

# Groton Daily Independent

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**Wednesday, Jan. 18**

**Senior Menu:** Cheeseburger soup, ham salad sandwich, pineapple tidbits, cookie.

**School Breakfast:** Cinnamon roll, yogurt, fruit, juice, milk.

**School Lunch:** Super nachos, tater tots, fruit, Romaine salad.

**Emmanuel Lutheran:** League at 6:30 p.m., Confirmation at 7 p.m.

**St. John's Lutheran:** Confirmation at 3:45 p.m.

## Groton Area boys beat Ipswich

Groton Area defeated Ipswich in boys basketball action last night, 68-34. Seric Shabazz led the Tigers with 27 points, having five three-pointers; Sean Schuring had 21 points with four three-pointers, Brandon Keith had 10 points, Anthony Sippel eight, Bennett Shabazz seven.

Further info will be coming in an upcoming edition. (I have a free night tonight - finally!)

## 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

**Closed:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave.

**The cardboard/paper**

recycling trailer at the school is **Closed**

**Midwest Masonry & concrete Pumping**

**Greg Heilman, owner**

405 E 1st Ave., Groton

Greg: 253/929-9137

Mike: 605/492-7041

midwestmasonry1@yahoo.com



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## Varsity Stat Sheet

VISITOR: Ipswich ( )

NO	PLAYER	TOT-FG		3-PT		FT		REBOUNDS		PF	TP	A	TO	BK	S	MIN		
		P	FG	FGA	FG	FGA	FT	FTA	OFF								DEF	TOT
20	Burgod,	*	1	5	0	2	0	0	1	2	3	2	2	1	5	0	1	24:00
22	Northrop,	*	2	8	0	4	0	2	0	1	1	4	0	2	0	2	8:00	
24	McQuarie,	*	1	4	0	1	1	2	0	3	3	3	2	3	0	1	0:00	
40	Fuhrman,	*	6	7	0	0	1	1	0	2	2	3	13	0	2	0	0	16:00
52	Gilbert,	*	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	2	4	0	3	0	0	0:00
4	Kadlec,		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	24:00
10	Kulesa,		1	3	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	32:00
12	Nierman,		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8:00	
30	Pond,		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	8:00
32	Braun,		1	3	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	3	0	2	0	0	24:00
50	Nehlich,		0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	8:00
54	Moehlenbrink,		0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	8:00
TEAM REBOUNDS									1	0	1			0				
Team Totals			14	34	1	10	3	7	4	14	18	12	32	4	19	0	5	160

Total FG% - 1st: 9/19 0.474 2nd: 5/15 0.333 Game: 0.412 Deadball Rebounds (1,0)  
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 0/2 0.000 2nd: 1/8 0.125 Game: 0.100  
 Total FT% - 1st: 2/4 0.500 2nd: 1/3 0.333 Game: 0.429

HOME: Groton ( )

NO	PLAYER	TOT-FG		3-PT		FT		REBOUNDS		PF	TP	A	TO	BK	S	MIN		
		P	FG	FGA	FG	FGA	FT	FTA	OFF								DEF	TOT
4	Shabazz, Bennett	*	2	5	0	3	3	6	4	3	7	3	7	3	2	0	2	16:00
12	Schuring, Sean	*	7	10	4	7	3	3	0	4	4	1	21	1	1	0	4	8:00
20	Keith, Brandon	*	2	5	1	4	0	0	3	1	4	0	5	2	4	0	1	0:00
42	Shabazz, Seric	*	8	16	5	11	6	7	1	1	2	0	27	3	1	0	3	16:00
50	Thorson, Luke	*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0:00
3	Sippel, Anthony		3	5	2	4	0	0	0	2	2	1	8	2	0	0	0	24:00
10	Lane, Marshall		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	16:00
14	Diegel, Treyton		0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	16:00
24	Wuestewald, Frankie		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	8:00
30	Doeden, Jonny		0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	24:00
32	Thurston, Mitch		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8:00
34	Jones, Austin		0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	16:00
40	Johnson, Peyton		0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	8:00	
TEAM REBOUNDS									1	5	6			0				
Team Totals			22	46	12	31	12	16	12	19	31	11	68	12	12	0	11	160

Total FG% - 1st: 13/28 0.464 2nd: 9/18 0.500 Game: 0.478 Deadball Rebounds (2,0)  
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 8/20 0.400 2nd: 4/11 0.364 Game: 0.387  
 Total FT% - 1st: 3/6 0.500 2nd: 9/10 0.900 Game: 0.750

Technical Fouls: Ips (0)  
 : groto (0)

OFFICIALS :  
 ATTENDANCE : 0

SCORE BY PERIODS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	TOTAL
Ipswich	9	11	10	2	32
Groton	19	18	20	11	68

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VISITOR: Ipswich ( )

## Junior Varsity Stat Sheet

NO PLAYER	P	TOT-FG		3-PT		FT	FTA	REBOUNDS			PF	TP	A	TO	BK	S	MIN
		FG	FGA	FG	FGA			OFF	DEF	TOT							
10 Unknown,	*	0	3	0	2	4	4	0	1	1	1	4	2	1	0	1	24:00
12 Unknown,	*	1	1	0	0	2	3	0	1	1	1	4	0	5	0	1	24:00
32 Unknown,	*	6	8	1	1	0	1	2	3	5	1	13	0	0	0	0	16:00
34 Add New Player,	*	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	1	4	0	1	0:00
54 Add New Player,	*	2	5	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	5	0	0	0	1	24:00
4 Unknown,		2	5	2	3	2	2	0	0	0	1	8	0	0	0	3	24:00
14 Add New Player,		0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	24:00
15 Unknown,		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0:00
22 Add New Player,		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0:00
30 Add New Player,		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0:00
40 Add New Player,		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00
42 Add New Player,		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	8:00
50 Unknown,		1	3	0	0	4	4	1	0	1	2	6	0	0	0	0	16:00
TEAM REBOUNDS								1	3	4				0			
Team Totals		12	30	3	8	13	15	7	13	20	13	40	4	12	0	7	160

Total FG% - 1st: 8/19 0.421 2nd: 4/11 0.364 Game: 0.400 Deadball  
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 0/2 0.000 2nd: 3/6 0.500 Game: 0.375 Rebounds  
 Total FT% - 1st: 1/1 1.000 2nd: 12/14 0.857 Game: 0.867 (0,0)

HOME: Groton ( )

NO PLAYER	P	TOT-FG		3-PT		FT	FTA	REBOUNDS			PF	TP	A	TO	BK	S	MIN
		FG	FGA	FG	FGA			OFF	DEF	TOT							
3 Sippel, Anthony	*	2	6	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	1	0	0	1	24:00
14 Diegel, Treyton	*	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	1	16:00
30 Doeden, Jonny	*	3	6	1	3	1	5	0	2	2	2	8	1	4	0	2	32:00
34 Jones, Austin	*	1	2	0	0	1	2	2	1	3	3	3	0	2	0	1	32:00
40 Johnson, Peyton	*	1	5	0	0	1	1	3	2	5	4	3	0	0	0	0	0:00
5 Shabazz, Darien		2	3	2	3	0	0	2	2	4	1	6	1	0	0	0	16:00
10 Lane, Marshall		0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	24:00
12 Thurston, Riley		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00
22 Guthmiller, Cade		0	3	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0:00
32 Thurston, Mitchell		1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	16:00
54 Unknown,		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00
TEAM REBOUNDS								1	4	5				0			
Team Totals		10	29	4	16	4	11	9	13	22	14	28	4	14	0	5	160

Total FG% - 1st: 4/13 0.308 2nd: 6/16 0.375 Game: 0.345 Deadball  
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 0/6 0.000 2nd: 4/10 0.400 Game: 0.250 Rebounds  
 Total FT% - 1st: 3/8 0.375 2nd: 1/3 0.333 Game: 0.364 (4,0)

Technical Fouls: Ips (0)  
 : groto (0)

OFFICIALS :  
 ATTENDANCE : 0

SCORE BY PERIODS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	TOTAL
Ipswich	7	10	9	14	40
Groton	4	7	9	8	28

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## Groton Coffee Cup League

**Team Standings:** James Valley 15, Kens 8, Ten Pins 6, Jungle Lanes 3

**High Games:** Penny Stolle 189, Vicki Walter 179, Arlowyn Spencer 173

**High Series:** Penny Stolle 497, Vicki Walter 463, Arlowyn Spencer 429.

## Conde National League

**Team Standings:** Cubs 11, Pirates 10, Mets 10, Braves 7, Colts 6, Giants 4

**Men's High Games:** Lance Frohling 200, 188; Butch Farmen 192; Bryce Dagartz 186

**Men's High Series:** Lance Frohling 555, utch Farmen 502, Bryce Dagartz 500

**Women's High Games:** Michelle Johnson 168, 160; Hope Dagartz 162; Alice Severson 160

**Women's High Series:** Michelle Johnson 463, Hope Dagartz 430, Mary Larson 399, Nancy Radke 399



Wednesday, January 18th  
thru  
Saturday, January 21st

**CRAZY** *Lori's Pharmacy*

**DAYS**

**SALE**



And



Lori's -

\* Buy one gift item at full price, get another (of equal value or less) at 1/2 price!

\*Christmas is now 75% off!

Olde Bank Floral -

\*Clearance Rooms - 75%-90% off!

\*Christmas is now 60% off!

\*Everyday Home Decor - 30% off!

AND MUCH MORE!

## Kosel Thank You

I would like to thank the Groton Rescue Squad, the Aberdeen Ambulance, the ICU department, and the other staff at AVERA St. Luke's for the care they gave me while I was up there. And to my family that came and visited and my boss Joyce and Dale for the beautiful flowers, and for the calls and text messages. It meant a lot to me. Sincerely Tina Kosel



## Upcoming Events

**Thursday, Jan. 19**

**Boys' Basketball at Aberdeen Roncalli**

**8 p.m.**

**Friday, Jan. 20**

**Girls' Basketball hosts Aberdeen Roncalli**

**8 p.m.**

**gdilive.com**

## Today in Weather History

January 18, 1979: A strong area of low pressure moving across the region brought widespread heavy snow of 5 to 10 inches to much of Minnesota from the 18th through the 20th. Travel was difficult if not impossible in many areas where there were near blizzard conditions. Schools and businesses closed along with many flights canceled.

January 18, 1999: One to 4 inches of snowfall combined with winds of 30 to 45 miles an hour brought blizzard conditions to part of northeast South Dakota. Highway 12 and Interstate 29 were most affected by the low visibilities. There was a seven car pileup on Highway 12 near Andover with minor injuries. As a result, traffic was shut off in the westbound lanes for a few hours. Over 200 people were stranded overnight at a restaurant near Summit. There was also a rollover north of Summit which resulted in minor injuries. One traveler said the visibility was frequently near zero.

January 18, 2014: A strong Alberta Clipper low-pressure system moved over the Northern Plains Friday night and Saturday morning. Anywhere from a trace to just near 3 inches of fresh snowfall accompanied this low-pressure system. Over this area, strong northwest winds of 25 to 40 mph developed by late Friday night with gusts of 45 to 55 mph. A few areas even experienced gusts to 58 mph or greater again. This system packed such a wallop that a couple of instances of thundersnow occurred as evidenced by the cloud to ground lightning strikes showing up in southwestern Day County and northwestern Clark County early Saturday morning.

Numerous reports of visibility reduced to one-quarter mile or less across northeast South Dakota, specifically on or just to the east of the Glacial Lakes region, were received.

1857 - A great cold storm swept across the Atlantic Seaboard. Snowfall totals of 12 inches were common, whole gales caused shipwrecks and damage property on islands, and temperatures near zero prevailed from Virginia northward. Great drifts of snow blocked transportation. Richmond VA was cut off from Washington DC for a week. (David Ludlum)

1973 - A baby was carried 300 to 400 yards by the strong winds of a tornado at Corey LA, yet received only minor injuries. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A storm in the south central U.S. blanketed Oklahoma City with eight inches of snow, their highest total since 1948. Snowfall totals in Oklahoma ranged up to 13 inches at Gage, with drifts five feet high. Roof collapses across the state resulted in seven million dollars damage. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)






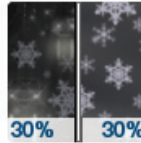

1988 - A storm in the southwestern U.S. produced a 15 to 20 foot surf along the southern coast of California resulting in more than fifty million dollars damage. A small tornado in Orange County CA lifted a baseball dugout fifteen feet into the air and deposited it in the street, 150 yards away. The same storm also produced 26 inches of snow at Duck Creek UT. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - While fair and mild weather prevailed across the forty-eight states, bitter cold gripped Alaska. The high temperature for the day at Fairbanks was 30 degrees below zero. Thunderstorms along the western Gulf coast drenched parts of southwest Houston with more than four inches of rain. (National Weather Summary)

1990 - A winter storm produced heavy snow and high winds across the southwestern U.S. Snowfall totals ranged up to 18 inches at Lake Arrowhead CA and Ashford AZ. High winds in New Mexico gusted to 100 mph east of Albuquerque. Unseasonably warm weather continued from Texas to the Atlantic coast. Twenty cities reported record high temperatures for the date including Roanoke VA with a reading of 71 degrees. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
						
Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Slight Chance Snow	Slight Chance Rain/Snow	Chance Rain/Snow then Chance Snow	Chance Snow then Chance Rain/Snow
High: 31 °F	Low: 14 °F	High: 34 °F	Low: 31 °F	High: 36 °F	Low: 29 °F	High: 35 °F

## Snow Melt on the Way

Highs today in the 30s

Lows tonight in the teens



### Warmth Continues Thursday - Friday

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD



[weather.gov/Aberdeen](http://weather.gov/Aberdeen)

Updated: 1/18/2017 5 am

Published on: 01/18/2017 at 5:38AM

Dry conditions with above normal temperatures can be expected today through Thursday. An area of low pressure will begin to affect the region Thursday night bringing some drizzle and freezing drizzle to the east before spreading further west on Friday.

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## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: 21.5 F at 9:22 PM**

**Low Outside Temp: -1.9 F at 7:00 AM**

**High Gust: 20.0 Mph at 9:17 PM**

Rain: 0.00

## Today's Info

**Record High: 51° in 1944**

**Record Low: -34 in 1970**

**Average High: 22°F**

**Average Low: 1°F**

**Average Precip in Jan.: 0.30**

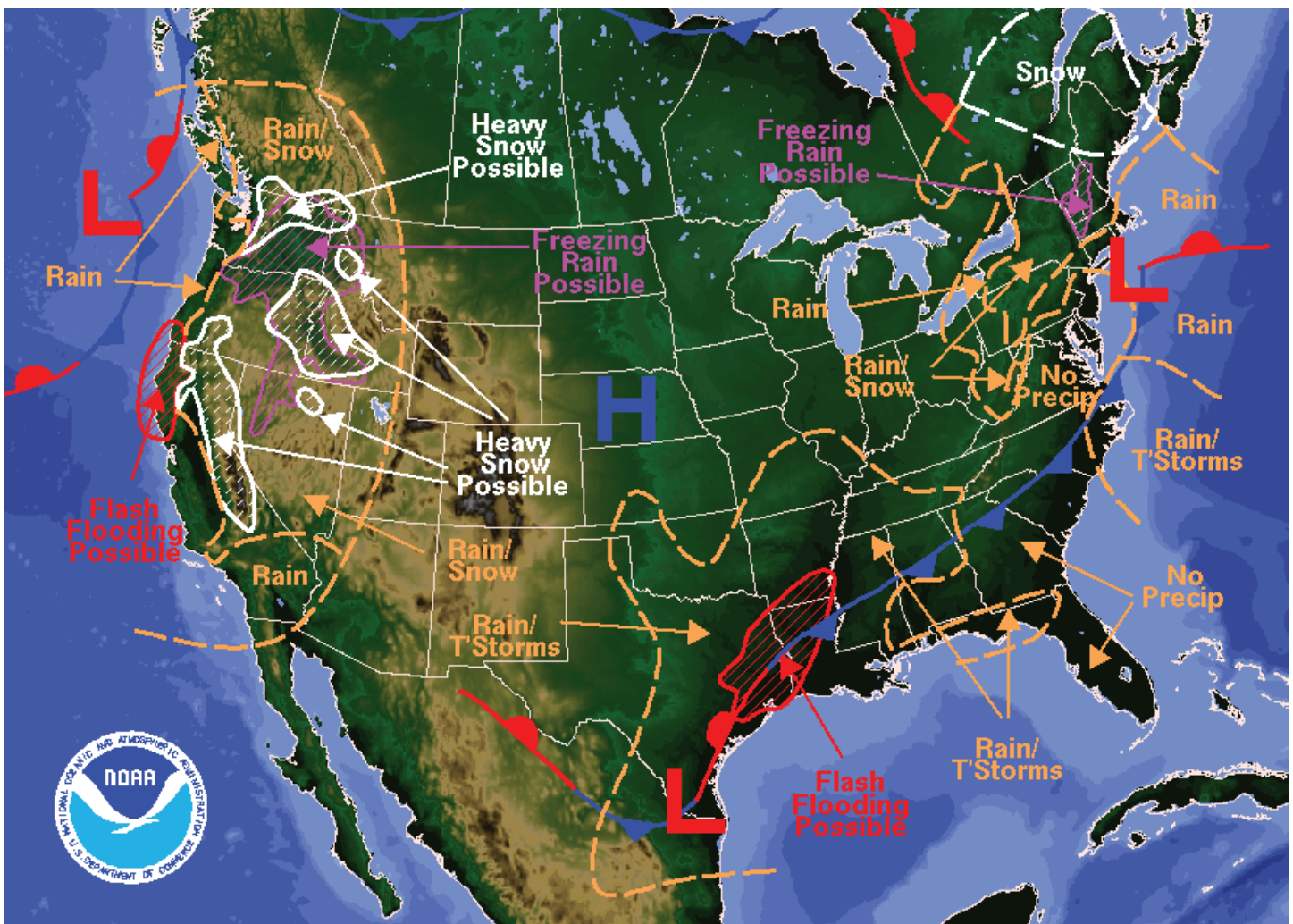
**Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00**

**Average Precip to date: 0.30**

**Precip Year to Date: 0.00**

**Sunset Tonight: 5:21 p.m.**

**Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:06 a.m.**



Weather Forecast for Wed, Jan 18, 2017, issued 4:50 AM EST  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts





## OUT OF SIGHT BUT NEVER OUT OF TOUCH

Marie had to stay home from school because of her measles. Her mother, knowing that the bright sunlight coming in through the window would cause her infected eyes to hurt, completely darkened the room as though it were night,

Sitting near her on the bed, her mother asked, "Are you afraid?"

"No, mother," came the reply, "as long as you sit where I can touch you."

Feelings of being alone or abandoned or rejected haunt each of us at one time or another. We draw feelings of strength, encouragement, hope, significance and inspiration from others. But, what do we do when we feel as though no one is with us?

When those moments come we need to claim the promise that "He will never leave us or forsake us!" That promise is unlimited, unconditional, unending and unwavering. If He says it and I accept it and believe it that ends it.

Whenever we have feelings of uneasiness or are frightened or afraid or lack the necessities of life that is God saying, "There may be no light but if you reach out to touch Me, you will always find Me available."

Whatever need we may have, God is right there with us. No matter how far we have fallen, how often we have failed or how deep is our doubt, He's there with us.

Prayer: Lord, we all want to be strong, filled with courage and have the ability to conquer life. How thankful we are to know that when we need You, You are there. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Isaiah 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

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## News from the Associated Press

### Monday's Scores By The Associated Press

#### BOYS' BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Christian 50, Britton-Hecla 29  
Andes Central/Dakota Christian 52, Parkston 36  
Chamberlain 81, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 56  
Dell Rapids 70, Garretson 44  
Freeman 57, Lyman 49  
Harding County 68, Dupree 30  
Sisseton 57, Flandreau Indian 43  
Sully Buttes 50, Winner 48  
Timber Lake 56, Bison 54, OT  
Waverly-South Shore 60, Great Plains Lutheran 35

#### POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

Bishop Heelan Catholic, Sioux City, Iowa vs. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, ppd.  
Lennox vs. West Central, ppd.

#### GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Britton-Hecla 55, Aberdeen Christian 32  
Canistota 53, Freeman Academy/Marion 34  
Groton Area 50, Langford 36  
Hamlin 67, Deuel 29  
Hankinson, N.D. 51, Wilmot 39  
Herreid/Selby Area 41, South Border, N.D. 26  
McCook Central/Montrose 58, Chester 29  
Mitchell Christian 30, Corsica/Stickney 27  
Northwestern 63, Potter County 36  
Sioux County, Neb. 57, Edgemont 39  
Sunshine Bible Academy 52, Iroquois 19  
Wall 60, Philip 50, OT  
Waverly-South Shore 54, Great Plains Lutheran 34  
Webster 70, Florence/Henry 41  
Dakota Valley Conference Tournament  
First Round

Colman-Egan 40, Arlington 18  
Deubrook 57, Estelline 17  
Elkton-Lake Benton 58, Lake Preston 52

#### POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS

Viborg-Hurley vs. Freeman, ppd. to Jan 30.

### Company gives \$50K donation under new school choice law

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls company has given a \$50,000 contribution to help South Dakota students attend private schools under a state-backed scholarship program.

Michael VanErdewyk, CEO and chairman at ReliaMax, said Tuesday that helping students and their families with options to get the best education possible has always been the company's top priority.

Former Sen. Phyllis Heineman, who sponsored the legislation last year, says that the scholarship program raised \$325,000 in 2016.

Recipients were spread across 38 private schools in South Dakota, with most of the scholarships going

to students in kindergarten, first or ninth grades.

Companies that pay an insurance company tax can get an 80 percent tax credit for total contributions to a scholarship organization. The total amount of credits is capped at \$2 million each budget year.

## Bill offered to overhaul initiative requirements, start date

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — State lawmakers are set to consider a bill that would move back the date that voter-approved ballot initiatives take effect in South Dakota.

The bill introduced this week says also that voter initiatives would be subject to the same constitutional requirements that apply to measures put forward by the Legislature.

Sponsor Sen. Jim White says that would include requiring a two-thirds majority to approve ballot measures that spend money.

The bill comes after initiatives including a crime victims' rights constitutional amendment and a government ethics overhaul caused confusion for officials when provisions took effect shortly after Election Day.

The bill would change the start date for constitutional amendments, ballot measures and referred laws to the July 1 after the official canvass. Right now, initiatives can take effect the day afterward.

## No residencies yet for proposed Idaho osteopathic school

By REBECCA BOONE, Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Idaho Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter and backers of a proposed for-profit osteopathic medical school have been touting the 78 new medical residency positions the proposed school says it has created.

But an Associated Press review shows those residency spots don't yet exist, and the accreditation board responsible for approving them has denied the first step in the process of creating them. A separate accreditation board has also deferred a decision on whether to grant the proposed Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine pre-accreditation status.

At best, it's a speed bump for investors and supporters of the proposed school. But it also lends credence to critics' worries that the dearth of residency positions in the region will result in a crop of doctors unable to actually practice or pay back hefty student loans.

Idaho's governor included the claims that the 78 residencies had been "secured at hospitals throughout the region" in his State of the State address last week. On Tuesday, he said he included the news because that was what backers of the school had reported to him.

Otter was also unaware that Benefis Health Systems in Great Falls, Montana — where all 78 of the positions were to be located — had been denied "sponsoring institution" status by Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education in August. The denial means the accreditation committee found that Benefis Health Systems "does not demonstrate substantial compliance with the requirements."

Officials with Benefis declined to comment on the denial, instead referring all questions to Hasty and the Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine.

College Dean Robert Hasty, meanwhile, said he is confident Benefis will win accreditation for the residencies by the time the college's first class of students graduates in 2022. "Benefis has publicly committed to those new 78 spots, which is why those spots have been made public," Hasty said.

He said the school is also working with other medical groups in the five-state region of Idaho, Montana, Wyoming and North and South Dakota to secure additional residencies, though he declined to name the groups.

The Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine hopes to begin admitting as many as 150 students in the fall of 2018, charging around \$40,000 in yearly tuition. College officials hoped to break ground on a Meridian campus in February of this year, but they indicated that may be contingent on winning pre-accreditation status in December, according to emails to the governor's office obtained by the AP through a public records request.

In December, however, the American Osteopathic Association's Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation (commonly called COCA) deferred its decision on whether to grant pre-accreditation status to the

Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine. That's not considered an adverse decision, but rather a "not at this time" signal from the accreditation agency. COCA doesn't release the reasons why a decision is deferred.

"You can infer they did not meet the standards of accreditation for the COCA commissioners at that time. I wouldn't read too much into it," said Sheridan Chaney, a spokeswoman for the American Osteopathic Association.

Hasty said the school plans to try again at COCA's April meeting, and the timeline for accepting students in 2018 is still on track.

The state has thrown significant support to the project, including tax breaks of nearly \$4 million over the next 10 years; use of the cadaver lab, classrooms and other facilities at Idaho State University's Meridian campus; and letters of support and attendance at meetings with the accreditation committee and other stakeholders.

"I'll go to Chicago and knock on doors if I have to," said Otter, referring to the location of the most recent COCA meeting.

Otter is also seeking about \$2.4 million in funding to help boost medical residencies in Idaho, a move that would help the Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine, Idaho State and other schools seeking to place new graduates in residencies.

State officials are also considering waiving the college's surety bond and instead leveraging the escrow account the school would have to create with the accreditation organization in order to start recruiting students. Idaho law requires for-profit proprietary schools to have surety bonds as a sort of financial insurance that can be used to compensate students or the state for any financial losses if the school goes under. COCA separately requires schools to have an escrow account for much the same reason.

Waiving the surety bond would present a risk, Idaho State Board of Education executive director Matt Freeman told the governor's office in an email late last year, but it would also mean college investors would only have to set aside \$14 million in special accounts rather than \$28 million. That plan is still being negotiated by attorneys, Freeman wrote.

## **2 BNSF Railway workers killed on tracks in SW South Dakota**

EDGEMONT, S.D. (AP) — Two BNSF Railway employees have been struck and killed by a train near Edgemont in southwestern South Dakota.

A company statement says the accident happened around 10:15 a.m. Tuesday.

The Rapid City Journal reports (<http://bit.ly/2k2csle>) the scene is just north of where the tracks cross under U.S. Highway 18 near Edgemont. BNSF operates a rail yard on the east side of Edgemont.

The railroad's statement says company officers are responding to the incident and will release more details when they are able.

Edgemont is about 60 miles southwest of Rapid City.

## **Senate panel sets aside rules restricting public lobbyists**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Senate panel has set aside a rule that would have barred public employee lobbyists from the chamber or space reserved for legislators during business hours.

The Senate Legislative Procedure Committee decided Tuesday to table the proposal. It would have applied to lobbyists such as those for the executive branch, constitutional offices and the judicial system between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Republican Sen. Ryan Maher, who proposed the rule, says he's unsure whether there was support for it in the full chamber. Maher said previously that members are sometimes bombarded by lobbyists and can't complete their work.

He says the conversation will continue and that the panel sent a message to public employee lobbyists that senators are "taking back our chamber."

Gov. Dennis Daugaard told the Argus Leader that he opposed the change.

## Dakota Access company seeks to block pipeline study

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON**, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The company building the Dakota Access oil pipeline wants a federal judge to block the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from launching a full environmental study of the \$3.8 billion pipeline's disputed crossing of a Missouri River reservoir in North Dakota.

Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners asked U.S. District Judge James Boasberg on Tuesday to stop the Corps from publishing a notice in the Federal Register announcing the study. Boasberg scheduled a hearing for Wednesday.

ETP wants any further study put on hold until Boasberg, in Washington, D.C., rules on whether ETP already has the necessary permission to lay pipe under Lake Oahe — the reservoir that's the water source for the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

ETP wants to block further study so that the decision on the permitting, which is likely weeks away, will be "free from the risk that its ruling will be frustrated or thwarted by new governmental actions." The Corps did not immediately respond to ETP's request.

The stretch under Lake Oahe is the last big chunk of construction for the 1,200-mile pipeline. The Corps wants to look at alternate routes, the potential for a pipeline leak and tribal treaty rights in the wake of opposition by the Standing Rock Sioux and its supporters who believe a pipeline leak would contaminate the tribe's drinking water.

ETP maintains the pipeline is safe and that the Corps gave it permission in July to proceed with the Lake Oahe stretch, but the Corps says all of the necessary steps have not yet been completed — including an easement to work on federal land and the notification of Congress.

An environmental assessment conducted by the Corps last year determined that the Oahe crossing would not have a significant impact on the environment. However, Assistant Army Secretary for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy said in December that a broader environmental impact statement was warranted. Such a statement can take up to two years to complete, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

The Standing Rock Sioux tribe has been urging people to lobby the Corps to start the environmental impact study before President-Elect Donald Trump, an energy supporter, takes office Friday. The tribe in a statement Tuesday said it's confident that a full environmental study would be "the best way to analyze the alternative routes."

The MAIN Coalition, made up of agriculture, business and labor entities that benefit from Midwest infrastructure projects, issued a statement saying it's "optimistic that the incoming Trump administration will soon issue the final easement for the Dakota Access pipeline."

ETP has already drilled entry and exit holes for the Oahe crossing, all on private property, and has already put oil in the pipeline leading up to the lake in anticipation of finishing the project, ETP executive vice president Joey Mahmoud said in court documents.

Follow Blake Nicholson on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/NicholsonBlake>

## Yankton Sioux Tribe ends dispatching contract

LAKE ANDES, S.D. (AP) — The police chief of the Yankton Sioux Tribe is asking people on the reservation to call his department's administrative phone number with emergencies rather than 911.

Tribal Police Chief Chris Saunsoci's request comes after the department hired six dispatchers of its own in October and ended its dispatching services with Charles Mix County on Jan. 1, The (Mitchell) Daily Republic (<http://bit.ly/2jFINLx>) reported.

"A lot of the community just did not want to call the sheriff's office," Saunsoci said. "They wanted to call us, not them."

The Yankton Sioux Reservation had paid the county an annual fee of \$45,000 for 911 dispatching services since the 1990s. Any 911 calls from the reservation are still being taken by the county, but calls to the sheriff's office are being redirected to the tribe's new dispatch center.

The department has received 250 calls per month, a more than 450 percent increase, since hiring the new dispatchers and beginning the transition. Saunsoci said other tribes have also cut 911 services without issue.

The department's new dispatch service will cost about \$60,000 annually, Saunsoci said. Initial costs of equipment and software were about \$20,000.

"It's not saving us anything, but we're just providing an extra service, a better service for our communities," Saunsoci said.

Charles Mix County Sheriff Randy Thaler supports the tribe's decision.

"They're increasing their own responsibility in wanting to open their own dispatch center and control their own officers," Thaler said. "I don't see a problem with that."

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

## **Injury-depleted Heat sign forward Okaro White to 10-day deal**

The Miami Heat have signed forward Okaro White to a 10-day contract. White was with the Heat for the summer league last year and training camp before this season. Tuesday's move means he becomes the 16th name on the roster. The Heat received permission from the NBA to exceed the 15-player limit because a number of players are sidelined by injury and illness.

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White averaged 18.4 points and 8.7 rebounds in 23 games for Miami's NBA Development League affiliate in Sioux Falls. For the Heat in preseason, he averaged 5.7 points in six games.

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## **Wesleyan students lend a hand in Uganda**

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — A group of Dakota Wesleyan University students traveled to Uganda during their winter break to help local communities grow and manage food, develop school curriculum and provide assistance with medical care.

The students spent time in both rural communities, such as Bugiri, and in larger cities like Kampala with a population of 7 million.

The university's Alisha Vincent led the student trip. Vincent tells The Daily Republic (<http://bit.ly/2ixGInG>) the students worked on hydroponic and vertical farming systems and had raised enough money to buy 14 pigs for farmers who in turn will give the pigs' offspring to families in the community.

Pre-med students assisted local doctors who saw about 500 patients a day at a rural clinic.

Vincent says it's the fourth group of Wesleyan students to make the service trip.

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

## **New report: Abortions in US drop to lowest level since 1974**

**By DAVID CRARY, AP National Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — Even as the election outcome intensifies America's abortion debate, a comprehensive new survey finds the annual number of abortions in the U.S. has dropped to well under 1 million, the lowest level since 1974.

The report, which counted 926,200 abortions in 2014, was released Tuesday by the Guttmacher Institute, a research group which supports abortion rights. It is the only entity which strives to count all abortions in the U.S.; the latest federal survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lacks data from California, Maryland and New Hampshire.

The total from 2014 represented a drop of 12.5 percent from Guttmacher's previous survey, which tallied 1.06 million abortions in 2011. The decrease was spread nationwide; in only six states did abortions increase over the three-year span.

According to the report, the abortion rate was 14.6 abortions per 1,000 women aged 15-44, the lowest rate since abortion was legalized nationally in 1973 by the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision.

Following that ruling, the number of abortions in the U.S. rose steadily — reaching a peak of 1.6 million in 1990 — before starting a decline.

The authors of the new report, Guttmacher researchers Rachel Jones and Jenna Jerman, said the latest phase of the decline was likely the result of two main factors: the increased availability of affordable, long-lasting contraceptives that have reduced unintended pregnancies, and the surge of abortion restrictions in many states that have forced some clinics to close and hindered many women's access to the procedure.

Guttmacher's state-by-state breakdown showed big declines in abortions in some liberal states, such as California, that protect abortion rights, and also in some conservative states, such as Texas, that have passed laws to restrict abortions.

Jones noted that the majority of women who get abortions have low incomes, and nearly two-thirds are already parents.

"It can be very difficult for them to arrange for time off from work, transportation and child care," Jones said. "Some of the abortion rate decline is likely attributable to women who were prevented from accessing needed services."

The highest abortion rates were in the District of Columbia, New York, New Jersey, Maryland and Florida. The lowest rates were in Wyoming, Mississippi and South Dakota, states that had only one abortion clinic operating in 2014.

According to the report, the number of abortion clinics nationwide declined by 6 percent — from 839 in 2011 to 788 in 2014.

The report's release comes 10 days before the anti-abortion movement's annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., and at a time when the movement is emboldened by the outcome of the recent presidential, congressional and state elections.

In Congress, majority Republicans in both chambers are seeking to halt federal funding for Planned Parenthood, which provided more than one-third of the nation's abortions in 2014, and also to ban most abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy. President-elect Donald Trump has promised to sign both measures if they reach his desk, and also says he wants to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court with a "pro-life" justice.

One of Trump's top advisers, Kellyanne Conway, is scheduled to speak at the March for Life.

At the state level, tough new restrictions on abortion are being pushed in numerous Republican-controlled state legislatures, including Iowa and Kentucky, where the recent election gave the GOP full control. In Kentucky, lawmakers have already moved swiftly to enact a ban on abortions after 20 weeks and to require doctors to perform ultrasounds prior to abortions.

In some cases, abortion-rights supporters are fighting back with legal challenges, such as an effort by the American Civil Liberties Union to block Kentucky's new ultrasound bill.

Abortion-rights leaders also are warning that progress in reducing unintended pregnancies could be derailed by efforts to defund Planned Parenthood, a major supplier of contraceptives, and to repeal the Affordable Care Act, which greatly expanded health-insurance coverage of contraceptives.

## Iraq military: Troops have 'full control' of eastern Mosul

By SINAN SALAHEDDIN, Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — U.S.-backed Iraqi government troops announced on Wednesday they were in "full control" of eastern Mosul, after routing Islamic State militants from that part of the northern city almost exactly three months since the major operation started.

The achievement was a "big victory," said Iraqi Army Lt. Gen. Talib Shaghatai, who commands the counter-terrorism forces, describing the success of the Iraqi forces as "unprecedented."

Shaghatai, who spoke to reporters in the town of Bartella, just east of Mosul, said plans were now being drawn up to retake the western part of the city. He did not elaborate on when that part of the operation would begin.

Wednesday's advance came after Iraqi troops over the past days intensified their push into the last IS-held neighborhoods in Mosul's eastern sector, closing in on the Tigris River, which roughly divides the city. Stiff resistance by the militants, thousands of civilians being trapped in their houses by the fighting and bad weather had in the past slowed the advances of the troops.

However, skirmishes and clashes continued in some pockets along the Tigris in eastern Mosul, according to Iraqi special forces Maj. Ali Hussein who said his unit was still pushing into the Ghabat area along the river bank. Small arms fire could be heard and at least one civilian was wounded by mortar fire.

Also, some commanders on the ground disputed Shaghatai's claim of "full control" of eastern Mosul, with Lt. Gen. Abdul-Amir Raheed Yar Allah saying the eastern side "has not been fully liberated ... and the advance is still continuing."

Yar Allah, who commands army operations in Ninevah, where Mosul is the provincial capital, said the special forces "have done their duty" in eastern Mosul.

The prospect of retaking western Mosul looms heavy on Iraqi forces, despite all the support they have by the U.S.-led coalition, and Sunni and Shiite volunteer militias. The western half of the city is home to some of Mosul's oldest neighborhoods, with narrow streets packed with buildings that will further complicate the urban fight.

So far in the Mosul offensive, Iraq's counterterrorism forces, which are by far the military's most battle seasoned unit, have done most of the fighting, advancing from east of the city.

Regular Iraqi army troops are pushing from the city's southeast and northern edges, and the federal security forces from farther to the west.

Mosul — Iraq's second-largest city and the Islamic State group's last urban stronghold in the country — fell to IS in the summer of 2014, when the militant group captures large swaths of northern and western Iraq.

The operation has also left more than 148,000 people homeless, according to the United Nations. Nearly 12,500 people have been forced to flee their homes just over the past week, the U.N. said.

More than 1 million people were estimated to still be living in Mosul in October, when Iraqi forces launched the operation to retake the city.

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Associated Press writer Susannah George in Mosul, Iraq, contributed to this report.

## George H.W. Bush hospitalized for shortness of breath

HOUSTON (AP) — Former President George H.W. Bush was taken to the hospital over the weekend for shortness of breath and the 92-year-old is responding well to treatments, his spokesman said Wednesday.

The 41st president was admitted to Houston Methodist Hospital on Saturday, spokesman Jim McGrath said in an email to The Associated Press.

"Doctors and everyone are very pleased, and we hope to have him out soon," McGrath said.



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Bush's chief of staff, Jean Becker, told the Houston Chronicle and KHOU-TV that Bush is expected to go home in a couple of days.

Bush, who served as U.S. president from 1989 to 1993, has a form of Parkinson's disease and uses a motorized scooter or a wheelchair for mobility. He was hospitalized in Maine in 2015 after falling at his summer home and breaking a bone in his neck, and was hospitalized in Houston the previous December for about a week for shortness of breath. He spent Christmas 2012 in intensive care for a bronchitis-related cough and other issues.

Despite the loss of mobility, Bush celebrated his 90th birthday by making a tandem parachute jump in Kennebunkport, Maine. Last summer, Bush led a group of 40 wounded warriors on a fishing trip at the helm of his speedboat, three days after his 92nd birthday celebration.

Bush's office announced earlier this month that he and his wife of more than 70 years, Barbara, would not attend Donald Trump's inauguration this week due to the former president's age and health.

George Herbert Walker Bush, born June 12, 1924, in Milton, Massachusetts, also served as a congressman, CIA director and Ronald Reagan's vice president.

His son, George W. Bush, was elected president in 2000 and served two terms. Another son, Jeb — a former Florida governor — made an unsuccessful bid for the GOP nomination in 2016. Only one other U.S. president, John Adams, had a son who also became president.

## Prosecutor: Orlando gunman's widow knew about the attack

By ERIC TUCKER and PAUL ELIAS, Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — The widow of the Orlando nightclub gunman knew about the attack ahead of time and then hindered the criminal investigation when she lied to FBI agents after the shooting, prosecutors said during a brief court appearance a day after her arrest in California.

Visibly nervous and bewildered, Noor Salman quietly acknowledged Tuesday that she understood the two felony charges alleging she assisted her husband and obstructed justice. She could face life in prison if convicted of both counts.

She didn't enter a plea and was ordered back to court Wednesday for the formal appointment of a lawyer and discussions on how to transfer her and the case to federal court in Orlando, where a grand jury indicted her.

She was arrested Monday at her mother's home in Rodeo, a middle-class suburb about 25 miles north-east of San Francisco.

Salman, 30, was raised in the San Francisco Bay Area and lived in Fort Pierce, Florida, with her husband Omar Mateen when he attacked the Pulse nightclub on June 12.

"She knew he was going to conduct the attack," federal prosecutor Roger Handberg told the judge Tuesday. Handberg did not disclose any more details and would not comment after the 15-minute hearing held in a courtroom packed with security officers.

Outside court, Salman's uncle Al Salman said his niece was innocent and did nothing to help Mateen plan the attack on the gay nightclub.

"She's a very soft and sweet girl," Salman said. "She would not hurt a fly."

The indictment charges her with aiding and abetting Mateen in providing material support and resources to the Islamic State group between April and June of last year. She was also charged with obstruction, accused of misleading and lying to police and the FBI during their investigation.

The indictment gave no additional details on Salman's actions.

During the standoff, Mateen pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in a 911 call. He was killed in a shootout with SWAT officers. In addition to the 49 victims killed, 53 people were injured.

In California, next-door neighbor Glauber Franchi said he was unaware that Noor Salman was living with her mother until she was arrested Monday.

"It's a very private family, very quiet family," Franchi said. "You don't see them. You barely see them on the street. They're good people from my knowledge. Never had a problem."

Al Salman said that Noor Salman was physically and mentally abused by Mateen and that she stayed with him for fear of losing custody of their son.

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Charles Swift, director of the Richardson, Texas-based Constitutional Law Center for Muslims in America, planned to represent Noor Salman at the Wednesday hearing, said public defender John Paul Reichmuth, who served as her attorney Tuesday.

Linda Moreno, a Florida attorney who also represents Salman, said after her arrest that the widow "had no foreknowledge nor could she predict what Omar Mateen intended to do that tragic night."

Salman told The New York Times in an interview published in November that she knew her husband had watched jihadist videos but that she was "unaware of everything" regarding his intent to shoot up the club. Salman also said he had physically abused her.

Tucker reported from Washington. Follow him on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

This story has been corrected to reflect that the indictment was unsealed Tuesday, not Monday.

## 10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

### 1. EMBRACING CLEMENCY POWERS LIKE NEVER BEFORE

Obama is planning more commutations after a dramatic move to cut short convicted leaker Chelsea Manning's sentence. OBAMA-CLEMENCY

### 2. WHAT'S AT STAKE IN TRUMP'S INAUGURAL SPEECH

Will the president-elect convey a unifying message for a divided nation or play up his persona as a disrupter of the established order? TRUMP-INAUGURATION-SPEECH

### 3. FLIGHT 370: CLUES BYPASSED

Some are questioning how investigators may have missed opportunities by failing to organize coastal searches for the remnants that drifted to distant shorelines. MALAYSIA-MISSING PLANE-DEBRIS CLUES

### 4. HEALTH SECRETARY PICK FACING SCRUTINY

Tom Price is facing pointed questions about Trump's health policies — and his own investments in health care companies. TRUMP-HEALTH SECRETARY

### 5. PROSECUTOR: ORLANDO GUNMAN'S WIDOW KNEW ABOUT ATTACK

Noor Salman is indicted on charges of aiding and abetting Omar Mateen in the months before the rampage at Pulse nightclub that left 49 people dead. ORLANDO SHOOTER'S WIFE

### 6. LARGE SWATHS OF GAZA STRIP PLUNGE INTO DARKNESS

The power shortages are the worst to hit Gaza since Hamas seized control of the territory 10 years ago. GAZA-IN THE DARK

### 7. FOR DRIVERLESS CARS, A MORAL DILEMMA

MIT researchers ask human drivers how they'd handle life-or-death decisions in hopes of creating better algorithms to guide autonomous vehicles. SELF-DRIVING CARS-ETHICS

### 8. GLOBAL WARMING COULD STEAL POSTCARD-PERFECT DAYS

Rio de Janeiro, Miami and much of Africa are projected to have more inclement weather, while Europe and Seattle will gain nicer conditions. FEWER MILD DAYS

### 9. GEORGE H.W. BUSH HOSPITALIZED IN HOUSTON

The 41st U.S. president is said to be "fine" and expected to go home in a few days, his chief of staff tells the news media.

### 10. COOPERSTOWN READY FOR NEXT ENSHRINEMENT

Tim Lincecum and Jeff Bagwell are likely to be voted into baseball's Hall of Fame. Trevor Hoffman and Ivan Rodriguez, too, might make the grade. HALL-OF-FAME

## Inaugural speech is Trump's time to rise to the moment

By NANCY BENAC, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Tradition suggests it's time for Donald Trump to set aside the say-anything speaking style and rise to the inaugural moment.

But bucking tradition, or ignoring it altogether, is what got Donald Trump to his inaugural moment.

When Trump stands on the west front of the Capitol on Friday and delivers his inaugural address, all sides will be waiting to see whether he comes bearing a unifying message for a divided nation or decides to play up his persona as a disrupter of the established order.

How Trump tends to that balancing act, in both style and content, will be a telling launch for his presidency.

"The inaugural is an address that is meant for the ages," said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, a communications professor and director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania. "In particular, it's important when you've had a divisive election. You need to become president of all of the people, including those who vehemently opposed your election."

Trump seems to get that.

He's spoken admiringly in recent weeks about the speeches of past presidents Ronald Reagan and John F. Kennedy, and is said to be deeply involved in preparing his address. He's expected to deliver a personal speech, while returning to some of the big themes of his campaign, including a deep love of country.

Trump told Fox on Tuesday that he'll start his address with words of thanks to "everybody," including President Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle, for being "so gracious."

The president-elect showed he can deliver a straight-forward, prepared address at the Republican convention, where he largely stuck to a script and shut down anti-Hillary Clinton chants of "lock her up" from the crowd of GOP loyalists.

But that address was strikingly dark in tone, sketching a portrait of an America in crisis, and he later embraced that chant from supporters at his freewheeling campaign rallies.

The inaugural address, by contrast, needs to be "an inherently aspirational speech," said Michael Gerson, who wrote speeches for President George W. Bush and is a frequent Trump critic. "It has to be about the future and about your vision."

Veteran speechwriters have plenty of other advice for Trump and his chief wordsmith, Stephen Miller. Keep it short. Don't overdo the gravitas. Don't gloat, the victory tour is over. No deviations from script.

Oh, and don't undo a successful inaugural address with an intemperate tweet — or two or three — a few hours later.

While Trump used his victory speech on Election Night to sound a call to "come together as one united people," his tweets since then have featured name calling, score settling and petulance.

Wayne Fields, a Washington University expert on presidential rhetoric, said Trump is in an awkward situation, going into his inaugural address as a man who seems to regard precise language with contempt "rather than respect."

After all, this is a candidate who reveled in taking juvenile potshots during the campaign, labeling his rivals "stupid," "dumb" and "bad."

"I know words," he declared at one rally. "I have the best words. But there's no better word than stupid, right?"

Even if Trump delivers a statesmanlike speech that hits all the right notes, Fields says, "nobody would know how to receive it or who it was coming from or how seriously to take it. It's a huge challenge."

Any reframing of Trump's tone for the presidency — if he wanted to do that — would require a consistent, longer-term shift, Fields said.

Trump does go into the speech with the benefit of low expectations: His off-the-cuff and often inflammatory style has long been a big part of his appeal. The soaring rhetoric of Obama, for example, simply wouldn't ring true.

"Because of the high level of attention and the low expectations, he's far more likely to exceed expectations," Jamieson said.

At the same time, Gerson cautions, Trump faces an extra hurdle in his inaugural address because he

won the election by dividing the country.

"The method that he won creates the initial challenge of his presidency, which is to rally people broadly around his agenda and vision," he said.

Trump also knows his audience will include plenty of supporters who elected him to challenge the status quo. An address that doesn't offer any flavor of Trump-the-disruptor could disappoint those eager for a sea change in the ways of Washington.

Beyond Friday, there is the larger question of how Trump will adjust his speaking style over the next four years. His past pledges to "act more presidential" when the time is right are coming due.

"Any president is going to have to learn how to make use of good speeches," said Gerson, noting that presidents may have to speak at three public events in a given day. "That may be different from anything he's ever experienced before, because the campaign rewarded spontaneity and being extemporaneous. There are huge portions of the presidency where that can't be the case."

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Associated Press writer Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

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Follow Nancy Benac on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/nbenac>

## Pointed questions await Trump's pick for health secretary

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With coverage for millions of people at stake, Rep. Tom Price is facing pointed questions about President-elect Donald Trump's health policies — and his own investments in health care companies — from senators considering his selection as health secretary.

While Price, an orthopedic surgeon-turned-lawmaker, is largely a known quantity on Capitol Hill, Trump's bottom line on health care remains a mystery for Democrats and Republicans alike. Trump campaigned on repealing "Obamacare," but at times he's sounded more like a liberal, for example, with recent comments about providing insurance for everyone and taking on the drug companies.

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee scheduled a hearing on Price's nomination for Wednesday.

Price, 62, represents Atlanta's northern suburbs and chairs the House Budget Committee. A budget hawk and a social conservative, he drafted his own plan to replace President Barack Obama's 2010 health care law. It would have saved taxpayers money but covered fewer people, according to an outside analysis.

Democrats intend to question Price about the impact of Trump's plans to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, now providing coverage for about 20 million people.

"Tom Price is one of the most extreme and partisan Washington insiders," said Sen. Patty Murray of Washington state, the ranking Democrat on the committee. "We have to consider what he would do to impact people in every corner of this country."

Democrats will also zero in on Price's investments, which have prompted questions about potential conflicts of interest and calls for a Securities and Exchange Commission investigation of possible insider trading. Senior Democratic senators want to pause the nomination until an investigation can be completed, a request Republicans are unlikely to grant.

Last week, Price signed a government ethics agreement pledging to sell his stocks, but that didn't stop the questions. The latest controversy involves Price's purchase last year of stock in Zimmer Biomet, a major medical device manufacturer. The acquisition came around the same time that Price introduced legislation to suspend Medicare rules seen as problematic for such companies.

"This isn't a witch hunt. These are serious and disquieting allegations," Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York said Tuesday.

Trump transition team spokesman Phillip Blando said the Zimmer Biomet purchase was directed by Price's stockbroker as part of ongoing management of the congressman's investments. The spokesman also said Price had no advance knowledge and had not directed the broker to consider the company. Government

records show that Price was notified about the purchase more than a week after he offered the legislation. His spokesman said Price had been working on the bill for months.

Republican senators are closing ranks behind Price on the ethics questions, but they want him to provide a better sense of Trump's ultimate objectives on health care. Over the weekend, the president-elect told The Washington Post that he is close to having a plan that will provide insurance for everybody and lower some costs. That surprised many on Capitol Hill, where Republicans are still looking for a path.

Republican economist Douglas Holtz-Eakin called Price "patient" and "thoughtful" — "not a fiery orator."

The Department of Health and Human Services, which Price would lead, has a \$1 trillion budget and about 80,000 employees. It runs major health insurance programs, including Medicare, Medicaid and HealthCare.gov. Price would also be ultimately responsible for the Food and Drug Administration, the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Generally, Republicans want to overhaul the health care system to shift a greater financial responsibility and risk to individuals. They argue that would help create a genuine market for medical care, leading consumers to demand lower prices for services.

Republicans would also loosen many Obama-era regulations on insurers, such as limits on how much older customers can be charged, and requirements that certain benefits be covered. They would cap the tax-free status of employer-provided health insurance. And Price favors limitations on jury awards in malpractice cases.

Emergency room doctor Leon Haley, dean of the University of Florida College of Medicine-Jacksonville, has known Price for nearly 20 years, since they both practiced at Grady Memorial Hospital, a major safety-net institution in the Atlanta area.

Although Price's financial disclosure forms show him to be a millionaire, Haley says he believes that Price is aware of the needs of low-income patients. "I don't believe he would make any intentional decisions that will harm patients," said Haley.

That said, repealing "Obamacare" carries risks. "What happens after the original plan goes away?" asked Haley. "If they want to choose something different, that is completely within the purview of the new administration. But until we have a defined plan, if you start removing things without adequate supports, that's a concern."

HELP is one of two Senate committees that will hold hearings on Price. The Finance Committee, which actually votes on reporting the nomination to the Senate floor, will conduct a hearing next week.

## More clemency coming after Obama shortens Manning's sentence

By JOSH LEDERMAN and ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Embracing his clemency powers like never before, President Barack Obama is planning more commutations in his final days in office after a dramatic move to cut short convicted leaker Chelsea Manning's sentence.

Obama became the president to have granted more commutations than any other when he announced Tuesday that Manning will be freed in May, almost 30 years ahead of schedule. Manning, the transgender Army intelligence officer who leaked more than 700,000 U.S. documents, was one of 273 people receiving clemency on a single day.

Receiving pardons from the president were retired Gen. James Cartwright, who was charged with making false statements during another leak probe, and San Francisco Giants Hall of Famer Willie McCovey, sentenced in 1996 on tax evasion charges. Puerto Rican nationalist Oscar Lopez Rivera's 55-year sentence was commuted.

But Obama is not finished. The White House said Obama would grant more commutations Thursday — the day before his presidency ends — though officials said those would focus on drug offenders and would not likely include any other famous names.

Neil Eggleston, Obama's White House counsel, said the individuals were learning "that our nation is a

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forgiving nation, where hard work and a commitment to rehabilitation can lead to a second chance, and where wrongs from the past will not deprive an individual of the opportunity to move forward.”

The actions are permanent, and cannot be undone by President-elect Donald Trump.

With his last-minute clemency for Manning and Cartwright, Obama appeared to be softening what has been a hard-line approach to prosecuting leakers.

Manning has been serving a 35-year sentence for leaking classified government and military documents to WikiLeaks, along with some battlefield video. She was convicted in military court of violating the Espionage Act and other offenses and spent more than six years behind bars. She asked Obama last November to commute her sentence to time served.

Her case has pitted LGBT rights activists, who warned about her mental health and treatment as a transgender woman living in a men’s prison, against national security hawks who said she did devastating damage to U.S. interests. The former cheered Obama’s move, while the latter called it an outrageous act that set a dangerous precedent.

Obama did not grant a pardon to another prominent leaker, former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden, whom the U.S. has been unable to extradite from Russia. Snowden hasn’t formally applied for clemency, though his supporters have called for it. Yet the White House drew a distinction between the unapologetic Snowden and Manning, whom officials noted has expressed remorse and served several years already for her crime.

Known as Bradley Manning at the time of her 2010 arrest, Manning came out as transgender after being sentenced. She was held at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where she attempted suicide twice last year, according to her lawyers. Manning has acknowledged leaking the documents, but has said she did it to raise public awareness about the effects of war on civilians.

“We are all better off knowing that Chelsea Manning will walk out of prison a free woman,” said Chase Strangio, an American Civil Liberties Union attorney representing Manning, adding that Obama’s action could “quite literally save Chelsea’s life.”

House Speaker Paul Ryan called the move “just outrageous,” and added, “Chelsea Manning’s treachery put American lives at risk and exposed some of our nation’s most sensitive secrets.”

Manning, Lopez and many of the others will be released in May, in line with standard procedure allowing a period for re-entry. Obama also pardoned hotelier Ian Schrager, who was sentenced in 1980 to 20 months for tax evasion.

Commutations reduce sentences being served, but don’t erase convictions. Pardons generally restore civil rights, such as voting, often after a sentence has been served.

Cartwright, the former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had pleaded guilty in October to making false statements during an investigation into a leak of classified information about a covert cyberattack on Iran’s nuclear facilities. Prosecutors said Cartwright falsely told investigators that he did not provide information contained in a news article and in a book by New York Times journalist David Sanger, and said he also misled prosecutors about classified information shared with another journalist, Daniel Klaidman.

The Justice Department sought a sentence of two years, saying employees of the U.S. government are entrusted each day with sensitive classified information.

Puerto Ricans had long demanded the release of Lopez, who was sentenced to 55 years in prison for his role in a violent struggle for independence for the U.S. island territory. Lopez had belonged to the ultranationalist Armed Forces of National Liberation, which has claimed responsibility for more than 100 bombings at public and commercial buildings in U.S. cities during the 1970s and 1980s.

The White House noted that absent a commutation, the 74-year-old Lopez likely would have died in prison.

Obama’s commutation for Manning also raised fresh questions about the future of another figure involved in the Army leaker’s case: Julian Assange.

WikiLeaks had earlier pledged, via tweet, that its founder would agree to U.S. extradition if Obama granted clemency to Manning. Holed up for more than four years at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London, Assange has refused to meet prosecutors in Sweden, where he’s wanted on a rape allegation, fearing he

would be extradited to the U.S. to face espionage charges if he leaves the embassy.

But the Justice Department has never announced any indictment of Assange. WikiLeaks lawyer Melinda Taylor said U.S. and British authorities refuse to say whether the U.S. has requested extradition. Though she praised the commutation for Manning, Taylor made no mention of Assange's earlier promise to agree to extradition.

White House officials said neither Assange's fate nor separate concerns about WikiLeaks' role in Russian hacking of the election factored into the decision to commute Manning's sentence. The officials briefed reporters on condition of anonymity.

Associated Press writers Vivian Salama, John Hanna, Darlene Superville, Kathleen Hennessey and Danica Cota contributed to this report.

## Were opportunities for clues from MH370 debris missed?

By KRISTEN GELINEAU, Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — Three nations shelled out around \$160 million and years' worth of work on the underwater search for missing Malaysia Airlines Flight 370. The result: No plane. The only tangible — and arguably most important — clues into what happened to the aircraft have come courtesy of ordinary citizens, who bore the costs themselves.

The deep-sea sonar search for the vanished Boeing 777 was suspended on Tuesday after officials conceded defeat following the most expensive, complex aviation search in history.

But while search crews spent years trawling in futility through a remote patch of the Indian Ocean, people wandering along beaches thousands of kilometers (miles) away began spotting pieces of the plane that had washed ashore. Those pieces have provided crucial information to investigators and prompted some to question whether Malaysia, Australia and China — who funded the hunt for the underwater wreckage — missed key opportunities by failing to organize coastal searches for the remnants that drifted to distant shorelines.

"It would have been good to have been getting people looking for debris," said David Griffin, an Australian government oceanographer who worked on an analysis of how the debris drifted in a bid to pinpoint where the plane crashed. "I think that was a job that fell between the cracks of whose responsibility it was."

Since the plane vanished on a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing on March 8, 2014, more than 20 pieces of debris confirmed or believed likely to have come from the aircraft have turned up on beaches along the east coast of Africa and on islands including Madagascar. All of the parts have been found by local residents and tourists who stumbled upon them, and by Blaine Gibson, an American amateur sleuth who launched his own, self-funded hunt for debris after working with oceanographers to estimate where bits of the plane may have ended up.

Several family members of Flight 370's passengers asked officials to launch a search along the coastlines for parts of the plane. When their pleas went unheeded, they banded together and traveled to Madagascar to encourage residents to keep an eye out for more debris. The family members, who covered all their travel expenses themselves, even offered a potential reward to anyone who found a piece of Flight 370.

Grace Nathan, a Malaysian whose mother was on board Flight 370, was among those who made the trip to Madagascar last month. She is deeply frustrated that the families felt compelled to take on the task themselves, and that the underwater search yielded nothing.

"Every single clue to date has been found by private individuals by chance," Nathan said. "Not a single piece of hard evidence has been found by the official search."

Nathan believes the governments' failure to search for coastal debris may have resulted in missed clues.

"They should have done more to initiate something like what we did," she said. "We are laypeople. We don't have the kind of reach they have, we don't have the kind of contacts that they have."

Initially, experts believed that the pieces washing ashore would be virtually useless to the investigation. Too much time had passed, they argued, and ocean currents are too volatile to make it possible to trace the pieces back to their origin.

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Yet the recovered parts of the plane provided valuable insight into what happened to it. They confirmed, firstly, that the aircraft went down somewhere in the Indian Ocean. Before the first part — a piece of airplane wing known as a flaperon — was discovered on Reunion Island, farther east of Madagascar, in 2015, some people continued to insist the plane had flown north into Asia, rather than heading south. The flaperon effectively killed that theory and bolstered the investigators' interpretation of satellite data that indicated the plane had ended up somewhere along a vast arc slicing across the Indian Ocean.

A wing flap that washed up in Tanzania also gave investigators clues into what happened in the final moments of the plane's flight. No one knows why the aircraft veered so far off-course after takeoff and turned south into the Indian Ocean, though Malaysian officials have said the plane's erratic movements after takeoff were consistent with deliberate actions. Investigators operated on the theory that the plane was on autopilot in its final hours before it ran out of fuel and plummeted into the sea.

A key question was whether anyone was still at the controls when the plane hit the water, which would affect how far the plane could glide after running out of fuel. Critics who favor the theory that Capt. Zuhair Ahmad Shah hijacked the plane say he could have made a controlled ditch at sea in order to minimize debris and help the plane disappear as completely as possible.

But an analysis of the wing flap by Australian investigators suggested it had not been deployed when it hit the water. A pilot attempting a soft landing would have extended the flaps.

The flaperon and other debris also helped officials narrow down the potential search zone. Griffin, the Australian oceanographer, set replicas of the flaperon adrift in the ocean, measuring how fast they traveled and noting how much the wind influences their rate of speed. He and his team then ran computer simulations of how the aircraft parts could have drifted, giving them an idea of where they originated. Late last year, investigators coupled that drift information with a fresh analysis of other data on the plane's movements and concluded that search crews were looking in the wrong part of the Indian Ocean. The investigators recommended crews instead search an area to the north, where they now believe the plane may lie.

But Australia, Malaysia and China have nixed that idea, saying they won't relaunch the search until they have credible evidence pointing to the plane's exact location.

That decision has stunned Gibson, the American who has found MH370 debris. To him, the debris that has been found is the most credible evidence investigators have.

"Debris is the key. Debris is the main clue. Those are actually pieces of the plane," he says. "The debris is really narrowing it down better than it's ever been narrowed. ... There's no excuse for them to not go search that area."

## Nathan Chen leads the way at US figure skating championships

By DAVE SKRETTA, AP Sports Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The pain in his hip is gone. All that's left is a surgical screw and a scar. Nathan Chen hardly thinks about it these days, when he's gliding over the fresh ice in training or competition. The next big thing in American figure skating doesn't worry about it while he's taking off for one of his myriad quads, or that triple axel that causes him so much vexation.

It's been a year, after all. A lot has happened.

"Now, it's totally fine," he said, while preparing for this week's U.S. championships at the Sprint Center in Kansas City, "but it's really difficult when you're injured for worlds or something big. But I think that being able to overcome that makes you stronger."

Yes, that's exactly what the 17-year-old prodigy has done: He's come back stronger.

The avulsion injury, where a piece of the hip bone splintered off, hardly hampered him last month in Marseille, France. Chen landed four of his stunning quadruple jumps during the Grand Prix final to earn silver, becoming the second-youngest ever to medal at the event.

He also was the first American to medal there since Evan Lysacek and Johnny Weir in 2009.

"He's a really great competitor," said reigning U.S. champion Adam Rippon, who will be unable to defend



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his title due to his own injury, "and I'm really impressed with what he's done."

Not surprisingly, Chen has become the heavy favorite to win the title this weekend.

"The first time I saw him, he was competing against my brother at nationals, and my brother retired after that year because of Nathan," said three-time champion Ashley Wagner. "He's definitely coming into his own. It's awesome how much he's pushing the boundaries of his sport."

By that, Wagner means that there are few other skaters doing quads with the same kind of amplitude as Chen — perhaps Japanese superstar Yuzuru Hanyu and a handful of others.

While risky, the rewards for the high-flying jumps are worth it. Their base value has jumped a considerable amount over the last couple Olympic cycles, reaching a point where even quads that end up under-rotated or with a two-footed landing yield big points.

The big question is what exactly will Chen unveil in Kansas City?

"I've been working on all my quads, excluding toe loops, the past two weeks," he said. "I've thought about different program plans and it depends on how my body is during that time, if anything is hurting, if I'm ready to push full-out. There's a lot of options."

Rippon's decision to withdraw cleared a major road block for Chen, and left Max Aaron and Jason Brown as his biggest competition. But chances are they'll have to land at least one clean quad of their own — and perhaps a couple — to have a shot at winning.

Here's a brief look at the other titles up for grabs this week in Kansas City:

**LADIES:** Wagner emerged as the favorite after winning Skate America, but a disappointing Cup of China left the race wide open. Defending champion Gracie Gold struggled throughout the fall but should not be counted out, while Mirai Nagasu and Mariah Bell are podium threats.

Missing is silver medalist Polina Edmunds, who withdrew with a foot injury.

"My confidence, some would say is surprisingly high," Gold said. "The amount of progress I've been able to make since Golden Spin (in December) to now has been incredible. I think I'm going to put out two really great performances in Kansas City."

**PAIRS:** Tarah Kayne and Danny O'Shea are back to defend the title they won in St. Paul, Minnesota, but the wild card is how Kayne's knee will hold up. She was diagnosed with a tendon issue that has had an impact on training and competition for much of the past year.

Former champs Alexa Scimeca and Christopher Knierim have withdrawn due to injuries, leaving the teams of Haven Denny and Brandon Frazier and Marissa Castelli and Mervin Tran among the favorites.

"We took a break and kind of reorganized a lot of things, a lot of weaknesses we've had this season," Frazier said. "I think the last month has been very solid, probably the best month of training we have had since we've been back."

**DANCE:** The Americans have become world leaders in ice dance, and that should mean a tight race for medals at the U.S. championships. But reigning champs Maia Shibutani and Alex Shibutani are still clear front-runners, especially after their bronze medal at the Grand Prix final.

Madison Chock and Evan Bates, the 2015 champs who took silver a year ago, are aiming to return to the top. Madison Hubbell and Zach Donohue are three-time bronze medalists eager for more.

"I think we're definitely in a different place heading into this championship," Alex Shibutani said. "The results have been validating for us, but I think what led to the success we've had over the past 18 months started with the mindset and approach that we've been able to successfully continue the first half of the season: We don't take anything for granted."

## Global warming could steal postcard-perfect weather days

By **SETH BORENSTEIN, AP Science Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Global warming is going to steal away some of those postcard-perfect weather days in the future, according to a first-of-its-kind projection of nice weather.

On average, Earth will have 10 fewer days of mild and mostly dry weather by the end of the century, the researchers estimate. Some places will get more days perfect for picnics or outdoor weddings, while

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other places will lose a lot. Rio de Janeiro, Miami and much of Africa are big losers, while Europe and Seattle will gain nicer weather.

"It's the type of weather where you can go outside and do something fun," said study lead author Karin van der Wiel, a meteorology researcher at Princeton University and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "It's not too cold. It's not too hot. It's not too humid."

For the past three decades, the world has averaged 74 mild days a year. But by 2035 that will shrink to 70 and then 64 by the last two decades of the century, according to the study, published Wednesday in the journal *Climatic Change*. Mild weather was defined as between 68 and 86 degrees (18 and 30 degrees Celsius) with low humidity and no more than a trace of rain.

Any change depends on where you live and the time of year. For example, on average, the U.S. will lose nine mild summer days by the end of the century, although most is gained back with more mild days in the winter, spring and fall. The report estimates that Washington, Chicago, New York and Dallas will lose two weeks of pleasant summer weather but some is gained back. On average, Washington loses 13 mild days; Atlanta, 12; Chicago, 9; Denver and New York, 6; and Dallas, 1.

The biggest losers will be the tropics and nearly all of Africa, eastern South America, South Asia and northern Australia. Rio de Janeiro, on average, will see 40 mild days disappear. Miami will lose its only mild summer day and nearly a month of spring and fall mild days by 2100.

"The changes are more dramatic in parts of the developing world, where you have high concentrations of populations," said NOAA climate scientist and co-author Sarah Kapnick.

Other places, especially northern developed ones, will gain some of what the tropics lost. England and northern Europe are big winners. Seattle should pick up nine mild days and Los Angeles, which already has a lot of nice weather, gets six extra by the end of the century.

The scientists didn't specifically focus on whether the loss of mild days has already started globally, but they did see it happening in much of Africa and South America, Van der Wiel said.

Climate scientists usually focus on extreme weather — record heat, tropical cyclones, droughts, floods — and how they could get worse as the world warms. Kapnick said she wanted to look at nice weather because her friends kept asking her what day to choose for good wedding weather.

The team used a middle ground scenario for global warming — not worst-case runaway carbon pollution and not dramatic cuts in emissions of heat-trapping gases — and ran different computer simulations to see what would happen.

It's not just fewer nice days to enjoy. Fewer mild days will also harm agricultural production and allow disease carrying insects to thrive more in more places, said University of Georgia meteorology professor Marshall Shepherd.

Stanford University climate scientist Chris Field, who led an international study of extreme weather, questioned the purpose of the study: "Extreme conditions are the sharp end of the climate stick. It is in the extremes when things break and damage occurs."

National Center for Atmospheric Research scientist Gerald Meehl, who also studies extreme weather, said a decrease in mild weather may not quite have the economic and health costs but there are other factors such as tourism "or simple human enjoyment."

Follow Seth Borenstein at <http://twitter.com/borenbears> and his work can be found at <http://bigstory.ap.org/content/seth-borenstein>

## Back-to-back shootings shake Mexico's tourism jewels

By CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN, Associated Press

CANCUN, Mexico (AP) — Two consecutive days of shooting attacks that left a total of nine dead have put two of the jewels of Mexico's Caribbean coast on edge and spurred a warning to tourists by the U.S. government.

As investigators worked Tuesday at the scene of a shooting the previous day that caused five deaths in the nearby beach town of Playa del Carmen, the region was stunned when gunmen assaulted the Quintana

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Roo state prosecutors' offices in Cancun, and four people were killed.

Authorities attributed both incidents to organized crime, but made no comment on whether they might be linked.

On Tuesday night, two women embraced and cried while looking at a pool of blood and a flickering candle just inside the gate of the state prosecutors' office. A police officer and three apparent attackers were killed as police repelled the afternoon attack and five suspects were detained, Quintana Roo state Gov. Carlos Joaquin said.

The governor pleaded for calm, saying the federal government was sending more security forces to help local and state authorities. "Cancun residents and our visitors can go about their lives," he said in a televised address. "I repeat: The three levels of government protect society."

But central Cancun, which is away from the hotel zone where most foreigners stay, was palpably tense.

Shortly after the gunbattle at the prosecutors' office, a convoy of police trucks streaked toward the gleaming Plaza de las Americas mall where hundreds of fearful shoppers flooded out the exits after people reported hearing gunfire. Soldiers in full battle gear cleared the property.

Later, an official with the prosecutor's office said the mall scare proved to be a false alarm. Although some shoppers reported hearing gunshots, investigators found no sign of any crime there, said the official, who agreed to discuss the incident only if not quoted by name because he was not authorized to speak with press.

The U.S. Consulate in Merida issued an alert about the incidents in Cancun and urged U.S. citizens to take care and "to follow local authorities' warnings and directives and consult with their hotels before leaving the premises."

Authorities released few details about the attack on the prosecutors' office, including the number of attackers or information on those detained.

David Franco waited anxiously with his family outside the office Tuesday night, saying they feared his brother-in-law had been wrongly detained after the shooting. He said the man had phoned his own wife saying he was caught in the middle of a shootout and his car had been hit twice by bullets. The last thing his wife heard was: "They're taking us, they're taking us." But she didn't know who or where.

Franco said the family frantically searched all over Cancun looking for his brother-in-law before learning he was inside the prosecutors' office being questioned. Franco said his brother-in-law was just on his way to work. His car was still double parked about 30 yards down the street.

The Cancun shooting came one day after five people, including three foreigners, died during a shooting at a beachside club during the BPM electronic music festival in Playa del Carmen.

On Tuesday, the hypothesis of drug links to that shooting was strengthened after a banner briefly appeared along a roadside, signed by the "Old School Zetas," part of the fragmented Zetas cartel, suggesting the attack was carried out as part of a battle against rival gangs.

Quintana Roo's attorney general, Miguel Angel Pech, said investigators were looking into whether the banner referred to the BPM festival or one of its organizers.

Pech said authorities were investigating whether extortion, street-level drug sales or a murder plot was the motive behind the shooting, which also resulted in 15 people being wounded or injured.

Standing in front of a memorial of flowers and candles at the Blue Parrot club Tuesday, Ruben Aguinaga of Mexico City tried to make sense of the shooting that had shattered an otherwise fun and happy music festival that he had attended for the third time. Asked if he would come back, Aguinaga said he would have to see.

"That this kind of thing happens pains me," he said. "It makes me sad, it makes me feel powerless, it makes me mad."

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Associated Press writer Maria Verza in Mexico City contributed to this report.

## Australia defends end of MH370 hunt; investigation continues

By KRISTEN GELINEAU, Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — Australian officials defended their suspension of the fruitless deep-sea sonar search for Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, insisting on Wednesday that the enormous costs involved played no role in their decision to halt the nearly three-year hunt.

Australia's Transport Minister Darren Chester also said that while the search had been called off on Tuesday, work behind the scenes would go on, with experts continuing to analyze data associated with the doomed aircraft's final hours and examining any future debris that washes ashore. But he declined to specify what kind of breakthrough would convince officials to resume the search for the Boeing 777's underwater wreckage.

"When we get some information or data or a breakthrough that leads us to a specific location, the experts will know it when they see it," he told reporters in the southern city of Melbourne.

Australia, Malaysia and China — which have funded the \$160 million search — have rejected pleas from family members of the passengers and some investigators that search crews be allowed to keep going. China is involved because more than half of the 239 people on board the plane were Chinese.

Late last year, as ships with high-tech search equipment covered the last strips of the 120,000-square kilometer (46,000-square mile) search zone west of Australia, experts concluded they had been looking in the wrong place and should have been searching a smaller area immediately to the north. But by then, the three countries had already agreed not to search elsewhere without evidence of the plane's exact location.

Chester defended the decision to call off the hunt without checking the new area to the north, saying, "No one is coming to me as minister and saying, 'We know where MH370 is.'" And he insisted the high price of the search had nothing to do with pulling the plug.

"It is a costly exercise, but it hasn't been the factor which led to the decision to suspend the search," Chester said. "We don't want to provide false hope to the families and friends. We need to have credible new evidence leading to a specific location before we would be reasonably considering future search efforts."

Officials are facing a no-win situation, the transport minister said in an interview with the Australian Broadcasting Corp. Call off the search, he said, and disappoint those who want resolution to the world's greatest aviation mystery. Keep going, and face the wrath of taxpayers who have already spent millions of dollars with no result.

The new 25,000-square kilometer (9,700-square mile) area to the north was determined with the help of drift modeling by Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, which attempted to calculate where debris that has washed ashore on coastlines in the western Indian Ocean originated.

Chester said that drift modeling would continue, and experts will scrutinize any further debris that washes up. Investigators will also continue to refine the satellite data that led them to conclude the plane went down somewhere in the Indian Ocean after it vanished on a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing on March 8, 2014.

Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said he empathized with the families who want the search to go on, but said officials had done the best they could under extraordinary circumstances.

"We share their deep disappointment that the plane has not been found," Turnbull told reporters. "It is an unprecedented search. It's been conducted with the best advice over the areas that were identified as the most likely to find the location of the airplane. It is a shocking tragedy and we grieve and we deeply regret the loss and we deeply regret that the plane has not been found."

Tony Abbott, who was Australia's prime minister when the Boeing 777 disappeared, suggested the search should continue. Abbott pledged on the first anniversary of the tragedy: "It can't go on forever, but as long as there are reasonable leads, the search will go on." On Tuesday, he tweeted: "Disappointed that the search for MH370 has been called off. Especially if some experts think there are better places to look."

If the plane is never found, the reasons for its disappearance and crash will probably never be known, though Malaysia has said the plane's erratic movements after takeoff were consistent with deliberate actions.

Chester said he had not given up hope of resolution — though he conceded answers may be a long

way off.

"It's an extraordinary aviation mystery as it stands today," he said. "I'm hopeful that we have a breakthrough in the future. We need to prepare ourselves for the sad and tragic reality that in this foreseeable future, we may not find MH370."

## 4 dead in new shooting in Mexico's Caribbean resort region

By CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN and GABRIEL ALCOGER, Associated Press

CANCUN, Mexico (AP) — Gunmen attacked the state prosecutors' office in this Caribbean resort city Tuesday, and authorities said four people were killed, ratcheting up tensions just a day after a shooting at a music festival in a nearby town left three foreigners and two Mexicans dead.

It was too early to say if the attacks were linked, but they were a marked intrusion of bloodshed into Mexico's main tourism zone, a region that had previously been spared much of the violence plaguing other parts of the country.

The governor of Quintana Roo state, Carlos Joaquin, said three attackers and one police officer died in Tuesday's incident. He said five suspected attackers were taken into custody. He urged calm, saying the federal government was sending more security forces to the region.

A witness said the gunmen who attacked the prosecutors' office also threw two explosive devices at a perimeter wall. A reporter at the scene saw police remove a body from a guard post near the building after the attack.

A few hours later, hundreds of people fled the Plaza de Las Americas shopping center after thinking they heard gunfire inside. Soldiers swarmed into the mall.

Irma Huxool, a woman who had just bought tickets to the movies, told The Associated Press that she heard three shots "at the entrance to the cinema" and people started running in confused panic.

But an official with the prosecutors' office said the mall incident proved to be a false alarm. The official, who agreed to discuss the incident only on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to talk to the press, said there were no signs of any crime there.

The U.S. Consulate in Merida issued an alert about the incidents in Cancun and urged U.S. citizens to take care and "to follow local authorities' warnings and directives and consult with their hotels before leaving the premises."

Earlier in the day, the hypothesis of drug links to the shooting in nearby Playa del Carmen before dawn Monday was strengthened after a banner briefly appeared along a roadside, signed by the "Old School Zetas," part of the fragmented Zetas cartel, suggesting the attack was carried out as part of a battle against rival gangs.

Quintana Roo's attorney general, Miguel Angel Pech, said investigators were looking into whether the banner referred to the BPM music festival or one of its organizers.

Pech said authorities were investigating whether extortion, street-level drug sales or a murder plot was the motive behind the shooting at the closing party for the BPM electronic music festival. Five people died and 15 suffered injuries.

Pech said the gunman fired directly at one of the Mexican victims at the Blue Parrot nightclub where the party was being held. A confused shootout ensued in which guards — it is not clear whether festival security personnel or the Mexican's bodyguards — returned fire.

One guard was hit by gunfire, and as he fell, his pistol went off, wounding several concert-goers, Pech said. It was unclear why the Mexican man might have been a target. Pech said his family told prosecutors that he had "an important relative" in the state government of Veracruz, a state plagued by corruption and violence.

The attacker fled, but Pech told the Televisa TV network that a taxi driver who helped the man escape has been linked to previous extortion attempts. Some businesses in Mexico are forced to pay protection money under threat of being attacked.

"Either they didn't reach an agreement over protection payments, directly extortion, or it may be that somebody did not allow them to sell drugs inside" the nightclub, Pech said.

"Perhaps the strongest hypothesis is that this person had gone there to demand they comply with protection payments," he added at a news conference.

Playa del Carmen residents said the shooting came amid a growing and increasingly open drug scene in the resort town, which has long been spared the violence of Mexico's cartel wars.

Concerns that violence may be creeping into the once-tranquil beachside town were voiced as people attended a Monday evening vigil in front of the Blue Parrot nightclub.

"This is a sign of what has been happening," said Lenin Amaro, a local business owner and politician.

"It has reached us," Amaro said of the country's drug violence. "We were living in what you could call a bubble."

Federal authorities say the Zeta cartel has been in the state for years, especially in Cancun itself, where the Zetas were blamed for the firebombing of a bar in which eight people died in 2010.

And drug cartel influence in the state as a whole goes back at least to the 1990s under Gov. Mario Villanueva, who was later convicted in the U.S. of involvement in large-scale drug smuggling.

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Associated Press writer Mark Stevenson in Mexico City contributed to this report.

## DeVos pledges not to undo public education, pushes choice

By MARIA DANILOVA and JENNIFER C. KERR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a sometimes contentious confirmation hearing, education secretary pick Betsy DeVos pledged that she would not seek to dismantle public schools amid questions by Democrats about her qualifications, political donations and long-time work advocating for charter schools and school choice.

DeVos said she would address "the needs of all parents and students" but that a one-size fits all model doesn't work in education.

But Democrats on the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee grilled the wealthy Republican donor on a range of issues from sexual assault to child care, students with disabilities and making public colleges and universities tuition-free.

Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont asked DeVos outright if she would have gotten the job had it not been for her family's political contributions. "As a matter of fact I do think that there would be that possibility," she responded. "I have worked very hard on behalf of parents and children for the last almost 30 years."

Sen. Patty Murray of Washington state, the top Democrat on the committee, said she was "extremely disappointed" that DeVos had not finalized her financial and ethics disclosures ahead of the hearing. She also asked whether DeVos would divest herself of any family business enterprises that may represent a conflict of interest in her job, including one student loan refinancing company.

"Where conflicts are identified, they will be resolved. I will not be conflicted. Period," DeVos said.

Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., a former education secretary, expressed confidence that DeVos is an "excellent" choice for the job. "She is on the side of our children," he said.

DeVos said that if she is confirmed education secretary, she will take a salary of only \$1.

She sidestepped a question about whether she would rein in the department's Office for Civil Rights' work to protect students from campus sexual assault. DeVos said she would "be looking very closely at how this has been regulated and handled and with great sensitivity to those who are victims."

What if unwanted kissing and groping, like the behavior Donald Trump once bragged about, happened in a school, Murray asked. Would DeVos consider that sexual assault?

DeVos said yes.

Asked by Sanders about her views on tuition-free public colleges and universities, DeVos said: "I think we also have to consider the fact that there is nothing in life that is truly free. Somebody is going to pay for it."

She skirted Sanders' question on whether she would support making child care free or much more affordable for low-income families as is the case in many countries around the world, saying only that she

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feels strongly about “parents having an opportunity for child care for their children.”

“But it’s not a question of opportunity,” Sanders fired back, raising his voice. “It’s a question of being able to afford it!”

Facing criticism from teachers unions that she is working against public education, DeVos told the committee that she will be “a strong advocate for great public schools.”

“But,” she added, “if a school is troubled, or unsafe, or not a good fit for a child — perhaps they have a special need that is going unmet — we should support a parent’s right to enroll their child in a high-quality alternative.”

Amid concerns that DeVos’ conservative religious views might make her a poor advocate for the rights of the LGBT community and other minorities, DeVos stressed that no students should face discrimination. Alexander read into the record a letter of support from the Log Cabin Republicans, a Republican organization pushing for LGBT rights.

As the hearing dragged on into its fourth hour, Democratic senators made repeated requests with Chairman Alexander to allow them to pose another round of questions to DeVos, but he refused, citing procedures at previous hearings.

DeVos, 59, also said she will seek to address rising higher education costs and massive student debt, but also advance trade and vocational schools as well as community colleges because “craftsmanship is not a fallback — but a noble pursuit.”

DeVos, the wife of Dick DeVos, the heir to the Amway marketing fortune, has spent more than two decades advocating for charter schools in her home state of Michigan, as well as promoting conservative religious values.

In a letter addressed to the committee, 38 prominent education groups and teachers’ organizations expressed concern that DeVos’ track record bodes ill for public education.

“Over the course of her career as a major campaign contributor, soft-money donor and lobbyist, DeVos has used her considerable wealth to influence legislation and the outcomes of elections to advance policies that have undermined public education and proved harmful to many of our most vulnerable students,” the letter said.

LGBT groups also have protested Trump’s choice of DeVos, saying she has funded conservative religious groups that promote what they consider to be traditional family values, including one organization that supports conversion therapy — counseling of gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender people with the aim of changing their sexual orientation.

DeVos told the hearing late Tuesday that she never supported the idea and that “believes in the innate value of every single human being.”

DeVos supporters, meanwhile, applauded her nomination. Eva Moskowitz, CEO of Success Academy Charter Schools, said that American public education “is in deep crisis,” with 35 countries outranking American schools in math and 20 in reading.

“I believe Betsy DeVos has the talent, commitment and leadership capacity to revitalize our public schools and deliver the promise of opportunity that excellent education provides, and I support her nomination as U.S. secretary of education,” Moskowitz said in a statement.

## With clemency for Manning, attention turns to WikiLeaks head

By ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama’s decision Tuesday to commute Chelsea Manning’s sentence brought fresh attention to another figure involved in the Army leaker’s case: Julian Assange.

On Twitter last week, Assange’s anti-secrecy site WikiLeaks posted, “If Obama grants Manning clemency Assange will agree to US extradition despite clear unconstitutionality of DoJ case.”

Obama’s move will test the promise. The president commuted Manning’s 35-year sentence, freeing her in May, nearly three decades early. Manning has acknowledged leaking a trove of diplomatic cables and national security documents to WikiLeaks in 2010.

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In a statement, Assange called Manning "a hero, whose bravery should be applauded."

Assange went on to demand that the U.S. government "should immediately end its war on whistleblowers and publishers, such as WikiLeaks and myself," but he made no mention of the Twitter pledge. His lawyer said he has been pressing the Justice Department for updates on an investigation concerning WikiLeaks.

Assange has been holed up for more than four years at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London. He has refused to meet prosecutors in Sweden, where he remains wanted on an allegation of rape, fearing he would be extradited to the U.S. to face espionage charges if he leaves the embassy.

The Justice Department has never announced any indictment of Assange, and it's not clear that any charges have been brought under seal.

The department, in refusing to turn over investigative documents sought by Manning under the Freedom of Information Act, has acknowledged that the FBI is continuing to investigate the publication of national security information on WikiLeaks arising from Manning's disclosures.

"That investigation concerns potential violations of federal criminal laws, in the form of serious threats to the national security, and the investigation continues today," Justice Department lawyers wrote in a court filing last year. "From the terms of her request, it is clear that Manning seeks to obtain documents concerning that investigation.

Separately, the FBI is also investigating Russian meddling through hacking in the U.S. presidential election. Hacked emails from top Democratic officials and Hillary Clinton campaign officials were posted on WikiLeaks in the final weeks of the presidential race.

With the commutation coming just days before Obama leaves office, any decision on whether to charge or seek to extradite Assange will now fall to the Trump administration.

In a statement Tuesday, a lawyer for Assange did not address whether Assange intended to come to the U.S.

"For many months, I have asked the DOJ to clarify Mr. Assange's status. I hope it will soon," Assange's lawyer, Barry Pollack, said in the statement. "The Department of Justice should not pursue any charges against Mr. Assange based on his publication of truthful information and should close its criminal investigation of him immediately."

Another Assange lawyer, Melinda Taylor, suggested he wouldn't go back on his word. "Everything that he has said he's standing by," she said in a brief telephone conversation with The Associated Press.

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Associated Press writers Danika Kirka and Raphael Satter contributed from London.

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Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

## **Pence promises big investment in infrastructure**

**By JONATHAN LEMIRE and CATHERINE LUCEY, Associated Press**

NEW YORK (AP) — Vice President-elect Mike Pence pledged to a group of mayors that the Trump administration will make a serious investment in infrastructure, and he told diplomats that Trump and his incoming team share "a commitment to engage with all of the world."

Speaking Tuesday to a meeting of the United States Conference of Mayors, Pence said President-elect Donald Trump told him to pass on that "we're going to do an infrastructure bill, and it's going to be big."

Trump, who consistently lamented the state of American bridges, roads and airports while campaigning, has promised to invest \$1 trillion in transportation and infrastructure spending, though he has provided few details.

Pence also said the new administration will work with cities as partners. He looked ahead to Friday's inauguration, saying it will mark "the dawn of a new era for our country, it's an era of growth and opportunity and renewed greatness for America."

Trump also made his first trip to Washington in weeks on Tuesday, as his inauguration festivities approach.

Trump flew in for a black-tie dinner honoring Tom Barrack, his longtime friend and head of the Inaugura-



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tion Committee. The Chairman's Global Dinner drew nearly 150 diplomats and ambassadors, well-heeled donors, soon-to-be White House staffers and Cabinet picks.

"We have great respect for your countries. We have great respect for our world," Trump told the group after he was introduced by Pence, who assured that the future president was willing to engage with the world, despite his "America First" mantra.

"I'm not sure that the national media here in America completely understands the president-elect. I can assure you that the world will," Pence said, adding that Trump "will be a president who puts America first, but we will work every day with nations around the world to advance the peace and prosperity of our allies and our friends across the world."

The president-elect is expected to return to New York after the dinner. He'll make his final trip to Washington on Thursday to attend a concert at the Lincoln Memorial and stay, as is custom for incoming presidents, at Blair House, the presidential guest quarters, the night before he's sworn in.

In New York on Tuesday, Trump met with Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg. Trump has criticized the cost of Boeing's Air Force One program.

"We made some great progress to refine requirements for Air Force One, to streamline the process, to streamline certain features, all of that will lead to a better airplane at a lower cost," Muilenburg said after the meeting. He said Trump "is doing a good job as an agent of business" and added that more conversations would be forthcoming. He did not set a timeline on settling on a final price tag.

Trump's comments on Twitter and to news organizations threatened to overshadow the pomp and circumstance of Friday's inauguration.

On Tuesday, the president-elect continued his attacks on Rep. John Lewis, whom he berated Saturday for challenging his legitimacy to be the next president. Trump said that the veteran African-American congressman from Georgia had wrongly claimed that it would be the first inauguration he's missed since 1987.

"WRONG (or lie!)" Trump tweeted. "He boycotted Bush 43 also because he 'thought it would be hypocritical to attend Bush's swearing-in....he doesn't believe Bush is the true elected president.' Sound familiar!"

Lewis' office on Tuesday confirmed that the civil rights icon had missed George W. Bush's 2001 swearing-in, saying it was also a form of dissent.

Trump has been widely criticized for the comments and more than 40 House Democrats plan to boycott his inauguration. Trump had sought to ease friction Monday, meeting with a son of Martin Luther King Jr.

Asked about the boycott on a phone call with reporters, Trump spokesman Sean Spicer said they would "love for every member of Congress to attend but if they don't, we've got some great seats for others to partake in. It's a shame that these folks don't want to be part of the peaceful transfer of power."

White House press secretary Josh Earnest said the boycott was a "reflection of the division" in the country.

Trump also put GOP lawmakers on the defensive Tuesday over their tax plan, after he called their approach "too complicated" in an interview with The Wall Street Journal.

At issue is a proposal called "border adjustment" that would tax imports to the U.S. while exempting exports. It's part of a sweeping planned rewrite of the U.S. tax code aimed at lowering overall rates on corporations from 35 percent to 20 percent.

"Anytime I hear border adjustment, I don't love it," Trump said.

Trump also appeared to outline a different health care goal than many Republicans over the weekend. During interviews with The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal, Trump said that after the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, he'll offer "insurance for everybody." Congressional Republicans have been careful to say that they want to provide "universal access."

European Union nations bracing for Trump's ascension showed defiance Monday in the face of the president-elect's stinging comments on everything from NATO and German cars to the crumbling of the European Union.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said the Trump's view that NATO was obsolete and his criticism that European allied members aren't paying their fair share had "caused astonishment."

Also this week, Trump's picks for Cabinet posts continue their trek to Capitol Hill to win support from lawmakers considering their confirmation for Cabinet positions.

On Tuesday, Republican Rep. Ryan Zinke of Montana made his case to be interior secretary. And Betsy

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DeVos, Trump's pick for education secretary, has a confirmation hearing Tuesday evening.

Associated Press writers Julie Pace and Jill Colvin in Washington and Steve Peoples in New York contributed to this report.

Reach Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire>

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Jan. 18, the 18th day of 2017. There are 347 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 18, 1967, Albert DeSalvo, who claimed to be the "Boston Strangler," was convicted in Cambridge, Massachusetts, of armed robbery, assault and sex offenses. (Sentenced to life, DeSalvo was killed in prison in 1973.)

On this date:

In 1778, English navigator Captain James Cook reached the present-day Hawaiian Islands, which he named the "Sandwich Islands."

In 1862, the tenth president of the United States, John Tyler, died in Richmond, Virginia, at age 71, shortly before he could take his seat as an elected member of the Confederate Congress.

In 1892, comedian Oliver Hardy was born in Harlem, Georgia.

In 1911, the first landing of an aircraft on a ship took place as pilot Eugene B. Ely brought his Curtiss biplane in for a safe landing on the deck of the armored cruiser USS Pennsylvania in San Francisco Harbor.

In 1919, the Paris Peace Conference, held to negotiate peace treaties ending the First World War, opened in Versailles (vehr-SY'), France.

In 1936, Nobel Prize-winning author Rudyard Kipling, 70, died in London.

In 1943, during World War II, Jewish insurgents in the Warsaw Ghetto launched their initial armed resistance against Nazi troops, who eventually succeeded in crushing the rebellion. A U.S. ban on the sale of pre-sliced bread — aimed at reducing bakeries' demand for metal replacement parts — went into effect.

In 1957, a trio of B-52's completed the first non-stop, round-the-world flight by jet planes, landing at March Air Force Base in California after more than 45 hours aloft.

In 1970, David Oman McKay, the ninth president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, died at the age of 96.

In 1988, a China Southwest Airlines Ilyushin 18 crashed while on approach to Chongqing Airport, killing all 108 people on board.

In 1993, the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday was observed in all 50 states for the first time.

In 1997, former Massachusetts Sen. Paul Tsongas, who rebounded from cancer to briefly become the Democratic front-runner for president in 1992, died in Boston at age 55.

Ten years ago: Truck driver Tyrone Williams was spared the death penalty and sentenced by a federal court in Houston to life in prison for his role in the deaths of 19 immigrants crammed in a sweltering tractor-trailer. A heated controversy at the ABC show "Grey's Anatomy" boiled over as the network rebuked co-star Isaiah Washington for making an anti-gay comment against fellow actor T.R. Knight and Washington issued a lengthy apology (Washington ended up being dropped from the cast).

Five years ago: President Barack Obama rejected the Keystone XL project, a Canadian company's plan to build a 1,700-mile pipeline to carry oil across six U.S. states to Texas refineries. Wikipedia and other websites went dark to protest two congressional proposals intended to thwart the online piracy of copyrighted movies and TV programs.

One year ago: For the first time in 17 years, civil rights leaders gathered at the South Carolina Statehouse to pay homage to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. without the Confederate flag present; it was one

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of many rallies throughout the country. Eagles co-founder Glenn Frey, 67, died in New York.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director John Boorman is 84. Former Sen. Paul Kirk, D-Mass., is 79. Singer-songwriter Bobby Goldsboro is 76. Comedian-singer-musician Brett Hudson is 64. Actor-director Kevin Costner is 62. Country singer/actor Mark Collie (TV: "Nashville") is 61. Actor Mark Rylance is 57. Actress Alison Arngrim (TV: "Little House on the Prairie") is 55. Former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley is 54. Actress Jane Horrocks is 53. Comedian Dave Attell (uh-TEHL') is 52. Actor Jesse L. Martin is 48. Rapper DJ Quik is 47. Rock singer Jonathan Davis (Korn) is 46. Former NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous is 44. Singer Christian Burns (BBMak) is 43. Actor Derek Richardson is 41. Actor Jason Segel is 37. Actress Samantha Mumba is 34. Country singer Kristy Lee Cook (TV: "American Idol") is 33. Actress Devin Kelley is 31. Actor Mateus Ward is 18.

Thought for Today: "Life is a great big canvas, and you should throw all the paint you can on it." — Danny Kaye, American entertainer (born this date in 1913, died 1986).