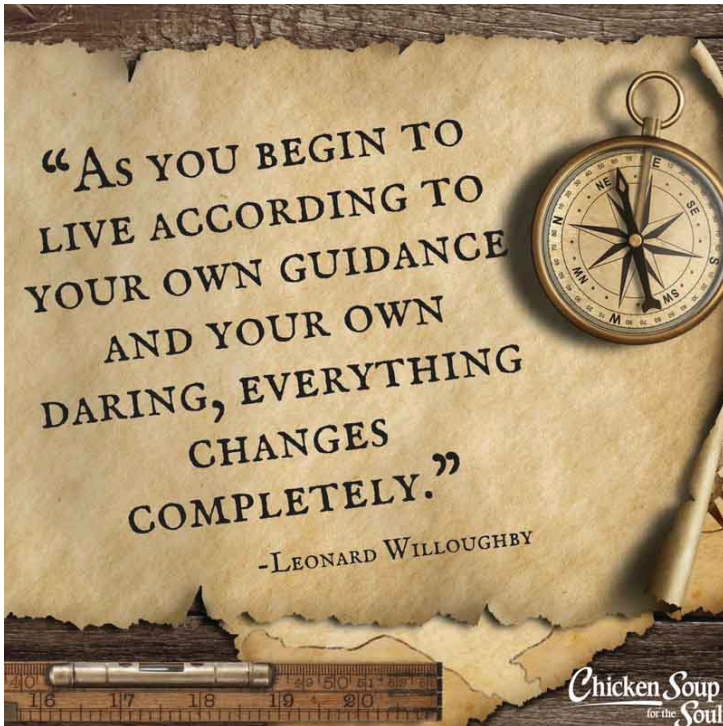


Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 1 of 38



- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 1- Hanlon Brothers Ad
- 1- SunDial Help Wanted Ad
- 1- A Riddle
- 2- Groton Care & Rehab Help Wanted Ad
- 2- World of Experience
- 3- Farmers Union PSA
- 3- Avera Careflight Expands to Pierre
- 4- North Central Farmers Elevator and Wheat Growers Announce New Co-op Name
- 5- Groton Prairie Mixed
- 5- Silver Skates Ad
- 6- Today in Weather History
- 7- Today's Forecast
- 8- Yesterday's Weather
- 8- Today's Weather Info
- 8- National Weather Map
- 9- Daily Devotional
- 10- 2018 Community Events
- 11- News from the Associated Press

A Riddle

**What has hands but cannot clap?
(answer at the end of the AP News)**



**Hanlon Brothers
Gravel Hauling**

New & Cleaning of
Stockdams with our
60' reach trackhoe

605/395-6531

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**



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.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 2 of 38



Yesterday (Wednesday), I had my next appointment for my ankle. The x-rays show everything is going good. They had to pop a boil on the outside, and then they put a green cast on. I have to keep this cast on for three weeks, then I will graduate to a boot of some sort.

All I know is that lying around and not being able to do much is starting to tax my body. My back is starting to feel signs of fatigue. I might have to head down to the fitness center for a while and do some upper body workouts.

Julianna had her glory moment this morning. She got to take the car to school for the first time and gave her sister a ride to the elementary school. The girls are still helping with the paper routes. We got done in record time this morning in 61 minutes. It does work quite well with the two girls helping, but I don't think they want this as a long term deal.

It's going to be an interesting pair of weekends coming up. We have basketball games in Redfield the next two Saturdays. The girls have skating practice which will leave only Justin to haul EVERYTHING from the car into the gym. I should be able to maneuver the steps to get everything set up. I might even have to try and find my old stool that we had from the old Omer's Cafe to sit on while running the video camera. At the doctor's office, they said I was not suppose to do steps, but she knew who she was talking too and is one of our GDILIVE.COM viewers. I didn't say anything, but as she left, she said, "Just be careful."

I'm running quite behind this morning. I didn't get a good night's sleep and finally got a nice snooze in when we got back home from the paper route. I've been fielding questions from Terry at the shop so I've been assisting with phone support.

My dad called me last night. He found out that someone back home was going up some steps. She missed a step and fell and hit her head and she ended up dying. I thank God for how He saved me from potential death.

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

Avera Careflight Expands to Pierre

Avera Health announces expansion of its Careflight program to better serve rural residents and improve response times across the vast 72,000-square-mile region that Avera serves.

This expansion involves basing a fixed-wing aircraft in Pierre. Avera's Careflight program recently celebrated 30 years of service, and Careflight aircraft have previously been located in Sioux Falls and Aberdeen. There will continue to be a Careflight helicopter based in Aberdeen, as well as a fixed wing plane and helicopter in Sioux Falls.

"Avera is concerned about every single resident within our service area. When a critical illness or injury occurs, the sooner a patient can receive specialty critical care services, the better outcomes he or she will experience," said Doug Ekeren, Administrative Lead for the Emergency Medicine Service Line at Avera.

"Pierre is virtually centered in the state of South Dakota. Basing a plane there naturally allows faster response times to areas of central and western portions of South Dakota," Ekeren said.

Careflight helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft are designed as airborne ICUs, staffed by professionals highly trained in critical care. The two types of aircraft Careflight provides – the helicopter and fixed wing – serve different needs. The helicopter flies within an approximate 100-mile radius of its home base. It offers "door-to-door" services to facilities with a helipad, and can land at the scene of accidents.

The fixed wing can fly at higher speeds and greater distances. Ground ambulances take patients to and from the airport in support of the fixed-wing unit.

Careflight staffing will be expanded as appropriate to serve three sites instead of two. Staffing generally involves a flight nurse, paramedic and pilot. Specialized teams are also at the ready for trauma and critical care, neonatal transports, obstetrics and pediatrics.

More than just a fast way to get patients to the hospital, Careflight is an extension of a hospital critical care unit and Emergency Department. "For critical patients, often the difference between life and death depends on getting the appropriate level of care within a crucial time window. Stationing Careflight aircraft at key locations places lifesaving care within reach for the largest number of patients," Ekeren said.

Careflight was the first helicopter transport program in South Dakota. In its 30-year history, Careflight has transported 25,000 patients.



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")**

North Central Farmers Elevator and Wheat Growers Announce New Co-op Name

(JAN. 3, 2018; Ipswich & Aberdeen, SD) – The Boards of Directors of North Central Farmers Elevator and Wheat Growers voted earlier today to approve the name for the new cooperative that will launch February 1 – Agtegra Cooperative.



Wheat Growers CEO Chris Pearson, who has been chosen to lead the new Agtegra Cooperative, said the Boards focused on choosing a name that would represent the rich history and bright future the two cooperatives share.

“We knew we needed to choose a name that allowed us the ability to adapt to changes in the ag industry,” Pearson said. “We knew not to limit ourselves to a geography, or to just one commodity crop or another. We also heard from our members through this process that to them, strength, stability and dependability are key characteristics they value from us. They want us grounded in agriculture, and they want us to stand together with them for the long haul – always holding a connection to our past and looking into the future.”

Pearson said Agtegra Cooperative reflects all that. “That’s a lot to pack into one name. But we believe Agtegra is a name that grounds us in agriculture, and points to the high level of integrity and dependability that we will seek to achieve serving our member-owners today and into the future.”

“In the end, we listened to our members and allowed their input and opinion to guide us through this process,” Pearson said.

Pearson said that in the three months since the vote, the employee teams of Wheat Growers and North Central have been laser focused on building a new cooperative committed to delivering value to its members.

“We’re combining two, legacy-rich organizations into one. We are preparing to create new efficiencies, expanding the use of new technologies, creating new opportunities for our employee team – all aimed at creating more value for our members,” Pearson said. “We’re excited about the progress we’ve made and looking forward to introducing this new farmer-owned cooperative to our members in a few weeks.”

The new Agtegra Cooperative that will begin operation Feb. 1 will be a farmer-owned agricultural cooperative, headquartered in Aberdeen, S.D., with 900 employees in North and South Dakota serving more than 60 communities and approximately 7,850 member-owners and 22,600 equity holders. In addition to offering grain and agronomy services, the cooperative will offer its members aerial application services, fuel, animal feed, and precision ag hardware and software products and services.

“Merging two strong cooperatives into one gives us the ability to expand the services and capabilities we offer our member-owners,” Pearson said. “Our purchase of the Kimball fertilizer plant from Gavilon announced yesterday, and our plans to expand the North Central aerial application service across our entire trade area, are two great examples of the high-quality products, services and efficiencies that we can provide our members from this new cooperative.”

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 5 of 38

Groton Prairie Mixed

Team Standings: Shih Tzus 9, Foxes 8, Cheetahs 7, Chipmunks 7, Jackelopes 3, Coyotes 2

Men's High Games: Ron Belden 240, Chris Kassube 234, Brad Waage 220, 219; Mike Siegler 219, Brad Larson 215

Women's High Games: Vicki Jorgensen 187, Vicki Walter 176, 168, Lori Wiley 162

Men's High Series: Brad Waage 634, Ron Belden 569, Mike Siegler 559

Women's High Series: Vicki Jorgensen 486, Vicki Walter 472, Lori Wiley 447



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.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 6 of 38

Today in Weather History

January 4, 1986: Snowfall amounts of 1 to 3 inches along with winds gusting to around 40 mph produced ground blizzard conditions in western South Dakota. Visibility was near zero in many locations with blowing and drifting snow blocking some roads. Some roads were closed in western South Dakota. Several accidents occurred with many cars ended up in the ditch.

January 4, 2005: Heavy snow of up to 10 inches fell across much of Lyman and Jones counties from the 4th until mid-morning of the 5th.

1641: According to historical records, Mount Parker, a stratovolcano on Mindanao Island in the Philippines erupted on this day. The eruption caused the formation of a crater lake called Lake Maughan.

1888 - Sacramento, CA, received 3.5 inches of snow, an all-time record for that location. The heaviest snow in recent history was two inches on February 5th in 1976. (4th-5th) (The Weather Channel)

1917: A tornado with estimated F3 damage cut a 15-mile path and struck a school at Vireton in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma, killing 16 people. It ranks as the 4th worst school tornado disaster in U.S. history.

1971 - A blizzard raged from Kansas to Wisconsin, claiming 27 lives in Iowa. Winds reached 50 mph, and the storm produced up to 20 inches of snow. (David Ludlum)

1982 - Milwaukee, WI, was shut down completely as a storm buried the city under 16 inches of snow in 24 hours. It was the worst storm in thirty-five years. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A storm moving off the Pacific Ocean spread wintery weather across the southwestern U.S., with heavy snow extending from southern California to western Wyoming. Up to 15 inches of snow blanketed the mountains of southern California, and rainfall totals in California ranged up to 2.20 inches in the Chino area. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Frigid arctic air invading the central and eastern U.S. left Florida about the only safe refuge from the cold and snow. A storm in the western U.S. soaked Bodega Bay in central California with 3.12 inches of rain. (National Weather Summary)

1989 - Up to a foot of snow blanketed the mountains of West Virginia, and strong winds in the northeastern U.S. produced wind chill readings as cold as 60 degrees below zero in Maine. Mount Washington NH reported wind gusts to 136 mph along with a temperature of 30 below zero! (National Weather Summary)






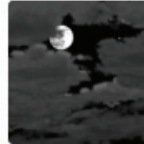

1990 - A winter storm moving out of the southwestern U.S. spread heavy snow across Nebraska and Iowa into Wisconsin. Snowfall totals in Nebraska ranged up to 7 inches at Auburn and Tecumseh. Totals in Iowa ranged up to 11 inches at Carlisle. In Iowa, most of the snow fell between midnight and 4 AM. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

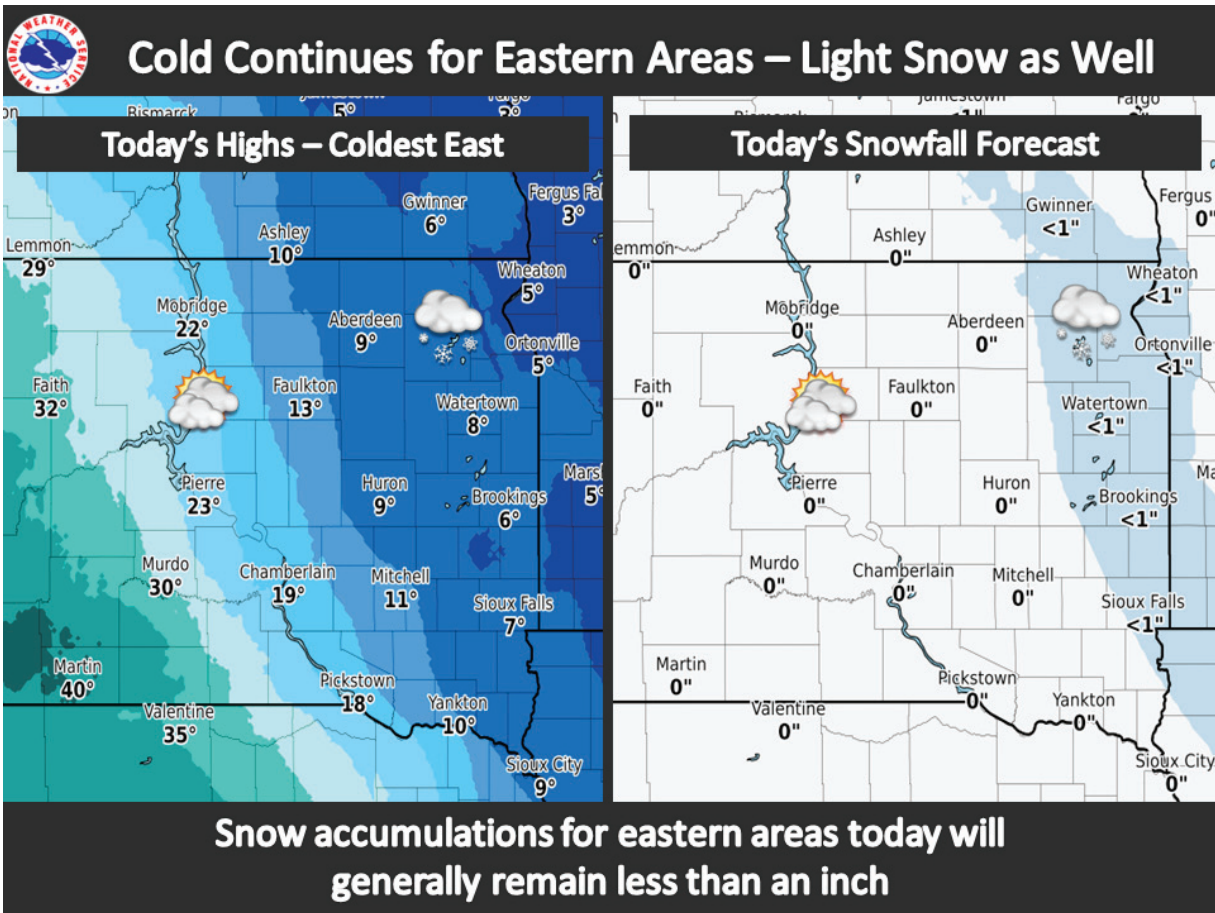
1994 - A major winter storm blanketed much of the northeastern U.S. with heavy snow. More than two feet was reported in northwestern Pennsylvania, with 33 inches at Waynesburg. There were ten heart attacks, and 185 injuries, related to the heavy snow in northwest Pennsylvania. Whiteout conditions were reported in Vermont and northeastern New York State. A wind gusts to 75 mph was clocked at Shaftsbury VT. In the Adirondacks of eastern New York State, the town of Tupper reported five inches of snow between 1 PM and 2 PM. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1997: The temperature rose to 61 degrees in Flint and Detroit, Michigan. The normal high temperature for January 4 is only 30 degrees!

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 7 of 38

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
 20% Slight Chance Snow	 Mostly Cloudy	 Cold	 Mostly Cloudy	 Mostly Cloudy	 Mostly Cloudy	 Mostly Cloudy
High: 11 °F	Low: -1 °F	High: 9 °F	Low: -1 °F	High: 21 °F	Low: 16 °F	High: 29 °F



An upper level disturbance moving south across the region will bring light snow to eastern areas this morning into the afternoon hours. Amounts will be on the light side and remain less than an inch for most places. High temperatures will remain cold for eastern areas, with highs in the single digits. Central South Dakota will warm into the 20s.

Groton Daily Independent

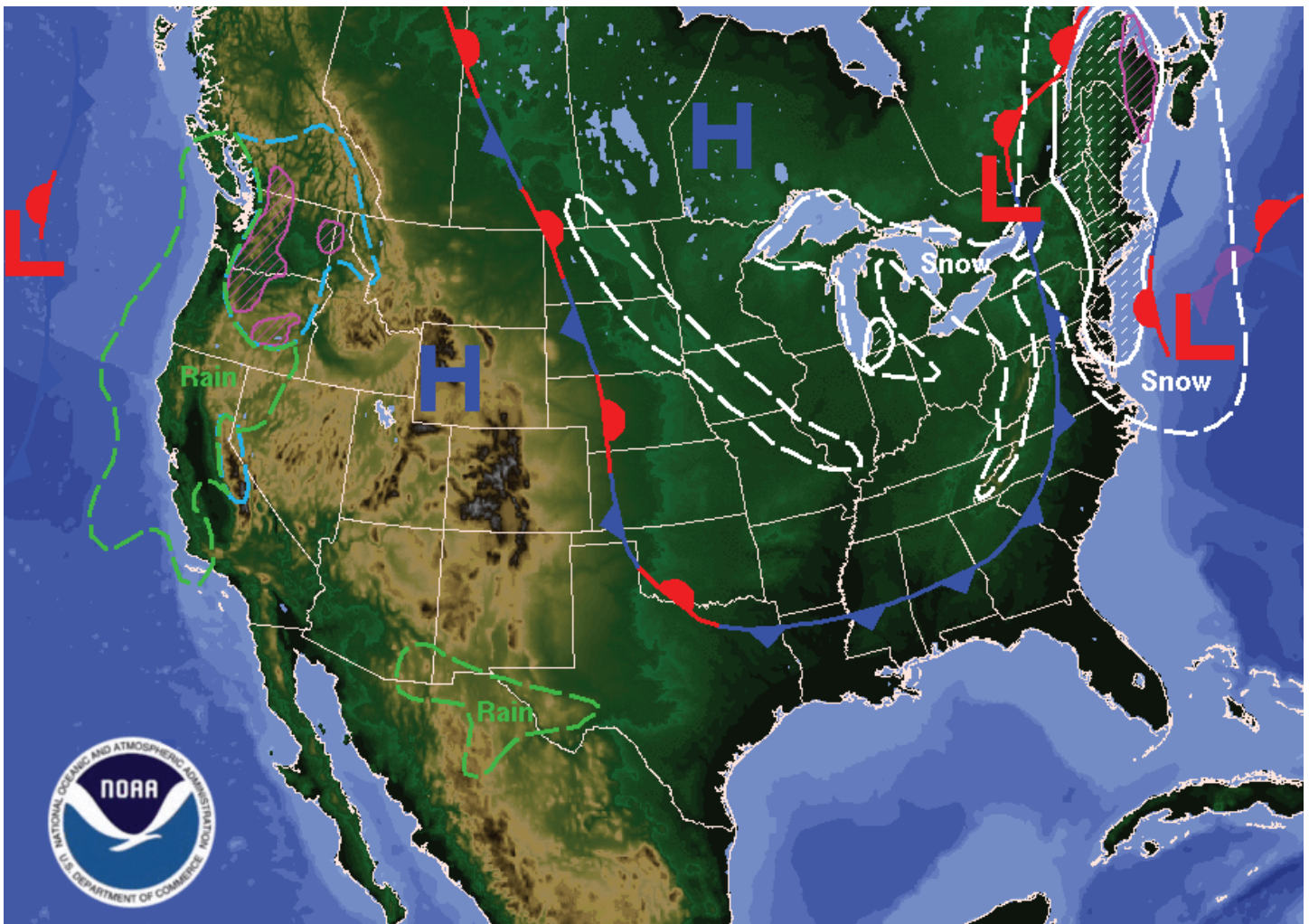
Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 8 of 38

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 3.9 at 3:33 PM
Low Outside Temp: -9.7 at 9:19 AM
Wind Chill: -17.0 at 9:23 AM
High Gust: 11 at 12:26 AM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 54° in 2012
Record Low: -34° in 1912
Average High: 22°F
Average Low: 2°F
Average Precip in Jan: 0.08
Precip to date in Jan: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.08
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 5:03 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:11 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Thu, Jan 04, 2018, issued 4:34 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds 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

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 9 of 38



CAN GOD REALLY?

"Can God really clean up the mess in my life? Am I so important to Him that He would hear my voice above all the other voices that call on Him every day? Do I make a difference to Him when so many others seem to have more significant issues than I? Should I really bother Him if I don't really have much faith? Can God do a few miracles for me? If I don't have money to give will He still hear me?"

We often hear of God's power but question whether or not He can do what He says He is able to do. Sometimes when we ask the question can God we do so with hope and other times with hopelessness even resignation wondering if He really is a can do God!

In Psalm 78:19 our writer makes an interesting statement: "They spoke against God" because they questioned His ability when the Israelites who were walking in the wilderness had no food. They even asked, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" They questioned God's ability to do something when they saw nothing. But God can do anything with nothing. Perhaps they forgot about Creation: "In the beginning God created" everything – and He did it from nothing. Nothing!

God has unlimited resources and might that exceed anything we can imagine. And we must not forget His unlimited love! So, when we add His resources to His might and mix in His love then add His wisdom with the plan He has laid out for each of us, it is not "CAN GOD" – it is GOD CAN! Our God is a CAN DO GOD!

Prayer: Father, may we realize that the only reason our prayers go unanswered is because we lack faith in You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 78:19 They even spoke against God himself, saying, "God can't give us food in the wilderness.

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

News from the Associated Press

Out-of-state money ban for initiatives to appear on ballot

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's chief elections official has cleared a measure that would ban out-of-state fundraising for citizens' initiatives to appear on the November ballot.

Secretary of State Shantel Krebs' office said Thursday the ballot question will be named Initiated Measure 24. The measure's approval could be challenged.

The initiative would prohibit contributions to ballot question committees from nonresidents, out-of-state political committees and entities that haven't filed with the Secretary of State's office for the preceding four years.

House Speaker Mark Mickelson's measure comes after out-of-state donors pumped over \$10 million into campaigns for or against South Dakota questions during the 2016 election cycle.

Backers needed nearly 14,000 valid signatures for the initiative to go before voters. Supporters turned in roughly 18,000 signatures, and a random sampling found about 81 percent were valid.

Governor seeks extension of special session lake use law

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard is asking South Dakota legislators to extend a law set to expire this summer that governs the use of lakes on private land for recreation.

Lawmakers during a special legislative session last year approved a compromise on so-called nonmeandered waters that sunsets in June 2018, meaning lawmakers will have to revisit the issue in the upcoming session.

The governor's office proposed a bill this week that would move the law's expiration date to 2021.

The law restored access to nearly 30 specific lakes for public recreation hampered after a 2017 state Supreme Court decision.

The law also says lakes on private property are open for recreational use unless a landowner installs signs or buoys saying an area is closed.

The 2018 legislative session starts next week.

Arsenal of weapons found at shooting suspect's home

BRANDON, S.D. (AP) — Police in South Dakota investigating a couple drive-by shootings in Iowa say they found dozens of guns, including fully automatic weapons, and thousands of rounds of ammunition in the home of the suspect.

The Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office says investigators determined the teen suspected of firing at two homes in Lyon and Sioux counties in Iowa last month lived in Brandon.

Sheriff's Capt. Jason Gearman tells KSFY-TV a search of the teen's home turned up about 80 guns, including tactical weapons, night vision and infrared optics, along with high-end body armor. Gearman says the weapons had been obtained legally with many purchased in the last three to five months.

Authorities say the teen has been arrested. A woman who lived in the home was arrested on a charge of child endangerment. The case is still under investigation.

Information from: KSFY-TV, <http://www.ksfy.com>

Cold temperatures won't hurt South Dakota youth goose hunt

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Organizers of an annual youth goose hunt in central South Dakota say frigid weather won't put a damper on the weekend event.

Organizer Sam Koenecke tells the Pierre Capital Journal that up to 100 young hunters will be taking the field this weekend for the 28th year of the Central South Dakota Youth Goose Hunt in the Pierre area.

Some organizers were concerned that the area's bitter cold will drive the thousands of geese normally found on the Missouri River further south.

Koenecke says it's supposed to warm up to a high temperature of 30 degrees (-1 Celsius) for the hunt on Saturday and Sunday. He says those relatively warm temperatures will encourage the geese that stayed in the area to start moving again.

Information from: Pierre Capital Journal, <http://www.capjournal.com>

Body found in SUV after chase identified as driver's mother

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified a California woman whose body was found in an SUV stopped after a high-speed chase in South Dakota as the mother of the driver.

Attorney General Marty Jackley's office said Thursday the body of 58-year-old Michelle Walsh was found in the rear of the vehicle after a chase with her son, 30-year-old Tosten Walsh Lommen, of California.

Lommen faces charges including aggravated eluding and drunken driving.

Jackley says South Dakota authorities are working with California officials on the death investigation. Autopsy results are pending.

Jackley's office says a state trooper on Monday observed Lommen driving over 100 mph on I-90 in western South Dakota.

Authorities say the vehicle he was driving eventually came to rest in a ditch after officials used spike strips, and Lommen was arrested.

Death penalty not sought in Mitchell man's murder trial

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — Prosecutors have decided against pursuing the death penalty against a Mitchell slaying suspect should he be convicted.

Forty-nine-year-old Anthony Lewis is charged with murder in the stabbing death last August of 30-year-old Quinn Schleuning during a confrontation outside of an apartment complex. Police say the two men knew one another and had an adversarial relationship.

Lewis has pleaded not guilty. The Daily Republic reports he appeared in court on Wednesday, and Davison County State's Attorney Jim Miskimins said Schleuning's parents were against seeking the death penalty.

Lewis remains jailed in lieu of \$500,000 bond.

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

Avera to base air ambulance plane in central South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls-based Avera plans to put an airplane and a crew of up to a dozen pilots and nurses in Pierre, to improve service.

The Avera Careflight air ambulance program has operated for 30 years, with two airplanes and a helicopter in Sioux Falls and a second helicopter in Aberdeen.

Avera leaders tell the Capital Journal that one of the airplanes will now be based in Pierre, in central South Dakota. The City Commission this week approved a plan for a hangar that will house the plane. The new service isn't expected to begin for several months.

Avera serves an area encompassing 72,000 square miles, including most of South Dakota and areas in North Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa and Minnesota.

Information from: Pierre Capital Journal, <http://www.capjournal.com>

County commissioner gets new trial on ordinance violation

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Pennington County commissioner convicted of violating a county zoning ordinance has been granted a new trial.

Seventy-seven-year-old George Ferebee disagrees with government oversight of septic systems. A magistrate court judge last September found him guilty of maintaining on his rural Hill City property a septic system that lacked an operating permit. Ferebee was fined \$200.

Ferebee had fought the charge for two years, and he appealed his conviction. The Rapid City Journal reports that he has been granted a two-day trial in circuit court in May.

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

Woman accused of helping slaying suspect set for trial

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A 19-year-old woman accused of being an accomplice in a Rapid City slaying last fall has been scheduled for trial next month.

Authorities allege Cierra Walks helped 21-year-old Maricelo Garcia evade authorities after Garcia allegedly shot and killed 20-year-old Clinton Farlee last October.

The Rapid City Journal reports Walks is scheduled for a four-day trial beginning Feb. 20. She faces up to five years in prison if convicted of being an accessory to a crime.

Garcia pleaded not guilty last November to first-degree murder. His trial hasn't been scheduled.

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

Most of South Dakota winter wheat crop holding up well

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Most of South Dakota's winter wheat crop appears to be holding up fairly well to winter so far.

The monthly crop report from the federal Agriculture Department shows about two-thirds of the crop in fair, good or excellent condition.

Soil moisture is still showing the effects of last summer's prolonged drought. Topsoil moisture supplies are rated only 47 percent adequate to surplus, and subsoil moisture is 44 percent in those categories.

Storm slaps coastal South with most snow in nearly 3 decades

By **RUSS BYNUM, Associated Press**

SAVANNAH, Ga. (AP) — A brutal winter storm smacked the coastal Southeast with a rare blast of snow and ice Wednesday, hitting parts of Florida, Georgia and South Carolina with their heaviest snowfall in nearly three decades.

Forecasters warned that the same system could soon strengthen into a "bomb cyclone" as it rolls up the East Coast, bringing hurricane-force winds, coastal flooding and up to a foot of snow.

At least 17 deaths were blamed on dangerously cold temperatures that for days have gripped wide swaths of the U.S. from Texas to New England.

A winter storm warning extended from the Gulf Coast of Florida's "Big Bend" region all the way up the Atlantic coast. Forecasters said hurricane-force winds blowing offshore on Thursday could generate 24-foot (7-meter) seas.

Schools in the Southeast called off classes just months after being shut down because of hurricane threats, and police urged drivers to stay off the roads in a region little accustomed to the kind of winter woes common to the Northeast.

In Savannah, snow blanketed the city's lush downtown squares and collected on branches of burly oaks for the first time in nearly eight years. William Shaw, a Savannah native, used baby steps to shuffle along a frozen road from his home to the post office.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 14 of 38

"It almost seems the town is deserted just like in the last hurricane," said Shaw, 65. "There's no one on the street. It's got a little eerie feeling."

Dump trucks spread sand on major streets in Savannah ahead of the storm and police closed several bridges, overpasses and a major causeway because of ice.

By the time the morning's dreary sleet and rain turned to fluffy snow, Savannah came out to play. Families with children flocked to Forsyth Park near the downtown historic district for snowball fights. The National Weather Service recorded 1.2 inches (3 centimeters) of snow — Savannah's first measurable snowfall since February 2010 and the first that exceeded an inch (2.5 centimeters) in 28 years.

Across the Georgia-South Carolina line in Charleston, the weather service reported 5 inches (12.7 centimeters) as the snow was winding down at 5 p.m. That's the most snowfall in Charleston since December 1989, and plenty for Chris Monoc's sons, ages 4 and 2, to go sledding outside their home near the city's iconic Ravenel Bridge.

"They probably will be teenagers the next time something like this happens, and that's kind of sad," Monoc said. "But we'll enjoy it while it is here."

Airports shut down in Savannah, Charleston and elsewhere as airlines cancelled 500 flights Wednesday, and at least 1,700 more were cancelled Thursday. Interstate 95 was nearly an icy parking lot for almost all of its 200 miles (322 kilometers) in South Carolina. Troopers couldn't keep up with the number of reported wrecks which numbered in the hundreds.

In Tallahassee, Florida, Michigan transplant Laura Donaven built a snowman 6 inches (15 centimeters) tall. The city tweeted that snow fell there for the first time in 28 years.

"I made a snowball and threw it at my dad," said Donaven, a 41-year-old hair salon owner.

The weather service said the winter storm will probably intensify into a "bomb cyclone" that could dump more than 8 inches (20 centimeters) of snow on the Boston area on Thursday and at least half a foot (15 centimeters) of snow in the New York City region.

Meteorologists have been using the term "bomb" for storms for decades, but the phrase went viral on social media on Wednesday. A storm is a bomb — or bombogenesis happens — when it drops 24 millibars of pressure in 24 hours. This storm looks like it will intensify twice that rate, said Bob Oravec, lead forecaster at the National Weather Service's Weather Prediction Center.

Mississippi's largest city said record cold is breaking water mains, leaving some customers with little or no water flow.

Jackson city spokeswoman Kai Williams said Wednesday evening that the city knew of 37 separate water main breaks that it attributed to cold. The city has declared an emergency and is hiring outside contractors to help repair water main breaks.

Blizzard warnings were issued from Rhode Island to Maine. Oravec said he expects they could be extended as far south as parts of New York.

"It's sort of akin to a hurricane traveling up the coast," says Ryan Maue, a meteorologist at the private firm Weather.US.

Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal declared a state of emergency through Friday for 28 counties. School systems on the Alabama coast waived uniform requirements so students could bundle up.

Florida's largest theme parks announced that water attractions such as Disney's Typhoon Lagoon, Universal Orlando's Volcano Bay and SeaWorld's Aquatica were closed. Temperatures were running well below normal for this time of year, and the lows are expected to hover right around freezing.

In Prairieville, Louisiana, Valerie Anne Broussard struggled overnight to keep warm in a house that is being rebuilt after the 2016 floods that hit the small community southeast of Baton Rouge. Her home has exterior walls and floors but no insulation, no central heating and only a few working electrical outlets. Eggs that she left on the kitchen counter froze and broke open.

"It's like a camping trip that I didn't sign up for," said Broussard, who's been huddling with her 8-year-old daughter, newborn baby and boyfriend in a bedroom warmed by space heaters.

Making the most of the South's bitter cold snap, the North Carolina Zoo in Asheboro offered discounted tickets for those willing to brave the cold to see polar bears frolic in their kind of weather, along with Arctic

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 15 of 38

foxes and elk. African elephants, lions and gorillas were sheltered out of public view.

As the cold pushed farther northward, Jerry Gorans found himself stunned by the frigid temperatures as he walked along the waterfront City Dock of Annapolis, Maryland, where birds stood still on icy water.

"This is the coldest I've been in probably 50 years," said Gorans, who lives in Fresno, California, and was visiting his wife's family in Maryland. "I mean, this is freezing cold. My feet hurt, my ears hurt."

Associated Press reporters Seth Borenstein in Washington; Jay Reeves in Birmingham, Alabama; Tammy Webber in Indianapolis; Jeff Martin in Atlanta; Freida Frisaro in Miami; Brendan Farrington and Gary Fin-eout in Tallahassee, Florida; Jonathan Drew in Raleigh, North Carolina; Jeffrey Collins in Columbia, South Carolina; Rebecca Santana in New Orleans; Brian Witte in Annapolis, Maryland; Jeff Amy in Jackson, Mississippi and Stephen Morton in Savannah contributed to this story.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

05-10-15-33-35

(five, ten, fifteen, thirty-three, thirty-five)

Estimated jackpot: \$70,000

Lotto America

03-18-22-33-43, Star Ball: 5, ASB: 5

(three, eighteen, twenty-two, thirty-three, forty-three; Star Ball: five; ASB: five)

Estimated jackpot: \$17.51 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$418 million

Powerball

02-18-37-39-42, Powerball: 12, Power Play: 3

(two, eighteen, thirty-seven, thirty-nine, forty-two; Powerball: twelve; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$460 million

Daum's double-double lifts S. Dakota St. past N. Dakota St.

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — Mike Daum scored 37 points and grabbed 15 rebounds and South Dakota State beat North Dakota State 87-80 in a Summit League opener Wednesday night.

Daum — for the third time — tied his career high with 16 made free throws and finished perfect from the line. Daum recorded his seventh double-double of the season for South Dakota State (13-5), which has won four straight and six of its last seven.

With a 57-55 lead with 15 minutes left, Reed Tellinghuisen made a 3 that started the Jackrabbits on a 12-2 run over the next four minutes. Tellinghuisen finished with 22 points on 9-of-13 shooting and Tevin King added 10 points.

North Dakota State (8-7) led 46-45 at halftime but shot 10 of 33 after the break.

The Bison got a career-high 36 points from Paul Miller who tied a career-high with seven 3-pointers in 11 attempts. Cameron Hunter added 10 points for North Dakota State, which saw its three-game win streak come to an end.

Mooney leads South Dakota over Western Illinois 62-50

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Matt Mooney scored 11 of his 14 points in the final 4:16 to help South Dakota pull away and beat Western Illinois 62-50 on Wednesday night for its third straight win.

The Coyotes (14-4, 2-0 Summit League) have won seven of their last eight games since a 16-point loss to then-No. 1 Duke on Dec. 2. They have defeated Western Illinois (8-5, 0-1) in four straight and eight of the last nine games dating to the 2013-14 season.

Kobe Webster made three free throws to pull the Leathernecks to 46-42 with 4:35 left before the Coyotes closed on a 16-8 surge. Mooney made two field goals and was 6-of-6 shooting from the line during the stretch.

Trey Burch-Manning had 10 points and 11 rebounds, and Nick Fuller chipped in 10 points for South Dakota. Webster scored 19 points and Dalan Ancrum added 12 points and 10 rebounds for Western Illinois.

Deadwood poised to expand after annexation petition approved

DEADWOOD, S.D. (AP) — Deadwood is poised to grow by more than 1,000 acres after city leaders approved an annexation petition.

The city commission on Tuesday approved a petition for a 1,020-acre annexation from Frawley Ranches, Inc. The Black Hills Pioneer reports the proposal would extend Deadwood city limits to beyond the Frawley Ranch courtyard barns.

JR Hamblet, director of operations for Elkhorn Ridge on the Historic Frawley Ranch, said the idea is to help the city with affordable housing and a sports field across from Centennial Quarry.

Landscape architect Pat Wyss says the plan calls for 60 acres designated for soccer, baseball and walking paths.

Mayor Chuck Turbiville says the next step is for the commission to negotiate an annexation agreement with the developer. He says county and state review also is needed.

Information from: Black Hills Pioneer, <http://www.bhpioneer.com>

Sioux Falls won't repeal downtown construction contract

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls has opted to move forward with a \$50 million construction project despite critics questioning the partnership with a developer connected to a 2016 building collapse.

The City Council voted 5-3 on Tuesday to reject the repeal of its agreement with Legacy Developments to build a hotel, commercial space and parking garage downtown.

But Mayor Mike Huether's administration said a private guarantor on the agreement who's at the center of the controversy won't be associated with the project any longer.

The moves followed emotional testimony from the father of a woman injured in the building collapse, which also killed one person and left another trapped in rubble for hours.

"When this body voted to partner with Aaron Hultgren (owner of Hultgren Construction) ... we were bewildered, angry and frustrated," said Mike Fodness, whose daughter was in a residence above the Copper Lounge when it collapsed.

Hultgren Construction, the company involved in the Copper Lounge collapse, is now under federal criminal investigation by the Justice Department. Owner Aaron Hultgren also serves as director of operations and development for Legacy Developments.

The Community Development Office announced that a new limited liability company, Village River Group, will take over the project from Legacy Developments. Village River Group formed last week.

City Council member Pat Starr said he believes Village River Group was formed in reaction to support for the repeal proposal, which he co-sponsored.

"I think the solution to a problem is to face it head on and not form another LLC," said Starr.

Village River Group's manager, Jeffrey Lamont, will replace Hultgren as a guarantor on the project as well.

Other Legacy Developments officials will remain on the contract.

Starr said the city could make another repeal attempt should more information surface about Legacy Developments officials before project bonds are sold this spring.

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

Missouri River power generation up in 2017

By JAMES MacPHERSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Electric power generation from the Missouri River's six upstream dams increased 23 percent in 2017 but the federal agency that sells the power still had to buy electricity on the open market to fulfill contracts.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which manages dams and reservoirs along the 2,341-mile river, said energy production from the dams in the Dakotas, Montana and Nebraska totaled 9.6 billion kilowatts of electricity last year, up from 7.6 billion kilowatts.

A billion kilowatt-hours of power is enough to supply about 86,000 homes for a year, said Mike Swenson, a corps engineer in Omaha, Nebraska.

The Western Area Power Administration, which buys and sells power from 56 hydropower plants around the nation, says the six Missouri River dams are WAPA's second-largest producer of energy.

The agency sells the power to rural electric cooperatives, municipal utilities, Indian tribes and other customers. A shortfall of needed hydropower to satisfy customers' contracts meant WAPA had to purchase \$28.3 million of electricity on the open market, agency data show.

WAPA has spent more than \$1.7 billion since 2000 to fulfill contracts, mostly due to drought years that caused shallow river levels.

Oahe Dam near Pierre, South Dakota, which holds Lake Oahe in the Dakotas, and Garrison Dam, which creates Lake Sakakawea in western North Dakota, are typically the biggest power producers in the Missouri River system.

Oahe Dam generated 2.6 billion kilowatt hours last year, equal to the long-term average, Swenson said.

Garrison Dam also generated 2.6 billion kilowatt hours of electricity last year, up from long-term average of 2.2 billion kilowatt hours, he said.

The plants have generated an average of 9.3 billion kilowatt hours of electricity since 1967, including a high of 14.6 billion kilowatts in 1997, Swenson said.

The water storage level of the six upstream reservoirs in the Missouri River system is about 56 million acre-feet at present, about equal to the ideal level.

An acre-foot is the amount of water covering one acre, a foot deep.

The corps is charged with finding a balance between upstream states, which want water held in reservoirs to support fish reproduction and recreation, and downstream states, which want more water released from the dams, mainly to support barge traffic.

Officials notifying kin of dead woman found after car chase

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Attorney General Marty Jackley says authorities are notifying the family of a woman whose body was found in an SUV stopped after a high-speed chase in South Dakota.

Jackley says he hopes officials can release the woman's identity Wednesday.

Highway Patrol officials allegedly found the body wrapped in a blanket Monday after the chase with a drunken driver from California. Jackley says state authorities are investigating the woman's death with California officials.

A court complaint says 30-year-old Tosten Walsh Lommen, of Santa Cruz, faces charges including aggravated eluding and drunken driving.

Jackley's office says a Highway Patrol trooper on Monday observed Lommen driving over 100 mph on

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 18 of 38

I-90 in western South Dakota.

Authorities say the vehicle he was driving eventually came to rest in a ditch after officials used spike strips, and Lommen was arrested.

Attorney general proposes harsher meth dealing penalties

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Attorney General Marty Jackley unveiled his priorities Wednesday for the upcoming 2018 legislative session, asking South Dakota lawmakers to impose harsher penalties for methamphetamine dealing and manufacturing.

The proposals would also require disclosure of data breaches to affected state residents, clarify sex offender registration requirements and enact stronger penalties for drug dealers whose product kills another person. The session starts next week and runs until late March.

South Dakota saw 51 accidental drug overdose deaths in 2016, according to Jackley. Meth arrests in the state jumped from 2,126 in 2015 to 3,179 through November 2016.

A proposal cracking down on meth dealing would make distribution and manufacturing a more serious felony with a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison and a \$30,000 fine, up from 10 years imprisonment and a fine of \$20,000. Jackley said the stronger consequences would send a message that the distribution of the drug in South Dakota is "off limits."

"What we're seeing nationally is a drug epidemic. Specifically, a methamphetamine epidemic," Jackley said. "It's something that has come to South Dakota. We see it in our families, our communities."

Other proposed changes include enacting harsher sentences for meth distribution if the person has things such as cash or firearms and increasing penalties for distributing the drug to a minor. Jackley is also asking state lawmakers to make changes so mandatory minimum sentences for drug distribution and manufacturing are more broadly applied.

On data breaches, Jackley plans to offer a measure that would require companies to inform South Dakota residents whose personal information was acquired by an unauthorized person within 45 days of discovering the security intrusion. If a breach affected more than 250 state residents, the proposal would require the company to notify the attorney general.

"Almost every state in the union has a data breach law, so I want to begin the conversation in the Legislature about what can we do in South Dakota to better protect our consumers, to better make sure that if there is a data breach, consumers receive the information they need to make personal decisions about their financial security," Jackley said.

Jackley and U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem are competing in the Republican primary to succeed GOP Gov. Dennis Daugaard, who can't run again because of term limits. The Republican primary election is in June after what is expected to be an intense campaign. State Senate Democratic leader Billie Sutton has also entered the 2018 race.

Rapid City updating city law regulating pawnshops

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Rapid City Council has updated city law regulating pawnshops and secondhand dealers.

The Rapid City Journal reports the new rules that will take effect later this month include heightened restrictions on who can own and operate such businesses.

The city also is expanding the list of criminal convictions that would cause an applicant to lose or be denied a license. The new list specifies violent crimes including murder, manslaughter, rape and aggravated assault; drug-related offenses; and weapons offenses.

Police Chief Karl Jegeris says that currently, a decision to deny or revoke a license is largely a judgment call.

The new rules also require digital photographs to be taken of all jewelry purchased or received.

Most area pawnshop operators say the changes won't have a big impact on their business.

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

New book leaves Trump 'furious,' 'disgusted' with Bannon

By JILL COLVIN and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump launched a scathing attack on former top adviser Steve Bannon, responding to a new book that portrays Trump as an undisciplined man-child who didn't actually want to win the White House and quotes Bannon as calling his son's contact with a Russian lawyer "treasonous."

"I don't talk to him," Trump said Thursday of his former chief strategist.

Hitting back via formal White House statement rather than a more typical Twitter volley, Trump insisted Bannon had little to do with his victorious campaign and "has nothing to do with me or my Presidency."

"When he was fired, he not only lost his job, he lost his mind," Trump said Wednesday.

It was a blistering attack against the man who helped deliver the presidency to Trump, spurred by an unflattering new book by writer Michael Wolff that paints Trump as a leader who doesn't understand the weight of the presidency and spends his evenings eating cheeseburgers in bed, watching television and talking on the phone to old friends.

Speaking to reporters before meeting with Republican senators Thursday, Trump noted Bannon had praised him on his radio show late Wednesday after Trump issued the statement. "He called me a great man last night," Trump said. "He obviously changed his tune pretty quick"

Late Wednesday, Trump attorney Charles Harder threatened legal action against Bannon over "disparaging statements and in some cases outright defamatory statements."

Harder sent Bannon a letter saying the former Trump aide violated confidentiality agreements by speaking with Wolff. The letter demanded Bannon "cease and desist" any further disclosure of confidential information. Bannon did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Harder on Thursday sent cease-and-desist letters to Wolff and publisher Henry Holt and Co. Neither immediately responded to requests for comment.

Trump has a history of threatening to sue when he doesn't like something but rarely acts on those threats.

White House aides were blindsided when early excerpts from "Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House" were published online by New York magazine and other media outlets ahead of the Jan. 9 publication date.

The release left Trump "furious" and "disgusted," said White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders, who complained that the book contained "outrageous" and "completely false claims against the president, his administration and his family."

Asked what specifically had prompted the president's fury with Bannon, she said: "I would certainly think that going after the president's son in an absolutely outrageous and unprecedented way is probably not the best way to curry favor with anybody."

In the book, an advance copy of which was provided to The Associated Press, Bannon is quoted as describing a June 2016 meeting at Trump Tower between Donald Trump Jr., Trump campaign aides and a Russian lawyer as "treasonous" and "unpatriotic." The meeting has become a focus of federal and congressional investigators.

Bannon also told Wolff the investigations into potential collusion between Russia and Trump campaign officials would likely focus on money laundering.

"They're going to crack Don Junior like an egg on national TV," Bannon was quoted as saying in one section that was first reported by The Guardian.

A spokeswoman for Bannon did not immediately respond to a request for a comment. Trump Jr. lashed out in a series of tweets, including one that said Andrew Breitbart, the founder of the Breitbart News site that Bannon now runs, "would be ashamed of the division and lies Steve Bannon is spreading!"

Bannon, who was forced out of his White House job last summer, was not surprised or particularly

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 20 of 38

bothered by the blowback, according to a person familiar with his thinking but not authorized to speak publicly on the matter. That person said Bannon vowed on Wednesday to continue his war on the Republican establishment and also predicted that, after a cooling-off period, he'd continue to speak with Trump, who likes to maintain contact with former advisers even after he fires and sometimes disparages them.

CNN reported Bannon said on his satellite radio program Wednesday night that Trump was a "great man" after the president had blasted Bannon earlier in the day.

The former-and-current Breitbart News head has told associates that he believes Trump has been ill-served by some of his closest allies, including eldest son Don Jr. and Jared Kushner, the president's son-in-law. Bannon has said he believes they have exposed Trump to the Russia probe that could topple his presidency and that Trump would be able to accomplish more without them.

So far, there is no indication that Bannon is being investigated by special counsel Robert Mueller. But the House intelligence committee has invited him, along with former Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski, for a closed-door interview as a part of the panel's investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election, according to a person familiar with the invitation.

New York magazine also published a lengthy adaptation of the book on Wednesday, in which Wolff writes that Trump believed his presidential nomination would boost his brand and deliver "untold opportunities" — but that he never expected to win.

It says Trump Jr. told a friend that his father looked as if he'd seen a ghost when it became clear he might win. The younger Trump described Melania Trump as "in tears — and not of joy."

The first lady's spokeswoman, Stephanie Grisham, disputed that, saying Mrs. Trump supported her husband's decision to run, encouraged him to do so and was happy when he won.

Wolff was generally granted access to the White House with a "blue badge" instead of a traditional press badge, giving him wide access to the West Wing, according to officials who spoke on condition of anonymity in order to discuss internal protocol. One former White House official said Wolff was known to camp out for hours in the West Wing lobby after meetings, sitting on a sofa as he waited to talk to staffers passing by.

Wolff said in an author's note that the book was based on more than 200 interviews, including multiple conversations with the president and senior staff. But Sanders said Wolff "never actually sat down with the president" and had spoken with him just once, briefly, by phone, since Trump had taken office.

She also said the vast majority of interviews Wolff conducted with other White House officials were done at Bannon's request.

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writer Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

Sessions ending federal policy that let legal pot flourish

By SADIE GURMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General Jeff Sessions has rescinded an Obama-era policy that paved the way for legalized marijuana to flourish in states across the country, creating new confusion about enforcement and use just three days after a new legalization law went into effect in California.

President Donald Trump's top law enforcement official announced the change Thursday. Instead of the previous lenient-federal-enforcement policy, Sessions' new stance will instead let federal prosecutors where marijuana is legal decide how aggressively to enforce longstanding federal law prohibiting it.

Sessions' plan drew immediate strong objection from Republican Sen. Cory Gardner of Colorado, one of eight states that have legalized marijuana for recreational use.

Gardner said in a tweet that the Justice Department "has trampled on the will of the voters" in Colorado and other states. He said the action would contradict what Sessions had told him before the attorney general was confirmed and that he was prepared "to take all steps necessary" to fight the step including holding up the confirmation of Justice Department nominees.

Sessions rescinded the policy by president Barack Obama's Justice Department that has generally barred

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 21 of 38

federal law enforcement officials from interfering with marijuana sales in states where the drug is legal. "In deciding which marijuana activities to prosecute under these laws with the Department's finite resources, prosecutors should follow the well-established principles that govern all federal prosecutions," by considering the seriousness of the crime and its impact on the community, Sessions wrote in a one-page memo to the nation's federal prosecutors.

The move by Trump's attorney general likely is sure to add to confusion about whether it's OK to grow, buy or use marijuana in states where the drug is legal.

It comes just after shops opened in California, launching what is expected to become the world's largest market for legal recreational marijuana and as polls show a solid majority of Americans believe the drug should be legal.

While Sessions has been carrying out a Justice Department agenda that follows Trump's top priorities on such issues as immigration and opioids, the changes to marijuana policy reflect his own concerns. Trump's personal views on marijuana remain largely unknown.

Sessions, who has assailed marijuana as comparable to heroin and has blamed it for spikes in violence, had been expected to ramp up enforcement. Marijuana advocates argue that legalizing the drug eliminates the need for a black market and will likely reduce violence, since criminals would no longer control the marijuana trade.

The Obama administration in 2013 announced it would not stand in the way of states that legalize marijuana, so long as officials acted to keep it from migrating to places where it remained outlawed and keep it out of the hands of criminal gangs and children. Sessions is rescinding that memo, written by then-Deputy Attorney General James M. Cole, which had cleared up some of the uncertainty about how the federal government would respond as states began allowing sales for recreational and medical purposes.

The marijuana business has since become a sophisticated, multimillion-dollar industry that helps fund some government programs. Eight states and the District of Columbia have legalized marijuana for recreational use, and California's sales alone are projected to bring in \$1 billion annually in tax revenue within several years.

But the Sessions Justice Department believed the Cole memo created a "safe harbor" for marijuana sales that are federally illegal, Justice Department officials said. Sessions in the memo called the Obama guidance "unnecessary."

Sessions' policy will let U.S. attorneys across the country decide what kinds of federal resources to devote to marijuana enforcement based on what they see as priorities in their districts. Officials couldn't say what the ultimate impact will be on the legal industry or whether it will lead to more pot prosecutions.

Nor is it clear how the memo might affect states where marijuana is legal for medical purposes. A congressional amendment blocks the Justice Department from interfering with medical marijuana programs in states where it is allowed. Justice officials said they would follow the law, but would not preclude the possibility of medical-marijuana related prosecutions.

Sessions and some law enforcement officials in states such as Colorado blame legalization for a number of problems, including drug traffickers who have taken advantage of lax marijuana laws to illegally grow and ship the drug across state lines, where it can sell for much more. The decision was a win for marijuana opponents who had been urging Sessions to take action.

"There is no more safe haven with regard to the federal government and marijuana, but it's also the beginning of the story and not the end," said Kevin Sabet, president and CEO of Smart Approaches to Marijuana, who was among several anti-marijuana advocates who met with Sessions last month. "This is a victory. It's going to dry up a lot of the institutional investment that has gone toward marijuana in the last five years."

Threats of a federal crackdown have united liberals who object to the human costs of a war on pot with conservatives who see it as a states' rights issue. Some in law enforcement support a tougher approach, but a bipartisan group of senators in March urged Sessions to uphold existing marijuana policy. Others in Congress have been seeking ways to protect and promote legal pot businesses.

Marijuana advocates quickly condemned Sessions' move as a return to outdated drug-war policies that unduly affected minorities.

Sessions "wants to maintain a system that has led to tremendous injustice ... and that has wasted federal resources on a huge scale," said Maria McFarland Sanchez-Moreno, executive director of the Drug Policy Alliance. "If Sessions thinks that makes sense in terms of prosecutorial priorities, he is in a very bizarre ideological state, or a deeply problematic one."

A task force Sessions convened to study pot policy made no recommendations for upending the legal industry but instead encouraged Justice Department officials to keep reviewing the Obama administration's more hands-off approach to marijuana enforcement, something Sessions promised to do since he took office.

The change also reflects yet another way in which Sessions, who served as a federal prosecutor at the height of the drug war in Mobile, Alabama, has reversed Obama-era criminal justice policies that aimed to ease overcrowding in federal prisons and contributed to a rethinking of how drug criminals were prosecuted and sentenced. While his Democratic predecessor Eric Holder told federal prosecutors to avoid seeking long mandatory minimum sentences when charging certain lower-level drug offenders, for example, Sessions issued an order demanding the opposite, telling them to pursue the most serious charges possible against most suspects.

Virginia Republican's name drawn from bowl, giving him win

By ALAN SUDERMAN, Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — By luck of the draw, incumbent Republican David Yancey won a Virginia state House of Delegates race so close that its outcome was determined Thursday when an elections official pulled his name out of a ceramic bowl.

The drawing of lots happened after the race between Yancey and Democratic challenger Shelley Simonds ended in tie. The win allows Republicans to maintain a slim majority in the House, though a final tally is still uncertain because Simonds could ask for another recount. Adding another wrinkle: Another close legislative race is in doubt because it's locked in a court battle.

The drawing drew quite a crowd to the Virginia elections board meeting. Most of the people packed into the room were Simonds' supporters. Yancey did not attend but did have a representative there.

As Yancey's name was announced, Simonds sat stoically, holding the hands of her daughter and husband seated beside her. She endured a long moment of silence as the elections officials certified Yancey as the winner. The only sound in the room was the clicking of cameras, most of which were trained on Simonds.

Her supporters left the room disappointed and she addressed the media.

"This is a sad conclusion for me," she said.

However, she did not rule out asking for a recount, saying that her options were still on the table.

Before the drawing, officials detailed how it would work. The name of each candidate was printed on a piece of paper and placed into separate film canisters. The canisters were put into a cobalt-blue-and-white ceramic bowl made by a local artist, stirred around and Yancey's name was chosen first.

It's been nearly 50 years since a legislative seat was settled by drawing lots in Virginia. In 1971, Republican William H. Moss Sr. appeared to lose the election for a seat in northern Virginia. But after a recount ended in a tie, Moss was declared the winner after a blindfolded state elections official pulled his name out of a large decorative cup, according to news reports at the time.

The race between Yancey, a three-term incumbent, and Simonds has bounced back and forth since the November election, when Virginia Democrats — fueled by voter anger directed at Republican President Donald Trump — wiped out a 66-34 advantage held by Republicans in the House. The election has been widely seen as a potential harbinger of the 2018 midterm congressional elections.

Simonds appeared to have lost the November election by 10 votes, but on Dec. 19, she won a recount by a single vote. The next day, a three-judge panel declared a tie based on a previously uncounted vote for Yancey.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 23 of 38

At the heart of the dispute is a single ballot on which the voter filled in the bubble for both Simonds and Yancey. The voter also drew a single slash through the bubble for Simonds and picked Republican candidates in statewide races.

The ballot wasn't counted during the recount and was identified after a Republican election official raised concerns the following day.

With Yancey's win, Republicans hold a slim, 51-49 advantage over Democrats in the Virginia House. But the race may not be over. Simonds could ask for another recount, a move that would likely delay a winner being declared before the 2018 legislative session begins next week. That would still allow Republicans to elect a speaker and make committee assignments based on a 50-49 advantage.

The balance of power in the House could shift again because a lawsuit is pending over the results of another House race in Northern Virginia. Democrat Joshua Cole lost to Republican Bob Thomas by 73 votes in a recount. But voters filed a federal lawsuit after at least 147 ballots were found to be assigned to the wrong districts. A federal court hearing on that election is scheduled for Friday.

The General Assembly is set to reconvene Wednesday.

Dow Jones industrials climb above 25,000 for the first time

By MARLEY JAY, AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Dow Jones industrial average is trading above 25,000 points for the first time Thursday, just five weeks since its first close above 24,000.

The Dow broke through five 1,000-point barriers in 2017, on its way to a 25 percent gain for the year, as an eight-year rally since the Great Recession continued to confound skeptics.

Strong global economic growth and good prospects for higher company earnings have analysts predicting more gains, but perhaps with more volatility.

Big gains in major U.S. blue chip companies over the past year have been powering the Dow's relentless rise to new heights, including an 87 percent gain in aerospace giant Boeing, a 69 percent rise in Caterpillar and a 49 percent increase in Apple.

The Dow, which was founded in 1896 and is the oldest barometer of the U.S. stock market, has nearly quadrupled in value from its low during the financial crisis in early 2009.

Technology companies and banks, which put up some of the biggest gains in the last year, continued to lead the market higher Thursday. Microsoft, JPMorgan Chase and Wells Fargo posted solid gains in late-morning trading. And there was more good economic news Thursday: A report showed private U.S. businesses added 250,000 jobs last month, with smaller businesses adding 94,000.

The Dow, which tracks 30 big U.S. companies, was up 153 points, or 0.6 percent, to 25,077 as of 11:43 a.m. Eastern Time. The Dow and the other major U.S. indexes all set record highs a day earlier.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index, a much broader index which professional investors prefer to use as their benchmark for large U.S. stocks, rose 13 points, or 0.5 percent, to 2,726.

The Nasdaq composite, which is heavily weighted with technology and biotech companies, added 15 points, or 0.2 percent, to 7,080. The Nasdaq reached a milestone of its own this week, closing above 7,000 points for the first time Tuesday.

The Dow has made a rapid trip from 24,000 points on November 30, partly on enthusiasm over passage of the Republican-backed tax package, which could boost company profits this year with across-the-board cuts to corporate taxes.

More broadly, a steady recovery in economies in Europe, emerging markets as well as the U.S. has been helping send markets higher around the globe, and indexes in some developing countries have done even better than those in Europe and the U.S. over the past year. Brazil's benchmark Bovespa is up 28 percent over the past year and the Hang Seng index in Hong Kong is up 39 percent.

Bond prices sank, sending yields higher. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 2.48 percent from 2.44 percent.

Higher bond yields are good news for banks because they can charge higher interest rates on mortgages

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 24 of 38

and other kinds of loans. JPMorgan Chase gained \$2.01, or 1.9 percent, to \$109.51 and Wells Fargo rose \$1.11, or 1.8 percent, to \$62.67.

Intel continued to stumble after security researchers at Google discovered serious security flaws in its computer processors. It lost \$1.90, or 4.2 percent, to \$43.36 after a 3.4 percent decline Wednesday. Intel said it's working to fix the problem and that it's not the only company affected.

Rival Advanced Micro Devices said it believes its chips are safe and its stock jumped 83 cents, or 7.2 percent, to \$12.38. Most of Intel's rivals made big gains Wednesday.

Elsewhere among tech stocks, Google parent Alphabet climbed \$11.30, or 1 percent, to \$1,102.82 and Intuit added \$2.44, or 1.5 percent, to \$161.60.

Electric car maker Tesla again said it fell short of production goals for its new Model 3 sedan, which is intended to be its first lower-cost car. Tesla has been dogged by doubts that it can ramp up production of the Model 3 to satisfy widespread demand for its vehicles. The stock skidded \$8.47, or 2.7 percent, to \$308.78.

Benchmark U.S. crude rose 7 cents to \$61.70 a barrel in New York. Brent crude, used to price international oils, shed 7 cents to \$67.77 a barrel in London.

European markets were also higher. France's CAC 40 leaped 1.6 percent while Germany's DAX gained 1.5 percent. In Britain the FTSE 100 edged 0.3 percent higher. Earlier in Asia, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 rose 3.3 percent on the first trading day of the year. South Korea's Kospi lost 0.8 percent while Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 0.5 percent.

The dollar rose to 112.79 yen from 112.52 yen. The euro climbed to \$1.2083 from \$1.2018.

AP Markets Writer Marley Jay can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MarleyJayAP> His work can be found at <https://apnews.com/search/marley%20jayt>

Divided Democrats face liberal backlash on immigration

By **STEVE PEOPLES** and **MATTHEW DALY**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With a new deadline approaching, Democrats in Congress are struggling to adopt a unified strategy to protect hundreds of thousands of young immigrants from deportation.

Democrats' inaction has enraged liberal activists, who have shifted their anger away from the Republicans who run Congress. Democrats are trying to balance their commitment to a progressive priority with their desire to avoid a government shutdown — and the potential fallout in the 2018 elections.

Groups such as MoveOn are threatening to champion primary challenges against incumbents who don't fight hard enough for these young immigrants. They're commonly referred to as "Dreamers," based on never-passed proposals in Congress called the DREAM Act.

The liberal organization CREDO is pledging to block campaign cash from uncooperative Democrats. The pro-immigration United We Dream is preparing a new wave of camera-friendly protests at the Capitol and outside congressional Democrats' offices nationwide.

"The unity and trust between the grassroots and elected Democrats is rapidly eroding. It could turn ugly if this goes on any further," said Ben Wikler, MoveOn's Washington director.

At issue is President Donald Trump's decision to rescind an Obama-era executive order that created the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which gave protected status to about 800,000 immigrants in the United States illegally. Many of these immigrants were brought here as infants or children and have known no other country except the U.S.

Trump gave Congress until March to come up with a legislative solution. Pro-immigrant groups report that an estimated 851 immigrants are losing DACA protections each week as Congress struggles to find a permanent solution.

Republicans are resisting a stand-alone bill to provide legal status to the young immigrants unless it includes funding for Trump's border wall. Liberal groups want Democrats to use what leverage they have to force immigrant protections into government spending legislation that must be passed by Jan. 19 —

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 25 of 38

even if that triggers a government shutdown.

Democrats are far from united on whether they should go that far, however.

Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren told The Associated Press on Wednesday that, like many Democrats, she prefers to pass "a clean Dream Act" before Jan. 19.

"But if we don't, then we must do it as part of the spending bill," she said in an interview. "We cannot afford to kick the can down the road again. We promised we would protect these young people and we need to keep that promise."

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, in a letter to colleagues this week, reiterated support for a stand-alone bill to protect young immigrants. Pelosi, D-Calif., did not link the issue to the spending bill, even as congressional leaders met with White House officials Wednesday to discuss plans to avoid a government shutdown.

Trump planned to meet with Senate Republicans at the White House on Thursday to discuss immigration.

A White House spokesman said any DACA legislation must be paired with securing the border with a wall, ending provisions that hamstringing enforcement and abolishing a policy that lets immigrants bring a chain of family members to the country.

The political director for the progressive group CREDO, Murshed Zaheed, said it was "a pipe dream" to expect the Republican-controlled Congress to adopt a stand-alone bill to protect the young immigrants. That's why, he said, Democrats must use their limited leverage to include the provision in the must-pass spending bill.

Eighteen Democrats in the Senate and 14 in the House voted in favor of a temporary spending bill last month that did not include protections for immigrants. Liberal groups quickly created a website identifying the Democrats as "the Deportation Caucus" and promised to highlight their votes on congressional scorecards ahead of the midterm elections.

Warren and several other Democrats with possible presidential aspirations, such as California Sen. Kamala Harris and New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker, voted against the short-term spending bill, while many facing difficult re-elections this fall voted for the package. Seven of 10 Democrats seeking re-election in states where Trump won voted in favor of the spending bill, including Missouri's Claire McCaskill, North Dakota's Heidi Heitkamp and Montana's Jon Tester.

Liberal groups largely blame Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York for not uniting Democrats behind a hardline strategy, as he did during recent debates on taxes and health care.

"This is on Schumer. His most important job is to keep his caucus together," said Angel Padilla, policy director for the Trump resistance group called Indivisible.

More than a dozen Hispanic House members — all Democrats — forced a meeting late last month with Schumer on this issue.

Rep. Darren Soto, D-Fla., said Schumer assured Hispanic lawmakers that Democrats "will lay it all on the line" to protect Dreamers.

Yet it remains unclear whether Schumer will push his party to risk a government shutdown. Amid that uncertainty, the New York Democrat cast himself among those fighting for the young immigrants on Wednesday.

"It's time that Congress passes DACA protection into law and fix this once and for all," Schumer declared on the Senate floor.

Illustrating the messy politics of the issue, even California Democrat Dianne Feinstein has flip-flopped on the strategy.

After initial hesitation, Feinstein voted against the spending bill last month, bowing to weeks of pressure from immigrant groups and her Democratic campaign rival.

State Senate leader Kevin de Leon, who is running against Feinstein, has called her "AWOL" on immigration.

While some of her colleagues remain undecided, Feinstein appears to have gotten the message.

"These young people study, they work, they pay their taxes. They're patriotic. They're American in every

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 26 of 38

way that counts, and to leave them in such uncertainty is nothing less than cruel," Feinstein said.

Peoples reported from New York.

Massive winter storm bringing snow, cold to huge swath of US

By **SUSAN HAIGH** and **DAVE COLLINS**, Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — A massive winter storm swept from the Carolinas to Maine on Thursday, dumping snow along the coast and bringing strong winds that will usher in possible record-breaking cold.

Up to 18 inches of snow was expected in eastern New England. Blizzard warnings and states of emergency were in effect, schools and government offices closed for the day, thousands of flights were canceled and motorists were warned to be careful as conditions worsened. Shelters were open as officials worried about power outages leaving people without any heat.

People who take to the roads are in for an "ugly, long commute" New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said.

North Carolina authorities said two people died during the storm when their pickup truck ran off a snow-covered road and overturned into a creek Wednesday night in Moore County, which wasn't expected to get any snow. The North Carolina Highway Patrol responded to 700 collisions and 300 other calls for service during the storm.

In New Jersey, Orlando Igmtat's car got stuck in a snowbank along the Garden State Parkway in Tinton Falls on Thursday morning as he drove to work at Verizon. He had to wait a half hour for a tow truck to pull him out.

"I just skidded on the road and then stopped me here so I can't move right now anymore," he said. "I didn't expect it (the storm) was going to be a heavy one. That's why I went to work today. I'm going to stay in a hotel tonight."

Ankle deep snow and wind gusts approaching 50 mph (80 kph) covered Maryland's Ocean City Boardwalk, which was under a blizzard warning Thursday.

Eastern Massachusetts and most of Rhode Island were bracing for as much as 18 inches of snow, with snow falling at a rate of 3 inches per hour possible. The National Weather Service warned of wind gusts hitting near 70 mph.

The Eversource electric utility said more than 5,500 homes and businesses were without power at mid-morning Thursday in Provincetown, Massachusetts, on the outermost tip of Cape Cod, which was being lashed with hurricane-force wind gusts.

Connecticut Gov. Dannel P. Malloy said more than 100 warming centers have been opened in 34 towns across the state. Connecticut has 634 state plow trucks and 250 contractors working to clear the highways.

The massive storm began two days ago in the Gulf of Mexico, first hitting the Florida Panhandle. It has prompted thousands of canceled flights, shuttered schools and businesses and sparked fears of coastal flooding and power outages.

Wind gusts strong enough to cause downed trees and power lines were predicted in places where the National Weather Service has issued blizzard warnings. They include the Delmarva Peninsula, which includes parts of Delaware, Virginia and Maryland; coastal New Jersey; eastern Long Island, New York; and coastal eastern New England.

More than two-thirds of flights in and out airports in the New York City area and Boston were canceled. The airline-tracking site FlightAware reported more than 3,200 canceled flights within, into, or out of the United States on Thursday morning.

The storm shut down much of eastern Virginia, but some people were taking it in stride.

Mark Schoenenberger, 45, a NASA engineer who lives in Norfolk, Virginia, put on his cross country skis so he could make a half hour trip to the bagel shop for some breakfast for his family.

"It's like 'Yay, I get to go out,'" he said.

The only concern he seemed to have was telecommuting while his kids were home from school. But "it's just noise," he said.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 27 of 38

In Norfolk, Virginia, Jonathan Rogers and his brother, Jason Mitchell, got stuck in the snow at least twice while driving home Thursday morning after working the overnight shift at a local hospital.

"I was not staying," said Rogers, 30, a floor technician. "I said the storm is not going to bother me."

The storm will then be followed by a wave of bracing cold.

"We think there are going to be scattered records broken for low temperatures," said Peterson, adding how the weather service expects 28 major cities across New England, eastern New York and the mid-Atlantic states will have record low temperatures by dawn on Sunday.

State and local officials urged residents to prepare for possible power losses and stay home so crews can clear streets and roads of what could be as much as foot or more of snow in some places. There were concerns in Boston and elsewhere that if roads aren't properly cleared, they could freeze into cement-like icy messes by Friday, given the expected low temperatures. In other areas, plummeting temperatures already have caused water mains to burst.

The storm has resulted in thousands of canceled flights at major airports such as Boston's Logan International Airport and New York's LaGuardia Airport and disrupted the schedules at regional airports.

Amtrak planned to operate a modified schedule between New York and Boston on Thursday. North-east Regional Service between Washington, D.C., and Newport News/Norfolk, Virginia, was canceled for Thursday.

The coastal Southeast got a rare blast of snow and ice on Wednesday. Schools were shut down just months after hurricane threats. In Charleston, South Carolina, the weather service reported 5 inches of snow, enough for Chris Monoc's sons, ages 4 and 2, to go sledding outside their home.

"They probably will be teenagers the next time something like this happens, and that's kind of sad," Monoc said. "But we'll enjoy it while it's here."

Collins reported from Glastonbury, Connecticut. Associated Press writers Ben Finley in Norfolk, Virginia, Martha Waggoner in Raleigh, North Carolina, and Julio Cortez in Tinton Falls, New Jersey, contributed to this report.

New health insurance rule aims to deliver on Trump promise

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Striving to fulfill a campaign promise, the Trump administration on Thursday proposed regulations to facilitate the interstate sale of health insurance policies that cost less but may not cover as much.

The complex proposal from the Labor Department aims to deliver on President Donald Trump's long-standing pledge to increase competition and lower costs by promoting the sale of health plans across state lines. Yet its success depends on the actions of insurers, state consumer protection regulators, plan sponsors and customers themselves. Some already have concerns.

Frustrated in its efforts to repeal the Obama-era Affordable Care Act, the administration is pursuing regulations to change the insurance marketplace.

The new rule would make it easier for groups, or associations, to sponsor health plans that don't have to meet all consumer protection and benefit requirements of the Obama law. Those requirements improve coverage, but also raise premiums.

Because health insurance, like real estate, reflects wide variation in local prices, it's not immediately clear whether an insurer could charge Texas premiums for policies sold to people in Manhattan.

Insurance industry groups are skeptical of Trump's idea. Patient groups are concerned about losing protections. Some state regulators object to federal interference. Some experts foresee potential legal challenges.

In a recent interview, Trump predicted that insurance markets would be transformed by the combination of this expected proposal, often referred to as "association health plans," and the GOP's recent repeal of the health law's requirement that most people get health insurance or risk fines.

"So now I have associations," Trump told The New York Times last week. "I have private insurance

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 28 of 38

companies coming and will sell private health care plans to people through associations. That's gonna be millions and millions of people. People have no idea how big that is. And by the way, and for that, we've ended 'across state lines.' So we have competition."

Trump appeared to be referring to current obstacles that deter a health insurance company in one state from marketing to individual customers in another state. Some of those barriers have to do with state regulations that differ in the kinds of benefits that insurers must cover. For example, one state may require robust coverage for children with autism, while another may not.

Under the administration's proposal, health plans sponsored by associations would gain enhanced status under a federal law that generally exempts large employer plans from state regulation. Experts are poring over the proposal to determine precisely to what degree such exemptions would apply to the new plans.

"The goal of the rule-making is to expand access to affordable health coverage, especially among small employers and self-employed individuals, by removing undue restrictions on the establishment and maintenance of association health plans" under federal law, the proposal said.

The Labor Department said up to 11 million people who are self-employed or work for small businesses could benefit. Association plans, called "Small Business Health Plans" in the proposal, would be open to small employers and sole proprietors and their families. They could be organized on the lines of a geographic area or an industry.

The department said such plans would not be able to charge individuals higher premiums because of health issues or turn down applicants with medical problems. Interested parties will have 60 days to comment on the proposal.

The main insurance industry groups, along with organizations representing patients and consumers, worry that the administration's approach could siphon healthy people away from the health law's insurance markets, creating a spiral of rising premiums for people who need comprehensive benefits.

"We are concerned that this could create or expand alternative, parallel markets for health coverage, which would lead to higher premiums for consumers, particularly those with pre-existing conditions," according to a letter last month to state regulators, signed by America's Health Insurance Plans and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. "Further, these actions destabilize the health insurance markets that guarantee access to comprehensive health coverage regardless of health status."

Even before Thursday's development, Pennsylvania's acting insurance commissioner, Jessica Altman, had her own concerns. "Generally speaking, these types of plans are exempt from state law and outside my jurisdiction," the Democratic appointee said in an interview. "That means any issues that consumers have, I won't be able to help them. More and more people would fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government, and I think state regulators would say we really do it better."

New year, new start? Not in President Trump's Washington

By JULIE PACE, AP Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON (AP) — So much for a new year, new start.

For Donald Trump, that energy-sapping 2017 cocktail of blistering presidential tweets, salacious White House infighting and jaw-dropping feuds with foreign adversaries has given way to, well, more of the same.

"We are off and running," said Josh Holmes, a longtime adviser to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. "It's amazing that the pace that we set in 2017 has continued with equal vigor."

Indeed, the first three days of 2018 — yes, just three days — brought a new array of targets for the president and the return of some familiar foes. As part of a 17-tweet barrage on Tuesday, Trump picked a fight with the "deep state" within his own government that he believes is trying to undermine his presidency, and he raised the specter of war with North Korea by asserting that his "Nuclear Button" was bigger than that of Pyongyang's leader Kim Jong Un.

By Wednesday, Trump had turned on his former top adviser Steve Bannon, accusing him of having "lost his mind." The scathing attack, issued with the formality of an official White House statement, followed the publication of excerpts from an unflattering book in which Bannon accuses the president's namesake

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 29 of 38

son of holding a “treasonous” meeting with a Russian lawyer during the campaign.

Across Washington, holiday cheer was suddenly a distant memory.

“I feel exhausted,” said Rick Tyler, a Republican strategist who advised Texas Sen. Ted Cruz in his campaign against Trump in the 2016 GOP presidential primary. “I feel like the year has got to be over by now.”

Trump rattled Washington in his first year in office by blowing past the guardrails that have traditionally governed what a president does and doesn’t say and by frequently picking fights that seem far less consequential than the weighty issues that land on a commander in chief’s desk. He needled friendly foreign leaders like Britain’s Theresa May, accused former President Barack Obama of wiretapping his New York skyscraper and spread rumors about media personalities he deemed overly critical.

To be sure, no one in Washington expected Trump to be a different man when he returned from Christmas vacation at his estate in Palm Beach, Florida. By now, Washington has largely come to grips with the reality of a president who often starts and ends his day with tweets on topics that are a mystery to even his closest aides until they pop up on their smartphones. And while some Trump advisers have grown beleaguered by the president’s seemingly insatiable appetite for a feud, few expect that to change or put much effort into trying to hold him back.

Yet there was still a hope, both in the White House and on Capitol Hill, that the president might return to Washington eager to build on the passage of a sweeping Republican overhaul of the tax code in the waning days of December. The bill passed with only Republican votes, and polling shows the complicated legislation is deeply unpopular with Americans, leaving the president and his party with a tall task if they hope to ride the tax overhaul to electoral victories in the midterm elections.

Trump has tweeted a handful of messages in 2018 about the tax bill. But he generated far more attention with his missives taking aim at the media and his unfounded claim of credit for the fact that no commercial airlines crashed in 2017.

Some Republicans cringed. Tyler said that in the early days of 2018, the White House had already “lost the communications war over what tax policy is designed to do.” And he put the blame squarely on Trump, saying the president “cannot be trusted with his own message.”

On Capitol Hill, where the Senate returned to work, most GOP lawmakers girded themselves for another year of what has become their familiar ritual: carefully critiquing Trump’s most sensational comments without criticizing the president himself. Asked about Trump’s North Korea button bluster, Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, the No. 2 Senate Republican, said simply: “It’s probably better not to tweet about such things.”

Just 361 days to go until the calendar flips again.

Follow Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC>

Strength of Iran protests uncertain after a week of unrest

By **NASSER KARIMI** and **JON GAMBRELL**, Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — The strength of protests shaking Iran was unclear on Thursday after a week of unrest that killed at least 21 people, with fewer reports of demonstrations as government supporters again took to the streets in several cities and towns.

It wasn’t immediately clear if the drop in reports of new demonstrations challenging Iran’s theocratic government meant the protests are subsiding or that the authorities’ blocking of social media apps has managed to stop protesters from offering new images of rallies.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration acknowledged the speed and breadth of the protests took both it and the Iranian government by surprise.

The past week’s protests have been the largest in Iran since the disputed 2009 presidential election, which ended in bloodshed. While many Iranians denounce the violence that has accompanied some demonstrations, they echo the protesters’ frustration over the weak economy and official corruption.

Thousands rallied on Thursday in support of the government in various towns and cities, including in the northeastern city of Mashhad, where the anti-government protests began last week and extended

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 30 of 38

to other cities.

State television repeatedly broadcast nationalistic songs and described the pro-government rallies as an "answer to rioters and supporters to the riot." That appeared to be a reference to President Donald Trump who tweeted in support of anti-government rallies.

The TV also broadcast footage of similar pro-government gatherings Thursday in the cities of Shiraz, Isfahan, Ardabil, Birjand and Yasuj.

Meanwhile, a top Russian diplomat warned the United States not to meddle in Iran's affairs and suggested that Washington wants to use the unrest to undermine the Iran nuclear agreement.

"We warn the U.S. against attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran," Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told the state news agency Tass on Thursday.

Ryabkov also said Washington "is tempted to use the moment to raise new issues with regard to the JCPOA," the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that limits Iran's nuclear program, including restricting uranium enrichment for 10 years. Vice President Mike Pence said Wednesday the U.S. wants an agreement lasting longer.

In a letter Wednesday to United Nations officials, Iranian Ambassador Gholamali Khoshroo complained that Washington was intervening "in a grotesque way in Iran's internal affairs." He said Trump and Vice President Mike Pence were personally stirring up trouble.

"The president and vice-president of the United States, in their numerous absurd tweets, incited Iranians to engage in disruptive acts," the ambassador wrote to the U.N. Security Council president and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Trump's U.N. envoy, Ambassador Nikki Haley, has called for an emergency Security Council meeting on Iran, saying the U.N. needed to speak out in support of the protesters. As yet, no meeting has been scheduled.

Late Wednesday, senior Trump administration officials acknowledged their surprise that the protests took hold so quickly.

"This was not on our radar," said one official, who like the others spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters.

The officials said they believed conservative opponents of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, a relative moderate within Iran's clerically overseen government, started the demonstrations in Mashhad, but quickly lost control of them. That largely mirrors analysts' beliefs.

The officials also said internet suppression by Iranian authorities made it difficult for protesters to publish their videos, with an upload sometimes taking the entire day. They said the U.S. government is still looking at its options at helping open up the internet, though no decision has been taken yet.

Associated Press writers Josh Lederman in Washington and Jennifer Peltz at the United Nations 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. HOW BANNON PORTRAYED TRUMP

In a new book, Trump's former top adviser labels the president as an undisciplined man-child who didn't actually want to win the White House and quotes Bannon as calling his son's contact with a Russian lawyer "treasonous."

2. FOR TRUMP, THERE'S NO NEW START TO THE NEW YEAR

The first three days of 2018 have been filled with blistering presidential tweets, White House infighting and feuds with foreign adversaries that governed the president's first year in office.

3. BLIZZARD WARNING ISSUED FROM NORTH CAROLINA TO MAINE

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 31 of 38

A monster winter storm packing snow, ice and high winds, followed by possible record-breaking cold, is moving up the Eastern Seaboard.

4. IRAN'S REGIONAL ENEMIES TAKE DIFFERENT TACT WITH UNREST

Saudi Arabia has largely remained quiet, while Israel has wholeheartedly and openly tried to woo Iranian protesters.

5. DIVIDED DEMOCRATS FACE LIBERAL BACKLASH ON IMMIGRATION

Democrats in Congress are struggling to adopt a unified strategy to protect hundreds of thousands of young immigrants from deportation.

6. HOW AN ELECTION WILL BE DECIDED

A tie in a Virginia legislative race will be decided by pulling a name out of a ceramic bowl.

7. TRUMP DISBANDS VOTER FRAUD COMMISSION

The White House says more than a dozen states refused to comply with the panel's demand for personal voter data.

8. AMTRAK TRAIN DERAILS IN GEORGIA

Three cars carrying more than 300 people from Miami to New York come off the rails in snowy Savannah but no injuries were reported, authorities say.

9. WHO IS LEADING CANNES

Australian actress and anti-sexual harassment campaigner Cate Blanchett will head this year's film festival jury.

10. ANDY MURRAY WITHDRAWS FROM AUSTRALIAN OPEN

A hip problem that has kept the three-time major champion out of competitive tennis since Wimbledon will sideline the Scottish star in Melbourne.

Real weather term "bomb" blows up on social media

By **SETH BORENSTEIN, AP Science Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — When it comes to weather, it's hard to sound scarier than "bomb cyclone."

It's a version of a real weather term that applies to a massive winter storm that pulled together Wednesday off the U.S. Southeast coast. But as fearsome as the storm is with high winds and some snow, it may not be quite as explosive as the term sounds.

Meteorologists have used the term "bomb" for storms for decades, based on a strict definition, said University of Oklahoma meteorology professor Jason Furtado.

After it showed up in a Washington Post story on Tuesday, the weather geek term took on a life of its own on social media. The same thing happened four years ago with "polar vortex," another long-used weather term that was little known to the public until then.

"Bombogenesis is the technical term. Bomb cyclone is a shortened version of it, better for social media," said Weather.US meteorologist Ryan Maue, who helped popularize polar vortex in 2014.

"The actual impacts aren't going to be a bomb at all," Maue said. "There's nothing exploding or detonating."

Storm intensity is measured by central pressure — the lower the pressure, the stronger. A storm is considered a "bomb" when the pressure drops rapidly — at least 24 millibars in 24 hours.

This storm looks like it will intensify at twice that rate, said Bob Oravec, lead forecaster at the National Weather Service's Weather Prediction Center.

So far, the storm has dumped freak snow on the Southeast. It's aiming for the Northeast, where the snow forecast for Thursday isn't that big a deal, Furtado and others said. The worst of this storm will stay out to sea. What is going to be bigger is the high winds — gusts exceeding 60 mph — and the bitter cold that follows, they said.

Bomb cyclones draw air from polar regions after they leave. In this case, it means extra cold Arctic air because of where the polar vortex is, Furtado said.

Worldwide, about 40 to 50 "bomb cyclones" brew each year, but most are over open ocean and nobody

but weather geeks notice, Maue said.

"We use the term bomb," Furtado said. "We know what it means, but I do think it gets a little hyped up."

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears . His work can be found here .

APNewsBreak: Foreign fishermen settle human trafficking suit

By CALEB JONES AND MARTHA MENDOZA, Associated Press

Two Indonesian fishermen who say they were enslaved on an American fishing boat have settled their lawsuit against the vessel's owner seven years after escaping and receiving special U.S. visas as victims of human trafficking, their lawyers told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

The attorneys said Sorihin, who uses just one name, and Abdul Fatah settled their lawsuit for an undisclosed sum against Thoai Van Nguyen, the California-based owner and captain of the Sea Queen II.

Nguyen denied all allegations of abuse but agreed to provide a detailed list of rights to anyone fishing on his boats.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. court in San Francisco, claimed the men were trafficked through the Hawaii longline fishing fleet and forced to work on the boat around Hawaii and off the shores of California.

Citing federal and international human trafficking laws, the suit sought an unspecified amount of money for fees they paid and compensation they were promised along with damages for mental anguish and pain.

The lawsuit was being prepared as a 2016 Associated Press investigation revealed the Hawaii fleet operates under a loophole in federal law that allows owners to use foreign laborers with no work visas or the ability to legally enter the United States.

The workers, mostly from impoverished Southeast Asian and Pacific nations, are required to hand over their passports and confined to boats while working in the U.S., even when docked in Honolulu or San Francisco.

Boat owner Jim Cook of the Hawaii Longline Association said Wednesday the settlement won't impact their fleet, made up of about 700 foreign fishermen on about 140 boats. He said they are separately preparing their own documents detailing rights which they will distribute to workers.

Honolulu attorney Lance Collins said it's unlikely more lawsuits will follow — even if they wanted to sue, most of the fishermen in Hawaii can't get a lawyer because they're not allowed to leave the docks when they come to shore.

"Two poor fishermen from another country who were brave enough, or frightened enough, to run from their boat can't be expected to enforce regulations for an entire multimillion industry," said Collins.

A broader solution has been proposed in Washington, where Hawaii's elected officials are backing legislation that would allow foreign fishermen to come onshore when they're not fishing.

Hawaii's foreign fishermen are generally paid a fraction of what other U.S. commercial fishing crews make, some receiving as little as 70 cents an hour while working up to 20 hours a day.

Conditions on the boats vary. While some vessels are clean and relatively safe, the AP found some crews living in squalor with sores from bed bugs. There also have been cases of active tuberculosis and low food supplies.

Ken Bass, Nguyen's son-in-law who is acting as his attorney, said the dispute between Fatah, Sorihin and Nguyen began with the fishermen getting different contracts from an Indonesian employment firm in 2009.

He said Nguyen never had any direct dealings with the Indonesian firm but used a middleman in Hawaii who knew how to get workers from Indonesia. The contract Nguyen was given from the Hawaii-based recruiter was different than the paperwork given to Fatah and Sorihin, Bass said.

"So, they basically had different contracts but no one at the time knew that, so that's immediately going to lead to misunderstanding," Bass said. "If anybody was culpable, it was the broker in Indonesia."

Lawyers for Fatah and Sorihin say it doesn't matter if there were differences in the contracts.

"The trafficking claims do not rely on the contract provisions," said Agnieszka Fryszman, one of the attorneys. "The trafficking statute provides basic protections that apply regardless."

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 33 of 38

After the men ran away from the Sea Queen, Bass said Nguyen was forced to pay hefty fines for letting the men escape and that U.S. customs agents threatened to suspend his ability to use foreign workers.

Under the settlement, Nguyen must give fliers to his foreign crew members, written in their native languages, outlining their rights and ways to get help. His crews must have at least 77 hours of rest a week, and access to their passports.

"This settlement should be a wakeup call to the commercial fishing industry," Fryszman said. "There's simply no excuse for turning a blind eye to human trafficking, and we look forward to continuing our efforts to hold others in the industry accountable."

Sorihin, who has settled with his family in the San Francisco Bay Area, said in an email that the settlement has given him "a sense of peace."

"I hope it will bring better treatment to seamen on the Sea Queen and in the fishing industry," he said.

"I feel more certainty after the settlement," Fatah said in an email. "I work in retail, and I want to start a new life in San Francisco and create a better future for my family. I hope the captain treats the seamen like what he agreed to."

Associated Press writer Margie Mason contributed to this report.

Read the entire AP series on abuses in the fishing industry: <https://www.ap.org/explore/seafood-from-slaves/index.html#main-section>

Pro-government rallies held in Iran after week of unrest

By **NASSER KARIMI** and **JON GAMBRELL**, Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Tens of thousands of government supporters took to the streets across Iran on Wednesday as authorities tried to project a sense of stability after a week of protests sparked deadly clashes and calls for the downfall of the Islamic Republic.

But even as state television aired footage shot from helicopters of the support for Iran's clerically overseen government, videos emerged showing the anti-government unrest that has swept major cities has also spread to the countryside in the nation of 80 million people.

At least 21 people have been killed in the unrest and hundreds more have been arrested by authorities. Demonstrators' videos corresponded with Associated Press reporting from outside of Iran, though individual activists remain unreachable and the protests for now appear leaderless. It was not clear if new protests were held Wednesday or if the videos showed earlier events.

The past week's protests have been the largest since the disputed 2009 presidential election, which ended in bloodshed. While many Iranians denounce the violence that has accompanied some demonstrations, they echo the protesters' frustration over the weak economy and official corruption.

The government "should not punish the guilty and the innocent alike," said Mohammad Hossein Vakili, a 20-year-old computer science student in Tehran who has struggled to find meaningful work and who joined in peaceful protests.

"Why should they arrest someone like me when I protest the rise of the price of eggs?" he said.

The protests began Dec. 28 in Mashhad, Iran's second-largest city and a bastion for hard-liners, initially focusing on Iran's flagging economy and rising food prices. Now, they've morphed into demands for wholesale change in Iran's theocratic government.

On Wednesday, state TV reported pro-government demonstrations in dozens of cities and towns, including Ahvaz, the capital of the oil-rich province of Khuzestan, the Kurdish town of Kermanshah in the country's west and Qom, the religious capital of Shiite Islam in Iran.

All those cities have seen protests in recent days.

The pro-government crowds included women wearing the all-encompassing black chador, the occasional man in military fatigues and Shiite clerics wearing black turbans identifying them as descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. Some claimed online that government employees had been instructed to take part,

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 34 of 38

something Iranian media did not discuss.

The English-language Press TV broadcast Wednesday's pro-government rallies live, saying they sought to "protest the violence that has taken place over the last few nights in cities." State TV said the demonstrations served as an "answer to the protests," which it blamed on "servants of the U.S."

Among the slickly produced signs carried at the pro-government rallies were ones targeting Israel, Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has blamed the protests on meddling by "enemies of Iran."

Some demonstrators also held aloft pictures of President Donald Trump with a bright red "X" through his face. Trump has tweeted several times in support of the protests, comments that have angered many Iranians given his travel ban barring them from getting U.S. visas, as well as his comments over the nuclear deal.

The 2015 agreement, in which Iran curbed its nuclear activities in exchange for the lifting of some sanctions, remains popular in Iran, but one of the central grievances of the protesters is that average Iranians have seen few benefits from it.

Trump kept up with the tweets Wednesday, writing: "Such respect for the people of Iran as they try to take back their corrupt government."

He added: "You will see great support from the United States at the appropriate time!"

Iran's ambassador to the United Nations complained about his tweets in a letter Wednesday to the Security Council president. Ambassador Gholamali Khoshroo says U.S. leaders have "incited Iranians to engage in disruptive acts" and the U.S. government has been intervening "in a grotesque way in Iran's internal affairs."

The United Nations' high commissioner for human rights, meanwhile, called on Iran to investigate all deaths in the protests and act "with great care so as not to further inflame violence and unrest."

"The Iranian authorities must respect the rights of all demonstrators and detainees, including their right to life, and guarantee their safety and security," Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein said in a statement.

Iranian officials have downplayed the strength of the protests. Turkish officials on Wednesday said Iran's President Hassan Rouhani told his Turkish counterpart during a phone call that he hopes the protests "will end in a couple of days." Rouhani's office did not mention the comment.

State TV quoted the chief of the powerful Revolutionary Guard, Gen. Mohammad Ali Jafari, as saying Wednesday marked "the end of the sedition."

It remains difficult for journalists to piece together what's happening beyond the capital, especially as the government has blocked both the photo-sharing app Instagram and the messaging app Telegram, which protesters have used to organize their demonstrations and share footage.

But online videos that emerged Wednesday appeared to show continued protests in the provinces.

One showed protesters in Shahinshar, 315 kilometers (200 miles) south of Tehran, throwing objects at a base of the Basij, a volunteer force affiliated with the paramilitary Guard. A gunshot and muzzle flash could be seen in the footage taken in Isfahan province, where there have been days of protests.

Another series of videos showed protesters in the city of Noor Abad, some 360 kilometers (225 miles) southwest of Tehran, offering a glimpse into how demonstrations can turn violent.

In the footage, protesters are seen tearing down a poster bearing the image of Khamenei and his late predecessor, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who led the 1979 Islamic Revolution. After a cut, demonstrators are seen coming to the aid of another protester, who appears seriously wounded. Activists said the man died, though the AP had no way to verify that.

In anger, the protesters set fire to an overturned ambulance, shouting as the flames rose into the night sky.

Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 35 of 38

Iran says Trump's 'absurd tweets' have incited disruption

By JENNIFER PELTZ, Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Iran charged Wednesday that the U.S. “has crossed every limit” in international relations by expressing support for Iran’s anti-government protesters and said President Donald Trump’s “absurd tweets” have encouraged disruption.

In a letter to U.N. officials, Iranian Ambassador Gholamali Khoshroo complained that Washington was intervening “in a grotesque way in Iran’s internal affairs.” He said Trump and Vice President Mike Pence were personally stirring up trouble.

“The President and Vice-President of the United States, in their numerous absurd tweets, incited Iranians to engage in disruptive acts,” the ambassador wrote to the U.N. Security Council president and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

The U.S. didn’t immediately respond to the letter, which maintains that Washington “has crossed every limit in flouting rules and principles of international law governing the civilized conduct of international relations.”

At least 21 people have been killed and hundreds arrested in Iran during a week of anti-government protests and unrest over economic woes and official corruption. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of people took part in counter-demonstrations Wednesday backing the clerically overseen government, which has said “enemies of Iran” are fomenting the protests.

Trump has unleashed a series of tweets in recent days backing the protesters, saying Iran is “failing at every level” and declaring that it is “time for change” in the Islamic Republic.

“Such respect for the people of Iran as they try to take back their corrupt government,” he tweeted Wednesday. “You will see great support from the United States at the appropriate time!”

Trump’s U.N. envoy, Ambassador Nikki Haley, called Tuesday for an emergency Security Council meeting on Iran, saying the U.N. needed to speak out in support of the protesters.

As yet, no meeting has been scheduled.

Guterres is following the developments in Iran with concern, deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said earlier Wednesday. He said the secretary-general urged respect for free-expression rights and stressed that any demonstrations should be peaceful.

Trump barrels into 2018 with fresh foreign fights on Twitter

By JOSH LEDERMAN and MATTHEW LEE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — You thought President Donald Trump might mellow out in 2018? Refrain from taunting world leaders tweet by tweet? Think again.

Trump is storming into the new year in exceptionally aggressive fashion, picking fresh fights on Twitter with such speed that his aides, international partners and the public are struggling to catch up. If he was brash on the global stage in Year 1, the first days of Year 2 suggest he was just warming up.

Pakistan? Liars and swindlers who enable terrorists, the president tweeted just hours after the world celebrated the arrival of a new year.

The Palestinians? No more U.S. aid until they get their act together and agree to peace talks with Israel.

Iran? “Failing at every level,” Trump tweeted as he declared full-throated U.S. support for protesters there opposing the government.

And North Korea? Leader Kim Jong Un may have a figurative “nuclear button” on his desk, but Trump’s is “much bigger,” the president quipped, flippantly tossing off a threat to launch the world’s first nuclear strike in more than 70 years.

To Trump’s supporters, and even to his critics, it may seem business as usual. After all, in his inaugural year Trump relentlessly pushed presidential boundaries with provocative declarations that often weren’t fulfilled.

Yet for foreign nations trying anxiously to interpret the U.S. leader, such statements can have real-world consequences. Pakistan is livid at Trump’s remarks, summoning the U.S. ambassador in Islamabad to

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 36 of 38

explain the disparagement of a key U.S. security partner. Iran's United Nations ambassador, citing "numerous absurd tweets" by Trump and Vice President Mike Pence, accused the administration of "flagrant acts of intervention." North Korea experts worry Trump's taunting of Pyongyang could lead the two countries to stumble into war.

"I think he should stop. It's dangerous. It's dangerous bravado," former Vice President Joe Biden told The Associated Press on Tuesday. During a visit to the U.S. Capitol, Biden also said Trump needed to learn that it's not a game and that "words matter" when uttered by the commander in chief.

The White House played down the furor.

Spokeswoman Sarah Sanders insisted Trump wasn't "taunting" Kim Jong Un, merely "standing up for the people of this country." What would be dangerous, Sanders said, would be for Trump to stay silent.

"This is a president who is not going to cower down and is not going to be weak," she said.

Trump's rapid-fire spate of new pronouncements on foreign policy came as the president, fresh off his holiday vacation, made clear the second year of his presidency would be no less of a rollercoaster than the first.

On Wednesday, much of official Washington gasped as Trump, responding to a new book filled with criticism and insider gossip about his administration, issued a statement blasting his former chief strategist Steve Bannon as "out of his mind."

"This is just who he is," Ari Fleisher, former press secretary to President George W. Bush, said of Trump. "One year in, he still appraises his job as an outsider, not as the insider who leads the government, but the outsider who tweets and critiques and lets it rip."

Trump's social media taunts have left officials at the White House National Security Council, the State Department and other agencies scrambling over the past two days to determine whether he was setting new directions on a dime, or simply giving some New Year's oomph to his pre-existing foreign policy.

For the most part, it turned out to be the latter. Senior administration officials said they're directing government staff to consider the tweets to be "just tweets" and assume that no new policies are announced unless told otherwise through formal channels. The officials weren't authorized to discuss internal conversations publicly and demanded anonymity.

On Pakistan, for instance, Trump tweeted about slashing the country's aid because its leaders treat U.S. leaders "as fools" and "give safe haven to the terrorists we hunt in Afghanistan." He appeared to be echoing U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley. Her comments earlier in the day came as she confirmed the U.S. was withholding \$255 million in assistance to Pakistan — a decision made last summer.

Despite the anger in Islamabad, officials in Washington felt the uproar was overstated. Although Trump's tweets were hardly diplomatic, officials said, they reflect years-long frustrations with the Pakistanis that have gripped administrations of both parties.

And Trump's threat to cut aid to the Palestinians didn't come out of the blue. U.S. officials had been considering steps against Palestinian authorities after they brought a vote to the U.N. General Assembly to condemn Trump's action in recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital. It passed overwhelmingly.

Officials described the discussions on cutting aid as still preliminary. An initial government-wide meeting to review possibilities is set for Thursday, and Trump's top national security aides aren't expected to weigh the options until at least next week, the officials said.

Nevertheless, Palestinians responded sharply, and senior officials there said they wouldn't be "blackmailed" by Trump. Whatever the president decides, his threat didn't give any immediate new life to an Arab-Israel peace process he wants to lead.

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller and Alan Fram contributed to this report.

Reach Josh Lederman on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/joshledermanAP> and Matthew Lee at <http://twitter.com/APDiploWriter>

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 37 of 38

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Jan. 4, the fourth day of 2018. There are 361 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 4, 1868, "The Moonstone" by Wilkie Collins, considered by some the first full-length English detective novel, began to be serialized in Britain and the U.S. in *All the Year Round* and *Harper's Weekly* (it was published in book form in July 1868).

On this date:

In 1717, France, Britain and Holland formed a Triple Alliance against Spain.

In 1896, Utah was admitted as the 45th state.

In 1904, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Gonzalez v. Williams*, ruled that Puerto Ricans were not aliens and could enter the United States freely; however, the court stopped short of declaring them citizens. (Puerto Ricans received U.S. citizenship in March 1917.)

In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his State of the Union address, called for legislation to provide assistance for the jobless, elderly, impoverished children and the handicapped.

In 1943, for the second time, Soviet dictator Josef Stalin made the cover of *TIME* as the magazine's 1942 "Man of the Year."

In 1951, during the Korean War, North Korean and Communist Chinese forces recaptured the city of Seoul (sohl).

In 1960, author and philosopher Albert Camus (al-BEHR' kah-MOO') died in an automobile accident in Villeblevin, France, at age 46.

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson delivered his State of the Union address in which he outlined the goals of his "Great Society."

In 1967, "The Doors," the self-titled debut album of the rock group featuring the song "Light My Fire," was released by Elektra Records.

In 1974, President Richard Nixon refused to hand over tape recordings and documents subpoenaed by the Senate Watergate Committee.

In 1987, 16 people were killed when an Amtrak train bound from Washington, D.C., to Boston collided with Conrail locomotives that had crossed into its path from a side track in Chase, Maryland.

In 1995, the 104th Congress convened, the first entirely under Republican control since the Eisenhower era.

Ten years ago: The government reported that the nation's jobless rate hit 5 percent in December 2007, a two-year high, fanning recession fears. Britney Spears lost custody of her two sons to ex-husband Kevin Federline a day after police and paramedics were called to her home.

Five years ago: The new Congress passed a \$9.7 billion bill to help pay flood insurance claims to homeowners, renters and businesses damaged by Superstorm Sandy. No. 10 Texas A&M beat No. 12 Oklahoma, 41-13, in the Cotton Bowl.

One year ago: President Barack Obama urged congressional Democrats to "look out for the American people" in defending his legacy health care overhaul, while Vice President-elect Mike Pence stood firm in telling Republicans that dismantling "Obamacare" was No. 1 on Donald Trump's list. Macy's said it was eliminating more than 10,000 jobs and planned to move forward with 68 store closures after a disappointing holiday shopping season.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Barbara Rush is 91. Football Hall of Fame coach Don Shula is 88. Opera singer Grace Bumbry is 81. Actress Dyan Cannon is 79. Author-historian Doris Kearns Goodwin is 75. Country singer Kathy Forester (The Forester Sisters) is 63. Actress Ann Magnuson is 62. Rock musician Bernard Sumner (New Order, Joy Division) is 62. Country singer Patty Loveless is 61. Actor Julian Sands is 60. Rock singer Michael Stipe is 58. Actor Patrick Cassidy is 56. Actor Dave Foley is 55. Actress Dot Jones is 54. Actor Rick Hearst is 53. Singer-musician Cait O'Riordan is 53. Actress Julia Ormond is 53. Tennis player

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Jan. 04, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 179 ~ 38 of 38

Guy Forget (ghee fohr-ZHAY') is 53. Country singer Deana Carter is 52. Rock musician Benjamin Darvill (Crash Test Dummies) is 51. Actor Josh Stamberg is 48. Actor Jeremy Licht is 47. Actor Damon Gupton is 45. Actress-singer Jill Marie Jones is 43. Alt-country singer Justin Townes Earle is 36. Christian rock singer Spencer Chamberlain (Underoath) is 35. Actress Lenora Crichlow is 33. Comedian-actress Charlyne Yi is 32. Actress-singer Coco Jones is 20.

Thought for Today: "Happiness quite unshated can scarcely be called happiness; it has no taste." — Charlotte Bronte, English author (1816-1855).

Riddle Answer: A Clock