

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Thursday, January 28

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

**School Lunch:** Chicken dummies, muffin, smile potato, lettuce, fruit.

**Senior Menu:** Roast beef, potatoes and carrots and onions, gravy, peaches, multi-grain dinner roll.

**Birthdays:** Audrey Miller, Deanna Hendrickson, Loren Locken, Ruby Luce

5:15pm: GBB at Sisseton (C game at 5:15, JV at 6:30, Varsity at 8:00)

6:00pm: Wrestling Triangler host Deuel and Redfield-Doland

## Friday, January 29

Debate at Yankton

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

**School Lunch:** BBQ, tater tots, carrots and dip, fruit.

**Senior Menu:** Breaded codfish, parsley buttered potatoes, coleslaw, orange sherbet, whole wheat bread.

**Birthdays:** Dorene Nelson, Glenda LaMee, Loren Wheeler

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

## Saturday, January 30

Debate at Yankton

**Birthdays:** Mary Kay Houdek, Patty Baule, Trevor Harry

10:00am: Groton Wrestling Tourney

3:00pm: GBB at Gettysburg

4:30pm: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church Mass

## Sunday, January 31

**Birthdays:** Ann Sheridan, Emma Jo Larson

9:00am: Emmanuel Lutheran School

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

## The cardboard/paper

recycling trailer at the school is **Open**

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## JOHNSON AGENCY

Real Estate & Insurance

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**Groton Daily**  
INDEPENDENT

110 N Washington St., Groton  
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Follow The Groton  
Activities On-Line



Paul Irvin Kosel and Justin Olson  
Julianna and Jeslyn Kosel

# gdilive.com

**Coming up this week at [gdilive.com](http://gdilive.com)**

**Thursday, Jan. 28: Girls' Basketball at Sisseton (Varsity only)**

**Friday, Jan. 29: Boys' Basketball hosting Sisseton (JV and Varsity)**

**Saturday, Jan. 30: Girls' Basketball at Gettysburg (Varsity only)**

**Saturday, Jan. 30: Groton Wrestling Tournament**

**Sunday, Jan. 31: 2 p.m. Performance of the Carnival of Silver Skates**

Ready to bring your heart and expertise to a team that feels more like a family? Bring your passion for patient care to the Golden LivingCenter in Groton. The Groton facility is now hiring for CNAs and Nurses. They have new wages with an excellent benefits package. All shifts are open. Join the team today by calling Jessica at 397-2365. The Golden LivingCenter of Groton is looking for you!

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## Groton Prairie Mixed

**Team Standings:** Coyotes 16, Chipmunks 12, Pocket Gophers 12, Foxes 11 ½, Shih Tzus 11, Jackelopes 9 ½

**Men's High Games:** Brad Waage 269, 210, Doug Jorgensen 239, 201, Ryan Sperry 221, Brad Larson 216

**Women's High Games:** Lori Giedt 197, Sue Stanley 182, 181, Karen Spanier 179

**Men's High Series:** Brad Waage 659, Doug Jorgensen 595, Brad Larson 550

**Women's High Series:** Sue Stanley 496, Karen Spanier 485, Dar Larson 484

## School Board Jan. 25 Minutes

UNOFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF BOARD OF EDUCATION

GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 06-6

REGULAR MEETING

January 25, 2016

Vice President Kjelden called the meeting to order at 7:00pm in the High School Conference Room. Members present: Hanson, Harder, Kjelden, Nelson, Rix and Weismantel. Absent: Smith. Others present: Superintendent J. Schwan, Principals A. Schwan and B. Schwan and Business Manager Weber.

Moved by Weismantel, second Nelson to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Members of the public were allowed five minutes to address the board on any topic of their choice. With no public members present to speak, the board proceeded with their remaining agenda items.

The board heard program presentations from Math Teachers Jordan Kjellsen and Darlyne Johnson and Social Science Teachers Shaun Wanner, Scott Thorson and Mary Johnson.

No board committee reports were given.

The long-range facility presentation was discussed. Moved by Harder, second Weismantel to have Foster, Jacobs and Johnson, Inc. proceed with the study as presented. Motion carried.

The board acknowledged second reading policy changes to AC - Nondiscrimination in Federal Programs (Amend); AC-E(1) Nondiscrimination in Federal Programs Complaint Form (New); AC-E(2) Nondiscrimination in Federal Programs Appeal to Superintendent Form (New); AC-E(3) Nondiscrimination in Federal Programs Appeal to School Board (New); ACAA – Sexual Harassment (Amend); ACAA-E(1) Sexual Harassment Complaint Form (New); ACAA-E(2) Sexual Harassment Complaint Appeal to Superintendent (New); ACAA-E(3) Sexual Harassment Complaint Appeal to School Board (New); BBE – Unexpired Term Fulfillment (Amend); BDDC – Agenda Preparation and Dissemination (Amend); CIA – Principal Evaluations (New); EBCD – Emergency Closings (Amend); GBAA – Veterans Preference (New); GCD – Professional Staff Hiring (Amend); GCN – Professional Teaching Staff Evaluation (Amend); JHG – Reporting Child Abuse (Amend); JO – Student Records (Amend); JO-E(1) – Student Records Notice of Rights (Amend); JOA – Student Directory Information (Amend); JOA-E(1) – Student Records Notice of Rights (Amend); JOA-E(2) – Student Directory Information Opt Out (Amend); KL – Complaint Against School Employee (Amend); KL-E(1) – Complaint Against School Employee Report Form (New); KL-E(2) – Complaint Against School Employee Appeal to Superintendent (New); and KL-E(3) Complaint Against School Employee Appeal to School Board (New). Moved by Nelson, second Hanson to approve as presented. Motion carried.

The following items were discussed in administrative reports: legislative session, special education accountability review, HS instrumental music position, elementary math review, Region V Superintendent meeting, PAC and OST updates, elementary student challenge, developmental screening, bond refinance update, Science curriculum pathways, North East Area Principals meeting and mini-staff development sessions.

The board reviewed Highway 37 Project Plans. Moved by Rix, second Hanson to approve Offer and Statement of Compensation from South Dakota Department of Transportation and authorize Board President to sign related documents. Motion carried.

The board reviewed specifications for a new school bus for FY '17. Moved by Hanson, second Weism-

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antel to authorize Weber to advertise for bids and set a bid opening date of February 22nd at 2:00 pm. Motion carried.

The board discussed signage on Doney Field. A private donor has offered to increase and/or improve the signage honoring former coach Perry Doney at the football field. Member Nelson will meet with the donor and report to the board at the next meeting.

The board discussed Donor Recognition Boards for the Arena Lobby. The plaques are full with over 5 years of donators. The board discussed purchasing additional plaques or replacing the names that are on the existing plaques. No action was taken.

Moved by Harder, second Nelson to amend the work agreement for Karin Bartell from 7.0 hours per day to 7.5 hours per day effective January 18, 2016. Motion carried.

Moved by Nelson, second Weismantel to adjourn. Motion carried.

M. J. Weber, Business Manager

Steven R. Smith, President

The addition of signatures to this page verifies these minutes as official.

## Wehde Family Thank You

**The family of Robert "Bob" Wehde would like to thank everyone who showered us with your sympathy and love by attending his memorial service and through your many phone calls, cards, memorials, flowers, food, hugs and kind words.**

**Special thanks go out to Andrea of Paetznick Garness for all of her help and guidance, Pastor Thomas Carlson for his visit and comforting words, Barbara Paepke and Susan Ellingson for their beautiful music, the members of the Groton Legion Post #39 Honor Guard for their part in the service and Bob's church family for preparing and serving the delicious lunch. Bob's love for his family, friends and community will remain in the hearts of all who knew him. May God Bless you all!**

**Mary Ann Wehde & family**

**Donna Cassels & family**

## FCCLA Meeting

The Groton FCCLA Chapter met on January 12, 2016 in the FACS room. FCCLA President, Hannah Webb, called the meeting to order, there were twenty nine members present. We opened the meeting with our open ceremony, minutes of the previous meeting were read. No corrections were made. The treasurer's report was read by treasurer, Lexi Harder. Unfinished business, Erika Herr is the officer of the month; Need more people to sign up for nails and OST, and fundraisers and got flowers for Padfeild family. New business January 22 is when the pizza party and thirty seven people qualified. FCCLA week starts February 8-11. Also doing Mr. and Mrs. Sweetheart for Valentine's week. We will be selling lollipops during the JH and HS lunch time and at the girls game against Roncolli. Will be sold for \$1.00 each. The meeting was closed with no closing ceremony. The Secretary's record was submitted by Kellyn Fluke and Erika Herr. Snacks were provided by the officer of the month, Erika Herr.

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## Today in Weather History

January 28, 1983: Freezing rain coated much of eastern South Dakota with up to a half inch accumulation before it changed over to light snow from the late evening of the 28th to the late evening of the 29th. The combination of ice, light snow, and very strong winds made travel extremely difficult. Numerous accidents and stranded vehicles resulted. Visibilities were near zero at times.

January 28, 1996: Extreme wind chills developed across central, north central, and northeast South Dakota as well as west central Minnesota as cold arctic air moved in behind an area of low pressure. With temperatures falling well below zero and northwest winds increasing to 20 to 35 mph, wind chills were lowered to 40 to 70 below throughout the night of the 28th and into the evening of the 29th. Two to five inches of snow had fallen across the area. The strong northwest winds caused areas of blowing snow significantly reducing visibilities. Big Stone and Traverse counties experienced a blizzard for about six hours on the 29th.

January 28, 2013: A low pressure system moving slowly across the region produced a moderate to heavy band of snow across much of central and northeastern South Dakota. Snowfall rates were greater than one inch per hour in some locations. Several area schools and businesses were either closed or opened late on the 29th.

Local Climate Information:

1887: Snowflakes "as large as milk pans" fell at Fort Keogh of Montana. The flakes, which were said to measure 15 inches across and 8 inches thick, hold the unofficial size record!

1986: The Space Shuttle Challenger exploded at 11:39am EST; 73 seconds after liftoff from the Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral, Florida on an extremely cold morning. Starting in the 20s, the ground temperature at liftoff was 36 degrees. Morton Thiokol recommended not launching if the liftoff temperature was below 53 degrees. The cold was blamed for causing the O-rings on the Shuttle's external booster to fail, leading to the explosion. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the History Channel.










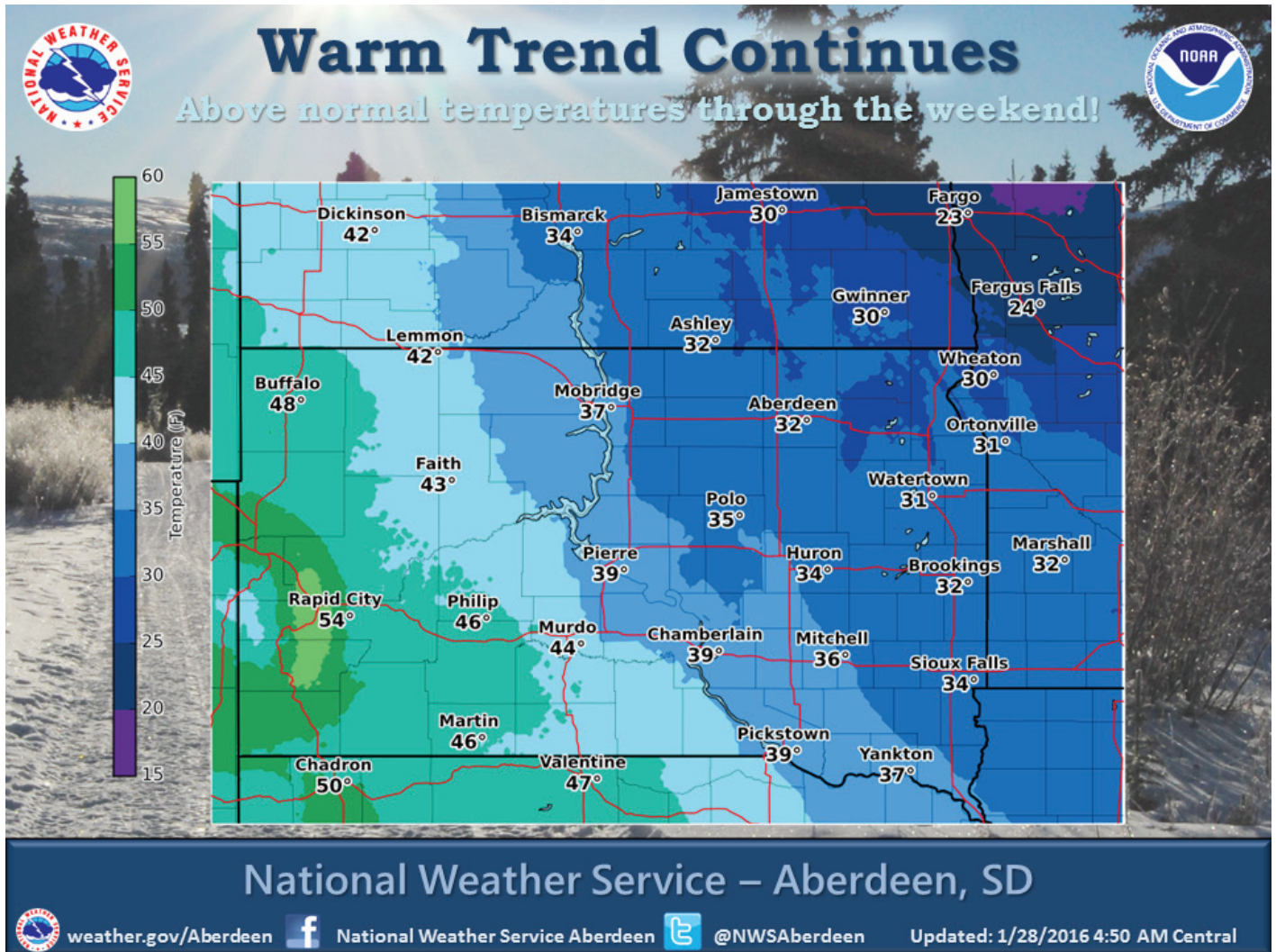
# Think of it!

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**of the wedding.**  
**Call Paper Paul at 605/397-7460 for**  
**details.**

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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
						
Increasing Clouds	Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Rain and Breezy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny
High: 32 °F ↓	Low: 25 °F	High: 43 °F	Low: 25 °F	High: 37 °F	Low: 24 °F	High: 35 °F



Slightly cooler air and clouds will be over northeast SD and west central MN today, whereas a warmer air mass and periods of sunshine can be expected for much of western and central SD. Temperatures on Friday will be even warmer, but light rain or sprinkles will be possible as a quick moving clipper system slides across the northern plains.

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## Yesterday's Weather

**High:** 42.4 at 3:46 PM

**Low:** 9.3 at Midnight

**High Gust:** 26 at 4:40 AM

Precip: 0.00

## Today's Info

**Record High:** 53° in 1931

**Record Low:** -31° in 1915

**Average High:** 23°F

**Average Low:** 2°F

**Average Precip in Jan.:** 0.43

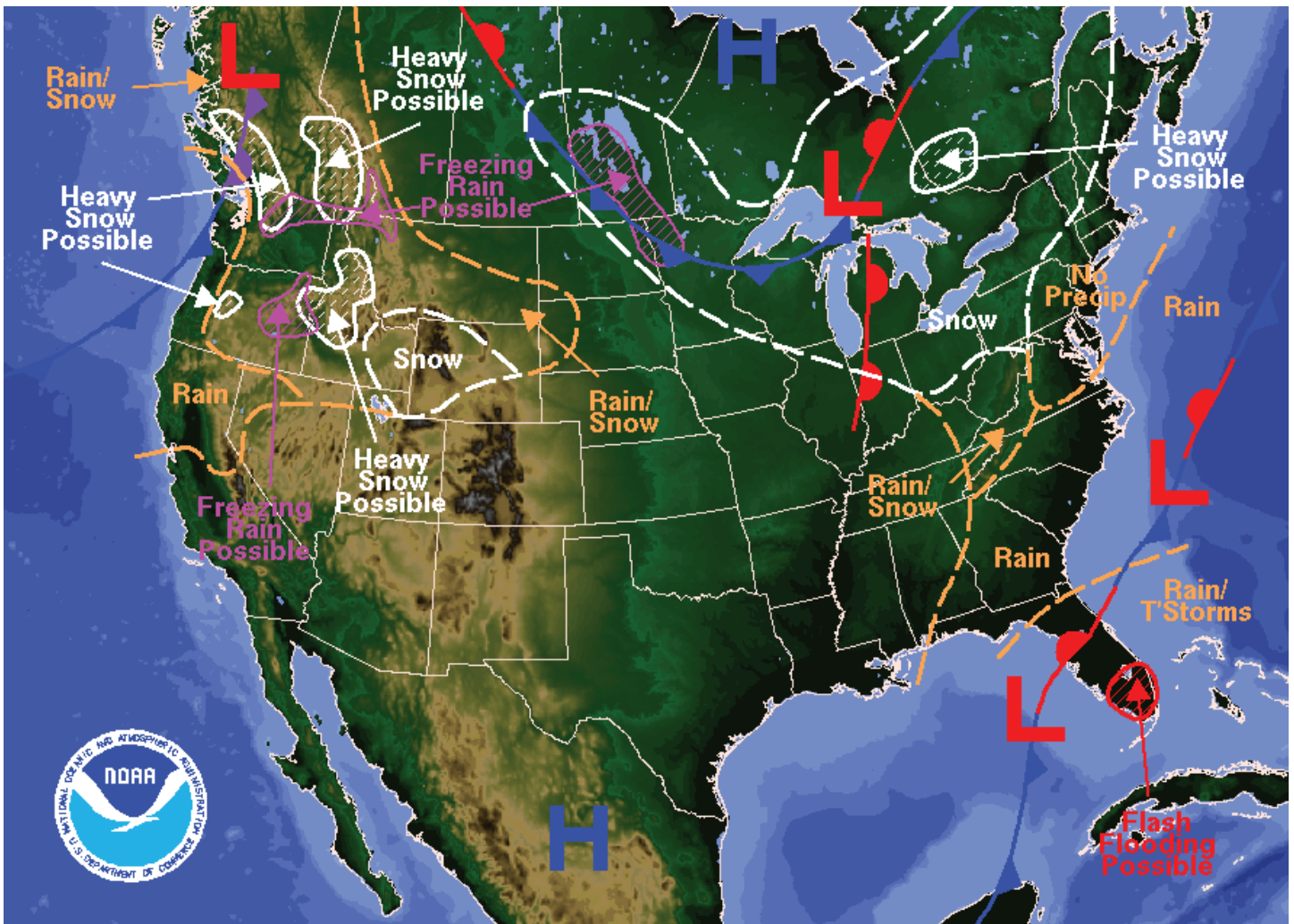
**Precip to date in Jan.:** 0.00

**Average Precip to date:** 0.43

**Precip Year to Date:** 0.00

**Sunset Tonight:** 5:34 p.m.

**Sunrise Tomorrow:** 7:58 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Thu, Jan 28, 2016, issued 2:34 AM EST  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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## CURIOSITY

Luther Burbank, the famous horticulturist, enjoyed entertaining and getting to know his guests. He always insisted that they sign his guest book before leaving. One column in the book asked the guests to describe their interests.

When Thomas Edison visited, Burbank asked him to be certain to sign his guest book. In the column where the guests were to describe their interests, Edison wrote the word, "Everything!"

His life reflected his interests. Among his many inventions were the phonograph, the telegraph, the incandescent light, the motion picture camera, light sockets, the dictating machine, iron ore products and wax paper.

The Bible tells the story of a short, determined, tax collector. He was desperately interested in seeing Jesus, but he could not see Him because he was so short and the crowd so large. He solved his problem by climbing a tree. Not only did he see Jesus, but Jesus saw him. As a result, Zacchaeus got saved. When our primary interest in life is to see Jesus, we can be assured that He will make Himself visible.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, may we look above the crowds and the things of life to seek, find, and know You. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

**Scripture for Today:** Luke 19:1-10 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."



### **2 indicted in death of woman on Pine Ridge Reservation**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A federal grand jury has indicted a man and a woman from Pine Ridge in the death of a woman on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

Twenty-three-year-old Elizabeth LeBeau is charged with first-degree murder, and 29-year-old Fred Quiver is charged with being an accessory. U.S. Attorney Randolph Seiler says Quiver also goes by the name Fred Brings Plenty.

The relationship between LeBeau and Quiver isn't clear. It's also not immediately clear how they knew 24-year-old Emily Blue Bird.

Blue Bird's body was found last Thursday in a creek near Pine Ridge. The mother of two had been missing for nearly three weeks. Authorities say she was strangled.

LeBeau and Quiver are in custody in Pine Ridge. The Associated Press requested comment from the federal public defender's office.

### **Plan requiring drug tests for welfare faces first hearing**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A measure that would require South Dakota welfare applicants under 65 to pass drug tests before receiving food stamps or cash assistance is set to face its first legislative test.

The bill is scheduled for a committee hearing Thursday.

If a welfare applicant tests positive, they would be barred from receiving the benefits for a year under the plan.

Republican Rep. Lynne DiSanto is the main House sponsor. She says that South Dakota taxpayers want to know that they're not subsidizing recipients' drug habits.

The measure would require applicants to pay for the test. An applicant can contest a decision to deny benefits under the plan.

Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard has called the bill "somewhat insulting."

House Majority Leader Brian Gosch says he thinks the measure is likely to fail.

### **AP Newsbreak: Nevada seeks change in sage grouse mining rule**

**SCOTT SONNER, Associated Press**

RENO, Nev. (AP) — The governor of gold-rich Nevada is pressing the Obama administration to alter its sage grouse protection plan to free up thousands of mining claims by shrinking the restricted area in exchange for making other unprotected areas off limits, restoring burned out rangeland and reining in wild horse herds.

Gov. Brian Sandoval maintains his alternative would exclude only about 6 percent of the federal land the government has temporarily withdrawn from future mineral development in Nevada, where previously unverified mining claims are effectively frozen across 4,200 square miles — a swath nearly as large as the state of Connecticut.

The moderate Republican wants to swap about one-fifth of the withdrawn area, some 555,000 acres, for 394,000 alternative acres he says contain higher quality habitat more critical to the survival of the imperiled bird, according to interviews with his aides and documents obtained by The Associated Press.

Interior Secretary Sally Jewell decided in September the greater sage grouse didn't warrant Endangered Species Act protection across 11 western states, where its numbers once totaling an estimated 16 million have dwindled to 200,000 to 500,000.

But almost simultaneously, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management adopted new regulations restricting development around grouse habitat that some critics say are just as onerous for ranchers, miners and others.

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Jewell also initiated a 2-year ban on new mining exploration in grouse habitat while the government studies whether tens of thousands of square miles across the West should be withdrawn from potential "mineral entry" for another 10 years.

In a Jan. 15 letter to BLM Director Neil Kornze, Sandoval argued a more effective way to protect the chicken-sized bird is to step up wildfire restoration and reduce "out-of-control" mustang populations. He says there's no scientific basis for the mining withdrawal, but asks that if necessary, it be limited to a maximum of five years. He also urged federal officials to clarify their "confusing" definition of "valid existing claims," which Jewell insists are exempt.

In detailed comments attached to the letter, Sandoval's office outlined the plan he says would protect 49 additional leks — the bird's traditional breeding grounds — while dropping protection of five others in the government blueprint.

Slightly shifting protection boundaries based on new maps would release all but 1 percent of the 3,726 mining claims currently in limbo in the biggest U.S. gold-producing state, he said.

"Nevada has developed maps that propose better boundaries that take into account existing mining operations and exploration activities that are crucial to the economy of Nevada and the nation," Sandoval wrote.

BLM Nevada spokesman Stephen Clutter said the agency appreciates Sandoval's "leadership on this issue."

"We will certainly give serious consideration to these ideas as well as the other scoping comments we have received," Clutter said.

Sandoval joined Jewell at her listing announcement in Denver in September, and started lobbying her directly on alternative approaches during an hour-long private meeting at a Western Governors' Association meeting in Las Vegas in December.

His refusal to join a lawsuit intended to block implementation of all new grouse protections — backed by his fellow GOP Attorney General Adam Laxalt — has drawn the ire of rural leaders who fear the regulations could put mines and ranches out of business. But last month, U.S. District Judge Miranda Du refused to grant a temporary injunction freezing the rules, which means a trial won't begin in Reno before mid-summer.

Sandoval maintains that offering reasonable, detailed alternatives is the only realistic way to win any relief, especially for mining companies in Nevada with claims at varying stages of development. He believes the government's plan "will not be able to show any measurable results except for the demise of the mineral exploration industry in Nevada."

## Premier Center posts \$1.9M in net operating income for 2015

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls officials say the city's new arena and events center posted a year-end net operating income of \$1.9 million in 2015.

Officials say the Denny Sanford Premier Center's first full calendar year included 11 sold-out events, and the arena hosted nearly 646,000 people over 135 event dates. Those attendees contributed nearly \$1.5 million in sales tax revenue.

Mayor Mike Huether says officials made a commitment to Sioux Falls residents that they would do their best to operate the events center in the black.

## House votes to send student bathroom bill to state Senate

**JAMES NORD, Associated Press**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A bill limiting transgender students' bathroom and locker room usage may have a better chance of passing the state Senate than efforts last year to void an activities association policy to accommodate transgender athletes, Majority Leader Corey Brown said Wednesday.

The state House approved a bill that would require students to use bathrooms and locker rooms that correspond to their biological sex, sending it over to the Senate.

Rep. Fred Deutsch said his bathroom plan is meant to protect the privacy of students while using showers, locker rooms and restrooms in public schools. The Republican said it has "nothing to do" with the activities association, which allows transgender student athletes to request playing on the team of their choice.

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"I look at this as a values-based bill. Do we want our children to shower and dress in front of children of the opposite biologic sex? Is that who we are? Is that who we're becoming?" he said.

Under the plan, schools must also provide "reasonable accommodations" for transgender students' needs. Accommodations include a single-occupancy bathroom or the "controlled use" of a staff-designated restroom, locker room or shower room.

The American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota and the Human Rights Campaign, groups that oppose the measure, say South Dakota would be the first state to pass such a law.

"This bill creates a hostile and toxic climate in South Dakota's education system for children who are transgender," Matt McTighe, executive director of national LGBT-rights group Freedom for All Americans, said in a statement. "With this and other harmful legislation pending, South Dakota legislators seem determined to make sure the state is an unwelcoming place for LGBT people to live and work."

Deutsch said the plan is a response the Obama administration's "overreach" in interpretation of federal anti-discrimination law related to education.

Federal officials have said that barring students from restrooms that match their gender identity is prohibited under Title IX anti-discrimination law.

Democratic Rep. Karen Soli called the bill "government overreach." She said a state law mandating how schools handle bathroom and locker room use "for our children and teenagers who are struggling to live in a body that does not match their understanding of themselves ... is neither wise nor necessary."

Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard told the Argus Leader that he hasn't yet read the bill, but said "it seems like a good accommodation."

Some legislators this session are also attempting again to void the current South Dakota High School Activities Association policy on transgender student athletes.

The bill says that a student's sex is what's listed on the birth certificate. If a birth certificate lacks a designation, a student's sex can be determined from a physical exam.

Sponsor Rep. Roger Hunt, a Republican from Brandon, has said it's inappropriate to allow people to ignore certain information on an official state document.

Efforts to block the policy during the 2015 session stalled in the Senate after easily passing through the House.

## **Feds: Deadline to sign up for health insurance is Sunday**

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakotans who don't have health insurance have until Sunday to sign up to ensure they receive coverage in 2016.

The third enrollment season for President Barack Obama's signature health care law began in November. It ends Jan. 31.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services says over 24,000 people in South Dakota have so far selected plans or have been automatically re-enrolled.

About 88 percent of those choosing plans have been deemed eligible for financial assistance.

Nationwide, about 8.9 million people have signed up for the first time or re-enrolled in coverage since the third enrollment period began.

Those who sign up by Sunday will avoid a penalty on their taxes when they file next year.

## **Regents policy holds up signing of new USD football coach**

**DIRK LAMMERS, Associated Press**

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The University of South Dakota can't officially sign its new head football coach until the state Board of Regents temporarily suspends a longstanding policy prohibiting multiyear contracts.

School officials announced the hiring of Western Illinois coach Bob Nielson in December, and Nielson has been busy assembling his staff after agreeing to a \$255,000 annual salary, Athletic Director David Herbster said.

But Nielson is seeking a long-term commitment, and current policy only allows one-year contracts for employees. On Friday, the board will consider approving a one-time suspension of its policy, the board's executive director Michael Rush said. Only after that, — and the regents' approval of Nielson's contract — will the length of it be known.

"Ultimately, we don't have this contract approved yet," Herbster said. "He knows it, and that's what we're working on."

Rush said he expects the board will approve the one-time suspension during its morning teleconference, and a separate vote would direct staff to develop a policy to deal with the matter in a more permanent basis.

"I'm pretty confident that there will be a change in permanent policy to reflect kind of the realities of Division I athletics," he said.

When Coyotes' coach Joe Glenn announced he was retiring in November, school officials decided they would go after someone coaching in the same conference — the Missouri Valley Football Conference. Glenn earned \$147,000 last year, but the conference's average annual salary for head coaches has grown to \$250,000, and Herbster knew any qualified candidate would want the security of a multiyear deal.

Nielson, 56, led the Leathernecks for three years, including this past season's 7-6 record and an FCS playoffs appearance, earning him the conference's honor of Coach of the Year. It was the first playoff appearance for the Leathernecks since 2010.

Herbster said the multiyear contract prohibition affected South Dakota's two major schools even when they played in the Division II North Central Conference alongside St. Cloud State, Minnesota State-Mankato and Minnesota-Duluth because those two were the only schools for the most part that didn't offer multiyear contracts.

Herbster, who previously as athletic director for former NCC rival Nebraska-Omaha, said some schools used the policy issue in recruiting, telling prospective athletes that if they go to a South Dakota school there's no guarantee that coach would be around longer than a year.

Rush said he's not sure if the issue has come up before the board before, as he's only served as executive director since July 1.

## 'Good Samaritan' measure headed to state House floor

**JAMES NORD, Associated Press**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A state House committee approved a 'good Samaritan' measure Wednesday that would protect underage drinkers from facing some criminal penalties during medical emergencies.

The bill, now headed to the House floor, says that someone can't be prosecuted for crimes such as underage consumption if they help during an alcohol-related emergency, report it and stay on scene to cooperate with law enforcement. The immunity would also apply to someone who reports their own emergency.

Medical providers and state health and public safety officials supported the measure, which faced opposition from representatives for sheriffs and prosecutors.

"We don't want individuals to hesitate asking for help because they're afraid of facing criminal charges," said Kristi Turman, who represented the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

Opponents argued that South Dakota residents should simply do the right thing during emergencies. Paul Bachand, executive director of the South Dakota State's Attorneys Association, said the problem of underage drinking should be better addressed before there's a dire medical situation.

"They ought to be doing what's right because it's right," he said. "It's as simple as that."

The panel also approved a similar measure for drug overdoses that would bar prosecution for some misdemeanor-level drug crimes. Republican Rep. Lance Russell successfully pushed an amendment that removed felony immunity from the plan based on "grave concerns" about the distinction between misdemeanor and felony offenses.

Marijuana possession in South Dakota law is a misdemeanor; it's a felony to have drugs such as heroin, methamphetamine and cocaine.

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"In my opinion, this would gut the bill," Republican Rep. Isaac Latterell said.

Sponsor Rep. Scott Munsterman, a Republican from Brookings, said there will likely be an attempt to add felony-level protections back into the bill on the House floor.

The measure would protect against ingestion or possession offenses only if evidence to prosecute was found because of a request for medical assistance.

Advocates told the panel that both proposals would help save lives. Terry Dosch, executive director of the South Dakota Council of Substance Abuse Directors, said the alcohol and drug treatment agencies he represents work with drug users and their families to direct people to addiction help.

"We can't do that if a crisis situation results in a fatality that precludes our ability to intervene," he said. "It's as pure and simple as that."

## Tickets on sale for Division II Elite Eight women's tourney

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Tickets are now on sale for the 2016 NCAA Division II Women's Basketball Elite Eight tournament in Sioux Falls.

The tournament is March 22-23 at the Sanford Pentagon. The Sioux Falls Sports Authority announced the launch of ticket sales on Wednesday.

All-session passes are \$25 for adults. Student and group discounts are available.

Sioux Falls also is hosting one of four Division I women's basketball regionals on March 25 and March 27 at the Denny Sanford Premier Center. A combined all-session pass for the Division II Elite Eight and Division I regional is available and ranges from \$55 to \$95.

## Dell Rapids teacher accused of inappropriate texts resigns

DELL RAPIDS, S.D. (AP) — A Dell Rapids teacher accused of inappropriately texting a student has stepped down.

The School Board during a special meeting on Wednesday accepted the music teacher's resignation.

A female student recently obtained a protection order against the male teacher. Court documents allege he sent sexually explicit messages to the student via Facebook in December. The school district placed the teacher on leave earlier this month.

The teacher has not been charged with a crime. A Feb. 9 hearing was scheduled on whether the protection order will be extended.

## Man pleads guilty to manslaughter in Rapid City shooting

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A man accused of fatally shooting his cousin in Rapid City over Memorial Day weekend last year has pleaded guilty to manslaughter in a deal with prosecutors.

Twenty-one-year-old Sean Marshall earlier had pleaded not guilty to murder in the death of 22-year-old Charles Metcalf. He was to stand trial beginning this coming Monday but pleaded guilty to the reduced charge this week and is to be sentenced Feb. 19.

Prosecutors will recommend a 35-year prison sentence. A judge must approve.

Authorities said Marshall admitted to shooting Metcalf but also said he feared for his life because Metcalf had threatened him.

Police said Metcalf was shot in the back multiple times.

## Patriots fan gets tattoo declaring Super Bowl win

BOSTON (AP) — A New England Patriots fan was a bit premature when he got a tattoo declaring the team champions of a game they never reached — yet he says he has no regrets.

Thirty-one-year-old Burke O'Connell says he strongly believed the Patriots would win the AFC Championship and advance to the Super Bowl.

The Massachusetts native had a friend ink the celebratory tattoo across his calf two days before the Patriots lost to the Denver Broncos.

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The black-and-white tattoo depicts a Lombardi Trophy rising above the Patriots' logo, along with the number "50" and the word "Champs."

O'Connell, who now lives in Los Angeles, tells The Boston Globe he has no regrets. He says his chin tattoo of an ex-girlfriend's name — now covered up — was much worse.

## UN to decide if Zika virus is a global health emergency

**JAMEY KEATEN, Associated Press**

**MARIA CHENG, Associated Press**

GENEVA (AP) — The World Health Organization says it is convening an emergency committee on Monday to decide if the Zika virus outbreak should be declared an international health emergency.

At a special meeting Thursday in Geneva, WHO Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan said the virus — which has been linked to birth defects and neurological problems — was "spreading explosively."

Zika virus was first detected in 1947 and for decades, only caused mild disease. But Chan noted that "the situation today is dramatically different."

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the Zika virus is now in more than 20 countries, mostly in Central and South America.

Chan said although there was no definitive proof that the Zika virus was responsible for a spike in the number of babies being born with abnormally small heads in Brazil, "the level of alarm is extremely high." She also noted a possible relationship between Zika infection and Guillain-Barre syndrome, which can cause temporary paralysis.

"The possible links, only recently suspected, have rapidly changed the risk profile of Zika from a mild threat to one of alarming proportions," Chan said.

There is no specific treatment or vaccine for Zika, which is related to dengue — scientists have struggled for years to develop a dengue vaccine but have failed to create a viable shot so far.

The U.N. health agency last declared an international emergency over the devastating 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, which ended up killing more than 11,000 people.

## Markets weighed down by Fed caution ahead of US data run

**The Associated Press**

LONDON (AP) — Concerns over the state of the global economic recovery following some cautious comments from the U.S. Federal Reserve weighed on global markets on Thursday ahead of a raft of U.S. economic data.

**KEEPING SCORE:** In Europe, the FTSE 100 index of leading British shares was down 1 percent at 5,935 while Germany's DAX fell 1.6 percent to 9,724. The CAC-40 in France was 1.2 percent lower at 4,329. U.S. stocks were set for an uninspiring open following Wednesday's big retreat on Wall Street, when both the main indexes fell by more than 1 percent.

**FED CAUTION:** The latest pullback in stock markets came after the Fed issued a cautious assessment of the global economy while also downgrading its view of U.S. growth. In a statement following their latest policy meeting, Fed officials suggested they might slow down the pace of interest rate hikes in light of the recent turmoil in financial markets. However, they did give themselves room to maneuver by not committing outright to a delay. After the Fed hiked interest rates in December for the first time in more than a decade, there had been widespread speculation that it would pull the trigger again in March.

**US DATA:** There's a raft of U.S. economic data later that could have an impact on how Wall Street performs. As well as weekly jobless claims, traders have figures on pending home sales and durable goods orders to digest.

**CENTRAL BANKS:** The Fed was the latest central bank to sound a note of caution about the state of the global economy. Last week, the European Central Bank indicated that it may enact another monetary stimulus in March. The Bank of Japan holds a policy meeting overnight and many in the markets think it will commit to more stimulus measures itself.

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**ANALYST TAKE:** "Already we've seen the ECB signal its intentions to ease monetary policy further in March and I would not be surprised if we get a similar commitment from the BoJ tonight, at the very least," said Craig Erlam, senior market analyst at OANDA. "We could even see monetary easing announced tonight, which could have an impact on global markets."

**ASIAN SCORECARD:** Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 index gave up early gains to end 0.7 percent lower at 17,041.45. South Korea's Kospi added 0.5 percent to 1,906.94. Hong Kong's Hang Seng zigzagged before finishing 0.8 percent higher at 19,195.83. The Shanghai Composite Index in mainland China was fairly steady for most of the day until dropping steeply in the last hour, closing 2.9 percent lower at 2,655.66.

**OIL:** The worries over the global economy have prompted big moves in the oil markets over the past few weeks. The benchmark New York rate has fallen to near 13-year lows, for example. For now, a floor in the price appears to have been forged amid speculation that the OPEC oil cartel may decide to cut production. On Thursday, oil prices were flat following a big advance in the previous session. The benchmark New York rate was up 3 cents at \$32.33 a barrel while Brent, the international standard, was up 33 cents at \$33.43.

**CURRENCIES:** Trading in foreign exchange markets was subdued with the euro up 0.1 percent at \$1.0908 and the dollar up 0.3 percent at 118.85 yen.

## Sting to perform halftime show at NBA All-Star Game

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Sting is trading "Fields of Gold" for a court of all-stars.

The Grammy-winning artist known for hits like "Roxanne" and "Desert Rose" will perform the halftime show at the NBA All-Star Game on Feb. 14 at the Air Canada Centre in Toronto.

Cirque du Soleil will perform a routine before the game that illustrates "the story of a basketball dream."

Actor-rapper Drake and actor-comedian Kevin Hart will serve as coaches for the NBA All-Star Celebrity Game on Feb. 12.

Ariana Grande performed at last year's NBA All-Star halftime show at Madison Square Garden in New York, while Earth, Wind and Fire, Janelle Monae and several jazz musicians teamed up for the halftime show at the Smoothie King Center in New Orleans in 2014.

## India cities get funds to tackle woes from sewage to traffic

NEW DELHI (AP) — India on Thursday moved toward rebuilding its metropolitan areas as so-called smart cities by awarding 20 with funds to solve problems from shoddy sewage treatment to constant power outages and snarled traffic. The government plans to spend \$15 billion to remake 100 cities over five years.

India's urban development minister, Venkaiah Naidu, listed the first 20 recipients, including the capital of New Delhi, the western cities of Pune, Surat, Jaipur and Ahmadabad, as well as six cities in the south including Chennai and Kochi.

While India has rapidly urbanized over the past few decades, most towns and cities are unplanned and lack the infrastructure required for the millions of poor who move into urban areas each year. Huge slums, lacking running water, electricity or sanitation, are in every city.

The smart city project pushed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi aims to provide basic urban services, such as potable water, sewage and waste management, electricity and housing, as well as provide broadband facilities to bring these cities into the 21st century.

The cities were selected based on their proposals after more than 2.5 million Indian citizens weighed in on which urban problems should be solved first.

Regardless of whether the initiative makes Indian cities smarter, it has drawn millions of citizens into the discussion of how best to govern municipal spaces.

Some sent their ideas to city officials via Twitter, Facebook or SMS. Others entered local contests for designing logos or writing essays. Bhubaneswar, the capital of the eastern state of Orissa, unfurled a 10-kilometer-long canvas banner across the city and invited residents to scroll down their suggestions.

Many of the proposals mentioned a need for better transportation, sewage treatment or trash management.

The Rajasthani heritage cities of Jaipur and Udaipur, and Agra, the city of the iconic Taj Mahal, all wanted to clean up their downtown tourist areas, while people in Amritsar, best known for its Golden Temple and location near Pakistan, suggested CCTV cameras and an emergency call center to address their main concerns about safety and security.

## Sweden to deport up to 80,000 asylum-seekers

STOCKHOLM (AP) — Interior Minister Anders Ygeman says Sweden could deport between 60,000 and 80,000 asylum-seekers in coming years.

Ygeman told newspaper Dagens Industri that since about 45 percent of asylum applications are currently rejected, the country must get ready to send back tens of thousands of the 163,000 who sought shelter in Sweden last year.

"I think that it could be about 60,000 people, but it could also be up to 80,000," Ygeman was quoted as saying.

His spokesman, Victor Harju, confirmed the quotes Thursday, adding that the minister was simply applying the current approval rate to the record number of asylum-seekers that arrived in 2015. Harju adds: "That rate could of course change."

Germany and Sweden were the top destinations for asylum-seekers in Europe last year

In the sea near a Greek island, the coast guard at least 11 people, most of them children, died Thursday in the latest migrant boat sinking.

Ten people were rescued, while the bodies of four boys, three girls, three men and one woman were recovered.

Romanian border police said Thursday that they had rescued 119 asylum-seekers from Africa — including 34 children — who were on an inflatable dingy in the Mediterranean, trying to reach Europe.

The migrants were dehydrated and had signs of hypothermia when they were picked up on Tuesday. They came from Gambia, Senegal, Liberia, Mali, Sierre Leona and Guinea Bissau and were planning to travel to the Schengen area.

A Dutch politician says his country, which currently holds the EU presidency, is working on a plan to ease the migrant crisis by which a core group of member states would accept up to 250,000 refugees coming from Turkey in return for sending back the migrants that now arrive by the hundreds of thousands in Greece.

Diederik Samson — leader of the Socialist PvdA party, a key partner in the government — told De Volkskrant newspaper that a core group of nations should be willing to accept a set number of refugees coming from Turkey, if the other migrants can be sent back.

## Sovereignty, legacy factors in Taiwan leader's island visit

**RALPH JENNINGS, Associated Press**

**CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press**

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Seeking to assert Taiwan's sovereignty and build his legacy, President Ma Ying-jeou paid a visit Thursday to an even smaller island also claimed by China.

Defying rare criticism from the U.S., Ma flew to the island of Taiping in the South China Sea and sought to cast Taiwan as a peaceful, humanitarian player in a region where China's robust assertions of its territorial claims are sharpening disputes with its neighbors.

Ma cited infrastructure developments, including a 10-bed hospital and a lighthouse, saying they reinforced Taiwan's claim of sovereignty and granted it rights over the surrounding waters. "All this evidence fully demonstrates that Taiping Island is able to sustain human habitation and an economic life of its own. Taiping Island is categorically not a rock, but an island," Ma said.

Ma had invited along his successor, President-elect Tsai Ing-wen of the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party, but she declined the offer, apparently to clarify the difference between her and Ma's unpopular China-friendly Nationalist Party administration.

NATURE OF THE DISPUTE — Roughly 2,000 kilometers (1,200 miles) south of Taiwan and 46 hectares (110 acres) in size, Taiping is the largest naturally occurring island in the South China Sea's disputed Spratly



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islands. However, it has recently been eclipsed in size by islands China has built up from reefs and shoals. China has constructed housing, ports, airstrips and other infrastructure on the newly created islands, which others say is exacerbating tensions in the strategically vital region. While Taiwan and China share identical claims to almost the entire South China Sea and its islands, reefs and atolls, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei also say parts of the strategically vital sea belong to them. Amid international litigation over the competing claims, Taiwan wants to ensure Taiping retains its status as an island with accompanying rights to surrounding waters, rather than simply that of a rock unable to sustain human habitation.

**TAIWAN'S ROLE** — Taiwan has been largely passive in the dispute, unlike China, which has deployed civilian vessels, coast guard ships and even oil rigs to assert its claims and intimidate its rivals. However, the island has also been upgrading its outpost on Taiping, spending more than \$100 million to improve the island's airstrip and build a wharf capable of allowing its 3,000-ton coast guard cutters to dock. On Thursday, Ma laid out what he called the South China Sea Peace Initiative Roadmap promoting cooperation rather than confrontation, sharing rather than monopolizing, and pragmatism rather than intransigence. Ma drew a contrast with China's approach, saying Beijing had not advocated peaceful sharing of resources. Incoming President Tsai, meanwhile, has pledged to uphold Taiwan's claims while avoiding conflict.

**CHINA'S RESPONSE** — Although Ma's presence on the island highlighted Taiwan's status as a self-governing democracy, Beijing wasn't outwardly bothered by his trip there. Responding to a question on the matter Thursday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said the islands have been Chinese "since ancient times," but that Beijing was committed to maintaining freedom of navigation, peace, stability, development and prosperity in the South China Sea. "People from both sides of the (Taiwan) Strait have the responsibility to maintain the ancestral property of the Chinese nation," Hua said. China and Taiwan hold identical claims to the South China Sea, aligning with Beijing's "one China principle" that considers them two parts of a single Chinese nation. Any renouncing of Taiwan's claims in the area would likely be frowned on by Beijing, which has threatened to retaliate against formal changes in Taiwan's legal status with military force.

**MA'S MOTIVES** — Ma is constitutionally barred from seeking a third four-year term and is preparing to leave office in May amid dismal public approval ratings. His Nationalist Party was hammered in the Jan. 16 elections, with Tsai taking 56 percent of the vote and her party winning 68 of 113 seats in the legislature, its first-ever majority. Ma has been seeking to leave on a high note, as witnessed by his historic summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping in November, the first meeting between leaders of the two sides since they split amid civil war in 1949. "It's for his legacy," said Lin Chong-pin, a retired strategic studies professor in Taiwan. "Ma would like to be called the one who really breaks the barrier between Taipei and Beijing and lays the cornerstone for eventual reunification."

**TAI'S DECISION** — Taiwan's president-elect declined to join the trip in an apparent effort to disassociate herself from Ma. The DPP takes a more guarded approach to relations with China and she has refused to endorse China's basic conditions for dialogue, casting new uncertainty over the relationship that had grown substantially closer under Ma. Tsai also wants to build ties with the United States, and by declining to join Ma's trip she avoided being netted in the U.S. State department's criticism. "She wants to draw a clear distinction from everything this government has done or plans to do regarding this controversy," said Raymond Wu, managing director of Taipei-based political risk consultancy e-telligence. "She also wants to maintain a close relationship with Japan and the United States and this isn't something they would want."

**OTHER RESPONSES** — The Philippines expressed concern over the trip, and U.S. State Department spokesman Mark Toner said the United States was disappointed by it. "We view it as, frankly, as raising tensions rather than what we want to see, which is de-escalation," Toner said. During a visit to Beijing on Wednesday, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry encouraged all parties in the South China Sea to clarify their territorial claims, exercise restraint and engage in negotiations on the basis of international law. Ma responded later in the day that Taiwan and the U.S. were on the same page in terms of prioritizing peace and joint development. "Everything we're doing is for the promotion of peace. How can we be causing tensions?" Ma told reporters.

## The Latest: Dutch working on plan to accept 250,000 refugees

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — The Latest on the continuing influx of asylum-seekers and migrants in Europe (all times local):

1:00 p.m.

The Dutch EU presidency is working on a plan to ease the migrant crisis by which a core group of member states would accept up to 250,000 refugees coming from Turkey in return for sending back the migrants that now arrive by the hundreds of thousands in Greece.

The leader of the Socialist PvdA party, a key partner in the government of Prime Minister Mark Rutte, told De Volkskrant paper Thursday that current EU plans were not working because of intransigence of many member states refusing to take refugees. Instead, Diederik Samson said a core group of nations should be willing to accept a set number of refugees coming from Turkey, if the other migrants can be sent back.

Samson said that once Turkey gains the full status as 'safe country' for migrants to be returned to, returns could happen speedily.

Even if the core group of EU nations would voluntarily accept the refugees, the 28-nation EU as a whole would have to bear the financial burden, he said.

12:55 p.m.

International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach has praised Greece's efforts to help migrants and refugees during a visit to a transit camp in Athens.

Bach, in Athens to attend a sporting awards ceremony, said the Greek effort for migrants is "really extraordinary."

His praise came as Greece is coming under mounting pressure from other European Union countries to speed up preparations to build more transit camps in the Greek mainland and screening centers on the islands in the eastern Aegean Sea.

More than a million refugees and migrants traveled to the EU last year, with over 80 percent of them traveling to Greece from nearby Turkey.

12:50 p.m.

Romanian border police say they have rescued 119 asylum-seekers from Africa who were on an inflatable dingy in the Mediterranean, trying to reach Europe.

A statement said the police who were aboard the "Stefan cel Mare" ship, picked up the migrants, all men and 34 of them children, on Tuesday evening, due to dangerous conditions including low temperatures and overcrowding on their vessel.

The migrants were dehydrated and had signs of hypothermia. They came from Gambia, Senegal, Liberia, Mali, Sierre Leona and Guinea Bissau and were planning to travel to the Schengen area.

The Romanian ship docked Wednesday evening near the port of Lampedusa where the migrants were handed over to Italian authorities.

12:45 p.m.

Croatia's president is meeting with her Polish counterpart for talks on the migrant crisis in Europe and on security.

The two-day visit by Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic opened Thursday with a military ceremony before the Presidential Palace, where she later met with President Andrzej Duda.

Apart from discussing the massive arrivals by migrants, who also pass through Croatia, they discussed the region's security in face of a resurgent Russia and closer cooperation of countries between the Mediterranean and the Baltic seas.

Grabar-Kitarovic is also to meet with Poland's Prime Minister Beata Szydlo.

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12:10 p.m.

The British government has announced plans to allow an unspecified number of vulnerable refugee children to come to Britain to live. Details were not announced.

The announcement Thursday comes after charities have urged Britain to take in some 3,000 children believed to be at risk.

Immigration Minister James Brokenshire says Britain will work with the United Nations refugee agency to identify "exceptional cases" in which unaccompanied children would be given shelter in Britain. The new program is in addition to the 4,000 refugees per year that Britain has agreed to settle.

12:05 p.m.

Authorities in Greece have raised the death toll from a migrant boat sinking to 18, after recovering seven more bodies off the island of Samos in the eastern Aegean Sea.

The Coast Guard said Thursday that nine children were among the dead — four girls and five boys — while eight adult men and one woman also died.

Vessels from the European border agency Frontex were assisting the Greek Coast Guard in the search for others possibly missing, after 10 people were rescued.

Despite toughening European border controls, refugees and migrants have continued to travel to the Greek islands near the Turkish coast, at a rate of roughly 1,500 per day since the beginning of the year, braving the bad weather in dinghies and old wooden boats.

11:00 a.m.

Berlin police say an activist working with asylum-seekers made up a story that a 24-year-old Syrian refugee died after waiting for days in the cold outside the city's central registration point.

Police began investigating after an activist posted on social media a Syrian man died of cardiac arrest after suffering from a high fever, accusing the city of negligence.

The posting quickly went viral and ignited a tempest of online indignation, but police were immediately skeptical, saying they had been unable to locate any body.

Police spokesman Michael Maass said Thursday the activist was tracked down and questioned, and admitted making up the story.

Maass wouldn't comment on the motivation of the activist, whose name wasn't released, saying "he has to explain that himself."

10:00 a.m.

Swedish Interior Minister Anders Ygeman says the country could deport between 60,000 and 80,000 asylum-seekers in coming years.

Ygeman told newspaper Dagens Industri that since about 45 percent of asylum applications are currently rejected, the country must get ready to send back tens of thousands of the 163,000 who sought shelter in Sweden last year.

"I think that it could be about 60,000 people, but it could also be up to 80,000," Ygeman was quoted as saying.

His spokesman, Victor Harju, confirmed the quotes Thursday, adding that the minister was simply applying the current approval rate to the record number of asylum-seekers that arrived in 2015. Harju adds: "That rate could of course change."

Germany and Sweden were the top destinations for asylum-seekers in Europe last year

9:45 a.m.

Greece's coast guard says it is unclear how many people are missing from the latest migrant boat sinking off an eastern Greek island that has claimed at least 11 lives.

Ten people have been rescued from Thursday's sinking north of the island of Samos. The coast guard said the survivors were in shock and their accounts of how many people were on board were confused and vague.

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Five of the survivors were found clinging to a piece of wood, leading authorities to believe that the vessel that sank was made of wood.

The bodies of our boys, three girls, three men and one woman were recovered from the sea. A search and rescue operation was ongoing in the area by the Greek coast guard and vessels from the European border patrol agency Frontex.

9:05 a.m.

Greece's coast guard says at least 11 people, most of them children, have died in the latest migrant boat sinking off an eastern Greek island.

The circumstances of Thursday's sinking were unclear. The Greek coast guard and vessels from the European border patrol agency Frontex were carrying out a search and rescue operation off the island of Samos. Ten people were rescued, while 11 bodies — those of four boys, three girls, three men and one woman — were recovered.

The sinking is the second in two days. Another boat sank off the island of Kos on Wednesday, leaving seven dead, including two children.

Greece, with thousands of kilometers (miles) of coastline and islands very near the Turkish coast, is the main gateway into Europe for refugees and migrants.

## Japan economy minister quits over graft allegations

**ELAINE KURTENBACH, AP Business Writer**

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's economy minister resigned Thursday as he fended off corruption allegations, in a setback for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's effort to rev up growth in the world's third-largest economy.

Akira Amari choked back tears as he announced his resignation in a televised news conference. He denied wrongdoing but apologized for causing "concern and trouble" and for undermining public trust in the government with a "very embarrassing situation."

The corruption scandal surfaced last week after the magazine Weekly Bunshun reported that Amari and his aides accepted at least 12 million yen (\$103,000) in cash and hospitality from the unnamed construction company.

As economy and fiscal minister since late 2012, Amari has been one of the most trusted members of Abe's Cabinet. He also served as Japan's top negotiator for the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact. Amari, 66, is a career politician and son of a lawmaker who was first elected in 1983.

With Amari's departure, Abe has lost a key ally as he is gearing up for an upper house election in the summer.

Political donations and their handling are perennial weak spots for Japanese lawmakers. The allegations against Amari have become fodder for attacks by Communist Party, Democratic Party of Japan and other members of the opposition, who otherwise are unable to effectively challenge the ruling Liberal Democrats' overwhelming majorities in the lower and upper legislatures.

During questioning in parliament, Amari said he did not recall clearly the details of meetings in his office with the construction company.

Shukan Bunshun said that on one occasion, a construction company employee met with Amari in his office in November 2013, handing him an envelope containing 500,000 yen in cash and an expensive Japanese sweet called "yokan."

Asked about the gift, Amari said Thursday that he wasn't sure what was inside the bag, but that it was "very heavy."

His resignation comes amid mounting signs Japan's economic recovery is faltering, raising pressure on its central bank to inject still more cash into the economy on top of its already massive monetary stimulus.

Data released Thursday showed weak retail sales in December. Other major monthly data are due for release Friday.

Abe apologized over the scandal and said Amari's resignation was "very regrettable." He said Nobuteru Ishihara, a former environment minister, would take on Amari's posts.

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## Iconoclastic presidential hopefuls worry Dems, GOP in House

ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump, Ted Cruz and Bernie Sanders are energizing grassroots voters as the first balloting of the 2016 presidential race draws near. Yet the three maverick contenders are also alarming political operatives over the damage each could wreak on their own parties' House candidates this November.

The worry is that each man's take-no-prisoners appeals would alienate moderate voters in the two to three dozen competitive House races expected in seats from Florida to California, often in the suburbs. While it seems unlikely Republicans will lose House control, some in the GOP envision a serious dent in their current majority should Trump or Cruz be nominated, while Democrats worry that a Sanders candidacy would deflate their chances for sizable gains.

"Being able to talk passionately about democratic socialism may be a virtue," said Rep. Steve Israel, D-N.Y., who formerly led House Democrats' campaign organization and is backing Hillary Clinton for his party's presidential nomination. "I'm not sure that resonates to swing voters in the suburbs and exurbs, and those are the districts we have to win to take back the House."

An independent senator from Vermont, Sanders has dubbed his political philosophy democratic socialism and is surging among liberal and young voters with calls for universal health care and a broadside against income equality.

Cruz, a Texas Republican senator and unyielding conservative, is popular among evangelicals and tea party backers while Trump's blunt assaults on all things establishment are resonating with working-class white voters, landing both amid the leaders of the GOP pack.

All three have found support among Americans disaffected with Washington and the economy. But while political professionals from both parties consider Trump's ultimate performance with voters unpredictable, they think the trio's appeal to key moderate voting blocs like suburban women could be weak. That would be bad news for House Republicans from swing districts if Trump or Cruz is nominated and for Democrats from such seats if Sanders is selected.

"His ideas are so far to the right, it makes it difficult for a swing district message to be coupled with that," Tom Reynolds, a former House Republican from upstate New York who headed House GOP political operations, said of Cruz.

Reynolds' advice to House candidates from such areas if Cruz or Trump wins the Republican nomination: "Define what you're about so they identify you for what you are, even with all the atmospherics of what's above you."

Seemingly agreeing that House Republicans need to define an agenda, Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., has said his chamber will map its own conservative priorities by the party's July nominating convention.

Republicans control the House 247-188, including one vacant Ohio seat the GOP is certain to win, their biggest majority since 1930. That gives Democrats a good chance to recapture seats with the additional turnout of minority and younger voters expected in this presidential election year — an outcome they believe Trump or Cruz would enhance.

"Donald Trump and Ted Cruz have both shifted the conversation to the extreme right," improving Democrats' pick-up opportunities, said Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, D-N.M., who heads his party's House campaign committee.

Roughly two-thirds of the contested districts are held by Republicans, including seats in the Chicago and Denver suburbs, South Florida, upstate New York and Texas. Democrats face tough fights to defend districts in Arizona; Omaha, Nebraska; New York's Long Island; Sacramento, California and Florida.

House Democrats' nervousness about Sanders seems tempered by doubts that he will best Clinton for the nomination, despite his recent surge in polls.

Even so, they concede they'd have to emphasize their differences with Sanders should he become their party's pick to succeed President Barack Obama. They're especially wary of his socialist label and his plan to broadly increase taxes to finance his proposal to broaden health coverage.

"We're not Obama clones, we vote against him on a regular basis, and we're certainly not socialists," said Rep. Kurt Schrader, D-Ore., a leader of the 15-member Blue Dog Coalition of moderate House Democrats.

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With Trump and Cruz atop many GOP presidential surveys, concerns are more widespread among Republicans. Though they say each party's ever-improving use of computer-drawn congressional districts locks in most House seats and provides a firewall against a catastrophic loss, many concede that both men would pose dangers at the top of the ticket.

That's especially true for Cruz, who helped steer the GOP into a losing 2013 government shutdown battle against Obama. That fight remains politically poisonous with moderate voters and House Republican freshmen who won 2014 elections in swing districts, in part, by opposing such tactics.

"He's taken some votes on the extreme side, and that makes them a little bit concerned," said Sarah Chamberlain, president of the Republican Main Street Partnership, which represents 72 congressional Republican pragmatists.

Many Republicans view Trump's comments on Mexicans, Muslims and women as incendiary and potentially damaging in House swing districts. But they say it's unclear whether that would be outweighed by the real estate billionaire's celebrity and the attraction his brusque approach has had for disgruntled lower-earning voters.

"He's said some very provocative statements, and obviously the campaigns are going to have to work through those," said David Winston, a top consultant to House Republicans.

## 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. 3 MORE ARRESTED AS BUNDY URGES REFUGE OCCUPIERS TO LEAVE

It is unclear whether the last few armed ranchers still holed up at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge south of Burns were ready to heed his advice.

### 2. WHO LOOKS TO GRAB ATTENTION AS GOP RIVALS DEBATE

Donald Trump, who is in an acidic feud with Fox News, will seek to steal the spotlight at a critical juncture in the campaign by holding a competing event for veterans of his own.

### 3. SWEDEN TO DEPORT UP TO 80,000 ASYLUM-SEEKERS

The Swedish interior minister says that since about 45 percent of applications are currently rejected, the country must get ready to send back tens of thousands of the 163,000 who sought shelter there last year.

### 4. MORE RESEARCH NEEDED INTO ZIKA-MICROCEPHALY LINK

The World Health Organization and others stress that any relationship between the virus and the defect remains circumstantial and is not yet proven scientifically.

### 5. WHY PANEL PROPOSES TO BAN AIR SHIPMENTS OF BATTERIES

Rechargeable devices can create fires capable of destroying planes, say AP sources familiar with the decision.

### 6. DRUG TRAFFICKERS SEEK SAFE HAVEN IN COLORADO

They are growing weed among the state's sanctioned pot warehouses and farms, then shipping it elsewhere and pocketing millions of dollars from the sale, The AP finds.

### 7. SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE EXAMINES MIGRANT CHILDREN ABUSE

Federal officials reportedly don't know how many young Central American migrants they've sent to live with convicted criminals across the U.S. over the last three years.

### 8. MAGICAL LAOTIAN TOWN PRESERVED BY UNESCO LOSES ITS SOUL

The international branding of Luang Prabang sparks mass tourism but residents are forced to move out as prices escalate.

### 9. WHERE TO MOVE IF YOU WANT TO FEEL BETTER

A new report ranking all 50 states based on residents' sense of well-being puts Hawaii at No. 1, followed by Alaska, which held the top spot last year.

### 10. GROUP CALLS ON NHL PLAYERS, FANS TO FIGHT HOMOPHOBIA

You Can Play partners with all 30 NHL teams and has hockey Olympians, All-Stars and team captains voice acceptance of the LGBT community.

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## Communism better than democracy, says Vietnam party boss

VIJAY JOSHI, Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — One-party rule in communist Vietnam is a far better alternative to authoritarianism disguised as democracy, the 71-year-old ideologue who was re-elected as party chief and consequently the country's leader said Thursday.

"A country without discipline would be chaotic and unstable ... we need to balance democracy and law and order," said General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong (pronounced noo-YEN' FOO' CHONG').

Trong was re-elected Wednesday as head of the Communist Party and the leader of a 19-member Politburo that will govern Vietnam for the next five years, after squashing a short-lived challenge for the top post by his No. 2, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung (pronounced noo-YEN' TAN' ZOONG').

The Communist Party has been in power since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, and every five years elects a new leadership. The party has 4.5 million members in a country of 93 million people, who have no direct say in how their leaders are elected. People do elect a National Assembly, but it is considered a largely rubber stamp body whose members are vetted by the Communist Party before they can contest.

The renewal of the leadership means little change for Vietnam, where the people have no direct role in selecting the party leaders.

"I very much hope the new faces in the Politburo will push with reforms and bring the country forward, but I don't know whether they can do that," said Tran Thi Tram, selling lotteries on the sidewalk in central Hanoi. "They will also have to really tackle the corruption problem, otherwise the people would be the ones to suffer most."

Trong cited the National Assembly and the thousands of party organizations at grassroots as representing the voice of the people.

"Vietnam's Communist Party is one-party rule but we also have principles of democracy and accountability of the leaders. Otherwise, good deeds would be credited to individuals while failure would be blamed on the group and no one would be disciplined," he said.

He said that the party "can never become authoritarian" unlike some democracies.

"It is not proper to name them, but in a number of countries, in the name of democracy, all decisions are made by one person. So which is more democratic?"

There is no organized movement in Vietnam calling for multi-party system.

Dissidents, who are active on social media, are quickly crushed. The biggest organized group that's vocal against the one-party system is based in the United States, and is branded a terrorist group by the government.

U.S. officials have said Vietnam has shown greater restraint in arrests and prosecution of dissent last year, but stressed it needs to do more to improve its human rights records. According to U.S. officials, there were about 100 prisoners of conscience in 2015, down from more than 160 in 2013. International human rights groups and the U.S. government has criticized Vietnam for using vague security laws to silence dissidents, but Hanoi has said only law breakers were put behind bars.

Trong is expected to continue to push the economic reforms led by Prime Minister Dung during his 10 years in office. Dung will be replaced by Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc after his appointment is endorsed by the National Assembly later this year.

Trong's camp has accused Dung of corruption and mismanagement, but analysts believe that the accusations were an excuse for the widespread corruption that seeps through the system and is not likely to vanish overnight with Dung's departure.

Addressing that question, Trong said there was a need to "particularly sustain the accountability and responsibility of the leaders and supervise power to ensure corruption and wastefulness are brought under control."

Despite having a reputation for being pro-China, Trong is not likely to be totally subservient to Beijing as that would risk massive anger from ordinary Vietnamese who harbor a deep dislike and historical suspicion of China. Tensions have spiked recently over overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea,

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where Beijing's massive construction of man-made islands has pushed the Philippines and Vietnam closer to the U.S.

"Many people were afraid that a conservative trend would prevail if Mr. Trong is re-elected. But ... whoever they may be, and however conservative they may be, when they are at the helm they are under pressure to carry out reforms," Le Hong Hiep, a visiting Vietnamese fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asia Studies in Singapore, told The Associated Press.

The third most important member elected to the Politburo was Minister of Public Security Tran Dai Quang, who will be the country's new president.

## 30 years since Challenger: New voice at astronauts' memorial

**MARCIA DUNN, AP Aerospace Writer**

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — As families of the lost Challenger astronauts gather with NASA to mark the space shuttle accident's 30th anniversary, there's a new voice to address the crowd.

June Scobee Rodgers — widow of Challenger commander Dick Scobee and longtime spokeswoman for the group — is passing the torch to daughter Kathie Scobee Fulgham.

Fulgham — not Rodgers — will be on the stage for Thursday morning's ceremony at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex. And making a rare appearance in the audience will be schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe's son, Scott, with his own family.

"It's going to be wonderful to watch the pages turn," Rodgers said earlier this week. The second generation "can now speak for our family and speak for the nation," she said, adding that she's looking forward to these grown astronauts' children "sharing their stories, their beliefs and their leadership."

For the seven astronauts' loved ones, Jan. 28, 1986, remains fresh in their minds.

Steven McAuliffe, a federal judge in Concord, New Hampshire, still declines interviews about his late wife Christa, who was poised to become the first schoolteacher in space. But he noted in a statement that although 30 years have passed, "Challenger will always be an event that occurred just recently. Our thoughts and memories of Christa will always be fresh and comforting."

McAuliffe said he's pleased "Christa's goals have been largely accomplished in that she has inspired generations of classroom teachers and students." She would be proud, he noted, of the Challenger Learning Centers.

McAuliffe is presiding over a trial this week in Concord, and so son Scott will represent the family, part of the next-generation shift. Scott and his sister are now in their 30s. The McAuliffes normally do not take part in these NASA memorials, so Scott's presence is especially noteworthy.

Along with the other Challenger families, Rodgers established the Challenger Center for Space Science Education just three months after the shuttle disintegrated in the Florida sky. Unusually cold weather that morning left Challenger's booster rockets with stiff O-ring seals; a leak in the right booster doomed the ship.

Today, there are more than 40 Challenger Learning Centers focusing on science, technology, engineering and math, mostly in the U.S. More are being built.

"They're not just a field trip for kids. They're actually lessons learned," said Rodgers, an educator who lives in Chattanooga, Tennessee. "That's why they've lasted."

McAuliffe's backup, Barbara Morgan, a schoolteacher from Idaho, rocketed into orbit in 2007 aboard Endeavour as a fully trained astronaut. Morgan was invited to speak Thursday at Rodgers' request.

Besides Dick Scobee and Christa McAuliffe, the Challenger dead include pilot Michael Smith, Judith Resnik, Ronald McNair, Ellison Onizuka and Gregory Jarvis.

Seven more shuttle astronauts died Feb. 1, 2003, aboard Columbia; that commander's widow, Evelyn Husband Thompson, will attend Thursday's ceremony.

The event will honor the Columbia Seven as well, along with the three Apollo 1 astronauts killed during a launch pad test on Jan. 27, 1967. NASA also plans observances at Arlington National cemetery, Johnson Space Center in Houston and elsewhere.

At Kennedy, the Scobee contingent will number 12, including June's son Richard, a major general in the Air Force, and a 16-year-old granddaughter.



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Dick Scobee was 46 years old when he died aboard Challenger barely a minute into the flight. Both his children are now in their 50s.

"For so many people, 30 years, it's definitely history. It's in the history books," Rodgers said. For the family, "it's like it's just happened, which in a way keeps Dick Scobee young in our hearts, and the joy and excitement he had for flying."

## Trump looks to grab attention as GOP rivals debate

**JULIE PACE, AP White House Correspondent**

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Republican presidential candidates take the debate stage Thursday night absent their front-runner, Donald Trump, who will instead seek to starve his rivals of attention at a critical juncture in the campaign by holding a competing event of his own.

Trump's abrupt decision to boycott the final debate before Monday's Iowa caucuses has added a new layer of uncertainty to a race that has defied political convention. He cited "unfair" treatment from debate host Fox News as his reason for skipping the contest and holding a rally instead.

"I don't like being taken advantage of," Trump said in an interview Wednesday on Fox, signaling he wasn't boycotting the highly rated network completely.

Other GOP candidates saw Trump's move as a welcome opportunity to emerge from the long shadow the billionaire has cast over the race, while also hoping it might damage his standing with Iowa voters.

"I think it'll hurt him that he's not showing up in the Iowa debate four days before the Iowa caucuses," former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush told CNN.

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio said Republicans "don't have time for these kinds of distractions."

Trump has led the Republican race nationally for months, to the surprise of many. In Iowa, however, polls suggest he's locked in a tight race with Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, a favorite of the conservatives and evangelical Christians who hold significant sway in the state's Republican caucuses.

Given Trump's unpredictable nature, some campaigns were preparing for the possibility he could reverse course and take the stage in Des Moines after all. Still, Trump moved forward with plans to host a rally just a few miles away that his campaign said would raise money for wounded warriors.

With Fox carrying the debate, other cable channels were likely to show Trump's event, stealing away at least some viewers who would have otherwise watched the contest.

"I think it's typical Trump," said Don Kass, chairman of Iowa's Plymouth County GOP. "He's betting on him making a bigger splash."

While earlier debates have been instrumental in the rise and fall of several GOP candidates, they have had minimal apparent impact on Trump's standing. He's preferred to make his case to potential voters in national television interviews and on Twitter, and has often faded into the background in the debates.

Trump's absence was likely to turn attention to Cruz, a firebrand conservative disdained by many in his party, and Rubio, who is hoping a third-place finish in Iowa could help him establish himself as the choice of more traditional Republicans.

Others on the debate stage will have their eye on New Hampshire, where they're hoping a strong showing in the Feb. 9 primary will jumpstart their White House hopes. Bush, Ohio Gov. John Kasich and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie have all devoted the bulk of their campaign resources to New Hampshire.

Also on the main debate stage Thursday: retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson, who has a loyal following in Iowa, and Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul, who was relegated to the undercard event in the last debate.

Trump's Fox feud dates back to the first Republican primary debate, when moderator Megyn Kelly took the billionaire business mogul to task over derogatory statements he'd made in the past toward women. Trump threatened to boycott Thursday's debate if Fox stuck with plans for Kelly to moderate again, but said it was a sarcastic statement from the network that was the final straw.

That statement said the leaders of Iran and Russia "both intend to treat Donald Trump unfairly when they meet with him if he becomes president" and that "Trump has his own secret plan to replace the Cabinet with his Twitter followers to see if he should even go to those meetings."

Trump and his campaign manager slammed the statement as taunting and juvenile.

## **Poll: Uninsured sit on the sidelines as sign-up season ends**

**RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Most uninsured Americans are sitting on the sidelines as sign-up season under the federal health law comes to a close, according to a new poll that signals the nation's historic gains in coverage are slowing.

The survey released Thursday by the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation finds that:

- Only 15 percent of the uninsured know this year's open enrollment deadline, which is Sunday.
- More than 7 in 10 say they have not tried to figure out if they qualify for the two main coverage expansions in the law, Medicaid and subsidized private health insurance.
- Only 1 in 100 know the minimum penalty for being uninsured is going up to \$695 in 2016.
- About two-thirds say they have not been contacted about signing up for coverage.

"What this survey does suggest is that it will get harder and harder to continue to make gains in the share of people getting health insurance," said Mollyann Brodie, Kaiser's polling director. "I think we will be in a period where we will see slower and slower gains in that number."

President Barack Obama's health care law has driven down the share of uninsured Americans to 9 percent, according to the government. Now, in the third year of the law's major coverage expansion, those historic gains could be stalling out. That's raising questions about the lasting impact of Obama's signature legislation, and spurring liberals like Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders to call for guaranteed coverage for all.

The health law's problems in part reflect entrenched political opposition, but there's also skepticism about whether the coverage is affordable for uninsured people of modest means. Premiums are up, and those who get sick can face significant out-of-pocket costs. Major health insurer Anthem said Wednesday it booked fewer customers than expected last year through the health care law.

The poll found that nearly half the uninsured (46 percent) have been without coverage for two years or longer.

The Kaiser poll is the second independent survey to raise questions recently. Earlier this month, the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index found that the law's progress stalled last year. The share of U.S. adults without health insurance was 11.9 percent in the last three months of 2015, according to Gallup, essentially unchanged from the start of the year.

The health law has added coverage in two major ways. Online insurance markets like HealthCare.gov offer taxpayer-subsidized private plans to people who don't have coverage on the job. Sunday is the marketplace sign-up deadline.

The Obama administration has set a modest goal of 10 million people enrolled through the markets and paying premiums at the end of the year. Earlier this week, the Congressional Budget Office reduced its own enrollment projections.

The law's other big driver of coverage is a Medicaid expansion aimed at low-income adults with no children living at home. Thirty-one states, plus Washington, D.C., have opted to expand. But populous Republican-led states including Texas, Florida, Georgia and North Carolina have turned down the federal offer. If they were to accept, the coverage expansion would regain its momentum.

The poll found that Americans remain divided on the Affordable Care Act, with 44 percent viewing it unfavorably and 41 percent holding a favorable view.

The Kaiser survey was conducted Jan. 13-19 among a nationally representative sample of 1,204 adults. For the entire poll, the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3 percentage points. For the uninsured, the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 10 percentage points.

## **AP sources: Panel proposes ban on air shipments of batteries**

**JOAN LOWY, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — A U.N. panel recommended that cargo shipments of rechargeable lithium batteries be banned from passenger airliners because the batteries can create fires capable of destroying planes, said aviation officials familiar with the decision.

The International Civilian Aviation Organization's air navigation commission, the agency's highest technical body, also proposed Wednesday that the ban be lifted if new packaging can be developed that provides an acceptable level of safety.

Final approval from the ICAO top-level council is still needed. The council is scheduled to take up the matter in late February.

The officials spoke on condition that they not be named because they weren't authorized to speak publicly.

Lithium-ion batteries are used to power everything from cellphones and laptops to hybrid and all-electric cars. About 5.4 billion lithium-ion cells were manufactured worldwide in 2014. A battery is made up of two or more cells. Most are transported on cargo ships, but about 30 percent are shipped by air.

Federal Aviation Administration tests show a single damaged or defective battery can experience uncontrolled temperature increases that can spread throughout a shipment. It's not unusual for tens of thousands of batteries to be shipped in a single cargo container.

In FAA tests, the overheating batteries have released explosive gases that, when ignited, have blown the doors off cargo containers and sent boxes of batteries hurtling through the air before becoming engulfed in flames.

Engineers from FAA's technical center told a public meeting last year that the explosions are forceful enough to knock the interior panels off cargo compartment walls. That would allow halon, the fire suppression agent used in airliners, to escape, leaving nothing to prevent fires from spreading unchecked.

Safety experts believe at least three cargo planes have been destroyed by lithium battery fires since 2006. Four pilots died in those accidents.

The proposed ban wouldn't apply to cargo planes despite efforts by the International Federation of Air Line Pilot Associations to include cargo operations.

A trade association for the rechargeable battery industry didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Last March, an organization that represents aircraft manufacturers — including the world's two largest, Boeing and Airbus — told ICAO that airliners aren't designed to withstand lithium battery fires and that continuing to accept battery shipments is "an unacceptable risk."

Six months later the U.S. decided to back a ban. But the battery industry, shippers and the International Air Transport Association, a global airline trade group, have strongly resisted. They say the risk is primarily due to shady manufacturers, mostly in China, that evade packaging and handling regulations.

The Transportation Department is barred from imposing its own ban under a 2012 law Congress passed at the behest of industry.

In late October, an ICAO panel on the transport of dangerous goods voted 11-7 against a ban. The U.S., Russia, Brazil, China and Spain, as well as organizations representing airline pilots and aircraft manufacturers, voted for it. The Netherlands, Canada, France, Germany, Australia, Italy, United Arab Emirates, South Korea, Japan and the United Kingdom, as well as the airline trade group, voted against it.

In early December another safety panel voted to recommend a ban, presenting conflicting advice.

Aviation officials interviewed by The Associated Press said they couldn't predict whether the council, which has 36 members, will ultimately agree to a ban.

The Montreal-based ICAO sent an alert to airlines this summer urging that they conduct risk assessments on how to safely handle the shipments. At least 20 airlines that fly internationally have voluntarily decided to no longer accept battery shipments.

## UNESCO World Heritage Sites under threat around the world

DENIS D. GRAY, Associated Press

Luang Prabang (AP) — A number of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites face major challenges, including the following:

### MACHU PICCHU, PERU

This magnificent "lost city of the Incas" is cited by UNESCO as beset by logging, poor waste management and agricultural incursion but hasn't been placed on its list of sites in danger. Peruvian experts are raising other alarm bells, from vehicle fumes to the unceasing tread of footsteps producing a similar effect as a small-scale earthquake that could lead to collapse of the temples and other structures.

The number of visitors — nearly 2,500 daily — appears to be overwhelming the site's safe carrying capacity. The 15th century royal retreat was built high up in the Peruvian Andes to accommodate a population estimated at no more than 800.

### OMORI, JAPAN

This sleepy western Japanese town had "no outstanding universal value," according to the International Council on Monuments and Sites, which makes recommendations on world heritage sites. Its only attraction was a long defunct silver mine and no tourist infrastructure existed aside from one eight-room guesthouse. But following intense lobbying by Japanese authorities, Omori was inscribed in 2007. A year later, almost 1 million tourists poured in, rupturing the quiet lifestyle of the unprepared community.

Another controversial site in Japan was added to UNESCO's roster last year: factories and mines of the country's Meiji Industrial Revolution. Tens of thousands of Koreans, Chinese and Allied prisoners of war were forced to work at some of the locations, prompting Chinese media to charge the listing "helped Japan cover up or glorify some of its past wartime atrocities." South Korea demanded that Japan make it clear that South Korean slave labor was used.

### LIJIANG, CHINA

Amid widespread publicity, the 800-year-old town in China's southern province of Yunnan was declared a site in 1997, and is today one of the country's top domestic tourist destinations. Outsiders with more capital and skills moved in, sparking tensions with mostly ethnic minority residents who felt they were "losing their town." Already in the early 2000s, many streets of the old quarter were up to 90 percent in the hands of newcomers profiting by the mass influx.

Annual visitors swelled from some 150,000 before the heritage designation to 2.8 million three years later and some 16 million last year. Local culture has been adulterated in a complete tourism-oriented make-over. The charming houses are reproductions: Virtually the entire old town was razed by a 1996 earthquake.

### MONT SAINT-MICHEL, FRANCE

This offshore islet topped by a stunning 8th century Benedictine abbey was France's first heritage site and among the first ever designated. Already a major pilgrimage destination in the Middle Ages, it underwent many transformations but has always drawn romantics and the faithful, even when it served as a prison during the French Revolution.

With a resident population of about 50 and only 247 acres (100 hectares) in size, it now attracts up to 2.8 million visitors a year. The Smithsonian Magazine wrote that its narrow, medieval streets are packed with tourists "who shoulder to shoulder, four to five thick, mill about like subway commuters at rush hour along the main street, which is nonstop cafes, hotels, restaurants and shops, selling every kind of souvenir imaginable."

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## Today in History The Associated Press

### Today in History

Today is Thursday, Jan. 28, the 28th day of 2016. There are 338 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlights in History:

On Jan. 28, 1915, the United States Coast Guard was created as President Woodrow Wilson signed a bill merging the Life-Saving Service and Revenue Cutter Service. The American merchant vessel SS William P. Frye, en route to England with a cargo of wheat, became the first U.S. ship to be sunk during World War I by a German cruiser, the SS Prinz Eitel Friedrich, even though the United States was not at war.

### On this date:

In 1547, England's King Henry VIII died; he was succeeded by his 9-year-old son, Edward VI.

In 1813, the novel "Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austen was first published anonymously in London.

In 1909, the United States withdrew its forces from Cuba as Jose Miguel Gomez became president.

In 1939, Irish poet-dramatist William Butler Yeats died in Menton, France.

In 1945, during World War II, Allied supplies began reaching China over the newly reopened Burma Road.

In 1956, Elvis Presley made his first national TV appearance on "Stage Show," a CBS program hosted by Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey.

In 1962, the last of Washington, D.C.'s original streetcars made its final run.

In 1973, a cease-fire officially went into effect in the Vietnam War.

In 1977, actor-comedian Freddie Prinze, 22, co-star of the NBC-TV show "Chico and the Man," shot and mortally wounded himself at the Beverly Comstock Hotel (he died the following day).

In 1980, six U.S. diplomats who had avoided being taken hostage at their embassy in Tehran flew out of Iran with the help of Canadian diplomats.

In 1985, the charity supergroup USA for Africa recorded the Michael Jackson-Lionel Richie song "We Are the World" at A&M Studios in Los Angeles.

In 1986, the space shuttle Challenger exploded 73 seconds after liftoff from Cape Canaveral, killing all seven crew members, including schoolteacher Christa McAuliffe.

In 2005, Iraqis overseas began three days of voting in 14 nations. Senate Democrats criticized President George W. Bush's plan to add personal accounts to Social Security and accused his administration of improperly using the Social Security Administration to promote the idea. Consumer products giant Procter & Gamble Co. and Gillette Co. announced a \$57 billion merger.

**Ten years ago:** A memorial service was held at the Kennedy Space Center to honor the crew of the Challenger on the 20th anniversary of the shuttle disaster. Sixty-five people were killed when the roof of an exhibition hall in Katowice (kah-toh-VEET'-suh), Poland, collapsed during a racing pigeon fair. Amelie Mauresmo (AM'-uh-lee maw-REHS'-moh) won her first Grand Slam singles title when Justine Henin-Hardenne (EH'-nihn ahr-DEHN') retired in the second set of their Australian Open final because of stomach pain. Mauresmo led 6-1, 2-0.

**Five years ago:** Chaos engulfed Egypt as protesters seized the streets of Cairo, battling police, burning down the ruling party's headquarters and defying a military curfew. Hundreds gathered at NASA's launch site to mark the 25th anniversary of the Challenger disaster. Police in Tampa, Florida, arrested Julie Schenecker in the shooting deaths of her 13-year-old son Beau and 16-year-old daughter Calyx; Schenecker allegedly told detectives she'd killed her children for being "mouthy." The nation's largest cable TV company, Comcast Corp., took control of NBC Universal, capping a 13-month bid.

**One year ago:** Jordan offered a precedent-setting prisoner swap to the Islamic State group in a desperate attempt to save a Jordanian air force pilot the militants threatened to kill along with a Japanese hostage. Jordan asked for proof that the pilot was still alive. The pilot's father met with Jordan's king who he said assured him that "everything will be fine." President Barack Obama phoned Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras to congratulate him on his party's election victory and told him the U.S. would work closely with Greece to help it pursue long-term prosperity. At a farewell ceremony for Defense Secretary Chuck

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Hagel, President Barack Obama called him a true American patriot who devoted his life to the United States.

**Today's Birthdays:** Actor Nicholas Pryor is 81. Actor Alan Alda is 80. Actress Susan Howard is 74. Actress Marthe (cq) Keller is 71. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen, D-N.H., is 69. Actress-singer Barbi Benton is 66. Evangelical pastor Rick Warren is 62. Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy (sahr-koh-ZEE') is 61. Actress Harley Jane Kozak is 59. Movie director Frank Darabont is 57. Rock musician Dave Sharp is 57. Rock singer Sam Phillips is 54. Rock musician Dan Spitz is 53. Country musician Greg Cook (Ricochet) is 51. Gospel singer Marvin Sapp is 49. Singer Sarah McLachlan is 48. Rapper Rakim is 48. DJ Muggs (Cypress Hill) is 48. Actress Kathryn Morris is 47. Humorist Mo Rocca is 47. Rock/soul musician Jeremy Ruzumna (Fitz and the Tantrums) is 46. Rhythm-and-blues singer Anthony Hamilton is 45. Singer Monifah is 44. Rock musician Brandon Bush is 43. Retired MLB All-Star Jermaine Dye is 42. Actress Terro Conn is 41. Singer Joey Fatone Jr. ('N Sync) is 39. Rapper Rick Ross is 39. Actress Rosamund Pike is 37. Actress Angelique Cabral is 37. Singer Nick Carter (Backstreet Boys) is 36. Actor Elijah Wood is 35. Rapper J. Cole is 31. Actress Alexandra Krosney is 28. Actor Yuri Sardarov ("Chicago Fire") is 28. Actress Ariel Winter is 18.

**Thought for Today:** "It is difficult to say what is impossible, for the dream of yesterday is the hope of today and the reality of tomorrow." — Robert H. Goddard, American rocket engineer (1882-1945).