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Monday, February 29

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

School Lunch: Soft shell tacos, refried beans, fruit.

Senior Menu: Turkey chow mein, rice and chow mein noodles, broccoli, Waldorf salad, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: Arletta Peterson, Mary Haying, Tyra Leonhardt

6:30am: Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study

4:30pm: Region 1A Boys in Groton (4:30 pm: Roncalli vs. Milbank; 6:00: Groton vs. Webster, 7:30: Britton-Hecla vs. Tiospa Zina

Tuesday, March 1

Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, mashed potatoes, vegetables, buttermilk biscuits, banana pudding with bananas.

Anniv: Craig & Tasha Dunker

Birthdays: Delores Leonhardt, Mitchell Locke, Alicia Clocksene

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

7:00pm: Region 1A Girls Title Game at Britton

2016 Groton Area Elementary Preschool Developmental Screening for 4 and 5 year olds February 29 and March 1

Parents of children ages 4 and 5 in the Groton Area School District are asked to contact Heidi Krueger at the Groton Area Elementary School during school hours at 397-2317 to set up a screening time or to confirm their screening time. If your child is already receiving services or enrolled at Groton Elementary School they will not need to be screened.

Please bring a copy of your child's birth certificate and immunization record.

The Developmental Screening will take place at the Groton Area High School Arena. Please park and use the east entrance to the arena.

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 next week at gdilive.com

Boys Regional Game

6:15 p.m. Monday, Feb. 29

Groton Area vs. Webster Area (not finalized yet)

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!



Glimpse From Greenfield

Brock Greenfield
State Senator
District 2

Now that crossover day has come and gone, all House bills have either passed or been killed by the House and Senate bills have, likewise, met their fate in their house of origin. I will be dedicating the majority of this article to a discussion on the education bills that remain in-play.

The Senate has taken up SB's 131, 132, and 133 and passed them over to the House. SB

132 was essentially a clean-up bill that struck outdated language relating to reorganization incentives that expired years ago and updated certain language relating to the funding formula and any one-time education enhancement program monies that are appropriated by the Legislature to the Department of Education on an annual basis. This bill was non-controversial and passed 33-1. SB 133, likewise met with strong support, as it passed 33-1. This bill establishes incentives for school districts to share employees or services via e-learning services from school-to-school or by utilizing the E-learning Center at Northern State University. It also provides for teachers who have completed accredited education programs and who have taught in other states to be granted reciprocity should they choose to come to South Dakota to teach. Currently, the process requires teachers who are relocating to SD to take a "Praxis" test that is state-specific. This requirement is duplicative in nature and is therefore an additional unnecessary burden in attracting new teachers to our schools. Finally, the bill establishes a "mentor teacher program" by which new teachers are paired with experienced teachers and the new teachers are subject to participation in a summer workshop program after their first year of employment. The hope is that this will provide a solid foundation for new teachers and will ultimately aid in the support and ultimately the retention of them.

SB 131 is a more involved bill that is a full rewrite of the education funding formula in SD. It establishes a sliding scale of student-to-teacher ratios in each school, depending on the size of the school. When the Blue Ribbon Task Force issued its report, it suggested that the ratio be set between 12-1 in the smallest schools, up to 15-1 in the largest schools in the state. However, when the Governor introduced the bill, the ratio was set at 12.5-1 in the smallest schools. The bill goes on to equalize "other" funds across the state. Other funds are those that are derived from fines--including speeding, overweight, and other traffic violations--wind towers, pumping stations, etc. For years, these revenues have been applied to schools within the counties where the violations or tax revenues are generated. Going forward, they would be allocated on a per-student basis. The bill also repeals provisions of our current funding formula regarding small school factor and sparsity payments. Proponents of the bill argue that these payments are offset by the different (lower) student-to-teacher ratios contained in the newly proposed funding formula. Although many within the education lobby have embraced these changes, some individuals have contacted me to express their concerns over the wholesale changes, saying it will place them in a distinct disadvantage. In some cases, the net loss of "other" fund revenues is a concern. In other cases, the target ratios are not realistic because of a relatively low number of students and because of special circumstances that exist within their districts. They have stated that the bill will ultimately force them into consolidation decisions over time because they will not be able to meet the target ratios and compete in the marketplace. When I raised that concern to one of the task force members who supported the measure, I was told that this bill WILL force some schools to make "tough choices". Given that response and the Governor's statement that we have 400 too many teachers in the state, despite the fact that we are running into teacher shortages, I chose not to support the bill. While I do embrace some of the individual elements contained within the bill, I do believe it is going to be to the detriment of some of our small, yet very successful school districts. I would just as soon we focus our efforts on providing more dollars to education and infusing the additional resources through the current funding formula. According to many administrators I have spoken with, the current formula is not broken...it just needs more dollars run through it. My hope is that the House will amend the bill to change the sliding scale back to the original plan of 12-1 to 15-1. If that happens, I will look upon it more favorably should it come back to the Senate for concurrence. It will not

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satisfy all my concerns, but it will go to the heart of my biggest hangup with respect to the bill.

Speaking of funding, the House has passed HB 1182 over to the Senate. This is the bill that would increase the state sales tax by 1/2 percent on all purchases. Although the stated goal is to raise \$67 million to provide additional dollars to education--and more specifically, teacher pay--this bill, as drafted, would raise approximately \$112 million. Interestingly, as it was drafted, the bill did not allocate any dollars to education or teacher pay and only included a statement of legislative intent that \$40 million of the \$45 million of over-taxation would go to property tax relief. While the House did amend the bill to put more structure in-place, I feel it fell short in scrutinizing the actual overall policy. Most notably, the House did not discuss whether it is appropriate to tax everybody more than is needed in order to provide property tax relief to some property owners. While the average person will not be substantially affected by the tax increase, it serves to hurt the poorest of the poor who are faced with the decision between paying to put food on their tables or to purchase the prescriptions they need in order to address their medical needs. Also affected in a very real way are those people who make purchases of large equipment. For example, it has been stated that the purchase of a new combine or tractor would cost hundreds of dollars more in taxes alone. By my calculation, the tax rate on a new \$250,000 piece of machinery would cost an extra \$1,250 if the tax rate is increased by 0.5%. Also, what often goes unspoken in this equation is that said property tax relief will likely be lost over time, if not because it is simply gobbled up by increased assessments, then because the future legislatures will look at the additional dollars as a shining object when attempting to fund other priorities. I, for one, would argue that some of those dollars would be well-utilized by our nursing homes and adjustment training centers who are providing care for our loved ones. Certainly, the direct care professionals are more than worthy of wage enhancements. They also do very demanding jobs and, in my opinion, are not adequately compensated for their efforts. By increasing the tax rate over-and-above what is needed, the feeding frenzy is soon to ensue as legislators attempt to secure funding for any number of worthy causes.

There have been ongoing discussions about different options available to us, assuming we are going to attempt to fund the additional \$67 million that so many of us have stated as our goal. One plausible option--and by the time you read this, I will have supported this language--is to amend HB 1182 to decrease the proposed tax rate to 4.25%, which would raise approximately \$56 million. The additional \$11 million could be covered by recapturing unspent dollars that have been consistently over-budgeted because of an under-utilization of governmental services and/or by reducing the Governor's proposed increase in M&R funds of \$6 million over last year's budget. The plan would also call for a reduction in the sales tax rate if/when we are allowed to collect sales tax on transactions that take place over the internet. If we are granted the authority to collect these additional dollars, once the state sales tax rate is reduced back to 4%, additional collections would be used to reduce the sales tax on food items purchased at the grocery store. The beauty of this plan is that it fully funds the proposed increase for education in an ongoing fashion, and over time could effectively return us to the 4% rate that has been in-place for decades. If we do, in fact achieve the implementation of the Main Street Fairness Act (collection of sales tax on internet transactions), it could even result in paying a lower tax rate on food, over time.

On that note, the Senate has passed SB 106, which forces the issue of full-implementation of the Main Street Fairness Act. What we have found over the past few years is that as more transactions take place in the virtual world, it is at the expense of our brick-and-mortar businesses in South Dakota. While those transactions are subject to tax, the sellers who do not have nexus in SD are often not voluntarily collecting and remitting the taxes. The responsibility, then, falls to the buyer, who legally is required to file use tax for the goods that are purchased from online sellers. However, in practice, this happens infrequently, if at all. While we do not want to stifle competition, we do want to try to ensure that all businesses are on a level playing field with respect to the collection and remittance of taxes. Failure to do so places SD retailers at a competitive disadvantage and also erodes our tax base and lessens our ability to properly fund education, medical, and all other government services that people have rely on.

I will keep you posted next week on what transpires with HB 1182. As I have stated all session, most of us have stated that our goal is to meet the stated objective of providing the full \$67 million that is contemplated in the related education bills. How we achieve that goal remains to be seen, but I remain optimistic that we can do better than passing a bill that overtaxes our population to the tune of \$45 million.

Until next week, be blessed and be well!

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Region 1A Boys Basketball Tournament

#1 Sisseton

Score:

Date: Thursday, March 3rd
Time: 6pm
Site: Groton Area HS

Score:

#4 Britton-Hecla

Score:

Date: Monday, Feb. 29th
Time: 20 Min. after 2nd game
Site: Groton Area HS

Score:

#5 Tiospa Zina

Score:

Date: Tuesday, March 8th
Time: 7pm
Site: Groton Area HS

CHAMPION

State Qualifier

#3 Groton Area

Score:

Date: Monday, Feb. 29th
Time: 20 Min. after 1st game
Site: Groton Area HS

Score:

Score:

#6 Webster Area

Date: Thursday, March 3rd
Time: 20 Min. after 1st game
Site: Groton Area HS

Score:

#2 Aberdeen Roncalli

Score:

Date: Monday, Feb. 29th
Time: 4:30pm
Site: Groton Area HS

Score:

Score:

#7 Milbank Area

Region 1	Seed Points	W-L
Sisseton	43.30	15-5
Aberdeen Roncalli	42.80	12-8
Groton Area	41.40	12-8
Britton-Hecla	40.60	10-10
Tiospa Zina	39.75	9-11
Webster Area	38.90	8-12
Milbank Area	38.30	5-15

Follow the Tigers on

gdilive.com



O'Neill chosen as Miss Dakota Rose

Carly Goodhart passes the Miss Dakota Rose crown to Kaitlin O'Neill. O'Neill is the daughter of Steve O'Neill and Robin O'Neill and she attends college at South Dakota State University. She will now compete in the Miss South Dakota Pageant June 16-18 in Hot Springs. (Photo from

Kaitlin O'Neill's Facebook Page)

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Today in Weather History

February 29, 2004: Heavy snow of 6 to 9 inches fell across parts of central and north central South Dakota. Some snowfall amounts included, 6 inches at Isabel and Ree Heights, 7 inches at Gettysburg and Eagle Butte, 8 inches at Murdo, and 9 inches northeast of Isabel in southern Corson County. The snowfall ended during the late morning of March 1st.

February 29, 2012: An intense area of low pressure moved across the region bringing blizzard conditions to much of central and northeast South Dakota. Snowfall amounts of 4 to 14 inches along with northwest winds gusting over 40 mph brought widespread low visibilities to less than a quarter of a mile at times. Most schools were closed on both the 28th and 29th. Interstates 29 and 90 were also closed for a while during the storm. There were several cars and semis stranded along with a few accidents. The power was out for a time for several hundred customers. Some snowfall amounts included, 6 inches at McLaughlin, Timber Lake, Pollock, Eureka, Seneca, and Murdo; 7 inches at Selby, Bowdle, Roscoe, and Webster; 8 inches at Aberdeen, Doland, and Gettysburg; 9 inches at Kennebec and Roy Lake; 10 inches at Miller and Victor; 11 inches southeast of Faulkton; 12 inches at Highmore and Little Eagle; 12 inches at Sisseton; and 14 inches west of Turton and west of Gann Valley.

1884: San Diego, California saw its wettest February in history with 9.05 inches. February 1884 is currently the third wettest month on record (wettest: 9.26 inches in 12/1921). The year of 1884 ended as the wettest in San Diego history with 25.97 inches.

1964: Thompson Pass in Alaska finishes the month with 346.1 inches of snow, the highest monthly total ever for Alaska.

2008: The world's tallest snowman, actually a snowwoman, is unveiled in the western Maine town of Bethel. "Olympia," named for Maine Senator Olympia Snowe, is about 122 feet tall, 10 feet taller than "Angus, King of the Mountain," which has held the tallest snowman record since 1999. He was named for Angus King, Maine's governor at the time.

2012: A tornado outbreak occurred across the central plains and the Ohio River valley region on the 28th and 29th. The most destructive tornado struck Harrisburg, Illinois, killing 8 people in one neighborhood. This tornado had EF4 strength with winds of 166 - 200 mph.

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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
						
Scattered Flurries and Blustery then Mostly Cloudy	Chance Snow	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Cloudy	Chance Snow	Chance Snow
High: 20 °F	Low: 11 °F	High: 33 °F	Low: 23 °F	High: 40 °F	Low: 22 °F	High: 33 °F



Falling Temperatures & Windy This Morning

Snow This Afternoon – Central & Western South Dakota

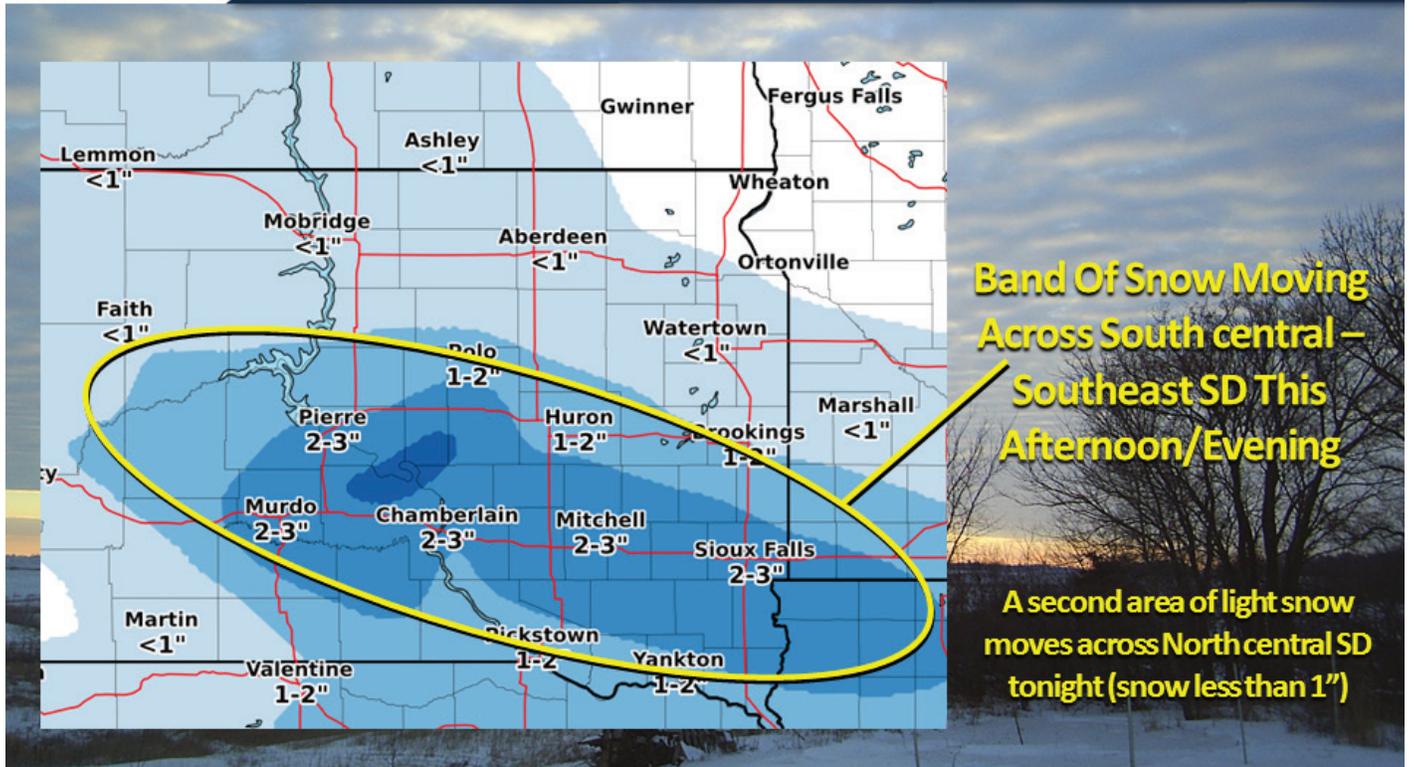
weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen



Published on: 02/29/2016 at 4:57AM

Arctic air moving across the region this morning will result in gusty winds and falling temperatures. this front stalls over central South Dakota this afternoon. A weak system overhead will support a band of snow along the front with the potential for brief but heavy snowfall. Snow amounts will generally range from 1 to 3 inches. A second weak system moves across north central South Dakota tonight with additional snowfall of less than 1 inch.

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 41.0 at 5:16 PM

Low: 28.2 at 7:16 AM

High Gust: 28 at 6:05 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 61° in 1992

Record Low: -19 in 1960

Average High: 33°F

Average Low: 13°F

Average Precip in Feb.: 0.55

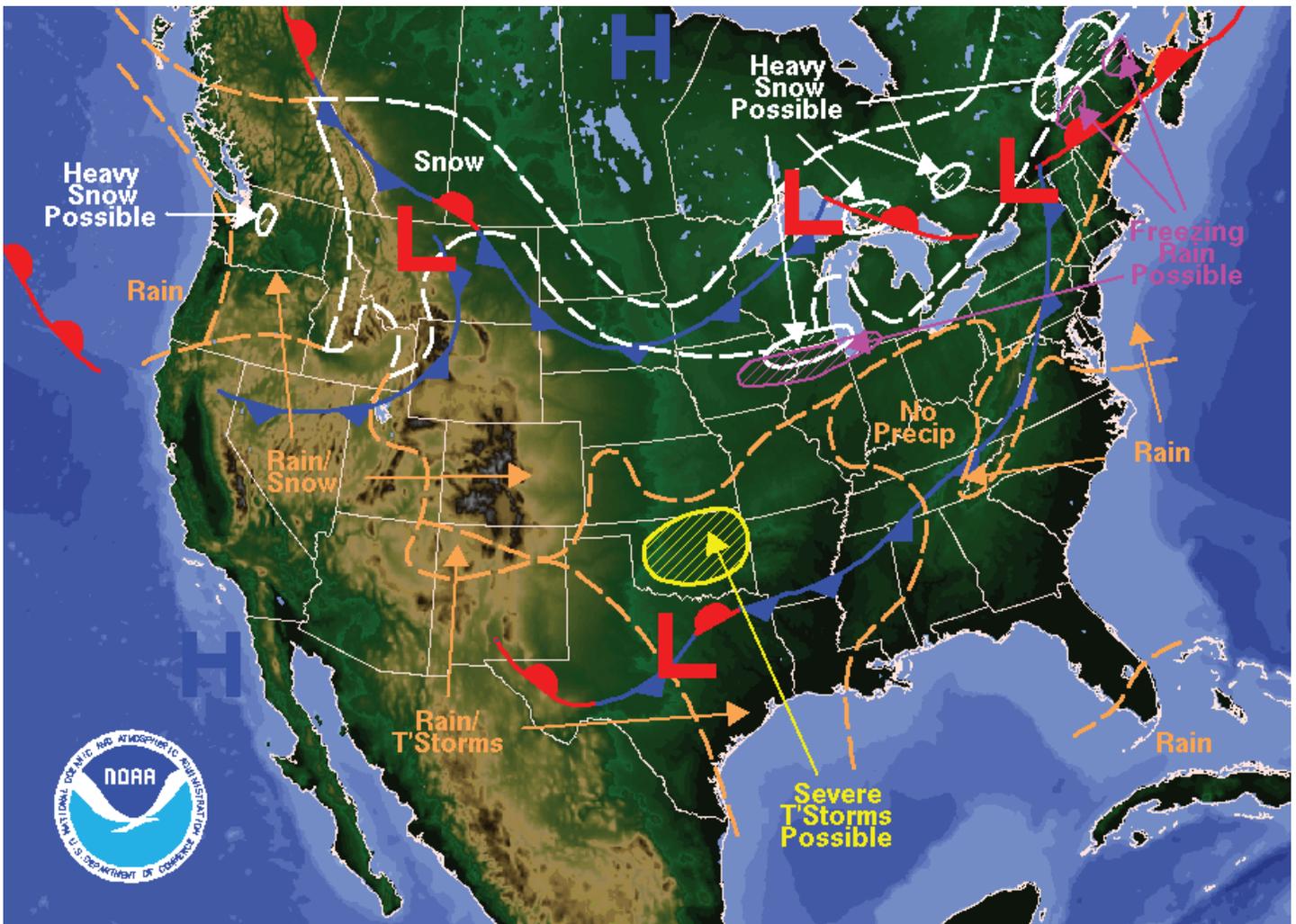
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.60

Average Precip to date: 1.02

Precip Year to Date: 0.60

Sunset Tonight: 6:20 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:10 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Mon, Feb 29, 2016, issued 2:56 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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SUNDAY'S SERMON

After returning from church President Coolidge's wife asked, "What did the preacher speak about today?"

"Sin," came the brief reply.

"What did he say about it?" wondered Mrs. Coolidge.

"He's certainly against it!" said the president.

One of the Psalmists asked a great question: "How can a young man stay pure?" He then gave a simple, easily understood answer: "By obeying Your word!"

He then continues by informing young people to develop personal wisdom and integrity and be disciplined if they want to live an uncorrupted life. But how can we, young and old, do this?

The answer does not appear to be complicated but it may be difficult to follow: "I have hidden Your word in my heart, that I might not sin against You!"

The way to "hide God's Word in our hearts" and to draw His wisdom from it is to invest time in reading and meditating on it. This "reading and meditating" is much like a cow chewing a cud. After we read it, we think about it by turning it over and over in our minds, asking God to show us the truth and wisdom that it contains. Another way of meditating would be like holding a beautiful diamond in the sunlight and carefully turning it around and around to see the brilliant colors "inside."

Prayer: Lord, may we love Your Word so much that we will make reading, praying and meditating the most important part of each day. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 119:9-16 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

News from the Associated Press

Authorities ID 2-year-old Rapid City boy killed by vehicle

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified a 2-year-old Rapid City boy who died after being struck by a pickup truck on a road just north of the city.

The Highway Patrol says Seth Brien was walking in the roadway, next to a 3-year-old girl who was riding a tricycle and also was hit.

The boy died at the scene Thursday evening. The girl suffered injuries that the patrol says are serious but not life-threatening. Her name hasn't been released.

The 19-year-old Sturgis man driving the pickup was not hurt.

The patrol is continuing to investigate.

The Latest: Trump disavows support of former KKK leader

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Latest on campaign 2016 on the eve of Super Tuesday (all times local):
7:30 a.m.

Donald Trump is stepping back from comments he made over the weekend when he claimed to know nothing about former Klu Klux Klan leader David Duke, saying that he couldn't hear the questions clearly.

Trump was asked Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union" whether he rejected support for his presidential campaign from the former KKK Grand Dragon and other white supremacists after Duke.

"Well, just so you understand, I don't know anything about David Duke. OK?" Trump told host Jake Tapper.

On Monday, however, he told NBC's "Today" that he was given a "very bad earpiece" for the interview and that he "disavowed David Duke all weekend long on Facebook and on Twitter."

7:00 a.m.

Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign has raised more than \$36 million in February and is pushing his supporters to help him top \$40 million for the month by the end of the day.

Sanders faced an end-of-the-month deadline in his primary campaign against Hillary Clinton. Entering the month, he had raised nearly \$95 million since launching his campaign last April.

Sanders has raised most of his campaign money online in small increments and has made overhauling the campaign finance system a central part of the race.

He is campaigning Monday in Minnesota and Massachusetts heading into the Super Tuesday contests.

Racial feud erupts as Republicans fight 'unstoppable' Trump

STEVE PEOPLES, Associated Press

BILL BARROW, Associated Press

LEESBURG, Va. (AP) — The final-days sprint to Super Tuesday has erupted into a feud over a white supremacist as Donald Trump's Republican rivals scramble to stop the billionaire businessman from becoming an "unstoppable" force in the 2016 presidential contest.

Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio continued to hammer the GOP front-runner's character and lack of policy specifics in a series of attacks Sunday while courting voters across the South. But it was Trump's refusal to denounce an implicit endorsement from former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke that dominated the narrative less than two days before Republican voters across 11 states head to the polls.

The new focus comes as Trump's rivals acknowledge that time is running out to prevent the former reality television host from becoming the Republican Party's presumptive nominee. He took a new step in that direction by earning the endorsement of Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, a would-be Cruz ally who backed Trump instead.

"There is no doubt that if Donald steam rolls through Super Tuesday, wins everywhere with big margins,

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that he may well be unstoppable," Cruz said Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation."

Trump was asked Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union" whether he rejected support from the former KKK Grand Dragon and other white supremacists after Duke told his radio followers this week that a vote against Trump was equivalent to "treason to your heritage."

"Well, just so you understand, I don't know anything about David Duke. OK?" Trump told host Jake Tapper. "I don't know anything about what you're even talking about with white supremacy or white supremacists."

Cruz soon responded on Twitter, telling Trump: "You're better than this. We should all agree, racism is wrong, KKK is abhorrent."

Rubio went further in a message to thousands of supporters in Leesburg, Virginia: "We cannot be a party who refuses to condemn white supremacists and the Ku Klux Klan," Rubio said. "Not only is that wrong, it makes him unelectable. How are we going to grow the party if we nominate someone who doesn't repudiate the Ku Klux Klan?"

Trump was asked Friday by journalists how he felt about Duke's support. He said he didn't know anything about it and curtly said: "All right, I disavow, ok?"

He hasn't always claimed ignorance on Duke's history. In 2000, he wrote a New York Times op-ed explaining why he abandoned the possibility of running for president on the Reform Party ticket. He wrote of an "underside" and "fringe element" of the party, concluding, "I leave the Reform Party to David Duke, Pat Buchanan and Lenora Fulani. That is not company I wish to keep."

Trump has won three of four early voting states, roiling a party divided over the prospect of the brash billionaire becoming its nominee. Late Sunday, Nebraska's Ben Sasse became the first sitting Republican senator to say explicitly that he would not back Trump if he does win the nomination.

"If Trump becomes the Republican nominee my expectation is that I'll look for some 3rd candidate — a conservative option, a constitutionalist," Sasse wrote on Twitter.

The Duke debate seeped into the Democratic contest, as Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders also lashed out on Twitter: "America's first black president cannot and will not be succeeded by a hater who refuses to condemn the KKK."

Asked about the issue on Monday, Trump said he had disavowed Duke and asked, "How many times do I have to continue to disavow people?"

In a phone-in interview with NBC's "Today" show, the real estate mogul was asked about earlier remarks in interviews where he had seemed to stop short of disavowing Duke.

He said the questioner in the earlier interview had asked about Duke and various "other groups," saying he had difficulty with an earpiece he was wearing for the phone-in interview and didn't want to disavow groups whose identity he didn't know. Trump also said he had clearly made separation with Duke over the weekend in posts on Twitter and Facebook.

Hillary Clinton re-tweeted Sanders' message. She scored a lopsided victory in South Carolina the day before, fueled by a huge advantage among African-Americans, a key Democratic constituency that will also play a dominant role in several Super Tuesday states.

Clinton turned her attention to the Republican field, all-but-ignoring rival Sanders from campaign events in Tennessee on Sunday.

Starting her morning with stops at two Memphis churches, Clinton offered an implicit critique of Trump, issuing a call to unite the nation and asking worshippers to reject "the demagoguery, the prejudice, the paranoia."

While she never explicitly mentioned Trump's name, the comments referenced his campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again." "America has never stopped being great, our task is to make American whole," said Clinton at Greater Imani Cathedral of Faith, prompting a chorus of "amens" from the crowd.

The latest shake up in the GOP race comes as attention shifts to the South, where the region will dominate on Super Tuesday — March 1 — and the weeks beyond.

Trump holds commanding leads across the region, with the exception of Cruz's home state of Texas, a dynamic that puts tremendous pressure on Rubio and Cruz as they try to outlast each other and derail Trump.

Trump mocked the Republican establishment and his flailing rivals. "It's amazing what's going on," he told NBC, calling his campaign a "movement."

Pakistan hangs ex-governor's killer, sparking tensions

ASIF SHAHZAD, Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan on Monday hanged the convicted killer of a former governor, shot in 2011 by his bodyguard who accused him of blasphemy, officials said.

The execution triggered protests in several cities denouncing the hanging after some religious and political leaders, as well as militant groups, publicly defended the killer.

Most schools closed down Monday in the capital, Islamabad, and the nearby garrison city of Rawalpindi in fear of violence by supporters of the executed former police officer Mumtaz Qadri.

Qadri's supporters blocked roads and burned tires, and many shopkeepers shuttered their stores. In some places, the protesters demanded the store owners close their businesses, said police official Sohail Ahmad. In Qadri's hometown of Rawalpindi, a mob ransacked a vehicle belonging to a local TV channel and attacked reporters, and in the port city of Karachi, his supporters briefly skirmished with police.

Qadri was on guard duty for secular Gov. Salman Taseer who was campaigning in support of a Christian woman jailed for years on accusations of blasphemy for allegedly desecrating Islam's holy book, the Quran.

Taseer had called for reforms of the country's harsh blasphemy laws, which impose the death sentence for insulting Islam. The laws are often misused against both Muslims and religious minorities to settle rivalries. Qadri, who repeatedly shot Taseer at a marketplace, later told authorities he killed the governor because he spoke out against the blasphemy laws.

The January 2011 assassination horrified Pakistan's relatively small liberal elite. However, many Pakistanis, including some in the religious establishment and in legal circles, praised Qadri — a sign of the spread of Islamic fundamentalist thought in this South Asian nation.

Qadri was convicted and sentenced to death in an anti-terrorism court in Rawalpindi later that year. He was hanged Monday in Rawalpindi, after all his petitions and mercy appeals were rejected, said police official Sadiq Mahmood.

Though the blasphemy laws allow for anyone convicted of insulting Islam or the Prophet Muhammad to be sentenced to death, people often take the law into their own hands, with lynchings on the streets and killings of those accused of blasphemy. No Pakistani leader has ever succeeded in amending those laws amid fears of retributions from right-wing political and religious parties and extremist militant groups.

Pakistan lifted a moratorium on the death penalty after a Taliban school attack in December 2014 and has executed over 300 convicts since then.

Academy Awards take on issues beyond #OscarsSoWhite

LINDSEY BAHR, AP Film Writer

JAKE COYLE, AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Hollywood's diversity crisis has loomed large over awards season and the big question going into the 88th annual Academy Awards was whether it would dominate the ceremony, too. It did, of course, but it wasn't alone.

The evening turned out to be a platform not just for racial representation in the movies, led by host Chris Rock's incisive insight and parody, but a wide array of causes, from global warming and bank reform to sexual abuse in church and on campus. It was a subtle plea from the film community that the movies and artists honored at Sunday night's ceremony did have purpose and meaning — even in this second year of #OscarsSoWhite.

The "Spotlight" team, which won the first and last prize of the night — best original screenplay and best picture — and nothing else, celebrated the Pulitzer Prize-winning work of The Boston Globe journalists who exposed sex abuses in the Roman Catholic Church and the conversation the film has renewed around

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the world.

Leonardo DiCaprio, the forgone best-actor winner for "The Revenant," used the platform to talk about his life's passion outside of acting — climate change, which got a "thank you" from the official White House Instagram account.

Adam McKay and Charlies Randolph, who won for best adapted screenplay for "The Big Short," spoke about the need for finance reform.

And Pakistani director Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, whose "A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness" spoke to the impact of her film.

"This week, the Pakistani prime minister said he would change the law on honor killing of women," said Obaid-Chinoy, who was also the only female director to win an award at Sunday's ceremony. "That is the power of film."

In some ways, the Oscars have always been a place where winners use the podium and their 45 seconds to opine on causes directly or indirectly related to the movies, from Sacheen Littlefeather's speech about Native American rights 43 years ago to Patricia Arquette's call last year for pay equality for women.

But perhaps no ceremony has had such a pointed target, and nothing this year could eclipse #OscarsSoWhite, which was woven into the fabric of the show, thanks to Rock. He launched immediately into the uproar over the lack of diversity in this year's nominees, and didn't let up, dubbing the show "The White People's Choice Awards" at the start.

Rock ensured that the topic remained at the forefront throughout the proceedings, usually finding hearty laughs in the process.

In an award show traditionally known for song-and-dance routines and high doses of glamour, Rock gave the 88th Academy Awards a charged atmosphere, keeping with the outcry that followed a second straight year of all-white acting nominees.

Streaks, broken and extended, dominated much of the evening, with an expected best actress win to Brie Larson for her breakout performance in the mother-son captive drama "Room" and a best supporting actress win for Swedish actress Alicia Vikander for the transgender pioneer tale "The Danish Girl."

Gasps went around the Dolby when Mark Rylance won best supporting actor for Steven Spielberg's "Bridge of Spies" over Sylvester Stallone. Nominated a second time for the role of Rocky Balboa 39 years later, Stallone had been expected to win his first acting Oscar for the "Rocky" sequel "Creed."

The night's most-awarded film, however, went to neither "Spotlight" nor "The Revenant." George Miller's post-apocalyptic chase film, "Mad Max: Fury Road," sped away with six awards in technical categories for editing, makeup, production design, sound editing, sound mixing and costume design.

Alejandro Inarritu, whose win for "The Revenant" meant three straight years of Mexican filmmakers winning best director and his second consecutive win, was one of the few recipients to remark passionately on diversity in his acceptance speech.

Mexican cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki ("The Revenant") also became the first cinematographer to win three times in a row.

Talk of election was largely absent from the ceremony, though Vice President Joe Biden was met by a standing ovation before talking about sexual assault on college campuses in an introduction to best-song nominee Lady Gaga.

Best animated feature film went to "Inside Out," Pixar's eighth win in the category. Asif Kapadia's Amy Winehouse portrait, "Amy," took best documentary. Hungary's concentration camp drama "Son of Saul" won best foreign language film.

Composer Ennio Morricone, at 87, landed his first competitive Oscar for "The Hateful Eight."

But the wins at times felt secondary to the unflinching host. Rock said he deliberated over joining the Oscars boycott and bowing out as host, but concluded: "The last thing I need is to lose another job to Kevin Hart."

Down the street from the Dolby Theatre, Rev. Al Sharpton led several dozen demonstrators in protest against a second straight year of all-white acting nominees.

The acting nominees restored "OscarsSoWhite" to prominence and led Spike Lee (an honorary Oscar

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winner this year) and Jada Pinkett Smith to announce that they wouldn't attend the show. Several top African American filmmakers, Ryan Coogler ("Creed") and Ava DuVernay ("Selma") spent the evening not at the Oscars but in Flint, Michigan, raising money for the water-contaminated city.

Rock also sought to add perspective to the turmoil. Rock said this year didn't differ much from Oscar history, but that black people earlier were "too busy being raped and lynched to worry about who won best cinematographer."

In a quick response to the growing crisis, Cheryl Boone Isaacs, president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, led reforms to diversify the academy's overwhelming white and male membership.

In her remarks during the show, Boone Isaacs strongly defended the changes, quoting Martin Luther King Jr. and urging each Oscar attendee to bring greater opportunity to the industry.

Last year's telecast, hosted by Neil Patrick Harris, slid 16 percent to 36.6 million viewers, a six-year low. How the controversy, and Rock's head-on approach, will affect ratings for the ABC show is the new big questions, not to mention how well the causes of the movies and their artists will live in the conversation beyond Sunday's show.

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. WHITE SUPREMACIST FEUD ERUPTS AS GOP FIGHTS TRUMP

The new focus comes as the billionaire businessman's rivals acknowledge that time is running out to prevent him from becoming the Republican Party's presumptive nominee.

2. WHOSE CAREER HAS PLENTY FOR FANS AND FOES TO LOVE, HATE

Donald Trump's business record gives Super Tuesday voters inclined to praise or condemn his boardroom bona fides a way to support either view.

3. ACADEMY AWARDS TAKE ON ISSUES BEYOND #OSCARSSOWHITE

The ceremony turns out to be a platform not just for racial representation, led by host Chris Rock's insight and parody, but a wide array of causes, from global warming to sexual abuse.

4. NORTH KOREA PUTS TEARFUL DETAINED AMERICAN BEFORE CAMERAS

Otto Warmbier, who is a University of Virginia student, says he tried to steal a political banner as a "trophy" for a church back home.

5. WHY WOUNDED PERUVIAN DRUG COP IS STRUGGLING

What gnaws at Sgt. Johnny Vega most is a sense of futility: With him out of commission, the traffickers have won.

6. WHY HAWAII IS WORRIED ABOUT ZIKA

Its anti-pesticide sentiment, tropical conditions and understaffing in the Department of Health might undermine efforts to prevent the spread of the virus linked to birth defects.

7. FOR IRANIAN RESTAURANTS IN SAUDI, IT'S BUSINESS AS USUAL

Iranian eateries in Riyadh are outselling calls for a boycott, serving as a reminder of the deep historic links between the two countries.

8. VETS OF '05 SENATE TRUCE DON'T SEE ACCORD OVER COURT PICK

They say that today's political climate is too toxic for a bipartisan pact that would lead to a replacement for the late Justice Antonin Scalia.

9. NAVY SEAL TO RECEIVE MEDAL OF HONOR

Obama is set to award the nation's highest military honor to Edward Byers who helped rescue an American hostage in December 2012.

10. COSBY'S LAWYERS SEEKING TO DISMISS MODEL'S DEFAMATION CASE

Janice Dickinson sued the comedian in May over his denial of her claims that he drugged and raped her in Lake Tahoe in 1982.

Trump's career: Plenty for fans and foes to love, hate

BERNARD CONDON, AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — To his supporters, the business career of Donald Trump is proof he's got the decisiveness and smarts required to lead the country. To critics, his exaggerated claims, burned customers and four bankruptcies suggest a man wholly disqualified for the office.

The truth: It's complicated.

Criticized by Republican rivals for his crude comments and what they call iffy conservative credentials, Trump now finds his business acumen in the political crosshairs. Florida Sen. Marco Rubio has started calling Trump a "con artist" who has been "sticking it to the little guy" as he built his empire, and says he would be "selling watches in Manhattan" if he hadn't gotten help from his millionaire father.

Trump's business record gives Super Tuesday voters inclined to praise or condemn his boardroom bonafides a way to support either view.

Gutsy, shrewd and armed with an uncanny sense of timing, Trump built a business that spans the globe, much bigger in scope and riches than when he took it over from his father. Yet some of his failures have been as spectacular as his successes, and he's stiffed creditors and has licensed his name in ways that raise questions about his judgment.

"Donald has proven himself an innovative and smart businessman," says real estate developer Don Peebles, a registered Democrat who does not plan on voting for Trump if he makes it to the general election. "I respect and admire what he's accomplished."

The fortune built by Trump's father, estimated at several hundred million dollars, came from low- and middle-income housing in Brooklyn and Queens. Trump wanted more. So he bet big on much richer Manhattan, a risk for the son of an outer-borough builder.

Two early ventures: Turning around the former Commodore Hotel at Grand Central Station, with help from tax subsidies, and buying a train yard out of bankruptcy across town, then getting New York to put a convention center there.

He was bold and creative. He put his name on luxury condo buildings, gambling that buyers would share his unabashed love of glitz and excess. It was a branding strategy like that used by giant hotel chains — Conrad Hilton had done it with Hilton Hotels — but it had never really succeeded in luxury residential buildings.

His timing was near perfect. He began construction in 1980 on his signature Fifth Avenue building, Trump Tower, just as New York City began a long boom following a brush with bankruptcy.

He put up more buildings, bought an airline and rolled the dice in another industry — casinos. In 1984, he opened the Trump Plaza in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and he opened Trump's Castle the following year. In 1991, he took an especially big risk to build the Trump Taj Mahal. He personally guaranteed loans used to develop the project, putting his own fortune on the line if things went sour.

They did. As the U.S. muddled through a recession, Trump was unable to make good on billions of dollars of debt. He put two of his casinos into bankruptcy, sold the airline, threatened to tie up his creditors in court and cajoled and blustered his way into deals that erased much of the guarantees on the Taj Mahal that endangered his personal wealth.

The bankruptcies — four in all, stretching over nearly a decade — left many casino lenders and vendors bitter. They got just pennies on each dollar they were owed.

Trump makes no apologies. He says he uses the laws of the land, including the bankruptcy law, to his advantage.

"People forget that he left bondholders out to dry ... that these were not victimless events," says Michael D'Antonio, author of the Trump biography "Never Enough." He views Trump as a "competent" businessman but no genius. "When he tried to do other kinds of business — airlines and casinos — he stumbled." Trump began building again. In 2001, he completed the 90-story residential Trump World Tower in New York City. Then, three years later, he discovered a flair for reality TV with the launch of "The Apprentice" on NBC.

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As his celebrity star rose, Trump moved to squeeze more dollars out of his name.

These days, you can drink Trump bottled water in your Trump suit with sun glinting off your Trump cufflinks while reading one of his books — perhaps “The Art of the Deal,” a best seller.

And you can do it sitting in one of the many Trump-labeled hotels or residential towers across the globe. He has struck deals to put his name on properties built and owned by others in Panama, Uruguay, Turkey, India and the Philippines.

As he has extended his brand, he’s faced criticism that he’s gotten careless, or worse.

He invested in a health products company that extolled the wonders of taking Trump-branded vitamins based on people’s urine samples. The business struggled, and Trump sold it a few years later.

Trump Mortgage, which the candidate predicted would soon be the country’s largest home loan provider, fizzled out after the man he hired to run it stepped down following revelations that he’d inflated his resume.

Rubio has focused in the past several days on Trump University, which charged students \$1,495 each for seminars that would teach them the billionaire’s secrets to making it big in real estate. A lawsuit filed by the New York attorney general claims the classes fell so short of promises that it amounts to fraud.

“This is a guy who says he stands for the working class,” Rubio said Saturday. “When in fact his entire business career, he’s been sticking it to working-class Americans.”

It’s clearly struck a nerve with Trump, who spent a large part of his time defending the business while campaigning on Saturday. He called the litigation “a small deal, very small” and told supporters he could have settled but is continuing to fight on principle.

Trump also railed against the California judge presiding over the civil suit, calling him hostile and noting his Hispanic ethnicity. Trump said of the judge: “I believe he happens to be Spanish, which is fine. He’s Hispanic — which is fine.”

That drew a reply for New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, who said “there is no place in this process for racial demagoguery.”

Trump has also left bitter feelings at residential towers that bear his name but which he didn’t build. Condo buyers in failed Trump-branded properties in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Baja, Mexico, have claimed in lawsuits that the presidential candidate misled them to believe he was deeply involved in the projects, not just lending his name. Trump won the Fort Lauderdale case and settled the one in Baja.

As the Trump candidacy gains momentum, even early Trump triumphs are getting new scrutiny.

The Rubio campaign is highlighting a 1983 lawsuit by union laborers who helped build Trump Tower. Polish laborers living in the U.S. illegally were paid “substandard” wages with no overtime, and paid “irregularly if at all,” according to a judge hearing the case. In his campaign, Trump has taken a hard line on employers who pass over Americans for workers living in the U.S. illegally.

The candidate has maintained he had no knowledge of his contractor’s activities, though the presence of the “Polish Brigade” was overt, with more than 200 men working 12-hour days, some sleeping at the construction site during the demolition of the building the Trump Tower replaced. The judge hearing the case found Trump had engaged in a “conspiracy” to shortchange union workers. Trump appealed, then settled and sealed the case.

For Trump, there’s perhaps nothing as important as the idea he’s a winner — especially in business.

“I’m really rich,” Trump declared in his speech announcing his candidacy last year. He added, “I’ve done an amazing job.”

For a man who measures his success in dollars, Trump has managed to grow them substantially.

“Amazing” is more debatable.

According to Forbes magazine, Trump’s wealth has risen to \$4.5 billion from \$1 billion in 1988, a 350 percent gain. That’s half of what he would have earned if he had invested in a broad U.S. stock index, and that doesn’t count dividends.

Other moguls have been more amazing. Donald Bren, a California developer who Forbes says is worth \$15 billion, has increased his wealth at twice the pace in that time — a nearly 700 percent gain.

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Trump, by the way, says Forbes is all wrong.
"I borrowed a tiny amount of money, \$1 million," he said Saturday. "I started a business. It's worth much more than \$10 billion right now."

List of 88th annual Academy Award winners

The Associated Press

List of winners at Sunday's 88th annual Academy Awards presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Best Picture: "Spotlight."

Actor: Leonardo DiCaprio, "The Revenant."

Actress: Brie Larson, "Room."

Supporting Actor: Mark Rylance, "Bridge of Spies."

Supporting Actress: Alicia Vikander, "The Danish Girl."

Directing: Alejandro G. Inarritu, "The Revenant."

Foreign Language Film: "Son of Saul."

Adapted Screenplay: "The Big Short."

Original Screenplay: "Spotlight."

Animated Feature Film: "Inside Out."

Production Design: "Mad Max: Fury Road."

Cinematography: "The Revenant."

Sound Mixing: "Mad Max: Fury Road."

Sound Editing: "Mad Max: Fury Road."

Original Score: "The Hateful Eight."

Original Song: "Writing's on the Wall" from "Spectre."

Costume Design: "Mad Max: Fury Road."

Documentary Feature: "Amy."

Documentary (short subject): "A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness."

Film Editing: "Mad Max: Fury Road."

Makeup and Hairstyling: "Mad Max: Fury Road."

Animated Short Film: "Bear Story."

Live Action Short Film: "Stutterer."

Visual Effects: "Ex Machina."

Today in History

The Associated Press

Today is Monday, Feb. 29, the 60th day of 2016. There are 306 days left in the year. This is Leap Day.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 29, 1916, singer, actress and TV personality Dinah Shore was born Frances Rose Shore in Winchester, Tennessee. (Shore, who claimed March 1, 1917 as her birthdate, died in 1994 just days before she would have turned 78.)

On this date:

In 1504, Christopher Columbus, stranded in Jamaica during his fourth voyage to the West, used a correctly predicted lunar eclipse to frighten hostile natives into providing food for his crew.

In 1796, President George Washington proclaimed Jay's Treaty, which settled some outstanding differences with Britain, in effect.

In 1892, the United States and Britain agreed to submit to arbitration their dispute over seal-hunting rights in the Bering Sea. (A commission later ruled in favor of Britain.)

In 1904, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed a seven-member commission to facilitate completion of the Panama Canal.

In 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a second Neutrality Act as he appealed to American

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businesses not to increase exports to belligerents.

In 1940, "Gone with the Wind" won eight Academy Awards, including best picture of 1939; Hattie McDaniel won for best supporting actress, the first black performer so honored.

In 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower announced he would seek a second term of office. Serial killer Aileen Wuornos was born in Rochester, Michigan (she was executed by the state of Florida in 2002).

In 1960, the first Playboy Club, featuring waitresses clad in "bunny" outfits, opened in Chicago. Serial killer Richard Ramirez was born in El Paso, Texas (he died in 2013 while awaiting execution in California).

In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (also known as the Kerner Commission) warned that racism was causing America to move "toward two societies, one black, one white — separate and unequal." The discovery of a "pulsar," a star which emits regular radio waves, was announced by Dr. Jocelyn Bell Burnell in Cambridge, England.

In 1980, former Israeli foreign minister Yigal Allon, who had played an important role in the Jewish state's fight for independence, died at age 61.

In 1984, Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau announced he was stepping down after more than 15 combined years in power.

In 1996, Daniel Green was convicted in Lumberton, North Carolina, of murdering James R. Jordan, the father of basketball star Michael Jordan, during a 1993 roadside holdup. (Green and an accomplice, Larry Martin Demery, were sentenced to life in prison.) A Peruvian Boeing 737 crashed on approach to Arequipa, killing all 123 people on board.

Twelve years ago (2004): Facing rebellion, Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide (zhahn behr-TRAHN' ahr-ihs-TEED') resigned and left for exile in the Central African Republic. (Aristide returned to Haiti in March 2011.) "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" won a record-tying 11 Academy Awards, including best picture; Sean Penn took the best-actor prize for "Mystic River" and Charlize Theron won best actress for portraying Aileen Wuornos in "Monster." Playwright Jerome Lawrence died in Malibu, California, at age 88.

Eight years ago (2008): Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama accused rival Hillary Rodham Clinton of trying to "play on people's fears to scare up votes" with a TV ad showing sleeping children and asking who would be more qualified to answer a national security emergency call at 3 a.m.

Four years ago (2012): Violent weather packing tornadoes continued to ravage the Midwest and South, resulting in some 15 deaths. Davy Jones, 66, the heartthrob singer who helped propel the made-for-TV rock band The Monkees to the top of the pop charts, died in Stuart, Florida.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Michele Morgan is 96. Actor Joss Ackland is 88. Former astronaut Jack Lousma is 80. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople is 76. Motivational speaker Tony Robbins is 56. Legal affairs blogger Eugene Volokh is 48. Actor Antonio Sabato Jr. is 44. Poet, musician and hip-hop artist Saul Williams is 44. Rapper Ja Rule is 40. Songwriter-musician Chris Conley (Saves the Day) is 36. Singer-musician Mark Foster (Foster the People) is 32. Hockey player Cam Ward is 32.

Thought for Today: "Trouble is a part of your life — if you don't share it, you don't give the person who loves you a chance to love you enough." — Dinah Shore (1916-1994).