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Sunday, December 20

Anniversary: Lon & Marva Gellhaus

Birthdays: • Virginia Spencer • Lisa Adler • Jim Pray • Harvey Fliehs III • Lexi Osterman

3:00 pm: Open Gym (JK-8th grade 6th grade - 12th grade 5=7 pm)

3:30pm: Emmanuel Lutheran fellowship at Golden Living Center (confirmands serve)

Monday, December 21

No School

Senior Menu: Beef stroganoff noodles, mixed vegetables, cake with strawberries, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: Kent Webb, Kayla Townsend, Ashley Fliehs, Steve Giedt, Eva Ellis, Gavin Englund, McKenna Tietz, Noella Graf

6:30am: Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study

5:15pm: BBB host Roncalli (C game at 5:15, JV at 6:30, varsity at 8:00)

7:00pm: City Council Meeting

Tuesday, December 22

No School

Senior Menu: Tater tot hot dish, green beans, grape juice, sour cream apple pie square, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: • Don Raines, Kristen Winther, Cameron Howard, Kelby Tracy

10:00am: United Methodist Women's Bible Study

3:30pm: BBB vs. Eureka/Bowdle at NSU Classic

6:30pm: GBB at Roncalli

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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Dr. Geoffrey Rath - Optometrist

Eye Exams Glaucoma Tests Rx's Filled
- All Types Contact Lenses -

Doctor here Mondays Only - Office open Thursdays.
701-349-3223 to make appointments & adjustments

Hours at Ellendale, N.D. are:

Monday 9 - 12 & 1 - 5 Thursday 1:00 - 4:00

Pray is NEC Champion, Anderson claims third

Trevor Pray and Brandyn Anderson wrestled at the Northeast Conference Tournament held Saturday in Milbank with Pray coming home with a first place finish and Anderson a third place finish.

"The Groton wrestlers had varsity competition at the NEC tournament in Milbank," said Coach Dana Dargatz, "while the younger grapplers were at a junior high tournament in Watertown this past Saturday."

Pray wrestled at 126 and he decisioned Joey Hubsch of Webster, 14-6, then he went on to pin Jordan Pollock of Milbank in the championship match, 5:09. "Trevor Pray was wrestling up a weight class at the conference tourney, but that did not slow him down," Dargatz said. "He defeated a scrappy Webster wrestler in the semis by maj. Decision 14-6 and pinned another defending conference champ in the finals."

Brandyn Anderson wrestled at 285. He was decisioned in his first match by Braxton Fuller of Deuel, 5-1. Anderson then went on pin Kaeden Metz of Sisseton in 42 seconds and he decisioned Tate Shape in the third place match, 5-1. "Brandyn Anderson in the heavyweight division had a good day on the mat bringing home the third place medal," Dargatz said. "He lost a close opening round match, then battled his way back to earn third place."

The two Tiger matmen have had challenges, but are facing them head on and Dargatz said, "We started the day slow then got down to business and picked things up a bit. We went into the day trying new moves and expanding on what we do, both Trevor and Brandyn did this with ease and gained confidence in their arsenal. Going into Christmas break we're sitting putting good, and looking forward to getting back at it after break."

Milbank Area won the team title with 159 points followed by Webster Area with 153.5, Sisseton 135, Deuel 96, Clark-Willow Lake 79, Britton-Hecla 57 and Groton Area 29. Outstanding Wrestler of the tournament receiving the Ken Keck award was Braxton Fuller of Deuel.



Trevor Pray is the NEC Wrestling Champion at 126 pounds. (Courtesy photo from Facebook)

Wheeting chosen as DAR Good Citizen Award

Carly Wheeting, a Groton High School senior, has been chosen as the 2015-2016 Groton DAR Good Citizen. The Groton faculty and the senior class selected her for this award.

The student selected as the school's DAR Good Citizen must show leadership and patriotism in home, school, and community to an outstanding degree. Carly competed in the DAR Good Citizen Scholarship Contest by completing an application and writing an essay. The DAR Good Citizen candidate from each school competes in a state-wide competition. State winners will compete in geographical and national competitions for scholarships ranging up to \$2000.

Carly Wheeting, senior, is the daughter of John and Chris Wheeting, Groton. Her top awards are being on the honor roll, National Honor Society, All NEC Basketball Team for two years, MVP thrower for track and Round Robin Champion at the Brown County Fair. She is involved in basketball, volleyball, track, FFA and 4-H. She has volunteered as a grade basketball coach, with Farm Safety Week, at the Ag Fair and at church. She worked at the Potting Shed and she plans to attend a four-year school, but is undecided about a major right now.



NECOG-DC Awarded Funding to Aid Rural Businesses and Create Jobs

ABERDEEN, S.D. – The Northeast Council of Governments Development Corporation (NECOG-DC) has been awarded \$486,861 by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development. These funds will enable the development corporation to relend the money to small businesses in 12 South Dakota counties which include Beadle, Brown, Campbell, Day, Edmunds, Faulk, Hand, McPherson, Marshall, Potter, Spink, and Walworth.

The federal funds, provided through USDA's Intermediary Relending Program (IRP), was leveraged with \$162,287 from the Governor's Office of Economic Development Economic Development Partnership Program.

Loans can be made for the purchase of a business, building or land; building renovations, inventory, equipment, start-up costs and permanent working capital.

NECOG-DC has provided financing for businesses such as restaurants, general contractors, electricians, grocery stores, gas stations, hardware stores, and other businesses important to rural areas.

NECOG-DC is an alternative source of financing for new and expanding small businesses in South Dakota. As a gap lender, NECOG-DC works in conjunction with other lenders to provide flexible rates and terms that meet the individual needs of small business borrowers.

The loan funds provided by NECOG-DC are effective economic development tools that assist small businesses and communities by promoting job creation and retention in northeast South Dakota.

For more information please contact Alison Kiesz, RLF Manager at (605) 626-2595 or alison@necog.org.

Since 1989, NECOG-DC has made 200 loans totaling more than \$13.7 million. These funds have leveraged more than \$86 million in other funds and have created or retained 1,661 jobs in the region. NECOG-DC's mission is to foster economic development, create/retain jobs, stimulate business opportunities, and attract and retain business in northeast South Dakota through various economic programs and relationships with Federal, State and local officials.

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Meeting to Focus on Growing Field Peas in South Dakota Jan. 14

BROOKINGS, S.D. - Growing field peas will be the focus of an upcoming SDSU Extension meeting to be held Jan. 14, 2016 in Pierre.

"With the pending startup of a new pea processing plant in central South Dakota, there may be new interest in field pea production. Interested producers and industry representatives who would like to learn more about this expanding crop may want to consider attending this meeting," said Ruth Beck, SDSU Extension Agronomy Field Specialist.

Agenda

The agenda will include a presentation from Chris Graham, SDSU Extension Agronomist. Graham runs the SDSU field pea and lentil variety trials in South Dakota. He will discuss the trials and results. Dwayne Beck, manager of the Dakota Lakes Research Farm will share some basic production and agronomic information. Ruth Beck, will share some of the common disease concerns associated with field pea production.

Special guest speaker will be Dr. Brian Jenks, weed specialist from NDSU, who will discuss weed control concerns and management in peas. The last part of the day will include a grower panel consisting of experienced field pea and lentil growers from South Dakota.

This meeting will be held at the Econolodge (formerly The Kings Inn) located at 110 East Sioux Ave in Pierre. It will start at 10:30 a.m. and run through to 3 p.m. There will be a catered noon lunch included.

To accommodate for the lunch an RSVP is requested by Jan. 13. Anyone interested should contact the SDSU Regional Extension Center in Pierre by calling 605-773-8120 or email aletha.scott@sdstate.edu.

There will be a \$10 registration fee collected at the door. We cannot accept credit cards.

This project is made possible with funds from The South Dakota Pulse Growers, Inc., SDSU Extension and the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program at the U.S. Department of Agriculture through grant 12-25-B-1487.

Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the USDA.

June Lockhart Remembers "A Christmas Carol"

By Nick Thomas

The 1938 version of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" has long been a favorite seasonal TV movie.

"It's a short film, only about an hour, so there was no premiere when it first came out," recalled June Lockhart, who made her film debut at the age of 13 as Belinda Cratchit in the Christmas classic. "The studio just put it out as a program filler with their feature Christmas movie for that year."

"A Christmas Carol" is especially memorable for Lockhart because her father and mother also appear in the film.

"I thought my parents were wonderful as the Cratchits, and it was just great fun to see how a film was made," said Lockhart. "I loved the Victorian costumes."

Prior to filming, Lockhart was very familiar with the story.

"We used to perform it every Christmas at home for our dinner guests," she recalled. "So I had already appeared in it, with my parents, in our living room for many years prior to doing



it for MGM. We read from a script that my father had prepared from the original story. We would have wonderful actors like Doris Lloyd or Walter Kingsford playing parts and Leo G. Carroll would play Scrooge. In the film, Scrooge was played by Reginald Owen who was just a lovely, lovely man."

Carroll, who portrayed Mr. Waverly in the '60s TV spy series "The Man from U.N.C.L.E.," was a close friend of the Lockhart family and always "Uncle Leo" to young June. He was cast as Marley's ghost in the movie.

A decade later, when Lockhart made her 1947 Broadway debut in 'For Love or Money,' for which she won a Tony Award, Carroll visited her dressing room after the first matinee.

"Standing at the door in a great coat with big black collar, cane, homburg hat, gloves, and with his blue eyes sparkling, he said 'Oh June, much better than I expected!'" recalled Lockhart. "Coming from him, it was a great accolade."

Today, "A Christmas Carol" is a favorite of Lockhart's family who are fond of quoting her first scene.

"My daughter, Junie, and granddaughter, Christianna, have never let me forget that the first words I ever spoke in movies were: 'I know, I know – sausages!'" laughed June. "It's become a family joke and

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we all shriek with laughter when we watch it now. Watching the film has become a family tradition each year. And now, to be able to watch it with my grandchildren – well, who gets to do something like that?”

However, the film did leave Lockhart with one unpleasant memory.

“One thing I do remember was feeling quite nauseated on the set one day from something I had eaten the night before,” she recalled. “Then they placed a bowl of mashed parsnips in front of me during the Christmas dinner scene.

The stench made me so ill, the prop man had to replace the dish with potatoes. I’ve avoided parsnips ever since!”

Lockhart went on to star in several TV series including “Lassie” and “Lost in Space.” Her father, Gene Lockhart (1891-1957), was one of Hollywood’s most recognizable character actors throughout the ‘30s and ‘40s. And her mother, Kathleen Lockhart (1895-1978), had a 26 year movie career appearing in 40 films, about half alongside her husband.

But “A Christmas Carol” was the only time June appeared on film with either of her parents.

“So it always had a sweet spot in the hearts of the Lockhart family,” she said. “It’s grand to see it on TV every year and it certainly lives on as a charming little picture.”

“A Christmas Carol” (1938) is scheduled to air on TCM on Dec 24.

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery, Ala., and has written features, columns, and interviews for over 600 magazines and newspapers.



Groton Chamber Holiday Boxes are out & about in Groton!

This Week (thru 12/18) – Professional
Management Supply

\$25 Chamber Bucks OR Mystery Gift!

Next Week (thru 12/23) – Olde Bank
Floral 'N More

**\$25 Chamber Bucks or a Fresh Floral Christmas Bouquet

Stop by each participating business and register for \$25
Groton Chamber Bucks – or a prize supplied by the business.



Merry
Christmas

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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



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Today in Weather History

December 20, 1991: Light freezing drizzle and freezing rain developed over northern South Dakota from Timber Lake to Webster. Numerous car accidents were attributed to slippery conditions. The Aberdeen Police Department reported 24 accidents in Aberdeen, but only one resulted in an injury. Numerous businesses closed and schools were canceled.

December 20, 2008: Arctic air combined with blustery northwest winds brought extreme wind chills to central and northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota from the late afternoon of the 20th until the afternoon of the 21st. Wind chills of 35 below to 45 below zero were common across the area.

1836 - A famous cold wave occurred in central Illinois. A cold front with 70 mph winds swept through at Noon dropping the temperature from 40 degrees to near zero in a matter of minutes. Many settlers froze to death. Folklore told of chickens frozen in their tracks and men frozen to saddles. Ice in streams reportedly froze to six inches in a few hours. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1942 - An early cold wave sent the temperature plunging to 3 degrees below zero at Nantucket, MA, and to 11 degrees below zero at Boston MA. (The Weather Channel)

December 20, 1977: A "Once in a Lifetime" wind and dust storm struck the south end of the San Joaquin Valley in California. Winds reached 88 mph at Arvin before the anemometer broke and gusts were estimated at 192 mph at Arvin by a U.S. Geological Survey. Meadows Field in Bakersfield recorded sustained 46 mph winds with a gust of 63 mph. The strong winds generated a wall of dust resembling a tidal wave that was 5,000 feet high over Arvin. Blowing sand stripped painted surfaces to bare metal and trapped people in vehicles for several hours. 70% of homes received structural damage in Arvin, Edison and East Bakersfield. 120,000 Kern County customers lost power. Agriculture was impacted as 25 million tons of soil was loosened from grazing lands. Five people died and damages totaled \$34 million dollars.

These strong winds also spread a large fire through the Honda Canyon on Vandenberg Air Force Base in southern California. This fire, which started from a power pole on Tranquillon Ridge being blown over, claimed the lives of Base Commander Colonel Joseph Turner, Fire Chief Billy Bell and Assistant Fire Chief Eugene Cooper. Additionally, severe burns were experienced by Heavy Equipment Operator Clarence McCauley. He later died due to complications from the burns.

1987 - Heavy snow fell in the northern mountains of Colorado, with 15 inches reported in the Mary Jane ski area. Strong and gusty winds prevailed from the Northern High Plains to the Great Lakes. Winds gusted to 54 mph at Buffalo NY, and reached 66 mph at Livingston MT. Rain, freezing rain, sleet and snow fell across New England, with up to seven inches of snow in Maine. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Strong southerly winds ahead of a cold front in the central U.S. gusted to 70 mph at Indianapolis IN. The high winds toppled a masonry wall killing a construction worker. Low pressure and a trailing cold front brought rain and snow and high winds to the western U.S. Winds gusted to 90 mph at the Callahan Ranch south of Reno NV. Soda Springs, in the Sierra Nevada Range of California, received 17 inches of snow in less than 24 hours. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Brutal northwest winds ushered bitter cold arctic air into the north central U.S. International Falls, MN, and Warroad, MN, tied for honors as the cold spot in the nation with morning lows of 34 degrees below zero.

2016 DOG LICENSES

AVAILABLE NOW!!

Licenses due by Dec. 31, 2015

Fines start after Dec. 31, 2015

Dogs CAN NOT be licensed without providing updated rabies shot information, please bring records 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

Minot ND reported a wind chill reading of 81 degrees below zero. Squalls produced more heavy snow in the Great Lakes Region. Erie PA received 21 inches of snow, including four inches in one hour, to bring their total snow cover to 39 inches, an all-time record for that location. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2006 - A major winter storm affected Colorado, dumping several feet of snow on areas of the Rocky Mountains. The snowstorm temporarily closed the Denver International Airport.

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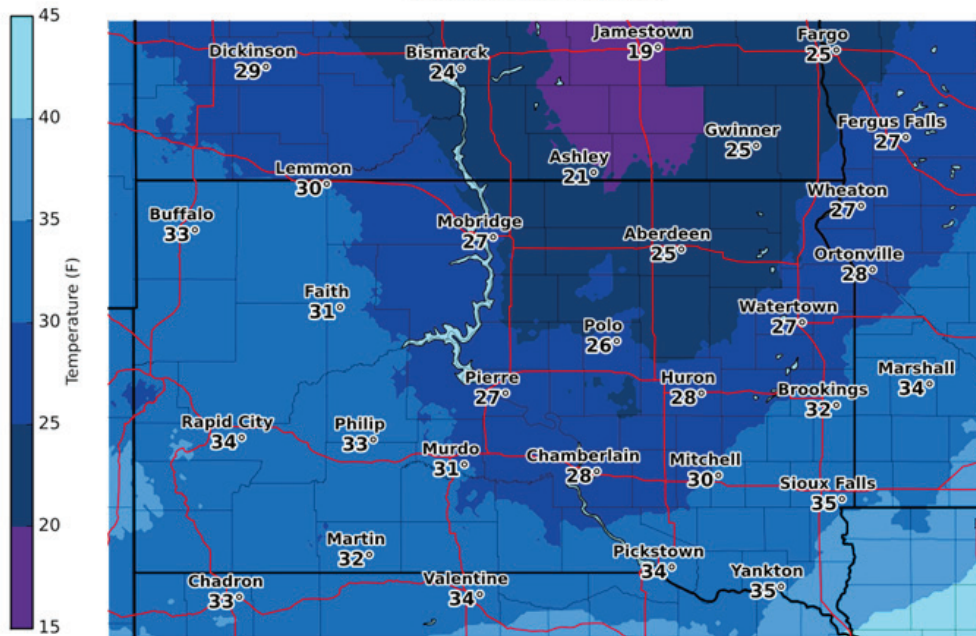
This Afternoon	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
						
Cloudy	Decreasing Clouds	Partly Sunny	Scattered Flurries	Slight Chance Snow and Breezy	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy
High: 23 °F	Low: 14 °F	High: 23 °F	Low: 14 °F	High: 33 °F	Low: 19 °F	High: 28 °F



Near Normal Temps Sunday



Afternoon Highs
Valid: December 20, 2015



National Weather Service
Aberdeen SD
12/20/2015 04:12 AM CST

Follow Us:   
weather.gov/aberndeen

 weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Published on: 12/20/2015 at 4:38AM

Not much happening across the area over the next couple days as temperatures remain near normal and conditions stay dry. Highs today will be in the 20s for most areas with north to northwest winds.

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 30.0 at 9:39 PM

Low: -2.4 at 12:18 AM

High Gust: 23 at 12:35 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 60° in 1893

Record Low: -29° in 1916

Average High: 24°F

Average Low: 4°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.33

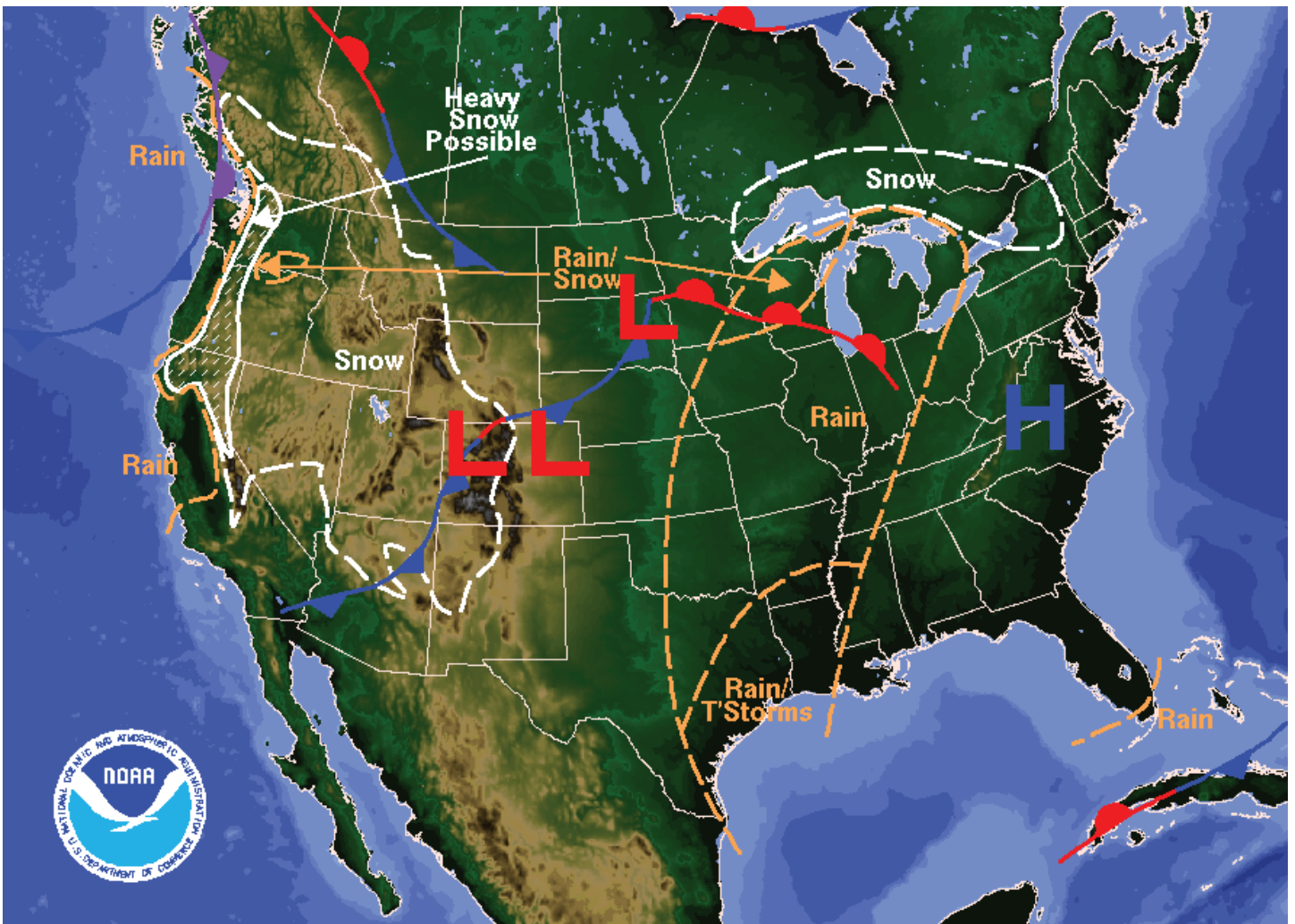
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.55

Average Precip to date: 21.53

Precip Year to Date: 20.37

Sunset Tonight: 4:52 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:10 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Sun, Dec 20, 2015, issued 3:20 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Krekeler based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



A CHEERFUL GIVER

A lady said to a beggar, "Here's a quarter. You don't deserve it, but it will make me happy to give it to you!"

"Thanks, ma'am," he said. "Why not make it few dollars and really enjoy yourself?"

Giving is an important theme in the Bible. It begins in the heart of God. We read about the abundant gifts He gave His people. It continues in the work of Jesus as He went about healing the sick and feeding the hungry. We see His supreme gift when He gave His life on the cross: the gift of love, life and eternity with Him. The gifts of God and His Son are priceless – life giving and life sustaining.

Paul reminds us that we are not to "give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves a person who gives cheerfully. And God will generously provide all you need and plenty left over to share with others."

The Lord has given us two hands: one for receiving and one for giving. The question is not "What can I spare?" but, "What can I share?"

Prayer: Father, without Your love, grace and mercy, we would have nothing. Often we focus on what we have rather than what You have given us. May we realize that we receive to give. When we give, we show Your love: in Christ's Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: 2 Corinthians 9:7-9 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

News from the Associated Press

Oglala Sioux seek solutions on chronic housing shortage

JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PINE RIDGE, S.D. (AP) — Delora Kills Enemy sleeps on her van's back seat. Raymond Eagle Hawk, his girlfriend and young daughter live in a plywood-walled shack barely larger than their bed. Rachel Hunter shares a single bedroom with her boyfriend and two children.

The housing shortage on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation is a longstanding problem for thousands of Oglala Sioux members — from the poorest to those who can afford to buy a house — but the tribe is pushing the issue into the spotlight again after severe storms and flooding in May spurred a federal disaster declaration.

Roughly 200 households are receiving new homes and about 100 homes will be repaired. A task force of federal and tribal officials and housing advocates also began work this month on a new plan to address the shortage on the reservation of about 35,000 people, starting with a study of current houses and their condition to better understand the situation. Tribal officials say the reservation needs 4,000 more units to ease crowding and ensure residences have plumbing and electricity.

The task force will use the results in a plan to help address the shortage and improve the tribe's ability to get grant funding, federal officials said. Tribal housing leaders hope the numbers back up their estimates and spur federal recognition, since the largest direct grant for Native American housing programs hasn't kept up with inflation since the 1990s.

"I can show a plan from 1997 with the same amount of money and the same ideas," said Vince Martin, chief operating officer of Oglala Sioux Lakota Housing. "It's just not enough resources to meet that need."

The tribe gets between about \$10 million to \$12 million, which it uses to build an average of between 30 and 40 housing units a year.

Almost half of Pine Ridge's residents live in poverty, and unemployment sits at more than 21 percent, though some estimates peg joblessness as much higher among tribal members on the reservation.

Kills Enemy, 43, said she sells beadwork to buy gas to heat her van, where she makes a bed in the back while her husband sleeps in the front seat.

She's in a dispute over her father's house, and was forced to remove her tent from his land over the summer. Finding a home, Kills Enemy said, would be "everything."

Oglala Sioux Lakota Housing's inventory includes about 1,200 low-income rentals and roughly 500 homes for ownership that have been built since the 1960s, Martin said, estimating an average of between 12 and 15 people live in each home.

The housing authority's waiting list is hundreds of families long and can take years. It would likely include thousands if some people didn't let their applications lapse from discouragement, Martin said.

Raymond Eagle Hawk, 29, lives in a small shed next to his mother's trailer, near the site of the Wounded Knee massacre. His girlfriend, Natasha Cuny, said she's been on the list for about seven years. Neither work, but Eagle Hawk receives Social Security benefits.

The family shares an outhouse and gets water through a garden hose. The three boil water on an electric hot plate to stay warm in the shed, Cuny said. Conditions were no better when she was at her mother's house.

Cuny, 31, said she would like a home with running water and heat, but after years living largely with neither, she's not angry.

"Life goes on, and you can't do nothing about it," she said.

When they're lucky enough to reach the front of the line, tribal members are assigned a home, Martin said. For those who aren't working, federal aid is available to cover rent, which varies but can start at \$100 a month for a two-bedroom unit. He said the tribe doesn't evict people who can't pay.

Meanwhile, those with the means to buy a home run into difficulties getting a loan and navigating the

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complexities of securing land on the reservation, but several organizations are there to help.

The nonprofit Oglala Sioux Tribe Partnership for Housing, which is participating in the task force, has put more than 100 people in homes since 1999, Executive Director Pinky Clifford said. The group works in concert with other organizations on financial literacy, homebuyer counseling, foreclosure prevention and credit repair.

Thunder Valley Community Development Corp., a nonprofit organization that has caught the eye of the Obama administration, broke ground in June on a sustainable community that's expected to include more than 20 homes, a grocery store and powwow grounds, among other features.

Executive Director Nick Tilsen said energy-efficient homes allow a family to put money that would have gone to high utility costs, a problem with older and dilapidated houses, toward a home loan.

Rachel Hunter, who works at a food company, has been approved for a mortgage in the community. The 25-year-old imagines Christmas in her new home, away from the confines of the single bedroom that her family shares.

"This is something I want. I want to be a homeowner," she said. "I want to set the example for my kids that there are things on the reservation. Hopefully whenever they're my age, there'll be more opportunity for homeownership."

Anglers urged to be cautious while ice fishing in SD

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — State officials are urging anglers to be cautious while ice fishing in South Dakota.

The state's Game, Fish and Parks Department says mild temperatures and snow cover have made for "unwinter-like" conditions on most of South Dakota's lakes, rivers and streams.

John Lott is the department's fisheries administrator. He says "repeated freezing and thawing have made for poor ice and open areas on many of our lakes."

Officials say it takes at least two inches to support an angler, at least six inches to support an ice shack and more than a foot to support a vehicle.

Lott says anglers should test ice conditions as they proceed in their adventure. He says six-inch ice conditions near the shore don't guarantee the same ice thickness across the lake.

Mount Marty College to host Native American art exhibit

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — A traveling exhibit of Native American art that includes works from different historic periods will stop in Yankton next year.

Mount Marty College will be hosting the exhibit "Living Traditions: Dakota, Nakota, Lakota Art." The exhibit belongs to the South Dakota State Historical Society and showcases artwork from the nomadic hunting, reservation and modern periods.

The college says text and images of objects from the museum's collection are shown on twenty panels in five pop-up kiosks.

Helen Louise with the Historical Society's museum says the "visual art from different historic periods shows how important traditions continue to be a part of life today."

The exhibit will be at the school from Jan. 4 through Feb. 26.

Saturday's Scores The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Brandon Valley 46, Yankton 23

Eureka/Bowdle 71, Edmunds Central 28

Hanson 53, Avon 21

Harrisburg 56, Pierre 55

Highmore-Harrold 74, Jones County 45

Huron 71, Rapid City Central 65, OT

Ipswich 73, Webster 70

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James Valley Christian 76, Kimball/White Lake 56
Langford 60, Hitchcock-Tulare 34
Lyman 47, Bennett County 41
Parker 68, Garretson 44
Philip 52, Edgemont 36
Potter County 53, Mobridge-Pollock 47
Rapid City Stevens 82, Mitchell 51
St. Thomas More 71, Douglas 44
Stuart, Neb. 50, Burke/South Central 48
Sturgis Brown 56, Hot Springs 47
Takini 84, Wakpala 35
Walthill, Neb. 70, Freeman Academy 35
Waubay/Summit 55, Wilmot 36
Winner 41, Sully Buttes 38
Lakota Nation Tournament (Paha Sapa Bracket)
Championship
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 84, Todd County 64
Lusk Tournament
Burns, Wyo. 39, Hill City 30
Stateline Shootout
Belle Fourche 70, Sundance, Wyo. 40
Newcastle, Wyo. 54, Lead-Deadwood 41
GIRLS' BASKETBALL
Bridgewater-Emery 34, Canistota 32
DeSmet 39, Chester 27
Elkton-Lake Benton 50, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 41
Ethan 61, Scotland 20
Eureka/Bowdle 48, Edmunds Central 30
Faith 45, New Underwood 30
Freeman 53, Platte-Geddes 43
Garretson 54, Lake Preston 33
Hanson 45, Avon 29
Hendricks, Minn. 29, Aberdeen Christian 25
Hitchcock-Tulare 57, Langford 16
Jones County 48, Highmore-Harrold 34
Lyman 65, Bennett County 9
Northwestern 63, Miller 41
Philip 53, Edgemont 10
Rapid City Central 62, Huron 60
Rapid City Stevens 51, Mitchell 23
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 43, Crofton, Neb. 34
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 47, Moorhead, Minn. 45
South Sioux City, Neb. 93, Sioux Falls Lincoln 75
Stuart, Neb. 59, Burke/South Central 49
Sully Buttes 58, Winner 51, OT
Wall 52, Harding County 36
Webster 74, Ipswich 45
Western Christian, Hull, Iowa 58, Sioux Falls Washington 49
Worthington, Minn. 37, Aberdeen Roncalli 36
Yankton 62, Brandon Valley 48
Lusk Tournament

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Hill City 45, Lusk, Wyo. 33
Hill City 42, Pine Bluffs, Wyo. 40
Stateline Shootout
Belle Fourche 64, Sundance, Wyo. 21
Newcastle, Wyo. 57, Lead-Deadwood 45

South Dakota St hangs on to beat Florida Gulf Coast, 56-52

FORT MYERS, Fla. (AP) — Deondre Parks scored 15 points, including 7 of 10 from the free throw line, to help lead South Dakota State to a 56-52 win over Florida Gulf Coast on Saturday.

Mike Daum added 14 points, including 4 of 6 from 3-point range, for the Jackrabbits (10-2), who have won four of their last five games.

South Dakota State trailed 47-46 with 3:42 left, but Jake Bittle made a layup sparking a quick 5-0 run that gave the Jackrabbits a four point lead which they held to the end.

Christian Terrell scored a layup for the Eagles (6-5) to cut the South Dakota State lead to 51-49 with 1:25 to go. But the Jackrabbits made 5 of 6 at the free throw line over the final 40 second to close it out.

Marc Eddy Norelia scored 26 points and had 11 rebounds to lead Florida Gulf Coast.

Hill with 34 points, Illinois beats South Dakota, 91-79

SEAN NEUMANN, Associated Press

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. (AP) — Malcolm Hill scored a career-high 34 points and had 11 rebounds, and Illinois never trailed in a 91-79 victory over South Dakota on Saturday.

Hill was 10 of 16 from the floor with four 3-pointers and had five assists. Jalen Coleman-Lands added 17 points with four 3s for Illinois (7-5), which has won four straight.

"Our offense was about as good as it's been all year," Illinois coach John Groce said. "We were really hitting on all cylinders."

The Illini opened on a 14-0 run behind eight-straight defensive stops, and led 55-36 at the break.

Illinois really came out of the gates hot," South Dakota coach Craig Smith said. "We just dug too big of a hole in the first half."

Tre Burnette had a career-best 27 points on 10-of-17 shooting to lead South Dakota (7-5).

Burnette made three 3-pointers and Trey Norris made a jumper during an 11-4 spurt to pull the Coyotes to 84-78 with two minutes left. Michael Finke answered with a 3-pointer, and Hill and Coleman-Lands each made a pair of free throws to seal it.

Illinois shot 47 percent on 14-of-30 shooting from beyond the arc.

"These points don't really mean anything to me," Hill said. "I was actually pretty upset at the end of the game just because we made it a closer game than it needed to be."

TIP-INS

Illinois: Malcolm Hill was 10 of 11 from the line and has scored in double figures in each game this season. His career-high against South Dakota surpasses his previous career-best 28 points he scored against Maryland in Jan. 2015. ... Michael Finke finished with 13 points and Kendrick Nunn added 10 points as the Illini had four players in double figures. ... The Illini beat South Dakota in their previous meeting, 96-56 during the 1971-72 season.

South Dakota: Guard Tre Burnette was 5-for-9 from beyond the arc, also a career-best. ... The Coyotes have lost two of their last three games since snapping a five-game winning streak.

TURNING POINT

Illinois forward Michael Finke hit a game-sealing 3-pointer with a minute to go, finally putting the game out of reach at 87-78. A minute prior, Coyote guard Tre Burnette made it an 84-78 game with a 3-pointer, but missed one on the next possession that would have made it a three-point game.

HOT START

Illinois started on a 14-0 run, and shot 60 percent from 3-point range, taking a 55-36 lead into the half.

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"When you allow a team to shoot 60 percent in a half, you're not going to win many games," South Dakota coach Craig Smith said. Illinois shot 59.4 percent from the field in the first half, and never trailed.

STAR POWER

Malcolm Hill has led Illinois through a difficult nonconference run, putting up double digits in all 12 games this season. The Illini have been without starters Tracy Abrams, Mike Thorne Jr. and Leron Black due to injuries. Starting guard Kendrick Nunn also missed the first two weeks of the season with a dislocated thumb.

UP NEXT

Illinois plays Missouri on Wednesday at the Scottrade Center in St. Louis, Mo.
South Dakota visits UNLV on Tuesday.

1 dead, 17 injured in Greyhound bus crash in North Texas

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — A woman died Sunday morning after the vehicle she was traveling in stalled on a North Texas interstate after crashing into a barrier and was hit by a Greyhound bus. More than a dozen people on the bus and the other occupant of the vehicle were injured, authorities said.

The accident happened about 5:30 a.m. on Interstate 30, Arlington Police spokesman Lt. Christopher Cook said.

Greyhound spokeswoman Lanesha Gipson says there were 40 passengers and a driver aboard the bus, which was headed from Dallas to Amarillo. Sixteen people sustained injuries that weren't life-threatening, Cook said.

It wasn't clear if the deceased woman was the driver or passenger of the sport utility vehicle. Cook said a man in the vehicle was taken to the hospital with serious injuries.

Cook said that just minutes before the bus hit the vehicle, authorities had gotten a call that a vehicle being driven erratically had hit a concrete barrier and become disabled. He said authorities are trying to determine what caused the erratic driving.

The westbound lanes of Interstate 30 were closed while police investigated and reopened at about 1:30 p.m.

Gipson said another bus picked up the remaining passengers to take them on to Amarillo.

Exit poll: Strong showing in Spain vote by upstart parties

HAROLD HECKLE, Associated Press

ALAN CLENDENNING, Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — A strong showing by a pair of upstart parties in Spain's general election on Sunday is threatening to upend the country's traditional two-party system, with an exit poll projecting that the ruling Popular Party won the most votes but fell far short of a parliamentary majority.

The exit poll for the state-owned RTVE channel gave the Popular Party 26.8 percent of the vote. The main opposition Socialist Party, with 20.5 percent was running neck-and-neck for second place with new far left party Podemos, with 21.7 percent, the poll said.

It put support for the new business-friendly Ciudadanos party far behind the others, at 15.2 percent. Jorge Clemente, spokesman for pollster TNS Demoscopia, says its figures are based on 180,000 face-to-face interviews.

Spain has been dominated for more than three decades by the Popular Party and the Socialists, which have alternated running the government.

The country could end up with a host of coalition government possibilities. The most likely ally for the Popular Party is Ciudadanos, while the center-left Socialists would probably team up with Podemos. There's also the possibility of a three-way alliance between the Socialists, Ciudadanos and Podemos.

Days or weeks of negotiations may be needed to determine the outcome — which will be unprecedented because the Socialists and the Popular Party have previously only needed support from tiny Spanish parties to get a majority in parliament when they didn't win one from voters.

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Podemos and Ciudadanos both gained strength by portraying the Popular Party and the Socialists as out-of-touch behemoths run by politicians who care more about maintaining their own power than citizens' needs.

Miguel Redondo, a 19-year-old Madrid university student, voted for Podemos because "it's the party that best understands the difficulties that young people are going through" in a nation where joblessness for people under 25 is more than double the country's overall 21 percent unemployment rate.

Spain's 36.5 million registered voters were electing representatives to the 350-seat lower house of parliament and to the Senate, which has less legislative power. Voting was brisk with lines outside some polling station and voter participation of 58.4 percent by 6 p.m. (1700 GMT, 12 p.m. EST), up slightly compared to the 2011 election.

Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy has said he would seek an alliance to prevent a leftist coalition from taking power — as one did in neighboring Portugal last month.

Francisco Herrera, a 43-year-old porter in Madrid, said he was disappointed with Rajoy's leadership, but would vote for his Popular Party because it "defends the economy and the type of government that suits us right now."

The nation's devastating economic crisis, non-stop corruption scandals and a separatist drive in the northeastern region of Catalonia have dominated Spanish politics over the past four years. Rajoy has boasted about his handling of the economy, done his best to skirt the corruption minefield and has vowed to halt the independence push.

His administration's biggest success has been in pulling Spain back from an economic abyss in 2012 and returning the economy to steady growth, but the jobless rate has come down slowly and salaries for people entering the workforce are 30 percent lower than they were in 2008. This has fueled claims by Ciudadanos and Podemos that the Socialists plunged Spain into an economic crisis and the Popular Party has failed to fix the problem.

Rajoy's party also adopted unpopular austerity measures and labor and financial reforms that are credited with creating jobs but damaging the country's social welfare system. Although Spain's economy is now one of the fastest-growing in the 28-nation European Union, its unemployment rate is the second-highest in the EU after Greece.

His administration has been hurt by his U-turn on a promise not to raise taxes and by cuts to national health care and public education. Many Spaniards are also angry about what they perceive as the impunity of politicians and business leaders amid incessant corruption cases.

The question of independence for economically and politically powerful Catalonia has divided that region and soured political ties with the rest of Spain. Rajoy vows to quash what is seen as the biggest threat to Spanish unity in recent decades. Other parties favor negotiations to devolve more power to Catalonia.

Rajoy, 60, champions conservative social policies, siding with the Roman Catholic Church against abortion. He has raised questions about his future as the Popular Party leader, however, by including his deputy, 44-year-old Soraya Saenz de Santamaria, on campaign posters.

Pedro Sanchez, a 43-year-old former university economics professor, was unknown to most Spaniards until he was elected leader last year of the Socialists.

Political science professor Pablo Iglesias, a ponytailed 37-year-old, and his radical left Podemos party want to break the mold of Spanish politics. Podemos was born from massive Madrid street protests in 2011 that drew mainly young Spaniards weary of corruption.

Ciudadanos has the media-savvy Albert Rivera as its leader. At 36, he is the youngest candidate, and his moderate, business-friendly policies plus a pledge to crack down on corruption have attracted voters.

After casting his ballot in a Barcelona suburb, Rivera said the election marks the start of a new era — especially for young Spaniards like him born after the nation's 1939-1975 dictatorship.

"For the first time, those of us who didn't experience the first democratic transition are experiencing a second one," Rivera said.

'Star Wars' blasts opening weekend record with \$238 million

LINDSEY BAHR, AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — To say that the force is strong with this one is an understatement.

"Star Wars: The Force Awakens" brought in a galactic \$238 million over the weekend, making it the biggest North American debut of all time according to studio estimates on Sunday.

The Walt Disney Co. earnings destroy the previous opening record set by Universal's "Jurassic World," which drew \$208.8 million this summer.

This is just the latest in a laundry list of records set by J.J. Abrams' film, the seventh in the franchise, which had analysts anticipating a debut anywhere from \$150 million to \$300 million.

The "X-factor" was quality. While "The Force Awakens" drew enormous pre-sales, the film was kept under lockdown from the press and critics until mere days before it was released to the public. Reviews turned out to be stellar (95 percent on Rotten Tomatoes), as did early audience reaction, who gave the film an A CinemaScore.

Rentrak's Senior Media Analyst Paul Dergarabedian said that's the key element that may push the film to the \$2 billion mark by the end of its run. Many are already going back for a second helping.

"The enthusiasm has really turned into a cultural event," said Dave Hollis, Disney's executive vice president of theatrical distribution. "It's unbelievable."

"It feels historic. The marketing team has embarked on a two-plus year journey to create this event feel," Hollis added. "It's hard to think you could replicate this, but never say never."

Males overwhelmingly drove the astronomical earnings, comprising 58 percent of the audience.

"Many of the bigger films of the past few years have been driven by that often marginalized female audience," Dergarabedian said. "This proves that if you put the right film in the marketplace, the guys will show up in big numbers. You can still break records with one gender being the dominant one."

He predicted that over time, Daisy Ridley's protagonist may help even the gender breakdown. Hollis agreed, noting that the breakdown evened out across the weekend too. Friday audiences were 63 percent male, he said.

The film also drew mainly adults, who made up 71 percent of the audience. Teens accounted for only 9 percent, but those numbers may go up in the coming weeks as holiday vacations kick in.

IMAX, 3D and other premium large format screens further helped drive the massive earnings. Nearly half of moviegoers — 47 percent — chose to see the film on the generally pricier screens.

But "Star Wars" didn't fly alone this weekend. A few other movies attempted to provide some counter-programming and ended up with comparatively decent results.

Almost a galaxy away, Fox's animated "Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip" came in second with \$14.4 million.

According to exit polls, 70 percent of audiences were comprised of families. The film also played to a rather diverse audience with 22 percent Hispanics and 19 percent African-Americans.

"Starting on Monday, 73 percent of K through 12 is out of school. Why wouldn't we make our picture available?" said Chris Aronson, Fox's president of domestic distribution as to why they released their film "in the teeth of the hurricane."

"'Star Wars' is the phenomenon it is and will continue to be, but there is another segment of the audience out there," he added.

In third place, the Tina Fey and Amy Poehler comedy "Sisters" earned an estimated \$13.4 million out of the gates. A whopping 79 percent of audiences were female for the R-rated comedy — a solid indicator that the counterprogramming against "Star Wars" was in fact a wise choice.

"A healthy box office needs something for everyone," said Nick Carpou, Universal's president of domestic distribution, who expects a solid performance for the comedy in the weeks to come.

Rounding out the top five were "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay — Part 2," with \$5.7 million and "Creed," with \$5.1 million.

This is the biggest overall weekend in box office history with combined grosses north of \$300 million, putting 2015 in range of becoming the first \$11 billion year in history.

"We're on the verge of a record-breaking year," Dergarabedian said. "I think we're going to do it."

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Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Rentrak. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," \$238 million.
2. "Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Road Chip," \$14.4 million.
3. "Sisters," \$13.4 million.
4. "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay — Part 2," \$5.7 million.
5. "Creed," \$5.1 million.
6. "The Good Dinosaur," \$4.2 million.
7. "Krampus," \$3.8 million.
8. "In the Heart of the Sea," \$3.5 million.
9. "Diwale," \$1.9 million.
10. "Bajirao Mastani," \$1.7 million.

Universal and Focus are owned by NBC Universal, a unit of Comcast Corp.; Sony, Columbia, Sony Screen Gems and Sony Pictures Classics are units of Sony Corp.; Paramount is owned by Viacom Inc.; Disney, Pixar and Marvel are owned by The Walt Disney Co.; Miramax is owned by Filmyard Holdings LLC; 20th Century Fox and Fox Searchlight are owned by 21st Century Fox; Warner Bros. and New Line are units of Time Warner Inc.; MGM is owned by a group of former creditors including Highland Capital, Anchorage Advisors and Carl Icahn; Lionsgate is owned by Lions Gate Entertainment Corp.; IFC is owned by AMC Networks Inc.; Rogue is owned by Relativity Media LLC.

Analysis: Sanders struggles to gain edge in presidential bid

LISA LERER, Associated Press

Publishable Editors Notes: An AP News Analysis

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — The third Democratic presidential debate opened with an apology and ended with compliments.

For months, the Democratic primary contest has been a relatively civil affair — offering a tone that party leaders see as a much-needed contrast to the raucous Republican field.

A day after a rancorous dispute over a breach of private campaign data by Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders' campaign roiled the Democratic Party, a political truce between Hillary Clinton and Sanders largely held — even as Sanders' aides seemed itching for a more aggressive confrontation with the front-runner.

"I apologize to Secretary Clinton," said Sanders. "This is not the type of campaign that we run."

Mindful of the grassroots support she'll need to fuel a general election bid should she capture the nomination, Clinton accepted his apology, instead, keeping her criticism carefully aimed at her GOP rivals — particularly businessman Donald Trump.

"I'm very clear that we have a distinct difference between those of us on this stage tonight and all of our Republican counterparts," she said, in her opening remarks. "We have to prevent the Republicans from rolling back the progress that we've made."

Clinton's brush-off of the data breach controversy underscores her confidence in a race in which Sanders is struggling to regain momentum as it shifts away from an economic message — the core of his campaign — to one over national security, because of terrorist attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, California.

Sanders' pledge to avoid personal attacks in favor of policy disputes has seemed to frustrate his aides at times, who have occasionally gone on the offensive on their own. Earlier this month, they pulled digital ads linking Clinton to Wall Street. Sanders also apologized earlier this year after his senior staffers publicly remarked that Clinton would make a good vice president.

The Sanders campaign's handling of the data breach this week emphasized the apparent disconnect between the candidate and his staff. His aides came out swinging on Friday after revelations that their staffers stole some of Clinton's voter data, using a clumsy response by the Democratic National Committee to charge party leaders with favoritism and insinuate that her campaign also lifted some of their information.

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Sanders did not follow their lead. Instead, he chose to forgo the political opportunity, just as he did in the first debate when he dismissed controversy over Clinton's use of a private email server as secretary of state.

The apparent distance between Sanders and his aides may be designed to benefit their candidate by disassociating him from the kind of political tactics that could undermine his truth-telling reputation. But it also highlights the organizational challenges Sanders faces as he tries to turn an insurgent candidacy into a campaign that can topple a world famous political celebrity with a solid double-digit lead.

Clinton has moved quickly to capitalize on the new focus of the race, touting her experience as secretary of state and casting herself as an experienced hand in a dangerous world — an argument her aides believe will play well against both Sanders and non-establishment GOP contenders like Trump. She also tackled economic issues, emphasizing differences, not so much with her Democratic rivals, as with the GOP.

"Now, this is getting to be fun," said Sanders, after Clinton resisted efforts by the moderators to cut her off during a dispute over taxes.

Over the next six weeks, it will become clear if Democratic voters agree.

But while most polls have Clinton leading by more than 20 percentage points nationally, the contest remains tight in the crucial early voting states of Iowa and New Hampshire, the latter in which Sanders has an advantage as the longtime senator of neighboring Vermont. His aides believe that wins in those two states would give them momentum heading into the next contests in South Carolina and Nevada, territory where he's struggled to gain traction over the former first lady.

Sanders' campaign has successfully turned grassroots energy into a sizable war chest, announcing last week that it had received 2 million contributions — a milestone only matched by President Barack Obama in his re-election campaign. But to turn that level of early energy into a national victory, Sanders must find a way to expand his appeal in a race in which economic uncertainty is increasingly taking a back seat to security concerns.

Though there were moments of tension over national security in Saturday night's debate, Sanders failed to score a clear hit on Clinton.

On national security, he reiterated years-old criticism of her vote for the 2003 Iraq invasion, accusing her of being "too much into regime change."

Clinton quickly shot back: "With all due respect, Senator, you voted for regime change with respect to Libya."

Rather than drag out the confrontation when the instability in Libya came up again later in the debate, Sanders seemed to drop it. "The secretary is right. This is a terribly complicated issue," he said.

He ended his debate performance by congratulating Clinton, the wife of former President Bill Clinton, for doing "an outstanding job" as first lady.

"Let me tell you something about Bernie Sanders," senior adviser Tad Devine said after the debate. "I've worked for him for 20 years. There's no script. Bernie decides what he wants to do, what he wants to say."

Notorious Lebanese militant killed in Syria airstrike

BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press

JOSEF FEDERMAN, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A Lebanese man convicted of one of the most notorious attacks in Israel's history and who spent nearly three decades in an Israeli prison has been killed by an Israeli airstrike near the Syrian capital, the Lebanese Shiite Hezbollah group said Sunday.

Hezbollah officials have pledged to avenge the killing of Samir Kantar, sparking fears of escalation in an already volatile region. In a possible first response, three rockets were fired into Israel from Lebanon late Sunday.

Kantar had said that he had been working, with the backing of Hezbollah, to set up "the Syrian resistance" to liberate the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in 1967 and annexed 14 years later.

Hezbollah said Kantar was killed along with eight others in an airstrike in Jaramana, a suburb of the Syrian

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capital Damascus, on Saturday night. According to Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV, two Israeli warplanes entered Syrian airspace and fired four long-range missiles at the residential building in Jaramana. It aired footage of what it said was the building, which appeared to be destroyed. Kantar's brother, Bassam, confirmed his "martyrdom" in a Facebook post on Sunday.

In Lebanon Kantar is known as "the dean of Lebanese prisoners," a reference to his long jail sentence.

In Israel, he gained notoriety for the kidnapping and grisly killing of a man named Danny Haran and his 4-year-old daughter, in the coastal town of Nahariya. Kantar was 16 at the time, and a member of the Palestinian militant group the Palestine Liberation Front.

He also killed a policeman during the attack, and is alleged to have beaten the four-year-old to death with a rifle butt. As the attack unfolded, the girl's mother hid inside a crawl space inside their home and accidentally smothered their crying two-year-old daughter, fearing Kantar would find them.

Kantar was imprisoned in 1979 in Israel and sentenced to three life terms, but was released as part of a prisoner swap with Hezbollah in 2008. While many in Israel were outraged at his release, in Lebanon he received a hero's welcome and the following year he was awarded Syria's highest medal by Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Israel and Hezbollah are bitter enemies. The two countries battled to a stalemate during a monthlong war in 2006 during which Hezbollah fired thousands of rockets into Israel and Israel's air force destroyed wide areas in Lebanon. Since then, Israeli military officials say Hezbollah has upgraded its capabilities and now possesses tens of thousands of rockets and missiles capable of striking anywhere in the country.

Many Israeli officials believe Hezbollah is currently in no position to open a new front with Israel, as it is bogged down aiding its close ally, President Assad, in the Syrian civil war.

Nevertheless, Hezbollah legislator Ali Ammar vowed to avenge Kantar's killing, saying the militant group will not allow his blood to go "betrayed." Ammar said the group's military arm would determine the timing and methods chosen "to punish the killers, specifically the Israeli enemy."

In January, the Lebanese group accused Israel of carrying out an airstrike on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights, which killed several Hezbollah members and a prominent Iranian general. Around ten days later, Hezbollah militants fired a salvo of missiles at an Israeli military convoy in a disputed border area, killing two soldiers and triggering deadly clashes that marked the most serious escalation since the 2006 war.

Gil Rabinovich, the former head of the Israeli military intelligence's counterterrorism unit, said it was impossible to predict how Hezbollah would respond, in part because Israel has not claimed responsibility for Kantar's killing. He noted however that Kantar was not a member of Hezbollah's "inner circle," reducing the probability that the group would open a new front against Israel.

"He's important, but not so important to endanger them in a situation where they might be in direct conflict with Israel," Rabinovich said.

Israel has previously said it would engage in the Syria conflict for two reasons only: to stop the transfer of game-changing weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon and to disrupt preparations for attacks on Israel. The country is believed to have intercepted and destroyed a number of arms shipments headed toward the militant group and Israeli warplanes have struck targets inside Syria several times during the country's nearly five-year conflict, although it has rarely confirmed its involvement.

Retired Israeli Maj.-Gen. Yaakov Amidror, former National Security Adviser and a Senior Fellow at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies said that Kantar was seen as "a pivot in the efforts of Hezbollah to prepare the Golan Heights for another front against Israel."

Israeli Cabinet minister Yuval Steinitz said he was not sorry about Kantar's death but could not comment on the accusations that Israel was behind the killing. It is not unusual for Israel to decline to comment on such operations.

Kantar's killing would mark the first Israeli assassination of a senior figure inside Syria since Russia launched its military operations in Syria on Sept. 30 in support of President Bashar Assad.

Israel and Russia have set up a communications channel to make sure their air forces do not clash with each other, though it was not known whether the alleged Israeli strike on Kantar had been announced to the Russians ahead of time. The Russian Defense Ministry declined comment.

An Israeli military official, speaking on condition of anonymity under briefing guidelines, said Hezbollah has a limited presence on the Syrian side of the Golan Heights, and its efforts there have been focused primarily on aiding Assad's forces against the advances of various rebel groups. He noted, however, that several attacks along the Israeli-Syrian frontier in the Golan in recent years were believed to have been carried out by Hezbollah or its allies.

On Sunday evening, Lebanese security officials speaking on condition of anonymity in line with regulations, said militants fired three rockets into northern Israel. No one claimed responsibility for the rocket attacks.

Firefighters sue siren maker over their hearing loss

NEW YORK (AP) — There were times by the end of his shift that firefighter Joseph Nardone's head would be pounding, his eyes crossing from the noise of the siren on his truck.

"The siren was so loud inside the cab that it actually physically hurt," said the former New York City fire battalion chief. Even though he's been retired for over a decade, he said, the effects of the sirens linger in hearing loss that has left him unable to understand rapid conversation or follow along in church.

Nardone is among about 4,400 current and former firefighters nationwide who are suing Federal Signal Corp., an Oak Brook, Illinois-based company that makes sirens, claiming it didn't do enough to make them safer for those on fire trucks who have to listen to them nearly every day.

They say the company could have designed them in a way that directs the volume away from areas where firefighters sit in the engines, shielding them from sound blasts that lawyers say reach 120 decibels, roughly equivalent to a rock concert. Said the 73-year-old Nardone: "The manufacturer had the means and ability to do something about it and they didn't."

Federal Signal argues that directing the sound defeats one of the main purposes of a siren — to warn motorists and pedestrians that a truck is coming. And it says it has long supported what many departments have advised its firefighters to do: wear ear protection.

The lawsuits, which began surfacing more than a decade ago, have been in places such as New York, Philadelphia, Boston, New Jersey and the Chicago area, said attorney Marc Bern, who's leading all the lawsuits. In documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the company said juries have decided in favor of Federal Signal in most of the half-dozen or so suits that have gone to trial.

The company also has settled in some cases without admitting any wrongdoing. The largest settlement, reached in 2011, required the company to pay \$3.6 million to 1,069 firefighters for cases filed in Philadelphia.

Bern said Federal Signal could have made the sirens with a shroud to warn those in its path instead of a more generalized blare.

"Clearly, you don't have to have sound going all the way to the rear of the fire engine," he said. "If you're driving behind a fire engine and you don't see a 50-foot-long, red ... engine with lights going on and off, there's really something wrong."

David Duffy, attorney for Federal Signal, said making the sirens more directed would put firefighters and the public at greater risk.

"Firefighters have testified that they want a loud siren that projects noise to the front and sides of fire trucks," he said. Accidents often involve vehicles that hit fire trucks from behind, necessitating a loud noise in all directions, he said.

Duffy also noted that firefighting organizations have for three decades advocated use of earplugs or ear coverings to reduce the risk of hearing loss from sirens or other noises in the course of their firefighting duties, "of which there are many."

The Fire Department of New York wasn't able to immediately provide information on its policies on noise or whether earplugs or coverings are provided or required.

Duffy said studies measuring the level of noise firefighters are exposed to during their work shifts, including sirens, is on average below 85 decibels.

Federal standards take into account the intensity of the sound and the duration. The higher the decibel level, the shorter the time workers can be exposed to it.

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Rick Neitzel, who studies noise and other exposures at the University of Michigan School of Public Health, said the standards are geared to traditional jobs like manufacturing, not firefighting, where shifts can last for longer and the exposure is intermittent but intense.

"A lot of the questions now are: Is the current recommended level appropriate for exposure that a firefighter would have? And I would say we're not entirely sure," he said.

Dr. Lawrence Lustig, a hearing loss expert at Columbia University Medical Center, said people have different levels of susceptibility. Some research involving animals seems to imply that noise exposure in early years leads to more rapid age-related hearing loss, he said.

Retired Bronx firefighter Frank Bazzicalupo was exposed early. He joined the FDNY in his 20s and stayed for 25 years. The 61-year-old spent the last decade or so of that career driving fire trucks before retiring in 2002, hearing the sirens blaring overhead.

These days, trying to hear in any environment that has background noise is an exercise in frustration. "On a plane is the worst," he said. "I hear the engines roaring; I can't hear the person next to me."

AP FACT CHECK: Clinton's video claim doesn't hold up

VIVIAN SALAMA, Associated Press
CALVIN WOODWARD, Associated Press

Publishable Editors Notes:

EDITOR'S NOTE _ A look at political claims that take shortcuts with the facts or don't tell the full story

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hillary Clinton had no evidence to back up her claim in the latest Democratic presidential debate that the Islamic State group is using video of Donald Trump to recruit Muslims to its cause.

It's an assertion reminiscent of Trump's insistence that video showed thousands of Muslims in the U.S. cheering the 9/11 attacks, which has been debunked for weeks. During Saturday's debate, Clinton stated that the Republican presidential contender is "becoming ISIS's best recruiter," with the group attracting people by showing videos of him. Clinton spokeswoman Jennifer Palmieri acknowledged Sunday the campaign is aware of no such IS video and that jihadis are capitalizing on Trump's comments about Muslims through social media.

Here's a look at some of the claims in the debate Saturday night and how they compare with the facts:

CLINTON: "He is becoming ISIS's best recruiter. They are going to people showing videos of Donald Trump insulting Islam and Muslims in order to recruit more radical jihadists."

THE FACTS: What's true is that Trump's provocative comments about Muslims, including his call to ban them from coming to the U.S., have been widely played across the Middle East — in the hothouse of social media and beyond. Plenty of people — his Republican rivals among them — see his positions as playing into the hands of terrorists and raising the risk of radicalizing Muslims in the West as well as in the Middle East. It's also true that IS has a sophisticated propaganda operation and it can't be ruled out that the group has spread such videos under the Western radar.

But if so, Clinton doesn't know about them.

"If you go back and look at social media, if you look at what's going on, they are definitely pointing at Mr. Trump," her campaign chairman, John Podesta, said on NBC's "Meet the Press." But he cited no IS videos.

Palmieri said on ABC's "This Week," "She didn't have a particular video in mind, but he is being used in social media."

When his claim about a video showing "thousands and thousands" of Muslims celebrating 9/11 was debunked weeks ago, Trump dug in his heels on the assertion about "plenty of people cheering." He repeated that position Sunday. Asked about IS recruitment videos, he told ABC: "She just made it up."

Clinton's statement that Trump is becoming the "top recruiter" for IS also is hard to square with the complex realities motivating its adherents.

Attackers connected to or inspired by IS often say their actions are in response to the airstrike campaign against Islamic State militants, whose focus is on Syria and Iraq. Shiite Muslims have been their primary

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target since the beginning and in their online videos, they often call out to their followers to attack infidels — Shiite Muslims in particular.

The Islamic State group is known by various names, ISIS and ISIL among them.

BERNIE SANDERS: "The cost of college education is escalating a lot faster than the cost of inflation. There are a lot of factors involved in that. And that is that we have some colleges and universities that are spending a huge amount of money on fancy dormitories and on giant football stadiums."

CLINTON: "States have been disinvesting in higher education ... So states over a period of decades have put their money elsewhere; into prisons, into highways, into things other than higher education."

THE FACTS: Clinton comes closest to diagnosing the problem accurately. College expenses are unsustainably high, but luxurious dorms aren't the big driver that Sanders portrays. Public universities are charging more because they receive less in state government support.

Demos, a left-leaning think tank, said in a May study that the decline in state funding accounted for 79 percent of tuition hikes between 2001 and 2011. Just 6 percent was due to construction costs.

Sanders would make up that lost government money by providing free tuition, paid for with a tax on financial transactions. Clinton would offer federal dollars to encourage states to do more and keep students from having to borrow. It's unclear how either plan would control colleges' costs, though.

CLINTON on rising premiums and out-of-pocket costs for the privately insured after enactment of Obama's health care law: "I would certainly build on the successes of the Affordable Care Act and work to fix some of the glitches."

SANDERS on his proposed single-payer health care system: "The average middle-class family will be saving thousands of dollars a year."

THE FACTS: Obama's law was mainly about expanding coverage for the uninsured, and even former officials of his administration say major work still has to be done on cost control. In other words, rising costs are more than "glitches."

One of the health care law's main brakes on costs — a tax on high-value workplace coverage — has been put on hold by the new federal budget deal. Clinton had called for complete repeal of that levy, known as the Cadillac tax. Many economists believe the tax would help keep costs in check by forcing people into leaner insurance plans.

Sanders says his plan for a government-run health care system along the lines of Canada's and Western Europe's would save money for families and taxpayers. But such a major transition would involve winners and losers, as well as new taxes in place of premiums.

When the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office looked at the concept back in the early 1990s, it concluded that a single-payer system had the potential to save money but that wasn't guaranteed. Moreover, individuals would have less freedom to choose their insurance packages, a trade-off that not everyone would accept.

SANDERS, apologizing for his campaign improperly gaining access to Clinton campaign data, raised the possibility that Clinton's campaign may have done the same thing. "I am not convinced that information from our campaign may not have ended up in her campaign," he said.

THE FACTS: Sanders is speculating, at best. There's no evidence so far that Clinton's campaign has accessed Sanders' voter lists.

During a conference call with reporters on Friday, Clinton's campaign manager, Robby Mook, said he could "unequivocally tell you that no member of our staff stole data from theirs." And the contractor that manages the campaign data for the Democratic Party, NGP-VAN, issued a statement Friday saying "our team removed access to the affected data, and determined that only one campaign took actions that could possibly have led to it retaining data to which it should not have had access."

CLINTON: "Assad has killed 250,000 Syrians."

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THE FACTS: Clinton appears to be blaming the entire estimated death toll of the Syrian civil war on just one side: the forces of Syrian President Bashar Assad. Yet no matter how vicious his forces have been, deaths have come at the hands of all sides in the nearly 5-year-old multifront civil war.

The Syrian conflict began with anti-government protests before spiraling into a war with many groups emerging in opposition to the brutal regime crackdown. Rebels in some of these groups are fighting and killing each other, in some cases with no involvement by Assad-backed troops.

The United Nations has estimated a death toll of 220,000 since 2011; other estimates are higher, and Clinton's figure is roughly in line with them. But the death toll is attributable to all parties, not just to Assad.

Trump isn't center of Miss Universe as pageant crowns winner

KIMBERLY PIERCEALL, Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Donald Trump's pageant days are over after his controversial comments about immigrants created a backlash, but the Miss Universe show must go on.

The pageant that pits international beauties against one another returns to Las Vegas on Sunday to crown a winner on a new network, with a new Spanish-language broadcaster and a new pageant owner.

The women, between ages 19 and 27, represent 83 countries. For the first time, viewers at home will get to weigh in, with their votes being tallied in addition to four in-person celebrity judges.

NBCUniversal and Trump co-owned the Miss Universe Organization until earlier this year. The real-estate developer offended Hispanics in June when he made anti-immigrant remarks in announcing his Republican presidential run.

That led Spanish-language network Univision to pull out of the broadcast for what would have been the first of five years airing the pageants and NBC to cut business ties with Trump.

The former star of the "Celebrity Apprentice" reality show sued both companies, settling with NBC in September, which included buying the network's stake in the pageants.

That same month, Trump sold the organization that includes the Miss Universe, Miss USA and Miss Teen USA pageants to entertainment company WME-IMG.

"It's quite a telenovela to be honest with you," said a laughing Manuel Abud, president and CEO of Azteca America, referring to the Spanish-language soap operas.

Abud's Spanish-language network won the broadcast rights to the contest only a few weeks ago. For English-language audiences, the show is being broadcast on Fox starting at 4 p.m. PST/7 p.m. EST.

"It was such a shame for such an important event to the Hispanic community to be taken hostage by politics," he said.

The Hispanic audience loves to "cheer for the countries," he said. "It's a big deal."

Despite Trump disappearing from the business, Abud said his company didn't jump right in, concerned there might still be lingering anti-Trump sentiment connected to the pageant.

"As long as we made it clear that Trump had nothing to do with it anymore, then we should be in the clear," he said they concluded.

And so far, he said, no one has asked him if he's crazy for signing on.

Fake bomb prompts emergency landing of Air France flight

TOM ODULA, Associated Press

LORI HINNANT, Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — A fake explosive rigged with cardboard, sheets of paper and a household timer forced an Air France flight into an emergency landing in Kenya on Sunday, sending hundreds of passengers down emergency slides in what the airline's CEO said was the fourth bomb hoax against the airline in recent weeks.

The homemade apparatus was discovered around midnight hidden in a lavatory cabinet behind a mirror where it was apparently placed during the approximately 11-hour flight to Paris from the island of Mauritius, said the airline's CEO, Frederic Gagey. He said the airline has had heightened security checks around the

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world since the Nov. 13 attacks that left 130 people dead in Paris.

"It was an ensemble of cardboard, papers and something that resembled a kitchen timer. Nothing that presented a danger to the plane, to the passengers or to the crew," a visibly irritated Gagey told a news conference in Paris. He said it contained no explosives.

With France in a state of emergency since the Paris attacks and the United States on high alert since the attack in San Bernardino, California, that left 14 dead, hoaxes present a particular conundrum for security officials, who must choose between feeding mass fear and keeping the public in potential danger. On Tuesday, the two biggest school systems in the U.S. — New York City and Los Angeles — received threats of a large-scale jihadi attack. LA reacted by shutting down the entire district, while New York dismissed the warning as an amateurish hoax and held classes.

Air France has been the target of three prior hoaxes, all in the United States, Gagey said. The fourth came on board the flight from Mauritius, a popular winter vacation spot for French tourists.

The Boeing 777 was heading to Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris when its pilots requested an emergency landing early Sunday at Kenya's coastal city of Mombasa.

Gagey congratulated the crew for their cool-headed reaction to divert the plane to Moi International Airport. A safety check was carried out in the bathroom before the flight, he said, indicating the device was placed in the cabinet while the plane was in the air. He denied any security failure in the flight, saying that passengers are checked and sometimes double-checked on flights.

Six passengers were being questioned, including the person who informed the crew about the device, said a Kenyan police official who is part of the investigation and who insisted on anonymity because he is not authorized to speak to the press.

Passengers praised the cool-headed response of the flight crew.

"The plane just went down slowly, slowly, slowly, so we just realized probably something was wrong," said Benoit Lucchini, who was headed home to Paris on the flight.

"The personnel of Air France was just great, they were just wonderful. So they keep everybody calm. We did not know what was happening," said Lucchini. "So we secured the seat belt to land in Mombasa because we thought it was a technical problem, but actually it was not a technical problem. It was something in the toilet."

The plane carrying 459 passengers and 14 crew members had left Mauritius at 9 p.m., said Kenyan police spokesman Charles Owino. All passengers were safely evacuated and the device was removed, he said. The passengers were being flown to Paris on a special flight late Sunday.

Two Air France flights from the U.S. to Paris were diverted on Nov. 17 after bomb threats were received. No bombs were found on the planes from Los Angeles and Washington. Air France officials said the third hoax was on a Dec. 8 flight from San Francisco to Paris. It was not immediately clear what, if any, action was taken in response to that threat.

Gagey decried the series of hoaxes.

"This is behavior that for me is criminal. It sows doubt, it disrupts our operations, it inconveniences passengers, and obviously each time we can get information about those who are responsible for these extremely bad jokes, pardon the expression, we file a legal complaint," Gagey said. "We find this behavior stupid, damaging and unacceptable."

The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for the Paris attacks and the Oct. 31 downing of a Russian passenger jet in Egypt's Sinai desert that killed all 224 people aboard. Moscow says the plane was brought down by a bomb planted on board. IS has also repeatedly threatened the symbols of France — among which Air France is prominent.

Steven Ciaran, a 30-year-old Irishman, said he was seated at the back of the Air France jetliner watching a movie when he noticed the rushed movement of cabin crew preparing emergency drills. The crew told him it was a technical problem and they created a calm environment among the passengers, he said.

"I was very distressed because I could see we were far from the destination," said Ciaran, who was traveling from Reunion Island to Dublin for the Christmas holiday. He said passengers reassured each other.

"I thought the plane had difficulty and not that it had anything to do with terrorism," he said.

In budget deal, health law foes took a different path

RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican foes of President Barack Obama's health care law may be able to get more by chipping away at it than trying to take the whole thing down at once.

That's one lesson of the budget deal passed by Congress and signed by the president last week.

It delayed a widely criticized tax on high-cost employer health insurance plans that hasn't taken effect yet. And it temporarily suspended two taxes on industry already being collected, which are also part of the health law.

In contrast to frontal attacks on "Obamacare" that have repeatedly failed, this tactic could well succeed. Delays and suspensions have a way of becoming permanent.

Polls show that the public remains deeply divided over the Affordable Care Act, or ACA. Opponents are already looking for other provisions that could be separated from the law.

Next could be the "employer mandate," a requirement that larger companies offer coverage or risk fines. Part of the mandate is a controversial definition of a full-time worker as someone who averages 30 hours a week. Critics say it discourages companies from hiring full-time employees.

"Maybe Republicans have come to grips with the idea that the basic structure of the ACA has been in place long enough that simple repeal is not possible," said economist Joe Antos of the American Enterprise Institute, a business-oriented think tank. Perhaps the budget deal "is practice" for more changes, he added.

Supporters of the health care law are trying to downplay the consequences of the budget deal as superficial dings. It did not touch coverage provisions that have reduced the nation's uninsured rate to a historic low of 9 percent. Indeed, Obama himself announced that 6 million people have already signed up for 2016 coverage, with more than a month left in open-enrollment season.

"I think you can make too much of these particular things," said economist Paul Van de Water of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, referring to the deal. "They don't actually have any effect on the ACA's coverage expansion. In that sense, it's not a blow against the ACA at all." The center advocates on behalf of low-income people.

Yet not too long ago a top White House adviser was vigorously defending the health law's tax on high-cost coverage, known as the Cadillac tax.

The tax is 40 percent of the value of employer-sponsored plans that exceeds certain thresholds: \$10,200 for individual coverage and \$27,500 for family coverage. In its first year, 2018, it would have affected 26 percent of all employers and nearly half of larger companies, according to the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation. Since the tax is indexed to general inflation, which rises more slowly than health insurance premiums, it would have affected a growing share of health plans over time.

Proponents of the tax, including many economists, see it as a much-needed brake on health care spending. But business and labor joined forces to oppose it. The budget deal delayed it two years, and its future is in doubt.

The spirited defense of the tax came from Jason Furman, chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers. "Repealing the tax or delaying its scheduled implementation ... would have serious negative consequences for our health care system," Furman warned in a speech Oct. 7.

Pulling back on cost controls in the health law would erode the wages of workers and add to government deficits, Furman explained, adding that "the administration opposes legislation that would repeal or delay this provision."

Fast forward to a recent White House news briefing, when spokesman Josh Earnest seemed to soften that stance. While Earnest said the administration strongly opposed repealing the Cadillac tax, he didn't address the notion of delaying it.

The health law's employer mandate is the next likely focus for opponents, said Antos, the economist.

"The really large employers are not going to stop offering health insurance, since it's an important benefit," he said. "Even analysts on the left would agree that that mandate isn't going to accomplish much."

Similar to the Cadillac tax, the employer requirement raises concerns on both sides of the political divide. That could put the mandate into play when Congress again tackles a budget bill, or some other massive piece of legislation on which lots of trades get made behind closed doors.

The step-by-step approach has led to other health law changes. Among them:

- Repealing a long-term care insurance program that was financially questionable.
- Blocking a change in the definition of “small employer” after businesses argued it would raise premiums.
- Changing an income formula for determining who can get Medicaid. Originally, Social Security benefits would not have counted, meaning that some middle-class early retirees could have qualified for nearly free care meant for the poor.
- Limiting the administration’s ability to compensate insurers that signed up sicker-than-expected customers.

New rules bringing kidneys to hardest-to-transplant patients

LAURAN NEERGAARD, AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A shake-up of the nation’s kidney transplant system means more organs are getting to patients once thought nearly impossible to match, according to early tracking of the new rules.

It’s been a year since the United Network for Organ Sharing changed rules for the transplant waiting list, aiming to decrease disparities and squeeze the most benefit from a scarce resource: kidneys from deceased donors. Now data from UNOS shows that the changes are helping certain patients, including giving those expected to live the longest a better shot at the fittest kidneys.

The hope is to “really level the playing field,” said Dr. Mark Aeder, a transplant surgeon at University Hospitals Case Medical Center in Cleveland who is chairman of the UNOS’ kidney committee.

In Abingdon, Virginia, 8-year-old Marshall Jones was one of the lucky first recipients. A birth defect severely damaged his kidneys and a failed transplant when he was younger left his immune system abnormally primed to reject kidneys from 99 percent of donors.

Then last January, after four years of searching, organ officials found a possible match, hours away by plane but available under the new policy — and it worked.

“We don’t use the word lightly, but this was really a miracle kidney for him,” said Dr. Victoria Norwood, Marshall’s doctor and the pediatric nephrology chief at the University of Virginia.

There’s a huge gap between who needs a new kidney and who gets one. More than 101,000 people are on the national waiting list, while only about 17,000 kidney transplants are performed each year. Roughly 11,000 of them are with kidneys donated from someone who just died; the rest occur when a patient is able to find a living donor.

The wait for a deceased-donor kidney varies widely around the country, and in 2014, more than 4,500 people died before their turn.

The new kidney allocation system can’t alleviate the overall organ shortage. “The only thing to shorten total wait time for everybody is more organ donors,” Aeder said.

Instead, the policy altered how deceased-donor kidneys are distributed, shifting priorities so that how long you’ve been on the waiting list isn’t the main factor. Among the changes:

—fewer transplants are occurring in which the kidney is predicted to outlive the recipient. Now, the kidneys expected to last the longest — as calculated by donor age and medical history — are offered first to the patients expected to survive the longest. That’s called longevity matching. Before the change, 14 percent of the longest-lasting kidneys went to recipients age 65 or older. That dropped to 5 percent as the new policy kicked in, according to UNOS monitoring.

—the less time spent on dialysis, the better patients fare after a transplant. Yet where you live still plays a big role in how quickly you’re put on the transplant list, with minorities and those in rural and poorer areas spending more time on dialysis first. The new policy gives people credit for that dialysis time, moving them up the waiting list, and boosted transplants among long-time dialysis users, UNOS found. In turn, transplants inched up among African-Americans, who spend disproportionately more time on dialysis.

—then there are those hardest-to-match patients such as Marshall, about 8,000 of them now on the

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waiting list. The new policy gives them special priority for organs that can be shipped to a wider area of the country than other kidneys, broadening the search for a super-rare match.

As a result, the percentage of transplants among those patients has risen nearly fivefold, UNOS senior research scientist Darren Stewart said.

UNOS is tracking the changes closely to look for unintended problems because more transplants for one group can mean fewer for another. For example, adults younger than age 50 are getting more kidneys since the rule change, but older patients still account for about half of transplants.

Another question is how the new policy will work long term as a backlog of the special-case patients starts to clear.

"All of a sudden you got a floodgate that opens because you gave these people a big advantage and you're shipping kidneys across the country to them," said Dr. John Roberts, transplant chief at the University of California, San Francisco, one of the largest kidney programs. He praised the rule change but said it may need some fine-tuning.

For example, the new policy also offers wider access to the kidneys expected to last the shortest amount of time, because the oldest or sickest patients might choose one for a quicker transplant rather than gambling that a fitter one will become available. But, "we don't have a great way to predict what's coming for a patient" to help them decide, Roberts said. Discards of those less-fit kidneys temporarily increased a bit as the new policy began.

Stay tuned. Transplant centers are learning to handle the logistical hurdles of shipping more kidneys around the country, potentially opening additional avenues to alleviate geographic disparities, Aeder said. "There's much more to come."

Landslide buries buildings in southern China; 27 missing

BEIJING (AP) — A landslide collapsed and buried buildings at and around an industrial park in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen on Sunday, leaving 27 people missing, authorities said.

At least seven people were rescued after 18 buildings were buried and an area of 20,000 square meters (24,000 square yards) was covered with soil, the Ministry of Public Security's firefighting bureau said in an online statement.

Shenzhen's public security bureau posted a notice online saying that eight hours after the landslide, 21 men and six women were unaccounted for.

Shenzhen's fire brigade said that one building had collapsed, but that the landslide had affected a large area in the northwestern outskirts of the city.

Li Yikang, the deputy secretary general of the Shenzhen city government, said at a televised news conference that more than 900 people had been evacuated.

Giving different figures than the fire authorities, Li said that four people had been rescued and 22 factory buildings buried, involving 15 companies. The reason for the discrepancies wasn't immediately clear.

Li said that nearly 1,500 people were involved in rescue efforts.

State broadcaster China Central Television, or CCTV, said that there was a residential area next to the industrial zone, and that the buildings buried included two workers' dormitories.

Ren Jiguang, the deputy chief of Shenzhen's public security bureau, told CCTV that most people had been moved to safety before the landslide hit.

The Beijing Youth Daily, citing a local resident, reported that the soil that slid down onto the area had been piled up against a 100-meter (110-yard) -high hill after being dug up in the past two years in construction work.

State media carried photos of what looked like at least one five-story building leaning over and partly crumpled in the industrial park, and a sea of brown soil covering a vast area around it.

Debate Takeaways: Candidates move on from data dust-up

KEN THOMAS, Associated Press
JULIE BYKOWICZ, Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — A day after their campaigns exchanged heated accusations over a breach of the Democratic Party's voter database, Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton decided to move on at the final presidential debate of the year.

Sanders extended the olive branch after one of his staffers was fired this week for improperly accessing Clinton campaign voter data. Asked if he wished to apologize, Sanders did, to Clinton and to his own supporters. His campaign later said it had suspended two more aides.

Clinton said her campaign was "distressed" when the news surfaced, but she quickly added: "I don't think the American people are all that interested in this."

While the allegations that Sanders' campaign improperly exploited a breach in the Democratic National Committee voter database kicked off the third Democratic presidential debate in New Hampshire, it wasn't the issue the defined it. Candidates spent most of the night engaged in an extensive conversation about foreign policy and national security.

A look at some key takeaways from the third Democratic presidential debate.

DATA WARS

Clinton's campaign on Friday bitterly accused the Sanders team of stealing some of its voter data, and the Sanders campaign blamed the vendor that runs the database and the Democratic National Committee for the breach. The Vermont senator's campaign even sued the DNC to restore its access, after the party cut it off from the database.

But on the debate stage, Sanders offered apologies while making clear he was still unhappy with the DNC. That's a message in keeping with his anti-establishment pitch to beleaguered voters and a way to connect with supporters who believe the DNC devised its shortened, six-debate plan to benefit Clinton.

Sanders tried to muddy the waters a bit by implying it was possible Clinton's campaign could have some of his team's data. That's even though the software vendor said only one campaign was involved in the breach, and there's no evidence that Clinton has any Sanders data.

CLINTON VERSUS TRUMP

He wasn't on the debate stage, but Republican front-runner Donald Trump was one of Clinton's biggest adversaries of the night.

Clinton said Trump was becoming the Islamic State group's "best recruiter" with his call to temporarily bar Muslims from entering the United States. And when she said she understood that people are fearful after the attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, California, she pivoted to attack Trump.

"Mr. Trump has a great capacity to use bluster and bigotry to inflame people and to make them think there are easy answers to very complex questions," she said.

And when she described the need to build a coalition of Arab nations to fight the Islamic State, she said: "Bringing Donald Trump back into it, if you're going to put together a coalition in the region to take on the threat of ISIS, you don't want to alienate the very countries and people you need to be part of the coalition."

Clinton has often used Republicans as foils to make the case that she is the Democrat who would give the party its best chance of holding onto the White House. Bringing up Trump allows her to present herself as a serious figure who would smoothly move into the White House and represent the U.S. around the globe.

FOREIGN POLICY RIFT

One of the sharpest exchanges at the debate came when Clinton and Sanders discussed their drastically different approaches on foreign policy. Clinton, a former secretary of state, said America must remain an engaged global leader, while Sanders said the country should be wary of involvement in complex foreign conflicts.

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Sanders said he wants to make "secondary" the fight against Syrian leader Bashar Assad and focus exclusively on defeating the Islamic State. "It is not Assad who is attacking the United States," he said. Clinton argued that both goals can be pursued simultaneously.

Sanders said he worried that Clinton is "too much into regime change and a little bit too aggressive without knowing what the unintended consequences might be." Clinton struck back, reminding Sanders that he "voted for regime change" in Libya.

Clinton portrayed herself as the most seasoned candidate on foreign policy, arguing "these are all difficult issues" that she's been dealing with for "a very long time."

O'MALLEY SEEKS AN OPENING

Former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley has struggled to move beyond single digits in polls and tried to cast the dispute over campaign data as a frivolous issue few Americans care about, particularly during the holidays. Many viewers, he said, were "wondering how they're even going to be able to buy presents for their kids."

O'Malley has tried to present himself as a fresh face and to play up his outside-Washington credentials. And at 52, O'Malley is a generation younger than Clinton and Sanders — something of which he reminded viewers.

"Can I offer a different generation's perspective on this?" O'Malley interrupted at one point, drawing some boos from the crowd.

Despite his low standing in the polls, Clinton was prepared for O'Malley's criticism. When he suggested Clinton couldn't separate herself from Wall Street, she said he was hypocritical and had "no trouble" raising money from major corporations when he led the Democratic Governors Association.

STAR WARS

In the debate's final minutes, Clinton sneaked in a reference to the movie "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," the latest installment of the sci-fi series that opened Friday nationwide. "Thank you; good night," Clinton told viewers, "and may the force be with you."

Today in History The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Dec. 20, the 354th day of 2015. There are 11 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 20, 1945, the Office of Price Administration announced the end of tire rationing, effective Jan. 1, 1946.

On this date:

In 1790, the first successful cotton mill in the United States began operating at Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase was completed as ownership of the territory was formally transferred from France to the United States.

In 1812, German authors Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm published the first volume of the first edition of their collection of folk stories, "Children's and Household Tales."

In 1860, South Carolina became the first state to secede from the Union as all 169 delegates to a special convention in Charleston voted in favor of separation.

In 1864, Confederate forces evacuated Savannah, Georgia, as Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman nearly completed his "March to the Sea."

In 1924, Adolf Hitler was released from prison after serving nine months for his role in the Beer Hall Putsch; during his time behind bars, he'd written his autobiographical screed, "Mein Kampf."

In 1946, the Frank Capra film "It's A Wonderful Life," starring James Stewart and Donna Reed, had a preview showing for charity at New York's Globe Theatre, a day before its official world premiere.

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In 1963, the Berlin Wall was opened for the first time to West Berliners, who were allowed one-day visits to relatives in the Eastern sector for the holidays.

In 1973, singer-songwriter Bobby Darin died in Los Angeles following open-heart surgery; he was 37.

In 1987, more than 4,300 people were killed when the Dona Paz, a Philippine passenger ship, collided with the tanker Vector off Mindoro island.

In 1989, the United States launched Operation Just Cause, sending troops into Panama to topple the government of Gen. Manuel Noriega.

In 1995, an American Airlines Boeing 757 en route to Cali, Colombia, slammed into a mountain, killing all but four of the 163 people aboard. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, NATO began its peacekeeping mission, taking over from the United Nations.

Ten years ago: New York City transit workers began a strike that shut down subways and buses for three days. A federal judge ruled that "intelligent design" could not be mentioned in biology classes in a Pennsylvania public school district, delivering a stinging attack on the Dover Area School Board.

Five years ago: In the biggest anti-terrorist sweep in Britain in nearly two years, police arrested a dozen men accused of plotting a large-scale terror attack on targets inside the United Kingdom. Former Mexican presidential candidate Diego Fernandez de Cevallos was freed more than seven months after his kidnapping by suspected leftist rebels. "Barney Miller" actor Steve Landesberg, 74, died in Los Angeles.

One year ago: A gunman who'd announced online that he was planning to shoot two "pigs" in retaliation for the police chokehold death of Eric Garner ambushed two New York City officers in a patrol car; Ismaaiyl Brinsley shot Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu to death before running to a subway station and killing himself.

Today's Birthdays: Actor John Hillerman is 83. Original Mouseketeer Tommy Cole (TV: "The Mickey Mouse Club") is 74. Rock musician-music producer Bobby Colomby is 71. Rock musician Peter Criss is 70. Psychic/illusionist Uri Geller is 69. Producer Dick Wolf ("Law & Order") is 69. Rock musician Alan Parsons is 67. Actress Jenny Agutter is 63. Actor Michael Badalucco is 61. Actress Blanche Baker is 59. Rock singer Billy Bragg is 58. Rock singer-musician Mike Watt (The Secondmen, Minutemen, FIREHOSE) is 58. Actor Joel Gretsch is 52. Country singer Kris Tyler is 51. Rock singer Chris Robinson is 49. Actress Nicole deBoer is 45. Movie director Todd Phillips is 45. Singer David Cook ("American Idol") is 33. Actor Jonah Hill is 32. Actor Bob Morley (TV: "The 100") is 31. Singer JoJo is 25.

Thought for Today: "All the mistakes I ever made were when I wanted to say 'No' and said 'Yes.'" - Moss Hart, American playwright and director (born 1904, died this date in 1961).