

Groton Daily Independent

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Death Notice: Helen Walter

Helen Walter died while in Texas. She has suffered from a stroke. Her service will be at Sunshine Lakes Hall, 1900 Grace Ave. #401, Harlingen, TX 78550. This Monday if any one would want to send flowers or a card. Jack does plan a memorial for Helen in Groton sometime this spring.

Sunday, January 10

Birthdays: Dave Hunter, Edwin Tietz, Maycee Albrecht, Michelle Fliehs, Neil Gilbert

Monday, January 11

School Breakfast: French toast, link, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, tater tots, romaine salad, fruit.

Senior Menu: Meatballs, mashed potatoes and gravy, carrots, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: Kayla Jensen, LaVonne Raap, Randy Padfield

6:30am: Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study

5:15pm: BBB host Tiospa Zina (C game at 5:15, JV at 6:30, Varsity at 8:00)

7:00pm: School Board Meeting

Tuesday, January 12

School Breakfast: Breakfast bagel, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Garlic cheese bread, corn, carrots and dip, fruit.

Senior Menu: Chili, cornbread, coleslaw, lime pear Jell-O.

Birthdays: Allyssa Locke, Derrick Halsey, Renee Swisher

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

6:30pm: GBB host Waubay-Summit

Wednesday, January 13

School Breakfast: Pancake on stick, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Soft shell tacos, bread sticks, tri taters, fruit.

Senior Menu: Baked chicken, baked potato with sour cream, green beans, chocolate cake, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: Adam Franken, Ben Schaller, Chuck Johnson, Elizabeth Abernathy, Ellen Leonhardt,

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

The cardboard/paper

recycling trailer at the school is **Closed**

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KC BBQ Bacon Cheeseburger
\$5 BUCK LUNCH
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Tea Area hands Lady Tigers first loss

Tea Area handed the Lady Tigers their first loss of the season as the two teams clashed at the Redfield-Doland Holiday Classic Saturday. Tea Area's zone defense shut out the Tiger's inside game and three-pointers were not falling for the Tigers. Tea Area won, 47-41, with the help of seven three-pointers.

Groton Area led at the end of the first quarter, 16-10, and held a 24-18 lead at half time. Karlee McKinney started hitting three-pointers in the third quarter and the Titans took a 29-27 lead. Tea Area led at the end of the third quarter, 34-29.

Groton came back to tie the game at 38 and took a 39-38 lead, but then Tea Area scored nine straight points to take a 47-39 lead and went on to win, 47-41.

Audrey Wanner led the Tigers with 21 points followed by Carly Wheeting with 10, Katie Koehler had eight and Jessica Bjerke added two points. Wheeting made one three-pointer for the Tigers.



Audrey Wanner goes to the basket in front of the Tea Area defense. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Jessica Bjerke and Tea Area's Amanda Carlson battle for the ball. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Lance Frohling
Groton Location Manager
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frohlingl@fullcircleag.com



1106 N 2nd St.
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**Physical Therapy
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Karlee McKinney led Tea Area with 24 points followed by Ally Kacmarynski with seven, Sidney Clayberg six, Brittany Swenson four and adding two points each were Bailey Conrad, Rachel Sherman and Avery Schupner. McKinney made five three-pointers and Clayberg made two.

Groton Area made eight of 15 free throws for 53 percent, was one of 14 in three-pointers and 16 of 53 in total field goals for 30 percent. Groton Area had nine offensive rebounds with Bjerke having three, and 27 defensive rebounds with Wanner having 10 and Wheeting seven. Stange had two of the team's three assists and Wanner had three of the team's nine steals. Wheeting had one block and the Tigers had 10 turnovers and 18 team fouls.

Tea Area had 36 rebounds, 11 turnovers and 10 assists.

Groton Area, now 7-1, will host Waubay-Summit on Tuesday.



Carly Wheeting tries to dribble around Tea Area's Ally Kacmarynski. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Good Luck
Groton Area Tigers!



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The Life of Robert Wehde



Memorial services for Robert "Bob" Wehde, 85, of Aberdeen, will be 10:30 a.m., Friday, January 15 at the United Methodist Church, Groton. Pastor Thomas Carlson will officiate. Inurnment with military honors will follow in Union Cemetery, Groton. Visitation will be held at the church at 9:00 a.m. on Friday.

Bob died December 21, 2015 at Banner Heart Hospital in Mesa, Arizona.

Robert Darrel Wehde was born on September 14, 1930 in Groton to Andrew and Lillian (Sippel) Wehde. He attended country school and later graduated from Groton High School. Bob was united in marriage with Marian Schinkel on March 20, 1951. To this union a son, Ronald, was born on January 23, 1956. Bob enlisted in the US Army and served from 1953-1955. Following his honorable discharge, Bob returned home to South Dakota, where he farmed north of Groton. On December 14, 1991 he was united in marriage with Mary Ann (Fjelstad) Ellingson at the United Methodist Church in Aberdeen.

Bob was a lifetime member of the United Methodist Church in Groton. He was a 60 year member of Groton Legion Post #39 and also belonged to the Groton Kiwanis Club. He was an avid golfer, and was instrumental in building Olive Grove Golf course. Bob's community mindedness also helped bring new bleachers to the ball field. He enjoyed having coffee with his friends in Groton and Aberdeen and looked forward to spending winters in Arizona where he loved playing volleyball with his many friends there.

Celebrating his life is his wife, Mary Ann of Aberdeen; his step-children: Terry (Susan) Ellingson of Aberdeen, Vicki (Doug) Bierschbach of Brookings, Craig (Marilee) Ellingson of Glendale, AZ; his sister, Donna Cassels of Faulkton and her children – Debbie (Dennis) Bollinger of Savage, MN, Diane (DeWayne) Huska of Faulkton, Cheri Bakewell of Aberdeen, Don (Patsy) Cassels of Clear Lake along with all of their children and grandchildren. Bob is also survived by Marian's numerous nieces and nephews as well as (10) step-grandchildren and (12) step-great-grandchildren.

Preceding him in death were his parents, his first wife, Marian in 1991 and their son, Ronald in 2003.

"There's A Song In The Air"

**To make you aware that
the Coopers are having an**

Open House

Sunday, Jan. 17, 2016

1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

208 N. 2nd St., Groton



Kappes named B.D.M. General Manager

The Board of Directors of B.D.M. Rural Water System, Inc. announces that they have filled their vacant General Manager position. Rodney D. Kappes of Groton, SD has accepted the position and began his duties on January 4, 2016. Mr. Kappes comes to BDM with substantial prior experience most recently as market president for Wells Fargo Bank - Aberdeen, Groton, and Redfield. The Board is excited about Mr. Kappes accepting this position and believes that he will bring to the position significant financial and management abilities to complement the existing staff and employees of BDM. BDM delivers quality drinking water to a four-county area (Brown, Day, Marshall and Roberts County), and serves 1,775 customers and 16 bulk water users.

Anderson takes second at Miller Tourney

Brandyn Anderson placed second at the Miller Wrestling Tournament held Saturday.

Coach Dana Dargatz said, "This past weekend the wrestlers competed in a very stout Miller tournament where every weight class was full of ranked wrestlers from across the state.

"We showed a lot of growth at this tournament compared to our last one in December. The kids fought hard and did some great things this weekend, before the day started I told them what I wanted to see out of them and they did just that."

Brandyn Anderson had a great day beating the 5th ranked kid in the state before dropping in the finals to the 3rd ranked wrestler to end the day with a 2nd place finish.

Thomas Cranford, at 126 pounds, was pinned by Landon Sivertsen of Miller/Highmore-Harrold, in 3:00; and he was pinned by Paul Winker of Howard, 3:41.

Wyatt Locke, 170 pounds, was decisioned by Austin Wiley, Sully Buttes, 5-4; and he was pinned by EJ Leetch, Howard, 2:01.

Brandyn Anderson, 285, decisioned Riley Schimetz, Wessington Springs, 5-4; and he was pinned by Truman Ashes of Wagner in the championship match.

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While You Were Sleeping . . .

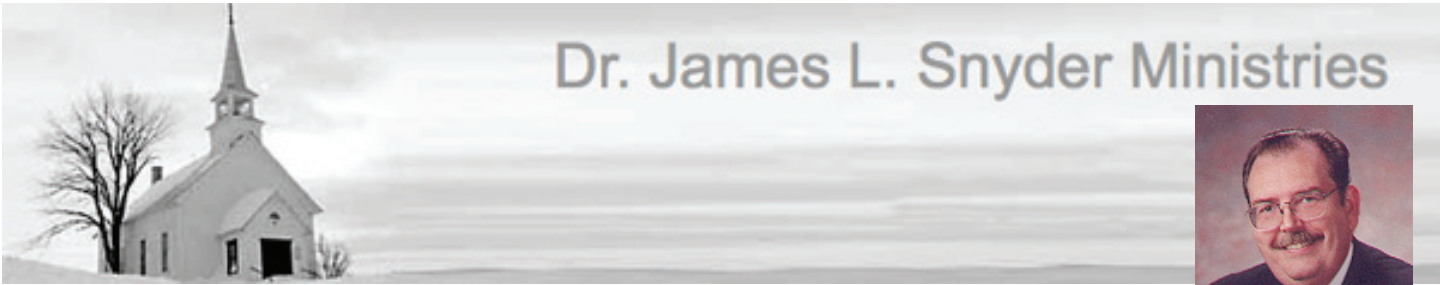


. . . the Northern lights were out this morning



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The New Year Calls for a New Mirror



The New Year festivities have died down quite a bit and everything seems calm in our blissful domicile. The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage is back to her routine of organizing and straightening everything up. Her motto is: "A place for everything and everything in its place."

She is quite faithful in her New Year's resolutions. For years, she has tried to get me involved in New Year's resolutions and I only halfheartedly get involved. It does not seem to work for me though.

I did get a glimpse of her New Year's resolution and one was to straighten me up. Ha! Good luck with that one, sister. If she has not got me straightened up by now I am not sure it is on the books.

Everything seemed to be going fine until this morning when I got up, went into the bathroom and looked into the mirror. What I saw was most frightening. I was on the verge of calling 911 when I happened to realize who was in that mirror.

I cannot tell you how disturbed I was to discover that I was looking at me and me was looking back. Oh, what a sorrowful sight it was.

For the last several months, everybody has been telling me the New Year is upon us and everything is going to be much better than last year. The old is gone, the new is here.

Being the skeptic that I am, I did not buy into it lock, stock and barrel but I did come very close to accepting the "New" associated with the New Year. After all, it does make sense. There should be a time and place where you can start all over and take on a new appreciation of life. I almost bought into it. Almost, but not quite.

Then, this morning I went into the bathroom as usual and looked into the mirror.

What I saw in that mirror was the old face from last year. In fact, do not let this get out, but it did look a twinge older than last year. Just a twinge, mind you. That is when it really hit me. It is not fair. According to what I have been told, the new always casts out the old. The old is behind me and all I had to look forward to is the new.

But the mirror? The mirror told me an altogether different story.

So I began to think about this. The reason my old face is in my mirror may be because my mirror is an old mirror from last year. As I begin ruminating through this very complex situation, I think I came up with a solution.

That's one thing about me. I like to find solutions. I do not always find them, but when I do find a solution, I celebrate. I was on the brink of celebrating when this thought stomped through my mind.

Because it is a New Year, I need to have a new face. I cannot afford a facelift because I have too many chins. I would not know what chin to eliminate. Never been to a plastic surgeon before, so I do not know if they charge per chin or what.

I disregarded the facelift idea and thought about wearing a mask all year. The Lone Ranger got away with it, maybe I could as well.

The more I thought about that, the less enticing it was. It would drive me crazy to have someone next to me always saying "Kemosabe" all day. I don't even know what that means.

Getting back to my solution. I think the New Year calls for a new mirror. I need a new mirror in my bathroom so I can see what my New Year's face looks like.

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"A what?" laughed my wife when I ask her where I could purchase such a mirror. I figured if anybody knew where to get such a mirror, it would be her. I just was not prepared for all the hilarity coming from her direction.

"Does this have anything to do with some kind of a New Year's resolution on your part?" She asked. She barely got that out before she broke down into more laughter.

Personally, I did not see what was so funny about all of this.

"If you don't like what you see in your mirror," she said, trying to keep from laughing, "a new mirror will not make any difference at all."

That is what I get for asking her a silly question.

My thought is simply this, it doesn't hurt to try.

Her thought is simply this, it's just too funny.

I have been backed into a corner now. I cannot get a new mirror because my wife will know what I am doing and laugh herself into hysterics. I thought about breaking the mirror, but she would figure out what I was doing and it would only make her laugh all the more.

I was reminded of what the Bible says, "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was" (James 1:23-24).

It is not outward appearances that are that important, but rather that I do those things that are pleasing unto the Lord.

Rev. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, PO Box 831313, Ocala, FL 34483. He lives with his wife, Martha, in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 1-866-552-2543 or e-mail jamesnyder2@att.net or website www.jamesnyderministries.com.

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Today in Weather History

January 10, 1911: The temperature at Rapid City, South Dakota plunged 47 degrees in just fifteen minutes.

January 10, 1975: An intense area of low pressure moved from eastern Iowa through eastern Minnesota. The storm center set many low pressure records as it moved across eastern Minnesota. New snow of 3 to 6 inches across much of Minnesota began to blow and drift on the morning of the 10th and then developed into a full blown blizzard with heavy snowfall developing. The blizzard continued over all of the state through the 11th with winds of 30 to 50 mph with gusts of 60 to 80 mph. Drifts up to 20 foot high developed in west central Minnesota paralyzing activity. Snowfall amounts from 1 to 2 feet occurred. Numerous roads were closed due to drifting and low visibility. Numerous sustained power outages occurred, particularly in rural sections. Thousands of people were stranded with 168 people trapped in a train in Willmar. Wind chills ranged from 50 below to 80 below behind the storm. Extensive losses to life and property occurred. There were 35 deaths during the storm and many injuries. Tens of thousands of livestock and poultry losses also occurred with 140 farm buildings damaged or destroyed. Losses to livestock and property were over 20 million. It took 11 days to clear some areas. Shelter was provided for nearly 17,000 people.

In South Dakota, snow began to fall on the 10th in the afternoon and then the winds increased and reached blizzard conditions by evening. These severe blizzard conditions continued on through the 11th and through the morning of the 12th. Wind chills fell to 50 below to 70 below zero. Many cars stalled on roads due to poor visibility, icy roads, and blowing and drifting snow. Eight people lost their lives. Thousands of livestock and poultry were lost. During the blizzard, a 2000 foot radio and TV antenna just east of Sioux Falls collapsed.

January 10, 2000: High winds gusting to over 60 mph caused some spotty damage across central and north central South Dakota. Near Mobridge, the high winds blew a semi-tractor-trailer off the road and tipped it over while it was heading westbound on Highway 12. The semi tractor-trailer sustained quite a bit of damage as a result. The high winds also damaged the windmill at the museum in Mobridge breaking off the tail and bending several of the blades. Some high wind reports include; 56 mph at McLaughlin, 58 mph at Onida and Mobridge, and 63 mph at Pierre.

1800 - Savannah, GA, received a foot and a half of snow, and ten inches blanketed Charleston SC. It was the heaviest snowfall of record for the immediate Coastal Plain of the southeastern U.S. (David Ludlum)

1911 - The temperature at Rapid City, SD, plunged 47 degrees in just fifteen minutes. (The Weather Channel)

1949 - Snow was reported at San Diego, CA, for the first and only time since 1882. Snow was noted even on some of the beaches in parts of the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Burbank reported 4.7 inches, and Long Beach and Laguna Beach received one inch of snow. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1975 - The "Storm of the Century" hit Minnesota. A severe blizzard moved northward across the state producing up to two feet of snow. High winds drove wind chill readings to 80 degrees below zero, and at Duluth MN the barometric pressure dipped to 28.55 inches. The storm, which claimed 35 lives, occurred on the 102nd anniversary of the infamous "Pioneer Blizzard" in Minnesota. (David Ludlum)

1982 - The temperature at O'Hare Airport in Chicago, IL, plunged to an all-time record of 26 degrees below zero, and high winds drove the wind chill reading to 77 degrees below zero. The temperature in Downtown Chicago reached 23 degrees below zero. A week later a second arctic surge sent the temperature plunging back down to 25 degrees below zero. (Weather Channel) (National Weather Summary)






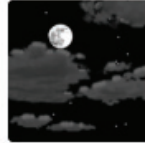

1987 - Bitter cold air invaded the Rocky Mountain Region, with subzero readings reported as far south as Gallop NM. Pocatello ID reported a record low reading of 14 degrees below zero. (National Weather Summary)

1988 - A storm in the northwestern U.S. produced wind gusts to 97 mph at Netarts OR, and up to two feet of snow in the mountains of Oregon. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - The first documented January tornado of record in Utah struck the south part of Sandy. Asphalt shingles were driven one half inch into a fence. (The Weather Channel) Clear skies, light winds, and up to 24 inches of snow cover, allowed the temperature to plunge to 45 degrees below zero at Roseau MN, and to -43 degrees at Warroad MN. The afternoon high at Grand Forks ND was 16 degrees below zero. (National Weather Summary)

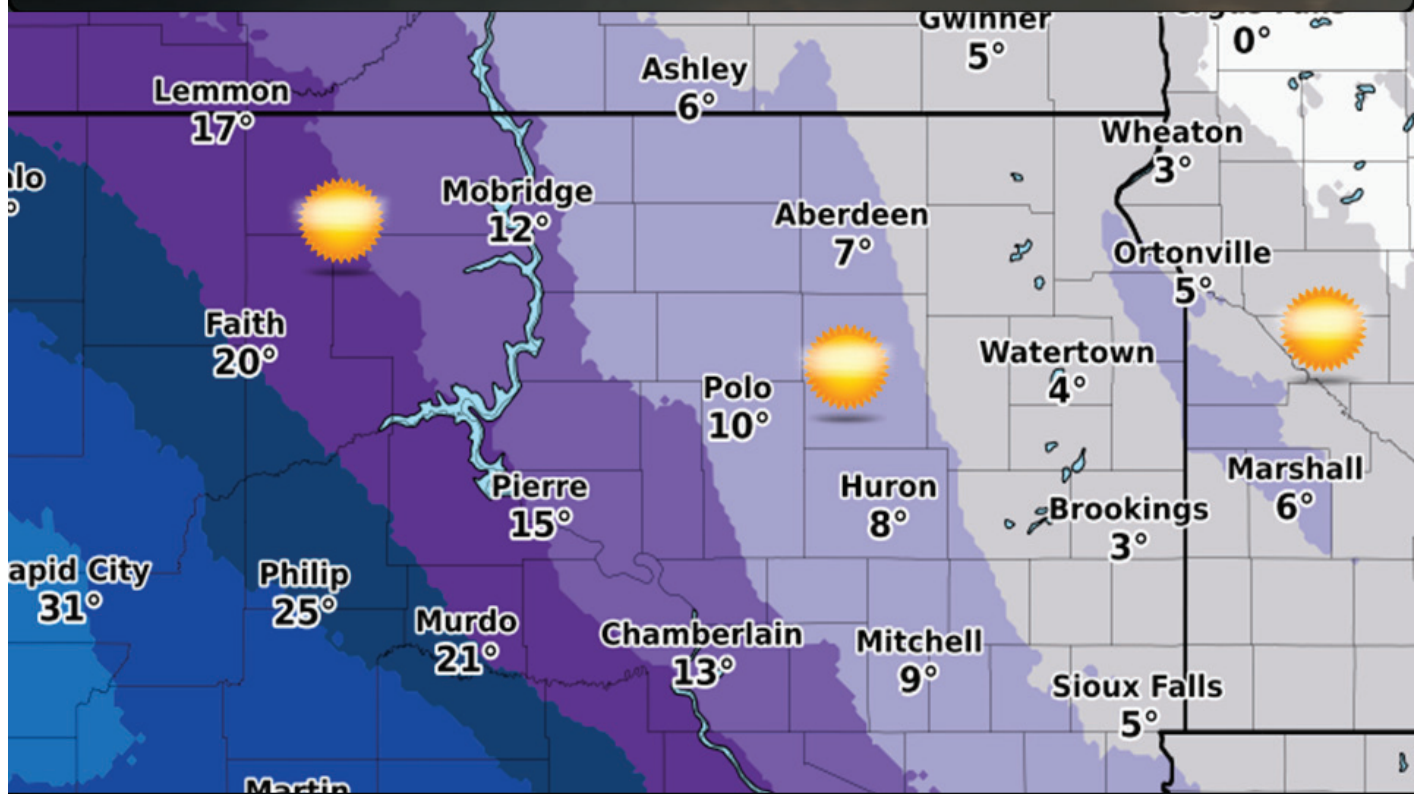
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Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
						
Cold	Mostly Cloudy	Chance Snow Showers and Blustery	Slight Chance Snow Showers and Blustery then Mostly Cloudy	Cold	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny
High: 6 °F	Low: -4 °F↑	High: 18 °F	Low: -3 °F	High: 5 °F	Low: -4 °F	High: 19 °F



Cold Weather Continues Today



National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD



weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Updated: 1/10/2016 5:01 AM Central

Published on: 01/10/2016 at 5:03AM

The core of the cold air mass is centered right over the area this morning as temperatures are in the teens below zero for most locations. Wind chill values will range from 20 below to 30 below zero through the morning hours. Highs will not warm much today as the arctic air mass only slowly begins to depart. Highs will range from the single digits east to the teens and 20s farther west.

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 6.6 at 12:24 AM

Low: -10.9 at 11:35 PM

High Gust: 24 at 6:34 AM

Precip: 0.0

Today's Info

Record High: 56° in 2012

Record Low: -30° in 1978

Average High: 22°F

Average Low: 1°F

Average Precip in Jan.: 0.18

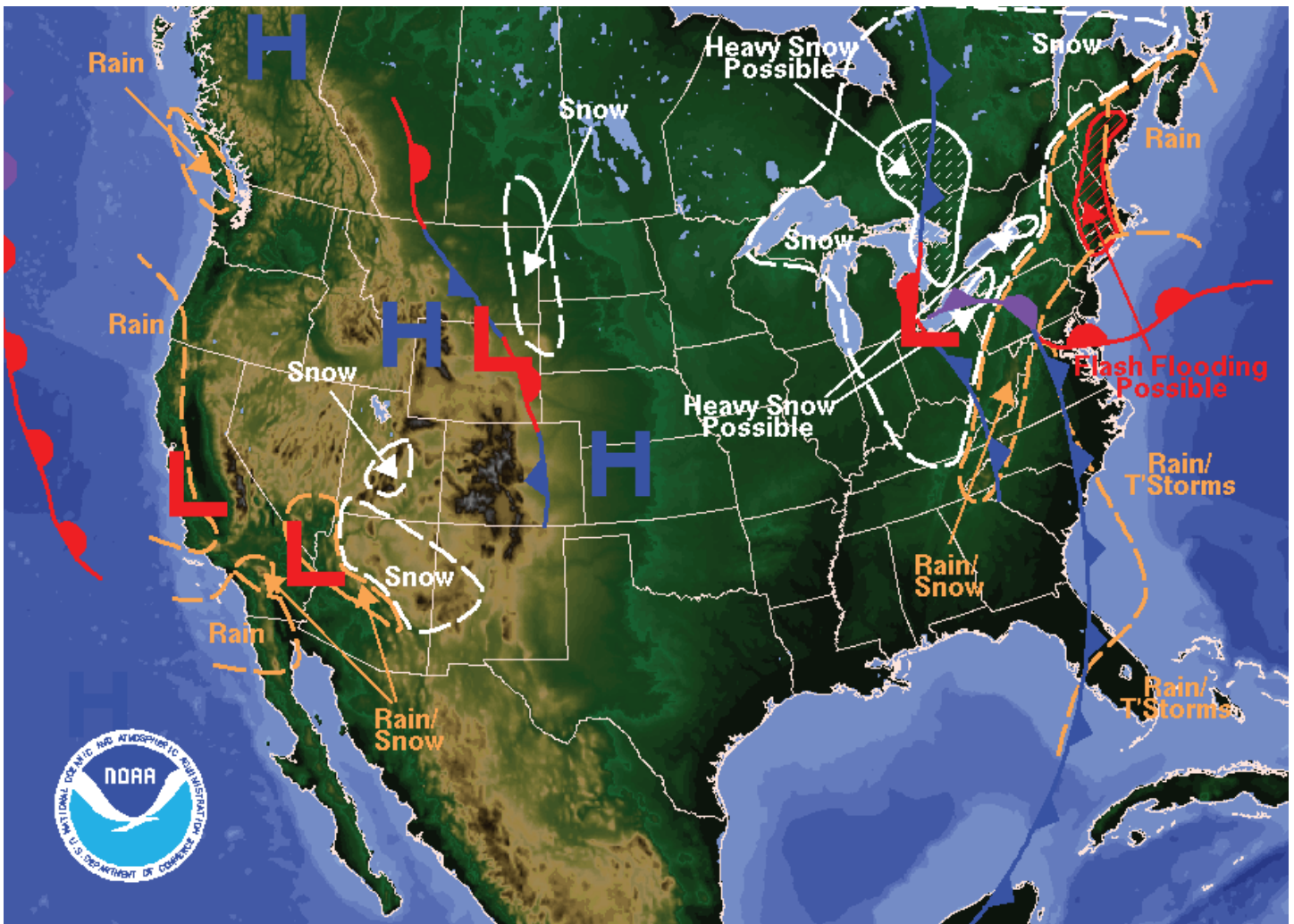
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.18

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 5:10 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:11 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Sun, Jan 10, 2016, issued 3:34 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Fanning based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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WHO IS THE WINNER?

It was the end of the season and the teams were playing for the championship of the league. Hope and excitement were building as they came to the final inning of the game. Neither had scored.

There were two outs, a runner was on third and it was the pitcher's turn to bat. Although he was a good pitcher, he was a poor hitter. Realizing the importance of the moment, the coach decided to bring in a pinch hitter. The count was full and the crowd was on their feet. On the next pitch, the batter singled into left field, a run scored, and they won the game.

How did the pitcher respond? Was he angry because he did not get the hit and drive in the run? No. He was the first one out of the dugout, running to the pinch hitter to congratulate him. He was delighted. Although he did not get the hit, he was credited with the win.

The writings of Paul reflect an amazingly selfless attitude. He realized that not all preachers had pure motives – some wanted recognition. But he said, "I rejoice because they are preaching about Christ." There may be some Christians who do the right things for the wrong reasons, but thank God for their results if they glorify Him.

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to do what we can, where we can, when we can to get Your message to the lost and dying. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: Philippians 1:15-19 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

News from the Associated Press

Counties set to lobby state Legislature for increased aid JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Cash-strapped South Dakota counties are looking to state lawmakers to help keep up with rising costs for such things as courts and jails.

Lawmakers will consider legislation to boost county funding during the session that begins Tuesday. Proposals include a plan that would allow them to impose a sales tax and a measure that would redistribute alcohol revenue from the state to the counties.

Advocates describe growing costs for court-appointed defense attorneys and mental health expenses, as well as jumps in spending to send prisoners to crowded jails.

"The jails are busting at the seams," said Duane Sutton, president of the South Dakota Association of County Commissioners. "There's no relief in sight under the present funding formula."

South Dakota counties get most of their revenue from property taxes, but state law limits yearly hikes. And about 80 percent of county spending is required by law, which limits flexibility for officials searching for a balanced budget.

In 2015, Brown County had to supplement its budget by nearly \$370,000. Court-appointed attorney costs alone overran expectations by nearly \$190,000, County Auditor Maxine Fischer said.

Brown County is luckier than others because it includes the growing city of Aberdeen, the third-largest in the state, said Sutton, who is a commissioner there. But he said the county may soon have to cut back on discretionary spending — including on mental health, a museum and library support — if the costs continue to grow.

"There's 66 counties and there's 66 different problems," said Staci Ackerman, executive director of the South Dakota Sheriffs' Association.

Lyman County has seen a significant increase in jail costs in the last several years largely from a spike in drug arrests along Interstate 90, Sheriff Steve Manger said. The office, which contracts with another county to house inmates, saw spending more than double between 2012 and 2014 to \$114,000 for that year, though the costs dipped in 2015.

The increases are frustrating. Officials can't control the number of people who get caught breaking the law, Manger said.

"If I could go out and say how many people were going to be arrested in Lyman County, I don't think I'd be a sheriff," he said. "I'd be in Las Vegas getting rich."

Roberts County fell behind paying bills around 2008 in part because of jail salaries, and the county had to cut back significantly on its highway budget to get out of the hole, Chairman Roger George said. He said having more funding is necessary, but would likely be difficult to get.

"It's something that needs to be addressed," said Republican Rep. Kristin Conzet, who led a group last year studying county government. But even Conzet said she's unsure if she would support the sales tax plan.

Advocates recognize that it will be difficult to advance this session with lawmakers expected to focus on expanding Medicaid and raising teacher pay. A separate proposal would require cities to reimburse counties for some court and jail expenses at a rate based on population.

County boosters are also focusing on a change that would distribute a third of the revenue from an alcohol tax — it brought in about \$14.4 million last fiscal year — to the counties.

Both measures face a tough path in the Legislature and a wall in Gov. Dennis Daugaard. The governor opposes a sales tax for counties and a redistribution of the alcohol tax, spokeswoman Kelsey Pritchard said in an email.

Pritchard also pointed to new road and bridge funding for local governments passed in a highway package last session. Sutton credited the state for tackling transportation, but said counties will still emphasize the need for additional money.

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Legislative issues set to include abortion, ethics and hemp

JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — State lawmakers are set to debate hundreds of proposals beyond Medicaid expansion and hiking teacher pay when they return to the capitol for the 2016 session on Tuesday.

Republican legislators are pushing measures on abortion, students' bathrooms and allowing hemp cultivation. Democrats' priorities include economic development and overhauling government oversight.

The session's main run wraps up in the middle of March, but lawmakers will return for consideration of gubernatorial vetoes at the end of that month. Some of the proposals set to be considered:

ABORTION RESTRICTIONS: Some lawmakers are set to push a 20-week abortion ban in South Dakota. Abortion opponents will also pursue legislation that would require practitioners to inform women who undergo medical abortions, in which two drugs are taken separately, that they may be able to reverse the effects of the first drug — should a woman change her mind — and still have a live birth.

FETAL TISSUE SALES: One of Attorney General Marty Jackley's priorities is to make it a felony in South Dakota to sell fetal remains. State law does allow the donation of fetal tissue in the case of a spontaneous abortion if the mother consents.

TRANSGENDER STUDENTS: A House Republican is backing a bill to require that students use bathrooms and locker rooms that match their biological sex. Rep. Fred Deutsch said schools must provide "reasonable accommodations" for transgender students' needs under his plan.

It's unclear if legislators will again try to void a high school activities association's policy allowing transgender student athletes to request to play on the team of their choice. Republican Rep. Jim Bolin, who sponsored such legislation last session, said "anything's possible."

HEMP CULIVATION: A bill that would legalize the cultivation of hemp in South Dakota could help spur economic development, especially among the state's Native American tribes, said sponsor Mike Verchio, a Republican representative from Hill City. He said allowing people to grow hemp could also open up opportunities for manufacturing facilities to turn the plant into clothing or cosmetics.

ETHICS COMMISSION: Democrats plan to renew their pursuit of a state ethics commission as a result of recent scandals that have hit state government. Rep. Peggy Gibson, who previously backed an ethics panel, has said government needs more oversight after controversies surrounding the EB-5 visa program and a murder-suicide involving two employees of a Platte-based educational cooperative.

LIFETIME GUN PERMITS: A Republican lawmaker said gun advocates are weighing whether to pursue making concealed firearm permits "lifetime." There would still be renewals, but they would be initiated by the state without additional fees required, Rep. Jim Stalzer said.

DEATH PENALTY: Republican Sen. Arthur Rusch, a former judge, said he will push to repeal the death penalty in South Dakota. Rusch said he has personally prosecuted a death penalty case, and said he's seen firsthand how costly and hard it was on jurors and court personnel.

Saturday's Scores The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 65, Yankton 36

Arlington 50, Deubrook 32

Bennett County 56, Wall 47

Bon Homme 60, Freeman 50

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Brandon Valley 58, Harrisburg 50
Bridgewater-Emery 77, Colman-Egan 57
Britton-Hecla 49, Castlewood 38
Chester 52, Sturgis 49
Corsica/Stickney 74, Wagner 40
Custer 52, Sturgis Brown 49, OT
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Hollins, Patterson lead Omaha to 79-73 win over South Dakota

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Tra-Deon Hollins had 17 points, eight assists and five steals, and Devin Patterson scored four of his 16 in the final 39 seconds to help Omaha rally from 21 points down in the second half to beat South Dakota 79-73 on Saturday.

South Dakota (9-9, 1-3 Summit League) led 54-33 with 14:03 left.

Jake White scored six straight for Omaha to start a 17-4 run that pulled the Mavericks within eight fewer than five minutes later.

Hollins hit a 3 with 7:53 left, igniting a 13-2 spurt that trimmed the deficit to 65-63.

Hollins hit another 3 to give Omaha its first lead since 3-2, and the Mavericks pulled away from there.

It's the fourth time this season that Omaha (12-6, 4-0) has overcome a double-digit second-half deficit. White scored 15 and Thurman finished with 11 for Omaha, which has won five in a row for the first time since 2013.

Shy McClelland led South Dakota with 15 points.

Technical foul nixes Sioux Falls' buzzer-beating victory

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — When Sioux Falls senior guard Taylor Varsho nailed a 30-foot 3-pointer at the buzzer to give the Cougars an apparent 59-58 win over Winona State, fans rushed the court in elation.

The Friday night celebration at Stewart Center was premature.

After reviewing the play, officials not only put fractions of a second back on the clock, but they called a technical foul on USF for fan interference. Winona State's Alexis Foley hit both free throws, and the Warriors escaped Sioux Falls with a 60-59 Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference victory.

With the loss, the Cougars dropped to 12-3 overall and 6-3 in NSIC play. Winona State improved to 15-1 and 8-1 in league play.

Varsho had 17 points, scoring 16 after halftime.

Nevada critics lose again in grouse fight; July trial looms

SCOTT SONNER, Associated Press

RENO, Nev. (AP) — A federal judge has rejected a rural Nevada water district's latest attempt to expedite construction of a storage tank in greater sage grouse habitat near the Utah line in a legal battle now expected to drag into the summer.

U.S. District Judge Miranda Du denied this week the final part of a request for a preliminary injunction that White Pine County officials say is necessary to set aside federal regulations protecting the bird so the town of Baker can replace a leaking water tank near Great Basin National Park.

The court battle in Reno hasn't received the same attention as the standoff at a national wildlife refuge in neighboring Oregon where a group of armed men say they are protesting unreasonable restrictions on the use of public lands.

But it's an example of ongoing conflicts across the West over myriad land-use issues, from management of wild horse herds from California to Colorado, to control of a road in a national forest near the Idaho line in Nevada that has been tied up in the same federal courtroom in Reno since 1999.

Utah Rep. Rob Bishop, chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, and leaders of the Congressional Western Caucus are among those who say the Oregon standoff is part of a larger controversy over federal mismanagement of western lands.

"While we do not condone the current actions taken by a select few in Oregon, we do understand their frustration with increasingly heavy handed federal agencies that continue to violate the rights of hardworking American farmers and ranchers," the caucus said this week in a statement from Reps. Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyo., chairman; Steve Pearce, R-N.M., chairman emeritus; and Mark Amodei, R-Nev., vice chairman.

In the Nevada case, Judge Du had allowed both sides to continue arguing about the water tank when she refused on Dec. 8 a broader request to immediately block the Bureau of Land Management from implementing the land use planning amendments in Nevada, California, Oregon, Idaho, Utah and Montana.

The Baker General Irrigation District is still considering whether to appeal the amended right of way the BLM issued Dec. 10, which allows for construction of the replacement tank on federal land but only during a narrow window from July to November so as not to disturb the grouse and its traditional breeding grounds less than a mile away.

But even without such an appeal — which would further delay resolution of the matter — the schedule Du has laid out suggests it will be at least July before a trial begins on the merits of the lawsuit filed in September by nine Nevada counties, ranchers and two mining companies that claim the regulations are illegal, unworkable and could run them out of business.

In her Jan. 5 order denying a preliminary injunction, Du said the fact the water tank right of way still may be appealed "further underscores that the claimed harm is neither immediate nor imminent sufficient to warrant preliminary injunctive relief."

"Because BLM has approved the district's application, plaintiffs argument of harm has morphed from harm caused by anticipated delay in BLM's approval to potential harm caused by the terms of BLM's approval," she wrote.

Opponents say the BLM's restrictions make it "virtually impossible" to complete the project they wanted to begin three months ago and complete by July to ensure water supplies to fight wildfires throughout the summer.

The "government's suggestion that a 10-month delay to this necessary repair is harmless reflects a lack of understanding of the seriousness of the problem or how the (regulations) harm the community," Laura Granier, the plaintiffs' lead lawyer, wrote in a recent brief.

Du said the plaintiffs have failed to show why significant work cannot be done before the actual construction, including planning, design and awarding of a contract. She said that even before the planning amendments were adopted, BLM had in place seasonal prohibitions to protect grouse habitat, including restricting activities within 2 miles of active breeding grounds from March 1 through May 15, and winter range habitat from November 1 through March 31.

Medicaid plan, teacher pay to lead 2016 legislative session

JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Proposals to expand Medicaid and raise South Dakota's teacher pay are expected to dominate the legislative session that begins when lawmakers return to Pierre on Tuesday.

The session — and especially the expansion plan — could expose discord among factions of South Dakota's Republican lawmakers, who hold the governor's office and have a strong grip on both chambers of the Legislature. Meanwhile, minority Democrats are celebrating that their two prime causes top the conversation at the Capitol.

State lawmakers must set the state budget during the session. Gov. Dennis Daugaard last month pitched a roughly \$4.8 billion proposal for the upcoming budget year, including more than \$80 million in new spending for a state that has better-than-expected revenues.

Daugaard outlined his plan — with several conditions — to broaden eligibility for the state's Medicaid program for disabled and low-income people at his budget address.

The proposal would pay for the state's share by expanding access to services that are fully funded by the federal government. It aims to reduce current state spending to free up funds for boosting potential enrollment by about 50,000 residents.

The complicated deal will take the backing of the federal government and South Dakota's Indian tribes, who would see more accessible and improved health care if the plan goes through because it depends on changes at the Indian Health Service. But some Republicans in the state Legislature, where the measure also requires approval, have already predicted it could face a tough path through the House of Representatives.

There are concerns that it could cost the state money and questions of whether the federal government can afford it, as well as philosophical opposition to expanding the program, said House Republican leader Brian Gosch.

Sen. Brock Greenfield, a conservative Senate Republican, said some GOP members will follow Daugaard's lead, but others will "remain consistent" in their opposition.

"Just because he's flip-flopped on the issue doesn't mean a lot of the legislators are going to be in a huge hurry to do so," he said.

In his budget address, Daugaard said he believes the state should seize the opportunity if the plan comes together, but acknowledged he shares concerns with lawmakers about the proposal.

It's also unclear how lawmakers will tackle increasing pay for South Dakota teachers, whose salaries are the lowest in the nation. A state task force on school funding said it would take at least \$75 million to make teacher salaries competitive.

Daugaard has offered support for using new state money to increase teacher salaries, but specific proposals won't come until his State of the State address. There's more momentum this year than in previous sessions, said Senate Republican leader Corey Brown.

But the debate will be over whether it should come from existing funds or from a tax increase, Gosch said. Democrats, who will bring their own proposal on teacher pay, are happy because they believe a longstanding priority has shifted into reach.

"We've been working on those issues for a long time, and we've finally seen them come to a head here," Senate Democratic leader Billie Sutton said.

Other notable measures including proposals to help struggling South Dakota counties, including a plan to allow them to impose a sales tax. Counties' increasing costs, particularly from spending on courts and police, need to be addressed, said Rep. Kristin Conzet, a Republican who led a group last year studying county government.

But advocates acknowledge it will be a tough sell for counties when lawmakers are focused on teachers and Medicaid. Conzet said she hasn't yet decided if she would support the tax proposal.

"I consider us the third horse in the race right now," she said.

Powerball jackpot world's largest at \$1.3 billion

JOSH FUNK, Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Disappointed you didn't win the Powerball jackpot this weekend? Don't be. Lottery officials say the estimated \$1.3 billion prize is the world's largest. Ever.

No one matched all six Powerball numbers Saturday night, leading to the astronomical prize, which is all but certain to grow before the next drawing Wednesday as others buy tickets, said Kelly Cripe with the Texas Lottery.

The odds to win are one in 292.2 million, according to the Multi-State Lottery Association, which runs Powerball. Cripe said 75 percent of all 292.2 million combinations were bought before Saturday's drawing.

The jackpot has ballooned since its Nov. 4 starting point of \$40 million.

The winning numbers — 16-19-32-34-57 and Powerball number of 13 — did gain some people a little wealth: 25 tickets won \$1 million by matching five numbers, and three other tickets won \$2 million because they paid extra to multiply smaller prizes.

The record jackpot lured an unprecedented frenzy of purchases. Anndrea Smith, 30, said Saturday that she already had spent more than she usually does on Powerball tickets.

"I bought four yesterday, and I usually never buy any," said Smith, manager of Bucky's gas station and convenience store in Omaha, Nebraska.

Powerball is played in 44 states as well as the District of Columbia, U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. The next Powerball drawing is Wednesday.

Francis lays out case for mercy in 1st book as pope

NICOLE WINFIELD, Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis lays out his case for emphasizing the merciful face of the Catholic Church in his first book as pontiff, saying God never tires of forgiving and actually prefers the sinners who repent over self-righteous moralizers who don't.

"The Name of God Is Mercy," a 100-page conversation with Italian journalist Andrea Torielli, is being published this week in 86 countries to help kick-start Francis' Holy Year of Mercy. A copy was provided in advance to The Associated Press on Sunday.

In the book, Francis condemns what he calls the "scholars of law" — the doctrinaire-minded rigorists who throughout the history of the church have challenged Jesus' message of unconditional love and mercy for even the most wretched of sinners. He says often these self-righteous Christians are hypocrites themselves, using the law to hide their own "deep wounds."

"These are men who live attached to the letter of the law but who neglect love; men who only know how to close doors and draw boundaries," Francis is quoted as saying.

Francis has rankled many conservatives with his frequent dismissals of theological and legalistic arguments stressing doctrine over his more pastoral message of welcome and mercy for society's most marginal. The clash in approaches has been particularly evident in recent church debates over marriage and divorce.

"We must avoid the attitude of someone who judges and condemns from the lofty heights of his own certainty, looking for the splinter in his brother's eye while remaining unaware of the beam in his own," Francis says. "Let us always remember that God rejoices more when one sinner returns to the fold than when 99 righteous people have no need of repentance."

The Vatican is officially launching the book Tuesday with a high-level panel discussion featuring Francis' secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, and 'Life Is Beautiful' actor Roberto Benigni, signaling the importance Francis places on getting the message out.

In the book, Francis insists that his now-infamous "Who am I to judge" comment about gays was merely a repetition of the church's teaching on homosexuality. Francis won praise from gays with the comment, uttered during his first press conference in 2013. But many conservatives have criticized the remark as vague and incomplete since church teaching also holds that gay acts are "intrinsically disordered."

Francis says the church has long held that gays should be treated with dignity and respect and seen as

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individuals. And he goes to some length throughout the text to cite scripture and previous popes to make clear that his radical agenda is fully rooted in the church's basic teachings.

"People should not be defined only by their sexual tendencies: Let us not forget that God loves all his creatures and we are destined to receive his infinite love," he says. "I prefer that homosexuals come to confession, that they stay close to the Lord, and that we pray all together. You can advise them to pray, show goodwill, show them the way, and accompany them along it."

Francis has made clear from the start of his pontificate that his would be a papacy focused on mercy, and he called a jubilee year to emphasize it. Throughout the book, Francis refers repeatedly to his own ministry to prostitutes and prisoners in Argentina, showing how his own personal encounters with society's outcasts have shaped his view about the faith and formed the bedrock of his papacy.

As a confessor, Francis is quoted as saying, "I have always tried to find a crack, just a tiny opening so that I can pry open that door and grant forgiveness and mercy."

But Francis' opening isn't a free-for-all: He says of course prisons can't throw their doors open and let violent criminals out onto the streets. But he says once a debt is paid, prisoners must be reintegrated back into society and welcomed. And he distinguishes between ordinary and even repeat sinners and those who are corrupt, saying corruption is a condition, a state of life and often a hypocritical one incompatible with Christianity.

"The corrupt man often doesn't realize his own condition, much as a person with bad breath doesn't know they have it," he says.

Some conservatives have balked at Francis' mercy-over-morals priorities, saying it has sent confusing messages to the faithful especially after two previous popes spent so much time stressing doctrine. Even some cardinals have called on Francis to make clear-cut policy statements on certain hot-button issues, especially on the divisive question of whether divorced and civilly remarried Catholics can receive Communion.

Church teaching holds that, if these Catholics are living in sin, they cannot receive the sacraments.

Francis launched a two-year study on the issue and other matters related to Catholic family life, and is expected to weigh in this year with a document on whether any accommodation can be found.

In the book, Francis doesn't commit himself one way or the other, but he indicated that his ultimate decision may draw on a personal experience.

Francis recounts that one of his nieces wanted to marry a man who had children from a previous marriage but hadn't yet obtained an annulment, a church decree that his first marriage was null.

The couple got married in a civil ceremony and went on to have three children. Francis recalls that every Sunday when they went to Mass the man went to confession and told the priest that he knew he couldn't be absolved from the sin of adultery, but he asked for a blessing.

"This is a religiously mature man," Francis said.

Progressives, led by the German bishops, have said such religiously mature Catholics should be allowed to participate fully in the life of the church, including receiving the sacraments.

Powerful US bomber flies over S. Korea as standoff deepens

FOSTER KLUG, Associated Press

AHN YOUNG-JOON, Associated Press

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea (AP) — A powerful U.S. B-52 bomber flew low over South Korea on Sunday, a clear show of force from the United States as a Cold War-style standoff deepened between its ally Seoul and North Korea following Pyongyang's fourth nuclear test.

North Korea will read the fly-over of a bomber capable of delivering nuclear weapons — seen by an Associated Press photographer at Osan Air Base near Seoul — as a threat. Any hint of America's nuclear power enrages Pyongyang, which links its own pursuit of atomic weapons to what it sees as past nuclear-backed moves by the United States to topple its authoritarian government.

The B-52 was joined by South Korean F-15 and U.S. F-16 fighters and returned to its base in Guam after the flight, the U.S. military said.

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"This was a demonstration of the ironclad U.S. commitment to our allies in South Korea, in Japan, and to the defense of the American homeland," said Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr., commander U.S. Pacific Command, in a statement. "North Korea's nuclear test is a blatant violation of its international obligations."

White House chief of staff Denis McDonough said the B-52 flight was intended to underscore to South Korean allies "the deep and enduring alliance that we have with them." Interviewed on CNN's "State of the Union," McDonough said the United States would work with South Korea, Japan, China and Russia "to deeply isolate the North Koreans" and "squeeze" them until they live up to prior commitments to get rid of their nuclear weapons.

"That's the baseline requirement they have to rejoin the international community," McDonough said. "Until they do it, they'll remain where they are which is an outcast -- unable to provide for their own people."

The B-52 flight follows a victory tour by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to celebrate the country's widely disputed claim of a hydrogen bomb test. Kim is seeking to rally pride in an explosion viewed with outrage by much of the world and to boost his domestic political goals.

There was no immediate reaction from North Korea's state media to the B-52 fly-over, which also happened after North Korea's third nuclear test in 2013.

Kim's first public comments about last week's test came in a visit to the country's military headquarters, where he called the explosion "a self-defensive step" meant to protect the region "from the danger of nuclear war caused by the U.S.-led imperialists," according to a dispatch Sunday from state-run Korean Central News Agency.

"It is the legitimate right of a sovereign state and a fair action that nobody can criticize," Kim was reported as saying during his tour of the People's Armed Forces Ministry.

The tone of Kim's comments, which sought to glorify him and justify the test, is typical of state media propaganda.

But they also provide insight into North Korea's long-running argument that it is the presence of tens of thousands of U.S. troops in South Korea and Japan, and a "hostile" U.S. policy that seeks to topple the government in Pyongyang, that make North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons absolutely necessary.

During his tour, Kim posed for photos with leading military officials in front of statues of the two members of his family who led the country previously — Kim Jong Il and Kim Il Sung. He also sought to link the purported success of the nuclear test to a ruling Workers' Party convention in May, the party's first since 1980. He's expected to use the congress to announce major state policies and shake up the country's political elite to further consolidate his power.

World powers are looking for ways to punish the North over a nuclear test that, even if not of a hydrogen bomb, still likely pushes Pyongyang closer to its goal of a nuclear-armed missile that can reach the U.S. mainland. Many outside governments and experts question whether the blast was in fact a powerful hydrogen test.

In the wake of the test on Wednesday, the two Koreas have settled into the kind of Cold War-era standoff that has defined their relationship over the past seven decades. Since Friday, South Korea has been blasting anti-Pyongyang propaganda from huge speakers along the border, and the North is reportedly using speakers of its own in an attempt to keep its soldiers from hearing the South Korean messages.

A top North Korean ruling party official's recent warning that the South's broadcasts have pushed the Korean Peninsula "toward the brink of war" is typical of Pyongyang's over-the-top rhetoric. But it is also indicative of the real fury that the broadcasts, which criticize the country's revered dictatorship, cause in the North.

North Korea considers the South Korean broadcasts tantamount to an act of war. When Seoul Korea briefly resumed propaganda broadcasts in August after an 11-year break, Seoul says the two Koreas exchanged artillery fire.

South Korean troops, near about 10 sites where loudspeakers started blaring propaganda Friday, were on the highest alert, but have not detected any unusual movement from North Korea along the border, said an official from Seoul's Defense Ministry, who refused to be named, citing office rules.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency said Seoul had deployed missiles, artillery and other weapons sys-

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tems near the border to swiftly deal with any possible North Korean provocation. The ministry would not confirm the report, nor another by Yonhap that said North Korea had started its own broadcasts likely meant to keep its soldiers from hearing the South Korean messages.

Officials say broadcasts from the South's loudspeakers can travel about 10 kilometers (6 miles) during the day and 24 kilometers (15 miles) at night. That reaches many of the huge force of North Korean soldiers stationed near the border, as well as residents in border towns such as Kaesong, where the Koreas jointly operate an industrial park that has been a valuable cash source for the impoverished North.

While the South's broadcasts also include news and pop music, much of the programming challenges North Korea's government more directly.

"We hope that our fellow Koreans in the North will be able to live in a society that doesn't invade individual lives as soon as possible," a female presenter said in parts of the broadcast that officials revealed to South Korean media. "Countries run by dictatorships even try to control human instincts."

Marathon talks by the Koreas in August eased anger and stopped the broadcasts, which Seoul started after blaming North Korean land mines for maiming two soldiers. It might be more difficult to do so now. Seoul can't stand down easily, some analysts say, and it's highly unlikely that the North will express regret for its nuclear test, which is a source of intense national pride.

Responding to the North's bomb test, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry urged China, the North's only major ally and biggest aid provider, to end "business as usual" with North Korea.

Diplomats at a U.N. Security Council emergency session pledged to swiftly pursue new sanctions. For current sanctions and any new penalties to work, better cooperation and stronger implementation from China is seen as key.

It may take weeks or longer to confirm or refute the North's claim that it successfully tested a hydrogen bomb, which would mark a major and unanticipated advance for its still-limited nuclear arsenal.

AP News Guide: A look at the record Powerball drawing

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — People who bought Powerball tickets have more time to think of elaborate ways to spend the largest lottery jackpot in the world — and they'll likely be joined by thousands more seeking a quick \$1.3 billion fortune.

Sales for Saturday night's drawing, in which \$949.8 million was at stake, had been robust in the participating 44 states, as well as the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

Here's what you need to know about the Powerball ahead of Wednesday's drawing:

THE LATEST FROM POWERBALL OFFICIALS

Kelly Cripe with the Texas Lottery, which is part of the Multi-State Lottery Association, says the \$1.3 billion figure is the world's largest.

She also noted that 75 percent of the 292.2 million number combinations were purchased ahead of Saturday's drawing, and that the jackpot is likely to balloon before the next drawing.

I'LL TAKE ALL OF THE COMINBATIONS, FOR \$650 MILLION

Powerball officials will allow you to purchase all possible number combinations, but it isn't a smart thing to do.

At \$2 a ticket, the strategy would cost about \$584 million, and when taxes are subtracted, you'd end up losing money.

Plus, if someone else matched the winning numbers, too, you'd have to split the prize. While you'd make back some of your investment on smaller prizes paid for matching three, four or five numbers plus the Powerball, chances are it still isn't a good bet.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

The jackpot for the twice-weekly game started at \$40 million on Nov. 4 and has been growing ever since. Because the payout is based on sales, the prize grows as people rush to try for a piece of the pie.

THE PAYOFF: HUGE, EVEN AFTER TAXES

A winner would have the option of being paid \$1.3 billion through annual payments over 29 years or opting

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for one \$806 million cash payment. But 39.6 percent of the lump sum would go to federal income taxes.

Plus, most states would take a chunk — something winners in Alaska, Florida, Nevada, South Dakota, Texas, Washington and Wyoming wouldn't have to worry about. California and Pennsylvania exempt lottery winnings from income taxes if the ticket was bought in-state.

SHARING IS CARING

Some people feel that pooling their money with co-workers will improve their chance of winning — but with such tiny odds, adding 50 or 100 chances doesn't give you a leg up. And if your group is lucky, lottery officials recommend preventing hard feelings by putting in writing how you plan to split the prize, since it's easy for misunderstandings to crop up when hundreds of millions of dollars are at stake.

A WORD OF CAUTION

Texas Lottery's executive director trumpeted the big jackpot over the weekend, but urged those hoping to hit it big not to spend more than they can afford. "We're very concerned about people playing responsibly and not overspending," Gary Grief said. "It only takes one ticket to win."

Golden Globes should provide traction in Oscar race

JAKE COYLE, AP Film Writer

Without a runaway favorite for this year's top Academy Award, a handful of key contenders will be looking to Sunday night's 73rd annual Golden Globe Awards for a little traction on the road to the Oscars.

Among the nominees with the most to gain from a best-picture win when the Globes are handed out in Beverly Hills, California, are "Mad Max: Fury Road," "The Revenant" and "Spotlight" in the drama category, and "The Big Short" and "The Martian" in the comedy category.

The five films are the only Globe best picture nominees in either category to also appear on the Producers Guild of America's list of 10 best picture nominees announced this past week. There has never been an Oscar best picture winner that hasn't also been on the PGA's list of best picture nominees since the guild started handing out awards in 1990.

Other nominees in the Globes' top two categories this year are the dramas "Carol" and "Room," and "Joy," "Spy" and "Trainwreck" in the comedy category. None were among the PGA's top nods.

Also not appearing on the PGA list and conspicuously absent from this year's Globes nominees is J.J. Abrams' galactic juggernaut "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," which on Wednesday, became the highest-grossing movie of all time in North America. The Hollywood Foreign Press Association, which presents the Golden Globes, announced its nominees a few days before the first industry screening of "Star Wars" in mid-December.

This will surely be one of the things acerbic host Ricky Gervais needles the Hollywood Foreign Press Association about at the Beverly Hilton Hotel ceremony, which runs from 8-11 p.m. EST, telecast live on NBC.

Gervais, who will host for the fourth time after a three-year stint by Tina Fey and Amy Poehler, said on the "Ellen DeGeneres Show" last week that booze gives him the courage to make his wince-inducing jokes.

"If I didn't drink, I wouldn't be brave enough to say some of the things I'm going to say," Gervais said.

He also blamed alcohol in a pre-emptive apology posted on Twitter last week: "Because I can see the future, I'd like to apologise now for the things I said at next week's Golden Globes. I was drunk..."

After a 10-year ratings high three years ago, the Golden Globes' viewership has dipped slightly since, with an audience of 19.3 million tuning in last year.

That, though, is still very strong for the Golden Globes, which have worked to shed an image of eccentric selections made by a group of little-known international journalists. The Globes have instead grown into one of the most popular award show broadcasts of the year, thanks to increasingly credible nominees, its trademark relaxed atmosphere and its unique position as a major awards show that honors both film and television.

Netflix earned a leading eight nods on the TV side, where nominations are scattered across streaming services, broadcast and cable. Six shows come in tied for the most nominations with three: " Fargo," "Mr. Robot," "Outlander," "Transparent," "American Crime" and "Wolf Hall."

Presenters at Sunday night's Golden Globes will include Tom Hanks, Helen Mirren, Michael Keaton, Amy

Adams, Kurt Russell, Lady Gaga, Jamie Foxx, Jennifer Lopez, Eddie Redmayne, Kate Hudson, Channing Tatum and Kate Bosworth. Also presenting will be Mel Gibson, who is returning to the Hollywood spotlight after keeping a low profile for almost a decade, following an explosive drunken-driving arrest and public custody dispute.

Mexico: Sean Penn interview helped locate drug lord

E. EDUARDO CASTILLO, Associated Press

KATHERINE CORCORAN, Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The recapture of drug lord Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman took a surprise, Hollywood twist when a Mexican official said security forces at one point located the world’s most-wanted trafficker thanks to a secret interview with U.S. actor Sean Penn.

Penn’s interview with Guzman, who has twice escaped from Mexican maximum security prisons, appeared late Saturday on the website of Rolling Stone magazine. It was purportedly held at an undisclosed hideout in northern Mexico in October, about two months before Guzman’s recapture Friday in Los Mochis, Sinaloa, after six months on the run.

In the interview, Guzman defends his work at the head of the world’s biggest drug trafficking organization, one blamed for thousands of killings. When asked if he is to blame for high addiction rates, he responds: “No, that is false, because the day I don’t exist, it’s not going to decrease in any way at all. Drug trafficking? That’s false.”

In the article, Penn describes taking elaborate security measures ahead of the clandestine meeting. But apparently they were not enough.

A Mexican federal law enforcement official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not permitted to comment on the issue, told the Associated Press it was the Penn interview that led authorities to Guzman in a rural part of Durango state in October.

Authorities who later raided the area decided not to open fire on Guzman as he ran away because he was with two women and child.

He was able to escape, and officials once again apparently lost track of him. But they finally caught him Friday at a house in Los Mochis where Mexican marines nabbed him after a shootout that left five people dead.

The official said the meeting between Penn and Guzman was held in Tamazula, a community in Durango state that neighbors Sinaloa, home of Guzman’s drug cartel.

On Friday, Mexican Attorney General Arely Gomez said that Guzman’s contact with actors and producers for a possible film about him helped give law enforcement a lead on tracking and capturing the world’s most notorious drug kingpin.

In the Rolling Stone article, Penn wrote that Guzman was interested in having a movie filmed on his life. He said Guzman wanted Mexican actress Kate del Castillo, who facilitated the meeting between the men, involved in the project.

“He was interested in seeing the story of his life told on film, but would entrust its telling only to Kate,” wrote Penn, who appears in a photo posted with the interview shaking hands with Guzman whose face is uncovered

There was no immediate response from Penn’s representatives to the Mexican official’s comments.

Earlier Saturday, a federal law enforcement official said that Mexico is willing to extradite Guzman to the United States, a sharp reversal from the official position after his last capture in 2014.

“Mexico is ready. There are plans to cooperate with the U.S.,” said the Mexican official, who spoke on condition anonymity because he wasn’t authorized to comment.

But he cautioned that there could be a lengthy wait before U.S. prosecutors get their hands on Guzman. “You have to go through the judicial process, and the defense has its elements too.”

Top officials in the party of President Enrique Pena Nieto also floated the idea of extradition, which they had flatly ruled out before Guzman’s embarrassing escape from Mexico’s top maximum security prison on

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July 11 — his second from a Mexican prison.

But even if Mexican officials agree, Guzman's attorney Juan Pablo Badillo told the Milenio newspaper that the defense already has filed six motions to challenge extradition requests.

"They can challenge the judge, challenge the probable cause, challenge the procedure," said Juan Masini, former U.S. Department of Justice attache at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico. "That's why it can take a long time. They won't challenge everything at once ... they can drip, drip, milk it that way."

Guzman faces drug trafficking charges in several U.S. states and American officials hoped to extradite him after he was captured in February 2014.

At the time, Mexico's government insisted it could handle the man who had already broken out of one maximum-security prison, saying he must pay his debt to Mexican society first.

Then-Attorney General Jesus Murillo Karam said the extradition would happen only after he finished his sentence in Mexico in "300 or 400 years."

Then Guzman escaped through an elaborate tunnel dug into Mexico's most secure lock-up on July 11, thoroughly embarrassing Pena Nieto's administration.

He also had escaped a similar maximum-security facility in 2001 while serving a 20-year sentence. Lore says he hid in a laundry cart, though many dispute that version. He spent 13 years on the lam.

Gomez said that one of Guzman's key tunnel builders led officials to the neighborhood in Los Mochis that authorities had been watching for a month. The team noticed a lot of activity at the house Wednesday and the arrival of a car early Thursday morning. Authorities were able to determine that Guzman was inside the house, she said.

The marines were met with gunfire as they closed in.

Gomez said Guzman and his security chief, Ivan Gastelum, a.k.a "El Cholo Ivan," were able to flee via storm drains and escape through a manhole cover to the street, where they commandeered getaway cars. Marines climbed into the drains in pursuit. They closed in on the two men based on reports of stolen vehicles and they were arrested on the highway.

According to a statement from the Mexican Attorney General's office, the U.S. filed extradition requests June 25, while Guzman was in custody, and another Sep. 3, after he escaped. The Mexican government determined they were valid within the extradition treaty and sent them to a panel of federal judges, who gave orders for detention on July 29 and Sept. 8, after Guzman had escaped.

Those orders were not for extradition but just for Guzman to begin the extradition hearing process. Now that he is recaptured, Mexico has to start processing the extradition requests anew, according to the law.

The quickest he could be extradited would be six months, said a federal official who spoke on condition of anonymity, but it's not likely because lawyers can file appeals. He said that they are usually turned down, but each one means a judge has to schedule a hearing.

"That can take weeks or months, and that delays the extradition," he said. "We've had cases that take six years."

Afghan forces struggle as ranks thinned by 'ghost' soldiers

LYNNE O'DONNELL, Associated Press

MIRWAIS KHAN, Associated Press

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP) — Afghan forces are struggling to man the front lines against a resurgent Taliban, in part because of untold numbers of "ghost" troops who are paid salaries but only exist on paper.

The nationwide problem has been particularly severe in the southern Helmand province, where the Taliban have seized vast tracts of territory in the 12 months since the U.S. and NATO formally ended their combat mission and switched to training and support.

"At checkpoints where 20 soldiers should be present, there are only eight or 10," said Karim Atal, head of Helmand's provincial council. "It's because some people are getting paid a salary but not doing the job because they are related to someone important, like a local warlord."

In some cases, the "ghost" designation is more literal -- dead soldiers and police remain on the books,

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with senior police or army officials pocketing their salaries without replacing them, Atal said.

He estimates that some 40 percent of registered forces don't exist, and says the lack of manpower has helped the Taliban seize 65 percent of the province -- Afghanistan's largest -- and threaten the provincial capital, Lashkar Gah. Those men who do serve face even greater danger because of the no-shows. In the last three months alone, some 700 police have been killed and 500 wounded, he said.

The province's former deputy police chief, Pacha Gul Bakhtiar, said Helmand has 31,000 police on the registers, "but in reality it is nowhere near that."

Nearly 15 years after the U.S.-led invasion that toppled the Taliban, and despite billions of dollars in military and other aid, corruption remains rife in Afghanistan and local security forces have struggled to hold off insurgent advances across the country. Last year the Taliban seized the northern city of Kunduz for three days, marking their biggest foray into a major urban area since 2001.

Pakistan will host four-nation talks Monday with Afghanistan, China and the United States aimed at reviving peace talks with the Taliban, but even if those efforts succeed the insurgents are expected to stay on the offensive in order to gain land and leverage.

The Defense Ministry declined to comment on ghost security forces. Interior Ministry spokesman Sediq Sediqqi acknowledged the problem and said an investigation has been launched, without providing further details.

Iraq has also struggled with the ghost soldier phenomenon, a factor in the Islamic State group's rapid conquest of much of the country's north and west in the summer of 2014. In December of that year, Iraqi officials said the payment of tens of millions of dollars in salaries to nonexistent forces had been halted.

But Afghan lawmaker Ghulam Hussain Nasiri, who has been researching the problem for more than a year, said his government is ignoring it.

"When we say we have 100 soldiers on the battlefield, in reality it is just 30 or 40. And this creates the potential for huge catastrophes when the enemy attacks," he said.

"It is an indication of massive corruption — the reason Afghanistan is one of the most corrupt nations in the world," he added. Afghanistan consistently ranks among the most corrupt countries in indices released by global watchdog Transparency International.

Nasiri said the government "doesn't seem to want to know about it," and that he received death threats after revealing the names of parliamentarians who are allegedly in on the racket. He said he handed a list of 31 names of corrupt parliamentarians to the Interior Ministry but has so far received no response.

Cash-strapped Afghanistan's security forces are entirely funded by the international community, at a cost of some \$5 billion a year, most of which comes from the United States. The U.S. government's auditor of spending in Afghanistan, John Sopko, told a congressional hearing last year that Afghan government figures on security personnel and pay could not be regarded as accurate.

"No one knows the exact numbers of the Afghan National Defense Forces," an Afghan official said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief media on the topic. He said the best internal estimates put the number at around 120,000, less than a third of what's needed to secure the country.

The heaviest cost of the ghost soldier phenomenon is being exacted on the battlefield. Neither the government nor NATO publicizes casualty figures for local security forces, but an internal NATO tally seen by The Associated Press shows casualties are up 28 percent from 2014, when some 5,000 Afghan forces were killed.

Last month, an army base in Helmand's Sangin district was besieged by insurgents for almost a week before reinforcements were rushed in backed by U.S. airstrikes and British military advisers.

In the northern Helmand district of Kajaki, soldier Mohammad Islam said many of his comrades deserted their posts because they didn't believe their bodies would be sent back to their families if they died. In the absence of a body, the family would not be eligible for compensation payments.

"Everyone knows that we are facing this fight alongside 'ghost' soldiers, and that's the reason we don't have enough men," he said. "The Taliban know it, too. When they attack us, and we're unable to protect ourselves, the big men then ask why."

Spain's Princess Cristina faces historic tax fraud trial

ALAN CLENDENNING, Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Visits to the palm-dotted Mediterranean island of Mallorca for Spain's Princess Cristina used to mean luxurious stays at the seaside Marivent Palace — but the sister of King Felipe VI won't get anywhere near the royal family's official summer residence in a trip this week.

Instead, the 50-year-old princess and her husband are set to face anti-monarchy protesters and hordes of media Monday as they enter a makeshift courtroom and she makes history in front of millions of Spanish TV viewers as the first royal family member to face criminal charges since the monarchy was restored in 1975.

Following the tax fraud trial expected to last six months, the princess could face up to eight years in prison if a three-member panel of judges agrees the couple abused a real estate consulting firm described in court papers as a "front company" to bankroll a lavish lifestyle — including parties at their modernist Barcelona mansion, salsa dancing classes and vacations at expensive hotels.

Cristina and her husband, Olympic handball medalist turned businessman Inaki Urdangarin, will sit in the dock alongside 16 others in the case centering on allegations that Urdangarin used his Duke of Palma title to embezzle about 6 million euros (\$6.5 million) in public contracts through the Noos Institute. It was the nonprofit foundation he set up with a business partner to broker seminars and sports events as a tourism lure.

The alleged scheming involved some events that never happened or were billed at unusually high rates at the height of Spain's economic boom before the onset of the financial crisis in 2008. Some money went to the Aizoon real estate company that paid for personal expenses for the couple — a perk they should have declared as an income to tax authorities but allegedly didn't.

The suspects stand accused of being "greedy in a time when it wasn't seen as being that bad," said Ana Romero, the royalty reporter for the El Espanol digital publication. "There was a lot of money around, and it's a country where connections are very important."

There are so many defendants and lawyers plus reporters covering the case that judicial officials were forced to move the trial from a courthouse to a sprawling building complex on the outskirts of Palma de Mallorca normally used to hold mass training courses for public servants. The case is being heard in the regional capital of Spain's Balearic Islands because many of Urdangarin's deals were for the islands.

The princess and her husband are not expected to utter a word during the first few days of the trial as judges read out the 89 alleged crimes committed by the suspects, and lawyers including Cristina's make arguments aimed at having their clients removed from the case.

She denied knowledge of her husband's activities during a 2014 closed door court appearance and a prosecutor recommended she should be fined but a judge decided Cristina could be charged with tax fraud in 2007 and 2008 because Spanish law allows groups to file charges when state prosecutors don't. Her case was driven forward by the anti-corruption group Manos Limpias (Clean Hands).

"They're saying she knew about it," said Ignacio Sanchez, a Madrid-based lawyer for Hogan Lovells International LLP who specializes in white collar crime and fraud. "They are saying she cooperated with it, knew that her husband was doing it and allowed him to do it."

Details about the lavish life the couple enjoyed dribbled out in court paperwork released during the pre-trial investigation from 2011 to 2013, outraging Spaniards as the country teetered on the edge of financial chaos at the height of Europe's debt crisis. The case made for a steady stream of bad headlines for Cristina's father, former King Juan Carlos — already smarting from a big backlash after he broke his hip during a 2012 elephant hunting trip seen as an extreme example of royal excess.

Juan Carlos ended up abdicating in 2014, not mentioning the scandals bearing down on his reign but saying Spain needed fresh royal blood. Cristina's brother Felipe has never mentioned his sister's troubles directly but pledged to restore public trust in Spain's monarchy.

Shortly after taking over, he invoked a palace reshuffle that stripped Cristina and her older sister Princess Elena of their roles as official members of the royal family though they have not given up their slots of

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succession in line for the throne.

And six months after Felipe became king, a prosecutor recommended charges for Urdangarin carrying a possible sentence of 19½ years in prison while saying Cristina should not be indicted but ordered to pay 580,000 euros (\$711,000) to cover the amount she could have profited because of her husband's alleged illegal dealings.

But the judge disagreed, saying in court documents that many company expenses appeared personal in nature, honing in on household examples with bills for work or services at the mansion charged to Aizoon.

"As royal misdemeanors go, things don't get much worse than this," said Joe Little, managing editor of Britain's Majesty magazine.

Just as Felipe and his wife Queen Letizia are making their mark as Spain's new royal couple and "repairing damage to the monarchy, this thing is coming back and biting them. It's not guilt by association, but it's an unhelpful situation just when they have turned the corner," Little added.

Cristina's royal role of appearing in public was reduced as her legal troubles mounted during her father's reign, and it's been completely eliminated by her brother Felipe. She moved to Switzerland in 2013 and hasn't been seen for years at the summer palace in Mallorca, after being photographed there annually during Juan Carlos' reign in summer visits with her husband and their four children.

The princess was allowed to attend a royal-studded October funeral for a cousin of Juan Carlos, but her husband was nowhere in sight and she did not appear in any pictures with King Felipe or Letizia, who were present.

"There is nothing about them that helps Felipe, and what would help him most is for them not to exist," said Romero, also the author of the book "End Game" about the abdication of Juan Carlos. "You will never, ever see a picture of him as king with her again."

The trial is expected to create an unwelcome sideshow for Felipe as he and his wife try to boost their public image in official state trips this year to Britain, Japan and Saudi Arabia. Among witnesses expected to testify are former palace officials who will presumably be questioned on whether Juan Carlos knew and approved of his son-in-law's business dealings.

Cristina herself has a chance of avoiding the trial if the judges agree with her lawyers that a Spanish legal precedent should be applied to her case that allows tax fraud cases to be dropped when they are not initiated by prosecutors.

But the same tactic can't be used by her husband to avoid trial, meaning it's all but inevitable that details about the couple's everyday life behind the high walls of the mansion they were forced to sell during the investigation come out during the proceedings.

And that will make for a constant stream of high-profile news in Spain, which is in an economic recovery but still has sky-high unemployment of 21 percent.

"Felipe and Letizia are protected because they were not there and in power when this happened, but it will be a mirror on a very embarrassing time that people do not feel proud of," Romero said.

Chinese official who oversaw hospital demolition fired

BEIJING (AP) — Local officials in a central Chinese province violated rules in forcibly demolishing part of a hospital, sending medical staff fleeing and burying under rubble six bodies being processed at a morgue, a state broadcaster said Sunday.

Xiong Zhiliang, a district official overseeing demolition work in the city of Zhengzhou, was fired, while local police were further investigating the incident that took place on Thursday, China Central Television said.

Forced demolitions are common in Chinese cities, where local authorities turn to real estate development to fuel economic growth. Clashes over land are frequent, and some turn deadly.

The No. 4 Hospital of Zhengzhou University has accused the local government of ordering the demolition after failing to get the hospital to agree to a road expansion project.

The hospital management also complained to state media that it was extremely disrespectful for the demolition crew to bury the dead in the rubble.

The Huiji district government in Zhengzhou said Thursday that it sent in the bulldozer only after the

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hospital turned a deaf ear to requests that its CT room and morgue must be demolished to make way for the road project.

The district defended itself by saying that the workers checked that no one was inside before they torn down the buildings.

Family fires veteran's ashes out of guns at shooting range

HURRICANE, Utah (AP) — A Vietnam War veteran literally went out with a bang on Saturday, the St. George Spectrum newspaper reports (<http://bit.ly/1nazFiz>).

The son of Walter "Jim" Hosey of LaVerkin, Utah, loaded a total of 50 shotgun shells with his father's ashes and fired them off at the Southern Utah Shooting Sports Park in Hurricane with the help of relatives and friends.

His son, Clint Hosey, says: "I think he got a kick out of that."

The newspaper reports that Walter Hosey, who often visited the sports park, died on Jan. 2.

Spilsbury funeral director Mark Heiner called the firing of the shells "a fitting tribute to the way he lived."

Heiner told the Spectrum that he has read about funeral ashes being loaded into shells for memorial shooting, but it's the first instance he knows of in Utah.

AFC divisional matchups set: Steelers-Broncos; Chiefs-Pats

ROB MAADDI, AP Pro Football Writer

Big Ben vs. Peyton Manning. Andy Reid vs. Bill Belichick.

The Steelers are on to Denver while the Chiefs are heading to New England.

Ben Roethlisberger rallied the Steelers to an 18-16 comeback win over Cincinnati after being carted off the field with a right shoulder injury, setting up a divisional round playoff game against the Broncos (12-4) next Sunday.

The Steelers might be without star receiver Antonio Brown, who sustained a concussion after taking a shot to the head on the final drive Saturday night.

The Chiefs also could be without their top receiver following a 30-0 win at Houston. Jeremy Maclin had tears in his eyes when he was carted off with a right knee injury. Maclin will have an MRI on Sunday. He missed the entire 2013 season because of a torn right ACL.

The sixth-seeded Steelers (11-6) already beat the Broncos in Pittsburgh in Week 15. They rallied from a 17-point deficit by dominating the league's top defense in a 34-27 win. Roethlisberger passed for 380 yards and three touchdowns and Brown caught 16 passes for 189 yards and two scores.

Peyton Manning watched that game in street clothes. He'll be under center for the Broncos instead of Brock Osweiler next week. Manning relieved Osweiler in the second half of the regular-season finale and led Denver to a division-clinching win and the No. 1 seed in the conference.

The 39-year-old Manning will make his 25th playoff start and second against Pittsburgh. He's 11-13, including a loss to the Steelers a decade ago with Indianapolis.

Roethlisberger has the same number of playoff wins in only 16 postseason starts and one more Super Bowl ring (2-1) than Manning. Roethlisberger beat Manning and the Colts in their only playoff meeting 10 years ago.

If Roethlisberger can't play because of his shoulder injury, Landry Jones would make his first career playoff start. Jones was 1-1 filling in this season. Michael Vick is Pittsburgh's No. 3 quarterback.

The previous time the Steelers played the Broncos in the playoffs, Tim Tebow was the best quarterback on the field. Tebow threw for 316 yards, including an 80-yard TD pass to Demaryius Thomas in overtime in a 29-23 win at Denver on Jan. 8, 2012.

After routing the Texans (9-8) in the playoff opener, the Chiefs (12-5) had to wait a few hours to find out their next opponent.

They'll play New England (12-4) next Saturday afternoon for their first meeting since Week 4 of the 2014

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season. The Chiefs beat up on Tom Brady and the Patriots in a 41-14 victory.

Brady was 14 of 23 for 159 yards, one TD and two interceptions. Jimmy Garoppolo finished the game and there was some talk he should replace Brady as the starter. But the Patriots dominated the rest of the season and won their fourth Super Bowl.

While the Chiefs are the hottest team in the NFL, the injury-riddled Patriots stumbled to the finish. They lost their final two games to drop from first to second in the conference. They were 2-4 after a 10-0 start.

The Patriots lost running backs Dion Lewis and LeGarrette Blount for the season and star wideout Julian Edelman missed the last seven games.

Reid gets his first playoff rematch against Belichick since the Patriots beat his Philadelphia Eagles 24-21 in the Super Bowl 11 years ago.

Today in History The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Jan. 10, the 10th day of 2016. There are 356 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On Jan. 10, 1946, the first General Assembly of the United Nations convened in London. The first man-made contact with the moon was made as radar signals transmitted by the U.S. Army Signal Corps were bounced off the lunar surface.

On this date:

In 1776, Thomas Paine anonymously published his influential pamphlet, "Common Sense," which argued for American independence from British rule.

In 1861, Florida became the third state to secede from the Union.

In 1870, John D. Rockefeller incorporated Standard Oil.

In 1901, the Spindletop oil field in Beaumont, Texas, produced the Lucas Gusher, heralding the start of the Texas oil boom.

In 1916, men loyal to Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa stopped a train at Santa Ysabel and shot a group of U.S. mining employees execution-style (the reported number of dead varies from 16 to 18).

In 1920, the League of Nations was established as the Treaty of Versailles (vehr-SY') went into effect.

In 1947, the musical fantasy "Finian's Rainbow," with music by Burton Lane and lyrics by E.Y. Harburg, opened on Broadway.

In 1957, Harold Macmillan became prime minister of Britain, following the resignation of Anthony Eden.

In 1967, Massachusetts Republican Edward W. Brooke, the first black elected to the U.S. Senate by popular vote, took his seat.

In 1971, "Masterpiece Theatre" premiered on PBS with host Alistair Cooke introducing the drama series "The First Churchills." French fashion designer Coco Chanel died in Paris at age 87.

In 1984, the United States and the Vatican established full diplomatic relations for the first time in more than a century.

In 2000, America Online announced it was buying Time Warner for \$162 billion (the merger, which proved disastrous, ended in Dec. 2009).

Ten years ago: Iran resumed nuclear research two years after halting the work to avoid possible U.N. economic sanctions. Apple Computer CEO Steve Jobs unveiled an iMac computer based on Intel chips at the Macworld Expo in San Francisco. Bruce Sutter became the fourth relief pitcher elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Five years ago: The nation got its first look at Jared Loughner, the accused assailant of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, as a federal judge in Phoenix ordered the 22-year-old suspect held without bail. A judge in Austin, Texas, ordered former U.S. House Majority Leader Tom DeLay to serve three years in prison for his money laundering conviction. (DeLay's conviction was ultimately overturned.) No. 1 Auburn beat No. 2 Oregon 22-19 on a last-second field goal to win the BCS national title. Singer Margaret Whiting, 86, died

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in Englewood, New Jersey.

One year ago: Hundreds of thousands of people marched in French cities from Toulouse in the south to Rennes in the west to honor the victims of recent terror attacks. SpaceX sent a supply ship soaring flawlessly toward the International Space Station, but the booster rocket ended up in pieces in the Atlantic following a failed attempt to land on a barge.

Today's Birthdays: Opera singer Sherrill Milnes is 81. Blues artist Eddy Clearwater is 81. Rock singer-musician Ronnie Hawkins is 81. Baseball Hall of Famer Willie McCovey is 78. Movie director Walter Hill is 76. Actor William Sanderson is 72. Singer Frank Sinatra Jr. is 72. Singer Rod Stewart is 71. Rock singer-musician Donald Fagen (Steely Dan) is 68. Boxing Hall of Famer and entrepreneur George Foreman is 67. Roots rock singer Alejandro Escovedo is 65. Rock musician Scott Thurston (Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers) is 64. Singer Pat Benatar is 63. Hall of Fame race car driver and team owner Bobby Rahal is 63. Rock musician Michael Schenker is 61. Singer Shawn Colvin is 60. Rock singer-musician Curt Kirkwood (Meat Puppets) is 57. Actor Evan Handler is 55. Rock singer Brad Roberts (Crash Test Dummies) is 52. Actress Trini Alvarado is 49. Rock musician Matt Roberts is 38. Rock singer Brent Smith (Shinedown) is 38. Rapper Chris Smith (Kris Kross) is 37. Actress Sarah Shahi is 36.

Thought for Today: "In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." — Ecclesiastes 1:18.