

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 1 of 51

- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Groton Ford ad
- 2- Obit: Evelyn Meyer
- 3- Harry Implement Help Wanted
- 3- Obit: Fern Kersting
- 4- Boys Varsity Stat Sheet vs. Langford
- 5- Boys JV Stat Sheet vs. Langford
- 6- Gun Show set for Aberdeen
- 6- GDI Living Heart Fitness Ad
- 6- Upcoming GDI Live Events
- 7- Today in Weather History
- 8- Local Weather Forecast
- 9- Yesterday's Groton Weather
- 9- Today's Weather Climate
- 9- National Weather map
- 10 - Daily Devotional
- 11 - AP News

Wednesday, Feb. 1

School Breakfast: Cheese omelette, muffin, fruit, juice, milk.

School Lunch: BBQ, French fries, fruit, broccoli and dip.

Senior Menu: Breaded fish, parsley buttered potatoes, Prince Edward Island Vegetable, Sherbet, whole wheat bread.

NAEP Testing at GHS

Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle at 5 p.m., League at 6:30 p.m., Confirmation at 7 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 2

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

School Lunch: Chicken noodle soup, grilled cheese, fruit, carrots and dip.

Senior Menu: Roast pork, baked potato with sour cream, squash, apple sauce, Molasses cookie, whole wheat bread.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle at 2 p.m. Varsity Boys Basketball hosts Tiospa Zina

Friday, Feb. 3

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

School Lunch: Shrimp poppers, sweet potato tots, fruit, vegetable cups.

Senior Menu: Hamburger cabbage roll hot dish, mixed vegetables, pears, muffin.

Girls basketball at Tiospa Zina with JV at 6:30 p.m. followed by varsity game.

Saturday, Feb. 4

CFC Debate

Robotics at Mitchell Technical Institute

10 a.m.: Wrestling at Stanley County

Apts for Rent

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

Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave.

The cardboard/paper
recycling trailer at the school is **OPEN**

© 2017 Groton Daily Independent



**Put our
experienced
team to work
for you!**

GROTON
Ford

GROTONFORD.COM 605-397-2311

The Life of Evelyn Meyer



Evelyn June (Honey) Meyer, passed away peacefully with her family by her side, on January 29, 2017 at the age of 94, at Prairie Lakes Hospital, in Watertown, SD. Services for June will be held on Saturday, February 4, 2017, at 2 p.m. at the Presbyterian Church, Groton. The Rev. Terry Kenny will officiate. Burial will be held at a later date in Union Cemetery, Groton.

Visitation will be held for one hour prior to the services at the church.

Casket bearers will be Josh Craig, Lance Craig, Steve Gibbs, Dan VanWinkle, Mark Peterson and Joe Gese.

Evelyn June Honey was born on June 30, 1922 in Britton, SD to George Dean and Matie (Gibbs) Honey. She lived in Putney as a child and attended school in Groton. She was united in marriage to Lowell Eugene Craig on November 8, 1942. They were blessed with three children, Cheryl "Cheri", Charlotte, and Clark. After her husband Gene passed away unexpectedly, June began working as a book-keeper at Sinclair in Groton and later for Feinsteins in Aberdeen, as a seamstress. She married Donald Meyer on June 26, 1969 and they made their home in Aberdeen, SD. Together they traveled the United

States extensively, visiting each one of the states and enjoyed their time fishing together. Don passed away in March of 2012.

June took great pride in providing a loving and welcoming home for her family. She was a wonderful cook and her family always enjoyed their time together at "Grandma June's." (So many special memories were made over the years while visiting at the dining room table). She always had cookies and coffee when family and friends stopped by for a visit. "Junebug" was a classy lady who loved to go shopping and will always be remembered for her beautiful jewelry. June loved spending time with her children and grandchildren, especially during their family celebrations each summer. June was a member of the Presbyterian Church and a member of the Eastern Star for over 60 years.

Celebrating her life are her children, Charlotte (Rory) Riggan of Devils Lake, North Dakota, Clark Craig (Nancy Hoops) of Watertown, South Dakota, her step-daughter, Donna Rae Brooks of Des Moines, Iowa, 11 grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren, two great-great-grandchildren, a sister, Geraldine Bowles of Salem, Oregon and brother-in-law, Harlow Kerl of Pickerel Lake, South Dakota.

Preceding her in death were her parents, husbands Gene Craig and Donald Meyer, her daughter Cheryl "Cheri" Gibbs, a granddaughter Tawnya Marie Craig, and two sisters Millicent Gilchrist and Lucille Kerl, and a son-in-law Jim Brooks.

June will be greatly missed by her family and everyone that was blessed to have known her.

The Life of Fern Kersting



Memorial services for Fern Kersting, 86, of Groton will be 10 a.m., Thursday, February 2, 2017 at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church. Father Mike Kelly will officiate. Inurnment will follow in Union Cemetery.

Visitation will be held at the church from 5-7 p.m. on Wednesday.

Fern passed away Sunday, January 29, 2017 at her home.

Fern Ann Betty was born on July 21, 1930 in Mina to Jim and Julia (Blanchette) Betty. She attended school in Groton. Fern was united in marriage with Don Ries on April 12, 1947 and together they were blessed with three children. Fern worked many years as a cook in the Groton School system and was later employed at 3M. Don passed away in November of 1994. Fern married Leo Kersting on June 27, 1998.

Fern was a member of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, Groton. She enjoyed sewing and quilting.

Celebrating her life is her husband, Leo of Groton, her children: Larry Ries of Jacksonville, Florida, Randy Ries of Phoenix, Arizona and Patricia (Greg) Lemburg of Grand Island, Nebraska, her grandchildren, Melissa (Mark) Stegman and

Amber (Jeremiah) Krantz, great-grandchildren: Jacob, Jordan, Jacey Stegman and Oliver Krantz. Fern is also survived by her step-children, Jeff (Kathy) Kersting, Brenda (John) Carey, step-grandchildren, Rylee (Carey) Stone, Rikki Carey, Ryder Carey, Jenna Kerstings and Kinzie Kersting, her step-great-grandchildren: Ben, Will, Jackson, Harrison Stone and many nieces and nephews.

Preceding her in death were her parents, her first husband, two sisters and a granddaughter, Starla Lemburg.

Honoary Urnbearers will be Mark Stegman, Jeremiah Krantz, Jacob Stegman, Neal Abeln, John Clark and Rick Mielke.

PARTS COUNTER SALES

Self motivated individual needed to fill our Parts Counter Sales position. Duties include parts sales, display stocking, shipping and receiving. Sponsored training, excellent benefits package and the possibility for advancement. Contact Steve at 605-395-6421 or email resume to s.harry@harrysinc.com.

Harry Implement Inc.

PO Box 841
Ferney, SD
57439



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 4 of 51

Varsity Stat Sheet

VISITOR: 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	*	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	3	6	2	0	3	3	0	0	8:00
4 Shabazz, Bennett	*	5	15	3	10	0	0	2	4	6	1	13	5	6	0	0	32:00
12 Schuring, Sean	*	5	12	3	8	5	5	2	2	4	3	18	0	1	0	1	24:00
20 Keith, Brandon	*	0	3	0	3	0	0	3	7	10	5	0	1	2	0	1	8:00
42 Shabazz, Seric	*	2	10	2	9	0	2	0	5	5	1	6	1	3	0	4	32:00
10 Lane, Marshall		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	1	16:00
14 Diegel, Treyton		0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8:00
30 Doeden, Jonny		0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	16:00
40 Johnson, Peyton		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8:00
50 Thorson, Luke		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8:00
TEAM REBOUNDS								1	3	4				0			
Team Totals		12	43	8	32	5	7	11	24	35	15	37	11	18	0	7	160

Total FG% - 1st: 7/22 0.318 2nd: 5/21 0.238 Game: 0.279 Deadball
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 5/15 0.333 2nd: 3/17 0.176 Game: 0.250 Rebounds
 Total FT% - 1st: 0/0 0.000 2nd: 5/7 0.714 Game: 0.714 (1,0)

HOME: Langford ()

NO PLAYER	P	TOT-FG		3-PT		FT	FTA	REBOUNDS			PF	TP	A	TO	BK	S	MIN
		FG	FGA	FG	FGA			OFF	DEF	TOT							
2 Olson,	*	7	11	0	1	3	5	1	4	5	2	17	5	1	0	3	32:00
23 Larson,	*	6	22	2	5	1	2	0	4	4	1	15	0	4	0	2	32:00
24 Fries,	*	1	3	0	2	1	1	1	2	3	4	3	3	2	0	3	32:00
30 Jensen,	*	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	8:00
32 Erickson,	*	2	3	0	0	4	6	5	5	10	2	8	0	1	0	1	32:00
3 Block,		1	4	0	2	0	0	0	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	2	16:00
20 Frey,		0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	8:00
TEAM REBOUNDS								0	4	4				0			
Team Totals		18	46	2	11	9	14	7	21	28	11	47	8	10	0	11	160

Total FG% - 1st: 9/22 0.409 2nd: 9/24 0.375 Game: 0.391 Deadball
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 2/5 0.400 2nd: 0/6 0.000 Game: 0.182 Rebounds
 Total FT% - 1st: 2/3 0.667 2nd: 7/11 0.636 Game: 0.643 (2,0)

Technical Fouls: groto (0)
 : Lang (0)

OFFICIALS :
 ATTENDANCE : 0

SCORE BY PERIODS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	TOTAL
Groton	13	6	11	7	37
Langford	15	7	12	13	47

Last FG: Groton 4th-08:00, Langford 4th-08:00
 Largest lead: Groton by 4 2nd-08:00, Langford by 11 4th-08:00
 Score tied: 1 times, Lead changed: 4 times

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 5 of 51

Junior Varsity Stat Sheet

VISITOR: 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							
5	Shabazz, Darien	*	1	9	1	6	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	0	1	0	0	24:00
14	Diegel, Treyton	*	2	7	1	3	1	6	1	3	4	0	6	2	3	0	2	16:00
30	Doeden, Jonny	*	3	7	0	1	1	2	0	2	2	3	7	0	4	0	1	24:00
32	Thurston, Mitchell	*	1	4	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0:00
40	Johnson, Peyton	*	1	3	0	1	3	9	2	9	11	4	5	1	3	0	0	8:00
10	Lane, Marshall		1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	2	0	2	0	2	8:00
20	Schaller, Hunter		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00
22	Guthmiller, Cade		3	5	2	3	0	0	0	2	2	0	8	0	1	0	0	24:00
42	Morris, Alex		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00
50	Thorson, Luke		0	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	2	3	0	1	0	0	3	16:00
TEAM REBOUNDS										1	2	3						
Team Totals			12	39	4	16	5	19	7	23	30	12	33	4	14	0	8	120

Total FG% - 1st: 5/20 0.250 2nd: 7/19 0.368 Game: 0.308 Deadball
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 2/9 0.222 2nd: 2/7 0.286 Game: 0.250 Rebounds
 Total FT% - 1st: 1/2 0.500 2nd: 4/17 0.235 Game: 0.263 (6,0)

HOME: Langford ()

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	Block,	*	1	5	0	2	2	5	1	5	6	1	4	1	5	0	1	16:00
20	Frey,	*	1	4	0	1	3	4	0	3	3	5	5	0	6	0	3	16:00
22	Frey,	*	8	13	0	2	2	4	0	2	2	18	0	4	0	3	16:00	
33	Punt,	*	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	7	7	2	1	0	3	0	1	16:00
44	Peterson,	*	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	4	4	1	0	0	1	16:00
5	West,		0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	8:00
23	Smith,		0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	16:00
30	Smith,		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8:00
34	Reints,		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00
40	Cartol,		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0:00
42	Steiner,		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	8:00
TEAM REBOUNDS										0	3	3						
Team Totals			12	30	0	7	8	15	1	28	29	18	32	3	21	0	9	120

Total FG% - 1st: 5/12 0.417 2nd: 7/18 0.389 Game: 0.400 Deadball
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 0/3 0.000 2nd: 0/4 0.000 Game: 0.000 Rebounds
 Total FT% - 1st: 3/6 0.500 2nd: 5/9 0.556 Game: 0.533 (1,0)

Technical Fouls: groto (0)
 : Lang (0)

OFFICIALS :
 ATTENDANCE : 0

SCORE BY PERIODS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	TOTAL
Groton	6	7	7	13	33
Langford	8	5	11	8	32

Last FG: Groton 4th-08:00, Langford 4th-08:00
 Largest lead: Groton by 3 4th-08:00, Langford by 6 3rd-08:00
 Score tied: 4 times, Lead changed: 4 times

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 6 of 51

Gun show set for Aberdeen

GUN SHOW: Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Association 15th Annual Aberdeen Gun Show. Saturday, February 4, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, February 5, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Aberdeen Ramkota Hotel on Highway 281 North. Roger Krumm 701-851-0129.

They have arrived!

GDI Living  **Fitness**

25 Main St., Downtown Groton

2 NuSteps

Call or Text Paul at 397-7460
or Tina at 397-7285
for membership information

The T4r provides a smooth and natural motion that delivers a low impact, inclusive, total-body cardiovascular and strengthening workout for virtually all users. Get a low impact workout with high impact results.



 **livestream**
Upcoming Events

Thursday, Feb. 2

Boys host Tiospa Zina. JV at 6:30. Varsity at 8:00

gdilive.com

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 7 of 51

Today in Weather History

February 1, 1969: Across central and eastern South Dakota, February 1969 contained a variety of winter weather causing many difficulties. Glazing due to heavy fog and drizzle periodically formed on utility lines causing numerous broken power lines. Periodically, strong winds caused widespread blowing and drifting snow resulting in many closed roads. Snowplows would open the roads and often drifting snow would close the roads again. Frequent uses of pusher type snowplows piled banks of snow 20 to 30 feet along the roads and it became impractical to open roads with this type of snowplow. Several rotary snowplows were flown in from military airbases outside of the state to open some of the roads in the eastern part of the state. Numerous school closings occurred during the month due to snow blocked roads.

February 1, 1989: Four to eight inches of snow fell across western and northern South Dakota. Winds of 25 mph and subzero temperature produced wind chills in the 50 to 80 below zero range. Several schools were closed across the area due to the dangerous wind chills. The storm continued into the 2nd.

1916: Seattle, Washington was buried under 21.5 inches of snow, their greatest 24-hour snowfall. A total of 32.5 inches of wet snow accumulated over three days. The Seattle cathedral dome collapsed under the snow's weight.

1947: On this date through the 9th, a memorable blizzard occurred in Saskatchewan, Canada. All highways into Regina were blocked. Railway officials declared the worst conditions in Canadian rail history. One train was buried in a snowdrift over a half mile long and 36.7 feet deep.

1955: Seen first as a "well defined cone-shaped funnel" over the Mississippi River, this F3 tornado cut a path from Commerce Landing to Clark in northeastern Mississippi. This tornado killed 20 and injured at least 141 individuals. Most of the deaths were in a plantation school. The following is from Thomas Grazulis, "Significant Tornadoes 1680-1991" book: "Despite the fact that a funnel was seen, that heavy objects were thrown long distances, and that the tornado was in a forecast box, the event was not officially called a tornado. A survey team state that since all debris was thrown in one direction, the event should not be listed as a tornado."

1893 - Thunder and lightning accompanied sleet and snow at Saint Louis MO during the evening hours, even though the temperature was just 13 degrees above zero. (The Weather Channel)

1951 - The greatest ice storm of record in the U.S. produced glaze up to four inches thick from Texas to Pennsylvania causing twenty-five deaths, 500 serious injuries, and 100 million dollars damage. Tennessee was hardest hit by the storm. Communications and utilities were interrupted for a week to ten days. (David Ludlum)

1951 - The temperature at Taylor Park Dam plunged to 60 degrees below zero, a record for the state of Colorado. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1985 - Snow, sleet and ice glazed southern Tennessee and northern sections of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. The winter storm produced up to eleven inches of sleet and ice in Lauderdale County AL, one of the worst storms of record for the state. All streets in Florence AL were closed for the first time of record. (1st-2nd) (The Weather Channel)








1987 - A storm in the Pacific Northwest produced wind gusts to 100 mph at Cape Blanco OR, and up to six inches of rain in the northern coastal mountain ranges. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thirty cities in the eastern U.S. reported new record high temperatures for the date, including Richmond VA with a reading of 73 degrees. Thunderstorms in southern Louisiana deluged Basile with 12.34 inches of rain. Arctic cold gripped the north central U.S. Wolf Point MT reported a low of 32 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

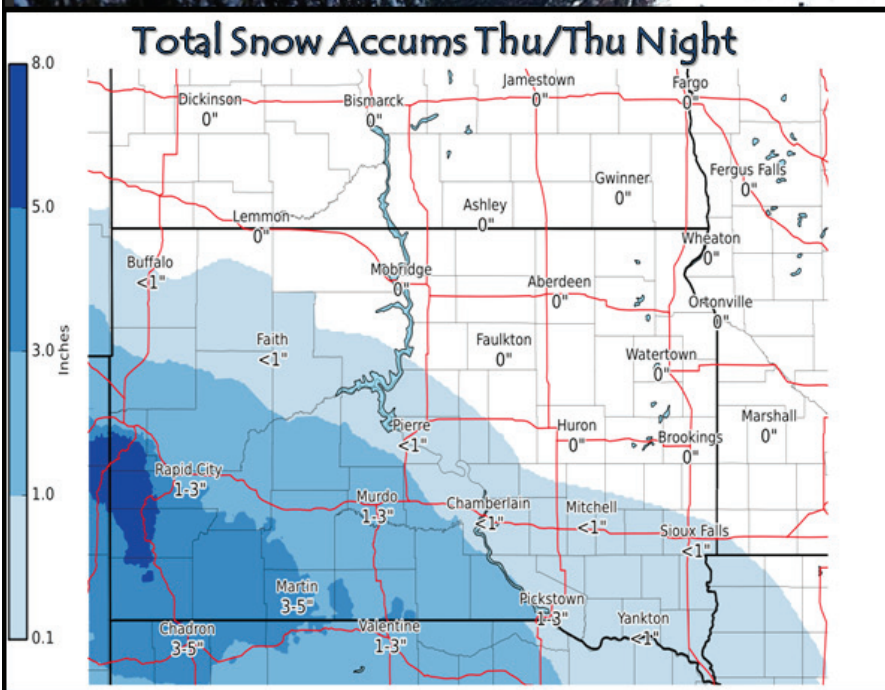
1989 - While arctic cold continued to invade the central U.S., fifty-four cities in the south central and eastern U.S. reported new record high temperatures for the date. Russell KS, the hot spot in the nation with a high of 84 degrees the previous day, reported a morning low of 12 above. Tioga ND reported a wind chill reading of 90 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary)

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 8 of 51

Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
						
Scattered Flurries	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Sunny	Mostly Clear then Slight Chance Snow	Slight Chance Snow then Mostly Cloudy
High: 10 °F	Low: -2 °F	High: 14 °F	Low: -5 °F	High: 17 °F	Low: 6 °F	High: 29 °F

Colder With Flurries East/Snow West



* Cold with Highs in the teens Today & Thursday.

* Lows Tonight in the single digits above and below zero!

* Turning milder over the upcoming weekend.

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD



weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Updated: 2/1/2017 4:41 AM Central

Published on: 02/01/2017 at 4:42AM

Flurries are possible east today, while measurable snow is expected over southwest South Dakota, especially Thursday and Thursday night. Temperatures will be cold, but milder air should move in this coming weekend.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 9 of 51

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 34.7

Low Outside Temp: 22.9

High Gust: 27

Rain: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 58° in 1931

Record Low: -36 in 1996

Average High: 24°F

Average Low: 3°F

Average Precip in Jan.: 0.48

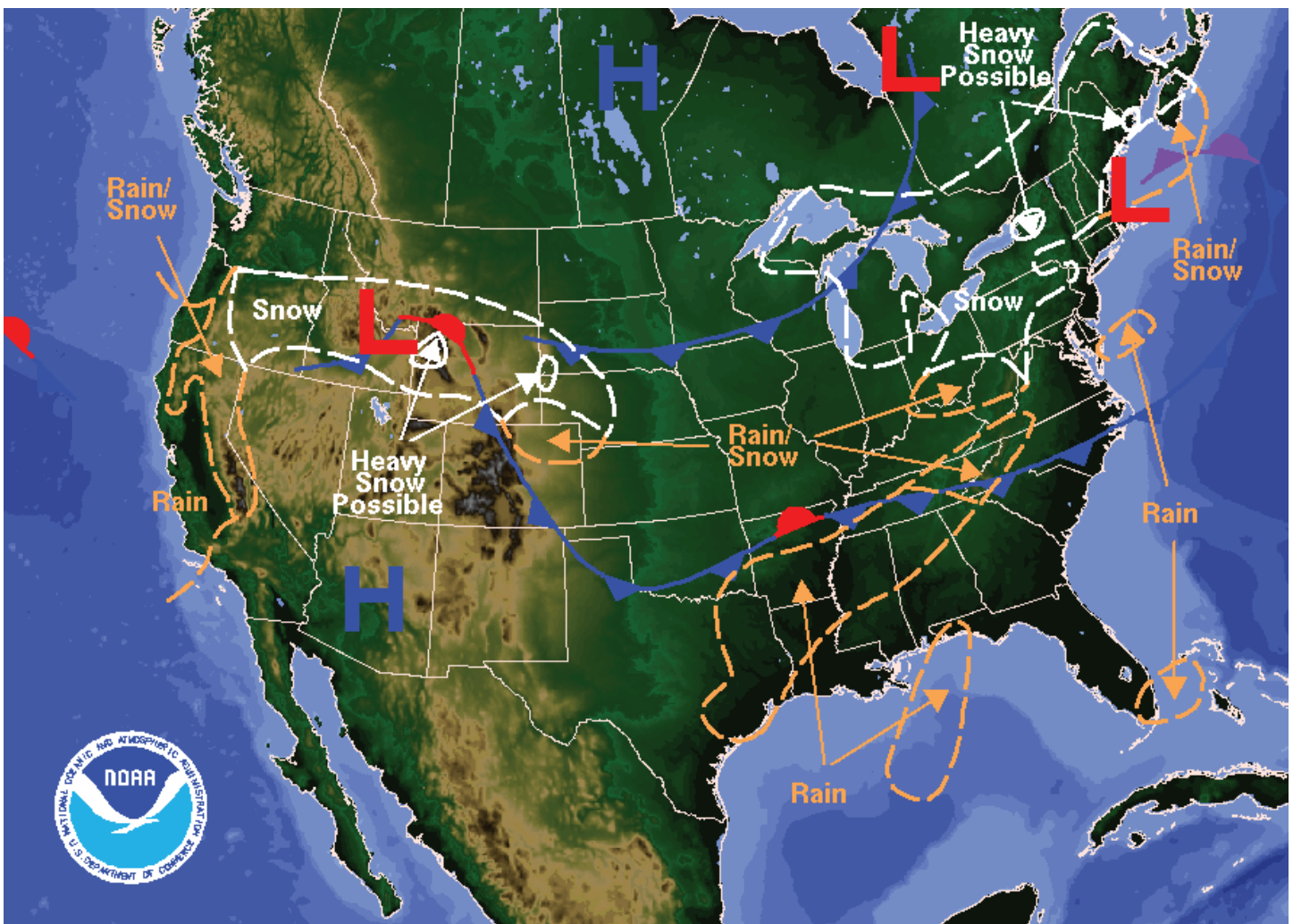
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.48

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 5:41 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:52 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Wed, Feb 01, 2017, issued 4:19 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 10 of 51



DO OUR WORDS REALLY MATTER?

It was the mid-week prayer service. The crowd was small but the singing loud. The final hymn before the Bible study was "For You I Am Praying."

A visitor turned to a member of the church who was standing next to him and asked, "For whom are you praying?"

"No one, really," came the response. "I just came to sing."

Often the hymns we sing and the words we speak are completely disconnected from the lives we live. Sometimes our faith is so frail that we fail Him.

But if our relationship with God is what He expects it to be and we want it to be, we must give Him our love and our lives, our heads and our hearts, our desires and our dreams. And we must ask Him to empower us, by His grace and goodness, to live lives that will be pleasing to Him.

God's first expectation of us is that we totally commit our lives to Him. Paul, writing to the Romans said, "I beg you, in view of all that God has done for you, to make a decisive decision to present all that you are or have to God as a living sacrifice – which is only reasonable."

If we do that – make that decisive decision to surrender our lives to Him – the songs we sing and the words we speak will be consistent with His expectations.

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, to be certain that our walk matches our words and that we behave what we say we believe. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.

News from the Associated Press

Senate eases regulations on grain buying, warehousing

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The Senate has approved a proposal to ease regulatory restrictions on grain buyers and warehouses in South Dakota.

Public Utilities Commission spokesman Chris Nelson says the bill streamlines the process for getting access to a bond that covers grain buying or warehousing.

The Daily Republic (<http://bit.ly/2kqsC7Q>) says the commission would take over that process and make sure grain farmers get their payments promptly. Currently farmers have to file multiple times to get paid under that scenario.

The legislation moves on to the House.

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

Senator: Army Corps told to approve Dakota pipeline easement

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The acting secretary of the Army has ordered the Army Corps of Engineers to allow construction of the Dakota Access pipeline under a Missouri River reservoir, a North Dakota senator said, the latest twist in the months-long legal battle over the \$3.8 billion project.

The Standing Rock Sioux, whose opposition to the project attracted the support of thousands of protesters from around the country to North Dakota, immediately vowed to return to court to stop it.

Sen. John Hoeven announced late Tuesday that Robert Speer directed the Army Corps of Engineers to “proceed” with an easement necessary to complete the pipeline. Hoeven said he also discussed Speer’s order with Vice President Mike Pence, just a week after President Donald Trump signed an executive order signaling his support for the project.

A spokesman for the U.S. Army did not respond to requests for comment Tuesday night. Hoeven spokesman Don Canton said Speer’s move means the easement “isn’t quite issued yet, but they plan to approve it” within days.

The crossing under Lake Oahe, a wide section of the Missouri River in southern North Dakota, is the final big chunk of work on the pipeline designed to carry North Dakota oil through South Dakota and Iowa to a shipping point in Illinois.

The pipeline has been the target of months of protests led by the Standing Rock Sioux, whose reservation lies near the pipeline’s route and who have argued that it’s a threat to water and tribal artifacts.

The tribe has vowed to challenge any granting of the easement in court, and Chairman Dave Archambault renewed that vow Tuesday night.

“If it does become a done deal in the next few days, we’ll take it to the judicial system,” Archambault said. He added: “This is a good indicator of what this country is going to be up against in the next four years. So America has to brace itself.”

The developer, Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners, said the pipeline would be safe.

An environmental assessment conducted last year determined the crossing would not have a significant impact on the environment. However, then-Assistant Army Secretary for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy on Dec. 4 declined to issue an easement, saying a broader environmental study was warranted.

Energy Transfer Partners called Darcy’s decision politically motivated and accused then-President Barack Obama’s administration of delaying the matter until he left office. Two days before he left the White House, the Corps launched an environmental impact study of the crossing that could take up to two years to complete.

On Jan. 24, just four days after he took office, Trump signed an executive action telling the Corps to quickly reconsider the Dec. 4 decision.

The company appears poised to begin drilling under the lake immediately. Workers have already drilled entry and exit holes for the Oahe crossing, and the company has put oil in the pipeline leading up to the

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 12 of 51

lake in anticipation of finishing the project, its executive vice president Joey Mahmoud said in court documents filed earlier this month.

Hundreds and at times thousands of pipeline opponents calling themselves "water protectors" have camped on federal land near the crossing site since August, often clashing with police and prompting more than 625 arrests. The camp's population has thinned to fewer than 300 due to harsh winter weather and a plea by Archambault for the camp to disband before the spring flooding season.

Midwest economic survey suggests more improvement in January

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Results from a monthly survey of business supply managers suggest economic conditions continue to improve in nine Midwest and Plains states.

The Mid-America Business Conditions Index report released Wednesday says the overall economic index for the region rose to 54.7 in January from 53.1 in December. It's the highest figure since February 2015 and the third monthly increase in a row.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss oversees the survey, and he says the increases point to an improving regional manufacturing economy.

The survey results are compiled into a collection of indexes ranging from zero to 100. Survey organizers say any score above 50 suggests growth in that factor. A score below that suggests decline.

The survey covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

Tuesday's Scores By The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Christian 52, Waubay/Summit 40
Aberdeen Roncalli 66, Miller 46
Alcester-Hudson 72, Centerville 22
Arlington 45, Hamlin 42
Baltic 64, Garretson 46
Bennett County 65, Kadoka Area 53
Brookings 61, Sioux Falls Lincoln 52
Burke/South Central 48, Wagner 44
Canistota 53, Viborg-Hurley 50
Castlewood 57, Deuel 41
Chamberlain 58, Platte-Geddes 37
Chester 56, Parker 54
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 56, Mobridge-Pollock 45
Clark/Willow Lake 59, Sisseton 54
Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley, Minn. 58, Wilmot 48
Colome 54, Kimball/White Lake 50
Dell Rapids 76, Tea Area 62
Elkton-Lake Benton 59, Flandreau Indian 33
Freeman Academy/Marion 67, Marty Indian 58
Great Plains Lutheran 51, Lake Preston 50
Highmore-Harrold 62, Sunshine Bible Academy 33
Huron 52, Mitchell 43
James Valley Christian 78, Hitchcock-Tulare 39
Langford 47, Groton Area 37
Linton-HMB, N.D. 55, Herreid/Selby Area 45
Lyman 65, Gregory 64

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 13 of 51

Madison 59, Lennox 38
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 64, Mitchell Christian 53
Philip 64, New Underwood 31
Pine Ridge 51, St. Francis Indian 42
Potter County 70, Redfield/Doland 37
Red Cloud 91, Hill City 72
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 61, Hanson 43
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 82, Sioux City, North, Iowa 49
St. Thomas More 71, Belle Fourche 53
Sturgis Brown 69, Hot Springs 44
Timber Lake 74, Dupree 45
Tiospaye Topa 62, Edmunds Central 43
Todd County 72, Stanley County 59
Vermillion 58, Beresford 33
Warner 69, Faulkton 37
Watertown 53, Aberdeen Central 48
Waverly-South Shore 55, Estelline 32
Wessington Springs 51, Iroquois 50
Wolsey-Wessington 57, DeSmet 34
Yankton 57, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 51
GIRLS' BASKETBALL
Aberdeen Central 47, Watertown 39
Aberdeen Christian 45, Waubay/Summit 31
Aberdeen Roncalli 66, Miller 46
Avon 57, Menno 30
Brandon Valley 65, Sioux Falls Washington 58
Bridgewater-Emery 64, Bon Homme 47
Burke/South Central 45, Corsica/Stickney 39
Castlewood 50, Deuel 32
Elk Point-Jefferson 64, Sioux Falls Christian 33
Elkton-Lake Benton 59, Flandreau Indian 33
Ethan 60, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 41
Flandreau 47, Colman-Egan 29
Florence/Henry 67, Tri-State, N.D. 55
Freeman 61, Scotland 24
Hamlin 55, Arlington 16
Hitchcock-Tulare 68, James Valley Christian 43
Lake Preston 49, Great Plains Lutheran 42
Madison 59, Milbank Area 45
Marty Indian 54, Freeman Academy/Marion 53
McCook Central/Montrose 58, Parkston 49
Mitchell 37, Huron 35
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 44, Mitchell Christian 20
Parker 46, Chester 32
Pine Ridge 64, St. Francis Indian 53
Platte-Geddes 49, Chamberlain 27
Rapid City Christian 49, Crazy Horse 42
Rapid City Stevens 83, Douglas 33
Red Cloud 53, Hill City 36
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 49, Hanson 45

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 14 of 51

Sioux Falls Lincoln 52, Brookings 49
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 38, Yankton 18
Spearfish 61, Lead-Deadwood 47
St. Thomas More 47, Belle Fourche 36
Sturgis 64, Hot Springs 30
Sunshine Bible Academy 40, Highmore-Harrold 18
Timber Lake 68, Dupree 26
Tiospa Zina Tribal 39, Sisseton 31
Tiospaye Topa 69, Edmunds Central 64
Todd County 63, Stanley County 26
Vermillion 40, Beresford 27
Viborg-Hurley 60, Canistota 58
Warner 59, Faulkton 47
Waverly-South Shore 50, Estelline 25
Wessington Springs 44, Iroquois 34
West Central 53, Tri-Valley 38
White River 76, Lower Brule 42
Entringer Classic
DeSmet 70, Sioux Valley 38

A timeline of the Dakota Access oil pipeline

By The Associated Press

Notable events in the dispute over the four-state, \$3.8 billion Dakota Access oil pipeline.

December 2014 — Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners applies to the federal government to build the 1,700-mile Dakota Access pipeline to carry North Dakota oil through South Dakota and Iowa to an existing pipeline in Illinois. The pipeline is projected to carry half a million barrels of oil daily. The proposed route skirts the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's reservation and crosses under Lake Oahe, a Missouri River reservoir in North Dakota that serves as the tribe's drinking water source.

March 2016 — Iowa regulators approve the pipeline, making it the fourth and final state to grant permission.

April 2016 — Opponents establish a camp at the confluence of the Cannonball and Missouri rivers in southern North Dakota for peaceful protest. Camps in the area would later swell to thousands of people.

July 2016 — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers grants pipeline permits at more than 200 water crossings. The Standing Rock Sioux sues a day later. The Cheyenne River Sioux later join the lawsuit as plaintiffs.

Aug. 10 — North Dakota authorities make the first arrests of protesters. The total has since surpassed 600, including actress Shailene Woodley and Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein.

Sept. 9 — U.S. District Court Judge James Boasberg denies an attempt by the Standing Rock Sioux to halt pipeline construction. The same day, the Army, the Department of Justice and the Interior Department declare that construction bordering or under Lake Oahe won't go forward pending further review.

Nov. 20, 21 — Authorities use tear gas, rubber bullets and water sprays on protesters who they say assaulted officers with rocks and burning logs at a blockaded bridge, in one of the most violent clashes of the protest. At least 17 protesters are taken to hospitals. One officer was injured when struck in the head with a rock.

Dec. 4 — Assistant Army Secretary for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy declines to allow the pipeline to be built under Lake Oahe in part because she says alternate routes need to be considered. Energy Transfer Partners calls the decision politically motivated and accuses President Barack Obama's administration of delaying the matter until he leaves office.

Jan. 18, 2017 — The Army Corps launches a full environmental study of the pipeline's disputed Lake Oahe crossing, a study that could take up to two years. Boasberg, the federal judge, rejects an ETP request to

stop the study.

Jan. 24 — President Donald Trump signs executive actions to advance the construction of the Dakota Access oil pipeline, along with the Keystone XL oil pipeline.

Jan. 31 — Sen. John Hoeven of North Dakota says the Acting Secretary of the Army has directed the Army Corps of Engineers to proceed with an easement necessary to complete the pipeline and a Hoeven spokesman says the move means “they plan to approve it” within days.

Senator: Army Corps told to approve Dakota pipeline easement

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The Army Corps of Engineers was ordered to allow construction of the Dakota Access pipeline to proceed under a disputed Missouri River crossing, North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven said on Tuesday, the latest twist in a months-long legal battle over the \$3.8 billion project.

The Standing Rock Sioux, whose opposition to the project attracted thousands of supporters from around the country to North Dakota, immediately vowed to again go to court to stop it.

Hoeven announced late Tuesday that the acting Secretary of the Army, Robert Speer, had directed the Army Corps of Engineers to “proceed” with an easement necessary to complete the pipeline. Hoeven said he also spoke with Vice President Mike Pence, just a week after President Donald Trump signed an executive order signaling his support for the project.

A spokesman for the U.S. Army did not immediately respond to requests for comment Tuesday night. Hoeven spokesman Don Canton says that Speer’s move means the easement “isn’t quite issued yet, but they plan to approve it” within days.

The crossing under Lake Oahe, a wide section of the Missouri River in southern North Dakota, is the final big chunk of work on the four-state, \$3.8 billion pipeline to carry North Dakota oil through South Dakota and Iowa to Illinois. President Donald Trump on Jan. 24 called on the Army Corps of Engineers to reconsider its December decision to withhold permission until more study is done on the crossing.

The pipeline has been the target of months of protests led by the Standing Rock Sioux, whose reservation lies near the pipeline’s route and who have argued that it’s a threat to water.

The tribe has vowed to challenge any granting of the easement in court, and Chairman Dave Archambault renewed that vow Tuesday night.

“If it does become a done deal in the next few days, we’ll take it to the judicial system,” Archambault said. He added: “This is a good indicator of what this country is going to be up against in the next four years. So America has to brace itself.”

The developer, Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners, says the pipeline would be safe.

An environmental assessment conducted last year determined the crossing would not have a significant impact on the environment. However, then-Assistant Army Secretary for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy on Dec. 4 declined to issue an easement, saying a broader environmental study was warranted in the wake of opposition by the Standing Rock Sioux.

Energy Transfer Partners called Darcy’s decision politically motivated and accused then-President Barack Obama’s administration of delaying the matter until he left office. Two days before he left the White House, the Corps launched a study of the crossing that could take up to two years to complete.

President Donald Trump on Jan. 24 — just four days after he took office — signed an executive action telling the Corps to quickly reconsider the Dec. 4 decision.

The company appears poised to begin drilling under the lake immediately. Workers have already drilled entry and exit holes for the Oahe crossing, and the company has put oil in the pipeline leading up to the lake in anticipation of finishing the project, its executive vice president Joey Mahmoud said in court documents filed earlier this month.

Hundreds and at times thousands of pipeline opponents who have dubbed themselves “water protectors” have camped on federal land near the crossing site since August, often clashing with police and prompting more than 625 arrests. The camp’s population has thinned to fewer than 300 due to harsh winter weather and a plea by Archambault for the camp to disband before the spring flooding season.

Longtime North Dakota company turned over to employees

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — One of the oldest manufacturing companies in North Dakota has been turned over to its employees.

KFGO Radio reports (<http://bit.ly/2jSIAnz>) that Fargo-based Hebron Brick Co. was recently sold to the workers through a process known as an employee stock ownership program.

Hebron Brick president Jeff Laliberte says former owner Rodney Paseka wanted to make sure the company remains in North Dakota.

Laliberte says Hebron employees didn't know they bought the company until they were told in January. He says the employees don't have to worry about financial responsibilities because the company's earnings go toward purchasing shares for the employees.

Hebron Brick has 171 employees at seven store locations in North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota. The company owns manufacturing plants in Hebron and Mandan, North Dakota.

Information from: KFGO-AM, <http://www.kfgo.com>

South Dakota's transgender locker room bill scuttled

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A bill that would have restricted which locker rooms South Dakota transgender students could use was scuttled Tuesday, averting another bitter fight in the Capitol over the regulation of school facilities.

The sponsor, Republican Sen. Lance Russell, said the measure was withdrawn because of GOP Gov. Dennis Daugaard's opposition and because a legal defense group that had offered to defend the bill if it passed withdrew support since it didn't apply to bathrooms.

The proposal required public school students to use the locker rooms, shower rooms and changing facilities matching their gender at birth. Schools would have been allowed to provide alternative accommodations, such as single-occupancy restrooms.

It was similar to a proposal Daugaard vetoed last year, and he had said he would reject this bill too if it reached his desk.

Dale Bartscher, who lobbies for a conservative group that supported the bill, said the governor's opposition was a "strong factor" in its withdrawal. Conversations had been ongoing about whether another bill would be introduced this year, but the organization decided against it, said Bartscher, of Family Heritage Alliance Action.

"We withdrew to rise and come back another day and pursue the privacy of every student in a very dignified and appropriate way," Bartscher said.

Daugaard said North Carolina has experienced major problems since enacting a similar law. Approved in 2016, it's best known for requiring transgender people to use restrooms in many public buildings that correspond to the sex on their birth certificates. As a result of that bill, corporations, entertainers and high-profile sporting events have shunned North Carolina to avoid being seen as endorsing discrimination.

South Dakota is among at least 11 states where similar bills had been pre-filed or introduced for the 2017 legislative session, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

In Texas, Republican House Speaker Joe Straus has said a bathroom bill would be bad for business, even as GOP Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick champions it. A similar proposal was dead on arrival in Washington's Democrat-controlled House, while bills in Missouri haven't yet been scheduled for a committee hearing.

The abrupt announcement that the South Dakota measure would be pulled was surprising to foes, who said they hoped the issue had been laid to rest. Jessie Lamphere, an 18-year-old transgender high school student from Sturgis who had planned to testify before lawmakers, said he was relieved.

"I just want them to know that transgender boys are boys, and transgender girls are girls, and that's just who we are," Lamphere said. "We all want privacy and safety in locker rooms, and we're not in there to harm anyone. We're just in there to get dressed and get out."

Bartscher said the measure may live on as legislation next session, or at the ballot box, "but this issue is not going to go away."

A ballot measure that would require transgender students to use bathrooms corresponding with their sex at birth may go before voters in 2018. Sponsor Jack Heyd, of Box Elder, has said he wants to protect children and ensure that students have privacy.

Judge: Federal firearms regulations trump Kansas gun law

By ROXANA HEGEMAN, Associated Press

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) — A federal judge on Tuesday rejected arguments that a Kansas law can shield from federal prosecution anyone owning firearms made, sold and kept in the state — a ruling that casts doubt on the legality of similar laws passed in nine states across the nation.

The decision handed down by U.S. District Judge J. Thomas Marten allows federal firearms charges against Shane Cox and Jeremy Kettler to stand. The ruling clears the way for their sentencing on Monday.

Jurors in November returned eight guilty verdicts against Cox, the owner of Tough Guys gun store in Chanute, under the National Firearms Act for illegally making and marketing unregistered firearms, including a short-barreled rifle and gun silencers. Kettler was found guilty on one count of possession of an unregistered silencer.

The Kansas Second Amendment Protection Act, which passed in 2013, says firearms, accessories and ammunition manufactured and kept within the borders of Kansas are exempt from federal gun control laws. Kansas modeled its law on a Montana law that an appeals court has found to be invalid, according to court filings.

Similar firearm nullification laws have been signed into law in nine states. In addition to Montana and Kansas, other states having them include Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah and Wyoming, according to Everytown For Gun Safety, which advocates common-sense gun control laws.

Noting the significant interest the case against Cox and Kettler has generated in Kansas and beyond, Marten wrote in his 13-page decision that he is bound to uphold the U.S. Constitution and laws as interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court and the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. The judge then proceeded to cite those earlier rulings in rejecting every constitutional argument raised by the defense in the Kansas gun case.

"As a district court judge, I am not empowered to do what I think is most fair — I am bound to follow the law," Marten wrote.

Defense attorneys argued that the National Firearms Act — a part of the Internal Revenue code enacted under Congress' power to levy taxes — is unconstitutional because it amounts to "regulatory punishment" rather than imposition of a valid federal tax. They also contended that the federal law violated the Second Amendment as well as Tenth Amendment state rights protections of the U.S. Constitution.

But Marten was unpersuaded, noting that the nation's highest court ruled 80 years ago that the National Firearms Act is valid exercise of Congressional taxing power. As such, it supersedes a state law, he said. Marten also rejected the Second Amendment arguments raised.

Kettler's attorney, Ian Clark, separately asked the court for leniency at sentencing, calling his client a good man "caught in the crossfire of a political strong arm contest." The two men, like many other Kansans, were under the mistaken belief that the Kansas Second Amendment Protection Act was valid and protected them from federal prosecution.

"Now that this prosecution has taken place and received fairly wide media attention, any need for deterrence has been satisfied simply by making the community aware that the federal government will prosecute possession of firearm accessories like these regardless of the Kansas law," Clark said.

University of Sioux Falls veteran named school's president

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The University of Sioux Falls has named a new president after outgoing President Mark Benedetto announced his retirement plans last spring.

Brett Bradfield was named the 23rd president of the Christian and liberal arts university on Tuesday.

Bradfield started at USF as director of graduate programs in 2000, then became vice president for professional studies in 2003 and provost and vice president of public academic affairs in 2007. His appointment takes effect Feb. 6.

Bradfield says he is prepared to tackle the challenges facing USF ranging from attracting students to fostering workforce development in Sioux Falls.

The Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2jSha1h>) reports Bradfield will oversee USF's adoption of programs that help immigrants and refugees who in the past went to Kilian Community College before it closed last spring.

This story has been corrected to correct that Benedetto is university's outgoing president instead of former president.

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

Cleanup begins at Dakota Access pipeline protest encampment

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Cleanup of a North Dakota encampment where opponents of the Dakota Access oil pipeline stayed for months to protest the \$3.8 billion project is expected to take weeks, a leader of the tribe that organized the protest said Tuesday.

The Standing Rock Sioux hopes to complete the work before any spring floodwaters from the Cannonball River can wash debris into the Missouri River — the very waterway pipeline opponents are working to protect. The camp has seen an exodus in recent weeks due to winter weather, pipeline work being stalled and the tribe's recent call for people to leave.

Protesters have left behind not just trash, but tents and even cars.

"There's more than anticipated, and it's under a lot of snow," Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault said. "I wouldn't say it's going to get done in days; it's going to take weeks."

The camp is close to where the Cannonball River flows into the Missouri, a water source for millions of people, including the tribe. Hundreds and sometimes thousands of people have camped there since August to protest a pipeline that they worry will threaten drinking water and Native American cultural sites.

The four-state, 1,200-mile pipeline would skirt the tribe's reservation as it carries North Dakota oil through the Dakotas and Iowa to a shipping point in Illinois. Texas-based developer Energy Transfer Partners says the pipeline is safe.

Standing Rock's environmental protection agency organized the camp cleanup with the help of the Thunder Valley Community Development Corp. from South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation, which has arranged for heavy equipment including front-end loaders, dump trucks and skid-steer loaders.

"We'll be here eight to 10 hours a day all week. Then we'll reassess the situation," returning next week if necessary, said Nick Tilsen, Thunder Valley's executive director.

People who still have not left the camp are helping, bringing the total on the job to about 100, said Tilsen, who is among the workers. Cost of the cleanup isn't yet known, but the tribe will use money from the \$6 million in donations it has received to support its pipeline fight, Archambault said.

The tribe hasn't asked for help from the state or Morton County.

Republican Gov. Doug Burgum, who has traveled to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation twice in the past week to be briefed about the situation, issued a statement saying the cleanup is "an important step toward addressing the safety and environmental risks posed by imminent flooding."

Minor flooding of the Cannonball River is almost certain this spring in the camp area, according to the National Weather Service's first flood outlook of the season, issued Friday. The next outlook, on Feb. 16, is expected to provide a clearer picture of potential flooding.

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

Sanctuary in South Dakota surrenders 520 wild horses

LANTRY, S.D. (AP) — The fate of wild horses at a troubled sanctuary in north-central South Dakota has been resolved.

A settlement will allow the embattled nonprofit organization to keep 20 horses with 520 others transferred to a new owner and put up for adoption, the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2kcuv3m>) reported.

The agreement pre-empted a two-day hearing last week on a motion to seize all the horses from the International Society for the Protection of Mustangs and Burros by state and local authorities.

The settlement limits the nonprofit from growing its 20-horse herd beyond 40 horses during the next five years. Horses will be seized if the society does not oblige. The settlement also requires the society to undergo quarterly veterinary inspections and other inspections as scheduled by sheriffs in Dewey and Ziebach counties over the next 18 months. The nonprofit will also be required to pay a total of \$10,000 to the counties.

The 520 horses will be transferred to the ownership of a Colorado-based nonprofit called Fleet of Angels that gives crisis management and transportation for emergencies relating to horses in the United States and Canada.

"The settlement sets the stage for one of the largest known equine rescue and adoption efforts in U.S. history," Fleet of Angels and another nonprofit, Return to Freedom, of California, said in a joint release.

They have pledged to place the horses at approved homes, sanctuaries and rescue facilities. They anticipate a cost of \$40,000 per month to feed the 520 horses, and also foresee additional costs for veterinary care, hoof care and transportation.

Local authorities have been taking care of the horses at the nonprofit's ranch since October after a state-employed veterinarian determined the animals had been neglected.

Fleet of Angels assisted in arranging the adoptions of 270 of the horses in the past few months, which left 540 horses.

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

Senate passes bill to establish tech school oversight board

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The state Senate has approved a bill that would set up a new board to oversee South Dakota's four technical institutes.

The chamber voted unanimously Tuesday to send the bill to the House.

Supporter Sen. Jim Bolin, a Republican, dubbed it the "tech school liberation bill." It would create the South Dakota Board of Technical Education.

Bolin says the bill would have a tremendous impact on South Dakota. He says workforce development is one of the most important issues the Legislature needs to tackle.

The bill comes after voters approved a constitutional amendment in November that specified the tech schools would be governed in a manner to be set by the state Legislature.

Girl's Basketball Polls

By The Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Sportswriters Association high school girl's preseason poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records, total points and last week's ranking.

Class AA

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs	
1. Harrisburg	(7)	10-1	35	1	
2. Brandon Valley	-	12-2	28	2	
3. Rapid City Stevens	-	8-2	15	4	
4. Rapid City Central	-	9-3	10	5	

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 20 of 51

5. Sioux Fall Washington - 8-3 9 3
Others receiving votes: Sioux Falls Roosevelt 2, Aberdeen Central 2.

Class A

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. St. Thomas More	(7)	13-0	35	1
2. Hamlin -	12-0	22	2	
3. Little Wound -	14-1	20	3	
4. Lennox -	14-1	15	4	
5. McCook Central-Montrose	-	13-2	7	RV

Others receiving votes: Bell Fourche 6, Dell Rapids 1.

Class B

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Ethan (5)	13-1	33	1	
2. Sanborn Central-Woonsocket	(2)	12-0	29	2
3. Sully Buttes -	13-1	22	3	
4. Warner -	11-2	7	4	
5. DeSmet -	11-2	7	5	

Others receiving votes: Avon 3, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 3, Freeman 1.

Boy's Basketball Polls

By The Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Sportswriters Association high school boy's poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records, total points and last week's ranking.

Class AA

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Sioux Falls O'Gorman	(7)	11-3	35	1
2. Brandon Valley -	12-2	27	3	
3. Rapid City Stevens	-	9-3	20	4
4. Brookings -	9-2	15	2	
5. Sturgis -	10-2	7	5	

Others receiving votes: Sioux Falls Washington 1.

Class A

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Madison (5)	9-3	31	1	
2. St. Thomas More	-	10-3	21	2
(tie) Sioux Valley (2)	12-2	21	3	
4. Sioux Falls Christian	-	8-3	15	4
5. Dell Rapids -	9-2	6	RV	

Others receiving votes: Vermillion 5, Tea Area 4, Flandreau 2.

Class B

Rank-School	FPV	Rcd	TP	Pvs
1. Bridgewater-Emery	(6)	13-0	36	1
2. Corsica-Stickney(1)	10-1	31	2	
3. Langford Area -	12-1	23	3	
4. Sully Buttes -	9-1	11	4	
5. Scotland -	10-1	7	5	
(tie) Wosley-Wessington	-	11-1	4	RV

Others receiving votes: Warner 2, Canistota 2.

Superintendent: Art, medicine classes are crucial education

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Rapid City Area Schools superintendent wants to incorporate art and medical curriculum into all grade levels.

Dr. Lori Simon says it's crucial to give students a diverse educational background so they can be better prepared for college and so they can meet the needs of growing companies like Regional Health and Black Hills Corporation.

Simon met recently with leaders of the Black Hills Economic Development Partnership and other organizations to discuss the curriculum additions as part of the Science, Technology Engineering and Math initiative, or STEM program.

KOTA (<http://bit.ly/2kn18Qf>) reports a task force will work over the next few months to create a blueprint for the programs. Simon would like to see the additions introduced by the start of the next school year.

Information from: KOTA-TV, <http://www.kotatv.com>

Tesla, BMW electrics fall short of highest crash-test rating

By DEE-ANN DURBIN, AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Two luxury electric vehicles — the Tesla Model S and the BMW i3 — fell short of getting the highest safety ratings in new crash tests by the insurance industry.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety tested 2017 models of both vehicles. Neither earned the institute's "Top Safety Pick" award, which is given to vehicles that get the highest rating in five different crash tests and offer a crash-prevention system with automatic braking. To get a highest "Top Safety Pick-Plus" designation, vehicles must meet all of those criteria and have good headlights.

In the 2017 model year, 38 vehicles have won the "Top Safety Pick-Plus" designation, including two plug-in hybrids: the Toyota Prius Prime and the Chevrolet Volt. But no all-electric vehicles are on the list. The institute hasn't yet tested the all-electric Chevrolet Bolt, which went on sale at the end of 2016.

Tesla's Model S, an all-electric luxury sedan that starts at \$72,500, earned good ratings in four of the institute's five tests, including a side impact test and a head restraint test. But it earned a lower rating in a small overlap frontal crash test, which replicates what happens when the front corner of the car collides with a tree or telephone pole at 40 miles per hour. The Tesla's safety belt allowed the crash dummy to move too far forward and it hit its head on the steering wheel.

The institute said Tesla made a production change this month to address the problem, so the car will be tested again. The Model S has earned the highest ratings on U.S. government crash tests, but IIHS performs different tests.

Tesla also earned a "poor" rating for its headlights. And a high-performance version of the Model S, the P100D, got a lower ranking on the roof strength test because its larger battery makes it much heavier, so the roof might not hold up as well in a rollover crash. The government hasn't performed a roof-strength test on the P100D.

The BMW i3, a small electric car that starts at \$42,400, also earned good ratings in four out of five tests. It fell short in the head restraint test, which measures how well the car protects against neck injuries in a rear crash. The i3 earned the second-highest rating of "acceptable" for its headlights.

The government hasn't yet reported crash-test results for the i3.

Senator: Army Corps told to approve Dakota pipeline easement

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The acting secretary of the Army has ordered the Army Corps of Engineers to allow construction of the Dakota Access pipeline under a Missouri River reservoir, a North Dakota senator said, the latest twist in the months-long legal battle over the \$3.8 billion project.

The Standing Rock Sioux, whose opposition to the project attracted the support of thousands of protesters from around the country to North Dakota, immediately vowed to return to court to stop it.

Sen. John Hoeven announced late Tuesday that Robert Speer directed the Army Corps of Engineers to "proceed" with an easement necessary to complete the pipeline. Hoeven said he also discussed Speer's order with Vice President Mike Pence, just a week after President Donald Trump signed an executive order signaling his support for the project.

A spokesman for the U.S. Army did not respond to requests for comment Tuesday night. Hoeven spokesman Don Canton said Speer's move means the easement "isn't quite issued yet, but they plan to approve it" within days.

The crossing under Lake Oahe, a wide section of the Missouri River in southern North Dakota, is the final big chunk of work on the pipeline designed to carry North Dakota oil through South Dakota and Iowa to a shipping point in Illinois.

The pipeline has been the target of months of protests led by the Standing Rock Sioux, whose reservation lies near the pipeline's route and who have argued that it's a threat to water and tribal artifacts.

The tribe has vowed to challenge any granting of the easement in court, and Chairman Dave Archambault renewed that vow Tuesday night.

"If it does become a done deal in the next few days, we'll take it to the judicial system," Archambault said. He added: "This is a good indicator of what this country is going to be up against in the next four years. So America has to brace itself."

The developer, Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners, said the pipeline would be safe.

An environmental assessment conducted last year determined the crossing would not have a significant impact on the environment. However, then-Assistant Army Secretary for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy on Dec. 4 declined to issue an easement, saying a broader environmental study was warranted.

Energy Transfer Partners called Darcy's decision politically motivated and accused then-President Barack Obama's administration of delaying the matter until he left office. Two days before he left the White House, the Corps launched an environmental impact study of the crossing that could take up to two years to complete.

On Jan. 24, just four days after he took office, Trump signed an executive action telling the Corps to quickly reconsider the Dec. 4 decision.

The company appears poised to begin drilling under the lake immediately. Workers have already drilled entry and exit holes for the Oahe crossing, and the company has put oil in the pipeline leading up to the lake in anticipation of finishing the project, its executive vice president Joey Mahmoud said in court documents filed earlier this month.

Hundreds and at times thousands of pipeline opponents calling themselves "water protectors" have camped on federal land near the crossing site since August, often clashing with police and prompting more than 625 arrests. The camp's population has thinned to fewer than 300 due to harsh winter weather and a plea by Archambault for the camp to disband before the spring flooding season.

Israeli forces begin evacuation of West Bank outpost

By NEBI QENA and IAN DEITCH, Associated Press

AMONA, West Bank (AP) — Israeli forces began an operation to evacuate settlers from a West Bank outpost on Wednesday whose slated destruction could rupture Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's narrow coalition, dominated by ultranationalists who support settlements.

Unarmed police in blue sweatshirts and black baseball caps made their way up the hill around midday Wednesday. On the hilltop, youngsters erected makeshift barricades from smashed tiles, rusty metal bars and large rocks to slow their advance. Some protesters threw rocks at security forces, while others set fire to tires and trash piles.

Minor scuffles broke out between some activists and police as protesters tried to block officers from progressing.

Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said forces were operating "carefully and slowly." He said 10 officers

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 23 of 51

were lightly hurt and several protesters were arrested.

Protesters chanted "Jews don't expel Jews" as they linked arms to form a wall against police.

Activists gathered in homes, praying, singing religious songs and dancing. Residents have said they plan to resist their evacuation peacefully. Some chained themselves to heavy objects and locked their doors. A few residents left their homes with young children in the arms.

Bilha Schwartz, 24, came along with her husband and nine-month-old daughter to support the residents. "If they want it they can take it, we will not fight. We will leave but we will come back," she told The Associated Press.

Shortly after noon, bulldozers began making their way up the hill, one of them clearing a path.

Several activists crawled under a house and chained themselves to its foundations. One of them, Mordechai, told Channel 2 TV they won't act violently toward police but "we will hold on to the ground and not give up because this is our land that God promised to the people of Israel."

Others heckled officers and pleaded with them to refuse their orders.

Amona is the largest of about 100 unauthorized outposts erected in the West Bank without permission but generally tolerated by the Israeli government. Israel's Supreme Court ruled in 2014 that Amona was built on private Palestinian land and must be demolished. It has set Feb. 8 as the final date for it to be destroyed.

The outpost, built in the 1990s, stretches out over a rugged, grassy hilltop and looks out across the valley onto Palestinian villages. In 2006, also on Feb. 1, Israeli police demolished nine homes at Amona, setting off violent clashes pitting settlers and their supporters against police and soldiers. Several dozen trailers have remained and the outpost has become a symbol for the settlement movement.

About 50 families, some 250 people, live in Amona now. In recent weeks dozens of mostly young supporters, including high school students, have arrived to face off against Israeli forces.

"This is a dark day for us, for Zionism, for the state and for the great vision of the Jewish people returning to its homeland," Avichay Buaron, a spokesman for Amona, told Channel 2 TV.

The fate of Amona has threatened to destabilize Netanyahu's narrow coalition that includes the pro-settler party Jewish Home and other hardliners. However, it's unlikely that Amona's demise would be sufficient to topple the government as the nationalist parties have too much to lose by leaving Netanyahu's government at this stage.

Speaking at Israel's parliament as the evacuation was in process, Education Minister Naftali Bennett — leader of the pro-settlement Jewish Home Party — called the Amona settlers "heroes" and vowed to "build a new settlement."

Bennett said he is confident a bill that would legalize scores of other Israeli settlement outposts will pass next week.

Netanyahu has struggled to find a balance between appeasing his settler constituents and respecting Israel's Supreme Court, which has drawn the ire of hard-liners by ruling against the settlers.

Bezalel Smotrich, a lawmaker from the Jewish Home party, was one of several politicians who went to Amona to show support. "There is a great pain, a huge disappointment. They are uprooting a community in Israel. It is a terrible thing," he told Channel 2 TV.

While readying to evacuate Amona, Israel announced plans to build 3,000 homes in the West Bank late Tuesday. The Palestinians claim the territory along with east Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war, as parts of a future independent state — a position that has wide international backing. Much of the territory has deep religious and historical significance for many devout Jews, who see it as their biblical heartland and heritage.

The election of Donald Trump, who has promised to be far more supportive of Israel than his predecessor, has emboldened Israel's settlement movement. His campaign platform made no mention of a Palestinian state, a cornerstone of two decades of international diplomacy in the region, and he has signaled that he will be far more tolerant of Israeli settlement construction.

Deitch reported from Jerusalem.

New Pentagon chief seeks to reassure nervous Asian allies

By **ROBERT BURNS, AP National Security Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — By visiting Japan and South Korea on his first official overseas trip, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis is seeking to reinforce key alliances after President Donald Trump's campaign-trail complaints that defense treaties disadvantaged the United States.

The visits also reflect the urgency of concerns on both sides of the Pacific about North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Mattis, a retired four-star Marine general, inherited a North Korea problem that has grown more worrisome as the communist nation's leader, Kim Jong Un, claims progress toward fielding a ballistic missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead to the United States. Former Secretary of State John Kerry said in early January the U.S. may need "more forceful ways" of dealing with North Korea if it develops a ballistic missile of intercontinental range.

Mattis, who entered office hours after Trump on Jan. 20, took off from Joint Base Andrews, Maryland before daybreak and is due to arrive Thursday in Seoul, where he will meet with his counterpart, Defense Minister Han Min Koo, amid a swirl of political turmoil. President Park Geun-hye was impeached in December and the constitutional court is reviewing whether to formally end her rule. Later in the week, Mattis is to hold talks in Tokyo with Defense Minister Tomomi Inada and other senior Japanese government officials.

North Korea is expected to be at or near the top of Mattis' agenda. Beyond its long-range missile aspirations, the North already has missiles capable of hitting South Korea as well as U.S. bases in Japan.

Trump said during the campaign that while he supports the alliances with Japan and South Korea, he would not rule out abandoning them if they refuse to pay more for their own defense. "It could be that Japan will have to defend itself against North Korea," he told a campaign rally in August. The first foreign leader he met as president-elect was Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe; they'll meet again in Washington on Feb. 10.

Mattis has said little in public since taking office. But he has left no doubt that America's security alliances, including those in Asia, are a top priority. He is the first recently retired military officer to serve as defense secretary since George C. Marshall in 1950-51 during the Korean War.

Pentagon chiefs regularly visit South Korea and Japan, reflecting their status as U.S. treaty allies. Chuck Hagel, who visited the heavily guarded Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea as defense secretary in September 2013, said in an interview that Mattis is making the right move.

"It was a smart decision" to visit these allies early, Hagel said. He believes officials in Tokyo and Seoul are wondering: "Can we rely on the U.S.? What is the future here?"

The U.S. has about 28,000 troops stationed in South Korea and about 50,000 in Japan.

Hagel said Tokyo and other U.S. allies in Asia have been particularly upset by Trump's decision to pull the U.S. out of a Pacific Rim trade initiative, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the centerpiece of former President Barack Obama's effort to strengthen U.S. economic ties in the region.

Kent Calder, director of Asia programs at Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies, said Mattis could bolster Japan's confidence by explicitly reaffirming that disputed East China Sea islands are covered by the U.S.-Japan defense treaty. The islands are controlled by Japan, which calls them the Senkaku, but also claimed by China, which calls them the Diaoyu.

China's regional role and military modernization will also loom over Mattis's meetings in Seoul and Tokyo. All are hoping to persuade China to use its influence over North Korea to contain or curtail Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs.

Mattis said at his Senate confirmation hearing the U.S. should do whatever it takes to stop North Korea from acquiring a nuclear-capable missile of intercontinental range.

"It's a serious threat," he said.

Anthony Ruggerio, a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a foreign policy think tank, said Mattis could advance U.S. security interests by encouraging Tokyo and Seoul to improve their bilateral relations, which are strained by disputes.

"While the two of them may have issues with each other, they need to be unified against North Korea," Ruggiero said.

Associated Press writer Ken Moritsugu in Tokyo contributed to this report.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. WHO IS TRUMP'S PICK FOR SUPREME COURT

Neil Gorsuch, 49, advocates for court review of government regulations, defense of religious freedom and skepticism toward law enforcement.

2. TRUMP POLICY DIMS HOPE FOR REFUGEES IN INDONESIA

A dire situation has become even more tenuous for thousands of asylum seekers and refugees from Iraq, Somalia and other conflict-scarred countries.

3. PENTAGON CHIEF SET FOR ASIAN TOUR

Jim Mattis is seeking to reinforce key alliances after Trump's campaign-trail complaints that defense treaties disadvantaged the U.S.

4. ISRAELI FORCES BEGIN EVACUATION OF WEST BANK OUTPOST

The slated destruction could rupture Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's narrow coalition, dominated by ultranationalists who support settlements.

5. FED LIKELY TO LEAVE RATES ALONE

The central bank is expected to keep its benchmark rate unchanged at a time of steady economic gains but also heightened uncertainty in Washington.

6. JAILING OF OFFICERS SEEN AS TEST OF FREE SPEECH IN JORDAN

Unwritten "red lines" in public debate become apparent at a time when the U.S.-allied kingdom faces growing security threats and an economic downturn.

7. ALASKA PANEL MULLS POT USE IN RETAIL STORES

Critics fear an Amsterdam-like scene in Juneau and hope the state's marijuana board puts in place restrictions to keep it from happening.

8. 'TOP SAFETY PICK' ELUDES 2 LUXURY ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The Tesla Model S and the BMW i3 failed to get the highest safety ratings in new crash tests by the insurance industry.

9. LAWSUIT: JOHNNY DEPP TO BLAME FOR MONEY WOES

Former business managers countersue the actor saying he spent heavily to maintain 14 homes, buy a 150-foot yacht, and amass fine art and Hollywood memorabilia collections.

10. WHY IT'S OBVIOUS ALABAMA CONTENDS EVERY YEAR

The Tide have had the No. 1 recruiting class each of the last six years, according to 247Sports, and are favorites again on national signing day.

Trump taps conservative Judge Neil Gorsuch for Supreme Court

By JULIE PACE and MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has nominated Neil Gorsuch, a fast-rising conservative judge with a writer's flair, to the Supreme Court, setting up a fierce fight with Democrats over a jurist who could shape America's legal landscape for decades to come.

At 49, Gorsuch is the youngest Supreme Court nominee in a quarter-century. He's known on the Denver-based 10th Circuit Court of Appeals for clear, colloquial writing, advocacy for court review of government regulations, defense of religious freedom and skepticism toward law enforcement.

"Judge Gorsuch has outstanding legal skills, a brilliant mind, tremendous discipline and has earned bi-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 26 of 51

partisan support," Trump declared, announcing the nomination in his first televised prime-time address from the White House.

Gorsuch's nomination Tuesday was cheered by conservatives wary of Trump's own fluid ideology. If confirmed by the Senate, he would fill the seat left vacant by the death last year of Antonin Scalia, long the right's most powerful voice on the high court.

With Scalia's wife, Maureen, sitting in the audience, Trump took care to praise the late justice. Gorsuch followed, calling Scalia a "lion of the law."

Gorsuch thanked Trump for entrusting him with "a most solemn assignment." Outlining his legal philosophy, he said: "It is the rule of judges to apply, not alter, the work of the people's representatives. A judge who likes every outcome he reaches is very likely a bad judge."

Some Democrats, still smarting over Trump's unexpected victory in the presidential election, have vowed to mount a vigorous challenge to nearly any nominee to what they view as the court's "stolen seat." President Barack Obama nominated U.S. Circuit Court Judge Merrick Garland for the vacancy after Scalia's death, but Senate Republicans refused to consider the pick, saying the seat should be filled only after the November election.

Senate Democratic leader Charles Schumer said he has "serious doubts" that Gorsuch is within what Democrats consider the legal mainstream, saying he "hewed to an ideological approach to jurisprudence that makes me skeptical that he can be a strong, independent justice on the court."

Trump's choice of Gorsuch marks perhaps the most significant decision of his young presidency, one with ramifications that could last long after he leaves office. After a reality television buildup to Tuesday's announcement — including a senior Trump adviser saying more than one court candidate was heading to Washington ahead of the event— the actual reveal was traditional and drama-free.

For some Republicans, the prospect of filling one or more Supreme Court seats over the next four years has helped ease their concerns about Trump's experience and temperament. Three justices are in their late 70s and early 80s, and a retirement would offer Trump the opportunity to cement conservative dominance of the court for many years.

Gorsuch would restore the court to the conservative tilt it held with Scalia on the bench. But he is not expected to call into question high-profile rulings on abortion, gay marriage and other issues in which the court has been divided 5-4 in recent years.

If confirmed, Gorsuch would join the court that is often the final arbiter for presidential policy. Justices upheld Obama's signature health care law in 2012 and could eventually hear arguments over Trump's controversial refugee and immigration executive order.

Gorsuch's writings outside the court offer insight into his conservative leanings. He lashed out at liberals in a 2005 opinion piece for National Review, written before he became a federal judge.

"American liberals have become addicted to the courtroom, relying on judges and lawyers rather than elected leaders and the ballot box, as the primary means for effecting their social agenda on everything from gay marriage to assisted suicide to the use of vouchers for private-school education," he wrote.

Gorsuch has won praise from conservatives for his defense of religious freedom, including in a case involving the Hobby Lobby craft stores. He voted in favor of privately held for-profit secular corporations, and individuals who owned or controlled them, who raised religious objections to paying for contraception for women covered under their health plans.

The judge also has written opinions that question 30 years of Supreme Court rulings that allow federal agencies to interpret laws and regulations. Gorsuch has said that federal bureaucrats have been allowed to accumulate too much power at the expense of Congress and the courts.

Like Scalia, Gorsuch identifies himself as a judge who tries to decide cases by interpreting the Constitution and laws as they were understood when written. He also has raised questions about criminal laws in a way that resembles Scalia's approach to criminal law.

University of Michigan law professor Richard Primus said Gorsuch "may be the closest thing the new generation of conservative judges has to Antonin Scalia."

Gorsuch, like the other eight justices on the court, has an Ivy League law degree. The Colorado native

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 27 of 51

earned his bachelor's degree from Columbia University in three years, then a law degree from Harvard. He clerked for Supreme Court Justices Byron White, a fellow Coloradan, and Anthony Kennedy before earning a philosophy degree at Oxford University and working for a prominent Washington law firm.

He served for two years in George W. Bush's Department of Justice before Bush nominated him to the appeals court. His mother was Anne Gorsuch Burford, who was head of the Environmental Protection Agency in the Reagan administration.

Gorsuch was among the 21 possible choices for the court Trump released during the campaign. Other finalists also came from that list, including Thomas Hardiman, who serves alongside Trump's sister on the Philadelphia-based 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, and William Pryor, a federal appeals court judge and Alabama's attorney general from 1997 to 2004.

If Democrats decide to filibuster Gorsuch's nomination, his fate could rest in the hands of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. Trump has encouraged McConnell to change the rules of the Senate and make it impossible to filibuster a Supreme Court nominee — a change known in the Senate as the "nuclear option."

A conservative group already has announced plans to begin airing \$2 million worth of ads in support of the nominee in Indiana, Missouri, Montana and North Dakota, four states that Trump won and in which Democrats will be defending their Senate seats in 2018.

AP writer Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

Follow Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC> and Mark Sherman at <http://twitter.com/shermancourt>

Refugees: A world away from loved ones, anxious and in limbo

By The Associated Press

President Donald Trump's executive order banning refugees from certain countries has brought stress, desperation, worry and confusion to a number of families in the United States and abroad.

Trump's order temporarily halted the entire U.S. refugee program and banned all entries from seven Muslim-majority nations for 90 days. Many refugees in the U.S. had expected to reunite with relatives any day, but now their plans are on hold.

5-YEAR-OLD GIRL: FAR FROM MOM AND DAD

Nagi Algahaim, a U.S. citizen who runs a gas station in Detroit, said he's effectively stuck in Malaysia with his wife, a native of Yemen. Their 5-year-old daughter is at home with relatives in Detroit but the mother can't travel there.

Algahaim, 33, said he and Kokab Algazali, 28, have been in Malaysia since December, seeking immigration documents to qualify her for a green card in the United States.

Algahaim said Malaysia Airlines told them that while he can fly to the U.S., his wife cannot.

But he's not leaving Kuala Lumpur without her.

"She's been crying every day. It's heartbreaking," he said Tuesday.

Their daughter, who has health problems, hasn't seen her mother since she was 8 months old.

"As an American, I'm disgusted," Algahaim said. "I thought Trump was going to bring up America, not twist it around with fear and racism."

EVERYTHINIG WAS SET

Everything was set for the Syrian refugees to fly to the U.S.

A "processing error" that for months kept Baraa Haj Khalaf, her husband and baby daughter from joining her parents and two siblings in the U.S. had at last been taken care of. They were told to be at the Istanbul airport Monday for their flight to the U.S. — and a new life near Chicago.

So confident were they that they were on their way to America after fleeing Aleppo, Syria in 2013, Baraa and her husband sold or gave away practically all of their belongings.

In suburban Chicago, her 46-year-old father, Khaled Haj Khalaf, could hardly contain his excitement. "We were very happy," he said through an interpreter Tuesday. "This is the land of freedom, the land of democracy."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 28 of 51

Even some Chicago mothers had volunteered to collect furniture, food, clothing and toys for the baby at their future apartment. Then came President Donald Trump's executive order.

Now all the refugees' plans and hopes are "in limbo," said Melineh Kano, executive director of a group called RefugeeOne, which is providing support for the volunteers.

A FAMILY SEPARATED

Abdalla Munye and his wife resettled in Georgia weeks ago but their 20-year-old daughter wasn't able to join them. Her flight was scheduled to arrive this week. Now her trip is on hold.

Munye said his family stayed in refugee camps after fleeing the violence of Somalia, and his wife, Habiba Mohamed, said she watched her 11-year-old daughter be raped and killed.

They are concerned about their older daughter, Batula, who remains in a refugee camp in Kenya.

"Now that we are here and we have left her behind, we are in a lot of distress and worry," Munye, 44, said through a translator. "The only thing I can request from the American government is to help me be reunited with my daughter."

The couple held out hope that first lady Melania Trump, herself an immigrant from Slovenia, might be able to persuade the president to reverse course.

"She's a parent and she knows the love that a parent has for their child and I would like her to do her best to convince the president to change his mind," Munye said.

A DAUGHTER WHO HAS NEVER MET HER FATHER

Somali refugee Nimo Hashi bought couches and a new kitchen table for her Salt Lake City apartment in anticipation of reuniting Friday with her husband for the first time in nearly three years.

Hashi said she last saw him when she was two months pregnant with their daughter, Taslim. Her husband has never seen his daughter. After Trump's order, it's not clear when the father and daughter will meet.

The couple met in Ethiopia after both fled Somalia amid the civil war. Her refugee case had already been approved, so officials told her to go ahead to the U.S. where she could apply for her husband to join her.

"I was so happy and joyous but that dream is shattered," Hashi said through a translator. "This is not right just singling out people from Muslim countries, being singled out based on religion."

STRESSED OUT

Iraqi refugee Rana Elshekly expected to see her husband soon but his resettlement was put on hold. Now he is in limbo in Turkey.

"Every time we talk it sounds like we are arguing because we don't know what to do," Elshekly said through an interpreter. "He's even trying to get me to come back to Turkey so we can at least all be together."

Elshekly, 36, resettled in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in October with her two young boys, 9-year-old Dair and 3-year-old Laith.

Her husband, Hikmat Ahmed, 42, stayed behind after officials suggested that she and the children come alone to the United State to get out of the region faster.

When she thinks about returning to the war-torn region, she remembers her 20-year-old pregnant sister who was recently killed in a bombing at a market in Iraq.

"I start thinking of my boys, and I have to stay because of them," she said.

NO ONE SHOWED UP FOR DINNER

The Somali community in Providence, Rhode Island, prepared traditional home-cooked meals — including goat meat, vegetables and the crepe-like bread known as canjeero — and furnished an apartment for three brothers who were supposed to arrive Monday night. They never made it.

The eldest brother fled his war-torn homeland in the 1990s and had been waiting to be resettled since 2000, when he registered with the United Nations Refugee Agency, said Baha Sadr of refugee resettlement group Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island.

"For the past 16 years, most of his life, he was just waiting to get approval," Sadr said. "If anybody's in waiting for 16 years, how much more extreme vetting can they get?"

FROM AFGHANISTAN WITH WORRIES

Haidary Mohammad, 27, is celebrating little more than a week of being in the U.S., just barely settled into an apartment in Jacksonville, Florida, after years of working for the U.S. military as a translator in

Afghanistan.

Haidary was able to move with his wife. But his father, mother and sisters and brothers remain in Afghanistan. He hopes they'll be able to make it to the U.S. one day — like he did. But now there's much to be uncertain about.

"I've been through a lot of firefights and ambushes and stuff like that in Afghanistan," he said, adding he applied two years ago to be resettled as a refugee, fearing for his life from the Taliban.

"The Taliban look for the guys who work with Americans, and I was one of the guys," he told The Associated Press. Now he doesn't know what will happen with two friends who are helping U.S. forces and also want to come over.

"There's two friends of mine still working in the north of Afghanistan with the Special Forces," he said. "Their paperwork is nearly done, one already got his visa, and they're still hoping to come."

Associated Press writers Don Babwin in Chicago; Jason Dearen in Gainesville, Florida; Ed White in Detroit; Jeff Martin in Atlanta; Brady McCombs in Salt Lake City; Russell Contreras in Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Matt O'Brien in Providence, Rhode Island, contributed to this report.

Conservative Gorsuch emulates Scalia minus the rough edges

By MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — If confirmed by the Senate to the Supreme Court, Neil Gorsuch would fill the seat of the man he seeks to emulate as a judge.

He would be the first justice to serve alongside a colleague for whom he worked. Gorsuch described his former boss, Justice Anthony Kennedy, Tuesday as one of the judges who brought him up in the law.

President Donald Trump nominated Gorsuch to fill the seat of Justice Antonin Scalia, who died nearly a year ago. Trump said he was delivering on his pledge to choose someone in Scalia's mold.

Gorsuch, a federal appeals court judge in Denver for the past 11 years, said he adheres to Scalia's approach to the law, evaluating the Constitution and laws by how they were understood when they were written. He also shares with Scalia a flair for writing.

But unlike the sometimes irascible Scalia, Gorsuch approaches his work with a courtly manner more reminiscent of Kennedy.

Jeffrey Rosen, president and CEO of the bipartisan National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, has known Gorsuch since they worked as clerks on the federal appeals court in Washington, though for different judges.

"His opinions stand out for his prose and analysis and he gets along really well with both sides," Rosen said.

While abortion rights groups immediately criticized the nomination, Rosen said Gorsuch's record on the issue is sparse.

In a book Gorsuch wrote laying out the case against assisted suicide and euthanasia, Rosen said, Gorsuch was careful to avoid making a religious case for his views, focusing instead on philosophy.

"He has been careful not to say what he thinks about abortion or marriage equality," Rosen said.

In any event, with Kennedy remaining on the court, there are five votes to preserve abortion rights and gay rights, no matter Gorsuch's views. Should Kennedy, 80, or liberal justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, 83, or Stephen Breyer, 78, leave the court in the next four years, Trump then would have a chance to appoint a justice whose vote could perhaps flip the court on abortion, gay rights and a range of hot-button issues.

It's unclear how quickly majority Republicans might be able to move Gorsuch's nomination through the Senate or whether Democrats will try to block him. Gorsuch could join the court in time for the last arguments of the term in the spring.

The court currently has before it a case about the rights of transgender students, though the case could end up being returned to a lower court without a full hearing in the high court. Next term's big issue could

be whether some partisan redistricting violates the Constitution. Critics of labor unions also are likely to bring before the court a case that could damage the financial viability of unions that represent government workers, an issue on which the court split 4-4 after Scalia's death.

From his time on the appeals court, Gorsuch's notable opinions include defense of religious freedom. In two cases that involved the contraception mandate under the Obama health care law, Gorsuch sided with businesses and non-profit groups that voiced religious objections to the requirement that they provide cost-free contraception to women covered under their health plans.

Gorsuch also has written opinions that question 30 years of Supreme Court rulings that allow federal agencies to interpret laws and regulations. Gorsuch has said that federal bureaucrats are allowed to accumulate too much power at the expense of Congress and the courts. Those rulings "permit executive bureaucracies to swallow huge amounts of core judicial and legislative power and concentrate federal power in a way that seems more than a little difficult to square with the Constitution of the framers' design," he wrote last year. Justice Clarence Thomas has raised similar concerns.

Notre Dame law professor John Copeland Nagle said he sees an irony in Trump's selection of Gorsuch. "Who would have guessed that President Trump's most important decision in his first weeks in office would be to limit his own power?" Nagle said. The choice of Gorsuch "does just that."

In background and style, Gorsuch resembles the group he may soon join. He would be the sixth member of the bench to have attended Harvard Law School; the other three have law degrees from Yale. Seven of the eight justices previously served as appeals court judges, Gorsuch's current job. He was a Supreme Court law clerk, along with three other justices.

While he is a native Coloradan, Gorsuch spent his high school years in Washington because his mother, Anne Gorsuch, was EPA administrator in the Reagan administration. At 49 years old, he's the youngest nominee since Thomas, who was 43 when he joined the court more than 25 years ago.

Gorsuch differs from his prospective colleagues in one respect. On a court with five Catholics and three Jews, he would be the lone Episcopalian.

Follow Mark Sherman at <http://twitter.com/shermancourt>

Fed is likely to leave rates alone at a time of uncertainty

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — At some point in the coming months, the Federal Reserve is widely expected to resume raising interest rates. Just not quite yet.

On Wednesday, the Fed will likely end its latest policy meeting with an announcement that it's keeping its benchmark rate unchanged at a time of steady economic gains but also heightened uncertainty surrounding the new Trump administration.

In its statement, the Fed will likely acknowledge that the economy has continued to move toward the central bank's dual goals of full employment and annual inflation of roughly a moderate 2 percent.

But the Fed is nevertheless expected to signal that it wants more time to monitor the economy's performance and that it still expects those rate increases to occur gradually.

"We are moving in the direction of more rate hikes this year, but the January meeting is not where that will start," said David Jones, chief economist at DMJ Advisors.

At the moment, most economists foresee no rate increase even at the Fed's next meeting in March, especially given the unknowns about how President Donald Trump's ambitious agenda will fare or whether his drive to cancel or rewrite trade deals will slow the economy or unsettle investors.

It's always possible that the central bank could surprise Fed watchers Wednesday by sending a signal that a rate hike is coming soon. In Fed parlance, that signal could be as slight as changing language in its statement to say "near-term risks to the economic outlook appear in balance," instead of "roughly in balance," the phrase it has been using.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 31 of 51

The statement will not be accompanied by updates to the Fed's economic forecasts or by a news conference with Chair Janet Yellen, both of which occur four times a year .

Last month, the Fed modestly raised its benchmark short-term rate for the first time since December 2015, when it had raised it after keeping the rate at a record low near zero for seven years. The Fed had driven down its key rate to help rescue the banking system and energize the economy after the 2008 financial crisis and the Great Recession.

When it raised rates last month, the Fed indicated that it expected to do so three more times in 2017. Yet confusion and a lack of details over what exactly Trump's stimulus program will look like, whether he will succeed in getting it through Congress and what impact it might have on the economy have muddied the outlook.

And while Trump's tax and spending plans are raising hopes for faster growth, his proposals to impose tariffs on such countries as China and Mexico to correct trade imbalances could slow the economy if U.S. trading partners retaliate and collectively impede the flow of imports and exports.

"The Fed is unlikely to signal intentions to raise rates as early as March given the heightened uncertainty about the timing and scope of fiscal and protectionist policies," said Sal Guatieri, senior economist at BMO Capital Markets.

Nariman Behraves, chief economist at IHS Markit, predicts that the economy will grow a modest 2 percent to 2.5 percent this year, before accelerating next year to 2.6 percent to 2.7 percent on the assumption that Trump's policy proposals will have begun to take full effect by then.

The outlook for both years would mark an improvement over the economy's lackluster growth of 1.6 percent in 2016, its weakest performance since 2011.

Even though economic growth, as measured by the gross domestic product, was underwhelming last year, the job market appears close to full health. Hiring was consistently solid in 2016, and the unemployment rate ended the year at 4.7 percent, just below the 4.8 percent level the Fed has identified as representing full employment.

And inflation, by the Fed's preferred measure, rose 1.6 percent in the 12 months that ended in December, moving closer to the Fed's 2 percent goal.

Signing day begins with Alabama closing on recruiting title

By RALPH D. RUSSO, AP College Football Writer

On the first Wednesday of February, it becomes obvious why Alabama contends for a national title every season.

The Crimson Tide have had the No. 1 recruiting class in the country each of the last six years, according to 247Sports' composite rankings, and are in position to make it seven in a row on national signing day. Even if none of the few highly touted recruits who are waiting until signing day to commit end up with the Tide, Nick Saban will still have a loaded class, featuring running back Najee Harris, who might be the top high school player in the country.

Can any team surpass the Tide on signing day?

Maybe Ohio State. Buckeyes fans are touting Urban Meyer's latest class as the best in school history.

That's probably about it. Still, there will be high spirits and optimism at most football programs as coaches tout their classes with a mountain of clichés.

Jim Harbaugh and Michigan will hold another "Signing of the Stars" welcome party, including a long list of past Wolverines greats.

Georgia is drawing raves from the recruiting analysts in Kirby Smart's second year as coach. The former Alabama assistant has brought the signing day process to the Bulldogs.

Gorsuch: Conservative court nominee praised by some liberals

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI, Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Neil Gorsuch, named Tuesday as President Donald Trump's nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court, has a solidly conservative pedigree that has earned him comparison to the combative justice he would replace, Antonin Scalia.

Gorsuch clerked for two Supreme Court justices and worked in President George W. Bush's Justice Department before being appointed to the federal bench and authoring a series of sharply written, conservative opinions. His mother, Anne, ran President Ronald Reagan's Environmental Protection Agency.

But Gorsuch has also won praise among liberals and others in the Colorado legal community for his fair-mindedness and defense of the underdog.

"He is a very, very smart man. His leanings are very conservative, but he's qualified to be on the Supreme Court," said Denver plaintiff's attorney David Lane. "I don't know that Judge Gorsuch has a political agenda and he is sincere and honest and believes what he writes."

A judge on the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver, Gorsuch lives in the hyper-liberal college town of Boulder and teaches at the University of Colorado's law school there, also a progressive bastion.

"I think this should be Merrick Garland's seat," said Jordan Henry, one of Gorsuch's students there and a self-described liberal, referring to President Obama's nominee for the vacancy last year who was never considered by the Republican-controlled U.S. Senate. But she described Gorsuch as an eager mentor, always solicitous of students' opinions and with a brilliant mind.

"He's dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the justice system," said Henry, 29. "I do take some comfort that he can be a Trump choice."

Gorsuch is a Colorado native who earned his bachelor's degree from Columbia University in three years, then earned a law degree from Harvard. He clerked for Supreme Court Justices Byron White, a fellow Coloradan, and Anthony Kennedy before earning a philosophy degree at Oxford University and working for a prominent Washington, D.C., law firm.

He served for two years in Bush's Justice Department before Bush appointed him to a seat on the 10th Circuit in 2006.

His mother, Anne Gorsuch Burford, served as administrator of the EPA, but she was forced to resign 1983 amid a scandal involving the mismanagement of a \$1.6 billion program to clean up hazardous waste dumps. Burford was cited for contempt of Congress for refusing to turn over Superfund records, which she claimed were protected by executive privilege.

Neil Gorsuch has contended that courts give too much deference to government agencies' interpretations of statutes, a deference that stems from a Supreme Court ruling in a 1984 case. More recently, he sided with two groups that successfully challenged the Obama administration's requirements that employers provide health insurance that includes contraception.

Gorsuch summed up his minimalist judicial philosophy and focus on impartial judgment Tuesday evening. "A judge who reaches every outcome he wishes is likely a very bad judge," he said after Trump introduced him from the East Room of the White House in a primetime televised address.

Lane, who frequently clashes with law enforcement, praised Gorsuch as fair and open-minded. Lane won a \$1.8 million jury verdict against the Denver Police Department in a brutality and wrongful arrest case. The city appealed and the case ended up before Gorsuch. Lane said Gorsuch tore into the city's lawyers and urged them to go to mediation rather than drag out appeals for years to deny the plaintiffs their reward. The mediation led the case to be settled for \$1.6 million.

Gorsuch has also drawn attention for siding with religious employers against the Obama administration's requirement that they provide health insurance that covers contraception. He also wrote a book arguing against assisted suicide.

Marcy Glenn, a Denver attorney and Democrat, recalls two cases before Gorsuch in which she represented underdogs. In one, a college student faced criminal libel charges for mocking a professor; the court upheld the student's right to file a claim against the prosecutor.

In the second, homeowners sued over illnesses stemming from an old nuclear weapons facility outside Denver. Gorsuch revived their class-action lawsuit in a novelistic, 38-page ruling that began, "Harnessing nuclear energy is a delicate business."

"He issued a decision that most certainly focused on the little guy," Glenn said.

Rebecca Love Kourlis, a former Colorado Supreme Court justice, said Gorsuch has written 175 majority opinions and 65 concurrences or dissents in his decade on the 10th Circuit.

"He's really earned his stripes," she said.

Kourlis said Gorsuch is also a notable advocate for simplifying the justice system to make it more accessible. "Legal services in this country are so expensive that the United States ranks near the bottom of developed nations when it comes to access to counsel in civil cases," Gorsuch wrote in a journal article last year. "The real question is what to do about it."

The article is written in Gorsuch's characteristic, straightforward style.

"He thinks it's really important for people other than lawyers to understand what he's writing," Kourlis said.

Gorsuch is also an avid skier, fly fisherman and horseback rider, Kourlis said. He teaches at the University of Colorado's law school in Boulder.

"He is humble, he is extremely articulate and he is extraordinarily hard-working," Kourlis said.

In his financial disclosure report for 2015, he reported assets ranging from \$3.1 million to \$7.25 million. He earned \$26,000 for his law school duties and another \$5,300 in book royalties that year.

Senator: Army Corps told to approve Dakota pipeline easement

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The Army Corps of Engineers was ordered to allow construction of the Dakota Access pipeline to proceed under a disputed Missouri River crossing, North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven said on Tuesday, the latest twist in a months-long legal battle over the \$3.8 billion project.

The Standing Rock Sioux, whose opposition to the project attracted thousands of supporters from around the country to North Dakota, immediately vowed to again go to court to stop it.

Hoeven announced late Tuesday that the acting Secretary of the Army, Robert Speer, had directed the Army Corps of Engineers to "proceed" with an easement necessary to complete the pipeline. Hoeven said he also spoke with Vice President Mike Pence, just a week after President Donald Trump signed an executive order signaling his support for the project.

A spokesman for the U.S. Army did not immediately respond to requests for comment Tuesday night. Hoeven spokesman Don Canton says that Speer's move means the easement "isn't quite issued yet, but they plan to approve it" within days.

The crossing under Lake Oahe, a wide section of the Missouri River in southern North Dakota, is the final big chunk of work on the four-state, \$3.8 billion pipeline to carry North Dakota oil through South Dakota and Iowa to Illinois. President Donald Trump on Jan. 24 called on the Army Corps of Engineers to reconsider its December decision to withhold permission until more study is done on the crossing.

The pipeline has been the target of months of protests led by the Standing Rock Sioux, whose reservation lies near the pipeline's route and who have argued that it's a threat to water.

The tribe has vowed to challenge any granting of the easement in court, and Chairman Dave Archambault renewed that vow Tuesday night.

"If it does become a done deal in the next few days, we'll take it to the judicial system," Archambault said. He added: "This is a good indicator of what this country is going to be up against in the next four years. So America has to brace itself."

The developer, Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners, says the pipeline would be safe.

An environmental assessment conducted last year determined the crossing would not have a significant impact on the environment. However, then-Assistant Army Secretary for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy on Dec. 4 declined to issue an easement, saying a broader environmental study was warranted in the wake of opposition by the Standing Rock Sioux.

Energy Transfer Partners called Darcy's decision politically motivated and accused then-President Barack

Obama's administration of delaying the matter until he left office. Two days before he left the White House, the Corps launched a study of the crossing that could take up to two years to complete.

President Donald Trump on Jan. 24 — just four days after he took office — signed an executive action telling the Corps to quickly reconsider the Dec. 4 decision.

The company appears poised to begin drilling under the lake immediately. Workers have already drilled entry and exit holes for the Oahe crossing, and the company has put oil in the pipeline leading up to the lake in anticipation of finishing the project, its executive vice president Joey Mahmoud said in court documents filed earlier this month.

Hundreds and at times thousands of pipeline opponents who have dubbed themselves "water protectors" have camped on federal land near the crossing site since August, often clashing with police and prompting more than 625 arrests. The camp's population has thinned to fewer than 300 due to harsh winter weather and a plea by Archambault for the camp to disband before the spring flooding season.

AP Source: Yates troubled that order disadvantaged Muslims

By ERIC TUCKER and SADIE GURMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Acting Attorney General Sally Yates, fired by President Donald Trump, has told others she refused to enforce his executive order on refugees because she felt it was intended to disadvantage Muslims, according to a person familiar with her thinking.

Yates knew that her firing was likely, but she did not want to resign and leave the problem unresolved for another lawyer to deal with, according to the person, who is familiar with the situation but was not authorized to discuss it by name. The person spoke about Yates to The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Trump fired Yates Monday night in an abrupt move that has sent a clear message to his future Cabinet about his tolerance for public dissent.

The president will soon have in place like-minded political appointees, not officials inherited from the Obama administration like Yates, who refused to allow the Justice Department to defend his immigration orders in court. And the Trump appointees surely will be less inclined to publicly disagree with him.

But his haste in firing a top holdover official, his spokesman's admonishment that career employees should "either get with the program or go" and Trump's comments about issues he wants federal prosecutors to investigate all illustrate how he moves aggressively to ensure his directives are carried out, even at agencies like the Justice Department that cherish their independence.

Over the decades, there has "been respect for the independence of the Justice Department as a law enforcement agency," said Bill Baer, a high-ranking department official during the Obama administration. "There is reason for grave concern that the incoming president views the Justice Department just as another political weapon to go after people who disagree with him."

White House spokesman Sean Spicer said Yates was "rightfully removed" from "a position of leadership that is given to someone who is supposed to execute orders that are handed down to them properly." While every American has the right to express an opinion, he said, the attorney general is "required to execute lawful orders."

Yates was concerned the policy's intent — based on Trump's own public comments — was to favor Christians and disadvantage Muslims, and she didn't feel comfortable encouraging Justice Department attorneys to defend it, the person familiar with her thinking told the AP.

A former spokeswoman for Yates said she was not publicly commenting.

A scheduled Senate committee vote on Sen. Jeff Sessions, Trump's nominee for the Cabinet post, was postponed Tuesday. Democrats cited the firing as a basis for the delay and some said they had no confidence Sessions would be able to stand up to Trump.

Monday night's firing of Yates, a career prosecutor appointed to a political position by Democrats, underscored the growing dissent — even among some Trump administration officials — over his executive order that halted America's refugee program and suspended immigration from seven Muslim-majority nations.

Yates' refusal to defend the order was largely symbolic since Sessions would almost certainly support it once sworn in. Yet the public clash between a president and his chief law enforcement officer over the

legality of a consequential policy could affect the willingness of Sessions, or any other Cabinet appointee, to say no to Trump.

Sessions himself, at confirmation hearings for Democratic-appointed Justice Department officials — including Yates — has repeatedly demanded that they declare their willingness to stand up to the White House. He asked Yates at a 2015 hearing if she believed the attorney general or his or her deputy had “the responsibility to say no to the president if he asks for something that’s improper.”

Yates replied that the attorney general must follow the law and provide “independent legal advice to the president.”

Sessions declared at his own confirmation hearing that he understood the importance of disagreeing with the president.

“You simply have to help the president do things that he might desire in a lawful way and have to be able to say no, both for the country, for the legal system and for the president, to avoid situations that are not acceptable,” he said.

That’s not always easy.

During the campaign and after taking office, Trump has waded into legal matters in ways that could call into question the Justice Department’s vaunted independence.

He said at one point he didn’t think Hillary Clinton should be investigated further for her email practices, even though such a decision would surely be up to the FBI and Justice Department. He also demanded an investigation into allegations of voting fraud without presenting evidence of a problem, though federal lawyers would almost certainly need reasonable suspicion to embark on a probe.

Justice Department officials have long asserted their independence from the White House, and in some cases have lost their jobs or were prepared to lose them.

Famously, as deputy attorney general under George W. Bush, current FBI Director James Comey clashed with White House officials in the hospital room of Attorney General John Ashcroft over the reauthorization of a government surveillance program and later prepared his resignation. A Nixon-era attorney general and his deputy both resigned rather than fire an independent prosecutor investigating the Watergate scandal.

There’s also precedent for the Justice Department objecting to laws that its leaders believed unlawful, including when Attorney General Eric Holder in 2011 said the department would stop defending the Defense of Marriage Act.

Former Attorney General Loretta Lynch on Tuesday praised Yates’ stance as part of that tradition, saying the department’s “first duty is always to the American people.”

Though Democrats applauded Yates, the Trump White House and other Republicans argued that she abdicated her responsibility.

George Terwilliger, a deputy attorney general under President George H.W. Bush, said the honorable thing to do in a “crisis of conscience” is to quietly resign. Disagreeing with the law, he said, is no excuse for not enforcing it.

“It undermined the independence of the institution of the Justice Department,” Terwilliger said of Yates’ announcement, “and was an affront to the career men and women of the Justice Department who every day have to go into court and represent the position of the United States — whether they agree with it or not.”

Democratic attorneys general in 4 states challenge Trump

By GEOFF MULVIHILL and MARTHA BELLISLE, Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Washington, Massachusetts, Virginia and New York are becoming the first states to sue the Trump administration with filings announced this week over the executive order restricting refugees and immigration. They likely won’t be standing alone for long.

Since Donald Trump was elected president, Democratic state attorneys general have been forming a coordinated wall of legal resistance over immigration, environmental protections, health care, and other major issues.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 36 of 51

New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman told The Associated Press that lawyers, including attorneys general, are having an "awakening" regarding the Trump administration.

"This is a president who does not have respect for the rule of the law," Schneiderman said. "That's something that bothers a lot of people."

On Tuesday, Schneiderman, and the attorneys general for Massachusetts and Virginia announced separately that their offices were joining legal challenges to Trump already filed in their states by advocacy groups.

The state officials' plan for legal pushback has precedent: Several Republican attorneys general made it a practice to routinely file lawsuits against the policies of former President Barack Obama.

Unlike groups taking up fights on behalf of individuals, attorneys general — the chief lawyers for state governments — can sue more broadly on behalf of their states. Most are elected and thus can act independently of their state legislatures or governors.

"It's my responsibility as attorney general to defend the rule of law, to uphold the Constitution on behalf of the people of this state. And that's what we're doing," Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson said Monday when announcing his lawsuit against Trump's executive order.

He said other states could join the lawsuit, which asks a judge to throw out key provisions of the order Trump issued Friday to temporarily close the U.S. to all refugees and all people from seven majority-Muslim countries and bars Syrian refugees indefinitely.

Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey, who has held town hall meetings around Massachusetts on responding to Trump, called the policy "harmful, discriminatory and unconstitutional."

The administration says such action is needed to protect the country from terrorist attacks. Since it was issued, the White House has said people from the banned countries who have permission to work in the U.S. can enter.

On Sunday, 17 Democratic attorneys general signed a letter vowing to "use all of the tools of our offices to fight this unconstitutional order." Most of the signatories were from states controlled by Democrats and that Hillary Clinton won in November. But also signing were the Democratic attorneys general from Iowa and Pennsylvania, which voted for Trump, and Maine, where the electoral vote was split.

Attorneys general have taken smaller actions since Trump was elected, both on their own and in concert. For example, some wrote Trump calling for him to keep former President Barack Obama's clean power plan in place.

In January, a group of them asked a judge to let it intervene in a court case on the constitutionality of the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. That motion could be a step toward the state officials defending the office in court. Trump said Monday he intends to do "a big number" on the bill that created the agency. Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller told the AP that protecting the office is a priority.

Some attorneys general banded together to urge the U.S. Senate to reject Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions to lead the U.S. Department of Justice.

Connecticut Attorney General George Jepsen said he has spoken with advocacy groups about legal strategies. Among them is Planned Parenthood, which is preparing to react if Trump and the GOP-led Congress defund the organization.

One of the first steps T.J. Donovan took when he became attorney general in Vermont this month was forming a task force to advise him on immigration policies.

State attorneys general have a history of banding together. Most notably, a series of lawsuits from them led to the 1998 tobacco industry settlement under which cigarette makers agreed to pay states more than \$200 billion over 25 years.

Republican attorneys general sued President Obama over his health insurance overhaul minutes after he signed it and over his rules to limit power plant emissions even before the details were final. In both cases, courts sided with them, at least in part. After Trump won the White House in November, taking on the president became part of the job description for their Democratic counterparts.

State attorneys general have become more active since the administration of former President George

W. Bush, especially when it comes to federal laws and policies, said a scholar who studies the office.

"It's become such an established part of what AG's do on the national level," said Paul Nolette, an assistant professor of political science at Marquette University. "It's become much more AG's going on the offensive."

Mulvihill reported from Haddonfield, New Jersey. Associated Press writer David B. Caruso in New York contributed to this article.

Follow Bellisle at <http://www.twitter.com/marthabellisle> and Mulvihill at <http://www.twitter.com/geoffmulvihill>

This story has been corrected to remove former before Scott Pruitt's title in 16th paragraph.

After Trump order, volunteer lawyers descend on big airports

By JENNIFER PELTZ and FRANK ELTMAN, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — It had been a few years since attorney Roman Zelichenko left immigration law for a career in finance, and longer still since he pulled an all-nighter.

But after President Donald Trump issued his immigration order, Zelichenko spent 21 straight hours at what swiftly became one of the nation's most closely watched immigration law centers — a diner at John F. Kennedy Airport where volunteer lawyers, translators and others tried to find and free people detained under the new rules.

Alerted by law school friends, Zelichenko joined the effort because it resonated personally: He emigrated from Ukraine as a child.

"We all have different personal connections," he said Monday as he worked on the project's social media postings. But "we're here as professionals, and our agenda is to uphold the rule of law."

As Friday's presidential order reverberated around the world, dozens of attorneys descended on JFK to advocate for people suddenly stuck in a legal limbo that the lawyers argue is unjust and unlawful.

Trump temporarily banned refugees and citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries from traveling to the U.S. Throughout the weekend that followed, travelers were held for questioning, confusion spread across the air-travel system and protesters marched against the measure.

Mobilized by email and word of mouth, the legal effort known on Twitter as "NoBanJFK" is one of several at major U.S. airports. Lawyers filed roughly two dozen lawsuits on behalf of detainees in several states and won several federal court rulings that, at least temporarily, blocked the government from removing people who arrived with valid visas.

At JFK, where lawyers helped win the first of the rulings Saturday night, the round-the-clock work began with attorneys typing on laptops on the airport floor. Now they sit at a cluster of cafeteria tables, and law students have toiled alongside seasoned litigators.

The volunteers take hotline calls on cellphones. Signs in multiple languages offer help.

More than 650 attorneys have volunteered for the project, which participants feel has done their profession proud.

"I think lawyers get a bad rap, and sometimes it's deserved. But most of us went to law school to help people," said Melissa Trent, a civil rights lawyer who left a training session to spend over 24 hours at the airport over the weekend.

"We believe in this country, its laws and the Constitution ... and when we see those values challenged, we show up."

The lawyers say Trump's order violates constitutional protections against religious discrimination, among other principles and federal laws.

Trump casts the measure as a safeguard against violent Islamic extremism. The order temporarily blocks immigrants and visitors from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen. It does not include all

countries with ties to terrorism affecting the U.S., nor does it address the threat of homegrown militants.

Legal experts are divided as to how federal courts will ultimately view Trump's action.

Whatever the final outcome, the airport attorneys and groups working with them have demonstrated a spontaneous form of legal rapid response to the new administration's policies. Meanwhile, Democratic state attorneys general are mounting broader challenges.

Roughly 400 attorneys have signed up to volunteer at Chicago's O'Hare Airport, taking six-hour shifts from 6 a.m. to midnight.

On Tuesday, some held signs — "Do you need an attorney?" "Was anyone on your flight detained?" — in arrival areas. Supporters donated office supplies, coffee and doughnuts.

At Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, reports of detained travelers were still coming in Tuesday to volunteer lawyers who organized an airport hotel "war room" and set up tables outside the customs area, attorneys Peter Schulte and Paul Wingo said.

A legal team also set up in the international arrival area at San Francisco's main airport. And at Washington Dulles Airport, about 100 attorneys gathered on Sunday alone.

"I was born here in order to help people who can't help themselves," said Mariam Masumi, who is Muslim, an immigration lawyer and the daughter of Afghan immigrants. She skipped a funeral to lend her skills at the airport.

With no information coming from the government on who is being held, legal volunteers glean what they can from arriving passengers and from detainees' relatives or friends.

"These were families that were torn apart who had done nothing wrong," says Russell Kornblith, an employment-discrimination lawyer who joined the JFK effort Saturday with his fiancée, Elizabeth Rosen, a corporate litigator.

One family Kornblith met was waiting for a 68-year-old Yemeni woman with diabetes who had a visa to stay with her son, a U.S. citizen, lawyers and relatives said. She was ultimately released after Saturday night's court order.

Carolyn Lipp isn't even a lawyer yet, but she got a new sense of the profession's potential at JFK, helping with the work that won the New York court order.

"It's definitely why I came to law school, to do something like this," said Lipp, a Yale Law School student who got involved through the school's Worker and Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic. "To make a difference."

Associated Press writers William Mathis in New York; Ben Nuckols in Chantilly, Virginia; Olga Rodriguez in San Francisco; Sophia Tareen in Chicago and David Warren in Dallas contributed to this report.

US misfires in online fight against Islamic State

By **DESMOND BUTLER** and **RICHARD LARDNER**, Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — On any given day at MacDill Air Force Base, web crawlers scour social media for potential recruits to the Islamic State group. Then, in a high-stakes operation to counter the extremists' propaganda, language specialists employ fictitious identities and try to sway the targets from joining IS ranks.

At least that's how the multimillion-dollar initiative is being sold to the Defense Department.

A critical national security program known as "WebOps" is part of a vast psychological operation that the Pentagon says is effectively countering an enemy that has used the internet as a devastating tool of propaganda. But an Associated Press investigation found the management behind WebOps is so beset with incompetence, cronyism and flawed data that multiple people with direct knowledge of the program say it's having little impact.

Several current and former WebOps employees cited multiple examples of civilian Arabic specialists who have little experience in counter-propaganda, cannot speak Arabic fluently and have so little understanding of Islam they are no match for the Islamic State online recruiters.

It's hard to establish rapport with a potential terror recruit when — as one former worker told the AP — translators repeatedly mix up the Arabic words for "salad" and "authority." That's led to open ridicule

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 39 of 51

on social media about references to the "Palestinian salad."

Four current or former workers told the AP that they had personally witnessed WebOps data being manipulated to create the appearance of success and that they had discussed the problem with many other employees who had seen the same. Yet the companies carrying out the program for the military's Central Command in Tampa have dodged attempts to implement independent oversight and assessment of the data.

Central Command spokesman Andy Stephens declined repeated requests for information about WebOps and other counter-propaganda programs, which were launched under the Obama administration. And he did not respond to detailed questions the AP sent on Jan. 10.

The AP investigation is based on Defense Department and contractor documents, emails, photographs and interviews with more than a dozen people closely involved with WebOps as well as interviews with nearly two dozen contractors. The WebOps workers requested anonymity due to the sensitive nature of the work and because they weren't authorized to speak publicly.

The information operations division that runs WebOps is the command's epicenter for firing back at the Islamic State's online propaganda machine, which uses the internet to sway public opinion in a swath of the globe that stretches from Central Asia to the Horn of Africa.

Early last year, the government opened bidding on a new counter-propaganda contract — separate from WebOps— that is worth as much as \$500 million. Months after the AP started reporting about the bidding process, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service told the AP that it had launched an investigation. NCIS spokesman Ed Buice said the service is investigating a whistleblower's "allegations of corruption" stemming from how the contract was awarded.

The whistleblower's complaint alleges multiple conflicts of interest that include division officers being treated to lavish dinners paid for by a contractor. The complaint also alleges routine drinking at the office where classified work is conducted. The drinking was confirmed by multiple contractors, who spoke to AP and described a frat house atmosphere where happy hour started at 3 p.m.

One of the most damning accusations leveled by the whistleblower is against Army Col. Victor Garcia, who led the information operations division until July 2016, when he moved to a new assignment at Special Operations Command, also in Tampa. The whistleblower contended that Garcia steered the contract to a team of vendors that included a close friend's firm. The whistleblower requested anonymity for fear of professional retribution.

The AP obtained a screen-grab from a Facebook page that shows Garcia and the friend at a tiki bar in Key Largo two weeks before the winning team was officially announced Sept. 30. The photo was also turned over to NCIS investigators by the whistleblower, who said the photo created a "clear impression and perception of impropriety."

Garcia, a West Point graduate and decorated officer, denied any wrongdoing and described the complaint as "character assassination." Garcia, who moved to his new post two months before the contract was decided, said he scrupulously avoided any discussions about the contract with both his friend and his former deputy. His former deputy served on the five-member panel that reviewed all of the bids.

"Because I was aware of these conflicts of interest, I intentionally kept myself out of that process — with any of these contract processes," Garcia said.

The whistleblower is a senior manager at a company that lost its bid for the work. He told AP that he was investigated for attempting to accept kickbacks on an unrelated government contract. He denied the allegations, which were made four years ago, and no charges have been filed in the case.

The problems with the WebOps operation and the personal bonds underpinning the new contract illustrate challenges awaiting President Donald Trump. He has promised to boost military spending by tens of billions of dollars while also cutting waste at the Defense Department and ensuring that contractors aren't getting sweetheart deals.

Charles Tiefer, a professor at the University of Baltimore's law school and a government contracting expert, reviewed AP's findings and called Central Command's lack of rigorous oversight inexcusable.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 40 of 51

"These people should not be wasting the money consigned to defend us against terrorism," said Tiefer, who served on a bipartisan Commission on Wartime Contracting. The commission reported in 2011 that at least \$31 billion was lost to waste and fraud in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"DO YOU SPEAK ARABIC?"

In a large office room filled with cubicles at Central Command, about 120 people, many of them Arabic language specialists, are assigned to fight IS militants on their own turf: the internet.

The WebOps contract is run by Colsa Corp., based in Huntsville, Alabama. A major challenge for Colsa — and contractors working on other national security programs— is finding people who can speak Arabic fluently and can also get security clearances to handle classified material.

The problem, according to six current and former Colsa employees, is that to engage with operatives of the Islamic State, or their potential recruits, you need to be fluent in language, nuance and Islam — and while Colsa has some Arabic experts, those skills are not widely distributed.

"One of the things about jihadis: they are very good in Arabic," said one specialist who worked on WebOps.

Another former employee said common translation mistakes he personally witnessed, including the "Palestinian salad" example, were the result of the company hiring young people who were faking language abilities.

He mockingly described the conversations between managers and potential hires: "Do you speak Arabic?" he mimicked. "Yes. How do you say 'good morning?' Oh, you can do that? You are an expert. You are hired."

A third specialist said she asked a colleague, who was assigned to analyze material written in Arabic, why he was discarding much of it. While watching a soap opera online, the colleague said the material was irrelevant because it was in Farsi or Urdu. But when she checked, it was indeed Arabic. She has since left WebOps to find more meaningful work, she said.

The WebOps Arabic program focuses on Syria, Iraq and Yemen, but for most of the time Colsa has been running it, it has had no Syrian or Yemeni staff, the AP was told in separate interviews with two current employees and one who left recently.

Engaging in theological discussions on social media with people who are well versed in the Quran is not for beginners. Iraq and Syria are riven with sectarian violence between Shiite and Sunni Muslims, who follow different interpretations of Islam. Multiple workers said that WebOps "experts" often trip up on language that is specific to one sect or region.

"People can tell whether you are local, or whether you are Sunni or Shia," said another former worker, so poorly crafted messages are not effective. He said he left WebOps because he was disgusted with the work.

A number of the workers complained to AP that a large group on staff from Morocco, in North Africa, were often ignorant of Middle Eastern history and culture — or even the difference between groups the U.S. considers terrorist organizations. The group was so dominant that colleagues jokingly referred to them as "the Moroccan mafia."

A lot of them "don't know the difference between Hezbollah and Hamas," said the employee who left to find more meaningful work. Hezbollah is an Iran-backed Shiite group based in Lebanon. Hamas, based in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, is the Palestinian branch of the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood.

Cathy Dickens, a vice president for business management and corporate ethics at Colsa Corp., referred questions to CENTCOM, which declined comment.

"YOU SHOULDN'T GRADE YOUR OWN HOMEWORK"

To determine whether WebOps actually dissuades people from becoming radicalized, Colsa's scoring team analyzes the interactions employees have online and tries to measure whether the subjects' comments reflect militant views or a more tolerant outlook.

Three former members of its scoring team told the AP they were encouraged by a manager to indicate progress against radicalism in their scoring reports even if they were not making any.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 41 of 51

The employee who said she left to find meaningful work recalled approaching a Colsa manager to clarify how the scoring was done shortly after starting her job. She said he told her that the bottom line was “the bread we put on the table for our children.”

The boss told her that the scoring reports should show progress, but not too much, so that the metrics would still indicate a dangerous level of militancy online to justify continued funding for WebOps, she said. She was shocked. “Until my dying day, I will never forget that moment,” she said.

She, like other former employees, spoke only on condition of anonymity for fear of retribution from Colsa that could affect future employment.

The manager she spoke to declined to comment. AP withheld his name because of security concerns.

Employees and managers routinely inflate counts of interactions with potential terrorist recruits, known as “engagements,” according to multiple workers. Engagements are delivered in tweets or comments posted on social media to lists of people and can also be automated. That automation is at times used to inflate the actual number of engagements, said two former workers, including the one who talked about colleagues faking their language abilities.

The worker who left in disgust explained that a single tweet could be programmed to be sent out to all the followers of a target individually, multiple times. So the targets and their followers get the same tweets tagged to them over and over again.

“You send it like a blind copy. You program it to send a tweet every five minutes to the whole list individually from now until tomorrow,” the former employee said. “Then you see the reports and it says yesterday we sent 5,000 engagements. Often that means one tweet on Twitter.” The person said that he saw managers printing out the skewed reports for weekly briefings with CENTCOM officers. But the volume made it look like the WebOps team’s work was “wow, amazing,” he said.

Garcia said Colsa has done a good job under his watch, that the data is sufficiently scrutinized and the program is succeeding.

In 2014, a group of more than 40 Defense Department data specialists came to Tampa to evaluate the program. Their unclassified report, obtained by AP, identified what one of the authors called “serious design flaws.” For instance, the report found that any two analysts were only 69 percent likely to agree on how to score a particular engagement. The author said a rate of 90 percent or higher is required to draw useful conclusions.

The report found that computers would be as accurate or better than analysts, and could evaluate effectiveness more quickly — and cheaply.

What Central Command really needed, the report said, was outside oversight.

“You shouldn’t grade your own homework,” said the author, a former U.S. military officer and data specialist once stationed at Central Command. The author, one of many people who signed off on the report, spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of professional retribution.

He said the report was given to officers, including Garcia, and to Colsa. The author said the suggestions were not implemented and WebOps managers resisted multiple attempts at oversight. The author said that when he directly appealed to Garcia for outside assessment, an officer under Garcia said the effort would cloud the mission.

“The argument was that WebOps was the only program at Central Command that was directly engaging the enemy and that it couldn’t function if its staff was constantly distracted by assessment,” he said. The argument worked, he said, and Colsa was not forced or instructed to accept outside oversight.

Garcia disputed that account but would not elaborate on what steps were taken to address the Defense Department data specialists’ concerns. The Government Accountability Office issued a report in 2015 on WebOps oversight, but it is classified.

“UNTOUCHABLE”

Despite the problems behind the scenes at WebOps, Central Command will play a key role in the new \$500 million psychological operations campaign against the Islamic State and other groups. The five-year

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 42 of 51

contract was a hefty commitment to “degrade and ultimately defeat extremist organizations,” according to a document detailing the scope of the work. It would run parallel to WebOps.

The request for bids was announced in April. Four separate teams of companies competed for the contract, including one led by defense giant Northrop Grumman.

From the start, competitors complained among themselves that Simon Bergman, an executive with the British advertising firm M&C Saatchi, had an advantage because he was friends with Garcia. Bergman was working with Northrop to prepare the bid.

A former British officer, Bergman was deployed to Iraq while Garcia was there working on psychological operations during the Iraq war. It was well known that the two men were close, and in recent years, contractors often saw Bergman at CENTCOM offices.

In April, defense contractor CACI International held a meeting in Tampa to discuss the bid. Three contractors on the team said a CACI manager warned a roomful of people that Garcia had already told him that he would decide who got the contract. The manager said that Garcia indicated that having Bergman on the team would help.

So in mid-September, when a photo appeared on Facebook showing Garcia and Bergman together in the Florida Keys, it did not look good in the eyes of many contractors. Garcia’s girlfriend captured the old friends inside the Tiki Bar at Gilbert’s Resort in Key Largo. They were on her Facebook page, shoulder-to-shoulder, smiling and giving the thumbs up.

Within days, the photos had been taken down from her page.

Two weeks later, the government announced Northrop had won the contract. Its team included M&C Saatchi, Bergman’s firm.

A panel led by the U.S. General Services Administration chose the winner of the contract. Chris Hamm, a senior GSA acquisition executive, said a five-member team scrutinized the technical merits of the proposals for the contract. That team was led by two GSA officials and included three military officers — one of whom was Marine Corps Lt. Col. Matt Coughlin, who reported directly to Garcia before Garcia left his post. Coughlin is the information operations’ liaison with contractors.

In an interview with AP, Hamm said the contract award was handled properly.

“The process is designed to avoid bias,” Hamm said.

But several other contractors on losing teams said Coughlin would clearly have been the person on the panel with the most sway, because of both his technical expertise and the fact that he represented CENTCOM. And given Coughlin’s ties with Garcia, they found that troubling.

Garcia said that while the bids were being considered, he stayed away from any discussions of it with Coughlin, his deputy. So he didn’t even realize the award announcement was imminent when he went with Bergman to the Keys.

“I wasn’t involved with the contracting process at all,” Garcia said. “So I had no idea what the timing of the contract was.”

When asked why the photo with Bergman was taken off Facebook, Garcia declined to comment.

Bergman said that his friendship with Garcia, one of many he has with military officers, is irrelevant. He noted that M&C Saatchi was only a subcontractor.

“I don’t see why my relationship with somebody in the military would have any influence over anything,” he said.

The whistleblower complaint however, filed in December with Central Command’s inspector general, contended the photo of Garcia and Bergman created a “clear impression and perception of impropriety.”

The four-page complaint, now under investigation by NCIS, said the atmosphere at the CENTCOM division, with routine drinking at the office and myriad conflicts of interest, led to an “air of untouchable invincibility.”

Several contractors who spoke to AP, among the nearly two dozen either bidding for work or involved in CENTCOM information operations, said they suspected undue influence in the decision for the \$500 million contract. In his complaint, the whistleblower alleges that Garcia told him directly at one point that “any team must include Simon Bergman.”

All the contractors asked for anonymity to discuss sensitive work because they feared repercussions for

their companies.

Colsa, the primary WebOps contractor, was not involved in Northrop's bid. However, nothing prevents Northrop from bringing the company in as a subcontractor.

That's the plan, said several contractors who have been briefed by Northrop. Such a move would provide ample funding to keep WebOps running for up to five more years.

Associated Press researchers Jennifer Farrar, Rhonda Shafner and Monika Mathur contributed to this report.

Follow Butler on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/desmondbutler> and Lardner at <http://twitter.com/rplardner>

Have a tip on government contracting? Contact the authors securely at <https://securedrop.ap.org>

Speaker defends Trump ban as veep addresses GOP concerns

By ERICA WERNER, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Paul Ryan defended President Donald Trump's divisive executive order on refugees and immigration Tuesday, while Vice President Mike Pence promised frustrated Republican senators better communication on major policy issues going forward.

"The president has a responsibility to the security of this country," Ryan told reporters after renewing his support for the temporary entry ban during a closed-door meeting with GOP House members.

While calling initial confusion over the rollout "regrettable," Ryan added: "What is happening is something that we support, which is, we need to pause. And we need to make sure the vetting standards are up to snuff so that we can guarantee the safety and security of our country. That is what this does."

GOP congressional leadership was frozen out of the drafting of the measure, and Ryan acknowledged he didn't find out the details until Friday as Trump was signing the order to shut off the Syrian refugee program indefinitely and halt the U.S. refugee program and all entries from seven Muslim-majority nations for 90 days.

The action triggered mass confusion and chaos worldwide, split families and set off protests at airports across the country.

Some GOP lawmakers, including key senators, have complained that the administration kept GOP Hill leaders in the dark, sending them scrambling for information to help confused constituents. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., told reporters Monday that his staff had been informed the State Department was barred from talking to Congress.

Pence used a regularly appearance at a weekly closed-door Senate Republican lunch Tuesday to try to soothe some of those concerns, lawmakers said.

"He talked about the changes they're making to address some of the problems and then he talked about really working to coordinate and communicate, both himself and the White House in general," Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., said.

Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said the White House realizes it could burn bridges to Capitol Hill by failing to keep congressional Republicans in the loop.

"I've got to believe they realize that," he said. "What I don't know yet is whether it's a concern or not on their end," Corker said. "It may be that this is the way they want to roll right now. So I think we'll see."

"They know that there's more than just concern from a few senators," Corker added of Pence's visit.

Concerns seemed fewer on the House side, where Ryan reminded lawmakers that Trump's executive order was similar to legislation they themselves had voted for in 2014 cracking down on refugee admissions, although the bill never got through the Senate.

Ryan warned lawmakers to expect protests at their offices, Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tenn., said, but assured them that the "rollout was a little bumpy, been a few potholes in the road, but the actual policy he agreed with."

Another lawmaker, Rep. Dennis Ross of Florida, said the speaker's message was, "Look this shouldn't

be a surprise to anybody, this is what we all campaigned on ... We're looking at eight years of a legacy that we're essentially undoing."

Ryan's reassurances weren't enough to quiet frustration from some members.

"Basically, I think the thrust of the executive order should have been a very positive move," Rep. Pete King, R-N.Y., said. "The way it was handled, though, put the Republicans on defense, and also caused great inconvenience to too many people. ... They're losing political capital for no reason. It was a self-inflicted wound."

Ryan also defended the surprising news, first reported by Politico, that the administration's repeated claims that Hill Republicans were involved in drafting the executive order apparently referred to staffers on the House Judiciary Committee who acted without the knowledge of GOP leadership. "Congressional staffers help the administration all of the time," Ryan said.

Associated Press writers Richard Lardner and Andrew Taylor contributed to this report.

Democrats force delays in votes on 3 Cabinet nominees

By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Democrats blocked committee votes on three of President Donald Trump's highest-profile Cabinet picks Tuesday as spiraling partisan hostility over the fledgling administration's refugee curbs and other initiatives seemed to seep into Congress' work on nominations.

In an unusual step, Democrats boycotted planned Senate Finance Committee votes on Rep. Tom Price, R-Ga., to become health secretary and financier Steven Mnuchin to head the Treasury Department. They accused both men of lying about their financial backgrounds, and since committee rules require at least one Democrat to be present, Republicans could not hold roll calls.

"He didn't tell the truth," the committee's top Democrat, Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, said of reports that Price received preferential treatment in purchasing stock in a biotech company. "He misled the Congress and he misled the American people."

The tactic infuriated Republicans, even though the GOP boycotted a committee vote on Gina McCarthy to head the Environmental Protection Agency in 2013 when Democrats ran the Senate.

"They ought to stop posturing and acting like idiots," said committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-Utah. "Are they that bitter about Donald Trump? The answer has to be yes."

At the Senate Judiciary Committee, Democrats criticized Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., Trump's nominee for attorney general, in speeches that lasted as long as 30 minutes apiece. After four-and-a-half hours, panel Chairman Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, adjourned the session and set a new meeting for Wednesday.

"He's been the fiercest, most dedicated defender in Congress of the Trump agenda," California's Dianne Feinstein, the senior Democrat on Judiciary, said of Sessions.

The clashes came as the opening days of the Trump administration have seen little of the honeymoon period new presidents usually experience. The chief battleground has been Trump's executive order temporarily blocking refugees worldwide and anyone from seven Muslim-majority nations.

With liberal groups pressing them to fight Trump and a brutal battle looming over his imminent pick for the Supreme Court vacancy, Tuesday's delaying tactics let Democrats signal they will use their limited power as the congressional minority to hamper the GOP.

Republicans said they would try reconvening the Finance committee Wednesday to see if Democrats would cooperate. Hatch planned to discuss the standoff with Wyden.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., all but taunted Democrats in remarks to reporters. "It is time to get over the fact that they lost the election," he said. "The president is entitled to have his Cabinet appointments considered. None of this is going to lead to a different outcome."

Price, Mnuchin and Sessions still seem certain to win eventual Senate confirmation, and other nominees made progress. The full Senate confirmed Elaine Chao to be transportation secretary, while committees advanced three other Trump picks, including wealthy GOP contributor Betsy DeVos to head the Education

Department.

Democrats said their objections to Price were prompted by a Wall Street Journal report in which officials of Innate Immunotherapeutics Ltd. said Price got a special offer to buy stock at a low price. Price had testified to Congress that the shares he purchased were available to all investors.

They've also opposed him for his support for repealing President Barack Obama's health care law and his plans to reshape Medicare and Medicaid, favorite Democratic programs.

On Mnuchin, Democrats cited an article in The Columbus Dispatch asserting that documents show he wasn't truthful with the Senate in describing how his bank, OneWest, had handled home foreclosures. The newspaper said that bank used "robo-signing" for hundreds of mortgage documents, a technique critics associate with fraud, though Mnuchin said it had not done so.

Democrats also said Trump's selection of Mnuchin breaks his campaign promise to go after Wall Street.

Price and Mnuchin have said they've done nothing wrong and Republican lawmakers have stood by them.

Besides Sessions' likely role defending Trump's moves against refugees, Democrats say they don't trust him to enforce civil rights laws.

DeVos has long supported charter schools and allowing school choice, policies that Democrats and teachers' unions view as threats to federal support for public education.

The Senate confirmed Chao to be transportation secretary by 93-6. She was labor secretary under President George W. Bush, and is McConnell's wife.

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee approved former Texas Gov. Rick Perry as Energy secretary by 16-7, and Rep. Ryan Zinke, R-Mont., to head Interior by 16-6.

AP reporters Maria Danilova, Mary Clare Jalonick and Martin Crutsinger contributed to this report.

Premier says Mosque shooting shows Quebec has its 'demons'

QUEBEC CITY (AP) — Quebec's premier acknowledged Tuesday that his French-speaking province has its "demons" in terms of attitudes toward Muslims, but he said it is generally open and accepting despite this week's deadly attack on a mosque and long-simmering debates about religious accommodation.

"Xenophobia, racism and exclusion are present here," Premier Philippe Couillard said at a news conference. "We have to acknowledge that and work together."

Couillard was grilled by reporters two days after a man entered a Quebec City mosque and shot six people to death and wounded 19. French Canadian university student Alexandre Bissonnette, 27, has been charged with murder and attempted murder in the massacre.

Bissonnette was a fan of French far-right leader Marine Le Pen and U.S. President Donald Trump. Those who monitor extremist groups in Quebec described him as someone who took extreme nationalist, pro-Le Pen positions at Laval University and on social media.

Most Canadians are proud of the country's welcoming attitude toward immigrants and all religions, but Quebec has had a contentious debate over race and religious accommodation. The previous Parti Quebecois government called for a ban on ostentatious religious symbols such as the hijab in public institutions.

A separatist premier, the late Jacques Parizeau, won notoriety by blaming "money and the ethnic vote" for losing a 1995 vote on Quebec becoming independent from Canada. He resigned a day later.

Asked whether the atmosphere is "more insidious" in Quebec than elsewhere in Canada, Couillard replied: "Every society has to live with its demons."

"Our society is not perfect. No society is," he said.

He said politicians in the province have to be aware of the words they use and urged Quebecers to continue expressing solidarity with the Muslim community.

"We've heard stories of women being spat on in the streets," Couillard said. "People feel they have a license to do that now."

More than 50 people were at the Quebec Islamic Cultural Centre when the shooting began during evening prayers Sunday. All the dead and wounded were men. Of the four victims who remained hospitalized, two

were in critical condition, authorities said. The dead ranged in age from 39 to 60.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Couillard both characterized the attack as a terrorist act, which came amid strong criticism around the world over Trump's temporary travel ban for people from seven Muslim countries.

Neighbors on a sleepy suburban street where the man charged in the Quebec City mosque shooting was raised said as that as a kid he played baseball, swam in backyard pools and explored the nearby forest like many local boys.

One said Bissonnette had a passion for guns. Rejean Bussieres, whose son is about the same age, said Bissonnette used to shoot pellet guns in the woods behind his house as a youngster and would invite his son to come over to watch violent movies.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump claims on travel ban misleading, wrong

By ALICIA A. CALDWELL, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In the face of widespread criticism, President Donald Trump and other member of his administration have staunchly defended his order temporarily banning refugees and nearly all citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries. But in a statement Sunday, tweets Monday and comments Tuesday, Trump and others misstated the facts or offered contradictory statements multiple times.

What Trump and others said and how it compares with the facts:

SEAN SPICER: "Well, first of all, it's not a travel ban," the White House spokesman said during his daily briefing Tuesday when asked about Trump's executive order halting travel to the U.S. for people from seven majority Muslim countries.

JOHN KELLY: "This is not a travel ban; this is a temporary pause that allows us to better review the existing refugee and visa-vetting system," the Homeland Security secretary told reporters Tuesday.

THE FACTS: That's not what their boss said Monday. Trump defended the order and its immediate implementation in a tweet by saying: "If the ban were announced with a one week notice, the 'bad' would rush into our country during that week. A lot of bad 'dudes' out there!"

Spicer also called it a ban Monday at George Washington University's School of Media and Public Affairs, saying "the ban deals with seven countries that the Obama administration had previously identified as needing further travel restrictions."

TRUMP: In a White House statement Sunday, he said, "My policy is similar to what President (Barack) Obama did in 2011 when he banned visas for refugees from Iraq for six months."

THE FACTS: That's not exactly what happened. According to State Department data, 9,388 Iraqi refugees were admitted to the United States during the 2011 budget year. The data also show that Iraqi refugees were admitted every month during the 2011 calendar year.

The Obama administration did slow processing for Iraqi nationals seeking refuge in the U.S. under the government's Special Immigrant Visa program for translators and interpreters who worked with American troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. That happened after two Iraqi nationals were arrested on terrorism-related charges. But that year, 618 Iraqis were allowed to enter the U.S. with that special visa.

Government data show that during the 2011 budget year, more than 7,800 Iraqis were allowed into the United States on non-immigrant visas, including tourists.

TRUMP: In the same statement, he said, "The seven countries named in the Executive Order are the same countries previously identified by the Obama administration as sources of terror."

THE FACTS: That is misleading. The Republican-led Congress in 2015 voted to require visas and additional security checks for foreign citizens who normally wouldn't need visas — such as those from Britain — if they had visited the seven countries: Iraq, Iran, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen. This was included in a large spending bill passed overwhelmingly by Congress and signed by Obama.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 47 of 51

As the law was enacted, the Obama administration announced that journalists, aid workers and others who traveled to the listed countries for official work could apply for exemptions. There were no special U.S. travel restrictions on citizens of those seven countries.

TRUMP, also in Sunday's statement: "To be clear, this is not a Muslim ban, as the media is falsely reporting. This is not about religion — this is about terror and keeping our country safe. There are over 40 different countries worldwide that are majority Muslim that are not affected by this order."

THE FACTS: Trump is right that there are many majority-Muslim countries that have not been included in the travel ban. But he's also being misleading. The executive order signed Friday does not specifically say Muslims can't visit the U.S., but it does create a temporary total travel ban for citizens of seven majority-Muslim countries. It also indefinitely bans Syrians.

Former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani recently told Fox News that Trump had asked him to create a plan for a Muslim ban that would meet legal tests. Giuliani said he ultimately made recommendations that focused on security and what countries posed security threats.

TRUMP: The president also tweeted: "If the ban were announced with a one week notice, the 'bad' would rush into our country during that week. A lot of bad 'dudes' out there!"

THE FACTS: The immigration system doesn't allow the kind of "rush" Trump is describing. There are 38 countries, mostly European, whose citizens can visit the U.S. without a visa. But they must be approved for travel in advance by supplying background information to the U.S. government. Any other foreigner looking to visit or move to America for school or work has to get in line for a visa and be subjected to a variety of background checks, including reviews by federal law enforcement and intelligence. Before Trump's executive order was signed, some people were eligible to skip an in-person interview if they met a variety of requirements.

And the U.S. can always stop a foreigner from boarding a U.S.-bound flight or cancel a visa upon someone's arrival. A visa is not a guarantee that a foreigner will be allowed into the U.S.

Follow Alicia A. Caldwell on Twitter at www.twitter.com/acaldwellap

Reported treason arrests fuel Russian hacking intrigue

By HOWARD AMOS, Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — In the days since it emerged that four men had been arrested on treason charges linked to cyber intelligence and Russia's domestic security agency, conspiracy theories and speculation about the case have swept through Moscow.

Was it some fallout from the alleged Russian hacking of the U.S. presidential election? Were they part of a hunt for a possible mole who tipped off American intelligence agencies? Was it a power struggle within Russia's security services?

Specifics of the case are murky, and no Russian government officials have commented publicly. Russian media have been filled with lurid, often contradictory, details that most assume are leaked by warring factions of intelligence officers.

Linking the arrests to the U.S. vote would mean joining the dots between a series of shadowy actors in the Russian internet world.

In one of the few formal acknowledgements of the case, Ivan Pavlov, a Russian defense lawyer specializing in treason cases, confirmed to The Associated Press that at least four arrests on linked treason charges had taken place. He declined to elaborate.

U.S. intelligence agencies alleged in early January that President Vladimir Putin ordered a campaign to influence the U.S. presidential election in favor of Donald Trump, with actions that included using a group called Fancy Bear to hack email accounts of individuals on the Democratic National Committee.

In an unclassified version of their report, the agencies did not disclose how the U.S. learned what it said

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 48 of 51

it knows, and Russia has denied the accusations.

"I have long assumed there has to be some human resource for U.S. intelligence," said Mark Galeotti, an expert on the Russian security services and a senior researcher at the Institute of International Relations in Prague.

The first arrest emerged last week with the news of the detention of Ruslan Stoyanov, an executive at Kaspersky Lab, a cybersecurity firm.

Stoyanov apparently traveled widely as the head of the company's computer incidents investigations. According to his LinkedIn profile, he was employed by the Russian Interior Ministry's cybercrime unit in the early 2000s and hired by Kaspersky in 2012. Kaspersky has said the charges against Stoyanov relate to a time before he joined the company.

Multiple Russian media outlets have reported the detention of three officers working for the cybercrime division of the FSB, Russia's domestic security agency, at around the same time as Stoyanov's arrest in December. Two of the men have been named in Russian media as Col. Sergei Mikhailov, deputy head of the FSB's Information Security Center (TsIB), and a subordinate, Maj. Dmitry Dokuchayev. Pavlov said a fourth defendant in the case was his client, but he refused to reveal his name.

TsIB is an "experienced cyberespionage outfit" that has expanded rapidly in recent years, according to Galeotti. "Their job is to Hoover up everything they can."

Reporting by Russia's opposition newspaper Novaya Gazeta and U.S. cybersecurity journalist Brian Krebs suggested compromising material on the FSB officers may have been a revenge operation by 26-year-old Vladimir Fomenko, revealed by U.S. cyber firm ThreatConnect last year as the owner of servers used in hacks on election systems in Arizona and Illinois, and a Russian businessman, Pavel Vrublevsky, who was jailed for a year in 2013 for organizing cyberattacks on a competitor.

Krebs said in a blog entry Saturday that Mikhailov may have passed details of Russian cyber criminals over many years to U.S. law enforcement officers and U.S. journalists, including a cache of information on Vrublevsky he himself received.

Vrublevsky told the AP on Monday he was only slightly acquainted with Fomenko. He declined to comment on the FSB officer arrests but said they were "the guys who put me behind bars." Fomenko did not respond to a request for comment.

In a further twist, the Interfax news agency reported Tuesday that Mikhailov and Dokuchayev are accused of passing information to the CIA. The report cited a source Interfax did not identify, making it difficult to verify its accuracy. A spokesman for the CIA declined to comment on the actions of Russian law enforcement.

Mikhailov's arrest apparently was designed to have maximum effect on fellow officers. He was detained at a gathering of FSB officials when he had a bag placed over his head and was marched out of the room, according to Novaya Gazeta and the nationalist Tsargrad network.

Another theory circulating apparently seeks to draw attention away from the U.S. hack.

News outlets Life News and Rosbalt, which has close links to the security services, reported that the FSB officers fed sensitive information to hacking group Shaltai Boltai, or Humpty Dumpty, which used it in a complex profit-making enterprise to blackmail dozens of Russian political figures.

A Moscow court confirmed Monday the arrest of Vladimir Anikeyev, reported to be one of the leaders of Shaltai Boltai, on hacking charges.

The arrests appear to add more weight to allegations against the Russian intelligence services that they recruited from the country's vibrant hacking community to boost their offensive cyber capabilities.

As U.S. president, Barack Obama imposed sanctions on renowned hackers Yevgeny Bogachyov and Alexei Belan for their alleged role in cooperating with the GRU, Russian military intelligence, to target the DNC.

Andrei Soldatov, who has studied the Russian security services and the internet for years, said the Moscow arrests clearly pointed to intelligence officers and criminal hackers working together to hack the Democrats.

Dokuchayev, one of the FSB officers reportedly accused of treason, has been identified by Russia media

as a hacker known as "Forb," who also worked for Hacker magazine in the 2000s before apparently joining the FSB.

In a 2004 interview with the newspaper Vedomosti, Forb described how he made money from credit card fraud and boasted of hacking U.S. government websites.

In 2011, Forb was listed as an editor at Hacker. Three of his colleagues contacted by the AP declined to comment on whether he had links with the FSB.

Speaker defends Trump's order, warns of protests

By ERICA WERNER, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Paul Ryan on Tuesday defended President Donald Trump's divisive executive order on refugees and immigration, arguing that while the rollout was bumpy, the policy is consistent with Republican principles.

"The president has a responsibility to the security of this country," Ryan told reporters.

Even though GOP congressional leadership was frozen out of the drafting of the order, Ryan told rank-and-file Republicans that he backed the decision to stop the U.S. refugee program and ban all entries from seven Muslim-majority nations for 90 days.

The action triggered mass confusion and chaos worldwide, split families and set off protests at airports across the country.

In the aftermath, Ryan told the GOP that the "rollout was a little bumpy, been a few potholes in the road but the actual policy he agreed with," Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tenn., said.

The speaker did warn lawmakers to expect protests in their districts and possible backlash.

Rep. Dennis Ross, R-Fla., said Ryan stressed that the order is similar to legislation Republicans have backed in the past.

"We're looking at eight years of a legacy that we're essentially undoing," Ross said.

Said Rep. Chris Collins, R-N.Y.: "The speaker was very out in front today reminding our conference this is something we should be embracing."

Top congressional leaders of Trump's party were left to find out the same way the general public did: from news reports as Trump signed the order.

"I guess one of you guys probably told me about it. Thank you for that," Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., who chairs the Foreign Relations Committee, told reporters Monday.

Then, as lawmakers struggled to gather details for constituents about the temporary halt to all refugee admissions, as well as a travel and immigration ban for those coming from seven Muslim-majority nations, at least one prominent GOP senator was told that the State Department had been instructed not to communicate with Congress.

"There's not a lot of answers as of today. In fact my staff was told the State Department as of today was ordered not to talk to Congress about this issue," said Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida. "That cannot be a permanent position, we expect answers here fairly soon."

Next followed the surprising news, first reported by Politico, that the administration's repeated claims that Hill Republicans were involved in drafting the executive order apparently referred to staffers on the House Judiciary Committee who acted without the knowledge of GOP leadership.

Each new revelation set off alarm bells on Capitol Hill where Republicans, eager to give Trump the benefit of the doubt barely a week into his presidency, are confronting repeated bouts of chaos of the administration's own making. The failure to consult with lawmakers ahead of time on the immigration executive order set the stage for high-profile Republicans to criticize the measure once it started attracting widespread controversy — and so they did, though House Speaker Paul Ryan and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell have remained largely supportive.

And the administration's decision to make a major foreign policy move with no notice to Congress raised questions about how well the Trump White House will work with Capitol Hill to push through a massive legislative agenda that includes repealing and replacing Barack Obama's health care law, overhauling the

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 50 of 51

tax code and building a border wall. Although many Republicans remained optimistic that the failures amounted to growing pains for the new administration, congressional relations under the Trump administration seemed to be off to a sour start.

"I think they understand, let me put it that way, that this was not handled in the most productive manner," Corker said. "My guess is next time they attempt to do something that is far-reaching like this there'll be a lot more communication."

Trump's order pauses America's entire refugee program and indefinitely bans all those from war-ravaged Syria. Federal judges in New York and several other states issued orders that temporarily block the government from deporting people with valid visas who arrived after Trump's travel ban took effect. Trump fired the Justice Department's acting attorney general Monday after she refused to defend the order in court, replacing her with someone who would.

Throughout the day Monday, as confusion continued at home and abroad over the scope and implementation of the order, White House officials led by press secretary Sean Spicer insisted that Hill Republicans were involved in drafting the order and were aware of it beforehand. Yet top aides to House GOP leaders repeatedly disputed that assertion, leaving it unclear what Spicer was talking about.

Finally late Monday, confirming some details of a report in Politico, the House Judiciary Committee said that some staff members had been "permitted" to lend their expertise on immigration to the Trump transition team. Yet leadership was not aware, and earlier in the day committee officials had said that the panel's chairman, Rep. Bob Goodlatte of Virginia, was not consulted on drafting the executive order, so the staff effort appeared to take place behind the backs of top House Republicans, an unusual circumstance.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Feb. 1, the 32nd day of 2017. There are 333 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 1, 1942, during World War II, the Voice of America broadcast its first program to Europe, relaying it through the facilities of the British Broadcasting Corp. in London.

On this date:

In 1790, the U.S. Supreme Court convened for the first time in New York. (However, since only three of the six justices were present, the court recessed until the next day.)

In 1865, during the Civil War, Union forces led by Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman began the Carolinas Campaign as they invaded South Carolina. Abolitionist John S. Rock became the first black lawyer admitted to the bar of the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1922, in one of Hollywood's most enduring mysteries, movie director William Desmond Taylor was shot to death in his Los Angeles home; the killing has never been solved.

In 1943, one of America's most highly decorated military units, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, made up almost exclusively of Japanese-Americans, was authorized.

In 1946, Norwegian statesman Trygve Lie (TRIHG'-vuh lee) was chosen to be the first secretary-general of the United Nations.

In 1959, men in Switzerland rejected giving women the right to vote by a more than 2-1 referendum margin. (Swiss women gained the right to vote in 1971.)

In 1960, four black college students began a sit-in protest at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, where they'd been refused service.

In 1968, during the Vietnam War, South Vietnam's police chief (Nguyen Ngoc Loan) executed a Viet Cong officer with a pistol shot to the head in a scene captured by news photographers. Richard M. Nixon announced his bid for the Republican presidential nomination.

In 1979, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (hoh-MAY'-nee) received a tumultuous welcome in Tehran as he ended nearly 15 years of exile.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, Feb. 01, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 207 ~ 51 of 51

In 1982, "Late Night with David Letterman" premiered on NBC (airing at 11:35 p.m. Central time, 12:35 a.m. Feb. 2 in the Eastern time zone).

In 1992, Ron Carey was sworn in as the first Teamsters president elected by the union's rank-and-file. Federal judge Irving R. Kaufman, who sentenced Julius and Ethel Rosenberg to death, died in New York at age 81.

In 2003, the space shuttle Columbia broke up during re-entry, killing all seven of its crew members.

Ten years ago: The departing top U.S. commander in Iraq, Gen. George Casey, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that improving security in Baghdad would take fewer than half as many extra troops as President George W. Bush had chosen to commit. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (ah-muh-DEE'-neh-zahd) launched anniversary celebrations for Iran's Islamic Revolution with a defiant promise to push ahead with the country's controversial nuclear program. Pulitzer Prize-winning opera composer Gian Carlo Menotti died in Monaco at age 95.

Five years ago: Facebook, the Internet social network, announced plans to go public with a stock offering. A Southern California woman who filed a small-claims action against Honda won her lawsuit when a judge ruled that the automaker had misled her about the potential fuel economy of her hybrid car. (However, another judge overturned the nearly \$10,000 small claims judgment in May 2012.) In Port Said (sy-EED'), Egypt, 74 people were killed after soccer fans rushed the field following an upset victory by the home team over Egypt's top club. Don Cornelius, 74, creator of "Soul Train," died in Los Angeles of an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound. Boxing trainer Angelo Dundee died in Tampa, Florida, at age 90.

One year ago: Texas Sen. Ted Cruz swept to victory in Iowa's Republican caucuses, overcoming billionaire Donald Trump and a stronger-than-expected showing by Florida Sen. Marco Rubio; among Democrats, Bernie Sanders rode a wave of voter enthusiasm to a virtual tie with Hillary Clinton. The World Health Organization declared a global emergency over the explosive spread of the Zika (ZEE'-kuh) virus, which was linked to birth defects in the Americas, calling it an "extraordinary event" that posed a public health threat to other parts of the world.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Stuart Whitman is 89. Folk singer Bob Shane (The Kingston Trio) is 83. Singer Don Everly is 80. Actor Garrett Morris is 80. Singer Ray Sawyer (Dr. Hook and the Medicine Show) is 80. Bluegrass singer Del McCoury is 78. TV personality-singer Joy Philbin is 76. Comedian-actor-director Terry Jones is 75. Political commentator Fred Barnes is 74. Sen. Mike Enzi, R-Wyo., is 73. Opera singer Carol Neblett is 71. Rock musician Mike Campbell (Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers) is 67. Blues singer-musician Sonny Landreth is 66. Actor-writer-producer Bill Mumy (MOO'-mee) is 63. Rock singer Exene Cervenka is 61. Actor Linus Roache is 53. Princess Stephanie of Monaco is 52. Country musician Dwayne Dupuy (Ricochet) is 52. Actress Sherilyn Fenn is 52. Lisa Marie Presley is 49. Comedian-actor Pauly Shore is 49. Actor Brian Krause is 48. Jazz musician Joshua Redman is 48. Rock musician Patrick Wilson (Weezer) is 48. Actor Michael C. Hall is 46. Rock musician Ron Welty is 46. Rapper Big Boi (Outkast) is 42. Roots rocker Jason Isbell is 38. Country singer Julie Roberts is 38. Actor Jarrett Lennon is 35. Rock singer-musician Andrew VanWyngarden is 34. TV personality Lauren Conrad is 31. Actress-singer Heather Morris is 30. Actress and mixed martial artist Ronda Rousey is 30. Rock singer Harry Styles (One Direction) is 23.

Thought for Today: "Happiness is a by-product. You cannot pursue it by itself." — Sam Levenson, American humorist (1911-1980).