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WEEKEND EDITION
EUROPE & PACIFIC

MUSIC



Album shows Dierks Bentley's split personality
Page 36

VIDEO GAMES



Humor of 'Stick of Truth' will delight 'South Park' fans
Page 37

NBA



76ers freefalling toward the worst record in league
Back page

UKRAINE UNREST

BOUND FOR THE BALTICS



EMERSON NUÑEZ/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

An F-15C Eagle from the 493rd Fighter Squadron takes off from RAF Lakenheath, England, on Thursday. The 48th Fighter Wing is sending aircraft and personnel to support NATO's air policing mission in Lithuania, at the request of U.S. allies in the Baltics.

Lakenheath jets to beef up air space patrolling as Ukraine crisis continues

Page 7

2013 recovery mission didn't follow JPAC's own protocol

By **MATTHEW M. BURKE**
Stars and Stripes

SASEBO NAVAL BASE, Japan — World War II officially ended with the surrender of the Japanese on Sept. 2, 1945, but it was far from over for 1st Lt. Horace Joe Gabbart.

The Army Air Corps pilot fought the urge to rush home to see family and friends, instead choosing to stay behind to help complete the daunting task of repatriating war dead from across the Pacific.



On May 17, 1946, Gabbart was behind the controls of a C-47B heading from Rangoon, Burma, to Barrackpore, India, with two other crewmembers, eight American Graves Registration Service personnel and the remains of 38 recovered American servicemembers when they disappeared.

Almost 67 years later, his niece, Neva Gabbart Erbacher, is no closer to seeing Gabbart come home. She and other families of those aboard blame the Joint Prisoners of War, Missing in Action Accounting Command, which launched a fruitless recovery mission last year in India.

At the outset, the November 2013 recovery mission looked good; An independent MIA hunter claimed to have identified the crash and burial sites years earlier. But a Stars and Stripes investigation of the mission revealed that the site was never properly vetted by the JPAC excavation decision board, and was instead fast-tracked based on questionable assumptions and procedural missteps.

SEE PROTOCOL ON PAGE 10

Army's top sex assault prosecutor suspended after groping allegation

By **CHRIS CARROLL AND JOHN VANDIVER**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The top Army prosecutor for sexual assault cases has been suspended after a lawyer who worked for him recently reported he'd groped her and tried to kiss her at a sexual assault legal conference more than two years ago.

Two separate sources with knowledge of the situation told Stars and Stripes that the

Army general Sinclair admits guilt on three counts, denies assault
Page 4

Army is investigating the allegations levied against Lt. Col. Joseph "Jay" Morse, who supervised the Army's nearly two dozen special-victim prosecutors — who are in charge of prosecuting sexual assault,

domestic abuse and crimes against children.

Attempts to reach Morse via phone and email for comment have been unsuccessful.

Morse was removed from his job when the allegations came to light, one source said. To date, no charges have been filed in the case.

The suspension comes at a time the military is dealing with rising reports of sexual assault.

SEE SUSPENDED ON PAGE 4



LM OTERO/AP

Army Lt. Col. Joseph "Jay" Morse waits to speak at the SMU Dedman School of Law in Dallas in November 2013.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It's a feeling like you're the only sober person at the party. Like — 'I hope I still get a piece of the cake.'"

— Kate Conmy, of the Women's Ordination Conference, on being encouraged about liberalizing reforms under Pope Francis but discouraged that they don't extend to equality for women and gays

See story on Page 14

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2. Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sinclair set to admit guilt on 3 counts, will deny assault
3. Bomb at ATM prompts warning to US military in Bahrain
4. Destroyer USS Truxton heads for Black Sea amid heightened tensions over Crimea
5. Russians sink a boat off Ukraine coast — their own

COMING SOON

Shifting Gears

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TODAY IN STRIPES

- American Roundup 19
- Classified 50-52
- Comics 42, 46-47
- Faces 43
- Faith 14
- Health & Fitness 40
- Opinion 44-45
- Quick Trips 29, 33-34
- Sports 53-64
- Weather 20
- Weekend 21-42

MILITARY

IG: Standards uneven in military scrutiny of prescription drug abuse

By GREGG ZOROYA
USA Today

Even after a dozen years of war, the Pentagon has not yet imposed uniform standards for fighting prescription medication abuse among soldiers, the Defense Department's inspector general reported.

The result is a patchwork of efforts among military branches, with some of them tougher than others in making sure that a recovering servicemember isn't abusing prescription pain pills or psychotropic medications, the report said.

Investigators found, for example, that the Army has an aggressive policy to guard against wounded troops' "doctor shopping" and using the same prescription to obtain more pills than they are prescribed, potentially for abuse. The Army threshold for closely monitoring a soldier's prescription practices is when he or she is receiving four drugs, including one that is a controlled substance.

The Navy provides the same scrutiny, but at some locations the threshold is only if a sailor or Marine is receiving five controlled substances.

"Medication management policies, especially for the high-risk warrior population of wounded patients, need to be standardized," the report said.

Dr. Jonathan Woodson, the Pentagon's top medical officer, said he agreed with the report's findings. Corrective steps are being taken, according to responses cited in the report.

Released Feb. 21, the inspec-

tor general's report was the second review in two days critical of Pentagon health care practices. A study issued Feb. 20 by the Institute of Medicine said that dozens of programs have been launched across the military during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan aimed at preventing mental illness, but there is little evidence that any work.

The inspector general's report noted that in 2010 — the latest data cited — nearly a thousand troops were hospitalized for drug overdoses. A Pentagon health survey of troops conducted the next year found that one in four used pain medication.

The IG report focused on a potential drug abuse among patients who are supposed to receive the most focused care in so-called Wounded Warrior units. Dozens of overdose deaths have occurred in those units during the war years.

The report also urges the Pentagon to be more aggressive in seeking federal approval for allowing pharmacies to take back unused medication from troops.

Currently, these "take-back" programs are conducted only twice a year at military installations under the legally required auspices of the federal Drug Enforcement Administration.

The inspector general said the Pentagon should speed efforts to obtain DEA authority to conduct take-back programs routinely at military pharmacies.

"Wounded warriors did not have a reliable, safe, accessible and accountable method to dispose of medications that were no longer needed for treatment," the report said.

Study: Asking of troops' pain helps predict suicide

By GREGG ZOROYA
USA Today

Asking a soldier about self-worth or emotional pain may be a better way of predicting suicide than inquiring whether they intend to kill themselves, researchers report.

Research has shown that more than half of troops who die by suicide denied in their last medical appointments that they were contemplating the act. Scientists are concerned that they fail to admit suicidal thoughts out of worry it would harm their military careers.

A Defense Department-funded study published online this week in the *Journal of Affective Disorders* discusses how several questions used on military members identified those at risk for suicide attempts and yet don't use the word "suicide."

"Those statements of 'I'm horrible, worthless,' actually predict future suicide attempts better than asking them, 'Do you want to kill yourself?'" said Craig Bryan, a psychologist and lead author on the study.

Research questions focused on how a servicemember sees himself or herself, and their place in the world, concentrating on areas scientists labeled "unlovability"

— feeling worthless or defective — and "unbearability," being unable to tolerate distress.

The questions were asked of 175 soldiers at Fort Carson, Colo., who had been hospitalized for mental health problems and 152 airmen who were behavioral health outpatients in military clinics in the southern and western United States.

Troops were asked to rate how certain statements pertained to them.

Examples include "nothing can help solve my problems"; "I can't imagine anyone being able to withstand this pain"; "I can never be forgiven for the mistakes I have made"; and "I am completely unworthy of love."

Examining the medical records of those airmen who participated and tracking the soldiers during a period of two years, scientists found that high scores on questions identified those soldiers who later attempted suicide and those airmen who had attempted it in the past.

The 18-question assessment tool that was used included questions about suicide. Bryan said that when answers to those suicide questions were excluded from the analysis, the remaining responses were highly predictive of suicide attempts.

Civilian charged with stealing from Navy denies guilt

Stars and Stripes

A Navy civilian accused of forging documents and accepting more than \$360,000 in illegal housing payments pleaded not guilty to charges in a federal courtroom in Iowa on Tuesday.

Steven W. Ashton, 41, was arrested at the Navy base in Naples,

Italy, in February after federal prosecutors alleged he used an apartment owned by his wife to draw a monthly rent reimbursement benefit from the base, a violation of federal regulations. Ashton also was accused of forging documents to extend his stay in Naples, to gain access to base privileges such as the commis-

sary and the exchange, and to save money on mooring fees for his boat.

Ashton worked for Navy Region Europe, Africa, Southwest Asia, where he managed the service's operation and maintenance of NATO facilities. He remains in Davenport, Iowa, where he was released on his own

recognizance.

Ashton is charged with five counts of making false statements, one count of falsifying a record in an investigation and one count of theft.

Region officials in Naples declined to comment on the arrest or the allegations.

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MIDEAST

Bombing by NATO kills 5 Afghan soldiers

By CID STANDIFER
Stars and Stripes

NATO forces accidentally bombed Afghan National Army forces in the predawn hours of Thursday, killing five and wounding at least eight others, according to Afghan officials.

The incident is likely to further jeopardize the already shaky alliance between the Afghan government and the West.

Zahir Azimi, spokesman for the Afghan Defense Ministry, said on Twitter that the International Security Assistance Force bombed Afghan soldiers in central Logar province at 3:30 a.m. He added that the defense minister, Bismillah Khan Mohammadi, was deeply affected and sympathized with the victims' families.

A statement from the Defense Ministry said the dead and wounded had been transferred to nearby Kabul.

ISAF confirmed five Afghan soldiers were "accidentally killed," but did not say how.

"An investigation is being conducted at this time to determine the circumstances that led to this unfortunate incident," ISAF said in a release, which also offered condolences.

"We value the strong relationship with our Afghan partners, and we will determine what actions will be taken to ensure incidents like this do not happen again," the statement said.

The New York Times reported that the bombing was a drone strike in Charkh district, which has long been a hotbed of insurgent activity. However, the Reuters news agency cited local

officials as saying it was an air strike.

Din Mohammad Darwish, a spokesman for the governor of Logar, speculated that poor coordination could have caused the accident, but said the circumstances are still unclear.

As for NATO's condolences, he said, "The Afghans cannot accept such apologies anymore, because such things are continuously happening."

The accident comes at a tense period in Afghan-American relations. President Hamid Karzai

has stalled for months on signing a Bilateral Security Agreement that would let NATO troops stay in the country past the end of 2014.

In January, the Times reported Karzai blames the U.S. for plotting insurgent-style attacks to

weaken the Afghan government, including a bloody attack early this year on expatriates at a Lebanese restaurant in Kabul that was claimed by the Taliban.

Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report.
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Blackwater agents want case dropped

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Former security contractors charged in a deadly shooting in Iraq are asking a U.S. judge to dismiss the indictment against them.

The four former Blackwater Worldwide contractors are accused of taking part in a Sept. 16, 2007, shooting that prosecutors say killed 14 unarmed Iraqi civilians in Baghdad. The shooting, which prosecutors contend was unprovoked, inflamed anti-American sentiment abroad and led to a criminal prosecution in Washington that has been winding through federal court for years.

Defense lawyers say the men were improperly charged under a federal law that holds military employees and contractors accountable for crimes committed outside the United States. The lawyers say the statute, the Military Extrajurisdiction Act, should not apply to the defendants since they were in Iraq on a contract not with the military, but with the State Department.

MILITARY

Sinclair admits to lesser counts at court-martial

By MICHAEL BIESECKER
AND ALLEN G. BREED
The Associated Press

FORT BRAGG, N.C. — As his court-martial got underway, an Army general accused of sexual assault pleaded guilty to three lesser charges Thursday, hoping his admission will strengthen his case by limiting some of the salacious evidence against him.

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey A. Sinclair is accused of forcing a female captain to twice perform oral sex and threatening to kill her family if she told anyone about their three-year affair.

Sinclair, 51, still faces five charges, including sexual assault, in his trial before a jury of five generals. The former deputy commander of the 82nd Airborne could be sentenced to life in prison if convicted on the most serious charges. Opening statements were expected Friday.

The case against Sinclair, believed to be the most senior member of the U.S. military ever to face trial on such charges, comes as the Pentagon grapples with revelations of rampant rape and sexual misconduct within the ranks.

The U.S. Senate was expected to vote Thursday on legislation that would strip senior military commanders of their authority to prosecute rapes and other serious offenses, a measure firmly opposed by the Pentagon.

The general pleaded guilty to having improper relationships with two other female Army officers and to committing adultery with the primary accuser, his mistress, which is a crime in the military. He also admitted to violating orders by possessing pornography and to conduct unbecoming of an officer and a gentleman.

Sinclair's lawyer Richard Scheff said before the plea that his client was taking responsibility for his actions, but also strengthening his legal position. By admitting guilt on the three charges for which there is the strongest evidence, the married father of two hoped to narrow the focus of the trial to charges that rely heavily on the testimony and credibility of his former mistress.

In pleading guilty to possessing a hoard of porn on his laptop in Afghanistan, a violation of orders for soldiers in the socially conser-



JAMES ROBINSON, THE FAYETTEVILLE (N.C.) OBSERVER/AP

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sinclair leaves the courthouse with his lawyers — **Richard Scheff, left, and Ellen C. Brotman** — following a day of motions Tuesday at Fort Bragg, N.C. On Thursday, Sinclair pleaded guilty to three lesser charges.

vative Muslim country, Sinclair's defense hopes to limit the ability of prosecutors to use those graphic images to shock the jury.

Prosecutors also have evidence

Sinclair asked two female officers to send nude photos of themselves to him. By conceding his guilt, the defense lessens the relevance of the messages they exchanged.

The primary accuser is the only one alleging assault.

"The government now has a big problem," Scheff said in an email before the plea.

Suspend: Groping alleged at sex assault legal conference

FROM FRONT PAGE

Morse, chief of the Trial Counsel Assistance Program at Fort Belvoir, Va., was responsible for Army prosecutorial training and assistance worldwide. He also was lead prosecutor in the case against Staff Sgt. Robert Bates, who pleaded guilty to the mass murder of 16 Afghan civilians in 2012.

Sources told Stars and Stripes that the female Army lawyer alleged that Morse attempted to kiss and grope her against his will. The alleged assault reportedly took place in a hotel room at a 2011 sexual assault legal conference attended by special victims prosecutors in Alexandria, Va., before he was appointed as chief of the Trial Counsel Assistance Program.

The female lawyer reported the incident in mid-February, and Morse was suspended shortly thereafter, one source said on condition of anonymity.

An Army official who was not authorized to speak publicly about the matter confirmed an investigation is underway. "We can confirm that this matter is currently under investigation and that the individual in question has been

suspended from duties pending the outcome of the investigation," the official said. "Given that this is still an open case, we are precluded from providing any additional information at this point."

The suspension follows on the heels of a late February announcement by the Army it had suspended 588 troops and employees in "positions of trust" — including sexual assault response personnel — for suspected offenses including sexual crimes and alcohol abuse.

According to an Army biography, Morse was commissioned as an aviation officer in 1993 and became a judge advocate in 2001. He received his law degree from the University of Arizona's James E. Rogers College of Law, and is a graduate of Army's Air Assault, Airborne and Ranger schools.

Last year, the former head of the Air Force Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Krusinski, was acquitted in civilian court of assault and battery against a woman who said he had grabbed her buttocks.

Stars and Stripes reporter Jennifer Hlad contributed to this report. vandiver.john@stripes.com carroll.chris@stripes.com

Bill to strip commanders of authority in prosecuting sexual assaults fails

By CHRIS CARROLL
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Senate measure to strip military commanders of authority over prosecutions of sexual assaults and other serious crimes failed Thursday in a procedural vote.

The bill known as the Military Justice Improvement Act needed 60 votes under Senate rules in order to end debate and move to a final vote, but received 55. Even if the bill had passed, however, a similar measure is considered highly unlikely to pass the House of Representatives.

It was championed by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., who said placing prosecution authority with independent military prosecutors, rather than with the chain of command, would encourage reporting by victims now intimidated to do so because of retaliation from superiors.

The Defense Department estimated fewer than 20 percent of victims of unwanted sexual contact in 2012 actually reported the incidents. DOD leaders have lined up to strongly oppose the

measure, which they said could damage good order and discipline in the military.

Meanwhile, a competing measure passed unanimously and will move ahead to a vote. That measure, backed by Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., would enact new protections for sexual assault victims while making less radical changes to the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Gillibrand's long-debated bill received strong endorsements as well as passionate criticism in the hours of debate leading up to Thursday's vote.

Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., said she would support McCaskill's bill because it made some useful changes in military law to support sexual assault victims. But Gillibrand's bill goes further, and was "the one opportunity to bring about the changes that survivors of rape and the survivors of sexual assault are asking for."

But Sen. Lindsay Graham said passage of the bill would be like telling military commanders they were "fired" from the job of policing sexual assault in the ranks.

"The worst thing that can happen in a unit is for the commander to say 'this is no longer my problem,'" an animated Graham said.

He attributed the bill, which had received bipartisan support from a majority of senators, to "liberal people wanting to gut the military justice system — social engineering run amok."

Gillibrand said the opinion of military victims of sexual assault on the matter was clear.

"It's not whether anyone in this chamber trusts the chain of command," she said. "The people who do not trust the chain of command are the victims."

The debate came at a time of growing frustration and outrage over the military's seeming inability to reverse an apparently growing number of sexual assaults in the ranks. About 5,400 instances of sexual assault or "unwanted sexual contact" were reported within the U.S. military last fiscal year, a 60 percent rise from 2012, the Pentagon said last week.

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PACIFIC

DOD: Execution unlikely to affect N. Korea's rule

By **ASHLEY ROWLAND**
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The surprise execution of a key figure in the North Korean regime last year is expected to have little impact on the stability of Kim Jong Un's rule or defense policy, according to a Department of Defense report released Wednesday.

Kim ordered the execution of close adviser Chang Song-taek — who was also his uncle — in December. Chang, a four-star general and vice-chairman of the country's National Defense Commission, had been a fixture in Kim Jong Il's government and a "relatively pragmatic" adviser to the younger Kim, who assumed power after his father's death in December 2011, the report said.

"Chang's execution is the most significant step to date in Kim's establishment of his authority, eliminating arguably the most influential senior Party official remaining from his father's era," the annual report to Congress said. "The sudden and brutal purge sends a strong message to regime

elites that the formation of factions or potential challenges to Kim Jong Un will not be tolerated."

The number of public appearances by Chang since Kim Jong Un dropped 50 percent last year compared with 2012, signaling that his influence had dropped.

Chang had little control over the defense and military sectors. However, he was in charge of several important initiatives to bring foreign currency and investment to North Korea, and his absence will most likely be felt in the economic sector, the report said.

The release of the assessment comes as the U.S. and South Korean militaries are wrapping up their annual Key Resolve command post exercise. About 5,200 U.S. troops participated, as well as troops from four major South Korean units, and four sending states of the United Nations Command: Australia, Canada, Denmark and the United Kingdom.

According to a press release issued Thursday by U.S. Forces Korea, the drill rehearses "various scenarios" that hone skills needed to protect South Korea.

Some 12,700 U.S. troops and 200,000 South Korean troops also are taking part in the Foal Eagle field exercises, which began last month.

In what defense officials see as a response to the exercises, Beijing has conducted several low-level actions in recent weeks — from rocket launches to brief incursions of a patrol boat across the disputed maritime border between the two Koreas.

While the North has criticized the exercises, it has been far less vocal than it was during last year's drills, when it levied a number of unusually bellicose threats at the U.S. and South Korea, substantially raising tensions on the peninsula.

The report says that the past year marked the end of North Korea's "institutional readjust-

ment to Kim Jong Un's leadership and began implementation of his broader national agenda," which includes gaining acceptance as a nuclear state.

During 2013, Pyongyang engaged in a series of provocative acts, such as conducting a nuclear test in February and withdrawing workers from the inter-Korean Kaesong Industrial Complex in April, while at times increasing its diplomatic overtures to other countries in the region. By late spring, North Korea had begun calling for renewed dialogue with the international community and sent high-level officials to Russia and China, though that outreach was followed later in the year by hostile rhetoric and the cancellation of inter-Korean family reunions.

The DOD report noted that the

North's diplomacy failed because of concerns about its nuclear program, though "the North likely believes a 'charm offensive' will eventually lead to improvements in regional relationships and gradual advancement of its strategic objectives."

Pyongyang also seems to believe that China, while disapproving of the North's nuclear program and provocations, is unlikely to cut off diplomatic or economic relations and risk destabilizing the region, it said.

According to the Pentagon report, Pyongyang continues to advance its nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities, though much of its conventional weapons and other military equipment remains outdated.

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Restrictions on Okinawa coincide with drop in crime

By **TRAVIS J. TRITTEN**
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Strict new liberty and alcohol rules coincided with a historic drop in year in crimes committed by U.S. personnel on Okinawa, according to statistics released this week by the military and Japan government.

Crimes committed outside base gates by the 47,000 status-of-force visa holders on the island — a number that includes troops, civilians and dependents — fell to 32 total offenses in 2013 from an average of 56 per year over the previous 10 years.

It was the lowest number since Okinawa reverted to Japanese control in 1972, according to the Cooperative Working Team, a low-level bilateral meeting Tuesday between the Japanese government and U.S. military and State Department officials.

The SOFA-visa offenders historically accounted for only about one-tenth of 1 percent of the military community on Okinawa. But a string of violent and drunken incidents in 2012 — including the rape of an Okinawan woman by two sailors — caused a surge of public outrage and led the military in the Japan to issue new restrictions on going outside the gates and drinking alcohol.

The military has mostly avoided embarrassing off-base incidents since.

Lt. Col. David Honchul, spokesman for U.S. Forces Japan, on Thursday attributed the dip in SOFA crime to a variety of factors.

"It proves our overall efforts, upon which the liberty policy is just one tool, have been a success," Honchul wrote in an email.

He said the military believes it is due to "a combination of solid leadership at all levels, the training efforts we have undertaken, and our servicemembers internalizing our professional core values."

Since early last year, all troops in the country have faced a ban on off-base drinking from midnight to 5 a.m., and troops ranked E-5 or lower are subject to a curfew.

Okinawa-based troops were banned from all off-base drinking for the first half of 2013. USJF eased the ban in June and began allowing servicemembers on the island up to two alcoholic drinks while dining in the evening at off-base restaurants. Drinking at bars and clubs is still forbidden.

The Marine Corps leadership on Okinawa has also emphasized cultural awareness training for newly arriving servicemembers. Col. Peter S. Rubin, staff judge advocate for Marine Corps Installations Pacific, wrote in a statement to Stars and Stripes.

The tightened liberty and drinking rules track with a slight reduction in vehicle wrecks during the period, according to the statistics released this week.

Last year, traffic incidents that involved SOFA members and resulted in bodily injury dropped to 188 from 200 to 2012, the working group reported.

Still, the reductions in 2013 are unlikely to spell any relief from liberty and alcohol restrictions for servicemembers on Okinawa.

"The liberty policy is just one tool commanders have, and I do not see this news affecting how long it will or will not remain in place," USJF spokesman Honchul said.

Reporter Chiyomi Sumida contributed to this story.
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UKRAINE UNREST



DARKO VOJNOVIC/AP

A Ukrainian navy officer looks Thursday at the scuttled Russian vessel Oshakov from the Black Sea shore outside Myrnyi, western Crimea, Ukraine. The Russian navy scuttled the decommissioned ship early Thursday, blocking access for five Ukrainian naval vessels trapped in the Southern Naval Headquarters.

Crimean lawmakers vote unanimously to join Russia

By YURAS KARMANAU AND JUERGEN BAETZ
The Associated Press

SIMFEROPOL, Ukraine — Ukraine lurched toward breakup Thursday when lawmakers in Crimea unanimously declared they wanted to join Russia and would put the decision to voters in 10 days — and Russian lawmakers pushed a bill to facilitate a handover. Russian President Vladimir Putin's hand was almost certainly behind the dramatic move, but it was not clear whether he is aiming for outright annexation, or simply strengthening his hand in talks with the West.

The West's response was less forceful: The EU announced limited punitive measures against Putin's government — including the suspension of trade and visa talks — and the U.S. said it was imposing travel restrictions on opponents of Ukraine's new government. Both were discussing further sanctions.

Crimea's parliament rammed through what amounted to a declaration of independence from Ukraine, announcing it would let the Crimean people, 60 percent of whom are ethnic Russians, decide whether they want to become part of their gigantic neighbor to the east.

"This is our response to the disorder and lawlessness in Kiev," said Sergei Shvaynikov, a member of the legislature. "We will decide our future ourselves."

Ukraine's prime minister swiftly denounced the action: "This so-called referendum has no legal grounds at all," said Arseniy Yatsenyuk.

As an emergency EU summit got underway in Brussels, a se-

nior Western diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity, promised that EU leaders "will send a clear message that the referendum won't be recognized."

But the punishment later announced seemed more symbolic than substantive: EU President Herman Van Rompuy declared that the bloc was suspending talks with Russia on a wide-ranging economic pact and on a visa deal, and would consider further measures if Russia does not quickly open meaningful dialogue.

"Not everyone will be satisfied with the decision, but I should say that we did much more together than one could have expected several hours ago," said Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

In Moscow, a prominent member of Russia's parliament, Sergei Mironov, said he has introduced a bill to simplify the procedure for Crimea to join Russia and it could be passed as soon as next week. Another senior lawmaker, Leonid Slutsky, said the parliament could consider such a motion after the referendum.

On Tuesday, Putin said Russia had no intention of annexing Crimea, while insisting its population has the right to determine the region's status in a referendum. A popular vote would give Putin a democratic fig leaf for what would effectively be a formal takeover — although it was too early to tell whether such a move actually would go forward. The Russian president called a meeting of his Security Council on Thursday to discuss Ukraine.

For Putin, Crimea would be a dazzling acquisition, and would help cement his authority with a Russian citizenry that in recent years has shown signs of restive-

ness and still resents the loss of the sprawling empire Moscow ruled in Soviet times. The peninsula was once Russia's imperial crown jewel, a lush land seized by Catherine the Great in the 18th century that evokes Russia's claim to greatness as a world power.

A referendum previously had been scheduled in Crimea on March 30, but the question to be put to voters was on whether their region should enjoy "state autonomy" within Ukraine.

Crimea's new leader has said pro-Russian forces numbering more than 11,000 now control all access to the peninsula in the Black Sea and have blockaded all military bases that have not yet surrendered.

Meanwhile, President Barack Obama declared on Thursday that the referendum on the future of Crimea would violate international law. Speaking from the White House, Obama said any decisions on the future of Crimea, a pro-Russian area of Ukraine, must include the country's new government.

The U.S. Congress moved to advance legislation imposing punitive sanctions on the Kremlin, and the U.S. House of Representatives was poised Thursday to pass the first aid bill for Ukraine's new, pro-Western government. Earlier on Thursday, the Obama administration slipped new visa restrictions on Russian and Ukrainian opponents of Ukraine's new government.

The U.S. measures targeted an unspecified and unidentified number of people and entities that the Obama administration accuses of threatening Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial borders.

NATO to cancel joint mission with Russia

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

NATO will cancel a joint mission with Russia to escort chemical weapons out of Syria in response to Russia's continued military presence in Ukraine, the alliance's top civilian official said late Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's prime minister vowed that his army was "ready to protect our country" if Russian forces moved deeper into Ukrainian territory.

"We have suspended the planning for our first NATO-Russia joint mission. The maritime escort for the U.S. ship Cape Ray, which will neutralize Syria's chemical weapons," NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said after a security meeting of the NATO-Russia Council. "Let me stress, this will not affect the destruction of chemical weapons, but Russia will not be involved in the escort of the U.S. vessel."

Plans call for the Cape Ray, a U.S. merchant ship refitted with a hydrolysis system, to neutralize 560 tons of Syria's most dangerous chemical weapons and ingredients at sea, a stockpile that includes mustard agents and sarin and VX nerve agents. The ship is currently moored at a Navy base in southern Spain as it awaits delivery of the chemicals by Syria to its port in Latakia, a task the Middle Eastern country has delayed for months but promised to finish before the end of April.

Other measures decided by NATO included the suspension of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in a statement issued Thursday in regard to his meeting with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry that such actions as those taken by the NATO-Russia Council and other international organizations "do not help create a stable atmosphere of dialogue and constructive cooperation."

Meanwhile, the 28-nation alliance will "intensify" its partnership with Ukraine, Rasmussen said.

"We will strengthen our efforts to build the capacity of the Ukrainian military, including with more joint training and exercises," he said. "And we will do more to include Ukraine in our multinational projects to develop capabilities."

Russian forces entered Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, causing outrage in the West. Crimea, home to a sizable Russian population, is positioned on the strategic Black Sea, where Russia maintains part of its fleet. Russia's invasion followed the ouster of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich after months-long protests by pro-Western demonstrators and the naming of a Western-leaning interim government.

Speaking in Brussels after holding talks with alliance officials, Ukraine's Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk warned that Russian forces must cease provocations against Ukraine.

"On the use of military force, we have been provoked a number of times to use force (but we refrained from using force," he told reporters. "We still believe can solve in peaceful (means) but in case of further escalation and military intervention into Ukrainian territory by foreign forces, the Ukrainian ... military will act."

"We are ready to protect our country," Yatsenyuk said.

Despite NATO's tough talk, the alliance has been careful not to escalate the dispute with Moscow, as it did in 2008 in response to the Russian military drive into Georgia. Although at the time, Russia ignored NATO's warnings that there could be no more "business as usual," the alliance gradually relented the next year and allowed relations to return to normal.

A senior diplomat in Moscow said that a group of NATO members, including Poland and the Baltic states, was pushing for a more forceful response. But another group, led by Germany and Belgium, was more cautious. "Their position is that in the end, we will have to talk to Moscow anyway, so what's the purpose of souring relations now?" said the envoy who spoke on usual condition of anonymity.

Rasmussen made no mention of reducing reliance on the strategically important overland transit route to Afghanistan, which crosses Russian territory. More than a third of the supplies used by coalition forces in Afghanistan arrive via the so-called Northern Distribution Network, which is also used to bring out military equipment as the NATO's combat forces prepare to pull out at the end of this year.

"The situation in Ukraine presents serious implications for the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area," Rasmussen said. "And Russia continues to violate Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and its own international commitments."

Stars and Stripes reporters Slobodan Letic and Steven Bortlesky contributed to this report. Write to John Vandiver at john.vandiver@starsandstripes.com



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UKRAINE UNREST

Destroyer bound for training in Black Sea

By STEVEN BEARDSLEY
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — A U.S. guided-missile destroyer is bound for the Black Sea in what the Navy calls a routine visit unrelated to events in Ukraine.

The USS Truxtun, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer with about 300 sailors on board, departed Greece early Thursday, said a spokesman for U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa in Naples.

The ship is scheduled to train with Romanian and Bulgarian naval forces for an unspecified period of time, conducting joint maneuvers and landing aircraft on ships. The spokesman, Lt. Shawn Eklund, said the visit is unrelated to Russia's recent incursion into Ukraine.

"Truxtun's operations in the Black Sea were scheduled well in advance of her departure from the U.S.," he said.

The Truxtun is part of the George H.W. Bush Carrier Strike Group, which recently entered the Mediterranean and is training with regional navies before continuing to the Middle East. The group also includes Carrier Air Wing 8, the destroyer USS Roosevelt and the cruiser USS Philippine Sea.

The destroyer will join the USS Taylor as the only two U.S. vessels inside the Black Sea during a period of heightened tensions. The Taylor, a guided-missile frigate, remains moored in Samsun, Turkey, after it ran aground in February.

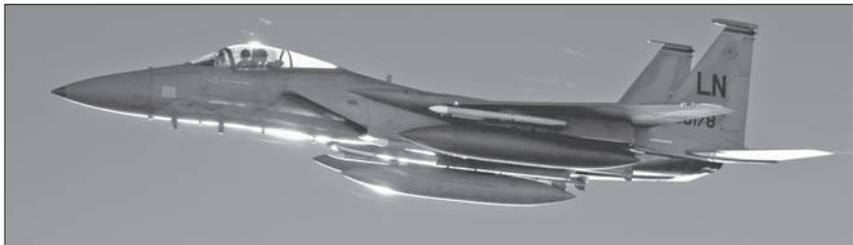
Russia's Black Sea Fleet is at the center of the country's operations in Ukraine, where Russian soldiers continue to surround Ukrainian military bases.

Other U.S. warships remain in the region on scheduled deployments. A group of amphibious ships with an embarked Marine expeditionary unit also recently entered European waters. The Bataan Amphibious Ready Group, which counts roughly 4,000 sailors and Marines, is training with regional navies before continuing to the Middle East.

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Russian network journalists speak out

WASHINGTON — An anchorwoman on a Kremlin-funded TV network said Wednesday that she is standing by her criticism of Russia's military incursion in Ukraine because she would rather risk her job and "go down on the right side of history."



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

An Air Force F-15 from RAF Lakenheath flies above Europe after refueling from a KC-135R Stratotanker. Six F-15E Strike Eagles and more than 60 U.S. airmen from Lakenheath were en route Thursday to Lithuania to bolster NATO's air policing mission over the Baltics region.

Lakenheath jets sent to Lithuania to help police air space

By JENNIFER H. SWAN
AND ADAM L. MATHIS
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Six F-15C Eagles and more than 60 U.S. airmen from RAF Lakenheath, England, were en route Thursday to Lithuania to bolster NATO's air policing mission over the Baltics region amid the crisis in nearby Ukraine.

U.S. Air Force officials with the 48th Fighter Wing at Lakenheath, and at U.S. Air Forces in Europe headquarters at Ramstein Air Base said Thursday morning that the additional fighter jets and military personnel were already on their way to Siauliai air base, Lithuania. The Pentagon announced late Wednesday that the U.S. military planned to augment its current Baltics air policing mission.

The action "comes at the request of our Baltic allies," said USAFE spokeswoman Capt. Reb Good. "We're committed to our NATO allies. We'll continue to support them."

Lacking the capabilities to police their airspace, the Baltic nations have relied on their NATO allies, which send fighter jets and crews on a rotational basis to perform the mission. For the past 10 years the United States has shared the task of protecting Baltic airspace with several other NATO countries, including Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy and Spain.

The 48th Air Expeditionary Group out of Lakenheath has been deployed to Lithuania in support of the mission since early January, when it replaced a Belgian unit. That mission is still scheduled to end as planned in early May, Good said. The Polish military will assume the next rotation.

The contingent includes pilots, engineers, medical personnel, support groups and communications personnel. The Air Force declined to provide the number of

servicemembers because of security reasons.

Though the beefed-up U.S. contingent headed to the Baltics more than doubles the number of U.S. warplanes currently patrolling the skies over the former Soviet republics of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia, a senior NATO diplomat said Thursday, "this is essentially a symbolic action."

"It's a demonstration meant to reassure those allies of the American presence and commitment," said the envoy, who spoke on usual condition of anonymity.

On Wednesday, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel told Congress that the United States would, separately, boost U.S. training flights with the Polish military.

The U.S. Air Force in November 2012 stood up a small aviation detachment, marking the first enduring presence of U.S. military members on Polish soil. Unac-

panied Air Force personnel are assigned to the unit, which hosts periodic rotations of U.S. F-16 fighter jets and C-130 cargo and personnel transport aircraft that deploy to Poland for joint training.

Good said there are currently 10 airmen working at the aviation detachment. No U.S. aircraft are deployed there at the moment, she said.

Next up in the rotation are three C-130s and about 100 personnel from Ramstein, scheduled to arrive in early April, Good said, but given Hagel's remarks, this could change. They will be located at Powidz air base in Poland.

"I think it's clear ... that the events of the past week underscore the need for America's continued global engagement and leadership," Hagel said in testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

While Air Force officials in Europe wouldn't draw a connection between the Ukraine crisis and the extra jets sent to the Baltics, Lithuanian's defense minister said the move was in response to Russia's "aggression in Ukraine and its amplified military activity in the Kaliningrad region," the Baltic News Service reported.

Meanwhile Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė warned Thursday, during a meeting in Brussels of the European Council, that Russia was trying to redraw its post-Cold War map and borders. "So, first it's Ukraine, Moldova will be next and, finally, it can reach the Baltic states," she told journalists in Brussels, according to the Baltic News Service.

Stars and Stripes' Slobodan Lekic contributed to this story.
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From wire reports

MILITARY



DANIEL WALLACE, THE TAMPA BAY (FLA.) TIMES/AP

A competing interest

Sgts. Tony Perez, left, and Patrick Gilmore, right, assist Justin Murphree, 26, from Tampa, Fla., as he is strapped into a special reinforced chair so he can throw shot put at MacDill Air Force Base on Wednesday. Murphree, who was hit by an improvised explosive device while serving in the Army in Afghanistan, and about 55 fellow wounded warriors attempted to qualify for a spot to represent U.S. Southern Command at the 2014 Warrior Games in Colorado in September.

Colonel charged with 110 counts

By Rich Lord
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

An Air National Guard colonel who had the run of the 171st Air Refueling Wing and a Guard contractor from Maryland are accused of engaging in a complex fraud scheme that may have earned them as much as \$300,000 in illicit payments.

Air National Guard Col. Gerard Mangis, 59, of Shaler, Pa., was arrested Wednesday, one day after being indicted on 110 counts of conspiracy, honest service wire fraud, false claims against the United States and theft of government property.

A former National Guard Bureau civilian financial analyst, Robert St. Clair, 50, of Bel Air, Md., was charged with 10 counts of conspiracy, false claims and theft of government property. As part of the scheme, Mangis made St. Clair a technical sergeant attached to the 171st, according to federal prosecutors.

St. Clair is expected to be ordered to court in coming days.

At a news conference Wednesday, U.S. Attorney David Hickton said that in a time of belt-tightening in the federal government "it is particularly repugnant that someone would steal from the United States Air Force in a manner such as this."

Mangis appeared briefly before U.S. Magistrate Judge Robert Mitchell, but neither he nor his attorney, Charles Porter Jr., commented.

Mangis was a technician and later comptroller of the 171st, based at Pittsburgh International Airport. The indictment alleges a complex set of trades of favors and influence between Mangis and St. Clair. St. Clair got military pay without military work, preservation of a national security clearance and access to Air Force benefits. Mangis got credit for work and training that he did not undergo, which increased his pension, according to Hickton.

According to the indictment, St. Clair served as a civilian contractor at the Guard's Resource Integration Division, headquartered at Joint Base Andrews, Md. His duties include distribution to Guard members nationwide of "workdays" — eight-hour allotments of time, with required pay, issued to perform regular military duties.

Due to personal financial problems that culminated in a bankruptcy, St. Clair's security clearance was threatened, which could have cost him his job. So Mangis, according to the charges, helped St. Clair maintain his security clearance by giving him a "no show" job for which he was not physically qualified at the 171st Air Refueling Wing.

St. Clair's position at the 171st was as an enlisted guardsman working as a contracting specialist. The job automatically preserved his security clearance.

Hickton said that Mangis moved his friend around the books of the 171st "in order to perpetuate St. Clair's fraudulent enlistment."

In return, St. Clair gave Mangis "workdays" credits for special training that the colonel "used to claim excessive activity and inactive duty military pay," according

to the charges.

Mangis, who once earned \$128,000 annually, is still assigned to the 171st as a reservist, though he has been excused from all duties since April 2011. The investigation began in 2010. St. Clair has resigned from the Guard, according to prosecutors.

Army's role murky as threats change

By Tom Vanden Brook
USA Today

Cut the Army to 450,000 soldiers and it might not be able to sustain a war with high casualties in its opening days. That smaller

ANALYSIS Army might also be led by poorly qualified field commanders.

Until Wednesday, the Army and the Pentagon have been vague about the effects of dropping from its preferred level of 490,000 soldiers to the 440,000 to 450,000 forecast in President Barack Obama's budget. It has about 520,000 soldiers now.

Army Brig. Gen. John Ferrari told a small group of reporters that an Army of 450,000 soldiers would struggle to reinforce itself if war broke out and many troops were killed or wounded quickly.

Roy Wallace, an Army civilian personnel official, said you can't "go to Walmart" and buy a division of soldiers when you need them most.

It takes 18 years to develop the commanders of the battalions that fight those wars. Try to raise them in a hurry through hasty promotions and you can get the "wrong kind of person" on the battlefield, he said.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel told the Senate on Wednes-

day that the Pentagon will no longer build its forces for "large and prolonged stability operations" (code words for Iraq and Afghanistan). Ferrari and others say those assumptions could be proved wrong.

Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, echoed those thoughts when he addressed senators Wednesday. Counterterrorism is the most likely use of the armed forces, but big wars can't be ruled out.

"The most likely threats emanate from violent extremist groups and from ungoverned spaces, yet we can never discount the possibility of state-on-state conflict," Dempsey said. "Therefore, our force must remain postured to provide options across the full spectrum of potential conflicts."

Absent a specific threat from a major foe in an era of declining budgets, the Army has a tough case to make. Indeed, if automatic spending cuts return in 2016, as the law calls for, the Army could drop to 420,000 soldiers.

"This is the pitfall the Army faces with no likely opponent to face: There is no obvious floor for how big a standing force to keep around," said Russell Rumbaugh, a military budget expert at the Stimson Center, a nonpartisan national security think tank.

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MILITARY

AF Academy will cut trainers, some majors for austerity

The Associated Press

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — The Air Force Academy plans to cut a third of the sergeants who oversee military training as part of an austerity plan that will cut 3 percent from its workforce and will eliminate 10 academic majors at the school, but the academy proposals do not include a reduction in the 4,000-member cadet wing or the elimination of sports teams.

The academy plans are part of a Pentagon move to cut \$900 billion in spending during a decade.

The fiscal 2015 spending plan meets Pentagon targets, but is far from official.

Congress must approve a budget before the cuts can take hold, and if lawmakers approve increased Pentagon spending some austerity measures won't be implemented.

Academy superintendent Lt. Gen. Michelle Johnson proposes cutting payroll by eliminating 99 of 3,000 positions at the school to meet spending targets.

Personnel spending makes

up 90 percent of the academy's budget.

"We don't have big squadrons of aircraft to cut or hangars to close down; we have people," Johnson said.

Of those positions, the biggest cut will be borne by sergeants. The school, which has 40 squadrons with 100 cadets in each, will cut the number of sergeants in those units from two to one, eliminating 40 jobs.

Academy Commandant of Cadets Brig. Gen. Greg Lengyel said the move saves money, but requires cadets to step up as military trainers and disciplinarians, the Colorado Springs Gazette reported Wednesday.

Degrees in biochemistry, environmental engineering and meteorology are among the cuts.

Dean of Faculty Brig. Gen. Andy Armacost said some of the programs facing elimination duplicate other offerings.

Armacost said the areas seeing cuts also traditionally have low enrollment, so the changes will affect about 100 cadets per year.

Admiral tells sailors cuts won't affect staffing levels

By HENDRICK SIMOES
Stars and Stripes

In the wake of Pentagon plans to slash the size of the Army and to rein in military spending, the chief of naval personnel insisted during a worldwide all-hands call Wednesday that the U.S. Navy would not be cutting back on personnel.

Vice Adm. Bill Moran went straight to questions during the hourlong session, which was televised on the Pentagon Channel and streamed on Navy.mil. Sailors from Norfolk, Va., to deployed ships in the Persian Gulf pinged the admiral with questions on a wide range of issues, including pay, deployment lengths, uniform changes and advancement. But cuts seemed to be on the mind of most sailors.

"I'm not anticipating having to cut people at all ...," Moran said in response to the first question. "The future is really bright for folks who want to continue to serve."

He said the Navy expects in five years to have a force of about 324,000 sailors, the same as today.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's proposal last month to reduce the size of the Army and to slow the growth of pay and benefits has many sailors spooked about the future quality of life in the service.

Sailors asked the admiral about cuts to the basic housing allowance, subsistence allowance and commissaries. Moran called all those "myths," asserting that pay is going up but the rate of growth is slowing.

"They are certainly not cuts to those programs," he said.

Nevertheless, some argue that failure to increase pay and benefits to match inflation amounts to the same thing. Officials anticipate that cuts to the basic allowance for housing will mean that only about 95 percent of total housing costs will be covered. Moran admitted that reducing the subsidies on commissaries may increase grocery bills in some areas.

Sailors also wondered why deployments are getting longer if the war in Afghanistan is coming to a close.

"The Navy is going to be asked to do more forward," Moran said, and that's why there could po-

tentially be longer deployments. Moran said he didn't think 10-month deployments were the new norm; rather, the norm is closer to seven months.

Factors resulting in longer deployments include circumstances in places like Syria, Crimea and the Persian Gulf.

"It's difficult to tell how long deployments will be," Moran said, but the Navy is working on going to a more predictable and stable deployment cycle.

The Navy also aims to compensate deployed sailors more. On Tuesday, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus announced an increase in sea pay for the first time in a decade — a 25 percent increase for most sailors. For those on deployments exceeding 190 consecutive days, the Navy is considering giving sailors an extra stipend on top of sea pay.

"We think we need to compensate sailors on long, arduous deployments," Moran said.

The additional stipend is still in the discussion phase with the Defense Department.

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PACIFIC



Courtesy of Clayton Kuhles

The Hot As Hell crew. Their B-24J Liberator disappeared Jan. 25, 1944, while on a routine ferrying mission between Kunming, China, and Chabua, India. In 2009, JPAC began an excavation at a crash site discovered by an independent investigator, but the search was abruptly suspended before any remains were collected.

Protocol: Recovery team continued to dig, spend despite discovering problems early in the mission

FROM FRONT PAGE

Issues emerged just a few days into the \$502,000, 49-day mission, when the JPAC recovery team realized they were excavating the wrong site, according to JPAC situation reports. Their site contained remnants of a commercial airplane, not Gabbart's C-47B. Still, they continued to dig, spending half of their budget before scrapping the mission. The team left the country after 33 days.

JPAC has since closed the case on Gabbart and the missing, saying the plane is believed to have been lost in the Bay of Bengal, according to internal documents. No future digs are planned unless new evidence surfaces, according to JPAC recovery team leader William Belcher.

Internal JPAC documents show JPAC "never investigated this site" before the mission, and suddenly the search was over. "I think it's totally irresponsible and it's a misuse of funds," Erbacher said. "There are so many questions."

Systemic troubles

The case is the latest example of the systemic troubles plaguing the Defense Department's accounting apparatus.

Army Air Corps pilot 1st Lt. Horace Joe Gabbart was behind the controls of a C-47B heading from Rangoon, Burma, to Barrackpore, India with two other crewmembers, eight American Graves Registration Service personnel and the remains of 38 recovered American servicemembers when they disappeared without a trace on May 17, 1946.

Courtesy of Neva Gabbart Erbacher

Last month, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel gave the Pentagon 30 days to come up with a plan to consolidate all Defense Department assets into a single, more accountable entity that will manage personnel accounting resources, research and operations.

The review comes on the heels of numerous reports of misconduct and poor management practices. A Stars and Stripes investigation in January alleged JPAC's Central Identification Laboratory had possibly desecrated remains and botched investigations into recovering remains from virtually every modern war.

Stars and Stripes has previously reported charges that JPAC and the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office have rou-

tinely ignored leads on MIAs in Southeast Asia, prematurely declared Southeast Asia MIAs deceased and unrecoverable, and actively argued against identifying unknown World War II remains in government custody when evidence suggested they could be identified.

In 2010, Congress directed the agency to increase their annual recoveries from 70 to more than 200 by 2015, but the numbers have changed little, or in some years have actually fallen.

More than 73,000 Americans who served in World War II remain unaccounted for, according to DPMO.

'He could have come home'

Gabbart, like many Americans, joined

Second Lt. Joseph Rich was navigator in a plane shot down on Nov. 27, 1943. Despite burns all over his body, he survived, and was held in Japanese captivity. He died on Sept. 13, 1944, weighing just 80 pounds at the time. His body was being carried home by Gabbart's ill-fated C-47B when it was lost.



Courtesy of Lisa Phillips

Chaos at JPAC

In the wake of reports of misconduct and poor management practices by personnel charged with recovering and identifying the remains of missing servicemembers from past conflicts, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel has given the Pentagon 30 days to come up with a plan to consolidate assets from Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command and the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office. The plan is due by March 22.

Hagel's order comes after embarrassing revelations and unflattering reports about the two agencies with primary responsibility for recovery and identification efforts.

■ In July, The Associated Press reported that a JPAC internal study of its operations concluded that DOD's effort to account for the tens of thousands of Americans missing in action were so incompetent and mismanaged that it risks descending from "dysfunction to total failure."

■ In October, the Pentagon acknowledged that JPAC had been holding phony remains arrival ceremonies for seven years.

■ In December, Stars and Stripes reported charges that JPAC and DPMO officials ignored leads, prematurely declared MIAs deceased and unrecoverable, and argued against identifying unknown remains in government custody when evidence suggested they could be identified.

■ In January, Stars and Stripes obtained internal communications from JPAC documenting allegations that JPAC's Central Identification Laboratory personnel were involved in the desecration and mishandling of remains, failure to keep critical records, excavation of incorrect sites, and waste of taxpayer funds on duplicate efforts.

Previous reports and an interactive timeline are at stripes.com/go/jpac

the military after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. The Oklahoma native was the middle child of three boys, all of whom signed up to serve. He went right into flight school, training to be a pilot. After the war, his brothers returned home, but something kept him behind.

"He could have come home after the war," Erbacher said. "I asked my dad why. He said that he would have felt there was still a job to do."

So while a mass migration of sailors, Marines, airmen and soldiers headed home to an America transformed by years of war, some like Gabbart were bringing fallen heroes like 2nd Lt. Joseph Rich home.

Rich was navigator in a plane shot down Nov. 27, 1943, according to his great-niece Lisa Phillips. The plane burst into flames and he was stuck in the navigator's position, suffering severe burns.

Rich lived and was taken prisoner by Japanese troops.

He survived in the prison camp until Sept. 13, 1944, when he died from a lack of medical attention, malnutrition and disease. He weighed just 80 pounds.

Phillips said her family didn't know he had been taken prisoner until after the war.

"There was always crying on Thanksgiving and Christmas," said Phillips, who has taken up the cause of finding his remains as president of WWII Families for the Return of the Missing.

Neither Phillips nor Erbacher knew the men they are working to see returned home, but the women are drawn together by duty and honor.

Erbacher seeks her uncle on behalf of her father, Bobby Bacon Gabbart, who passed away about five years ago, still hoping to see his brother buried on American soil.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

PACIFIC

FROM PAGE 10

He gave a family reference DNA sample before he died.

In the aftermath of the plane's disappearance in 1946, the U.S. military conducted aerial and ground searches for the missing plane but found nothing, according to internal JPAC documents.

The case lay dormant for 63 years.

Then, on Nov. 5, 2009, an independent MIA hunter claimed to have found Gabbart's C-47B.

Independent discovery

Clayton Kuhles, an avid climber, was mountaineering in Burma in 2002 when a glider pilot crashed a wrecked American aircraft from World War II. He decided to take a two-week detour to locate the wreck out of curiosity, he told Stars and Stripes. He said he pried the ID plates off the aircraft and took them to the U.S. Embassy.

From then on, the Arizona adventurer went to the porous border regions where wrecks in the region and found out the plane was one of hundreds lost by the U.S. in the theater encompassing China, India and Burma during the war. The most notorious stretch was an inhospitable mountainous region between U.S. airbases in northeastern India and a mountain range called "the Hump." Due to weather and the terrain, many of these aircraft were never found and their crews declared dead, unrecoverable or MIA.

Kuhles joined organizations, talked to veterans as well as families of the missing, and to pore over news reports, and documents as well as expanding his operation, known today as the non-profit MIA Recoveries Inc. He claims to have found 26 aircraft, four of which could not be positively identified.

From the 22 planes he says he has correlated, there are 193 personnel that he believes would be accounted for.

"I felt it was something that needed to be done," he said. "It seemed like nobody looked for these men."

Kuhles said he submitted a contract offer to JPAC for recovery operations and agreed to a pore-out, but he said they have not responded. He said JPAC has obtained information from his website for their own missions in an effort to take credit for his discoveries.

Belcher denied the claims, saying Kuhles had not responded to numerous JPAC inquiries.

Despite the tenuous relationship, Kuhles and JPAC often crossed paths in their searches.

In 2006, Kuhles claimed to have located the wreckage of the B-24J Liberator known as Hot As Hell, according to his website. The aircraft disappeared Jan. 25, 1945, on a ferry flight en route to a mission between Kunming, China, and Chabua, India. Eight men were lost.

In 2008, JPAC investigators went to the crash site that Kuhles had identified as belonging to Hot As Hell. The site was directly correlated to the crash.

After getting approval from its excavation decision board, JPAC launched a full-scale recovery mission to the site in 2009, according to former JPAC employees speaking anonymously for fear of reprisal. However, the mission was abruptly suspended before any remains could be collected. Under the terms of the agreement, Hot As Hell navigator 1st Lt. Irwin Zetst, the families were not informed of the reason the mission was stopped. JPAC recovery operations wouldn't resume again in India until a diplomatic agreement was reached in 2013.

At the time, Kuhles continued to search. Later in 2009, he claimed to have found the wreckage of Gabbart's C-47B, on a one-day trek from the town of Birmani Kani.

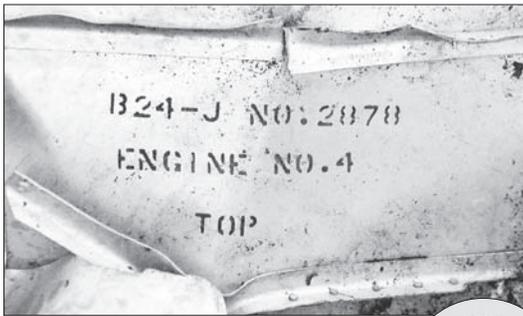
Kuhles said he had heard about the site through a trekking guide. His travels were complicated by a terrorist threat in the area, but after securing an armed police

escort, he made it to the crash site, which was on a hillside extending half a mile down a stream bed.

Locals shared longstanding stories about the crash into Long Thrai Mountain, he said, including how villagers had carried the bodies down to an impromptu cemetery. Kuhles claimed to have visited the cemetery near the crash site, and described it as "neatly fenced with woven bamboo" and "currently planted with ginger."

He took photos of wreckage, including one with a stenciled number that matched the C-47B, he said, and posted those as well as global positioning coordinates on his website. JPAC did not acknowledge his work, he said.

In September 2013, then Defense Secretary Leon Panetta announced an agreement between American and Indian officials to allow JPAC operations to resume in India. JPAC began planning its return, but instead of going to the site of Hot As Hell in Arunachal Pradesh to finish the dig there, JPAC decided to pursue remains from Gabbart's C-47B in Tripura state. Belcher said this was done because of weather concerns, fiscal preparation and political sensitivities in the northeast Indian states.



Photos courtesy of Clayton Kuhles

Wreckage from 1st Lt. Irwin Zetst's plane, a B-24J Liberator known as Hot As Hell. MIA hunter Clayton Kuhles, right, claims to have found the plane. JPAC launched a recovery mission to the site in 2009 but did not recover any remains.

Against protocol

Before JPAC can excavate a site, there is clear protocol they have to follow, according to its standard operating procedure manual, obtained by Stars and Stripes. They first have to go before an investigation decision board, which determines whether there is enough circumstantial evidence to fund a mission to investigate a site. If there is, a small-scale mission is launched to the site, where investigators might dig test pits, search for plane parts or correlating evidence, and interview potential witnesses.

The case is then brought back to JPAC's offices, where it is presented to JPAC and CIL leadership on an excavation decision board that meets almost monthly.

For a more costly and labor intensive excavation to be approved, the evidence must point to the likelihood that Americans will be recovered in the given site.

If an excavation decision board approves a site, it is put on the master list, where families of the missing say it could be years before an excavation is launched. There are a multitude of factors that dictate which sites are chosen each year, including funding, weather windows or looming construction.

"All cases being considered for future recovery team operations go before the EDB," JPAC spokesman Army Maj. Jamie Dobson previously told Stars and Stripes. "The excavation board, in part, helps ensure we are good stewards of the taxpayers' money by not sending out recovery

teams (and expending funds) on sites that are not solidly verified."

The alleged crash site of Gabbart's C-47B, however, was seemingly fast-tracked through the process. It was never investigated, never correlated to the plane with any evidence and was never brought before an excavation decision board, former JPAC employees told Stars and Stripes.

Internal JPAC documents obtained by Stars and Stripes explicitly state JPAC had "never investigated this site" before the 2013 mission.

Team leader Belcher said that was true, but told Stars and Stripes that procedures were followed. "I don't know if I would characterize this as skipping the procedures," he said. "We were really in a discovery mode ... We would have launched into recovery operations if it got to that point."

Belcher repeatedly called the mission an "investigation" and not a "recovery." He said that if remains were found, they would have to knock and convene an excavation decision board before the excavation took place.

However, internal JPAC documents paint a different picture.

"From 05 NOV - 14 DEC 2013, JPAC

their crash site. According to documents, an investigation was planned for the crash site after the excavation of the burial site.

"This demonstrates a complete departure of normal established procedure which requires an investigation team locate and correlate the site and recommend the site for excavation to the Excavation Decision Board prior to the site excavation," a former JPAC employee said.

The wrong site

Within a few days of digging, it became apparent that the JPAC recovery team was excavating the wrong site, according to Belcher, and situations reports drafted during the mission over 20 interviews with an Indian government official and newspaper articles written at the time confirmed this.

The crash site they had been digging was for a commercial airliner.

The team did not check the nearby site that Kuhles had identified.

"They were in the neighborhood and never bothered to check there," Erbacher said. "Why did you continue there, spending all of that money? Why didn't you go seven miles west?"

Belcher said that would have meant more planning, but that would have meant more planning, but that would have meant more fresh missions that take time.

"It isn't as easy as just turning down the road," he said.

Belcher said he wasn't embarrassed the mission failed and it did not harm relations between the U.S. and Indian governments. Despite the \$234,000 price tag, the mission is viewed positively at JPAC.

"We view this mission as a success because it channeled us for future operations in India," he said.

Families of the missing were angered by the unsuccessful mission. Two were invited by JPAC officials to their headquarters in Hawaii for a briefing. All expenses paid, according to internal JPAC emails.

Stars and Stripes obtained a copy of a PowerPoint presentation given at the briefing in which experts were cited questioning the authenticity of Kuhles' correlating photo: "Aircraft expert reviews photo in December 2013 and advises metal is not from a C-47 and not WWII-era — high temperature metal based on appearance ... Experts question validity of the construction number reporting format and location."

In the presentation, JPAC stated that it now believes the plane was lost over water in the Bay of Bengal. Gabbart, Rich and the other crew members on the C-47B were declared "non-recoverable."

Erbacher said she was told JPAC has no plans to locate the plane unless families find more evidence.

"They said they would pursue any evidence we could give them," Erbacher said. "We were still actively trying to get government contracts to recover remains from the theater."

Lost in all of this are the families from Hot As Hell.

Zetst feels betrayed. He said that JPAC has found his uncle's crash site yet hasn't brought him home. Years have gone by, and Zetst's 89-year-old father — Irwin's surviving younger brother — is in failing health.

"There are still close relatives of these people still alive," he said. "If the Indians and JPAC don't do what was promised to them, they will die" before they see their loved ones home.

Belcher said they have plans to return to Hot As Hell in the fall.

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NATION

Mass. high court: Subway 'upskirt' photos not illegal

By MARK PRATT
The Associated Press

BOSTON — A man who took cellphone photos up the skirts of women riding the Boston subway did not violate state law because the women were not nude or partially nude, Massachusetts' high-court ruled Wednesday.

The Supreme Judicial Court overruled a lower court that had upheld charges against Michael Robertson, who was arrested in August 2010 by transit police who set up a sting after getting reports that he was using his cellphone to take photos and video up female riders' skirts and dresses.

The ruling immediately prompted top Beacon Hill lawmakers to pledge to update state law.

Existing so-called Peeping Tom laws protect people from being photographed in dressing rooms and bathrooms when nude or partially nude, but the way the law is written, it does not protect clothed people in public areas, the court said.

"A female passenger on a MBTA trolley who is wearing a skirt, dress, or the like covering these parts of her body is not a person who is 'partially nude,' no matter what it is or is not underneath the skirt by way of underwear or other clothing," the court said in its ruling.

State law "does not apply to photographing (or videotaping or electronically surveilling) persons who are fully clothed and, in particular, does not reach the type of upskirting that the defendant is charged with attempting to accomplish on the MBTA," the court said.

The SJC said that while such actions should be illegal, they are not, given the way state law is written.

Suffolk County prosecutors said their interpretation of the state's Peeping Tom law was that "upskirt" photos are illegal.

District Attorney Dan Conley said prosecutors are hoping state lawmakers will change the wording of the statute by the end of this legislative session.

"What we have is not that the Supreme Judicial Court is saying this is OK," Conley said. "The statutory language just didn't quite fit the conduct."

In its ruling, the court said that other states, including New York and Florida, have passed laws specifically criminalizing upskirt photos, noting that women have an expectation of privacy under their clothing. Washington lawmakers closed a loophole in that state's voyeurism law a decade ago after a similar ruling there.

Conley added that this conduct has become more and more prevalent, and he urged riders to be alert.

"This action is immoral and reprehensible; don't do it," he said.

A telephone message left with Michelle Menken, Robertson's attorney, was not immediately returned.

Senate President Therese Murray said she was "stunned and disappointed" with the court ruling. She said the Senate will respond quickly.

"We have fought too hard and too long for women's rights to take the step backward," Murray said in a statement. "I am in disbelief that the courts would come to this kind of decision and outraged at what it means for women's privacy and public safety."

Gina Scaramella, executive director of the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, said such photos are a serious invasion of privacy. She said the law needs to catch up to technology.

"It really is a form of sexual harassment. It's a violation for the person who is unknowingly getting their body photographed," she said. "People wear clothing for a reason and having someone violate that privacy is a real problem."

MBTA spokesman Joe Petruso said Transit Police support the Suffolk County District Attorney's efforts to work with the Legislature in rewriting the statute. He did not say what the MBTA could do in the meantime to prevent the activity.



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., faces reporters Wednesday on Capitol Hill in Washington after bipartisan Senate opposition blocked swift confirmation for President Barack Obama's choice to head the Justice Department's Civil Rights division.

Senate blocks Obama's pick for civil rights post

By JESSE J. HOLLAND
AND NEDRA PICKLER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Should a lawyer be disqualified from public service for representing a client like a cop killer? The question arises after the Senate rejected President Barack Obama's candidate to be the government's chief civil rights attorney.

The White House, attorneys and civil rights groups argued that a bipartisan vote Wednesday blocking Debo Adegbile from advancing toward confirmation set a troubling precedent that could dissuade lawyers with aspirations to serve in government from taking on unpopular clients or working for unpopular causes.

"The fact that his nomination was defeated solely based on his legal representation of a defendant runs contrary to a fundamental principle of our system of

justice," Obama, a lawyer, himself, argued after the final vote.

Adegbile spent much of his career at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, where he argued before the Supreme Court that Mumia Abu-Jamal's conviction for killing a Philadelphia police officer should be overturned because of discrimination in jury selection. Abu-Jamal is now serving a life sentence without parole.

The National Fraternal Order of Police urged senators to oppose Adegbile for his advocacy in the case. All 44 Republicans and eight Democrats voted against his nomination as head of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, likely dooming the nomination in what Obama called a "travesty based on wildly unfair character attacks." It was unknown what the next steps the White House will take with the nomination.

Democratic Sen. Chris Coons, of Delaware, a lawyer, voted no

because Adegbile "would face such visceral opposition from law enforcement on his first day on the job." But Coons also said he embraces "the proposition that an attorney is not responsible for the actions of their client."

Hans von Spakovsky, senior legal fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation think tank, said senators had a right to probe Adegbile's work because it was for an advocacy group.

"They tried to bring racial politics into this murder of a police officer, and not only that, they used it to try to try to make the false claim that we have an entirely racist judicial system and they used it to raise money," he said.

"I don't know of any private attorneys who use their representation of clients to try and raise money for their organization. It is very much on point to be able to criticize him for the kind of representation they provided."

Poll finds Republican resistance to Christie presidential bid

By DAN BALZ
AND BEYON M. CRAIGHILL
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — As conservatives gather in the Washington area on Thursday for three days of speeches from prospective 2016 presidential candidates and discussions about the future of the GOP, a new Washington Post-ABC News poll found that three in 10 of all Republicans say they would not vote for New Jersey

Gov. Chris Christie if he ran for the White House.

Christie will address the annual Conservative Political Action Conference on Thursday morning. He was not invited to speak at last year's event. What he says and the reception he receives will be closely watched and analyzed, and the new survey underscores the obstacles Christie will face if he seeks his party's nomination in 2016.

The poll also found that former Florida governor Jeb Bush has problems of a different kind. He is more popular in the Republican Party than Christie but faces potential headwinds as a candidate. The Post-ABC poll found that almost half of all Americans, and 50 percent of registered voters, say they "definitely would not" vote for him for president — a possible hangover from the presidency of his brother, George W. Bush.

The overall findings underscore the degree to which the contest for the GOP nomination in 2016 is as wide open as any in the modern era. The poll found that there is no obvious beneficiary to Christie's problems within the party nor to Jeb Bush's apparent problem with the wider electorate. Many of those thinking about running have made little impression on the general public, and in some cases they are not even well

known among Republicans.

The survey asked about nine Republicans, most of them thinking seriously about running in 2016, and one Democrat, Hillary Rodham Clinton. Twenty-five percent of all Americans say they "definitely would" vote for the former secretary of state, while 41 percent say they would consider doing so. Thirty-two percent of all Americans (and 37 percent of registered voters) say they definitely would not.

NATION

Goal of new SAT: Relate to needed skills Survey: Cost now bigger factor in college decisions

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The perfect score will again be 1,600. What's more, the essay will be optional, students will no longer be penalized for wrong answers and the vocabulary is shifting to do away with some high-sounding words such as "prevaricator" and "sagacious."

The SAT college entrance exam is undergoing a sweeping revision.

College Board officials said Wednesday the update — the first since 2005 — is needed to make the exam more representative of what students study in high school and the skills they need to succeed in college and afterward. The test should offer "worthy challenges, not artificial obstacles," College Board President David Coleman said at an event in Austin, Texas.

The new exam will be rolled out in 2016, so this year's ninth-graders will be the first to take it, in their junior year. The new SAT will continue to test reading, writing and math skills, with an emphasis on analysis. With the 1,600-point scale, which had been used until 2004, there will be a separate score for the optional essay. Some complicated vocabulary words will be replaced by words more widely used in classroom and work settings.

For the first time, students will have the option of taking the test on computers. Also, the extra penalty for wrong answers, which discouraged guessing, will be eliminated.

Each exam will include a passage drawn from "founding documents" such as the Declaration of Independence or from discussions they're inspired.

Instead of testing a wide range of math concepts, the new exam will focus on a few areas, like algebra, deemed most needed for college and life afterward.

A longstanding criticism of the SAT is that students from wealthier households do better because they can afford expensive test preparation classes. The College

Changes coming to SAT

A redesigned SAT exam will be administered for the first time in spring 2016. Here are the major differences:

Changes	Current SAT	New SAT
Test format	Paper only.	Paper and digital.
Essay section	Required; no need to verify arguments made.	Optional; judged based on analysis strength.
Duration	3 hours, 45 minutes	3 hours Essay: Additional 50 minutes
Scoring scale	Up to 2,400	Up to 1,600; separate score for the essay
Point deductions	¼ point for each incorrect answer.	No points taken away for wrong answers.
Math section	Covers a range of high-school-level math topics.	Fewer topics; more focus on core math areas
Calculator use	Can be used in all parts of the math section.	Permitted in portions of the math section.
Reading and writing section	No need for students to cite evidence.	Students will cite passages to support answers.
Source documents	Students are unfamiliar with the passages before the exam. The exam is not required to use scientific or historical sources.	Familiar works, including the Declaration of Independence, will be used. Source texts to include science, history and social studies.
Vocabulary	Includes obscure words.	Focuses on common words.

SOURCE: The College Board

CHICAGO TRIBUNE/MCT

Board said it will partner with the nonprofit Khan Academy to provide free test preparation materials for the redesigned SAT. It

also said every income-eligible student who takes the SAT will receive four fee waivers to apply for college.

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A new survey of the nation's college freshmen has found that the percentage attending their first-choice school has reached its lowest level in almost four decades, as cost and the availability of financial aid have come to play an influential role in decisions of where to enroll.

The annual survey released Wednesday, conducted by UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute, found that while more than three-quarters of those who started college last fall were admitted to the school they most wanted to attend, only 57 percent ended up going to their top school. That was the lowest rate in the 39 years that the institute has asked first-time freshmen if they enrolled at their dream college.

Kevin Egan, the institute's interim managing director and an assistant professor at UCLA, said the cost of attending college appears to be largely responsible for the decline. A record 46 percent of students reported that cost was a very important factor in where they ended up, compared with 31 percent nine years ago. Meanwhile, the share of respondents who said being offered financial aid was a crucial factor in the decision to enroll at their current campus reached 49 percent — an all-time high.

"The difficult financial decisions that students and their families have to make about college are becoming more evident," Egan said. "Colleges that can reduce net costs to families are gaining an edge in attracting

students."

Although many colleges are turning to online courses as a way to reduce costs and the time it takes to earn a degree, fewer than 7 percent of survey respondents indicated there was a very good chance they would take an online course offered by their college.

Other key findings:

■ A career in business remained the top post-college path among first-time freshmen, with 13 percent expressing interest in pursuing a career as an entrepreneur, accountant, executive, manager, consultant or administrative assistant or in the fields of human resources, sales and marketing, finance, real estate and sports management. Ten percent said they want to be doctors, 7 percent engineers, 5 percent classroom teachers, 4 percent artists and musicians and 3 percent lawyers or judges.

■ While college campuses are often thought to be hotbeds of radical politics, only 3 percent of the survey respondents described their political leanings as far-left, and only 2 percent as far-right. More students, 46 percent, regarded their political beliefs as middle-of-the-road, while 28 percent saw themselves as liberal and 21 percent conservative.

The survey was based on the responses of 165,743 first-time, full-time students at 234 four-year colleges and universities. The responses were statistically weighted to reflect the broader population of such students — approximately 1.5 million at 1,583 four-year schools across the U.S.

16th-century manual's 'rocket cat' idea not likely to take off

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — You're a 16th-century German prince plotting to crush a peasant rebellion, or perhaps you're leading an army against the Ottoman Empire or looking to settle the score with a rival nobleman. What's a guy looking for a tactical edge to do?

Bring on the rocket cats!

Fanciful illustrations from a circa 1530 manual on artillery and siege warfare seem to show packs strapped to the backs of cats and doves, with the German-language text helpfully advising military commanders to use them to "set fire to a castle or city which you can't get at otherwise."

Digitized by the University of Pennsylvania, the unusual, full-color illustrations recently caught

the attention of an Australian book blog and then found their way to Penn researcher Mitch Fraas, who set out to unravel the mystery.

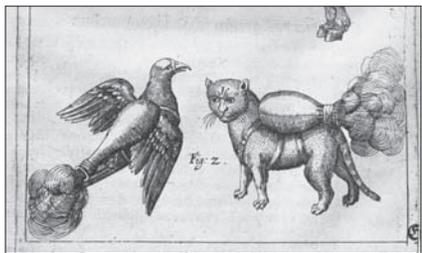
So were these unfortunate animals from the 1500s really wearing 20th-century technology? Fraas' conclusion: No. Obviously.

The treatise in question was written by artillery master Franz Helm, of Cologne, who was believed to have fought in several skirmishes against the Turks in south-central Europe at a time when gunpowder was changing warfare.

Circulated widely and illustrated by multiple artists, Helm's manual is filled with all sorts of strange and terrible imagery. According to Fraas' translation, Helm explained how animals could be used to deliver incendi-

ary devices: "Create a small sack like a fire-arrow ... if you would like to get at a town or castle, seek to obtain a cat from that place. And bind the sack to the back of the cat, ignite it, let it glow well and thereafter let the cat go, so it runs to the nearest castle or town, and out of fear it thinks to hide itself where it ends up in barn hay or straw it will be ignited."

Fraas said he could find no evidence that cats and birds were used in early modern warfare in the way prescribed by Helm.



MATT ROUKE/AP

An illustration from a manual on artillery and siege warfare by 16th-century artillery master Franz Helm at the University of Pennsylvania library in Philadelphia depicts a cat and dove strapped with flammable matter.

FAITH

The Francis effect

Pope's first year hasn't changed US Catholics' measurable behavior — but his impact is felt

By MICHELLE BOORSTEIN
The Washington Post

In the year since he was elected, Pope Francis has become the most talked-about person on the Web. Millions are riveted by his words, and, to many, his very name implies humanity and compassion in a world rife with divisions.

Still, he appears not to have had much impact on the number of Americans attending Mass, converting to Catholicism, giving to Catholic charities and other conventional measures, according to interviews with a wide range of U.S. church leaders, experts and other Catholics as well as early data released Thursday by the Pew Research Center.

It's not clear "there has been a so-called 'Francis effect,' a discernible change in the way American Catholics approach their faith," according to the report.

Yet, his effect is undeniably everywhere.

Forty percent of U.S. Catholics polled by Pew say they've been praying more often in the past year, 21 percent say they're reading the Bible "and other religious materials" more often and 26 percent say they've become "more excited" about their faith. Majorities say they haven't changed their behaviors.

Anecdotally, officials at Catholic schools say students — and teachers — are showing a greater interest in discussing the pope. Catholic fundraisers are urging donors to "take advantage" of the Francis momentum. Church reformers seeking such changes as women's ordination are rewriting their materials to remove words such as "hypocrisy" and "outrage" that won't work in an era of pope love. Priests say they are watching the cost of where they eat and drive, following the example of their humble leader.

It's still early in the Francis era, however, and experts say the standing of the Catholic Church in the United States

will depend partly on whether Francis signals changes in areas where there is broad disagreement between American Catholics and the church hierarchy. That includes the ban on using artificial contraception and giving Communion to divorced Catholics who remarry outside the church. Francis has called for a rare "Synod on the Family" this fall to discuss those and related issues.

Equally important will be how grass-roots pastors and parishioners interpret the pope's words and gestures.

"The level of openness is totally different," said John Carr, a policy adviser to the U.S. bishops. "What's not clear is, when they go to church finally, do they find Francis, or do they find one of the 'little monsters?'" he said, using a term Francis coined last year to describe seminarians trained to overly focus on rules and obeying the hierarchy.

Meanwhile, Francis's remarks and deeds are encouraging some Catholics and former Catholics to become more engaged with the Church.

For progressive advocates such as Kate Conmy, Francis has upended the landscape. Conmy, assistant director of the Women's Ordination Conference, said his broad tone has renewed interest from Catholics who had given up on such changes as women being ordained but also tamped down the intensity of liberals who suddenly want a less-demanding posture toward the Vatican.

"As soon as Pope Francis was elected, we started receiving pushback from members, claiming our tone was too harsh," Conmy said. "Many members wrote and told us to 'give him time.'"

Advocates from her group and other progressive ones are now writing letters to Rome instead of sending petitions. Literature calls for such things as "a truly collaborative relationship with women" and "a more Pope Francis-like pastoral approach" instead of demanding "accountability," she said.

It's exciting, she said, to see

Catholics so encouraged about liberalizing reforms. Indeed, the Pew report says that since a year ago, there have been jumps in Catholics' expectation that women and married men will be priests in the near future.

Conmy also feels discouraged to see less fervent support for full equality for women, gay men and lesbians.

"It's a feeling like you're the only sober person at the party. Like — 'I hope I still get a piece of the cake,'" she said. "Atmospheres don't change real consequences."

The explosion in the discussion about Francis' words and actions appears to be everywhere in American Catholicism.

Daniel McMahon, the principal of DeMatha, a prestigious Catholic high school in Hyattsville, Md., said it's unlikely that most staff — never mind students — "except the most academic and devout" — had read Pope Benedict XVI's words. But probably 75 percent of DeMatha teachers had read Pope Francis's conversational interview last year with America magazine, he said.

"Francis has caused people to think and listen in different ways," he said.

Catholics will feel Francis's impact most by the bishops he picks, said the Rev. Tom Gaunt, executive director of the Catholic research firm Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University. Many church watchers noted recently that the pope decided not to reappoint Cardinal Raymond Burke — a conservative culture warrior — to the Vatican's bishop-picking committee and chose just one liberal, Wuerl, a moderate cardinal.

Last week, Francis made news when he told the committee that bishops should guard Church teaching "not to measure how far the world lives from the truth it contains, but to fascinate the world... to enchant... to seduce it with the free gift of the Gospel."

‘Francis has caused people to think and listen in different ways.’

Daniel McMahon
DeMatha Catholic High School principal



WORLD

Protest closes Legoland

The Associated Press

LONDON — The Legoland theme park west of London has temporarily closed its hotel after threats from far-right groups forced it to cancel a “Muslim fun day.”

The resort had been booked by the Muslim Research and Development Foundation for about 1,000 families.

The decision to cancel Sunday’s event and close the hotel was made after the popular attraction received threats via phone calls, emails and social media postings.

“We are appalled at what has occurred, and at the fact that the real losers in this are the many families and children who were looking forward to an enjoyable day out at Legoland,” the company statement said. It said a small group had distributed misinformation about the event.

Legoland reopens for the season next week, but the hotel is open year-round.



Model makers at Legoland in Windsor, England, make alterations in the Trafalgar Square model in 1996. The Legoland theme park temporarily closed its hotel after threats over a planned “Muslim fun day.”

Prince plans competition for wounded

The Associated Press

LONDON — Britain’s Prince Harry is launching the “Invictus Games,” a new sporting event for wounded, injured and sick service personnel.

Inspired by a visit to the Warrior Games in the United States, Harry described the Paralympic-style competition as “such a good idea by the Americans that it had to be stolen.”

He told reporters Thursday he’d seen “how the power of sport can positively impact the lives of wounded, injured and sick servicemen and women.”

The games will be funded in part from a government fund holding proceeds of fines levied on banks for manipulating currency.

Jaguar Land Rover will be a sponsor of the September event featuring athletes from Britain, Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Iraq, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand and the U.S.



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WORLD

China targets pollution after years of growth

By LOUISE WATT
The Associated Press

PINGSHAN COUNTY, China — Huge chunks of concrete and broken machinery are all that is left of a cement plant that once spewed clouds of pollution over China's most polluted province, Hebei. Demolished in December, the factory was one of 35 closed or torn down in Pingshan county as part of the government's drive to clear up China's notoriously smoggy skies.

Combating pollution has shot up the agenda of the ruling Communist Party, which for years pushed for rapid economic development with little concern about the environmental impact. Under public pressure to reduce the air pollution that blankets Beijing and cities across China, the country's leaders are rebalancing their priorities.

That was evident during this week's ceremonial National People's Congress. Premier Li Keqiang said Wednesday the government would "declare war" on pollution in the same way China had fought poverty. Smog, he said, was "nature's red-light warning against the model of inefficient and blind development."

The drive to clean up China's industry has added impetus to the government's campaign during the past several years to reduce excess production capacity in the polluting steel and cement industries.

But shutting plants has taken a human and economic toll in lost jobs and income. The demolition or closure of the 35 plants in Hebei's Pingshan county, about a four-hour drive southwest of Beijing, resulted in layoffs of 3,780 workers, according to state media reports.

"I want the government to do something to improve the air quality. If the air gets better, it is good for everyone," said Guo Quanguan, 52, one of those laid off. "But my life has gotten worse after the closure."

He hasn't been able to find another job and now lives off the earnings of his two 20-something sons.

Another resident in Guo's village, Jia Shufang, said that most of its 200 households had depended directly or indirectly on the cement industry, with workers earning an average monthly wage of \$490. Former employees could work in restaurants or on farms raising pigs, cattle and poultry, she said, although "now



A Chinese woman wears a mask Monday in Beijing as she walks past the capital city's skylines shrouded by a haze of pollution.

ANOR WONG/AP

most of them are sitting at home doing nothing."

For years, the central government has issued various environmental targets and has pushed for industries to reduce excess capacity that had built up during China's years of booming growth, but they were resisted by local officials whose performance was judged more on their region's economic growth than the cleanliness of their skies.

Pressure has increased on local governments since September, when China's Cabinet released an action plan to control and prevent air pollution through 2017. Since then, more than half the country's provinces have released their own plans, including new restrictions on coal and heavy industry. The Cabinet also announced a \$1.6 billion fund last month to reward the prevention and control of air pollution in key areas.

And in December, the party required local governments to revise the criteria used to evaluate their officials away from economic growth to their "overall work," including "ecological civilization." The quality of the environment is now among the main criteria used to assess officials' performance in Shijiazhuang city, which oversees Pingshan county, according to a report in the Hebei Daily in December.

"What's very important when assessing how likely it is for local officials to implement these policies is what are their incentives," said Brian Jackson, a China econ-

omist at IHS Economics. "This shows that the issue is being taken much more seriously even at the provincial level and they are adjusting their incentives accordingly to make sure that there is follow-through this round."

In Pingshan county, cement factories that had failed to meet national pollutant emissions standards had been targeted in the round of closures with the aim of reducing overcapacity and combating pollution, said Jia Taoshu of Shijiazhuang's Development and Reform Commission. Shijiazhuang is one of seven Hebei cities that made it on to a recent environment ministry list of the top 10 most polluted cities in China.

The overall impact of these moves on China's economy is hard to judge at this point and no official estimates have been released.

"We may suffer slow economic growth in the short term, but this will work in upgrading the economic structure and result in a good living environment for our people, so it is worthwhile," the China Daily newspaper quoted Sun Ruibin, Shijiazhuang's Communist Party chief, as saying.

Across the city, the local government is organizing job fairs for thousands of laid-off workers and encouraging them to work in farming and food processing, according to its website.

After years of breakthrough growth, China's battle against pollution isn't going to bear results quickly.

Despite the plant closings in Pingshan, the air quality doesn't seem to have improved much. The area was whitened by a seven-day stretch of hazardous, thick smog, prompting authorities to order 200 factories to suspend opera-

tions, 550 others to halve production and a fifth of private vehicles to stay off the roads.

"The cement factories are all closed," said Guo, the laid-off cement worker, "but the air pollution is still the same as before."

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WORLD

S. Korea blasts North's latest launch

By **YOUKYUNG LEE**
The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korean officials on Thursday criticized a North Korean artillery launch that they say happened minutes before a Chinese commercial plane reportedly carrying 202 people flew in the same area.

It wasn't immediately clear what danger, if any, the launch Tuesday posed to the China Southern Airlines plane traveling from Tokyo to Shenyang, China, but Seoul Defense Ministry spokesman Kim Min-seok called it a "serious threat" that Pyongyang failed to notify international aviation authorities of its launch plans in the area.

Kim said the plane was traveling at an altitude of 6 miles, while the projectile's peak altitude was 12 miles. He said the flight passed through the area about five minutes after the projectile hit the water.

An unidentified North Korean army spokesman said in a statement Wednesday night that rocket drills conducted from Feb. 21 until Tuesday were part of regular training. He said that neither regional security nor the international navigation were in danger because the North took "scrupulous advance security measures for flight orbit and targets in the designated waters."

Asked about the incident, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman called for all sides to continue improving relations and to refrain from provocations.

Seoul officials say the suspected artillery launch Tuesday and others that included Scud missiles in previous days were protests of U.S.-South Korean military drills that Pyongyang considers invasion preparation. Washington and Seoul say the drills, which prompted threats of nuclear war from the North a year ago, are defensive in nature and meant to deter North Korean aggression.

It was not immediately clear what kind of artillery the North launched. South Korean officials believe the recent series of launches were in part an effort to test 300-mm multiple rocket launchers, according to the South's Chosun Ilbo. If fired from near the demilitarized zone separating the rival Koreas, the newspaper reported, such rockets could reach the headquarters of the South Korean army, navy and air force.

Despite the recent firings and launches, outside analysts say the North is taking a softer stance toward the U.S.-South Korean military drills this year than last year because it wants better ties with the outside world to revive its struggling economy.

Also Thursday, Seoul said that North Korea rejected Seoul's proposal to hold talks on reunions of families divided by the 1950-53 Korean War. South Korea wants to make such reunions, which were held last month for the first time in more than three years, regular events but analysts say Pyongyang worries that could take away a key piece of political leverage with the South.



LEE JIN-MAN/AP

A woman hangs a ribbon with messages on a wire fence as a sign of hopes for reunification of the two Koreas in the border village of Panmunjom, which has separated the two Koreas since the Korean War, in Paju, north of Seoul, on Thursday.

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WORLD

Greek police, anti-austerity rioters clash

The Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece — Greek riot police used tear gas, pepper spray and batons in scuffles Thursday with anti-austerity protesters who took to the streets despite a partial ban on demonstrations in the capital during a visit by German President Joachim Gauck.

The scuffles in central Athens broke out when a group of several dozen demonstrators attempted to break through a police cordon set up on a major avenue as they headed toward the Finance Ministry.

The demonstrations by hundreds of union members were about job cuts and the government's ongoing austerity measures, and were unrelated to Gauck's visit. The German president met with his Greek counterpart earlier Thursday, a day

ahead of a visit to the site of a World War II Nazi massacre in northwestern Greece.

Giving security concerns, authorities banned all demonstrations from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. local time in parts of central Athens. Several austerity-related protests, however, had already been scheduled.

Greece has been hammered by a vicious financial crisis since late 2009 that has developed into an economic depression. The country's economy has shrunk by around a quarter while unemployment has soared. Seasonally adjusted figures released by the statistics authority Thursday showed the jobless rate dipped marginally in December 2013 to 27.5 percent from 27.6 percent the previous month.

Since May 2010, Greece has been dependent on billions of

euros in rescue loans from the other European Union countries that use the euro, and from the International Monetary Fund. In return, successive Greek governments have had to slash spending, increase taxes and enact wide-ranging economic reforms.

Germany is the largest single contributor to Greece's bailout, and one of the strongest proponents of the austerity agenda. Germany's stance has often been criticized in Greece as overly harsh and has led to increasing resentment.

Gauck's three-day visit, which will include laying a wreath at the site of the World War II massacre in the village of Ligiades and a meeting with the Jewish community in the nearby town of Ioannina, has been seen as an attempt to tamp down anti-German sentiment.



Kostas Tsironis/AP

Riot policemen detain a protester during a demonstration against austerity measures in Athens on Thursday.

Venezuela marks death of Chavez

The Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — Thousands of Venezuelans mourned the passing of President Hugo Chavez on the first anniversary of his death Wednesday, while National Guard troops fired tear gas and rubber bullets at anti-government activists who pressed on with street protests despite the commemorations.

Chavez's successor, President Nicolas Maduro, angrily announced that he would break off relations with Panama, which he accused of being a "lackey" of the U.S. in what he has repeatedly called a conspiracy to topple his government through the daily protests that have left at least 18 dead since mid-February.

Maduro said he made the move because Panama asked for the Organization of American States to study the situation in Venezuela. Maduro considers the OAS to be dominated by the U.S. government, which has denied his claims that it is acting against Venezuela's government.

"We don't accept the interventionism of anyone, because our international policy is a policy of peace, of cooperation, of respect, of the anti-imperialist Latin American union," Maduro said.

Panama's Foreign Ministry issued a statement expressing "astonishment" at Maduro's action and called his comments "unacceptable insults."

It denied that the request for the OAS to discuss Venezuela was interference in Venezuelan affairs, saying the proposal had the "sole purpose to assist in bringing together the different actors in this sister country."

Venezuela is mired in economic crisis and daily anti-government demonstrations, and Wednesday was no exception as protests erupted in at least six cities.



Rodrigo Aso/AP

People chant pro-government slogans outside the mausoleum of the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez in Caracas, Venezuela, on Wednesday, a year after his death.

Virtual currency CEO dead

The Associated Press

SINGAPORE — The CEO of a virtual currency exchange was found dead in her home in Singapore.

A police spokesman said Thursday that initial investigations indicated there was no suspicion of "foul play," meaning officers do not suspect murder.

The spokesman said Autumn Radtke, 28, an American, was found dead in her home Feb. 26.

Police have so far classified the death as "unnatural," which can mean an accident, misadventure, or suicide.

Radtke's company, First Meta,

said it was "shocked and saddened by the tragic loss."

First Meta allows users of virtual currencies such as bitcoin to trade and cash out the currencies. It is one of several such exchanges.

The future of bitcoin has been under scrutiny since the collapse of the Mt. Gox exchange in Tokyo last month.

Postings on her Facebook page showed her to be a believer in the potential of virtual currencies.

Last month she linked to an article on entrepreneurs suffering depression, commenting above the link: "everything has its price."

Cheering may bring sedition charges

The Associated Press

LUCKNOW, India — Dozens of Kashmiri students who cheered for the Pakistani cricket team during a match against India could face sedition charges, police said Thursday.

Authorities were trying to track down the 66 university students for questioning, police officer N.K.S. Chauhan said. The students were expelled and kicked out of their dorms after Sunday's televised cricket match, in which India lost to Pakistan, Chauhan said.

Sedition carries a possible life sentence. Calls to the College of

Swami Vivekanand Subharti University, in Uttar Pradesh state, were not immediately returned Thursday.

Nuclear-armed rivals Pakistan and India have fought three major wars since they became independent in 1947, two of them over Kashmir, a divided Himalayan territory that both countries claim. Kashmiri insurgents have been fighting for its independence or its merger with Pakistan since 1989.

India is a cricket-crazy nation, but some Kashmiris refuse to support the Indian team because of deep resentment over Indian rule.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Dove nixes 'Armpit of America' billboard

NJ ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS — Dove is learning the hard way that New Jersey residents don't appreciate being referred to as "The Armpit of America."

Unliver, the brand's parent company, says it no longer plans to run a billboard featuring the well-known dig at the Garden State. The ad was intended to promote a new line of deodorants by encouraging people to see armpits in a more positive light.

The text of the ad read, "Dear New Jersey, When people call you 'The Armpit of America,' take it as a compliment. Sincerely, Dove." It featured a woman in a white tank top raising an arm behind her head to expose an armpit.

The news of the billboard sparked complaints after the New York Times published a story about it last week.

The company said it will instead donate the space on the billboard to a charity.

Pricey eatery falls short on health inspection

NY NEW YORK — A \$310 tasting menu makes Per Se one of New York City's most expensive restaurants.

But Per Se's "C" grade from the city Health Department puts it near the bottom of the heap when it comes to sanitary violations.

Health Department records show that Per Se got 42 violation points when it was inspected Feb. 19. Infractions included failure to hold hot food at 140 degrees and a lack of a hand-washing facility near the food preparation area. Per Se representatives did not immediately return a call seeking comment, but the restaurant will have a chance to argue its case at a hearing. Until then it must post a sign saying its grade is pending.

The Health Department said about 87 percent of city restaurants have "A" grades.

City to strike ban on being willfully annoying

MI GRAND RAPIDS — It's soon expected to be OK to be willfully annoying in Grand Rapids.

The Grand Rapids Press reported that the City Commission is mixing a 38-year-old section of city code that states "no person shall willfully annoy another person."

City Attorney Catherine Mish recommended repealing the language, saying the wording is "unconstitutional in terms of being vague" and "simply unenforceable." A final decision is expected March 11.

Even with the change, related crimes such as obstructing someone in a public place or assault would still be on the books.

Mish has been scouring city code to find archaic rules.

Last year, rules that got a look included one prohibiting people from riding horses on a sidewalk and another allowing jail time for failing to return a library book.

THE CENSUS

492

The number of billionaires in the United States, making it the world's leading billionaire habitat, according to Forbes magazine in its annual rankings. Bill Gates, right, with a net worth of \$76 billion, won the top spot back from Mexican telecom mogul Carlos Slim Helu, who has led the list for the past four years. The largest net worth gainer on the list was Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, who more than doubled his fortune to \$28.5 billion as the value of his company's stock soared. He ranks 21st on the list.



PENNY RAY, THE (N.J.) TRENTONIAN/AP

Townhouse in tatters

Firefighters work at the scene of an explosion caused by a gas leak at a townhouse complex in Ewing, N.J., on Tuesday. The explosion killed one person and injured seven workers. Mayor Bert Steinmann said investigators don't yet know what went wrong, and that it's possible they will never be able to identify the point of ignition. Public Service Electric & Gas was working on repairs when the explosion happened.

9 sent to hospital after car rams into store

NV LAS VEGAS — A Las Vegas grocery store reopened Sunday morning, a day after a woman in her 80s drove her pickup into it, sending nine people to hospitals with minor to moderate injuries.

Police are investigating the cause of the 2:50 p.m. accident at a crowded Food 4 Less store that caused another 17 people to be treated at the scene for cuts, scrapes and bruises.

Police Lt. Ken Romane told the Las Vegas Review-Journal there were no life-threatening injuries. He said the woman was driving through the parking lot when "for some unknown reason" her pickup went through the front door and ended up in the rear of the store.

He said the accident caused "significant property damage."

The driver, whose name wasn't released, stood outside the store

afterward. She didn't suffer any visible injuries and she wasn't taken into custody.

Mall's 'hoodie' signs offend some patrons

IN ANDERSON — A central Indiana mall's recent posting of signs asking visitors to lower their hoodies when stepping inside the building has offended some of its younger patrons.

The signs at the entrances of the Mounds Mall in Anderson state that, "For the safety & well-being of everyone, please lower your hoodie."

Mounds Mall general manager Braun Roosa said the mall's hoodie rule dates to 2004, but the signs were not posted until December at the request of local police. He said that once the weather turns warmer, the signs will be removed.

"It is for security and ID purposes only. We don't ask them to remove the hoodie, just lower it,"

Roosa told The Herald Bulletin.

Ranny Hinton Jr., 21, of Anderson, said he's offended by the signs, which are posted next to the door handles at each entrance and show a crossed-out hooded figure. Hinton said it's mainly younger people who wear the hooded sweatshirts and the sign doesn't mention anything about ski masks or other facial coverings.

Taylor Motsinger, 17, who wore a zip-up hoodie during a visit to the mall last week, said it's "disrespectful" for anyone to wear a hood up in a public place.

"But why should they ask people with hoodies and not hats or scarves?" Mtsinger asked.

Grower to pay \$85K for sexual harassment

WA SEATTLE — A federal agency said one of the largest hop producers in the world will pay \$85,000 to settle a sexual harassment lawsuit.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission said Roy Farms will pay the settlement stemming from a male supervisor harassing male farmworkers.

The EEOC's lawsuit said that for nearly two years, male farmworkers at the Eastern Washington farm faced constant sexual and threatening comments and physical contact from an orchard supervisor.

The lawsuit said the supervisor would tell the workers in vulgar terms that he wanted to have sex with them and in some occasions would caress their faces, backs and buttocks.

The agency said one of the farmworkers affected, Martin Barrera, notified supervisors and eventually the farm's owner of the harassment, but nothing was done. Eventually, he quit.

Roy Farms is based in Moxee, Wash. It produces hops, apples, cherries and blueberries.

From wire reports

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Target shake-up puts spotlight on CIOs

By Bree Fowler
The Associated Press

NEW YORK—The departure of Target's chief information officer in the wake of the company's massive pre-Christmas data breach highlights the increased pressure facing executives who are charged with protecting corporate computer systems from hackers whose attacks are on the rise and becoming more sophisticated.

CIOs from companies in all walks of business — from retail

to banking and drug discovery — are using the Target breach as a rallying point to call attention to the struggle and to garner additional funds and manpower to fight digital threats.

Cyberattacks were on the rise long before Target's news that hackers had stolen 40 million debit and credit card numbers, along with the personal information belonging to as many as 70,000 people.

A 2013 Hewlett-Packard Co-sponsored study by the Ponemon

Institute found that the average annual cost of cybercrime suffered by a benchmark sample of U.S. organizations was \$11.6 million per organization, a 26 percent increase from the previous year.

For a host of companies, the Target breach was a pivotal event that permanently altered the way they approach data security.

Many CIOs say they're receiving more support, but they say the tradeoff is that they're facing increased scrutiny from their CEOs and other executives.

If their fortress walls fall to hackers, their jobs will be on the line.

Analysts believe the Target data theft couldn't have had a positive effect on Beth Jacob, who had served as the company's CIO since 2008.

Target said Wednesday that Jacob's resignation was her decision, but analysts say Jacob took the fall amid a swell of bad publicity for the Minneapolis-based company.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (March 7)	\$1.4178
Dollar buys (March 7)	€0.7053
British pound (March 7)	\$1.71
Japanese yen (March 7)	100.00
South Korean won (March 7)	1,039.00

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.6725/0.9799
Canada (dollar)	1.0993
China (Yuan)	6.1187
Denmark (Krone)	6.9627
Egypt (Pound)	0.9627
Euro	\$1.3848/0.7222
Hong Kong (Dollar)	1.7668
Hungary (Forint)	223.38
Israel (Shekel)	3.4658
Japan (Yen)	103.08
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2812
Norway (Krone)	5.9714
Philippines (Peso)	44.55
Poland (Zloty)	3.102
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7503
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2630
South Korea (Won)	1,063.54
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8820
Thailand (Baht)	32.29
Turkey (New Lira)	1.8663

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

INTEREST RATES

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Discount rate	3.75
Federal funds market rate	0.07
3-month bill	0.05
30-year bond	3.65

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U.K.	--	\$3.820	\$3.984	\$4.188
Change in price	--	+3.3 cents	+2.9 cents	-0.1 cents
Azores	--	--	\$4.482	--
Change in price	--	--	no change	--
Turkey	--	--	\$4.445	\$4.121
Change in price	--	--	no change	-0.1 cents
Italy	\$3.899	\$3.929	\$4.059	\$4.266
Change in price	-3.79 cents	--	--	-3.8 cents

CHEMICAL GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	--	\$3.539	--	\$4.069
Change in price	--	+3.0 cents	--	no change
Okinawa	\$3.469	--	\$4.009	--
Change in price	+3.0 cents	--	no change	--
South Korea	\$3.729	--	\$4.069	\$4.269
Change in price	+3.0 cents	--	+3.0 cents	no change
Guam	\$3.729*	\$3.899	\$4.059	--
Change in price	+4.0 cents	+4.0 cents	+4.0 cents	--

* Diesel EFD ** Midgrade
For the week of March 8-14

MARKET WATCH

March 5, 2014	
Dow Jones Industrials	-35.70
	16,360.18
Nasdaq composite	+6.00
	4,357.97
Standard & Poor's 500	-0.10
	1,873.81
Russell 2000	-2.7417
	1,205.90

WEATHER OUTLOOK



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

Friday's US temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	Chatanooga	60	41	Pcldy	Fort Wayne	43	17	Clr	Louisville	57	30	Cdly	Pocatello	53	36	Cdly	Sioux City	35	29	Snow
Ablene, Tex	76	43	Pdly	Cheyenne	39	34	Snow	Fresno	70	50	Clr	Lubbock	75	40	Pcldy	Portland, Maine	35	0	Cdly	Sioux Falls	30	28	Cdly
Akron, Ohio	46	22	Pcldy	Chicago	44	20	Cdly	Goodland	46	35	Cdly	Macon	54	37	Rain	Portland, Ore.	57	45	Cdly	South Bend	40	16	Pcldy
Albany, N.Y.	54	35	Pcldy	Cincinnati	54	28	Clr	Grand Junction	48	36	Cdly	Madison	39	19	Cdly	Providence	39	17	Cdly	Toledo	48	36	Cdly
Albuquerque	66	43	Cdly	Cleveland	45	23	Pcldy	Grand Rapids	41	16	Cdly	Medford	65	39	Cdly	Pueblo	50	37	Rain	Union City	52	25	Pcldy
Allentown, Pa.	39	17	Cdly	Colorado Springs	45	38	Snow	Great Falls	42	16	Cdly	Memphis	58	32	Cdly	Raleigh-Durham	43	31	Rain	Springfield, Mo.	60	31	Pcldy
Amarillo	69	38	Cdly	Columbia, S.C.	45	36	Rain	Green Bay	39	18	Cdly	Miami Beach	81	71	Pcldy	Rapid City	58	39	Cdly	Worcester	45	18	Pcldy
Anchorage	31	19	Cdly	Columbus, Ga.	55	36	Rain	Greensboro, N.C.	39	28	Snow	Midland-Odessa	79	45	Cdly	Roanoke	58	32	Cdly	Tallahassee	59	42	Cdly
Asheville	50	31	Rain	Columbia, S.C.	52	26	Cdly	Hartford	41	21	Cdly	Milwaukee	39	18	Cdly	Richmond	45	31	Rain	Tampa	70	59	Pcldy
Atlanta	54	35	Rain	Concord, N.H.	36	-9	Cdly	Hartford Spg	37	9	Cdly	Minneapolis	33	27	Cdly	Rochester	42	30	Rain	Toledo	39	19	Pcldy
Atlantic City	45	28	Cdly	Corpus Christi	74	48	Pcldy	Helena	42	25	Cdly	Missoula	47	26	Cdly	Rockford	41	19	Cdly	Topeka	55	32	Pcldy
Austin	74	58	Pcldy	Dallas-Ft. Worth	68	48	Pcldy	Honolulu	79	70	Rain	Mobile	79	70	Rain	St. Louis	41	19	Cdly	Tulsa	65	35	Pcldy
Baltimore	45	26	Cdly	Dayton	51	26	Cdly	Houston	69	40	Pcldy	Montgomery	54	39	Cdly	Sacramento	70	47	Cdly	Tulsa	65	32	Cdly
Baton Rouge	62	39	Pcldy	Daytona Beach	69	57	Pcldy	Huntsville	61	38	Cdly	Nashville	60	31	Cdly	St. Louis	58	29	Pcldy	Tupelo	61	35	Pcldy
Bilings	39	27	Cdly	Denver	40	37	Pcldy	Indianapolis	51	26	Cdly	New Orleans	60	45	Pcldy	St. Petersburg	71	61	Cdly	Wichita	57	32	Pcldy
Birmingham	56	38	Cdly	Des Moines	44	30	Cdly	Jackson, Miss.	59	38	Pcldy	New York City	42	25	Cdly	St. Thomas	84	73	Cdly	Wilmington	45	30	Cdly
Bismarck	20	11	Cdly	Detroit	40	14	Pcldy	Jacksonville	58	50	Cdly	Newark	42	23	Cdly	Salerno, Ore.	60	44	Cdly	Wilmington, Del.	78	68	Cdly
Boise	69	38	Pcldy	Duluth	30	22	Cdly	Janeau	28	17	Pcldy	Norfolk, Va.	41	40	Rain	Salt Lake City	51	37	Cdly	Wichita	57	32	Pcldy
Boston	37	17	Cdly	El Paso	76	53	Cdly	Kansas City	56	33	Pcldy	North Platte	39	31	Cdly	San Diego	77	42	Cdly	Wichita Falls	72	38	Pcldy
Bridgport	39	15	Cdly	Elkins	50	31	Cdly	Key West	55	29	Pcldy	Oklahoma City	65	34	Pcldy	San Antonio	74	44	Cdly	Wilkes-Barre	36	15	Pcldy
Brownsville	74	53	Cdly	Erie	39	19	Pcldy	Knoxville	58	40	Pcldy	Omaha	42	31	Cdly	San Jose	69	57	Pcldy	Wilmington, Del.	46	24	Cdly
Buffalo	40	18	Pcldy	Eugene	59	41	Cdly	Lake Charles	63	38	Pcldy	Orlando	74	59	Pcldy	San Francisco	64	50	Cdly	Yakima	58	34	Pcldy
Burlington, Vt.	32	5	Cdly	Evansville	50	25	Cdly	Lansing	41	13	Cdly	Padsuah	49	25	Cdly	San Jose	67	48	Cdly	Youngstown	45	18	Pcldy
Caribou, Maine	32	-5	Cdly	Fairbanks	13	-13	Pcldy	Las Vegas	71	53	Cdly	Pendleton	57	40	Pcldy	Santa Fe	63	34	Cdly				
Casper, Wyo.	44	29	Cdly	Fargo	49	14	Cdly	Lexington	56	29	Pcldy	Peoria	47	22	Pcldy	St. Marie	31	14	Cdly				
Charleston, S.C.	53	41	Rain	Flagstaff	54	30	Cdly	Lincoln	45	31	Cdly	Philadelphia	47	25	Cdly	Savannah	53	41	Rain				
Charleston, W.Va.	55	28	Pcldy	Flint	41	9	Pcldy	Little Rock	60	31	Cdly	Phoenix	81	57	Cdly	Seattle	54	45	Cdly				
Charlotte, N.C.	45	34	Rain	Fort Smith	65	31	Cdly	Los Angeles	76	53	Cdly	Pittsburgh	47	24	Pcldy	Shreveport	66	34	Pcldy				

National temperature extremes
Hi: Wed., 88, Yuma, Ariz., and Thermal, Calif.
Lo: Wed., 31, Rabbit, Minn.

WEEKEND

Dierks
Bentley
Page 36



Why are we crazy about quizzes?



To learn what my ideal city is

Gray.
No, wait.
Charcoal.

Good distraction while waiting

For proof that we are cool

To see what my favorite dessert says about me

One website's silly tests smash traffic records and generates tons of Facebook comment threads

Page 26

WEEKEND: GADGETS & CHARTS

GADGET WATCH

Motrr Galileo captures the perfect panoramic

By GREGG ELLMAN

The McClatchy-Tribune News Service

The Motrr Galileo is an iPhone dock designed for taking perfect 360-degree panoramic images.

It's available for Apple iOS devices in a Bluetooth (\$149.95) model and 30-pin dock connection (\$99.95).

The Bluetooth is listed to work with the iPhone 5/S/5C, iPhone 4/S and iPod Touch (5th generation). The 30-pin Galileo is for the iPhone 4/S, iPhone 3GS and iPod Touch (4th generation).

Both work with many photography apps, all listed on the Motrr site (motrr.com/apps.html). It's updated as new apps become available, but there are already many to choose from including Sphere, TimeLapse, DMD Panorama and many more.

The Motrr app is free, but there is a charge for some of the others; for example, the Panorama app is \$1.99 in the Apple App Store.

The 30-pin dock doubles as a charging station since it has a built-in rechargeable lithium polymer battery. A standard tripod mount is on the bottom of both versions.

Right out of the box you would think this is an Apple product with its solid construction and white finish (also available in black).

It takes a little getting used to, but after some experiments it worked really well. You'll probably have to take your case off, as I did, for it to fit in the dock. It works in both landscape and portrait positions.

If it were late December instead of early March, the Galileo would be my gadget of the year. For now, I'll just say it has an early lead.

Online: motrr.com

Jongo from Pure (pictured below) is one of the best complete portable speaker systems yet. There are many options for the system's speakers: paired as a stereo system, a single speaker in different rooms, inside or outside; multiple users; multiple colors; and in multiple streaming choices.

If you stream by connecting to your personal Wi-Fi network, as I did, you'll probably have to read the directions for the setup. But connecting into Wi-Fi to stream audio gives you greater range compared to Bluetooth, which gives you only about 30 feet.

The specific pieces I sampled were the Jongo T2 and the Jongo S3.

The Jongo S3 (\$229) is a desktop/bookshelf-sized portable, rechargeable wireless speaker (5.16 by 5.47 by 5.31 inches) and comes in black, white or a mixture called Piano (white body with a black grill) but can be accessorized to coordinate with your room's color scheme.

A grille pack (\$29.99) of easy-to-fit replacements is available in white, lime green, burnt orange or mango.

The speaker produces 360-degree sound from five internal speakers (four tweeters for 360-degree sound and an upward-firing subwoofer for powerful bass) and can be paired with additional S3's to form stereo sound. More is better but even just a single S3 fills the room with sound.

As for the Jongo T2 (\$179), it won't fill the room like the S3 but it makes a great choice for background sound where you don't want the volume cranked up.

A pair of 10W 3-inch, mid-range drivers are inside and optional grill covers



Motrr/MCT
The Motrr Galileo is an iPhone dock designed for taking perfect 360-degree panoramic images.

are available in mango, burnt orange and lime green.

Both speakers can be used with Apple or Android devices using Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, along with the Free Pure Connect app.

The company's Pure Connect app lets users turn their smartphone into a remote control for your music and your choice of Jongo speaker output. This includes your personal playlists or access to a never-ending list of radio stations and music.

The app is free, but there are different levels of service within the app that may incur monthly fees. For example the Green level is free, up to the Violet level for \$9.99 per month.

Earlier this year, Pure announced third-party app support via Bluetooth, allowing the Jongo system to support all music apps including Pandora, Spotify and many more. This service is expected out in the spring.

Online: pure.com

The Soldier portable battery is a best friend for the adventurous traveler. This handy 7800mAh

battery backup is built for the roughest environments with a waterproof, rugged shock-proof body.

It's built with a standard USB and a microUSB port for charging portable electronics on the go and a flashlight with SOS functionality. LED indicators display the remaining battery life.

A friend recently spent two weeks hiking in Central America, and agree to take the backpack-friendly battery (4.52 by 3.46 by 1.14 inches) along with him.

The Soldier lived up to its name, handling all the rough and tumble of two weeks on and off the trail. An accidental dip in a stream verified the company's statement that it's waterproof up to 3 feet deep for up to 30 minutes.

No electronic device can be a perfect solution for all situations, and this had its own limitations. At one point, it might be a little more weight than some adventurers want to carry. And to recharge the three internal Li-ion 3.7V 2500mAh batteries, you'll need to include your own USB-to-otg plug to connect with the supplied cord for an 8-hour charge.

Online: digitaltreasures.com; \$59.99 at Amazon.com



Digital Treasures/MCT



Pure/MCT

ITUNES MUSIC

Top 10 songs on the iTunes Store for March 5:

1. "Happy" (from "Despicable Me 2"), Pharrell Williams
2. "Let It Go," Idina Menzel
3. "All of Me," John Legend
4. "Magic," Coldplay
5. "Dark Horse," Katy Perry (feat. Juicy J)
6. "Pompeii," Bastille
7. "The Man," Aloe Blacc
8. "Team," Lorde
9. "Ordinary Love," U2
10. "Best Day of My Life," American Authors

— Compiled by MCT

SPOTIFY MUSIC

The top streamed tracks on Spotify for Feb. 24-March 2:

1. Katy Perry, "Dark Horse"
2. Jason Derulo, "Talk Dirty — feat. 2 Chainz"
3. Bastille, "Pompeii"
4. Beyoncé, "Drunk In Love"
5. Lorde, "Team"
6. John Legend, "All of Me"
7. Pitbull, "Timber"
8. Pharrell Williams, "Happy (from Despicable Me 2)"
9. OneRepublic, "Counting Stars"
10. A Great Big World, "Say Something"

— Compiled by The Associated Press

ITUNES MOVIES

Top 10 movies downloaded from the iTunes Store for March 5:

1. "12 Years a Slave"
2. "Dallas Buyers Club"
3. "Gravity"
4. "Thor: The Dark World"
5. "Blue Jasmine"
6. "Nebraska"
7. "Captain Phillips"
8. "Short Term 12"
9. "Jackass Presents: Bad Grandpa" (Unrated)
10. "The Great Beauty"



— Compiled by MCT

VIDEO GAMES

The editors of Game Informer Magazine rank the top 10 former Game:

1. "Dark Souls II," PS3, 360, PC
2. "Titanfall," Xbox One, PC
3. "Strider," PS4, Xbox One, PS3, 360, PC
4. "Shadowrun Returns: Dragonfall," PC
5. "The Last of Us: Left Behind," PS3
6. "Our Darker Purpose," PC
7. "South Park: The Stick of Truth," PS3, 360
8. "Thief," PS4, Xbox One, PS3, 360, PC
9. "Banished," PC
10. "Earth Defense Force 2025," PS3, 360

— Compiled by MCT

APPS

Top 5 new free apps for March 5:

ANDROID

1. Splashy Fish
2. LEGO City My City
3. Crazy Doctor
4. Deadman's Cross
5. Mad Skills Motocross 2

Top 5 free apps for March 5:

APPLE

1. Disney Movies Anywhere
2. Flappy Wings — FREE
3. Farm Heroes Saga
4. Jump Jack
5. Calculator for iPad Free

— Compiled by MCT

WEEKEND

CHECK IT OUT

Events, entertainment and other ways to fill your free time

1

Laugh at, or contribute to, the return of 'Shaq Fu'

Shaquille O'Neal says he's seeking redemption for "Shaq Fu," his infamous fighting game originally released in 1994 that's now considered to be among the worst games ever made. The four-time NBA champion is launching a crowd-funding campaign to create a "Shaq Fu" follow-up titled "Shaq Fu: A Legend Reborn."

In return, backers could receive anything from a pair of autographed size 22 sneakers to a pick-up basketball game and lunch with Shaq, depending on the size of the donation.

"The old 'Shaq Fu' was a 'ha, ha, ha,'" said O'Neal in a telephone interview this week. "This will not be a 'ha, ha, ha.'"

Unlike the original "Shaq Fu" released by Electronic Arts, "Shaq Fu: A Legend Reborn" will be a beat-'em-up game created by Big Deez Productions in the style of "Streets of Rage."

— The Associated Press

• To contribute, or to see the game's laughably egotistical trailer, see alegendreborn.com



Screenshot from indiegogo.com

Big Deez Productions studio said upcoming video game "Shaq Fu: A Legend Reborn" will feature Shaq taking on hordes of enemies with hundreds of different moves, as well as melee weapons, in various levels.

2

Enjoy five free SXSW concerts on iTunes

The iTunes Festival in London has been a hit, and now iTunes wants to share the love of the South by Southwest festival in Austin, Texas. March 11-15, Coldplay, Imagine Dragons, Keith Urban, Pitbull and more take the stage. You can stream the concerts live or later in the iTunes store on your iPhone, iPad, iPod touch or computer.

• See the lineup and enjoy the shows at itunes.com/festival



3

You read them here first: 'Spouse Calls' in a book

All the wit and wisdom of Spouse Calls, formerly for Stars and Stripes readers only, are now collected in a book. Terri Barnes has written her weekly column about military life since 2007. Her columns are geared toward military families, but civilians will also be able to relate to the joys and heartbreaks in "Spouse Calls: Messages from a Military Life."



• To order from Amazon: tinyurl.com/lh8qkqk

4

See your name Travoltified

In honor of John Travolta's infamous mangling of singer Idina Menzel's name at the Academy Awards last weekend, Slate.com has developed the Adele Dazeem Name Generator. According to Slate, "You're no one until you've had your name mangled by a confused, squinting John Travolta." For the record, Travolta himself would be "Jan Thozomas."



• Find out how Travolta would mangle your name at tinyurl.com/travoltify

WEEKEND: MOVIES



New on base

"Non-Stop" is playing at:

Europe
Mildenhall, Ansbach, Baumholder, Grafenwöhr, Hohenfels, Ramstein, Spangdahlem, Stuttgart, Vilseck, Wiesbaden, Aviano, Vicenza and Brunssum.

Pacific
Yokota, Zama, Foster, Futenma, Hansen, Kadena, Kinser, Schwab, Courtney, Yongsan South Post No. 2, Henry, Kunsan and Osan.
Online: nonstopthefilm.com

During a flight from New York City to London, U.S. Air Marshal Bill Marks (Neeson) receives a series of cryptic text messages demanding that he instruct the airline to transfer \$150 million into an offshore account. Until he secures the money, an airplane passenger will be killed every 20 minutes in "Non-Stop."

PHOTOS COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES/AP

Neeson keeps 'Non-Stop' from crashing

Action star delivers intelligent performance in serviceable hijack thriller

By JAKE COYLE
The Associated Press

Settling in for a film that takes place almost entirely on an airplane, as does the latest Liam Neeson action flick, "Non-Stop," one's instinct is to search for the nearest sleeping pill.

The prospect of nearly two hours on an airliner, without the complimentary peanuts, is not quite the sensory experience we typically seek in the movies. After federal air marshal Bill Marks (Neeson) morosely guzzles some whiskey in his car outside JFK Airport, he boards the plane headed for Heathrow that he's to protect, that will be the setting from here on out.

If you're now hitting the "call flight attendant" button for help,

you'll be pleased with the results. Things pick up when down the aisle strolls stewardesses Michelle Dockery and Lupita Nyong'o. The plane populates with our cast: Julianne Moore (Marks' chatty seatmate), a school teacher (Soot McNairy), a tough New Yorker (Corey Stoll) and a Muslim doctor (Omar Metwally). Neeson begins getting mysterious text messages from a hijacker on board — a snake on the plane, if you will — who says someone will die every 20 minutes until \$150 million is sent to an off-shore account.

The cabin pressure steadily rises. It could be anyone on the plane, a clever little conceit reflective of today's air travel: Everyone is treated like a suspect. In the film's best image, Marks

has all the passengers hold their hands up.

But, as with so many high-concept films, it takes an awful lot of implausibility to keep the story airborne. The manner of the deaths turns suspicion to Marks himself, and even his boss (via phone) believes he's the terrorist. Most incredulously, the plot is propelled by the live coverage of the incident by NY1, that cute little local New York cable channel.

Moore breathes life into the claustrophobia, as does Dockery — both helpful aids to Marks. Recent Oscar winner Nyong'o has barely a line, but sports a cool flat top.

But the question is — as was with the similarly European-backed, one-word titled thrillers "Taken," "Taken 2" and

"Unknown" — what to make of this unlikely action hero turn for Neeson at 61? "Non-Stop" is directed by the Spanish-born filmmaker Jaume Collet-Serra, who also helmed "Unknown." Now they're churning them out.

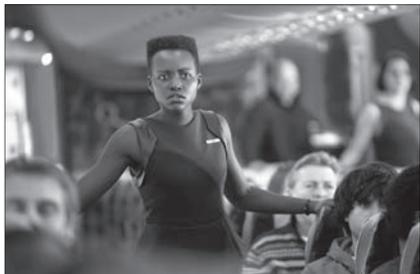
The movies, "Non-Stop" included, are simple, mostly serviceable genre flicks that are smart enough to dispense with exposition but not witty enough to put three acts together.

Neeson's presence — wounded, intelligent, honorable — is much sturdier than these films, which he elevates with ease. It's not an issue of him lowering himself to them, but of these films not raising themselves to Neeson.

On "60 Minutes" recently, Neeson was himself bemused and rather sheepish about this career turn to movies he ac-

knowledged were "straight-to-video" stuff. But his tolerance that he came to "Taken" and the rest because it allowed him to busy himself after the death of his wife, Natasha Richardson, gives these movies a melanancholy poetry: The weary Neeson, kicking butt to keep the demons at bay.

"Non-Stop" is rated PG-13 for violence, crude language, sensuality and drug references. Running time: 107 minutes.



From left: Lupita Nyong'o, Nate Parker and Julianne Moore co-star in "Non-Stop," a suspense thriller played out at 40,000 feet in the air.

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THUR MAR 06 WED MAR 7
In Digital 3D: **The Lego Movie (PG)** - Sat & Sun 13:30

In Digital 3D: 300: Rise of an Empire (R) - Thur 16:00, 18:00, 20:30; Fri 16:00, 18:00, 20:15, 22:30; Sat 15:45, 18:00, 20:15, 22:30; Sun 15:45, 18:00, 20:15, 20:30

MCP Peabody & Sherman (PG) - Thur & Fri 16:00, 18:00; Sat & Sun 15:30, 15:45, 18:00; Mon - Wed 16:00, 18:00

Non-Stop (PG13) - Thur 18:00, 20:30; Fri 18:00, 20:15, 22:30; Sat 18:15, 20:15, 22:30; Sun 18:15, 20:15; Mon - Wed 18:00, 20:30

Robocop (PG13) - Fri & Sat 22:30

In 2D: The Lego Movie (PG) - Fri 16:00, Sat & Sun 14:30, 16:30; Mon - Wed 16:00

The Monuments Men (PG13) - Sat & Sun 15:45; Mon & Wed 16:00

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Check movie listings for base theaters at stripes.com/military-life

WEEKEND: MOVIES

‘Son of God’ gentler than ‘Passion’

By RYAN PEARSON
The Associated Press

Ten years after “The Passion of the Christ,” Jesus is returning to movie theaters with a gentler, more inclusive approach.

“Son of God,” spun out of the hugely successful “The Bible” miniseries, plays up the political maneuvering that led to the crucifixion. It won an endorsement from the Anti-Defamation League’s Abraham Foxman, one of the Jewish leaders who denounced Mel Gibson’s 2004 blockbuster “The Passion.”

“Clearly we were aware of the controversy that had been created around that film,” actress and executive producer Roma Downey said. “If everything begins with intention, our heart on ‘Son of God’ was to find the places that we could bring people together.”

Gibson famously self-financed and distributed his ultra-violent “Passion” in 2004. It became a box-office hit but was criticized by some reviewers and religious leaders for its depiction of Jews. Downey’s husband, “The Voice” and “Survivor” producer Mark Burnett, said the Christian filmmaking team reached out specifically to other faiths to tell the story of the life of Jesus — played with an air of bemused dignity by Portuguese actor Diogo Morgado — without causing offense.

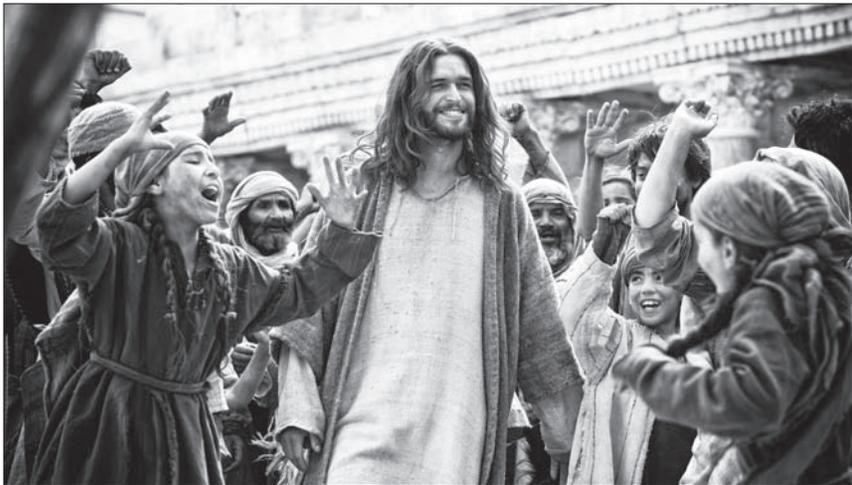
“It just took a lot of work and a lot of time and a lot of listening over a number of years to see everybody’s point of view and how to not take the teeth out of the story — the dynamic drama from the story — but be sensitive across groups,” Burnett said. “Because there’s very different interpretations across the Catholic faith and the Protestant faith and the Jewish faith.”

Using footage shot during production of History Channel’s ten-part miniseries “The Bible,” the film now in theaters spends much of its final half examining maneuvering by Jerusalem’s military governor, Pontius Pilate, and Judean high priest Caiaphas.

“It’s like ‘House of Cards’ in many ways,” Burnett said. “They’re all humans living their lives... Pilate is scared of Caesar and what Rome might do. Caiaphas is scared of Pilate and losing the whole temple and their faith. It’s a real political thriller with tension, which explodes at Passover in Jerusalem.”

Burnett credits his miniseries, which garnered strong ratings and broke DVD and Blu-ray sales records last year, with this year’s flurry of biblical films from major Hollywood studios.

“You’ve got to believe that the enormity of ‘The Bible’ series had other biblical productions speed up,” he said. Darren Aronofsky’s take on “Noah,” starring Russell Crowe, is coming later this month, and Ridley Scott’s “Exodus,” with Christian Bale, is due out in December.



PHOTOS BY CASEY CRAWFORD, 20TH CENTURY FOX/AP

Diogo Morgado, center, portrays Jesus in “Son of God.” The film spans from his humble birth through his teachings, crucifixion and ultimate resurrection. It marks the first motion picture about Jesus’ life since “The Passion of the Christ,” released 10 years ago.

Still a great story, even when tepidly told

By ROGER MOORE
McClatchy-Tribune News Service

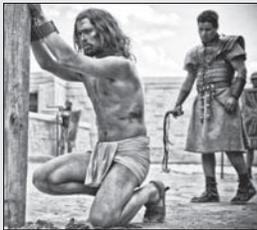
Blame Mel Gibson for it if you like, but no Jesus movie these days is worth its salt without an utterly unflinching treatment of his torture and crucifixion. And “Son of God” has stretches where the agony we watch this poor man endure is avert-your-eyes awful. If history ever produced a more brutal form of punishment, it probably included lions at dinner time.

But “Son of God,” a big-screen version of Mark Burnett and Roma Downey’s History Channel TV series “The Bible,” has a redemptive optimism about it that makes the brutality go down easier. Their Jesus is all business. But he sports a beatific smile as he renders out audiences lions that feel like roger drafts of the polished poetry of the King James Bible.

“I’ll give my stone to the first man who tells me he has not sinned” doesn’t have the memorable ring of “Let he who is without sin cast the first stone.” But that’s what Shakespearean editors can do for you.

It’s a standard-issue Christ picture — hitting the high points from Jesus (Diogo Morgado) taking that first fishing trip with Peter (Darwin Shaw) to Lazarus to “Where’s Judas?” to “Give us Barabbas” and the long, final walk.

Unlike “The Passion of the Christ,” there’s no Aramaic with English subtitles, a lot less blood and no anti-Semitism. No character feels like a caricature — not the hypocritical Pharisee Caiaphas (Adrian Schiller) or the gruff and dismissive Pontius Pilate (Greg Hicks of “Snow White and the Huntsman”). But it’s also dramatically flat, with few actors who make an impression as they play saints and sinners, the



Spun out of the hugely successful “The Bible” miniseries, “Son of God” is told with the scope and scale of an action epic.

icons of the Bible.

An eight-minute prologue takes us from Eve and Adam through Noah and Abraham to the Biblical “present,” in which the Apostle John (Sebastian Knapp) narrates the story — from recruiting Peter to the Miracle of Fishes and Loaves (unleavened pita bread here), from tackling the money changers in the Temple to the Sermon on the Mount.

The settings are passable versions of ancient Israel — digital models of Jerusalem amid the arid, rock-strewn landscape.

Among the cast, Hicks and Shaw make the strongest impression, with co-producer Downey (“Touched by an Angel”) managing a perfectly weepy Mother Mary.

And while Morgado’s Jesus suggests little of the charisma of this first “fisher of men,” it is a pleasantly retro, “hippies will inherit the Earth” take on the man. The film emphasizes his role as rabbi or

New on base

“Son of God” is playing at the following military facilities:

Europe

Mildenhall, Ansbach, Baumholder, Grafenwöhr, Hohenfels, Ramstein, Spangdahlem, Stuttgart, Vilseck, Wiesbaden, Aviano, Vicenza and Brunnsum.

Pacific

Yokota, Zama, Foster, Futenma, Hansen, Kadena, Kinsers, Schwab, Courtney, Yongsan South Post Nos. 1 and 2, Henry, Kunsan and Osan.

Online: sonofgodmovie.com

“teacher,” and his big lessons about forgiveness, humility, compassion for the poor and wariness of the wealthy. Morgado’s Portuguese accent makes him stand out from the often Brit-accented Apostles, Pharisees and Romans.

Like the much-criticized TV series it is culled from, the film’s main aim is to be inoffensive, and with multiple directors and screenwriters, they at least manage that. Parts of the story emphasized by the Catholic Church (the redemption of Dismas, on the cross next to Christ) and that inspired “Raiders of the Lost Ark” (the spear of Longinus delivers the coup de grace) are touched on.

And unlike Gibson’s bloody blockbuster, this loving, forgiving son comes back long enough to remind us of why the religion, founded in his name, has endured.

“Son of God” is rated PG-13 for intense and bloody depiction of the crucifixion, and for some sequences of violence. Running time: 140 minutes.

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE



John Egan — in Austin, Texas, last month — is one of many taking online quizzes. A recent veritable explosion of silly online personality quizzes, most of them created by the young social media mavens at BuzzFeed.com, has everybody talking about which state they really ought to be living in and which Harry Potter character they really are.

By MEGHAN BARR
The Associated Press

For a compulsive online quiz-taker like Chrissy Noh, the temptation was too great to resist: “Which sandwich are you?” After answering a series of unscientific, seemingly unrelated questions, which included selecting her favorite doughnut from a lineup of frosted pastries, the New Yorker had her answer (grilled cheese). And she’s not the only one who’s comparing herself to sandwiches lately.

A recent explosion of silly online personality quizzes, most of them created by the young social media mavens at BuzzFeed.com, has Americans talking about which of the 50 states they really ought to be living in and which Harry Potter character they really are. BuzzFeed says the quizzes are smashing traffic records and generating more Facebook comment threads than any viral posts in the site’s history.

Experts say the phenomenon isn’t surprising given the age-old fascination with that central question — “Who AM I?” — and a desire to compare ourselves with others in a social media-obsessed society.

On a recent snowy day, the 37-year-old Noh admitted that she and several friends spent the afternoon taking quizzes and texting each other screen shots of the results. “It turned into an all-day group text message fest, where it was just picture after picture of, oh, what rapper are you?” she says, laughing. “What career should you actually have? Which sandwich are you? Which member of One Direction should you marry?”

Personality quizzes have been around for decades, gracing the covers of women’s and teen magazines with questions designed to lure us in. Nor are they new to the Internet, where online quizzes can be found aplenty on sites like Zimbardo.com, among others. But the recent wave of quiz popularity can be traced directly to BuzzFeed’s New York City headquarters, where a team of about 100 content creators have been producing one to five quizzes every day for the past two months.

The most popular quiz — “Which State Do You Actually Belong In?” — has generated about 41 million page views.

Which _____ are you?

Online quizzes from BuzzFeed go viral

“For our most viral quizzes, the results have to be meaningful in some way,” says Summer Burton, BuzzFeed’s managing editorial director. “It’s not that they are scientific. It’s just that what they say means something to people as far as their own identity.”

A quiz for everyone

A scroll through the “QUIZZES” page on BuzzFeed.com reveals a bewildering assortment, many infused with pop culture references. Which celebrity cat are you? Which pop diva? Which “Girls” character? What career should you actually

have? Which generation do you actually belong in? What kind of dog would you be?

The intense push to pump out as many quizzes as possible started a couple of months ago after BuzzFeed editors realized that a quiz called “Which ‘Grease’ Pink Lady are you?” ranked among the most-trafficked posts of 2013. Then, in mid-January, a quiz called “Which city should you actually live in?” went viral, and the whole venture just took off like wildfire, Burton says.

The ability to create a quiz was encoded into BuzzFeed’s in-house content management

system a little more than a year ago. Essentially any staff member has the autonomy to create one. There are no specific rules regarding quiz-making, but each one follows the same age-old general format: You start with the results and work backward based on general personality traits that go with each answer.

“If you take a ‘Parks and Rec’ quiz and you get Leslie Knope, then you’re very enthusiastic,” Burton says. “It’s almost like you pick three or four adjectives, and then those kind of go into figuring out what the answers for each question are going to be. And assigning them to a result.”

Staff members generate the quiz ideas themselves and create the entire thing on their own, although they do receive an edit and feedback before the quizzes are published. The trick to creating an addictive personality quiz is similar to the art of writing a good horoscope. It has to be broad and all-encompassing yet make people believe the answer applies to them personally. We know there’s little substance to them, and yet we can’t seem to stop taking them.

What makes these online quizzes so alluring is that they can be instantaneously shared with hundreds of friends on Facebook for instant feedback, says Denise Friedman, who teaches psychology at Roanoke College in Salem, Va. “In our age, we’re constantly reflecting on who we are, and technology has really changed the way we interact,” Friedman says. “I think we are constantly engaging in social comparison and thinking about where we stand.”

‘A way to kill time’

John Egan, 50, who lives in Austin, Texas, says he gets sucked into the quizzes partly because he’s curious about himself — and because he wonders how his answers will stack up against those of his Facebook friends. But the quizzes have little staying power in his brain.

“It’s kind of this momentary thrill, if you will, and then you move on. And it’s like a shiny object: ‘Oh — there’s another quiz!’” he said.

The quizzes are overwhelmingly upbeat and lighthearted in nature, a calculated decision by the people engineering them.

“Quizzes are an investment of someone’s time,” Burton says. “So it feels like it would almost be mean for someone to go through the process of taking the quiz and have it say, ‘You’re really cynical and negative and nobody likes being around you.’”

And you can take them over and over until you get the answer that validates your own assumptions about yourself. Noh says she probably took the “Which rapper are you?” quiz quite a few times until she was satisfied with the result.

“I kept getting Eminem, which I was unhappy about,” she says. “I was like, ‘I really want Kanye, so I’m gonna answer these questions until I get Kanye West.’”

Experts say the phenomenon isn’t surprising given the age-old fascination with that central question — “Who AM I?” — and a desire to compare ourselves with others in a social media-obsessed society.

WEEKEND

Europe

THE EUROPE EXPERIENCE



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Silk threads in various widths and colors were carefully stitched through holes in these eggs among those on display at a past Easter egg market at Eberbach Monastery at Eltville, Germany. This year's Eltville market is scheduled for March 15-16.

HOP TO IT:
Easter egg markets

A sure sign of spring, Easter egg markets start to spring up in Europe at this time of year, selling intricately hand-painted and decorated Easter eggs and spring-themed crafts in locations ranging from monasteries to castles.

In Germany, the markets start as early as this weekend and last either a weekend or until Easter.

Here is a sampling of some popular ones. Most charge an entry fee of 3 euros for those older than 12.

- **Andechs:** Monastery, March 28-30.
- **Bad Arolsen:** Bürgerhaus, April 5-6.
- **Donauwörth:** Tanzhaus, March 30.
- **Eltville am Rhein:** Eberbach Monastery, March 15-16.
- **Erlangen:** Redoutensaal, March 22-23.
- **Hamel:** March 8-9.
- **Hirschhorn:** Sängerkirche Igelsbach, March 23.
- **Karlsruhe:** Friedrichsplatz, April 5-6.
- **Lindensfels:** Bürgerhaus, April 5-6.
- **Mannheim:** Luisenpark, April 12-13.
- **Maulbronn:** Monastery, March 15-16.
- **Michelstadt:** Odenwald- und Spießzug-Museum, March 29-30.
- **Munich:** Kulturpavillon, April 11-13.
- **Schwäbisch Hall:** Hospitalkirche, April 5-6.
- **Schwetzingen:** Castle, March 22-23.
- **Seligenstadt:** Regiomuseum, monastery grounds, March 8-9 and 15-16.
- **Titisee:** Kurhaus, April 18-21.
- **Wiesbaden:** Schlossplatz, April 4-6.

TOP TRAVEL PICKS

A big WOW for women

International Women's Day is celebrated each year on March 8. Although it passes largely unnoticed in the country where it was first observed (the United States), in many lands it is a big deal indeed, as well as a national holiday. Throughout Europe, you may witness events or activities acknowledging women's contributions to society. One of those events takes place in London.

The Women of the World Festival opens Friday and takes place through Sunday at the Southbank Centre. The WOW weekend celebrates women's achievements and provides a platform for voices from around the world with a program encompassing talks, debates, music, comedy and more.

Topics up for discussion include women of courage in war and conflict zones, fertility, cyber bullying, black women in popular culture, pornography, society's claim of ownership of women's bodies, and more.

Also on the docket are mentoring sessions, a workshop on building confidence through humor, self-defense lessons and a drama performance titled "Nir-



Karen Bradbury

See the Europe Traveler blog at stripes.com/travel/europe-travel

haya," based on the true story of the brutal gang rape of a female bus passenger in Delhi, India, in December 2012. A highlight will be the Saturday appearance by Malala Yousafzai, the 16-year-old activist from the Swat Valley in Pakistan, who campaigns for education rights for all.

While a few of the events are free, access to most activities requires a day pass, available for 12 British pounds (about \$20) plus transaction fees per day. Other events, including Malala's appearance, require separate tickets, costing 10 pounds and up.

Learn more about WOW at southbankcentre.co.uk

Fasnacht in Basel

Basel's Fasnacht traditions are often described as otherworldly. In contrast to carnival in Germany, the city at the intersection of three lands celebrates on the days not leading up to, but rather following, Ash Wednesday.

For three days next week, Basel will celebrate the start of Lent in its inimitable manner. With 12,000 or more masked participants, Basel's carnival is regarded as Switzerland's largest popular festival.

At precisely 4 a.m. Monday, the lights in the Old Town will be dimmed and the words "*Moorgestraich Vorwärts, marsch!*" will ring out. Members of the Cliques, one of the major groups to participate in Fasnacht, will march forth while playing their instruments; others will bear lanterns, some towering up to 9 feet high. The light burning from within sets off the silhouette of a person or event that characterizes the year that was. The theme chosen for 2014 is "Keep Clean."

On Monday and Wednesday afternoon, parades will wind along two routes through the two sections of the city referred to as *Grossbasel* and *Kleinbasel*. Processions begin at 1:30 p.m.

and end at about 6:15 p.m.

Celebrations on Tuesday, considered family day, play out to the accompaniment of Guggenmusik, recognizable by the cacaphonic sounds of brass and pipes. From Monday through Wednesday, lanterns will be displayed on the Münsterplatz.

Another part of the revelry includes skits and songs featuring caricatures poking fun at events of the past year. Since they are performed in local dialect and refer to happenings within the local area, outsiders might find it all rather incomprehensible.

Three foods are intrinsic to Basel Fasnacht: *Mehlsuppe*, a soup made of brown flour; *Zwiebelschäl*, an onion tart; and *Fastenwähe*, a pretzel with caraway seeds. Festivities conclude Thursday at 4 a.m.

Revelers support the carnival by buying badges. A copper badge costs 8 Swiss francs (about \$9); silver, gold and "bijou" versions cost more, with the latter costing 100 Swiss francs. Badges may be picked up at one of the official sales kiosks on the Markt-platz or Claraplatz. Learn more at fasnacht.comite.ch.



Basel's Fasnacht is 72 hours of parades, piping and partying.

AP



Looking for even more to do? For additional events, concerts and activities, go to stripes.com/military-life

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe



PHOTOS BY RICHARD SENNOTZ/Minneapolis Star Tribune

The Villa d'Este in Tivoli, Italy, near Rome, is listed as a UNESCO world heritage site. Right: A street musician plays Jewish folk songs on Via del Portico d'Ottavia, the main street of Rome's Jewish Ghetto.



Above: A synagogue sits over Via del Portico d'Ottavia. Below: A walk down the Via del Portico d'Ottavia offers a feel for this unique area and its mix of ancient, medieval and Renaissance architecture.

Unknown Rome

To understand the Eternal City, step off the beaten tourist path

By BILL WARD
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Stand within the Colosseum's massive bowl, and you can practically hear the roar of the ancient crowd. But to capture the sounds of today's Rome, it's best to get away from the flurry of tourists and settle into a quaint trattoria like Da Tonino, where everyone within its rustic walls chatters away in Italian.

No sign outside announces the restaurant; my wife and I dined there courtesy of a local's tip. And that cloaked quality was precisely its appeal.

Hidden gems, ignored by the guidebooks, well off the tourist path, await in nearly every nook of this wondrous

city. Of course visitors should crane their necks at the Vatican, sip espresso at an open-air bar in Piazza Navona and climb the Spanish Steps. But in a place with a history so long and rich that it is dubbed "the Eternal City," only one approach seems plausible: Peel away the layers, savoring each one, to get a deeper sense of the place.

In our journey to do just that, we hoofed everywhere, from an underappreciated villa with some of the world's foremost fountains to a neighborhood bakery with marzipan confections — and places beyond.

Our feet are still recuperating, but our souls are soaked with indelible memories. Our recommendations:

Cul De Sac

Cork dorks should head posthaste to Cul de Sac (Piazza di Pasquino 73; enotecaculdesac.com), to sample scores of wines they can't get elsewhere (start with a glass of the *Cesane*, although it's impossible to make a bad choice here). But this locals-laden enoteca has way more to offer: a locavore menu with sundry salumi and cheese and homemade pasta, friendly service and a fabulous vibe inside and out.

Tucked into a prototypically quaint but preternaturally quiet piazza a block west of the Piazza Navona, Cul de Sac's outdoor tables are filled by 7 p.m., which is still happy hour for Romans.

Jewish Ghetto

At a couple of entrances to the Jewish Ghetto, you must pass through turnstiles (no coins needed) that we dubbed "pedestrian roundabouts." Sadly, the Jews who were forced to live in this flood plain near the Tiber River in the 16th century (after two millennia of being a free community),

had to come in and out through locked gates in massive walls.

The walls came down in the late 19th century, and a stately, imposing synagogue went up on the neighborhood's edge. The old ghetto now has a few Jewish merchants and restaurants serving Roman Jewish specialties.

Don't miss the fried artichokes at Giggetto (Vie del Portico d'Ottavia 21; giggettoalportico.it), and walk off your meal on tree-lined riverside Longotevere di Cenci.

Villa d'Este

Villa d'Este's array of eye-popping frescoes are almost worth the 20-mile trek from Rome to Tivoli by themselves. The grandiose fountains in the "back yard" more than cinch the deal.

Installed by one Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este, the son of Lucrezia Borgia, these 25 acres of waterworks (Piazza Trento, Tivoli; villadestetivoli.info) use ancient Roman hydraulic-engineering principles

and range from the simple to the massive, from an endless row of smaller jet streams to a multifaceted "nymphaeum." These spigots aside, the gardens include lovely landscaping and some gravity-defying trees.

Similar landscapes are depicted inside, spread through a suite of art-filled rooms that, were they housed in Rome, would be anything but "hidden."

Bone art

Most of us have found ourselves in a museum gawking at some oddity and thinking (or saying) "Is this art? Really?" That's certainly the rote response at the catacombs in the Church of the Immaculate Conception (Via Vittorio Veneto 27; cappucinivieneto.it), where thousands of bones have been fashioned into light fixtures, hourglasses, arches and even flowers in rooms with names such as "The Crypt of Pelvises." The Catholic Church's Capucin sect, which has a history of an often-cultish



relationship with the dead, crafted these "works of art" with the remains of 4,000 of their flock. There are many theories about the arrangement of the bones; one holds that French Capuchins did the work, mimicking the catacombs of Paris. Understanding the funerary art is enhanced mightily by a fabulous museum above the crypt, leading to a plaque that advises: "What you are now, we used to be. What we are now, you shall be."

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe

After Hours: Italy

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

One of the challenges of being assigned overseas is that you can often feel at sea. What are they saying? Why is there a ticket on my car windshield again? It's 220 euros?

Dining out is subject to the same difficulties, particularly when you hit the sweet spot, where servers do not speak English (and you don't speak anything but) and the menu, if there is one, is unfamiliar and untranslatable.

Worse still is, if the region's specialties, when you're a stranger, are strange. You can end up, as I recently did, with a plate of three different fish pastes served with fried polenta.

The regional cuisine in Vicenza, Italy, can seem quite foreign. There is thick spaghetti, *bigoli*, with a meat sauce made from duck. I like that one.

But then there's the radicchio, served all sorts of ways, some of them quite slimy, and *baccalà* — dried salted cod reimagined into, well, wet cod paste.

A remedy and a respite is Trattoria alla Baracca. It's a paradoxical place. The outside looks like what it once was — an old, narrow wooden warehouse. Inside it's modern, with neutral, soothing colors.

An outside terrace on the riverbank, gorgeous in spring and summer, shaded by huge sycamores, is bleak and unused in winter.

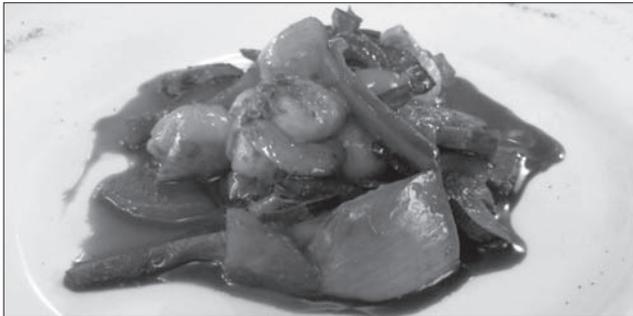
But the best part is the food. It's a family place, very reasonably priced. But every day, in addition to a written menu with comforting standbys like mixed fried fish and veal chops, there are a variety of creative specials, including pasta dishes that are always different and like nothing I've had before.

Often, I'm not sure what I'm ordering at Trattoria alla Baracca. Always, it is delicious. On a recent afternoon, a companion and I took our seats in the dining room along with several Italian families enjoying a long Sunday lunch. We might have been the only Americans there. Our waitress kindly enlisted



PHOTOS BY NANCY MONTGOMERY/Stars and Stripes

The family who started Trattoria alla Baracca in Vicenza, Italy, seems to look out from a giant photograph on the dining room wall at the families who patronize the restaurant a half century later.



The restaurant serves scallops and vegetables in a surprising soy-infused sauce.

another server who spoke more English to help us order. She did her best, and we ordered two courses.

For the first, I ended up with

scallops, onions, mushrooms, peppers and zucchini in a soy-based sauce. It surprised me — soy sauce in an Italian place? — plus I thought I was getting pasta. No worries, though: It tasted great.

My companion got fried eel and polenta, a regional specialty. It's something I would normally avoid, having an aversion to something so slithery no matter how sweet. But he was fully aware it was eel and was game. It tasted better than I'd imagined.

For the second course, my companion got homemade pasta with shrimp and artichokes in a white wine sauce that was both delicate and flavorful. But I felt I was the winner with a buttery, satisfying veal chop. On the side we got peas and carrots. We would have gotten the little onions called *chippole* as well, but they were gone; dishes often sell

out at Trattoria alla Baracca.

The restaurant, on the outskirts of Vicenza and about 10 minutes from Caserme Ederle, opened in the 1950s after an

TRATTORIA ALLA BARACCA

Address: Strada di Casale,

634, 36100 Vicenza, Italy

Food: Regional Italian.

Hours: Complicated. Open

Mondays for lunch only,

11:45 a.m.-3 p.m. Open

Wednesday through Sunday

for lunch, 11:45 a.m.-

3:30 p.m. Open Wednesday

through Friday 7:30-11

p.m. Open Saturdays and

Sundays 7:30 p.m.-mid-

night. Closed Tuesdays.

Posted hours are not the

same as kitchen hours,

however. Prospective din-

ers should arrive at least

an hour before "closing."

Prices: First courses run

from about 5.50 euros to 8

euros. Second courses run

from about 9 euros to 15

euros. Vegetable sides cost

about 3.50 euros.

Dress: Casual.

Information: Menus are in

Italian only, but the servers

will help. Website:

allabaracca.it (in Italian);

phone: (+39) 0444 248018.

— Nancy Montgomery

enterprising woman named Luigia Bertuzza had the structure moved to the riverbank. She planned a lunch business serving local workers as Italy recovered from World War II.

All the family pitched in including two sons, who caught and cooked the river fish.

The menu also included vegetables grown in Bertuzza's own garden and the sausage and salami she made by hand.

The restaurant has undergone renovations over the years as it prospered from one generation to the next. But it retains its traditional focus on family, fresh, carefully prepared food; and value. It recently won a top prize for quality and value among all trattorie in the Veneto region.

The prize was won with Grandmother Luigia's original recipe for stewed eel.

montgomery.nancy@stripes.com



Fried eel with polenta looks and tastes better than you might think.



After a big, long Italian Sunday family lunch, the baby nods off.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Europe

Rapid-fire fun

World of Laser Kaiserslautern offers a real-world sci-fi experience

By **JOSHUA L. DeMotts**
Stars and Stripes

The year is 2014. You've been sent to a world where your opposition is armed with laser rifles and survival will depend on your ability to navigate and hunt opponents through a dimly lit, fog-filled labyrinth.

OK, so your actual survival wouldn't be at risk, but at World of Laser Kaiserslautern, a real-world sci-fi experience is certainly in the cards.

The mood is set even as you approach the laser hall, especially in the hours of darkness. Located in the rear of a modern building, the small, brightly lit parking garage pulls you in not unlike a moth being drawn to a bright light.

Once anchored in the mother-ship's docking cavity, you'll enter the laser hall, passing by a section of stadium seating oriented toward several screens that provide real-time surveillance of the battlefield.

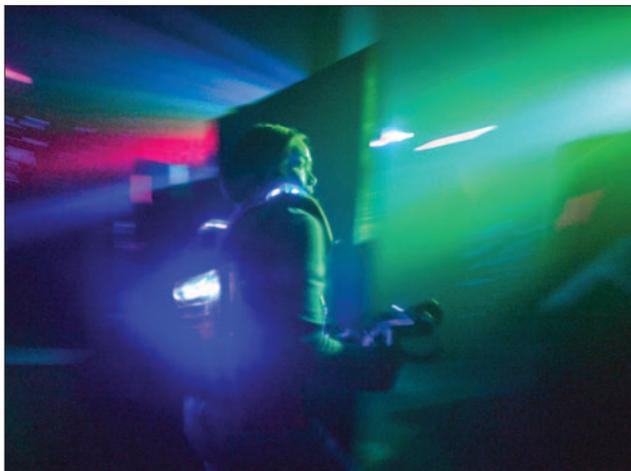
When it's your time to battle, you'll choose your vest and accompanied weapon. After kitting up and getting a short intelligence brief, the countdown begins. A heart-racing rapid scattering of players intensifies as the voice coming from your vest says only one word, over and over: "Go!"

As you move methodically through the maze of angled walls, your senses are simultaneously sharpened and overloaded with the contrast of brightly colored lights scanning through the fog and the glow of neon under black lights against the backdrop of an otherwise dark room. The vest is lit with your individual or team color, and there's no hiding it.

You scan the room and peer around every approaching corner as nimbly as possible, when suddenly, a combination of white light and red laser beams assaults you. Sweat now begins to seep from your pores as you pull the trigger, but it's too late. Your once-bright-colored vest turns to white and your gun is disabled. It's over, you've seen the light, but the voice is back. He's telling you not to give up, and suddenly you're back in the game with a smile that won't leave your face all evening.

After lighting your friends and family up for 15 minutes, the game is called and yams are spun instantly that chronicle the glories and follies of the battle that just took place. Everyone receives a printout ranking the players and providing statistics, which can either be used for bragging rights or for motivation before meeting on the battlefield again.

demotts.joshua@stripes.com



PHOTOS BY JOSHUA L. DeMotts/Stars and Stripes

Maricel DeMotts stalks her opponents during a game of laser tag at World of Laser Kaiserslautern.



All suited up, from left, Maricel DeMotts, Matt Millham and Heath Druzin watch an instructional video before tackling a game.



Matt Millham delightedly goes on the attack.



NCCA Airtaxi/Stars and Stripes

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

World of Laser Kaiserslautern is located at Barbarossastrasse 60, 67655 Kaiserslautern, Germany.

TIMES

Open 10 a.m. to midnight Saturday, Sunday and public holidays; 5-11 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday; 4 p.m.-midnight Friday; closed Mondays.

COSTS

Fewer than six players costs 8 euros (about \$11.30) per person for a 15-minute game. More than six players (limit is 10) costs 7.50 euros. The hourly rate is 150 euros.

FOOD

Limited refreshments are available in the laser hall.

INFORMATION

Website: world-of-laser.de/kl, in German only. The Google Chrome browser will automatically offer to translate the website to the language of choice. Phone: (+49) (0) 631-62489132; email: kl@world-of-laser.de. A reservation calendar on the website allows you to see what times are available.

— Joshua L. DeMotts



Behind that beam of laser light is Heath Druzin taking a shot. Players must navigate a darkly lit, foggy labyrinth in pursuit of their opponents.

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Traveling with the kids can be child's play

It's easy to make the case against taking the kids on a European vacation. A trip with kids in tow is much more about playgrounds and petting zoos than museums and churches. And traveling with kids can be expensive. Out of exhaustion and frustration, you may opt for pricey conveniences like taxis and any restaurant with a child-friendly menu.

But traveling with kids, you'll live more like Europeans and less like tourists. Your children are like ambassadors, opening doors to new experiences and countless conversations. Let the kid in you set the itinerary and everyone will have a good time.

Europe's Disneyland, outside Paris, has all the familiar rides and characters. But Mickey Mouse speaks French and you can buy wine with your lunch. My kids went ducky for it.

Also a hit, but on a more Danish scale, is Legoland, a fun sight for kids and their parents. Sixty million of the plastic bricks are arranged into extraordinarily detailed depictions of such wonders as Mount Rushmore, the Parthenon and "Mad" King Ludwig's castle.

Little kids in particular will enjoy Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen, which recently celebrated its 150th birthday. This 20-acre park is happily and simply Danish, without commercial glitz. You pay one admission price and find yourself lost in a Hans Christian Andersen wonderland of rides, restaurants, games,

marching bands, roulette wheels and funny mirrors.

Certain European cities seem built for kids. London eliminates the language barrier and has some of the best museums for children: the Natural History Museum (dinosaur bones), Victoria and Albert Museum of Childhood (toys, doll houses and games dating to the 1600s) and Science Museum (hands-on fun). Hyde Park is the perfect place for kids to play, ride bikes and run free. Don't miss the pirate-themed playground.

Barcelona bubbles with inexpensive, quirky sights. There's a fun, hill-capping amusement park, "magic" fountains that put on free light-and-sound shows most summer nights, a chocolate museum and one of Europe's best urban beach scenes.

Venice is one big fantasy world. It's safe and like nothing else your kids have ever seen. Riding a *vaporetto* across the lagoon to the Lido, Venice's beach island, is nearly as fun as the beach itself.

Canal-lined Amsterdam has a special charm for kids. Its electric trams are an enjoyable ride, as are the boats that tour the canals. At NEMO, the kid-friendly science museum, it's

forbidden *not* to touch. Older kids will want to make a pilgrimage to the house where Anne Frank wrote her diary.

Wherever you are, take advantage of the legacy of Europe's royal past: spacious parks and an abundance of castles. Line up with your kids for the changing of the guard at Prague's Castle or London's Buckingham Palace. Have a picnic in Berlin's sprawling Tiergarten Park, once a royal hunting ground. Vienna's formerly royal Prater Park tempts young and old with its sprawling amusement park, huge red Ferris wheel and miles of green space.

So go and enjoy while treating your kids to a fun glimpse of the big, wide world.

Rick Steves (ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and radio. Email him at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.



Rick Steves



Courtesy of Dominic Bonuccelli

Young-at-heart travelers, like this boy enjoying a public fountain in Rome, make their own fun wherever they go.



Restaurant Directory

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WEEKEND

Pacific

THE PACIFIC EXPERIENCE



ST. PATRICK'S DAY EVENTS

OFF BASE

ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE
YOKOHAMA MOTOMACHI
(Kanagawa prefecture): March 15; includes bagpipers, Irish dance teams and more at 2 p.m. on Motomachi Dori Street, followed by Irish dance party at 3:30 p.m., JR Ishikawacho Station or Motomachi Chukagai Station on the Minato Mirai-Line; tinyurl.com/bhr65eb.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE
TOKYO: March 16, 1-2 p.m.; more than 1,000 people wearing green parade along Omotesando Street, five-minute walk from JR Harajuku Station on the Yamanote-Line or Omotesando Station on the Chiyoda-Line; tinyurl.com/plmtnx2.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY MAKUHARI PARADE (Chiba prefecture): March 21; parade at 2 p.m. between Kaihin

Makuhari Koen and Kaihin Makuhari Station on the Kokusai Dori Street, 29-minute ride on Keiyo Line from Tokyo Station; http://chiba.inj.or.jp.

ON BASE

YOKOTA AIR BASE
Yokota Enlisted Club, 225-8820
March 15, 9 p.m., St. Patrick's Night Celebration, show off your Irish spirit by wearing green and get a chance to win a gift card, Shogun Lounge.
Yokota Officer's Club, 225-8526
March 14, 5-9 p.m., St. Patrick's Celebration, free for members, \$10/nonmembers, Samurai Lounge.

Tama Hills
March 15, 7 a.m., St. Patrick's Golf Tournament, shotgun start, \$20; 7-11 p.m., St. Patrick's Celebration, free admission, Hillcrest Lounge.



SHUJI KAJIYAMA/AP

PRINTED WISHES: Yushima Tenjin Shrine
Visitors look at a pile of wooden plaques — ema — at Yushima Tenjin Shrine in Tokyo on March 1. The annual examination season is on and students make a pilgrimage to the Shinto shrine to write wishes for success on exams. Now through March 9, it is also the site of the Yushima Tenjin Plum Blossoms Festival.



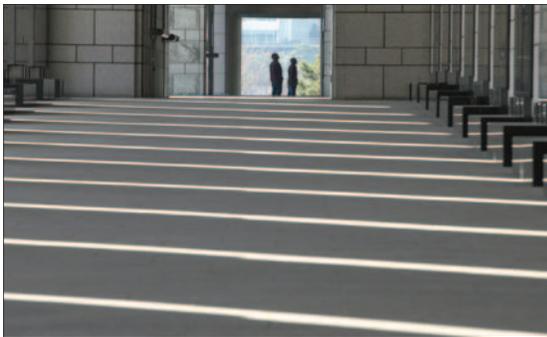
IN BLOOM

Spring approaches — and with the season comes the blooming of the cherry blossoms! Next week, get a calendar of when and where to see the bloom in the Weekend section of Stars and Stripes. For the official prediction for the bloom in Japan: tinyurl.com/jntosakura.

DESTINATION: War Memorial of Korea

Sunlight streams between boards inscribed with the names of fallen South Korean soldiers who died during the Korean War at the War Memorial of Korea in Seoul on March 3. For more: warmemo.or.kr.

LEE JIN-MAN/AP



MCT

Looking for even more to do? For additional events, concerts and activities, go to stripes.com/military-life

“ESCAPE TO THE HEART OF TOKYO!”

Calendar grid for March, April, and May with availability indicators.

RESERVATIONS FOR ROOMS: room_rsv@thenewsanno.com or DSN 229-7121 CML 03-3440-7871 EXT.7121

We will respond with a confirmation number or contact you if your first choice of dates is not available. For current availability, call our Reservation Desk or check our website: www.thenewsanno.com. Available dates on the above calendars are subject to change without notice.

April Escoffier Dinner advertisement with date April 19, Saturday and reservation details.

RESERVATIONS FOR EVENTS: events@thenewsanno.com or 229-7151

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL



Q&A: Preparing for cruises, flights

The Washington Post

We're hearing again about mass sickness aboard a cruise ship. Do you have any tips about not falling victim? You can catch norovirus by touching infected handrails or doorknobs, for instance. So you need to make sure that you clean your hands often (I carry around a small bottle of antibacterial gel). Cruise lines have been vigilant about containing this virus, erecting gel dispensers throughout the ships and forbidding guests to refill their water bottles from public fountains and dispensers. I've been on more than a dozen cruises and never contracted the virus.

I've never been on a cruise, but I'm thinking about it. Do higher or lower decks feel more stable in rough water? Do I want to be close to the elevator or stairs, or are they the noisiest? And I can't imagine taking an inside cabin without a window. What's it like to spend a week in a broom closet? If you're afraid of motion sickness, get a cabin in the middle of the boat toward the

bottom decks and avoid the front of the boat. If noise bothers you, choose a cabin with cabins below and above it — you don't want to be over the disco or the pool deck. And, yes, it's noisier near the elevators/stairs. As for interior cabins, I'd go for at least a porthole. Even if time in the cabin is short, you still have to shower, dress, etc., and interior cabins can feel claustrophobic.

We're going on a cruise and will be using new, lightweight hard-shell luggage, but the damage from misuse by airlines can make new pieces look old on the first trip. Are there any TSA-friendly slip-on covers to protect this type of luggage? I like covers such as the Luggage Sock, but an agent would have to remove the sock to access the insides, which could lengthen your screening time. My advice? Carry your old, inconspicuous luggage and use duct tape to mark it. No one will want to steal anything from it, and as long as the bag is intact, it should work fine. I doubt that a cover will protect luggage in a meaningful way.

I try to be a good air citizen and play by the rules and check my bag and pay the fee. It seems as if most flyers try to haul everything onto the plane with them, and when the bins are full, those bags must be checked at the gate. Do they then have to pay the fee? And if not, how easy is it to game the system

by not checking the bag for a fee, and then trying for a free gate check? It's nice of you to check your bags and pay the fee. I'm sure that your airline is grateful. But until the airlines close the loophole that lets you check your carry-on luggage for free when they run out of overhead bin space, this situation is unlikely to change. The solution is for the airlines to find a better way of making money than charging a bundle for our luggage. United Airlines is getting tough on passengers with oversized carry-on bags, even sending some of them back to the ticket counter to check their luggage for a fee. So perhaps there's a win-win on the horizon, with airlines making more money from folks attempting to carry their wardrobes on the plane, and passengers who are playing by the rules. We can hope!

I'm considering a trip to Vietnam and due to my vacation schedule can only travel in August. I've told that it's likely to be extremely muggy and rainy. I'm okay with some rain, but not a complete washout. Any advice? If that's the only time you can go, then go! The weather varies so much depending on your location, so you won't get a complete soaking. The southern area is typically hot and humid with daily rain showers (but rarely all-day affairs). The central region is sunny and dry; the northern mountains are wet, and Hanoi can be a bit moist.

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Pacific

For beaches, try Thai



PHOTOS BY MAIREAD FLYNN/AP

Above: The scenic beach at Koh Ma, a deserted island connected to Koh Phangan by a sandbar. Bottom: Sunrise Beach, Thailand's home of the Full Moon Party, where participants adorn themselves with neon body paint and dance until they drop.

Gulf of Thailand offers sun by day and parties by night

By MAIREAD FLYNN
The Associated Press

For the adventurous on spring break, beaches in Thailand are a lot more exotic than Miami.

That beaches offer gorgeous stretches of sand, water sports, nearby outdoor activities and cheap food and drink.

Off the Andaman Sea are famed Phuket and Koh Phi Phi, which rose to international prominence after being featured in the Leonardo DiCaprio film "The Beach." But the beaches along the Gulf of Thailand have an equally renowned trio in Koh Samui, Koh Phangan and Koh Tao. Each has its own charms and attractions, and regular boat service makes it easy to travel among them.

Koh Samui

This is the main transport center for the islands, with a fancy airport boasting designer shops — and a built-up infrastructure. While the island boasts gorgeous beaches all over its coasts, head to Chaweng Beach for a proper spring-break vibe. The beach is dotted with hotels for all budgets, open-air massage parlors where you can get an hourlong treatment for less than \$10, and vendors peddling everything from corn on the cob and pineapple to beachwear and decorative wooden keepsakes.

That's by day. By night, the main drag, a block from the beach, buzzes with thumping music and busy restaurants. The laid-back daytime schedule means the venues don't become crowded until about 10 p.m. or 11 p.m.; in the interim, for penny-pinching students, head to Walking Street for cheap Chang beer, barbecued crocodile or fruit shakes, affordable swimwear and sarongs, and people-watching. Places like Ark Bar on the beach keep the party going until the early hours, with DJs and fire displays.

See tourismthailand.org/Where-to-Go/Koh-Samui.

Koh Phangan

This island is home to the legendary Full Moon Party, but locals have realized the potential of such fiestas and capitalize upon everything and anything they can. Every few feet there is a sign advertising a Black Moon Party, a Waterfall Party and countless others. A key feature of these beach raves is that participants adorn themselves with neon body paint, then dance until they drop as the gentle, cerulean waters lap the shore. The Full Moon Party, especially, is notorious for drugs, but you'll see signs as soon as you disembark at the ferry port warning that marijuana and mushrooms are illegal. Be aware that travelers have ended up in Thai jails for violating drug laws.

Sunrise Beach is the cove where the Full Moon event takes place, but it is quiet and stunning on any day you visit. There is a rickety path of wooden slats to a viewpoint restaurant, and the whole area, despite its popularity and the touristy, neon Full Moon

Party tank tops for sale everywhere, gives off a very end-of-the-world paradise impression.

During the day, there are ecotours available that include elephant trekking (this is often only about 10 minutes stop an elephant), waterfall hiking and visits to temples or scenic beaches such as Bottle Beach and Koh Ma, a deserted island connected to Koh Phangan by a sandbar that can be crossed for some Robinson Crusoe-style exploring.

At night, however, Sunrise Beach cannot be beat. You'll end up with a group of Israeli soldiers, guys from County Cork in Ireland or solo travelers from London who are all trying their hands at "fire limbo," shimmying underneath a rope set alight by local workers.

Visit tourismthailand.org/Where-to-Go/Koh-Phangan.

Koh Tao

This is the island more renowned for its underwater charms

than its beach parties, though it has the latter as well. Many resorts on Koh Tao are also dive schools and offer lessons and dives as part of their packages; aside from that, snorkeling is legendary and excursions can easily be booked. The beaches are dotted with iconic wooden long-tail boats and water taxis, which can be rented for tours around the island's beaches and coves. Renting motor bikes or scooters on this island is slightly less fraught than on the previous two, as it is quieter with less traffic, and that's a great way to explore.

At night, its beach culture is also spring break-centric; many bars and restaurants along the sand offer fire shows, live music and late DJs. The tranquility makes it easy to wander safely along the beach from one venue to another, and when heading a few blocks inland to much of the accommodation, you can grab a banana and nutella pancake or another tasty, cheap treat.

See tourismthailand.org/Where-to-Go/Koh-Tao.



WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Pacific

free things to do in

By **KELVIN CHAN**
The Associated Press

The former British colony of Hong Kong has become an increasingly popular destination for wealthy visitors from mainland China, many of whom come just to shop. In Hong Kong's main tourist districts, Louis Vuitton and Gucci boutiques have crowded out middle-of-the-road retailers to cater to big spenders. Trendy, expensive restaurants and bars have replaced mom-and-pop shops. One could be forgiven for thinking there's nothing else to do in the Asian capital of commerce but spend money.

However, Hong Kong still has a wealth of non-retail activities for visitors, and many are free.

Catch the view

With its bustling harbor and



Visitors get a bird's-eye view of upscale homes and the city's skyscrapers from Lugard Road, a trail on Victoria Peak.



AP photos

With its harbor and skyscrapers, Hong Kong is undeniably one of the world's most scenic cities.

HONG KONG

Central to the crowded Causeway Bay shopping district to less glamorous neighborhoods.

Honor Bruce Lee

Martial arts legend Bruce Lee died in 1973 at age 32. Forty years later, he arguably remains Hong Kong's most famous movie star, yet there are only a few landmarks for his fans. A bronze statue of the actor was erected in 2005 on the Kowloon waterfront promenade, showing Lee in one of his characteristic fighting stances. The statue is on Hong Kong's Avenue of Stars, the city's version of the Hollywood Walk of Fame, where Lee and other Chinese stars are memorialized with plaques.

Fans have been pushing for Lee's childhood home in Kowloon Tong to be turned into a museum, but talks with the businessman who owns the property, which has been used as a holiday love hotel, have dragged on for years.

The intrepid can still visit the residence at 41 Cumberland Road. The truly devoted can hunt out even more obscure Lee sites by following walking tours developed by fans, like the one at: <http://tinyurl.com/axl55f>.

Go hiking

To get away from the city's crowds, try numerous parks offering hiking trails, many with scenic panoramas. One favorite is the Dragon's Back on eastern Hong Kong Island. The trail starts in a shady, quiet bamboo grove before emerging onto a hillside leading to the Dragon's Back, a winding ridge with sweeping views of the South China Sea.

Victoria Peak is a must, but don't just stick to the kitschy Peak Tram terminal and tourist complex. Instead, take the Hong Kong Trail that circles the mountaintop. Look for signs pointing to the path, which follows Lugard and Harlech Roads. The hour-long walk is gentle and flat, providing a bird's-eye view of upscale homes nestled amid the



Strike a pose in front of a bronze statue of martial arts actor Bruce Lee on the Avenue of Stars.

lush green flanks of the mountain and the city's skyscrapers beyond. Watch out for the occasional car trying to squeeze past to get to one of the posh homes along the route. Details at thepeak.com.hk/en.

Hit the beach

At any time except winter, you'll likely encounter sweltering weather in Hong Kong. So head to the beach. Hong Kong Island has several, including Big Wave Bay in Shek O or the beach at Tony Repulse Bay, but they get crowded on weekends.

You can escape the masses — though you'll have to pay for transportation — by taking the ferry to Mui Wo on Lantau Island and then bus or taxi to Cheung Sha beach. The stretch of broad white sand is one of Hong Kong's longest beaches.

At one end, there's a public changing room, lifeguard station and two restaurants serving Thai and South African food.

Ogle the art

Hong Kong's art scene has mushroomed thanks to soaring numbers of wealthy

mainland Chinese and other Asians who have developed a taste for collecting. Big names like London's White Cube and Larry Gagosian of the U.S. have opened local outposts of their art dealing empires while numerous lesser-known galleries have also sprouted up. Many are located on or near Hollywood Road in the Mid-Levels neighborhood.

If you tire of looking at art, you can also watch people spend lots of money buying it. Hong Kong has become one of the biggest auctions hubs worldwide and is one of the biggest markets for the Sotheby's and Christie's auction houses. In spring and autumn, you can watch their twice-yearly sales of art as well as jewelry, watches, wine and furniture held in a cavernous exhibition center in Wan Chai.



There's no entry charge at Repulse Bay Beach.

WEEKEND: MUSIC

THE DUALITY OF DIERKS

New album shows Bentley's split personality

By CHRIS TALBOTT
The Associated Press

Dierks Bentley bought a plane, but it was no country star vanity purchase.

The singer long ago earned his pilot's license but thought he had no use for it as he chased his music dreams. One day, though, he realized that if he could fly to some of his gigs instead of stepping on a bus, he'd get an extra day at home.

"Since the kids came around, it's just this push and pull to cut corners, being on the road, being home trying to get home faster," Bentley said. "I can't afford to sit in the back right seat of a jet, but I realized I could afford to sit in the front left seat of a prop plane. ... I get that one extra night with my kids. That may not seem like much, but it is."

That push and pull is at the heart of Bentley's new album, "Riser," released on Feb. 25. His seventh studio LP hobs back and forth between contemplative songs examining themes of family and loss and party rockers that play best in the 38-year-old's boisterous live show.

Dierks Bentley

Riser (Capitol Nashville)

Contemporary country singer Dierks Bentley changed producers for "Riser," his seventh album, and the results play up a long-held U2 influence. The chiming guitars and slow-boiling melodies add a simmering passion to Bentley's distinctive vocal and writing style, while the lyrics and subtle instrumental touches tie it to country music.

Working with producer Ross Copperman, Bentley's ambitious reach comes charging back in such new gems as the spiritual "Here On Earth" and the personal statements of "I Hold On" and "Damn These Dreams."

The album's arrangements — a refinement of a sound Bentley has drawn on since his 2003 debut — mix atmospheric touches with steady rhythms that percolate and at times explode into fist-pumping anthems. The sound accentuates the strengths of Bentley's voice, which nicely articulates narrative story songs like "Bourbon In Kentucky" (with harmony vocals by Kacey

It's among his most personal work. His father died near the beginning of the writing and recording process. And his first son and third child, Knox, was born toward the end, offering Bentley a wealth of reflections and emotions to sift.

"There were times in the months after he passed that I'd pick up the phone to call him about something funny or whatever," Bentley said of his father. "I still have his number in my phone. And when the kids are a little older, now is when I really need to talk to him, not when they're born. My daughter's losing her tooth, and I want to ask him, 'Did you really do the string thing where you tied it around my tooth and slammed the door? I'm pretty sure you did.'"

Bentley looks at family life and grown-up themes on songs like the title track, "Damn These Dreams," "I Hold On" and "Here on Earth," which looks at the grief of losing a child and was inspired by the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut.

At the same time, Bentley spends at least three nights a week on

the road a majority of weeks, and the album has plenty of cuts with titles like "Drunk on a Plane" and "Pretty Girls."

"I can still relate to the 17-year-old kid who jacks his truck up because my jacks set there and it's still jacked up," he said. "But I also get to be this guy who has this really full life."



Musgraves) and the tangled emotions of "Say You Do."

Bentley has often shown a sly sense of humor, and it surfaces on the entertaining "Drunk on a Plane," which manages to turn a poignant portrait of heart-break into a party song.

"Riser" might not lift Bentley to the top-tier rank of label mates Luke Bryan and Eric Church, but the singer-songwriter continues to bring a much-needed creative left to country music.

—Michael McCall
The Associated Press



Courtesy of Universal Music Group

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

Eric Cartman in all his uncensored glory

Humor, offense of 'Stick of Truth' will delight any 'South Park' fan

By MICHAEL S. DARNELL
Stars and Stripes

As the saying goes, if you want to do something right, you're going to have to do it yourself.

After a string of failed games by now-defunct Acclaim Entertainment, "South Park" creators Matt Stone and Trey Parker retook control over future game development with the creation of their in-house entertainment label, South Park Digital Studios.

Their increased involvement with games bearing the name "South Park" has resulted in a couple of blue-to-source Xbox Live Arcade titles, but even those weren't what fans wanted. Fans have been clamoring for a game that looks, feels and sounds like the animated show.

To that end, South Park Digital Studios entered a partnership with Obsidian Entertainment, the studio responsible for some of the best — albeit bugiest — role-playing games ever made, including the massive "Fallout: New Vegas" and cult favorite "Alpha Protocol."

The result of that partnership is "South Park: The Stick of Truth," a role-playing game with 17 seasons worth of TV episodes, a feature-length movie and equal parts hilarity and controversy.

"South Park" fans can rest easy, knowing that there were no punches pulled on the PC version I played and that the game is just as offensively hilarious as the show. It's important to note that there are five versions of the game, with only the North and South American versions being completely uncensored on all platforms. Germany and Austria's version has removed some of the humor in the console version and Nazi symbolism from all versions. The rest of Europe and Russia will have censored console versions and the Australian version is censored across every platform.

The game's humor matches and exceeds the level of offense the show generates. It even shocked me, a lifelong fan who has seen every episode multiple times. It should go without saying, but if you're easily offended, this is most definitely not the game for you.

You have been warned. On the other hand, if you're familiar with the adventures of Stan, Kyle, Cartman, Kenny and Butters, you'll feel right at home with the setting of "The Stick of Truth." The game is visually

indistinguishable from the show, and each character is voiced by the voice actor who brings them to life on the TV screen.

The amount of fan service packed into every aspect of the game is impressive — you'll meet up with the Underpants Gnomes, visit Tweek's family coffee shop and hang out at Cartman's house. Every piece of loot you gather is a callback to the show. Even the familiar banjo twang that opens each episode greets players when they boot up the game. From start to finish, this is a true "South Park" experience.

The game itself revolves around the conceit that the boys are playing swords and sorcery, so the game is filtered through their eyes. Cartman is a wizard king, Butters is a noble paladin, Kenny is a beautiful princess, and they're all at war with the dastardly elves (Stan and Kyle's faction).

You play as the new kid in town who helps to turn the tide of the make-believe war, thanks to the power of your magical flatulence. Of course, in true "South Park" style, everything goes off the rails very quickly and you must eventually help save the town from a great evil that I won't spoil here.

You'll create your own version of what the new kid looks like, choosing one of the four classes (fighter, wizard, thief or Jew), then from a decent array of customization options. You're then dropped into the town of South Park. You can explore most of the town from the start, though you'll open up new areas (including the exotic, faraway land of Canada) as you gain new abilities. Like most role-playing games, you'll gain side quests, experience points and loot as you traipse about talking to folks.

Along the way, you will amass a crew of companions, though only one of them at a time can accompany you. Most of them have a special ability that will help you get past certain obstacles and each have their own abilities in combat. For instance, Butters has the ability to heal people in an out of combat, while Stan harnesses the power of his dog to ... well, short out certain electrical sources on the map.

You can easily swap between buddies from the menu, which is set up to resemble a social media site. Non-playable characters are added to your roster of friends, which will increase the amount of perks you unlock, giving you more reason to explore the town and complete quests. The game is largely driven by the narra-



Photos courtesy of Ubisoft

Kyle, Cartman, Stan, Kenny, Butters. Every major "South Park" character makes an appearance in the new game, "Stick of Truth," with each being voiced by the TV show's voice actors.

tive, though, so while there are side quests, these are relatively sparse.

A fair amount of time is spent in combat, which is handled with a turn-based timing system. You have regular, heavy, ranged and special attacks, each of which are tied to the timing of your button presses. A prompt will be shown in the attack animation and if you time your button press correctly, your attack will do more damage. The same mechanic applies to defense. Enemies will adjust to your tactics, forcing you to switch between melee and ranged attacks. Fans of games like "Paper Mario" will feel right at home with this system. Personally, I've always found this type of system engaging, because you're doing something in every encounter.

The loot you gather along the way is broken up into different categories and is handled surprisingly well. Weapons, armor, status-affecting patches and add-ons can be swapped out to give players a great amount of control over the look and feel of their character. A worn gas mask, for example, shows up on your character model and protects from gross-out attacks — the game's

take on poison status. A number of purely cosmetic items are found along the way, and clothing and armor can be colored however you'd like. Sadly, these changes can only be applied to the new kid. Your companions will gain some special abilities as the game progresses, but you can't change their weapons or appearance.

The mix-and-match patch and add-on system can make even the tougher battles manageable (looking at you, Mr. Gore), but it can create some wild unbalances in the difficulty level. Toward the middle of the game, you'll get a combination of patches and armor that will allow you to attack again after you kill an enemy. Since each attack will generally kill an enemy, you'll just breeze through a large chunk of the combat without taking a scratch. I eventually forced myself to use a different setup, just to bring back some challenge to the battles.

It's worth noting that Obsidian is going to do wonders for their reputation with the technical execution of the game. Generally, you take the good with the bad when playing an Obsidian title,

Overall grade: **A**

and they've gotten somewhat of a rep for putting out buggy games. "The Stick of Truth" shows what they're capable of accomplishing without tight time constraints. I had zero bugs in the 13 hours of play time on my gaming rig. I can't speak to how stable it is on consoles, but there have been some streams going online showing some small amounts of slowdown in some areas, but nothing else.

The length is definitely on the shorter side for the genre, but the game is largely without filler. I'm a huge fan of lengthy games like "Skyrim," but some of the greatest entries in the genre have been short, sweet and to the point. "Stick of Truth" left me wanting more exploration possibilities, but I felt that 13 to 15 hours was plenty of time spent in a game revolving around fart jokes.

When the end-game credits rolled, I was a little sad to see it go, but even happier I never felt I had to slog through poorly-paced filler. There is some room for improvement, mostly in the difficulty balance and restriction on only one companion at a time.

If you're not a fan of "South Park," most of the game's humor will go over your head. But for long-suffering fans, who at one point had to put up with "Chef's Luv Shack," having a fantastic "South Park" game that looks, feels and plays like a season of the show is a dream come true. And even though it's easily the best game to use the South Park license, it's also a solid role-playing experience.

Bottom line: A If you've ever been a fan of South Park, you owe it to yourself to buy this now.

Platforms: Xbox 360, PlayStation 3, PC

Online: southpark.ubi.com/stickoftruth

Many more staff-written game reviews at stripes.com/military-life

WEEKEND: BOOKS

‘Delusional TV writer thinks he’s Mark Twain’

B.J. Novak compiles tales with honesty, heart in ‘One More Thing: Stories and Other Stories’

By **CONNIE OGLE**
The Miami Herald

Writers learn their craft in any number of ways — from books they read, classes they take, the editors with whom they work. B.J. Novak says his best lesson came from comedian Steve Carell.

As a young writer, actor and co-producer on the NBC series “The Office,” he played the self-involved Ryan Howard — Novak had done standup comedy and tended to think in terms of jokes. Carell, the former “Daily Show” correspondent who starred as excruciatingly clueless boss

Michael Scott, had a different approach.

“The idea, which came from Steve Carell’s background in improv and from show runner Greg Daniels, is that everything I could proceed from honesty,” says Novak, who worked on the mockumentary-style series for its eight-

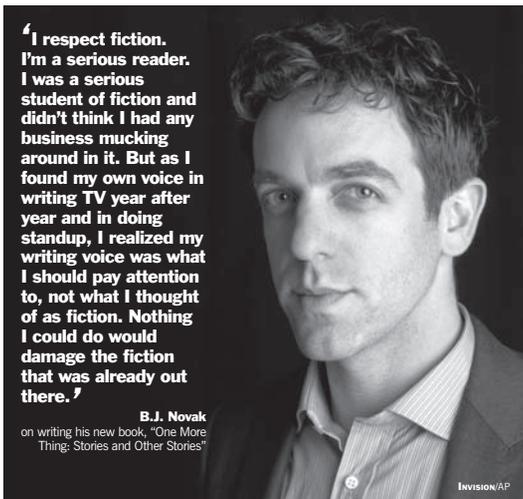
season run. “If you do that, comedy and drama can be indistinguishable. If you are true to all these things, the jokes will naturally reveal themselves to be funny. You didn’t have to worry about chasing the joke.”

“That was very scary. ... I’d be like, ‘Where are the jokes? We gotta kill!’ This one time I brought jokes to Steve Carell, and he said, ‘These are like jokes to me.’ I said, ‘It’s my job. I wrote you great jokes for this sitcom you’re the star of! Did you not get the memo?’ But he was right. You have to find honesty first.”

Novak, 34, puts this theory to good use in “One More Thing: Stories and Other Stories.” Eschewing the usual jokeworthy celebrity memoir or essays of the sort penned by Tina Fey or Novak’s BFF and “Office” cohort Mindy Kaling, Novak writes fiction — short, clever, funny fiction. He’s not your usual short story writer — how many of them have actually co-starred in a Quentin Tarantino movie? — but the results display that honesty Carell was talking about, as well as quite a bit of heart.

‘I respect fiction. I’m a serious reader. I was a serious student of fiction and didn’t think I had any business mucking around in it. But as I found my own voice in writing TV year after year and in doing standup, I realized my writing voice was what I should pay attention to, not what I thought of as fiction. Nothing I could do would damage the fiction that was already out there.’

B.J. Novak
on writing his new book, “One More Thing: Stories and Other Stories”



“That was very scary. ... I’d be like, ‘Where are the jokes? We gotta kill!’ This one time I brought jokes to Steve Carell, and he said, ‘These are like jokes to me.’ I said, ‘It’s my job. I wrote you great jokes for this sitcom you’re the star of! Did you not get the memo?’ But he was right. You have to find honesty first.”

Some of the stories are mere tidbits. “The Walk to School on the Day After Labor Day” simply reads: “I was sad that summer was over. But I was happy that it was over for my enemies, too.” “Kindness Among Cakes” consists of a short but pointed conversation: “CHILD: Why does carrot cake have the best icing? MOTHER: Because that’s the best icing.” Other stories run at a more traditional length, such as “Sophia,” about a guy who buys a sex robot, then returns her when she confesses she’s in love with him. The story, like all the others, grew from an idea Novak jotted down in a pocket notebook: “First artificial intelligence to fall in love falls for a guy who doesn’t want commitment.” He considered writing a short film

about the premise, but when the idea of a book arose, his “Office” training kicked in. “These are bizarre characters, but I was really interested in this guy and this creation that could feel love,” Novak says. “We’ve all been through heartbreak and emotional confusion about the issue of love. Before I knew it, I had put in so many of my most private fears and theories about love for both of these characters. I never would’ve had the courage to do that in a memoir.” Timothy O’Connell, Novak’s editor at Knopf, calls him a natural storyteller. “That shows both in his readings and on the page,” O’Connell says. “He has so many ideas, and the way he spins these ideas out — it was just a lot of fun to work

with him. He’s rare. The spectrum he can cover is something you just don’t work with every day as an editor.”

So yes. Though he played one of Brad Pitt’s Nazi killers in “Inglourious Basterds,” and though his favorite “Office” character to write for was Michael Scott — “He had this huge heart and this brain that couldn’t quite keep up”

— Novak comes by his love of literature honestly. After all, who but a lit lover writes a story, complete with footnotes, about a struggling poet who chases glory translating the classics? He graduated from Harvard University with a degree in English and Spanish literature. His father, William Novak, co-edited “The Big Book of Jewish Humor” and ghostwrote autobiographies of Magic Johnson, Oliver North, Nancy Reagan and Lee Iacocca.

Yet Novak was still nervous about venturing into literary waters.

“I was intimidated,” admits Novak. “I respect fiction. I’m a serious reader. I was a serious student of fiction and didn’t think I had any business mucking around in it. But as I found my own voice in writing TV year after year and in doing standup, I realized my writing voice was what I should pay attention to, not what I thought of as fiction. Nothing I could do would damage the fiction that was already out there.”

Standup comedy is not the usual path to publishing short stories, but it turns out to have been solid training for Novak, who says he has read most of his stories at least 20 times on stage over the course of the editorial process. He likens his method to that of David Sedaris, who also has honed his craft by performing them in front of an audience.

“There used to be much more of a tradition of this,” he says. “Mark Twain was really a standup comic. He was a persona. He would go from city to city telling stories. Charles Dickens, too, performed stories on stage. Both of them have writing that reads as popular entertainment, and they had this tradition of performing live. I’m sure it did shape them. They had a real consciousness of how it sounded.”

“My main point here is I am just like Mark Twain and Charles Dickens. There’s your headline: ‘Delusional TV writer thinks he’s Mark Twain.’”

‘The Snowden Files’ tells of ‘biggest intelligence leak in history’

By **JEFFREY BURKE**
Newsday

Nine months ago, Edward Snowden rocked the U.S. government and many of its allies and antagonists by leaking top-secret documents that exposed massive surveillance programs by Washington’s National Security Agency. Along with his brief to spy on bad guys, it was bugging wiretaps, e-mails, monitoring of telephone and Internet traffic of millions of ordinary people at home and abroad.

Snowden, now 30, dropped his bombshell in early June, while in Hong Kong, and was indicted by the U.S. government for espionage on June 21. The unquiet American flew to Moscow two days later, seeking asylum with another superpower not known for respecting privacy — or extra-

dition efforts. “The Snowden Files,” the first book on what British journalist Luke Harding calls “the biggest intelligence leak in history,” is a readable and thorough account. The narrative is rich in news-room details, reflecting Harding’s inside access as a correspondent for the London-based Guardian newspaper.



which broke the story. When Snowden first meets his two hand-picked contacts in Hong Kong, he is carrying a Rubik’s cube to identify himself. They are waiting, as ordered, by a big plastic alligator in a hotel lobby. The spycraft is amusing but not

overblown for someone about to become “the world’s most-wanted man.” References to spies and James Bond abound, along with repeated superlatives that suggest a compulsion to oversell a story that hardly needs it.

The pair by the gate are Guardian columnist Glenn Greenwald, who will lead the paper’s coverage of the leaks, and documentary filmmaker Laura Poitras, whose video will give the world its first view of this renegade.

Harding traces Snowden’s rapid evolution from clever teenage geek in Maryland to a young adult with exceptional computer skills and top-secret clearance. His résumé includes the Central Intelligence Agency and the NSA.

During a stint with the CIA in Switzerland, the agency’s dirty tricks began to sour him on spy-

ing. “I realized I was part of something that was doing far more harm than good,” Snowden later said to Greenwald. (It doesn’t appear that Harding himself ever interviewed Snowden.)

The disillusion deepened between 2009 and 2012 while working in Japan, as “he found out just how all-consuming the NSA’s surveillance activities are.” What “pushed Snowden over the edge” was an NSA report that “involved the collection of content and metadata from millions of Americans without a warrant.”

Snowden began his own collection, especially during his last NSA job, in Hawaii.

He also approached Poitras and Greenwald about working with him. In May 2013, he flew to Hong Kong to begin life as a fugitive. Two days after the alligator assassination, the Guardian’s operation in the United States — where

the risk of official gagging or arrest was lower than in Britain — published the first story.

Harding explores at great length the NSA’s alliance with and hefty financial support of Britain’s Government Communications Headquarters. It’s part of the book’s heavily British flavor, along with the busy Guardian, the fencing with London officials, some grammatical ticks and the ubiquitous 007.

Harding’s book offers a fresher take on what we have followed the tale closely and a useful compendium for those catching up.

Its occasional rough spots and repetitions can be forgiven in light of what he has put together in a short time on a story that develops almost daily. The writer deserves unqualified praise for fueling the debate on privacy that Snowden so hoped to ignite.

WEEKEND: ENTERTAINMENT

NEW ON DVD



FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

Michael Fassbender, left, and Chiwetel Ejiofor star in "12 Years a Slave." The Oscar-winning film is now available on DVD.

"12 Years a Slave": In 1977, the miniseries "Roots" awakened the national conscience about the inhumanity of slavery that remains one of the most appalling periods in American history. The Oscar winner for best picture, "12 Years a Slave" adds an exclamation point to that production through the true life story of Solomon Northup (Chiwetel Ejiofor), the New York State citizen — a free man — who was kidnapped and made to work on a plantation in New Orleans in the 1800s.

Through dynamic performances by Oscar-nominated Ejiofor and Lupita Nyong'o, who won her first Oscar for best supporting actress for her role, director Steve McQueen has fashioned a film that will haunt and enslave your heart and mind.

These images come through the life Northup lives under the control of heartless masters and the constant threat from those who consider slaves to be less important than livestock. McQueen built the movie as a constant battle between one man's efforts to maintain his humanity and the efforts of others to strip it away.

"The Hunger Games: Catching Fire": Katniss (Jennifer Lawrence) must fight again during the 75th Hunger Games. The second film in what will be a four-part series features the same elements as the first. The problem is that it also features a structure that is such a duplication of the first movie that it feels more like a rerun than a chance to move ahead.

Director Francis Lawrence has matched the visual splendor of the first movie from the landscapes to the costuming. He also shows a competence with the battle sequences, from a terrifying confrontation with mutated monkeys to a spinning cornucopia. But despite being presented with a more diverse group of Hunger Games competitors, he does little to play up their individuality.

"Catching Fire" is a good-enough representation of the second book that it won't upset fans. Those who don't know the book will find a film that is a mildly altered version of the first movie in the series. That makes it easy enough to skip and wait for the final two movies.

Also new on DVD:

"Doctor Who: The Time of the Doctor": Threat to the universe brings multiple Doctors together.

"Breaking Amish: Season 1": Amish experience the outside world.

"Super Bowl XLVIII Champions Seattle Seahawks": Recap and interviews.

"Oldboy": Man seeks revenge after being held captive for 20 years.

"Elmo's World: All About Animals": Children pretend to be different animals.

"The Last Days on Mars": Liev Schreiber stars in this tale of what explorers to the red planet find.

"Dora the Explorer: Dora in Wonderland": Dora goes on adventure based on "Alice in Wonderland."

"The Agony and The Ecstasy": Charlton Heston film is now on Blu-ray.

— Rick Bentley/The Fresno Bee

Noah Emmerich stars in "The Americans," a period drama series airing on FX.

CRAG BLANKENHORN, FX/AP



A spy hunter with scruples

Noah Emmerich keeps 'em guessing in FX drama series 'The Americans'

By FRAZIER MOORE
The Associated Press

"The Americans" puts its audience on the spot. Whom to root for?

Do we throw our support behind Elizabeth and Philip Jennings (played by Keri Russell and Matthew Rhys), the sexy, all-American-seeming couple who in truth are Russian-born KGB spies working to bring down the United States from within?

Or do we side with Stan Beeman, their neighbor in a Washington, D.C., suburb, who happens to be an FBI agent in this circa-1980s phase of the Cold War? Stan (played by Noah Emmerich) is sworn to flush out these enemies of the state, but, despite his smarts and dogged commitment, is constantly frustrated in his mission while undermined by personal demons.

As "The Americans" returns for its second season, the continuing obligation for its fans will be to reconcile divided loyalties and cheer for both parties, never mind that they're working in deadly opposition.

As before, viewers will likely thrill at the death-defying dedication of Elizabeth and Philip, but will identify with Stan. In Emmerich's performance, he sticks to a fine line between being a hero and being a dupe. He's a straight arrow bending under the pressures of his job, including the isolation it imposes: He has lately fallen into an affair with a beautiful Russian informant as his job keeps him from home.

Most challenging for the audience to deal with: Stan is largely unknowable. Unlike Elizabeth and Philip, whose secret lives are manifest to viewers, Stan remains a private soul to all.

"You don't know what he knows," says Emmerich. "You don't know what he's thinking."

Stan's early-on suspicion of Elizabeth and Philip seems to have relaxed into acceptance of them as the ordinary couple they pretend to be. In a future episode, he even meets Philip at a bar for a sodden heart-to-heart about his extramarital affair.

Has he let down his guard beyond the point of return?

"Is he naive? Or is he (messing) with them?" poses Emmerich, who himself isn't always sure what Stan is up to. "There have been times when I interpreted things in a certain way and played it that way, then mentioned it in passing to a writer, only to find out we had different opinions of what Stan does and doesn't know."

This leaves viewers free to fret about his vulnerabilities and setbacks. So does Emmerich, whose keeps-you-guessing portrayal makes Stan one of TV's most absorbing characters.

"I worry about him a lot, I really do," says Emmerich over a bowl of lentil soup in a Greenwich Village restaurant in Manhattan. It's a day off from filming the series, but Stan, as usual, is on Emmerich's mind.

"Stan's so squeezed," he says sympathetically. "Stan gets very little respite from the pain and arduousness of his job and his strained relationships. I take it really personally. The things that the character is going through, I go through as an actor. But that's what the work is, and the joy of it. It's precarious, because your internal life is being written by someone else."

Emmerich, 49, is immersed in this, his first series, which he laughingly refers to as "The Emmerichans." But his extensive film work includes "Beautiful Girls," "Little Children," "Super 8," "Cop Land" and the landmark "The Truman Show," in which he played the turncoat chum of Jim Carrey, prompting rebukes for years past its 1998 release from moviegoers who would ask him, "How could you DO that to your friend?"

With that film, says Emmerich, "I became known as the guy who could appear one way and actually be another way."

It's a quality that serves him well as Stan, an unassuming-looking chap, a craggy former golden boy who might have lettered in high school but now chases Communists.

"And does it in the 'analog '80s,'" notes Emmerich. He points out how, on each table of this restaurant, a smartphone is almost as common as silverware. Not then! "Information exchange was so much more dramatic from what it is now when, if you want to find out something, you call on your cellphone or send someone a text. Back then, you had to go and find them, or drop a note under a park bench. The world lent itself better to storytelling in the analog age than now."

Just one more reason Emmerich is pleased with "The Americans." And here's another: He lives in downtown Manhattan, and tomorrow he reports for work at the show's Brooklyn studio, just across the river, minutes away.

"I asked the universe for exactly this," he says. "I decided I wanted to do a series, and I really wanted to stay in New York." He smiles. "Sometimes the universe is listening."

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

For those with orthorexia, diet can never be

PURE ENOUGH

By MARY MACVEAN
Los Angeles Times

One awful day, D.C. Copeland recalls, her perspective on her "pure" diet had become so distorted that she found herself crying in a grocery store because she could not decide whether the kale or the chard was "better."

Jennifer Lombardi had so limited what she considered healthful that she found herself fending off others' questions about her diet. So she fabricated all sorts of food allergies — so no one would challenge her.

Both women say they were struggling with orthorexia, a condition that had them so consumed with a health food diet — or, as many people now term it, a clean diet — that the list of foods they'd eat shrank and shrank.

Their initial impulses might have been fine: perhaps cutting out processed foods or eating only organic food. But what if someone believes she absolutely cannot touch carrot juice if it's not organic? Or that she can eat only vegan raw food or not a single carb? The result, says Sandra Kronberg, a registered dietitian and nutrition therapist based on Long Island, can be malnutrition, brittle bones and other problems.

Our culture is immersed in advice and admonitions about the "right" way to eat: Juice, Paleo, low-carb, no-fat, GMO-free diets abound. So perhaps it's no wonder that the terrain gets dicey for some people.

Orthorexia "absolutely" is growing, says Kimberley Quinlan, a psychotherapist at the OCD Center of Los Angeles, an outpatient clinic that specializes in obsessive

compulsive disorder.

People who struggle with anorexia or bulimia generally have a preoccupation with their appearance and sometimes cannot rightly judge if their weight is appropriate. Those with orthorexia "are not looking to lose weight or are not fixated on a number on a scale," Lombardi says. "They say, 'I want to look at the value of food, and I want to look at an altruistic approach.'"

For Copeland, who had obsessive compulsive disorder as a child and later had problems with alcohol and drugs, getting sober in her 20s also meant that it was important to eat healthfully.

"I got into raw veganism, colonics, enemas and a whole way of life. It was so insanely pure. There was no room for error. I couldn't even work. All the energy went into making my green smoothies and doing a yoga class," she says. "I was addicted to this feeling, I had to be pure."

A hallmark of orthorexia is perfectionism, finding the "perfect" foods. "Theoretically, if we do things right or perfectly, people will be less upset with us, we will experience less adversity," Lombardi says. "There's no room for imperfection, and there's no room for enjoyment."

Orthorexia was named in 1996 but has yet to be accepted as a formal diagnosis in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, the bible of psychiatric illnesses. Some therapists see it as an eating disorder, others as a manifestation of OCD. Some doctors think a separate diagnosis is unnecessary.

Whatever it's called, therapists say, there are people whose rigid attention to what to eat, its nutritional content and how the food is grown and processed can put themselves in danger. A person might start "by getting rid of processed foods, then sugars and gluten, and little by little most things get taken out. They'll take out meat. Only raw foods, only fruit. There are no real rules, but it usually gets down to a very small number of foods," Quinlan said.

In addition, sufferers generally think there's nothing wrong with their behavior.

Copeland, a Yale graduate, says she was sure that her "pure" diet would help her reach her potential, but she now sees that it left her enervated, isolated and unwilling to leave her house without bringing her own food.

"If I can fill my whole mind with food and the purity of the food and the green smoothies, then I can stay sober," Copeland says in describing her thought process.

The day she couldn't choose which greens to buy, she called her Alcoholics Anonymous sponsor and began to get the help she needed, eventually seeing Quinlan and undergoing therapy that included learning to eat foods she had rejected.

More kids, youths get caffeine from coffee

By DEBORAH NETBURN
Los Angeles Times

Children might be consuming more caffeine than we realize. A

new study finds that 73 percent of children and young adults in the United States have caffeine in their systems on any given day.

Over the past 10 years, the overall percentage of children and young adults ages 2 to 22 who ingest caffeine has stayed the same, but the way they get caffeine has changed, according to a study published last month in the journal Pediatrics.

Among kids, soda consumption is down, and coffee consumption is up. In 2000, 62 percent of young caffeine consumers got their caffeine in soda. By 2010, however, just 38 percent of the caffeine ingested by kids came from soda.

And while coffee accounted for 10 percent of caffeine intake among youngsters in 2000, by 2010, it was responsible for nearly a quarter of their caffeine intake.

Tea held steady as the No. 2 way that kids got caffeine throughout the duration of the study.

Amy Branum, a health statistician with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said she was surprised that caffeine consumption among kids had not grown more.

"You hear a lot about energy drinks in particular so we expected to see an increase," she said. "That was our original hypothesis."

The percentage of kids who got caffeine from energy drinks did grow from 0 percent to 6 percent over the course of the study, but that is mostly because energy drinks were not available when the study started.

"In 2005 we saw a very small percentage, less than 5 percent of kids, who got caffeine from energy drinks, and then it was 5 percent and then it was 6 percent, so it was not exponential increases," she said.

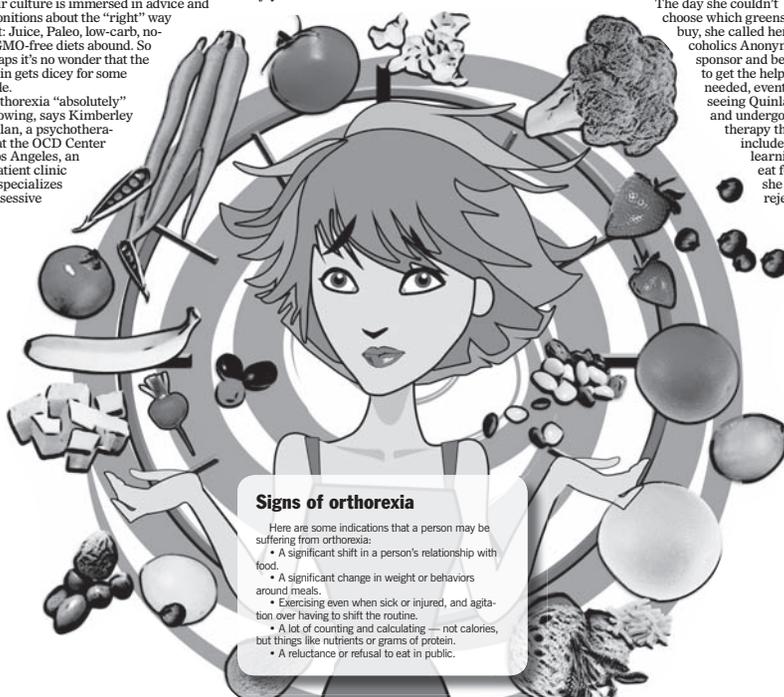
It is still unclear how harmful caffeine is to kids, but the American Academy of Pediatrics says caffeine-containing beverages should generally be avoided by children.

The study also looked at the demographics of caffeine-drinking kids. It found that non-Hispanic white children were more likely to consume caffeine than non-Hispanic black or Mexican-American kids, and that higher-income kids were more likely to consume caffeine than those who fell below the poverty threshold.

Signs of orthorexia

Here are some indications that a person may be suffering from orthorexia:

- A significant shift in a person's relationship with food.
- A significant change in weight or behaviors around meals.
- Exercising even when sick or injured, and agitation over having to shift the routine.
- A lot of counting and calculating — not calories, but things like nutrients or grams of protein.
- A reluctance or refusal to eat in public.



WEEKEND: FAMILY



PATRICK TENAN, BAY AREA NEWS GROUP/MCT

Los Altos High School counselor Judy Prothro, right, and student David Wu, 16, attend a meeting of the LETS (Let's Erase the Stigma) Club, meant to teach students about mental health and improve help-seeking behaviors. Educators are seeing an increase in the number of students suffering from depression, social phobia and anxiety.

Overloaded adolescents

Educators say depression, social anxiety rising in kids

BY SHARON NOGUCHI

San Jose (Calif.) Mercury News

A popular and accomplished Los Altos High student received a parent's text message at school last year, to come home to talk about her grades. The student and star athlete had earned all A's — except one D. She asked to be excused from English class to go to the bathroom, but she never returned. She had collapsed, suffering a disabling emotional breakdown.

The student, who didn't want to be identified because of the stigma of mental illness, is not alone.

Educators are seeing more and more students suffering from depression, anxiety and social phobia. The acuity of mental illness among students has sharpened, they say, and it's striking ever younger children, though many quietly bear the stress for years before snapping.

"I was very good at putting up a facade," said the Los Altos High student, now a senior, who later was diagnosed with major depression and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, a diagnosis that her parents resisted for six months and that many who knew her couldn't believe. "I was raised on how to sell myself, which buttons to press, which phrases to drop," she added, until one day "everything just shattered."

The increasing stress isn't just afflicting children of Silicon Valley's affluent and educated, who attend top schools among driven, college-bound peers. Though not yet reflected in lagging and incomplete national statistics, the trend appears to cut across social class, income level, ethnicity and academic ability. "We see all demographics," said Gloria Dirkmaat, special education

director in the San Mateo Union High School District.

Overfelt High on San Jose, Calif.'s East Side has seen a spike in student panic attacks. Anxiety disorder rose this past fall among teens in nearby schools as well.

"We are seeing children who are coming in with greater needs around mental health, and also seeing them at an earlier age," said

Judith Cameron of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District.

Not all schools have reported an increase in mental illness. But not every school has staff attentive to each student's well-being, nor do they have therapists and psychologists at hand.

That is changing. Since a rash of student suicides at Palo Alto high schools four years ago, the district has trained teachers, put in place safeguards, offered more counseling and now is training all students in how to intervene with those who may threaten to kill themselves.

What's behind the rise is uncertain. Theories include economic distress, dysfunctional families, absent and preoccupied busy parents, technology obsession, social media and extraordinary pressure on kids to excel.

"They're not expected to be great; they're expected to be stupendous," said Cristy Dawson, assistant principal at Los Altos High, about the ultracompetitive college-going

culture.

Sometimes, anxiety grows into phobias. "Kids are so depressed or anxious, they're not getting out of bed; they're becoming agoraphobic," afraid to appear in public, said Helen Hsu, a supervisor at the city of Fremont's Youth and Family Services, which provides therapists to several schools.

The stigma surrounding mental illness discourages some parents from seeking help.

"I've had parents refuse to sign permission for counseling for one boy," Hsu said. "They were afraid it would negatively affect his college application."

Statistics from the National Institute of Mental Health indicate that the incidence of teen mental illness was stable for 10 years through the early 2000s, the latest data available. Those surveys show that 25 percent of teens have suffered anxiety at some time in their lives, 11.2 percent major depression and 2.4 percent agoraphobia.

But mental health professionals and educators say those statistics are out of sync with what they observe.

"I see an incredible rise in the stress in families," said Barbara Neal, principal at Morgan Hill's Nordstrom Elementary School.

The high-pressure run-up to college claims many victims.

"There's a consistent urgency that you have to be the best," said Los Altos High School junior Borna Barzan, 16.

But Brenda Carrillo, student services coordinator at Palo Alto Unified, said it's important not to blame academic pressure for depression.

"A mental health condition doesn't necessarily come from high expectations," she said.

SPOUSE CALLS

Military budget cuts painful but necessary

It's not that I don't love the commissary. I do. I'm a faithful, lifelong shopper. When I was little, my mom put me in the basket on her commissary trips, with my chubby little legs dangling from on front. I put each of my children, at various times, in the same spot for my weekly commissary runs.

Drop me in a commissary anywhere in the world and I'm at home. For me, the commissary is comfortable and economical. I'm even a little sentimental about this part of my military neighborhood.

In spite of all that, I can't generate much righteous indignation over the possibility that the government might stop providing this privilege for military families and retirees. With many cuts looming over the Department of Defense, there's so much more at stake.

Yes, there are plenty of things that could and should be cut before Congress starts hacking away at military life as we know it. Just read Sen. Tom Coburn's "Wastebook," which outlines unwise government projects, to get good and mad about the way Congress has cut money. Get as irate as you want, but then get real. The cuts are coming, and the commissary is first on the block.

Although it's not easy, I say, let the bean counters have the commissaries, at least the state-side stores. There are more things in military life worth fighting for. Like manpower and training, supplies and equipment, child care and health care, and Department of Defense schools for families overseas.

Not long ago, a group of organizations banded together in support of the military. The Keep Your Promise Alliance brought together military voices spread across the globe and amplified them, and Congress heard. We said something important: Don't reduce pensions already promised to those who have served.

Cuts that would have affected all servicemembers, including those who have served 20 or 30 years, were repealed. It was a victory. Military families spoke in unison when a vital principle was at issue. When it counted, we banded together, and we were heard.

This is different. Commissary shopping is a privilege, not a promised benefit. We need to save our power and our protest for things that are far more essential to our military and our country. We should choose our battles carefully, because there are plenty more to come.

Cost-cutting measures will fall in many painful places. The good news is that the American military presence in Afghanistan is drawing down and troops are coming home. The bad news is that troop numbers are being reduced, and many military members are being discharged, like it or not. Most of us probably know someone who has been let go from active duty. Many more military families don't know if they'll have a job, let alone commissary privileges, a year from now.

Our servicemen and women have always gone to battle for our country, and they will be called on to do so again. Another war is nearly over, but other conflicts are on the horizon. Whether or not our military is ready depends in part on how the coming budget cuts are managed.

How will the community of military supporters use the power we've discovered in our unified voice? I hope it will be to urge our leaders to trim wisely; to keep our military strong, well trained and equipped for the next time they are called to protect our country or others.

It's possible that more will be asked of us than of other Americans. Since often have military families measured ourselves — our willingness to make sacrifices or dedication to duty — against anyone else? We can trim our grocery budgets, cut coupons, even plant victory gardens like our military family forebears, if that's what it takes to keep our fighting force strong.

In this economic climate, the chances are high that our community will have to speak out again on behalf of vital programs in financial jeopardy, perhaps for the wounded, surviving families or our children's education. Our voices will have more power if we don't wear them out crying over cuts that we are strong enough to take.

Terri Barnes is a military wife and mother of three. She writes Spouse Calls weekly for Stars and Stripes. She is the author of "Spouse Calls: Messages From a Military Life." Contact her at spousecalls@stripes.com.



Terri Barnes

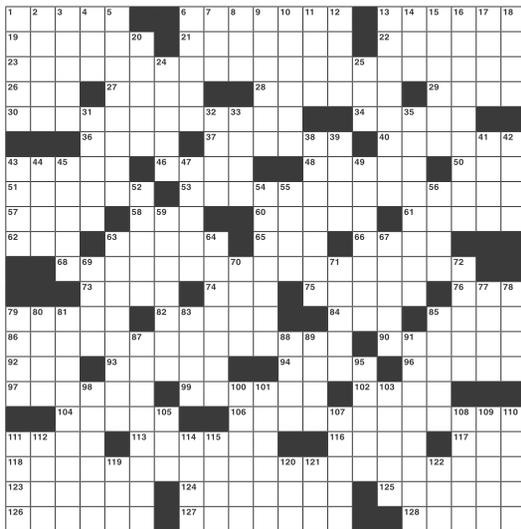
WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

OSCAR DOUBLE FEATURES By ALAN ARBESFELD / Edited by Will Shortz

- ACROSS
1 Compadre
6 Director of "Carrie" and "Scarface"
13 Muss
19 They put up walls
21 Does some farmer's work on
22 Berate
23 Nelson Mandela? [1995, 1985]
26 She, in Lisbon
27 Strike the ground in a golf swing
28 On the line
29 Fraternal group
30 One giving unreliable testimony? [1976, 1985*]
34 Blood-related
36 Gang girl
37 Paraglider
40 Bread holder?
43 Magnate
46 Alternatively
48 Like yaks and mynas
50 Muckraker Tarbell
51 Flips over
53 Reason for missing a fight! [1970*, 2009*]
57 Message from one who's all thumbs?
58 ♫

- 101 "With the jawbone of ___..." (declaration of Samson)
141 Purlicizer winner James
117 Locale in Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"
118 Seaside outing? [1955*, 1954]
123 Former Gracie Mansion resident
124 Repeat
125 Lying face up
126 ___ Channel
73 From the top
74 Hide-hair connector
75 ___ cologne
76 Put away
79 Leader of the pack
82 Insurance giant
84 Part of a jazz duo?
85 Noted provider of pictorial instructions
86 Cheesy pickup line? [1944, 1995*]
90 Bears, but not Cubs
92 Novelist Patchett
93 Forfeits
94 Degrees for attys.
96 "Hound Dog" or "What's New Pussycat"?
97 Baseball's Iron Man
99 Snowmobile brand
102 River to the Rhine
104 V-shaped fortification
106 Reason why all the computers are down? [1976*, 2005]
111 Gallic girlfriend
112 Surgically remove
113 Reciprocal raising of tariffs, e.g.
14 Lumox
15 "Amazing!"
16 Many a hanging
17 Deficiency
18 Some P.A. announcements
20 Knitted wrap
24 TurboTax option
25 "Yuk!"
31 Target competitor
32 Not yet final, legally
33 Linda of Broadway's "Jekyll & Hyde"
35 "Holy cow!"
38 Historic foil on the Oregon Trail
39 Bygone boomers
41 Mine words?
42 Tijuana treat
43 Star of "Mr. Hulot's Holiday"
44 Put the finger on
45 Poisonous
47 "The Divided Self" author
R. D. ___
49 "I'm not kidding!"
52 Enliven, with "up"
54 Like Gamal Abdel Nasser's movement
55 Jet black
56 Numismatic condition
59 Ocean routes
63 Achieved through trickery
64 "Rough day?" response
67 Expand



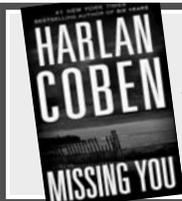
- 69 Chemistry Nobelist Otto
70 Award won 21 times by Harold Prince
71 In a stupor
72 Like fall leaves
77 Hatcher or Polo
78 Allay
79 Food thickener
80 Actress Anderson
81 Small irritations
83 Meadow mamas
85 "No one's ___ than me" (Eminem lyric)
87 Belgium or Denmark
88 Tons
89 Diddle away
91 Emphatic
95 "Beetle Bailey" figure
98 Excited about
100 Moves slowly
101 Scares off
103 Astronaut Thomas on four space shuttle flights
105 Prefix with natal
107 Western female service member
108 Dr. Alzheimer
109 Medicinal plant
110 Can't stand
111 Mimicked
112 Skirt style
114 Short cut
115 James portrayed by Beyoncé
119 Circus
120 Post-W.W. II female service member
121 From ___ Z
122 The Engineers of the N.C.A.A., for short

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RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



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FACES

Chart-breaker

Idina Menzel delights in success with song from 'Frozen'

BY MESFIN FEKADU
The Associated Press

Tony-winning Idina Menzel is enjoying massive success with "Let It Go" from the animated film "Frozen," but the entertainer is still perplexed that she's finally triumphing on the pop charts with a show tune-esque track.

"I've had a lot of self-introspection about this. This business is so hard, especially the music business, and I've tried so hard to cross over, to convince people just because I was in a Broadway show I didn't have the street cred to be a rock or a pop singer," she said in a recent interview. "And then the one time I have it, it's the arrangement from the Disney movie."

"I'm singing at the Oscars — I've never sang at the Grammys," Menzel added, laughing.

Menzel's musical moment grew even stronger when "Let It Go" won best original song at Sunday's Academy Awards (the Oscar went to the songwriters and producers, Robert Lopez and Kristen Anderson-Lopez). The song has sold close to 1.5 million tracks and is a Top 20 hit on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. The "Frozen" album, a platinum success, is the soundtrack to spend the most time at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 chart with five weeks and counting; it recently beat the record set by the "Titanic" soundtrack, which featured Celine Dion's epic, Oscar-winning "My Heart Will Go On."

"I've had ups and downs ... and I'm aware of when something's happening and has an energy of its own," said Menzel, who voices the lead character Elsa in the film, which won the best animated feature Oscar. "I'm aware enough to know of something special and to try and be in the moment."

"Let It Go" is having a pop culture moment because of the thousands of videos posted of young girls and boys — and some adults — singing covers of

the song. Cutely, Menzel took her younger sister, a second grade teacher, to the Oscars as her date ("Frozen" is about two sisters who are best friends, but have to keep distance because of Elsa's uncontrollable powers).

Menzel's song has even eclipsed Demi Lovato's version of "Let It Go" — technically the "single version." Disney Music Group president Ken Bunt said he's not surprised Menzel's song has become more successful commercially, and adds that the soundtrack is a winner because the film plays like a cartoon musical. "The songs are part of the storytelling. They're helping to tell the story of the film, and I think that's different than what we've seen in the last 15-plus years in animated movies," Bunt said.

Menzel, who has released three albums, said some members of her team want her to capitalize on her recent pop star fame:

"I'd like to, but also, that's the trap."

"Like, 'I better get in there and oh, make an album now. I have some success and attention,'" she recalled.

The 42-year-old does plan to record more music, but right now she's focused on "If/Then," the new Broadway musical she stars in. She will play the role of Elizabeth, a woman returning to New York City to rebuild her life after a divorce. The show officially opens March 30. Her latest role might seem parallel to Menzel's personal life. She and actor Taye Diggs announced last year that they were separating after 10 years of marriage.

"I've been lucky to have roles that teach me about myself at a time when I need to hear it — so I am learning while I'm in the role creating and rehearsing. Then I find a way in my own process to be able to leave it at the door and move on," she said. "But I also find a way to integrate it into what I need to do as a human being to evolve and become a better person. This particular show ... it's about a woman starting over and not trying to control every outcome and the choices we make as opposed to fate and what's destined and what isn't."

'I've had ups and downs ... and I'm aware of when something's happening and has an energy of its own.'

Idina Menzel

on the success of "Let It Go"

Actress, singer and songwriter Idina Menzel performed the Oscar award-winning song "Let It Go" from the "Frozen" soundtrack at the Academy Awards.

Dan Hallman, Invision/AP

MTV Awards pits '12 Years' against 'Hunger Games'

Oscar winner "12 Years a Slave" will face off with blockbusters like "The Hunger Games: Catching Fire" and "The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug" at the MTV Movie Awards.

MTV network announced Thursday the nominees for its 24th annual movie awards. The other movie of the year nominees are "The Wolf of Wall Street" and "American Hustle."

Most of the best male and female nominees reassemble recent Oscar contenders including Matthew McConaughey, Lupita Nyong'o and Leonardo DiCaprio.

The awards' best kiss category will have a clear favorite: Amy Adams and Jennifer Lawrence's smooch in "American Hustle."

For best shirtless performance, Jennifer Aniston from "We're the Millers" will vie with DiCaprio in "The Wolf of Wall Street."

Conan O'Brien will host the show live April 13 from Los Angeles' Nokia Theatre.

Prince Harry launches event for wounded servicemen

Britain's Prince Harry is launching the "Invictus Games," a new sporting event for wounded, injured and sick service personnel. Inspired by a visit to the Warrior Games in the United States, Harry described the Paralympic-style competition as "such a good idea by the Americans that it had to be stolen."

He told reporters Thursday that he had seen "how the power of sport can positively impact the lives of wounded, injured and sick servicemen and women."

Jaguar Land Rover will be a sponsor of the September event that will feature athletes from countries including Britain, Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Iraq, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand and the U.S.



Akon's initiative is intended to bring electricity to 1 million homes in Africa.

Other news

■ **Lady Gaga** will headline snack brand Doritos' lineup at South by Southwest in Austin, Texas. Her concert at the restaurant and music venue Stubb's Bar-B-Q on March 13 will mark the "ARTPOP" singer's first performance at the annual event. Entrance to the 2,000-capacity show will require an act of Gaga-esque unconventional behavior on social media in the days leading up to the concert.

■ **Queen** will embark on a summer tour with **Adam Lambert** as its frontman. The iconic band announced Thursday on "Good Morning America" that the 19-date U.S. tour kicks off June 19 in Chicago.

■ Grammy-nominated singer **Akon** has a goal of bringing solar-powered electricity to 1 million homes in Africa by the end of the year, and the singer is using millions of his own dollars for the cause. Akon started an initiative called "Akon Lighting Africa" this month.

From wire reports

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OPINION

Defense contractors fine with China

By WILLIAM PESEK
Bloomberg News

Let's congratulate the real winners from China's latest economic disclosures: Lockheed Martin, BAE Systems, Northrop Grumman and European Aeronautics Defense and Space.

Forget the Potemkin growth target Premier Li Keqiang served up Wednesday at the opening of China's rubber-stamp parliament, the National People's Congress. It's always hard to take Chinese numbers seriously. Who among you economists really believe Chinese leaders can simultaneously "declare war" on the pollution choking Beijing and Shanghai, reduce debt, rein in shadow banks, reverse engineer the nation away from exports and still grow 7.5 percent in 2014?

No doubt China will come awfully close to meeting that number by the end of the year — even if it doesn't. The risks of having Warren Buffett, George Soros, executives at Wal-Mart and, of course, 1.3 billion Chinese citizens publicly fretting about a China crisis are too great for Beijing to allow gross domestic product to fall to 6 percent or less.

The number coming out of Beijing that really matters is 12.2 percent. That's how much the central government is upping its defense spending this year as Li's boss, President Xi Jinping, works on building the strongest military Asia has ever seen, equipped with an expanding navy as China extends its reach into waters around the region. What better way to flex China's muscles than spending an amount — about \$132 billion — greater than the annual GDP of Hungary.

The trouble is, Chinese spending will reverberate around the region, much to the delight of the above-mentioned giants of the global defense business. It hardly matters that the U.S. military-industrial complex has largely been banned from selling its wares to China since the Tiananmen Square crackdown in 1989. Western defense contractors will get rich selling to all those in China's orbit — Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and others.

At last month's Singapore airshow, regional air forces, territorial units and owners alike were keeping shipping lanes open had suppliers salivating. North Korea's provocations have since given an additional boost to demand. On Tuesday, a North Korean



NO HAN GUAN/AP

Chinese President Xi Jinping is displayed on a screen as he attends the opening session of the annual National People's Congress in Beijing on Wednesday.

rocket missed a China Southern Airlines airplane carrying 220 passengers by all of seven minutes. Suddenly, declining U.S. budgets and the drawdown of conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan must seem a lot less problematic for weapons makers.

The bump in spending, while higher than last year's, is generally in line with China's recent expansion of its defense budgets. National People's Congress spokeswoman Fu Ying insisted that the added billions haven't altered China's path toward "peaceful development." She went on to say China needs military might to ensure peace in Asia, as a few regional rivals are promoting the idea that China is a threat. Dr. Strangelove would be proud of the logic.

In fact, China's arms buying is feeding a very dangerous dynamic in Asia. Its military expansion only gives nationalist Prime Minister Shinzo Abe more political ammunition in his fight to boost Japan's own capabilities and perhaps even rewrite its pacifist constitution. Abe's new favorite buzzphrase is "collective self-defense,"

which is his way of creatively interpreting a document imposed on the country after the war. The concept would allow Japan to engage in military operations to defend its allies.

China boasts the second-biggest military budget in the world after the United States. Officially, its outlays are still around five times less. Many analysts, though, believe China significantly understates its expenditures. Last month, the Defense Intelligence Agency estimated that the true figure in 2013, before this latest boost, was \$240 billion, about twice the declared budget.

If China believes that kind of spending will go unanswered in Tokyo, Manila, Seoul and Taipei, where governments have direct access to a U.S. military-industrial complex craving new business, it's dreaming. It's all a bit too reminiscent of the movie "Dr. Strangelove" for me. China says it's trying to reassure the world, only to unnerve it to the benefit of arms dealers.

William Pesek is a Bloomberg View columnist.

Finally, Facebook unfriends illegal gun sales

Bloomberg News editorial

Facebook has decided that it was not good for business to become a conduit for illegal gun sales. From now on it will monitor and limit gun-sale postings to discourage criminal activity. It's a smart move that the company should have made months ago.

Moms Demand Action, an advocacy group founded after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting (and supported by Michael R. Bloomberg, founder and majority owner of Bloomberg News parent Bloomberg LP), began pressuring Facebook last year to adopt basic safeguards to block illegal gun sales that users were advertising on the site. Given the resistance the company put up, you'd have thought the moms were asking its employees to ditch their hoodies for suits.

Under the company's new rules, members can still post information about guns for sale, but Facebook will take down any offers that don't include a background check.

Users younger than 18 will be blocked from viewing posts from unlicensed dealers, and all users will be allowed to flag posts that suggest criminal activity.

The Internet has become a 24/7 gun show, where unlicensed dealers offer firearms to customers who could not pass a federal background check. According to a 2011 investigation by Mayors Against Illegal Guns (co-founded by Michael Bloomberg), 1 in 30 buyers on Armslist.com, a major online sales forum, had a criminal record barring them from owning a gun. If 1 in 30 of your customers is acting illegally, that should be a major concern for your business. But not for unlicensed gun sellers, who — thanks to a feckless Congress and a timid White House — act with virtual impunity.

Armslist and similar websites have flatly refused to take basic steps to prevent illegal activity. Facebook initially resisted, too, protesting for months that it is not an e-commerce site and does not permit paid

advertising of gun sales. True enough. But it was nevertheless facilitating an underground market that allows dangerous people — as well as troubled teenagers — easy access to guns.

In October, a 15-year-old boy was arrested in Kentucky for carrying to school a loaded 9 mm handgun, which he had bought through a man he met on Facebook. Two weeks ago, a felon in Iowa was arrested for attempting to trade an AR-15 military-style rifle for a handgun on Facebook.

The new rules are hardly an intrusion into Facebook's business. The website already polices other kinds of illegal and dangerous activity, including hate speech, bullying and graphically violent content. And sites such as Google+ and Craigslist had already taken steps to prevent illegal gun activity on their sites.

Social media didn't create the online illegal gun market, but by ignoring it Facebook was feeding it and making a growing public safety problem worse.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by STARS and Stripes and other stateside syndicates.

Karzai endangering his country The Buffalo (N.Y.) News

President Barack Obama had little choice but to float the threat of the “zero option” to Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai.

Karzai’s stubborn refusal to sign the bilateral security agreement that would allow troops to stay in Afghanistan is wrongheaded and dangerous.

If the United States is forced to withdraw its troops by the end of the year, the Taliban and al-Qaida will almost certainly fill the power vacuum. The Afghan army is not ready to take over the country’s security, which is why U.S. officials want to keep as many as 10,000 troops in Afghanistan to train those soldiers.

Nearly 3,500 coalition troops, mostly American, have been killed in the 13 years of war. From that sacrifice, al-Qaida and the Taliban have not only survived, but thrived. Pulling out now would undo much of that progress. Still, the outgoing Afghanistan president is forcing the United States to plan for a pullout this year.

The White House is aware that it will soon be dealing with Karzai’s successor, and the major candidates for president have all signaled that they would sign the security agreement. But who’s to tell?

As reported in The New York Times, of the 11 parties represented in the April 5 elections, six include at least one candidate on the ticket who is widely considered to be a

Withdrawing our troops in the next 10 months should not be the way forward, and not only because it will be a logistical nightmare and invite a return of the Taliban and al-Qaida. The move could further destabilize the region if India and Pakistan, nuclear-armed neighbors who have fought each other before, enter a proxy war in Afghanistan in a bid for regional influence. ...

With Karzai continuing to spew anti-American rhetoric, he leaves the Pentagon no option except to start planning a pull-out, and hope the next president listens to reason.

Can still cut Russia from G8 The Memphis, Tenn.) Commercial Appeal

Barring an unlikely change of heart, Russia has effectively annexed the Crimea from Ukraine. The use of troops without identifying patches and insignia was a cynical and clumsy ruse that fooled no one.

Indeed, for pure cynicism it’s hard to beat the smiling Russian President Vladimir Putin and other smiling top Kremlin officials were welcoming visitors to the winter games in Sochi, an Olympic event intended to promote international harmony, planning for the incursion was likely well under way.

Even if the United States has a limited number of options to convince the Kremlin it made a mistake, one that can still be reversed. However, the United States is not without means of recourse.

The G8, the world’s eight largest industrial democracies, should not only move its upcoming summit from Sochi but consider excluding Russia altogether. It barely qualifies in any case; the World Bank ranks it as the world’s ninth largest economy and very soon it will be overtaken by India.

The United States and other Western nations should begin closing off Russia from the world banking system and denying visas to Russian officials who were actively



Afghan President Hamid Karzai walks with Sri Lankan Prime Minister Dissanayake Mudyisense Jayaratne, behind, upon arrival in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on Wednesday.

ERANGA JAYARATENA/AP

complicit in the Crimean incursion.

The United States should suspend talks on pending trade agreements with Moscow. It’s not inconceivable that Russia will overplay its hand and cause Ukraine to split into a pro-European West and a pro-Moscow East. If that happens, we should stand ready with trade and aid and eventual membership in the European Union for the Western Ukraine. ...

The Obama administration should shed its customary caution and greatly increase its efforts to stop Russian ally Bashar Assad as president of Syria. ... President Barack Obama should curb his insistence on publicly explaining and rationalizing his foreign policy initiatives. The actions should speak for themselves.

Shoot for safe jobs in Qatar The Henderson, Ky.) Gleaner

The Persian Gulf emirate of Qatar, flush with oil riches and seeking to push its way to the front of the international stage, is in the midst of an enormous, decade-long building boom to construct facilities and infrastructure for the 2022 World Cup soccer tournament, the largest and most viewed sporting event in the world.

Unfortunately, Qatar is preparing for that moment of international cooperation and sport by grievously exploiting its foreign workers, subjecting them to dangerous conditions that should be drawing forceful condemnations from the world community.

A recent report by the government of India, which supplies a large share of Qatar’s workers, suggests that more than 500 of its citizens have died there since 2012, primarily, according to The Guardian, in either on-site accidents or from working in inhumane conditions.

Nepal, another big supplier of Qatar’s labor force, recorded the deaths of 383 Nepali workers in that country in 2012-13. International observers and human rights groups have described working conditions for foreign laborers in Qatar as intolerable and inhumane, citing dangerous work sites, confiscations of passports by employers, withheld wages, oppressively overcrowded worker dormitories and limited access to food and water despite 12-hour work shifts often in triple-digit temperatures.

Although conditions are difficult for foreign workers in many Gulf countries, Amnesty International notes that Qatar is different because of its unusual exit permit system — under which foreign nationals can’t leave the country without permission from their employers — its ban on unions and the sheer size of its foreign labor force.

So why should the world care? Beyond the basic human rights issue, Qatar is hosting so many foreign workers in part to turn itself into an international tourist destination, and to prepare for the 2022 World Cup. ... Qatar needs to do more, and FIFA and

the nations involved in the World Cup should press the emirate to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of its immigrant workers.

Nigeria must stop Boko Haram Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The deteriorating situation in northeastern Nigeria created by attacks of a violent Islamist organization, Boko Haram, bears U.S. watching but not U.S. involvement.

Most of the attacks by the group trying to overthrow the government center around the city of Maiduguri are directed against schools and schoolchildren, who, in the eyes of Boko Haram, represent anti-Islamic government activity that should be exterminated.

The killings have several disturbing aspects. First is their sheer number. Boko Haram has claimed thousands of lives since 2009, including at least 74 people killed in the past three weekends. Fifty-nine children died after the militant group set fire to their boarding school on Feb. 24.

Second, the inability of Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan and his armed forces to subdue Boko Haram is shameful. The country has an impressive 500,000 troops, but they have either avoided battle with the militants or fled when encountering them. Senior military officers instead devote their time and energy to skimming off the country’s oil wealth.

Third, northeast Nigeria borders on Cameroon, Chad and Niger. This means that the disorder could spread easily to the neighbors, turning Nigeria’s national problem into a regional one. Each of the countries could also serve as a refuge for Boko Haram forces evading Nigerian efforts to bring them under control.

None of this is an American problem, however, and it should not become an excuse for U.S. military involvement in that part of West Africa. Jonathan needs to use his armed forces to put Boko Haram out of business and he must coordinate with the presidents of Cameroon, Chad and Niger to mount a regional security effort.

Governors carp as they ‘lead’ Lincoln (Neb.) Journal Star

When the nation’s governors gathered in the U.S. capital, they tried to deliver a bipartisan message that gridlock in Washington is impairing efforts to govern at the state level.

Too bad their efforts to drive home that point were undercut by their own displays of partisanship.

Gov. Mary Fallin, of Oklahoma, chairman of the National Governors’ Association, delivered the script.

“While Washington remains mostly gridlocked — preventing long-term solutions — we are addressing challenges by reforming education, building infrastructure, improving health care and developing energy resources. Governors do not have the luxury of standing still. Our

hope is that our federal partners will do their part and take action,” said Fallin, a Republican.

Chiming in was Gov. Steve Beshear, of Kentucky, a Democrat. “The whole country’s frustrated with this place,” he said.

Gov. John Hickenlooper, of Colorado, a Democrat who is vice chairman of the association, pointed out that “unlike what you see in Congress,” state officials “love to share and steal ideas from each other and see them improved.”

A month previously when delivering the governors’ State of the States address, Hickenlooper pointed out that more than 26 percent of most state budgets come from the federal government. “The politics of fiscal responsibility can no longer be centered around crisis and deadlines,” Hickenlooper said.

By the time the governors had disbanded, however, it was apparent that the same divisions that are hamstringing Washington are interfering with cooperation among states.

After a group of Democratic governors met with President Barack Obama, they threw into Republicans, Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin said Republican governors “have been distracted by a more radical social agenda that gives tax cuts to the wealthy (and asks the state to pay for them) while they cut education and the opportunities that allow us to grow jobs.”

Shumlin tried to return to the script several days later in a bipartisan media briefing after governors met with Obama. “We governors actually have to get things done. It’s not like Congress down here,” Shumlin said.

That’s when Gov. Bobby Jindal, of Louisiana, launched his now-famous tirade against Obama. “The Obama economy is now the minimum-wage economy,” Jindal said, drawing gasps that he had broken protocol. Connecticut Gov. Dan Malloy, a Democrat, claimed Jindal’s remark was “the most insane statement I’ve ever heard.”

To Americans more removed from the scene, however, it seemed like the visiting governors had succumbed to whatever virus infects Washington. It’s unfortunate the governors can’t stay on point. It’s a message Washington needs to hear.

Fracking is Obama-approved San Diego Union-Tribune

Hydraulic fracturing, the energy-exploration process known as fracking, has created huge economic booms in North Dakota, Texas, Ohio and Pennsylvania over the past decade.

Fracking — which uses underground water canons to frim up natural gas and oil supplies — has the potential to create hundreds of thousands of middle-class jobs and vast new wealth in energy-rich California, according to a USC study. This would mean a gigantic influx of new tax revenue for a state government with a long list of unmet needs.

But state environmental groups assert it is dangerous and untested, and vow to fight its use in accessing huge reservoirs of oil beneath Central California.

Thankfully, however, we have yet another reminder that the greenest president in U.S. history disagrees with this alarmism. The Obama administration recently confirmed that it had approved three new hydraulic-fracturing projects off the Santa Barbara coast.

This should matter in California’s debate over fracking. But coverage of the debate rarely notes that the Obama administration has for years dismissed fracking as a “low-potential” energy source. Obama confirmed that at his 2011 news conference in which Interior Secretary Sally Jewell said their criticism “ignores the reality” of fracking’s history.

Given their quasi-religious hatred of fossil fuels, greens aren’t likely to change their tune. But the Golden State media, at least when it’s ignoring the reality of the president’s embrace of fracking.

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	31		
32								33				
34						35		36				
			37					38				
39	40	41				42	43		44	45	46	47
48						49			50			
51						52			53			
54						55			56			

ACROSS

- 1 Glazier's sheet
- 5 Appellation
- 9 Literary collection
- 12 Teeny bit
- 13 Periods of history
- 14 Once around the track
- 15 Thing
- 16 "— She Sweet?"
- 17 Rd.
- 18 As deemed fit
- 19 Snitch
- 20 Cameo gem
- 21 Plagiarize
- 23 Hosp. hookups
- 25 Settlement
- 28 Arcane
- 32 Mistreat
- 33 Chortle
- 34 California river
- 36 Chemist's bottle
- 37 Reuters rival
- 38 Sphere
- 39 Went through channels?
- 42 Beavers' creation
- 44 St. Louis squad
- 48 Playground game
- 49 Advantage
- 50 Greatly
- 51 "— had it!"
- 52 Narrow opening
- 53 PBS science show
- 54 Catcher's place?

DOWN

- 1 Settled up
- 2 Aleutian island
- 3 Yuletide refrain
- 4 "The Phantom of the Opera" actress
- 5 At hand
- 6 Operatic showstopper
- 7 Praying figure?
- 8 "Guinness Book" suffix
- 9 "Two and a Half Men" role
- 10 Almost black
- 11 Top
- 20 Pete Seeger contemporary
- 22 Barely ahead
- 24 Re the soft palate
- 25 Taxi
- 26 Japanese sash
- 27 Drag along
- 29 Massage
- 30 Freudian concept
- 31 Your
- 35 Enigma
- 36 Halley's and Hale-Bopp
- 39 Use a teaspoon
- 40 Undulating
- 41 Writer James
- 43 Not "er"
- 45 Burn soother
- 46 Relocate
- 47 Celebrity
- 49 Kreskin's claim

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

3-8

CRYPTOQUIP

H DLHQV DB THOY SO SFFNQ BL
 FQSWZ HO DZQ WBOCQHQQWO
 K D B L Q . Z B A Q C Q L , D Z Q

K Q S L W Z A S K T L E H D N Q K K .
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: AFTER I ACCIDENTALLY ATE LOTS OF FOOD COLORING, IT FELT AS THOUGH I DYED A LITTLE INSIDE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals T

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MLB/TRACK AND FIELD

Santana trying for comeback with O's

The Associated Press

SARASOTA, Fla. — Johan Santana is hoping the Baltimore Orioles' patience with him pays off in another chance to pitch in the big leagues.



Santana was out of the majors last season while recuperating from surgery on his left shoulder. He signed a one-year, incentive-laden contract with the Orioles on Tuesday, and worked out with them for the first time on Wednesday.

The 34-year-old Santana said he's not ready to pitch in the major leagues yet. Baltimore has set a target of June 1 for his arrival.

Santana, once a dominant pitcher for the Minnesota Twins and New York Mets, is eager to show he can still be effective. Last week in a showcase for the Orioles and other major league teams, Santana struggled to throw more than 80 mph.

"As long as I don't feel anything in my arm, I'll be able to go out there. I know what to do. And again, you've got to make adjustments. There's no question about it. That's what I'm really going to do. But right now, I don't really know what my velocity will be," Santana said.

Santana was a two-time Cy Young winner with Minnesota. He pitched the only no-hitter in

the history of the New York Mets in 2012 and has a 139-78 record with a 3.20 ERA in 12 seasons. He's comfortable that no one will try to rush his comeback.

"One of the biggest things is they understand exactly where I am as far as my rehab and everything. And then they've got the confidence that they'll be able to help me to come back. We're on the same page and I'm very happy for that," Santana said.

Manager Buck Showalter has watched his team add right-hander Ubaldo Jimenez, outfielder Nelson Cruz and Santana since spring training began three weeks ago.

"I'm excited. I think it's great," Showalter said. "I'm not going to say it's a no-lose proposition. There are things you lose, but it makes a risk worth taking. I think it's exciting, the possibility down the road. I'm hoping we get five starters who pitch so well, we don't need it."

Showalter looks at Santana as a starter, but he could pitch out of the bullpen if needed. Santana hasn't made a relief appearance since 2003. More important is Baltimore's ability to be a factor in the AL East.

"This team is going to contend. And I am going to prepare to try to help as much as I can in any way. So whenever it is time for me to join the team I'm going to help as much as I can and hopefully it will be sometime soon," Santana said.



HENRY RAY ABRAMS/AP

Two-time American League Cy Young award winner Johan Santana will try to resurrect his career following a second major operation to his left shoulder by signing a minor-league deal with the Baltimore Orioles on Tuesday. After eight years with the Minnesota Twins, Santana, 34, pitched for the New York Mets for four seasons.



MARCO LONGARI/AP

Oscar Pistorius, puts his hands to his head while listening to evidence from a witness speaking about the morning of the shooting of his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp, in court on the fourth day of his trial at the high court in Pretoria, South Africa, on Thursday. Pistorius is charged with murder for the shooting death of Steenkamp on Valentine's Day in 2013.

Witness: Pistorius prayed over body of shot girlfriend

BY GERALD INRAY
AND CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA
The Associated Press

PRETORIA, South Africa — As the girlfriend he shot lay dead or dying in his home, a weeping, praying Oscar Pistorius knelt at her side and struggled to help her breathe by holding two fingers in her clenched mouth, a witness testified Thursday at the double-amputee runner's murder trial.

"I shot her. I thought she was a burglar. I shot her," radiologist Johan Stipp recalled Pistorius saying in the minutes after the fatal shooting for which the celebrated athlete is on trial for murder.

A few minutes later, Stipp said, Pistorius went upstairs — the area where he had shot Reeva Steenkamp — and then returned. At that point, Stipp said he was concerned that the gun used in the shooting had not been recovered and that a distraught Pistorius was going to harm himself. The testimony did not address what Pistorius did when he went upstairs.

The testimony in a Pretoria

court was the first detailed, public description of the immediate aftermath of the shooting of Steenkamp, a 29-year-old model, by the Olympian in the pre-dawn hours of Feb. 14 last year.

At his bail hearing last year, Pistorius said in a statement read by lawyer Barry Roux that, after he realized he had shot Steenkamp, he pulled on his prosthetic legs and tried to kick down the toilet door before finally giving up and bashing it in with a cricket bat. Inside, he said he found Steenkamp, slumped over but still alive. He said he lifted her bloodied body and carried her downstairs to seek medical help.

"It was obvious that she was mortally wounded," Stipp said as he described what he saw at Pistorius' villa. "At the bottom of the stairs ... there was a lady lying on her back on the floor."

As a radiologist, Stipp is a medical doctor with years of study, and he said he used his expertise to try to save the shot woman.

"I tried to assist her," Stipp said. "I tried to open an airway."

"She had no pulse in the neck,

she had no peripheral pulse. She had no breathing movements that she made," Stipp said.

Sitting on a courtroom bench, Pistorius bent forward and put his hand over his face, then moved them to cover both ears, as Stipp spoke. He stayed that way for a while, even when one of his lawyers reached back and touched him on the head.

"I went near her and as I bent down, I also noticed a man on the left kneeling by her side," Stipp said under questioning by prosecutor Gerrie Nel. "He had his left hand on her right groin, and his right hand, the second and third fingers in her mouth."

Stipp, who said he didn't know that man was Pistorius until later, said he tried to help but Steenkamp showed no signs of life. Stipp said he noticed a wound in her right thigh, in her upper arm and in the right side of the head, and there was brain tissue around the skull.

Pistorius is charged with murder after shooting Steenkamp three times out of four shots through a toilet door in his home.

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STARS AND STRIPES

NHL

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Boston	51	29	17	6	88	204	141
Montreal	64	35	22	7	77	184	157
Toronto	64	32	28	8	74	189	195
Tampa Bay	62	34	23	5	73	179	160
Detroit	64	33	25	8	74	189	195
Ottawa	63	27	25	11	65	177	206
Florida	62	23	32	7	53	152	201
Buffalo	61	18	35	8	44	124	183

Metropolitan Division

GP	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA		
Pittsburgh	61	41	16	4	86	195	150
Philadelphia	63	38	24	6	72	180	184
N.Y. Rangers	63	33	26	6	70	164	160
Columbus	62	32	25	5	69	184	172
Washington	63	30	26	10	68	188	152
New Jersey	63	27	23	13	67	152	156
Carolina	62	27	26	9	63	154	175
N.Y. Islanders	64	24	32	8	56	176	217

Western Conference

Central Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
St. Louis	61	42	14	6	88	204	141
Chicago	63	36	13	14	86	215	170
Colorado	62	40	17	5	85	192	166
Minnesota	62	34	21	5	75	153	166
Dallas	62	29	23	10	68	175	175
Winnipeg	63	30	26	7	67	176	181
Nashville	62	26	10	6	62	151	188

Pacific Division

GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Anaheim	63	18	41	7	52	205	154
San Jose	63	39	17	9	85	190	154
Los Angeles	63	35	22	6	76	152	134
Phoenix	62	23	31	11	67	170	180
Vancouver	64	28	26	10	66	150	167
Calgary	62	24	31	7	54	145	186
Edmonton	63	21	34	8	50	157	206

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Tuesday's Games

Boston 4, Florida 1
 New Jersey 4, Detroit 3
 Columbus 4, Dallas 2
 Colorado 4, Chicago 2
 St. Louis 2, Tampa Bay 2
 Pittsburgh 5, Nashville 1
 N.Y. Islanders 3, Winnipeg 2, OT
 Phoenix 1, Vancouver 0
 Edmonton 3, Ottawa 2, OT
 Carolina 3, San Jose 2, OT

Wednesday's Games

Montreal 4, Anaheim 5, SO
 Toronto 3, N.Y. Rangers 2, OT
 Philadelphia 6, Washington 4
 Calgary 4, Ottawa

Thursday's games

Washington at Boston
 Los Angeles at Winnipeg
 Buffalo at Tampa Bay
 Colorado at Detroit
 Columbus at Chicago
 St. Louis at Nashville
 Vancouver at Dallas
 Montreal at Phoenix
 N.Y. Islanders at Edmonton
 Carolina 3 at San Jose

Friday's games

N.Y. Rangers at Carolina
 New Jersey at Detroit
 Buffalo at Florida
 N.Y. Islanders at Calgary
 Pittsburgh at Anaheim

Saturday's games

Ottawa at Winnipeg
 St. Louis at Colorado
 Philadelphia at Toronto
 Boston at Tampa Bay
 Carolina at New Jersey
 Phoenix at Washington
 Columbus at Nashville
 Minnesota at Dallas
 Calgary at Vancouver
 Montreal at San Jose

Sunday's games

Detroit at N.Y. Rangers
 Boston at Florida
 Chicago at Buffalo
 St. Louis at Minnesota
 Los Angeles at Edmonton

Vanek, Hemsky, Moulson dealt at deadline

Teams make flurry of deals before stretch run toward Stanley Cup playoffs

BY LARRY LAGE
 The Associated Press

Here's a look at some trade-deadline observations as teams made moves — or chose not to — in an attempt to get in a better position for the playoffs in the hopes of hoisting the Stanley Cup in three months.

Some teams stayed out of the fray for big names because they didn't want to pay a steep price for a player, especially one with an expiring contract. The Montreal Canadiens, meanwhile, made what seems to be a shrewd move.

The Canadiens acquired high-scoring forward Thomas Vanek from the New York Islanders for a prospect, second-round pick and conditional fifth-round selection.

Vanek, who becomes Montreal's leading scorer, has 53 points this season and 541 in his nine-year career, which was spent in Buffalo until he was traded to the Islanders early this season.

Coming home: The banged-up Detroit Red Wings, who are without four players who could play center, brought David Legwand back to play next to his hometown of Grosse Pointe, Mich., as they cling to hopes of making the playoffs for the 23rd straight time.

If Henrik Zetterberg, Pavel Datsyuk, Stephen Weiss and Darren Helm were healthy enough to play for the Red Wings, they wouldn't have needed to make a deal with Nashville for the 33-year-old Legwand.

Zetterberg, though, will miss the remainder of the regular season with a back ailment. Datsyuk is going to rest for a few weeks in the hope that heals his left knee. Weiss has a lingering groin injury. Helm might be out indefinitely with a concussion.

Moulson on the move: Matt Moulson will play for his third team when he suits up for the Minnesota Wild. He started his fifth season with the Islanders



JEFF MCINTOSH, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Acquired earlier in the day before the trade deadline, the Ottawa Senators' Ales Hemsky, left, is checked by the Calgary Flames' TJ Brodie in the first period of Wednesday's game in Calgary, Alberta.

and was traded Oct. 27 to Buffalo with draft picks for Vanek.

The forward with 17 goals, 38 points and an expiring contract was dealt again on Wednesday along with center Cody McCormick to the Wild for a pair of second-round picks and fourth-line forward Torrey Mitchell.

Hemsky heads east: The Ottawa Senators were a buyer at the deadline, adding Ales Hemsky from the Edmonton Oilers earlier in the day. After scoring twice against the Senators on Tuesday, the 30-year-old had two shots in 15:55 minutes of ice time, playing for Ottawa on a line with Jason Spezza and Milan Michalek.

Goalie go-round: The Buffalo Sabres acquired goalie Jaroslav Halak as part of the deal and dealt him to the Washington Capitals, who hope he can help them close the regular season well enough to earn a spot in the playoffs.

The Florida Panthers are almost mathematically out of the playoff race, but they're putting Roberto Luongo back in their net for the future after giving up on him in the past.

After lots of talk about the possibility, the Vancouver Canucks finally decided to part ways with Luongo.

"When I was least expecting it, something happened," Luongo said at a news conference in South Florida.

To make room for Luongo, the Panthers traded goalie Tim Thomas to Dallas. Minnesota also acquired goalie Ilya Bryzgalov from Edmonton.

"A lot of goalies changed hands," Sabres general manager Tim Murray said. "That's surprising this late in the year that so many teams would feel they would need to make a change at that position. I haven't seen that

before."

Standing pat: The defending champion Chicago Blackhawks didn't budge from their plan to stay away from talks about possibly adding a high-profile player when the Blues made a big move to add goalie Ryan Miller.

Instead, Chicago is choosing to chase a third Stanley Cup in five seasons with players they have on their loaded roster.

"You have to be aware of what your competitors do, but can't simply react just because one team does one thing," Blackhawks general manager Stan Bowman said.

The New Jersey Devils decided to keep goaltender Martin Brodeur, the NHL's winningest goaltender, and the Canucks chose not to part ways with talented center Ryan Kesler after there was much speculation that both players would get moved.

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL/SOCCER

Proposed 10-second rule tabled

BY RALPH D. RUSSO
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Round 1 in the fight over pace of play in college football goes to those who have the need for speed.

The NCAA football rules committee tabled a proposal Wednesday that would have penalized offenses for snapping the ball before 10 seconds had run off the 40-second play clock.

After a conference call, the committee decided not to send the so-called 10-second rule to the playing rules oversight panel for approval Thursday.

"What the committee agreed to do was table that proposal to allow time to gather more information from the medical community and allow time for a broader discussion for the implications of that change," NCAA national coordinator of officials Rogers Redding told the AP on Wednesday.

Redding said the NCAA received 324 comments during the feedback period after the proposal passed and 75 percent opposed the change; 16 percent supported the proposal. The rest were uncertain.

Redding also said a new proposal was passed by the committee to expand roughing the passer to include "forcible" hits to the knees or below. That proposal now goes into a comment period before it will be taken up by the oversight panel. On Thursday, the panel will consider a proposal to drop the 15-yard penalty when an ejection for a targeting foul is overturned by video replay and no other foul is involved. Last year, if the ejection for targeting was overturned, the 15-yard penalty stood.

The 10-second proposal was touted as a move to protect players by slowing down the fast-break offenses so prevalent now in college football. Supporters, such as Alabama's Nick Saban and Arkansas' Bret Bielenia, said they were concerned about the increasing number of plays in games and the inability to substitute for fatigued defensive players.

Other coaches were infuriated by the proposal. Auburn's Gus Malzahn, Arizona's Rich Rodriguez and Texas Tech's Kliff Kingsbury were among the many critics who said there was no proof that up-tempo offenses increase the risk of injuries.

Had the rule been approved it would have gone into effect next season. The penalty for snapping the ball too fast would have been 5 yards.



PHOTOS BY PETROS KARADIAS/AP

Ukraine's Anatoliy Tymoshchuk, right, fights for the ball with the United States' Jermaine Johns during Wednesday's friendly at Antonis Papadopoulos stadium in Larnaca, Cyprus. The game was moved from Kharkiv, Ukraine, to Larnaca for security reasons.

Ukraine blanks Americans

Friendly moved from Kharkiv amid security concerns

BY MENEALOS HADJICOSTIS
The Associated Press

LARNACA, Cyprus — One banner in the stands read "Ukraine is Undivided!" on the top and "One Country — One Team!" on the bottom. Ukrainian fans sang their nation's anthem in the final moments, and some broke into a chant of "No war in Ukraine!" after the final whistle.

A small contingent of Ukrainian fans had a couple hours to forget about their nation's troubles, wave their flags and unite amid a political crisis back home. Ukraine eased past the United States 2-0 on Wednesday in an exhibition soccer game shifted from Kharkiv to a Mediterranean island nation 600 miles to the south.

"Our country is facing difficult times now, we must support our team and our country," said Oleg Ivanovskyi a fan from Kiev currently residing in Larnaca. "Ukraine lives and will live. This friendly match is important for us to show the friendship between the U.S. and Ukraine. The friendship between the two countries is more important than the score."

Andriy Yarmolenko scored in the 12th minute and Marko Devic in the 68th as Ukraine exposed the shaky American central defense of Oguchi Onyewu and Anthony Brooks.

Ukraine's players linked arms on shoulders during the national anthem of their nation, which has been disrupted by political protests followed by Russia's military intervention. Players in both starting lineups bowed their heads as they stood



Ukraine's Andriy Yarmolenko celebrates his goal in the 12th minute.

on the field before the game for a moment of silence for the victims of violence in Ukraine.

The crowd of 1,573 at Papadopoulos Stadium, which has a capacity of about 10,000, was so small that players could be heard talking to each other during the game.

"Of course we do it for our supporters, for our country," Ukraine coach Mykhailo

Fomenko said. "I asked to make our people happy. We had to show that we're all united."

U.S. coach Jurgen Klinsmann said his team's thoughts were with the Ukrainian people.

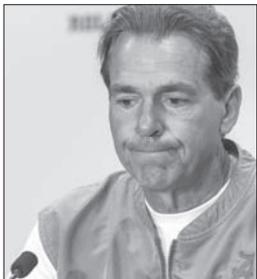
"You feel for that country. You feel for that nation, and there's nothing more than wishing them well and to solve these issues peacefully," Klinsmann said.

At 18th, Ukraine is the highest-ranking nation that failed to qualify for the World Cup. The match marked the last chance for Klinsmann to evaluate his Europe-based players before he chooses his 23-man World Cup roster in mid-May. He will use a squad mostly from Major League Soccer for an April 2 exhibition against Mexico at Glendale, Ariz.

"We're disappointed with the result," U.S. captain Clint Dempsey said. "We just have to do a better job and learn from our mistakes."

Onyewu's only prior international appearances since June 2012 were last July 5 in an exhibition against Guatemala and in a CONCACAF Gold Cup match against Cuba eight days later. He was paired in central defense with Brooks, a 21-year-old making just his third international appearance. Geoff Cameron played at right back and Edgar Castillo was on the left.

"It's understandable that collectively, it's not clicking. It would be half a miracle if we would click," Klinsmann said. "It was difficult for a lot of players to get into a rhythm."



VASHA HUNT, AL.COM/AP

Alabama coach Nick Saban is a vocal supporter of the 10-second rule.

AUTO RACING

Around the track

SPRINT CUP

This week: Kobalt 400 at Las Vegas.

TV: AFN-Xtra, 8 p.m. CET Sunday, 4 p.m. Japan & Korea Monday, 4 p.m. Track Las Vegas Motor Speedway (oval, 1.5 miles).

Race distance: 400.5 miles, 267 laps.

Last year: Matt Kenseth won in his third start for Joe Gibbs Racing.

Last week: Kevin Harvick raced to his second straight victory at Phoenix International Raceway, leading 224 of 312 laps. He's in his first season with Stewart-Haas Racing.

Fast facts: Dale Earnhardt Jr. won the season-opening Daytona 500 and finished second in Phoenix. ...

Kyle Busch won the 2009 race at his home track. ... Two-time Indy 500 winner Dan Wheldon was killed in an accident at the track during the 2011 IndyCar finale.

Next race: Food City 500, March 16, Bristol Motor Speedway, Bristol, Tenn.

Online: nascar.com
— The Associated Press

Driver standings

1. Dale Earnhardt Jr.	90
2. Brad Keselowski	84
3. Jeff Gordon	80
4. Kevin Harvick	79
5. Jimmie Johnson	78
6. Joey Logano	75
7. Matt Kenseth	70
8. Denny Hamlin	68
9. Carl Edwards	68
10. Greg Biffle	64
11. Jamie McMurray	64
12. Casey Mears	64
13. Ricky Stenhouse Jr.	63
14. Kyle Busch	64
15. Ryan Newman	61
16. Austin Dillon	56
17. Marcos Ambrose	49
18. Kasey Kahne	47

Driver to watch

For a guy who is a six-time series champion as well as the reigning Sprint Cup king, there has been little talk about **Jimmie Johnson** through the first two races of the season. Johnson has finished in the top 10 of both races (fifth at Daytona, sixth at Phoenix). More importantly, he has a series-high four victories at Las Vegas. Johnson has finished in the top 10 in two of the past three races there — leading double-digit laps in both. Johnson has led laps in 10 of his 12 starts at the track, which matches Matt Kenseth for most of any driver.



NATIONWIDE SERIES

This week: Boyd Gaming 300 at Las Vegas.

TV: AFN-Xtra, 10:15 p.m. CET Saturday, 6:30 a.m. Sunday Japan & Korea.

Track: Las Vegas Motor Speedway (oval, 1.5 miles).

Race distance: 300 miles, 200 laps.

Last year: Sam Hornish Jr. held off Kyle Busch on two late restarts.

Last week: Busch won the rain-shortened Phoenix race to become the first driver to win three consecutive Nationwide events at the track. Busch has a series-record 64 victories.

Fast facts: Daytona 500 winner Dale Earnhardt Jr. is driving the No. 88 Chevrolet. ... Busch is winless in Nationwide competition at his home track. ... Regan Smith won the season-opening race at Daytona.

Next race: Drive to Stop Diabetes 300, March 15, Bristol Motor Speedway, Bristol, Tenn.

Online: nascar.com
— The Associated Press

CAMPING WORLD TRUCKS SERIES

Next race: Kroger 250, March 29, Martinsville Speedway, Martinsville, Va.

Last race: Kyle Busch won at Daytona on Feb. 21 to become the first driver to win Truck, ARCA, Nationwide and Sprint Cup races at the track.

Online: nascar.com
— The Associated Press

NHRA MELLO YELLO DRAG RACING

Next event: NHRA Gatornationals, March 13-16, Auto Plus Raceway At Gainesville, Fla.

Last event: Alexis DeJoria raced to her first career Funny Car victory on Feb. 23, beating Robert Hight in the final at Wild Horse Pass in Chandler, Ariz. Antron Brown won in Top Fuel and Allen Johnson topped the Pro Stock field.

Online: nhra.com
— The Associated Press

Victory and validation

Phoenix win backs up Childers' move to Harvick's team

BY JENNA FRYER
The Associated Press

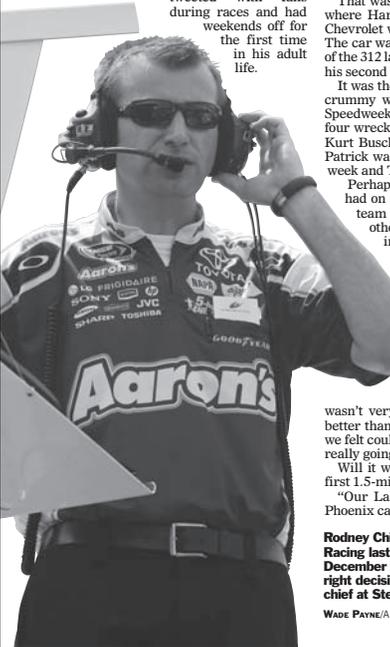
CHARLOTTE, N.C.

Rodney Childers wrestled for months with the decision to join Kevin Harvick at Stewart-Haas Racing. Just when he thought he'd made up his mind to leave Michael Waltrip Racing, he and Brian Vickers won a race together at New Hampshire.

Weeks went by after that victory last July when Childers thought his heart was truly in remaining with MWR. He woke up one day and his mind was finally made up.

"My alarm went off and it hit me, it was like, 'I need to go to Stewart-Haas and crew chief Kevin Harvick,'" Childers told The Associated Press this week.

So much for peace of mind: MWR reacted to his decision by essentially benching Childers for the rest of the season. He couldn't work for all-most six weeks. He pressure washed his house, tweeted with fans during races and had weekends off for the first time in his adult life.



In late October, MWR gave Childers his release and he was free to join to SHR and get a head-start on the 2014 season.

"When I started, it was a bit overwhelming, the way it's run is different because the crew chiefs have a lot more control," Childers said. "I got there and really wasn't happy with the way the cars were built, the equipment needed to be a lot nicer. I started to think after six or seven days, 'Man, this is going to take a long time to fix.'"

Childers grew so discouraged he thought it would be June or July before Harvick would win his first race with his new team.

Six weeks into the process, something suddenly changed.

"I left work one night and looked around and thought 'Crap, we can win one of the first four races and we can contend just like anyone else can,'" Childers said. "It had all come together so quickly, and from that moment on, our whole demeanor has been a lot different — it's been about winning."

That was evident all last weekend at Phoenix, where Harvick showed early on that his No. 4 Chevrolet was going to be a race-day contender. The car was ultimately so good, Harvick led 224 of the 312 laps Sunday en route to a victory in just his second race with SHR.

It was the lone bright spot in a second straight crummy weekend for SHR. After a disastrous Speedweeks plagued with engine issues and four wrecked cars, Phoenix wasn't much better. Kurt Busch had another engine failure, Danica Patrick was wrecked out for the second straight week and Tony Stewart finished 16th.

Perhaps because of the head-start Childers had on 2014 and Harvick's arrival, the No. 4 team doesn't have the same ailments as the other SHR cars. Harvick finished second in his Daytona qualifying race, and was in the mix at the Daytona 500 until he was part of the last-lap crash.

Childers points to a December test at Charlotte as knowing he made the right decision to move and that he and Harvick can have a special season.

"My personal validation was not winning at Phoenix but leaving that Charlotte test," he said. "We knew that car wasn't very nice and we could build cars way better than that. But to still be that fast in a car we felt could be a lot better — it was like, 'This is really going to work out.'"

Will it work out Sunday in Las Vegas, on the first 1.5-mile track of the season?

"Our Las Vegas car is even better than our Phoenix car," Childers said.

Rodney Childers, shown with Michael Waltrip Racing last season, says he knew after a December test at Charlotte that he made the right decision in becoming Kevin Harvick's crew chief at Stewart-Haas Racing.

WADE PAYNE/AP

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NBA



New York coach Mike Woodson is on the hot seat as the Knicks have gone from Eastern Conference contender to also-ran in a season filled with distractions and disappointments.

Woodson still believes he can lead Knicks back from abyss

By Jon Krawczynski
The Associated Press

TMINNEAPOLIS loses, the distractions, the disappointments. They all keep coming for the New York Knicks in a season fast taking on the look of one that can't end soon enough.

In the face of it all, coach Mike Woodson is steadfast in his belief that he's the man to lead the Knicks out of the abyss.

"My thought process will never change in terms of me being the coach here," Woodson said on Wednesday morning before the Knicks faced the Minnesota Timberwolves. "I still think I was the guy for the job. I still think I am the guy for the job and I'm going to continue to work in that area."

The Knicks have lost seven of eight games to fall to 22-40, a slide that has buried them in 11th place in the Eastern Conference with 20 games to play. Naturally, Woodson's job status has become a hot topic while a team that started the season with high expectations unravels right in front of him.

"I don't think they're tuning me out," Woodson said about his players. "They're still listening. We're just not getting it done on the basketball floor, and that's the frustrating part about it."

The problems have been many for the Knicks, who won 54 games last season and advanced to the Eastern Conference semifinals. They have had injuries to key players, J.R. Smith's suspension at the beginning of the season and inability to replicate last season's breakout year and their latest distraction — point guard Raymond Felton's recent arrest on gun charges.

Felton is 7-for-32 from the field since his arrest, and Woodson

said he spoke with his struggling point guard at length on Tuesday to try to help him through his troubles.

"I feel for Raymond because only he knows what's going on in his heart and mind in terms of how he's feeling and I don't wish that on anybody," Woodson said. "But again, my job as the coach is to shelter and pat him and try to keep him upbeat."

That seems like a lot to ask, as does even thinking about the playoffs right now. The Knicks are 5½ games behind eighth-place Atlanta (26-33). After Wednesday night's 118-106 win in Minnesota, they do hit a soft spot in the schedule with Utah, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Boston and Milwaukee all coming up.

That's about the only hope the Knicks can cling to.

"I think this year has been an unexpected struggle for us," forward Amare Stoudemire said. "We had high expectations going into the season. At the same time, it builds character. So you've got to stay optimistic and stay focused and positive about things and get things turned around."

Woodson took part of the blame, saying he has "failed somewhat" to help his players navigate all the negative issues — on and off the court — that have enveloped the team this season. As the season has worn on, and the winning streaks have been few and far between, it appears the weight of expectations has started to stifle the Knicks.

"Right now we're just in a struggling mode right now and the only people that are going to get us out of it are me and this team, these players," Woodson said. "They (are) going to have to work their asses off to get it done."

Follow Jon Krawczynski on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/APKrawczynski>

The right guy for the job?

JEFF HAYNES/AP

Design: Philadelphia plan is a 'long-range' approach to rebuilding

FROM BACK PAGE

"It's hard for me to watch Sixers basketball games," Iverson said, "so I don't."

Toss out rookie Michael-Carter Williams, injured rookie Nerlens Noel, and veteran Thaddeus Young and the Sixers are left with a bunch of no-names.

Brown was blunt after the Sixers' 13th straight loss when asked if he wondered if the Sixers would win another game. "All the time," he said, "I tell them that."

The Sixers are closing in on the longest single-season losing streak in team history, per STATS LLC.

■ 20 straight; Jan. 9, 1973-Feb. 11, 1973.

■ 15 straight; Feb. 9, 1994-March 11, 1994

■ 14 straight; Dec. 7, 1972-Jan. 6, 1973

■ 14 straight; Jan. 31, 2014-present

Up next, Western Conference-leading Oklahoma City on Tuesday.

Does anyone hear 15?

Of course, the plan set all along this season by ownership and general manager Sam Hinkie was to gut the roster until the uncompetitive franchise was pointed straight toward the No. 1 draft pick. The Sixers traded former No. 2 overall pick Evan Turner, forward Lavoy Allen and center Spencer Haynes at the deadline to dump salary, create roster space, and gobble draft picks in hopes of building a championship contender down the road.

"We're trying to acquire things that will help us move forward," Hinkie said.

The next draft pick could be the answer to their prayers, and the Sixers can sign a free agent or two and become Eastern Conference contenders within the next three or four years.

But the huge risk to Hinkie's gamble is this: Instead of drafting championship cornerstones in the lottery, he could instead land the likes of Turner and Kwame Brown, watching the short rebuild twist into a decade of wretched hoops.

The Sixers did try and become winners in the summer of 2012 with a nucleus of hometown talent in Turner, Young, and Jrue Holiday, then they made the blockbuster trade for Los Angeles Lakers center Andrew Bynum. Bynum was a bust and never played a game last season

because of bad knees, the first strain pulled in the unraveling of a franchise that reached Game 7 of the Eastern Conference semifinals in 2012.

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver defended the Sixers' plan, saying it was nothing more than a forlorn franchise taking a long-range approach toward rebuilding. In other words, he wouldn't call it tanking.

"I am concerned about the perception," he said. "I am not concerned about what is happening in Philadelphia."

The Sixers are 29th in attendance at 13,694 fans per game and Iverson's return was their first sellout of the season.

For now, all the team can do is gut out the season, and hope a glut of draft picks and about \$30 million in salary cap space is enough for Hinkie to craft a contender.

It could happen, it's in the franchise's DNA: Four seasons after the 1972-73 Sixers set an NBA record for futility (9-73), they were in the NBA finals.

"They want to win and I can see from their attitude that this is not acceptable," Iverson said. "Things will change around. I have the utmost confidence in the people running the show here that everything will turn around."

By the numbers

9-73

Record of the 1972-23 Philadelphia 76ers, an NBA record for futility in a season. This year's team is 15-46.

20

76ers' franchise record for longest single-season losing streak, set by the '72-'73 squad. This season's 76ers have lost 14 straight.

29th

76ers' attendance rank, out of 30 teams. Allen Iverson's jersey retirement ceremony last week was the first sellout of the season.

SOURCE: The Associated Press

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division			
	W	L	Pct
Toronto	13	29	35.9
Brooklyn	30	29	50.8
New York	12	40	23.1
Boston	20	41	32.8
Philadelphia	14	46	24.6

Southeast Division			
	W	L	Pct
Miami	43	29	59.6
Washington	32	29	52.5
Charlotte	28	33	45.9
Philadelphia	33	44	43.1
Orlando	19	44	30.2

Central Division			
	W	L	Pct
Indiana	46	15	75.4
Portland	14	27	33.7
Detroit	24	37	39.3
Cleveland	24	38	38.7
Milwaukee	12	40	23.0

Western Conference

Southwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
San Antonio	17	16	51.3
Houston	42	19	68.9
Dallas	36	26	58.1
Phoenix	24	26	47.9
New Orleans	37	39	48.8

Northwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
Oklahoma City	46	15	75.4
Portland	42	19	68.9
Minnesota	30	30	50.0
Denver	36	34	51.4
Utah	21	40	34.4

Pacific Division			
	W	L	Pct
L.A. Clippers	12	20	61.7
Golden State	38	24	61.3
Los Angeles	25	25	50.0
Sacramento	22	39	36.1
Oakland	21	40	34.4

× clinched playoff spot

Wednesday's games			
Washington 104, Utah 91			
Charlotte 109, Indiana 87			
Brooklyn 103, Memphis 94			
Golden State 108, Boston 88			
Chicago 105, Detroit 94			
Denver 115, Dallas 90			
New York 118, Minnesota 106			
Sacramento 116, Milwaukee 102			
Portland 102, Atlanta 78			

Thursday's games			
Miami at San Antonio			
Oklahoma City at Phoenix			
L.A. Clippers at L.A. Lakers			

Friday's games			
Memphis at Toronto			
Cleveland at Charlotte			
Brooklyn at Boston			
Utah at New York			
Detroit at Minnesota			
Milwaukee at New Orleans			
Atlanta at Houston			
L.A. Lakers at Denver			
Utah at Dallas			
Atlanta at Golden State			

Saturday's games			
Utah at Philadelphia			
New York at Cleveland			
Charlotte at Memphis			
Orlando at San Antonio			
Washington at Milwaukee			
Atlanta at L.A. Clippers			

Sunday's games			
Miami at Chicago			
Portland at Golden State			
Detroit at Boston			
Sacramento at Brooklyn			
Denver at New Orleans			
Indiana at Houston			
Portland at Minnesota			
Atlanta at Dallas			
Phoenix at Golden State			

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Pick 6: Women's tourney players to watch

By AARON BEARD
The Associated Press

It's conference tournament week in women's basketball with the NCAA tournament about two weeks away.

Here's a look at six players to watch among the top leagues in tournament action, which began with the Atlantic Coast Conference's first-round games Wednesday afternoon. Strong performances by these players could help determine whether their teams can hoist the championship trophy.



LM OTERO/AP

West Virginia senior Asya Bussie averaged 13.2 points per game for the No. 7 Mountaineers.

1 Asya Bussie, West Virginia. The 6-foot-4 senior missed last year with a knee injury, but has averaged 13.2 points and 7.7 rebounds for the No. 7 Mountaineers. She has seven double-doubles this year and nearly half her team's

blocked shots while leading active players nationally with 133 career steals. West Virginia tied No. 9 Baylor for first in the Big 12 and split the regular-season meetings, with Bussie averaging 19 points in those two games for the second-seeded Mountaineers.



TIMOTHY D. EASLEY/AP

Louisville's Shoni Schimmel guided her team to the NCAA championship game last season.

4 Shoni Schimmel, Louisville. Schimmel guided the No. 3 Cardinals to their surprising run to the NCAA tournament's championship game last year. They're the No. 2 seed in the American Athletic Conference tournament behind top-ranked and unbeaten Connecticut. The senior guard ranked among the league's leaders in numerous categories, including scoring (16.9 points), assists (3.7), free-throw percentage (77.9), three-point percentage (37.8) and made threes per game (3.2). Schimmel's ability to hit from outside could spark the Cardinals in this week's tournament.



GEORGE NIKITIN/AP

California's Reshanda Gray had eight 20-point performances.

5 Reshanda Gray, California. The 6-3 junior averaged 17.3 points and 9.1 rebounds while shooting 60 percent from the floor, good for second in the Pac-12 for the No. 20 Bears. Gray had eight 20-point performances, cracked 30 points twice and scored a career-high 43 points on 17-for-20 shooting against Washington State last week. The only hiccups came against tournament top seed Stanford, when she managed a combined seven points on 3-for-9 shooting while battling foul trouble in the two regular-season meetings. Cali is the No. 2 seed in the Pac-12 tournament.



MARY ANN CHASTAIN/AP

South Carolina sophomore Tiffany Mitchell was named the Southeastern Conference Player of the year this season.

2 Tiffany Mitchell, South Carolina. Mitchell was the Southeastern Conference player of the year in the fifth-ranked Gamecocks' historically successful season. Mitchell averaged 15.5 points and 5.6 rebounds while shooting 52 percent both from the floor and behind the three-point arc. The 5-9 sophomore guard sparked South Carolina to its first SEC regular-season title and has the Gamecocks as the No. 1 seed aiming for a first tournament title to go with it.



PAT SULLIVAN/AP

Nebraska's Jordan Hooper was the Big Ten player of the year, shooting 36 percent from three-point range during the season.

3 Jordan Hooper, Nebraska. The 6-2 senior was the Big Ten's player of the year by proving to be an inside-out threat for the No. 16 Cornhuskers. Hooper ranked third in the league in scoring (20.1) and rebounding (9.3) while shooting 36 percent from three-point percentage during the regular season, helping Nebraska finish a game behind Penn State and Michigan State atop

the league. Hooper was part of the team's 2012 run to the tournament final, a double-overtime loss to Purdue. "I think anybody who watches Jordan on a daily basis in our practices knows that Jordan works really hard," coach Connie Yori said after Hooper's final home game against Illinois. "That's how you get better — by working hard on a regular basis and being consistent. And that's what she's been."



PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

Maryland forward Alyssa Thomas, three-time ACC player of the year is averaging 18.7 points, 10.8 rebounds and 4.3 assists per game for the No. 8 Terrapins.

6 Alyssa Thomas, Maryland. The 6-2 senior is a three-time ACC player of the year for the No. 8 Maryland, the third seed in the ACC tournament. If the Terrapins have any chance of stopping Notre Dame's unbeaten run in its league debut, Thomas will have to come up big. She's averaging 18.7 points, 10.8 rebounds and 4.3

assists while shooting nearly 53 percent from the field. She also had 29 points and 12 rebounds in an 87-83 loss to the Fighting Irish on Jan. 27, which was Notre Dame's closest call all year. "A kid that can be powerful inside and pass like that is just a special, special player," Florida State coach Sue Semrau said this season.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL



RON JENNINS, FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM/MCT

Florida Gulf Coast's Chase Fielser says "we're trying to make new memories" in this year's NCAA tournament. Last year the Dunk City crew became the first No. 15 seed to reach the Sweet 16.

Here they come: Dunk City seeks more NCAA magic

BY TIM REYNOLDS
The Associated Press

Different team, different coach, different situation. Same Dunk City magic. At least, that's what Florida Gulf Coast hopes is the case.

The team that stole the show over the first week or so of last season's NCAA tournament — reaching the Sweet 16 as a No. 15 seed that ran and dunked with so much flair that it rebranded the school almost overnight — has the Big Dance within reach again, now just two home wins away from getting back to the field of 68.

The Eagles (21-11) play host to East Tennessee State (18-14) in the semifinals of the Atlantic Sun Conference tournament on Thursday night, and a

win in that game means the title game would be back in Fort Myers, or Dunk City, on Sunday.

And yes, this team still has some of the swagger left from last spring.

"I feel like when we play the right way, no matter what, nobody's going to be able to beat us."

Brett Comer
FGCU guard

He was asked to clarify — did he mean nobody in

the A-Sun, or nobody, period?

"Whatever you guys want to write it down as," a smiling Comer told a swarm of reporters after the Eagles topped Stetson in Tuesday's Atlantic Sun quarterfinals. "Whatever you guys say."

FGCU lost some of the key players from last season's team, coach Andy Enfield to USC and entered the A-Sun tournament as the No. 1 seed, unlike a year ago when the Eagles were considered an underdog.

"That bulls-eye has been on Dunk City from Game 1. And the strains seemed to show a bit early on, but the Eagles are 15-4 in their last 19

games and look to be peaking when it matters.

"They're a formidable opponent," Stetson coach Corey Williams said, "and they are going to do well."

Williams' team lost by 22 points on Tuesday night, getting into an early 33-13 deficit and never getting itself out of trouble.

In short, Williams knew that a team with as much postseason savvy as FGCU wouldn't need much help.

"Those guys are experienced," Williams said. "They've been there, done that, got the T-shirt. ... When you go to the Sweet 16 like they did, that becomes very valuable. Very valuable."

Make no mistake, Dunk City still dunks, preferring an up-tempo style with plenty of emphasis on three-pointers and ringing up plenty of points.

But overlooked last season, and probably again this season, is defense is emphasized as much as the dunks are celebrated.

"These guys will be the first to tell you, because I wasn't here last year, that when they got good defensively is when they got good," said FGCU coach Joe Dooley, the former longtime Kansas assistant who took over at Dunk City following Enfield's departure. "I think there's got to be a bunch of different ways to win. You're not always going to score."

The A-Sun quarterfinals were all business for the Eagles, who know another NCAA chance is out there. They also know that a loss now would take it all away in a hurry.

"It brings back some memories, but for the most part we're trying to make new memories," said forward Chase Fielser, probably FGCU's biggest key on both ends of the floor. "We don't want to think about the last years' ones. We want to have our new ones and try to repeat."

That's also why, Comer said, being a No. 1 seed now isn't making the Eagles think the NCAA trip is assured. Plus, they've already lost to East Tennessee once this season, so overlooking them on Thursday seems unlikely.

"At the end of the day you've got to come out and play, no matter what seed you are," Comer said. "I think that's something we kind of proved last year."

Conference tournaments

America East Conference

At Albany, N.Y.
First Round
Saturday, March 8
Vermont vs. New Hampshire
Stony Brook (N.Y.) vs. UMBC
Stony Brook vs. Maine
Hartford vs. Binghamton
Semifinals
Sunday, March 9
Vermont-New Hampshire winner vs. Albany (N.Y.)-UMBC winner
Stony Brook-Maine winner vs. Hartford-Binghamton winner
Atlantic Sun Conference
At Campus Sites
First Round
Tuesday, March 4
ETSU 89, Lipscomb 88, 207
Florida Gulf Coast 77, Stetson 55
Mercer 85, Jacksonville 64
S. Carolina-UPstate 80, North Florida 74
Semifinals
Thursday, March 6
Florida Gulf Coast vs. ETSU
Mercer vs. SC-UPstate
Championship
Sunday, March 9
Semifinal winners
Big South Conference
At Conway, S.C.
First Round
Wednesday, March 5
Winthrop 77, Liberty 65
Radford 78, Presbyterian 73
Charleston Southern 81, Campbell 71
Gardner-Webb 81, Longwood 65
Quarterfinals
Friday, March 7
High Point vs. Winthrop
UNC Asheville vs. Radford
Coastal Carolina vs. Charleston Southern
VMI vs. Gardner-Webb
Colonial Athletic Association
At Baltimore
First Round
Friday, March 7
Hofstra vs. UNC-Wilmington
Quarterfinals
Saturday, March 8
Delaware vs. Hofstra-UNCW winner
Drexel vs. Northeastern
Towson vs. James Madison
William & Mary vs. Coll. of Charleston
Horizon League
First Round
Tuesday, March 4
Milwaukee 83, Detroit 73
Oakland 96, Youngstown St. 92, OT
Valparaiso 73, Ill.-Chicago 63
At Green Bay, Wis.
Second Round
Friday, March 7
Wright State vs. Oakland
Valparaiso vs. Milwaukee
Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference
At Springfield, Mass.
First Round
Thursday, March 6
Rider vs. Monmouth (N.J.)
Saint Peter's vs. Fairfield
Marist vs. Niagara
Quarterfinals
Saturday, March 8
Iona vs. Rider-Monmouth (N.J.) winner
Canisius vs. Siena
Manhattan vs. Saint Peter's-Fairfield winner
Quinnipiac vs. Marist-Niagara winner
Missouri Valley Conference
At St. Louis
Thursday, March 6
Drake vs. Evansville
Bradley vs. Loyola of Chicago
Quarterfinals
Friday, March 7
Wichita St. vs. Drake-Evansville winner
Missouri State vs. Loyola of Chicago
Indiana State vs. Bradley-Loyola of Chicago
Northern Iowa vs. Southern Illinois

Northeast Conference

At Higher-Seeded Team
First Round
Wednesday, March 5
Robert Morris 60, Fairleigh Dickinson 53
Wagner 83, CCSU 59
St. Francis (Pa.) 55, Bryant 54
Mount St. Mary's 72, St. Francis (N.Y.) 71
Semifinals
Saturday, March 8
St. Francis (Pa.) at Robert Morris
Mount St. Mary's at Wagner
Ohio Valley Conference
At Nashville, Tenn.
First Round
Wednesday, March 5
Tennessee Tech 71, SIU Edwardsville 67
Southeast Missouri 79, Eastern Illinois 61
Second Round
Thursday, March 6
Morehead State vs. Tennessee Tech
Eastern Kentucky vs. SE Missouri
Semifinals
Friday, March 7
Belmont vs. Morehead State-Tennessee Tech winner
Murray State vs. E. Kentucky-SE Missouri
Patriot League
At Campus Sites
First Round
Monday, March 3
Colgate 57, Navy 7
Lafayette 50, Loyola (Md.) 71
Quarterfinals
Wednesday, March 5
Boston University 91, Lafayette 54
Army 72, Bucknell 71
Holy Cross 54, Lehigh 48
American 59, Colgate 59
Semifinals
Saturday, March 8
Boston University vs. Army
American vs. Holy Cross
Southern Conference
At Asheville, N.C.
First Round
Friday, March 7
Samford vs. Appalachian State
Georgia Southern vs. Furman
UNC Greensboro vs. The Citadel
Quarterfinals
Saturday, March 8
Davidson vs. Samford-Appalachian State winner
Elon vs. Western Carolina
Chattanooga vs. Georgia Southern
Furman winner
Wofford vs. UNC-CE The Citadel winner
Summit League
At Sioux Falls, S.D.
First Round
Saturday, March 8
IPFW vs. IUPUI
Sunday, March 9
Denver vs. South Dakota
South Dakota St. vs. Western Illinois
Semifinals
Monday, March 10
North Dakota State vs. Denver-South Dakota winner
IPFW-IUPUI winner vs. South Dakota State-Western Illinois winner
Championship
Tuesday, March 11
Semifinal winners
West Coast Conference
At Las Vegas
First Round
Thursday, March 6
Portland vs. Loyola Marymount
Pacific vs. Santa Clara
Quarterfinals
Saturday, March 8
San Francisco vs. San Diego
BYU vs. Portland-Loyola Marymount winner
Gonzaga vs. Pacific-Santa Clara winner
Saint Mary's vs. Pepperdine



JANET BLACKMON MORGAN, THE SUN NEWS/PA

Campbell's Kyle' Harner, left, tries to find a way around Charleston Southern's Paul Gombweur during a Big South Conference tournament game on Wednesday in Conway, S.C.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Brown has Mustangs running wild

73-year-old coach puts SMU on verge of first NCAA berth since 1993

By KENT BABB
The Washington Post

THEY returned home after sunset, a mostly silent flight and a devastating loss behind them.

Southern Methodist University, perhaps the biggest surprise of the college basketball season, had lost on the afternoon of Feb. 16 to last-place Temple. This was how the Mustangs reacted to being ranked for the first time since 1985; this was apparently how they handled pressure and success.

As the team turned a corner toward campus, someone leaned toward second-year Coach Larry Brown. "Larry," the 73-year-old coach recalled, "there's going to be a bunch of kids camping out."

Team members, including Brown, left the bus and walked to find students waiting in tents and professors ready to applaud their team despite the 71-64 loss a few hours earlier.

"They really care about us," freshman shooting guard Keith Frazier said.

No. 18 SMU is 23-6 and a near lock for its first NCAA tournament appearance since 1993. But this team's greatest accomplishment has been making people care again. This is the same school whose football team was infamously handed the NCAA's only "death penalty," the suspension of its 1987 season and a sanction that crippled a once-powerful pro-

gram. The men's basketball team, once a contender, didn't do much to distract its poor students and alumni; over the dozen years that followed the football team's punishment, the Mustangs had four winning seasons. More recently, Matt Doherty, the former North Carolina star who also coached the Tar Heels, went 80-109 in six seasons before being fired in March 2012.

Brown, who has held 12 head coaching jobs since 1974, had been out of work since he was fired in December 2010 by the NBA's Charlotte Bobcats. He spent the next months hounding old friends, trying to stay involved in a game that made him a legend. Brown, who led Kansas to the 1988 NCAA championship and the Detroit Pistons to the 2004 NBA title, visited Maryland's Mark Turgeon, Villanova's Jay Wright, Kansas's Bill Self and Kentucky's John Calipari — watching practices and imparting wisdom, sure, but mostly keeping his mind and body active.

"They never realized they were helping me," Brown said of the coaches who let him hang around. "They were saving my life."

SMU approached Brown in 2012 after swinging and missing on other, younger coaching candidates. This was still SMU, and it was clear few

established coaches were willing to stake their reputations on such a reclamation project. Brown, though, was bored. He didn't know much about the program's history, other than a win here while he was coaching Kansas. School officials told him this would be a period of transition at SMU; it was moving from Conference USA to the newly formed American Athletic Conference, which would bring television money and exposure. All the school needed was a committed coach, and before long, Brown agreed to take the job — his first college coaching position since cutting down the nets with Kansas in '88.

"I thought we could do something here if we showed kids we cared," he said.

Brown met with his new team before the 2012-13 season, telling players that they would emphasize discipline and fundamentals and an inside-out, physical style. Then he told them he came to Dallas to, believe it or not, win a national championship.

"It kind of seemed out of the ordinary," said Williams, the Dallas area native who transferred to SMU before the 2010-11 season.

The Mustangs went 15-17 in Brown's first season, hampered by injuries and a roster unaccustomed to Brown's style. Some players left, but others gave the old man a chance. Frazier, who grew up in Dallas and became a McDonald's all-American in high school, spoke with Brown during the recruiting process. Frazier's options were Arizona, Texas A&M and SMU; one of those

schools, his friends told him, didn't belong. "People were looking at me like: 'Why?'" Frazier recalled.

Then Brown shared his expectations. Yes, SMU would win big, maybe sooner than anyone thought.

"He told me: 'We're going to be good with or without you,'" said Frazier, the centerpiece of Brown's 2013 recruiting class. "That kind of just humbled me, and maybe I can be part of something special. . . . I was like, 'Why not?' I just figured I would take a chance."

The Mustangs started this season 10-2, and suddenly fans began noticing. Then they beat Connecticut and then Memphis, both wins coming on SMU's 58-year-old home court where average attendance has more than doubled since Brown's arrival. SMU stomped then-No. 7 Cincinnati last month, and a fraternity printed T-shirts that read "The House That Larry Built."

Before practice began on a recent Friday afternoon, someone pointed toward the faded banners hanging inside the Mustangs' practice gym. They date from 1935, telling the story of conference titles and NCAA tournament appearances. After 1993, though, there is nothing but blank wall.

Williams said he expects to see a fresh banner raised soon — and, to him, it'll mean more than just an appearance or a big win. It'll mean something changed here.

"Man," he said, "we were the team that turned SMU around; we were the team that made SMU relevant again."

"I thought we could do something here if we showed kids we cared."

Larry Brown

SMU coach on the Mustangs, who are on the verge of their first NCAA tournament appearance since 1993

PHOTO BY JOHN F. RHODES/AP

Brown by the numbers

12 23-6 1

Number of head coaching positions the notoriously nomadic Larry Brown has held, and counting, since 1974.

SMU's record in Brown's second season as head coach. The No. 18 Mustangs are ranked nationally for the first time since 1985.

Brown is the only coach to have ever won both NBA and NCAA titles. He was named to the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2002.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Making progress

WCC might get 3 teams in NCAA tourney

By JANIE MCCAULEY
The Associated Press

When Jamie Zaninovich looks at the West Coast Conference men's basketball tournament as commissioner, he envisions two teams from the conference reaching the NCAA tournament and putting the WCC on the national map once more.

As a member of the NCAA tournament men's basketball selection committee, he has to take a hard look at the entire league while wearing a different hat. The conference tournament winner crowned next week in Las Vegas will receive an automatic bid and the WCC also could land an at-large berth, considering both regular-season champion Gonzaga and runner-up BYU each have impressive RPI rankings based on strength of their nonconference schedule and results. The Zags rank 25th in RPI nationally and BYU is 35th.

While Gonzaga (25-6, 15-3 WCC) won its 13th conference regular-season title in 14 years, Zaninovich is celebrating all but two of the 10 conference schools finishing at or above .500. Newcomer Pacific (15-14) made a tough transi-

tion back into what has become one of the more competitive mid-major conferences.

"You probably have the most competitive year we've had in our modern era," Zaninovich said leading up to Thursday's start of the conference tournament. "Four teams are in the top (66) in the RPI, which is almost half the teams."

As the WCC tournament kicks off its sixth year at Orleans Arena in Las Vegas, the tournament will now feature a more traditional 10-team bracket in which the top two seeds don't get byes for the first two rounds but rather just one bye. Five games will be televised on either ESPN or ESPN2.

"Between the parity in the conference and the fact that the playing field in terms of the format of the tournament has really leveled, it's going to be really interesting," said Zaninovich, the WCC's sixth-year commissioner.

"It's more of a traditional format. We weren't ready for it until recent-

ly. And you trade some things off, we're not protecting our higher seeds as much. We felt like we were headed toward more depth, where this was the right way to do it."

While San Francisco produced the program's first 20-win season in 32 years under 2014 WCC Coach of the Year Rex Walters, some nonconference losses could cost the third-seeded Dons if they don't capture the WCC tournament and automatic bid. USF is riding a season-best five-game winning streak into the tournament and went 9-2 down the stretch.

"We think we have two teams — commissioner hat on, men's basketball committee hat off — that are pretty well positioned for NCAA selection, so we hope that this format can only help them," Zaninovich said. "Then we play the games on a neutral site with a bunch of 18-20 year olds and we see what happens."

The WCC expanded in July 2011 for the first time in 32 years with the addition of BYU, then added Pacific. No more expansion any time soon, Zaninovich insists. Pacific — which plays 85 miles away from San Francisco in Stockton — joins USF, Santa Clara and Saint Mary's in the Bay Area as the WCC's North-



TRAVIS HEYING, WICHITA EAGLE/MCT

Gonzaga's Przemek Karnowski dunks against Kansas State during the second half on Dec. 21.

ern California representatives.

"Oh yeah, we're good," Zaninovich said with a smile. "Our conference didn't expand for 30 years and we've added two in three years. The one thing that's been really cool with Pacific's addition that we did get, that we hoped we'd get, is that these four Bay Area rivalries, being sort of the renaissance of those."

The WCC is signed to stay at Orleans Arena through 2016, with option years beyond that. In 2009, the league moved its conference tournament to a neutral site and away from one of the school's campuses. The WCC women's tournament also is played at Orleans Arena.



Did you know

Gonzaga won the West Coast Conference's regular-season title this season for the 13th time in the last 14 years.



SOURCE: The Associated Press

Brigham Young's Kyle Collinsworth, center, drives between Saint Mary's Stephen Holt, left, and Beau Levesque during the first half at McKeon Pavilion in Moraga, Calif., on Feb. 15.

Jose Carlos Fajardo, Bay Area News Group/MCT

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Did you know

Creighton's highest seeding in the NCAA tournament was No. 6 in 2003, but it lost to Central Michigan in the first round. The Bluejays have never advanced past the second round.

SOURCE: The Associated Press



Beast of the East

Creighton's McDermott shows he's the best player in college basketball

By ERIC OLSON
The Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb.

It's been a season of no regrets for Creighton's Doug McDermott. He's answered naysayers who predicted he wouldn't be tough enough for the Big East. The fact is, he's never been better.

The two-time first-team All-American has added to his offensive repertoire and is the nation's leading scorer. He is considered the front-runner for the Wooden Award as college basketball's best player and has become one of the top 10 scorers in history while keeping the 13th-ranked Bluejays (23-6, 13-4) in the Big East race and on track for their highest NCAA tournament seed.

McDermott said he's never second-guessed his decision to hold off on the NBA so he could play his senior season for his father-coach, Greg McDermott.

"When college is over, I'll definitely realize how special it was," Doug said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I'm just living in the moment right now. If I were the national player of the year, that would be really cool, something that has never been in my wildest dreams. Everything is a bonus from here on out."

McDermott was the premier player in the Missouri Valley Conference as a sophomore and junior. With nothing left to prove in the Valley, he said he probably would have declared for the draft last year if Creighton hadn't joined the Big East.

He was projected to be a middle- to late first-round pick if he had turned pro, and his decision to stay in school was a calculated risk. It's turned out he's probably enhanced his draft stock. His scoring averages have improved from 22.9 points a game as a sophomore and 23.2 as a junior to 25.9 this season.

"It's really incredible that someone who has achieved at the level he's achieved at has been able to continue to add things to his game," Greg McDermott said. "That's difficult to do when you're on top. Sometimes the subtle changes don't really show up in your game. In Doug's case, he's made noticeable improve-

ments to his game each year."

McDermott has long complemented his 46-percent career three-point shooting with crafty moves in the post. This season he has added to his mid-range game with a reliable fade-away jumper.

What the 6-foot-8, 225-pound McDermott lacks in athleticism he has made up for with his understanding of the game.

"He's as complete a player — and I do not use that term loosely — with size as I've ever seen," Villanova coach Jay Wright said. "There's nothing he can't do. He can take you off the dribble. He guards. He rebounds. He moves without the ball. He seals. He's the best post player that we've played against and he's the best perimeter player."

Greg and Doug McDermott went to Creighton as a package deal in 2010. Greg left an Iowa State program in decline for the familiarity of the Missouri Valley, where he had played and coached at Northern Iowa. Doug, who wasn't even a starter at Ames (Iowa) High until his junior year, originally had signed to play at Northern Iowa. Ben Jacobson, the coach at UNI and a McDermott family friend, released Doug from his letter of intent so he could join Greg in Omaha.

McDermott has scored 30 or more points nine times this season and has hit three game-winning shots. He went into Tuesday's game at Georgetown having scored 25 or more points in eight straight games. He had 22 in the 75-63 loss to the Hoyas.

"It's just been fun to do this together and to really enjoy this last season knowing that the clock's ticking," Greg said.

Back-to-back road losses mean the Bluejays can do no better than the sixth-ranked Villanova for the regular-season title. Doug McDermott will play his final home game Sunday against Providence and then it will be off to New York for the Big East tournament.

He has passed Danny Manning for No. 9 on the all-time scoring list and is four points behind Oscar Robertson. McDermott brushes off discussion about where he'll finish. He said it's all about where the team finishes. The Bluejays have never been higher than a No. 6 NCAA seed or advanced past the round of 32.

"We want to go further than last year. That's my main goal," Doug said. "So I think anything less than that would be, in my mind, disappointing. I just want to carry this team as far as we can go."

By the numbers

25.9

Doug McDermott's scoring per game average.

9

Number of 30-point games this year for McDermott.

8

Streak of games with 25 points or more for McDermott.

SOURCE: The Associated Press



Creighton senior Doug McDermott hasn't regretted his decision to return to school for his senior season. The two-time first-team All-American leads the nation in scoring and is a front-runner for the Wooden Award as college hoops' best player.

Charles Fox, Philadelphia Inquirer or MCT

SPORTS



Return of Dunk City?
Florida Gulf Coast making push
for NCAA tourney berth | Page 60

Disaster by design

The 76ers may be the worst team in the NBA.
They wouldn't have it any other way.

BY DAN GELSTON
The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA

For one night in Philadelphia, the spirit of a big NBA game was back.

The packed house roared when Allen Iverson celebrated his No. 3 being retired, chanted "MVP!" when he thanked the fans, and yelled for basketball greats Julius Erving and Moses Malone.

The atmosphere was electric — then the 76ers pulled the plug.

By the fourth quarter, most of the 20,856 fans fled the Wells Fargo Center, the memories of Iverson's homecoming trumping the idea of

sticking around to watch the home team limp toward another loss. The few that remained cheered only when the Sixers scored 100 points, netting them some free fast food.

Coach Brett Brown loved Saturday's atmo-

sphere that was pulled straight from 2001.

"You think, 'What can happen if we ever get this right?'" he said.

Can they?

The Sixers have been every bit as bad as their preseason billing, and have lost 14 straight games to drop their record to 15-45. They've lost 12 straight at home and are freefalling their way toward catching Milwaukee (11-47) for the worst record in the NBA. They had allowed 100-plus points in 13 straight games before Sunday, their longest single-season streak since 1989.

Iverson, one of the 76ers' all-time greats, has tuned out the Sixers as if they were a coach talking about practice.

**SEE DESIGN ON
PAGE 58**

76ers rookie Michel Carter-Williams has been one of the few bright spots on a Philadelphia squad that appears destined for the worst record in the NBA.

RON CORTES/MCT

Multiple players moved at trade deadline | NHL, Page 55

