

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 1 of 28

- 1- Frost Construction ad
- 1- Recycling Trailers in Groton
- 1- Today's Information
- 2- Kosel's place second in holiday lighting contest
- 3- Many enrolled in Marketplace Coverage
- 4- 5 Ways to be charitable on a budget
- 5- Schwan's to give to SD Destination Imagination
- 6 - Today in Weather History
- 6- City Dog License Ad
- 7- Local Weather Forecast
- 8- National Weather Map
- 8- Local Weather
- 9- Daily Devotional
- 9- Olde Bank Floral Ad
- 10 - News from the Associated Press

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

12:00pm: Kiwanis meets at the Community Center

Thursday, December 31

No School

New Year's Eve

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, corn, frosted brownie, whole wheat bread.

Anniversaries: Paul & Tina Kosel, Jake & Tiffany Unzen, Ralph & Virginia Breitreutz

Birthdays: Jill Cutler • Braiden Craig • Brian Koens

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**

© 2015 Groton Daily Independent



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 2 of 28



The Paul and Tina Kosel home at 110 N Washington St. received second place in the Holiday Lighting Contest. They will receive a \$50 credit on their utility bill next month.



The Kosel home had a Peanuts theme this year with a number of inflatables throughout the yard.

In South Dakota 22,354 People Are Enrolled In Marketplace Coverage; Over 8.2 million nationally have enrolled through December 19

As of December 19, the number of consumers signed up for Marketplace coverage surged to more than 8.2 million nationally, including 22,354 in South Dakota. Those who selected a plan by December 17 or were auto reenrolled will have coverage effective January 1, 2016. High consumer demand as we neared the enrollment deadline for January 1 coverage, as well as the automatic renewal process, contributed to this overall total.

"Millions of Americans will start 2016 with the quality and affordable health coverage they want and need to keep their families healthy and financially secure," said Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell. "We are encouraged by the strong start we experienced in the first half of Open Enrollment for 2016 coverage, and know we have ongoing work to do. We are focused on making sure South Dakota families looking for coverage understand their options through the Marketplace, know about the financial assistance available, and have access to the support they need to enroll."

These data, for the first time, reflect the vast majority of consumers who were automatically re-enrolled into 2016 coverage. The re-enrollment process has not yet been completed so as it continues, upcoming snapshots will include additional consumers who were automatically re-enrolled after December 19. If a consumer realized after the deadline for coverage starting January 1 that there is a better plan for their family, they can come back and make a change any time before the end of Open Enrollment on January 31, 2016.

Open Enrollment for 2016 health coverage at HealthCare.gov began November 1, 2015 and individuals can still enroll in coverage through January 31, 2016. Consumers should visit HealthCare.gov or Cuidad-odeSalud.gov to review their coverage options, learn about what financial assistance is available, or to sign up or re-enroll in a plan that best meets their needs.

Having health insurance when you can afford it is now the law. If someone chooses not to buy health insurance and could afford to do so, they are at risk of paying a fee of \$695 or more.

Five Facts about Open Enrollment in South Dakota:

Since Open Enrollment began on Nov. 1, 22,354 South Dakota consumers have selected a plan through December 19.

Plans for 2016 are affordable, 70 percent of South Dakota enrollees can find plans for \$75 or less a month in premiums after tax credits. Nationwide, about 8 out of 10 people who enroll in health coverage through HealthCare.gov qualify for financial help to make their monthly premiums more affordable.

For 2016, 71 percent of returning South Dakota HealthCare.gov consumers could save an average of \$217 annually in premiums before tax credits for a plan in the same level of coverage by returning to shop. If a consumer realized after the deadline for coverage starting January 1 that there is a better plan for their family, they can come back and make a change any time before the end of Open Enrollment on January 31, 2016.

When South Dakota customers visit HealthCare.gov they'll find a variety of quality health coverage options available. For 2016, South Dakota consumers can choose from 2 issuers and an average of 19 plans.

Free confidential enrollment help is available if people in South Dakota have questions or want to talk through their options with a trained professional.

Visit LocalHelp.HealthCare.gov to find a listing enrollment centers and events in your community where free, confidential enrollment help is offered.

Representatives at the 24-hour Call Center are available every day at 1-800-318-2596. Call Center representatives can answer questions and help people enroll in coverage over the phone.

5 Ways to be Charitable on a Budget

By Nathaniel Sillin

If you've ever wondered if you can be charitable with only a few extra dollars in your wallet or a little bit of free time, the answer is yes. You just have to get a little creative.

In the Chronicle of Philanthropy's latest analysis of charitable giving, it appears people who earned less were giving more. Based on state-by-state tax data, the nonprofit industry trade publication reported that between 2006 to 2012, Americans earning more than \$200,000 gave a smaller percentage of their income to charity while those earning less than \$100,000 actually gave more during the same period.

Wherever you stand on the income scale, stretching charitable dollars or time should begin with a little planning. Here are five steps to consider.

Check your finances first. Helping others is a worthwhile lifetime habit. However, before you start writing checks or handing out cash to various individuals or groups, check your budget to determine whether you actually have extra money to spare for charitable donations in any form. If you itemize, check the IRS rules (www.irs.gov) on charitable giving or consult with a qualified tax professional to see if there are charitable giving options that fit your circumstances.

Screen charities you're considering. It's never been easier to evaluate a potential charity or nonprofit organization. Leading online databases like CharityNavigator.org, CharityWatch.org and Guidestar.org provide extensive data on thousands of national, state and local charities and nonprofit organizations. The Better Business Bureau also operates Give.org, a national charity database that accredits and notes complaints. The U.S. Federal Trade Commission's Charity Scams website offers breaking news on illegal fundraising activities and best practices for evaluating charities and nonprofits year-round. What else can you do? Play reporter. Even if an organization checks out through these reputable sources, do an online search of news media just to make sure no unsavory developments have occurred that might discourage your donation.

Research what's needed. If the charity in question accepts physical items or volunteer work, see if you're interested in providing help that way. Check with the charity either online or by phone to determine what they will and will not accept – donating the wrong items simply wastes staff and volunteer time. If you would like to volunteer, ask about opportunities and make sure that volunteer assignment fits you before you commit. Remember, charities really count on their volunteers and your enthusiasm for an assignment can help them keep their turnover to a minimum. Some organizations may also have travel-based service missions that can provide charitable travel opportunities that allow you to help while seeing the world.

Ask if your employer will match your donation. Even if your cash donation is modest, some employers can make your contribution go farther if they have a matching gifts program. Check with your human resources department or benefits manager. Also, many nonprofits, universities and charitable organizations keep their own online databases of employer matching gift programs.

Go micro. If you can only find a few dollars to give, don't let that discourage you. Organize like-minded friends and family members to pool funds, attend events or volunteer time for a cause, or consider a particular nonprofit's organized crowdfunding (<https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/crowdfunding-nonprofits>) efforts that will allow you to make an impact with only a few dollars. Still short on cash and want to help? Pick up the phone or email the charity and ask if they accept small items or in-kind services. Some ideas might include gift cards (including ones with unused balances), office supplies, stamps, catering for events or board meetings or help with writing, fundraising or technology.

Bottom line: Making a difference in the world doesn't always require big bucks, but big know-how helps. Check your finances first, research charities you're interested in and investigate how small donations of time, money and physical items can make an impact.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 5 of 28

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!

© 2014 Schwan's Home Service, Inc. All rights reserved. 0301



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



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 6 of 28

Today in Weather History

December 28, 2000: Northwest winds of 35 to 50 mph, gusting to around 65 mph, occurred across central and north central South Dakota in the morning. The high winds resulted in blizzard conditions at some locations just east of the Missouri River. Further east, in northeast South Dakota, northwest winds of 30 to 50 mph combined with newly fallen snow to generate blizzard conditions from the morning into the early afternoon hours. Travel was very difficult in many places and many motorists found themselves in ditches. There were also several non-injury accidents.

1839 - The third storm in two weeks hit the northeastern U.S. It brought two more feet of snow to Hartford, CT, and Worcester, MA. Whole gales swept the coast causing many wrecks. (David Ludlum)

1879: Tay Bridge is the main-line railway across the Tay River in Scotland, between the city of Dundee and the suburb of Wormit in Fife. During the evening hours of December 28, 1879, strong winds were said to blow at right angles to the bridge. Witnesses said the storm was as bad as they had seen in 20 to 30 years. The winds at Glasgow and Aberdeen were measured at 71 mph. Winds were estimated to be 80 mph in Dundee. A passenger train departing at 7:13 pm was said to disappear three minutes later. The train was found at the bottom of the river, along with the high girders and much of the ironwork of their supporting piers. There were no survivors. The Court of Inquiry report concluded that, "The fall of the bridge was occasioned by the insufficiency of the cross bracing and its fastenings to sustain the force of the gale."

1897 - The temperature at Dayville, OR, hit 81 degrees to establish a state record for December. (The Weather Channel)

1924 - Iowa experienced its coldest December morning of record. Morning lows averaged 25 degrees below zero for the 104 weather stations across the state.

1955 - Anchorage, AK, was buried under 17.7 inches of snow in 24 hours, a record for that location. (28th-29th) (The Weather Channel)

1958 - Albuquerque, NM, received 14.2 inches of snow to establish a 24 hour record. (28th-29th) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A winter storm produced heavy snow in the Upper Mississippi Valley and the Upper Great Lakes Region. Up to twenty inches of snow buried southern Minnesota, and 20 to 40 mph northwesterly winds produced snow drifts six feet high, and reduced visibilities to near zero at times in blowing snow. There were a thousand traffic accidents in Michigan during the storm, resulting in thirty-five injuries. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Strong winds behind a cold front claimed three lives in eastern Pennsylvania, and injured a dozen others in eastern Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Maryland. Winds gusted to 87 mph at Hammonton NJ and in the Washington D.C. area. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Squalls continued to bring snow to the Great Lakes Region, with heavy snow reported near Lake Superior and Lake Ontario. Syracuse NY received 8.5 inches of snow to push the total for the month past their previous December record of 57 inches. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2003 - A severe snow storm hit northern California and southern Oregon. As much as 2 feet of snow fell along Interstate 5 closing a 150-mile stretch of the interstate, stranding hundreds of travelers. Winds from the storm

caused power outages to more than 200,000 customers in California and Oregon. One man died of a heart attack after helping other drivers. (CNN)

2004 - Los Angeles (downtown) broke a daily rainfall record for the month of December (5.55 inches). This was the third wettest calendar day in Los Angeles since records began in 1877.

2005 - An outbreak of severe thunderstorms across portions of the southeast United States on the 28th produced hail, high winds and a few tornadoes. The states of Georgia and Tennessee were the most affected. (NCDC)

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


Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 7 of 28

Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
						
Increasing Clouds	Chance Snow then Snow	Snow then Chance Snow	Chance Snow	Slight Chance Snow then Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny
High: 15 °F	Low: 10 °F	High: 20 °F	Low: 9 °F	High: 18 °F	Low: 5 °F	High: 15 °F

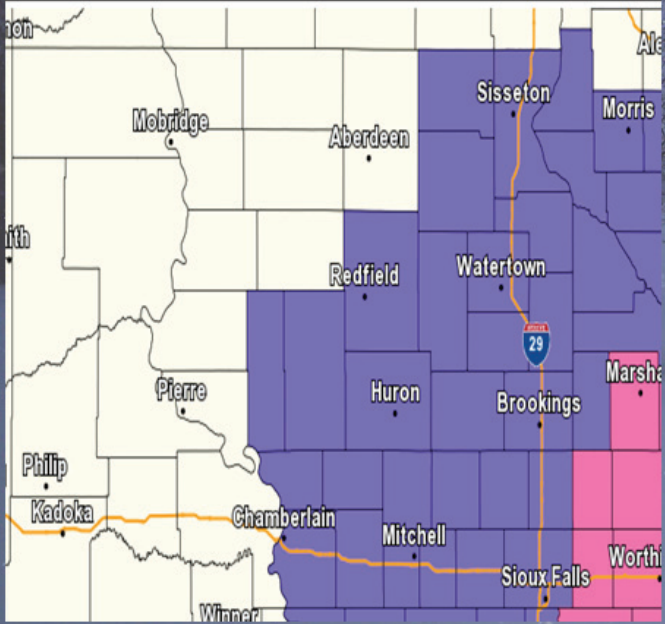


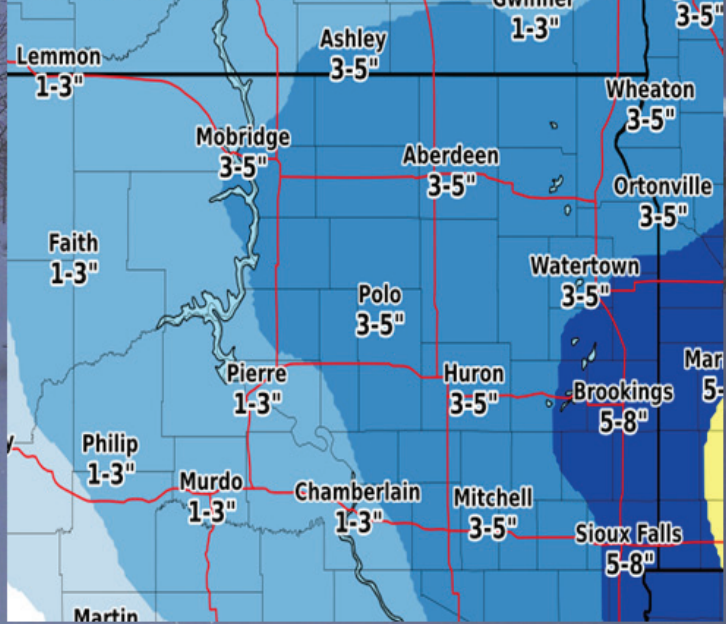
Snow This Evening Into Wednesday






Monday – Wednesday Snowfall Accumulation

Winter Weather Advisory





National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD

 weather.gov/Aberdeen
 National Weather Service Aberdeen
  @NWSAberdeen
 Updated: 12/28/2015 4:18 AM Central

An area of low pressure will move into the Great Lakes region on Tuesday. As the system moves northeast through the Plains, moisture will wrap back around it into South Dakota and Minnesota. Snow will begin early this evening and continue into Wednesday morning. Communities in the advisory will see accumulations of 3 to 6 inches by Tuesday afternoon. Other areas east of the Missouri River may expect 1 to 3 inches of snow.

Published on: 12/28/2015 at 4:22AM

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 8 of 28

Yesterday's Weather

High: 8.9 at 2:48 PM

Low: -6.8 at 4:24 AM

High Gust: 8 at 12:31 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 57° in 1898

Record Low: -24° in 1924

Average High: 23°F

Average Low: 3°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.46

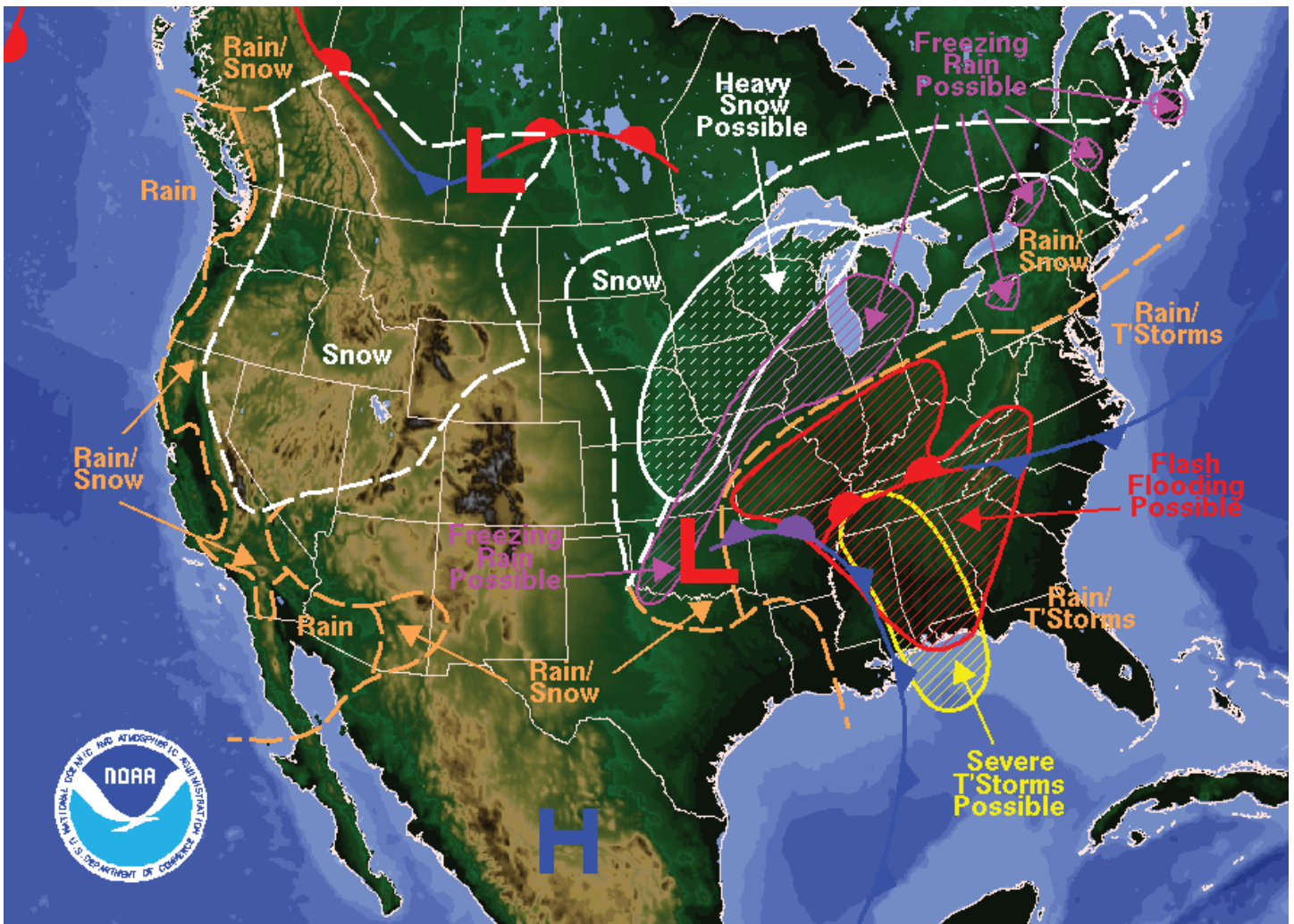
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.55

Average Precip to date: 21.66

Precip Year to Date: 20.37

Sunset Tonight: 4:57 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:13 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Mon, Dec 28, 2015, issued 2:40 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



WHEN HEAVEN CAME DOWN

A little girl took her first elevator ride with her father. When they arrived at the top floor, he asked, "What did you think of that? Did you like it?"

"I don't know, Daddy," she replied. "It was kind of funny. We got into this little house, and then the upstairs came down."

An amusing little story, isn't it? But that's exactly what happened when God sent His Son into the world. God sent His Son into the world to give us life and light, hope and healing, grace and goodness.

We are expected to do the same through Him. We are to take the message of salvation to others, light up the dark pathways of those who are still blinded by sin, give hope to those who are unable to see past their problems, show grace to those who are burdened beyond measure and demonstrate goodness to those who are in need by sharing our possessions with them.

It is not enough that we know God's "Golden Rule." He expects us to live it every day of our lives.

Prayer: Help me, Dear Jesus, to live as You lived and do as You did that I might give to others what You gave to me. May I take a little bit of heaven to others because You brought all of heaven to me. In Your Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: John 10:9-18 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,

Major Inventory Reduction Sale!

BIG SALE

Going on NOW!

50%

ALL Christmas Decor
ALL Kids Merchandise

30%

ALL Cold Weather Head & Hand
ALL Silk Florals

20%

ALL Everyday Home Decor



Fresh flowers, home decor, Dark Canyon Coffee & so much more
101 N. Main St., Groton ~ 397-8650
www.oldebankfloralsd.com



Olde Bank Floral



News from the Associated Press

The Latest: Snow, ice target huge swath of Midwest **The Associated Press**

The latest developments on the severe storms across the U.S. (all times local):
6:30 a.m.

Parts of 11 states in the middle of the country are under a winter storm warning as the weather system that spawned tornadoes in Texas and flooding in Missouri moves on.

Meanwhile, the National Weather Service has issued a flash flood warning for southern and eastern parts of Missouri, including St. Louis, and a small section of northern Arkansas. Most of Arkansas, eastern Oklahoma, central Missouri and central Illinois are under a flood warning.

Forecasters say Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan and parts of Minnesota, Illinois, Missouri, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas will see winter weather conditions ranging from heavy snow to ice, accompanied by gusty winds.

Parts of the Southeast will see rain, while severe weather is possible in Mississippi.

2:30 a.m.

Blizzard-like conditions have led to the closure of most of Interstate 40 from Albuquerque east across the Texas Panhandle.

New Mexico State Police spokeswoman Sgt. Elizabeth Armijo said Sunday night that the stretch of interstate from Albuquerque to the Texas border would be closed through at least Monday afternoon. She urged travelers passing through New Mexico to use Interstate 10 instead.

In Texas, the Texas Department of Public Safety says only a small section of the highway around Amarillo remains open. Texas State Trooper Cindy Barkley says deteriorating conditions forced authorities to indefinitely close the highway for about 100 miles east of Amarillo to Oklahoma.

I-40 is the main east-west highway through the state's Panhandle.

The National Weather Service has issued a blizzard warning until 9 a.m. Monday for the Panhandle and several counties in New Mexico. Authorities say that even in areas where the warning has expired, residual blowing and drifting is expected and will make conditions dangerous.

Midwest storm brings twisters, floods, and it's not over yet

DAVID WARREN, Associated Press

REESE DUNKLIN, Associated Press

GARLAND, Texas (AP) — As residents of North Texas surveyed the destruction from deadly weekend tornadoes, the storm system that spawned the twisters was bringing winter storm woes to the Midwest and worsening flooding already being blamed for more than a dozen deaths.

At least 11 people died and dozens were injured in the tornadoes that swept through the Dallas area and caused substantial damage. The storms and flooding in Missouri and Illinois were the latest in a succession of severe weather events across the country that have led to at least 43 deaths in less than a week.

The damage began to come into view Sunday in North Texas, where local officials estimated as many as 1,450 homes were damaged or destroyed. Vehicles were mangled, power lines fell and trees were toppled. Heavy rain, wind and falling temperatures hampered cleanup efforts Sunday afternoon.

"This is a huge impact on our community and we're all suffering," Garland Police Lt. Pedro Barineau said of the suburb about 20 miles northeast of Dallas, where eight people died, 15 were injured and about 600 structures, mostly single-family homes, were damaged.

The weather service said an EF-4 tornado, which is the second-most powerful with winds up to more than 200 mph, hit the community at about 6:45 p.m. Saturday.

Natalie Guzman, 33, took photos of her family's home in a Garland neighborhood. The garage wall had collapsed and the roof fell in. The only part of the house that appeared to be spared was the master

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 11 of 28

bathroom, where her brother-in-law took shelter Saturday night. He was the only one at home and told her he had just enough time to get himself and his dogs into the bathroom.

"It was worse than I thought," Guzman said, comparing the scene to the photos he had sent Saturday.

In the nearby town of Rowlett, City Manager Brian Funderburk said Sunday morning that 23 people were injured, but that there were no deaths and no reports of missing people. The weather service said damage indicated it was likely an EF-3 tornado, which has winds up to 165 mph.

Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins said in a statement Sunday night that as many as 600 homes were damaged in Rowlett.

Homes in the neighborhood that had been searched by emergency responders were marked with a black "X." In some instances, it looked like homes had been picked up and set back down in a big pile. State troopers blocked off roads, utility crews restored power and people walked around, hushed and dazed.

Three other people died in Collin County, about 45 miles northeast of Dallas, according to sheriff's deputy Chris Havey, although the circumstances were not immediately clear.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott made disaster declarations Sunday for four counties — Dallas, Collin, Rockwall and Ellis — and warned that the number of victims could rise.

On the other side of the state, the Department of Public Safety in Amarillo strongly discouraged travel throughout the entire Texas Panhandle — a 26-county area covering nearly 26,000 square miles — because blowing and drifting snow had made the roads impassable. Interstate 40, the main east-west highway across the Panhandle, was almost completely shut down. DPS said only a small section of the highway in Amarillo remained open.

Meanwhile, Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin declared a state of emergency as there were blizzard conditions and an ice storm warning out west and flood warnings in the east, where one community had received 9 inches of rain. The state Department of Emergency Management said eight storm-related injuries were reported. About 60,000 homes and businesses were without power.

Further north, rain caused dangerous driving conditions and flooding in Missouri, where Gov. Jay Nixon also declared a state of emergency, and Illinois.

Six people died over the weekend when two separate vehicles drove into flooded roadways in south-central Missouri, Pulaski County Sheriff Ronald Long said. Greene County authorities said two fatalities there were associated with the flooding.

In southern Illinois, authorities said three adults and two children drowned Saturday evening when the vehicle they were riding in was swept away and sank in a rain-swollen creek.

The storm system was moving to the northeast and was expected to bring a mix of snow and ice into the Upper Midwest. Forecasters said parts of Minnesota and Wisconsin could see up to 10 inches of snow.

Also Sunday, the death toll in the Southeast linked to severe weather just before Christmas rose to 19 when Alabama authorities found the body of a 22-year-old man whose vehicle was swept away while attempting to cross a bridge.

Storm could dump 10 inches of snow on southeast South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A major winter storm impacting the central U.S. could bring up to 10 inches of snow to southeastern South Dakota.

The National Weather Service has issued a winter storm warning for the extreme southeastern part of the state into Tuesday, with 6-10 inches of snow expected.

Winter weather advisories have been posted for much of the rest of eastern South Dakota, with 3-6 inches of snow likely. That includes the city of Sioux Falls.

Forecasters say the storm system also could bring snow to west, central and southeast North Dakota, but it should be light.

The storm system is the latest in a succession of severe weather events across the country that have led to more than 40 deaths in less than a week.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 12 of 28

Man sought on Iowa, South Dakota warrants nabbed in Nebraska

SOUTH SIOUX CITY, Neb. (AP) — A man wanted on Iowa and South Dakota warrants has been arrested in northeast Nebraska.

Authorities say 19-year-old Zachary Frye, of Sioux City, was arrested Saturday afternoon in South Sioux City after a chase that began in Woodbury County, Iowa. The passenger in the vehicle told police he pulled the emergency brake to stop the vehicle. The passenger was not arrested.

Charges against Frye include felony eluding, willful reckless driving and several drug counts. His attorney didn't immediately return a call Monday from The Associated Press, seeking comment on Frye's behalf.

Man accused in large meth ring ordered held without bond

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — A Fargo man accused of distributing large quantities of methamphetamine in Fargo and in Sisseton, South Dakota, is being held without bond.

Roble Hernandez is charged in federal court with conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance. He has waived his right to a detention hearing.

Authorities say Hernandez's residence was being used as a "stash house" for an out-of-state drug trafficking organization. A woman who lived with Hernandez had allegedly stolen five pounds of meth and members of the cartel came to Fargo and assaulted her to gain information about the missing drugs.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Alice Senechal (SEN'-ah-shawl) says she may reconsider Hernandez's bond at a later date "if additional facts are available." Trial has not been scheduled.

A federal public defender could not be reached for comment.

NFL moves Vikings-Packers to Sunday night

NEW YORK (AP) — The Vikings-Packers game at Green Bay that will decide the NFC North title has been moved to Sunday night.

Through its flex scheduling option, the NFL placed that game in prime time, with the winner taking the division crown.

Ten games are set for a 1 p.m. EST kickoff, with the New York Jets at Buffalo, and Pittsburgh at Cleveland involving a potential AFC wild card. Houston, which will win the AFC South by beating Jacksonville at home, also is at 1 o'clock.

Among the five 4:25 p.m. EST matchups are Oakland at Kansas City, and San Diego at Denver, which will play a role in deciding the AFC West title. Seattle at Arizona, and Tampa Bay at Carolina — the Cardinals and Panthers are chasing the top overall NFC seed — also will be at 4:25.

South Dakota State holds off Middle Tennessee 65-61

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Deondre Parks scored 16 points and South Dakota State survived bad free throw shooting to hold off Middle Tennessee State 65-61 on Sunday.

The Jackrabbits (11-3) went 15 of 33 from the foul line, 10 of 22 in the second half, but secured the win on Tevin King's free throw with 10 seconds left.

South Dakota State led 63-55 on a Parks free throw with 56 seconds left. After the teams traded turnovers, Darnell Harris hit a 3-pointer for the Blue Raiders. Before Harris hit another 3 at 17 seconds, SDSU went 1 of 4 from the line.

After Harris' second 3 made it 64-61, the Jackrabbits missed three free throws before King's clincher.

Ian Theisen added 13 points for SDSU, which had a 49-32 rebounding advantage.

Harris finished with 14 points for the Blue Raiders (7-4), who opened 2 of 16 from the field to fall behind by 11 before rallying to take a 31-27 lead at the half.

University Center looks to expand, refocus 2-year degrees

DIRK LAMMERS, Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls-based educational center that offers classes from South Dakota's public universities is looking to expand and refocus its offering of two-year associate degrees, partly in response to industry's desire for a more highly educated workforce.

The state's four technical schools, which report to their respective boards, meet the demand for career and technical certificates and associate of applied science degrees, said Michael Rush, executive director of the South Dakota Board of Regents.

But the regents are looking to refocus the mission of University Center-Sioux Falls, which has seen a drop in enrollment over the past five years, on two-year associate of arts and associate of science degrees that would be easily transferrable to four-year institutions, Rush said. The changes could serve as a model for the state's other university centers in Rapid City and Pierre.

"We're specifically working on that piece of the market, because the technical piece is pretty well served with our technical colleges," he said.

Better and more diverse postsecondary educational offerings ranging from technical certificates to PhDs will help in creating a well-trained and educated workforce so that South Dakota can compete nationally and globally for workers, according to Rich Naser Jr., executive director of the South Dakota Technology Business Center.

"Your opportunities are to train and educate and retain your existing, or attract new in," Naser said. "The workforce is really one of our absolute keys to our future."

Brooke Murray, a 20-year-old administrative assistant pursuing an associate in business administration degree through Dakota State University, said she chose to attend University Center because it allows her to attend evening classes without having to make the 55-mile trek to the main campus.

Murray, who also is a budding photographer, said she may choose to eventually go for a four-year degree "depending on where life takes me."

"The two-year degree is my start," Murray said. "Right now, it's going to take me a while to finish it."

South Dakota has never had a public community college system, though U.S. Census data shows the state outpaces all but one of its bordering states for its percentage of residents with associate degrees.

The regents recently formed a task force to look at how schools can offer community college-type services using the state's existing institutions. The discussions were underway months before Kilian Community College, a Sioux Falls private nonprofit, announced it would close its doors in May 2016 after 39 years.

University Center's refocus is part of a larger effort to refine its governance and role in the community, executive director Craig Johnson said. It offers associate in general studies degrees from the University of South Dakota, South Dakota State University and Dakota State University, but Johnson said that might be scaled back to one school.

Its most popular workforce-related associate degrees are offered through DSU in business management, health information technology, network and system administration and respiratory care. Offerings from Black Hills State University in tourism and hospitality and from Northern State University in applied gerontology and banking and financial services have drawn fewer students.

Two-year degrees are important offerings, as studies have shown that to keep students engage and moving toward a goal, they need to have success along the way, said Jeff Holcomb, president of Southeast Technical Institute in Sioux Falls. He thinks both University Center and the state's technical schools can have their niches.

"We are designed to prepare the individual to enter the workforce, whereas the associate degree at University Center is designed to transfer on," he said.

Holcomb added that Southeast Tech is open to accepting transfer credits from University Center, and he hopes the inverse will be true.

Sioux Falls offering Christmas tree drop-off sites

ST. JOHNS, S.D. (AP) — Ready to get rid of your Christmas tree? Sioux Falls is now offering two sites where trees can be dropped off.

The sites will operate from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Jan. 17. There's no cost for dropping a tree.

One drop-off site is located on East Chambers Street, west of Cliff Avenue by the Household Hazardous Waste Facility. The other site is on Lyon Boulevard, west of the W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds.

Large and commercial loads won't be accepted. All ornaments must be removed before disposing of the tree. Artificial trees won't be accepted.

In addition, the Household Hazardous Waste Facility will be accepting at no cost broken or unwanted holiday lights from residents from Lake, Lincoln, McCook, Minnehaha and Turner counties.

Badlands National Park seeks input on possible fee hikes

INTERIOR, S.D. (AP) — Officials with the Badlands National Park have scheduled several meetings for next month to hear the public's opinion on proposed entrance fee increases.

Meetings are planned in Wall, Kadoka, Interior, Rapid City and Pine Ridge. The proposed increases would go into effect in January 2017.

Under the proposed rates, the per-person walk-in fee would go from \$7 to \$12, the motorcycle fee would double to \$20 and the vehicle fee would jump from \$15 to \$25. The annual pass would also increase to \$50.

Park Superintendent Mike Pflaum says officials are committed to keeping the park affordable, but they also want to provide visitors with the best possible experience.

Pflaum says entrance fees are used to provide services to visitors. Park projects include improving roads and funding a lab.

Iraq: Military making progress in fight for Ramadi

SINAN SALAHEDDIN, Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraqi military forces on Monday retook a strategic government complex in the city of Ramadi from Islamic State militants who have occupied the city since May, military officials said — a symbolic victory that could help lift the morale of Iraq's beleaguered security forces as they battle to retake the rest of the city.

In a televised statement, military spokesman Brig. Gen. Yahya Rasool initially announced that Ramadi had been "grabbed from the hateful claws" of the Islamic State group and "fully liberated."

But Gen. Ismail al-Mahlawi, head of military operations in Anbar, quickly clarified that government forces had only retaken a strategic government complex and that parts of the city remained under IS control. IS fighters have retreated from about 70 percent of city, but still control the rest; government forces still don't fully control many of the districts from which the IS fighters have retreated.

"The troops only entered the government complex," al-Mahlawi told The Associated Press. "We can't say that Ramadi is fully liberated. There are still neighborhoods under their control and there are still resistance pockets."

Iraqi state TV showed troops, some waving Iraqi flags and others brandishing machine guns, chanting and dancing inside what it described as the government complex. Some troops were seen slaughtering sheep in celebration near heavily damaged buildings.

The capital of Anbar province, Ramadi was one of the Iraqi cities under the full control of IS fighters. The city, and others in Anbar province, was the scene of fierce battles between U.S. military troops and the Islamic State group's predecessor, al-Qaeda in Iraq, during the years following the 2003 U.S.-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein.

Col. Steve Warren, a spokesman in Baghdad for the U.S. military told AP that "today's success is a proud moment for Iraq."

"The clearance of the government center is a significant accomplishment and is the result of many months of hard work by the Iraqi Army, the Counter Terrorism Service, the Iraqi Air Force, local and federal police,

and tribal fighters," Warren said.

He added that the U.S.-led coalition has provided steadfast support to the Iraqi government, conducting more than 630 airstrikes, training security forces, and providing both advice and specialized engineering equipment to clear bombs and booby traps.

"The coalition will continue to support the government of Iraq as they move forward to make Ramadi safe for civilians to return and as the military moves to fight ISIL in other areas of the country," he continued, using an alternative acronym for the Islamic State group.

The Iraqi military launched a long-promised campaign to retake the city, located about 130 kilometers (80 miles) west of Baghdad, last week. Their progress had been hampered by snipers, booby traps and the destruction by IS militants of all bridges leading into Ramadi.

The extremists control large swaths of land in western and northern Iraq and in neighboring Syria. The IS group has declared a self-styled caliphate on the territory it controls.

South Korea, Japan reach landmark deal on WWII sex slaves

HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press

FOSTER KLUG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — An apology from Japan's prime minister and a pledge of more than \$8 million sealed a breakthrough deal Monday in a decades-long impasse with South Korea over Korean women forced into Japanese military-run brothels during World War II.

The accord, which aims to resolve the emotional core of South Korea's grievances with its former colonial overlord, could begin to reverse decades of animosity and mistrust between the two thriving democracies, trade partners and staunch U.S. allies. It represents a shift for Tokyo's conservative government and a new willingness to compromise by previously wary Seoul.

A statement by both countries' foreign ministers said Prime Minister Shinzo Abe "expresses anew his most sincere apologies and remorse to all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women," the euphemistic name given the women.

Historians say tens of thousands of women from around Asia, many of them Korean, were sent to front-line military brothels to provide sex to Japanese soldiers.

It wasn't immediately clear if Abe would be issuing a separate written statement or if it would be directly delivered to the 46 surviving former Korean sex slaves, now in their 80s and 90s.

The language mirrored past expressions of remorse by other prime ministers, although it was seen by some in Seoul as an improvement on previous comments by Abe's hawkish government, which has been accused of whitewashing wartime atrocities.

Another deciding factor was that the 1 billion yen (\$8.3 million) — to create a foundation to help provide support for the victims — came from the government, not private sources, something Tokyo has resisted in the past.

South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se said Seoul considers the agreement "final and irreversible," as long as Japan faithfully follows through with its promises.

Later Monday, Abe called South Korean President Park Geun-hye and reiterated his apology. He said Tokyo would implement the deal and called the issue settled irreversibly. Park said she hoped the two countries will build mutual trust and open a new era in ties based on the agreement.

After phoning Park, Abe told reporters that the agreement was based on his commitment to stop future generations from having to repeatedly apologize.

"Japan and South Korea are now entering a new era," Abe said. "We should not drag this problem into the next generation."

Park issued a separate statement saying the deal was the result of her government's best efforts to resolve the sex slave issue, given its urgency. "Most of victims are at an advanced age and nine died this

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 16 of 28

year alone," she said.

"I hope the mental pains of the elderly comfort women will be eased," Park said.

The initial reaction of former sex slaves was mixed. One woman said she would follow the government's lead, while another vowed to ignore the accord because Tokyo didn't consider the money to be formal compensation.

"Isn't it natural to make legal compensation if they commit a crime?" said Lee Yong-su, 88, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

Some in Seoul saw the deal, while not perfect, as an important step forward.

"If we brushed aside this deal, the comfort women issue would remain unresolved forever," said Lee Won Deog, director of Institute of Japanese Studies at Seoul's Kookmin University. "Elderly women would die one by one; South Korea and Japan would engage in history wars and find it harder to improve ties."

Many South Koreans continue to feel bitterness over Japan's brutal colonial occupation of the Korean Peninsula from 1910 to 1945. But South Korean officials have also faced calls to improve ties with Japan, the world's No. 3 economy and a regional powerhouse, not least from U.S. officials eager for a strong united front against a rising China and North Korea's pursuit of nuclear-armed missiles that could target the American mainland.

Japan appeared emboldened to make the overture to Seoul after the first formal leaders' meeting between the neighbors in 3½ years, in November, and after South Korean courts recently acquitted a Japanese reporter charged with defaming Park and refused to review a complaint by a South Korean seeking individual compensation for Japan's forceful mobilization of workers during colonial days.

Seoul, meanwhile, said it will refrain from criticizing Japan over the issue, and will talk with "relevant organizations" — a reference to civic groups representing the former sex slaves — to try to resolve Japan's grievance over a statue of a girl representing victims of Japanese sexual slavery that sits in front of the Japanese Embassy in downtown Seoul. Yun said South Korea recognizes Japan's worries about security over the statue, where anti-Tokyo protests take place weekly.

There has long been resistance in South Korea to past Japanese apologies because many here wanted Japan to acknowledge that it has a legal responsibility to the women.

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida later emphasized in a closed-door briefing with Japanese reporters that Tokyo doesn't consider the 1 billion yen as compensation, but "a project to relieve emotional scars and provide healing for the victims." It will include medical services, health checks and other support for the women, he said. All compensation issues between the countries were settled by a 1965 treaty that restored diplomatic ties and was accompanied by more than \$800 million in economic aid and loans from Tokyo to Seoul, he said.

But Kishida said the comfort women system "deeply hurt the honor and dignity of many women under the involvement of the Japanese military at the time, and Japan strongly feels responsibility."

Better relations between South Korea and Japan are a priority for Washington. The two countries together host about 80,000 U.S. troops and are members of now-stalled regional talks aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear ambitions in return for aid.

10 Things to Know for Today The Associated Press

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

1. IRAQI MILITARY MAKING PROGRESS IN FIGHT FOR RAMADI

The head of military operations in Anbar says that troops have retaken a strategic government complex but parts of the city remain under control of the Islamic State group.

2. WHO STRIKES BREAKTHROUGH DEAL

South Korea and Japan agree to resolve a decades-long impasse over Korean women forced into Japanese military-run brothels during World War II.

3. CHICAGO POLICE SHOOTING OF GRANDMOTHER, TEEN DRAWS CRITICISM

It raises further questions about law enforcement practices which are already under intense scrutiny.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 17 of 28

4. SEVERE WEATHER LEAVES DOZENS DEAD IN THE U.S.

At least 11 people died in the tornadoes that swept through the Dallas area, bringing the nationwide death toll from storms and floods to at least 43 in less than a week.

5. WHERE PENALTIES FOR POT ARE EASED

At least one-third of the Power Five conference schools are not punishing athletes as harshly as they were 10 years ago for testing positive for marijuana and other so-called recreational drugs, The AP learns.

6. WHY JAPAN KEEPS DOORS CLOSED TO REFUGEES

Its hands-off response to the global refugee crisis reflects deep unease over allowing in outsiders, in keeping with the insular customs of this island nation.

7. PRESIDENT ENCOURAGES STAFF TO 'STAY ON OFFENSE'

It is a rallying cry for a White House that suddenly seems to find its footing in the final quarter of Obama's tenure.

8. NYC MAY FIT MORE 'MICRO' APARTMENTS INTO HOUSING PICTURE

Critics fear a turn back toward the city's tenement past and question whether less space will really mean less expensive.

9. KIDS' ASTHMA RATES QUIET DOWN AFTER EARLIER INCREASE

A possible plateau in childhood obesity levels and declines in air pollution are among factors that may have helped lower cases, a 2001-13 study suggests.

10. 'STAR WARS' MAKERS HAVE HIGH HOPES FOR CHINA SUCCESS

'The Force Awakens' breaks the \$1 billion mark in just 12 days in the U.S., but producers anticipate it will play "very very well" in the world's second-biggest film market.

Chicago police shooting of grandmother, teen draws criticism

MICHAEL TARM, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Bettie Jones, known in her Chicago neighborhood for her work with anti-violence community groups, was killed by police responding to a domestic disturbance just hours after she hosted family on Christmas Day.

The fatal shooting of Jones, 55, and 19-year-old Quintonio LeGrier, a college student visiting his father for the holiday, at a West Side apartment has raised further questions about a police department already under intense scrutiny. Grieving relatives and friends of the two victims gathered Sunday to remember them and criticize city officials who they said had once again failed residents.

The shooting happened early Saturday morning at the small two-story apartment, where Jones lived in a ground-floor apartment and LeGrier's father in an upstairs unit. Police, who were responding to a 911 call made by LeGrier's father after an argument with his son, have released few details beyond a brief statement.

It said that officers "were confronted by a combative subject resulting in the discharging of the officer's weapon" and added that Jones "was accidentally struck."

Both Jones and LeGrier were black, and their deaths come amid scrutiny of police after a series of deaths of African-Americans at the hands of officers across the country gave rise to the Black Lives Matter movement. It also comes amid a federal civil rights investigation into the Chicago Police Department that was launched after last month's release of police dashcam video showing white officer Jason Van Dyke shooting black 17-year-old Laquan McDonald 16 times in 2014.

Police did not disclose the race of the officer or officers, saying only that those involved will be placed on administrative duties.

LeGrier's mother, Janet Cooksey, during a vigil Sunday placed candles on the porch of the home. On either side of the door, Post-It notes indicated where two bullets hit siding on the house.

"I used to watch the news daily and I would grieve for other mothers, other family members, and now today I'm grieving myself," Cooksey said at a news conference outside the residence earlier Sunday.

Others who spoke said police should have used stun guns or other nonlethal methods if they felt they needed to subdue LeGrier.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 18 of 28

"Why do (police) have to shoot first and ask questions later?" Jacqueline Walker, a friend of Jones, asked. "It's ridiculous."

Family spokesman Eric Russell said Jones' many grandchildren had hoped to thank her for their Christmas gifts over the weekend.

Autopsy findings released Sunday by the Cook County medical examiner's office say Jones died from a gunshot to the chest and LeGrier from multiple gunshot wounds.

Police spokesman Anthony Guglielmi on Sunday said only that the shootings are being investigated by the city's Independent Police Review Authority, the main police oversight agency.

LeGrier's cousin, Albert Person, said LeGrier's father had invited his son to a holiday gathering at another home on Christmas. Person said the son's refusal to go caused friction, but he downplayed the severity of the argument.

"What family doesn't fight on the holidays?" he said.

LeGrier's father, Antonio LeGrier, told the Chicago Sun-Times his son appeared to be a "little agitated" when the father returned to the apartment. Around 4:15 a.m., the elder LeGrier said he heard loud banging on his locked bedroom door and that his son said, "You're not going to scare me." He said his son tried to bust the door open, but he kept him from doing so and called police. He added that he called Jones on the floor below to say his son was a "little irate" and not to open the door unless police arrived.

He said Jones told him his son was outside with a baseball bat. Person said the teen was back in the house by the time police arrived.

When they did arrive, Antonio LeGrier said he heard Jones yell, "Whoa, whoa, whoa!" He said he heard gunshots as he made his way down from the second floor and then saw his son and Jones lying in the foyer.

He said his son had emotional problems after spending most of his childhood in foster care. He described him as a "whiz kid" on break from Northern Illinois University, where he majored in electrical engineering technology.

Cooksey denied that her son ever exhibited "combative behavior." She said he "might've been angry with his father and they might've got into it," but that he was not angry or violent.

It's not clear whether Jones tried to intervene before being shot or if she was hit by gunfire while answering the door.

Sam Adam Jr., a lawyer for the Jones family, said Jones and LeGrier were apparently shot near the doorway of the home, but that shell casings were found some 20 feet away. He said that raised questions about whether police could have perceived LeGrier as a threat at such a distance.

It couldn't be independently verified that the casings had any link to Saturday's shooting.

Adam also said police took the hard drive of a home-security camera from across the street, but it was unknown if it or other cameras in the neighborhood captured the shootings.

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel's office said in a statement Saturday that IPRA would share its evidence with the county prosecutor's office.

"Anytime an officer uses force the public deserves answers, and regardless of the circumstances, we all grieve anytime there is a loss of life in our city," Emanuel said in the statement.

Man accused of killing partner, son may blame cough syrup

SEATTLE (AP) — Attorneys for a doctor charged with aggravated murder may argue that their client was suffering from cough-syrup induced psychosis, which led him to kill his partner and toddler son in 2011.

The Seattle Times reports (<http://is.gd/2LrHYA>) that 43-year-old Dr. Louis Chen is accused of fatally stabbing 29-year-old Eric Cooper and 2-year-old Cooper Chen, whose bodies were found inside the couple's Seattle apartment.

Chen's defense team had previously indicated it would pursue an insanity or diminished capacity defense. But a motion filed in October suggests Chen had a buildup of dextromethorphan, a cough suppressant found in many over-the-counter cold medicines, in his system. The motion argues that the drug metabolized slowly in Chen, who is Taiwanese, due to his genetic makeup.

Chen goes to trial in April.

Police: Gaza man dies of wounds from Israeli fire

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Authorities in Gaza say that a Palestinian man has died from his wounds after being injured by Israeli fire last week.

Police say the man had a farm near where the clashes occurred on Friday but was not involved in the violence. Police said he was shot in the chest.

Gaza's Health Ministry identified the victim as 48-year-old Yousif Abu Sbaikhah.

A three month-long wave of violence has gripped the region, with Palestinian attacks and clashes showing no signs of relenting.

Monday's death brings the Palestinian death toll during the outburst of violence to 129. Israel says 88 of those were carrying out attacks.

On the Israeli side, 20 people have been killed.

In final year, Obama encourages staff to 'stay on offense'

JULIE PACE, AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — In June, during one of the best stretches of his presidency, Barack Obama strode through a West Wing hallway exclaiming: "Offense! Stay on offense!"

It was a rallying cry for a White House that suddenly seemed to find its footing in the final quarter of Obama's tenure. An Asia-Pacific trade agreement was moving forward, as were the diplomatic opening with Cuba and work on an historic nuclear accord with Iran. The Supreme Court upheld a key tenet of the president's long-embattled health care law and legalized gay marriage nationwide. Even in the depths of tragedy following a church shooting in Charleston, South Carolina, the president struck an emotional chord with his stirring eulogy for the victims.

"I said at the beginning of this year that interesting stuff happens in the fourth quarter — and we are only halfway through," Obama said during his annual year-end news conference.

But the seventh year of Obama's presidency also challenged anew his cautious and restrained approach to international crises, particularly in the Middle East. Attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, California, heightened fears of terror on American soil and Obama's attempts to reassure Americans fell flat. And a seemingly endless string of mass shootings elsewhere in the country exposed the sharp limits of Obama's power to implement the gun control measures he speaks of with passion.

Obama now stares down 11 months before his successor is chosen in an election shaping up to be a referendum on his leadership at home and abroad. He stirs deep anger among many Republicans, a constant reminder of his failure to make good on campaign promises to heal Washington's divisiveness. But he remains popular among Democrats and foresees a role campaigning for his party's nominee in the general election.

The president is packing his final year with foreign travel and has about a half-dozen trips abroad planned, including a likely visit to Cuba. The White House's legislative agenda is slim and centers mostly on areas where he already has overlapping priorities with Republicans, including final passage of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact and criminal justice reform. But he's also eyeing provocative executive actions, including an expansion of background checks for gun purchases and the closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention center.

"We recognize there's limited time left," said Jennifer Psaki, Obama's communications director.

At times, Obama's second term has appeared to play out in reverse.

He struggled to capitalize on his decisive re-election victory in 2012, stumbling through a two-year stretch that exposed the limits of his power and made him a political liability for his party. Then in an unexpected twist, his party's devastating defeats in the 2014 midterm election spurred one of the most productive years of his presidency, positioning Obama to be a valuable political ally for Democratic presidential front-runner Hillary Clinton.

"Barack Obama will loom over the election," said Dan Pfeiffer, a longtime Obama adviser who left the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 20 of 28

White House earlier this year.

Advisers say the Supreme Court's ruling in May, which upheld the subsidies at the heart of Obama's health care law, came as a particular relief to the president. The decision ensures the law survives his presidency, even as Republican candidates campaign on pledges to repeal it.

Obama sees the Iran nuclear accord, Pacific Rim trade pact and sweeping climate change agreement finalized in Paris earlier this month as examples of how America should wield its power on the world stage. The agreements have driven the debate in the presidential campaign for long stretches—a point of pride for a White House eager to show that the president remains the country's most relevant politician even as he eyes the exits.

Yet Obama hasn't been able to escape the Middle East. No matter how many times he tries to pivot to Asia or rebrand U.S. foreign policy as more about diplomacy than military might, the volatile region continues to be the dominant force in the way his foreign policy is viewed.

Nearly every candidate running for president — including Clinton, his former secretary of state — is calling for more aggressive action to fight the Islamic State group. Obama has inched the military deeper into the conflict, including backtracking on his refusal to put U.S. troops on the ground in Syria, but has largely stuck with his initial strategy of combating the extremist group from the air.

The terror attacks in Paris and California, however, have taken a worrying but distant fight against the Islamic State militants and made it top-of-mind for many Americans. White House advisers say Obama is well aware that he misjudged the public's level of anxiety about terrorism and must scramble to counter what he sees as overheated rhetoric from Republican presidential candidates that filled the void he created by his tepid initial response.

Aides say outlining an alternative to Republicans on foreign policy and other matters will be a central part of his final State of the Union address to Congress on Jan. 12. The address was purposely scheduled earlier than usual to give the president space to make his case before primary voting begins. He departed for his annual Hawaii vacation with a draft of the speech in hand.

Julian Zelizer, a political historian at Princeton University, said a well-crafted speech can only go so far in helping Obama reassure the public of his national security stewardship.

"The only way he regains ground is concrete victories where people can literally see progress made," Zelizer said. "This is an area where he has to have policy gains"

As he closed out 2015, Obama promised he wouldn't fade into the background in his final year in office. But he's also realistic about the limited legislative opportunities for a Democratic president and Republican-led Congress in a presidential election year.

His relatively modest congressional agenda includes final passage of the TPP trade pact, criminal justice reforms, dealing with Puerto Rico's debt crisis and funding programs to address the spike in opioid use.

At least some Republicans say they're willing to work with the president in his final year.

"I think if you look at what we've been able to work with him on this year, it's a good, telling piece of the kinds of things we can do next year," said Sen. Cory Gardner, R-Colo. "We worked very well on education reform, the highway bill, on human trafficking legislation — so there were some significant bipartisan accomplishments that we have been able to achieve this year."

Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., echoed that sentiment, saying "There are a lot of opportunities" to work with the president in his final year in office.

Of course, Obama's legacy will be determined far more by the outcome of the presidential campaign than his 2016 legislative agenda. Since many of his most prominent moves have been the result of executive actions, a Republican president could largely wipe them away, while a Democrat is more likely to keep them in place and perhaps even expand on them.

White House aides say the president is eager to campaign for the party's nominee, as well as Democrats in other races. He chafed at being kept on the sidelines in the 2014 midterms, and advisers used Democrats' sweeping losses in that campaign as an I-told-you-so moment for party officials.

This time, Obama isn't waiting for an invitation from the Democratic nominee to make his campaign plans.

"I will have a Democratic successor, and I will campaign very hard to make that happen," he said.

Cow dung patties selling like hot cakes online in India

NIRMALA GEORGE, Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Like consumers around the globe, Indians are flocking to the online marketplace in droves these days. But there's one unusual item flying off the virtual shelves: Online retailers say cow dung patties are selling like hot cakes.

The patties — cow poop mixed with hay and dried in the sun, made mainly by women in rural areas and used to fuel fires — have long been available in India's villages. But online retailers including Amazon and eBay are now reaching out to the country's ever-increasing urban population, feeding into the desire of older city folks to harken back to their childhood in the village.

Some retailers say they're offering discounts for large orders. Some customers are asking for gift wrapping.

"Cow dung cakes have been listed by multiple sellers on our platform since October and we have received several customer orders" since then, said Madhavi Kochar, an Amazon India spokeswoman.

The orders come mostly from cities where it would be difficult to buy dung cakes, she said.

In India, where Hindus have long worshipped cows as sacred, cow dung cakes have been used for centuries for fires, whether for heating, cooking or Hindu rituals. Across rural India, piles of drying cow dung are ubiquitous.

Radhika Agarwal of ShopClues, a major online retailer in India, said demand for the cow dung cakes spiked during the recent Diwali festival season, a time when Hindus conduct prayer ceremonies at their homes, factories and offices. On a recent day, ShopClues' website showed that the patties had sold out.

"Around Diwali, when people do a lot of pujas in their homes and workplaces, there is a lot of demand for cow dung cakes," said Agarwal, referring to rituals performed during the popular festival.

"Increasingly, in the cold weather, people are keeping themselves warm by lighting fires" at outdoor events, she said, adding that people who grew up in rural areas find the peaty smell of dung fires pleasant.

"It reminds them of the old days," she said.

Online retailers said people were also buying the dung cakes to light fires for ritual ceremonies to mark the beginning of the new year and for the winter festival known as Lohri, celebrated in northern India.

The cakes are sold in packages that contain two to eight pieces weighing 200 grams (7 ounces) each. Prices range from 100 to 400 rupees (\$1.50 to \$6) per package.

Dung cakes are also used as organic manure, and some sellers are marketing them for use in kitchen gardens.

Wildfire contained, authorities worry about landslides

VENTURA, Calif. (AP) — As firefighters mopped up the remains of a wildfire on the Southern California coast, authorities turned their focus to a new concern: a landslide if rain pounds the charred hills.

In a heavy rain, the denuded soil could threaten nearby railroad tracks, U.S. 101 and the Pacific Coast Highway.

"Gravity's going to take it where it wants to go," Ventura County fire Capt. Mike Lindbery said, "and where it wants to go is down on the highway, across the railroad tracks and right into whatever is in its way."

On Sunday, hundreds of firefighters up the remnants of the wind-whipped wildfire that threatened dozens of coastal homes. The fire that scorched about 1,230 acres north of Ventura was 75 percent contained, with full containment expected Tuesday, fire officials said.

The blaze erupted Friday night when high winds caused power lines on an oil field to arc. At its peak, the fire closed a 15-mile stretch of an adjacent, six-lane freeway, U.S. 101, and another major north-south route, the Pacific Coast Highway.

The winds eased Saturday, and the fire stopped growing. Evacuation orders for about 50 homes in Solimar Beach were rescinded.

On Sunday, about 300 firefighters were busy dousing hotspots in a stretch of coastal land that was thick with drought-dry brush.

"It's nuked — moonscaped," Lindbery told the Ventura County Star (<http://bit.ly/1YHfObL>) during a tour of the area.

NYC may fit more 'micro' apartments into housing picture

JENNIFER PELTZ, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The apartments in a new Manhattan building boast little balconies, tall ceilings, dishwashers and storage space. All in 360 square feet or less.

It's micro-living in the nation's biggest city, and New Yorkers could be seeing more of it. Planning officials are proposing to end a limit on how small apartments can be, opening the door for more "micro-apartments" that advocates see as affordable adaptations to a growing population of single people. Critics fear a turn back toward the city's tenement past and question whether less space will really mean less expensive.

At Carmel Place, the Manhattan building that marks the city's first experiment in decades with building super-small dwellings, the pitch is that little can be just enough.

"An efficiently designed micro-unit," says developer Tobias Oriwol, "is just a nice apartment."

Due to open early next year, Carmel Place features 55 apartments ranging from 265 to 360 square feet. By comparison, a typical one-car garage can be about 200 square feet.

As an experimental project, Carmel Place got city land and a waiver from New York's 400-square-foot minimum on new apartments, set in 1987. A proposed elimination of that minimum would allow smaller studios in buildings with a mix of apartment sizes, but entire micro-unit buildings would continue to need waivers.

"For us, it was really important to demonstrate how small space could be an enhancement to quality of life," said Christopher Bledsoe of Stage 3 Properties, which designed the interiors and amenities at Carmel Place.

Long, flat walls without columns maximize furniture-arranging options, although some units come furnished with fold-out wizardry, including a desk that expands into a 12-seater table and a retractable bed that pulls down tidily over a love seat. Developer Monadnock Construction and architecture firm nArchitects worked inch-by-inch — sometimes by eighth-inch — to meet such requirements as a wheelchair-accessible bathroom within the small space.

Forty percent of the units have rents set by affordable-housing programs topping out at around \$1,500 a month, but market-rate ones rent for \$2,650 to \$3,150, roughly on par with many studios in the nearby Murray Hill neighborhood. About 20 people have applied and hundreds requested information for eight market-rate units so far, while over 60,000 have entered a lottery for the affordable ones.

Mayor Bill de Blasio's housing plan says Carmel Place and other projects show "developers can build compact units that are livable, safe, healthy" options for small households.

Of course, tiny apartments in New York are not exactly new. Veteran appraiser Jonathan Miller estimates there are about 3,000 older apartments citywide that measure less than the 400-square-foot minimum. And some real estate agents say New York's young professionals are increasingly seeking small studios, willing to sacrifice space to be near work and away from roommates.

Cities from San Francisco to Boston have OK'd some micro-apartments in recent years, seeking to address housing squeezes in a nation where 28 percent of households are people living alone, up from 13 percent in 1960. It's higher in some cities including New York, where about a third of households are single people.

Tiny units haven't always been welcomed. A micro boom in Seattle spurred complaints from neighbors and new regulations last year. Still, some housing advocates see micro-apartments as improvements on cramped quarters some people endure in shared apartments.

"People are spending \$1,800 a month renting a room that's 10-by-10 and living with strangers that they met on Craigslist" in New York, said Sarah Watson, deputy director of the Citizens Housing Planning Council, an advocacy group.

But critics see micro-units as a step backward in the city's affordable housing crunch — still pricey, just smaller.

"It just, on some level, is offensive: The only way we can manage to house people is to stick them in a closet," says state Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, a Manhattan Democrat who knows the limits of living small herself.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 23 of 28

She and her spouse live in an apartment that Glick says measures a bit over 400 square feet. But they moved in together only after acquiring a more spacious weekend home.

"There was no way two lives could reasonably exist in the space that we have," Glick said. "We get along extremely well, but we do have a safety valve."

Manning angrily denies Al Jazeera report he obtained PEDs

ARNIE STAPLETON, AP Pro Football Writer

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — Peyton Manning said a report by Al Jazeera set to air Sunday that suggests he obtained performance-enhancing drugs was "completely fabricated, complete trash, garbage."

Manning angrily denied allegations to ESPN on Sunday morning he used HGH in 2011.

The report is based on secret recordings made by a former intern at an Indianapolis anti-aging institute who now says he fabricated the allegations.

Al Jazeera sent British hurdler Liam Collins undercover to expose performance-enhancing drug use in sports. Collins made secret recordings of Charles Sly, a former intern at the Guyer Institute, where Manning was treated in 2011 following four neck surgeries.

Sly has recanted the claim that Manning used HGH. Sly, who also named other high-profile athletes on the secret recordings, told Al Jazeera the statements attributed to him "are absolutely false and incorrect." Sly told ESPN that he fabricated the allegations to test Collins' legitimacy.

Manning denied ever using PEDs and blasted the report for suggesting he got drugs that were shipped to his wife, Ashley.

"I can't speak for any other athlete. I know what I've done, I know how hard I've worked in my 18 years of playing in the NFL. There are no shortcuts in the NFL. I've done it the long way, I've done it the hard way. And to insinuate anything otherwise is a complete and total joke, it's defamation and it really ticks me off," Manning told ESPN.

The Broncos and Colts also issued statements Sunday morning in support of Manning.

"Knowing Peyton Manning and everything he stands for, the Denver Broncos support him 100 percent," the team said. "These are false claims made to Al Jazeera, and we don't believe the report."

The Colts, whom Manning played for from 1998-2011, issued a statement calling the report "utterly ridiculous."

"We are thoroughly familiar with Peyton's tireless work habits, his medical history, and, most importantly, his integrity," the Colts said.

"We also note that the 'source' of this allegation has since recanted his story."

Manning joined the Broncos in 2012 and had a record-setting run, going 47-15 until he tore the plantar fascia in his left foot on Nov. 15. That was the same day he broke Brett Favre's NFL record for most career passing yards.

He's been sidelined ever since, and backup Brock Osweiler will make his sixth straight start Monday night when the Broncos (10-2) host the Bengals (11-3).

"Throughout his NFL career, particularly during his four seasons with the Broncos, Peyton has shown nothing but respect for the game," the Broncos said. "Our organization is confident Peyton does things the right way, and we do not find this story to be credible."

Manning said he sought holistic treatments such as hyperbaric oxygen and nutrient therapy at the Guyer Institute with the consent of the Colts training and medical staff.

Al Jazeera's report claims Manning received HGH from the Indianapolis anti-aging clinic in 2011 while he was still with the Colts. It said the drug, which was later banned by the NFL in the 2011 collective bargaining agreement, was delivered to his wife so that the quarterback's name was never attached to the shipments.

Manning told ESPN he's never taken anything that was ever sent to his wife nor has he ever used PEDs.

"Absolutely not. And what hurts me the most about this is whoever this guy is, this slapstick trying to insinuate that in 2011, when I more or less had a broken neck," he said. "... But I had a broken neck and I busted my butt to get healthy, put in a lot of hard work. I saw a lot of doctors."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 24 of 28

The report names other high-profile athletes as having obtained PEDs.

The attorney for Phillies slugger Ryan Howard said his client will fight claims made in the Al Jazeera report that his client received performance-enhancing drugs.

William Burck called the claims made against Howard and Ryan Zimmerman of the Washington Nationals "outright lies."

"It's inexcusable and irresponsible that Al Jazeera would provide a platform and broadcast outright lies about Mr. Howard and Mr. Zimmerman," Burck said in a statement.

"The extraordinary reckless claims made against our clients in this report are completely false and rely on a source who has already recanted his claims. We will go to court to hold Al Jazeera and other responsible parties accountable for smearing our clients' good names," Burck said.

Manning said he had to take time off from his throwing session inside the Broncos' field house to address this story.

"I plan to go throw today a little bit harder. My ball has a little extra heat on it today. I've got some built-up anger as you might understand," Manning said.

Manning said he's had a good week of work without the soreness that developed in his injured foot last week and hopes to return to practice next week. As for when he might play again, he said that he'll do whatever coach Gary Kubiak thinks is best.

"If they need me to play and be in there, then I'll be ready," Manning said. "But if they don't feel that's the best for the team, then I'll respect that decision and do what I can to help the team."

Former deputy waits decades to be cleared in fatal shooting

JAY REEVES, Associated Press

NEEDHAM, Ala. (AP) — A single gunshot has haunted Quinnie Donald for more than five decades.

The former Alabama sheriff's deputy shot and killed a black man in 1964 outside a house known for selling illegal booze. If the same events played out today, the death of Frank Andrews might have become a flashpoint in the national debate about police use of force and minority rights.

Instead, the white deputy spent 50-plus years second-guessing his actions and waiting to find out whether he would be prosecuted in the shooting, which forced the Andrews family to endure years of pain and left Donald with the sense that something was always hanging over his head, about to drop.

That gnawing uncertainty ended only weeks ago, when Donald learned that the FBI had closed its last investigation into Andrews' death with a determination that no charges were warranted. He now says the shooting was an accident, but FBI reports show that's not what he said at the time, and it's still not clear exactly what happened that night in Lisman, just a few miles from the Mississippi state line in rural Choctaw County.

"I'm proud that they closed it, but I don't like bringing it up," Donald said quietly during an interview at his home earlier this month. "I regret that it happened."

Andrews' family could not be located for comment on the government's decision. Several years ago, two of Andrews' relatives told The Associated Press they never really knew how he died.

FBI reports show Donald and another deputy stopped at Smith's Cafe on Nov. 28, 1964, to investigate a possible disturbance or illegal alcohol. The county was dry at the time.

In the interview, Donald said he remembers the headlights of the patrol car illuminating Andrews on the side of the road as they arrived.

"He was either taking a pint of whiskey or selling a pint of whiskey. We never found out which," Donald said.

The officers split up, and Donald said he saw Andrews put his hand in his pocket as if trying to pull a knife on the other officer. Donald, whose regular service revolver was broken, said he was carrying an unfamiliar pistol that took only a slight touch to fire.

"I pulled out the gun and didn't know it had such a light trigger," he said. "It went off when it wasn't supposed to."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 25 of 28

Andrews, 27, was shot in the lower back. Donald and his partner drove him to a hospital, but the man was dead within hours.

During the initial investigation, Donald did not explicitly claim that the shooting was an accident, according to an FBI report. Instead, he told investigators he fired because he believed Andrews was going to cut partner Bo Clark, the brother of then-Sheriff Leon Clark. A partially opened knife was found in Andrews' pocket at the hospital, the FBI report said.

A grand jury declined to indict Donald, as sometimes happened in the 1960s, when Southern whites killed blacks under questionable circumstances. Then a monthlong FBI investigation ended without charges in December 1964.

Still, Donald said, he always felt the case could be revived, particularly after a prosecutor from a neighboring county encouraged him to plead guilty to an unspecified charge.

"He said, 'If you don't, they could come back on you,'" Donald said. "I said, 'No, that's not what happened. I'm not going to do that.'"

The matter was reopened in 2008 as part of the Justice Department's investigation into "cold cases" from the civil rights era.

An agent questioned Donald in 2008, but his memory was fuzzy by then, and many witnesses had died. The sole surviving witness who was questioned said the shooting could have been a mistake, bolstering Donald's current memory. That witness also said Donald was not known for mistreating others because of their race, the FBI report stated.

Federal officials held the case open until late 2013, when they issued their findings in a report that noted inconsistencies and lingering questions about what really happened. The agency sent a letter to Andrews' family informing them of the decision, but not Donald.

The former deputy did not find out he had been cleared until this fall, after the Justice Department responded to an Associated Press request for a copy of the letter and a news story about the decision was published. Instantly, Donald experienced a wave of relief.

He left law enforcement nine months after the shooting and later spent 26 years in the trucking business, retiring in 1999. He's been married to his wife, Melba, for about 58 years, and they have two grown children who live across the street. He has served for about 20 years as mayor of Needham, population 99.

An FBI summary, released to a project at Louisiana State University that reviews unsolved killings, indicated that Donald struggled with his emotions after the shooting and needed time to recover from the psychological trauma. Donald puts it in religious terms.

"I think the devil just lets it pop up in your mind, 'You should have done this. You should have done that,'" he said.

Today, he sees news of police shootings and wonders what the officers are experiencing, how they will cope.

He knows one thing: He will never again pull the trigger of a handgun.

"When I left the sheriff's office, I gave my gun away," he said. "To this day, I don't have a pistol. I don't want one."

Triple crown, flubbed punt highlight best games of 2015

EDDIE PELLIS, AP National Writer

The games people play. There are around 300 in pro football, 2,500 in baseball, 1,500 in basketball and thousands in soccer every year — and that's just at the very highest levels. Most blend into each other. Only a few stand out.

Those that leave a lasting impression do so because of, say, a flubbed snap on a punt, or a play call that decides a title, or a near-perfect, once-in-a-generation race to the finish line.

Those games and races kept us at the edge of our seats in 2015 — then eventually brought us completely out of our chairs and made us shake our heads upon realizing, once again, that just when we think we've seen it all, we're reminded that we really haven't.

A look at some of the best games and events of 2015:

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 26 of 28

TRIPLE CROWN: It had been 37 years since Affirmed crossed the finish line first at the Belmont Stakes to win the last Triple Crown. And over those 37 years, horse racing and its fans had seen 13 horses win the first two legs, only to falter — or, in one case, not even line up at the Belmont. American Pharoah finally broke through. He started slow and carried a two-length lead through most of the race. But then, he showed the heart and speed of a champion, pulling away over the last five furlongs to cross the finish line in 2 minutes, 26.65 seconds — ending nearly four decades of close calls.

On the web: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyDcXtVb8_U

THE FLUB: All Michigan punter Blake O'Neill had to do was field the snap and get off the kick, just as he'd done hundreds of times previously in practices and games. Instead, O'Neill fumbled the snap and Michigan State's Jalen Watts-Jackson pulled it in, cradled it to his body and ran 38 yards for a touchdown. The Spartans won 27-23, and because of that win, they are still in the hunt for the national title. Some of the most memorable reactions came from the heartbroken, close-to-tears Michigan fans, a few of which were captured forever on YouTube. "That's why football is loved so much in America," Michigan State coach Mark Dantonio said. "It's because things like this happen. Every now and then, they happen."

On the web: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RB1gN85wB6U>

FOR OPENERS: The first inning of Game 1 included the first inside-the-park home run in a World Series in 86 years. Later, there was a power outage that stopped play and knocked the telecast off the air. The game lasted 14 innings and, at 5 hours, 9 minutes, was the longest World Series Game 1 played. Kansas City hit a game-tying home run in the bottom of the ninth and went on to beat the Mets 5-4. And if that wasn't drama enough, there was the underlying story of starting pitcher Edinson Volquez, who pitched even though his father had died only hours before the game.

On the web: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJQkyvvMWQo>

RUGBY UPSET: It was supposed to be a tuneup for perennial title contender South Africa. It ended up being "a rugby miracle" at the World Cup, as the TV announcers called it, pulled off by none other than 1,000-1 longshot Japan. The "Cherry Blossoms" only other victory on the world's biggest stage had come back in 1991. This time, they played South Africa toe-to-toe for more than 80 minutes, and into extra time. Trailing by three, Japan decided against kicking for a tie, and instead got the ball to replacement back Karne Hesketh, who squeezed into rugby's version of the end zone for the winning points in a 34-32 victory.

On the web: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXhrwadiFQ4>

SUPER CALL: Seattle had the ball at the New England 1-yard line with two, maybe three, chances to let one of the best running backs in the game, Marshawn Lynch, bull in for what would have been the winning touchdown. Instead, Seahawks coach Pete Carroll called for a pass. Patriots defensive back Malcolm Butler, a one-time do-everything employee at a fast-food chicken restaurant, had been focusing on that exact play call during the week in practice. He recognized it, stepped in front of the receiver and intercepted the pass to save the game for the Patriots. Carroll then spent hours, days and weeks defending his play call, while Butler no longer had to worry about returning to the chicken joint.

On the web: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7rPIg7ZNQ8>

THE 3-WOOD AND THE THREE-PUTT: So many majors are remembered as much for who lost at the end, as who won. The 2015 U.S. Open will be remembered for both. There was Dustin Johnson's hard-to-watch three-putt from 12 feet that cost him the title — a title that went to Jordan Spieth, hardly a fluke winner in anybody's book. It was the second major of the year for Spieth and he set it up with a 284-yard 3-wood from the near-barren 18th fairway at Chambers Bay that led to a birdie. Four days of listening to players grumble about conditions on the course, then watching most of them play down to their expectations, ended with 30 minutes of pure drama — and with Spieth cradling the trophy.

On the web: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvPO7yLtYc>

FLURRY OF GOALS: In a rematch of the previous World Cup final, the U.S. team played Japan, which had beaten the Americans on penalty kicks four years earlier. Thanks to Carli Lloyd, this game was anything but a repeat. Lloyd scored in the third minute, then again two minutes later. The United States scored four goals in the first 16 minutes, capped by Lloyd's shot from midfield, and went on for a 5-2 victory. For a while after the match, Lloyd's Wikipedia page listed her as "President of the United States."

On the web: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrsxXa2DINw>

UK military helps combat flooding as it spreads to cities

GREGORY KATZ, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister David Cameron sent hundreds more troops into northern England on Sunday to help exhausted residents and emergency workers fight back rising river waters that have inundated towns and cities after weeks of heavy rain.

Cameron said the flooding is "unprecedented" and vowed to do everything possible to protect people and their property as the damage spread to the major cities York, Leeds and Manchester. He said protective systems and contingency plans will be reviewed because the frequency of such extreme weather events seems to be on the rise.

Weeks of persistent rainfall has saturated the ground and swollen the rivers to record levels, leaving entire swathes of northern England, and smaller parts of Wales and Scotland, vulnerable. Several hundred flood warnings remain in effect.

There have been no fatalities or serious injuries reported, but hundreds of people have been evacuated from houses and apartments in York, 200 miles (320 kilometers) north of London, where 3,500 properties are judged to be at risk. Emergency crews worked extra shifts to try to restore power to roughly 7,500 blacked out homes in the greater Manchester and Lancashire areas.

Environment Secretary Liz Truss said flood protection systems put in place in recent years were unable to cope with the record-high river levels.

"In Lancashire every single river was at a record-high," she said. "In Yorkshire we have seen some rivers a meter (yard) higher than they have ever been before. Clearly, in the light of that, we will be reviewing our flood defenses."

Several hundred people had been evacuated the day before in the West Yorkshire and Lancashire regions and officials said thousands had lost power. The number of people affected continues to grow as flooding spreads and impacts cities as well as villages and towns.

A picturesque 200-year-old pub, The Waterside, in the greater Manchester area, collapsed and part of the structure was swept away by the River Irwell. Rising river levels also threatened downtown Manchester and police dealt with a ruptured gas main and small fire believed to have been caused by the flooding.

The Environment Agency urged residents to remain vigilant because more "severe" flooding is expected overnight and Monday.

The agency used its Twitter feed to beg people to be cautious, tweeting that driving or walking in flowing flood waters could be life-threatening.

Rescue crews have been using boats to help remove people from their homes and in some cases from their nearly submerged vehicles.

Pakistani army chief visits Kabul to discuss peace talks

LYNNE O'DONNELL, Associated Press

MUNIR AHMED, Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Afghanistan and Pakistan agreed on Sunday to meet with U.S. and Chinese officials in the first weeks of the new year to discuss "peace-related issues," a move that could re-invigorate a stalled peace process with the Taliban, the Afghan president's office said.

The development came as Pakistan's powerful army chief Gen. Raheel Sharif met with senior officials in

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Dec. 28, 2015 ♦ Vol. 20 - No. 157 ♦ 28 of 28

the Afghan capital, including President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah.

The visit focused on the possible revival of peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban, which stalled this summer. The Taliban have been waging a vicissitudinous insurgency since the 2001 U.S.-led invasion overthrew their regime.

According to Pakistan's military spokesman Lt. Gen. Asim Saleem Bajwa, the army chief had travelled to Kabul with "sincerity and optimism" about the peace process and also planned to discuss better border management between the two neighbors.

Bilateral ties had suffered in recent months, and Ghani has lately blamed Pakistan for much of the violence in Afghanistan, saying Islamabad supports and harbors the Taliban in Pakistani cities close to the Afghan border — a charge Pakistan denies.

Then, two weeks ago, a regional conference in Islamabad called for the resumption of the Afghan-Taliban peace negotiations. Ghani attended the meeting, as well as U.S. and Chinese representatives. Washington and Beijing have a keen interest in moving the peace dialogue forward.

The Taliban-Kabul talks have been on hold since July, when Afghanistan announced the death of Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar and the Taliban called off its participation. A subsequent power struggle and clashes between rival Taliban factions have raised questions as to who will represent the insurgents if the talks with Kabul are revived.

But analysts have cautioned that despite the rapprochement, any substantive talks are still months off.

The statement from Ghani's office after Sharif's departure, however, struck an optimistic note, saying "both sides discussed the mutual interest issues" and agreed that Afghanistan, Pakistan, the U.S. and China would "hold their first meeting on peace-related issues in January 2016, under the leadership of Afghanistan."

In a statement late Sunday, the Pakistani military said both sides agreed to pursue peace and reconciliation with Taliban groups willing to join the process. "Elements that still continue to pursue violence will be dealt with under a mutually worked-out framework," it said.

Sunday's talks in Kabul considered "effective ways to stop or avoid the activities of terrorist groups who are using the soil of two countries for their activities," Ghani's palace statement also said. It added that the two sides emphasized the need for more security meeting between Afghanistan and Pakistan to foster a better exchange of information.