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Thursday, March 3

Senior Menu: Hot turkey combo, mashed potatoes and gravy, 7 layer salad, fruit.

School Breakfast: Cereal, yogurt, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: Pizza, corn, carrots and dip, fruit.

Anniv: Cal & Mary Hayenga

Anniv: David & Cheryl Krueger

Birthdays: Christine Zoellner, Josie LaMee, Tim Yeaton, Tristan Kampa

Region Boys in Groton:

6 p.m.: Sisseton vs. Britton-Hecla

7:30 pm: Groton Area vs. Aberdeen Roncalli

Friday, March 4

CDE at Redfield

State Debate in Aberdeen

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

School Lunch: Shrimp poppers, mixed vegetables, lettuce, fruit.

Senior Menu: Lemon baked fish, rice pilaf, California blend vegetables, peach crisp, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: Christina Zoellner, Kale Pharis, Kay Brandt

Saturday, March 5

State Debate in Aberdeen

Birthdays: Chance Strom, Linda Locken

8:00am: Region DI in Groton

4:00pm: Emmanuel Lutheran 5th graders and parents meet

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

Sunday, March 6

Birthday: Stacey Bonn

9:00am: Emmanuel Lutheran School and Con-

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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Oven Fresh Sandwiches Hot Desserts Snack Melts

11 E Hwy 12, Groton ~ 397-8627

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Follow The Groton
Activities On-Line



Paul Irvin Kosel and Justin Olson
Julianna and Jeslyn Kosel

gdilive.com

Coming up today at gdilive.com

Boys Regional Game

7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 3

Groton Area vs. Aberdeen Roncalli

Region 1A being played in Groton.

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!

Activities association foundation may get boost

By Dana Hess

For South Dakota Newspaper Association

PIERRE — The South Dakota High School Activities Association Foundation has a goal of raising a \$5 million endowment to relieve some of the financial burden on member schools.

Stephanie Judson, executive director of the South Dakota Community Foundation, met with association board members Wednesday, talking about her organization's role.

"We're here as your philanthropic partner," Judson said, explaining that the SDCF manages \$230 million in endowed funds for a variety of organizations.

The activity association's foundation currently has \$141,000. When the fund grows to \$5 million, Judson said a yearly payout of about \$200,000 would be sent to member schools to help them pay for association expenses like catastrophic insurance and dues.

"The fund would be used, Judson said, "to remove the financial burden on members long-term."

Association board president Jason Uttermark of Aberdeen said there's an opportunity for a significant donation to the foundation. If the association were to raise ticket prices for state events by \$1 to \$7 for adults and \$5 for students and earmark those extra dollars for the foundation, an anonymous donor is considering making a matching donation.

Uttermark said the new ticket prices would bring in an estimated \$200,000 resulting in a \$400,000 donation to the foundation.

While board members would expect to hear some opposition to higher ticket prices, Uttermark said of the possible donation, "That's pretty tough to turn down."

Board member Brian Maher of Sioux Falls said the first conversation he every had about the SDHSAA Foundation was "venomous." Subsequent conversation have been more cordial, he said, as member schools have learned more about the foundation.

Maher said the board has to be sure to offer the message to member schools about the foundation and "what that means for kids and opportunities down the road."

Uttermark agreed that the association needs to get better about explaining their vision for the foundation. "We have not done a very good job of communicating this," Uttermark said.

—30—

Activities calendar may get overhaul

By Dana Hess

For South Dakota Newspaper Association

PIERRE — The massive job of overhauling the state's high school athletics and activities calendar took a step forward Wednesday. That's when the South Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors got a look at the work done by its calendar committee.

The calendar committee, headed by Huron Superintendent Terry Nebelsick, includes superintendents, athletic directors, principals, representatives of the fine arts and SDHSAA staff. Nebelsick's report can be found on the agenda for the board's meeting on the SDHSAA website at www.sdhsaa.com.

Speaking to the board meeting by phone, Nebelsick said that the committee had three main concerns as it looked at the calendar for the school year. They wanted to provide a concussion protocol for football players by offering a less strenuous playoff schedule; provide a specific, conflict-free time for students to participate in all-state chorus and orchestra; and provide a rest period for players between the volleyball and girls' basketball seasons.

The committee had originally thought that switching dates for fall girls' tennis, spring boys' tennis and fall boys' golf would allow those events to take place in better weather. Nebelsick said the changes were not acceptable due to concerns about student participation dropping for events held outside of the school year. Nebelsick said there was also concern about job conflicts and higher lodging costs for events held

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in the Black Hills.

The committee recommended a week off during the football season between the semi-final games and the championship games at the Dakota Dome. All-state chorus and orchestra would take place that weekend. No sports games or practices would be allowed so that students would not have to choose between a sport or attending the all-state music event.

The committee offered four options for nine-man and 11B football. Those options included starting the season sooner, removing the bye week, reducing the regular season to seven games and reducing the playoffs to eight qualifying teams.

Those options were not acceptable to Kelly Messmer, athletic director at Harding County.

"None of these options are acceptable to the nine-man schools," Messmer said.

Tom Rice, principal at Gayville-Volin, offered a fifth option with a series of Thursday playoff games that would still allow for a students to attend all-state chorus and orchestra.

The committee also recommended reducing the number of games by two for the volleyball and girls' basketball seasons. The advantages of the change, according to the committee, would be better academics, quality practice and quality rest during the season.

"I don't think that's a calendar committee issue," Messmer said, noting that any move to shorten a season should come through the association's advisory boards.

Board member Brian Maher of Sioux Falls also questioned the shorter seasons.

"I've always been a proponent of activities, the games themselves," Maher said. "We always have the option to play less locally."

Assistant executive director Brooks Bowman said music directors were in favor of having a protected weekend for all-state chorus and orchestra, though they feared that previous attempts to block out some conflict-free for the event have failed in the past.

Bowman also took issue with the fifth football playoff option, noting it would lead to more lost time in the classroom.

"There goes the sanctity of the classroom that we're trying to protect," Bowman said.

The calendar committee also recommended a five-day holiday moratorium on games and practices with two of those days set as Dec. 24 and 25. The selection of which other days school districts would black out would be up to the districts so as to not interfere with traditional holiday sports tournaments.

Board member Steve Morford of Spearfish said that was a mistake, having seen a similar plan in another state. He said that for the holiday moratorium on activities to work, it has to be the same for every school.

"The five days need to be set here," Morford said.

The calendar committee's recommendations, including the fifth option for football, will be distributed to member schools. It will be up for board consideration and a possible first reading at the board's next meeting on April 19 and 20 in Pierre.

—30—

Schools cautioned about use of Native American mascots, team names

By Dana Hess

For South Dakota Newspaper Association

PIERRE — A resolution passed unanimously by the board of directors of the South Dakota High School Activities Association Wednesday recommends that member schools consider the appropriateness of using Native American mascots and team names.

The resolution, which is not a directive to schools but rather a suggestion, cites examples from the American Psychological Association, the American Sociological Association and the White House Initiative on American Indian/Alaska Native Education about the harm those symbols can cause for young Native Americans.

The topic of a lengthy discussion at the board's January meeting, the second reading of the resolution passed without much comment.

Moe Ruesink of Sioux Valley in Volga was the lone dissenting vote in January.

"I totally see this as an awareness issue," Ruesink said, explaining his previous vote. "It's more of a

school issue.”

Board member Linda Whitney of Sanborn Central reminded Ruesink that the resolution was a recommendation to schools. “We’re not dictating,” Whitney said.

There are as many as 16 South Dakota high schools with mascot names that might be considered offensive according to the SDHSAA resolution. Those schools include the Bennett County Warriors, the Britton-Hecla Braves, the Castlewood Warriors, the Cheyenne-Eagle Butte Braves, the Crazy Horse Chiefs, the Crow Creek Chieftains, the Estelline Redmen, the Iroquois Chiefs, the Lower Brule Sioux, the Marty Indian School Braves, the St. Francis Indian School Warriors, the Sisseton Redmen, the Wakpala Sioux, the Sioux Falls Washington Warriors, the Watertown Arrows and the Woonsocket Redmen.

—30—

Out-of-season athletic rules tweaked, approved

By Dana Hess

For South Dakota Newspaper Association

PIERRE — With a couple of additions, the South Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors Wednesday approved the second reading of more relaxed out-of-season training rules.

The new rules allow coaches to work with athletes on an unrestricted basis during the summer—defined as that period after the last state event through July 31. This year the last state events are the state golf tournaments taking place June 6 and 7. The rules also include a moratorium on contact between athletes and coaches from July 1 through July 7.

Team contacts, whether or not they take place on school grounds, would be limited to four. Those contacts include team camps, scrimmages, leagues or an event that includes multiple teams from different schools. The rules allow for open gyms and private lessons.

The new rules were passed with two additions that were not present for the first reading. Assistant executive director John Krogstrand said some schools would like a one-year grandfather clause that would allow contact in 2016 following the state track meet. This year’s golf tournaments are later than previous years and some schools had already scheduled camps that will be held prior to June 7.

“It didn’t quite sink in that golf is as late as it is,” said board member Sandy Klatt of Brandon Valley.

The second addition was a restriction on contacts between football coaches and athletes that limits coaches to a maximum of 10 days with athletes when they will be allowed to wear pads. No more than five of the 10 days can be consecutive.

Board member Linda Whitney of Sanborn Central said she has heard concerns about the relaxed rules inspiring coaches to insist on daily mandatory practices.

“That is exactly what can happen,” said board chairman Jason Uttermark of Aberdeen.

Krogstrand said enforcement of the rules and reining in overzealous coaches would have to be done by local school districts.

Clay Anderson, activities director at Belle Fourche, said the threat of a “rogue coach” has always existed.

“If they can’t control them in their community,” Anderson said, “they’re probably already doing it. I don’t believe it’s going to get out of control.”

Craig Nowotny, activities director at St. Thomas More, said the restriction on pads may make his players more susceptible to injury. He said St. Thomas More players wear shoulder pads during summer passing drills as a precaution against injury but the 10-day limit would mean some drills would have to be held without pads.

Krogstrand said the rule was proposed because “when you put shoulder pads on kids, you’re inviting contact.”

The out-of-season rules were approved on an 8-1 vote with Roger Bordeaux of the Tiospa Zina Tribal School dissenting.

—30—

Activities board won't let schools set terms for cooperative

By Dana Hess

For South Dakota Newspaper Association

PIERRE — The South Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors turned down a request for an athletic cooperative after the schools tried to set the terms of how their teams would be classified.

Representatives of Centerville and the Irene-Wakonda school districts were at the board's meeting Wednesday asking that their schools be allowed to form an athletic cooperative for football, girls' basketball and volleyball.

Centerville Superintendent Chad Conaway said it was likely that without the cooperative agreement Centerville wouldn't be able to field those teams. He predicted that without the cooperative, Centerville would lose at least two student-athletes to open enrollment.

The request came with the stipulation that the only way Irene-Wakonda would agree to the cooperative would be if its football team continued to be classified as 9AA and its girls' sports teams retain their Class B designation.

SDHSAA staff objected to the request, noting that the enrollment of the combined schools should boost their football team to an 11-man schedule and their girls' sports to Class A.

Conaway said he couldn't see any other way to get a chance for his students to play sports.

"If it doesn't get done that way," Conaway said, "I don't know what to do for my kids."

Board members were sympathetic to Centerville's problem but less than enthusiastic about meeting the schools' terms.

"We don't just look after Centerville," said board member Brian Maher of Sioux Falls. "We look after all the schools in the state."

Conaway said he knew the role of the board. "I'm asking for a little latitude in judgment," Conaway said.

Assistant executive director Jo Auch said a school with a similar enrollment problem was going to play a junior varsity schedule. Conaway said he'd have to move up younger players to make that happen in Centerville.

"I don't know if that's best for my kids," Conaway said.

Board member Sandy Klatt of Brandon Valley urged the board to find a way to allow the Centerville students to compete.

"His kids are not going to have an opportunity to play," Klatt said.

Board member Moe Ruesink of Sioux Valley in Volga disagreed, pointing out that they would have an opportunity to play if the school districts would be willing to go up in classification.

A motion to not approve the cooperative agreement as submitted was approved 8-1 with Klatt casting the dissenting vote.

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Groton Prairie Mixed

Team Standings: Coyotes 13, Shih Tzus 11, Chipmunks 8, Pocket Gophers 7, Jackelopes 5, Foxes 4

Men's High Games: Roger Colestock 225, Tony Waage 221, Mike Siegler 200

Women's High Games: Nicole Kassube 197, Vicki Jorgensen 184, Darci Spanier 181

Men's High Series: Roger Colestock 582, Mike Siegler 542, Roger Spanier 518

Women's High Series: Vicki Walter 492, Nicole Kassube 486, Vicki Jorgensen 473

Conde National League

Team Standings: Pirates 23, Braves 19, Colts 17, Cubs 17, Giants 17, Mets 14

Men's High Games: John Lowary 213, Troy Lindberg 207, Jeff Holverson 189

Men's High Series: Troy Lindberg 539, Chad Furney 512, Bryce Dagartz 511

Women's High Games: Mary Larson 157, Michelle Johnson 155, Hope Dagartz 152

Women's High Series: Mary Larson 418, Sandy Hoops 414, Nancy Radke 405



Woods & Sichmeller

Engagement Announcement

Patti and Tom Woods, Groton and Brian and Sherry Sichmeller, Webster are happy to announce the engagement of their children Sarah Woods and Dalton Sichmeller

Sarah is a teacher at the Aberdeen YMCA Youth Development Center, Aberdeen and Dalton is a body tech and painter at the Aberdeen Chrysler Center

They are planning a wedding on August 6, 2016 in Groton, SD



Woods & Geary

Engagement Announcement

Brianna Woods and Zachary Geary along with their parents are happy to announce their engagement.

Brianna Woods the daughter of Patti and Tom Woods of Groton, SD. Brianna is teaching in Doland.

Zachary Geary the son of Cindy and Bruce Geary of Conde, SD. Zach is working for Hanlon Brothers.

They are planning a wedding on June 4th 2016 in Groton, SD.

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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: **56**

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

Score: **Britton-Hecla**

Score: **46**

#5 Tiospa Zina

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

CHAMPION

State Qualifier

#3 Groton Area

Score: **70**

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

Groton Area

Score:

Score: **55**

#6 Webster Area

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

Score:

#2 Aberdeen Roncalli

Score: **69**

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

Score: **Roncalli**

Score: **30**

#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

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Today in Weather History

March 3, 1994: The melting of a very high snowpack resulted in flooding along the James River, as well as other lowlands and farmland. Widespread problems included damaged roads, washed out culverts, and flood damage to homes, especially basement flooding.

1896: The temperature in downtown San Francisco, California fell to 33 degrees, which was the lowest ever for the city in March.

1966: An F5 tornado hit Jackson, Mississippi killing 54 persons.

1980 - A coastal storm produced 25 inches of snow at Elizabeth City, NC, and 30 inches at Cape Hatteras NC. At Miami FL the mercury dipped to 32 degrees. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1983 - The last of a series of storms to strike the California coast finally came to an end. Waves fifteen to twenty feet high pounded the coast for two days, and in a four day period up to 18 inches of rain drenched the Los Angeles and Santa Barbara area. On the morning of the first, thunderstorms spawned two tornadoes which moved through the Los Angeles area. (Storm Data)

1987 - A storm brought heavy rain and gale force winds to Washington and Oregon. Quillayute WA received 2.67 inches of rain in 24 hours, and winds gusted to 60 mph at Astoria OR. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A small but intense low pressure system roared across west central Mississippi at 90 mph early in the morning. A tornado in southern Mississippi picked up an automobile, carried it 150 feet, and tossed it through the brick wall of an unoccupied retirement home. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Wintry weather prevailed from the southern Rockies to the Upper Great Lakes. Neguanee MI received 19 inches of snow, and up to 24 inches of snow blanketed Colorado. Blizzard conditions were reported in Minnesota. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1990 - An upper level weather disturbance produced snow in the Colorado Rockies, with eight inches reported at Winter Park, and a storm moving off the Pacific Ocean began to spread rain and snow across the western U.S. March continued to start off like a lamb elsewhere around the country. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1991: A major ice storm coated parts of central and northwestern New York State with up to two inches of ice. Damage was totaled at \$375 million dollars. It was the most costly natural disaster ever in the state up until that time. Nearly half a million people were without power at the height of the storm and many would not see their power restored until the 16th.

2003 - It was a day of temperature extremes. Miami reached a high temperature of 90 degrees, the earliest observed 90 degree temperature since March 5, 1964. Meanwhile Marquette, MI, dropped to 30 degrees below zero, the lowest temperature ever recorded in the city in March.

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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
						
Scattered Flurries	Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance Rain/Freezing Rain then Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny and Breezy
High: 35 °F	Low: 25 °F	High: 54 °F	Low: 20 °F	High: 49 °F	Low: 33 °F	High: 59 °F



Mostly Cloudy and Cool Today

Follow us on *Social Media*

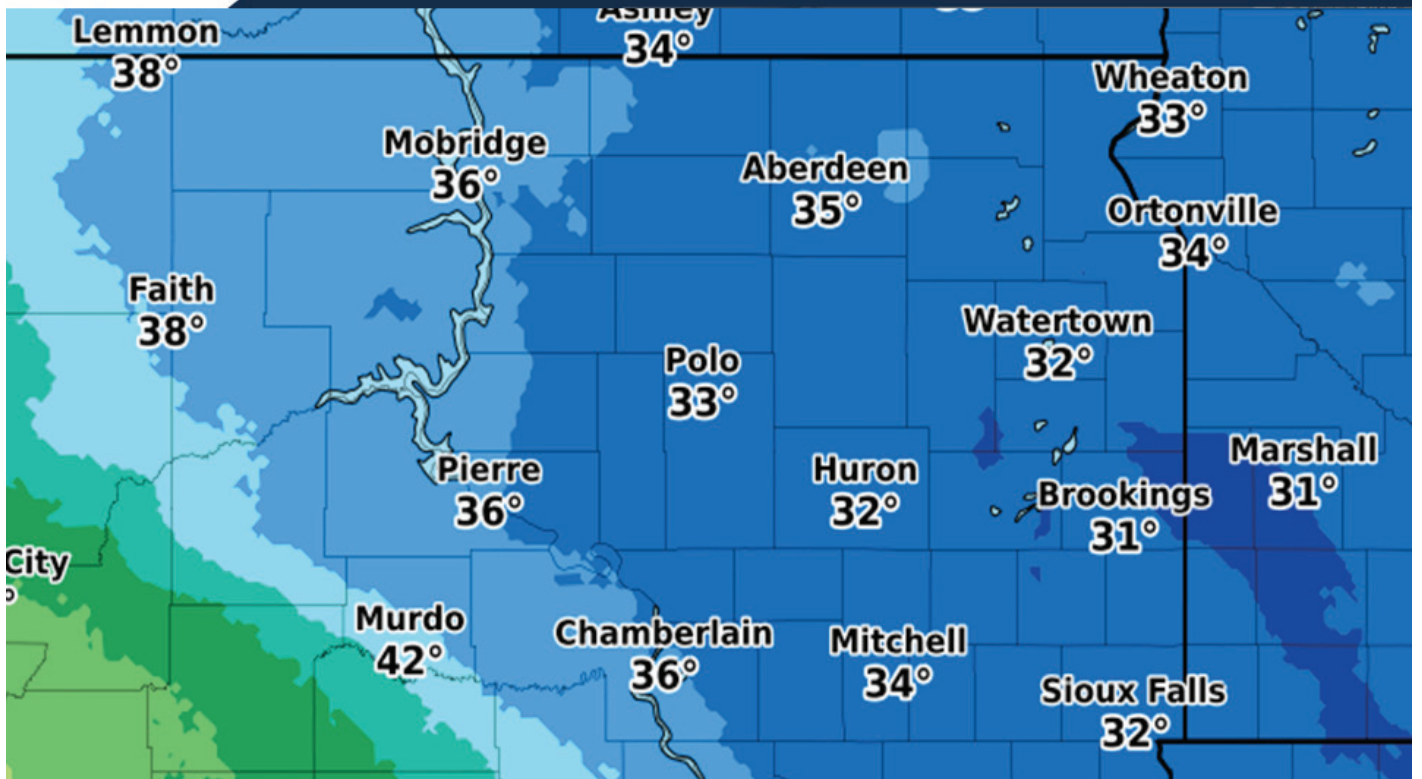
weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen



Published on: 03/03/2016 at 5:14AM

Surface high pressure over the area today will bring light winds and cool temperatures. Skies are also expected to remain cloudy to mostly cloudy. Much warmer air will be moving into the region Friday with highs in the 40s and 50s. This mild air will stick around through the weekend and even into the start of next week. In fact, by Sunday, many locations will be in the 50s and 60s.

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 37.3 at 4:35 PM

Low: 13.2 at 4:18 AM

High Gust: 23 at 2:26 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 73° in 1905

Record Low: -15 in 1916

Average High: 34°F

Average Low: 14°F

Average Precip in March.: 0.09

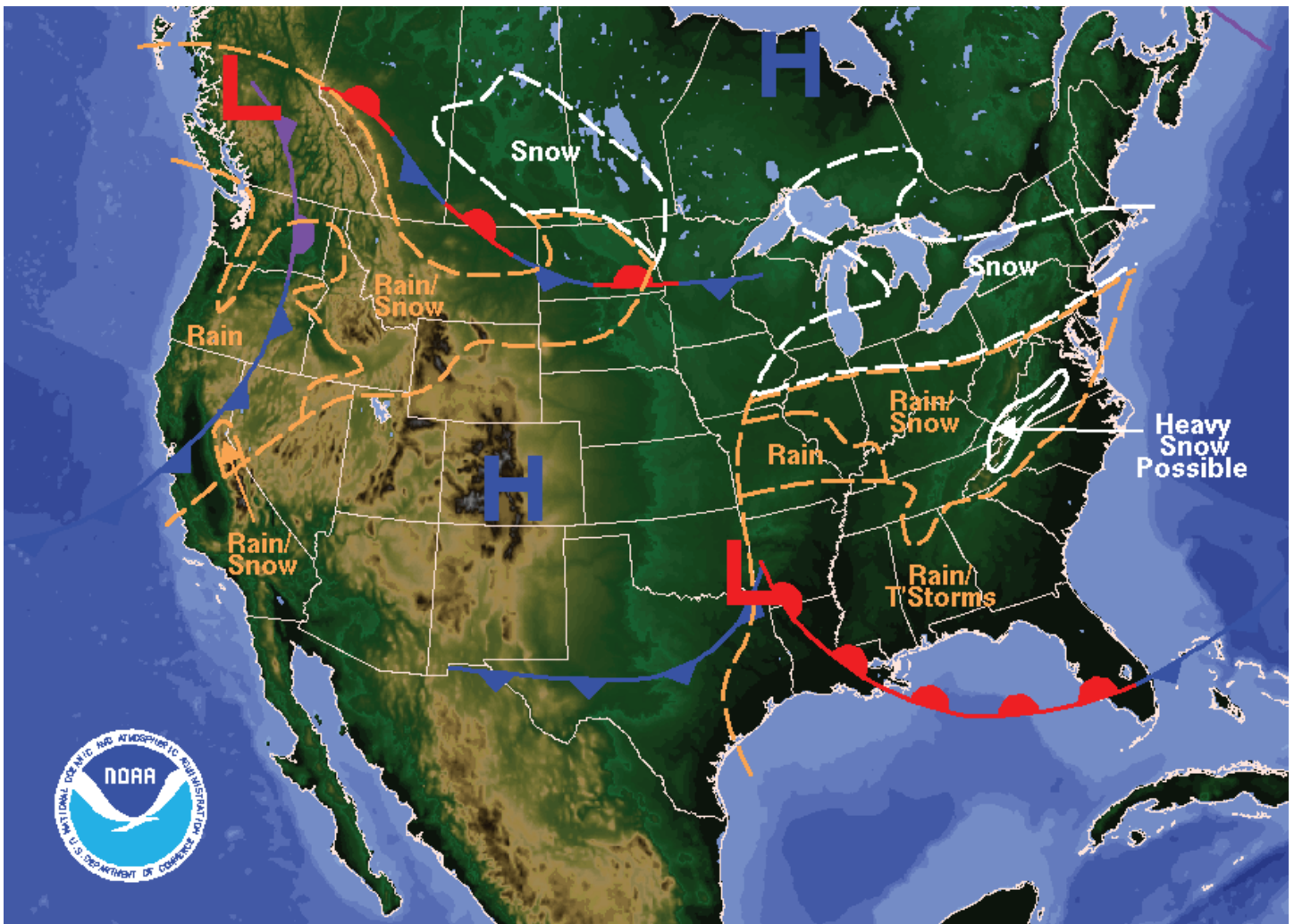
Precip to date in March.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 1.11

Precip Year to Date: 0.60

Sunset Tonight: 6:24 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:05 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Thu, Mar 03, 2016, issued 5:35 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



THE WARRIOR AND THE ANT

Tamerlane was an oriental warrior who had defeated and conquered many armies. His many victories included the conquests of the Mongols, the Turks and the Persians.

Once when it appeared that his army would be defeated by an enemy whose strength he had underestimated, he hid in a manger to avoid being captured. As he lay quietly, discouraged and desperate, he noticed an ant struggling to carry a large kernel of corn over a steep wall. The ant tried the first time and failed. Then the second time – and failed again. Again and again the ant tried with the same result. Each time the ant tried and failed Tamerlane would make a mark in the dirt. The ant tried and failed sixty-nine times. Once again for the seventieth time the ant tried and was finally successful – making it over the top.

Tamerlane was amazed and encouraged at the persistence of the ant. His courage returned, he regrouped his army, engaged the enemy once again and won!

The book of Proverbs warns against giving in to the temptation of laziness. It says, "Take a lesson from the ants. Learn from their ways and be wise!" God used the ant as an example to encourage us to be industrious.

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to take each moment that You give us as a gift of Your grace to be used wisely and thoughtfully for Your glory. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: Proverbs 6:1-11 Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!

Meade County fugitive arrested after foot chase in Spearfish

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — A man who fled after being handcuffed by sheriff's deputies in Meade County over the weekend is back in custody.

Deputies tried to arrest 32-year old Kerri Nacey on Sunday for allegedly violating a court-ordered sobriety program. He was able to flee and remained on the lam until Wednesday afternoon, when Lawrence County deputies and Spearfish police arrested him after a foot chase in Spearfish.

Authorities say escape charges are pending against Nacey. The Black Hills Pioneer reports that he also faces felony drunken driving warrants from Butte County. It was not immediately clear if he had an attorney.

South Dakota governor bucks party line with transgender veto

JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — When South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard vetoed a bill this week that would have required transgender students to use bathrooms and locker rooms that match their sex at birth, it wasn't his first break with elements of his Republican Party.

The same governor who orchestrated a massive cut in state spending early in his first term has since won a pair of tax increases to fund roads and higher salaries for teachers. He has also considered expanding Medicaid in South Dakota, even though Republicans hold every statewide office and supermajorities in both legislative chambers.

Confidants say the moves aren't surprising for a thoughtful, analytical governor who charts his own course, and that Daugaard's approach to politics and policy hasn't changed during his tenure. Despite his initial positive reaction to the transgender student bathroom bill, he discussed it with three transgender individuals, who he said helped him see the issue "through their eyes."

"He is not an ideologue," said Dusty Johnson, Daugaard's former chief of staff. "He is a pragmatist who cares about people and getting things done."

He has taken flak from conservative elements in the party, and his Medicaid and education funding proposals have been the subject of attack ads on TV and radio.

"He always held himself out as a pillar of the conservative cause, and then after getting re-elected, he's embraced an entirely different philosophy," said Republican Sen. Brock Greenfield.

The tax hikes approved Tuesday will mark the first permanent increase to South Dakota's sales tax rate in nearly half a century once signed. Daugaard said he was "elated," about the passage of the bill, which aims to improve South Dakota's lowest-in-the-nation teacher pay.

Daugaard — who says he has no aspirations to remain in politics once his second term expires — said he waited until after the vote on the tax bill before revealing his decision to veto the transgender bathroom measure, so that it wouldn't affect the outcome.

Observers, including opponents of the measures, either dismiss the possibility of political retribution for his departure from Republican orthodoxy, or point out that the governor doesn't plan to continue his political career beyond the end of his current term.

State House Majority Leader Brian Gosch, who opposed the tax increase, said it's unlikely to be undone, and that supporters of the transgender student bathroom bill would have difficulty mustering support to override the governor's veto.

Daugaard's 45-point margin of victory in 2014 was the largest of any governor in the state's history, even after he made some tough choices during his first term in 2011, cutting state spending by 10 percent to turn a \$127 million post-recession structural deficit into a state budget with a surplus.

This session, the sales tax increase failed in the state House by a single vote. But with educators in the state Capitol rotunda, the governor showed steely resolve. It's not clear what changed over the weekend,

but by Monday he had the votes.

Daugaard said Wednesday that he hasn't changed course during his second term.

"In my very first inaugural address, I remember making the statement that I didn't get elected to be concerned about re-election," Daugaard said.

USD offering health care-themed camp for high schoolers

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — High school students considering careers in the field of health care can now register for a summer camp at the University of South Dakota that will give them a taste of the professions they're interested in.

Registration for the school's 10th annual Healthcare Careers Camp is now open to students who will enter 10th through 12th grades in the fall.

Students selected to attend the camp will participate in an anatomy lab tour, CPR certification and field trips to area medical facilities, among other activities.

Campers will also interact with health care professionals and others in the industry. Staffers from the Sanford School of Medicine and the USD School of Health Sciences will also be available.

The camp will run June 19-24. The application deadline is April 1.

LSS launching student loan counseling program in Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Lutheran Social Services is launching a student loan counseling program in Sioux Falls.

The LSS Center for Financial Resources will help provide relief to borrowers struggling to repay money they borrowed to finance a college education.

Student loan counselor Cassandra Johnson says the program's NFCC certified counselors will address the full range of financial challenges faced by consumers, which includes the repayment of student loan debt.

LSS says that among 43 million total student borrowers, 7.3 million are at least 90 days delinquent on their loans, 5 million are in default and millions more are in negatively-amortizing income-driven repayment plans.

Former buffalo ranch owner suing North Dakota man over lease

DAVE KOLPACK, Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — The former owner of a Dakotas buffalo ranch who was chastised by neighbors and law enforcement for his business practices is suing a man who was leasing the property before it was sold.

Florida real estate honcho Maurice Wilder is seeking nearly \$200,000 in damages from Curt Hepper and his company, Flying H Buffalo Inc., of Raleigh, North Dakota. Wilder says in a federal civil suit filed Monday that Hepper stayed on the property 40 days after the lease expired in November.

Hepper did not respond Wednesday to email and phone messages left by The Associated Press. A phone message left for David Bliss, a Bismarck attorney who filed the suit for Wilder, declined to comment.

Wilder owned the ranch on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation for more than 20 years before it was recently sold. The ranch was criticized by some people who said the bison often ran loose and others who said the animals were mistreated.

The suit says Hepper and Wilder agreed to a one-year lease agreement in October 2014 for about 15,000 acres of land in Corson County, South Dakota, and about 5,000 acres in Sioux County, North Dakota. The deal also included the sale of about 3,500 buffalo cows, bulls, yearlings and calves.

"The parties consummated the sale of the buffalo, but Hepper and Flying H Buffalo did not remove their livestock and machinery from the Wilder Ranch by the end of the lease agreement," the lawsuit says.

The suit also levels that damages from a holdover client are double the yearly value of property for the time the land is occupied — about \$125,000. The suit also asks for \$67,500 that Wilder said was paid to the new owner for the delay and about \$1,900 in utility costs.

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Wilder bought the ranch in 1994. Neighbors for years complained the animals getting out of their fences, damaging hay stacks and pastures and creating road hazards. North Dakota officials in 2009 dropped animal neglect charges against Wilder after he paid eight neighboring ranchers more than \$60,000 in damages.

In 2009, the sheriff in Corson County was ordered to oversee the care of 6,000 buffalo on the Wilder ranch after several were found dead and others were determined to be malnourished. Wilder said employees were to blame and said other problems were overblown in media reports.

No election in Fort Pierre after challenger disqualified

FORT PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Fort Pierre will not hold a city election this year, after the only potential challenging candidate was disqualified.

KCCR radio reports that there is no opposition for three City Council seats up for election, and Mayor Gloria Hanson also has no challenger.

City Finance Officer Roxanne Heezen says a resident did file nominating petitions to run against Hanson but hadn't handled the petitions correctly, making them invalid.

The city of Yankton also has canceled its municipal and school board elections this year, due to a lack of candidates. The Daily Press & Dakotan reports it's the second straight year of no city election and the third consecutive year of no school board election.

Huron businessman and philanthropist Earl Nordby dies at 85

HURON, S.D. (AP) — Huron businessman and philanthropist Earl Nordby has died.

Nordby died Tuesday at a Huron hospital. He was 85. KOKK radio first reported the death. Kuhler Funeral Home confirmed it to The Associated Press.

Nordby's funeral is 10:30 a.m. Monday at First Presbyterian Church, followed by a private burial.

Nordby made his money in the soft drink bottling industry and later donated millions of dollars for public projects. The Nordby Exhibit Hall on the South Dakota State Fairgrounds is named for him.

KOKK reports that Nordby was inducted into the South Dakota Hall of Fame in 1997 and into Beverage World magazine's Hall of Fame in 2004. In 2011, Gov. Dennis Daugaard proclaimed May 6 as Earl Nordby Day.

Man who pleaded guilty to murder wants to withdraw plea

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A man who pleaded guilty to murder in Bismarck now wants to withdraw that plea.

Mark Butts is accused of stabbing 57-year-old Richard Glover to death in a car in December 2014. In January he pleaded guilty to a lower-level felony murder charge that carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison rather than life.

Butts has now asked to withdraw the plea and change attorneys. The judge in the case did not immediately rule.

Butts has said in court that he's homeless. Court documents list his address as Rapid City, South Dakota.

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. WHAT ARE OPTIONS FOR REPUBLICANS ANXIOUS OVER DONALD TRUMP'S DOMINANCE

There are few good ones as party elites pore over complicated delegate math, contemplating a contested convention and even the prospect of a third party option.

2. MALAYSIA SAYS PROBABILITY IS HIGH THAT DEBRIS FOUND IN MOZAMBIQUE IS FROM FLIGHT 370

The transportation ministers of Malaysia and Australia both say the area where it was found matches investigators' predictions of where debris from the plane would end up.

3. PILOT'S FAMILY COPES WITH PAIN, REJECTS THEORY HE WAS TO BLAME

Two years after the disappearance of Flight 370, the eldest sister of Capt. Zaharie Ahmad Shah tells AP's Eileen Ng that he was a kind, generous and happy man.

4. NORTH KOREA FIRES SHORT-RANGE PROJECTILES INTO SEA HOURS AFTER U.N. SLAPS SANCTIONS

South Korea's Defense Ministry said the projectiles were fired from the eastern coastal town of Wonsan and could be missiles, artillery or rockets.

5. AFGHAN BOYS ARE THE NEW FACE OF EUROPE'S MIGRATION EMERGENCY

AP gains rare access to a Norwegian shelter for children and teens traveling alone in an unexpected and challenging aspect of the migrant crisis.

6. CLINTON STILL STRUGGLES FOR YOUNGER VOTERS SHE NEEDS TO WIN IN NOVEMBER

The Democratic front-runner acknowledges she is falling short on that front as young people flock to Bernie Sanders.

7. HOW THE FIRST OIL COMPANY DREW CRUDE FROM AN ALASKA RESERVE SET ASIDE NEARLY A CENTURY AGO

It took compromises with Alaska Natives and keeping environmental concerns in mind for oil to start flowing from the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.

8. WHO COULD BE THE FIRST FOREIGN-BORN JUSTICE TO SERVE ON THE U.S. SUPREME COURT IN OVER 50 YEARS

Sri Srinivasan, a federal appeals judge who was born in India and grew up in Kansas, is one of several people being mentioned prominently as a potential replacement for Justice Antonin Scalia.

9. HOW ARE CAMBODIA'S POLITICAL RIVALS GETTING A JUMP START ON CAMPAIGNING

Long-ruling Prime Minister Hun Sen and exiled opposition leader Sam Rainsy are competing for "likes" on Facebook well ahead of 2018 elections.

10. WHAT DUSTIN HOFFMAN THINKS ABOUT RACE IN AMERICA

The actor tells AP he feels there is a systematic problem beyond the Oscars that can change "when the people that are oppressed force it to change."

Yearlong spacemen embrace fresh, frigid air back on Earth

MARCIA DUNN, AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Ah, there's nothing like a blast of fresh, frigid air to welcome you back to the planet after nearly a year cooped up in space.

That's the word from astronaut Scott Kelly, NASA's space-endurance champ who returned to bitterly cold Kazakhstan on Wednesday, along with his roommate for the past year, Russian cosmonaut Mikhail Kornienko.

In a NASA interview before heading home to Houston, where he arrived early Thursday, Kelly said it was "amazing" to feel the cold air when the hatch of his Soyuz capsule popped open after touchdown.

"I don't mean to say it's not fresh on the space station," he said, "but there's nothing like new cold air coming into the capsule."

Both Kelly, 52, and Kornienko, 55, yearned for nature throughout their 340-day mission at the International Space Station, a dry run by NASA for eventual trips to Mars.

"Just like Scott, I wanted to see Earth and I wanted to smell that fresh air. This is an unforgettable feeling," Kornienko said.

It was the longest an American ever lived in space, although nothing new for the Russians. The world record is 438 days, set back in the mid-1990s at the former Mir space station. Even before that, a pair of Soviet cosmonauts had racked up a full one-year spaceflight.

"Congratulations on your record," former cosmonaut and Kazak space agency chief Talgat Musabayev said at a welcoming ceremony. He couldn't resist: "Of course, it was already done 28 years ago."

President Barack Obama joined the chorus of praise pouring in.

"Welcome back to Earth, @StationCDRKelly! Your year in space is vital to the future of American space

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travel. Hope gravity isn't a drag!" Obama said via Twitter.

The White House said Obama spoke with Kelly on Wednesday, thanking him for his service and for sharing his journey through social media. Kelly posted hundreds of photos of Earth.

After landing, the latest one-year space subjects quickly parted company, Kelly flying back to Houston and Kornienko to Star City, Russia, near Moscow. While en route, Kelly tweeted a picture of his first salad back on Earth, noting it will be important to grow fresh food during Mars expeditions, like his space station lettuce crop.

Kelly acknowledged it was bittersweet leaving the space station — his home since last March, currently staffed by three men until the arrival of three more in two weeks.

"I'd been there a long time, so I looked forward to leaving. But at the same time, it's a magnificent place and I'm going to miss it," he said.

Neither will be saying goodbye — in Russian, do svidaniya — to medical tests anytime soon.

Minutes after emerging from their capsule, they were whisked in chairs to a medical tent where they did their best to stand, walk, jump, navigate obstacles — everything an astronaut might need to do immediately upon arriving at Mars.

NASA aims to put astronauts on the red planet in the 2030s, but first wants to know how the body — and mind — will fare during the 2½-year expedition. Kelly ranked physical isolation aboard the 250-mile-high platform, from those he loved, as his biggest challenge.

Kelly looked fit as he emerged from the Soyuz capsule on the remote steppes of central Asia, pumping his fist and giving a thumbs-up. He showed no signs of slowing down a few hours later as he waited to board the plane for the long flight back to Houston. He needed little if any assistance in walking and said there seemed to be little difference from his five-month station stint five years ago.

The exams — along with blood, saliva and urine collections — will continue for weeks if not months. In the case of Kelly and his identical twin, retired astronaut Mark Kelly, the testing could last a year if not longer. The brothers served as guinea pigs — one in weightlessness, the other on the ground.

Kelly's last tweet from orbit Tuesday provided a cliffhanger: "The journey isn't over. Follow me as I rediscover #Earth!"

The brothers were reunited at Ellington Airport near Johnson Space Center in Houston early Thursday. The welcoming committee included Scott's two daughters, ages 21 and 12; his girlfriend who's been chronicling his mission as a NASA public affairs officer at Johnson; and his sister-in-law, former Arizona congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, Mark's wife.

"It's great to be back in Texas on U.S. soil," Scott Kelly told the crowd. "I missed everyone very much."

Also joining in the celebration: Vice President Joe Biden's wife, Jill, and NASA Administrator Charles Bolden.

"I brought you some beer and apple pie - nothing's more American than that," Jill Biden said.

As for his space legacy, Kelly said he and Kornienko "were a small part" in setting the stage for Mars.

"Expanding our envelope and our ability to operate in space is something that's going to take us farther from this planet," he said.

He stressed that it took thousands working behind the scenes to pull off this mission, noting: "It's really not about us."

Maybe so, but their sacrifice was duly noted by grateful well-wishers at NASA and elsewhere. On this flight alone, the pair traveled 144 million miles through space — the average distance between Earth and neighbor Mars — and were exposed to cosmic radiation. They tackled 400 experiments, some of them unpleasant. And like other station residents, Kelly downed recycled urine and sweat — nearly 200 gallons over the year.

Make no mistake, "a year's a long time," according to Kelly. He checked into the space station last March and by the six-month mark last September, "I felt like I had been up there my whole life."

Six months is the typical space station stint; that was the mission length for Russian cosmonaut Sergey Volkov, who piloted Kelly and Kornienko to a safe Soyuz touchdown.

"I'm definitely encouraged on our ability to go even longer," Kelly said. "I mean, even though I looked forward to coming home and there were things that I missed, I felt like if it was for the right reason, I clearly could have stayed however long it took."

Chance to try NFL combine drills fun but humbling experience

TIM BOOTH, AP Sports Writer

RENTON, Wash. (AP) — Richard Sherman and Bobby Wagner looked over the assembled throng and for a change they were the ones in position to analyze and criticize our performances.

"Now it's our turn," Sherman said with Wagner, Bruce Irvin and a few other Seattle Seahawks by his side.

Under the bright lights of the Seahawks' practice facility this week, two dozen under-scouted, undervalued hopefuls were subjected to the same NFL combine drills as all the top draft prospects in Indianapolis. Nursing bad knees, ankles, shoulders and other achy joints, these members of the Seattle media put their egos and pride aside to show off their athleticism — which for most of us was very little — in front of some of the same players that we evaluate for 16 NFL games every fall.

Of course, Sherman and the majority of his friends didn't stick around for the entire 90-minute event. There was no reason for those players to spend more time than needed watching a bunch of media members looking awkward while doing the same thing the players do effortlessly.

The events were the same as the NFL combine in Indianapolis — minus the bench press, which probably would have led to the need for medical personnel. Our efforts in the 40-yard dash, 20-yard shuttle run, 3-cone drill, vertical jump and broad jump were all timed, measured and visually documented for future embarrassment, and brought out the competitiveness among colleagues who are only marginally similar to the players using that field during the NFL season.

Above all else, it was humbling. Absolutely it was fun and competitive. Yet seeing those numbers flashing on an electronic board or being written down to be published publicly is sometimes not easy to accept; the same numbers that sometimes can make or break the career of an NFL prospect.

I try to stay active, with the emphasis on try. I play a little basketball with friends when I can, indoor soccer once a week with a group of fellow youth soccer parents and am supposed to be training for a half-marathon later this summer. When the email arrived announcing the Seahawks event, I happened to be spending the afternoon with a childhood friend and told him I thought I could break 5.3 in the 40. He laughed.

Turned out he was right. Another humbling moment. But more on that later.

Before the event began, Sherman and his friends offered up suggestions. Some were actually useful: Keep your head down coming out of the start in the 40; swing your arms doing the broad jump; stay low in and out of your cuts in the shuttle run and 3-cone drill.

And then there were the less helpful ideas.

"Run fast and don't tear something," Sherman said.

And even more ludicrous.

"Less is more," Sherman said. "Less clothes." To which Irvin added a suggestion about letting body parts "breathe," which was the last thing about to take place with this group of athletic specimens.

Along with the worry of having our performances videoed and photographed was a general paranoia of committing a moment of clumsiness that would be on a continuous Internet loop. And it happened less than one minute into the 40-yard dash when a radio producer stumbled at about 25 yards and barrel rolled on the turf. Sherman, Irvin and nearly everyone else watching doubled over in laughter, but that didn't help my nerves. I was next to run.

So when I completed the 40 yards in 5.45 seconds and without falling on my face, it was a success even if I didn't break my target of 5.3.

Based on historical numbers at the NFL combine, the rest of my efforts would have been acceptable if I was a defensive tackle or an interior offensive lineman: 8.09 in the 3-cone drill; 5.13 in the 20-yard shuttle run; 86 inches in the broad jump; and a vertical of 19 inches that lacked the leap part. I also managed to catch all eight passes in the final event, the "gauntlet drill" a 53-yard sprint across the field catching throws from two directions, including a pass from former NFL quarterback Jim Zorn.

But that was it. The challenge was done, right as my hamstrings tightened up and my knee throbbed.

As if I needed another reminder that I'm better suited to have a notebook, a pen and a slice of pizza in my hand.

Judge would be first Indian-American named to Supreme Court

ARIA SUDEKUM, Associated Press

EDITOR'S NOTE _ First in a series of profiles of potential nominees to the U.S. Supreme Court, following the death of Justice Antonin Scalia.

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Sri Srinivasan, a federal appeals judge who was born in India and grew up in Kansas, would be the first foreign-born justice to serve on the Supreme Court in more than 50 years.

The 49-year-old Srinivasan is one of several people being mentioned prominently as a potential replacement for Justice Antonin Scalia, who died last month. A judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, Srinivasan would bring to the high court previous experience as an attorney in private practice, a law clerk to two Republican-appointed judges and a high-ranking official in the Obama Justice Department.

He has a "first-rate intellect, an open-minded approach to the law, a strong work ethic, and an unimpeachable character," high-ranking Justice Department veterans of Democratic and Republican administrations said in a letter endorsing him for the appeals court. The bipartisan warmth extended to his 97-0 confirmation vote by the Senate in 2013.

Srinivasan told the Senate Judiciary Committee then that he has "a deep respect for the need for strict objectivity and impartiality in the task of judging," citing both his work for Vice President Al Gore after the 2000 presidential election and his later work in the Justice Department under Solicitor General Theodore Olson, who was the lead lawyer for George W. Bush in the Supreme Court case that decided the 2000 race.

"I think any objection to Sri would have to be based on notions that he's either not conservative enough or not liberal enough," said Stephen McAllister, a law professor at the University of Kansas. "It could not be intellectual ability, could not be writing ability, it could not be his general competence in the law," McAllister said. "He's just extremely talented in all respects."

His nomination to the appeals court did provoke some criticism from liberal interest groups who objected to his work in private practice representing former Enron Corp CEO Jeff Skilling in his successful Supreme Court appeal, and represented Exxon Mobil Corp and mining company Rio Tinto in lawsuits alleging their connection to human rights abuses abroad.

Srinivasan would be the court's first Indian-American and its first Hindu, on a bench with five Catholics and three Jews. The last justice who was born overseas was Austrian-born Felix Frankfurter, who retired from the court in 1962.

Srinivasan grew up in Lawrence, Kansas, where his parents taught at the University of Kansas and he played high-school basketball. He remains an avid Kansas basketball fan and tries to return for a game once a year, said McAllister.

He received his bachelor's degree, law degree and MBA from Stanford University. He clerked for U.S. Circuit Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson in Richmond, Virginia, and former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, both appointed by President Ronald Reagan. He also worked in a junior Justice Department position during the Bush administration and as the top political deputy in the Solicitor General's office in the Obama administration.

If nominated and confirmed, Srinivasan would have to step aside from high court consideration of two cases he has been involved with on the federal appeals court. He has been considering challenges to the Obama administration's plan to address climate change, and "net neutrality" rules that regulate how the Internet is delivered to consumers.

Deanell Tacha, a native Kansan who is now dean of the Pepperdine Law School, calls Srinivasan a "man of great integrity, high intellect and extraordinary qualifications."

"He cares about other people," she said. "He's generous of spirit, and he's amazingly humble."

And perhaps a tad superstitious. He regularly carried his twin children's baby socks to Supreme Court arguments and pulled them from his pocket at his investiture on the appeals court, longtime legal affairs writer Tony Mauro reported in 2013.

Biographical information on Judge Sri Srinivasan

The Associated Press

NAME — Srikanth Srinivasan

AGE — 49

CURRENT POSITION: Judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

PROFESSIONAL — Principal deputy solicitor general, Office of the Solicitor General, Justice Department, 2011-2013; Partner, O'Melveny & Myers, Washington, D.C., 2007-2011; Law lecturer, Harvard Law School, 2010-2011; Assistant to the Solicitor General, Office of the Solicitor General, Justice Department, 2002-2007; Associate, Counsel, O'Melveny & Myers, Washington, D.C., 1998-2002; Law clerk to Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, Supreme Court, 1997-1998; Bristow Fellow, Office of the Solicitor General, Justice Department, 1996-1997; Law clerk to Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III. U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit.

EDUCATION — Stanford Law School, JD, 1995; Stanford Graduate School of Business, MBA, 1995; Stanford University, bachelor's degree, 1989

OF NOTE: Srinivasan would be the first Indian-American on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Clinton now faces struggle to win back younger voters

NICHOLAS RICCARDI, Associated Press

FORT COLLINS, Colo. (AP) — Standing in a line of thousands outside an arena at Colorado State University, Aleksandr Cronk contemplated the grim possibility that the man he was waiting to see, Bernie Sanders, may not make it to the November ballot and he'd have to decide whether to vote for Hillary Clinton.

Like millions of young voters nationwide, Cronk has been electrified by Sanders' longshot bid for the Democratic presidential nomination. Even as Clinton has racked up a commanding lead in the contest, she's overwhelmingly losing voters between ages 18 and 29 in early-voting states. Her lukewarm reception among people like Cronk points to a challenge for her in November, should she win the nomination. Overwhelming support from young voters twice helped secure the White House for Barack Obama.

"I don't think there's going to be a lot of change" if Clinton wins, said Cronk, 21. Like many younger voters he's especially alarmed by income inequality, the issue that Sanders has made a centerpiece of his campaign. "The Clintons don't really stand in that position very well."

Clinton's weakness with younger voters has stood out consistently this year — she lost Democratic primary voters who are aged 18 to 29 by 70 points in Iowa, 68 points in New Hampshire and 25 points on Super Tuesday, when she won seven of the 11 states in play for Democrats.

"Hillary's weakness with millennials has to be very worrisome for the Democratic Party," said Simon Rosenberg, president of the New Democrat Network, a center-left advocacy group. "What you're seeing is the millennial generation has essentially seceded from the Democratic establishment."

Obama's presidential campaigns showed the power of voters under 30, who gave him 2-1 support in both 2008 and 2012. In 2016, even more millennials than Baby Boomers are eligible to vote, and they make up a large share of potential voters in battleground states such as Ohio, Pennsylvania and Iowa, demographers say.

For months Clinton tried to connect with younger voters through famous supporters such as singer Katy Perry and actor Lena Dunham. She embraced the anti-police-brutality movement Black Lives Matter, spearheaded by young African-Americans, and vowed to expand President Obama's deportation relief for young people in the country illegally and their families. She promised debt-free college for all, only to be one-upped by Sanders' pledge of free college for all.

Clinton has acknowledged she's fallen short, saying she has to work harder to convince young people she will help them. When an Iowa college student asked her in January why so many other youths found her dishonest, Clinton blamed decades of Republican attacks.

"I have been around a long time and people have thrown all kinds of things at me and I can't keep up with it," replied Clinton. "If you are new to politics and it's the first time you've really paid attention, you go, 'Oh my gosh, look at all of this.'"

Joelle Gamble of the Roosevelt Institute, a liberal New York think-tank, said young voters are increasingly

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distrustful of institutions like political parties. She noted that, on the Republican side, many have rallied around Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, who boasts of how hated he is by Washington Republicans.

"I don't think there's any one candidate that can fix this," she said.

Sanders, a socialist senator who was an independent until launching his quixotic Democratic primary run last year, has come the closest. His call for a political revolution has reached people like Daniel Harty, a 21-year-old computer science student in Las Vegas who once saw himself as a libertarian but registered as a Democrat to support Sanders. Should Clinton be the nominee, Harty said, he'd never back her. "Hillary Clinton doesn't seem like a genuine person," Harty said. "She changes her opinions based on what's politically expedient."

Jay Morris, 24, of Oklahoma City, has \$72,000 in student debt and no job. A Sanders supporter, he said he'd never back Clinton. "I think she's completely entrenched in the political machine," he said. "I just wouldn't vote."

Michelle Williams, 20, a natural resources student, didn't pay attention to politics until the hashtag #FeeltheBern began popping up in her social media feeds. She was excited to see Sanders speak in Fort Collins. "He keeps it real about how America truly is," she said. But she would drop out of politics if the nominee were Clinton. "She's weird," Williams said.

Cronk has a running debate with his parents about his support of Sanders. They're Clinton voters, fearful of what Republicans could do to Sanders in a general election. Cronk, on the other hand, was in elementary school when a Republican last won a presidential election and believes the increasing divide between the wealthy and everyone else demands dramatic action.

He worries whether he'll be able to have the same life as his parents, a librarian and part-time teacher who own a house in a nice San Diego, California, neighborhood. "To see how quickly the gap is increasing is kind of scary," he said.

Cronk said that, if it came down to it, he'd vote for Clinton in a general election. She'd be better than whoever emerges from the Republican primary, he said. "You feel kind of forced."

First oil flows from Alaska reserve set aside in '23

MARK THIESSEN, Associated Press

NUIQSUT, Alaska (AP) — Rising from the edgeless, wind-scoured, snow-covered tundra on Alaska's North Slope lies a million-pound drilling rig pulling the first commercial oil from a reserve set aside nearly a century ago.

ConocoPhillips is the first oil company to draw crude from the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, an area the size of Indiana which President Warren G. Harding dedicated as an emergency oil supply for the U.S. Navy in 1923.

Getting to this point took compromises with Alaska Natives while keeping environmental concerns in mind. The Bureau of Land Management, which controls the reserve, in 2013 identified 12 million acres that could be available for development while setting aside 11 million acres to protect wild animals and grazing lands.

The drilling rig first began pulling up oil in October, and at peak production will produce 16,000 barrels a day from the Colville-Delta 5 field, or as it's more commonly known, CD5. It also will serve as a launch pad for another nearby fields in Alaska's Arctic.

The Colville-Delta 5 field itself is an extension of the ConocoPhillips' Alpine field, located about five miles to the east.

"We've spent more than a dozen years trying to achieve the permits to do the development, to complete the development," Jim Brodie, the capital projects manager for ConocoPhillips in the reserve, said of the \$1 billion project earlier this month after reporters toured the North Slope facility last month. "It's a sizable investment."

The project included a 6-mile gravel road, four bridges over channels of the Colville River, including one 1,400 foot-expanse, 32 miles of pipelines, and miles of communications and electrical infrastructure that tie the field back to the main Alpine facilities. Oil that is being brought up goes back to Alpine for processing,

and then is sent 800 miles down the trans-Alaska pipeline for shipment out of Valdez.

The oil is being drilled on surface land which is owned by Kuukpik Corp., an Alaska Native village corporation for the nearby community of Nuiqsut, located about 25 miles south of the Arctic Ocean, or 625 miles north of Anchorage.

Village residents who live a subsistence lifestyle objected to the original plans for one of the bridges over the Colville River to the oilfield, worried that it might interfere with fishing access.

Brodie said ConocoPhillips pulled its permit package to come up with an alternate plan, working "with the community and the elders and established a new location for the Nigliq Channel Bridge, which caused a reroute of the road and it was at considerable expense to ConocoPhillips but at the same time we got the support from the community and it enabled the project to move forward."

The Inupiat village agreed with the new plan and now welcome the financial opportunities that oil brings to the native community in terms of taxes and jobs.

"We worked with ConocoPhillips to make sure that CD5 is developed responsibly and make sure that it's a win-win," said Isaac Nukapigak, president of Kuukpik Corp.

Development in the petroleum reserve hasn't drawn the usual protests from environmental groups.

Nicole Whittington-Evans, Alaska regional director for The Wilderness Society, said her group has been mostly concerned with how the development will proceed: Will it involve roads or not? How far westward will the sprawl continue?

"Those are the types of things that we're concerned about right now, and we have focused on trying to ensure that the least environmentally damaging developments move forward," she said.

ConocoPhillips continues preparations to drill in the more ingloriously named Greater Mooses Tooth 1 despite oil prices being in the tank. First oil from there could be as soon as December 2018, and could produce 30,000 barrels a day at peak production.

Steve Thatcher, ConocoPhillips' Alpine operations manager, said oil prices are cyclical and will rebound.

"For these kinds of projects, if we can invest in them now, it makes a lot of sense for when the oil price is the other extreme," he said.

Sheriff: Man taking selfies with gun fatally shoots himself

CONCRETE, Wash. (AP) — A 43-year-old man has died after authorities say he accidentally shot himself in the face while taking selfies.

The Skagit Valley Herald reports (<http://goo.gl/jJZQVw>) the man and his girlfriend were photographing themselves with the weapon on Sunday at a residence when he shot himself.

Skagit County Sheriff's Office Patrol Chief Chad Clark says the woman reported that she and the man had taken photos with the gun several times that day and that the man had loaded and unloaded bullets multiple times.

Clark says a bullet apparently remained in the gun the final time he fired.

The death is being investigated as accidental. The man's name has not been released.

Probation for Marine biologist who got too close to otters

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — A prominent California marine biologist on probation for feeding killer whales in the wild was ordered Wednesday to serve an extra year on probation for being too close to sea otters.

A federal judge also ordered Nancy Black, who runs a popular whale watching tour on Monterey Bay, to pay a \$2,000 fine.

Black, who operates Monterey Bay Whale Watch, admitted to violating the conditions of her probation, which required her to remain at least 50 yards away from marine mammals, the Monterey Herald reported (<http://bit.ly/1RICbah>).

Black said she was documenting otter pup health in the Monterey harbor when a sea otter and her pup swam near her boat and someone took a picture.

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"Harbor otters will come up and lay on a boat or swim right up to you," she said. "We were not harassing them in any way."

Black was placed on three-year probation in 2014 after she roped a piece of gray whale blubber and attached it to the side of her boat near a feeding pod of orcas in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Her probation now extends to January 2018.

The marine biologist's work has appeared on PBS, National Geographic and Animal Planet.

Black has also worked with federal agencies on the study of whales, including the National Marine Mammal Laboratory, which is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Court: Utility must house gas leak refugees until March 18

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A California court has rejected a utility's efforts to stop paying to house Los Angeles residents displaced by a massive gas leak.

The 2nd District Court of Appeal denied a petition Wednesday by Southern California Gas Co. to reconsider a judge's order that required the company to pay for room and board until March 18.

The order came last week on the day the company was due to cease reimbursing residents staying with family, friends and at hotels.

The gas company says it appealed because public health officials have determined it's safe for residents to return to homes near its Aliso Canyon facility.

Thousands of residents moved out of the Porter Ranch area during the 16-week leak, and many complained of nausea, headaches, nosebleeds and other symptoms.

Sports Authority stumbled as shoppers moved online

MARCY GORDON, AP Business Writer

Fans coveting their favorite team's jersey with the personal touch of their name on the back are flocking online, likely not to the sports store at their local mall. Consumer habits are evolving.

That looks to be one of the developments behind the financial travails of retail chains like The Sports Authority Inc., which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection Wednesday and plans to close or sell about a third of its 463 stores.

The seemingly bottomless inventory online of team-branded apparel and equipment — contrasted with a limited supply in stores that have to be restocked — adds to the cheaper price advantage of the Internet, notes Marc Ganis, president of Chicago-based consulting firm SportsCorp. And it can be easier to get team clothing personalized online.

Millennials, especially, are attuned to the point-and-click of Internet purchasing and also like to get personal stuff. And even heavy exercise equipment is finding an online audience.

"There's tremendous movement to online sales," Ganis said. "It has really impacted the big-box sports retailers."

Other companies in that category are Modell's and Dick's Sporting Goods. They're all under pressure from the Internet, says Ganis, but regional chains like Modell's, as opposed to national companies, have a better time of it. They can more easily put on promotions of home-team gear, for example.

Overall, the retail industry has struggled with the consumer move to online shopping, trying to find ways to lure customers to brick-and-mortar stores. Macy's Inc. has opened Macy's Backstage in order to go head-to-head with discount retailer T.J. Maxx.

J.C. Penney Co. is using store-label offerings to fight against pricing pressures from online rivals and recently launched a new campaign called "Get Your Penney's Worth," which offers certain store-label items for pennies.

Sports Authority, which is privately held and based in Englewood, Colorado, said it intends to close or sell about 140 stores and two distribution centers, in Denver and Chicago. The company has 463 stores in 41 states and Puerto Rico. The store closings are expected to take up to three months.

Sports Authority stores will remain open and run on normal schedules during the Chapter 11 process. The company's website will continue to function, and the chain plans to honor warranties on items pur-

chased at its stores or online.

"We are taking this action so that we can continue to adapt our business to meet the changing dynamics in the retail industry," CEO Michael Foss said in a written statement. The executive said the company needs fewer stores as consumers are increasingly shifting to online shopping.

In a letter to customers posted on the company's website, Foss said Sports Authority's long-term plan includes upgrading stores and improving its website.

Foss said the company has received interest from third parties that may want to invest in or buy some or all of the business. Sports Authority plans to continue evaluating all of its options, he added.

Sports Authority said it expects to have sufficient liquidity during the Chapter 11 process when factoring in cash from operations and anticipated access to up to \$595 million in debtor-in-possession financing.

Sports Authority made its Chapter 11 filing in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware.

Don't need a blender? Crowdfunding sites now fund honeymoons

JOSEPH PISANI, AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Before they say "I do," soon-to-be newlyweds are increasingly going online to ask, "Will you pay for our honeymoon?"

Crowdfunding websites such as Honeyfund, GoFundMe and Honeymoon Wishes make it easy to raise cash from family and friends for a post-wedding getaway. The sites charge fees for their services — as much as 10 percent of the total collected — but people are warming up to the idea, despite the cost.

As couples increasingly live together first and marry later, they already have toasters and towels, so traditional gift registries don't make as much sense. Honeymoon registries also provide a polite way of hinting to guests to give money instead, without breaking wedding etiquette.

"I didn't feel right saying, 'Hey, give me cash,'" says Nicole DePinto, who raised \$2,900 on GoFundMe for an Icelandic honeymoon with her husband Anthony in December.

Sites that help couples raise cash for honeymoons have seen their popularity soar recently. Honeyfund users, for example, raised \$90 million last year, a 50 percent jump from the year before, says co-founder and CEO Sara Margulis.

Last year, 22 percent of people using the Knot, a wedding planning site, said they also used honeymoon registries, according to a survey of 6,500 customers. That's the same as the year before, but up from 17 percent in 2013 and 13 percent in 2012.

The DePintos even crowdsourced the destination of their honeymoon, asking the 100 guests at their travel-themed October wedding reception to vote on Greece, Iceland or Japan. The save-the-dates came on postcards and the party favors were luggage tags.

"We did everything outside of the box," she said, and besides: "They're all places we wanted to go eventually."

The guests chose Iceland. In winter.

"Iceland is absolutely beautiful in December," she insisted, recalling the Christmas decorations, mulled wines, ice caves and northern lights. "I think our guests understand that we are not a super-traditional couple, so we wanted our honeymoon to be more adventure and less lounging on a beach."

Most guests gave the couple cash-stuffed envelopes at the wedding, but the 14 donations they got online covered their hotel and airline tickets, even after GoFundMe kept more than \$230 in fees. The Union City, New Jersey, couple also had a registry at Target, but asked for just a few things there since they had lived together for three years.

"In that time we've acquired tons of pots, plates, towels, throw pillows and bedding," they explained on their GoFundMe page.

Asking for cash in the invitation is a wedding faux pas, says Kristen Maxwell Cooper, deputy editor at The Knot. But passing around a link to a honeymoon registry works, because couples can explain to guests exactly where the money will be spent, she says.

Couples have a few options to turn to.

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Crowdfunding site GoFundMe has collected \$2 billion to date for all sorts of personal campaigns, raising money for medical emergencies, crime victims and other local causes. But the site does have a weddings and honeymoons section where users have raised \$4 million since GoFundMe was launched six years ago, says media director Kelsea Little.

Anyone can see a GoFundMe campaign, but don't expect strangers to hand over cash — only friends and family will likely donate, says Little.

"It's a common misconception," she says.

Honeyfund, meanwhile, is more focused on honeymoons. Couples can list exactly what the cash will pay for, from hotel rooms to sightseeing tours to massages.

Major resorts and cruise lines are jumping in, using Honeymoon Wishes to power honeymoon registries built into their sites.

At Carnival Cruise Line, for example, couples can ask wedding guests to pay for scuba diving excursions or horseback rides. The money goes straight to Carnival and couples can redeem the gifts on board, says Nancy Williams, the business development director at Honeymoon Wishes. Couples can also go to Honeymoon Wishes and build their own honeymoon, without being attached to a certain resort.

"It's now socially acceptable," says Williams.

Christie's thousand-yard stare stirs mockery, befuddlement

MICHAEL CATALINI, Associated Press

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — Was that really Chris Christie, the brusque, take-a-back-seat-to-nobody governor of New Jersey?

Christie's seemingly shell-shocked gaze as he stood behind Donald Trump on Super Tuesday generated morning-after befuddlement and mockery in his home state and beyond.

Conservatives and liberals alike piled on.

His expression was so grave and his introduction of Trump so subdued that many people joked on the Internet that he looked like a hostage reading a coerced statement. "Gov. Christie, blink twice if you're in trouble!" one person tweeted.

In a move that shocked nearly everyone, especially in Democratic-leaning New Jersey, Christie endorsed his fellow Republican Trump last week and has appeared at the billionaire businessman's side at campaign appearances over the past few days.

But after Tuesday night's appearance, conservative commentator Jonah Goldberg of the anti-Trump National Review imagined Christie was thinking: "My God what have I done?" Others saw the same thing in Christie's thousand-yard stare.

Footage of Christie's stunned look, set to the jaunty theme song from HBO's "Curb Your Enthusiasm," became a sensation online Wednesday. And Washington Post blogger Alexandra Petri wrote an extended riff about how Christie was "screaming wordlessly" as Trump spoke and had "the glazed and terrified look of someone who has traded his inheritance for no pottage at all."

Christie's office declined to comment on his appearance.

Aside from Tuesday night, Christie appears to be fully embracing his surrogate duties. He has introduced Trump at a number of enthusiastic rallies and has been the front-runner's attack dog, sinking his teeth into Sen. Marco Rubio and vouching for Trump and his family.

Back home, the reaction has been fierce.

Republican Christine Todd Whitman, the former New Jersey governor and Environmental Protection Agency administrator, told The Star-Ledger of Newark last week she would rather vote for Hillary Clinton than Trump.

"I am ashamed that Christie would endorse anyone who has employed the kind of hate mongering and racism that Trump has," she said.

Six Gannett newspapers in New Jersey said he isn't fit to be governor any more. They called him a political opportunist who has neglected his duties in the Garden State, and urged him to resign.

A Fairleigh Dickinson University poll saw Christie's approval ratings fall from 33 percent before he backed

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Trump to 27 percent since. The poll of 694 registered New Jersey voters had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.9 percentage points.

"Trump and Christie kind of do belong together, but not running our country," said Barbara Silverstein of Gibbsboro, New Jersey. "It's a big show, and it's pretty pathetic."

In the past few days, the politician with the outsized personality seemed to be shrinking in political stature even if something big — perhaps the No. 2 spot on the ballot with Trump — is his goal.

Trump was heard on a microphone telling Christie to get on a plane and go home this weekend, and Christie was pressed Sunday in an ABC interview about his disagreement with Trump on his proposed ban on Muslims.

Christie refers to the candidate, who is supposedly his longtime friend, as "Mr. Trump," while Trump refers to the governor as "Chris."

Christie defended his endorsement this week on his regular radio call-in show.

"I've known him personally for 14 years and I believe he is the best person to beat Hillary Clinton," the governor said, before clarifying that he, Christie, was the best candidate but that Trump is the best of the remaining contenders.

Christie wouldn't discuss on the call-in show whether he was hoping for a vice presidential or Cabinet slot.

Asked about his previous criticisms of Trump, Christie said that was a natural part of having to run against him — no different, he said, from George H.W. Bush calling Ronald Reagan's policies "voodoo economics" before becoming his vice presidential pick.

To Montclair State University political science professor Brigid Harrison, Christie's far-off stare seemed to reflect sadness.

"It really looked like heartbreak and kind of a bitter pill that he was swallowing," she said. "I still think that in his heart of hearts he thinks he was destined to be president of the United States."

2 candidates for same race die, including the winner

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — By the time the votes were counted, two of the three candidates vying to be the Republican nominee for property assessor in Tennessee's Unicoi County had died. One of them was the winner.

First, Interim Assessor of Property Wayne Peterson died of cancer last month, while early voting was underway. On election day Tuesday, candidate Margaret Seward died, apparently of a massive heart attack. Had she lived, she would have been declared the winner of the race after getting 48 percent of the vote, said Sarah Bailey, election administrator for the rural county straddling the North Carolina border.

"I have not spoken to anyone who has ever experienced two candidates dying while running for the same office," Bailey said. She called the deaths "horrible, coincidental tragedies."

Unicoi County Republican Party Chairman Jim Buchanan said Seward was only 54, and left behind three children and a husband.

Candidate Alan "Rocky" McInturff, the lone living contender, received 34 percent of the vote, Bailey said, and Peterson captured 17 percent.

It will be up to the local GOP to decide who will be on the ballot in the August general election, Buchanan said.

Stocks made small gains as energy companies surge

MARLEY JAY, AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks eked out tiny gains Wednesday as oil prices continued to recover and investors hoped the worst is over for the beleaguered energy industry. Telecommunications companies, which have climbed as the rest of the market has struggled this year, also rose.

Indexes wavered between tiny gains and losses for most of the day, then climbed steadily in the last 90 minutes of trading. Oil prices increased for the seventh time in eight days, an encouraging sign after many months of sharp declines. After Tuesday's big gains, the market is the highest it's been since the

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first week of the year.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 34.24 points, or 0.2 percent, to 16,899.32. The Standard & Poor's 500 index gained 8.10 points, or 0.4 percent, to 1,986.45. The Nasdaq composite index added 13.83 points, or 0.3 percent, to 4,703.42.

The price of oil has been plunging for almost two years, from over \$100 a barrel in mid-2014 to \$26 a barrel last month. That decimated profits at energy companies and hurt banks that lent money to them. Oil has staged a modest recovery over the last couple of weeks.

Benchmark U.S. crude rose 26 cents to close at \$34.66 a barrel in New York, its highest closing price since Jan. 5. Brent crude gained 12 cents to \$36.93 a barrel in London.

Energy stocks did the best in the market. Murphy Oil climbed \$2.08, or 12.1 percent, to \$19.30, and Marathon Oil picked up \$1.14, or 14.3 percent, to \$9.10. Telecom stocks also rose, with Verizon Communications up 66 cents to \$52.12. Verizon and AT&T are trading at their highest prices in more than a year.

Agribusiness giant Monsanto took its biggest one-day loss in five years after it slashed its annual profit forecast. The company cited the strong dollar, competition from lower-cost generic products, and reduced spending from farmers because of lower crop prices. The stock tumbled \$7.19, or 7.8 percent, to \$85.30.

The news pressured other materials companies including fertilizer maker CF Industries, which fell \$1.51, or 4.2 percent, to \$34.74.

Spirits maker Brown-Forman, whose brands include Jack Daniels and Korbelt, also lowered its profit estimates because of the strong dollar. The company makes 60 percent of its sales overseas. It's also being affected by cutbacks in spending by travelers and weak economies in some emerging markets. Its stock fell \$1.47 to \$96.19.

A strong dollar hurts U.S. companies in a couple of ways when they do business overseas: it makes their products more expensive compared to locally-produced goods, and it reduces their revenue when it's translated back into dollars.

Katie Nixon, chief investment officer of wealth management for Northern Trust, said that matters because economic growth is so slow right now. Still, she said it's not a big problem for the U.S. economy as a whole, which relies more on services than sales of goods.

"The strong dollar is much more of an issue for the S&P 500 than it is for the U.S. economy," she said.

ADP, a payroll processing company, delivered another positive sign for the economy when it said private U.S. businesses added a healthy 214,000 jobs last month. That followed upbeat reports on construction and manufacturing on Tuesday. The federal government will release its jobs report on Friday.

Bond prices fell. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 1.84 percent from 1.82 percent a day earlier. Bond yields also climbed on Tuesday.

"The Treasury yield is increasing because the economy is better than people had feared and investors feel that the Fed is going to hike rates," Nixon said.

Bond yields are still relatively low. That has helped telecommunications and utility stocks, which are seen as similar to bonds: they are less-volatile stocks that tend to pay high dividends. Investors have favored them in recent months as the rest of the market turned turbulent. They are the two best performing sectors in the market so far this year.

Sporting goods retailer Big 5 Sporting Goods fell \$1.38, or 10.4 percent, to \$11.91 as it offered a weak profit forecast, and competing retailer Sports Authority said it will file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection and close almost a third of its stores.

Digital health and wellness company Everyday Health leapt 89 cents, or 19.1 percent, to \$5.55 following a strong quarterly report. Teen retailer Abercrombie & Fitch rose \$1.27, or 4.4 percent, to \$30.41 after it said its Hollister business did particularly well in the latest quarter.

Germany's DAX rose 0.6 percent and France's CAC rose 0.4 percent. The FTSE 100 index of leading British shares dipped 0.1 percent after asset manager BlackRock warned that if the U.K. votes to leave European Union, the economy will be "economically worse off."

A weak yen added to investor optimism, sending Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 up 4.1 percent. Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 3.1 percent.

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The price of gold rose \$11 to \$1,241.80 an ounce. Silver rose 27 cents to \$15.02 an ounce. Copper rose 4 cents to \$2.18 a pound.

In other energy trading, the price of natural gas fell 6 cents to close at \$1.68 per 1,000 cubic feet. Natural gas is at its lowest price in 17 years. Wholesale gasoline rose 1 cent to \$1.31 a gallon. Heating oil rose 1 cent to \$1.11 a gallon.

The euro was unchanged at \$1.0868 and the dollar fell to 113.45 yen after climbing to 114.05 yen Tuesday.

Falling lottery sales pinch college scholarships in 8 states

USAN MONTOYA BRYAN, Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — The ticket-buying frenzy that erupted over January's \$1.6 billion Powerball jackpot wasn't enough to reverse a long-running trend: Proceeds from lottery games aren't keeping pace with the higher education costs they were supposed to pay.

Now lawmakers in at least eight states have made or are considering making dramatic cuts to scholarship programs funded by lotteries. The programs, aimed at opening access to college by providing nearly free tuition, include one at the University of New Mexico that helps nearly half of all first-time, full-time students.

College administrators and students alike are bracing for a blow if more money isn't found.

"This would force students to pay about \$1,700 more out of their pockets annually, and most likely, it would mean borrowing more in student loans," said Terry Babbitt, an associate vice president at the university.

New Mexico has one of the nation's most generous programs, paying more than 90 percent of tuition for eligible students. Without any new money, the benefit will have to be reduced to about 60 percent, according to the state Department of Higher Education.

The problem begins with declining ticket sales. When a state establishes a lottery, excitement typically builds and consumers rush to buy tickets. As the games mature, sales level off. After 20 years, New Mexico's lottery sales have plateaued, as have sales for multi-state games such as Powerball.

Changing spending habits play a role too. Millennial consumers, according to some experts, are moving away from lotteries. And many Americans never go inside a convenience store to buy gas anymore, choosing instead to swipe a credit card at the pump. That means fewer opportunities to sell lotto tickets.

The rising cost of tuition and tight state budgets add to the strain.

Affected states have been forced to make painful changes in recent years, tightening eligibility requirements or reducing the amount of aid a student receives.

In New Mexico, lawmakers introduced dozens of measures over the last decade to shore up their program, including making one-time appropriations to prop up the scholarships and shifting \$19 million in liquor excise tax revenue.

During the legislative session that ended last month, Senate Majority Leader Michael Sanchez pushed through a bill allowing for unclaimed prize money to be transferred to the lottery tuition fund. Experts said that's a step in the right direction but not enough to close the growing gap.

Other ideas include raising the bar for eligibility. To qualify, New Mexico students must maintain a 2.5 grade-point average and complete at least 15 credit hours a semester at a four-year school.

Students are frustrated at the prospect of cuts.

"The reason we were pushing so hard for solvency this year was because we don't want to reach the point where we're looking at a cliff, where we either have to make a decision or students are looking at a 30 percent decrease in funding," said Jenna Hagengruber, a college senior and president of Associated Students of the University of New Mexico. "That's an incredibly large drop."

The scholarships were created two decades ago, shortly after Georgia established a lottery scholarship that became a model for similar programs throughout the South. Georgia was forced to make changes in 2011 that resulted in a nearly 25 percent cut in the number of students who qualified.

Tennessee has tried to buffer its program from the volatility of lottery sales by establishing an endowment that can fund scholarships through interest and earnings. The move could provide a cushion over the short term, experts said.

The other five states with lottery scholarships are Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, South Carolina and West

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Virginia. More than two dozen states earmark lottery proceeds for education in general.

New Mexico already leads the nation with the highest student loan default rate, federal data show. And even if new funding could be tapped, the problem is expected to linger.

Annual revenue from lottery ticket sales has plateaued at about \$40 million. Tuition costs for eligible students are expected to top \$65 million a year.

Legislators have floated some three dozen ideas in recent years.

One Republican lawmaker said New Mexico's four-year research colleges regarded the lottery scholarship "as a blank check from Santa Fe" and rapidly raised tuition over the last 15 years.

State Rep. Jason Harper, who has been working on the issue since his election in 2013, suggests that the scholarships serve as a bridge for students after all other financial aid is exhausted.

Teens say burning of ex's love letter led to school fire

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — A case of burning love caused thousands of dollars in damage at a school playground in Alaska.

Anchorage police say a fire from lit paper ignited rubber mulch and spread to two pieces of playground equipment, destroying both.

After speaking to witnesses and reviewing surveillance video, police interviewed two 18-year-olds.

The teens told investigators that they burned a love letter Tuesday night from an ex-girlfriend on the playground at Bowman Elementary School and left.

Police spokeswoman Jennifer Castro says investigators recommended charges of criminal mischief, criminal negligent burning and failure to control or report a fire.

Online court documents Wednesday morning did not indicate formal charges had been filed.

Rubber mulch is used on the playground to cushion falls. School district spokeswoman Heidi Embley says damage is estimated at \$20,000.

Kelly says she doesn't expect Trump hostility in debate

DAVID BAUDER, AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Anticipating another appearance on a debate stage with Donald Trump, Fox News Channel's Megyn Kelly says their public feud hasn't affected her preparation and she doesn't expect a renewal of hostilities with the Republican presidential front runner.

Kelly, who is moderating Thursday's debate with colleagues Bret Baier and Chris Wallace, said Trump was more in her head before the GOP debate prior to the Iowa caucuses, which he ultimately boycotted.

"I think he's much more focused on securing the nomination now and not on me, and that's how it should be," Kelly said. Thursday's debate, the 11th among Republicans, will be held at Detroit's Fox Theater from 9 to 11 p.m. EST.

Kelly's questioning angered Trump during the first GOP debate last August, most prominently when he was confronted with some of his past comments about women. He responded harshly, and skipped Fox's Iowa debate when the network refused to remove Kelly as moderator. Ted Cruz beat Trump in Iowa.

Trump spokeswoman Hope Hicks said he looks forward to Thursday's debate.

"It's not a focus of our preparation but obviously it's the elephant in the room," Fox's Baier said. "It's not front of mind, but it's in mind. We're not going to focus on one candidate or the other."

At the very least, the Fox moderators won't have to prepare one set of questions for if Trump showed up and another for if he didn't, as they did in Iowa. Kelly, who has not interviewed Trump since last summer's dust-up, said she's preparing the same tough but fair questions she always tries for.

"I don't need to be overly tough to prove that I am some sort of tough gal and I don't want to go easy on him to disprove the people who think I have it in for him," she said. She believes Trump, a novice politician, had the misguided thought Fox would go easy on him.

"Perhaps his expectations for the event were not set properly by the people who were advising him," she said. "I think at this point in the game he understands better how these things go. He knows he can

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handle me. He can handle any interviewer.”

Fox’s debate preparation became a little easier with Ben Carson announcing Wednesday that he is effectively suspending his campaign and not attending. Kelly said he wouldn’t have gotten much attention, anyway: Fox will concentrate its questions on Trump, Cruz and Marco Rubio — making for potentially awkward moments for John Kasich.

In one of the campaign’s many oddities, the Trump-Kelly episode created lingering bad feelings between the leading Republican candidate and the television network most popular with Republican viewers. Kelly was one of the first public figures caught in the middle of one of Trump’s withering attacks on media, which prompted some of his supporters to attack her on social media.

“It didn’t create any personal animus on my part, but that doesn’t mean I enjoyed it or wanted it to continue,” she said. She tried to stay away from the angry comments on social media, but it’s hard to avoid when you need to use Twitter for work.

At its worst, Trump went on CNN to say of Kelly that “you could see there was blood coming out of her eyes. Blood coming out of her wherever.” Many interpreted that to be a crude reference to a woman’s menstrual cycle. Kelly said she understood that attacks come with the territory but that her husband was upset and some of the language used filtered down to her 4-year-old daughter through friends. She also has sons age 6 and 2.

“I’ll put it to you this way — Donald Trump is the only name they know of the people who are running for president,” she said.

Even as gas prices rise, drivers will save at the pump

DAVID KOENIG, AP Business Writer

DALLAS (AP) — Gasoline prices have started their annual springtime migration higher, but motorists should still save money at the pump in 2016.

The national average price for a gallon of regular has risen for eight straight days — the first time that has happened since last May, according to the auto club AAA — to about \$1.79 on Wednesday. That’s still 54 cents cheaper than at this time last year.

Forecasters say prices should rise at least 30 cents or more by June. Demand will rise as people drive more, and supplies will tighten when refiners slow down to perform maintenance and switch to more expensive summer fuel blends.

The U.S. Energy Department predicts that the national average for a gallon of regular gasoline will peak at \$2.08 from June through August. Tom Kloza, an energy analyst with the Oil Price Information Service, says the peak will be between \$2.10 and \$2.50 a gallon.

Either forecast would leave prices well below recent years. From 2011 to 2014, the national average on June 1 topped \$3.60 and some places saw gas over \$4. Last year, gas prices peaked in June at \$2.80 a gallon.

Gas is cheaper because a glut of crude has caused oil prices to tumble. Even with a 30 percent rally since Jan. 20, benchmark U.S. crude closed Tuesday down 68 percent from its June 2014 peak.

Motorists may enjoy the relative bargain for a while. The Energy Department expects crude prices to average about \$38 a barrel this year and \$50 next year. That forecast was made before Saudi Arabia’s oil minister forcefully rejected production cuts during a speech to a major oil-industry conference last week in Houston.

Oil prices have been undercut by demand that turned out to be weaker than expected, especially in China and other developing countries. But for the most part, it’s a case of oversupply — more crude is gushing into world markets than consumers and industry need.

Last month, commercial inventories of U.S. crude topped 500 million barrels for the first time; they are more than one-third above their five-year average. Iran is expected to produce more oil now that it is free from international sanctions. And producers like Saudi Arabia, who could cut supply to prop up prices, are continuing to pump away instead.

Lower oil prices have led to layoffs at drilling companies and contributed to weakness in the stock market,

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but cheaper gasoline and heating oil are putting more money in consumers' pockets.

The U.S. Energy Department estimates that the average household saved \$660 because of cheaper gas in 2015 and will save another \$320 this year.

Chris Christopher, director of consumer economics at research firm IHS, said consumers will gradually spend more of their gas savings as they believe that cheaper pump prices will last a while. More consumer spending should boost the economy.

"In West Texas, they are in a recession," Christopher said, "but it's a net positive for the United States and most developed economies that don't depend too much on energy prices for their livelihood."

Last year, the JPMorgan Chase Institute looked at records from 26 million debit and credit card holders and concluded that gas savings varied greatly by income and region. The card holders spent about 80 percent of their savings, almost 20 percent of it at restaurants. They also increased spending at department stores and on entertainment, electronics and appliances.

The institute's CEO, Diana Farrell, said even though consumers are still saving money compared with 2015 gas prices, they might not spend it if they don't see the price at their gas station falling any lower. "They may no longer feel like they have that extra money in their pocket," she said in an interview.

Gasoline prices vary by region of the country. Californians usually pay among the highest gas prices, and on Tuesday the average for regular there was \$2.41 a gallon — only Hawaiians paid more. Arizona had the cheapest average at \$1.53 a gallon, according to AAA.

A few stations even sold gas for under \$1 last month, although they appeared to be marketing gimmicks, said AAA spokesman Michael Green.

Several stations in Oklahoma City were under \$1.10 in February, but that was before two refineries serving the central U.S. announced cutbacks in production because of low prices. On Tuesday, the best price in Oklahoma City was \$1.45, according to GasBuddy.com.

"That flirtation with less-than-\$1 gas is over," said Kloza, the oil analyst.

Romney calling Trump 'phony,' urging Republicans to shun him

STEVE PEOPLES, Associated Press

JULIE PACE, Associated Press

KATHLEEN HENNESSEY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney charged into the increasingly divisive 2016 GOP White House sweepstakes Thursday with a harsh takedown of front-runner Donald Trump, calling him a "phony" and exhorting fellow Republicans to shun him for the good of the country and party.

"His promises are as worthless as a degree from Trump University," Romney said in a speech readied for delivery to a University of Utah audience.

In turning up the rhetoric, Romney cast his lot with a growing chorus of anxious Republican leaders — people many Trump supporters view as establishment figures — in trying to slow the New York real estate mogul's momentum.

"Here's what I know: Donald Trump is a phony, a fraud," Romney said in his talk, set for delivery later Thursday.

Trump, in turn, disparaged Romney in a series of tweets: "I am not a Mitt Romney, who doesn't know how to win," "Romney, who ran one of the worst races in presidential history, is working with the establishment to bury a big 'R' win!" and Romney is "not a good messenger" to be telling Republicans how to get elected.

Romney has been chipping away at Trump in recent days, but the speech Thursday was certain to be his most forceful statement yet. Trump has responded to Romney by saying the former Massachusetts governor was a failed candidate in his own right.

Panicked GOP leaders say they still have options for preventing the billionaire from winning the GOP

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nomination — just not many good ones.

Romney also declares that a Trump nomination at the party's convention in Cleveland in July would enable Democrat Hillary Clinton to win the presidency, according to excerpts of his speech obtained by The Associated Press.

He charged that Trump "has neither the temperament nor the judgment to be president."

In a phone-in interview Thursday with "Good Morning America," Trump scoffed at Romney's charges and declared that "I've brought millions and millions of people ..into the Republican Party."

"The Republican establishment is going to give it all back," he added.

Romney's involvement comes as party elites pore over complicated delegate math, outlining hazy scenarios for a contested convention and even flirting with the long-shot prospect of a third party option.

The 2012 Republican nominee's speech marks his most aggressive step into the 2016 contest to date, but it was unclear what impact his words would have with voters deeply frustrated by their party's leaders.

Trump, meanwhile, was setting his sights on the general election. His campaign reached out to House Speaker Paul Ryan's office to arrange a conversation between the two men, and urged Republican leaders to view his candidacy as a chance to expand the party.

Trump padded his lead with victories in seven Super Tuesday contests, with Texas Sen. Ted Cruz claiming three states and Florida Sen. Marco Rubio picking up his first victory of the 2016 race.

Despite Trump's strong night, he was not yet on track to claim the nomination before the party's national gathering in July, according to an Associated Press delegate count. He has won 46 percent of the delegates awarded so far, and he would have to increase that to 51 percent in the remaining primaries.

GOP strategists cast March 15 as the last opportunity to stop Trump through the normal path of winning states and collecting delegates. A win for Rubio in his home state of Florida would raise questions about Trump's strength, as could a win for Kasich, Ohio's governor, on his home turf.

The candidates have a high-profile opportunity to make their case to voters in Thursday night's prime-time debate. Retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson all but ended his bid Wednesday, saying he would skip the debate and declaring he did "not see a political path forward."

The GOP mayhem contrasted sharply with a clearer picture on the Democratic side, where Hillary Clinton was drawing broad support from voters and her party's leaders. Rival Sen. Bernie Sanders vowed to keep up the fight, though his path to the nomination has become exceedingly narrow.

Romney argues that Trump's "domestic policies would lead to recession. His foreign policies would make America and the world less safe," Romney says. "And his personal qualities would mean that America would cease to be a shining city on a hill."

The Associated Press has asked Republican governors and senators if they would support Trump if he becomes the party's nominee. Of the 59 respondents, slightly fewer than half could not commit to backing him in November.

One long-shot idea rumbling through power corridors in Washington was the prospect of a late third-party candidate to represent more mainstream conservatives. Former Texas Gov. Rick Perry has been approached by "a mixture of people" about being part of a third-party bid, according to Jeff Miller, who managed Perry's failed GOP presidential campaign. But Miller said Perry found the idea "ludicrous."

A more likely, though still extraordinarily unusual, scenario being discussed is a contested convention.