

Groton Daily Independent

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Silver Skates is Sunday

After skating on the ice, although the surface looks good, we found that it is not frozen solid. We want to keep the skaters safe, so we are moving to our established contingency plan of holding the carnival next Sunday, February 7th. We will hold one performance at 1:00. With cooler temps next week, we will be able to significantly improve the skating rink for the safety of the skaters. If you are unable to attend next week due to prior plans, please contact your instructor.

Friday, February 5

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

School Lunch: Pulled pork sandwich, French fries, carrots and dip, fruit.

Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked potato and sour cream, creamed peas, fruited Jell-O, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: Emilie Thurston, Emily Thompson, Madison Thurston, Rayelle Ulvog, Todd Thurston

4:00pm: Basketball Double Header with Hamlin Here (Girls JV at 4, Boys JV a 5, Varsity girls at 6:30, Varsity boys at 8:00)

Saturday, February 6

MathCounts at SDSU

Birthdays: Jacob Tewksbury, Jake Unzen, Shawna Tunby

9:00am: Robotics at Mitchell High School

10:00am: Wrestling Tourney at Stanley County

12:00pm: Brown County Historical Society Annual Meeting (Lunch DPM program at 12:45, Meeting at 1:15)

2:00pm: Basketball Double Header at Warner (JV Girls at 2, JV boyJV Boys at 3, Varsity girls at 4:30, Varsity Boys at 6:00)

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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Follow The Groton
Activities On-Line



gdilive.com

Coming up this week at gdilive.com

Friday, Feb. 5: Boys (JV & V) and Girls Basketball (V) host Hamlin

Saturday, Feb. 6: Boys (JV & V) and Girls Basketball (V) at Warner

Sunday, Feb. 7th: 1 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!

Groton Robotics Competition

The GT VEX Robotics January Tournament championship matches pitted Groton's G.A.T. Wrenches and Mitchell's Team VEXcellent against Groton's G-Force and Gear Heads. G.A.T. Wrenches and Team VEXcellent walked away victorious. G-Force had mechanical problems in the first championship match and had to replace a motor. G.A.T. and Team VEXcellent were gracious and allowed the extra 10 minutes for repair; in fact, G.A.T. robotists even ran for the motor.

Eighteen teams from five different school competed in the tournament. Britton brought four teams, Doland brought one, Eureka two, Groton five and Mitchell brought six team. This was Britton's first completion of the season and Doland's team just started this year.

Award Presented:

Tournament Champions were G.A.T. Wrenches and Team VEXcellent.

The Excellence Award went to Geek Squad. This award is given to the robot and robotics team that did well in competition and also had the best robot, judged by construction, design and documentation.

The Design Award went to G.A.T. Wrenches for the quality of their engineering book, Documenting the design and building of the robot.

The rankings at the end of the qualifying matches were:

Rank	School	Teams	Wins	Losses	Score Points
1	Groton	G-Force	5	0	136
2	Mitchell	Mitchell War Machine	5	0	79
3	Mitchell	Team VEXcellent	4	1	97
4	Groton	Geek Squad	4	1	94
5	Groton	G.A.T. Wrenches	4	1	62
6	Mitchell	M2K (Made 2 Konquer)	4	1	34
7	Mitchell	Robots In Black	3	2	104
8	Britton	Slamatron 2000	3	2	80
9	Groton	Gear Heads	2	3	101
10	Eureka	Teck-Kno-Logik	2	3	69
11	Doland	Doland High School	2	3	65
12	Britton	R.W.A.	2	3	64
13	Mitchell	MCTE	1	4	77
14	Eureka	Double Trouble	1	4	76
15	Mitchell	Mechatron	1	4	68
16	Groton	Galaxy	1	4	60
17	Britton	Rock Steady	1	4	56
18	Britton	Hambot	1	4	29

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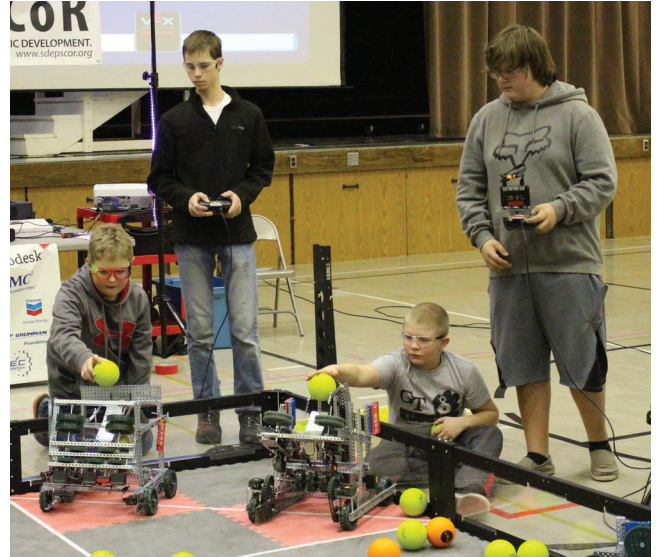
GT Robotics next completion is February 6th in Mitchell.

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Landon Kokalas, Lee Williams, Jim Lane and Thomas Cranford working on a robot. (Photo by Renee Marzahn)



Dragr Monson and Noah Tullis are from the G.A.T. Wrenches team. Monson is loading a ball in his robot during the competition. (Photo by Renee Marzahn)



G-Force aligning with the Gear Heads team. Team members include, Hunter Monson, Landon Marzahn, Anne Marie Smith, Trey Wright, Nathan Fjelstad and Travis Townsend. (Photo by Renee Marzahn)

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Isaac Smith and Chris Zarycki from Geek Squad Robotics Team. (Photo by Renee Marzahn)



The G.A.T Wrenches won the championship round. Team members include Noah Tullis, Dragr Monson and Thomas Cranford. The team members were from Mitchell. The Mitchell team was aligned with the G.A.T Wrenches to win.) (Photo by Renee Marzahn)

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Valentine's Day and Olde Bank Floral



Order your loved one a Valentine Bouquet of \$50 or more BEFORE Feb 10th and receive a FREE \$10 Gift Certificate! Will be delivered with the bouquet any time through the 13th! Call us now at 397-8650

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Valentine's Day is Sunday, February 14th!

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Today in Weather History

February 5, 1978: Another winter blizzard plagued the northern half of the state beginning on February 5th and continuing until the 9th. The unusual aspect of this blizzard was that the wind came from the southeast between 25 to 45 mph. Only one to three inches of new snow accumulation fell during the five-day period but was piled high on the existing large snow drifts. Most of the northern half of the state was paralyzed due to blocked roads. Eighteen counties across the northern part of the state were declared a disaster by the governor. There were also numerous livestock losses.

1745: Today is National Weatherman/Meteorologist day commemorating the birth of John Jeffries in 1745. Jeffries, one of America's first weather observers, began taking daily weather observations in Boston, MA in 1774 and he took the first balloon observation in 1784.

1887: San Francisco experienced its greatest snowstorm of record. Nearly four inches was reported in downtown San Francisco, and the western hills of the city received seven inches. Excited crowds went on a snowball throwing rampage.

1920: An intense nor'easter dumped 17.5 inches of snow over a three day period on New York City, New York.

1986: A supercell thunderstorm tracked through the Tomball area northwest of Houston, TX and produced four tornadoes along with damaging microburst winds and up to tennis ball size hail. An F3 tornado killed two people, injured 80 others and devastated a mobile home park and the David Wayne Hooks Airport. 300 aircraft were either damaged or destroyed. Much of the larger hail was propelled by 60 to 80 mph winds, resulting in widespread moderate damage. Total damage from this storm was \$80 million dollars.



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of the wedding.**

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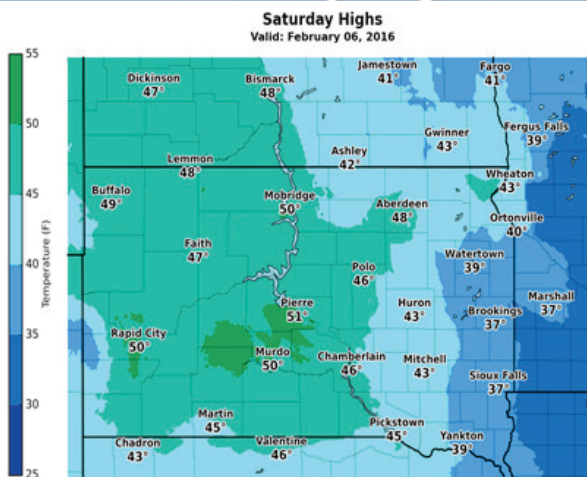
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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
 50% → 20%			 20%	 50% 60%	 30%	
Chance Snow then Slight Chance Snow	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Snow and Breezy	Rain/Snow Likely and Areas Blowing Snow	Chance Snow and Windy	Partly Sunny and Blustery
High: 34 °F	Low: 18 °F	High: 47 °F	Low: 30 °F	High: 36 °F	Low: 21 °F	High: 29 °F

Mild on Saturday, Very Windy on Sunday!

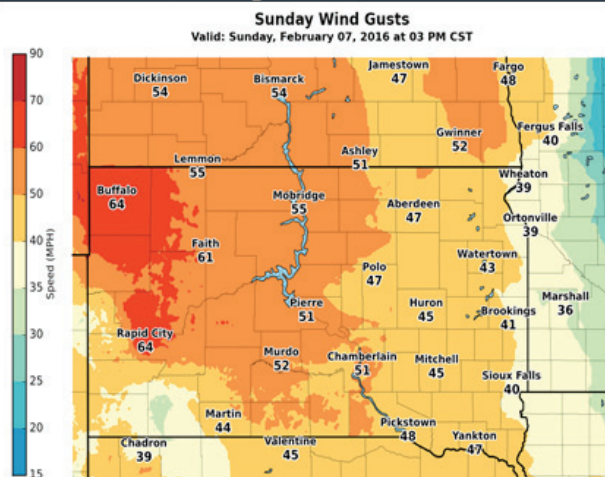
Saturday Highs



National Weather Service
Aberdeen SD
02/05/2016 05:25 AM CST

Follow Us: [f](#) [t](#) [v](#)
weather.gov/aberdien

Sunday Wind Gusts



National Weather Service
Aberdeen SD
02/05/2016 05:20 AM CST

Follow Us: [f](#) [t](#) [v](#)
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- Much Above Normal Temperatures Saturday
- Strong Northwest Winds Sunday
- Light Snow and Blowing Snow Possible East on Sunday

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD



weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen | Updated: 2/5/2016 5:29 AM Central

Published on: 02/05/2016 at 5:35AM

The weather will get quite eventful this weekend! First, on Saturday, very mild air will surge into the region, with highs soaring well into the 40s. Some areas could even see 50 degrees on Saturday. By Sunday, low pressure will bring strong northwest winds to the area. Sustained winds from 25 to 45 mph with gusts from 50 to even 60 mph will occur across the forecast area, with the highest of these winds expected across central South Dakota. Light snow is also forecast across northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota on Sunday, and may accumulate to an inch or two. The light snow combined with the strong winds has the potential to bring hazardous travel conditions in blowing snow and low visibility. Stay tuned to the latest forecasts!

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 29.6 at 2:59 PM

Low: 16.6 at 8:27 AM

High Gust: 21 at 6:39 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 57° in 1991

Record Low: -36° in 1907

Average High: 25°F

Average Low: 4°F

Average Precip in Feb.: 0.08

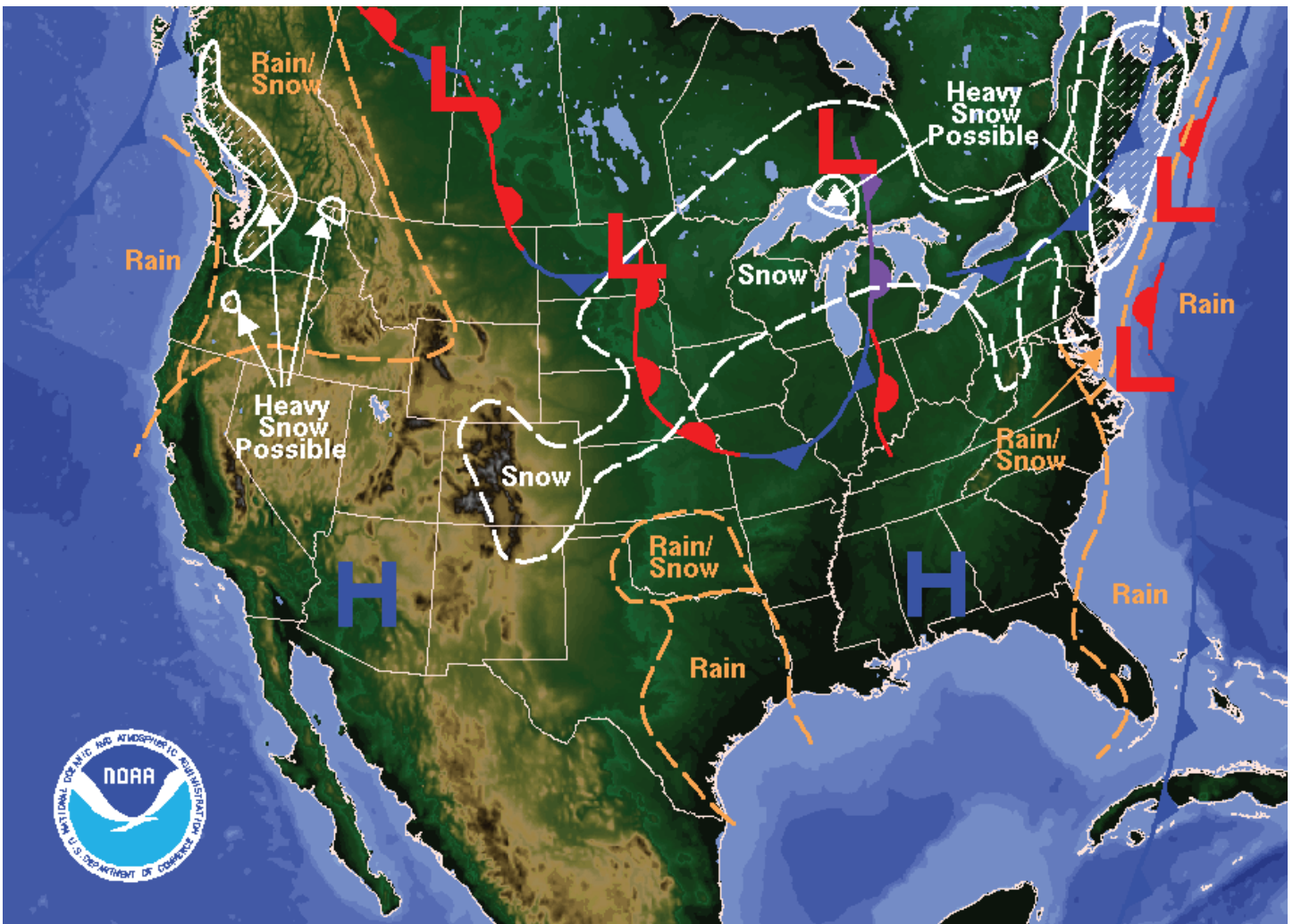
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.55

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 5:45 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:48 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Fri, Feb 05, 2016, issued 3:52 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



CRYING FOR HELP

Years ago a cargo ship was making its way through the stormy seas of the Atlantic. The waves were high, the winds fierce and the crew in fear for their lives. To add to their fright, they heard strange sounds coming from underneath the deck. They thought that they were hearing people moaning and crying for help. They were frightened and in a state of panic.

The captain, knowing that he was responsible for everything that happened on his ship, decided that he would find the source of the voices. Going below deck to the area containing the cargo, he noticed that one crate had broken loose from its straps. Each time the ship rose and fell with the waves, the sounds were loud enough to hear but not clear enough to understand.

Breaking open the crate he discovered a shipment of dolls that cried "Mama" when they were rocked back and forth by the waves. That calmed their fears.

The Psalmist wrote, "The Lord hears His people when they call to Him for help...He is close to the brokenhearted and to those crushed in spirit...and those that face troubles. He will protect them from harm."

We all desire to escape the fears of life: pain, grief, loss, sorrow, sadness, abandonment and failure. Let's thank God that when trouble comes, He's there to care and comfort.

Prayer: Thank You, Savior, for Your presence in our lives, and for protecting and comforting us in the storms and stresses of life. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 34:15-19 The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry;

News from the Associated Press

Rapid City murder suspect pleads guilty to manslaughter

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Rapid City man charged with killing another man a year ago in the home where they lived has pleaded guilty to a lesser charge of manslaughter.

Twenty-one-year-old Anthony Smith initially faced a second-degree murder charge in the February 2015 death of 57-year-old Farrel Phelps. He reached a deal with prosecutors and pleaded guilty to first-degree manslaughter on Thursday.

Authorities say Phelps died of hammer blows to the head and face.

Smith faces up to life in prison. He'll be sentenced later.

Governor's office looking for summer internship applications

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard is looking for two interns for his office's summer 2016 internship program in Pierre.

The governor said Thursday that his office is accepting applications until March 15. The paid intern positions would run from early May through September.

The governor's office says duties could include helping his general counsel, doing policy research and readying policy briefings, among other responsibilities.

Those could include staffing the governor, lieutenant governor and the first lady.

The internships are open to undergraduate and graduate students. Preference will be given to state residents attending South Dakota higher education institutions.

The governor's office also encourages students seeking academic credit to apply.

Dakota Wesleyan dedicates sports and wellness complex

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — Dakota Wesleyan University has dedicated its new sports and wellness complex.

The 85,000-square-foot DWU/Avera Sports and Wellness Complex features a cardio and weight-training room, an athletic training suite, a multi-purpose room for fitness and classes, the university's first wrestling training room and a fieldhouse and athletic institute with a 200-meter indoor running and walking track and three multi-purpose sports courts.

It's the school's first indoor track since Morrow Gym, which was built in 1920 and razed in 1993,

The United Methodist-based, liberal arts university has seen record enrollment and campus improvements over the last decade.

Thursday's Scores The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Brookings 64, Harrisburg 48
Burke/South Central 63, Marty Indian 59
Clark/Willow Lake 60, Redfield/Doland 37
Colman-Egan 61, Arlington 49
Crazy Horse 67, Takini 63
Deubrook 41, DeSmet 39
Edmunds Central 64, Northwestern 61
Elkton-Lake Benton 63, Dell Rapids St. Mary 24
Ethan 58, Scotland 35
Eureka/Bowdle 90, Wakpala 36

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Garretson 63, Baltic 43
Hanson 53, Centerville 37
Hill City 66, Newell 33
James Valley Christian 80, Iroquois 38
Kimball/White Lake 52, Platte-Geddes 49
Little Wound 77, Hay Springs, Neb. 21
Miller 56, Ipswich 39
Newcastle, Wyo. 61, Custer 54
Oelrichs 59, Minatare, Neb. 46
Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 51, Lake Preston 48
Philip 61, Lead-Deadwood 46
Potter County 52, Sully Buttes 46
Rapid City Christian 65, Kadoka Area 44
Sanborn Central 59, Corsica 53
Sioux Falls Lincoln 60, Watertown 51
Sioux Valley 64, Flandreau 54
Tri-Valley 70, West Central 48
Wagner 63, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 50
Warner 58, Leola/Frederick 30
White River 89, Wall 66
Yankton 55, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 48
Little Moreau Conference Tournament
First Round
Bison 88, Tiospaye Topa 56
Faith 58, Dupree 26
Harding County def. McIntosh, forfeit
Timber Lake 62, Lemmon 52

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Avon 65, Bon Homme 29
Centerville 59, Menno 54
Chester 55, Parker 47
Freeman 60, Alcester-Hudson 20
Harrisburg 48, Brookings 37
Herreid/Selby Area 61, Strasburg-Zeeland, N.D. 39
Highmore-Harrold 39, Faulkton 30
Hill City 52, Newell 10
Ipswich 59, Miller 41
Kadoka Area 52, Rapid City Christian 40
Lead-Deadwood 49, Philip 46
Lennox 48, Elk Point-Jefferson 44
Leola/Frederick 49, Warner 44
Little Wound 73, Hay Springs, Neb. 17
McCook Central/Montrose 69, Garretson 41
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 59, Bridgewater-Emery 27
Oelrichs 61, Minatare, Neb. 16
Pine Ridge 79, Bennett County 23
Platte-Geddes 58, Kimball/White Lake 40
Rapid City Central 45, Rapid City Stevens 44
Red Cloud 83, St. Francis Indian 48
Rosholt 50, Florence/Henry 48

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Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 49, Corsica/Stickney 36
Scotland 51, Marion 22
Sioux Falls Christian 47, Vermillion 42
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 61, Yankton 50
St. Thomas More 68, Douglas 25
Sully Buttes 62, Potter County 20
Takini 38, Crazy Horse 20
Todd County 68, Chamberlain 50
Wagner 70, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 46
Wall 62, White River 47
Waubay/Summit 42, Waverly-South Shore 36
Webster 53, Aberdeen Roncalli 36
West Central 57, Tri-Valley 42
Wilmot 53, Great Plains Lutheran 32
Winner 69, Crow Creek 25

Landis scores record 44 points as IPFW beats S. Dakota 95-82

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Max Landis missed his first shot of the game, a 3-pointer, but not many more as he poured in a school-record 44 points to lead IPFW past South Dakota, 95-82 on Thursday night.

The red-shirt senior shot 15-for-21 from the floor, including 11-for-15 from 3-point range to help Indiana-Purdue Fort Wayne reach a school-record 20 3-pointers in the game.

Fort Wayne (19-6, 8-2 Summit League) has posted its best start in program history as a Division I school. Tre Burnette made four 3-pointers and Logan Power added another as South Dakota (10-14, 2-8) tried to rally in the last three minutes, but was unable to overcome IPFW's 19-point lead.

Burnette led the Coyotes with 18 points and five assists, Tyler Flack 17 added points and Trey Norris 16. After Landis, DeAngelo Stewart scored 17 points, Michael Calder 14 and John Konchar 13 with 10 assists and six rebounds.

Some GOP lawmakers want separate vote on Medicaid expansion

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Some Republican lawmakers want to show Gov. Dennis Daugaard what the Legislature thinks of his Medicaid expansion plan.

A bill was introduced Thursday that would require a separate vote about expansion rather than having it sandwiched in with the state budget bill.

GOP Rep. Don Haggard says if his bill gets traction, the Republican governor can glean that the Legislature is likely unsatisfied with his approach and opposed to expansion.

A spokeswoman for Daugaard says the administration "doesn't think this is necessary." Kelsey Pritchard says the Legislature has authority over changes to Medicaid through the budget process.

Daugaard has proposed expanding the program if the state's share of the cost is covered by savings. The plan needs the backing of the federal government, the Legislature and South Dakota's Indian tribes.

Court upholds South Dakota vehicular homicide conviction

DIRK LAMMERS, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court on Thursday upheld the conviction of a Lake Andes man who was drunk when he drove into two federal wildlife researchers, killing them.

Ronald Fischer Jr. is serving 30 years in prison for vehicular homicide in the July 2013 deaths of Maegan Spindler, 25, of Cazenovia, New York, and Robert Klumb, 46, of Pierre. Prosecutors say Fischer was drunk and ran a stop sign before he struck the two U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service researchers in a parking lot. They were conducting tests on the Missouri River.

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After the crash, investigators obtained Fischer's blood samples from Wagner Community Memorial Hospital, where he was being treated. According to court records, his blood-alcohol content was 0.232 percent, which is nearly three times the legal limit of 0.08 percent.

Fischer's attorney, Tim Whalen, argued before the justices last month that authorities infringed on Fischer's constitutional rights by drawing blood without a warrant and that it shouldn't have been allowed into evidence at his trial. He said the officers knew they would get the blood sample from the hospital and chose not to get a warrant.

Assistant Attorney General Kelly Marnette argued that law enforcement did nothing wrong and went above and beyond in handling the crash scene.

In a written opinion, the high court ruled that the drawing of blood was objectively reasonable.

"Blood drawn by hospital personnel for medical purposes is not subject to Fourth Amendment protection and therefore suppression of the draw was not warranted," the justices wrote.

Spindler's parents, Gregg and Susan Spindler, issued a statement Thursday urging the Legislature to pass a bill classifying vehicular homicide as a crime of violence. The measure was introduced in the state Senate and referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"We ask you to consider whether Maegan and Rob met violent deaths," they wrote. "There is only one answer to that question."

State House approves industrial hemp bill; heads to Senate

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The state House of Representatives has approved a bill that would open the door to the cultivation of industrial hemp in South Dakota.

House lawmakers voted 57-11 on Thursday to approve the plan. It now heads to the Senate for consideration.

Republican Rep. Mike Verchio of Hill City is the bill's main House sponsor. He says hemp could be a significant economic development opportunity and provide jobs in South Dakota.

The South Dakota bill restricts the content of THC for industrial hemp. It would allow people to apply to the state Department of Agriculture for a license to grow the plant.

Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard has said he's against allowing industrial hemp in the state. Daugaard has said he doubts its cultivation would amount to much economic activity.

Campus beer, wine sales measure receives committee approval

JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's six public universities could see wine and beer sales on campus at sports and other special events under a plan that a legislative committee approved Thursday.

The Senate Commerce and Energy committee voted 6-1 to send the bill to the chamber's floor. The proposal could help control alcohol use on campus and would create an income stream for the universities, said Mike Rush, executive director and CEO of the South Dakota Board of Regents, which supported the bill.

Current state law doesn't ban serving alcohol, but on-campus sales are prohibited. The intent of the new plan is to have private vendors manage the sales, which would be limited to specific events and would have to be authorized by the Board of Regents and approved by local municipalities, said Republican Sen. Larry Tidemann of Brookings.

"This does not mean that we're just going to all start drinking on campus," said Tidemann, the bill's sponsor. The move would apply to events involving sports, performing arts, conferences and fundraising, among other things.

South Dakota is in the "very small minority" of states that has a blanket prohibition against all alcohol sales on campus, Rush said. The bill would create the opportunity for the board to develop policies to regulate alcohol sales on campus, but Rush said there's "no interest to open this wide open by any stretch."

He told the committee that the plan would also help fundraising events and other groups that use university facilities — campuses often offer the largest venue for an event — who find the lack of alcohol

sales prohibitive.

South Dakota State University President David Chicoine said the sale of alcohol at the Brookings institution could help venues on campus tap a broader potential audience. He said the proposal could also help the university promote premium seating at the new \$65 million Dana J. Dykhouse Stadium.

And allowing the sales is important to the community, which has put funding into campus facilities such as a performing arts center that it views as part of economic development interests for the city of Brookings, Chicoine said.

"I ask you to support this bill to help us grow as a city," Brookings Mayor Tim Reed said.

Rush said he's confident that the Board of Regents will be able to create a strong policy governing alcohol sales, citing his experience as executive director of the Idaho State Board of Education.

"We were very successful, so I don't have any doubt that we can do the same here," he said.

Sen. Jenna Haggar was the only lawmaker to vote against the measure. The Republican from Sioux Falls said that college alcohol use is becoming a more significant issue every year.

Victims' rights initiative gathers steam in Montana

BOBBY CAINA CALVAN, Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — Backers of a ballot measure to expand rights for crime victims and their families say they have enough signatures to put the Marsy's Law initiative before voters in November.

Montana is one several states where national victims' rights advocates hope to build momentum for expanding the measure into more states.

In 2008, voters in California were the first to pass the law. A similar measure went into effect in Illinois last year. And efforts are now also underway in Georgia, Hawaii, Kentucky, Nevada, North Dakota and South Dakota.

The law is in honor of Marsalee "Marsy" Nicholas, a University of California, Santa Barbara, student who was stalked and killed in 1983 by a former boyfriend. The national effort is bankrolled by her brother, high tech billionaire Henry Nicholas.

Just a week after the college student was murdered, Henry Nicholas and his mother crossed paths with the suspect while in a grocery store. They were never informed that authorities had released the suspect on bail.

The law would amend the state constitution to require prosecutors to inform victims or their families of key developments in a case and accord them the right to be heard in proceedings.

"The criminal justice system can get confusing, and sometimes victims feel left out. And sometimes they are left out," said Derek VanLuchene, a former Montana law officer, whose 8-year-old brother Ryan was killed in 1987.

"Back then, there was no such thing as victims' rights. ... We were in the dark on what's going on," said VanLuchene, who was 17 at the time of his brother's disappearance and who later founded Ryan United, a victims' rights group based in Helena.

National organizers are targeting 18 states that they say have inadequate laws to protect victims and their families.

"Victims of crime do not have equal rights to those accused or convicted of crime," said Gail Gitcho, the spokeswoman for the national group, Marsy's Law for All. "Criminals have more rights than victims do, and that's unfair, not right and we're working to change it."

National organizers say many of the states targeted by the Marsy's Law campaign are smaller — and cost less to get measures on the ballot. They are also cheaper media markets in which to wage campaigns.

In Montana, organizers expressed confidence that they have the minimum number of signatures required — 48,349 collected across 40 legislative districts — to place the measure on the ballot, said Charles Denowh, who is leading the ballot drive in Montana.

He said many counties in Montana already do a good job in keeping victims and their families in the loop. Marsy's Law, he said, would require every county to extend rights and courtesies to victims of crime.

Gallatin County Attorney Marty Lambert said laws already exist in Montana to protect victims of violent

crime. He worries that expanding the law to misdemeanors and nonviolent offenses, as he said Marsy's Law would do, could further burden overstretched staffs.

"We do not have time and the staff for every single theft case to afford the rights that are set forth in Marsy's Law," he said. "We do not have the sufficient resources to implement the requirements of the law."

Bill to allow concealed guns in South Dakota Capitol fails

JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A bill that would have allowed concealed weapon permit holders to bring guns into the South Dakota state Capitol failed in a legislative committee Thursday.

The Senate Judiciary Committee voted down the plan that would have removed from state law a ban on carrying firearms in the Capitol building.

Republican Sen. Betty Olson said her proposal would deter potential attackers, but the state Highway Patrol urged lawmakers to leave the protection of the Capitol to trained law enforcement officers.

Olson, who has a concealed weapon permit, said she wants to be able to protect herself. State lawmakers would be "sitting ducks" in the House and Senate chambers if a shooter took aim from the upper galleries, Olson said.

There are no metal detectors or other security checks at the Capitol entrances to enforce the current prohibition of guns in the building.

"I would like to be able to have my concealed weapon in my seat in case somebody stands up there and starts shooting," Olson said, noting that law enforcement has limited resources. "Those guys can't be everywhere all the time, and there's going to be a lot of us dead if we have a mass shooting."

The bill would have allowed legislators to inform Capitol security that they're carrying weapons and volunteer to assist if necessary. The proposal would also have allowed certain state officials, such as the governor, to post signs barring concealed weapons in galleries or specific offices.

But the South Dakota Highway Patrol, which is tasked with protecting the Capitol, opposed the bill because it could create confusion for authorities responding to a violent situation, said Maj. Dana Svendsen, an assistant superintendent.

"Please let law enforcement make the tough calls and do the job we're here to do," he said.

South Dakota State Treasurer Rich Sattgast, who supports allowing concealed weapon permit holders to bring guns into the Capitol, said he doesn't have the same ability to protect himself at work as others do.

Sattgast gave lawmakers on the committee the layout of his office, which handles cash every day, and said the door is unlocked because it needs to be accessible.

"We can't have it set up like a liquor store in east St. Louis where you have a revolving glass door, because we need to have the interaction with the public," he said.

Supporters of such a bill will have another opportunity to make their case on Friday, when a measure to allow concealed weapons in the Capitol or a county courthouse with an enhanced permit is set to be considered by the House State Affairs committee.

MDU Resources profits down in 2015; new refinery loses money

JAMES MacPHERSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The Bismarck-based MDU Resources Group Inc. has reported a decrease in profits for 2015 due to losses at its North Dakota refinery and warmer winter weather that cut natural gas and electricity sales.

The energy, mining and construction company said late Wednesday that its profits for ongoing operations in 2015 were \$180 million, down from \$205.5 million in 2014.

"I am not satisfied with our overall earnings performance," MDU Resources President and CEO David Goodin said in a statement.

One highlight Goodin noted was the company's construction businesses, which had record earnings of

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\$115.8 million, up from \$114.4 million in 2014.

MDU Resources and Indianapolis-based Calumet Specialty Products Partners' \$430 million Dakota Prairie Refinery near Dickinson began selling fuel in May but has lost money due to low fuel prices and a slow-down in North Dakota oil activity.

MDU spokeswoman Laura Lueder said its share of the loss was \$20.5 million in 2015.

Combined with low demand, the refinery also experienced "down time and equipment challenges" last year, she said. "The refinery was a challenge," she said.

The company last year also delayed plans for a second diesel factory in the Minot area for similar reasons that contributed to the Dickinson plant's problems.

MDU is the parent company of Montana-Dakota Utilities, whose eight-state service area includes the Dakotas, Minnesota, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon. The utility said warmer-than-normal temperatures decreased natural gas and electricity sales by \$7.2 million last year, to \$59.5 million.

MDU Resources said it has nearly completed the sale of its oil and gas exploration subsidiary, Fidelity Exploration and Production Co. When complete, the sale is expected to be worth about \$450 million.

Hartford councilman investigated by police won't be charged

HARTFORD, S.D. (AP) — A Hartford City Council member who resigned in the wake of a police investigation will not face criminal charges.

A community group accused Doyle Johnson of reading a possibly fraudulent email at a council meeting, disparaging the group. Falsification of a public record by a public official is punishable by up to a year in jail under state law.

Minnehaha County State's Attorney Aaron McGowan on Thursday said Johnson's alleged actions "do not clearly fall within our criminal statutes regarding false entries into a public record." McGowan says he considers the matter closed.

Ellsworth officials 'committed' to being good neighbors

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Officials at Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota say they're committed to being good neighbors to the pilots and communities in their newly expanded training zone.

Officials in a statement Thursday said base members have been in "constant communication" with many of the ranchers, communities and organizations impacted by the Powder River Training Complex.

Last year's expansion roughly quadrupled the training airspace for the Air Force in Wyoming, Montana and the Dakotas.

The South Dakota Stockgrowers Association sent a request to Ellsworth officials Tuesday petitioning Air Force officials to provide more information to ranchers who monitor their herds and land by air.

Officials said efforts to mitigate the impact have only increased since they began operations in September.

Ohio man fighting state over his exotic animals has hearings

BOWLING GREEN, Ohio (AP) — A northwestern Ohio man whose six tigers and other exotic animals were seized is getting back-to-back hearings as he fights the state.

The evidentiary hearings in Kenny Hetrick's case were starting Thursday in Wood County.

Hetrick is challenging the Ohio Department of Agriculture's decision denying him a permit to keep the animals at his home just outside Toledo.

Last year, Ohio took custody of the animals from Hetrick's roadside sanctuary after officials said he ignored warnings about needing a permit for the exotic animals. Inspectors also reported that his cages weren't secure enough to prevent an escape.

The state relocated the animals in August under contracts with facilities in Arizona, Florida and South Dakota.

Hetrick argued that violated his rights. The state said it was for the animals' benefit.

South Dakota State football team adds players from 10 states

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota State University football team added 28 players during national signing day.

Head coach John Stiegelmeier says this year's class includes recruits at every position. They include high school players from 10 states, including South Dakota.

SDSU made its fourth consecutive appearance in the Football Championship Subdivision playoffs this past season. The Jackrabbits finished No. 16 in the final coaches poll and No. 15 in the media poll.

Snow sculptors from across the nation compete in Wisconsin

LAKE GENEVA, Wis. (AP) — Fifteen teams of snow sculptors from 11 states have gathered in Wisconsin to compete to be named the best in the nation.

The U.S. National Snow Sculpting Championship began Wednesday with judging set for Saturday morning along Geneva Lake.

The Wisconsin team that won with "Arbor Amor" depicting two intertwined trees last year has split into two and are competing against each other in this competition.

The teams receive a cylinder block of snow eight feet in diameter and nine feet high. They can use only saws, axes, files, scaffolding, shovels and other homemade implements.

They will be judged on creativity, technique and message.

The winner gets a trophy and an invite to an international snow sculpting competition.

China governor fired for 'disloyalty' as Xi tightens grip

CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — The governor of a major Chinese province has been accused of disloyalty to the ruling Communist Party and removed from his post, amid a growing consolidation of power by President Xi Jinping that some have likened to a personality cult.

Deposed Sichuan Gov. Wei Hong joins a long list of those sidelined in a sweeping crackdown on dissent, civil society and corrupt officials.

However, the accusations against Wei are unusual in that they make no mention of graft or any other crime, which some observers took as a sign that Xi has become powerful enough to take down major politicians without charging them with criminal activity. Wei was accused only of violating "party discipline," not of breaking the law, demoted to a vice departmental post and removed from his party duties.

Wei had been "disloyal to the party, dishonest and failed to value the many opportunities to receive education and rectify his wrongdoing," the party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection said in an unusually long statement on its website.

Along with "seriously violating political and organizational discipline," he also sought to subvert the investigation, refused to confess and interfered with judicial activities, the commission said.

No details were given about the specific accusations against Wei, who has spent most of his career in the Sichuan party apparatus and was also a delegate to the national party and government congresses.

The commission also announced an investigation into a vice governor of the southern province of Guangdong on the same charge. It said Liu Zhigeng was under investigation but gave no details about his alleged violation of party discipline.

The accusations appear to show an expansion of Xi's anti-corruption campaign to include those who fail to profess fealty to his leadership rather than just those who have engaged in criminal activity, said Willy Lam, who closely follows China's elite politics at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Whereas previous leaders tolerated some degree of factionalism, Xi appears intent on removing all who fail to toe the line, Lam said. Wei may have been suspected of being under the sway of one of Xi's two predecessors, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, he said.

"This is a warning to party members that they can lose their place," Lam said. "It is an alarming devel-

opment in the personality cult around Xi.”

The son of a founder of the Communist state, Xi has increasingly turned to well-worn methods of state propaganda to promote his image. He has appeared on decorative plates, medals and billboards, and even established a presence on social media within China’s narrowly confined online world.

More so than usual, Xi has dominated state broadcaster CCTV’s newscasts in recent days, visiting mountainous areas of central China where the nascent Communist Party established its foothold in its early days.

During the visit, local residents grasped Xi by the arm, clapping, smiling and singing revolutionary folk songs. Xi then held forth in front of local government officials and military units, cementing his image as the paramount leader.

Xi now appears to be moving to elevate his status to the “core” of the party leadership, rather than simply its general secretary, Lam said. The distinction is highly significant in Chinese politics, raising him above Hu and placing him on the level with Jiang, who ruled from 1989 to 2002.

Syrian troops push ahead in offensive, take another village

KARIN LAUB, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The Syrian military and allied fighters, backed by Russian airstrikes, on Friday pushed ahead with a major offensive in the north of the country, capturing another village and moving a step closer to encircling contested Aleppo, Syria’s largest city.

The offensive near the Turkish border, which began earlier this week, has sent tens of thousands of residents fleeing. Turkey has said about 10,000 Syrians have amassed on the Syrian side of the Turkish border and that about 70,000 more were on their way.

Meanwhile, there was mounting Western criticism of Russia’s military support for its ally, Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Russian airstrikes in Syria that mainly target opposition forces are “undermining efforts to find a political solution to the conflict,” NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Friday.

Russian air force activity in Syria has also led to increased violations of Turkish airspace, Stoltenberg said in Amsterdam, on the sidelines of a meeting of EU defense ministers. “This creates risks, heightened tensions and is of course a challenge for NATO because they’re violations of NATO’s airspace,” he said.

The Syrian government offensive comes at a time when hopes for a peace deal are increasingly dim, amid signs of possible further foreign military intervention.

Earlier this week, a U.N.-led attempt to launch indirect talks between a government delegation and opposition representatives in Geneva was adjourned after several days of acrimonious bickering.

At the same time, the Russian military said Thursday it had “reasonable grounds” to suspect that Turkey is making intensive preparations for a military invasion of neighboring Syria, while a Saudi military spokesman said the kingdom is ready, in principle, to send ground troops to Syria to fight Islamic State group extremists.

In Friday’s fighting, pro-government troops retook the village of Rityan north of Aleppo, one of several communities they captured in the area this week, according to the state news agency SANA and the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The Observatory, an opposition monitoring group, said pro-government troops were backed by Russian airstrikes. It said that by taking Rityan, the government secured a road that links the predominantly Shiite villages of Nubl and Zahraa. These villages had been encircled by rebels for more than three years, but government troops broke the siege earlier this week.

In capturing another community Friday, the government also moved a step closer toward surrounding Aleppo.

The city, Syria’s one-time commercial center, has been carved up between government and rebel-held districts since the summer of 2012. A government siege of Aleppo and its rebel strongholds would deal a potentially devastating blow.

Also Friday, the Syrian army and allied militias retook the town of Atman near the southern city of Daraa, located between the capital Damascus and the Jordanian border, according to the Observatory and

Syrian state media

The Observatory said the capture opened several supply routes to Daraa, which is divided between government and opposition fighters. Troops advanced under the cover of heavy artillery bombardment and air power, the Observatory said.

Daraa was the scene of some of the first protests against Assad in 2011 and holds symbolic value in the narrative of the uprising that has since collapsed into a vicious civil war.

Pope, Russian Orthodox patriarch to meet in historic step

NICOLE WINFIELD, Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis and the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church will meet in Cuba next week in a historic step to heal the 1,000-year-old schism that divided Christianity between East and West, both churches announced Friday.

The meeting between Francis and Patriarch Kirill will be the first ever between the leaders of the Catholic and Russian Orthodox churches.

Francis is due to travel to Mexico Feb. 12-18. He will stop in Cuba on the way and meet with Kirill on Feb. 12 at the Havana airport, where they will sign a joint declaration, a joint statement said.

The two churches split during the Great Schism of 1054 and have remained estranged over a host of issues, including the primacy of the pope and Russian Orthodox accusations that the Catholic Church is poaching converts in Russia.

Those tensions have prevented previous popes from ever meeting with the Russian patriarch, even though the Vatican has long insisted that it was merely ministering to the tiny Catholic community in largely Orthodox lands.

The persecution of Christians — Catholic and Orthodox — in the Middle East and Africa, however, has had the effect of bringing the two churches closer together.

In November 2014, Francis had said he had told Kirill. "I'll go wherever you want. You call me and I'll go." Kirill will be in Cuba on an official visit.

The meeting, which was announced jointly at the Vatican and in Moscow, marks a major development in the Vatican's long effort to bridge the divisions in Christianity.

In the joint statement, the two churches said the meeting "will mark an important stage in relations between the two churches. The Holy See and the Moscow Patriarchate hope that it will also be a sign of hope for all people of good will. They invite all Christians to pray fervently for God to bless this meeting, that it may bear good fruits."

Metropolitan Illarion, foreign policy chief of the Russian Orthodox Church, told reporters on Friday that there are still core disagreements between the Holy See and the Russian Church, in particular on various Orthodox churches in western Ukraine.

"Despite the existing ecclesiastical obstacles, a decision has been taken to hold a meeting between Patriarch Kirill and Pope Francis," he said.

"The situation in the Middle East, in northern and central Africa and in other regions where extremists are perpetrating a genocide of Christians requires immediate action and an even closer cooperation between Christian churches," Illarion said. "In this tragic situation, we need to put aside internal disagreements and pool efforts to save Christianity in the regions where it is subject to most severe persecution."

The Vatican has long nurtured ties with the Istanbul-based Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew I, who is considered "first among equals" within the Orthodox Church. Starting with Pope Paul VI, various popes have called upon the Ecumenical Patriarch in hopes of bridging closer ties with the Orthodox faithful.

But the Russian Orthodox Church, which is the largest church in Orthodoxy and the most powerful, has always kept its distance from Rome. Joint theological commissions have met over the years and the Russian church's foreign minister has made periodic visits to Rome, but a pope-patriarch meeting has never been possible until now.

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About two-thirds of the world's Orthodox Christians belong to the Russian Orthodox Church, the Vatican spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, said.

About 75 percent of Russia's 144 million population call themselves Russian Orthodox, according to the latest polls, although only a fraction of them say they are observant. The Catholic Church claims about 1.2 billion faithful.

Under Francis, the Vatican has encouraged continuing ecumenical ties with the Orthodox as well as other Christian denominations. And it has gone out of its way to be solicitous to Russia, especially in shying away from directly criticizing Moscow over its role in the Ukraine conflict.

Ever since Kirill took the helm of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2009, the church has enjoyed increasingly close ties with the Kremlin that critics have dismissed as the de-facto merging of the state and the church.

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. FIREWORKS FLY IN FIRST ONE-ON-ONE DEMOCRATIC DEBATE

Hillary Clinton accuses Bernie Sanders of subjecting her to an "artful smear" regarding her Wall Street links while Sanders suggests the former secretary of state is a captive of America's political establishment.

2. U.N. PANEL RULES FOR WIKILEAKS FOUNDER

Julian Assange has been "arbitrarily detained" by Britain and Sweden since December 2010, and should be freed and compensated, the rights group says.

3. EXPERTS DOWNPLAY PLANNED NORTH KOREA LAUNCH

Pyongyang's rockets look like space launch vehicles and aren't necessarily helping them get that much closer to having a reliable, long-range missile capacity.

4. DESPITE ZIKA SCARE, PARTY GOES ON

As tens of thousands descend on Brazil for the annual Carnival festival, there are fears the crush of humanity will be a perfect opportunity for the virus to spread.

5. TALIBAN CLOSING RANKS AROUND NEW LEADER

The move could allow Afghanistan's insurgents to speak with one voice in hoped-for peace talks but will also strengthen them on the battlefield.

6. WHAT SECTOR OF ECONOMY IS STILL STRONG

Despite U.S. manufacturing shrinking, corporate profits declining and goods piling up on warehouse shelves, hiring continues to buck the recessionary trends.

7. HOW POLICE SHOOTINGS ARE CHANGING THE DEBATE

A dispute is erupting among police organizations over new proposals that would govern when officers should use force during violent arrests.

8. WHERE JAPAN IS FACING A CULTURAL DILEMMA

Japanese are mulling changing the traditional "manji" symbol identifying Buddhist temples on maps that is often confused with the Nazi swastika.

9. HOW CASINOS ARE TRYING TO LURE MILLENNIALS

Tattoo studios, mixed martial arts competitions and other offbeat attractions are designed to attract a younger clientele.

10. SUPER BOWL ADVERTISERS STICKING TO CLASSICS

Talking animals, celebrity cameos and crowd-pleasing rock songs are the themes that marketers hope to win over Big Game viewers.

Analysis: Clinton moves aggressively to hold off Sanders

JULIE PACE, AP White House Correspondent

MANCHESTER, New Hampshire (AP) — Hillary Clinton has been here before, watching a political rival generate youthful enthusiasm with lofty proposals she believes are going unchallenged.

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So on Thursday, she took matters into her own hands.

In the first head-to-head debate between Clinton and Bernie Sanders, the former secretary of state tried to systematically undermine the Vermont senator's plans for a government-run health care system, his call for free college tuition and his foreign policy judgment. And she upbraided Sanders for his "artful smear" of the high-dollar speaking fees she received from Wall Street banks and the implication she's beholden to the financial firms as a result.

"I really don't think these kinds of attacks by insinuation are worthy of you," Clinton said to Sanders. "If you have something to say, say it directly."

Clinton's fiery performance was a manifestation of the frustration growing inside her campaign for weeks. Her team believes Sanders is getting away with breaking his pledge to avoid negative attacks. And they think he's not being straight with Americans about the cost of his proposals, particularly his call for a single-payer health care system.

With the attention of a prime-time television audience, Clinton set about trying to vet Sanders' proposals on her own. When it comes to his calls for broader government involvement in domestic programs, Clinton said, "The numbers don't add up." On foreign policy, she tried to poke a hole in Sanders' argument that his vote against the invasion of Iraq is proof he has the judgment necessary to manage America's involvement in the turbulent Middle East.

"A vote in 2002 is not a plan to defeat ISIS," she said.

Addressing her own readiness to be president, Clinton said: "I've been vetted. There's hardly anything you don't know about me."

While the contest between Clinton and Sanders has grown more heated in recent weeks, Thursday's debate took the rancor to a new level. It followed Clinton's narrow victory in the Iowa caucuses and came just days before the primary in New Hampshire, where Sanders has for months maintained a large lead in preference polls.

Clinton's allies don't believe her standing is nearly as precarious as it was during this stage of her 2008 primary fight against Barack Obama. They view Sanders as a candidate with narrower appeal, particularly once the primary calendar moves to states with more racially diverse electorates.

But there are enough eerie echoes of that contest eight years ago to spark growing anxiety, as well as a determination to not underestimate Sanders. Even if Clinton believes his proposals are unrealistic, he's amassing enough campaign cash to keep the race going for months — and potentially enough support among young voters and liberal Democrats to stay competitive in the delegate count.

In Thursday's debate, Sanders was still finding his way in his new role as a viable presidential candidate. He continued to be more at ease when discussing economic issues and was still searching for a foreign policy argument that holds up next to Clinton.

He reiterated his belief that as president, he could muscle big government programs through a divided Washington, even those that include tax hikes to pay for the costs. And he kept up his intense attacks on the same Wall Street banks from which Clinton accepted speaking fees, casting her decision to take the money as an example of what he sees as the inappropriate blending of politics and big business.

"Wall Street is an entity of unbelievable economic and political power," Sanders said. "That's a fact."

Even as the Democratic contest takes a more acrimonious turn, Clinton is mindful of the fine line she must walk between drawing sharp distinctions with Sanders and not turning off his supporters. She's still the front-runner for her party's nomination and will need his voters — particularly the young people flocking to his campaign — in the general election.

In the closing moments of the two-hour debate, Clinton was asked whether she might pick Sanders as her running mate if she becomes the nominee. She demurred — "I think that would be a little presumptuous" — but said Sanders would have a voice in her administration.

"If I'm so fortunate to be the nominee, the first person I will call to talk to about where we go and how we get it done will be Sen. Sanders," she said.

Sanders, who has his own reputation as an all-about-the-issues candidate at stake if the race devolves into personal attacks, returned the favor. "Sometimes in these campaigns, things get a little bit out of

hand. I happen to respect the secretary very much," he said.

What had started as a contentious confrontation then ended with a happy handshake.

South Africa: About 87 trapped after collapse at mine

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — A South African miners' union says about 87 people are trapped after a building collapsed at a gold mine in the country's eastern Mpumalanga province.

A spokesman for the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union, Manzini Zungu, said 52 people were trapped when an office building collapsed above ground on Friday, trapping an additional 35 miners below ground. Zungu said 80 miners have been rescued so far.

Zungu said the building collapsed in the town of Barberton Friday morning.

Television news channel eNCA reported the rescued miners had no serious injuries.

Florida readies for a fight with Zika virus

JENNIFER KAY, Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Florida's history of fighting off mosquito-borne outbreaks puts the state in perhaps better position than most when it comes to the Zika virus.

In 2014, chikungunya, a virus spread by the same species of mosquito as Zika, infected a million people in the Caribbean. While 452 travel-related cases were documented in Florida that year, just 11 people contracted the virus in the state. Last year, no locally acquired cases of chikungunya were reported, though 73 people picked up the virus while traveling.

Florida's warm climate, year-round mosquitoes and revolving door of international travelers make it vulnerable to the Zika virus, but local governments aggressively urge people to dump or cover anything on their property that holds water so they don't end up raising mosquitoes that spread the virus through bites. A rainy, humid winter already had mosquito control officials on alert statewide and door-to-door inspections have been increased in neighborhoods where 12 cases of Zika were reported, all from people who have traveled abroad.

Gov. Rick Scott called for more vigilance Thursday, and he said his emergency health declaration for five counties was much like getting ready for a hurricane. He sought to assure people that Florida, a hub for cruises and flights to Central and South America where the outbreak is, was safe.

But in preparing for the worst, the governor asked the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to supply 1,000 kits to test for viral antibodies in pregnant women and new mothers who have shown Zika symptoms after traveling to affected countries. The state has about 500 tests on hand.

"With 20 million people and over 100 million tourists, we need the CDC to immediately provide these kits to Florida so we can protect our families and of course all of our visitors," Scott said at a news conference in Tampa.

He also wants the CDC to help train Florida hospital workers to identify Zika symptoms.

Zika usually is transmitted through bites from infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, which are common in Florida, along the Gulf Coast and states that border Mexico. So far, the only recent case that has been transmitted within the U.S. is believed to have occurred in Texas through sex.

Gonzalo Vazquez, an environmental science researcher at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health, said any transmission beyond Florida is likely to remain tightly contained because most tourists returning north aren't likely to be bitten by any mosquitoes during the winter. That may change as the seasons change, though.

"Timing is essential," Vazquez said.

Typically, only a fifth of those afflicted with Zika notice its mild symptoms, including a moderate fever and a rash.

Amid an ongoing Zika outbreak, Brazilian authorities say they have detected a spike in cases of microcephaly, which leaves infants with unusually small heads and can result in brain damage and other developmental and health problems. However, the link between Zika and microcephaly is as yet unproven.

There is no vaccine or treatment for Zika. Experts say the best way to stop its spread is to controlling

the population of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which also carries dengue fever.

The state had a spike in dengue cases in 2013, with 22 people contracting the virus in Martin County. But the number of locally acquired cases statewide dropped to six the following year and just one last year.

So far, county mosquito control officials say their Zika response has followed protocols for other *Aedes aegypti*-related outbreaks: Tipping and tossing anything holding even small amounts of water, since the mosquitoes live largely inside homes and can lay eggs in a bottle-cap or shallow puddles.

"There's no need for us to do area-wide spraying. That's not going to be effective," said Chalmers Vasquez, operations manager for Miami-Dade County mosquito control.

Woman charged in teen's death says she, too, was bullied

TOM FOREMAN Jr., The Associated Press

BEN NUCKOLS, The Associated Press

BLACKSBURG, Va. (AP) — Natalie Keepers told a judge that she was bullied — just like the 13-year-old girl she is accused of plotting to kill.

And like seventh-grader Nicole Lovell, the 19-year-old Virginia Tech student had endured health challenges, though Keepers' were of the emotional variety: suicidal thoughts, cutting herself, stress and anxiety that required medication.

The similarities emerged in a Blacksburg courtroom Thursday as Keepers and her lawyer argued that she should be released on bail while she awaits trial for allegedly helping plan Lovell's slaying and then improperly dumping her body just across the state line in North Carolina, two hours south of Virginia Tech's campus, where she was a student. Bond was denied.

Keepers' classmate, 18-year-old David Eisenhower, is charged with kidnapping and killing Lovell, who survived a liver transplant and other health scares only to have her life ended after apparently climbing out her bedroom window last week. Eisenhower also is being held without bond.

In court, Montgomery County Commonwealth's Attorney Mary Pettitt described how authorities believe Eisenhower and Keepers planned Lovell's stabbing death but left key aspects of the crime a mystery. She did not suggest a possible motive nor describe the killing itself.

But the prosecutor said messages on the girl's phone led to the suspects and accused the college students of deciding together in a fast-food restaurant that Eisenhower would cut her throat.

Defense lawyers argued that Keepers' mental health could unravel behind bars.

"We understand the allegations are disturbing and serious," attorney Kristopher Olin said. "But they are just allegations."

Keepers told the judge that she began cutting her body and had considered suicide "a few times" after being bullied in school five years ago. She said she's been in therapy and taking Prozac since then.

She's also allergic to the gluten in jail food, Olin added.

Judge Robert Viars Jr. decided Keepers should remain behind bars after Pettitt said she "is in the same position as the person who carried out the murder."

The prosecutor said Eisenhower initially denied his involvement when police found his messages on Nicole's phone, but eventually he said he drove to the girl's home, watched her climb out her window and greeted her with a "side hug" before they drove off to pick up Keepers.

Keepers insists she was not present at the killing itself but she went along for the ride, Pettitt said. And once Nicole was dead, Keepers helped load her body into Eisenhower's Lexus, the prosecutor added.

Pettitt said Keepers revealed the plot after officers tracked her down but that she first tried to warn Eisenhower, sending him a one-word text message reading "Police."

Nicole's parents, David Lovell and Tammy Weeks, attended the bail hearing but made no comments before leaving for their daughter's private funeral, where several hundred mourners paid their respects.

Friends and neighbors have described Nicole as a lovely if awkward girl, clinging to childhood ways while exploring older behaviors.

A neighbor said she told 8-year-old friends before she vanished that she planned to sneak out to meet her 18-year-old "boyfriend," a man she said was named David, whose picture she displayed on her phone.

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Authorities have not confirmed that this was Eisenhower's photo.

A 911 call on Jan. 27 alerted police that Nicole was missing, Pettitt said. Weeks discovered that the door to her daughter's bedroom had been barricaded, and that her phone and her "Minions" blanket also were gone.

An examination of emails and social media showed that Eisenhower and Nicole last made contact at 12:39 that morning, shortly before she disappeared, the prosecutor said.

Like others her age, Nicole was tech savvy, posting on Facebook and chatting using the Kik messenger app. Unlike other young teens, she had to take daily medicine to keep her transplanted liver from failing and endured bullying over a disfiguring tracheotomy scar in her neck, a reminder of the months she spent in a coma.

Keepers told the judge that she has problems, too. Shackled, handcuffed and wearing an orange jumpsuit, she said she's not getting her full dosage of anti-anxiety medicine in jail.

"I've learned how to love myself and to take care of myself and deal with any stress that I have," Keepers said, describing how she had promised a friend that if she stopped cutting herself, she would get a tattoo of a semicolon, representing that her life was not ending, but taking a new path.

Her father, Tim Keepers, said he and his wife, Sara, first heard of Eisenhower in October. He said the young man had "dropped everything" last year to rush their daughter to a hospital for an emergency appendectomy.

Eisenhower and Keepers went to high schools five miles apart in Columbia, Maryland. Excelling in the classroom and on the track, Eisenhower was focused on competing with top college runners while pursuing a career as an engineer.

Keepers, for her part, displayed a packed resume on her LinkedIn profile, including a summer internship with NASA, where she made how-to videos for engineers. Her father choked up in court Thursday when he said she had planned to follow his footsteps into aerospace engineering.

World stocks drift as Fed watchers await US job data

KELVIN CHAN, AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — World stock markets were uneven Friday as investors awaited U.S. job numbers that could influence how much the Fed raises interest rates this year. Japanese shares sagged on the strengthening yen.

KEEPING SCORE: European benchmarks were mixed in early trading. France's CAC 40 rose 0.6 percent to 4,255.33 while Germany's DAX dipped 0.2 percent to 9,378.43. Britain's FTSE climbed 0.2 percent to 5,911.46. U.S. stocks were poised to open lower. Dow futures lost 0.1 percent to 16,318.00 and broader S&P 500 futures edged 0.1 percent lower to 1,904.60.

JANUARY JOBS: Market attention is focused on the U.S. government's employment report for last month, which will be released later Friday after Asian markets have closed. Analysts expect a solid 200,000 jobs to be added, with the unemployment rate holding steady at 5 percent. However, weaker than expected figures would add to other downbeat economic data that's been piling up in recent days, including contracting U.S. and Chinese factory activity and a disappointing U.S. service sector index. Taken together, it could all be used to support the case for the Fed putting off further interest rate hikes, a prospect that's already helped push down the dollar.

ANALYST VIEW: "What's worrying the markets is some Fed policymakers' belief that recent developments are not sufficiently serious or persistent to warrant a material change in the central bank's outlook and view on the gradual path of the rate hike cycle," IG market strategist Bernard Aw wrote in a commentary. "The expectations disparity will heighten market volatility."

ASIA'S DAY: Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 index dropped 1.3 percent to close at 16,819.59 as the dollar weakened against the yen, hurting shares of the country's export producers. South Korea's Kospi edged up 0.1 percent to 1,917.79, Hong Kong's Hang Seng climbed 0.6 percent to 19,288.17 and the Shanghai Composite in mainland China shed 0.6 percent to 2,763.49. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 dipped 0.1 percent to

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4,976.20. Benchmarks in Southeast Asia rose. Trading volumes in Asia will be muted as many exchanges shut for all or part of the Lunar New Year holiday next week.

ENERGY: Oil futures retreated, with benchmark U.S. crude down 16 cents, or 0.5 percent, to \$31.56 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract lost 56 cents to settle at \$31.72 on Thursday after jumping 8 percent the day before. Brent crude, a benchmark for international oil prices, lost 46 cents, or 0.5 percent, to \$34 a barrel in London.

CURRENCIES: The dollar weakened to 116.81 yen from 116.96 yen in the previous day's trading, bringing its loss for the week to 3.5 percent. The euro eased to \$1.1194 from \$1.1199, its highest in more than three months.

Friday's jobs report could ease US recession fears. Or not.

CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. manufacturing is shrinking, corporate profits are declining and goods are piling up on warehouse shelves. Those trends have elevated concern that a U.S. recession may loom in the next year or two.

Yet in the one area that matters most, the economy has continued to shine: Hiring.

Over the final three months of 2015, employers added jobs at a robust monthly average of 284,000, and the unemployment rate has remained a low 5 percent. Such a trend typically reflects an economy in prime health, not one nearing a recession.

Another solid report Friday from the government on job growth during January could help assuage concerns about a recession possibly nearing. Analysts have forecast that employers added 200,000 jobs.

Yet if the job gain falls far short of that projection, worries about a recession might begin to intensify.

Most analysts say that while the economy may slow this year compared with 2015, an outright recession remains unlikely. Economists at Bank of America Merrill Lynch have put the odds of a recession within the next 12 months at 20 percent. While still low, that estimate is up from 15 percent last year.

Here are three trends that point to a potential recession — and three that do not:

MANUFACTURING SLOWDOWN:

No doubt factory output is declining. A jump in the value of the dollar and sluggish economies in Europe, China and Japan have squeezed exports of U.S. goods.

The Institute for Supply Management's manufacturing index has been below 50 for four months, signaling contraction. Orders for factory goods plunged in 2015 — the first annual drop since 2009, when the economy was just emerging from recession.

And industrial production, as measured by the Federal Reserve, fell 1.8 percent in December from a year earlier. That was the steepest drop since 2009.

A weak manufacturing sector can be a harbinger of recession. That's because Americans tend to reduce purchases of costly manufactured items, such as appliances or electronic products, before they start cutting back on more basic services.

Still, manufacturing now accounts for only about 10 percent of the U.S. economy, a small enough proportion that a factory slowdown probably won't derail the rest of the economy.

BIG STOCKPILES:

A classic recession indicator occurs when companies stock more items than people are willing or able to buy. Those companies then must slash new orders and prices to clear the backlog. This lowers production and profits.

In December, U.S. stockpiles reached 1.38 times sales — the highest level since July 2009, a month after the Great Recession officially ended. Some analysts estimate that the overstocking shaved one-half a percentage point off growth in the October-December quarter. That's a key reason the economy grew at an anemic 0.7 percent annual rate in the final three months of 2015.

Yet consumers and businesses are still spending, and that should enable companies to work off their

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excess supplies, says Nariman Behraves, chief economist at IHS, a forecasting firm.

BOND MARKET:

One of the most reliable recession indicators in the past has been a drop in longer-term interest rates, such as the yield on a 10-year Treasury, along with a rise in shorter-term rates, such as the yield on a three-month Treasury.

When longer-term rates fall below short-term ones, it produces what Wall Street analysts call an "inverted yield curve." It's a sign that investors expect the economy to slip into recession and lead to lower long-term rates.

According to an analysis by economists at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, historically the yield curve has been one of the most accurate predictors of recessions. It has flattened in the past month: The 10-year Treasury yield has sunk from 2.3 percent to 1.8 percent.

But with the Fed pegging its short-term rate at between 0.25 percent and 0.5 percent, most other short-term rates also remain very low. So the yield curve has not inverted. Analysts at Bank of America Lynch say it's showing just a 20 percent chance of recession over the next 12 months.

Other analysts are a bit more worried. Guy LeBas, chief fixed income strategist at Janney Montgomery Scott, says the bond market has reacted more sharply to recent signs of an economic slowdown. That suggests that investors are more concerned about the U.S. economy, rather than simply reacting to weakness in places like China.

Most economists still see a recession this year as unlikely. Here are three reasons why:

JOBS:

Though economic growth weakened in the final three months of last year, businesses kept on adding jobs and held the unemployment rate to an essentially healthy 5 percent. That means more Americans are earning paychecks to spend.

And while average wage levels are growing only tepidly, there are signs that the steady job growth is forcing companies to pay more to attract employees. That means consumer demand — the U.S. economy's lifeblood — will likely stay sound.

Zach Pandl, an economist at Goldman Sachs, notes that the economy added an average of 284,000 jobs a month in the second quarter of 2014, before oil prices plunged and manufacturing slowed. That the economy managed to add the same number of jobs a year and a half later meant that hiring remained healthy even as oil and gas drillers slashed jobs and factory jobs flattened.

And most economists say the bulk of job cuts in the oil and gas drilling sector have likely already occurred.

NO TRIGGERS:

As the saying goes, recessions typically don't die from old age. Instead, there's usually a trigger that kills them. And most of the usual suspects aren't evident.

A stock-price bubble helped tip the economy into a recession in 2001. A housing bubble triggered the deep 2008 downturn. Yet by most measures, neither stocks nor housing are nearly as overpriced as they were then.

The Federal Reserve has frequently been blamed for causing recessions by raising rates too quickly. And while it boosted its benchmark short-term rate in December for the first time in nine years, most economists forecast that it will raise rates very slowly this year, if at all.

Finally, sharply higher oil and gas prices have preceded or accompanied every recession since the 1970s. But oil prices right now are plunging.

"Those traditional recovery-killers just aren't there," Behraves says.

CONSUMERS:

Investors are worried about much slower growth in China, where many American multinationals have

invested a lot of money. Yet few American consumers share that concern.

Instead, consumer confidence rose in December, according to the Conference Board, a business research group, despite some volatility in the stock market that month.

With low gas prices leaving more money in consumers' wallets and borrowing costs low, most economists expect Americans to spend at a decent pace this year and bolster economic growth.

Sales of new homes surged in December to the healthiest level in 10 months. Sales of existing homes rose 6.5 percent during 2015, though that pace is expected to slow a bit this year.

"Why would the consumer stop spending?" Behraves asked. "They don't care about China."

Both kickers hoping Super Bowl 50 comes down to them

ARNIE STAPLETON, AP Pro Football Writer

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP) — They both visualized Adam Vinatieri growing up, these even-keeled kickers who are hoping to emulate "Mr. Clutch" in Super Bowl 50.

Maybe it's not the mighty legs of Cam Newton or the beautiful mind of Peyton Manning that will decide who wins Sunday when the Carolina Panthers and Denver Broncos play for the silver trophy in this golden anniversary game.

It could come down to the big right toe of either Brandon McManus or Graham Gano.

Both are more than ready.

They've been envisioning a last-second kick to win the Super Bowl ever since they traded the soccer pitch for pigskins as kids.

While fans might be freaking out — just ask Minnesota fans who watched Blair Walsh miss a 27-yarder in the NFC playoffs last month — these kickers are icy cool and confident.

"Yeah, I've been thinking about that since I first starting playing," said Gano, Carolina's sixth-year kicker. "So, hopefully it does come down to that."

"The end of the game could end up on my foot," said McManus, Denver's second-year kicker. "I'm super excited it might happen."

Both had their speed bumps during the season — Gano had four kicks blocked, including three field goals and McManus missed kicks in five consecutive games — and each missed an extra point, but both are 7-for-7 on field goals in the playoffs.

McManus bounced back in a big way, making a pair of long field goals and history in the opener to get back in his teammates' good graces a year after his sideline erupted in anger when he shanked a short field goal, costing him his job.

McManus won his job back from Connor Barth last summer, then joined St. Louis kicker Greg Zuerlein as the only players in NFL history to make two field goals of 56 yards or longer in the same game in Denver's 19-13 win over Baltimore in the season opener.

McManus began tinkering with his kicking mechanics to eliminate a jab-step and improve his accuracy to salvage his NFL career. That work paid off when he reclaimed the kicking job from Barth with a spectacular summer that included a 70-yard field goal in camp.

He went on to make 30 of 35 field goals.

Gano was 30 of 36.

Now each is one win away from fulfilling their childhood dream.

"I think all kids dream of the biggest moment to win a championship," Gano said. "I was no different. Watching guys do it over the years, especially Adam Vinatieri — although unfortunately one of them was against us. But he's a great clutch kicker. Everybody dreams of that moment."

Vinatieri is the patron saint of kicking visionaries, the antithesis of Scott Norwood, whose miss against the Giants sent the Bills on a run of four consecutive Super Bowl losses in the 1990s.

Vinatieri, the Colts' 43-year-old kicker, has played in five Super Bowls, winning four rings, three with New England and one with Indy.

He had winning kicks in the final seconds of the Patriots' Super Bowl wins over the Rams in 2002 and the Panthers in 2004.

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Gano has been envisioning himself as Vinatieri since high school.

"I think every opportunity, every practice it is in the back of your mind, the chance to make that winning kick," Gano said. "The opportunity to do that, I think that is what every position dreams of — the quarterback dreams of throwing the winning TD pass, same as a running back scoring the winning touchdown, the cornerback dreams of making that interception return."

At 24, McManus is five years younger than Gano, but he actually got to emulate Vinatieri when he was signed by the Colts as a college free agent in 2013 before being released at the end of that summer.

"I was with Adam in training camp, so I learned a lot from him and I still stay in contact with him," McManus said. "So, he's been a good mentor for me and we've played Indianapolis every year, so I get to pick his brain even more."

McManus tied an NFL record by going 5 for 5 on field goals in Denver's 23-16 win over Pittsburgh in the playoffs last month, and he did it in 30 mph crosswinds that swept over the Rocky Mountains just before kickoff.

"Yeah, but I mean, it's not going to say 'on a windy day' in the record books," McManus said.

Both Gano and McManus missed PATs from the new longer distance and had rough stretches, but both teams are supremely confident they have the right guy should it come down to a field goal — or even an extra point Sunday.

"I definitely feel ready for it," Gano said.

"I grew up trying to make the penalty kicks in soccer, the free throws in basketball," said McManus. "So, I've prepared my life for this."

Band Perry on Denver Broncos, Lady Gaga and Grammys **MESFIN FEKADU, AP Music Writer**

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Returning to perform ahead of the Super Bowl is good and (sort of) bad for country trio The Band Perry, who last performed around the 2014 game.

The good: The group gets a chance to play its hits in front of feverish concertgoers and gain new fans. The bad: They're not-so-great good luck charms for the Denver Broncos.

"There must be some connection we have with the Broncos, like we always are in the same vicinity as them," said Neil Perry, sitting next to his siblings, Kimberly and Reid.

"We weren't the good luck charm last time, so maybe we'll bring them a little bit more good luck this year," Kimberly Perry added in an optimistic tone.

The Band Perry performed in East Rutherford, New Jersey, when the Seattle Seahawks defeated the Broncos 43-8. They're back for Sunday's big game when the Broncos will take on the Carolina Panthers at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California.

"We're like massive football fans," said Reid Perry, adding that he's more into college football. "I'm the type where I'll like record football games and re-watch them."

The band, whose No. 1 country hits include "If I Die Young," "All Your Life" and "Better Dig Two," performed Thursday night in San Francisco at Levi's The City Stage, where OneRepublic and Alicia Keys will perform Friday and Saturday, respectively.

They said they're excited for the Super Bowl 50 halftime show, which includes Coldplay, Beyoncé and other unannounced guests. "Being the girl of the family, I like football, but I love the halftime show," Kimberly Perry said.

The trio is also excited to see Lady Gaga sing the national anthem at the game. The band worked with RedOne — the producer behind the Gaga hits "Just Dance" and "Poker Face" — on the 2015 single, "Live Forever," and Gaga was in the same studio while the group wrote the song.

"Red actually brought her in, because we hadn't gotten to meet her yet, and so we played her 'Love Forever' and Neil loves that her one comment was, 'Well I just want you guys to turn up the mandolin,' because Neil plays the mandolin," Kimberly Perry said.

"Which he interprets that as like flirting," Reid Perry said as his sister chimed in: "Yeah, he thought that

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was Gaga going, 'Yeah, I love you Neil.' "

"Well, it is," Neil Perry said with a smile.

The group said they recorded more songs with RedOne, along with other producers, for their upcoming third album to be released this year.

"One thing that we've always loved since day one is to find what the next Band Perry voice is going to be, and that self-discovery is a blast," Kimberly Perry said.

When asked about the Thursday's death of Earth, Wind & Fire's Maurice White, Reid Perry said his band's current headspace is similar to the iconic group: "They very much were all about feel, the beats, and that's where we are right now on our creative journey. So those guys, anyone who really embraced groove, we really love."

The band is also celebrating the one-year anniversary of its first Grammy win: Their cover of Glen Campbell's "Gentle On My Mind" won best country duo/group performance at last year's ceremony.

"I mean, winning a Grammy is life-changing. For us, that is our Super Bowl," Kimberly Perry said.

Today in History The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, Feb. 5, the 36th day of 2016. There are 330 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 5, 1811, George, the Prince of Wales, was named Prince Regent due to the mental illness of his father, Britain's King George III.

On this date:

In 1631, the co-founder of Rhode Island, Roger Williams, and his wife, Mary, arrived in Boston from England.

In 1783, Sweden recognized the independence of the United States.

In 1887, Verdi's opera "Otello" premiered at La Scala.

In 1911, Missouri's second Capitol building in Jefferson City burned down after being struck by lightning. Opera singer Jussi Bjoerling was born in Borlange, Dalarna, Sweden.

In 1917, Congress passed, over President Woodrow Wilson's veto, an immigration act severely curtailing the influx of Asians. Mexico's constitution was adopted.

In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed increasing the number of Supreme Court justices; critics accused Roosevelt of attempting to "pack" the court. (The proposal failed in Congress.)

In 1940, Glenn Miller and his orchestra recorded "Tuxedo Junction" for RCA Victor's Bluebird label.

In 1958, Gamal Abdel Nasser was formally nominated to become the first president of the new United Arab Republic (a union of Syria and Egypt).

In 1971, Apollo 14 astronauts Alan Shepard and Edgar Mitchell stepped onto the surface of the moon in the first of two lunar excursions.

In 1989, the Soviet Union announced that all but a small rear-guard contingent of its troops had left Afghanistan.

Ten years ago: Jacob Robida, suspected of an attack at a Massachusetts gay bar, the killing of an Arkansas officer and the slaying of a mother of three, was mortally wounded in a shootout with authorities. Thousands of protesters in Beirut, Lebanon, enraged over Danish caricatures of the prophet Muhammad, torched the Danish mission. Iran ended all voluntary cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Pittsburgh Steelers won a record-tying fifth Super Bowl with a 21-10 win over the Seattle Seahawks. Actor Franklin Cover ("The Jeffersons") died in Englewood, New Jersey, at age 77.

Five years ago: The leadership of Egypt's ruling party stepped down as the military figures spearheading the transition tried to placate protesters without giving them the one resignation they were demanding, that of President Hosni Mubarak. Marshall Faulk and Deion Sanders led a class of seven voted into

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the Pro Football Hall of Fame; joining them were Shannon Sharpe, Richard Dent, Ed Sabol, Les Richter and Chris Hanburger. J. Paul Getty III, the troubled grandson of the billionaire oil magnate, died outside London at age 54.

One year ago: Jordan stepped up its air attacks on Islamic State facilities in Syria and expanded its airstrikes into Iraq for the first time after a captured Jordanian pilot was burned to death by the militant group. At the National Prayer Breakfast, President Barack Obama called the Islamic State group a "death cult" and condemned those who seek to use religion as a rationale for violence. RadioShack filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection and said it would sell up to 2,400 stores.

Today's Birthdays: Baseball Hall-of-Famer Hank Aaron is 82. Actor Stuart Damon is 79. Tony-winning playwright John Guare (gwayr) is 78. Financial writer Jane Bryant Quinn is 77. Actor David Selby is 75. Singer-songwriter Barrett Strong is 75. Football Hall-of-Famer Roger Staubach is 74. Movie director Michael Mann is 73. Rock singer Al Kooper is 72. Actress Charlotte Rampling is 70. Racing Hall-of-Famer Darrell Waltrip is 69. Actress Barbara Hershey is 68. Actor Christopher Guest is 68. Actor Tom Wilkinson is 68. Actor-comedian Tim Meadows is 55. Actress Jennifer Jason Leigh is 54. Actress Laura Linney is 52. Rock musician Duff McKagan (Velvet Revolver) is 52. World Golf Hall-of-Famer Jose Maria Olazabal is 50. Actor-comedian Chris Parnell is 49. Rock singer Chris Barron (Spin Doctors) is 48. Singer Bobby Brown is 47. Actor Michael Sheen is 47. Actor David Chisum (TV: "Black Box") is 46. Country singer Sara Evans is 45. Country singer Tyler Farr is 32. Actor-singer Darren Criss (TV: "Glee") is 29. Actor Alex Brightman is 29. Rock musician Kyle Simmons (Bastille) is 28. Actor Jeremy Sumpter is 27. Drummer Graham Sierota (Echosmith) is 17.

Thought for Today: "Many excellent words are ruined by too definite a knowledge of their meaning."
— Aline Kilmer, American poet (1888-1941).