

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 1 of 25

- 1- Dr. Mark Malmberg ad
- 1- Pre-School 3-year-old screening ad
- 1- Recycling Trailers in Groton
- 1- Today's Information
- 2- Upcoming Streaming Events
- 3- Groton Chamber Holiday Boxes
- 4- S&S Lumber closing Dec. 16th for Inventory
- 4- Grotonites perform in Living Christmas Tree
- 5- Schwan's to give to SD Destination Imagination
- 6- Don't let the last-minute holiday rush crush your budget
- 7- Winter Storm Watch
- 8 - Today in Weather History
- 9- Local Weather Forecast
- 10- National Weather Map
- 10- Local Weather
- 11- Daily Devotional
- 12 - News from the Associated Press

Monday, December 14

School Breakfast: Cereal, yogurt, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Submarines, potato chips, carrots and drip, fruit.

Senior Menu: Baked chicken breast, mashed potatoes and gravy, California blend vegetables, lemon tart bar, whole wheat bread.

Anniversary: Bob & Mary Ann Wehde

Birthdays: Sue Patton, Elda Stange, Carroll Dean, Lincoln Shilhanek

6:30am: Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study

6:30pm: GBB at Tiospa Zina

6:30pm: JHGBB at Warner (7th at 6:30, 8th at 7:30)

7:00pm: School Board Meeting

Tuesday, December 15

School Breakfast: Mini pancakes, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Pizza, green beans, lettuce salad, fruit.

Senior Menu: Baked pork chop, au gratin potatoes, peas and carrots, iced honey cookie, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: Col Arthur Krueger • Marjae Schinkel • Janice Sombke

10:00am: United Methodist Women's Bible Study Wednesday, December 16

School Breakfast: Egg and cheese omelet, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Soft shell tacos, refried beans, fruit.

Senior Menu: Lasagna rotini, tossed salad with dressing, ambrosia fruit salad, oatmeal spice cookie, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: John Sippel • Layne Howard • Sage Mortenson • Dan Schinkel

7:00am: United Methodist Men's Bible Study

2015 Groton Area Elementary Preschool Developmental Screening for 3 year olds

Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2015

Parents of children ages 3 in the Groton Area School District are asked to contact Heidi Krueger at the Groton Area Elementary School during school hours at 397-2317 to set up a screening time or to confirm their screening time.

The Developmental Screening will take place at the Groton Area High School Arena. Please park and use the east entrance to the gym.

Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave.

The cardboard/paper

recycling trailer at the school is **Open**

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Mark Malmberg, DDS

19 North 6th St.

Oakes, N.D.

701-742-3401



Groton Daily Independent

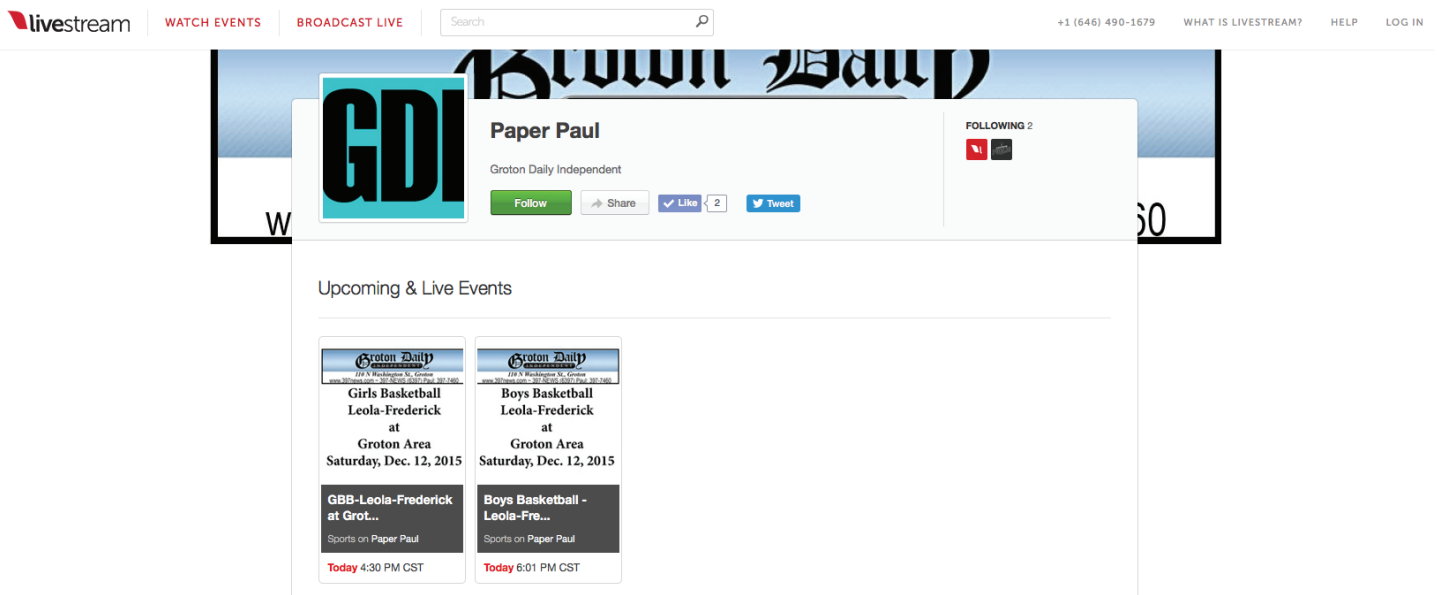
Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 2 of 25

All Events Streamed with the Groton Daily Independent can now be seen on



All future streams can be viewed at
<http://livestream.com/GDI>

Middle/High School Christmas Concert. 7 p.m., on Dec. 17
Elementary Christmas Concert, 2 p.m. on Dec. 18
and more!



When you get to the page, it will look like that above. Click on the green Follow button, enter your email address or sign in with your Facebook account and you'll be notified of the streams. You watch the streams on your mobile device as well.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 3 of 25



Groton Chamber Holiday Boxes are out & about in Groton!

This Week (thru 12/11) – Lori's Pharmacy
\$25 Chamber Bucks OR Savory Seasoning!

Next Week (thru 12/18) – Professional
Management Supply
\$25 Chamber Bucks OR Mystery Gift!

Stop by each participating business and register for \$25
Groton Chamber Bucks – or a prize supplied by the business.
Prizes will be drawn weekly – starting over each week with
entries!



Merry
Christmas

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 4 of 25

**S & S Lumber/Hardware Hank of Groton
will be closing
at noon on Wednesday, Dec. 16th, for inventory
and will reopen at normal hours on Thursday.**



Living Christmas Tree Groton area performers are pictured L-R -Bev Sombke, Deb Olson, Lee Schinkel, Eric Ulvog (string bass,) Bill Duncan, Sage Mortenson, and Yvonne Lorenz. Front L-R - Valerie Baker, and Vivian Dobberpuhl. Missing from picture were Lon Gellhaus, Seth Duncan, and Marsha Wienk, choir, and Angel Lorenz, orchestra.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 5 of 25

Here is how the Schwan's fundraiser works.

Customers phone in the order or order online
They use the code. 25179

If they regularly order online they are asked if they want to contribute to a fundraiser

That is when they put the code in.

Between Dec 2 and Jan 16, we will earn 20% of sales

If a customer orders an ecertificate-and online gift card we get \$10 for the \$25 ecertificate.

When you get an ecertificate, you can go in and purchase right away or you can print it out

if you want to give it as a gift or save it for later.

Customers are limited to one ecertificate...BUT if you use an alternate email address you can purchase more than one

If you are not a regular Schwan's customer, when you place your order they will tell you what day
And approximate (2 hour) time they plan to deliver.

You can be a one time customer and support us.

If you order online you must give them a credit card number, however you can switch payment at the door.

It took me a few fundraisers to realize that if I purchase during the first 45 days I contribute 20% and save my ecertificates for after the Jan 16 date, duh! Before that I was purchasing ecertificates and using them right away.

Our greatest income will be during this 45 day period.
After that we will earn 5% until April 16.

Schwan's
Cares™
A Fundraising Network



Support Us

*Giving back to your community
never tasted so delicious.*

Schwan's Home Delivery offers over 350 delicious foods, flash-frozen at the peak of freshness and conveniently delivered to your door. Through Schwans-Cares.com, you can order from Schwan's Home Delivery and help our organization meet its fundraising goals. When you order by **January 16th, 2016**, 20% of product and 40% of eGift Card sales will go back to the organization.

Here are two ways to support us!

Order Online:

1. Visit Schwans-Cares.com
2. Enter Campaign ID: **25179** into the search box located in the upper right hand corner then click to open campaign.
3. Click "Shop to Give" and then select either the "Buy Now" or "Shop Now" option.
4. Select team member, if applicable
5. Start shopping!

Order by Phone:

Call 1-855-870-7208 and provide Campaign ID: **25179**

Thank you for your support!

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Shop online at Schwans-Cares.com
or call 1-855-870-7208



Don't Let the Last-Minute Holiday Rush Crush Your Budget

By Nathaniel Sillin

For all the planning we do during the holidays, the last couple of weeks before the big parties and family gatherings can trip up the best of budgets.

Perhaps what's needed is some last-minute tricks to keep overspending to a minimum. Here are a few ideas to get you through.

Track your spending. If you're close to the upper end of your budget and you're not quite sure what's happened, go through those receipts. Maybe you and your partner or spouse are shopping independently, spending too much on gas, meals out or failing to coordinate on the items you need. Maybe the kids are adding items to their lists at the last minute. It's toughest to say no to kids, so see if there are adult gifts, decorating items or seasonal specialty food you really don't need to purchase. In other words, if your budget is tight, identify the expenses you can alter and adjust your spending plans.

Don't ignore the cost of returns. Some retailers are strict about return policies on a host of items, which makes it doubly important to save all your receipts. If you're giving gift cards, make sure the recipient has the purchase receipt in case the card doesn't work. If you've bought items online, make sure you keep critical return information and package return stickers in case you need them. However, take one additional step with shipped returns – see whether the seller is charging you more for their convenient shipping label option than shipping the item back locally in your own packaging. Finally, keep restocking fees in mind – some retailers charge in excess of 10 percent of the item's cost to accept a return, particularly for electronic and mechanical purchases that involve heavy packaging. Ultimately, the best time to check return policies is before you buy, but if you do have to return items, consolidate those trips to save time, gas and money.

"Piggyback" the purchases of others. If you have a large gift list for loved ones or family, be a nosy shopper. Maybe your sister is finally giving her movie freak husband the room-sized flatscreen he's always wanted. Maybe your nieces and nephews are getting expensive dolls, toys or technology items that require clothes or software of some sort. If you are trying to cut your holiday budget, check in with loved ones to see if you can supplement these expensive gifts with accessories that might be easier on your budget and appreciated just as much. Pitching in for a couple of outfits for the expensive doll – rather than having to buy the expensive doll itself – saves you money, gives your loved ones a break on the subsequent purchases they'll need to make and the recipient gets more of what he or she wants. A win-win all around.

Watch out for theft. All the smart shopping in the world won't lessen the headaches from thieves who target your packages, personal and online data or the contents of your wallet. Fast-approaching holidays and busy schedules can leave us tired and distracted, so keep a close watch on potential risk for identity theft, (<https://www.identitytheft.gov>) package theft from cars, homes and apartment vestibules. If you take public transportation, use extra caution to keep your money, purchases and personal technology hidden from thieves.

Bottom line: Don't let the last, busy weeks of the holiday season knock you off budget or threaten your financial security in other ways.

Nathaniel Sillin directs Visa's financial education programs. To follow Practical Money Skills on Twitter: www.twitter.com/PracticalMoney.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 7 of 25

Winter Storm Watch

URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE ABERDEEN SD
342 AM CST MON DEC 14 2015

...WINTER STORM TAKING AIM ON THE REGION...

.LOW PRESSURE IS FORECAST TO DEVELOP ACROSS EASTERN COLORADO BY EARLY TUESDAY MORNING. THIS LOW WILL THEN MOVE NORTHEAST INTO MINNESOTA BY WEDNESDAY MORNING...SPREADING SNOWFALL ACROSS THE REGION. GUSTY NORTHWEST WINDS WILL ALSO DEVELOP ON THE BACK SIDE OF THIS STORM SYSTEM BY WEDNESDAY MORNING.

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/O.NEW.KABR.WS.A.0003.151215T1800Z-151217T0000Z/
TRAVERSE-BIG STONE-MCPHERSON-BROWN-MARSHALL-ROBERTS-EDMUNDS-DAY-
FAULK-SPINK-CLARK-CODINGTON-GRANT-
INCLUDING THE CITIES OF...WHEATON...ORTONVILLE...EUREKA...
ABERDEEN...BRITTON...SISSETON...IPSWICH...WEBSTER...FAULKTON...
REDFIELD...CLARK...WATERTOWN...MILBANK
342 AM CST MON DEC 14 2015

...WINTER STORM WATCH IN EFFECT FROM TUESDAY AFTERNOON THROUGH WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON...

THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN ABERDEEN HAS ISSUED A WINTER STORM WATCH...WHICH IS IN EFFECT FROM TUESDAY AFTERNOON THROUGH WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON.

* TIMING...SNOW BEGINNING MID TO LATE AFTERNOON TUESDAY AND ENDING WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON.

* MAIN IMPACT...SNOW AMOUNTS FROM 5 TO 8 INCHES POSSIBLE.
NORTHWEST WINDS 20 TO 35 MPH CREATING BLOWING AND DRIFTING SNOW.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

A WINTER STORM WATCH MEANS THERE IS A POTENTIAL FOR SIGNIFICANT SNOW...SLEET...OR ICE ACCUMULATIONS THAT MAY IMPACT TRAVEL. CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE LATEST FORECASTS.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 8 of 25

Today in Weather History

December 14, 1994: Snow accumulated over all of South Dakota on the 14th, but was heavy in the central part of the state and at a few places in the northwest. The greatest accumulations were 11 inches at Murdo and 10 inches at the Lake Sharpe project and near Stephan. Numerous accidents were caused but no fatalities or injuries were reported. Eight inches of snow fell at McLaughlin and Miller, with 7 inches at Faulkton and McIntosh, 6 inches at Eagle Butte and Timber Lake, and 5 inches at Mobridge, Kennebec, and near Highmore.

December 14, 1996: Heavy snow of 6 to 20 inches fell across most of central, north central, and part of northeast South Dakota during the late evening of the 14th. Strong north winds of 20 to 35 mph created near-blizzard conditions and heavy drifting across the area. Travel was extremely difficult if not impossible, with several cars going into the ditch. A two-car accident between Blunt and Pierre left several people injured. Many activities were postponed or canceled. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Fort Pierre, Ipswich, Kennebec, Aberdeen, and Pollock; 7 inches at Mobridge; 8 inches at Lake Sharpe, Clark, and Mellette; 9 inches at Roscoe, Gettysburg, and McIntosh; 10 inches at Highmore, Eagle Butte, 22 miles SSW of Keldron, and at West Whitlock; 11 inches at Blunt and Miller; 12 inches at Ree Heights, McLaughlin, and Onida; 13 inches at Highmore; 14 inches at Redfield; 15 inches at Timber Lake; 18 inches at Faulkton; and 20 inches at Hoven.

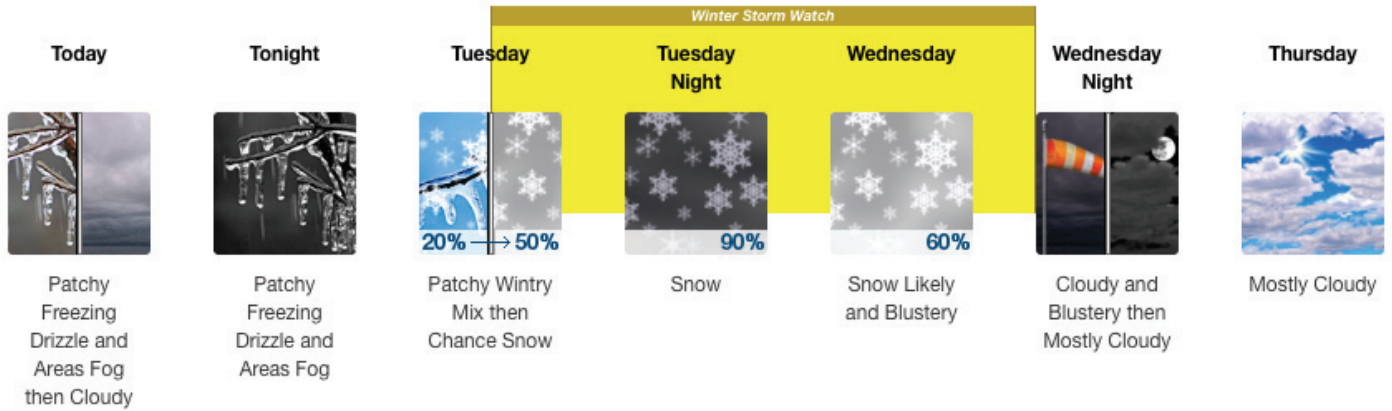
December 14, 1287: A powerful storm affected the Netherlands and Northern Germany on this day. Called the St. Lucia's flood, which was the day before, this storm broke a dike, flooding much of the land in what is now the Waddenzee and IJsselmeer. A significant percentage of the country's population perished in this disaster and has been rated as one of the most destructive floods in recorded history. The death toll from this storm was between 50,000 to 80,000 people. Also, 180 residents of Hickling village, which is 137 miles north-east of London was impacted from this storm. The storm surge rose a foot above the high altar in the church. From British-History.ac.uk, "Hickling was one of the townships that suffered most severely from the tremendous storm of December, 1287, no fewer than nine score persons being drowned there. In the priory the water rose more than a foot above the high altar, and all the canons fled away except two, who stayed behind and managed to save the horses and other property by bringing them up into the dormitory over the vaulted undercroft."

December 14, 1952: Trace of snow or sleet at or near Pensacola, Crestview, DeFuniak Springs, Quincy, Carrabelle, Tallahassee, St. Marks, Monticello, Madison, Mayo, Live Oak, Lake City, Glen St. Mary, and Hilliard. Frozen precipitation occurred before noon at most points, but occurred in the afternoon at Mayo and Lake City and near Hilliard. Temperatures were above freezing and snow or sleet melted as it fell.

December 14, 1997: Central Mississippi and western Alabama saw significant snowfall of 4 to 8 inches on this day. In Mississippi, this was one of the heavier snowfalls to occur since 1929. The weight of the snow caused limbs of trees to break, which knocked down power lines.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 9 of 25



Winter Storm Looming...

Follow us on Social Media

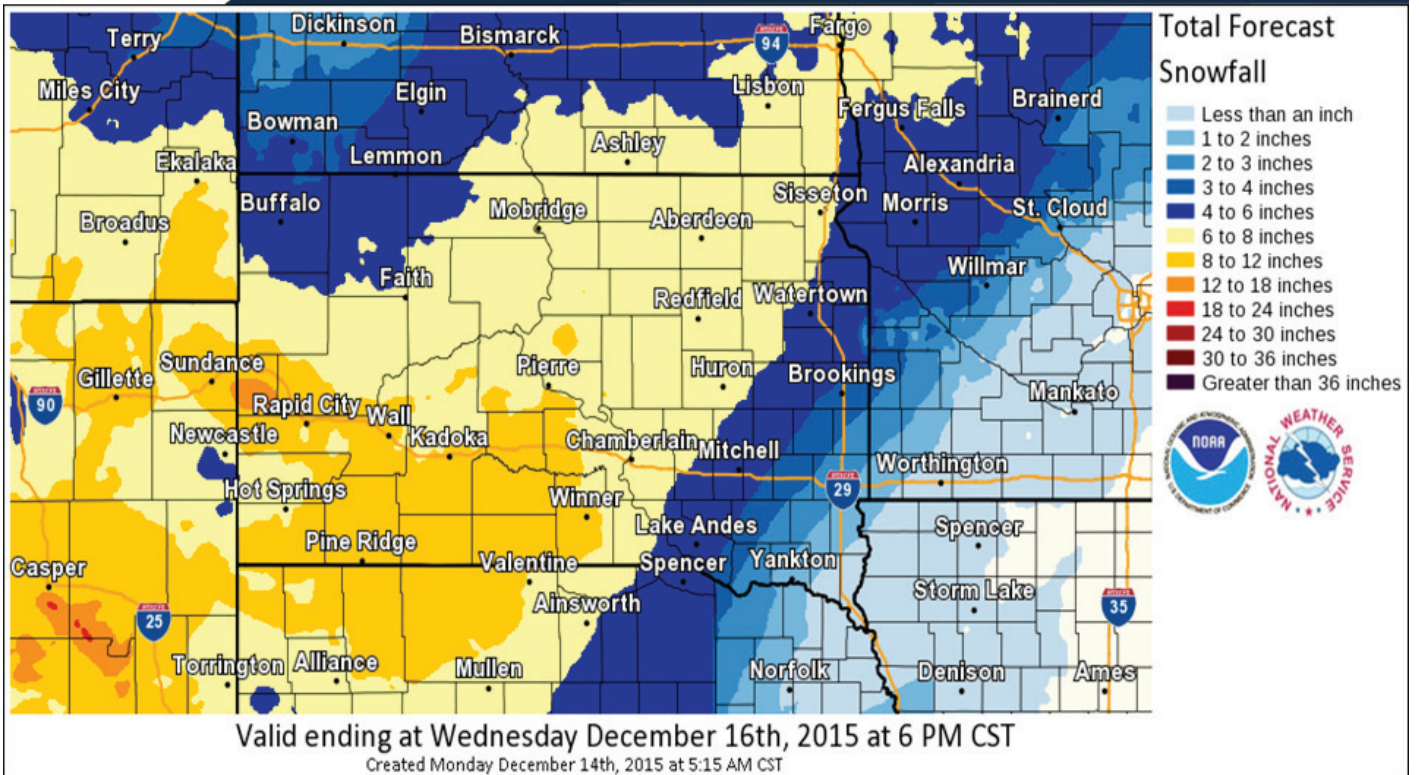
weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen



Published on: 12/14/2015 at 5:30AM

A winter storm is expected to affect the region Tuesday and Wednesday. The graphic shows the total forecast snowfall during the storm system. Most of the region has the potential to see greater than 6 inches of snow. Therefore, a winter storm watch has been issued for the area. Blowing and drifting snow could become an issue late Tuesday night and into Wednesday as northwest winds increase on the back side of the low pressure system.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 10 of 25

Yesterday's Weather

High: 31.9 at 3:19 PM

Low: 28.0 at 6:36 AM

High Gust: 18 at 8:28 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 55° in 1998

Record Low: -30° in 1917

Average High: 26°F

Average Low: 6°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.24

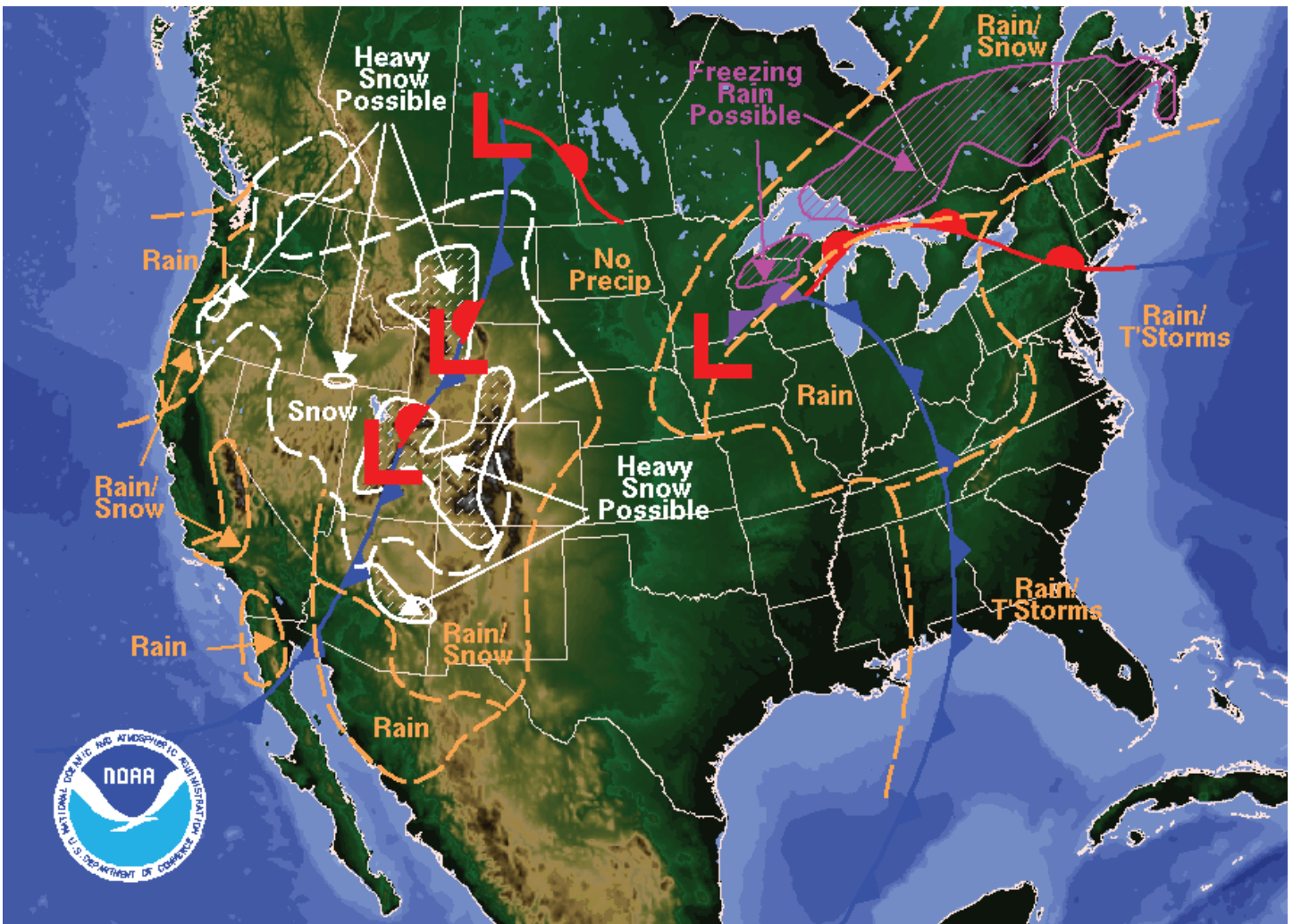
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.55

Average Precip to date: 21.44

Precip Year to Date: 20.37

Sunset Tonight: 4:50 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:06 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Mon, Dec 14, 2015, issued 4:52 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 11 of 25



HOW TO START EACH DAY

What is the first thing you do each morning? The author of Pilgrim's Progress said that "He who runs from God in the morning will scarcely find Him the rest of the day." It is important that we go into the presence of God before we go into the presence of men.

A woman attended a concert and realized the next morning that she has lost a diamond earring the night before. She called the manager of the auditorium and asked if it had been found. He said, "If you stay on the line, I'll check." A search was made and the diamond found. When he returned to the phone, the woman had hung up.

How like many of us when we pray. We do not expect anything to happen when we pray so we give up on God.

David said, "In the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee and will look up." He was saying, "I will pray and then I will wait for answers and directions." If we begin every day with God, we will end up with His blessings!

Prayer: Lord, when I begin my day I know it is important to ask for Your guidance and grace and to seek wisdom from Your Word. May I look to You for Your wisdom in every decision I make and direction in every path I take. In Your Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 5:3 In the morning, Lord, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.

News from the Associated Press

Much of Dakotas could see significant snowfall by midweek

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Much of the Dakotas could be in store for significant snowfall by midweek. The National Weather Service has posted winter storm watches and advisories in the western and central portions of the two states for Tuesday into Wednesday.

Forecasters say a foot or more of snow could fall in the northern Black Hills of South Dakota. Other areas could see about half a foot of snow. Freezing drizzle also could fall in western and central North Dakota and central and eastern South Dakota.

The weather service says there is no arctic air moving down with the system, so high temperatures will remain in the 20s and 30s and wind chills likely will stay above zero. It could be breezy, though, with blowing snow that could hamper motorists.

Board of Regents set to discuss governor's budget proposal

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Board of Regents is discussing Gov. Dennis Daugaard's budget plan for the upcoming budget year.

The board is set to hold a special meeting about the spending proposal and other legislative matters on Tuesday.

Much of the roughly \$60 million in one-time spending included in the governor's budget would go to paying off debt to help the state's public universities and technical schools freeze tuition for the next school year.

Mike Rush is executive director and CEO of the state Board of Regents. He has said the freeze would reduce the amount students have to borrow or pay out of pocket for school.

Authorities identify boy, 4, killed in Rapid City crash

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified the child who was killed in a one-vehicle crash on Interstate 90 in Rapid City.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol says 4-year-old Connor Ajer of Rapid City was killed Friday morning when the driver of the minivan he was riding in lost control and the vehicle rolled.

Highway Patrol says the boy was wearing a seat belt but he wasn't in a car seat at the time of the accident. He was thrown from the van and was pronounced dead at the scene.

The driver and three other children suffered minor injuries.

An investigation is ongoing.

South Dakota St. beats UCSB for 21st straight home win 86-68

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Deondre Parks scored 23 points, including two free throws for 34 in a row, and South Dakota State beat UC Santa Barbara 86-68 on Sunday for its 21st consecutive home victory.

UC Santa Barbara was within 57-49 early in the second half before South Dakota State went on an 18-6 spurt, capped by Parks' jumper for 75-55 lead. It's the Jackrabbits' ninth game this season with a 20-plus point advantage.

Mike Daum added 15 points for South Dakota State (9-1). Jake Bittle had 14 and Keaton Moffitt scored a career-high 11.

South Dakota State was 16-of-24 shooting (66.7 percent) in the first half, including 7 of 12 3-pointers, and build a 51-42 advantage by halftime. UC Santa Barbara made 57 percent of its shots in the half.

Michael Bryson paced UC Santa Barbara (2-5) with 21 points and John Green added 15. The Gauchos finished at 45 percent shooting.

Still no invasive mussels in Wyoming waters so far

BOB MOEN, Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — Wyoming appears to have succeeded for another year in preventing invasive zebra and quagga mussels from entering the state's streams and reservoirs.

Beth Bear, coordinator of the state's aquatic invasive species program, said testing of more than 65 streams, lakes and reservoirs around the state so far has not turned up any trace of the invasive species.

Results from some samples are still pending, Bear said.

Since 2010, the state has been inspecting boats entering Wyoming to make sure they are not carrying unwanted species. Both zebra and quagga mussels can proliferate by the millions and choke out native species and clog intake pipes for water systems.

Mussels have been found in the neighboring states of Colorado, Utah and South Dakota, Bear said.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department said its annual boat inspection program checked 45,967 boats entering the state this year. Three boats were found with zebra or quagga mussels attached and were decontaminated before being allowed into the state.

"Since we've been doing inspections at the borders, we've typically seen more, on average 10 to 12," Bear said. "So this year there were fewer. ... My hope is that people are learning that they need to check their boats and aren't transporting them across the country with mussels on them."

Wyoming inspectors this year counted 488 watercraft that had been in Utah's Lake Powell, which is known to be contaminated with mussels. Another 37 boats had been in Lake Michigan, also infested with mussels.

While mussels are the main threat to Wyoming waters, Bear noted that inspectors are looking for and finding other undesirable species.

"We are seeing the spread of some other species unfortunately," she said. "We're seeing plants, like curly pond weed popping up in locations, and then New Zealand mud snails popping up in new locations. So we're really trying to go back and educate anglers and other water users, not just boaters, that everybody needs to drain, clean and dry."

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. DARK STORY BEHIND SEAFOOD SOLD IN AMERICA

Poor migrant workers and children are being sold to factories in Thailand and forced to peel shrimp that ends up in global supply chains, including those of Wal-Mart and Red Lobster, an AP investigation finds.

2. HOW OBAMA HOPES TO ALLAY TERRORISM CONCERNS

The president plans to meet with his National Security Council on Monday, then give a public update on the fight against Islamic State militants.

3. TRUMP BACKERS ARE BAFFLED BY CRITICISM OF HIS MUSLIM PROPOSAL

The candidate's supporters see his plan as an entirely reasonable response to a clear and present threat.

4. FRENCH FAR RIGHT COLLAPSES IN REGIONAL ELECTIONS

Marine Le Pen's anti-immigration party fails to win a single region in the latest balloting, after dominating the first round of voting following the extremist attacks in Paris.

5. MAN SHOT BY LA DEPUTIES WAS REPORTEDLY HOLDING WEAPON

"When he collapsed, his arms were underneath him, and the gun was still in his hand," says homicide Capt. Steven Katz, but questions remain as to why the police kept firing.

6. 5 MONTHS AFTER CHATTANOOGA, FEDS QUIET ON ANY TERROR LINKS

Labeling it a terror attack would make its victims eligible for the Purple Heart and entitle its survivors to additional payments and benefits.

7. WHERE MOST SEX OFFENDER PAROLEES ARE EXEMPT FROM BAN

In California, convicts previously banned from living near places where children congregate now face no restrictions after the state changed its policy in response to a court ruling, the AP learns.

8. CHINESE POLICE SCUFFLE WITH PROTESTERS AT TRIAL

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 14 of 25

Prominent rights lawyer Pu Zhiqiang is tried on charges of stirring ethnic hatred with commentaries posted online that were critical of the Communist Party.

9. BOSTON COMPANY TURNS ROADKILL INTO FASHION

Animal rights groups have mixed feelings about this alternative to wild fur trapping and large-scale fur farms.

10. WHAT HOLLYWOOD IS READY FOR

On Monday evening, three theaters will roll out red carpets for the world premiere of the hugely anticipated "Star Wars: The Force Awakens."

Trump backers baffled by criticism of his Muslim proposal

JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

BILL BARROW, Associated Press

GREER, S.C. (AP) — As she's working the counter at a hole-in-the-wall hot dog stand named Rosie's in upstate South Carolina, Tracy Hooker isn't interested in debating the merits of Donald Trump's proposal to temporarily block Muslims from coming into the United States.

She knows some people think it's bigoted. That others argue it's impractical, legally dubious or both. And that every other Republican running for president has, in some way or another, rejected the idea that the plan is even worth talking about.

That's why she says Trump is "my guy."

He's the only one who gets it.

"Think about it. You don't know what you've got here. You've got no clue," she said of the Muslim tourists, immigrants and refugees Trump wants to temporarily bar from coming to the U.S.

"You don't know if they like us. You don't know if they hate us," said Hooker, 47, of Greer, South Carolina. "You don't know why they're here."

To Hooker and the dozens of Trump supporters interviewed in the past week by The Associated Press in the first-to-vote states of Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina, the near universal condemnation of the billionaire's plan is simply baffling.

They hear U.S. House Speaker Paul Ryan say, "This is not conservatism," and British Prime Minister David Cameron call it, "Quite simply wrong." They listen to the secretary general of the United Nations call Trump's plan "xenophobic" and an "appeal to hate."

And, they say, they marvel at how naïve all the critics sound.

In the wake of the attacks in Paris and shootings in San Bernardino, they say only Trump is taking on what they believe is a clear and present danger to America and its citizens.

"When you're in war, you have to take steps that are not American to protect yourself and defend the country," said Margaret Shontz, of Cedar Falls, Iowa, as she arrived at a Trump campaign stop in Des Moines on Friday.

Trump's call to bar Muslims from coming to America is "awesome."

"Very needed," she said. "Very necessary."

By their own description, Trump supporters are frustrated and angry about the direction of the nation. They fret over the fate of the economy, feel betrayed by the nation's immigration policy and worry America has lost its way on the world stage.

In interviews with AP, they argued Trump's plan for Muslims who want to come to the U.S. is a bold proposal that regular politicians are too timid to make. They feel the criticism that comes from those same politicians is rooted in the weakness Trump promises to sweep away.

Iowa's Dale Witmer, 90, a registered Republican and World War II veteran who likes Trump and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, embraced the Muslim ban as a "great idea." While he has concerns about Trump's unfiltered style, he praises him for talking about things he says others are thinking but afraid to say themselves.

"I'd like to go back (to) when I was younger in the 50s and 60s, when the country was a little better. It was America then. I'm starting to worry we're starting to lose identity in this country, I do believe," Witmer said.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 15 of 25

He added he was taken aback by the backlash: "I don't know how to comprehend that."

Many of Trump's supporters called the reaction to his plan yet another example of the Republican establishment and a biased media trying to stop a candidate who refuses to play by their rules.

Dan Edwards, a retired banker from Van Meter, Iowa, who brought his family to Trump's town hall in Des Moines on Friday, said the real estate mogul's words were taken out of context to make his plan sound more extreme.

"I think it's been made into something it wasn't meant to be. I think basically what he's doing is saying, 'OK, wait a minute. Refugees, we need to make sure we know what we're looking for and to make sure everything is in place,'" said Edwards, 53, who compared the proposal to a temporary "time out" while the country re-assesses the situation.

Trump made the proposal a week ago, releasing a statement on Dec. 7 that called for "a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country's representatives can figure out what the hell is going on."

Trump's campaign said immediately thereafter the proposed ban would apply to "everyone," including individuals seeking to immigrate to the country as well as those looking to visit as tourists.

When asked by AP if the ban would apply to U.S. citizens traveling, working or living abroad, including American servicemen and women who are Muslim, Trump responded via a spokeswoman, "You figure it out!"

As the week progressed, Trump began to fill in additional details. He said American citizens, including Muslim members of the military, would be exempt, as would certain world leaders and athletes coming to the U.S. to compete.

"By the way, it's not total and complete. And it's temporary," Trump said Sunday in an interview with CNN. "You're going to have exceptions. You're going to have people coming in and you are going to get people in."

New Hampshire state Rep. Stephen Stepanek, Trump's campaign co-chairman in the state, said the reaction to Trump's proposal fit the pattern of his campaign: First outrage, then a realization Trump hit the nail on the head.

"He's always one step ahead of all the other politicians in pointing out a problem. And everybody's outraged. And then all of a sudden they start analyzing what he said and realize, 'Oh my god, he's right,'" he said.

"I think it's a fabulous idea," Stepanek said. "Because our system is broken and what has happened in San Bernardino is an example of a tip of the iceberg."

An NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll released last week found that at 57 percent, a solid majority of Americans, oppose Trump's proposal. A CBS News poll also found nearly six-in-10 Americans opposed the ban, with two-thirds saying it goes against the country's founding principles.

But Republicans are far more receptive; 54 percent voiced support for the ban in the CBS poll.

During a 29-person focus group made up of mostly Trump supporters in a suburb of Washington last week, just eight participants said they disagreed with Trump's proposal. Seventeen raised their hands when asked if they agreed.

Republican pollster Frank Luntz, who led the group, said in his 23 years in the business, he's never seen a phenomenon quite like Trump.

"He defies every assumption that was laid out," Luntz said. "He has created or found the magic formula. And he has been using it more successfully than anyone — including me — ever imagined."

While Trump has brushed back criticism, including from some Republicans, that his idea smacks of bigotry, some of his backers take that charge personally.

"I felt like I'm being insulted," said Edwards, the banker from Iowa. "I'm feeling strongly about my country and I feel attacked when they're going against him in that way."

Others saw it as a badge of honor.

"Being compared to Hitler is how you know you've reached the apex," said Gary Hopper, 58, of Bedford, New Hampshire.

At Cannon's restaurant in Greer, South Carolina, not too far from Rosie's hot dog stand, manager Tammy Holcombe argued "everybody's getting too offended by this." Another Cannon's employee, 50-year-old Wayne Weathers, chimed in: "The drive-by media says everybody's a racist who supports Trump. That's ridiculous."

Holcombe said she doesn't have a problem applying a religious test to visitors, immigrants and refugees.

"I'm a Christian, and they're all against that, so why not?" she said, adding that the U.S. leaders should "man up, grow a backbone and quit worrying about the little things and focus on the big picture of everything, not just immigration."

"I know we all came from somewhere else," she added, "but this is a different time now."

Back at Rosie's, Hooker made a point to say that among her hundreds of Facebook friends, "a few of them are Muslims. One's even an atheist."

But she said she'd be willing to bar American citizens who are Muslim and travel outside the country from returning home — a position that goes far beyond what Trump has proposed.

"Look, if I let you borrow my shoes from my house, when you bring them back, I'm not going to bring them back in until I reassess and see what I've got," she said.

Among some Trump supporters, even those who agree with his proposal, there are some concerns — usually about how the bombastic former reality TV star is selling his ideas.

"I agree with him, mostly," said Greg Spearman, 46, who owns an electrical firm in Greer. "But there's certainly a better way to say it."

Still other backers said they simply don't take Trump's plan at face value. Some argued he was deliberately trying to provoke the media in search of attention, while others said he was simply trying to raise an alarm and would take a more measured approach if he makes it to the White House.

Trump himself as even suggested his proposed ban was intended to stir up reaction: "Without the ban," he said Sunday, "you're not going to make the point."

Billy Montplaisir, a 27-year-old maintenance worker who lives in Weare, New Hampshire, said that he likes "everything about" Trump — but nonetheless felt uncomfortable with the proposal. He worried it would play into the hands of Islamic radicals and risked turning the "good ones against us."

"The Muslim thing, that kind of blew me out," Montplaisir said. "He kind of went a little overboard there."

Still, Montplaisir is sticking with Trump and plans to vote for him when New Hampshire holds the first primary of the campaign in a few weeks.

"I like how he's just up front," he said, "and doesn't care what people think."

Police: Man fatally shot by LA deputies kept holding gun

ROBERT JABLON, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A black man who was fatally shot by Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputies kept holding a gun as he lay dying on the ground, authorities said Sunday in response to questions about why they continued to fire on the man after he fell to the pavement.

A close-up from security footage showed 28-year-old Nicholas Robertson stretched out on the ground with a gun in his hand. He died at the scene Saturday morning in the south Los Angeles suburb of Lynwood.

Two deputies fired 33 bullets at the man after he refused to drop the gun and walked across a busy street to a filling station where a family was pumping gas, homicide Capt. Steven Katz said.

"When he collapsed, his arms were underneath him, and the gun was still in his hand. There was never a time when the weapon was not in his possession," Katz said.

Asked if the officers were white, Katz said no but would not elaborate. He said one had been working in the field for about a year, the other for about 18 months.

Police confronted Robertson as they investigated 911 calls from witnesses who saw a man firing a gun

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 17 of 25

into the air. Witnesses said he was walking down a residential street and then through a busy commercial area holding the weapon and acting strangely.

Witnesses told authorities that Robertson reportedly fired six to seven rounds and briefly went into a car wash and a pizza parlor before deputies arrived.

Deputies spotted the man in front of the gas station, where two women and three children were inside a car, and they ordered him to drop the gun, Katz said. But he refused and at one point pointed the gun in the deputies' direction, Katz added.

The gun was not registered to Robertson and has not been reported stolen. Detectives are trying to track it, Katz said.

Robertson may have been in a dispute at home with his spouse before he went out on the street, but authorities have yet to verify that report, Katz said.

Video, apparently from a cellphone, appeared on several media sites. It appears to show deputies firing about two dozen bullets, including several rounds after Robertson falls and is crawling on the ground.

"They shot him in his shoulder, and he was crawling," Pamela Brown, Robertson's mother-in-law, told Los Angeles television station KCAL. "He left three kids behind, two daughters and a son. What, they could have Tasered him or anything."

Robertson's wife declined to speak with the Associated Press, providing only a photo of their children. Earlier, she told the Los Angeles Times that her husband was a stay-at-home father who didn't engage in crime.

"Anytime you see him, you see him with the kids," Nekesha Robertson said. "He'd take them to and from school. Help them with homework. He's a daddy — that's his job. He didn't do nothing else."

Nekesha Robertson said her mother-in-law had called her shortly before the shooting to say her husband was under the influence of alcohol. She said she was on her way to get him and had stopped at the same gas station to buy milk before the shooting happened.

Other relatives said the shooting was unjustified and that Robertson may not have heard the deputies' call to drop the gun.

"This man never turned at you and looked at you or pointed the gun at you. Nothing," said Nekesha Robertson's cousin, Monica Reddix. "What they did yesterday was ... point-blank murder."

Robertson's death comes at a time of increasing criticism of police use of force after several killings of black men by officers have been caught on video in California and throughout the nation.

On Dec. 2, five San Francisco officers shot and killed Mario Woods, 26, in the city's gritty Bayview neighborhood after they say he refused commands to drop an 8-inch knife he was carrying. Police were responding to a stabbing report when they encountered Woods. The shooting was caught by several bystanders, and their videos circulated online widely.

Los Angeles County Sheriff Jim McDonnell promised the investigation into Robertson's death would be handled "with the utmost professionalism and integrity" and urged anyone with information to come forward.

"In this modern age of cellphone video and instant analysis on the Internet, I would ask that we keep in mind that a thorough and comprehensive investigation is detailed and time intensive," he said in a statement. "It will involve, not just one source of information, but numerous sources, potentially including multiple videos, physical evidence and eyewitness accounts."

AP Exclusive: Most sex offender parolees exempt from ban

DON THOMPSON, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Three-quarters of California's paroled sex offenders previously banned from living near parks, schools and other places where children congregate now face no housing restrictions after the state changed its policy in response to a court ruling that said the prohibition only applies to child molesters, according to data compiled at the request of The Associated Press.

The rate is far higher than officials initially predicted. The state expected half of the 5,900 parolees would

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 18 of 25

have restrictions on where they can live or sleep lifted when the corrections department changed its policy following the March ruling. Instead, data shows that 76 percent of offenders no longer are subject to the voter-approved restrictions.

Corrections officials said last spring that about half of the convicted sex offenders are considered child molesters who would still be subject to the housing ban.

But even some whose offense involved a child no longer face the 2,000-foot residency restriction, officials disclosed in explaining the higher number. That's because the department's new policy requires a direct connection between where a parolee lives and the offender's crime or potential to reoffend. Only rarely is the assailant a stranger to the victim, the type of offender whose behavior might be affected by where he lives.

"A parole agent cannot simply prevent a parolee from living near a school or park because the offender committed a crime against a child," Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation spokesman Jeffrey Callison said in a statement.

The decision largely reverses a blanket housing ban imposed by California voters nine years ago. Many states impose a variety of residency restrictions on sex offenders, though states including Iowa, Georgia and Oklahoma rescinded or changed their residency restrictions and some now also tailor restrictions to individual sex offenders.

As a result of California's policy change, more than 4,200 of the state's 5,900 offenders no longer qualify for the residency restrictions, according to data compiled by the corrections department at the AP's request. However, their whereabouts still are monitored with tracking devices and they must still tell local law enforcement agencies where they live.

One in five sex offenders who used to be transient have been able to find permanent housing because they are no longer subject to the rule, the department said.

"These numbers are absolutely astounding," said state Sen. Sharon Runner, R-Lancaster, who co-authored the original ballot initiative. "Kids in kindergarten living across the street from a sex offender is not what the people voted for in Jessica's Law. Seventy percent of the people voted to keep them away from schools and parks."

The department spent months reviewing offenders' criminal backgrounds before deciding that the ban should continue to apply to about 1,400 offenders. The department couldn't provide the status of nearly 300 other offenders.

"That's a pretty dramatic reduction in numbers, so that's scary. That's scary for victims," said Nina Salarno, executive director of Crime Victims United of California.

She and Criminal Justice Legal Foundation president Michael Rushford, who represents crime victims, said the department is broadly interpreting the March court ruling, which applied only to San Diego County. Officials have refused to release the legal advice from the state attorney general that they are relying upon in making the decision.

In the March ruling, justices found that blanket restrictions violate offenders' constitutional rights by making it difficult for them to find housing and other services, without advancing the state's goal of protecting children. One of the San Diego County offenders sued after he was forced to live in a dry riverbed, while two others slept in an alley near the parole office.

Susan Fisher, a board member of the victims support group Citizens against Homicide, said she would have been surprised at the low number of parolees still facing residency restrictions had she not spent so much time as a parole commissioner and as victims' rights adviser to former Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Most people think "that around every corner is a child molester," she said. Yet experts say most child molesters are family members or acquaintances of the victim.

Ending the blanket housing restriction tracks recommendations that have been made for years by the Sex Offender Management Board, an advisory panel made up of law enforcement and treatment professionals.

Board vice chairman Tom Tobin said California parole officers who are responsible for enforcing the prohibition are doing a much better job now of tracking sex offenders based on their individual risk.

Tobin, a psychologist who also is on the board of the California Coalition on Sexual Offending, said agents

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 19 of 25

can still apply the housing ban where it makes sense, and the department said it still prohibits many offenders from having contact with minors or loitering near parks, schools or other places where children gather.

Tobin and Fisher said the public is safer with about 260 fewer transient sex offenders who now have been able to find housing since the rule changed.

"If somebody's living under a bridge or going from one house to the next ... we're putting ourselves at greater risk," Fisher said.

Runner disagreed. She intends to try again next year to pass stalled legislation that would let judges in each county decide if the 2,000-foot limit is too restrictive in their jurisdiction.

"Unfortunately, that many people coming from transient to living near schools is not good," Runner said.

5 months after Chattanooga, feds quiet on any terror links

CURT ANDERSON, AP Legal Affairs Writer

It took about two days for the FBI to announce it was investigating the Dec. 2 attack that killed 14 in San Bernardino, California, as an act of terror.

Nearly five months after the killing of five military personnel in Chattanooga, Tennessee, authorities have carefully avoided using the same wording about the attack by a Kuwaiti-born gunman.

As a practical matter, labeling Chattanooga a terror attack would make its victims eligible for the Purple Heart, which if awarded would entitle their survivors to additional payments and benefits.

There's also a key difference between Chattanooga and San Bernardino in terms of how publicly authorities have announced investigative details and drawn conclusions, said former federal prosecutor David S. Weinstein: the ramped-up visibility of extremism after the deadly attacks in Paris blamed on adherents to the Islamic State extremist group.

"What has changed is U.S. and world perception about terrorists and how the U.S. is combating terrorism," he said. "That national pulse about terrorism is high."

At a news conference the day of the Chattanooga shooting, then-U.S. Attorney Bill Killian said the shooting was being investigated as an act of terrorism. Minutes later, he backtracked, saying the investigation would determine whether it was terrorism or some other crime.

The closest federal authorities have come since to calling Chattanooga a terror attack was Dec. 6, when President Barack Obama addressed the nation from the Oval Office after San Bernardino. The president noted that as the U.S. has improved in preventing large-scale assaults like those on Sept. 11, 2001, "terrorists turned to less complicated acts of violence like the mass shootings that are all too common in our society."

Obama then cited both Chattanooga and San Bernardino, as well as the 2009 shootings at Fort Hood, Texas, that killed 13 people and wounded 32 more. The Fort Hood attack, initially called an instance of workplace violence by many authorities, resulted in the murder conviction and death sentence of Nidal Hasan, a former U.S. Army major who said during his court-martial he believed he was defending Taliban leaders from American troops.

Joyce McCants, a spokeswoman for the FBI in Knoxville, Tennessee, which oversees Chattanooga, said Thursday that the bureau is likely to provide an updated statement this week about the July 16 killings by Muhammad Youssef Abdulazeez.

Abdulazeez, 24, was fatally shot by police after opening fire at a military recruiting center and then driving to a reserve center, where he killed four Marines and a sailor.

Within hours of the shooting, Attorney General Loretta Lynch issued a statement describing a "national security investigation" — which immediately suggested the possibility of terrorism. No such statement came from the Justice Department on the night of the San Bernardino attacks as investigators worked to determine a motive.

Initially, authorities described Abdulazeez, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in Kuwait, as a homegrown violent extremist. Vice President Joe Biden said at a memorial for the Chattanooga dead that Abdulazeez was a "perverted jihadist" who may have been inspired to become "a single lone wolf to commit a savage act."

In the days after the San Bernardino massacre, the FBI labeled the married couple behind the attack

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 20 of 25

terrorists who had been "radicalized" with Islamic extremist views.

The word "terrorism" is used by civilians and government officials alike to describe many killings that may have political or religious overtones, but terrorism is also a federal criminal charge. In essence, federal code defines terrorism as any one of a list of violent acts that is "calculated to influence or affect the conduct of government by intimidation or coercion, or to retaliate against government conduct."

The Associated Press reported previously that Abdulazeez had visited an uncle in Jordan before the Chattanooga shooting, but it's not clear if that visit prompted him to adopt extremist views.

Soon after the attack, investigators found writings from Abdulazeez that reference Anwar al-Awlaki, a U.S.-born cleric who encouraged and inspired attacks on the homeland and was killed in a U.S. drone strike in 2011.

Representatives of the family have said Abdulazeez was helping out with his uncle's small cellphone business in Jordan. The family has also described Abdulazeez as having problems that included depression and drug abuse. A representative for the family declined additional comment last week.

Ed Reinhold, special agent in charge of the FBI's Knoxville office, has said investigators believe Abdulazeez was acting on his own.

FBI Director James Comey told reporters during a visit last month to Nashville, Tennessee, that the bureau may never publicly reveal the results of its Chattanooga investigation.

"Sometimes the way we investigate requires us to keep information secret. That's a good thing. We don't want to smear people," Comey said.

Those killed were Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Randall Smith and four Marines: Staff Sgt. David Wyatt, Sgt. Carson Holmquist, Gunnery Sgt. Thomas Sullivan and Lance Cpt. Squire "Skip" Wells.

U.S. Rep. Chuck Fleischmann, R-Tennessee, has introduced a non-binding resolution in Congress calling for Purple Hearts to be awarded in this case.

"These men proudly served their country, and several made the ultimate sacrifice to save others," Fleischmann said.

Utah community leaves fake packages on doorstep for thieves

SOUTH JORDAN, Utah (AP) — A man in one Utah community says his neighbors have begun placing decoy packages on front porches in an effort to thwart holiday delivery thieves.

Rocks, old clothes and junk televisions are among items that resident Kroger Menzer says residents in the Daybreak neighborhood of South Jordan have been putting in shipping boxes. People are also using surveillance video.

"The goal isn't to catch them in the act, that's for the police," Menzer told KSL-TV (<http://bit.ly/1MbxFuW>). "The goal is to make it confusing and frustrating. So they come and steal a box, and they get home and it's a bunch of rocks, there's a good chance that they're probably not going to come back to steal another box."

Menzer said one of his neighbors came up with the idea and posted it to the Daybreak community Facebook page.

"This is a very tight-knit community," said Menzer, a real estate agent. "Even though there are 4,000 homes and 15,000 people living here, we all get to know each other pretty well."

Lt. John Barker, of the Unified Police Department, said it can take just seconds for a thief to jump out of a car, grab a package and run.

He said police don't want residents putting themselves in danger by confronting thieves. They recommend using surveillance video instead.

"If it's a good system, they can get some very good pictures," Barker said. "If you can get the car, and especially the license plate, that's very helpful in tracking these individuals down."

Barker also recommended picking up packages at delivery service locations.

Head-scratching over gifts? How about part of a human skull?

WILLIAM MATHIS, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — What to get the loved one who has everything? Steven Rabinowitz wracked his brain before settling on (spoiler alert, relatives!) a raccoon skull.

"We'll see how it goes," Rabinowitz, 31, said as he revealed his purchase near a crowded display of animal skulls, antique medical instruments — and a bowl full of human teeth.

The bizarre bazaar that drew Rabinowitz and other curious clientele Sunday was the Morbid Anatomy Museum Holiday Flea Market — offering gifts both frightful and festive.

In the dim light of a pair of golden chandeliers, about a dozen vendors displayed their horrific wares: pieces of human skulls, a wide variety of taxidermy and earrings made from muskrat jaws. One vendor, Divya Anantharaman, stood by her display of two-headed taxidermied birds — complete with Santa hats.

Joanna Ebenstein helped open the museum in 2014 as an extension of an art project on anatomical history and artifacts. Initially, Ebenstein said she had to hide her odd obsession from her co-workers at a children's book publishing company.

"I didn't want them to know I was into all this scary death stuff," she said.

The museum hosts a wide range of events like taxidermy classes, lecture series and film screenings. But Ebenstein said the flea markets are the most successful.

"People like me don't want to buy normal Christmas stuff," she said.

The flea markets have proven so popular they had to be moved from the museum's basement to a larger space around the corner after the wait to get in reached 2 1/2 hours last spring.

Sunday's was the third of the year. The line stretched around the block.

"For some reason right now it's captured the public imagination," Ebenstein said.

Anantharaman, who was hawking the two-headed birds, quit her day job two years ago to turn her taxidermy hobby into a full-time career.

The holidays are her busiest time of year, when consumers yearn for that special something that sets their gift apart from the pack — or flock.

"It's the same reason they want to buy anything handmade," she said.

With 'Force Awakens' looming, 'Heart of the Sea' sinks

JAKE COYLE, AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The movie industry braced for the coming storm of "The Force Awakens" over a quiet weekend where "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 2" notched its fourth-straight week atop the box office and Ron Howard's whaling tale "In the Heart of the Sea" capsized.

With "The Force Awakens" lurking, few studios wanted to push out a new release ahead of the expected box-office behemoth. That left the final chapter of Lionsgate's "Hunger Games" saga to remain No. 1 with \$11.3 million according to studio estimates Sunday, bringing its domestic total to \$245 million.

"In the Heart of the Sea," starring Chris Hemsworth, was the only major new wide release to test the pre-"Star Wars" waters. But hopes for the Warner Bros. film sank with an estimated \$11 million despite a production budget around \$100 million.

"Ron Howard is an accomplished, terrific filmmaker who took this ambitious project on as a real passion, and we're proud to have made it with him," said Jeff Goldstein, domestic distribution head for Warner Bros.

Though Goldstein acknowledged it was a disappointing start, he hopes that "In the Heart of the Sea" — about the shipwreck of the Essex, which inspired Herman Melville's "Moby-Dick" — will benefit over the Christmas holiday by getting out ahead of "The Force Awakens," which opens Thursday night.

"There's a cultural phenomenon around the corner," Goldstein said. "Our hope was to get in in front of it and get some word of mouth so that when you get down to Christmas week — we leapfrog over this coming week — that you can break through the clutter of those other new movies."

In limited release, Adam McKay's comic rendering of the economic collapse, "The Big Short," opened strongly with \$720,000 in eight theaters. The Paramount Pictures release came into the weekend riding good re-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 22 of 25

views and a wave of nominations from the Screen Actors Guild and the Golden Globes, where it landed four nods including best picture, comedy, as well as nominations for stars Steve Carell and Christian Bale.

Rob Moore, vice chairman of Paramount, credited McKay for bringing a wry sense of humor to the Michael Lewis adaptation, and creating a movie both powerful and commercial. The strong response to "The Big Short" also vindicated Paramount's decision ___ made after early screenings of the film ___ to move the film, which opens wide on Dec. 23, into awards season from its planned release in 2016.

"We thought that we had something really special," Moore said. "The last week with all the critical attention and audience reaction has certainly proved that out."

The low-key weekend allowed Pixar's "The Good Dinosaur" to take third place with \$10.5 million in its third week. Ryan Coogler's acclaimed "Rocky" sequel "Creed" followed close behind with \$10.1 million in its third week. Slowly expanding Oscar contenders "Spotlight" and "Brooklyn" ___ both in their sixth week ___ continued to crack the top 10 with \$2.5 million and \$2 million, respectively.

But with "The Force Awakens" breaking advance ticket sales records, the force of "Star Wars" was felt a week before it even opens.

"There's no question that this weekend was affected by the anticipation of 'Star Wars,'" said Paul Derarabedian, senior media analyst for box office data firm Rentrak. "You have countless moviegoers poised and ready to hit the multiplex later this week. We're on the cusp of an earth-shattering weekend at the box office."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Rentrak. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay — Part 2," \$11.3 million (\$15.4 million international).
2. "In the Heart of the Sea," \$11 million (\$12.6 million international).
3. "The Good Dinosaur," \$10.5 million (\$14.3 million international).
4. "Creed," \$10.1 million.
5. "Krampus," \$8 million (\$3.6 million international).
6. "Spectre," \$4 million (\$12.9 million international).
7. "The Night Before," \$3.9 million.
8. "The Peanuts Movie," \$2.7 million (\$2.7 million international).
9. "Spotlight," \$2.5 million.
10. "Brooklyn," \$2 million.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at international theaters (excluding the U.S. and Canada), according to Rentrak:

1. "Surprise: Journey to the West," \$17 million.
2. "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay — Part 2," \$15.4 million.
3. "The Good Dinosaur," \$14.3 million.
4. "Spectre," \$12.9 million.
5. "In the Heart of the Sea," \$12.6 million.
6. "Point Break," \$12.3 million.
7. "The Martian," \$8.1 million.
8. "Bridge of Spies," \$6.7 million.
9. "Inside Men," \$5 million.
10. "The Master," \$4.2 million

Seattle to decide whether to let Uber, Lyft drivers unionize

PHUONG LE, Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Seattle may soon become the first city to let drivers of ride-hailing companies such as Uber and Lyft collectively bargain over pay and working conditions, a move opposed by the companies

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 23 of 25

and one seen as a test case for the changing 21st century workforce.

The city council is to vote Monday on whether to extend collective bargaining rights for drivers of taxis, for-hire transportation companies and app-based ride-hailing services that are part of the growing on-demand economy.

A national leader on workers' rights, Seattle was among the first cities to pass laws to gradually raise the minimum wage to \$15 and require most employers to provide paid sick leave.

But Councilmember Mike O'Brien says for-hire drivers as independent contractors are excluded from such protections. He wants to take the next step in the fight for workers' rights and give them a say in their working conditions. Independent contractors aren't covered by the National Labor Relations Act, which allows for collective bargaining.

Many drivers in Seattle are immigrants who depend on full-time work, but some make less than minimum wage and don't have basic worker rights, such as sick leave or protection from retaliation, O'Brien said.

"This feels like the right thing to do," said O'Brien, who expects a legal fight if the measure passes. "We don't take legal challenges lightly, but we recognize that businesses sue when they disagree with our policies."

San Francisco-based Uber and others say federal labor law prevents cities from regulating collective bargaining for independent contractors, and the ordinance would violate federal antitrust laws by allowing independent transportation providers to conspire to artificially drive up transportation costs.

"The ordinance is puzzling because I think it's generally believed to be flatly illegal what they're trying to do, and I assume the courts will look at that if it were to be successful," said Uber chief adviser David Plouffe, who ran President Barack Obama's 2008 campaign, during a recent talk in Seattle.

Samuel Estreicher, a law professor at New York University, said that if the drivers aren't considered as employees under federal labor law, there's no serious argument over whether that law pre-empts the city ordinance.

He said the bigger issue concerns antitrust laws, including whether independent businesses getting together to bargain constitutes an antitrust violation.

"There's a lot of agitation over the on-demand workforce," Estreicher said. Technology has made it easier to get services from people who are not classically controlled by employers, but the concern on the labor side is whether such workers are going to be protected, he noted.

"If the Seattle ordinance survives challenge, we'll see it in a lot of cities," he added.

Lea Vaughn, a University of Washington law professor, agrees with the ride-hailing companies that federal labor law would pre-empt the city ordinance. She raised a broader issue of whether the current labor law written for an industrial economy is well-suited for the new sharing economy.

Uber is currently facing a class-action lawsuit in federal court in California over worker classification. The plaintiffs named in the suit say they are Uber employees, not independent contractors, and have been shortchanged on expenses and tips.

Uber has about 400,000 drivers nationwide with about 10,000 in Seattle. Its rival, Lyft, also has thousands of drivers in Seattle but declined to give a specific number.

"We believe the proposed ordinance threatens the privacy of drivers, imposes substantial costs on passengers and the city, and conflicts with longstanding federal law," Lyft spokeswoman Chelsea Wilson said in a statement.

Uber says drivers have flexibility in deciding when they work and how many hours, and many chose to drive to supplement their income. Drivers don't have a say in rate changes, can be deactivated at will and don't have access to worker protections such as sick leave and minimum wage laws, Dawn Gearhart, a representative with Teamsters Local 117.

Under the proposed ordinance, the city will give certified nonprofits organizations a list of eligible drivers at each company, and the groups must show that a majority of drivers of each company want representation. Those organizations would then bargain on behalf of those drivers.

Michael Palmer, 55, who has been driving for Uber for 1 ½ years, said he's divided.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 24 of 25

"Unions always have been a good thing in any business. It helps with having a voice," said Palmer, who drives about 50 hours a week. "But I don't know if a union would work for something like Uber."

"Are we employees or partners? We don't get treated as partners," said Fasil Teka, 40, who drives part time for Uber and works full time for a for-hire company. "We have no way to negotiate with Uber."

"The only way we can achieve what we deserve as a driver is by working together," he said.

Today in History The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, Dec. 14, the 348th day of 2015. There are 17 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 14, 1799, the first president of the United States, George Washington, died at his Mount Vernon, Virginia, home at age 67.

On this date:

In 1819, Alabama joined the Union as the 22nd state.

In 1911, Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen (ROH'-ahl AH'-mun-suhn) and his team became the first men to reach the South Pole, beating out a British expedition led by Robert F. Scott.

In 1918, "Il Trittico," a trio of one-act operas by Giacomo Puccini, premiered at New York's Metropolitan Opera House. (The third opera, "Gianni Schicchi (SKEE'-kee)," featured the aria "O Mio Babbino Caro," which was an immediate hit.)

In 1939, the Soviet Union was expelled from the League of Nations for invading Finland.

In 1946, the United Nations General Assembly voted to establish the U.N.'s headquarters in New York.

In 1964, the U.S. Supreme Court, in Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States, ruled that Congress was within its authority to enforce the Civil Rights Act of 1964 against racial discrimination by private businesses (in this case, a motel that refused to cater to blacks).

In 1972, Apollo 17 astronauts Harrison Schmitt and Eugene Cernan concluded their third and final moonwalk and blasted off for their rendezvous with the command module.

In 1975, six South Moluccan extremists surrendered after holding 23 hostages for 12 days on a train near the Dutch town of Beilen (BY'-luhn).

In 1981, Israel annexed the Golan Heights, which it had seized from Syria in 1967.

In 1985, Wilma Mankiller became the first woman to lead a major American Indian tribe as she took office as principal chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. Former New York Yankees outfielder Roger Maris, who'd hit 61 home runs during the 1961 season, died in Houston at age 51.

In 1995, Presidents Alija Izetbegovic (AHL'-yuh ee-zeht-BEG'-oh-vich) of Bosnia, Slobodan Milosevic (sloh-BOH'-dahn mee-LOH'-shuh-vich) of Serbia and Franjo Tudjman (FRAHN'-yoh TOOJ'-mahn) of Croatia signed the Bosnian peace treaty in Paris.

In 2012, a gunman with a semi-automatic rifle killed 20 first-graders and six educators at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, then committed suicide as police arrived; 20-year-old Adam Lanza had fatally shot his mother at their home before carrying out the attack on the school.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush defended his decision to wage the Iraq war, even as he acknowledged that "much of the intelligence turned out to be wrong." The House voted 251-174 to renew the USA Patriot Act. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (mahk-MOOD' ah-muh-DEE'-neh-zahd) escalated his anti-Israeli rhetoric, calling the Holocaust a "myth" used by Europeans to create a Jewish state in the heart of the Islamic world.

Five years ago: The White House insisted the implementation of President Barack Obama's landmark health care law would not be affected by a negative federal court ruling, and the Justice Department said it would appeal. Gunman Clay A. Duke fired at school board members in Panama City, Florida, but hit no one before fatally shooting himself. Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi scraped through two parliamentary votes of no confidence.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 14, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 143 ♦ 25 of 25

One year ago: A last-minute deal salvaged U.N. climate talks in Lima, Peru, from collapse. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (shin-zoh ah-bay) scored a decisive election victory and promised to push efforts to revitalize the world's third largest economy. Politician, TV personality and onetime Miss America Bess Myerson died in Santa Monica, California, at age 90.

Today's Birthdays: Singer-actress Abbe Lane is 84. Actor Hal Williams is 81. Actress-singer Jane Birkin is 69. Actress Patty Duke is 69. Pop singer Joyce Vincent-Wilson (Tony Orlando and Dawn) is 69. Entertainment executive Michael Ovitz is 69. Actress Dee Wallace is 67. Rhythm-and-blues singer Ronnie McNeir (The Four Tops) is 66. Rock musician Cliff Williams (AC/DC) is 66. Actor-comedian T.K. Carter is 59. Rock singer-musician Mike Scott (The Waterboys) is 57. Singer-musician Peter "Spider" Stacy (The Pogues) is 57. Actress Cynthia Gibb is 52. Actor Archie Kao is 46. Actress Natascha McElhone is 46. Actress-comedian Michaela Watkins is 44. Actress-comedian Miranda Hart (TV: "Call the Midwife") is 43. Rhythm-and-blues singer Brian Dalrymple (Soul For Real) is 40. Actress KaDee Strickland is 40. Actress Tammy Blanchard is 39. Actress Sophie Monk is 36. Actress Vanessa Hudgens is 27. Rock/R&B singer Tori Kelly is 23.

Thought for Today: "The trouble with our times is that the future is not what it used to be." - Paul Valery, French philosopher (1871-1945).