Hassoun charged with desertion after claiming Iraq abduction Page 11

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GI pleads guilty in alleged mercy killing

16-year-old victim was severely wounded in Sadr City fighting

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Recognizing their sacrifice

Pentagon dinner honors troops on mend from wounds suffered in terror war Page 12

PHOTOS BY JOE GROMELSKI/Stars and Stripes

Above: Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz sat for dinner with wounded servicemembers Thursday night in the Pentagon. Dining with Wolfowitz is, at left, Army National Guard Capt. Troy O'Donley, commander of the 1544th Transportation Company based in Paris, Ill., and, at right, Guard 1st Lt. Ed Salau, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry, 30th Brigade in Lumberton, N.C. Right: Air Force Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, speaks with Spc. Chad Johnson of the Fort Hood, Texas-based 1st Cavalry Division. Johnson lost his leg in an improvised explosive device blast on Sept. 20 in Iraq. Top: World Wrestling Entertainment superstar Mick Foley, aka Mankind — who was a favorite of the troops at the dinner — poses with a dog tag touting the Pentagon's new "America Supports You" program.

STARS AND STRIPES.
COMING SOON

Scene on Sunday

Dave Barry offers unusual gift ideas

Scene on Sunday

Julie Roberts stars in 'Closer'

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

World

Berlusconi corruption trial: A Milan court acquitted Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi of corruption charges Friday — a major victory in the billionaire's decade-long battle with legal woes that he has blamed on left-wing prosecutors.

Berlusconi

More than 24 hours after the case went to the three-judge jury, the verdict was read to the court: acquittal on one count and a ruling that the statute of limitations had run out on the second corruption charge.

Throughout his trial, Berlusconi had maintained his innocence.

Turkey's EU membership bid: Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's drive to get his country into the European Union won strong backing Friday from the EU's head office in Belgium a week before the bloc's leaders decide whether to open membership talks.

European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso will argue Turkey's case at the EU summit next Thursday and Friday, which must decide on opening negotiations, his spokeswoman said.

"The president supports the accession of Turkey to the Union," said spokeswoman Francoise Le Bail. "He thinks that will be a good thing for Turkey and a good thing for the Union."

Meeting Erdogan at EU headquarters, Barroso told the Turkish leader he expected a "positive outcome" for Turkey at the summit, Le Bail said, adding that he also backed Turkey's call for a starting date early in 2005.

Ukraine election turmoil: Ukrainian opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko promised Friday to prosecute government officials and their supporters for crimes committed during the last decade should he win Ukraine's Dec. 26 rerun of the presidential election.

Yushchenko faces Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych in the repeat of the Nov. 21 vote. The Supreme Court threw out Yanukovych's victory in that runoff, saying it was invalidated by fraud.

Meanwhile, Yanukovych accused his rival of an unfair election campaign and said his camp would retaliate.

Looking tired and defensive, Yanukovych said Yushchenko's allies had tried to intimidate his supporters in western Ukraine, and that in reshuffling the Central Election Commission they left him without a single representative.

"The vote results won't be fair," Yanukovych said.

U.N. war crimes tribunal: A human rights group in Bosnia-Herzegovina said Friday that an offer by the Bosnian Serb government to pay special welfare benefits to war crimes suspects who surrender to the U.N. war crimes tribunal is immoral.

The government announced this week that fugitives who turn themselves in by Dec. 31 would qualify for monthly payments while they are on trial or serving prison terms, as will their families.

Family members would also get two free trips a year to the Hague, Netherlands, where the court is based.

"It is absolutely scandalous and immoral that Serb authorities are using taxpayers' money to compensate their incompetence and inability to arrest war crimes suspects," said Branko Todorovic of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, a Vienna-based rights watchdog.

Oil-for-food scandal: U.N. diplomats say they are concerned that calls for Secretary-General Kofi Annan's resignation and allegations of widespread corruption in the U.N. oil-for-food program in Iraq could derail plans for a sweeping reform of the United Nations.

When a blue ribbon panel, after a year's work, released a report last week on how the world body should tackle wars, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, poverty and other threats, the spotlight should have been on its 101 recommendations, officials say.

Annan

Instead, the report was eclipsed by headlines that Sen. Norm Coleman, a Minnesota Republican, was calling for Annan's resignation over the oil-for-food allegations.

States

Church abuse allegations: An association representing 75,000 Roman Catholic nuns has rejected a proposal from a victims advocacy group designed to encourage people who were sexually molested by nuns to come forward and get help.

The proposal was presented to officials of the Silver Spring, Md.-based Leadership Conference of Women Religious, an umbrella group of women's religious orders, by representatives of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests when the two sides met privately in Chicago on Oct. 3.

Conference officials responded to the requests in a Nov. 22 letter, saying the group's efforts had heightened "our awareness of the long-term effects of sexual misconduct by women religious." But, the officials wrote, they could not "meet their specific requests in the manner ... indicated."

Experimental flu vaccine: A European-produced flu vaccine widely used in other countries will be tested at four locations in the United States, the government announced.

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease is launching the trial in an effort to increase the supply of flu vaccine in this country.

The United States is millions of doses short on flu vaccine this year because of manufacturing problems at a major producer of the vaccine.

NIAID said Thursday it hopes to enroll 1,000 healthy adults in the new tests by Dec. 23 in Rochester, N.Y., Cincinnati, Baltimore and Houston.

While more than 126 million doses of the test vaccine, Fluarix, have been distributed in more than 70 countries worldwide, Fluarix has never been tested or licensed for use in the United States. It is made by GlaxoSmithKline PLC's subsidiary GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals of Rixensart, Belgium.

Governor-newspaper conflict: Maryland Gov. Robert Ehrlich agreed to meet with editors of The (Baltimore) Sun, three weeks after he barred aides from talking to two of the newspaper's journalists, the Sun reported Friday.

The Republican governor and members of his communications staff will meet Dec. 17 in Annapolis with editor Timothy Franklin, publisher Denise Palmer, a Sun attorney and other editors, Franklin said.

In an e-mail sent Nov. 18, Ehrlich's office barred spokespeople and executives in 19 state agencies from speaking with columnist Michael Olesker and State House bureau chief David Nitkin. Ehrlich accused the pair of "serial inaccuracies" in their work on how the administration was handling the sale of state-owned lands.

The newspaper then sued the governor in federal court, claiming a First Amendment violation. Franklin said he was happy Ehrlich agreed to the meeting but wished it had been arranged before the lawsuit.

War on terrorism

Stop-loss lawsuit: A soldier who lost his bid to stay in the United States while the courts deal with his suit challenging the extension of his re-enlistment is preparing to return to duty in Iraq, his lawyer says.

U.S. District Judge Royce Lamberth in Washington declined to issue a temporary restraining order allowing Spc. David Qualls, 35, of Morrilton, Ark., to remain in the United States, where he is home on leave.

"He's going to obey orders and return to his unit," Qualls' attorney, Jeffery Fogel, said Thursday.

Qualls and seven other unnamed U.S. soldiers in Kuwait and Iraq filed a lawsuit Monday challenging the military's "stop loss" policy, which allows the extension of active-duty deployments during times of war or national emergencies.

Stories and photos from wire services

Coast Guard rescue attempt: The wreckage of a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter was swept ashore on the eastern part of Skan Bay near Unalaska, Alaska, on Thursday. Frustrated by furious winds, mountainous seas and a mere five-hour window of December daylight, rescuers searched for six people lost in the Bering Sea after the helicopter that had plucked them from the crippled freighter Selendang Ayu crashed in the darkness. A major fuel spill from the grounded freighter threatens sensitive wildlife habitats in the Aleutian Islands, but finding the lost crewmembers remains a priority, officials said.

Soldier's club-stabbing trial heads to jury

BY KEVIN DOUGHERTY
Stars and Stripes

WIESBADEN, Germany — They sat at opposite ends of the courtroom, as families in these situations often do.

On one end, next to Army prosecutors and the jury, was the Scardino family. Santo Scardino was stabbed to death in a nightclub brawl on April 18.

"I always think of Santo, day and night. I can't sleep," Scardino's father, Attilio Scardino, an Italian immigrant, said through an interpreter at Wiesbaden Army Airfield.

On the other side, behind the defense table, sat the family and friends of Pvt. Nestor K. Velazquez, charged with the unpremeditated murder of the younger Scardino.

"There are very few students I would come this far for," said Mel Goodman, who taught Velazquez at Franklin K. Lane High School in Brooklyn, N.Y.

But Goodman came to support Velazquez, whom he characterized as respectful and peaceful.

Velazquez

Prosecutors argued that Velazquez can't be that peaceful if he stabbed a man to death and injured three others in a Wiesbaden-area nightclub.

The defense contends that events that night aren't that simple, and if Velazquez did stab anyone, he did so in self-defense.

At press time, the six-member panel was deliberating Velazquez's fate. If convicted of unpremeditated murder, he could be sentenced to anywhere from no time in jail to a life sentence.

After six hours of deliberations Friday, the panel adjourned without a decision. They will reconvene Saturday.

MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Pvt. Nestor K. Velazquez is accused of killing an Italian man during a fight at the Euro Palace night club in Mainz-Kastel, Germany.

The day began with instructions from the judge to the jury, followed by closing arguments. Judge (Col.) Denise Lind told jurors that they may consider lesser charges, such as manslaughter, involuntary manslaughter and aggravated battery. She also informed them of the legal definition of self-defense.

Maj. Meg Foreman, one of the prosecutors, said in her closing remarks that Velazquez stabbed Scardino in five places. She emphasized this point by repeatedly stabbing into the air as if re-enacting the attack.

The victim's blood was found on Velazquez's clothing, she said, and his DNA — taken from skin cells — was recovered from the knife handle. By brandishing his knife, Velazquez turned a fistfight into a bloody mess, she said.

Defense attorneys said it more than a fistfight. There were bottles, glasses and ashtrays flying and Velazquez was afraid for his safety as well as that of a fellow soldier he was trying to protect.

Capt. Will Helixon, one of the defense attorneys, blasted German investigators in Wiesbaden, calling their work "pitiful" and "second-rate."

A second knife found in the bar was lost by investigators, Helixon recounted. They also released a man whom a witness positively identified as the person who dropped the first knife.

In addition, Helixon questioned the handling of evidence, including the knife presumed to be the murder weapon.

German police passed the knife around "like a baton in a 400-meter relay," Helixon said.

But Attilio Scardino said he is sure they have the right man.

There is "his statement to [German] police [that he thought he stabbed some people], his DNA and the knife and the blood on the clothes and knife," the father said of Velazquez.

The defense had portrayed Scardino as a troublemaker, based on several people's statements, including nightclub employees. They also produced medical evidence indicating that the 19-year-old was drunk and high on drugs at the time of the brawl that led to his death.

The Scardinos immigrated to Germany from Sicily and settled in nearby Budenheim. Attilio Scardino described his son as "a good kid."

"Santo had many dreams, but he had one special dream," his father said. "He wanted to be a famous soccer player."

Nestor Velazquez just wanted to put some distance between himself and the gang-infested Brooklyn neighborhood where he grew up.

His mother, Sofia Hernandez, and Goodman and others who spoke on his behalf portrayed the soldier as a peaceful soul, someone who knew how to avoid trouble.

Goodman said Velazquez had a habit of cutting classes but then turned himself around and became a role-model student, volunteering for after-school programs and helping younger students.

"I feel confident," Hernandez said of her son's chances for acquittal. "My son acted in self-defense."

E-mail Kevin Dougherty at:
dougherty@mail.estripes.osd.mil

Navy tests new uniform designs for lower enlisted

BY SCOTT SCHONAUER
Stars and Stripes

NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain — The Navy is trying out new service uniform styles for lower enlisted sailors that are designed to be more comfortable and worn year round.

The plan is to find one uniform to replace the summer white, winter blue and tropical uniforms.

The Navy unveiled the new designs Wednesday at the Naval Medical Center in San Diego. Service uniforms are typically worn at office work spaces at shore bases and commands.

The concepts come in two types: gray or khaki shirts with Navy blue pants or skirts. The prototype with the gray shirt and blue slacks looks slightly like the Air Force's service uniform. The khaki version looks a lot like the Marine Corps uniform.

The new designs attracted mixed reviews from sailors.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Lenore Gregory, a storekeeper at Naval Station Rota, likes having a year-round uniform but thought the khaki style looked too much like the officer or chief petty officer uniform.

"Oh my goodness," she said, when she saw the khaki version in a picture. "That's disgusting. That's not good at all. We know by the collar devices and the uniforms who's a chief and who's not a chief. That kind of separated us. … They couldn't be 'khakis' any more because there's no distinction."

Petty Officer 2nd Class Angel Ortiz, a reservist with the base security department, also preferred the gray shirt and Navy slacks.

"They're going to say you're a chief or an officer," Ortiz said of the khaki shirt. "But they do look better."

About 550 sailors at commands across the globe will test-wear the uniforms this winter. Overseas locations include Naples, Italy, and Yokosuka, Japan.

The prototypes include several options, including sewn-in creases versus pressed creases, and two styles of garrison caps.

For females, the pants and the skirts do not need a belt. The blouse for the females is meant to be untucked and extend over the top of the slacks.

Both shirts will be tested in wool or polyester fabrics for comfort.

After the six-month testing phase, the Navy will collect fleet-wide surveys and hand them to the chief of naval operations. If he decides to change the uniform, the Navy will begin phasing in the new uniform within 18 to 24 months.

A Navy task force conducted more than 40,000 surveys to find out what types of styles sailors would like and what changes they would like to see made to the current uniforms. The group came up with the designs based on that input.

Surveys found that lower-ranking sailors, those in pay rates E-6 and below, were the least satisfied with their uniforms. They especially disliked the summer white uniforms because they got so dirty, the Navy said.

E-mail Scott Schonauer at:
schonauers@mail.estripes.osd.mil

MPs train to avoid another prison scandal

Hohenfels center aims to prevent more Abu Ghraib-like situations

BY RICK EMERT
Stars and Stripes

HOHENFELS, Germany — Soldiers from the military police and military intelligence communities are training together at a mock prison in Hohenfels in hopes that the Army can avoid another Abu Ghraib-like prison scandal.

Members of the 709th Military Police Battalion are working alongside soldiers from the 165th Military Intelligence Battalion during the two-week exercise at the Combat Maneuver Training Center. The training wraps up Sunday.

For the exercise, a portion of the training center was made to replicate a forward operating base in Afghanistan, complete with a nearby detention facility, which can hold up to 50 prisoners.

The exercise marks the first time since before the Persian Gulf War that MPs and MI soldiers have trained together before a deployment, said Capt. Matt Palmer is from Company E, 165th MI Battalion.

Soldiers practice all the procedures of running a detention facility — processing prisoners, medical screenings and showering prisoners — according to Capt. Jeffrey Searl, commander of 709th's 92nd Military Police Company.

As if running the mock facility weren't enough, the training planners threw in a couple of scenarios to heat things up.

"We inject various things into the detention facility training," said Maj. Roger Hedgepeth, 709th MP Battalion operations officer. "We will have a [car bomb] go off at the gate killing MPs and prisoners, and the soldiers have to quickly lock down the facility."

MPs also faced riots, prisoner escapes and visits from the International Red Cross.

RICK EMERT/Stars and Stripes

Staff Sgt. Scott Adkins, left, a 92nd Military Police Company medic, talks to a "detainee" Thursday who claims he was maltreated during his capture. The role-playing detainee was being escorted through detention facility processing by Sgt. Tyion Stanley, right. The three were training at the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels, Germany, to gear up for an Afghanistan deployment next spring.

Hedgepeth said the training is an important step in preventing another prisoner abuse scandal similar to Abu Ghraib.

"At Abu Ghraib, there were not any clear lines drawn between what the duties were for MPs and the interrogators," he said. "We will inject MPs who are mistreating prisoners into the facility, and it's up to the other MPs to identify it and stop it."

However, the mistreatment will not be as blatant as the abuse recorded in the infamous Abu Ghraib photos.

"It will be much more subtle than that," Hedgepeth said.

"We want to make sure that the abuse at Abu Ghraib never happens again," said Capt. Clint Mundinger, who ran the detention facility training for the 709th MP Battalion. "As far as the MP and MI relationship, we each need to know how the other side operates so there is no confusion and no mix-ups."

Capt. Jamica Powell, commander of the 9th Military Police Detachment — the soldiers who run the Mannheim confinement facility — has been on hand throughout the training as an observer-controller.

"They have done absolutely fabulous," she said. "Detention operations have suddenly become a different mission for MPs. Although it is not much different than law enforcement, the detention facility is ... a real hot spot in the public eye right now.

"These soldiers have really grasped the concept of switching from warriors on the battlefield to properly handling detainees," she said.

In addition to the prison training, the MPs spent five days on combat operations, such as performing cordon-and-search missions, setting up checkpoints, conducting combat patrols and acting as a quick-reactionary force, Hedgepeth said.

Overall, the soldiers said the training has been challenging and as realistic as it could be in a training environment.

Sgt. Christopher Hooper, of the 212th MP Company, called the training informative and said it is like learning a new military occupational specialty.

"I don't think we could ever be fully ready for what we may face downrange, even if we train all day long," he said. "I think the best we can do is take the tools we have learned with us and hope that's enough. Tools for the tool bag, that's what this training is."

Lt. Col. John Garrity, the 709th's commander, he wants his soldiers challenged in training, so they know how to react in Afghanistan next year.

"This is the kind of training event that builds confidence," Garrity said. "At the end of the day, when we leave CMTC, I want my soldiers to be able to say: 'I'm confident in my tasks and skills and confident in my leadership.' "

E-mail Rick Emert at:
emertr@mail.estripes.osd.mil

Stomach virus closes veterans home to visitors

The Associated Press

BENNINGTON, Vt. — The Vermont Veterans Home has been closed to new admissions and visitors because of an outbreak of a highly contagious stomach virus.

The illness has stricken 60 residents and employees at the 169-bed facility.

Visitors will be asked to stay away and admissions will be halted for at least a week after a sudden outbreak of "norovirus" hit. About 20 of the 208 staffers and at least 40 residents have already become ill.

The outbreak began in the home's dementia wing and spread to other resident halls quickly, said Commandant Earle Hollings II, head of the state's only nursing home for veterans.

Hollings on Thursday described the onset of the virus as violent — "literally you don't know what hit you."

> *"You and I can handle this — but when we're talking about the frail and elderly and they get it again, it's dangerous as hell. It breaks your heart when you see a dementia patient get this."*
>
> **Commandant Earle Hollings II**
> head of Vermont Veterans Home

Because the virus is so contagious, it is not uncommon for it to "recycle" and infect someone again and again, Hollings said. As a precaution, residents also have been restricted to their wings so they don't commingle and infect or re-infect each other or health workers, Hollings said.

The building is being disinfected "with enough chemical to kill any bug that crawled through here," he added.

It's been particularly hard on the home's dementia patients, Hollings said. "You and I can handle this — but when we're talking about the frail and elderly and they get it again, it's dangerous as hell. It breaks your heart when you see a dementia patient get this."

Initially, people who get the virus are likely to vomit, have diarrhea and stomach cramping, which can be quite severe; the symptoms can last up to three days, according to Dr. Paul Jarris, commissioner of the state Department of Health.

Noroviruses are a group of viruses that cause "stomach flu" or gastroenteritis in people. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control has coined norovirus as the new official name for a group of viruses that includes the Norwalk virus — or "cruise ship virus" that struck the home last year.

In that episode, Hollings followed the same health protocol — temporarily freezing admissions, thorough disinfection and restricting access to the home — and the outbreak was over in several weeks.

Norovirus is not usually serious, nor are there long-term health effects. The most potentially serious side effect is dehydration, which is more common in the very young and the elderly, according to the CDC.

Tropical marathon

HONOLULU — Come Sunday, some 300 American soldiers in Afghanistan will run their very own Honolulu Marathon.

The servicemen and women will do 26.2 miles on the same day as more than 26,000 runners in the Aloha State, making nearly six laps around a dusty airstrip at Firebase Ripley just outside Tarin Kowt in the central province of Uruzgan, a former Taliban stronghold and a possible hiding place of Osama bin Laden.

Runners need a foxhole here and there for cover in case of a rocket or mortar attack. Fellow soldiers in full gear will be standing by with armored Humvees. Much of organizing the run fell to Capt. Ivan Hurlburt, who has run the Honolulu Marathon himself four times.

He set about the task after a fellow soldier in the 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, expressed the wish of going back to Honolulu for the race.

From The Associated Press

MILITARY UPDATE

Tom Philpott

Troops safeguarded from weaker dollar

DOD committee follows a specific formula to make adjustments to COLA and OHA

Despite a three-month drop in the value of the dollar against foreign currencies, the buying power of 290,000 servicemembers overseas largely has been protected by a system of allowances that are tied directly to exchange rates, say Department of Defense officials.

A weakening dollar can squeeze travel budgets for American tourists and raise the cost of imported goods, a setback for many U.S. businesses. But the Defense Department's Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowances Committee in Alexandria, Va., is there to insulate U.S. servicemembers overseas from currency fluctuations.

"We are looking at them constantly and making adjustments as warranted," said Roy Sammarco, chief of the committee's economics and statistics branch.

The "adjustments" to protect the military from a weak dollar involve two payments available overseas: a Cost-of-Living Allowance for all and, for members and families living off base, an Overseas Housing Allowance.

The committee daily collects exchange-rate data from banks that serve U.S. military abroad. In countries where few servicemembers are assigned, the committee tracks daily currency rates through the Wall Street Journal.

When there is a 5 percent change in the dollar's value, up or down, the two allowances are adjusted on the next payday, either the 1st or 16th of the month. The system cannot make daily changes, said Sammarco, and indeed needs a week's lead time to make next payday changes.

So, if by the 9th of the month the value of the dollar has changed 5 percent or more, servicemembers will see a change to overseas allowances in midmonth paychecks. Similarly, a change of 5 percent or more by the 23rd of the month will impact the following first-of-the-month payday.

"That 5 percent threshold must be met on the review day," said Sammarco. "If not, we don't make a change. We wait until the next pay period to see whether that threshold is crossed or not."

One weakness of this "accumulator" method of adjusting allowances is the time lag responding to currency fluctuations. To compensate for the lag, Sammarco said, as allowances are raised, the committee will set them a little higher than the review-day currency rate. Likewise, when allowances are reduced, they will be lowered a little more than currency data supports.

"Over time, it balances out," he said.

From Sept. 1 to Dec. 1, the dollar's value fell 9 percent against the euro and 7 percent against the Japanese yen. Allowances rose to keep pace, Sammarco said. In Germany, for example, members saw four allowance adjustments over three months and are likely to see another in Dec. 16 paychecks.

Susan Brumbaugh, chief of the committee's COLA section, said servicemembers should understand that the currency-driven adjustments are automatic, based on exchange rate and a set formula, and not influenced by the tightness of service budgets or even the demands of war. No corners are cut to hold down the cost of protecting their buying power, she said.

Current rates and more on how allowances are set can be found at the committee Web site: https://secureapp2.hqda.pentagon.mil/perdiem/ To comment, write Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centreville, VA 20120-1111, e-mail milupdate@aol.com or visit www.militaryupdate.com

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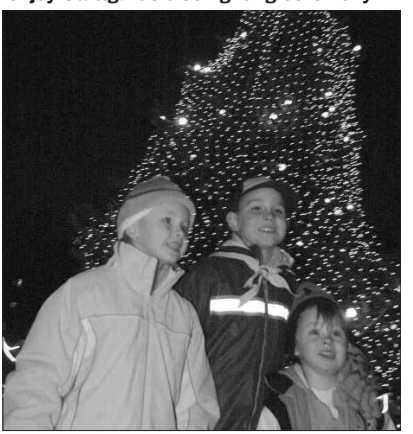
Kids of all ages enjoy Stuttgart's tree-lighting ceremony



From left, 6-year-old Faith, 8-year-old Aaron and 3-year-old Joseph Kauhn, the children of Army Staff Sgt. Matthew and Jessica Kauhn of the 10th Special Forces Group, pose in front of the Christmas tree during the tree-lighting ceremony Thursday at Robinson Barracks in Stuttgart, Germany. About 300 people attended the ceremony, including more than 150 children who got to see Santa Claus a little later at the nearby Community Club.

CHARLIE COON/Stars and Stripes

Former Stripes reporter Neth dies

Stars and Stripes

Mary A. Neth, a reporter and editor for 27 years at Stars and Stripes in Europe, died recently. She was 74.

Neth was found dead in her home in Seeheim-Jugenheim, Germany, on Dec. 2 after relatives did not hear from her for two weeks.

She is suspected of having a heart attack, according to her daughter, Shelley Neth.

Mary Neth is survived by her daughter, three grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Neth, a native of Huntington Beach, Calif., worked at Stars and Stripes from 1964 to 1991. Her jobs included writing consumer columns and coordinating the women's page.

Shelley Neth said her mother was an art student in 1957 when she talked her way onto the staff of a Torrance, Calif., weekly, even though she couldn't type.

"She would wait until everyone else started typing, then she would just start pecking away," her daughter said. "One day the owner came in and everyone just stopped typing, except my mom.

"The owner said, 'Good God, she doesn't even know how to type.' But they thought it was very spunky of her, not even knowing how to type, to have applied for the job. So they kept her and it was the beginning of her journalism career."

A memorial service is being planned in Seeheim-Jugenheim. For more information, phone 06257-84823 or 06257-97130.

Fort Carson lifts ban on Denver Post reporters

The Associated Press

DENVER — Fort Carson has lifted its restrictions on reporters from The Denver Post, a day after a spokesman said the newspaper wouldn't be allowed to cover events at the base because officials were upset by a story the newspaper had published.

The front-page Sunday story focused on mentally and physically ill National Guard and Army Reserve members who say they have been denied quality care and are being pushed out of the service without disability pay.

Lt. Col. David Johnson, chief of public affairs at Fort Carson, spoke with Post editor Greg Moore on Thursday and Johnson agreed to lift the ban.

"This was never about impeding the First Amendment. This was about us [not] being able to tell our side of the story," Johnson said. "I think that relationships are very important."

The story quoted a representative of Fort Carson as well as other Army officials, but Johnson and other officials didn't believe they were given a fair chance to respond to the soldiers' claims.

Last week, the Post fought the Army's decision to close a hearing for three Fort Carson soldiers accused of murdering an Iraqi general. The newspaper won an injunction to stop the hearing while the Army appeals court reviews the closure.

Pair win scholarships

Two Reading Recovery teachers with the Department of Defense Dependents Schools were chosen for Limited Brand Scholarship awards.

Libby Gross of Mannheim Elementary School, Germany, and Kim Mitchell from Gelnhausen Elementary in Germany will each receive $500 in scholarship money to help pay for the cost to attend the 2005 National Reading Recovery Conference in Columbus, Ohio.

Gross and Mitchell are language arts specialists, trained and certified as Reading Recovery teachers.

They were chosen for exceptional commitment toward helping pupils read and write, according to a statement issued by the 293rd Base Support Battalion, based in Mannheim.

Reading Recovery is a short-term tutoring program for first-graders who need help in reading outside of classroom teaching.

From staff reports

Study: U.S. bases put Indians at risk

Expansion into remote areas creates many safety concerns on reservations

BY NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS

The Associated Press

SPOKANE, Washington — The last major push by the U.S. Army against American Indian tribes took place in the late 1800s. But a new report finds the military still poses a danger to American Indians.

The study contends the dramatic expansion of U.S. military bases during the 20th century was largely concentrated in the same remote, arid places in the West where tribal reservations were located.

That means aboriginals could be disproportionately exposed to toxic chemicals and unexploded bombs compared to non-native Americans, according to the report by Gregory Hooks of Washington State University and a former graduate student, Chad Smith, now of Texas State University-San Marcos.

Two world wars and the Cold War "pushed the United States to produce, test and deploy weapons of unprecedented toxicity," the study said. "Native Americans have been left exposed to the dangers of this toxic legacy."

The study, published in American Sociological Review, is based on geography, not on actual data on injuries caused by unexploded bombs, Hooks said. Using Defense Department data on closed military bases in the Lower 48 states — including bombing ranges, weapons testing and storage sites — researchers discovered the locations deemed most hazardous "lay within close proximity to Indian reservations," the report said.

AP

A B1-B bomber drops live bombs in 2002 at the Nevada Test and Training Range in Indian Springs, Nev. A recent study contends the expansion of U.S. military bases during the 20th century was largely concentrated in the same remote places where Indian reservations were located. The Nevada Test and Training Range is located within 50 miles of two reservations.

The study only considered closed military bases because security concerns make it impossible to learn of environmental hazards at functioning military bases, Hooks said.

As a result, military facilities like Washington's Yakima Training Center, Whidbey Island Naval Air Station and Fort Lewis, all of which are located near Indian reservations, were not considered in the study, Hooks said.

That raises the possibility that dangers to aboriginals are even greater than what was found in the report, he said.

The Department of Defense has acknowledged the problems, the report said, quoting a 2001 department report that said aboriginal lands have "hazardous materials, unexploded ordnance (UXO), abandoned equipment, unsafe buildings, and debris."

Aboriginals typically did not choose the sites of their reservations, and the toxic wastes were created not by private industry but by the military.

The study noted the U.S. military expanded dramatically into aboriginal territory for much of the 20th century. That's because they were looking for areas that were remote, unpopulated and already owned by the federal government.

Making a list, checking it twice ...

BEN MURRAY/Stars and Stripes

An ambitious Alexis Smith, 3, works her way through an exhaustive list of desired Christmas presents that Mrs. Claus, played by a patient Liesel Woodard, said was more than a dozen items long. Santa and Mrs. Claus visited with kids after a tree lighting ceremony Thursday at the Kids' Zone in Volgelweh, Germany.

Rape charge at Army

WEST POINT, N.Y. — A West Point cadet was charged with one count of rape and five counts of indecent assault after allegedly breaking into the rooms of female cadets while they slept, the U.S. Military Academy said Thursday.

Tracey L. Rivers, a second-year cadet from Superior, Wis., also faces three counts of housebreaking and one of unlawful entry, among other charges.

Four women reported that the alleged incidents happened in the past two months, said Lt. Col. Kent Cassella, an academy spokesman.

A preliminary hearing will start Friday to determine whether there is enough evidence to try Rivers at a court-martial. If convicted, he could be sent to a military prison for life.

Rivers was continuing his duties pending the pretrial investigation by a West Point military officer.

The alleged rape victim remains at the academy, Cassella said.

"Our directives from the superintendent are to create an environment that encourages reporting," Cassella said. "The women came forward to the chain of command to report these issues, which is an indication ... of their faith in the system and leadership here."

From The Associated Press

Italy crash kills man, injures others

A Korean man was killed Thursday night in a two-car collision that involved a vehicle driven by the wife of a U.S. sailor stationed at Naval Air Station, Sigonella, Sicily, base officials said.

The sailor and his daughter suffered internal injuries and remained at a local hospital Friday, said base spokesman Lt. Steve Curry. The wife was taken to the hospital and later released.

Investigators have ruled out alcohol as a contributing factor, but the collision remains under investigation, Curry said. No charges have been filed.

The two-car crash happened about 11:30 p.m. Thursday on SS-114, a highway between Catania and Syracuse.

The car in which the Korean man was traveling had two other foreign nationals, another Korean male and a Chinese female. Information on the extent of their injuries was not available, Curry said.

Librarian remembered

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — A memorial service for Patsy Loomis will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday at Vogelweh chapel in Kaiserslautern.

Loomis, the community librarian, died Nov. 18 in a car accident.

She had worked as the 415th Base Support Battalion community librarian since February 2000.

From staff reports

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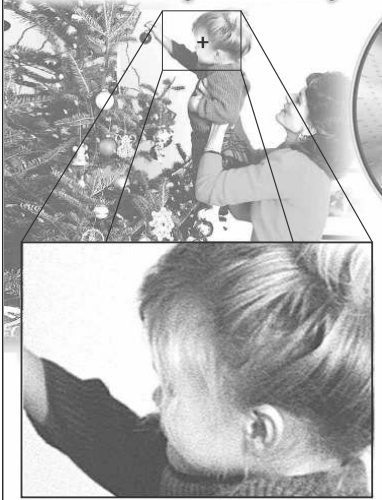

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GI pleads guilty to killing wounded Iraqi

BY PAUL GARWOOD
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A U.S. soldier pleaded guilty at his court-martial Friday to killing a severely wounded 16-year-old Iraqi male during fierce fighting in Baghdad's impoverished Sadr City neighborhood, the military said.

Staff Sgt. Johnny M. Horne Jr., 30, of Winston-Salem, N.C., was among several soldiers who had found the wounded teenager on Aug. 18 in a burning truck with severe abdominal wounds sustained during the clashes. A criminal investigator had said during an earlier hearing that the soldiers decided to kill him to "put him out of his misery."

Sadr City was the scene of wild clashes earlier this year between coalition forces and Shiite rebels allied to firebrand cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, a loud opponent of the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq.

In a plea bargain, Horne, a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, from Fort Riley, Kan., pleaded guilty to one count of unpremeditated murder and one count of soliciting another soldier to commit unpremeditated murder. The charges are under Articles 118 and 81 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice."The convictions stemmed from Staff Sgt. Horne's murder of a severely wounded Iraqi civilian in Baghdad's Sadr City district," a military statement said.

Lt. Col. James Hutton, a military spokesman, said Horne had originally been charged with the more serious offenses of premeditated murder, conspiracy to commit premeditated murder and solicitation of another soldier to commit premeditated murder.

"He decided to plead guilty to the lesser charges presented to him," Hutton said.

Hutton said Horne was expected to be sentenced later Friday.

Horne is one of six Fort Riley soldiers charged with killings in recent months, two for Kansas slayings and four for deaths in Iraq. Staff Sgt. Cardenas J. Alban, 29, of Inglewood, Calif., was also charged along with Horne in the teenager's killing and is awaiting a court-martial hearing.

Another military hearing into a soldier charged with killing another Iraqi in a separate August incident in Sadr City is expected to continue Friday.

Sgt. Michael P. Williams, 25, of Memphis, Tenn., faced the opening day of an Article 32 hearing Thursday charged with premeditated murder, obstruction of justice and making a false official statement.

Williams is charged in the same case along with Spc. Brent May, 22, of Salem, Ohio, who faced a two-day hearing this week and is awaiting a ruling on whether he will be court-martialed, receive a lesser penalty or be acquitted.

And earlier this week in Germany, Capt. Rogelio Maynulet, a U.S. tank company commander accused of killing a critically injured Iraqi driver for al-Sadr, was ordered court-martialed.

U.S. airmen morph into new Iraq combat roles

With too few GIs for security, AF 'volunteered to help ... out'

BY RON JENSEN
Stars and Stripes

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq — Hours before dawn recently, Airman 1st Class Brandon Young was cleaning and maintaining an MK-19, which can fire 40 mm grenades at a rapid pace.

"Before we go out on a mission, we check them out and make sure they're clean," he said. "If they're not clean, they won't fire. If you can't fire, that can be a very bad thing," Young said.

Young and his MK-19 were about to leave the base and provide security for a convoy traveling the dangerous roads of Iraq.

So how, exactly, did a guy who normally drives distinguished visitors around Scott Air Force Base, Ill., find himself doing this?

"I have no idea," Young said without looking up from his task. "I went to work one day, and they said, 'Hey, you're getting deployed, and you'll be on a gun truck.' "

For nearly a year now, airmen who normally do such tasks as drive shuttle buses or act as chauffeurs for generals and politicians have been battling bad guys with crew-served weapons in support of convoys.

In that time, they have covered more than 1 million miles of Iraqi roads. One airman has been killed in the line of duty and more than 50 have been wounded.

Lt. Col. Sal Nodjomian, deputy commander of the 732 Expeditionary Mission Support Group in Balad, explained that the job changes came up about a year ago at an all-services conference where resources was the main topic. "The Army recognized that they were lacking some capabilities when it came to convoy support," he said. "The Air Force volunteered to help the Army out."

Under the initial plan, the airmen would simply drive the supply trucks, Nodjomian said, which is why transporters like Young were picked. Later, the job expanded to driving the gun trucks, as well. "That further morphed into not just driving the [gun trucks], but being the guys who sat in the back," he said.

That meant they'd handle not only the MK19, but other weapons, such as the M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon and the M-240B light machine gun, weapons not ordinarily required for bus driving duties.

PHOTOS BY RON JENSEN/Stars and Stripes

Above: Combat airmen at Balad Air Base, Iraq, work in the pre-dawn hours to prepare their armored Humvees for duty as security for a convoy from the base. Combat airmen have been trained for the job of convoy security to help supplement Army security troops.

Right: Airman 1st Class Brandon Young cleans an MK-19 grenade launcher prior to a convoy in which he will provide security.

The airmen — Nodjomian refers to them as combat airmen — receive four weeks of training near Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, in such areas as combat life-saving, use of the weapons and land navigation. That's augmented by four more weeks in Kuwait on the firing range, learning, among other things, close-quarters combat and how to fire from a moving vehicle.

> *"I hope this opens everybody's eyes that we do more than drive air crews around."*
>
> **Staff Sgt. Reuben Rangel**
> Vehicle operator at Ramstein Air Base, Germany

Tech. Sgt. Rob McMillan, also from Scott Air Force Base and a truck master with Detachment 2632 at Balad, said attacks are always a threat. "It's common. Not every day, but I'd say it's common," he said. "We're used to it."

"It's a constant source of concern," Nodjomian said. "It's part of our daily business." When he first arrived, he said, "I would sit here with my mouth open at the number of incidents involving our people."

In Young's time, he has seen roadside bombs explode and rocket-propelled grenades shoot past. "I've seen tracer rounds go by," he said.

Senior Airman Javarick King, who normally drives at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., has also seen the gamut of enemy weaponry up close. "I was nervous the first time, but it's become second nature," he said.

Staff Sgt. Reuben Rangel, who works vehicle operations at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, recalled a mortar round landing 30 yards from his truck on one mission. He said, "It's scary, but we use it to our advantage. It keeps us on our toes."

Besides the detachment at Balad, the squadron has convoy security detachments at Forward Operating Base Speicher at Tikrit and Logistics Support Area Diamondback at Mosul.

At least some combat airmen are on the road every day. They may have a short mission and return in a few hours, or they may be gone for a few days, traveling to a few bases before returning to home.

Nodjomian said the Air Force recognizes the combat airmen are experiencing something unusual in the flying service.

"We're not known for going forward into the hostile area to work on the ground," he said.

The service will now provide "decompression time" at Lackland for combat airmen once they return to the United States, Nodjomian said. "It's still in the works," he said, but it will be several days in which the troops can talk to chaplains, family counselors and others who can help them readjust to their routines on the home front.

Because so few have the training, the combat airmen are deployed for six months instead of the normal Air Force rotation of four.

Rangel said the effort might shine a different light on the airmen who drive the shuttle buses around bases back home.

"I'm hoping it brings a lot more respect to our group," he said. "I hope this opens everybody's eyes that we do more than drive air crews around."

In fact, it has changed the perspective of the airmen who drive the buses, now that they've had a taste of combat.

"I'd rather be doing this," King said.

Young, however, had a different take.

Asked if he would find shuttling distinguished visitors around his base in Illinois a bit boring after this experience, he said, "Actually, I won't have a problem with it at all."

E-mail Ron Jensen at:
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Nonprofit sends holiday warmth to troops

BY LEO SHANE III
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Operation Air Conditioner is now working to bring a little holiday warmth to Iraq and Afghanistan, with shipments of Christmas trees, plastic snowmen and portable heaters already arriving in troops' stockings.

Frankie Mayo

The nonprofit group, founded by Delaware resident Frankie Mayo after her Army son, Cpl. Chris Tomlinson, complained about the intense heat at his Iraq base, has spent the last two summers shipping more than 10,000 air conditioners to units serving in the Middle East.

This fall she began mailing out winter supplies again, spending more than $52,000 on heaters, $130,000 on boots and socks, and $37,000 on holiday decorations. Those items are expected to be in Iraq by Dec. 25.

"There has been an upswing of both money and people wanting to adopt soldiers and Marines," Mayo said. "We ship at minimum three times a week with a full 24-foot box truck full of items: care packages, tools, combat boots, supplies — anything [the troops] need or ask us for, really."

Photo courtesy of Operation Air Conditioner

Mathew Mayo, center, husband of Operation Air Conditioner founder Frankie Mayo, talks to employees earlier this year at Mike's Famous Harley-Davidson in New Castle, Del., as volunteers pack and ship thousands of boots to troops in Iraq. The Mayos have raised more than $2.3 million to send troops' supplies, including holiday decorations and space heaters currently en route to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mayo and her family have raised more than $2.3 million in the last two years to buy and send supplies to Iraq. In addition, Mayo's 12-year-old daughter, Olivia, has begun sending handmade Christmas cards to the troops with the other supplies. Shipping for the holiday items began in early October, and many troops have already e-mailed her to let her know their bases are beginning to look a lot like Christmas.

First Sgt. Rich Woodring, of the 630th Military Police Company currently serving in Baghdad, said his unit has received 11 decorated trees they have spread throughout their camp, and it has boosted everyone's morale.

"Her efforts have definitely helped make our quality of life much better," he told Stars and Stripes via e-mail.

Lt. Col. Myles M. Miyamasu, with the Army's 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, stationed in Fallujah, said often the connection with friendly faces back home is just as important as the gifts the soldiers receive.

"For some of my soldiers who don't have a strong support network back at home, this has been a godsend," he said via e-mail. "These men now have families to write to, to send birthday cards to, and to have someone recognize them for what they are doing."

For her part, Mayo said she is happy to be able to offer comfort and encouragement to the soldiers serving far from home.

"My hope is that my sons' generation and my daughter's generation grow up in a safer world," she said. "That doesn't happen without a strong military and Americans to support the soldiers and Marines in it. I will continue as long as there are troops in Iraq or Afghanistan who need my support."

The U.S. Postal Service has set Dec. 11 as the shipping deadline for care packages and other gifts destined for overseas military bases, but Operation Air Conditioner will continue sending donations and gifts to soldiers into the new year.

For more information, go to: www.operationac.com
E-mail Leo Shane at: shanel@stripes.osd.mil

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Iran-linked cleric top candidate in Iraq election

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A cleric with links to Iran leads the candidate list of a powerful coalition of Iraq's mainstream Shiite Muslim groups for next month's election, an aide said Friday. The list also includes former Pentagon favorite Ahmad Chalabi and some followers of radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

Abdel-Aziz al-Hakim — the head of Iraq's largest Shiite party, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution — would stand to take a central position in the assembly that will create Iraq's next government and constitution, if the coalition takes most of the parliament seats in the Jan. 30 vote.

In a troubling sign, masked gunmen riding in a black BMW killed three members of Iraq's Hezbollah Shiite movement, one of the 23 groups in the coalition, said Essa Sayid Jaafer, director of the group's political office.

Jaafer said one of the three victims, Sattar Jabar, was on the candidate list and had been warned he would be killed unless he bowed out.

"Sattar Jabar received a threatening letter two days before the assassination," Jaafer said. "The letter mentioned that if you are nominated, you will be killed, but he did not give the threat any attention."

Backed by Iraq's top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the coalition — called the United Iraqi Alliance — hopes to draw the bulk of the vote from Iraq's Shiite majority.

U.S.-backed interim Prime Minster Ayad Allawi, also a Shiite, has not joined the group and is drawing up his own candidate list. The coalition's platform, which has not been finished, will include a call for working toward the withdrawal of foreign troops in Iraq, members said.

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Marine who went missing in Iraq charged with desertion

BY ESTES THOMPSON
The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — A Marine who claimed he was abducted by anti-coalition forces after he went missing from his unit in Iraq has been charged with desertion.

The charges filed Thursday against Cpl. Wassef Ali Hassoun followed a five-month investigation into his June disappearance from a U.S. military camp near Fallujah, Iraq, according to a statement from the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade at Camp Lejeune.

Hassoun, of West Jordan, Utah, is accused of taking unauthorized leave from the unit where he served as an Arabic interpreter.

Hassoun also is charged with loss of government property and theft of a military firearm for allegedly leaving the Marine camp while still in possession of his 9 mm service pistol, as well as theft and wrongful appropriation of a government vehicle.

Neither Hassoun nor his lawyer planned to make any public statement about the charges, brigade spokesman Maj. Matt Morgan said. Hassoun's family in Utah did not answer their phone Thursday.

No date has been set for an Article 32 hearing, one of the first steps toward a possible court-martial, Morgan said.

Hassoun is not in custody or confined to Camp Lejeune; he is working in the brigade motor pool. Morgan said he will continue to go about his normal duties, although he is considered to be non-deployable until the charges are resolved.

The desertion count carries a five-year maximum prison sentence and the other counts carry 10-year maximums. If convicted, Hassoun also could be dishonorably discharged and ordered to forfeit his pay and allowances.

Hassoun was last seen in Iraq on June 19. He did not report for duty the next day and was listed as missing.

On June 27, the Arabic news network Al-Jazeera broadcast the photo of Hassoun looking as if he was a hostage, blindfolded and with a sword behind his head. A group called the National Islamic Resistance/1920 Revolution Brigade claimed to be holding him and was threatening to decapitate him unless detainees in "U.S.-led occupation prisons" were released, Al-Jazeera said.

Pentagon recognizes wounded troops

Military officials host dinner for those injured in global terror war

BY PATRICK DICKSON
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Spc. Arthur McLin walked into the Pentagon's Eisenhower corridor and saw a familiar face.

"I remember you," he said to Sgt. Paul Shelmerdine.

The two sized up each other's injuries and gingerly shook hands.

"Therapy," said Shelmerdine.

McLin, of the National Guard's 2101 Transportation Company 3rd Platoon out of Aliceville, Alabama and Shelmerdine, of the Army Reserve's 369th Transportation Company, based in Wichita, Kansas, were two of 170 guests from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington and the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., honored Thursday evening with a dinner for those injured in the global war on terror.

> *"My first few visits [with the wounded], I thought they were … just trying to impress me, but it turns out they're not. They just have a love for their country — devotion to it — that guys like me sitting on the sidelines can't really understand."*
>
> **Mick Foley, aka Mankind**
> WWE wrestler

The troops were welcomed by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Mrs. Donald Rumsfeld and a host of general officers and their wives. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld could not attend because he was flying back from his visit with troops in Kuwait, among other places.

Wolfowitz told those gathered about troops fighting in the Battle of the Bulge, the seemingly insurmountable odds against them and the casualties they suffered.

"You've probably heard all the accolades," Wolfowitz said. "They're called the Greatest Generation, and deserve to be called that. But you here, and the men and women in uniform on the front lines in Afghanistan and Iraq, are every bit as brave and courageous and dedicated to this country."

One of the highlights of the evening was World Wrestling Entertainment superstar Mick Foley, aka Mankind, who ate with the troops and agreed to countless requests from servicemembers and families for a photo.

Foley, who regularly visits the wounded, spoke before the meal about his work with the Defense Department's America Supports You program and how humbling his visits have been.

"My first few visits, I thought they were … just trying to impress me, but it turns out they're not. They just have a love for their country — devotion to it — that guys like me sitting on the sidelines can't really understand."

The America Supports You program provides an easy way of letting the servicemembers know the folks at home are behind them.

But the stars of the evening, as all the speakers said, were the troops.

As they mingled and talked about their experiences, they wanted their compatriots still in the fight to know they are OK, and to be safe.

Cpl. Roberto Santiago of the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, based at Friedberg, Germany, talking about his friends Spcs. DeCamps and Gregory, perhaps summed up the experience of camaraderie in war best.

"Those guys kept me alive over there. When one of us was down, the other two would get him up and keep him goin'."

Santiago was badly injured in May when he took shrapnel from an RPG in the spine in Karbala. He walks with crutches now, but says the prognosis is good for him to walk unaided soon.

Now that he's recovering, he has a different support team.

"I give all the credit to my wife, Tina — she takes care of me and our three kids. I don't know how she does it."

McLin, injured when an improvised explosive device was set off as his convoy passed, wanted his friends in the 3rd Platoon to know he was thinking of them.

"My battle buddy, Staff Sgt. Ida Prude, my other friend Sgt. Jonnie Dover, Staff Sgt. Ike Gipson … um, Bradford, Mitchell, Ellis, Matthews … gotta say hello!"

He was looking forward to 30 days' leave for Christmas at home in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

"I guess once I go back home and step on that ground, I think all the fears and worries that I've had in Iraq will finally fall off, because I'll know I'm safe now."

E-mail Pat Dickson at: dicksonp@stripes.osd.mil

PHOTOS BY JOE GROMELSKI/Stars and Stripes

Three-year-old Annysia Lane and her mom, Army Spc. Goldie Staley, pose with WWE wrestler Mick Foley, aka Mankind, at a dinner at the Pentagon held for servicemembers being treated at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington and National Naval Medical Center in nearby Bethesda, Md. Staley, of the 2nd Infantry Division at Camp Casey in South Korea, injured her back and was treated at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Thursday, at least 1,281 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,003 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is three higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Thursday.

The British military has reported 74 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,143 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 894 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ No deaths reported.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Army Sgt. 1st Class Todd C. Gibbs, 37, Angelina, Texas; died Tuesday in Khalidiyah, Iraq, when an explosive hit a dismounted patrol; assigned to 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 2d Infantry Division, Camp Greaves, Korea.

■ Army Capt. Mark N. Stubenhofer, 30, Springfield, Va.; died Tuesday in Baghdad, Iraq, when his unit was attacked by small arms fire; assigned to the 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, 1st Armored Division, Fort Riley, Kan.

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IN THE WORLD

AP

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Wangari Maathai waves to 3,000 children gathered to greet her outside Oslo City Hall on Friday.

Maathai receives Nobel in lively Oslo ceremony

BY DOUG MELLGREN
The Associated Press

OSLO, Norway — The first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize, environmental activist Wangari Maathai, received her award Friday to the beat of drums and dancers that broke with the usual stodgy ceremony, and she warned that humanity is "threatening its own life-support system."

Maathai received the traditional gold medal and diploma that accompanies the $1.5 million prize at a ceremony in the Norwegian capital. A few hours later, Sweden's king awarded the other Nobel prizes — medicine, physics, chemistry, literature and economics — in Stockholm.

Bengt Samuelsson, chairman of the board of the Nobel Foundation, addressed the frequently heard criticism that too few women have received the Nobel Prize over the years. While only 31 of the 705 Nobel Prizes handed out since 1901 have gone to women, Samuelsson pointed out that three of this year's laureates are women.

"If the history of the Nobel Prize during its first century was a reflection of 19th- and early 20th-century values, maybe this year's awards are a glimpse of the changes we will see during this century," Samuelsson said.

One of the women, however, was a no-show at the ceremony: literature laureate Elfriede Jelinek. The Austrian writer says she has a social phobia. The third female winner was Linda B. Buck, who shared the medicine prize with fellow American Richard Axel.

Maathai's Nobel prize is the first to acknowledge environmentalism as a means of building peace. In Oslo, the 64-year-old Kenyan — wearing a traditional dress, a bright orange scarf tied in her hair — warned that the world remained under attack from disease, deforestation and war.

"Today, we are faced with a challenge that calls for a shift in our thinking, so that humanity stops threatening its life-support system," she Kenyan told the crowd of dignitaries, who included the Norwegian royal family as well as talk show host Oprah Winfrey and Kerry Kennedy, a daughter of the late Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

Volkswagen recall

BERLIN — Volkswagen said Friday it is recalling some 290,000 diesel vehicles worldwide to carry out checks on their fuel pumps.

The automaker said it was contacting owners of vehicles with three- or four-cylinder diesel engines that were built between March and August of this year. The recall affects the Volkswagen, Audi, Seat and Skoda brands, the company said.

Volkswagen said a defect during the manufacturing process of a bolt on the cover of the fuel pump could, "in isolated cases," lead to the bolt breaking.

Bomb kills at least 11

QUETTA, Pakistan — Assailants set off a powerful time bomb next to an army truck parked in a teeming outdoor market in southwestern Pakistan on Friday, killing at least 11 people and injuring more than two dozen others, police and hospital officials said.

The bomb, hidden on a bicycle, blew out windows, shredded the truck's canvas cover and left blood and debris over a wide area of the market in Quetta, the main city in Baluchistan province, said police chief Rehmat Ullah.

The dead included one soldier and 10 vendors and passers-by, Pervez Bhatti, a senior police official, told Pakistan's private Geo television.

Food shortage in space

MOSCOW — The two-man crew on the international space station could be forced to return to Earth if a planned flight cannot reach them with food supplies later this month, a Russian space official said Friday.

A Progress supply ship carrying food and other supplies is to launch Dec. 24 and reach the station Dec. 26.

The crew already has been ordered to cut back on calories because food is running short.

NASA said Thursday there was food to last seven to 14 days beyond Dec. 25 if the supply ship did not arrive, and called the situation "critical."

Low-cost train

ROME — Italy's first low-cost, high-speed train will run Sunday from Rome to Milan.

The start of the low-cost train, aiming at mirroring the success of some low-cost airlines, was announced on Friday state railroad officials.

The train will commute between Rome and Milan, with stops in Florence and Bologna. It will not use cities' central train stations but secondary ones, taking 4½ hours in all.

From The Associated Press

OPEC approves plan to cut daily oil production

BY GEORGE JAHN
The Associated Press

CAIRO, Egypt — Juggling between its need to keep prices up without having them explode, OPEC agreed Friday to reduce its daily oil output by 1 million barrels a day — and reserved the right to cut deeper early next year if crude turns much cheaper than now.

The move represented a decision by OPEC to go down the middle, in a bid to prevent further revenue losses amid a recent downward price trend, while trying to reduce the kind of volatility that rocketed prices up to record highs earlier this year, leading producers scrambling to meet demand.

Saudi Oil Minister Ali Naimi said the cut will be implemented starting Jan. 1. He told reporters that OPEC would meet again at month's end to review the cut's effect on prices, which have fallen sharply recently but remain high above previous established levels.

If effective, the output reduction would scale back output to the group's overall ceiling of 27 million barrels a day.

OPEC's two other options — doing nothing, and risking continued losses, or reducing the quota target and precipitating a new oil crisis — were clearly not appealing to members. Their decision to try and end quota busting appeared to be a bid to reduce the risks both ways.

Still, the decision to meet again Jan. 20 was meant as a signal that OPEC was ready to defend current prices — a message driven home at the Cairo meeting by several oil ministers.

In another bid to keep markets from roiling, the 11-nation group resisted pressure from some members to raise its target rates — the prices it sees as fair — for OPEC crudes.

That band is now at between $22 to $28, below the lower $30s some members would like to see it at and far under present market prices.

Still, oil ministers made clear that the bar had been raised at least informally.

Naming $32 as his country's bottom line, Iran's Bijan Namdar Zangeneh, told reporters: "We are concerned about prices dropping."

OPEC Secretary General Purmono Yusgiantoro of Indonesia touched on the need for stability after months of "excessive speculative activity."

He said the group would reassess its current price band at the January meeting in Vienna.

U.S. makes first flight to Vietnam in 30 years

The Associated Press

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam — For the first time since the war ended nearly 30 years ago, a U.S. passenger jet was on its way to Vietnam on Friday.

United Flight 869 took off from San Francisco on Thursday and was scheduled to land in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon, at 10:25 p.m. Friday local time.

It will be the first U.S. commercial plane to touch down at Tan Son Nhat International Airport since the wartime capital of South Vietnam fell to the communists in 1975.

U.S. relations with Vietnam have improved considerably in recent years. The two countries established diplomatic ties in 1995, and in 2001 they signed a landmark trade agreement, followed by an aviation pact last year.

In November 2003, the first U.S. Navy ship since the Vietnam War docked on the Saigon River.

United Airlines, which filed for bankruptcy two years ago, is betting the daily flight to Vietnam will be a big moneymaker. The carrier says it expects air travel to Vietnam to grow 10.5 percent a year in the next decade.

Among the 347 people on the flight was 48-year-old Van Trinh, one of the tens of thousands of Vietnamese who fled the country in boats after the war. "I'm excited to see Vietnam now because 30 years is too long," she said before boarding the Boeing 747-400.

Trinh is among 1 million ethnic Vietnamese who live in the United States, the largest population outside Vietnam. Many visit Vietnam every year.

The country is also a popular destination with American veterans who want to see how it has changed. "The United Airlines link between the two countries will not only serve Vietnamese nationals living in America, but I was told that 45 million Americans wanted to travel to Vietnam, and that is a very big market," said Nguyen Xuan Hien, Vietnam Airlines president and CEO.

Many Americans who fought in the war have vivid memories of Tan Son Nhat airport, where they caught Pan American "freedom birds" home or to rest stops such as Hong Kong and Japan.

IN THE STATES

Agency seeks recall

WASHINGTON — Federal safety regulators want 600,000 Dodge Durangos and Dakota trucks recalled because their wheels could fall off, but the auto maker doesn't believe the defect is dangerous, a company spokesman said.

Federal safety regulators have asked DaimlerChrysler AG to recall Durango sport utility vehicles and Dakota pickups from the 2000 to 2003 model years, Chrysler spokesman Max Gates confirmed. He stressed the models haven't been recalled.

Gang leader detained

MIAMI — A street gang leader who joined demobilized soldiers in a rebellion that forced Haiti's President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to flee the country has been arrested in Miami, officials said Friday.

Butteur Metayer was taken into custody by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and "is currently going through proceedings and his case is active in litigation," spokeswoman Nina Pruneda said.

Metayer's family told The Miami Herald on Thursday that he arrived at Miami International Airport from Haiti on Nov. 28 for treatment of stomach pains and to see his mother.

Serial killer sentenced

BATON ROUGE, La. — Twice-convicted murderer Derrick Todd Lee already was spending his time on death row at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, but he formally received his death sentence Friday for the beating and stabbing death of a 22-year-old woman.

Before he was sentenced to the penalty decided by a jury in October, the mother and sister of victim Charlotte Murray Pace spoke to him, with Pace's sister Sam describing how he would be put to death by lethal injection.

Terrorists with lasers

WASHINGTON — Federal officials are concerned that terrorists could try to down aircraft by blinding pilots with laser beams during landing approaches.

A memo sent to law enforcement agencies recently by the FBI and the Homeland Security Department says there is evidence that terrorists have explored using lasers as weapons.

"Although lasers are not proven methods of attack like improvised explosive devices and hijackings, terrorist groups overseas have expressed interest in using these devices against human sight," the memo said.

"In certain circumstances, if laser weapons adversely affect the eyesight of both pilot and co-pilot during a non-instrument approach, there is a risk of airliner crash," the agencies said.

The federal authorities said there is no specific intelligence indicating al-Qaida or other groups might use lasers in the United States.

Lasers can cause temporary blindness and severely damage the eye by burning the retina. The bulletin notes they are "relatively inexpensive, portable, easy to conceal and readily available on the open market."

From The Associated Press

Shooter obsessed with Pantera

By Anita Chang
The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The man who shot former Pantera guitarist "Dimebag" Darrell Abbott and three other men to death at a nightclub was obsessed with the popular heavy metal band and made bizarre accusations against it, a onetime friend said in reports published Friday.

Jeramie Brey said gunman Nathan Gale once showed up at a friend's house saying he wanted to share songs he had written. The pages of lyrics were copied from Pantera, but Gale claimed he had written them, Brey said.

"He was off his rocker," Brey told The Columbus Dispatch. "He said they were his songs, that Pantera stole them from him and that he was going to sue them."

He later told Brey that he planned to sue Pantera for stealing his identity. Brey and friend Dave Johnson said Gale's behavior frightened them and they distanced themselves from him several years ago. But other friends said they never considered Gale capable of violence.

On Wednesday night, the 25-year-old former Marine charged the stage at a show by Abbott's new band, Damageplan, and gunned down four people, including Abbott, before a policeman fatally shot him.

Police said Friday they still didn't know Gale's motive, and they may never find out. Some witnesses said Gale yelled accusations that the revered guitarist broke up Pantera, but police had not verified those reports.

An imposing figure at 6-foot-3, Gale had made people uneasy even at the tattoo parlor, staring and locking them into conversations about heavy metal music. When he played offensive line for the semi-professional Lima Thunder football team, he psyched himself up before games by piping Pantera into his headphones, coach Mark Green said.

But Green had not pegged Gale as the type to go on a shooting rampage.

"It wasn't like he was a loner," Green said.

Gale had had minor run-ins with police since 1997 but wasn't considered a troublemaker, according to police in his hometown of Marysville, 25 miles northwest of Columbus.

Gale had served with the 2nd Marine Division at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina until November 2003, when he was discharged after less than half of the typical four-year stint, Marine spokeswoman Gunnery Sgt. Kristine Scarber said. She declined to explain the discharge, citing privacy rules.

A few hours before the shooting, Gale had showed up at Marysville's Bears Den Tattoo Studio, where often he stared at people and forced them into conversations, manager Lucas Bender said.

On Wednesday, he asked about having the studio order tattoo equipment for him, tattoo artist Bo Toler said. Toler told him no, and Gale got angry and started yelling, he said.

"Last night was actually the first time I noticed his temper," Toler said.

No one answered the door Thursday at the Marysville home of Gale's mother, Mary Clark. A message left on her cell phone was not returned.

AP

Fans and friends of Damageplan guitarist "Dimebag" Darrel Abbott — including, from left, Tom Webber of Davison, Mich., and Leor Snapir and Jeff Cooch, both of Ann Arbor, Mich. — hold a vigil outside The Machine Shop nightclub in Flint, Mich., on Thursday, where Abbott and band were to have played. Abbott and three others were killed when a lone gunman charged the stage and opened fire Wednesday.

President names secretary of energy

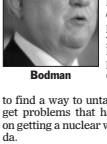
By Terence Hunt
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President George Bush on Friday named Treasury deputy secretary Samuel Bodman as secretary of the Energy Department, filling one of the last openings in his second-term Cabinet.

Bodman "has shown himself to be a problem solver who knows how to set goals and knows how to reach them," Bush said at an announcement ceremony in the Roosevelt Room.

If confirmed by the Senate, Bodman's major challenge will be to get Congress to enact energy legislation, including one of the president's longtime goal of opening an Arctic wildlife refuge in Alaska to oil drilling.

Bush said his priorities for the department are to "develop and deploy the latest technology to provide a new generation of cleaner and more efficient energy sources" and to "promote strong conservation measures."



Bodman

"We will bring greater certainty of cost and supply and that certainty is essential to economic growth and job creation."

He pledged to renew his push for legislation codifying the energy plan he unveiled 3½ years ago, stymied by lawmakers despite Republican domination of Congress.

Bodman also will have to find a way to untangle both legal and budget problems that have threatened progress on getting a nuclear waste dump built in Nevada.

Congress this year refused to provide enough money to keep the Yucca Mountain waste project on schedule and a federal court earlier this year ordered a review of proposed radiation standards for the site.

Congress for four years has tried, and failed, to enact energy legislation. Bush has bowed to press lawmakers next year to try again.

The administration next year also will face continuing concerns about high oil prices and a winter that is expected to bring record high heating costs. Although crude prices have receded in recent weeks they remain unusually high, edging up on Thursday to $42.90 a barrel.

Bodman would replace Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham.

The nomination leaves one major opening in Bush's 15-member Cabinet: a candidate to replace Tommy Thompson as secretary of health and human services.

Gays regroup after suffering elections setbacks

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The ritual was replayed from Boston to San Francisco: exuberant gay couples sharing marriage vows and slices of wedding cake.

After decades of seeking the same basic rights as most Americans, gay activists celebrated a long-sought achievement as the highest court in Massachusetts ruled that same-sex marriage was legal. In San Francisco, Mayor Gavin Newsom performed gay marriages even though he had no similar court affirmation.

Gays thought barriers were finally crumbling. Then came the elections. Outraged by these images of gay couples, conservatives clamored for laws not only banning gay marriage but in some states for prohibiting civil unions and domestic partnerships. Nine of the 13 states that acted on or before Election Day on laws barring gay marriage also banned other forms of recognition for same-sex relationships.

Effects of those measures already are being felt. Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm, a Democrat, will remove same-sex partner benefits from contracts negotiated with state workers after passage of the voter-approved amendment to the Michigan Constitution that bans gay marriage "and similar unions."

The lack of activists' success in the United States stands in contrast to Canada where the Supreme Court ruled Thursday that gay marriage was constitutional, allowing the government there to call on Parliament to legalize same-sex unions nationwide.

The string of U.S. election defeats — and the extent of the restrictions — has forced gay activists to reassess their strategy in what they see as a protracted fight for equal rights.

Bill expands anti-terror powers

BY CURT ANDERSON
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — People indicted on terror charges will have a much harder time getting free on bail under a provision in the new intelligence bill. The provision also broadens the government's authority to spy on terror suspects.

Critics say the enforcement powers, attached to the bill with little debate in Congress, weaken civil liberties and privacy rights that already were undermined by the Patriot Act that was approved shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

The new legislation broadens prohibitions against providing material support to terror groups, makes it a crime to visit a terror camp that provides military-style training and allows the FBI to obtain secret surveillance warrants against "lone wolf" extremists not known to be tied to a specific terrorist group. It also makes terrorism hoaxes a federal crime and toughens penalties against people who possess weapons of mass destruction.

President Bush's administration pushed to include the law enforcement package in the intelligence measure to augment the Patriot Act, which expanded the government's surveillance and prosecutorial powers against suspected terrorists, their associates and financiers.

"We are pleased that Congress agreed that we still needed to improve our defenses," Justice Department spokesman Mark Corallo said.

Critics say the provisions escaped close scrutiny because they were tucked into the massive bill creating a new national intelligence director.

"Overall, it's another threat to civil liberties in this country," said Charlie Mitchell, legislative counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union. "It's just a continuation of what the administration's been doing."

Under the bill, a legal presumption would be established denying bail for anyone indicted by a grand jury on terrorism charges.

Although the suspect could appeal to a judge, the burden of proof would be on the defendant to show release would be prudent.

That stipulation has long been in place for suspects in many violent and drug crimes but not for terrorism.

Skeptics say the provision has the potential to be abused, possibly resulting in long detentions for people ultimately found innocent.

"Unfortunately, this Justice Department has a record of abusing its detention powers post-9/11 and of making terrorism allegations that turn out to have no merit," said Democratic Sen. Russell Feingold.

The bill also allows federal prosecutors to share secret information obtained in grand jury proceedings with state, local or foreign law enforcement officers if it might help prevent a terrorist attack.

Another provision would adjust parts of the law that make it a crime to provide "material support" to terrorist organizations.

Details of intelligence provisions

WASHINGTON — Law enforcement and anti-terrorism provisions are included in the intelligence legislation passed by Congress. The measure:

■ Establishes a legal presumption that people charged with terrorism offenses not be released on bail unless they can convince a judge otherwise. Shifts the burden of proof for keeping such defendants detained from the government to the defense.

■ Broadens the law making it a crime to provide material support to terror groups to include any type of resource or service.

■ Enables the FBI to obtain a secret surveillance warrant on someone suspected of terrorism even if no ties can be established between that person and a foreign country or international terror group. Would not apply to U.S. citizens.

■ Increases penalties for unauthorized possession of weapons of mass destruction and components for such things as radioactive "dirty bombs," smallpox virus, shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles and nuclear weapons.

■ Makes it a federal crime to perpetrate a terror hoax, such as a fake anthrax mailing, or make false reports about the death of someone in the U.S. armed forces.

■ Allows federal prosecutors to share secret information obtained in grand jury proceedings with state, local or foreign law enforcement officers if it might help prevent a terrorist attack.

— The Associated Press

Air security to change pat-downs

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Security screeners at U.S. airports will make a small adjustment to the way they conduct pat-down searches of passengers after receiving hundreds of complaints that the procedure was invasive, Transportation Security Administration sources said Thursday.

The change allows both male and female passengers to put down their arms after being screened on the upper body, sources said. Many passengers had said that standing in a "spread eagle" position throughout the inspection made them feel like criminals.

"We want to make the process less uncomfortable," said one TSA official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

TSA will begin training screeners on the change on Monday. The decision comes after agency officials met last week to discuss the large volume of complaints from travelers.

"This is such a minor change, it is really not significantly going to improve the situation," said Lenora Lapidus, director of the Women's Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union.

"We've been getting calls and complaints from women across the country, complaining that their breasts are being poked, prodded and pushed. Just saying passengers don't have to keep their arms extended is not going to address the invasiveness of these procedures."

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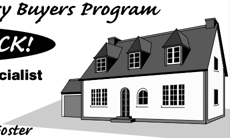

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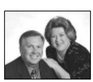

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YOUR MONEY

Customers getting the hang of plasma TVs

Retailers expect to at least double sales of high-end television sets

BY JOSHUA FREED
The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Hanging stockings by the chimney with care? Retailers hope that St. Nicholas soon will be there — to hang a 42-inch plasma-screen TV.

As prices drop for high-end televisions, sales are leaping.

Retailers expect to sell twice as many plasma-screen televisions and three times as many LCD televisions this year, according to the Consumer Electronics Association.

And with new sellers such as Dell Inc. and Wal-Mart Stores Inc. now in the market, retailers are looking for new ways to differentiate themselves.

Dell and some other sellers will deliver a TV free of shipping charges. Wal-Mart, competing on price, offers a 42-inch plasma TV for $2,000 at many of its stores, about $1,000 less than many other sellers. Many Best Buy Inc. stores will send a technician to visit prospective TV buyers at home, at no charge, to measure and suggest other products.

"That has been a huge difference between a guy buying just a TV and a guy buying a complete solution," said Joe Brandt, the home theater manager at a Best Buy store in the Minneapolis suburb of Maple Grove.

And that "complete solution" — such as a sound system and DVD player — can be a way for Best Buy and others to grab sales it might have missed by selling just the TV.

Brandt said sales of plasma televisions were brisk during last year's holiday season, but really took off six to eight months ago.

After struggling to keep up with demand last year, Best Buy has increased the number of high-end televisions for sale this year by 50 percent.

Shoppers will "see prices almost a minimum of 30 percent lower than they saw last year in flat-panel TVs," said Lee Simonson, the chief buyer for TVs for Best Buy.

Wal-Mart is selling plasma TVs in about a third of its stores, including its own ILO brand, which it rolled out in May. The company, which made its name on low prices, wants customers to think of its stores for higher-end products, too.

Many retailers are advertising lower prices on older technologies such as so-called "enhanced definition" and rear-projection TVs, hoping to lure customers into the store and then sell them newer, more expensive models, said Ross Rubin, director of industry analysis at market researcher NPD Techworld.

AP

Potential high-end television buyers relax as they watch a flat panel plasma model at the Best Buy store last month in Maple Grove, Minn. Retailers expect sales for flat panel televisions to double from last year.

While Best Buy said a growing number of its customers understand the differences between different flat-screen televisions, Rubin said manufacturers and stores still have plenty of educating to do.

Panasonic, he said, recently sent workers into New York-area P.C. Richard & Son stores with that in mind.

Plasma screens are considered the most vibrant, and are often the most expensive. Liquid-crystal displays are the television version of the screen commonly used on laptop computers. They are slightly thinner and cheaper than plasma screens. Also available are DLP, or Digital Light Processing, televisions that are cheaper than LCD or plasma, but not quite as bright or compact.

TV-maker Westinghouse Digital Electronics recently cut prices by $500 each for its 27- and 30-inch LCD TVs, to $1,199 and $1,699, respectively.

"A year ago, it was a cool product, a gadget, a very expensive gadget," said Douglas Woo, the company's president. Now, high-end TVs are a routine replacement for older TVs, he said.

Woo said retailers may not be making the 50-percent margins they got on the early, most-expensive high-end TVs, but they're making better money than on the traditional sets.

"LCD TV is right in the sweet spot for retailers," Woo said.

With prices expected to fall further next year as new factories come on line, stores may need to work harder to attract buyers who might otherwise wait. Woo, in fact, called 2004 "still a set-up year," and predicted the technology won't really take off until next year or even 2006.

Indeed, traditional cathode-ray televisions still make up the majority of TVs sold, according to the CEA.

Brandon Martin, 27, held a blender under his arm at the Best Buy in Maple Grove while he eyed what he really wanted — a new flat-panel TV. But Martin said he wasn't sure it's worth the money.

"I think they do a real good job of making it seem necessary," Martin said of the high-end sets. "It's just TV."

THURSDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES

52-week High	52-week Low	Name	Last	Net Chg	% Chg	YTD % Chg	52-wk % Chg
10,753.63	9,708.40	Dow Jones Industrials	10,552.82	+58.59	+.56	+.95	+5.44
3,748.05	2,743.46	Dow Jones Transportation	3,709.21	-14.72	-.40	+23.35	+25.06
335.20	252.47	Dow Jones Utilities	318.77	+.41	+.13	+19.43	+25.44
7,108.61	6,087.23	NYSE Composite	7,048.10	+18.13	+.26	+9.44	+14.11
1,417.41	1,105.38	Amex Index	1,386.57	-.05	...	+18.15	+23.75
2,164.63	1,750.82	Nasdaq Composite	2,129.01	+2.90	+.14	+6.27	+9.61
1,197.46	1,053.41	S&P 500	1,189.24	+6.43	+.54	+6.95	+11.02
646.34	548.29	S&P MidCap	640.50	+2.79	+.44	+11.20	+13.47
644.84	515.90	Russell 2000	629.19	-1.97	-.31	+12.98	+15.89
11,788.44	10,244.15	DJ Wilshire 5000	11,691.39	+54.38	+.47	+8.26	+12.09

NYSE

MOST ACTIVE ($1 OR MORE)

Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg
Lucent	1291321	3.84	+.11
Pfizer	292509	27.37	-.13
NortelN lf	278864	3.83	+.07
Motorola	260653	17.72	-.07
TycoIntl	234854	34.40	+.32
SprntFON	231696	24.28	+1.78
TexInst	221320	23.70	-.35
TimeWarn	187302	18.38	+.23
NatSemi s	183207	16.79	+.79
AMD	176229	22.10	-.80

AMEX

MOST ACTIVE ($1 OR MORE)

Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg
SPDR	585631	119.22	+.49
SemiHTr	526131	32.58	-.45
iShJapan	94490	10.16	-.16
iShRs2000	92427	125.24	-.96
DJIA Diam	87822	105.38	+.37
WheatR g	55874	3.27	-.06
Cheniere	34714	52.50	-4.00
SP Engy	32559	35.80	+.30
BemaGold	32260	3.21	+.04
OilSvHT	27311	81.69	+1.63

NASDAQ

MOST ACTIVE ($1 OR MORE)

Name	Vol (00)	Last	Chg
SiriusS	1425208	7.17	+.27
Nasd100Tr	1266258	40.05	+.24
Intel	1108484	22.76	-.25
CienaCp	842001	2.88	+.54
Microsoft	826357	27.23	-.13
Cisco	673518	19.40	-.40
AlteraCp	462511	20.47	-1.73
JDS Uniph	409999	3.10	+.02
ApldMatl	366551	17.15	-.12
Oracle	356658	13.29	+.08

KEY DEFENSE STOCKS

Name	Div	PE	Last	Chg	YTD %Chg
Alliant Technosystem	...	16	65.15	+.27	+12.8
Armor Holdings	...	28	42.88	+2.11	+63.0
Boeing	.80	15	52.78	-.02	+25.2
Computer Sciences	...	19	56.21	-.24	+27.1
Engineered Sup Sys	.04	22	53.55	-1.35	-2.7
General Dynamics	1.44	18	105.09	-.05	+16.3
General Electric	.80	24	36.02	+.31	+16.3
Halliburton	.50	...	39.38	+1.03	+51.5
Harris Corp.	.48	29	64.17	-.93	+69.1
Allied Signal	.75	21	34.57	+.01	+3.4
L-3 Communications	.40	22	73.57	-.15	+43.2
Lockheed Martin	1.00	21	59.02	-.10	+14.8
NorthrpG s	.92	20	55.20	+.11	+15.5
Raytheon	.80	44	38.92	+.27	+29.6
Rockwell Intl.	.66	22	46.96	+.69	+31.9
Sequa Corp.	...	36	59.43	+.93	+21.3
Texas Instruments	.10	24	23.70	-.35	-19.3
Textron Inc.	1.40	32	72.78	+.04	+27.5
United Technologies	1.40	18	99.45	+1.26	+4.9

KEY MUTUAL FUNDS

Name	NAV	Chg.	YTD %Ret.
Fidelity Invest: GroInc	38.08	+.22	+8.2
Fidelity Invest: GroCo	54.94	+.28	+9.7
Amer Century Inv: Ultra	28.97	+.24	+8.7
Fidelity Spartan: EqIdx	42.34	+.23	+8.6
Putnam Funds A: GrInA p	18.98	+.10	+8.6
Fidelity Invest: A Mgr	16.16	+.03	+4.1
Frank/Temp Frnk A: SMCpGrA	33.10	+.13	+9.5
AIM Investments A: Const p	22.44	+.14	+4.3
Fidelity Invest: USBI	11.20	-.02	+4.3
Fidelity Invest: Ovrsea	34.16	-.16	+9.6
Fidelity Advisor T: GrOppT	30.14	+.14	+5.2
Fidelity Advisor T: EqInT	28.17	+.10	+9.4
Scudder Funds S: GroIncS	21.64	+.12	+7.9
Putnam Funds A: GlbEqty p	8.16	+.03	+9.4
AIM Investments A: WeingA p	12.85	+.07	+6.4
AIM Investments A: ChartA p	12.60	+.05	+6.0
Merrill Lynch I: BalCapI	27.93	+.08	+6.6
Scudder Funds S: Intl FdS	42.89	-.15	+11.7
Fidelity Advisor T: OvrseaT	17.14	-.09	+9.0
Lord Abbett A: DevGtA p	15.40	-.05	+2.7
Scudder Funds S: Income S	13.02	-.01	+5.1
Merrill Lynch I: USGvtMtg	10.34	-.01	+3.4
Scudder Funds S: Devel	19.06	+.15	+1.2
Putnam Funds A: GlGvA p	13.16	...	+8.4

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates

Euro	$1.3590
Euro	0.7358
British pound	$1.98
Japanese yen (Dec. 11)	101.00
South Korean won (Dec. 10)	1,033.00

Commercial rates

Bahrain (Dinar)	0.37698
British pound	$1.9275
Canada (Dollar)	1.2215
Denmark (Krone)	5.31
Egypt (Pound)	6.23
Euro	$1.3321/0.7507
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.774
Hungary (Forint)	188.10
Iceland (Krona)	62.965
Israel (Shekel)	4.3403
Japan (Yen)	104.50
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.29467
Norway (Krone)	5.89
Philippines (Peso)	56.20
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.59
Singapore (Dollar)	1.6483
South Korea (Won)	1,055.30
Switzerland (Franc)	1.10
Thailand (Baht)	39.43
Turkey (Lira)	1,426,371.00

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

PRECIOUS METALS

London close

Gold	$434.90
Silver	$6.69

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.00
Discount rate	3.00
Federal funds market rate	2.0625
3-month bill	2.24
30-year bond	4.84

Sources: The Associated Press, Bank of America

Cents and Sensibility
Money tip of the day

Finding online bargains

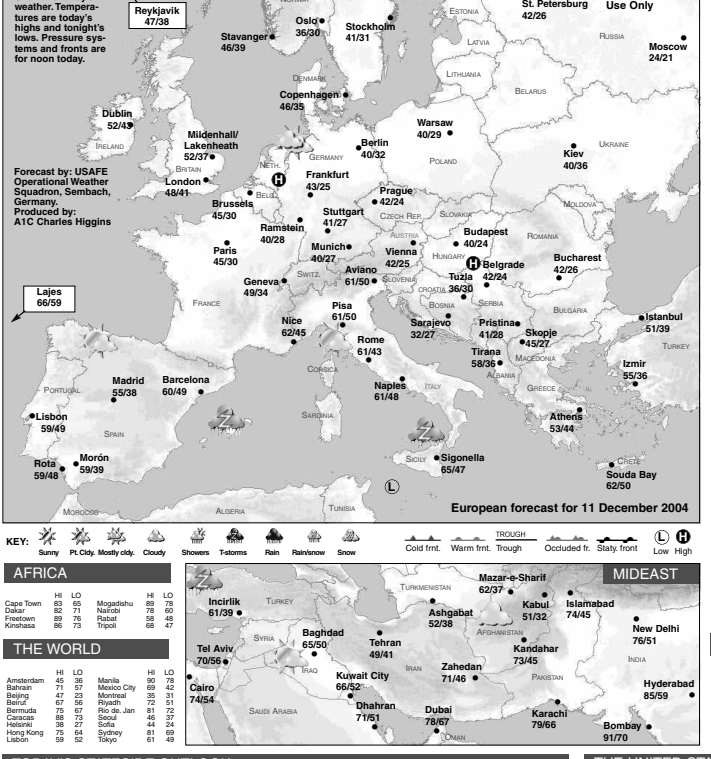
BY NANCY DUNNAN

A new Web site, **www.shopping.com**, now combines DealTime.com's shopping search engine with Epinion.com's consumer reviews and ratings.

It's a great way to find the least expensive and the best among the many items for sale on the Internet. The site covers all sorts of things from books, cars and clothing to jewelry, kids and family and office supplies.

Perfect for holiday shopping!

Financial adviser, economist and security analyst Nancy Dunnan is the author of "How to Invest $50 to $5,000." She writes a weekly column for **theonlineinvestor.com**



EUROPEAN FORECAST

Benelux: Partly to mostly cloudy with areas of dense fog in the morning. Highs in the mid 40s, Sunday lows in the upper 20s to low 30s.

Britain, Ireland: Mostly cloudy to cloudy with fog in the morning. Highs in the upper 40s to low 50s, Sunday lows in the upper 30s.

Croatia and Bosnia: Cloudy with fog in the morning becoming mostly cloudy in the afternoon. Highs in the mid 30s, Sunday lows in the upper 20s to low 30s.

France: Partly to mostly cloudy with areas of dense fog in the morning. Highs in the mid 40s in the north, to lower 60s in the south, Sunday lows in the 30s.

Germany: Partly to mostly cloudy with areas of fog in the morning. Highs in the low to mid 40s, Sunday lows in the upper 20s to low 30s.

Southern Germany: Partly to mostly cloudy with areas of fog in the morning. Highs in the 40s, Sunday lows in the upper 20s to low 30s.

Hungary: Partly to mostly cloudy with pockets of fog in the morning. Highs in the upper 30s to low 40s, Sunday lows in the mid 20s.

Northern Italy: Partly cloudy. Highs in the mid 50s, Sunday lows in the low to mid 30s.

Southern Italy: Partly to mostly cloudy with isolated thunderstorms. Highs in the upper 50s to low 60s, Sunday lows in the upper 40s.

Kosovo: Partly to mostly cloudy. Highs in the upper 30s to low 40s, Sunday lows in the upper 20s.

Norway: Partly cloudy with pockets of fog in the morning. Highs in the mid 40s, Sunday lows in the 30s.

Portugal, Spain: Partly cloudy with pockets of fog in the morning and isolated thunderstorms on the southern coast. Highs in the mid 50s to low 60s, Sunday lows in the upper 30s to upper 40s.

Turkey: Partly to mostly cloudy in the morning become cloudy in the afternoon with rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. Highs in the low 50s to low 60s, Saturday lows in the mid to upper 30s.

For current weather watches, warnings, and 5-day forecasts go to the USAFE Operational Weather Squadron home page at:
https://ows.sembach.af.mil
http://ows.public.sembach.af.mil

AFRICA

	Hi	LO		Hi	LO
Cape Town	83	65	Mogadishu	89	78
Dakar	82	71	Nairobi	78	60
Freetown	89	76	Rabat	58	48
Kinshasa	86	73	Tripoli	68	47

MIDEAST

THE WORLD

	Hi	LO		Hi	LO
Amsterdam	45	36	Manila	90	78
Bahrain	71	57	Mexico City	69	42
Beijing	47	23	Montreal	35	31
Beirut	67	56	Riyadh	72	51
Bermuda	75	67	Rio de. Jan	81	72
Caracas	88	73	Seoul	46	37
Helsinki	38	27	Sofia	44	24
Hong Kong	75	64	Sydney	81	69
Lisbon	59	52	Tokyo	61	49

SUN & MOON

	Today	Tomorrow
Sunrise (Baghdad)	6:57am	6:57am
Sunrise (Frankfurt)	8:14am	8:15am
Sunset (Baghdad)	4:56pm	4:57pm
Sunset (Frankfurt)	4:23pm	4:23pm

New moon 12 Dec — First qtr. 18 Dec — Full moon 26 Dec — Last qtr. 03 Jan

TODAY'S STATESIDE OUTLOOK

	Hi	Lo	Otlk
Abilene,Tex.	72	46	Clr
Akron,Ohio	37	29	Snow
Albany,N.Y.	40	29	Rain
Albuquerque	56	35	Clr
Allentown,Pa.	47	32	Cldy
Amarillo	69	38	Clr
Anchorage	32	22	Snow
Asheville	46	30	Cldy
Atlanta	48	36	Cldy
Atlantic City	54	34	Cldy
Austin	69	40	Clr
Baltimore	54	35	Cldy
Baton Rouge	57	36	PCldy
Billings	63	29	Clr
Birmingham	46	34	Cldy
Bismarck	49	23	Cldy
Boise	47	37	Rain
Boston	46	36	Rain
Bridgeport	52	35	Rain
Brownsville	79	54	Clr
Buffalo	34	27	Snow
Burlington,Vt.	34	25	Snow
Caribou,Maine	28	29	Snow
Casper	56	29	Clr
Charleston,S.C.	60	38	PCldy
Charleston,W.Va.	45	33	Rain
Charlotte,N.C.	54	32	PCldy
Chattanooga	45	34	Cldy
Cheyenne	63	33	Clr
Chicago	39	32	Cldy
Cincinnati	40	30	Cldy
Cleveland	38	30	Snow
Colorado Springs	65	33	Clr
Columbia,S.C.	56	36	PCldy
Columbus,Ga.	50	37	PCldy
Columbus,Ohio	38	30	Cldy
Concord,N.H.	37	30	Rain
Corpus Christi	77	49	Clr
Dallas-Ft Worth	67	44	Clr
Dayton	38	29	Cldy
Daytona Beach	61	42	Cldy
Denver	66	30	Clr
Des Moines	43	33	PCldy
Detroit	37	29	Snow
Duluth	32	27	Cldy
El Paso	66	39	Clr
Elkins	41	29	Rain
Erie	36	31	Snow
Eugene	51	40	Rain
Evansville	42	33	Cldy
Fairbanks	10	-7	PCldy
Fargo	38	25	Cldy
Flagstaff	56	24	Clr
Flint	36	27	Cldy
Fort Smith	54	36	PCldy
Fort Wayne	39	28	Cldy
Fresno	60	46	Cldy
Goodland	70	39	Clr
Grand Junction	46	25	Clr
Grand Rapids	36	28	Snow
Great Falls	53	21	Clr
Green Bay	35	30	Cldy
Greensboro,N.C.	55	34	Cldy
Harrisburg	52	34	Cldy
Hartford Spgfld	47	33	Rain
Helena	51	21	Cldy
Honolulu	81	67	Clr
Houston	62	45	Clr
Huntsville	45	32	Cldy
Indianapolis	39	31	Cldy
Jacksonville	56	36	PCldy
Juneau	38	38	Rain
Kansas City	49	39	Cldy
Key West	75	62	Cldy
Knoxville	44	32	Cldy
Lake Charles	62	41	Clr
Lansing	33	25	Snow
Las Vegas	69	45	Clr
Lexington	38	29	Cldy
Lincoln	54	35	PCldy
Little Rock	54	37	PCldy
Los Angeles	78	51	Clr
Louisville	40	33	Cldy
Lubbock	71	37	Clr
Macon	53	33	PCldy
Madison	38	32	PCldy
Medford	53	41	Rain
Memphis	50	39	PCldy
Miami Beach	76	52	PCldy
Midland-Odessa	73	43	Clr
Milwaukee	39	33	PCldy
Mpls-St Paul	37	30	Cldy
Mobile	56	38	PCldy
Montgomery	50	35	PCldy
Nashville	45	33	Cldy
New Orleans	59	42	PCldy
New York City	56	39	Cldy
Newark	56	37	Cldy
Norfolk,Va.	60	40	Cldy
North Platte	63	32	PCldy
Oklahoma City	62	41	PCldy
Omaha	49	35	PCldy
Orlando	60	41	Cldy
Paducah	44	32	PCldy
Pendleton	50	30	Cldy
Peoria	39	31	PCldy
Philadelphia	53	37	Cldy
Phoenix	77	52	Clr
Pittsburgh	38	28	Cldy
Pocatello	48	30	Cldy
Portland,Maine	37	32	Rain
Portland,Ore.	51	38	Rain
Providence	52	36	Rain
Pueblo	70	27	Clr
Raleigh-Durham	57	35	Cldy
Rapid City	69	32	PCldy
Reno	61	32	PCldy
Richmond	57	35	Cldy
Roanoke	51	33	Cldy
Rochester	35	27	Snow
Rockford	38	31	Cldy
Sacramento	69	43	Rain
St Louis	42	42	PCldy
St Thomas	85	75	PCldy
Salem,Ore.	50	38	Rain
Salt Lake City	53	35	PCldy
San Angelo	74	45	Clr
San Antonio	73	47	Clr
San Diego	72	54	Clr
San Francisco	63	52	Cldy
San Jose	67	51	Cldy
San Juan,P.R.	84	73	Rain
Santa Fe	55	27	Clr
St Ste Marie	30	22	PCldy
Savannah	58	38	PCldy
Seattle	50	36	PCldy
Shreveport	57	39	PCldy
Sioux City	49	32	PCldy
Sioux Falls	47	29	Cldy
South Bend	39	28	Cldy
Spokane	42	25	Rain
Springfield,Ill.	39	32	PCldy
Springfield,Mo.	49	37	PCldy
Syracuse	40	28	Snow
Tallahassee	56	34	PCldy
Tampa-St Pbsbg	65	46	Cldy
Toledo	36	29	Snow
Topeka	53	37	PCldy
Tucson	78	47	Clr
Tulsa	57	41	Clr
Tupelo	48	39	Cldy
Waco	67	44	Clr
Washington,D.C.	54	36	Cldy
Wichita Beach	74	45	PCldy
Wichita	61	38	PCldy
Wichita Falls	67	43	PCldy
Williamsport	50	30	Snow
Wilmington,Del.	53	36	Cldy
Yakima	49	26	PCldy

THE UNITED STATES TODAY

As of noon, Eastern U.S. time

Scheduled to ETS or PCS?

Check our Relocation Guide every Saturday to find Realtors at your new station.

STARS AND STRIPES®
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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Odor closes school

MA PEMBROKE — A mysterious odor that's making some students sick has forced town officials to close Bryantville Elementary School until they can figure out what's causing the stench.

The school, which received a $15 million renovation two years ago, was shut down by the Board of Health after a unanimous vote.

A smell of burnt rubber was first detected in early November after the cafeteria ceiling was painted with a sealant intended to prevent mold growth.

Tests to determine the source of the smell are scheduled. In the meantime, town officials are coming up with alternative plans to educate roughly 570 students in grades K-6.

Trespassing swines

FL MELBOURNE — All over one suburban subdivision, wild pigs have left their mark.

There was a dead cat. Ruth Strahosky's lawn was shredded when she was on vacation. Trespassing swine have been spotted along Wright Avenue and Corbusier Drive, congregating in rummaging hordes of up to 20 animals.

The animals come from the adjacent, unfenced land owned by the Melbourne Airport Authority.

After a rash of complaints from the Fountainhead Homeowners Association, the airport authority agreed to a one-year contract with two licensed trappers to try to thwart the hog onslaught.

Volcano brush fire

HI VOLCANO — What at first appeared to be a fiery eruption at Kilauea Volcano turned out be a brush fire that scorched more than 850 acres and threatened a native shrub in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park on the Big Island, officials said.

Through the day, 20 park personnel and seven Hawaii County firefighters battled the blaze.

Three helicopters — one each from the park, county and Hilo-based tour operator Tropical Helicopters, made water drops after filling their buckets from a frog pond along a road.

"We want to assure our neighboring communities that we are on the attack; we are fighting this fire aggressively," Park Superintendent Cindy Orlando said.

Woman survives accident

IN ANDERSON — A woman survived being impaled by a 12-foot metal fence post that pierced through her mouth and came out the back of her neck in a car accident, authorities said.

Emergency crews had to saw off part of the 1½-inch thick fence rail to free Alejandra Martinez, who was still awake when crews arrived at the scene. Fire officials were shocked to find her alive.

Martinez drove through a stop sign at an intersection and hit another car, Anderson police spokesman Terry Sollars said. She then lost control, careened off the road and went through a chain-link fence.

The car hit a concrete porch, shoving it three feet back, Sollars said. The metal rod from the fence went through the driver's side of the windshield, he said.

Man tortures stray dog

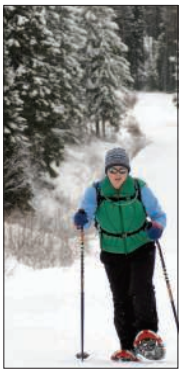
TX SAN ANGELO — An 18-year-old man was sentenced to two years probation for torturing a stray dog by hitting it with a skateboard, a case that drew national attention when a videotape of the attack showed up on the Internet.

The dog, a red chow-German shepherd mix, was euthanized after no one adopted it following the March 1 attack, according to court documents. Animal-rights Web sites posted the video and organized letter-writing campaigns urging harsh punishment.

The video, played in court, shows the dog lying in a corner next to a vending machine in a parking garage when Jonathan Benjamin Johnson lunges forward, smashing a skateboard with two hands into the side of the dog's head. The dog, after first jumping and barking, begins to stagger against the machine.

As the dog tries to turn away into the corner, another blow with the skateboard is delivered to its neck. The dog then curls into the corner.

Johnson also was fined $500 and ordered to complete 60 hours of community service. Johnson is also to avoid contact with Kevin Ward Wright, 18, whose trial on the same state jail felony charge of cruelty.



Winter walk

Heidi Reindl of Columbia Falls, Mont., snowshoes below Chair 6 on her way to the top of Big Mountain in Whitefish, Mont.

Brighter futures

CO DENVER — The drought isn't officially over, but the state's water supply is improving and farmers and ranchers are seeing a brighter future for the first time in four years. Trade pacts like the North American Free Trade Agreement have increased exports, raising prices for beef, wheat and vegetables, Colorado Farm Bureau officials said.

Airport standstill

CA SANTA ANA — An Orange County airport was temporarily brought to a standstill after a passenger vanished with a suspicious bag, prompting authorities to empty 10 planes and force hundreds of people to make a second trip through security screening. The precautionary step tangled air traffic at John Wayne Airport for as long as three hours.

Vaseline vandalism

NY BINGHAMTON — A Virginia man admitted to smearing 14 jars of petroleum jelly all over an upstate New York motel room.

Robert F. Chamberlain, 45, of McLean, gave no reason for his actions when he appeared in court to plead guilty to a misdemeanor charge of criminal mischief.

A Broome County judge sentenced Chamberlain to three years of probation and ordered him to pay $3,886 in damages to the Motel 6 in Chenango.

Authorities said Chamberlain coated every object of the motel room with petroleum jelly in May. A cleaning crew discovered the mess after he checked out, and he was arrested at another motel covered in the greasy stuff.

Gorillas mourn leader

IL BROOKFIELD — After Babs the gorilla died at age 30, keepers at Brookfield Zoo decided to allow surviving gorillas to mourn the most influential female in their social family.

One by one, the gorillas filed into the Tropic World building where Babs' body lay, arms outstretched. Curator Melinda Pruett Jones called it a "gorilla wake."

Keepers said the display wasn't surprising.

"She was the dominant female of the group, the peacekeeper, the disciplinarian, the one who kept things in a harmonious state," Pruett Jones said.

Babs had an incurable kidney condition and was euthanized. Keepers had recently seen a videotape of a gorilla wake at the Columbus, Ohio, zoo and decided they would do the same for Babs. Gorillas in the wild have been known to pay respects to their dead, keepers said.

Online payment service

AR LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas launched an online service to help ensure children get the support they're owed. Parents can make their child-support payments online by going to a secured Web site and logging into their account with a private password. Currently, more than 162,000 child-support payments are submitted each month in Arkansas by mail or in person.

Powerful kid

Nicholas Norton, 3, of Chenango Bridge, N.Y., puts all of his might into applying glue to pine cones as he makes a wreath out of mixed red pine, scotch pine, almonds, hickory nuts, rosehips, hemlock and cinnamon sticks at Finch Hollow Nature Center in Johnson City, during "Make a Nature Wreath" class.

We're cute, we know it

Eeyor and Jesus, two miniature donkeys who reside at the Pride and Joy Ranch in Vacaville, Ca., take a moment to pose for a picture.

Heartful performance

Dwana Adiaha Smallwood, left, Clifton Brown, center, and Hope Boykin perform in "Love Stories" in Kansas City, Mo.

Slippery accident Janesville firefighter Bob Gabbey keeps an eye on a SUV as it is removed from the swimming pool deck of the YMCA in Janesville, Wis. The vehicle's driver was pulling into a parking stall when the vehicle accelerated through the window and dropped six feet to the deck. The car came to rest with its nose on the floor and rear wheels still on the building's foundation, just missing a plunge into the deep end of the pool. The driver was not injured in the incident.

Rainy days A pedestrian walks in the rain across the campus of the University of Mississippi in Oxford, Miss.

Duck traffic A pair of ducks swim in the flood-waters of the Tennessee River at Ditto Landing in south Huntsville, Ala. The stop sign and speed limit signs are along roads leading to the marina's boat slips.

Frisbee in December College of Charleston student Eric Oliver tosses a flying disk to his friend Bud Yackey, not pictured, at Marion Square park in Charleston, S.C., as Christmas trees stand in the background.

ACLU against new law

CA SAN FRANCISCO — The American Civil Liberties Union is asking a federal judge to overturn California's voter-approved Proposition 69, which greatly expands the number of people whose DNA is included in law enforcement databases.

"Proposition 69 is an extraordinary assault on the privacy and security of all Californians," said Maya Harris, an ACLU attorney and director of the Racial Justice Project. "It turns the presumption of innocence on its head."

In a lawsuit filed Tuesday in federal district court in San Francisco, the ACLU says the new law — which requires DNA samples be taken from everyone convicted of a felony, and, in 2009, anyone arrested for a felony — is unconstitutional and a violation of privacy.

Teen hit by train

CO DENVER — Moments before slamming on the brakes of a northbound light-rail train, the driver looked up and locked eyes with a 13-year-old boy standing in the middle of the tracks.

The driver, whose name has not been released, hit the brakes, but the train was traveling 40 mph and still plowed into the boy. It eventually stopped with the teen wedged under a bumper guard.

"As soon as she saw the kid run up the embankment and stand on the tracks and stare right at her, she slammed on the brakes," police spokesman Perry Schellpfeffer said. "We are still trying to figure out why he did what he did."

The unidentified teen, who turned 13 in November, was listed in serious but stable condition Tuesday.

Parents go on strike

FL DELTONA — Even though the dishes, garbage and dirty laundry were piling up, homeowners Cat and Harlan Barnard were getting no help from their two children.

After begging and pleading with their 17-year-old son and 12-year-old daughter to help out around the house, the Barnards decided they were fed up. So they went on strike — and moved out to the front yard.

"This was our last-ditch effort," Cat Barnard said.

Since Monday morning, the Barnards have lived in a tent in their front yard, going inside the house only to use the restroom or shower. The couple sits on lawn chairs and roasts marshmallows over a hibachi.

Their children were confused on the first day when they came home from school. "It's extremely inconvenient," said their son, Ben Barnard. "Every time the phone rings, we have to run outside to give it to them."

Whether the couple's actions could be regarded as abandonment depends on how much guidance the parents are still providing and "if the children are suffering as a result," said Carrie Hoeppner, a spokeswoman with the Department of Children & Families in Orange County.

But Cat Barnard says the strike may already be paying dividends.

She noted that her daughter washed her own clothes for the first time on Tuesday.

"This is war," Cat Barnard said. "I love my babies, but I don't like what they're doing."

'Star Wars' dream

NJ GLOUCESTER TOWNSHIP — Not so long ago in a galaxy far, far away — or just southeast of Philadelphia — Mike Degirolamo had a plan.

He wanted to build a 20-by-12-foot model of a Jawa Sandcrawler, a hulking transport vehicle from the original "Star Wars" film, before the next installment of the saga "Star Wars: Episode III: Revenge of the Sith" opens in May.

To get the project done, he doesn't need the Force, but rather the power to persuade the township council it's a worthy project.

The council is planning a special meeting to discuss whether Degirolamo will be allowed to erect the model on the property of a local business.

There are two concerns about the proposed meeting of the fantasy and real worlds, according to township community development director Ed Sayers.

First, the property is in a historic redevelopment area where the Sandcrawler might not fit in architecturally. Also, it could be a liability.

"This is certainly one of those gray areas," Sayers said.

"This could wind up being an attractive nuisance and a safety concern if kids try to climb on it."

A lifesaving gift

IN ANDERSON — The Anderson Fire Department has a holiday gift that has a real lifesaving ring to it — ambulance service subscription cards.

The cards cost $25 and can save the recipient $225 to $400 on a trip to the hospital depending on the amount of care needed. The cards are good for one ride and expire after a year.

"It would be a good Christmas gift if you know a needy family who might need medical care," said fire department Capt. Denny Jones.

The cards have been available since 1996, when the city about 35 miles northeast of Indianapolis began charging for ambulance service. But this is the first year the department has promoted them.

"It used to be that we only sold them twice a year, but now they're available all year," said Leona Brown, the fire department's billing coordinator.

Don't feed the geese

NV RENO — The increasing population of geese in the Reno-Sparks area is causing officials to consider a ban on feeding waterfowl. Under the proposal, feeding waterfowl would be prohibited at Virginia Lake and most other city properties.

Town may buy orchard

NH HOLLIS — At a town meeting next week, voters will consider spending more than $4 million to protect 261 acres. Voters will consider buying the 181-acre Woodmont Orchard and 80 acres of woodlands. About 20 percent of the town's 21,000 acres is protected from development.

Stories and photos from wire services

AFRTS Television Schedule

Updated sports listings are available on the first Scoreboard page in the sports section or AFN's Web site at http://myafn.dodmedia.osd.mil/

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2004

	AFN-FAMILY	AFN-MOVIE	AFN-EUROPE	AFN-KOREA	AFN-NEWS	AFN-SPORTS	SPECTRUM	AFN-PACIFIC
9:00	Static Shock "Gear"	(8:54) Movie ★★★ "Of Mice and Men" (1992, Drama) John Malkovich, Gary Sinise, Casey Siemaszko.	Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius	Access Hollywood	Nightline	College Basketball Alabama-Birmingham at Oklahoma State. (Taped)	Clean House	Access Hollywood
9:30	Kim Possible "Partners" (EI)		Drake & Josh "First Crush"		Air Force TV News			
10:00	Teen Titans		That's So Raven	Headline News	Hardball With Chris Matthews		BBQ With Bobby Flay	Headline News
10:30	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turt.		Switched! "Steven and Kyle"	ESPNews			$40-a-Day	ESPNews
11:00	Dragonball GT	Movie ★★½ "Jack the Bear" (1993, Drama) Danny DeVito. Adults become real-life monsters to two young boys.	Focus on the Force	George Lopez	The O'Reilly Factor	SportsCenter	Fashion Police	According to Jim
11:30	Justice League		American Adventurer	Half & Half			It's Good to Be	Half & Half
12:00	Teen Kids News (EI)		Access Hollywood	CSI: Miami "Invasion"		Rodeo Wrangler National Finals. From Las Vegas. (Taped)	101 Most Unforgettable SNL Moments	CSI: Miami "Invasion"
12:30	Tutenstein (EI)				Dateline NBC			
13:00	Endurance "Pathfinder" (EI)	(12:49) Movie ★★★ "Crocodile Dundee" (1986, Comedy) Paul Hogan, Linda Kozlowski.	WWE Raw	Law & Order: Special Victims Unit "Mean"			Intimate Portrait "Diane Von Furstenberg"	Law & Order: Special Victims Unit "Mean"
13:30	Scout's Safari "Shark!" (EI)				CNN Saturday Morning			
14:00	Animal Kidding	(4:1) Movie ★★★ "Moulin Rouge" (2001, Musical) Nicole Kidman, Ewan McGregor. A writer shares a bittersweet romance with a nightclub diva.	According to Jim	Headline News	Economy Watch	SportsCenter	Antiques Roadshow "Charlotte, North Carolina"	Headline News
14:30			Half & Half	Saturday Night Live				Saturday Night Live
15:00	Most Extreme "Dads" Some animal fathers.		CSI: Miami "Invasion"		CNN Saturday Morning	NBA Basketball Portland Trail Blazers at Utah Jazz. From the Delta Center in Salt Lake City.	Star Trek: Voyager "Jetrel"	
15:30								
16:00	Hercules: The Legendary Journeys "All That Glitters"		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit "Mean"	Kickin' It Latest in music and trends.	Bulls and Bears		Ripley's Believe It or Not	Kickin' It Latest in music and trends.
16:30					Cavuto on Business			
17:00	Aaahh! Real Monsters	Movie ★★½ "The Three Musketeers" (1993, Adventure) Charlie Sheen, Kiefer Sutherland, Chris O'Donnell.	Headline News	The Entertainers	Forbes	SportsCenter	Fear Factor	The Entertainers
17:30	Rocket Power		Navy/Marine Corps News		America's Black Forum			
18:00	SpongeBob SquarePants		SportsCenter	NFL Matchup	CNN Live Saturday	College Basketball Louisville at Florida. (Live)	What Not to Wear "Elizabeth" Teacher's fashion makeover.	NFL Matchup
18:30	Rugrats			ESPNews				ESPNews
19:00	Movie "It's a Very Merry Muppet Christmas Movie" (2002, Comedy) Whoopi Goldberg.	Movie ★★½ "American Pie 2" (2001, Comedy) Jason Biggs, Shannon Elizabeth.	NFL Live	College Basketball Utah at Arizona. (Live)	War Stories With Oliver North		Trading Spaces	College Basketball Utah at Arizona. (Live)
19:30			College Basketball Indiana at Kentucky. (Live)					
20:00					Wall Street Journal	College Basketball Oregon at Illinois. (Live)	Tru Calling "Putting Out Fires"	
20:30	Movie ★★ "Call Me Claus" (2001, Comedy-Drama) Whoopi Goldberg, Nigel Hawthorne.	(4:42) Movie ★★½ "What Women Want" (2000, Comedy) Mel Gibson, Helen Hunt. A chauvinistic ad executive can suddenly read women's minds.			Air Force TV News			
21:00				College Football Teams to Be Announced. (Live)	Next at CNN		1-800-Missing "MIA"	College Football Teams to Be Announced. (Live)
21:30								
22:00	My So-Called Life "Resolutions"		College Basketball Stanford at Michigan State. (Live)		FOX News	College Football NCAA Division II Final -- Pittsburg State vs. Valdosta State. From Florence, Ala. (Live)	Friends	
22:30							Seinfeld "The Millennium"	
23:00	The Simpsons	Movie ★★★½ "Seven" (1995, Suspense) Brad Pitt.		College Basketball DePaul at Notre Dame. (Live)	FOX News		The Real World	College Basketball DePaul at Notre Dame. (Live)
23:30	The Simpsons						Punk'd	

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2004

00:00	Futurama	(11:00) Movie ★★½ "Seven" (1995) Brad Pitt.	Inside the NFL	(11:00) College Basketball DePaul at Notre Dame. (Live)	Headline News	College Football: NCAA Division II Final	Mad TV	(11:00) College Basketball DePaul at Notre Dame. (Live)
00:30	Futurama "The Honking"				McLaughlin Group (N)			
1:00	Movie "It's a Very Merry Muppet Christmas Movie" (2002, Comedy) Whoopi Goldberg.	(12:47) Movie ★★½ "Demolition Man" (1993) Sylvester Stallone, Wesley Snipes.	Saturday Night Live	Headline News	The Capital Gang	SportsCenter	Trading Spaces	Headline News
1:30				Air Force TV News				Air Force TV News
2:00				NBA Basketball Teams to Be Announced. (Live)	Washington Week in Review	2004 Heisman Trophy Presentation From New York.	Tru Calling "Putting Out Fires"	NBA Basketball Teams to Be Announced. (Live)
2:30	Movie ★★ "Call Me Claus" (2001, Comedy-Drama) Whoopi Goldberg, Nigel Hawthorne.	Coming Attractions	Kickin' It Latest in music and trends.		Headline News			
3:00		Movie ★★½ "American Pie 2" (2001, Comedy) Jason Biggs, Shannon Elizabeth.			Larry King Live	Rodeo Wrangler National Finals. From Las Vegas. (Taped)	1-800-Missing "MIA"	
3:30			The Entertainers					
4:00	My So-Called Life "Resolutions"				At Large With Geraldo Rivera		Friends	
4:30		(4:42) Movie ★★½ "What Women Want" (2000, Comedy) Mel Gibson, Helen Hunt. A chauvinistic ad executive can suddenly read women's minds.	The American Athlete	Happily Ever After			Seinfeld "The Millennium"	Happily Ever After
5:00	Sesame Street (EI)		Headline News	The Three Stooges	Dateline International	SportsCenter	Breathingspace Yoga	Movie ★★ "The Santa Clause 2" (2002) Tim Allen, Elizabeth Mitchell. Santa must get married in order to keep his job.
5:30			Hour of Power	(:20) The Three Stooges			Caribbean Workout	
6:00	Barney & Friends (EI)		Celebration of Victory	Gilligan's Island	Big Story Weekend Edition	Rodeo Wrangler National Finals. From Las Vegas. (Taped)	Area	
6:30	Blue's Clues (EI)		Coral Ridge Hour	The Simpsons			Swamp Critters	MotorWeek
7:00	Sylvester & Tweety	Movie ★★½ "Love Me Tender" (1956, Musical) Elvis Presley, Debra Paget.	Word in the World	MotorWeek	CNN Saturday Night		Harvest	Ebert-Movies
7:30	Scooby Doo		Cafe Video Christian music.	Ebert-Movies			Music and the Spoken Word	WWE Smackdown!
8:00	The Magic School Bus (EI)		Madeline	WWE Smackdown!	The Beltway Boys	SportsCenter	Real Videos	
8:30	The Jetsons	(:45) Movie "Secret of Giving" (1999, Drama) Reba McEntire. A mysterious rider helps a woman regain her faith.	Happily Ever After		Fox News Watch		Lain Lifestyles	Stargate SG-1 The team may have discovered Atlantis.
9:00	House of Mouse		Movie ★★ "The Santa Clause 2" (2002) Tim Allen, Elizabeth Mitchell. Santa must get married in order to keep his job.	Stargate SG-1 The team may have discovered Atlantis.	Headline News	Golf Target World Challenge -- Third Round. From Thousand Oaks, Calif. (Taped)	Urban Style	
9:30	Animaniacs				America's Black Forum		Fantasy Camp	Headline News
10:00	Ed, Edd n Eddy			Headline News	The Chris Matthews Show		Roker on the Road	ESPNews
10:30	Fillmore (EI)	(:25) Movie ★★½ "For the Boys" (1991, Comedy-Drama) Bette Midler, James Caan. Two bickering USO performers share 50 years and three wars.		ESPNews	Navy/Marine Corps News		Radical Sabbatical	Smallville "Delete"
11:00	Out There		Destinations	Smallville "Delete"	Big Story Weekend Edition		All-American Festivals	
11:30	Planet's Funniest Animals		Ebert-Movies				The Suze Orman Show	Movie
12:00	In the Mix		Headline News	Movie	20/20	SportsCenter		
12:30	Happy Days		Air Force TV News					
13:00	Movie ★★ "Switching Goals" (1999, Comedy) Mary-Kate Olsen, Ashley Olsen.	Movie ★★★ "The River" (1984, Drama) Mel Gibson, Sissy Spacek. A farm family uses all its resources to save its land.	College Basketball Teams to Be Announced. (Live)		Fox and Friends	Boxing Glen Johnson vs. Antonio Tarver. (Taped)	Celebrity Poker Showdown	
13:30								
14:00				Headline News	Fox and Friends			Headline News
14:30	Movie ★★½ "The Adventures of Pinocchio" (1996, Fantasy) Martin Landau.			Scrubs				Scrubs
15:00		(:14) Movie ★★ "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" (1989, Comedy) Chevy Chase, Beverly D'Angelo.	SportsCenter	Meet the Press	CBS News Sunday Morning	ESPNews	Battle Stations "A10" Tank destroyer.	Meet the Press
15:30						NBA Fastbreak		
16:00	Aaahh! Real Monsters		WWE Smackdown!	America's Black Forum		Sports Reporters	JAG "Iron Coffin"	America's Black Forum
16:30	Rocket Power			Access Hollywood		SportsCenter		Access Hollywood
17:00	SpongeBob SquarePants	True Hollywood Story	Stargate SG-1 The team may have discovered Atlantis.		Face the Nation	NFL Countdown	The Best Of	
17:30	Rugrats				Headline News		Good Eats	ESPNews
18:00	Kraft Bros. Be the Creature		NFL Today (Live)	Fox NFL Sunday (Live)	Navy/Marine Corps News		My Wife and Kids	Fox NFL Sunday (Live)
18:30	Manatees.				Late Edition Primetime		King of the Hill	
19:00	America's Funniest Home Videos	Movie ★★½ "The Straight Story" (1999, Drama) Richard Farnsworth, Sissy Spacek, Jane Galloway Heitz.	NFL Football Regional Coverage -- Cincinnati at New England; Cleveland at Buffalo, Indianapolis at Houston or Oakland at Atlanta. (Live)	NFL Football Regional Coverage -- Chicago at Jacksonville, New Orleans at Dallas, N.Y. Giants at Baltimore or Seattle at Minnesota. (Live)		NFL Football Regional Coverage -- Chicago at Jacksonville, New Orleans at Dallas, N.Y. Giants at Baltimore or Seattle at Minnesota. (Live)	Hope & Faith	NFL Football Regional Coverage -- Chicago at Jacksonville, New Orleans at Dallas, N.Y. Giants at Baltimore or Seattle at Minnesota. (Live)
19:30							The King of Queens	
20:00	Gilmore Girls "Scene in a Mall"				FOX News		Last Comic Standing	
20:30								
21:00	American Dreams "Real-to-Reel"	(:07) Movie ★★★ "The Wedding Singer" (1998) Adam Sandler. A 1980s wedding crooner attempts to find true love.			FOX News		NCIS A Marine's severed leg is found in a trash receptacle.	
21:30								
22:00	The Cosby Show		NFL Football Regional Coverage -- Miami Dolphins at Denver Broncos or New York Jets at Pittsburgh Steelers. (Live)	NFL Football: Regional Coverage -- Lions at Packers, 49ers at Cardinals, Rams at Panthers or Buccaneers at Chargers	Meet the Press	NFL Football: Regional Coverage -- Lions at Packers, 49ers at Cardinals, Rams at Panthers or Buccaneers at Chargers	Friends	NFL Football: Regional Coverage -- Lions at Packers, 49ers at Cardinals, Rams at Panthers or Buccaneers at Chargers
22:30	Home Improvement						Seinfeld "The Muffin Tops"	
23:00	Touched by an Angel "My Dinner With Andrew"	Movie ★★★ "G.I. Jane" (1997, Drama) Demi Moore.			FNS with Chris Wallace		Mad TV	
23:30								

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FACES

Joan and Melissa Rivers are back

There's just no keeping **Joan** and **Melissa Rivers** off Hollywood's red carpets.

The mother-daughter tandem, shut out of this year's Emmy Awards because of a contractual tangle, will return starting with next month's Golden Globe Awards.

Melissa and Joan Rivers

Star Jones Reynolds, a co-host of ABC's "The View," replaced the Rivers team on E! Entertainment Television after they took their acerbic fashion commentary to the TV Guide Channel earlier this year. The duo had been at E! since 1996.

Now they'll all be on the red carpet, chatting with Golden Globe nominees and guests as they arrive at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on Jan. 16.

"It's been a mess, it's been a very messy couple of months," Joan Rivers said Tuesday. "I think they have their acts together. I just want to get back to work."

She said she expects to be on hand for all the Hollywood awards in 2005.

Will Hollywood's stars be more carefully dressed knowing they'll again be facing the sharp-tongued Rivers women? "They better be," Melissa Rivers said.

Shalala may join all-male football club

The Miami Touchdown Club, a group for football fans and former players that raises money for charities and college scholarships, has agreed to change its rules to accept University of Miami President **Donna Shalala** as its first female member.

Shalala

Shalala had told the 45-year-old club she wanted to apply last month after a female lawyer's earlier application was rejected.

Club President **Adam Lubkin** sent an e-mail notifying Shalala of her acceptance if she chooses to apply.

Shalala has yet to apply to the organization, school spokeswoman **Sarah Artecona** said Wednesday. Shalala, who was President Clinton's secretary of health and human services, was traveling on school business and wasn't immediately available for comment.

Coral Gables lawyer **Natalie Lemos**, a Miami football season-ticket holder, applied for membership in September, but was told the club only accepted men.

Country singer Dickens reportedly ill

Veteran country singer **Little Jimmy Dickens** reportedly was hospitalized with pneumonia.

WSMV-TV reported Tuesday that the 83-year-old Grand Ole Opry star, who has performed on the live country show almost continuously since 1948, had been admitted to an unidentified Nashville hospital last weekend. The station said he was improving.

A spokeswoman for the Grand Ole Opry didn't return a phone call Tuesday night.

Dickens was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1983. His hits include "May the Bird of Paradise Fly up Your Nose," and "A-Sleepin' at the Foot of the Bed."

'The Incredibles' nominated for Annies

"The Incredibles," Pixar Animation Studios' tale of a superhero family struggling with supervillians and suburban life, tops the list of nominees for the 32nd annual Annie Awards.

"The Incredibles" got 16 nominations while DreamWorks' "Shrek 2" and "Shark Tale" had seven each, according to a Monday announcement by the International Animated Film Society, which will present the awards on Jan. 30 in Glendale, Calif.

Nominations for "The Incredibles" include best animated feature, directing, music and voice acting for **Samuel L. Jackson**, who plays the hero Frozone, and **Brad Bird** as the fashion designer Edna Mode.

Other nominees for top animated feature include "Shrek 2," "Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence" and "The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie."

Nominated for best animated television production were the "SpongeBob SquarePants" show, "My Life as a Teenage Robot," "Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends," "Star Wars: The Clone Wars" and "Batman."

Society members will vote on the nominations, which were made by a committee.

Stories and photos from wire services

Ten secrets behind SpongeBob SquarePants

BY ANTHONY BRECZNICAN
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES

America's favorite deep-sea sponge is coming to the surface.

SpongeBob SquarePants, a goofy sink utensil who wears a little brown suit and lives in a pineapple at the bottom of the ocean, has spent the past five years on the Nickelodeon TV channel. Now a new animated film sends him to a "real world" both simple and surreal.

Here are 10 little-known facts about "The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie" and the origin of a cartoon cult icon:

1. The birth of SpongeBob: The movie's director and "SpongeBob" creator Stephen Hillenburg was a former marine science teacher who wanted to do a sea cartoon. "I really wanted to do something about one character, based on an innocent who is surrounded by more cynical beings ... . A sort of awkward, nerdy goofball, oddball," he said.

Fish seemed too ordinary, so he started thinking about a sponge.

"I drew these natural sponges for a while and gave them googly eyes and it didn't come together until I drew a sink sponge one day. I thought, 'This is the guy.' He's the square peg, literally, in this world of animals."

2. Helium voice: Tom Kenny, who supplies SpongeBob's high, nasal voice, was a standup comic who worked with Hillenburg on the 1993 animal cartoon series "Rocko's Modern World." When "SpongeBob" started in 1999, Hillenburg remembered an obscure character Kenny did years earlier, and envisioned it as the voice of his weird sea hero.

"It was in one episode in a crowd scene," Kenny recalled. "In the voice-over world we call the sound 'walla,' just a crowd of people mumbling and grumbling. Steve remembered I had done this squeaky, helium-voiced elf guy. Just a total throwaway voice."

3. Nine times as absorbent: Most half-hour SpongeBob TV episodes are made of 10-minute shorts, so the new 90-minute film required a different kind of story: SpongeBob and his slow-witted starfish friend Patrick travel to the surface to rescue the crown of temperamental King Neptune.

4. Bald spot: Among the movie's celebrity voices is Jeffrey Tambor as the overly angry King Neptune, whose missing crown reveals his blinding baldness.

Tambor, the criminal father from the Emmy-winning comedy "Arrested Development" and the pathetic "Hey, now!" announcer from "The Larry Sanders Show," said he shares the follicle-challenged scalp of the character, but not his insecurities.

"I don't have those issues. I look lousy in a rug," Tambor said. "I worked because of being bald, so I'm blessed. I mean, I was the guy in summer stock [theater] who played all the old guys at 16."

5. Patrick the starfish: Bill Fagerbakke, best known as Dauber from TV's "Coach," has a naturally deep voice, but has to swallow it further to play SpongeBob's dopey starfish friend Patrick.

The result, he said, is an audible version of the fat/skinny look of comedy teams like Laurel and Hardy or Abbott and Costello — Patrick is the immense rumbler and SpongeBob is the high-pitched whiner.

"I just kinda pretend my mouth is in my chest and I just sloooowww down," Fagerbakke said.

6. Undersea songwriter: Besides doing SpongeBob's voice, Kenny also wrote two songs for the movie's soundtrack: one with the title hero singing "The Best Day Ever" and another with Patrick singing "Under My Rock."

A group of old-time pirates sings the theme song in the film, and Avril Lavigne belts it out on the soundtrack CD.

7. Hasselhoff to the rescue: Former "Baywatch" star David Hasselhoff appears in live action as a lifeguard who jumps in to help SpongeBob and Patrick in a critical moment.

"We wrote the entire sequence without asking him," Hillenburg said. "Fortunately, he's a great guy. ... He didn't even see the material and said, 'I'm in.' He was great at making fun of himself."

8. Why adults like SpongeBob: "It's about keeping your kid-nature in life and not totally becoming a curmudgeon," Hillenburg said. "As we get older it gets harder to do that."

"SpongeBob's job is to just be positive and think that every day is going to be the best day ever," Kenny added. "The people around him either find that delightful or ... just irritating."

9. Wife swap: Kenny's real-life wife, comic Jill Talley, supplies the deadpan voice of Karen — the computer program "wife" of the character Plankton, who is a tiny, green, megalomaniacal sea villain.

10. Future episodes: There have only been a handful of new "SpongeBob" TV episodes since 2003, but — despite rumors — the series has not been canceled.

Kenny, Fagerbakke and the rest of the crew have completed four new episodes for broadcast on Nickelodeon in early 2005. They said they plan to finish about 20 total.

Stand-up comic Tom Kenny loves his job as the voice for SpongeBob SquarePants, who now stars in "The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie." "I get paid to do all this stuff you get yelled at for in school," Kenny said.

AP
Photo illustration by Bill Webster
The Washington Post

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Addresses

U.S. MAIL: Unit 29480, APO AE 09211
INTERNATIONAL MAIL: Postfach 1330, 64345 Griesheim, Germany
FAX: DSN 349-8416; civ. (+49) (0) 6155/601416
E-MAIL: News: news@mail.estripes.osd.mil
Letters: letters@mail.estripes.osd.mil
CENTRAL OFFICE: 529 14th Street NW, Suite 350, Washington DC 20045-1301. Phone DSN 312-763-0900 or civ. (+1) (202) 761-0900. Fax (+1) (202) 761-0890
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR: David Mazzarella, 529 14th St. NW, Suite 350, Washington, DC 20045-1301. Phone DSN 312- 763-0945 or civ. (+1) (202) 761-0945.
E-mail:mazzarellad@stripes.osd.mil
OMBUDSMAN: Joe Ungaro. Send comments to: Ombudsman, Stars and Stripes, 529 14th St. NW, Suite 350, Washington, D.C. 20045-1301. Phone civilian (+1) (401) 364-6032; fax (+1) (401) 364-8696;
or e-mail: ombudsman@stripes.osd.mil.

How to call us

Editor: DSN 349-8237: civ. (+49) (0) 6155/601237
Letters: DSN 349-8400: civ. (+49) (0) 6155/601400
Sports: DSN 349-8225: civ. (+49) (0) 6155/601225
Circulation: DSN 349-8437; civ. (+49) (0) 6155/601437
Advertising: DSN 349-8335/443;
civ. (+49) (0) 6155/601335/443.

News Bureaus

GERMANY (country code +49)
Bamberg: Rick Emert, 279th BSB, Unit 27535, Box 23541, APO AE 09139-7535; tel. DSN 469-7957 or civ. (0) 951/36896; fax DSN 469-8007 or civ. (0) 951/300-8007;
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boydt@mail.estripes.osd.mil
Darmstadt: Kevin Dougherty, Unit 29480, APO AE 09211; tel. DSN 349-8406 or civ. (0) 6155-601406;
e-mail: doughertyk@mail.estripes.osd.mil; Ward Sanderson, Unit 29480, APO AE 09211; tel. DSN 349-8326 or civ. (0) 6155-601326; e-mail: sandersonw@mail.estripes.osd.mil; and Jessica Iñigo, Unit 29480, APO AE 09211; tel. DSN 349-8290 or civ. (0) 6155-601290; e-mail: inigoj@mail.estripes.osd.mil
Heidelberg/Mannheim: Jon R. Anderson, Room 117, Romerstr. 104, 69115 Heidelberg; tel. DSN 370-7010 or civ. (0) 6221/600554; fax civ. (0) 6221/23421; e-mail:
andersonj@mail.estripes.osd.mil;
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coonc@mail.estripes.osd.mil
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ITALY
Aviano/Vicenza: Kent Harris, tel. DSN (314) 632-7652 or civ. (39) 0434-66-7652; second line DSN (314) 632-4222 or civ. (39) 0434-66-4222; e-mail: harrisk@mail.estripes.osd.mil
Naples: Sandra Jontz and Jason Chudy, PSC 810, Box 56, FPO AE 09619; tel. DSN 626-5157 or civ. (+39) (081) 568-5157; fax DSN 626-5150 or civ. (+39) (081) 568-5150; e-mail:
jontzs@mail.estripes.osd.mil; chudyj@mail.estripes.osd.mil
SPAIN
Rota: Scott Schonauer, PSC 819, Box 1, FPO AE 09645; tel. DSN 727-1099 or civ. (+34) (956) 82-1099; fax DSN 727-1034 or civ. (+34) (956) 82-1034
e-mail: schonauers@mail.estripes.osd.mil
UNITED KINGDOM
RAF Mildenhall: Ron Jensen, Building 465 ECSS-UK, RAF Mildenhall, APO AE 09459; tel. DSN 238-4868 or civ. (+44) (0) 1638/544868; fax civ. (+44) (0) 1638/ 718013;
e-mail: jensenr@mail.estripes.osd.mil
WASHINGTON D.C.
Bureau editor: Patrick Dickson, 529 14th Street NW, Suite 350, Washington DC 20045-1301; tel. (+1) (202) 761-0859;
e-mail: dicksonp@stripes.osd.mil
Lisa Burgess, tel civ. (+1) (703) 692-1875; and Leo Shane, 529 14th Street NW, Suite 350, Washington DC 20045-1301; tel civ. (+1) (202) 761-1183; fax civ. (+1) (202) 761-0890; e-mail: burgessl@stripes.osd.mil and shanel@stripes.osd.mil

Printed in Italy by Editrice Telestampa

Stars and Stripes (USPS 017252) is published daily (except Christmas and New Year's) for 50 cents daily and $1 Sunday by the Stars and Stripes central office, 529 14th St. NW, Suite 350, Washington DC 20045-1301. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C. Postmaster: Send address changes to European Stars and Stripes, Unit 29480, APO AE 09211.
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Higher headquarters decides

I would like to know what were the sources used to determine that our higher headquarters considers Logistics Support Area Anaconda to be a garrison base ("Anaconda is not garrison," letter, Nov. 9).

The answer to the question: "Why are we required to wear our body armor and head protection at all times when outside?" is because our higher headquarters ordered us to because of the threat level increase. If our higher headquarters has ordered us to wear our protective gear, then maybe they don't consider LSA Anaconda a garrison base.

As far as the buildings on LSA Anaconda that are used to service the soldiers, the buildings were available. If a building is available to be utilized for offices such as finance, personnel and for the Army and Air Force Exchange Service and Morale, Welfare and Recreation services, then it will be utilized instead of tents. These buildings were available and not built to provide overhead protection for soldiers, even though they can provide such protection.

Our higher headquarters has determined that soldiers speeding on base is a safety issue, so if the military police are ordered to give out tickets, then that is what they will do. If you are not an MP, then you can't assume that this is all that they do, because they may be rotating patrols, giving out speeding tickets and other things.

The overabundance of soldiers, if that is what the letter writer wants to call it, is a political issue and we can't just send a bunch of untrained trigger-happy soldiers outside the wire.

Our higher headquarters has provided us the luxuries that we have to help us deal with a yearlong deployment and to prepare for future plans in Balad, not because they consider LSA Anaconda a garrison base. Terrorists have demonstrated that they will attack us on our own land and anywhere else in the world, so the threat is there if you are in a garrison environment or not, and our higher headquarters knows that.

Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Johnson
Logistics Support Area Anaconda, Iraq

Tell us what you think

Stars and Stripes welcomes your comments on editorials and columns that are published in the newspaper, and values letters on topics of importance in the lives of our readers. All letters must be signed, and must include the writer's address or base and telephone number. Please limit all letters to 300 words. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, taste and clarity.

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Watch out for news spin

When I listen to any news source lately I take the stories with some very large grains of salt. However, [recently] I heard American Forces Radio Network mention protesters against President Bush's visit to Canada as "thousands show up to protest the President."

A little swing through some non-spun Web news found a story (copyright 2004 Agence France Presse, no less) that was titled "Early anti-Bush demos fizzle in Canada." That article goes on to explain how the 42 journalists in attendance outnumbered the 39 protesters from various groups from Ottawa. Listen, Canadians are great people and most of them don't want to be lumped together with professional protesters of "everything under the sun."

We in America, and especially in the military, have a hard enough time listening to fellow Americans who love to protest but would never be caught dead helping to solve any real problems. Remember, governance is hard and peace is even harder.

American Forces Network, AFRN and Stars and Stripes: Please check your stories before you send them out into the ether. Most all news sources out there are spun or slanted in some way that suggest bias. Even The Associated Press, United Press International and Reuters can't claim to be totally without their journalistic top spin. But sometimes "news" is merely shot-gunned from one source into the news that, for many soldiers, is the only one readily available. Then, we tend to believe what may turn out to be outright, boldfaced lies.

As for the story itself, can you imagine the agenda of a journalist who has to paint such an ugly face on a presidential visit to one of our oldest and greatest allies? Who would do such a thing? For shame!

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Dennis Busch
Giebelstadt, Germany

Hunting photo unnecessary

Why was it necessary to depict the photo and caption about the deer hunter in Stripes (Nov. 3, American Roundup)?

I find this objectionable. I don't need to be reminded that there are plenty of yahoos out there attempting to prove their manhood (or lack of it) by killing innocent animals. What a cowardly act.

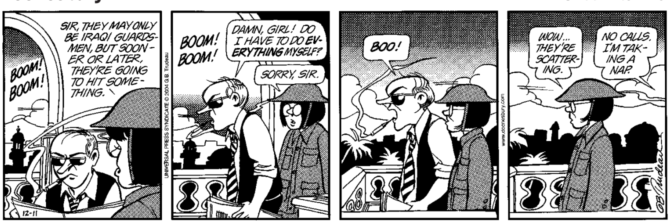
Perhaps a more beneficial use of this space would be if Stripes explained the consequences of this so-called sport, a description of what actually takes place when a buckshot makes contact with a deer or any other animal, and brutally maims or causes the sometimes-slow and agonizing death of these creatures, unless, of course they immediately drop dead.

It is disappointing that Stripes endorses this unnecessary, barbaric and depraved annihilation.

Jacqueline Diaz
Stuttgart, Germany

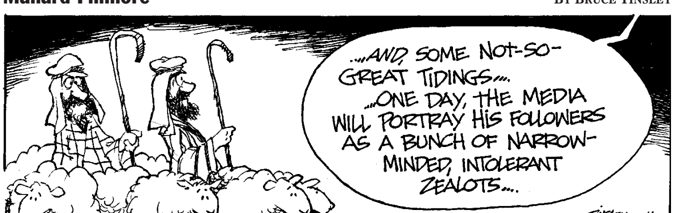
Doonesbury

BY GARRY TRUDEAU



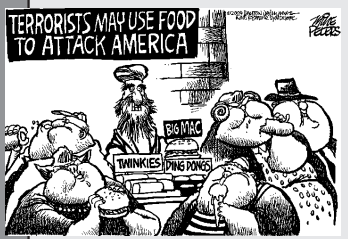
Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



Looking at the news

A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons



MIKE PETERS/King Features Syndicate

MIKE PETERS/King Features Syndicate

PAT OLIPHANT/Universal Press Syndicate

GLENN MCCOY/Universal Press Syndicate

PAT OLIPHANT/Universal Press Syndicate

Horoscope

Holiday Mathis

The sun and new moon in Sagittarius join with Pluto to make a cosmic call like an emphatic preacher, saying, "Lay your burdens down!" But don't worry, if you still think your baggage makes you quirky and attractive, and you can't bear to part with your troubles, events converge to bump the problem right out of your hand.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (December 11). Your mojo is working for you this year. You capture the intrigue of people who make up reasons to be around you. A romantic proposition this month could involve making a lifetime commitment. Shrewd investments this month keep making you money through the year. A change of locale does your heart and soul good in February or March.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). When a "lack" mentality sets in — "Hey, wait, there's not enough to go around!" — be bold enough to believe in something different from the rest of the group. Maybe it's time to bust a move to more fertile ground.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Evidence that there may have been a past misjudgment on your part is stacking up and spilling over into your formerly orderly world. Luckily, you can avoid that nasty pile because you are never wrong (ahem).

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Your attitude dictates that everything is doable. Learning is freedom. Once you know the system, you can accomplish the most complex and impressive of feats — living with your family, for starters. Everything is copasetic.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). It's simply not fair. Your mistakes only make you more attractive, your messes make you loveable, and when you misstep, well, you couldn't care less. You are too busy dreaming of ways to earn your first million.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You're not being calculating when you decide to show your vulnerability to someone who will most definitely take you straight into his or her heart as a result. But if you were being calculating, this would be a stroke of brilliance.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Yours is a tough job for sure. You'll be providing tea and sympathy for loved ones, to a point. And then, you'll be serving up the swift kick that gets them back into action. They'll thank you later — much, much later.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Where can you hang the blame for your "blahs"? Is it too much sugar, a lack of exercise or not enough room on your credit card for a proper shopping spree that's the problem? Make a few calls, and things turn around quickly.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You're the Sweetart in someone's candy stash, the crouton on the salad, the pickle on the deli plate. How does it feel to have someone crave you? Likely, you're still not sure if you want to be this needed.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You believe in love at first sight. You think it's possible to meet a benevolent benefactor. And you have faith that everyone gets a comeuppance sooner or later. And so, you're the one to whom these things happen.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You've been breaking your back to see a project take off, and the progress is slow going. As for that person who is doing less and getting more reward, the whistle is blown now — one of the many reasons you're dancing.

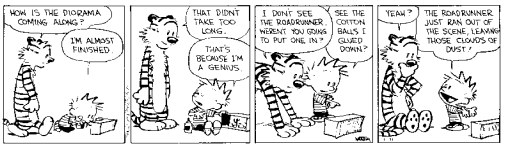
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The heights of joy you aspire to can be reached, but not as readily as you'd like right now. If you can't get there through the usual philanthropy, try comparing yourself to people who are really in a bad way.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Your key relationships feature a bit of the old razzle-dazzle, hocus-pocus, mumbo jumbo! It's up to you to decide what to believe. Going along for the ride is probably more fun. There's always time for bubble bursting later.

Creators Syndicate

Peanuts

Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start

Zits

Cathy

Hi and Lois

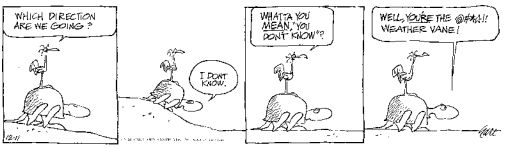
Beetle Bailey

Red and Rover

Better or Worse

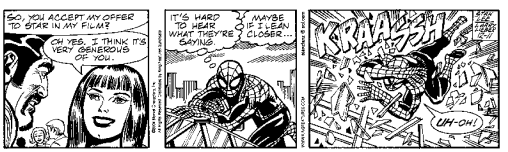
Foxtrot

B.C.



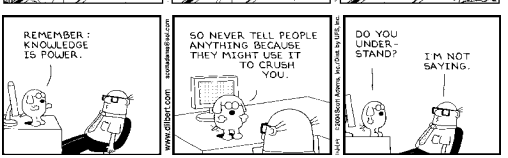
Baby Blues

Spider Man



Blondie

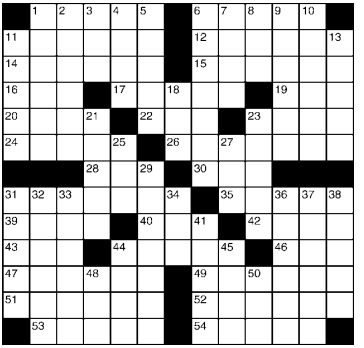
Dilbert



Hagar

Garfield

Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

1 "Get lost!"
6 Half a 1960s quartet
11 In
12 Wards off
14 South American land
15 Mideastern land
16 Possessive pronoun
17 — numeral
19 Greek vowel
20 It takes the cake
22 "Platoon" setting
23 Not loose
24 Brought back
26 Tastes
28 Insult (Sl.)
30 Scale member
31 Any old person
35 Kid-lit author Dahl
39 LPs, CDs, etc. (Abbr.)
40 Chaps
42 Branch
43 "You — There"
44 De-squeaked
46 Khan title
47 European land
49 Mediterranean land
51 Merchant
52 Cutlery
53 Cowardly one
54 They often battle

Down

1 Endeavor
2 Went after
3 Cartoonist Chast
4 Eastern potentate (Var.)
5 Crenshaw, e.g.
6 Nightwear
7 Shakespeare's river
8 Apiece
9 Zealous
10 Museum piece
11 Detest
13 Unexpected problems
18 Treasure seeker's aid
21 Some are real posers
23 Corporate division
25 King Louis —
27 Fate
29 Wine description
31 Covers completely
32 Medal earners
33 Peacock-tail spots
34 Cath. or Prot.
36 Suffer from deprivation
37 Medley connectors
38 Pile up
41 Parts of guitars
44 Individuals
45 Unit of force
48 Hirt and Gore
50 Snaps

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	R	M	E	D		H	M	S		M	I	S
P	I	A	N	O		Y	E	A		I	N	N
T	O	D	D	Y		M	A	D	O	N	N	A
		I	S	L	A	N	D		R	E	E	K
A	S	S		E	V	A		H	A	R	R	Y
D	O	O	R		E	L	F	I	N			
J	U	N	I	O	R		L	E	G	M	A	N
			T	A	S	T	Y		E	A	V	E
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I	X	I	A		T	A	N	G	L	E		
M	A	D	L	I	B	S		R	E	I	G	N
E	L	D		M	A	E		E	E	R	I	E
S	T	Y		A	R	T		E	R	A	S	E

12-11 CRYPTOQUIP

B C W X M C V M M E V Q Q D U U Z N C V J M W H M C W T X Z B L V X, Z X W L D R C M T V F Q E Z T M F B V T T M Z N N W H U Z J H.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF MY DINNER PLATE IS FOUR-CORNERED, I SUPPOSE YOU COULD SAY I EAT SQUARE MEALS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals F

Work harassment can be stopped

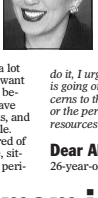
Dear Abby: I'm a 25-year-old recent college graduate who just started a new job. I love it here because I'm doing something I care about and earn decent money. I like all of my co-workers with the exception of one. This person, "Jim," interrupts my work a lot, says things like "Hey, beautiful!" and calls me things like "baby girl." The other day he said, "It's too hot outside." I replied cheerfully, "Sorry, I had nothing to do with it," and he said in a creepy manner, "You have a lot to do with it."

This is bothersome because I think Jim is a nice person, but he makes me uncomfortable. He has worked here a lot longer than I have. I don't want to say anything to the boss because I'm the new girl. I have been here only a few weeks, and I don't want to make trouble.

At the same time, I'm tired of Jim walking into my office, sitting down, talking for long periods and making off-color remarks. If I close my door, I'll appear anti- social, but I'm tired of being badgered because he's bored or because I'm the only young female in the office. I don't want to get anyone in trouble — I just want it to stop.

— Trapped in North Carolina

Dear Abby



Dear Trapped: You are entitled to be comfortable in the workplace and free from unwanted conduct. State and federal laws guarantee you the right to be free of unwelcome talk based on gender. Ideally, you should tell this man that he is making you uncomfortable. However, if you cannot bring yourself to do it, I urge you to document what is going on and bring your concerns to the attention of your boss or the person who handles human resources at your company.

Dear Abby: I am a 26-year-old female in the Navy. I have been divorced for two years and have two beautiful little boys.

Last February, I met a man and I have fallen head over heels. He's great with my boys and wonderful to me. He has expressed that although he loves my kids, he also wants children of his own. My problem: I had a tubal ligation after my youngest was born, and now I regret it. I think this is the only thing that is preventing us from going to the next level. What should I do?

— Helpless in Washington

Dear Helpless: Call your ob-gyn and ask if the tubal ligation can be reversed. It is sometimes possible to reverse the procedure. (The same is true of a vasectomy.) If it is not possible, consult an infertility specialist.

These days, there is more than one way to skin a cat or become a mother.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at **http://www.uexpress.com/dearabby**

Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GEEBI

YABBE

ENGLIT

GLOONB

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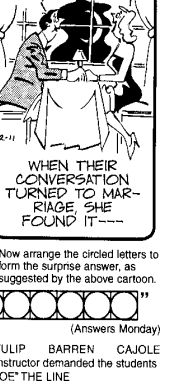
www.jumble.com

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: " " (Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: JUICY TULIP BARREN CAJOLE
Answer: The dance instructor demanded the students do this — "TOE" THE LINE

Worried mom is dating gold digger

Dear Annie: My dad died three years ago. Six months ago, my mother met a guy while she was walking in the park. Mom is 59, and "Joe" is 13 years younger and twice divorced. At first we were happy for her, but then Joe became manipulative and controlling.

Two months ago, Joe moved in with Mom and suddenly quit his job.

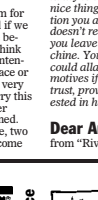
Joe said it was just temporary, but now he drives Mom's new Mercedes and screens her calls.

Also, she somehow never gets anyone's messages on her answering machine.

My sister and I meet Mom for lunch every two weeks, and if we say anything about Joe, she becomes very defensive. We think he is using her and has no intention of moving out of her place or getting another job. We are very worried that she might marry this man. He has proposed to her twice, but so far she's declined.

Mom owns her new house, two cars and has a very nice income from Dad's retirement fund, plus a healthy portfolio from good investments made before he died.

Annie's Mailbox



Annie, we want Mom to be happy, but we are terribly concerned that she will marry this guy and get taken to the cleaners.

— Bad Feelings in Georgia

Dear Georgia: Your intuition sounds solid to us. You cannot prevent your mother from making a mistake if she is determined to do so.

However, since you see Mom regularly, you still have the opportunity to influence her. Say only nice things about Joe, but mention you are concerned that she doesn't respond to the messages you leave on her answering machine. You also might tell her she could allay your fears about Joe's motives if she puts her money in trust, proving that he is not interested in her fortune.

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Riverside, Calif.," who attended a bridal shower where guests addressed their own thank-you notes and were asked to bring their own stamps.

I agree that bringing your own stamp is tacky (maybe one of the bridesmaids can buy the stamps as a gift), but at my wedding shower, guests addressed their own envelopes. I cannot tell you how much easier it was for me to keep everything straight, not to mention ensure that I had the correct address and spelling. It's even a good idea for the guests to indicate who they are ("Agnes Smith, Mike's aunt"). I shouldn't have to take the next two months off work to make sure everyone's thank-you note is perfect.

— A Bride in Endicott, N.Y.

Dear Bride: For heaven's sake, you aren't writing a novel. No one has to take two months off work to compose thank-you notes. But we agree that identifying how you are related is helpful.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to **anniesmailbox@comcast.net**, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

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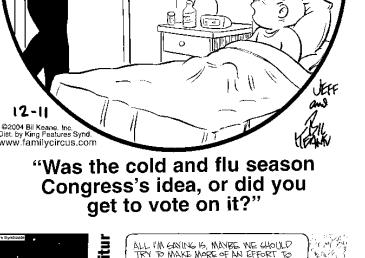
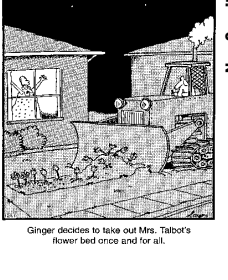
Family Circus



"Was the cold and flu season Congress's idea, or did you get to vote on it?"

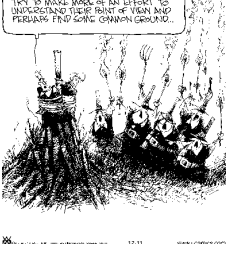
Dennis the Menace

©Gary Larson
The Far Side



Ginger decides to take out Mrs. Talbot's flower bed once and for all.

Non Sequitur



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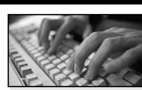

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Fortson on rebound with SuperSonics

Seattle F has overcome many struggles

BY PERCY ALLEN
The Seattle Times

SEATTLE — He is sometimes sullen and withdrawn because his father never showered him with affection, because his sister shot and killed her boyfriend, and because his mother couldn't cope with an abusive, alcoholic husband and the overwhelming demands of raising three kids.

He is expressive and joyous because his other sister, the one who nicknamed him Snootchie, always laughed and joked with him even when their modest Pennsylvania home was cold and dark because the electricity had been shut off.

Danny Fortson is here and partly responsible for the Sonics' revival because a man named J.O. Stright rescued him from a downtrodden neighborhood in Altoona, Pa., and because Cincinnati coach Bob Huggins, the pied piper of lost causes, provided him discipline and a platform to showcase his brutish basketball skills.

He is here, averaging 9.5 points and 6.5 rebounds a game, because four other NBA teams gave up on him and because Sonics General Manager Rick Sund shipped away Calvin Booth believing that Fortson could resurrect the prowess he displayed in Golden State and in Denver, where he averaged double figures in rebounding and scoring.

"Give Danny credit, he hasn't lost heart when a lot of people told him that he was no good and finished," said Garry St. Jean, the former coach of the Warriors. "He's bounced around a lot. A lot of times it's being in the right place at the right time.

"One door closes and another door opens, I believe in that. Danny is that way. He's got his enemies, but he's also got a lot of people rooting for him. I'm rooting for him."

Huggins echoed St. Jean's sentiments, describing Fortson as "a warrior," and "one of my all-time favorite people," on a list that also includes Kenyon Martin and Nick Van Exel.

Fortson keeps all of the people from his past, and all of the stories that he shares with them, tucked deep inside his 6-foot-8, 275-pound body.

He prides himself on being nigh indestructible, but here's a secret: He's not so tough. Not really. That's the thing with many so-called bruisers and bullies. You think they come out of the womb throwing elbows and spewing obscenities?

"I had a lot of problems growing up with my family situation," Fortson said the other day. "I couldn't focus and concentrate. I was constantly thinking of something else.

"I didn't have the same life as a lot of normal kids have, going to school and coming home. You know stuff like that, that was like TV stuff to me. I went home sometimes and I wouldn't have electricity. Or we didn't have anything to eat. That's what I remember."

There's one story that says the whole thing. It was Fortson's junior year at Cincinnati, and he was on his way to winning the Conference USA Player of the Year when his older sister Tammi shot and killed her boyfriend.

She was convicted of manslaughter, and her three infant children were without a home.

And, then quite suddenly, Fortson had to grow up quickly.

Without a real understanding of family and what it truly meant to be a father — because his father, now dead, had been an absentee parent — the big man became a big daddy.

"My sister Tammi, she's found God now, but that was a terrible situation," Fortson said. "She had three kids and I had to take care of them a little bit. That's why I had to leave (college) early.

"There are a lot of things, a lot of people might say I go off of the deep end sometimes, but there are a lot of pressures going on. I'm just trying to stay focused. I got two nephews and a niece staring at me and I'm like, who else is going to take care of them?"

The thought of parceling them off to foster homes never entered his mind. He'd nearly been through that ordeal as teenager and wouldn't allow it.

AP

Seattle SuperSonics forward Danny Fortson, left, with his fifth NBA team, has helped the Sonics compile the best record in the league.

He thought of Stright, the man he credits with "saving my life."

They met in 1990. Stright was a Pennsylvania businessman who sponsored four AAU age-group teams in the Pittsburgh area. Fortson was 14, and at 6-3 he was the biggest kid on the court.

Over the next two summers, Fortson lived in Stright's home outside of Pittsburgh, worked at his steel-industry companies and played on his AAU teams.

When Fortson's parents were jailed after a domestic dispute, Stright helped Lossie Bridgers, Fortson's maternal grandmother, move into an apartment in the Shaler High School District, near Pittsburgh, and he enrolled in school.

Fortson lived with his grandmother but he also had a bedroom in Stright's home, where he hung a Charles Barkley poster on the wall.

After Fortson scored 31 and 35 points in the first two games of his junior season at Shaler High, he was ruled ineligible because it was determined he had transferred with athletic intent.

"It wasn't easy, trust me," said Fortson, who was one of four African-American students in a class of nearly 600 at the suburban school. "They weren't accepting of us basically because they knew we were there to play basketball. It was definitely an experience."

Fortson returned for his senior season and averaged 29.8 points and 13.6 rebounds. His mother, Deloris Fortson, was hardly in his life at that time because she was dealing with periodic hospitalizations for diabetes and bouts of depression, Fortson said.

His father, Daniel Anthony Fortson Sr., wasn't around, either. The two often clashed when Danny was a teenager, but they restored a semblance of a relationship before the elder died two years ago.

"He was in and out of jail because he had his problems," Fortson said. "He and my mom, they really didn't get along. My mom, she had a nervous breakdown at that time, and ever since she's been dealing with that. Even to this day, she has to go to the mental health institute to get herself together.

"Those are some of the things I'm dealing with."

He is asked, now that things are seemingly going well for him, if he is truly happy.

He shares a downtown apartment with his girlfriend. His mother often visits him at home and on the road, and his sister has been released from prison and raises her teenage children who appear headed toward college.

He is asked now that he's found a team that tolerates his foul-prone behavior if he's found a place to call home after a lifetime of traveling.

"As far as I'm concerned, it's like I'm finally out of a long tunnel," Fortson said. "God has really blessed me. That doesn't mean there won't be more tunnels, but this feels good now."

SCOREBOARD

AFN TV & Radio

Saturday

AFN-Sports, 9 a.m. — College basketball: Alabama-Birmingham at Oklahoma St. (dld).
AFN-Sports, noon — Rodeo: National Finals (dld).
AFN-Sports, 3 p.m. — NBA: Portland at Utah (dld).
AFN-Sports, 6 p.m. — College basketball: Louisville at Florida.
AFN-Pacific, 7 p.m. — College basketball: Utah at Arizona.
AFN-Atlantic, 7:30 p.m. — College basketball: Indiana at Kentucky.
AFN-Sports, 8 p.m. — College basketball: Oregon at Illinois.
AFN-Pacific, 9 p.m. — College football: NCAA Division I-AA semifinal game, Sam Houston St. at Montana (joined in progress).
AFN-Radio, 9 p.m. — College basketball: Air Force at Georgia Tech.
AFN-Atlantic, 10 p.m. — College basketball: Stanford at Michigan St.
AFN-Sports, 10 p.m. — College football: NCAA Division II championship game, Pittsburg St. vs. Valdosta St.
AFN-Pacific, 11 p.m. — College basketball: DePaul at Notre Dame.

Sunday

AFN-Pacific, 2 a.m. — NBA: Sacramento at Indiana.
AFN-Sports, 2 a.m. — College football: Heisman Trophy Presentation.
AFN-Sports, 3 a.m. — Rodeo: National Finals.
AFN-Radio, 4:30 a.m. — NBA: L.A. Lakers at L.A. Clippers.
AFN-Sports, 6 a.m. — Rodeo: National Finals (dld).
AFN-Sports, 9 a.m. — Golf: Target World Challenge, third round (dld).
AFN-Atlantic, 1 p.m. — College basketball: Pepperdine at UCLA (dld).
AFN-Sports, 1 p.m. — Boxing: Antonio Tarver (22-2, 17 KOs) vs. Glen Johnson (41-9-2, 28 KOs) for WBC and WBA light heavyweight championship (dld).
AFN-Atlantic, 7 p.m. — NFL: Cincinnati at New England.
AFN-Sports, 7 p.m. — NFL: Oakland at Atlanta.
AFN-Pacific, 7 p.m. – NFL: Seattle at Minnesota.
AFN-Radio, 7 p.m. – NFL: Chicago at Jacksonville.
AFN-Atlantic, 10 p.m. – NFL: N.Y. Jets at Pittsburgh.
AFN-Sports, 10 p.m. – NFL: St. Louis at Carolina.
AFN-Pacific, 10 p.m. – NFL: Tampa Bay at San Diego.
AFN-Radio, 10 p.m. – NFL: Detroit at Green Bay.

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Pro football

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	11	1	0	.917	330	189
N.Y. Jets	9	3	0	.750	254	175
Buffalo	6	6	0	.500	260	224
Miami	2	10	0	.167	196	269
South						
Indianapolis	9	3	0	.750	431	263
Jacksonville	6	6	0	.500	198	225
Houston	5	7	0	.417	236	289
Tennessee	4	8	0	.333	231	294
North						
Pittsburgh	11	1	0	.917	273	184
Baltimore	7	5	0	.583	233	191
Cincinnati	6	6	0	.500	268	272
Cleveland	3	9	0	.250	240	308
West						
San Diego	9	3	0	.750	339	238
Denver	7	5	0	.583	274	212
Kansas City	4	8	0	.333	341	326
Oakland	4	8	0	.333	234	328

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Philadelphia	11	1	0	.917	340	181
N.Y. Giants	5	7	0	.417	209	230
Dallas	5	7	0	.417	236	328
Washington	4	8	0	.333	169	201
South						
Atlanta	9	3	0	.750	232	242
Carolina	5	7	0	.417	249	257
Tampa Bay	5	7	0	.417	233	203
New Orleans	4	8	0	.333	253	344
North						
Green Bay	7	5	0	.583	318	294
Minnesota	7	5	0	.583	305	286
Detroit	5	7	0	.417	218	269
Chicago	5	7	0	.417	196	235
West						
St. Louis	6	6	0	.500	253	305
Seattle	6	6	0	.500	278	266
Arizona	4	8	0	.333	192	253
San Francisco	1	11	0	.083	198	336

x-clinched division

Sunday's games
Oakland at Atlanta
New Orleans at Dallas
Cleveland at Buffalo
N.Y. Giants at Baltimore
Indianapolis at Houston
Chicago at Jacksonville
Cincinnati at New England
Seattle at Minnesota
N.Y. Jets at Pittsburgh
Miami at Denver
Detroit at Green Bay
St. Louis at Carolina
San Francisco at Arizona
Tampa Bay at San Diego
Philadelphia at Washington

Monday's game
Kansas City at Tennessee

Saturday, Dec. 18
Pittsburgh at N.Y. Giants
Washington at San Francisco
Carolina at Atlanta

Sunday, Dec. 19
Houston at Chicago
Minnesota at Detroit
Seattle at N.Y. Jets
Denver at Kansas City
Buffalo at Cincinnati
Dallas at Philadelphia
San Diego at Cleveland
St. Louis at Arizona
New Orleans at Tampa Bay
Jacksonville at Green Bay
Tennessee at Oakland
Baltimore at Indianapolis

Monday, Dec. 20
New England at Miami

College basketball

Men's AP Top 25 fared

Thursday

1. Illinois (8-0) beat Georgetown 74-59. Next: vs. Oregon, Saturday.
2. Kansas (5-0) beat Texas Christian 93-74. Next: vs. Louisiana-Lafayette, Saturday.
3. Georgia Tech (5-0) did not play. Next: vs. Air Force, Saturday.
4. Syracuse (7-1) did not play. Next: vs. Binghamton, Saturday.
5. Oklahoma State (6-0) did not play. Next: vs. Alabama-Birmingham, Friday.
6. Wake Forest (6-1) did not play. Next: at Temple, Monday.
7. Connecticut (4-1) lost to Massachusetts 61-59. Next: vs. Rice, Sunday, Dec. 19.
8. North Carolina (6-1) did not play. Next: vs. Loyola of Chicago, Sunday.
9. Duke (5-0) did not play. Next: vs. Toledo, Sunday.
10. Kentucky (5-1) did not play. Next: vs. Indiana, Saturday.
11. Pittsburgh (6-0) did not play. Next: at Penn State, Saturday.
12. North Carolina State (6-0) did not play. Next: vs. Liberty, Saturday.
13. Louisville (4-1) did not play. Next: at Florida, Saturday.
14. Texas (6-1) did not play. Next: vs. Texas-Arlington, Wednesday, Dec. 15.
15. Arizona (5-2) did not play. Next: vs. Utah, Saturday. N 16. Washington (6-1) did not play. Next: at Loyola Marymount, Sunday.
17. Iowa (7-1) did not play. Next: vs. Iowa State, Friday.
18. Alabama (7-1) did not play. Next: vs. Temple, Saturday.
19. Virginia (7-1) did not play. Next: vs. Loyola Marymount, Thursday, Dec. 23.
20. Michigan State (4-2) did not play. Next: vs. Stanford, Saturday.
21. George Washington (5-1) did not play. Next: at St. Francis, Pa., Saturday.
22. Mississippi State (6-2) did not play. Next: vs. Arkansas-Little Rock, Saturday.
23. Maryland (4-2) did not play. Next: vs. North Carolina-Asheville, Sunday.
24. Wisconsin (5-1) did not play. Next: at Marquette, Saturday.
25. Gonzaga (6-1) did not play. Next: vs. Saint Louis, Saturday.

Thursday's men's scores

EAST
Army 75, N.Y. Maritime 59
Baruch 85, CCNY 78
Bentley 76, Assumption 65
Bloomfield 79, Sciences, Pa. 75
Boston College 63, Holy Cross 60, OT
Brandeis 91, Mass.-Dartmouth 62
Clark U. 54, Fitchburg St. 40
Colby-Sawyer 87, Bowdoin 73
Columbia 76, Sacred Heart 67
Dartmouth 72, Keene St. 56
DeSales 92, Goucher 84
Dominican, N.Y. 61, Nyack 57
Fairleigh Dickinson 76, Rider 74
Fredonia St. 80, Pitt.-Bradford 75
Holy Family 69, Felician 65
Illinois 74, Georgetown 59
Lehman 60, John Jay 57
Maine 62, UMBC 51
Manhattan 85, Siena 70
Mansfield 74, Houghton 53
Mass.-Boston 101, Salem St. 84
Massachusetts 61, Connecticut 59
Misericordia 78, Neumann 69
NYCCT 86, York, N.Y. 72
NYU 95, Manhattanville 47
Newberry 81, Becker 66
Norwich 75, Rivier 65
Old Westbury 92, Mount St. Vincent 84
Rhode Island Coll. 68, Salve Regina 53
Springfield 77, Trinity, Conn. 75, OT
Westfield St. 92, Albertus Magnus 51
Widener 95, Phila. Bible 67
Wilkes 77, Marywood 74
Worcester St. 76, Nichols 70
Worcester Tech 72, Endicott 56

SOUTH
Coppin St. 66, Morgan St. 62
Fla. International 81, Florida Tech 66
Flagler 104, Florida Christian 63
Lewis 75, N. Kentucky 68
Presbyterian 61, North Greenville 57
Quincy 83, Kentucky Wesleyan 66
Samford 68, Tenn. Wesleyan 30
Tusculum 85, King, Tenn. 70
W. Carolina 93, Atlanta Christian 50

MIDWEST
Ashland 61, Mercyhurst 55
Augustana,S.D. 102, Peru St. 50
Bethany, Kan. 90, Bethel, Kan. 83
Carroll, Wis. 81, Carthage 76
Chadron St. 79, N.M. Highlands 63
Cincinnati 88, Vanderbilt 72
Coll. of the Ozarks 78, Cent. Bible 55
Concordia, Moor. 76, St. Mary's, Minn. 68
Findlay 74, Gannon 53
Hannibal-LaGrange 87, William Penn 81
Indiana St. 70, Valparaiso 68, OT
Indianapolis 76, Wis.-Parkside 70
Kansas 93, TCU 74
McPherson 81, Kansas Wesleyan 70
Missouri-Rolla 68, Rhema Bible 46
Montana 69, SE Missouri 66
Mount Mercy 93, Cornell, Iowa 78
Nebraska Wesleyan 66, Simpson, Iowa 56
Rose-Hulman 69, DePauw 60
S. Dakota Tech 67, Black Hills St. 65
Shawnee St. 100, Geneva 96
Southwestern, Kan. 86, Ottawa, Kan. 79
Tabor 76, St. Mary, Kan. 62
Viterbo 99, Maranatha Baptist 84
William Jewell 74, Evangel 66

SOUTHWEST
Abilene Christian 110, Dallas Christian 79
Sam Houston St. 113, Wiley 72

FAR WEST
New Mexico 86, N. Colorado 52

Women's AP Top 25 fared

Thursday

1. LSU (8-0) did not play. Next: at No. 16 Minnesota, Tuesday, Dec. 14.
2. Stanford (5-0) did not play. Next: vs. Pepperdine, Friday.
3. Duke (7-1) did not play. Next: vs. Liberty, Sunday.
4. Texas (4-2) did not play. Next: at North Texas, Thursday, Dec. 16.
5. North Carolina (7-1) did not play. Next: vs. Coastal Carolina, Sunday.
6. Baylor (6-1) did not play. Next: vs. Penn State, Saturday.
7. Notre Dame (8-1) beat Dayton 65-39. Next: vs. Washington, Saturday.
8. Connecticut (3-1) did not play. Next: at Arizona State, Tuesday, Dec. 21.
9. Tennessee (4-2) did not play. Next: vs. No. 15 DePaul, Sunday.
10. Ohio State (7-1) did not play. Next: vs. Nebraska, Saturday.
11. Georgia (5-3) did not play. Next: vs. Augusta State, Friday.
12. Michigan State (7-1) beat Eastern Illinois 85-45. Next: at Detroit, Saturday.
13. Texas Tech (4-1) beat Oral Roberts 79-46. Next: vs. Mississippi, Sunday.
14. Vanderbilt (6-1) lost to Western Kentucky 85-77. Next: vs. Saint Louis, Sunday.
15. DePaul (6-1) lost to No. 21 Purdue 69-61. Next: at No. 10 Tennessee, Sunday.
16. Minnesota (7-1) did not play. Next: at Santa Clara, Saturday.
17. Boston College (6-1) did not play. Next: vs. New Hampshire, Saturday.
18. UCLA (5-1) did not play. Next: at Fresno State, Saturday.
19. Maryland (6-1) did not play. Next: vs. Monmouth, N.J., Sunday.
20. Rutgers (5-1) did not play. Next: at Temple, Monday.
21. Purdue (5-2) beat No. 15 DePaul 69-61. Next: vs. Western Michigan, Sunday.
22. Houston (8-0) did not play. Next: at Hawaii, Thursday, Dec. 16.
23. TCU (7-2) beat Oklahoma 81-65. Next: at Utah, Saturday.
24. Arizona (6-1) did not play. Next: at No. 11 Georgia, Sunday.
25. Kansas State (4-2) did not play. Next: at Missouri-Kansas City, Saturday.

Thursday's women's scores

EAST
Baruch 85, CCNY 65
Bloomfield 64, Sciences, Pa. 46
Bowdoin 73, Colby-Sawyer 45
Bowie St. 71, Columbia Union 47
Bridgewater, Mass. 64, Endicott 47
Delaware 76, Fairfield 54
Delaware Valley 68, Ursinus 56
Dominican, N.Y. 57, Nyack 46
Fitchburg St. 70, Johnson & Wales, R.I. 42
Grove City 68, Pitt.-Bradford 57
Hamilton 64, Utica Tech 56
Holy Cross 64, Siena 56
Holy Family 71, Felician 60
Hunter 77, Medgar Evers 63
Keene St. 76, Nichols 52
Lehman 55, John Jay 27
Massachusetts 64, Hofstra 57
McDaniel 58, Lebanon Valley 52
Misericordia 47, Wilkes 42
Mount Holyoke 64, Mass. College 32
NYCCT 78, York, N.Y. 70
Oneonta 67, Utica 59
Oswego St. 69, Cazenovia 53
Penn St. 84, Pittsburgh 79, OT
Pitt.-Johnstown 70, Slippery Rock 55
Point Park 74, Carlow 71
Rider 66, St. Francis, NY 63
Trinity, Conn. 94, Rivier 47
UMBC 73, Lafayette 57
Union, N.Y. 57, Rochester 55, OT
Worcester Tech 53, Emerson 34

SOUTH
Auburn 76, New Orleans 27
Cumberland, Tenn. 69, Oklahoma Christian 66
Fla. Gulf Coast 70, Fayetteville St. 51
Howard 59, Loyola, Md. 53
Lee 62, Tenn. Wesleyan 50
Lees-McRae 89, Converse 67
Longwood 63, High Point 59
Lynchburg 66, Randolph-Macon Women's 58
Morehead St. 51, Charleston Southern 50
N. Kentucky 54, Lewis 47
Qunicy 73, Kentucky Wesleyan 67
Randolph-Macon 77, E. Mennonite 56
Samford 52, Nicholls St. 47
Tennessee Tech 52, Middle Tennessee 50
Tusculum 60, Milligan 51
W. Kentucky 85, Vanderbilt 77
Washington & Lee 56, Guilford 54

MIDWEST
Albion 54, Spring Arbor 47
Ashland 80, Mercyhurst 62
Augustana,S.D. 89, Peru St. 32
Bethany, Kan. 58, Bethel, Kan. 46
Capital 76, Bluffton 51
DePauw 81, Rose-Hulman 53
Eureka 83, Lincoln Christian 54
Evangel 61, William Jewell 50
Gannon 71, Findlay 61
Grand Valley St. 74, Saginaw Valley St. 37
Illinois College 74, Greenville 42
Indiana St. 91, E. Kentucky 64
Kenyon 61, Allegheny 48
Lake Superior St. 74, Ferris St. 68
McPherson 82, Kansas Wesleyan 60
Michigan St. 85, E. Illinois 45
Mid-Am Nazarene 88, Graceland, Iowa 53
Millikin 60, McKendree 50
Notre Dame 65, Dayton 39
Notre Dame Coll. 79, Oberlin 60
Ottawa, Kan. 62, Southwestern, Kan. 61
Purdue 69, DePaul 61
S. Dakota Tech 77, Black Hills St. 72
Sioux Falls 82, Martin Luther 60
St. Ambrose 83, Trinity Christian 66
St. Cloud St. 95, North Central 37
Tabor 78, St. Mary, Kan. 59
Wis.-Parkside 81, Indianapolis 64

SOUTHWEST
Harding 65, North Alabama 60
Houston Baptist 78, Alcorn St. 65
Ouachita 78, Ala.-Huntsville 62
S. Arkansas 72, Jarvis Christian 65
TCU 81, Oklahoma 65
Texas Tech 79, Oral Roberts 46

FAR WEST
E. New Mexico 64, St. Edward's, Texas 60
Fresno St. 65, Washington St. 61
Hawaii 79, SE Missouri 69
Oregon 79, Idaho St. 56
San Francisco 62, Long Beach St. 57
Utah 66, Weber St. 59

Golf

Target World Challenge

Thursday
At Sherwood Country Club
Thousand Oaks, Calif.
Purse: $5.25 million
Yardage: 6,933 yards; Par: 71
First Round

Jim Furyk	32-35—67
Tiger Woods	34-33—67
Colin Montgomerie	33-34—67
Fred Couples	35-33—68
Miguel Angel Jimenez	33-35—68
Padraig Harrington	36-32—68
Jay Haas	33-33—69
Chris DiMarco	35-34—69
Chad Campbell	35-35—70
Stewart Cink	35-35—70
Davis Love III	36-34—70
Kenny Perry	37-36—73
John Daly	34-39—73
Todd Hamilton	38-35—73
Vijay Singh	36-38—74
Stephen Ames	36-38—74

Australian Masters

Friday
At Huntingdale Golf Club
Melbourne, Australia
Purse: $977,500
Yardage: 7,040; Par: 72
Second Round

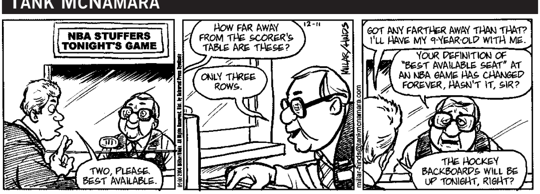
Bradley Hughes, Australia	64-66—130
Robert Allenby, Australia	66-68—134
David McKenzie, Australia	67-68—135
Peter Lonard, Australia	68-67—135
Jarrod Moseley, Australia	69-67—136
Richard Green, Australia	69-67—136
Ricky Barnes, United States	68-68—136
Geoff Ogilvy, Australia	69-67—136
Steven Bowditch, Australia	68-69—137
Greg Chalmers, Australia	66-71—137
Peter Senior, Australia	70-67—137
Craig Jones, Australia	68-69—137
Michael Long, New Zealand	69-68—137
Hunter Mahan, United States	69-68—137
Craig Parry, Australia	67-70—137
Michael Campbell, New Zealand	70-67—137
Brad Kennedy, Australia	67-70—137
Paul Marantz, Australia	71-67—138
Nick O'Hern, Australia	70-68—138
Stuart Appleby, Australia	69-69—138
Gary Simpson, Australia	72-66—138
Todd Morgan, Australia	68-70—138
Corey Pavin, United States	68-70—138
Also	
Adam Scott, Australia	71-68—139
John Morse, United States	70-69—139
Camilo Villegas, Colombia	69-72—141
Peter O'Malley, Australia	69-72—141
Daniel Chopra, Sweden	70-72—142
Ty Tryon, United States	73-70—143
Failed to Qualify	
Ian Leggatt, Canada	71-74—145
Nick Flanagan, Australia	75-75—150
Michael Pearson, United States	72-80—152

Dunhill Championship

Friday
At Leopard Creek Golf Club
Malelane, South Africa
Purse: $955,000
Yardage: 7,316; Par: 72
Second Round

Peter Gustaffson, Sweden	69-66—135
Warren Abery, South Africa	69-70—139
Des Terblanche, South Africa	69-70—139
Oliver Whitely, England	72-67—139
Neil Cheetham, England	68-71—139
Euan Little, Scotland	71-69—140
David Frost, South Africa	70-70—140
Charl Swartzel, South Africa	71-69—140
Leif Westerberg, Sweden	70-70—140
Manuel Quiros, Spain	69-72—141
Darren Fichardt, South Africa	70-71—141
Mathias Gronberg, Sweden	70-71—141
Louis Oosthuizen, South Africa	72-69—141
Lindani Ndwandwe, South Africa	70-71—141
Graeme Storm, England	73-68—141
Alessandro Tadini, Italy	71-70—141
Richard Finch, England	72-69—141
Mike Lamb, Zimbabwe	72-70—142
Damien McGrane, Ireland	74-68—142
Sarel Son-Houi, France	69-73—142
Peter Lawrie, Ireland	75-67—142
Ernie Els, South Africa	67-75—142
Lee Slattery, England	73-69—142
Andre Cruse, South Africa	70-72—142
Mark Davis, England	70-72—142
Bruce McDonald, Zimbabwe	66-76—142
Oliver Wilson, England	69-73—142

TANK MCNAMARA



Deals

Thursday's transactions

AUTO RACING
INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY—Named Joie Chitwood III president.
INDY RACING LEAGUE—Named Brian Barnhart president.

BASEBALL
American League
CHICAGO WHITE SOX—Agreed to terms with OF Jermaine Dye on a two-year contract.
NEW YORK YANKEES—Named Neil Allen bullpen coach and Rich Monteleone special pitching instructor.
National League
ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS—Agreed to terms with 3B Troy Glaus on a four-year contract.
ATLANTA BRAVES—Agreed to terms with 1B Julio Franco on a one-year contract.
LOS ANGELES DODGERS—Agreed to terms with 2B Jeff Kent on a two-year contract.
SAN DIEGO PADRES—Agreed to terms with OF Eric Young on a one-year contract. Designated LHP Mike Bynum for assignment.

FOOTBALL
National Football League
DENVER BRONCOS—Claimed P Jason Baker off waivers from Indianapolis. Waived P Micah Knorr.
GREEN BAY PACKERS—Agreed to terms with LB Steve Josue.
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS—Placed RB Priest Holmes on injured reserve.
SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS—Placed C Jeremy Newberry on injured reserve. Signed QB Brandon Doman from the practice squad. Signed OL Thomas Herrion to the practice squad.
WASHINGTON REDSKINS—Placed DE Phillip Daniels on injured reserve. Signed DL Cedric Killings. Signed LB Billy Strother to the practice squad.

McGrady's rally boosts Rockets against Spurs

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — Tracy McGrady was racing down the court with the ball, his eyes focused squarely on the basket and the fate of the game in his hands.

No way he was going to settle for a tie and overtime. McGrady was thinking about making a game-winning three-pointer the whole time.

"I wanted to take my chances," McGrady said. "At that point, I felt anything I threw up was going to go in. The rim felt really, really big."

NBA roundup

So McGrady let fly with a running three with 1.7 seconds left, capping a one-man rally in the final minute to send the Houston Rockets to an improbable 81-80 win over San Antonio on Thursday night.

McGrady scored 13 points in the final 35 seconds, including four difficult threes, to finish with 33 points, eight rebounds and five steals in a terrific clutch performance.

"It was unbelievable," said Spurs coach Gregg Popovich, shaking his head. "End of story. Guys get hot."

The sleepy-eyed, 25-year-old All-Star put on a virtuoso finish that rivaled any of the top last-second efforts in the league record books.

McGrady's amazing display inevitably brought back memories of Reggie Miller's career-defining moment against the New York Knicks in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference semifinals in 1995. Miller scored eight straight points in the final 8.9 seconds of Indiana's 107-105 win.

Rockets coach Jeff Van Gundy, an assistant coach for the Knicks then, was even stumped for a comparison to McGrady's fourth-quarter flourish.

"Sometimes when you work, you get miracles," he said.

McGrady was mobbed by teammates near midcourt, while red-and-white confetti poured from the roof. The Spurs watched the celebration then walked off the court in stunned silence.

"I swear, I've never been a part of anything like that," McGrady said. "That was like the best feeling to me, just to have my teammates embrace me and just jumping on me like that. That was a great feeling."

Then, he smiled.

"For all those fans who left the game early ... ya'll missed a great game," he said.

SuperSonics 107, Mavericks 102: At Dallas, Rashard Lewis refused to let Seattle give away a game it had dominated.

The small forward erased a fourth-quarter deficit then protected the lead with a high-flying baseline dunk, a three-pointer as the shot clock expired and two free throws with 18.5 seconds to go.

One night after becoming the first team this season to win in San Antonio, Seattle won its fourth straight and ninth in 10 games to reclaim the NBA's best record at 17-3.

Trail Blazers 89, Celtics 87: Shareef Abdur-Rahim hit a buzzer-beating three-pointer to lead the Trail Blazers to a dramatic victory.

Boston led 87-84 with 29.3 seconds left, but Zach Randolph made two free throws to make it a one-point game. After letting time run down, the Celtics' Gary Payton tried to get the ball in to Paul Pierce, but the shot-clock expired and left Portland with one final chance to win.

Abdur-Rahim caught an outlet pass from Derek Anderson, set up from 25 feet and drilled the winning shot.

AP

Houston Rockets' Tracy McGrady, left, and San Antonio Spurs' Malik Rose battle for a rebound in the second half Thursday night.

NBA stays away from hearing

BY CHRIS SHERIDAN
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Along one side of a rectangular conference table were at least a half-dozen chairs set up for the NBA's legal delegation.

For more than six hours, they sat empty.

One of the strangest grievance hearings in NBA history unfolded Thursday at a Manhattan law office just three blocks from league headquarters, with arbitrator Roger Kaplan hearing arguments on the brawl-related suspensions issued by Commissioner David Stern.

The NBA, contending the arbitrator had no jurisdiction, declined to participate and made no public comment after the proceeding.

From the league's perspective, the empty chairs said it all.

Stern, citing a clause in the collective bargaining agreement giving him sole authority to impose discipline for on-court behavior, suspended Artest for the remainder of the season, Jackson for 30 games, O'Neal for 25 games and Johnson for five — for their roles in a Nov. 19 brawl in the Indiana Pacers' game at Detroit.

The union contends the penalties were excessive and asked for a "significant" reduction in each, although officials would not specify what alternative penalties they suggested.

Kaplan must issue two rulings — whether he had jurisdiction to hear a grievance, as well as the actual grievance itself. If he were to rule in favor of the union on both counts, the players would likely sue in federal court to have Kaplan's judgment enforced.

The NBA has already filed suit against the union and the four players in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, contending they are pursuing a grievance before an arbitrator who has no authority to intervene.

That lawsuit remains pending, with the league having decided earlier this week not to seek a temporary restraining order that might have prevented Thursday's hearing from going forward.

Kaplan said he would try to issue a ruling before the latter part of next week, though he made no promises.

AP

Indiana Pacers' Ron Artest arrives for a meeting with the players' association Thursday in New York.

Owner Gund in 'serious' talks to sell Cavaliers

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Gordon Gund is about to hit another NBA lottery.

The Cleveland Cavaliers' owner is involved in "serious" negotiations to sell the franchise that has risen from the league's basement to unprecedented popularity since the arrival of star LeBron James.

NBA briefs

Gund, who bought the Cavaliers in 1983 for $20 million, may soon sell them to Michigan businessman Dan Gilbert for a reported $375 million. The Cavaliers' turnaround began on May 22, 2003, when a ping-pong ball bounced their way in the league's draft lottery and they won the rights to draft James.

With him, the Cavaliers have been soaring ever since.

On Thursday night, Gund released a statement saying the sale was possible.

"We are engaged in serious negotiations to sell the Cleveland Cavaliers to a new principal owner," Gund said. "A potential buyer is presently verifying information about the Cavaliers. If matters go forward beyond this stage, we will enter into a formal contract subject to NBA approval."

Team spokesman Tad Carper said the team would have no further comment.

Citing unidentified sources, the New York Daily News reported that Gilbert was the potential buyer. Gilbert is chief executive of Livonia, Mich.-based Quicken Loans, the nation's largest online retail mortgage lender. He previously tried to buy the Milwaukee Brewers.

Wizards bench Brown

WASHINGTON — The Washington Wizards suspended Kwame Brown for one game Thursday for his actions during the previous night's game against Denver.

Brown refused to join a team huddle after the coach Eddie Jordan berated him and the rest of the team for a poor defensive series in the second quarter of Wednesday's 111-105 loss to the Nuggets.

Jordan benched Brown for the rest of the game and was excused from Thursday's practice.

Brown will miss Friday's game against the New York Knicks.

Nuggets' White suspended

NEW YORK — Denver Nuggets forward Rodney White was suspended without pay for one game by the NBA on Thursday for pleading guilty to unlawful possession of a weapon.

He will miss Friday's game against the Toronto Raptors.

White pleaded guilty to two weapons charges Tuesday in Washington, D.C., and agreed to 100 hours of community service. A third charge was dropped.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	9	9	.500	—
Boston	7	11	.389	2
Philadelphia	6	12	.333	3
Toronto	7	14	.333	3½
New Jersey	5	13	.278	4
Southeast Division				
Orlando	12	6	.667	—
Miami	13	7	.650	—
Washington	10	6	.625	1
Charlotte	4	12	.250	7
Atlanta	3	15	.167	9
Central Division				
Cleveland	12	7	.632	—
Detroit	10	8	.556	1½
Indiana	10	8	.556	1½
Milwaukee	5	11	.313	5½
Chicago	3	13	.188	7½

Western Conference

Southwest Division	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	16	5	.762	—
Dallas	13	8	.619	3
Houston	9	11	.450	6½
Memphis	8	12	.400	7½
New Orleans	1	16	.059	13
Northwest Division				
Seattle	17	3	.850	—
Minnesota	12	6	.667	4
Denver	11	7	.611	5
Portland	9	8	.529	6½
Utah	8	11	.421	8½
Pacific Division				
Phoenix	16	3	.842	—
Sacramento	13	5	.722	2½
L.A. Clippers	11	7	.611	4½
L.A. Lakers	10	8	.556	5½
Golden State	5	13	.278	10½

Thursday's games
Houston 81, San Antonio 80
Seattle 107, Dallas 102
Portland 89, Boston 87

Friday's games
Denver at Toronto
New York at Washington
Memphis at Miami
New Orleans at New Jersey
Philadelphia at Chicago
Atlanta at Detroit
Sacramento at Minnesota
Indiana at Milwaukee
Charlotte at Phoenix
Portland at Utah
Orlando at Golden State

Saturday's games
New Jersey at Atlanta
Detroit at Memphis
Sacramento at Indiana
Dallas at Houston
Minnesota at Chicago
Cleveland at San Antonio
Boston at Seattle
L.A. Lakers at L.A. Clippers

Sunday's games
Denver at New York
Miami at Toronto
New Orleans at Washington
Milwaukee at Philadelphia
Utah at Portland
Charlotte at Golden State
Orlando at L.A. Lakers

Thursday
Rockets 81, Spurs 80

SAN ANTONIO — B.Bowen 3-6 0-0 7, Duncan 7-22 12-14 26, Nesterovic 1-5 1-2 3, Ginobili 4-11 2-2 13, Parker 2-9 0-0 5, Brown 6-11 8-8 20, Rose 0-5 0-0 0, Barry 0-3 0-0 0, Udrih 2-3 0-0 4, Massenburg 0-0 0-0 0, Horry 1-2 0-0 2. Totals 26-77 23-26 80.

HOUSTON — R.Bowen 0-2 0-0 0, Howard 2-10 1-1 5, Yao 9-15 9-10 27, Sura 2-7 0-0 4, McGrady 12-29 4-4 33, Gaines 0-0 0-0 0, Mutombo 0-1 4-4 4, Barrett 1-6 0-0 2, Taylor 2-10 0-0 4, Padgett 1-2 0-0 2. Totals 29-82 18-19 81.

San Antonio	12	22	24	22	—80
Houston	18	20	16	27	—81

Three-Point Goals—San Antonio 5-13 (Ginobili 3-6, B.Bowen 1-2, Parker 1-3, Brown 0-1, Barry 0-1), Houston 5-14 (McGrady 5-12, Sura 0-1, Barrett 0-1). Fouled out—Sura. Rebounds—San Antonio 54 (Duncan 18), Houston 54 (Yao 10). Assists—San Antonio 19 (Parker 9), Houston 11 (Barrett 4). Total fouls—San Antonio 16, Houston 24. A—16,170 (17,982).

Sonics 107, Mavericks 102

SEATTLE — Lewis 9-21 5-6 25, Evans 1-4 5-10 7, James 2-2 3-3 7, Ridnour 5-9 0-0 10, Allen 9-19 2-3 22, Radmanovic 6-11 1-2 18, A.Daniels 4-11 0-0 9, Fortson 1-4 5-6 7, Collison 1-3 0-0 2. Totals 38-84 21-30 107.

DALLAS — Howard 3-6 0-0 6, Nowitzki 8-17 9-10 27, Dampier 3-6 1-1 7, Finley 7-17 3-3 19, Armstrong 2-6 0-2 5, M.Daniels 4-7 2-2 10, Stackhouse 5-11 9-10 19, Terry 3-6 2-2 9, Henderson 0-1 0-0 0, Booth 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 35-77 26-30 102.

Seattle	35	27	18	27	—107
Dallas	26	26	21	29	—102

Three-Point Goals—Seattle 10-23 (Radmanovic 5-7, Lewis 2-5, Allen 2-7, A.Daniels 1-2, Ridnour 0-2), Dallas 6-17 (Nowitzki 2-3, Finley 2-7, Terry 1-2, Armstrong 1-3, M.Daniels 0-1, Howard 0-1). Fouled out—None. Rebounds—Seattle 58 (Lewis, Evans 9), Dallas 43 (Dampier 9). Assists—Seattle 20 (Ridnour 7), Dallas 16 (Armstrong 4). Total fouls—Seattle 31, Dallas 22. Technicals—Evans, Dallas Defensive Three Second. A—19,733 (19,200).

Trail Blazers 89, Celtics 87

BOSTON — Welsch 3-12 2-2 8, LaFrentz 3-10 6-6 12, Blount 5-10 4-4 14, Pierce 3-13 0-0 6, Payton 5-10 3-3 14, Davis 6-15 0-0 12, Jefferson 4-6 0-0 8, Banks 1-4 3-4 5, Allen 4-7 0-0 8, McCarty 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 34-88 18-19 87.

PORTLAND (89)
Abdur-Rahim 6-16 2-2 15, Randolph 8-25 6-6 22, Ratliff 4-7 2-2 10, Anderson 6-14 1-1 15, Stoudamire 0-8 2-2 2, Telfair 4-8 2-2 11, Miles 3-9 2-2 8, Patterson 2-6 2-4 6, Przybilla 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 33-93 19-21 89.

Boston	25	27	13	22	—87
Portland	24	26	16	23	—89

Three-Point Goals—Boston 1-16 (Payton 1-1, McCarty 0-1, LaFrentz 0-2, Davis 0-2, Pierce 0-5, Welsch 0-5), Portland 4-8 (Anderson 2-3, Abdur-Rahim 1-2, Telfair 1-2, Patterson 0-1). Fouled out—None. Rebounds—Boston 46 (LaFrentz 9), Portland 71 (Randolph 17). Assists—Boston 14 (Pierce, Payton 5), Portland 20 (Stoudamire 7). Total fouls—Boston 17, Portland 18. A—15,531 (19,980).

UMass upsets UConn on Freeman's basket

BY DONNA TOMMELLEO
The Associated Press

AMHERST, Mass. — Connecticut didn't have to travel far to hit its first bump in the road.

Massachusetts stunned the seventh-ranked Huskies 61-59 on Rashaun Freeman's layup with 4.3 seconds to play Thursday night, prompting many of the 9,037 fans to storm the court after the final buzzer.

"I felt like we won the national championship. I never saw a crowd like that around here," UMass guard Anthony Anderson said. "We've been saying that this was our year. Maybe we showed it tonight."

It was UConn coach Jim Calhoun's first loss to UMass in 19 years with the Huskies, the defending national champions who made the short trip up Interstate 91 for their first road game after nine at home.

"They outworked us," Calhoun said. "Steve (Lappas) got his kids jacked up for the game. They played exceptionally hard. There was no reason for us to not to play hard. ... I couldn't be more disappointed."

Freeman, who had 18 points and eight rebounds, came through repeatedly to help the Minutemen (3-2) beat the Huskies (4-1) for the first time in 14 games.

"It was a gutsy win for our kids," Lappas said.

Freeman and his teammates got the better of UConn's frontcourt, which had been outrebounding opponents by 25 boards a game. The teams finished even with 39 rebounds, but UMass had a slight edge on the glass in the first half and outscored Connecticut 42-24 inside.

"I told them at halftime we outrebounded UConn. That's unbelievable," Lappas said. "I also told them that we outscored them for a half, that's also unbelievable. Now the big challenge — we've got to win the second half."

The Huskies came back from a 12-point, first-half deficit and held a tenuous five-point lead late in the game. But Freeman hit consecutive baskets with under 4 minutes left, pulling the Minutemen to 55-54.

Turnovers doomed the Huskies down the stretch. Antonio Kellogg dribbled the ball off his foot, and the Minutemen made him pay.

Jeff Viggiano hit a three-pointer with 55.2 seconds left to give UMass a 57-55 lead.

"It had to be my best basket at UMass," Viggiano said. "It helps when your teammates get behind you."

After UConn's Rudy Gay hit two free throws to tie it on the next possession, the Minutemen raced upcourt on the inbounds play and Art Bowers hit Freeman in full stride for the winner. For Freeman, the buzzer came just in time.

"I had leg cramps at the end," Freeman said. "I really didn't want to go into overtime."

Gay had 13 points for UConn. Josh Boone added 12 points and led the Huskies with nine rebounds.

AP

Connecticut's Alassane Kouyate (21) has his path to the basket blocked by Massachusetts' Rashaun Freeman in Thursday night's game.

Army too much for winless Maritime

The Associated Press

WEST POINT, N.Y. — Colin Harris and Matt Bell each scored 18 points to lead Army to a 75-59 victory over New York Maritime on Thursday night.

Bell scored all 10 of his first-half points in the last four minutes to help the Black Knights (2-6) build a 33-24 halftime lead.

Army used a 25-10 run to build its lead to 58-34 midway through the second half.

Cory Sinning added 10 points, six rebounds, five assists and two steals for the Black Knights.

Robert Benton, who scored the first 12 points for Maritime (0-7), finished with 24 points and 10 rebounds. No other Privateers scored in double figures.

Illinois, Kansas show why they are ranked 1-2

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Chants of "Overrated! Overrated!" bellowed from the Georgetown fans even before the opening whistle. Illinois needed about 14 minutes to shut them up.

After trailing for much of the first half, a rarity this season, the top-ranked Fighting Illini took control with a 14-2 run just before the break and shot 65 percent in the second half Thursday night in a 74-59 victory over the Hoyas.

"We're going to take people's shots," coach Bruce Weber said. "When you're in the top five, or one or whatever, people are going to be fired up. Our kids have got to realize that."

On a night when the Illini's outside shots weren't falling, Roger Powell exploited Georgetown's interior defense for 19 points on

8-for-11 shooting. James Augustine added 15 points and six rebounds. Guards Luther Head, Deron Williams and Dee Brown were a combined 10-for-25, but each had at least five assists to help overcome the team's season-low five three-pointers in 15 attempts.

Illinois finished with 20 assists, just off its nation-leading 22.3 average.

"If the threes are going, we're playing at home, that's great," Weber said. "But today they weren't going. We had to chill out. And I think we did a good job of that, at least enough to get a big lead."

The victory moved Illinois (8-0) two-thirds of the way to holding a No. 1 ranking for consecutive weeks for the first time in school history. The Illini lost their first game the previous two times they gained the top spot. This time, they've held their own with two victories, with a game against Oregon in Chicago on Saturday to wind up the week.

Freshman Jeff Green had 20 points and six rebounds to lead Georgetown (3-2), which had won three straight after an opening loss to Temple.

The Illini trailed for 11:20 of the first half, longer than they had in their first seven games combined (10:12). Entering the game shooting 52 percent from the field, they missed nine of their first 13 shots before dedicating themselves to working the ball inside.

No. 2 Kansas 93, TCU 74: At Lawrence, Kan., Wayne Simien had 20 points and Keith Langford added 17 for the Jayhawks (5-0), who had five players in double figures against the Horned Frogs.

Walk-on Christian Moody had career highs with 10 points and 10 rebounds, and teamed with guard J.R. Giddens on the play of the night.

With 5:11 left and the Jayhawks holding a 13-point lead, Moody took the ball under the basket and fired a blind one-handed pass over his head to Giddens on the wing. Giddens then dropped in a three-pointer that brought a roar from the sellout crowd and put Kansas on top 77-61.

Nile Murry had 20 points for TCU (5-3), although he was hampered by foul problems much of the second half. Corey Santee added had 14.

Chudi Chinweze, TCU's 6-foot-7 junior, landed awkwardly on the floor with 3:08 left and appeared to hurt his left leg. Play was stopped for several minutes while he was helped into the locker room. He finished with 10 points.

Langford, the Jayhawks' best shooter lately, had nine points in the first half but went to the bench with his third foul at the 4:53 mark.

Aaron Miles had 10 points for Kansas and Giddens, after a slow start, had 13.

The Horned Frogs, quicker than any Kansas opponent to date, had a hot hand early and led by as many as four. The Jayhawks, led by Simien and Langford, finally got untracked for an 11-0 run and coasted into halftime with a 47-37 lead.

Ohio State slaps itself with a postseason ban for violation

BY RUSTY MILLER
The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio State imposed a one-year ban on postseason play by its men's basketball team in response to $6,000 the university said former coach Jim O'Brien gave a recruit who never played for the school.

"It's too bad. It's a shame. I'm sick about it. I hate it," athletic director Andy Geiger said Thursday, calling it a major violation of NCAA bylaws.

Ohio State president Karen Holbrook said the firing of O'Brien on June 8 was the first step in appeasing NCAA investigators. She and Geiger said more penalties may be coming.

"It doesn't mean we're finished, that there's not other stuff we're looking at," Geiger said.

O'Brien, who had coached the Buckeyes for seven seasons, was fired six weeks after he spoke with Geiger about the payment.

During their conversation, Geiger said O'Brien admitted he gave $6,000 to recruit Aleksandar Radojevic in 1999.

Radojevic never played for Ohio State. He was deemed ineligible by the NCAA before he enrolled because he had accepted money to play basketball in his native Yugoslavia.

O'Brien, 14-46 in his final year with the Buckeyes, has sued Ohio State for at least $3.4 million, claiming he was fired improperly. In a statement, he hinted that there were other problems in the basketball program unrelated to what he termed a "loan" to Radojevic's mother.

"Ohio State has jumped the gun once again," O'Brien said Thursday in a statement. "I was sorry to learn that the university opted to sacrifice the senior season of many fine young student-athletes rather than allow the NCAA to consider and evaluate all of the relevant facts.

"I believe the university is mistaken in its impression that the NCAA would sanction it on account of conduct that occurred six years ago. I believe that as the whole story comes out, it will become clear that the university took the action of today because of other conduct for which I was not responsible."

Thad Matta, hired July 7 to replace O'Brien, has led Ohio State to a 6-2 record. He told the players of the ban in a meeting.

"The shame of it is that our players had nothing to do with it," he said. "They're being penalized for a crime they did not commit."

The ban includes NCAA and NIT bids, but the Buckeyes can still play for the Big Ten regular season and tournament titles.

Geiger said it will be easier to accept penalties now rather than waiting.

"It could be this year, next year, the year after," he said. "We chose to do it this year. Get it over with."

Harrison hopes Colts can re-sign James next

WR's extension means two of team's big three signed long-term

BY MICHAEL MAROT
The Associated Press

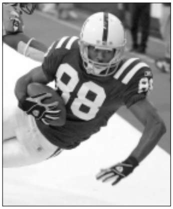
INDIANAPOLIS — One thing might make Marvin Harrison happier than having a new contract: Keeping Edgerrin James in an Indianapolis Colts uniform.

After signing Harrison to a seven-year extension on Wednesday, the Colts have two of their three triplets — Harrison and Peyton Manning — locked in for the long-term. Harrison said he hopes James joins the club soon.

"You know there's nothing like talking about Edgerrin that makes me smile," Harrison joked Thursday. "I hope they can get Edge done, too."

For now, the focus is on Harrison, who agreed to a $66 million deal that includes $22 million in bonuses. The contract is also cap-friendly — Harrison is expected to count a little more than $3 million next year against a salary cap that is expected to increase from this year's total of about $80.6 million.

Had Harrison or James not re-signed before March, Colts President Bill Polian would have faced the toughest of choices — placing the franchise tag on Harrison, a five-time Pro Bowler, or James, a two-time NFL rushing champ.



AP

Indianapolis Colts WR Marvin Harrison, the fastest to 800 receptions in NFL history, signed a seven-year, $66 million extension with the team on Wednesday.

The signing of Harrison precluded Polian from wrestling with that decision. It also delighted Colts owner Jim Irsay.

"Marvin is a pro's pro," Irsay said. "He works so hard and carries himself with so much class on the field, he's helped bring the horseshoe back where it is today. He deserves it, and it puts us in a good position to move forward."

In the past nine months, Colts owner Jim Irsay has re-signed Manning and Harrison for a combined total of more than $165 million and shelled out more than $55 million in signing bonuses. Both are now among the highest-paid players at their positions.

Harrison holds the NFL season record for receptions (143) and reached 800 career receptions faster than any player in league history, beating Jerry Rice's pace by an astounding 23 games.

Manning could break two other NFL records this year, Dan Marino's mark for touchdown passes (48) and Steve Young's mark for passer rating (112.8). Manning has 44 TDs and a 126.3 rating with four games remaining.

Shanahan says he intends to honor Broncos contract

The Associated Press

DENVER — Trying to defuse rumors that he might be leaving soon, Broncos coach Mike Shanahan said Thursday night that he intends to honor the final four years of his contract.

Some media outlets have reported the Broncos coach could be a candidate for the vacant job at Notre Dame. Last month, Shanahan was rumored to be a candidate for the Miami Dolphins job.

Speculation about his future has increased in the past couple of days. Last Sunday, the Broncos lost their second straight game and fell to 7-5, two games out of first place in the AFC West and tied for the final AFC wild-card spot.

"As I've said all along, I have four years remaining on my contract here and I intend to honor it," Shanahan said in a statement made through Broncos spokesman Jim Saccomano.

That was a much more emphatic stance than the coach took Wednesday when, asked if he would return next year if given the choice, he essentially ignored the question and said he wanted to concentrate on Denver's upcoming game against Miami.

Broncos owner Pat Bowlen has long said Shanahan has the job as long as he wants it. This is Shanahan's 10th season with the Broncos. He has not won a playoff game since the 1999 Super Bowl, which was John Elway's final game with the team.

NFL Briefs

FBI: Racial hate mail sent to NFL reaching high schools

CLEVELAND — A person who has sent threatening letters denouncing interracial relationships to some NFL players and other prominent black men now is targeting high school athletes, authorities said Thursday.

St. Ignatius and St. Edward, two Catholic high schools in Cleveland with well-known sports programs, received threatening letters addressed to student athletes, FBI special agent Bob Hawk said. St. Ignatius received eight letters on Nov. 30. St. Edward received two letters last week.

"The sentence structure is very similar, the paragraph structure, the verbiage structure. They're all computer generated," Hawk said. "We're convinced that it's the same letter writer."

Hawk said he only knew of schools in Ohio receiving letters.

Over the past two years, 60 such letters have been sent to at least six NFL players and other well-known black men across the nation, including civic and business leaders. None of the recipients has been identified.

The mail, postmarked from cities in northeastern Ohio and Pennsylvania, criticized interracial relationships and directed the men to end such relationships "or they're going to be castrated, shot or set on fire."

The FBI says it has no suspect and is asking anyone with information to contact the agency.

Broncos waive punter/kicker Knorr, pick up Baker

DENVER — Several weeks of lackluster punts and kickoffs cost Micah Knorr his job with the Denver Broncos on Thursday.

Denver waived Knorr and signed Jason Baker, cut a day earlier by Indianapolis.

Knorr is thought to have a good leg, but he struggled Sunday in Denver's 20-17 loss to the Chargers. Two punts didn't go 40 yards; one was returned to the Denver 21 and resulted in a San Diego touchdown.

The Broncos struggled with field position all day, and all four Chargers scores came off drives that began in Denver territory.

Knorr's 41.5-yard average is 12th in the AFC and his net of 34.2 is tied for 14th. He leads the league in touchbacks on kickoffs with 15, but only four of those have come in the past seven games.

Baker, a fourth-year veteran, played for Kansas City and Indianapolis this season, mainly handling kickoff duties, but also punting nine times for a 37.8-yard average.

NFL injury update

Injuries to prominent NFL players, followed by team's prognosis:

Seahawks: WR Jerry Rice (strained left quadriceps) and WR Darrell Jackson (undisclosed illness) listed as probable for Sunday's game at Minnesota.

Steelers: WR Plaxico Burress (sore hamstring) is out for Sunday's game against the New York Jets; QB Ben Roethlisberger (bruised thigh) practiced Thursday and is listed as probable.

Cardinals: RB Emmitt Smith (sprained left big toe) upgraded from doubtful to questionable for Sunday's game against San Francisco.

Four finalists selected in bids for 2009 Super Bowl

NEW YORK — Atlanta, Houston, Miami and Tampa, Fla., were selected as the four finalists for the 2009 Super Bowl.

The four were recommended by a committee of owners at a meeting in Atlanta on Wednesday. One of the four will be chosen as host by the league's owners next May.

This season's game will be played Feb. 6, 2005, in Jacksonville, Fla. The 2006 game will be in Detroit, with Miami host for the 2007 game and Phoenix in 2008.

Test: Jets one of 4 teams winless in Pittsburgh

TEST, FROM BACK PAGE

The Jets have won three in a row, but the Steelers have won 10 straight behind Roethlisberger, one short of the team-record 11-game streak set during a 12-2 season in 1975.

To keep winning, the Steelers admittedly must play much better against the league's best scoring defense than they have while scoring only 19, 16 and 17 points in their past three victories.

"We are going to have to play our best football to beat this team, I don't think there is any question about that," coach Bill Cowher said.

Roethlisberger, the rookie who has yet to lose as a starter, has presided over a virtually mistake-free offense that has relied mostly on Bettis and running back Duce Staley, but has shown little ability to get the ball downfield quickly without receiver Plaxico Burress, who will miss a third consecutive game with a sore hamstring.

"Hopefully, this team is [being looked at as] a team that can do a lot of things and is a pretty dangerous team, but I think a lot of people still aren't giving us respect and that's fine with us," Roethlisberger said.

The same statement could apply to the Jets, who had consecutive low-scoring victories over the Browns (10-7) and Cardinals (13-3) before Pennington returned from a three-week shoulder injury layoff to throw two touchdown passes in a 29-7 victory over Houston.

"We're going to try to put the whole game in his [Pennington's] hands, try to take the run away as soon as possible," Steelers linebacker Joey Porter said. "I think we're at our best when we can take one dimension away from them."

That might not be easy. Martin is having, well, a Martin-like season, with a league-high 1,305 yards, and Martin and Bettis likely will surpass the 13,000-yard career barrier Sunday, a total reached only by Emmitt Smith, Walter Payton, Barry Sanders and Eric Dickerson.

With 12,974 yards, Martin figures to pass the benched-again Bettis (12,980) and move into No. 5 in career rushing on his first or second carry, though he will be tested by the NFL's No. 1 rushing defense.

Bettis' string of four consecutive 100-yard games ended when Staley returned Sunday after being out a month with a hamstring injury.

The Jets were 1-14 against the Steelers until winning 6-0 behind Martin's 174 yards during a snowstorm last Dec. 14 at Giants Stadium.

The Jets (0-4), Falcons (0-5-1), Panthers (0-2) and Buccaneers (0-2) are the only NFL teams to have never won in Pittsburgh, where the Steelers are 6-0 this season. It won't help the Jets that leading pass rusher John Abraham (9½ sacks) will sit out with a sprained right knee.

"We are pretty confident," said Martin, who expects to achieve the 13,000-yard milestone in his hometown. "We have seen what we can do. We don't have anybody doubting anything and we have been able to win some tough games in some tough situations."

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NHL players offer to cut salaries 24 percent

BY IRA PODELL
The Associated Press

TORONTO — The NHL players' association stunned the league and even its members with its latest effort to save the hockey season.

When the owners walked away Thursday after the first bargaining session in three months, they had a 236-page document to go through and an offer of a 24 percent rollback of all salaries to consider.

"It was shocking for me to hear it," said Dallas forward Bill Guerin, a member of the executive board. "That's a lot of money out of a guy's pocket to be giving up."

But like the Sept. 9 bargaining session that triggered the lockout a week later, the new offer doesn't provide the cost certainty that Commissioner Gary Bettman is seeking for the 30 NHL clubs.

He noted that one aspect — presumably the rollback — was significant. But he still isn't in favor of a luxury-tax system, that players prefer, over a salary cap.

A cap is an option the union says it will never accept.

"We have said consistently that the focus must be on the overall systemic issues and the long-term needs and health of our game," Bettman said.

Bettman

By union estimates, the six-year, six-point proposal would save the NHL a total that exceeds $1 billion.

The union said all current contracts would be cut, a move that would save NHL teams $270 million in the first year and $528 million over three years. The players' association offer on Sept. 9 only included a 5 percent salary rollback.

Another key portion of the proposal is a luxury tax, but those numbers were similar to the previous offer. If a deal is there to be made, the payroll tax would likely be the area that provides the most room for negotiation.

"I'm not sitting here saying that something couldn't be moved or adjusted, but I am saying this is the basis for an agreement, this is the basis for there to be hockey this year," NHLPA executive director Bob Goodenow said.

Bettman said the NHL needed time to go through the offer. The sides agreed to postpone the next meeting from Friday until Tuesday, either in New York or Toronto.

At that time, Bettman said the league will likely make a counterproposal.

Time is running short to work out a deal and still have a legitimate season. Already 382 regular-season games, plus the All-Star Game, have been canceled.

Bettman declined to announce a drop-dead date that would make the NHL the first major North American league to cancel an entire season over a labor dispute.

"When we have the deal, we'll see what we can do about having a semblance of a season," Bettman said.

After this major giveback offer, players had an even stronger resolve against a cap.

"If they want to come back with a linkage to a salary cap, then there will be no season," said Ottawa forward Daniel Alfredsson, who would stand to lose millions of a recently signed five-year deal.

The proposed luxury tax would penalize teams 20 cents for each dollar they spend between $45 million and $50 million. The penalty would increase to 25 percent the second year and 30 percent in the third.

Teams spending between $50 million and $60 million would be taxed 50 cents on the dollar the first year, 55 cents the second year and 60 cents the third. Those with payrolls above that would have to pay 60 cents for every dollar the first year, 65 cents the second, and 70 cents the third year on each dollar over the threshold.

The NHLPA offered to change arbitration and make it more like baseball's system in which clubs and players submit figures for an arbitrator to decide on.

An entry-level contract cap of $850,000 also was proposed, which would return the ceiling to that of the 1995 draft class. Last season, the cap on entry-level contracts was $1.295 million.

The players' association also proposed a revenue-sharing plan to bring the bottom 15 teams within 30 percent of the revenues of the top 15 teams.

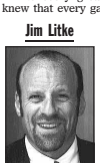
"This is no grandstand ploy. ... This is serious negotiations," Goodenow said.

Arenas have been given the go-ahead by the league to free dates previously reserved for hockey on a 45-day rolling basis. As of now, that means there won't be any games before late January.

Bettman has said that teams lost a total of more than $1.8 billion over 10 years and that management will not agree to a deal without a defined relationship between revenue and salaries. Owners say teams lost $273 million in 2002-03 and $224 million last season.

Hamm set standard for all athletes with skill and grace

Jim Litke



Hers was the game that launched a thousand kicks, then tens of thousands, then millions, a rare blend of brains, beauty and hard-nosed grace that redefined what it meant to play like a girl.

But Mia Hamm's influence didn't end there.

Like every great athlete, she knew that every game mattered, that every time she raised the bar, everybody who played alongside or after her would have to pull that little bit extra out of themselves. And if making teammates better is the ultimate compliment bestowed on an athlete, what more can be said about Hamm and that small band of soccer players who lifted an entire sport to heights that once seemed unimaginable.

This: Under her leadership, they never, ever took a night off.

"We all understand there's a bigger perspective," Hamm said Wednesday night, moments after joining longtime teammates and fellow retirees Julie Foudy and Joy Fawcett on the sidelines after a 5-0 win over Mexico. "We want to make sure this game and these girls go forward together."

Wednesday night's game in Carson, Calif., was the last in a 10-match, post-Olympics tour by the U.S. national team to mark the end of an era. The game itself was little more than a chance for the trio to take their bows on the international stage one final time in what soccer fans call a "friendly."

Typically, though, Hamm wouldn't allow the friendly part of the evening until she'd taken care of business.

In the opening 20 minutes, she set up the first two goals and saw her bid for another ricochet off the crossbar. Midway through the second half, with the U.S. women already ahead 5-0, Hamm chased a teammate's pass into the goalbox and ran into Mexican goalkeeper Pamela Tajonar instead, a collision that left her clutching her knee and writhing on the turf. It wasn't until she'd hobbled around for another 15 minutes or so that Hamm finally walked off the pitch, stopping to shake hands with every player and coach on both benches.

Like all pioneers, she and the handful of others who blazed the trail for women's soccer were overachievers by nature. They put their lives on hold and bottled up their emotions for almost 20 years on that long, difficult march to find a place to play. They never had to be told to act like ambassadors. They always knew exactly what was at stake.

"Think of it this way: Imagine that Magic, Larry Bird, Michael Jordan, Shaq, Kobe and LeBron were all on one team for 15 years.

That's what we have had with our women's national team," U.S. national team coach April Heinrichs said.

It wasn't simply the winning that made this bunch remarkable, though there was plenty of that: World Cup championships in 1991 and 1999, and Olympic gold medals last summer and in 1996. It wasn't just about proving to TV, corporate sponsors and the other half of America that women athletes can draw an audience and keep it, though they accomplished that, too. It wasn't just about opportunities for women and girls, either, though you could make the argument they did more to create those than anything this side of Title IX.

It was about all of those things. And to achieve any of them, they had to prove first that they were skilled, fearless and ferocious enough to compel our attention.

And at the center of it all — night after night over two decades — was that familiar ponytail bobbing just above shoulders too impossibly slim to singularly shift the attitudes of an entire nation. But Hamm never shirked her task.

"It wasn't just a game here or a game there," Foudy said. "We could always count on her."

Hamm had predecessors every bit as smart and tough as she was, though the most memorable made their mark in individual sports.

She's the first real team superstar that women's sports produced, and as such, she's undoubtedly inspired more girls to step onto a playing surface than all other female athletes combined.

It didn't hurt that Hamm was attractive, articulate and way more modest than any man who's ever achieved such a lofty status. Of course, those things will only make it tougher on anybody who would step into her shoes, which is exactly the way Hamm would have wanted it.

"Ask yourself if you could have your choice of role models, would you ask for a day with Mia Hamm or Julie Foudy or with a famous male athlete of today?" Heinrichs said as the celebration drew to a close. "They had an impact on America's consciousness, on women's sports, on women's voices."

Jim Litke is a national sports columnist for The Associated Press. Write to him at: jlitke@ap.org

Virginia Tech QB Randall voted ACC player of year

The Associated Press

No one asked Bryan Randall to light up scoreboards by filling the air with footballs or carrying the load on the ground.

The Virginia Tech quarterback hardly expected that of himself, either.

"I felt like it was my responsibility to put us in a position to win the ballgame," Randall said. "A lot of times you can't win a game by yourself but you can lose by yourself."

By that measure, no one in the Atlantic Coast Conference had a better season than the 6-foot, 222-pound senior. Randall led a team picked sixth in the preseason to the title in its league debut and was named The Associated Press ACC player of the year for 2004 on Friday.

Randall received 75 of a possible 100 votes from members of the Atlantic Coast Sports Media Association. Miami quarterback Brock Berlin, who threw for a league-best 21 touchdowns, finished second with 13 votes.

Randall, the league's offensive player of the year, is the fifth quarterback in the last six seasons to win the ACC's top individual honor.

Meanwhile, Clemson linebacker Leroy Hill was named the ACC's top defensive player. Hill earned 20 votes to beat out Maryland linebacker D'Qwell Jackson (17) and Miami defensive back Antrel Rolle (13).

Randall's statistics were solid. He threw for 1,965 yards and 19 touchdowns with seven interceptions, and ran for 466 yards and three scores. He ranked third in the ACC in total offense at nearly 203 yards per game.

Sports briefs

Monty, Woods, Furyk tied

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. — Colin Montgomerie was thrilled to get an invitation from Tiger Woods to play in his year-end tournament with 15 of the best players in golf. Even better was matching Woods' score.

Montgomerie hit a 5-wood into about 8 feet for eagle on the 16th hole, giving him a 4-under 67 and a share of the lead Thursday with Woods and Jim Furyk after the first round of the Target World Challenge.

"I played quite well," Montgomerie said. "Anytime you can equal Tiger Woods, well, that's OK."

Woods and Furyk didn't do anything quite so dramatic. They just kept out of trouble and avoided the kind of mistakes that knocked Chris DiMarco out of the lead twice and sent Vijay Singh to a 3-over 74, matching the worst round on a pristine day at Sherwood Country Club.

Utah State hires Guy

LOGAN, Utah — Brent Guy was hired to coach Utah State on Friday after spending the last four seasons as an assistant with Arizona State.

Guy, a former Utah State assistant from 1992-94, was defensive coordinator and linebackers coach for the Sun Devils.

He replaces Mick Dennehy, who was fired after posting a 19-37 record in the last five years.

Big money doled out for big bats

On eve of winter meetings, Dodgers sign Kent and D-backs grab Glaus

BY RONALD BLUM
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Before the baseball world gathered in California for the winter meetings, Arizona snapped up third baseman Troy Glaus and Los Angeles added second baseman Jeff Kent in a pair of big-money deals involving All-Stars.

Glaus, the 2002 World Series MVP for Anaheim, agreed Thursday to a $45 million, four-year contract with the last-place Diamondbacks.

Baseball roundup

Los Angeles didn't even wait for the formal start of the meetings to hold the first news conference at the hotel where baseball officials will gather in Anaheim, traveling south to announce a $17 million, two-year contract with Kent, who helped Houston come within a game of its first NL pennant.

In other deals Thursday:

■ The Chicago White Sox agreed to a $10.15 million, two-year contract with outfielder Jermaine Dye.

■ San Diego agreed to a $1 million, one-year deal with outfielder Eric Young.

■ First baseman Julio Franco, 46, stayed with the Atlanta Braves for a $1 million, one-year deal.

Plenty of big names are likely to be bandied about on the trade market when baseball officials gather for their annual weekend of business and gossip. During last year's meetings in New Orleans, there were 13 trades, eight deals with free agents who agreed to major league contracts and six more contracts with free agents that were agreed to but not announced.

Randy Johnson, Sammy Sosa, Mike Piazza, Kevin Brown, Barry Zito, Tim Hudson and Shawn Green have been mentioned in trade talk, but there's been no indication their teams are ready finalize any deals.

Most of the biggest names among free agents have held off agreeing to contracts, among them pitchers Pedro Martinez, Derek Lowe, Carl Pavano, Russ Ortiz, Eric Milton and Kevin Millwood; first basemen Carlos Delgado and Richie Sexson; third baseman Adrian Beltre; outfielders Carlos Beltran and Magglio Ordonez; and catcher Jason Varitek.

Fifty-four of the 207 free agents have agreed to contracts thus far, five fewer than on the eve of last year's meetings.

Glaus, slowed by a shoulder injury the past two seasons, is being counted on by Arizona to fill the void left by Sexson.

"He's a cornerstone player," general manager Joe Garagiola Jr. said of Glaus. "What he brings is one of the issues we felt we needed to address. Now we've done that and I'm confident in saying there will be more to come."

Glaus, 28, hit .284 with an AL-leading 47 home runs in 2000, followed by 41 homers in 2001 and 30 in the Angels' World Series championship season of 2002. In Anaheim's seven-game World Series triumph over San Francisco, he hit .385 with three home runs and eight RBIs.

The three-time All-Star played in only 91 games in 2003 because of the shoulder problems, then appeared in 29 games last season before arthroscopic surgery. Glaus returned in late August, and hit seven of his 18 home runs in the final month of the season to help the Angels to the division title.

"It's healed. It's fixed," Glaus said. "Now it's just a matter of time in the throwing program and things like that and I'll be ready for spring without any doubt."

His deal includes a signing bonus of $4 million and annual salaries of $8 million, $9 million, $10.5 million and $12.5 million. The contract also provides Glaus a hotel suite on road trips and up to $250,000 reimbursement per year for personal business expenses.

Arizona went 51-111 last season just three years after winning the World Series. The Diamondbacks tied for the 10th-most losses in major league history.

Kent, 36, hit .289 with 27 homers and 107 RBIs last season and made the NL All-Star team for the fourth time. The 2000 NL MVP has a .289 career average with 302 homers and 1,207 RBIs in 13 seasons.

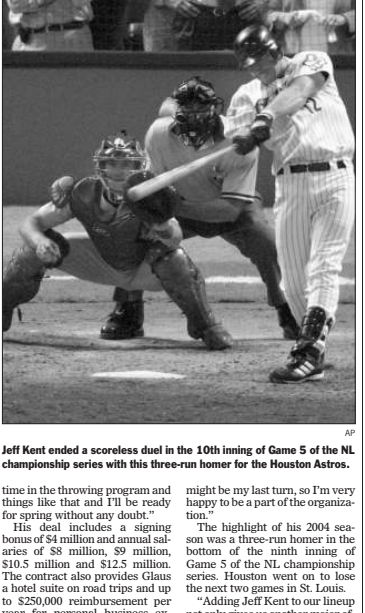
"My parents did not know about this," Kent said, choking back tears, along with his parents. "I grew up with my dad taking me to Dodger games. This might be my last turn, so I'm very happy to be a part of the organization."

The highlight of his 2004 season was a three-run homer in the bottom of the ninth inning of Game 5 of the NL championship series. Houston went on to lose the next two games in St. Louis.

"Adding Jeff Kent to our lineup not only gives us another major offensive force, but it provides me with flexibility in the field," manager Jim Tracy said.

Dye will replace Ordonez as the starting right fielder with the White Sox. Dye rebounded from an injury-plagued year to hit .265 with 23 homers and 80 RBIs in 137 games with Oakland last season — despite playing almost a month with a fractured thumb.

"I'm not going to try and fill any role," Dye said when asked about replacing Ordonez. "I'm just going to play hard and hope it's enough to get this team to the playoffs."



AP

Jeff Kent ended a scoreless duel in the 10th inning of Game 5 of the NL championship series with this three-run homer for the Houston Astros.

Kent not shocked by Bonds' testimony

The Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Jeff Kent isn't shocked that San Francisco slugger Barry Bonds is the focus of baseball's steroid scandal.

"I won't get into specifics, but in general, I'm not surprised," Kent said when asked what he thought about Bonds' acknowledging, during grand jury testimony last year, that he used a substance he didn't know contained steroids.

"It's embarrassing that we've come to this point, where we have grand jury testimony coming out as evidence against some players," added Kent, Bonds' teammate for six seasons with the Giants.

"I think we all know that there was a problem, but I think we were all hesitant because we didn't know the real truth about the issue at hand — the steroid issue."

Kent made his remarks Thursday after a press conference during which his free-agent signing with the Los Angeles Dodgers was announced.

Bonds' testimony last year in the investigation of a steroid-distribution ring was leaked to the San Francisco Chronicle. The story came out one day after New York Yankees slugger Jason Giambi's testimony to that same grand jury was reported by the Chronicle.

Kent believes the steroid scandal is dragging baseball down.

"It's sad to see that there are still accusations and investigations. The integrity of the game has been hurt by this, and it's embarrassing to me as a player," said Kent, the 2000 NL MVP whose 278 career home runs are the most by a second baseman in big league history.

Every major league player was tested once in 2004 during a period between the start of spring training and the end of the regular season. In 2003, anonymous tests were conducted as a survey, and 5 percent to 7 percent came back positive.

"It's embarrassing to baseball," Kent said. "We addressed it with the bargaining agreement a few years back. We needed to do something to fix it at that time, and obviously, I don't think we did a good enough job to fix it. Now, all of a sudden, we're back to where we were then, so there's a need to do more."

Arizona Sen. John McCain last week threatened to propose federal legislation that would override the drug-testing provisions in baseball's collective bargaining agreement. The players union then gave its lawyers the OK to reach an agreement with the owners on tougher testing for steroids.

"This has been going on too long," Kent said. "They didn't fix it right the first time, and I'm hoping they fix it right this time. It's sad to see that some families are keeping their kids away from the game because the guys are cheating."

Bradley loses appeal of jail sentence

The Associated Press

CUYAHOGA FALLS, Ohio — The Ohio Supreme Court rejected former Cleveland Indians outfielder Milton Bradley's appeal of a three-day jail sentence he received for driving away from police who were trying to give him a speeding ticket.

Bradley, who now plays for the Los Angeles Dodgers, pleaded guilty earlier this year to a charge of obstructing official business, a second-degree misdemeanor, in the August 2003 incident. He was sentenced to three days in jail and 40 hours' community service and fined $250.

Bradley's lawyer appealed the sentence, saying the offense did not merit jail time and would hurt Bradley professionally.

A new sentencing hearing was scheduled for Wednesday in Cuyahoga Falls Municipal Court. The Supreme Court rejected hearing the appeal on Dec. 1.

Bradley's lawyer did not return a message seeking comment Friday.

The outfielder faces a Feb. 22 trial in Barberton Municipal Court on a misdemeanor count of disorderly conduct stemming from a Nov. 25 arrest for interfering with someone else's traffic stop. Bradley, 26, has asked for a jury trial. If convicted, he could face 30 days in jail or a $250 fine.

Bradley was suspended for five games in late September by Major League Baseball for slamming a plastic bottle into the front row at Dodger Stadium after a fan had thrown it onto the field.

Briefs

Red Sox to carry World Series trophy to Maine

PORTLAND, Maine — The Boston Red Sox will bring their World Series trophy to Maine next week, and the team's representatives are going to cover much more ground than originally envisioned.

Gov. John Baldacci announced Thursday that the Red Sox will visit Portland on Friday, Dec. 17. The following day the trophy will be taken on a road trip with stops in Presque Isle, Bangor and Augusta. The Red Sox were originally scheduled to come to Portland on Nov. 3, but the visit was postponed due to a scheduling conflict.

"It will be the largest rally Portland has ever seen," predicted Portland's marketing and communications manager, Liz Darling.

She helped plan the New England Patriots Super Bowl rally last April, which drew an estimated 45,000.

"We're anticipating this to be larger," she said.

Report: Irish interested in Pats' Weis

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Count Charlie Weis among the coaching candidates at Notre Dame.

The New England Patriots offensive coordinator could be interviewed by the Irish as early as Friday, The Boston Globe reported on its Web site Thursday night.

Weis

The report is "nothing that we would comment on," Patriots spokesman Stacey James said.

Notre Dame is looking for a replacement for fired coach Tyrone Willingham. School officials also are scheduled to meet with former Irish assistant coach Tom Clements on Friday, a football source told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Clements, in his first season as offensive coordinator with the Buffalo Bills, played quarterback for the Irish under coach Ara Parseghian, leading the school to an undefeated season and a national championship in 1973.

The Globe attributed its report on Weis to an unidentified source involved in the hiring process at Notre Dame and a source in the NFL with ties to Weis.

Weis' agent, Bob LaMonte, told the AP early Thursday that he had not heard from Notre Dame, saying he thought the school was focusing on Clements. LaMontre did not immediately return another call seeking comment.

Weis did not immediately return a phone message.

John Heisler, Notre Dame's associate athletic director, said Thursday the university would not comment.

Weis attended Notre Dame, but never played college football. He was hired an assistant at South Carolina from 1985-88 and joined the New York Giants as a defensive assistant and assistant special teams coach in 1990. He has also been an assistant with Patriots and Jets before becoming offensive coordinator in New England in 2000.

Study: Less than half of players at 27 of 56 bowl schools graduate

BY MIKE SCHNEIDER

The Associated Press Writer

ORLANDO, Fla. — Twenty-seven of the 56 schools with bowl-bound football teams graduated less than half their players, according to a study released Tuesday.

The annual study by the Institute of Diversity and Ethics in Sports at the University of Central Florida also showed that 39 of the schools graduated less than half of their black players.

Among the bowl teams, 51 of 55 graduated at least 40 percent of their white players, according to the study, while just 30 schools graduated at least 40 percent of their black players. Only six schools graduated a higher percentage of black players than white players.

There are 56 teams playing in this year's bowl games, but only 55 teams were examined because Navy doesn't release graduation rates. Last year, 32 bowl-bound teams graduated less than half of their football players.

"You find the gaps between African-American and white football players a little bit wider at the bowl level," said Richard Lapchick, the study's author. "It's a problem throughout Division I-A."

The institute used NCAA statistics for the study. The statistics were taken from four freshman classes, beginning in 1994-95 and ending in '97-98, with each class given six years to graduate.

This year, the NCAA reported that 54 percent of all football players graduated, an increase of 3 percent over last year. The general student body rate was 60 percent and the overall student-athlete rate was 62 percent.

The schools with the worst graduation rates, both overall and for black players, were Pittsburgh and Texas. Pittsburgh had an overall graduation rate of 31 percent and 20 percent for black players. Texas had an overall graduation rate of 34 percent, 33 percent for its black players.

Texas spokesman Bill Little said the study didn't take into account that many football players left and graduated at other schools after coach Mack Brown took over the program in 1998.

"When you change coaches, there are guys who don't want to play in that system," Little said.

Pitt spokesman E.J. Borghetti said the report doesn't reflect the school's current graduation rate since 15 of 19 seniors on the team graduated last year, including eight of 11 black players.

"It's key to emphasize the report is a snapshot of a football program in the middle of the last decade," Borghetti said. "It's not an accurate portrait of what our football program is in 2004."

Syracuse (78 percent overall, 69 for black players), Notre Dame (78 and 74) and Boston College (77 and 76) had the best graduation rates overall and for black players.

Cooper defends decision to hire Spurrier

BY JACOB JORDAN

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — The only black football coach currently at South Carolina defended the school's decision to hire Steve Spurrier after the Black Coaches Association criticized the university for failing to conduct a full search.

Assistant Ron Cooper, a former head coach at several Division I-A schools, said Thursday he was contacted about the position when Lou Holtz decided to retire earlier this year.

But when athletic director Mike McGee told Cooper there was a chance to hire Spurrier, Cooper said, "if you can hire Steve Spurrier, go hire him now."

"It doesn't take a rocket scientist," Cooper said. "There are a lot of coaches out there that would have said what I said."

> *"It doesn't take a rocket scientist. There are a lot of coaches out there that would have said what I said."*
>
> **Ron Cooper**
> South Carolina assistant coach on hiring Steve Spurrier

BCA director Floyd Keith told prospective football recruits and assistant coaches to stay away from South Carolina because the school ignored the group's recommendation for a more open coaching search.

Keith said earlier this week that South Carolina never contacted the BCA.

"There was an announcement and a hire," he said. "That was so fast that a jackrabbit couldn't have had a family between all that."

Cooper, a former head coach at Eastern Michigan, Louisville and Alabama A&M, said he was out of town this week when the news broke.

"I know Floyd and I understand where he's coming from," Cooper said. But "to say that it was never brought up, it was brought up and it was talked about."

Three of the five black head coaches at major colleges — Notre Dame's Tyrone Willingham, New Mexico State's Tony Samuel and San Jose State's Fitz Hill — won't be back with their schools next season.

McGee has said the mission of the BCA is important to college football. Bur he said administrators faced a brief time frame to land someone as prominent as Spurrier.

AP

Heisman Trophy candidates, from left to right, Matt Leinart, of USC; Reggie Bush, of USC; Alex Smith, of Utah; Jason White, of Oklahoma, and Adrian Peterson, of Oklahoma, pose before the start of the Home Depot College Football Awards on Thursday in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

OU's White takes Maxwell, O'Brien

The Associated Press

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Oklahoma quarterback Jason White was a two-time award winner in college football, taking the Maxwell Award as best all-around player and adding his second straight Davey O'Brien quarterback trophy.

Texas running back Cedric Benson won the Doak Walker Award on Thursday night.

White, last year's Heisman Trophy winner, also is a finalist for this year's Heisman to be presented Saturday night in New York.

White had 30 touchdown passes and just four interceptions in leading the Sooners (12-0) to the national title game against Southern California in the Orange Bowl on Jan. 4. He beat out teammate Adrian Peterson and Southern California quarterback Matt Leinart for the Maxwell, and topped Leinart and Utah quarterback Alex Smith for the Davey O'Brien Award.

"I'm really very surprised about this, especially after the way our season ended last year," White said, referring to losses in the final two games of the '03 season. "Everybody seemed to really write me off as far as the awards and everything for this year.

"This is certainly a great honor. But you know in the grand scheme of things, it really doesn't mean very much unless we're able to win it all. I'd rather be on the best team in the nation than to be the best overall player in the nation."

Leinart didn't leave the awards ceremony empty-handed — he was chosen Walter Camp player of the year. Also a Heisman finalist, Leinart has the top-ranked Trojans (12-0) in position to win a second straight national title. He threw for 2,748 yards and 28 touchdowns.

"I'm really just kind of going into this [Heisman] with an open mind, but I'm going in by not getting my hopes up, either," Leinart said. "I'm just looking forward to the whole experience in New York City and hanging out with everybody and all of those past winners. It's going to be an honor, and we'll see what happens. I'm just going into it looking to have fun."

The Maxwell Award once was a good predictor of the Heisman with 14 of 19 players earning both awards from 1981-99. But the last four Maxwell winners fell short in winning the Heisman, college football's top individual prize.

"In all honesty, I think that string will probably reach five," White said. "I'm not sure about my chances for the Heisman."

Benson's honor signified him as the nation's top runner, having gained 1,764 yards and scoring 20 touchdowns. He beat out Peterson, the Sooners' sensational freshman, and California's J.J. Arrington, for the award sponsored by the Southern Methodist Athletic Forum.

"With those guys (Oklahoma) being undefeated and in the national championship game, I'm a little bit surprised," Benson said. "It seems like the undefeated teams always get all the awards. I'm just really honored and glad my named was mentioned, and that my hard work wasn't overlooked."

Georgia defensive end David Pollack won the Chuck Bednarik Trophy as the nation's best defensive player. On Wednesday, the 6-foot-3, 261-pound Pollack won the Lombardi Award as the nation's top lineman.

White wasn't the only award winner from Oklahoma. Offensive tackle Jammal Brown took the Outland Trophy as the nation's best interior lineman.

Also, Michigan's Braylon Edwards took the Biletnikoff Award for best wide receiver; Auburn's Carlos Rogers won the Jim Thorpe Award for best defensive back; Ohio State's Mike Nugent won the Lou Groza Award for best kicker; and Baylor's Daniel Sepulveda took the Ray Guy Award for best punter.

Utah's Urban Meyer, who took over at Florida earlier this week, was chosen The Home Depot coach of the year.

A freshman who's ahead of the class

Oklahoma's Peterson lives up to the hype

BY JEFF LATZKE
The Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. — Adrian Peterson's arrival at Oklahoma was accompanied by impossible expectations. Before he even stepped on a practice field, he was hyped as one of the nation's best runners who would carry the Sooners to greatness.

Then, in just one season, he proved it wasn't so impossible after all.

Now, the 19-year-old running back will try to become the first player to win the Heisman Trophy as a freshman. No sophomore has won it, either.

He's one of five finalists, joining Sooners quarterback Jason White, Utah quarterback Alex Smith and Southern California teammates Matt Leinart and Reggie Bush. The award will be presented Saturday.

Peterson has rushed for 1,843 yards and 15 touchdowns. He's had at least 100 yards rushing in 11 games — an NCAA freshman record — and is only 20 yards from breaking the NCAA's season rushing record for freshmen, set by Wisconsin's Ron Dayne in 1996.

But Dayne, whose Badgers were 8-5 that year, didn't even break the top 10 in the Heisman voting. The last freshman to make it to the top five was Virginia Tech's Michael Vick, third in 1999.

Not even Maurice Clarett, who rushed for 1,190 yards and 16 touchdowns as he helped Ohio State win the 2002 national championship, found his way into the top 10.

Peterson, though, has run right past Clarett's numbers. And he hasn't made the typical freshman mistakes. He hasn't lost a fumble all season despite leading the nation with 314 carries, helping the No. 2 Sooners (12-0) to an Orange Bowl berth against No. 1 Southern California (12-0) for the national championship.

Along the way, Peterson shrugged off the records and the attention. He's not on a mission. He's just doing what he does best.

"I really don't feel like I have to prove anything to anybody," he said. "I just go out there and run the ball."

Teammates no longer view him as a liability in pass blocking — his lone weakness at the start of the season — and White said he's comfortable with Peterson protecting him.

White has even said he'd cast his Heisman vote — as a past winner — for Peterson.

"Adrian brings a lot to the team," White said. "Just his presence being out there, the defense has got to be ready for him."

Colorado coach Gary Barnett, whose team was routed 42-3 by the Sooners in the Big 12 title game, viewed Oklahoma last year as a one-dimensional, pass-only team the Buffaloes could blitz mercilessly.

"The reason we could do that is because they didn't have Adrian Peterson at that time," Barnett said. "Adrian Peterson takes you out of that mode. He makes you become a really sound, fundamental, basic football team. If you are taking any chances, they better be thought out. That's what he does to you."

One of Barnett's cornerbacks, Terrence Wheatley, said this after facing Peterson: "I have never seen a guy that big, that strong, that fast."

Tackle Jammal Brown, one of three seniors on Oklahoma's offensive line, would vote for Peterson for the Heisman if he could.

"He's the real deal," Brown said. "He makes plays on his own. We block well for him, but a lot of times the things he does are all him. He'll make the first guys miss and he'll outrun the last guy.

"He's the future and will take Oklahoma a long ways in the next few years."

Peterson has taken them far this year. With White struggling against Texas (113 yards, no touchdowns, two interceptions), it was Peterson who lifted the Sooners with 225 rushing yards to outshine Texas tailback Cedric Benson.

He ran for 249 yards to help Oklahoma edge Oklahoma State 38-35. After a shoulder injury limited his carries against Nebraska, he returned to score three touchdowns each against Baylor and Colorado to bolster his Heisman credentials.

Stoops has refused to pick sides in the Heisman race, but he'll be the first to praise Peterson. When asked what makes the 6-foot-2, 210-pound freshman so successful, Stoops rolled out the superlatives.

"It's his strength, it's his speed, it's his vision, it's toughness when he takes somebody on," Stoops said. "He's got it all."

But will it be enough to beat two undefeated senior quarterbacks?

History says it won't. But it wouldn't be the first time Peterson has done something few thought he could.

AP

Adrian Peterson has rushed for 1,843 yards and 15 touchdowns.

College football schedule/statistics

Playoffs

Division I-AA Semifinals
Friday, Dec. 10
James Madison (11-2) at William & Mary (11-2)
Saturday, Dec. 11
Sam Houston St. (11-2) at Montana (11-2)
Division II Championship
Saturday, Dec. 11
At Florence, Ala.
Pittsburg St. (14-0) vs. Valdosta St. (12-1)
Division III Semifinals
Saturday, Dec. 11
Mary Hardin-Baylor (12-1) at Mount Union, Ohio (12-0)
Rowan, N.J. (10-2) at Linfield, Ore. (11-0)
NAIA Championship
Saturday, Dec. 18
At Hardin County, Tenn.
St. Francis, Ind. (13-0) vs. Carroll, Mont. (11-2)

Bowl schedule

Tuesday, Dec. 14
New Orleans Bowl
North Texas (7-4) vs. Southern Miss. (6-5)
Tuesday, Dec. 21
Champs Sports Bowl
At Orlando, Fla.
Georgia Tech (6-5) vs. Syracuse (6-5)
Wednesday, Dec. 22
GMAC Bowl
Mobile, Ala.
Memphis (8-3) vs. Bowling Green (8-3)
Thursday, Dec. 23
Fort Worth (Texas) Bowl
Cincinnati (6-5) vs. Marshall (6-5)
Las Vegas Bowl
Wyoming (6-5) vs. UCLA (6-5)
Friday, Dec. 24
Hawaii Bowl
At Honolulu
UAB (7-4) vs. Hawaii (7-5)
Monday, Dec. 27
MPC Computers Bowl
At Boise, Idaho
Fresno State (8-3) vs. Virginia (8-3)
Motor City Bowl
At at Pontiac, Mich.
Toledo (9-3) vs. Connecticut (7-4)
Tuesday, Dec. 28
Independence Bowl
At Shreveport, La.
Iowa State (6-5) vs. Miami (Ohio) (8-4)
Insight Bowl
At Phoenix
Oregon State (6-5) vs. Notre Dame (6-5)
Wednesday, Dec. 29
Houston Bowl
Texas-El Paso (8-3) vs. Colorado (7-5)
Alamo Bowl
At San Antonio
Ohio State (7-4) vs. Oklahoma State (7-4)
Thursday, Dec. 30
Continental Tire Bowl
At Charlotte, N.C.
Boston College (8-3) vs. No. Carolina (6-5)
Emerald Bowl
At San Francisco
New Mexico (7-4) vs. Navy (9-2)
Holiday Bowl
At San Diego
California (10-1) vs. Texas Tech (7-4)
Silicon Valley Classic
At San Jose, Calif.
Troy (7-4) vs. Northern Illinois (8-3)
Friday, Dec. 31
Music City Bowl
At Nashville, Tenn.
Alabama (6-5) vs. Minnesota (6-5)
Sun Bowl
At El Paso, Texas
Purdue (7-4) vs. Arizona State (8-3)
Peach Bowl
At Atlanta
Miami (8-3) vs. Florida (7-4)
Saturday, Jan. 1
Cotton Bowl
At Dallas
Tennessee (9-3) vs. Texas A&M (7-4)
Outback Bowl
At Tampa, Fla.
Wisconsin (9-2) vs. Georgia (9-2)
Gator Bowl
At Jacksonville, Fla.
Florida State (8-3) vs. West Virginia (8-3)
Capital One Bowl
At Orlando, Fla.
Iowa (9-2) vs. LSU (9-2)
Rose Bowl
At Pasadena, Calif.
Michigan (9-2) vs. Texas (10-1)
Fiesta Bowl
At Tempe, Ariz.
Utah (11-0) vs. Pittsburgh (8-3)
Monday, Jan. 3
Sugar Bowl
At New Orleans
Auburn (12-0) vs. Virginia Tech (10-2)
Tuesday, Jan. 4
Orange Bowl
At Miami
Southern Cal (12-0) vs. Oklahoma (12-0)

Division I-A team statistics

Total offense

	Plays	Yds	Yds Pg
Louisville	812	5904	536.7
Boise St.	882	5628	511.6
Utah	801	5539	502.7
Bowling Green	817	5518	501.6
California	759	5442	494.7
Texas Tech	863	5303	482.1
Toledo	897	5689	474.1
Oklahoma	895	5635	469.6
Texas	816	5129	466.3
Memphis	837	5110	464.5
Michigan St.	899	5520	460.0
Purdue	837	5011	455.5
Minnesota	756	4909	446.3
Northern Illinois	787	4906	446.0
Southern California	860	5313	442.8

Rushing offense

	Car	Yds	Yds Pg
Rice	688	3372	306.5
Texas	569	3326	302.4
Navy	631	3205	291.4
Air Force	648	3051	277.4
California	470	2860	260.0
Minnesota	500	2806	255.1
West Virginia	543	2796	254.2
Oklahoma St.	564	2695	245.0
Utah	494	2694	244.9
Louisville	484	2676	243.3
Boise St.	558	2670	242.7
Virginia	514	2654	241.3
Northern Illinois	506	2645	240.5
Michigan St.	500	2862	238.5
Fresno St.	468	2508	228.0

Passing offense

	Att	Cp	Yds	Yds Pg
Texas Tech	591	387	4276	388.7
Bowling Green	428	287	3692	335.6
Hawaii	589	339	3997	333.1
Purdue	439	274	3573	324.8
Arizona St.	457	264	3438	312.5
Rutgers	473	303	3416	310.5
Toledo	409	286	3076	306.3
Oregon St.	487	259	3348	304.4
Louisville	328	235	3228	293.5
Connecticut	423	272	3137	285.2
Miami (Ohio)	416	257	3395	282.9
Brigham Young	423	234	3075	279.5
Florida	368	224	2991	271.9
Boise St.	324	206	2958	268.9
Middle Tenn. St.	404	282	2945	267.7

Total defense

	Plays	Yds	Yds Pg
North Carolina St.	701	2439	221.3
Alabama	641	2595	235.9
LSU	682	2749	249.9
Virginia Tech	735	3185	265.4
Auburn	720	3234	269.5
Florida St.	721	2977	270.6
Southern California	775	3259	271.5
Wisconsin	678	3035	275.9
Oklahoma	749	3362	280.1
Iowa	745	3180	289.0
Penn St.	753	3207	291.5
Georgia	685	3237	294.2
California	713	3254	295.8
Georgia Tech	729	3294	299.4
Virginia	669	3303	300.2

Rushing defense

	Car	Yds	Yds Pg
Florida St.	371	759	69.0
Southern California	354	904	75.3
California	347	913	83.0
Boise St.	323	918	83.5
Oklahoma	374	1037	86.4
Iowa	356	992	90.2
Troy	400	998	90.7
New Mexico	405	1030	93.6
Notre Dame	381	1038	94.4
Purdue	365	1097	100.6
North Carolina St.	429	1126	102.4
Nebraska	390	1144	104.0
LSU	381	1150	104.6
Texas	374	1164	105.8
Marshall	392	1164	105.8

Passing defense

	Att	Cp	Yds	TDs	Pts
North Carolina St.	272	118	1309	12	91.75
Alabama	229	100	1282	9	94.93
Virginia Tech	316	169	1797	7	97.17
Fresno St.	331	167	1935	8	97.87
LSU	301	140	1599	14	98.51
Oregon St.	391	168	2135	23	99.04
Wisconsin	328	161	1743	11	99.30
Southern California	421	222	2355	11	99.32
Penn St.	310	175	1785	5	99.82
Troy	382	209	2375	9	101.62
UTEP	355	179	2152	12	102.36
Clemson	359	183	2108	10	103.36
Texas Tech	339	171	1930	12	104.05
Iowa	389	211	2188	13	104.29
Missouri	277	148	1642	10	104.31

Div. I-A individual statistics

Rushing

	Car	Yds	Avg	Yds Pg
Thomas, No. Texas	256	1709	6.7	189.9
Arrington, Cal	264	1845	7.0	167.7
Williams, Memphis	295	1828	6.2	166.2
Benson, Texas	303	1764	5.8	160.4
Wolfe, No. Illinois	241	1572	6.5	157.2
Peterson, Oklahoma	314	1843	5.9	153.6
Moats, La. Tech	288	1774	6.2	147.8
Morency, Okla. St.	250	1454	5.8	145.4
Hart, Michigan	261	1372	5.3	124.7
Hall, So. Florida	210	1357	6.5	123.4
Sproles, Kansas St.	244	1318	5.4	119.8
Seymour, C. Michigan	262	1284	4.9	116.7
Jones, Army	209	1269	6.1	115.4
Herron, Northwestern	274	1381	5.0	115.1
Dorsey, UNLV	226	1260	5.6	114.5

Passing

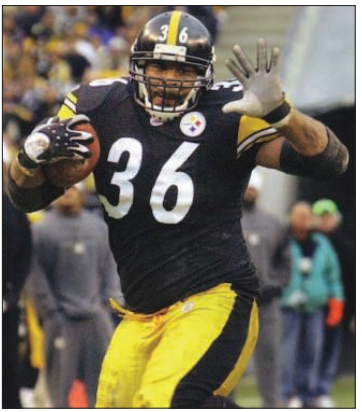
	Att	Cp	Yds	TDs	Rtg
LeFors, Louisville	231	171	2403	18	185.4
Smith, Utah	280	185	2624	26	174.9
Campbell, Auburn	254	177	2511	19	172.7
Jacobs, Bowl. Green	418	283	3637	36	167.8
Gradkowski, Toledo	387	274	3475	27	165.1
White, Oklahoma	354	231	2961	33	162.6
Rodgers, Cal	274	185	2320	23	161.2
Orton, Purdue	342	213	2809	28	155.4
Leinart, USC	377	251	2990	28	154.5
DGreene, Georgia	261	156	2244	18	153.2
Picard, Tulane	321	143	1881	12	152.5
Zabransky, Boise St.	298	192	2728	15	150.6
Leak, Florida	360	219	2935	28	149.4
Blackmon, LSU	304	166	2623	24	149.4
Pierce, N. Mexico St.	285	191	2253	16	148.4

Receiving

	Gms	Ct	Yds	Ct Pg
Ridgeway, Ball State	11	105	1399	9.5
Bernal-Woods, Idaho	12	96	938	8.0
Edwards, Michigan	11	87	1221	7.9
Owens, Hawaii	12	94	1176	7.8
Deslaurie, E. Michigan	11	84	1257	7.6
Flowers, Nevada	12	91	1126	7.6
Stubblefield, Purdue	11	82	1014	7.5
Moses, Rutgers	11	81	1056	7.4
J.Davis, Marshall	11	81	847	7.4
Hass, Oregon State	11	81	1274	7.4
Moore, Toledo	12	85	1141	7.1
Wright, Middle Tenn.	11	76	1048	6.9
Dowery, Kent State	10	68	712	6.8
Hagan, Arizona State	11	74	1066	6.7
Jennings, W. Michigan	14	74	1092	6.7

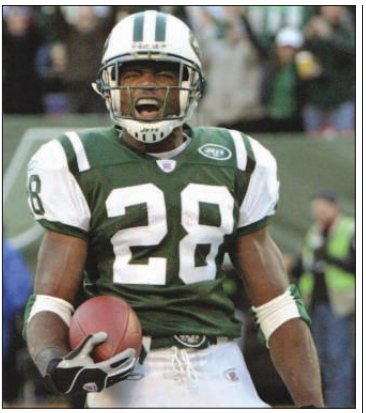
SPORTS

Players offer to cut salaries by 24 percent in latest effort to end lockout, Page 36



AP

Pittsburgh Steelers' Jerome Bettis needs 20 yards Sunday to reach 13,000 career rushing yards, a total reached by only four NFL backs.



AP

New York Jets' Curtis Martin, who leads the league with 1,305 yards this season, can also reach 13,000 career yards with 26 on Sunday.

Sooners freshman Peterson outran hype to become Heisman finalist

Page 39

Oklahoma QB White picks up hardware on way to Heisman dinner

Page 38

Hustling UMass stuns No. 7 Connecticut

Page 34

A test of endurance

Steelers-Jets matchup could determine better prospect for long run in playoffs

BY ALAN ROBINSON
The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — This game may not define or validate a season — no, the Jets and Steelers seem long past that. The mere presence of soon-to-be 13,000-yard rushers Curtis Martin and Jerome Bettis could make Sunday a special occasion, but then the very teams themselves ensure that.

Reputations won't necessarily be made, either. Martin and Bettis were certifiable stars years ago, and quarterbacks Chad Pennington and Ben Roethlisberger may soon be in their upper-echelon class, too. Neither defense needs another sack or long shutout streak to authenticate its rigidity, neither offense must produce another 100-yard rusher to prove its longshoreman-like commitment to toughness.

What this mid-December game between two similar, championship-potential teams may decide is which has the strength and resilience to still be playing in early February.

New York Jets at Pittsburgh Steelers

10 p.m. Sunday
AFN-Atlantic

Game time is Central European.

The Jets, whose 9-3 record has been matched by only three teams in franchise history, begin a difficult four-game closing stretch that could propel them into the playoffs on a remarkable roll — or, conversely, leave them too depleted to play beyond early next month.

Coach Herm Edwards' team owns a two-game lead in the AFC wild-card race that it wants to maintain to gain more favorable matchups in the playoffs. But it won't be easy, not with the Seahawks (6-6), Patriots (11-1) and Rams (6-6) still to play.

The Steelers (11-1), their own record equaled in franchise history only by one of the greatest teams ever to play the sport, are all but assured of a division championship — but, beyond that, little else. With the defending Super Bowl champion Patriots matching them victory for victory, one slipup could cost them the potentially decisive home-field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs.

To both teams, the choice is simple: win Sunday, or possibly be forced to win a much more difficult game in January.

"This is a playoff-style game that will prepare both teams for the playoffs," Pennington said. "We both have a lot at stake. We are trying to solidify a wild-card spot and they are trying to protect home-field advantage. It is important to both teams."

SEE TEST ON PAGE 35

Week 14 playoff scenarios

AFC EAST

New England can clinch division title with:
1) A win and N.Y. Jets loss

New England can clinch playoff berth with:
1) A win or tie, OR
2) Baltimore loss or tie, OR
3) Denver loss or tie, OR
4) Pittsburgh win or tie

New York Jets can clinch playoff berth with:
1) A win + Buffalo loss or tie + Denver loss + San Diego win or tie OR
2) A win + Buffalo loss or tie + Denver loss + Baltimore win or tie

AFC NORTH

Pittsburgh can clinch division title with:
1) A win or tie OR
2) Baltimore loss or tie

Pittsburgh can clinch playoff berth with:
1) Denver loss or tie

AFC SOUTH

Indianapolis can clinch division title with:
1) A win, OR
2) A tie and a Jacksonville loss or tie

NFC EAST

Philadelphia has clinched division title.

Philadelphia can clinch first-round bye with:
1) A win or tie, OR
2) Green Bay loss or tie, OR
3) Atlanta win or tie

NFC SOUTH

Atlanta can clinch division title with:
1) A win or tie, OR
2) Tampa Bay loss or tie and a Carolina loss or tie

Cleveland, Miami and San Francisco have been eliminated from playoff contention.

■ Colts wide receiver Harrison signs seven-year, $66 million contract extension, Page 35

Rockets' McGrady takes off in final seconds Page 33

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