting disease in free-ranging deer or elk in Bennett County.

Chronic wasting disease is a fatal brain condition in deer, elk and moose. It has previously been found in deer and elk in southwestern South Dakota.

Restrictions on moving deer carcasses in South Dakota will go into effect beginning with the 2020 hunting season in an attempt to limit the spread of the disease.

Midwest economy: October state-by-state glance

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The Institute for Supply Management, formerly the Purchasing Management Association, began formally surveying its membership in 1931 to gauge business conditions.

The Creighton Economic Forecasting Group uses the same methodology as the national survey to consult supply managers and business leaders. Creighton University economics professor Ernie Goss oversees the report.

The overall index ranges between 0 and 100. Growth neutral is 50, and a figure greater than 50 indicates growth in that factor over the next three to six months.

Here are the state-by-state results for October:

Arkansas: The state's overall index jumped to 53.4 from September's 48.3. Index components were new orders at 59.2, production or sales at 57.9, delivery lead time at 49.2, inventories at 49.7 and employment at 51.2. "Based on recent surveys of manufacturers in the state, I expect job growth to slow but remain positive, and hourly wage growth to decline to an annualized range of 3.5%-4.0% through the first quarter of 2020," Goss said.

Iowa: After two straight months of below growth neutral readings for Iowa, the state's overall index climbed to 53.5 in October from September's 49.6. Index components were new orders at 59.3, production or sales at 57.9, delivery lead time at 49.2, employment at 51.2 and inventories at 49.8. "Based on recent surveys of manufacturers in the state, I expect job growth to slow but remain positive and hourly wage

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 17 of 54

growth to continue at its current solid pace through the first quarter of 2020," he said.

Kansas: The Kansas overall index rose to 54.6 last month from 51.1 in September. Index components were new orders at 62.0, production or sales at 56.9, delivery lead time at 50.0, employment at 52.8 and inventories at 51.3. The manufacturing sector has boosted jobs by 0.9% over the past 12 months and hourly wages by 1.4%. "Based on recent surveys of manufacturers in the state, I expect job growth to remain at its current pace, and hourly wage growth to expand above its current pace through the first quarter of 2020," said Goss.

Minnesota: Minnesota's overall index hit 51.3 in October, compared with 48.4 in September. Index components were new orders at 50.2, production or sales at 58.4, delivery lead time at 48.7, inventories at 48.9, and employment at 50.3. "Based on recent surveys of manufacturers in the state, I expect job growth to move into positive territory but below an annualized pace of 1%, and annualized hourly wage growth to slow to a 3.5%-4% range through the first quarter of 2020," he said.

Missouri: The overall index for Missouri advanced to 53.6 last month from September's 49.2. Index components were new orders at 59.6, production or sales at 57.8, delivery lead time at 49.3, inventories at 50.0 and employment at 51.4. "I expect job growth to accelerate but remain below an annualized rate of 1.5%, and hourly wage growth to rise significantly to an annualized range of 3.5%-4% through the first quarter of 2020," Goss said.

Nebraska: Nebraska's overall index climbed to 53.7 from September's 50.6. Index components were new orders at 59.7, production or sales at 57.7, delivery lead time at 49.3, inventories at 50.0 and employment at 51.5. "Based on recent surveys of manufacturers in the state, I expect job growth to rise slightly and hourly wage growth to expand at a higher annualized pace of 3%-4% through the first quarter of 2020," he said.

North Dakota: The overall index for North Dakota slipped below growth neutral to hit 49.7 in October, compared with 50.1 in September. Index components were new orders at 50.3, production or sales at 58.4, delivery lead time at 45.8, employment at 48.7 and inventories at 45.4. North Dakota's manufacturing sector has boosted jobs by 1.1% over the past 12 months and hourly wages by 6%. "I expect job growth to slow but remain positive, and annualized hourly wage growth to decline to less than 4% through the first quarter of 2020," Goss said.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma's overall index has fallen below growth neutral for two of the last three months. The index hit 48.7 last month, compared with 50.1 in September. Index components were new orders at 52.7, production or sales at 58.4, delivery lead time at 42.3, inventories at 44.5 and employment at 45.6. The state's manufacturing sector has lost 1.5% of its employment over the past 12 months. "I expect job growth to move into positive territory but remain below 1% annualized, and hourly wage growth to continue at its current solid pace through the first quarter of 2020," said Goss.

South Dakota: The overall index for South Dakota jumped to 52.6 in October from 47.8 in September. Index components were new orders at 57.3, production or sales at 58.6, delivery lead time at 48.6, inventories at 48.7 and employment at 50.1. The state's manufacturing sector has boosted jobs by 3.6% over the past 12 months and hourly wages by 3.2%. "I expect job growth to slow but remain positive, and hourly wage growth to continue at its current solid pace through the first quarter of 2020," he said.

Survey suggests slight rebound in Midwest economic growth

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — An October survey of business supply managers suggests a bump occurred in economic growth for nine Midwest and Plains states, according to a report released Friday.

The Mid-America Business Conditions index rebounded to 52.6, compared with 49.1 in September, the report said. The August figure was 49.3.

"For 2019, the Mid-America economy has been expanding at a pace well below that of the nation," said Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the survey.

"The trade war and the global economic slowdown have cut regional growth to approximately one-half that of the U.S. October's survey results indicate that regional growth is likely to bottom at positive, but

slow rate, in (the) fourth quarter of this year," he said.

The survey results are compiled into a collection of indexes ranging from zero to 100. Survey organizers say any score above 50 suggests growth. A score below that suggests decline. The survey covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

The regional trade numbers remained weak last month, with both export orders and imports falling, if at a slower pace. The index for new export orders rose to 44.7 from September's 36.2, while the import index rose to 48.2 from 42.4.

The wholesale inflation gauge for the month rose to 57.0, up from 55.3 in August.

Nearly 60% of supply managers reported that tariffs had increased the prices of supplies and inputs purchased by their companies, Goss said.

"However, tariffs have, to date, have had little impact on our wholesale inflation gauge," said Goss.

Looking ahead six months, the October business confidence index slipped to 47.3 from September's 47.7 reading.

"I expect business confidence to depend heavily on trade talks with China and the passage of the nation's trade agreement with Canada and Mexico," Goss said.

Consultants: More inpatient psychiatric beds needed

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Consultants are recommending that Pennington County add inpatient psychiatric beds at Regional Behavioral Health Center in Rapid City.

Behavioral Health Services director Dr. Katy Sullivan says the consultants from the National Council for Behavioral Health took a look at the community and the availability of mental health services and recommended adding 30 inpatient beds.

KOTA-TV reports the consultants' report listed 12 additional proposals dealing with mental health. They include bolstering the existing system of recovery housing and employment support and adding more case managers to specialty courts that deal with drugs, drunken driving, veterans and mental health.

There are 52 beds at Regional Behavioral Health Center, 34 are for adults and 18 are for children.

Information from: KOTA-TV, <http://www.kotatv.com>

Is the anti-Trump suburban revolt escalating? Watch Virginia

By STEVE PEOPLES and ALAN SUDERMAN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Republican state Sen. Siobhan Dunnivant wanted to avoid talking about President Donald Trump as she courted voters this week on Ridgefield Green Way just outside Virginia's capital city. The middle-aged man at one door didn't want to talk about anything else.

"I've only got one question. Do you support Trump?" he asked.

"Yes," Dunnivant replied.

"Then you've got my vote," he said.

On the sidewalk a few minutes later, Dunnivant actively distanced herself from the Republican president, acknowledging he is deeply unpopular in her district — despite the doorway encounter. The 55-year-old OB-GYN said she'd prefer that Trump stay out of Virginia ahead of Tuesday's high-stakes elections.

"I don't want to have Washington, D.C., replicated in Virginia," she told The Associated Press. "I'm running a campaign on state issues and getting state things done."

Dunnivant's dance speaks to the dire threat Trump has created for Republicans in Virginia and, more broadly, suburbs across America. This is where higher-educated and more affluent voters — particularly women — have revolted against Trump's GOP. These areas leaned Republican in the past, but amid shifting demographics and Trump's turbulent presidency, they have transformed into the nation's premier political battleground.

Nearly three years into Trump's administration, Virginia's leftward shift appears to be rapidly accelerating. Since the beginning of 2017, Democrats have won every statewide contest, made historic gains in the House of Delegates and picked up three additional congressional seats. And on Tuesday, Democrats are

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 19 of 54

just a handful of new seats away from seizing control of both chambers of the Virginia legislature for the first time in more than two decades.

Voters across several other states also head to the polls Tuesday, including Mississippi and Kentucky, whose high-profile gubernatorial races have attracted Trump's direct involvement.

But more than anywhere, Virginia's lower-profile state legislative elections will test the magnitude of the GOP's suburban slide. Democratic victories could reshape the national political landscape in 2020 — and, perhaps more broadly, politics across the South for decades.

Like Virginia, suburban North Carolina, Georgia and Texas have seen explosive growth and demographic shifts in recent years that have given Democrats real momentum, even if they have yet to break through.

"We are a model for the South," said former Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, who has served as a chief surrogate in the state's legislative elections.

Vice President Mike Pence will rally voters in Virginia Beach on Saturday. But Trump, who is his party's most powerful political weapon, has been noticeably absent. Instead, the president dedicated time over the weekend to campaign in deep-red Mississippi and Kentucky.

Virginia Republican Corey Stewart, an unapologetic Trump loyalist who was beaten badly in last year's U.S. Senate race, suggested Trump would help his party by rallying the base in Virginia in what is expected to be a relatively low-turnout election. Still, he feared that the elections could be "a complete rout" for Republicans.

"Things are so bad right now in Virginia for a Republican like me," Stewart said. "Things are moving in the wrong direction in the suburbs."

Trump campaign spokesman Tim Murtaugh had only this to say about the president's decision to bypass Virginia: "President Trump is focused on the places where he can have the greatest impact in 2019, and those are in states having governor's races."

Trump may be a major factor in Virginia's off-year elections, but he was often a silent factor on the ground as suburban candidates scrambled across House and Senate districts knocking on doors to ensure their supporters' vote on Tuesday.

Like many suburban neighborhoods across the nation, the voters here in Richmond's suburbs tend to have more education and more money than those in rural areas. It's located in Henrico County, where more than 42% of residents hold a college degree and the median household income is \$66,447.

They have also trended younger and more racially diverse in recent years. Nearly 30% of Henrico's population is African American and 8% is Asian, reflecting the changes in population growth since 2000 that have accompanied the county's leftward shift in recent elections.

The voters here are aware of national politics, but interviews on the ground this week suggest many are more invested in local issues that affect their families. On the doorstep, voters are more likely to raise concerns about education, health care and, perhaps above all, gun violence.

Still, one district voter, Elyse Ward, a 31-year-old marketing and technology manager who's expecting her first child later this month, said "it goes without saying" that Trump is on her mind as she weighs next week's election.

"I'm ready for him to go," Ward said.

Four years ago, the Republican Dunnivant won this Senate district by almost 20 points. This year, she's facing a fierce challenge from Debra Rodman, a college professor who said in an interview this week that Democrats in Virginia's legislature represent a "firewall against the craziness in Washington."

"With Donald Trump in the White House, it's never been more important to vote in state election," says one of her campaign flyers.

Yet Rodman has difficult questions to answer about her political party as well.

Republicans in recent days have seized on Washington Democrats' push to impeach the president, hoping to cast Virginia's local elections as a referendum on impeachment.

"Stop the impeachment witch hunt," one GOP mailer says, with pictures of former presidential nominee Hillary Clinton, U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and House Intelligence Committee Chairman Rep. Adam

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 20 of 54

Schiff all wearing witch hats.

Rodman was reluctant to talk impeachment, but she took a firm position when pressed.

"Yeah, I do think he needs to be impeached," Rodman said with a sigh. "This is what our democracy is about, is having somebody who's going to represent the people, and right now I think we're in really tough times."

She also distanced herself from some national Democrats' call to adopt a government-backed "Medicare for All" health care system and sidestepped questions about banning assault weapons. On health care, she favors a so-called public option that would give Americans the choice to keep their private insurance. And on guns, she said her immediate focus was "low-hanging fruit" like universal background checks and "red flag" laws.

Dunnavant has sided with the Republican majority in the State House to block Democrats' push for such gun control measures. She opposes universal background checks, saying she doesn't have enough information to know if they would be effective.

"I would not say I'm an expert. I think I want input from subject matter experts to see how that's going to work," she said.

While some suburban moms may want more, the position is popular with the shrinking number of Trump loyalists in Dunnavant's suburban district.

Back on Ridgefield Green Way, 65-year-old conservative Richard Delafosse said one thing above all is important to him this election season: "Keeping America great."

Associated Press writer Josh Boak in Washington contributed to this report.

World Series champs Washington Nationals get their parade

By CAROLE FELDMAN and LYNN BERRY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Washington Nationals are getting a hero's welcome home from a city that had been thirsting for a World Series championship for nearly a century.

Tens of thousands of fans are expected for a parade Saturday honoring the Nationals, who won a nail-biting, come-from-behind victory against the Houston Astros in Game 7 to clinch the World Series.

"When they tell you dreams come true, point them toward our @Nationals," Mayor Muriel Bowser tweeted Thursday. "Tell them they do."

She included the hashtag SportsCapital, a reference, too, to the Washington Capitals' Stanley Cup championship in 2018 and the Washington Mystics' WNBA championship this year.

"For the first time in 95 years, the #WorldSeries champions are from Washington, DC," the Nationals tweeted after the Wednesday night win. Before the Nationals, the last Washington team to win a World Series was the Senators in 1924.

President Donald Trump has invited the Nationals to the White House on Monday, though relief pitcher Sean Doolittle doesn't plan to attend. "There's a lot of things, policies that I disagree with, but at the end of the day, it has more to do with the divisive rhetoric and the enabling of conspiracy theories and widening the divide in this country," Doolittle told The Washington Post.

The president attended Game 5 of the series in Washington and was greeted with loud boos when he was shown on the giant video screen during a tribute to veterans. They more than overwhelmed a scattering of cheers.

In a capital city divided by politics, race and economics, the Nats were something of a unifier — at least for the time being — as partisans and nonpartisans alike openly congratulated one another on their team's win. There were lines at the Post's downtown office Thursday as fans sought to buy a copy of the day's paper celebrating the win and a 12-page commemorative edition with a single-word headline blazoned across the top of the front page: CHAMPS!

Saturday's parade was beginning on Constitution Avenue and then merging onto Pennsylvania Avenue for a rally just a few blocks from the Capitol.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 21 of 54

When the Capitals won the Stanley Cup championship in 2018, it was estimated that hundreds of thousands of people lined the streets along the parade route to celebrate.

"Hey @Nationals - #WorldSeries Championship party at our house on Sunday night see you there," the Capitals tweeted Friday.

The NHL team planned to honor the Nationals in a pregame ceremony before taking the ice against the Calgary Flames.

Trump says Chad Wolf to be next acting DHS secretary

By JILL COLVIN and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Friday said Chad Wolf, a longtime Homeland Security official, would be the new acting head of the department, the fifth person in the job for this administration.

But Trump's casual announcement, made in response to a reporter's question outside the White House, temporarily created more uncertainty about who was in charge of the sprawling department.

There have been weeks of speculation over who would be named the next leader, and Kevin McAleenan, the current acting secretary, has agreed to stay on temporarily. The department initially wouldn't confirm Wolf was next in line, saying only that McAleenan was acting secretary.

When a reporter asked Trump directly whether Wolf was to be the next DHS secretary, the president responded, "He's acting, and we'll see what happens."

White House spokesman Hogan Gidley later clarified.

"As the president has said, Kevin McAleenan has done a tremendous job. He'll be leaving after Veterans' Day and after he departs, Chad Wolf will serve as acting secretary in the interim," Gidley told reporters.

The elevation of Wolf, who has served in Democratic and Republican administrations, is likely to disappoint immigration hardliners and perhaps Trump himself. The White House had been trying to work around rules that prevented Trump from promoting several political allies to at least temporarily run the agency that carries out U.S. immigration policies.

Wolf was chief of staff to former DHS Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen. He has been involved with the 240,000-person department off and on since its creation following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Wolf worked with Nielsen through many of the administration's most challenging immigration issues but left as her chief of staff to take on another role within Homeland Security before she resigned in April.

He was nominated earlier this year to a Senate-confirmed position as Under Secretary of the department's Office of Strategy, Policy and Plans. That nomination has not been yet confirmed.

He is described by some colleagues as a knowledgeable and widely respected member of the department who can carry on the president's agenda.

But he was not initially discussed as a successor.

For weeks, various factions have been looking for legal blocks and workarounds as they sparred over who was eligible to succeed McAleenan. Federal vacancy rules that place restrictions on the position had been thought to bar immigration hardliner Ken Cuccinelli, currently the acting head of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and Mark Morgan, the current acting commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, from taking the job.

But officials recently identified a "loophole" in which Trump could appoint otherwise ineligible individuals by first tapping them to lead the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office — a post that is vacant.

It's possible Wolf could take over temporarily while the work-around is put into place.

The massive department was initially envisioned as a cohesive counterterrorism operation. It includes the Coast Guard as well as disaster relief and election security. But in Trump's world, Homeland Security means one thing: immigration.

The president's signature issue has led Trump to focus on the department and balancing a White House eager to push major changes with the reality on the ground is a daunting and constant challenge. Plus, factions within the White House often cause friction on immigration, and this decision was no different.

Wolf's nomination was met with some pushback from hardliners who felt his policies aligned too closely with Nielsen's. But White House officials did not want to bump up too closely against the laws on who can lead and when, even though many of the department's leaders are not in permanent positions.

Associated Press writers Jonathan Lemire and Kevin Freking contributed to this report.

Baghdad building now a landmark in anti-government protests

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — The protesters stand by the thousands on the abandoned building's open floors, waving Iraqi flags and cheering. Some sit on the edge, feet dangling in the air from high floors as they sway to blasting music. They have a bird's-eye view of Baghdad — and the tens of thousands of demonstrators below.

At night, they wave the lights on their mobile phones at comrades on the ground. Then they move inside the building, dine together, play dominoes and sing patriotic songs until the early hours of the morning. They also are able to watch the security forces battling the protesters.

The 14-story, Saddam Hussein-era building on the Tigris River has emerged as a landmark in the anti-government protests gripping Iraq. The structure has been abandoned since 2003, when it was bombed by the U.S.-led forces in their invasion, but has now been taken over from security forces by demonstrators since Oct. 25. They have sworn not to leave it.

A one-time commercial center, the building was nicknamed the "Turkish Restaurant" because of a famous dining spot on the top floor that was a tourist attraction in the 1980s with panoramic views. Today it is called other names — the "Stalingrad Baghdad," the "Hanging Gardens" and "Jabal Uhud," a reference to a mountain north of Medina, Saudi Arabia, that was the site of a historic battle between Muslim and Meccan forces.

The building has clear views of Tahrir Square, nearby bridges and the Green Zone, home to government offices and Western embassies. That makes it a strategic location, and it was previously used by security forces and riot police, according to an Iraqi general.

"The protesters were very smart when they occupied it. They now can monitor the movements of security forces and it's difficult to get it back because of the crowds," said the general, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk about security measures.

The tower is routinely packed with young men and women, and has become the embodiment of the free spirit unleashed by unprecedented protests that began on Oct. 1 in Baghdad.

Spontaneous and leaderless, the demonstrations were organized on social media over long-standing grievances including government corruption, unemployment and a lack of basic services. They have quickly grown into the largest grassroots protest movement that Iraq has seen.

Ali Hashim, a 19-year-old former university student in a black T-shirt and holding an Iraqi flag, was hanging out with friends on the 12th floor of the building.

"I had to stop my studies because I don't have tuition fees. That's why I'm here," he said.

The protests are not directed by any political party. Instead, they take aim at the political establishment that came to power after the U.S. invasion, which many blame for Iraq's spiraling corruption and poor public services.

Authorities have responded with force, firing live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas at unarmed protesters from the first day. During a first round of demonstrations, gunmen and snipers shot at crowds from the building. A government inquiry found that security forces killed at least 149 protesters and injured over 5,000. It concluded that most of the dead were shot in the head and chest.

After a three-week pause, the rallies resumed Oct. 25, and so has the violence, with more than 100 slain. Far from deterring protesters, the crackdown appears to have energized them.

Tahrir Square, Baghdad's biggest and most central plaza on the eastern banks of the Tigris, has become the epicenter. Thousands have been camped out in the circle with its famous Freedom Monument and

palm trees in the middle. Volunteers ferry food and drinks to them. Students have joined the protests, and celebrities, artists and activists also mingle in the square, discussing the future.

Protesters have sought to cross the flashpoint Jumhuriyya and Sanak bridges to get to the heavily fortified Green Zone. They have failed every time as riot police stationed on the bridges confronted them with tear gas and stun grenades.

Inside the building, young Iraqis cheer, dance and take selfies. They hoist baskets of food, water and other supplies, including face masks to use against tear gas. A narrow staircase is crammed with people going up and down.

Cheering groups stand precariously close to the edge of the building's rooftop, some of them wearing yellow-colored goggles. Tear gas is frequently fired in their direction.

The building is decorated with posters of the dead, as well as giant red, white and black Iraqi flags and banners that stretch across several floors. One reads: "The building of the revolutionaries."

Women volunteer to clear away the rubbish left behind by the building's new inhabitants.

"Our presence here is also a revolution of women against the corrupt," said Ikhlas Saddam, a 42-year-old fashion designer and volunteer.

"We help the protesters by providing food and by cleaning. We support them despite all the tear gas from security forces," she said.

Many of the young men say they won't leave until their revolution is complete.

"I have been here since Oct. 25 and I haven't gone home since," said Hashim, the former student. "It is now my home."

Associated Press writer Zeina Karam in Beirut contributed.

Iran student leader says he regrets 1979 US Embassy attack

By **NASSER KARIMI** and **MOHAMMAD NASIRI** Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — His revolutionary fervor diminished by the years that have also turned his dark brown hair white, one of the Iranian student leaders of the 1979 U.S. Embassy takeover says he now regrets the seizure of the diplomatic compound and the 444-day hostage crisis that followed.

Speaking to The Associated Press ahead of Monday's 40th anniversary of the attack, Ebrahim Asgharzadeh acknowledged that the repercussions of the crisis still reverberate as tensions remain high between the U.S. and Iran over Tehran's collapsing nuclear deal with world powers.

Asgharzadeh cautioned others against following in his footsteps, despite the takeover becoming enshrined in hard-line mythology. He also disputed a revisionist history now being offered by supporters of Iran's Revolutionary Guard that they directed the attack, insisting all the blame rested with the Islamist students who let the crisis spin out of control.

"Like Jesus Christ, I bear all the sins on my shoulders," Asgharzadeh said.

At the time, what led to the 1979 takeover remained obscure to Americans who for months could only watch in horror as TV newscasts showed Iranian protests at the embassy. Popular anger against the U.S. was rooted in the 1953 CIA-engineered coup that toppled Iran's elected prime minister and cemented the power of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

The shah, dying from cancer, fled Iran in February 1979, paving the way for its Islamic Revolution. But for months, Iran faced widespread unrest ranging from separatist attacks, worker revolts and internal power struggles. Police reported for work but not for duty, allowing chaos like Marxist students briefly seizing the U.S. Embassy.

In this power vacuum, then-President Jimmy Carter allowed the shah to seek medical treatment in New York. That lit the fuse for the Nov. 4, 1979, takeover, though at first the Islamist students argued over which embassy to seize. A student leader named Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who later became president in 2005, argued they should seize the Soviet Embassy compound in Tehran as leftists had caused political chaos.

But the students settled on the U.S. Embassy, hoping to pressure Carter to send the shah back to Iran

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 24 of 54

to stand trial on corruption charges. Asgharzadeh, then a 23-year-old engineering student, remembers friends going to Tehran's Grand Bazaar to buy a bolt cutter, a popular tool used by criminals, and the salesman saying: "You do not look like thieves! You certainly want to open up the U.S. Embassy door with it!"

"The society was ready for it to happen. Everything happened so fast," Asgharzadeh said. "We cut off the chains on the embassy's gate. Some of us climbed up the walls and we occupied the embassy compound very fast."

Like other former students, Asgharzadeh said the plan had been simply to stage a sit-in. But the situation soon spun out of their control. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the long-exiled Shiite cleric whose return to Iran sparked the revolution, gave his support to the takeover. He would use that popular angler to expand the Islamists' power.

"We, the students, take responsibility for the first 48 hours of the takeover," Asgharzadeh said. "Later, it was out of our hands since the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and the establishment supported it."

He added: "Our plan was one of students, unprofessional and temporary."

As time went on, it slowly dawned on the naive students that Americans as a whole wouldn't join their revolution. While a rescue attempt by the U.S. military would fail and Carter would lose to Ronald Reagan amid the crisis, the U.S. as whole expressed worry about the hostages by displaying yellow ribbons and counting the days of their captivity.

As the months passed, things only got worse. Asgharzadeh said he thought it would end once the shah left America or later with his death in Egypt in July 1980. It didn't.

"A few months after the takeover, it appeared to be turning into a rotten fruit hanging down from a tree and no one had the courage to take it down and resolve the matter," he said. "There was a lot of public opinion support behind the move in the society. The society felt it had slapped America, a superpower, on the mouth and people believed that the takeover proved to America that their democratic revolution had been stabilized."

It hadn't, though. The eight-year Iran-Iraq War would break out during the crisis. The hostage crisis and later the war boosted the position of hard-liners who sought strict implementation of their version of Islamic beliefs.

Seizing or attacking diplomatic posts remains a tactic of Iranian hard-liners to this day. A mob stormed the British Embassy in Tehran in 2011, while another attacked diplomatic posts of Saudi Arabia in 2016, which led to diplomatic ties being cut between Tehran and Riyadh.

However, Asgharzadeh denied that Iran's then-nascent Revolutionary Guard directed the U.S. Embassy takeover, although he said it was informed before the attack over fears that security forces would storm the compound and retake it. Many at the time believed the shah would launch a coup, like in 1953, to regain power.

"In a very limited way, we informed one of the Guard's units and they accepted to protect the embassy from outside," Asgharzadeh said. "The claim (by hard-liners) on the Guard's role lacks credit. I am the main narrator of the incident and I am still alive."

In the years since, Asgharzadeh has become a reformist politician and served prison time for his views. He has argued that Iran should work toward improving ties with the U.S., a difficult task amid President Donald Trump's maximalist campaign against Tehran.

"It is too difficult to say when the relations between Tehran and Washington can be restored," Asgharzadeh said. "I do not see any prospect."

Associated Press writer Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, contributed.

Crews battle last stubborn Southern California wildfire

By JOHN ANTCZAK Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Crews fought a pitched battle against the last remaining large wildfire in Southern California as the stubborn flames threatened nearly 2,000 homes and other buildings.

The fire that erupted on a hilltop northwest of Los Angeles headed for what would be its third day Saturday and firefighters were finding it hard work as shifting winds made the front line a moving target.

The Maria Fire had burned some 15 square miles (38 square kilometers) and prompted evacuation orders for nearly 11,000 people since it began Thursday evening.

Eastern Ventura, Camarillo, Somis and Santa Paula were at risk, Ventura County fire officials said.

On Friday, a tug of war developed between onshore and offshore winds.

“It has been an uphill battle ever since,” Ventura County Fire Chief Mark Lorenzen said. “As winds shift, we have a whole new fuel bed open up.”

Winds and skin-cracking low humidity were expected to make Saturday another difficult day for firefighters.

Crews battled to keep the flames away from orchards and farms in the rural area. Three buildings were destroyed.

The cause was under investigation but there was a troubling possibility that an electrical line might have been involved — as such lines have been at other recent fires.

Southern California Edison said Friday that it re-energized a 16,000-volt power line 13 minutes before the fire erupted in the same area.

Edison and other utilities up and down the state shut off power to hundreds of thousands of people this week out of concerns that high winds could cause power lines to spark and start fires.

SCE will cooperate with investigators, the utility said.

The fire began during what had been expected to be the tail end of a siege of Santa Ana winds that fanned fires that destroyed buildings and prompted mass evacuations across the region.

The fires even caught the attention of teenage climate-change activist Greta Thunberg, who was visiting Los Angeles for a rally.

“It has been horrifying to see what is going on here and what happens here often and that it’s gotten worse because of the climate crisis,” she said.

Red flag weather warnings of extreme fire danger had been expected to expire Friday evening but forecasters extended them to 6 p.m. Saturday for valleys and interior mountains of Ventura and Los Angeles counties, citing the withering conditions.

In Northern California, more people were allowed to return to areas evacuated due to the huge Kincade Fire burning for days in the Sonoma County wine country.

The 121-square-mile (313-square-kilometer) fire was 70% contained, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said.

The tally of destroyed homes reached 174 and there were 35 more damaged, Cal Fire said. Many other structures also burned.

Historic, dry winds prompted the state’s largest utility, Pacific Gas & Electric Co., to initiate four rounds of widespread pre-emptive shut-offs in Northern California this month to prevent wildfires.

But the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District pegged the utility’s equipment as the cause of three smaller fires that cropped up Sunday in the San Francisco Bay Area suburbs of Martinez and Lafayette.

And while the cause of the Kincade Fire hasn’t been determined, PG&E reported a problem with a transmission tower near the spot where the fire started.

AP staff writer Janie Har in San Francisco and John Rogers in Los Angeles contributed to this story.

This story has been corrected to report that the Maria Fire is northwest of Los Angeles, not northeast.

Lacking magic of Senate run, O'Rourke drops presidential bid

By WILL WEISSERT and JULIE PACE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Beto O'Rourke, the former Texas congressman, announced Friday that he was ending his Democratic presidential campaign, which failed to recapture the enthusiasm, interest and fundraising prowess of his 2018 Senate bid.

Addressing supporters in Iowa, O'Rourke said he made the decision "reluctantly" and vowed to stay active in the fight to defeat President Donald Trump. "I will be part of this and so will you," he said.

O'Rourke was urged to run for president by many Democrats, including supporters of former President Barack Obama, who were energized by his narrow Senate loss last year in Texas, a reliably Republican state. He raised a record \$80 million from donors across the country, visited every county in Texas and used social media and livestreaming video to engage directly with voters. He ultimately lost to incumbent Republican Sen. Ted Cruz by 3 percentage points.

But O'Rourke, 47, struggled to replicate that model in the presidential primary, and both his polling and his fundraising dwindled significantly in recent months.

"We have to clearly see, at this point, that we did not have the means to pursue this campaign successfully and that my service will not be as a candidate, nor as a nominee of this party for the presidency," O'Rourke said.

O'Rourke's decision comes as the Democratic primary enters a critical stretch. With three months until the kickoff Iowa caucuses, polls consistently show a trio of candidates leading the way: former Vice President Joe Biden, Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, with Pete Buttigieg, the mayor of South Bend, Indiana, showing strength in Iowa, as well. Lower polling candidates face difficult questions about whether they have the money to sustain a campaign through the first primary contests.

Earlier this week, Kamala Harris, another candidate who entered the race to much fanfare, announced she was downscaling her campaign, laying off some staffers and reorienting almost exclusively to focus on Iowa.

O'Rourke entered the race as the feel-good, dynamic candidate who had the ability to appeal to both Republicans and Democrats and work across the aisle in Washington.

But he immediately faced criticism that he had a sense of entitlement, particularly after the release of a Vanity Fair interview on the eve of his campaign launch in which he appeared to say he was "born" to be in presidential politics.

After quickly pulling in \$9.4 million during his first two weeks in the race, O'Rourke's financial situation deteriorated. By the end of June, he was spending more than his campaign was taking in. By the end of September, he had just \$3.2 million cash on hand while spending double that over the previous three months, campaign finance records show.

Perhaps more significantly, the small-dollar contributions that fueled his Senate bid and the early days of his presidential campaign slowed to a \$1.9 million trickle.

The former congressman also struggled to articulate a consistent vision and messaging as a presidential candidate.

He spent several weeks trying to build his campaign around climate change, calling global warming the greatest existential threat the country had ever faced. But as the excitement over his candidacy began to fade, O'Rourke was forced to stage a "reintroduction" of his campaign to reinvigorate it. After a gunman opened fire at a Walmart in his hometown of El Paso, killing 22 people, O'Rourke more heavily embraced gun control, saying he would take assault weapons away from existing owners.

As O'Rourke's standing in the presidential primary plummeted, some Democrats urged him to return to Texas for another Senate run. He has repeatedly denied having any interest in that race.

O'Rourke's decision came hours before he was supposed to join other Democratic contenders at a party dinner in Iowa. Campaign volunteers were still collecting voter information and handing out "Beto" stickers outside the event amid a steady rain as the candidate announced he was dropping out.

O'Rourke did not endorse another Democrat for the nomination, saying the country will be well served by any of the other candidates, "and I'm going to be proud to support whoever that nominee is."

Trump quickly weighed in on O'Rourke's exit, saying in a tweet: "Oh no, Beto just dropped out of race for President despite him saying he was 'born for this.' I don't think so!"

Associated Press writer Brian Slodysko contributed to this report from Washington. Weissert reported from Des Moines, Iowa.

No arrests after California Halloween shooting kills 5

By **STEFANIE DAZIO** and **DAISY NGUYEN** Associated Press

ORINDA, Calif. (AP) — A woman who rented a San Francisco Bay Area home where five people were killed in a Halloween party shooting lied to the owner, saying she only wanted to keep family members away from the smoke of a wildfire, according to police and a person with knowledge of the transaction.

Witnesses described hearing gunfire and seeing chaos erupt as some 100 terrified partygoers fled the home Thursday night in Orinda, a quiet and wealthy suburb about 15 miles (24 kilometers) from San Francisco that has seen only two previous killings this century, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

No arrests had been made and there was no immediate word on a motive for the attack. Two guns were found at the property, authorities said.

Three people, all from the Bay Area, died at the scene and a fourth died at the hospital, authorities initially said. The Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office identified them Friday evening as 22-year-old Tiyon Farley of Antioch, 24-year-old Omar Taylor of Pittsburg, 23-year-old Ramon Hill Jr. and 29-year-old Javin County. The sheriff's office identified a fifth victim, 19-year-old Oshiana Tompkins of Vallejo and Hercules, late Friday night, saying she died at a local hospital.

Other people were wounded by gunshots or injured in the panic that followed, authorities said.

The party apparently was advertised on social media. One attendee said he was enjoying the music and watching people dance when he heard shots and people started running.

The screaming seemed to last forever, said Devan, who asked that his last name not be used because he feared for his safety.

"Everybody started running, scrambling," he said. "People were just collapsing and friends were helping friends. It was a scary situation and then as everyone is panicking and stuff, there were more shots."

Devan shot a video posted to Instagram that showed a wounded man on the ground and a police officer standing over him and a woman saying she needs to go to the hospital "because my hand's been blown off."

On Friday, police tape surrounded the block as people came to collect their cars and other belongings. One woman in tears told reporters the father of her child had been killed. She left before giving her name.

Romond Reynolds picked up the car of his son, 24-year-old Armani Reynolds, who he said was left comatose by the shooting.

"All I know is that he's a victim and was at the wrong place at the wrong time," Reynolds said.

The four-bedroom home had been rented on Airbnb by a woman who told the owner her dozen family members had asthma and needed to escape smoke from a wildfire, the person with knowledge of the transaction told The Associated Press. A fire burning in Sonoma County about 60 miles (97 kilometers) north of Orinda earlier in the week fouled the air over a wide area.

The owner was suspicious of a one-night rental on Halloween and before agreeing reminded the renter that no parties were allowed, said the person with knowledge of the transaction, who was not authorized to publicly disclose the information and spoke only on condition of anonymity.

The owner, Michael Wang, said his wife reached out to the renter Thursday night after neighbors contacted them about the party. The renter said there were only a dozen people at the home but Wang said he could see more people on video from his doorbell camera.

"We called the police. They were on the way to go there to stop them, but before we got there the neighbor already sent us a message saying there was a shooting," he told the Chronicle.

Neighbor Shahram Saki, 61, said in a phone interview that some fleeing partygoers hid in the bushes in

his front yard and others begged to be let into his home.

"They were screaming for help. I told them, 'You gotta get out of here,'" Saki said. "I was scared to death, anything could have happened."

Orinda city documents show officials issued violations in March for exceeding the home's maximum occupancy and illegal parking. City Manager Steve Salomon said the homeowner had resolved previous complaints lodged in February over occupancy and noise and in July over overflowing trash.

Orinda, with a population of about 20,000, requires short-term rental hosts to register with the city annually and pay an occupancy tax. The maximum occupancy is 13 people.

Airbnb is "urgently investigating" what happened, spokesman Ben Breit said in an email.

Airbnb has banned the renter from its platform and the home has been removed as a listing, he said.

Dazio reported from Los Angeles. Associated Press writers Janie Har in San Francisco and Brady McCombs in Salt Lake City contributed.

Migrants endure rape and torture on route through Yemen

By **MAGGIE MICHAEL** Associated Press

RAS AL-ARA, Yemen (AP) — Zahra struggled in the blue waters of the Gulf of Aden, grasping for the hands of fellow migrants. Hundreds of men, women and teenagers clambered out of a boat and through the surf, emerging, exhausted, on the shores of Yemen.

The 20-year-old Ethiopian saw men armed with automatic rifles waiting for them on the beach and she clenched in terror. She had heard migrants' stories of brutal traffickers, lurking like monsters in a nightmare. They are known by the Arabic nickname Abdul-Qawi — which means Worshipper of the Strong.

"What will they do to us?" Zahra thought.

This story is part of an occasional series, "Outsourcing Migrants," produced with the support of the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

She and 300 other Africans had just endured six hours crammed in a wooden smuggling boat to cross the narrow strait between the Red Sea and the gulf. When they landed, the traffickers loaded them into trucks and drove them to ramshackle compounds in the desert outside the coastal village of Ras al-Ara.

There was Zahra's answer. She was imprisoned for a month in a tin-roofed hut, broiling and hungry, ordered to call home each day to beseech her family to wire \$2,000. She said she did not have family to ask for money and pleaded for her freedom.

Instead, her captors raped her. And they raped the 20 other women with her — for weeks, different men all the time.

"They used each of the girls," she told The Associated Press. "Every night there was rape."

With its systematic torture, Ras al-Ara is a particular hell on the arduous, 900-mile (1,400 kilometer) journey from the Horn of Africa to oil-rich Saudi Arabia. Migrants leave home on sandaled feet with dreams of escaping poverty. They trek through mountains and deserts, sandstorms and 113-degree temperatures, surviving on crumbs of bread and salty water from ancient wells.

In Djibouti, long lines of migrants descend single file down mountain slopes to the rocky coastal plain, where many lay eyes on the sea for first time and eventually board the boats. Some find their way safely across war-torn Yemen to Saudi Arabia, only to be caught and tossed back over the border. The lucky ones make it into the kingdom to earn their livings as a servants and laborers.

But others are stranded in Yemen's nightmare — in some measure because Europe has been shutting its doors, outsourcing migrants to other countries.

The European Union began paying Libyan coast guards and militias to stop migrants there, blocking the other main route out of East Africa, through Libya and across the Mediterranean to Europe. The number of Mediterranean crossings plummeted — from 370,000 in 2016 to just over 56,000 so far this year.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 29 of 54

Meanwhile, more than 150,000 migrants landed in Yemen in 2018, a 50% increase from the year before, according to the International Organization for Migration.

This year, more than 107,000 had arrived by the end of September, along with perhaps tens of thousands more the organization was unable to track — or who were buried in graves along the trail.

And European policies may be making the Yemen route more dangerous. Funded by the EU, Ethiopia has cracked down on migrant smugglers and intensified border controls. Arrests of known brokers have prompted migrants to turn to unreliable traffickers, taking more dangerous paths and increasing the risk of abuses.

Many of those migrants end up in Ras al-Ara.

Nearly every migrant who lands here is imprisoned in hidden compounds while their families are shaken down for money. Like Zahra, they are subjected to daily torments ranging from beatings and rapes to starvation, their screams drowned out by the noise of generators or cars or simply lost in the desert.

"Out of every thousand, 800 disappear in the lockups," said a humanitarian worker monitoring the flow of migrants.

Traffickers who torture are a mix of Yemenis and Ethiopians of different ethnic groups. So victims cannot appeal to tribal loyalties, they are tortured by men from other groups: If the migrants are Oromia, the torturers are Tigrinya.

At the same time, because the three main ethnic groups don't speak each others' languages, Yemeni smugglers need translators to convey orders to the migrants and monitor their phone conversations with their families.

The AP spoke to more than two dozen Ethiopians who survived torture at Ras al-Ara. Nearly all of them reported witnessing deaths, and one man died of starvation hours after the AP saw him.

The imprisonment and torture are largely ignored by Yemeni authorities. The AP saw trucks full of migrants passing unhindered through military checkpoints as they went from the beaches to drop their human cargo at each desert compound, known in Arabic as a "hosh."

"The traffickers move freely, in public, giving bribes at the checkpoints," said Mohammed Said, a former coast guard officer who now runs a gas station in the center of town.

From Ras al-Ara, it's nearly 50 miles in any direction to the next town. Around 8,000 families live in a collection of decaying, one-story stone houses beside dirt roads, a lone hotel and two eateries. The fish market is the center of activity when the daily catch is brought in.

Nearly the entire population profits from the human trade. Some rent land to traffickers for the holding cells, or work as guards, drivers or translators. For others, traffickers flush with cash are a lucrative market for their food, fuel or the mildly stimulant leaves of qat, which Yemenis and Ethiopians chew daily.

Locals can rattle off the traffickers' names. One of them, a Yemeni named Mohammed al-Usili, runs more than 20 hosh. He's famous for the red Nissan SUV he drives through town.

Others belong to Sabaha, one of the biggest tribes in southern Yemen, some of whom are famous for their involvement in illicit businesses. Yemenis call the Sabaha "bandits" who have no political loyalties to any of the warring parties.

Many traffickers speak openly of their activities, but deny they torture, blaming others.

Yemeni smuggler Ali Hawash was a farmer who went into the human smuggling business a year ago. He disparaged smugglers who prey on poor migrants, torturing them and holding them hostage until relatives pay ransom.

"I thought we need to have a different way," he said, "I will help you go to Saudi, you just pay the transit and the transportation. Deal."

The flow of migrants to the beach is unending. On a single day, July 24, the AP witnessed seven boats pull into Ras al-Ara, one after the other, starting at 3 a.m., each carrying more than 100 people.

The migrants climbed out of the boats into the turquoise water. One young man collapsed on the beach, his feet swollen. A woman stepped on something sharp in the water and fell screeching in pain. Others washed their clothes in the waves to get out the vomit, urine and feces from the rugged journey.

The migrants were lined up and loaded onto trucks. They gripped the iron bars in the truck bed as they

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 30 of 54

were driven along the highway. At each compound, the truck unloaded a group of migrants, like a school bus dropping off students. The migrants disappeared inside.

From time to time, Ethiopians escape their imprisonment or are released and stagger out of the desert into town. Eman Idrees, 27, and her husband were held for eight months by an Ethiopian smuggler. She recalled the savage beatings they endured, which left a scar on her shoulder; the smuggler received \$700 to take her to Saudi Arabia, but wouldn't let her go, because "he wanted me."

Said, the gas station owner, is horrified by the evidence of torture he has seen, so he has made his station and a nearby mosque into a refuge for migrants. But locals say Said, too, profits from the trafficking, selling fuel for the smugglers' boats and trucks. But that means the traffickers need him and leave him alone.

On a day when the AP team was visiting, several young men just out of a compound arrived at the gas station. They showed deep gashes in their arms from ropes that had bound them. One who had bruises from being lashed with a cable said the women imprisoned with him were all raped and that three men had died.

Another, Ibrahim Hassan, trembled as he showed how he was tied up in a ball, arms behind his back, knees bound against his chest. The 24-year-old said he was bound like that for 11 days and frequently beaten. His torturer, he said, was a fellow Ethiopian but from a rival ethnic group, Tigray, while he is Oromo.

Hassan said he was freed after his father went door to door in their hometown to borrow money and gather the \$2,600 that the smugglers demanded.

"My family is extremely poor," Hassan said, breaking down in tears. "My father is a farmer and I have five siblings."

Starvation is another punishment used by the traffickers to wear down their victims.

At Ras al-Ara hospital, four men who looked like living skeletons sat on the floor, picking rice from a bowl with their thin fingers. Their bones protruded from their backs, their rib cages stood out sharply. With no fat on their bodies, they sat on rolled-up cloth because it was too painful to sit directly on bone. They had been imprisoned by traffickers for months, fed once a day with scraps of bread and a sip of water, they said.

One of them, 23-year-old Abdu Yassin, said he had agreed with smugglers in Ethiopia to pay around \$600 for the trip through Yemen to the Saudi border. But when he landed at Ras al-Ara, he was brought to a compound with 71 others, and the traffickers demanded \$1,600.

He cried as he described how he was held for five months and beaten constantly in different positions. He showed the marks from lashings on his back, the scars on his legs where they pressed hot steel into his skin. His finger was crooked after they smashed it with a rock, he said. One day, they tied his legs and dangled him upside down, "like a slaughtered sheep."

But the worst was starvation.

"From hunger, my knees can't carry my body," he said. "I haven't changed my clothes for six months. I haven't washed. I have nothing."

Near the four men, another emaciated man lay on a gurney, his stomach concave, his eyes open but unseeing. Nurses gave him fluids but he died several hours later.

The torment that leaves the young men and women physically and mentally shattered also leaves them stranded.

Zahra said she traveled to Yemen "because I wanted to change my life."

She came from a broken home. She was a child when her parents divorced. Her mother disappeared, and her father — an engineer — remarried and wanted little to do with Zahra or her sisters. Zahra dropped out of school after the third grade. She worked for years in Djibouti as a servant, sending most of her earnings to her youngest sister back in Ethiopia.

Unable to save any money, she decided to try her luck elsewhere.

She spoke in a quiet voice as she described the torments she suffered at the compound.

"I couldn't sleep at all throughout these days," as she suffered from headaches, she said.

She and the other women were locked in three rooms of the hut, sleeping on the dirt floor, suffocating in the summer heat. They were constantly famished. Zahra suffered from rashes, diarrhea and vomiting.

One group tried to flee when they were allowed to wash at a well outside. The traffickers used dogs to

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 31 of 54

hunt them down, brought them back and beat them.

"You can't imagine," Zahra said. "We could hear the screams." After that, they could only wash at gunpoint.

Finally, early one morning, their captors opened the gates and told Zahra and some of the other women to leave. Apparently, the traffickers gave up on getting money out of them and wanted to make room for others.

Now Zahra lives in Basateen, a slum on the outskirts of southern Yemen's main city, Aden, where she shares a room with three other women who also were tortured. .

Among them is a 17-year-old who fidgets with her hands and avoiding eye contact. She said she had been raped more times than she can count.

The first time was during the boat crossing from Djibouti, where she was packed in with more than 150 other migrants. Fearing the smugglers, no one dared raise a word of protest as the captain and his crew raped her and the other nine women on board during the eight-hour journey.

"I am speechless about what happened in the boat," the 17-year-old said.

Upon landing, she and the others were taken to a compound, where again she was raped — every day for the next two weeks.

"We lived 15 days in pain," she said.

Zahra said she's worried she could be pregnant, and the 17-year old said she has pains in her abdomen and back she believes were caused by the rapes — but neither has money to go to a doctor.

Nor do they have money to continue their travels.

"I have nothing but the clothes on me," the 17-year old said. She lost everything, including her only photos of her family.

Now, she is too afraid to even leave her room in Basateen.

"If we get out of here," she said, "we don't know what would happen to us."

Basateen is filled with migrants living in squalid shacks. Some work, trying to earn enough to continue their journey.

Others, like Abdul-Rahman Taha, languish without hope.

The son of a dirt-poor farmer, Taha had heard stories of Ethiopians returning from Saudi Arabia with enough money to buy a car or build a house. So he sneaked away from home and began walking. When he reached Djibouti, he called home asking for \$400 for smugglers to arrange his trip across Yemen. His father was angry but sold a bull and some goats and sent the money.

When Taha landed at Ras al-Ara, traffickers took him and 50 other migrants to a holding cell, lined them up and demanded phone numbers. Taha couldn't ask his father for more money so he told them he didn't have a number. Over the next days and weeks, he was beaten and left without food and water.

One night, he gave them a wrong number. The traffickers flew into a rage. One, a beefy, bearded Yemeni, beat Taha's right leg to a bloody pulp with a steel rod. Taha passed out.

When he opened his eyes, he saw the sky. He was outdoors, lying on the ground. The traffickers had dumped him and three other migrants in the desert. Taha tried to jostle the others, but they didn't move — they were dead.

A passing driver took him to a hospital. There, his leg was amputated.

Now 17, Taha is stranded. His father died in a car crash a few months ago, leaving Taha's sister and four younger brothers to fend for themselves back home.

Taha choked back tears. In one of their phone calls, he remembered, his father had asked him: "Why did you leave?"

"Without work or money," Taha told him, "life is unbearable."

And so it is still.

Analysis: In hyperpartisan era, Trump's GOP support is solid

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The more concrete the testimony in the impeachment inquiry, the more solidly Republicans are sticking with President Donald Trump.

Witness after witness in closed-door House hearings is corroborating the core facts that Democrats say make a strong case against the president.

Trump pressured Ukraine, an American ally, for an investigation of Joe Biden, his family and the Democrats. At the same time, the Trump administration withheld military assistance for the young democracy as it confronted Russian aggression.

For Democrats, it adds up to a nothing short of a brazen abuse of power, a quid pro quo, swapping U.S. foreign policy and funds for personal political gain.

"I don't think there is any justifying this president's misconduct," Rep. Adam Schiff, the chairman of the Intelligence Committee leading the inquiry said in an interview.

Republicans are having none of it. Trump says it's all just a "witch hunt," and his supporters agree.

"The American people see this for what it is," said Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio, the top Republican on the Oversight committee that's part of the inquiry. "We see it just like the American people do, and we know — we just know — it's wrong."

While that investigation unfolds in the basement of the Capitol, another version plays out upstairs for the public.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi gavelled a vote this week to formalize the impeachment inquiry, and the roll call split along predictable party lines.

Not a single Republican joined Democrats to agree to investigate. Among the Democrats, all but two stuck together to support the inquiry.

In previous modern-era impeachment proceedings, at least some lawmakers crossed party lines to initially provide bipartisan support for the probes of Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton.

But times are different now. The polarizing of the country plays out in almost all aspects of political life. Impeachment proceedings, so far, are only reflecting that divide, in Congress as in the country at large.

More Americans approve than disapprove of the impeachment inquiry, 47% to 38%, according to a new poll by The Associated Press and the NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. But it all depends on whom you ask.

The vast majority of Democrats approve of the inquiry, 68% of them strongly. Most Republicans disapprove, 67% strongly.

Neither Trump nor Republicans in Congress dispute the White House's rough transcript of Trump's July phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy. They say it proves the president did nothing wrong.

Standing before a portrait of George Washington after the House vote, the GOP leader, Kevin McCarthy of California, quoted Pelosi from earlier this year saying impeachment was "so divisive for the country" she'd rather not pursue it unless it was completely necessary.

"What has changed?" McCarthy asked. "In all the hearings there's nothing compelling, nothing overwhelming." He said it's a "sham that has been putting the country through this nightmare."

Pelosi, in an interview Friday with Bloomberg News, said it was the phone call between Trump and the Ukrainian president that "changed everything in the public mind."

Pelosi launched the impeachment inquiry after a government whistleblower recounted that Trump in the call asked Zelenskiy for "a favor."

Trump insists the conversation was "perfect."

Julian Zelizer, a professor at Princeton University, said partisanship is greater than it was during Watergate and "the loyalty to party even greater."

Thus, there isn't likely to be any group of Republican lawmakers heading to the White House to tell the president it's over, as happened during the impeachment proceedings against Nixon. No march of Republicans to say that support for Trump has dwindled and they can no longer protect him.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 33 of 54

As for this week's solid House support, Schiff said, "I think it's a vote they will come to regret over time." "And I think when their children and grandchildren ask what they did to stand up to this unethical president ... they will have a hard time explaining why they chose to defend him."

It's specifically illegal to seek or receive foreign assistance in U.S. elections. But the framers of the Constitution drafted the impeachment clause more broadly, capturing all level of "high crimes and misdemeanors" that could be committed in the White House.

While the first president, Washington, was seen as a leader beyond reproach, the founders knew not all who followed might be.

There could be those who sought to use the office for personal financial gain or to rule the country more like the monarchy the founders were leaving than the democracy the U.S. was becoming. And so they tucked in the impeachment provision as part of the simple, but powerful, system of checks and balances among the three branches of government.

The system depends on an agreement not only of the facts but of what the facts mean.

Zelizer, who favors impeachment, says that back in 1974, "nobody would have expected Republicans" to go to the White House as they did to pressure Nixon to resign.

But once the evidence spilled out about what Nixon said in his taped recordings, the situation became indefensible for Republicans. It's hard not to wonder if that would ever happen again.

So far in this era of intense partisanship, Republicans are rock solid in supporting Trump. House investigators are now preparing to push the impeachment hearings into the open.

Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick and Hannah Fingerhut contributed to this story.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Lisa Mascaro has covered Congress since 2010.

Halloween terror: 4 killed at Northern California party

By **STEFANIE DAZIO** and **DAISY NGUYEN** Associated Press

ORINDA, Calif. (AP) — Four people were killed and at least four injured at a Halloween party shooting at a Northern California home rented by a woman who falsely claimed she wanted the Airbnb so her asthmatic family members could escape wildfire smoke, police and a person with knowledge of the transaction said Friday.

Gunshots were reported at about 10:45 p.m. Thursday at the large home in the wealthy San Francisco suburb of Orinda where more than 100 people had gathered, police said. The home, surrounded by trees and up a steep driveway, had been rented on Airbnb by a woman who told the owner her dozen family members needed a location with fresh air, the person with knowledge of the transaction told The Associated Press.

Three people, all from the Bay Area, died at the scene and a fourth died at the hospital, authorities said. The Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office identified them Friday evening as 22-year-old Tiyon Farley of Antioch, 24-year-old Omar Taylor of Pittsburg, 23-year-old Ramon Hill Jr. and 29-year-old Javin County.

Other people were wounded by gunshots or injured in the panic that followed, authorities said.

A one-night rental on Halloween was suspicious enough that before agreeing to rent the home the owner reminded the renter that no parties were allowed, said the person, who was not authorized to publicly disclose the information and spoke only on condition of anonymity.

The renter, whose name and hometown have not been disclosed, told the homeowner that her family members had asthma and needed a place to escape the smoky air. A giant wildfire burning in Sonoma County about 60 miles (97 kilometers) north of Orinda earlier in the week forced tens of thousands to evacuate and fouled the air over a wide area.

Michael Wang, who owns the 4,000-square-foot (372-square-meter), four-bedroom house, said his wife reached out to the renter Thursday night after neighbors contacted them about the party. The renter said there were only a dozen people at the home. However, Wang said he could see more people on video

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 34 of 54

from his doorbell camera.

"We called the police. They were on the way to go there to stop them, but before we got there the neighbor already sent us a message saying there was a shooting," he told the San Francisco Chronicle in a phone interview. "When we arrived there, the police were already there."

Two guns were found at the scene.

Though no suspect was identified or arrested, Orinda Police Chief David Cook said at a news conference there is no ongoing threat to the public.

"We don't have any reason to believe that they stayed in the area," Cook said. "We don't have any reason to believe that they were from Orinda."

Cook did not address a possible motive or whether more than one person was involved in the shooting that made people run out of the house in terror.

The party apparently was advertised on social media and one attendee said he was inside the main floor, enjoying the music and watching people dance, when he heard shots and people started running. The screaming seemed to last forever, said Devan, who asked that his last name not be used because he feared for his safety.

"Everybody started running, scrambling," he said. "People were just collapsing and friends were helping friends. It was a scary situation and then as everyone is panicking and stuff, there were more shots."

Devan shot a video posted to Instagram that showed a wounded man on the ground and a police officer standing over him and a woman saying she needs to go to the hospital "because my hand's been blown off." At one point, the camera is pointed at the house and a woman off camera is heard asking if someone is hurt. Shots then ring out from inside the home and people outside run.

Another Halloween party, in a rural area east of Salt Lake City, also ended in violence and left two men dead. A 22-year-old man was fatally stabbed and a 23-year-old man was shot to death at the party near the town of Roosevelt where about 20 people were drinking, said Duchesne County Sheriff Travis Tucker. Police had no motive and had made no arrests.

In Chicago, a 7-year-old girl out trick-or-treating in a bumblebee costume was shot in the neck by someone firing from across the street at a gang member. A juvenile identified as a person of interest in the shooting was taken into custody Friday. The girl was in critical but stable condition Friday.

In Orinda on Friday, police tape surrounded the block where the house is located as people came to collect their cars and other belongings. One woman in tears told reporters the father of her child had been killed. She left before giving her name.

Romond Reynolds picked up the car of his son, 24-year-old Armani Reynolds, who he said was left comatose by the shooting.

"All I know is that he's a victim and was at the wrong place at the wrong time," Reynolds said, adding his son apparently learned about the party on the internet.

Reynolds said he received a call at about 11 p.m. saying someone had driven his son to the hospital.

Neighbor Shahram Saki, 61, said in a phone interview he heard loud music and then the sound of shots. When he opened his door, he saw dozens of people run out of the house and some hid in the bushes in his front yard. Others begged to go into his house.

"They were screaming for help. I told them, 'You gotta get out of here,'" Saki said. "I was scared to death, anything could have happened."

Saki said he signed a petition about a year ago to complain about renters at the home, who he said often parked their vehicles along the street and sometimes blocked his driveway.

Orinda city documents show officials issued violations in March for exceeding the home's maximum occupancy and illegal parking. City Manager Steve Salomon said the homeowner had resolved previous complaints lodged in February over occupancy and noise and in July over overflowing trash.

Orinda, with a population of about 20,000, requires short-term rental hosts to register with the city annually and pay an occupancy tax. The maximum occupancy is two people per bedroom plus three people not assigned to bedrooms.

Salomon said the property was registered with the city as a short-term rental with a maximum occu-

pancy of 13 people.

Airbnb is "urgently investigating" what happened, spokesman Ben Breit said in an email. Airbnb has banned the renter from its platform and the home has been removed as a listing, he said.

The home's Airbnb ad included prohibitions on smoking, marijuana use, weapons and parties, Breit added. The listing also said that quiet hours must be observed between 10 p.m. and 8 a.m. because neighboring homes are close.

The home last sold for \$1.2 million in 2017 and rents for about \$420 per night.

Dazio reported from Los Angeles. Associated Press writers Janie Har in San Francisco and Brady McCombs in Salt Lake City contributed.

Juvenile charged with shooting Chicago trick-or-treater, 7

By DON BABWIN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — A 15-year-old boy was charged Friday night with attempted murder in the suspected gang-related shooting of two people on Chicago's West Side, including a 7-year-old girl out trick-or-treating in a bumblebee costume when she was shot in the neck and critically injured.

The shooting Thursday night was another grim example of children in the city being caught in the cross-fire while doing normal activities like walking down the street, sitting on a porch or laughing with friends inside a house. A day before Halloween, an earlier shooting of a child resurfaced in the news when a jury acquitted a man who was charged with first-degree murder in the 2014 death of an 11-year-old girl who was shot while inside a house at a slumber party.

Investigators think the 7-year-old girl was shot in a gang-related attack. The man believed to be the target was a 30-year-old shot in the hand, police spokesman Anthony Guglielmi said.

The 15-year-old was charged with two counts of attempted murder and two counts of battery through discharge of a firearm, police said in a news release Friday night. He was taken into custody and interviewed earlier Friday.

The Chicago Tribune reported police believe the gunman is a member of the Gangster Two-Six gang and was targeting a member of the Latin Kings.

The girl was trick-or-treating as a group of males chased a man down the street in the Little Village neighborhood. Someone in the group opened fire, police said.

"This is unacceptable," Sgt. Rocco Alioto said. "A 7-year-old girl that was trick-or-treating with her family had to get shot because a group of guys want to shoot at another male."

The shooter had on a mask like the one the character Jason wears in the "Friday the 13th" movies, Guglielmi said, adding that investigators had found a gun that might be the weapon used in the shooting.

The girl was shot in the lower neck and rushed to a hospital in critical condition, according to Fire Department spokesman Larry Langford. She was in critical but stable condition Friday, Guglielmi said.

The wounded man, who was shot in his left hand, was taken to a hospital in good condition.

The shooting came on a night where children typically crowd the streets. But in Chicago, because of snowy weather, the number of children trick-or-treating was smaller than normal.

The girl was one of several people shot in U.S. cities during Halloween night activities. In the San Francisco Bay area community of Orinda, California, police said four people were killed in a shooting at a party. And in the eastern Utah community of Roosevelt, one man was fatally shot and a second man was stabbed to death at a party.

Investigators in the Chicago shooting received several tips from the public in the hours after the gunfire, and police recovered surveillance video that detectives believe shows people involved in the shooting or people who know those who were involved.

Trump may face fight over planned move from NYC to Florida

By **BERNARD CONDON** and **JONATHAN LEMIRE** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Donald Trump a Florida man? Not so fast.

Despite a stinging “good riddance” tweet from New York’s governor, the president’s home state may not let him go to Florida without a fight.

Trump’s plan to shift his permanent residence to Palm Beach will likely be heavily scrutinized by New York state officials, who are notorious for auditing wealthy residents seeking to flee to lower-tax states to make sure such moves are real and not just on paper. Those cases can go on for years.

“New York says just because you fill out a piece of paper, that doesn’t make you a Floridian,” said Mark Klein, a tax lawyer who has handled hundreds of tax-residency audits. “People have this misunderstanding that if you go to Florida and fill out an affidavit, you register to vote and you get a driver’s license, that is all it takes.”

Even though it appears Trump has a strong case — he’s only spent a few nights at his Trump Tower penthouse overlooking Fifth Avenue since he became president — tax experts say it’s not a matter of if he will be audited but when.

“It’s 100 percent he’ll get audited,” predicted Barry Horowitz, a tax accountant who has handled many change-of-residency cases. “There’ll be a fight.”

The general rule for avoiding New York taxes is to spend less than 184 days of the year in the state, but that’s just the beginning. Auditors and judges could look at where his business is headquartered (also in Trump Tower), the size of his various homes, where he displays his family photos and his most valuable artwork, even where he gets his teeth cleaned.

In announcing his move in a tweet late Thursday, Trump said New York City “will always have a special place in my heart!” But despite paying “millions of dollars in city, state and local taxes each year,” he complained, he had been “treated very badly by the political leaders of both the city and state.”

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo quickly tweeted: “Good riddance. It’s not like @realDonaldTrump paid taxes here anyway...”

And then New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio chimed in, tweeting, “Don’t let the door hit you on the way out” and “Deepest condolences to the good people of Florida.”

Trump responded later Friday with a four-part tweet that blasted both Cuomo (“the brother of Fredo”) and de Blasio, saying, “I love New York, but New York can never be great again under the current leadership.”

In New York, Trump is paying a top marginal tax rate to the city and state that adds up to 12.7 percent. And because of Trump’s own tax overhaul two years ago, he can no longer deduct most of those state and local taxes on his federal return.

In Florida, Trump would pay zero income taxes and zero estate taxes.

Trump is following a well-trod path of many other septuagenarian New Yorkers who have been drawn to Florida’s year-round warmth, sunshine and low taxes. Last year alone, 63,000 New Yorkers became Florida residents.

“I think the governor of New York should take a look at his economic policies and what is happening there,” said Kellyanne Conway, a counselor to the president. “The president is doing what many taxpayers have done and property owners have done, and that is to go to a state that is more hospitable to hard-working Americans.”

For Trump, his planned move to Florida could mark the end of an era. The glittering Manhattan skyline has always been part of Trump’s brand, interwoven with his brash, boastful, in-your-face style. Trump Tower, his gleaming high-rise home for decades, became a character in his 2016 presidential campaign, the site of his famous escalator ride to launch his bid and dozens of headline-grabbing events and news conferences.

But soon after Trump took office, few people around him thought it would remain his home, mostly because of the hostile reception he’s gotten there. Upset with its Democratic leaders and the protests, Trump has privately raged against the city, according to three Republicans close to the White House not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 37 of 54

New York City's elite never fully accepted the brash, tabloid-friendly, Queens-born businessman. And it got worse after he embraced right-wing politics, particularly on immigration. The deeply diverse and Democratic city turned on him, and he only received 10 percent of the vote in Manhattan.

When the president-elect ran his presidential transition out of the Tower, aides actively explored scenarios in which Trump would return to New York most weekends. But as demonstrators clogged midtown streets, Trump, who is loath to face protesters, began to back away from the idea.

Since taking office, New York's attorney general has announced investigations into the Trump Organization, and the state Legislature has moved to obtain his tax returns, efforts that likely will not be affected by his planned move to Florida.

"If people could escape New York charges simply by moving to Florida, there would be a lot of criminals walking around Miami Beach right now," said Duncan Levin, a New York City lawyer specializing in money laundering and fraud cases.

Trump returns to New York City on Saturday to cheer on a mixed martial arts fight. As if on cue, protests are already scheduled to pass in front of Trump Tower.

Lemire reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Michael R. Sisak in New York and Zeke Miller and Deb Riechmann in Washington also contributed to this report.

Storms kill 2, knock out power, down trees on East Coast

By WILSON RING Associated Press

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — Storms that began on Halloween killed at least two people, caused flooding, downed trees and power lines and damaged homes across the Northeast on Friday.

By Friday afternoon, the number of people without power in the Northeast was starting to creep down, but still more than 450,000 customers were without electricity. In some areas it could be days before all power is restored.

A man who was injured when a tree fell on his van later died, Tennessee officials said Friday. In New York, Thomas Connery, an 82-year-old Catholic priest from Glenville, died Thursday night after he got out of his car on a flooded road and was swept away, authorities said.

In a New York City suburb, a 9-year-old girl was injured on Halloween when she was hit by a falling tree while trick or treating. Another person was injured when a tornado touched down in Pennsylvania.

A tornado with winds of 111 to 135 miles per hour (180 to 220 kilometers per hour) tore through Glen Mills, a Delaware County suburb of Philadelphia, the National Weather Service confirmed. Local officials say that at least two dozen homes were damaged and one person was injured. Investigators are still evaluating whether tornadoes touched down elsewhere in the state.

By mid-afternoon Friday almost 75,000 homes and businesses were without electricity across Pennsylvania. In the western part of the state, storms caused flooding, mudslides and road closures. High winds Friday morning caused a car fire to spread to other vehicles in a hotel parking lot in Harmar Township, leaving six cars damaged, officials said.

WPXI-TV in Pittsburgh posted a video of a small school bus driving through floodwaters Thursday after a line of heavy rain came through a suburban neighborhood. The video showed water reaching above the headlights and near the hood of the bus, which the school district said was carrying students. The bus company told the station the driver was fired as a result. A message seeking comment was left with the bus company, ABC Transit.

Almost 147,000 customers were without power in New York state after a night of heavy rain and wind gusts of up to 70 mph (110 kph).

Gov. Andrew Cuomo told Spectrum News on Friday that several hundred people were evacuated in scattered areas around the state because of high waters. In the central New York village of Dolgeville, police used a boat to rescue people from a home. The Buffalo area, meanwhile, saw flash flooding after 4 to 5 inches (10 to 13 centimeters) of rain.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 38 of 54

In the Adirondacks, a state of emergency was declared in Essex County. Early voting for next week's elections was called off Friday in some communities, small bridges were closed because of rising water, and many schools canceled classes.

The weather also led to the cancellation of the opening session of the luge national championships at Mount Van Hoevenberg in Lake Placid. USA Luge said Saturday's races were on schedule.

National Weather Service Meteorologist Conor Lahiff in Burlington, Vermont, said the amount of rainfall in some parts of northeastern New York and northern Vermont was almost double what had been forecast.

"We knew there would be rivers to come up because we had saturated soils," said Lahiff.

Electric utilities across the Northeast were busy restoring service to hundreds of thousands of customers who lost power in the storm.

The Maine Emergency Management Agency warned that some residents will likely be in the dark into the weekend following winds that topped 70 mph (110 kph) in the coastal town of Castine.

The howling wind downed trees, damaged homes and temporarily shut down the only two roads of Castine.

Will Cosgrove, an owner of The Manor Inn, said the wind knocked over a sign, ripped away shingles and rearranged outdoor furniture. The building shook and windows rattled.

"It was kind of 'knock-you-over wind.' It rattled the bones of the building," he said of the building constructed in 1893. "It whistled and rattled all night long."

The state's largest utility, Central Maine Power, is getting help from crews for other utilities, including some in Canada, and is trying to line up even more help, but is struggling because there's damage all over the region.

In Orono, Maine, the state's flagship university was again without power after coping with major outages during the October storm. The University of Maine announced on Friday morning that it was closed, and classes were canceled until 5 p.m.

Associated Press writers Shawn Marsh in Trenton, New Jersey; David Sharp and Patrick Whittle in Portland, Maine; Becky Yonker in Louisville, Kentucky; and Maryclaire Dale in Philadelphia contributed to this report.

Governor threatens possible PG&E takeover if no plan is made

By ADAM BEAM Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California's governor on Friday threatened a possible takeover of the troubled utility blamed for sparking deadly wildfires across the state with its outdated equipment unless it can emerge from bankruptcy ahead of next year's wildfire season with a plan focused on safety.

Gov. Gavin Newsom called all sides to a meeting early next week, saying he would personally try to mediate a solution involving Pacific Gas & Electric.

But if an agreement can't be reached, Newsom said, "then the state will prepare itself as backup for a scenario where we do that job for them."

PG&E has come under more scrutiny in recent weeks as it cut off power to millions of people to avoid a repeat of last year's deadly fire season.

The shutoffs have angered residents, businesses and local governments, who say the company has done a poor job of communicating.

"This is not the new normal," Newsom said. "There are things that can be done immediately and will be done immediately."

It's unclear how the state could take over PG&E in the event it does not meet the June 30th deadline. But the governor's office pointed to General Motors as an example. The automaker filed for bankruptcy in 2009, and the federal government purchased a controlling stake in the company. The government later sold its shares once the company was on solid footing.

"That kind of a move would give the state a lot of control over the strategic direction that PG&E takes without getting it into the nitty gritty of running the day to day," said Michael Wara, director of the Climate

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 39 of 54

and Energy Policy Program at the Woods Institute for the Environment at Stanford University.

Local governments, including San Francisco, have offered to purchase portions of PG&E's equipment for \$2.5 billion so it could operate parts of the power system on its own. Asked if taxpayers would buy the company, Newsom said: "We're scoping all of that."

"It's not writing a check," Newsom said. "This is not plan 'A,' but it is a plan. We would be irresponsible not to scope that plan. So we're not going to sit back and hope and hope an expectation that everything else works out."

Pacific Gas & Electric filed for bankruptcy earlier this year after a 2018 wildfire mostly destroyed the town of Paradise and killed 85 people. An investigation revealed the fire was started by one of the company's powerlines that was knocked down during a windstorm.

The utility is facing up to \$30 billion in damages from that fire and others.

Shareholders and creditors have been battling for control of the utility in bankruptcy court, offering two competing plans for the company's future.

A federal judge has expressed concern the two sides are not making progress, and last week appointed a mediator to try and resolve the case.

In June, Newsom signed a law setting up a \$21 billion fund that could help utility companies pay out claims for future wildfires as climate change makes them more frequent and destructive.

Utility companies would have to spend at least \$5 billion on safety improvements and meet new safety standards to participate. PG&E would have to be out of bankruptcy by June 30th to use the fund.

Friday, Newsom called on PG&E executives, shareholders and creditors along with wildfire victims to meet with him. Newsom said he is confident the meeting will occur.

However, representatives for the largest groups of bondholders and shareholders did not respond to a request for comment.

PG&E spokesman James Noonan indicated the company would participate.

"We welcome the governor's and the state's engagement on these vital matters and share the same goal of fairly resolving the wildfire claims and exiting the Chapter 11 process as quickly as possible," he said.

AP-NORC poll: More support than oppose impeachment probe

By HANNAH FINGERHUT and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More Americans approve of the impeachment investigation into President Donald Trump than disapprove of it, though only about a third say the inquiry should be a top priority for Congress, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

That solid, if measured, support serves as a warning sign for Trump's White House and reelection campaign, which have insisted that pursuing impeachment will end up being a vulnerability for Democrats heading into 2020.

But the findings present some red flags for Democrats, too: More people say House members are motivated mainly by politics rather than by duty as they investigate the Republican president's dealings with Ukraine and whether he abused his office or compromised national security when he tried to pressure the country to dig up dirt on a political rival.

And assessments of the president's performance generally have remained remarkably stable even as the investigation has unfolded at a rapid clip.

Overall, 47% said they support the impeachment inquiry, while 38% disapprove.

Still, 53% of Americans think the House is acting mainly on a political motivation to challenge Trump's presidency. That compares with fewer, 43%, who say it's acting more in good faith on its responsibility to investigate the executive branch.

Like most assessments of Trump and Washington, views of impeachment are starkly polarized.

A vast majority of Democrats approve of the inquiry, including 68% who strongly approve.

Among them is Sandra Shrewsbury, 70, who lives in Greencastle, Indiana. She said that Trump's impeachment is long overdue.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 40 of 54

"I am really concerned about our country if this does not stop," she said of Trump's time in office.

She voiced concerns that Trump doesn't have the temperament to be the nation's commander in chief and is doing serious damage to the country's standing.

She was relieved, she said, that after months of hemming and hawing, impeachment proceedings were finally underway.

"I was getting very frustrated with Congress and those investigating because I felt like they were just dragging their heels," she said. "I wish they'd stop worrying about getting reelected themselves and get down to the business they're supposed to be doing. ... We pay them to do this job."

"They should have done it a long time, a way long time ago," agreed Monica Galindo, 32, who lives in Camilla, Georgia.

It's another story among Republicans, who overwhelmingly disapprove of the inquiry, including 67% who do so strongly.

"I think its garbage," said Sara Palmer, 42, a staunch Trump supporter who lives in Pocatello, Idaho, and accused Democrats of wasting time and money trying to take down Trump when there are far more important things they should be doing for the country.

"I mean come on!" she said. "There's nothing there. ... He didn't do anything wrong."

That's a sentiment shared by a majority, 64%, of Republicans.

Yet even among members of Trump's party, a modest share think he did do something wrong. About a quarter, 28%, think he did something unethical, while 8% think he broke the law.

The public overall has mixed views of whether the president committed any wrongdoing. Most say his interactions with the president of Ukraine were at least unethical. That includes about 4 in 10 who think he did something illegal. About another 3 in 10 think what he did was unethical but not illegal.

Trump has insisted he did nothing wrong.

But nearly all Democrats think the president crossed a line, including roughly 7 in 10 who say that he broke the law.

Still, not all Democrats think the inquiry should be Congress' top priority. A quarter think it should be an important but lower priority, and 1 in 10 say it should not be an important priority at all. And while most Democrats support the inquiry, 27% think the House is acting mainly on political motivation to challenge Trump's presidency.

Even as Americans express strong opinions about the inquiry, many have mixed assessments of their own understanding of the impeachment process. Just about 3 in 10 say they understand the process very or extremely well, while roughly as many describe their understanding as limited.

Skylar Iske, 22, who voted for Trump in 2016 but has grown weary of him, said it was difficult for him to oppose the process given his limited awareness of the case for impeachment.

"I don't feel like he should be. But then again, I also don't know what they're investigating," said Iske, who lives outside Des Moines, Iowa.

And there are rare areas where Republicans and Democrats agree.

Majorities across party lines think it was inappropriate for Hunter Biden, former Vice President Joe Biden's son, to serve on the board of a Ukrainian energy company while his father was vice president, with only about a quarter of Americans saying it was appropriate.

Roughly 7 in 10, including 6 in 10 Democrats, say it wasn't.

The AP-NORC poll of 1,075 adults was conducted Oct. 24-28 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.1 percentage points. Respondents were first selected randomly using address-based sampling methods and later were interviewed online or by phone.

Online:

AP-NORC Center: <http://www.apnorc.org/>

AP videojournalist Sarah Blake Morgan in Charlotte, North Carolina, contributed to this report.

Warren vows no middle class tax hike for \$20T health plan

By WILL WEISSERT and RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Elizabeth Warren on Friday proposed \$20 trillion in federal spending over the next decade to provide health care to every American without raising taxes on the middle class, a politically risky effort that pits the goal of universal coverage against skepticism of government-run health care.

The details of Warren's "Medicare for All" plan aim to quell criticism that the Massachusetts Democrat and presidential candidate has been vague about how she would pay for her sweeping proposal. Her refusal to say until now whether she would impose new taxes on the middle class, as fellow progressive White House hopeful Bernie Sanders has said he would, had become untenable and made her a target in recent presidential debates.

However, her detailed proposal was quickly attacked by her moderate rivals, including former Vice President Joe Biden, whose campaign said it amounts to "mathematical gymnastics." Some independent experts also questioned whether her numbers were realistic.

In a 20-page online post, Warren said a cornerstone of her plan would require employers to transfer to the government almost all the \$8.8 trillion she estimates they would otherwise spend on private insurance for employees.

"We can generate almost half of what we need to cover Medicare for All just by asking employers to pay slightly less than what they are projected to pay today, and through existing taxes," she wrote.

Campaigning in Iowa, Warren said Friday her plan was drafted with help from top health care experts and economists. "If Joe Biden doesn't like that ... I'm just not sure where he's going," she said.

Companies with fewer than 50 employees that don't already sponsor coverage would be exempt from the proposal. And in a nod to unions whose support will be key in the Democratic primary, Warren said that employers already offering health benefits under collective bargaining agreements will be allowed to reduce how much they send to federal coffers — provided they pass those savings on to employees.

Democrats have spent decades debating the proper role of government in health care, and the complicated politics surrounding the issue quickly resurfaced after Warren released her proposal. Biden, who favors building on the Affordable Care Act, slammed Warren's plan as eliminating private insurance coverage and said it still amounts to a tax increase on workers.

President Donald Trump has branded Medicare for All as socialism.

For all the attention being paid to Warren's proposal, Sanders is the chief architect of Medicare for All. He has previously released several options to pay for it, including a 4% income tax "premium" that kicks in after the first \$29,000 for a family of four — very much affecting the middle class.

Politics aside, some independent experts raised doubts about the Warren campaign's estimates.

"They are making more aggressive assumptions about the same things we already made aggressive assumptions about," said John Holahan, an economist at the Urban Institute who co-authored a recent cost analysis that the Warren campaign is using as a starting point for its estimates.

And then there's the task of passing such legislation through Congress. A Republican-controlled Senate is unlikely to approve anything approaching Medicare for All. And if Democrats took the Senate majority, the party almost surely won't have enough votes to break a filibuster.

"There's the practical application of getting 60 people in the Senate who are going to vote for this," said former Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack, who has consulted Warren on rural policy.

A critical question for Warren is whether her \$20 trillion cost estimate is accurate. The Urban Institute think tank recently pegged the cost closer to \$34 trillion over 10 years.

If Warren is underestimating the cost by that much, her predictions about needed tax revenue would come up well short.

"This seems like an exercise to low-ball the revenues needed to actually make this enormous transition,"

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 42 of 54

said Emory University economist Ken Thorpe, who has done his own estimates of Medicare for All.

How Warren's proposed employer contribution would work in the real world will get close scrutiny. It could create winners and losers among companies depending on their health care costs, which can reflect such factors as the age of the workforce and the generosity of benefits.

"It's going to lock in inequities based on companies that have an older workforce with better benefits," Thorpe said.

If the transfers from employers to the government don't raise enough money, Warren said she would make up the difference by imposing a supplemental contribution requirement for big companies "with extremely high executive compensation and stock buyback rates."

All told, Warren estimates she could generate \$20.5 trillion in revenue through a combination of, among other things, higher levies on capital gains and other investments and new taxes on the wealthiest 1% of Americans.

Some of her other revenue estimates also could hit political snags. Many lawmakers may be reluctant to side with Warren's call to raise \$800 billion over 10 years by eliminating a Pentagon contingency fund used for anti-terrorism operations. Another \$400 billion represents dividends from an immigration overhaul, a legislative feat that has eluded the past three presidents.

And a whopping \$2.3 trillion would come from stronger enforcement of existing tax laws — money that would have to be identified and collected before it could be used.

Over the weekend, Warren and more than a dozen other candidates will be in Iowa, which holds the nation's leadoff presidential caucuses in three months. Health care remains a dominant issue as the first votes of the Democratic contest near.

Associated Press Writer Thomas Beaumont in Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this report.

Reports: US launches review of China-owned video app TikTok

By The Associated Press undefined

Multiple published reports say that the U.S. government has launched a national-security review of the China-owned video app TikTok, popular with millions of U.S. teens and young adults.

The reports Friday from Reuters, The New York Times and others said that the interagency Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, which reviews acquisitions by foreign firms, has opened an inquiry into TikTok owner ByteDance's 2017 acquisition of a predecessor app, Musical.ly.

Several senators have recently noted concerns about censorship and data collection on TikTok.

The Treasury Department, which houses CFIUS, said it does not comment on specific cases because the agency by law cannot disclose to the public information filed to it.

TikTok said it cannot comment on ongoing regulatory processes. But it said it "has made clear that we have no higher priority than earning the trust of users and regulators in the U.S. Part of that effort includes working with Congress and we are committed to doing so."

After acquiring Musical.ly, Beijing-based ByteDance merged it into TikTok. Musical.ly, popular in the U.S. and Europe, had operated out of offices in Shanghai and California.

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) last month sent a letter to Treasury requesting a CFIUS review of the national-security implications of the Musical.ly deal, saying there is "ample and growing evidence" that TikTok is censoring content that is not in line with the Chinese government. In the letter, he said there had been questions about why the app had so few videos of the recent protests in Hong Kong.

Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) and Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) later in October asked for the U.S. intelligence community to assess national-security risks of TikTok and other Chinese-owned content platforms in the U.S. They said that while TikTok says it stores U.S. user data in the U.S., the company must still adhere to Chinese law on supplying information to the government. Such accusations have also been leveled against other Chinese companies, including Huawei.

The senators also said that TikTok is a potential target of foreign influence campaigns similar to Russia's

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 43 of 54

attempts to undermine the 2016 U.S. election on Facebook.

TikTok has said its data is not subject to Chinese law and that it does not remove content based on "sensitivities related to China."

On the app, people share short videos, often set to music. They lip-sync and dance to songs, do silly pranks and share other bits of their lives. It's searchable by user names, songs and hashtags, like "thishalloween" or "tiktokcats."

The government has stepped in several times over the past few years to block or break up Chinese deals. A Chinese company that owns the gay dating app Grindr reportedly agreed to sell it earlier this year after a CFIUS review. Broadcom, based in Singapore, was stopped from going after U.S. chip maker Qualcomm because of U.S. national-security concerns over losing dominance in the race to for leadership in "5G" wireless, particularly to China. Qualcomm is a major telecom supplier.

What do 2020 Democrats say about California fires? Not much.

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California Democrats hoped they would finally bask in the attention of presidential candidates when they moved their primary to the front of the calendar. But as the state battles the twin disasters of wildfires and mass power outages, White House hopefuls are nowhere to be found.

In a field of nearly 20 candidates, no one has traveled to California to visit residents displaced from their homes or commend first responders who have worked around the clock. That includes California Sen. Kamala Harris, who is trying to revive her flagging campaign with an all-in focus on Iowa, the state that ushers in the presidential primary season.

California is the nation's most populous state and its biggest economic powerhouse. It's also home to more than 400 delegates who will be awarded on Super Tuesday to help decide the next Democratic presidential nominee. But the response to the wildfires has been mostly limited to tweets expressing a need to fight climate change and urging people to heed emergency warnings. That's a reminder that the state is still a relatively low priority for most candidates.

The path to the nomination, for most White House hopefuls, still runs through the traditional early voting states of Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina.

Harris may be missing an opportunity, said Rob Stutzman, deputy chief of staff to former California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who had a knack for the public-facing side of dealing with disaster.

"It's a chance to look presidential, like a commander," he said. "A great narrative for (Harris) in Iowa right now would be her leading her state during the fires."

Most presidential candidates are spending the weekend in Iowa, where a marquee party fundraiser on Friday night is expected to attract 13,000 people and kick off the final three-month stretch until the caucuses. But some have visited disaster sites in other early voting states.

Pete Buttigieg, the mayor of South Bend, Indiana, unveiled a disaster-relief plan in September in Conway, South Carolina, which was hit last year by a hurricane and will hold its primary three days before California. Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar toured flooded sections of Hamburg, Iowa, last spring.

Former California Gov. Jerry Brown, who signed the legislation moving up the primary and is a prominent climate crusader, said candidates are being short sighted by not doing more to address the wildfires.

"People are not running for president for 15 minutes or five days. Presumably they want to get elected for four years," he said. "In the next eight years, we're going to have worse fires. On many levels, there's plenty to talk about."

He said candidates should talk in detail about forest management and upgrading the nation's utility infrastructure as climate change worsens. So far, he said, the White House hopefuls have spent too much time arguing about other issues, such as the future of the health insurance market.

"The worst is yet to come, but California gives an early warning of the devastation that is in store for us," Brown warned. "The amount of time they spend on the difference between Obamacare and Medicare for All, those are rather fine distinctions."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 44 of 54

"The stability of the climate," he said, "has far more to do with health over the next quarter century."

Millions of Californians have lost power since Oct. 9, most of them customers of Pacific Gas & Electric but some of Southern California Edison.

About 180,000 people were forced to evacuate from their homes earlier this week as a fire raged near Northern California's wine country. Some communities had been devastated by a deadly fire just two years earlier. Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency on Sunday as winds topped 100 mph in some places and more fires started. The utilities kept shutting off the power.

Overall, it's a milder fire season for California than in recent years. But the mass blackouts create a fresh layer of anger and fear.

Bernie Sanders has made the wildfires a key part of his push for a climate change package, which he rolled out in California this summer after touring a Northern California town where a fire sparked by PG&E equipment killed 85 people last year.

Days after millions of Californians lost power, his campaign sent an email railing against PG&E and sharing the addresses for evacuation centers in dozens of California counties. Earlier this week, he said it's time to consider public ownership of utilities. PG&E and California's other two large utilities are investor-owned.

Sanders' plan calls for investing more than \$500 billion to upgrade the electrical grid with actions like burying power lines to prevent fires.

His moves reflect the unique emphasis he's placed on California, putting more staff members on the ground here than any other campaign and talking with ease about local issues. But he has not traveled to California amid the recent round of fires.

For her part, Harris introduced legislation in Congress to provide more money for communities to guard against wildfire, though a dollar amount is not yet attached. She's also called for fresh investments from the Federal Emergency Management Agency in microgrid technology that could limit the scope of blackouts, and she's encouraged her supporters to donate to a wildfire relief fund.

In her role as senator, she's spoken regularly with local and state officials on the phone, her Senate office said.

But she has not returned to California for any public events, even as her Los Angeles neighborhood was evacuated due to wildfire risk. She attended a Hollywood fundraiser with Newsom last week. Harris's campaign did not respond to repeated questions about whether she planned to publicly appear in her home state.

Joe Biden tweeted about the fires on Thursday, more than a week after they began.

Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren shared on social media a message about the economic and safety consequences of shutting off power.

Warren, like Sanders, has addressed fire prevention in her climate plan. She's called for investing in forest restoration and upgrading the energy grid to make it easier to avoid widespread power shutoffs.

While utility regulation is primarily the job of the state, the federal government owns much of California's forest land. The solutions to better manage forests, including prescribed burns, are often publicly unpopular.

"It's complicated, but it's a very important matter for the whole West," Brown said. "When they come out for these Western primaries, it's something they ought to talk about."

NOT REAL NEWS: A look at what didn't happen this week

By BEATRICE DUPUY, ARIJETA LAJKA and AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

A roundup of some of the most popular but completely untrue stories and visuals of the week. None of these is legit, even though they were shared widely on social media. The Associated Press checked them out. Here are the real facts:

CLAIM: Joe Biden, while vice president, leaked the identities of special ops SEAL Team 6 who captured Osama bin Laden.

THE FACTS: Biden, who is seeking the Democratic presidential nomination, did not leak the names of

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 45 of 54

those involved in the 2011 raid that killed the al-Qaida leader despite posts circulating widely on social media. The claim, which has circulated before, surfaced again this week following the death of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader of the Islamic State group, during an Oct. 26 U.S. special operations raid. The death of bin Laden, who was sought for the Sept. 11 attacks, was announced on May 1, 2011, after a Navy SEAL team raided his compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan, killing him, his son and several others. On May 3, 2011, Biden gave an address at the 50th anniversary dinner for the Atlantic Council, a Washington-based foreign policy think tank, where he mentioned the Navy SEAL team that killed bin-Laden. He first acknowledged the night's honorees, including U.S. Navy Adm. James Stavridis, now retired, who he said would speak more about the Navy SEALs and their raid on bin Laden. Biden went on to praise the team that carried out the mission, including the SEALs. But he did not mention team members by name. Social media users began blaming Biden for identifying participants in the raid after 15 members of SEAL Team 6 were killed in August 2011 when a rocket-propelled grenade fired by a Taliban insurgent downed their helicopter in Afghanistan.

CLAIM: President Barack Obama freed al-Baghdadi from prison during his presidency.

THE FACTS: The Islamic State group leader, who died in an Oct. 26 raid by U.S. forces, was not released in the Middle East under Obama, who served two terms, from 2009 to 2017. The false claim resurfaced after news of the raid on his hideout in Syria. The false claim also circulated on social media in 2014. Posts with the false claim resurfaced on Monday on Facebook and Twitter following President Donald Trump's announcement Sunday that al-Baghdadi had died after being cornered by U.S. special operations forces. According to the Pentagon, al-Baghdadi was detained by U.S. forces in 2004 and sent to Camp Bucca prison in Iraq for anti-U.S. militant activities. He was released after 10 months and then joined the al-Qaida branch in Iraq. At the time of his release, George W. Bush was the U.S. president. Following the deaths of senior leaders in the group, he rose to lead IS in Iraq. Pentagon spokesman Cmdr. Sean Robertson confirmed to The Associated Press that Al-Baghdadi was released from Camp Bucca after being held for ten months. He said there is no information indicating he was imprisoned again and released in 2009, as some false items online have claimed.

CLAIM: Photo shows Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota wiping away tears after learning U.S. forces in Syria killed IS leader al-Baghdadi.

THE FACTS: Posts on Facebook and Twitter are falsely claiming, sometimes satirically, that Omar — a Somali immigrant who is Muslim — was pictured shedding tears over the death of the terrorist leader. In fact, the photo was taken on April 10, 2019, at the U.S. Capitol in Washington as Omar spoke about Trump's immigration policies. Reuters photographer Jim Bourg took the image, which shows Omar wearing a black headscarf, rubbing her left eye to wipe away tears. Hours after Trump formally announced al-Baghdadi's death, Omar wrote a tweet offering "deep gratitude" to the forces who carried out the "dangerous operation" against the terrorist leader. "Abu Bakr al Baghdadi was an evil man and a terrorist, who terrorized the world with violence and a message of hate," Omar's tweet read, in part. "The world is a safer place without him."

CLAIM: Picture shows Mary and Fred Trump wearing Ku Klux Klan robes, standing with son Donald Trump in 1999.

THE FACTS: The manipulated photo, edited to make it appear Trump's parents are wearing Klan garb, has circulated before on social media. It surfaced again this week on Facebook and Twitter. The image shows Trump in a red tie and a black suit standing with his arms around his mother and father. Mary Trump is wearing a pink and black floral suit, with pearls draped around her neck. Fred Trump is wearing a navy suit, red pocket square and polka dot tie. The three Trumps posed for the photo against a marble wall backdrop and a sign that reads "theater tickets." The original photo was taken by Judie Burstein in 1992, according to Globe Photos, a celebrity and entertainment photo company that archived the image

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 46 of 54

in March 2004. Fred Trump, who made a fortune in real estate, died in 1999 at the age of 93. Mary Trump died in 2000, at the age of 88.

This is part of The Associated Press' ongoing effort to fact-check misinformation that is shared widely online, including work with Facebook to identify and reduce the circulation of false stories on the platform.

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One big step: Google buys Fitbit for \$2.1 billion

By MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

Google, the company that helped make it fun to just sit around surfing the web, is jumping into the fitness-tracker business with both feet, buying Fitbit for about \$2.1 billion.

The deal could put Google in direct competition with Apple and Samsung in the highly competitive market for smartwatches and other wearable electronics. But it also raises questions about privacy and Google's dominance in the tech industry.

The company's announcement Friday came with a promise that it won't sell ads using the intimate health data that Fitbit devices collect.

Fitbit is a pioneer in wearable fitness technology, making a range of devices that have become pop-culture accessories, from basic trackers that count how many steps you take each day to smartwatches that display messages and notifications from phones.

They can track activities such as running, cycling and swimming and record heart rates and sleep patterns. Fitbit typically asks for date of birth, gender, height and weight to help with such things as estimating calories burned. Some people use Fitbit's app to record what they eat and how much water they drink. Women can track their periods.

Fitbit has 28 million active users worldwide and has sold more than 100 million devices.

Google, meanwhile, makes software for use in other manufacturers' wearable devices, but those products haven't gained much traction in the face of competition from Fitbit, Apple, Samsung and others. And Google doesn't sell a device of its own.

The deal to buy Fitbit could give Google a needed boost.

"Google doesn't want to be left out of the party," said analyst Daniel Ives of Wedbush Securities. "If you look at what Apple has done with wearables, it's a missing piece of the puzzle for Google."

Google's pledge that it won't sell ads using Fitbit health data is a continuation of promises previously made by Fitbit.

Privacy experts, though, were skeptical.

Consumer Reports health privacy expert Dena Mendelsohn said she is concerned that people enrolled in wellness programs through their employers that use Fitbit devices could lose control over their data.

"While a person may not have had concerns about Fitbit holding their data, they may have concerns over Google holding their data," Mendelsohn said.

Google's promise is also unlikely to stop it from gathering other information from Fitbit devices.

For example, Fitbit has GPS models that could track users' locations. That could help Google know that a runner stopped at a coffee shop on the way home. Google could then display ads for rival coffee shops.

More important, having a Google device on the wrist could drive wearers to use Google services even more, giving the company more ways to sell ads.

The deal is likely to face scrutiny from state and U.S. Department of Justice antitrust authorities, who are already investigating Google and other big tech companies over whether they have abused their market power.

"Why should Google be permitted to acquire even more companies while they're under DOJ antitrust

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 47 of 54

investigation?" Sen. Josh Hawley, a Missouri Republican, tweeted.

Still, analysts at equity research firm Cowen said they believe regulators are unlikely to block the deal because of Fitbit's relatively small size and its focus on hardware.

While Fitbit all but created the field, it has been shredded by the competition. It was worth nearly \$10 billion after it went public in 2015. But its value this week is well below \$2 billion.

When rumors of a potential buyout by Google surfaced earlier this week, Fitbit stock soared almost 30%. It jumped nearly 16% more Friday.

Google's corporate parent, Alphabet, will pay \$7.35 per share. Alphabet stock gained about 1%.

"With Google's resources and global platform, Fitbit will be able to accelerate innovation in the wearables category, scale faster, and make health even more accessible to everyone," Fitbit co-founder and CEO James Park said in a statement.

Fitbit has been expanding its partnerships with major health care companies such as Humana to encourage healthier living.

John Hancock announced incentives last year on its insurance policies for people willing share data gathered by health-monitoring devices. It offers free Fitbits to participants.

Last year, Fitbit acquired a health coaching business that helps people manage conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure.

Fitbit ranks fourth in global shipments of digital watches, fitness trackers and other wrist-worn devices, according to research firm IDC. Chinese companies Xiaomi and Huawei were No. 1 and No. 3, Apple was No. 2, and Samsung came in fifth.

AP Business Writer Michelle Chapman and Technology Writers Tali Arbel, Frank Bajak and Rachel Lerman contributed to this report.

US economy defies threats with a solid job gain for October

By JOSH BOAK and BANI SAPRA AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — A solid October jobs report on Friday spotlighted the surprising durability of the U.S. economy in the face of persistent trade conflicts and a global slowdown.

The economy managed to add 128,000 jobs last month even though tens of thousands of workers were temporarily counted as unemployed because of the now-settled strike against General Motors. What's more, the government revised up its combined estimate of job growth for August and September by a robust 95,000.

Though the unemployment rate ticked up from 3.5% to 3.6% in October, it's still near a five-decade low.

And for a second straight month, average hourly wages rose a decent, if less than spectacular, 3% from a year ago.

The report from the Labor Department suggested that the economy has enough strength to keep expanding despite the threats from overseas, political tensions at home, a downturn in manufacturing and a chronic gap between the wealthiest Americans and everyone else.

The healthy level of hiring also makes it less likely that the Federal Reserve, which cut short-term interest rates this week for a third time this year, will do so again anytime soon.

"This was an unambiguously strong report," said Kathy Bostjancic, chief U.S. financial economist at Oxford Economics.

The jobs data put stock investors in a buying mood. The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed up 301 points for the day, or 1.1%.

Friday's jobs report also raised the prospect of further job growth to come. The settlement of the GM strike, which contributed to the temporary loss of 41,600 auto factory and likely other related jobs last month, seems sure to lead to a return of those jobs in coming months.

In addition, the labor force participation rate, a gauge of how many adults either have a job or looking for one, reached 63.3%, the best since 2013. That suggests that a rising number of people continue to

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 48 of 54

think it's a good time to find a job.

Besides GM, a temporary drag on hiring last month was the U.S. Census. The government let go of 20,000 short-term workers who had been helping prepare for the 2020 survey.

The economy has been expanding for more than a decade, the longest period of growth on record. But the bump from the 2018 tax cuts is fading, and an aging population and other demographic forces are slowing potential growth.

That slowdown could be worrisome for President Donald Trump, who is seeking re-election next year amid an impeachment inquiry. The economy appears unable to achieve the lasting growth of more than 3% annually that Trump had promised. Within 30 minutes of the jobs report's release, though, the president celebrated the figures on Twitter as a "blowout," adding that "USA ROCKS."

Job growth so far this year has averaged 167,000 a month, down from an average of 223,000 in 2018, according to Labor Department figures. Even so, hiring remains high enough to keep the unemployment rate from rising even as overall growth has become more tepid. On Wednesday, the government estimated that the economy grew in the July-October quarter at a modest 1.9% annual rate.

The hot job market is spurring many employers to raise wages to attract and retain workers. Yet those gains may not always leave workers feeling better off as they grapple with high housing, transportation, health and education expenses.

One employer, Nona Lim, the founder and CEO of a company that supplies rice noodles and broths to grocery stores across the country, says she's had to raise wages 20-25% above the minimum wage of \$13.80 in Oakland, California, to attract workers.

"There is a lot of money in the Bay Area in tech but not necessarily in non-tech," said Lim, 45. "It gets kind of challenging working in the Bay Area as a manufacturer. The cost of living is high. The minimum wage is high."

Much of the fuel for overall U.S. growth has come from consumers, who drive about 70% of economic activity. Pay raises are helping some of them. In September, consumers modestly stepped up their spending, and their incomes grew fast enough to let them save more, too.

In a sign that consumer spending is helping to lead to more hiring, restaurants added 47,500 jobs last month.

But even as consumers help drive growth, business investment has become a drag on the economy. Collectively, businesses have slashed their spending on industrial machinery and other equipment, mostly because the U.S.-China trade war has made them reluctant to commit to big purchases. The tariffs between the U.S. and China, the world's two largest economies, have also reduced U.S. exports.

Friday's jobs report hinted at a mixed picture for the start of the holiday shopping season. Retailers added 6,100 jobs last month. But the rise of e-commerce and an increasing concentration of wealth in large U.S. metros have corresponded with the loss of more than 20,000 jobs at retailers over the past 12 months.

A slowdown in pay growth is another source of concern. Hourly average earnings had been rising at a 3.4% annual rate back in February, significantly above the 3% pace in October.

But reduced wage growth might be somewhat misleading. Employers are giving more opportunities to workers who usually start at lower wage levels, and that might have cut into the overall pay gains, said Julia Pollak, a labor economist at ZipRecruiter, an online job marketplace.

"Given the number of women, the number of Hispanics, the number of blacks, the number of young people entering the workforce," Pollak said, "it's quite possible that the influx of all these workers is dragging that average down."

A new hope for Star Wars on Disney Plus in 'The Mandalorian'

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Never heard of a Mandalorian? You're not alone.

Actor Pedro Pascal hadn't either when he started talking to Jon Favreau and Dave Filoni about an ambitious new "Star Wars" series that would become a marquee offering for the Walt Disney Co.'s new stream-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 49 of 54

ing service, Disney Plus, which launches Nov. 12.

But Pascal, known for playing Oberyn Martell on "Game of Thrones," knew that this Mandalorian character looked a lot like Boba Fett and that was enough for him. The stoic bounty hunter behind the helmet who made his debut in "The Empire Strikes Back" became a cultish fan favorite and happened to be Pascal's preferred action figure as a kid. When he got out of the meeting and wanted to share the news, he could barely get the words out.

"I was like, 'They want me to be — it's not Boba Fett, but it's like, you remember. They want me to be the coolest looking thing in Star Wars, you know?'" Pascal says, channeling his energy from that day. "It was a big geeky moment."

Pascal and anyone else scratching their heads about how they might have missed this Mandalorian concept can rest easy: It's not even a word that's uttered in the original trilogy. But the idea comes straight from George Lucas himself. He had envisioned a race of warrior peoples called the Mandalore that ended up getting streamlined into one character in the films — Boba Fett. "Star Wars" literature and series like "The Clone Wars" helped keep the Mandalorians alive over the years, and it re-emerged again when Disney and Lucasfilm started thinking about non-Skywalker ideas for the new streaming service where it's primed to get its biggest audience yet.

"The Lion King" and "Jungle Book" director Jon Favreau was enlisted to executive produce and write for "The Mandalorian," which is set in the franchise's Outer Rim five years after "Return of the Jedi" and 25 years before the events of "The Force Awakens." The eight episode series, which will roll out on a near-weekly basis, follows the title character in his bounty hunting adventures.

The world around him is full of seedy and mysterious characters, like Greef Carga, played by Carl Weathers, who leads a bounty hunter guild, and former soldier Cara Dune, played by Gina Carano. As with all recent Star Wars properties, details are being kept as secret as possible.

"I had to cut my finger and sign in blood that I would say nothing about it, not even say I was doing it, that I was part of it. They're very protective of Star Wars, the stories, the Mandalorian, the brand, and it makes sense," Weathers said. "We all want to protect it also."

But from early footage and the nature of the bounty hunting profession, "The Mandalorian" does seem a little darker than your average Star Wars story. It's been described as a Western, leaving it open as to whether the lead characters are good, bad or somewhere in between.

"We can be pulled to any side, any one of us," said Carano. "Even when you begin the journey with the Mandalorian, you aren't sure what side you're on."

Pascal agreed that it's meant to be ambiguous.

"They separate good and evil so perfectly in the world of Star Wars. And in this one it's like we're way more at the center," Pascal said. "We're past those borders, and past those very, very linear, very specific lines of definition."

While Star Wars is no stranger to the small screen, those efforts have mostly been animated. So when initial trailers debuted for "The Mandalorian," in glorious live-action, many observed how movie-like it seemed, as though it would fit right in on the big screen alongside the "Star Wars" spinoffs like "Rogue One" or "Solo." A reported \$15 million per episode budget probably didn't hurt.

It's also a gesture of investment into a new phase of the Star Wars universe under Disney. The Skywalker saga is coming to an end with "The Rise of Skywalker," which opens in theaters on Dec. 20, and the next cinematic trilogy is going through its own restructuring with the recent news that its overseers, "Game of Thrones" showrunners David Benioff and D.B. Weiss, have parted ways with Lucasfilm.

But "The Mandalorian" could help ease the gap as the future is plotted. And Favreau is already at work on a second season.

The involvement of Favreau and Filoni, who directed the pilot and has been behind "Star Wars" projects like "The Clone Wars" and "Star Wars Rebels" has everyone confident in the product.

"They are the Star Wars fans," said Carano. "This is made for (fans) because two of their own are making it."

Follow AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr on Twitter: www.twitter.com/ladbahr

Trump fires up religious critics with job for televangelist

By ELANA SCHOR and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The ascension of Paula White as an official member of Donald Trump's White House highlights how closely the president is relying on his inner circle of evangelical Christian supporters as he fights an impeachment probe during his reelection bid — while giving liberal evangelicals a new opening to push back at his administration's mingling of religion and policymaking.

White is a televangelist who has sparked division among fellow Christians over her association with the so-called "prosperity gospel," an assertion that God rewards believers with personal as well as financial success. She's also frequently identified as personal minister to the president and is now set to become an adviser heading Trump's Faith and Opportunity Initiative, according to a White House official.

In some ways, White's new position only formalizes her long-standing influence in the White House. The 53-year-old has known Trump for more than 15 years and frequently meets with the president alongside fellow evangelical Christian advisers, including a White House visit this week where the group laid hands on Trump in prayer. But White is a more contentious figure within her faith than other pro-Trump evangelicals and was the subject of a years-long investigation into her finances by Iowa Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley.

That profile makes White, who uses her married name White-Cain, a compelling symbol for liberal Christians who are making an increasingly vocal appeal to religious Americans who do not align with Trump's broader political agenda.

"The rise of the religious left has been given a shot in the arm every time Trump doubles down on his white evangelical base," said Guthrie Graves-Fitzsimmons, a religious activist on the left who created an anti-Trump network called The Resistance Prays. "Yes, he may score short term political points. But in the long term, he really is energizing and mobilizing this whole swath of people who are religious and are astonished by what's happening with the Paula Whites of the world."

Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, a liberal evangelical preacher who works with the progressive group Red Letter Christians, said White's use of her ministry "to exploit the poor ... should be of real concern to all people of faith."

"While we often frame religion in public life as progressives to conservatives, it's important to say that even within that frame, Paula White is an extremist and always has been," Wilson-Hartgrove said.

The White House role for White, whose ministry did not immediately return an interview request, was first reported by The New York Times. White distanced herself from the prosperity gospel in a 2017 statement that said she would "reject any theology that doesn't affirm or acknowledge the entirety of scriptural teaching about God's presence and blessing in suffering as much as in times of prosperity."

The Florida-based White's website features a pitch for followers to purchase a \$130 "Favor Seed" in order to help battle "an enemy of debt, depression, a job, or a health issue prevailing against you."

The White House initiative she will advise was created by the Trump administration last year to help faith-based groups partner with the federal government. White's advisory role, according to the executive order setting up the initiative, empowers her to suggest "changes to policies, programs, and practices that affect the delivery of services by faith-based and community organizations."

Beyond White's new position, Trump's meeting this week with his closest conservative evangelical supporters included some discussion of how they would try to energize their contacts on the president's behalf, according to attendee Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council. Perkins said that while the Tuesday meeting with Trump was not entirely "a planning session," attendees did perform "a quick inventory" of their own networks to determine what "we can do" to help the president.

"Several of us have daily radio programs and some of us have TV programs and some of (us) lead very large churches and ministries," Perkins said. "It was more looking around the room and how do we be more intentional about getting this out there and using the platforms that we already have."

Schor reported from New York.

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through the Religion News Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

Brexit Party wants to team up with Tories; Johnson says no

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Nigel Farage, the minor-party leader who played a major role in Britain's decision to leave the European Union, is trying to throw his weight around again in the U.K.'s Brexit-dominated election.

Farage on Friday piled the pressure on British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, saying his Brexit Party will run against Johnson's Conservatives across the country in the Dec. 12 early election unless Johnson abandons his divorce deal with the EU.

Farage spoke a day after U.S. President Donald Trump barged into the British election campaign, urging his friend Farage to make an electoral pact with Johnson's Conservatives. Trump told Farage on the Euroskeptic politician's own radio phone-in show Thursday that he and Johnson would be "an unstoppable force."

Johnson on Friday gently rebuffed Trump's suggestion and ruled out an electoral pact with Farage.

"If I may respectfully say to all our friends around the world ... the only way to get this thing done is to vote for us," Johnson told ITV News. "If you vote for any other party, the risk is you'll just get Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour Party, dither and delay."

All 650 seats in the House of Commons are up for grabs in the election that is coming more than two years early, with winners to be chosen by Britain's 46 million voters. If the Brexit Party runs in only a small number of seats, that would help the Conservatives, who are vying with Farage for the support of Brexit-backing voters.

Farage's party, which was founded earlier this year, rejects Johnson's Brexit deal, preferring to leave the bloc with no agreement on future relations in what it calls a "clean-break" Brexit. It holds seats in the European Union's legislature but has none so far in Britain's Parliament.

Launching the Brexit Party's election campaign on Friday, Farage said Johnson's deal "is not Brexit" because it would mean continuing to follow some EU rules and holding years of negotiations on future relations.

"Boris tells us this is a great new deal. It is not. It is a bad old treaty. And simply, it is not Brexit," Farage said.

Farage, who played a key role in the 2016 campaign for Britain to leave the EU, said if Johnson agreed to abandon his deal, the Brexit Party would form a "non-aggression pact" with the Conservatives, standing aside from running against them in many areas.

"I believe the only way to solve this is to build a 'leave' alliance across this country," Farage said. "If it was done, Boris Johnson would win a very big majority."

Farage warned that if Johnson rejects the offer, "we will contest every single seat in England, Scotland and Wales."

He said Johnson needs to make up his mind before the nominations for candidates close on Nov. 14.

On the U.K. radio show Thursday, Trump called Johnson "fantastic" but also undermined him by claiming that "certain aspects" of the prime minister's EU divorce agreement would make it impossible for Britain to do a trade deal with the U.S.

The ability to strike new trade agreements around the world is seen by Brexit supporters as one of the key advantages of leaving the EU. Most economists, though, say trade deals with the U.S. and other countries are unlikely to compensate for Britain's reduced commerce with the EU, which currently accounts for half of U.K. trade.

Forecasters say a no-deal Brexit would have an even more severe effect on the U.K. economy and would hurt EU nations as well.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 52 of 54

Purist Brexiteers such as Farage dislike the Brexit agreement struck by Johnson — as they did a previous effort by his predecessor Theresa May — because it keeps the U.K. bound by EU rules and financial obligations for up to three years while a new trade relationship is negotiated. The terms would also see Northern Ireland bound by EU trade and customs rules indefinitely to avoid checks on the border with EU member Ireland that could undermine both the regional economy and peace in Northern Ireland.

The prime minister sought this early election to break the political impasse over Britain's stalled departure from the EU.

Johnson had promised for months that the U.K. would leave the 28-nation bloc on the scheduled date of Oct. 31 "come what may." He struck a divorce deal with the EU last month, but Parliament blocked his plan to rush it into law in a matter of days. Amid the impasse, last week the EU granted Britain a three-month Brexit delay, setting a new Jan. 31 deadline.

While the Conservatives have a wide lead in most opinion polls, analysts say the election is unpredictable because Brexit cuts across traditional party loyalties.

The Brexit Party also poses a threat to the main opposition Labour Party in traditionally Labour-supporting post-industrial areas of Wales and northern England, which voted in 2016 to leave the EU.

On the other side of the divide, the centrist Liberal Democrats, who want to cancel Brexit, are wooing pro-EU supporters from both the Conservatives and Labour in Britain's big cities and liberal university towns.

Left-of center Labour, which has its own internal divisions over Brexit, is trying to shift the election battleground onto more comfortable domestic terrain: the rising inequities in Britain. Labour is hoping that voters want to talk about health care, the environment and social welfare instead of holding more seemingly endless Brexit debates.

Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, whose Scottish National Party is running on a pro-independence, anti-Brexit platform, said if the Conservatives won, "you'll have Nigel Farage and Donald Trump pulling Boris Johnson's strings."

"A Nigel Farage-and-Boris Johnson coalition would be scary," she said. "It's the kind of Halloween monster that no one in Scotland wants to see."

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

Trade body: China can hit US with sanctions worth \$3.6 bln

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The World Trade Organization said Friday that China can impose tariffs on up to \$3.6 billion worth of U.S. goods over the American government's failure to abide by anti-dumping rules with regard to Chinese products.

The move hands China its first such payout at the WTO at a time when it is engaged in a big dispute with the United States. The two sides have recently imposed tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of goods, but did not do so through the WTO, which helps solve trade disputes.

Friday's announcement from a WTO arbitrator centers on a case with origins long before the current trade standoff: a Chinese complaint filed nearly six years ago seeking over \$7 billion in retaliation.

The decision means China can impose higher tariffs against the United States than China is currently allowed under WTO rules, and will be given leeway as to the U.S. products and sectors it would like to target.

Parts of a WTO ruling in May 2017 went in favor of China in its case against some 40 U.S. anti-dumping rulings, involving trade limits on Chinese products that the United States says are or were sold below market value.

However, the WTO arbitrator honed down the award to base it on some 25 Chinese products — including diamond sawblades, furniture, shrimp, solar panels, automotive tires and a series of steel products — that were affected by U.S. anti-dumping measures. That explains why the award was less than the sum China had sought.

The decision comes as the United States is fresh off a high-profile WTO award against the European

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 53 of 54

Union over subsidies given to European plane maker Airbus, which has let Washington slap tariffs on \$7.5 billion worth of EU goods including Italian cheese, Scottish whiskey and olives from Spain.

That was a record award from a WTO arbitrator in the trade body's nearly quarter-century history. The award announced Friday ranks as the third-largest.

In the Chinese anti-dumping ruling, the WTO faulted two techniques that the United States uses to set penalties for dumping. Its so-called "zeroing methodology" — long a problem for the trade body — involves cherry-picking violators and neglecting law-abiding producers in a way that lets U.S. officials artificially inflate the penalties imposed.

The other technique involves treating multiple Chinese companies of a product as a single entity, in essence penalizing some producers that do not violate anti-dumping rules along with those that do.

While these tariffs are allowed by the WTO under international trade law, the Trump administration has in its disputes with China and other commercial partners exchanged tariffs unilaterally, without any green light from the WTO.

The U.S. and China have filed a number of complaints with the WTO against each others' tariffs, but dispute resolution can take years.

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Nov. 2, the 306th day of 2019. There are 59 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 2, 1948, President Harry S. Truman surprised the experts by winning a narrow upset over Republican challenger Thomas E. Dewey.

On this date:

In 1783, General George Washington issued his Farewell Address to the Army near Princeton, New Jersey.

In 1889, North Dakota and South Dakota became the 39th and 40th states with the signing of proclamations by President Benjamin Harrison.

In 1917, British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour issued a declaration expressing support for a "national home" for the Jews in Palestine.

In 1947, Howard Hughes piloted his huge wooden flying boat, the Hughes H-4 Hercules (derisively dubbed the "Spruce Goose" by detractors), on its only flight, which lasted about a minute over Long Beach Harbor in California.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy delivered a brief statement to the nation in which he said that aerial photographs had confirmed that Soviet missile bases in Cuba were being dismantled, and that "progress is now being made toward the restoration of peace in the Caribbean."

In 1963, South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem (noh ding ZEE'-em) was assassinated in a military coup.

In 1976, former Georgia Gov. Jimmy Carter became the first candidate from the Deep South since the Civil War to be elected president as he defeated incumbent Gerald R. Ford.

In 1986, kidnappers in Lebanon released American hospital administrator David Jacobsen after holding him for 17 months.

In 1992, movie producer Hal Roach died in Los Angeles at age 100.

In 1994, a jury in Pensacola, Florida, convicted Paul Hill of murder for the shotgun slayings of an abortion provider and his bodyguard; Hill was executed in September 2003.

In 2000, American astronaut Bill Shepherd and two Russian cosmonauts, Yuri Gidzenko (jihd-ZEENG'-koh) and Sergei Krikalev (SUR'-gay KREE'-kuh-lev), became the first residents of the international space station.

In 2004, President George W. Bush was elected to a second term as Republicans strengthened their grip on Congress. Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh was slain in Amsterdam after receiving death threats over his movie "Submission," which criticized the treatment of women under Islam.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Nov. 02, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 124 ~ 54 of 54

Ten years ago: A suicide bomber killed 35 people outside a bank near Pakistan's military headquarters in Rawalpindi (rah-wuhl-PIHN'-dee). Afghanistan's election commission proclaimed President Hamid Karzai the victor of the country's tumultuous ballot, canceling a planned runoff. The Philadelphia Phillies staved off elimination from the World Series with an 8-6 victory over the New York Yankees in Game 5. World Boxing Hall of Famer Lou Filippo, 83, died in Downey, California.

Five years ago: Islamic State group extremists shot dead at least 50 Iraqi men, women and children from the same Sunni tribe. A Taliban suicide bomber killed 60 in an attack on a paramilitary checkpoint in Pakistan close to the Wagah border crossing with India. Daredevil Nik Wallenda wowed Chicago and the world with two hair-raising skyscraper crossings on high wires without a safety net or a harness.

One year ago: The Trump administration restored U.S. sanctions on Iran that had been lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal but carved out exemptions for eight countries that would still be able to import Iranian oil. The oldest victim of the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting, 97-year-old Rose Mallinger, was laid to rest in the last of the funerals for the 11 victims. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration said drug overdose deaths in 2017 had hit the highest level ever recorded in the United States, with most of the increase due to a record number of opioid-related deaths. Actor Alec Baldwin was arrested and charged with assault and harassment after allegedly striking a man in the face during a dispute over a parking spot outside his New York City home. (Baldwin pleaded guilty to harassment and agreed to attend a one-day anger management class.) Grammy-winning jazz trumpeter Roy Hargrove died in New York after a long fight with kidney disease; he was 49.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Jay Black (Jay and the Americans) is 81. Political commentator Patrick Buchanan is 81. Actress Stefanie Powers is 77. Author Shere (shehr) Hite is 77. Country-rock singer-songwriter J.D. Souther is 74. Actress Kate Linder is 72. Rock musician Carter Beauford (The Dave Matthews Band) is 61. Actor Peter Mullan is 60. Singer-songwriter k.d. lang is 58. Rock musician Bobby Dall (Poison) is 56. Actress Jenny Robinson ("Bull Durham") is 56. Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage is 55. Actress Lauren Velez is 55. Actor Sean Kanan is 53. Actor David Schwimmer is 53. Christian/jazz singer Alvin Chea (Take 6) is 52. Jazz singer Kurt Elling is 52. Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker is 52. Rock musician Fieldy is 50. Actress Meta Golding is 48. Rock singer-musician John Hampson (Nine Days) is 48. Actress Marisol Nichols is 48. Rhythm-and-blues singer Timothy Christian Riley (Tony Toni Tone) is 45. Rapper Nelly is 45. Actor Danny Cooksey is 44. Rock musician Chris Walla is 44. Actress Reshma Shetty is 42. TV personality Karamo Brown ("Queer Eye," "Dancing With the Stars") is 39. Country singer Erika Jo is 33. Actor-singer Kendall Schmidt is 29.

Thought for Today: "Our most dangerous tendency is to expect too much of government, and at the same time do for it too little." — President Warren G. Harding (1865-1923).

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