



Friday's sun dogs

This photo was taken by Teresa Lutz near Henry Friday morning as the sun dogs were out in full force, which means colder temperatures are on the way. According to Wikipedia: A sun dog or mock sun, formally called a parhelion in meteorology, is an atmospheric optical phenomenon that consists of a bright spot to one or both sides of the Sun. Two sun dogs often flank the Sun within a 22° halo.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

- 2- State Fall Coaches of the Year
- 2- Help Wanted Ads
- 2- Holiday Garbage Pickup Schedule
- 3- Illegally Dumped Snow Causing Problems
- 3- Death Notice: Olga Grandpre
- 4- Women to have 'larger voice' in 2019 S.D. Legislature

- 5- City hauling snow this morning
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Fall State Coaches of the Year

Sioux Falls, SD – The South Dakota High School Coaches Association announces the Coach of the Year Awards for the Fall of 2018. (Other nominees listed below each winner):

Cheer – Val Ewing of Winner High School

Tina Barnett-Sioux Falls O’Gorman, Bruce Kleinsasser-Aberdeen Central, Diedra Nissen-Sioux Falls Roosevelt

Dance – Tracy Kuhn of Brandon Valley High School

Megan Smith-Huron, Melissa Strong-Dakota Valley

Soccer – Sidney Zanin of Pierre High School

Dave Dancler-Sioux Falls Washington, Tyler Schuring-Yankton, Luis Usera-Rapid City Stevens, Kendall Velgersdyk-Sioux Falls Christian

Girls Cross Country – Don Ray of Deubrook High School

Karen Karim-Custer, Eric Pooley-Sioux Falls Lincoln, Kyle Sanderson-Newell

Boys Cross Country – Jeff Larson of Warner High School

Tom Brantner-James Valley Christian, Karen Karim-Custer, Eric Pooley-Sioux Falls Lincoln

Football – Byron Pudwill of Bon Homme High School

Craig Clayberg-Tea Area, Chad Garrow-Brandon Valley, Michael Schmitz-Huron, James Strang-Canistota

Volleyball – Linda DeBoer of Miller High School

Kari Jung-Warner, Kylie Voorhees-Rapid City Stevens, Darci Wassenaar, Sioux Falls Christian

Last year’s winners:

Cheer – Angela Bernard of Dakota Valley High School

Dance – Cyndy Demers of Winner High School

Soccer – Zach Jurgens of Tea Area High School

Girls Cross Country – Joe Noyes of Hill City High School

Boys Cross Country – Todd Thorson of Ipswich High School

Football – Brian Allmendinger of Gregory High School

Volleyball – Nora Groft of Northwester High School

These coaches will be recognized at the annual awards banquet to be held in Mitchell this summer in conjunction with the South Dakota Coaches’ Clinic.

Homecare Services Caregivers

Flexible, part time positions available in the Groton area. Home Care Services is looking for friendly dependable people to provide care and companionship for elderly and disabled people in their homes. You will be assisting our clients with personal care needs, meal preparations, light housekeeping, errands and other tasks. If you have a passion for helping others and need a flexible schedule, please call our office at (605) 225-1076 or 1-800-899-2578. (1218.0101)



Holiday Trash Pick-Up

Garbage pick-up will NOT be on Christmas Day instead pick-up will be the following day, Wednesday, December 26!!

Garbage WILL be picked up on New Year’s Day, January 1st!!

Front Porch Manager Wanted

Immediate opening for Restaurant General Manager at The Front Porch Bar & Grill in Langford SD. Hiring bonus available! Salary DOE. Must be 21 years old. Contact Suzie Easthouse at (605) 493-6570 or email resume by to langfordfrontporch@venture-comm.net. (1227.0111)

Illegally Dumped Snow Causing Problems

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Department of Transportation reminds the public and commercial snow removal operators that it is illegal to place or dump excess snow on highway right of way, which includes driving surfaces, shoulders and ditches.

"The recent snowstorm across South Dakota has deposited a large amount of snow in some areas," said Kristi Sandal, public information officer. "The space within the right of way needs to be reserved for future snow that may fall on the road. If the department's plow operators do not have a place to put that snow, it severely hampers their ability to clear roadways."

Violation of the anti-dumping law is a Class 1 misdemeanor, with a penalty of up to one year in jail, \$2,000 in fines, or both. It is the policy of the SDDOT to remove snow that has been illegally piled within the highway right of way that may be a safety hazard. In addition, violators will be billed for the costs of removing illegally dumped snow.

"Piling snow in the state highway right of way can be very dangerous," says Sandal. "Snow piles can restrict sight distance, as well as present an extreme hazard if a vehicle leaves the roadway. Snow piles that remain adjacent to the road may cause additional drifting and visibility problems posing more safety hazards to travelers, as well as additional expenses for manpower and equipment to remove the illegally dumped snow."

Property owners and access users are reminded it is their responsibility to remove snow from the ends of driveways and around their own mailboxes.

The department asks landowners and commercial snow-removal operators to keep excess snow on private property or haul it to legal dumping sites.

Death Notice: Olga Grandpre

Olga Grandpre, 91, of Aberdeen and formerly of Conde passed away Friday, December 28, 2018 at Mother Joseph Manor, Aberdeen. Services are pending with Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Women to have 'larger voice' in 2019 S.D. Legislature

By: Bart Pfankuch

This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, a non-profit news organization. Find more in-depth reporting at www.sdnewswatch.org.

In South Dakota and across the country, women will play a larger role in lawmaking and policymaking at almost all levels of government in 2019.

The new U.S. Congress will feature a record number of women in both the House and Senate. South Dakota will have its first female governor when Kristi Noem takes office in January. The South Dakota Legislature will be home to a near-record number of women, several of whom were elected for the first time this fall. And Noem recently named Kim Vanneman as the state's first female agriculture secretary.

Among the contingent of women entering lawmaking in South Dakota, there exists a growing esprit de corps and a feeling of excitement that new issues, new voices and a new sense of collaboration will arise in the 2019 session that starts in January.

"Women are feeling like, 'Hey, things are not where we want them to be, and we have ideas and answers that haven't been considered,'" said Linda Duba, a Representative-elect and first-time lawmaker from Sioux Falls. "So, we said, 'OK, let's go get a seat at the table.'"

The rise of women in Congress and the state Legislature results in part from concerted efforts to encourage more women to run for elected office. In the wake of the 2016 presidential election, groups were formed specifically to provide qualified women with the knowledge, resources and support to run for office.

Based on interviews with several incoming female lawmakers, the influx of women into the Legislature could lead to a greater focus on issues such as improving access to health care, beefing up the state education system especially at the pre-kindergarten level and creating more jobs and economic opportunities for younger people and the working poor.

While those issues are not gender-specific, they may get a stronger push this session from female lawmakers who have different perspectives and life experiences than men.

Furthermore, the incoming women say they will bring a heightened sense of bi-partisanship and collaboration that they say has been missing in state and federal lawmaking.

"I definitely think there will be a louder voice from women than we've had in the past," said Erin Healy, a representative-elect from Sioux Falls. "A few of us are trying to actively figure out a way that we can get all the women together, regardless of political affiliation, to work on specific issues."

One expert suggests that the surge in female leadership in South Dakota and America is just beginning.

"This has been a great year for women running for office," said University of South Dakota political science professor Julia Hellwege, who studies the role of gender and race in elections.

"We're going to see continuous growth because as more women see more other women in office, they'll say, 'Yeah, I can do that as well.'"



Three new incoming South Dakota lawmakers gathered in Rapid City in December for a taping of the South Dakota Public Broadcasting show, "Where Do We Go From Here?" to discuss the upcoming legislative session. They are, from left, Republican Representative-elect Scyller Borglum, Rapid City; Democratic Senator-elect Red Dawn Foster, Pine Ridge and Democratic Representative-elect Peri Pourier, Pine Ridge. Photo: Bart Pfankuch

Not yet full representation

Even with more women in the state Legislature in 2019, the state is far from seeing full representation of its female population.

The population of South Dakota is made up 49.5 percent women, yet the incoming class of lawmakers will be only 24 percent female. In all, 25 female lawmakers will travel to Pierre for the session that starts Jan. 8. The 2019 roster of lawmakers has four more women than in 2018 and near the record of 26 who served in the 1991-92 session, according to the South Dakota Legislative Research Council. Still, the new contingent is a far cry from the three women who served in 1971-72 and the 11 who served in 1981-82.

Only two leadership positions will be occupied by women: Republican Sen. Kris Langer of Dell Rapids will serve as majority leader in the Senate, and incoming Democratic Rep. Erin Healy of Sioux Falls was named a minority whip in the House.

According to the Center for Women and Politics at Rutgers University, South Dakota ranked 34th among the 50 states for women in the state legislature with 21 percent female lawmakers in 2018. With four more women lawmakers in 2019, that ranking could rise but will depend on how many women were elected in other states.

The state is behind the 2018 national average of 26 percent women in state legislatures.

Studies have shown that women and men tend to win elections at roughly the same rate, so the disproportionately small number of women in office is likely due to fewer women than men seeking office, said Hellwege.

The state saw a record number of women run for the Legislature in 2018, according to CWAP. In total, 61 female candidates sought office – 41 Democrats and 20 Republicans – and 25 were elected, six Democrats and 19 Republicans.

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The structure of the South Dakota Legislature, with an annual session held in the middle of the state, makes it easier for retirees, business owners and the independently wealthy to hold office than for working women and mothers.

The female newcomers to the statehouse have a wide breadth of life experiences and ages. They range in age from the early 30s to the mid-60s with vocations including bartender, non-profit executive, archivist, engineer, employment investigator and homemaker.

The number of women who ran for office in 2018 was boosted by the recent formation of groups that encourage women to enter public service and advise them on how to run a successful campaign, Hellwege said. Efforts to recruit more women were bolstered by rise of the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment and the election of President Donald Trump, who has made off-color and patronizing statements about women, she said.

In South Dakota, the non-partisan Ready to Run group is an offshoot of a national female candidate support effort. Similarly, the Leaders Engaged and Determined group, known as LEAD, was formed by a small group of Sioux Falls women after the 2016 presidential election in which Trump defeated Hillary Clinton.

The groups provide potential candidates with networking opportunities, training on fundraising and campaigning and the moral support to realize they can win elected office, Hellwege said.

Often, women may not run for office unless someone encourages or asks them to do so, Hellwege said.

Three female Democratic candidates who participated in LEAD were elected this fall: Duba, Healy and Kelly Sullivan, all of Sioux Falls.

While it is unclear if a surge of women in government will cause new or different issues to arise, women have historically been more comfortable to address some topics that aren't top of mind for men, such as birth control or women's and children's health, said Hellwege.

"Children and family issues may be highlighted more, and women who are moms are more likely to prioritize those issues more," she said.

Female lawmakers may also see issues with a different perspective than men, she said, such as considering educational opportunities rather than just fiscal considerations as a critical component of a debate over expanding workforce options.

"I want the next generation, and for me that next generation is my nieces, to know and remember that when you make up your mind to do something, and have a solid plan and you're committed, that you have a good chance of being successful in running for office."

- Scyller Borglum.

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Downplaying gender, focusing on legislating

Like Governor-elect Noem, Scyller Borglum of Rapid City has downplayed the impact her gender had on her decision to run, on her election and how she will legislate.

Borglum, 41, is a representative-elect from Rapid City who said she ran first and foremost as a Republican and Christian, then as a scientist and engineer and finally as someone who will work with any other willing lawmaker to improve things for her state and its residents.

"I have not met anybody who's run for the state Legislature as a woman, where that was their platform," said Borglum, a graduate of the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology who works as a research engineer in the geomechanics lab at Respec, an industrial engineering firm in Rapid City. "I hesitate to emphasize gender because in the end we're all working on the important issues facing the state."

Yet Borglum is cognizant that she is part of a wave of women entering the Legislature, and she embraces what she said can be a fresh approach to studying issues in a collaborative, bi-partisan way.

During new lawmaker orientation in December, Borglum struck up an immediate friendship with Senator-elect Red Dawn Foster of Pine Ridge, a Democrat. Borglum said the pair share a goal to work hard to improve life for South Dakotans.

Some of their stated priorities differ. Foster promotes Medicaid expansion, backs labor unions and wants improved protection of state land and water resources from abuse by foreign business interests. Borglum, meanwhile, wants to tackle meth addiction, expand mental health treatment options and protect failing nursing homes.

Both incoming lawmakers, however, want to expand economic and employment opportunities for all state residents and share the goal of improving the state education system, particularly for younger students and Pre-K children.

"What you're seeing are two women, very excited, who are doing this together," Borglum said. "All of us pushing forward and pushing toward a common goal and recognizing that same thing in our fellow legislators — that's where this positive energy is coming from."

Both women also said they hope to serve as an inspiration to others, women in particular, to seek elected office.

"I want the next generation, and for me that next generation is my nieces, to know and remember that when you make up your mind to do something, and have a solid plan and you're committed, that you have a good chance of being successful in running for office," Borglum said.

Foster and fellow Pine Ridge lawmaker Peri Pourier will also focus on improving conditions on South Dakota Indian reservations.

The pair hope to continue a historic pattern of strong Native women who take a determined approach to governing in the fight for positive change.

Pourier, a Democratic Representative-elect who is a military veteran, said she wants to help indigenous people by expanding access to health care, eliminating food deserts and improving safety and security on reservations.

"We're dealing with survival factors; we're dealing with survivability," Pourier said at a recent panel discussion in Rapid City.

Some in the incoming wave of women lawmakers bring up early education, access to health care and finding ways to help the working poor as issues deserving more attention in Pierre

A push for collaboration

Another consistent message among the new crop of female lawmakers is increasing collaboration and reducing the binary partisanship that exists in government.

"I was really sick of the partisanship in Pierre and at the national level," said Healy, a Democrat who works as an analyst at Midco Communica-



Democratic Representative-elect Erin Healy, shown here campaigning on election day, said she hopes to bring a fresh voice and approach to issues in the upcoming legislative session. Photo: Courtesy Erin Healy

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Linda Duba is a newly elected Representative from Sioux Falls.

Photo provided by Linda Duba

tions in Sioux Falls. "When I went around campaigning, that was often the conversation, that people were incredibly sick of issues coming up that were dominated by one party or the other."

Communication may become more civil — and likely more effective — with more women involved in legislative debates, said Duba.

"Women in general are more gregarious that way; we come at people from a more personal than political approach," Duba said. "It's also refreshing when you have both genders in a room because you have more sharing of ideas."

Duba, 62, is a retired corporate finance executive who now works as an educational assistant at an elementary school and was elected as a Democrat.

Duba said the further she worked her way up the corporate ladder, the more she became a minority as a woman. She said that women leaders tend to be more open than men to considering new ideas and sharing information in order to solve problems.

"It's more of a collaborative style than a command style, not that men can't be collaborative," she said. "I'm not going to tell you that we're like-minded, but I do find that women are more open to ideas and getting new information."

Hellwege, the USD professor, said studies show that women see themselves as more collaborative but that the impression is not always reality.

"We do know that women themselves perceive themselves to be better listeners and more collaborative," Hellwege said. "But the literature is actually somewhat mixed on that; some studies say that's true and some say there's really no gender difference."

Hellwege said any shift that takes place in lawmaking due to stronger influence by women may show up only over time and only if the trend toward greater female involvement continues.

"Things will not change that much until women actually get to the leadership positions, which takes seniority," she said. "It's not enough to just get women into office, but they have to get into positions of leadership. We're getting there, but there's a long way to go."



About Bart Pfankuch

Bart Pfankuch, Rapid City, S.D., is an investigative reporter for South Dakota News Watch. A Wisconsin native, he is a former editor of the Rapid City Journal. Bart has spent almost 30 years as a reporter and editor.

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The city crew was out this morning hauling off many truck loads of snow off of Groton's Main Street. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The Groton Area Elementary School has snow banks around its building from the recent blizzard that hit the area. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Today in Weather History

December 29, 2005: Heavy snow of 6 to 14 inches fell across parts of north central and most of north-east South Dakota from the morning of the 29th through the early afternoon of the 30th. Big Stone and Traverse counties in west central Minnesota had 7 to 8 inches of snow the evening of the 29th through the early afternoon of the 30th. Light rain and freezing rain fell before the snow, creating some slick roads which resulted in some accidents. Some snowfall amounts included 7 inches at Watertown, Big Stone City, and Artichoke Lake; 8 inches at Waubay, Browns Valley, and Wheaton; 9 inches northeast of Isabel and Hecla; 10 inches at Wilmot and Clear Lake; 12 inches at Milbank; and 14 inches at Summit.

December 29, 1876: The Pacific Express train was crossing the Ashtabula River in Ohio when the bridge collapsed. The bridge collapsed at 7:28 PM, during a snowstorm that left two feet of snow and produced 40 mph winds. The only railcar not to fall into the icy river below was the first locomotive.

1830 - A very heavy snowstorm ushered in the "winter of the deep snow." The storm produced 30 inches of snow at Peoria IL and 36 inches at Kansas City MO. Cold and snow continued until the middle of February causing great suffering among pioneers. (David Ludlum)

1894 - A severe freeze hit Florida destroying fruit and causing considerable damage to trees. (David Ludlum)

1954 - Fort Scott, KS, was buried under 26 inches of snow in 24 hours to establish a state record. (28th-29th) (The Weather Channel)

1984 - One hundred cities in the central and eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures. Kansas City, MO, experienced its warmest December day of record with a morning low of 60 degrees and an afternoon high of 71 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)




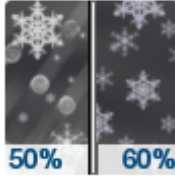

1987 - A storm off the Middle Atlantic Coast produced heavy snow in the Appalachians and the north-eastern U.S. Snow and high winds created blizzard conditions in southeastern Massachusetts. Cape Cod received thirteen inches of snow, and snow drifts three feet deep were reported around Chatham MA. Strong winds produced wind chill readings as cold as 60 degrees below zero in southwestern New England. In the western U.S., a Pacific coast storm produced heavy snow in the Sierra Nevada Range of California, with 24 inches reported at Mammoth Mountain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A cold front brought rain and snow to the northwestern U.S. The rainfall total of 2.70 inches at Astoria OR was a record for the date. High winds along the eastern slopes of the Northern Rockies gusted to 81 mph at Livingston MT. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

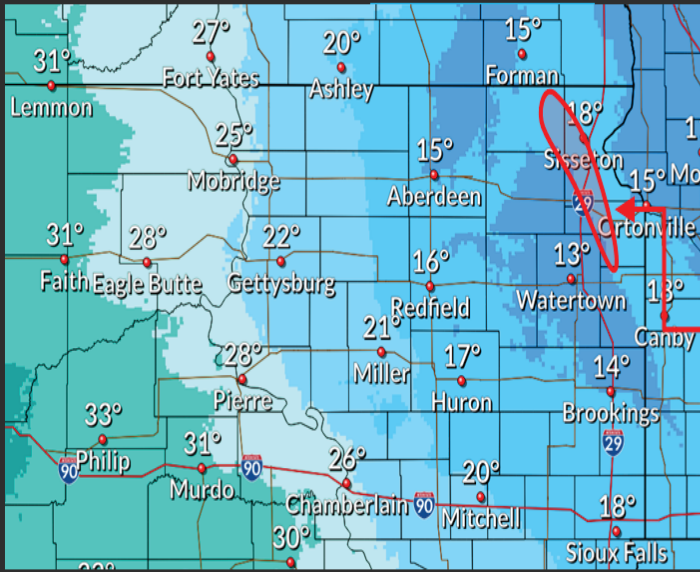
1989 - Snow and ice prevailed from the southwestern U.S. to the Great Lakes Region. Flagstaff, AZ, received nine inches of snow in just six hours. Bitter cold weather continued over Maine. Portland ME reported a record twenty-two straight days with highs 32 degrees or colder. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)


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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
				
Mostly Sunny	Increasing Clouds	Mostly Cloudy then Chance Wintry Mix	Chance Snow/Sleet then Snow Likely and Patchy Blowing Snow	Chance Snow and Patchy Blowing Snow
High: 14 °F	Low: 14 °F	High: 35 °F	Low: 9 °F	High: 9 °F

High Temperatures Today








National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD
12/29/2018 4:11 AM

**Strong Winds
Blowing
Snow**

- ❖ Clear Today
- ❖ Clouds Tonight
- ❖ Clipper System Late Sunday into Monday – A Mix Changing To Snow With Gusty Winds

3 Day Forecast Highs

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
		
35-45°	5-15° Above	5° Below to 15° Above

Published on: 12/29/2018 at 4:15 AM

It will be a cold start to the morning but warmer air is moving in. It might take a little time however, and temperatures today will struggle. Additionally, we get a favorable setup for some gustiness with blowing snow downwind of the Sisseton hills, so stay alert if you plan to travel up that way! A clipper system moves in to start the work week with a few inches of snow and gusty winds.

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Late Sunday – Monday Clipper

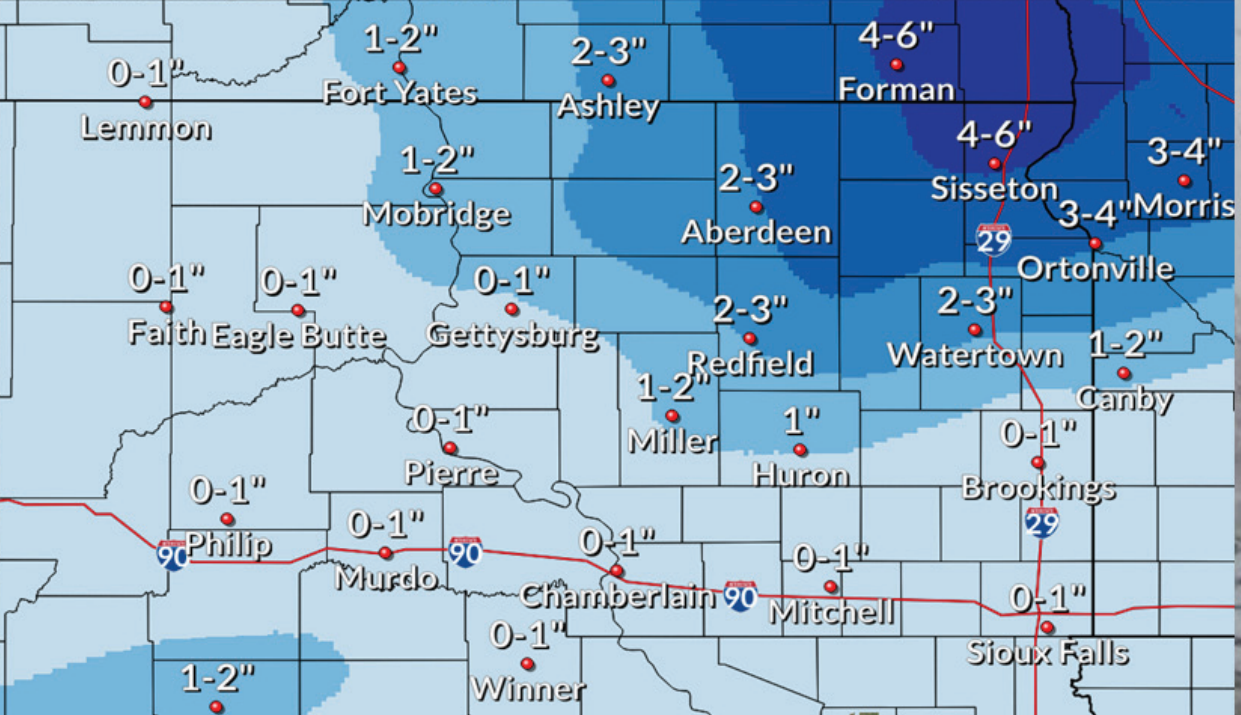
Forecast Snowfall Sun Night - Mon Night

Weather Forecast Office
Aberdeen, SD



Blowing and Drifting Snow Possible Monday

Issued Dec 29, 2018 3:06 AM CST



Windy Monday: Blowing & Drifting – Visibility Reduced



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

12/29/2018 4:45 AM

Published on: 12/29/2018 at 4:50AM

A clipper system will cross the region late Sunday into Monday. While we expect mild temperatures ahead of this feature, a quick changeover to snow will result in a few inches accumulation, along with gusty winds which will cause blowing and drifting along with reduced visibility. This likely will impact travel for parts of the Dakotas and western Minnesota.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 10 °F at 12:00 AM

Low Outside Temp: -12 °F at 9:14 PM

High Gust: 34 mph at 12:06 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 59° in 1999

Record Low: -35° in 1917

Average High: 23°F

Average Low: 3°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.46

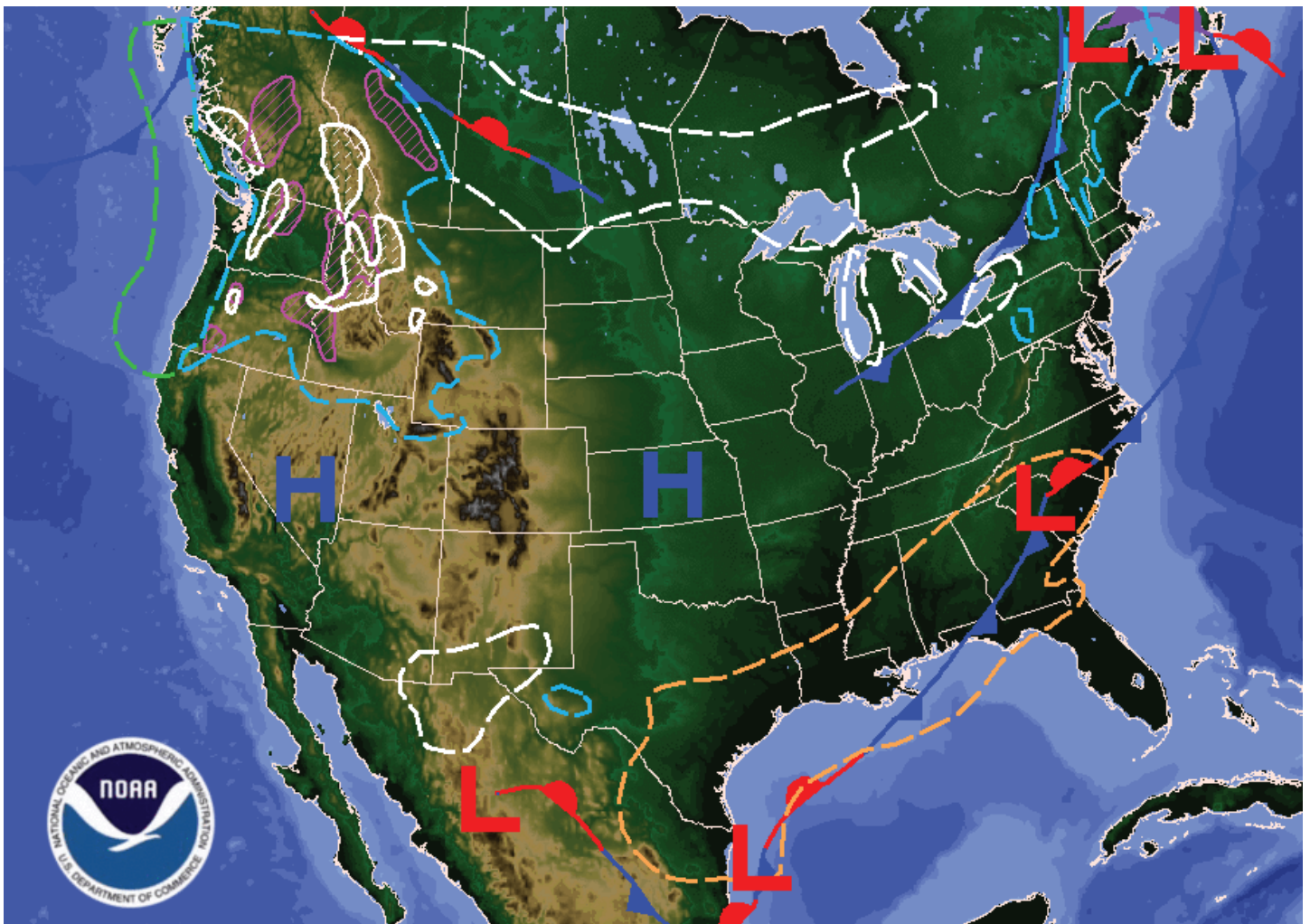
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.66

Precip Year to Date: 15.81

Sunset Tonight: 4:59 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:13 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sat, Dec 29, 2018, issued 4:54 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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WHAT TO EXPECT IN 2019

As we come to the close of this year and face the uncertainties that are before us in the year to come, it is important to pause, listen to and accept a promise from our God:

For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

In those days when you pray, I will listen. If you search for me with all your heart, you will find me, declares the Lord.

This is one of Gods if thens. There can be no misunderstanding of what He is talking about in this passage of Scripture. God knows our future. He very carefully designed it in our best interest to enable us to find and follow His will. Because He knows our future, He assures us that it can be one of goodness and hope not one of disaster.

But if we want this future that contains goodness and hope we must study His Word and go to Him in earnest prayer. He assures us that He will listen to us but then we must also search for Him with all of our hearts.

Perhaps we have prayed and even searched for Him in years past, but did not do so with all our heart.

Prayer: Lord, may we come to You this year with a sincerity and singleness of heart to find Your plans. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

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2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- Nov./Dec./Jan./Feb./Mar. Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 4/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 5/4/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/27/2019 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program at the Cemetery, Lunch to follow at the American Legion (Memorial Day)
- Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 6/15/2019 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/14/2019 Summer Fest
- 9/7/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching 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)
- 12/01/2018 Olive Grove Golf Course 2018 Holiday Party
- 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

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News from the Associated Press

Friday's Scores By The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Roncalli 62, Belle Fourche 34
Alliance, Neb. 96, Oelrichs 27
Breckenridge, Minn. 79, Bridgewater-Emery 77
Chadron, Neb. 50, Custer 38
O Gorman 67, Mitchell 43
St. Thomas More 61, Madison 46
Tea Area 76, Vermillion 40
Yankton 72, Dominican, Wis. 52
Hoop City Classic(equals)
Mitchell Christian 59, Dominican, Wis. 50
Swiftel Classic(equals)
Viborg-Hurley 55, Deuel 37

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Alliance, Neb. 59, Oelrichs 33
Belle Fourche 59, Aberdeen Roncalli 55
Chadron, Neb. 57, Custer 21
Flandreau 60, Dell Rapids 56
Garretson 73, Dell Rapids St. Mary 67
Kadoka Area 73, Stanley County 25
St. Thomas More 55, Madison 36
Vermillion 55, Tea Area 42
Hoop City Classic
Mitchell 59, Waconia, Minn. 50
Swiftel Classic(equals)
Howard 47, Tiospa Zina Tribal 38
Viborg-Hurley 61, Lake Preston 52
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS
Colman-Egan vs. Hitchcock-Tulare, ccd.
Faulkton vs. Sanborn Central/Woonsocket, ccd.
Hutchinson, Minn. vs. Aberdeen Central, ccd.
Ipswich vs. Chester, ccd.
Jones County vs. Iroquois, ccd.
Leola/Frederick vs. James Valley Christian, ccd.
Lower Brule vs. Miller, ccd.
Worthington, Minn. vs. Yankton, ccd.

Some high school basketball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

North Dakota State vs. South Dakota, ppd. to Saturday

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — The Summit League opener between North Dakota State and South Dakota was postponed on Friday night due to winter weather and hazardous travel conditions.

The game has been rescheduled for Saturday at noon at North Dakota State's Scheels Center.

South Dakota family faces rare brain disease

By MAKENZIE L. HUBER, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Kandie Nelson feels like a ticking time bomb.

If a headache lasts too long, she worries it will mean another hospital trip.

The 45-year-old has seven tangles of blood vessels known as cerebral cavernous malformations in her brain. The mulberry-shaped tangles can bleed and lead to seizures or stroke-like symptoms.

It's an incurable disease she's lived with for more than a decade. She's gotten used to the stress and irregularity of her condition.

But her children have CCM too. That's the tough part.

"The most difficult thing was finding out that my kids had the gene — that devastated me," Nelson, a clerk for the city of Sioux Falls, told the Argus Leader. "I was so afraid because I didn't want them to go through what I went through. As a parent, you want to protect your kids, and I couldn't protect them from this."

But instead of letting the disease control their lives, the Nelsons have banded together as a family, drawing strength from one another.

About 12 years ago, Nelson was working at the front desk of a hotel when she couldn't speak on the phone. Her hands, legs and feet grew numb and she fell. She didn't know it at the time, but a CCM in her brain was hemorrhaging.

Soon after being diagnosed with the condition after the incident, Kandie Nelson and her husband, Bryan Theodore Nelson, 48, genetically tested their children. Two out of the three — Kayla Nelson, 20, and Bryan David Nelson, 26 — have CCM.

Kandie Nelson, Kayla Nelson and Bryan David Nelson have a mutated gene in CCM2, which distinguishes their strand of disease from two others: CCM1 and CCM3. They've all gone through brain surgeries at Mayo Clinic, which have relieved Kandie Nelson and Kayla Nelson from deficiencies. Bryan David Nelson still has issues with balance from a CCM that bled in his spinal cord.

Neurologist Kelly Flemming has worked with the family since 2016. While the disease is "anxiety provoking" for many patients, Flemming doesn't see that with the Nelsons. Instead, the family "takes the good with the bad."

"They're fantastic people with an amazing amount of resilience," Flemming said. "Kandie's experience helps the kids be less anxious because she's able to know what to expect."

Kayla Nelson said she has a personal support group in her family, and advice from her mom has helped calm any fears she's had during treatment or surgery.

"I think at the time I was still anxious because it was my first major surgery," Kayla Nelson said. "There's times when I still get bad headaches and bad anxiety, but my mom's always there to help me through it. So is my dad."

Support from friends, extended family and groups like the Angioma Alliance has made it easier for the Nelsons. But it's supporting each other that's been most important.

"Bryan was my biggest supporter," Kandie Nelson said of her husband. "He sat there and stayed strong through my tears and me asking 'why me?'"

One day when Kandie Nelson felt a seizure coming on when the kids were still young, she wanted to cry. But since she was around the children, she laughed instead. Finding humor in her situation was a way to help her children through it as well.

"It's going into this with humor and seeing it in a different perspective — that, yes, it's an incurable disease right now but it's not that bad. Laughing makes it easier and better," Kandie Nelson said. "I think we've gotten to the point where we joke about it. My kids will joke at me, 'Hey, you have half a brain.'"

None of the Nelsons plan on letting their condition keep them from achieving their goals.

"Between Kayla and Bryan (David), I think I get strength from them knowing that they're continuing on with their dreams and not letting a 'weakness' or a disease get them down," said Bryan Theodore Nelson, an electronic technician for the Federal Aviation Administration in Sioux Falls.

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After her surgery as a junior in high school, Kayla Nelson planned to be a neurosurgeon and work on patients with her same condition. But since she doesn't have "steady enough hands," the medical biology major at University Center in Sioux Falls wants to become a neurologist and study CCM at Mayo Clinic instead.

Living with CCM herself, she said she'd be able to better empathize and relate to patients who will also have the same condition.

Each of the CCMs taken from their surgeries have been donated for research to find a cure. Flemming also works with the family to find how lifestyle factors, medications and other medical problems influence bleeding from CCMs.

"It's a rare disease, but I think there's a lot of hope in the near future," Flemming said.

Based on statistics, there should be about 350 people in Sioux Falls with the disease. The Nelsons only know five other people besides them in the city with CCM, and believe many in the area don't know they have the condition.

With research for further treatment, Flemming said there will be multiple clinical trials in the next few years.

"I believe God puts you here for a reason," Kandie Nelson said, "and I believe one of my things to do in life is to help find a cure for this. I don't know how, but I believe it."

These days, it's more important than ever to Kandie Nelson that a cure is found.

Bryan David, who's a mechanic, just had a child in October. It'll be another eight months until they can test the baby for CCM.

No matter what happens, Kandie Nelson and Bryan Theodore Nelson plan to support their son and daughter-in-law in just the same way their family's found support in each other.

"The biggest thing we've learned is for people to find their strength," Bryan Theodore Nelson said. "Whether that be family, God or whatever their faith may be — find your strength and surround yourself with that."

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

South Dakota resort gets new owners, stays in the family

By CORA VAN OLSON, Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — For Michael and Valeri Grave, coming to Yankton's Lewis & Clark Resort as owners is a new life chapter, as well as a homecoming.

Jeff Wahl was there at the beginning when the Lewis & Clark Resort, located just west of the Marina Grill at the Lewis & Clark Recreation Area, was built. He ran it for the last 18 years, and recently decided to sell it — to his nephew Michael Grave.

"My previous company, we developed (the Lewis & Clark Resort) back in 1988," Wahl told the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan. "I've been here since 2001, and we kind of developed it. Now it's 2018, and it's time to move on to the next chapter in my life: get out of here; go live on a boat."

Michael and Valeri Grave, and their young son Max, moved in at the resort recently after purchasing the property, which consists of hotel rooms, cabins and a lodge.

"The state owns the land and we are concessionaires," Wahl said. "We own the buildings."

Michael Grave, originally from Hartford, and has lived and worked in Yankton before.

"People that have been here before may remember me," he said. "I was on the Convention and Visitors Bureau board from 2009-2012, and Leadership Yankton. Leadership Yankton was a program about getting younger professionals more involved in Yankton so they stayed, which, I guess, didn't work short term for me, but it did work long term."

"Michael worked here for three years," Wahl explained. "He managed the place for three years, so it's not anything new. He's got intimate knowledge of the business. He knows how everything works."

Michael Grave was the resort's maintenance manager, helping his uncle on and off for multiple summers,

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he said, before becoming the resort manager. Three years ago, he left his job at the resort to pursue a master's degree at the South Dakota School of Mines, where he met his wife.

"After I finished my MBA, I took an engineering job and also a sales engineering job in Boise, Idaho," Michael Grave said.

During that time, the couple returned to the Lewis & Clark Resort to get married. The main clientele of the resort is primarily lake guests, then family reunions and weddings, Michael Grave said. "It was an awesome venue and was really enjoyable."

Once Max was born, the couple began to reconsider the idea of raising a family in the city.

"We were living in Boise, and we decided we wanted to be back close to the family in a lifestyle that we didn't have to travel for work with a little one," Michael Grave said. "It made sense to buy the resort; to be closer to home; to be home at night, raise our kids in a nice quiet environment that's enjoyable and acceptable to families, rather than a city."

"It definitely is like coming home," he added.

"I came and visited a couple of times, so this is pretty new to me," Valeri Grave said. "I am a physician assistant and I'll be keeping my job through the Veterans Administration (VA).

Neither the Graves nor Wahl think the transition will be difficult. Michael Grave will manage the resort and maintenance, while Valeri Grave, who has hotel experience, will take care of decor, customer service and projects developing new amenities.

"Jeff has agreed to be a resource for me," Michael Grave said. "So, if there's anything that comes up that is a little unknown, or if I need refreshing on how things are run or done, he'll be that resource. It should be a very smooth transition."

Though they do not want to make any drastic changes, the couple is considering some small tweaks, they said, like a coffee bar, a tot lot and maybe some additional rental options.

"We are excited for the new chapter," the Graves agreed.

"Kind of like coming home," Wahl added. "Seamless transition; here's the keys; I am out of here — the money's in the bank."

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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Friday:

Mega Millions

09-10-25-37-38, Mega Ball: 21, Megaplier: 2

(nine, ten, twenty-five, thirty-seven, thirty-eight; Mega Ball: twenty-one; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$348 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$40 million

Jenkins scores 23, South Dakota St routs W Illinois 100-58

MACOMB, Ill. (AP) — David Jenkins scored all 23 of his points in the first half, Mike Daum had a double-double and South Dakota State cruised past Western Illinois 100-58 in the Summit League opener on Friday.

Daum had 15 points and 10 rebounds and the Jackrabbits (11-5) had six players in double figures.

Jenkins went 5 of 7 from 3-point range in the first half and South Dakota State was 9 of 14 from distance, opening a 55-30 lead. SDSU went 21 of 31 from the field while the Leathernecks were 10 of 31.

It got worse for the Leathernecks (5-9) in the second half, going 7 of 27 from the field (26 Percent) to finish the game at 29 percent, their worst of the season. Zion Young led the way with 16 points.

The Jackrabbits cooled off to 56 percent (15 of 27) in the second half. They ended up with a 42-29 advantage on the boards.

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Heavy snow blamed in 3 fatal Midwestern accidents

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A powerful winter storm that caused whiteout conditions and treacherous roads in parts of the Upper Midwest is blamed in at least three fatal accidents, officials said.

The Minnesota State Patrol said it responded to more than 100 crashes, more than 200 spinouts and eight jackknifed semis from late Thursday until mid-day Friday. Northern Minnesota snowfall reached 18 inches (46 centimeters) at Finland, along Lake Superior's north shore. Twelve inches (30 centimeters) fell in Brainerd, according to the National Weather Service.

The driver of a pickup truck was killed Thursday when he collided with another vehicle on a snow-covered highway in Dunn County, North Dakota. The Highway Patrol says the vehicles crashed when visibility was reduced by blowing snow kicked up by a plow. Officials identified the driver who died as 37-year-old Jared Maturin, of Jeanerette, Louisiana; the driver and three passengers in the other vehicle were not hurt.

Also Thursday, a small bus and an SUV collided on a slippery road near Big Lake, Minnesota, leaving one bus passenger dead. Sherburne County sheriff's officials said 47-year-old Marilyn Balogi of Zimmerman was killed, while seven other passengers, the bus driver and the SUV driver were taken to hospitals. Big Lake is about 40 miles (65 kilometers) northwest of Minneapolis.

In central Minnesota's Crow Wing County, a pedestrian was struck on a road by a pickup with a plow blade. Sheriff's officials say road conditions and visibility were very poor at the time of the accident around 8:30 p.m. Thursday. The victim was identified as 51-year-old Michael Donnay, of Merrifield, who was pronounced dead at the scene.

Snow from the same system also left roads blanketed in Nebraska. The Nebraska Transportation Department listed nearly two-thirds of the state's highways as partially or fully covered with snow Friday morning. The department pulled its plows from clearing highways in parts of northeast Nebraska because visibility was so limited.

In North Dakota, the Highway Patrol is urging drivers to be cautious around snowplows working to clear highways after multiple crashes this week, including the fatal wreck. The patrol is also encouraging drivers to slow down when approaching emergency vehicles with lights flashing.

Officials said a trooper's vehicle was hit Friday by a driver while parked on the shoulder of Interstate 94 in Fargo. Officials said the driver lost control and sideswiped the patrol vehicle, but that the driver and trooper weren't injured. Shortly after, two more vehicles crashed and three others spun out in the same area.

___ For the latest updates on the weather in the Upper Midwest: <https://bit.ly/2LfqNUD>

Wild weather: Water rescues in South, heavy snow in Midwest

By JOHN SEEWER, Associated Press

A powerful winter storm that brought blizzard warnings Friday across the Upper Midwest was blamed for at least three fatal crashes while flash flooding from rains in the South swept away cars and forced dozens of water rescues.

In northern New England, a mix of snow, sleet, freezing rain and rain added up to make for dangerous driving Friday for post-holiday travelers.

Much of the Dakotas and part of Minnesota were under a blizzard warning after many areas got a foot (30 centimeters) of snow or more Thursday.

A collision between a small bus and an SUV in Minnesota killed a 47-year-old woman on the bus and injured nine others Thursday. A second person died in central Minnesota after being struck on a road by a pickup with a plow blade.

In North Dakota, a pickup truck driver was killed Thursday on a snow-covered highway when visibility was reduced by blowing snow from a plow, according to the state highway patrol.

Another storm dumped up to 12 inches (30 centimeters) of rain in Louisiana and Mississippi, sweeping away cars and forcing some residents to be rescued from their homes before the rains moved into Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and western North Carolina on Friday.

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The National Weather Service posted flash flood watches and warnings for much of the South from Louisiana into southwest Virginia.

"We had an extreme flash flooding event," said Glen Moore, the emergency management director in Forrest County, in southwestern Mississippi, which saw 9 inches (23 centimeters) fall over 12 hours through early Friday.

Authorities had to rescue residents from about 25 area homes in Forrest County, Moore said.

They rescued one man whose car was swept away after he went around a barricade on a flooded road, Moore said.

"He was able to make it outside of the car and latch onto a tree until we could get a boat to him," Moore said.

Mississippi officials warned that flood levels on some rivers in the state could be high, especially if the forecast for more rain through Tuesday holds up. Some levels could match a 2016 flood that led to a federal disaster declaration, said Greg Flynn, the state's Emergency Management Agency spokesman.

He said survey teams were still assessing damage from flash flooding in southern Mississippi and it was too soon to say how many roads and bridges were damaged or how many homes were flooded.

Rain-fed rivers were rising Friday in some New Orleans suburbs north of big Lake Pontchartrain.

The St. Tammany Parish government told residents of neighborhoods along both sides of the Tchefuncte River to consider voluntary evacuation because of the possibility of flooding Friday night and Saturday. The parish also declared an emergency to coordinate local, state and federal resources.

North of St. Tammany Parish in Washington Parish, Parish President Richard N. Thomas said in a Facebook message that 10 to 13 inches of rain had caused flash floods in the Bogalusa, Varnado and Angie areas, and some people had to be rescued.

There was one death in Tennessee where a woman fell into a rain-swollen creek near Chattanooga. Authorities who recovered the woman's body Friday morning about three hours after she lost her footing said she had been camping in a cave with friends and they were trying to leave the area when she fell into the water.

Rescue workers in north Georgia used a ladder and ropes to get to a woman and baby stranded in a truck inundated by rising waters Friday. Dramatic video posted to Facebook showed crews working to reach the truck as water reached the vehicle's windshield.

The storm system was blamed for a death in Louisiana earlier this week when a tree fell on a camper.

Forecasters said up to 5 inches (13 centimeters) of rain were possible in northern Alabama and central and north Georgia.

Water also flooded more than a dozen homes in St. Charles Parish, Louisiana, and a Trader Joe's store near New Orleans lost power during the storm, prompting it to donate perishable grocery items to a food bank.

Some areas of the Midwest were seeing spring-like conditions.

Shorts and t-shirts replaced winter running gear Friday for several joggers in downtown Columbus, Ohio, where temperatures were in the 50s.

"It's weird that there's no snow," said Evan Miller, who was about four miles into his run while wearing gray shorts and a short sleeve shirt.

Los Angeles TV news anchor Chris Burrous dies at 43

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Chris Burrous, weekend news anchor at Los Angeles TV station KTLA, has died. Suburban Glendale police say the 43-year-old Burrous was not breathing when firefighters were called to a Days Inn on Thursday and he was pronounced dead at a hospital.

Police say the call indicated a possible overdose.

The Los Angeles County coroner's office said an autopsy was performed Friday but the cause of death was deferred pending further investigation.

Burrous came to KTLA in 2011 after 14 years as a reporter and anchor at various stations, primarily in California's Central Valley, as well as at WPIX in New York City.

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KTLA President and General Manager Don Corsini and News Director Jason Ball said in a statement that Burrous will be remembered as "a great journalist and a wonderful friend to many."

He is survived by his wife, Mai Do-Burrous, and 9-year-old daughter Isabella.

Fiscal analysis: Sports betting wouldn't bring big tax boost

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota ballot measure to legalize sports betting in Deadwood wouldn't be a huge moneymaker for casinos or bring in much tax revenue, according to a legislative financial analysis. But supporters say it would help keep the historic mining town competitive as a gambling destination.

The analysis, released this month by the Legislative Research Council, estimates that the constitutional amendment would result in roughly \$2 million in casino revenues and about \$185,000 in new tax collections for the budget year it takes effect. Deadwood gambling revenues were roughly \$100 million in 2017.

Deadwood Gaming Association executive director Mike Rodman said supporters never thought allowing sports betting would have a major effect on tax collections. But he said it would be another amenity for Deadwood to attract more visitors and, hopefully, result in more stays at hotels and meals at restaurants.

"We certainly think that it is important that Deadwood maintain itself as a competitive gaming destination," Rodman said. "We need to have those same game types that other destinations have."

The group plans to ask state lawmakers to put the amendment on the 2020 ballot.

Republican Sen. Bob Ewing, whose district includes Deadwood, plans to sponsor the measure during the upcoming 2019 legislative session. He said putting the change on the ballot gives everyone an opportunity to vote on it.

House Majority Leader Lee Qualm, an opponent, has said he believes the measure will spur a "very heated discussion."

Rodman has said his association envisions that players would have to be physically at a casino to place a bet on a sporting event. The proposed constitutional amendment would give the Legislature the authority to implement the wagering in Deadwood and at tribal casinos. If sports betting gets voter's blessing in 2020, it could be available by July 2021.

The fiscal analysis found that of the roughly \$185,000 in new tax revenues for state budget year 2022, most would go to the state general fund and into a tourism promotion fund.

Noem to appoint Sioux Falls businesswoman to House seat

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov.-elect Kristi Noem will name a Sioux Falls businesswoman to a South Dakota state House seat.

Noem announced Friday that she will appoint Rhonda Milstead, of Sioux Falls, to represent District 9 during the 2019 and 2020 legislative sessions. The vacancy came after Sen. Deb Peters won election to the House but later decided to join the South Dakota Association of Healthcare Organizations.

Milstead has spent 16 years as the executive officer for the Sioux Falls Board of Realtors and run several businesses including Falls Overlook Cafe. Noem says Milstead's involvement in the community and small business experience will bring a "practical perspective" to the state House.

Milstead will be officially appointed Jan. 7.

Noem announces picks for cabinet, staff positions

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov.-elect Kristi Noem has announced her choices for interim secretaries of the state Human Services and Social Services departments.

The incoming Republican governor said Friday that Shawnie Rechtenbaugh will serve as interim secretary of Human Services and Amy Iversen-Pollreizs will be interim secretary of Social Services.

Noem also says Mark Lauseng will be reappointed to his post as executive director of the South Dakota Housing Development Authority and Tiffany Sanderson will join the administration in April as a senior policy adviser.

Heat sending Dion Waiters to G League for work

MIAMI (AP) — Dion Waiters is about to take a big step toward returning to the Miami Heat.

The Heat said Friday that they are sending Waiters to the Sioux Falls Skyforce, their G League affiliate. The plan is for Waiters to practice with the Skyforce and potentially return to Miami in time for Sunday's game against Minnesota.

Waiters last appeared in an NBA game on Dec. 22, 2017. He sprained his long-problematic left ankle that night and expected to miss only a few games.

More than a year later, he's still sidelined. Waiters had surgery on Jan. 23 to repair the instability in the ankle, along with a broken bone on the inside of his foot.

Waiters' issues with the ankle go back to March 17, 2017 when he initially was lost to a sprain. He missed the final 13 games of that season, then labored through his 30 appearances last season — averaging 14.3 points, but shooting only 31 percent from 3-point range.

For his career, Waiters is a 13.3-point scorer. This is the seventh NBA season for the former Syracuse guard.

More AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/tag/NBA> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Northwest Iowa to see benefits from water system connection

BERESFORD, S.D. (AP) — Work will begin next year to connect northwest Iowa communities to a regional water system that city officials hope will help keep water rates and accessibility stable.

The Lewis & Clark Regional Water System is preparing to add nearly 34 miles (55 kilometers) of pipeline that will run from Beresford, South Dakota, to the Iowa cities of Sioux Center and Hull, The Sioux City Journal reported. The system serves Iowa, South Dakota and Minnesota. It first began delivering water in 2012 after years of construction.

Officials in Sioux Center and Hull said connecting to the Lewis & Clark system will help stabilize water rates and ensure there is enough water for new or expanding businesses.

"It really helps the sustainability of the community as we grow. It gives us a future reliable source of water," said Dennis Dokter, assistant Sioux Center city manager and community development director. "Our current system is reliable. This will just enhance it."

Sioux Center has its own well field and water system, while Hull receives water from the Rock Valley Rural Water District.

Lewis & Clark awarded a \$9.2 million contract for the first 11.2-mile (18-kilometer) section of the project this year, said Troy Larson, the executive director of Lewis & Clark. Work on that portion will begin in the spring and finish in the fall, he said.

The water system is expected to award contracts for two more sections of the project next year, which are estimated to cost about \$25 million in total. The system will also need to build a meter building, a water tower and additional pumps before water can be pumped to the two cities.

Sioux Center and Hull should begin receiving water by 2022 if federal funding stays consistent, Larson said.

Supreme Court rejects sanctuary's easement request

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court has rejected an attempt by a wild horse sanctuary to get rid of a conservation easement that limits use of thousands of acres.

The operators of the Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary near Hot Springs filed a lawsuit in 2016 alleging it was fraudulently induced into granting the easement to The Nature Conservancy, a nonprofit with an office in Rapid City, in exchange for \$230,000.

The Rapid City Journal says the easement includes about 8,300 acres of sanctuary land and prohibits certain uses to ensure it will remain in a mostly natural and undeveloped state.

The Supreme Court's opinion issued Wednesday affirms a circuit court decision to dismiss the lawsuit.

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

2-year-old Yemeni boy whose mom sued US to see him has died

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — The 2-year-old son of a Yemeni woman who sued the Trump administration to let her into the country to be with the ailing boy has died.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations announced Friday that Abdullah Hassan had died in an Oakland hospital. He suffered from a genetic brain condition.

The boy's father brought him to the United States for medical treatment in October. His mother Shaima Swileh remained behind in their Egypt home. The boy and his father are U.S. citizens but Swileh is not.

Yemeni citizens are restricted from entering the United States under President Donald Trump's travel ban. She applied for a waiver in 2017, but U.S. officials granted it only in December after the council sued.

Swileh held her son for the first time in the hospital on Dec. 19.

This story has been corrected to show that the boy's first name is spelled Abdullah, not Abdallah.

Trump, Democrats play the blame game in 2nd shutdown weekend

By ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and LISA MASCARO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and Democrats are trading blame for the partial government shutdown but doing little substantive talking with each other as the disruption in federal services and public employees' pay slogs into another weekend.

Trump upped the brinkmanship by threatening anew to close the border with Mexico to press Congress to cave to his demand for money to pay for a wall. Democrats vowed to pass legislation restoring the government as soon as they take control of the House on Thursday, but that won't accomplish anything unless Trump and the Republican-controlled Senate go along with it.

The effects to the public of the impasse grew as the Environmental Protection Agency, which had the money to function a week longer than some agencies, implemented its shutdown plan at midnight Friday night. EPA spokeswoman Molly Block said many of the agency's 14,000 employees were being furloughed while disaster-response teams and certain other employees deemed essential would stay on the job.

Also running short on money: the Smithsonian Institution, which said its museums and galleries popular with visitors and locals in the capital will close starting midweek if the partial shutdown drags on. But federal flood insurance policies will continue to be issued and renewed, in a reversal prompted by pressure from lawmakers, said Republican Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida.

Trump appeared no closer to securing money for his signature border wall, which he vowed during the campaign that he would make Mexico pay for. He's failed to do so. Now Democratic leaders are adamant that they will not authorize money for the project, calling it wasteful and ineffective. They show no signs of bending, either.

"We are far apart," White House press secretary Sarah Sanders told CBS on Friday.

Trump tweeted: "We will be forced to close the Southern Border entirely if the Obstructionist Democrats do not give us the money to finish the Wall & also change the ridiculous immigration laws that our Country is saddled with." He also threatened to cut off U.S. aid to El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, among countries he deems have not done enough to combat illegal immigration.

He's made similar threats in the past without following through, and it is Congress, not the president, that appropriates aid money.

The shutdown is forcing hundreds of thousands of federal workers and contractors to stay home or work without pay.

Trump's incoming chief of staff, Mick Mulvaney, said Democrats are no longer negotiating with the administration over an earlier offer by the White House to accept less than the \$5 billion Trump wants for the wall.

Democrats said the White House offered to accept \$2.5 billion for border security, but that Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer told Vice President Mike Pence that it wasn't acceptable. It was also

not guaranteed that Trump would settle for that amount.

"There's not a single Democrat talking to the president of the United States about this deal," Mulvaney said Friday

Speaking on Fox News and later to reporters, he tried to drive a wedge between Democrats, pinning the blame on House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi.

Mulvaney said Schumer was "really interested in doing a deal and coming to some sort of compromise" but he understood that Pelosi was at risk of losing the speakership of the House if she went along. "So we're in this for the long haul," he said.

In fact, Pelosi has all but locked up the support she needs to win the speaker's gavel Thursday and there has been no sign that she and Schumer are in conflict.

"For the White House to try and blame anyone but the president for this shutdown doesn't pass the laugh test," said Justin Goodman, a spokesman for Schumer.

Pelosi has vowed to pass legislation to reopen the nine shuttered departments and dozens of agencies now hit by the partial shutdown as soon as she takes the gavel, which is expected when the new Congress convenes. But that alone won't solve the shutdown, absent Senate approval and Trump's signature.

Pelosi spokesman Drew Hammill added that Democrats united against the wall and won't seriously consider any White House offer unless Trump backs it publicly because he "has changed his position so many times."

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador reacted cautiously to Trump's threat to close the border, calling it an "internal affair of the U.S. government."

"We are always seeking a good relationship with the United States. We do not want to be rash," he said.

As for EPA, workers needed for preventing immediate public health threats at more than 800 Superfund hazardous-waste sites will remain on the job as well as emergency response workers for disasters.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Juliet Linderman in Washington contributed to this report.

Police killing suspect was fleeing to Mexico, sheriff says

By **OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ** and **JOCELYN GECKER**, Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A man suspected of gunning down a California policeman was in the U.S. illegally and was captured while planning to flee to his native Mexico, a sheriff announced as he all but blamed the state's sanctuary law for the officer's death.

A two-day statewide manhunt ended Friday with the arrest of Gustavo Perez Arriaga, who came out with his hands up as a SWAT team prepared to raid a home in Bakersfield, California. That was about 200 miles (320 kilometers) southeast of where Cpl. Ronil Singh was shot before dawn Wednesday.

Singh had stopped a suspected drunken driver in the town of Newman when he was fatally wounded and managed to fire back but didn't hit his attacker, authorities have said.

Perez Arriaga was taken into custody using the slain officer's handcuffs, Kern County Sheriff Donny Youngblood said.

Stanislaus County Sheriff Adam Christianson, who led the investigation, blamed California's sanctuary law for preventing local authorities from reporting Perez Arriaga to U.S. immigration officials for deportation after two previous drunken driving arrests.

"We can't ignore the fact that this could have been preventable," Christianson told reporters, asking why the state was "providing sanctuary for criminals (and) gang members. It's a conversation we need to have."

Christianson called for stricter laws at a news conference as Singh's brother wept beside him.

Perez Arriaga crossed the border in Arizona several years ago and had worked a variety of jobs as a laborer, including at several dairies. The 33-year-old had gang affiliations and multiple Facebook pages with different names, Christianson said.

The shooting came amid an intense political fight over immigration, with President Donald Trump and congressional Democrats at odds over funding for a border wall that has forced a partial government

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shutdown.

Trump tweeted about Singh's killing Thursday, saying it was "time to get tough on Border Security. Build the Wall!"

California's sanctuary law limits cooperation between local authorities and U.S. immigration officials and has drawn scorn from the Trump administration. It includes more than 800 exceptions for violent crimes and felonies and bars police from asking people about their citizenship status.

Gov. Jerry Brown has said the law strikes a balance between protecting families and ensuring consequences for serious criminals. His spokesman said Friday that if the suspect was a known gang member, police could have provided that information to federal authorities.

"California law fully permits the sharing of information on dangerous gang members," spokesman Evan Westrup said.

A federal judge upheld the law earlier this year after a challenge by the Trump administration.

Former state Sen. Kevin de Leon, the Democrat who wrote the legislation, said it's unfair to blame the law for the officer's death.

Christianson, who was at a meeting with Trump and slams California's law in a video posted by the White House in May, said the measure prohibited his department from sharing Perez Arriaga's gang ties, "other active warrants" and past DUI arrests with federal immigration authorities. He didn't give details on the other warrants.

That suggests law enforcement could have apprehended Perez Arriaga previously, de Leon said.

"He should've been in the physical custody of law enforcement," de Leon said. To blame the law "is highly irresponsible."

De Leon also told KNX-AM radio in Los Angeles that the sheriff was politicizing a tragedy and actually harming police work.

"The type of tone and attitude that Sheriff Christianson has taken instills fear and panic in all immigrant communities" that could make people afraid to report crimes, de Leon said.

Authorities also arrested five other people, including Perez Arriaga's brother, 25-year-old Adrian Virgen, and a co-worker, 27-year-old Erik Razo Quiroz, who lied to police to try to protect him, Christianson said. Both men also were in the country illegally, he said.

Three people also were arrested at the home near Bakersfield for helping Perez Arriaga, Youngblood said.

The Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department later reported the additional arrests of Perez Arriaga's girlfriend, 30-year-old Ana Leyde Cervantes of Newman and Perez Arriaga's brother, 34-year-old Conrado Virgen Mendoza of Chowchilla. Cervantes was arrested in Turlock, and Virgen Mendoza was arrested in Livermore.

The 33-year-old officer was an immigrant, too, arriving legally from his native Fiji to fulfill his dream of becoming a police officer, authorities said. Singh had a newborn son and joined the 12-officer Newman police force in 2011.

Newman Police Chief Randy Richardson called Singh a patriot.

"This is a man that loved his country. This is a man that worked hard for what he believed in. He believed in this community," the chief said at a community vigil Friday night honoring the officer.

Residents, friends, relatives and fellow officers held back tears as they eulogized Singh during the candlelight memorial.

Associated Press writers Daisy Nguyen in San Francisco, Amanda Lee Myers in Los Angeles and Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento contributed to this report.

Trump EPA orders rollback of Obama mercury regulations

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration has targeted an Obama-era regulation credited with helping dramatically reduce toxic mercury pollution from coal-fired power plants, saying the benefits to human health and the environment may not be worth the cost of the regulation.

The 2011 Obama administration rule, called the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, led to what electric utilities say was an \$18 billion clean-up of mercury and other toxins from the smokestacks of coal-fired power plants.

Overall, environmental groups say, federal and state efforts have cut mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants by 85 percent in roughly the last decade.

Mercury causes brain damage, learning disabilities and other birth defects in children, among other harm. Coal power plants in this country are the largest single manmade source of mercury pollutants, which enters the food chain through fish and other items that people consume.

The proposal Friday from the Environmental Protection Agency challenges the basis for the Obama regulation. It calculates that the crackdown on mercury and other toxins from coal plants produced only a few million dollars a year in measurable health benefits and was not “appropriate and necessary” — a legal benchmark under the country’s landmark Clean Air Act.

The proposal, which now goes up for public comment before any final administration approval, would leave the current mercury regulation in place.

However, the EPA said it will seek comment during a 60-day public-review period on whether “we would be obligated to rescind” the Obama-era rule if the agency adopts Friday’s finding that the regulation was not appropriate and necessary. Any such change would trigger new rounds in what have already been years of court battles over regulating mercury pollution from coal plants.

This move is the latest by the Trump administration that changes estimates of the costs and payoffs of regulations as part of an overhaul of Obama-era environmental protections.

It’s also the administration’s latest proposed move on behalf of the U.S. coal industry, which has been struggling in the face of competition from natural gas and other cheaper, cleaner forms of energy. The Trump administration in August proposed an overhaul for another Obama-era regulation that would have prodded electricity providers to get less of their energy from dirtier-burning coal plants.

In a statement, the EPA said Friday the administration was “providing regulatory certainty” by more accurately estimating the costs and benefits of the Obama administration crackdown on mercury and other toxic emissions from smokestacks.

Hal Quinn, head of the National Mining Association, charged in a statement Friday that the Obama administration had carried out “perhaps the largest regulatory accounting fraud perpetrated on American consumers” when it calculated that the broad health benefits to Americans would outweigh the cost of equipment upgrades by power providers.

Sen. Tom Carper of Delaware, the top Democrat on the Senate’s Environment and Public Works Committee, condemned the Trump administration’s move.

The EPA has “decided to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory” after the successful clean-up of toxins from the country’s coal-plant smokestacks, Carper said.

He and other opponents of the move said the Trump administration was playing with numbers, ignoring what Carper said were clear health, environmental and economic benefits to come up with a bottom line that suited the administration’s deregulatory aims.

Janet McCabe, a former air-quality official in the Obama administration’s EPA, called the proposal part of “the quiet dismantling of the regulatory framework” for the federal government’s environmental protections.

Coming one week into a government shutdown, and in the lull between Christmas and New Year, “this low-key announcement shouldn’t fool anyone — it is a big deal, with significant implications,” McCabe said.

Supreme Court lays low after Kavanaugh confirmation

By MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court began its term with the tumultuous confirmation of Justice Brett Kavanaugh, followed by a studied avoidance of drama on the high court bench — especially anything that would divide the five conservatives and four liberals.

The justices have been unusually solicitous of each other in the courtroom since Kavanaugh's confirmation, and several have voiced concern that the public perceives the court as merely a political institution. Chief Justice John Roberts seems determined to lead the one Washington institution that stays above the political fray. Even Roberts' rebuke of President Donald Trump, after the president criticized a federal judge, was in defense of an independent, apolitical judiciary.

The next few weeks will test whether the calm can last.

When they gather in private on Jan. 4 to consider new cases for arguments in April and into next term, the justices will confront a raft of high-profile appeals.

Abortion restrictions, workplace discrimination against LGBT people and partisan gerrymandering are on the agenda. Close behind are appeals from the Trump administration seeking to have the court allow it to end an Obama-era program that shields young immigrants from deportation and to put in place restrictive rules for transgender troops.

There already are signs that the conservative justices, apart from Roberts, are willing to take on controversial cases that are likely to produce the ideological and partisan divisions that their colleagues seem eager to avoid.

In recent weeks, three conservative justices accused the court of ducking its job of deciding important cases, especially when lower courts have disagreed on the outcome. Their criticism, written by Justice Clarence Thomas and joined by Justices Samuel Alito and Neil Gorsuch, came after a recent decision to avoid a case involving funding for Planned Parenthood.

Then, on the Friday before Christmas, the court divided 5-4 in refusing to allow the Trump administration to enforce new restrictions on asylum seekers. Roberts joined the four liberals. The three conservatives who were displeased by the Planned Parenthood case outcome again noted their disagreement, this time joined by Kavanaugh.

The two votes can't be used to draw any firm conclusions about what may be happening behind closed doors at the court, as the cases arrived in different circumstances. In the Planned Parenthood case, the justices were considering whether to grant full review, a process that takes only four votes. The asylum case was an emergency appeal from the administration. At least five of the nine justices would have had to vote in the administration's favor.

But Lawrence Solum, a professor of constitutional law at Georgetown University's law school, said Roberts seems to have two reasons to limit the court's involvement in hot-button cases: his preference for taking small steps in the law and his concern for the court's reputation.

"It's clear that 5-4 decisions will be perceived by many, many lawyers, many politicians and large numbers of the public at large as ideological decisions," Solum said. "So given Roberts' desire to preserve the legitimacy of the court, he could be highly motivated to avoid decisions like that in the next immediate period in the history of the court. Whether that's one year, or two years or five years, who knows?"

The court arrived at this point after an unusual chain of events that began with the death of Justice Antonin Scalia in February 2016. Senate Republicans refused to act on President Barack Obama's nomination of Merrick Garland, allowing Trump to put Gorsuch on the court in 2017. To this day, Democrats say the seat was stolen from them.

Then, over the summer, Justice Anthony Kennedy's retirement meant that Trump would also get to replace the court's swing vote with a more reliable conservative. Kavanaugh's track record as an appellate judge suggested he was that man, but his confirmation was nearly derailed by allegations of sexual assault, which Kavanaugh denied.

The accusations against Kavanaugh turned the confirmation process into a national spectacle that culmi-

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nated in a hearing with Kavanaugh and Christine Blasey Ford, who accused him of assault when they were in high school. Republicans said the allegation was unproven and confirmed Kavanaugh in a rare Saturday session. Spotlighting how emotional the debate had become, a crowd of demonstrators gathered at the Supreme Court building after the Kavanaugh vote, with some climbing the stone statues that line the steps.

One result of the Kavanaugh turmoil has been the most serious discussion in decades of limiting the court's powers, including possibly increasing the number of justices, Solum said. "It suggests that the legitimacy of the court is at issue now in perhaps a way it hasn't been until recently."

Roberts is not only the chief justice, but he has essentially taken Kennedy's place as the swing vote — the conservative justice nearest the court's center. The Supreme Court will go only as far as Roberts is willing in either direction.

He can try to keep the court entirely out of some cases, though that requires him to be able to persuade at least one other conservative justice to go along. That's what happened in the Planned Parenthood case, when Kavanaugh voted to deny review. "The difficult confirmation battle may lead to a bit of caution," said John McGinnis, a Northwestern University law school professor.

When the justices do plunge into controversy, Roberts will be able "to write or insist that decisions be narrowly drawn," McGinnis said.

Roberts has been chief justice for more than 13 years, but he is only 63 and could lead the court for an additional two decades or more. That allows Roberts, who began his legal career as a lawyer in the Reagan administration, to take a long view, McGinnis said, and await a time when political tensions and concerns about the court's reputation subside.

Farmers risk loss of federal payments, loans, from shutdown

By JULIET LINDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The end of 2018 seemed to signal good things to come for America's farmers. Fresh off the passage of the farm bill, which reauthorized agriculture, conservation and safety net programs, the Agriculture Department last week announced a second round of direct payments to growers hardest hit by President Donald Trump's trade war with China.

Then parts of the government shut down.

The USDA in a statement issued last week assured farmers that checks would continue to go out during the first week of the shutdown. But direct payments for farmers who haven't certified production, as well as farm loans and disaster assistance programs, will be put on hold beginning next week, and won't start up again until the government reopens.

There is little chance of the government shutdown ending soon. Trump and Congress are no closer to reaching a deal over his demand for border wall money, and both sides say the impasse could drag well into January.

Although certain vital USDA programs will remain operational in the short term, that could change if the shutdown lasts for more than a few weeks.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or food stamps, helps feed roughly 40 million Americans. According to the USDA, eligible recipients are guaranteed benefits through January. Other feeding programs, including WIC, which provides food aid and nutrition counseling for pregnant women, new mothers and children, and food distribution programs on Indian reservations, will continue on a local level, but additional federal funding won't be provided. School lunch programs will continue through February.

USDA has earmarked about \$9.5 billion in direct payments for growers of soybeans, corn, wheat, sorghum and other commodities most affected by tariffs. The first round of payments went out in September. The deadline to sign up for the second round of payments is January 15.

The impact of the shutdown, which began shortly before most federal workers were scheduled for a holiday break, started coming into focus by midweek.

About 420,000 employees are working without pay, while 380,000 are being forced to stay home. In the past, federal employees have been paid retroactively. But government contractors won't get paid for

hours they'll lose staying home, causing problems for those who rely on hourly wages.

In anticipation of the financial bind many federal workers and contractors may soon find themselves in, the Office of Personnel Management offered some advice: haggle with landlords, creditors and mortgage companies for lower payments until the shutdown is over.

The shutdown also is affecting national parks, although unevenly: Some remain accessible with bare-bones staffing levels, some are operating with money from states or charitable groups, while others are locked off.

Nielsen visits Texas border after second child's death

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen on Friday visited the Texas border city where an 8-year-old Guatemalan boy was detained with his father before dying in government custody.

DHS spokeswoman Katie Waldman said earlier in the week that Nielsen was scheduled to tour multiple stations and substations, and was also scheduled to meet with emergency medical technicians and medical professionals, as well as local officials.

Nielsen then was scheduled to go to Yuma, Arizona, on Saturday.

DHS did not immediately release more details on the trip or who Nielsen met, saying it was closed to the press. Late Friday, El Paso Mayor Dee Margo confirmed he was among those who met with Nielsen, saying they discussed "our immigration needs on the border." The statement from Margo, a Republican, did not mention the boy's death or whether it was discussed.

The trip came four days after the death of 8-year-old Felipe Gomez Alonzo. Felipe was the second Guatemalan child to die in government custody in three weeks.

Nielsen has called the death "deeply concerning and heartbreaking" and requested medical help from other government agencies, including the U.S. Coast Guard. As Nielsen made the trip to Texas, New Mexico's Democratic senators, Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich, sent her a letter Friday seeking answers about the boy's death.

"The timeline, action and factors that led to Felipe's death are still developing, but the information that has become public so far is alarming and demands immediate attention and investigation," the letter says.

Felipe and his father, Agustin Gomez, were apprehended by border agents on Dec. 18 near the Paso del Norte bridge connecting El Paso to Juarez, Mexico, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The two were detained at the bridge's processing center and then the Border Patrol station in El Paso, until being taken at about 1 a.m. Sunday to a facility in Alamogordo, New Mexico, about 90 miles (145 kilometers) away.

After an agent noticed Felipe coughing, father and son were taken to an Alamogordo hospital, where Felipe was diagnosed with a common cold and found to have a fever of 103 degrees Fahrenheit (39.4 degrees Celsius), CBP has said.

Felipe was held for observation for 90 minutes, according to CBP, before being released with prescriptions for amoxicillin and ibuprofen.

But the boy fell sick hours later on Monday and was re-admitted to the hospital. He died just before midnight.

New Mexico authorities said late Thursday that an autopsy shows Felipe had the flu, but more tests need to be done before a cause of death can be determined.

Wall Street faces annual losses despite solid gains for week

By ALEX VEIGA, AP Business Writer

Wall Street capped a week of volatile trading Friday with an uneven finish and the market's first weekly gain since November.

Losses in technology, energy and industrial stocks outweighed gains in retailers and other consumer-focused companies. Stocks spent much of the day wavering between small gains and losses, ultimately

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unable to maintain the momentum from a two-day winning streak.

Even so, the major stock indexes closed with their first weekly gain in what's been an otherwise painful last month of the year. The Dow Jones Industrial Average and S&P 500 rose more than 2 percent for the week, while the Nasdaq added nearly 4 percent. The indexes are still all down around 10 percent for the month and on track for their worst December since 1931.

"It seems like convulsions in either direction have been the real norm for much of December and that's certainly been the case this week," said Eric Wiegand senior portfolio manager for Private Wealth Management at U.S. Bank. "The initial push higher and then seeing it subside a little bit is perhaps getting back to a little bit more of a normal environment, reflecting the reality that we have still a number of issues overhanging the market."

The market's sharp downturn since October has intensified this month, erasing all its 2018 gains and nudging the S&P 500 closer to its worst year since 2008.

Investors have grown worried that the testy U.S.-China trade dispute and higher interest rates would slow the economy, hurting corporate profits. This week, with trading volumes lower than usual because of the Christmas holiday, served up some pronounced swings in the market.

A steep sell-off during the shortened trading session on Christmas Eve left the major indexes down more than 2 percent. On Wednesday, stocks mounted a stunning rebound, posting the market's best day in 10 years as the Dow shot up more than 1,000 points for its biggest single-day point gain ever.

The market appeared ready to give much of those gains back on Thursday, before a late-afternoon reversal that erased a 600-point drop in the Dow left the market with a two-day winning streak.

"The market was so oversold and then Wednesday and Thursday were key reversal days, but also stronger closes than opens," said Janet Johnston, portfolio manager at TrimTabs Asset Management.

"The market was starting to price in the worst-case scenario: a recession," Johnston said

Still, the market's downturn has left stocks substantially less expensive than they were heading into the fourth quarter, Johnston noted.

"And that sets up a good buying opportunity," she said.

On Friday, the S&P 500 index fell 3.09 points, or 0.1 percent, to 2,485.74. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 76.42 points, or 0.3 percent, to 23,062.40. The average had briefly climbed to 243 points.

The Nasdaq added 5.03 points, or 0.1 percent, to 6,584.52. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks climbed 6.11 points, or 0.5 percent, to 1,337.92.

Technology companies, a big driver of the market's gains before things deteriorated in October, were among the big decliners. Alliance Data Systems dropped 1.4 percent to \$149.82.

Oil prices recovered after wavering in midmorning trading. Benchmark U.S. crude rose 1.6 percent to settle at \$45.33 a barrel in New York. Brent crude, used to price international oils, inched up 0.1 percent to close at \$52.20 a barrel in London.

Despite the rise in oil prices, energy sector stocks declined. Cabot Oil & Gas slid 3.5 percent to \$22.95, while Hess lost 2.8 percent to \$40.38.

Retailers and other consumer-focused companies fared better. Amazon rose 1.1 percent to \$1,478.02.

Wells Fargo rose 0.5 percent to \$45.78 on news that the lender has agreed to pay \$575 million in a national settlement with state attorneys general over its fake bank accounts scandal. The San Francisco-based bank has acknowledged that its employees opened millions of unauthorized bank accounts for customers in order to meet unrealistic sales goals.

Tesla climbed 5.6 percent to \$333.87 after naming two independent directors to its board under an agreement with federal regulators.

Homebuilders fell broadly in the morning after the National Association of Realtors said its pending home sales index fell last month as fewer Americans signed contracts to buy homes. Higher mortgage rates and prices are squeezing would-be buyers out of the market, especially in the West. The stocks mostly recovered by mid-afternoon. William Lyon Homes gained 3.4 percent to \$10.81.

Bonds prices recovered after midday dip, sending the yield on the 10-year Treasury down to 2.72 percent from 2.74 percent late Thursday.

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The dollar declined to 110.41 yen from Thursday's 110.74 yen. The euro weakened to \$1.1442 from \$1.1449. Gold edged up 0.1 percent to \$1,283 an ounce and silver gained 0.8 percent to \$15.44 an ounce. Copper rose 0.5 percent to \$2.68 a pound.

Overseas, major indexes in Europe closed higher while markets in Asia mostly rose. London's FTSE 100 gained 2.3 percent, while the Nikkei 225 index fell 0.3 percent.

Bomb strikes tourist bus near Egypt's Giza Pyramids, kills 4

By HAMZA HENDAWI, Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — A roadside bomb hit a tourist bus on Friday near the Giza Pyramids, killing three Vietnamese and their Egyptian guide, officials said.

The bus was traveling in the Marioutiyah area near the pyramids when the crude roadside bomb, concealed by a wall, went off, Egypt's chief prosecutor Nabil Sadeq said in a statement. The blast wounded 11 other Vietnamese tourists as well as the Egyptian driver.

The bus was carrying a total of 15 Vietnamese tourists, according to Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It said that 10 were seriously injured.

Vietnamese Ambassador to Egypt Tran Thanh Cong visited the scene of the attack and Al Haram Hospital, where the victims were being treated, the ministry said.

Egypt has battled Islamic militants for years in the Sinai Peninsula in an insurgency that has occasionally spilled over to the mainland, hitting minority Christians or tourists. However, this is the first attack to target foreign tourists in almost two years.

The attack takes place as Egypt's vital tourism industry is showing signs of recovery after years in the doldrums because of the political turmoil and violence that followed a 2011 uprising that toppled former leader Hosni Mubarak.

It will likely prompt authorities to further tighten security around churches and associated facilities ahead of the New Year's Eve celebrations and next month's Christmas celebrations of the Coptic Orthodox Church, the dominant denomination among Egypt's estimated 10 million Christians.

Over the past two years, militant attacks against Christians in Egypt — usually targeting churches or buses carrying pilgrims to remote desert monasteries — have killed over a hundred people.

GOP and Democrats trade blame for shutdown, no deal in sight

By ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and LISA MASCARO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The partial government shutdown will almost certainly be handed off to a divided government to solve in the new year, as President Donald Trump sought to raise the stakes Friday and both parties traded blame in the weeklong impasse.

Agreement eludes Washington in the waning days of the Republican monopoly on power, and that sets up the first big confrontation between Trump and newly empowered Democrats. Trump is sticking with his demand for money to build a wall along the southern border, and Democrats, who take control of the House on Jan. 3, are refusing to give him what he wants.

Trump worked to escalate the showdown Friday, reissuing threats to close the U.S.-Mexico border to pressure Congress to fund the wall and to shut off aid to three Central American countries from which many migrants have fled.

"We will be forced to close the Southern Border entirely if the Obstructionist Democrats do not give us the money to finish the Wall & also change the ridiculous immigration laws that our Country is saddled with," he wrote in one of a series of tweets.

The president also signaled he was in no rush to seek a resolution, welcoming the fight as he heads toward his own bid for re-election in 2020. He tweeted Thursday evening that Democrats may be able to block him now, "but we have the issue, Border Security. 2020!"

Incoming acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney said Trump had canceled his plans to travel to Florida to

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celebrate New Year's at his private Mar-a-Lago club.

The shutdown is forcing hundreds of thousands of federal workers and contractors to stay home or work without pay, and many are experiencing mounting stress from the impasse. It also is beginning to pinch citizens who count on public services. Gates are closed at some national parks, new farm loans will be put on hold beginning next week, and in New York, the chief judge of Manhattan federal courts suspended work on civil cases involving U.S. government lawyers, including several civil lawsuits in which Trump himself is a defendant.

The Smithsonian Institution also announced that museums and galleries popular with visitors and locals in the nation's capital will close starting midweek if the partial shutdown drags on.

The Environmental Protection Agency will keep disaster-response teams and other essential workers on the job as it becomes the latest agency to start furloughing employees in the government shutdown. Spokeswoman Molly Block says the EPA will implement its shutdown plan at midnight Friday. That will mean furloughing many of its roughly 14,000 workers.

Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., released a statement applauding a decision by the administration to reverse new guidance issued by the Department of Homeland Security that prevented the Federal Emergency Management Agency from writing or renewing National Flood Insurance Program policies during the current government shutdown. He said it was important that people could continue to get and maintain their flood insurance.

With another long holiday weekend coming and nearly all lawmakers away from the Capitol there is little expectation of a quick fix.

"We are far apart," White House press secretary Sarah Sanders told CBS on Friday, claiming of Democrats, "They've left the table all together."

Mulvaney said Democrats are no longer negotiating with the administration over an earlier offer to accept less than the \$5 billion Trump wants for the wall. Democrats said the White House offered \$2.5 billion for border security, but that Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer told Vice President Mike Pence it wasn't acceptable.

"There's not a single Democrat talking to the president of the United States about this deal," Mulvaney said Friday

Speaking on Fox News and later to reporters, he tried to drive a wedge between Democrats, pinning the blame on House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi.

"My gut was that (Schumer) was really interested in doing a deal and coming to some sort of compromise. But the more we're hearing this week is that it's Nancy Pelosi who's preventing that from happening," he said, alleging that if Pelosi "cuts a deal with the president of any sort before her election on January 3rd she's at risk of losing her speakership, so we're in this for the long haul."

Pelosi has all but locked up the support she needs to win the gavel on Jan. 3 and there is also no sign of daylight between her and Schumer in the negotiations over government funding.

Mulvaney added of the shutdown: "We do expect this to go on for a while."

Democrats brushed off the White House's attempt to cast blame.

"For the White House to try and blame anyone but the president for this shutdown doesn't pass the laugh test," said Justin Goodman, a spokesman for Schumer.

Pelosi has vowed to pass legislation to reopen the nine shuttered departments and dozens of agencies now hit by the partial shutdown as soon as she takes the gavel, which is expected when the new Congress convenes.

Pelosi spokesman Drew Hammill added that Democrats "are united against the President's immoral, ineffective and expensive wall" and said Democrats won't seriously consider any White House offer unless Trump backs it publicly because he "has changed his position so many times."

"While we await the President's public proposal, Democrats have made it clear that, under a House Democratic Majority, we will vote swiftly to re-open government on Day One," Hammill said in a statement.

But even that may be difficult without a compromise because the Senate will remain in Republican hands and Trump's signature will be needed to turn any bill into law.

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"I think it's obvious that until the president decides he can sign something — or something is presented to him — that we are where we are," said Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., who opened the Senate on Thursday for a session that only lasted minutes.

Trump had said during his campaign that Mexico would pay for his promised wall, but Mexico refuses to do so. It was unclear how Trump's threat to close the border would affect his efforts to ratify an amended North American free trade pact.

He has repeatedly threatened to cut off U.S. aid to countries that he deems have not done enough to combat illegal immigration, but thus far he's failed to follow through. Experts have warned that cutting off aid money to El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras could actually exacerbate the problem by worsening the poverty and violence that push many migrants to leave.

And it is Congress, not the president, which appropriates aid money.

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador reacted cautiously to Trump's threat to close the border, calling it an "internal affair of the U.S. government."

"We are always seeking a good relationship with the United States. We do not want to be rash," he said.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Juliet Linderman contributed from Washington.

Acclaimed author Amos Oz dies at 79

By JOSEF FEDERMAN, Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli author Amos Oz, one of the country's most widely acclaimed writers and a pre-eminent voice in its embattled peace movement, died on Friday after a battle with cancer, his family announced. He was 79.

His daughter, Fania Oz-Salzberger, announced her father's death on Twitter.

"My beloved father, Amos Oz, a wonderful family man, an author, a man of peace and moderation, died today peacefully after a short battle with cancer. He was surrounded by his lovers and knew it to the end. May his good legacy continue to amend the world," she wrote.

Oz was known around the world for his dozens of novels, essays and prose about life in Israel, including a well-received memoir, "A Tale of Love and Darkness." He won some of the literary world's most prestigious honors, including the Goethe Prize and the French Knight's Cross of the Legion D'Honneur, received honorary doctorates and was a perennial candidate for the Nobel Prize in literature.

Oz was born in Jerusalem in 1939, the son of immigrants from eastern Europe. As a teen he rebelled against his upbringing, looking to put behind what he felt was his parents' world that glamorized Europe and the West and instead was drawn to the young pioneers who built the early state.

"I secretly dreamed that one day they would take me away with them. And make me into a fighting nation too. That my life too would become a new song, a life as pure and straightforward and simple as a glass of water on a hot day," he wrote in his 2002 memoir.

He would complete high school at Kibbutz Hulda in central Israel, and return to the kibbutz after completing his mandatory military service in 1961. While working in the farming community's cotton fields, he published his first short stories.

After earning a degree in literature from Jerusalem's Hebrew University, he would spend 25 years on the kibbutz, dividing his time between writing, farming and teaching at the community's high school, according to his website.

As a reserve soldier in a tank unit, Oz fought in the 1967 and 1973 Mideast wars.

In a career spanning half a century, Oz published over 35 books, including 13 novels as well as children's books and collections of short stories, and hundreds of articles on literary and political topics. His works were translated into more than 40 languages.

His works included "In the Land of Israel," a work that chronicled his travels and interviews with people throughout Israel and the West Bank in the 1980s about the country's past and future; "My Michael," a novel about a troubled marriage in 1950s Jerusalem, and "A Tale of Love and Darkness." That 2002 memoir,

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recounting his childhood in Jerusalem and the suicide of his mother when he was 12 years old, won him the Goethe Prize and other recognitions, and was adapted into a film starring Natalie Portman.

Oz was a leading voice in Israel's peace movement and a friend of the late Shimon Peres, a former prime minister and legendary politician who won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to reach a deal with the Palestinians. Oz frequently wrote essays and delivered lectures urging the country's leaders to establish a Palestinian state as part of a peace agreement with Israel.

In a 1998 interview, he lamented the deep divisions in Israeli society — a prescient observation that remains true to today.

"We have not yet established the rules of the game in 50 years," he said. "You could hardly get two Israelis to agree on the kind of Israel they want."

In a 2001 interview with The Associated Press, Oz said Israel must wean itself from the view that the West Bank and Gaza were assets to be traded for peace and instead should just be given away.

"I think today that Israel should draw its own borders, withdraw to them, and if needed defend them," Oz said. "If we're going to fight, Israel without Nablus and Gaza is stronger than with Nablus and Gaza. Stronger, more unified, more just."

He was among the founders of Peace Now, a leftist organization that opposes Israeli settlements in the West Bank, and was a leading voice in the 2003 "Geneva Initiative," an unofficial peace plan reached by leading Israeli and Palestinians. He also was a supporter and activist in Meretz, a dovish Israeli political party.

In recent years, he, along with fellow authors David Grossman and A.B. Yehoshua, became pillars of the country's peace movement, which has grown increasingly marginalized over the past two decades.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who was in Brazil on Friday, remembered Oz as "one of the greatest authors" in Israeli history.

"He greatly contributed to the renewal of Hebrew literature, with which he deftly and emotionally expressed important aspects of the Israeli experience," he said. "Even though we had differences of opinion in many fields, I greatly appreciate his contributions to the Hebrew language and the renewal of Hebrew literature. His words and his writings will continue to accompany us for many years."

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin tweeted: "A story of love and light and now great darkness!"

"We are mourning the passing of Amos Oz, a wonderful Israeli poet and novelist, a towering voice for peace," wrote the European Union's delegation to Israel. "May his memory be a blessing."

Wild weather: Water rescues in South, heavy snow in Midwest

By JOHN SEEWER, Associated Press

A powerful winter storm that brought blizzard warnings Friday across the Upper Midwest was blamed for at least three fatal crashes while flash flooding from rains in the South swept away cars and forced dozens of water rescues.

In northern New England, a mix of snow, sleet, freezing rain and rain added up to make for dangerous driving Friday for post-holiday travelers.

Much of the Dakotas and part of Minnesota were under a blizzard warning after many areas got a foot (30 centimeters) of snow or more Thursday.

A collision between a small bus and an SUV in Minnesota killed a 47-year-old woman on the bus and injured nine others Thursday. A second person died in central Minnesota after being struck on a road by a pickup with a plow blade.

In North Dakota, a pickup truck driver was killed Thursday on a snow-covered highway when visibility was reduced by blowing snow from a plow, according to the state highway patrol.

Another storm dumped up to 12 inches (30 centimeters) of rain in Louisiana and Mississippi, sweeping away cars and forcing some residents to be rescued from their homes before the rains moved into Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and western North Carolina on Friday.

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The National Weather Service posted flash flood watches and warnings for much of the South from Louisiana into southwest Virginia.

"We had an extreme flash flooding event," said Glen Moore, the emergency management director in Forrest County, in southwestern Mississippi, which saw 9 inches (23 centimeters) fall over 12 hours through early Friday.

Authorities had to rescue residents from about 25 area homes in Forrest County, Moore said.

They rescued one man whose car was swept away after he went around a barricade on a flooded road, Moore said.

"He was able to make it outside of the car and latch onto a tree until we could get a boat to him," Moore said.

Mississippi officials warned that flood levels on some rivers in the state could be high, especially if the forecast for more rain through Tuesday holds up. Some levels could match a 2016 flood that led to a federal disaster declaration, said Greg Flynn, the state's Emergency Management Agency spokesman.

He said survey teams were still assessing damage from flash flooding in southern Mississippi and it was too soon to say how many roads and bridges were damaged or how many homes were flooded.

Rain-fed rivers were rising Friday in some New Orleans suburbs north of big Lake Pontchartrain.

The St. Tammany Parish government told residents of neighborhoods along both sides of the Tchefuncte River to consider voluntary evacuation because of the possibility of flooding Friday night and Saturday. The parish also declared an emergency to coordinate local, state and federal resources.

North of St. Tammany Parish in Washington Parish, Parish President Richard N. Thomas said in a Facebook message that 10 to 13 inches of rain had caused flash floods in the Bogalusa, Varnado and Angie areas, and some people had to be rescued.

There was one death in Tennessee where a woman fell into a rain-swollen creek near Chattanooga. Authorities who recovered the woman's body Friday morning about three hours after she lost her footing said she had been camping in a cave with friends and they were trying to leave the area when she fell into the water.

Rescue workers in north Georgia used a ladder and ropes to get to a woman and baby stranded in a truck inundated by rising waters Friday. Dramatic video posted to Facebook showed crews working to reach the truck as water reached the vehicle's windshield.

The storm system was blamed for a death in Louisiana earlier this week when a tree fell on a camper.

Forecasters said up to 5 inches (13 centimeters) of rain were possible in northern Alabama and central and north Georgia.

Water also flooded more than a dozen homes in St. Charles Parish, Louisiana, and a Trader Joe's store near New Orleans lost power during the storm, prompting it to donate perishable grocery items to a food bank.

Some areas of the Midwest were seeing spring-like conditions.

Shorts and t-shirts replaced winter running gear Friday for several joggers in downtown Columbus, Ohio, where temperatures were in the 50s.

"It's weird that there's no snow," said Evan Miller, who was about four miles into his run while wearing gray shorts and a short sleeve shirt.

House leader: Dems won't seat candidate in unresolved race

By EMERY P. DALESIO and JONATHAN DREW, Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — The dissolution of North Carolina's elections board Friday injected further uncertainty into a still-undecided congressional race as a U.S. House Democratic leader rejected the idea of filling the seat until an investigation of ballot fraud allegations is complete.

Gov. Roy Cooper was met with Republican resistance after announcing he would appoint an interim Board of Elections after a three-judge state court panel ruled Thursday that the current board should disband at noon Friday. The Democrat's move would fill the gap — and allow the board to proceed with a Jan. 11

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evidentiary hearing about the 9th District congressional race — until a new law governing the statewide elections panel can take effect Jan. 31.

Amid the turmoil, incoming U.S. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer issued a statement saying House Democrats won't allow Republican Mark Harris to be sworn in next week because of the ongoing investigation.

"Given the now well-documented election fraud that took place in NC-09, Democrats would object to any attempt by Mr. Harris to be seated on January 3," Hoyer said, adding that "the integrity of our democratic process outweighs concerns about the seat being vacant at the start of the new Congress."

The U.S. Constitution states that the House is the judge of the elections of its members and the final arbiter of contests.

The state Elections Board has refused to certify the race between Harris and Democrat Dan McCready while it investigates absentee ballot irregularities in the district in the south-central part of the state. Harris holds a slim lead in unofficial results, but election officials are looking into criminal allegations against an operative hired by the Harris campaign.

Friday's standoff was set in motion by the latest ruling from a state court that previously had found the elections board's makeup unconstitutional after the Republican-controlled legislature altered the board in 2016. The court had ruled earlier this year to allow the board to remain in place until Friday while it investigates the congressional race. The latest ruling came as lawmakers enacted a new law Thursday to largely restore the board to how it operated before 2016.

Cooper started the process of rebuilding the elections board Friday by informing the state Democratic and Republican parties that he plans to create an interim panel with five members of the current elections board, unless he receives different picks from the state parties. The interim board would last until the new law takes effect Jan. 31.

He said he would appoint both Democrats and Republicans to comply with pre-2016 state elections law he says is temporarily back in force.

"All of these members have election law experience and an awareness of the circumstances around the allegations involved in the Ninth Congressional District election," Cooper said in his letter to state party heads.

But state GOP Chairman Robin Hayes said the dissolving board's four GOP members "will not accept appointments to an unconstitutional, illegal sham Roy Cooper creation." Republicans instead will withhold GOP nominees until the new law takes effect, he said.

The outgoing state board refused a last-minute formal request by Harris to certify him the winner.

The elections board reorganization threatens to delay the Jan. 11 hearing. Lawyers for Harris and McCready had a Monday deadline to submit requests to the elections board for people they wanted to have compelled to appear and testify at next month's hearing. But if the current elections board is disbanded without a new one to replace it, the board chairman or vice chairman who could issue the requested subpoenas wouldn't exist.

Last week, elections board chairman Josh Malcolm said in an affidavit to the three-judge panel that investigative staffers — who can continue working through any reorganization — had collected more than 182,000 pages of materials in response to 12 subpoenas.

Malcolm said Friday that the elections board issued "numerous additional subpoenas" before disbanding. In a letter to Harris' attorney, Malcolm wrote that the GOP candidate had turned over only about 400 pages of subpoenaed documents and had yet to produce another 140,000 documents. Harris also had so far failed to arrange a requested interview with agency staffers, Malcolm said.

Harris' campaign committee has pored through about 135,000 documents that needed review, the Republican's attorney David Freedman said Friday. Harris "has cooperated and intends to continue cooperating with the investigation," Freedman said.

If House Democrats refuse to seat Harris, it wouldn't be the first time a chamber of Congress delayed or rejected seating a new member. In 2009, U.S. Senate leaders initially refused to seat Roland Burris as the replacement for President-elect Barack Obama's Illinois seat. Burris had been named to succeed

Obama by Gov. Rod Blagojevich, who was eventually convicted on corruption charges for trying to sell the Senate appointment.

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Follow Drew on Twitter at www.twitter.com/JonathanLDrew

Lawyer: McCarrick repeatedly touched youth during confession

By NICOLE WINFIELD, Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The Vatican's sexual abuse case against ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick has expanded significantly after a man testified that the retired American archbishop sexually abused him for years starting when he was 11, including during confession.

James Grein testified Thursday in New York before the judicial vicar for the New York City archdiocese, who was asked by the Holy See to take his statement for the Vatican's canonical case, said Grein's attorney Patrick Noaker.

The testimony, which lasted about an hour, was difficult and stressful but Grein was proud to have done it, Noaker said.

"He wants his church back. He felt that in order to accomplish that end, he had to go in and testify here and tell them what happened, and give the church itself the chance to do the right thing," Noaker said in a telephone interview Friday.

Grein initially came forward in July after the New York archdiocese announced that a church investigation determined an allegation that McCarrick had groped another teenage altar boy in the 1970s was credible.

Grein's claims, first reported by The New York Times, are more serious. He has alleged that McCarrick first exposed himself to Grein when he was 11 and then sexually molested him for years thereafter.

Noaker said in the testimony Thursday, Grein also gave "chilling" details about alleged repeated incidents of groping during confession - a serious canonical crime on top of the original offense of sexually abusing a minor.

Grein had previously not made public those claims, but Noaker confirmed his testimony to The Associated Press. Grein also allowed McCarrick's defense lawyers to listen to his testimony by telephone.

Grein testified that McCarrick — a close family friend who baptized Grein — would take him upstairs to hear his confession before celebrating Mass for the family at home.

"He touched James' genitals as part of the confessional. That became the course, it happened almost every time," Noaker said. McCarrick would absolve Grein and "touch him on the forehead, shoulder, chest and genitals."

Noaker said combining sexual abuse with a sacrament like confession haunts Grein to this day.

"People are vulnerable in the confessional. Very vulnerable," he said. "If you manipulate that, and try to sexualize that, it's extremely emotionally damaging."

McCarrick denied the initial groping allegation of the altar boy and has said through his lawyer that he looks forward to his right to due process. It wasn't clear when he would testify in the Vatican case.

The McCarrick scandal has sparked a credibility crisis for the U.S. and Vatican church hierarchies, since it was apparently an open secret for some that "Uncle Ted" slept with adult seminarians. Yet McCarrick still rose to the heights of church power, and even acted as the spokesman for U.S. bishops when they enacted a "zero tolerance" policy against sexually abusive priests in 2002.

Pope Francis initially ordered McCarrick removed from public ministry in June after he was accused of groping the teenage altar boy - the first known allegation against him involving a teen. A month later, after former seminarians and Grein came forward, Francis removed McCarrick as a cardinal and ordered him to live a lifetime of penance and prayer while the canonical process ran its course.

Now 88, the former archbishop of Washington is living at a Kansas religious residence.

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The Vatican is under pressure to finalize its case against McCarrick before Francis hosts church leaders at a February sex abuse prevention summit, since Francis himself has been implicated in the yearslong cover-up of McCarrick's misconduct with adults.

If convicted by the Vatican, Francis could defrock McCarrick or give him a lesser penalty.

While victims have long complained about the way they have been treated during canonical proceedings, Noaker praised the judicial vicar, the Rev. Richard Welch, saying he was compassionate, respectful and patient during Grein's testimony.

Noaker said Welch gave Grein time to compose himself when he testified about an incident in which McCarrick allegedly masturbated Grein in a car. When McCarrick dropped Grein back at home, he allegedly told Grein's parents that the mess was caused by a spilled soda, so Grein's mother went to clean up the car seat.

"That was a really psychologically damaging moment," Noaker said, adding that Grein had to relive it during his testimony. "He closed his eyes. He was sitting in that car with McCarrick, and you could see it. It was moving and terrifying."

Grein has told AP in the past that he struggled for decades with immense shame and guilt over the abuse. He said he struggled with alcoholism, which broke up his marriage, and attempted suicide multiple times.

The AP does not identify people who say they have been victims of sexual assault unless they grant permission. Grein has gone public with his full name.

In addition to the canonical case against McCarrick, Noaker filed a police report against McCarrick in July in Virginia.

NYC utility probes electric flash that lit sky in eerie blue

By JENNIFER PELTZ, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Electric utility Con Edison was working Friday to figure out what caused a high-voltage equipment failure that unleashed an otherworldly flash of bright blue light in the night sky over New York City.

The event Thursday caused power outages, briefly grounded flights at LaGuardia Airport and filled social media feeds with eerie photos, questions and jokes, to the point that the New York Police Department tweeted there was "no evidence of extraterrestrial activity."

And a jocular Gov. Andrew Cuomo pulled out a space-alien mask at a news conference Friday, while assuring the public that the incident "was what it was represented to be: an electrical malfunction."

It involved 20-foot-high (6-meter-high) equipment with cables carrying 138,000 volts, Con Ed officials said Friday. By comparison, a standard U.S. household gets 120-volt service.

"It was like a lightning bolt, essentially," spokesman Bob McGee said.

Substations transform electricity that comes in from power plants at high voltage down to lower voltage levels, and send it on for use.

Thursday's malfunction, at a power substation in the Astoria section of Queens, involved voltage-monitoring equipment, Con Ed Chairman John McAvoy said as he joined Cuomo at the substation.

"That piece of equipment failed in a very significant manner," McAvoy said.

Normally, a circuit-breaker-like device intervenes and quickly cuts off power to the affected equipment if there's an electrical fault, but that apparently didn't happen Thursday as quickly as expected, McAvoy said. Instead, the electricity kept cycling through, causing the flash.

Across much of the nation's most populous city, people looked up around 9:12 p.m. to see a pulsing orb of blue light that lasted a minute or more in the sky over Queens, casting the skyline into a strange silhouette.

"It was pitch black outside, and then suddenly the whole side of the eastern sky was lighting up and changing colors," said Madeleine Frank Reeves, who saw the lights from her Upper West Side apartment.

As for why the cyan sky: When electric charges move through air, the air gets superheated and glows blue, explains Eric O'Dea, of Boston's Museum of Science, which is known for generating indoor lightning

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bolts in its Theater of Electricity.

Derrick Pitts, the chief astronomer at Philadelphia's Franklin Institute Science Museum, said it's possible the light wavelength caused by the electrical arc refracted through tiny water droplets in the clouds, yielding a blue color.

"Sort of like what happens in a rainbow," but with a more specific color, he explained in an email.

Onlookers invoked supernatural and sci-fi screen classics — "Ghostbusters," "Independence Day," "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" and more. There were, of course, hashtags — including #alieninvasion — and a tongue-in-cheek take on a real scientific phenomenon: the "Astoria Borealis."

The city's 911 system got over 3,200 calls in the half-hour including the flash, compared to 500 calls in the prior half-hour, Police Commissioner James O'Neill said.

Witnesses' video showed plumes of smoke pouring from a piece of equipment at the substation, and nearby residents reported hearing banging or roaring sounds. Those likely were caused by the electrical arc — a term for this kind of discharge of electricity — going to the ground, McGee said.

The arc subsided on its own, he said. No one was seriously injured, though an employee at the substation reported eye irritation, Con Ed said.

Meanwhile, power flickered or went out at least briefly around northern Queens. Lights flickered in parts of the massive Rikers Island jail complex before back-up generators kicked in, according to the city Correction Department.

Although LaGuardia also has backup power, the emergency system doesn't allow for full operation of the airport, so flights were stopped for a time, Cuomo said. Normal power was restored in about an hour, he said.

Some subway service was disrupted for about a half-hour, according to Con Ed.

McGee didn't immediately have information on whether there had been any recent problems with or repairs to the equipment that failed.

Cuomo, a Democrat, asked the state Public Service to join Con Ed in investigating what caused the problem.

Thursday wasn't the first time a substation power problem has illuminated the city's skies with a strange glow. Superstorm Sandy flooded a Con Ed substation in 2012, producing a great, greenish flash and plunging a swath of Manhattan into darkness.

Associated Press writers Jim Mustian and Michael R. Sisak contributed to this report.

Kurds seek help from Syrians as US prepares to withdraw

By SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Syria's military said Friday it had entered the key Kurdish-held town of Manbij in an apparent deal with the Kurds, who are looking for new allies and protection against a threatened Turkish offensive as U.S. troops prepare to leave Syria.

Turkey and American troops patrolling the town denied there was any change of forces in the contested area, contradicting the Syrians and highlighting the potential for chaos in the wake of last week's surprise pronouncement by the United States that it was withdrawing its troops.

Since the U.S. announcement, forces have been building up around Manbij and further east, ushering in new alliances and raising the chances for friction. The Kurds' invitation to Syrian troops shows they'd rather let Syria's Russian- and Iranian-backed government fill the void left by the Americans, than face the prospect of being overwhelmed by their top rival Turkey.

Meanwhile, a flurry of meetings is expected in the coming days as all sides of the conflict scramble to find ways to replace the departing U.S. troops. They include one Saturday in Moscow, where Russia will host top Turkish officials in a possible sign that the two sides could be working on a deal to avert a Turkish offensive into Syria. Russians officials have said they expect Syrian government troops to replace the U.S. troops when they withdraw.

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Turkey considers the U.S.-backed Kurdish People's Protection Units, which now controls nearly 30 percent of Syria, a terrorist group linked to an insurgency within its own borders. Kurdish-controlled Manbij has been at the center of rising tension between the U.S. and Turkey.

There were conflicting reports Friday on the location of the Syrian troops, who said they had moved into Manbij and raised the Syrian flag in the town. The Kurdish militia said it has invited the Syrian government to take control of Manbij to protect it against "a Turkish invasion."

But a Kurdish official said the government deployment has so far been limited to the front line with Turkey-backed fighters, based north and west Manbij. And U.S. officials in Washington said Syrian regime forces and some Russian forces had moved a bit closer to the city and were largely south or southwest of the city. The officials spoke anonymously because they were not authorized to discuss the troop movements publicly.

The U.S.-led coalition said the announcement that government troops had entered the town was "incorrect," and called "on everyone to respect the integrity of Manbij and the safety of its citizens."

Russia and Iran, meanwhile, welcomed the Syrian announcement. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov called it a "positive step" that could help stabilize the area. Iran hailed it as a "major step toward establishing the government's authority" over all of Syria. Russia has signaled it expects the Syrian government to deploy where U.S. forces leave.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the Syrian government move was "a psychological act," and the situation in Manbij was uncertain. He spoke as Turkey-allied forces in Syria said they were fortifying their front line positions ahead of the possible military offensive.

But Erdogan also noted that his country's goal is to oust the Kurdish militia from along his country's borders. "If terror organizations leave, then there is no work left for us anyway," Erdogan told reporters.

In Washington, Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, who broke with U.S. President Donald Trump on his decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria, tweeted that reports about the Kurds aligning with Assad were a "major disaster in the making." Graham, a leading voice on foreign policy and national security issues in Congress, warned the development would be a "nightmare for Turkey and eventually Israel." Graham tweeted that the "big winners" are Russia, Iran, Assad and Islamic State militants.

National Security Adviser John Bolton is expected in Turkey after the new year.

Friday's announcement by the Syrian military comes as Turkey and allied Syrian fighters have been sending in reinforcement to the front lines and threatening an offensive to dislodge the Kurdish forces. In response, the U.S. first warned against unilateral action and increased patrols and observation points in northeastern Syria.

Then, in a surprise move, Trump announced he was withdrawing troops from eastern Syria. He later said the withdrawal would be coordinated with Turkey.

The decision has left America's Syrian Kurdish partners in a conundrum. With no backing from the U.S., the Kurdish forces looked to new allies to protect their Kurdish-administered areas. Partners since 2014, the U.S.-led forces and the Kurdish group have liberated most of east Syria from Islamic State militants.

Ilham Ahmed, a senior Kurdish official, said an agreement is being worked out between the Russians and the Syrian government. She said the U.S. troops have not yet withdrawn from Manbij, but said Syrian troops would take over once U.S. withdrawal is complete.

"The aim is to ward off a Turkish offensive," Ahmed said. "If the Turks' excuse is the (Kurdish militia), they will leave their posts to the government."

The Syrian government has said it welcomes the Kurdish group returning to areas under its authority. But government officials have stated they will not accept an autonomous area, a main demand for the Kurds.

The Syrian military declaration came shortly after the Kurds invited the government to seize control of Manbij to prevent a Turkish attack.

Pro-state Syrian al-Ikhbariya TV aired footage from inside Manbij of commercial streets on a rainy day, but didn't show any troops. It carried images of a military convoy driving late at night, purportedly to Manbij.

A timetable for the U.S. withdrawal has not yet been made public.

Associated Press writers Nataliya Vasilyeva in Moscow, Zeynep Bilginsoy in Istanbul and Lolita C. Baldor in Washington, D.C., contributed to this report.

From duct-taped shoes to \$11M: Man leaves surprise donations

By SALLY HO, Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Alan Naiman was known for an unabashed thriftiness that veered into comical, but even those closest to him had no inkling of the fortune that he quietly amassed and the last act that he had long planned.

The Washington state social worker died of cancer this year at age 63, leaving most of a surprising \$11 million estate to children's charities that help the poor, sick, disabled and abandoned. The amount baffled the beneficiaries and his best friends, who are lauding Naiman as the anniversary of his death approaches in January.

That's because the Seattle man patched up his shoes with duct tape, sought deals at the grocery store deli at closing time and took his best friends out to lunch at fast-food joints.

Naiman, who died unmarried and childless, loved kids but also was intensely private, scrimping, investing and working extra jobs to stockpile money that he rarely spent on himself after seeing how unfair life could be for the most vulnerable children, his friends say.

They believe a lifelong devotion to his older brother who had a developmental disability influenced Naiman, though he rarely spoke of it. The brother died in 2013, the same year Naiman splurged on a sports car — a modestly priced Scion FR-S.

"Growing up as a kid with an older, disabled brother kind of colored the way he looked at things," close friend Susan Madsen said.

A former banker, Naiman worked the past two decades at the state Department of Social and Health Services, handling after-hours calls. He earned \$67,234 and also took on side gigs, sometimes working as many as three jobs. He saved and invested enough to make several millions of dollars and also inherited millions more from his parents, said Shashi Karan, a friend from his banking days.

Thrilled when he finally qualified for senior discounts, Naiman bought his clothes from the grocery store. He loved cars, but for the most of his life, drove beat-up vehicles and seemed to enjoy the solitude and savings of solo road trips, friends say.

After Naiman's death, Karan realized how little he knew of the other aspects of his longtime friend's life.

"I don't know if he was lonely. I think he was a loner," Karan said.

Many of the organizations benefiting from Naiman's gifts said they didn't know him, though they had crossed paths.

He left \$2.5 million to the Pediatric Interim Care Center, a private organization in Washington state that cares for babies born to mothers who abused drugs and helps the children wean off their dependence. The group used some of what was its largest donation ever to pay off a mortgage and buy a new vehicle to transport the 200 babies it accepts from hospitals each year.

Naiman had called the center about a newborn while working for the state more than a decade ago, and its founder, Barbara Drennen, showed up in the middle of the night to get the baby.

"We would never dream that something like this would happen to us. I wish very much that I could have met him. I would have loved to have had him see the babies he's protecting," Drennen said.

Naiman gave \$900,000 to the Treehouse foster care organization, telling them that he was a foster parent years ago and had brought kids in his care to the group's popular warehouse, where wards of the state can choose toys and necessities for free.

Treehouse is using Naiman's money to expand its college and career counseling statewide.

"The frugality that he lived through, that he committed to in his life, was for this," said Jessica Ross, Treehouse's chief development officer. "It's really a gift to all of us to see that pure demonstration of philanthropy and love."

Follow Sally Ho on Twitter: https://twitter.com/_SallyHo .

California's Jerry Brown caps 5 decades on political scene

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — It was a matter of life and death in 2015 when California Gov. Jerry Brown pondered an assisted suicide bill granting terminally ill people the right to choose when they die.

After much speculation, Brown signed the measure, a victory for "death with dignity" advocates and a blow to the Catholic Church, which vigorously opposed it. Brown, who once considered becoming a priest, added to his signature a five-paragraph statement outlining how he made his decision: He sought contradicting perspectives from the church, families of the terminally ill, his friends and doctors. And he pondered his own existence.

"I do not know what I would do if I were dying in prolonged and excruciating pain. I am certain, however, that it would be a comfort to be able to consider the options afforded by this bill," Brown wrote. "And I wouldn't deny that right to others."

Brown, who leaves office Jan. 7, has signed thousands of bills, but this one stands out to Dana Williamson, Brown's cabinet secretary at the time.

"His ability to articulate his deliberations and why he landed the way he did — to me that's quintessential Jerry Brown," she said.

Brown has honed that decision-making style over five decades in public life, including a record 16 years as California's governor, first from 1975 to 1983 and again since 2011.

He used the spotlight that comes with governing the nation's largest state to mount three unsuccessful bids for president and urge swifter action on climate change — something he'll continue when he leaves office — and he's credited with pulling California out of a financial sinkhole that had observers deeming the state ungovernable when he returned to Sacramento in 2011.

The son of Gov. Pat Brown, Jerry Brown became governor at 36 and built a reputation as an idealist who eschewed traditional trappings of wealth and power. During his first term, he earned the condescending nickname "Gov. Moonbeam" after proposing a state communications satellite.

Now 80, he's still an idealist but one who during the last eight years championed fiscal moderation, a position that sometimes put him at odds with fellow Democrats who wanted more social program spending. Yet Brown's popularity surged as he took the state from a deep budget deficit when he entered office to a surplus and \$14.5 billion socked away in a rainy day fund.

He never gave up on the satellite idea. Last fall, at the end of a global conference on climate change that he organized, he announced California would launch its "own damn satellite" to track pollutants.

"Jerry is an original and always has been," said his sister Kathleen Brown, the former state treasurer who ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1994.

Jerry Brown was 20 when his father was elected to the first of two terms in 1958. Politics wasn't his plan — he chose to attend a Jesuit seminary. There he learned the Latin motto: "Age quod agis," or "Do what you are doing." He chafes when asked to reflect on his accomplishments or legacy.

"Taking pride is not something that I have been trained to pursue," Brown said recently at a Sacramento Press Club appearance.

But the priesthood ultimately wasn't for Brown; he instead got a law degree at Yale and a job at a Los Angeles firm before embarking on his political career by winning a spot on a community college district board of trustees.

Brown leaves the governorship with an unmatched history in California politics. He was elected secretary of state in 1971 on a platform of transparency and reform, and then governor in 1974. Two years later, Brown was running for president. He lost, but his star continued to rise, powered in part by his relationship with popular singer Linda Ronstadt. The two appeared on the cover of Newsweek magazine under the headline "The Pop Politics of Jerry Brown."

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Brown again ran unsuccessfully for president in 1980, with a slogan that reflected the same sensitivities he has today: "Protect the Earth, serve the people, explore the universe."

After losing a bid for the U.S. Senate in 1982, he traveled abroad, re-entering politics as California Democratic Party chairman and, in 1992, seeking the presidency for a third time and losing to Bill Clinton. He returned to elected office six years later as Oakland mayor then became state attorney general. In 2011, he won the governorship, and his political comeback was complete.

He prefers the second two terms to the first.

"I was more experienced, the people who work with me were more skilled, I had a wonderful wife who was my partner and companion in all this," he told The Associated Press in a recent interview. Brown's wife, Anne Gust Brown, is a former Gap executive who friends and advisers say helps Brown execute his ambitious ideas.

The second time around, Brown more easily persuaded the Legislature and voters to make politically painful decisions such as cutting services or raising taxes on themselves. Lawmakers often overrode his vetoes in the 1970s, but they did not do it once in the last eight years. Unlike his early terms, Brown didn't have his sights set on the presidency.

"Jerry Brown One was quirky and an interesting governor. Jerry Brown Two is not quirky. Jerry Brown Two is deliberative, and he likes to have it his way," said Republican state Sen. Jim Nielsen, who served in the Legislature from 1978 to 1987 and returned in 2008.

In the 1970s, Brown brought younger, more diverse voices into state government. He appointed his campaign manager, Tom Quinn, to head the state Air Resources Board and quickly advanced policies to curb air pollution. Quinn cracked down sharply on the auto industry for violating California's vehicle emissions standards, still the nation's strictest and now a target of the Trump administration.

He won passage of the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act in 1975, the first in the nation to give farmworkers collective bargaining rights. It was hailed as a victory, but its long-term effectiveness remains disputed.

Brown also fell victim to his presidential ambitions, giving lawmakers and voters the impression he was focused elsewhere. In 1978, a property tax revolt led to the passage of a ballot measure that radically changed California's financial picture.

Although Brown opposed it, his embrace of the measure once it passed earned him the endorsement of tax crusader Howard Jarvis and reinforced that Brown's idealism was wrapped in political pragmatism.

When Brown returned to Sacramento, he turned California's \$27 billion deficit into a surplus for his successor; twice successfully pushed tax increases at the ballot box; aggressively advanced California's climate change fighting measures; and reversed course on tough-on-crime measures he adopted in the 1970s. He also championed two major and expensive infrastructure projects — a high-speed train between Los Angeles and San Francisco and giant twin tunnels to reroute the state's water supply — that are mired in lawsuits and may never be completed.

And while he's made significant strides on climate change by extending a cap-and-trade program for emissions and expanding access to electric cars, critics fault him for failing to stop new oil drilling.

"There's a slightly tragic quality to the fact that he couldn't in the end bring himself to change his outlook, because the thing that's marked his career for decades is being able to change his outlook and be kind of ahead of the curve," said Bill McKibben, an environmentalist who wrote "The End of Nature," a call to arms against global warming.

Criticism, bad press, political fights — Brown said he will miss it all when he leaves the governor's office and retires to a ranch he built on family land in rural Colusa County.

"I can't think of a day I haven't enjoyed since I've been governor," he said. "I can't think of one day."

Associated Press writers Jonathan J. Cooper and Don Thompson contributed to this report.

Wells Fargo pays \$575 million to settle state investigations

NEW YORK (AP) — Wells Fargo will pay \$575 million in a settlement with attorneys general from all 50 states and the District of Columbia that are investigating fake accounts opened without the knowledge of customers and a string of other dodgy practices.

Under the agreement announced Friday, the bank will also create teams to review and respond to customer complaints about its banking and sales practices.

The bank has been under a cloud since 2015 when it acknowledged that employees had opened millions of fake bank accounts for customers in order to meet sales goals. It has also said that it sold auto insurance and other financial products to customers who didn't need them.

Wells Fargo has already been ordered to pay more than \$1.2 billion in penalties and faced stricter regulations.

"This agreement underscores our serious commitment to making things right in regard to past issues as we work to build a better bank," said CEO Tim Sloan.

Tim Sloan apologized for the phony accounts and other practices during a congressional hearing in 2017, but the company remained under pressure from the weight of all the scandals. The company has announced plans to lay off up to 10 percent of its workforce over the next three years.

California, the bank's home state, will get more than a quarter of the settlement funds because of the number of Wells Fargo customers residing there.

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra called the bank's behavior "disgraceful".

"Wells Fargo customers entrusted their bank with their livelihood, their dreams, and their savings for the future," said Becerra. "Instead of safeguarding its customers, Wells Fargo exploited them, signing them up for products - from bank accounts to insurance - that they never wanted. This is an incredible breach of trust that threatens not only the customers who depended on Wells Fargo, but confidence in our banking system."

Protests as Congo leader warns of Ebola election 'disaster'

By SALEH MWANAMILONGO and AL-HADJI KUDRA MALIRO, Associated Press

KINSHASA, Congo (AP) — Congo's leader is blaming a deadly Ebola virus outbreak for the last-minute decision to bar an estimated 1 million voters from Sunday's long-delayed presidential election, claiming it would be a "disaster" if someone infects hundreds of people. Protests exploded again on Friday in response as health workers suspended efforts and warned that new cases could sharply rise.

In an interview with The Associated Press, President Joseph Kabila contradicted his own health officials and experts with the World Health Organization who have said precautions were taken in collaboration with electoral authorities so people could vote. Those include tons of hand sanitizer — Ebola is spread via infected bodily fluids — and the screening of all voters entering polling stations.

Without mentioning the election, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned late Friday that "prolonged insecurity" in Congo could erase recent gains made in containing the second-deadliest Ebola outbreak in history. Work has reached a "critical point," he said.

Kabila on Thursday evening claimed that the hemorrhagic fever could spread as people use voting machines, tapping on a touchscreen to select candidates. A polling station could have 500 to 600 voters and "this assumes that a lot of people will be contaminated," he said. Health officials have said people would sanitize their hands before and after voting.

Until this week, the Ebola outbreak declared on Aug. 1 had been a challenge but not a barrier to the election. Voting is now delayed in the cities of Beni and Butembo — but not in other communities with Ebola cases — until March, long after the inauguration of Kabila's successor in January. Residents had largely supported Kabila in past elections but sentiment has turned in recent years amid persistent insecurity.

This latest delay in an election meant to occur in late 2016 has angered both residents and the opposition, which accuses the government of trying to ensure that Kabila's preferred successor wins. Many Congolese believe Kabila will wield power behind the scenes and protect his assets in a country with vast

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mineral wealth.

Protests broke out in Beni again on Friday, with hundreds of people demanding to vote on Sunday with the rest of the country. Police used live ammunition and tear gas to disperse the marchers who barricaded streets.

Some protesters carried crosses displaying "RIP Kabila" and saying his preferred successor, Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary, "will never be our president." Beni's civil society urged residents to turn out en masse on Sunday. Others protested in Butembo and Goma city.

"We don't fear Ebola," one marcher, Claude Vianney, told the AP. "I know that if you wash your hands, the Ebola virus will be killed." He added: "We are furious, as you can see. Why does Kabila keep mocking us?"

On Thursday, some protesters attacked an Ebola response center and sent 21 patients fleeing. Many later returned, but the vandalism was the latest setback in efforts to contain the outbreak. Nearly 600 cases have been reported, with more than 350 confirmed deaths.

The uproar over the voting delay has "badly disturbed" Ebola response work in Beni and Butembo, Congo's health ministry said. Health teams barely deployed on Thursday and no Ebola vaccinations could be carried out.

The Oxfam aid group said it was forced to suspend Ebola response work. Acting country director Raphael Mbuyi called it "extremely worrying" because previous suspensions have led to a spike in new cases.

"It's not surprising that people who have had their votes taken away at the last minute are frustrated and going to the streets," Mbuyi added. "These people deserve to have their say as well."

Congo's national organization of Episcopal churches called the decision to bar voters "unjust" and urged the election commission to reconsider.

Protesters said life has continued in the outbreak zone, with schools open, people going to church and candidates holding campaign rallies. Congo's president said such activities don't involve voting machines.

There is "no further reason" to prevent Sunday's election for the rest of the country, Kabila told the AP, adding: "Rest assured, there will be peace." Police can secure the population, he said.

He dismissed opposition allegations that campaigns had faced restrictions, including blocked flights and supporters assaulted.

Opposition candidate Martin Fayulu told the AP that up to 5 million of Congo's 40 million voters might not be able to cast ballots on Sunday, claiming that voting machines had yet to be delivered to some areas.

Congo's president also sounded defiant in the face of international pressure. His foreign minister on Thursday ordered the European Union ambassador to leave the country within 48 hours, citing EU sanctions on Kabila's preferred successor, Shadary.

The former interior minister is under an EU asset freeze and travel ban for obstructing Congo's electoral process and for a crackdown against protesters angry over the delayed vote. The EU prolonged the sanctions this month.

An EU spokesperson called Congo's order "completely unjustified" and counterproductive ahead of "very challenging elections."

Kabila, when asked what advice he had for his successor, replied: "The biggest recommendation is that he listen to the voice of the Congolese and not follow that of the United States, Europe or elsewhere."

Congo resists what it considers international meddling, funding this election itself. Western observer groups are notably absent.

"I have already said that Congo is not a beggar country," Kabila said.

Maliro reported from Beni. Associated Press writer Mathilde Boussion in Kinshasa and video journalist Mark Carlson in Brussels contributed.

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Weather hampers efforts to inspect Indonesia tsunami volcano

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Bad weather and a massive ash column hampered efforts to assess whether Indonesia's Anak Krakatau volcano island could trigger another deadly tsunami as authorities said Friday the search for victims in the worst-affected province will continue into January.

Indonesia's disaster agency said that 426 people died in the Sunda Strait tsunami that struck Sumatra and Java without warning on Saturday. That was slightly lower than previously announced due to some victims being recorded twice. It said 23 are missing and more than 40,000 displaced.

High seas, clouds and constant eruptions have hindered attempts to visually inspect Anak Krakatau, the offspring of the infamous Krakatau volcano whose eruption in 1883 caused a period of global cooling. A large part of the volcano collapsed following an eruption Saturday, triggering the tsunami.

Authorities have warned Sunda Strait residents to stay a kilometer away from the coastline, citing the potential for another tsunami.

Gegar Prasetya, co-founder of the Tsunami Research Center Indonesia, said the severity of another potential tsunami could be less since satellite radar shows the volcano is now much smaller.

Saturday's tsunami hit more than 300 kilometers (186 miles) of coastline with waves of 2 meters (about 6 1/2 feet) or higher.

"According to the theory and my past research, the severity of the potential tsunami is reduced significantly. This morning we tried to take an aerial photo from the plane to confirm the satellite image but failed due to cloud cover," Prasetya said.

The disaster agency said the emergency period for Banten province in Java ends Jan. 9 and on Friday for Lampung province in Sumatra.

About 1,600 people have been evacuated from Sebesi island nearest Anak Krakatau and the remaining residents from its population of more than 2,800 will be transported Friday, the agency said.

Sulphur and thick ash from the continually erupting volcano has blanketed the island.

Indonesia on Thursday raised the danger level for the island volcano and more than doubled its no-go zone to 5 kilometers (3 miles).

Janine Krippner, a New Zealand-born volcanologist at Concord University in West Virginia, said it's hard to assess the risk of another Anak Krakatau collapse and tsunami because authorities don't know how stable its remaining edifice is.

"Ideally there would be an assessment of the volcano but it has been constantly erupting, preventing anyone getting close," she said.

US investigating CenturyLink internet outage, 911 failures

By KEITH RIDLER, Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — U.S. officials and at least one state said Friday that they have started investigations into a nationwide CenturyLink internet outage that has disrupted 911 service.

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai called the outage that began Thursday "completely unacceptable" because people who need help couldn't use the emergency number.

"Its breadth and duration are particularly troubling," he said.

The commission's Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau will investigate the cause and effect of the outage, he said.

The Monroe, Louisiana-based telecommunications giant is one of the largest in the United States. It offers communications and information technology services in dozens of states. Customers from New York to California reported outages.

CenturyLink spokeswoman Debra Peterson said the outage "is not related to hacking," but she declined further comment.

The company said on Twitter that it's working to restore service and appears to be making progress. It hasn't provided a cause for the problems.

"Where CenturyLink is the 911 service provider 911 calls are completing," the company said in a tweet.

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Regulators in Washington state also said they were opening an investigation into an outage of its state-wide 911 service.

The state Utilities and Transportation Commission said interruptions began about 8:30 p.m. Thursday. The commission's regulatory services division director, Mark Vasconi, said the system appeared stable Friday but the agency was monitoring it.

In Idaho, Emergency Office Management Director Brad Richy said he didn't receive any reports of 911 service failures, but some state agencies, including the state Department of Correction, lost service on internet-based phones.

Some businesses in Idaho also lost the ability to make credit card sales, and some ATM machines weren't working in Idaho and Montana.

Due to sporadic 911 outages in Massachusetts, public safety officials recommended individuals looking for emergency help use the 10-digit telephone number of the fire or police departments they wanted to contact.

In Greeley, Colorado, the Weld County Regional Communication Center on Friday said 911 calls were being dropped, but callers should keep trying and emergency dispatchers would try to call back.

The 911 dispatch center and emergency management in western Missouri's Johnson County were hit by the outage, county Emergency Management Director Troy Armstrong said Friday. He said the 911 lines were not affected, but the internet was down at the dispatch center and phone services also were spotty.

A strong economy translates into big sales this holiday

NEW YORK (AP) — Americans buoyed by a strong economy pushed holiday sales growth to a six-year high. Retail sales rose 5.1 percent between Nov. 1 and Dec. 24 from a year ago, according to Mastercard SpendingPulse, which tracked spending online and in stores across all payment types, including those who paid by cash or check. Total sales topped \$850 billion this year, Mastercard said.

"From shopping aisles to online carts, consumer confidence translated into holiday cheer for retail," said Steve Sadove, a senior adviser at Mastercard and the former CEO of the department store chain Saks.

Online sales continued to grow, up more than 19 percent from a year ago. Last week, Mastercard said online sales made up 13 percent of total retail sales.

Clothing sold well this year -- up nearly 8 percent from last year, the biggest growth for apparel sales since 2010, Mastercard said. Home furniture sales rose 2.3 percent, while electronics and appliances slipped 0.7 percent.

Shoppers spent less at department stores, which Mastercard said was partly due to store closings. But shoppers did head to the websites of department stores, where sales rose 10.2 percent, Mastercard said. Traditional retailers have been updating their websites and smartphone apps, as well as making it easier for shoppers to buy online and then pick up their items in store.

Sears wins reprieve from liquidation as Chairman Lampert makes last-minute \$4.4 billion bid on bankrupt company

Friday was the deadline for prospective buyers and liquidators to put in their offers to buy Sears. Sears, which also owns Kmart, filed for bankruptcy in October.

The 125-year-old company has more than 68,000 employees.

by Lauren Hirsch, CNBC

Department store chain Sears won a reprieve from liquidating Friday after its chairman, Eddie Lampert, submitted a \$4.4 billion bid in an effort to buy the retailer and keep it alive.

Lampert's hedge fund, ESL Investments, put forward the tentative proposal for the parent of Kmart and Sears earlier this month, with his formal submission due today. The offer came just in time to meet the 4:00 p.m. deadline, CNBC first reported.

Friday's offer, which Lampert submitted through an ESL affiliate, Transform Holdco, is for 425 of Sears'

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stores. To fund the bid, it has a \$1.3 billion financing commitment from investment banks, a spokesperson for ESL said in a Friday statement.

The bid would "offer employment to up to 50,000 associates," the spokesperson for ESL said, cautioning, though, that it would depend on "further actions the company may take between now and closing." It would also reinstate severance protections for "eligible employees."

The bid may help divert liquidation, but may not necessarily. Sears' advisors have until Jan. 4 to decide whether ESL is a "qualified bidder." Only then could ESL take part in an auction against liquidation bids on Jan. 14. They will weigh the value of Lampert's bid against offers to liquidate the company.

The full structure of Lampert's bid could not immediately be determined, but will be made public in coming days. If it is similar to the \$4.6 billion proposal he outlined earlier this month, it is likely to face pushback from the company's unsecured creditors. As part of the initial bid, which regulators required Lampert to make public, financing would in part stem from \$1.8 billion in debt that Lampert would forgive through a so-called "credit bid."

Unsecured creditors said earlier this month they will object to a credit bid. Those creditors believe there may be claims against Sears for transactions under Lampert's leadership. Those deals include Sears' spinoff of Lands' End and transactions with Seritage Growth Properties, a real estate investment trust Lampert created through some Sears' properties.

Sears declined to comment to CNBC for this story.

The company filed for bankruptcy on Oct. 15. At that time, it said it would close 142 unprofitable stores, then in November it announced the closure of 40 additional stores. On Friday, it disclosed plans to close 80 more stores, bringing the total closures to more than 260, or more than a third of its 700 or so stores. The 125-year-old company has more than 68,000 employees.

Once the nation's biggest retailer, it was also its first "everything store," stocking wares from jewelry to clothing, from hardware to prefabricated homes. But the department store industry has struggled over the past half-decade, as the mall has become less convenient and apparel more casual. Rival J.C. Penney has also felt the pressure; on Wednesday its shares dipped below \$1 for the first time.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Dec. 29, the 363rd day of 2018. There are two days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 29, 1940, during World War II, Germany dropped incendiary bombs on London, setting off what came to be known as "The Second Great Fire of London."

On this date:

In 1170, Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was slain in Canterbury Cathedral by knights loyal to King Henry II.

In 1808, the 17th president of the United States, Andrew Johnson, was born in Raleigh, North Carolina.

In 1845, Texas was admitted as the 28th state.

In 1890, the Wounded Knee massacre took place in South Dakota as an estimated 300 Sioux Indians were killed by U.S. troops sent to disarm them.

In 1910, the capital of Oklahoma was moved from Guthrie to Oklahoma City as the state legislature approved a bill which was signed by Gov. Charles N. Haskell. (Although the move was challenged in court, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the action.)

In 1967, Hyundai Motor Co. was founded in Seoul (sohl), South Korea.

In 1972, Eastern Air Lines Flight 401, a Lockheed L-1011 Tristar, crashed into the Florida Everglades near Miami International Airport, killing 101 of the 176 people aboard.

In 1975, a bomb exploded in the main terminal of New York's LaGuardia Airport, killing 11 people (it's never been determined who was responsible).

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In 1978, during the Gator Bowl, Ohio State University coach Woody Hayes punched Clemson player Charlie Bauman, who'd intercepted an Ohio State pass. (Hayes was fired by Ohio State the next day.)

In 1986, former British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan died in Sussex, England, at age 92.

In 1992, New York Governor Mario Cuomo (KWOH'-moh) commuted the prison sentence of Jean Harris, the convicted killer of "Scarsdale Diet" author Herman Tarnower.

In 2006, word reached the United States of the execution of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein (because of the time difference, it was the morning of Dec. 30 in Iraq when the hanging took place). In a statement, President George W. Bush called Saddam's execution an important milestone on Iraq's road to democracy.

Ten years ago: Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich's lawyer responded to impeachment charges, saying a vague array of charges and evidence did not merit removing his client from office. Somali President Abdullahi Yusuf resigned, saying he had lost control of the country to Islamic insurgents. The African Union suspended Guinea after a coup in the West African nation. Grammy-winning jazz musician Freddie Hubbard died in Sherman Oaks, Calif., at age 70. French fashion designer Ted Lapidus died in Cannes at age 79.

Five years ago: The first of two suicide bombings that claimed the lives of 32 victims in the southern Russian city of Volgograd took place in a train station (the second blast occurred on a bus the next day).

One year ago: Puerto Rico authorities said nearly half of the power customers in the U.S. territory still lacked electricity, more than three months after Hurricane Maria.

Today's Birthdays: Country singer Rose Lee Maphis is 96. Actress Inga Swenson is 86. ABC newscaster Tom Jarriel is 84. Actress Barbara Steele is 81. Actor Jon Voight is 80. Country singer Ed Bruce is 79. Singer Marianne Faithfull is 72. Hall of Fame Jockey Laffit Pincay Jr. is 72. Actor Ted Danson is 71. Singer-actress Yvonne Elliman is 67. The president of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach, is 65. Actress Patricia Clarkson is 59. Comedian Paula Poundstone is 59. Rock singer-musician Jim Reid (The Jesus and Mary Chain) is 57. Actor Michael Cudlitz is 54. Rock singer Dexter Holland (The Offspring) is 53. Actor-comedian Mysterio Clark is 52. Actor Jason Gould is 52. News anchor Ashleigh Banfield is 51. Movie director Lilly Wachowski is 51. Actress Jennifer Ehle is 49. Actor Patrick Fischler is 49. Rock singer-musician Glen Phillips is 48. Actor Kevin Weisman is 48. Actor Jude Law is 46. Actress Maria Dizzia is 44. Actor Mekhi Phifer (mih-KY' FY'-fuhr) is 44. Actor Shawn Hatosy is 43. Actress Katherine Moennig is 41. Actor Diego Luna is 39. Actress Alison Brie is 36. Country singer Jessica Andrews is 35. Actor Iain de Caestecker is 31. Actress Jane Levy is 29. Singer-actor-dancer Ross Lynch is 23. Rock musician Danny Wagner is 20.

Thought for Today: "If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in." — Rachel Carson, American biologist (1907-1964).