

Groton Daily Independent

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Chicken Soup
for the Soul

*"Out of pain
and problems have
come the sweetest
songs and the most
gripping stories."*

- Billy Graham

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Riddle:

**Who spends the day at the window, goes to
the table for meals and hides at night?**

Answer at end of AP News



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Monday, Feb. 12

Boys' Basketball at Roncalli
7th grade at 3 p.m., 8th grade at 4 p.m., C game
at 5:15 p.m., JV at around 6:30 p.m. and varsity
around 8 p.m.
School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 12

Girls' Basketball at Webster
C game at 5:15 p.m. followed by JV and Varsity
Boys' Basketball at Groton Area with 7th grade
game at 6 p.m. and 8th grade game at 7 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 15

Girls' Basketball hosts Milbank. C game at 5:15
p.m. followed by JV and Varsity
JH Basketball at Webster: 7th grade at 4 p.m.,
8th grade at 5 p.m.

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

The cardboard/paper
recycling trailer at the school is

Closed

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Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

The Minnesota Vikings had a phenomenal season, even if it didn't end how we all hoped. Before we move forward, let's look back at the 2017 season to see what went right and what went wrong. This week we examine the offense, where the team was 10th in the NFL, scoring 23.9 points per game.

The Vikings started the season with Sam Bradford at quarterback, but he was sidelined after week one due to a recurring knee problem and backup Case Keenum was thrust into the starting role and ended up playing almost all the rest of the season. Offensive coordinator Pat Shurmur (who has since been named the head coach of the New York Giants) crafted a phenomenal game plan to maximize Keenum's strengths and limit his weaknesses – and the Vikings finished the season as a top 10 offense as a result.

The Vikings were known as a dink and dunk passing offense in 2016, mainly because the offensive line was so bad that Sam Bradford needed to get the ball out of his hands quickly. The Vikings spent considerable resources to fix the offensive line heading into 2017, and it showed, as the Vikings ended the season in the top half of all the important passing categories: 234.6 passing yards per game (11th in the NFL), 7.5 yards per pass attempt (11th), 25 passing touchdowns (12th), 99.1 passer rating (4th), and only eight interceptions (2nd) and 27 sacks allowed (7th) all season.

The offensive line was a major reason the Vikings' pass attack made huge improvements, but some of the praise needs to go to the receivers. Adam Thielen exploded on the scene, finishing the season with 91 catches (8th in the NFL), 1,276 receiving yards (5th), four touchdowns (36th), and earning his first Pro Bowl. Stefon Diggs also had a heck of a year, finishing with 64 catches (22nd), 849 yards (23rd), and eight touchdowns (7th) even though he missed two games because of injury. Kyle Rudolph, the Vikings Pro Bowl tight end, made his presence known as well, finishing with 57 catches (9th), 532 yards (14th), and eight touchdowns (2nd).

Like the quarterback position, the Vikings' running back position was in flux last season. Electric rookie Dalvin Cook began the year as the starter, but he suffered a torn ACL in week four and missed the rest of the season. Fourth year player Jerick McKinnon and free agent signee Latavius Murray were able to pick up the slack, however, and the Vikings finished the season 7th in the NFL with 122.3 rushing yards per game – a huge improvement from 2016, when the team was dead last in the league with 75.3 yards per game. The team also had 15 rushing touchdowns in 2017, good for 7th most.

The Vikings will have a new offensive coordinator in 2018. With Shurmur leaving for New York, the Vikings brought in John DeFilippo, who was the quarterbacks coach in Philadelphia last season. DeFilippo was a huge reason Carson Wentz was playing at a MVP level before he got hurt, and he also deserves a ton of praise for turning backup Nick Foles into the Super Bowl MVP. DeFilippo will inherit an offense that has most of the pieces coming back, but he will have a huge job on his hands right away, as the Vikings will be trying to decide who their starting quarterback is for the upcoming season.

Next week, we'll be taking a look at the Vikings' defense from last season. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to reach out to me on Facebook ([facebook.com/SkolJWright](https://www.facebook.com/SkolJWright)) or on Twitter (@SkolJWright). Skol!



By **Richard P. Holm M.D.**



Music Heals the Soul

When asking a group of friends how important music is

to them, I heard a lot of answers. "Music must live in our brains somewhere close to where emotions reside." "Think of how the plot of a movie is moved by the music, from *The Wizard of Oz* and *Jaws*, to *Star Wars* and *the Sound of Music*". One friend told me, "I have music in my life every day." My wife Joanie said, "If I am grumpy, put on a waltz and my bad mood goes away." Another friend said, "Music dips into the deepest aspects of my soul."

Almost everyone enjoys music of some type, whether it be classical, country, hip hop, blues, or jazz. But music can be for so much more than pure enjoyment. It can enhance feelings and memories of suspense, fear, compassion, sadness, and happiness. There is scientific data to show that music therapy significantly helps improve physical, cognitive, emotional, and social well-being. Music therapy is commonly prescribed for treating medical illnesses, physical and developmental disabilities, psychiatric disorders, and neurological impairment. Music therapists are now working in hospitals, psychiatric centers, nursing homes, rehab centers, schools, daycare facilities, substance abuse centers, and hospice programs.

I have the privilege to sing with a voice-only choir called the Hopeful Spirit Chorale. Almost every week, we sing for an individual who is either sick at home, in the hospital or nursing home, receiving help from hospice, recovering from an illness, or who simply would appreciate it. We sing well-known hymns and non-religious songs mostly in four-part harmony. One choir member said, "we are caring people lifting the spirits of others with a nice gift of music." However, music is one of those gifts that gives back as much, if not more, as is given. There is an unexplainable thing that often happens with that choir when the music is just right. A spiritual connection shivers through everyone's bones; tears may flow, and the individual and family being sang to feels loved.

I know this doesn't work for everyone, but when I try to define what God is to me, the great mystery is at least partially explained when, in song, the harmonic spirit embraces my soul and brings balm to my fears and suffering.



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")**

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Today in Weather History

February 12, 1905: On this date in weather history, record low temperatures occurred across north-east South Dakota and west central Minnesota with lows in the 30s below zero. Sisseton, Aberdeen, and Watertown all had record lows. Sisseton fell to 31 degrees below zero, Watertown saw 35 degrees below zero, and Aberdeen dropped to 36 degrees below zero in 1905. In central South Dakota, Kennebec fell to 34 degrees below zero.

1784: Ice floes were spotted in the Gulf of Mexico after passing out of the Mississippi River in February 1784. Ice blocked the river at New Orleans, Louisiana. The ice in New Orleans is one of two times that this occurred, the other during the Great Arctic Outbreak of 1899. The eruption of Laki in Iceland from June 8, 1783, through February 7, 1784, is the likely cause for the severe winter of 1783 to 1784.

1899: More from the bitter cold outbreak of 1899. Texas and the Eastern Plains experienced their coldest morning of modern record. The mercury dipped to 8 degrees below zero at Fort Worth, Texas and 22 degrees below zero at Kansas City, Missouri. The temperature at Camp Clarke, Nebraska plunged to 47 degrees below zero to establish a record for the state. The all-time record low for Oklahoma City was set. The mercury fell to a frigid 17 degrees below zero and broke the previous record low of 12 below zero, which was set on the previous day. In the eastern U.S., Washington D.C. hit 15 degrees below zero, while Charleston SC received a record four inches of snow. Snow was reported in Fort Myers, Tampa, and Tallahassee in Florida.

1958: Snow blanketed northern Florida, with Tallahassee reporting a record 2.8 inches. A ship in the Gulf of Mexico, 25 miles south of Fort Morgan Alabama, reported zero visibility in heavy snow on the afternoon of the 12th.

1960 - A snowstorm in the Deep South produced more than a foot of snow in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A storm in the eastern U.S. produced high winds from North Carolina to Maine. A storm in the western U.S. produced up to thirty inches of snow in the Sierra Nevada Range of California. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A classic "nor'easter" formed off the Carolina coast and intensified as it moved up the Atlantic coast bringing heavy snow to the northeastern U.S. Totals ranged up to 26 inches at Camden NY and Chester MA. Arctic cold gripped the north central U.S. Duluth MN was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 32 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1989 - Unseasonably mild weather prevailed across Alaska. Morning lows of 29 degrees at Anchorage and 31 degrees at Fairbanks were actually warmer than those in northern Florida. (The National Weather Summary)


1990 - Strong southerly winds ahead of an arctic cold front pushed temperatures into the 70s as far north as Iowa and Nebraska. Twenty-one cities in the central U.S., seven in Iowa, reported record high temperatures for the date. Lincoln NE reported a record high of 73 degrees, and the afternoon high of 59 degrees at Minneapolis MN smashed their previous record for the date by twelve degrees. Springfield IL reported a record forty-eight consecutive days with above normal temperatures. (The National Weather Summary)

2006 - An intense snow squall off of Lake Michigan cuts visibility to zero along a section of US 31. The resulting whiteout causes 96 cars to pile up. 25 were injured.





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Mon Feb 12	Tue Feb 13	Wed Feb 14	Thu Feb 15	Fri Feb 16	Sat Feb 17	Sun Feb 18
						
9°F	28°F	42°F	15°F	22°F	37°F	35°F
5°F	14°F	11°F	-5°F	10°F	18°F	4°F
NNE 5 MPH	S 14 MPH	SSW 11 MPH	N 17 MPH Precip 30%	SW 13 MPH	W 13 MPH	WNW 15 MPH Precip 30%

Searching for Warmer Weather? 

Wednesday is your day!

Today	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
near 10°	25 to 34°	low 40s	15 to 25°
			
Light snow possible			Light snow possible

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

www.weather.gov/abr

GRAPHIC CREATED:
2/12/2018 4:16 AM

Published on: 02/12/2018 at 4:24AM

Plenty of clouds, and even light snow possible (over central SD today, and south central SD to eastern SD and western MN tonight). Accumulations of around an inch or less are expected. Cold high pressure will exit into Minnesota this afternoon, with warmer air surging back in for mid week. Low 40s are expected Wednesday! We'll quickly return to the cold Thursday.

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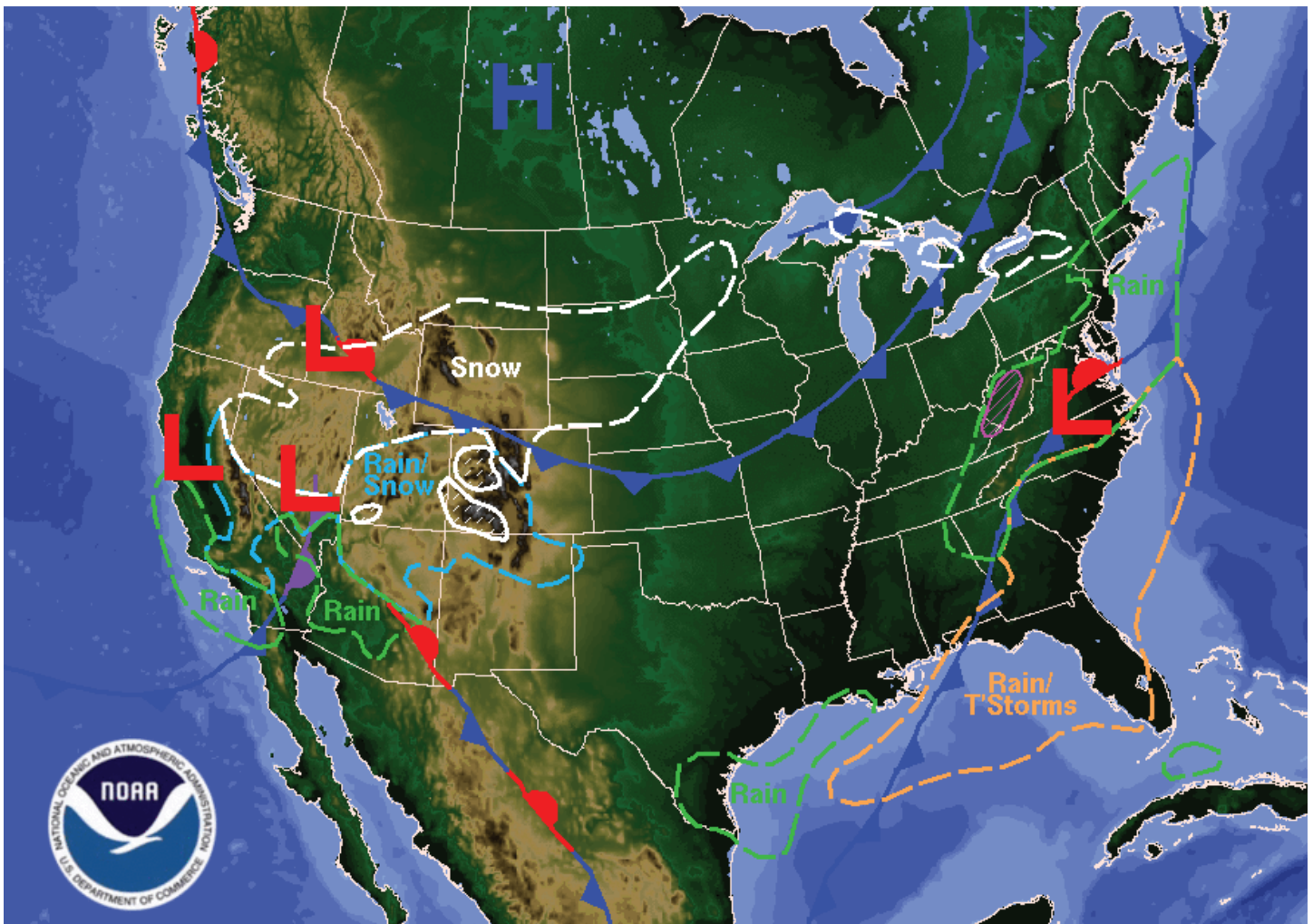
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 17.8 F at 3:07 PM
Low Outside Temp: -11.1 F at 7:38 AM
Wind Chill:
High Gust: 16.0 Mph at 1:19 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 62° in 1921
Record Low: -36° in 1905
Average High: 27°F
Average Low: 6°F
Average Precip in Feb: 0.19
Precip to date in Feb: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.66
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 5:56 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:38 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Mon, Feb 12, 2018, issued 4:56 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)

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WORKING FOR GOD'S FAVOR

Not long ago a student came into my office and asked, "Dr. Guido, will you do a favor for me?"

Without knowing what favor the student wanted, it was obvious that I had a certain amount of power over him and could do something for him that he could not do for himself. He literally was at my mercy.

Moses concluded Psalm 90 with a gracious reminder of God's power and our need to work for His favor. "May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us," he wrote. And then he described how we could know that God's favor was on our work: God Himself would establish the work of our hands. "Establish the work of our hands for us – yes, establish the work of our hands." When Moses added the "for us" he underlined the fact that God Himself is the One who established our work, not us. Whatever we do is temporary. Whatever God does through us is eternal.

How, then, can we work with God to establish works that are eternal? Paul gives us a clear answer: "Stand firm. Let nothing disturb you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

But just what is "the work of the Lord?" we ask.

Jesus answered that: "Love the Lord Your God with all your heart – and love your neighbor as yourself." And "who is my neighbor" someone asked? His answer: "Anyone who has a spiritual, emotional or physical need."

It is difficult to go from one place to another without seeing someone who has some need. Our work? Meet it.

Prayer: Father, open our eyes to see the needs of others, our ears to hear their cries and use our hands to give help. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 90:17 And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, And establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands.

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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)
- 4/13/2018 Elementary School Carnival, 5 p.m.
- 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

Suspect in double shooting near Pine Ridge pleads not guilty

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The suspect in a shooting on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation that left two people critically wounded recently pleaded not guilty.

Lester Waters Jr. is charged in federal court with assault resulting in serious bodily injury. U.S. Attorney Ron Parsons says Waters is being detained until trial, which wasn't immediately scheduled.

Authorities allege Waters shot two men near Pine Ridge on Jan. 25. He could face up to 10 years in prison if convicted.

South Dakota church merges 3 denominations together

By **CAITLYNN PEETZ, The Daily Republic**

WOONSOCKET, S.D. (AP) — Her best friend had just died, and Anderson was at a loss — she wasn't angry with God, she was just confused.

What she found in those church pews changed Anderson's life.

"Nobody ever said anything negative. People knew I was grieving and were welcoming and warm and open-hearted," Anderson said. "I wanted to go and see if I could find comfort and understanding, and I really think that's an important thing a lot of people go through — they don't care about their faith until something really tragic happens."

The life-changing experience Anderson had at Spirit of Faith in Woonsocket isn't uncommon.

But the situation leading to the formation of the church is.

The congregation is made up of three denominations — Evangelical Lutheran, United Methodist and Bethany Lutheran — that merged approximately one year ago to form the church. Since then, the congregation has raised more than \$300,000, and it plans to build a new church facility to house their unified entity, the Daily Republic reported. Church leaders plan to get the first sketches of the proposed building in February.

Spirit of Faith Pastor Rhonda Wellsandt-Zell acknowledged the uniqueness of banding three denominations together — a feat she hasn't seen elsewhere. But for Woonsocket, it has worked well, and she hopes the new church will be the "center point" of the community.

To be that place, though, means ensuring everyone has access.

Much of the decision to build a new sanctuary is attributed to handicap accessibility, or lack thereof, in the current building. People confined to wheelchairs or with other disabilities are now forced to sit just outside of the worship area, near the door, which is uncomfortable and unsafe, Wellsandt-Zell said. The conditions drove some worshippers away.

Regardless, Spirit of Faith has grown in numbers, seeing anywhere between 40 and 100 people for Sunday services, and there simply isn't enough space to accommodate the growth.

"When we started changing things to start meeting the needs of the people, that's when we realized we had potential for so much more," she said. "We are, as Spirit of Faith, an umbrella, including everybody. We realized we had potential to do more with our lives if we were working collectively together."

For approximately 40 years, the three Sanborn County churches shared a pastor and services rotated weekly among the churches. Finally, in October 2016, the decision was made to make a permanent home in Woonsocket, in a building along Highway 34.

The change has worked out for the best, Wellsandt-Zell said, making scheduling simpler and consistent. But knowing the former churches will be demolished to make way for the new, Wellsandt-Zell said there has been plenty of change for many patrons, especially for those who had attended one of the churches for their entire lives.

Thankfully, though, the support has been outstanding, she said.

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"For people it has become this thing where it's more important to worship as the body of Christ than in a specific place or as a specific religion," Wellsandt-Zell said.

Maybe the most dramatic change, at least for Wellsandt-Zell, came nine years ago when she moved to South Dakota.

Previously, Wellsandt-Zell lived in Chicago and Kansas City and requested to do inner-city ministry, but she was assigned to South Dakota. She started in De Smet and eventually moved on to the Woonsocket area. For a woman accustomed to large cities, small town South Dakota was a shock, but Wellsandt-Zell believes she's right where she's supposed to be.

"When I first got there, they were really wondering if they could keep their doors open," she said. "I worked with them for three years and finally got to the point where I said, 'If we're going to die, we're going to die healthy. And if we're going to live, we're going to live healthy and boldly.' Once they made that decision to live, it took off."

Church officials hope to break ground on the new church in May and, hopefully, be completed by Spirit of Faith's anniversary Oct. 29.

Much of the construction and other work will be completed by members of the church, just adding to the "community pride" already infused in the congregation, Wellsandt-Zell said.

And when it's complete, the building will be open to the community for other events such as food drives and fundraisers. Spirit of Faith also plans to grow its outreach programs to entice young people to the church, a method already proven successful.

The congregation is made up of a large chunk of young people who have been essential in spreading the church's message, and they give Wellsandt-Zell hope for the future, knowing there will be a generation following hers interested in keeping the church alive.

"When we see the trend across the nation for churches to close frequently, we feel fortunate to be in a different place," she said. "They're continuing our work and that's exciting to see, but we know it's not just a destination you arrive at, this is something you have to keep working toward all the time."

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

Dance studio owner helps Rapid City find its groove

By TANYA MANUS, Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Jamey McCaskill quickly got hooked after he stepped onto a dance floor for the first time. He became an award-winning professional ballroom dancer and now, as the owner of National Dance Clubs, he's out to help Rapid City find its groove.

McCaskill and his wife, Nancy, bought the former Gotta Dance studio in Rapid City in late 2017, the Rapid City Journal reported. The McCaskills incorporated the local studio into National Dance Clubs, a Tennessee-based chain of ballroom dance clubs they've owned since 2016. The chain first opened in 1984.

"There are a few powerhouses in our industry known for being premier ballroom dance clubs, and we're one of them," said McCaskill, who has 13 years of dance experience. "We have a tried-and-true proven system of teaching that teaches people how to dance whatever their dance goals may be, whether it's to dance for a lifetime or just to learn to dance the basics. ... Our goal is to deliver a five-star service and product."

National Dance Clubs specializes in exclusively teaching five categories of ballroom dance — rhythm, smooth, international Latin, ballroom and theater arts. Rhythm dances include cha cha, rumba, swing, bolero, mambo, merengue, salsa and paso doble. Smooth dances include waltz, tango, foxtrot, Viennese waltz, and the Peabody, which McCaskill calls "one of the most fun dances out there." The Peabody rose to popularity in the 1910s and '20s, along with the Lindy and jive, but has a jolly style all its own, McCaskill said.

International Latin dances include cha cha, samba, rumba, paso doble and jive, while the ballroom category covers waltz, tango, Viennese waltz, foxtrot and quickstep. Finally, the theater arts category is

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for experienced dancers who want to learn lifts and complex moves for competitions or exhibition performances, McCaskill said.

"We have classes geared to which level of a dancer you are, and we have private lessons that allow instructors to focus on what an individual needs and wants," McCaskill said. "We teach people to dance to the most popular music that will be played in most social environments."

Non-ballroom dance and exercise classes that were previously offered at Gotta Dance, including yoga, belly dance and clogging, have moved to other studios in Rapid City.

National Dance Clubs instructors use a world-renowned curriculum from Dance Vision International Dance Association. Through DVIDA, McCaskill is a certified grand master dancer in all five categories of ballroom offered at National Dance Clubs. Every location, including Rapid City, is staffed by full-time trained dance instructors. McCaskills personally trained local instructors Melissa Houska, Ramon Pardo and Tricia Huber. All three successfully passed an associate degree-level exam in professional dance instruction.

The McCaskills will be moving National Dance Clubs from its current location on Oshkosh St. to a new, centrally-located studio on Disk Drive near Kohl's. Like its current location, the new studio will have a professional-grade floating dance floor, which is cushioned and built on a suspension system. The floors allow teachers and students to dance for hours without suffering leg fatigue and are comparable to those professional dancers and their star partners use on the long-running hit TV series "Dancing With The Stars." It will also be equipped with large mirrors that will aid teachers and students in improving their form. The new location should be open in March.

Beyond teaching the skills needed to dance, the McCaskills genuinely want to help people experience the joys and benefits of dancing. Its side effects include weight loss, better posture, stress relief, sharper mental acuity and a happier mood.

"It's the life-enhancing experiences people have while dancing ballroom, whether it's a couple finding new things out about each other no matter how long they've been together, or somebody overcoming a tough loss. People have more fun out of life (when they're dancing). Giving people their groove back, being able to see people continue to grow as individuals and ballroom dancing helping with that ... that's what keeps me coming back," McCaskill said. "I like knowing once they learn from me, people can go anywhere in any social environment and feel comfortable and confident dancing."

"Our goal is to be the happiest, friendliest, most encouraging place in town. We try to be the gas station of positivity in a world of negativity," McCaskill said.

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

S. Dakota takes down NAIA-member Peru St. 98-55

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Brandon Armstrong scored a career-high 24 points on 9-of-11 shooting and Tyler Hagedorn added 19 and South Dakota beat NAIA Peru State of Nebraska, 98-55 on Sunday.

Matt Mooney's jump shot with 9:54 before halftime gave South Dakota a 24-23 lead and the Coyotes never trailed again. Despite that, the Bobcats proved competitive for the first half. Armstrong scored eight straight for the Coyotes with a layup and a pair of 3-pointers in consecutive possessions, but Lj Westbrook followed with a jumper and a layup to tie it at 32.

Trey Burch's layup with 2:05 before halftime started a 10-0 run, which included a pair of 3s from Armstrong, and Hagedorn's jumper as time expired made it 44-34. The Coyotes outscored Peru State 53-21 in the second half and finished the game shooting 38 of 65 (58.5 percent).

Westbrook led Peru State with 15 point and Quantice Hunter scored 11.

Oglala Sioux officer killed in apparent domestic dispute

KYLE, S.D. (AP) — The FBI says an officer with the Oglala Sioux tribal police department was shot and killed in an apparent domestic dispute.

The FBI says it happened around 4:30 a.m. Saturday but is providing few other details. The FBI says

there's no threat to the public.

The officer's name has not been released.

The FBI, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Oglala Sioux tribal police are investigating.

The FBI's Minneapolis field office, which also covers South Dakota, says no further comment will be available.

South Dakota sheriff to head state's sobriety program

PARKER, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota sheriff will now lead the state's sobriety program.

South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley recently appointed Turner County sheriff Byron Nogelmeier to the position, the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan reported.

"Sheriff Nogelmeier has served as the Turner County Sheriff for the last 18 years and has dealt firsthand with the 24/7 Sobriety Program since its inception," Jackley said.

The 24/7 Sobriety Program for South Dakota tests offenders daily for drug and alcohol use to ensure compliance with court orders. Participants in the program are subject to breath tests, urine analysis, drug patches, alcohol-detecting bracelets and ignitions interlocks. The program works with almost 70 participating agencies.

Nogelmeier has worked with the program in his county since 2005. Offenders pay for the different testing methods the program utilizes, such as \$1 a day for a breathalyzer to \$40 for a drug patch, he said.

Nogelmeier will begin the coordinator position April 1. He'll remain stationed in Parker and will travel around the state as needed in his new role.

"I love traveling around South Dakota and seeing my brother sheriffs and the 24/7 sites," he said. "As the new coordinator, I want to keep the program solid or, if I can, make it better so it will become the best it can be."

Nogelmeier is also involved in the South Dakota Network Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault, the National Sheriffs' Association and the South Dakota Sheriffs' Association.

Information from: Yankton Press and Dakotan, <http://www.yankton.net/>

Sioux Falls City Hall sees increase in employee turnover

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The employee turnover rate at Sioux Falls City Hall rose last year after three consecutive years of decline.

Figures from the city's Human Resources Department show that 7.6 percent of the city's roughly 1,300 positions changed hands in 2017, an increase from the 6.5 percent turnover rate in 2016, the Argus Leader reported.

Employee retention is still strong despite the slight increase, said Bill O'Toole, director of Sioux Falls Human Resources.

The city's retention rate remained much lower than the national average for both public and private sector jobs, and also lower than the national average for state and local governments. Both rates were about 18 percent in 2016, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"We view these as very good numbers," O'Toole said. "Our low turnover, to me, says when employees get here, they like their jobs, they're fairly paid, they like their benefits and they stay."

Low unemployment in the area means there's a highly competitive job market. Private sector jobs that tend to pay more than civil service jobs are one challenge to the city's retention efforts, O'Toole said.

"Everybody is competing," he said. "We've got a good pitch to make — that working for the public sector is very rewarding."

The city has created a practice of hiring an independent consultant to study the city's wages and benefits and see how they compare with private sector jobs, O'Toole said. Segal Waters Consulting of Minneapolis began a study this winter.

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

Climbing tax collections boost South Dakota budget outlook

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota officials are offering hope — but no guarantees — that climbing tax collections will allow for more spending in areas like state employee pay as lawmakers prepare to craft the state budget.

Legislators will set revenue targets Tuesday that will dictate state spending levels for the current budget year and the next. Gov. Dennis Daugaard in December outlined funding priorities constrained at the time by disappointing tax collections.

Daugaard proposed leaving most state workers without raises for the second straight year.

But new figures show revenues for the first seven months of the current budget year are \$18.2 million, or 1.9 percent, higher than Daugaard projected in December. That includes roughly \$7.6 million in higher-than-expected sales taxes receipts, which are the state's main revenue source.

The Republican governor had more optimism recently that the "brighter" picture could allow inflationary increases for education, Medicaid providers and state workers.

"There's certainly hope for that now, where I would say in December there was little hope for that," Daugaard said. "But time will tell."

Lawmakers will revise spending for the current 2018 budget year and craft the budget for the upcoming fiscal year before the legislative session ends in March. House Majority Leader Lee Qualm would only describe his mood as "guardedly optimistic."

House Speaker Mark Mickelson said he would like to see increased funding for the state's tech schools, adding that the Legislature's priorities appear to be helping community support providers and state employees.

Eric Ollila, executive director of the South Dakota State Employees Organization, said the group would like to see an emphasis on state employee compensation and benefits considering the new numbers. Ollila said workers are the "backbone" of the state, and he's fed up with their flat pay.

"Employees never contact me and say, 'Hey, you know, I'll be happy with a zero raise.' I've never had that," Ollila said. "They work hard. They're worth it."

The employee advocacy group is pushing a bill this year that would write cost-of-living increases for state employees into South Dakota law. But Daugaard said officials wouldn't be able to execute such a law.

"I think it would be nice to say we should automatically make payments based on inflation, but if our revenue doesn't meet inflationary targets, then that law is just a statement of attitude," he said.

1 man dies, 1 injured and jailed, in Sioux Falls stabbing

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Police say one man died and another man was injured in a stabbing in Sioux Falls.

Police were called to an apartment building just after 9:15 p.m. Saturday on a report of a stabbing.

A Sioux Falls Police Department statement says a 26-year-old man died at a hospital from his injuries. His name has not been released.

The other subject, a 24-year-old Sioux Falls man, is expected to survive. He's been arrested on suspicion of attempted first-degree murder and aggravated assault.

Police say the two were the only people involved in the stabbing, and there's no danger to the public.

The statement says more information will be released at Monday's police briefing.

Missouri River reservoirs ready for spring runoff

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The officials who manage the reservoirs along the Missouri River say the system is in good shape to handle this spring's runoff.

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John Remus with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers says the reservoirs are ready to reduce flood risk in the region even though runoff is expected to be slightly above average at 104 percent of normal.

Some of the Plains snowpack has already melted and entered the reservoir system because of recent warmer periods.

The releases from Gavins Point dam near the South Dakota-Nebraska border are expected to remain at winter levels of 18,000 cubic feet per second during February.

The Missouri River should have enough water for full service navigation through at least the first half of the 2018 season.

Trump infrastructure plan relies on state, local funding

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and MARTIN CRUTSINGER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Monday launched a “big week” for his long-awaited infrastructure plan, which envisions spurring \$1.5 trillion in spending over a decade to rebuild roads and highways. The plan would fulfill some Trump campaign goals but rely heavily on state and local government for much of the funding.

Trump said on Twitter that it would be “a big week for Infrastructure. After so stupidly spending \$7 trillion in the Middle East, it is now time to start investing in OUR Country!” He was meeting with state and local officials at the White House later in the day to drum up support.

The administration’s plan is centered on using \$200 billion in federal money to leverage local and state tax dollars to fix America’s infrastructure, such as roads, highways, ports and airports.

Trump has repeatedly blamed the “crumbling” state of the nation’s roads and highways for preventing the American economy from reaching its full potential. Many in Washington believe that Trump should have begun his term a year ago with an infrastructure push, one that could have garnered bipartisan support or, at minimum, placed Democrats in a bind for opposing a popular political measure.

But the administration chose to begin with health care and relations with Democrats have only grown more strained during a turbulent, contentious year. The administration has pushed two previous “infrastructure weeks,” in June and August, that were sidetracked by other events.

This time, the White House is grappling with the fallout from the departure of a senior aide after spousal abuse allegations, which has dominated the political dialogue since last week.

The massive infrastructure plan’s path through a polarized Congress isn’t clear. Congress has just dealt with two federal government shutdowns and is turning its attention to immigration.

Administration officials previewing the plan said it would feature two key components: an injection of funding for new investments and help speed up repairs of crumbling roads and airports, as well as a streamlined permitting process that would truncate the wait time to get projects underway. Officials said the \$200 billion in federal support would come from cuts to existing programs.

Half the money would go to grants for transportation, water, flood control, cleanup at some of the country’s most polluted sites and other projects.

States, local governments and other project sponsors could use the grants — which administration officials view as incentives — for no more than 20 percent of the cost. Transit agencies generally count on the federal government for half the cost of major construction projects, and federal dollars can make up as much as 80 percent of some highway projects.

About \$50 billion, would go toward rural projects — transportation, broadband, water, waste, power, flood management and ports. That is intended to address criticism from some Republican senators that the administration’s initial emphasis on public-private partnerships would do little to help rural, GOP-leaning states

Early reaction to the proposal was divided.

Jay Timmons, president of the National Association of Manufacturers, saluted Trump “for providing the leadership we have desperately needed to reclaim our rightful place as global leader on true 21st-century infrastructure.”

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"When ports are clogged, trucks are delayed, power is down, water is shut off, or the internet has a lapse, modern manufacturers' ability to compete is threatened and jobs are put at risk," said Timmons. "There is no excuse for inaction, and manufacturers are committed to ensuring that America seizes this opportunity."

But a number of Democrats and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce have pushed the administration to commit far more federal dollars, funded by tax increases, or by closing tax loopholes. And environmental groups expressed worry about its impact.

"President Trump's infrastructure proposal is a disaster," said Shelley Poticha, of the Natural Resources Defense Council. "It fails to offer the investment needed to bring our country into the 21st century. Even worse, his plan includes an unacceptable corporate giveaway by truncating environmental reviews."

Associated Press writers Joan Lowy and Ken Thomas contributed reporting.

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Wind, ice and cold are making this Olympics too wintry

By **GRAHAM DUNBAR** and **HOWARD FENDRICH**, AP Sports Writers

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea (AP) — The Winter Olympics are supposed to be cold, of course. Just maybe not THIS cold.

Wind and ice pellets left Olympic snowboarders simply trying to stay upright in conditions that many felt were unfit for competition, the best ski jumpers on the planet dealing with swirling gusts and biathletes aiming to shoot straight.

All around the games, athletes and fans are dealing with conditions that have tested even the most seasoned winter sports veterans.

Low temperatures have hovered in the single digits, dipping below zero with unforgiving gusts whipping at 45 mph (70 kph) making it feel much colder. Organizers have shuffled schedules, and shivering spectators left events early.

The raw air sent hundreds of fans to the exits Sunday when qualifying was called off after women's slopestyle devolved into a mess of mistakes, and Monday's final started 75 minutes late. Of the 50 runs, 41 ended with a fall or a rider essentially giving up.

American Jamie Anderson won the gold medal by watching most of her competitors struggle, and then completing a conservative run that paled in comparison to her winning performance at the X Games just two weeks ago.

"It has to be absolutely petrifying, terrifying, being up that high in the air, and having a gust 30 mph coming sideways at you," said United States Ski and Snowboard Association CEO Tiger Shaw.

Many of the snowboarders didn't think they should have been out there.

"You're going up the chairlift and you see these little tornadoes," said Czech snowboarder Sarka Pancochova, who finished 16th, "and you're like, 'What is this?'"

At ski jumping, giant netting was set up to reduce the wind that can blow at three times the optimal velocity for the sport. Didn't help all that much, though: The men's normal hill final on Saturday was pushed back repeatedly and eventually finished after midnight.

"It was unbelievably cold," said Japan's Noriaki Kasai, competing at his record eighth Olympics. "The noise of the wind at the top of the jump was incredible. I've never experienced anything like that on the World Cup circuit. I said to myself, 'Surely, they are going to cancel this.'"

Alpine skiing, meanwhile, still hasn't been able to get started at all, leaving stars like Mikaela Shiffrin of the U.S. and Aksel Lund Svindal of Norway waiting for their turn in the spotlight. Each of the first two races on the program — the men's downhill Sunday, and the women's giant slalom Monday — were called off hours before they were supposed to begin. Both of those have been moved to Thursday, when things

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are supposed to become slightly more manageable.

The forecast calls for more high winds Tuesday and Wednesday.

"I am pretty sure that soon," men's race director Markus Waldner said with a wry smile, "we will have a race."

Until then, he and other officials are left trying to come up with contingency plans and ways to get the full 11-race Alpine program completed before the Olympics are scheduled to close on Feb. 25.

As it is, logistical complications are real concerns.

Waldner pointed out that he needs to figure out a way to get three men's races — the combined, downhill and super-G — completed by Friday, because there is only one hotel right by the speed course at the Jeongseon Alpine Center. The male skiers need to vacate their rooms to make way for their female counterparts, whose speed events are supposed to begin Saturday.

"Now, it's getting tight," he said.

Even those attending indoor events have been tested. Long, cold waits for buses have left workers, media and fans complaining.

Those involved in winter sports are used to this sort of thing, of course.

At the 2007 Alpine world championships in Sweden, for example, strong winds wiped out first three days of competition. At the 1993 world championships in Japan, the men's super-G was never contested.

Can happen the other way, too. At the 2010 Vancouver Games, the first two Alpine races were postponed because of rain and — get this — too-warm temperatures in the 40s (below 10 Celsius). The entire Alpine world championships slated for Spain in 1995 were rescheduled for a whole year later because of a lack of snow.

"That's a piece of the puzzle that, I guess, fortunately or unfortunately is part of our world," U.S. Alpine men's speed coach Johno McBride said. "You're dealing with Mother Nature."

AP Sports Writers Jim Armstrong, Pat Graham, Eddie Pells and Jake Seiner contributed to this report.

More AP Olympic coverage: <https://wintergames.ap.org/>

Emergency teams search for victims of Russian plane crash

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV, Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Emergency teams combed the snowy fields outside Moscow on Monday, searching for debris from a crashed Russian airliner and the remains of the 71 people aboard it who died.

The An-148 twin-engine regional jet bound for Orsk in the southern Urals went down minutes after taking off from Moscow's Domodedovo airport Sunday afternoon. All 65 passengers and 6 crew on board were killed.

Transport Minister Maxim Sokolov said the search for victims' remains will take a week. He noted that emergency teams already have found the plane's flight data recorder, which is crucial for determining the crash's cause.

Russian investigators quickly ruled out a terror attack but will not speculate on possible reasons for the crash.

Still the crash Sunday re-ignited questions about the An-148, since the model's safety record is spotty, with one previous crash and a series of major incidents in which pilots struggled to land safely.

The Investigative Committee, Russia's premier state investigative agency, said the plane was intact and there had been no fire on board before it hit the ground.

The plane's fuel tanks exploded on impact, scattering debris across 30 hectares (74 acres) in deep snow, according to the Emergency Ministry, which used drones to direct the search.

The 65 passengers ranged in age from 5 to 79, according to a list posted by the Russian Emergencies Ministry. Most victims were from Orsk, where the authorities declared an official day of mourning on Monday.

The plane was operated by Saratov Airlines, which said the plane had received proper maintenance and

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passed all the necessary checks before the flight. The plane was built in 2010 for a different airline that operated it for several years before putting it in storage. Saratov Airlines commissioned it last year.

The airline said the plane's captain had more than 5,000 hours of flying time, 2,800 of them in an An-148. The other pilot had 812 hours of experience, largely in that model.

The An-148 once was touted as an example of Russian-Ukrainian cooperation, but it fell into trouble as relations between the two neighbors unraveled following Russia's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula.

It was developed by Ukraine's Antonov company in the early 2000s. About 40 were built, most of them in Russia that manufactured the plane under license.

Along with several commercial carriers, the An-148 was operated by the Russian Defense Ministry and several other government agencies. Ukraine's president has used the plane for some of his trips.

But the plane's production in Russia was halted last year because of low demand and media reports indicated that some carriers, including the Saratov Airlines, were experiencing a shortage of spares. Some airlines reportedly had to cannibalize some of their planes to keep others airworthy.

Among the major problems, in March 2011 an An-148 crashed during a training flight in Russia, killing all six crew on board. Investigators blamed pilot error.

In 2010, another An-148 operated by a Russian carrier suffered a major failure of its control system but its crew managed to land safely.

Last September, a Saratov Airlines An-148 had one of its engines shut down minutes after takeoff, but landed safely. And in October, another An-148 that belonged to a different Russian carrier suffered an engine fire on takeoff but managed to land.

The last large airline crash in Russia occurred on Dec. 25, 2016, when a Tu-154 operated by the Russian Defense Ministry on its way to Syria crashed into the Black Sea minutes after takeoff from Sochi. All 92 people on board were killed.

The probe into that crash is still ongoing, but officials have indicated that a pilot error appeared to be the reason.

Congress takes on immigration issue amid election pressures

By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate begins a rare, open-ended debate on immigration and the fate of the "Dreamer" immigrants on Monday, and Republican senators say they'll introduce President Donald Trump's plan. Though his proposal has no chance of passage, Trump may be the most influential voice in the conversation.

If the aim is to pass a legislative solution, Trump will be a crucial and, at times, complicating player. His day-to-day turnabouts on the issues have confounded Democrats and Republicans and led some to urge the White House to minimize his role in the debate for fear he'll say something that undermines the effort.

Yet his ultimate support will be vital if Congress is to overcome election-year pressures against compromise. No Senate deal is likely to see the light of day in the more conservative House without the president's blessing and promise to sell compromise to his hard-line base.

Trump, thus far, has balked on that front.

"The Tuesday Trump versus the Thursday Trump, after the base gets to him," is how Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., a proponent of compromise, describes the president and the impact conservative voters and his hard-right advisers have on him. "I don't know how far he'll go, but I do think he'd like to fix it."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., scheduled an initial procedural vote for Monday evening to commence debate. It is expected to succeed easily, and then the Senate will sort through proposals, perhaps for weeks.

Democrats and some Republicans say they want to help the "Dreamers," young immigrants who have lived in the U.S. illegally since they were children and have only temporarily been protected from deporta-

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tion by an Obama-era program. Trump has said he wants to aid them and has even proposed a path to citizenship for 1.8 million, but in exchange wants \$25 billion for his proposed U.S.-Mexico border wall plus significant curbs to legal immigration.

McConnell agreed to the open-ended debate, a Senate rarity in recent years, after Democrats agreed to vote to end a three-day government shutdown they'd forced over the issue. They'd initially demanded a deal toward helping Dreamers, not a simple promise of votes.

To prevail, any plan will need 60 votes, meaning substantial support from both parties is mandatory. Republicans control the chamber 51-49 but GOP Sen. John McCain of Arizona has been home for weeks battling brain cancer.

Seven GOP senators said late Sunday that they will introduce Trump's framework, which they called a reasonable compromise that has White House backing. The group includes Sens. Tom Cotton of Arkansas, John Cornyn of Texas and Iowa's Charles Grassley.

Democrats adamantly oppose Trump's plan, particularly its barring of legal immigrants from sponsoring their parents or siblings to live in the U.S. It has no chance of getting the 60 votes needed to survive. The plan will give GOP lawmakers a chance to stake out a position, but it could prove an embarrassment to the White House if some Republicans join Democrats and it's rejected by a substantial margin.

Another proposal likely to surface, backed by some Republicans and many Democrats, would give Dreamers a chance at citizenship but provide no border security money or legal immigration restrictions. It too would be certain to fail.

Votes are also possible on a compromise by a small bipartisan group led by Sens. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., and Lindsey Graham, R-S.C. It would provide possible citizenship for hundreds of thousands of Dreamers, \$2.7 billion for border security and some changes in legal immigration rules. McCain and Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., would offer legal status but not necessarily citizenship, and require tougher border security without promising wall money.

Trump has rejected both proposals.

Some senators have discussed a bare-bones plan to protect Dreamers for a year in exchange for a year's worth of security money. Flake has said he's working on a three-year version of that.

"I still think that if we put a good bill to the president, that has the support of 65, 70 members of the Senate, that the president will accept it and the House will like it as well," Flake told NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday.

Underscoring how hard it's been for lawmakers to find an immigration compromise, around two dozen moderates from both parties have met for weeks to seek common ground. So have the No. 2 Democratic and GOP House and Senate leaders. Neither group has come forward with a deal.

In January, Trump invited two dozen lawmakers from both parties to the White House in what became a nearly hour-long immigration negotiating session. He asked them to craft a "bill of love" and said he'd sign a solution they'd send him.

At another White House session days later, he told Durbin and Graham he was rejecting their bipartisan offer. He used a profanity to describe African nations and said he'd prefer immigrants from Norway, comments that have soured many Democrats about Trump's intentions.

Trump made a clamp-down on immigration a staple of his 2016 presidential campaign. As president he has mixed expressions of sympathy for Dreamers with rhetoric that equate immigration with crime and drugs.

Last September he said he was ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, which lets Dreamers temporarily live and work in the U.S. Trump said President Barack Obama had lacked the legal power to create DACA.

Trump gave Congress until March 5 to somehow replace it, though a federal court has forced him to continue its protections.

The court's blunting of the deadline has made congressional action even less likely. Lawmakers rarely take difficult votes without a forcing mechanism — particularly in an election year. That has raised the prospect that the Senate debate launching Monday will largely serve to frame a larger fight over the issue on the campaign trail.

2nd Alpine postponement means Shiffrin starts with slalom

By HOWARD FENDRICH, AP Sports Writer

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea (AP) — Mikaela Shiffrin's pursuit of gold at the Pyeongchang Olympics will start on a different day than everyone expected — and in a different event, the slalom, which is her forte.

Of course, that's assuming they ever get around to doing any racing at all in Alpine skiing. Each of the first two contests were postponed because of dangerous winds that exceeded 25 mph (40 kph) and the forecast predicts more of the same on Tuesday and Wednesday.

"I am pretty sure," men's race director Markus Waldner said with a wry smile Monday, "that soon, we will have a race."

The latest schedule change came Monday, when the temperature was 5 degrees (minus-15 Celsius) and the women's giant slalom was shelved less than three hours before it was supposed to start. That followed Sunday's postponement of the men's downhill.

Now both of those races will be held Thursday, but on different hills, and Waldner said the weather should cooperate by then. The women will compete at the Yongpyong Alpine Center used for technical races, and the men will be about 30 miles (50 kilometers) away at the Jeongseon Alpine Center used for speed races.

The men's super-G, originally set for Thursday, has been switched to Friday.

Waldner pointed out that he needs to figure out a way to get three men's races — the combined, downhill and super-G — completed by Friday, because there is only one hotel right by the course, and male skiers need to move out to make way for their female counterparts, whose speed events are supposed to begin Saturday.

"Now," Waldner said, "it's getting tight."

The giant slalom would have been Shiffrin's much-anticipated debut at these Winter Games. Instead, she will begin on Wednesday — weather permitting, of course — in the slalom, a race she has dominated for five years, and then ski again the next day. That is something to which she is accustomed: World Cup races frequently are held on consecutive days, and twice this season she went three days in a row.

Shiffrin is the defending champion in the slalom and will be trying to become the first man or woman to win that Olympic gold twice in a row; she also has claimed three consecutive world titles.

The 22-year-old American is expected to be one of the superstars of the next two weeks, considered a medal favorite in slalom and giant slalom, a strong contender in the combined and a possible entrant in the other two women's individual races, the downhill and super-G.

For now, though, she must wait to get in a starting gate, along with all the other Alpine skiers.

"It's a bummer that we're not able to race today," Shiffrin said. "But with the training block I've had, I'm prepared and feeling good. I'll use this time to continue to train and refocus on Wednesday's slalom race. We have a great gym and space to eat and take plenty of naps, so I'll use this time to recharge."

It is unusual, but hardly unprecedented, for men and women to have races pushed onto the same day at a major competition because of bad weather.

Men and women shared race days at the 2006 Turin Olympics and 1998 Nagano Olympics, for example. At last year's world championships in St. Moritz, Switzerland, the two downhills were back-to-back on the same hill.

All of the shifting means that they will try to open the 11-race Alpine program Tuesday at the Jeongseon hill with the men's combined, which adds times from one downhill run in the morning and one slalom run in the afternoon. Because wind could again present problems, Waldner said, three of the downhill's four jumps were adjusted so skiers wouldn't fly as high in the air.

Plus, all sorts of contingency plans have been considered. They could reduce the length of the downhill by about 20 seconds and shorten the slalom by 10 gates. Another possibility would be to delay the start of the downhill in hopes of calmer conditions and push the slalom back three hours so it would be run under the lights at 6 p.m. local time (4 a.m. ET).

Follow Howard Fendrich on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/HowardFendrich>

More AP Olympic coverage: <https://wintergames.ap.org/>

White House response reflects obstacles facing abused women

By JULIET LINDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When Jennifer Willoughby and Colbie Holderness stepped forward to tell the story of how they were physically, verbally and emotionally abused by their ex-husband, who had since become a top White House aide, President Donald Trump had nothing but good things to say about the man they had accused of domestic violence.

Rob Porter “did a great job while he was at the White House. And we hope he has a wonderful career,” Trump said Friday, adding that the aide had vehemently maintained his innocence.

The president followed that up Saturday with a tweet that “lives are being shattered and destroyed by a mere allegation.”

Porter’s resignation was announced Wednesday, just hours after a photograph was published of Holderness with a black eye, allegedly inflicted by Porter. Trump’s staff secretary called the allegations from his former spouses “outrageous” and “simply false.”

Trump’s chief of staff, John Kelly, had defended Porter on Tuesday as “a man of true integrity and honor” and “a friend, confidante and trusted professional.” By some accounts, White House counsel Don McGahn had been apprised of some accusations about Porter at least four times, including as early as January 2017.

The White House response serves as a high-profile illustration of the obstacles many women face in speaking out about their abuse. First and foremost: Will anyone believe them?

“It so clearly illustrates that even today, in 2018, a lot of people react to these sorts of allegations by assuming that the woman is lying, or by indicating that, in essence, how a man behaves with women is nobody’s business, that it’s irrelevant,” said Emily Martin, National Women’s Law Center general counsel and vice president for education and workplace justice. “It suggests that what we really need to worry about is how these allegations will impact the man who is accused.”

Months before Willoughby spoke to reporters and identified Porter by name, she published a blog post explaining the fear and anxiety she felt about leaving her marriage and going public about the abuse she said she had suffered at the hands of a powerful man who was well-liked and well-respected.

“Everyone loved him. People commented all the time how lucky I was. Strangers complimented him to me every time we went out. But in my home, the abuse was insidious. The threats were personal. The terror was real. And yet I stayed,” she wrote. “When I tried to get help, I was counseled to consider carefully how what I said might affect his career. And so I kept my mouth shut and stayed.”

In an interview on CNN’s “Anderson Cooper 360,” Willoughby said she’s often asked why she stayed in a relationship with Porter if he was a “monster.”

“The reality is he’s not a monster,” she said. “He is an intelligent, kind, chivalrous, caring, professional man. And he is deeply troubled and angry and violent. I don’t think those things are mutually exclusive.”

Martin said victims of domestic violence and abuse often hesitate to come forward or to leave their relationships, no matter how toxic, because they worry nobody will believe their accounts, particularly when the balance of power between the abuser and the victim is uneven.

“That dynamic leaves many simply unwilling to consider the possibility that he has engaged in acts of violence, and when people aren’t willing to imagine that, the easiest thing to do is disbelieve the woman making these allegations,” Martin said.

Both Holderness and Willoughby spoke of how Porter’s abuse shattered their confidence and manipulated their emotions, making the women feel powerless. In an interview with NBC, Willoughby said she didn’t even realize she was in an abusive relationship until she had been suffering for a year.

Jessica Corbett is the wife of David Sorensen, who on Friday resigned as a White House speechwriter amid allegations that he physically and emotionally abused her. She wrote in a blog post that she was

"embarrassed to tell anyone because I thought that this wasn't something that happened to women like me; it didn't happen in my social circles."

"It's lonely enough being a victim of abuse," she wrote. "It's even worse when the victim is made to stand alone."

Sorensen has denied the allegations.

Debby Tucker, president of the board of directors for the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence, said women are far more likely to be accused of fabricating stories than men. Such long-standing social biases play into victims' reluctance to share their stories.

"The societal belief system supports the idea that women are vindictive, spiteful, and lie for advantage in custody and other matters," she said.

In the days since Willoughby's story became public, comments on social media from abuse survivors tell stories of being afraid to come forward — and not being believed when they do.

Vice President Mike Pence, striking a markedly different tone than Trump, said in an interview Friday on MSNBC that "there's no tolerance in this White House and no place in America for domestic abuse."

But this is not the first time the White House has found itself in the middle of the #MeToo moment.

Trump, who was recorded on tape prior to his presidency boasting about sexually assaulting women, has denied allegations of sexual misconduct from more than a dozen women, and said he was the victim of a "smear campaign."

Apart from disbelief, the White House also has showed ambivalence about allegations of mistreatment of women: Steve Bannon was brought on as Trump's chief strategist despite misdemeanor charges in a 1996 domestic violence case. After Trump's campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, was arrested and charged with assaulting a female reporter, Trump asked, "How do you know the bruises weren't there before?"

Associated Press writer David Crary contributed to this report.

Helicopter crashes in Grand Canyon, kills 3 British tourists

By **WALTER BERRY, Associated Press**

PHOENIX (AP) — Four survivors of a deadly tour helicopter crash onto the jagged rocks of the Grand Canyon were being treated at a Nevada hospital while crews tackled difficult terrain in a remote area to try to recover the bodies of three other people.

Six British tourists and a pilot were on board the Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopters chopper when it crashed under unknown circumstances on Saturday evening on the Hualapai Nation's land near Quartermaster Canyon, by the Grand Canyon's West Rim. A witness said he saw flames and black smoke spewing from the crash site, heard explosions and saw victims who were bleeding and badly burned.

"It's just horrible," witness Teddy Fujimoto said. "And those victims — she was so badly burned. It's unimaginable, the pain."

Windy conditions, darkness and the rugged terrain made it difficult to reach the helicopter's wreckage, Hualapai Nation police Chief Francis Bradley said. Rescue crews had to fly in, walk to the crash site and use night vision goggles to find their way around, he said.

The survivors were airlifted to a Las Vegas hospital by around 2 a.m. Sunday, Bradley said.

All six passengers were from the United Kingdom, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office confirmed. Three passengers and the pilot were airlifted to a Las Vegas hospital early Sunday, Bradley told the Arizona Republic .

Authorities didn't immediately release the names or ages of the victims.

National Transportation Safety Board officials were expected at the crash scene by Sunday afternoon to begin investigating what caused the chopper to go down, Bradley said. The Federal Aviation Administration also will be investigating the crash of the Eurocopter EC130, spokesman Allen Kenitzer said.

National Weather Service meteorologists in Flagstaff and Phoenix said winds were blowing an estimated 10 mph (16 kph) with gusts of 20 mph (32 kph) around the time of the crash.

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Fujimoto, a Las Vegas photographer who was doing a wedding shoot at the time of the crash, said he suddenly saw people running toward the edge of a gulch. He said he heard gasps and went to check out the commotion coming from about 600 feet (183 meters) below.

"In the gulch, there was a helicopter, flames, smoke," he said. "It was horrible."

He said that's when two or three small explosions went off in the wreckage and people weren't sure what to do. He said some other pilots flying helicopters in the area at the time of the crash descended into the gulch and delivered water and first aid supplies.

Fujimoto said he saw two badly injured women and one of them was yelling out a man's name. He said one of them "was pretty much burned all over."

"Her hands were bloody and body was just more burned," Fujimoto said.

The other woman, he said, was "covered in blood" and was bleeding from her head or neck.

Fujimoto said he has taken helicopter rides for photo shoots for the past few years and generally felt safe. He said the crash aftermath is the worst thing he's ever witnessed.

The tour company promised full cooperation with crash investigators and offered its sympathy.

"It is with extreme sadness we extend our heartfelt sympathy to the families involved in this accident," Papillon Group CEO Brenda Halvorson said in a statement. "Our top priority is the care and needs of our passengers and our staff."

The Nevada-based company's website says it flies roughly 600,000 passengers a year around the Grand Canyon and on other tours. It notes that it "abides by flight safety rules and regulations that substantially exceed the regulations required by the Federal Aviation Administration."

In August 2001, a Grand Canyon tour helicopter operated by Papillon crashed and burned near Meadview, Arizona. The pilot and five passengers died. An NTSB report issued in 2004 blamed the pilot's decision to descend too fast and too close to the scenic Grand Wash Cliffs.

Associated Press writer Terry Tang contributed to this report.

Trump aide confident Democratic memo will be released

By CALVIN WOODWARD, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats on the House Intelligence Committee are prepared to black out parts of their memo about the FBI's Russia investigation to ensure there's no harmful spilling of secrets, then try again to get President Donald Trump to let it come out. A White House aide said he's confident it will be released once Democrats "clean it up."

That possible nudge toward progress came as both sides traded steamy recriminations over the matter.

Rep. Adam Schiff of California, senior Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said Trump is putting his personal interest above the country's in blocking a memo that "completely undermines his claim of vindication" in special counsel Robert Mueller's continuing investigation of the 2016 Trump campaign's relationship with Russian interests and Russia's meddling in the election. "The president doesn't want the public to see the underlying facts," Schiff said Sunday on CBS's "Face the Nation."

The White House legislative director, Marc Short, countered that Democrats padded their memo with sensitive information, knowing Trump would stop its release, in an effort to make him look obstructionist.

"We're not afraid of transparency," Short said on NBC's "Meet the Press." "I think you're going to see us release the memo."

Trump overrode strong Justice Department objections when he declassified a Republican memo alleging an abuse of surveillance powers in the FBI's Russia investigation. The FBI expressed "grave concerns" about the memo's accuracy and the Justice Department said in advance that its release, without proper review, would be "extraordinarily reckless."

But Trump has blocked the Democratic document, which tries to counter the Republican allegations of surveillance excesses. The president has the authority to keep such information under wraps, and exercised it only against the Democrats.

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"Their goal here is to put the FBI on trial, to put Bob Mueller's investigation on trial, and the president is only too happy to accommodate," Schiff said.

Rep. Devin Nunes, chairman of the intelligence panel, said if Democrats were intent on making important information public, they should get to work. "Their memo is sitting at the House Intelligence Committee down at the bottom of the Capitol waiting to be redacted," the California Republican told Fox News. "If they really wanted to get it out, they'd be down there all day yesterday redacting it, getting it back over to the White House so that the public can know what's in it."

Schiff said Democrats showed the memo to the Justice Department and the FBI and asked for their feedback before bringing it to the intelligence panel, and did not hear complaints about inaccuracy. But he said Democrats will "sit down with the FBI and go through any concerns that they have" about the disclosure of classified intelligence. "We will redact it to make sure that we're very protective of sources and methods," Schiff said.

In their memo, Republicans challenged how the FBI and Justice Department used information from former British spy Christopher Steele in obtaining a secret warrant to monitor Carter Page, who advised the Trump campaign on foreign policy. The memo alleges the FBI and Justice Department didn't tell the court enough about Steele's anti-Trump bias or that his work was partly paid by Hillary Clinton's campaign and the Democratic National Committee. Republicans argued that the reliance on Steele's material politicized the government's surveillance powers.

Democrats said that memo "cherry-picked" details. They noted federal law enforcement officials had informed the court about the political origins of Steele's work, some of his information was corroborated by the FBI and other evidence was used to get the warrant. The Democratic memo is thought to elaborate on those points.

Short, though, said Democrats also introduced political theater into the episode. "We believe that Congressman Schiff potentially put in there methods and sources that he knew would need to be redacted," he said. "And if we redacted it, then there would be an outcry that said the White House is trying to edit it. So we said take it back, work with the FBI, clean it up, and we'll release it." Asked if Democrats drafted a memo they knew would be blocked, Schiff said "of course not."

Dems taking another run at blocked memo on Russia probe

By CALVIN WOODWARD, Associated Press

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Blackout hits northern Puerto Rico following fire, explosion

By DANICA COTO, Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — An explosion and fire at an electric substation threw much of northern Puerto Rico into darkness late Sunday in a setback for the U.S. territory's efforts to fully restore power more than five months after Hurricane Maria started the longest blackout in U.S. history.

The island's Electric Power Authority said several municipalities were without power, including parts of the capital, San Juan, but they were optimistic it could be restored within a day as they worked to repair a substation that controls voltage.

The blast illustrated the challenges of restoring a power grid that was already crumbling before it was devastated by the Category 4 hurricane.

In many cases, power workers are repairing equipment that should have long been replaced but remained online due to the power authority's yearslong financial crisis. PREPA is worth roughly \$4 billion, carries \$9 billion in debt and has long been criticized for political patronage and inefficiency. It also struggled with frequent blackouts, including an island-wide outage in September 2016.

It was not immediately known what caused Sunday's fire, which was quickly extinguished. Officials said the explosion knocked two other substations offline and caused a total loss of 400 megawatts worth of generation.

"We are trying to restore that as quickly as possible," the company said.

Heavy black smoke billowed from the substation as neighbors in the area described on social media see-

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ing the sky turn orange following a loud explosion. San Juan Mayor Carmen Cruz tweeted that no injuries had been reported and that power had been restored in some areas of the city.

The blackout comes as more than 400,000 power customers remain in the dark more than five months after Hurricane Maria. The storm destroyed two-thirds of the island's power distribution system and caused up to an estimated \$94 billion in damage.

Puerto Rico's governor announced last month that he plans to privatize the state-owned power company, which relies on infrastructure nearly three times older than the industry average. It would be the largest restructuring of a public entity in U.S. history.

One week after his announcement, a federal control board overseeing the island's finances asked that a judge authorize a loan of up to \$1.3 billion so the power company can keep operating. The board said the company could see an estimated \$1.2 billion loss in revenue in the first six months after Hurricane Maria.

Attorney general suit: Weinstein Co. failed to protect women

TOM McELROY, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York's attorney general is accusing Hollywood movie producer Harvey Weinstein of "repeatedly and persistently" sexually harassing female employees at his film company, according to a lawsuit filed on Sunday by the state prosecutor that could impact the company's potential sale.

"As alleged in our complaint, The Weinstein Company repeatedly broke New York law by failing to protect its employees from pervasive sexual harassment, intimidation, and discrimination," state Attorney General Eric Schneiderman said in court papers filed against Weinstein and the company.

Schneiderman launched a civil rights probe into the New York City-based company in October after The New York Times and The New Yorker exposed allegations of sexual assault and harassment spanning decades.

Weinstein's attorney, Ben Brafman, released a statement Sunday evening saying many of the allegations against his client are "without merit."

"While Mr. Weinstein's behavior was not without fault, there certainly was no criminality, and at the end of the inquiry it will be clear that Harvey Weinstein promoted more women to key executive positions than any other industry leader and there was zero discrimination at either Miramax or TWC," Brafman said.

Scores of women, including well-known actresses, have come forward with stories of forced sexual encounters. Weinstein was fired by the film company he founded with his brother Robert and expelled from Hollywood's movie academy.

The attorney general's office said the lawsuit was filed on Sunday partly due to reports of the company's imminent sale, saying it believed it would leave victims without adequate redress.

"Any sale of The Weinstein Company must ensure that victims will be compensated, employees will be protected going forward, and that neither perpetrators nor enablers will be unjustly enriched," court papers said.

Schneiderman's investigation found that employees were subjected to various verbal threats from Weinstein such as "I will kill you, I will kill your family, and "you don't know what I can do."

"To work for Harvey Weinstein was to work under a persistent barrage of gender-based obscenities, vulgar name-calling, sexualized interactions, threats of violence, and a workplace general hostile to women," according to court papers.

In one case, the probe found that "in a fit of rage against one female employee, he yelled that she should leave the company and make babies since that was all she was good for."

Female executives were forced to facilitate Weinstein's sexual conquests with promises of employment opportunities to women who met his favor, according to the lawsuit, which also accused the company of being "responsible for the unlawful conduct" by failing to stop the abuse.

The company and co-owner Robert "are liable because they were aware of and acquiesced in repeated and persistent unlawful conduct by failing to investigate or stop it," court papers said.

Representatives for Weinstein have previously denied all accusations of non-consensual sex.

Trump budget plan already outdated after budget deal

By ANDREW TAYLOR and MARTIN CRUTSINGER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a twist on Washington's truism about presidential budgets being D.O.A., President Donald Trump's 2019 fiscal plan due Monday is dead even before arrival.

The original plan was for Trump's new budget to slash domestic agencies even further than last year's proposal, but instead it will land in Congress three days after he signed a two-year spending agreement that wholly rewrites both last year's budget and the one to be released Monday.

In a preview of the 2019 budget, the White House on Sunday focused on Trump's \$1.5 trillion plan for the nation's crumbling infrastructure. He also will ask for a \$13 billion increase over two years for opioid prevention, treatment and long-term recovery. A request of \$23 billion for border security, including \$18 billion for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and money for more detention beds for detained immigrants, is part of the budget, too.

Trump's latest submission was completed before the budget pact delivered the nearly \$300 billion increase above prior "caps" on spending. The \$4 trillion-plus 2019 budget was originally designed to double down on last year's proposals to slash foreign aid, the Environmental Protection Agency, home heating assistance and other nondefense programs funded by Congress each year.

"A lot of presidents' budgets are ignored. But I would expect this one to be completely irrelevant and totally ignored," said Jason Furman, a top economic adviser to President Barack Obama. "In fact, Congress passed a law week that basically undid the budget before it was even submitted."

Trump would again spare Social Security retirement benefits and Medicare as he promised during the 2016 campaign. And while his plan would reprise last year's attempt to scuttle the "Obamacare" health law and sharply cut back the Medicaid program for the elderly, poor and disabled, Trump's allies on Capitol Hill have signaled there's no interest in tackling hot-button health issues during an election year.

Instead, the new budget deal and last year's tax cuts herald the return of trillion-dollar-plus deficits. Last year, Trump's budget predicted a \$526 billion budget deficit for the 2019 fiscal year starting Oct. 1; instead, it's set to exceed \$1 trillion once the cost of the new spending pact and the tax cuts are added to Congressional Budget Office projections.

Mick Mulvaney, the former tea party congressman who runs the White House budget office, said Sunday that Trump's new budget, if implemented, would tame the deficit over time, though unlike last year's submission, it wouldn't promise to balance the federal ledger eventually.

"The budget does bend the trajectory down, it does move us back towards balance. It does get us away from trillion-dollar deficits," Mulvaney said on "Fox News Sunday." "Just because this deal was signed does not mean the future is written in stone. We do have a chance still to change the trajectory. And that is what the budget will show tomorrow."

Last year, Trump's budget projected a slight surplus after a decade, but critics said it relied on an enormous accounting gimmick — double counting a 10-year, \$2 trillion surge in revenues from the economic benefits of "tax reform." Now that tax reform has passed, the math trick can't be used, and the Trump plan doesn't come close to balancing.

Trump's infrastructure plan would put up \$200 billion in federal money over the next 10 years to leverage \$1.5 trillion in infrastructure spending, relying on state and local governments and the private sector to contribute the bulk of the funding.

Critics contend the infrastructure plan will fail to reach its goals without more federal support. Proposals to streamline the permitting process as a way to reduce the cost of projects have already generated opposition from environmental groups.

The budget's call for increased border security funding would probably depend on Congress passing legislation to deal with young immigrants brought to the country illegally. The Senate was set Monday to begin debate on immigration policy, the fate of the so-called Dreamers a central question.

The White House budget office said Friday that Monday's submission would reflect stringent limits on appropriated spending — that's the more than \$1 trillion spent each year for agency operations — that

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were the hangover from a failed 2011 budget deal. Last year, Trump promised a \$54 billion, 10 percent increase for the Pentagon, financed by an equal cut to foreign aid and domestic agencies.

What Congress instead delivered on Friday was a budget law would instead increase defense by \$80 billion this year and boost nondefense appropriations by \$63 billion. For the 2019 budget year submitted on Monday — and Trump's plan as originally devised would adhere to the old limits — Congress has already shattered the spending cap by \$153 billion.

"Our leadership caved. The swamp won. And the American taxpayer lost," said Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., on CBS' "Face The Nation."

Presidential budgets tend to reprise many of the same elements year after year. While details aren't out yet, Trump's budget is likely to curb crop insurance costs, cut student loan subsidies, reduce pension benefits for federal workers and cut food stamps, among other proposals.

Such cuts went nowhere in Congress last year as Republicans focused on trying to repeal and replace Obama's Affordable Care Act and, after that failed, turned their sights to a successful rewrite of the tax code.

But the election in December of Alabama Democrat Doug Jones to the Senate seat cut the GOP's margin of control to 51-49. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., says the chamber won't tackle politically toxic cuts to so-called mandatory programs.

Russian airliner crashes moments after takeoff, killing 71

By JIM HEINTZ, Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — A Russian airliner that had just taken off from the country's second-busiest airport crashed Sunday, killing all 71 people aboard and scattering jagged chunks of wreckage across a snowy field outside Moscow.

The pilots of the An-148 regional jet did not report any problems before the twin-engine aircraft plunged into the field about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from Domodedovo Airport, authorities said.

The Saratov Airlines flight disappeared from radar just minutes after departure for the city of Orsk, some 1,500 kilometers (1,000 miles) to the southeast.

Transport Minister Maxim Sokolov confirmed that there were no survivors.

The 65 passengers ranged in age from 5 to 79, according to a list posted by the Russian Emergencies Ministry, which did not give their nationalities. Six crew members were also aboard.

Emergency workers combed through the field while investigators descended on the airport to search for clues to what brought the jet down. One of the flight recorders was recovered, Russian news reports said, but it was not immediately clear if it was the data or voice recorder.

The airport has been the focus of security concerns in the past. Security lapses came under sharp criticism in 2004, after Chechen suicide bombers destroyed two airliners that took off from the airport on the same evening, killing a total of 90 people. A 2011 bombing in the arrivals area killed 37 people.

Investigators also conducted a search at the airline's main office in Saratov, reports said.

In Washington, The Trump administration has expressed sympathy for the families of the 71 people killed in the crash. White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said the U.S. "is deeply saddened by the tragic deaths of those on board Saratov Airlines Flight 703."

Russia's Investigative Committee said all possible causes were being considered. Some reports suggested there were questions about whether the plane had been properly de-iced. Moderate snow was falling in much of Moscow at the time of the crash.

Airline spokeswoman Elena Voronova told the state news agency RIA Novosti that one of the pilots had more than 5,000 hours of flying time, 2,800 of them in an An-148. The other pilot had 812 hours of experience, largely in that model plane.

Tass said the plane entered service in 2010 for a different airline, but was held out of service for two years because of a parts shortage. It resumed flying in 2015 and joined Saratov's fleet a year ago.

TV footage from the crash site showed airplane fragments lying in the snow. Reports said the pieces were strewn over an area about a kilometer (0.6 miles) wide.

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A plane can disappear from radar when it gets too close to the ground to reflect radar signals.

John Cox, a former airline pilot and now a US-based safety consultant, said the disappearance could also indicate that the jet's transponder lost power.

"That says potential of engine failure or a technical problem," Cox told The Associated Press.

President Vladimir Putin put off a planned trip to Sochi to monitor the investigation. Putin was to meet Monday with Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas at the Black Sea resort, where the president has an official residence.

Instead, Abbas will meet with Putin in Moscow in the latter part of Monday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Russian news agencies.

The An-148 was developed by Ukraine's Antonov company in the early 2000s and manufactured in both Ukraine and Russia.

Shabby equipment and poor supervision plagued Russian civil aviation for years after the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, but its safety record has improved in recent years.

The last large-scale crash in Russia occurred on Dec. 25, 2016, when a Tu-154 operated by the Russian Defense Ministry on its way to Syria crashed into the Black Sea minutes after takeoff from Sochi. All 92 people on board were killed.

In March 2016, a Boeing 737-800 flown by FlyDubai crashed while landing at Rostov-on-Don, killing all 62 people aboard.

An onboard bomb destroyed a Russian Metrojet airliner in October 2015 soon after it took off from Egypt's Sharm al-Sheikh resort. The bombing killed 224 people.

Jocelyn Gecker in San Francisco contributed to this story.

Trump support vital as Congress tackles immigration issue

By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate begins a rare, open-ended debate on immigration and the fate of the "Dreamer" immigrants on Monday, and Republican senators say they'll introduce President Donald Trump's plan. Though his proposal has no chance of passage, Trump may be the most influential voice in the conversation.

If the aim is to pass a legislative solution, Trump will be a crucial and, at times, complicating player. His day-to-day turnabouts on the issues have confounded Democrats and Republicans and led some to urge the White House to minimize his role in the debate for fear he'll say something that undermines the effort.

Yet his ultimate support will be vital if Congress is to overcome election-year pressures against compromise. No Senate deal is likely to see the light of day in the more conservative House without the president's blessing and promise to sell compromise to his hard-line base.

Trump, thus far, has balked on that front.

"The Tuesday Trump versus the Thursday Trump, after the base gets to him," is how Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., a proponent of compromise, describes the president and the impact conservative voters and his hard-right advisers have on him. "I don't know how far he'll go, but I do think he'd like to fix it."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., scheduled an initial procedural vote for Monday evening to commence debate. It is expected to succeed easily, and then the Senate will sort through proposals, perhaps for weeks.

Democrats and some Republicans say they want to help the "Dreamers," young immigrants who have lived in the U.S. illegally since they were children and have only temporarily been protected from deportation by an Obama-era program. Trump has said he wants to aid them and has even proposed a path to citizenship for 1.8 million, but in exchange wants \$25 billion for his proposed U.S.-Mexico border wall plus significant curbs to legal immigration.

McConnell agreed to the open-ended debate, a Senate rarity in recent years, after Democrats agreed

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to vote to end a three-day government shutdown they'd forced over the issue. They'd initially demanded a deal toward helping Dreamers, not a simple promise of votes.

To prevail, any plan will need 60 votes, meaning substantial support from both parties is mandatory. Republicans control the chamber 51-49 but GOP Sen. John McCain of Arizona has been home for weeks battling brain cancer.

Seven GOP senators said late Sunday that they will introduce Trump's framework, which they called a reasonable compromise that has White House backing. The group includes Sens. Tom Cotton of Arkansas, John Cornyn of Texas and Iowa's Charles Grassley.

Democrats adamantly oppose Trump's plan, particularly its barring of legal immigrants from sponsoring their parents or siblings to live in the U.S. It has no chance of getting the 60 votes needed to survive. The plan will give GOP lawmakers a chance to stake out a position, but it could prove an embarrassment to the White House if some Republicans join Democrats and it's rejected by a substantial margin.

Another proposal likely to surface, backed by some Republicans and many Democrats, would give Dreamers a chance at citizenship but provide no border security money or legal immigration restrictions. It too would be certain to fail.

Votes are also possible on a compromise by a small bipartisan group led by Sens. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., and Lindsey Graham, R-S.C. It would provide possible citizenship for hundreds of thousands of Dreamers, \$2.7 billion for border security and some changes in legal immigration rules. McCain and Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., would offer legal status but not necessarily citizenship, and require tougher border security without promising wall money.

Trump has rejected both proposals.

Some senators have discussed a bare-bones plan to protect Dreamers for a year in exchange for a year's worth of security money. Flake has said he's working on a three-year version of that.

"I still think that if we put a good bill to the president, that has the support of 65, 70 members of the Senate, that the president will accept it and the House will like it as well," Flake told NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday.

Underscoring how hard it's been for lawmakers to find an immigration compromise, around two dozen moderates from both parties have met for weeks to seek common ground. So have the No. 2 Democratic and GOP House and Senate leaders. Neither group has come forward with a deal.

In January, Trump invited two dozen lawmakers from both parties to the White House in what became a nearly hour-long immigration negotiating session. He asked them to craft a "bill of love" and said he'd sign a solution they'd send him.

At another White House session days later, he told Durbin and Graham he was rejecting their bipartisan offer. He used a profanity to describe African nations and said he'd prefer immigrants from Norway, comments that have soured many Democrats about Trump's intentions.

Trump made a clamp-down on immigration a staple of his 2016 presidential campaign. As president he has mixed expressions of sympathy for Dreamers with rhetoric that equate immigration with crime and drugs.

Last September he said he was ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, which lets Dreamers temporarily live and work in the U.S. Trump said President Barack Obama had lacked the legal power to create DACA.

Trump gave Congress until March 5 to somehow replace it, though a federal court has forced him to continue its protections.

The court's blunting of the deadline has made congressional action even less likely. Lawmakers rarely take difficult votes without a forcing mechanism — particularly in an election year. That has raised the prospect that the Senate debate launching Monday will largely serve to frame a larger fight over the issue on the campaign trail.

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Women's giant slalom to run same day as men's downhill

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea (AP) — The women's giant slalom featuring Mikaela Shiffrin has been rescheduled for Thursday, the same day as the men's downhill at the Pyeongchang Olympics.

The first two events on the Alpine skiing schedule were postponed because of strong wind. Both will be contested Thursday but on different hills. The women will compete at the Yongpyong Alpine Center used for technical races, and the men about 30 miles (50 kilometers) away at the Jeongseon Alpine Center used for speed races.

The women's giant slalom, which was supposed to be Shiffrin's debut at these Winter Games, was called off about three hours before it was supposed to begin Monday. The same happened with the men's downhill on Sunday.

Now Shiffrin's first race in South Korea will be Wednesday in the slalom, where she is the defending Olympic champion.

More AP Olympic coverage: <https://wintergames.ap.org>

Dozens of nude models brave cold, rain for Polar Bear Paint

NEW YORK (AP) — Cold feet can't stop naked models from parading around New York City.

Dozens of body-painted models walked through the chilly streets and posed for photos in a drizzle on Saturday as part of the Polar Bear Paint, a nude spin on the traditional polar bear plunges that see people in swimsuits dive into frigid waters to celebrate the New Year.

The Polar Bear Paint was organized by artist Andy Golub (GAH'-lub), who uses body painting as a way to promote human connection through art.

The models were painted in a Times Square studio and then gathered outside, where the temperature was about 50 degrees Fahrenheit (10 degrees Celsius) and a fairly heavy rain subsided and then stopped.

Golub says the Polar Bear Paint models "almost brought the sunshine" with them.

Kim's sister ends Olympic visit, leaving South to mull offer

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

GANGNEUNG, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's sister headed home Sunday night after a whirlwind three days in South Korea, where she sat among world dignitaries at the Olympics and tossed a diplomatic offer to the South aimed at ending seven decades of hostility.

Kim Yo Jong and the rest of the North Korean delegation departed for Pyongyang on her brother's private jet, a day after they delivered his hopes for a summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in during a lunch at Seoul's presidential palace. It was a sharp, but possibly fleeting, contrast with many months of rising tensions connected to the North's continued development of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles.

They capped their final day in South Korea by joining Moon at a Seoul concert given by a visiting North Korean art troupe led by the head of the immensely popular Moranbong band, whose young female members are hand-picked by Kim Jong Un.

Accepting North Korea's demand to transport more than 100 members of the art troupe by sea, South Korea treated the Mangyongbong-92 ferry as an exemption to the maritime sanctions it imposed on the North, a controversial move amid concerns that the North is trying to use the Olympics to poke holes in international sanctions.

South Korean Prime Minister Lee Nak-yeon hosted the North Koreans for lunch Sunday before Moon's chief of staff, Im Jong-seok, hosted them for dinner ahead of the concert.

Kim Yo Jong, 30, is an increasingly prominent figure in her brother's government and the first member of the North's ruling family to visit the South since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War. The North Korean delegation also included the country's 90-year-old head of state, Kim Yong Nam.

In dispatching the highest level of government officials the North has ever sent to the South, Kim Jong Un revealed a sense of urgency to break out of deep diplomatic isolation in the face of toughening sanc-

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tions over his nuclear program, analysts say.

"Honestly, I didn't know I would come here so suddenly. I thought things would be strange and very different, but I found a lot of things being similar," Kim said while proposing a toast at Sunday's dinner, according to Moon's office. "Here's to hoping that we could see the pleasant people (of the South) again in Pyeongchang and bring closer the future where we are one again."

U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis on Sunday rejected any suggestion that even a temporary warming of relations between the North and South could drive a wedge between Seoul and Washington.

It's too early to say, Mattis said, "if using the Olympics in a way to reduce tension - if that's going to have any traction once the Olympics are over. We can't say right now."

South Korea accommodated both the North Korean government officials and members of the art troupe at the Walkerhill hotel in Seoul. The riverside facility is named after late U.S. Army commander Walton Walker, who's considered a war hero in the South for his battles against the North during the Korean War. It was built in the 1960s under the government of late anti-communist dictator Park Chung-hee as a luxury facility for U.S. troops stationed in South Korea.

The North Koreans went through a busy schedule in South Korea as the world watched their every move. They were whisked back and forth between Seoul and the Olympic towns of Pyeongchang and Gangneung.

They shared the VIP box with world leaders at the opening ceremony and joined Moon in cheering for the first-ever inter-Korean Olympic team as it debuted in the women's ice hockey tournament. Saturday's game ended in a crushing 8-0 loss to Switzerland.

The most important part of the visit, however, came during one of the quieter moments.

Invited by Moon for lunch at Seoul's presidential palace, Kim Yo Jong verbally delivered her brother's hope for a summit with Moon in Pyongyang, a meeting that she said would help significantly improve ties after an extended period of animosity.

"We hope that President (Moon) could leave a legacy that would last over generations by leading the way in opening a new era of unification," she said, according to Moon's office.

Though Moon has used the Olympics to resurrect meaningful communication with North Korea after a diplomatic stalemate over its nuclear program, he didn't immediately jump on the North Korean offer for a summit.

He said the Koreas should create an environment so that a summit could take place. He also called for the need of a quick resumption of dialogue between North Korea and the United States.

After arriving in Seoul on Friday, the North Koreans attended a chilly opening ceremony at Pyeongchang's Olympic Stadium, taking their place among world dignitaries, including U.S. Vice President Mike Pence and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who seemed to go out of their way to not acknowledge the North Koreans despite sitting just few feet (meters) away.

Analysts say Kim Jong Un's decision to send his sister to the South reflected an eagerness to break out of diplomatic isolation by improving ties with the South, which the country could eventually use as a bridge to approach the United States. The U.S.-led international community has been tightening the screws on North Korea with sanctions designed to punish its economy and rein in its efforts to expand its nuclear weapons and missile program, which now includes developmental long-range missiles targeting the U.S. mainland.

By also sending a youthful, photogenic individual who would surely draw international attention at the Olympics, Kim might have also been trying to construct a fresher image of the country, particularly in face of U.S. efforts to use the Olympics as an occasion to highlight the North's brutal human rights record.

Always flanked by thick groups of bodyguards, Kim Yo Jong commanded attention wherever she went, walking among throngs of journalists with a quiet poise and occasionally shooting an enigmatic smile at cameras.

The Koreas previously held summits in 2000 and 2007, both hosted in Pyongyang by Kim Jong Il, Kim Jong Un's late father. The previous meetings came after rounds of international talks aimed at eliminating the North's nuclear program, which eventually failed.

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Moon has always expressed a desire to reach out to North Korea. Reviving inter-Korean dialogue is critical for the policies of Moon, who insists that Seoul should be in control in international efforts to deal with the North Korean nuclear issue.

"The fate of our nation must be determined by our own selves — we must not allow the repeat of unfortunate past history where our fate was determined with no regard to our opinions," Moon said in a speech to South Korean lawmakers in November.

But analysts say it may be more difficult for the South to arrange a summit with the North coming off a year in which Pyongyang test-fired dozens of missiles, including three ICBMs, and conducted its most powerful nuclear test to date.

South Korea may also need to persuade traditional allies the United States and Japan, which have raised concerns that the North is attempting to use its outreach as a release valve for international pressure.

Kim Tong-hyung covers the Koreas for The Associated Press. Follow him on Twitter at @KimTongHyung.

This story has been corrected to show that the North Korean delegation stayed at the Walkerhill, not Wakerhill, hotel.

White House grappling with fallout from aide's resignation

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Reeling from the downfall of a senior aide, the White House was on the defensive Sunday, attempting to soften President Donald Trump's comments about the mistreatment of women while rallying around the embattled chief of staff.

Several senior aides fanned out on the morning talk shows to explain how the White House handled the departure of staff secretary Rob Porter, a rising West Wing star who exited after two ex-wives came forward with allegations of spousal abuse. And they tried to clarify the reaction from Trump, who has yet to offer a sympathetic word to the women who said they had been abused.

"The president believes, as he said the other day, you have to consider all sides," said senior counselor Kellyanne Conway. "He has said this in the past about incidents that relate to him as well. At the same time, you have to look at the results. The result is that Rob Porter is no longer the staff secretary."

On Saturday, Trump tweeted that "lives are being shattered and destroyed by a mere allegation. Some are true and some are false." And the day before, he pointed to Porter's assertions of innocence and wished him a great future.

Conway also delivered what she said was a vote of confidence from Trump for chief of staff John Kelly, who has come under fire for his handling of the Porter matter. Kelly initially defended his right-hand man before later offering a version of the week's events that puzzled aides and did not line up with the White House's earlier timeline.

Budget director Mick Mulvaney, among those mentioned as a possible Kelly successor if Trump were to make a change, also downplayed the speculation about Kelly's standing, suggesting those stories "are mostly being fed by people who are unhappy that they have lost access to the president." He said talk of Kelly's departure is "much ado about nothing."

But Trump has grown frustrated with Kelly, once commended for bringing discipline to the West Wing but who recently has been at the center of his own controversies.

Trump has begun floating possible names for a future chief of staff in conversations with outside advisers, according to three people with knowledge of the conversations but not authorized to discuss them. In addition to Mulvaney, the others are House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, Rep. Mark Meadows and CIA Director Mike Pompeo.

Mulvaney said no one has talked to him about replacing Kelly and "I don't want that job."

There was no sign that a move was imminent, according to the people with knowledge of the conversations. Trump is known to frequently poll his advisers about the performance of senior staff and is often

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reluctant to actually fire aides.

Kelly has indicated he would step aside if he lost the faith of the president. But he has not offered to resign, according to a White House official who was not authorized to discuss personnel matters publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

But a number of West Wing aides were shaken by Kelly's handling of the Porter accusations. At a senior staff meeting on Friday, Kelly tried to push his own timeline concerning Porter. Some aides in that meeting privately questioned Kelly's account, thinking his version of events was self-serving, according to one official with knowledge of the meeting but not authorized to discuss it publicly.

Kelly has said he found out only Tuesday night that the accusations against Porter were true, but that same evening the White House released a statement of support for Porter from Kelly. The chief of staff, who has said he only learned of irregularities with Porter's background check in November, insisted that the decision for the staff secretary was made before photos of one of his ex-wives with a black eye were published.

Mulvaney, however, said Porter was "not entirely forthcoming" when asked about the allegations and, once the photos came out, "we dismissed that person immediately."

The week also cast a harsh spotlight on Hope Hicks, the White House communications director, who was dating the staff secretary. She helped craft the White House's initial supportive response and has clashed with Kelly. But several aides, including Conway, delivered ringing support for Hicks and said that the president still valued her.

As the aftershocks of the accusations against Porter reverberated for a sixth day, Trump stayed out of sight on a rainy Sunday in Washington. Showing little regard for the #MeToo movement, he has followed a pattern of giving the benefit of the doubt to powerful men and insisting upon his own innocence in the face of allegations of sexual misconduct from more than a dozen women.

"I think the president's shaped by a lot of false accusations against him in the past," said legislative director Marc Short, who added that Trump was "very disappointed" by the charges against Porter. "And I think that he believes that the resignation was appropriate."

Conway spoke on ABC's "This Week" and CNN's State of the Union," Mulvaney on "Fox News Sunday" and CBS's "Face the Nation," and Short on NBC's "Meet the Press."

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'Fifty Shades Freed' commands \$38.8 million to top charts

By LINDSEY BAHR, AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Newcomers like "Fifty Shades Freed," "Peter Rabbit" and "The 15:17 to Paris" breathed some fresh life into a marketplace that has for weeks been dominated by "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle," "The Greatest Showman" and various Oscar contenders. But it's all just setting the stage for "Black Panther," which opens next week.

"Fifty Shades Freed" managed to take the top spot on the charts in North American theaters. Universal Pictures estimated Sunday that the final chapter in the Christian Grey and Anastasia Steele saga earned \$38.8 million over the weekend — down significantly from the first film's \$85.2 million debut and even the sequel's \$46.6 million opening, but enough to bump the three-film franchise over \$1 billion globally. Women once again made up the vast majority (75 percent) of the opening weekend audience.

"We are exhilarated with the results," said Jim Orr, Universal's president of domestic distribution. "To have a trilogy engineered primarily for a female audience that we were then able to broaden out into a billion-dollar franchise is just a fantastic result."

The studio expects a healthy mid-week bump on Valentine's Day and to serve as counter-programming over the holiday weekend against "Black Panther."

The steamy romance outdid other new competitors like Sony's CG and live-action update of "Peter Rabbit," featuring the voice of James Corden, and Clint Eastwood's "The 15:17 to Paris," starring the real men

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who thwarted an attack on a Paris-bound train in the summer of 2015.

"Peter Rabbit," which cost around \$50 million to produce, hopped to second place with a solid \$25 million and an A- CinemaScore.

"The 15:17 to Paris" pulled into third place with \$12.6 million. Eastwood's dramatic thriller about the true story was not well-received by critics or audiences, who gave the film a poor B- CinemaScore.

Two films that just won't quit rounded out the top five: "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle" fell to fourth place with \$9.8 million and "The Greatest Showman" took fifth with \$6.4 million.

Overall the marketplace is still down around 1.8 percent for the year and around 27 percent from the same weekend last year which, comScore senior media analyst Paul Dergarabedian notes, saw the launch of "The Lego Batman Movie," "Fifty Shades Darker" and "John Wick: Chapter 2," all of which opened over \$30 million.

But the box office will pick up next weekend with "Black Panther," which some analysts are pegging for a \$150 million start.

"This is the calm before the Marvel storm," Dergarabedian said. "'Black Panther' is going to supercharge this marketplace when it opens later this week. I think it's going to break records and spark a huge conversation."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to comScore. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "Fifty Shades Freed," \$38.8 million (\$98.1 million international).
2. "Peter Rabbit," \$25 million.
3. "The 15:17 to Paris," \$12.6 million (\$5.3 million international).
4. "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle," \$9.8 million (\$7.5 million international).
5. "The Greatest Showman," \$6.4 million (\$8.7 million international).
6. "Maze Runner: The Death Cure," \$6 million (\$23.5 million international).
7. "Winchester," \$5.1 million (\$860,000 international).
8. "The Post," \$3.5 million (\$5.9 million international).
9. "The Shape of Water," \$3 million (\$3.1 million international).
10. "Den of Thieves," \$2.9 million (\$4.4 million international).

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at international theaters (excluding the U.S. and Canada), according to comScore:

1. "Fifty Shades Freed," \$98 million.
2. "Maze Runner: The Death Cure," \$23.5 million.
3. "Pad Man," \$8.9 million.
4. "Secret Superstar," \$8.7 million.
5. "The Greatest Showman," \$8.7 million.
6. "Les Tuche 3 (The Magic Tuche)," \$7.9 million.
7. "Coco," \$7.8 million.
8. "Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle," \$7.5 million.
9. "Detective K: Secret Of The Living Dead," \$6.9 million.
10. "Till The End Of The World," \$6.9 million.

Universal and Focus are owned by NBC Universal, a unit of Comcast Corp.; Sony, Columbia, Sony Screen Gems and Sony Pictures Classics are units of Sony Corp.; Paramount is owned by Viacom Inc.; Disney, Pixar and Marvel are owned by The Walt Disney Co.; Miramax is owned by Filmyard Holdings LLC; 20th Century Fox and Fox Searchlight are owned by 21st Century Fox; Warner Bros. and New Line are units of Time Warner Inc.; MGM is owned by a group of former creditors including Highland Capital, Anchorage Advisors and Carl Icahn; Lionsgate is owned by Lions Gate Entertainment Corp.; IFC is owned by AMC

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Follow AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/ldbahr>

Red alert: Gerard wins United States' 1st gold of games

By DENNIS WASZAK Jr., AP Sports Writer

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea (AP) — A blustery morning wind had just about everyone scrambling in the men's slopestyle event. Except for Red Gerard, who kept his footing all the way to the podium.

Kicking off the second day of full events at the Pyeongchang Olympics, the 17-year-old snowboarder won the United States' first gold medal of the games.

"Everyone in the contest was worried about the wind and stuff," said Kyle Mack, Gerard's friend and Olympic roommate. "I kept telling him, 'Don't think about it. Do the run you know you have to do.'

"He went out and put it down flawlessly."

Also Sunday, Dutch speedskater Sven Kramer broke his own Olympic record in the men's 5,000 meters to win his third straight medal in the event, Felix Loch missed his shot at a third straight luge title with a wobble on the last run and, in a biathlon stunner, Martin Fourcade and Johannes Thingnes Boe missed their targets and both missed out on medals.

Earlier, Simen Hegstad Krueger led a Norwegian sweep and won the men's 30-kilometer cross-country skiathlon — despite crashing on the first lap.

The men's downhill was postponed until Thursday because of strong winds. But other medals were scheduled to be awarded in the men's 10-kilometer sprint in biathlon, the ladies' moguls in freestyle skiing and men's luge singles.

Swirling winds blew from the bottom of the mountain during the slopestyle, and the 5-foot-5, 116-pound Gerard took advantage of the quick reflexes he honed while growing up just outside of Breckenridge, Colorado. He took a risk on the second-to-last jump by trying a 1080-degree jump off the quarterpipe side of the kicker instead of going straight through the jump and flying higher. Gerard then closed with a backside triple-cork 1440.

It all added up to a first-place score of 87.16 — and a gold medal.

"Just having fun snowboarding," Gerard said.

Canadian teammates Max Parrot (86.00) and Marc McMorris (85.20) took bronze and silver, respectively.

RECORD BREAKER

Kramer won the 5,000 in 6:09.76, besting the mark of 6:10.76, which he set in 2014 in Sochi.

He also became the first man to win three golds in the event, using a late kick to beat Canada's Ted-Jan Bloemen.

Kramer has a chance at winning two more golds in other events: the 10,000 next Thursday and the team pursuit.

NO LOCH IN THE LUGE

Loch's reign came to a sudden and shocking end, with David Gleirscher a surprise men's luge gold medalist and Chris Mazdzer giving USA Luge its first men's singles medal. Germany's Johannes Ludwig took third.

Gleirscher, who had never medaled in a World Cup singles race, finished his four runs in 3:10.702 for the gold, Austria's first in men's luge in 50 years.

Loch struggled in the final run and slipped all the way to fifth, ending his bid to become the second slider to win the event three consecutive times.

TARGETING BIATHLON

The 10-kilometer biathlon, expected to be a two-man race between Martin Fourcade and Johannes Thingnes Boe, sent shockwaves through the biathlon world.

Arnd Peiffer of Germany connected on all 10 of his targets to win gold, ahead of Michal Krčmar of the Czech Republic and Dominik Windisch of Italy.

The top-ranked Fourcade missed three of five shots from the prone position, forcing him to do three

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penalty laps. The Frenchman finished eighth overall. Thingnes Boe, a Norwegian ranked No. 2, missed three from the prone position and one from the standing position to finish a distant 31st.

MOGULS GOLD FOR FRANCE

Perrine Laffont gave France its first women's gold medal in the moguls in the 26-year history of the event, landing both her jumps without a bobble in the snow and cold.

The 19-year-old Laffont's score of 79.72 was more than two points better than 2014 gold medalist Justine Dufour-Lapointe of Canada, who had to settle for silver. Yulia Galysheva of Kazakhstan won bronze.

CRASH AND BURN — THE FIELD

An early crash couldn't keep Krueger from gold. His Norwegian teammates then helped complete a sweep in the cross-country ski race.

Krueger slipped when the mass start began and his right ski came out from under him, causing him to fall. Russian athletes Andrey Larkov and Denis Spitsov toppled over Krueger and the three ended up at the rear of the field by the time they untangled.

Krueger stormed back, though, and took the lead with 5 kilometers remaining and powered his way to gold. Norwegian teammates Martin Johnsrud Sundby and Hans Christer Holund completed the 1-2-3 finish.

NOT SO FAST

The men's downhill was supposed to be the first race of the 11-event Alpine program, and it had been scheduled for Sunday. But race organizers ruled that it needed to be rescheduled three hours before it was supposed to start because the gondola lift used to carry teams and officials up the mountains couldn't operate.

The first race of the Alpine program will now be the women's giant slalom on Monday.

More AP Olympics: <https://wintergames.ap.org>

This Week: PepsiCo results, consumer prices, housing starts **By The Associated Press**

A look at some of the key business events and economic indicators upcoming this week:

MIXED RESULTS?

PepsiCo serves up its latest quarterly report card Tuesday.

Financial analysts predict the food and beverage company's earnings increased in the fourth quarter versus a year earlier. They've also forecast that PepsiCo's revenue declined slightly in the same period. A shift from sodas to more healthy and low-calorie drinks crimped the company's sales in the third quarter.

HIGHER PRICES?

Economists expect that a gauge of U.S. consumer prices edged higher last month.

The Labor Department's consumer price index, due out Wednesday, is projected to show a gain of 0.3 percent in January from the previous month. Consumer prices rose a scant 0.2 percent in December, held back by falling energy prices. But core inflation, which excludes the volatile categories of food and energy, surged 0.3 percent, the most in 11 months.

Consumer price index, monthly percent change, seasonally adjusted, by month:

Aug. 0.4

Sept. 0.5

Oct. 0.1

Nov. 0.3

Dec. 0.2

Jan. (est.) 0.3

Source: FactSet

CONSTRUCTION RAMPS UP

Groundbreakings on new U.S. homes and apartments have been climbing amid strong demand from homebuyers.

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Housing starts in 2017 hit the highest level in a decade, finishing in December at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.19 million. That ramp up in construction has done little to offset the dwindling pool of homes for sale, though. Did builders pick up the pace further in January? Find out Friday, when the Commerce Department reports its latest figures.

Housing starts, monthly, seasonally adjusted annual rate:

Aug. 1,172,000

Sept. 1,159,000

Oct. 1,261,000

Nov. 1,299,000

Dec. 1,192,000

Jan. (est.) 1,230,000

Source: FactSet

Energy riches fuel bitcoin craze for speculation-shy Iceland

By EGILL BJARNASON, Associated Press

KEFLAVIK, Iceland (AP) — Iceland is expected to use more energy “mining” bitcoins and other virtual currencies this year than it uses to power its homes.

With massive amounts of electricity needed to run the computers that create bitcoins, large virtual currency companies have established a base in the North Atlantic island nation blessed with an abundance of renewable energy.

The new industry’s relatively sudden growth prompted lawmaker Smari McCarthy of Iceland’s Pirate Party to suggest taxing the profits of bitcoin mines. The initiative is likely to be well received by Icelanders, who are skeptical of speculative financial ventures after the country’s catastrophic 2008 banking crash.

“Under normal circumstances, companies that are creating value in Iceland pay a certain amount of tax to the government,” McCarthy told The Associated Press. “These companies are not doing that, and we might want to ask ourselves whether they should.”

The energy demand has developed because of the soaring cost of producing and collecting virtual currencies. Computers are used to make the complex calculations that verify a running ledger of all the transactions in virtual currencies around the world.

In return, the miners claim a fraction of a coin not yet in circulation. In the case of bitcoin, a total of 21 million can be mined, leaving about 4.2 million left to create. As more bitcoin enter circulation, more powerful computers are needed to keep up with the calculations — and that means more energy.

The serene coastal town of Keflavik on Iceland’s desolate southern peninsula has over the past months boomed as an international hub for mining bitcoins and other virtual currencies.

Local fishermen, chatting over steaming cups of coffee at the harbor gas station, are puzzled by the phenomenon, which has spawned oversize construction sites on the outskirts of town.

Among the main attractions of setting up bitcoin mines at the edge of the Arctic Circle is the natural cooling for computer servers and the competitive prices for Iceland’s abundance of renewable energy from geothermal and hydroelectric power plants.

Johann Snorri Sigurbergsson, a business development manager at the energy company Hitaveita Sudurnesja, said he expected Iceland’s virtual currency mining to double its energy consumption to about 100 megawatts this year. That is more than households use on the island nation of 340,000, according to Iceland’s National Energy Authority.

“Four months ago, I could not have predicted this trend — but then bitcoin skyrocketed and we got a lot more emails,” he said at the Svartsengi geothermal energy plant, which powers the southwestern peninsula where the mining takes place.

“Just today, I came from a meeting with a mining company seeking to buy 18 megawatts,” he said.

At the largest of three bitcoin “farms” currently operating within Keflavik — called “Mjøltnir” after the hammer of Thor, the Norse god of thunder — high metal fences surround 50 meter-long (164 foot) ware-

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house buildings stacked with computer rigs.

The data centers here are specially designed to utilize the constant wind on the bare peninsula. Walls are only partial on each side, allowing a draft of cold air to cool down the equipment.

"What we are doing here is like gold mining," said Helmut Rauth, who manages operations for Genesis Mining, a major bitcoin mining company. "We are mining on a large scale and getting the gold out to the people."

Genesis Mining, founded in Germany, moved to Iceland in 2014 when the price of bitcoin fluctuated from \$350 to \$1000.

Today, one bitcoin is valued at about \$8,000, according to tracking site Coindesk, after peaking at almost \$19,500 in December.

The currency took a hit in January when China announced it would move to wipe out its bitcoin mining industry, following concerns of excessive electricity consumption.

Rauth said bitcoin should not be singled out as environmentally taxing. Computing power always demands energy, he argues.

"How much energy is needed for credit card transactions and internet research? Cryptocurrencies have the same global impact," he said.

In the capital, Reykjavik, some are more skeptical about bitcoin.

The last time Iceland was an international hub for finance, the venture ended with a giant bank crash, making the country one of the symbols of the 2008 global financial crisis.

The political turmoil following the crash swept the upstart Pirate Party into Iceland's parliament, where it currently holds 10 percent of seats.

Pirate Party legislator McCarthy has questioned the value of bitcoin mining for Icelandic society, saying residents should consider regulating and taxing the emerging industry.

"We are spending tens or maybe hundreds of megawatts on producing something that has no tangible existence and no real use for humans outside the realm of financial speculation," he said. "That can't be good."

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, Feb. 12, the 43rd day of 2018. There are 322 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 12, 1809, Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States, was born in a log cabin in Hardin (now LaRue) County, Kentucky.

On this date:

In 1554, Lady Jane Grey, who had claimed the throne of England for nine days, and her husband, Guildford Dudley, were beheaded after being condemned for high treason.

In 1818, Chile officially proclaimed its independence, more than seven years after initially renouncing Spanish rule.

In 1909, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was founded.

In 1914, groundbreaking took place for the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. (A year later on this date, the cornerstone was laid.)

In 1924, George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" premiered in New York.

In 1940, the radio play "The Adventures of Superman" debuted with Bud Collyer as the Man of Steel.

In 1959, the redesigned Lincoln penny — with an image of the Lincoln Memorial replacing two ears of wheat on the reverse side — went into circulation.

In 1963, a Northwest Orient Airlines Boeing 720 broke up during severe turbulence and crashed into the Florida Everglades, killing all 43 people aboard.

In 1973, Operation Homecoming began as the first release of American prisoners of war from the Viet-

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nam conflict took place.

In 1980, the FBI announced that about \$5,800 of the \$200,000 ransom paid to hijacker "D.B. Cooper" before he parachuted from a Northwest Orient jetliner in 1971 had been found by an 8-year-old boy on a riverbank of the Columbia River in Washington state.

In 1993, in a crime that shocked and outraged Britons, two 10-year-old boys lured 2-year-old James Bulger from his mother at a shopping mall near Liverpool, England, then beat him to death.

In 1999, the Senate voted to acquit President Bill Clinton of perjury and obstruction of justice.

Ten years ago: Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain won their respective parties' primaries in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. General Motors reported losing \$38.7 billion in 2007, a record annual loss in automotive history, and offered buyouts to 74,000 hourly workers. Character actor David Groh died in Los Angeles at age 68. Uno became the first beagle named Westminster's best in show.

Five years ago: The manhunt for a rogue ex-Los Angeles cop seeking revenge for his firing came to an end with his apparent suicide in a mountain cabin following a gunbattle with law enforcement; authorities blamed him for killing four people, including two officers. President Barack Obama set up high-stakes clashes over guns, immigration, taxes and climate change in his State of the Union address. The U.N. Security Council strongly condemned North Korea's latest nuclear test. IOC leaders dropped wrestling for the 2020 Games in a surprise decision to scrap one of the oldest sports on the Olympic program.

One year ago: Northern California authorities ordered the evacuation of some 200,000 people from communities near the Oroville Dam, where an emergency spillway was in danger of flooding. (After officials drained water from the lake behind the dam and made emergency repairs, residents were allowed to return.) At the Grammy Awards, Adele took home all five awards she was nominated for, including album ("25"), as well as record and song of the year ("Hello"). Grammy-winning jazz singer Al Jarreau, 76, died at a Los Angeles hospital, just days after announcing his retirement from touring because of exhaustion.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director Franco Zeffirelli is 95. Movie director Costa-Gavras is 85. Basketball Hall of Famer Bill Russell is 84. Actor Joe Don Baker is 82. Author Judy Blume is 80. Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak is 76. Country singer Moe Bandy is 74. Actress Maud Adams is 73. Actor Cliff DeYoung is 72. Actor Michael Ironside is 68. Rock musician Steve Hackett is 68. Rock singer Michael McDonald is 66. Actress Joanna Kerns is 65. Actor-talk show host Arsenio Hall is 62. Actor John Michael Higgins is 55. Actor Raphael Sbarge is 54. Actress Christine Elise is 53. Actor Josh Brolin is 50. Singer Chynna Phillips is 50. Rock musician Jim Creeggan (Barenaked Ladies) is 48. Rhythm-and-blues musician Keri Lewis is 47. Actor Jesse Spencer is 39. Rapper Gucci Mane is 38. Actress Sarah Lancaster is 38. Actress Christina Ricci is 38. NFL quarterback Robert Griffin III is 28. Actress Jennifer Stone is 25. Actresses Baylie and Rylie Cregut (TV: "Raising Hope") are eight.

Thought for Today: "Human beings are the only creatures who are able to behave irrationally in the name of reason." — Ashley Montagu, English anthropologist (1905-1999).

Riddle Answer: A Fly