

# Groton Daily Independent

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## 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 Center at 7 p.m.

## Wednesday, Jan. 4

**Senior Menu:** Creamed chicken, buttermilk biscuit, peas, pineapple/mandarin orange sauce, peanut butter cookie.

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

**School Lunch:** Hamburgers, wedge fries, fruit, carrots and dip.

**United Methodist Church, Groton:** Kid Zone at 3:30 p.m., Evening Bible Study at 7 p.m.

**Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Groton:** Sarah Circle at 5 p.m., League at 6:30 p.m., Confirma-

## 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**

## Dakota Brush

Brooms, Brushes, Mops, Can Liners, Paper Products.

Get Ready for Spring With Wash Brushes & Squeegees

**397-9337**

104 N. Main, Groton

happy new year



On the road, the rule is to always look ahead. May you reach your destination safely, but if you happen to have a mishap, let Allen at McKiver Collision get the dents and dings out of your vehicle.

*Happy New Year!*



**Allen McKiver, Owner - 605-397-4747**

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## Wrapping up my first session of Congress, ready to get to work in the year ahead

Two years ago, you trusted me with your vote to serve as your United States Senator. Having seen the damaging effects of our overreaching, broken federal government as a business owner, governor, father and grandfather, I was eager to get to work to fix Washington.

While partisan gridlock in Washington still exists, we were able to make progress in several specific areas. We were able to enact the first major changes to our education laws since 'No Child Left Behind,' returning decision-making to the local level where it belongs. We also passed a long-term highway bill for the first time in two decades, allowing us to make long-overdue improvements to our roads and bridges.

While we still have work to do on tax reform, we were able to come together to make permanent sales tax deductions as well as deductions for charitable giving and certain educators. We also made section 179 permanent at the \$500,000 level, which particularly benefits farmers and ranchers and could increase U.S. economic output by nearly \$19 billion over 10 years. This type of tax relief allows South Dakota families and businesses to plan more efficiently and spend more of their money how they see fit.

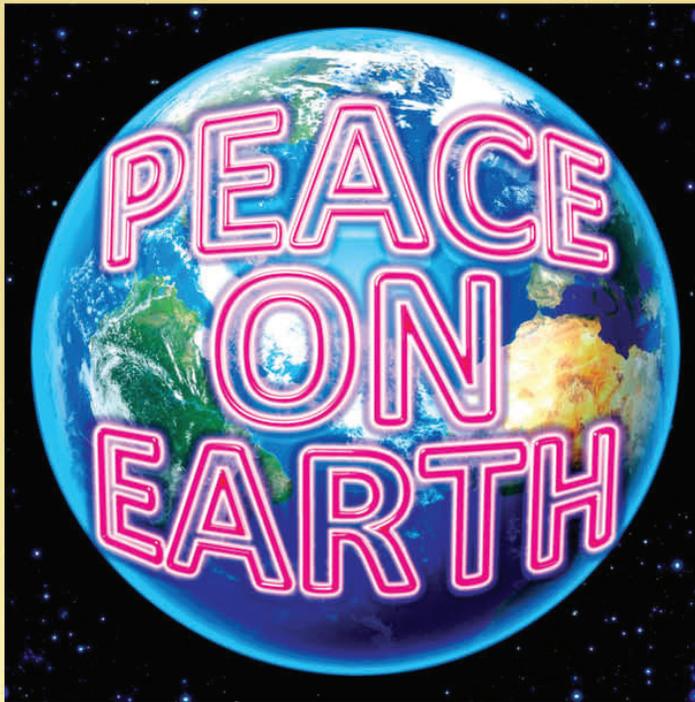
While the accomplishments of the 114th Congress are a start, I am also aware of the challenges we continue to face. Despite getting 240 bipartisan bills signed into law, we still have a broken budget system, an over-sized bureaucracy, too much red tape and a tax code that is more than 74,000 pages in length.

The regulatory regime alone is costing Americans nearly \$1.9 trillion annually, far more than is paid in individual income taxes. These regulatory costs are taking money out of the pockets of hard-working South Dakotans, stunting economic growth in our country and hurting the citizens our government is meant to serve.

While we have made improvements to agencies such as the VA, too many veterans today are still suffering at the hands of administrative bureaucracy. We have an Indian Health System in need of total overhaul, employing twice as many bureaucrats as actual health providers. Meanwhile, tribal members are literally dying awaiting care the federal government has an obligation to provide. We must seek ways to make these and other agencies more efficient.

In the next Congress, addressing our debt crisis must also be a priority. The long-term driver of our debt is mandatory payments and interest on our debt, currently over \$19 trillion. Yet Congress does not even debate the merits of mandatory payments, which accounts for more than 70 percent of our spending today. I have been working with a number of other senators to find ways to revise the budget process here in Congress, so we can address our budget crisis. What we have been working on would open up the entire budget to congressional management, including mandatory payments.

As we move forward to the 115th Congress and a new, Republican administration eager to work with us, rather than against us, I am optimistic in our ability to build on the successes of the past two years. But we must also get serious about bringing real changes that will leave our country even stronger for the next generation of Americans.



Let there be peace  
on Earth in 2017 and  
may peace be with  
you and your family  
throughout the year!

***Harry Implement***

*"Family Owned & Operated Since 1935!"*

(605) 395-6421 ~ Ferney



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1  
7**



## Small State, Big Impact

The swearing-in ceremony on January 3 marks the official start of the 115th Congress, but our work to prepare for these next two years has been ongoing for months.

Last summer, House Republicans introduced a once-in-a-generation blueprint for the reforms we feel are necessary to move this country forward. In late December after most of Congress had gone home for the holidays, I – along with just 23 other members of the House Ways and Means Committee – came back to Washington to hammer out two critical sections of this blueprint: tax reform and healthcare reform.

On tax reform, we worked on a framework for a simpler, flatter and fairer tax code. Coming from a state that has zero income tax, I wanted to share a real-world example of the economic benefits of a lower tax rate. As a busy mom, I wanted to speak to the importance of a simpler tax return – one that may even be simple enough to fit on a postcard. As an experienced small business owner, farmer and rancher, I wanted the tax code to incentivize growth in the American economy. And as a taxpayer, I wanted the loopholes to be closed and the IRS to be held accountable. Our work continues, but I'm glad we were able to communicate this vision from the onset.

On healthcare reform, we plan to take immediate steps to repeal Obamacare. While we're still navigating the best legislative path from that point, we are committed to protecting the healthcare needs of all Americans. At our meeting in December, we worked through a number of ideas for creating a system that no longer relies on mandates, but instead ensures affordable access so families can choose what works best for them. This plan would deliver unprecedented freedom, empowering Americans to purchase the healthcare plan of their choice, manage how they spend their healthcare dollars, and access their electronic health records. Moreover, it would include tools that drive down the actual cost for delivering healthcare, an expense that is higher per person in the U.S. than almost any nation in the world. The only way health insurance is going to be affordable is if the delivery of healthcare becomes less expensive too.

With so much at stake, it was important to get a seat at the table for South Dakota during these debates. After all, there are challenges that come with having just one representative in the House. Places like Texas, for instance, have dozens of congressmen who can represent the state's interests on any given issue. A state like South Dakota, however, occupies just one of 435 seats, so making our perspective known requires a deliberate effort. Getting in on these types of conversations is one of the reasons I fought for a seat on the House Ways and Means Committee last Congress.

Our state might be small, but we've already had a major impact on what's expected to be an aggressive 2017 agenda. What's more, those contributions have helped establish the tone for the 115th Congress and set the legislative branch up to hit the ground running on Day 1.

Hope It's Festive.  
Hope It's Fun.  
Hope It's Lucky For Everyone!

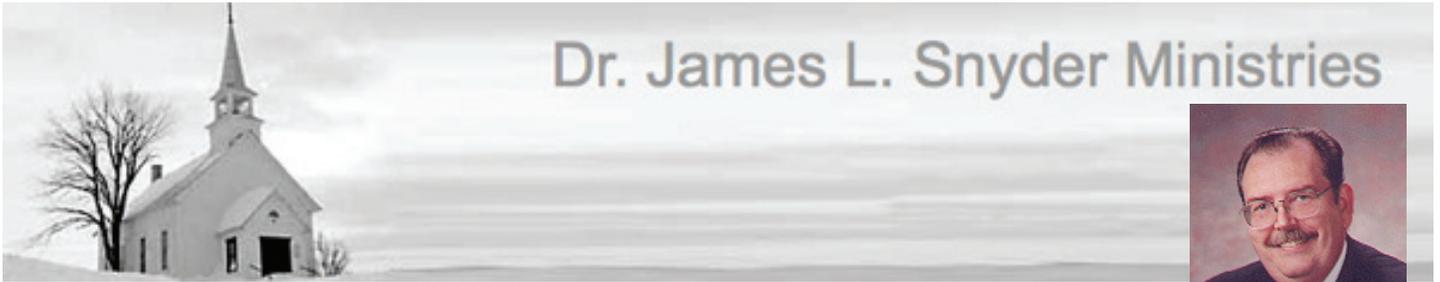


**Our best wishes to you  
and yours in 2017.**

**Krueger Brothers  
Road Maintenance,  
Dirt & Gravel**

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries



## Is The Cup Half Empty or Half Full?

Many things in life have me in a tangle of confusion. I try to put on a good face so that nobody knows how confused I am at the time. I think I get away with it, at least most of the time.

The only person I cannot fool is the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. According to her evaluation, I am confused all the time. I would like to set her straight sometime, but I am really confused as to when would be the right time.

If I do not pick the right time, my confusion will be accelerated to the point of no return.

There is one thing, despite my professional confusion, I have not been able to understand. And it just bugs me to no end. Why are some things more confusing than others?

There is a positive side to confusion.

For example, someone is trying to explain to me something that is rather boring I can say, "That's too confusing for me."

What that does is help the other person think that he's a lot better than I am which is not a bad thing to get out of some boring situation at the time. Believe it or not, this is not too confusing for me.

Another side of this would be, somebody wants me to explain something and I am not really in the mood to do a lot of explaining, I say many confusing things and the person comes to the point where he says, "That's too confusing for me."

Winning is so wonderful.

Not long ago, I overheard somebody say, "Is that cup half full or half empty?"

For some reason I just cannot get that out of my head and it has confused me like nothing else in my life.

If, for example, a cup is half-full is it not also half-empty? And, if it is half-empty is it also half-full?

I do not know if this is intentional confusion or if it is not supposed to make any sense at all.

I think "the half empty/half full" scenario is just for plain ordinary fools. In my experience, I have never met a half fool. Either they are all fool or they are not a fool at all. Just when you think you met a half-fool, they spiral into a complete fool. There is a question whether any fool can be complete or not, but that is too confusing for me.

Several times my wife will look at me and say, "Are you acting a fool?"

I would like to set her straight sometime, but I am a little confused as to be the right time. But I am not acting a fool. I have absolutely no skill in the thespian art of acting. Of course, when she addresses me with that question, I act like I am not a fool which I am not sure qualifies in the thespian arts category.

The confusion here is, if I am not acting a fool, how can I act like I am not a fool? What is the real difference here? Is there any difference at all? Oh, how confusing it all is.

I am afraid that confusion runs very deep in my life.

If I wanted to get out of the confusion syndrome, all I have to do is approach my wife and say, "I don't understand this, could you explain it to me?" After that, I am too confused to really understand that I am confused about it at all. Thanks, of course, to my wife who is confused about nothing that I know.

With her great skill in this area, she has helped me out of many a confusing situations.

Perhaps that is the primary difference between a husband and wife. The husband is afflicted with the confusion syndrome and the wife knows how to unconfuse her husband. She has a remedy, according to her, that will cure him immediately.

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This is the great joy of my life to be able to ignore my confusion and trust my wife's judgment in this area. I can balance the checkbook, but I have a hard time balancing these confusion elements in my life. Thanks to my wife, I do not have to worry about it.

At my present junction in life, I do not know if I am really confused or not. It is rather a confusing aspect to think about right now. Am I confused or am I not confused. If I am confused, what are the symptoms? If I am not confused, how will I know?

Perhaps the most comforting aspect of life, at least for someone my age, is knowing you are confused, accept it and get on with life. Nothing is more satisfying in life than knowing what you are and being able to accept yourself as you are and then enjoy the rest of your life.

With so much to do in the world today, it is always comforting to know that there is something you do not have to do. I like what the apostle Paul said. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17).

In the midst of all your supposed confusion, sit back, take a deep breath and give thanks to God for his grace in accepting you as you are.

Rev. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, PO Box 831313, Ocala, FL 34483. He lives with his wife, Martha, in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 1-866-552-2543 or e-mail [jamesnyder2@att.net](mailto:jamesnyder2@att.net) or website [www.jamesnyderministries.com](http://www.jamesnyderministries.com).

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## **Winter Weather Advisory URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE...CORRECTED NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE ABERDEEN SD 415 AM CST SUN JAN 1 2017**

...MIXED PRECIPITATION TONIGHT AND SNOW LATER MONDAY...

.A PAIR OF WEATHER SYSTEMS WILL PASS ACROSS THE REGION IN QUICK SUCCESSION. THE FIRST WILL MOVE ACROSS MAINLY EASTERN SOUTH DAKOTA DURING THE EVENING AND OVERNIGHT HOURS. THERE IS THE POTENTIAL FOR A WINTRY MIX WITH THIS FIRST SYSTEM...AND A FEW AREAS MAY EXPERIENCE A FEW HUNDREDTHS OF ICE ACCUMULATION...AND POSSIBLY AN INCH OR TWO OF SNOW. A SECOND SYSTEM WILL MOVE ACROSS THE AREA MONDAY...WITH 2 TO 4 INCHES OF SNOW POSSIBLE MAINLY ALONG AND NORTH OF HIGHWAY 12.

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TRAVERSE-BIG STONE-CORSON-CAMPBELL-MCPHERSON-BROWN-MARSHALL-ROBERTS-WALWORTH-  
EDMUNDS-DAY-SPINK-CLARK-CODINGTON-GRANT-HAMLIN-DEUEL-  
INCLUDING THE CITIES OF...WHEATON...ORTONVILLE...MCINTOSH...HERREID...EUREKA...ABERDEEN...  
BRITTON...SISSETON...MOBRIDGE...IPSWICH...WEBSTER...REDFIELD...CLARK...WATERTOWN...MILBANK...  
HAYTI...CLEAR LAKE

THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE IN ABERDEEN HAS ISSUED A WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY...WHICH IS IN EFFECT FROM 6 PM CST /5 PM MST/ THIS EVENING TO 6 AM CST /5 AM MST/ TUESDAY.

\* TIMING...MIXED PRECIPITATION WITH THE FIRST SYSTEM WILL MOVE IN LATE THIS AFTERNOON... AND CONTINUE INTO EARLY MONDAY MORNING. THE SECOND ROUND OF SNOW WILL HIT LATER ON MONDAY. PRECIPITATION AND STRONG WINDS WILL COME TO AN END TUESDAY MORNING.

\* SNOW AND ICE ACCUMULATIONS...TOTAL SNOW ACCUMULATIONS OF 1 TO 5 INCHES AND ICE ACCUMULATIONS OF A FEW HUNDREDTHS ARE EXPECTED.

\* WINDS / VISIBILITIES...LOOK FOR REDUCED VISIBILITIES AT TIMES...PARTICULARLY MONDAY NIGHT INTO EARLY TUESDAY DUE TO STRONG NORTHWEST WINDS.

\* MAIN IMPACT...ANY ICE WILL CAUSE TRAVEL DIFFICULTIES MONDAY MORNING. DIFFICULT TRAVEL IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE INTO EARLY TUESDAY DUE TO BLOWING AND DRIFTING SNOW.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

A WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY MEANS THAT PERIODS OF SNOW...SLEET OR FREEZING RAIN WILL CAUSE TRAVEL DIFFICULTIES. BE PREPARED FOR SLIPPERY ROADS AND LIMITED VISIBILITIES...AND USE CAUTION WHILE DRIVING. THE LATEST ROAD CONDITIONS FOR THE STATE YOU ARE CALLING FROM CAN BE OBTAINED BY CALLING 5 1 1.

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## 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. The board and hundreds of students across our state thank you for your support of South Dakota Destination Imagination.

## Case IH Heaters

70,000 BTU Heater- \$249.00

125,000 BTU Heater- \$349.00

215,000 BTU Heater-\$449.00

**Great Buys!**



## Sector 750 EFI UTV

Winch, Alloy Wheels, Windshield, Roof, Digital Dash, Blinker/Tail Lights, LED Lighting, Hydraulic Disc Brakes, Tilt Steering Wheel

**\$9,999**



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Ferney



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## Today in Weather History

January 1, 1960: The winter storm began on New Year's Eve as a low-pressure center moved from Colorado northeast to the Great Lakes. Snowfall ranged from 5 to 10 inches across central and north-east South Dakota. High winds on the 1st and 2nd caused low visibilities and drifted highways over affecting holiday travel. There were scattered power and telephone outages due to breakage from wind and ice. The storm wined down in the afternoon of the 2nd.

1864 - Snow, gales and severe cold hit the Midwest. It was the most bitter cold New Year's day of record with afternoon highs of 16 below zero at Chicago IL and 25 below at Minneapolis MN. (David Ludlum)

1934 - Heavy rain which began on December 30th led to flooding in the Los Angeles Basin area of California. Flooding claimed the lives of at least 45 persons. Walls of water and debris up to ten feet high were noted in some canyon areas. Rainfall totals ranged up to 16.29 inches at Azusa, with 8.26 inches reported in Downtown Los Angeles. (The Weather Channel)

1949 - A six day blizzard began over the Northern Rockies and the Great Plains. The storm produced the most adverse weather conditions in the history of the west. (David Ludlum)

1979 - The temperature at Maybell CO plunged to 60 degrees below zero to tie the state record set back in 1951 at Taylor Park. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A winter storm brought rain and snow and high winds to the Southern and Middle Atlantic Coast Region. The storm, which occurred in a period of unusually high astronomical tides, produced a tide of 9.4 feet at Myrtle Beach SC (their highest since Hurricane Hazel in 1954) which caused a total of 25 million dollars damage in South Carolina. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Arctic cold gripped the north central U.S. The morning low of 31 degrees below zero at Alamosa CO was a record for the date. Squalls in the Great Lakes Region produced 17 inches of snow at Elmira NY. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Those who woke up New Year's morning unable to see much farther than the end of their nose had a good excuse, at least in the central U.S., as dense fog prevailed from Texas to Wisconsin. (National Weather Summary)

1990 - The new year and decade began on a rather peaceful note. Snow was primarily confined to the Great Lakes Region, the Upper Ohio Valley, and the Sierra Nevada Range of California. Subzero temperature readings were confined to Minnesota and North Dakota. (National Weather Summary)

1994 - Strong winds along the eastern slopes of the Central Rockies gusted to 70 mph at Arlington WY, and gusted to 80 mph near Estes Park CO. Heavy snow in the northeast mountains of Oregon produced 14 inches at Tollgate. A series of storms the first three days of the year produced 20 inches of snow at Lowman, in the west central mountains of Idaho. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

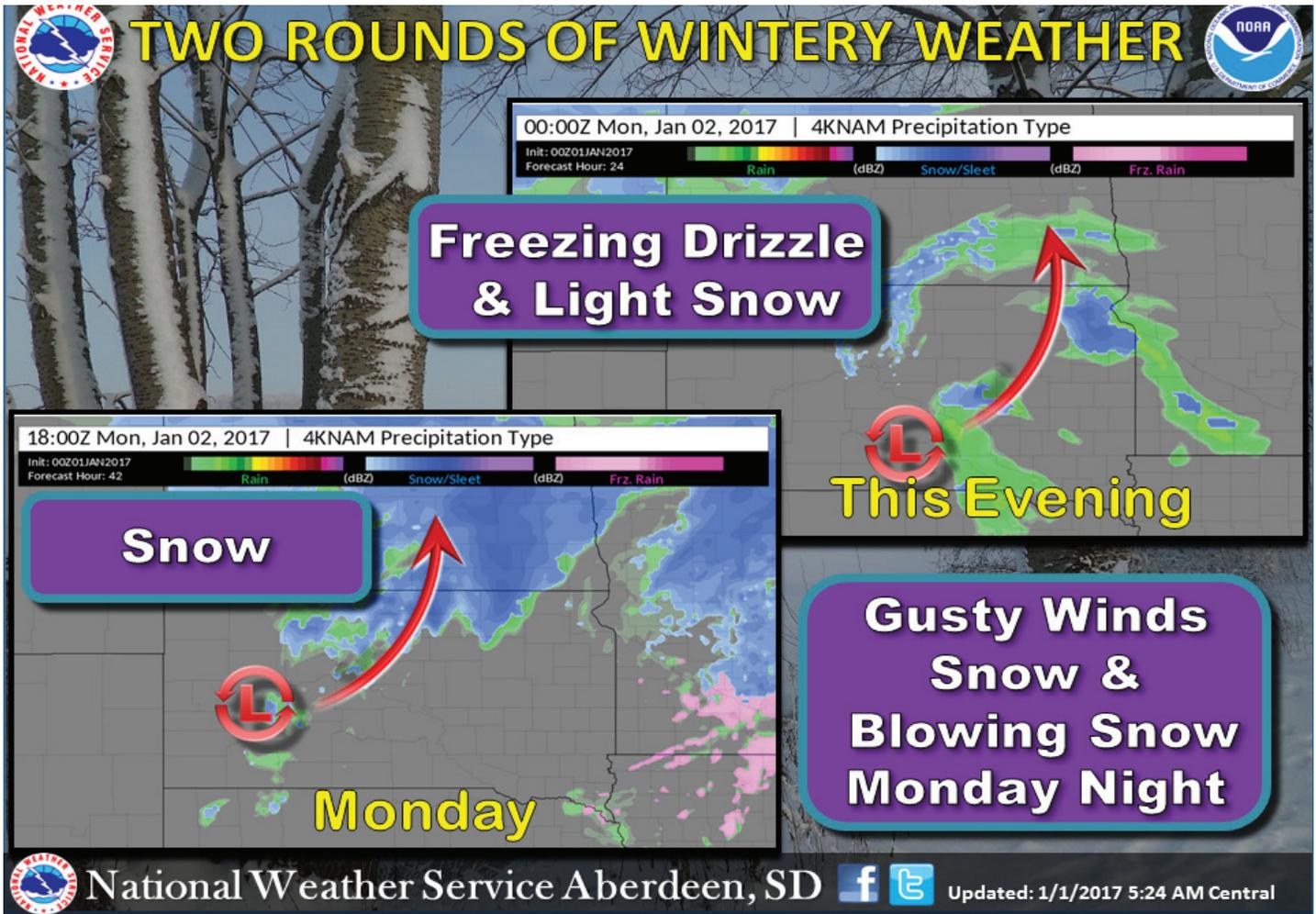
1997 - Heavy precipitation fell from December 26, 1996 to January 3, 1997 in much of the west. In the California Sierra Nevadas the Truckee River reached its highest level on record. Lake Tahoe reached its highest level since 1917. Sacramento was spared the worst of the flooding by a system of levees, although many nearby towns were not so fortunate. Numerous levee breaches and breaks occurred across the state. Approximately 16,000 residences were damaged or destroyed. State officials estimated at least \$1.6 billion in damages to private and public property.

1999 - A major blizzard struck portions of the Midwest on January 1-3, 1999. The storm produced 22 inches of snow in Chicago and was rated by the NWS as the second worst blizzard of the 20th century, ranking behind the blizzard in January 1967. Estimates of losses and recovery costs are between \$0.3 and \$0.4 billion with 73 dead as a result of the blizzard. (NCDC)

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|  | Winter Weather Advisory  |  |  | Tuesday  | Tuesday Night   | Wednesday   |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| New Year's Day   | Tonight  | Monday   | Monday Night   |  |   |   |
| <br>20% | <br>50% | <br>50% → 90% | <br>50% → 20% |  |  |  |
| Slight Chance Freezing Drizzle and Patchy Fog  | Chance Wintry Mix and Patchy Fog   | Chance Wintry Mix then Snow  | Chance Snow and Patchy Blowing Snow  | Cold and Blustery  | Partly Cloudy   | Cold  |
| High: 24 °F  | Low: 19 °F ↑   | High: 28 °F  | Low: 3 °F  | High: 4 °F   | Low: -13 °F   | High: 0 °F  |



Published on: 01/01/2017 at 5:27AM

A pair of systems will move across the region Sunday through early Tuesday. The first will bring with it a wintry mix, with some ice accumulations possible. The second system will follow with primarily snow. A few inches of accumulation are expected. Strong winds will follow on the backside. Expect hazardous travel conditions. These systems will also draw Arctic air back into the region.

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## Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 25.5 F at 12:00 AM

Low Outside Temp: 12.5 F at 8:41 AM

High Gust: 30.0 Mph at 12:51 AM

Rain: 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 53° in 1998

Record Low: -30° in 1919

Average High: 22°F

Average Low: 2°F

Average Precip in Jan.: 0.02

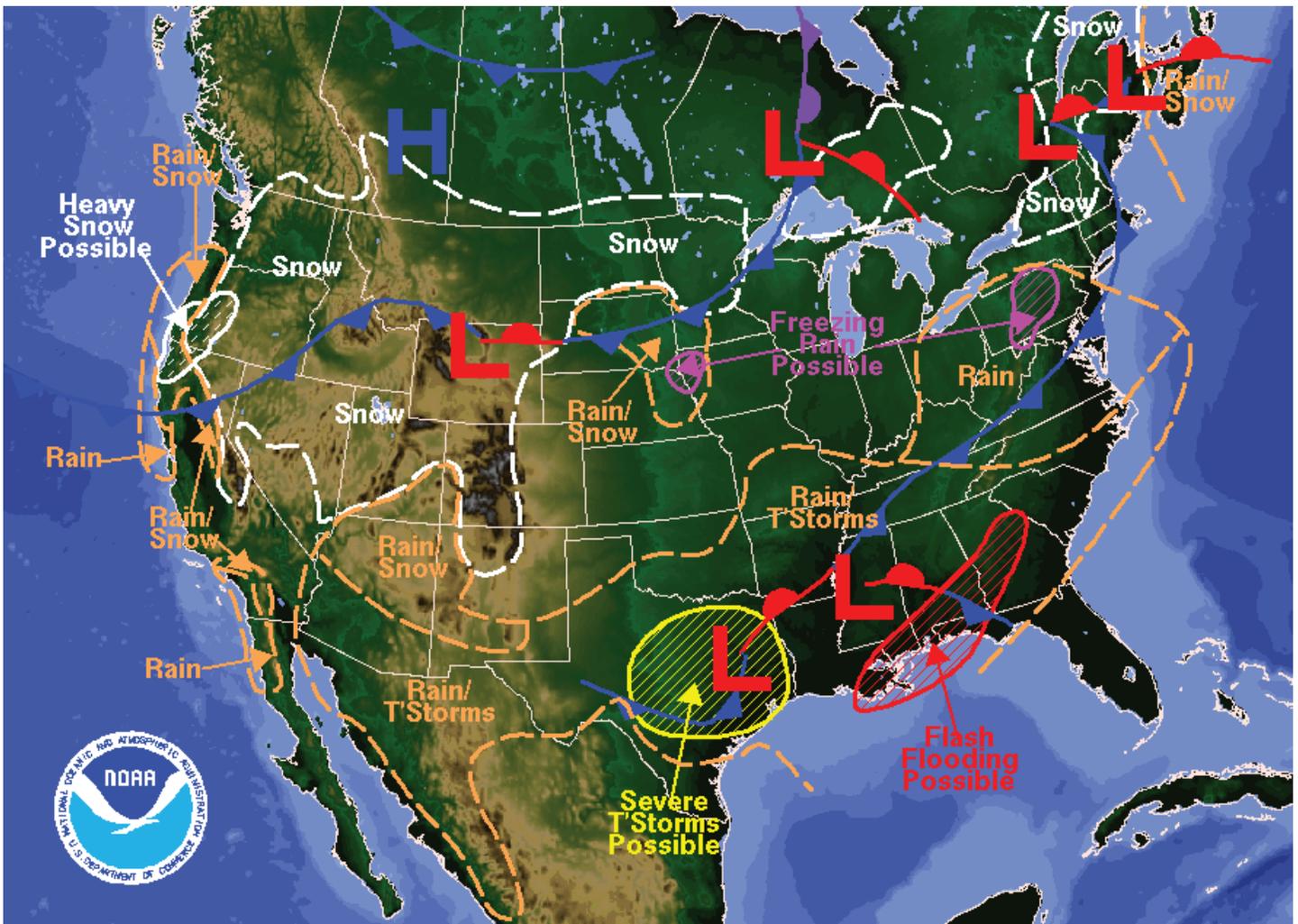
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.02

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 5:01 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:13 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Sun, Jan 01, 2017, issued 4:27 AM EST  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by Tate based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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## STARTING NEW

My father came from Italy. Often he would fascinate me with stories of their celebrations and holidays. One event stands out, celebrating New Year. They would begin each year with fireworks and noise making, hugging and dancing, shouting and well-wishing.

But that was not all. Believing that they should get rid of the old and take on the new, they would go through their drawers and closets and look for worn-out clothing, old dishes and furniture – whatever needed to be replaced. They would only keep what had value to them.

Perhaps it would do us good to go through our lives and take an inventory. We may find that we are harboring hatred and hostilities, harmful habits and hurts. Perhaps we would find some shortcomings and sins, false pride and forgotten promises. We may discover that there have been some days without prayer and Scripture reading, worship and witnessing.

The Bible advises us to “Throw off your old nature...be a new and different person, holy and good.”

We do not have to wait for a new year to do this. We can do it now!

Prayer: Father, we confess with sorrow, shame and sadness our sins. We ask that You would cleanse and consecrate us for Your service. Help us to throw off our faults and failures and replace them with Your values and virtues. Give us victory through Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Scripture: Ephesians 4:20-24 That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

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News from the  Associated Press

## Saturday's Scores

By The Associated Press

### BOYS' BASKETBALL

Dakota Valley 70, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 54  
Hanson 43, McCook Central/Montrose 30  
Minneapolis North, Minn. 69, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 56  
Tea Area 65, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 44  
Vermillion 67, Little Wound 53  
Waverly-South Shore 50, Leola/Frederick 47

### Entringer Classic (Brookings)

Arlington 61, Garretson 58  
Castlewood 67, Lake Preston 50  
Dell Rapids St. Mary 50, Estelline 16  
DeSmet 57, Deubrook 31  
Flandreau 61, Colman-Egan 42  
Hamlin 54, Elkton-Lake Benton 45  
Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 47, Deuel 45  
Sioux Valley 81, Dell Rapids 72

### GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Brandon Valley 50, Mitchell 23

## 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."

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

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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.

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"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."

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

## Daum's late hoop lifts SDSU over South Dakota 73-72

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Mike Daum scored 30 points, including the game-winning layup, to help South Dakota State beat South Dakota 73-72 on Saturday.

Trey Burch-Manning gave the Coyotes a 72-71 lead on a 3-point play with 11 seconds left. Daum then went coast-to-coast, driving hard to the rim through contact and using a reverse spin dribble toward the inside of the lane to get free for a bank shot with 2.8 seconds left. It was the Jackrabbits' first field goal in 6:15 and the fourth lead change in the final minute.

South Dakota (10-7, 1-1 Summit) missed a heave from half court at the buzzer.

The Jackrabbits (8-9, 1-1) hung close down the stretch by making 7 of 10 free throws after Daum's basket with 6:18 left made it 63-60.

Matt Mooney led the Coyotes with 22 points and five steals. His deep 3-pointer pulled South Dakota within 68-67 with 2:04 left.

## Deadwood backs expansion of Cadillac Jack's Gaming Resort

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A major expansion of Cadillac Jack's Gaming Resort has cleared its first hurdle, and Deadwood's mayor says it could cause other hotel operators to "up their game."

Infrastructure work for the four-story, 108-room Tru Hotel by Hilton is expected to begin in January after the City Commission approved a \$2 million financing plan.

The commission awarded RCS Construction of Rapid City a \$3.1 million contract for improvements that will include replacing a water main, upgrading sewers and adding a pedestrian bridge spanning Whitewood Creek, city planner Bob Nelson Jr. told the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2hRRd0T>).

The city's financing plan will cover \$2 million of the total costs, while Liv Hospitality, which owns Cadillac Jack's and nine other hotels in the Black Hills, will pay the rest.

Liv Hospitality CEO Caleb Arceneaux said the Deadwood expansion signifies his company's confidence in the former gold camp's future.

"Deadwood owns a special slice of American history; after all, we have been the life of the party since 1876," Arceneaux said.

The new hotel will be built south of the existing Cadillac Jack's hotel, casino and restaurant.

"Gaming consumers' tastes are changing," Arceneaux said. "They want a more impactful experience that creates memories, not just a slot machine. We're allocating much of the main floor space to food and beverage and entertainment outlets that will be very appealing and very unique to Deadwood."

The hotel is expected to open in May 2018, depending on weather, Arceneaux said.

Mayor Chuck Turbiville predicted the project may change the way Deadwood lodging proprietors operate.

"Some will look at it as additional competition, but it's a notification to everyone to be more competitive, to take a hard look at their businesses and what they are providing," Turbiville said. "Some may realize it's time to up their game."

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

## Rapid City School Board looks to break up employees' union

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Paraprofessionals in Rapid City Area Schools were expected to vote on whether to continue their alliance with the teachers' union after the school board moved to break off the association.

It is the second time in as many years that the school board is attempting to dissolve union representation.

The board sent a petition to the state's Department of Labor last week to decertify union representation for the district's 245 paraprofessionals. Last year, the board worked to decertify Teamsters Local 120, the union that represented support services employees, such as custodians and bus drivers. The local dissolved shortly thereafter, the Rapid City Journal reported (<http://bit.ly/2hrJXfU>).

The board's most recent action followed a closed-door executive session. The result will be an election at which the paraprofessionals will vote on whether they want the teachers' union, the Rapid City Education Association, to continue representing them, as it has for more than 20 years.

Paraprofessionals assist teachers in the classroom by focusing on individual students who need extra academic help, often because they have special needs such as a developmental or learning disability. The teachers' union, or RCEA, represents all paraprofessionals in the district, even those who aren't members.

District officials say the idea to decertify came from paraprofessionals themselves who were frustrated with last year's contract negotiations, which never materialized because of an error by the union's bargaining team. A member of the union failed to file a letter of intent to negotiate. Without the letter, the board refused to bargain over salaries, and the paraprofessionals had to take the first offer put on the table.

The union's failure is why some paraprofessionals would like to see it dissolved, according to district officials. Those are the voices that school board president Jim Hansen said he was listening to when the decision was made to try to decertify the paraprofessionals.

"Because people of their own group asked for that, the board said, 'Yes, we'll do that,'" Hansen said, adding that he believes the school board is helping the paraprofessionals.

But Virginia Montcrieff, who has been a paraprofessional in the school district for 19 years, thinks dissolving the union would be a mistake that would be difficult, if not impossible, to reverse.

"We do this job because we love the kids. We're not doing it to get rich," Montcrieff said. "Some amazing people do this job. We need support from this district, and we're not getting it."

The Department of Labor has not yet set a date for the election to decide whether the paraprofessionals will continue to have union representation.

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

## Justice, retirement systems among Daugaard's top priorities

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard enters his final two years in office aiming to tackle issues ranging from rising methamphetamine use to the solvency of the state retirement system.

During the legislative session that starts Jan. 10, the Republican governor will likely be the final word on reshaping a voter-approved government ethics overhaul and deciding whether to restrict the bathrooms that transgender students use.

Daugaard told The Associated Press that he and First Lady Linda Daugaard are looking forward to leaving politics after his second term. He said he hasn't considered seeking the U.S. House seat being

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vacated by Rep. Kristi Noem for the 2018 election.

"As Linda would say, 'not with this wife,'" he said with a laugh.

## GOVERNOR'S PRIORITIES

The governor heads into his penultimate legislative session hoping to enact policies to address issues surrounding mentally ill people entering the criminal justice system and fight against growing meth use and mounting drug arrests. The policies would be based on recommendations made by state workgroups.

Daugaard, who takes pride in South Dakota's financial health, is also backing changes to the state's retirement system to make sure it's sustainable by tying cost-of-living adjustments more closely to inflation, among other proposals.

The governor said he doesn't foresee proposing any more tax increases over the rest of his term.

## ETHICS OVERHAUL

Daugaard said he would be "surprised" if the ethics overhaul isn't repealed this session, saying that the campaign for the ballot measure was misleading. The high-profile initiative created an ethics commission, public campaign funding and limitations on lobbyist gifts to lawmakers.

"I'd be surprised if there were a hundred voters who've read the measure itself," said Daugaard, who has suggested studying the issues covered by the initiative to find other solutions.

A group of GOP legislators are challenging the ethics overhaul in court, and their ire will likely build into fireworks during the session. Initiative supporters say they're prepared to fight for it in the Legislature and again at the ballot box if necessary.

Daugaard said he's also open to changes to South Dakota's initiative system. Some Republican lawmakers are weighing whether to make it harder for people to put measures before voters after an election season that brought in millions of dollars from out-of-state groups.

## BATHROOM BILL

Daugaard vetoed a bill in 2016 that would have required transgender students to use bathrooms and locker rooms matching their gender at birth. Conservative group Family Heritage Alliance Action has said it "will encourage" legislation in 2017 on the topic.

The governor said a twin bill would face his same objections, but said he would have to evaluate other potential proposals.

## TOUGH CALL

Daugaard said his toughest 2016 decision was not calling a special legislative session to consider expanding the Medicaid health coverage program for low-income and disabled people. Daugaard had floated a special session to open the program to roughly 50,000 more low-income residents, but decided against it because it was unlikely to succeed in the Legislature.

He called it making the "right decision, regretfully." The governor ultimately abandoned plans for expansion in 2017 after a discussion with Vice President-elect Mike Pence about the Trump administration's plans for repealing or overhauling the Affordable Care Act.

## Standing Rock Sioux seek government storm recovery help

FORT YATES, N.D. (AP) — The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is seeking federal and state help to recover from a winter storm.

The tribe has issued a disaster declaration, asking for financial assistance from the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs and other agencies to help it deal with disruptions of business and transportation due to the Christmas Day storm.

The National Weather Service says 8-12 inches of snow fell in the Fort Yates area during the most

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recent storm. To date, approximately 40 inches of snow has fallen in the area.

Standing Rock emergency manager Elliott Ward tells the Bismarck Tribune (<http://bit.ly/2hUFzSW> ) the snowplows have been unable to keep up with all the snow and that roads on the reservation are bad. The declaration says a significant amount of livestock was lost in the storm.

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Information from: Bismarck Tribune, <http://www.bismarcktribune.com>

## **Kennel owner charged, 75 animals seized**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota kennel owner is charged with 37 counts of mistreating animals.

Sheriff's deputies were sent Janell Gibson's property in Pennington County earlier this month. Deputy Cory Dressler wrote in a report that the smell inside a barn on the property near Wall was "wretched and almost unbearable."

The Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2it180j> ) reports deputies say they found dead puppies, kennels piled with feces and animals without food or water. The deputies and animal control officers removed 75 animals; including 48 dogs, 12 cats and 15 rabbits. A hen pheasant was also removed.

The animals are being cared for at Humane Society of the Black Hills in Rapid City. Authorities say Gibson's kennel license was revoked in February after county inspectors found problems with the operation.

A call to Gibson for comment went unanswered.

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

## **Trump still not sold on Russian link to hacking**

**By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press**

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump says that "no computer is safe" when it comes to keeping information private, expressing new skepticism about the security of online communications his administration is likely to use for everything from day-to-day planning to international relations.

Trump rarely uses email or computers, despite his frequent tweeting.

"You know, if you have something really important, write it out and have it delivered by courier, the old-fashioned way," Trump told reporters during his annual New Year's Eve bash. "Because I'll tell you what: No computer is safe."

Trump has repeatedly cast aside allegations by U.S. intelligence agencies that Russia tried to influence the presidential election through hacking. President Barack Obama ordered sanctions on Russian spy agencies last week, closed two Russian compounds and expelled 35 diplomats the U.S. said were really spies. The Russian government has denied the allegations.

Trump plans to meet with intelligence officials in coming days to learn more about the allegations. He said he wants U.S. officials "to be sure because it's a pretty serious charge." He pointed to intelligence failures over the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq before the U.S. invasion, and declared himself an expert in the area.

"I know a lot about hacking," he said, "and hacking is a very hard thing to prove, so it could be somebody else."

He added, cryptically, that he also knows "things that other people don't know. And so they cannot be sure of the situation."

Asked what he knows, he said: "You'll find out on Tuesday or Wednesday."

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Trump made the comments during at his Mar-a-Lago club. Hundreds of guests gathered in the club's grand ballroom, including action star Sylvester Stallone and romance novel model Fabio. Reporters were invited to watch as guests arrived.

Earlier in the day, Trump ditched his press pool, traveling to play golf at one of his clubs without journalists on hand to ensure the public has knowledge of his whereabouts.

A member of Trump's golf club in Jupiter, Florida, posted a photo on Twitter of Trump on the greens Saturday morning and said about 25 U.S. Secret Service agents accompanied the president-elect. Reporters had not been advised of the visit to the club.

Transition aide Stephanie Grisham confirmed that Trump had made a "last-minute trip" to Trump National Golf Club Jupiter, which is about a half-hour drive from Mar-a-Lago, where Trump has been spending the holidays. He returned to the estate at midafternoon.

Grisham said that she and other aides weren't aware of the trip and "appreciate everyone's understanding."

"We are in the home stretch of this transition period and don't anticipate any additional situations like this between now and inauguration," she said in a statement.

Before he went golfing Saturday, Trump tweeted an unusual New Year's message to friends and foes: "Happy New Year to all, including to my many enemies and those who have fought me and lost so badly they just don't know what to do. Love!"

With the arrival of 2017, another New Year's message moved on Trump's Twitter account at about midnight.

This one was decidedly more upbeat, addressed to all Americans, and included an abbreviation for his campaign slogan: Make America Great Again.

"To all Americans- HappyNewYear & many blessings to you all! Looking forward to a wonderful & prosperous 2017 as we work together to #MAGA."

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Follow Colvin on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/colvinj>

## Manhunt in Turkey after New Year's nightclub shooting

By ZEYNEP BILGINSOY and SUZAN FRASER, Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — A manhunt is on in Turkey for an assailant in a Santa Claus hat who unleashed a salvo of bullets in a crowded Istanbul nightclub during New Year's celebrations Sunday, killing at least 39 people.

Foreigners were among the fatalities, including an 18-year-old Israeli woman and a Belgian national, according to the two countries' respective foreign ministries. Close to 70 others were injured in what authorities described as a terror attack.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vehemently condemned "the terror attack in Istanbul's Ortakoy neighborhood in the first hours of 2017" and offered condolences for those who lost their lives, including "foreign guests."

The attacker, armed with a long-barreled weapon, killed a policeman and a civilian outside Istanbul's popular Reina club at around 1:15 a.m. before entering and firing on people partying inside, Gov. Vasip Sahin said.

"Unfortunately (he) rained bullets in a very cruel and merciless way on innocent people who were there to celebrate New Year's and have fun," Sahin told reporters.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack and authorities did not name any suspects. The bloodiest attacks that Turkey endured in 2016 were the work of the Islamic State group or

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Kurdish militants.

Turkey is a member of NATO and a partner in the U.S.-led coalition against the Islamic State group. The country is also facing renewed conflict with Kurdish rebels in the southeast, and across the border in Syria and Iraq.

Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said the attacker has not been identified and is still at large. "Our security forces have started the necessary operations. God willing he will be caught in a short period of time," he said.

Private NTV news channel said the assailant entered the upscale nightclub, on the shores of the Bosphorus, on the European side of the city, dressed in a Santa Claus outfit. The minister said the lone attacker was believed to have left the club wearing different clothing.

Security camera footage obtained by AP from Haberturk newspaper, shows the male assailant dressed in black and carrying a backpack as he shoots down a police officer outside the Reina nightclub.

Footage taken by a different camera shows him inside the venue wearing different clothes and a Santa Claus hat.

Turkey's Minister of Family and Social Policies Fatma Betul Sayan Kaya said citizens of Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Lebanon, Libya were among those hurt in the attack. Lebanon's Foreign Ministry said three Lebanese citizens were wounded.

At least 15 of the dead were foreign nationals, according to Turkey's interior minister. Five of the victims were identified as Turkish nationals while authorities were still trying to identify the rest.

At least 69 people were being treated in hospitals, four in serious condition, Soylu said, describing the attack as a "massacre, a truly inhumane savagery." He said three or four of the Turkish victims may have been employees at the nightclub,

Some customers reportedly jumped into the waters of the Bosphorus to escape the attack.

Mehmet Dag, 22, was passing by the club and saw the suspect shoot at a police officer and a bystander. He said the suspect then targeted security, gunning them down and entering the club. "Once he went in, we don't know what happened. There were gun sounds, and after two minutes the sound of an explosion."

The nightclub area remained sealed off on Sunday morning.

Heavily armed police blocked the snowy street in front of the nightclub where the entrance was covered with blue plastic sheeting below a Turkish flag. Police patrolled the Asian side of the Bosphorus on the other side of the club.

Crime scene investigators were seen inside the club searching through piles of mingled chairs, tables and pieces of clothing left behind during the panic among the guests.

And there were emotional scenes in front of a city morgue where those shot dead were brought for identification. Some relatives cried out and fell to the ground as they apparently learned the fate of their loved ones.

Major attacks carried out by IS or Kurdish militants killed more than 180 people in Istanbul and Ankara alone in 2016.

On Dec. 10, a double bomb attack outside a soccer stadium near the Reina nightclub killed 45 people and wounded some 150 others. The attack was claimed by Turkey-based Kurdish militant group, the Kurdish Freedom Falcons.

"Turkey continues its combat against terror and is absolutely determined to do whatever is necessary in the region to ensure its citizens safety and peace," said President Erdogan in a written statement Sunday.

The nightclub attack drew quick condemnation from the West and Russia.

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Russian President Vladimir Putin sent his Turkish counterpart a telegram of condolences, saying "it is hard to imagine a more cynical crime than killing innocent people during New Year celebrations."

"However, terrorists don't share moral values. Our common duty is to combat terrorists' aggression," Putin said.

The White House condemned what it called a "horrific terrorist attack" and offered U.S. help to Turkey. An estimated 600 people were celebrating inside the club that is often frequented by famous locals, including singers, actors and sports stars. Several shocked revelers were seen fleeing the scene after the attack and the music fell silent.

The prime minister's office issued a media blackout on the events and asked media to refrain from broadcasting and publishing anything that may cause "fear in the public, panic and disorder and which may serve the aims of terrorist organizations."

Security measures had been heightened in major Turkish cities, with police barring traffic leading up to key squares in Istanbul and the capital Ankara. In Istanbul, 17,000 police officers were put on duty, some disguised as Santa Claus and others as street vendors, Turkey's Anadolu news agency reported.

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Fraser reported from Ankara. Associated Press writers Mehmet Guzel and Dusan Stojanovic in Istanbul and Dominique Soguel in Vannes, France, contributed to this report.

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This story has been corrected to give the death toll from the stadium attack as 45, instead of 44.

## **N. Korea's leader hints of long-range missile test launch**

**By ERIC TALMADGE, Associated Press**

TOKYO (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un hinted Sunday that Pyongyang may ring in the new year with another bang — the test-launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile.

In his annual New Year's address, Kim said that after testing what the North claims was its first hydrogen bomb last year, preparations for launching an intercontinental ballistic missile have "reached the final stage"

Kim did not explicitly say an ICBM test, which if successful would be a big step forward for the North, was imminent. But he has a birthday coming up on Jan. 8, and last year Pyongyang conducted a nuclear test on Jan. 6.

Kim threatened in the address to boost his country's military capabilities further unless the U.S. ends war games with rival South Korea. But he also said efforts must be made to defuse the possibility of another Korean war and stressed the importance of building the economy under a five-year plan announced in May.

"The political and military position of socialism should be further cemented as an invincible fortress," Kim said, according to an outline of the speech carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency. "We should resolutely smash the enemies' despicable and vicious moves to dampen the pure and ardent desire of the people for the party and estrange the people from it."

The address was shown on television mixing video with Kim speaking and stretches of audio only, as still photos were broadcast. It was less than 30 minutes long.

South Korea's Unification Ministry said in a statement that it "strongly condemns" Kim's threat to proceed with a test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile and strengthen North Korea's nuclear-strike capabilities. It said that the international community will not tolerate North Korean efforts to develop nuclear weapons, and that the North will only face tougher sanctions and pressure if it continues to go down that path.

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Under Kim, who rose to power following his father's death in 2011, North Korea has seen steady progress in its nuclear and missile programs, including two nuclear tests in 2016. It recently claimed a series of technical breakthroughs in its goal of developing a long-range nuclear missile capable of reaching the continental United States.

U.N. resolutions call for an end to North Korea's nuclear and missile tests. Kim appears uninterested in complying.

The year ahead could be a tumultuous one in north Asia, with Donald Trump set to become the new U.S. president on Jan. 20, and South Korea's politics in disarray over a scandal that brought the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye.

Kim indicated there will be no change in the North's nuclear policy unless Washington makes a big, conciliatory first move, which, even with the advent of Trump, would seem unlikely.

Trump has somewhat offhandedly suggested he would be willing to meet with Kim — but not in North Korea — and has at the same time indicated that he wants China to exert significantly more control over Pyongyang to get it to abandon its nuclear program.

Demands from Pyongyang for the U.S. to stop its joint military exercises with the South and enter into negotiations to sign a peace treaty formally ending the 1950-53 Korean War have fallen on deaf ears in Washington for years amid an atmosphere of distrust and deepening hostility.

Kim is in his early 30s and is now in his fifth year as the North's leader.

His New Year addresses, and a marathon speech at the May ruling party congress, are a contrast with his enigmatic father, Kim Jong Il, who rarely spoke in public. But he has yet to meet a foreign head of state or travel outside of North Korea since assuming power, and remains one of the world's most mysterious national leaders.

## Get ready for a blockbuster sequel: Alabama vs. Clemson

By PAUL NEWBERRY, AP National Writer

Get ready for a blockbuster sequel.

It's Alabama vs. Clemson, The Rematch.

The top-ranked Crimson Tide will take on the No. 3 Tigers in a do-over of last season's national championship game, a 45-40 thriller won by Alabama.

If the Jan. 9 matchup in Tampa comes anywhere close to that classic in the desert, it will more than make up for two semifinal duds on Saturday.

Alabama (14-0) wore down No. 4 Washington for a 24-7 victory in the Peach Bowl, while Clemson dominated No. 2 Ohio State 31-0 in the Fiesta Bowl, handing Urban Meyer the first shutout of his coaching career.

The Tide opened as a touchdown favorite.

"They are who they are because they're the best, they're the standard," Clemson coach Dabo Swinney. "We're excited. If you're ever going to be the best, you've to beat them. It's going to be an unbelievable game. I'm glad we've got a shot. That's all we can ask for."

Alabama will be going for its fifth national championship in eight seasons, a run that already has stamped it as one of the greatest dynasties in college football history.

If coach Nick Saban claims another title, he will join Bear Bryant as the only coaches to win six titles in the poll era.

Clemson (13-1) will be going for the second national title in school history, having come up just short a year ago.

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The Tigers wanted another shot at Alabama all along.

"Of course," said Clemson quarterback Deshaun Watson, who turned in a virtuoso performance in the Fiesta Bowl, much like he did in last year's title game. "They're the best of the best. You've got to earn it."

Alabama has been dominant all year long, surviving a close call at Ole Miss early in the season but winning every other game by double-figure margins.

The Tide went old school on Washington, wearing down the Huskies with its stifling defense and a powerful running game, overcoming an off day for freshman quarterback Jalen Hurts.

Bo Scarbrough, a second-string running back who has come on strong late in the season, rushed for 180 yards and two touchdowns in the Peach Bowl. He figures to play a big role in the championship game.

"We've been playing him more and more, and he has certainly delivered in a really positive way," Saban said. "Whoever's hot, that's who's going to get the ball. He's been hot lately and he's going to get the ball."

But everything at Alabama starts with the defense. The Tide leads the nation in most major categories and has even helped out the offense by scoring 11 touchdowns, including Ryan Anderson's interception return for a score just before halftime in the Peach Bowl, putting his team firmly in control against the Huskies.

"They can get in a quarterback's head," said Washington quarterback Jake Browning, who threw two interceptions and was sacked five times.

Clemson endured an up-and-down year that included close victories over Troy and North Carolina State, and a shocking loss at home to Pittsburgh.

But the Tigers, led by Heisman Trophy runner-up Watson, are playing their best when it matters most.

The victory over Ohio State was dominant in every way.

"That's our best four quarters of the year," Swinney said. "We were at our best on the biggest stage."

Well, not quite the biggest.

The next game is the one Clemson has been aiming for since the Tigers walked off the same field in Arizona having come up just short against Alabama.

"It's gonna be a heck of a ballgame down in Tampa," Swinney said. "Let's get it on."

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Follow Paul Newberry on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/pnewberry1963](http://www.twitter.com/pnewberry1963). His work can be found at <http://bigstory.ap.org/content/paul-newberry>.

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## Revelers say hello to 2017, goodbye to a year of conflicts

By The Associated Press

As 2016 draws to a close, revelers around the world are bidding a weary adieu to a year filled with political surprises, prolonged conflicts, deadly attacks at gatherings and deaths of legendary celebrities.

Here's a look at how people are ushering in the new year:

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NEW YORK CITY

An estimated 1 million people ushered in the new year in Times Square, screaming and kissing as the glittering crystal ball dropped.

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New Year's Eve revelers began to fill Times Square hours before midnight. They braved cold temperatures and strong winds at the Crossroads of the World to greet 2017 amid heavy police protection.

Maria Raimilla, from New Jersey, said 2016 was rough.

"Everything is going to be new," she said at midnight. "I just want to find happiness this year and leave all the bad things behind."

Lori Haan, from Tucson, Arizona, and her husband were on their first trip to New York. She said she's looking forward to what 2017 brings.

"This is a great start to the new year," she said. "We are doing something new and exciting, and I hope that it's a theme for the rest of the year."

Dozens of 20-ton sanitation trucks weighted with an extra 15 tons of sand blocked off streets leading to the celebration zone to avoid the possibility of a truck attack like those in Germany and France in recent months. About 7,000 police officers, along with specially armed counterterrorism units and bomb-sniffing dogs, were on guard.

Mariah Carey headlined in Times Square for "Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve with Ryan Seacrest" on ABC. She had technical difficulties during her performance and stopped singing, then she paced the stage and urged the audience to belt out the "Emotions" lyrics instead.

"I'm trying to be a good sport here," she said.

## AUSTRALIA

Sydney sent up a dazzling tribute to 2016's fallen icons with a New Year's Eve fireworks display honoring the late singer David Bowie and late actor Gene Wilder, becoming the first major city to bid a bittersweet adieu to a turbulent year.

The glittering display over Sydney's harbor and bridge featured Saturn- and star-shaped fireworks set to "Space Oddity," the classic song by Bowie, among the seemingly endless parade of beloved entertainers who died in 2016.

Wilder was honored as the bridge lit up in a rainbow of colors while a song from his film "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" played.

## TURKEY

New Year's celebrations turned deadly when an armed assailant believed to have been dressed as Santa Claus opened fire at a nightclub in Istanbul, killing dozens of people.

Istanbul's governor said at least 39 people were killed and about 70 others were wounded.

Security measures had been heightened in major Turkish cities, with police barring traffic leading up to key squares in Istanbul and the capital, Ankara. In Istanbul, 17,000 police officers were on duty, some camouflaged as street vendors.

Ankara and Istanbul have been targeted by several attacks in 2016 carried out by the Islamic State group or Kurdish rebels, killing more than 180 people.

Neslihan Dogruol, a restaurant owner in a chic Istanbul neighborhood, said she hopes for peace in 2017 following a year filled with "unrest and death."

"2016 affected everyone badly," she said.

## BRAZIL

More than 2 million people have welcomed 2017 at Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana beach.

Twelve minutes of fireworks amazed many of the more than 860,000 tourists who traveled to Rio for the party.

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The event was more modest than last year due to the city's recession. Still, tourists and Brazilians enjoyed a festival of sounds, including two sets of drums from popular samba schools.

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## LAS VEGAS

A decked-out bride and groom walking to a chapel and photo-happy tourists from halfway around the world were among the estimated 300,000 visitors turning out to celebrate the new year Las Vegas style.

The city's celebration features some of the biggest names in music headlining nightclubs and a fireworks show launching from the tops of half a dozen high-rise casinos.

Local police joined forces with the National Guard, the Secret Service and FBI agents to protect Sin City on one of its biggest nights of the year.

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## GERMANY

In Berlin the mood was more somber than celebratory.

"I don't like the way politics is going," Daniel Brandt said. "Fears are being fanned, and people are so angry with each other."

The tone of public debate in Germany has become shriller over the past two years with the influx of hundreds of thousands of migrants.

Walking by the Reichstag, Germany's Parliament building, Hamed Noori said 2016 had been a good year.

"I came to Germany from Afghanistan," he said. "Life is better here."

Nicole Durand-Nusser, originally from France but living in Berlin for almost 50 years, said 2016 had been a difficult year: "Brexit, Trump, Erdogan — it's all getting worse."

Later, police said they arrested a man who shouted "bomb, bomb, bomb" at Berlin's massive open-air New Year's party.

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## RUSSIA

President Vladimir Putin invoked a bit of seasonal enchantment in his New Year's Eve remarks to the nation.

"Each of us may become something of a magician on the night of the New Year," Putin said in a short televised address broadcast in the closing minutes of 2016 in each of Russia's 11 time zones. "To do this we simply need to treat our parents with love and gratitude, take care of our children and families, respect our colleagues at work, nurture our friendships, defend truth and justice, be merciful and help those who are in need of support. This is the whole secret."

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## LONDON

A beefed-up security presence throughout London and Britain's other major cities did nothing to squelch raucous New Year celebrations highlighted by a breathtaking fireworks display over the River Thames that began just after the Big Ben tower chimed midnight.

Police had added overt and covert personnel to patrol crowded areas, and some barriers were put in place to prevent vehicle attacks.

Britain had a tumultuous year, with a June vote to leave the European Union followed by the resignation of the prime minister, but Warren Male and Natasha Lewis said they looked back on 2016 with fondness.

"Because we've been together," Lewis said.

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## PARIS

Tourists and French revelers swarmed along Paris' illuminated Champs Elysees Avenue on a frosty night, admiring the laser display from the Arc de Triomphe and lines of trees sparkling with lights.

"It's so magical to be here in Paris, on what people say is the world's most beautiful avenue," said Maureen O'Reilly, a visitor from Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Some people were happy to say goodbye to 2016.

"It's been such a horrible year, with all these (entertainment celebrity) deaths, Syria, Brexit and Trump. I say: good riddance," said Karine Dublot, from Lyon.

## THE VATICAN

Pope Francis has called on the faithful to help young people find a place in society, noting the paradox of "a culture that idolizes youth" but has made no place for the young.

Francis said during vespers marking New Year's Eve that young people have been "pushed to the margins of public life, forcing them to migrate or to beg for jobs that no longer exist, or fail to promise them a future."

## JAPAN

Temple bells echoed at midnight as families gather around noodles and revelers flock to shrines for the biggest holiday in Japan.

Kami Miyamoto, an economics student at Meiji University in Tokyo, traveled home in Hakusan, Ishikawa prefecture, for the holiday.

Miyamoto's mother was preparing soba noodles, a standard New Year's Eve dish in Japan, except in their home it will be filled with green onions and shrimp. As the new year rolls in, the entire family, including her younger brother and sister, will drive to a nearby shrine, which, like temples all over Japan, will be filled with those praying for good fortune in the Year of the Rooster, according to the Chinese zodiac.

## CHINA

Residents in Beijing and Shanghai, China's two largest cities, passed New Year's Eve quietly in a relative state of security lockdown, according to Chinese media reports citing police.

The Bund waterfront in Shanghai had no celebrations, authorities announced this week, while the sale, use and transportation of fireworks in central Shanghai will be prohibited.

Large buildings that often display light shows also stayed dark. More than 30 people died two years ago in a deadly stampede on Shanghai's waterfront, where 300,000 people had gathered to watch a planned light show.

Chinese President Xi Jinping said in his New Year's Eve address his government will continue to focus on alleviating poverty at home and resolutely defending China's territorial rights.

## SOUTH KOREA

Hundreds of thousands of South Koreans ushered in the new year with a massive protest demanding the resignation of disgraced President Park Geun-hye. It was the 10th straight weekend of protests that led to Park's impeachment on Dec. 9 over a corruption scandal.

The evening rally was planned to overlap with Seoul's traditional bell-tolling ceremony at the Bosin-gak pavilion at midnight, which was also expected to be a political statement against Park.

The city's mayor, Park Won-soon, invited as guests a man whose teenage son was among more than

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300 people who died during a 2014 ferry sinking and a woman who was forced into sexual slavery by Japan's World War II military.

Park Geun-hye came under heavy criticism over the way her government handled the ferry disaster.

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## INDIA

For most people in India, New Year's Eve is a time for family. In New Delhi and many other cities, newspapers are full of big advertisements for lavish parties at upscale hotels and restaurants. The big draws at the hotel parties are song and dance performances from Bollywood and television stars.

The western city of Mumbai was to host big street parties with thousands of people at the iconic Gateway of India, a colonial-era structure on the waterfront overlooking the Arabian Sea.

And there was talk about money — India's recent devaluing of its currency in an apparent effort to cut graft and tax evasion.

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## PHILIPPINES

The Philippines' notorious tradition of dangerous New Year's Eve celebrations persisted after President Rodrigo Duterte delayed to next year his ban on the use of powerful firecrackers, often worsened by celebratory gunfire.

Powerful firecrackers and gunfire have maimed hundreds of people and killed some each year across the Philippines despite government crackdowns, an annual government scare campaign and efforts by officials to set up centralized fireworks displays, like on Saturday night.

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## ROMANIA

New Year's is the biggest party of the year in Romania, and thousands of people flocked to the mountains to ski, hike and celebrate, some in the mood for fun, others anxious about global challenges in 2017.

Former Finance Minister Daniel Daianu, traveling to the mountain town of Sinaia, said Western governments should pay closer attention to the public mood.

"People are frustrated, people are resentful and people react," he said. "Unless governments pay attention to fairness and fair play, we could see some very unpleasant surprises."

Early Saturday, young Romanians roamed streets and trains, wearing peasant costumes and singing traditional songs about goats, a New Year symbol, while waving wands made of dried flowers.

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## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

In Dubai, hundreds of thousands of people watched fireworks shoot from the sides of the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa.

There was no repeat of the chaos of last year, when police say faulty wiring sparked a fire several hours before midnight at a skyscraper nearby.

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## FINLAND CENTENARY

Finland has kicked off celebrations for 100 years of independence from Russia.

Tens of thousands of people gathered in Helsinki for a concert and a huge fireworks display to celebrate the beginning of festivities marking its independence.

Throughout 2017 there will be hundreds of events in the Nordic nation of 5.5 million, from films, dance parties and environment-related events to concerts and activities linked to its renowned sauna tradition.

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Celebrations will culminate on Dec. 6, the day Finnish Parliament declared independence in 1917 amid the turmoil of the Russian Revolution.

Finland shares an 800-mile border with Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday congratulated Finland for its centenary in a phone conversation with Finnish President Sauli Niinisto.

## MEXICO CITY

Thousands of people in Mexico City are expected to turn out for a New Year's Eve concert at the Monument to Independence, better known as The Angel.

Workers spent several days setting up a stage and a booming sound system along a stretch of the central Paseo de la Reforma boulevard. Streets were blocked off in the area, and 2,000 police officers were on hand for security.

The lineup includes a mix of Latin pop and balladeer Jorge "Coque" Muniz, with cumbia band Los Angeles Azules heating things up after a midnight fireworks show.

## Trump says he doesn't trust computers as he rings in 2017

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President-elect Donald Trump says that "no computer is safe" when it comes to keeping information private, expressing new skepticism about the security of online communications his administration is likely to use for everything from day-to-day planning to international relations.

Trump rarely uses email or computers despite his frequent tweeting.

"You know, if you have something really important, write it out and have it delivered by courier, the old-fashioned way. Because I'll tell you what: No computer is safe," Trump told reporters during his annual New Year's Eve bash. "I don't care what they say."

Trump has repeatedly cast aside allegations by U.S. intelligence agencies that Russia tried to influence the presidential election through hacking. President Barack Obama earlier this week ordered sanctions on Russian spy agencies, closed two Russian compounds and expelled 35 diplomats the U.S. said were really spies. The Russian government has denied the allegations.

Trump, who has said that he plans to meet with intelligence officials next to week to learn more about the allegations, said he wants U.S. officials "to be sure because it's a pretty serious charge." He pointed to intelligence failures over the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq before the U.S. invasion, and declared himself an expert in the area.

"I know a lot about hacking. And hacking is a very hard thing to prove, so it could be somebody else," he said.

He added, cryptically, that he also knows "things that other people don't know. And so they cannot be sure of the situation."

Trump made the comments during his annual New Year's Eve bash at his Mar-a-Lago club. Hundreds of guests gathered in the club's grand ballroom, including action star Sylvester Stallone and romance novel model Fabio. Reporters were invited to watch as guests arrived.

Earlier in the day, Trump ditched his press pool, traveling to play golf at one of his clubs without a pool of journalists on hand to ensure the public has knowledge of his whereabouts.

A member of Trump's golf club in Jupiter, Florida, posted a photo on Twitter of Trump on the greens Saturday morning and said about 25 U.S. Secret Service agents accompanied the president-elect. Reporters had not been advised of the visit to the club.

Transition aide Stephanie Grisham confirmed that Trump had made a "last-minute trip" to Trump National Golf Club Jupiter, which is about a half-hour drive from Mar-a-Lago, where Trump has been

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spending the holidays. He returned to the estate at midafternoon.

Grisham said that she and other aides weren't aware of the trip and "appreciate everyone's understanding."

"We are in the home stretch of this transition period and don't anticipate any additional situations like this between now and inauguration," she said in a statement.

Trump, both as a candidate and during the transition, has often scoffed at tradition, such as allowing a group of reporters to follow him at all times to ensure the public knows where he is. Not long after his election, Trump went out to dinner with his family in Manhattan without informing the pool of his whereabouts.

The practice is meant to ensure that journalists are on hand to witness, on behalf of the public, the activities of the president or president-elect, rather than relying on secondhand accounts.

The White House also depends on having journalists nearby at all times to relay the president's first comments on breaking news.

Trump aides appear to have made an effort in recent weeks to offer additional access, allowing reporters to camp out outside a doorway at Mar-a-Lago to document staff and Cabinet candidates' arrivals and departures. Aides also are providing information about his meeting schedule.

Every president and president-elect in recent memory has traveled with a pool of journalists when leaving the White House grounds. News organizations take turns serving in the small group, paying their way and sharing the material collected in the pool with the larger press corps.

Before he went golfing Saturday, Trump tweeted an unusual New Year's message to friends and foes: "Happy New Year to all, including to my many enemies and those who have fought me and lost so badly they just don't know what to do. Love!"

With the arrival of 2017, another New Year's message moved on Trump's Twitter account at about midnight.

This one was decidedly more upbeat and carefully prepared — illustrated with a photo that included his holiday message next to it, including a hashtag and abbreviation referring to his campaign slogan: Make America Great Again.

"To all Americans- HappyNewYear & many blessings to you all! Looking forward to a wonderful & prosperous 2017 as we work together to #MAGA."

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Follow Colvin on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/colvinj>

## **New Year's attack on packed Istanbul club leaves 39 dead**

**By ZEYNEP BILGINSOY, Associated Press**

ISTANBUL (AP) — An assailant believed to have been dressed in a Santa Claus costume opened fire at a crowded nightclub in Istanbul during New Year's celebrations, killing at least 39 people and wounding close to 70 others in what the province's governor described as a terror attack.

Gov. Vasip Sahin said the attacker, armed with a long-barreled weapon, killed a policeman and a civilian outside the club at around 1:45 a.m. Sunday before entering and firing on people partying inside. He did not say who may have carried out the attack.

"Unfortunately (he) rained bullets in a very cruel and merciless way on innocent people who were there to celebrate New Year's and have fun," Sahin told reporters.

Private NTV news channel said the assailant entered the Reina nightclub, in Istanbul's Ortakoy district, dressed in a Santa Claus outfit.

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Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said the man was still on the run, adding: "efforts to find the terrorist are continuing."

"Our security forces have started the necessary operations. God willing he will be caught in a short period of time," the minister said.

At least 16 of the dead were foreign nationals, Soylu said, without providing information on their nationalities. Five of the victims were identified as Turkish nationals while authorities were still trying to identify 18 of the victims. At least 69 people were being treated in hospitals, four in serious condition, Soylu said.

Some customers jumped into the waters of the Bosphorus to escape the attack, the report said.

Sinem Uyanik was inside the club with her husband who was wounded in the attack.

"Before I could understand what was happening, my husband fell on top me," she said outside Istanbul's Sisli Etfal Hospital. "I had to lift several bodies from top of me before I could get out. It was frightening." Her husband was not in serious condition despite sustaining three wounds.

Police with riot gear and machine guns backed up by armored vehicles blocked the area close to the Reina nightclub, one of the most popular night spots in Istanbul. Several ambulances flashing blue lights arrived on the scene, some taking wounded to hospitals.

The White House condemned what it called a "horrific terrorist attack" and offered U.S. help to Turkey.

White House spokesman Eric Schultz said President Barack Obama was briefed on the attack by his national security team and asked to be updated as the situation developed. Obama is vacationing in Hawaii this week with his family.

National Security Council spokesman Ned Price said the attack on "innocent revelers" celebrating New Year's shows the attackers' savagery.

"Our thoughts are with victims and their loved ones. We continue to work to prevent these tragedies," European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini tweeted.

An estimated 600 people were celebrating inside the club that is also frequented by famous locals, including singers, actors and sports stars. Several shocked revelers were seen fleeing the scene after the attack and the music fell silent.

The country has been rocked by a series of deadly attacks in 2016 carried out by the Islamic State group or Kurdish militants, killing more than 180 people.

On Dec. 10, a double bomb attack outside soccer stadium — located near the Reina nightclub — killed 44 people and wounded 149 others. The attack was claimed by Turkey-based Kurdish militant group, the Kurdish Freedom Falcons. Nine days later, an off-duty Turkish riot policeman assassinated Russian Ambassador Andrei Karlov at a photo exhibition in the capital, Ankara. The government has suggested that a movement led U.S.-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen was behind the killing — an accusation the cleric has denied.

Justice Minister Bekir Bozdog vowed that Turkey would press ahead with its fight against violent groups.

"Turkey will continue its determined and effective combat to root out terror," Bozdog said on Twitter.

Security measures had been heightened in major Turkish cities, with police barring traffic leading up to key squares in Istanbul and the capital Ankara. In Istanbul, 17,000 police officers were put on duty, some camouflaged as Santa Claus and others as street vendors, Turkey's Anadolu news agency reported.

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Dusan Stojanovic and Mehmet Guzel in Istanbul and Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Turkey contributed.

This story has been corrected to say that attack took place just after midnight Sunday instead of on Saturday.

## **With Ohio State shutout, Clemson earns another shot at `Bama**

**By RALPH D. RUSSO, AP College Football Writer**

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP) — In a return trip to the desert, Clemson found redemption through utter domination.

Part I of Dabo and Deshaun's make-good tour is done. Now comes the really hard part: A rematch against Alabama in the College Football Playoff national championship game.

Deshaun Watson ran for two touchdowns and threw another and No. 3 Clemson crushed No. 2 Ohio State 31-0 Saturday night in the Fiesta Bowl.

Tigers coach Dabo Swinney had sold his players on getting to celebrate at the same site where they lost to Alabama in the national title game last season. This time they got the confetti shower and the trophy at the University of Phoenix Stadium.

With that taken care of, it is on to Tampa, Florida, for the Tigers (13-1), where they will face the top-ranked Crimson Tide on Jan. 9. The teams that started the season ranked Nos. 1 and 2 will most certainly end it that way, too.

"If you're going to be the best, you've got to beat'em," Swinney said.

In what figures to be Watson's final college game, he will try to lead Clemson to its first national title since 1981. The junior and Heisman Trophy runner-up passed for 259 yards and ran for 57 against the Buckeyes (11-2), who could not keep Clemson's big and quick defensive line out of their backfield.

Redshirt freshman Clelin Ferrell had a sack among his three tackles for loss and Clemson allowed only 215 yards and nine first downs.

"We definitely expected to come out here and dominate because we grinded, but shoot! A shutout?" Ferrell said. "I don't think anybody expected that."

The Buckeyes were blanked for the first time since 1993 against Michigan and Urban Meyer had one of his teams held scoreless for the first time in 194 games as a head coach.

"I'm not used to it. We're not used to it. It's not going to happen again," Meyer said.

Watson made it 24-0 with 2:06 left in the third quarter when he faked a pitch, cut through a hole and into the end zone from 7 yards out. He hopped through the back of the end zone and did what he called a "little LeBron thing" in front of the Ohio State section, a bit of a shoutout to his idol and Buckeyes fan LeBron James.

"Just having a little fun," Watson said.

The rest was a formality.

Much the way Alabama's defense suffocated Washington in the day's first semifinal, Clemson gave Ohio State no options. The Buckeyes came in averaging 258 yards rushing per game and finished with 88. J.T. Barrett threw for 127 yards and was intercepted twice.

The sellout crowd of 71,279 had far more Ohio State scarlet than Clemson orange at kickoff, but half-way through the fourth quarter Tigers fans mostly had the place to themselves.

### THE TAKEAWAY

Ohio State: In a rebuilding year with only six returning starters, the Buckeyes reached the playoff. Hard to call that a disappointment, but Ohio State's issues on the offensive line and limitations in the passing game were badly exposed by a Clemson defensive line that features a bunch of future NFL

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players. Expect some Penn State fans to again start asking why Ohio State was picked for the playoff instead of the Big Ten champion Nittany Lions, who beat the Buckeyes in October.

Clemson: The Tigers seemed to spend much of the season trying to explain why they were not running roughshod over opponents. Expectations were so high after last season ended with a stinging 45-40 loss in a classic national championship game against Alabama.

There were close calls for Clemson early in the season against Auburn and Troy and they needed some luck to beat North Carolina State in overtime. Watson was throwing more picks and an offense that welcomed back star receiver Mike Williams was not quite the unstoppable juggernaut many expected.

But the best Clemson was the Clemson that showed Saturday. And that Clemson has always been the team best equipped to beat Alabama.

"If we play to the Clemson standard and play at a high level and focused and prepared and having a great mind-set and mentality, we can beat anybody in the country," linebacker Ben Boulware said.

UP NEXT

Ohio State: The immediate concern for the Buckeyes is figuring out which underclassmen will jump to the NFL. The most notable players who have decisions to make in the next two weeks are: Barrett, who will be a fifth-year senior next season; H-back Curtis Samuel; linebacker Raekwon McMillan and defensive backs Malik Hooker and Gareon Conley.

"I didn't really give it that much though, but it will be really hard for me to walk away when we just lost 31-0," Barrett said.

Clemson: Watson put on an all-time performance with 478 total yards against Alabama last season. This Tide defense is even better, but Clemson brings something new to the fight in Williams, who missed most of last season because of an injury. The 6-foot-3, 225-pound junior had six catches for 96 yards against Ohio State.

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Follow Ralph D. Russo at [www.Twitter.com/ralphDrussoAP](http://www.Twitter.com/ralphDrussoAP)

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More college football coverage: <http://collegefootball.ap.org/>

## A look at the major attacks in Turkey over the past year

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — A deadly New Year's assault on an Istanbul nightclub follows a long string of attacks in Turkey over the past year. A look at the most significant attacks:

— Jan. 12, 2016, Istanbul: Suicide bomber kills 12 German tourists in historic district. Authorities say attacker was linked the Islamic State group.

— Feb. 17, Ankara: A suicide car bomb apparently targeting military personnel kills 29 people in an attack claimed by TAK, an offshoot of the Kurdistan Workers' Party.

— March 13, Ankara: Kurdish woman blows herself up in a car at a busy transport hub, killing 37 people in an attack claimed by TAK, also known as the Kurdish Freedom Falcons.

— March 19, Istanbul: Turkish suicide bomber kills five people in the city's main pedestrian shopping street, Istiklal. Turkish officials say bomber was linked to IS.

— March 31, Diyarbakir: Car bomb kills seven police officers and wounds 27 people, including 13 police.

— April 12, Gaziantep: Syrian journalist dies from gunshot wounds from attack claimed by IS.

— April 27, Bursa: Female suicide bomber wounds 13 in a historic district of Turkey's fourth largest city.

— May 1, Gaziantep: Car bomb at the entrance of a police station kills two officers, 22 other people

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wounded.

—May 10, Diyarbakir: Car bomb strikes police vehicle carrying officers escorting seven detained Kurdish militants, killing three people and wounding 45 others.

— May 12, Istanbul: Car bomb targeting a military garrison explodes during rush hour, wounding eight people.

— June 7, Istanbul: Car bomb hits a riot police bus during the morning rush hour, killing 11 people and wounding 36. A Kurdish militant group claims responsibility.

— June 8, Midyat: Kurdish suicide car bomber kills five people and wounds 51, including 23 civilians, outside a police headquarters near Turkey-Syria border.

— June 17, Istanbul: Car bomb explodes as a police vehicle passes by, killing 11 people.

— June 28, Istanbul's Ataturk Airport: Three suicide bombers armed with assault rifles storm airport, killing 44 people and wounding nearly 150.

— July 15: About 270 people die in military coup attempt.

— Aug. 17, Van: Car bombing at a police station kills a police officer and two civilians; 53 civilians and 20 police officers wounded.

— Aug. 18, Elazig: Car bomb at police headquarters kills at least five people and wounds more than 140.

— Aug. 20, Gaziantep: Suicide bomber — possibly as young as 12 — kills at least 51 people at an outdoor Kurdish wedding party. IS suspected of directing attack.

— Aug. 26, Cizre: Kurdish suicide bomber rams an explosives-laden truck into a police checkpoint, killing at least 11 officers and wounding 78 other people.

— Sept. 12. Van: Car bomb wounds 50 people outside ruling party's municipal headquarters.

— Oct. 6, Istanbul: Motorcycle bomb explodes near a police station, wounding at least 10 people.

— Oct. 8, Ankara: Two suicide bombers blow themselves up after refusing to surrender to police. No one else was hurt.

— Oct. 9, Hakkari province: Kurdish militants detonate car bomb outside a military checkpoint in the southeast, killing 10 soldiers and eight civilians.

— Oct. 10, Dicle: A top local official of the ruling Justice and Development Party is killed when attackers open fire at a gas station he owned.

— Nov. 4, Diyarbakir: Car bomb near a riot-police bus kills at least 11 people, including two police officers. A Kurdish militant group and IS both claim responsibility.

— Nov. 24, Adana: Car bomb targeting a government building kills at least two people and wounds 33 others.

— Dec. 10, Istanbul: A double bomb attack outside soccer stadium kills 44 people and wounds 149.

—Dec. 17, Kayseri province: Suicide car bomber targeting a public bus transporting off-duty soldiers kills 13 troops and wounds 56 other people.

—Dec. 19, Ankara: A Turkish riot policeman assassinates Russian Ambassador Andrei Karlov at a photo exhibition.

—Jan. 1, 2017, Istanbul. An assailant opens fire at a crowded nightclub during New Year's celebrations. Istanbul's governor says the attack killed at least 35 people and wounded 40 others.

## **US states, leery of Russia malware, re-examine cybersecurity**

BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP) — Several states around the country on Saturday asked cybersecurity experts to re-examine state and utility networks after a Vermont utility's laptop was found to contain malware U.S. officials say is linked to Russian hackers.

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The Burlington Electric Department, one of Vermont's two largest electric utilities, confirmed Friday it had found on one of its laptops the malware code used in Grizzly Steppe, the name the U.S. government has given to malicious cyber activity by Russian civilian and military intelligence services.

A Burlington Electric Department spokesman said federal officials have told company officials the threat was not unique to them.

The Department of Homeland Security said it had no information indicating the power grid was penetrated in the cyber operation. A spokesman wouldn't say whether any other utilities, organizations or entities had reported similar malware on their systems but said any such information would be confidential.

Officials in New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut said they're more closely monitoring state and utility networks for anything suspicious.

"We have not detected any activity matching the reported malware at this time," Connecticut governor's office spokesman Chris Collibee said.

New Jersey's homeland security director said the state had no reports of malicious activity associated with Grizzly Steppe at major utility systems.

In New York, Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo directed all state agencies to re-examine their computer systems for security breaches. Nothing had been found.

An attack on a U.S. power grid has long been a nightmare scenario for top U.S. officials. The National Security Agency and U.S. Cyber Command chief Adm. Michael Rogers have previously warned it's not a matter of if but when attackers target U.S. power systems.

On Dec. 23, 2015, a highly sophisticated cyberattack on the power grid in Ukraine hit three regional electronic power distribution companies, blacking out more than 225,000 customers.

Democratic Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin said his administration has been in touch with the federal government and the state's utilities. He said people should be "alarmed and outraged" that Russia "has been attempting to hack our electric grid, which we rely upon to support our quality-of-life, economy, health and safety."

Burlington Electric noted it wasn't connected to the grid system and didn't explain how the malware got onto the computer.

The company said U.S. government authorities alerted American utilities about the malware code Thursday in a report released when Democratic President Barack Obama announced the U.S. response to election hacking. Obama ordered sanctions on Russian intelligence agencies, closed two Russian compounds and expelled 35 diplomats the U.S. said were spies.

A Russian state television channel on Saturday sought to discredit reports linking the malware to the Kremlin.

If Russia is found to be connected to widespread hacking of U.S. utilities, it will make it more difficult for Republican President-elect Donald Trump to soften anti-Russian sentiment on Capitol Hill, where hearings on hacking are scheduled next week.

Rep. Peter Welch, a Democrat from Vermont, said the incident proves Obama's response was warranted.

"This attack shows how rampant Russian hacking is. It's systemic, relentless, predatory," Welch said in a statement. "They will hack everywhere, even Vermont, in pursuit of opportunities to disrupt our country."

The Washington Post first reported on the Vermont utility's malware discovery.

The Rossiya state television channel said the Post provided no confirmation Russia was involved. It said the Post report spoke only about the identification of malicious software code that Washington

previously concluded had been used by the Russian intelligence services in the cyberattack on U.S. political institutions.

In a report released Thursday, Homeland Security and the FBI provided technical details about the tools and infrastructure they say Russian civilian and military intelligence services have used to compromise and exploit networks "associated with the U.S. election as well as a range of U.S. government, political and private sector entities."

"This activity by the Russian civilian and military intelligence services is part of an ongoing campaign of cyber-enabled operations directed at the U.S. government and its citizens," the report said.

Associated Press writers Deb Riechmann in Washington, Jacob Pearson in New York, Jennifer McDermott in Providence, Rhode Island, Holly Ramer in Concord, New Hampshire, and Christina Paciolla in Philadelphia contributed to this report.

## Texas judge halts federal transgender health protections

By PAUL J. WEBER, Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A federal judge in Texas on Saturday ordered a halt to another Obama administration effort to strengthen transgender rights, this time over health rules that social conservatives say could force doctors to violate their religious beliefs.

The latest injunction signed by U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor comes four months after he blocked a higher-profile new set of transgender protections — a federal directive that required public schools to let transgender students use bathrooms consistent with their gender identity. Several of the Republican-controlled states that brought that lawsuit, including Texas, also sued over the health regulations that were finalized in May.

Civil rights groups had hailed the new health rules as groundbreaking anti-discrimination protections. The Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund said the new U.S. Health and Human Services regulations advised that certain forms of transgender discrimination by doctors, hospitals and insurers violated the Affordable Care Act.

But a coalition of religious medical organizations said the rules could force doctors to help with gender transition contrary to their religious beliefs or medical judgment. O'Connor agreed in his 46-page ruling, saying the rules place "substantial pressure on Plaintiffs to perform and cover transition and abortion procedures."

The rules were set to take effect Sunday.

"Plaintiffs will be forced to either violate their religious beliefs or maintain their current policies which seem to be in direct conflict with the Rule and risk the severe consequences of enforcement," O'Connor wrote.

Transgender rights advocates have called that a far-fetched hypothetical, saying a person would not approach a doctor who lacked suitable experience and expertise.

The Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund criticized the injunction as contrary to existing law and said it expects the ruling to be overturned on appeal.

"Judge O'Connor's conclusion that transgender people and persons who have had abortions are somehow excepted from protection is deeply troubling, legally specious, and morally repugnant," said Ezra Young, the organization's director of impact litigation.

Federal officials did not immediately react to the ruling, and adding to the uncertainty is a new administration under President-elect Donald Trump. Many transgender people expect him to abandon or weaken the transgender protection efforts pursued by the Obama administration. Trump sent mixed signals about his approach to transgender rights during his campaign, at one point saying transgender

celebrity Caitlyn Jenner could use whatever bathroom she preferred in one of his luxury buildings.

At the same time, Trump has declined to repudiate a divisive North Carolina law that restricts transgender people's bathroom access. He has said such policy decisions should be left up to the states.

O'Connor's ruling also comes amid the fears of transgender people that more GOP-governed states will approve legislation limiting transgender rights and will reject proposals to expand such rights.

Joining Texas in the lawsuit over the health regulations were Wisconsin, Kentucky, Nebraska and Kansas, along with the Christian Medical and Dental Association and Franciscan Alliance, an Indiana-based network of religious hospitals.

The Obama administration finalized the regulations around the time it issued its directive to public schools regarding transgender students. Thirteen states signed on to fight that directive, including three involved in the health regulations lawsuit, and won a temporary injunction in August from O'Connor.

At the time, O'Connor wrote in that case that the federal education law known as Title IX "is not ambiguous" about sex being defined as "the biological and anatomical differences between male and female students as determined at their birth."

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Follow Paul J. Weber on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/pauljweber](http://www.twitter.com/pauljweber)

## **They loved her and she knows: Mardi Gras krewe honors Fisher**

**By REBECCA SANTANA, Associated Press**

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Their hair wrapped in side buns, wielding lightsabers and dressed as everything from Wookiees to stormtroopers, thousands of people turned out to honor Carrie Fisher, the actress famous for her iconic role as Princess Leia in the "Star Wars" movies.

Fisher, whose tough-talking princess defied Empire generals while tossing off one-liners like "into the garbage chute, flyboy," died Tuesday.

In New Orleans, where death is marked by both mourning and merriment, the Mardi Gras group called the Intergalactic Krewe of Chewbacchus organized a parade Friday in honor of the woman they consider royalty.

"This is a public demonstration of our love for Princess Leia," said Brooke Ethridge, one of the founders of the Leijorettes, a dancing group made up of fans who dress like Princess Leia. "Our first instinct was to hit the streets and parade and celebrate Princess Leia and Carrie Fisher."

Chewbacchus is dedicated to all things sci-fi and fantasy related and has always drawn inspiration from the "Star Wars" movies. The group's logo features the head of Chewbacca, the furry Wookiee who was Han Solo's close friend and co-pilot.

Fisher had been hospitalized since Dec. 23 after falling ill aboard a flight and being treated by paramedics at the Los Angeles airport. One day after Fisher's death, her actress mother, 84-year-old Debbie Reynolds, died as well.

Reynolds' son Todd Fisher said the mother and daughter will be buried together. They will have a joint funeral, but it will be private. Todd Fisher said the actresses will be interred at Forest Lawn-Hollywood Hills in Los Angeles, the final resting place of numerous celebrities, including Lucille Ball, Dick Van Dyke, Liberace, Florence Henderson, David Carradine and Bette Davis.

A public memorial is being contemplated, but no plans have been finalized.

A few dozen fans, many wearing costumes, gathered Saturday in Hollywood for a memorial for Fisher outside Grauman's Chinese Theatre, where the original Star Wars movie premiered in 1977.

The New Orleans parade was led by the Leijorettes, followed by a brass band playing the "Star Wars" theme as hundreds of people — many in costume or carrying light sabers — walked behind them. Fans

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lined the road, taking photos.

"I didn't know her. But as an iconic character and as a person, a writer and a smart funny fantastic woman and role model, I was heartbroken and devastated," Dale Hrebrik said.

But even in a crowd where Fisher's Princess Leia role was front and center, many pointed out the contributions Fisher had made even after her "Star Wars" acting wound down. One marcher in the crowd held a sign calling Fisher, who spoke openly about her struggles with bipolar disease, a mental health advocate.

Jacquelyn Ryan came with her husband and two children. Her hair was wrapped in the two side buns Fisher wore in the first movie, but Ryan said she was more impressed with Fisher's other contributions.

"Probably my first introduction to her was 'Star Wars,' but she as a person was really important. Her activism, her mental health awareness, her activism for women, her unapologetic attitude about youth and beauty in Hollywood really spoke to me," Ryan said.

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Follow Rebecca Santana on Twitter @ruskygal.

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AP writer Anthony McCartney and AP television writer Lynn Elber, both in Los Angeles, contributed to this report.

## No big New Year's celebrations for Iraq's displaced

By HAMZA HENDAWI, Associated Press

BARTELLA, Iraq (AP) — There were no big New Year's celebrations for the Iraqi men, women and children who narrowly escaped the fighting in Mosul, only to wait for hours under armed guard while the fighting-age males among them were cleared of links to the Islamic State.

The lucky ones would go with their families to one of the wind-swept camps for displaced Iraqis, where they will endure the remainder of northern Iraq's bitterly cold winter in tents and learn to survive on insufficient supplies of food, heating oil and blankets.

Those whose names were found on the wanted list would be detained, interrogated and likely face trial.

Many of the Iraqis told of going hungry in Mosul for weeks, surviving on a single daily meal and drinking murky water extracted from recently dug wells. There was no formula for their small children, who survived on bread soaked in tea or soup made of rice or crushed wheat. Life was miserable without electricity or medical care. They watched mortar shells or stray bullets kill their relatives and neighbors.

They don't know when they will go home, but are thankful.

"The camp is the lesser of two evils. Life in Mosul now kills you," said 33-year-old English teacher Ahmed Abu Karam, from the IS-held Karama neighborhood east of the Tigris River. "What happens in 2017 is in the hands of God alone, but let me tell you this: My escape, thanks be to God, has given me a new life."

Abu Karam was among about 200 men ordered by grim faced Iraqi soldiers to squat outside a row of abandoned stores on a main road close to the mainly Christian town of Bartella near Mosul. It is the gathering point for the mainly Sunni residents who fled Mosul to avoid being killed in the crossfire between government troops and IS militants or because they ran out of food and money.

The ground where they gathered was wet from a heavy downpour a few days before and scattered with trash. Many men sported long beards they had to grow under IS rule, but some were shaving off their facial hair on Saturday as they waited. As the men were processed, the women and children sat on buses. The men were expected to be transferred separately, many in the back of army trucks, one

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of which flew a Shiite banner.

"We Sunnis are marginalized," said Abu Karam. "The security forces ran away and left us with Daesh in 2014. Now they suspect us of being terrorists," he said, using the Arabic acronym for IS.

Iraq's Shiite-dominated military and security forces launched a new offensive in Mosul on Thursday, breaking a two-week lull in fighting that began in mid-October, more than two years after Iraq's military and police melted away in the face of an IS blitz across northern and western Iraq.

The renewed fighting in Mosul has forced hundreds of civilians to flee, joining an estimated 120,000 who already left. Most gathered in Bartella on Saturday came from neighborhoods where the latest fighting is taking place.

Electrician Ibrahim Saleh and his family escaped Mosul's Quds neighborhood on Friday and spent the night at the home of "kind strangers" in a suburb just east of the city. He said he, his wife and children endured most of the last two months hiding under their house's staircase for fear of shelling.

"We have survived only by divine intervention," he said.

The camps for Iraqis displaced by the fighting in and around Mosul are mostly south and east of the city in Nineveh province and in the nearby self-ruled Kurdish region. There, many complain of rain and other severe winter conditions, or inadequate supplies of heating oil and medicines.

But in one of the larger camps for the displaced in the Kurdish region — Hassan Sham — a local non-governmental organization provided a welcome change from the drab daily life there by throwing a New Year's party for the children, complete with clowns and face painting.

But the children's excitement did little to conceal the camp's grim realities, or erode the painful memories of life under IS and the horrors of war in Mosul since October.

Shortly before the party began, camp residents pushed and shoved over blankets and clothes distributed by local donors. Some spoke of feeling imprisoned in the camp, unable to secure a sponsor allowing them to live in the urban bustle of nearby Irbil, the Kurdish region's capital.

Akram Ali, a former cameraman for a Mosul TV channel, now makes less than 10 dollars a day cutting hair, but still enough to buy fresh vegetables and fruit to supplement the food handouts he, his wife and four children get from camp organizers.

"We died 20 times every day when we lived under fire in Mosul," he recounted emotionally. "Under Daesh, it was oppression, tragedies, persecution and suffering. I can do without food and water, as long as I and my family are safe."

Fellow camp resident Mustafa Mahmoud, a 21-year-old who quit school when IS took over his native Mosul in 2014, sees little to celebrate with the arrival of 2017. Since arriving at the camp six weeks ago, he goes to bed at 7 or 8 every evening.

"Nothing will change tonight," he said.

## UN backs Russian-Turkish Syria efforts as cease-fire wavers

By EDITH M. LEDERER and PHILIP ISSA, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution Saturday supporting efforts by Russia and Turkey to end the nearly six-year conflict in Syria and jump-start peace negotiations, as a fragile country-wide cease-fire wavered.

The resolution also calls for the "rapid, safe and unhindered" delivery of humanitarian aid throughout Syria. And it anticipates a meeting of the Syrian government and opposition representative in Kazakhstan's capital Astana in late January.

The resolution's final text dropped an endorsement of the Syria cease-fire agreement reached Thurs-

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day, simply taking note of it but welcoming and supporting Russian-Turkish efforts to end the violence. Western members of the council sought the last-minute changes to the draft resolution to clarify the U.N.'s role and the meaning of the agreement brokered by Moscow and Ankara.

U.S. deputy ambassador Michele Sison said the Obama administration strongly supports a cease-fire and "unfettered humanitarian access," but she expressed regret that additional documentation to the agreement brokered by Russia and Turkey with details about its implementation have not yet been made public.

Meanwhile on the ground in Syria, rebels warned on Saturday that cease-fire violations by pro-government forces threatened to undermine the two-day-old agreement intended to pave the way for talks between the government and the opposition in the new year.

Airstrikes pounded opposition-held villages and towns in the strategically-important Barada Valley outside Damascus, activists said, prompting rebels to threaten to withdraw their compliance with a nationwide truce brokered by Russia and Turkey last week.

The airstrikes let up in the late evening, but rebels nevertheless staged retaliatory attacks against government-held areas in other parts of the country, according to the media arm of the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, which is fighting alongside the government in Syria.

Hezbollah military media reported a barrage of rebel rocket fire on the twin Shiite villages of Foua and Kfraya in northern Syria which have remained loyal to the government in the otherwise rebel-dominated Idlib province. The government's side has rallied thousands of Shiite militia fighters from across the Middle East on the grounds of defending the sect in Syria.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group also reported the attacks. It added that pro-government forces had advanced against rebels in the eastern Ghouta region outside Damascus, in a clear violation of the cease-fire.

Rebels also accused the government of signing a different version of the agreement to the one they signed in the Turkish capital of Ankara, further complicating the latest diplomatic efforts to bring an end to six years of war.

Nearly 50,000 people died in the conflict in 2016, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which maintains networks of contacts on all sides of the war. More than 13,000 of them were civilians, according to the Observatory. Various estimates have put the war's overall toll at around 400,000 dead.

If the truce holds, the government and the opposition will be expected to meet for talks for the first time in nearly a year in the Kazakh capital of Astana in the second half of January. Those talks will be mediated by Russia, Turkey and Iran, though Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin has said other key players including the United States are welcome to participate.

Churkin said after Saturday's vote that the Astana talks will be the first face-to-face negotiations between the Syrian government and opposition and he expressed hope that 2017 will see a political settlement of the conflict that has claimed over 250,000 lives.

Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Moallem and Major General Ali Mamlouk, head of the National Security Bureau, were in Tehran Saturday to discuss developments with their Iranian counterparts, according to Iranian state media. They met with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Ali Shamkhani, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council.

The Kremlin meanwhile said Russian President Vladimir Putin and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani confirmed their commitment to negotiations in Astana, in a phone conversation between the two leaders.

Iran and Russia have provided crucial military and diplomatic support to Syrian President Bashar Assad throughout the conflict, while Turkey has served as a rear base and source of supplies for the

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opposition.

The developments follow months of talks between Ankara and Moscow that culminated in a cease-fire agreement that went into effect Friday at midnight.

But in a statement issued by a coalition of 11 rebel factions, including the powerful Army of Islam group operating in the Damascus countryside, rebels said they could not abide by the cease-fire if the government continued its assault on Barada Valley.

The statement also complained that the government's version of the agreement signed in Ankara last week had deleted "a number of essential and non-negotiable points."

It said the opposition had agreed to a cease-fire encompassing the whole of Syria, without any exceptions to region or faction.

The Barada Valley Media Center said Lebanese Hezbollah militants were firing on villages and towns in the water-rich region as Russian and government aircraft carried out raids for the 10th consecutive day Saturday. The Lebanese militant group is a key ally to President Assad's forces.

The Barada Valley is the primary source of water for the capital and its surrounding region. The government assault has coincided with a severe water shortage in Damascus since Dec. 22. Images from the valley's Media Center indicate its Ain al-Fijeh spring and water processing facility have been destroyed in airstrikes. The government says rebels spoiled the water source with diesel fuel, forcing it to cut supplies to the capital.

The Observatory reported at least two civilians and five militants have been killed in battles over opposition-held Eastern Ghouta and Barada Valley regions around Damascus, since the truce came into effect Thursday at midnight.

The Syrian military on Friday denied attacking the valley, saying it respected the Russian and Turkish brokered truce.

Meanwhile, Turkey's state-run Anadolu news agency reported the death of an Islamic State commander in a Turkish airstrike near the north Syrian town of al-Bab on Friday. The truce does not cover operations against the Islamic State group or al-Qaida's Syria affiliate, the Fatah al-Sham front.

Anadolu identified the commander as Abu Ansari. The report could not be independently verified.

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Lederer reported from the United Nations. Associated Press writers Zeynep Bilginsoy in Istanbul, James Heintz in Moscow, and Mohammad Nasri in Tehran, Iran, contributed to this report.

## **Ban Ki-moon buoyed by climate accord but laments conflicts**

**By EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press**

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Ban Ki-moon ends 10 years at the helm of the United Nations lamenting the "fires still burning" from Syria to South Sudan but buoyed by a global agreement to combat climate change and new U.N. goals to fight poverty and inequality.

As a final act before his term ends at midnight on New Year's Eve, the secretary-general will push the button starting the descent of the glittering 11,875-pound ball in New York's Times Square in the countdown to 2017's arrival. At that moment, former Portuguese prime minister Antonio Guterres will start his tenure as United Nations chief for the next five years.

Looking back at his stewardship of the United Nations at a farewell news conference earlier this month, Ban told reporters "this has been a decade of unceasing test."

While he has seen collective action improve millions of lives, Ban expressed frustration at the failure to end Syria's war, now in its sixth year, and conflicts in South Sudan, Yemen, Central African Republic

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and Congo, to name a few.

And in rare criticism of world leaders, he blamed unnamed presidents, prime ministers and monarchs for the turmoil in the world today — and expressed disappointment many care more about retaining power than improving their people's lives. He singled out Syria, saying he can't understand why it is being held hostage to "the destiny" of one man, Bashar Assad.

Even after leaving the U.N., Ban said he will keep urging new and longstanding leaders to embrace the "pre-eminent 21st century fact" — that "international cooperation remains the path to a more peaceful and prosperous world" — and to demonstrate "compassionate leadership."

To reinforce this, the secretary-general's final trip this month was to visit the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois. "Lincoln was a heroic force for equality, integration and reconciliation; and desperately, we need that spirit today," Ban said of the U.S. leader during America's Civil War.

Ban has also expressed frustration at the way the U.N. operates and expectations in some quarters that the secretary-general has the power "to be some almost almighty person." That's impossible, he told the AP in September, because the U.N.'s 193 member states make decisions and the secretary-general implements them. The U.N. chief cannot implement his or her own policies and initiatives.

John Bolton, who was U.S. ambassador to the U.N. when Ban was selected to be secretary-general, said President George W. Bush's administration supported him because "we wanted someone who would do what the member governments wanted" — and not take the lead on issues and act as the world's top diplomat like then-secretary-general Kofi Annan.

"I think Ban Ki-moon lived up to our expectations, which is not to say I agreed with every position he took on climate change and things like that," Bolton told AP.

When the former South Korean foreign minister, who grew up during the Korean War, took over as secretary-general from Annan at the start of 2007, he promised his tenure would be "marked by ceaseless efforts to build bridges and close divides." And he made tackling global warming, then on a back burner, a top priority.

During his first term, he won plaudits for helping move climate change close to the top of the global agenda, for creating UN Women to focus on the fight for gender equality, and for speaking out early and strongly for demonstrators in Tunisia and other countries that rose up in the Arab Spring.

During his second term, his campaign for a new global climate deal culminated in the December 2015 Paris agreement. He got all 193 member states to agree on 17 new U.N. goals and 169 targets to combat poverty, achieve gender equality, protect the environment and ensure good governance by 2030. He called early on for an end to the Syrian conflict and he strongly backed gay rights despite opposition from many countries.

But Ban also faced criticism — in his first term for not speaking out against human rights abuses in China and Russia. In his second term, the U.N.'s handling of the cholera epidemic in Haiti and its failure to deal effectively with sexual abuse by U.N. peacekeepers in the Central African Republic and elsewhere were widely criticized. Ban's temporary removal of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition in Yemen from a U.N. blacklist for allegedly killing children after coalition supporters threatened to stop funding many U.N. programs was sharply rebuked as well.

A workaholic, Ban traveled more than any of his predecessors on U.N. business. He said most Western leaders speak through statements, but he believes face-to-face meetings with world leaders are critical to getting support to end conflicts or promote action on issues like climate change and combatting poverty.

Despite his decade as U.N. chief, Ban Ki-moon is hardly a household name. He has been criticized for

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his lack of charisma and communication skills crucial in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world, though in private and at the off-the-record U.N. Correspondents Association's annual gala he has regularly displayed a good sense of humor.

France's U.N. Ambassador Francois Delattre told AP he deeply values Ban's "sense of humility."

"The world owes him a lot, both as a man whose commitment to common good is second to none and as a leader whose secret weapon is a genuine respect for others — the best tool for real leadership," Delattre said.

When Ban came to the U.N., he had been in the forefront of South Korea's nuclear negotiations with Pyongyang. He said he planned to travel to North Korea as secretary-general, something Annan never did, but he didn't get there.

His hope of using his U.N. position to promote peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula "and a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue" remained unrealized. But after some time off, he will return to South Korea amid widespread speculation he will be a candidate to replace the country's impeached president. If so, North Korea will again be at the top of his agenda.

## **Palestinian president ready to work with Trump for peace**

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) — Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas says he is willing to work with President-elect Donald Trump to reach a two-state solution to the conflict with Israel.

Abbas spoke Saturday at an event marking the anniversary of his Fatah party.

He said "We want to emphasize our willingness to work with the newly-elected American administration... to achieve peace... based on a two-state solution."

Abbas thanked the U.S. for its U.N. abstention vote last week, which allowed the Security Council to adopt a resolution declaring Israeli settlements in territory claimed by Palestinians illegal.

The two-state solution has been the basis for peace talks under the past several U.S administrations.

Trump's election platform didn't mention a Palestinian state and his choice for ambassador to Israel has strong ties to the West Bank settler movement.

## **AP New Year's poll: Americans ready to bid farewell to 2016**

**By EMILY SWANSON and VERENA DOBNIK, Associated Press**

NEW YORK (AP) — Emotionally wrenching politics, foreign conflicts and shootings at home took a toll on Americans in 2016, but they are entering 2017 on an optimistic note, according to a new poll that found that a majority believes things are going to get better for the country next year.

A look at the key findings of the Associated Press-Times Square Alliance poll:

### **SO HOW WAS 2016?**

Americans weren't thrilled with the year. Only 18 percent said things for the country got better, 33 percent said things got worse, and 47 percent said it was unchanged from 2015.

On a personal level, they were optimistic about 2017.

Fifty-five percent said they believe things will be better for them in the coming year than in the year that just concluded. That's a 12-point improvement from last year's poll.

Americans interviewed about the poll's results expressed some of that optimism.

"Next year will be better than this year, because people will have more jobs and they'll have more money to spend," said Bourema Tamboura, a Harlem resident who works for a New York car service.

"I'm hoping 2017 will be better," said Elizabeth Flynn, 62, an elementary schoolteacher from Peabody,

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Massachusetts. "You've got to be optimistic, and I'm going to try."

Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say 2016 was worse for the country than 2015. And Republicans are especially likely to feel that 2017 will be even better for them personally.

University of Miami professor Benjamin Alsup said he needed only three words to explain why 2016 felt worse for him: "Trump, Trump, Trump!"

Robert Greenstone, a New York commercial real estate broker, said the political discourse leading up to Republican Donald Trump's election as president played havoc with people's emotions.

"The amount of disinformation made people suspect of everything and everyone, even their neighbors," he said.

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## U.S. ELECTION LEADS TOP NEWS EVENTS

The U.S. elections top Americans' list of 10 top news events in 2016. Three-quarters called the presidential election and Trump's victory very or extremely important.

Sixty-three percent ranked mass shootings and bombings in Orlando, Florida, and in Belgium, Turkey, Pakistan and France as personally important news stories of the year.

Fifty-one percent said they found news stories about the deaths of people at the hands of police officers, or news about ambush attacks on police in three states, to be among the year's most important news events.

Fourth on the list are 43 percent who described the spread of the Zika virus as important.

The three events described by the largest percentages of Americans as not too important included the death of Muhammad Ali (50 percent), approval of recreational marijuana use in four states (43 percent), and the death of Fidel Castro (40 percent).

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## TOP MOMENTS IN POP CULTURE AND SPORTS

A majority of Americans, including 7 in 10 Midwesterners, called November's World Series win for the Chicago Cubs to end their 108-year drought memorable.

Of nine other pop-culture items tested, two were called memorable by about half of Americans: the death of Prince, David Bowie and Leonard Cohen; and the Olympic victories of the U.S. women's gymnastics team.

The two least-notable events for Americans, of the 10 possible choices in the poll, were the Angelina Jolie-Brad Pitt divorce filing and the "Pokemon Go" app game phenomenon, each described by most as forgettable.

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## RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR

About half of Americans plan to celebrate the New Year at home. About 2 in 10 plan to go out to a friend's or family member's home, and 1 in 10 to a bar or restaurant. About a quarter don't plan to celebrate at all.

About 6 in 10 plan to watch the Times Square ball drop, nearly all of whom will watch on TV.

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The AP-Times Square Alliance Poll of 1,007 adults was conducted online Dec. 9-11, using a sample drawn from GfK's probability-based KnowledgePanel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The poll is a cooperative effort between AP and the organizers of the Times Square New Year's Eve Celebration, the Times Square Alliance and Countdown Entertainment. The Alliance is a nonprofit group that seeks to promote Times Square, and Countdown Entertainment represents the owners of One

Times Square and the New Year's Eve Ball Drop.

Online: <http://www.ap-gfkpoll.com>

## UN Security Council to vote on Syria cease-fire agreement

By **EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press**

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. Security Council will vote Saturday on a resolution that would endorse the cease-fire agreement in Syria brokered by Russia and Turkey, and reiterate support for a roadmap to peace that starts with a transitional government.

The resolution also calls for “rapid, safe and unhindered” access to deliver humanitarian aid throughout the country. And it looks forward to a meeting in late January between the Syrian government and opposition in Kazakhstan’s capital Astana “as an important part of the Syrian-led political process facilitated by the United Nations.”

Russia and Turkey are on opposing sides of the Syrian conflict: Moscow along with Iran provides crucial military support to Syrian President Bashar Assad, while Turkey has long served as a rear base and source of supplies for the rebels.

Divisions in the Security Council between Russia and the veto-wielding Western powers — the U.S. Britain and France who support the moderate opposition and demand that Assad steps down — have blocked action to end the war, now in its sixth year.

Russia and Turkey sent the cease-fire agreement and the draft resolution to Security Council members Thursday night. After closed discussions in the council Friday morning, Russia’s U.N. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin circulated a revised draft, urged council members to support it, and called for a vote on Saturday.

The Security Council needs to participate “in this important process,” Churkin said.

The council is scheduled to meet at 11 a.m. EST. Russia’s U.N. Mission said members would hold closed consultations and then vote.

The cease-fire agreement, if it holds, would mark a potential breakthrough in a conflict that began in 2011 with an uprising against decades of rule by President Bashar Assad’s family and has left over 250,000 dead and more than 13.5 million people in need of urgent assistance, and triggered a refugee crisis across Europe.

The draft resolution reiterates “that the only sustainable solution to the current crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic is through an inclusive and Syrian-led political process based on the Geneva communique of June 30, 2012,” which was endorsed by the Security Council.

The communique, adopted by key nations, calls for the formation of a transitional government with full executive powers “on the basis of mutual consent” and steps leading to elections.

Churkin told reporters “there is no competition” between the talks in Astana and negotiations that the U.N. special envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, hopes to arrange between the government and opposition in Geneva on Feb. 8.

“As you know Staffan de Mistura had trouble reconvening the talks, so Russia and Turkey obviously decided to give the United Nations a hand in pushing things forward, and this is what we see happening,” Churkin told reporters.

He said de Mistura has been in contact with the Russian government and “indicated his eagerness to help organize the Astana meetings. ... So we expect the United Nations to be fully involved in the preparations of the meetings.”

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Churkin said Russia's understanding is that seven major rebel groups have joined in the cease-fire, representing 60,000 fighters, "and they control a large chunk of the territory of Syria."

As with previous failed cease-fire attempts, the current agreement excludes both the al-Qaida-affiliated Fatah al-Sham Front, which fights alongside other rebel factions, and the Islamic State group.

If the Astana meetings are successful, Churkin said, "they could move on to Geneva as far as I am concerned, so we don't see any competition there or overlapping of the two processes."

Churkin said Russia and Turkey have made clear they want other countries to participate in the Astana meetings.

He said Iran will definitely participate "actively" in preparing the Astana meeting and in Russia's view Egypt can also join the preparatory process right now.

Churkin said there are other very important players who are welcome including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar — and "we do expect the Trump administration after it comes into the White House on Jan. 20 will be an important participant."

The United States was left out of the cease-fire agreement, reflecting the deterioration of relations between Moscow and the Obama administration after the failure of U.S.-Russian diplomatic efforts to halt the fighting in Aleppo and elsewhere in Syria.

## Obama lines up a meeting with lawmakers, a speech in Chicago

By JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Eager to stop Republicans from destroying his signature health care law, President Barack Obama and Democratic lawmakers will meet next week to try to forge a common strategy. Obama also plans a major valedictory speech in Chicago, his hometown, shortly before his presidency ends.

Obama will travel to the Capitol on Wednesday morning for the meeting with House and Senate Democrats, according to an invitation sent to lawmakers. The White House is casting it as an effort to unite Democrats behind a plan to protect the law, known as the Affordable Care Act, before Republicans have a chance to settle on their own plan for repealing it.

Democrats are on edge over the future of the ACA, given the GOP's disdain for "Obamacare" and President-elect Donald Trump's vows to gut it. Though Republicans are united behind the notion of repealing the law, they're split over how best to replace it. Some want to strip out unpopular provisions while leaving others intact, while other Republicans prefer a start-from-scratch approach.

It's that lack of unanimity among Republicans that Obama and Democrats hope can be exploited, if they can lay the groundwork even before Trump takes office. To that end, Obama also planned to answer questions about the future of the health care law next Friday during a livestreamed event at Blair House, just across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House.

Initially stunned by the defeat of Hillary Clinton, Democrats are now trying to organize a counter-attack to preserve the ACA, among the most significant expansions of the social safety net since Medicare and Medicaid were created 50 years ago. House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi has urged her lawmakers to make health care their focus at the start of the year.

Defenders of the law have also launched a political coalition called "Protect Our Care," bringing together more than 20 groups, including the NAACP and the Service Employees International Union.

One of their objectives is to try to prevent Republicans from repealing the ACA without also enacting a replacement. (Currently Republicans plan to quickly vote on repealing the law, and delay the effective date to give them time to craft a replacement.) Another goal for Democrats is to pre-empt bigger health care changes to Medicare and Medicaid long sought by Republicans.

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Since the ACA passed, about 20 million people have gained coverage and the uninsured rate has dropped to a historic low of around 9 percent. Some of the coverage gains are due to employers offering jobs with health care in a stronger economy, but most experts mainly credit Obama's law.

A recent poll suggests that defenders of the law may get a receptive hearing from the public. Only about 1 in 4 Americans want Trump and the GOP-led Congress to completely repeal the ACA, according to a post-election survey by the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation.

"Republicans don't fully appreciate the implications of even a partial repeal of the ACA," said Rob Restuccia, executive director of Community Catalyst, one of the advocacy groups in the coalition trying to preserve the law. "People use the analogy of the dog that caught the car."

Obama's speech in Chicago on Jan. 10 is expected to serve as his closing words to the nation as president. His appearance will be open to the public and followed by a "family reunion" for alumni of Obama's former campaigns, according to a save-the-date notice sent to Obama alumni and obtained by The Associated Press.

The White House has not confirmed Obama's speech or trip to Chicago.

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White House Correspondent Julie Pace and Associated Press writer Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar contributed to this report.

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

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Jan. 1, the first day of 2017. There are 364 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On Jan. 1, 1942, 26 countries, including the United States, signed the Declaration of the United Nations, pledging "not to make a separate armistice or peace" with members of the Axis. The Rose Bowl was played in Durham, North Carolina, because of security concerns in the wake of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor; Oregon State defeated Duke, 20-16.

On this date:

In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that slaves in rebel states shall be "forever free."

In 1913, the U.S. Parcel Post system went into operation.

In 1935, The Associated Press inaugurated Wirephoto, the first successful service for transmitting photographs by wire to member newspapers.

In 1945, France was admitted to the United Nations.

In 1953, country singer Hank Williams Sr., 29, was discovered dead in the back seat of his car during a stop in Oak Hill, West Virginia, while he was being driven to a concert date in Canton, Ohio.

In 1959, Fidel Castro and his revolutionaries overthrew Cuban leader Fulgencio Batista, who fled to the Dominican Republic.

In 1975, a jury in Washington found Nixon administration officials John N. Mitchell, H.R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman and Robert C. Mardian guilty of charges related to the Watergate cover-up (Mardian's conviction for conspiracy was later overturned on appeal).

In 1979, the United States and China held celebrations in Washington and Beijing to mark the estab-

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lishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In 1984, the breakup of AT&T took place as the telecommunications giant was divested of its 22 Bell System companies under terms of an antitrust agreement.

In 1992, Boutros Boutros-Ghali succeeded Javier Perez de Cuellar (hah-vee-EHR' PEHR'-ehs day KWAY'-yahr) as secretary-general of the United Nations.

In 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement went into effect.

In 2014, the nation's first legal recreational pot shops opened in Colorado at 8 a.m. Mountain time.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush and first lady Laura Bush joined thousands of other mourners in paying respects to former President Gerald R. Ford. An Indonesian Boeing 737 jetliner crashed, killing all 102 people on board. Ban Ki-moon became the 8th U.N. secretary-general. Grand Ole Opry star Del Reeves died at age 74. Denver Broncos cornerback Darrent Williams, 24, was slain in a drive-by shooting (gang member Willie Clark was later convicted of killing Williams and was sentenced to life in prison). The 9th-ranked Boise State Broncos completed a perfect season with a 43-42 overtime victory over No. 7 Oklahoma in the Fiesta Bowl. No. 8 Southern California beat No. 3 Michigan 32-18 in the Rose Bowl.

Five years ago: A Mount Rainier National Park ranger, Margaret Anderson, was shot and killed by the driver of a car that blew through a checkpoint. (Searchers later found the body of the gunman, 24-year-old Benjamin Colton Barnes, in a snowy creek; an autopsy showed he had died of drowning with hypothermia as a factor.)

One year ago: Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign said it had raised \$37 million in the previous three months and more than \$112 million in all of 2015 to support her bid for the Democratic nomination. Ohio State defeated Notre Dame 44-28 in the Fiesta Bowl; Stanford beat Iowa 45-16 in the Rose Bowl; Mississippi toppled Oklahoma State 48-20 in the Sugar Bowl. Death claimed former Arkansas governor and U.S. senator Dale Bumpers at age 90; former U.S. Rep. Mike Oxley at age 71; and cinematographer Vilmos Zsigmond at age 85.

Today's Birthdays: Former Sen. Ernest Hollings, D-S.C., is 95. Actor Ty Hardin is 87. Documentary maker Frederick Wiseman is 87. Actor Frank Langella is 79. Rock singer-musician Country Joe McDonald is 75. Writer-comedian Don Novello is 74. Actor Rick Hurst is 71. Country singer Steve Ripley (The Tractors) is 67. Sen. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., is 63. The head of the International Monetary Fund, Christine Lagarde, is 61. Rapper Grandmaster Flash is 59. Actress Ren Woods is 59. Actress Dedee Pfeiffer is 53. Actress Embeth Davidtz is 51. Country singer Brian Flynn (Flynnville Train) is 51. Actor Morris Chestnut is 48. Actor Verne Troyer is 48. Elin Nordegren is 37. Actor Jonas Armstrong is 36. Actress Eden Riegel is 36. Olympic gold medal ice dancer Meryl Davis is 30. Rock musician Noah Sierota (Echosmith) is 21.

Thought for Today: "If you asked me for my New Year Resolution, it would be to find out who I am."  
— Cyril Cusack, Irish actor (1910-1993).