

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Sunday, December 27

**Birthdays:** Rayne Baker, Raymond Alberts, Jane Johnson, Emily Overacker, Karla Pasteur  
9:00am: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church Mass  
9:00am: St. John's Lutheran Worship  
10:00am: Heaven Bound Ministries worship at Pierpont Church  
10:15am: Emmanuel Lutheran texts and carols  
11:00am: United Methodist Church Worship  
3:00pm: Heaven Bound Ministries worship at Golden Living Center

## Monday, December 28

No School  
**Senior Menu:** Beef stew, buttermilk biscuit, waldorf salad, sherbet.  
**Birthdays:** Tracey Heidrich, Sharon Tullis, Jaden Dobbins, Meredith Anderson  
6:30am: Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study

## Tuesday, December 29

No School  
**Senior Menu:** Roast pork, baked potato with sour cream, squash, molasses cookie, whole wheat bread.  
**Birthdays:** Adam Herman, Barbara Stauch • Connie Stauch • Nicole Osterman • Delbert Hinkelman • Brady Keith • Melissa Locke  
10:00am: United Methodist Women's Bible Study

## Wednesday, December 30

No School  
**Senior Menu:** Hearty vegetable beef soup, chicken salad sandwich, mandarin oranges, oatmeal raisin cookie.  
**Birthdays:** Alec Oleson, Alex Graf, Breslyn Hinman  
7:00am: United Methodist Men's Bible Study

**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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Removal, Grinding, Chipping, Trimming  
**605-725-WOOD**  
Mason Dinger: 605-216-6098  
Trevor Zeck: 605-216-8910



**DAKOTA TREE COMPANY**

# Groton Daily Independent

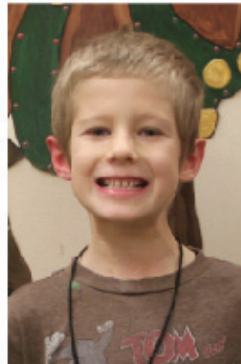
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## Some Kindergarten Students . . .

## What Christmas means to them . . .



Treyton Smith, son of Jeremy and Missi Smith, Claremont, it is about Jesus' birthday, getting presents and Santa Claus.



Thomas Aalseth, son of Kurt and Amy Aalseth, Columbia, Christmas is about Jesus' birthday.



Kayli Hardell, daughter of Ceslie Veurink and Keith Wipf, Groton, Jesus' birthday.



Mya Feser, daughter of Tom and Jessica Feser, Claremont, Christmas is about baby Jesus' being born and giving presents to other people makes me smile.

Destin Pardick son of Tina and Jerrid Pardick, Conde, Christmas holiday and Santa Claus, and getting toys



Karson Frohling, son of Jesse and Kristi Frohling, Bath, it is when you gather up your family and open presents and Jesus' birthday

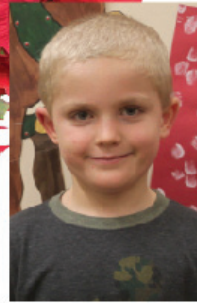


Makenna Krause, daughter of Kayla and Pat Krause, Groton, it is about Jesus' birthday and it is happy and joy together Christmas is the family being together.

*Merry Christmas!*

**TITAN** CASE II  
**MACHINERY**

Justin Hanson, Field Marketer  
justin.hanson@fitanmachinery.com  
605-380-1120



Owin Alsleben, son of Alex and Jennifer Alsleben, Bath, being nice and getting presents



Addison Hoeft, daughter of Tiffany and Travis Hoeft, Bath, it is about Jesus' birthday. The shepherds watched the star that made them know their way to Jesus' stall

*Merry Christmas!*

**Kristi Peterson Bookkeeping**  
Simple Solutions for YOU  
605/216-4474 ~ peterson4@nvc.net



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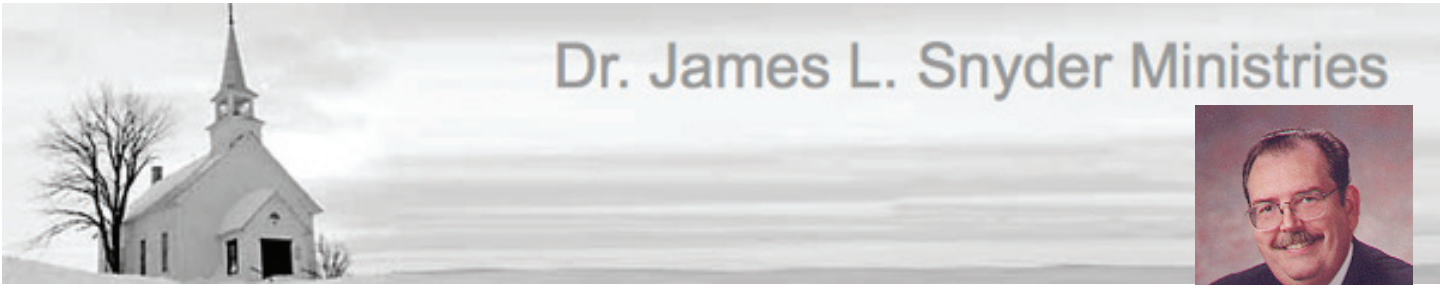
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**The Randy and Sue Stanley home at 403 E 6th Ave. took fourth place in the holiday lighting contest sponsored by the city. They will receive a \$10 credit next month on their utility bill.**



**The Terry Kenny home at 610 N. Main St. has a very festive look.**



## A new look at the old year

From a practical standpoint, and if I am anything I am practical, well, practically, this year has gone by rather quickly. The fact I have survived this past year has to count for something.

I was musing on this with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage just the other day. I was feeling rather comfortable with myself and was congratulating myself on making it through another year. After all, the facts speak for themselves.

"Well," my wife began rather deliberately, "I guess you did survive the year."

"What in the world is that supposed to mean," I queried. I must say I was a little agitated by the tone of her voice. After all, I did survive the year.

It was quiet for a few minutes and then she said, "What about your New Year's resolutions?"

I informed her I was working on a brand-new set of New Year's resolutions for the upcoming year. I think it's rather important to jot down a few things you would like to do, maybe some improvements you would like to make or maybe something I should like to give up for the New Year.

"That's not what I mean."

I looked at her quizzically not really understanding what she was talking about.

"What about the New Year's resolutions for this year." And she looked at me with one of those looks.

You do not have to hit me with a baseball bat for me to understand what's going on, although sometimes it does help. To be quite truthful I had not thought of those New Year's resolutions, well, for the whole year.

"Would you like me to recite the New Year's resolutions you made last year?"

Oh boy. I saw a news story the other day about people who could remember every day of their life in minute detail. I do not know how that feels, but I do know how it feels to live with someone who can remember every detail of my life.

I have a photographic memory; the problem is I have been out of film for three decades.

It got me to thinking about my New Year's resolutions for this year. I must say that after looking at this list I did not fare too well.

I had resolved to improve my diet and lose some weight. Fortunately, I did not put down how much weight I proposed to lose. I did lose 1 pound 974 times but it always found its way home. I spent some time in Michigan this past summer and just as I was leaving, I threw a pound out the window and hurried on. By the time I got home to Florida that pound was waiting for me at the front door munching on an Apple fritter. What's a person to do?

Also, another item on my New Year's resolution list was, "I resolve not to work harder but smarter this coming year." At the time, I thought it was a very brilliant thing to say. And, don't get me wrong, it is.

I have mastered the part of not working harder, but the smarter aspect of that resolution eluded me. Whose definition of smarter should apply here? Certainly, I will not appeal to my wife's idea about smarter. She has an altogether different concept of this whole area of working smarter.

My only consolation is that my definition of the subject is, it is always smarter not to work harder. If we apply that definition to my New Year's resolution, I passed with flying colors.

Then my good wife reminded me of another part of my New Year's resolution. According to her memory, and I am in no position to challenge it, I had resolved to exercise more during the year. At the moment, I exercised my right to object to her memory. But, I lost that one.

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The only actual exercise I got this past year was several times I had a runny nose. Believe me, that exercised me to no end, but it was not on track with my wife's idea of exercise.

At this point of life, I think exercise is blown way out of proportion. I tried to persuade my wife that working my elbow at breakfast and lunchtime as well as suppertime was all the exercise I really needed. She said to me, "When was the last time you saw your feet?"

At the moment, I exercised my right to shut up!

Then it dawned on me. I actually did get my share of exercise in this past year.

I exercised my right to be wrong when confronted by my wife.

I exercised my right to keep quiet when my wife was giving me instructions.

All that exercise may not have helped me lose weight but it helped me gain in my relationship with my wife.

I pondered this for some time and realized that many times it is better to admit you are wrong and save your relationship. Those who have to be right all the time are those who end up never being right. I thought of what the apostle Paul said. "Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (1 Corinthians 6:7 KJV).

Sometimes it is better to suffer wrongfully for a good purpose.

Rev. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, PO Box 831313, Ocala, FL 34483. He lives with his wife, Martha, in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 1-866-552-2543 or e-mail [jamessnyder2@att.net](mailto:jamessnyder2@att.net) or website [www.jamessnyderministries.com](http://www.jamessnyderministries.com).



## **Sec. of Ag. Tom Vilsack Appoints two South Dakota Farmers Union Members to Serve on Cattlemen's Beef Promotion & Research Board**

HURON, S.D. - Two S.D. Farmers Union members were appointed by Sec. of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack Dec. 22, 2015, to serve on the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board, they are Union Center rancher, Tammy Basel and Frederick cattleman, Eric Sumption.

"Secretary Vilsack made a good choice. Tammy and Eric live and breathe the cattle industry. Combined, they have extensive experience in all areas of the cattle industry as well as experience in promoting the industry by serving on state and national boards," said Doug Sombke, President of South Dakota Farmers Union.

Farmers Union is one of the organizations which nominated Basel and Sumption, the two South Dakotan cattle producers appointed to serve with 100 producers from across the nation.

"As a cattle producer, I believe that I need to do my part in promoting our product because consumers need to know that U.S. beef is not only safe, but healthy to consume," said Basel, a fourth-generation South Dakota cattle and sheep producer who ranches with her husband, Dallis and two sons on the land her grandmother homesteaded.

Prior to this appointment, Basel served two terms on the Grain Inspection Packer & Stockyard Administration (GIPSA) Grain Standard Committee. She is a lifetime member of South Dakota Farmers Union and volunteers her time with South Dakota Cattlewomen an auxiliary of South Dakota Stockgrowers to help educate South Dakota consumers on the health benefits of consuming beef.

"I'm passionate about working to inform consumers about heart-healthy cuts of beef. I love seeing folks smile when they learn that by choosing heart-healthy cuts they can continue to eat beef and don't have to limit their menu to chicken and fish," Basel said.

Sumption echoes Basel's passion for education. Currently serving as the Vice President of the South Dakota Beef Industry Council, Sumption looks forward to sharing what he learns about the national board with South Dakota cattle producers.

"All cattle producers pay into the Beef Checkoff, so cattle producers often ask me how their dollars are spent out of state. Now, I'll have an insider's view and the opportunity to impact how the dollars are spent on a national level," said Sumption, who farms with his four brothers on their crop and livestock farm. "I will work to ensure that the dollars spent benefit every aspect of the cattle industry."

Unique to most South Dakota cattle producers, Sumption and his brother's cattle operation is multifaceted, from cow/calf to finishing.

"I see the every side of cattle production - from cow/calf to finishing. Many South Dakota producers are cow/calf operators, but they never see their calf taken all the way to the marketplace," said Sumption, who will become S.D. Beef Industry Council President in 2017 once he his term as Vice President is complete.

## Applications open for SDAC funding opportunities

PIERRE, S.D. - South Dakota artists, arts organizations and other nonprofit groups are invited to seek grant support from the South Dakota Arts Council to assist in funding arts projects and programs throughout the state. The application deadline is March 1.

South Dakota artists may apply for funding through five grant programs:

- ♦ Artist Fellowships of \$5,000 are awarded to South Dakota artists of exceptional talent in any discipline or medium to recognize past artistic achievement and encourage future artistic growth.
- ♦ Artist Project Grants between \$1,000 and \$2,000 are matching grants for talented South Dakota artists in any discipline or medium to fund specific arts-related projects that not only further the artist's career but also benefit the public in some way.
- ♦ Artist Collaboration Grants encourage South Dakota artists to collaborate among themselves or with an out-of-state artist in the creation of a joint project or activity that will significantly benefit the artists and the state. A maximum of \$6,000 may be requested.
- ♦ Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Grants promote the continuation of folk and traditional arts and culture by providing up to \$4,000 in support of a master folk artist to teach qualified apprentices.
- ♦ Artist Career Development Grants of \$2,000 are designed to provide financial support to emerging artists committed to advancing their work and careers as artists.

South Dakota nonprofit organizations can seek funding support in the following categories this year:

- ♦ Arts Challenge Grants provide general operating support to non-profit arts organizations with annual budgets greater than \$20,000. The Arts Challenge Grants program is divided into two categories, based on budget size.
- ♦ Statewide Services Grants fund statewide cultural service organizations partnering with the South Dakota Arts Council to help meet the goals of the SDAC's long-range plan. Applicants must be invited to apply in this category.
- ♦ Project Grants assist non-profit organizations in the presentation of a single arts event or a series of similar and related arts activities that benefit the general public.
- ♦ Importation of Musicians Grants enable small South Dakota orchestras that do not receive funding in another grant category to improve the quality of their performance seasons by importing musicians from outside their local communities to supplement local orchestra personnel.

Applicants have until March 1 to apply for projects and activities that will occur July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017. Applications are available at [www.artsCouncil.sd.gov](http://www.artsCouncil.sd.gov) and must be submitted online through the South Dakota Arts Council's e-grant system. Hard-copy applications submitted through the mail will not be accepted, with the exception of Traditional Arts Apprenticeship grants.

Applicants should review the eligibility requirements, granting criteria and the application procedure on the website before beginning the application process.

SDAC staff will be available to help assess specific needs and assist in the development of grant proposals for artists and nonprofit organizations. Contact the South Dakota Arts Council by calling 605-773-3301 or by emailing [sdac@state.sd.us](mailto:sdac@state.sd.us) with any questions.

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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](http://Schwans-Cares.com)  
or call 1-855-870-7208





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## Today in Weather History

December 27, 1959: Precipitation began as freezing rain on the morning of the 27th throughout the eastern half of South Dakota, changing to snow mixed with occasional sleet late on the 27th, then continued as mostly snow through the late afternoon of the 28th. Glaze caused extensive breakage of tree limbs and power and telephone lines in southeast sections of the state and in scattered communities in the northeast counties. More than 40 communities were without telephone service for more than 24 hours. Highway travel was very dangerous; one man was killed when a tractor skidded on an icy highway and overturned on him in Kingsbury County. Strong winds averaging 20 to 25 mph both dates increased breakage of ice-laded utility wires and caused drifting and blocking of highways by the 3 to 6 inch snowfall. Damage and repair costs to utility lines were estimated at \$400,000.

December 27, 1987: A winter storm gave some freezing rain and snow to southern and eastern South Dakota and southwest and west central Minnesota on the 27th and 28th. In Minnesota, freezing rain began Sunday morning the 27th before changing to heavy snow, which extended into the 28th. The heaviest snowfall was across the high terrain of southwest Minnesota. In southern and eastern South Dakota, six to twelve inches of snow fell. Strong northwest winds of 20-40 mph hampered travel and snow removal. Snow drifts up to 6 feet deep were common. Across many areas of southern Minnesota, visibilities were reduced to zero due to blowing snow. Snowfall amounts in South Dakota included 12 inches in DeSmet; 10 inches in Wessington Springs and Madison; 9 inches in Huron; 8 inches in Pierre, Brookings, Mission and McCook County; 7 inches in Sioux Falls, Kadoka, Pine Ridge, and Martin. 8 inches also fell in Watertown and Highmore, with 7 inches at Bryant and 6 inches in Clear Lake. 1869 - A post Christmas storm in New York and Vermont produced record storm totals of 30 inches at Burlington, VT, and 39 inches at Montpelier VT. A public emergency was declared in Vermont. (David Ludlum)

1892 - An Atlantic coast storm produced a record 18.6 inches of snow at Norfolk, VA, including 17.7 inches in 24 hours. The storm also produced 9.5 inches of snow at Raleigh NC, and brought snow to northern Florida for the first time in 35 years. (26th- 28th) (The Weather Channel)

1982 - The worst Louisiana rainstorm in more than 100 years came to an end. More than 18 inches fell at Vinton, LA, during the three day storm. Flooding was widespread, and property damage was estimated at 100 to 200 million dollars. President Reagan visited the state and declared ten parishes in northeastern Louisiana disaster areas. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A winter storm produced snow and high winds in Wyoming, Colorado and Nebraska. Denver CO experienced its worst snowstorm since December 1983 as high winds gusting to 46 mph created near blizzard conditions, whipping the fifteen inch snow into drifts five feet high, and closing Stapleton Airport. Snowfall totals in the foothills southwest of Denver ranged up to 42 inches, at Intercanyon. Blizzard conditions raged across southeastern Wyoming through the day, stranding 300 holiday travelers in the tiny town of Chugwater. Heavier snowfall totals included 19 inches at La Grange WY, and 22 inches at Elsmere NE. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Severe thunderstorms developing along a cold front in the south central U.S. spawned a dozen tornadoes in Mississippi between early afternoon and sunrise the following day. A tornado at Harpersville destroyed

five chicken homes killing thousands of chickens. Strong thunderstorm winds gusted to 80 mph at Rolling Fork MS. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Half a dozen cities in the northeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Elkins, WV, with a reading of 13 degrees below zero. Watertown NY was the cold spot in the nation with a morning low of 37 degrees below zero. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2004 - A major storm system affected parts of the western United States during December 27-29, bringing a variety of weather conditions to the region. Heavy rainfall broke daily precipitation records at some locations in California. Very heavy snow fell across the Sierra Nevada Mountains, with some areas receiving several feet of accumulation. Winds with this weather system gusted over 65 mph at some coastal and mountain locations in California.

## 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

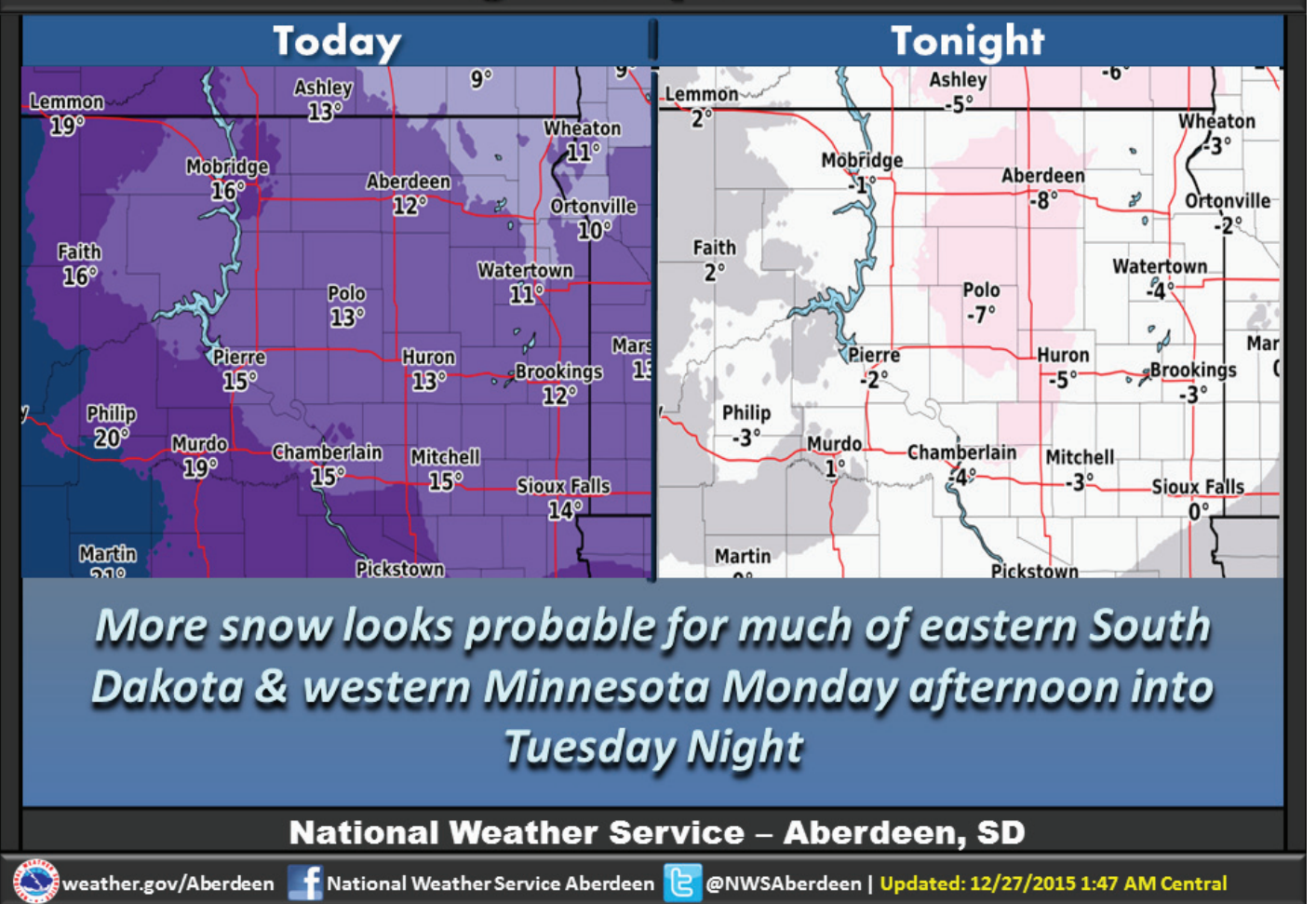
Spayed or neutered dogs are \$5 per dog, otherwise \$10 per dog

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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
						
Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny then Slight Chance Snow	Chance Snow	Chance Snow	Chance Snow	Slight Chance Snow
High: 12 °F	Low: -8 °F	High: 14 °F	Low: 9 °F	High: 19 °F	Low: 7 °F	High: 15 °F

## Below Average Temperatures Continue



Published on: 12/27/2015 at 1:51AM

Cold temperatures will continue across the region for the start of the week. Additional snow will be possible late Monday through Tuesday night. Potential accumulations over the period are expected to range from 3 to 7 inches.



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## Yesterday's Weather

**High:** 25.8 at Midnight

**Low:** -3.2 at 11:06 PM

**High Gust:** 29 at 12:39 AM

Precip: 0.00

## Today's Info

**Record High:** 54° in 1928

**Record Low:** -29° in 1914

**Average High:** 23°F

**Average Low:** 3°F

**Average Precip in Dec.:** 0.45

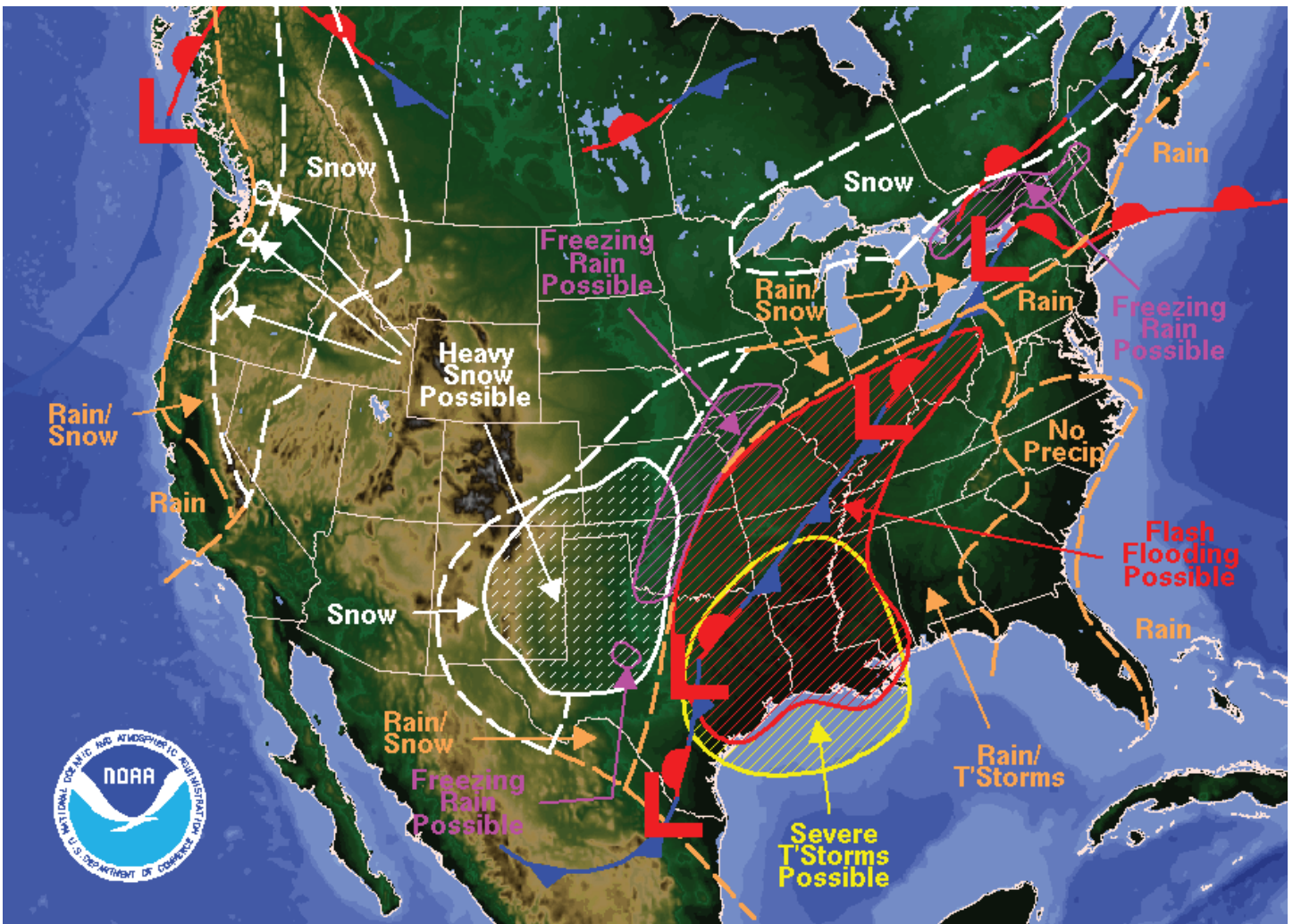
**Precip to date in Dec.:** 0.55

**Average Precip to date:** 21.65

**Precip Year to Date:** 20.37

**Sunset Tonight:** 4:56 p.m.

**Sunrise Tomorrow:** 8:12 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Sun, Dec 27, 2015, issued 3:02 AM EST  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



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## RECEIVING AND BELIEVING

God works in an unusual way. Before we can ever receive anything from Him, we must believe in His power and ability to do what He says He is capable of doing.

An excellent example of this is God speaking to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Initially, when the angel spoke to her about a special assignment from God, Mary had a difficult time believing what was happening or in accepting the responsibility God had for her. But she finally said, "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as You have said."

This is always the way God works in us and through us. We can never see everything that He has planned for us. It may appear to be too overpowering, too difficult, too threatening or too impossible. It may seem foolish, impractical, unwise or unrealistic. But God always works in unseen and unheard of ways.

Mary could never have imagined the angels that would protect her, the shepherds that would visit her, the Magi that would honor her, the gifts that were presented to her, the escape that was provided for her or the Voice that spoke to her, nor the Son that God gave to her to become our Savior.

Nor can we ever imagine all that God has for us.

**Prayer:** Father, give us a faith that exceeds our limited sight and a trust that believes the impossible. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

**Scripture for Today:** Luke 1:46 "My soul magnifies the Lord,

## News from the Associated Press

### **DENR debuts interactive observation wells map**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The state Department of Environment and Natural Resources has added a new interactive observation wells map to website.

DENR Secretary Steve Pirner says the department's water rights program routinely collects data from 1,556 dedicated monitoring wells, which is crucial to making fact-based recommendations and decisions regarding water use from our aquifers.

Pirner says that most of the wells were constructed by DENR's geological survey program, but the department is making all ground water information available to everyone over the Internet.

Historical measurements going back more than 50 years for some wells are available by locating a measured well on an interactive map or by searching using other attributes such as aquifer, reading dates or location.

### **South Dakota Arts Council accepting applications for grants**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Arts Council is now accepting applications for several grants for artists and arts organizations in the state.

The funds are meant to go toward projects and activities that will take place between July 1 and June 30, 2017.

The Arts Council will be providing financial help for orchestras to add musicians and nonprofit organizations that want to present a single arts event. The council is also offering grants for emerging artists and for the continuation of folk and traditional arts and culture.

The deadline to apply for funding is March 1.

### **The Latest: Death toll rises to 7 in Texas storms**

**The Associated Press**

The latest developments on the severe storms across the U.S. (all times local):

11:15 p.m.

Three more people are confirmed dead from the storms near Dallas, the latest fatalities located in Collin County.

Sheriff's Deputy Chris Havey gave no other details of the deaths.

Collin County is about 45 miles northeast of Dallas.

The fatalities in Collin County bring to seven the number of confirmed deaths from a series of storms that spawned tornadoes after dark on Saturday evening.

9:30 p.m.

Four people are confirmed killed in vehicle accidents near the intersection of two major highways in Garland, east of Dallas.

Officer Joe Harn, a Garland police spokesman, said Saturday night the four were killed in accidents that occurred during a massive storm, but it's unclear if all four were in the same vehicle or how they died.

A tornado is reported to have gone through the suburb east of Dallas, damaging several homes.

Harn says there are no active rescues underway, though first responders continue to search houses for anyone trapped after the storms passed.

8:30 p.m.

An official with the Dallas County Sheriff's office says deputies are responding to damages caused by a tornado east of Dallas, including a trailer park ablaze.

Spokeswoman Melinda Urbina said while several emergency teams had been dispatched to Sunnyvale, just east of the Dallas city limits, following reports of trailers on fire and possible injuries in a mobile home

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park.

Urbina said the extent of the damage was still uncertain but that nearby roads had been shut due to debris and that the damage to the homes was likely extensive enough to render some "inhabitable." The Red Cross was also responding to the scene, she said, and trees were down.

7:05 p.m.

The emergency manager for a county south of Dallas says some homes have been destroyed and damaged during a fierce storm that spawned tornadoes in the area.

Stephanie Parker is the emergency manager for Ellis County, which is about 30 miles south of Dallas. She posted on twitter: "We have destroyed and damaged homes. Please do not get out on the roads if you do not have to."

The National Weather Service in Fort Worth confirmed that a tornado touched down south of Dallas earlier this evening. No other details of damage were immediately available.

6:30 p.m.

The National Weather Service says a tornado was on the ground south of Dallas.

There were no immediate reports of damage, but National Weather Service Meteorologist Anthony Bain in Fort Worth says that the tornado was confirmed by numerous people on the ground and with video. It was located near the town of Duncanville around Interstate 20.

The tornado's trajectory was headed toward downtown Dallas but WFAA television said that it appeared to have lifted off the ground at it moved north.

6:10 p.m.

The National Weather Service says the Dallas area is under a tornado warning until 6:45 p.m.

An Associated Press reporter says warning sirens went off in the downtown area of Dallas.

At Love Field, a major airport in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, the public address system warned people to move away from windows in the concourse area.

4:30 p.m.

Inmates from an Alabama correctional facility were evacuated as a precaution to potential flooding caused by the recent heavy rainfall.

Alabama Department of Corrections spokesman Bob Horton says 336 inmates were evacuated from the Red Eagle Community Work Center around 12:30 a.m. Saturday. Horton says the inmates were cooperative and moved to three state correctional facilities in Elmore County.

Red Eagle is a minimum security correctional facility and is located three miles north of Montgomery near the Tallapoosa River.

The National Weather Service says the river had exceeded a flood stage of 25 feet to 33.5 feet by 8 a.m. Saturday. The NWS has extended the flood warning for the area until Monday afternoon.

4 p.m.

Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley praised efforts to restore and improve the levee system while touring the town of Elba, which was affected by flooding.

Bentley visited the town in southern Alabama on Saturday and stopped in at Elba Elementary, where people had taken shelter from the flood waters. He says the levees are expected to withstand the river crest.

The tiny, flood-prone Alabama town was underwater in 1929, which led to the constructions of levees for protection. The city flooded again in 1990 when rising waters overwhelmed levees and again in 1998 when a levee failed under pressure from flood waters.

Bentley declared a state of emergency Friday amid widespread flash flooding that follows several days of intense weather throughout the Southeast.



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1:30 p.m.

Mississippi's death toll from this week's storms has climbed to 10.

Mississippi Emergency Management Agency spokesman Greg Flynn confirms two bodies were found Saturday morning in Benton County. He says the bodies were those of two people authorities had been searching for since tornadoes touched down Wednesday.

Further details on where or how the bodies were discovered were not immediately available.

Unseasonably warm temperatures across the southeastern U.S. this week spawned severe weather blamed for deaths in Mississippi, Alabama and Arkansas. A total of 17 people have been killed.

1 p.m.

Volunteers are distributing sandbags in the town of Elba, Alabama, as flooding remained a major concern after severe storms battered the state.

James Brown of the Coffee County Emergency Management Agency says volunteers distributed sandbags in Elba, where the Pea River was projected to crest Saturday at 43 feet, about a foot below the levees that protect the area.

Brown says while that height was much too for much comfort, so far the levees were holding.

Emergency officials issued a voluntary evacuation order for the flood-prone community.

About 17 people took safety in a county shelter. Brown said that, according to estimates, more than 100 structures appear to have water damage.

Gov. Robert Bentley will tour the area later in the day.

11:30 a.m.

Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley will tour areas in his state damaged by floods a day after declaring a state of emergency in all counties affected by excessive rain.

The governor's office said in a statement that nearly 200 roads in the state are closed due to flooding.

Bentley will visit, among other places, Elba Elementary School, where dozens of flood victims took shelter Friday night.

Unseasonably warm temperatures across the southeastern U.S. this week spawned severe weather blamed for deaths in Mississippi, Alabama and Arkansas. A total of 15 people were killed.

9:20 a.m.

The Texas and Oklahoma Panhandles are bracing for what National Weather Service forecasters are calling a "historic blizzard."

Between 6 to 15 inches of snow are in the forecast for the region, which includes Amarillo and Lubbock. High winds will drive wind chills as low as 10 below zero and cause low visibility due to blowing and drifting snow.

The blizzard warning for the region takes effect at 6 p.m. Saturday and runs through noon Monday.

Other parts of Texas and Oklahoma, including El Paso, are under winter storm warnings, while North Texas, central Oklahoma and central Kansas are under a winter storm watch.

Widespread rain has prompted flash flood watches in eastern Texas, eastern Oklahoma, most of Arkansas, central and southern Missouri and Illinois and central Indiana.

9:45 a.m.

The National Weather Service has issued flood warnings for parts of northern Alabama following days of heavy rain and severe weather.

The NWS says moderate flooding is occurring and major flooding is forecast for Big Nance Creek, which runs through the town of Courtland in northern Alabama. The area is about 40 miles east of Huntsville. The creek is not expected to fall below flood stage until early Monday.

A flood warning was also in effect for the Coosa River, swollen by up to 8 inches of rain over the past week. The biggest town threatened by the rise in the Coosa is Gadsden in northeastern Alabama.

The NWS is warning drivers to stay off roads in areas where flooding is expected.

## California wildfire 60 percent contained, evacuations lifted

VENTURA, Calif. (AP) — Fire crews stopped the spread of a wind-whipped wildfire along the Southern California coast on Saturday, reopened a scenic highway and lifted an evacuation order for dozens of homes.

The 1,238-acre blaze in the steep foothills northwest of Ventura was 60 percent contained by nightfall and no homes burned, fire officials said at a news conference.

"We made tremendous progress today," said Tom Clemo, deputy fire chief from the neighboring city of Santa Monica, which aided the firefighting effort. "Despite the challenges of high winds, steep terrain, significant brush, we were able to bring a stop to all forward progress of the fire."

About 600 firefighters from various agencies, aided by water-dropping helicopters, fought the blaze during the day. About 400 were expected remain on the line overnight.

The fire began late Friday night and winds gusting to 50 mph pushed the flames down hills and over roads and railroad tracks, showering sparks on homes in coastal communities, fire officials said.

About 50 homes in the Solimar Beach community were placed under mandatory evacuation orders and about 30 nearby homes were placed under voluntary evacuation.

However, the winds had died down by early afternoon. The evacuation order was lifted by nightfall and a stretch of the scenic Pacific Coast Highway was reopened.

At its peak, the fire closed a 15-mile stretch of an adjacent, six-lane freeway, U.S. 101. It was reopened Saturday afternoon.

The freeway is a major route connecting Northern and Southern California and its closure forced holiday motorists to narrow backcountry roads.

"We had multiple motorists stranded with the flames impinging on the highway," Ventura County Fire Battalion Chief Fred Burris said earlier in the day. "We had motorists making U-turns going opposing directions on the freeway with other motorists, not realizing the situation."

A downed power line on private property is believed to have sparked the fire, which had burned 1,250 acres by Saturday afternoon, said Tom Kruschke, a spokesman for the Ventura County Fire Department, who didn't know the identity of the power line's owner. Wind may have felled the power line, he said.

Two firefighters suffered minor injuries, one to a knee and one to an ankle, Kruschke said.

## Obama admits to feeling 'small' alongside Marines

**DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press**

KANEOHE BAY, Hawaii (AP) — President Barack Obama may be one of the most powerful men in the world but he admits to feeling "small" when working out alongside Marines at their gym on base in Hawaii.

"The only problem I've got when I'm here is having to work out with Marines in the gym," Obama said during his annual Christmas Day visit with U.S. troops at Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay. "Because I generally feel like your commander in chief is in pretty good shape, and then I get next to some guy, you know, curling 100 pounds and it makes me feel small."

Obama works out at the base gym just about every day when he vacations here. With New Year's Day approaching, though, he told the troops he's inspired "to work harder so I can keep up with you next year."

Perhaps using the "workout stuff" his wife, Michelle, had said she was getting him for Christmas.

The 6-foot-1 Obama is known to enjoy a daily workout whether he's at home in the White House, traveling or on vacation. He plays golf practically every weekend in Washington when the weather cooperates, and he swings his clubs just about daily during extended vacations on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, or here in his native Hawaii.

The Christmas visit with the troops has become a tradition for the Obamas during their annual vacation on the island of Oahu.

Obama said it's one of their favorite things to do because they get a chance to "say thank you on behalf of the American people."

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This year's visit came four days after six U.S. service members were killed in a suicide attack in Afghanistan. In his first public comments on the attack, Obama praised the six individuals as "outstanding, brave men and women."

"As we know, when you're deployed overseas, it's tough," Obama said Friday. He said that although his administration has brought home troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, "there are still folks over there every single day and it's still dangerous, as we saw this past week, where we had some outstanding, brave men and women who were killed."

"So we never take for granted what all of you do for the American people," Obama said. "You help keep us free. You help keep us strong. Whatever service you're in, whatever branch, we are extraordinarily grateful for everything that you do every single day."

The six service members, including a New York City police detective who served in the U.S. National Guard, were killed Monday at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan, the largest U.S. facility in the country, when a suicide attacker rammed an explosives-laden motorcycle into a joint NATO-Afghan patrol. The Taliban claimed responsibility.

Before the afternoon visit, Obama opened Christmas gifts and sang carols with his family at their vacation rental in nearby Kailua, about a half hour from downtown Honolulu.

Obama is on a 16-day vacation. He is scheduled to return to the White House just after the start of the new year.

## Police in California say naked burglar took purse

AUBURN, Calif. (AP) — Police in California are trying to determine why a man was naked in frigid temperatures when he entered a home and stole a purse.

Auburn police say the homeowner's boyfriend then chased 28-year-old Adam Pettibone on Friday night before Pettibone got into an SUV and drove off. Sgt. Tucker Huey says Pettibone struck the boyfriend with the SUV. The boyfriend declined medical treatment.

Auburn is about 30 miles northeast of Sacramento. The temperature dipped into the 30s Friday.

Police say they found the SUV a short distance away in front of a home where Pettibone was. They booked him at Placer County Jail on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon and burglary. He was being held on \$250,000 bail.

Huey said he did not know whether Pettibone had a lawyer.

## Chinese mine boss drowns himself after deadly collapse

BEIJING (AP) — The owner of a Chinese gypsum mine drowned Sunday after jumping into a well in an apparent suicide during rescue efforts for 17 workers still trapped two days after the mine collapsed and killed one person, state media said.

Quoting a morning briefing by the rescue command center, state media said Ma Congbo, president of Yurong Commerce and Trade Ltd. Co., was assisting with rescue efforts on Sunday morning when he jumped into a mine well and drowned.

Since the mine collapse on Friday, rescuers have pulled 11 workers to safety and recovered one body. Another 17 miners are yet to be found.

Gypsum is a soft sulfate mineral that is widely used in construction.

Chinese authorities have typically meted out harsh punishments, including jail sentences, to company management and local work safety officials following major work safety disasters. Still, lack of regulatory oversight prevails, and cost-conscious management fails to pay enough heed to work safety.

The mine collapse came just days after a landslide from a man-made pileup of construction waste in the southern city of Shenzhen killed one person and left another 75 missing and presumed dead.

Authorities have ruled that the landslide was not a geological disaster but a work safety incident, adding to China's list of major man-made disasters in recent years.

In a rare move, Shenzhen's top officials, including its party chief and mayor, bowed deeply at a press conference as an apology.



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## Once again, giant Yule goat burns in Sweden

STOCKHOLM (AP) — In what's become a Christmas tradition to some Swedes, a giant decorative goat made of straw was set ablaze early Sunday and police arrested a 25-year-old man suspected of arson.

The straw goat is a beloved Christmas symbol in the city of Gavle, in central Sweden. However, it's also become a tradition of sorts to burn it down.

This year's edition lasted nearly a month on a downtown square before going up in flames.

Police said they arrested a suspect wearing a balaclava and clothes reeking of lighter fluid. His face was covered in soot and his hair damaged by fire.

Police said he would be questioned once he sobered up.

The goat is an ancient Scandinavian Yuletide tradition that preceded Santa Claus as the bringer of gifts.

## AP Interview: Climate deal caps a long quest for UN chief

**EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press**

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — When international negotiators reached a first-of-its kind climate change agreement in Paris this month, the United Nations' normally low-key leader, Ban Ki-moon, celebrated onstage, arms raised in victory and more exuberant than many had ever seen him before.

Nearly nine years had passed since, in his first days as secretary-general, Ban surprised world leaders by making global warming a top item on his agenda. Now, on the eve of his final year in office, the cheers in Paris marked the culmination of his nonstop campaign, pressed with world leaders at summit after summit and in locales including melting glaciers and islands at risk of disappearing.

It was an emotional moment, and looking back at the road to Paris in an interview with The Associated Press, Ban paid tribute to many people, including the leaders of the United States, China, India and France. He also spoke proudly of his own role.

No other leader in the world "has been raising, without fail, all the time, climate change," Ban said. "I have spent real passion ... and most of my time and energy on this issue."

It was quite a shift for the former South Korean foreign minister, whose main focus before becoming the eighth U.N. secretary-general in 2007 was his country's standoff with North Korea.

Ban traced his interest in climate change to his yearlong campaign to lead the United Nations, which took him to many countries and broadened his vision of global issues.

Two weeks before he was sworn in as secretary-general, Ban told Tim Wirth, then president of the United Nations Foundation, that one of his two highest priorities would be climate change, along with empowering women.

"You could have blown me away," Wirth said of Ban's choice of tackling global warming. "He had a deep commitment then, and he has stayed with it, and stayed with it, and stayed with it."

At the time, climate change was not a popular topic.

The 1997 Kyoto treaty, which required only rich countries to limit emissions blamed for global warming, was set to expire in 2012. Negotiations on a new agreement had almost collapsed, Ban said.

"I thought that I needed to revive this one," he said.

His first high-level meeting as U.N. chief was with then-President George W. Bush.

The original agenda for their January 2007 meeting didn't include climate change, Ban said, and Bush "seemed to be a little bit surprised" when he raised it.

Undeterred, Ban decided to hold the first-ever climate change summit at the United Nations in July 2007.

He invited Bush and told him that the success of the summit would depend on his participation. Bush came, though he didn't address the summit.

That connection paid off at a U.N. conference in Bali in December 2007.

The United States, the lone major industrial nation to reject Kyoto, was opposing India's proposal to strengthen requirements for richer nations to help poorer countries with technology to limit emissions. In one of the most memorable moments in climate change diplomacy, tiny Papua New Guinea implored

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America to lead or get out of the way.

An isolated United States capitulated, and the first roadmap for addressing climate change was adopted. "Miraculously, I was able to save this one, but I didn't know why," Ban said.

In early 2009, he finally found out.

Ban and his wife were invited to dinner at the White House in the last days of the Bush presidency. Bush told the U.N. chief that when the Bali meeting reached a difficult moment, he got a call from the head of the U.S. delegation asking for instructions.

Ban said Bush told him: "Suddenly, you came to my mind. Then I told the delegation head, 'Do what the secretary-general of the U.N. wants to do,'"

The secretary-general said he still feels "very much grateful" to Bush.

"That was the beginning of our success," Ban said.

But then came the disappointment of the 2009 Copenhagen climate change negotiations.

In Copenhagen, a newly elected President Barack Obama showed "great commitment," even working on proposed global text from his laptop, Ban said. But there were too many differences and negotiations ended with no agreement.

"From the failure of Copenhagen, we learned a great lesson," Ban said.

One was to have every country provide its own national action plan to combat climate change. Another was to get countries to agree to have a universal climate change agreement by 2015.

Meanwhile, Ban was traveling the world to spotlight the impacts of climate change. His visits to Antarctica and the Arctic showcased melting ice, and his visits to the Aral Sea in central Asia and Lake Chad in west Africa warned of their disappearance. He visited the low-lying Pacific island nation of Kiribati, where he found a life jacket in his room in case of inundation.

He also asked to attend annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund — a first for a U.N. secretary-general — to talk to finance ministers on the need to mobilize \$100 billion in climate financing annually by 2020.

As the summit in Paris approached, Ban participated in monthly strategy videoconferences with the leaders of France and Peru and later, Germany. One key decision was to reverse the usual negotiations process and have country leaders attend the start of the summit to give impetus and clear direction to negotiators.

The Paris opening was the largest-ever gathering of country leaders, with 150 assembled, the secretary-general said.

But there were about half a dozen "spoilers," countries ready to block consensus on an agreement. Nicaragua refused to submit its national plan, arguing that rich nations should be compelled to make deeper emission cuts.

Ban recalled the moment the Nicaraguan delegation said "we will not block" a deal. The French foreign minister immediately gave approval of the agreement, which was later adopted unanimously.

The Paris agreement, adopted by nearly 200 nations, calls on both poor and rich countries to cut greenhouse gas pollution. It aims to keep global temperatures from rising another degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) between now and 2100.

Ban's perseverance and leadership were essential, said former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, who headed a U.N.-appointed commission that published a groundbreaking report in 1987 outlining the dangers of climate change.

"This is not a one-man show, but the one man is important," Brundtland said.

Without him, "we cannot take for granted that we would be here."

Ban's priority for the rest of his term has not changed. With the climate deal imposing no sanctions for non-compliant countries, the secretary-general said he will focus on establishing a framework to ensure U.N. member states follow through on the climate change promises he worked so hard to get.