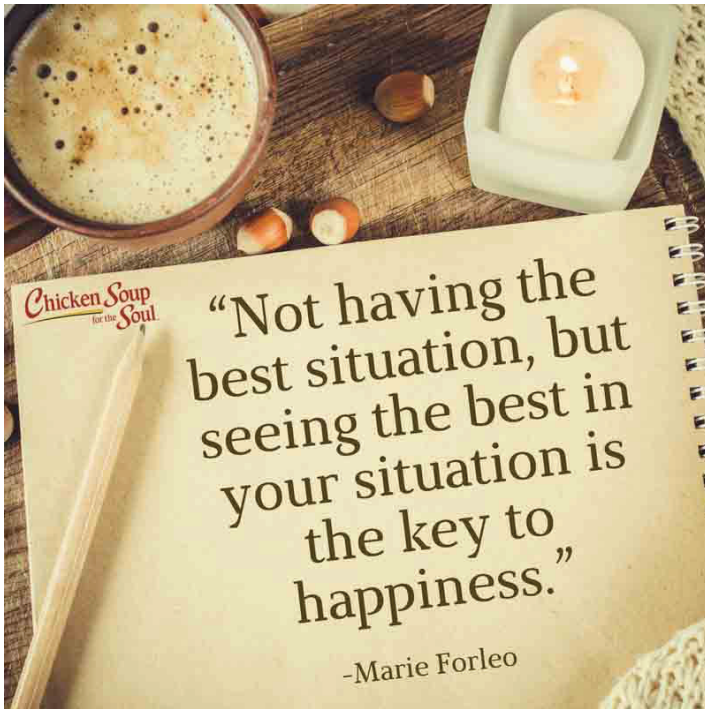


Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 1 of 31



- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 1- Dakota Tree Ad
- 2- Groton Care & Rehab Help Wanted Ad
- 2- World of Experience
- 3- Farmers Union PSA
- 3- Career Highs for Ristau and Tappe Lead #19
- Wolves over Golden Bears
- 4- Sen. Rounds' Weekly Column
- 5- Rev. Snyder's Column
- 6- Silver Skates Ad
- 7- Four Wolves Score in Double-Figures in 12th
- Straight Victory
- 8- SDHDA Introduces New Program
- 9- Today in Weather History
- 10- Today's Forecast
- 11- Yesterday's Weather
- 11- Today's Weather Info
- 11- National Weather Map
- 12- Daily Devotional
- 13- 2018 Community Events
- 14- News from the Associated Press

Removal, Grinding, Chipping, Trimming

605-725-WOOD

Mason Dinger: 605-216-6098

Trevor Zeck: 605-216-8910



Job Opening

Sun Dial Manor in Bristol is accepting applications for a Full or Part time Cook/Dietary Tech. Hours Vary. Sign-on Bonus available.

Please contact Mandy at 605-492-3615 or P.O. Box 337, Bristol, SD 57219 for more information.

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**

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 2 of 31



Okay, now it's getting a little chilly outside. It was so chilly that the moon laid an egg. Well, not quite, but if you were up this morning, the moon was in the shape of an egg before it set in the west. I tried taking a picture with my phone, but images like that don't come through very well.

Oh yes, Happy New Year's Eve. The last day of 2017. It's also our anniversary. This anniversary, Tina has to put up with my injury. I guess the marriage vows of "for better or for worse" are true, but I will say we have had more "for better" times. God has blessed me with a wonderful family.

Yesterday, Tina had it planned out that I was not going anywhere. I ended up being home bound and "Home Alone." She had Julianna take the car to work so I had no transportation. She probably thought I would attempt to take the car and go downtown. Well, she was right. I would have.

I must have slept too much yesterday. I ended up getting up at 2:30 this morning and decided to shave, then went back to bed. Kind of odd timing. After the paper route, I took a shower and am ready for church. We'll be heading over to Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church. I guess it sounds like they're planning for some games and activities as well today. One thing I will say - I'm sure glad they took my advice about installed a timed thermostat. Now when we get over there, the church is nice an warm.

We'll have to be back to Groton before 4 p.m. as Tina works tonight. The Dairy Queen will now be closing at 7:30 p.m. on Sundays for the rest of the winter.

NEW SIGN-ON BONUSES!

★ ★ ★ \$1,500 for CNAs ★ ★ ★

★ ★ ★ \$3,000 for LPNs ★ ★ ★

★ ★ ★ \$4,500 for RNs ★ ★ ★

Alzheimer's Care Unit Director

Medication Aid

Contact Brynn Pickrel or Nellie Hatfield at 605-397-2365
or apply in person.



GROTON
CARE & REHABILITATION CENTER

1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton

Career Highs for Ristau and Tappe Lead #19 Wolves over Golden Bears

St. Paul, Minn. – The No. 19 Northern State University women's basketball team bounced back in league action, defeating Concordia-St. Paul 86-71. The Wolves improved to 10-2 overall and 6-1 in the NSIC, following their first cross divisional game of the season.

The Wolves out-scored the Golden Bears in each of the four quarters, notching a game high 24 points in the second. They tallied their largest lead of 20 points, with just three minutes remaining in the third quarter. Northern shot 50.0 percent from the floor and the arc, as well as 86.4 percent from the foul line in the win.

Northern more than doubled Concordia's rebound total in the game, notching 46 boards to the Golden Bears 22, including 15 offensive grabs. The Wolves added 44 points in the paint, 12 points off turnovers, 12 points off the bench, and nine second chance points. Northern added 19 points from the foul line, going 11-of-12 in the second half. Defensively, NSU forced ten turnovers and tallied seven team blocks.

Miranda Ristau led the team matching her career high of 29 points. The senior went 12-of-21 from the floor and 5-of-6 from the charity stripe, while adding seven rebounds, and a team leading six assists and five blocks. Alexis Tappe was second on the team with a career high 17 points, shooting 80.0 percent from the floor. Tappe tallied six rebounds and five assists, while notching one of the team's three made 3-pointers.

Jill Conrad rounded out the double digit scorers for the Wolves notching her first double-double of the season with ten points and ten rebounds. She tallied three assists and one block as well. Brianna Kusler and Jessi Marti each notched nine points and four assists in the win, as Kusler was second on the team with nine rebounds.

Gabby Laimer and Haley Froelich led the team off the bench with three points apiece, notching one and two assists respectively. Brynn Flakus, Sara Tvedt, and Alayna Johnson added the final team points for NSU, notching two each.

The Wolves return to action tomorrow afternoon for a 2 p.m. match-up against the Mavericks of Minnesota State on New Year's Eve.



All auto owners!
Save \$2-\$4 /tank
& grow your local economy
by choosing low carbon
Super Premium E30's
94 octane, more power,
same mileage, fewer
carbon deposits, lower
maintenance costs,
slashed benzene & related
genotoxic, carcinogenic
tailpipe emissions;
*see sdfu.org's E30 tab for
info, E30 prices/locations.

***Farmers Union's
PSA: Courtesy Merle
Anderson (Merle is 94
year old founder of Ace
and legendary ethanol
supporter... "because it is
the right thing to do")**

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 4 of 31



2018 Brings us a Year Closer to America's 250th Birthday

Over the past three years, many of you have heard me talk about what we want our country to look like in 2026, the year we celebrate America's 250th birthday. I've said time and again that we must get away from the centralized, overregulated system of government that has stifled economic growth. In the past year, we've made great strides in getting back on track to a freer, less intrusive government.

Just before Christmas, President Trump signed historic tax relief legislation into law, the first major overhaul of our tax code in more than 30 years. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which takes effect immediately, will lead to more jobs and bigger paychecks for hardworking families. Additionally, lowering the corporate tax rate for American businesses will put them on a level playing field with the rest of the world, and allow them to be more competitive in the global marketplace, keeping jobs and income here at home.

In 2017, we were also able to undo a number of burdensome federal regulations. We were able to undo 15 Obama-era regulations under the Congressional Review Act, saving taxpayers \$36 billion and more than 4 million hours of paperwork. The Trump administration has also withdrawn or reconsidered close to 900 ineffective and duplicative regulations. Some of these regulations include the Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule, the Clean Power Plan, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) power grab rule and retirement plan rules. Each of these 'Washington-knows-best' rules would have led to more paperwork, more government intrusion and less freedom for the American people.

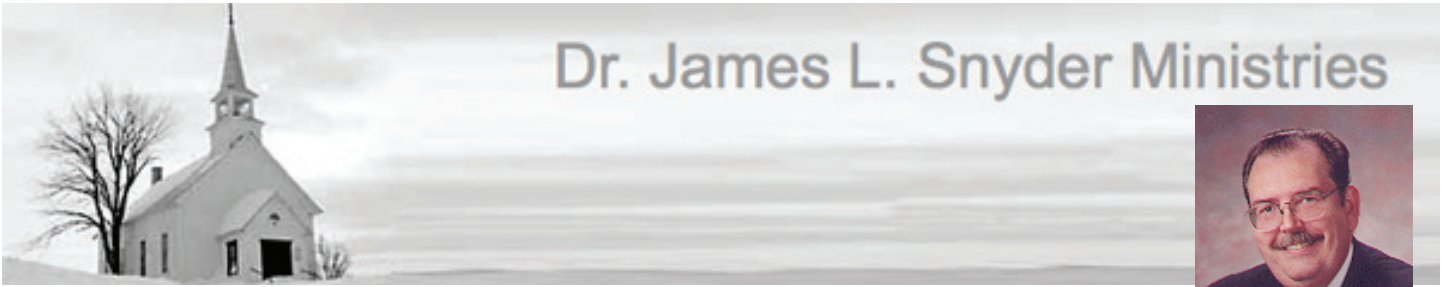
In the Senate Banking Committee, we made progress this year on bipartisan legislation to provide relief to our financial institutions. Our bill, which includes six provisions I offered, will improve our nation's financial regulatory framework by rolling back some of Dodd-Frank's one-size-fits-all regulations. In doing so, our bill will help assure that South Dakota families and businesses have access to credit when they need it. This is critical as we work to grow a healthy American economy.

Our armed forces also received a much-needed boost. After years of underfunding, our military received additional resources for the second year in a row, allowing our military leaders to take necessary steps to regain the required level of readiness. I'm also pleased to report that the National Defense Authorization Act, the annual bill that specifies where funds should be spent, included eight of my provisions that will help our armed forces accomplish their missions and take care of our troops and their families.

With 2018 upon us, we are just eight years away from our 250th birthday. In 2017, we made significant steps toward a freer, less intrusive government that will help keep us safe and grow our economy. While we should be proud of the progress made, we will continue to work on the important issues that will shape our birthday celebration in 2026 and provide a stronger, healthier economy that we can pass onto future generations.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 5 of 31



As The Old Year Fades, So Does My Memory

Memory is a very tricky thing, at least for me it is. Looking back over a year's span of activity, my memory seems to pick and choose what it remembers. After all, I do not have the brain capacity I once had.

Often some old-timer will moan about how much he misses the good old days. I am not sure if he is thinking of World War II or the Great Depression. I am positive that during the Great Depression, some wonderful memories were created, but I am not sure anyone wants to return to those thrilling days of yesterday.

The bad was not as bad as we remember and the good not as good as we boast.

Some things are best forgotten, while some things should never be forgotten; my trouble has always been remembering which is which.

Several things about the old year bear serious consideration. The past year, in my opinion, was not just one year, but several years flowing together. Sometimes I am not sure which year I lived.

This past year, like all its brothers before it, actually consisted of three years.

First, there is the year that really was. "Just the facts, ma'am."

I am a little fuzzy about this one. For one thing, looking at my checkbook entries (at least the ones I remembered to enter) the past year was a completely different one than I recall.

I really do not recollect having all the fun suggested by my bank statement. Why is it no matter how much money I put into my bank account, more money comes out? It is a Ponzi scheme in reverse.

Evidently, some phantom creature has access to my checkbook.

President Ronald Reagan was accused of voodoo economics. Reviewing my bank statements, I could be accused of "Who-do" economics. If I ever find that "Who-Do" rascal, I will balance my checkbook on the top of his head.

My income tax statement is another perplexity. I can never figure it out either. If the government said I made that much money, I must have made that much money and owe that much in taxes.

Speaking of the government, what I do not understand is how they know how much I owe, to the penny, along with millions of other Americans?

Second, there is the year I remember.

This year is much shorter than the previous one, for some odd reason. The year I remember had only two months; this month and last month. And believe me, "last month" is a stretch for me.

Honestly, I remember paying the electric bill, contrary to what the electric company says. My problem with the electric company is that during the space of a year they send me 12 bills and I can only remember two. Let's just split the difference.

They penalize me for screwing up, but they do not credit my account when they screw up — like being without electricity for four days — twice this past year. Oh, that I remember, and remember well. In fact, if my memory serves me correctly, it was more like 90 days.

I remember deducting the monthly service charges from my bank each and every month. Well, maybe not "each and every" month. Why those three checks bounced is beyond my comprehension.

Should the bank charge a larger fee for a bounced check than the face value of the check? I personally do not think so. Isn't it the bank's business to keep their records straight? Why do I have to spend so

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 6 of 31

much time each month on my checkbook account?

Last, but certainly not least, is the year the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage remembers.

At times, I am tempted to think (at least it's what I call thinking) my wife lives one life and I live something altogether different from hers. The things she remembers that took place during the year are beyond my remembering.

I am beginning to believe she remembers things that never took place. Of course, and I say this with all sincerity, I would never contradict her memory.

For the life of me, I do not know where I was when all these things happened she says happened. Nor do I know where I was when I promised to do all those things she said I promised.

Even in my right mind, (of which I do not have much left) I would never concede to help remodel the family room. I would never accuse her, heaven forbid, of taking advantage of me in this area. The thought is not a stranger in my head, although rational thoughts are.

King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, framed his thoughts this way, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Ecclesiastes 12:1).

Solomon's idea was, "now" is more important than "then."

The Apostle Paul had the right idea with this matter of remembering. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).

It is not important how much I can remember about the past, as long as I do not forget to set Christ before me in all I do in the coming year.



The Carnival of Silver Skates theme for January 2018 is
"80 Years of Memories".

We would like to honor the former skaters who have
passed away.

Please contact Tina at the Groton Independent at 397-6397 or
email her at tina@grotonsd.net to share the name of someone you
would like remembered at this year's carnival.

Thank you for helping us to honor those who started this great
community tradition.

Four Wolves Score in Double-Figures in 12th Straight Victory

St. Paul, Minn. – The No. 13 Northern State University men's basketball team defeated Concordia-St. Paul, 84-71, in a full team effort with four scoring in double figures. The Wolves improve to 13-1 overall and 7-0 in the NSIC, currently on a 12-game win streak.

The Wolves led by as much as 26 just five minutes into the second half, after a 48-28 lead through the first 20 minutes. The Golden Bears were unable to stifle the NSU offense as their only lead, of one point, came at the 15-minute mark in the first. The win marks the 11th double figure victory for the Wolves this season, and fifth straight.

Northern shot 49.1 percent from the floor, 43.5 percent from the arc, and 81.8 percent from the foul line in the game. They forced 16 Golden Bear turnovers, which resulted in 17 points. CSP just edged NSU in rebounds at 33-to-31, however the Wolves tallied 11 points off nine offensive boards. Northern added 36 points in the paint, 12 points off the bench, and eight fast break points in the win.

Darin Peterka led the team with 25 points, shooting 50.0 percent from both the floor and the 3-point line. He added three assists, two steals, one rebound, and one block in the win. Ian Smith was second on the team notching his first double-double of the season with 14 points and ten rebounds. Smith also added a team leading six assists and three steals, while shooting 50.0 percent from the floor.

DJ Pollard and Gabe King added 13 and 12 points respectively. Pollard shot 62.5 percent from the floor and added three rebounds and two steals, while King knocked down a team leading four made 3-pointers and four blocks. Logan Doyle added eight points and six rebounds, adding four assists, two blocks, and two steals.

Andrew Kallman led the team off the bench with five points, followed by Carter Evans and Bo Fries with four and three respectively. Evans was second on the team with five assists, while adding four rebounds and one steal.

The Wolves will travel to Mankato tomorrow for a 4 p.m. match-up with the Mavericks of Minnesota State on New Year's Eve.

SDHDA Introduces New Program For Recent Graduate Homebuying Assistance

PIERRE, S.D. (12/29/17) – South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard announced today that South Dakota Housing Development Authority (SDHDA) has launched a brand new program aimed at assisting postsecondary graduates in purchasing a first home in South Dakota.

The “Grants for Grads” program will launch Jan. 2, 2018, and will be open to first-time homebuyers who:

- Meet certain income requirements
- Are purchasing a primary residence in-state
- Have not owned a home in the past three years
- Select a home with a purchase price of \$250,200 or less
- Have earned a degree from an accredited postsecondary educational facility within the past 60 months.

“Graduates now have more incentive than ever to remain or return to South Dakota and purchase their home,” Gov. Dennis Daugaard said. “This program provides an opportunity to assist recent graduates become first-time homebuyers that may have other financial obligations with student loans.”

SDHDA plans to offer this program for a limited time through participating lenders, with per-beneficiary assistance at five percent of the loan amount. In order to apply for the program, participants must contact a lender to set an appointment.

View “Grants for Graduates” participating lenders here: <http://www.sdhda.org/homeownership/first-time-homebuyer/lender-list.html>

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 9 of 31

Today in Weather History

December 31, 1972: A winter system visited the area on the 29th through the 31st, with precipitation beginning as rain in South Dakota during the early morning hours of the 29th. A period of freezing rain had occurred across South Dakota before the precipitation there changed to all snow, while in west central Minnesota snow in the morning turned to a period of freezing rain and sleet in the afternoon. Damages from the 40-mile wide ice storm from the Wheaton-Morris-Appleton area ENE through St. Cloud and Pine City, MN were some of the largest known to date across the area. Thousands of farms and homes across the ice storm strip were without power and telephone service as the result of thousands of broken lines and broken poles. Many were without utilities from one to three days, and a few without utilities for nearly a week. Utility damages were estimated to be 1.5 million dollars. In South Dakota, snowfall of 2 to 6 inches was common. Strong winds of over 40 mph accompanied the snow, causing drifting and blowing snow and occasionally reducing visibility to zero. Some of the roads were blocked. The most severe conditions occurred on the 30th when the highway department advised no traveling.

December 31, 2010: A second stronger surface low-pressure area moved across the region on New Year's Eve bringing widespread heavy snowfall along with blizzard conditions. Bitter cold northwest winds of 25 to 40 mph combined with additional snowfall of 6 to 10 inches brought visibilities to near zero across much of the region. This storm was the second blizzard in two days across the area. The blizzard conditions continued into early New Year's Day. Both Interstates 29 and 90 were closed from the 31st until Sunday, January 2nd. There were several stranded motorists along Highway 83 with five people being rescued. The total snowfall amounts from the two storms ranged from 6 to 15 inches across the region. The two-day snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Eagle Butte; 7 inches at Doland; 8 inches at Mobridge and Gann Valley; 9 inches at Castlewood; 10 inches at Murdo, Clark, Ipswich, Kennebec, and Watertown and 11 inches at Clear Lake and Bryant. Locations with a foot or more of snow included 12 inches at Aberdeen, Gettysburg, Highmore, Milbank, Mission Ridge, and Bowdle; 13 inches at Eureka, Pierre, Onida, and Blunt; 14 inches at Mellette, Sisseton, Victor, and Roscoe with 15 inches at Britton, Webster, and Redfield. The snowfall began between 6 am and noon CST on the 31st and ended between 4 am and 11 am CST on January 1st.

December 31, 1890: According to the National Meteorological Library and Archive from the United Kingdom, during the month of December 1890, Westminster, England saw zero hours of sunshine. Click [HERE](#) to read more Weather Extremes.

1926 - A hurricane came inland near Daytona Beach, FL. The hurricane caused 2.5 million dollars damage in eastern Florida, including the Jacksonville area. (David Ludlum)

December 31, 1933: During the last week of December, a series of winter storms pounded the mountainside with 12 inches of rain near Los Angeles. More rain occurred on New Year's Eve, including 4.86 inches in downtown Los Angeles. The 4.86 inches is currently the fourth most rainfall to occur in one day in downtown Los Angeles since 1877. Around midnight, hillsides in at least three mountain locations collapsed sending millions of tons of mud and debris into the Crescenta Valley neighborhoods below. Crescenta Valley is a few miles north of Los Angeles. This mudslide destroyed more than 400 homes. Following the disaster, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the County of Los Angeles built a flood control system of catch basins and concrete storm drains, designed to prevent a repeat of the 1934 disaster.








1939 - The temperature at Lewiston, ID, hit 117 degrees to establish an all-time record high for that location. (The Weather Channel)

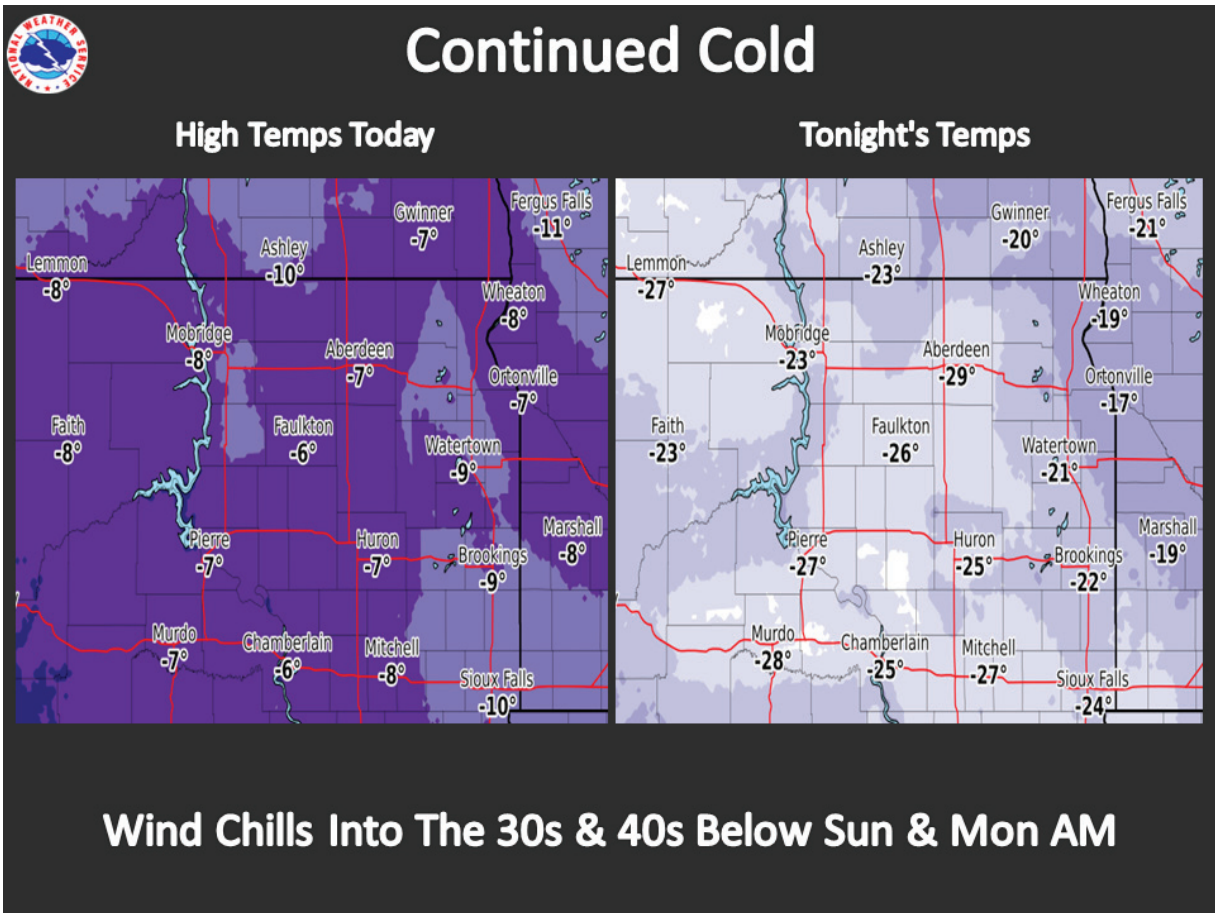
1943 - On a whim, and flying a single engine AT-6, Lieutenant Ralph O'Hair and Colonel Duckworth were the first to fly into a hurricane. It started regular Air Force flights into hurricanes. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in Minnesota spawned a tornado which moved in a southwesterly direction for a distance of thirty miles across Rice County and Goodhue County. Trees were uprooted and tossed about like toys, and a horse lifted by the tornado was observed sailing horizontally through the air. Thunderstorms drenched La Crosse, WI, with 5.26 inches of rain, their second highest 24 hour total of record. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 10 of 31

Today	Tonight	New Year's Day	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
						
Cold	Clear	Cold	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Cold
High: -7 °F	Low: -27 °F	High: 0 °F	Low: -20 °F	High: 17 °F	Low: 0 °F	High: 6 °F



Temperatures will struggle to reach the single digits below zero today after a very cold start, and readings could be even colder for Monday morning. A warming trend is expected this week however, though only to back around average for this time of year.

Groton Daily Independent

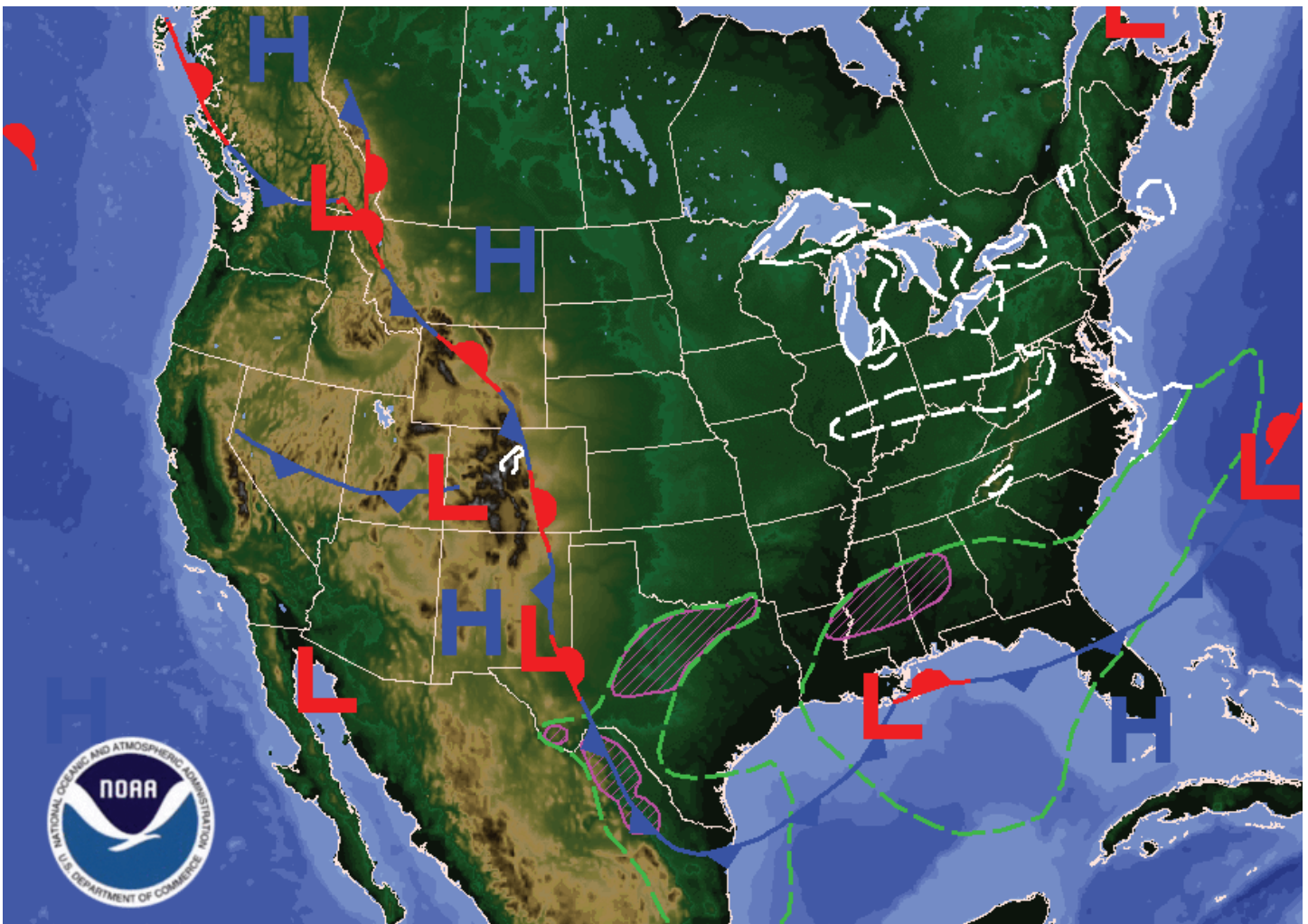
Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 11 of 31

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: -8.8
Low Outside Temp: -19.4
This morning: -27.6
High Gust: 22
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 47° in 1999
Record Low: -39° in 1967
Average High: 23°F
Average Low: 2°F
Average Precip in Dec: 0.52
Precip to date in Dec: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 21.72
Precip Year to Date: 13.47
Sunset Tonight: 5:00 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:13 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sun, Dec 31, 2017, issued 3:50 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Tate with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain
Rain and T'Storms
Rain and Snow
Snow
Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)
Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)
Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)
Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 12 of 31



LOOKING FOR GOD IN 2018

"You chart the path ahead of me and tell me when to stop and rest. Every moment you know where I am." Psalm 139:3

"The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you." Psalm 32:8

"Because of Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for He chose us from the beginning and all things happen just as He decided years ago." Ephesians 1:11

"The Lord will work out His plans for my life – for Your faithful love, O Lord, endures forever. Don't abandon me, for You made me!" Psalm 138:8

"Seek His will in all you do and He will direct your paths." Proverbs 3:6

Prayer: Grant us wisdom, give us faith, increase our trust and watch over us each day, Father, as we seek Your plan for our lives. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 139:3; Psalm 32:8; Ephesians 1:11; Psalm 138:8; Proverbs 3:6

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 13 of 31

2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- 11/18/2017-3/31/2018 Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/28/2018 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 3/24/2018 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 5/5/2018 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/28/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program at the Cemetery, Lunch to follow at the American Legion (Memorial Day)
- 6/14/2018 Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- 6/15/2018 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 6/16/2018 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2018 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/22/2018 Summer Fest (4th Sunday in July)
- 9/8/2018 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/6/2018 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/12/2018 Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2018 Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/10/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)

- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 14 of 31

News from the  Associated Press

Saturday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Castlewood 66, Chester 36
Breckenridge, Minn. 62, Milbank 51
Colome 51, Wessington Springs 21
Dell Rapids St. Mary 64, Elkton-Lake Benton 49
Deubrook 57, Garretson 32
Flandreau 62, Arlington 45
Hamlin 57, Colman-Egan 45
Harrisburg 57, Watertown 37
Ipswich 38, Waubay/Summit 29
Langford 71, Dawson-Boyd, Minn. 53
Sioux Falls Lincoln 68, Marshall, Minn. 60
Chadron Tournament
Third Place
Hemingford, Neb. 59, Custer 41
Huron Holiday Classic
James Valley Christian 56, Gayville-Volin 49
Leola/Frederick 56, Ethan 55
Lyman 66, Hitchcock-Tulare 58
Miller 58, Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 55
Rapid City Christian 61, Faulkton 37
Mike Miller Classic
Prior Lake, Minn. 65, Sioux Falls Washington 53
Tea Area 73, Bridgewater-Emery 39
Wauwatosa West, Wis. 53, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 45
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS
Chamberlain vs. Lennox, ppd.
Beresford vs. Parker, ppd. to Jan 20.

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 51, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 41
Harrisburg 54, Watertown 32
Waubay/Summit 41, Ipswich 38
Wessington Springs 52, Colome 46
Chadron Tournament (Invite)
Custer 54, Chadron, Neb. 43
Mike Miller Classic
Aberdeen Central 51, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 41
Mike Miller Classic
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 58, DeLaSalle, Minn. 53
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS
Parker vs. Beresford, ppd. to Jan 20.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 15 of 31

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Saturday:

Dakota Cash

14-15-17-23-25

(fourteen, fifteen, seventeen, twenty-three, twenty-five)

Estimated jackpot: \$62,000

Lotto America

04-07-10-14-17, Star Ball: 9, ASB: 2

(four, seven, ten, fourteen, seventeen; Star Ball: nine; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$17.46 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$343 million

Powerball

28-36-41-51-58, Powerball: 24, Power Play: 2

(twenty-eight, thirty-six, forty-one, fifty-one, fifty-eight; Powerball: twenty-four; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$384 million

Mooney sparks South Dakota past Denver 82-71

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Matt Mooney tossed in 20 points with six steals and South Dakota breezed to an 82-71 victory over Denver in a Summit League opener on Saturday.

Triston Simpson scored 17 for the Coyotes (13-4), who won for the sixth time in seven games. Reserve Tyler Peterson added 13 points and five rebounds, while Tyler Hagedorn scored 11 with five boards.

Mooney had 13 points on 5-of-7 shooting in the first half as South Dakota took a 45-33 lead into the break. The Coyotes shot 58 percent in the opening half, while the Pioneers (6-9) made just 13 of 33 shots (39 percent).

Ade Murkey's 3-point play pulled Denver within 56-50 early in the second half, but Peterson had six points in an 11-3 run and South Dakota never looked back.

Amigo finished with 17 points and eight rebounds for the Pioneers, while Jake Pemberton added 14 points and Murkey and Joe Rosga scored 12. Rosga added six assists.

S Dakota State sets points record in 111-68 win

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Mike Daum scored 24 points for his 42nd career 20-point game, David Jenkins Jr. added 18 points with five assists, and South Dakota State set a school points record in its 111-68 rout of NAIA Presentation College on Saturday.

Reed Tellinghuisen scored 17 points with three 3-pointers, Chris Howell added 15 points, and Ian Theisen had 11 for the Jackrabbits (12-5), who won their third straight and 13 straight at home. SDSU made 14 of 23 3-pointers (61 percent) and shot 64.5 percent overall.

Daum made his 460th career free-throw attempt for the fourth most in school history, surpassing Kent Hyde's 459 (1955-58).

Daum hit a hook shot and Jenkins' 3 capped the Jackrabbits' opening 14-6 run. Tellinghuisen scored two 3s and eight points amid a 13-0 run and the Jackrabbits led 59-30 at halftime after shooting 74 percent shooting from the floor and 8 of 10 from 3.

Daum hit a layup with 8:36 left and the Jackrabbits led by 45 points. It was Daum's 570th field goal,

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 16 of 31

tying Austin Hansen (1999-03) for the sixth most in school history.

Julius Jackson scored 13 points and Deiontay Walters had 11 for the Saints (6-10).

Revelers around the world ring in 2018, say bye to the old

By The Associated Press

A look at how people around the world are ringing in 2018:

AUSTRALIA

Fireworks lit up the sky above Sydney Harbour, highlighting the city's New Year's celebrations.

The massive fireworks display included a rainbow waterfall cascade of lights and color flowing off the harbor's bridge to celebrate recently passed legislation legalizing gay marriage in Australia.

Over a million people were expected to gather to watch the festivities. Security was tight, but officials said there was no particular alert.

Sydney officials said the event would generate some \$170 million for the city and "priceless publicity." Nearly half the revelers were tourists.

NEW ZEALAND

Tens of thousands of New Zealanders took to streets and beaches, becoming among the first in the world to usher in 2018.

As the new year dawned in this southern hemisphere nation, fireworks boomed and crackled above city centers and harbors, and party-goers sang, hugged, danced and kissed.

In Auckland, New Zealand's biggest city, tens of thousands gathered around Sky Tower as five minutes of nonstop pyrotechnics exploded from the top of the structure.

But on nearby Waiheke Island, 30 kilometers (20 miles) away, authorities canceled the planned fireworks display because of drought conditions and low water supplies for firefighters.

CHINA

Those willing to brave the cold in Beijing will join a countdown at the tower at Yongdingmen Gate, a rebuilt version of the Ming dynasty-era landmark gate at the southern end of the city's north-south axis.

Bells will be rung and prayers offered at temples in Beijing, but the Gregorian calendar's New Year's celebrations are typically muted in China compared to the Lunar New Year, or Spring Festival, a time of fireworks, feasts and family reunions.

Authorities throughout China are also on high alert for stampedes or terror attacks at large public gatherings. Police in the central city of Zhengzhou are putting 3,500 officers on duty across the city while residents gather to watch a light show and cultural performance in a public square.

The official Xinhua News Agency reported that President Xi Jinping sent a New Year's greeting to his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, saying Beijing is ready to boost cooperation with Russia in 2018.

JAPAN

Many Japanese are celebrating the arrival of the Year of the Dog in the traditional way of praying for peace and good fortune at neighborhood Shinto shrines, and eating New Year's food such as noodles, shrimp and sweet black beans.

Barbecued beef and octopus dumpling stalls were out at Tokyo's Zojoji Temple, where people take turns striking the giant bell 108 times at midnight, an annual practice repeated at other Buddhist temples throughout Japan.

North Korea's nuclear and missile programs cast a shadow over Japan's hopes for peace, said 33-year-old cab driver Masaru Eguchi, who was ready to be busy all night shuttling shrine visitors.

"The world situation has grown so complex," Eguchi said, adding that he also worried about possible terrorism targeting Japan. "I feel this very abstracted sense of uncertainty, although I really have no idea

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 17 of 31

what might happen.”

SOUTH KOREA

After spending an exhausting year that saw a presidency toppled by a corruption scandal and nuclear-armed North Korea firing missile after missile, South Koreans enter 2018 in need of a happy distraction. The upcoming winter Olympics just might do it.

Thousands of people are expected to fill the streets near Seoul’s City Hall for a traditional bell-tolling ceremony to usher in the new year. The group of dignitaries picked to ring the old Bosingak bell at midnight includes Soohorang and Bandabi — the tiger and bear mascots for the Pyeongchang Winter Games and Paralympics in February and March.

Tens of thousands of people are expected to flock to eastern coastal areas, including Gangneung, the seaside city that will host the Olympic skating and hockey events, to watch the sun rise on 2018.

INDIA

Security was tight in the southern Indian city of Bangalore to prevent a repeat of incidents of alleged groping and molestation of several women during last year’s New Year’s Eve celebrations.

Sunil Kumar, the city’s police commissioner, said at least 15,000 police officers were on duty and were being aided by drones and additional closed-circuit television cameras.

Last year, police first denied that any sexual harassment had taken place during the celebrations in Bangalore, India’s information technology hub. But later, police detained at least six men after several video clips of women being attacked by groups of men spread on social media.

PHILIPPINES

Hours before midnight, authorities had already reported that at least 86 people had been injured by celebratory firecrackers in the Philippines, which has some of the most raucous New Year’s celebrations in Asia.

Although the number of injuries has tapered off in recent years, largely due to hard economic times and government scare campaigns, the figures remain alarming. President Rodrigo Duterte signed an order in June confining the use of firecrackers to community-designated areas, such as near shopping malls and parks.

Many Filipinos, largely influenced by Chinese tradition, believe that noisy New Year’s celebrations drive away evil and misfortune. But they have carried that superstition to extremes, exploding dangerously large firecrackers and firing guns to welcome the new year despite threats of arrest.

TURKEY

Security measures were ramped up across Turkey, which was hit by a New Year’s attack a year ago that killed dozens.

In Istanbul alone, 37,000 officers were on duty, with multiple streets closed to traffic and large vehicles barred from entering certain districts. Several New Year’s Eve street parties were canceled for security reasons.

Early on Jan. 1, 2017, an assailant shot his way into Istanbul’s Reina nightclub, where hundreds were celebrating New Year’s. Thirty-nine people were killed — mostly foreigners — and 79 wounded. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility.

On Sunday, some 100 people gathered outside the nightclub to remember the victims of the attack.

ROMANIA

Romanians prepared to usher in a new year in which the focus is expected to be an anti-corruption fight as the government seeks to push through legislation that critics say will make it harder to punish high-level graft.

Television stations broadcast live from supermarkets full of last-minute shoppers, while beauty salons

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 18 of 31

reported full bookings as revelers geared up for traditional celebrations of copious meals that can run to hundreds of euros (dollars).

Others meditated and prayed at Orthodox churches and monasteries. In rural eastern Romania, villagers danced traditional pantomime-like jigs to welcome the new year, wrapping themselves in bear furs or dressing as horses.

In his New Year message, President Klaus Iohannis praised Romanians who staged the largest protests since the end of communism.

LAS VEGAS

Tens of thousands of revelers will ring in the new year in Las Vegas under the close eye of law enforcement just three months after the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history.

Tourism officials expect about 330,000 people to come to Las Vegas for the festivities, which are anchored by a roughly eight-minute fireworks display at the top of seven casino-hotels.

Acts including Bruno Mars, Britney Spears, Celine Dion and the Foo Fighters will keep partiers entertained before and after midnight at properties across Sin City.

The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department will have every officer working Sunday, while the Nevada National Guard is activating about 350 soldiers and airmen.

The federal government also is sending dozens of personnel to assist with intelligence and other efforts.

Supreme Court to take up Ohio's purges of inactive voters

By JULIE CARR SMYTH and MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — The Supreme Court will soon hear a case about Ohio's efforts to remove inactive voters from its rolls, which has become a flashpoint in a nationwide fight between Democrats and Republicans over access to the polls.

Democrats accuse Republicans of trying to suppress votes from minorities and poorer people who tend to vote Democratic. Republicans argue they are trying to promote ballot integrity and prevent voter fraud.

The issue in Ohio is whether those who fail to vote in a two-year period can be targeted for removal from registration rolls even if they haven't moved and remain eligible.

Only a handful of states use a process similar to Ohio's, but others could join in if the high court sides with the state.

The Supreme Court hears arguments on Jan. 10.

2 protesters in Iran killed as social media apps blocked

By AMIR VAHDAT and JON GAMBRELL, Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran on Sunday blocked access to Instagram and a popular messaging app used by activists to organize and publicize the protests now roiling the Islamic Republic, as authorities said two demonstrators had been killed overnight in the first deaths attributed to the rallies.

The demonstrations, which began Thursday over the economic woes plaguing Iran and continued Sunday, appear to be the largest to strike the Islamic Republic since the protests that followed the country's disputed 2009 presidential election.

They were fanned in part by messages sent on the Telegram messaging app, which authorities blocked Sunday along with the photo-sharing app Instagram, which is owned by tech giant Facebook.

Many in Iran are learning about the protests and sharing images of them through Telegram, a mobile phone messaging app popular among the country's 80 million people. On Saturday, Telegram shut down one channel on the service over Iranian allegations it encouraged violence, something its moderator denied.

On Sunday, Telegram CEO Pavel Durov wrote on Twitter that authorities had blocked access to the app. "Iranian authorities are blocking access to Telegram for the majority of Iranians after our public refusal to shut down ... peacefully protesting channels," he wrote.

Iran's state TV news website, iribnews.ir, quoted an anonymous source saying that social media in Iran

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 19 of 31

would be temporarily limited as a safety measure.

"With a decision by the Supreme National Security Council, activities of Telegram and Instagram are temporarily limited," the report said, without elaborating.

Facebook, based in Menlo Park, California, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Facebook itself has been banned in Iran since protests against the disputed 2009 re-election of hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. However, some in Iran access it and other banned websites using virtual private networks.

Meanwhile, authorities acknowledged the first fatalities in the protests in Doroud, a city some 325 kilometers (200 miles) southwest of Tehran in Iran's western Lorestan province. Protesters had gathered for an unauthorized rally that lasted into the night Saturday, said Habibollah Khojastepour, the security deputy of Lorestan's governor. The two protesters were killed in clashes at the rally, he said.

"The gathering was to be ended peacefully, but due to the presence of the (agitators), unfortunately, this happened," Khojastepour said.

He did not offer a cause of death for the two protesters, but said "no bullets were shot from police and security forces at the people."

Videos circulating on social media late Saturday appeared to show fallen protesters in Doroud as gunshots sounded in the background. The Associated Press could not immediately verify the footage.

Thousands have taken to the streets of cities across Iran, beginning on Thursday in Mashhad, the country's second-largest city and a holy site for Shiite pilgrims.

The protests in the Iranian capital, as well as President Donald Trump tweeting about them, raised the stakes. It also apparently forced state television to break its silence on Saturday, acknowledging it hadn't reported on the protests on orders from security officials.

Trump, whose travel bans blocked Iranians from getting U.S. visas, again tweeted about the protests Sunday.

"The people are finally getting wise as to how their money and wealth is being stolen and squandered on terrorism. Looks like they will not take it any longer," Trump wrote. "The USA is watching very closely for human rights violations!"

At least 50 protesters have been arrested since Thursday, authorities said Saturday. State TV said some protesters chanted the name of the U.S.-backed shah, who fled into exile just before Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution and later died.

On Sunday, the semi-official ILNA news agency reported that authorities have arrested some 80 protesters in the city of Arak, some 280 kilometers (173 miles) south of Tehran.

Iran's economy has improved since its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, which saw Iran limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the end of some international sanctions. Tehran now sells its oil on the global market and has signed deals to purchase tens of billions of dollars' worth of Western aircraft.

That improvement has not reached the average Iranian, however. Unemployment remains high, and official inflation has crept up to 10 percent again. A recent increase in egg and poultry prices by as much as 40 percent, which a government spokesman has blamed on a cull over avian flu fears, appears to have been the spark for the economic protests.

While the protests have sparked clashes, Iran's hard-line paramilitary Revolutionary Guard and its affiliates have not intervened as they have in other unauthorized demonstrations since the 2009 election.

Some analysts outside of Iran have suggested that may be because the economic protests initially just put pressure on the administration of President Hassan Rouhani, a relative moderate whose administration struck the nuclear deal.

Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 20 of 31

Hornibrook's 4 TDs carry Badgers over Miami, 34-24 in Orange

By **TIM REYNOLDS, AP Sports Writer**

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP) — Alex Hornibrook's first pass of the night was a wobbler, one that seemed to slip out of his hand.

Nearly everything else he threw was just about perfect.

Hornibrook threw four touchdown passes, three to Danny Davis, and No. 6 Wisconsin capped off the winningest season in school history by topping No. 11 Miami 34-24 in the Orange Bowl on Saturday night.

"We were pretty relaxed," Hornibrook said. "We knew we had what it takes to win this game."

Everyone does now.

And the Big Ten — shut out of the College Football Playoff after Wisconsin lost to Ohio State in the conference title game — moved to 7-0 in bowls this season.

"You play the whole season and you earn what you get and I'm proud of this team," Wisconsin coach Paul Chryst said. "They can call themselves Orange Bowl champions. That's pretty big."

Jonathan Taylor ran for 130 yards on 26 carries for the Badgers (13-1), who rallied from an early 14-3 deficit. Taylor finished the year with an FBS-freshman-record 1,977 yards. A.J. Taylor also had a scoring catch for Wisconsin.

"I take as much responsibility as anybody, actually more because I'm in charge of everything," Richt said. "I didn't coach good enough and we will get better. I can promise you that."

The Badgers dominated time of possession, holding the ball for nearly 40 minutes. Hornibrook completed 23 of 34 passes for 258 yards, going 20 for 25 in the final three quarters.

Travis Homer and DeeJay Dallas had rushing scores for Miami (10-3), which lost on its home field for the first time in 2017. Lawrence Cager had a touchdown catch for the Hurricanes, while quarterback Malik Rosier was 11 for 26 passing for 203 yards — with three interceptions.

The Hurricanes had a chance to get within a touchdown midway through the fourth, but Michael Badgley's chip-shot field goal went off the right upright. By the time Miami got the ball back, most of their fans were gone and only 1:37 remained. Rosier was picked off for the third time 18 seconds later, and the Badgers ran out the clock.

"They did a really good job making me throw balls into tight coverage," Rosier said.

Homer went in from 5 yards out to give Miami the early lead, and Dallas' 39-yard scamper for a score out of the wildcat formation pushed the Hurricanes' edge to 14-3 late in the first quarter.

Miami was rolling.

It was temporary.

Rosier's pass was intercepted by Wisconsin's Andrew Van Ginkel on the first play of the second quarter, and the game quickly changed. Hornibrook threw touchdown passes on three consecutive possessions — two to Davis, one to A.J. Taylor — and the Badgers held the ball for more than 11 minutes in that quarter alone on the way to taking a 24-14 lead into the half.

Richt was flagged for unsportsmanlike conduct just before the third of those scores, after losing his cool while arguing with officials about what replays showed was a missed holding call that would have pushed Wisconsin back. He grabbed at head linesman Gus Morris — part of the SEC crew on the game — while pleading his case, as Miami security personnel unsuccessfully tried to keep him calm.

"Apologies to anyone who can read lips," Richt said.

The Hurricanes got within three points twice in the second half, the first coming when Rosier bought some time and lobbed the ball to a wide-open Cager for a 38-yard score. Rosier tried to connect with Cager again later in the third, but got intercepted again on a play where the Hurricanes thought Cager got held as he neared the end zone.

Hornibrook and Davis connected on a scoring play for the third time with 7:44 left, the Badgers weren't threatened again, and started talking about a title run in 2018 right afterward.

"We're all coming back," Hornibrook said. "But nothing is going to happen if we don't put in the work."

BIG PICTURE

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 21 of 31

Wisconsin: Hornibrook became just the third Badgers quarterback in the last 15 years to have multiple games with at least four touchdown passes in the same season. Scott Tolzien had a pair of four-TD games in 2009, and Jim Sorgi had games of four and five TDs in consecutive weeks back in 2003. From 2012 through 2016, the Badgers never had a quarterback throw for four scores in a game.

Miami: The Hurricanes were on a four-game losing streak last season, then started what became a 15-game winning streak that ended in the regular-season finale against Pitt, and now will take a three-game slide into 2018. The four touchdown passes allowed matched the most allowed by Miami in any game since Oklahoma threw for six TDs in a 2007 romp over the Hurricanes.

ROSIER RECORD

Rosier's third-quarter touchdown pass to Cager was the 31st touchdown he's accounted for this season, a Miami single-season record. The previous mark was 30, set by Vinny Testaverde in 1986.

FAMILY TIES

Hornibrook is the great-nephew of former Miami quarterback John Hornibrook, who was under center for a memorable play in Hurricanes history. John Hornibrook ran in for a touchdown against Florida in 1971, on a play dubbed the Gator Flop — one where every Florida defender fell to the ground in order to let Miami score and get the ball back so Gators quarterback John Reaves could break the NCAA career passing record. The ploy worked.

UP NEXT

Wisconsin: Hosts Western Kentucky on Aug. 31.

Miami: Plays LSU in Arlington, Texas, on Sept. 1.

More AP college football: <http://collegefootball.ap.org> and http://www.twitter.com/AP_Top25

Brother-in-law of Martin Luther King Jr. dies at 83

ATLANTA (AP) — The brother-in-law of Martin Luther King Jr. and a founding member of The Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolent Social Change has died.

Isaac Newton Farris Sr., who suffered from prostate cancer and Parkinson's disease, died at his Atlanta home on Saturday morning, his daughter Angela Farris-Watkins told The Associated Press. He was 83.

Farris married Christine King in a ceremony performed by Martin Luther King Jr. and their brother A.D. King on Aug. 19, 1960.

"He wasn't caught up marrying into a prominent family," Farris-Watkins said by phone. "He was secure in his own right."

Farris was a successful entrepreneur and founder of Farris Color Visions. He also served a project manager for the construction of The King Center.

"Through all the tragedies and victories he helped build the King Center," Farris-Watkins said.

The center was founded by Martin Luther King's wife, Coretta Scott King.

Farris was also a deacon and trustee at the historic Ebenezer Baptist church where he was a member for over 60 years.

"He was such an integral part of our family who will be sorely missed," Farris-Watkins said.

In addition to his daughter, Farris is survived by his wife, Christine, his son Isaac Farris Jr., his granddaughter, Farris Watkins, his sister Gail Farris Joyce and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Funeral arrangements will be handled by Willie A. Watkins Funeral Home in Atlanta.

Erica Garner dies; fought police brutality after dad's death

NEW YORK (AP) — The daughter of key Black Lives Matter figure Eric Garner died Saturday after a weeklong hospital stay following a heart attack.

"She was a warrior to the end. She stood up for justice for her father," the Rev. Al Sharpton said in announcing the death of Garner, 27, at a New York hospital.

Garner's official Twitter account, run by her family and friends since she became ill, asked that she be

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 22 of 31

remembered as a mother, daughter, sister and aunt with a heart "bigger than the world."

In 2014, her father, Eric Garner, who was black, was stopped on Staten Island for selling untaxed cigarettes and died after a white police officer subdued him with a chokehold. A grand jury declined to indict the officer; the city agreed to pay a \$6 million civil settlement.

Garner's last words, "I can't breathe," became a slogan for activists.

Erica Garner became a voice for police accountability after his death, criticizing Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio over policing matters. In 2016, she campaigned on behalf of Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, an independent, for president.

Garner's mother, Esaw Snipes, told The New York Times previously that Garner, who gave birth four months ago, had learned during the pregnancy that she had heart problems.

Snipes said Garner had a heart attack after an asthma episode and was placed in a medically induced coma.

Extreme cold to test New Year's revelers; some events iced

By MARY ESCH, Associated Press

Dress in layers, lay off the booze and bring some hand warmers. Those are some of the tips offered for the huge crowd of revelers expected in Times Square for what could be one of the coldest New Year's Eve ball drops on record.

Brutal weather has iced plans for scores of events in the Northeast from New Year's Eve through New Year's Day, but not in New York City, where people will start gathering in Times Square up to nine hours before the famous ball drop.

"Hundreds of thousands have withstood very cold weather over the years for a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and we expect this year to be no different," said Tim Tompkins, president of the Times Square Alliance which puts on the event.

The coldest New Year's Eve in Times Square came in 1917, when it was 1 degree at midnight. This year, the forecast is for 11 degrees with a wind chill around zero, which would tie for second with 1962.

City and state health officials are advising people to cover all exposed skin, and wear a hat, scarf and gloves. Drinking alcohol is discouraged because it causes the body to lose heat faster.

Extra New York Fire Department personnel are going to be on hand to provide medical support and a National Weather Service meteorologist will be on site with the city's emergency management officials to monitor weather conditions.

In other areas gripped by the cold, some events are being canceled or reconsidered. The annual Lobster Dip at Old Orchard Beach in Maine has been rescheduled for the first time in 30 years.

Organizers of the Penguin Plunge in Narragansett, Rhode Island, say it's still on for New Year's Day but advised the thousands of expected participants to "use their good judgment" and avoid taking the plunge if they have a medical condition or have been sick.

With temperatures only expected to reach 9 degrees in Springfield, Illinois, on Sunday, organizers of its annual New Year's Eve fireworks display have decided to cancel this year's show. Officials say they plan to reschedule it for a warmer date.

In Ohio where some communities saw digit temperatures on Saturday, fireworks have been canceled and events moved inside in Miami Township and the New Year's Eve ball drop and other activities in New Carlisle have been reduced to an hour.

Despite the drawn-out deep freeze across Pennsylvania, officials said Saturday the annual New Year's Day Mummers Parade will still be held. The event features thousands of performers in colorful costumes adorned with sequins and feathers strutting through Philadelphia's streets.

The village of Orchard Park near Buffalo, New York, has canceled its New Year's Eve event because subzero temperatures have been forecast. "With frigid weather, the chance of a water line break is higher, and I'd rather have my public works crew fixing it than hoisting a ball up to drop," said Mayor Jo Ann

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 23 of 31

Litwin Clinton.

At Long Lake in the heart of New York state's Adirondack Park, intrepid souls in swimsuits or funny costumes will jump into frigid water through a hole cut by the fire department for the fifth annual Polar Plunge, a fundraiser for High Peaks Hospice. With temperatures expected to top out around 13 degrees, the rescue squad will be checking participants' blood pressure and buses will provide warm shelter, said Alexandra Roalsvig, the town's director of recreation and tourism.

"People get excited about the cold here; we grew up with it," Roalsvig said. "We're counting on a good cold winter and snow because we're so reliant on snowmobiling for the winter economy."

New economic protests in Tehran challenge Iran's government

By AMIR VAHDAT and JON GAMBRELL, Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — A wave of spontaneous protests over Iran's weak economy swept into Tehran on Saturday, with college students and others chanting against the government just hours after hard-liners held their own rally in support of the Islamic Republic's clerical establishment.

The demonstrations appear to be the largest to strike the Islamic Republic since the protests that followed the country's disputed 2009 presidential election.

Thousands already have taken to the streets of cities across Iran, beginning at first on Thursday in Mashhad, the country's second-largest city and a holy site for Shiite pilgrims.

The protests in the Iranian capital, as well as President Donald Trump tweeting about them, raised the stakes. It also apparently forced state television to break its silence, acknowledging it hadn't reported on them on orders from security officials.

"Counterrevolution groups and foreign media are continuing their organized efforts to misuse the people's economic and livelihood problems and their legitimate demands to provide an opportunity for unlawful gatherings and possibly chaos," state TV said.

The protests appear sparked by social media posts and a surge in prices of basic food supplies, like eggs and poultry. Officials and state media made a point Saturday of saying Iranians have the right to protest and have their voices heard on social issues.

However, protesters in Tehran on Saturday chanted against high-ranking government officials and made other political statements, according to the semi-official Fars news agency. Hundreds of students and others joined a new economic protest at Tehran University, with riot police massing at the school's gates as they shut down surrounding roads.

Social media videos purport to show clashes between protesters and police in several areas. At least 50 protesters have been arrested since Thursday, authorities said. State TV also said some protesters chanted the name of Iran's one-time shah, who fled into exile just before its 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Many in Iran are learning about the protests and sharing images of them through Telegram, a mobile phone messaging app popular among the country's 80 million people. Iran's Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi wrote to Telegram CEO Pavel Durov on Saturday, complaining about one chat channel was "encouraging hateful conduct, use (of) Molotov cocktails, armed uprising and social unrest."

Durov responded by saying Telegram suspended the account.

"A Telegram channel (amadnews) started to instruct their subscribers to use Molotov cocktails against police and got suspended due to our 'no calls for violence' rule. Be careful - there are lines one shouldn't cross." Durov tweeted.

The semi-official Tasnim news agency later quoted the deputy commander of Tehran's Revolutionary Guard base, Brig. Gen. Ismail Kowsari, as saying: "Peace has returned to city of Tehran and its surroundings." He added that if inflation was the reason the protesters took to the streets they should not have destroyed property, according to the report.

Earlier Saturday, hard-liners rallied across the country to support Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and others. The rallies, scheduled weeks earlier, commemorated a mass 2009 pro-government rally

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 24 of 31

challenging those who rejected the re-election of hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad amid fraud allegations.

State TV aired live the pro-government "9 Dey Epic" rallies, named for the date on the Iranian calendar the 2009 protests took place. The footage showed people waving flags and carrying banners bearing Khamenei's image.

In Tehran, some 4,000 people gathered at the Musalla prayer ground in central Tehran for the rally. They called for criminal trials for Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mahdi Karroubi, leaders in the 2009 protests who have been under house arrest since 2011. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, whose administration struck the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, campaigned on freeing the men, though they remain held.

Mohsen Araki, a Shiite cleric who serves in Iran's Assembly of Experts, praised Rouhani's efforts at improving the economy. However, he said Rouhani needed to do more to challenge "enemy pressures."

"We must go back to the pre-nuclear deal situation," Araki said. "The enemy has not kept with its commitments."

Ali Ahmadi, a pro-government demonstrator, blamed the U.S for all of Iran's economic problems.

"They always say that we are supporting Iranian people, but who should pay the costs?" Ahmadi asked.

Iran's economy has improved since the nuclear deal, which saw Iran limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the end of some of the international sanctions that crippled its economy. Tehran now sells its oil on the global market and has signed deals for tens of billions of dollars of Western aircraft.

That improvement has not reached the average Iranian, however. Unemployment remains high. Official inflation has crept up to 10 percent again. A recent increase in egg and poultry prices by as much as 40 percent, which a government spokesman has blamed on a cull over avian flu fears, appears to have been the spark for the economic protests.

While police have arrested some protesters, the Revolutionary Guard and its affiliates have not intervened as they have in other unauthorized demonstrations since the 2009 election. The economic protests initially just put pressure on Rouhani's administration.

Trump tweeted out support for the protests Saturday.

"The entire world understands that the good people of Iran want change, and, other than the vast military power of the United States, that Iran's people are what their leaders fear the most...." he tweeted. "Oppressive regimes cannot endure forever, and the day will come when the Iranian people will face a choice. The world is watching!"

It's unclear what effect Trump's support would have. Iranians already are largely skeptical of him over his refusal to re-certify the nuclear deal and Iran being included in his travel bans. Trump's insistence in an October speech on using the term "Arabian Gulf" in place of the Persian Gulf also has also riled the Iranian public.

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's comments in June to Congress saying American is working toward "support of those elements inside of Iran that would lead to a peaceful transition of that government" has been used by Iran's government of a sign of foreign interference in its internal politics.

The State Department issued a statement Friday supporting the protests, referencing Tillerson's earlier comments.

"Iran's leaders have turned a wealthy country with a rich history and culture into an economically depleted rogue state whose chief exports are violence, bloodshed and chaos," the statement said.

Iran's Foreign Ministry dismissed the comments.

"The noble Iranian nation never pays heed to the opportunist and hypocritical mottos chanted by the U.S. officials and their interfering allegations on domestic developments in the Islamic Republic of Iran," the state-run IRNA news agency quoted ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi as saying.

Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Merkel sees Germany split over pace of social change

BERLIN (AP) — Germans have rarely been so divided about the changes taking place in their society, the country's long-time leader Angela Merkel said Sunday, adding in her New Year's address that she is committed to helping tackle the challenges of the future by swiftly forming a new government.

Germany has been in political limbo since elections in September, which saw heavy losses for the centrist 'grand coalition' that's run the country since 2013. Merkel's attempt to forge a new government with two smaller parties failed, forcing her to reach out to her erstwhile partners, the Social Democrats, again.

Merkel acknowledged the concerns some in Germany have about the pace of social change, including the influx of asylum-seekers that saw many conservatives question her leadership. But she noted that others in Europe's biggest economy, which has seen rapid growth and a continued fall in unemployment, are optimistic about the future.

"Some are even talking about a split that goes through our society," she said of the differing views she's heard over the past year.

Merkel said she took seriously the voters' mandate "especially when it comes to working on swiftly forming a stable government for Germany in the new year," citing among her priorities the need to safeguard prosperity, improve education and the use of digital technology, strengthen families and elderly care, even out regional imbalances and ensure security.

She also reiterated the need for European countries to work together more closely and defend the continent's external borders, pledging to work with France to "make Europe fit for the future."

Addressing the increasingly tense debate in Germany that's seen some political opponents describe her as a "traitor," Merkel urged her countrymen to focus more on what they have in common, and to "respect each other more again."

2 men charged in deaths of women, children found in home

TROY, N.Y. (AP) — Two men were arrested Saturday on murder charges in the deaths of two women and two children who were found dead in their upstate New York apartment.

Justin Mann and James White were arrested in their hometown, Schenectady, and pleaded not guilty in Troy City Court.

According to the Times Union, Troy Police Chief John Tedesco said one of the defendants knew one of the victims. He declined to elaborate.

Information given in court said the killings took place at about 9 p.m., Dec. 21. It wasn't until Tuesday, five days later, that a property manager found 36-year-old Shanta Myers; her children, 11-year-old Jeremiah Myers and 5-year-old Shanise Myers; and 22-year-old Brandi Mells in a basement apartment along the Hudson River, just north of Albany. Meyers and Mells became engaged earlier this year, Mells' cousin, Sharonda Bennett, told the newspaper.

Tedesco and District Attorney Joel Abelow, who appeared at a press conference, declined to answer questions about a possible motive and the method of the killings.

They also would not say how the defendants know each other, but said that both have records and Mann is on parole.

More than two dozen people were in court Saturday, some wearing Troy Boys & Girls club sweatshirts.

Mann appeared to break down as he was led out of court. A man and a woman in the courtroom became visibly distraught.

The suspects were sent to the Rensselaer County Jail to await their next court appearance, on Thursday. Neither man said anything as the charges were read.

Tedesco said no more arrests are expected.

"I don't have to tell you what a good feeling it is to have these two in custody," he said. "It's a great relief."

"The rapid apprehension and arrest of two suspects in connection with this tragic crime is welcome news for our community and the victims' families impacted by this senseless tragedy," Troy Mayor Patrick Madden, a Democrat, said in a statement.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 26 of 31

"My heart remains with both the Myers and Mellis families," said Madden, who expressed hope that "with the support of the Troy community, they can begin to heal."

Australian diplomat's tip a factor in FBI's Russia probe

WASHINGTON (AP) — An Australian diplomat's tip appears to have helped persuade the FBI to investigate Russian meddling in the U.S. election and possible coordination with the Trump campaign, The New York Times reported Saturday.

Trump campaign adviser George Papadopoulos told the diplomat, Alexander Downer, during a meeting in London in May 2016 that Russia had thousands of emails that would embarrass Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton, the report said. Downer, a former foreign minister, is Australia's top diplomat in Britain.

Australia passed the information on to the FBI after the Democratic emails were leaked, according to The Times, which cited four current and former U.S. and foreign officials with direct knowledge of the Australians' role.

"The hacking and the revelation that a member of the Trump campaign may have had inside information about it were driving factors that led the FBI to open an investigation in July 2016," the newspaper said.

White House lawyer Ty Cobb declined to comment, saying in a statement that the administration is continuing to cooperate with the investigation now led by special counsel Robert Mueller "to help complete their inquiry expeditiously."

Papadopoulos has pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI and is a cooperating witness. Court documents unsealed two months ago show he met in April 2016 with Joseph Mifsud, a professor in London who told him about Russia's cache of emails. This was before the Democratic National Committee became aware of the scope of the intrusion into its email systems by hackers later linked to the Russian government.

The Times said Papadopoulos shared this information with Downer, but it was unclear whether he also shared it with anyone in the Trump campaign.

California man arrested after fatal Kansas police shooting

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and MICHAEL BALSAMO, Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Police in Los Angeles have arrested a man they suspect made a hoax emergency call that resulted in a SWAT police officer fatally shooting a man at the door of his own home in Kansas, law enforcement officials said Saturday.

Wichita Deputy Police Chief Troy Livingston on Friday characterized the hoax call as "swatting" in which a "prankster" called 911 with a fake story about a shooting and kidnapping to draw a SWAT team to the victim's address. Authorities haven't released the name of the man who was killed Thursday, but relatives have identified him as 28-year-old Andrew Finch.

Tyler Barriss, 25, is suspected of making that call and was arrested in Los Angeles on Friday, according to the Los Angeles Police Department and the Wichita Police Department in statements emailed early Saturday afternoon.

Officer Paul Cruz, a spokesman for the Wichita police, said the two city police departments are working with the FBI on the case, but provided no further details including on possible charges or extradition.

In audio of the 911 call played by Wichita police at a news conference on Friday, a man said he shot his father in the head and that he was holding his mother and a sibling at gunpoint. The caller, speaking with relative calm, also said he poured gasoline inside the home "and I might just set it on fire."

Officers subsequently surrounded the home at the address the caller provided and prepared for a hostage situation. When Finch went to the door, police told him to put his hands up and move slowly.

But Livingston said the man moved a hand toward his waistband — a common place where guns are concealed. An officer, fearing the man was reaching for a gun, fired a single shot. Finch died a few minutes later at a hospital. Livingston said Finch was unarmed.

The officer, a seven-year veteran of the department, is on paid leave pending the investigation.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 27 of 31

Lisa Finch on Friday told reporters "that cop murdered my son over a false report in the first place."

In addition to the 911 call, police also released a brief video of body camera footage from another officer at the scene. It was difficult to see clearly what happened.

Dexerto, an online news service focused on gaming, reported that the series of events began with an online argument over a \$1 or \$2 wager in a "Call of Duty" game on UMG Gaming, which operates online tournaments including one involving "Call of Duty."

Livingston said investigators were tracking online leads, and a law enforcement official who earlier confirmed Barriss' arrest said the shooting stemmed from a dispute over "Call of Duty." The official wasn't authorized to discuss the investigation publicly and spoke to The Associated Press Saturday on condition of anonymity.

The official said Barriss believed a person involved in the dispute lived at the address, but that investigators don't believe Finch was the intended target. Finch's mother said her son was not a gamer.

The official said it wasn't clear if Barriss was involved in the dispute or if he had been recruited to make the false call.

Court records show Barriss was convicted in 2016 on two counts of making a false bomb report to a TV station in Glendale, California, and sent to Los Angeles County jail for two years. Jail records show he was released in January.

The FBI estimates that roughly 400 cases of swatting occur annually, with some using caller ID spoofing to disguise their number. An FBI supervisor in Kansas City, Missouri, which covers all of Kansas, said the agency joined in the investigation at the request of local police.

In other cases of apparent swatting, three families in Florida in January had to evacuate their homes after a detective received an anonymous email claiming bombs had been placed at the address.

Balsamo reported from Los Angeles. Associated Press writer Jim Salter contributed to this report from St. Louis.

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Warm hearts, subzero temps: Couple gets engaged on mountain

SARGENT'S PURCHASE, N.H. (AP) — Extreme cold didn't get in the way of a heartwarming proposal on an icy mountainside.

Josh Darnell, 31, of Londonderry, New Hampshire, dropped to his knee and popped the question after climbing to a scenic spot Thursday on Tuckerman's Ravine, on the southeastern side of Mount Washington. That same day it hit minus 34 (-37 Celsius) on the mountain's summit, which is more than 6,200 feet (1889.76 meters) high.

There's a happy ending: Rachel Raske, 27, of Lowell, Massachusetts, said yes.

Darnell's father, Doug, tagged along to record the event with his camera. He said the wind was blowing so hard that it knocked him on his back when he got out of the car.

Raske was stunned by the proposal.

"After about 10 minutes of her crying, I said you'd better stop crying or your eyes are going to freeze up," Doug Darnell recalled on Saturday.

The Darnells had hiked Tuckerman's Ravine previously and the younger Darnell decided he was going to propose to his girlfriend next to a waterfall.

The younger Darnell secretly sought permission from Raske's father for his daughter's hand in marriage prior to making the trek.

"She had no clue," said Raske's father, Charlie. "We all knew she was getting engaged — everyone except for her."

Texting ban may soon be enforced on Florida's deadly roads

By TERRY SPENCER, Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Florida Highway Patrol Sgt. Mark Wysocky says it is hard to separate texting drivers from drunken drivers as he cruises down a suburban interstate highway. Both weave. They speed up and slow down for no obvious reason and get too close to other cars. They endanger their lives and others.

"There's one," he says, as a woman zips past. But even though he could see her texting, he couldn't ticket her - Florida statutes wouldn't allow it because she wasn't breaking any other traffic laws.

Florida, with some of the nation's deadliest roads, is one of the last states to not fully ban texting while driving, but the Legislature will soon consider a bill that would. However, studies conflict over whether such bans have any effect.

Currently, Florida law says texting by noncommercial drivers is a secondary offense - law enforcement officers must see another violation like speeding or an illegal lane change before they cite a driver for texting. The bill would make texting a primary offense. The fine for a first offense would remain \$30 plus court costs and add no points to the driver's record. Previous attempts have failed, but this bill has support from legislative leaders.

Forty-three states already make texting while driving a primary offense. Three besides Florida list it as a secondary offense - Nebraska, Ohio and South Dakota. There is no state law against texting in Arizona, Montana and, for noncommercial drivers 22 and older, in Missouri. The federal government estimates that in 2015 accidents involving texting and other distracted driving killed almost 3,500 people nationally - more than nine per day - and injured almost 400,000. A Florida trooper, Carlos Rosario, was seriously injured in March when investigators say a texting driver struck him as he worked along a Miami highway shoulder.

Rosario spent two months in the hospital undergoing several surgeries to repair injuries to his face, spine and legs. He will remain off duty until at least late 2018. Driver Hugo Olivares received five years' probation on Dec. 20.

"You see it every day when you are out driving - people texting. It has become part of our culture," said Democratic state Rep. Emily Slosberg, one of the bill's sponsors.

She was seriously injured in a 1996 traffic accident caused by a reckless driver that killed her twin sister, Dori, and four other teens. Her father, former state Rep. Irv Slosberg, long pushed traffic safety bills including the state's mandatory seat belt law, and she has picked up the mantle.

"It is time for the Legislature to send a message that we will no longer accept this deadly behavior on our roads," she said.

The state says Florida car crashes killed almost 2,700 this year, but the number killed in texting-related accidents is unknown. Under the current law, only about three drivers a day are cited statewide for texting while driving.

According to Insurance Institute for Highway Safety statistics, five of the seven states without a primary offense law had 2016 highway death rates above the national average. Ohio and Nebraska were below; South Dakota and Missouri were just above. Florida, Montana and Arizona tied for the ninth-highest fatality rate.

Counterintuitively, the IIHS says its studies also show that states enacting bans experience no decrease in accidents even though surveillance shows the number of drivers texting drops substantially. Vice President of Research Jessica Cicchino said the reasons aren't known - perhaps texting drivers hold their phones lower so they won't be seen. That takes their eyes further off the road for longer, increasing the risk.

A 2014 University of Alabama at Birmingham study, however, showed a 3 percent drop in fatalities in states after a full texting ban with the best results among young drivers.

Opponents of a texting ban generally fall into two camps. First, libertarians, who say current law is sufficient if texting leads to swerving, tailgating or other dangers. Issue tickets for that, they say.

Minorities fear texting bans lead to racial profiling. State Sen. Perry Thurston, a Fort Lauderdale Democrat, said the law would save lives but he is concerned some officers would stop mostly black drivers. If

the law is adopted, he wants statistics collected to make sure minorities aren't disproportionately ticketed.

An American Civil Liberties Union study showed that after Florida made driving without a fastened seat belt a primary offense in 2009, black drivers were significantly more likely to receive tickets than white drivers even though studies showed blacks were only slightly less likely to buckle up.

"It's disappointing but the reality in some communities is that this is an issue," said Thurston, an African-American.

At a turnpike rest stop near Fort Lauderdale, retired insurance salesman Steve Josephson said he supports the bill because too many distracted drivers have almost hit him and he's tired of being stuck behind people who are watching their phones when traffic lights turn green. He says he doesn't text and drive.

Landscaper Francisco Martinez wasn't sure whether he likes the ban, but said he stopped texting and driving 11 months ago after his first child was born.

"But it is tempting, particularly when someone is trying to reach you," he said.

Victim, gunman in California law firm shooting were partners

By **ANDREW DALTON, Associated Press**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Police were trying to learn Saturday what motivated a partner in a law firm to shoot two of his colleagues before turning the gun on himself.

Officers arrived at an office building in Long Beach on Friday to find the gunman and one victim dead and learned that the second victim had gone to a hospital, according to investigators.

The shooter was identified Saturday as John Mendoza, 58, of Redondo Beach. He shot the two men before killing himself, police said.

Major Langer, 75, of Rolling Hills, was shot in the upper body and died at the scene.

A friend told the Long Beach Press-Telegram that the wounded man was another partner in the firm, Ronald Beck, who was driven to the hospital by his son. The 68-year-old injured man was shot in the torso and lower body, police said. He remained hospitalized in stable condition and was expected to survive.

"Several employees were in the office at the time of the shooting, however, no other injuries were reported," according to the police statement. "A motive for the shooting remains under investigation."

A gun was recovered from the scene.

Basieleus Zeno, who videotaped employees running from the building, told KCBS-TV that he heard screams but thought they were from employees enjoying a holiday party at the office.

But it became clear that the half-dozen workers streaming from the law office, which is located in the well-to-do neighborhood of Bixby Knolls, were fleeing.

"The woman was saying 'They're shooting inside. They're shooting inside,'" Zeno said.

Beck ran day-to-day operations at the law firm of Perona, Langer, Beck, Serbin, Mendoza and Harrison. He also was managing partner of the Larry H. Parker law firm that worked with Perona and Langer. Beck and Parker have appeared in well-known Southern California television commercials for Parker's firm that conclude with Parker promising: "We'll fight for you!"

Langer was senior managing partner of both firms.

"This guy was the most caring, sincere man I probably ever met," longtime friend Jim Hall told the Press-Telegram. "He just had a heart of gold and really cared for everybody who works at the firm and considers them members of his family. He certainly didn't deserve this."

According to the Perona, Langer firm's website, Mendoza was a workers' compensation attorney who had worked thousands of industrial injury cases over the past 20 years and had been a frequent guest on local television and radio stations.

The office is about 20 miles south of downtown Los Angeles in Long Beach, a city of about 460,000 people.

Associated Press writers Robert Jablon and Michael Balsamo contributed to this report.

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 30 of 31

Follow Andrew Dalton on Twitter at twitter.com/andyjamesdalton.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Dec. 31, the 365th and final day of 2017.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 31, 1879, Thomas Edison first publicly demonstrated his electric incandescent light by illuminating some 40 bulbs at his laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey.

On this date:

In 1775, during the Revolutionary War, the British repulsed an attack by Continental Army generals Richard Montgomery and Benedict Arnold at Quebec; Montgomery was killed.

In 1857, Britain's Queen Victoria decided to make Ottawa the capital of Canada.

In 1877, President Rutherford B. Hayes and his wife, Lucy, celebrated their silver anniversary a day after the actual date by repeating their wedding vows during a reception in the White House.

In 1904, New York's Times Square saw its first New Year's Eve celebration, with an estimated 200,000 people in attendance.

In 1946, President Harry S. Truman officially proclaimed the end of hostilities in World War II.

In 1951, the Marshall Plan expired after distributing more than \$12 billion in foreign aid.

In 1969, Joseph A. Yablonski, an unsuccessful candidate for the presidency of the United Mine Workers of America, was shot to death with his wife and daughter in their Clarksville, Pennsylvania, home by hit men acting at the orders of UMWA president Tony Boyle.

In 1972, Major League baseball player Roberto Clemente, 38, was killed when a plane he chartered and was traveling on to bring relief supplies to earthquake-devastated Nicaragua crashed shortly after takeoff from Puerto Rico.

In 1985, singer Rick Nelson, 45, and six other people were killed when fire broke out aboard a DC-3 that was taking the group to a New Year's Eve performance in Dallas.

In 1986, 97 people were killed when fire broke out in the Dupont Plaza Hotel in San Juan, Puerto Rico. (Three hotel workers later pleaded guilty in connection with the blaze.)

In 1987, Robert Mugabe (moo-GAH'-bay) was sworn in as Zimbabwe's first executive president.

In 1997, Michael Kennedy, the 39-year-old son of the late Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, was killed in a skiing accident on Aspen Mountain in Colorado. Pianist Floyd Cramer died in Nashville at age 64.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush signed legislation to allow states and local governments to cut investment ties with Sudan because of the violence in Darfur. Sara Jane Moore, who took a shot at President Gerald R. Ford in San Francisco in 1975, was paroled after 32 years behind bars.

Five years ago: Racing the clock, the White House reached a New Year's Eve accord with Senate Republicans to block across-the-board tax increases and spending cuts in government programs due to take effect at midnight. Private recreational marijuana clubs opened in Colorado, less than a month after Gov. John Hickenlooper signed into law a constitutional amendment allowing recreational pot use. Seven NFL coaches and five general managers were fired in a flurry of sackings the day after the regular season ended.

One year ago: Mariah Carey ushered in 2017 with a botched performance on "Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve with Ryan Seacrest" on ABC; Carey blamed the show's producers for technical difficulties, while Dick Clark Productions called Carey's claims "absurd." No. 1 Alabama beat No. 4 Washington 24-7 in the Peach Bowl while No. 3 Clemson crushed No. 2 Ohio State 31-0 in the Fiesta Bowl, sending the two winning teams to the College Football Playoff championship game. Actor William Christopher, best known for playing Father Francis Mulcahy on the TV series "M.A.S.H.," died in Pasadena, California, at age 84.

Today's Birthdays: TV producer George Schlatter is 88. Actor Sir Anthony Hopkins is 80. Actor Tim Conside (TV: "My Three Sons") is 77. Actress Sarah Miles is 76. Rock musician Andy Summers is 75. Actor Sir Ben Kingsley is 74. Producer-director Taylor Hackford is 73. Fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg is 71. Actor Tim Matheson is 70. Pop singer Burton Cummings is 70. Actor Joe Dallesandro is 69. Rock

Groton Daily Independent

Sunday, Dec. 31, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 175 ~ 31 of 31

musician Tom Hamilton (Aerosmith) is 66. Actor James Remar is 64. Actress Bebe Neuwirth is 59. Actor Val Kilmer is 58. Singer Paul Westerberg is 58. Actor Don Diamont is 55. Rock musician Ric Ivanisevich (Oleander) is 55. Rock musician Scott Ian (Anthrax) is 54. Actress Gong Li is 52. Author Nicholas Sparks is 52. Actor Lance Reddick is 48. Pop singer Joe McIntyre is 45. Rock musician Mikko Siren (Apocalyptica) is 42. Business executive Donald Trump Jr. is 40. Rapper PSY (Park Jae-sang) is 40. Rock musician Bob Bryar is 38. Actor/singer Erich Bergen is 32. DJ/vocalist Drew Taggart (The Chainsmokers) is 28. Olympic gold medal gymnast Gabby Douglas is 22.

Thought for Today: "Drop the last year into the silent limbo of the past. Let it go, for it was imperfect, and thank God that it can go." — Brooks Atkinson, American drama critic (1894-1984).