

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 1 of 45

- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Blocker Construction Ad
- 2- Bowling Scores
- 2- Groton Kiwanis Club
- 2- DI Help Wanted
- 3- Day 4: Christmas Storm Outages Update
- 4- Bring in the birds for winter entertainment
- 5- Harry Implement Ad
- 6- Deep Thoughts Column
- 7- Today in Weather History
- 8 - Local Weather Forecast
- 9- Yesterday's Groton Weather
- 9- Today's Weather Climate
- 9- National Weather map
- 10 - Daily Devotional
- 11 - AP News

## Thursday, Dec. 29

**Senior Menu:** Ham and bean soup, egg salad sandwich, tomato spoon salad, oatmeal raisin cookie.

## Friday, Dec. 30

**Senior Menu:** Turkey and dressing, mashed potatoes and gravy, broccoli, ice cream sundae, whole wheat bread.

## Saturday, Dec. 31

**Catholic Parish:** Worship at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church at 4 p.m., worship at St. Joseph in Turton at 6 p.m.

## Sunday, Jan. 1

**United Methodist Church Parish:** 9 a.m. service in Conde, 10 a.m. coffee fellowship time, 11 a.m., worship at Groton (No Sunday School)

**Emmanuel Lutheran Church:** Worship at 9 a.m. (No Sunday School)

**Catholic Parish:** Worship at St. Anthony in Bristol at 9 a.m.

**Heaven Bound Ministries in Pierpont:** Worship at 10 a.m.

**St. John's Lutheran Church:** Worship with Communion at 9 a.m.

## Monday, Jan. 2

**Emmanuel Lutheran Church:** Bible Study at 6:30 a.m.

## Tuesday, Jan. 3

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

**Boys' Basketball** at Webster Area (C game at 5:15 p.m., JV at 6:30 p.m. with varsity game to follow)

City Council meeting at Groton Community

## Apts for Rent

1 bedroom and HUGE 2 bedroom, 2 bath apartments available NOW! All utilities included except A/C, 1 bedroom \$504 and HUGE 2 bedroom 2 bath \$674 Please call or text 239-849-7674

**Open:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave.

## The cardboard/paper

recycling trailer at the school is **Closed**



# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 2 of 45

## Groton Prairie Mixed

**Team Standings:** Chipmunks 6, Foxes 5, Jackelopes 4, Shih Tzus 3, Coyotes 3, Cheetahs 3

**Men's High Games:** Roger Spanier 247, Doug Jorgensen 222, 200, Randy Stanley 214

**Women's High Games:** Michelle Johnson 234, Darci Spanier 173, Vicki Walter 168

**Men's High Series:** Doug Jorgensen 561, Randy Stanley 553, Lance Frohling 534

**Women's High Series:** Michelle Johnson 538, Nicole Kassube 475, Sue Stanley 470

## GROTON KIWANIS CLUB

Sharon Simon was program leader for Kiwanis Club , Wednesday noon.

Due to a cancellation of her speaker, Sharon showed a very interesting video on Aberdeen's Pheasant canteen, which served a great service to the soldiers, during the war years.

Roger Rix, treasurer; handed out his financial report on the annual successful Snow Queen and Talent contest.

Mayor Scott Hanlon has become a new member of the Kiwanis Club.

Lee Schinkel will have the program for next week.

## Help Wanted!

The South Dakota Creativity Association board (SD DI) is currently looking for people interested in filling open Affiliate and Regional Challenge Master positions for the upcoming tournament season. These positions involve studying a current Destination Imagination Challenge and being involved in insuring that consistency in appraising is maintained from tournament to tournament throughout our state. Many of these positions are open this year due to retiring long-time dedicated volunteers. This is a volunteer position, but the board helps defray some travel costs. The tournaments run from the end of February to the end of March, but we'd like these positions filled within the next month. Please pass this on to anyone that you think might be interested in a position. If interested yourself, or if you want more details as to what the position entails, please contact the SD Affiliate Director, Dean Fenenga at [di.soda.ad@gmail.com](mailto:di.soda.ad@gmail.com). The board and hundreds of students across our state thank you for your support of South Dakota Destination Imagination.

## Day 4: Christmas Storm Outages Update

Electric cooperatives across South Dakota continued to make progress on restoring power to some 10,000 South Dakotans who remain without electricity after a Dec. 25 storm hit the state.

Repairs to the lines – which are spread out among counties across the state from the Montana border to the Minnesota border – are slow going as crews encounter deep snow in the west and thick ice in the east. At least one cooperative is reporting discovery of additional damage as they are able to access more parts of their system. The counties affected encompass more than 20,000 square miles – or about the area of the states of Maryland and New Jersey.

In northeast South Dakota, cooperatives report ice the diameter of two-liter bottles surrounding power lines, which would fit through the bottle's opening.

Ten distribution cooperatives and one transmission cooperative continue to have outages related to the storm. Employees at those cooperatives have been working since Sunday to make repairs. More than 60 workers from 15 South Dakota electric cooperatives are assisting with repairs, as are 52 workers from 13 cooperatives in Minnesota and Iowa. Private contractors add approximately 75 more workers to the force.

The Christmas Day storms brought blizzard, strong winds, freezing rains and even lightning strikes to the state.

At least seven other cooperatives had also experienced outages in the storm but were able to make repairs by Monday afternoon.

Cooperatives are advising it may be several days before power is restored into all areas.

The storm has also affected cooperatives' transmission suppliers, which bring electricity to local substations.

East River Electric Power Cooperative, headquartered in Madison, S.D., has damage in northeastern South Dakota from the Watertown and Clear Lake area north to the Sisseton area. Otter Tail Power Company, an investor-owned utility, is also having problems in the area, which in turn is affecting East River. Western Area Power Administration lines are also affected in the Summit area. EREPC continues to assess the damage, but is aware of nearly 500 transmission structures damaged in the storm, which affect the cooperative's ability to deliver power to substations serving some of the affected distribution cooperatives.

For information on outages at electric cooperatives in the state, go to <https://outages.sdrea.coop/outages/maps>

Cooperatives urge people to stay away from downed power lines and to not drive over downed lines.

South Dakota's 28 distribution cooperatives provide electricity in each of the state's 66 counties and serve more than 120,000 South Dakota homes, farms/ranches and businesses. South Dakota's electric cooperatives maintain more than 68,000 miles of distribution and transmission line and employ more than 960 people.

## Bring in the Birds for Winter Beauty and Entertainment

By Melinda Myers

Brighten your winter days by inviting birds into your landscape. Their beauty and motion help enliven the garden and lighten your spirit. Not only do they provide entertainment, but also an opportunity for all ages to stay involved with nature year-round.

Increase the number of visitors to your yard by including all the essentials these winged visitors need; food, shelter and water.

Plants are the easiest way to bring birds into your landscape. These natural feeders provide seasonal food and shelter for the birds. Take a walk through your yard and look for trees, shrubs and perennials that provide food and evergreens that provide year-round shelter. Plan on adding a few of their favorites that provide food and shelter and seasonal beauty you can enjoy.

In the meantime, add a few feeders. This is a great way to increase the number and diversity of birds visiting your garden.

Place feeders in a quiet, sheltered location where you can easily watch these visitors come and go. Avoid placing feeders too close to plants that provide easy places for squirrels to jump onto the feeders and cats to hide while hunting for a meal.

Select feeders to attract the type of birds you want to bring into the garden.

Tube feeders with metal ports keep the seeds fairly clean and dry and are somewhat squirrel resistant. Feeders with short perches attract small birds like chickadees, titmice, and finches. Those with the perches above the feeding port are suitable for birds like goldfinches, chickadees and pine siskins that can feed upside down.

Thistle feeders and socks have extra small openings designed to hold the small seeds of thistle. You'll find small songbirds like finches feeding at these.

Suet feeders hold blocks of high energy food made of animal fat filled with seeds and berries. They attract woodpeckers, nuthatches, chickadees, titmice, jays and starlings.

Platform feeders attract the greatest variety of birds, but give squirrels easy access to the seed. Plus, the open environment subjects the seeds to spoilage from damp weather and droppings from feeding birds. Enclosed hopper or house feeders are attractive to most birds, but once again the seed can be exposed to the weather and spoil.

Be sure to thoroughly clean the feeders monthly to avoid the spread of disease. Cover droppings and spoiled seed on the ground with a fresh layer of mulch.

Add additional feeding stations by dressing up your evergreens with bird-friendly ornaments. You can purchase seed coated ornaments or make your own. Roll an evergreen cone in peanut butter or suet and coat with birdseed. Coat a stale bagel with peanut butter and seed. Hang these on the tree with colorful yarn. Add a few orange slices and strings of cranberries for added food and color.



Gardener's Supply Company photo

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 5 of 45

And once the holidays are over move a discarded holiday tree into your bird feeding station. It provides shelter from cold winter winds and makes another place to hang a few edible ornaments.

Keep the birds coming by adding a birdbath for a constant supply of water for drinking and bathing. Shallow birdbaths with sloping sides and a maximum depth of two inches in the center provide easy access for all birds. Keep the water flowing despite cold temperatures with the help of an immersion heater designed for birdbaths or purchase a birdbath with a built-in thermostatically controlled heater.

And once you create a bird-friendly environment you'll be enjoying them year-round. Listen for their songs, watch them raise their young and thank them for helping keep garden pests under control.

Melinda Myers has more than 30 years of horticulture experience and has written over 20 gardening books, including Small Space Gardening. She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything: Food Gardening For Everyone" DVD set and the nationally syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment TV & radio segments. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine. Myers' web site is [www.melindamyers.com](http://www.melindamyers.com).

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## Deep Thoughts

Notes from the underground by Communications Director Constance Walter

Wednesday, December 28, 2016

# Sanford Lab year in review

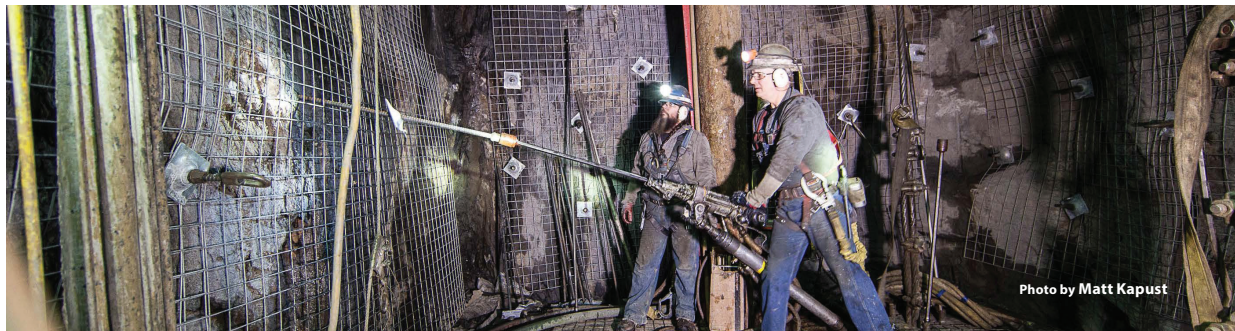


Photo by Matt Kapust

By Executive Director Mike Headley

As I look back on 2016 and see the incredible progress we've made at the Sanford Underground Research Facility (Sanford Lab), I am grateful to our staff, partners and experiment collaborators for their tremendous efforts to advance and support our science activities.

We are excited about the progress that's been made with current experiments, and looking forward to participating in plans for future experiments studying dark matter and neutrinos. Underpinning all this progress is our continued commitment to safety at Sanford Lab. I am so proud of the South Dakota Science and Technology Authority (SDSTA) staff and our researchers for the focus you place on safety every day.

We've made tremendous strides this year in our Education and Outreach and the development of new K-12 curriculum units and tremendous progress rehabilitating the Ross Shaft for future construction and operations activities. The success of the past year is directly supported by our strong partnerships with many organizations, including the science collaborations at Sanford Lab; Fermilab, which recently assumed oversight responsibilities for our operation activities for the Department of Energy and is

### MAJORANA DEMONSTRATOR

In February, the MAJORANA DEMONSTRATOR project collaboration deployed the second cryostat into its multi-layered shield. Each cryostat contains seven strings that contain approximately 44 kilograms of enriched and natural germanium. At the

Neutrino 2016 conference held in London in early July, the collaboration presented preliminary background results based on data collected from Module 1, which began operating in July 2015.

Infrastructure technicians James Gregory and Jerry Hinker install ground support below the 4100 foot-level in the Ross Shaft.

the lead DOE laboratory for the Long-Baseline Neutrino Facility and Deep Underground Neutrino Experiment (LBNF/DUNE) project; and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. I also want to thank the State of South Dakota and the SDSTA Board of Directors for their strong support.

Finally, I'd like to express my deep appreciation to the SDSTA staff, our science collaborations, university and national laboratory partners, and the funding agencies for the opportunity to support world-leading underground science at Sanford Lab.

### Ross Shaft

Under construction since 2013, the Ross Shaft rehabilitation project inched closer to the finish line when crews surpassed the 4,100-foot level. That leaves just over 900 feet before they hit the bottom of the shaft at the 5000-foot-level. The project is critical to the success of LBNF/DUNE, which will require the excavation of approximately 800,000 tons of rock, all of which must be moved up the Ross Shaft.



Photo by Matt Kapust

Researchers load poly shielding onto a cart in the MAJORANA assembly room.

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 7 of 45

## Today in Weather History

December 29, 2005: Heavy snow of 6 to 14 inches fell across parts of north central and most of northeast South Dakota from the morning of the 29th through the early afternoon of the 30th, with 7 to 8 inches of snow across Big Stone and Traverse counties in west central Minnesota from the evening of the 29th through the early afternoon of the 30th. Light rain and freezing rain fell before the snow, creating some slick roads which resulted in some accidents. Some snowfall amounts included 7 inches at Watertown, Big Stone City, and Artichoke Lake; 8 inches at Waubay, Browns Valley, and Wheaton; 9 inches northeast of Isabel and Hecla; 10 inches at Wilmot and Clear Lake; 12 inches at Milbank; and 14 inches at Summit.

1830 - A very heavy snowstorm ushered in the "winter of the deep snow." The storm produced 30 inches of snow at Peoria IL and 36 inches at Kansas City MO. Cold and snow continued until the middle of February causing great suffering among pioneers. (David Ludlum)

December 29, 1876: The Pacific Express train was crossing the Ashtabula River in Ohio when the bridge collapsed. The bridge collapsed at 7:28 PM, during a snowstorm that left two feet of snow and produced 40 mph winds. The only railcar not to fall into the icy river below was the first locomotive.

1894 - A severe freeze hit Florida destroying fruit and causing considerable damage to trees. (David Ludlum)

1954 - Fort Scott, KS, was buried under 26 inches of snow in 24 hours to establish a state record. (28th-29th) (The Weather Channel)

1984 - One hundred cities in the central and eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures. Kansas City, MO, experienced its warmest December day of record with a morning low of 60 degrees and an afternoon high of 71 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1987 - A storm off the Middle Atlantic Coast produced heavy snow in the Appalachians and the northeastern U.S. Snow and high winds created blizzard conditions in southeastern Massachusetts. Cape Cod received thirteen inches of snow, and snow drifts three feet deep were reported around Chatham MA. Strong winds produced wind chill readings as cold as 60 degrees below zero in southwestern New England. In the western U.S., a Pacific coast storm produced heavy snow in the Sierra Nevada Range of California, with 24 inches reported at Mammoth Mountain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)


1988 - A cold front brought rain and snow to the northwestern U.S. The rainfall total of 2.70 inches at Astoria OR was a record for the date. High winds along the eastern slopes of the Northern Rockies gusted to 81 mph at Livingston MT. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Snow and ice prevailed from the southwestern U.S. to the Great Lakes Region. Flagstaff, AZ, received nine inches of snow in just six hours. Bitter cold weather continued over Maine. Portland ME reported a record twenty-two straight days with highs 32 degrees or colder. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)


# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 8 of 45

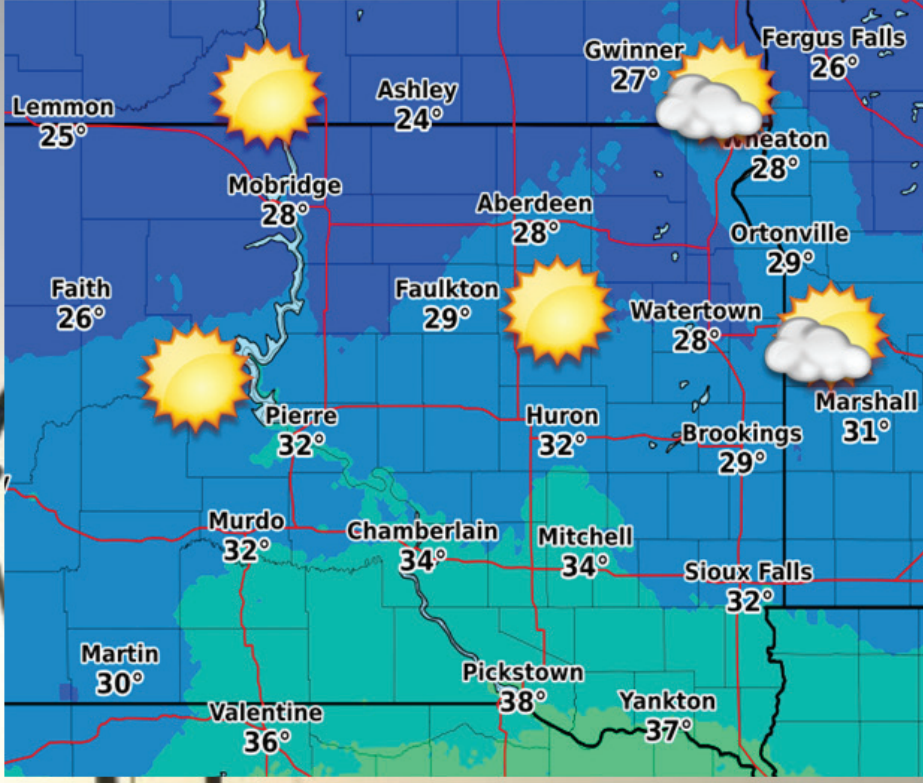
Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	New Year's Day
Patchy Blowing Snow and Blustery	Increasing Clouds	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 28 °F	Low: 11 °F	High: 33 °F	Low: 14 °F	High: 22 °F	Low: 11 °F	High: 25 °F





## Gusty Winds Again Today



Temperatures Above Freezing Expected Friday



City	Temperature
Lemmon	25°
Ashley	24°
Gwinner	27°
Fergus Falls	26°
Wheaton	28°
Mobridge	28°
Aberdeen	28°
Ortonville	29°
Faith	26°
Faulkton	29°
Watertown	28°
Marshall	31°
Pierre	32°
Huron	32°
Brookings	29°
Murdo	32°
Chamberlain	34°
Mitchell	34°
Sioux Falls	32°
Martin	30°
Pickstown	38°
Valentine	36°
Yankton	37°

National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD
 
12/29/2016 4:08 AM Central

Published on: 12/29/2016 at 4:11AM

Today will be windy yet again, with the strongest winds expected over the Sisseton hills region. Winds will subside through the day from west to east. Temperatures will once again top the freezing mark on Friday.



# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 9 of 45

## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: 35.6 F at 2:24 PM**

**Low Outside Temp: 19.2 F at 8:31 AM**

**High Gust: 24.0 Mph at 10:40 PM**

Rain: 0.00

## Today's Info

**Record High: 59° in 1999**

**Record Low: -35° in 1917**

**Average High: 23°F**

**Average Low: 3°F**

**Average Precip in Dec.: 0.48**

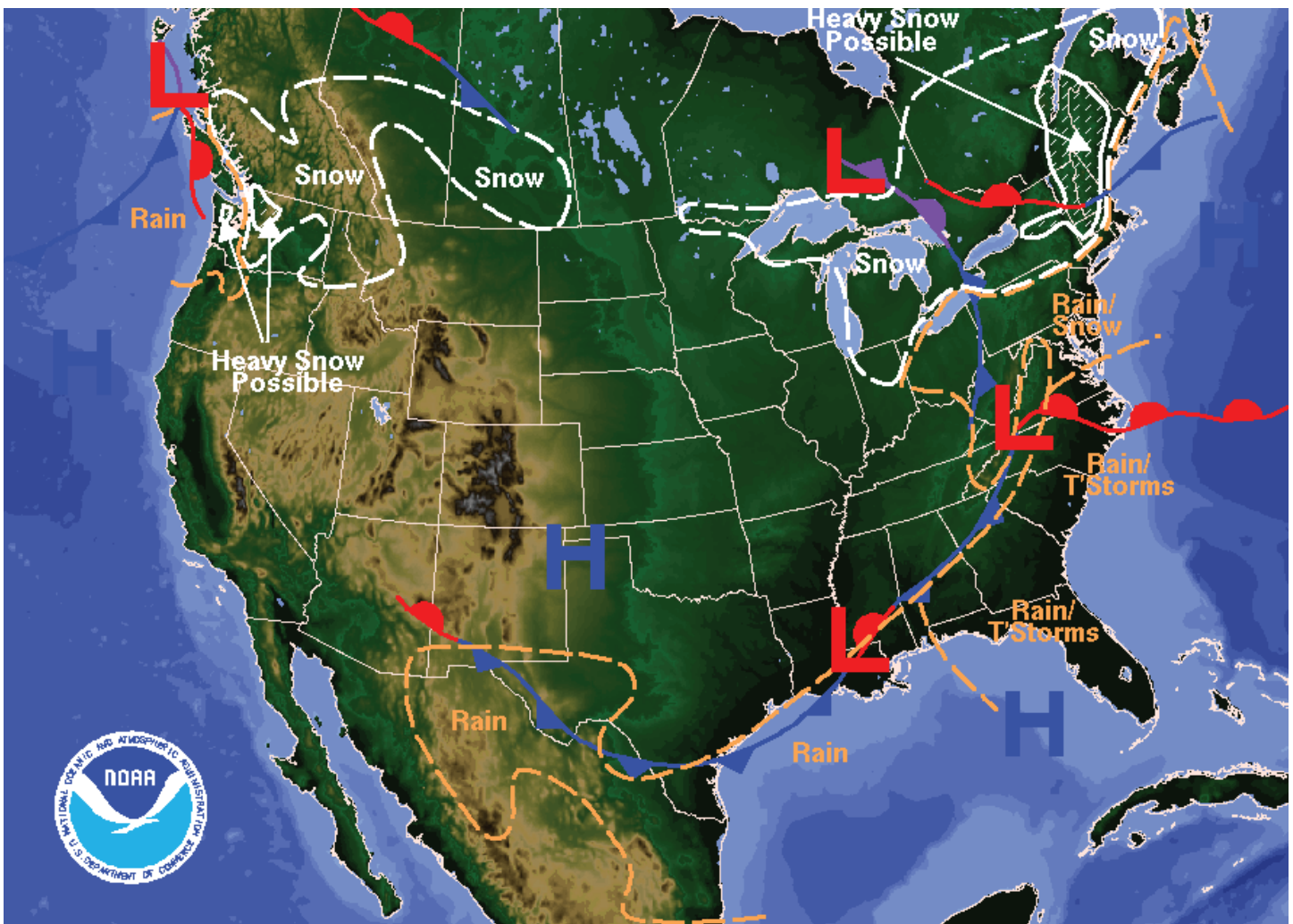
**Precip to date in Dec.: 1.74**

**Average Precip to date: 21.68**

**Precip Year to Date: 19.08**

**Sunset Tonight: 4:58 p.m.**

**Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:13 a.m.**



Weather Forecast for Thu, Dec 29, 2016, issued 3:57 AM EST  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by Reinhart based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



## WITH GOD, ALL THINGS...

During a family conference, one small son was confused. He did not fully understand the discussion, so in his innocence he asked, "What's going on here?"

Might that same question have been on Mary's mind and in her heart as she looked at the Baby Jesus? Could she completely understand all that God had in His plan for her Son, herself and Joseph? Perhaps as she looked in the face of her child, she was filled with questions. No doubt she knew the Scriptures of the Old Testament and was able to catch a glimpse of God at work. Surely she had a faith that would surpass that of most. Indeed her trust was larger than life. But for her to know what God was planning was something that would have been humanly impossible.

Certainly the question, "What's going on here" would have surfaced. We can begin with the fact of a virgin giving birth to a child, let alone the Messiah, that had been promised and long awaited. But it happened when God was ready for it to happen, as He planned it.

As we come to the end of this year and look forward to the one that is fast approaching, let's pause and review "our impossibilities" – the "impossibilities" that have come to pass this year. These once impossibilities have become "miraculous" events that are now memories that prove God's presence, power, place and plan in our lives.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, give us the faith we lack to see Your presence and protection at work in our lives. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture: Luke 1:37 For no word from God will ever fail.

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 11 of 45

## News from the Associated Press

### Wednesday's Scores By The Associated Press

#### BOYS' BASKETBALL

Langford 46, Herreid/Selby Area 28  
Chamberlain East/West Classic  
Chamberlain 68, Lennox 52  
Douglas 65, West Central 57  
Lower Brule 71, Centerville 23  
Hunkpapa Classic  
Crow Creek 67, Solen, N.D. 54  
Little Wound 73, McLaughlin 32  
Pine Ridge 64, Standing Rock, N.D. 40  
Huron Holiday Classic  
Hitchcock-Tulare 43, Ethan 38  
James Valley Christian 68, Rapid City Christian 42  
Swiftel Classic  
Canby, Minn. 70, Alcester-Hudson 59  
Dell Rapids St. Mary 56, Iroquois 35  
St. Francis Indian 61, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 50

#### GIRLS' BASKETBALL

East West Classic  
Ethan 55, Douglas 30  
Hunkpapa Classic  
Little Wound 55, McLaughlin 45  
Pine Ridge 68, Standing Rock, N.D. 61  
Southwest Minnesota State University Tournament  
Elkton-Lake Benton 68, Russell-Tyler-Ruthton, Minn. 60  
Swiftel Classic  
Belle Fourche 44, Waubay/Summit 23  
Canby, Minn. 56, Arlington 17  
Sully Buttes 51, West Central 41

### North Dakota State erases 16-point deficit, beats SDSU 80-69

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Paul Miller had 21 points, 10 rebounds and six assists on Wednesday night and North Dakota State erased a 16-point, second-half deficit to open the Summit League season with an 80-69 win over South Dakota State.

The Bison (9-5) trailed by 15 at halftime and fell behind 53-37 with 14:51 left in the game. Dylan Miller and A.J. Jacobson then scored on back-to-back 3-pointers, opening a 21-2 run that ended with North Dakota State leading 58-55 on Miller's 3-point play with 8:36 left.

The Jackrabbits (7-9) never retook the lead but stayed close until NDSU had a 7-0 run to make it 75-64 with 1:37 left.

Jacobson made all four of his 3-pointers in the second half and finished with 12 points. Jared Samuelson added 11 points, and Dexter Werner and Khy Kabellis added 10 points each.

Mike Daum led the Jackrabbits with 24 points. Skyler Flatten and Tevin King added 11 each.

## Aberdeen family creates hockey ice rink in backyard

By Jacque Scoby, Aberdeen News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — The Orr family is OK with being a little bit cliché.

So OK, in fact, they built a hockey rink in their backyard.

The whole idea of building a backyard hockey rink is arguably the antithesis of cliché, but Tom and Matty Orr, both North Dakota natives and avid hockey players and fans, really just wanted to create a space for their kids to play hockey.

"Tom and I grew up with hockey, both loving it and playing it," Matty Orr said. "So we always figured our kids would be hockey players. When we moved here to Aberdeen and it would get cold enough to have a rink, it was something we thought of."

The Orrs took advantage of some excess boards and glass from the local hockey association and some combined ingenuity to build a small hockey rink in the family's back yard.

The rink soon became the talk of the neighborhood and the subject of a short documentary film called "Sandlot Hockey," which has made stops at the South Dakota Film Festival and several other film festivals, Aberdeen News (<http://bit.ly/2iwtLDd>) reported.

While the film has gained traction on the festival circuit, the Orrs said they had something more "wholesome" in mind when they built the winter arena.

"It's spreading the idea of community and having a purpose and a cause behind it of trying to get kids to enjoy wellness," Tom Orr said. "Being in the outdoors and being hardy and having fun and giggling and being resilient. Learning a lot of things on the ice. Some of the things you don't get playing video games."

Admittedly, the family's "little boring rink" has become something more than just that, however. The family routinely entertains their kids' friends or students from Northern State, where Tom Orr teaches. Most recently, nine students from the Montessori school in Aberdeen stopped by for an afternoon of skating.

Still, the rink's first and most obvious function remains backyard hockey with a side of community.

"It was just created as a place for our kids and for us to share as a place to play hockey for whoever wanted to come by and play in a small setting," Matty said. "It's just fun to have people come over, especially if they've never experienced hockey. The joy and the laughter and getting to talk about different things that have happened in their lives. When the international students come over, it's fun to hear about their culture and how it's different or how it's the same."

Matty also noted that, unlike basketball or volleyball, hockey can be cost-prohibitive, particularly for players who aren't sure if they want to keep going.

"I don't know what the rate is, but it's a hundred bucks to sign them up and 10 hours of volunteer time and \$200 worth of tickets, which is great if you know your kid is going to stick it out," she said. "But if your kid just wants to try it just a few times, it's hard to get that experience. So for some of these kids, it's their chance to play in a pick-up game."

Both Tom and Matty said the film, which took nearly two winters of filming and several more months of editing and stitching before it hit the festival tour, is a side benefit.

"I hope that it's inspired people to share what they like to do and to bring people in," Matty said. "It's not just for an individual, it's for as many people as you can bring in. I hope people have watched it and thought, 'Hey, we can do that.'"

Information from: Aberdeen American News, <http://www.aberdeennews.com>

## Local teacher inspires students after near-death experience

By Sara Bertsch, The Daily Republic

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — A stray crayon on the floor could be a nightmare for art teacher Cassondra Grogan. Carefulness is key, as a potential step, slip and fall could aggravate injuries she sustained in a near-death car crash seven months ago.

On May 13, the 24-year-old elementary art and special education teacher at Mitchell School District was driving to Hartford when she checked a text message on her phone. What resulted was a vicious car

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 13 of 45

crash, several broken bones and surgeries. Perhaps most important, though, is that Grogan is using the incident as a first-hand, teachable moment for her students.

"In a way, my accident has helped the students bond with me," she said. "I have been pretty open and honest with them and I have talked to them about the dangers of not wearing their seat belts and distracted driving."

When the crash occurred, Grogan was driving 50 mph down a gravel road. She became distracted while reading the text and, before completely veering off the road, Grogan overcorrected her pickup twice. That sent her vehicle rolling into a five-foot ditch four times.

Not wearing her seat belt, Grogan was thrown from her vehicle and was found 70 feet away in the opposite ditch, The Daily Republic (<http://bit.ly/2hI1X1R>) reported.

Grogan does not remember the next three days.

"I remember looking up from my phone and my body kind of lifting," Grogan said. "And I remember dewy gravel on my face. That's it."

The Brandon native was taken to the emergency room at Sanford Health in Sioux Falls, where medical officials realized immediately she had internal bleeding due to a damaged artery in her left hip. She lost approximately six units of blood during the crash. The internal bleeding required immediate surgery, and now she has a small metal coil in the artery.

That was just the beginning of the surgeries.

Grogan broke her neck in two spots, she said, and one break was so severe, she was told she was lucky it did not cut off her air supply. Surgery fixed her neck, but now she has a plate, four screws and a cadaver bone in this spot.

Grogan had severe injuries in the vertebrae in the upper and lower part of the back.

To top it off, she also broke her right femur, which was repaired by surgery. A rod was inserted into her femur along with two screws. She will have another surgery in June to remove the rod and screw.

And those are the broken bones. Grogan said she also had a concussion and her left hip was separated from the sacrum — which now has two screws holding it in place. She separated her left shoulder and tore several ligaments that were repaired with surgery. Four screws and two metal plates now hold her shoulder together.

So far, Grogan has had five surgeries, and she will have a sixth surgery in June. But mostly she's just grateful she survived the rollover.

"Doctors have said that surviving this crash in itself is a miracle," Grogan said. "The fact that I didn't sustain a traumatic brain injury or become paralyzed is another miracle that doctors cannot explain. I must have landed just right."

Grogan said it was Friday, the 13th — an unlucky day — but it was also her father's birthday. Unfortunately, he was greeted at the emergency room doors by a priest, Grogan said, because nobody believed she would survive.

Knowing their teacher is delicate and still in the healing process, Grogan said, her students are much better about cleaning up their art supplies.

And today, nobody would know that Grogan had been in a life-threatening crash seven months earlier. She hides her scars and walks as if nothing happened.

Grogan was discharged from the hospital three weeks after the crash. She went home to live with her parents in Brandon. But because of her injuries — the broken femur and separated hip in particular — she had to learn to walk again.

This was an overwhelming process that consumed her life, Grogan said, but she was determined to heal quickly. And one factor that motivated her was the hundreds of students she had waiting for her at the Mitchell School District.

Prior to the crash, Grogan was hired as the art teacher for L.B. Williams and Longfellow elementary schools. Knowing she had students waiting and counting on her in August helped the healing process, she said.

"When I found the determination to get up and learn how to walk, one of the factors that helped me was my students here in the Mitchell School District and my desire to be here," she said. "If I had not had the

desire to come here and to meet all roughly 600 of my students I would have had a more difficult time.”

Because of her injuries, Grogan was unable to move to Mitchell right away in August. For the first three days she was employed at the school district, Grogan commuted from Brandon. Finally, during that first weekend, she was able to move to Mitchell. But she didn't have her apartment set up, or her classroom.

She rushed to prepare the best she could, and has been doing well since. Occasionally she has to miss half days to attend doctor's appointments.

And with curious students, questions popped up.

Filled with love for their new teacher, Grogan said the kids have completed a random act of kindness project, making cards for all of her doctors, therapists and paramedics.

The curiosity doesn't end. Grogan said the students have asked multiple times to see pictures of her pickup and photos of her neck X-ray.

Wanting to be honest with her students, she tells them the truth, but phrases it in ways that if someone breaks the law or the rules, bad things happen.

“There are several kids who are like, ‘Well I'm surprised I'm not dead. Mom texts all the time while she's driving’ or, ‘Mom and dad don't wear seat belts,’” Grogan said. “But it's making them kind of aware. I don't know if parents will be happy with them knowing, but it's something you need to think about.”

Grogan hadn't planned on being an art teacher.

She originally attended the University of South Dakota taking general courses, but then transferred to Augustana University.

Considering medical school, she wasn't sure what to study. She then realized she missed art. So she obtained a degree in K-12 art education and K-12 special education, graduating in 2015 from Augustana.

While she teaches art at both L.B. Williams and Longfellow, Grogan also is a special education academic tester, allowing her to visit all of the schools within the Mitchell School District.

“It's perfect here right now, because I wanted to do special ed and art,” Grogan said.

New to the Mitchell area, she said it was quite the transition after the crash from having people constantly helping her to living alone in a new town. But she kept her determination to heal and start a new life.

And in October, she ran a 5K.

“When you're told you can't run again, it makes you want to run. So I ran. I didn't run all of it, but I ran and I wasn't last,” Grogan said.

Grogan doesn't shy from sharing her story about her near-death experience, and she wants people to know that life is precious. To share her story, Grogan started a blog and hopes more people can learn from her experience.

“It's just really important when you're given the gift of life that you share with others and try to tell them that life might have you down right now, but you have to keep pushing,” Grogan said. “Life is beautiful. There's something to be said when you have a near-death experience. Things are brighter. The sunsets are prettier.”

Information from: The Daily Republic, <http://www.mitchellrepublic.com>

## **Spearfish woman fights for 'Death with Dignity' referendum**

**By Tom Griffith, Rapid City Journal**

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — Angie Albonico was perusing the internet some months ago when she came upon a YouTube video detailing the plight of a young woman named Brittany, who was suffering from terminal brain cancer and sought to end her own life with dignity.

“It really spoke to me and captured my heart,” said Albonico, a 38-year-old married mother of three.

The video and further research alerted her to the fact that South Dakota does not allow assisted end-of-life measures. So now she's on a path to change state law.

Dec. 22, state Attorney General Marty Jackley released his 26-section, 13-page ballot explanation for Albonico's proposed law that, if passed by voters, would allow South Dakota doctors to prescribe drugs that terminally ill patients could take to end their own lives, the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2i8gsNt>)

reported.

"It should be my right and my doctor's right to determine when that time should come," Albonico said of the initiated measure. "If that happens to me, I'd want to have that dignity to choose where I'm at, what comfort level I want to be at, and who surrounds me. We do that for animals; we ought to be able to do that for ourselves.

"This is not a choice I can make for you; this is a choice I can make for me."

Albonico said she recognized the hurdles that awaited her and supporters of the measure, patterned after Washington state's end-of-life law. By next November, supporters of the "Death with Dignity" measure must gather petitions bearing the signatures of 13,871 registered state voters which, when certified, would place the initiated measure on the November 2018 ballot.

"It's quite the process," Albonico said. "It will take an army of compassionate South Dakota volunteers to get this measure passed, but if we pull together, we can get it done."

Although she said she had encountered some initial opposition to her proposal, more South Dakotans in the past week had voiced their support of the measure based on their personal experiences, according to Albonico.

"It's important to note that with this law, doctors don't have to prescribe this if it's against their beliefs and that this is not a measure to give people with psychological problems a way out," she said. "This is a measure to give those with terminal illness and less than six months to live a way to die with dignity."

Information from: Rapid City Journal, <http://www.rapidcityjournal.com>

## Gas station accommodations confuse disabled residents

By John Hult, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Russell Eagleman has pumped his own gas since losing his left leg to diabetes two years ago.

On Dec. 13 — out of curiosity, Eagleman said — he hit a little blue handicap button on the gas pump at the Get N Go station at 12th Street and West Avenue.

No one came to help.

After a few minutes, he went inside to ask about it.

"Every time I touched it, it would beep, but she said 'I didn't hear anything,'" Eagleman said.

His curiosity piqued, he drove to the Freedom Valu Center near 12th Street and Kiwanis Avenue, where he again tried to hail for help by tapping a button on the pump.

Again, no one came.

Eagleman contacted Argus Leader Media about the situation, wondering why the buttons would be there if they don't serve their purpose.

"They didn't seem to be educated about it," Eagleman said. "They didn't seem to know what it was about."

The buttons on the pumps are installed to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, as it turns out, but didn't serve the ADA purpose Eagleman expected.

The button he punched at Get-N-Go was meant to help people pump their own gas by lowering the control pad, Area Manager Daren Miller said. The "help" button is used to call for assistance.

"It's definitely our policy to help people who need assistance," Miller said.

Eagleman's curiosity and its result speak to the space that sometimes exists between attempted ADA compliance and ease of use for customers who need help.

The 1990 law requires that those with disabilities have equal access to service and accommodations, but in some cases compliance with the letter of the law doesn't send a clear signal of openness or make access easy, the Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2ixFXqk>) reported.

Patrick Hughes, an Evanston, Illinois, entrepreneur whose company specializes in access products, said it's easy to overlook how complex daily tasks can be for someone with a disability.

"There's about 20 steps involved in getting out of our car and getting gas, if you really started to analyze it," Hughes said. "It's not a simple thing."

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 16 of 45

Both stations have service and call buttons meant to meet the requirements of the ADA.

The beeping Eagleman heard at the pump that day wasn't heard inside the store because he hadn't pressed the button meant to signal the attendant.

Instead, the wheelchair button's tone signaled that control of the self-service prompts had moved from the standing height of the pump's touch screen to its numbered touchpad, which is low enough for someone in a wheelchair.

That's part of an ADA requirement that operable parts at self-service islands be set at 48 inches or lower. State didn't move fast enough for feds on ADA issue

The "help" button on the keypad can be used to draw out an attendant for help — something required by the ADA unless there's only one person on duty.

"Unless we have only one associate on duty, if there's anything we can do to help, we do it," Miller said.

It's "very rare" that Get-N-Go stores only have a single attendant, he said.

Freedom Valu Centers have a similar process, Zone Manager Tom Benson said. In the case of the 12th Street store, the "help" button wasn't functioning that day.

"We immediately contacted our repair service to get the function working ASAP," Benson said this week.

The law's guidance on gas pumps expects accommodations and a posting that informs visitors those accommodations are available.

As long as instructions are available, call buttons are not specifically required.

"The person could honk and get the cashier's attention, or they could be waving, and that would technically be in compliance with the ADA," said Alison Ramsdell, the civil rights section chief at the U.S. Attorney's Office in Sioux Falls.

There's more to compliance than height, available assistance and signage, though. The goal of the ADA is equal access, so businesses and agencies that serve the public are expected to take whatever reasonable steps possible to make that happen.

"Certainly the letter of the law is important and you should follow the requirements of Title III, but you have to be pragmatic," Ramsdell said.

Help buttons on keypads are useful for some people with disabilities, but not everyone.

"If you're a quadriplegic or you have issues with mobility in your hands, trying to push a tiny button on a gas pump is virtually impossible," said Willie Amos, a Hy-Vee sales and promotions coordinator in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

Amos has worked on access issues for the Des Moines-based company since 2008, when he fell 28 feet from a tree in a bow-hunting accident. The resulting spinal cord injury left him unable to walk.

"Before that, I never thought twice about getting gas," Amos said.

The first time he had to get gas without his wife's help, Amos went from one station to the next trying to get an attendant's attention. He couldn't reach the pump's buttons from his window, and at least one attendant looked at him in confusion when he waved.

Amos, then a store manager, reached out to a product from Hughes' company called FuelCall, which includes a large blue handicap button that can be activated to alert clerks of those who need help.

Hy-Vee now has a button at all 242 of its convenience stores.

It complies with the law, Amos said, but the button's prominence also acts as a signal to drivers that they're welcome at the station.

"When you see that, you know that you can get assistance without trouble," Amos said.

Ramsdell's office regularly hears disability-related complaints, but she said it's most often about discrimination, not lack of physical accommodations.

Her office also offers checks for businesses concerned about compliance and technical guidance, and she said the process is meant to be collaborative and helpful.

"We all have the same goal in making sure people have access," Ramsdell said. "The community of people with disabilities is growing. It's a population that any of us could join at any time."



## Rapid City man arrested in death of man staying at motel

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Police have made an arrest after a deadly confrontation outside a Rapid City motel.

Gilbert Li Clifford, 33, of Rapid City was arrested Tuesday on a preliminary charge of second-degree murder in the death of a 61-year-old man, the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2iqEwed>) reports. The victim was found unconscious in a motel room and declared dead at Rapid City Regional Hospital.

On Wednesday, police identified the victim as Robert Smith of Rapid City. Authorities said a preliminary investigation shows Smith died of blunt force trauma.

Stardust Motel owner John Ashley said Smith had been staying at his motel for about a month and had been living alone. He said his motel no longer has security cameras because of vandalism. But he said businesses around the motel might have footage of what happened, after a female witness said she saw two men arguing in the alley near the motel around 1 a.m. Tuesday.

Police had responded to a phone tip and discovered Smith about two hours later.

Online jail records don't indicate whether Clifford has an attorney.

The incident marks the second homicide in Rapid City this year.

Information from: Rapid City Journal, <http://www.rapidcityjournal.com>

## New 'gold card' permit may make gun shopping easier, faster

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A new South Dakota concealed pistol permit would speed up gun shopping for permit holders if it receives federal approval, according to supporters of the "gold card" available starting next week.

It would allow customers to bypass a background check for each firearm purchase from a licensed dealer. Instead, shoppers would simply be able to present the permit, which requires completing an FBI fingerprint background check on top of the standard obligations necessary to get a concealed carry permit.

South Dakota would join more than two dozen states with such an option if it is approved by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. A spokeswoman said in an email that the agency won't make a decision until after the new law goes into effect on Jan. 1.

The bill creating the gold card permit sailed through the Legislature during the 2016 session with only one vote against it. The new permit is similar to a trusted traveler program at the airport, said Jim Stalzer, a Republican lawmaker who supported the measure.

To get a gold card, applicants must complete the background check in addition to meeting normal age, criminal record and mental competency requirements, among other necessities. Law enforcement officials can also perform periodic background checks on permit holders to make sure they remain eligible during its five-year lifespan.

The application fee is \$70, plus the cost of a background check, and the gold card also functions as a standard concealed carry permit.

"It's a balancing thing," said Republican Sen. Arthur Rusch, who was a sponsor of the bill. "You want to make sure that we make it as convenient as possible, but that people who shouldn't have the firearms are not getting them."

Opponents contend that background checks should be the default for every gun purchase. The gold card permit trades convenience for public safety, said Mike McLively, a staff attorney at the California-based Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, which opposes the policy.

"Why not make sure you're getting the most up-to-date information?" he said.

Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Association President Brandon Maddox, who pushed for the law change, said background check delays can cause problems for vendors and customers at gun shows. People who have experienced the delays will see a value in getting the gold card, which he mentions to those customers, said Maddox, who also owns Sioux Falls-based Dakota Silencer.

"They say, 'I want it yesterday. I'll go get it. How do I get it? I want to get it now,'" he said.

## Walter Wick, who helped grow family newspaper company, dies

SIERRA VISTA, Ariz. (AP) — The former publisher of Arizona's Sierra Vista Herald, who with his brother grew Wick Communications into a media company with publications in 11 states, has died. He was 85

Walter M. Wick died Christmas morning at his home in Hereford. He had pancreatic cancer.

His brother, Robert Wick, told the Herald that he was "as blessed as any brother could be with Walter's presence in my life."

The brothers bought their uncle's interest in the company in 1965. They took over full ownership when their father died in 1981. Their father, Milton Wick, and uncle, James, founded the company when they acquired the family's first newspaper in 1926 in Niles, Ohio.

"We at times had our differences but we each knew our love transcended all problems," Robert Wick said Tuesday. "In my life this great soul is passed but his reverberation will ripple throughout all those who have known him."

Wick Communications is based in Sierra Vista, Arizona, and also publishes newspapers in Alaska, California, Colorado, Idaho, Louisiana, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon and South Dakota.

Family members still run the company, with Walter's daughter, Rebecca Rogers, serving on the company's board of directors and nephew Francis Wick serving as the president and CEO. Daughter Pat Wick is the assistant general manager at the Herald/Review.

Walter Wick was a member of the Arizona Newspaper Association Hall of Fame and was publisher emeritus of the Herald and the Bisbee Daily Review newspapers.

Wick was born in Youngstown, Ohio, on Feb. 4, 1931, and grew up in Niles, Ohio, before attending Kent State University and the University of Minnesota. He began his newspaper career as publisher of the Niles Daily Times and later was publisher of the Williston (ND) Daily Herald. He moved to Sierra Vista in 1974 and became publisher of the Herald. He and his brother were co-chairmen of Wick News, Inc. for many years.

In addition to his two daughters and brother, Wick is survived by his second wife, Beverly, sons Robin, Jonathan and Christopher, daughter Martha and numerous grandchildren. A son, Thomas, died at age 16 in 1973 and his former wife, Joyce Wick, died in 2002.

Services are set for Jan. 6 in Sierra Vista.

Information from: Sierra Vista Herald, <http://www.svherald.com>

## Polygamous leader takes plea deal in food-stamp fraud case

By BRADY McCOMBS, Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A high-ranking polygamous leader was released from jail Wednesday after pleading guilty in a multimillion-dollar food-stamp fraud case, becoming the second of 11 defendants to accept a plea deal in the crackdown on the sect based along the Utah-Arizona border.

Federal prosecutors said deals could be coming with other defendants implicated in the scheme in which at least \$12 million in food stamps was misused — some diverted to front companies to buy tractors, trucks and other items.

Seth Jeffs, 43, pleaded guilty to felony fraud after prosecutors agreed to accept the six months he has already served in jail as his punishment.

The charge carries a maximum possible penalty of 20 years in prison.

Conspiracy and money laundering charges against Jeffs were dropped as part of the agreement.

Prosecutor Robert Lund acknowledged that some people might not be satisfied with the deal, but he said the time Jeffs spent behind bars will serve as a deterrent.

Federal prosecutors will continue to keep close tabs on the group's use of food stamps and plan to hold training sessions in the community to make sure people know what is allowed, Lund said.

Jeffs runs the group's South Dakota compound and is a brother of Warren Jeffs, the sect's leader who is serving a life sentence in Texas for sexually assaulting girls he considered wives.

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 19 of 45

Seth Jeffs declined to talk in court Wednesday other than to answer the judge's questions. He smiled and laughed with his attorney Jay Winward before the proceeding.

Outside court, Winward said Jeffs is happy to go home to his family. Winward accused prosecutors of unfairly targeting his client due to his family connections.

"I'm not certain that if it were any individual besides Seth Jeffs that they wouldn't simply just ask the person to stop donating their food to their church," Winward said.

Known as the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the group believes polygamy brings exaltation in heaven — a legacy of the early Mormon church. The mainstream Mormon church abandoned the practice in 1890 and strictly prohibits it today.

In an attempt to have charges dismissed due to religious beliefs, Seth Jeffs testified in October that he and other members of the group donated food bought with food stamps to a community storehouse because they believe everything on Earth belongs to God. He said the group's leaders decide how best to redistribute the goods.

U.S. District Court Judge Ted Stewart refused to dismiss the charges on that argument, and Winward acknowledged Wednesday that he wasn't sure that defense would have made a difference with a jury.

Lund said prosecutors opted not to seek repayment or fines from Jeffs because it wasn't likely the government would ever get the money.

"The people in that community, including the defendants, are among the poorest people who live in Utah," Lund said. "They have no ability to pay restitution."

Lund would not say if a plea deal was possible with fugitive Lyle Jeffs, the highest-ranking sect leader accused in the scheme. He has been sought for more six months since he slipped out of a GPS ankle monitor and escaped home confinement in the Salt Lake City area.

"We'll have to cross that bridge when, and if, we are ever able to find him," Lund said.

## 101-year-old manufacturer moving from original location

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A concrete products manufacturer with a deep history has plans to build a \$19 million plant in Sioux Falls.

City documents say Gage Brothers Concrete Products plans to construct a 230,000-square-foot building to house manufacturing operations, a carpentry shop, administrative offices and employee spaces.

Gage Brothers makes precast concrete panels, monuments and other products. The Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2ih8EeQ>) says the company is currently located at the same location it was founded in 1915. Childhood friends William Gage and Harold Gabel started the business by pouring concrete sidewalks.

Information from: Argus Leader, <http://www.argusleader.com>

## What it means if Trump names China a currency manipulator

By PAUL WISEMAN, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump has vowed to name China a currency manipulator on his first day in the White House.

There's only one problem - it's not true anymore. China, the world's second-biggest economy behind the United States, hasn't been pushing down its currency to benefit Chinese exporters in years. And even if it were, the law targeting manipulators requires the U.S. spend a year negotiating a solution before it can retaliate.

Trump spent much of the campaign blaming China's for America's economic woes. And it's true that the U.S-China trade relationship is lopsided. China sells a lot more to the United States than it buys. The resulting trade deficit in goods amounted to a staggering \$289 billion through the first 10 months of 2016.

But in fact, for the past couple of years China has been intervening in markets to prop up its currency, the yuan, not push it lower.

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 20 of 45

WHAT DOES CURRENCY HAVE TO DO WITH THE TRADE GAP?

When China's yuan falls against the U.S. dollar, Chinese products become cheaper in the U.S. market and American products become more costly in China.

So the U.S. Treasury Department monitors China for signs it is manipulating the yuan lower. Treasury has guidelines for putting countries on its currency blacklist. They must, for example, have spent the equivalent of 2 percent of their economic output over a year buying foreign currencies in an attempt to drive those currencies up and their own currencies down.

Treasury hasn't declared China a currency manipulator since 1994.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE US DECLARED CHINA A CURRENCY MANIPULATOR?

Probably not much, at least initially.

If Treasury designates China a currency manipulator under a 2015 law, it is supposed to spend a year trying to resolve the problem through negotiations.

Should those talks fail, the U.S. can take a number of small steps in retaliation, including stopping the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corp., a government development agency, from financing any programs in China. Trouble is, the United States already suspended OPIC operations in China years ago — to punish Beijing in the aftermath of the bloody 1989 crackdown in Tiananmen Square.

So naming China a currency manipulator is mostly "just a jaw-boning exercise," said Amanda DeBusk, chair of the international trade department at the law firm of Hughes Hubbard & Reed and a former Commerce Department official. "There's no immediate consequence."

IS CHINA GUILTY OF USING CURRENCY TO HELP ITS EXPORTERS?

For years, China pretty clearly manipulated its currency to gain an advantage over global competitors. It bought foreign currencies, the U.S. dollar in particular, to push them higher against the yuan. As it did, it accumulated vast foreign currency reserves — nearly \$4 trillion worth by mid-2014.

But now the Chinese economy is slowing, and Chinese companies and individuals have begun to invest more heavily outside the country. As their money leaves China, it puts downward pressure on the yuan.

The yuan has dropped nearly 7 percent against the dollar so far this year. The Chinese government has responded by draining its foreign exchange reserves to buy yuan, hoping to slow the currency's fall. China's reserves have dropped by \$279 billion this year to \$3.05 trillion.

If Beijing stepped back and let market forces determine the yuan's level, it likely would fall even faster, giving Chinese exporters even more of a competitive edge.

So Beijing is doing the opposite of what Trump says it's doing. Cornell University economist Eswar Prasad earlier this month called Trump's plans to name China a currency manipulator "unmoored from reality."

"The whole discussion is ironic," said David Dollar, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a former official at the World Bank and U.S. Treasury Department. "It's out of date."

COULD TRUMP DO ANYTHING ON HIS OWN?

Gary Hufbauer, an expert on trade law at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, notes that as president, Trump could nonetheless escalate any dispute over the currency on his own. Over the years, Congress has ceded the president broad authority to impose trade sanctions. Trump has threatened to slap a 45 percent tax, or tariff, on Chinese imports to punish it for unfair trade practices, including alleged currency manipulation.

Brookings' Dollar said China likely would bring a case to the World Trade Organization "against any protectionist measures that are a violation of U.S. commitments to the WTO," which oversees the rules of global commerce and rules on trade disputes.

Some trade analysts wonder if Trump is using the tariff threat as a negotiating tool to win concessions from China.

Whatever the U.S. motive, China has a consistent record of retaliating against trade sanctions. When the Obama administration slapped tariffs on Chinese tire imports in 2009, for instance, China lashed back by imposing a tax on U.S. chicken parts.

China's Global Times newspaper, published by the ruling Communist Party's People's Daily, has already speculated that "China will take a tit-for-tat approach" if Trump's tariffs are enacted. The paper suggested that Beijing might limit sales of Apple iPhones and Boeing jetliners in China.

"The Chinese are predictable and reliable," DeBusk said. "If they get punched, they punch back."

Follow Paul Wiseman on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/PaulWisemanAP>

## Russian plane crash probe rules out explosion

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV, Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Flight recorders revealed no evidence of an explosion on board a Russian plane that crashed into the Black Sea, killing all 92 on board, but investigators haven't ruled out foul play, a military official said Thursday.

Russian air force Lt. Gen. Sergei Bainetov, who heads the Defense Ministry commission conducting the crash probe, said that a cockpit conversation recorder contained the captain's words that indicated a "special situation" that began unfolding on board the plane.

Bainetov wouldn't elaborate on what may have led to the crash, but noted that it likely had been caused by several factors.

The Tu-154 of the Russian Defense Ministry crashed into the sea early Sunday, moments after taking off in good weather from the city of Sochi. It was carrying members of the Alexandrov Ensemble, widely known as the Red Army Choir, to a New Year's concert at a Russian military base in Syria.

Bainetov said that the plane crashed 70 seconds after takeoff from an altitude of 250 meters (820 feet) while it was traveling at a speed of 360-370 kilometers per hour (224-230 miles per hour).

"After deciphering the first flight recorder we have made a conclusion that there was no explosion on board," Bainetov said at a news conference.

But asked if that means that investigators have ruled out a terror attack, Bainetov said "we aren't ruling out that version yet."

"A terror attack doesn't always involve an explosion," he said. "Along with an explosion on board, there could have been some mechanical impact."

He wouldn't offer any details, saying that Russian law-enforcement agencies are working on the case.

Bainetov's words appeared to contradict a previous statement from Russia's top domestic security and counter-terrorism agency, the FSB, which has said it found "no indications or facts pointing at the possibility of a terror attack or an act of sabotage."

It said investigators were looking into whether the crash might have been caused by bad fuel, pilot error, equipment failure or objects stuck in the engines.

Bainetov noted that "according to a preliminary assessment of information from the flight parameter recorder there had been no obvious equipment failures."

Investigators also have taken samples from a fuel tank used to fill the plane, which flew from Moscow's Chkalovsky military airport and stopped in Sochi for refueling.

In an apparent attempt to downplay Bainetov's statement, Russian Transport Minister Maxim Sokolov emphasized that "the version of a terror attack isn't being considered as the main version."

Sokolov said search teams have completed the bulk of efforts to recover bodies and debris from the crash site. He said 19 bodies and more than 230 body fragments have been recovered, adding that 13 big fragments of the plane and about 2,000 smaller fragments have been pulled from the seabed.

Bainetov said that Syria-bound planes normally stop for refueling at the North Caucasus military air base in Mozdok, but the plane that crashed had been diverted to Sochi because of bad weather in Mozdok.

Flights of the military's Tu-154s have been suspended during the investigation.

The Tu-154 is a Soviet-built three-engine airliner designed in the late 1960s. Russian airlines decommissioned the noisy, fuel-guzzling aircraft years ago, but the military and other government agencies continue using the plane, which is still loved by crews for its maneuverability and sturdiness.

"The aircraft has proven itself well," Bainetov said, but said they will likely resume after the investigation is over.

The plane that crashed Sunday was built in 1983 and underwent factory checkups and maintenance in

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 22 of 45

2014, and earlier this year. Investigators have taken relevant documents from the plant that did the job. The crash wiped out most singers of the Alexandrov Ensemble, popular for its fiery performances. "It will be very difficult to replace the gifted artists who were famous around the world," Deputy Defense Minister Nikolai Pankov said, adding that the military will work on reviving the choir.

## 10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

### 1. WHO IS NOW LINKED BY DEATH

Debbie Reynolds embodied the sunshine of postwar America on the screen, while Carrie Fisher brought the sass and sarcasm of the Baby Boomers to her work. Mother and daughter died on successive days.

### 2. HOW FANS ARE HONORING CARRIE FISHER

She didn't have a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, so fans have taken over a blank sidewalk star to pay tribute to the late "Star Wars" actress.

### 2. RELATIONS BETWEEN OBAMA, NETANYAHU CAMPS HIT ROCK BOTTOM

It took eight years of backbiting and pretending they got along before relations between President Obama's administration and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's government finally tanked.

### 3. WHAT IT MEANS IF TRUMP NAMES CHINA A CURRENCY MANIPULATOR

Donald Trump has vowed to label China a currency manipulator on his first day in the White House — but independent economists say China isn't meddling in markets to lower the yuan's value.

### 4. US SENATORS SAY RUSSIA SHOULD BE SANCTIONED FOR ELECTION HACKS

They're calling for sanctions against Russia for interfering in the presidential election by hacking American political sites and email accounts.

### 5. WHERE OBAMA IS EXPANDING HIS ENVIRONMENTAL LEGACY

President Barack Obama is naming two new national monuments in Utah and Nevada at sites that have become key flashpoints in battles over public lands in the West.

### 6. IRAQI TROOPS RESUME MOSUL FIGHT AFTER 2-WEEK LULL

Iraqi troops, backed by airstrikes, Iraqi special forces, have pushed deeper into the Islamic State-held city after a two-week lull in the operation to retake it.

### 7. WHY AMAZON'S ALEXA COULD BE A WITNESS TO MURDER

The hypothetical question is at the center of an Arkansas murder case in which prosecutors are seeking to obtain data from an Amazon Echo smart speaker.

### 8. RUSSIAN PLANE CRASH PROBE FINDS NO EVIDENCE OF EXPLOSION

A Russian military official says analysis of a crashed plane's flight recorders has shown there was no blast on board, but stopped short though of immediately ruling out a terror attack.

### 9. JAPAN'S DEFENSE MINISTER VISITS WW2 SHRINE

Japanese Defense Minister Tomomi Inada, just back from Pearl Harbor, visited a Tokyo shrine that honors convicted war criminals among the nation's war dead, drawing a rapid rebuke from neighboring South Korea.

### 10. MAIMED LIONS SHOW CHALLENGES OF RECOVERY IN MOZAMBIKAN PARK

They highlight the pressures of rebuilding a lion population that was almost wiped out during civil war, one of conservation's more dramatic stories in Africa.

## Debbie Reynolds and daughter Carrie Fisher linked by death

By ANDREW DALTON, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Debbie Reynolds embodied the sunshine of postwar America on the screen as she matched steps with Gene Kelly in "Singin' in the Rain."

Carrie Fisher brought the sarcasm and cynicism of the Baby Boomers to her movies, books and stage

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 23 of 45

shows, even when she was playing a princess in "Star Wars."

The mother and daughter, separated by so many differences both personal and generational, are likely drawn closer in the public memory after their deaths on successive days.

Reynolds died on Wednesday at age 84, just as she and the rest of the world were starting to mourn her daughter Fisher, who died on Tuesday at 60, days after falling ill on a flight.

Even after a year of shocking and constant celebrity deaths, the one-two punch of Fisher and Reynolds brought a staggering finale to 2016.

Reynolds' son Todd Fisher said his sister's death was "just too much" for his mother.

"She said, 'I want to be with Carrie,'" Fisher told The Associated Press by phone from Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, where Reynolds had just died after being rushed there earlier in the day. "And then she was gone."

No cause of death has been revealed for either woman.

Both mother and daughter enjoyed the heights of show business success and endured the depths of personal troubles. Their relationship for years ranged from strained to non-existent, a theme frequently explored in Fisher's writing, but late in life they became allies and close confidantes in their struggles.

Reynolds lost one husband to Elizabeth Taylor and two other husbands plundered her for millions.

Fisher struggled from early in life with addiction and mental illness.

"There have been a few times when I thought I was going to lose Carrie," Reynolds said when Oprah Winfrey interviewed both mother and daughter in 2011. "I've had to walk through a lot of my tears. But she's worth it."

As Fisher tried to distance herself from Reynolds, she barely spoke to her mother for nearly a decade.

"It's very hard when your child doesn't want to talk to you and you want to talk to them, and you want to touch them, you want to hold them," Reynolds told Winfrey. "It was a total estrangement."

Reaction to Reynolds' death was swift and emotional.

"Debbie Reynolds, a legend and my movie mom. I can't believe this happened one day after Carrie," Albert Brooks, who played opposite Reynolds in "Mother," said on Twitter.

"I can't imagine what Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds' family are going through this week. I send all of my love," Ellen DeGeneres tweeted.

Born Mary Frances Reynolds, she spent the first eight years of her life in Depression-era poverty in El Paso, Texas. Her father, a carpenter for the Southern Pacific Railroad, was transferred to California and the family settled in Burbank, near Warner Bros. studio.

The girl flourished, excelling as a girl scout and athlete, and playing French horn and bass viola in the Burbank Youth Symphony. Girlfriends persuaded her to enter the beauty contest for Miss Burbank, and she won over the judges.

She found superstardom quickly. After a handful of minor roles, MGM studio boss Louis B. Mayer cast her in "Singin' in the Rain," despite Kelly's objections.

But at 19 with little dance experience, she managed to match Kelly and Donald O'Connor, two of the screens most masterful dancers, step-for-step.

"Gene Kelly was hard on me, but I think he had to be," Reynolds, who more than held her own in the movie, said in a 1999 Associated Press interview. "I had to learn everything in three to six months. Donald O'Connor had been dancing since he was three months old, Gene Kelly since he was 2 years old."

After her transition from starlet to star, Reynolds became popular with teenage girls and even more so when in 1955 she married Eddie Fisher, the pop singer whose fans were equally devoted.

The couple made a movie together, "Bundle of Joy," which seemed to mirror the 1956 birth of Carrie. The Fishers' next child was Todd, named for Eddie's close friend and Taylor's husband, showman Mike Todd.

During this period, Reynolds had a No. 1 hit on the pop charts in 1957 with "Tammy," the Oscar-nominated song from her film "Tammy and the Bachelor." But the Cinderella story ended after Mike Todd died in a 1958 airplane crash. Fisher consoled the widow and soon announced he was leaving his wife and two children to marry Taylor.

The celebrity world seemed to lose its mind. Taylor was assailed as a husband stealer, Fisher as a de-

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 24 of 45

serter. Reynolds won sympathy as the innocent victim. A cover headline in Photoplay magazine in late 1958 blared: "Smiling through her tears, Debbie says: I'm still very much in love with Eddie."

Fisher's singing career never recovered, but Reynolds' film career flourished.

The 1964 Meredith Willson musical "The Unsinkable Molly Brown," with Molly's defiant song "I Ain't Down Yet," brought Reynolds her only Academy Award nomination.

She also starred with Glenn Ford in "The Gazebo," Tony Curtis in "The Rat Race," Fred Astaire in "The Pleasure of His Company," Andy Griffith in "The Second Time Around," with the all-star cast in "How the West Was Won" and Ricardo Montalban in "The Singing Nun."

And she provided the voice of Charlotte in the 1973 animated "Charlotte's Web," the same year she received a Tony nomination for her starring role in the Broadway revival of "Irene," in which her Fisher also appeared.

But marital woes made life outside entertainment difficult.

In 1960 Reynolds married shoe magnate Harry Karl. The marriage ended in 1973 when she discovered that Karl, a compulsive gambler, had devastated her assets.

Reynolds' third marriage, to Virginia businessman Richard Hamlett in 1984, proved equally disastrous. In 1992, against friends' advice, she paid \$10 million to buy and convert a faded Las Vegas hotel into the Debbie Reynolds Hotel and Casino, where she performed nightly.

Reynolds ended up filing for bankruptcy in 1997 and accusing Hamlett of making off with her money.

"All of my husbands have robbed me blind," she said in 1999.

In her later years, Reynolds continued performing her show, traveling 40 weeks a year. She also appeared regularly on television, appearing as John Goodman's mother on "Roseanne" and a mom on "Will & Grace."

In 1996 she won critical acclaim in the title role of Albert Brooks' movie "Mother." Reynolds and her daughter were featured together in the HBO documentary "Bright Lights," scheduled for release in 2017.

Eventually, she reconciled and teamed up with Taylor — long since divorced from Fisher — and two other veterans, Joan Collins and MacLaine, for the 2001 TV movie "These Old Broads." The script, co-written by Carrie Fisher, was about aging, feuding actresses who get together for a reunion show. Reynolds would look back wryly on the Taylor affair, acknowledging that no man could have resisted Taylor, who died in 2011.

Reynolds received an honorary Oscar in 2015, the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award, but was too ill to attend the ceremony. Her granddaughter, actress Billie Lourd, accepted the statuette in her honor.

Reynolds took solace and strength in her last years from her renewed closeness with her daughter.

"I would say that Carrie and I have finally found happiness," Reynolds told Winfrey in 2011. "I admire her strength and survival."

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AP entertainment reporters Hillel Italie in New York and Lynn Elber, Sandy Cohen and Anthony McCartney in Los Angeles contributed to this report. The late Associated Press writer Bob Thomas contributed biographical material.

## Relations between Obama, Netanyahu camps hit rock bottom

By JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — It took eight years of backbiting and pretending they got along for relations between President Barack Obama's administration and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government to finally hit rock bottom.

Though they've clashed bitterly before, mostly notably over Iran, the two governments seemed farther apart than ever after a speech Wednesday by Secretary of State John Kerry and last week's United Nations resolution.

The key question for the Obama administration, newly willing to air grievances with Israel on live television, is why now?

"We cannot, in good conscience, do nothing and say nothing when we see the hope of peace slipping away," Kerry said in a speech that ran more than an hour.

Yet in just over three weeks, Obama will no longer be president, Kerry will no longer be secretary of State,



# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 25 of 45

and the U.S. will have a new leader under no obligation to embrace any of what Kerry said. President-elect Donald Trump has assured Israel that things will be different after Jan. 20, when he's to be inaugurated, and lamented how the Jewish state was "being treated very, very unfairly."

Kerry took pains to voice America's staunch commitment to Israel's security and support for its future, and to detail U.S. complaints about Palestinian leadership and its failure to sufficiently deter violence against Israelis. He laid out a six-point framework for a potential peace deal that it will be up to the next U.S. government to try to enact, if it chooses to do so.

The White House has portrayed Obama's decision to break with tradition by abstaining — rather than vetoing — a U.N. Security Council resolution declaring Israeli settlements illegal as a reaction forced by other countries that brought it up for a vote.

The White House has also acknowledged that Obama had long considered the possibility of taking some symbolic step before leaving office to leave his imprint on the debate. For much of the year, his staff pored over options that included a U.N. resolution outlining principles for a peace deal and a presidential speech much like the one Kerry gave Wednesday. Yet there was reluctance to act before the U.S. election, given the way it would have thrust the Israeli-Palestinian issue into the campaign.

Kerry acknowledged Trump appears to favor a different approach. Yet frustrated by years of Israeli actions he deemed counterproductive for peace, Obama appeared to have decided it was better to make his administration's views known while still in office, even if it risked a blockbuster clash with America's closest ally.

In his speech, Kerry tore into Israel for settlement-building, accusing Netanyahu of dragging Israel away from democracy. He defended the move to allow the U.N. vote, the spark that set off an extraordinary and deepening diplomatic spat between the U.S. and its closest Mideast ally.

"If the choice is one state, Israel can either be Jewish or democratic, it cannot be both, and it won't ever really be at peace," Kerry said

Shortly after, Netanyahu appeared on camera in Jerusalem and suggested he was done with the Obama administration and ready to deal with Trump. The Israeli leader faulted Kerry for obsessing over settlements while paying mere "lip service" to Palestinian attacks and incitement of violence.

"Israelis do not need to be lectured about the importance of peace by foreign leaders," Netanyahu said. Trump wouldn't say whether settlements should be reined in. But he told reporters Israel was being "treated very, very unfairly by a lot of different people."

In a nod to Netanyahu's concerns that Obama would take more parting shots, Kerry seemed to rule out the possibility Obama would support more U.N. action or, even more controversially, recognize statehood.

The U.S., the Palestinians and most of the world oppose Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank and east Jerusalem, territories captured by Israel in 1967 and claimed by the Palestinians for an independent state. But Israel's government argues previous construction freezes didn't advance peace and that the settlements — now home to 600,000 Israelis — must be resolved in direct talks Israelis-Palestinian talks.

While Israel's Arab population has citizenship rights, the roughly 2.5 million Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank do not, and most in annexed east Jerusalem have residency rights but not citizenship.

Kerry said a future deal would have to ensure secure borders for Israel and a Palestinian state formed in territories Israel captured in 1967, with "mutually agreed, equivalent swaps." He said both countries must fully recognize each other, ensure access to religious sites and relinquish other existing claims. Kerry also called for assistance for Palestinian refugees.

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Lederman reported from Honolulu. Associated Press writers Josef Federman in Jerusalem and Vivian Salama in Palm Beach, Florida, contributed to this report.

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Reach Josh Lederman on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/joshledermanAP>

## Trump holds Q&A, discussing jobs, Russia, Israel

By VIVIAN SALAMA and JOSH BOAK, Associated Press

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump applauded the return of 8,000 jobs to the U.S. and hailed his transition discussions with President Barack Obama in a series of comments that amounted to the most detailed interaction he's had with journalists since before the election.

In one of his cameos Wednesday on the front steps of his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida, Trump touted plans by a Japanese mogul to bring jobs to the United States. They could be the first of the 50,000 jobs that tech billionaire Masayoshi Son promised to create after meeting with the president-elect earlier in December.

In the grand scheme of the economy, the jobs announcement is unlikely to have a major impact. Still, it's another example of how Trump is trying to stoke voters' belief that he is actively fighting for their well-being.

Son is the founder and chief executive of SoftBank, one of Japan's largest technology outfits. He owns the U.S. mobile carrier Sprint, which Trump said Wednesday would be moving 5,000 jobs "back" to the United States. Son also controls OneWeb, which Trump said would hire 3,000 workers.

It was unclear whether the president-elect was referencing the Dec. 6 commitment by Son to invest \$50 billion in the United States and create 50,000 jobs.

Trump said the addition of 8,000 jobs was "because of what's happening and the spirit and the hope."

Still, the U.S. job market has been robust for much of 2016. Employers have added more than 2.2 million jobs over the past 12 months — a sign of economic health that predates Trump's presidential victory.

Sprint has struggled since its 2013 acquisition by SoftBank. The carrier shed roughly 9,000 workers between 2012 and 2016, reducing its staff to 30,000, according to annual reports.

Sprint Chief Executive Marcelo Claure said in a statement that the company is "excited" to work with Trump.

"We believe it is critical for business and government to partner together to create more job opportunities in the U.S. and ensure prosperity for all Americans," Claure said.

The Sprint jobs announcement came after tensions rose and fell Wednesday between Trump and Obama. Trump has made it clear that it didn't sit well with him when Obama recently boasted that he would have won the election if he'd been running.

Trump appeared again later Wednesday night on the Mar-a-Lago steps, this time alongside legendary boxing entrepreneur Don King, who appeared to be one of several guests attending a dinner party. King carried about a dozen flags, including those of the U.S. and Israel; wore two big diamond necklaces, one with a pendant with the Star of David and another with the American flag; and sported a large pin featuring a picture of Trump.

With King by his side, Trump dismissed days of tense remarks by the outgoing and incoming presidents about who would win if they were to hypothetically run against each other, saying he and Obama had "a very, very good talk."

"We talked about it and smiled about it and nobody is ever going to know because we are never going to be going against each other," Trump said.

Earlier, he had accused Obama of throwing up "inflammatory" roadblocks during the transition of power and said his administration was treating Israel with "total disdain."

White House spokesman Eric Schultz said Obama phoned Trump. "Today's call, like the others since the election, was positive and focused on continuing a smooth and effective transition," Schultz said. "The president and president-elect committed to staying in touch over the next several weeks."

Trump also took issue with the Obama administration's decision not to block a United Nations Security Council resolution critical of Israeli settlements.

He told reporters that Israel is being treated "very, very unfairly," maintaining that countries that are "horrible places" never get reprimanded. He refused to directly answer a question about whether Israel should stop building settlements, saying he is "very, very strong on Israel."

He dodged a direct response when asked about accusations that Russia hacked the U.S. election, saying

computers have "complicated lives very greatly."

"We don't have the kind of security we need," Trump said, adding, "Nobody knows what's going on." He said he believes "we have to get on with our lives."

Boak reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Cal Woodward in Washington, Josh Lederman in Honolulu and Julie Pace in Buffalo, New York, contributed to this report.

## US senators: Russia should be sanctioned for election hacks

By TAMI ABDOLLAH, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. senators visiting eastern European allies to discuss security issues called for sanctions against Russia for interfering in the presidential election by hacking American political sites and email accounts. Their demands came amid ongoing discussions among U.S. officials on an imminent response to alleged Russian meddling that would ensure the U.S. takes action before President-elect Donald Trump takes office.

"We have to sanction Russia for these cyberattacks (and) send a clear message to the incoming administration that there is a lot of bipartisan support in Congress for going after this," Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., told The Associated Press by phone from Latvia.

Klobuchar joined Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., in their visits to Russian neighbors, the Baltic States, Ukraine, and Georgia as well as Montenegro.

Russian officials have denied the Obama administration's accusation that the highest-levels of the Russian government were involved in trying to influence the U.S. presidential election. U.S. intelligence agencies concluded that Russia's goal was to help Trump win — an assessment Trump has dismissed as ridiculous.

The Obama administration has said the U.S. will respond at a time and with a means of its choosing, and that all responses may not be publicly known.

The lawmakers on Wednesday reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to the Baltics, saying the relationship with the three former Soviet states — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — "will not change" under the new administration.

"I predict there will be bipartisan sanctions coming that will hit Russia hard, particularly (President Vladimir) Putin as an individual," Graham told reporters in Riga, the Latvian capital. He didn't elaborate on possible sanctions.

The U.S. has already sanctioned Russia over its annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Ukraine, but it could potentially use an April 2015 executive order allowing for the use of sanctions to combat cyberattacks.

A year after the order was issued, Democratic Party officials learned their systems were attacked after discovering malicious software on their computers.

But the executive order "(isn't) well suited to the Russian activities," said Stewart Baker, a partner specializing in cybersecurity for Steptoe & Johnson LLP. Baker said that order was primarily aimed at cyberespionage, for example spying by the Chinese military for commercial advantage.

The order covers a response to attacks on critical infrastructure, and Klobuchar called on the administration to amend it to also include election systems, which are not considered critical infrastructure.

A presidential policy directive in 2013 identified 16 sectors that are considered critical infrastructure, including energy, financial services and health care. The U.S. Homeland Security Department is mulling over adding election systems to that list.

The designation places responsibilities on the secretary of Homeland Security to conduct comprehensive assessments of vulnerabilities and track as well as provide information on emerging and imminent threats that may impact critical infrastructure.

More importantly, in this case, it would allow for a response to a cyberattack against election systems.

And while Trump could change back any amended or new order allowing for the U.S. to impose sanctions on entities involved in a cyberattack on election systems, "he would have a lot of explaining to do," Klobuchar said. "The executive order gives tools to respond."

Speaking to journalists at his Palm Beach, Florida, estate Wednesday, Trump was not addressing the

issue of sanctions, but said: "We don't have the kind of security we need." He added: "Nobody knows what's going on."

Trump said he has not spoken with senators calling for sanctions, but believes "we have to get on with our lives."

President Barack Obama has ordered intelligence officials to conduct a broad review of election-season cyberattacks.

Russia's neighbors have long suffered the wrath of its hackers, whose actions have frequently complemented the government's political and military aims. In 2014, Ukraine's Central Election Commission was targeted by a pro-Russian hacking group.

The Russian Embassy did not respond to requests for comment on Wednesday.

Follow Tami Abdollah on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/latams>

## Reactions to the death of actress Debbie Reynolds Wednesday

By The Associated Press

Reaction to the death of actress Debbie Reynolds Wednesday at 84, a day after her daughter, Carrie Fisher, died:

— "Debbie Reynolds, a legend and my movie mom. I can't believe this happened one day after Carrie. My heart goes out to Billie." — Albert Brooks, on Twitter.

— "Debbie went to be with Carrie. She always worried about her. Carrie left too soon and now they are together again. My heart is literally broken.... An inspiration on every level. A Legend of course, the epitome of clean cut American optimism, dancing with Gene Kelly as an equal, a warrior woman who never stopped working." — Actress Debra Messing, from a lengthy statement on Instagram. Reynolds played Messing's mother on the TV show "Will and Grace."

— "She was beautiful and generous. It seems like only yesterday she was having lunch here at the house and we were discussing the possibility of working together in a new show." — Carol Channing.

— "I was blessed to work with this remarkable woman for 45 almost 50 years. That makes for a very rare bond and unique relationship. She was generous to a fault, never caring who got the laugh from the audience. I Will always love her." — Rip Taylor, who worked with Reynolds for decades in her Las Vegas stage show.

— "Truly heartbroken to hear @DebbieReynolds1 has died. She was a wonderfully warm friend and colleague. Praying for Todd & Billie. #RIPDebbie" — Joan Collins on Twitter.

— "How shocked we were to learn that Debbie Reynolds passed away just a day after her daughter Carrie. I loved & worked both of these icons." — Carl Reiner on Twitter.

— "I can't imagine what Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds' family are going through this week. I send all of my love." — Ellen DeGeneres on Twitter.

— "Debbie Reynolds was one of the last of Hollywood Royalty. It breaks my heart that she is gone. I'd hoped that my grieving was done for 2016." — William Shatner on Twitter.

— "Debbie Reynolds cd sing, dance & gave dazzling performances. RIP doesn't sound right for her or Carrie-I hope they're somewhere having fun" — Mia Farrow, on Twitter.

— "The loss of #DebbieReynolds 1 day after #CarrieFisher is epic. 2016 has taken a piece of all of us" — Actress Ileana Douglas on Twitter.

— "A final curtain made of tears #DebbieReynolds #CarrieFisher" — Actress Rose McGowan on Twitter.

— "Today is officially a sad day. As a mother my heart goes out to Debbie Reynolds and her daughter Carrie Fisher. RIP DB and CF" — Actress Zoe Saldana on Twitter.

— "The unbearable loss of a child and now this. Rest In Peace Carrie and Debbie, sending our love and prayers to the Fisher, Lord family" — Actress Lisa Rinna on Twitter.

— "My thoughts and prayers are with the family during this time of unimaginable loss. Two generations in two days." — Chaz Bono on Twitter.

— “Deepest condolences to the family of Debbie Reynolds. I was just notified of her passing. Such a talented charming lady & a good mother” — Actress Barbara Eden on Twitter.

— “There is nothing harder than having to bury a child. Debbie died of a broken heart, but she’s with her daughter now.” — Actor George Takei on Twitter.

— “Dear Debbie Reynolds, I totally get it. Hug her so tight for all of us.” — Actress Alyssa Milano on Twitter.

— “I can’t imagine what kind of pain the family of Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds are feeling right now. My prayers are with them.” — Actress Gabourey Sidibe on Twitter.

— “Let’s just cancel the rest of this annus horribilus, have hogmanay now and start 2017 tomorrow. I’m done.” — Comedian Craig Ferguson on Twitter.

## Alexa a witness to murder? Prosecutors seek Amazon Echo data

By JILL BLEED, Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Authorities investigating the death of an Arkansas man whose body was found in a hot tub want to expand the probe to include a new kind of evidence: any comments overheard by the suspect’s Amazon Echo smart speaker.

Amazon said it objects to “overbroad” requests as a matter of practice, but prosecutors insist their idea is rooted in a legal precedent that’s “as old as Methuselah.”

The issue has emerged in the slaying of Victor Collins, who was found floating face-up last year in the hot tub at a friend’s home in Bentonville, about 150 miles northwest of Little Rock. The friend, James Andrew Bates, was later charged with murder.

Prosecutors have asked the court to force Amazon to provide data from the Echo that could reveal more clues about the night of Nov. 22, 2015, when Collins was apparently strangled and drowned.

Benton County Prosecuting Attorney Nathan Smith said Wednesday that he has no idea if the device recorded anything related to the death. But looking for clues is simply “a question of law enforcement doing their due diligence.”

Like any investigation, “law enforcement has an obligation to try to obtain evidence of the crime,” Smith said.

The device is a cylinder-shaped speaker with internet-connected microphones that debuted in late 2014. Similar to other gadgets, it listens for a user’s voice and responds to commands — to play music, read the morning headlines or add an upcoming event to a calendar, for instance. The Echo can speak back to the user in a female voice known as “Alexa.”

The search warrant, signed by a judge in August, requests all “audio recordings, transcribed records, text records and other data” from Bates’ Echo speaker.

So far, authorities have obtained only basic subscriber and account information. Smith said Wednesday that his office has had discussions with Amazon, but that the bulk of the request remains unfulfilled.

The prosecution’s request was first reported this week by The Information, a news site that covers the technology industry.

Amazon spokeswoman Kinley Pearsall declined to comment specifically on the Arkansas case but said in a statement that the company “will not release customer information without a valid and binding legal demand.” Amazon, Pearsall added, objects to “overbroad or otherwise inappropriate demands as a matter of course.”

On its website, the company says the Echo streams audio to cloud-based storage after it detects the user’s “wake word,” and that it stops recording once a question or request has been processed.

Smith compared his request to routine warrants that seek a record of cellphone “pings,” which can be used to track a user’s location.

“It is a search warrant for a new device, but the legal concept is old as Methuselah,” he said.

The Arkansas slaying could be a test case for how evidence rules apply to information from home ap-

pliances connected to the internet such as water meters, thermostats and lighting systems, said Nuala O'Connor, president of the Center for Democracy & Technology, a nonprofit group that works on privacy and civil-liberties issues. She previously worked for Amazon.

Law enforcement agencies will have to be careful in drawing conclusions from smart systems, she said. If a case is built on changes in patterns of people's behavior, there's a chance that prosecutors and police "could guess wrong."

"That's where we're going to get into issues of circumstantial evidence," O'Connor said.

The next court hearing for Bates, who has professed his innocence, is set for March 17.

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Associated Press Writer Tali Arbel in New York contributed to this report.

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Follow Jill Bleed on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/jzbleed](http://www.twitter.com/jzbleed).

## Actress Debbie Reynolds, 84, dies a day after daughter

By LYNN ELBER, AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Debbie Reynolds, who lit up the screen in "Singin' in the Rain" and other Hollywood classics despite a tumultuous life, has died a day after losing her daughter, Carrie Fisher. Reynolds was 84.

Her son, Todd Fisher, said Reynolds died Wednesday.

"She's now with Carrie and we're all heartbroken," Fisher said from Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, where his mother was taken by ambulance earlier Wednesday.

He said the stress of his sister's death on Tuesday "was too much" for Reynolds. Carrie Fisher, who was 60, had been hospitalized since Friday.

"She said, 'I want to be with Carrie,'" her son said. "And then she was gone."

Reynolds enjoyed the heights of show business success and endured the depths of personal tragedy. She lost one husband to Elizabeth Taylor and two other husbands plundered her for millions. Fisher, who found lasting fame as Princess Leia in "Star Wars" and struggled for much of her life with drug addiction and mental health problems, died after falling ill on a plane.

Reaction to Reynolds' death was swift.

"Debbie Reynolds, a legend and my movie mom. I can't believe this happened one day after Carrie," Albert Brooks, who played opposite Reynolds in "Mother," said on Twitter.

"I can't imagine what Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds' family are going through this week. I send all of my love," Ellen DeGeneres tweeted.

Reynolds found superstardom early. After two minor roles at Warner Bros. and three supporting roles at MGM, studio boss Louis B. Mayer cast her in "Singin' in the Rain," despite Kelly's objections. She was 19 with little dance experience, and she would be appearing with two of the screen's greatest dancers, Donald O'Connor and Kelly.

"Gene Kelly was hard on me, but I think he had to be," Reynolds, who more than held her own in the movie, said in a 1999 Associated Press interview. "I had to learn everything in three to six months. Donald O'Connor had been dancing since he was three months old, Gene Kelly since he was 2 years old."

The 1964 Meredith Willson musical "The Unsinkable Molly Brown," with Molly's defiant song "I Ain't Down Yet," brought Reynolds her only Academy Award nomination. She also received a Tony nomination in 1973 for her starring role in the Broadway revival of "Irene," in which her daughter also appeared.

After her transition from starlet to star, Reynolds became popular with teenage girls and even more so when in 1955 she married Eddie Fisher, the pop singer whose fans were equally devoted.

The couple made a movie together, "Bundle of Joy," which seemed to mirror the 1956 birth of Carrie. The Fishers also had a son, Todd, named for Eddie's close friend and Taylor's husband, showman Mike Todd.

During this period, Reynolds had a No. 1 hit on the pop charts in 1957 with "Tammy," the Oscar-nominated song from her film "Tammy and the Bachelor." But the Cinderella story ended after Mike Todd died in a

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 31 of 45

1958 airplane crash. Fisher consoled the widow and soon announced he was leaving his wife and two children to marry Taylor.

The celebrity world seemed to lose its mind. Taylor was assailed as a husband stealer, Fisher as a deserter. Reynolds won sympathy as the innocent victim, a role emphasized when she appeared before news cameras with diaper pins on her blouse. A cover headline in Photoplay magazine in late 1958 blared: "Smiling through her tears, Debbie says: I'm still very much in love with Eddie."

Fisher's singing career never recovered, but Reynolds' film career flourished. She starred with Glenn Ford in "The Gazebo," Tony Curtis in "The Rat Race," Fred Astaire in "The Pleasure of His Company," Andy Griffith in "The Second Time Around," with the all-star cast in "How the West Was Won" and Ricardo Montalban in "The Singing Nun."

She also provided the voice of Charlotte in the 1973 animated "Charlotte's Web."

But over the years, her marital woes continued.

In 1960 Reynolds married shoe magnate Harry Karl. The marriage ended in 1973 when she discovered that Karl, a compulsive gambler, had devastated her assets.

Reynolds' third marriage, to Virginia businessman Richard Hamlett in 1984, proved equally disastrous. In 1992, against friends' advice, she paid \$10 million to buy and convert a faded Las Vegas hotel into the Debbie Reynolds Hotel and Casino. She performed nightly and conducted tours of her movie memorabilia.

Reynolds, who ended up filing for bankruptcy in 1997 and selling the property at auction the next year, accused Hamlett of making off with her money.

"All of my husbands have robbed me blind," she asserted in 1999. "The only one who didn't take money was Eddie Fisher. He just didn't pay for the children."

In her later years, Reynolds continued performing her show, traveling 40 weeks a year. She also appeared regularly on television, appearing as John Goodman's mother on "Roseanne" and a mom on "Will & Grace." Her books included the memoirs "Unsinkable" and "Make 'Em Laugh."

In 1996 she won critical acclaim in the title role of Albert Brooks' movie "Mother." Reynolds and her daughter were featured together in the HBO documentary "Bright Lights," scheduled for release in 2017.

Mary Frances Reynolds spent the first eight years of her life in Depression-era poverty in El Paso, Texas, where she was born on April 1, 1932. Her father, a carpenter for the Southern Pacific Railroad, was transferred to California and the family settled in Burbank, near Warner Bros. studio.

The girl flourished, winning 48 Girl Scout merit badges, excelling in sports and playing French horn and bass viola in the Burbank Youth Symphony. Girlfriends persuaded her to enter the beauty contest for Miss Burbank, and she won over the judges.

Eventually, she teamed up with Taylor — long since divorced from Fisher — and two other veterans, Joan Collins and MacLaine, for the 2001 TV movie "These Old Broads." The script, co-written by Reynolds' daughter, was about aging, feuding actresses who get together for a reunion show. Reynolds would look back wryly on the Taylor affair, acknowledging that no man could have resisted her and that she actually voted for Taylor when she was up for best actress in 1960. The former romantic rivals had reconciled years before Taylor died in 2011; Reynolds recalled they had both been passengers on the Queen Elizabeth.

"I sent a note to her and she sent a note to me in passing, and then we had dinner together," she told The Huffington Post a few months after Taylor's death. "She was married to Richard Burton by then. I had been remarried at that point. And we just said, 'Let's call it a day.' And we got smashed. And we had a great evening, and stayed friends since then."

Reynolds received an honorary Oscar in 2015, the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award, but was too ill to attend the ceremony. Her granddaughter, actress Billie Lourd, accepted the statuette in her honor.

"I'm so sorry that I'm sick, but I am thrilled beyond words, shocked, and you couldn't be more amazed that a little girl from Burbank even came near this sort of accolade," she said in a pre-recorded statement.

She was recognized for her decades-long commitment to various charities, including the mental-health organization she founded, the Thaliens.

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AP entertainment reporters Hillel Italie in New York and Sandy Cohen and Anthony McCartney in Los

Angeles contributed to this report. The late Associated Press writer Bob Thomas contributed biographical material to this report.

## In parting shot, Kerry tears into Israel over settlements

By **JOSH LEDERMAN** and **MATTHEW DALY**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State John Kerry tore into Israel on Wednesday for settlement-building, accusing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of dragging Israel away from democracy and forcefully rejecting the notion that America had abandoned Israel with a controversial U.N. vote. Netanyahu accused the Obama administration of a biased bid to blame Israel for failure to reach a peace deal.

In a farewell speech, Kerry laid out a two-state vision for peace that he won't be in office to implement, but that the U.S. hoped might be heeded even after President Barack Obama's term ends. He defended Obama's move last week to allow the U.N. Security Council to declare Israeli settlements illegal, the spark that set off an extraordinary and deepening diplomatic spat between the U.S. and its closest Mideast ally.

"If the choice is one state, Israel can either be Jewish or democratic, it cannot be both, and it won't ever really be at peace," Kerry said in a speech that ran more than an hour, a comprehensive airing of grievances that have built up in the Obama administration over eight years but were rarely, until this month, discussed publicly.

Netanyahu pushed back in a hastily arranged televised statement in which he suggested he was done with the Obama administration and ready to deal with President-elect Donald Trump, who has sided squarely with Israel. The Israeli leader faulted Kerry for obsessing over settlements while paying mere "lip service" to Palestinian attacks and incitement of violence.

"Israelis do not need to be lectured about the importance of peace by foreign leaders," Netanyahu said from Jerusalem.

The dueling recriminations marked a low point for U.S.-Israel relations, and a bitter end to eight years of frustrated ties between Obama and Netanyahu, who quarreled repeatedly over settlements, the peace process and Obama's nuclear deal with Iran.

Trump, who has assured Israel it merely needs to "hang on" until he takes over, wouldn't say Wednesday whether settlements should be reined in. But he told reporters Israel was being "treated very, very unfairly by a lot of different people."

It was unclear whether Israel came up in a phone call Obama, while vacationing in Hawaii, placed to Trump on Wednesday morning. Nor was it obvious what impact Kerry's speech, coming in the final days of the administration, might have.

Netanyahu expressed concern that a French-hosted summit next month could lead to an international framework that the U.N. Security Council might then codify with Obama's assent, boxing Israel in. Yet Kerry seemed to rule out the possibility Obama would take more parting shots, such as promoting that type of U.N. resolution or recognizing Palestinian statehood.

The diplomatic fracas erupted last week when the U.S., in a departure from past policy, decided to abstain rather than veto a U.N. Security Council resolution calling Israeli settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem a violation of international law. Israel was incensed, and on Wednesday, Netanyahu claimed Israel has "absolute, indispensable evidence" the U.S. actually spearheaded the resolution.

Netanyahu offered what he called proof of U.S. collusion: a document, leaked to an Egyptian newspaper, that purports to be a Palestinian account of a December meeting between top U.S. and Palestinian officials. But White House spokesman Ned Price called it a "total fabrication" and added: "This meeting never occurred."

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas responded to the speech by reaffirming that he's ready to resume peace talks if Israel halts settlement construction.

Kerry, unveiling a six-part outline of what a future peace deal could look like, deviated from the traditional U.S. message that foreign powers shouldn't impose a solution. His outline tracked closely with principles long assumed to be part of an eventual deal, and Kerry insisted he was merely describing what's emerged



as points of general agreement.

Though Kerry faulted Palestinian leaders for insufficiently condemning violence and terrorism against Israelis, most of his speech focused on Israel. He said the two-state solution, the basis for all serious peace talks for years, was "now in serious jeopardy," and called Netanyahu's government "the most right-wing in Israel's history."

He invoked the widespread concern that the growing Arab population in Israel and the Palestinian territories will eventually make Jews a minority in Israel, creating a demographic crisis for Israel unless there's a separate Palestinian state.

"The settler agenda is defining the future of Israel. And their stated purpose is clear: They believe in one state," Kerry said.

The U.S, the Palestinians and most of the world oppose Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank and east Jerusalem, territories captured by Israel in 1967 and claimed by the Palestinians for an independent state. But Israel's government argues previous construction freezes failed to advance a peace deal and that the future of the settlements — now home to 600,000 Israelis — must be resolved in direct talks between Israelis and Palestinians.

While Israel's Arab population has citizenship rights, the roughly 2.5 million Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank do not. Israel has annexed east Jerusalem, where Palestinians have residency rights but few have citizenship, in a move not internationally recognized.

Kerry said a future deal would have to ensure secure borders for Israel and a Palestinian state formed in territories Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war, with "mutually agreed, equivalent swaps." He said both countries must fully recognize each other, ensure access to religious sites and relinquish all other existing claims. Kerry also called for assistance to help Palestinian refugees.

Yet he offered fewer details about how to get to such a deal, given the failure of so many previous attempts, including his own nine-month effort that collapsed in 2014. He urged Israelis and Palestinians to take "realistic steps on the ground now" to begin separating themselves into two states.

Kerry reiterated that the Obama administration's commitment to Israel was as strong as that of previous presidents, but he also noted that previous U.S. administrations had also abstained on certain resolutions critical of Israel.

Lederman reported from Honolulu. Associated Press writers Josef Federman and Daniel Estrin in Jerusalem and Vivian Salama in Palm Beach, Florida, contributed to this report.

## Trump takes credit for 8,000 jobs, talks with Obama

By VIVIAN SALAMA and JOSH BOAK, Associated Press

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — After weeks of giving only brief comments to the media, Donald Trump made a series of public statements Wednesday, applauding the return of 8,000 jobs to the U.S. and hailing his discussions with President Barack Obama.

In one of his cameos on the front steps of his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida, Trump touted plans by a Japanese mogul to bring those jobs to the United States. They could be the first of the 50,000 jobs tech billionaire Masayoshi Son promised to create after meeting with the president-elect earlier in December.

In the grand scheme of the economy, the jobs announcement is unlikely to have a major impact. Still, it's another example of how Trump is trying to stoke voters' belief that he is actively fighting for their well-being.

Son is the founder and chief executive of SoftBank, one of Japan's largest technology outfits. He owns the U.S. mobile carrier Sprint, which Trump said Wednesday would be moving 5,000 jobs "back" to the United States. Son also controls OneWeb, which Trump said would hire 3,000 workers.

It was unclear whether the president-elect was referencing the Dec. 6 commitment by Son to invest \$50 billion in the United States and create 50,000 jobs.

Trump said the addition of 8,000 jobs was "because of what's happening and the spirit and the hope."

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 34 of 45

Still, the U.S. job market has been robust for much of 2016. Employers have added more than 2.2 million jobs over the past 12 months — a sign of economic health that pre-dates Trump's presidential victory.

Sprint has struggled since its 2013 acquisition by SoftBank. The carrier shed roughly 9,000 workers between 2012 and 2016, reducing its staff to 30,000, according to annual reports.

Sprint's attempt to join with rival T-Mobile failed in 2014 after regulators objected to combining two of the four largest mobile telecom companies in the United States. Analysts say a Trump administration would be more likely to approve telecom mergers, including a deal between Sprint and T-Mobile.

Sprint Chief Executive Marcelo Claude said in a statement that the company is "excited" to work with Trump.

"We believe it is critical for business and government to partner together to create more job opportunities in the U.S. and ensure prosperity for all Americans," Claude said.

The Sprint jobs announcement came after tensions rose and fell Wednesday between Trump and Obama. Trump has made it clear that it didn't sit well with him when Obama recently boasted that he would have won the election if he'd been running.

Trump appeared yet again Wednesday night on those steps, this time alongside legendary boxing entrepreneur Don King, who appeared to be one of several guests attending a dinner party. King carried about a dozen flags, including those of the U.S. and Israel; wore two big diamond necklaces, one of the Star of David and one of the American flag; and sported a large pin featuring a picture of Trump.

Trump addressed a range of questions, from tensions over Israeli settlements to accusations that Russia hacked the U.S. election.

On Russia, Trump said computers have "complicated lives very greatly."

He did not address calls from some on Capitol Hill for sanctions against Russia, saying, "We don't have the kind of security we need."

He added, "Nobody knows what's going on," and said he believes "we have to get on with our lives."

With King by his side, Trump dismissed days of tense remarks by the outgoing and incoming presidents about who would win if they were to hypothetically run against each other, saying he and Obama had "a very, very good talk."

"We talked about it and smiled about it and nobody is ever going to know because we are never going to be going against each other," Trump said.

Earlier, he had accused Obama of throwing up "inflammatory" roadblocks during the transition of power and said his administration was treating Israel with "total disdain."

"Doing my best to disregard the many inflammatory President O statements and roadblocks," Trump tweeted Wednesday morning. "Thought it was going to be a smooth transition — NOT!"

White House spokesman Eric Schultz said Obama phoned Trump. "Today's call, like the others since the election, was positive and focused on continuing a smooth and effective transition," Schultz said. "The president and president-elect committed to staying in touch over the next several weeks."

Trump also took direct issue with the Obama administration's decision to let a United Nations Security Council resolution critical of Israel pass.

"We cannot continue to let Israel be treated with such total disdain and disrespect," he said in a two-part tweet. "They used to have a great friend in the U.S., but ... not anymore. The beginning of the end was the horrible Iran deal, and now this (U.N.)! Stay strong Israel, January 20th is fast approaching!"

Trump later told reporters that Israel is being treated "very, very unfairly," maintaining that countries that are "horrible places" never get reprimanded. He refused to directly answer a question about whether Israel should stop building settlements, saying he is "very, very strong on Israel."

The president-elect's comments about Israel came a few hours after John Kerry made his final speech about Mideast peace as secretary of state. Kerry criticized Israel for settlement-building and accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of dragging Israel away from democracy.

Boak reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Cal Woodward in Washington, Josh Lederman in Honolulu and Julie Pace in Buffalo, New York, contributed to this report.

## Video appears to show Texas police shooting man walking away

By DAVID WARREN

DALLAS (AP) — A police dashcam video released five months after a Texas officer shot a black man appears to show the man walking away as the officer fired, and the man's lawyer says he was not a threat.

David Collie was shot in the back, leaving him paralyzed, lawyer Nate Washington said Wednesday. Police said at the time of the July encounter that a Fort Worth officer fired twice, striking Collie "once in the lower torso."

The officer and a Tarrant County sheriff's deputy with him were off-duty at the time and working a security detail at an apartment complex, Washington said.

Police were searching for two shirtless black men who they believed had committed a robbery near a gas station, Washington said. Authorities said in a news release they issued at the time that Collie pulled a box cutter from his pocket and pointed it at the officers.

Collie was charged with aggravated assault on a public servant but a grand jury declined to indict him.

Fort Worth police on Wednesday defended the actions of the officers, who they have not named. Sgt. Marc Povero said in a statement that Collie failed to comply with commands to stop and that he appeared to point a silver object at the deputy, consistent with earlier reports by the robbery victim that a suspect flashed a silver handgun. Washington said Collie was not involved in the robbery. A box cutter found nearby didn't belong to Collie, Washington said.

The shooting occurred late at night and darkness obscures Collie's actions, but the video seems to show him pointing in another direction as he walks away and it is not clear if there is anything in his hand.

Povero said a department review of the incident had been completed but declined to discuss the outcome. The officer who shot Washington has since returned to duty, he said. Povero declined to comment on the race of the officer.

Samantha Jordan, a spokeswoman for the Tarrant County District Attorney's office, said all police-involved shootings are submitted directly and without recommendation to the grand jury, where Collie's case is currently pending.

"We've reviewed the evidence," Jordan said. "Since it is pending, we can't comment."

The 33-year-old Collie was walking from work to a friend's apartment when the officers approached him in their patrol vehicle, Washington said. The video appears to show the Fort Worth officer firing his weapon about 10 seconds after exiting the vehicle and as Collie walked away.

The video was obtained about three weeks ago from the Tarrant County district attorney's office through an open-records request, Washington said. The attorney said he released the video Tuesday at a news conference at Collie's insistence because Collie was tired of comments made to his mother by people assuming he must have done something wrong.

Washington said Collie wanted to make clear he "didn't do anything to threaten an officer."

The two officers argued over the decision to fire on Collie, Washington said, and the deputy prayed with him as he was on the ground.

"I don't believe most people are racist but there are indeed racial biases that persist, and they don't go away when you go to the police academy," Washington said. "Having racial biases doesn't necessarily make you a bad person but we need to find a way to remove them when it comes to police work."

The release of the video came just days after the Fort Worth police were in the spotlight over another incident. A cellphone video captured a white Fort Worth officer last week wrestling a black woman to the ground and then arresting her and her two daughters. The officer appeared to be argumentative and escalate the encounter with the woman, who had called police following an encounter between her son and a neighbor. The video has been viewed millions of times.

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Associated Press writer Jamie Stengle contributed to this report.

## Fans create impromptu Walk of Fame star for Carrie Fisher

By SANDY COHEN, AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Fans seeking to pay tribute to Carrie Fisher have created an impromptu star for the actress on Hollywood's Walk of Fame.

Fisher fans took over a blank star on Hollywood Boulevard and used paste-on letters to spell out her name and the phrase "May the force be with you always." Candles and flowers surround the star.

Fisher did not have an official star on the Walk of Fame, but administrators of the Los Angeles tourist attraction are allowing the tribute temporarily to give fans a place to mourn.

Walk of Fame stars are granted by a committee overseen by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce. Celebrities must apply to be considered and be willing to pay a \$30,000 fee.

There has also been a run on Fisher's books since the "Star Wars" actress and humorist died on Tuesday.

Fisher, the daughter of actress Debbie Reynolds and singer Eddie Fisher, had been hospitalized since Friday, when paramedics responded to a report of a patient in distress at Los Angeles airport.

Her most recent book, "The Princess Diarist," was on top of Amazon's list of best-selling books on Wednesday. "Wishful Drinking" and "Postcards From the Edge" were also in Amazon's top 10, with "Shockaholic" ranked as No. 57.

Five of the top 10 books on Amazon's "Movers and Shakers" list, which measures titles that show the greatest upward movement in sales over a 24-hour period, were by Fisher. That list also included Courtney Carbone's book, "I Am a Princess," about Fisher's Princess Leia character, at No. 11.

HBO, which is airing a documentary "Bright Lights: Starring Debbie Reynolds and Carrie Fisher" next year, added a New Year's Day showing of Fisher's one-woman stand-up special "Wishful Drinking."

The network called Fisher "a great friend and a rare talent who left us with so many lasting memories with her wonderful sense of humor and unique and honest perspective on life."

Viewers also will hear Fisher's voice again on two new episodes of Fox's animated comedy "Family Guy."

She reprised her role as Angela, brewery boss to Peter Griffin (Seth MacFarlane). Air dates have yet to be set for the episodes, Fox said Wednesday.

Meanwhile, comic Steve Martin found himself the topic of discussion online about a tweet that he posted, then deleted, that said: "When I was a young man, Carrie Fisher ... was the most beautiful creature I had ever seen. She turned out to be witty and bright as well."

Martin received some online criticism for initially focusing on her appearance instead of her work, which in turn drew backlash for being a too sensitive reading of his tribute.

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AP television writers David Bauder in New York and Lynn Elber in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

## Man suspected of ties to Berlin attacker detained in Germany

By GEIR MOULSON and COLLEEN BARRY, Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — German prosecutors said Wednesday that they have detained a Tunisian man they think may have been involved in last week's truck attack on a Christmas market in Berlin.

The 40-year-old, who wasn't identified, was detained in Berlin during a search of his home and business, federal prosecutors said.

The man's telephone number was saved in the cellphone of Anis Amri, a fellow Tunisian believed to have driven a truck into the market on Dec. 19. Amri, 24, was killed in a shootout with Italian police in a suburb of Milan early Friday.

Of the new suspect, prosecutors said in a statement that "further investigations indicate that he may have been involved in the attack."

Twelve people died and dozens more were injured in the truck attack. The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility.

Prosecutors have until Thursday evening to determine whether the case against the 40-year-old is strong enough for them to seek a formal arrest warrant. That would allow them to keep him in custody pending

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 37 of 45

possible charges.

Investigators are trying to determine whether Amri had a support network in planning and carrying out the attack, and in fleeing Berlin. They're also trying to piece together the route he took from Berlin to Milan.

Italian police have said Amri traveled through France, and French authorities said on Tuesday that he made a stop in the eastern French city of Lyon.

On Wednesday, Dutch authorities said it appeared Amri first had fled through the Netherlands, Germany's western neighbor.

Jirko Patist, a spokesman for the Dutch national prosecutor's office, said "highly likely" that Amri had been in Nijmegen, in the eastern Netherlands, during his journey from Berlin to Milan.

Camera images recovered in Nijmegen "found someone we think, rather of whom we say it is highly likely," is the same person appearing in photos from Lyon in France, Patist told Netherlands public broadcaster NOS.

Patist added that there was no reason to think the suspect was accompanied by anyone while in the Netherlands.

A SIM card found on the fugitive after he was shot led authorities to the Netherlands.

"We can see that the SIM cards like this have been distributed in several locations in the Netherlands," he said.

Amri had no phone with him in Milan, only the loose SIM card.

According to Italian police, Amri also had a pocket knife and a few hundred euros in cash in a backpack that he was carrying when officers on a routine patrol stopped him to ask for identification in the Milan suburb of Sesto San Giovanni on Friday.

He also carried a .22 pistol that he then used to shoot a police officer, hitting him in the shoulder.

The Italian investigator said the weapon appeared to be the same one used in Germany to kill the Polish driver of the truck that was commandeered for the Christmas market attack, but that final ballistic tests were still being carried out.

The body of the Polish driver, Lukasz Urban, was returned to Poland on Tuesday, said Aldoma Lema, a spokeswoman for prosecutors in the Polish city of Szczecin.

There has been speculation over whether Urban still was alive at the time of the attack and struggled with Amri. His body was found in the truck's cab.

German daily Bild reported Tuesday, without citing sources, that autopsy results showed Urban was shot in the head several hours before the attack and would have been dead or unconscious by that time.

Lema said she could not give the time of his death. Another autopsy was performed in Poland on Wednesday and preliminary findings won't be known for three weeks, she said.

In Belgium, Interior Minister Jan Jambon said the apparent ease with which Amri traveled through Europe after the attack showed that passenger watch lists used to flag terror suspects should be extended from airplanes to other modes of public transportation, including buses.

Jambon, who has said he wants the European Union to pursue the idea, told public broadcaster VRT that "the (passenger) information would need to be checked with lists of international terrorists that we have had warnings about. So, someone who is known or warned to be a violent extremist could be kicked off that transport."

German media reported Wednesday that investigators believe an emergency braking system in the truck may have prevented more deaths.

Daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung and public broadcaster NDR cited unnamed officials familiar with the investigation saying the tractor unit had a mechanism that automatically slams the brakes when a collision is detected.

The news outlets also reported that Amri, whom German authorities had deemed a potential threat months before the attack, allegedly searched the internet for instructions on how to make explosives and first attempted to contact the Islamic State group in February.

Barry reported from Milan. Frank Jordans in Berlin, Raf Casert in Brussels and Vanessa Gera in Warsaw, Poland contributed to this report.

## Israeli PM calls Kerry speech a 'deep disappointment'

By JOSEF FEDERMAN, Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's prime minister decried Secretary of State John Kerry's Mideast policy speech as a "deep disappointment" on Wednesday and vowed to work with the incoming Trump administration to contain the fallout from last week's U.N. resolution calling Israeli settlements illegal.

Netanyahu's angry statement, delivered at a late-night news conference shortly after Kerry's address, capped a tumultuous week in which years of tense relations with President Barack Obama boiled over.

"We are not about to be swayed by a mistaken policy that could cause big, big damage," Netanyahu said, speaking in English. "Israelis do not need to be lectured about the importance of peace by foreign leaders."

In a farewell speech at the State Department, Kerry outlined his vision for Mideast peace. While his speech included criticism of Palestinian violence and incitement, his strongest words were aimed at Israel, and its policy of settling its citizens in occupied territories claimed by the Palestinians. He said the continued settlement growth is threatening the possibility of a two-state solution, which Netanyahu has endorsed.

"The settler agenda is defining the future of Israel. And their stated purpose is clear: They believe in one state," Kerry said.

He also defended Obama's move last week to allow the U.N. Security Council to declare Israeli settlements illegal, the spark that set off a nearly weeklong diplomatic spat between Israel and its most important ally.

"I must express my deep disappointment with the speech today of John Kerry, a speech that was almost as unbalanced as the anti-Israel resolution passed at the U.N. last week," Netanyahu said.

He accused Kerry of paying "lip service" to decades of Palestinian violence against Israelis, while spending "most of his speech blaming Israel for the lack of peace."

He repeated his position that Israel is ready to pursue peace through direct negotiations with the Palestinians. Netanyahu, whose government is dominated by West Bank settler supporters who oppose Palestinian independence, says international law dictates in favor of the Palestinians and undermines the negotiating process.

"Israel looks forward to working with President-elect Trump and with the American Congress, Democrats and Republicans, to mitigate the damage that this resolution has done and ultimately to repeal it," he said. He expressed hope that the Obama administration will not pursue any more moves against Israel at the U.N. in its remaining time in office.

Netanyahu and Obama, who took office in 2009 just months apart, have had chilly relations throughout their tenures.

The Obama administration has been a vocal critic of Netanyahu's policies and questioned his commitment to peace. Netanyahu has harshly criticized the U.S.-led nuclear deal with Iran.

Although Trump has not outlined his Mideast policy, he has signaled that he will be much more sympathetic to Israel. He has appointed a West Bank settler ally as his ambassador to Israel and vowed to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, over Palestinian objections.

## With the loss of its celebrities, Gen X ponders mortality

By TAMARA LUSH, Associated Press

Princess Leia was our first girl movie heroine, and we made our moms braid brunette yarn so we'd have earmuff buns for Halloween. Carol Brady of "The Brady Bunch" was the ideal mother we probably didn't have, because our moms had to work and left us latchkey kids home alone, with TV and processed food our only companions.

Carrie Fisher and Florence Henderson — and other icons of Generation X's youth — are now gone, stolen by the cruel thief that is 2016. The year has left the generation born between the mid-1960s and the early 1980s wallowing in memories and contemplating its own mortality.

"It's a very melancholy time," sighed Shelly Ransom, a 47-year-old speech-language pathologist in Darien,

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 39 of 45

Connecticut. "This is really bringing back a lot of teen angst feelings. These people are supposed to still be the voices of my generation. It's sad to see these artists not there to be our voice."

Or, as weary, 51-year-old Lawrence Feeney, a filmmaker from New Port Richey, Florida, put it: "You lose George Michael and Carrie Fisher in a three-day span, you feel like you've gotten a couple of daggers thrown at you."

Throughout the year, office conversations, dinner party discussions and social media have exploded with incredulity, sadness and fear, as one '80s celebrity after another died, starting in January with David Bowie.

The feelings have been particularly acute for Gen X, whose members came of age when many of these cultural figures were popular.

We adored Bowie in the movie "Labyrinth" and danced to "Modern Love" at prom. We remember reading the words "Purple Rain" on the theater marquee and wondered why that little guy in high heels was so sexy. We made out fervently in cars in high school as George Michael crooned on the FM dial (Remember radio? It came decades before Spotify, and you couldn't pick your music).

"We were the generation that was going to change the world. When I was a young man, I watched people my age stand in front of tanks in Tiananmen Square and tear down the Berlin Wall. Now I find myself complaining about arthritis in my hands and taking care of my aging parents," lamented Rob Withrow, a 43-year-old landscape business owner in Palm Bay, Florida.

He added: "The musicians I admired growing up are now dying off. Hopefully, I still have quite a few more decades left in me, but the reality of dying is much clearer to see."

Of course, this happens to every generation: Our idols die off, and we suddenly feel our youth slipping away.

But Lou Manza, a professor of psychology at Lebanon Valley College in Annville, Pennsylvania, said baby boomers and older generations weren't as invested in or connected to their celebrities. Gen X had MTV, which put pop stars like Prince and Bowie into our homes in heavy rotation.

That, combined with the immediacy and intimacy of 21st-century social media — we knew when platinum-haired punk rocker Billy Idol turned 61 because Facebook informed us, for instance — amplifies the sadness.

"Our parents in the '70s would hear about a celebrity death on the nightly news, or the next day in the newspaper," Manza said. "Now, there's more and more of an immediacy with every successive generation."

Sarah McBride Wagner, a 37-year-old writer in Weirton, West Virginia, said social media has created a place for collective mourning.

"We've never met these people. Yet we're all so affected by it," she said. "Being a shared grief both makes it bigger and easier."

For some, the death of beloved childhood figures reminds us of the passing of people closer to us and of the march of time, which seems more like a fast jog.

"We're at the age now when we really start to see ourselves in our parents. My son just turned 10, and it occurred to me as he hung out with my parents that it's really not going to be too many more years before my husband and I are my parents, and he is us," said Amanda Forman, a 38-year-old mother of three and a writer from Flourtown, Pennsylvania.

"The celebrity deaths of people we've admired exacerbate those feelings. I think in the case of those who passed who are slightly older, it makes us feel like we are that much closer, that our generation is next. And it makes us feel like our childhood is that much further behind us."

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Follow Tamara Lush on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/tamaralush>

## Turkey, Russia discussing Syria cease-fire

By PHILIP ISSA and SUZAN FRASER, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Turkey and Russia are discussing a broader Syrian cease-fire after brokering the deal that evacuated rebel-held eastern Aleppo, Syrian opposition factions said Wednesday, but a number of rebel groups say they won't agree to anything until they get more details.

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 40 of 45

All previous attempts at enforcing a nationwide cease-fire in Syria have failed. The recent warming of ties between Russia and Turkey, who provide crucial support to opposing sides of the war, may prove to be a game changer, but the challenges are immense.

The foreign ministers of Turkey, Russia and Iran met in Moscow last week for talks on Syria that pointedly included no Syrians, indicating they prefer to pursue a grand bargain among great powers with stakes in the conflict rather than a domestic settlement between the government and the opposition.

An official with one of the factions confirmed to The Associated Press that Russian and Turkish officials were debating a cease-fire proposal that would encompass the whole of Syria. He spoke on condition of anonymity because the talks were ongoing.

Rebels have opposed previous proposals that would allow the government to continue its offensives around the outskirts of the capital, Damascus.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said later Wednesday that its embassy in the Syrian capital was hit by mortar fire, blaming the attack on "extremists" opposed to a peaceful settlement. It said a mortar round landed in the embassy courtyard without exploding, and another fell in the vicinity.

Turkey's Anadolu Agency said Wednesday morning that Ankara and Moscow had reached an agreement, and Turkish media reports quoted Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu as saying that a lasting cease-fire and political solution in Syria are "close." But no details were announced, and there was no confirmation from state officials.

Yasin Aktay, the spokesman for Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party, said the government is pushing for a cease-fire to be in place "as we enter 2017."

The Syrian opposition official said factions were holding vigorous discussions over the possibilities, while an official with a different group said the proposal has not been formally presented to the opposition.

"It is difficult to accept or refuse the matter before we look at the details, of course," said the official, who also spoke on the condition of anonymity so as not to prejudge intra-opposition talks.

The Anadolu report quoted unnamed officials as saying a plan for a cease-fire "in all regions" would be presented to the warring parties. The cease-fire would exclude terrorist organizations, it said, without elaborating on which groups would be left out.

It said peace talks in Kazakhstan would proceed under Russia and Turkey's leadership if the cease-fire holds, with the two acting as "guarantors" of any deal.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman confirmed Russia and Turkey were in "constant contact" to prepare for planned Syria peace talks in Kazakhstan, but did not comment about the possibility of a cease-fire.

Mosayyeb Naimi, a Tehran-based political analyst, said it was unclear whether Turkey could corral Syria's fractured opposition.

"Turkey's ability to convince armed groups to accept the cease-fire is unknown, particularly because Turkey is involved in conflict with some of those groups," he said. Naimi added that although the Russians have made initial agreements with Ankara, they may be waiting for U.S. President-elect Donald Trump to take office to discuss the U.S. role in the cease-fire process.

A top Russian diplomat meanwhile said a draft U.N. Security Council resolution that would impose sanctions on Syria for chemical weapons use is unacceptable to Moscow, which has veto power on the council.

A resolution drafted by Britain and France, which was obtained by The Associated Press, would impose sanctions on an array of Syrian individuals, organizations and companies allegedly involved in chemical weapons attacks. It would also ban sales of helicopters to Syria.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov was quoted by the state news agency Tass on Wednesday as saying the resolution "is categorically unacceptable to us. We warn them against attempts to fan tensions in the U.N. Security Council."

In Syria, activists said at least 20 civilians have been killed in an airstrike on an Islamic State-held village in Deir el-Zour province in eastern Syria.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported Wednesday that several unknown warplanes bombed the village of Hajna the night before, killing 12 people from one family and 10 from



another. It said at least 10 children were killed.

The activist group Deir Ezzor 24 said no one in the two families survived.

Fraser reported from Ankara, Turkey. Associated Press writer Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow and producer Mahdi Fattahi in Tehran contributed to this report.

## Dylann Roof won't work to spare his life in church massacre

By JEFFREY COLLINS, Associated Press

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — Charleston church shooter Dylann Roof says he won't call any witnesses or present evidence while representing himself during the punishment phase of his death penalty trial, but he is working hard to keep secret potentially embarrassing evidence about himself and his family.

Just exactly what that evidence is remains a mystery. Roof, the judge and prosecutors carefully tiptoed around describing it during a hearing Wednesday. The judge has indicated that it may be allowed during the penalty phase of the trial, which starts next week.

The same jurors who convicted Roof earlier this month of killing nine black church members in a racially motivated attack will hear from Roof as well as testimony from the families of victims. At the end of the penalty phase, the panel will decide whether Roof, who is white, should be put to death or spend the rest of his life in prison.

Roof was warned by U.S. Judge Richard Gergel that being his own lawyer was a bad idea.

"That's your decision," Gergel said. "I think that highlights my advice to you that you aren't served by being your own counsel."

Gergel told Roof to talk to his grandfather, who is a lawyer, and other family members one last time. He told Roof he has until the start of the penalty phase Tuesday to change his mind and rehire his high-powered, publicly funded defense team.

Roof spoke for less than 10 minutes of the 35-minute hearing. He told Gergel he does plan an opening and closing statement. He also told the judge he objects to prosecutors' plans to present a photograph of evidence in the court's possession. Roof, Gergel and assistant U.S. Attorney Jay Richardson talked about it without saying what it is.

Gergel said there was a hearing in which he decided it could be admitted in the penalty phase.

Roof also wanted a jailhouse statement left out of the penalty phase and evidence that involved his mother. No specifics were given. Gergel told Roof to go back to jail and write a motion for him to consider. Roof's ankle chain clanked as he walked back to the defense table in his jail jumpsuit.

Roof's defense attorneys wanted to call mental health experts, but Roof has indicated he will not. In his hate-filled, racist journal read to the jury during his trial, Roof said he doesn't believe in psychology.

"It is a Jewish invention and does nothing but invent diseases and tell people they have problems when they don't," Roof wrote.

Prosecutors also laid out their case Wednesday. Most of the penalty phase will involve up to 38 people related to the nine people killed and the three people spared when Roof went into Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church on June 17, 2015, sat through a 45-minute Bible study in the fellowship hall, then fired 77 shots as many of the worshippers hid under tables.

Gergel, who complained during the guilt phase that prosecutors were repeating themselves at times with witnesses, said he will allow Richardson to call as many witnesses related to the victims as he wants.

"The statute provides broad leeway for the victims to be heard, and I plan on honoring that," the judge said.

Richardson said he also will call the chief FBI agent on the case to tie up loose ends and refresh jurors' memories.

Gergel spent much of the hearing going over the format of the penalty phase with Roof, warning him several times he was likely doing himself no favors leaving his defense team as just advisers to file briefs.

After saying he planned no witnesses, Roof told Gergel he was just answering the same question the

judge had asked prosecutors. Gergel said that wasn't necessary.

"Don't do them any favors," the judge said. "They aren't going to do you any."

Follow Jeffrey Collins on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/JSCollinsAP>. His work can be found at <http://bigstory.ap.org/content/jeffrey-collins>

## **Iraqi forces in Mosul reinforced, new push against IS soon**

**By HAMZA HENDAWI, Associated Press**

MOSUL, Iraq (AP) — Iraqi forces stalled for weeks on the edges of Mosul have been bolstered by reinforcements and are now ready, along with elite special forces, to launch a stepped up, three-pronged assault against Islamic State group militants in the city's eastern sector, ending a two-week lull in fighting, a top Iraqi general told The Associated Press.

The planned assault aims in part to overcome stiff resistance by the militants that has slowed advances in the more than 2-month-old offensive to recapture the northern city, the last main bastion of the Islamic State group in Iraq.

In an attempt to isolate militants in the eastern sector from those in the western half of Mosul, warplanes from the U.S.-led coalition destroyed the last remaining bridge over the Tigris River, which runs through city center.

So far in the Mosul offensive, Iraq's counterterrorism forces, which are by far the military's most battle seasoned unit, have done most of the fighting, pushing in from the east. But regular army troops on the city's southeast and northern edges, as well as federal police farther west, have not moved in weeks, unable to penetrate the city either because they are not equipped or trained to fight on the streets or because of inadequate resources.

Lt. Gen. Abdul-Wahab al-Saadi, commander of the counterterrorism forces in eastern Mosul, said in an interview Tuesday night that units of the federal police have joined units from the military's 9th Division southeast of Mosul, while troops have taken positions alongside units from the army's 16th Division on the north side.

Al-Saadi would not say when the advance would begin. But it appeared likely within days, weather permitting. He would not give details on the size of the reinforcements.

The new reinforcements suggest that original plans to penetrate the city's western side have been abandoned and that the plan was now for all forces to push on in the eastern sector.

The bridge hit this week was the last remaining of five bridges across the Tigris between the western and eastern halves. Activists inside Mosul published photos Tuesday night showing the twisted girders of the bridge in the water as boats ferried residents back and forth. The Old Bridge, as it is known, was built in the 1930s and is considered one of the city's iconic landmarks.

The damage is expected to further complicate life inside Mosul. A resident said people waiting by the banks to be ferried across ran for cover every time they heard a plane buzzing overhead, fearing further airstrikes.

The counterterrorism forces, also known as the "Golden Division," have taken a string of neighborhoods in eastern Mosul and are now less than 3 kilometers (2 miles) away from the Tigris River, which slices the city in half. But they have moved little the past two weeks, apparently waiting for the reinforcements.

They have faced grueling urban fighting, often house to house against IS militants who have had more than two years to dig in and prepare. Even in districts that have been wrested away from IS, Iraqi troops have faced surprise attacks, shelling and car bombs. The extremists have launched more than 900 car bombs against Iraqi troops so far during the operation in Mosul and surrounding areas in Nineveh province. Al-Saadi said 260 of these targeted his men.

"Daesh has by now realized that the battle is in the eastern sector of Mosul, and that's where most of its forces are," said al-Saadi, using an Arabic acronym for the Islamic State group.

He denied reports that the lull in fighting was caused by a higher-than-expected casualties among his men. "We have sustained casualties, but not much," he said. "We will also be reinforced by new members

of the counterterrorism forces," he said, without elaborating.

The presence of an estimated one million civilians inside Mosul is partly to blame for the slow progress in the battle since Iraqi forces and their allies in the U.S.-led coalition have avoided the use of overwhelming firepower against the militants for fear of massive civilian casualties. About 120,000 people have fled the city since the offensive began, according to the United Nations.

"Daesh snipers shoot at us from the rooftops of homes occupied by families. We can only use light arms against them so as not to hurt the civilians," he explained. "They fire from side streets lined by homes. Again, we can only use light arms."

A new menace in the fight was the growing use by IS of drones, mostly armed with bombs or grenades that they drop on troops or civilians, he said.

Al-Saadi said he expected Mosul and the rest of Nineveh province to be totally rid of IS in about three months.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi spoke last week of a need to revise the battle plans in Mosul. On Tuesday, he told a news conference: "God willing, there will be good news in the coming days," he said

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Associated Press correspondent Sinan Salaheddin in Baghdad contributed to this report.

## **Skin cancer drop in Northeast bucks rising rates elsewhere**

**By LINDSEY TANNER, AP Medical Writer**

CHICAGO (AP) — A decline in melanoma cases and deaths in Northeast states bucks a national trend for the deadliest skin cancer and may reflect benefits of strong prevention programs, a study suggests.

In the years included in the study, the Melanoma Foundation of New England became more active with programs to prevent skin cancer, the researchers noted. Two years ago, the group started a program that funds sunscreen dispensers in public places and recreation spots in Boston and other New England cities. That effort expanded this year to other states.

"Such programs may enhance public awareness about skin cancer and may suppress the continual rise in melanoma," the researchers said.

Nationally, melanoma cases have steadily increased over the past two decades. The American Cancer Society estimates that when 2016 cases are tallied, more than 76,000 Americans will have been diagnosed during the year.

The new study, led by Dr. Robert Dellavalle of the Denver Veterans Affairs Medical Center, is an analysis by region of government data on cases and deaths in 2003 and 2013. The results were published online Wednesday in *JAMA Dermatology*.

Most skin cancers rarely spread but melanoma is different. It may show up looking like an unusual, irregularly shaped or colored mole. It can invade tissues beneath the skin's surface and spread throughout the body. Overexposure to sunlight and indoor tanning are among the risk factors.

A separate study published last week showed that U.S. melanoma rates climbed from about 22 per 100,000 people in 2009 to an estimated nearly 24 per 100,000 in 2016. Earlier research showed the number of cases has increased sharply since 1980.

The new study found melanoma dropped in five of nine Northeast states over a decade and death rates declined in six of the nine states.

By contrast, incidence and death rates climbed in most Midwestern states studied. Melanoma cases also rose in the South and West but death rates varied in those regions.

Regional ethnic differences and other demographics play a role. Melanoma is more common in whites and in people with light-colored eyes and red or blond hair.

The states included in the Northeast region: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont.

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Online:

# Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 44 of 45

American Cancer Society: <http://bit.ly/2iDWskQ>

Follow AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner at <http://www.twitter.com/LindseyTanner>. Her work can be found at <http://bigstory.ap.org/content/lindsey-tanner>

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Dec. 29, the 364th day of 2016. There are two days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 29, 1916, James Joyce's first novel, "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," was first published in book form in New York after being serialized in London.

On this date:

In 1170, Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was slain in Canterbury Cathedral by knights loyal to King Henry II.

In 1808, the 17th president of the United States, Andrew Johnson, was born in Raleigh, North Carolina.

In 1812, during the War of 1812, the American frigate USS Constitution engaged and severely damaged the British frigate HMS Java off Brazil.

In 1845, Texas was admitted as the 28th state.

In 1890, the Wounded Knee massacre took place in South Dakota as an estimated 300 Sioux Indians were killed by U.S. troops sent to disarm them.

In 1934, Japan formally renounced the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922.

In 1940, during World War II, Germany dropped incendiary bombs on London, setting off what came to be known as "The Second Great Fire of London."

In 1957, singers Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme were married in Las Vegas.

In 1972, Eastern Air Lines Flight 401, a Lockheed L-1011 Tristar, crashed into the Florida Everglades near Miami International Airport, killing 101 of the 176 people aboard.

In 1975, a bomb exploded in the main terminal of New York's LaGuardia Airport, killing 11 people (it's never been determined who was responsible).

In 1986, former British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan died in Sussex, England, at age 92.

In 1996, guerrilla and government leaders in Guatemala signed an accord ending 36 years of civil conflict. North Korea issued an unprecedented apology for sending a spy submarine into South Korean waters.

Ten years ago: Word reached the United States of the execution of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein (because of the time difference, it was the morning of Dec. 30 in Iraq when the hanging took place). In a statement, President George W. Bush called Saddam's execution an important milestone on Iraq's road to democracy. Gerald R. Ford's flag-draped casket was carried into a church in Palm Desert, California, for a public viewing that marked the start of six days of mourning for the former president. More than 400 people died when a crowded Indonesian ferry sank in the Java Sea.

Five years ago: Fed-up voters in Jamaica threw out the ruling party and delivered a landslide triumph to the opposition People's National Party and its leader, former Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller. The No. 15 Baylor Bears, led by Heisman Trophy winner Robert Griffin III, pulled out an incredible Alamo Bowl victory in the highest-scoring regulation bowl game in history, beating the Washington Huskies 67-56 at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

One year ago: Belgian authorities announced they had arrested two men and seized military-type uniforms and Islamic State group propaganda in connection with a suspected plot to unleash holiday season attacks against police and celebrated locations in Brussels. Former "Glee" star Mark Salling was arrested in Los Angeles for investigation of possessing child pornography. (Salling has pleaded not guilty.)

Today's Birthdays: Country singer Rose Lee Maphis is 94. Actress Dina Merrill is 93. Actress Inga Swen-

# Groton Daily Independent

**Thursday, Dec. 29, 2016 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 177 ~ 45 of 45**

son is 84. ABC newscaster Tom Jarriel is 82. Actress Mary Tyler Moore is 80. Actress Barbara Steele is 79. Actor Jon Voight is 78. Country singer Ed Bruce is 77. Rock musician Ray Thomas is 75. Singer Marianne Faithfull is 70. Hall of Fame Jockey Laffit Pincay, Jr. is 70. Actor Ted Danson is 69. Singer-actress Yvonne Elliman is 65. Actress Patricia Clarkson is 57. Comedian Paula Poundstone is 57. Rock singer-musician Jim Reid (The Jesus and Mary Chain) is 55. Actor Michael Cudlitz is 52. Rock singer Dexter Holland (The Offspring) is 51. Actor-comedian Mystro Clark is 50. Actor Jason Gould is 50. News anchor Ashleigh Banfield is 49. Movie director Andy Wachowski is 49. Actress Jennifer Ehle is 47. Actor Patrick Fischler is 47. Rock singer-musician Glen Phillips is 46. Actor Kevin Weisman is 46. Actor Jude Law is 44. Actress Maria Dizzia is 42. Actor Mekhi Phifer (mih-KY' FY'-fuhr) is 42. Actor Shawn Hatosy is 41. Actress Katherine Moennig is 39. Actor Diego Luna is 37. Country singer Jessica Andrews is 33. Actress Jane Levy is 27. Singer-actor-dancer Ross Lynch is 21.

Thought for Today: "Ours is the age of substitutes: Instead of language we have jargon; instead of principles, slogans; and instead of genuine ideas, bright suggestions." — Eric Bentley, British-born American author and educator.