

PACIFIC

Marines join sailors aboard USS Denver, head for Cobra Gold Page 7



OLYMPICS

US has rare shot at gold in cross-country Back page



FACES

Flea: Chili Peppers pre-recorded music for Super Bowl show Page 17

Military: New GI Bill tool helps calculate benefits, compare schools » Page 5

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Layover: ROMANIA

First troops move through new transit hub en route to Afghanistan | Page 3

WARREN W. WRIGHT Jr./Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, walk toward a C-17 transport plane on Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base in Romania on Monday. Soldiers with the unit were departing for a deployment in Afghanistan and were the first group to use the MK Passenger Transit Center at the Romanian base.

30 nuclear instructors sidelined over naval cheating allegations

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Staff members at an elite training school allegedly cheated on tests administered to personnel who train other sailors to operate nuclear reactors that power Navy submarines, Navy officials said Tuesday.

Answers to a written qualification propulsion exam were allegedly shared among some instructors at the Naval Nuclear

Power Training Command near Charleston, S.C., Adm. Jonathan Greenert, the chief of naval operations, told reporters at the Pentagon.

The staff members accused of cheating were required to pass the test to qualify to instruct students on the training reactors. None of the students at the school appears to have been involved, Adm. John Richardson, the director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, told reporters.

The allegations came to light Monday when a senior enlisted sailor at the school was approached by at least one sailor involved in the cheating.

“One of our sailors from the Nuclear Power Training Unit in Charleston, S.C., was offered to compromise his integrity, recognized that this was wrong, and reported it to the command,” Richardson said.

SEE CHEATING ON PAGE 2

IRAQ

Bombs rock capital; senior US official predicts more violence

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Brett McGurk, the deputy secretary of state for Iraq and Iran, told lawmakers Wednesday that he anticipates more high-profile attacks in Iraq as an al-Qaida-linked group grows in power.

The latest suicide and vehicle-borne bombings in Baghdad killed at least 25 people and wounded 30 Wednesday, according to several reports.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks, but they bear the signature of al-Qaida's former affiliate in Iraq. The group — which calls itself the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant — became resurgent following the withdrawal of U.S. troops and the emergence of a large-scale insurgency in neighboring Syria. The ISIL has taken over the city of Fallujah, which was the scene of bloody battles between insurgents and U.S. troops during the height of the Iraq War.

SEE IRAQ ON PAGE 8

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The 18-year-old thought he was trying to eat his face off."

— Sheriff Ric Bradshaw, of Palm Beach County, Fla., on a 6-foot-3, 250-pound naked man who was killed by police after he attacked a former New York City police officer and bit an 18-year-old man on the face in Delray Beach

See story on Page 10

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COMING TOMORROW



Health
Anxiety can be contagious

TODAY IN STRIPES

- American Roundup 16
- Business 15
- Classified 19-21
- Comics 18
- Crossword 18
- Faces 17
- Opinion 12-13
- Sports 21-32
- Weather 15

MILITARY

Navy ships on standby for Sochi

By STEVEN BEARDSLEY
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — A pair of Navy ships has entered the Black Sea, where the top U.S. commander in Europe has said they will be available to respond to any emergencies arising from the Winter Olympic games in Sochi. The USS Mount Whitney, an amphibious command ship, and the USS Taylor, a guided-missile frigate, arrived Tuesday on a routine and pre-scheduled deployment to the region, a U.S. Navy press release said.

The Pentagon announced their planned deployment to the region in January after terrorist groups threatened to disrupt the Olympic Games in the resort town on Russia's Black Sea coast. The events begin Friday and run through Feb. 23.

Air Force Gen. Philip Breedlove, chief of U.S. European Command, said in an interview with Stars and Stripes on Saturday that one of the ships would offer command-and-control ability, a role seemingly filled by the USS Mount Whitney, the flagship of the U.S. 6th Fleet in Europe.

The military will have assets that can be deployed for medical operations in Sochi, should there be a demand for such support,



COLLIN TURNER/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

The U.S. 6th Fleet flagship USS Mount Whitney steams in formation with Georgian coast guard ship Sokhumi P-24 while in the Black Sea on Nov. 13, 2013. The Mount Whitney, homeported in Gaeta, Italy, is underway in the Black Sea in support of maritime security operations.

Breedlove said. "We will have the capability to respond medically with airlift if it is required," Breedlove said. "We will require cooperation with Russia to be able to land those aircraft."

The ships total roughly 500 sailors together, and both have helicopter pads.

Fears over the safety of athletes have increased in recent months following suicide attacks in the city of Volgograd in December and a series of threats against athletes competing in the games, prompting Russia to impose heavy security measures in and around Sochi. Russian and U.S. officials have discussed

sharing information on countering improvised explosive devices, and the FBI reported it would send at least two dozen agents to the games.

American athletes will be escorted by diplomatic security, according to the State Department.

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Cheating: Admiral confident in nuke safety despite scandal

FROM FRONT PAGE

"To say that I'm disappointed would be an understatement," Greenert said. "Whenever I hear about integrity issues, it's disruptive to our unit's success and it's definitely contrary to all of our core values."

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the Training Command are investigating. The tests and the operation of the reactors involve access to classified material, Richardson said.

"I assure you if these allegations are substantiated... we will hold the appropriate people accountable," Greenert said. "We will remain vigilant throughout the program."

Richardson said punishment would be meted out on a case-

by-case basis, but such behavior would likely result in removal from the program and possibly removal from the Navy.

The training reactors were shut down for routine maintenance when the allegations came to light.

All personnel implicated so far have been removed from the site and their access has been revoked. As a precaution, all other personnel at the school who have access to the reactors are being retested to validate their knowledge, and extra supervision has been assigned to the operating teams.

Richardson will not authorize re-operation of the reactors until he is satisfied that appropriate corrective actions have been

taken, he told reporters.

Richardson would not say precisely how many sailors have been sidelined while the investigation is ongoing, but a Navy official told Stars and Stripes that about 30 engineering watch supervisors have been removed.

Richardson said the investigation has just begun and it's too soon to tell how many were involved, but he believes the number will be less than 160 — or 1 percent of the 16,000 personnel in the Navy nuclear propulsion program. Richardson did not say how he arrived at that number.

The alleged cheating was centered on propulsion reactors and is not related to nuclear weapons, Richardson said.

A team from Richardson's

headquarters is in Charleston and will assess the command climate to determine if there are broader problems at the school.

Despite the alleged cheating, Richardson is confident that Naval reactors throughout the fleet are being operated safely because sailors have to pass many layers of testing to pass their evaluations and qualify to operate the reactors.

The last comparable Navy cheating incident occurred in 2010 when the discovery of a cheating ring aboard the USS Memphis submarine led to the firing of the ship's commanding officer and the ouster of 10 percent of its crew.

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MILITARY

Possible Obama snub is on S. Korea's radar

By **ASHLEY ROWLAND**
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — President Barack Obama's upcoming visit to Asia may be attracting the most attention in a country that isn't on his probable itinerary — South Korea.

While the schedule for the April trip has not been formally announced, he is widely expected to visit Japan, Malaysia and the Philippines. Bypassing Seoul would be viewed here as a diplomatic snub to South Korea and a sign that the U.S. places greater value on its relationship with Tokyo.

The apparent omission has not gone unnoticed here, particularly as tensions have escalated with Tokyo in recent months over historical grievances between the

‘The public thinks we could do worse than cooperating with China.’

Cho Sei Young

professor of international relations at Dongseo University in Busan, South Korea

two key U.S. allies. Local media have framed whether Obama meets in Seoul with President Park Geun-hye as a question of U.S. commitment to the country in the face of a rising China and a militarily resurgent Japan.

South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Wednesday it is "communicating closely with the U.S. side" about Obama's trip. An invitation was extended last spring when Park visited Washington.

The U.S. and South Korea face a number of contentious issues, including how much South Korea contributes toward the upkeep of the large U.S. troop presence on the peninsula. The two countries agreed last month that Seoul will increase its contributions, but the deal still could face opposition this spring when it goes to the National Assembly for ratification.

Seoul has also sought a delay in next year's scheduled handover of wartime operational control

of allied forces on the peninsula because of concerns about the threat posed by North Korea.

A no-show by Obama would be an embarrassment for Park and could undermine support for a leader friendly to the U.S. administration. It could also lead to South Korea aligning itself with an increasingly assertive Beijing, despite concerns over China's disputed territorial claims in the region and military expansionism.

"The public thinks we could do worse than cooperating with China," said Cho Sei Young, a professor of international relations at Dongseo University in Busan.

In a recent Washington Post column, three prominent analysts urged the president to include Seoul in his Asia trip, saying military issues — including OPCON transfer — make a presidential

stopover imperative and that "a trip without South Korea would send the wrong message."

North Korea could conduct another provocation — possibly a nuclear test — by the time of Obama's trip, according to Richard Armitage, a former deputy secretary of state and president of Armitage International, and Victor Cha and Michael Green, both of the Center for Strategic and International Studies and formerly on the National Security Council.

"Whatever the provocation, the United States would need to demonstrate solidarity with Seoul and galvanize regional pressure to deter further escalation by Pyongyang," they wrote.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this story. rowland.ashley@stripes.com

Transit bases

A new transit center at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, near Constanta, Romania, is to replace the transit center at Manas, Kyrgyzstan, which has served as a main hub for troops moving in and out of Afghanistan.



NOGA AMIRAV/Stars and Stripes

New transit point in Romania sees first GIs move through

By **JOHN VANDIVER**
Stars and Stripes

Afghanistan-bound U.S. troops departed from the military's new transit hub in Romania this week, marking a first for the new facility, which will play a key role as the United States draws down in Afghanistan in the year ahead.

On Monday, about 300 soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division took off for a nine-month rotation from Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, which the military refers to as the MK Passenger Transit Center.

The center was established as a replacement for the Manas Transit Center in Kyrgyzstan, which is slated to close in July.

The new MK Passenger Transit Center was built by soldiers from the 902nd Engineer Company (Vertical), which operates under the umbrella of the Germany-based 21st Theater Sustainment Command.

In June, the Kyrgyz parliament voted not to extend the U.S. military's lease at Manas, which has served as a main transit point for troops moving into and out of Af-

ghanistan over the years.

In October, the U.S. Defense Department announced it would shift the mission of transiting troops and cargo to a facility in Romania.

The MK Passenger Transit Center provides "essential logistical, transportation, reintegration and morale and welfare services," according to the 21st TSC.

The base, near Romania's Black Sea port town of Constanta, can accommodate about 2,000 transiting personnel at a time and maintains a contingent of roughly 350 servicemembers and civilians to operate the transit center.

So far, some troops appear to prefer the facility in Romania to the transit center it will replace in Kyrgyzstan, according to a 21st TSC news release.

"Our stay here has been a lot better than at Manas," Spc. Stephen Mayville, a transiting soldier from Grass Lake, Mich., was quoted as saying.

"The facilities are awesome; they actually have buildings instead of tents."

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WARREN W. WRIGHT JR./Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, walk toward a C-17 transport plane at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base in Romania on Monday. The soldiers constitute the first wave of passengers to transit through the base's MK Passenger Transit Center, which was established as a replacement for the Manas Transit Center in Kyrgyzstan, en route to Afghanistan.



MICHAEL A. CURRIN/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

The soldiers prepare to check in at the base's newly constructed passenger holding area.

MIDEAST

Afghan candidates face off

By KAY JOHNSON
The Associated Press

KABUL — Tackling topics ranging from the Taliban to the future of foreign troops in Afghanistan, candidates battling to replace President Hamid Karzai faced off Tuesday in the first televised debate of a crucial election campaign.

The presidential race is playing out in the run-up to the planned withdrawal of NATO combat troops, and the April 5 vote will be a crucial test of whether the country can ensure a stable transition after years of war and while facing a Taliban insurgency that has vowed it will attempt to disrupt the poll.

With Karzai ineligible to run for

a third term, a successful election would mark Afghanistan's first real democratic transfer of power.

On a snowy Tuesday night in Kabul, five of the 11 candidates vying for Karzai's seat took their places behind podiums in front of a studio audience.

After each of the candidates — Abdullah Abdullah, runner-up in the 2009 election; former foreign minister Zalmay Rassoul; former finance minister Ashraf Ghani; former defense minister Abdul Rahim Wardak; and Karzai's brother, Qayyum Karzai — gave an opening statement, the questions began.

The U.S. security deal took center stage right off the bat, with Qayyum Karzai, Ghani and Rassoul all expressing their support for its

signing. The remaining two candidates were not asked the question.

"The security forces and the people of Afghanistan will not have the ability to function on their own," Qayyum Karzai said.

Abdullah echoed his sentiments, adding that "support from the international community to our security forces will help our security."

On peace talks with the Taliban, the candidates mostly shared the same views — all five support a negotiated settlement with insurgents willing to lay down arms and cut ties with terrorist groups like al-Qaida. They were more reticent when asked by the moderator if the Taliban are the enemy of Afghanistan — perhaps with an eye to future



MASSOUD HOSSAINI/AP

Afghan presidential election candidates Abdullah Abdullah, left, and Qayyum Karzai talk during the first presidential election debate in Kabul on Tuesday

negotiations.

While Ghani condemned the killing of innocents and suicide attacks, he said some Taliban are "forced because of corruption and injustice to take up arms."

Other topics on the agenda included the economy and how to

eradicate corruption.

"There is no doubt that corruption is like a cancer in Afghanistan," Ghani said, but argued that "if you place someone who is clean at the head of government, it's very hard for others to be corrupt."

Officials: Obama administration is curbing drone strikes in Pakistan

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration has sharply curtailed drone strikes in Pakistan after a request from the government there for restraint as it pursues peace talks with the Pakistani Taliban, according to U.S. officials.

"That's what they asked for, and we didn't tell them no," said a U.S. official, one of sev-

eral who spoke on the condition of anonymity about the sensitive matter.

The administration indicated that it will still carry out strikes against senior al-Qaida targets, if they become available, and move to thwart any direct, imminent threat to U.S. persons.

Concern about Pakistani political sensitivities provides one explanation for the ab-

sence of strikes since December, the longest pause in the CIA's drone campaign since a six-week lull in 2011 after an errant U.S. air assault killed 24 Pakistani soldiers at a border post, triggering a diplomatic crisis.

The current pause follows a November strike that killed Pakistani Taliban leader Hakimullah Mehsud just days before an initial attempt at peace talks was

scheduled to begin. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government accused the United States of trying to sabotage the talks, and the Taliban canceled the meeting.

A senior administration official denied that any informal agreement had been reached, saying that "the issue of whether to negotiate with the Pakistani Taliban is entirely an internal matter for Pakistan."

Celebrate the Week With Yokosuka MWR



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Friday, February 14 from 1700 to 2100 in Kosano Dining Room
This night of romance starts with an elegant cocktail hour at 1700 and at 1800... a red rose, and, five course gourmet dinner with wine, accompanied with the smooth sounds of the Jazz Command Band. Tickets on sale from January 28 to February 10 or until sold out. \$90 per couple/\$50 per person. All authorized patrons.

CPO Club 243-5506

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Friday, February 14 from 1700 to 2100 in 3rd Floor Ballroom
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Say I love you to your special someone and bring them to our annual special four course dinner. Start your meal with a little bubbly and prepare yourself for a night to remember! Reservations highly recommended. For more information, please call 246-8077. \$25 per person.

Negishi Club 242-4151

Valentine's Day Dinner

Friday, February 14

Enjoy a special dinner with the one(s) you love. Along with our regular dinner menu, we will offer a Valentine's dinner special available for the entire family! A full course meal including soup, salad, grilled chicken or baked fish. Adults \$20/person. Children's ages 4-12, meal available \$10.

MILITARY

VA launches tool for education comparison

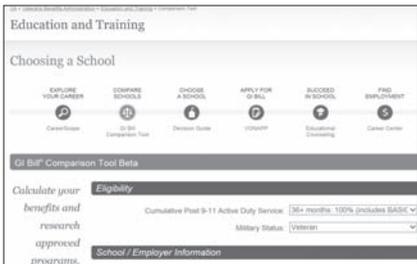
Information on costs, education quality offered

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

The Department of Veterans Affairs has launched a new tool to help servicemembers, veterans and their families calculate Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits and compare schools and training programs nationwide.

The GI Bill Comparison Tool brings together information from more than 17 online sources and three federal agencies and seeks to provide key information about costs and quality of education.

The comparison tool was developed in response to President Barack Obama's executive order on April 27, 2012, which instructed agencies to establish standards for educational institutions that interact with servicemembers, veterans and their families; provide information on the costs and quality of institutions and programs; prevent deceptive recruiting practices; and provide



The Department of Veterans Affairs has launched the GI Bill Comparison Tool, which can help servicemembers and veterans calculate Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, compare schools and training programs and more.

quality academic and student support services, according to a VA statement.

The tool addresses concerns of predatory practices, in which institutions and programs failed to deliver on educational promises, leading many in Washington to suggest that large amounts of benefit dollars were being wasted.

The VA has to work out some bugs with the new site, but customers will be able to calculate

and even apply for their benefits, take an interests-and-aptitudes assessment, compare schools and graduation rates, peruse careers and job opportunities and access counseling services.

Users also will be able to compare the number of students receiving VA benefits at each school.

In addition to calculating benefit funding, the tool shows how much users can receive for books

and living stipends and whether the school in question participates in the VA's Yellow Ribbon Program, which helps students avoid out-of-pocket tuition and fees that may exceed the Post 9/11 GI Bill tuition benefit.

The tool also shows how the school compares with others in financial aid.

Veterans of Foreign Wars, Student Veterans of America and the American Legion have worked closely with the White House and legislators on initiatives such as the comparison tool.

"Before this tool launched, estimating how much beneficiaries may receive under the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit was challenging," VA Deputy Undersecretary for the Office of Economic Opportunity Curtis Coy wrote in a VA blog posting. "The new comparison tool makes it easy to estimate Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits with just one click."

Coy also said the VA will add functionality, such as the ability to compare up to three schools side-by-side.

"By offering student veterans better comparison information, we help them to choose the right schools and programs that match their goals," VFW National Commander William Thien said in a

statement.

"In the past, veterans who wanted to use their GI Bill educational benefits would have to search through three different government agencies to find all of the information they can now find in a few simple clicks."

The launch was applauded by college and university representatives.

"We're very supportive of the comparison tool," said Michael Dakduk, vice president of military and veterans affairs for the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities. "It will allow military veterans to choose the institution that best fits their needs."

The comparison tool comes on the heels of the VA's launch last week of a secure online GI Bill complaint system to report fraud, waste and abuse.

That website is designed to collect feedback from servicemembers, veterans and their families on issues with educational institutions that receive funding from federal military and veterans benefits programs such as the GI Bill and tuition assistance.

Check out the tool at <http://department-of-veterans-affairs.github.io/gi-bill-comparison-tool/>.
burke.matt@stripes.com

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Feuilletage

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Passion Fruit

ENTRÉE

Chateaubriand

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THE NEW SANNO

MILITARY

Volksfests back at 2 bases after 1-year absence

By MICHAEL S. DARNELL
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWÖHR, Germany — The U.S. Army-run German-American Volksfests at U.S. Army Garrisons Grafenwöhr and Hohenfels are back on after having been canceled last year because of budget restrictions.

The 56th German-American Volksfest at Hohenfels is scheduled for April 30 to May 4, according to a base news release. The larger Volksfest at the Grafenwöhr training area is set to run Aug. 1-3.

“This event helps us to celebrate the wonderful partnership that we have with our garrison town of Grafenwöhr and our other German partners,” Col. James E. Saenz, commander of U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria, said in the news release. “It’s wonderful news for U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria, and all of the other cities and towns we share a special friendship with. I encourage everyone to attend.”

The popular community festival, which draws between 80,000 and 100,000 visitors annually, was canceled in 2013. Garrison officials cited Defense Department guidance that temporarily restricted funds allotted for nonessential events such as the Volksfest. Proponents of the festival, including Hohenfels Mayor Bernhard Graf, fought to bring the festival back this year, even bringing it to the attention of U.S.

Ambassador John Emerson. “I wanted him to know that the fest is important to us,” Graf said. “Because it’s a big fest, not only for Hohenfels, but also for the entire Upper Palatinate region. People come here from as far away as Nuremberg and Regensburg. “It’s a great fest for Germans and Americans to meet and to show the great partnership we share. I’m very glad it’s back,” Graf said.

Norbert Wittl, a spokesman for Hohenfels, said the cancellation of the festival in 2013 was a great disappointment to the town.

“Many Germans were very sad when the Volksfest was canceled,” he said. “They were very upset to see it go, and the people used everything they had to let people know, ‘We want this fest back.’”

As in years past, the Hohenfels festival will feature food vendors selling both American and German fare, souvenir booths, children’s activities, guided nature tours of the wooded areas around town, and displays from both nations’ militaries. The fest is an opportunity to strengthen ties between the Americans and Germans who call the area home, Wittl said.

“Germans and Americans will have five days where they meet each other, eat together and party together,” he said. “It will definitely foster our relationships.”

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Stars and Stripes

A visitor to the 2005 German-American Volksfest in Hohenfels, Germany, signals his enthusiasm for The Twister.

Man guilty of shooting veteran’s dog

It took a jury just 15 minutes to convict a man accused of breaking into the Augusta, Ga., home of a wounded soldier and shooting her service dog.

At the conclusion of a two-day trial in Richmond County Superior Court, Joshua Patterson, 33, was found guilty of aggravated cruelty to an animal and burglary — felonies that could result in a maximum sentence of 25 years in prison.

According to witnesses at the trial, Patterson broke into the home of William and Kinga Kiss-Johnson on May 7, 2012. Balto, her black English lab service dog, was shot in the neck-chest area.

Although Balto has recovered, he still has physical limitations and Kiss-Johnson — severely injured while deployed in Afghanistan — cannot rely on his assistance for long periods of time.

Patterson is set for sentencing Thursday.

From The Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle



ALEJANDRO A. ALVAREZ, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/AP

Jimmie Stewart, of northeast Philadelphia, who was on the USS Forrestal from 1960 to 1962, stands near the decommissioned aircraft carrier as it prepares to make its final voyage from the Navy shipyard in south Philadelphia for a dismantling and recycling facility in Brownsville, Texas, on Tuesday.

Forrestal starts trip to scrap heap

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The Navy’s first supercarrier has left Philadelphia on a final trip to a scrapping facility in Texas.

The Philadelphia Inquirer says the massive USS Forrestal left under tow early Tuesday to begin

its 17- or 18-day trip.

The 60-year-old ship is being taken to a Brownsville, Texas, recycling facility owned by All Star Metals, which was paid 1 cent to haul away and dismantle it.

The USS Forrestal was decommissioned in September 1993, after more than 38 years of ser-

vice. It’s best known for a 1967 fire on its flight deck that killed 132 crewmen and injured 62 others.

The Navy made the USS Forrestal available for donation as a museum or memorial but officials said it received no feasible applications for reuse.

Navy Yard building to be renamed

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Officials are renaming the Washington Navy Yard building where a gunman fatally shot 12 people in September before he was killed by police.

Navy Vice Adm. William Hilarides said in an email to employees on Tuesday that Building 197 will be named after Joshua Humphreys, who designed the Navy’s first six frigates. Hilarides said officials are also “exploring renumbering the building.”

“I feel this is a critical step towards establishing a new sense of place as we return to the Navy Yard next year,” Hilarides wrote of the change to the building’s name and number.

Officials are working on renovations to the building, headquarters for Naval Sea Systems Command. Its approximately 3,000 employees have not worked in the building since the shooting.

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PACIFIC



BRADLEY GEE/Courtesy of the US Navy

Marines and sailors embark mission equipment aboard the USS Denver at White Beach Naval Facility, Okinawa, on Monday.

Preparing for Cobra Gold

USS Denver picks up Okinawa-based Marines en route to exercise

By LISA TOURTELROT
Stars and Stripes

WHITE BEACH NAVAL FACILITY, Okinawa — The USS Denver made a brief stop at Okinawa on Wednesday to pick up members of the 3rd Marine Division and their gear before proceeding to Thailand in support of Exercise Cobra Gold 2014.

China is as an observer this year for the annual exercise, which is focused on rehearsing a multinational response to crises in the Asia-Pacific region. The main participants in the Feb. 11-21 exercise are Thailand, Japan, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia and South Korea, as well as about 5,000 U.S. personnel from the Army, Navy and Marine Corps.

An exercise this large requires massive cooperation and coordination efforts spanning different nations, and even within the U.S. military.

“We’re seeing more and more Marines who have never been on ship before,” Chief Warrant Officer 2 Dustin Heffel, the combat cargo officer for the Denver, said as the ship loaded up at White Beach Naval Facility. “I think it’s important that the ship receives and operates well with the Marines. This is our roots, the amphibious role.”

“This is the place to be, building relationships between the United States and our partners in the Pacific,” Heffel said.

The Denver’s support of Cobra Gold also marks what could be the last deployment of the 50-year-old Austin-class amphibious transport dock. The Denver is scheduled for decommissioning in September.

For more on the USS Denver’s stop on Okinawa, go to: stripes.com/go/ussdenver



PHOTOS BY LISA TOURTELROT/Stars and Stripes

Above: Sailors and Marines board the USS Denver at White Beach Naval Facility on Tuesday. Sailors from the Denver, below left, and members of the 3rd Marine Division are heading to Thailand in support of the upcoming Exercise Cobra Gold 2014. Below right: Sailors bring the latest mail aboard the ship.



Osan airman found dead in dorm room

SEOUL, South Korea — An airman with the 694th Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group was found dead Monday in his dormitory at Osan Air Base, according to the 51st Fighter Wing.

The airman’s name has been withheld pending notification of next of kin but is expected to be released Wednesday, according to the Wing’s public affairs office.

The cause of death is under investigation.

Japan-based sailor arrested for assault

SASEBO NAVAL BASE, Japan — A Sasebo-based sailor has been arrested for allegedly assaulting his girlfriend during an argument, police officials said.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Lyndon Anthony Lucien Jr., 26, was taken into custody Sunday afternoon at a Shiomi-cho apartment where his 30-year-old girlfriend reported that he assaulted her and threw her to the ground, a Sasebo police spokesman said Monday.

Lucien, who works in Sasebo Naval Base’s port operations department, denies the allegations, the spokesman said. He remained in custody Monday as police investigate the case.

Base spokeswoman Terri Kaltenbacher said Lucien has not

been formally charged.

The Asahi Shimbun reported that the two were fighting over a breakup.

Koreas agree to family reunions this month

SEOUL, South Korea — The rival Koreas agreed Wednesday to hold their first reunions of Korean War-divided families in more than three years later this month, another small step forward in easing tensions that comes despite North Korea’s anger over upcoming U.S.-South Korean military drills.

Many had been skeptical in Seoul that the North would agree to a quick resumption of the dramatic reunions because of the annual military exercises that Seoul and Washington plan later this month. North Korea calls them a rehearsal for invasion, and used last year’s drills to partly justify a torrent of threats and provocations that still clouds relations on the Korean Peninsula.

North Korea also scrapped an earlier plan for reunions at the last minute in September after accusing South Korea of planning war drills and other hostile acts. It is again calling for the cancellation of the annual drills.

Seoul and Washington say the exercises are purely defensive and have refused to call them off.

From staff reports

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NATION

Snowden leaks will force DOD changes

By **KIMBERLY DOZIER**
AND **STEPHEN BRAUN**
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A top U.S. military intelligence official said Tuesday that the Pentagon will have to make costly changes to programs and personnel because of leaks by former National Security Agency analyst Edward Snowden.

Defense Intelligence Agency chief Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn told the House Intelligence Committee that his agency has to assume that Snowden took every document he accessed, and that much of it concerned Pentagon programs.

“We assume the worst case in how we are reviewing all of the Defense Department’s

actions... events, exercises around the world,” said Flynn, whose agency produced a classified report assessing the fallout of the Snowden leaks. He said he believes there will likely have to be changes in all branches of the U.S. military because investigators have to assume the information is compromised.

“What he potentially made off with ... transcends” the NSA’s telephone and Internet collection programs, said Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, speaking before the committee’s annual threat assessment hearing. “Less than 10 percent has to do with domestic surveillance programs.”

Clapper has called on Snowden and anyone helping him to return documents that

have not been published.

Documents released over the past year by Snowden have revealed that the NSA sweeps up millions of Americans’ phone and Internet records. Revelations about the NSA’s spy programs were first published in the Guardian and The Washington Post newspapers in June, based on some of the thousands of documents Snowden handed over to journalists.

Officials have said Snowden downloaded some 1.7 million documents. U.S. intelligence officials have said some of those documents include the identities of undercover operatives. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the case.

In describing the effect of Snowden’s

leaks, Clapper appeared to carefully retreat from his contention last week to the Senate Intelligence Committee that the disclosures were “the most massive and most damaging theft of intelligence information in our history.” Some historians and researchers reacted to that comment by questioning whether the Snowden leaks were more damaging than Soviet spy rings that stole U.S. atomic bomb designs in the 1940s and funneled critical communications data and lethally exposed American informants in Russia in the 1980s and 1990s.

Instead, in his opening statement Tuesday, Clapper told the House panel that Snowden’s leaks were “potentially the most massive and most damaging theft of intelligence information in our history.”

Iraq: US in consultation with allies on training plans

FROM FRONT PAGE

The attacks Wednesday are just the latest example of escalating violence and the growing strength of jihadists. There were only a handful of suicide bombings each month at the end of 2012, but in 2013 the ISIL carried out an average of 30 to 40 suicide bombings each month. In December that number rose to 50, according to McGurk.

Nearly 8,000 civilians and 1,000 Iraqi security force members were killed in violent attacks in Iraq last year, according to the United Nations, although not all of those deaths are attributable to the ISIL.

McGurk told lawmakers he anticipates more attacks like the ones carried out Wednesday, especially suicide attacks by foreigners coming into Iraq through Syria.

“I think ISIL is going to maintain its pace of operations and continue to be a very serious threat,” he said.

The U.S. will help the Iraqi government deal with the insurgent threat by providing intelligence sharing, weaponry, training and military planning, McGurk said. The U.S. is providing hundreds of Hellfire missiles for the Iraqi security forces to use against jihadist camps, and Apache attack helicopters will be delivered later



VIA MILITANT WEBSITE/AP

Shakir Waheib, left, a senior member of the al-Qaida-linked Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, stands next to a burning police vehicle in Iraq’s Anbar Province in a photo posted in January.

this year. The U.S. is not contemplating bombing the camps directly, McGurk said.

Gen. Lloyd Austin III, the commander of U.S. Central Command, traveled to Iraq last week to meet with Iraqi military leaders to discuss the way forward. The U.S. is in talks with regional partners about allowing U.S. forces to train Iraqi conventional forces on their soil since the U.S. is barred from having large numbers of boots on the ground in Iraq, McGurk said.

While visiting wounded warriors at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio last month, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel was asked about the deteriorating situation in Iraq and whether the sacrifices of those who took part in Operation Iraqi Freedom were in vain.

“In eight years, we did accomplish what we set out to do,” Hagel said. “If we analyzed what Iraq is

today versus what Iraq was when we went into Iraq, it’s a different country ...

“You all did what you were asked to do, and I think you did it as well as it could have been done. ... So I don’t agree with the analyses that lives were wasted at all. I just — I don’t think that’s true, and I think it’s unfortunate that there are people out there saying that.”

Despite the ISIL’s violent tactics and jihadist goals, McGurk does not believe it is a threat to the United States.

“Right now they do not pose a direct threat to us or our personnel. But they pose a direct threat to the stability of Iraq,” he said in a Congressional hearing on the resurgence of jihadists. “It’s a very, very serious problem and a national problem.”

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Officials: Syria-trained US militants pose threat

By **KEN DILANIAN**
Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — More than 50 U.S. citizens have joined extremist groups that are fighting to overthrow Syrian President Bashar Assad and some have returned to America and are under FBI surveillance, U.S. intelligence officials said Tuesday.

Counterterrorism officials are increasingly concerned that Americans who have been trained by al-Qaida-linked groups and gained battlefield experience in Syria ultimately will try to mount terrorist attacks back home.

“It’s probably one of the most significant threats we’re dealing with,” said a senior intelligence official who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly.

At a House Intelligence Committee hearing Tuesday, CIA Director John Brennan said al-Qaida-linked fighters are training Americans and Europeans at camps in Syria and Iraq.

“We are concerned about the use of Syrian territory by the al-Qaida organization to recruit individuals ... to use Syria as a launching pad” for attacks on the West, Brennan said in a hearing Tuesday. “Global threats to national security.”

James R. Clapper, the U.S. director of national intelligence, said “7,500 or so” fighters from 50 countries are in Syria. Clapper last week cited a figure of 7,000 at a Senate hearing. He did not say how many Americans were involved or how many have returned.

Clapper said he was particularly worried about a small cadre of al-Qaida operatives who have fought in Afghanistan and Pakistan and aspire to attack the United States.

“Not only are fighters being drawn to Syria, but so are technologies and techniques that pose particular problems to our defenses,” he said.

The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, a research group based in Israel that has close ties to the Israeli military, estimated last month that as many as 2,100 Europeans and 70 Americans have fought in Syria.

Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Mich., the House Intelligence Committee chairman, used the hearing Tuesday to criticize the Obama administration’s counterterrorism policies. The White House quickly issued a strong rebuttal.

Rogers said the “lack of leadership has created a growing risk aversion within our intelligence agencies as al-Qaida has morphed and spread throughout Yemen, Syria, the Levant and Africa.”

New targeting criteria for drone strikes to reduce civilian casualties, which President Barack Obama announced last May, “are an utter and complete failure, and they leave Americans’ lives at risk,” Rogers said.

In response, White House spokeswoman Caitlin Hayden said Obama “imposed prudent limits on the use of drones” because “we will not be safer if people abroad believe we strike within their countries without regard for the consequence.”



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NATION

Report: ACA will prompt many to leave their jobs

White House says law is working as it was intended

By ZACHARY A. GOLDFARB AND AMY GOLDSTEIN
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — More than 2 million Americans who would otherwise rely on a job for health insurance will quit working, reduce their hours or stop looking for employment because of new health benefits available under the Affordable Care Act, congressional budget analysts said Tuesday.

The findings from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office revived a fierce debate about the impact the health care program will have on the U.S. economy.

The White House scrambled to defend the law, which has been defended by President Barack Obama since its 2010 passage, arguing that the report shows it will work as planned, freeing people to care for their children, retire early or start their own businesses without worrying about health coverage.

“The Affordable Care Act today, right now, is helping labor markets, is helping businesses and is helping jobs,” said Jason Furman, the president’s chief economist.

Republicans hailed the report as fresh evidence that the law will decimate the American workforce, encouraging people to force private employers out of favor of taxpayer handouts.

“Today’s CBO report gives a sobering outlook on our economy,” Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., said in a statement. “It confirms what we’ve known all along: The health care law is having a tremendously negative impact on economic growth.”



Congressional budget analysts say the Affordable Care Act, which President Barack Obama signed into law in 2010, will prompt millions of Americans to work fewer hours or quit their jobs.

The report raises new questions about the health care law just as some Republicans are again looking for concessions related to the Affordable Care Act in exchange for an agreement to raise the federal debt limit. Treasury Secretary Jack Lew has urged quick action on the debt limit — with no concessions or negotiations — saying he could run out of cash to pay the nation’s bill’s by the end of this month.

The health care law promises to be a major issue in midterm congressional elections this fall, with Republicans looking to bludgeon Democrats over the program’s botched launch and Democrats hoping to highlight the millions of Americans who have gained coverage.

On Tuesday, few Democrats publicly defended the law, a sign that lawmakers recognize its vulnerability. In its report, the CBO said severe technical problems during the October rollout of the HealthCare.gov website would sharply curtail enrollment this

year. In its assessment of the law’s impact on the jobs market, the agency had bad news for both political parties. In an implicit rebuke of GOP talking points, the CBO said that there was little evidence that the health care law is affecting employment and that businesses are not expected to significantly reduce head count or hours as a result of the law.

The report also contained a setback for the White House. The CBO predicts that the economy will have the equivalent of 2.3 million fewer full-time workers by 2021 as a result of the law — nearly three times previous estimates.

Deficit projected to reach 5-year low

By ANDREW TAYLOR
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. budget deficit is set to fall to \$360 billion this year, down substantially from last year and the lowest level by far since President Barack Obama took office five years ago, a congressional report said Tuesday.

The Congressional Budget Office credits higher tax revenues from the rebounding economy and sharp curbs on agency spending as the chief reason for the deficit’s short-term decline.

The budget experts see the long-term deficit picture worsening by about \$100 billion a year through the end of the decade because of slower growth in the economy than they had previously predicted.

Last year’s deficit registered \$680 billion.

Obama inherited an economy in crisis and the first deficits ever to exceed \$1 trillion. The 2009 deficit, swelled by the costs of the Wall Street bailout, hit a record \$1.4 trillion, while the deficits of 2010 and 2011 both registered \$1.3 trillion.

The report predicted the U.S. economy will continue to rebound this year and grow at a 3.1 percent rate and by 3.4 percent next year. It foresees the jobless rate holding steady at 6.8 percent this year; the most recent nationwide unemployment rate registered 6.7 percent.

It predicts the jobless rate remaining above 6 percent through the remainder of Obama’s term.

The agency sees the deficit sliding to \$478 billion next year before beginning a steady rise through 2024 that would bring deficits back above \$1 trillion a year.

“CBO expects that economic growth will diminish to a pace that is well below the average seen over the past several decades,” the report said, citing an aging population and decrease in the rate of growth in the labor force.

The budget experts see the long-term deficit picture worsening.

deficits and debt are a drag on the economy and squeezing out investment and, if unchecked, could eventually precipitate a European-style fiscal crisis.

Tuesday’s report comes as Obama and Republicans in Congress are taking a respite in the budget wars that have periodically consumed Washington since Republicans took control of the House in 2011. The declining deficit numbers mean there’s even less urgency to act now.

A December budget agreement and last month’s follow-up spending bill could buy peace through November’s mid-term elections. Republicans also appear to be taking a less confrontational approach to legislation needed this month to increase the government’s borrowing limit to avoid defaulting on its obligations.

Singer Clay Aiken will run for Congress in N. Carolina

The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Former “American Idol” runner-up Clay Aiken is running for Congress in North Carolina.

The singer said Wednesday he’ll seek the Democratic nomination for the seat held by Republican Congressman Renee Ellmers.

Aiken, 35, is expected to face two opponents in the Democratic primary.

Aiken has been a special education teacher. He said he decided to put his entertainment career on hold and seek to represent the state’s 2nd Congressional District. He said he considers Wash-



Aiken

ington to be dysfunctional and will focus on jobs and the economy and the importance of education. Ellmers narrowly captured the seat from a Democrat in 2010. Her district was later redrawn and is now considered by analysts to be safely Republican, but she faces a primary challenge from a conservative radio host.

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Dr. Jin Robertson at Harvard graduation with her daughter and son. After swearing her into the U.S. Army

For your own Best Life, read MAJOR DREAM: From Immigrant Housemaid to Harvard PhD

NATION

Naked man shot after attacking former cop

The Associated Press

DELRAY BEACH, Fla. — A 6-foot-3, 250-pound naked man died after being shot by a Palm Beach County Sheriff's sergeant when he attacked a former New York City police officer, chased a man and his young son and bit a man on the face.

Sheriff Ric Bradshaw said at a Tuesday night news conference that the man later died at a hospital. But he wasn't immediately clear whether he died from gunshot wounds or from a medical condition.

According to Bradshaw, the man was walking on a street in Delray Beach when, for no apparent reason, he attacked the 66-year-old retired officer. The man continued down the street, where he chased a man and his 10-year-old son near the entrance to a gated community.

Bradshaw said the man then started fighting with an 18-year-old man, who defended himself with a box cutter. The man bit the 18-year-old on the face.

"The 18-year-old thought he was trying to eat his face off," Bradshaw said.

"The people that he assaulted ... said this guy had like super human strength," the sheriff said. "But he's a big guy to start with. He's not fat, he looks like an NFL linebacker. And he basically was terrorizing people all up and down this street."

Deputies arrived and tried to calm the man down. They used a stun gun, but the man kept going. "He takes a fighting stance. They're trying to get him on the ground. He starts charging them," Bradshaw said.

That's when a sergeant fired three times, once to the torso and twice on the lower part of the body. The man was taken to Delray Medical Center, where he died.

The injured former police officer and the teen were also taken to the hospital. Their conditions were not available.

Bradshaw said the man was "obviously on some kind of narcotics to act like this."



RICHARD DREW/AP

U.S. Park Service employee Danny Merced clears snow from the steps of Federal Hall in New York City's Financial District on Wednesday after a winter storm dumped another round of snow on the Northeast.

Say it ain't snow

Winter weather heads back to Northeast after slamming Midwest

The Associated Press

Northeast residents of the winter are getting another dose of snow, sleet and freezing rain, with the second storm of the week canceling classes, closing government and business offices, and causing power outages across the region after causing similar havoc in the Midwest on Tuesday.

Anywhere from a few inches to a foot or more of snow was expected to fall Wednesday on East Coast states, while some are getting freezing rain and sleet that makes driving treacherous. It's their second go-round since Monday.

Arkansas: A day after snow, sleet and freezing rain pushed through Arkansas, leaving thousands without power, more wintry precipitation is forecast.

Connecticut: Connecticut's governor and legislative leaders agreed to delay the start of the General Assembly's annual session because of snow.

Illinois: Heavy, blowing snow is slowing travel across much of Illinois.

Iowa: Snow that began falling Tuesday is expected to leave several inches by early Wednesday.

Kentucky: Freezing rain and ice that moved through Kentucky overnight left thousands of people without power.

Maine: Maine is under a winter storm warning.

Maryland: The National Weather Service has issued warnings for a wide area from western Maryland to northern Delaware, including the suburban counties north of Baltimore and west of Washington.

Massachusetts: A storm that could drop a foot or more of snow in some places is making its way across Massachusetts.

Michigan: Another winter storm is pushing across southern Michigan, with 5 to 8 inches of snow expected in three counties along the Indiana and Ohio state lines.

New Hampshire: The snow started falling before sunrise Wednesday and quickly picked up in strength for the morning commute. The state Department of Transportation lowered highway speeds to 45 mph.

New Jersey: Temperatures are determining whether the ride to work in New Jersey is wet or icy.

New Mexico: Forecasters say a cold front Wednesday could bring more snow to the northeastern part of the state and could even bring snow to dry southeast areas.

New York: A mix of snow and freezing rain began falling after midnight. Manhattan and the Bronx should get anywhere from

3 to 6 inches of snow and up to a half-inch of ice.

Ohio: Most of Ohio was hit with another bout of heavy snow and freezing rain, closing hundreds of schools and creating extremely hazardous driving conditions.

Oklahoma: A storm that dumped several inches of snow on Oklahoma is to be followed by bitter cold Wednesday and Thursday, with lows in the single digits.

Pennsylvania: Ice conditions have knocked out power to more than 200,000 electric customers in southeastern Pennsylvania and prompted school and legislative delays as well as speed reductions on major roadways.

Rhode Island: The National Weather Service expects the storm to dump 5 to 9 inches of snow and sleet in the northwestern corner of the state, 3 to 7 inches in the Providence area and 1 to 3 inches along the coast.

Wisconsin: Severe winter conditions have caused officials to ask thousands of homeowners in far northern Wisconsin to leave their faucets running 24 hours a day to prevent water pipes and sewer lines from freezing.

Vermont: The snow started falling before sunrise Wednesday and was expected to taper off in the afternoon. Vermont is expected to get 5 to 10 inches.

Woman who drove with man on car found guilty

LOS ANGELES — A substance-abuse counselor who drove 2 miles through a Los Angeles suburb with a dying man on her windshield was convicted Tuesday of second-degree murder, drunken driving and hit-and-run.

Sherri Lynn Wilkins, 52, showed no response as the Superior Court jury returned with its verdict.

Wilkins' blood-alcohol level was nearly twice the legal limit for driving when she struck Phillip Moreno, 31, in November 2012 in suburban Torrance, prosecutors said.

"The way she treated Phillip Moreno struck at human dignity," Deputy District Attorney John Harlan, the lead prosecutor, said after the verdict.

Couple led daughter's body in freezer, cops say

SAN FRANCISCO — A Northern California woman and her boyfriend accused of killing the woman's 3-year-old daughter a day after officers visited their apartment to check on the girl stored the tiny body in a suitcase and inside a freezer, authorities said.

Sara Krueger, 23, and Ryan Scott Warner, 26, both of Napa, were charged with murder and assault on a child resulting in death.

Napa County District Attorney Gary Lieberstein announced Tuesday. The couple put Kayleigh Slusher's body in a suitcase and then in a freezer, Napa police Capt. Jeff Troendly said.

CVS to stop selling tobacco products

CVS Caremark, America's second-largest drugstore chain, is quitting selling tobacco products at its more than 7,600 U.S. drugstores as it focuses more on providing health care.

The Massachusetts-based company said Wednesday that it will phase out cigarettes, cigars and chewing tobacco by Oct. 1, a move that will cost about \$2 billion in annual revenue but won't affect its 2014 earnings forecast. CVS Caremark leaders said removing tobacco will help them grow the company's business of working with doctors, hospitals and other care providers to improve customers' health.

From The Associated Press



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WORLD

UN report details impact of war on Syrian children

By BARBARA SURK
The Associated Press

BEIRUT — Children in Syria have been tortured, maimed and sexually abused by President Bashar Assad's forces and recruited for combat by the rebels fighting to topple him during the country's nearly 3-year-old conflict, a new United Nations report said.

The report, which highlights the treatment of children in the conflict from the beginning of the uprising against Assad in March 2011 until Nov. 15, 2013, was released this week to the Security Council and was posted on the U.N. website Tuesday.

It cites U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as saying that Syrian children have been subjected to "unspeakable suffering" during that time. Ban urged Syria's warring sides to "take, without delay, all measures to protect and uphold the rights of all children in Syria."

The uprising against Assad's rule began with largely peaceful protests in 2011 but evolved in

time into a bloody civil war that has killed more than 130,000 people, according to activists.

Millions of Syrians have been driven from their homes, seeking shelter in neighboring countries or in safer parts of their homeland.

The conflict has hit the country's children hard.

The U.N. said government forces have been responsible for the arrest, arbitrary detention, ill treatment and torture of children. Children as young as 11 have been detained by the authorities on suspicion of having links with armed groups.

Children in government custody have reportedly suffered beatings with metal cables, whips and wooden and metal batons, electric shock and sexual violence, including rape or threats of rape, mock executions, cigarette burns, sleep deprivation and solitary confinement, the report said.

It was not clear what methodology was used. The summary of the report posted on the U.N. website did not say how investigators obtained their information.

Family of sea survivor rejoices to regain son

The Associated Press

GARITA PALMERA, El Salvador — The family of a Salvadoran fisherman who says he survived at least 13 months at sea in an open boat had thought he was dead after losing touch with him eight years ago and are calling his astonishing story of survival a miracle.

While authorities said questions remained about his tale, relatives provided details that might help explain how Jose Salvador Alvarenga could survive floating across 6,500 miles of the Pacific in a small boat.

They said he was always unusually strong and resilient and was an experienced sailor.

"The sea was his thing," Alvarenga's father, Jose Ricardo Orellana, 65, said Tuesday. Orellana, who owns a store and flour mill in the seaside Salvadoran town of Garita Palmera, said his son first went off to work at sea as a stocky 14-year-old.

Alvarenga's family reacted with joy after two phone calls from their long lost son, who told them he was getting medical treatment and food in the Marshall Islands. Alvarenga, who says he is 37 years old, later got a shave and a haircut.

Recounting their talks, his mother, Maria Julia Alvarenga, 59, broke into tears.

"We hadn't heard from him for eight years; we thought he was dead already. This is a miracle, glory to God," she said.

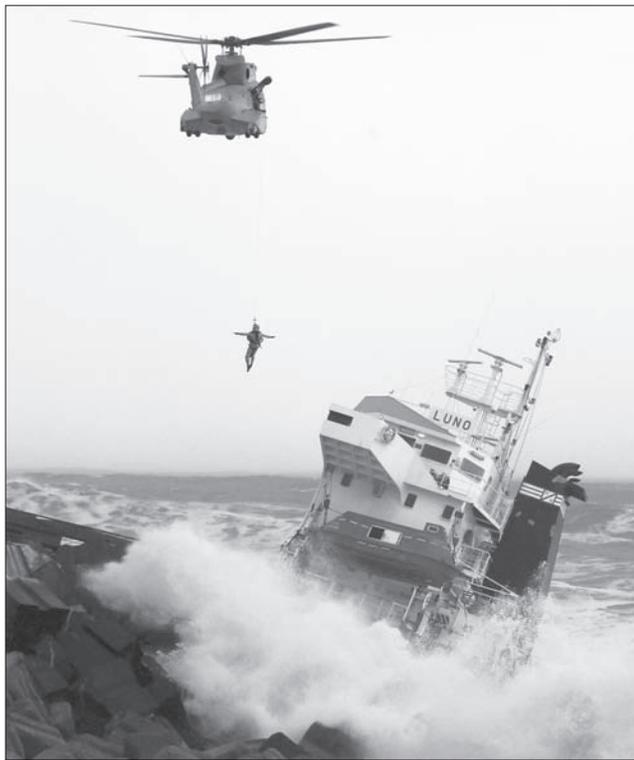
The fisherman's 14-year-old daughter, Fatima, said she didn't remember her father, who left El Salvador when she was just over a year old.

"I'm so very happy to know he's alive," said Fatima. "He's alive and I'm going to see him."

Geo Bing, the Marshall Islands' acting secretary of foreign affairs, said Alvarenga also spoke by phone on Tuesday to his brother in Maryland for the first time in years.

"He requested that we give him some time to rest," Bing said. "I don't think he got enough sleep at the hospital, and he wanted to rest and also get a haircut."

"When we dropped him off at the hotel, there was someone there to take him to the barber."



Bob Edme/AF

Cargo ship slams into jetty in France

A military helicopter evacuates a member of the crew of a Spanish cargo ship that slammed into a jetty and split in two in choppy Atlantic Ocean waters off southwestern France on Wednesday. The hold of the ship, the Luno, was empty when the accident occurred along the coast of the town of Anglet, and a small amount of fuel was spilling into the water, officials said. The ship had been heading to a nearby port to load up with cargo when its engine broke down and the rough waves carried it into the jetty.

UN blasts Vatican on sex abuse, abortion

The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican "systematically" adopted policies that allowed priests to rape and molest tens of thousands of children over decades, a U.N. human rights committee said Wednesday, urging it to open its files on pedophiles and bishops who concealed their crimes.

In a devastating report hailed by victims, the U.N. committee severely criticized the Holy See for its attitudes toward homosexuality, contraception and abortion and said it should change its own canon law to ensure children's rights and their access to health care are guaranteed. The Vatican promptly objected.

The report puts renewed pressure on Pope Francis to move decisively on the abuse front and make good on pledges to create a Vatican commission to study sex abuse and recommend best prac-

tices to fight it. The commission was announced at the spur of the moment in December, but few details have been released since then.

The committee issued its recommendations after subjecting the Holy See to a daylong interrogation last month on its implementation of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, the key U.N. treaty on child protection, which the Holy See ratified in 1990.

Critically, the committee rejected the Vatican's longstanding argument that it doesn't control bishops or their abusive priests, saying the Holy See was responsible for implementing the treaty not just in the Vatican City State but around the world "as the supreme power of the Catholic Church through individuals and institutions placed under its authority."

In its report, the committee blasted the "code of silence" that has long been used to keep victims quiet, saying the Holy See had "systematically placed preservation of the reputation of the church and the alleged offender over the protection of child victims."

It called on the Holy See to provide compensation to victims and hold accountable not just the abusers but also those who covered up their crimes.

It called for Francis' nascent abuse commission to conduct an independent investigation of all cases of priestly abuse and the way the Catholic hierarchy has responded over time, and urged the Holy See to establish clear rules for the mandatory reporting of abuse to police and to support laws that allow victims to report crimes even after the statute of limitations has expired.

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OPINION

Attacks on NSA restrict cyberspace

By DAVID IGNATIUS

Edward Snowden's supporters have portrayed him as the champion of Internet freedom. But when senior European and American experts privately discuss the future of cyberspace, their fear is that the Internet may be closing, post-Snowden, rather than opening. "We may be the last generation to take joy from the Internet," because of new boundaries and protectionism, as one American glumly put it.

Privacy advocates would argue that any dangers ahead are the fault of the pervasive surveillance systems of the U.S. National Security Agency, rather than Snowden's revelation of them. I'll leave that chicken-and-egg puzzle for historians. But it begs the question of how to prevent the anti-NSA backlash from shattering the relatively free and open Internet that has transformed the world — and which the NSA (and other security services) exploited. Unfortunately, the cure here could be worse than the disease, in terms of reduced access, cybersecurity and even privacy.

As a starting point, Americans need to understand just how angry Europeans are about the NSA's invasion of their personal space. Secretary of State John Kerry cheerily told the Munich Security Conference last weekend that the foresees a "trans-Atlantic renaissance," with new trade and diplomatic agreements. For now, such talk is just whistling past the NSA graveyard.

"People in Washington don't realize how serious feelings on this side of the Atlantic are," one prominent European politician said at a high-level private dinner here hosted by the Atlantic Council to discuss cyber

issues. He predicted flatly that American companies would lose an estimated \$28 billion to \$32 billion in revenues to European cloud-computing companies that will market "NSA-proof" data storage.

This boom for Euro-cloud companies is understandable, in terms of corporate opportunism. But it could build fences around European servers that might turn the global information superhighway into a series of bottlenecks and on-off ramps.

The Internet governance issue is fraught, too. For the last several decades, basic standards and architecture have been managed by a private body known as ICANN. That group, though passionate about privacy, is now seen as American-dominated, and therefore contaminated. An alternative would give more oversight to the U.N.'s International Telecommunication Union. The leading candidate to head the ITU next is a Chinese official, Houlin Zhao, the group's deputy secretary-general.

Protecting data networks may actually be harder in the post-Snowden environment, both Europeans and Americans said. That's because sophisticated cyberprotection involves cooperation between agencies such as the NSA (and its foreign counterparts) and private Internet service providers.

Another paradox is that indignation about American snooping may make it easier for Russian and Chinese security services to spy on their own people and conduct cyber-espionage. "The Russians and Chinese will talk about sovereignty and non-interference in cyberspace, which is a proxy for their control agenda," one cyber expert said.

"The Snowden disclosures are being

used to rationalize the Internet and roll back changes that have weakened government control of information," said Stewart Baker, a former NSA lawyer who writes an influential blog on cyber issues.

Many Europeans told me President Barack Obama made a good start with his speech last month outlining new rules for the NSA, especially in his willingness to provide some version of a global Fourth Amendment. One European argued that privacy rights should be reciprocal — the U.S. should offer protections to countries that grant such rights to their own citizens, as well as Americans.

But one senior European politician warned that if his fellow citizens can't sue in U.S. courts to enforce their new privacy rights, then the European Union will withdraw its so-called "safe harbor" protection for American technology companies. That provision allows U.S. companies to operate in European cyberspace by quickly certifying that they comply with stringent EU privacy rules. Closure of this "safe harbor" could sink U.S. companies and stall commerce. ...

In this tempest of anti-NSA feeling, one of the bravest speeches at Munich was given by German President Joachim Gauck.

"We rightly complain when allies overstep the mark when they use electronic surveillance to detect threats," he said. "And yet, we prefer to remain reliant on them and hesitate to improve our own surveillance capacities."

A loose translation would be: Get real, fellow Europeans. Protecting cyberspace is more complicated than bashing the NSA.

David Ignatius is a member of Washington Post Writers Group.

Open gossip lanes help steer Christie scandal

By KATHLEEN PARKER

We have officially reached the take-a-step-back moment in the unfolding — or unraveling — of the Chris Christie alleged bridge/political retribution/Sandy funds political scandal.

It always happens in any story these days. News stampedes through the ether, trampling context and nuance, oblivious to potholes and fissures. And then corrections must be made.

This isn't finger-pointing at my colleagues. Columnists have the luxury of taking their time with facts, while reporters are expected to update news by the minute, or less. In our amped-up, blogdoyte world, stories are chugging 5-hour Energy shots just to keep up with reporters and, it must be said, gossip.

Thus on Tuesday, Minka Brzezinski said the necessary on MSNBC's "Morning Joe": "Calm down." Later, a guest on the show added, "People need to step back," a sentiment with which all present were in accord.

For the past several days on most news shows, the dominant buzz has centered on a New York Times story, subsequently adjusted, that came close to accusing Christie of lying when he has insisted repeatedly that he knew nothing about the George Washington Bridge lane closings that resulted in a four-day traffic jam and that have been characterized as political retribution.

The Times story cited a letter from Alan L. Zegas, attorney for David Wildstein, the former Port Authority executive and one-time Christie ally who, after an infrequent email exchange with Christie aide Bridget

et Anne Kelly ("Time for some traffic problems in Fort Lee?"), ordered the lane closings.

In the Times story, Wildstein was said to have "had the evidence" to prove that Christie knew contemporaneously about the lane closings. Later, the Times story was tweaked to reflect what the letter actually said: that "evidence exists" that Christie knew at the time of the lane closings. Thank you for the clarification. What evidence existed where the evidence was?

And then she heard it again, the same chilling voice whispering as the curtains fluttered on a still night. "It exists ... it exists ... it exists."

But seriously, without confirmation or corroboration of such damning evidence, what, really, was this latest chapter? The letter was essentially a plea to the Port Authority that it pay Wildstein's legal expenses, which it previously had declined to do.

To be fair, the Times story was not without basis — the letter does exist and its contents are of interest. News. But it is also that, really, was this latest chapter? The letter was essentially a plea to the Port Authority that it pay Wildstein's legal expenses, which it previously had declined to do.

Before you could say heywaitaminute, the Drudge Report led with the scurrilous headline "He Knew." Though Matt Drudge clearly isn't a Christie fan (this must be terrible), his reporting in this case has been a circling of conservative wagons by those who hate the media more than they dislike a moderate Republican — as foretold by a certain columnist weeks ago. Thus, Christie has been invited to speak at the annual Conservative Political Action Conference in March, where he was conspicuously not invited a year ago.

Meanwhile, Christie's office has fired back, impugning Wildstein's character, even going back to his high-school days as a crumb-hung "turkulous." One can only imagine his yearbook inscription: "Dude, stay as tumultuous as you are and bridges will fear you!"

In a parallel saga, CNN recently issued a report poking holes in Hoboken Mayor Dawn Zimmer's story claiming that Christie had threatened to withhold Hurricane Sandy recovery funds if she didn't support a development project the governor favored.

CNN cited not only contradictions and discrepancies but evidence that Zimmer may have practiced the same tactics of which she has accused Christie. The executive director of the Hoboken Housing Authority had sued Zimmer, claiming that the mayor had "an unwritten policy of political patronage or 'pay to play' to reward ... political supporters."

Shocking. As the Christie scandal machine grinds on, his polling numbers unshockingly plummeting. Once in the lead in a fantasy presidential race, he now trails Hillary Rodham Clinton 39 percent to 55 percent. In the race for the GOP nomination, he trails Mike Huckabee and Rand Paul, tying with Jeb Bush.

It's a young. It remains entirely possible that Christie is telling the truth. And evidence may or may not exist. Which means a new narrative must fill the void. It goes like this: Even if he's telling the truth, Christie created the culture in which his people felt free to abuse power. Stay tuned ... and stay calm.

Kathleen Parker is a member of Washington Post Writers Group.

OPINION

Ad only adds to military's alcohol problem

By PHILLIP CARTER
Foreign Policy

WASHINGTON
Like beer, and would wager that most veterans like beer too. Budweiser placed a similar bet Sunday night during the Super Bowl, with its ad "A Hero's Welcome," which showed a Norm Rockwell-esque homecoming for Army 1st Lt. Chuck Nadd in his hometown of Winter Park, Fla. — courtesy of Budweiser.

The ad tugs my heartstrings in the same complex way that standing ovations at Washington Nationals games for veterans do. The applause feels good, and is certainly better than what Vietnam-era veterans faced too frequently at home.

Nonetheless, the Budweiser ad should have never been aired. The ad ignores the complicated relationship that veterans have with alcohol, obscuring how much harm booze does to veterans when they come home. And the one-minute spot arguably breaks a handful of government regulations meant to prevent public endorsement of private brands, especially where alcohol and drugs are concerned.

Two main sets of military regulations exist to prevent the Army from getting, well, too buddy-buddy with companies like Budweiser. The first are the military's ethics regulations. Joint Ethics Regulation section 3-209 states that "Endorsement of a non-Federal entity, event, product, service or activity by a member of the armed forces not implied by DoD or DoD employees in their official capacities and titles, positions, or organization names may not be used to suggest official endorsement or preferential treatment of any non-Federal entity except (the services' official relief societies). Under that regulation, the Army cannot legally endorse Budweiser, nor allow its active-duty personnel to participate in their ads (let alone wear their uniforms), any more than the Army can endorse Gatorade or Nike.

The second set of regulations relates to the Army's anti-alcohol program, something that has been in place for decades, and has evolved out of the all-volunteer force's desire to have a drug- and alcohol-free workplace. Paragraph 3-4 of that regulation, titled "Deglamorization," states that "[i]t is Army policy to maintain a workplace free from alcohol," and that "Alcohol will not become the purpose for, or the focus of, any social activity. At

all levels alcohol will not be glamorized nor made the center of attention at any military function." That rule forbids the Army from bringing alcohol companies like Budweiser onto bases to support Army functions, and regulation sharply limits the ways the Army can interact with these alcohol brands and distributors, limiting such interactions to essentially flowing through Army-approved concessions on base (like the base liquor store or Officer's Club).

I sent a detailed list of questions about how, and why, the Army seems to have ignored both sets of policies. An Army spokesman said the ad had been vetted, and that Army officials concluded that Ladd's appearance in uniform while on duty did not constitute "official support to or otherwise partnering with" Budweiser or the Veterans of Foreign Wars in the spot's production. This logic convinced the Army's top leaders that it would be OK to raise a toast to Budweiser.

Because these are Army and Defense Department rules, and not statutes carved into law, senior Pentagon leaders can generally waive them. However, an option's legality often says nothing about its wisdom. The problems with the ad go way beyond the legal questions, and are in many ways far more serious.

Few serious issue public health researchers more than the ill effects of alcohol. From its effects in the workplace to its links to disease, alcohol's correlation with suicide, alcohol plays a role in thousands of deaths each year in this country.

For post-9/11 veterans, tens of thousands of whom are suffering from PTSD, the data have been unequivocal too.

The National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health found in 2005 that veteran alcohol use surpassed nonveteran drinking. The rates of alcohol use were highest among young veterans aged 18-25, who were also the ones most likely to engage in binge drinking. More recent studies echo those conclusions from the 2005 survey: "Studies show that alcohol misuse and abuse, hazardous drinking, and binge drinking are common among [Afghanistan and Iraq] veterans," said one Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration policy brief, adding that increased combat exposure often increased the frequency and amount of alcohol consumption among young veterans.

According to a recent study sponsored



Lt. Chuck Nadd and his girlfriend, Shannon Cantwell, wave as they ride aboard a Budweiser brewer wagon in a parade, led by a marching band, in Winter Park, Fla. The brewer fashioned an ad around the parade that debuted during the Super Bowl.

by the National Institutes of Health, 27 percent of Iraq War veterans met the criteria for alcohol abuse and were therefore at higher risk for drunk driving and illicit drug use. The NIH also reported that alcohol and drug use frequently overlapped with military suicide, with booze or drugs involved in 30 percent of Army suicide deaths between 2003 and 2009 and 45 percent of attempts during roughly the same period. That means alcohol is directly fueling the military's suicide crisis, which has seen more than 1,500 troops take their own lives since the start of the two wars.

A 2011 study by the Department of Veterans Affairs and University of California, San Francisco researchers documented an 11 percent rate of alcohol or drug abuse disorder among Iraq and Afghanistan veterans seen by the VA. More importantly, those researchers found that three-quarters of those diagnosed with alcohol or drug abuse also had post-traumatic stress disorder or depression, meaning that those with PTSD or depression were four times more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol than their combat peers. In a more recent study in the *American Journal of Public Health*, researchers found that 39 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans screened positive for probable drug abuse — the same percentage as had existed among return-

ing Vietnam veterans decades earlier.

Despite all that data, the military has a long and complex relationship with alcohol. In past wars, active-duty servicemembers drank on the battlefield. Booze stains the occasional page of many World War I and II veterans' memoirs. "Band of Brothers" veteran Dick Winter writes of his troops' liberation of Hermann Goering's wine cellar at the end of their fight across Europe. In Korea and Vietnam, our troops drank too, often to excess. Such was the nature of war, and the military embraced alcohol as part of the wartime experience.

That changed with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, where the military instituted policies explicitly banning all deployed troops from consuming alcohol. There was a good reason for those rules, which is the same reason Sunday night's Super Bowl ad went too far. Alcohol can lead to depression, worsen PTSD and — in some cases — accelerate the downward spiral that leads to suicide. Decades of research should have persuaded the Army to avoid getting in bed with Budweiser. Better for at-risk soldiers to hear a simple truth: This Bud isn't for you.

Phillip Carter is a fellow at the Center for a New American Security. He served in 2009 as the deputy assistant secretary of defense for detainee policy.

Abuse claims don't always direct us to the truth

By CATHY YOUNG

The child sexual abuse accusations against filmmaker Woody Allen, resurfacing more than two decades after the initial scandal in a statement by Allen's now-grown daughter, have reignited a debate on whether an artist's work can be separated from his or her moral failings. But the controversy raises even more pressing issues. How does one judge the credibility of sexual abuse claims, particularly from a young person? How can the presumption of innocence should there be in the court of public opinion? What does society owe the accused — and the accused? This case illustrates how wrenchingly complex these questions are.

Allen was accused of molesting then-7-year-old Dylan, one of the two children he had adopted with longtime partner Mia Farrow, during a bitter custody battle in 1992. The Allen-Farrow breakup was spurred by her discovery of his affair with her adopted daughter from a previ-

ous marriage, 21-year-old Soon-Young Farrow Farrow. Farrow recorded a video of Dylan describing molestation by Allen. In 1993, a Connecticut prosecutor dropped the case, saying that while there was "probable cause" to bring sexual abuse charges, Dylan was too young to testify. Medical experts found no evidence of molestation.

Last October, Vanity Fair ran a feature on Mia Farrow's family in which Dylan (now 28, married and using a different name) discussed her alleged abuse. More recently, new honors for Allen — including a Golden Globes Lifetime Achievement Award — have prompted Mia and Dylan Farrow to speak out, accusing Hollywood of disrespect toward abuse survivors. On Saturday, New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof published a letter from Dylan on his blog with excerpts in his column.

Allen has always staunchly proclaimed his innocence.

For many people who have reacted passionately to the disclosures, the battle cry is "Believe the survivor." In their view,

Dylan's account settles the matter.

But does it? We now know much more than we did 20 years ago about how easily children can be coaxed into saying (and believing) they were abused. The 1980s saw a wave of cases in which one parent's suspicion of wrongdoing at a day care center would balloon into accusations of unspeakable acts toward numerous children. Dozens of men and women were convicted. In the mid-1990s, those cases collapsed as it became clear that the children made the accusations under pressure from investigators and parents.

Many of those now-grown "victims" insist they were molested and describe having painful flashbacks — even when material evidence has shown the crimes to be virtually impossible.

While sexual abuse allegations in child-custody disputes are actually fairly uncommon, a major study published in *Child Abuse and Neglect Journal* in 2005 shows that about half of the charges made in such circumstances are found to be un-

substantiated. Those are not necessarily deliberate lies; often, the accusing parent genuinely believes the child is being molested, reading malicious intent into horse-play or affection.

In Allen's case, the suspicions are facilitated by the fact that he was a 56-year-old man sleeping with his daughter's stepsister. While Soon-Young was an adult, it was unquestionably a sordid affair that makes him look like a self-absorbed creep. Yet it's quite a leap from that to being a pedophile.

Kristof and others say that while a criminal conviction requires solid proof, the accusation should be enough to deny Allen honors because survivors deserve support. But that can be a slippery slope to a presumption of guilt that can also inflict criminal justice. In this tragic case with no winners, uncertainty may be the lesser of two evils.

Cathy Young is a regular contributor to Reason magazine and the website RealClearPolitics. This column first appeared in Newsday.

NATION

Not one size fits all

Mannequins get makeover to more closely resemble average women

BY ANNE D'INNOCENZIO
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The one-size-fits-all mannequin is getting a much-needed makeover.

Wings Beachwear's mannequins in Miami sport flower tattoos like some of the women who shop there. The mannequins at American Apparel's downtown New York City store have public hair peeking through their lingerie.

And at David's Bridal, mannequins soon will get thicker waists, saggy breasts and back fat to mimic a more realistic shape.

"This will give (a shopper) a better idea of what the dress will look like on her," says Michele Von Plato, a vice president at the nation's largest bridal chain.

Stores are using more realistic versions of the usually tall, svelte, faceless mannequins in windows and aisles. It's part of retailers' efforts to make them look more like the women who wear their clothes. That means not only adding fat and hair, but also experimenting with makeup, wigs and even poses.

This comes after two decades of stores cutting back on mannequins to save money. Many have been using basic, white, headless, no-arms-or-legs torsos that can cost \$300 compared with the more realistic-looking ones that can fetch up to \$1,500. Now, as shoppers are increasingly buying online, stores are seeing mannequins as a tool to entice shoppers to buy.

Indeed, studies show mannequins matter when shoppers make buying decisions. Forty-two percent of customers recently polled by market research firm NPD Group Inc. say something on a mannequin influences whether they buy it. In fact, mannequins ranked just behind friends and family in terms of influence.

"Mannequins are the quintessential silent salespeople," says Eric Feigenbaum, chair of the visual merchandising department at LIM College, a fashion college in New York City.

Stores for over a century have played with the look of their "silent salespeople." Until the early 1900s, the most common ones were



PHOTOS BY BEBETO MATTHEWS/AP

Above: David's Bridal dressmaker Noel Belancourt works with a size-18 mannequin at his work station in New York City. The nation's largest bridal chain started changing its mannequins used to showcase their collection of gowns to reflect the average body.

Below: David's Bridal senior vice president Michele von Plato arranges a wedding gown on a plus-size mannequin.

'Mannequins are the quintessential silent salespeople.'

Eric Feigenbaum
chair, visual merchandising
department at LIM College



just torsos. But with the rise of mass production clothing, full-length mannequins became popular.

The first ones were made of wax and melted in the heat and had details like human hair, nipples and porcelain teeth. By the 1960s, stores were investing in hair and makeup teams specifically devoted to taking care of the mannequins. That decade also started the trend of mannequins being made in the image of celebrities.

The late Adel Rootstein, founder of mannequin maker Rootstein, created a mannequin based on elfin model Twiggy in 1966. A year later, it made the first black mannequin based on Donyale Luna, the first black fashion model.

The next decade or so ushered in an era of hyper realism, with manne-

quins showing belly buttons and even back spine indentations, says Chad Michael Morrisette, an expert in mannequin history. But by the late 1980s, the trend moved away from realistic mannequins and toward torsos or mannequins without faces. Now, retailers are doing another about-face.

faceless. But in the past two years, the luxury retailer has been showcasing more mannequins with hair, makeup and chiseled features.

"There's this whole generation of shoppers that hadn't seen realistic mannequins," says Harry E. Cunningham, a senior vice president at Saks. "We saw it as an opportunity."

Others also see opportunities. Ralph Pucci International, a big mannequin maker that creates figures for Macy's, Nordstrom and others, plans to offer versions with fuller hips and wider waists next year.

David's Bridal also is going for a more realistic look. In 2007, the company scanned thousands of women's bodies to figure out what the average woman looks like and applied those measurements to its first mannequins.

Whereas the original forms were closer to a size 6 with 36-26-36 bust-waist-hip measurements, David's Bridal's Von Plato said the new torso has less of a difference in measurements between the bust and the hip. The breasts are now flatter on top and rounder underneath.

And the plus-size mannequins will now show the imperfections of getting heavier, with bulges in certain places like the belly and back.

American Apparel also is going more realistic. The teen apparel retailer known for its racy ads, this month has mannequins in its store in the trendy SoHo shopping district of New York City that are wearing see-through lingerie that reveal public hair and nipples.

Ryan Holiday, an American Apparel spokesman, noted the number of customers in the store has increased 30 percent since the debut of the new mannequins. "We created it to invite passersby to explore the idea of what is sexy and consider their comfort with the natural female form," the company.

The windows were attention grabbing, with most people on a recent Friday, stopping, pointing and laughing.

But Allison Berman, 19, thought the realism went too far. "I see this as sexual," says the Manhattan resident.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

School cafeteria cook denies gun threat

MA NORFOLK — A cook at a Massachusetts school who allegedly threatened to shoot co-workers in a dispute over cookies has pleaded not guilty.

Wendy Ferris, of Cumberland, R.I., was released on \$5,000 bail after pleading not guilty Monday to threatening to commit a crime.

Prosecutors said Ferris, 46, the head cook at King Philip Regional Middle School in Norfolk, told co-workers Friday she would bring an AK-47 to school and shoot the place up because she was angry another worker had to remake a batch of overbaked cookies.

Authorities said Ferris claimed to have a "hit list."

Police said Ferris has a firearms license and owns a handgun. It has been confiscated.

Her husband said she's a "good person" and her lawyer said she denies the charge.

City in quandary over prehistoric find

FL MIAMI — Archaeologists say an extensive Native American village they've uncovered in downtown Miami is one of the most significant prehistoric sites in the United States.

The Miami Herald reported that over the past several months, archaeologists have dug up eight large circles comprising uniformly carved holes in the limestone. They think these are foundation holes for Tequesta Indian dwellings that could date back 2,000 years.

The finds have left officials and a downtown developer in a quandary. MDM Development Group plans to develop the site. The state and Miami-Dade County historic-preservation officials want the city to consider other options that could salvage the site, or at least a portion of it.

MDM already has leases for businesses on the site and could lose substantial money if that happens.

Jail: Woman sent pot in inmate's Valentine's card

NM PORTALES — A New Mexico woman is facing charges after authorities say she tried to send marijuana inside a Valentine's Day card to a Roosevelt County inmate.

The Portales News-Tribune reported that Jessica Rodriguez, 30, was arrested last week and charged with furnishing drugs or liquor to a prisoner.

According to an affidavit, the one gram of marijuana was found inside a Valentine's Day card. Jail officials said the drug was discovered during a routine mail check, and staff could smell the marijuana prior to opening the envelope.

State Lotto declining as other games expand

NY ALBANY — Lotto is still losing its mojo. New York's venerable twice-

THE CENSUS

80

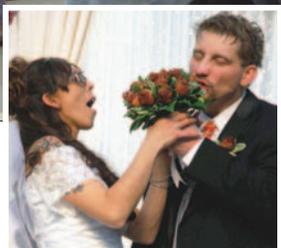
The estimated number of alligators a Mississippi couple say have infested land next to their homestead, in a lawsuit against ExxonMobil, which maintains 19 retention ponds on the property next door. The alligators were allegedly introduced to the site from Louisiana as early as 1964 as "canaries" to warn of hazardous contamination in the retention ponds. Tom Christmas and his wife argued Tuesday before the Mississippi Supreme Court that the infestation is a nuisance that has caused permanent injury to their property. ExxonMobil says the Christmases' real estate agent told them about the alligators when they bought the property in 2003. The company says the couple had three years to sue and waited too long.



For bacon or worse

Above: Craig Rouch and April DaVita get ready to walk down the aisle for their wedding during the Blue Ribbon Bacon Festival at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines on Saturday. The couple was one of two to combine their love of bacon and each other in ceremonies. **Right:** Rouch takes a bite out of his bride's bacon bouquet.

PHOTOS BY SCOTT MORGAN (TOP) AND ZACH BOYDEN-HOLMES, (RIGHT), THE DES MOINES (LOU) REGISTER/EP



weekly Lotto drawing continues its long-term decline in an age of multistate mega-jackpots. Even as overall lottery revenues grew, receipts from Lotto dropped from \$137.5 million in 2005 to a projected \$44 million for the state fiscal year ending March 31, according to Gov. Andrew Cuomo's recent budget proposal.

Lotto is less alluring than the six-figure jackpots of Powerball and Mega Millions, which are sold around the nation.

Police responding to screams find happy pig

ME CHINA — Police responding to reports of screaming coming from a home in Maine didn't find a victim of domestic violence as they feared. Instead, they found an amorous pig.

State police said a woman called last week after hearing what she believed to be a fight coming from a neighbor's home in the town of

China. The caller said she heard screaming and thought there was a domestic assault.

The Morning Sentinel reported that four state troopers responded and talked to the neighbor.

The neighbor explained that she raises pigs and the screaming was coming from an overjoyed male pig that had been placed in a pen with five sows in heat.

Lincoln handkerchiefs given to museum

TN HARROGATE — Two handkerchiefs once owned by Mary Todd Lincoln have been given to a museum at Lincoln Memorial University. The handkerchiefs will be on exhibit at the Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum in Harrogate in the fall.

The silk and cotton handkerchiefs are monogrammed with the initials "ML," The News Sentinel reported.

Mary Lincoln would have used the items before her husband was assassinated, because they are not bordered in black, said museum curator Steven M. Wilson. He said the items date between 1858 and 1864.

Teens grieve for skate park gutted in fire

MN MANKATO — A fire has gutted a YMCA indoor skate park in Mankato. The fire at the Chesley Roller Sport Park was reported shortly after 9:30 a.m. Saturday. The park was fully engulfed by the time firefighters arrived at the park, which is just down the block from a fire station.

For the hoodie-wearing teens who call the skate park their home away from home, The Free Press reported that witnessing the scene was like watching the slow death of a very dear friend. Some shed tears; others exchanged

hugs. Most stood and watched the spectacle silently.

3 waitresses are given checks for \$5,000 each

IL ROCKFORD — Three waitresses at an Illinois restaurant say they could only stare in disbelief when a manager over the weekend handed them each a \$5,000 check.

The owner of the Boone County Family Restaurant in Caledonia, Matt Nebus, said business was slow Saturday when the customer handed checks to Amy Sabani, 25; Sarah Seckinger, 23; and Amber Kariolich, 28.

Sabani told the Rockford Register Star that she first thought her check was for \$500. On closer inspection she saw its actual value and refused to take it. She said the woman told the waitresses to use the money for school and "everything else in life."

From wire reports

FACES



Pop-up Prince gig

3RDEYEGIRL NPG Records/AP

Prince performs an unannounced late-night set at the Electric Ballroom in London on Tuesday night. The enigmatic star flew into the city on Tuesday at the start of a still-evolving string of dates in support of forthcoming album "Plectrum Electrum," recorded with all-female trio 3RDEYEGIRL. Details are being released in a trickle, but Prince said he planned to play "iconic" venues along the lines of music club the Bag o' Nails, where Jimi Hendrix once played; storied rock venue Electric Ballroom; and Ronnie Scott's jazz club. "We'll work our way up, if people like us, to bigger venues," Prince said.

Sources: 4 arrests in Hoffman probe

From wire reports

Four people are in custody on drug charges after police investigating the death of Oscar-winning actor Philip Seymour Hoffman executed search warrants at three New York City apartments. Two people with knowledge of the investigation say a confidential source provided a tip that the suspects might have supplied Hoffman drugs. The people spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because investigators have not obtained evidence to corroborate the reported connection.

Police say undisclosed quantities of heroin and marijuana were found Tuesday night.

Hoffman, 46, was found dead Sunday with a syringe in his arm.

The NYPD's intensive effort to determine the source of the drugs in an apparent accidental overdose is unusual. Courts have found that under state law drug dealers cannot be held liable for a customer's death.

Also, heroin recovered at Hoffman's apartment has tested negative for the powerful additive fentanyl, a police official said.

Samples taken from Hoffman's Manhattan apartment didn't contain the potent synthetic morphine, which is added to intensify the high and has been linked to 22 suspected overdose deaths in Manhattan, N.Y., the official, who wasn't authorized to talk about the evidence and insisted on anonymity, said Tuesday.

A spokeswoman for the medical examiner's office said Tuesday there has been no official determination made on what killed Hoffman.

Bieber gets March trial date in US case

Justin Bieber has a March 3 trial date in Miami for his arrest on charges of driving under the influence, resisting arrest and driving with an invalid license. The date for the misdemeanors was set Tuesday by an automated system. Bieber's attorneys have filed a written plea of not guilty.

The 19-year-old pop star was arrested Jan. 23 in Miami Beach

after what police called an illegal drag race between sports cars driven by Bieber and R&B singer Khalil Amir Sharief. Sharief was arrested on a charge of driving under the influence.

Breath tests showed Bieber's blood alcohol content below the .02 threshold for underage drivers. Police say a toxicology test detected marijuana and Xanax in his system.

Paul Walker's estate estimated at \$25M

Court records show Paul Walker's estate is worth an estimated \$25 million and the actor appointed his father to manage his affairs upon his death.

The star's will was filed Jan. 28 in Santa Barbara, Calif. The document was prepared in 2001, the same year that Walker helped launch the "Fast & Furious" film franchise that made him famous.

Walker's mother is named as the guardian of her son's 15-year-old daughter, Meadow.

Walker, 40, died Nov. 30 in a fiery crash after a specialty Porsche driven by his friend and financial adviser struck a light pole and a tree in northern Los Angeles County.

Other news

■ Oscar producers announced Tuesday that Pharrell Williams will sing his nominated song, "Happy," at the Academy Awards. There was no word on whether his Grammy Award scene-stealing habit would make an appearance.

■ Kesha, 26, is postponing March and April tour dates as she completes treatment for an eating disorder, reps for the pop star said Tuesday.

■ Widely considered one of the greatest rap records ever, Nas' "Illmatic" is being reissued as a special 20th anniversary edition. "Illmatic XX" will boast remastered versions of the album's original tracks and a disc of rare remixes, unreleased demos and freestyles. The double-disc special edition will be released April 15, via Sony Legacy. The album will also be available on vinyl.

Netflix renews 'House of Cards'

Los Angeles Times

"House of Cards" still has a winning hand as Netflix has voted in favor of a third-season renewal for the political drama.

The early renewal for a third installment, confirmed by a Netflix spokesperson, comes ahead of the Valentine's Day rollout of its second season on the streaming service.

"House of Cards" was originally given a two-season commitment, so the news makes good on Netflix's chief content officer Ted Sarandos' indication last fall that he wanted to extend the show's



Kevin Spacey as Congressman Frank Underwood

life past that.

This news also comes as a welcome relief for those who have become infatuated with scheming U.S. Congressman Frank Underwood (played by Kevin Spacey) in his quest for power.

Adapted from the original BBC program of the same name by Beau Willimon, "House of Cards" has earned Netflix bragging rights, becoming the first digitally distributed show to earn major Emmy nominations last year.

The third season of the show, which touts David Fincher as an executive producer, will consist of 13 episodes.



MARY YORK/AP

Flea, with his bass unplugged, performs during the Super Bowl halftime show on Sunday in East Rutherford, N.J.

Flea says Chili Peppers mimed Super Bowl song

By CHRIS TALBOTT
The Associated Press

The Red Hot Chili Peppers decided long ago they were never going to mime a live performance. The band made an exception for the NFL, it turns out.

The group's bassist, Flea, said in a letter to fans posted on the group's website Tuesday that the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame members pretended to play along to a taped track of "Give It Away" during the Super Bowl halftime show as Anthony Kiedis sang live. The request came from NFL officials who

felt it was too difficult to pull off a completely live performance because of potential sound issues.

The admission came after observers noted Flea and his bandmates weren't plugged in while performing Sunday at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J.

Flea wrote on the band's website that the opportunity was too big for the lifelong football fans to turn down. After internal debate, dubiously checking with fellow musicians and consulting with headliner Bruno Mars, they decided it was "a surreal-like, once in a life

time crazy thing to do and we would just have fun and do it."

Flea said the group recorded a unique instrumental track for the show. He didn't directly address whether Mars also recorded instrumental tracks for his appearance, although he said Mars was aware they did. A publicist for Mars did not immediately respond to an email requesting comment.

A record 115 million people tuned in to watch Mars and the Peppers, besting audiences of 114 million for Madonna and 110 million for Beyonce.

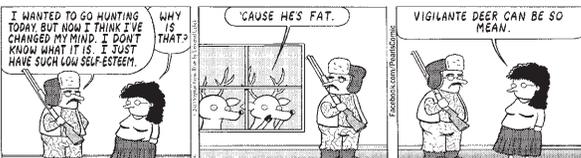
Frazz



Dilbert



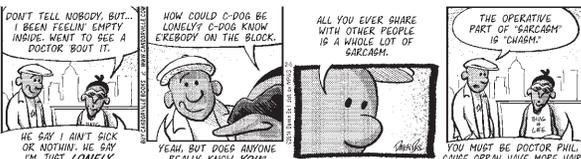
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Get Fuzzy



Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12					13			14			
15					16			17			
18				19		20	21				
		22			23				24	25	
26	27	28			29			30			
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45	46				47	48		49			
50					51			52			
53					54			55			

ACROSS

- 1 Spirited horse
- 5 Apply lightly
- 8 Cripple
- 12 Theater box
- 13 Roe, to Romans
- 14 Really involved with
- 15 Author Bellow
- 16 "Of course"
- 17 Houston acronym
- 18 Threatening words
- 20 Close up tightly
- 22 New Jersey-born rocker
- 26 Extended sleeps
- 29 Scepter
- 30 Group of whales
- 31 Banned insecticide
- 32 Scoot
- 33 Baby-feeding finale
- 34 Tractor-trailer
- 35 Comprehend
- 36 Baby kangaroos
- 37 "Enjoy your meal"
- 40 October stone
- 41 "The Night of the ..."
- 45 Sandwich shop
- 47 Toss in
- 49 Weaver's apparatus
- 50 Eye part
- 51 Spy-novel org.
- 52 — European
- 53 "Why not?"

DOWN

- 1 As well
- 2 Lion's call
- 3 Chills and fever
- 4 Vacuum container
- 5 Senior member
- 6 "Hail!"
- 7 Oboe's cousin
- 8 Rapper Nicki
- 9 Something similar
- 10 "Monty Python" opener
- 11 Kiwi's extinct kin
- 19 "Mayday!"
- 21 Finish
- 23 Animal
- 24 Change
- 25 Little demons
- 26 Pasta or potato, for short
- 27 Medley
- 28 Mississippi emblem
- 29 Superseed
- 33 Toxin in spoiled food
- 35 Coll. statistic
- 36 Leprechauns' dance
- 38 Unoriginal
- 39 Re cover motion
- 42 Too-notch
- 43 Agrees silently
- 44 Biblical prophet
- 45 Home improvement inits.
- 46 Before
- 48 Conk out

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	P	B	S	A	D							
A	L	E	E	T	H	R	E					
A	C	T	E	D	A	I	R	E	R	S		
S	H	A	K	E	S	P	E	A	R	E	A	N
P	E	R	V	O	I	D	S	C	U	T		
G	O	O	P	L	I	A	R	E	T	C	H	
S	T	A	L	K	T	A	N	S	Y			
G	O	O	P	M	O	T	E	T	S	E	E	
S	H	A	K	E	R	H	E	I	G	H	T	S
S	H	O	D	D	Y	Q	U	A	N	T		
S	T	E	E	L	U	L	N	A				
O	A	R	E	L	K							

2-6

CRYPTOQUIP

HOITD O'F LHOIB FJ ZDBH
 AU NZPJ P NXPTAOTPZ
 RUMD, JUL FOBGA HPJ AGPA`H

RLHA PI PXFZDHH NXPI M.
 Yesterday's Cryptquip: I GUESS THE MEN WHO INTRODUCED A COMMUNAL MELTED-CHEESE DISH TO AMERICA WERE FONDING FATHERS.
 Today's Cryptquip Clue: A equals T

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The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market

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Classified EUROPE Information on Commercial Rates: EU: 0631-3615-9013/0912 or DSN: 583-9013/9012

Announcements 040

SCAM FADS

Classified scams can target both sellers and buyers with classified advertisements.
Be aware of the common red flags.
Some of the latest Scam fads:
Vehicle buyers wanting to buy sight unseen and have the vehicle shipped through an agent using paypal.
People saying Free Dog donation breeds for adoption.

Events 041

SAHS Reunion: Area you (SAHS American High School) SAHS Reunion: The SAHS Class of 1984 is hosting their 30th year reunion...

Automotive 140

Mercedes-Benz Roof Rack (Cross Bar)
Mercedes-Benz Roof Rack (Cross Bar)
Mercedes-Benz Roof Rack (Cross Bar)

Automotive 140

Mercedes SLK Snowboard Rack
Mercedes SLK Snowboard Rack
Mercedes SLK Snowboard Rack

Prell, Winter Tires

Prell, Winter Tires Size 20
Prell, Winter Tires Size 20
Prell, Winter Tires Size 20

VW, Tires on Rims

VW, Tires on Rims Golf 07
VW, Tires on Rims Golf 07
VW, Tires on Rims Golf 07

Automotive 140

SELLER BEWARE

Individuals placing classified advertising should use discretion in concluding the sale of their property.
Sellers are reputable or honest. Stars and Stripes suggests that you take precautions to ensure that potential buyers are reputable and will be able to fulfill the terms of the sale.

Automotive 140

Trailer Hitch Receiver Lock
All All Pickups 5/8" and 1 1/4"
All All Pickups 5/8" and 1 1/4"

Automotive 140

Auto Quality Pro-owned
Auto Quality Pro-owned
Auto Quality Pro-owned

Automotive 142

BMW 318i, 1999 \$4200.00 For sale
BMW 318i, 1999 \$4200.00 For sale
BMW 318i, 1999 \$4200.00 For sale

Automotive 142

BMW 325i, 1999 \$3950.00 Excellent cond. exterior
BMW 325i, 1999 \$3950.00 Excellent cond. exterior
BMW 325i, 1999 \$3950.00 Excellent cond. exterior

BMW Explorer Sport Trac

BMW Explorer Sport Trac
BMW Explorer Sport Trac
BMW Explorer Sport Trac

BMW 525i Kombi (Wagon)

BMW 525i Kombi (Wagon)
BMW 525i Kombi (Wagon)
BMW 525i Kombi (Wagon)

Ford Focus S 2010 \$7900.00

Ford Focus S 2010 \$7900.00
Ford Focus S 2010 \$7900.00
Ford Focus S 2010 \$7900.00

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

BMW 525i Kombi (Wagon)
BMW 525i Kombi (Wagon)
BMW 525i Kombi (Wagon)

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

SEER Patriot Sport 2012
SEER Patriot Sport 2012
SEER Patriot Sport 2012

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

Subaru Impreza 2007 \$1000.00
Subaru Impreza 2007 \$1000.00
Subaru Impreza 2007 \$1000.00

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

Toyota Corolla, 1999 Selling
Toyota Corolla, 1999 Selling
Toyota Corolla, 1999 Selling

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

Toyota Sienna XLE 2007
Toyota Sienna XLE 2007
Toyota Sienna XLE 2007

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

Toyota Tacoma, 2007
Toyota Tacoma, 2007
Toyota Tacoma, 2007

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

Volkswagen Golf GTI, 2011
Volkswagen Golf GTI, 2011
Volkswagen Golf GTI, 2011

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

Volkswagen Golf, 2011
Volkswagen Golf, 2011
Volkswagen Golf, 2011

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

VW, S60-R, 2011 \$11500.00
VW, S60-R, 2011 \$11500.00
VW, S60-R, 2011 \$11500.00

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

Mini Cooper S US spec, 2009
Mini Cooper S US spec, 2009
Mini Cooper S US spec, 2009

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

Nissan Cashless, 2013
Nissan Cashless, 2013
Nissan Cashless, 2013

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

Renault Grand Scenic Luxe
Renault Grand Scenic Luxe
Renault Grand Scenic Luxe

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

Subaru Impreza 2007 \$1000.00
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Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

Toyota Corolla, 1999 Selling
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Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

Toyota Sienna XLE 2007
Toyota Sienna XLE 2007
Toyota Sienna XLE 2007

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

Toyota Tacoma, 2007
Toyota Tacoma, 2007
Toyota Tacoma, 2007

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

Volkswagen Golf GTI, 2011
Volkswagen Golf GTI, 2011
Volkswagen Golf GTI, 2011

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

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Toyota Tacoma, 2007

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VW, S60-R, 2011 \$11500.00

Automotive for Sale - Germany 142

Mini Cooper S US spec, 2009
Mini Cooper S US spec, 2009
Mini Cooper S US spec, 2009

Motorcycles 164

Plymouth 2005, 1970 \$3000.00
Plymouth 2005, 1970 \$3000.00
Plymouth 2005, 1970 \$3000.00

Motorcycles 164

Plymouth 2005, 1970 \$3000.00
Plymouth 2005, 1970 \$3000.00
Plymouth 2005, 1970 \$3000.00

Motorcycles 164

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Motorcycles 164

Plymouth 2005, 1970 \$3000.00
Plymouth 2005, 1970 \$3000.00
Plymouth 2005, 1970 \$3000.00

Baby Items 200

Guardian covers, nursing pads
Guardian covers, nursing pads
Guardian covers, nursing pads

Baby Items 200

Guardian covers, nursing pads
Guardian covers, nursing pads
Guardian covers, nursing pads

Baby Items 200

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Baby Items 200

Guardian covers, nursing pads
Guardian covers, nursing pads
Guardian covers, nursing pads

U.S. military news 24/7 from around the world.

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HIGH SCHOOL: DODDS-EUROPE

Atkinson makes her mark on court, gridiron

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

In many ways, the career of Hohenfels junior Shelby Atkinson follows the conventional script for standout DODDS-Europe athletes: one sport in the fall, another in the winter and a third in the spring, followed by a summer focusing on the favorite of the three.

But even in that context, there is nothing conventional about Atkinson. Hers is a story of opportunities presented and seized, of circumstances falling into place, of steady hard work gradually yielding results. Now three years in, her career is evolving into one of the more fascinating ONES, even in the quirky annals of DODDS-Europe sports history.

The basis for Atkinson's success is stability, a foundation denied many DODDS-Europe athletes. While many aspiring overseas athletes are disrupted by frequent relocations and adjustments to multiple high schools, Atkinson left her Atlanta-area hometown and landed in Hohenfels in time to launch what she expects to be a four-year DODDS-Europe career as a freshman.

And launch it she did, in an unexpected way. Atkinson pulled football pads over her slender frame, tucked her hair under a helmet and joined the Tigers varsity football team.

Though Atkinson isn't the first girl to play DODDS-Europe football, it was still an unconventional choice. But Atkinson wasn't looking to make a political statement. Her decision to play football stemmed from a challenge — "My brother told me I couldn't play it," Atkinson said — and pure circumstance, namely the fact that DODDS-Europe doesn't offer soccer in the fall.

Once on the gridiron, she kept her initial goals well within reason.

"Not wanting to embarrass myself was the main worry," Atkinson said.

She's garnered sporadic playing time as a wide receiver, in the secondary and on special teams over her three-year football career. But when head coach Larry Daffin took over "Tiger sports at the start of the 2013 season, he found



Shelby Atkinson (11) returns to the field with her teammates for the second half of the Tigers' 38-14 win over Schweinfurt/Baumberg last September, at Schweinfurt, Germany. Atkinson plays multiple sports for Hohenfels and is currently leading the Tigers' pursuit of a Division II girls basketball championship to match the school's 2013 Division II football title.

GREGORY BROOME/Stars and Stripes

in Atkinson a "true competitor" who embodied the "hard work, determination and persistence" he wanted from all of his players.

Daffin said he made no special accommodations for Atkinson's gender, and didn't need to.

"I can honestly say that pound for pound, ounce for ounce, she was as tough, if not tougher than most of the guys on the team," Daffin said, recalling occasions where Atkinson "bounced up" from a hit anxious for another snap. "She gave as well as she took, and never complained."

While her contributions skewed more towards the inspirational and motivational than the tangible on-field variety, Atkinson was rewarded with a trip to the pinnacle of DODDS-Europe football. In November, she and her teammates won the Division II European championship, capping an unlikely title run with a comeback victory over SHAPE.

"It was amazing," Atkinson said.

Though she's collected three



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Shelby Atkinson gets off a jumper in Hohenfels' 37-33 win over Heidelberg last year.

varsity letters and a European title on the gridiron, football is not Atkinson's preferred sport.

Basketball is her primary game, the sport where the size of her stat line rivals that of her heart. Entering the weekend, Atkinson is averaging 13 points, five assists, five steals and three rebounds per game for a 6-5 Hohenfels team that has lost just twice to fellow Division II opponents.

Like Daffin, Hohenfels girls basketball coach Shawn Rodman has had nothing but positive experiences with Atkinson.

"I only have to tell her how to do something once and she gets it," Rodman said of his star player. "She is always positive with her teammates and works harder than anyone."

Atkinson's role with the team has expanded this season after the departures of All-Europe forward Tashia Golson and All-Region wing Kianna Glenn, two highly productive players who Atkinson called "really good leaders."

The loss of Golson and Glenn highlighted the double-edged nature of Atkinson's unusual stability.

'I can honestly say that pound for pound, ounce for ounce, she was as tough, if not tougher, than most of the guys on the team.'

Larry Daffin
Hohenfels football coach

"I think it's lucky being able to be here for four years," Atkinson said, adding that the situation has its challenges. "Waiting year after year to figure out who's moving and who's staying, what the people have to offer."

In spring, Atkinson will move on to soccer, the third sport in which she'll earn her third varsity letter. But she'll bring basketball with her; on many spring days, Atkinson will leave the practice pitch, change her shoes and head into the gym to put up some jumpers.

In fact, the calendar is the only thing that limits Atkinson's athletic pursuits. If DODDS-Europe soccer were played in the fall, as it is in many areas statewide, she said she'd likely play soccer then and softball in the spring, though that arrangement would have unfortunately precluded her football career.

But as long as she has a sport to play, Atkinson is happy.

"I think I look forward to all of them," she said.

Her seniority and growing list of sports achievements have turned Atkinson into a prominent figure on the Hohenfels campus.

"She is an extrovert that will take on any challenge, anywhere," athletic director Kathy Clemmons said. "She's a team player who always takes responsibility for her actions and always supports her teammates and coaches."

If she's become a motivating force for the Tiger athletic program, that's fine with Atkinson. "I want to show people things can be done if you work for them," Atkinson said. "I just like putting smiles on people's faces."

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Top performances in Europe

Boys basketball

Conner Manning, SHAPE: The All-Europe football player starred on the court for the Spartans, making five three-pointers in a 21-point, five-steam, five-assist effort against Brussels.

David Vidovic, Hohenfels: Manning was the only football phenom to enjoy a basketball breakout. The Stars and Stripes DODDS Athlete of the Year scored 20 points against Ansbach and

23 against Schweinfurt/Baumberg in a 2-0 weekend for the Tigers.

Anthony Little, Wiesbaden: Football's hardcourt invasion continued with the speedy Little, star of the Warriors' Division I European championship game win, hanging 15 points and six rebounds on Bitburg on Friday.

Jesse Gray, Ramstein: The forward scored 20 points and grabbed 10 rebounds in a losing effort against Wiesbaden on Saturday.

Girls basketball

Rebecca Russell, Wiesbaden: All 18 of the Warrior sharpshooter's points came from beyond the three-point arc in a rout of Bitburg on Friday.

Lindsey Breton, Ramstein: The Royals averaged the previous weekend's loss to Wiesbaden on Saturday during a 14-point, 11-rebound performance from Breton.

Jena Solorzano, AFNORTH: The

guard scored 18 points in both of the Lions' Saturday games, part of a 4-0 homestand for AFNORTH.

Johanna Quinn, Kaiserslautern: The reigning Stars and Stripes girls basketball Athlete of the Year put up a 12-point, 12-rebound double-double in a Saturday win over Black Forest Academy.

Marksmanship

Caelyn Miller, Patch: Miller scored

288 individual points as the sharpshooter captured individual honors and guided the Panthers to the European team championship.

Weighting

Armando Saldana, Vileck: The Falcons' heavyweight doesn't find opposition in the 285-pound weight class every week, but he took advantage of a robust field Saturday to defeat contenders from both Patch and Wiesbaden.

HIGH SCHOOL: DODDS PACIFIC

Akebono's daughter makes name for herself

Yokota sophomore basketball player Rowan building own athletic prowess

By DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

Most DODDS Pacific students are the sons and daughters of servicemembers, Defense Department civilians, contractors or even State Department personnel.

Caitlyn Rowan, a sophomore at Yokota, is in a class of her own.

She's the daughter of former Sumo wrestling grand champion Akebono, whose birth name is Chad Rowan.

While Dad was about as famous as it gets in Japan — and still draws attention just about anywhere he goes — his daughter doesn't feel she's much different than her classmates.

"I don't feel like I get treated in any special way," she said. "I feel like I'm a normal, teen-age girl or at least what I think is normal. I go to school, I do my homework, I play school sports and I have chores to do every weekend."

"She's a humble, shy girl," says her mother, Christine, a 1989 Yokota graduate and daughter of the school's former counselor, Don Kalina.

At 6 feet tall, Caitlyn is the Panthers girls basketball center and is becoming a cog in a team that's won five of six games. And it's likely that she possesses some of her father's basketball bloodlines.

Chad Rowan was on basketball scholarship at Hawaii-Pacific for one semester before being recruited to come to Japan for Sumo. He debuted in March 1988 and almost five years later, Jan. 27, 1993, he became the first foreigner to be promoted to Sumo's highest rank, yokozuna.

At 6-foot-8 and 514 pounds at his peak, he was one of the heaviest Sumo wrestlers ever. He won 11 Emperor's Cups before retiring in January 2001. He's currently on the All-Japan pro wrestling circuit.

When not on the road, the 44-year-old is a regular at Caitlyn's home games and says he's proud of her development. She didn't share her dad's love for sports at first, he said, "but then coaches approached her and asked if she wanted to play basketball or volleyball."

"The first year, she would come home, grumble and cry" whenever things didn't go well on the court. "She started slowly, but now, she's full swing into it."

One other reason Caitlyn was reluctant to play sports, Chad said, was the fact that her father was famous and in the spotlight.

Caitlyn says it was more about her not knowing much about basketball.

"I was asked to play for the basketball team" last year by former principal Darrell Mood. "I did it [but] I had no knowledge of the sport last year."

A year later, Rowan — who spent most of last offseason playing games against boys in weekend clinics at Negishi, near Yokohama — has averaged 12 points and 12 rebounds in the past six games, five of them Yokota wins. The team lost its first six games and is 5-9 overall.

"Now, I'm starting to get it," Caitlyn said, adding that she learned much from the clinic's coaches. "I think I've improved."

Through much of last season and this year, she's played under the watchful eye of her father, who can be vocal at times. That caused some frustration last year, but she's gotten used to this year.

Because he's so visible and so noteworthy, Chad Rowan says he has to be careful how he behaves.

"I long ago came to terms with no matter where I go or what I do, I have to watch what I do outside in public," he said.

Some of Caitlyn's classmates recognize him in an instant; others simply see him just as the biggest thing in the gym.

"He's the guy who's two feet above the rest of the crowd and takes up half the audience," said Yokota senior Chase Cupp. "I didn't know who he was until I saw him in the (homecoming) parade last year. I'm like what is that big thing. Like Godzilla."

"I might suspect he's a Sumo wrestler, but I wouldn't know he was a champion," fellow senior Kerry Dittmeier said.

Cupp says he's not mustered up the nerve to talk to him. "I'm always too intimidated."

But observers say the father is as approachable as his daughter is nice.

"She's as sweet as can be," Cupp said. "She's really quiet. She's just a nice girl. Very humble."

She's also well-rounded, carrying a 3.0 grade-point average and has been hula-dancing since she was 5.

As far as her abilities on the



TYLER ESPINOZA/Special to Stars and Stripes

Yokota's Caitlyn Rowan puts up a shot against Nile C. Kinnick's Charla Johnson during a January game at Yokota Air Base, Japan. Rowan, a sophomore, is the daughter of former Sumo grand champion Akebono (birth name Chad Rowan). Yokota has won five of its past six games and Rowan has played an integral part, averaging 12 points and 12 rebounds in that span.

court, coach Tim Pujol says he sees limitless possibilities.

"She's really taken a serious approach" to the game. "She works hard, she has the desire to do better, more maturity in prac-

tice, I've seen a real rise," he said, adding that mentoring from assistant coach Kitty Martinez, who works with Yokota's post players, has been a good match.

"She wants to improve herself,"

Pujol said. "For her to be doing what she's doing as a sophomore is an indicator of the success she can achieve in the future. I think the sky's the limit."

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Top performances in the Pacific

Boys basketball

■ Kareem Key scored 51 points and pulled down 30 rebounds in Kubasaki's two games over the weekend, one a 97-83 victory over Ginowan, the other a 90-80 defeat against Oroku, the No. 2-rated Japanese team on the island.

■ Jon Cadavos scored 26 points and grabbed seven rebounds, and helped Matthew C. Perry

outscore Christian Academy Japan 18-4 in overtime as the Samurai beat the Knights 66-52. It was Perry's first visit to the CAJ victory in 14 seasons.

■ Dawud Abdul-Azeez recorded a double-double of 15 points and 19 rebounds for Daegu, which downed Humphreys 76-48 and sealed second place in the regular season and the No. 2 seed in this weekend's Korean-American In-

terscholastic Activities Conference Blue Division tournament.

Girls basketball

■ Alyah Johnson recorded back-to-back double-doubles for Kubasaki, scoring 20 points and grabbing 17 rebounds in an 86-74 win over Haboru, then scoring 22 points and pulling down 16 boards as the Dragons downed Kita Nakagusuku

78-67.

■ Alyshia Allison scored 45 points in three games, all victories, for Nile C. Kinnick in a DODDS Japan weekend series at Robert D. Edgren. The Red Devils scored two victories over the host Eagles and one over E.J. King.

■ Sophomore Rheaugh Wyche scored 17 points and recorded eight steals for Daegu, which beat Humphreys 64-35.

NHL



FRANK FRANKLIN/MLP

Colorado Avalanche goalie Semyon Varlamov deflects a shot by the Rangers' Ryan Callahan during the third period on Tuesday. Callahan scored twice in the first period, and New York won 5-1.

Roundup

Rangers blast Avalanche for fourth straight victory

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Ryan Callahan heard the Madison Square Garden crowd roar loudly each time he scored for the New York Rangers against Colorado.

Those cheers seemed more special this time because the captain's run on Broadway could soon be over. The adoration surely sounded much nicer to Callahan than all the recent trade talk.

Callahan shook that off and scored two first-period goals to lead New York to its fourth straight win, 5-1 over the Avalanche on Tuesday night.

Callahan is eligible for free agency before the season, and if he doesn't reach a new contract agreement with the Rangers before two upcoming trade deadlines, he could be sent packing.

"I try not to bring that business to the rink," Callahan said. "I try to concentrate on the Rangers and what we're doing here. That's my main focus."

Callahan stalked New York to a 2-0 lead with goals 3:19 apart. Defenseman Anton Stralman added his first of the season in the second period and Derick Brassard and Brad Richards scored in the third in the Rangers' 10th win in 13 games.

After Callahan was stopped with a chance at a hat trick, Brassard made it 4-1 at 1:58. Richards finished the scoring with 1:36 left. Henrik Lundqvist made 27 saves for his 297th win, four shy of Mike Richter's club record.

The Rangers looked well rested after a three-day break and took advantage of the Avalanche, who

played for the third time in four days — including an overtime win at New Jersey on Monday.

Gabriel Landeskog, Lundqvist's teammate with Sweden in the Olympics, scored in the second, and Russian Olympian Semyon Varlamov stopped 38 shots, but the Avalanche had a four-game winning streak snapped.

The shots were 16-21 in New York's favor at one point, but the game was still scoreless. Callahan took care of that.

"Even though we didn't score early, we came out and created chances," Lundqvist said. "When we finally got that first one, I felt like we were doing so many good things."

Carl Hagelin chipped the puck away from defenseman Jan Hejda in the Rangers zone and raced up left wing. Hagelin sent a crisp pass across to Callahan, who took it at the bottom of the right circle, shifted to his backhand and scored with 5:44 left in the first.

The Rangers continued their barrage before Callahan connected again.

Brad Richards made a pass from the right circle into the slot to Callahan for a quick one-timer past Varlamov. Callahan raised both arms over his head and then dropped them to his waist as he let out an emphatic yell to celebrate his 11th goal with 2:25 remaining in the frame.

"Ryan's been playing hard since the first game," Rangers coach Alain Vigneault said. "He's the captain of the team. He prepares real well and competes every shift."

Bruins 3, Canucks 1: Jarome

Iginla and Milan Lucic each had a goal and an assist for host Boston Bruins in a win over slumping Vancouver, which lost their fifth straight.

Stars 3, Coyotes 1: Antoine Roussel scored the go-ahead goal early in the third period, Kari Lehtonen stopped 26 shots and Dallas beat host Phoenix in a key victory for its playoff hopes.

Wild 2, Lightning 1: Darcy Kuemper made 34 saves and Jared Spurgeon had two assists in his return from a 14-game injury absence to help host Minnesota defeat Tampa Bay.

Jets 2, Hurricanes 1: Chris Thornburn scored the tiebreaking goal with 1:03 remaining to lift Winnipeg over host Carolina. Andrew Ladd also scored for the Jets, who are 9-2-0 since Paul Maurice became coach Jan. 12.

Canadiens 2, Flames 0: Rene Bourque scored in the second period against his former team as host Montreal snapped Calgary's five-game winning streak.

Fanters 4, Maple Leafs 1: Tim Thomas made 20 saves, Brian Campbell had two assists and host Florida beat Toronto to snap a three-game losing streak.

Islanders 1, Capitals 0: Andrew Macdonald scored early in the third period and Evgeni Nabokov made 22 saves for his 57th career shutout as New York broke a five-game losing streak with a win over host Washington.

Senators 5, Blues 4 (SO): Kyle Turris scored the deciding goal in the fifth round of the shootout to go with one in regulation that helped visiting Ottawa beat St. Louis.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division						
GP	W	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Boston	55	16	3	75	167	120
Tampa Bay	56	32	19	69	163	139
Montreal	56	31	15	66	139	139
Toronto	58	30	22	66	171	180
Detroit	55	25	12	62	146	158
Ottawa	57	24	11	61	164	182
Buffalo	56	22	27	57	137	175
Buffalo	55	21	7	56	171	175
Metropolitan Division						
Pittsburgh	57	23	13	60	178	133
N.Y. Rangers	57	21	3	65	150	141
Columbus	56	29	23	62	167	156
Philadelphia	57	23	3	62	157	165
Carolina	55	21	9	59	138	153
New Jersey	56	21	9	59	142	161
Washington	57	25	23	9	59	164
N.Y. Islanders	58	22	28	8	52	160

Western Conference

Central Division						
GP	W	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Chicago	58	34	10	14	82	205
St. Louis	55	37	12	6	80	189
Colorado	58	26	5	77	168	148
Minnesota	58	30	21	7	67	142
Dallas	56	21	9	61	161	161
Winnipeg	58	28	25	5	63	167
Nashville	55	25	9	59	142	172
Pacific Division						
Anaheim	58	40	13	5	85	193
San Jose	58	34	16	6	110	130
Los Angeles	58	27	6	66	137	127
Vancouver	57	23	9	63	169	177
Phoenix	56	26	20	9	62	160
Calgary	56	21	28	7	69	175
Edmonton	55	23	9	64	156	166

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.
Monday's games
 Edmonton 3, Buffalo 2
 Pittsburgh 2, Ottawa 1, OT
 Detroit 2, Vancouver 0
 Colorado 2, New Jersey 1, OT
 Columbus 4, Anaheim 2
 Chicago 5, Los Angeles 3
 Philadelphia 5, San Jose 2
Tuesday's games
 Ottawa 5, St. Louis 4, SO
 Boston 3, Vancouver 1
 St. Louis 4, Colorado 3
 Winnipeg 2, Carolina 1
 Montreal 2, Calgary 0
 Florida 4, Toronto 1
 N.Y. Islanders 1, Washington 0
 Minnesota 2, Tampa Bay 1
 Dallas 3, Phoenix 1
Wednesday's games
 Pittsburgh at Buffalo
 Chicago at Anaheim
 Dallas at San Jose
Thursday's games
 Calgary at N.Y. Islanders
 Edmonton at N.Y. Rangers
 Colorado at Philadelphia
 Winnipeg at Washington
 Vancouver at Montreal
 Florida at Ottawa
 Toronto at Tampa Bay
 Detroit at Florida
 Boston at St. Louis
 Nashville at Minnesota
 Columbus at Los Angeles

Brains 3, Canucks 1

Vancouver 0 1 0-1
 Boston 1 2 0-3
 Montreal 1 1 1-2
Second Period—1. Montreal, Bourque (Prust, Eller), 16:15.
Third Period—2. Montreal, Deshares, Diaz 1 (Kassian, Stanton), 11:28. 4. Boston, Pauley, Royce (Lecavalier, Giguere), 16:48.
Shots on Goal—Vancouver 9-10-9=28.
Goals—Bravo 1, Lucic 1, Giguere 1.
Power-play opportunities—Vancouver 0 of 2; Boston 1 of 3.
Goals—Vancouver, Luongo 19-14-6 (32 shots=29 saves). Boston, Raak 25-13-3 (28-27).
A=17,565 (17,565), **T=**2:33.

Canadiens 2, Flames 0

Calgary 0 0 0-0
 Montreal 1 1 1-2
Second Period—1. Montreal, Bourque (Prust, Eller), 16:15.
Third Period—2. Montreal, Deshares, Diaz 1 (Kassian, Stanton), 11:28. 4. Boston, Pauley, Royce (Lecavalier, Giguere), 16:48.
Shots on Goal—Calgary 9-11-9=27.
Goals—Montreal, Giguere 1, Giguere 1.
Power-play opportunities—Calgary 0 of 2; Montreal 1 of 1.
Goals—Calgary, Berra 7-15-2 (26 shots=24 saves). Montreal, Price 24-12-3 (27-27).
A=21,273 (21,273), **T=**2:33.

Wild 2, Lightning 1

Tampa Bay 0 0 1-1
 Montreal 1 1 1-2
First Period—1. Minnesota, Niederreiter 10 (Spurgeon, Zucker), 16:04 (pp).
Second Period—2. Minnesota, Heatley 11 (Spurgeon), 3:4. 3. Tampa Bay, Filipoulo 20 (St. Louis, Gudus), 15:59.
Shots on Goal—Tampa Bay 11-11-13=35. Minnesota 8-14-4=26.
Power-play opportunities—Tampa Bay 0 of 2; Minnesota 1 of 2.
Goals—Tampa Bay, Bishop 27-8-4 (26 shots=24 saves). Minnesota, Kuemper 7-3-2 (35-34).
A=18,454 (17,954), **T=**2:23.

Panthers 4, Maple Leafs 1

Toronto 0 0 1-1
 Florida 1 1 1-2
First Period—1. Florida, Gilbert 3 (Campbell, Huberdeau), 1:14 (pp).
Third Period—2. Carolina, Winchester 8 (Campbell, Gormet), 5:21. 3. Toronto, Thornton 1 (Campbell, Gormet), 10:17. 4. Florida, Spezza 5 (Zibanejad, Methot), 8:27. 8. Florida, Leopold 1 (Schwartz, Verley), 17:09.
Shots on Goal—Toronto 4-9-21. Florida 19-18-11=48.
Power-play opportunities—Toronto 0 of 0; Florida 1 of 2.
Goals—Toronto, Bernier 20-16-5 (47 shots=46 saves). Florida, Thomas 15-16-3 (21-20).
A=15,583 (17,040), **T=**2:33.

Senators 5, Blues 4 (SO)

Ottawa 0 1 3 0-5
 St. Louis 1 1 1 0-4
Ottawa won shootout 3-2
First Period—1. St. Louis, Morrow 9 (Berlind, Oleskiw), 14:08.
Second Period—2. Ottawa, Eriksson 14 (Spezza, Zibanejad), 15:01. 3. St. Louis, Oshie 13 (Pauley, Pietrangeli), 15:01. 4. St. Louis, Backes 20 (Schwartz, Jackman), 19:55.
Third Period—3. Winnipeg, Michalek 8 (Spezza, Zibanejad), 5:52. 6. Ottawa, Gormet 1 (Schwartz, Verley), 10:17. 7. Ottawa, Spezza 15 (Zibanejad, Methot), 8:27. 8. St. Louis, Leopold 1 (Schwartz, Verley), 17:09.
Shootout—Ottawa 3 (Zibanejad, Gormet, Verley), 2-1. St. Louis, Oshie 13 (Pauley, Pietrangeli), 2-2.
Shots on Goal—Ottawa 13-8-10=31. St. Louis 10-11-11=32.
Power-play opportunities—Ottawa 0 of 1; St. Louis 0 of 7.
Goals—Ottawa, Lehner 7-13-0 (50 shots=46 saves). St. Louis, Halak 23-8-6 (39-37).
A=14,758 (19,150), **T=**3:04.

Stars 3, Coyotes 1

Phoenix 0 1 2-3
 Dallas 1 0 1-1
Second Period—1. Phoenix, Rusetto 2 (Suter, Dallas, Horcoff 2 (Gagnon, Verley), 12:32 (pp).
Third Period—2. Dallas, Vermette 9 (Garbutt), 3:54. 3. Dallas, Garbutt 11 (Eakin), 19:33 (pp).
Shots on Goal—Dallas 13-19-4=40. Phoenix 11-7-10=28.
Power-play opportunities—Dallas 1 of 4; Phoenix 0 of 2.
Goals—Dallas, Lehtonen 21-15-9 (28 shots=26 saves). Dallas, Smith 19-15-9 (39-37).
A=12,257 (17,125), **T=**2:27.

Islanders 1, Capitals 0

N.Y. Islanders 0 0 1-1
 Washington 0 0 0-0
Third Period—1. N.Y. Islanders, MacDonald 4 (Neilson), 2:16.
Shots on Goal—Islanders 1-1-0=2. Washington 8-8-6=22.
Goals—N.Y. Islanders, Brassard 8-7-13. Washington 8-8-6=22.
Power-play opportunities—N.Y. Islanders 0 of 5; Washington 0 of 6.
Goals—N.Y. Islanders, Nabokov 10-10-10 (28-27). Washington, Neuvirth 4-6-2 (28-27).
A=18,506 (18,506), **T=**2:24.

Islanders 1, Capitals 0

N.Y. Islanders 0 0 1-1
 Washington 0 0 0-0
Third Period—1. N.Y. Islanders, MacDonald 4 (Neilson), 2:16.
Shots on Goal—Islanders 1-1-0=2. Washington 8-8-6=22.
Goals—N.Y. Islanders, Brassard 8-7-13. Washington 8-8-6=22.
Power-play opportunities—N.Y. Islanders 0 of 5; Washington 0 of 6.
Goals—N.Y. Islanders, Nabokov 10-10-10 (28-27). Washington, Neuvirth 4-6-2 (28-27).
A=18,506 (18,506), **T=**2:24.

Calendar

Feb. 9 — Olympic break begins.
 Feb. 9-10 — Olympic hockey tournament begins: Sochi, Russia.
 Feb. 26 — NHL regular season resumes.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL/OLYMPICS



PHIL SANDLIN/AP

Florida forward Chris Walker blocks a shot by Missouri guard Earnest Ross during the first half of Tuesday's game in Gainesville, Fla. The third-ranked Gators won 68-58.

AP Top 25 roundup

No. 3 Florida tops Missouri for 28th straight home win

The Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Highly touted freshman Chris Walker gave the home fans something to cheer about early.

Michael Frazier II sent them home happy.

Frazier II scored 14 points, hitting four three-pointers in the second half, and Walker had two crowd-pleasing dunks in his college debut as the third-ranked Gators beat Missouri 68-58 on Tuesday night.

Florida won its 14th consecutive game and extended a school record with its 28th straight victory at home.

Frazier came up huge in the latest one. The sophomore drained three three-pointers in a two-minute span in the second half, giving Florida some breathing room in a tight, back-and-forth game. Frazier, who missed all four shots from behind the arc in the first half, made 4 of 7 after the break.

"Him giving up an open 3 is like a turnover because it's probably one of the best shots we can get as a team," center Patric Young said.

Young's driving layup with 4:10 remaining gave the Gators (20-2, 9-0 Southeastern Conference) a 58-48 lead. It showed Florida's concerted effort to work the ball inside-out, something that rarely happened in the first half against

Missouri's zone.

Missouri's three-point shooting kept the Tigers (16-6, 4-5) in it for much of the game.

Missouri made 8 of 21 from behind the arc, but just 4 of 13 in the second half. The Tigers went more than 4 minutes without a point, a stretch that helped Florida build its biggest lead.

"We knew it was going to be a slugfest," Missouri coach Frank Haith said. "We were OK with that. ... Our game plan was good and we were executing. Then they got going. They got it in the paint, they got to the free throw line and got aggressive there in the second half, and that was the difference in the game."

Jabari Brown led the Tigers with 15 points while Jordan Clarkson added 14. Scottie Wilbekin finished with a career-high 19 points for the Gators. He was 13 of 16 from the free throw line, most of them down the stretch. Young chipped in 13 points and six rebounds.

He drew oohs and aahs with every move during pregame warm-ups. He got a standing ovation as he entered the game with 11:28 remaining in the first half. His first few minutes on the court gave Florida fans even more to celebrate.

No. 8 Kansas 69, Baylor 52: Naadir Tharpe scored 22 points, nine in a go-ahead run before halftime, and Big 12-leading Kan-

sas (17-5, 8-1 Big 12) rebounded from its first league loss to beat Baylor (14-8, 2-7).

Andrew Wiggins overcame a slow start to score 14 points, while Penny Ellis had 14 points and 10 rebounds for Kansas.

No. 11 Duke 83, Wake Forest 63: Jabari Parker scored 21 points and Rasheed Sulaimon added 19 points for Duke (18-5, 7-3 Atlantic Coast Conference) in a win over Wake Forest (14-9, 4-6).

No. 15 Texas 59, Texas Christian 54: Jonathan Holmes had 20 points and a career-high 16 rebounds and Texas (18-4, 7-2 Big 12) rallied in the second half to beat TCU (9-12, 0-9) and extend its winning streak to seven games.

Ohio St. 76, No. 17 Iowa 69: Aaron Craft had 17 points, six assists and six steals to help Ohio State (18-5, 5-5 Big Ten) beat Iowa (17-6, 6-4) for its third win in four games.

No. 18 Kentucky 80, Mississippi 64: Willie Cauley-Stein broke a slump with 18 points and 11 rebounds, and Kentucky (17-5, 7-2 Southeastern Conference) shot 60 percent in the second half to beat Mississippi (15-7, 6-3).

No. 24 Memphis 101, Rutgers 69: Austin Nichols scored 18 points, and Joe Jackson added 16 points and eight assists for Memphis (17-5, 7-3 American Athletic Conference) in a win over Rutgers (9-14, 3-7).

White withdraws from slopestyle

Wrist injury forces out snowboarder

By **EDDIE PELLIS**
The Associated Press

KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia — Shaun White jammed his wrist on one jump and watched the world's best snowboarders join him in tumbling down the supersized, super-scary Olympic slopestyle course.

Quickly, his choice became clear: Time to step away from the danger, and give himself a better chance in the event he knows he can win.

The world's most famous snowboarder pulled out of the new Olympic event Wednesday, saying that after much deliberation, he has decided to bypass a chance at winning two gold medals at these games and instead concentrate on the halfpipe, where he'll have a chance to win his third straight title next week.

"With the practice runs I have taken, even after course modifications and watching fellow athletes get hurt, the potential risk of injury is a bit too much for me to gamble my other Olympic goals on," White said in a statement.

The world's most decorated rider in a sport known for its risk-takers, White's decision was a stunner that dealt yet another blow to the still-to-start Sochi Games. They have been wracked by security threats and political dust-ups, along with the loss of at least one other headliner, injured American skier Lindsey Vonn.

White isn't leaving, but his departure from an event that was essentially introduced at the Olympics this year to take advantage of his star power certainly can't make the folks at the IOC or NBC too happy.

"He's a notable person and he probably would have brought more viewers to slopestyle," said Nick Goepfer, an American who competes in the skiing version of the event.

IOC spokesman Mark Adams downplayed the idea that the course is too dangerous.

"I don't think that's an issue," he said. "A lot of the athletes have said they're very happy, they like the venue."

Slopestyle qualifying starts Thursday, the day before the Opening Ceremony.

Snowboarding's newest and most-hyped Olympic event is a judged sport — a speed-packed

trip down the mountain, filled with rails, bumps and, most notably, steeply angled jumps that allow riders to flip two, sometimes three times, before landing. White hurt his wrist on one of the takeoff ramps, which were built "kind of obnoxiously tall," according to one top rider, Canadian Mark McMorris.

White, who had already hurt his shoulder and ankle in the lead-up to the Olympics, deemed his latest injury — the jammed wrist — as nothing serious and said reports about it were overblown. But he said there remained serious issues with the slopestyle course.

"There are definitely concerns about the course," he said. "It's been interesting to see how it's developed and changed over the past couple days. The big question is if it will continue to change. Because every day, they have riders meetings and they give feedback. Sometimes there's changes, sometimes there's not."

Reaction to White's decision came from several corners, not all of it positive.

"Mr. White... It's easy to find excuses to pull out of a contest when you think you can't win," Canadian rider Sebastian Touretant tweeted.

Maybe so. But White certainly wasn't alone in questioning the course.

Australian Torah Bright, the defending women's halfpipe champion who is trying to compete in three events this year — halfpipe, slopestyle and a racer's version called snowboardcross — also described an overly treacherous few days of training.

"We're here as the world's best snowboarders," she told The Associated Press. "Too bad we don't have a world-class course. The craftsmanship doesn't match the world-class athletes that are here."

But of slopestyle, White will now focus solely on next Tuesday's contest in the halfpipe, which is essentially a hollowed-out ice shell with 22-foot (7-meter) sidewalls. There is danger there, but unlike slopestyle, it's based mostly on the types of head-over-heels tricks the riders try and not the setup of the pipe.

In a news conference about an hour before he gave first word of his decision to the "Today" show, White was asked whether halfpipe was more important to him.

"For me, I definitely feel the halfpipe carries a bit more weight, a bit more pressure. I guess that's fair enough to say," he said.

He is favored to become the first male American to win three straight golds in the Winter Games.

'There are definite concerns about the course.'

Shaun White
snowboarder

OLYMPICS

SPEEDSKATING

US could match best medal haul

Five things to know

By PAUL NEWBERRY
The Associated Press

Shani Davis will be chasing history at the Sochi Olympics.

For Sven Kramer, it's all about making up for the one that got away.

The longtime star of the U.S. team, Davis has a shot at becoming the first male speedskater to win the same event at three straight Winter Games. He took gold in the 1,000 meters at both Turin and Vancouver.

"Anytime I step out on the ice and I put my hood on, I have something to prove," said Davis, who also claimed silver medals in the 1,500 at the past two Olympics. "It's not easy. These guys are getting stronger and stronger."

The 31-year-old Chicagoan leads what might be the deepest American squad since the 2002 Salt Lake City Games, with Heather Richardson and Brittany Bowe also in the mix for multiple medals.

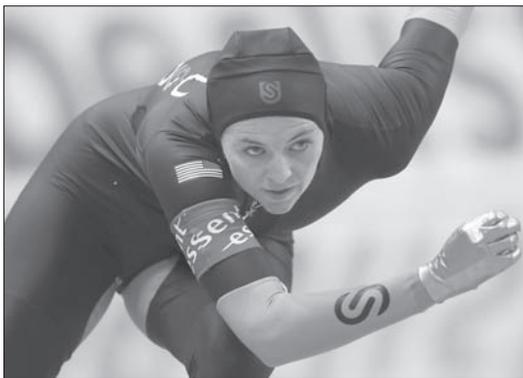
But Kramer and his Dutch teammates look like the ones to beat at the big oval along the Black Sea.

Four years ago, Kramer easily took gold in the 5,000 and would've been on top of the podium in the 10,000 if not for a coaching mistake. He was directed to the wrong lane during a routine crossover on the backstretch and disqualified, a baffling error that makes him even more determined to capture both events in Sochi.

"I want to make it into something beautiful," the three-time Olympian said in a recent interview with the NOS network. "I am not just there for the Olympic spirit. I already have had that."

Even though Kramer is again an overwhelming favorite in the two longest events he is taking part in for granted.

Vancouver taught him that. "Things are certainly not as self-evident as it sometimes seems," he said.



KOJI SASAHARA/AP

Heather Richardson, part of the strongest U.S. team since the 2002 Salt Lake City Games, is top-ranked in the 1,000 and could medal in three events.

Richardson and Bowe are former inline skaters who have become best friends. They room together, train together and are looking forward to competing for much of the same hardware in Sochi.

The Americans are 1-2 in the World Cup rankings in the 1,000, with Richardson on top and Bowe setting a world record in November on the fast ice at the Utah Olympic Oval. Richardson could also make the podium in the 500 and is coming on strong in the 1,500, beating Bowe in that event at the U.S. Olympic trials.

"We both want to win, so we go out and

push each other hard," Richardson said. "It's a good quality to take us to the next level."

While Richardson competed in Vancouver, the 25-year-old Bowe is more of a late bloomer on the ice, having also played college basketball at Florida Atlantic. After watching the Vancouver Games on television, she was inspired to return to skating — only with blades instead of wheels.

Bowe quickly emerged as one of the world's best in both the 1,000 and 1,500.

"I'm happy that the level of competition in America has risen so high," Davis said. "It's only going to make us stronger."

Celski replaces Ohno as top American

By BETH HARRIS
The Associated Press

Apolo Anton Ohno took his soul patch, bandanas and eight Olympic medals into retirement, leaving a gaping hole in American short track speedskating.

J.R. Celski is poised to step into the void as the country's best hope for a medal in the wild and wooly sport known as roller derby on ice.

The 23-year-old from Federal Way, Wash., will compete at his second Olympics looking to add to the pair of bronze medals he won in Vancouver, where Ohno ended his career as America's most decorated Winter Olympian.

Celski qualified in all three distances for Sochi, and the 5,000-meter relay. He's ranked among the world's top 10 in the 1,000 and 1,500.

This time, Celski is healthy heading to the Olympics. At the U.S. trials four years ago, his right skate sliced his left leg in a crash, spewing blood on the ice. He bruised his femoral artery and came close to severing it, which could have been fatal.

The accident required six hours of daily physical therapy, which robbed him of practice time. But he bounced back five months later to make the podium in Vancouver.

"My goal was just to get to Vancouver. I did that and the medals were just a bonus," he said. "This time, I'm going to Sochi healthy and I'm looking forward to doing

some damage." Celski took a year off after Vancouver to re-establish his goals and mindset. Once he returned and started winning races, he rekindled the love he had for the sport. He welcomes assuming leadership of the U.S. men's team from Ohno, who mentored Celski and is one of his biggest supporters.

"I am very happy to be in the position I am now. I looked up to that guy for a long time," Celski said. "This time is completely different for me mentally, physically, I'm healthy. I'm going to ride that momentum."

In Vancouver, a team led by Ohno and now-retired Katherine Reutter earned a total of six medals to trail only powerhouse South Korea in the standings.

The Americans will be hard-pressed to equal the six medals won in Vancouver, but the men have the stronger team.

The U.S. women didn't qualify a relay team for Sochi. The men will be a gold-medal favorite in the 5,000 relay. Celski will be joined by Eddy Alvarez, Kyle Carr, Chris Creveling and Jordan Malone.

"We all practice together every day and that's going to make a huge difference," Celski said.

Their togetherness is in stark contrast to the turmoil that roiled the program beginning in 2012, when coach Jae Si Chun was accused by a dozen national team members of physical, emotional and verbal abuse. Celski was among Chun's accusers.



RICK BOWMER/AP

J.R. Celski will compete at his second Olympics, looking to add to the pair of bronze medals he won in 2010.

Having endured the turmoil to make a second Olympics, Celski is now optimistic enough to consider the future.

"I love to speed skate," he said. "I wouldn't be surprised if I convince myself to keep going."

By PAUL NEWBERRY
The Associated Press

Speedskating has been on the Olympic program since the first Winter Games in 1924, while its unpredictable offshoot, short track, became an official sport in 1992.

Speedskating is held on a 400-meter oval at distances ranging from 500 to 10,000 meters, with two skaters going at a time but essentially racing against the clock. Simply put, the fastest time wins the gold medal. There are also team pursuit events.

In short track, skaters compete on a 111-meter oval in the middle of a hockey-sized rink, and the clock isn't important at all. There are frequent crashes and disqualifications, leading the sport to be known as "roller derby on ice." The head-to-head races are conducted in heats until a winner is determined at distances ranging from 500 to 1,500 meters. There are also team relays.

Five things to look for in speedskating and short track at the Sochi Games:

1 Countries to watch: Despite perennial funding challenges, the U.S. speedskating program has won more gold medals (29) than any other country. The Netherlands (82) and Norway (80) have captured the most overall medals, and the Dutch are expected to be the powerhouse team at these Games. Their deep squad is led by Sven Kramer and Irene Wust. In short track, the Chinese women took a huge loss when two-time defending 500 champion Wang Meng was injured on the ice during training. Canada's Charles Hamelin on the men's side and South Korea's Shim Suk Hee are now poised to be the biggest stars.

2 Shan's threepeat: American star Shani Davis will try to do something that's never been done by a male speedskater: Win the same event at three straight Olympics. The 31-year-old won the 1,000 at both Turin and Vancouver, and he's considered a strong contender. He also won silver in the 1,500 at the last two Olympics, and he would love to add a gold in the other of his favorite events. Heather Richardson and Brittany Bowe both have a shot at multiple podium finishes, giving the Americans a shot at matching the eight medals won in 2002.

3 40-Something wonder: Germany's Claudia Pechstein will be competing in her sixth Olympics as she approaches her 42nd birthday. While she has won Olympic golds and nine medals overall, her career feels incomplete. She's still miffed about missing the Vancouver Games while serving a two-year ban for doping, a case that didn't involve a positive drug test; instead, the International Skating Union cited irregular blood levels. Pechstein vehemently denied ever taking banned drugs, urging her to keep skating at an age when most athletes have long since retired. Pechstein has a good shot at winning medals in the 3,000 and 5,000.

4 Home team: The home team normally performs better than expected, and Russia could be poised to capture plenty of medals. Viktor Ahn was born in South Korea and competed for his native country most of his career. In 2011, he became a citizen of Russia. He won three golds and a bronze at the 2006 Olympics when he was known as Ahn Hyun-soo. On the big oval, Denis Yuskov for the men and Olga Fatkulina on the women's side are the top Russian hopes.

5 No Ohno: Apolo Anton Ohno, the most decorated American Winter Olympian ever with eight medals, retired after Vancouver. Ohno was one of short track's most dynamic skaters, had a heated rivalry with the South Korean team, and was a magnet for television coverage. He's an analyst for NBC.

OLYMPICS



KERSTIN JOENSSON/AP

Japan's Sara Takanashi, 17, is the favorite to win gold in the inaugural women's ski jump competition.

Teen Takanashi favored for gold

By JIM ARMSTRONG
The Associated Press

TOKYO — For a 17-year-old high school student, Japanese ski jumper Sara Takanashi is remarkably calm about carrying the gold medal aspirations of an entire nation at the Sochi Olympics.

The International Olympic Committee decided in April 2011 to add women's jumping to the Olympic program, and with her dominance of World Cup events this season, Takanashi will be the favorite to take the inaugural gold.

Japan didn't win any gold medals at the Vancouver Olympics so the heat is on the country's athletes to improve at Sochi but Takanashi keeps the expectations in perspective.

"I basically just try to enjoy every jump," Takanashi said after winning her eighth title at a World Cup meet in Zao, Japan, last month. "I know the expectations are there but all I can do is prepare as best I can and enjoy each competition."

Takanashi, who started jumping in elementary school, finished second to 19-year-old Sarah Hen-

drickson of the United States at the 2013 world championships.

Hendrickson crashed in a training session five months ago, injuring her right knee but had surgery on Aug. 29, returned to jumping on Jan. 11 and was named to the U.S. team.

Having Hendrickson back changes things but Takanashi said she's not intimidated by the return of her biggest rival.

"I feel motivated even more now that she is back," Takanashi said of Hendrickson's return. "I'm looking forward to competing against her."

Takanashi has struggled with her Telemark landing in the past but seems to have improved that this season. With eight wins out of 11 events this season, Takanashi has 1,020 points in the overall standings for a 354-point lead over her closest rival Carina Vogt of Germany.

Ski jumping has always been popular in Japan. One of the most memorable Winter Olympic moments for Japan was when the men won the team event on home soil at the Nagano Olympics in 1988.

Growing up on Japan's northern island of Hokkaido not far

from Sapporo, host city of the 1972 Olympics, Takanashi had plenty of opportunity to practice and ski jumping runs in the family.

Takanashi's father, Hironari Takanashi, was formerly an active sky jumper. Her brother, four years older than Sara, is also a ski jumper.

At Sochi, the competition will be held over two rounds, with the top 30 advancing to the second jump. The winner is determined by points, not purely on the length of the jump, with the total score a combination of distance and style.

Takanashi, who is 5 feet tall, attributes her ability to achieve her overwhelming distances on her jumps to a sense of balance she developed through ballet lessons at an early age.

She has become hugely popular in Japan. At two recent World Cup events on home soil capacity crowds turned out to get a glimpse of the young star.

"I really appreciate the support of the fans that come out to watch me in some pretty tough conditions," Takanashi said. "I will do everything I can to make them proud."

Hendrickson ready to jump back in

By PAT GRAHAM
The Associated Press

Five months ago, American ski jumper Sarah Hendrickson crashed in a training session, tearing the ACL and MCL off the bone, along with damaging 80 percent of her meniscus.

No way to be back in time for the Sochi Games, right?

Turns out, Hendrickson's a very fast healer.

The 19-year-old from Park City, Utah, had surgery to repair her right knee on Aug. 29, returned to jumping on Jan. 11 and was named to the U.S. team as women's ski jumping makes its Olympics debut. Lindsey Van and Jessica Jerome also made the squad.

"It's a miracle, kind of," Hendrickson said of her quick return. "You never know how your body is going to react to that. Luckily, my body responded well. I was able to get strength back and everything working again."

Hendrickson, the reigning world champion, had no time to squeeze in any competitions before the Olympics begin. That's all right, Hendrickson said, she's still confident. After all, she's won 13 World Cup events since 2011 and figures to be in the medal mix in Russia.

First, though, she had to get over the mental barrier of her crash, which happened in Germany when she overshot her intended landing area. On her first jump back, Hendrickson stared down the hill in Park City, trying to calm her emotions.

"Sitting there, the doubts just run through your head. Everything from, 'Do I remember how to ski jump?' to 'Is my ACL going to completely pop in land?'" said Hendrickson, who spent nearly six hours a day in the gym



JEFFREY D. ALLREAD/AP

Sarah Hendrickson made the U.S. ski jumping team despite not having competed since tearing her ACL and MCL five months ago. She is the reigning world champion.

getting her knee back into shape. "But I had to be confident that the hard training would pay off. I had to trust that."

She landed that first jump just fine, like she has countless times before.

Instantly, her confidence was restored.

"I was like, 'OK, now I can do my normal thing,'" said Hendrickson.

Her goal, as she recovered, was simply to be in a position to make the team. She was added to the squad after a promising return to jumping and on the strength of her résumé.

"Sarah has done an outstanding job of taking baby steps every day. She has exceeded everyone's expectations and continues to do so," head coach Alan Albom said.

"As for her medal chances, well, don't discount them."

"I'm going to Sochi to compete," Hendrickson said, "and whenever I compete, I compete to win."



JENS MEYER/AP

Every time cross-country skier Kikkan Randall reaches a career milestone, she's also breaking new ground for American cross-country skiing. Now there's just the big one left: an Olympic medal.

Chasing: World Cup victories give Randall boost

FROM BACK PAGE

also an outside contender in the men's sprint.

But Randall is the team's only real star. "We have a unique opportunity to make history in Sochi," U.S. cross-country head coach Chris Grover said when the American team was announced.

Only one American has ever won an Olympic medal in cross-country skiing, with Bill Koch taking silver in the men's 30-kilometer race at the 1976 Innsbruck Games. On the women's side, Randall is the only one to ever make the top 10, with an eighth-place finish in the classical-style sprint in Vancouver four years ago as her best result.

This time, though, the individual sprint is a freestyle event — by far Randall's best discipline. At the age of 31, she is also a much stronger skier than four years ago. Nine of her 10 individual World Cup victories have come since 2011, and all of them in freestyle sprints — the event she specializes in. She won the last two World Cup events before Sochi, in Poland and the Czech Republic,

although those victories came against slightly weakened fields as some top skiers focused on training for Sochi.

Still, those were confidence-boosting wins that showed she is peaking at the right time.

The problem for Randall is that the sprint race doesn't come down to just form. Luck sometimes plays its part as well.

In the individual sprint, skiers have to go through a qualifying run, then a quarter-final and semifinal heat before the top six reach the final. With six skiers fighting it out in each heat on a narrow course, poles and skis often get tangled up and there are a lot of spills and crashes. It is one of the most spectator-friendly events of all the cross-country disciplines — full of tactics and close finishes — but also the one where most accidents occur.

Randall knows that all too well.

In 2011, the American was entering the world championships as the gold-medal favorite in the freestyle sprint. She had just having won the last two World Cup events before the championships. But in the quarter-

finals, another competitor ran over one of her skis, causing Randall to fall, and she finished last in her heat, ending her chances of an individual world title.

"It was definitely pretty tough after that, because everything had been focused on the preparations and I knew I was in the best shape of my life and I could contend for a medal," the Anchorage, Alaska, native said. "That really taught me a lot that will help me going into the Olympics. I know that my career and my self-worth doesn't depend on whether I get that medal. There's always a chance that something could happen, and I just have to be focused on doing my best. That's what counts at the end of the day."

And she insists that entering the games as one of the favorites doesn't add any extra pressure — only more motivation.

"I really enjoyed my previous three Olympics, but I really wanted to be there and contend for a medal," Randall said. "And to finally be at that point, I'm just excited about the opportunity that lies ahead."

OLYMPICS

PREVIEWS: 5 THINGS TO KNOW

Cross-country skiing

By **MATTIAS KAREN**
The Associated Press

Petter Northug and Dario Cologna were supposed to have a two-man duel at the Sochi Olympics to establish which one should be called the world's best cross-country skier.

Because of injuries and illness, however, no one knows quite what to expect from the sport's two biggest stars — making these Olympics unusually unpredictable on the men's side.

Northing and Cologna have combined to win the last five overall World Cups, but both have had their Olympic season disrupted by health issues.

Northing, the Norwegian double gold medalist in Vancouver four years ago and a nine-time world champion, had a stubborn virus at the start of the season that set back his preparations.

Cologna, who in Vancouver became the first Swiss cross-country skier to win an Olympic gold, is an even bigger question mark. Cologna hasn't competed at all on the World Cup circuit this season after tearing a ligament in his right ankle in November.

On the women's side, these Olympics should be another duel for supremacy between Norway's Marit Bjørgen and Justyna Kowalczyk of Poland.

Expect both to climb the podium several times again in Sochi — the only question is in which order.

Here are five things to know about the cross-country skiing events in Sochi:

1 Norwegian dominance: As always, Norway is likely to top the cross-country medals table, on both the men's and women's side. Northing and Bjørgen both have a handful of teammates capable of fighting for medals and will each anchor a relay team heavily favored for gold. With four individual events for both men and women, don't be surprised to see at least one Norwegian podium sweep.

2 New generation: This could well be the last Olympics for both the 33-year-old Bjørgen and the 31-year-old Kowalczyk, and there is a host of younger women looking to supplant them at the sport. There's Johaug has been seen as Bjørgen's heir apparent in Norway, but the list of challengers also includes her teammates Astrid Jacobsen and Heidi Weng, along with Sweden's Charlotte Kalla.

3 America first?: No American has ever won a gold medal in cross-country skiing at the Olympics. On Feb. 11, Kikkan Randall has a very good chance of becoming the first. Randall is one of the favorites in the women's individual freestyle sprint, an event she specializes in and has won 10 times on the World Cup circuit.

4 Russian hopes: Host nation Russia will be hoping to improve on its performance in Vancouver, when its cross-country skiers earned one gold and four medals in total. Nikita Kriukov surprisingly won the individual sprint four years ago but that event switches to freestyle this time rather than his preferred classical style. However, the team sprint is classical, and Russia will be among the favorites there.

5 Healthy Hellner?: Marcus Hellner came away with two golds in Vancouver, winning the 30K skiathlon and then leading Sweden to victory in the men's relay, but he has also struggled with illness this season and has not had a single World Cup podium finish.



Jens Meyer/AP

With the help of Einar Bjoerndalen, who starts in his sixth Olympics, Norway is aiming to top the biathlon medal table in Sochi again as it was four years ago.

Biathlon

By **ERIC WILLEMSEN**
The Associated Press

Starting in his sixth Olympics, veteran Ole Einar Bjoerndalen aims to help Norway top the biathlon medals table at Sochi again, just like four years ago.

Germany and Russia are likely to become the Scandinavians' toughest opponents over the 11 events, which includes a mixed competition for the first time.

The three nations have dominated Olympic biathlon by winning 46 of the 64 events since the sport made its debut at the 1960 Winter Games in Squaw Valley.

A record quadruple gold medalist in 2002, Bjoerndalen is the most decorated biathlete at major championships. After struggling for a couple of seasons, the 39-year-old Norwegian surged back to form in recent pre-Olympic events.

For the relay competition, Bjoerndalen will team up with the likes of Emil Hegle Svendsen, who has won four World Cup events so far this season — a feat only matched by Martin Fourcade of France.

On the women's side, Norway's hopes are boosted by the dominance of overall World Cup champion Tora Berger, who won the Olympic individual race four years ago and has since added eight world titles, including four in team events.

Here are five things to know about biathlon at the Sochi Olympics:

1 Last shot for glory: Once nicknamed "The Cannibal" because of his unstoppable hunger for titles, Bjoerndalen is still eager to extend his collection of silverware. The Norwegian has won 50 medals at major biathlon championships — including six golds and 11 in total at the Olympics. Bjoerndalen will turn 40 before the Sochi Games — his last Olympics, by his own account — but said in a recent interview that "I don't feel old."

2 Home advantage: One of the most popular winter sports in Russia, biathlon might give the home fans plenty to cheer about. The events are staged in the 7,500-capacity Laura Bihl and Ski Complex. Since 1960, the Soviet Union and Russia have won a combined 18 Olympic gold medals. Olga Zaitseva, part of the winning relay teams in 2006 and 2010, leads the women's squad, while on the men's side Anton Shipulin is regarded as a main medal contender alongside 2010 mass start champ Evgeny Ustyugov.

Skeleton

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
The Associated Press

Noelle Pikus-Pace has one of those quintessential Olympic stories.

She would have been a huge favorite for a gold medal in skeleton — the headfirst sliding sport — in 2006, then missed the Turin Olympics that year because a hobnail ran her over and shattered her leg. She missed a medal at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics by one-tenth of a second and retired, insisting she was content.

Now she can see the final finish line. The end of her racing story, the last time she'll ever jump on her sled and throw herself headfirst down a mountainside chute at 85 mph competitively. Another retirement beckons after the Sochi Games.

The one-tenth of a second that kept her off the medal podium four years ago? Pikus-Pace insists it has not kept her awake at night. And if she won bronze in 2010, she probably wouldn't be racing for gold in 2014.

She's one of two clear favorites in the women's race. Pikus-Pace and Britain's Lizzy Yarnold have taken turns atop the winners' stand all season.

There's also two big favorites in the men's skeleton race, and they're from one family. Tomass Dukurs of Latvia might be the second-best slider in the world. He's also second-best in his own family, given that brother Martins Dukurs has been the dominant slider in the last four years and now gets a chance to solidify his resume with Olympic gold.

Here's five things to watch in Olympic skeleton:

1 Katie's comeback: Pikus-Pace and Katie Uhlenhuth finished first and second in the women's race last season in Sochi, and Uhlenhuth has been targeting the Olympics all year. She got a concussion during a training run in Lake Placid this past fall, and the time that followed away from training and sliding pretty much wrecked her momentum for the World Cup season. So for her, it's been all about Sochi.

2 Speed, speed, speed: Top racers got up to 80 mph at a World Cup race on the Sochi track last season, and that's even with the chute having a few uphill sections that obviously curb speed. Pikus-Pace and Martins Dukurs were the winners there a year ago, and when combining that with the seasons they've had this year, it's difficult to envision them missing a medal in Sochi this time around.

3 US men: It's an individual sport, but make no mistake, the U.S. men's trio of Matt Antonie, Kyle Tress and John Daly are a team. They're close friends and decided a long time ago that they all wanted to make an Olympic team together. It wouldn't be a shocker to see any of the three in the hunt.

4 Home edge: The more trips a slider gets down a track, they better they learn the subtle nuances — and the more they know about where to find that tenth of a second that often separates winning from losing. So clearly, Russian sliders like Alexander Tretyakov (who has the best shot of beating the Dukurs duo) and Elena Nikitina will have a major advantage. And the Russians expect big support from home-country fans as well.

5 British success: It's not just Yarnold who will be a medal hopeful for Team GB at Sochi. The British are the only team to medal in each of the past two Olympics since skeleton was returned to the program.



Felipe Dana/AP

The United States' Tim Burke finished 18th in the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver.

The United States' Tim Burke finished 18th in the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver. The United States biathlon federation's target is winning two events in Sochi, according to president Mikhail Prokhorov during this week's team presentation.

3 Sister act: The United States has announced its largest Olympic biathlon squad in over two decades, but virtually all media attention has so far gone to the Barnes sisters. Initially Tracy Barnes made the U.S. squad while her twin sister, Lanny, failed to do so after falling ill in the final qualifying event in Italy. However, Tracy gave up her spot to let her sibling Lanny in.

4 Mix it up: Since its Olympic inception in 1960 with a men's individual 20-kilometer race, biathlon has rapidly expanded. New formats have been introduced on a regular basis though it wasn't until 1992 that the first women's events were held. Another 22 years later, the Sochi Games will see the first mixed competition with relay teams consisting of two women and two men.

5 High hopes on Henkel: Magdalena Neuner became the star of women's biathlon at the Vancouver Games, winning two golds and a silver at individual races. Neuner retired two years later, leaving a gap that the Germans are still trying to fill. This World Cup season, no German biathlete reached the podium of an individual race until the final event before Sochi.

OLYMPICS

PREVIEWS: FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

Women's ski jumping

By DENNIS PASSA
The Associated Press

Women's ski jumping will finally make its Olympic debut in Sochi — 90 years after the men competed in the sport for the first time at the Winter Games. For the best female jumpers in the world, Feb. 11 will be a momentous day after years of fighting for the right to compete, including an unsuccessful court case to be included in Vancouver four years ago.

The International Olympic Committee finally decided in April 2011 to add women's jumping to the Sochi program. The delay can be partly blamed on Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards, whose terrible form and questionable bravado at the 1988 Calgary Games brought the wrong kind of publicity to the sport and persuaded the governing body to introduce tougher qualifying restrictions, which ultimately affected female jumpers.

Here are five things to know about the event at the Mountain Cluster east of Sochi:

1 Why so long? Female ski jumpers have heard all the excuses about why they weren't allowed into the Olympics sooner, including not having enough elite jumpers. But they were also told the female body wasn't thought to be strong enough to take the strain of repeated jumps, and even that it might affect their ability to have children. Former world champion Lindsay Van of the United States and Jessica Jerome were among the top competitors who filed the unsuccessful suit ahead of the Vancouver Olympics.

2 Kid ballerina is big favorite: Despite her small stature — she's 4 feet, 11 inches tall — Japan's Sara Takanashi is one of the biggest gold-medal favorites in any sport heading into Sochi. The 17-year-old Takanashi has won eight of nine World Cup events this season and is a runaway leader in the standings. Takanashi, who graduated from high school in 2012, credits ballet lessons as a child with helping her maintain balance during her jumps.

3 Comeback: Perhaps the only credible threat to Takanashi's supremacy could come from American teenager Sarah Hendrickson, if she has recovered sufficiently from knee surgery. Hendrickson beat Takanashi at last year's world championships but tore her anterior cruciate ligament in August and has been fighting to be fit for Sochi ever since. Hendrickson only returned to jumping this week, but has been included on the U.S. team along with Van and Jerome.

4 One shot: While the men's ski jumpers have three shots at a medal — two individual competitions and a team event — the women only get one chance. The women only compete on the normal hill — 90 meters long — whereas the men also have an individual competition on a 120-meter hill. While there have been mixed team events on the World Cup — with two men and two women on each team — that format is not on the schedule for Sochi.

5 The format: The competition is held over two rounds, with the top 30 advancing to the second jump. The winner is determined by points, not purely on the length of the jump, with the total score a combination of distance and style. The competitors start with 60 points and receive two points for every meter jumped beyond 95 meters and two deducted for every meter under 95. There are five judges, with the best and worst scores thrown out, and the other three scores added together to determine a style score.



MICHAEL PROBST/AP

Bryan Fletcher will make his Olympic debut in Sochi, part of an American Nordic combined squad that won the silver medal in the team competition at Vancouver.

Nordic combined

By DENNIS PASSA
The Associated Press

A sport that has its beginnings in the late 1800s when Norwegian soldiers began informal competitions, the event first featured cross-country skiing following by ski jumping, but was reversed in the 1930s. Under the Gundersen Method, which has been used since the Calgary Games in 1988 and is named after its creator, Norway's Gunnar Gundersen, starting places for the cross-country are determined based on the ski jumping results. Once the jumping points are totaled, they are converted into time penalties, and generally, a 10-point lead provides for a one-minute start in the cross-country race.

Here are five things to know about the Nordic combined events in Sochi:

1 Male-only bastion: With women ski jumpers joining their male counterparts at Sochi, Nordic combined is the sole male-only sport at the Winter Olympics. The International Ski Federation (FIS) does not currently sanction women's competition on its calendar, although it has information on its website that a women's version of the sport is growing in Russia. It says 86 women are training in the Perm region and that during the recent Russian national championships, a women's training camp under the direction of former Russian Olympian and Perm-based Denis Tishagin was held at the new World Cup venue of Chaikovsky.

2 Frenzel in charge: Germany's Eric Frenzel is a big gold-medal favorite for Sochi based on his results heading into the Olympics. He won his third consecutive World Cup event earlier this month and became the first winner of the Nordic Combined Triple, a new format that added the results of three competitions on one weekend. "This is great. I have no explanation for it, it all went just really well," Frenzel said after the race at Seefeld, Austria. It was Frenzel's sixth victory in Seefeld and he has a commanding lead in the World Cup standings.

Men's ski jumping

By DENNIS PASSA
The Associated Press

For the first time, the world's best male ski jumpers will have to share the Olympic stage with their female counterparts — the guys have had it all to themselves since the inaugural Winter Games in 1924.

While the women will make their one and only appearance on the normal hill in Sochi, three gold medals will be awarded in men's competition. The normal hill event is scheduled for Feb. 9, with the large hill on Feb. 15 and the team event on the large hill on Feb. 17.

With the Austrian team not looking as dominant as it has the past few years, all three events could have some surprises.

Here are five things to know about the men's ski jumping competition at Sochi:

1 The defenders: The podium places in both the normal and large hill events were occupied by the same three men at Vancouver in 2010. Leading the way with two golds was Simon Ammann of Switzerland, considered a legend in the sport after also having won double gold at Salt Lake City in 2002 and more than 20 World Cup events in his career. The 32-year-old Ammann also won the last World Cup event of 2013, showing he's still a contender. The silver medalist in both events from Vancouver, Adam Malysz of Poland, won't be back — he retired in March 2011.

2 The contenders: Slovenia's Peter Prevc leads the overall World Cup in a tight race ahead of Poland's Kamil Stoch and Gregor Schiellerzauer, who surprisingly is the only Austrian in the top 8. Ammann is fourth. While Japan's Sara Takanashi is the runaway leader in the women's event, there is no clear-cut leader or medal favorite among the top five or six jumpers. Austria has dominated the team events in recent years, but this season Slovenia has won both team competitions on the World Cup.

3 Schiellerzauer's quest: At the age of 24, Schiellerzauer is already the most successful World Cup jumper ever, with a record 42 victories on the circuit. But he has struggled to carry that dominance into the major championships so far, with a single individual victory from four world championships and one Olympics. If he wants to cement his place among the all-time greats, he needs at least one individual gold medal in Sochi.

4 The danger: Three-time Olympic champion Thomas Morgenstern of Austria suffered skull injuries and a bruised lung in a training crash in early January and was discharged from the hospital about 10 days later. Still suffering some memory gaps, it's uncertain whether Morgenstern will be able to compete in Sochi. Jumpers often have to make personal safety choices in the conditions, even if organizers deem them as conditions safe.

5 The format: The individual competitions are held over two rounds, with the top 30 advancing to the second jump. The winner is determined by points, not purely on the length of the jump, with the total score a combination of distance and style. The competitors start with 60 points and receive two points for every meter jumped over a certain distance determined by the size of the hill, and two points deducted for every meter under the prescribed distance. There are five judges, with the best and worst scores thrown out, and the other three added together to get a style score. In the team event, four jumpers compete for each country, with their combined scores over two rounds added up to determine the winner.

3 Changing of the guard? Norway has traditionally been the strongest nation in Nordic combined, having won 11 gold medals, eight silvers and seven bronze medals in the sport since it was held at the first Olympics in 1924. Finland is a distant second with four gold medals and 14 overall, and Austria is in third with three golds. One of the Austrian team golds came at Vancouver in 2010, where a shift in power in the sport began to take shape. The American team that included Billy Demong, Todd Lodwick and the now-retired Johnny Spillane won the team silver, while Germany, including Frenzel, took the bronze.

4 Americans look strong: There will be four Americans in the competition, and all are capable of winning medals. Lodwick initially earned his berth by winning the Olympic trials in December, Demong and brothers Taylor Fletcher and Bryan Fletcher, who are cross-country ski specialists. The 37-year-old Lodwick will be competing at his sixth Olympics, and finished fourth in the individual 10-kilometer and with a silver medal in the team competition at Vancouver in 2010. Demong won the individual large hill gold, the first by any American in Nordic combined, and the team silver medal. Taylor Fletcher, 23, competed in Vancouver, while brother Bryan, 27, will make his Olympic debut in Russia.

5 The gear: Nordic combined athletes have to switch equipment during their event. First the jumping gear — specialized high-backed boots to allow the skier to lean far forward during flight, and a connection cord that is a part of the binding attaches the ski to the boot and prevents the skis from wobbling during flight. The cross-country skiing gear includes a boot that is shored up in the ankle, which is constantly under pressure in the free technique. Cross-country skis are narrower and lighter than those used in Alpine skiing, have curved ends and can be up to 6 feet, 6 inches long.

SPORTS



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team to Miami | **Page 21**

WINTER OLYMPICS

Chasing history

Randall seeks to become first US woman to medal in cross-country skiing

BY MATTIAS KAREN
The Associated Press

Every time Kikkan Randall reaches a career milestone, she's also breaking new ground for American cross-country skiing. In a sport with little in the way of tradition in the U.S., no American woman had ever even been on the podium in a World Cup event before Randall earned a third-place finish in January 2007. Seven years later, she has 10 career victories, is the defending World Cup sprint champion, and a world champion in the team sprint with Jessica Diggins — and every achievement has been a first for an American woman.

Now there's just the big one left: an Olympic medal. And in Sochi, at her fourth Winter Games, Randall has a real chance to finally get one: She is entering the individual freestyle sprint as one of the big gold-medal favorites, another status previously unheard of for an American.

"The Olympics are really kind of the gold standard in the sport," Randall said in a phone interview. "It's been wonderful to achieve the success I have had in the sport, but success at the Olympics is really the final one to go for. I feel my career has been building up to this point. I know it's just one race on one day, but I would love to add an Olympic medal to that collection."

In the wake of Randall's successes, a number of other American skiers have also emerged on the World Cup. On the men's side, Simi Hamilton won a sprint stage on the Tour de Ski this season, while veteran Andrew Newell is

SEE CHASING ON PAGE 29

Kikkan Randall is America's best hope for its first-ever cross-country skiing medal

GIOVANNI AULETTA/AP

White withdraws from risky slopestyle to focus on halfpipe | **Page 27**

US has sights on record medal haul in speedskating | **Olympic previews, Pages 28-31**

