

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 1 of 35

- 1- Rix Apartments for Rent
- 1- Schultz Construction
- 1- Transit Thank You
- 1- Doeden Thank You
- 1- Today's Information
- 1- Recycling Trailers in Groton
- 2- October Students of the Month
- 3- Classifieds
- 4- November Students of the Month
- 6- Bowling Scores
- 6- Andover Bar & Grill
- 7- Groton School News
- 7- General Happy New Year's Ad
- 8- Groton Vet Clinic HNY
- 9- Full Circle Ag HNY
- 10- Olson Backhoe HNY
- 11- Olde Bank Floral HNY
- 12- Spanier's Harvesting HNY
- 13- Heaven Bound Ministries HNY
- 14- Ferney Farmers Union Oil HNY
- 15- Dog Licenses Due Today
- 16- Farm Credit Services Ad
- 19- Today in Weather History
- 21- Weather Page
- 22- Local Weather
- 22- National Weather Map
- 23- Daily Devotional
- 24- News from the Associated Press

Wednesday, December 31

No School

Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, mashed potatoes, winter mix vegetables, buttermilk biscuits, banana pudding with bananas.

Anniversaries: Paul & Tina Kosel • Jake & Tiffany Unzen

Birthdays: Jill Cutler • Braiden Craig • Brian Koens
New Year's Eve

12:00pm: Kiwanis meets at the Community Center

Transit Thank You

The Groton Transit would like to thank everyone for making the Transit Christmas Open House and Bake Sale such a success. The bake sale and Open House were great!

Thank You, Groton Transit

Doeden Thank You

A big thank you to Olde Bank Floral n' More for the beautiful Christmas floral arrangement.

Arlis Doeden

**Two bedroom apartment in the
Rix Apartments (former city
apartments) at 407 N Garfield**

FOR RENT

Attached garage.

Major appliances included.

\$700 per month

Roger: 605/397-7118



*Check out our portfolio
on Facebook at
Schultz-Construction-LLC*
~ New Construction and Remodeling-
renovations, additions, and carpentry
work
~ Concrete- foundations, flatwork,
decorative concrete surfaces.

605-380-1717
www.shawnschultzconstruction.com

The cardboard/paper

recycling trailer at the school is **OPEN**

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is back at 10 East Railroad Ave. Don't forget, there is also a dumpster at the city shop for aluminum cans with the proceeds going to the pool.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 2 of 35



Back: Alexis Gustafson, Erin Smith, Luke Smith, Marlee Jones; Front: Ashley Garduno, Kaycie Hawkins, Erin Unzen

October Students of the Month

The October Students of the Month at Groton Area are Erin Unzen, Kaycie Hawkins, Ashley Garduno, Alexis Gustafson, Erin Smith, Marlee Jones and Luke Smith.

Erin Unzen is a sixth grader and is the daughter of Jake and Tiffany Unzen, Groton. Other family members are Haley, Megan and Nathan. Erin is involved in basketball, volleyball, skating, soccer, band and MathCounts. Her accomplishments are doing well in school and doing well in sports. She is interested in shopping, reading, doing hair and makeup, hanging with friends, playing sports and baking. Her favorite subject is reading and her role model is her mom. Erin plans to either be a fifth grade teacher or a cosmetologist.

Kaycie Hawkins is a seventh grader and is the daughter of Lance and Kristie Hawkins, Groton. Her siblings are Katelyn, Kylie and Kelby. Kaycie is involved in basketball, volleyball, softball, Carnival of Silver Skates, UMYF and MathCounts. Her accomplishments include being on the U12 softball state champion team in 2004, placing in MathCounts and being on the Honor Roll. She is interested in basketball, volleyball and softball. Her favorite subject is math and her role model is her mom. Kaycie plans to attend college.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 3 of 35

Ashley Garduno is an eighth grader and is the daughter of Alfredo and Shannon Garduno, Webster. She has a brother, Kason. Ashley is involved in volleyball, stats for basketball, doing piano and French Horn, being in the church choir and 4-H. Her accomplishments are getting fourth seat in the French Horn section of All-State Middle School Honors Band, went twice to Northern for the Piano Guild where she "passed" both times, she went to the Milbank Bandmasters Piano Contest many times, has been on the 4.0 Honor Roll many times and placed second in the Watertown Elks Americanism Essay and Coloring Contest. Ashley's favorite subject is Civics and her role models are YaVonne Stahl and LaVonne Schaeffer. She plans to get good grades, get a high school diploma and then go to college.

Alexis Gustafson is a freshman and is the daughter of John and Beth Gustafson, Groton. Her siblings are Taylor and Hannah. Alexis is involved in Luther League, basketball, volleyball, swimming, skating and does baby-sitting. Her accomplishments are being on the honor roll and being first chair in trumpets in the honors band last year. Her favorite subject is Spanish and her mom is her role model. She plans to be a nurse some day.

Erin Smith is a sophomore and is the daughter of Dr. Steve and Carol Smith, Groton. Her siblings are Sam, Marah, Luke, AnneMarie and Isaac. Erin is involved in cross country, the school play, oral interp, Destination Imagination, show choir, jazz band and piano. Her accomplishments are placing in cross country meets, first superior in oral interp, superior plus on piano solos, being on the 4.0 honor roll and was a state oral interp qualifier. Erin's favorite subject is vocal and her role model is Lo Magee. She plans to go into nursing.

Marlee Jones is a junior and is the daughter of Jim and Mendy Jones, Groton. Siblings are Austin Jones and Emerlee Jones and her grandpa is Emery Sippel. Marlee is involved in soccer, basketball, volleyball, track, the swim team, FCCLA, FBLA an FCA. Her accomplishments are Groton Junior Snow Queen, being on the Principal's Honor Roll, getting straight As and being the most improved and the most valuable thrower in track. Her favorite subject is biology and her role model is her grandpa, Emery Sippel. She plans to go into the medical field to be an ophthalmologist, optometry and an orthodontist.

Luke Smith is a senior and is the son of Dr. Steve and Carol Smith. His siblings are Sam, Marah, Erin, AnneMarie and Issac. He is involved in show choir, Chamber choir, concert choir, concert band, jazz band, piano, Destination Imagination, school musical, church organist, cross country and a school tutor. Luke's accomplishments are National Merit Semi-finalist, National Honor Society; Superior rating for band, choir, Chamber Choir and solos; and being on the 4.0 honor roll. He is interested in medicine and biology, music, reading and making food. His role models are his parents and his favorite subjects are Biology II and Honors English. He plans to attend college at USD or SDSU for pre-medicine, then attend medical school to become a doctor.

Classifieds

Apartments For Rent

ONE AND TWO bedroom apartment for rent. HDS subsidized. Rent includes utilities and heat. No smoking. Pets okay. Contact Darlene Daly at 605/397-8131.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 4 of 35



Back: Megan Unzen, Kayla Jensen, Landon Marzahn, Madilyn Wright; Front: Isaac Smith, Taylor Gustafson, Cassandra Townsend

November Students of the Month

The November Students of the Month at Groton Area are Isaac Smith, Kayla Jensen, Cassandra Townsend, Madilyn Wright, Landon Marzahn, Megan Unzen and Taylor Gustafson.

Isaac Smith is a sixth grader and is the son of Dr. Steve and Carol Smith, Groton. His siblings are Samuel, Marah, Luke, Erin and AnneMarie. Isaac is involved in basketball, soccer, piano, the school play and MathCounts. His accomplishments are winning MathCounts three times, getting second at the state DI twice and being on the honor roll in the first quarter. He is interested in trivia, sports and likes food. His favorite subject is math and Sam Smith is his role model. He wants to find a cure for cancer.

Kayla Jensen is a seventh grader and is the daughter of Robin and Lynn Jensen, Claremont. She has a daughter, Abby. Kayla is involved in Destination Imagination, volleyball, MathCounts and band. Her accomplishments are: MathCounts - first place in seventh grade individual competition and first place in seventh grade team competition on October 1; and went to state in DI in 2012. She is interested in DI, art, reading, being awesome, animals and duct tape. Band is her favorite subject and her aunt, Vonnie, is her role model. She does not have any future plans right now, but she does want a husky dog some day.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 5 of 35

Cassandra Townsend is an eighth grader and is the daughter of Dean and Kellie Townsend, Groton. Travis is her brother. Cassandra is involved in 4-H, track and likes to ride horse. Her accomplishments include being named the South Dakota Quarter Horse Rookie of the Year and has won multiple other horse titles. She is interested in working with animals and drawing. Her dad is her role model and her favorite subject is art. She plans to work with animals in her future occupation.

Madilyn Wright is a freshman and is the daughter of Lynn and Stephan Wright, Houghton. Her brother is Nathan. Madilyn is involved in 4-H, volleyball, track and FFA. She earned a 100% on the math portion of the Dakota Step Test as a fifth grader and was a champion junior showman at the Challenge of the Best in 2013. She is interested in playing sports and hanging out with friends. English is her favorite subject and her mom is her role model. Madilyn is not sure what she wants to do in the future.

Landon Marzahn is a sophomore and is the son of Wade and Renee Marzahn, Groton. His siblings are Breanna, Nicole and Andrew. His activities include golfing, robotics, 4-H, band, and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Youth Group. His accomplishments include making it state in golf, being on the honor roll and Youth Engineering Adventure. He is interested in golfing, hunting, fishing, robotics and skating. Math is his favorite subject and his dad is his role model. He plans to pursue an engineering degree.

Megan Unzen is a junior and is the daughter of Tiffany and Jake Unzen, Groton. Haley, Erin and Nathan are her siblings. She is involved in volleyball, softball, FCA, youth group, FBLA and tutoring. She has been on the 4-0 honor roll since junior high and has been named student of the month. She is interested in sports, reading, hanging out with friends, painting, drawing, fishing and watching movies. Her favorite subject is math and her role model is her grandpa, Dale Kurth. She is undecided on what to do in the future, but does plan to attend college.

Taylor Gustafson is a senior and is the daughter of John and Beth Gustafson, Groton. Her sisters are Alexis and Hannah. Taylor was a volleyball team manager, is involved in the yearbook, Luther League, Carnival of Silver Skates as a skater and an instructor, YMCA volleyball coach, show choir, piano, an accompanist, school plays and GHS choir. Her accomplishments are earning multiple superior ratings at the NSU music contest for piano and vocal solos, art exhibit at the Granary, earning the vocal director's award, being selected as a HOBY ambassador, being on the National Honor Society and was a merit finalist at the Miss Teen of South Dakota. Taylor is interested in reading, volunteering, shopping, photography, snowmobiling and spending time with family and friends. Her favorite subjects are Biology II, Art III and Honors English. Her grandma is her favorite role model. She plans to go to USD to major in nursing then get a master's degree in physician's assistant.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 6 of 35

Coffee Cup

Team Standings: Golden Girls 8, Ten Pins 5, Farm Girls 5, James Valley 3, Ken's 2, Jungle Lanes 1.

High Games: Mavis Rossow 180, Vicki Walter 177, Vickie Kramp 172.

High Series: Mavis Rossow 487, Vickie Kramp 463, Vicki Walter 453.

Conde National

Team Standings: Giants 28.5 (winner of first half), Mets 24.5, Cubs 24, Pirates 23.5, Colts 23.5, Braves 20.

Men's High Games: Cliff Kuckelburg 234, 199, 182; Lance Frohling 205, Larry Frohling 178.

Women's High Games: Brianna Kuckelburg 205 and 180, Joyce Walter 183, Mary Larson 177, Vickie Kramp 177.

Men's High Series: Cliff Kuckelburg 615, Lance Frohling 484, Bryce Dargatz 473.

Women's High Series: Brianna Kuckelburg, 533 Mary Larson 489, Joyce Walter 487, Vickie Kramp 487.

Prairie Mixed

Team Standings: Foxes 6.5, Jankelopes 5, Coyotes 4.5, Pocket Gophers 4, Chipmunks 3.5, Killer Chihuahuas 0.5.

Men's High Games: Brad Waage 278, 214, Doug Jorgensen 243, Ryan Schelle 220, Rick Carlson 216, Roger Colestock 216, 213, Roger Spanier 213, Lance Frohling 211

Women's High Games: Sue Stanley 182, Vicki Jorgensen 180, Tasha Dunker 168

Men's High Series: Brad Waage 681, Roger Colestock 612, Doug Jorgensen 573

Women's High Series: Tasha Dunker 478, Vicki Walter 465, Sue Stanley 453

New Year's Eve

10 oz. Sirloin

or

12 oz. Baked Walleye Filet

Served With Baked Potato and Salad

5:30-9:00

Johnson Brothers Band

9:00 to 1:30

120 S Main St. • 298-5252



Groton Area Elementary School News

Elementary Principal ~ Dan Dalchow

Book Readership is going strong here at Groton Area Elementary. Whenever you can have children reading more, it is a good thing. The relationship between a student's reading ability and their success in school is quite substantial. The easier reading becomes, the less processing power one's brain needs to utilize for reading purposes, and that extra processing can go towards higher level thinking skills. The more you read, or practice, the easier it becomes, to the point of it being automatic.

There is a reason why we spend so much time emphasizing reading in our lower grades. Brain research has shown that once a child reaches the age of approximately 8 years old, the brain starts to change and it becomes much more difficult to master the skill of reading. This is similar to studies that have shown that a young child can learn a foreign language much easier and faster than their adult counterparts. Something in the brain changes around the age of 8 and it takes roughly 5 times as long to master those reading and language skills. Thus it makes sense to invest in the time and staff needed to ensure that all of our students are reading at grade level by the time they reach 3 grade.

By the time students have reached middle school, a good reader will have read over 10 million words. On the other hand, students who do not read out of school, and who struggle will read approximately 100 thousand words over the same time period. This is quite a substantial difference and it is not hard to figure out that the limited exposure to reading will negatively affect a student's ability to perform well academically. With over 75% of students who drop out of school struggling to read, it is very important that we reach them as soon as possible to do everything we can to give them the skills necessary to read at grade level. Rest assured we are doing our best to make sure that this happens at Groton Area Elementary.

One of the ways we encourage students to read is with incentives. The hope is that by having some extrinsic rewards encouraging students to read, eventually student



www.cathy-snidele.com

"Whether we want them or not, the New Year will bring new challenges; whether we seize them or not, the New Year will bring new opportunities." - Michael Josephson

Happy New Year

FROM

**Truck World &
Prorate Services**

Clark Engineering

**Farmers Union
Co-op of Ferney**

RDO Equipment

Blocker Construction

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 8 of 35

will realize what reading can do for them and turn reading into an intrinsic reward by itself. So we set goals with rewards for those that reach those goals. The goals for students in grades 1st through 5th for reading utilize our Accelerated Reader program. Student earn points for reading A.R. books and passing the short comprehension quiz. The goal is ten points multiplied by a student's grade, so a first grader's goal would be 10 points, a second grader's 20, and so on. We also have a super reader goal that is 7 times their grade level goal, so a 1st grader's super reader goal is 70 points, a 2nd grader's 140 points, and so on. Look for a banner in the elementary gym listing all of our super readers from the inception of this super reader goal sometime soon after the holiday break.

If you ever have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me here at school.

Sincerely,

Mr. Dan Dalchow ~ Principal

Groton Area Elementary School

Elementary Phone # 397-2317

E-mail: dan.dalchow@k12.sd.us

Junior Kindergarten – Kayla Krause

Happy holidays from all of us in Junior Kindergarten! As we finish up the second quarter, we are amazed with how quickly the year is going and how much we have grown since the beginning of the year.

In the spirit of the season, many of our letter matching activities, stories, and games are centered around a Christmas/winter theme. We also have a gift wrapping station set up in our dramatic play center. The students really enjoy getting the opportunity to wrap presents, add bows and ribbon, and write friends' names on the tags.

We recently visited the fourth grade classroom as they presented the play *Ranita the Frog Princess*. They did a wonderful job and had impressive scenery and props. Junior Kindergarten had a few very special visitors come to our classroom this week as well. Elsa from the movie *Frozen* and Mrs. Claus came to visit JK. Elsa played the ukulele and sang songs, and Mrs. Claus read us a story and handed out treats.

We want to wish everyone a safe and enjoyable Christmas break!

1st Grade ~ Emily Eichler & Julie Milbrandt

Merry Christmas! We hope this finds you all enjoying the holiday season with family and friends. The first graders are sure ready for Christmas! Here are the latest "happenings" in first grade:

We have learned over 68 brand new high-frequen-

A colorful, bubbly graphic that says "HAPPY NEW YEAR!" in large, stylized letters. The letters are yellow and orange with a gradient and are surrounded by small blue and pink dots. There are also some squiggly lines around the text.

Enjoy The New Year of 2015!

This year is a new chance, to start over, make mistakes, love new people, and try harder not to take life for granted because you don't know how long you'll have it.

GROTON
VET CLINIC



1503 N Broadway, Groton, 605/397-8145

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 9 of 35

cy words, all short and long vowel sounds, 11 consonant blends, and how to identify nouns and verbs. We have even learned how to make and use present-tense and past-tense verbs. Our textbook stories are becoming longer and using some challenging words. It is a good thing we have hard-working students ready for a challenge!

In math, we are still learning different strategies to solve math problems. One strategy we have been working on is making groups of ten. We use this method when adding two 2-digit numbers. We also use the make-a-ten strategy with money, where we think of ten pennies as a group of ten, or a dime. We have solved many story problems and have lots of practice explaining our thinking to the classmates in our math class. This helps others learn the way we think, as well as, helping our own thought process.

In science class, we are learning about life cycles. This is usually a favorite unit for students, as we get to learn about the life cycles of frogs, butterflies, flowers, and trees. Social studies class has been filled with learning about maps, land and water, and different parts of our Earth.

What a busy first half of the school year we had! We look forward to updating you again in 2015!

3rd Grade ~ Kristi Anderson & Deb Winburn

It is such an exciting time of the year for our students! Christmas is in the air with our concert practice and the numerous works of art that adorn our walls. Third graders also submitted entries to the Woodsy Owl/Smokey Bear poster contest sponsored by the Groton Garden Club.

Science finds us studying ecosystems, and students made trioramas to illustrate these. The next unit of study will be animals with concentration on food chains, predators, and carnivores. We've studied urban, rural, and suburban communities in social studies. We are currently finishing up our Native American unit.

We have been spending a great deal of time on recognizing main ideas and supporting details in reading class. Students have also been reading passages to determine author's purpose. We are learning words with prefixes and suffixes as well as possessive forms. We will read Sarah, Plain and Tall when we return in January. We are doing our second round of DIBELS testing for the year to monitor our students' fluency and comprehension. Students have been reading a variety of passages and then going back to the passage to find text evidence in all subject areas.

Math finds us in the world of fractions, area, perimeter, and we continually work on word problems. We move on to multi-step word problems as we are ready. We are always busy!

We wish all of you a happy holiday season and a wonderful new year!

5th Grade ~ Shelby Hendrickson & Janel Lone

It is hard to believe that we are approaching the half-way point of the school year. Students have spent part



Wishing you and your loved ones peace, health, happiness and prosperity in the coming New Year.



Lance Frohling
Groton Location Manager
605/397-2671
frohlingl@fullcircleag.com

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 10 of 35

of the first half of the year reviewing things from fourth grade. It has just been the last month that we have moved into more unfamiliar territory. In Math, we started reviewing adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing whole numbers and decimals. We have just finished long division and division by 2 digit divisors. We will be moving into fractions after the New Year.

In Science, we have completed the section on Earth and space. We will be starting physical science and learning about atoms. The electric company came in and did a short presentation on how we get electricity. We will also have the opportunity to build robots. Social Studies has us reviewing the geography of our nation and Native Americans. Currently we are studying the explorers. Students are also taking quizzes on the states and are expected to know all 50 states.

Technology seems to be a bigger part of our classroom each year. Both Science and reading textbook are also on the internet. We have many internet sites to help improve writing and math skills. Students each have flash drives to save their projects. This allows them to work on their projects at home and at school. Senteos are another form of technology we are using with our smartboards. They are handheld devices that students use to enter their answers. The computer will then tell them which answers they had correct and which were wrong. The times are changing and we are trying to keep up.

Speech Pathologist~ Mary Hempel & Jennifer Deutsch

Greetings to all Groton area parents and staff! I am Jennifer Deutsch, one of the speech therapists that is in the Groton Area School, to provide services for students with Communication Disorders. I am employed by the North Central Special Education Cooperative (NCSEC), and travel to Groton

Mondays and Thursdays. I currently reside in Britton, and that happens to be where I grew up and attended school myself. I have been a Speech Language Pathologist for 17 years, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Communication Disorders from NSU, and then my graduate degree from USD with a Masters of Art in Speech and Language Pathology. I've been a part of several districts in this area in the past. Langford, Warner, Doland, Conde, Roslyn, and Frederick are all schools I have compiled experience in. At the present time, my other district to provide services in is Langford. I have two sons that attend school in Britton. When I told them I would now be traveling to Groton, I said "What could be a better? I'll be a Britton Brave, Langford Lion, and Groton tiger all in one"! I am very excited to work with new staff and students and be a part of this school. It is an amazing setting and I am fortunate to work with excellent teachers and staff. Everyone has made me feel exceptionally welcomed. You have a superb school here! In addition to my job in the school I am able to help out with speech therapy occasionally in the hospital setting in Britton, which is an advantage as it hopefully keeps me versatile in the field of communication disorders. Please contact Mary Hempel or myself at the school if you have concerns with your child in the area of speech commu-



Thank God for this day.

As we continue this renewed journey of

**Hope and Faith on this Earth,
may God, in His infinite mercy, grant
us the comfort we need to strengthen
our Hope and Faith in order to steady
our balance,**

**as we embark on this
wonderful trip round the
sun once again.**

**Meanwhile, let's celebrate our victory
over last year.**

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!

Olson Backhoe & Trenching

397-8262



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 11 of 35

nication. This may include hearing skills, fluency skills when speaking, voice disorders, articulation (speech sound productions), and overall expressive/receptive language skills which may include vocabulary, grammar, social language, and listening and comprehension skills. Happy Holidays!

Physical Education – Lynette Grieve

Since my last newsletter, the weather has changed drastically and we are now inside all the time for P.E. classes.

We have enjoyed numerous games and learning and practicing some skills for a few sports. The games we have played are Three-Team Dodge Ball, Amoeba Tag and Steal the Bacon.

We have practiced the skills of bumping and setting for volleyball using a beach ball to make it easier for our small hands. We then had fun practicing these skills over a net. We are now working on Basketball skills. We have practiced dribbling and the bounce pass so far. We will also be learning and practicing the chest pass and the how to shoot the ball correctly.

We are all looking forward to the Christmas vacation and will then come back continuing with Basketball skills.

GRASP/OST (Before and After School Program) – Rose Long

GRASP and Winter Weather Policy:

With the Winter Weather starting to come after the last few weeks of nice weather that we have had, I wanted to share our GRASP program policy when it comes to Winter Weather. Here is how the GRASP program will operate as it relates to late starts, early releases due to weather, and school cancelations:

1 or 2 hour late start to school

OST will still be open at 7 AM with breakfast served at 8 AM and will remain open until the start of the school day.

Early release from school due to weather: No OST

School cancelation: No OST

Note that if school gets called off after a late start, students will need to be picked up immediately as there will be no OST after a cancelation of school.

Recent/Future Activities:

The GRASP program recently participated in activities to celebrate the start of the winter season. We have participated in different games and have done a variety of other activities including coloring snow kings and queens and watching the movie 101 Dalmatians.

Looking forward, GRASP will be closed during Christmas Break. However, once we get back to school in January, we are hoping to do different activities relating to snowmen, cooperative play, among other themes.

30-75% off Christmas Décor

Our staff
and
families
wish you
a very safe
and happy
new year.



Thank you for your business in 2014

Watch Facebook for additional sale
notifications!

*Fresh flowers, silks, home decor &
so much more*

101 N. Main St., Groton ~ 397-8650
www.oldebankfloral.com



Olde Bank Floral @

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 12 of 35

MS/HS News

Greetings from the Office of the Superintendent.

I hope that you've taken the opportunity over the past couple of weeks to appreciate the talented students from your community. The cast and crew of Honk performed twice for the public and did an absolutely incredible job of musically telling the story of The Ugly Duckling. The Christmas programs are being held right before the Christmas break and promise to be very enjoyable and will again display the talent and efforts of our students.

When there are weather-related announcements to be made, they will be sent via SchoolReach, they will be posted to the grotonarea.com website, posted on our Facebook page, and posted to the television stations KELO, KSFY, and KDLT. We also notify the local news media, The Groton Daily Independent (397news.com) and the Dakota Press. The Aberdeen area radio stations are also notified. Given the vast array of tools available to us, I am very confident that the important messages of school delays, cancellations, or early dismissals will be available to each home in a timely manner.

As another important winter time reminder, please help your children to dress appropriately for winter weather as well. Even though our bus transportation system (and most students' cars) are very dependable modes of transportation, general sense tells us that unanticipated problems can occur en route to school or home. When the temperatures drop, students need to have appropriate clothing, including long pants (not shorts), coats, hats, gloves, etc.

My wish for each of you is to have a very happy and safe holiday season and a joyous and fruitful 2015.

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me any time.

Sincerely,
Joe Schwan

Geometry – Mr. Kjellsen

The Geometry classes are just completing the unit on proving figures congruent. It is a sequential process where the must justify their conclusions using theorems, postulates, and definitions. It is one of the most difficult concepts they will do in Geometry. They are also using reflections over 1, 2, and 3 different lines to show the different ways that figures are congruent. They will be starting the chapter dealing with polygons. They will use symmetry to learn the various properties of different types of polygons

Algebra II – Mr. Kjellsen

The Algebra II classes are on a chapter involving solving systems of equations. They will solve equations with 2 and 3 variables by methods such as, linear combination, substitution, graphing, and Cramer's rule. It is one of the most important chapters in the book. The main purpose of Algebra should be for students to be able to

Hope It's Festive.
Hope It's Fun.
Hope It's Lucky For Everyone!



Our best wishes to you
and yours in 2015.



(605) 228-3880
**Spanier's Custom
Harvesting
& Trucking**

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 13 of 35

solve equations. Their Christmas present will be a test over this chapter the last day of class before the break.

Trig – Mr. Kjellsen

The Trigonometry class is currently working on finding missing parts of right and non-right triangles. They have learned several different methods, such as, the law of sines, and the law of cosines, to find these missing parts. They are also graphing equations involving the different trig ratios. The last portion of this chapter involves solving equations with trig functions.

Discrete Math – Mr. Kjellsen

The Discrete Math class is a new class this year. It is for seniors who have completed all the previous levels of math. They are currently working on a unit in Logic. They use various types of reasoning to determine if various premises and conclusions are valid.

6th Grade Math – Mrs. Hanson

Our 6th graders have been working hard with decimals and fractions. We began the year working with decimal concepts (place values, comparing, ordering, estimating), and then moved on to decimal operations (adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing), along with working on problem solving skills. We then applied what we learned with decimals to central tendency problems (mean, median, and mode) and displayed them on different forms of graphs and tables.

Next came fractions...students learned that in order to reduce fractions we use the greatest common factor, and that we use least common multiple to write fractions with a common denominator. Then, we used this common denominator concept to compare and order fractions and to add and subtract fractions. We are just finishing up with multiplying and dividing fractions and working with fractions in expressions and equations. When we return from Christmas vacation, we will be starting to work with integers (positive and negative whole numbers).

Whenever you can point out the importance of math in the "real world" it will help the students see why math is so important. If you are doubling a recipe for the holidays, or if you are playing a game of bean bags this summer (those bean bags canceling each other out is working with positives and negatives) or if you are measuring fabric or cutting a piece of wood, please involve your child and ask them to help!

7th Grade Math – Mrs. Hanson

In 2014, our 7th graders reviewed decimals briefly, worked with fractions and integers, used these fractions and integers in problems involving the order of operations and measures of central tendency, and we



As another year approaches, we are given a book with blank pages. The book is called Opportunity and the first chapter is New Year's Day. Let the Spirit of God guide you on your journey in 2015.



"Within the covers of the Bible are the answers for all the problems men face."
- Ronald Reagan

www.heavenboundministries.church

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 14 of 35

are just finishing up expressions, equations, and inequalities. Whenever possible, we use hands-on manipulatives to see "why" 2 negatives that are divided turn into a positive or "why" adding a positive to a negative is sometimes a positive answer and sometimes it's a negative answer. We have recently been talking about "why" we use the Property of Equality to solve an equation and that sometimes there isn't just one answer to a problem and that is "why" we need to write an inequality instead.

We will begin 2015 with ratios, rates, and proportions which lead into percentages. After that we will work extensively with Geometry and learn all the formulas we need before we have the Smarter Balanced Test in the spring. We will also be exploring "why" these formulas work. When you encounter math in your everyday life, please encourage your kids to "see" it as well. If you are figuring out how many miles per gallon your vehicle got this week, you are figuring rate. Does it really pay to buy the cheaper gas if I don't get as many miles per gallon? That's real life math. If you are shopping and see a great sale, estimate the new cost or the discount amount. Check to see if that large shampoo bottle really is a better deal than buying the smaller bottle. You might actually be surprised yourself at what you think is going to be the better deal; sometimes it isn't.

The 7th graders are very lucky to have lots of technology with their curriculum. I have shown them how to find links to video tutorials for each lesson in their textbook, online lesson quizzes, and many other links that I have found. We also have used the iPads recently for working with equations and inequalities. I have several sites linked at www.portaportal.com and sign in with my name (mrs.hanson) at the guest access. The students should have this written in their planners.

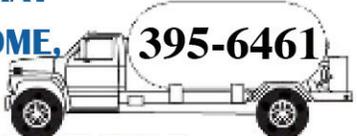
8th Grade Transition Math – Mrs. Hanson

Our 8th grade year in math reviews a lot of the 7th grade curriculum, but takes it a step farther into more real life problems, higher-level thinking questions, and more explanations. We do Pre-Algebra along with Geometry. Eighth graders began the year with powers of ten and scientific notation, writing, solving, and graphing expressions, equations (which includes the Pythagorean Theorem), and inequalities. We have linked fractions, decimals and percents, and used them when working with probabilities. Knowing what a good definition was and using it to classify numbers and shapes was also another concept that we recently encountered. In fact, you may have seen our Polygon Snowmen. They had directions such as the snowman needed a trapezoidal sled, hexagons for buttons, a scarf made from rhombuses, etc. Currently we are working with graphing equations and will soon work with the slopes.

After Christmas, we will be doing a lot of Geometry. We will be working with rotations, reflections, and translations. We will review some basics with lines and angles, then moving on to Surface Areas and Volumes of 3-dimensional figures.

Eighth graders should be coming home with homework most nights. The only way to learn math is to



HERE'S TO THE BRIGHT
NEW YEAR, AND A **Farmers**
FOND FAREWELL TO **Union**
THE OLD; HERE'S TO **CO-OP**
THE THINGS THAT
ARE YET TO COME. **395-6461**
AND TO THE 
MEMORIES THAT WE HOLD.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

101 S 1st Ave., Ferney

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 15 of 35

practice math, just like they need to do for music or sports or really, anything in our lives. When it's time for a test, they should be looking the chapter over, going back over the problems they had gotten wrong in their homework and reworking them, using online sites to practice some more or watch tutorials, reviewing their vocabulary/note sheet we fill out in class, etc. At this grade level, they really need to take the time to review and study. These middle school years are laying the foundation for their high school math courses and will be vital to their success.

7th FACS – Mrs. Tietz

A wonderful addition to the FACS department this fall was the 7th grade quarter exploratory class. In a 9 week long class, the students have the opportunity to learn the basics of sewing and construct a cinch bag. Then we move on to basic cooking unit where students are introduced to kitchen safety, kitchen equipment, cooking terminology, basic preparation methods, and parts of recipe. They get to experience these concepts not only in the classroom, but through cooking labs. Middle school students really enjoy these hands-on units!

FACS I – Mrs. Tietz

Students in FACS I began the year with a Family Connections unit. The students have explored the need for strong families, needs and values that the family teaches, various family structures, how society has affected the family unit, communication within a family, and how to strengthen family bonds, as well as the family unit as whole. We then moved in a "Choices" unit, where students explored the long-term and short-term effects of their choices. They each were able to experience 24 hours with "Real Care Baby" to discover the realities of a teen parent. In groups, students selected a topic for their Illustrated Talks, created them and competed with them at the District I FCCLA Meeting on December 12. Each group did a great job! We then moved into a career exploration unit where they completed research on a career they are interested in. They explored job applications, resume writing, and job interview skills. Each student went through a mock interview and had the opportunity the job shadow a professional in the field in which they are interested in. After Christmas break, the students will begin the sewing and textiles unit.

FACS II – Mrs. Tietz

Food Preservation is the unit the FACS II students have kicked the year off with. We began by reviewing kitchen safety and sanitation, kitchen equipment and terminology. We spent time learning about food preservation and experienced it hands-on. We then moved on to our meats unit where they learned about and prepared beef, pork, poultry, and fish. We then came to the baking section of the unit where they will explore quick breads, yeast breads, pies, and pastry making. After Christmas break, we will be moving into a Child Development Unit, focusing on toddlers.

FACS III – Mrs. Tietz

FACS III began the school year with a unit on "Farm to Table". This is a great opportunity to be able to utilize local produce and learn first-hand how important



2015 DOG LICENSES AVAILABLE NOW!!

Licenses due by Dec. 31, 2014

Fines start Jan. 2, 2015

Please bring proof of rabies shot information for each dog to City Hall

Please contact City Hall as soon as possible if you no longer have any dogs

Spayed or neutered dogs are \$5 per dog, otherwise \$10 per dog

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 16 of 35

it is to eat fresh and local. We were able to travel to a local garden, harvest vegetables from it, and then plan and cook several meals from that produce. Students concluded that food tastes so much better when you grow it and cook it yourself! We then moved in a cultural cooking unit, where students created presentations about a global cuisine of their choosing. We also made food from each cuisine. In the second half of the semester, students dove into a wardrobe planning unit. We studied different elements that affect clothing choices, such as personal coloring, body proportion, lifestyle needs, and budget. Students compiled this information to form a "Personal Wardrobe Booklet" featuring styles and colors that best suit them. After Christmas break, students will be choosing a sewing pattern and fabric that is suitable for each of them and will construct this project and will later be modeled in the FCCLA style show.

FACS IV – Mrs. Tietz

Entrepreneurship is the basis for FACS IV. The students dipped into the meaning of entrepreneurship with lots of classroom discussion. Refinishing wooden furniture being an entrepreneurial opportunity, students will be completing a project that will be displayed at the last home volleyball game and conferences. They have each brought in a piece of furniture they have choose to refinish along with all of the supplies needed to complete this large project. The students have worked very hard and each have a beautiful piece of furniture to take home with them to be proud of, along with a new skill that could someday be transferred to an entrepreneurial opportunity for them. We are now in a home cooking unit where the students have had the opportunity to make dishes that staples in any family kitchen such as roasting a turkey, meatloaf, and angel food cake. To finish up the semester the students will be baking, including pies, cookies, and a gingerbread house.

FCCLA – Mrs. Tietz

The 2014-2015 FCCLA year was kicked off to a great start! Over the summer, members tended to the newly planted planter at the baseball complex. It was reported that the planter looked great and big thank you was owed to the baseball complex grounds crew for helping to keep watered and weeded! The "Kiss the Pig" contest was held in the elementary school. Mrs. Gibbs, Kindergarten teacher, was the lucky elementary teacher that was chosen by students to kiss the pig at the Homecoming assembly the morning of Homecoming. The kids loved seeing her kiss the pig, which was not so little this year and oh how he squealed! The football cheerleaders joined us to bring a whole lot of school spirit to the elementary students, the kids demonstrated their spirit by cheering along to "Battle Cry", "Go Bananas", and "Say What?". Also for Homecoming, the FCCLAers sold tattoos during lunch at both the elementary school and high school, all proceeds going to continue to help fund the more new playground equipment for the park. We also sponsored the Duck Pond at the Homecoming Car-

FCSAMERICA.COM

THINKING ABOUT OR PLANNING TO BUILD A HOME IN THE COUNTRY? YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THIS EVENT.

Join Farm Credit Services of America at BuildingOn® on Monday, January 5 in Watertown from 5:30-7:30 p.m. or Tuesday, January 6 in Aberdeen from 5:30-7:30 p.m. We'll share information and resources to help you make informed, confident decisions. Some of the topics to be discussed are considerations for country home construction, the construction loan and funding process, requirements and timing – from pre-application to final disbursement and explanations of commonly heard home financing terms.

Call or email Matt or Kathy to register.



Matt Lindgren
Country Home
Loan Officer
NMLS #614225
605-882-4030

matt.lindgren@fcsamerica.com



Kathy Holm
Country Home
Loan Specialist
NMLS # 1174536
605-225-1030

kathy.holm@fcsamerica.com



**Farm Credit Services
of America**



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 17 of 35

nival. Members sold fruit, meat, & cheese as our annual fundraiser, with it being delivered the week of December 15. In November, FCCLA along with several local church youth groups sponsored our annual community food drive. The students went door to door in the evening, collecting food that was later distributed to local families in need. Thank you for donating food! We attended our District 1 FCCLA meeting in Clark on December 12. FCCLAers presented their Illustrated Talks, all earning golds or silvers. Great job FCCLAers!

Bio I – Mr. Kurth

The students have been studying cells. We have talked about the plasma membrane, organelles and their functions, and how materials move through cells. We just finished talking about cell respiration and photosynthesis. I believe the students would vote that those were the two toughest topics to date in the course. We are now moving into cell reproduction and will test on mitosis and meiosis before we jump into genetics.

Life Science – Mr. Kurth

Life Science is basically a mini biology class. We talk about a lot of the same topics we talk about in biology but maybe not as in depth. The class is currently going through all the kingdoms. We just finished talking about bacteria. We discussed eubacteria and archaeobacteria. We are now working on protists and fungi and eventually will move to plants and animals. The students find it interesting in that there are some similarities between kingdoms but there are differences and how that plays a role in making their own kingdoms.

This semester has been a busy one for the students in the Groton ag program. We had a student from SDSU join us for her student teaching experience. Miss Bailey Hurlbert was a welcome addition and shared her knowledge on a variety of subjects.

Intro to Agriculture – Mr. Franken

The Intro to Ag students have been learning about FFA and they each were required to learn and recite the FFA Creed. The students are currently learning about parliamentary procedure and how to properly run a meeting. They have also started record books for their Supervised Agriculture Experience. We are using a new program this year and all the record books are online.

Natural Resources – Mr. Franken

The students in the Natural Resources class have been busy updating their records into the new online record keeping system. This year they have studied Soil, GPS, and Fish with Miss Hurlbert. Next semester we are going to start a wildlife unit where we will score and mount deer antlers.

Plant Science – Mr. Franken

Record books are a common theme in class as the junior students are also working on getting their online record books set up. We recently finished up a unit on common weeds in South Dakota and how to control them. Next semester we will be moving into our Animal Science curriculum.

Ag Business Management – Mr. Franken

The senior students have also been filling out record books and applying for their state degree in FFA, if they qualify. They have learned how to use different marketing strategies such as forward contracts and hedging to sell farm commodities.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 18 of 35

Horticulture – Mr. Franken

The Horticulture class has been really busy working with Miss Hurlbert. She recently finished up the unit on Floriculture by taking the students to the Golden Living Center and making candy bouquets with the residents. It was a great opportunity for growth from both the students and the residents.

FFA – Mr. Franken

The FFA students just finished up the fall semester with the State Leadership CDE's. We had five students qualify in three different events. The ag sales team of Nicholas Achen, Kate Helmer, Kaitlyn Ringgenberg and Katie Miller placed second on regions to qualify for state. Our two individual qualifiers were Trey Wright in the area of ag broadcasting and Katie Miller in the area of prepared public speaking.

7-12 Vocal Music and Show Choir – Mr. Swanson

Greetings! It has already been a very busy year! It's hard to believe that the Christmas is just around the corner!

7th-8th Grade Choir – Mr. Swanson

Members of the 7th-8th Grade Choir traveled to Britton on Monday, October 20, to perform in the Prairie Harvest Choral Festival. The guest conductor was Kent Knudson, the 7-12 vocal music director from West Lyons, Iowa. After the choral festival, we began working on Christmas music for our concert on Thursday, December 18.

High School Choir - Mr. Swanson

Eight members of the High School Choir traveled to Sioux Falls for All State Chorus on October 31 – November 1. Those that participated were Kaitlin O'Neill (soprano), Kari Hanson (soprano), Sydney Thorson (alto), Macy Knecht (alto), Adam Herman (tenor), Matt Knecht (tenor), Luke Smith (bass), and Alex Kern (bass). Matt Knecht received a 4 year participation award! The guest conductor was Dr. Andre Thomas. He is the Director of Choral Activities and Professor of Choral Music Education at The Florida State University.

The High School Choir has been working hard on our music for our Christmas Concert which will be held on Thursday, December 18. The Chamber Choir recently caroled at local businesses and homes in Groton! We are looking forward to a great start on small and large group contest in the spring!

Show Choir – Mr. Swanson

The Show Choir recently finished learning choreography for our competition show. Our choreographer is Melanie Walters, a professional choreographer from Omaha, Nebraska.

Thank you to everyone who purchased cookie dough from us back in October and those who purchased tickets for Tour of Homes. The fundraisers allow us to continue our strong show choir program!

Today in Weather History

1972: A winter system visited the area on the 29th through the 31st, with precipitation beginning as rain in South Dakota and snow in Minnesota during the early morning hours of the 29th. A period of freezing rain occurred across South Dakota before the precipitation there changed to all snow, while in west central Minnesota, snow in the morning changed to a period of freezing rain and sleet in the afternoon. Damages from the 40-mile wide ice storm from the Wheaton-Morris-Appleton area ENE through St. Cloud and Pine City, MN were some of the largest known to date across the area. Thousands of farms and homes across the ice storm strip were without power and telephone service as the result of thousands of broken lines and/or broken poles. Many were without utilities from one to three days, and a few without utilities for nearly a week. Utility damages were estimated to be 1.5 million dollars. In South Dakota, snowfall of 2 to 6 inches was common. Strong winds of over 40 mph accompanied the snow, causing drifting and blowing snow and occasionally reducing visibility to zero. Some of the roads were blocked. The most severe conditions occurred on the 30th when the highway department advised no traveling.

2010: A second stronger surface low pressure area moved across the region on New Year's Eve bringing widespread heavy snowfall along with blizzard conditions. Bitter cold northwest winds of 25 to 40 mph combined with additional snowfall of 6 to 10 inches brought visibilities to near zero across much of the region. This was the second blizzard in two days across the region. The blizzard conditions continued into early New Year's Day. Both Interstates 29 and 90 were closed from the 31st until Sunday, January 2nd. There were several stranded motorists along Highway 83 with five people being rescued. The total snowfall amounts from the two storms ranged from 6 to 15 inches across the region. The two day snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Eagle Butte; 7 inches at Doland; 8 inches at Mobridge and Gann Valley; 9 inches at Castlewood; 10 inches at Murdo, Clark, Ipswich, Kennebec, and Watertown and 11 inches at Clear Lake and Bryant. Locations with a foot or more of snow included 12 inches at Aberdeen, Gettysburg, Highmore, Milbank, Mission Ridge, and Bowdle; 13 inches at Eureka, Pierre, Onida, and Blunt; 14 inches at Mellette, Sisseton, Victor, and Roscoe with 15 inches at Britton, Webster, and Redfield. The snowfall began between 6 am and noon CST on the 31st and ended between 4 am and 11 am CST on January 1st.

1967: The Green Bay Packers beat the Dallas Cowboys 21 to 17 in the Ice Bowl. It was 13 degrees below zero at Lambeau Field, and the wind chill was -36.

1968: The world's highest sea-level barometric pressure reading occurred: 1083.3mb at Agata, Russia.

1978: Europe's coldest temperature on record: -73 degrees at Ust Schugor, Russia.

1988: The Chicago Bears beat the Eagles 20 to 12 in the playoff game known as the Fog Bowl. Just before half-time, a dense fog rolled in from Lake Michigan. Visibility was less than 20 yards. The fans and the announcers couldn't even see the game!

2000: The 2000 Independence Bowl will be remembered as the Snow Bowl. About 30 minutes before kickoff snow blew into Shreveport, LA with strong winds whipping from one end zone to the other. The game started with the synthetic grass field a mix of green and white. By the second quarter, the turf was blanketed by snow. Plows were used during timeouts to make the goal lines, end lines, and hash marks visible. Snow fell throughout the game. Mississippi State beat Texas A&M 43 to 41 in overtime.

2010: Forty tornadoes swarmed from the Ozarks to central Illinois, and also across central Mississippi. EF3 twisters struck Cincinnati, AR, Fort Leonard Wood, MO, Rolla, MO, Sunset Hills, MO, Lake Petersburg, IL, and near Macon, MS. Seven people were killed.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 20 of 35

1917 - The temperature at Lewisburg, WV, plunged to 37 degrees below zero to set a state record. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1929 - Greenland Ranch, in Death Valley, California, went the entire year without measurable precipitation. (The Weather Channel)

1933 - A 24 hour rainfall of 7.36 inches set the stage for the worst flood in Los Angeles history. Flooding claimed 44 lives. (David Ludlum)

1941 - Snow which began on New Year's Eve became a major blizzard on New Year's Day, burying Des Moines, IA, under 19.8 inches of snow in 24 hours, an all-time record for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1947 - A late afternoon tornado touched down 10 miles north of Shreveport LA, and dissipated south of El Dorado AR. The tornado, as much as 400 yards in width, killed 18 persons. It damaged or destroyed two thirds of the structures at Cotton Valley LA. (The Weather Channel)

1962 - Perhaps the worst blizzard in the history of the state of Maine finally came to an end. The storm produced 40 inches in 24 hours at Orono, and a total of 46 inches at Ripogenus Dam. Gale force winds produced snow drifts twenty feet high around Bangor. A disastrous icestorm was over Georgia and South Carolina. It ravaged the two states for days causing more than seven million dollars damage. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1963 - A snowstorm struck the Deep South. Meridian, MS, received 15 inches of snow, 10.5 inches blanketed Bay St Louis MS, and 4.5 inches fell at New Orleans LA. Freezing temperatures then prevailed for New Year's Day. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Torrential rains caused extensive flash flooding over eastern sections of the island of Ohau in Hawaii, resulting in many rock and mud slides. Rainfall totals ranged up to 22.89 inches in a 24 hour period, and property damage was estimated at 35 million dollars. Strong winds continued to usher arctic cold into the north central U.S. The temperature at Alexandria MN remained below zero through the day, and Jamestown ND reported a wind chill reading of 58 degrees below zero. Gales lashed the Great Lakes, with wind gusts to 54 mph reported at Lansing MI. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

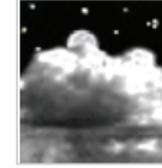
1988 - Warm and wet weather prevailed in the southeastern U.S. Six cities in Florida reported record high temperatures for the date. Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains from the Lower Mississippi Valley to the Southern Atlantic Coast. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - The year and decade ended on a soggy note in the eastern U.S. Thunderstorm rains pushed precipitation totals for the year to 88.32 inches at Baton Rouge, and to 75.37 inches at Huntsville AL, establishing all-time records for those two locations. Dry weather continued in California. Sacramento and San Francisco finished the month without any rain or snow, and Santa Maria reported their driest year of record with just 3.30 inches of precipitation. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2010 - Unusually warm air fueled strong storms in the midwestern and southern U.S., producing high winds and a preliminary count of 53 tornadoes across five states. At least eight people were killed in Missouri and Arkansas and dozens of others were injured. In Mississippi, about 200 people were evacuated from the Jackson-Evers International Airport, where an EF-2 tornado crossed a runway. (NCDC)

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 21 of 35

TODAY	TONIGHT	NEW YEAR'S DAY	THURSDAY NIGHT	FRIDAY	FRIDAY NIGHT	SATURDAY
						
Sunny High: 17 °F	Partly Cloudy Low: 10 °F	Increasing Clouds High: 24 °F	Mostly Cloudy Low: 7 °F	Partly Sunny High: 24 °F	Slight Chc Snow Low: 16 °F	Chance Snow High: 17 °F



**Relatively* Warmer Today*

Follow us on *Social Media*

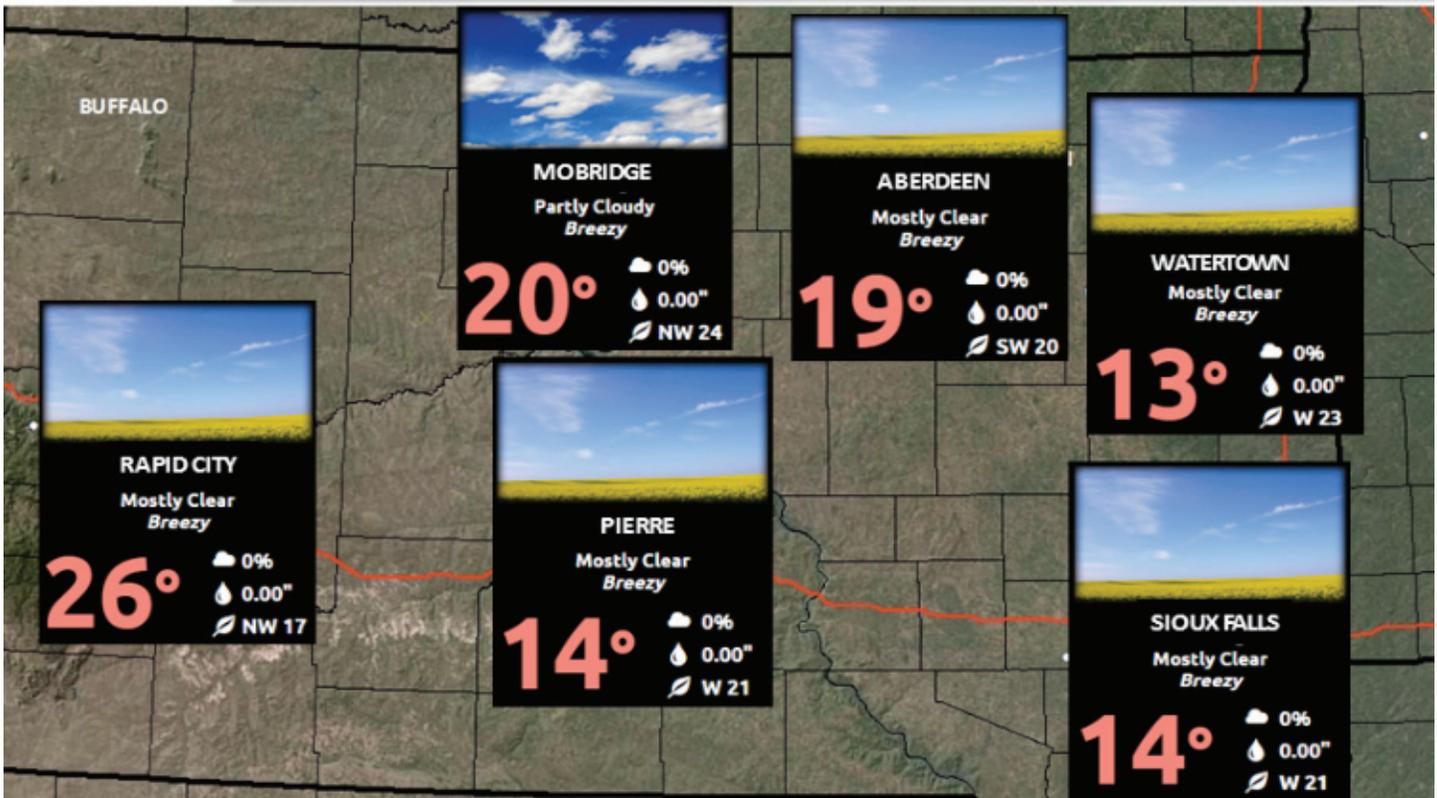
weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen



Relatively speaking, warmer temperatures are expected across the region today. Breezy southwest winds will gradually switch to more of a west or northwest direction this afternoon. Thursday, a weak cold front will move across the northern plains. However, any associated snowfall looks to remain across North Dakota and northern Minnesota.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 22 of 35

Yesterday's Weather

High: 2.0 at 2:56 PM

Low: -9.8 at 12:59 AM

High Gust: 18 at 10:34 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 49° in 1904

Record Low: -39° in 1967

Average High: 22°F

Average Low: 2°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.50

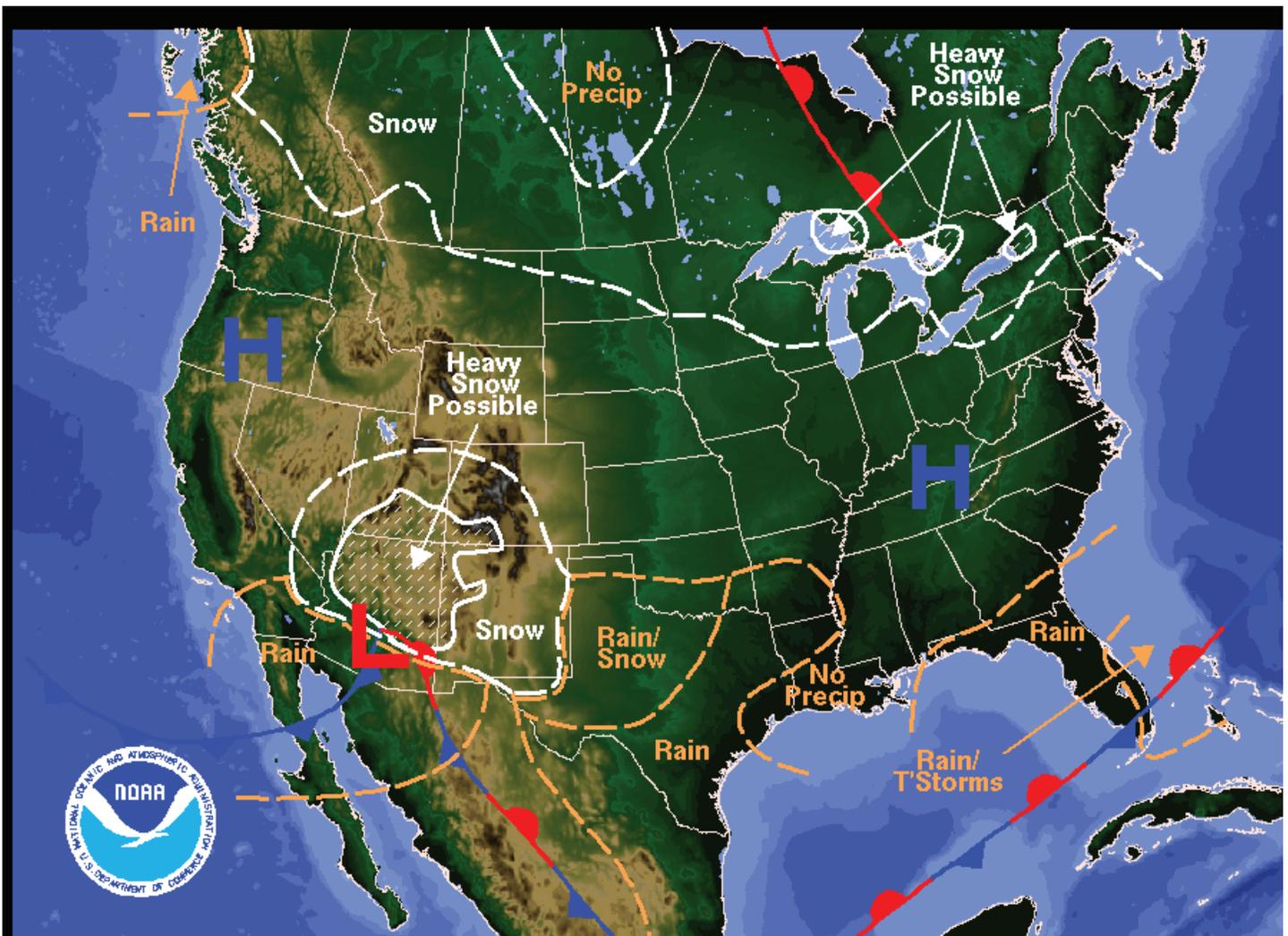
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.70

Precip Year to Date: 13.99

Sunset Tonight: 5:01 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:14 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Wed, Dec 31, 2014, issued 3:27 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



STARTING NEW

My father came from Italy. Often he would fascinate me with stories of their celebrations and holidays. One event stands out – New Year. They would begin each year with fireworks and noise making, hugging and dancing, shouting and well-wishing.

But that was not all. Believing that they should get rid of the old and take on the new, they would go through their drawers and closets and look for worn-out clothing, old dishes and furniture – whatever needed to be replaced. They would only keep what had value to them.

Perhaps it would do us good to go through our lives and take an inventory. We may find that we are harboring hatred and hostilities, harmful habits and hurts. Perhaps we would find some shortcomings and sins, false pride and forgotten promises. We may discover that there have been some days without prayer and Scripture reading, worship and witnessing.

The Bible advises us to “Throw off your old nature...be a new and different person, holy and good.” We do not have to wait for a new year to do this. We can do it now!

Prayer: Father, we confess with sorrow, shame and sadness our sins. We ask that You would cleanse and consecrate us for Your service. Help us to throw off our faults and failures and replace them with Your values and virtues. Give us victory through Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Scripture for Today: Ephesians 4:20-24 You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,

News from the Associated Press

Huron farm tops 300 bushels/acre in corn contest

HURON, S.D. (AP) — A Huron farm's crop this year set a lofty new state record in corn production. The South Dakota Corn Growers Association says Riverside Farms broke the 300-bushel-per-acre barrier with a record yield above 308 bushels in the irrigated-ground category for the National Corn Yield Contest.

The association says corn yields have grown consistently in recent decades and 300 bushels became a contest target for South Dakota farmers.

The state had 119 entries in four categories this year.

Riverside Farms also won the no-till/strip-till irrigated category with more than 289 bushels per acre. Scott McKee, of Hawarden, Iowa, won the non-irrigated ground category with nearly 287 bushels per acre. And Nathan Hoeft, of Stratford, took the top spot in no-till/strip-till non-irrigated with more than 261 bushels.

All state contest results: <http://bit.ly/1D4C8gZ> .

Home fires top list of Red Cross disaster responses

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Red Cross volunteers in South Dakota helped more people affected by home fires than all other disasters combined in 2014.

The group provided food, blankets and other services to more than 620 people whose homes were affected by fires throughout the year. The organization also provided financial support to 198 households to help replace lost belongings.

The group this year assisted in several other disasters across South Dakota, including a tornado in Wessington Springs that destroyed or damaged dozens of homes and a large fire at a motel in Pierre that displaced nearly 40 people.

The Red Cross says that nationwide its volunteers respond to a disaster every eight minutes and the vast majority of those are home fires.

Volleyball clinic to be held Feb. 7 in Rapid City

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — It's sign-up time for the Hardrocker Volleyball Skills Clinic put on by the women's volleyball team at the School of Mines & Technology in Rapid City.

The clinic is open to the first 30 girls from fifth through eighth grade who sign up before Jan. 30. The \$45 clinic is meant to build players' skills while having fun, and it includes lunch and a shirt.

The clinic will be held on Feb. 7 at the King Center.

Tuesday's Scores The Associated Press

BOYS BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 50, Rapid City Central 47

Andes Central 51, Menno 39

Britton-Hecla 73, Webster 52

Dakota Valley 63, West Central 59

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 25 of 35

Highmore-Harrold 81, Wessington Springs 67

MACCRAY, Minn. 66, Milbank Area 38

McCook Central/Montrose 52, Chester 38

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 59, Gregory 48

New England, N.D. 66, Lemmon 33

Pierre 45, Watertown 41

Todd County 85, Bennett County 32

Winner 68, Bon Homme 56

Chamberlain East/West Classic

Chamberlain 59, Tea Area 46

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 72, Platte-Geddes 68

Douglas 51, Canton 47

Lennox 57, Belle Fourche 34

NSU Wolves Classic

DeSmet 46, Harding County 38

Edgeley-Kulm-Montpelier, N.D. 47, Ipswich 31

Faith 49, LaMoure-Litchville-Marion, N.D. 29

Langford 71, Linton-HMB, N.D. 57

Potter County 58, St. Francis Indian 52

Sunshine Bible Academy 62, Northwestern 46

Park Rapids Tournament

Consolation: Park Rapids, Minn. 82, Rosholt 73

Swiftel Classic

Canby, Minn. 61, Hamlin 46

Deuel 63, Wilmot 57

Estelline 53, Waubay 24

James Valley Christian 75, Lake Preston 39

Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 38, Florence/Henry 35

Parker 45, Beresford 37

Wolsey Big Bo Classic

Kimball/White Lake 52, Timber Lake 46

Wolsey-Wessington 77, Jones County 53

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Bennett County 54, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 47

Highmore-Harrold 55, Wessington Springs 39

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 52, Gregory 25

Pierre 64, Watertown 44

Rapid City Stevens 51, Sturgis 41

Sisseton 45, Lisbon, N.D. 44

West Central 70, Dakota Valley 49

Winner 79, Bon Homme 54

Chamberlain East/West Classic

Lennox 64, Belle Fourche 59

Tea Area 62, Chamberlain 57, OT

Marshall Tournament (SMSU)

Sioux Falls Lincoln 92, Minneota, Minn. 78

Sioux Falls O’Gorman 62, Marshall, Minn. 44

Sioux Falls Washington 66, Martin County West, Minn. 49

Wilmot 63, Fulda, Minn. 41

Milbank Tournament

Milbank 65, Lemmon 59, 2OT

Summit 38, DeSmet 32

Wolsey Big Bo Classic

Kimball/White Lake 72, Iroquois 14

Timber Lake 64, Wolsey-Wessington 26

SD man gets 41 months in prison in assault case

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A central South Dakota man convicted of two assault charges has been sentenced to 41 months in prison.

U.S. Attorney Brendan Johnson says 22-year-old Santana Drapeau was also sentenced to two years of supervise release for his conviction on charges of domestic assault by a habitual offender and simple assault. A federal jury convicted Drapeau in October.

Authorities say the Fort Thompson man assaulted his spouse twice on May 18. Drapeau first hit the victim in the face during a bonfire on May 18 and then physically assaulted her at a residence. Authorities say Drapeau committed these assaults when he already had three final convictions in Crow Creek Sioux Tribal Court for domestic violence against the same victim.

It’s unclear whether Drapeau has an attorney.

South Dakota’s minimum wage goes up with new year

CARSON WALKER, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The new year comes with a pay raise for thousands of South Dakotans who make minimum wage or wait tables, but Thursday’s increase already has prompted some higher fees and budget changes.

Residents voted 55 percent to 45 percent in November for a measure that raises the minimum hourly wage from \$7.25 to \$8.50 an hour, increases the \$2.13 hourly tip wage to half the minimum wage, and ties future increases to the cost of living.

The hourly increase represents about \$50 additional per week for a full-time worker. A study released last fall by the nonpartisan nonprofit South Dakota Budget and Policy Institute found about 34,000 South Dakotans would be in line for raises and another 28,000 workers who make slightly more than the federal minimum wage could see a boost as employers adjust wage scales.

The hike means more money for Laurel Lund, who rents a house in Hot Springs, to pay for her prescriptions. Lund will get a 50-cent raise from her \$8 hourly wage at a Taco John’s in Hot Springs.

“It helps pay bills or I wouldn’t be here,” said Lund, 56, who was laid off from her job at a concrete company after the snow and cold came.

Proponents argued that a wage increase would boost South Dakota’s lagging personal income, but business groups said it could trigger layoffs and higher prices for some goods and services.

That’s already happening, said Shawn Lyons, executive director of the South Dakota Retailers Association in Pierre.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 27 of 35

The Board of Regents, which oversees the state's six public universities, said it will have to find another \$970,000, including from tuition, student fees and room and board. The Aberdeen Salvation Army said it will have to plug a \$5,000 hole in its budget. And the Oahe YMCA in Pierre cited the wage increase, as well as utilities and insurance, as reasons for a fee increase in 2015, Lyons said.

"It's not just the business community seeing the impact. It's widespread," he said.

The South Dakota Democratic Party and some labor unions gathered enough signatures to put the proposal in front of voters, arguing that in a state that prides itself on being business-friendly, a worker-friendly wage increase is long overdue.

Mark Anderson, president and financial secretary of the state's AFL-CIO union, said the increase will impact some employers but also help overall wages rise in the state.

"The economy's booming. I think it's a good idea that the workers get their share," he said.

Dawn Dovre, spokeswoman for the state Department of Labor, said the biggest question from businesses is whether they need to put up a new poster advertising the new minimum wage, so the agency created a new one that can be downloaded from its website. The department also consulted retailers in putting together a "frequently asked questions" section, she said.

South Dakota is one of 21 states increasing its minimum wage. An analysis by Washington-based liberal think tank the Economic Policy Institute this month projected an economic impact of \$22.5 million in the state from increased consumer spending caused by the wage increase.

Police arrest 2 in western SD home invasion

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Two men have been arrested in connection with a home invasion in western South Dakota that left a 72-year-old man injured.

Police in Rapid City say 30-year-old Robert Arpan III and 30-year-old Cody Hopkins are facing charges of first-degree burglary and conspiracy to commit first-degree burglary. The Rapid City men were arrested Tuesday. Police are yet to identify a third suspect.

Authorities say the three men forced their way into the residence on Dec. 17 and assaulted the homeowner. The victim, who hasn't been publicly identified, was taken to a hospital with serious injuries that weren't life threatening.

Police say the three suspects took several items and were recorded on the home's surveillance system. It's unclear whether Arpan and Hopkins have legal representation.

More than 8,800 in SD enroll in health insurance

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Federal officials say more than 8,800 South Dakota residents signed up for health insurance in the first month of the Affordable Care Act's second enrollment period.

The second enrollment season for President Barack Obama's signature health care law began Nov. 15 and runs through Feb. 15. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on Tuesday said 8,817 people selected plans in South Dakota by the Dec. 15 deadline for coverage beginning Jan. 1. Of those, 49 percent were re-enrolling in plans and 51 percent were first-time sign-ups.

About 88 percent of those choosing plans in the first month were deemed eligible for financial assistance.

Nationwide, more than 4 million people signed up for the first time or re-enrolled in coverage for 2015 during the first month of open enrollment.

Wind chills plummet in North Dakota, South Dakota

BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The Dakotas were stuck in the deep freeze for a second day Tuesday, with the combination of icy air and brisk wind making it feel colder than minus 30 degrees in some areas.

Wind chill advisories posted by the National Weather Service were in effect for all of both states until midday, when temperatures were expected to begin moderating, on their way to a brief warmup just in time for the New Year's holiday. Bitter cold was expected to settle in again early next week, however.

Temperatures in North Dakota and South Dakota early Tuesday dropped into the single digits and teens below zero, and wind chill factors were in the minus 20s and even the minus 30s. The wind chill dropped as low as minus 33 degrees in Minot. Temperatures that cold can quickly result in frostbite and hypothermia for people who don't dress properly for the weather.

The cold was nowhere near record-setting, though it was a bit deceiving after a relative balmy Christmas holiday, according to weather service meteorologist Bill Abeling in Bismarck.

"It's not unusual (for the time of year) by any means, but since we've had sort of a mild period here, it does seem quite a bit colder," he said.

For some businesses, the harsh weather meant slower sales. For others, the cold snap brought more traffic.

"Usually what happens when we have cold, the first day we might not see much (of an increase in business), but the second day we see more," said Kileen Limvere, owner of the Red Rooster Coffee House in Aberdeen, South Dakota. "People realize they can't go without coffee."

It was minus 6 with a wind chill of minus 20 in Aberdeen on Tuesday morning — "cold enough that I had to wear two layers," Limvere joked. "For us, this is normal weather."

The cold arctic air was expected to give way to warmer air from the Pacific Northwest for the rest of the workweek. High temperatures on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day in the two states were forecast to be in the teens, 20s and lower 30s.

South Dakota has first measles case since 1997

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota has its first case of measles since 1997.

The state Health Department says the case is in an unvaccinated Davison County child who is younger than 5 years old. The department is working to identify people who might have been exposed to the case.

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease that can cause permanent brain damage or even death. It's spread by direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected people or, less frequently, by airborne transmission.

State Epidemiologist Lon Kightlinger says measles is on the rise nationally, and he encourages South Dakota residents to make sure immunizations are up to date.

\$11M in upgrades proposed for Custer State Park

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's Department of Game, Fish and Parks plans to ask the Legislature to approve \$11 million in debt for improvements to resort facilities at Custer State Park.

The state would pay off the bonds over 15 years with a 4 percent increase in the annual franchise fee paid by the private company that operates the state-owned facilities, Game, Fish and Parks said in a statement. Custer State Park Resort Co. currently pays a 10.4 percent franchise fee on all gross receipts.

The goal is protecting and enhancing the park's status as a premier destination, state Parks and Recreation Director Doug Hofer told the Rapid City Journal. The Black Hills park drew 1.9 million visitors last year — about one-fourth of all visitors to South Dakota's state parks, recreation areas and nature areas — and gross receipts totaled \$13 million.

"I think we've done a really good job in the past of upgrading the facilities and meeting the more contemporary needs the public has," Hofer said. "But we can't rest on the past. We need to continue to look forward and make improvements."

Major aspects of the proposed project include renovation or possible replacement of the main lodge building at Legion Lake, and the renovation of guest rooms at the State Game Lodge.

"The improvement plan that has been proposed will enhance our guests' experience and allow the state to renovate or replace some of the smaller cabins and other outdated structures that don't meet today's visitor expectations," Resort Operations Director Josh Schmaltz said in a statement.

Construction would take place during the next two tourism offseasons, which generally run from the end of October to the beginning of June.

Rapid City arena expansion could go to public vote

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — What might be the most expensive municipal project in Rapid City history appears destined for a public vote.

A group that wants the public to decide on a \$180 million plan to expand the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center has submitted 150 petitions that include a total of 2,866 signatures. If there are at least 2,062 valid names, the plan will go to a public vote. The earliest any vote could be held is March 10.

City Finance Director Pauline Sumption will validate the petition signatures this week and submit results to the City Council on Monday.

City Council members on Dec. 1 approved the expansion. It would replace the center's 9,400-seat Barnett Arena with one that could seat up to 19,000 people. Local sales tax money would be used to repay the bonds for the project. The arena ultimately could cost \$420 million over 30 years with interest, making it the most expensive municipal project in city history.

That prompted the effort to have city residents decide the project's fate. The Civic Center Vote Committee included both opponents and proponents of the expansion.

Mayor Sam Kooiker, a project supporter who also promoted the referendum, collected about 400 signatures himself — the most of any petition circulator.

"It was easy collecting signatures," he said. "There was a lot of enthusiasm for a public vote, on both sides of the issue.

"There's going to be a very healthy debate on the issue," Kooiker said. "There's strong opinion on both sides. And a lot of people have recognized the importance of the civic center to the community and that this is a very large investment."

10 Things to Know for Today

The Associated Press

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

1. WHAT'S HINDERING INDONESIA PLANE CRASH RECOVERY

Bad weather is slowing efforts to find victims of AirAsia Flight 8501 — 7 bodies have so far been recovered — and rough seas are sending wreckage drifting away from the crash site.

2. WORLD BEGINS RINGING IN NEW YEAR

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 30 of 35

Auckland, New Zealand counts down the new year with a huge fireworks display launching at midnight. In the wings, more than 1 million people are expected to flock to Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana beach, and New York will drop its trademark Waterford crystal ball.

3. PALESTINIANS MAY SEEK INT'L CRIMINAL COURT MEMBERSHIP

The Palestinians have long vowed to join the ICC in order to press charges against Israel for alleged war crimes.

4. NINE DEAD, INCLUDING TWO CHILDREN, IN RAMPAGE IN CANADA

Edmonton's police chief blames a domestic dispute for the "senseless mass murder."

5. CHILD ACCIDENTALLY SHOOTS, KILLS MOTHER AT WAL-MART

The little boy reached into Veronica J. Rutledge's purse and her concealed gun fired, according to the Kootenai County, Idaho, sheriff's department.

6. HOW EBOLA OUTBREAK MAY HAVE BEGUN

Researchers tentatively trace the outbreak's origin to a hollow tree where infected bats lived in a small village in Guinea.

7. RED SQUARE RALLY LEADS TO ARRESTS

Demonstrators were protesting the court conviction of opposition leader Alexei Navalny and his brother.

8. WHO MAKES DEBUT AT SAN DIEGO ZOO

A four-day-old baby gorilla, as yet unnamed, is shown to the public as his mother cradles and nurses him.

9. HOW SOUTH KOREAN ACTIVIST PLANS TO SEND 'THE INTERVIEW' NORTH

Park Sang-hak says he will launch balloons carrying DVDs of the controversial comedy toward North Korea, where it's banned.

10. RAVENS SECURITY DIRECTOR FACES SEX OFFENSE CHARGE

Darren Sanders is charged with fourth-degree sexual offense, related to an incident that occurred Dec. 14, court records show.

AP News in Brief

7 bodies found from AirAsia crash in Indonesia, but bad weather, big waves hinder recovery

PANGKALAN BUN, Indonesia (AP) — Bad weather hindered efforts to recover victims of AirAsia Flight 8501 on Wednesday, and sent wreckage drifting far from the crash site, as grieving relatives prayed for strength to endure their losses.

"Help us, God, to move forward, even though we are surrounded by darkness," the Rev. Philip Mantofa, whose church lost about 40 members in the disaster, told families gathered in a waiting room at the Surabaya airport.

The massive hunt for 162 people who vanished Sunday aboard the Airbus A320 from Surabaya, Indonesia to Singapore, was severely limited due to heavy rain, wind and thick clouds. Seven bodies, including a flight attendant in her red AirAsia uniform, have been recovered, said Indonesia's Search and Rescue Agency chief Henry Bambang Soelistyo.

Sonar images also identified what appeared to be large parts of the plane, but strong currents were moving the debris.

Conditions prevented divers from entering the choppy Java Sea, and helicopters were largely ground-

ed. But 18 ships continued to scour the narrowed search area, and four of the seven corpses were recovered Wednesday. Indonesia's Meteorology and Geophysics Agency predicted conditions would worsen, with more intense rains, through Friday.

AirAsia News Guide: Slow recovery, 41 church members on the doomed flight

An AirAsia jet with 162 people on board crashed Sunday morning while flying from Surabaya, Indonesia, to Singapore on a scheduled two-hour flight. Here's a look at the latest developments:

ROUGH SEA HAMPERS RECOVERY

Strong winds and 2-meter (6-foot) waves slowed down the recovery of bodies and debris from the Java Sea on Wednesday. A total of seven remains have been plucked from the sea since they were first spotted Tuesday. They include a female flight attendant in her red AirAsia uniform.

On Wednesday, strong currents prevented divers from deploying and pushed the bodies and debris toward beaches in Pangkalan Bun on Borneo island, 160 kilometers (100 miles) away from where they were first spotted.

Glittery fireworks, beach parties, and watching a giant pine cone drop: World rings in 2015

After a turbulent year marred by terror woes, Ebola outbreaks and a horrific series of airline disasters, many could be forgiven for saying good riddance to 2014 and gratefully ringing in a new year.

Across the globe, revelers looking for a respite from the gloom will converge on the beaches of Brazil, the shores of Sydney harbor and the potentially snowy streets of Las Vegas (yes, really) to welcome 2015. Here's a look at how the world is celebrating:

FIRST UP: DOWN UNDER

Sydney takes pride in being one of the first major cities in the world to welcome each new year, and it plans to greet 2015 in its trademark glittery fashion — with a tropical-style fireworks display featuring shimmering gold and silver palm tree pyrotechnic effects.

Palestinians say they will try to join ICC following failed UN vote

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) — The Palestinian leadership is meeting Wednesday to plan its next steps after a resolution to end Israel's occupation was rejected by the U.N. Security Council, and could set a date for applying to join the International Criminal Court, Palestinian officials said.

The U.N. vote Tuesday against the Palestinian bid, which called for the Israeli occupation to end within three years, was a blow to an Arab campaign for international action to bring about an independent Palestinian state.

The Palestinians have long vowed to join the ICC in order to press charges against Israel for alleged war crimes. But membership could expose the Palestinians to similar allegations.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said officials would hold a "very serious meeting" Wednesday and could set a date for applying for membership to the ICC and other international agencies.

"There will be no more waiting, no more hesitation, no more slowdown," Erekat said. "We are going to meet and make decisions."

Profiles of some of the passengers and crew aboard AirAsia Flight 8501

SURABAYA, Indonesia (AP) — For many, it was a family trip to Singapore to ring in the new year, a chance to go shopping and enjoy the city's famed restaurants. One family was going to visit their 15-year-old daughter, who had just begun studying at a Christian girls' school. Others were taking a familiar flight to a city they visited often for getaways.

As searchers began recovering bodies and debris from Java Sea waters, relatives and loved ones recalled the stories of some of the 162 people aboard AirAsia Flight 8501, which crashed Sunday:

SUDDENLY ALONE

Just 15, Chiara Natasha lost her entire family in the tragedy.

Surviving witness corroborates cover-up of mass killing by Mexican army

ARCELIA, Mexico (AP) — When the witness refused to sign a false statement that 22 suspected drug gang members had died in a shootout with the Mexican army, state investigators began to kick her in the ribs, she said. They put a bag over her head, plunged her face into a toilet bowl and beat her so hard that, six months later, she still has trouble with her hearing and eyesight.

"As they were hitting me ... they told me they could make even the mute talk," said the woman, one of three witnesses known to have survived a June 30 mass killing by the Mexican army.

In her first interview since being falsely imprisoned for five months on weapons possession charges, the woman said a cover-up of the crime went far beyond the seven soldiers facing trial in the case to include more soldiers, and state and federal prosecutors who pushed to make the deaths look like the result of a gunbattle rather than what they were -- extra-judicial killings after surrender.

Criminal case files obtained by The Associated Press last week supported her assertion that state prosecutors knew from the start that soldiers had altered the crime scene, despite official and public declarations to the contrary. And the documents revealed that the battalion commander responsible for the troops arrived at the scene before state investigators.

The witness, a 20-year-old prostitute who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said that two days after the beating in the state of Mexico she was taken to the capital, where she was pressed into signing the false statement by federal organized crime investigators working for the attorney general's office.

Taliban attack on Afghan mountain hamlet tests army after US forces leave

DANGAM, Afghanistan (AP) — The smoke from mortar and rocket attacks rises from the mountains of Dangam in the remote eastern border region of Afghanistan as Taliban insurgents battle government forces in a bid to establish a permanent presence now that the American soldiers who led the fight here for more than a decade have left.

Heavy fighting has been raging for almost three weeks, with wave after wave of Taliban militants assaulting this picturesque but poverty-stricken district of Kunar province just four kilometers (2.5 miles) from the border with Pakistan, officials and residents said.

The U.S.-led international effort to rid Afghanistan of the Taliban officially shifts from a combat to a

training band support mission Wednesday, with Afghan forces assuming full responsibility for security nationwide on New Year's Day. A residual force of 10,800 Americans and almost 3,000 NATO soldiers will remain, under the banner of a new mission called Resolute Support.

Over the last 18 months, U.S. and NATO forces have been closing their bases across the country, taking their battlefield prowess, air support and medical evacuation assets with them.

The war is meanwhile creeping into urban and residential areas, putting ordinary people at greater risk. Civilian casualties look set to hit 10,000 in 2014, the highest yearly total of dead and wounded since the U.N. began keeping records in 2008. More than 75 percent of the deaths and injuries are caused by Taliban attacks, according to the U.N.

4 amigos: Vacation in home state of Hawaii reunites Obama with 3 childhood friends

HONOLULU (AP) — Since returning to his childhood home this month on vacation, President Barack Obama has spent a good part of most days cloistered with three people whose company puts him at ease. They're not his wife and daughters, who came with him, but a trio of pals whose friendship dates back to Obama's high school days in Hawaii.

The three men — Mike Ramos, Bobby Titcomb and Greg Orme — are among the few people still in Obama's life who knew him long before he was famous. Although their paths have long since diverged, they've made it a point to gather for frequent reunions, in one of Obama's most visible links to the days when his life was much simpler and his problems more mundane.

On this visit alone, Obama has spent more than 22 hours with the group on the lush golf courses that dot the island of Oahu. When it rained, Obama and his pals went bowling, instead.

And on Tuesday, in what's become a yearly tradition, the men and their families gathered for a luau hosted by Titcomb. With rain drizzling over Oahu, Obama's motorcade whisked Obama across the island to Titcomb's beachside home in Waialua, about an hour outside of Honolulu on the North Shore.

Increasingly, the reunions have become the focal point of Obama's family vacations in his second term, as his teenage daughters spend less and less time at their father's side. Once content to join their parents for outings to the aquarium or to get shave ice, Sasha and Malia are now more independent. Since arriving more than a week ago, Obama has been out in public with one of his daughters only once, briefly, during a hike.

In Kentucky, rat-a-tat auctioneer chants at tobacco warehouses becoming a dying art

DANVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Tripp Foy's sing-song chant rang out like a sentimental oldie for die-hard farmers clinging to the old way of selling tobacco, as a small procession of buyers shadowed him down long rows of reddish-brown leaf piled in bales.

Farmers who have spent their lives tending the aromatic crop in their fields find comfort in Foy's rat-a-tat style, part of an auction system that's been all but snuffed out by another way of selling tobacco after years of declining smoking rates.

"It's kind of in our blood," said tobacco farmer Walter Browning. "But I'm about bled out."

This tobacco-belt tradition, once as much a part of Kentucky's fabric as bourbon or horse racing, is fading away — and it's taking the maestros like Foy with it.

"The chant of an auctioneer can sound as good as a song," said Foy, 63, who has spent four decades

auctioning tobacco in Kentucky — the nation's top burley producer. "You can walk down a row and you can almost dance to the tune of the sale."

Canada police: Edmonton man with lengthy criminal record kills 8 people before taking own life

EDMONTON, Alberta (AP) — A man with a lengthy criminal record killed six adults and two young children before taking his own life in Edmonton, Alberta, in what the police chief on Tuesday called the city's worst mass murder.

Edmonton Police Chief Rod Knecht told a news conference late Tuesday night that there was no suggestion of gang involvement and said the motive for the "senseless mass murder" appears to have been "planned and deliberate" domestic violence.

"It's terrible for the city," said Knecht. "The scene ... has been described as chaotic, horrific. Particularly when there's children involved, it has a tremendous impact on our folks."

Knecht did not release the name of the suspect, but said the man was well-known to police and had a criminal record dating back to September 1987.

Today in History

The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 31, the 365th and final day of 2014.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 31, 1904, New York's Times Square saw its first New Year's Eve celebration, with an estimated 200,000 people in attendance.

On this date:

In 1514, physician Andreas Vesalius, who wrote and illustrated the first comprehensive books on human anatomy, was born in Brussels.

In 1775, during the Revolutionary War, the British repulsed an attack by Continental Army generals Richard Montgomery and Benedict Arnold at Quebec; Montgomery was killed.

In 1879, Thomas Edison first publicly demonstrated his electric incandescent light in Menlo Park, New Jersey.

In 1909, the Manhattan Bridge, spanning the East River between Manhattan and Brooklyn, was officially opened to vehicular traffic.

In 1946, President Harry S. Truman officially proclaimed the end of hostilities in World War II.

In 1951, the Marshall Plan expired after distributing more than \$12 billion in foreign aid.

In 1969, Joseph A. Yablonski, an unsuccessful candidate for the presidency of the United Mine Workers of America, was shot to death with his wife and daughter in their Clarksville, Pennsylvania, home by hitmen acting at the orders of UMWA president Tony Boyle.

In 1972, Major League baseball player Roberto Clemente, 38, was killed when a plane he'd chartered and was traveling on to bring relief supplies to earthquake-devastated Nicaragua crashed shortly after takeoff from Puerto Rico.

In 1974, private U.S. citizens were allowed to buy and own gold for the first time in more than 40 years.

In 1985, singer Rick Nelson, 45, and six other people were killed when fire broke out aboard a DC-3 that was taking the group to a New Year's Eve performance in Dallas.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, December 31, 2014 ♦ Vol. 17 - No. 160 ♦ 35 of 35

In 1986, 97 people were killed when fire broke out in the Dupont Plaza Hotel in San Juan, Puerto Rico. (Three hotel workers later pleaded guilty in connection with the blaze.)

In 1999, Russian President Boris Yeltsin announced his resignation (he was succeeded by Vladimir Putin).

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush pledged \$350 million to help tsunami victims, and didn't rule out sending even more U.S. aid to help people recover from what he called an "epic disaster." Ukrainian Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich (yah-noo-KOH'-vich) resigned, admitting he had little hope of reversing the presidential election victory of his Western-leaning rival, Viktor Yushchenko (yoo-SHEN'-koh). Taiwan celebrated the official opening of what was then the world's tallest skyscraper, known as "Taipei 101."

Five years ago: A lone gunman dressed in black killed five people in Espoo, Finland, four of them at a crowded shopping mall, before returning home and taking his own life.

One year ago: Only hours before the law was to take effect, Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, acting on a request from an organization of Catholic nuns in Denver, blocked implementation of part of President Barack Obama's health care law that would have forced some religion-affiliated organizations to provide health insurance for employees that included birth control. Character actor James Avery, who'd played the Honorable Philip Banks in "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air," died in Glendale, California, at age 68. Radio host Bob Grant, 84, died in Hillsborough, New Jersey.

Today's Birthdays: TV producer George Schlatter is 85. Actor Sir Anthony Hopkins is 77. Actor Tim Considine (TV: "My Three Sons") is 74. Actress Sarah Miles is 73. Rock musician Andy Summers is 72. Actor Sir Ben Kingsley is 71. Producer-director Taylor Hackford is 70. Fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg is 68. Actor Tim Matheson is 67. Pop singer Burton Cummings is 67. Actor Joe Dallesandro is 66. Rock musician Tom Hamilton (Aerosmith) is 63. Actor James Remar is 61. Actress Bebe Neuwirth is 56. Actor Val Kilmer is 55. Singer Paul Westerberg is 55. Actor Don Diamont is 52. Rock musician Ric Ivanisevich (Oleander) is 52. Rock musician Scott Ian (Anthrax) is 51. Actress Gong Li is 49. Author Nicholas Sparks is 49. Actor Lance Reddick is 45. Pop singer Joe McIntyre is 42. Rock musician Mikko Siren (Apocalyptica) is 39. Rapper PSY (Park Jae-sang) is 37. Rock musician Bob Bryar is 35. Actor/singer Erich Bergen (Film/stage: "Jersey Boys") is 29. Olympic gold medal gymnast Gabby Douglas is 19.

Thought for Today: "Though the past haunt me as a spirit, I do not ask to forget." - Felicia Dorothea Browne Hemans, English poet (1793-1835).