

STARS AND STRIPES®

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Volume 73, No. 116 ©SS 2014 FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2014

平成26年9月5日 第三種郵便物認可 日刊(土日除く)
発行所 星島新聞社 〒100-0032 東京都港区六本木7丁目22番12号 定価 ¥100 **\$1.00**

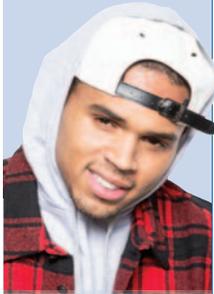
WEEKEND EDITION EUROPE & PACIFIC



Burger King taps into its DARK SIDE

Fast-food joint launches all 'black' burger in Japan
Food & Dining | Page 32

MUSIC



Hard times don't keep Chris Brown down on 'X'

Page 36

HEALTH & FITNESS



Hookahs aren't harmless, experts warn

Page 40

NFL



It's payback time as Ravens' Smith faces Panthers

Back page



WAR ON TERRORISM

BUILDING PRESSURE

Fighters from a militant Shiite group known as *Asaib Ahl al-Haq*, or *League of the Righteous*, prepare for clashes with militants from the *Islamic State* group in *Jurf al-Sakhar*, Iraq, 43 miles south of Baghdad, on Wednesday.

US-led strikes hit militant-held oil sites in Syria

By DIAA HADID
The Associated Press

BEIRUT — U.S.-led airstrikes targeted Syrian oil installations held by the extremist *Islamic State* group overnight and early Thursday, killing at least 19 people as more families of militants left their key stronghold, fearing further raids, activists said.

The strikes aimed to knock out one of the militants' main revenue streams: black market oil sales that the U.S. says earn as much

‘God has imposed on you just a part of what you have done, but you are even more criminal.’

Mahmoud Abdul-Razak
on an anti-Islamic State Facebook page

as \$2 million a day for the group. That funding, along with a further estimated \$1 million a day from other smuggling, theft and extor-

tion, has been crucial in enabling the extremists to overrun much of Syria and neighboring Iraq.

The United States and its Arab allies have been carrying out strikes in Syria for the past three days, trying to uproot the group, which has carved out a self-declared state straddling the border, imposed a harsh version of Islamic law and massacred opponents. The U.S. has been conducting air raids against the group in neighboring Iraq for more than a month.

SEE STRIKES ON PAGE 8

INSIDE

■ US preparing to deploy division headquarters to Mideast, Army chief says
Page 10

■ Turkey joins coalition fight against Islamic State after weeks of reluctance
Page 9

QUOTE
OF THE DAY

“We put everything we earn back into conservation. Hunters pay us to save the rhino and repopulate Africa with native species.”

— Peter Oberem, game rancher who uses fees generated by antelope hunting to fund rhino programs

See story on Page 14

TOP CLICKS
ON STRIPES.COM

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3. USS Compens XO reportedly drove away after flunking alcohol test
4. Troops aiding Ebola effort in Africa have minimal chance of infection, USARAF chief says
5. Burger King's black bun in Japan weird, but not much fun

COMING
SOON



Shifting Gears

What's next for Ferrari after Montezemolo?

TODAY
IN STRIPES

- American Roundup 20
- Business 51
- Classified 50, 52-53
- Comics 42, 46-47
- Crossword 42, 46-47
- Faces 43
- Faith 19
- Opinion 44-45
- Sports 53-64
- Weather 51
- Weekend 21-42

AFGHANISTAN

Abdullah willing to work with Ghani

By SLOBODAN LEKIC
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Abdullah Abdullah, runner-up in Afghanistan's long, contentious electoral process, on Thursday pledged to work with President-elect Ashraf Ghani in a government of national unity “to save Afghanistan.”

Under a U.S.-brokered power-sharing arrangement, Abdullah is expected to occupy the new post of chief executive, who will report to the president on the implementation of government policies.

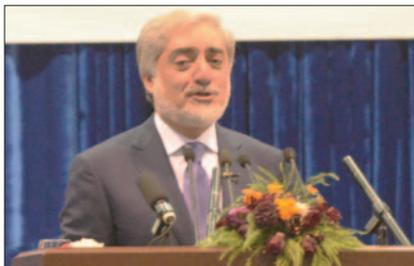
“We will work as a team and we hope we will fulfill the hopes and dreams of our people,” Abdullah told cheering supporters in Kabul. “The people should not have any concerns that (we) will divide the country.”

The agreement, hammered out after three months of bitter disputes over accusations of massive electoral fraud in the June 14 runoff, provides for Ghani and Abdullah to name key members of the new government on a near-equal basis — thus diluting the president's current sweeping political powers, senior Western diplomats in Kabul said.

However, many of the chief executive's powers, although outlined in the power-sharing agreement — even the creation of the position — are yet to be confirmed “by presidential decree,” according to the agreement.

The chief executive will chair a new Council of Ministers, which will “implement the executive affairs of the government,” while the president will chair the Cabinet, according to the agreement.

Despite the agreement's stipulation that the president and chief executive are “honor-bound” to work together in a “spirit of partnership,” analysts have warned that the compromise between the two men remains fragile due to



JAD SLEIMAN/Stars and Stripes

Abdullah Abdullah, runner-up in Afghanistan's contentious election, addresses supporters Thursday in his first speech since an agreement was reached to form a national unity government with President-elect Ashraf Ghani.

the long and acrimonious election battle. While their domestic policies do not differ significantly, they draw their support from different regions and ethnic groups.

However, a senior State Department official noted in a briefing with reporters in New York on Wednesday that Ghani and Abdullah had worked together before when they were finance minister and foreign minister, respectively, under current President Hamid Karzai.

“They have a good working relationship,” the official said, and have been careful not to accuse each other personally of fraud or undermining the process.

“They really do have this very common conceptual vision of what needs to be done on behalf of the Afghan people,” the official said, speaking on condition of not being further identified.

But they will have to work out the exact division of duties, the official said, adding it was likely “the president will lay out broad policy issues, strategic issues, and that the chief executive officer will help to actually implement and operationalize them.”

Human rights groups have criticized the power-sharing deal as undemocratic.

Although the national election commission this week proclaimed Ghani the winner following a U.N.-supervised recount of all 8 million ballots, it has not yet released the final results for fear that they could reignite tensions between the two camps.

Western diplomats who helped break the electoral deadlock said Abdullah had accepted the novel position of chief executive, but

he has not himself yet confirmed that.

“I think that the political deal was the best option and alternative to overcome the situation,” Abdullah said. “We signed (it) to save Afghanistan.”

One of the priority tasks, he said, would be to fix the electoral system, which allowed extensive voter fraud in presidential elections in 2009 and this year.

“One of our other main goals is to bring reforms in the electoral system so that in the future no candidate should face the same problems we faced,” he said.

Another key part of the agreement provides for a constitutional Loya Jirga — or council of tribal elders and other dignitaries — to meet in 2016 to reform the constitution. The major change would involve amending the current presidential system for a parliamentary one, creating the position of prime minister to assume most administrative powers, diplomats said.

Both Abdullah and Ghani are committed to signing the bilateral security agreement with Washington, allowing nearly 10,000 U.S. servicemembers — mainly advisers and counterterrorism teams — to remain in Afghanistan past December. NATO allies are expected to contribute another 2,000-3,000 troops to the follow-on mission.

The State Department official said he expected the agreement to be “fully signed in a matter of days after the new administration starts.” Ghani is to be inaugurated Monday.

Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report.
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Afghanistan's national unity government

Last week, Abdullah Abdullah and President-elect Ashraf Ghani signed an agreement to form a national unity government in Afghanistan. Here are some of the most important points in that agreement:

- **The creation of the post of chief executive officer.** The new position, to be filled by Abdullah or one of his nominees, will manage a Council of Ministers. The CEO will report to the president on the implementation of government policies, while not affecting the powers of the president under the current constitution.
- **Council of Ministers.** A soon-to-be-created body comprising Cabinet ministers and the CEO that will be charged with managing the administration of the country.

- **Parity in nominations.** Government officials will be nominated by both the president and the CEO on the basis of merit.

- **Electoral commission.** A special commission will be formed to draft changes to the constitution. Its members will be named by the president in consultation with the chief executive officer.

- **Electronic voting cards.** Will be introduced to all citizens in order to avoid future voting fraud.

- **Constitutional reform.** In 2016, the president is to convene a Loya Jirga, a council of elders and other key officials from across the country, to discuss amending the constitution, which now provides for a presidential system with a powerful head of state, into what Western officials say will probably be a parliamentary system in which voters will elect political parties in national election.

- **The creation of the post of executive prime minister.** The constitutional reform will likely include the creation of a post of prime minister, who would form and run the Cabinet that would have the support of a parliamentary majority. The president's powers would be reduced, although the head of state would not be relegated to a ceremonial role, according to Western officials.

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MILITARY

Korea threat underscores US land mine exemption

By Ashley Rowland
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The Obama administration's decision to remove all of its land mine stockpiles, except those in South Korea, underscores the constant security threat posed by North Korea and serves as a reminder that little has changed in the decades-old military standoff here.

"No other country besides South Korea faces such a huge military confrontation like the one on the Korean Peninsula. There's no comparison," a spokesman for South Korea's Ministry of National Defense said, speaking on customary condition of anonymity.

Citing security concerns, neither South Korean defense officials nor U.S. Forces Korea would disclose how many land mines are buried in the 160-mile-long, 2.5-mile-wide Demilitarized Zone that separates the two Koreas, though officials have previously estimated it's more than 1 million.

Meant to deter a land attack, the mines are part of the massive arrays of military forces and equipment that make the DMZ the most heavily guarded — and dangerous — border in the world.

The buffer zone — and particularly the Joint Security Area — is a surreal place, part tense border, part tourist attraction. Busloads of visitors tour infiltration tunnels dug by the North and watch as troops from both countries glare at each other from across the Military Demarcation Line, separated by just yards in land but miles in dueling ideologies.

Both Koreas maintain villages in the DMZ. On the southern side is Daesungdong, home to some 200 people and a small school where students practice evacuating in case hostilities flare up. On the northern side is the ghost



Stars and Stripes

Members of the United Nations Command Security Battalion guard the southern side of the Joint Security Area in the Demilitarized Zone in Korea in May.

village of Kijong-dong, which has no residents and is best known for the massive North Korean flag that flies over its empty buildings.

While a ground invasion might seem unlikely, it is estimated that millions of North Korean soldiers would flood across the border if war broke out again. Vestiges of the past remain along the northern edge of the South's territory, like the overpasses rigged to explode and stymie the advancement of North Korean troops. South Korean troops posted in lookout points along barb-wired riverbanks scan for infiltrators.

Along with hundreds of thousands of South Korean military personnel, more than 28,500 U.S. troops are stationed on the peninsula as a deterrent to the North, whose nuclear capabilities remain a key security concern in the region. The North periodically threatens to use them against South Korea and even the U.S. mainland.

Earlier this week, the State Department announced the U.S. is exempting the Korean peninsula from a pledge it made earlier this year to quit producing land mines and get rid of its current stockpiles.

Another Defense Ministry spokesman said South Korea respects and welcomes the U.S. decision and views it as a sign that the U.S. understands its "unique" security situation.

"We have confidence in the strength of combined U.S.-ROK capabilities to defend against North Korean military action and maintain appropriate capabilities to meet U.S. defense requirements to defend the ROK," the spokesman said.

South Korea has spent millions of dollars to remove land mines south of the DMZ in recent years, primarily from rural areas. A legacy of the 1950-53 Korean War, they may be unearthed due to farming or uncovered by heavy rains and washed far from where they were buried.

"Land mines still hurt people, and there are still so many," a spokesperson for South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said previously.

While the war ended in armistice, the two Koreas, along with the U.S., remain technically at war.

Stars and Stripes' Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this story.
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Congress OKs \$50M for Ebola mission

By Andrew Taylor
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Top lawmakers in the U.S. Congress have approved the use of leftover Afghanistan war money to fight Ebola in West Africa.

But just \$50 million of President Barack Obama's \$1 billion request has been approved for immediate use, under the opaque process by which congressional panels approve transfers between agency accounts, a House Appropriations Committee spokeswoman said.

The final hurdle was the approval of Sen. James Inhofe, the top Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, who protested that the Pentagon has provided virtually no details about the mission, which would send the military to Africa to help with the logistics of fighting the dangerous virus. Inhofe signed off on the request Wednesday.

The rest of the money will be released after the Pentagon offers a detailed spending plan and briefs key congressional committees on the mission.

The Pentagon mission will involve airlifting personnel, medical supplies and equipment such as tents to house Ebola victims and isolate people exposed to the virus. U.S. officials said earlier this week that more than 1 million people could be infected by the disease if it is left unchecked.

Inhofe's move came shortly after Rep. Harold Rogers, the Republican chairman of the powerful Appropriations Committee, separately gave the nod for the money while demanding additional information about the mission.

Also Thursday, Obama offered a chilling assessment of international efforts to stem a deadly Ebola outbreak, saying the world has not done enough to respond to a health crisis that poses a growing threat to regional and global security.

"There is still a significant gap between where we are and where we need to be," Obama said Thursday in remarks to a high-level United Nations meeting on Ebola. "The crisis in West Africa is the largest ever outbreak of Ebola with more than 6,200 people believed to have been sickened, almost half of whom have died."

South Korea buying 40 F-35A jets from Lockheed for \$7B

By Ashley Rowland
and Yoo Kyong Chang
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea is buying 40 F-35A fighter jets from Lockheed Martin to upgrade its aging fleet of aircraft and help counter the threat posed by North Korea, officials said Wednesday.

The approximately \$7 billion acquisition from the Bethesda, Md.-based company marks South

Korea's single largest weapons purchase, said Paek Youn-Hyung, a spokesman for the South's Defense Acquisitions Program Administration.

"The biggest reason for the purchase is that we need higher-performance aircraft," he said.

South Korea announced its intent to sign a Letter of Offer and Acceptance with Lockheed Martin on Wednesday after several months of negotiation at the price. The aircraft will be delivered

to the South between 2018 and 2021, Paek said.

The F-35A Lightning II is a fifth-generation fighter with advanced stealth technology and sustainment, according to Lockheed Martin.

The agreement makes South Korea the third Foreign Military Sales country to buy the F-35, along with Israel and Japan, which announced their purchases in 2010 and 2011, respectively, a company statement said.

The purchase of the fighter jets is designed to replace South Korea's aging fleet of F-4 and F-5 fighter jets, South Korea's Yonhap News reported.

Paek said Thursday that the DAPA has also finalized plans to produce 120 mid-sized, next-generation fighter jets at the cost of approximately \$8.5 billion. The upgraded aircraft will be deployed beginning in 2025, he said.

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VETERANS

‘Not enough people to run the program’

Hobbled VA caregiver program dims chance of program expansion

By TOM PHILPOTT

For older generations of spouses, mothers and other family caregivers of severely disabled veterans, the startling feature of the Family Caregiver Program that Congress enacted in 2010 was its exclusivity.

The unprecedented package of caregiver benefits includes training to help to ensure patient safety; cash stipends to partially compensate for caregiver time and effort; caregiver health coverage if they have none; and guaranteed periods of respite to protect against burnout.

The comprehensive package, however, isn't available to most family members who are primary caregivers to severely ill and injured veterans.

To control costs, Congress opened the program only to caregivers of veterans severely "injured," either physically or mentally, in the line of duty or after Sept. 11, 2001. It is not open to families of severely disabled vets injured before 9/11. It also is not open to post-9/11 veterans who have severe service-connected illnesses rather than injuries.

Advocates for those forgotten families had hoped a successful launch of a limited program would spur Congress to expand eligibility and end the inequity it created. That hope is set back by a new Government Accountability Office report on the 3-year-old Family Caregiver Program, which finds it's under-resourced and, for the most part, in disarray.

For starters, officials woefully underestimated the number of veterans eligible for the program, for which Congress set aside \$1.5 billion to fund it through fiscal 2015. The VA forecast 4,000 approved caregivers by September this year. Instead, by last May, 15,600 had been approved out of an applicant pool of 30,400. Roughly 500 more are being approved monthly, the GAO report stated, with no slowdown in sight.

Eight of every 10 approved caregivers are spouses of veterans. Ninety-two percent of them care for veterans with mental health diagnoses, mostly post-traumatic stress disorder (63 percent) or traumatic brain injury (26 percent). Stipends, based on local hourly caregiver wages, are set at three levels. Caregivers providing a maximum of 40 hours of care per week receive an average of \$2,320 a month, or \$27,830 annually. About 6,000 caregivers qualify for this level.

An equal number provide a maximum of 25 hours of care per week and draw an average \$1,470

a month. And 3,600 caregivers provide 10 hours of care weekly and receive on average \$600 a month, or \$7,200 a year.

Because the VA "significantly underestimated caregivers' demand for services," the GAO reports, VA medical centers were unprepared to meet program demands, particularly the workload on primary care physicians and nurses who must form into teams and visit homes of applicants to assess health needs and determine appropriate levels of caregiver support.

The GAO also found that the computer system hastily adopted to track caregivers and workloads is inadequate and must be replaced if officials are to have data needed to monitor and resource the program effectively.

As the program now operates, a mandate to complete application reviews within 45 days is routinely missed. Also, some physicians and nurses have rebelled against the extra work, declining to visit homes to assess caregiver skills, veterans' eligibility and proper level of support.

VA regional health officials told the GAO, the report says, "that their facilities do not have suffi-

cient medical staff to effectively manage the additional workload" from the program, "which they view as collateral duty."

There are funds for medical centers to hire more Caregiver Support Coordinators who run the program locally by providing stipends and support services, and arranging CHAMPVA medical coverage for eligible caregivers. But, the GAO found some medical centers reluctant to hire enough CSCs for fear that funds available now to support caregivers will dry up in time, forcing medical centers to pinch spending on more critical priorities.

As a result, the GAO reports, the ratio of coordinators to caregivers varies widely across the VA medical system. For example, there is one coordinator for six caregivers in Fayetteville, Ark., and also only one to support 251 caregivers at the Atlanta VA medical center in Decatur, Ga.

The workload on some CSCs is

so heavy that caregivers can't get their phone calls returned. One caregiver said she became desperate to learn how to manage a veteran with increasingly severe symptoms of traumatic brain injury. Her coordinator finally said her request was one of many and the program was too taxed to provide counseling. The caregiver had to turn to an outside non-profit organization for help.

"There are just not enough people to run the program," said Adrian Atizado, assistant legislative director for Disabled American Veterans, who has monitored the caregiver program since its start. "There are not enough support coordinators, not enough interdisciplinary providers and nurses to do the home visits. Also, keep in mind this program doesn't exist anywhere else. This is the first of its kind so it's going to have problems."

All of the research and the studies that Congress relied to shape the program, Atizado added, had focused on caregiver needs for the elderly, not for a younger generation of veterans struggling to re-engage with society.

Atizado noted that most caregivers of severely disabled veter-

ans, including most represented by DAV, aren't eligible for the comprehensive caregiver benefit, although they want to be and should be.

"We have always asked that eligibility include illness so if you come down with multiple sclerosis or ALS, a prevalent disease for the veteran population that served in Southwest Asia for whatever reason, that should be covered," Atizado said. "Now, it is not allowed."

Caregivers of older vets also should be covered, he said. Most caregivers of severely disabled Vietnam and Korean War veterans "are spending their estates to support their veterans at home. They haven't worked in 20 to 30 years. They have no Social Security or retirement. These are the veterans and caregivers we're fighting to get expansion for."

Problems with the current program don't help, he agreed.

The VA concurred with GAO recommendations to fix the program so eligible caregivers get the services they need. How long it will take is not yet clear.

Send comments to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centreville, VA, 20120, email mlupdate@aol.com or twitter: Tom Philpott @Military_Update.

MILITARY UPDATE



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MILITARY

Army says increase in sexual assault reports is good news

By **MATT MILLHAM**
Stars and Stripes

WIESBADEN, Germany — Reports of sexual assaults in U.S. Army Europe jumped 131 percent in fiscal 2013.

That sounds bad, but Lt. Gen. Donald M. Campbell Jr., who heads the command, sees it as a sign of progress in the service's fight to put a stop to sexual violence in the ranks.

The increase indicates that victims "are developing trust and confidence in their leaders that something will happen if they report it," Campbell said Tuesday as he opened a two-day sexual assault summit with senior Army officers and enlisted leaders from across the continent. "That's a good-news story."

While such a view is counterintuitive, other experts at the meeting agreed.

A Stars and Stripes reporter attended the first day of the summit but agreed not to identify speakers or participants in open sessions so as to encourage openness among those attending. Interviews with a small number of attendees and presenters were conducted outside the main sessions.

The summit was the second that Campbell has convened in as many years as his command wrestles with myriad issues surrounding sexual assault. Last year's came after a Defense Department report revealed that a majority of rapes and similar offenses were going unreported. That led some in Congress to call for commanders to be stripped of the authority to investigate and prosecute such crimes. The lack of reporting, critics said, indicated that victims didn't have confidence in their chain of command to take care of them and prosecute perpetrators.

Campbell said the Army has improved on that point, "but we've still got work to do in the trenches, where the rubber meets the road."

While leadership now understands the significance of the problem, lower-ranking soldiers are sometimes loath to confront their peers or turn them in for sexual offenses, Campbell said. One staff sergeant he spoke with before the summit told the general, "You're still classified as a Blue Falcon" — a slang term meaning backstabber — "if you report it or intervene," Campbell said.

Nevertheless, one senior civilian who deals directly with the Army's program to combat sexual harassment and assaults said military leaders in the Pentagon have a sense that things are "getting better" because of the increased reporting. At some point, officials acknowledged, the number of reports — along with actual assaults — will have to decrease, or the president and Congress will lose faith in the military's ability to deal with the problem.

"The White House has been relatively quiet, especially on the topic of the disposition of sexual assault — of leaving it with the commanders or taking away from the commanders," one official said. "That's been the big controversy on the Hill."

Senators have lined up on opposite sides of the aisle on the issue. Sen. Claire McCaskill of Missouri wants commanders to retain the authority to deal with it; Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York wants commanders stripped of that power.

A Pentagon report due Dec. 1 to President Barack Obama will probably provoke the White House to weigh in, the official said.



MATT MILLHAM/Stars and Stripes

Lt. Gen. Donald M. Campbell Jr., commander of U.S. Army Europe, gives opening remarks Tuesday at a summit on sexual assault.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, defense think tank RAND Corp. wrapped up a DOD-wide survey for another report on sexual assault, which many predict will show an increase in the number of sexual assault reports in all the services.

Media coverage of the May 2013 report, which estimated that 26,000 assaults occurred across the military in 2012, created a "perception that it [sexual assault] happens more in the military than in the general public," said Andrea Quijada, executive director of the Media Literacy Project, who spoke at the USAREUR summit. However, she said she did not know if that were true.

Still, experts in the Army's sexual assault prevention community are looking forward to the results of the RAND study because it will,

for the first time, provide a breakdown of the types of offenses.

That will make it hard to compare to previous studies, said Russel W. Strand, chief of the U.S. Army military police school's Behavioral Sciences Education and Training Division, but it will likely provide a more reliable "base line" indicating just how prevalent various sexual offenses are.

Strand said he and others in the sexual-assault-prevention community are concerned that the expected increase in reports could be used as an argument for stripping commanders of the authority to deal with the issue before they have a clearer picture of whether the military's efforts are working.

"These things take time."

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MILITARY

Ex-drill sergeant guilty of sexual misconduct

By **JESSE BOGAN**
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo.

— A judge Wednesday found a former drill sergeant guilty of most allegations against him after a three-day court-martial that shined a light on the issue of sexual misconduct in the military.

The military judge in the case recommended a 20-year sentence.

Army Staff Sgt. Angel M. Sanchez, 30, who wore a decorated uniform during the hearings, already had pleaded guilty to disobeying orders by having sex with three female trainees.

"I'm sorry I betrayed your trust, all of you," Sanchez said after the ruling. He apologized to the military, the victims and his family.

"I accept responsibility for my actions, I pray that all of you realize that person who went through that stretch is not actually me," he said.

Sanchez mainly held his composure when he faced the hearing room's audience, which included his victims. He cracked speaking about his family.

"To my daughters, who are not here, your daddy loves you, and I'll see you soon."

Sanchez was found guilty of



Sanchez

18 specifications of three charges. Those include some of the most egregious sexual assault claims against him, such as forcing sexual favors from young trainees.

He was found not guilty of nine specifications, including an allegation that he forced an Army medic to have sex with him at an outpost in Afghanistan.

During sentencing testimony Wednesday, one of the victims told the court she felt "disgusted" by what Sanchez did to her and "I am too scared to look at him."

Another said a superior officer had told her company of trainees on post several months ago not to report allegations of sexual assault. She suggested that the implications of the issue were broader than the Sanchez case.

"I have issues of trusting those who are in charge of me," the woman, now a military police officer, testified, especially after a lieutenant colonel "telling you not to make any more allegations."

On Tuesday, a different witness

testified about a similar statement made by the highest-ranking noncommissioned officer who oversees the 14th Military Police Brigade on post.

Sanchez also was found guilty of abusive sexual contact involving a fellow drill sergeant. That drill sergeant wept from the stand Wednesday, saying she was going to quit the Army out of guilt for not reporting the crime earlier.

"I was supposed to be that strong female leader they could look up to," she testified about female trainees. "I have decided that I am done. I don't feel that I am the top 10 percent. I don't think I am good enough to do this."

Drill sergeants are supposed to be an example of the best in the Army.

Capt. Tyler Heimann, a prosecutor in the case, honed in on that standard during sentencing, telling the judge that Sanchez instead used his authority role to fulfill "his own pornographic fantasy."

"We can't have this in the Army," Heimann said, asking for a 25-year sentence. "If you sexually assault our junior soldiers, you must go to jail and you must go to jail for a long time ... he must now soak up the pain and bear it on himself."

Recent reforms to the mili-

tary justice system were aimed at encouraging better reporting of sexual misconduct, victims' rights and accountability of perpetrators. There were an estimated 26,000 incidents of unwanted sexual contact in the military in 2012. Of those, only 3,374 were reported and 238 of those resulted in convictions.

But officials are cautiously optimistic about what they say was a 50 percent jump in the willingness to report sex crimes in the military from 2012 to 2013.

The 20-year sentence recommended by Third Circuit Court Chief Trial Judge Col. Jeffery Nance will now go to Maj. Gen. Leslie Smith, the post commander, for approval. Smith can lower the sentence, but cannot overturn it.

Nance seemed to agree with prosecutors who portrayed Sanchez as an abusive predator who used omnipotent drill sergeant authority to isolate and prey on victims.

"Absolute power corrupts absolutely," Capt. Stephen Altizer, another prosecutor, told the court in closing arguments Wednesday, adding that Sanchez "applied that power over these weak trainees."

Several claims were dismissed since Sanchez was charged in May. Prosecutors had asked the

judge to convict Sanchez on all the remaining claims, which involved the sexual assault and harassment of eight women. Apart from a fellow drill sergeant, all of the women were subordinate to Sanchez.

Defense attorney Ernesto Gaspin described his client in closing arguments merely as a "jokester" who went too far, but not a predator.

"Sgt. Sanchez is simply too immature to fulfill his role as a drill sergeant," Gaspin said.

He discredited trainees who had testified that Sanchez forced them to perform oral sex on him. "Oral sex always exhibits a certain degree of consent," he told the court, adding that "what this case is really about is consent and conjecture."

As a drill sergeant, Sanchez was assigned to E Company, 701st Military Police Battalion, 14th Military Police Brigade.

A fellow drill sergeant with E Company said during his sentencing testimony that the unit has been stigmatized by the case.

"They are less receptive of what we have to say," Staff Sgt. Jesus Cabrera said of trainees.

Instead of saying, "Yes, drill sergeant," or "No, drill sergeant," he said they were now asking "why" when told to do something.



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WAR ON TERRORISM

Strikes: Some welcome attacks as others in Syria see benefit for Assad

FROM FRONT PAGE

On the ground, Syria's civil war continued unabated, with government forces taking back an important industrial area near Damascus from the rebels, Syrian activists said while also accusing President Bashar Assad's troops of using an unspecified deadly chemical substance.

The Islamic State group is believed to control 11 oil fields in Iraq and Syria. The new strikes involved six U.S. warplanes and 10 more from the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, mainly hitting small-scale refineries used by the militants in eastern Syria, Pentagon spokesman Rear Adm. John Kirby said.

At least 14 militants were killed, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the Syrian conflict through a network of activists on the ground.

The Observatory and two independent activists said another five people who lived near one of the refineries were also killed, likely the wives and children of the militants.

Kirby said the Pentagon is looking into reports that civilians were killed but has no evidence yet.

Other strikes hit checkpoints, compounds, training grounds and vehicles of the Islamic State in northern and eastern Syria. The raids also targeted two Syrian military bases that had been seized by the Islamic State group. In the town of eastern Syria's town of Mayadeen, a building used by the militants as an Islamic court also was hit.

Apparently fearing more strikes, the militants reduced the number of fighters on their checkpoints, activists said. More families of Islamic State militants left Raqqa city, the group's de facto capital,

heading eastward, they added.

For some Syrians, the airstrikes were bitter justice.

"God has imposed on you just a part of what you have done, but you are even more criminal," Mahmoud Abdul-Razak wrote on an anti-Islamic State group Facebook page, saying that the airstrikes were divine punishment.

Other Syrians see coalition strikes as serving Assad's interests because they do not target government forces and because some have hit the Nusra Front, Syria's al-Qaida affiliate that has battled both the Islamic State and Assad's forces.

Some opposition activists saw the strikes on the Nusra Front as a sign of a wider operation targeting other Syrian militants among the anti-Assad rebellion seen as a potential threat by the United States.

"All of this is to serve Bashar, and yet people believe the Americans are protecting the Syrians," said Saad Saad, writing on the same Facebook page.

A rebel fighter in the northern Aleppo province who only identified himself by his nom de guerre, Ramy, said the U.S. airstrikes appear coordinated with the flights of Syrian military planes, which would disappear from the skies shortly before the U.S.-led coalition aircraft show up.

"It's like they coordinate with each other," Ramy told The Associated Press over Skype. "The American planes come and they go."

The Observatory reported fewer Syrian airstrikes in the past three days — likely because of the cessation of the coalition aircraft. Still, bombing continued in a rebel-held area near Damascus, killing at least eight people, including children, reported the Observatory and activist Hasan Taqaidin.

Syrian Kurdish fighters also reported



SHAWN NICKEL, COURTESY OF THE U.S. AIR FORCE/AP

A U.S. Navy F-18E Super Hornet receives fuel Tuesday from a KC-135 Stratotanker over northern Iraq after conducting airstrikes as part of U.S.-led coalition airstrikes on the Islamic State group and other targets in Syria.

three airstrikes near a northern Kurdish area, which Islamic State militants have been attacking for nearly a week, prompting more than 150,000 people to flee to neighboring Turkey.

The Kurdish fighters said the U.S.-led coalition was likely behind the strikes in the area known as Kobani, or Ayn Arab. A spokesman for the fighters, Reydour Khalil, pleaded again that the coalition coordinate with them, claiming that the overnight strikes were not effective and struck abandoned bases.

"We are willing to cooperate with the U.S. and its alliance" by providing positions and information about the militants' movements, Khalil said.

Elsewhere in Syria, Assad's forces

wrested back a rebel-held industrial area near Damascus after months of clashes, the Observatory and pro-Assad media in Lebanon said.

The government forces seized the Adra industrial zone after rebels accused them of using chemical explosives there on Wednesday. Footage of the wounded from the incident, in which six people were killed, showed men jerking uncontrollably and struggling to breathe before their bodies went limp.

The footage, posted on social networks, appeared genuine and consistent with The Associated Press reporting of the event depicted. But the footage did not suggest what chemical — if any — was used on the men.

US airstrikes kill one of Khorasan group's leaders

By KAREN DEYOUNG, GREG MILLER and LOVEDAY MORRIS
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — U.S. missile strikes against an obscure al-Qaida cell in Syria killed at least one of the group's leaders, delivering what U.S. officials described as a significant but not decisive blow to a terrorist group accused of plotting attacks against Europe and the United States.

U.S. officials said late Wednesday that American intelligence agencies had not confirmed reports that the leader of al-Qaida's Khorasan group, Muhsin al-Fadhli, was the senior operative killed in the barrage of strikes west of Aleppo. But that prospect was a focus of ongoing U.S. efforts to assess the impact of the operation, carried out simultaneously with a broader offensive against the Islamic State.

The growing certainty that a senior operative were killed came as U.S. officials provided new details on the origins of the murky terrorist entity and the status of its alleged attempt to mount an attack against Western targets.

Although Obama administration officials described the group as "near the execution phase" of a potentially major terrorist plot,

other U.S. officials on Wednesday said there was no indication that it had selected targets, deployed operatives or otherwise set a specific plan into motion.

Airstrikes Monday night in Kafr Deryan, a village in northwest Syria's Idlib province, killed about 50 fighters at a base belonging to the Nusra Front, an al-Qaida-linked rebel group in which they were embedded, rebel fighters in the area said. Khorasan operatives have also joined Ahrar al-Sham, another hard-line rebel group, said Faisal al-Hashemi, an Iraqi analyst specializing in jihadist organizations.

"The Khorasan group" is the name U.S. intelligence uses to refer to dozens of al-Qaida-affiliated foreign fighters who have moved into Syria during the past two years from Iran, Afghanistan, Yemen and elsewhere in the region.

Among the rebels, the foreigners are referred to as "Khorasani," a reference from early Islamic texts to a geographic area primarily in western Afghanistan but also including parts of eastern Iran, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. The online magazine of al-Qaida in Afghanistan is called "Vanguards of Khorasan."

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Turkey is ready to join coalition against militants

By LARA JAKES
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Moving from reluctance to refusal and finally to acceptance, Turkey is joining its NATO allies and fellow Sunni Muslim nations in a coalition to destroy the Islamic State militant group. But the U.S. is still waiting for details of any new, specific aid and is warily watching to make sure Ankara keeps its commitments.

Turkey, often described as a difficult partner with much of the West, long has resisted being used as a launching pad for foreign troops to attack neighboring nations. Now, however, Turkey faces threats from militants who have overtaken much of northern Syria and Iraq, as well as from Kurdish separatists whom Ankara considers terrorists.

And while Turkey has been overwhelmed by an estimated 1.5 million Syrian and Iraqi refugees, it also has been accused of harboring — or at least helping — Islamic State militants by letting them traffic fighters, weapons and lucrative oil shipments over its borders.

Until this week, Turkey was coy about whether it would contribute to a coalition of what the U.S. says is about 50 countries that have united against the Islamic State group. For months, the world largely gave Turkey a pass as it

sought to free 49 of its diplomats, family members and employees who were kidnapped by the militants from the Turkish Consulate in Mosul, Iraq, in June.

The hostages were freed last weekend, prompting the U.S. and other coalition nations to press Turkey on what it would contribute.

"We'll always get more than people think we're officially getting, and we're always going to get less than what we would want," James F. Jeffrey, former U.S. ambassador to Turkey and Iraq, told a forum this week at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "In the end, Turkey will come along."

Jeffrey was speaking specifically about whether Ankara will let allied forces launch airstrikes from the U.S. air base at Incirlik, located within 100 miles of the Syrian border. Yet his words aptly sum up what U.S. officials describe as Washington's overall relationship with Turkey: a push-and-pull diplomacy that rarely saves either nation.

But after holding out on joining the coalition, Turkey finally may have the upper hand. As it is heavily courted by the U.S. and allies in the West and Mideast to contribute, Turkey is now in a better position than ever to demand international support for its own needs — in the name of fighting the Islamic State group.



SETH WENIG/AP

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan speaks Wednesday during the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly at U.N. headquarters.

Senior State Department officials on Wednesday said Turkey has yet to pledge any specific new assistance to the coalition, despite a number of meetings on the matter that are continuing. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the negotiations by name.

A day earlier, Secretary of State John Kerry confidently announced that "Turkey is very much part of this coalition and Turkey will be very engaged on the front lines of this effort." Now that the hostages have been freed, Kerry said: "Turkey is ready to conduct additional efforts along with the rest of us. ... We're very grateful for that willingness."

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told reporters Tuesday, "Of course, we will do our part."

He was not specific about what Turkey might contribute but said

"it includes everything — both military and political," according to Turkey's DHA news agency. Next month, Turkey's parliament is expected to consider a yearlong extension of a mandate allowing Turkish troops to go to Iraq and Syria. Only a small number of Turkish troops are currently in Syria, to protect a historical site that dates to the Ottoman Empire, although Turkish forces routinely patrol its borders with both Iraq and Syria.

At summits this month in Wales and Saudi Arabia, Turkey balked at committing specific assistance, despite its proximity to Iraq and Syria and its unique role as both a NATO partner and overwhelmingly Sunni state. But its reluctance to pitch in on similar global efforts is rooted much deeper and includes Turkey's 2003 refusal to be a staging ground for U.S. troops headed to Iraq.

US bases in Turkey warned of attacks

Stars and Stripes

Incirlik Air Base and other U.S. military installations in Turkey are on heightened alert after the U.S. Embassy issued a security warning urging Americans in the country to be vigilant against potential terrorist attacks.

"We are in close coordination with the embassy regarding security in Turkey," Col. Craig Wills, 39th Air Base Wing commander, was quoted as saying in a news release issued Thursday to Stars and Stripes. "We are constantly assessing the threat environment and adjusting our posture as required."

"We have shared this security message directly with our population and our leadership is working diligently to ensure our personnel have the latest information available to them," he wrote.

In a warning issued late Wednesday, the embassy said there was no information about any specific threats, but the possibility of terrorist attacks in Turkey "remains high," according to a report by The Associated Press.

It asked that Americans be cautious in Turkey's eastern and southeastern provinces near the borders with Syria and Iraq.

Incirlik, in southeastern Turkey, is the largest U.S. military installation in the country and all active-duty personnel and most civilians based there live in housing on base.

From staff and wire reports

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Army sending division HQ element to Iraq

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The 1st Infantry Division headquarters will deploy to Iraq soon as the U.S. military steps up its campaign against Islamic State militants, the Pentagon said Thursday.

It will be the first division headquarters assigned to Iraq since U.S. forces withdrew from the country at the end of 2011.

About 500 soldiers from the Fort Riley, Kan.-based division will be heading for the Middle East next month, with about 200 of them going to Iraq, Pentagon press secretary Rear Adm. John Kirby said.

"They're going to provide command and control of the ongoing advise-and-assist effort in support of Iraqi and peshmarga forces. And they're going to continue to help us all degrade and destroy ISIL," Kirby told reporters, refer-

ring to the Islamic State by one of its acronyms.

The new headquarters personnel will be working out of the joint operations centers in Baghdad and the Kurdish capital of Irbil, as well as the Iraqi defense ministry.

An advance element of about 10 soldiers is already in Iraq preparing for the influx of the additional troops, Kirby said. "Those soldiers will not be mixed with Iraqi units in the field, Kirby said.

Rick Brennan, Jr., an analyst at the Rand Corporation and former Army officer, said sending elements of a division headquarters and the general officer who will come with it will make it easier to coordinate with international allies as well as Iraqi and Kurdish forces in the campaign against the Islamic State, which overran about a third of Iraq in an offensive last summer.

Brennan said the decision also

signals that there will be a significant U.S. military presence in Iraq for the foreseeable future.

"I think there's been recognition that what the United States is doing in Iraq is going to be long term," he said.

Kirby acknowledged that the time line for the headquarters element's mission is uncertain.

"I just don't know for how long they're going to be there or how and when they might be replaced," he said.

The 200 headquarters servicemembers who will be in Iraq are part of the increase of 475 troops that President Barack Obama authorized two weeks ago. The U.S. has been sending teams of military advisers to assist the Iraqi security forces, many of whom have performed poorly against the Islamic State.

The other 300 troops from the 1st Infantry will be supporting the command-and-control mis-

sion from outside Iraq. Kirby did not identify the country where they will be stationed.

The deployment of the new headquarters element is just the latest part of a steadily increasing U.S. force presence in Iraq. The process began three months ago after the Islamic State militant group overran much of the country.

On June 16, the Pentagon announced that 275 personnel were being sent to secure U.S. diplomatic facilities as Islamic State fighters marched towards Baghdad. Later that month, President Barack Obama announced that 300 troops would go the country to assess the capabilities of the troubled Iraqi security forces and set up joint operations centers near Baghdad and Irbil. About 200 additional security personnel were sent around that time.

On Aug. 8, the U.S. military

commenced airstrikes and humanitarian airdrops as terrorists threatened to massacre religious minorities near Mossul Sinjar. The bombing campaign later expanded to support Iraqi ground forces and to prevent the militants from damaging the Mosul and Haditha dams.

Two weeks ago, after a new Iraqi government was formed, Obama announced that another 475 troops would deploy to advise and assist Iraqi forces.

As of Thursday, 1,268 of the 1,600 American troops authorized to be in Iraq were in country. The Pentagon also has carried out approximately 200 airstrikes there.

In early June, there were only about 200 American troops in Iraq manning the Office of Security Cooperation.

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Obama's Syria attack brings foreign policy into campaigns

By LISA LERER
AND PHIL MATTINGLY
Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON — The midterm U.S. elections may have just gone national.

For months, congressional campaigns have focused on local issues rather than such overarching national affairs as the Affordable Care Act, government spending and the war in Iraq that came to define midterm elections throughout the past decade.

That started to shift in recent weeks, tracking closely with public opinion polls, as the United States ramped up its campaign against Islamic militants in Iraq after the beheadings of two American journalists. This week's attacks by U.S. fighter planes on Syria made the difficult balance of foreign and domestic policy an inescapable reality for candidates.

The National Republican Congressional Committee already has begun airing ads against three Democratic incumbents and a top-tier challenger that explicitly question their commitment to keeping the country safe. Scott Brown, the former Massachusetts senator now taking on Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen in New Hampshire, released an ad Tuesday seizing on the issue.

"President Obama and Senator Shaheen seem confused about the nature of the threat," Brown says. "I'm not."

With a promise of no U.S. boots on the ground, the direct impact of the mission remains remote for most Americans. And politics in the midst of U.S. military action may come across as unseemly. But about six weeks before an election, the candidate considerations are real.

'President Obama and Senator Shaheen seem confused about the nature of the threat. I'm not.'

Scott Brown
Republican Senate candidate

In town halls, interviews and debates, candidates will be confronted with questions about President Barack Obama's decision to escalate U.S. involvement in Iraq and Syria. Governors with national ambitions will as well, including such prospective 2016 Republican candidates as New Jersey's Chris Christie and Texas's Rick Perry.

Thom Tillis, the North Carolina Republican challenging Senator Kay Hagan, attacked the incumbent Democrat on Sept. 15, saying she "inexplicably failed to hold a single hearing" on Islamic State, even as she chairs a subcommittee on the Senate Armed Services Committee. The state Republican Party has continued to attack on the issue.

In going after Hagan, Tillis is taking on a lawmaker who, in her role on the committee and as a statewide official, has close ties to some of the premier Army, Air Force and Marine installations in the country. She moved quickly to address breakdowns in veterans' health care and said she was far more forceful action before the Obama decision to go in that direction.

Both Hagan and Shaheen last week voted for the Senate bill to fund the government through mid-December, a measure that also authorized the training and arming of Syrian rebels.

The pace of the rise in instability in the Mideast is tough enough

for a campaign to handle. The violent unpredictability of the actions of the militants makes political positioning particularly challenging.

There's much the candidates must weigh when taking a stand: the retaliatory actions the radical Islamic group may take against hostages, if regional allies continue to hold firm, even the possibility of another terrorist attack.

"Most Republican candidates are going to be happy that we finally have taken steps to combat this threat," said Whit Ayres, a Republican pollster and strategist. "There are a number of left-wing Democrats who are going to be made very uncomfortable by this."

Still, he said, "It's hard to know at this point how it's going to play out" in the campaign.

For Democratic incumbents, some of whom cut their political teeth with their virulent opposition to the Iraq War, the issue is especially complicated.

Party lawmakers have grumbled about the decision not to consider a nuclear authorization of force — Obama, ironically, is relying on the sweeping legal authority granted to the Bush administration to carry out the current strikes. Yet White House and Senate aides say it was made clear there was limited appetite to have full deliberation in either chamber this close to November.



Clashes in Iraq

Iraqi security forces inspect a battle site after clashes with militants from the Islamic State group Tuesday in Jurf al-Sakhar, 43 miles south of Baghdad.

France weighs joining airstrikes in Syria

The Associated Press

PARIS — France is considering whether to extend its airstrikes to Syria and is increasing security in public places after militants linked to the Islamic State group beheaded a French hostage, officials said Thursday.

President Francois Hollande's office announced that France will "intensify" its support for Syrian opposition forces fighting the Islamic State extremists. A presidential aide would not elaborate on what kind of support or whether it could involve military action.

Hollande held an emergency defense meeting Thursday, a day

after the killing of mountaineering guide Herve Gourdel, 55, was announced.

Hollande's office said France will increase security in public places and on public transportation.

Security measures were already stepped up after France started airstrikes in Iraq last Friday, becoming the first country to join the U.S. air campaign against the Islamic State fighters.

France initially insisted that it would limit airstrikes to Iraq. But the French position seems to be shifting since the U.S. extended its airstrikes to Syria.

NATION

FBI cites increase in mass shootings

By ERIC TUCKER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of shootings in which a gunman wounds or kills multiple people has increased dramatically in recent years, with the majority of attacks in the past decade occurring at a business or a school, according to an FBI report released Wednesday.

The study focused on 160 "active shooter incidents" between 2000 and 2013. Those are typically defined as cases in which a gunman in an attack shoots or attempts to shoot people in a populated area.

The goal of the report, which excluded shootings that are gang- and drug-related, was to compile

accurate data about the attacks and to help local police prepare for or respond to similar killings in the future, federal law enforcement officials said.

"These incidents, the large majority of them, are over in minutes," said James F. Yacone, an FBI assistant director who oversees crisis response and was involved in the report. "So it's going to have to be a teaching and training of the best tactics, techniques and procedures to our state and local partners."

According to the report, an average of six shooting incidents occurred in the first seven years that were studied. That average rose to more than 16 per year in the last seven years of the study.

That period included the 2012 shootings at a movie theater in Aurora, Colo., and at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., as well as last year's massacre at the Washington Navy Yard in which a gunman killed 12 people before dying in a police shootout.

The majority of the shootings occurred either at a business or a school, university or other education facility, according to the study, conducted in conjunction with Texas State University. Other shootings have occurred in open spaces, on military property, and in houses of worship and

health care facilities.

More than 1,000 people were either killed or wounded in the shootings. In about a quarter of the cases, the shooter committed suicide before the police arrived. The gunman acted alone in all but two of the cases. The shooters were female in at least six of the incidents.

Not all of the cases studied involved deaths or even injuries. In one 2006 case in Joplin, Mo., a 13-year-old boy brought a rifle and a handgun into a middle school, but his rifle jammed after he fired one shot. The principal then escorted the boy out

of school and turned him over to the police.

Law enforcement officials who specialize in behavioral analysis say the motives of gunmen vary but many have a real, or perceived, personally held grievance that they feel mandates an act of violence. Though it's hard to say why the number of shootings has increased, officials say they believe many shooters are inspired by past killings and the resulting notoriety.

"The copycat phenomenon is real," said Andre Simons, of the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit. "As more and more notable and

Suspect captured on Texas beach; U.Va. student still missing

By MICHAEL FELBERBAUM
The Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — A man charged with abducting a missing University of Virginia sophomore has been captured in Texas, and is awaiting extradition — but there is still no sign of the student, authorities said.

Jesse Leroy Matthew Jr. was arrested on a beach in the Texas community of Gilchrist by Galveston County Sheriff's authorities, Charlotteville Police Chief Timothy Longo announced Wednesday night.

The capture came less than a full day after police announced they had probable cause to arrest Matthew on charges of abduction with intent to defile Hannah Graham, 18, a sophomore who went missing on Sept. 13 in Charlotteville.

Longo said an intense search for Graham continues.

"This case is nowhere near over," he told a news conference Wednesday. "We still have a person in custody, but there's a long road ahead of us and that long road includes finding Hannah Graham."

Longo said Thursday on NBC's "Today" show that the search is focusing on rural and wooded areas around Charlotteville.

Matthew was captured at a beach in the sparsely populated community of Gilchrist around 3:30 p.m. after police received a call reporting a suspicious person, the Galveston County Daily News reported. The newspaper quoted Galveston County Sheriff Henry Trochesset as saying a deputy responding to the call found a man who had pitched a tent on the beach with his car parked nearby.

Trochesset said a check of the car's plates revealed it was the vehicle sought in connection with the case. Authorities were trying to get a warrant to search the car,

he added.

Matthew was being held Thursday morning in Galveston County. A dispatcher at the sheriff's office in Galveston referred questions about the arrest and timing of Matthew's extradition to Charlotteville police, who did not provide details at the news conference and did not immediately respond to telephone messages afterward.

The case has spread fear through Charlotteville, a quiet community about 70 miles west of Richmond. Authorities have increased patrols and a late-night transportation program for students, who also have begun walking in pairs at night and are paying closer attention to their surroundings.

Graham was an alpine skier and also saxophone player who had earned straight A's six years in a row, according to family members and police. Graham met friends at a restaurant for dinner on Sept. 12 before stopping by two parties at off-campus housing units, authorities said. They said she left the second party alone, and sent a text message to a friend saying she was lost.

Surveillance videos showed her walking, and at some points running, past a pub and a service station and then onto the Downtown Mall, a seven-block pedestrian strip where police believe she entered a bar with Matthew.

The latest revelations came late Tuesday, when police, who have searched Matthew's car once and his apartment twice, decided they had probable cause to charge him in the disappearance. Longo declined to say what new information police had, but authorities sent several items, including clothing, to a state forensics lab for testing.

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NATION

Holder to resign as attorney general

The Associated Press

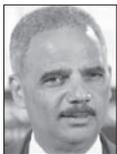
WASHINGTON — Eric Holder, who served as the public face of the Obama administration's legal fight against terrorism and pushed to make the criminal justice system more even-handed, is resigning after six years on the job. He is the nation's first black attorney general.

The White House said Thursday that President Barack Obama planned to announce Holder's departure later Thursday. The White House said Holder plans to remain at the Justice Department until his successor is in place.

The 63-year-old former judge and prosecutor took office in early 2009 as the U.S. government grappled with the worst financial crisis in decades and with divisive questions on the handling of captured terrorism suspects, issues that helped shape his six-year tenure as the country's top law enforcement official. He is the fourth-longest serving attorney general in U.S. history.

In his first few years on the job, Holder endured a succession of firestorms over, among other things, an ultimately abandoned plan to try terrorism suspects in New York City, a botched gun-running probe along the Southwest border that prompted Republican calls for his resignation, and a perceived failure to hold banks accountable for the economic meltdown.

But he stayed on after Obama won re-election, turning in his final stretch to issues that he said were personally important to him. He promoted voting rights and legal benefits for same-sex couples and pushed for changes to a criminal justice system that he said meted out punishment disproportionately to minorities.



Holder



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

Tim Flaherty, of the Fresno, Calif., CalFire crew, takes a break on a mountainside with a drip torch while fighting the King Fire on Tuesday in Mosquito, Calif.

Calif. fire crews stand ground; winds approach

The Associated Press

PLACERVILLE, Calif. — Crews battling a massive blaze threatening thousands of homes in Northern California are standing their ground as gusty winds approach.

Containment lines around the King Fire east of Sacramento were holding Wednesday but weather officials said gusts up to 40 mph and low humidity were expected later in the day.

Eric Kurth, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service, said the southwestly winds could last well into Thursday, despite a chance of rain and cooler temperatures.

The fire has burned 145 square miles since it started Sept. 13. It has destroyed 12 homes and is

threatening another 12,000. Containment has reached nearly 40 percent.

"We're not sitting back and waiting," said state fire Battalion Chief Scott McLean. "We have crews trying to get those containment lines strengthened."

Nearly 2,000 firefighters were brought in as reinforcements Tuesday, bringing the total to about 7,400.

"This is the highest priority fire in the nation," McLean said.

The wildfire, which authorities believe was deliberately set, is threatening about 21,000 structures, more than half of them homes.

Evacuated homeowners in the White Meadows area near Pollock Pines about 60 miles east of Sacramento were allowed to re-

turn Tuesday. El Dorado Sheriff John D'Agostini said.

About 2,700 people remain under evacuation orders, fire officials said. The fire also threatens a key University of California, Berkeley, research station that is home to scores of experiments on trees, plants and other wildlife.

The National Weather Service issued a dense-smoke advisory for Reno, Nev., and around Lake Tahoe, which is about 15 miles from the fire.

The air quality index was rated "hazardous" for the city of Auburn northeast of Sacramento, as well as the Roseville and Rocklin areas.

The man charged with starting the fire, Wayne Allen Huntsman, 37, has pleaded not guilty to arson.

Support for legal weed is down in past year

By Christopher Ingraham
The Washington Post

National support for legalized marijuana has slipped by 7 percentage points in the past year, from 51 percent in 2013 to 44 percent today, according to the Public Religion Research Institute.

PRRI asked 4,500 Americans about the intensity of their support for or opposition to legalizing marijuana. The year-over-year drop in overall support was concentrated among those who favored marijuana legalization last year, but not strongly. Opposition increased greatly among those who strongly opposed legal marijuana.

Those numbers suggest that people who only slightly supported legalization last year have changed their minds, and that people who slightly opposed legalization now feel more strongly about it.

They could auger difficulties for marijuana legalization measures on the ballot this year in Alaska and Oregon. An August PPP poll found Alaska voters closely divided on the marijuana question, with 44 percent in favor of legalization and 49 percent opposed.

A June SurveyUSA poll found more robust support for legalization in Oregon, at 51 to 41.

An October 2013 Gallup poll found strong support for marijuana legalization nationally, with 58 percent in favor and 39 percent opposed. The PRRI and Gallup numbers are not directly comparable, since the questions were worded differently in each survey. Moreover, survey responses on marijuana legalization tend to be highly sensitive to particular question wording.

Still, the year-over-year drop within this one poll is significant and well outside the poll's 1.8 point margin of error. If other surveys show similar findings, it could mean that Americans generally don't like the news coming out of Colorado and Washington — even if that news has been largely positive.

Immigrant who hid in Ore. church to avoid deportation gains support

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — As an immigrant activist's stay at an Oregon church to avoid deportation nears a week, he's gaining supporters, including Portland's mayor, and the church plans a rally for him. But court documents reveal more details about the troubled past of Francisco Aguirre, 35, who came to the U.S. from El Salvador nearly two decades ago and is facing removal to his native country because of an old drug conviction and a previous deportation.

Aguirre — who has two U.S. citizen children and is now the coordinator of a Portland nonprofit that runs a day labor center — disputes the criminal prosecution on drug-dealing charges 15 years ago and says he was innocent. He has vowed to remain at Augustana Lutheran Church in Portland until he's able to resolve his immigration case. In recent years, as immigration reform has stalled, churches around the country have offered sanctuary to immigrants who lack legal status because federal officials generally don't make arrests at sensitive locations such as churches.

"I'm a part of this community, and this is where I belong," Aguirre said. Portland-area churches and local lead-

ers support Aguirre, pointing to his contributions during the past decade as a labor and immigrant rights' organizer and a family man.

"Francisco Aguirre has been a community leader in Portland and an important voice on issues of equality and immigrant rights ... I believe Francisco should remain in the United States, and in Portland, until his case can reach a humane conclusion," Mayor Charles Hales said in a statement.

Aguirre says he first entered the U.S. illegally in 1995. He worked as a day laborer and helped found the nonprofit group that operates the day labor center.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement deported Aguirre to El Salvador in 2000 after his drug conviction. He then unlawfully re-entered the country, spokesman Andrew Munoz said in a statement.

Aguirre came to the attention of immigration authorities in August after his arrest for driving under the influence.

The churches and organizations that have rallied around Aguirre say they'll continue to stand behind him.

"Francisco has contributed a lot to this community," said Marco Mejia, an organizer with Portland Jobs with Justice, a workers' rights group.

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WORLD

Addition by subtraction?

S. African hunting defended as conservation

By KEVIN CROWLEY
AND TSHEPISO MOKHEMA
Bloomberg News.

JOHANNESBURG — When U.S. television host Melissa Bachman posted a photo on Facebook of herself smiling and holding a rifle above the head of a lion she had shot, the response was instant.

Users of the social network vilified Bachman, 30, who also killed a Nyalala antelope last year on a trip to South Africa, as “evil,” a “low-life” and a “disgusting excuse for a human being.”

The hunting trip was part of South Africa’s game-ranching industry, which is worth \$1.1 billion a year and growing at 10 percent annually, according to Barclays Africa Group.

The industry is also responsible for boosting the country’s large mammal population, a measure that excludes animals such as rodents, to 24 million, the most since the 19th century, and up from 575,000 in the early 1960s, Wouter van Hoven, an emeritus professor at the University of Pretoria, said in an interview last month. By contrast, animal numbers in Kenya, which focuses on ecotourism, have plunged 80 percent since it banned hunting in 1977.

“We’re made out to be the bad guys,” said Peter Oberem, 60, a veterinarian-turned-game rancher, as he pointed to three adolescent rhinos being raised on his farm in northern South Africa, funded by hunting antelopes. “We put everything we earn back into conservation. Hunters pay us to save the rhino and repopulate Africa with native species.”

Game ranching, the private ownership of wildlife for hunting, tourism and meat production that’s been allowed by law since 1991, has split conservation groups.

Some, such as London-based Save the Rhino, say the money raised from hunting is vital in the fight against poaching. The Massachusetts-based International Fund for Animal Welfare, says it’s hypocritical to conserve animals by killing them, and that turning wildlife into a commodity is bad for natural ecosystems.

Kenya has lost 80 percent of its wildlife since it banned hunting and large mammal numbers are declining by 4.2 percent a year, said Mike Norton-Griffiths, an academic writing for London’s Institute of Economic Affairs, a social policy research group.

The country’s elephant population has dropped 76 percent since the 1970s while rhinos are down 95 percent, said Stephen Manegene, a wildlife conservation director in Kenya’s Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Foreign hunters, about 60 percent of whom came from the United States, spent \$118.1 million on



A Facebook photo of Melissa Bachman smiling and holding a rifle above the head of a lion she had shot is taken from the “Stop Melissa Bachman” Facebook page. The photo, when originally posted by Bachman to her own page, led users of the social network to vilify the U.S. television host.

licenses to hunt in South Africa in 2012, figures from the Pretoria-based Professional Hunters’ Association of South Africa, known as PIASA, show.

Hunters target animals ranging from the Big Five — rhino, lion, leopard, elephant and buffalo — to plains game, a term for animals ranging from antelopes to zebra. The hunting of endangered animal species, such as the black rhino, is subject to quotas.

Bachman, host of the “Winchester Deadly Passion” televi-

sion series on hunting around the globe, defended her actions in a Dec. 13 Facebook post, while saying the photo was “upsetting” to some viewers. The hunt was legal, with the money helping maintain national parks and animal populations, she said.

“To those who have criticized my hunting, I hope you will consider that only through sustainable use of our natural resources will we reach a balance for both human and wildlife populations,” Bachman said.



COURTESY OF PETER OBEREM/Bloomberg News

Game rancher Peter Oberem has about 1,000 large mammals and funds his ranch by allowing hunters to shoot 8 percent of them a year, mostly old male antelopes.



COURTESY OF PETER OBEREM/Bloomberg News

A rhino and calf raised on Peter Oberem’s wildlife ranch in South Africa are shown. The \$1.1 billion recreational hunting industry in South Africa is defended as a vital source of revenue in the fight against poaching, but some conservation groups say it makes no sense to defend wildlife by killing animals.

WORLD

Sierra Leone restricts travel

The Associated Press

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone — Sierra Leone restricted travel Thursday in three more “hot spots” of Ebola where more than 1 million people live, meaning about a third of the country’s population is now under quarantine.

Sierra Leone is one of the hardest hit countries in the Ebola outbreak sweeping West Africa that is believed to have killed more than 2,900 people, according to World Health Organization tolls published Thursday. The agency says the situation in Sierra Leone continues to deteriorate, driven primarily by a sharp increase of cases in the capital, Freetown.

In an address to the nation on Wednesday night, President Ernest Bai Koroma put Port Loko,



MICHAEL DUFF/AP

A health worker sprays disinfectant on a colleague in Freetown, Sierra Leone. In an effort to contain the Ebola virus, the country essentially quarantined 1 million people on Thursday.

Bombali and Moyamba districts under isolation, allowing only people delivering essential services to enter and circulate within these areas. The WHO also noted that these districts were seeing a rise in cases.

In other parts of Sierra Leone, including the capital, homes will be put under quarantine when cases are identified, a govern-

ment statement after the address said.

The Ebola outbreak, the largest ever, has also hit Liberia and Guinea and is believed to have sickened more than 6,200 people. An Ebola patient also slipped into Senegal from Guinea but the disease does not appear to have spread there.

Nigeria has linked 20 cases

to the disease and eight deaths after a man infected with Ebola traveled there from Liberia; the outbreak seems to have been contained in Nigeria as well.

The Ebola outbreak’s unprecedented scale and geographic spread have pushed governments to impose severe measures, like the cordoning off of entire towns or regions.

Basketball team leaves Asian Games over hijabs

INCHEON, South Korea — The Qatari women’s basketball team withdrew from the Asian Games in a protest against international rules that ban players from wearing Muslim headscarves in competition.

The dispute over the Qatari players’ refusal to remove their hijabs — regarded by some as a rule that discriminates against Muslim women — has created a major stir at the games and raised new questions about rules banning the head coverings.

Qatar delegation leader Khalid al-Jabir said the team had decided to withdraw and was already preparing to return home.

The decision not to show up at all on Thursday appeared to take by surprise games organizers, who have tried to portray the regional Olympic-style event as a showcase of diversity.

The Olympic Council of Asia had no immediate comment on the issue, nor did the Asian Games organizing committee.

Although sports ranging from bowling to badminton allow hijabs to be worn during competition, basketball’s world governing body does not allow them in international competition.

Asian Games officials on Wednesday said they did not receive any instructions from FIBA to allow head coverings, and were simply following the rules.

From The Associated Press

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VETERANS

Electronic form to streamline claims process

By **HEATH DRUZIN**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs is changing the way veterans file disability claims, in the hopes of speeding up the process.

The new system, which introduces standardized electronic forms for veterans to fill out, is aimed at streamlining a chaotic process that had led to delays in handling claims and appeals. In the past, veterans

could file claims and appeals on any piece of paper, which often caused delays due to missing information, according to a VA press release.

“We must do everything that we can to make it as fast and easy as possible for veterans and their survivors to file for and receive an accurate decision on their claim,” VA Secretary Robert McDonald said in the press release.

The VA is also standardizing the intention-to-file form — after veterans or survivors

submit that form, they have one year to gather documentation and evidence for the claim.

The new regulations go into effect in late March.

Lauren Augustine, legislative associate for the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, said veterans groups have long been pushing for such a change.

“We view it as a move in the right direction to creating an efficient process,” she said.

The VA has come under heavy criticism in recent months for its treatment of veterans amid a health care scandal that included hospital administrators falsifying records and patients dying while on secret wait lists.

McDonald has promised vast reforms to the VA, including major changes by Nov. 11, which is Veterans Day.

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Report: Many services for female veterans fall short

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Veterans Affairs Department and other government agencies are not doing enough to help women who served in the military, even as their number is rising dramatically, according to a new report.

The report, released Wednesday by the Disabled American Veterans, identified serious gender gaps in virtually every program serving veterans, including health care, job training, finance, housing, social issues and combatting sexual assault.

The advocacy group's report blamed most of the deficiencies on a disregard for the needs of female veterans, saying the VA and other agencies focus on “the 80 percent solution for men who dominate veterans affairs in both numbers and public consciousness.”

A sharp increase in reporting of military sexual trauma is an illustration of problems that require “radical change” at the VA and throughout the military, the report says.

“At a time when the number of women veterans is growing to unprecedented levels, our country is simply not doing enough to meet their health, social and economic needs,” said Joy Ilem, DAV's deputy national legislative director. Female veterans “deserve equal respect, consideration and care as the men who served, yet the support systems are ill-equipped to meet the unique needs of the brave women who have defended our country,” she said.

The DAV report closely tracks an Associated Press review in June that found serious shortcomings in how the VA cares for female veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, many of them of child-bearing age.

The AP review found that nearly one in four VA hospitals does

not have a fulltime gynecologist on staff, and that 140 of the 920 community-based clinics serving veterans in rural areas do not have a designated women's health provider, despite a goal that all clinics have one.

Female veterans of child-bearing age were far more likely to be given medications that can cause birth defects than were women being treated through a private doctor, the AP found.

The VA cared for about 390,000 female veterans last year at its hospitals and clinics — far fewer than the 5.3 million male veterans who used the VA system in fiscal year 2013.

The number of women receiving care at VA has more than doubled since 2000.

The tens of thousands of predominantly young, female veterans returning home have dramatically changed the VA's patient load, and the system has yet to fully catch up.

While the number of male veterans is expected to decline by 2020, the number of female veterans is expected to grow dramatically, to 11 percent of the veteran population, the report said.

Dr. Carolyn Clancy, the VA's acting undersecretary for health, said the VA will consider all of the report's 27 recommendations on topics including health care, education, job training and sexual assault.

The report will serve “as our road map for improvements,” Clancy told a gathering of female veterans and their supporters at the Capitol on Wednesday. The VA is working to ensure that all clinics and hospitals have a women's health provider onsite, she said, adding that the agency makes referrals to private providers in cases where none is available at the VA.

“We've made some great progress,”



RON AGNIR/AP

U.S. Air Force veteran Betty Roberts, of Harpers Ferry, W.Va., sits in the Women Veterans Health Clinic waiting room in the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Martinsburg, W.Va., in 2009. Doctors at the center in this quiet, bucolic town tucked between coal country and the nation's capital used to go months without treating a female veteran. Today, they're reporting the beginning of a boom.

ness,” Clancy said in an interview. “Certainly the awareness (of women's issues) is way up. It's certainly a priority.”

The disabled veterans group released the report, titled “Women Veterans: The Long Journey Home,” at a news conference, along with a screening of a documentary called “Journey to

Normal,” which tells the story of female veterans returning home from deployments overseas.

When compared with men, women in the military are less likely overall to be married, more likely to be married to a fellow servicemember, more likely to be a single parent, more likely to be divorced, and more likely to be

unemployed after their service, the report said. Female veterans also tend to be younger than their male counterparts and are less likely to use VA benefits, the report said.

About 1 in 5 female veterans have delayed or gone without needed medical care in the prior 12 months, the report said.

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Conflict revisited

South Korean army soldiers portray fighting between South Korea, in green, and North Korea during the Naktong River Battle re-enactment Thursday in Waegwan, South Korea. The South Korean Defense Ministry re-enacted the important battle as part of commemoration events for the 64th anniversary of the Korean War.

US man's prison life in N. Korea: digging, isolation

The Associated Press

PYONGYANG, North Korea — An American man recently sentenced by North Korea to six years of hard labor says he is digging in fields eight hours per day and being kept in isolation, but that so far his health isn't deteriorating.

Under close guard and with only enough time to respond to one question, Matthew Miller, 24, spoke briefly to an Associated Press Television News journalist at a Pyongyang hotel, where he had been brought to make a phone call to his family. It was his first appearance since he was convicted Sept. 14 of entering the country illegally to commit espionage.

"Prison life is eight hours of work per day. Mostly it's been agriculture, like in the dirt, digging around," Miller said when asked what conditions were like in prison.

"Other than that, it's isolation, no contact with anyone. But I

have been in good health, and no sickness or no hurts," he said, showing little emotion.

This is the fourth time North Korea's government, normally one of the most secretive in the world, has produced an American detainee before the AP. It has given no reason for its actions.

One possibility is that it is trying to pressure the U.S. government to send a prominent high-level representative to negotiate Miller's release, as has happened with some previous detainees. In North Korea's view, that would bolster its standing among North Koreans and possibly lead to political concessions or much-needed aid.

Miller is one of three Americans detained in North Korea. Jeffrey Fowle, who was arrested in May for leaving a Bible at a sailor's club, is expected to be tried in court soon. Kenneth Bae was sentenced in 2013 to 15 years of hard labor.

N. Korean leader not at parliament meeting

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea's young leader wasn't in his customary seat as the country convened its rubber-stamp parliament Thursday, adding to South Korean media speculation that Kim Jong Un may be ill.

Only part of the meeting of the Supreme People's Assembly was shown on state TV, but Kim was not present and apparently missed the meeting for the first time since he took power after the death of his father, Kim Jong Il, in December 2011, according to an

official for the South's Unification Ministry who spoke on condition of anonymity because of office rules.

The usually ubiquitous Kim, the third member of his family to rule the country, has not been seen in state media since attending a Pyongyang concert on Sept. 3. He was shown limping on television in July and again earlier this month, and South Korean media have speculated that Kim has been ill, although there has been no discussion of the absence in the authoritarian North's state-run media.

From The Associated Press

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- Amusement Park
- Dance/Yoga Studio
- Fitness Center (on base/post)
- Hobby Center (on base/post)
- Mineral/Thermal Spa
- MWR/FSS Service (on base/post)
- Pool

SERVICE

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FAITH

“Sometimes we’re blessed, sometimes we’re burned”

Kansas couple's ministry gives addicts a place to worship, recover

By JOE ROBERTSON
The Kansas City Star

RAYMORE, Mo. — Shawna and Kevin Coffman's house of refuge isn't on the way to anywhere.

You wouldn't know it's here unless you heard about it from someone else who turned up from life's floor — who maybe rotted relationships and teeth with methamphetamine, or raided a grandparent's medicine cabinet for pills, or knows how to squat and cough for a jailer's body-cavity check.

The Coffmans' Saved by Grace Fellowship in rural Cass County east of Raymore, a city in the Kansas City metropolitan area, sits lonely on a horizon as big as all the hope its self-described misfits nurture for one another.

But the small crowd that gathered on the gravel drive ahead of another Celebrate Recovery Friday service also knew the truth.

“The sky, as big as it is, can't absorb all their pain.

“Once you're here, you're still not fixed,” said Moe Witt, 39, one of seven members, along with husband Corey Witt, 41, who agreed to talk to The Star about a community's generosity and its struggle to change lives.

“We don't know how to live,” she says. “We're trying to learn how to get through this life together. That's what makes this place wonderful.”

They talked about the love and trust of the Coffmans. How they all found their way here. About addiction's strangling grip. And how quickly they can fall.

Not all of them will stay clear of trouble by the time their stories are told here.

Did you shoot up once hiding in a bathtub at a homeless shelter? Did you steal your wife's birthday money to spend on dope?

“Nothing surprises us,” Witt said. “We all know what it's like.”

With hands open to the ceiling, voices high, they sing.

“I am free!”

On Sunday mornings. On Friday nights.

“I am free to run. I am free to dance.”

Shannon Bruegge, the Cass County Drug Court probation officer, had to see it for herself.

She drove out to Saved by Grace Fellowship on a rainy day, turned and slipped into a seat in the back row.

Sure enough, she saw several of her people — convicted drug law violators who'd diverted from prison to the county's intense drug treatment program — singing in the choir. One read the Scripture.

Drug court turns its clients' lives inside out, watching over their treatment, their counseling, their home life, their employment, and their social and spiritual support.

Bruegge wanted to see this



PHOTOS BY JILL TOYOSHIBA, KANSAS CITY STAR/MCT

Above: Kevin Coffman, far left, and Corey and Melissa “Moe” Witt, of Harrisonville, react as Coffman's wife, Shawna, sings in Raymore, Mo. Coffman's Saved by Grace Fellowship has become a haven for people fighting severe addiction. Below: Shawna Coffman rehearses before a service.

place and these people — “Shawna” and “Kevin” — whose names kept popping up when the court was checking in on its clients.

When some of the clients had completed the grueling drug court program and were given graduation ceremonies, a mysterious woman in the back was clapping and cheering loudest of all.

Who is that? Judge Mike Rumlley wanted to know.

It was Shawna.

The Coffmans' church is simple. A pianist and drummer at the front. A congregation casual in summer shirts, shorts and sandals. Plenty of long hair. Plenty of tattoos. No minister robes.

A satiric bowling ball with a bolted chain and emblazoned with the word “religion” sits at the front.

Here was “someone for the underdog,” Bruegge said. Here was a community “giving back to a lot of people society had given up on.”

There was no formal line for greeting when it was done. Bruegge approached Shawna, who was mingling, and introduced herself.

Shawna gushed, “I've heard a lot about you.”

And the probation officer replied, “I've heard a lot about you.”

Fifteen years ago, Kevin and Shawna simply wanted to publish a religious newsletter to send into prisons.

He was a construction tradesman with a tile company, and she was a graphic designer — and they still are.

Kevin Dimmick, 15 years ago, was coming out of his teen years on a path toward oblivion. A pot-smoking habit with friends was escalating.

“We said, ‘I wonder what meth does?’” Dimmick said.

Come 2014, three felonies later and a year of hiding out in a

friend's garage, strung out using and dealing, the 35-year-old Belton, Mo., man was “going hard and heavy,” he said. “I knew the police were going to get me. I think I was trying to off myself.”

Once the police did get him, he found himself looking at drug court as an option out of a long prison sentence.

Over those same 15 years, the Coffmans' nationwide prison newsletter had gained a following.

Some of their readers who left prison for homes in or near Cass County wanted to make church part of their lives but felt self-conscious and a bit ragged to step into a regular congregation.

So the Coffmans started a church in their home in 2002 just for those people. Within a few months, they rented a storefront shop to take in a small but growing church group.

They learned how much drugs and alcohol had ravaged so many of these former prisoners' lives. Helping them help one another fight their addictions became a central part of their mission.

They moved into their own building in May 2011. Within a year, they opened a chapter of the national Celebrate Recovery program. It became one of the Cass County Drug Court's approved choices for its clients' required support group meetings.

Shawna and Kevin haven't experienced addiction. But they've learned.

They know that for every three people in their ministry in recovery, two are bound to relapse, they said.

Things disappear. Desperate people will take advantage of them.

“Sometimes we're blessed,” Kevin said. “Sometimes we're burned.”



Tony Eskue, 44, of Harrisonville, Mo., one of their early church members, brought the Coffmans the idea of starting a Celebrate Recovery program.

He, like all the people passing through, can tell you how hard recovery can be because they know the damage already done, damage that wasn't enough to stop their fall.

“I was losing my wife and children, with grandbabies on the way,” he said.

They've already passed “now or never” moments like Corey Witt's. He and Moe had landed in a homeless shelter in Paola, Kan., he said, and there he was in a bathtub, doing a large dose of bath salts — a dangerous mix of synthetic

drugs. He passed out. Bit his tongue. And woke up, still in a shelter.

“Once you cross a line, there is another line,” he said. “You cross that line.”

And some lines you can't uncross, he said.

“I taught her how to shoot dope,” he said, looking across at Moe. “That's my lowest point. Once you teach someone how to shoot meth, you can't take it back.”

Knowing all they know makes them marvel at the small community that has clustered around the Coffmans.

This is their best chance. “It's about finding people you trust and care and love,” Corey Witt said.

Dimmick nodded. “You don't want to let them down.”

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Firefighters rescue pet frog from blaze

TX WESTWORTH VILLAGE — Firefighters who doused the flames at a North Texas house have also made sure the lone resident didn't croak.

Fort Worth firefighters rescued a pet frog and returned the critter to the daughter of the homeowners, who were out of town.

Battalion Chief Richard Harrison said Wednesday that firefighters have saved dogs and cats but it's the first time he recalls a frog rescued.

Pot-friendly state's city considers smoking ban

CO BOULDER — Boulder will consider extending a smoking ban to cover its entire downtown business district, including alleys behind businesses where smokers frequently take breaks.

An ordinance to be introduced this fall would also ban smoking in city parks, on multi-use paths and anywhere within 25 feet of public bus stops and libraries. It would also cover city-owned open space.

Boulder's smoking ban applies to flammable tobacco products, such as cigarettes and cigars, as well as e-cigarettes.

Naked man arrested at scene of homicide

KS TOPEKA — Topeka police detained a naked, blood-covered man on Wednesday after neighbors reported that he had been running around outside, screaming, and they found the woman with whom he lived lying dead outside their home.

Police did not release the names of the man or the woman, but said her death is being investigated as a homicide. A young girl was found uninjured at the home and was placed in protective custody.

According to police Lt. Chuck Haggard, it took several officers to subdue the man, and they eventually had to use a stun gun on him.

Police said the naked man also assaulted an older neighbor who apparently had come outside to check on all the commotion, but he wasn't seriously hurt.

Fraternity activities suspended after death

SC COLUMBIA — One day after a student fatally fell from a bridge after a run with his fraternity brothers, Clemson University suspended activities for all of its fraternities, citing reports of alcohol abuse and sexual misconduct but stopping short of tying the ban to the death.

Oconee County deputies said Wednesday that there is no evidence Tucker Hipps' death was a result of hazing, but they are still trying to piece together what happened.

Hipps, 19, was running with fellow Sigma Phi Epsilon members when he started falling behind, authorities said.

Fraternity members reported him missing to university police at 1:45 p.m.

Poole says he fell more than 20 feet from a state highway bridge to shallow water below.

THE CENSUS

126

The age in years of a Tennessee tombstone that was stolen this past summer only to turn up weeks later in a Spearfish, S.D., alley during the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. S.J. Elliot's 1888 tombstone, like that of his wife, is inscribed with the epitaph, "We shall meet again." It was reported stolen from the cemetery in Manchester, Tenn., in July, the Black Hills Pioneer reported. Spearfish police Officer Kale Nelson said how the tombstone traveled to Spearfish probably will remain a mystery. Police shipped the 60-pound stone back to Coffee County, where it arrived in two pieces. Authorities plan to have it restored and returned to its cemetery.



DON CAMPBELL, THE (St. JOSEPH, Mich.) HERALD-PALLADIUM/AP

Happy accident

Bees and a butterfly land on a sunflower in Berrien Springs, Mich., on Tuesday.

Man wins \$25K in cat video contest

FL TAMPA — A Tampa cat owner is \$25,000 richer after his Internet video captured the grand prize in "The Friskies," the awards for the best Internet cat videos of the year.

The Tampa Bay Times reported that cat owner Chris Poole recently took home the grand prize for his "Dumpster Kitty" video. It also won as best strange video in the competition, which featured 12 finalists.

The video depicts Marmalade, an orange feline, climbing into a small, lidded garbage can as the black-furred Cole looks on.

Poole was awarded \$5,000 for his win in the strange category, then took home another \$20,000 as the overall winner

in an Internet voting contest.

He was also awarded the golden "catuette."

3 wedding crashers face criminal charges

NJ OCEAN TOWNSHIP — Authorities said three juveniles who allegedly crashed a wedding reception in central New Jersey last weekend won't have to face strong-armed robbery charges.

Instead, they will be charged as juveniles with simple assault and trespassing.

Authorities said the youths mingled with guests, consumed food and beverages and took pictures inside a photo booth set up for the event Saturday night at a banquet facility in Ocean Township.

When it was learned they had not been invited to the reception,

a woman who manages the facility tried to detain the youths until police arrived. One youth allegedly threw her to the ground, and all three ran out of the building.

Man accused of using counterfeit money

AK JUNEAU — A Juneau man faces a forgery charge after police said he used fake bills to buy soda at a hotel and pay a phone bill.

Michael James Healey, 32, was indicted by grand jury Friday. An arraignment was planned in Juneau Superior Court for the felony charge.

At least five Juneau businesses reported receiving forged bills in the last month, the Juneau Empire reported.

Police said they were led to Healey after the manager of the

Breakwater Inn reported a man staying at the motel used a fake \$10 bill to buy soda.

Sheriff wants meeting with tribal boss after tiff

ID POCATELLO — A south-east Idaho sheriff wants to have a one-on-one conversation with a tribal leader following an armed standoff where the sheriff says the tribe threatened to confiscate the SWAT team's armored vehicle.

The seven-county Southeast Idaho SWAT team responded about 3 a.m. Saturday to a residence on the Fort Hall reservation after neighbors reported gunshots. During the 18-hour standoff, Ray Broncho fired at officers and neighboring houses with a rifle before surrendering, police allege.

From wire reports

WEEKEND



Chris Brown sings a different tune
Page 36



Future imperfect

Boys get a big-screen dystopian tale of their own with 'The Maze Runner'

Page 25

Spicy and nice

Indian eatery in Weiden, Germany, a flavorful delight

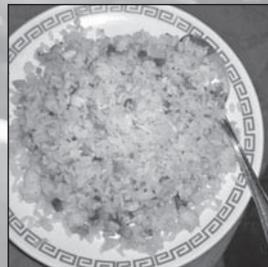
Food, Page 29



Cantonese cuisine

Plaza House a must for fans of Chinese food on Okinawa

Food, Page 35



WEEKEND: GADGETS & CHARTS



NATIONAL TOY HALL OF FAME/AP

The National Toy Hall of Fame has selected 12 finalists for induction in 2014. The nominees are Fisher-Price Little People, Hess toy trucks, My Little Pony, Rubik's Cube, Slip 'N Slide, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle Toys, American Girl dolls, the game Operation, little green Army men, bubbles, pots and pans and paper airplanes. Two winners will be inducted on Nov. 6.

Pots, pans, planes, dolls and games up for toy hall of fame

The Associated Press

Pots and pans and paper airplanes are among the 12 finalists for induction this year into the National Toy Hall of Fame.

The humble contenders are up against American Girl dolls, the game Operation and several return nominees including little green Army men and bubbles.

The hall of fame at the Strong museum in Rochester announced the finalists on Monday. Two winners will be inducted Nov. 6.

Anyone can nominate a toy. An internal museum advisory committee narrows down the list and a national committee of history, toy and education experts then votes on the winners.

Inductees have to be widely

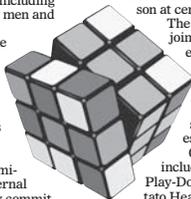
recognized, proven to be more than a passing fad and foster learning, creativity or discovery through play.

The other 2014 nominees are: Fisher-Price Little People, My Little Pony, Rubik's Cube, Slip 'N Slide, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle Toys and the toy trucks sold each holiday shopping season at certain gas stations.

The two winners will join last year's honorees, the rubber duck and chess, along with the 51 other toys that have been inducted since the hall was established in 1998.

Other past winners include Etch A Sketch, Play-Doh, Barbie, Mr. Potato Head and the Frisbee.

But things like the cardboard box and stick have also made the hall for inspiring kids to transform them into playthings on their own.



ON THE COVER: Dylan O'Brien stars in "The Maze Runner."

20TH CENTURY FOX/AP

GADGET WATCH

Accessories fit for your new iPhone 6

By GREGG ELLMAN

McClatchy-Tribune News Services

It's safe to say that Apple provided enough information this month on the new iPhones, Watch and the technologies associated with them.

Getting the new iPhone is one thing; getting it dressed up is another. This week, my email box was flooded with new cases to dress up your naked iPhone 6 or 6 plus. Here are some highlights:

The PowerArmor from BuQu Tech has a 2,500mAh battery in a unibody shell exterior to protect the iPhone 6 from drops.

BuQu states that the internal battery doesn't add any unnecessary bulk to the smartphone, and slides in and out of the case with its patented slide-lock mechanism.

There's also a built-in LED gauge showing available battery power and a power-saving on/off switch.

Online: buqutech.com; \$79.99, expected out in November



BuQu TECH/MCT

The Q Card Case from CM4, one of my favorite cases, is now available for the iPhone 6. The Q Card Case's one-piece design combines a wallet on the back side of the protective case.



CM4/MCT

A few credit cards, ID and cash can be stored in the wallet, which is built into the case constructed of a patented soft-touch rubber and premium fabric design.

Online: CM4.com; \$39.99, in black onyx, pacific green or champagne gold

The Trentium and Alixo cases from New Trent are part of a new line of protective cases for the iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus.

The Trentium's ultra-thin and rugged design is dirt- and water-resistant for both new phones in black, gold or silver. The Alixo has the same protection as the

Trentium but adds a scratch-resistant screen case, along with an interchangeable front cover in choices of black or white.

Online: newtrend.com; \$31.95 each, the cases will be available October 31



NEW TRENT/MCT



ENERGI's sliding power case for iPhone 6 (\$99.99) has a built-in 3,200mAh rechargeable battery. Once the case is taken off, you'll have a TPU-lined inner case for drop protection.

The ALIN glass screen protector (\$34.99) keeps your new iPhone 6 clean and scratch-free. A snap-on alignment tool makes positioning easy. Online: tyt.com

X-Doria's fashion-forward accessories now include a full line of iPhone 6 and 6 Plus cases including the Defense 720⁺ and the Engage Folio.

The Defense 720⁺ (\$29.99) features a full-screen, hard-plastic protective front shield.

Rear armor is built into the back for a grippy, protective bumper with a sturdy shield. The two-piece construction snaps together for full protection and is available in black, blue and pink for the iPhone 6.

The Engage Folio is a clear, hard polycarbonate back to protect the smartphone without hiding it. An anti-scratch coating helps keep the view crystal clear.

A leather-like front cover protects the screen and has card slots on the inside. The Engage Folio is available for the iPhone 6 and the iPhone 6 Plus for \$29.99.

Online: x-doria.com

Urban Armor Gear's collection of protective solutions for the new 4.7 and 5.5-inch iPhone 6 meet military standards for drop and shock (MIL-STD 810G-516.6). They are constructed with a hard armor shell, soft rubber core and bumpers in a rugged one-piece design.

Urban Armor Gear iPhone 6 cases are available for pre-order in black, white, rust (orange), plasma (pink), slate (blue) and ice (clear) for \$34.95 each for the 4.7-inch device and \$39.95 for the 5.5-inch device. Online: urbanarmorgear.com



Urban Armor Gear/MCT

ITUNES MUSIC

Top 10 songs on the iTunes Store for September 24:

- "Shake It Off," Taylor Swift
- "All About That Bass," Meghan Trainor
- "Gonna Know We Were Here," Jason Aldean
- "Bang Bang," Jessie J, Ariana Grande & Nicki Minaj
- "Sun Daze," Florida Georgia Line
- "Here We Go," Alex & Sierra
- "Rather Be (featuring Jess Glynne)," Clean Bandit
- "Burnin' It Down," Jason Aldean
- "Habits (Stay High)," Tove Lo
- "Chandelier," Sia

— Compiled by MCT

SPOTIFY MUSIC

The most streamed tracks on Spotify from Sept. 15-21:

- "All About That Bass," Meghan Trainor
- "Black Widow," Iggy Azalea
- "Bang Bang," Jessie J, Ariana Grande & Nicki Minaj
- "Break Free," Ariana Grande
- "Chandelier," Sia
- "Stay With Me," Sam Smith
- "Blame," Calvin Harris
- "Cool Kids," Echosmith
- "Animals," Maroon 5
- "Rude," MAGICI

— Compiled by The Associated Press

ITUNES MOVIES

Top 10 movies downloaded from the iTunes Store for Sept. 24:

- "Transformers: Age of Extinction"
- "Godzilla"
- "The Fault in Our Stars"
- "Captain America: The Winter Soldier"
- "Live Die Repeat: Edge of Tomorrow"
- "Fed Up"
- "Chef"
- "The Lunchbox"
- "Blended"
- "Draft Day"



— Compiled by MCT

VIDEO GAMES

Game Informer ranks the Top 10 Wii U games for September:

- "Hyrule Warriors," Nintendo
- "Shovel Knight," Yacht Club Games
- "SteamWorld Dig," Image & Form
- "Guacamelee Super Turbo Championship Edition," DrinkBox Studios
- "Mario Kart 8," Nintendo
- "1001 Spikes," Nintalo
- "Donkey Kong Country: Tropical Freeze," Nintendo
- "Child of Light," Ubisoft
- "CastleStorm," Zen Studios
- "Pushmo World," Nintendo

— Compiled by MCT

APPS

Top free app downloads from Android and Apple for Sept. 24:

- ANDROID
- Diamond Digger Saga
 - Spider-Man Unlimited
 - Solitaire
 - Wipeout 2
 - Guns Girlz — Escape Ragnarok
- APPLE
- Facebook Messenger
 - Spider-Man Unlimited
 - Yik Yak
 - Amazing Thief
 - Bicolar

— Compiled by MCT

WEEKEND

CHECK IT OUT

Events, entertainment and other ways to fill your free time

1

More great-night TV shows on tap

The season of great new and returning TV shows continues this week:

- **'Grey's Anatomy,'** starring Ellen Pompeo, Season 11, Sept. 26 on AFN-Spectrum;
- **'How to Get Away with Murder,'** starring Viola Davis, series premiere Sept. 26 on AFN-Spectrum;
- **'Scandal,'** starring Kerry Washington, Season 4, Sept. 26 on AFN-Spectrum;
- **'Modern Family,'** Season 6, Sept. 26 on AFN-Prime;
- **'black-ish,'** series premiere Sept. 26 on AFN-Prime;
- **'Covert Affairs,'** Season 5, Sept. 27 on AFN-Spectrum;
- **'Scorpion,'** series premiere Sept. 27 on AFN-Prime;

- **'The Amazing Race,'** Season 25, Sept. 27 on AFN-Family;
- **'Gotham,'** starring Ben McKenzie, series premiere Sept. 28 on AFN-Spectrum;
- **'Resurrection,'** Season 2, Sept. 29 on AFN-Spectrum;
- **'Nashville,'** Season 3, Sept. 29 on AFN-Spectrum;
- **'The Simpsons,'** Season 26, Sept. 29 on AFN-Xtra;
- **'Brooklyn Nine-Nine,'** Season 2, Sept. 29 on AFN-Xtra;
- **'Once Upon a Time,'** Season 4, Sept. 29 on AFN-Family.

These lovely and talented ladies return to prime time this week: From left to right, Kerry Washington of "Scandal"; Viola Davis of "How to Get Away with Murder"; and Ellen Pompeo of "Grey's Anatomy."

DAN STEINBERG, INVISION/AP



2

Director turns 'Raiders' into master film class

When was the last time you watched the Steven Spielberg-directed "Raiders of the Lost Ark"? We guarantee

that you've never seen it quite like this.

Steven Soderbergh, also a talented director, is stripping well-known movies of color and using them to teach whomever will listen about filmmaking. The black-and-white "Raiders" is also free of dialogue and backed by a new soundtrack by Atticus Ross and Trent Reznor.

- Watch at tinyurl.com/12atc3d.



3

DeGeneres makes sense of McConaughey ad

The McConaissance is everywhere. Films, TV shows — and now an auto ad. Those currently stationed overseas probably haven't been subjected to this head-scratcher, in which Matthew McConaughey stares down a bull in the road and eventually does a U-turn. (Yup, that's the whole ad.) Talk show host Ellen DeGeneres jokingly inserts herself into the ad, and in the process gives it some hilarious context. Bonus: A few strains of DJ Snake's "Turn Down For What."

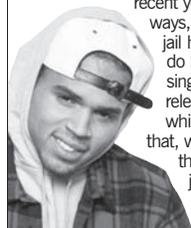
- Watch the original ad and the DeGeneres version at tinyurl.com/p89ymwp.

4

Chris Brown's 'X' shows change of heart

Rapper Chris Brown has been infamous in recent years for his violent ways, but he says a stint in jail has convinced him to do better. The talented singer and dancer recently released his sixth album, which seems to suggest that, while he's still letting the good times roll, he just might be sincere.

- Profile of Chris Brown on Page 36.

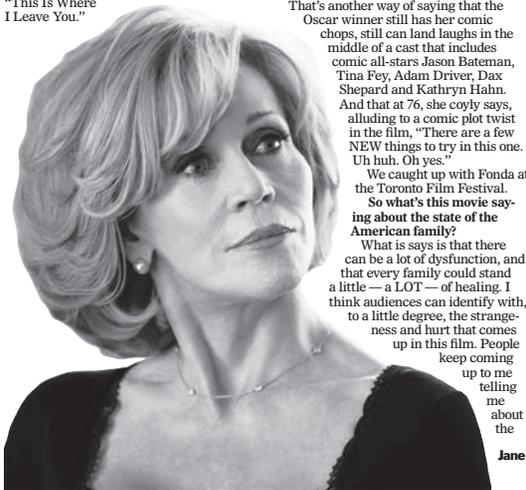


WEEKEND: MOVIES

Fonda gives improv comedy a try in 'Leave You'

By ROGER MOORE
McClatchy-Tribune News Service

“At my age,” Jane Fonda says, “it gets hard to find a role that’s fun and sexy and a little bit outrageous.” Which is exactly what she found in “This Is Where I Leave You.”



Playing the shares-to-much matriarch of a non-observant Jewish family who insists her adult kids sit shiva with her in mourning for seven days after her husband/their father dies, Fonda “finds the grace notes in a character that might easily have become another shrill ‘Monster-in-Law.’” Variety notes.

That’s another way of saying that the Oscar winner still has her comic chops, still can land laughs in the middle of a cast that includes comic all-stars Jason Bateman, Tina Fey, Adam Driver, Dax Shepard and Kathryn Hahn. And that at 76, she coyly says, alluding to a comic plot twist in the film, “There are a few NEW things to try in this one. Uh huh. Oh yes.”

We caught up with Fonda at the Toronto Film Festival. So what’s this movie saying about the state of the American family?

What is says is that there can be a lot of dysfunction, and that every family could stand a little — a LOT — of healing. I think audiences can identify with, to a little degree, the strangeness and hurt that comes up in this film. People keep coming up to me telling me about the

family members who fall within the ‘types’ we play in the film.

Are families more mixed-up now, or are we just talking about all our problems and familial complaints more? Oh, we have NAMES for things now, like ‘dysfunction’ and ‘narcissism,’ words most of us didn’t know decades ago. Too much information! We know what to CALL some of us we see acting differently. I think this stuff has always been around.

Your character, Hillary Altman, is the matriarch here, the psychologist mother who wrote a tell-all book about her kids, which they (Fey, Bateman, Driver and Corey Stoll) still hold against her. Is any of what’s wrong with them Hillary’s fault?

(Fonda pauses, gives this some thought) Somebody like Hillary, who has porous boundaries, probably has issues when it comes to parenting that would have impacted her children.

But none of the kids are MASSIVELY dysfunctional. The cops haven’t been called. They just have troubles with intimacy and things like that. REAL dysfunction, for me, is having a house full of addicts. I guess she’d have to take the hit, a little bit.

Fonda laughs. Could have been a lot worse. I guess I’m getting defensive for poor old Hillary. She probably did OK. But I identify with her and where she probably messed up. If you ask my children, they’d almost certainly say that I tended to reveal too much about them in my own books. But unlike Hillary, in my defense, I gave the books to my children before I published them so that they could remove anything they would find offensive. Hillary would NEVER have

done that. OK, mothers are never supposed to play favorites, but you have one-on-one scenes with a lot of funny people playing your kids. Who was your favorite?

Jason is a consummate pro ... very easy to work with, because when you look into his eyes he takes you into exactly the place you need to be in the scene.

I kind of fell in love with Adam Driver, I have to admit. I’m old enough to be his grandmother, but I wish I could date him. He’s a doll.

But Tina Fey is a genius. The funniest riffs in the movie came out of her head right there on the spot. She’s just got one of those brains, and what I found out over the course of making “This Is Where I Leave You” is you either have that brain, or you don’t. You can hone an existing talent, but comic improvisation isn’t just something you can do. I did try. And when the movie was over, I got Ben Schwartz, who played ‘Boner,’ the rabbi, to let me do some work at the Upright Citizen’s Brigade with him. Me and five guys, and while I got through it and did OK, I hope, it’s plainly not my forte. I can improvise drama, but comedy is a whole different thing.

That will help me, I think, with my new project, this Netflix series, ‘Grace and Frankie,’ that will air second quarter of next year. Lily Tomlin and I co-star in it, and even though we’ve been friends since (the 1980 film) ‘Nine to Five,’ this is the first time I’ve had any type of improv background to bring to the party. With Lily, you need that just to keep up!”

Jane Fonda stars as matriarch Hillary Altman in the comedy “This Is Where I Leave You.”

JESSICA MULLIG, WARNER BROS. PICTURES/AP

‘Leave You’: A-list cast, B-grade result

By JOCELYN NOVECK
The Associated Press

Somebody dies. Family gathers to mourn. Everybody’s stuck in one house, with all their quirks and foibles and enough emotional baggage to fill an aircraft carrier. What could go wrong? Ha ha. What could? This scenario could be a drama or a comedy — or, in the case of “This Is Where I Leave You,” both: a dramedy. In the best dramedies, of course, laughter and tears alternate seamlessly and gracefully, and you leave both entertained and enlightened.

Alas, this isn’t that film. Instead, “This Is Where I Leave You,” directed by Shawn Levy and adapted from Jonathan Tropper’s novel by the author himself, seems to be constantly questioning — or doubting — what it is. Which means that just when it enters into some meaty issues that deserve serious treatment, it gets nervous and falls into forced comedy — or full-on slapstick. Which can get grating.

And it’s a shame, because the film has an A-list ensemble cast, headed by Jason Bateman and

New on base

“This Is Where I Leave You” is playing at:

Europe
Lakenheath, Mildenhall, Ansbach, Baumholder, Grafenwöhr, Ramstein, Spangdahlem, Stuttgart, Vilsack, Wiesbaden, Aviano and Vicenza.

Pacific
Misawa, Yokota, Zama, Foster, Putnam, Hansen, Kadena, Kinser, Schwab, Courtney, Yongsan South Post No. 2, Casey, Henry, Humphreys, Kunsan and Osan.

Online: thisiswhereliveleaveyou.com

Tina Fey, but also featuring nice work from Jane Fonda, Connie Britton, Adam Driver, Rose Byrne, Corey Stoll and more. A cast like that deserves an A-list movie; they got maybe a solid B.

Bateman plays Judd Altman, a radio producer with a pretty wife and an even prettier Manhattan apartment. But he arrives home one afternoon and finds the wife

bonking his boss.

This obviously throws Judd for a loop, but then he gets even graver news: His father has died. He rushes to the suburban homestead, where Mom (Fonda) awaits her four children with a firm requirement: They will honor Dad’s dying wish and sit shiva — Jewish ritual and sit shiva — grieving together, with guests — for seven days.

This pleases no one, especially Wendy (Fey), Judd’s sharp-tongued, bossypants sister, or the other brothers, Paul (Stoll), the mature one, who stayed home to run the family business, and Phillip (Driver), the immature one, who can’t get settled in life.

Fonda has fun here as an uninhibited child psychologist who became famous for a book years ago that spilled her family’s secrets. She loves talking about sex, which embarrasses her family to no end, and also loves showing off her very prominent boob job.

Once everyone’s together, things can start to fall apart. Judd wants to keep his impending divorce a secret, but bossy Wendy won’t let him. Phillip has brought home a smart, sexy, wealthy older woman (Britton) but struggles to stay faithful.



WARNER BROS. PICTURES/AP

“This Is Where I Leave You” stars, from left, Tina Fey, Corey Stoll, Jane Fonda, Jason Bateman and Adam Driver.

Wendy’s having troubles of her own — she’s married to a doll — and still has strong feelings for an old love. Judd is trying to forget his cheating wife, but she shows up anyway. Meanwhile, Judd’s also reconnecting with a lovely friend from the past, Penny (Byrne). And Paul and his wife, Annie, are desperately trying to conceive. Ever been to a shiva where the baby monitor transmits vigorous sex from upstairs to the mourning guests? Us neither.

It’s the scenes of over-obvious mayhem — or ultra-thick sappiness — that ultimately hurt an appealing film. Does every conflict have to involve

people screaming and shouting, then falling over each other in a brawl? At one point, the three adult brothers end up getting high together, in an inappropriate place. They just sit there and laugh loudly. It feels totally fake.

That’s not to say the film isn’t often enjoyable. It’s a pleasure to watch pro like these interact. But at one point, after a particularly silly brawl, poor Wendy asks if everyone can just act more normal. And she’s right. It would have made for a more interesting film.

“This Is Where I Leave You” is rated R for language, sexual content and some drug use. Running time: 103 minutes.

WEEKEND: MOVIES

By RAFER GUZMAN
Newsday

The strangest thing about science fiction, a genre famous for catering to the fantasies of day-dreaming boys, has been its recent popularity among girls. In both book and movie form, “The Hunger Games” and “Divergent” have made billions selling their futuristic heroines to female audiences, while recent boy-oriented movies like “Ender’s Game” and “The Giver” have flopped.

Enter “The Maze Runner,” Wes Ball’s adaptation of James Dashner’s 2009 best-seller. Its hero is Thomas (Dylan O’Brien, MTV’s “Teen Wolf”), who wakes up in a bucolic meadow called the Glade but has no memory of how he got there. His fellow Gladders — all male, all equally clueless — explain that hope for escape is slim: Surrounding them is a towering concrete maze patrolled by spider-like robots called Grievers. Boys known as Runners, led by Minho (Ki Hong Lee), map the maze each day, but the concrete walls shift each night.

“The Maze Runner” is chock-full of male bonding, homemade weapons, robot battles, even a tree fort — just about everything that snails and puppy-dogs’ tails. Though it sometimes feels calculated and mechanical, it’s also solid, well-crafted and entertaining. The maze itself is supercool, an endlessly pivoting puzzle that begs to be explored, and it’s inhabited by a remarkably strong cast. Among the standouts are Thomas Brodie-Sangster as Newt, a friendly kid with owlish eyes, and a terrific Will Poulter (“We’re the Millers”) as Gally, a boy hardened too soon into manhood. Kaya Scodelaria, as the Glade’s most surprising newcomer, Teresa, barely registers but might get more to work with in the future. (Patricia Clarkson, in a small role, lets us know a sequel is coming.)

“The Maze Runner” occa-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF 20TH CENTURY FOX/KAP

‘Maze Runner’ offers tougher, boy-focused dystopian film

A gang of boys must find their way out of a gigantic maze in the post-apocalyptic teen thriller “The Maze Runner.”

sionally ventures into “Lord of the Flies” territory, depicting violence that feels rougher, both physically and emotionally, than the usual PG-13 fare. Frankly, that also might appeal to the movie’s target audience. “The Maze

Runner” is the first dystopian teen movie in a while that offers boys a room of their own.

“The Maze Runner” is rated PG-13 for thematic elements and intense sequences of sci-fi violence and action. Running time: 112 minutes.

New on base

“The Maze Runner” is playing at the following:

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

Pacific
Misawa, Yokota, Zama, Foster, Futenma, Hansen, Kadena, Kinsler, Schwab, Courtney, Yongsan South Post No. 1, Casey, Henry, Humphreys, Kunsan and Osan.

Online: themazerunner.com

Screen teens with nothing to lose

It’s only teenage wasteland — and whether it’s The Who singing about it metaphorically or James Dashner writing about it literally, in the young-adult novel on which “The Maze Runner” is based, dystopia is just another word for teens with nothing else to lose.



“Lord of the Flies” 1963

The artist of teen-dystopia novels, William Golding’s 1954 classic of British boys stranded on a tropical island, where their attempts at civilization descend into savagery, was filmed in 1963 by esteemed theater and movie director Peter Brook, and again in 1990.



“Akira” 1988

In this animated film set in corrupt Neo-Tokyo, 31 years after World War III decimated the original city, a teenage biker exhibits powerful psychic powers.



“Battle Royale” 2000

Before “The Hunger Games,” teens were sent to an island, fitted with explosive collars and ordered to fight to the last on TV in this Japanese action-thriller, a blockbuster domestically and a cult film in the U.S.



“The Hunger Games” 2012

Katniss (Jennifer Lawrence) kicks butt in an authoritarian dystopia.

— Frank Lovice/Newsday

Gross, funny ‘Boxtrolls’ is the best animated film of the year

By ROGER MOORE

McClatchy-Tribune News Service

There’s something about stop-motion 3-D animation — the not-quite-real textures of skin and hair, the quite real cloth and metal, the subtle gloomy lighting effects — that says “spooky.” At all the best animated films, a hint of Halloween have been stop-motion animation or digital efforts that duplicate that hand-molded model look — “The Nightmare Before Christmas,” “Coraline.”

“The Boxtrolls” is from Laika, the studio that made “ParaNorman” and “Coraline.” This adaptation of an Allen Snow novel (“Here Be Monsters!”) is inventive and fanciful and almost certainly the best animated film of the year. It’s spooky and funny and a little twisted. Start to finish, it’s a delight.

The title characters are pointy-eared trolls who live in abandoned cardboard boxes and rummage through the garbage cans of Chesbridge at night to collect gawgaws and such; door knockers, busted alarm clocks, abandoned toys. When the lights come on, they skulk inside the boxes that they wear. When the sun comes up, they flee below ground where they speak Minions-style gibberish and compare notes on what they’ve collected, tinkered with and eaten.

But they’re feared. They’ve stolen a human

New on base

“The Boxtrolls” is playing at the following military facilities:

Europe
Mildenhall, Ramstein, Vilseck and Vicenza.

Pacific
Atsugi, Showboat, Village, Benny Decker, Negishi, Zama, Foster, Kadena and Yongsan South Post No. 1.

Online: theboxtrolls.com

baby, so that must be in their diet.

“Hide your tender and delicious babies,” purs the red-tatted exterminator the town-folk have hired to wipe out the trolls.

Archibald Snatcher, voiced with malevolent glee by Oscar winner Ben Kingsley, wants to swap his red hat for a white hat. The men who wore those white hats, led by Lord Portley-Rind (Jared Harris), are an exclusive lot, rich members of a secret society who do exotic cheese tastings behind closed doors.

But Lord Portley-Rind’s daughter Winifred (Elle Fanning) spies the Boxtrolls at work, and sees a boy (Isaac Hempstead Wright) in their ranks. There’s more to them

than Snatcher is letting on, and as she gets to know the boy, Eggs, she and we learn something of their true nature and their history.

Animation vets Graham Annable and Anthony Stacchi and their design team make the most of this 3-D world. We see the light through the cloth brim of Snatcher’s red hat, the angles of his crooked teeth, the smoke and cinders from his steam-powered vehicles and the wriggling leeches one of his henchmen (voiced with relish by Tracy Morgan, Nick Frost and Richard Ayoode) treat “The Boss” with when he’s had too much cheese.

There are grownup jokes — street names are all cheese ingredients, cheese jokes and cheese references — “What the Gouda?” And small children will delight in the gross gags; bug eating and the like.

The plot is as clockwork as the many gadgets the trolls swipe and Snatcher uses to hunt them, with hints of class warfare and fear-mongering slipped in.

The story’s English fairytale tone, English accents and setting (late Victorian) call to mind Aardman Animations’ “Wallace and Gromit” films. Laika’s earlier efforts hinted that they’d learned from those masters of this animation style. “Boxtrolls” suggests that they’ve mastered it.

“The Boxtrolls” is rated PG for action, some peril and mild rude humor. Running time: 97 minutes.

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THUR SEPT 25 - WED OCT 01

Dawn of the Planet of the Apes (PG-13): Sat & Sun 13:30, Tue 16:00
Guardians of the Galaxy (PG-13): Thur 16:00, 18:15, 20:30, Fri 15:45, 18:00, 20:15, Sat & Sun 13:30, 15:45, 20:15, Mon & Tue 16:00, 18:15, 20:30, Wed 16:00, 18:15
Hercules (PG-13): Sat & Sun 13:30, Wed 16:00
Lucy (PG-13): Thur 19:00, Fri & Sat 18:45, 22:30, Sun 18:45, Mon - Wed 19:00
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (PG-13): Thur 16:00, Sat & Sun 13:30, Mon 16:00
The Giver (PG-13): Thur 19:00, 20:45, Fri & Sat 15:45, 18:45, 20:30, Sun 18:45, 20:30, Mon - Wed 19:00, 20:45
Coming soon:
Gone Girl, Dracula Untold, The Equalizer

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WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



"The Walking Dead" offers a graphic interactive adventure that takes place following a zombie apocalypse.

Telltale Games

Coming of age

By DERRIK J. LANG
The Associated Press

For many of the game designers showing off their latest creations at the recent Penny Arcade video game expo in Seattle, the push to feature more mature storytelling has been one of their most significant challenges. "We are changing as a medium," said Richard Dansky, a writer who has worked on several "Tom Clancy" games, in a talk called "You're So Mature! Is Storytelling in Games Coming of Age?"

While recognizing there have been seri-

ous play has gained both financial and cultural significance, but a disparity persists, as evidenced on the floor of the Seattle expo, known as PAX Prime. There, the likes of the kid-friendly, cartoony "Pokemon" icon Pikachu loomed over gamers firing virtual guns and slashing virtual throats in "Far Cry 4" and "Assassin's Creed."

"I think it's important not to lose track that games tackling serious subjects have been woven into the DNA of the industry since the beginning," said Dansky. "We've always had people who've

attempted to use this medium for more than just 'shoot 'em in the face.' I think what's happening now is unprecedented access to consumers and the awareness the Internet allows us."

Ryan Payton, the head of game studio Camouflaj who previously worked on the "Metal Gear Solid" and "Halo" series, said he had to balance the financial rigors of game development with his personal desire to explore a mature topic while crafting the mobile game "Republique," which casts players as a hacker guiding a woman through a dystopia where individuality is banned.

"My end goal is to not only make enough money to keep the business going and our 25 employees

Despite discord, game creators seek more mature storytelling in games

well fed," said Payton. "It's also that I know, through our game, we could touch millions — if not possibly tens of millions — of people in all parts of the world and get them to think seriously about surveillance infrastructures, whether they're corporate or governmental."

While indie games have long been the biggest sector of the industry to tackle sociopolitical topics like

diversity, personal freedom, mental health and sexual identity, developers at PAX Prime said that line has come to many mainstream games in recent years, pointing to "The Last of Us" and "The Walking Dead: The Game" as examples of titles that took such risks.

Toiya Kristen Finley, a writer who recently worked on a mobile game called "Fat Chicken," which light-heartedly looks at the issue of factory farming, said the most difficult topic for game designers to confront has been sexual abuse. She chastised the PlayStation 3 game "Beyond: Two Souls" for limiting interactivity during a scene that dealt with a sexual assault at a bar.

"I'm not saying you can't have that content, but I think it's a problem when it's shortcut character development," said Finley. "It's often used to toughen a character up, but it just doesn't work that way. When you experience trauma, it can take years of healing. It's a long process. It's disrespecting to the character and players who've been through that, as well."

Ultimately, designers like Qais Fulton, who has worked on such games as "Crimson Dragon" and "Marlow Briggs and the Mask of Death," believes there's room in the cloud and on hard drives for all types of titles. Fulton is among the game developers who hope to bridge the divide between not-so-serious and more thoughtful games.

"I think the resistance to mature storytelling in games is coming from a place of concern," said Fulton. "It doesn't mean mature games preclude juvenile games. Fart jokes are never going away. We will always love them, so just because we enjoy those doesn't mean we can't also appreciate a heartfelt, insightful and poignant experience that has no fart jokes."



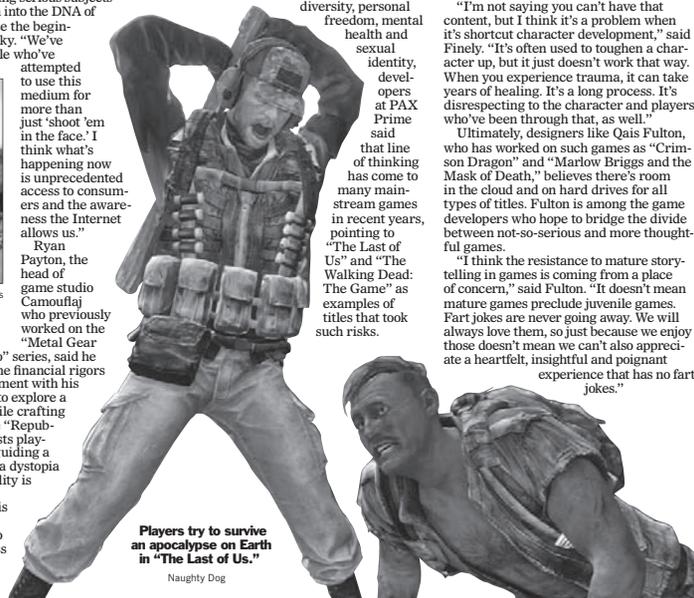
Relevant Games

"Fat Chicken" takes a light-hearted look at factory farming.

ous-minded games going back to the days of 1980s text-based adventures, Dansky said an unstoppable evolution is afoot in the industry — an evolution that has sparked recent online feuding between fans, bloggers and developers.

"We are throwing open new doors and exploring new territory in ways that are advancing faster and obviously making some people unhappy," he said. "We can't just say, 'They have to deal with it.' They're letting us know they're unhappy in ways that are reprehensible. It's up to us to keep reinforcing and pushing for change."

Over the past 50 years, the interactive medium once considered merely child's



Players try to survive an apocalypse on Earth in "The Last of Us."

Naughty Dog



Many staff-written game reviews at stripes.com/military-life

WEEKEND

Europe

THE EUROPE EXPERIENCE

DO THIS: PEEK INTO THE SECRET WORLD OF SPYING

Every day it seems there are media reports about new data hacking scandals and international events involving espionage. But how did this all start?

The interactive exhibition "Top Secret" at the Neue Mitte Oberhausen Museum in Oberhausen, Germany, gives the inside scoop on the legendary world of national secret services including the CIA, the Russian KGB and the east German STASI, professional spies and today's spying via data snooping. Included in its collection of espionage gadgets from different centuries are a mock-up of a pigeon with a small camera attached to its body; tiny cameras placed in books and shoe heels; eavesdropping equipment, including a microphone

concealed inside an artificial cherry placed in a martini glass; firearms, including a pistol that shoots chemical substances to mark people and objects; and a small, foldable version of a U-boat, a type of submarine invented by the Germans for use in World War I and II. "Top Secret" is open every

day, year-round. Admission costs 12.50 euros for adults, 8 euros for children ages 7 to 14 and

5 euros for children ages 4 to 6. A family card for 32 euros provides entry for two adults and two children ages 4 to 14.

Tours for the general public are offered Saturdays at 11 a.m. and Sundays at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. On Sundays, a special tour for children ages 8 to 12 departs at 12:30 p.m.

Please book in advance: (+49) (0)208-62 039 111 or email info@spionage.de. Information is available in English at topsecret-oberhausen.de.

The interactive exhibition "Top Secret" at the Neue Mitte Oberhausen Museum in Oberhausen, Germany, gives the inside scoop on the legendary world of national secret services and their tools. At left is a foldable U-boat used by divers, and above is a martini glass holding an artificial cherry implanted with a microphone.

Photos courtesy of topsecret-oberhausen.de

TOP TRAVEL PICKS

German fall markets

Autumn is welcomed to the old city by the Neckar on Saturday, when the annual event known as "Heidelberger Herbst" brings an artsy and creative flair to the old town. The daytime hours hold endless shopping possibilities, with flea, crafts, and photography markets and numerous stands offering local fare. Musical entertainment offers a journey through cultures, from Arabian drums to French chansons to Irish folk. By the time evening falls, the commercial aspect of the day will have been replaced by a more party atmosphere, and numerous live concerts will ensure each guest finds something to his or her own taste.

A medieval market runs from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. at Hinterer Universitätsplatz, where smiths, potters and masons display their crafts and jugglers and fire artists demonstrate their talents. Those who can't make it Saturday have a second shot at the Middle Ages meriment on Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Get additional info by downloading the pdf brochure at tinyurl.com/q9hsbh.

Wiesbaden hosts an autumn market over the weekend too. Here, visitors will find more than 50 creatively decorated stands offering products associated with the changing of the seasons, from fall vegetables to jams and sausages and wine, including



Karen Bradbury

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

that autumnal fizzy favorite, the new wine known as Federweissen. Quality handicrafts also figure into the mix. Children can enjoy a puppet show, a giant slide and street acts. Mauritius Square makes up the heart of the action. The market opens from 10 a.m. both days, closing at 8 p.m. Saturday and 6 p.m. Sunday. As an added bonus, the city's shops are open Sunday from 1 to 6 p.m.

Running parallel to the autumn market is Wiesbaden's City Festival. A highlight comes Friday evening, when the British band UB40 gives a free performance at the Dern's-sche Gelände. Head back to that same venue Sunday at 11 a.m. for breakfast to the sounds of the USAREUR Band Musik Brigade, playing jazzy interpretations of popular songs. More music, entertainment and fun rounds out the program. Download the city fest's brochure at tinyurl.com/lq84429.

Tattoo you in London

Getting one's body permanently inked probably shouldn't be a spur-of-the-moment decision. Those contemplating a commitment of this type might wish to pay a visit to the London International Tattoo Convention, running through Sunday at Tobacco Dock.

This well-regarded event attracts the cream of the crop in terms of tattoo artists, including those spotlighted on several reality TV series. Although checking out the mastery of the tattoo artists present is perhaps the major draw, a wide range of entertainment across several stages will also be served up at the 10th anniversary edition of this event.

The Main Stage is the venue for acts from burlesque to sword swallowing, as well as performances by The Fuel Girls, a tattooed acrobatic dance troupe. The Voodoo Crypt Stage

Tattoo artists' work will be on display at the London International Tattoo Convention, running through Sunday at Tobacco Dock.

Photo courtesy of Work Hard PR, London



features music from rockabilly to punk. The Pinup Stage hosts models and beauty competitions.

Convention visitors themselves can compete in various tattoo contests across several categories. Vendors will offer not only tools of the trade but alternative merchandise including body jewelry, latex, fetish, goth, pin-up, skate and rocker attire. Food and drink are available on premises.

The convention opens at 11:30 a.m. and runs until 2 a.m. the following day on both Friday and Saturday; on Sunday the show closes at 8 p.m. Adult entry tickets are available at the door. Entry on Saturday costs 35 pounds (about \$57); Sunday admission is 30 pounds, or a multi-day pass is 55 pounds. Those under 14 enter free in the company of an adult. Learn more at london-tattooconvention.com.

Ultra Trail run

Too much wine and song over the past few weeks? Mark your calendar for a rigorous endeavor sure to burn off copious calories: The Pfalz Trail

in Leiningerland, an area along the German Wine Road some 20 miles east of Kaiserslautern.

The Pfalz Trail, slated for Oct. 11, offers runs of varying distances over hills and through forests. According to race organizers, such competitions match current trends as today's runners move away from paved roads toward challenging trails through scenic landscapes.

The Ultra Trail, covering an 85.4-kilometer distance and a 2,440-meter difference in altitude, is billed as ideal for both newcomers to the sport and those who want to prepare for some of the world's biggest runs of this type. Those hoping to someday complete the North Face Mont Blanc Ultra Trail can chalk up two qualifying points by finishing this run.

Those not ready to take on an ultra can choose between 32.7- and 16.8-km runs; alternately, it's possible to take the Ultra as part of a three-man relay team. The 8.8-km course is suitable for both runners and walkers. Children get a taste of the sport along 3-km and 800-m trails of their very own (entry free).

The ultras start at 6:30 a.m. and must be completed within the event's 12.5-hour cutoff time. Cost is 55 euros (about \$71) for those who register by Oct. 10; participation in shorter distance runs costs less. The starting point is the Bürgerhaus at Carlsberg-Hertlingshausen, PLZ 67316.

Learn more at pfalztrail.de.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Europe



The Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte in Naples, Italy, is inside a former Bourbon royal palace and is set on almost 300 acres of former hunting and leisure grounds.



PHOTOS BY STEVEN BEARDSLEY/Stars and Stripes

A bust of Pope Paul III stands next to a portrait at the museum. The 16th-century pope was an art connoisseur whose collection was moved in part to Naples in the 19th century.

A not-so-hidden gem

Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte in Naples houses collection of Italian Renaissance, Baroque paintings

BY STEVEN BEARDSLEY
Stars and Stripes

Just off the well-trodden tourist path that swings through the pizzerias and ancient ruins of this southern city is a museum often overshadowed by its counterparts to the north — but is nearly as impressive and far more serene.

The Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte boasts a solid collection of Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings from across the country, among them notable works from Titian, one of the city's three Caravaggios and the impressive works of lesser-known artists like Parmigianino. A collection of Neapolitan works explores Renaissance principles then radiating from farther north.

Capodimonte can feel like a hidden gem compared to galleries in Rome and Florence, which swarm with visitors during summer. Few seem to tour here, an area distant enough from downtown that visitors must make a point of reaching it. Locals mostly stick to the former royal grounds outside, one of the city's few green spots.

The museum is hardly hidden. Located inside a former palace of the city's Bourbon rulers, it is a chunk of royal architecture perched atop one of the city's two dominant hills.

Capodimonte partly preserves the rooms and art of the former palace, but the real treasure is the earlier artwork, much of it from the Farnese family collection moved from Rome in the 19th century. The family's most esteemed member, Pope Paul III, served from 1534 to 1549 and enjoyed collecting and commissioning art.



A preserved room in the former Bourbon palace that now houses the Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte.

Portraits of the pope and his contemporaries are among the first works in the Farnese gallery on the first floor. Titian painted many of them, putting depth and presence into the gazes of some of the era's most powerful men. The pope is frail but shrewd. Charles V, ruler of the Holy Roman Empire, is circumspect.

Nearby are several literal heavyweights, the large, muscular bodies sketched by Michelangelo and Raphael in preparatory cartoons that act as blueprints for later frescoes. Look closely and notice the pinholes along the lines, used to transfer the outline onto the wall.

Michelangelo's muscular style and Raphael's classical softness are visible in works across the gallery, speaking to the masters' influence. Other artists are more distinct.

A personal favorite is Parmigianino, whose portrait subjects pose with their personal effects — a milk stole, a pair of gloves — and stare out as if defying or confronting the viewer.

His portrayal of Lucretia, a Roman noblewoman whose suicide is a common theme in Italian art, is striking. Her face flashes as the knife enters her breast and she gazes upward, her mouth slightly open. Her elaborate braids are a testament to her dignity, even in death.

The floor above is devoted to Naples art but dominated by a single work from the city's favorite son, Caravaggio. Venetian by birth and style but a drifter for life, Caravaggio fled to Naples in 1606 after killing a man in Rome. Three of his works remain, one of them at Capodimonte.

Cleverly placed at the end of the wing and visible in the distance with every entry or exit from an exhibit room, the work stands out sharply from the gilded altarpieces that precede it, drawing the visitor near. Titled "Flagellation," it shows the twisted, illuminated body of Christ being flogged by tormentors half-obscured in shadows, their violence visible in their tensed muscles and an ugly scowl caught in the light. It is, like most of his works, grimy, violent and incredibly real.

Caravaggio's works stunned Naples, and his style of light and shadow influenced a set of devotees whose works finish the wing.

They offer a fitting end to the museum and a metaphor for the city itself, beautiful and brutal in equal measure.

beardsley.steven@stripes.com
Twitter: @sjbeardsley



"Lucretia," by Ignoto lombardo. The depiction of the Roman noblewoman's suicide, a popular theme in Italian art, compares to another dramatic portrayal at the museum, by artist Parmigianino.

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Address: via Miano, 2, 80131 Napoli

TIMES

8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. daily, except Wednesday. Ticket office closes one hour before the museum closes.

COSTS

Normal entry is 7.50 euros. The price drops to 6.50 euros after 2 p.m. An audioguide costs 5 euros.

FOOD

The museum has a cafe, and other options (trattorias, street food) are abundant outside the park.

INFORMATION

Telephone: (+39) (0)81-749-9111. English information cards are available in many of the museum's rooms. An audioguide or book (avail-



Stars and Stripes

able at the ticket office, which doubles as a gift shop), is recommended. Street parking is available but can be limited at certain times of the day. Signs around the park will point to parking garages with reasonable rates. I paid 5 euros for a garage on the northern side of the park. The former royal grounds and woods surrounding the museum are large (nearly 300 acres), well-kept and popular in a city with few such expanses. Entry to the park is free.

— Steven Beardsley

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL S. DARNELL/Stars and Stripes

Each meal at Ganesha, such as the mango prawns in the background, comes with naan bread and cardamom-infused rice.

After Hours: Germany

BY MICHAEL S. DARNELL
Stars and Stripes

I've been resisting the urge to write about Ganesha. This is my local "spot," the place I go when I want a great meal with minimal fuss. Some part of me has wanted to keep this place to myself, but after my most recent visit, I changed my mind.

Simply put, Ganesha is too good to keep to myself.

This moderately-sized Indian restaurant right in the middle of Weiden, Germany, opened a little more than a year ago, so it's not as well-known as other eateries in the area.

The charm of Ganesha, to be completely frank, isn't immediately apparent. From the outside, it looks like any other restaurant in the area. Inside, the decor is typical and the lighting is a bit dim. On some visits, the service leaves much to be desired, while on others it's well above average. The menu has the usual *pakoras*, *nanans* and *biryani* dishes one might expect from an Indian restaurant in southern Germany.

I say this, because while some restaurants woo diners with their atmosphere, Ganesha's strength lies with the quality of its kitchen staff, which has, to date, yet to disappoint. In fact, it's fair to say the food there ranks among the best — if not the best — Indian cuisine I've ever eaten.

I've had a good sampling of the menu on my many visits there, with the lamb *palak* — a flavorful and hearty lamb, curry and onion dish — and a sweetened mango and prawn *jheenga* being among the highlights. My personal favorite, and a dish I can't recommend enough, is the garlic chicken *tikka*. Like all Ganesha's tandoori creations, this spicy fowl is roasted over coals in a clay oven, and the texture is absolutely wonderful because of that preparation.

It's not just the main courses that mark Ganesha as a quality restaurant. For example, some Indian restaurants treat their *naan*s — baked flatbreads ubiquitous in Anglicized Indian cuisine — as



Ganesha tandoori restaurant in Weiden, Germany, has consistently delicious food, including these poppadoms, served with a nice variety of side sauces.

an afterthought. Not so here. The garlic *naan* is of particular note, and served with a side of curry, could be a meal in itself.

The same quality can be found in the couple of desserts I've tried. The *gulab jamun* — a honey-baked cake — is sweet without being cloying. It's been the favorite dessert among people I've eaten with, though more adventurous types may want to give the homemade rice-and-milk pudding a chance, as that was a pleasant experience.

No matter what I've tried, I have always managed to leave Ganesha happy with the quality of the food and fair prices.

I wish I could say the same for the service. The owner is often working the floor and is extremely friendly and attentive. But the wait staff on my most recent visit had to be flagged down for nearly everything. On other times, the staff is very attentive. The hit-or-miss service is the only negative I can levy against the restaurant, but I felt it worth mentioning. I can recommend Ganesha more strongly than nearly every other restaura-



Don't forget dessert: the after-dinner treats at Ganesha are tasty, and this honey-sweetened *gulab jamun* is one of the restaurant's best offerings.

GANESHA

Address: Weisenstrasse 1, Weiden.
Hours: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 5-10 p.m. daily

Dress: Casual.
Prices: Main course are between 12 euros and 16 euros; starters between 4 euros and 10 euros.

Clientele: German and the occasional American.

Menu: In English and German.
More information: Phone: (+49) (0) 961-206-331-55, website:
www.ganeshaweiden.com

— Michael S. Darnell

rant in the Weiden area, simply because I have never had anything less than a stellar meal there.

Bottom line: If you're in the mood for Indian food and you happen to be in Weiden, Ganesha should be at the top of your list.

darnell.michael@stripes.com

Brussels sprouts can bulk up salad

BY MELISSA D'ARABIAN
The Associated Press

If you love salads as much as I do, listen up, because I'm about to change your salad-building world.

Ditch the usual greens and get your hands on Brussels sprouts! For a long time, no one knew what to do with Brussels sprouts except boil them. Yuck! But they're delicious when roasted, sauteed, broiled and even grilled.

Today I am celebrating Brussels sprouts as a salad green. That's right — raw and in a salad.

It's as simple as it sounds. Slice them thinly with a knife, or buy them pre-shaved in the produce aisle. They are delicious, lightly crunchy and crisp, and have a wonderful, fresh flavor.

Brussels sprouts belong to the same family as cabbage, broccoli and kale, so it's no surprise that they are incredibly healthy. Not only do they have tons of fiber and vitamins, but a 1-cup serving of shaved Brussels sprouts also packs about as much protein as a handful of raw almonds or a half cup of milk.

SHAVED BRUSSELS SPROUTS AND CHICKEN SALAD WITH BLACK PEPPER-MUSTARD DRESSING

For the dressing:
¼ cup plain low-fat Greek yogurt
½ clove garlic, smashed or roughly chopped

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
1 tablespoon water
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon ground black pepper

For the salad:
1 Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored and diced

1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 pound Brussels sprouts, shaved or thinly sliced (about 5 cups)

1 pint grape tomatoes, halved
¼ cup almonds, toasted and roughly chopped

1 boneless, skinless chicken breast, cooked and chopped or shredded (about 1 cup)

1 scallion, chopped
1 ounce Parmesan cheese, broken into shards

Lemon wedges, for serving

To make the dressing, in a blender combine all ingredients and blend until smooth. Set aside.

To prepare the salad, in a large serving bowl toss the diced apple with the lemon juice. Add the Brussels sprouts, tomatoes, almonds, chicken and scallion. Drizzle ¼ cup of the dressing and toss well to coat. Top with Parmesan shreds. Serve with the remaining dressing and lemon wedges on the side.

Start to finish: 30 minutes
Servings: 4



MATTHEW MEAD/AP

This Brussels sprouts and chicken salad is topped with mustard pepper dressing.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Going coastal



PHOTOS BY KATHY KIELISZEWSKI/Detroit Free Press

Adventurers coasteer on the rocky cliffs along Ganavan Bay on the outskirts of Oban, a seaside town on Scotland's western coastline. Stramash, an outdoor adventure company, takes groups coasteering, an activity that involves sea swimming, rock climbing and cliff jumping.

'Coasteering' combines climbing Scottish cliffs with diving into roiling water

BY KATHY KIELISZEWSKI
Detroit Free Press

WE sat among strangers, stuffed into wet suits and squeezed into a van headed toward a beach. No one was sure what to expect when we arrived. The website had used words like "climb," "scramble," "swim" and "jump." It added: "A hair-raising and spine-tingling journey of exploration."

We were going coasteering. I had never heard of coasteering until I started digging around the Internet as I planned our family's summer vacation to Scotland. My husband, two boys and I would tour castles, visit tiny villages and eat haggis, but most of all we wanted to experience Scotland's nature and geography to its fullest extent — the cloud-kissed mountains, sheep-dotted glens, legendary lochs and rugged coastline.

We were headed to the western highlands near Oban, a coastal town filled with bed-and-breakfasts and seafood. Coasteering originated in the United Kingdom and combines sea swimming, rock climbing and cliff jumping. Yes, cliff jumping.

I had stumbled on Stramash,

an outdoor adventure company on the outskirts of Oban. It offers a series of what they call Adventure Days that include things like sea kayaking, sailing, archery, mountaineering and coasteering.

When we arrived at Stramash's office, we met Rob, our guide for the day. He was young, tall, muscular and built for jumping off cliffs. I am over 40, mildly athletic and afraid of heights. And yet here I was in a wet suit, life jacket and helmet so I could jump off a cliff.

Tucked northwest of Oban is Ganavan Bay and a crescent-shaped patch of beach abutted by steep cliffs. This is where we headed in the musty van.

It wasn't until I plodded into the cold ocean water that I wondered, "What was I thinking?"

Thankfully, the wet suit did its job, keeping me warm from the icy ocean water. We started swimming toward the cliffs. I don't know if it was the weight of the wet suit or the buoyancy of the life jacket, but swimming was difficult. I was the last to reach the cliffs and completely out of breath.

My younger son stayed close to his dad, just to be safe. This was, after all, an ocean, filled with lots of unknowns. My confident

teenage son didn't even look back to see how the rest of us were doing.

Rob explained the proper way to climb. And fall. Grab hold of the black rocks, not the greenish ones — those are covered in razor-sharp barnacles — and when you start to fall, push away from the rocks.

As we began to climb, I said, "I'm not going to be able to do this."

Yet, I did it. I'd find my footing and hoist myself up, around and over the rocky crags.

Now it was time to jump off the cliffs. There would be multiple jumps, each one higher and harder than the last.

You aren't supposed to jump so much as leap. Rob demonstrated by striking a runner-like pose; one foot in front, one foot in back, and like a gazelle he leapt off the first jump.

Not practiced in the art of leaping, I couldn't decide what felt natural, left foot in front and right in back or vice versa. Frankly, nothing felt natural as I stared over the cliff, 10 feet above the waves.

One by one, we leapt, some of us more gazelle-like than others.

The next jump was about 15 feet. Boosted by the success of

the last jump, I didn't hesitate.

However, the final jump was 25 feet, almost as tall as a three-story building.

My older son was the first to go. He had been brave the whole afternoon, but even he hesitated before jumping. After he emerged from the dark green water, he let out a yell and waved up at us.

The other mother in the group stood just to the side of the looking down and said, "We'd regret it if we didn't do it, right?"

"Right," I said, with zero confidence in my voice.

After one more internal pep talk, I was leaping off the cliff, holding my nose. The water comes sooner than you'd expect,

and the impact is harder than you'd imagine. The sound is amazing and scary. Thanks to my life vest, I popped out of the water like a fishing bobber that just lost the catch of the day.

Later in the evening, we drove back to the beach as the sun was setting behind the islands past Ganavan Bay, and we walked the dry path above the ocean and cliffs to where we had jumped.

We took a family photo and compared battle wounds — I had scraped my face with my nails while holding my nose, and the boys counted barnacle scratches.

Those little scratches quickly disappeared. The sensation of hurtling seaward from a Scottish cliff will last forever.

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe



PHOTOS BY KATHY KIELUSZEWSKI/Detroit Free Press

Tucked northwest of Oban, a Scottish seashore town, is Ganavan Bay and a crescent-shaped patch of beach abutted by steep cliffs.

KNOW & GO: COASTEERING

Oban, Scotland

Oban is a small fishing village of about 8,500 people on the west coast of Scotland. Unofficially known as the Gateway to the Isles, it's a popular summer tourist spot with seafood restaurants serving the day's catch, boat tours to the islands of the Inner Hebrides and the Oban Distillery, one of Scotland's oldest whisky distilleries and famous for its single malt 14-year-old

scotch. Website: oban.org.uk.

Where to stay

While in Oban and the western highlands, you'll find a bevy of bed-and-breakfasts, hotels and quaint inns to spend the night. Another option is renting a self-catered cottage where linens and basic kitchen essentials are supplied, but for the most part, you are on your own when it comes to cleaning and cooking. A cottage allows a larger group to spread

out, and you can save money on food by eating in.

Sites like HomeAway.com and VRBO.com list rentals of all shapes, sizes and prices. We rented a small lodge on a working farm called Ballimore Farm Estates about 30 minutes outside of Oban. We prepared most of our own meals.

A long winding road, past fields of heather and thistle, takes you into the heart of the farm where we stayed, which

includes a large manor house that sleeps 12, a small cottage for four and a slightly larger lodge — actually, a duplex-style building — that can sleep up to eight, depending on if you rent part or all of it. The lodge is comfortable but not fancy, and the best part is the view. The farm sits on thousands of acres of rolling hills complete with its very own fishing loch, Loch Tromley.

Expect to wake to the sounds of bleating sheep and bellowing

Highland cows grazing in the field right next to your window.

Costs

We paid 428 pounds — about \$700 U.S. with a \$100 refundable cleaning deposit and a three-night minimum for half of the lodge. But you can get in for as little as 70 pounds a night, or about \$116, for this space in the off season from November through March. There are special rates during the holidays.

Restaurant Directory

GERMANY

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WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING



Burger King's black bun weird, but not much fun

Squid ink-infused meal not terrible, but not worth \$10

By JAMES KIMBER
Stars and Stripes

At Burger Kings throughout Japan, black is the new brown. It's also the new yellow and red.

On Sept. 19, Burger King brought back the black buns it made famous two years ago. Only this time, the fast-food chain went the extra mile and made the cheese and ketchup black as well. Instead of using food coloring, BK opted instead for bamboo charcoal smoke and squid ink.

According to the now-viral press release, the buns and cheese are smoked with the charcoal, and the squid ink is part of the sauce. Add a peppered all-beef patty, and even the meat takes on a darker shade.

The result is as unappetizing in appearance as it sounds, but not quite as horrible-tasting as it looks. I volunteered to be a taste-tester, putting my nearly 15 years of Naval training in consuming vast quantities of normally inedible foods to good use.

The burgers come in two forms. The Kuro Pearl has only the unique black condiments; cheese, ketchup and bun. For roughly a dollar more, the Kuro Diamond has the same plus regular lettuce, tomato, onion and mayo.

The Kuro Pearl and the Kuro Diamond are sold at nearly every Burger King in Japan. I went to the franchise just outside Hachioji Station's north gate. The burger is wrapped nicely in a black wrapper and, if you get up to get it to go, comes in a black bag to match. Once you open the wrapper, the burger sits there looking as sad and pathetic as any other hastily-assembled fast-food burger.

And that cheese. That strange-looking plastic-like thing hanging off the sides of the bun looks like the blown tire tread on the side of the freeway.

Oddly, the burger gets more strange-looking after you bite into it. The air bubbles are black, too. It looks cake-like in texture, but smells like liquid smoke.

Here's how it tastes: First, you're hit by a heavy smoky flavor, followed by the tang of the squid-ink ketchup. The black-peppery burger that follows doesn't taste or look like a typical BK burger. No, it tastes more like a TV dinner meat patty and looks more like a veggie burger.

And that cheese. That strange-looking plastic-like thing hanging off the sides of the bun looks like the blown tire tread on the side of the freeway.

However, once you get past the looks, you realize that marketing must have been lying about the cheese, because it tastes like American cheese. The inky ketchup is actually and surprisingly good, especially considering it's made by Burger King.

Regardless, \$10 for the meal (if you get fries and a drink) is high for any fast food, even by Japanese standards, and the burger patty is too much like a microwavable Salisbury steak to be worth a second go. But it does make for great photos.

kimber.james@stripes.com
Twitter: @james_kimber



PHOTOS BY JAMES KIMBER/Stars and Stripes

Burger King's Kuro Diamond is peppered hamburger with black cheese and black ketchup between two black buns, plus lettuce, tomato, onions and mayo. According to Burger King's press release, the black cheese gets its color from bamboo charcoal smoke. The burger is available only in Japan.



After biting into the unexpectedly peppery burger, the black bun resembles pumice.



The Kuro Diamond in its black wrapper. The meal (with fries and drink) will set you back about \$10.

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THE NEW SANNO

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Pacific

Tourists asked not to eat while walking in Kanazawa, Japan

The Yomiuri Shimbun

Tourists are being requested to refrain from eating while walking through the historic Higashi Chaya District in Kanazawa. The request, introduced about three months ago, has drawn mixed reactions, but a group consisting mainly of local merchants is asking people to understand their efforts to preserve the district, which features traditional chaya teahouses from the Edo period (1603-1867).

In connection with the opening of the Hokuriku Shinkansen line scheduled for March next year, the group said, "We aim to make a high-quality sightseeing spot by protecting the beautiful landscape."

The group, named Kanazawa Higashiyama: Higashi no Machinami to Bunko o Mamorukai (Kanazawa's Higashiyama group for protecting the landscape and culture of Higashi) started asking tourists not to eat while walking in June, putting up notices in Japanese and English. As the district is crowded with

tourists enjoying local ice cream and wagashi confections on weekends, food containers and other litter tossed onto the street and into ditches have aroused concern among local people and led to the request.

Quaint chaya with latticed fronts line the street in the Higashi Chaya district, which is part of an area designated as a national important preservation district for groups of traditional buildings. To protect the landscape, the group has placed restrictions on the locations of vending machines and outdoor ads, and established criteria for the size and color of store curtains since 2003. After the group explained its request to avoid eating while walking to local store owners selling confectionery and souvenirs, they agreed to encourage the effort.

The signs have proven largely effective: Most tourists now eat food at or in front of stores, as the signs request. A government worker visiting from Nagoya appreciated the group's effort, saying, "The street is really beautiful without garbage,



YOMIURI SHIMBUN/Bloomberg

Tourists are being requested to refrain from eating while walking through the historic Higashi Chaya District in Kanazawa, Japan; here, a sign with the request hangs at an ice cream shop.

though it would be more comfortable with more places to sit." However, since the request has no mandatory power, some still eat while walking and ignore the

notices. A 23-year-old female office worker from Tokyo who was eating an ice cream while walking with her family said, "I don't cause trouble to anyone."

Unruly passenger reports drop

Three commercial flights were diverted in the span of nine days recently because of passenger squabbles over reclining seats, prompting the question: Has shrinking legroom pushed fliers to their breaking point?

But if more passengers are having meltdowns over airline service, federal statistics do not show it.

The number of "unruly passengers" cited with interfering with the duties of a crew member has declined over the past decade, according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

Such passengers can face criminal charges with a sentence of up to 20 years in prison or fines of up to \$25,000, depending on the severity of the incident.

In 2004, 330 passengers were charged with being unruly and interfering with the duties of a crew member, compared with 167 passengers in 2013, according to the FAA. In the first half of 2014, only 59 passengers were charged with interfering with a crew, putting 2014 on pace for the least number of unruly passenger cases in nearly 20 years.

From The Los Angeles Times

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WEEKEND

Pacific

THE PACIFIC EXPERIENCE

OFF BASE



DO THIS: Yokohama Floating Yacht Show, Japan

The show, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sept. 26-28 in Kanagawa prefecture, features 20 yachts at Yokohama Bayside Marina and a performance by professional comic storyteller Jingoro Yanagya at 2 p.m. Sat. The free event is a five-minute walk from Torihama Station on Kanazawa Seaside Line. For more: 03-3434-5181.

Photos courtesy of Yokohama Floating Yacht Show



COSMOS FLOWERS

Events on this page are as accurate as possible at press time. Please verify events before attending.

Japan

COSMOS GARDEN (Yokosuka): Through Nov. 3; one million cosmos flowers in bloom; at 2 p.m. Oct. 26 & Nov. 3; visitors can pick the flowers. Kurihama Flower World, 1 Shinmei-cho, 15-minute walk from Kurihama Station, Keikyuu and JR Yokosuka Lines; free; 046-833-8282.

SHOWA KINEN PARK COSMOS FESTIVAL (Tokyo): Through Nov. 3, 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m., until 6 p.m. weekends in September; concert 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at Minnae Harappa on Oct. 4; showakinenpark.go.jp.

South Korea

BUKCHEON COSMOS and BUCKWHEAT FESTIVAL (South Gyeongang province): Through Oct. 5; music concerts in flower gardens, photo contest and more; Jikjeon town and Inyeong town area, Hadonggun; tour.hadong.go.kr.



KOJI SASAHARA/AP

People walk past cosmos in full bloom at Hama-rikyu Gardens in Tokyo on Sept. 22. For more: tinyurl.com/onzo5k8.



©JTA, ©JNTO

Tea time in Japan

Enjoy a tea ceremony party at Aizu Wakamatsu Tsurugajo Castle in Fukushima prefecture, Japan, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Oct. 5. For more on the site: tsrugajo.com.

OKTOBERFESTS IN JAPAN

SENDAI OKTOBERFEST 2014 (Miyagi prefecture): Through Sept. 28, 11 a.m.-9 p.m., 4-9 p.m. Sept. 26; German beers and live performance at Nishiki-cho Park, five-minute walk from Kodjoudai Keon or Hirose Dori Stations on subway; free admission; 022-714-8324.

ICHIKAWA OKTOBERFEST 2014 (Chiba prefecture): Sept. 28, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; German beers and live performance at Nikke Collon Plaza Square, 10-minute walk from Motoyawata Station on JR Subu or Toei Shinjuku Lines; free admission; 047-300-8051.

MACHIDA OKTOBERFEST 2014 (Tokyo): Oct. 3, 3-9:30 p.m. & Oct. 4 & 5, 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m.; enjoy German beers, performances and more at Machida Shichiro; free.

OKTOBERFEST IN KOKURA 2014 (Fukuoka prefecture): Oct. 3-13, 4-9 p.m., 11 a.m.-9 p.m. weekends; at Katsuyama Park, eight-minute walk from JR Kokura Station on Kagoshima Line; free admission; 093-512-9980.

OKTOBERFEST AT YOKOHAMA RED BRICK WAREHOUSE (Yokohama): Oct. 3-19, noon-9:30 p.m. weekdays, 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m. weekends; 15-minute walk from JR Kan-nai Station; free admission; 045-227-2002.

OKTOBERFEST KAMAKURA 2014 (Kanagawa prefecture): Oct. 4, noon-8 p.m. & Oct. 5, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; beers by local microbreweries and live performance at Kamakura City Hall parking lot, five-minute walk from JR Hirasaki Station; free admission; 0467-23-2563.

KADARUBE CRAFT BEER FES 2014 IN HIROSAKI (Aomori prefecture): Oct. 5, noon-6 p.m.; Dolemachi Community Park, one-minute walk from Shimo Dolemachi Bus Stop after taking a loop-line bus from JR Hirasaki Station; 0172-31-5765.

OKTOBERFEST AT ODAIBA (Tokyo): Through Oct. 5, 4-10 p.m. weekdays; German beers and German band performs at Odaiba Symbol Promenade and Central Parks, five-minute walk from Daiba Station on Yurikamome (monorail) and Tokyo Teiport Station on

Rinkai Line; free admission; 03-3524-0788.

SAITAMA OKTOBERFEST 2014 (Saitama prefecture): Through Oct. 5, 4-10 p.m., 11 a.m.-10 p.m. weekends; at Kanazuka Park, 11-minute walk from JR Oniya Station on Takoku and Keihin Takoku Line; 03-3572-3730.

OKTOBERFEST COEDO BEER FESTIVAL (Saitama prefecture): Oct. 13, noon-6 p.m.; Saitama Super Arena; free admission; 049-259-7733.

OKTOBERFEST IN KURA-NO MACHI (Tochigi prefecture): Oct. 10-13, 5-9 p.m. & 11 a.m.-9 p.m. on weekends; JR Tochigi Station North Exit Square; free admission; 0282-25-2356.

AKITA OKTOBERFEST (Akita prefecture): Oct. 16-19; Area Nakaichi, 10-minute walk from JR Akita Station on Owu Line; 018-862-1841.



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

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Pacific

After Hours: Okinawa

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

China's influence lies just beneath the surface in many facets of Okinawan life, with Chinese and Japanese heritage colliding with Ryukyuan traditions. The food is no different, and the Plaza House Restaurant is where their culinary styles deliciously collide.

Located conveniently in Okinawa City about halfway between Camp Foster and Kadena Air Base on Highway 330, the Plaza House offers a wide selection of authentic Cantonese cuisine at affordable prices. The heaping portions, generally starting at just over 1,000 yen (less than \$10), are meant to be shared by friends and family.

Founded more than 50 years ago, the restaurant claims to be the first authentic Chinese restaurant on the island. The claim isn't easily

confirmed, but when it comes to quality, the Plaza House puts their food where your mouth is. Over the years, they have served a wide variety of celebrities and political figures.

Finding good Chinese food in America is often like playing with a hand grenade. Sometimes it is so inauthentic, greasy and just plain disgusting it can blow up in your face, not to mention leave you hungry less than an hour later.

The real deal is often delicious and healthy, and Plaza House sticks to that recipe.

The fried rice is a respect-

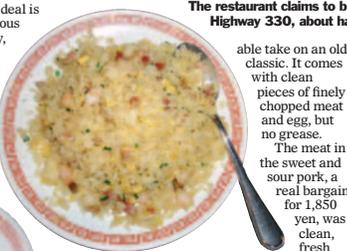
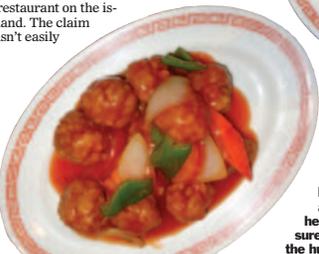
Above: The Plaza House's fried rice is a decent take on a classic.

Left: The sweet and sour pork's heaping portion is sure to satisfy even the hungriest patron.



PHOTOS BY MATTHEW M. BURKE/Stars and Stripes

The Plaza House Restaurant's neon sign beckons, much like its delightful authentic Cantonese cuisine. The restaurant claims to be the first to specialize in Chinese food in Okinawa and is located off Highway 330, about halfway between Camp Foster and Kadena Air Base.



able take on an old classic. It comes with clean pieces of finely chopped meat and egg, but no grease.

The meat in the sweet and sour pork, a real bargain for 1,850 yen, was clean, fresh and tender. It

came lightly battered and fried to crispy, delicious perfection, drizzled in a sublime sweet and tangy sauce, coupled with large chunks of onion, green pepper and tomato that stole the show.

The spring rolls, beef and tomato on rice, shrimp and scrambled egg on rice, and stir-fried beef with vegetables also come highly recommended.

The Plaza House additionally offers fusion cuisine like jellied pig ear in a hot pepper awamori sauce, stir-fried Nago royal pork with Shanxi dark vinegar and Aosa seaweed with king crab soup. The local produce is strikingly fresh.

The Plaza House caters to families and functions with large dining and private function rooms, complete with Cantonese decor, and a course menu for any special occasion. The course selection offers a wide array of dishes, from simple and cheap to robust and exotic, starting at 6,200 yen for two and reaching 48,500 yen for five.

The menu also features a wide selection of non-alcoholic beverages, including a selection of juices for the kids. For the adults, there is Japanese and Chinese beer, sake, awamori and Chinese wine by the glass or bottle.

The Plaza House carries on their tradition with a welcoming

PLAZA HOUSE RESTAURANT

Location: Okinawa City, halfway between Camp Foster and Kadena Air Base, off Highway 330, in the Plaza House Shopping Center.

Cost: Varies, with appetizers starting at under \$10. Entrees generally cost upwards of \$10. They offer a course menu for parties of more than one.

Website: plazahouse.net/show/data/67 (in Japanese)
Phone: 098-933-3111

— Matthew M. Burke

and friendly staff that is quick to recommend their favorite dishes and provide an English-language menu.

burke.matt@stripes.com

Pimiento cheese now a trendy bar food

By **MICHAEL FELBERBAUM**
The Associated Press

Could it be that the cocktail and craft beer scenes are making the "caviar of the South" suddenly hip?

They're certainly trying. Because that caviar — better known as pimiento cheese — is experiencing a renaissance of sorts around the United States as trendy bars and restaurants catering to upscale drinkers have embraced the blend of cheeses and peppers as a funky accompaniment to hipster booze.

Pimiento cheese (also often spelled pimento) dates to at least the late 1800s, when the blend of pimientos (a sweet pepper) and cheese was served at formal gatherings. It quickly became a staple for the working man because it didn't require refrigeration. Often called the pate or caviar of the South, pimiento cheese also was an important food during war times and the Great Depression.

Perre Coleman Magness, author of the new cookbook "Pimiento Cheese," admits she didn't necessarily like pimiento cheese growing up in Memphis, Tenn., but her fondness blossomed as she got older. She spoke to The Associated Press about America's fondness of, and sometimes

aversion to, the cheddar cheese concoction.

AP: Why is there seemingly such a love-hate relationship with pimiento cheese?

Magness: I think it might be the mayonnaise. There are some people who just have an aversion to it. That combination of three simple ingredients — tangy, sharp cheddar cheese and pimientos, which have a bite but are not hot and spicy, and creamy mayonnaise — comes together in this amazing way that can translate into other recipes.

Is there a revival of pimiento cheese going on?

I've seen it in many forms in menus all over and I think it's concurrent to a resurgence in Southern cuisine and to Southern chefs feeling like it's OK to revisit the dishes of their childhood that maybe at one point weren't thought of as anything restaurant-worthy.

Are you a pimiento cheese purist?

I love seeing it used in all different ways. I love it when I go to a restaurant and they have something really unique that they've done with pimiento cheese. I can't say that I like every pimiento cheese that I've ever had, but it's a very personal taste. But I think it's fascinating to see

people riffing on their mothers' recipe. ... I'm not a big fan of pimiento cheese with pickles in it, but I know a lot of people who think pimiento cheese without pickles makes no sense.

ZESTY PIMIENTO CHEESE

4 ounces cream cheese
½ cup mayonnaise
2 tablespoons marinated hot peppers (or pickled jalapeno slices)
2 tablespoons marinated garlic cloves (or plain garlic)
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
4-ounce jar chopped pimientos, drained
8 ounces shredded cheddar cheese
8 ounces shredded pepper jack cheese

In a food processor, combine the cream cheese, mayonnaise, hot peppers, garlic and mustard. Process until smooth. Add the pimientos and pulse just until combined. Transfer to a medium bowl. Add the cheddar and jack cheeses, then stir to combine. Serve immediately or refrigerate.

Start to finish: 15 minutes

Servings: 16

Nutrition information per serving: 150 calories;

110 calories from fat

Recipe from Alison Ladman



MATTHEW MEAD/AP

Pimiento cheese (also often spelled pimento) dates to at least the late 1800s, when the blend of pimientos (a sweet pepper) and cheese was served at formal gatherings. It quickly became a staple for the working man because it didn't require refrigeration.

WEEKEND: MUSIC

Brown putting focus back on music

By RYAN PEARSON
The Associated Press

Chris Brown celebrated his 25th birthday in jail last May by making his own "spread cake": chocolate, peanut butter, bread and milk.

"Mix it up in a little cereal bowl and let it sit for a little while. It comes out and you've got a nice little cake," Brown said, laughing. "A couple of the homies taught me how to do it."

Accustomed to the high life since he became an R&B star at 16, Brown was brought low by his three months in lockup. He emerged last June determined not to slide back into his old ways. Jail had changed things.

"I've always renegeed on a lot of my situations. But I think that's a part of growing up and learning. For me, now I have a better sense of what's important — being that I was incarcerated, being that I've had the bad stuff happen to me," he said in an interview. "You can't continuously mess up. You're not going to get that many chances. I'm not saying by my peers, but I'm just saying by God in general. For me and my spirit, I just want to be able to have some peace, be able to chill and do what I love — because I was blessed with this opportunity and this talent, so I don't want to waste it."

Brown — a brilliant dancer and talented singer who is among the most electrifying young performers — presents himself as a maturing artist who recognizes past mistakes. He's in court-ordered twice-a-week therapy. He trimmed his entourage from 30 people to single digits. He ended simmering feuds, including one with rapper-singer Drake. His sixth album, "X," released last week, includes plenty of sex- and party-focused songs, yes, but also reflective and thoughtful lyrics that acknowledge and take responsibility for his struggles.

Sitting in his publicist's office a day after his album was released, Brown smiled easily and seemed eager to show that he had turned a corner — but acknowledged he still has room to grow.

"Sometimes you've got to touch the stove to see that it's hot. And I'm one of those guys that does that all of the time," he said. "Sometimes I might be my own worst enemy. I'm not always going to make the right decision."

He was quick to criticize the series of angry outbursts that culminated in an incident in Washington, D.C., last October when he punched a man who tried to get into a picture Brown was taking with two women. That led eventually to a jail sentence for violation of his probation, instituted after he was convicted of the infamous 2009 pre-Grammy Awards attack on then-girlfriend Rihanna.

"At first I went mentally into being aggressive, and being totally like unapproachable with situations because I didn't feel comfortable with myself living my life, as far as whatever mistakes I made, because I was constantly being judged," he said. Now, Brown said he recognizes, "I'm an entertainer. And I influence a lot of people, young and older. ... Before, I was out of hand. So I think now it's time to grow up."

Brown said he feels a kinship with Justin Bieber, 20, another pop star whose once-immaculate image has been sullied by repeated public bad behavior.

"Growing up in the public eye, being younger with all of the success — girls, money, everything — it can get to your head real fast. ... I was arrogant, cocky, thought I was invincible at one point," Brown said. "We don't get the benefit of growing up behind the camera. We don't get the benefit of making

our mistakes and nobody hears about it."

The question now is whether Brown can avoid further mistakes. Someone shot and injured Death Row Records founder Suge Knight at a Brown-hosted party last month. Does trouble simply follow Brown, no matter what?

"It's 50-50. You could say that trouble follows me. And you could also say I create my own trouble," he said. He mostly sticks to throwing house parties lately but, "I'm not in control of going to a club and it getting shot up."

Brown has been able to climb pop charts despite legal trouble: "Loyal" peaked at No. 9 on the Billboard Hot 100 while Brown was jailed. The rude, flippant song was the fourth single from "X" to be released. Brown said he was surprised at its success.

"It's my version of TLC's 'No Scrubs,'" he said. "It just goes to show that sometimes when you put out a super big record with substance, that's not the key all the time. Sometimes you want to just put a record out there that might be disrespectful, just have fun."

Brown's album was released at a time of increased public discussion about domestic violence following TMZ's release of a video showing NFL star Ray Rice punching out his then-fiancee in an elevator. The singer said he accepts that he'll be linked with the issue for the foreseeable future.

"There could be a million other celebrities who were in the same situation, but because of the high-profile case and whatever it is, they're going to always automatically associate myself with it," he said. "When the media associates me, it's to do a bigger message. It's to show the world and raise awareness for it, and definitely show that it's not OK."



Chris Brown collaborates with Ariana Grande, Trey Songz and R. Kelly on "X," his long-awaited sixth studio album.

OMAR VEGA, INVISION/AP

Chris Brown

X (RCA)

Chris Brown's sixth studio album, "X," is cohesive, entertaining and not at all what one might expect of a project plagued by delays following the release of lead single "Fine China" back in March 2013.

But while court dates, rehab stints and — if you believe the singer's tweets from last year — "incompetent" management might have stalled his latest set, those factors don't seem to have diminished his creativity.

Brown captures attention from the



get-go, opening "X" with the chilly first lines of his title track: "If you're only as good as the company you keep." Then I'ma blame you for what they say about me," he sings, taking listeners on a slow, dark cruise that eventually erupts into a crush of dubstep and electronic stylings from track producer Diplo.

That brooding vibe shows up again on

"Autumn Leaves," a captivating collaboration with Kendrick Lamar. "I been bleeding in your silence, I feel safer in your violence," Brown sings, making good on earlier promises to deliver honesty and vulnerability with "X."

Brown is light and carefree on the very danceable "Time for Love" and fun on the irresistible "Drunk Texting" with Ihenia Aiko. His collaborations with Brandy on "Do Better" and Ariana Grande on "Don't Be Gone Too Long" are both winners. And alongside Trey Songz, Brown pays homage to R. Kelly with the smooth "Songs on 12 Play."

The R, himself, even drops in for the sexy — and slightly over the top

— "Drown In It," which is worth a listen, if only to hear Kelly find occasion for the phrase, "like a male mermaid."

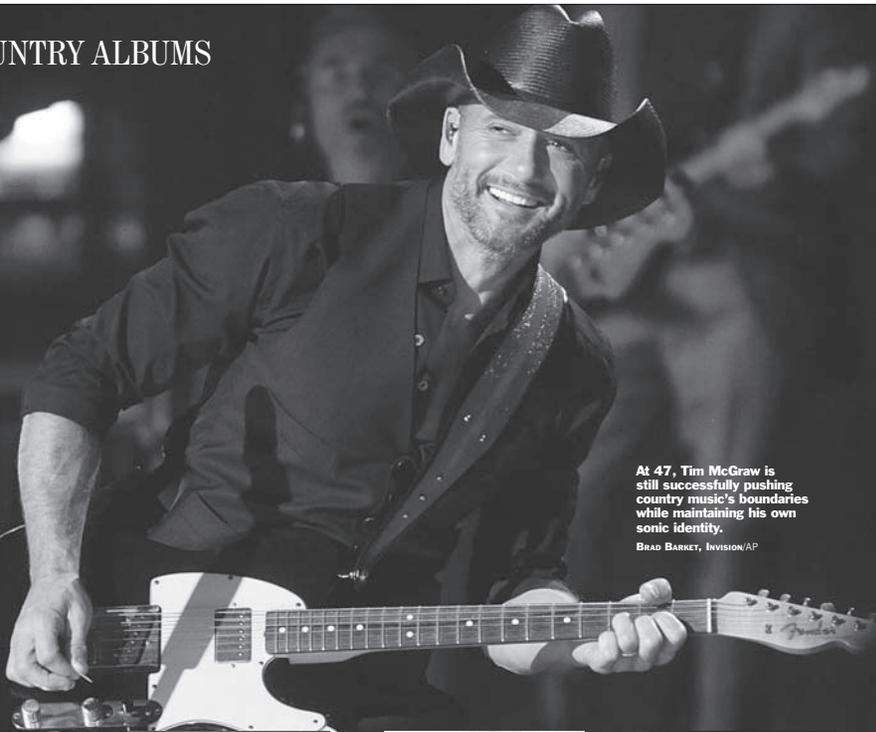
Tired math metaphors, though, drain the energy from the Danja-produced "Add Me In." And "Stereotype," by the same producer, features a chorus that has Brown repeating "stereotype" an annoying number of times and ways.

Those are minor details, though, and whether Brown is reflecting on life and love or setting himself up for what will surely play out as part of an elaborate dance sequence, the singer's work is majored on point.

— Melanie Sims
The Associated Press

WEEKEND: MUSIC

NEW COUNTRY ALBUMS



At 47, Tim McGraw is still successfully pushing country music's boundaries while maintaining his own sonic identity.

BRAD BARRETT, INVISION/AP

**Tim McGraw**

Sundown Heaven Town (Big Machine)

Twenty years after his breakthrough hit, "Indian Outlaw," Tim McGraw still pushes at country music's boundaries. His new album, "Sundown Heaven Town," incorporates contemporary Nashville flourishes while holding onto McGraw's signature sound — a moody, atmospheric tone developed over the years with producer Byron Gallimore.

His current single, "Shotgun Rider," and complicated relationship songs like "Sick of Me," show how good the 47-year-old McGraw is at real-life situations, buoyed by Gallimore's atmospheric production. The veteran also offers a welcome surprise with "Diamond Rings And Barstools," which brings a contemporary context to old-school country sounds and themes.

But too many hazy sentiments — in the songs "City Lights," "Looking For That Girl," "Keep on Truckin'" — keep the collection from achieving the glowing consistency of McGraw's best work.

**George Strait**

The Cowboy Rides Away: Live from AT&T Stadium (MCA Nashville)

The 20-song "The Cowboy Rides Away: Live from AT&T Stadium" documents what was billed as Country Music Hall of Fame member George Strait's final concert. Held on June 7 in Arlington, Texas, the event was more celebration than concert — where the waves of cheers play as big a role as the voices and musicians.

The guest-heavy lineup leans on modern stars such as Jason Aldean, Eric Church and Miranda Lambert more than Strait's peers or influences. Several cuts are reduced to karaoke sing-alongs, with the guests providing harmony vocals or taking a single stanza. But memorable cuts surface, such as a powerful version of "A Showman's Life," with Faith Hill on backing vocals.

This record isn't the place to sample Strait's long list of hits. It is, however, a gift to those who hate to see this legendary cowboy ride off into the sunset.

**Kenny Chesney**

The Big Revival (Blue Chair/Columbia)

Kenny Chesney took a year off before recording his new album, "The Big Revival," and it shows. Cohesive in scope, "The Big Revival" suggests the veteran country star is determined to extend his two-decade string of top 10 hits — something he achieves with the first single, "American Kids."

Chesney has continually tinkered with his sound, growing more introspective in recent years while remaining the king of the arena sing-along. Chesney's forte is that even his rockers offer snapshots of the lives of his fans, as he does here on "Beer Can Chicken," which he co-wrote. A rocker like "Drink It Up" avoids the cliché flowing through contemporary country songs by injecting some real-life gravitas.

Today's country arena rockers might model themselves on Chesney's good-time style, but "The Big Revival" proves they still have a thing or two to learn from him.

**Lee Ann Womack**

The Way I'm Livin' (Sugar Hill)

For more than a decade, Lee Ann Womack ranked as the most traditional female artist in contemporary country music, holding on to old-school values in themes and arrangements as others in the genre kept incorporating more pop rhythms and rock energy.

With the beautiful and moving "The Way I'm Livin'," her first album in six years, Womack turns completely against the grain of modern Nashville. Instead, she focuses on stripped-down, emotionally raw songs that bring out the best in her voice, which sounds as tender and expressive as ever.

"The Way I'm Livin'" isn't retro or old-fashioned. It simply presents an alternative direction of where modern country could go, one that probes the way people live in a more realistic manner than the party-without-consequences themes dominating contemporary country radio.

— All reviews by Michael McCall
The Associated Press

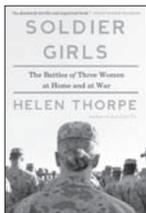
WEEKEND: BOOKS

By MELINDA HENNEBERGER
The Washington Post

There is little blood but a lot of guts in Helen Thorpe's new book, "Soldier Girls," about three women in the Indiana National Guard who went to war together and gave a brutally honest account of their service, boredom, affairs, drinking, stress-relieving stunts and long-distance parenting from Afghanistan and Iraq.

All three women stand by every word, too: Others at Camp Atterbury, the Indiana National Guard training base where one of them, Desma Brooks, still works, "are mostly surprised we told our story," Brooks said in a phone interview. "Sometimes the truth isn't exactly pretty, but it's reality."

Thorpe, a 49-year-old former political journalist, was the first lady of Denver and then Colorado as the wife of Gov. John



Hickenlooper (D), from whom she is separated. She minded the lack of privacy in political life and didn't give many interviews as first lady. But when I ask, over coffee at the Tattered Cover bookstore nearest her home, if that's because she knew her former

colleagues all too well, she says on the contrary, she's always assumed a kinship, especially "because I'm not a standard political spouse."

That is kind of a laugh line, because as she surely remembers from writing profiles of political spouses, they are almost invariably tagged by handlers or headline writers as "not the usual," etc.

"I don't even know if there is such a thing" as a standard spouse, she allows, but if there were such a creature, he or she would, she guesses, be "an extrovert who enjoys large, crowded, chaotic events." Whereas "I'm so much more shy and not at home in that environment, so I'll just get misread."

Even in a pinstriped suit and chic glasses today, she's recognizable as the fellow reporter I met sitting on the floor in an Austin, Texas, hotel suite where George W. Bush's campaign team was holed up on Super Tuesday of 2000. Though warned by local journalists that the mention of her husband's name might be conversation-ender, Thorpe brings him up early and often, even asking if I've heard the latest unflattering thing about Bob Beaupere, Hickenlooper's opponent in his current re-election campaign.

And her response to a question about her work first covers how much was going on in her personal life as she moved toward this project: "I got married, moved, had a baby, moved again, my husband was elected [mayor]. So I was starting motherhood, marriage and public life at the same time."

When she looked up from that whirl as her son, Teddy, was turning 3 in 2005, she "regrouped" and went to work on her first book, "Just Like Us: The True Story of Four American Girls Coming of Age in America." Yet ever since the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq first started, really, she'd also had the nagging feeling that she was "missing out on something" and never feeling "I understood the narratives of the wars, what was happening."

Finally, in 2010, she started interviewing veterans — dozens of them, including one man who had been a sniper in Iraq and had come to oppose the war. An other standout was the woman she calls



JOANNA B. PINNETT/The Washington Post

In her new book "Soldier Girls," writer and former political journalist Helen Thorpe weaves together the stories of three women who went to war together and how they handled affairs, relationships and parenthood while deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Women's war stories

Helen Thorpe's 'Soldier Girls' tells of sex, stress-relief and pride in service

Michelle Fischer in "Soldier Girls," who remembered such telling details about her fellow in Afghanistan, and her friends and fellow soldiers Debbie Helton Deckard and Brooks.

Though their stories of "juggling" military and home lives resonated with Thorpe, she was leaning toward going with the sniper until her editor said his story felt awfully familiar. So over the next several years, she interviewed and re-interviewed the women and others who'd served with them and knew them.

The result is a particularly hard look at motherhood and service; the two main characters who have children both gave up legal custody to get around rules against training and deploying single parents.

Soldiers in their unit routinely opt not to visit home in mid-deployment, even when they can, because it's so rough on them and their families when they have to leave again a few days later. The cost that Brooks' children paid for her service was awfully high even before she was wounded by a roadside bomb in Iraq. And "the hardest thing about a deployment is coming home," she tells me, because "we're definitely different people" at that point.

Thorpe wound up giving everyone mentioned in the book, not just the main characters, the choice of whether to use his or her own name, and Brooks and Deckard were among the few who did opt to use their real names.

She also sent the three main charac-

ters the manuscript before publication, and though she did not give them veto power, "they didn't object." Thorpe said, to anything about the way they were characterized. She forwarded me a text that "Michelle" sent her the night the book was launched, right here in this bookstore, where she had been in the audience, incognito. It was the best night of her life, she wrote: "Veterans don't need yellow ribbons and meaningless thanks for our service; we simply need to be heard."

Though it would be easy to read "Soldier Girls" as antiwar, it does not present the kind of narrative in which everything points neatly in the same direction; Deckard sees her time in Afghanistan and Iraq as the highlight of her life, and Brooks says that in certain ways, "life is easier in a combat zone; it's simplified."

One of the biggest surprises of the book, Thorpe says, "was the amount of sex and the number of relationships" the women had, though those stories only came out slowly, over time.

Michelle, who opposed the wars then and now, feels that even though "I didn't fire my weapon or see any dead bodies," she did suffer "moral injury" in her job repairing AK-47s, in part because she never knew where they'd end up. On the plane, she said she most hopes the book will shed some stereotypes: "We're still human beings who still have the same social needs, and maybe more so because you're in a life-and-death situation and feel your vitality."

One of the biggest surprises of the book, Thorpe says, "was the amount of sex and the number of relationships" the women had, though those stories only came out slowly, over time.

Thorpe worried while writing the book that it might bore readers, because "not a lot happens that's a traditional war narrative." Which, of course, is its power.

The real takeaway, she feels, is not that all their sacrifice came to nothing, but that single parents probably shouldn't serve: "I really wanted to show the human cost whatever those accomplishments might be or might not be. ... Was it a good idea to deploy single moms with young kids? And there's men who are single dads in the unit; why are we deploying them? The cost to the kid is so high."

While finishing the book, her own life was again in transition: "I also separated, moved, bought a house, moved again, got a legal separation" and spent this summer riding bikes with her son. What she learned as a writer from her time on the other side of the pen is a little embarrassing, she says: "I really did not understand the demands of public life — the amount of mail and invitations."

And even now, "I don't understand how people thrive in that life. I didn't. John does. God bless him ... I remember going to a Broncos game with John and I thought we were going to watch football," but instead they moved from suite to suite, chatting with people "capable of helping him move an agenda forward; he's selling constantly."

"I'm an introvert," she says for the third time, so "I'd have a good idea and think that would carry the day, but he understands the world is built on relationships."

WEEKEND: ENTERTAINMENT

NEW ON DVD

“Neighbors”: Mac and Kelly Radner (Seth Rogen, Rose Byrne) are a couple with a new baby who have to deal with the raucous Delta fraternity that moves into the house next door. The only way the story works is if either neighbor is likable. Neither is. Writers Andrew J. Cohen and Brendan O'Brien create a Catch 22 with having the couple be new parents. It gives them the plot line: “A new baby often means the parents have to (or at least should) leave their partying days behind. It would make more sense if the couple were close to the same age as the college students. The fraternity guys aren't any better. The only time the guys aren't engaged in this neighborhood turf war is when they are involved in activity that involves their sex organs.”

“The Signal”: Director William Eubank's movie is structured like an M. Night Shyamalan movie — and not one of the good ones. This tale of three college students who see their road trip to find a hacker turn into a nightmare is 90 minutes of set-up for a big reveal that comes in the last moments. Such a “Twilight Zone” approach works only if the ending is such an unpredictable twist that there is no way to guess what will happen. This one's painfully obvious.

Also available on DVD:

“L.A. Law: Season 3”: Includes all 19 episodes.

“The Calling”: Small town detective faces serial killer. Susan Sarandon stars.

“The Tom and Jerry Show, Season 1 — Part 1”: Two-disc DVD set features 13 episodes.



THE CW/AP

Adelaide Kane, left, stars as Mary, Queen of Scots, and Caitlin Stasey stars as Kenna in the network TV series “Reign,” now available on DVD.

“Reign: The Complete First Season”: CW series looks at passion and politics during the time of Mary, Queen of Scots.

“Found”: Young boy faces horror of having a brother who's a serial killer.

“Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: Green With Evil”: Includes episodes chronicling arc of the Green Ranger.

“Transformers Prime: Ultimate Autobots”: Features five Autobots adventures.

“Mom: The Complete First Season”: Anna Faris and Allison Janney star in the CBS comedy.

“Daniel Boone: The Complete Series”: Fess Parker plays the frontier hero in 165 episodes.

“We Are the Best”: Three girls in 1980s Stockholm decide to form a punk band.

“Modern Family: The Complete Fifth Season”: Wedding bells are ringing in the ABC family comedy.

“How I Met Your Mother: The Whole Story — Seasons 1-9”: Complete series tells the story of how the mother was met.

“Rise Up Black Man”: Tale of friendship and racism.

“Firestorm”: Police inspector crosses moral lines to hunt down a crew of criminals.

— Rick Bentley/The Fresno Bee

Tea Leoni returns to TV with ‘Madam Secretary’

By MEREDITH BLAKE
Los Angeles Times

When the Secretary of State invites you into bed, it's hard to say no.

At the end of a long week filming the new drama “Madam Secretary,” Tea Leoni is exhausted. Because there are few comfortable places available on the makeshift Brooklyn soundstage where the show is produced, she suggests sitting for an interview in her character's plush bed. Before it's possible for a reporter to object, she's draped her long limbs across a pile of downy pillows and, with a groan of satisfaction, kicked up her feet.

Though Leoni is still dressed in the silk blouse and crisply tailored pencil skirt belonging to her character, Elizabeth McCord, a former CIA analyst turned college professor and happily married mother of three who is unexpectedly tapped to become the Secretary of State, the artifice crumbles just below her ankles: She's already ditched the power heels for a pair of bright white sneakers.

“Wow, my ... feet,” says the 48-year-old, whose propensity for four-letter words is more Selma Meyer than Condoleezza Rice. “I think if John Kerry really wants to experience the role like Madeleine Albright or Hillary (Rodham Clinton), he should have to wear heels.”

For Leoni, the punishing footwear is merely one of the challenges of returning to series television after a 16-year absence. “Madam Secretary” is not only her first outing as the lead of a network drama, but it also represents a major step back into the public eye for the actress. She has spent much of the past decade raising her two children, now 12 and 15, fundraising on behalf of UNICEF and turning down enough job offers to earn her the nickname Pass-adena at her agency. Her last on-screen appearance came three years ago in Brett Ratner's action-comedy “Tower Heist.”

“Being No. 1 on the call sheet for a one-hour drama is like a marathon I'd never heard about,” Leoni says in her distinctive husky voice. Sizing up her character's bedroom, a convincingly luxurious simulation of a Georgetown townhouse, she continues: “I pretty much live here. So, the more comfortable it is, the better. I was going to talk to CBS: ‘You know what? Can I just sleep here? I like this bed. Could we just get a working toilet?’”

Kidding aside, Leoni hardly seems the type to cover a bit of hard work. As a teenager, she chose to transfer to the Putney School, an unconventional Vermont boarding school where manual labor was built into the curriculum. She fondly recalls waking at 4:30 a.m. to milk cows in the dead of winter and the mice that bounced off her bunk bed at night.

Co-star Tim Daly, who plays Elizabeth's bumpy religion professor husband — he quotes Thomas Aquinas in bed — also happens to be a graduate of the tiny academy. “If someone survives that school,” he says, “you sort of know that they are as comfortable sleeping in a wet sleeping bag on a stone floor at 40 degrees in drizzly rain as they are at the Ritz-Carlton hotel.”

A similar spirit of adventure drove Leoni to drop out of Sarah Lawrence

College and, after some globe-trotting, audition for a part in “Angels '88,” a “Charlie's Angels” reboot from mega-producer Aaron Spelling. It was never picked up, but other roles followed.

By the late '90s, following a critically praised turn in David O. Russell's antic road-trip comedy “Flirting with Disaster” and a lead in the sitcom “The Naked Truth,” Leoni was proclaimed the Next Big Thing, a sexy throwback to screwball heroines like Carole Lombard and Katharine Hepburn.

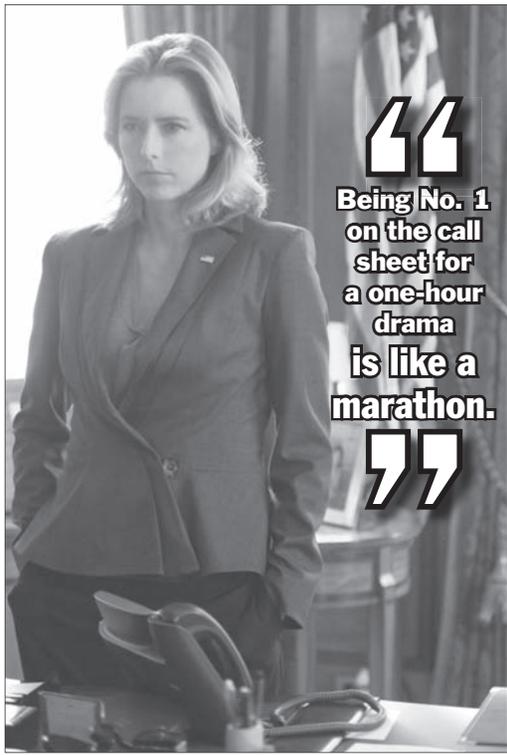
Instead, “The Naked Truth” was canceled after three tortuous seasons, while roles in popcorn fare like “Deep Impact” and “Jurassic Park III” did little to capitalize on her saucy charm. By the early aughts, Leoni's pace had slowed to a single movie every year or so as she focused on rearing her children with then-husband David Duchovny.

The actress resists the suggestion that she somehow failed to live up to the early

hype. “People will say, ‘It's too bad you didn't have sort of a bigger career.’ And I think, ‘My God, I've loved my career.’ It's been plenty. I didn't get knocked up in the back of a pickup when I was 18.”

What Leoni won't contest is her reputation for being highly selective. “Even in the early days, I never worked back to back, because I wanted to fish or sail or travel or just take care of the house and the dogs.”

Although playing a government official privy to the country's most closely guarded security secrets might not seem an obvious role for such a deft comedian, Leoni's wit brings some levity — and maybe even some realism — to the world of “Madam Secretary,” says executive producer Lori McCrea. “When you meet people in the State Department, they have this gallows humor going on because they're dealing with life and death situations every day.”



“Being No. 1 on the call sheet for a one-hour drama is like a marathon.”

CBS Broadcasting

Tea Leoni stars as the newly-appointed secretary of state on the TV series “Madam Secretary.” The pilot airs on AFN-Family on Sept. 28 and the second episode airs on Sept. 29 on AFN-Prime and again Oct. 4 on AFN-Family.

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

Hooked on hookah

Water pipe smoking a hot trend but clouded by health concerns

By LIZZIE JOHNSON
The Dallas Morning News

Clouds of sickly sweet blackberry smoke are billowing out of Isaac Doss' mouth. He takes a long draw from the bubbling hookah and passes the pipe to Kara Brick. They sprawl on cushioned wicker chairs on the patio at Kush, a hookah bar on Greenville Avenue in Dallas. It's a muggy day, and the two are celebrating the return of Kara's sister, Savannah Brick, from an au pair job in Europe.



BRITTANY SOWACKE, THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS/MCT

Some studies show hookah smoking is no healthier than cigarettes.

"This is kind of cheating," Kara Brick, 28, says. "We are all ex-smokers. With cigarettes, you really have to push through smoking it the first time.

They taste terrible and smell terrible. Hookah is actually enjoyable. This has a social feel and is something we can do together."

Hookah bars are a relaxed gathering place for customers to socialize as they smoke tobacco through water pipes. It's a hot trend among young adults. Nearly one in five U.S. students smoked hookah in the past year, according to a study published in the journal *Pediatrics*. About 10 businesses sell hookah within a five-mile radius of the University of Texas at Dallas.

But hookah, which comes with few warning labels or health notices, can be more dangerous than smoking cigarettes. A study funded by the National Institutes of Health notes that a single hookah session delivers 1.7 times the nicotine, 6.5 times the carbon monoxide and 46.4 times the tar of a single cigarette.

"There is no reason to believe that a water pipe is less dangerous than a cigarette," says Dr. Thomas Eisenberg, a Virginia Commonwealth University professor who has conducted numerous studies on water pipe smoking. "In fact, depending on some of the toxins, there is reason to believe it was more dangerous."

Doss, 25, smoked hookah regularly at the University of the Ozarks in Clarksville, Ark., without realizing the health risks. "I was 18 the first time I smoked," he says. "I smoked every weekend. I never considered how bad it would be for me. Now I smoke occasionally enough that it really can't affect me. It's something I consider before I go to the hookah bar."

State law prohibits the sale and smoking of hookahs to anyone younger than 18. Kevin Ferlich, a spokesman at the Richardson, Texas, Police Department, says that anyone caught smoking under 18 will be issued a citation for the use of tobacco, a Class C misdemeanor similar to a speeding ticket.

Richardson has adopted ordinances that ban the use of tobacco products, including water pipes, in most public places. But the law does not restrict young patrons from entering the lounge, so teenagers are legally able to be in the environment.

"Hookah seems like it is on the upswing," says Dr. Gary Weinstein, a pulmonologist at Texas Health Presbyterian Dallas. "There are hookah bars in many young areas, and it's a cool thing to do. It seems cooler than smoking a cigarette."

Data from the University of Michigan's Monitoring the Future survey suggests hookah usage among high school seniors in the past year rose 21 percent.

Eisenberg says this is an issue because many young people do not realize they are inhaling tobacco, charcoal smoke and other carcinogens with each breath.

"The problem is, if you go into a water pipe bar and look at the pipe you are being served, there is nothing on that pipe or on the tobacco or in that charcoal that tells you it's dangerous," Eisenberg says. "I have gotten this outlook from kids: 'It doesn't say it's dangerous, so it must be safe.'"

When smoking a cigarette, the user lights the tobacco with fire and inhales the smoke. With hookah, the smoke passes from a head containing tobacco and charcoal, through a water bowl and into a hose for inhalation. The tobacco comes in many flavors, ranging from chocolate to fruit to alcoholic varieties.

Hookah smoke is known to contain higher levels of lead, nickel and arsenic, 36 times more tar and 15 times more carbon monoxide than cigarettes, research in the *Journal of Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention* shows.

This is because smoking a hookah requires taking harder and longer drags, increasing the levels of inhaled carcinogens and nicotine in the lungs.

"When they take a puff, the smoke is very cool and the draw resistance is very low, so it is easy to inhale and it tastes good," Eisenberg says. "They take dramatically larger puffs, about 500 milliliters per puff. We are talking about an entire cigarette's worth of smoke in a single puff."

The longer the hookah session, the more nicotine and toxins a person takes in.

A 45- to 60-minute hookah session can expose the smoker to about the same amount of nicotine and tar as one pack of cigarettes, Eisenberg says.

"If you aren't a cigarette smoker because you know cigarettes are dangerous and lethal, then there is absolutely no reason to be smoking a water pipe and every reason to avoid it for the same reason," he says. "Water pipe smoking will kill you also."

Eisenberg adds: Know the risks. "As a package deal, it's a dangerous thing to do," he says. "Educate yourself. Then make the decision."

WEEKEND: FAMILY



Lindsey Lafferty of O'Fallon, Mo., who is pregnant with triplets, passes time on bed rest watching TV.

Changing guidelines

Does bed rest help or hurt a pregnancy?

By MICHELE MUNZ
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

When Lindsey Lafferty was 22 weeks pregnant with triplets, her body showed signs that it was preparing for delivery, so her doctor prescribed one of the most common interventions used to prevent preterm birth: bed rest.

For most of the past eight weeks, seven of which have been in the hospital, Lafferty has lain in bed, only getting up to use the bathroom, shower or go on a short wheelchair ride. She eventually got to sit upright in a chair for 30 minutes a day, and recently got the OK to walk down the hallway of the antepartum unit at Mercy Hospital St. Louis.

"It was exhausting," said Lafferty, 31, of O'Fallon, Mo.

She is worried about being strong enough to take care of three newborns. She misses being home with her husband and 3-year-old son. But she's thankful she's made it past 30 weeks, she said. "I think if I was not on bed rest, the babies would've already been here."

The scientific evidence, however, paints a different picture. Mounting research shows the century-old prescription of bed rest does not improve outcomes and, worse, is causing more harm than good.

Recently the nation's society of high-risk obstetricians issued a new guideline recommending against the routine use of bed rest in pregnancy. The Society of Maternal-Fetal Medicine guideline said bed rest has not been proven to benefit any pregnancy condition.

"We have to stop," said Dr. Anthony Sciscione, the director of the Christiana Care Health System in Delaware and co-author of the guideline.

Bed rest is often recommended for potential complications, such as preterm contractions, dilated cervix from preterm labor, a short cervix, premature rupture of the amniotic sac, elevated blood pressure, pre-eclampsia, inadequate growth of the baby, placenta complications, risk of miscarriage and pregnancies of multiples.

Also referred to as "modified bed rest" or "activity restriction," bed rest varies in definition, and how and when it is used among practitioners. It can range from resting for a few hours a day to not even being allowed to stand up.



PHOTOS BY LAURIE SRIVAN, ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH/MCT

Lafferty gets a visit from her son, Oscar, 3, at Mercy Hospital St. Louis on Sept. 11. Doctors placed Lafferty on bed rest when she was 22 weeks pregnant, due to a thinning cervix.

Researchers started to question the use of bed rest in the 1980s, and researchers concluded as early as 1994 that doctors should sharply reduce ordering bed rest. Ten years later, nursing professor Judith Maloni called for the use of bed rest to be discontinued until evidence supported its use. More than a half dozen comprehensive reviews of studies have been done, each concluding that bed rest has not been shown to achieve its goals.

Despite the research, the use of bed rest has changed little over the years. About one in five women are placed on bed rest during their pregnancy — or about 1 million women a year. Surveys show nearly all obstetricians report prescribing it, while at the same time, they admit expecting little benefit from the intervention.

"It's like obstetric heroin," Sciscione said. "We don't want to tell anyone we use it, but we all do."

Sciscione said he suspects that's because medicine lacks good interventions for preterm birth, the leading cause of infant mortality and morbidity, and doctors have a hard time doing nothing.

"It's like Linus and his blanket. They just can't get rid of it," he said. "Patients want it, and we want to give it to them, but this is just a bad thing to give them."

The new guideline, researchers hope, will achieve what study after study hasn't — send a clear, unified message that bed rest is out.

"We feel like we so really needed to put out a statement to put practitioners up to speed, but also it's important to educate the public as well," said Dr. Alison Cahill, chief of the maternal-fetal division at Washington University School of Medicine. "It's hard to believe it's true that something we've been doing for a long time is not good, but that really is the case with bed rest."

While bed rest has not been proved to benefit any condition, more stringent studies could prove otherwise, he said. "I think we all would like more data in these areas, but it is lacking."

While bed rest might have been first used under the assumption that it didn't hurt to try, studies show several harmful side effects. After just a few days of immobility, muscle and bone loss begins. Blood volume decreases, and every major organ system is affected. Blood pressure tends to rise. Women are at an increased risk of weight loss because of these changes and are more likely to have low birth weight babies.

Bed rest might increase the risk of developing blood clots in the legs. The clots can move to the lungs, a leading cause of maternal death, and increase the risk of gestational diabetes.

SPOUSE CALLS

Patterson shows troops love with book donation

James Patterson doesn't have any close relatives in the military, but he knows a few military characters: Jack Morgan is a Marine helicopter pilot-turned-private investigator. Dan Carter, his British counterpart, served in the Royal Military Police. Patterson knows these guys because he created them — and their exploits — for his Private thriller series. The author has created many other book series, such as the Women's Murder Club, and plenty of well-known characters, like Alex Cross.

Patterson has sold around 300 million books worldwide and has written record-breaking numbers of best-sellers, but in a recent conversation, he wanted to talk about the military. This month, Patterson donated 180,000 of his books to wounded veterans. It's not the first time. To date, Patterson estimates he's given 700,000 of his own titles to U.S. military members serving around the world and in the States.

"These men and women don't necessarily get what they ought to get, in terms of people paying attention to what happens to them and what they've sacrificed," said Patterson from his Palm Beach, Fla., home. "If I can help there, I'm delighted to do it."

Patterson's military donations were inspired, at least in part, by messages from the son of a friend.

"One of my best friends was a captain in Vietnam. Then his son was a captain in Iraq," Patterson said. "He would write back to his dad ... and it brought home that a lot of these men and women are over there, and they feel a little bit as though they've been forgotten by the people here. I thought I could send a little signal that we are thinking about them. Here are some books, and somebody cares. Obviously a lot of people care, but I think the more (servicemembers) hear that, the better."

The books in this latest donation will be distributed through two charities: the Coalition to Salute America's Heroes, and Feed the Children. Patterson said getting the books delivered both overseas and stateside is complicated, and those organizations have distribution channels already in place.

One way or the other, Patterson's books have traveled the globe, and he said he believes his characters provide well-rounded portrayals of Americans. "Unfortunately, a lot of people around the world stereotype who Americans are," he said. "Letting them see characters like Alex Cross and Michael Bennett, I think, gives them another view of what Americans are like. Basically, we're good people. Not perfect people, but good people."

Perhaps Patterson — Forbes says he's the world's richest writer, earning \$8 million last year — hopes his largesse will say the same about him. In addition to his book donations to troops, he financially supports independent bookstore, scholarships for teachers at several universities and maintains a website dedicated to encouraging kids to read called ReadKiddoRead.com, which recommends books by various authors, including Patterson.

As well as writing for adults, Patterson creates books for young adults and middle schoolers. He said those are the most important books to write.

His method of churning out books with the help of multiple co-writers is controversial in some literary circles, but Patterson is unequivocal about the importance of literature, especially for children.

"If (children) don't have a breath of reading ... they're going to be so limited in terms of the way they see the world and what they're capable of doing and how their imaginations flourish," he said, adding that reading reveals the complexity of the world and an understanding of other people.

Literature and reading, he said, should be important to everyone.

"Getting our kids reading is hugely important," Patterson said.

In fact, in our whole conversation, it was the one thing he insisted I must tell military families: It's the job of parents to get their kids to read — a task he took seriously when his own son was a reluctant reader in grade school.

"More important than a kid having 15 video games in their room is that they have 15 books that they actually like. A kid's gotta read. The end."

And when the storyteller says it's the end — well, it is.

Terri Barnes is the author of "Spouse Calls: Messages From a Military Life." Contact her at spousecalls@aol.com or at stripes.com/go/spousecalls.



Terri Barnes

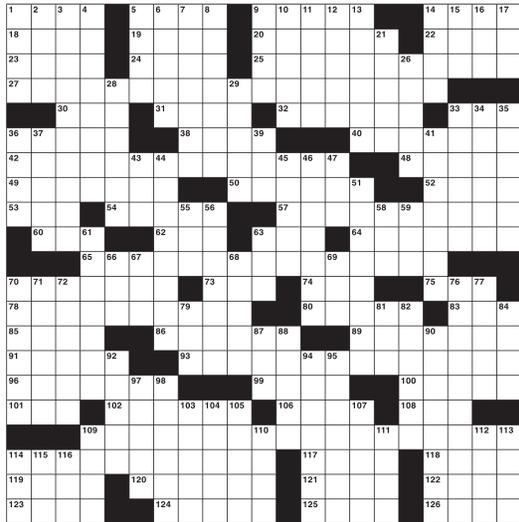
WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

NASCAR ROCKS!

BY MICHAEL ASHLEY / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

- ACROSS
1 Coping mechanisms?
5 Dog for a "gentleman detective"
9 White, informally
14 "Germinal" novelist
18 Ton
19 Drama critic John of The New Yorker
20 Teeing off
22 Popular children's "find it" book series
23 Rescue film of 2012
24 It's normal for NASA
25 Comedy classic of 1978
27 "Hey, what did you think when you missed that last pit stop?" [The Who, 1971]
30 "system (world chess standard)
31 Ken of "thirtysomething"
32 Surgically remove
33 "Who, me?"
36 Bogs down
38 Hydroxyl compound
40 Fanny
42 "Did you do anything for luck before today's race?" [Katy Perry, 2008]
48 Scrumptious
49 "Like this"
50 Seth of "Late Night"
52 Rock's Everly or Collins
53 Stopover spot
54 Summoned, in a way
57 Perform some magic
60 Okla. City-to-Dallas direction
62 4 letters
63 Gen ____
64 Exams for some coll. applicants
65 "How did that new car handle out there on the track?" [Maroon 5, 2011]
70 Soft-shell clam
73 Steinfeld, maybe
74 Article in Aachen
75 Orly bird, once?
78 Tend
80 Giant in heating and air-conditioning
83 Hack
85 City SSW of Moscow
86 Toy company on track to success?
89 Unacceptable to polite society
91 Late disc jockey Casey
93 "What did you try to do after the caution flag came out?" [The Doors, 1967]
96 Cover with a hard outer surface
99 Dame ____
100 Cast part
101 Ming of the N.B.A.
102 Relatively up-to-date
106 Beatles
108 Slow-witted
109 "Are you enjoying your time out on the NASCAR circuit?" [Ricky Martin, 1999]
114 Movie with the line "Old age. It's the only disease, Mr. Thompson, that you don't look forward to being cured of"
117 Lend a dirty hand to ____ do"
118 " ____ do"
119 George Will piece
120 Someone a little short?
121 The Swedish Nightingale
122 Sporty option
123 Love letter sign-off
124 Outfit
125 Antoine Domino Jr., familiarly
126 Ditz
DOWN
1 Only Literature Nobelist also to win an Oscar
2 Dynamic start?
3 "Ring" lovers
4 Impeccable
5 Succulent plant
6 ____ Domingo
7 Posthumous John Donne poem that includes "It suck'd me first, and now she sucks thee"
8 At it
9 ____ Caspian Depression
10 Bay Area griddier
11 Skate
12 Green beans
13 Asian wild ass
14 Jerusalem
15 Big Ten sch.
16 Old track holders
17 Reply to a captain
21 Candied, as fruit
26 Assault
28 Venge, in poetry
29 Hugs, in poetry
33 Semitransparent fabrics
34 Suffering a losing streak, in poker
35 Rustic poems
36 Noon, in Nantes
37 Sacred images: Var.
39 Not be straight
41 " ____ Delight," pioneering song by the Sugarhill Gang
43 Writer LeShan
44 Almost any poem that starts "Roses are red..."
45 Elève's destination
46 High-speed ride
47 Sounds of equivocation
51 Still
55 "So-so" responses
56 Eye opener?
58 Kwik-E-Mart guy
59 Stop: Abbr.
61 Spammer, e.g.
63 Classic sports car
66 Words of retreat?
67 Nov. honoree
68 Actress Massey
69 Travel option



- 71 European capital
72 "Romanian Rhapsodies" composer
76 "Be prepared"
77 Sierra follower, in code
79 Needle
81 Drama with masks
82 Online investment option
84 Big name in house paint
87 Squeeze (out)
88 Place to dangle one's legs
90 Tameness
92 Frankie who starred on "Malcolm in the Middle"
94 See 97-Down
95 Home of some Bushmen
97 94-Down x 14
98 Coiled about
103 Tattoo artist
104 Glam band with six #1 hits in Britain
105 Brief name?
107 Trail
109 "Death in Venice" locale
110 ____ libretto (poetry style)
111 Old Fords
112 Get old
113 Dog Chow alternative
114 Crew member
115 One means of corp. financing
116 Okla. neighbor

GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and visit gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



Ken Follett's Century Trilogy follows the fortunes of five intertwined families—American, German, Russian, English, and Welsh—as they make their way through the twentieth century. Edge of Eternity, the finale, covers one of the most tumultuous eras of all: the 1960s through the 1980s.

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FACES

Andre Benjamin finds new rhythm in biopic

By JAKE COVLE
The Associated Press

Andre Benjamin was uniquely qualified to play Jimi Hendrix in the film "Jimi: All Is By My Side," and not just because his colorfully cosmic style has long owed something to the '60s icon.

The film, written and directed by "12 Years a Slave" screenwriter John Ridley, is a portrait of Hendrix in 1966 — a then somewhat aimless 24-year-old playing backup guitar — finding himself as a frontman and being elevated by the blues-rock scene of Swinging London. As the often reticent half of hip-hop duo Outkast, Benjamin, too, knows something about the psychology of a performer discovering his onstage swagger.

"I had to grow into being an entertainer, and Jimi had to grow into being an entertainer, too," Benjamin said in a recent interview. "I can say from being an entertainer and a star, my very first shows were horrible. The shyness. You're put on stage in front of all of these people, and you're kind of in your head a lot. It takes the confidence of knowing, 'Hey, people dig this.'"

"All Is By My Side," which opens in U.S. theaters Friday, eschews the

'I had to grow into being an entertainer, and Jimi had to grow into being an entertainer, too.'

Andre Benjamin
on playing Jimi Hendrix



usual cradle-to-the-grave biopic trajectory, focusing instead on Hendrix's discovery by Linda Keith (Imogen Poots), his formation of The Experience and his breakthrough in a town dominated by the Beatles and Eric Clapton. Made without the cooperation or approval of the Hendrix estate, the independently produced "All Is By My Side" doesn't include any of Hendrix's familiar hits.

"I don't really see the point of just showing people what they already know. I never felt that that was going to impede our ability to tell the story," Ridley says. "We've all seen films before that have had access to artifacts or intellectual property, and they put their best foot forward, but it doesn't necessarily mean that the story's going to be there."

The film is Benjamin's first since the 2008 Will Ferrell comedy "Semi-Pro." He turned down Ridley several times before agreeing to tackle the role, for which he studied with a vocal coach and strove to learn to play guitar left-handed. As a naturally right-handed player, he compares the task to walking backward.

For Benjamin, who dabbled in movies in the '00s most notably with the Prohibition musical "Idlewild," it's easily his

most ambitious acting work.

"All Is By My Side" is opening during a kind of crossroads for Benjamin, who has been touring with his Outkast partner, Big Boi, for the first time in years. It's been nearly a decade since Benjamin put out an album, solo or with Outkast. He's limited himself largely to appearances on the records of others. Now 39, he's said he'll give up rap when he turns 40.

"I can't say I was gearing up to make this huge acting jump, but if that's the way my life goes, I'm wit it," Benjamin says. "In music, I still write almost every day. I don't know how I feel about it at this age. I always write. But I don't know if I believe in it enough to want to present it. You have to believe in it to work."

"I really don't know what's going on," he adds. "I'm kind of in a limbo place."

Ridley flew to Atlanta to meet with Benjamin, who had been sought for other Hendrix films. "Being around him for about five or 10 minutes, you realize that he really is the right person to try to attempt something like this," Ridley says. "He's very intellectually curious. He's very much a true artist. He's very much a music historian."

Andre Benjamin portrays Jimi Hendrix in the film "Jimi: All Is By My Side."

XLNATOR MEDIA/AP

'Modern Family' actress alleges ex-boyfriend choked her

From wire reports

"Modern Family" actress Sarah Hyland has obtained a restraining order against her ex-boyfriend after he allegedly choked and threatened to kill her, court records show.

A Los Angeles County judge issued the order days before her ex, 24-year-old Matthew Prokop, was due to be released from rehab. She alleged in court records that the rehab center's director warned her to "seek this order immediately due to Mr. Prokop's mental state and attitude toward me."

During the pair's four-year relationship, Hyland, 23, who portrays Haley Dunphy on the ABC sitcom, alleged that Prokop repeatedly abused her verbally and physically. Superior Court Judge Andrea C. Thompson granted the order Sept. 19 that forbids Prokop from being within 100 yards of Hyland, her home, her workplace and her vehicle.

Prokop, an actor, could not be reached for comment.

Young not returning to AC/DC

Malcolm Young has left AC/DC.

A statement Wednesday from the band's label said: "Unfortunately, due to the nature of Malcolm's condition, he will not be returning to the band."

No details were provided.

The band announced in April that the 61-year-old guitarist was taking a break to focus on his health.

AC/DC will release the album "Rock or Bust" on Dec. 2. They will launch a world tour next year.

Sorrentino hit with tax courts

A former star of the MTV reality show "Jersey Shore" and his brother filed bogus returns on nearly \$9 million and claimed millions in bogus business expenses including luxury vehicles and clothing, according to a seven-count indictment released Wednesday.

Mike "The Situation" Sorrentino and his brother Marc pleaded not guilty through their attorneys during a brief initial appearance in U.S. District Court. Neither made any statements during or after the proceeding, though when Mike Sorrentino was

asked outside the courthouse if he was innocent he smiled and replied, "Of course."

Each brother was released on bail and scheduled for arraignment on Oct. 6.

According to the indictment, the Sorrentinos earned about \$8.9 million between 2010 and 2012, mostly through two companies they controlled, MPS Entertainment and Situation Nation. They allegedly filed false documents that understated the income from the businesses as well as their personal income. Mike Sorrentino also is charged with failing to file taxes for 2011, a year in which he earned nearly \$2 million.

The brothers also allegedly spent millions of dollars on personal expenses they claimed were for business. Both brothers are charged with one count of conspiracy to defraud the U.S.

Other news

■ Jazz pianist and singer Diana Krall is canceling her U.S. fall tour to give herself time to recuperate from a case of pneumonia. Krall also is putting off the release of



Sarah Hyland has a restraining order in place against her ex-boyfriend.

her new album, "Wallflower," to Feb. 3.

■ Model Amber Rose filed for divorce from rapper Wiz Khalifa on Tuesday in Los Angeles, citing irreconcilable differences. She is seeking custody of their 20-month-old son and spousal support as laid out in the former couple's prenuptial agreement. They were married in July 2013.

■ Cat Stevens said on his Facebook page Wednesday he is canceling his New York performance because its requirement for paper tickets has led to exorbitant resale prices.

■ Jason Orange is leaving the British pop band Take That.

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Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) is published weekdays (except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96338-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA. Postmaster: Send address changes to Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96338-5002.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Election deal failed Afghan voters

By SARAH CHAYES

President Barack Obama called Kabul on Sunday to congratulate Afghan presidential contenders Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah for finally accepting a power-sharing deal to resolve a monthslong dispute over who won in an election deeply marred by fraud. "Signing this political agreement," said White House spokesman Josh Earnest, "helps bring closure to Afghanistan's political crisis and restores confidence in a way forward."

Afghans are not so sure. Many express relief that the threat of a descent into chaos or civil war has been averted, and they hope that day-to-day business activities will resume after months of paralysis. Still, most Afghans fear that this cobbled-together government — in which Ghani has been declared winner and president but Abdullah has been given an extra-constitutional prime minister-style post — will be overtaken by the unpopular regime of Hamid Karzai.

Built as it is on a foundation of electoral fraud and elite bargains, the new government is likely to be at least as corrupt and even more fractured and contested than the Karzai government. Those weaknesses will invite further inroads by the Taliban, which has regained ground over the last six months, fighting pitched battles and both killing and enlisting frightened locals.

"This isn't an inclusive government," says Shafullah Afghan, a former police officer and rule-of-law expert. "It's a joint venture." Indeed, one of the ironies of the power-sharing deal is that it was conceived by U.S. officials, is that it negates the value of what so many Americans hailed as a triumph on the first day of voting: the overwhelming turnout.

Surprising even themselves on April 5, Afghans flocked to cast their votes. Braided ropes of villagers and city dwellers wound down steep hillsides and along muddy streets, or clogged thoroughfares in cities shut down for the day. In separate women's lines, voters could be distinguished only by the color of the burqas or the black head-

'We voted for nothing. Votes should have value, but our vote doesn't count in the end. Only force counts.'

Afghan voter

to-foot wraps they wore — and the names on the voter cards they clutched in their hands. In Kabul, it was a holiday celebration, as people waiting in line exuberantly called out greetings to friends and neighbors, as they do on annual feast days.

In Kandahar — where during the last presidential election, in 2009, members of my soap-making cooperative were the only ones among their friends who voted, and scrubbed the tell-tale ink of their fingers immediately afterward — this year everyone voted. "For the first time ever," said local radio reporter Sarwar Amani, "they ran out of ballot papers!"

Contrary to one common Western myth, in other words, Afghans are not unwilling or unready to accept democracy. They craved it.

Many Western observers read the high participation as having "delivered a resounding ... defeat to the Taliban," in the words of The Washington Post. In fact, that ballot had a more sophisticated political significance: It represented an explicit repudiation of Karzai. He was widely believed to have placed his support — and the levers of state power he controlled — behind his longtime confidant Zalmay Rashid. And, by the hundreds of thousands, Afghans voted against Rassoul for precisely the same reason.

"We knew that if people didn't come out to vote, Karzai would be able to throw this election to Rassoul," said Haji Muhammad Rahim, a shopkeeper in Karzai's fiefdom of Kandahar. "And that would mean another five years of Karzai's regime."

Rassoul's loss demonstrates the success of that strategy. So massive was the participation that it overwhelmed even the ability of Karzai's practiced vote-stealing machine to fix the results.

But that doesn't mean the elections were honest. While international attention was primarily focused on the enthusiastic turnout, blatant violations of electoral laws marred the first round and proved to be the dominant factor in the second.

Many Afghans describe the upshot as a betrayal of the whole notion of democracy. "We feel nothing is in our hand; it's in the foreigners' hand," one Kandahar graybeard put it. "We voted for nothing. Votes should have value, but our vote doesn't count in the end. Only force counts."

The post-Karzai government, in other words, is facing a credibility crisis before it even gets going. "Whether it's Ghani or Abdullah," one NGO worker told me before Sunday's result, "it won't be legitimate."

The elite bargains that went into building the two contending camps and negotiating Sunday's deal also undermine chances for the type of profound governance reforms Afghans crave. "It's a good system for corrupt people," said the NGO worker. "If a person is arrested, he can just claim the move was ethnically motivated and his camp will be his defense." Meanwhile, the Ghani/Abdullah regime will be focused more on spoils than on governance.

Ultimately, the inauguration of a new Afghan president is unlikely to usher in much of a transition. Ghani and Abdullah and his appointee will preside over a fractured, contested, corrupt government. Karzai, who played a Machiavellian role in the electoral process, may leave the front of the stage, but he will remain a background presence. As recent events in Iraq demonstrate so painfully, this is a ripe stew for extremist advances.

Sarah Chayes is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment who lived in Afghanistan for most of the last decade and served as special assistant to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. She wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.

Fence-jumper shows how we've let vets down

The Sacramento (Calif.) Bee editorial

Before he was tackled last week in the north woods of the White House, before he jumped the fence and touched off a debate over the competency of the Secret Service — before any of that — Omar Gonzalez was a casualty of war.

Wounded in Iraq, suffering from post-traumatic stress and depression, he had been living in his truck almost since his 2012 medical retirement from the U.S. Army.

Relatives told the Los Angeles Times that the once-lighthearted man — who, as a child in California and Puerto Rico, had dreamed of becoming a soldier — was a haunted wraith by the time he came home from his deployment, unable to sleep, obsessed with guns and convinced that unseen enemies were trying to kill him.

It took more than a year, his relatives said, before the Department of Veterans Affairs began compensating the 42-year-

old soldier for his medical conditions. By that time, they said, he was firmly in the grip of one of the American military's fastest-growing conditions.

Sprinting across the White House lawn, ignoring the warnings of guards and oblivious to the fact that he was in a sniper's crosshairs, he believed he had to tell the president that "the atmosphere was collapsing," according to court papers.

His intent, he told the Secret Service, was to raise an alarm about a gathering crisis. He did.

Post-traumatic stress in the military has reached stunning proportions. According to some studies, it afflicts as many as 1 in 5 veterans who were deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Characterized by crippling flashbacks, mood swings, insomnia and other mental health problems, it can last a lifetime, according to a comprehensive VA study released in August. And that lifetime is often shortened: Veterans with PTSD were twice as likely as those without it to die by retire-

ment age.

As Gonzalez was arraigned, the debate in Washington was over the Secret Service's questionable performance. Not only did he dash 70 yards across the lawn without capture, but it turns out he had already been questioned last month after agents caught him lurking around the White House fence with a hatchet tucked into his pants.

Certainly, his case calls for a thorough look at security at the White House. Longer term, however, the shortcomings of the Secret Service pale in comparison with the deeper issues of how we fill mentally ill people, particularly our traumatized veterans. Yes, President Barack Obama has moved to do better by them. And yes, in the wake of scandals over delays in treatment, the VA has worked overtime to redeem itself.

But we need to do better. At last count, more than 650,000 veterans were on disability with PTSD. They are casualties of an epidemic that is heading straight for us, full-tilt.

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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 The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

A complacent Secret Service? The (Rock Hill, S.C.) Herald

A 42-year-old intruder entered the White House on Sept. 19 in less time and with less trouble than a tourist waiting in line for a guided tour might encounter.

Iraq War veteran Omar Gonzalez, who apparently suffers from mental problems, scaled the 7-foot spiked fence that surrounds the White House, ran across the front lawn and walked inside through an open door where he was stopped by a security guard. Fortunately, President Barack Obama and his family had left the grounds about 10 minutes before Gonzalez arrived.

Reports state that Gonzalez was carrying a pocket knife and had left 300 rounds of ammunition, two hatchets and a machete in his car. His intentions are unclear but he had no weapon on him other than the knife.

The easy breaching of White House security nonetheless is disconcerting. What if Gonzalez were heavily armed and tried to sneak into the White House? Various members of Congress stated the obvious: The Secret Service didn't do its job. Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Mich., attributed the ineffective protection to an "atrophy of concern."

There could be something to that. Few attempts have been made in recent years to sneak into the White House, and none has been as successful as Gonzalez' mad dash.

Agents guarding the White House might have become a little complacent. And the charge that the Secret Service needs to shape up is bolstered by recent stories about agents' wild parties while off duty in foreign cities where they were part of the presidential entourage.

Security agents already had erected large concrete posts along Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House to keep vehicles away. The posts went up after a car crashed into the front gate of the White House.

This week, a second waist-high fence, about 8 feet from the existing fence, was placed along part of the White House grounds, pushing pedestrians that much farther away from "The People's House." The number of Secret Service agents patrolling the grounds also was increased, including at least one with a dog.

Times have changed since President Harry Truman used to take unescorted walks outside the White House. And tourists now will be farther away than ever from the fence.

Bombing one step in long fight Charlotte Observer

In an otherwise unbinged diatribe, the Islamic State's chief spokesman made a boast that is uncomfortably close to the truth:

"O crusaders, you have realized the threat of the Islamic State, but you have not become aware of the cure, and you will not discover the cure because there is no cure." Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi said on an audiotape released Monday. "If you fight it, it becomes stronger and tougher. If you leave it alone, it grows and expands."

This is precisely the predicament in which the United States and the West find themselves. Ignoring this growing threat only invites its expansion and increased military interventions. It requires a level of engagement that most Americans



SUSAN WALSH/AP

Uniformed Secret Service officers walk along the fence on the north side of the White House on Saturday. The Secret Service is coming under intense scrutiny after a man who hopped the White House fence made it all the way through the front door before being apprehended.

will not support, and is probably futile in any case.

A majority of Americans, and of Congress, support the Obama administration's current airstrike campaign against ISIS targets in Syria. A new Washington Post-ABC poll found that 71 percent of respondents back airstrikes against ISIS in Iraq, and nearly two-thirds support them in Syria.

That's the nearly a complete reversal from a year ago. Public support for military action is fickle, though, and could taper quickly the deeper America and its allies trudge in chasing President Barack Obama's stated goal of "destroying" the Islamic State. The airstrikes are easy to get behind, given the low risk they pose to U.S. personnel. They are insufficient, however, for eliminating the extremist network. That would require a significant and prolonged American military presence on the ground in Syria and elsewhere, a scenario that neither we nor a majority of the public embraces.

The airstrikes are necessary. They will disrupt the Islamic State, perhaps kill some of its leaders, and make it more difficult for the group to launch a successful attack on the West in the near term. That the U.S. was joined by five Arab nations in the attack is unprecedented and important. Containing the extremists will require Arabs and Muslims combating them internally, not only with military might but also with efforts to cut off their financing and their popularity.

Americans, though, need to fully understand that the bombing is just one more step in a very long fight. Obama's goal of eliminating ISIS and other al-Qaida offshoots is admirable. It is also, we believe, unrealistic. The unsettling truth is that international relations have evolved and the West is now in a fight not with a nation-state but with a radical ideology that spreads like a virus across parts of the world. The fight against that virus is likely to last as long as we all live.

Hold Congress accountable Sacramento (Calif.) Bee

Even for this do-nothing Congress, this is appalling. After a five-week summer vacation, the honorables spent barely a week at work before heading home again — this time until after the November elections.

From their perspective, that may be their most important task — to get re-elected, though most are running for relatively safe seats. That makes it even more important for constituents to show up at town halls to ask tough questions and hold members of Congress accountable. Too often, these events become promotional campaign appearances.

California's representatives will be out

and about in the coming weeks. For instance, Democratic Rep. Ami Bera is holding a small-business workshop Wednesday at Elk Grove City Hall. Democratic Rep. Doris Matsui, of Sacramento, is holding a forum Wednesday at the state Capitol on "net neutrality," followed by a Thursday event at McClellan Park on women in business.

This session, Matsui can at least claim credit for helping break the logjam on federal funding to finish the levees protecting Natomas.

But for many members of Congress, if they tell voters how hard they're working, they'll be stretching the truth, to put it charitably.

The current recess means that between Aug. 1 and Nov. 12, the Republican-led House will be in session a grand total of 10 days. That's shameful given the state of our nation and world.

Before wrapping up last Thursday, the House did the bare essentials — approving President Barack Obama's request to arm Syrian rebels to help fight the Islamic State and passing a funding resolution to avoid another damaging federal government shutdown.

The Democratic-majority Senate followed suit in skipping town. The two parties' leaders blame each other for blocking measures passed by the other chamber. What Americans see is partisan gridlock getting in the way of help they need.

The 113th Congress is on track to be the least productive in 60 years.

While it's no surprise that Congress hasn't taken up immigration reform, there's a long list of other pressing issues put off until after the election: tax reform, domestic surveillance, minimum wage, defense policy, foreign trade and the care of mentally ill people, just to name a few.

Is it any wonder that Obama has resorted to executive actions to get things done? House Republicans, of course, did find the time and energy to sue the president.

The only potential upside is that in a lame-duck session — without re-election to worry about — members of Congress might do what's best for the country. Given their recent track record, however, that's probably too much to ask.

With Ebola, time is money Los Angeles Times

Since Sept. 8, the death toll from the Ebola epidemic in West Africa has grown from about 1,900 to well above 2,600 — an increase of more than 36 percent in less than two weeks. Perhaps the world should have realized earlier that this wasn't another small outbreak, and should have responded more vigorously. Perhaps most countries hadn't taken into account the fact

that the World Health Organization's budget had been so deeply cut that it no longer could act as the first responder to far-flung medical crises. But whatever the reason, it took a while — too long — for the level of contagion in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone to become obvious, and for the rest of the world to recognize just how much money and assistance would be required both to treat the sick and prevent the outbreak from spreading.

There's no excuse now for any developed nation not to respond quickly and generously. The United States, to its credit, has more than shown the way. President Barack Obama has offered to lead and organize an international response. He is seeking congressional approval to spend close to \$1 billion in assistance, much of it redirected from elsewhere in the budget. That includes \$500 million for the deployment of 3,000 troops to build treatment centers and train desperately needed health care workers. Congress should waste no time approving the request.

Time is money, in this case. Just weeks ago, the U.N. was warning that \$600 million was needed to fight Ebola, and that without quick intervention the number of sick people might reach 20,000 within a few months. Now at least \$1 billion is needed, and the potential threat to life is in the hundreds of thousands.

But Obama is right when he says there is even more at stake. Without food, water, assistance with crowd control and compliance on the part of the affected population with rules intended to reduce the risk of contagion, conditions in these already dysfunctional nations will escalate into a global security threat as a regional health crisis.

The United States should be proud of its humanitarian leadership. The question is whether other nations will see its generosity as a model to be followed, or as an excuse to be cheap. So far, the contrasts are striking. The relatively wealthy European Union has pledged only about \$180 million toward the effort, a significant sum but one that pales next to that from the United States. China has offered to send 174 medical experts, most of whom already are in Africa. Compare that with Cuba, a none-too-wealthy nation that is sending almost the same number of medical personnel even though its population is less than 1 percent of China's. Russia is doing almost nothing, while a single private organization, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, has pledged an astonishingly generous \$50 million.

There are signs, in all this, that although the economy may have become globalized, the sense of joint responsibility for the world's welfare hasn't.

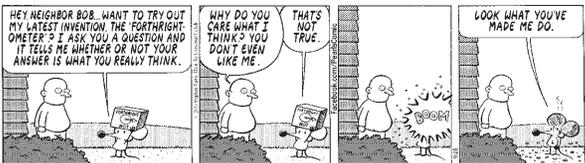
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



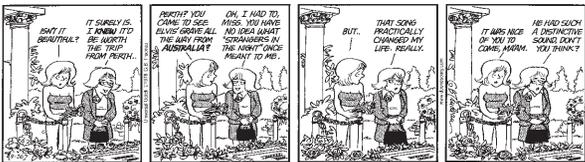
Candorville



Get Fuzzy



Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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48	49	50	51								52	
53						54					55	
56						57					58	

ACROSS

- Ecol. org.
- Branch
- Country once called Dahomey
- Felony without flight
- Carnival city
- Spry
- Underwear with underwear
- Pleasant lingering effect
- Autumn mo.
- Wind-tossed
- Expert
- Before
- Emanation
- Ar follower
- Roof beam
- Mennonite
- Feudal figure
- Less logical

58 "Of course"

DOWN

- Knee counterpart
- Shrivel with heat
- Ritzy violin
- Speedy steed
- Boil
- Engine
- Hoedown site
- Early bird?
- U.N. workers' grp.
- Fresh
- Basin accessory
- Piquant
- Blazing
- Multipurpose truck
- U.S. Pat. Off.
- Exist
- 28 You maiden
- 30 Muhammad or Laila
- 31 Toss in
- 32 Scratch
- 33 "— picture paints 1,000 words ..."
- 36 Paper quantity
- 37 Boil
- 40 Talent
- 42 Energetic
- 43 Mail carrier's beat
- 44 Nicole Smith and Devere Smith
- 45 Legal document
- 46 Leg part
- 48 Blackjack component
- 49 "Back to the Future" star
- 50 Spigot
- 51 Greek vowel

Answer to Previous Puzzle

M	A	C	B	R	I	T	C	L	A	U	D
O	R	R	R	U	N	E	A	C	R	E	
C	R	E	D	E	N	C	E	W	A	G	E
S	O	W	A	N	T	S	I	E	R		
S	O	C	E	R		Y	O				
A	P	E	D	A	M	N	I	C	A	D	
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L	U	L									
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D	O	T	S								

9-26

CRYPTOQUIP

SIVW YVPRZXB SNATVAG XAV

SVXARWM INGERJXB GZALQG,

R NCJ VW JIRWT N CJVY XG

QVRWM RBB -GLRJVP.

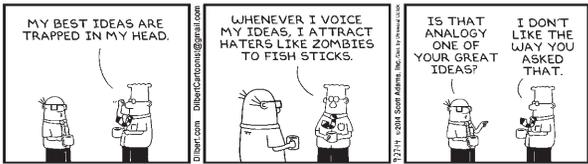
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: EVERY TIME VETERAN NEWSMAN DAN DELIVERS A REPORT, WILL PEOPLE SAY THAT'S RATHER ENLIGHTENING?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: N equals O

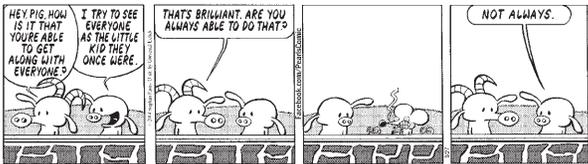
Frazz



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	
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48						49					50		
51						52					53		

ACROSS

- 1 Doctrine
- 4 Whip
- 8 European capital
- 12 Greek X
- 13 Vicinity
- 14 Wicked
- 15 A billion years
- 16 Withdraw gradually
- 17 Contact, e.g.
- 18 Singing siblings
- 21 Moray, for one
- 22 Carton
- 23 — vortex
- 26 Mandible
- 27 "Terrif!"
- 30 Water pitcher
- 31 Trot
- 32 Days gone by
- 33 Hearty quaff
- 34 Rotation duration
- 35 Eagle's home
- 36 Total
- 37 Historic period
- 38 Silly siblings
- 45 Hodgepodge
- 46 Waterloo is there
- 47 Bronze
- 48 Horse play?
- 49 Quarter, e.g.
- 50 Weep
- 51 Ego
- 52 Hathaway or Heche
- 53 Wharmy

DOWN

- 1 On the rocks
- 2 "Scat, gnatt!"
- 3 Wis. neighbor
- 4 John Grisham character
- 5 "This was — nice clambake"
- 6 Connery or Penn
- 7 Purse
- 8 Take ten
- 9 Done
- 10 Revealing fashion
- 11 Otherwise
- 12 Approach
- 20 Tend the lawn
- 23 Shell game item
- 24 Night bird
- 25 Shelter
- 26 Bliss

27 In favor of

- 28 "Entourage" role
- 29 Quilters' get-together
- 31 Where to find Montego Bay
- 32 "Why not?"
- 34 Pair
- 35 Esoteric
- 36 Parody
- 37 Olympic hurdler Moses
- 38 Beer ingredient
- 39 Lotion additive
- 40 Small stream
- 41 Lunchtime for many
- 42 Fruit
- 43 Give a hoot
- 44 Black stone

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

9-27

CRYPTOQUIP

CMUX JYW DMIMCWKWRV
 QRLZEVX DFED RVIX KFRTK
 DFM OIWQ GK RO EQDRU

QIEUG: DWLM TEUVMU YEJIM.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN MEDICAL WORKERS ARE WEARING HOSPITAL SCRUBS, I OFTEN THINK OF THEM AS BEING ILL-SUITED.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals T

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College GameDay



MORRY GASH/AP

Player to watch

Melvin Gordon RB | Wisconsin

Gordon had a career-best 253 yards rushing and five touchdowns against Bowling Green last week. He silenced any doubters worried about his 38-year outing the previous game.

"I was motivated. I heard a lot of people doubting me saying 'I can't do this, I can't do that,'" he said. "That definitely motivated me to get out there and do what I needed to do."

This week, he'll go up against a South Florida team 62nd nationally in rushing defense at 142.0 yards per game.

South Florida at No. 19 Wisconsin
6 p.m. Saturday, CET
1 a.m. Sunday, Japan/Korea, AFN-Atlantic



SHANE KEYSER, KANSAS CITY STAR/MCT

Missouri quarterback Matt Mauk throws the ball away to avoid a sack by Indiana defensive end Zack Shaw last week. Missouri fell out of the Top 25 after the surprising 31-27 home loss to the Hoosiers, and is looking to get back on track Saturday against No. 13 South Carolina. A victory would go a long way toward helping the Tigers return to the SEC championship game.

THE POWER CONFERENCES

ACC		
Atlantic Division		
Conf.	W	All W
L	L	L
Florida St.	0	3
Louisville	1	3
NC State	0	4
Syracuse	0	2
Wake Forest	0	1
Boston College	0	1
Clemson	0	1
Coastal Division		
Conf.	W	All W
L	L	L
Georgia Tech	1	4
Pittsburgh	1	0
Virginia	0	2
Duke	0	4
North Carolina	0	2
Miami	0	2
Virginia Tech	0	1

Game of the week: Duke at Miami. This contest matches the Hurricanes — preseason pick to win the Coastal Division — against the team that actually received the most first-place votes in media voting. Duke (4-0) has outscored opponents by an average of 44-12 in its best start since 1994.

Inside the numbers: The North Carolina Triangle is home to the ACC's three highest-scoring offenses. Duke leads the way averaging 43.5 points with North Carolina scoring 42.7 points and N.C. State third at 40.2 points per game. They have combined to score at least 40 points eight times and their composite record is 10-1.

Player to watch: Clemson's DeShaun Watson. The freshman QB came off the bench and nearly led an upset of No. 1 Florida State. His next challenge is a Carolina defense that gave up 70 points and 789 total yards in a loss at East Carolina

Big Ten		
East		
Conf.	W	All W
L	L	L
Penn St.	1	0
Maryland	0	3
Indiana	0	2
Michigan St.	0	2
Ohio St.	0	2
Michigan	0	2
Rutgers	0	1
West		
Conf.	W	All W
L	L	L
Nebraska	0	4
Illinois	0	3
Iowa	0	3
Minnesota	0	3
Wisconsin	0	2
Purdue	0	2
Northwestern	0	2

Game of the week: Minnesota at Michigan. The Little Brown Jug is on the line. So, it seems, is Brady Hoke's job. Last week's 16-point loss to Utah, following the 31-0 defeat at Notre Dame two weeks earlier, has made this as much a must-win game as there can be in late September. Gophers workhorse David Cobb is running for 135 yards a game and is the only weapon for a Minnesota team that ranks 124th nationally in passing.

Inside the numbers: Nebraska's Ameer Abdullah needs 33 all-purpose yards to overtake Michigan's Anthony Carter for ninth place on the Big Ten career chart.

Player to watch: Illinois's Josh Ferguson. He didn't do much his first three games before rushing for a career-high 190 yards against Texas State. This week he'll be the key for the Illini against Nebraska. He ran for 114 yards against the Cornhuskers last year, and he's dangerous as a receiver.

Big 12		
Conf.	W	All W
L	L	L
Oklahoma	1	0
Kansas	1	2
Baylor	0	3
TCU	0	2
Texas Tech	0	2
Kansas	0	2
Oklahoma St.	0	1
Texas	0	1
West Virginia	0	1
Iowa St.	0	1

Game of the week: No. 7 Baylor at Iowa State. Yes, the Bears (3-0) are three-touchdown favorites going to Ames, Iowa, for their Big 12 opener, but they have lost their last two trips there. The Cyclones (1-2, 0-1 Big 12) are playing for the first time since winning at rival Iowa of the Big Ten, while Baylor has also had a break since three lopsided victories against teams from outside the five power leagues.

Inside the numbers: Big 12 offenses are averaging 75 plays and 456 yards a game. Their opponents are averaging 71 plays and 350 yards a game. ... Through the first four weeks, there were 65 rushing touchdowns by Big 12 teams, and 63 passing TDs.

Player to watch: Baylor's KD Cannon. While senior Antwan Goodley has been out injured for Baylor, freshman Cannon has 14 catches for 471 yards (33.6 yards per catch) with five touchdowns.

Pac-12		
North		
Conf.	W	All W
L	L	L
Oregon	0	4
Washington	0	4
Oregon St.	0	3
California	0	2
Stanford	0	1
Washington St.	0	1
South		
Conf.	W	All W
L	L	L
Arizona	1	0
Arizona St.	1	0
Southern Cal	1	0
UCLA	0	3
Utah	0	3
Colorado	0	2

Game of the week: No. 16 Stanford at Washington. The Cardinal have two shutouts already. Stanford leads the country in scoring defense (4.3 points), total defense (204.3 yards) and passing defense (65 yards) per game. Facing Stanford will be a strong indication of where the Huskies — who have been wildly inconsistent through four games — are at the start of Pac-12 play.

Inside the numbers: In 33 non-conference games, Pac-12 teams have given up 14 or fewer points 10 times. In non-conference play, the Pac-12 is averaging 39.6 points per game. **Player to watch:** Oregon State's Sean Mannion. The QB, who has led Oregon State to a 3-0 start, is expected to keep the Trojans secondary hopping. He's passed for 903 yards and four touchdowns this season. He needs 969 more yards passing to break the Pac-12 career record of 12,237, held by USC's Matt Barkley.

SERVICE ACADEMIES

Air Force vs. Boise State
Last week: Did not play
Next game: vs. Navy, Oct. 4

Army vs. Yale
Last week: Lost to Wake Forest, 24-21
Next game: vs. Ball State

Navy vs. Western Kentucky
Last week: Lost to Rutgers, 31-24
Next game: at Air Force, Oct. 4

AP TOP 25 SCHEDULE

Thursday's games
No. 11 UCLA at No. 15 Arizona State
No. 24 Oklahoma State vs. Texas Tech

Saturday's games
No. 1 Florida State at N.C. State
No. 5 Auburn vs. Louisiana Tech
No. 6 Texas A&M vs. Arkansas at Arlington, Texas
No. 7 Baylor at Iowa State
No. 8 Notre Dame vs. Syracuse at East Rutherford, N.J.
No. 9 Michigan State vs. Wyoming
No. 10 Mississippi vs. Memphis
No. 12 Georgia vs. Tennessee
No. 13 South Carolina vs. Missouri
No. 16 Stanford at Washington
No. 17 LSU vs. New Mexico State
No. 18 Southern Cal vs. Oregon State

No. 19 Wisconsin vs. South Florida
No. 20 Nebraska vs. Illinois
No. 22 Ohio State vs. Cincinnati
No. 25 Kansas State vs. UTEP

SEC		
East		
Conf.	W	All W
L	L	L
South Carolina	0	1
Florida	1	1
Missouri	0	3
Tennessee	0	2
Georgia	0	2
Kentucky	0	1
Vanderbilt	0	2
West		
Conf.	W	All W
L	L	L
Texas A&M	1	0
Alabama	1	0
Mississippi	1	0
Auburn	1	0
Missouri	0	3
Arkansas	0	1
LSU	0	1

Game of the week: No. 6 Texas A&M meets Arkansas at Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas. The Aggies are once again scoring a ton of points and racking up a lot of yards with a dominant passing game led by sophomore quarterback Kenny Hill. Arkansas is much improved under second-year coach Bret Bielerma, who has established the league's most effective running game.

Inside the numbers: Tennessee has used 22 true freshmen — the most of any FBS team — but that youth hasn't resulted in many penalties. Tennessee's averaging 21.3 penalty yards per game, the fewest of any FBS program.

Impact player: South Carolina's Pharo Cooper. Cooper caught 10 passes for 114 yards Saturday in a 48-34 victory at Vanderbilt to set career highs. He will try to produce a repeat performance this week when the Gamecocks host Missouri.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Transforming its identity?

Offensive firepower leads to image change for SEC

By Kurt Voigt
The Associated Press

THAT'S THE MESSAGE FROM FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. The Southeastern Conference held to the notion that defense won championships as long as it could.

Like the rest of the country, however, college football's most dominant league has finally embraced an undeniable fact: Offense rules — and how.

With three of the top four scoring teams in the country this season, SEC teams lead all conferences with an average of 39.7 points per game. That's up from 31.7 points last season and falls in line with the national rise in scoring totals in recent years.

Yes, even the league once known for Bear Bryant and defense has begun to out-Pac 12 the offensive-renowned Pac-12 Conference.

"I think it's what football is right now," Mississippi coach Hugh Freeze said. "The fans like it. It's exciting ... It's just kind of where we are right now. I don't know what else the defenses can do. Trust me; it's a chore to try to figure it out."

Nowhere will the uptick in the SEC's offensive prowess be on more display this weekend than when No. 6 Texas A&M and Arkansas meet in Arlington, Texas. The high-flying Aggies are second in the nation in scoring behind Baylor with an average of 55.3 points per game, while the resurgent Razorbacks are third at 48.8.

The two former Southwest Conference rivals arrive at their prolific scoring totals in vastly different ways — with Texas A&M primarily through the air and Arkansas on the ground — but they aren't

alone in the SEC. Seven of the conference's schools are in the top 25 nationally in scoring, including Georgia at fourth with an average of 48.7 points per game.

Alabama coach Nick Saban, long known for coaching some of the best defenses in the country, said college football currently has an environment favorable for offenses.

Because of that, as well as rule changes such as ejections for targeting penalties, Saban said the Crimson Tide — who are allowing 14 points per game this season after allowing as few as 8.2 in 2011 — have adjusted their expectations on defense.

'I think the whole approach to how you prepare for a game has to be completely different than what it used to be.'

Nick Saban
Alabama coach

"I think you have to have a lot more patience on defense," Saban said. "I think the whole approach to how you prepare for a game has to be completely different than what it used to be."

Nationally, college football teams averaged 27.1 points per game nationally in 2009. It's a number that's steadily risen since, to 29.5 points per game last year and 31.6 so far this season.

Arkansas coach Bret Bielema echoed Saban's comments about adjusting defensive expectations, saying he used to be a "17-point guy on defense."

Bielema said the days of 17-10 football games are likely finished for good. "Yeah, those are," Bielema said. "You know, everybody gets bored. You guys get mad; that's so boring. To me, it's awesome ... I don't like high scoring, but it makes everybody happy, so it's probably good."

AP Sports Writers David Brandt, John Zenor, Pete Iacobelli and Steve Megargee contributed to this story.

Running back Trey Williams and the Texas A&M offense are one of the reasons scoring is up in the normally defense-oriented Southeastern Conference.

TONY GUTIERREZ/AP

By the numbers

39.7 **7** **31.6**

Average number of points per game being scored this season by Southeastern Conference teams.

Number of teams in the 14-team SEC which rank in the top 25 nationally in scoring, led by Texas A&M at No. 2.

Number of points per game being scored nationally, up from 27.1 in 2009 and 29.5 last season. The Big 12's Baylor ranks first.

SOURCE: The Associated Press



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HIGH SCHOOL: DODDS-PACIFIC

Game of the week

Football: Kadena (3-0) vs. Kubasaki (1-1)

When — 6 p.m. Friday. **Where** — Mike Petty Stadium, Camp Foster, Okinawa.

What — First of two regular-season meetings between teams that met in last year's D-1 championship game. Runner-up Panthers are 2-0 in D-1 play, while the reigning D-1 champion Dragons sit a game back at 1-1.

Players to watch — The Dragons get much of their offensive fuel from senior running back Winston Maxwell (36 carries, 256 yards) and junior quarterback De-Curtis Davis (20-for-33, 284 yards, four touchdowns). The bulk of the Panthers' offense comes from senior running back Justin Segg (57.7 yards, six touchdowns).
— Dave Ornauer, Stars and Stripes

Schedule

Football

Friday

Osan at Daegu, 6 p.m.
Kadena at Kubasaki, 6 p.m.
Edgen at Zama, 7 p.m.
George Washington at Guam, 7 p.m.

Saturday

Yokota at ASUJ, 1 p.m.
Sotoku at Kinrick, 3 p.m.
Southerl at John F. Kennedy, 7 p.m.
Okkido vs. Father Duenas at GW, 7 p.m.

Cross country

Saturday

DODDS-Japan and international schools at Tama Hills Recreation Center
Korea Group A (Taejon Christian, Seoul Foreign, International Christian-Uijongbu, Chadwick International) vs. Group B (Yongsan International-Seoul, Korea International, Seoul American,

Korea Kent Foreign, Dwight School Seoul) at Seoul American

Girls volleyball

Friday

Sacred Heart at St. Maur, Okkodo at JFK, St. John's at Harvest Christian, Simon Sanchez at St. Paul, Guam Adventist at Notre Dame

Friday-Saturday

Edgren at Kinrick, Yokota at E.J. King

Saturday

CAJ at ASUJ, Okinawa Higashi at Kadena, YIS-S at Humphreys, Seoul Foreign at Taejon Christian, Daegu at Osan, SHS at HCA, St. Paul at JFK, St. John's at Okkido, Notre Dame at Southerl, Guam at GW

Boys volleyball

Saturday

YIS-S at Humphreys, Seoul Foreign at Taejon Christian, Daegu at Osan

Tennis

Friday

SAHS at YIS-S, Seoul International at Taejon Christian, Daegu at Gyeonggi Suwon

Friday-Saturday

Edgren at Kinrick, Yokota at King

Saturday

TCIS at YIS-S, Korea International at Seoul Foreign, Osan at Gyeonggi Suwon, Humphreys at Chadwick, CAJ at St. Mary's (boys), CAJ at ASUJ (girls)

Weekend peek

Bragging rights on the line

First Kadena-Kubasaki matchup will be telling but not the final word

By DAVE ORNAUER

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The date Nov. 9 is one that resonates with coaches Sergio Mendoza of Kadena and Kubasaki's Fred Bales.

That's the day the Panthers and Dragons met for the Far East Division I title, something Kubasaki happened to win 34-31 in overtime after losing the regular-season series to Kadena two games to one.

"It's a great rivalry, all these games we've played these last few years," Bales said during a Thursday walk-through at Mike Petty Stadium, site of where the teams will tee it up next. Kickoff is 6 p.m. Friday.

"These games have been extremely competitive and we expect this one to be, too. It will be a terrific challenge for us."

Kadena has beaten its three foes by a combined 130-13, while Kubasaki struggled in its first game but rebounded in its second.

Kadena is currently "playing at a very high level, they have some serious playmakers," Bales said. "We have the opportunity to play a very good game with them."

Panthers coach Sergio Mendoza calls the Dragons a "really strong team that's really coached well. I think it's going to be a tough game."

While the teams have enjoyed some high moments in the Far East playoffs, they've also suffered their share of heartache as well.

Kadena has won the D-1 title three times, and by wide margins. But the Panthers have also lost three finals — two in overtime — by a combined 10 points. "You kind of remember the losses more than the wins," Mendoza said. "Those were some really important lessons. I learned a lot. You tend to learn more from the losses. It helps you better prepare to play."

The Dragons enjoyed their share of the thrill of victory, with a title in 2005 to go with the one last fall, and the agony of defeat: two blowout losses in 2011 and 2012 at Yokota.

"We share the same pain," Bales said. "It leaves a bitter taste in your mouth. But this is this year's team, this is this year's season. We'll take this one game at a time."

While Kadena can take charge of the D-1 race with a victory, the Dragons can throw it wide open if they win.

Kinrick, 1-0 in Division I, could also benefit from a Kubasaki victory, which would give the Dragons and Panthers one loss each.

On Saturday, Kinrick hosts Seoul American, Yokota looks to unsettle American School In Japan and continue chasing its 32nd Kanto Plain title, and football returns to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni for the first time since the 2003 season when the M.C. Perry Samurai host Sotoku, a Japanese team from Hiroshima, on Saturday.

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HIGH SCHOOL: DODDS EUROPE

Weekend peek

Cougars, Falcons set for third encounter

Familiar foes will make best of unfortunate volleyball matchup

By GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

"Hey, you look familiar!"

The Vilsack Falcons and Ansbach Cougars are scheduled to play one another Saturday in a four-team DODDS Europe volleyball meet at Stuttgart. Each would rather play one of the other teams in attendance.

It's not that the Falcons and Cougars don't like the other. It's just that they've already played twice this fall, in the season's first two weekends. Vilsack has won both matches, but Ansbach won a set, and that's a cool moment for a Division II team against a Division I opponent.

But that moment's passed, and the match the teams played last Saturday wasn't that close.

Vilsack wants to play Ramstein, because Ramstein is the defending Division I champion and Vilsack wants to see what good Ramstein is. But Ramstein is playing against Ansbach and Patch.

And Ansbach wants to play Patch, because Ansbach hasn't played Patch yet because it's been too busy playing Vilsack. They won't play all season, including in the tournament, since Ansbach

is in Division II and Patch is in Division I. But Patch is playing against Vilsack and Ramstein. Vilsack and Ansbach are making the best of it.

Falcons coach Brian Sventy said "regular-season matches can be a double-edged sword," with the potential to build valuable momentum for a team while artificially boosting its confidence.

"You do have to be careful about how you handle success or failure. It is all relative," Sventy said. "If you are playing smaller or much larger schools than you will face at the European championships, you must be mindful of how much you really learn as a team."

Ansbach coach Desma Colburn said she'll look for signs of progress in her team's latest meeting with the Falcons, while her team enjoys playing without the pressure of heavy expectations.

"It will be great to see how we improve each time we play Vilsack," Colburn said. "With our regular-season schedule we have nothing to lose. We are facing Division I teams almost every weekend. It gives us a chance to let loose, have fun and compete."



MICHAEL S. DARNELL/Stars and Stripes

Ansbach Cougars coach Desma Colburn rallies her team during their second meeting with the Vilsack Falcons last Saturday. Despite competing in different divisions, the two squads will meet for a third time when they play this Saturday at a four-team DODDS Europe volleyball meet in Stuttgart.

And if this weren't enough, they meet again Oct. 25.

broome.gregory@stripes.com

Schedule

Football

Friday
Vilsack at Wiesbaden

Saturday
Ramstein at Lakenheath
Baumholder at Menwith Hill/Woodham
Alconbury at ISB
Vicenza at SHAPE
Rota at Bitburg
AFNORTH at Aviano
Naples at Hohenfels

Vicenza, Florence at Aviano
Naples, Sigonella, Marymount at AOSR

Tennis

Friday
Lakenheath at Ramstein
Alconbury at Brussels
SHAPE at AFNORTH

Saturday
Lakenheath at Bitburg
Alconbury at SHAPE
Wiesbaden at ISB
Ramstein at DFA
Vilsack at Ansbach
Patch at Hohenfels
Vicenza at Aviano
AOSR at Florence
Naples at Marymount

Golf

Oct. 2
Bitburg, AFNORTH at Baumholder
Kaiserslautern, Vilsack, Ramstein, Patch at Wiesbaden

Volleyball

Saturday
Rota, Brussels, SHAPE at Bitburg
Baumholder, AFNORTH, Wiesbaden at Kaiserslautern
Lakenheath, Alconbury at Menwith Hill
Ramstein, Vilsack, Ansbach at Patch
Hohenfels at Black Forest Academy
Marymount at American Overseas School of Rome
Florence, Vicenza at Aviano
Naples at Sigonella

Cross country

Saturday
Baumholder, Kaiserslautern, ISB, Rota, Lakenheath at Bitburg
Wiesbaden, Vilsack, Hohenfels at BFA
Ramstein, Ansbach, Frankfurt International, Munich International at Patch
SHAPE, AFNORTH, Brussels at St. John's

This week's key matchups

Football

Rota at Bitburg

Saturday

One team is undefeated this season. The other has won four of the last five DODDS Europe Division II championships.

The Rota Admirals aren't long removed from Division III contention, but the abolition of Division III left the team rulerless, resulting in a winless 2013 season. That's all changed in 2014 — the Admirals are off to a hot 2-0 start.

It's not all beer and skittles, however. Those wins came against two small-school peers, teams that under DODDS-Europe's former football alignment would be sharing the Division III standings.

To truly turn the ship around, Rota needs a win over a legacy Division II squad. And there's no stronger candidate than this week's opponent.

The Bitburg Barons were overthrown as DODDS Europe champion by Hohenfels last year after a run of four straight titles, and their deteriorating aura took another shot last weekend in a 50-8 loss to Ansbach.

That leaves the Barons either humbled — and therefore vulnerable to the Admiral assault — or hungry and poised to enact some damage control by controlling visiting Rota.

Football

Vicenza at SHAPE

Saturday

DODDS Europe's five-game regular season doesn't allow a team to build much momentum. But the Cougars will need all they can manage for a formidable stretch run.

Vicenza will play three games in 20 days starting Saturday, and all three opponents are fellow 2013 postseason qualifiers. After the Spartans, the Cougars will travel to rival Naples on Oct. 4 before wrapping up their regular season against defending champion Hohenfels on Oct. 10.

Though their early-season competition doesn't rise to the level of their upcoming opponents, the Cougars have been above reproach so far, earning a 2-0 start with matching 35-0 shutouts over Aviano and International School of Brussels.

SHAPE, last season's Division II runner-up, is a motivated foe. The Spartans' 1-1 record puts them at risk of missing out on a return trip to the postseason.

Cross country

Ramstein at Patch

Saturday

It doesn't get much more straightforward than this: last year's reigning champion and this year's early-season frontrunner will share the same course this weekend.

Ramstein's John Casey posted the standout time of DODDS Europe's opening cross-country weekend with a speedy 17 minutes, 32 seconds on Saturday.

Meanwhile, reigning champion Mitchell Bailey of Patch broke a course record at Vilsack's Rose Barracks with a time of 18:01.

Different courses, of course, produce varying times. The only way to measure two runners is to put them on the same starting line. That, conveniently, happens Saturday at Stuttgart, almost exactly a month removed from the European championship race Oct. 25 at Baumholder.

The girls' race, meanwhile, features an equally interesting matchup. Patch's Julia Lockridge, who set a course record of her own Saturday at Vilsack, takes on Ramstein's Madison Morse, owner of the 21:14 time that is the class of DODDS Europe so far this fall.



Follow the action
Gregory Broome has the latest on Twitter
@broomestripes

RYDER CUP



Fast facts

GLENEAGLES, Scotland — Facts and figures for the Ryder Cup:

Event: 40th Ryder Cup matches.
Date: Sept. 26-28.

The course: The PGA Centenary Course at Gleneagles Resort was designed by Jack Nicklaus and opened in 1993 as The Monarch's Course. It has been revamped and renamed ahead of the Ryder Cup. It has hosted a European Tour event since 1999. The course plays as a par 72 at 7,243 yards. The 16th and 18th holes are par 5s that are easily reachable in two shots.

Format: Four matches of fourballs (better ball) and foursomes (alternate shot) on Friday and Saturday, 12 singles matches on Sunday.

Points: Europe needs 14 points to retain the cup. The United States needs 14½ points to win the cup.

Series: United States leads 25-12-2.

Last time: In what has been called the "Miracle at Medinah," Europe produced the greatest comeback for a visiting team when it rallied from a 10-6 deficit to win, 14½-13½. Ian Poulter began the rally Saturday night with birdies on his last five holes to win a fourballs match and cut the U.S. lead to four points. In Sunday singles, Justin Rose, Sergio Garcia and Poulter each won the last two holes of their matches for 1-up victories to lead the rally. Poulter went 4-0 for the week.

Captains: Tom Watson (United States), Paul McGinley (Europe).

European roster: Thomas Bjorn, Jamie Donaldson, Victor Dubuisson, Stephen Gallacher (captain's choice), Sergio Garcia, Martin Kaymer, Graeme McDowell, Rory McIlroy, Ian Poulter (captain's choice), Justin Rose, Henrik Stenson, Lee Westwood (captain's choice).

U.S. roster: Keegan Bradley (captain's choice), Rickie Fowler, Jim Furyk, Zach Johnson, Matt Kuchar, Hunter Mahan (captain's choice), Phil Mickelson, Patrick Reed, Webb Simpson (captain's choice), Jordan Spieth, Jimmy Walker, Bubba Watson.

Tiger Tales: Tiger Woods is not in the Ryder Cup for only the second time in his career. The last time he didn't play because of injury (2008) was the last time the United States won.

Key statistic: The Americans have three Ryder Cup rookies, their fewest since 2002.

Noteworthy: The United States has not won the Ryder Cup in Europe since 1993, the last time Tom Watson was the captain. Watson (65) will be the oldest captain in Ryder Cup history.

Quoteworthy: "Nobody is going to expect us to win. But I fully expect us to win." — U.S. captain Tom Watson.

Television: Live on AFN-Sports, Day 1, 8:30 a.m. Friday CET, 3:30 p.m. JKT; Day 2, 9 a.m. Saturday, 4 p.m. JKT; Final Day, 1 p.m. Sunday, CET, 8 p.m. JKT.

— The Associated Press



PETER MORRISON/AP

U.S. captain Tom Watson holds the Ryder Cup trophy as he lines up with players Jimmy Walker, left, Bubba Watson and Phil Mickelson, right, for a team photograph Tuesday ahead of the Ryder Cup at Gleneagles, Scotland.

'We've got the guts'

Captain Watson says US team capable of redemption at Gleneagles

By DOUG FERGUSON
The Associated Press

Steve Stricker never felt more alone in front of so many people. All he could do was watch on the 18th green at Medinah two years ago when Martin Kaymer made the best 6-foot putt of his life that won the Ryder Cup for Europe. He went to shake Kaymer's hand and couldn't find him because the German was swept up in the flag-waving, champagne-spraying mass of winners. Stricker walked quietly over to his wife, captain Davis Love III and the rest of the Americans.

"That whole day was so difficult that none of the guys ... when I looked over at them, you could see it in their faces," Stricker said. "No one was happy. There was a crappy feeling among us all. That's why you were hearing how guys wanted to be part of this team and get back something that we had one hand on."

That something is a 17-inch gold trophy, one of the most coveted in golf. And it has belonged to Europe for all but two years dating to 2002.

The Americans have made "redemption" their singular focus going into the 40th Ryder Cup matches at Gleneagles Resort in Scotland, even though only five players are back from the last team. Stricker will be there as an assistant captain.

Missing from the U.S. team is Tiger Woods, who completed only 25 rounds this year because of an ailing back. Then again, the

Did you know

U.S. captain Tom Watson has never been part of a losing Ryder Cup team (four times as a player, 1 as captain).

SOURCE: AP, rydercup.com

Americans won the Ryder Cup without him in 2008 at Valhalla. But that was a home game.

Europe is a heavy favorite. It already has the No. 1 player in the world (Rory McIlroy), three of the four major champions this year and four of the top six players in the world ranking. The odds are stacked even more in its favor because of where it is played.

The Americans haven't won on European soil since 1993 at The Belfry. The captain that year was Tom Watson, and the PGA of America went outside the box by asking Watson to return at age 65. He is the oldest Ryder Cup captain in the 87-year history of the matches.

Watson has never been part of a losing Ryder Cup team as a player or captain, though a tie when he played in 1989 felt like a loss because Europe retained the cup. He says he had a pit in his stomach watching the Americans lose at Medinah, and he has been try-

ing to convey his own memory to this team.

"Watch the stands. Watch the fans leave early," Watson said. He recalls running back to join Raymond Floyd in the joyous moments after Love's clinching putt in 1993. He was walking up the fairway with Floyd when the late Payne Stewart slapped him so hard on the back that Watson nearly lost his breath.

"He said, 'Captain, look up there.' And I looked up there at the green, at the stands, which had been completely chock-a-block full when Davis Love made his 5-foot putt. And they were over half-empty," Watson said. "And that's what I told my players."

Watson could not have imagined when he left The Belfry that the Americans would go 21 years without winning on the road.

They had their chances in Wales four years ago until the Americans failed to win any of the six matches in the final team session and Graeme McDowell thwarted a rally by winning the final match. The Americans were poised to win in 2002 at The Belfry until Phillip Price upset Phil Mickelson in singles, and Paul McGinley made an 8-foot par putt to win the Ryder Cup.

Watson is idolized in Scotland, where he won four of his five British Open titles. It would be hard for any captain in Europe to measure up to Watson's stature in the game. That task falls to McGinley, a tough-as-nails Irishman who has never lost in the Ryder Cup as a player (three times) or

an assistant captain (twice).

"It's not about reinventing the wheel," McGinley said. "I don't see my job as a maverick. I see the job of captain as taking what's working, making it better — which is a tough job — and rolling it out again."

Watson's job is to make sure the Americans come home with that trophy.

The Americans have five players who haven't won a tournament all year, including Phil Mickelson, Jordan Spieth and Rickie Fowler. They do not have FedEx Cup champion Billy Horschel, who won his two biggest events after Watson made his captain's picks, and Dustin Johnson, who took a voluntary leave from golf for "personal challenges."

Five Americans from the top 25 in the world ranking are not on the team.

"It's the mix I was dealt," Watson said. "We're going in a little under the radar because of the notoriety of the European team — Rory McIlroy, Justin Rose, Kaymer. But we've got the guts. We've got the team to do it. People don't expect us to win. I fully expect us to win."

Europe's victory at Medinah matched the largest comeback in Ryder Cup history. The Americans also trailed 10-6 going into Sunday singles when they won in 1999 at Brookline. Europe won back the cup the next time, and Watson can only hope he gets the same result.

AUTO RACING



CHERYL SENTER/AP

Brad Keselowski is all smiles now that he and teammate Joey Logano brought home wins for Penske Racing in the first two races of the NASCAR Sprint Cup Chase for the championship.

Penske playing for keeps

Wins in first 2 Chase races puts team in driver's seat

AS CHARLOTTE, N.C. s Brad Keselowski flaunted his fast car by leading session after session at New Hampshire Motor Speedway, Joey Logano took a good-natured swipe at his teammate by asking him via Twitter to slow down.

The first message apparently fell on deaf ears, so Logano tried again the next day, tweeting to Keselowski: "You must have not heard the yesterday. Please?"

Logano ultimately didn't need an assist from Keselowski on Sunday.

He led the final 30 laps to grab a pivotal victory and the win pushed Logano into the second round of the Chase for the Sprint Cup championship, where he and Keselowski are the only two drivers guaranteed of advancing.

Team Penske is hot — the hottest organization in NASCAR with four wins in the past five races — and Logano and Keselowski are ruthless right now about results. They aren't content simply securing spots in the second round of the Chase. They want to win everything in sight and not let anyone else in the game.

"Knowing that we're in the next round is nice," said Logano after his victory, "but we want to go there and win. Our goal is to win the championship. Just because we're in the next (round) doesn't mean we're going to take a week off next week."

This 16-driver Chase under a new elimination format was supposed to pit Penske against mighty Hendrick Motorsports, but it's been all Penske through the first two races. Kevin Harvick has held his own, but his Stewart-



OSRAM SYLVANIA/AP

Jes Munk Hansen, Sylvania 300 Grand Marshal and President and CEO of Osram Sylvania, presents the official winner's trophy to Joey Logano, right, after his victory last Sunday in the second race of the Chase for the championship.

Haas Racing entry has yet to stack up to the two Penske cars when a win is on the line.

And the four-car Hendrick effort? Kasey Kahne could be eliminated Sunday at Dover, six-time and defending champion Jimmie Johnson has been mediocre at best and Jeff Gordon and Dale Earnhardt Jr. aren't yet on the same level as the two Penske teams.

Granted, the 10-race Chase has ebbs and flows — Matt Kenseth won the first two races last year but still lost the championship to Johnson. But what the first two races this year has shown is that Penske is playing for keeps.

Keselowski's win at Richmond was good for the top seed in the Chase and he made it two-straight with a victory in the Chase opener at Chicagoland to give him five on the year. Logano answered with Sunday's win at New Hampshire, and both drivers have made it clear they won't coast into each round. If they could somehow win all 10 Chase races, they'd have no

chance for the other teams. "I'd like to say the 35-inch, 35-ounce bulb, they're swinging it hard," Walt Czarniecki, vice chairman at Penske, said Sunday. "Someone asked me a minute ago, 'This must make you feel pretty good, both cars are advancing to the next round?' I said 'Let me tell you something about this group — we're worried about Dover right now.'"

Keselowski feels the attention the team is receiving now didn't come until the seventh or eighth race of his title run two years ago. He's used to attention and doesn't mind it, but cautions Penske against believing its own hype.

"It's different because it's so early, and I know that we have so much further to go and so much more work to do," Keselowski said. "In that sense, it's a compliment. But it's kind of scary because you don't want to get overinflated as a team and think you've done what you needed to do when there's so much work left to be done."

Around the tracks

NASCAR SPRINT CUP

This week: AAA 400 at Dover, Del. **Track:** Dover International Speedway (oval, 1.0 miles).

Distance: 400 miles, 400 laps.

TV: AFN-Xtra, 8 p.m. Sunday Central European Time; 3 a.m. Monday Japan and Korea Time.

Last year: Jimmie Johnson raced to his record eighth Dover victory, holding off Hendrick teammate Dale Earnhardt Jr.

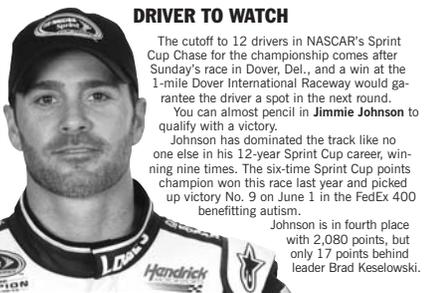
Next week: Joey Logano won at New Hampshire to earn a spot in the second round of the Chase for the Sprint Cup. He has four wins this season, one behind series leader Brad Keselowski.

Next race: Hollywood Casino 400, Oct. 5, Kansas Speedway, Kansas City, Mo.

Online: nascar.com

DRIVER STANDINGS

1. Brad Keselowski	2,097
2. Joey Logano	2,096
3. Kevin Harvick	2,090
4. Jimmie Johnson	2,080
5. Kyle Busch	2,077
6. Dale Earnhardt Jr.	2,077
7. Jeff Gordon	2,070
8. Matt Kenseth	2,057
9. Carl Edwards	2,057
10. AJ Allmendinger	2,056
11. Kasey Kahne	2,055
12. Ryan Newman	2,049
13. Denny Hamlin	2,049
14. Greg Biffle	2,049
15. Kurt Busch	2,047
16. Eric Almirola	2,045
17. Kyle Larson	821
18. Jamie McMurray	782
19. Clint Bowyer	781
20. Austin Dillon	759



DRIVER TO WATCH

The cutoff to 12 drivers in NASCAR's Sprint Cup Chase for the championship comes after Sunday's race in Dover, Del., and a win at the 1-mile Dover International Raceway would guarantee the driver a spot in the next round.

You can almost pencil in **Jimmie Johnson** to qualify with a victory. Johnson has dominated the track like no one else in his 12-year Sprint Cup career, winning nine times. The six-time Sprint Cup points champion won this race last year and picked up victory No. 9 on June 1 in the FedEx 400 benefiting autism.

Johnson is in fourth place with 2,090 points, but only 17 points behind leader Brad Keselowski.

NATIONWIDE SERIES

This week: Dover 200 at Dover, Del.

Track: Dover International Speedway (oval, 1.0 miles).

Distance: 200 miles, 200 laps.

TV: AFN-Xtra, 9 a.m. Sunday (delayed) Central European Time; 4 p.m. Sunday Japan and Korea Time.

Last year: Joey Logano raced to his fourth straight Dover victory.

Last week: Brendan Gaughan won at Kentucky Speedway, surging past Chase Elliott and Ty Dillon in a three-wide run. Gaughan also won this year at Road America.

Next race: Kansas Lottery 300, Oct. 4, Kansas Speedway, Kansas City, Mo.

Online: nascar.com

CAMPING WORLD TRUCKS SERIES

This week: Rhino Linings 350 at Las Vegas.

Track: Las Vegas Motor Speedway (oval, 1.5 miles).

Distance: 219 miles, 146 laps.

Last year: Timothy Peters raced to the second of his 2013 victories.

Last week: Cole Custer won at New Hampshire to become the youngest NASCAR national series winner at 16 years, 7 months, 28 days. He led 148 of the 175 laps.

Next race: Fred's 250, Oct. 18, Talladega Superspeedway, Talladega, Ala.

Online: nascar.com

NHRA MELLO YELLO DRAG RACING

This week: NHRA Midwest Nationals at Madison, Ill.

Track: Gateway Motorsports Park.

FORMULA ONE

Next race: Japanese Grand Prix, Oct. 3, Suzuka International, Suzuka, Japan.

Last week: Lewis Hamilton won the Singapore Grand Prix for his seventh victory of the year. He took the series lead over Mercedes teammate Nico Rosberg.

Online: formula1.com

OTHER RACES

WORLD OF OUTLAWS: Sprint Car, Friday, Bloomington Speedway, Bloomington, Ind.; Saturday, Berlin Raceway, Manne, Mich.

Online: worldofoutlaws.com

U.S. AUTO RACING CLUB: Sprint Car, Saturday, Lawrenceburg Speedway, Lawrenceburg, Ind.

Online: usacracing.com

In the Pits



by JENNA FRYER • AP

NFL



STEPHEN B. MORTON/AP

Indianapolis Colts wide receiver Hakeem Nicks (14) celebrates with running back Ahmad Bradshaw after Bradshaw scored a touchdown against the Jacksonville Jaguars in Jacksonville, Fla., on Sunday. Bradshaw has averaged 6.0 yards per carry this year after suffering a career-threatening neck injury during Week 3 last season.

Colts' RB Bradshaw defying odds

Bruising runner refused to let neck injury cut short his career

By MICHAEL MAROT
The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Ahmad Bradshaw found the plan.

He was built to play football his own hard-headed way and wanted to leave the sport on his own terms.

So three games into his second season with the Colts and one year removed from a career-threatening neck injury, the Super Bowl winner has defied the odds by making a remarkable comeback.

"I love this game so much, I couldn't put it away that easy," Bradshaw said Wednesday when asked about the possibility of retiring after last October's surgery.

To Bradshaw, this is not just a second chance.

It's an opportunity to show those who wrote him off after the injuries started mounting that he can still play, still rely on his battering-ram style and still make a difference on a Super Bowl contender knowing there are two fused vertebrae in his neck.

The injury occurred in Week 3 last season when Bradshaw was hit near the head by a San Francisco defender.

Almost instantly, Bradshaw felt a disconcerting sensation in his arms and later in his legs.

By early October, doctors had left him two options — undergo season-ending surgery or let the neck heal on its own. Bradshaw chose surgery.

So far, he's looked good. Bradshaw has 25 carries for 150 yards, an impressive 6.0 average, 12 receptions for 114 yards and a career-best three TD catches.

The biggest reason for Bradshaw's re-

He's a warrior. He's the type of guy that you just want to go out and play on the field with.

Andrew Luck

Indianapolis Colts quarterback, on running back Ahmad Bradshaw

surge might be how he uses the work week.

"He didn't practice much in New York because of injuries," said receiver Hakeem Nicks, a teammate of Bradshaw's with the Giants and now with the Colts. "But he was the only guy I knew who could be in a (walking) boot one day and run for 150 yards the next day."

Coach Chuck Pagano and quarterback Andrew Luck never doubted Bradshaw could emerge as another playmaker in Indy's emerging power-running offense.

They just needed to make sure he was healthy.

"He's a warrior. He's the type of guy that you just want to go out and play on the field with," Luck said. "I think he's got everybody's respect in this locker room and around the league for being a tough guy, a hard-nosed guy, and he's a consummate teammate."

First, though, Bradshaw had to prove to himself that his body could withstand the weekly grind.

When training camp opened, Indy (1-2) protected Bradshaw with a red, non-contact jersey. When he was cleared for contact, Bradshaw acknowledged there were times his neck was sore enough to raise questions about how it would hold up through

a 16-game regular season. His limited preseason workload — three carries for 2 yards — didn't help.

So Bradshaw entered the regular season still looking for answers. He wasn't convinced until he started taking some big shots against Philadelphia in Week 2.

"I always wondered why or if there was a different hit that I couldn't take. There was a question mark always there if it was," he said. "I think I've gotten hit plenty of different ways now to know that my neck is fine."

While Bradshaw's family and friends have urged him to change his style, the Marshall alum insists he didn't win two Super Bowl rings, post two 1,000-yard seasons or score the winning touchdown with 57 seconds left in the Giants' second Super Bowl win over the Patriots by playing it safe.

He did it by sacrificing his body and getting physical — and even a repaired neck isn't going to change the way he plays the game he loves.

"You sit back and you see how physical the game is and how perishable your body is," Bradshaw said. "You've just got to take advantage of every opportunity, and that's what I did this whole offseason and that's trying to get my rest, hone my feet and, of course, get my neck right."

Foe: Smith has proven his worth for Baltimore

FROM BACK PAGE

"I'm not bitter because I get to play," Smith said. "But do I want to show certain individuals that I can still play? Honestly, I don't have to. They are game-planning for me. (Panthers defensive coordinator) Sean McDermott knows what I bring to the table."

With the Ravens, Smith has proven he's still got the talent to be a No. 1 receiver. He leads Baltimore with 18 catches and 290 yards receiving, and has also been a leader in the locker room.

"It's pretty obvious as a football player what he's meant to us," coach John Harbaugh said. "He's made plays. He's a fiery competitor. He's been a leader. It's a young group of receivers, and he's had an impact on those guys. But he hasn't done it in an overbearing way. He's been himself. He's fit in really well."

Smith has a reputation for being loud and feisty. He trash-talks with the best of them — so much so that Harbaugh made light of it.

"My advice to Steve would be, 'Shock the world. Surprise everybody. Don't even say a word the whole game. Go into a shell!'" Harbaugh said. "But I don't think he's going to take that advice."

Especially if Smith catches a pass in front of a former teammate.

"If he catches the ball, he's going to let people know how good of a job he did right there," Ravens quarterback Joe Flacco said. "I don't think this week is going to be any different. I'm sure he's talked some trash in 1-on-1's the last handful of years with all the guys over there. So he'll probably pick up right where he left off."

Smith said: "My enthusiasm will be out of this world, but it will also be fun to play against guys that I know their tendencies."

And the Panthers certainly know about Smith, who rarely eased up in practice or during a game.

"He was one of those guys who never wanted to back down from anything, and I was the same way," Carolina cornerback Josh Norman said. "He will probably be in the Hall of Fame, and you have to respect that."

Another reason to respect Smith? He's just about as good today as when he was drafted in the third round of the 2001 draft out of Utah.

"He's still got it," Norman said. "He never dropped off from what he was. The older you are, the finer the wine, I guess."

Smith is happy to be with the Ravens, and they're delighted to have him. Nonetheless, he will always have a huge place in his heart for Carolina.

"I miss everything about Carolina," Smith said. "I miss my home. I miss my friends. Guys that I have grown with. But I also understand that it's a business. And sometimes in business, you've got to temporarily go somewhere else."

Playing — and starring — in Baltimore has helped ease the sting of being dismissed by general manager Dave Gettleman without ceremony.

"Unless you hate your job, I don't think anybody has walked out of your job and has been fired or released or go 'Yay,'" Smith said. "I was taken aback by it, but I took my time to kind of reflect to kind of see it. To be honest, I knew a long time ago.

I knew when I had my meeting with Gettleman what was going to happen, and that's what happened. I walked out of there with dignity, and I held my head up high."

NFL

No panic: Packers look to boost offense

Rodgers urges calm as Green Bay works to increase output

By GENARO C. ARMAS
The Associated Press

Jordy Nelson hears the concerns among the Packers' fan base about Green Bay's sputtering offense. The receiver gets it. He's not happy about the output, either, just like the rest of the team.

But there is no panic in Green Bay. "I don't think anyone's happy with how we performed," Nelson said. "But yeah, we've got to stay calm, and we'll stay the course and keep working at it and get better and hopefully go out and play better on Sunday."

There is plenty of room for improvement after the performance last week in a 19-7 loss to Detroit.

Green Bay's 223 yards of total offense were the team's lowest total since a 184-yard outing on Nov. 9, 2008, in a 28-27 loss to Minnesota.

The 51 offensive plays against the Lions were well below the goal of 75 that coach Mike McCarthy likes to run in his up-tempo, no-huddle scheme.

"Our biggest thing right now is production. Our offense really isn't where we would like it to be," McCarthy said.

The Packers have faced three tough defenses to start the season in the Seahawks, Jets and Lions.

Still, the offensive woes are a bit surprising considering how well the team felt about the offense coming out of the preseason. Now, there are a few pressing issues to address.

For instance, at receiver:

- Nelson is the biggest downfield threat for now. Randall Cobb had three short touchdown receptions the first two weeks, but otherwise hasn't had more than 58 yards receiving in each of his first three games.

- Green Bay has had limited success with its third receivers, Jarrett Boykin or rookie Davante Adams.



PAUL SANCYA/AP

Green Bay quarterback Aaron Rodgers watches the game from the bench during the first half of Sunday's loss to Detroit. Rodgers and the Packers hope they can punch up their offense ahead of this week's divisional game against the Chicago Bears.

"It's kind of play to play," Adams said when asked about issues with the offense. "Somebody might drop the ball, somebody might miss a block, something like that. But ultimately everything goes hand in hand, so you've got to pull all the pieces together to create good drives and good plays."

Rodgers has completed 62.7 percent of passes through three games. For whatever reason, he noted, the Packers don't usually get off to fast starts.

On his weekly radio appearance Tuesday on ESPN radio in Milwaukee, Rodgers urged calm.

"Five letters here, just for everybody out there in Packer land: R-E-L-A-X. Relax. We're going to be OK," he said.

He sounded a similar tone Wednesday. "There (are) high expectations here for us every year. But we've underachieved on offense, so you understand it," Rodgers said Wednesday. "But I think it's just a reminder that it's a long season and all of our goals are in front of us and within reach."

About the fourth, fifth or sixth game is when the Packers usually find their stride, he estimated. The Bears game will be the fourth for Green Bay.

"We can't rely on that every year because that just makes it tough," Rodgers added. "But for whatever reason, that's kind of been the way our season has gone."

Green Bay hasn't been able to get its running game on track. It wasn't working

well even when the Lions played back with two safeties and left fewer defenders closer to the line of scrimmage.

Running back Eddie Lacy said Wednesday he was working on keeping his pads low. Theoretically, that would make Lacy a more compact target who would be tougher to tackle.

Last year's Offensive Rookie of the Year, Lacy, is averaging just 3.1 yards on his 36 carries. Without a running game, play action becomes less of a viable option.

"It'll get better throughout the course of the season, but nobody really expected ... we'd run the ball the way we have the past few times," Lacy said. "Everybody expected more."

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GAMEDAY

WEEK 4

TELEVISED GAMES



Marquee matchup

Philadelphia Eagles (3-0) at San Francisco 49ers (1-2)

AFN-Sports, 10 p.m. Sunday CET, 5 a.m. Monday Japan & Korea

SERIES RECORD: 49ers lead 17-12-1; Eagles have won five of past six.

LAST MEETING: 49ers beat Eagles 24-23 on Oct. 2, 2011, at Philadelphia.

EAGLES OFFENSE: OVERALL (6), RUSH (19), PASS (2).

EAGLES DEFENSE: OVERALL (26), RUSH (13), PASS (30).

49ERS OFFENSE: OVERALL (20), RUSH (17), PASS (17).

49ERS DEFENSE: OVERALL (6), RUSH (7) PASS (14). **STREAKS, STATS AND NOTES:** Eagles are first team in NFL history to start 3-0 after trailing by 10-plus points in each game. Have won 10 of past 11 regular-season games...QB Nick Foles passed for 325 yards, 3 TDs and 114.4 rating last week. Has 129.2 rating in past eight on road...completing 143 of 217 (65.9 percent) for 2,198 yards with 22 TDs and 2 INTs. In

last game at San Francisco, RB LeSean McCoy had 138 yards from scrimmage (92 rush, 46 receiving) and a TD. Since 2011, Eagles' Darren Sproles leads NFL RBs with 246 receptions, 2,177 receiving yards and 16 receiving TDs...WR Jeremy Maclin had 8 catches for 154 yards and TD last week. Aims for fourth road game in row with TD. Rookie WR Jordan Matthews had career-high 8 catches, 59 yards and 2 TDs last week; first 2 TDs of career...49ers QB Colin Kaepernick has won 10 of 13 starts at home (including playoffs)... RB Frank Gore has 100-plus yards rushing in three of past four meetings... WR Michael Crabtree had career-high 10 catches

(80 yards, TD) last week... Since entering NFL in 2007, LB Patrick Willis, who leads Niners with 20 tackles, is only player with 20 sacks (20.5). 15 forced fumbles (16) and 8 interceptions (8).



Atlanta Falcons (2-1) at Minnesota Vikings (1-2)

AFN-Atlantic
10 p.m. Sunday CET
5 a.m. Monday JKT

Series: Vikings lead 15-10; Falcons have won three of past four. **Last meeting:** Falcons won 24-14 on Nov. 27, 2011.

Notes: Falcons QB Matt Ryan set club records with an 87.5 completion percentage (21-for-24) and a 155.9 rating in last week's 56-14 victory over Tampa Bay... Vikings rookie QB Teddy Bridgewater, who will step in for Matt Cassel (IR, foot), completed 12 of 20 for 150 yards last week in his NFL debut.



Eagles rookie WR Jordan Matthews scored his first two TDs last week.

Michael Perez/AP

Green Bay Packers (1-2) at Chicago Bears (2-1)

AFN-Sports
7 p.m. Sunday CET
2 a.m. Monday JKT

Series: Bears lead 92-88-6; Packers have won six of past seven.

Last meeting: Packers won 33-28 on Dec. 29, 2013.

Notes: Packers RB Eddie Lacy has rushed for 216 yards (108 per game) and 2 TDs in two meetings with the Bears... WR Jordy Nelson had 10 catches for 161 yards in last meeting... Bears QB Jay Cutler has 8 passing TDs, most ever by a Bear in the first three games of a season.

Game capsules compiled from nflmedia.com



New Orleans Saints (1-2) at Dallas Cowboys (2-1)

AFN-Sports
2:30 a.m. Monday CET
9:30 a.m. Monday JKT

Series: Cowboys lead 15-11, but have lost past three meetings.

Last meeting: Drew Brees passed for 392 yards and 4 TDs in 49-17 Saints victory on Nov. 11, 2013.

Notes: Brees leads NFL with 39,596 passing yards and 288 passing TDs since 2006... In last home start vs. Saints, Cowboys QB Tony Romo threw for 416 yards and 4 TDs... RB DeMarco Murray has rushed for 100-plus yards and a TD in each game this season.

Also on AFN: Jacksonville Jaguars (0-3) at Chicago Chargers (2-1), AFN-Xtra, Midnight Sunday CET, 7 a.m. Monday JKT (joined in progress)

EXPANDED STANDINGS

American Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	East			Home	Away	AFC	NFC	Div
					PF	PA	Diff					
Buffalo	2	1	0	.667	62	52	1+1-0	1+0-0	1+0-0	1-1-0	1-0-0	1-0-0
New England	2	1	0	.667	66	49	1+0-1	1+0-1	1-1-0	1-0-0	0-1-0	0-1-0
Miami	1	2	0	.333	58	83	1+1-0	0+1-0	1-2-0	0+0-0	1+1-0	0+0-0
N.Y. Jets	1	2	0	.333	62	72	1+1-0	0+1-0	1+0-0	0-2-0	0+0-0	0+0-0
South												
Houston	2	1	0	.667	64	50	1+0-1	1+0-1	1+0-0	1+1-0	0+0-0	0+0-0
Indianapolis	1	2	0	.333	95	78	0+1-1	1+0-1	1+1-0	0+1-0	0+0-0	0+0-0
Tennessee	1	2	0	.333	43	69	0+1-1	1+0-1	1+1-0	0+1-0	0+0-0	0+0-0
Jacksonville	0	3	0	.000	44	119	0+1-0	0+2-0	0+1-0	0+2-0	0+1-0	0+1-0
North												
Cincinnati	3	0	0	1.000	80	33	2+0-0	1+0-0	2+0-0	1+0-0	1+0-0	1+0-0
Baltimore	2	1	0	.667	65	50	1+1-0	1+0-0	2+1-0	0+0-0	2+1-0	0+0-0
Pittsburgh	2	1	0	.667	73	72	1+0-1	1+0-1	1+1-0	1+0-0	1+1-0	0+0-0
Cleveland	1	2	0	.333	74	77	1+1-0	0+1-0	0+2-0	1+0-0	0+2-0	0+2-0
West												
Denver	2	1	0	.667	75	67	2+0-0	0+1-0	2+0-0	0+1-0	1+0-0	1+0-0
San Diego	2	1	0	.667	69	49	1+0-1	1+0-1	1+0-0	1+1-0	0+0-0	0+0-0
Kansas City	1	2	0	.333	61	65	0+1-1	1+1-0	1+2-0	0+0-0	0+1-0	0+1-0
Oakland	0	3	0	.000	37	65	0+1-0	0+2-0	0+3-0	0+0-0	0+0-0	0+0-0

National Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	East			Home	Away	NFC	AFC	Div
					PF	PA	Diff					
Philadelphia	3	0	0	1.000	101	78	2+0-0	2+0-0	1+0-0	2+0-0	2+0-0	1+0-0
Dallas	2	1	0	.667	77	69	0+1-0	2+0-0	1+1-0	1+0-0	0+0-0	0+0-0
N.Y. Giants	1	2	0	.333	58	77	1+0-0	0+1-0	1+1-0	0+0-0	1+0-0	0+0-0
Washington	1	2	0	.333	81	64	1+0-0	0+2-0	0+1-0	1+0-0	0+1-0	0+1-0
South												
Atlanta	2	1	0	.667	103	72	2+0-0	0+1-0	2+0-0	0+1-0	2+0-0	0+0-0
Carolina	2	1	0	.667	63	58	1+1-0	1+0-0	2+0-0	0+1-0	1+0-0	1+0-0
New Orleans	1	2	0	.333	78	72	1+0-0	0+2-0	1+1-0	0+1-0	0+1-0	0+1-0
Tampa Bay	0	3	0	.000	45	95	0+2-0	0+1-0	0+3-0	0+0-0	0+2-0	0+2-0
North												
Detroit	2	1	0	.667	61	45	2+0-0	0+1-0	2+1-0	0+0-0	2+1-0	0+0-0
Chicago	2	1	0	.667	75	62	0+1-0	2+0-0	1+1-0	1+1-0	0+0-0	0+0-0
Minnesota	1	2	0	.333	50	56	0+1-0	1+1-0	1+1-0	0+1-0	0+0-0	0+0-0
Green Bay	1	2	0	.333	54	79	1+0-0	0+2-0	0+2-0	0+1-0	0+1-0	0+1-0
West												
Arizona	3	0	0	1.000	66	45	2+0-0	0+1-0	2+0-0	1+0-0	1+0-0	1+0-0
Seattle	2	1	0	.667	83	66	2+0-0	0+1-0	1+1-0	1+1-0	0+0-0	0+0-0
St. Louis	1	2	0	.333	56	85	0+2-0	0+1-0	1+2-0	0+0-0	0+0-0	0+0-0
San Francisco	1	2	0	.333	62	68	0+1-0	1+1-0	1+2-0	0+0-0	0+1-0	0+1-0

REST OF THE SCHEDULE

Buffalo at Houston
Tennessee at Indianapolis
Detroit at N.Y. Jets
Tampa Bay at Pittsburgh
Miami vs. Oakland at London
Opens: Arizona, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Denver, Seattle, St. Louis
Monday
New England at Kansas City

NEXT WEEK

October 5
Minnesota at Green Bay
Buffalo at Detroit
Cleveland at Tennessee
Tampa Bay at New Orleans
Houston at Dallas
Chicago at Carolina
St. Louis at Philadelphia
Atlanta at N.Y. Giants
Buffalo at Detroit
Baltimore at Indianapolis
Pittsburgh at Jacksonville
Arizona at Denver
Kansas City at San Francisco
N.Y. Jets at San Diego
Cincinnati at New England
Opens: Miami, Oakland
Monday, Oct. 6
Seattle at Washington

SPORTS



The case for Kluber
Cleveland pitcher has emerged as unlikely Cy Young candidate | Page 53

NFL

From friend to foe

Ravens' Smith eager to face off with Panthers

By DAVID GINSBURG
The Associated Press

WHENS HE WAS cut by the Carolina Panthers in March, Steve Smith cried.

Smith spent his entire 13-year NFL career with the Panthers. The leading receiver in franchise history with 836 catches for 12,197 yards, Smith fully expected to add to those totals before being released in a cost-cutting move.

"We sat down as a family, we prayed, we thought about it and we discussed it," Smith recalled Wednesday. "My wife cried, my kids cried. They didn't see me; I shed a few tears. And then we got back up, dusted ourselves off and we said, 'What is the plan for the Smith family?'"

Two days later, Smith signed with the Baltimore Ravens.

'I miss everything about Carolina. I miss my home. I miss my friends. Guys that I have grown with. But I also understand that it's a business. And sometimes in business, you've got to temporarily go somewhere else.'

Steve Smith

Ravens WR on leaving the Carolina Panthers in the offseason after spending 13 years with the team



**Carolina Panthers (2-1)
at Baltimore Ravens (2-1)**

AFN-Atlantic
7 p.m. Sunday CET
2 a.m. Monday JKT

This Sunday, months after that somber family meeting, Smith has the opportunity to have the last laugh when the Panthers (2-1) come to Baltimore (2-1).

SEE FOE ON PAGE 61

Ravens wide receiver Steve Smith will face the team he spent the first 13 years of his NFL career with when Baltimore hosts the Carolina Panthers on Sunday.

Tony Dejak/AP

