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Free to Deployed Areas



DANGER ON JALALABAD ROAD

Civilians often unintended victims of attacks on Kabul's most treacherous highway » Page 5

An Afghan policeman moves bystanders away from the scene of a suicide bombing that targeted a British Embassy convoy along Jalalabad Road in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Nov. 27. CARLO MUNOZ/Stars and Stripes

Study examines impact of service dogs on veterans with PTSD

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

Retired Marine and lifelong New Yorker Matthew Raible knows that service dogs save lives.

On a cold January night, the disabled Vietnam veteran fell while transitioning from the driver's seat to his wheelchair inside his specialized van. He lay on the floor as temperatures plummeted; the door handle and his keys with an automatic

door opener were out of reach.

Raible — who was wounded in the feet, abdomen, hands, shoulder and neck when a mortar round exploded during Operation Allen Brook on May 27, 1968 — said it was likely he would have frozen to death.

But that's when his service dog, Agatha, sprang into action.

The golden retriever he received in 1992 from Canine Companions for Independence Inc. snatched the keys from the ignition at Raible's prodding and brought them to him.

Raible then was able to open the door to the van and call for help.

Agatha's actions likely saved his life.

Doctors from the Department of Veterans Affairs say that the benefits of service dogs working with the physically disabled are well-documented. However, there is no scientific literature that supports the theory that they are equally beneficial to those with mental scars.

SEE DOGS ON PAGE 4



Retired Marine Cpl. Matthew Raible poses for a photo with Jason, his third service dog from Canine Companions for Independence Inc. Besides his physical disabilities, Raible said the dogs have helped him with post-traumatic stress.

Photo courtesy of Canine Companions for Independence

QUOTE
OF THE DAY

“There are plenty of ugly women. If you want the money, you can be beautiful.”

— Andressa Urach, Brazilian reality TV star speaking last year, before she was hospitalized because of complications from plastic surgery

See story on Page 11

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MILITARY

2 US contractors killed in Kabul ID'd

The Sun News (Myrtle Beach, S.C.)

Two out of three U.S. contractors killed in Afghanistan Thursday have been identified by local media sources.

Walt Fisher, 49, a Praetorian Standard Inc. employee from North Myrtle Beach, S.C., was killed when a gunman dressed as an Afghan soldier opened fire at a base attached to Kabul's international airport, according to information from the military officials and the man's family.

The Idaho State Journal reported that one of the other victims was Jason D. Landphair, formerly of Chubbuck, Idaho.

Wounded during his first tour in Iraq, Landphair was killed during his fourth stint in Afghanistan — three of them as a medic for the Army Special Forces, the newspaper said.

The third American victim has not been identified. Dre Fisher said her husband was training Afghan soldiers there and had been in the country for 30 days. He was scheduled to come home March 17.

“He was such a loving son, brother, friend to everybody,” she said, “and such a wonderful husband to me.”

The military reported Friday

that three contractors were killed and a fourth was injured when a man wearing an Afghan National Security Forces uniform began shooting at a group of contractors in the northern section of Hamid Karzai International Airport. The gunman also died during the attack.

The Taliban took credit for the killings, according to multiple media outlets.

Maj. Brad Avots, a U.S. Department of Defense spokesman, said he did not have any information about the contractors. He did, however, provide a statement from the company:

“We can confirm that on January 29, 2015, three employees of Praetorian Standard, Inc. were killed and one was wounded in Afghanistan while supporting the efforts of the U.S. Government. This was a terrible day for the families involved, our company and the United States. We are shocked by the tragic nature of these deaths and offer our deepest condolences to the families of these brave men.”

PSI has offices in North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland as well as an international office in Kabul.

A PSI representative could not be reached for comment.

Judge: No asylum for Afghan soldier who fled training

The Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — An immigration judge denied asylum Friday for an Afghan military officer who sneaked away from a U.S. training exercise in Massachusetts to avoid returning to Afghanistan, where he said he had been threatened by the Taliban.

The judge ruled that Maj. Jan Arash did not qualify for certain protections because the Taliban is not a government, his lawyer said, nor had he proved that he would be persecuted, rather than legally prosecuted, by the Afghan government.

“If he gets deported and hung for desertion, that’s OK under the law,” attorney Matthew Borowski said.

“We have no choice but to appeal to the Board of Immigration Appeals,” the attorney said. The process could take several months.

In the meantime, Arash will continue to be held at the Buffalo Federal Detention Center, where the asylum case was heard.

Arash is one of three Afghan military officers who were detained in September after being denied entry into Canada, where they had planned to seek refugee status.

One of the soldiers, Capt. Mohammad Nasir Askarzada, was allowed into Canada in December after proving he had relatives there.

The other, Capt. Noorullah Aminyar, is seeking asylum in the United States. His case is pending before the same judge that denied Arash’s claim.

“The cases are essentially the same,” Borowski said. Friday’s ruling “doesn’t bode well for him.”

Borowski said Arash had hoped to be released on parole so that he could work to send money to his wife and children.



HASAN JAMALI/AP

Bahrain protesters rally for jailed leader

A Bahraini anti-government protester carries a national flag and a cutout of Sheikh Ali Salman, the jailed leader of the country's largest opposition group, through a street crowded by tear gas during clashes in Bilad Al Qadeem, Bahrain, on Friday. Protests in support of jailed activists and clashes were reported Friday, with some injuries, as violence intensifies in the Gulf island kingdom. Salman, 49, is standing trial on charges of inciting a coup.

DODDS SPORTS

Keep up with the champions of overseas military high school sports with Stars and Stripes. Visit Stripes.com/sports for DODEA sports news, scores, photos and more.



MILITARY

Dailey takes over as sergeant major of the Army

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Daniel Dailey was sworn in Friday as the new sergeant major of the Army, becoming the service chief's top adviser on matters affecting enlisted soldiers.

He takes over the post at a time of transition for the Army. The force is emerging from more than 13 years of warfare, and is facing major troop level cuts and budget restrictions that are already impacting servicemembers and their families.

Dailey is no stranger to the challenges facing the troops. He enlisted in 1989 and became an infantryman. Early in his career he participated in Operation Desert Storm, and later went on four overseas deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn. He was awarded the Bronze Star with "V" for valor for his actions with the Army's 4th Infantry Division during the fighting in Sadr City at the height of the insurgency in Iraq.

"I've trained and fought with those soldiers [I'll be representing]," Dailey said during an interview with Stars and Stripes in his new office.

Prior to becoming sergeant major of the Army, he served as command sergeant major of the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command.

"He brings this broad experience of both understanding the institutional side as well as the

tactical and operational side" of the force, Army chief of staff Gen. Ray Odierno said during the swearing-in ceremony at the Pentagon. "In my mind, there's no one more qualified to take on the responsibility and the challenges that our Army faces in the future."

Dailey, a native of Palmerton, Pa., said he didn't seem destined for leadership when he was young.

"I was just somewhere in the middle of the class [academically]," he told the audience. "I played high school sports but I wasn't a superstar athlete ... By all accounts I was just a poor average kid from northeastern Pennsylvania."

He credits others for molding him into someone who could rise to the top.

"How does the middle of the road guy make it to this rank, to wear this rank, to represent the finest fighting force the world has known? The answer is simple ... It's leadership. Leadership from great soldiers, noncommissioned officers, and officers that I served with over the years," he said.

"Leadership is not born, it's built over time. It takes great leaders to build leaders, and I'm merely a product of the best the Army has ever had to offer. It is no less their achievement that Dan Dailey is the 15th sergeant major of the Army."

Many of Dailey's mentors were at the ceremony, including former company, brigade and division



PHOTOS BY CARLOS BONGIOANNI/Stars and Stripes

Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel A. Dailey sits beside his wife, Holly, and son, Dakota, just before being called up to become the 15th sergeant major of the Army on Friday.

commanders. Dailey honored them all by name.

"These professionals took a poor kid off the streets of a zinc town in northeastern Pennsylvania and built him into the soldier you see today. So Gen. Odierno, if I mess this up now you know exactly who needs to be held accountable," Dailey joked.

Dailey used his own life story to encourage others who might not stand out in their early lives and careers.

"Any soldier in today's Army, even an average soldier like [I was], has the potential to be an Army senior leader someday," he said. "It just requires two things: great leadership and a strong Army family."

Dailey replaces Raymond Chandler, who is retiring.

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Dailey is sworn in as sergeant major of the Army during a ceremony Friday at the Pentagon in Arlington, Va. Administering the oath is Gen. Ray Odierno, chief of staff of the Army, as Dailey's wife, Holly, looks on.

'Badge' will tell viewers if show has connection to vets

By MARK KENNEDY
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — First lady Michelle Obama urged Hollywood to give a more accurate portrayal of veterans and defended the Oscar-nominated "American Sniper," which has received criticism for its depiction of war.

Bradley Cooper, who is nominated for best actor for his portrayal of the late Navy SEAL sniper Chris Kyle, joined Obama and media heavyweights in Washington, D.C., on Friday to launch "6 Certified" with representatives from Warner Bros., National Geographic Channels and the Producers Guild of America.

The initiative will allow TV shows and films to display an on-screen badge that tells viewers the show they're watching has been certified by the group Got Your 6, which takes its name from military slang for "I've got your back." To be approved, the

film or show must cast a veteran, tell a veteran story, have a story written by a veteran or use veterans as resources.

"We hope our country will welcome back our veterans — not by setting them apart but by fully integrating them into the fabric of our communities," Obama said.

Obama also came to the defense of "American Sniper" — about Kyle, considered the most lethal sniper in U.S. military history. It has become a box-office sensation and has strong supporters but has also weathered a growing storm of criticism that the film glorifies murder and serves as war propaganda.

"While I know there have been critics, I felt that, more often than not, this film touches on many of the emotions and experiences that I've heard firsthand from military families over these past few years," she said.

Chris Marwin, managing director of Got Your 6 and a former U.S.



JACQUELYN MARTIN/AP

Actor Bradley Cooper speaks on a panel during the launch of "6 Certified," which will certify that a movie or TV show has had involvement by a veteran.

Army officer and Black Hawk helicopter pilot, said their campaign isn't hoping to show veterans in a good light but in an honest one.

"Most Americans tell us that they only see veterans portrayed as broken or as heroes who walk on water in film and television," he said by phone.

"We're missing something in the middle. Veterans are everyday people.

"They're your next-door neighbor who helps you bring your garbage cans back when they blow away. They're your kids' fifth-grade math teacher. It's the person running for city council," he added.

"You see them every day in your own life but you don't see them on film or television."

The Got Your 6 group was launched in 2012 to enlist Hollywood in the effort to discourage stereotypes and promote more accurate representation of the 2.6 million soldiers coming home over the past 10 years.

Surveys have found that many Americans presume veterans

suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, are homeless or are addicted to drugs or alcohol.

The group has taken lessons from other successful efforts to change national viewpoints.

It has identified Hollywood as an engine of cultural change.

"This is more of a challenge than anything else. We're challenging the entertainment industry — myself included — to live up to the responsibilities inherent in the powers we have and with the reach that we have," said Charlie Ebersol, a producer and creator of the "6 Certified" program.

Obama cited TV shows including "Nashville" and "Doc McStuffins" as ones that share stories of "our veterans in new and meaningful ways."

She said telling veterans' stories honestly makes for "tremendous TV and movies" and "a good for business as well."

MILITARY

Dogs: Prior study halted over concerns about bites, dogs' health, training

FROM FRONT PAGE

An attempt to study the correlation in 2011 was suspended because of dog bites and later was canceled over concerns about the health and training of the dogs.

The VA and several new groups, including Canine Companions, launched a second iteration of the study in December. This time around, the study is bigger, more comprehensive and more tightly controlled, VA officials said.

They have vowed to answer the question: Can service dogs improve activity and quality of life in veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress?

"This is a very large and complex study. We just can't rush it," the VA's chief veterinary medical officer Michael Fallon told Stars and Stripes. "We're going to do it right."

Two kinds of dogs

The study will follow 220 veterans from three regions in the United States: Atlanta, Ga.; Iowa City, Iowa; and Portland, Ore. Half the veterans will receive service dogs and the other half will receive emotional support dogs.

The difference between the dogs is stark.

The service dogs have five specific abilities based on commands they receive from their owner.

The first is "block," according to Fallon. When directed, the dog will stand in front of the veteran, offering a barrier and space. The second command is "behind," which tells the dog to position itself behind the veteran.

The third command is "lights," Fallon said. When this command is given, the dog will enter a room before the veteran and turn on the lights so they don't have to enter a dark space.

The fourth command is "sweep." The dog will enter a room or house and sweep it for people or intruders, alerting the veteran by barking.

The final command is "bring," Fallon said, so the dog will fetch an item and bring it to the veteran.

Emotional support dogs are not trained for specific tasks but are AKC-certified and provide comfort and companionship, Fallon said. Unlike service dogs, they have limited access to public places. They will also be studied for any potential benefits.

After the veterans receive their dogs, study teams will visit the veterans in their homes quarterly to check the safety of the dogs and the veterans and to assess



Retired Army Staff Sgt. Sam Cilia, holding his service dog, Gillian, has lauded service dogs for the positive effects they can have on soldiers' minds.

their impact.

The VA will be enrolling veterans for the next two years, Fallon said. Once enrolled, the assessments begin. The study will take 18 months after the veterans receive their dogs.

The VA has committed more than \$10 million to the study, Fallon said, and hopes to have publishable results by 2018 or 2019.

Helping veterans cope

Veterans such as Raible say they know the answer to the question posed by the VA, because many physically disabled veterans with service dogs also suffer from PTSD. He applauded the VA's efforts, which could pave the way for more struggling vets to get service dogs.

"[Agatha] did more for me than any psychologist could in a lifetime," Raible said. "I couldn't cry after seeing so much death. I felt like an outcast. ... She put me in touch with my humanity."

Agatha passed away in 2002 at age 12. Raible is on his third service dog through Canine Companions. He said the dogs have given him independence while he deals with his ongoing medical issues, have helped him connect with people and have kept him physically active.

Retired Army Staff Sgt. Sam Cilia agrees. Cilia lost his left hand and a portion of his left arm following an ambush in Iraq in 2005.

Like Raible, he also had to contend with wrapping his mind around his new reality. He said his service dog — a black Labrador/



Photos courtesy of Canine Companions for Independence

Above: Canine Companions for Independence instructor Sarah Birman unleashes a service dog-in-training into a room after giving it the search command.

Below: Retired Marine Cpl. Matt Raible trains with Jason, his third service dog from Canine Companions for Independence Inc. Raible and Jason passed the training program together in November.



golden retriever mix named Gillian — played a huge role in his recovery.

"I suffered. I don't know if it was PTSD or depression or my traumatic brain injury, but I did struggle," Cilia said. "Gillian played a big role in overcoming those challenges."

Cilia said that service dogs help veterans stay active, get them out of the house, and if the veteran is missing a limb or bears the scars of war, they are no longer the cen-

ter of attention when they enter the room. Their dog becomes the star of the show.

None of this is scientific evidence, however. The study will determine whether a service dog is the answer for vets diagnosed with PTSD or whether other wagging tails will do. The study will track suicide, depression, sleep quality and more.

"We're optimistic that this could be something really transformative for these individuals,"

said Sarah Birman, an instructor at Canine Companions. "I think we'll find that the answer is yes" on the value of service dogs.

The study is open to veterans of any conflict, VA officials said. Veterans must be 18 or older, meet eligibility criteria and live in an area served by the Atlanta, Iowa City or Portland VA Medical Centers.

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WAR/MILITARY

Civilians bear brunt of attacks on Kabul road

By JAD SLEIMAN
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — From his modest grocery, Sameem can see the crudely paved-over crater left behind after a massive suicide bomb killed five people and wounded 20 late last year.

"There was a huge blast, so powerful we thought it was next door," he said. "We ran out and some people said it was on the road. My brother was injured."

Sameem's grocery is one of dozens of ramshackle shops that stand beside foreign-run fortresses on Kabul's Jalalabad Road — the most dangerous street in one of the world's most dangerous cities.

For years, the 20-mile stretch of road from Afghan National Police District 9 to the Afghan Army's Camp Phoenix has been a frequent target of Taliban attacks, presumably because of the heavy convoy traffic to and from the major installations that line the highway.

Mohammed Salim Almas, head of the ANP's 9th district, said the Jalalabad Road has seen more attacks than any other part of the city, although he had no precise figures.

More often than not, when the dust and smoke clear, it's the Afghans who work in plywood shops and drive civilian Toyota Corollas that lay dead or injured rather than the Taliban's true targets, who generally work behind heavy blast walls and ride around in armored vehicles.

In the past three months, there have been at least six attacks along the highway, claiming more than 10 lives, including one British national, and injuring dozens more Afghan civilians.

"We are the real witnesses and victims of these explosions because we are so near," said construction supply store owner Shafiq, who like many Afghans goes by only one name. "A few weeks ago, I was sitting in my shop like today and suddenly there was a huge blast and smoke. There were bicycle riders and shopkeepers dead."

He was referring to the Jan. 5 suicide car bombing against a European police training mission convoy, the first attack against foreigners in Kabul claimed by the Taliban this year. Officials reported one Afghan civilian killed and five injured while the occupants of the target vehicle escaped unharmed.

At a time when coalition fatalities are at 10-year lows — NATO deaths fell for the fifth straight year in 2014 — the United Nations counted 3,188 Afghan civilians killed and 6,429 injured nationwide last year, a record high.

And people like Safiq, who has owned his business on Jalalabad Road for eight years, suspect the count is much higher.

"On TV, they'll say that just one person was killed (in an attack), but I'll see 12," he said.

Life is slightly less dangerous for the foreigners on the road. Most of their compounds are protected by concrete barriers topped with concertina wire.



JAD SLEIMAN/Stars and Stripes

Sameem's grocery is only feet away from Jalalabad Road in Kabul, Afghanistan. His brother was injured when a suicide car bomber struck a British convoy as it passed by his store in November.

A few weeks ago, Taliban militants attempted to storm the nearby Green Village complex following four suicide bomb attacks. Afghan forces killed the attackers after an hour-long firefight. A Nepalese guard was wounded, but no other foreigners were killed or injured.

International security forces in Kabul are mindful of the risks to the Afghans created by their proximity to the local shops.

"Whilst we cannot comment on the details surrounding our movements for obvious reasons, our security staff constantly assess the threats and risks involved to mitigate as far as is possible such threats, not only to our staff, but to the general population," Christiane Buck, spokesman for the European Union police mission in Afghanistan, said in an email. "We do, however, need to move around Kabul in order to deliver on our mandate, supporting institutional reform of the Afghan National Police and the wider justice system."

Almas said the concentration

of foreigners and Afghan military make the street a prime target for the Taliban. The enormous volume of travelers from four eastern provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman and Nuristan also complicates defense efforts.

"Thanks to stepped-up patrols and an increased number of checkpoints, however, 'we were able to reduce such attacks in the last couple of weeks' he said.

It's unclear whether the reduction is mostly due to effective Afghan security forces or winter weather. Fighting in Afghanistan is typically seasonal, slowing to a crawl as snow clogs mountain passes and dirt roads, and picking up again in the spring and summer months.

It's those warmer months that have the Jalalabad Road shopkeepers like Shafiq and Sameem worried. For them, the need to make a living outweighs the risk of death.

"My house is nearby, I can't afford rent in another part of the city, so I can't move," Shafiq said. "I support 10 family members."

Sameem shared similar thoughts.

"My family was telling me it's really dangerous and risky, but we have to be here because there is no better job and my house is near," he said. "We have to eat. If I was not forced to be here, why would I be here?"

Sameem, a much younger man, said he takes care of 14 family members, including his unemployed father.

Although business has slowed considerably as fewer customers risk venturing out into their street, he keeps operating his shop because he has little choice.

"I used to make 10,000 Afghani a day [\$172], now I make 4,000, maybe 5,000," said Sameem, adding he also can't afford to move somewhere safer. "It's not just here because everywhere is the country it's not safe."

"When we leave the house every morning, we don't believe fully we'll come back."

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Anti-magazine protest in Kabul turns violent

KABUL, Afghanistan — A protest in the Afghan capital, Kabul, Saturday against the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, turned into a violent confrontation between riot police and demonstrators, police said.

Farid Afzeli, chief of the Kabul police department's criminal investigations division, said several hundred demonstrators gathered in eastern Kabul Saturday afternoon to protest the magazine's ongoing practice of running satirical caricatures depicting the Prophet Muhammad.

Afzeli said the protest started peacefully, but said a group of armed infiltrators began blocking roads, throwing rocks and shooting at police officers on the scene.

Police responded by calling in reinforcements and firing into the air to disperse the crowd, Afzeli said.

At one point, the crowd at-



AP Photo/Rahmat Gul

Afghan police carry an injured colleague during a protest Saturday against caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad that were published in the French magazine Charlie Hebdo.

tempted to attack several government buildings and a local bank, but they were blocked by police. Afzeli said eight demonstrators

were injured and one police officer was wounded by gunfire. No arrests were made.

From The Associated Press

Bahraini authorities revoke citizenship of 72

MANAMA, Bahrain — Bahraini authorities said they have stripped the citizenship of a senior member of the Islamic State militant group and dozens of other people.

The Ministry of Interior said Saturday the government revoked the citizenship of 72 Bahrainis as part of its responsibility to "protect the security and stability of Bahrain."

The list includes Sunni and Shiite Bahrainis.

Among those affected is Turki al-Binali, a 30-year-old Sunni preacher who has emerged as one of the Islamic State group's leading ideologues.

Bahrain has faced four years of unrest, with its Shiite majority pushing for greater rights from the Western-allied Sunni monarchy. It has revoked the citizenship of opposition activists in the past.

The Associated Press

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MILITARY



BOB MACK, THE JACKSONVILLE FLORIDA TIMES-UNION/AP

Navy Chief Noel Martinez stands in front of a display dedicated to the independent duty corpsmen that have deployed over recent years at the Naval Hospital Jacksonville in Florida.

'He's the go-to guy'

Navy corpsmen treat sailors, Marines — and sometimes enemies

By CLIFFORD DAVIS

The (Jacksonville) Florida Times-Union

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — In the spring of 2011, Miami native Noel Martinez found himself on a small craft in the middle of the night headed for a pirate "mothership" off the coast of Somalia.

As a Navy independent duty corpsman, such situations are not uncommon.

The enlisted corpsmen serve as the senior medical providers for cruisers, destroyers and frigates, as well as many isolated ground units.

"If we deploy with a SEAL team, we're the medical asset for that team," Martinez said. "The IDC program itself is designed to put us into these places independently so we can function away from a doctor or medical officer."

"We go through a school where they cram almost four years of medical school into 13 months."

The Navy created the position in 1944 when it found a need for medical personnel in places where no medical officer or medical facility was present.

They are critical to the ships and the units they serve.

"The ship relies on him and, in fact, the ship can't even get underway unless he's on-board," said Petty Officer 1st Class Richard Spees, also an IDC. "He's the go-to guy."

"While not deployed, IDCs serve in much the same role as a physician's assistant, seeing active-duty patients at Navy hospitals with a caseload of about 500 patients.

Currently, 1,374 IDCs serve in the Navy, said Lt. David Bennett, U.S. Navy public affairs officer.

When the call comes however, they go where they're needed.

For Martinez, it was the Mayport-based frigate USS Halyburton.

Aboard the ship, he had a front-row seat during the Maersk Alabama incident in 2009 that ended when Navy SEAL snipers shot and killed three of the Somali pirates

who were holding the Alabama's Capt. Richard Phillips hostage on one of the ship's lifeboats.

Two years later, Martinez and the Halyburton were again off the coast of Somalia when the ship began pursuing a large pirate ship with hostages on board.

"The pirates on that ship had tried to board another ship that day and got shot up real bad and the head pirate's son was one of the ones that was critically injured," he said. "Piracy was up pretty high at that point and I guess they tried to board a civilian ship and that ship had a security detachment onboard who handled their business."

"So we got bridge-to-bridge radio communication with them — we had a translator on board — and he said that if you can treat my son, take care of his medical wounds, I'll release the hostages."

As the Halyburton's IDC, the task of trying to save the pirate's son fell squarely on Martinez's shoulders. He and about a dozen other sailors boarded on of the frigate's smaller crafts and headed off into the darkness on tossing, 6-foot seas.

"All we could see ... were the lights from the ship and some of their guys scurrying around with rifles," he said. "I thought, 'We're going to go out there and they're going to detonate this thing and just take us out,' but that didn't happen."

The pirates sent out a small boat carrying a driver and the wounded son of the top pirate.

But what greeted Martinez when he stepped aboard the pirates' craft was a far different situation from what he'd been told. "They just said he had a couple of broken bones," Martinez said. "Well, when I showed up, he had multiple gunshot wounds, multiple broken bones and he was pretty much on his way out."

He went to work on the young pirate, but the high seas made it impossible to do much. The decision was made to take the man back to the Halyburton, where Marti-

nez and a group of sailors he'd trained in the basics went to work.

"We worked on him for about 2½ hours," he said. "We did CPR, we did everything we could to keep this guy alive."

"It was just an event that the whole crew helped out with, it wasn't just me, but he ended up passing away."

Immediately, the sailors' thoughts turned to the hostages, and Martinez expected the worst.

"That's part of the reason why we tried to treat his body with as much respect as we could," he said. "We wanted to get the body back in the condition we would hope for if it was one of our family members."

"We even circled around him and said a prayer over him."

The team put clean bandages on the body and dressed him in all white with clothes that sailors donated for the cause.

"We covered him, put him in a body bag and sent him back over," he said. "The head pirate was so pleased by the respect we showed the body that he released the hostages anyway."

"So even though his son passed away, he allowed the hostages to be released and we got them onboard."

The hostages, some Thai, others Filipino, spent the next few weeks aboard the Halyburton.

"I ended up treating a bunch of them for different things, between dental and all kinds of stuff they hadn't had for so long," he said. "So that was a rewarding experience."

In his current role as senior enlisted leader for Directorate of Medical Services at Jacksonville Naval Hospital, the 16-year Navy veteran is helping to train the next generation of IDCs.

However, he'll soon be on his way to Spain as the IDC for the destroyer USS Carney when it moves there this year.

"Whatever the Navy decides, that's where I'll go," Martinez said.

NATO units to deploy to Eastern Europe

By LORNE COOK

The Associated Press

BRUSSELS — NATO will deploy small units in six Eastern European nations to help coordinate a spearhead force set up in response to Russia's actions in Ukraine, the alliance's secretary-general said Friday.

Jens Stoltenberg said the units in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania will be the first of their kind there.

Defense ministers from the 28-nation military alliance will discuss the full force, which can react quickly to any hot spots in Europe, when they meet on Thursday.

Stoltenberg said countries responsible for providing the several thousand troops to the force should be known this week.

The forward units will comprise a few dozen personnel only. They will plan and organize military exercises, and provide command and control for any reinforcements the force might require.

"They're going to plan, they're going to organize exercises, to provide ... some key command elements for reinforcements," Stoltenberg said.

France, meanwhile, is pledging tanks and armored vehicles to bolster NATO forces in Poland, where leaders are increasingly uneasy about Russia.

The French military equipment is expected to remain in Poland for two months.

As tensions increased in 2014, NATO forces conducted about 200 military exercises, and Stoltenberg vowed this would continue as the alliance adapts to the increased presence of Russian warplanes in European skies. NATO intercepted Russian aircraft more than 400 times last year.

Stoltenberg also warned that Russia has continued to build up its military, as European NATO allies cut budgets against last year.

"It is not possible to get more out of less indefinitely. That is the reason why we have to stop the cuts and gradually start to increase defense spending as our economies grow," he said.

"Despite the economic crisis, despite the financial problems they are facing, Russia now is still giving priority to defense spending."



AP

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg visits NATO-led peacekeepers in Pristina, Kosovo, on Jan. 23.

NATION



PROVIDED BY TAMI BRADLEY, TWO EAGLES BALLOON TEAM/AP

Pilots Troy Bradley, of Albuquerque, N.M., left, and Leonid Tikhutyaev of Russia, prepare to lift off Jan. 8 in a balloon in Saga, Japan.

Pilots in balloon filled with helium land safely off Mexico

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN
The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — A helium-filled balloon piloted by an American and a Russian landed safely off the coast of Mexico early Saturday after an audacious trip across the Pacific Ocean that shattered two long-standing records for ballooning.

The pilots landed 4 miles offshore in Baja California, about 300 miles north of the popular beach destination of Cabo San Lucas, greeted by a team of balloon enthusiasts who assisted with the landing. The pilots came in low and dropped thick trailing ropes into the ocean to help slow the balloon before setting down in a controlled water landing.

Mission Control in Albuquerque was packed with balloon team members and the pilots'

families, as all eyes focused on a giant screen showing a map of the coast and the balloon's location as it descended. They exchanged hugs and smiled with relief after it touched down.

"We're really pleased with the distance numbers we have here and very pleased with the duration numbers," said Steve Shope, mission control director. "These are significant improvements over the existing records. We didn't break them by just a little bit. They were broken by a significant amount."

Troy Bradley of Albuquerque and Leonid Tikhutyaev of Moscow lifted off from Japan on Sunday morning, and by Friday, they beat what's considered the "holy grail" of ballooning achievements, the 137-hour duration record set in 1978 by the Double Eagle crew of Ben Abruzzo, Maxie Anderson

and Larry Newman in the first balloon flight across the Atlantic. They also easily exceeded the distance record of 5,209 miles set by the Double Eagle V team during the first trans-Pacific flight in 1981.

The pilots were said to be in good spirits at various times during the trip, but it was a grueling ordeal. The balloon's capsule is about the size of a large tent — 7 feet long, 5 feet wide and 5 feet tall. They were flying at an altitude of at least 15,000 feet, requiring them to wear oxygen masks and to bundle up against the 50-degree temperature inside the capsule.

By Saturday morning, the Two Eagles team had been in the air more than 160 hours and was smashing the distance record, having traveled nearly 7,000 miles across the Pacific Ocean.

Romney's exit unleashes race to secure donors

By THOMAS BEAUMONT
AND JILL COLVIN
The Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — Mitt Romney's exit from the presidential campaign has unleashed a frenzy of fresh fundraising and has set off a new race for the backing of donors who had remained loyal to the 2012 Republican nominee.

Big dollars were said to flow immediately on Friday to former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, who already had won over several of Romney's past donors. New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie claimed the support of others who were waiting for Romney to make a decision about whether to seek the White House a third time.

Tony Carbonetti, a Christie supporter and top aide to former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, a 2008 GOP candidate, said every major Republican donor got at least two calls on Friday — one from Christie's people and one from those promoting Bush.

Romney, Carbonetti said, "released the hounds."

None of the Republicans considering a run for president has formally entered the race. But most have established political committees that effectively serve as campaigns-in-waiting of varying sophistication. That step allows the politicians to raise money to pay for travel, staff and the logistics of getting ready to run for the White House.

The competition for donors to those organizations is fierce, with commitments signaling the potential strength of a nascent campaign and laying the groundwork for more fundraising to come.

Romney raised more than \$57 million before the first voting in 2012, and that figure is often cited as this campaign's benchmark.

Even before Romney's announcement Friday, Bush had picked off several of Romney's past supporters. Among them was Lisa Wagner, a top Midwest fundraiser for Romney in 2012 who pushed hard to win over others Friday.

"I've raised a million dollars in the four hours since he announced that I otherwise would not have raised," she said. Her converts included Big Kunkler, part of Chicago's wealthy Crown family, who had been holding out for Romney.

"I'll work for Jeb. Period. And no one else," he said.

Christie had his own pickups. None was more significant than Bobbie Kilberg, a Virginia-based fundraiser who said she and her husband were all in for the former federal prosecutor.

"We will support him financially and we will be bundlers for him," she told The Associated Press, referring to the practice of rounding up donations from friends, family and colleagues for a campaign.

Ray Washburne, the outgoing finance chairman of the Republican National Committee, has taken up the same position with Christie's political action committee. Washburne said his phone started ringing early Friday.

"It's been very, very positive. A lot of people that were kind of fence-sitters have come off the fence," he said. "We've been very, very encouraged."

Others were too upset or stunned by Romney's announcement to decide what to do next. That includes Bill Simmons, a Washington-based donor who raised money for both of Romney's previous campaigns.

"I haven't fully thought about the next step," he said.

NYC to pay \$5M to kin of man killed in 'Mafia cops' case

By JENNIFER PELTZ
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Nicholas Guido was showing off his new car outside his mother's home on Christmas Day in 1986 when he was gunned down because he'd been mistaken for a mobster with the same name. The bad information, prosecutors said, came from two decorated police detectives who would later be convicted of moonlighting as hit men for the mob.

Twenty-eight years later, the city has reached a \$5 million settlement with Guido's family in part of the fallout from one of the

most stunning police corruption cases in New York history.

"This tragic matter involves the murder of an innocent man. After evaluating all the facts, it was determined that settling the case was in the city's best interest," the Law Department said in a statement Friday. The family's lawyer didn't immediately return a call Friday night seeking comment.

Guido's mother, Pauline Pipitone, was washing dishes after Christmas dinner when gunfire erupted outside her Brooklyn home.

She ran over to the car and

found her 26-year-old son sitting up at the wheel, she testified at the ex-detectives' 2006 racketeering trial. "I went to touch his hand, and he must have just died," she said. "His fingertips were cold."

Guido's killers had him confused with an enemy of a mob underboss who paid then-detectives Louis Eppolito and Stephen Caracappa to be his criminal "crystal ball," a source of help killing eight of their patron's foes between 1986 and about 1990, Brooklyn federal prosecutors said.

The detectives were accused of carrying out two of those killings themselves. In others, they made

traffic stops that ended with the driver killed; another time, they kidnaped a target and turned him over to the underboss, prosecutors said.

The detectives got \$4,000 per month for inside information on law enforcement investigations, and they got \$65,000 for carrying out one killing, prosecutors said.

"This is probably the most heinous series of crimes ever tried in this courthouse," a judge said at one point.

Eppolito and Caracappa, who insisted they were innocent, are serving life in prison.

Caracappa helped establish

the police department's office for Mafia homicide probes. Eppolito wrote an autobiography, "Mafia Cop," about his life as a police officer who grew up in a mob family. He also played a bit part in the classic 1990 mob movie "GoodFellas."

By the time of their 2005 arrests, Eppolito and Caracappa had retired to Las Vegas.

In 2010, New York City agreed to pay \$9.9 million to an innocent man who spent 19 years behind bars after being framed by Eppolito, whose arrest prompted a re-examination of the man's case.

NATION

Bikers beware

Insurer: Single-vehicle accidents are most common type of claim

By JING CAO
Bloomberg News

NEW YORK — Motorcyclists may be their own worst enemy on the road.

Insurer Progressive Corp. found that single-vehicle mishaps accounted for more motorcycle-related claims last year than any other event, the company said in a report Thursday.

Mayfield Village, Ohio-based Progressive said it processed 3.5 times more of such claims than for rear-end crashes, the next-most common motorcycle incident.

“Excess speed is the most common rider-related factor in fatal motorcycle accidents,” Steve Carapia, a California Highway Patrol public information officer, said in a phone interview.

Motorcyclists who drive too fast can’t identify and react to obstacles in the road, he said.

“They don’t give themselves enough time to maneuver around the open road.”

Scott Hall
Progressive Corp.

Due to their speed, it’s hard to negotiate that hazard.”

Motorcyclists made up 14 percent of all vehicle-related fatalities in 2013, up from about 9 percent in 2004, according to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data. In 2013, more than 32,000 people were killed and 2.3 million injured in U.S. motor-vehicle crashes.

Riding while intoxicated on alcohol or controlled substances is another leading cause of motorcycle accidents, Carapia said.

California had the biggest share of motorcycles on the road in 2012, with more than 780,000 registered in the country’s most populous state, the Federal Highway Administration reported.

“Progressive saw the most motorcycle claims from single-vehicle accidents — far more than rear-end, intersection, and stolen bikes combined,” Scott Hall, motorcycle product manager at the insurer, said in the report. “Even when other vehicles aren’t around, you need to be extremely vigilant on the open road.”

California provides classes to teach new and experienced riders about motorcycle safety, Carapia said.



PHOTOS BY JEREMY HOGAN, BLOOMINGTON (IND.) HERALD-TIMES/AP

Droppings lead city to shield meters

Parking enforcement officers Ross Jackson and Susan McCarter, above, install covers to keep crow feces from falling on the parking meters around the Monroe County Courthouse in Bloomington, Ind. The shields are made from old city street signs, and cost less than \$15 per meter. The birds have been wreaking havoc on the square since they’ve settled into the trees and dropped feces like raindrops on the pavement and cars below.



Tough fight for medical devices tax repeal

By ALAN FRAM
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It flew through the Republican-run House in 2012, and a year later members embraced it. With Republicans now controlling both chambers of Congress, the chances for repealing the 2.3 percent tax on medical devices are better than ever.

Yet abolishing the tax won’t be easy, even though Republicans rank it a top priority and are backed by Democrats from states that rely on the industry for jobs.

The upcoming battle underscores the complex politics surrounding President Barack Obama’s health care law. Another round of that fight looms this week, when the House will likely vote to repeal the entire 2010 law.

The device tax repeal faces a possible Obama veto. It is also opposed by many Democrats, including some who backed eliminating the tax in 2013 but say they want to replace any lost revenue.

Created under Obama’s expansion of health care coverage, the tax will raise an estimated \$29 billion through 2022. So far no one has revealed a broadly acceptable alternative for raising that money.

The tax took effect in 2013 and is paid by manufacturers and importers of equipment like imaging systems and artificial hearts. Exempted are consumer items like eyeglasses, hearing aids and bandages.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, the chief sponsor, says



SUSAN WALSH/AP

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., has indicated opposition to the 2.3 percent tax on medical devices.

he wants a bipartisan bill and is open to finding replacement revenue but will push forward one way or another. He’s introduced legislation repealing the tax retroactively to 2013, without replenishing the lost money.

The repeal fight could take any of several paths. The tax’s \$29 billion covers a small fraction of the health care law’s overall costs. The White House and Democrats could end up accepting repeal as a battle not worth fighting, or opposing it as an erosion of Obama’s treasury law.

The bill could be hampered by amendments taking other swipes at the overall law. Or it could prompt negotiations over changes both sides might accept.

Man detained in suitcase remains case

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A man was detained Friday night in connection with a suitcase that had been found on a downtown San Francisco street stuffed with human remains, authorities said.

Police Chief Greg Suhr confirmed the “person of interest” was detained for questioning in the Tenderloin district, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

The move came only hours after police released grainy surveillance photos of a man wearing a striped baseball cap, light blue jeans and a blue and orange jacket.

The suitcase was found Wednesday afternoon on a street in the city’s South of Market neighborhood. More body parts were found in a trash can nearby.

Police said that in addition to the man pictured in the photo, a second person was detained. His connection to the case was not revealed.

The newspaper reported that police did not know if the “person of interest” had committed a crime, only that video footage showed him in the area where the suitcase was discovered.

The man, whose identity was not released, was cooperating with detectives, police spokeswoman officer Grace Gatpandan said.

The San Francisco medical examiner determined that the remains belong to an unidentified light-skinned man. Authorities will now turn to a DNA laboratory to identify him.

Obama has been opaque. The White House threatened to veto the House-passed repeal of the tax in 2012. But asked in November if he would veto a repeal of the medical device tax, Obama said, “Let me take a look comprehensively at the ideas that they present.”

The medical device industry says its 7,000 firms provide more than 400,000 U.S. jobs, and argues that the tax jeopardizes many of them. AdvaMed, the industry’s top lobbying group, says that 39,000 existing and planned jobs have been lost and companies have had to slash research, development and new investments because of the tax.

“This is a tax on manufacturing,” said Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, a leading Democratic supporter from a state where the industry says it provides 27,000 jobs.

A January study by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service said the tax’s impact was far less severe. It estimated total job losses ranging from zero to 1,200 — or 0.2 percent of industry employment. It said any reductions in jobs and production “probably would be more than offset” by the added people covered by the health care law.

The measure should have no problem clearing the House in coming weeks, as it did in 2012 by a mostly party-line 270-146.

The bigger question is the Senate. When it voted 79-20 to repeal the tax in 2013, 34 Democrats supported the effort. Many of those Democrats say that vote wasn’t meaningful because it didn’t specify how the lost money would be reconstituted and was on a budget resolution, which is advisory and not binding.

WAR ON TERRORISM

White House grapples with terrorism language

By JULIE PACE
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Twice this month, the White House has publicly grappled with the politically fraught language of terrorism.

In the days after a deadly terror spree in Paris, President Barack Obama was criticized for purposely avoiding calling the attacks an example of "Islamic extremism," settling for the more generic "violent extremism." This week, the White House struggled to explain why the administration sometimes classifies the Afghan Taliban as a terrorist organization — and sometimes does not.

The rhetorical wrangling underscores the extent to which a president who pledged to end his predecessor's war on terror is still navigating how to explain the threats that persist to the American public, while also being mindful of the impact his words can have abroad.

"They do believe that the part of the roots of terrorism comes from the way the United States



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVIS/AP

President Barack Obama speaks Friday in the East Room of the White House in Washington.

acts and talks and is perceived globally," said Trevor McCrisken, a professor at Britain's University of Warwick who has studied Obama's foreign policy rhetoric.

The early January attacks on a French satirical newspaper and a kosher deli put a fresh spotlight on what Obama's supporters see as his appropriately careful language and his critics see as overly

cautious.

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said the attacks that left 17 people dead suggested the world was "waging a war against Islamist extremists." And British Prime Minister David Cameron, on a visit to Washington two weeks ago, said Europe and the U.S. face a "very serious Islamist extremist terrorist threat."

Obama, however, assiduously avoided associating the attacks with Islam, a decision White House spokesman Josh Earnest said was made for the sake of "accuracy."

"These are individuals who carried out an act of terrorism, and they later tried to justify that act of terrorism by invoking the religion of Islam and their own devout view of it," Earnest said. "We also don't want to be in a situation where we are legitimizing what we consider to be a completely illegitimate justification for this violence, this act of terrorism."

Obama's conservative opponents quickly seized on the president's rhetorical choice and cast it

as an example of the White House downplaying the root cause of the terror threat. At least one Democrat — Hawaii Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, an Iraq war veteran — agreed, saying the president's terror terminology matters, particularly as Congress weighs a new authorization for military action in Iraq and Syria.

"By his not using this term 'Islamic extremism' and clearly identifying our enemies, it raised a whole host of questions in exactly what Congress will be authorizing," Gabbard said on Fox News.

The president has long tried to shift his administration's terror rhetoric away from what he saw as the hyperbolic terminology used by his predecessor, George W. Bush, particularly his declaration in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks that the U.S. was engaged in a "war on terror."

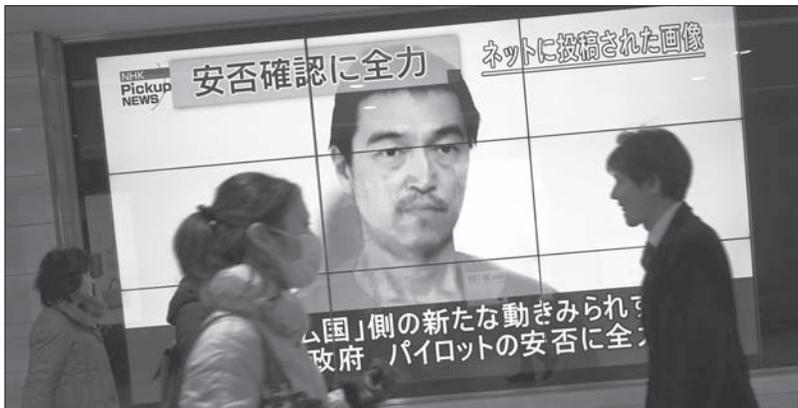
In a high-profile national security address in 2013, Obama declared, "We must define our effort not as a boundless 'global war on terror,' but rather as a se-

ries of persistent, targeted efforts to dismantle specific networks of violent extremists that threaten America."

Under Obama's narrower definition, his advisers say the U.S. is at war with terror groups like al-Qaida and its affiliates, as well as the Islamic State group.

Given the U.S. policy of not making concessions to terrorists, the White House has refused to negotiate with Islamic State militants to free American hostages and opposes Jordan's ongoing efforts to orchestrate a prisoner swap with the group. However, the U.S. did negotiate with the Taliban through an intermediary last year to free American Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl in exchange for five Afghan detainees at the Guantanamo Bay prison.

The White House insisted anew this week that those negotiations did not violate U.S. policy because the administration does not classify that Taliban as a terrorist organization — though officials said there are overlapping characteristics.



EUGENE HOSHINO/AP

People walk by a screen showing TV news reports of Japanese hostage Kenji Goto, held by the Islamic State group, in Tokyo on Saturday.

Family, diplomats: No new word on hostages

By KARIN LAUB
The Associated Press

AMMAN, Jordan — The family of a Jordanian fighter pilot held by the Islamic State group said Saturday it has received no word on his fate since the militants threatened to kill him earlier this week.

The Islamic State group purportedly threatened to kill Lt. Muath al-Kaseasbeh by Thursday unless Jordan released a female al-Qaida prisoner, Sajida al-Rishawi, from death row. Jordan has said it cannot release her without proof the pilot is alive.

The fate of the 26-year-old airman has been linked to that of Japanese journalist Kenji Goto, who also is being held by the militants.

Japan's deputy foreign minister, Yasuhide Nakayama, said late Friday that efforts to free Goto are "in a state of deadlock."

"The deadline has passed, and it is a reality that several hours have passed since then, so we are doing our utmost to gain more information," he said.

In their purported ultimatum, the militants did not say what would happen to Goto if al-Rishawi is not released.

The family of the pilot also said there has been no word.

"We are waiting," Jawad al-Kaseasbeh, a brother of the pilot, said Saturday. "We received nothing new, neither from the government nor from informal sources." Al-Kaseasbeh's plane went down over an Islamic State-controlled area of northeast-

ern Syria in December. He is the first foreign pilot to be captured by the group since a U.S.-led military coalition began carrying out airstrikes against the extremists in September. Jordan is part of the coalition.

Goto was captured in October, after he traveled to Syria to try to win the release of Haruna Yukawa.

The hostage drama began last week after militants threatened to kill Goto and Yukawa in 72 hours unless Japan paid \$200 million.

The militants later demanded the release of al-Rishawi, 44, who faces death by hanging for her role in a 2005 al-Qaida attack on hotels in Amman that killed 60 people. A purported militant message also claimed Yukawa had been killed.

Officials say bombings kill 9 people around Iraq's capital

By SAMEER N. YACOB
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A series of bombings in and around the Iraqi capital killed nine people Saturday and a senior Kurdish commander died in clashes with Islamic State militants in northern Iraq.

A bomb exploded near a sheep market Saturday morning in the town of Madain, about 14 miles southeast of Baghdad, killing four people and wounding 11, police officials said.

A second blast struck near a string of car repair shops in central Baghdad, killing three people and wounding 10.

Authorities said another explosion also struck an army patrol in the town of Taji, just north of Baghdad, killing two soldiers and wounding four.

Medics confirmed the casualty figures. All officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to journalists.

Meanwhile, two Kurdish security officers said Saturday that Kurdish Brig. Gen. Hussein Mansour was killed Friday night by a sniper shot near the oil rich city of Kirkuk during clashes between IS fighters and Kurdish security forces, known also as peshmerga.

The two officials said that Mansour has just replaced Brig. Gen. Shirko Fathi, who was killed early Friday after IS militants attacked the peshmerga fighters' positions near Kirkuk.

Iraq is facing its worst crisis since the 2011 withdrawal of U.S. troops. Militants from the Islamic State group now control about a third of the country. They are being resisted by a combined force of Iraqi soldiers, Kurdish peshmerga, and volunteer Shiite militiamen, backed by U.S.-led coalition airstrikes.

WAR ON TERRORISM



COURTESY OF AYMAN KARIM/The Washington Post

Ayman Karim, an engineer, fell in love in August against the backdrop of war but was inspired to bring the tradition of the "love lock" to Iraq by encouraging sweethearts to affix padlocks to a bridge in his southern city of Basra. The site was launched in September, drawing visitors who saw photos on Facebook. But in November, masked gunmen threw the wire grids and locks into the water.

Iraqi militias doom attempt to replicate Paris' 'love locks' bridge

By LOVEDAY MORRIS

The Washington Post

BASRA, Iraq — When Ayman Karim fell in love last summer, he wanted others to experience his joy. Iraq was reeling from an escalating war with Islamist extremists, and men from his home city of Basra were dying by the dozens.

"We were living in the dark," said Karim, 26. "We needed a point of light to make people happy. I was happy, and I wanted to share my love with everyone."

His idea: to bring the tradition of the "love lock" to Iraq by encouraging sweethearts to affix padlocks to a bridge in this southern city in an affirmation of their love.

The young engineer took inspiration from Europe, where the custom has burgeoned, most famously at the Pont des Arts in Paris. One of the French bridge's railings collapsed last year under the weight of the tokens of affection.

But the course of true love never did run smooth, and in Basra, a city with a strong presence of religiously conservative Shiite militias, such a public display of affection inevitably risked a backlash.

Karim had met his love, a local government worker, in August against the backdrop of the war. In northern Iraq, the Islamic State had declared a "caliphate" and its fighters were advancing on Mount Sinjar, forcing tens of thousands of minority Yazidi to flee.

As the conflict flared, Karim and his girlfriend began a typically modern Iraqi courtship.

Iraq is a restrictive society, but on Facebook, we met," he said. Their first date was an af-

ternoon walk along the Shatt al Arab river. "We fell in love. It was very fast."

Having organized other community projects with friends, the love-bitten mechanical engineer knew how to bring his idea to life. His group got permission from local authorities to repaint and restore a bridge near Basra's waterfront. They launched their effort in September with a party — music and poetry. Wire mesh was attached to the sides of the bridge so people could attach their padlocks.

Young and old, they wrote their names on the locks. And while Parisian lovers fling the keys of their padlocks into the Seine, the Iraqis tossed theirs into the Shatt al Arab, the confluence of the mighty Euphrates and Tigris rivers that course through Iraq.

Some were married couples, others young lovers. Locks were attached for brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers. People traveled from Baghdad and other places in the south — Amarah, Nasriyah, Najaf — to Iraq's new city of love.

Sijad Hussein, 19, who works in a Basra restaurant, recalled with a smile the day he attached his lock. "I'm married, but I came and put a lock for my sweetheart," he said. His wife was a family-approved match, "but I'll always love my girl," he said, referring to the other woman.

Soon the death threats came to Karim. His father opened an envelope that was pushed under the door of the family's home. "We advise you to stay away from that bridge, it could be dangerous for you," the note said. In the envelope was a bullet. The letter was signed from the "people of Basra," but Karim had little

doubt of who sent it.

Former Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki launched an operation to wrest Basra from the control of Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's Mehdi Army in 2008. The Charge of the Knights, as it was dubbed, broke the back of the group in the southern city. However, Asaib Ahl al-Haq, another militia that is close to the former premier, still maintains a heavy presence in Basra.

Karim's parents, who opposed the love lock project, tried to persuade him to end it. His mother, a local politician, reassigned her bodyguards to watch her son.

Then, in November, on Ashura — a day that commemorates the death of one of Shiite Islam's most revered figures, Imam Hussein — it all came to an end.

Karim received a call that there was a problem at the bridge. He arrived just in time to see masked gunmen heaving the wire grids and their locks into the water.

"It was like someone was suffocating me," he said.

Now all that remains on the bridge are a few inscriptions from the sweethearts: "M + Z" and "I miss you."

But locals still refer to it as the Love Bridge.

Hussein, the restaurant worker, said people still trickle in looking for the padlocks. "It's very sad," he said. "When I saw it was destroyed, I cursed them, it was such a nice thing."

Despite the threats, Karim plans to put wire mesh back up and to relaunch the bridge project in time for Valentine's Day.

"We need to deliver the message that even with this current situation in Iraq, there is love, there is kindness," he said.

Rivalries hinder Kurds fighting in northern Iraq

By VIVIAN SALAMA AND BRAM JANSSEN
The Associated Press

SINJAR, Iraq — Kurdish forces in recent weeks have retaken parts of the strategic Iraqi town of Sinjar, whose Yazidi population was driven out in a humanitarian disaster last year that triggered U.S. intervention. But sniping among Kurdish factions makes the hold on the town seem shaky and is threatening the wider fight against Islamic state militants.

Overlooking the strategic northern Iraq town of Sinjar, peshmerga fighters representing the recognized authorities of Iraqi Kurdistan have again what they see as the recklessness of their supposed allies in militias drawn from neighboring Syria and Turkey.

Within the bomb-scarred warrens of the town below, foot soldiers in those militias complain that the much more heavily armed peshmerga have done too little during the fight against Islamic State fighters held up within easy range of a sniper's bullet.

The immediate issue is ownership of Sinjar, the town that once was home to many of Iraq's Yazidi religious minority. Tens of thousands fled to the nearby mountains, creating a humanitarian disaster, when Islamic State militants seized the town in August and unleashed a wave of terror involving killings, imposed conversions and forced marriages. But there is a wider concern as well: The Kurds, in their various forms, have provided the most effective ground resistance to date against the jihadis who have taken large swaths of Iraq and Syria — and the outside world has a stake in their ability to continue that struggle.

Since December, the peshmerga and their Kurdish comrades in arms have regained the mountains in this area thanks in part on increased weapons, airstrikes and airstrikes from coalition warplanes.

But the fight has bogged down around Sinjar, itself, inflaming intra-Kurdish tensions just as their fight was gaining momentum.

To date, the region has seen decades of conflict between peshmerga supporters of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), headed by Iraqi Kurdish President Massoud Barzani, and the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) of Abdul-Qader Qasbi. The two groups were opponents in 1990s civil warfare, which ended in an accord that allowed PKK fighters to remain on the KDP's Iraqi turf. The U.S. State Department regards the PKK as a terrorist organization because of its history of violence in Turkey.

Militants admit defeat in Kobani

BEIRUT — Members of the Islamic State group have acknowledged for the first time that they were defeated in the Syrian town of Kobani.

In a video released by the pro-IS Amaq News Agency late Friday, two fighters said airstrikes by the U.S.-led coalition were the main reason why they were forced to withdraw from Kobani.

On Monday, activists and Kurdish officials said the town was cleared of IS fighters, who once held nearly half of the town.

The failure to capture Kobani was a major blow to the extremists, whose hopes for an easy victory dissolved into a costly plan under withering airstrikes by coalition forces and an assault by Kurdish militiamen.

From The Associated Press

The commander of peshmerga forces around Sinjar, Brig. Gen. Salam Warti, described the PKK and other militias as loose cannons unwilling to stick to an agreed-upon strategy plan. He said they rushed into Sinjar too quickly last week, when the Kurdish regional government announced that its forces had wrested nearly a third of the town from Islamic State forces. That boast proved short-lived as peshmerga troops retreated to the hills, and other Kurdish soldiers took refuge in the urban outskirts.

"We had planned to take the surrounding areas first and then take the town," Warti told the Associated Press. "But they (allied militias) decided to show off and take a section of the town, and now we're paying for it with many casualties. Militarily, it was a bad move."

Kurds drawn from Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Iran all seek the establishment of an independent Kurdistan against the desires of all four existing nations. The semi-autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq is the closest the Kurds have come to reaching their goal.

But the PKK and the YPG remain suspicious of Barzani's intentions, particularly because of his peshmerga forces' efforts in recent years to dig defensive trenches all along the Iraqi borders with Syria and Turkey.

WORLD

Pakistanis mourn, protest after bombing

The Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — Thousands of Shiites across Pakistan mourned and protested Saturday after a bombing at a Shiite mosque in the country killed at least 59 people.

In Shikarpur, the site of the blast, mourners held a mass funeral for the dead in Friday's attack. Thousands of Shiite mourners beating their chests and heads, wailing as they mourned, did not take part.

Shiite organizations also held protest sit-ins in different cit-

ies across Pakistan. Television footage showed some protesters burning tires and blocked roads, chanting slogans for arrest of the perpetrators and protection for Shiite worship places.

The death toll in the blast rose Saturday after three victims died overnight from their wounds, said Abdul Qudous Kalwar, a senior police official.

The bombing happened in Shikarpur, roughly 310 miles north of Pakistan's port city of Karachi.

That area of Pakistan has suffered comparatively little violence in contrast to the northwestern tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. Friday's bloodshed raised fears that extremists could be gaining a foothold in the region.

The blast took place when about 250 worshippers gathered in the Shiite mosque for Friday prayers, Kalwar said. Dozens were wounded.

On Saturday, investigators determined a suicide bomber caused

the blast, said Saqib Memon, another senior police official in Shikarpur.

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was "appalled by such vicious targeting of people on account of their religious affiliation," his spokesman said in a statement.

The Sunni militant group Jundallah claimed responsibility for the attack. The militant group previously has claimed responsibility for attacks on Shiites and

other religious minorities, including a 2013 double suicide bombing of an Anglican church in Peshawar that killed 85 people.

Many Sunni extremists do not consider Shiites, who represent as much as 20 percent of Pakistan's population, to be true Muslims. Sunni militants in Pakistan have bombed Shiite mosques, killed Shiite pilgrims traveling to Mecca, and assassinated Shiite religious figures and community leaders.

Brazilian star speaks out after botched thigh surgery

The Associated Press

SAO PAULO — Andressa Urach went from being a single teenage mom nicknamed "Beanpole" to a reality TV bombshell in Brazil thanks to silicone implants, anabolic steroids, a nose job and gel and botox injections, a fact she wasn't ashamed to share with fans.

"There are plenty of ugly women," she said last year. "If you have the money, you can be beautiful. This pretty face you see here, my dear, it costs some."

More, it turns out, than she bargained for.

The 27-year-old Urach, arguably Brazil's most outspoken advocate of advancement through cosmetic surgery, recently went into septic shock and was placed on life support after a botched operation to augment her thighs, sparking a debate about the risks Brazilian women will take for beauty at a moment when the nation has surpassed the U.S. as the world's plastic surgery capital.

It led the runner-up in Brazil's "Miss Bum Bum" contest, who is still trying to fully recover, to express regret at her decision to flaunt her surgically enhanced flesh for fame and money.

"We lose our health to get rich," she recently posted on her Instagram account. "We live as if we are never going to die."

Since Urach's ordeal, several celebrities have come forward to disclose that similar procedures had sent them to the hospital. In October, a 39-year-old woman died from a pulmonary embolism hours after hydrogel was injected in her buttocks in the city of Goiana.

Experts and activists worry that Brazil's culture of beauty has sent women to the dangers and encouraged them to experiment with riskier, untested materials and methods and even unlicensed practitioners.

"They are selling us these plastic surgeries, these synthetic injections like it was any other product," said Sara Winter, a women's rights activist who protested on Copacabana beach in



Brazilian reality TV star Andressa Urach, shown in 2012, was recently placed on life support after a botched operation to augment her thighs.

“We lose our health to get rich. We live as if we are never going to die.”

Andressa Urach
Instagram post

December with a large needle made of cardboard and signs sending good wishes for Urach's recovery.

While Brazil has around 5,500 certified plastic surgeons, another 12,000 doctors without specialized training are performing cosmetic procedures, according to the country's Federal Council of Medicine, which is in charge

of medical licenses. And some women turn to paramedics, or even people with no medical training at all.

Brazil's Plastic Surgery Society said Urach was given a dose of silicone gel 200 times what the government allows and used a hydrogel that isn't approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. It's not clear where or even who carried out the procedure on Urach; she hasn't disclosed the information.

Despite the debate, there is no sign of flagging demand to fight sagging flesh.

Brazil recently surpassed the United States in plastic surgeries, with 1.5 million procedures in 2013, according to the International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery.

Vatican outreach initiative hits sour note with women

The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — A new Vatican outreach initiative to listen to women hit a sour note before it even got off the ground: The sexy blonde on its Internet promo video came under such ridicule that it was quickly taken down.

But the program is going ahead, and an inaugural meeting this week will study women's issues in ways that are utterly new for the Holy See.

No, there is no talk of ordaining women priests.

But the working paper for the Pontifical Council of Culture's plenary assembly on "Women's Cultures: Equality and Difference" speaks about opening the church's doors to women so they can offer their skills "in full collaboration and integration" with men.

It denounces plastic surgery as a form of "aggression" against the female body "like a burqa made of flesh." And it acknowledges that the church has for centuries offered women "ideological and ancestral left-overs."

This is dangerous territory for the all-male Catholic Church hierarchy, as even Pope Francis has faced criticism for being a bit tone deaf as far as women are concerned.

The pontiff, a master of communication, has sincerely praised the "feminine genius." But he has also elicited cringes, such as when he recently welcomed female members of the church's most prestigious theological commission as "strawberries on the cake." And when asked if a woman might someday head a Vatican office, he joked that "pastors often wind up under the authority of their housekeeper."

Few people doubt the seriousness of Francis' pledge to appoint women to key Vatican decision-making jobs once his bureaucratic reform is complete. Nor do they question his sincerity when he says: "We men can ask questions that women men just don't get."

The Vatican has made progress in recent years, appointing laywomen to some Vatican offices and giving women's issues as a whole more ink with the monthly women's insert of the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*.

But many would argue that much remains to be done when the recently ousted Vatican high

court judge, Cardinal Raymond Burke, complains that the church has been "assaulted" by radical feminism and that the shortage of priests is due to an overly "feminized" church.

The latest initiative comes courtesy of Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, an academic who quotes Nietzsche and Amy Winehouse with equal ease and has no fear of courting controversy as he raises the Vatican profile in sport, art and even atheist circles at the helm of the Vatican's culture ministry.

Ravasi's first major foray into women's issues, however, was a flop — at least in the English-speaking world.

Just before Christmas, his office launched the #lifewomen crowd-sourcing initiative to promote the Feb. 4-7 plenary meeting and invite women around the globe to send in a 60-second video of their lives for possible inclusion in a montage to be screened at the "big meeting of cardinals and bishops" next week.

In the video, Italian actress Nancy Brilli — buxom albed in a modest blue top — earnestly asked her viewers how often they ask themselves "Who are you? What do you do? What do you think about yourself as a woman?"

The criticism was swift and harsh.

"[W]hat were they thinking at the Vatican?" wrote Phyllis Zagano, of Hofstra University, in the liberal National Catholic Reporter. "Aside from the obvious — sexy sell has long gone by the boards in developed nations and is totally unacceptable — a predominantly Muslim country — the fact of the matter is that highlighting a stereotypical spokeswoman is not the way to ask for women's input."

Critics noted that the women the Vatican might most want to hear from — those suffering from poverty, violence or war — might not have a smart phone at hand to send in a clip. Others noted that the two-week deadline — at the height of the Christmas holidays — worked against any widespread response.

The English version of Brilli's promo was summarily yanked, though the Italian remains on the ministry's website.

In the end, some 250 videos were sent in. A good number came from activists advocating for women's ordination.

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OPINION

Pumped for this Wretched Excess Season

By GEORGE F. WILL

Beer, Benjamin Franklin supposedly said but almost certainly didn't, is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy. Without cannonballing into deep theological waters, perhaps DeFlegate proves the same thing.

This scrumptious NFL pratfall — think of someone inufferably self-important stepping on a banana peel; hello, Donald Trump — has come to lighten the mood of America's annual Wretched Excess Season. It consists of the days — this year, 12 of them — between the State of the Union address and the final merciful tick of the clock of the Super Bowl.

The State of the Union has become, under presidents of both parties, a political pep rally degrading to everyone. The judiciary and uniformed military should never attend. And Congress, by hosting a spectacle so monarchical in structure (which is why Thomas Jefferson sent his thoughts to Congress in writing) deepens the diminishment of the legislative branch as a mostly reactive servant of an overbearing executive.

Catching the State of the Union's rising wave of choreographed spontaneity and synthetic earnestness, the nation then surfs into the long run-up to the Super Bowl. This storm before the storm delivers hurricane-force gusts of anticipatory analysis forecasting the minute nuances of enormous people throwing their weight around. The chatter culminates in 60 minutes of actual football — men risking concussions and other crippling injuries for

our amusement. And for selling beer (see above) and other stuff.

Game Day XLIII (Roman numerals are attached to Super Bowls as to popes, but with less reason than for the bishop of Rome) will be swaddled in many pre-game hours of advertising leavened by eruptions of patriotic kitsch. So, herewith a suggested pre-game reading: Ben Fountain's Iraq War novel "Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk." It is set not at a Super Bowl but at a Thanksgiving Day NFL game in Dallas, so the difference is of degree, and not much of that.

Anyway, this year the tedium of Wretched Excess Season has been relieved by DeFlegate, itself a permutation of wretched excess. Unless you have allowed yourself to be drawn by the dismemberment of Ukraine, Islamic State beheadings and counting the U.S. military personnel in Iraq that are not wearing left boots that are actually on the ground, you know this:

When the New England Patriots won a Super Bowl berth by defeating the Indianapolis Colts 45-7, 11 footballs in the Patriots' end zone, and for the team's use on offense, were filled with less air than NFL rules require, making them easier to pass and catch. Perhaps the 11 balls spontaneously lost exactly the same amount of air in the 2 hours or so between when the officials checked them and kickoff. Religions have been founded on less startling occurrences, but judge not lest ye be judged to be judgmental.

The Patriots' head coach, Bill Belichick, a detail-obsessed martinet of Prussian severity but without even a Junker's flair for jollity, says he is stumped. Perhaps a rogue equipment manager decided on his own

to put deflated balls into the famously and exquisitely sensitive hands of the Patriots' \$7 million quarterback, Tom Brady, who never noticed. There has not been such an unmysterious mystery since an 18½-minute gap occurred in President Richard Nixon's White House tapes of a conversation between Nixon and his chief of staff in the Oval Office three days after the Watergate break-in.

Concerning cheating, let the sport that is without past the first scuffed baseball. Baseball players have tampered with themselves (e.g., performance-enhancing drugs) and their equipment (e.g., corked bats). Teams with creative groundskeepers have given an outward tilt to infield foul lines when a team adept at bunting comes to town. And on at least one occasion a gifted base stealer has reached first base only to find himself standing in a muddy swamp on an out-of-play sticky.

But let us not all fallen humanity's sins to suit today's fun. On the second-highest calorie-consumption day of every year (second to Thanksgiving), we celebrate the end of Wretched Excess Season by gathering around our televisions, as around a continental campfire. In this communal experience we say: Take the day off, better angels of our nature, because nothing says America like football played indoors in air conditioning on grass in the desert.

Tomorrow, we still will not be sure who or what blew up the USS Maine in Havana harbor on Feb. 15, 1898. But it would be good to know the whereabouts of the Patriots' equipment manager that day.

George F. Will is a member of Washington Post Writers Group.

Victorious Kurds ask for promised weapons

By ELI LAKE

With the victory last week over Islamic State forces at Kobani, Syria, one might think that the United States and Iraqi governments would be looking to increase shipments of armaments to the Kurdish forces who did the actual fighting.

But according to the Kurdish overseer much of the ground campaign in Kobani, his peshmarga units are facing a shortage of ammunition and guns just at the moment they have turned the tide against the jihadis.

In an exclusive interview from a command center on the Iraq-Syria border, Masrour Barzani, the chancellor of the Kurdistan Security Council, told me his forces have received only four shipments of needed munitions in recent months. "The shortage of ammunition is a big problem and this is not even close to what we were asking for," he said.

His comments have all the more significance because a recent deal — brokered in part by the U.S. — committed the Baghdad government to provide \$1 billion to Kurdish forces in exchange for the Kurds sharing revenue of their oil exports. Barzani says that so far, his forces have not received that money, though he spoke to me before the final deal was passed last week in Iraq's parliament as part of its annual budget.

The news is also important in light of recent news reports suggesting the Obama administration has not committed many resources in other elements of its war against Islamic State jihadis, such as bankrolling and equipping moderate Syrian rebels. The White House now says it will take at least three years to complete the Islamic State mission, leaving the war to be finished by the next president's administration.

Barzani is the son of the Kurdistan region's president, Massoud Barzani, and the grandson of the legendary Kurdish nationalist Mustafa Barzani. He is now overseeing much of the day-to-day fighting on one of the war's hottest fronts. When Kurdish fighters from Turkey known as the PYP were under siege in Kobani, Masrour Barzani sent a peshmarga artillery team into the city that also helped coordinate the U.S. airstrikes as part of the battle.

But such cooperation with the U.S. Air Force in the border area and elsewhere has not resulted in the arms shipments the Kurds say they desperately need to fight the Islamic State army, which has appropriated heavy weaponry the U.S. provided long ago to the Iraqi army.

"The United States spent 10 years training an Iraqi army, it spent billions of dollars training an Iraqi army and equipping it with Humvees, MRAPs [mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles], artillery and howitzers, all of this given to the Iraqi army, and it was dismantled in 10 hours," Barzani said, referring to the collapse of the Iraqi forces in June at Mosul and around Kirkuk.

A State Department official in Washington contacted on Thursday largely disputed the characterization that the Kurds were being deprived. In talking points provided to me, the official pointed out that Baghdad had recently sent 25 MRAPs to the Kurds, and that since August there have been 59 international cargo flights worth of ammunition delivered to the peshmarga. This included 45,000 mortar rounds, 2,800 rocket-propelled-grenade launchers, 40,000 rounds for those launchers, and 18,000 assault rifles.

Yet Barzani says that most of those shipments came in the last summer and fall

from eastern European countries, and that the resupply of the Kurdish forces since December has slowed to a trickle. He was particularly angry that his forces received only 25 MRAPs.

"Now the Americans are providing 250 MRAPs to be given to the Kurds," he said. "Ninety percent of the burden for this war is on the shoulder of the peshmarga, 90 percent of the work is done by the peshmarga, but we are only getting 10 percent of the armaments."

The State Department official said there was no intent to deny Kurdish fighters heavy weapons, and that there was a new effort to provide mortars, rounds for Soviet-made T-62 tanks the Kurds commandeered in 2003 from Saddam Hussein's army, and other vehicles and equipment to counter roadside bombs. The Obama administration also committed for the first time to train and equip a Kurdish peshmarga division.

But the White House has also not changed a long-standing policy — enshrined in U.S. law — that prohibits the open shipment of weapons to sub-state entities such as the Kurdistan Regional Government. The means, in practice, the Baghdad government gets a final say on all weapons headed to Kurdistan.

"At the end of the day, the U.S. position is that it has to get Baghdad's approval for any specific weapons system," said James Jeffrey, who served as U.S. ambassador there between 2010 and 2012. "That is part of our keeping-Iraq-unified policy. As it stands now, Masrour has had to rely in large part on other countries for the equipment and ammunition he will need to take on the Islamic State."

Eli Lake is a Bloomberg View columnist.

OPINION

Suddenly, the Democrats have ideas too

By **DOYLE MCMANUS**
Los Angeles Times

Only a few months ago, it looked as if Republicans had recaptured their old claim to be the party of ideas, especially on the economic issue that has setized the attention of most Americans: the stagnation of middle-class incomes.

The GOP's former vice presidential nominee, Rep. Paul Ryan, of Wisconsin, unveiled proposals to help the struggling middle class. Sen. Marco Rubio, of Florida, another conservative hero, inveighed against income inequality. Even Mitt Romney, the once presidential candidate, has started saying it is time to get serious about poverty.

Meanwhile, Democrats seemed like an extinct volcano. Many of them campaigned for November's congressional election without any clear economic message at all. It didn't turn out well.

In politics, nothing concentrates the mind like electoral defeat — unless it's the low roar of an oncoming presidential campaign.

And so in the last few weeks, the Democratic volcano has erupted with ideas. President Barack Obama listed dozens in his State of the Union speech, beginning with a tax increase on the top 1 percent to pay for child care and education benefits for the middle class. House Democrats went further, proposing a tax on financial transactions that would allow for broader tax cuts for workers. And a think-tank task force co-chaired by former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers proposed a platform including tax breaks for middle-income folks as well as corporate tax incentives to push companies toward sharing profits with their workers.

"Stagnation in wages and income is a choice, not a necessity," Summers said as he signed off the report. "A different choice is possible."

You probably haven't seen much about,

much less read, his report; it's 160 pages long and stuffed with serious economic analysis of why most Americans' incomes haven't grown much in real terms since — such — 1973.

But its prescriptions are serious, and they are probably closest to what Hillary Rodham Clinton's economic platform will be, when we get to see it. The report was sponsored by the liberal Center for American Progress, whose founder, John Podesta, is expected to become chairman of Clinton's presidential campaign. The think tank's president, Neera Tanden, was Clinton's chief policy adviser in 2008.

And the report isn't coy about its political purpose; it sets out to update the centrist Democratic policies Bill Clinton ran on in the 1990s. "The world has changed," Summers says.

The core argument is that economic growth alone isn't enough to ensure sustained prosperity any more. Unless profits are broadly shared, the argument goes, the economy won't generate enough domestic spending to keep growth going — or alleviate the widening gap between rich and poor.

The solutions would be on almost any Democrat's wish list: more spending on education and training, more spending on roads and bridges and airports, paid parental leave for both fathers and mothers, and paid sick and vacation days for all.

But then there's that corporate reform: legislation to push employers to share more of their growing profits with their employees, and to shift financial incentives to executives from short-term stock price increases to long-term growth.

The report calls for strengthening the 2010 Dodd-Frank financial regulation law, including tougher punishment for financial crimes beginning with mandatory "clawbacks" of bonuses paid to executives who are found responsible for malfeasance.

That sounds like a bow to Sen. Elizabeth Warren, of Massachusetts, and others on the Democratic left who have long



complained that Wall Street got away with too much in the Great Recession. But the Summers report doesn't call for breaking up or shrinking big banks, as Warren has proposed, so it's unlikely to satisfy every progressive.

It won't make every centrist Democrat happy, either. The Progressive Policy Institute, a think tank spawned by Bill Clinton's New Democratic movement, began work last week on a list of policies focused on promoting private-sector growth. "We need to expand our growth agenda to attract voters who may not agree with us," the group's president, Will Marshall, told me.

And what does Hillary think? She's not saying. As the prohibitive front-runner in a Democratic nomination race she hasn't formally joined, she can let the arguments percolate.

She's already given clues, of course — but in all directions. In October, she said she loved "watching Elizabeth (Warren)

give it to those who deserve to get it." In Canada last month, she struck a less populist note, saying the most pressing problem is "small- and medium-sized business formation."

And she has offered terse tidbits of policy via Twitter, warning Congress that "attacking financial reform is risky and wrong" and praising Obama's State of the Union address — but adding: "Now we need to step up and deliver for the middle class."

But for Democrats who worried that their party's idea shortage might be chronic and disabling, the eruption of economic prescriptions must come as a relief. There's a debate underway, and the front-runner even has a draft platform in hand. The Democrats won't have to wage another campaign without an economic message after all.

Doyle McManus is a Los Angeles Times columnist.

Obamacare can survive losing next high court case

By **RAMESH PONNURU**
Bloomberg News

Conservatives in Washington are increasingly confident that the Supreme Court will rule this summer that the White House has gone beyond its legal authority in implementing the Affordable Care Act. Any such decision would enrage liberals. They would accuse the Republican-appointed justices of putting a stake through Obamacare to suit their partisan preferences.

They would be wrong. The legal case against the administration is strong, and ruling accordingly won't kill the health care law.

Obamacare authorizes federal subsidies for health care plans purchased on state insurance exchanges. In states that decline to establish those exchanges — 34 of them have opted out — the law says the federal government can run an exchange instead.

The hitch is that nowhere does the law authorize subsidies for plans purchased on those federally run exchanges. The Internal Revenue Service, which administers the subsidies, has acted as though it does. The court has to decide whether the IRS is acting legally.

Supporters of the IRS' policy say that the case, *King v. Burwell*, — makes too much of a mere drafting error. They say that

It's true that taking away the subsidies now would be disruptive, but the court can't let itself be swayed by that argument.

Congress can't have intended to withhold subsidies from most of the country. And they say it would be disruptive and cruel to take away people's tax credits now that they're counting on them.

Congress surely didn't want the subsidies to be geographically limited. Most members of Congress who voted for the law surely wanted it to be more popular and wanted states to set up exchanges. And the majority of them surely had no thoughts in particular about how to treat states that didn't go along. They're generally not detail-oriented people when it comes to policy.

But the law Congress passed tied subsidies to a state's behavior in a way that is not at all absurd in principle. The subsidies create an incentive for states to set up exchanges. Congress uses such incentives all the time, taking the risk that states will balk and laws will not achieve all of their

ambitions. Much of Obamacare's coverage expansion comes from enlarging Medicaid. The method of the law was to offer extra money for states that went along, and not all of them have.

It's true that taking away the subsidies now would be disruptive, but the court can't let itself be swayed by that argument. Otherwise, it would be saying that the more people a lawless presidential action affects, the more untouchable it should be. Congress and state legislatures are the proper forums for resolving this problem. Both will be under enormous pressure to do so if the court rules against the IRS and people lose their subsidies. That's why a lot of the commentary about the case as a death knell for Obamacare is overstated.

Even one of the judges who ruled in favor of the administration in earlier stages of the case has noted the strength of the argument against it. Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Roger Gregory said that the administration had an "only slightly" stronger case than its critics, whose position had a "common-sense appeal."

A lot of conservatives think the Supreme Court whiffed the last time it considered Obamacare, in 2012, when it upheld the law's constitutionality. This time might be different, though, because this isn't a constitutional case. In 2012, Chief Justice John

Roberts argued that the court had an obligation to try to read the law in a way that made it consistent with the Constitution. That reading didn't have to be the most natural one so long as it was plausible. In this case, though, the Constitution is not at issue and is therefore not a reason to read the law one way or the other.

The fact that it isn't a constitutional case also makes it easier for other branches of the government to adjust their policies in reaction to a ruling. In 2012, the court was being asked to rule that the federal government had no power to mandate that individuals obtain health insurance and strike down the law entirely. If the court rules against the administration this time, it won't be saying that Congress can't offer subsidies in states without their own exchanges; it will just be saying that Congress did not, in fact, make that choice in writing the law. It might further ease the justices' minds that it's entirely possible that Congress and state governments will move to shore up Obamacare after its decision.

So the court may decide that the law simply says what it says. Ruling that way won't doom Obamacare. It will, however, reopen the law in Congress. This time, let's hope lawmakers pay more attention to the details.

Ramesh Ponnuru is a Bloomberg View columnist.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

George Zimmerman assault case dropped

FL ORLANDO — An aggravated assault case against George Zimmerman that was opened when his ex-girlfriend said he threw a wine bottle at her has been dropped because she recanted her story and stopped cooperating with investigators, a prosecutor said Friday.

State Attorney Phil Archer said he wouldn't file a formal charge against Zimmerman, the former neighborhood watch leader who was acquitted of killing Trayvon Martin.

The ex-girlfriend had made it clear she didn't want to cooperate with Lake Mary Police officers, and there were no other eyewitnesses, Archer said.

Thieves smash SUV into museum, steal gold

CA SAN FRANCISCO — Wells Fargo Bank officials vowed to reopen a popular corporate museum in the heart of San Francisco's financial district after thieves smashed a stolen SUV through its front door and made off with historic Gold Rush nuggets on display.

The museum is a popular destination for schoolchildren and tourists and includes two restored stagecoaches, a working telegraph and other California Gold Rush-era memorabilia.

The thieves struck at about 2:30 a.m. Tuesday when they rammed a Chevrolet Suburban through the museum's revolving door. They then emerged from the SUV, and one of them held a security guard at gunpoint while the others took up to 10 ounces of gold nuggets from a display case.

Children told to drop pants over feces at gym

TX GUSTINE — A North Texas school district is investigating after about two dozen elementary students had to pull their pants down when feces were found on a gym floor.

A parent said the children in Gustine were forced to expose their underwear for inspection.

Maria Medina told WFAA-TV that boys were taken to one room and the girls to another on Monday. Medina said she was furious after learning the students were told to lower their pants so school workers could try to find the culprit behind the waste.

Superintendent Ken Baugh said he does not condone the search and that partially strip-searching students went too far. He said the district is investigating.

Dry Christmas tree fuels mansion fire

MD ANNAPOLIS — Just weeks after celebrating the holidays at their \$6 million Annapolis mansion, the family's Christmas tree fueled a ferocious fire that took the lives of four children and their grandparents, fire officials said Wednesday.

A faulty electrical outlet powering tree lights in the home's Great Room — which had 19-foot-

THE CENSUS

\$300

The approximate value of energy drinks stolen from an East Longmeadow supermarket in Massachusetts last week. Sgt. Patrick Manley said Big Y security personnel saw the suspect on surveillance video enter the store at about 5 p.m. on Monday, load \$177 worth of Red Bull and Monster Energy into a shopping cart and leave. Store workers stalked out the energy drink section at about the same time on Thursday, and the man returned. He loaded a cart with about \$114 worth of the drinks and was arrested. The suspect was identified as Bryan Kneeland, 31, of East Hampton, Conn.



ALEXA ROGALS, THE (FARMINGTON, N.M.) DAILY TIMES/AF

Sharing the spirit

Students watch Friday as the Apache Crown Dancers perform during an event at Ojo Amarillo Elementary School in Fruitland, N.M. Apache tradition believed there were mountain spirits with healing powers, and if sickness came, the medicine man would call the spirits down to dance overnight to bless the people and keep evil spirits away.

high ceilings and was connected to the sleeping and living areas — likely ignited the Jan. 19 blaze by setting the tree skirt on fire, officials said. It killed homeowners Don and Sandra Pyle, along with the four Boone children: Lexi, 8; Katie, 7; and their first cousins, Charlotte, 8, and Wes, 6.

Survivalist pleads not guilty in trooper killing

PA MILFORD — He eluded police for nearly two months and has been jailed for three more. But the death-penalty trial for Eric Frein could still be more than a year away.

On Thursday, Frein pleaded not guilty to charges he plotted the ambush that killed one state trooper and wounded a second last September in nearby Blooming Grove. It was his first court appearance since prosecutors officially declared they would seek the death penalty against him.

In a brief court appearance via video feed from the Pike County prison, the self-styled survivalist remained expressionless and re-

sponded politely to County Court Judge Gregory H. Chelak.

Frein, 31, waived his formal arraignment and said he understood the charges against him, which include murder, terrorism and possession of explosive devices.

Ex-taxi driver added to FBI's most-wanted list

VA ALEXANDRIA — The FBI on Thursday added a former taxi driver from northern Virginia to its list of most-wanted terrorists, saying he was a recruiter for the al-Shabab terrorist group in Somalia.

An arrest warrant, originally issued in February, was unsealed Thursday in U.S. District Court in Alexandria for Liban Haji Mohamed, 29, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in Somalia.

He is the older brother of Gulet Mohamed, who for the past four years has been challenging his placement on the government's no-fly list, the attorney representing the younger Mohamed, Gadeir Abbas, told The Associated Press on Thursday. A hear-

ing on Gulet Mohamed's case is scheduled in federal court in Alexandria on Friday.

Sons of woman who died on Metro file suit

DC WASHINGTON — The sons of a woman who died after smoke filled a Washington subway train are suing the Metro transit agency for \$50 million.

Attorney Patrick Regan filed the lawsuit Friday on behalf of Marcus and Anthony Glover, the adult sons of Carol Glover, 61.

The lawsuit accuses Metro of negligence that led directly to Glover's death. It says she was trapped on the smoke-filled train near the L'Enfant Plaza station for 45 minutes before rescuers arrived. At that point, the lawsuit says she had no pulse.

The lawsuit also says ventilation fans in the subway tunnel didn't work properly.

More than 80 other people were sickened by the smoke during the Jan. 12 accident, which was caused by an electrical malfunction. What led to the malfunction

is under investigation.

Lawyer's client killed, law license suspended

MD BALTIMORE — A Baltimore County attorney who inadvertently shared information that led to a client's murder has agreed to an indefinite suspension of his law license, court records show.

Larry Feldman, who's been an attorney for 17 years, acknowledged violating Maryland's rules of conduct for lawyers when he told a suspect in a check fraud scheme that prosecutors needed to speak with his client, Isiah Callaway, about the case.

Prosecutors said the suspect, Tavon Davis, then hired a hit man for \$2,000 and had Callaway killed in 2011. Davis is serving 35 years in prison stemming from the killing. The man convicted of killing Callaway, Bruce Byrd, is serving a 40-year prison term.

Feldman's license was suspended starting Saturday, The Baltimore Sun reported.

From wire reports

FASHION

MARKETING TO THE MANLY MAN



PHOTOS BY JACOB LANGSTON, ORLANDO SENTINEL/TNS

Cloak & Dapper CEO Calvin Cearley shows off the decor in his store near Orlando, Fla. Cearley says it's like a modern general store for men, specializing in casual clothing, grooming goods and provisions.

Retailers reach out to today's 'modern gentleman'

By KYLE ARNOLD
Orlando Sentinel

Next to the button-down shirts and brown-leather boots at the Cloak and Dapper store, you can find make-your-own-gin kits and beard-grooming oils.

The retailer that opened in November in Orlando, Fla., is what owner Calvin Cearley would call "a general store for the modern gentleman."

That is, if you're a guy in the market for ceramic flasks and whiskey-scented soaps.

Retro men's styles are hip once again at retailers and other businesses.

For a generation, men's retail has been geared toward technology and sports. But with slim-cut suits finding their way back into style and beards gaining in popularity, men's boutiques are finding a growing audience.

"We are starting to see companies capitalize on a group that hasn't been marketed to all that specifically," said Brett McKay, author of a book titled "The Art of Manliness." "On the boutique level you are seeing a lot of entrepreneurs and artisanal stuff that

is geared towards men."

In Cearley's store, canvas satchels are filled with chopped wood, and the cologne has names like Moonshine.

"We wanted to create a throwback, general-store type of vibe but a modern, tech-friendly version of that," Cearley said.

Gene Zimmerman, a Cloak and Dapper customer, said he likes the store because many retailers aren't giving attention to the styles the store carries. He has purchased items such as boots and jeans.

"You can go to a Bloomingdale's, and you can find things that have a similar look, but you have to dig," Zimmerman said. "These aren't just off-the-rack brands, they are American brands, and they are handmade and not necessarily mass-manufactured."

Much of the trend started with conglomerates such as Procter & Gamble creating lines of soaps and shampoos with manly scents. Think "Old Spice."

Craft liquors and cocktails also have roared back into popularity

along with home-beer brewing.

"It's a combination of people wanting authentic stuff, and it's also men wanting to feel like men," McKay said.

Procter & Gamble has opened Art of Shaving locations at the Florida Mall and Mall at Millenia, in Orlando. The stores have seen an increased demand for products such as beard oils and mustache waxes as facial hair comes back into style, said Florida Mall store manager Juan Vasquez.

"Adding a lather and a brush

really takes a shave to the next level," Vasquez said. "It's really for the benefit of their own skin."

At Orlando's Liberty Barber-shop, tattooed and bearded barber John Duvoisin is giving more close-shaves, and beard-cutting services, using an old-fashioned straight razor, are more popular than ever. Men can have a beer while they wait.

"Working-class guys understand there aren't many things a man can do to feel good about himself better than getting a haircut, a shave and getting his shoes

shined," Duvoisin said.

The revival of beards is a reaction to the "metrosexual" fashion movements of the mid-2000s, he said. Then men's barbershops took off in popularity when the economy tanked in 2008, and a simpler haircutting service was needed.

Duvoisin's old-fashioned barbershop is so popular he's opened a second place called The Den Shave Parlor.

"It's just a more 'high-end' experience where we hand out craft cocktails instead of Miller High Life," he said.



Above: Western-themed gear at Cloak & Dapper near Orlando, Fla. Left: Grooming products in the store label themselves "old-fashioned."

MUSIC

BY GLENN GAMBOA
Newsday

Idina Menzel was facing her biggest crowd since the Oscars — a million or so revelers with her in Times Square for New Year's Eve and millions more watching at home.

She reaches for the high note that ends "Let It Go" — a challenging one to hit in the best of circumstances, much less in windy conditions with temperatures in the 20s for a performer doing eight Broadway shows a week. She misses. Badly.

The reaction on social media was harsh and predictable. "Why does Idina Menzel sound like a goat right now?" asked one Twitter user. "They booked Idina Menzel, but got Adele Dazeem," added another.

Menzel's reaction, however, was surprising. She tweeted a photo of her interview with Southwest magazine where she said, "I am more than the notes I hit, and that's how I approach my life. You can't get it right all the time, but you can try your best. If you've done that, all that's left is to accept your shortcomings and have the courage to try to overcome them."

So you think you can sync?

Artists' use of backing tracks during live performances gains acceptance

In a time when lip-syncing is increasingly becoming the norm for singers in situations where it used to be unheard of, Menzel is taking a stand for live performance for better or worse. And music fans really should have her back.

After all, why should the artist singing live be judged more harshly for a mistake than the artist who is miming the words? Of course, no one said show business was fair.

But it could be a little fairer. Maybe those who rush to criticize Mariah Carey for her struggle to sing "All I Want for Christmas Is You" live at the Rockefeller Center tree lighting ceremony could save some criticism for those who lip-sync, especially in the current awards season.

The temptation to play it safe or, in TV speak, "to guarantee the best performance possible" is growing, especially as shows make more and more exceptions to what used to be hard-and-fast rules for live singing. When Ashlee Simpson made her infamous failed lip-sync attempt on "Saturday Night Live" in 2004, the show's executive producer, Lorne Michaels, said

"The temptation to play it safe or, in TV speak, 'to guarantee the best performance possible' is growing, especially as shows make more and more exceptions to what used to be hard-and-fast rules for live singing. When Ashlee Simpson made her infamous failed lip-sync attempt on 'Saturday Night Live' in 2004, the show's executive producer, Lorne Michaels, said

it would have been the program's first lip-synced performance. He said it goes against the show's essence, adding that lip-syncing is generally used only "during dance breaks ... if it was all about dance."

However, in recent years, that has changed. The use of backing tracks is much more commonplace, leading to more hybrid performances. There's an obvious moment in Nicki

Minaj's 2011 "SNL" performance where she moves the mic away from her face while the track she was just lip-syncing to continues, even though she was clearly rapping live during the same song.

This season, Danish singer MO apologized for her inability to match the backing track during Iggy Azalea's performance of "Beg

For It," resulting in her mistimed, off-key contributions. "I had some technical issues, which caused latency on my vocals and as a result I got confused and my timing was off," she said in her Instagrammed apology. "It pains me and I'm so sad today. But life goes on."

The question that never got answered, though, was why she needed a backing track with her vocals on it in the first place? Could it be, as many speculated, that Azalea was using the same backing track for her vocals, too? Only the sound man knows for sure.

That will likely also be the case for Sunday's Super Bowl halftime show with Katy Perry, who has been known to lip-sync, is expected to use a mix of backing tracks and live vocals for the show, which will include Lenny Kravitz. She isn't really talking about her plans for the show, except for the extra effort she's putting into her entrance and exit.

Given the current climate that's more accepting of lip-syncing and more critical of vocal missteps, it's an understandable decision. But it's also a missed opportunity at creating a true, once-in-a-lifetime moment — and it also diminishes the power of performing. One more thing that Menzel understands better than most.

"Performing isn't only about the acrobatics and the high notes," Menzel says. "It's staying in the moment, connecting with the audience in an authentic way and making yourself real to them through the music."

Faking it big

The consequences of lip-syncing used to be far more dire than they are today. Here's a look at some of the most memorable offenders:

Milli Vanilli (1990)

The scandal: Milli Vanilli producer Frank Farian reveals that German models-dancers Fab Morvan and Rob Pilatus never sang a note on their multiplatinum album, "Girl You Know It's True," which landed a Grammy.

For best new artist, or in any of their performances.

The fallout: They returned the Grammy in disgrace and their careers were ruined. Pilatus died from a drug overdose in 1998. Morvan has tried unsuccessfully to launch a solo career.



Ashlee Simpson (2004)

The scandal: Suffering from severe acid reflux that strained her voice, Simpson tries to lip-sync her song "Autobiography" on "Saturday Night Live," but her drummer triggers the recorded vocals to her song

"Pieces of Me" instead. Embarrassed, Simpson does a little jig and then runs off the stage.

The fallout: "SNL" executive producer says her early exit is the first in the show's history and her attempted lip-syncing is the first outside of "dance breaks." Simpson's musical career suffered, but she has had runs on Broadway in "Chicago," as well as acting gigs.



Britney Spears (2007)

The scandal: Spears couldn't keep up with the lyrics as she lip-synced "Gimme More" on the MTV Video Music Awards, not even moving her mouth at times, as she struggled to keep up with her dance steps as well.

The fallout: Despite some short-term fallout for looking dazed and unprepared, Spears rebounded. And she seems to have embraced lip-syncing in her tours — where, at times, she even lip-syncs talking to the crowd — and in her current residency at Planet Hollywood in Las Vegas.



'X Factor' (2011)

The scandal: Contestant Leroy Belle is late to hold his mic up to his mouth as he lip-syncs in a group performance. It turns out all the finalists in the singing competition were lip-syncing that song and other non-judged performances.

The fallout: In an effort to save the then-struggling show, producers pointed out that the lip-syncing during non-judged performances

was a common practice on other singing competitions, including "American Idol." How dare we expect singing competition contestants to, you know, sing!



MUSIC



CONTROLLED CHAOS

'Pale Emperor' ushers in the return of Marilyn Manson

By AUGUST BROWN
Los Angeles Times

Around 8 p.m. on a recent Wednesday night, in a candlelit, marble-plated West Hollywood, Calif., hotel room, Marilyn Manson reached into his pocket and flicked open a switchblade.

"The Roman Emperor Constantius was referred to as the 'Pale Emperor.' He liked to dress up as a woman and (torture) men and have them dance for him," Manson said. "I identify with that petulant pursuit of chaos."

Manson's blade (and his own rows of metallic teeth) glinted gold in the candlelight. For a moment, it seemed like he might actually be pondering something sinister. Instead, he looked down at the knife and grinned. "I prefer using this to eat oysters."

Nearly 20 years after his 1996 album "Antichrist Superstar" made him America's most infamous musician, Manson still has the power to unnervingly. In person, however, he's also droll and self-aware, prone to knife-twirling goofiness and Southern-gentleman affectations. What's even more startling is that, at 46, he just made one of the best albums of his career.

"The Pale Emperor," released Jan. 20, is a 10-song LP that's just as quick and ferocious as his switchblade. The album largely sheds his trademark industrial-music howl, replacing it with sleek, glamorous brooding that evokes goth-punk pioneers like the Birthday Party and Christian Death.

After his widely praised acting on "Sons of Anarchy" (where he played a white supremacist gang leader) and a cameo on "Eastbound & Down" (where he played a schlub in orange shorts and a mopy brown wig), Manson might be preparing for a new role: as a musician at the unexpected height of his powers.

As befits his imperial album title, Manson doesn't really have conversations. He holds court. Within minutes of sitting down on his suite's couch, he's already gone over the repulsion he still feels toward his home state of Florida, ancient Chilean astronomical discoveries and how he finally buried the hatchet with his longtime '90s rock adversary, Billy Corgan. He was especially giddy over a recent gift from a friend, a copy of

Goethe's "Faust" that he said was "once owned by a very unsavory character, a German's personal copy."

Did he mean Hitler? "I think you can figure it out," he said, affecting a cryptic flair.

"The Pale Emperor" comes after probably the most difficult stretch of his career. After his then-label Interscope Records released him from his contract (a move largely attributed to slow sales of his 2009 album, "The High End of Low"), his relationship with actress Evan Rachel Wood ended, and 2012's "Born Villain" didn't revitalize his career as hoped. His once-sinewy frame began to soften from drinking, drugs and age.

Some of the hardest moments came, he said, when his mother died during the making of "The Pale Emperor." Even for someone as death-obsessed as Manson, when he talks about her, he curls into the couch a bit.

"It's inevitable, I know, and I made my peace with her a few years ago when she was no

longer aware of who I was," he said. In the record's liner notes, he dedicates the album to her, following her dementia-related death in 2014. "My father drove from Ohio to California to see my show on Halloween; I didn't understand why he drove, but he later told me he was spreading her ashes on Route 66."

Two unanticipated new relationships changed his outlook on songwriting.

The first and more personal one, with the photographer and fellow goth-complexioned muse Lindsay Usich, brought him a more stable (by Manson standards) home life. The second, with producer Tyler Bates — the film composer behind scores for Hollywood action romps like "Guardians of the Galaxy" and "300" — helped him re-imagine what Marilyn Manson could sound like.

"He is a living performance-art experimenter. He is a school bus full of children perched on a ledge, and you can't look away," Bates said. "There aren't a lot of real rock stars left, and he's one of them."

The two met on the set of the Showtime series "Californication," where Manson was playing himself. Bates started recording with him as a casual, friendly collaboration, to get Manson's head back in the game.

But the sessions (often starting with just a microphone, a digital kick drum and Bates playing guitar) soon yielded an unprecedented new sound for both of them.

"He really gave himself over to a process unlike any other for him so far," Bates said. "For me, writing music for film is listening to the story and writing for character roles. This was a really different project, but I applied that same idea to working with Manson."

The result is a record that is the best possible way to imagine Manson starting down 50. The self-anointed "Mephistopheles of Los Angeles" takes the open post-punk space of Siouxsie and the Banshees and adds a heavy drum swing and vocal wails that seem to come straight from the back of the Bronson Canyon caves in the Hollywood Hills. The single

"Third Day of a Seven Day Binge" rides a grime-caked bass line into a lament about (or maybe an ode to) imminent self-destruction.

"A lot of people say the record has a blues sound to it, but 'blues' goes to a few core things," Manson said. "It's actually quite Faustian, with (legendary bluesman) Robert Johnson selling his soul to the devil. So there were a lot of strange parallels on this record, like a snake eating its tail."

It won over Tom Whalley, the former chairman and CEO of Warner Bros. Records who worked with Manson during his time at Interscope in the '90s. Whalley is releasing "The Pale Emperor" on his Loma Vista imprint, where more polite acts like Spoon, St. Vincent and Rhye now count the "Beautiful People" singer as a label mate.

Initially, a new Manson album "wasn't something I was chasing," Whalley said. "It felt like [a] long shot for me to be interested in it, and his last few records weren't really up to his past standards. But I heard the songs, and I was beyond impressed."

He knew they'd have a difficult job convincing skeptics that Marilyn Manson was really, truly back. Sure, Manson's core audience will always give him a fair shake. But the harder part, Whalley said, was "how to get people who wouldn't think they'd like it to open up to listening. We'd play his music for our other acts and their teams, and all of them would say, 'Oh, my God, I like it. I never thought I'd like a Marilyn Manson album in today's world.' That's part of why people are intrigued with this — he's a living, breathing rock star who has found a fresh moment."

How that fresh moment will play out commercially is anyone's guess. Between the current '90s revival in fashion and music and an affection for occultish, drugged-up aesthetics across hip-hop and underground music, it's an appropriate time for a Manson revival. When Kanye West released his stomping 2013 single "Black Skinhead," many fans falsely assumed it was based on a sample of Manson's "The Beautiful People," and they found the prospect enticing.

Whalley doesn't reasonably expect to sell much more than half a million records worldwide. By comparison, it took West's "Yeezus" seven months to go platinum. "The goals are to have an impact, period, which can mean many different things. [Fans] watch the videos and stream his songs millions of times, the social media engagement is incredible — the music will have [a] reach far beyond commercial sales."



Photos courtesy of Universal Music Group

LIFESTYLE

Kady Grant of Train Spottings, left, approaches a stranger in the subway in New York City. "Hi, I'm a matchmaker," she always says at the outset to make sure the person doesn't think she's looking for a date for herself.

PHOTOS BY CAROLYN COLE/Los Angeles Times

The love train

BY TINA SUSMAN
Los Angeles Times

Errika Christensen approached a stranger, put her hand out in greeting and uttered the words that are music to many a man's ears. "Are you single?"

It's a question that Christensen fears is rarely asked in these days of online dating as face-to-face introductions take a back seat to digital photographs and flirtations.

So she started a dating service aimed at getting old-fashioned romance back on track — literally. Her Train Spottings business scours New York's subway system for singles to pair with clients, taking advantage of the feast of humanity swarming the underground transportation hubs.

"If you want to meet someone, you have to go where people are, and we know where they are. They're on the subway," said Christensen, who was 31 and an aspiring entrepreneur when she launched Train Spottings two years ago.

Christensen dismisses those who view the subways as loveless hellholes plagued by rats, lost tourists and impatient commuters. Quite the opposite, she says, rattling off statistics that make her sound more like a Metropolitan Transportation Authority spokeswoman than a mass transit matchmaker. With 24 subway lines, 468 stations and daily ridership in the millions, the city's favored mode of movement provides an endless supply of potential romantic material, she said.

"And it's constantly being refreshed," Christensen said, noting the turnover on platforms as trains pass every few minutes, spilling new human specimens onto the sliding doors and carrying away the stale ones.

There are men, women, men dressed as women, and women dressed for whatever the day or night

NYC matchmakers take subway to make connections

might hold. Recently, a couple who did not meet through Train Spottings but whose relationship warmed over long, late-night subway rides chose to wed on an N train heading from Brooklyn to Manhattan. "Stand clear of the closing doors, please," a voice warned riders as the bride, Tatyana Sandler, walked up the center of the car to her groom, Hector Irakliotis.

Train Spottings recently claimed its first marriage, though, of Kelly Aronowitz Katz and Andrew Swartz. Aronowitz Katz had paid Train Spottings to find her a match. Kady Grant, who works for Christensen as a "cupid," spotted Swartz waiting for the A train.

Eight months after Train Spottings arranged their first date, the couple married in October.

Train Spottings' system is simple, and computers come into play only when someone who has been spotted follows up by sending an email to the spotter. If Christensen thinks the person would appeal to one of her paying clients, she sends the pair on a blind date — but not before she conducts in-person interviews and background checks to verify that they are indeed single and not lying about their identities.

Neither client knows the other's name in advance, because Christensen does not want daters to scour online profiles before meeting.

"We have zero in common with online dating," said Christensen, who demonstrated her technique one afternoon in Rockefeller Center outside a coffee kiosk near a major subway hub. She walked up to the handsome stranger and asked whether he was single.

The man, who gave his name as Wayne, flashed a wide smile. Alas, Wayne said, he was not single. But he took Christensen's card and promised to share it with eligible friends.

Grant, 25, an art industry employee by day and a spotter by night, is familiar with the travails of dating in New York City.

"People don't come to New York to date," she said.

"They come here for their careers."

Grant picks her stations carefully, avoiding those that are heavy with tourists and suburbanites dashing for trains out of the city. Her favorites are ones with wide platforms, which ensure broad viewing angles, space to loiter and relative privacy when she approaches someone.

"You want it to be, like, not embarrassing," Grant said.

On a platform buzzing with activity one evening, Grant's first target was a clean-shaven blond man in his 20s in corduroy trousers. She walked up to him with her hand held out, a Train Spottings business card clasped in her fingers.

"Hi, I'm a matchmaker," Grant always says at the outset. That ensures that the person Grant approaches knows she is looking for a date for someone else, not herself.

The man in the corduroy took the card and chatted for a few seconds before jumping onto his train and disappearing.

"I like this one with the instrument," Grant said, scurrying over to a dark-haired man with a guitar case waiting for an F train.

"Everyone is married today," she said in mock exasperation after a brief conversation with the man, who, like several others that evening, was married. Grant also approaches women for male clients.

Sometimes, no words are exchanged. As one train's doors opened, Grant spotted a potential candidate standing in the car. She rushed over and slipped a card into his pocket before the doors closed. Grant estimates that about 60 percent of the people she gives cards to contact Train Spottings.

Ronald Pierre, a 27-year-old in a gray double-breasted coat, said he would be part of the 60 percent.

"Honestly, I am looking for someone who can match my personality," Pierre said after Grant handed him a card.

"Here in New York, that's hard to find," he said before excusing himself to jump on a train.



CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

TWIST ENDING

BY ALAN ARBESFELD / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

- ACROSS**
- 1 Hairstyle that usually involves clips or pins
 - 8 Confidentially
 - 15 N.J. Army base
 - 20 "Beautiful!"
 - 21 Points in the right direction
 - 22 "Let's stop fighting, O.K.?"
 - 23 "Those wreaths all look the same to me!"
 - 25 Something hard to drink?
 - 26 Law-school class
 - 27 Start of a conclusion
 - 28 Satisfies
 - 30 Sales force, informally
 - 31 Summers on the Seine
 - 32 Convention closing?
 - 33 ___ black
 - 34 Cutlass model of the 1980s-'90s
 - 36 Seville sort
 - 39 Start of an oral listing of African nations, perhaps?
 - 42 Texas home of the Bears
 - 44 One small sip
 - 46 Store
 - 47 Asked to come back, in a way
 - 49 "Over There" subj.
 - 50 VCR button
 - 51 D halved
 - 52 Alternative to JFK
- DOWN**
- 16 Caution to an orphan girl not to leave her wildebeest behind?
 - 17 Gen ___
 - 18 Winter carnival attraction
 - 19 Gen ___
 - 24 Silents star Bara
 - 29 They put points on the board
 - 33 Help to secure a loan, maybe
 - 35 "Them's fightin' words!"
 - 37 Former A.L. manager who was an N.L. M.V.P.
 - 38 Geometric figures
 - 39 Have a big mouth?
 - 40 Artire
 - 41 In a bad way
 - 42 Secure, as a sailor's rope
 - 43 She's asked "When will those clouds all disappear?" in a 1973 hit
 - 45 Where many people may follow you
 - 48 Per ___
 - 49 Popular après-ski place
 - 55 Spot in the afternoon?
 - 71 U.S. city whose name becomes another city's name if you change both its vowels to A's
 - 72 Kiss drummer Peter
 - 74 Reach the Mediterranean, say?
 - 75 Pig sounds
 - 76 ___ Warm"
 - 78 "There was the time ..."
 - 81 Middle of summer?
 - 84 Cheap roadside assistance?
 - 87 "I don't need to hear that," informally
 - 88 Skip town
 - 89 Big ___
 - 90 Stick in a rack
 - 91 Mistakes
 - 93 Setting for most of "Moby-Dick"
 - 95 Kind of TV
 - 98 Liqueur flavors
 - 99 Knockoff dress labeled "Armani," say?
 - 101 Rob
 - 103 Popular Hispanic newspaper name
 - 104 Rider's handful
 - 105 Sen of, in foreign names
 - 106 Have legs
 - 109 E.R. "A.S.A.P.,"
 - 110 Devote
 - 112 Longtime Yankee nickname
 - 113 Less loopy
 - 114 Ban competition
 - 116 Enter stealthily
 - 121 "With Reagan" memoirist
 - 122 Ready followers?
 - 123 One in a night spot?
 - 124 Did some edgy writing?
 - 125 Embroidery loop
 - 2 Embroidery loop
 - 3 Group of actors who all have stage fright?
 - 4 Emulated Diana Ross (1970) and Justin Timberlake (2002)
 - 5 How long it takes mountains to form
 - 6 Roxy Music co-founder
 - 7 Attentive dog owner
 - 8 French sister
 - 9 They may be bookmarked
 - 10 "The Family Circus" cartoonist Keane
 - 11 Castigate
 - 12 Away, in a way
 - 13 Republican politico Michael
 - 14 "___ happens ..."
 - 15 National Do Not Call Registry overseer, for short
 - 16 Ancient galley

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GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and visit gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE

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H	E	N	V	S	O	D	O	N	E	S								
I	S	V	T		N	E	I	N	W	O								
E	L	O	H	O	E	N	I	T	V	O	E	T	T	I				
S	E	S	I	N	V	W	S	V	T	V	E	S	N	O				
S	I	N	D	O	S	E	N	O										
I	W	L	M	O	T	O	S	E	L	E	V	O	N	O				
R	E	W	E	L	E	V	E	N										
C	L	O																
V	H	S	O	E	N	O	E	L	V	E	S	T	E					
A	E	H	W	E	H	E	L	N	I	S	I	V						
T	O	C																
T	Y	N	E	S	H													
I	T	Y	A	L	O	G	A	N	O	A								
W	H	E	I	O														
S	E	E	H															
R	E	L	I	O														
O	C	C	H															
X	I	D	I															

KNOWLEDGE

ARCHIVE PHOTO OF THE DAY

STRIPES CENTRAL

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PACIFIC SPORTSBLOG

PACIFIC STORM TRACKER

OMBUDSMAN

GADGETS & CHARTS

Smart socks, smart pacifier, smart ring:

The Internet of Things keeps growing

By KEVIN HUNT
Chicago Tribune



Sensoria Smart Socks
Courtesy of Sensoria/TNS

Edyn Garden Sensor and Water Valve

What: A Wi-Fi-connected system with smartphone app for a surefire green garden. The Garden Sensor analyzes soil and environmental conditions near your plants, then the Water Valve uses that data to water them as needed. The app recommends what to grow, and when, based on the sensor's information.

Want it, need it?: The unlucky, or lazy, gardener will want it.

Price, availability: Garden Sensor (\$99.99) and Water Valve (\$59.99) by preorder; coming this spring.

Information: edyn.com

Sensoria Smart Socks

What: An electronic anklelet that snaps magnetically onto the cuff of the sock. (The sock is washable; the anklelet is not.) Why a smart sock instead of a smart-watch? Sensoria says its device, with a stride analyzer and foot-landing gauge, can help a runner/walker reduce impact and avoid injury. The app displays, in a heat map, where pressure is placed on the foot and includes a coaching feature that voices advice when it detects poor form.

Want it, need it?: Neither.

Price, availability: \$149, expected by March.

Information: sensoriafitness.com

XYZprinting Food Printer

What: A 3D printer that sculpts uncooked, doughy food, into gorgeous ready-to-cook cookies or cake decorations. Ford builds prototype car parts with 3D printers. But print-and-eat is something new.

Want it, need it?: From farm to table and now printer to mouth. It's all local, right?

Price, availability: Uncertain, sometime this year.

Information: xyzprinting.com

Will 2015 be the year of the connected pacifier, the almighty gesture-control ring or printable, edible cupcake frosting? Probably not, but I now feel less guilt-ridden about last year's endorsement of a slow cooker programmable and controllable by a smartphone app.

The wireless connection of everyday things continues.

Pacifi-Smart Pacifier

What: A Bluetooth-connected smart pacifier from Blue Maestro that sends a baby's temperature to a parent's smartphone. Be careful, though: It's a \$39 sachet. Fortunately, after Junior hurls it into the all-you-can-eat salad bar while you're not looking, a smartphone alarm will let you know it's missing as soon as it's out of Bluetooth range. Because this dishwasher-safe pacifier uses a low-energy Bluetooth Smart chip, the battery should last at least a year.

Want it, need it?: For the concerned baby, yes.

Price, availability: \$39 (preorder), by midyear.

Information: bluemaestro.com

Self-Parking BMW i3 (Prototype)

What: An electric car that drives itself through a multistory parking garage, finds a space, parks and locks, then arrives at the exit when summoned — by the owner's smartwatch app. The on-board Remote Valet Parking Assistant uses four lasers to scan what's ahead while navigating the garage. BMW used a Samsung Gear S smartwatch in demonstrations at the Consumer Electronics Show, though it's possible they will develop apps for other smartwatch platforms.

Want it, need it?: Are you kidding? Absolutely.

Price, availability: Uncertain.

Information: bmwblog.com

GADGET WATCH

Virtual keyboard pairs with any Bluetooth device

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

With the Virtual Keyboard from Brookstone, you type like there's a keyboard there, even though there isn't.

That might not make sense, but this is a really cool pocket-sized (2.4-by-1.6 by-0.6 inches, 2.75 ounce) device. Just pair the hardware with any Bluetooth device you want to use.

Turn it on and lay the virtual keyboard — which uses laser projection — on any flat surface. Optics track your fingers typing and communicate with the device with which the keyboard is paired.

The device projects a keyboard approximately 11 inches wide by 4 inches high.

A display shows key features such as battery level, caps lock, volume, sensitivity settings and brightness.

The three sensitivity levels are for different light conditions and even for those of you who have painted fingernails. Different modes can be set for how you position your fingers and wrist for typing and for using the device as a mouse.

An internal 500mAh lithium-ion rechargeable battery will last for about two hours of continuous typing.

Online: Brookstone.com \$119.99

The Phorce Freedom over-the-shoulder messenger smart bag holds everything you would expect but also charges two USB devices inside the bag.

The main compartment holds a whopping 15,000mAh lithium-ion rechargeable battery that can charge devices simultaneously, including tab-

Pair any Bluetooth device with Brookstone's Virtual Keyboard, and you can type like there's a real keyboard in front of you.

TNS



lets and smartphones.

The battery is built with intelligent connectors that automatically supply the proper voltage to each device.

The bag is coated natural canvas and has dark gunmetal hardware. In case of rain, its water-resistant fabric and waterproof zippers will help keep the contents dry.

If you prefer, the bag's strap splits into two, converting the shoulder bag to a backpack. Or take off the straps and use it as a briefcase.

A microUSB cable is included for charging the battery.

Online: phorce.com; \$199

Chicoeex Magic Opener isn't really magic and doesn't require a USB connection, but I think it's cool so I'll tell you about it.

It's designed to open any bottle or can on the planet and is especially good for anyone suffering from arthritis or other hand ailments.

Sometimes even bottles with a twist-off cap can be a challenge for your hands, but not with this magic opener.

It's advertised as "No strain, no pain, perfect for seniors, kids and gentle on hands." I can say after using on a few bottles it's all of that.

A magnetic bag makes it easy to store and find the bottle-shaped opener.

The Original (\$19.99) opens bottles and soda cans, while the Extreme (\$24.99) opener will do the same as well as open canned food.

Online: MagicOpener.com

The iDapt wireless charger (i4w Qi) is as useful as it gets for charging multiple or single portable electronic gadgets — even some without cords.

It's compatible with more than 5,000 devices, and can charge up to four simultaneously. If your device is Qi-enabled, all you do is lay it on the front of the base to charge it.

In addition to wireless charging, iDapt charging systems are known for their charging "tips" that are interchangeable.

Tips included with the system are a pair of microUSB, miniUSB and both the newer Apple Lightning and older 30-pin chargers. Additional tips can be purchased for \$9.99 each.

Any two of these can be put to use at the same time along with the Qi-enabled device. The fourth device can be charged out of the USB port (2.1 to 2.4amps) with your own USB cable.

Built-in technology lets the charger sense what charge is needed for any device, enabling it to be charged at the correct speed.

Online: idaptweb.com \$59.99

ITUNES MUSIC

Top 10 albums on the iTunes Store for Jan. 28:

1. "American Beauty/American Psycho," Fall Out Boy
2. "1989," Taylor Swift
3. "B4 Da \$\$," Joey Bada\$\$
4. "Vulnicura," Bjork
5. "Title (Deluxe)," Meghan Trainor
6. "x," Ed Sheeran
7. "Tetsuo & Youth," Lupe Fiasco
8. "The Pinkprint," Nicki Minaj
9. "2014 Forest Hills Drive," Cole
10. "What a Terrible World, What a Beautiful World," The Decemberists

— Compiled by TNS

SPOTIFY MUSIC

The most streamed tracks on Spotify from Jan. 19-25.

1. Mark Ronson, "Uptown Funk"
2. Ed Sheeran, "Thinking Out Loud"
3. Hozier, "Take Me To Church"
4. Sam Smith, "I'm Not The Only One"
5. Flo Rida, "GDFR" (feat. Sage The Gemini and Lockjaw)
6. Ellie Goulding, "Love Me Like You Do — From the 'Fifty Shades Of Grey' soundtrack"
7. The Weeknd, "Earned It" (Fifty Shades Of Grey) From the 'Fifty Shades Of Grey' soundtrack"
8. Big Sean, "I Don't F— With You"
9. Nicki Minaj, "Only"
10. Maroon 5, "Sugar"

— Compiled by The Associated Press

ITUNES MOVIES

Top 10 movies downloaded from the iTunes Store for Jan. 28:

1. "Lucy"
2. "Gone Girl"
3. "The Drop"
4. "Boydhood"
5. "Dracula Untold"
6. "The Interview"
7. "John Wick"
8. "A Walk Among the Tombstones"
9. "Fury"
10. "The Equalizer"

— Compiled by TNS

VIDEO GAMES

The editors of Game Informer rank the Top 10 Wii U games for January:

1. "Super Smash Bros. for Wii U," Nintendo
2. "Bayonetta 2," Nintendo
4. "Hyrule Warriors," Activision
5. "Mario Kart 8," Nintendo
6. "Captain Toad: Treasure Tracker," Nintendo
7. "Watch Dogs," Ubisoft
8. "Donkey Kong Country: Tropical Freeze," Nintendo
9. "SteamWorld Dig," Image & From
10. "The LEGO Movie Videogame," Warner Bros.

— Compiled by TNS

APPS

Top 5 new paid apps for Jan. 28: ANDROID

1. Adventure Time Game Wizard
2. Flockers
3. Ref. Guide for Essential Oils
4. SpongeBob: Sponges on the Run
5. Blaze and the Monster Machines

Top 5 paid apps for Jan. 28: APPLE

1. Trivia Crack (Ad Free)
2. Minicraft — Pocket Edition
3. Heads Up!
4. Five Nights at Freddy's 2
5. Five Nights at Freddy's

— Compiled by TNS

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STARS AND STRIPES OFFERS A SUMMARY OF THE LEADING STORIES OF THE WEEK.



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BUSINESS/WEATHER

Consumers drive steady US economy

By Josh Boak
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — There's a good reason the U.S. economy is impressing the world right now despite a slowdown in the final three months of 2014: In a word, steadiness.

Companies have been hiring at healthy rates for the past year. Layoffs hover near historic lows. Auto sales are strong. Gas prices have sunk. Congressional budget fights have faded. Americans are increasingly confident.

All that fed a surge of consumer spending last quarter, offsetting weaker business spending caused in part by a pullback by oil drillers and a frail global economy.

The U.S. economy as a whole expanded at a 2.6 percent annual rate, the government said Friday, down from a sizzling 5 percent gain the previous quarter. Yet consumers signaled their optimism by spending at the fastest rate in nearly nine years.

"This hasn't changed my pic-

ture on the strength and resilience of the U.S. economy," said Scott Anderson, chief economist at the Bank of the West. "Almost all the drivers of consumer spending are pointing in the right direction."

Nearly six years into the recovery from the Great Recession, the economy has finally gone from straining just to grow to posting consistently solid gains. The gains have come even though many households continue to struggle without much of a financial cushion. Nearly half say they spend all their income, go into debt or use savings to meet their expenses, a new analysis by the Pew Charitable Trusts has found.

In addition, a surging dollar is denting the earnings of U.S. companies that operate overseas. And energy firms have been hurt by plummeting oil prices, and as a result, companies in the Standard & Poor's 500 index are expected to report weak profit growth.

But collectively, consumers and investors are showing renewed

faith in the economy.

On Friday, the University of Michigan said its sentiment index found that U.S. consumers are more confident than they've been since 2004. Also Friday, the government said wages and benefits are ticking up, a sign that steady job gains may be compelling employers to pay a bit more.

Most indicators suggest that the economy has surpassed a psychological threshold that has made businesses more comfortable with hiring and has infused consumers with more enthusiasm.

At a time when Europe, Asia and South America face deep anxieties, the U.S. economy's greatest strength might be its remarkable sturdiness.

The consensus expectation is that the U.S. economy will expand a solid 3 percent this year, well above the recovery's 2.2 percent annual average. This has made U.S. stocks and Treasuries comparably attractive to buyers from the risks from Europe's prolonged slump, collapsing oil prices,

China's slowdown and Japan's struggles to stave off recession.

Yet the U.S. economy still has additional room to continue expanding. In current dollars, the median household income of \$54,417 remains about \$1,800 below its late 2007 levels, according to Senter Research. More than 5 million households owe more on their mortgages than their homes are worth, according to the real estate data firm CoreLogic.

MARKET WATCH

Jan. 30, 2015

Dow Jones industrials	-251.90
	17,164.95
Nasdaq composite	-48.17
	4,635.24
Standard & Poor's 500	-26.26
	1,994.99
Russell 2000	-24.79
	1,165.39

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Feb. 2)	\$1.1265
Dollar buys (Feb. 2)	€0.8602
Japanese yen (Feb. 2)	\$1.55
South Korean won (Feb. 2)	1,067.00

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.6770
British pound	\$1.5061/0.3400
Canada (dollar)	1.2681
China (Yuan)	6.2495
Denmark (Krone)	5.5892
Egypt (Pound)	7.5895
Euro	\$1.1293/0.8755
Hong Kong (dollar)	7.7524
Hungary (Forint)	285.44
Israel (Shekel)	3.9309
Japan (Yen)	117.53
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2953
Norway (Krone)	7.7274
Philippines (Peso)	44.21
Poland (Zloty)	3.70
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7600
Singapore (dollar)	1.3528
South Korea (Won)	1,103.09
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9174
Thailand (Bath)	32.72
Turkey (New Lira)	4,424

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

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
3-month bill	0.11
Federal funds market rate	0.11
3-month bill	0.02
30-year bond	2.22

WEATHER OUTLOOK

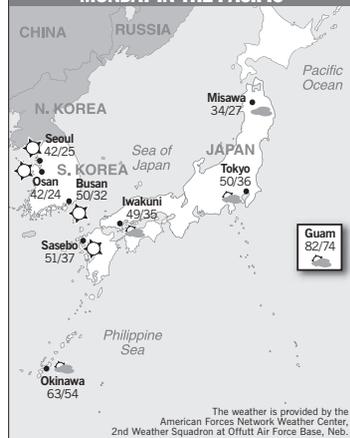
SUNDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



SUNDAY IN EUROPE



MONDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

Sunday's US temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	Chatanooga	51	36	Rain	Fort Wayne	28	6	Snow	Louisville	45	23	Rain	Pocatello	42	34	Cir	Slou City	18	-7	Snow
Ablene, Tex	52	27	Cir	Cheyenne	22	12	PCldy	Fresno	61	44	Cir	Lubbock	47	27	Cir	Portland, Maine	19	0	Cir	Siox Falls	12	-7	Snow
Akron, Ohio	30	12	Snow	Chicago	27	11	Snow	Goodland	30	17	Cir	Macon	63	49	Rain	Portland, Ore.	48	44	Rain	South Bend	25	6	Snow
Albany, N.Y.	24	6	Cir	Cincinnati	40	13	Rain	Grand Junction	46	25	PCldy	Madison	17	0	Snow	Providence	28	15	Cir	Springfield	34	31	Snow
Albuquerque	49	28	Cir	Cleveland	26	10	Snow	Grand Rapids	19	1	Snow	Medford	52	43	Cir	Pueblo	37	18	Cir	Springfield, Ill.	35	10	Snow
Allentown, Pa.	33	26	Snow	Colorado Springs	35	23	Cir	Great Falls	34	41	Cir	Memphis	57	29	Rain	Raleigh-Durham	54	47	Rain	Springfield, Mo.	42	16	Snow
Amarillo	41	22	Cir	Columbia, S.C.	61	51	Cir	Green Bay	11	2	Cir	Miami Beach	75	68	Cir	Rapid City	18	10	Cir	St. Louis	62	33	Snow
Anchorage	25	10	Cir	Columbus, Ga.	61	46	Rain	Greensboro, N.C.	52	37	Cir	Midland-Odessa	53	29	Cir	Reno	60	36	PCldy	Tallahassee	67	58	Cir
Ashville	48	38	Rain	Columbus, Ohio	36	12	Snow	Harrisburg	33	27	Cir	Milwaukee	22	9	Snow	Richmond	50	42	Cir	Tempa	74	62	PCldy
Atlanta	41	22	Cir	Concord, N.H.	19	7	Snow	Hartford Spfld	28	12	Cir	Miami Beach	75	68	Cir	Roanoke	48	38	Cir	Tampa	74	62	PCldy
Atlantic City	39	35	Cir	Corpus Christi	75	46	Cir	Helenia	34	28	Cir	Missoula	33	25	Cir	Rochester	18	3	Snow	Topeka	34	9	Cir
Austin	54	37	Rain	Dallas-Ft. Worth	57	29	Rain	Honolulu	65	54	Cir	Mobile	65	54	Cir	Rockford	35	4	Snow	Tucson	63	42	PCldy
Baltimore	38	34	Snow	Dayton	35	11	Snow	Houston	69	41	Rain	Montgomery	62	44	Rain	Sacramento	64	43	PCldy	Tulsa	63	42	PCldy
Baton Rouge	71	42	Rain	Daytona Beach	75	62	Cir	Huntsville	54	32	Rain	Nashville	55	30	Rain	St. Louis	44	17	Rain	Tupelo	59	32	Rain
Billings	8	0	Cir	Denver	35	21	Cir	Indianapolis	33	9	Snow	New Orleans	73	48	Rain	St. Petersburg	72	63	PCldy	Washington	61	36	Cir
Birmingham	58	36	Rain	Des Moines	28	2	Snow	Jackson, Miss.	66	35	Rain	New York City	32	25	Cir	St. Thomas	83	75	Rain	Waco	62	32	Rain
Bismarck	8	0	Cir	Detroit	23	2	Snow	Jacksonville	73	58	PCldy	Newark	34	26	Snow	Salem, Ore.	51	45	Rain	W. Palm Beach	75	67	Cir
Boise	42	32	Cir	Duluth	8	-8	Snow	Janeau	28	15	Snow	Norfolk, Va.	52	44	Cir	Salt Lake City	47	33	Cir	Wichita	33	13	Cir
Boston	26	11	PCldy	El Paso	53	35	Cir	Kansas City	34	8	Snow	North Platte	24	8	Snow	San Angelo	56	30	Cir	Wichita Falls	49	24	Cir
Bridgeport	24	21	Cir	Elkins	40	24	Snow	Key West	57	41	Cir	Oklahoma City	32	20	Cir	San Antonio	68	40	Cir	Wilkes-Barre	29	20	Snow
Brownsville	79	55	Cir	Erie	22	8	Snow	Knoxville	50	34	Rain	Omaha	21	8	Snow	San Diego	70	53	PCldy	Wilmington, Del.	37	34	Snow
Buffalo	18	6	Snow	Eugene	51	45	Rain	Lake Charles	69	41	Rain	Orlando	76	62	PCldy	San Francisco	62	50	PCldy	Yonkers	39	31	Cir
Burlington, Vt.	31	27	Cir	Fairbanks	6	-7	Cir	Las Vegas	63	41	PCldy	Portland	49	25	Rain	San Jose	67	44	Cir	Youngstown	28	11	Snow
Caribou, Maine	1	-21	Cir	Fargo	7	5	Cir	Lexington	46	21	Rain	Phoenix	36	31	Snow	Seattle	51	45	Rain				
Casper, Wyo.	31	27	Cir	Flagstaff	49	26	Cir	Lincoln	21	-1	Snow	Philadelphia	36	31	Snow	Savannah	67	55	Cir				
Charleston, S.C.	65	54	Cir	Flagstaff	49	26	Cir	Little Rock	55	28	Rain	Phoenix	36	31	Snow	Seattle	51	45	Rain				
Charleston, S.W.	46	24	Rain	Ft. Smith	49	22	Rain	Los Angeles	73	54	Cir	Pittsburgh	33	15	Snow	Shreveport	60	32	Cir				
Charlotte, N.C.	52	46	Cir																				

National temperature extremes
Hi: Fri., 78, Pompano Beach, Fla.
Lo: Fri., -19, International Falls, Minn.

SPORTS BRIEFS/AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Briefly

NASCAR Hall class headlined by Elliott

The Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Bill Elliott headlined the sixth class of inductees into NASCAR's Hall of Fame, a group that included three champions, the first African-American winner and a driver with movie star looks.

"Awesome Bill From Dawsonville" was NASCAR's 1988 champion, a 44-race winner and the first driver to win the Winston Million bonus in 1985 for winning three NASCAR crown jewel races.

A 16-time winner of NASCAR's most popular driver award, Elliott won two Daytona 500s and the Southern 500 three times.

His induction came one day after his 19-year-old son, Chase, was named by Hendrick Motorsports as the driver who will replace four-time champion Jeff Gordon in the iconic No. 24.

Introduced by Kasey Kahne, who replaced Elliott in the No. 9 in 2004, Elliott was inducted by former car owner Ray Evernham.

"Thinking about it and dreaming about it and listening to guys on the radio ... it's just incredible," Elliott said. "I dreamed of doing this."

The sixth class was the first to be comprised of five drivers.

First to be inducted Friday night was Fred Lorenzen, one of NASCAR's first superstars.

He was followed by Wendell Scott, the first African-American driver to be elected to the Hall.

Reigning Sprint Cup champion Kevin Harvick introduced the third inductee, Rex White.

Two-time champion Joe Weatherly was fourth to be inducted, and was introduced by 2012 champion Brad Keselowski.

Weatherly, who died after a crash at Riverside in 1964, was accepted into the Hall by Joy Barbée, his youngest niece.

Source: Rubio to return Monday against Dallas

MINNEAPOLIS — Ricky Rubio is one game away from returning to the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Rubio has been cleared to play on Monday against the Dallas Mavericks, a person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press on Saturday. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because an announcement has not been made.

Rubio has been ruled out since severely injuring his left ankle Nov. 7. He will have missed 43 games because of the injury, and the Wolves sunk to the bottom of the league without him.

They are 8-38 entering Saturday night's game against Cleveland. When he returns, the team plans to restrict him to minutes until after the All-Star break while he sees how his ankle responds.

Laird leads in Phoenix as Tiger misses the cut

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Martin Laird had another 5-under 66 to take a two-shot lead in a Phoenix Open that will be without Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson on Super Bowl weekend.

The bigger shock was Woods — not because he missed the cut, but how. Woods made bogey on his last hole for an 82, the worst score in his two decades as a pro. Mickelson played in the afternoon and wasn't much better. He shot 76 and missed the cut by two shots.

Laird ran off three birdies in the cold rain on the back nine at TPC Scottsdale until taking his lone bogey on the last hole. He was at 10-under 132, two shots ahead of Daniel Berger, who had a 69.

In other golf news: Tiger Woods is out of the top 50 in the world ranking for the first time in three years.

If he doesn't turn his game around quickly, he will be ineligible for a World Golf Championship for only the second time.

Woods was No. 1 in the world last May. After missing most of last year recovering from back surgery, he came to the Phoenix Open at No. 47 and missed the cut by 12 shots. He was last out of the top 50 on Nov. 27, 2011.

He is to play Torrey Pines next week and the Honda Classic two weeks later. He must be in the top 50 after the Honda Classic to be eligible for the WGC event at Dorland.

Lydia Ko is 18 holes from history.

The 17-year-old New Zealand-er birdied five consecutive holes and shot a 7-under 65 in the third round of the Coates Golf Championship on Friday at Ocala, Fla., to take the outright lead in the LPGA Tour's season opener.

If she hangs on Saturday, she would become the youngest golfer — male or female — to be ranked No. 1 in the World Golf Rankings.

Second-round leader Ha Na Jang was a stroke back at 13-under 203 after a 1-under 71 Friday.

Rory McIlroy extended his lead to four shots with a 6-under 66 in the third round of the Dubai Desert Classic on Saturday at the United Arab Emirates.

The top-ranked McIlroy, who led by a stroke overnight, made just one birdie on the back nine of Emirates Golf Club's Majlis course after five birdies in his first eight holes.

With an overall 20-under 196, McIlroy can challenge the tournament winning record of 22 under, set by Stephen Gallacher in 2013 and Thomas Bjorn in 2001.

Denmark's Morten Soren Madsen, who shot a 9-under 63 on Friday, was second after a 66.



BERNAT ARMANQUE/AP

Serena Williams celebrates after winning a point against Russia's Maria Sharapova on Saturday during the women's singles final at the Australian Open in Melbourne, Australia. Williams won 6-3, 7-6 (5).

Williams tops Sharapova for 19th Grand Slam title

By JOHN PYE
The Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Serena Williams stuck out a fist in mock triumph and mouthed "C'mon," careful not to push her point too far.

The 33-year-old Williams was closing in on her 19th Grand Slam singles title, her 16th straight win over Maria Sharapova and her sixth Australian Open championship when she was docked a point by the chair umpire for hindrance — for yelling in celebration too early when she thought she'd hit a service winner.

She didn't let that, or another early celebration on match point, or a hacking cough that made her sick, become distractions. Instead, Williams maintained her composure to beat Sharapova 6-3, 7-6 (5) on Saturday night to continue her 100 percent record in finals at Melbourne Park and move closer to Steffi Graf's record of 22 major titles in the Open era.

"I got too excited and I hit a great serve ... I didn't expect her to get it back," Williams explained of the hindrance call in the seventh game of the second set. "I said, 'C'mon,' a little too soon. I guess there's a rule that you can't do it. So I'm fine with it. I moved on very fast to the next point; just tried to stay as focused as I could."

Saturday

Weather: Sunny, high of 68 degrees.

Attendance: Single session: 19,236

Stat of the day: 19 — number of career Grand Slam singles titles by Serena Williams after Saturday's victory, second only to Steffi Graf's 22 in the Open era.

Quote of the day: "Growing up I wasn't the richest, but I had a rich family in spirit and support. Standing here with 19 championships is something I never thought would happen." Williams.

Matches: Sunday: Men's singles final: No. 1 Novak Djokovic vs. No. 5 Andy Murray; mixed doubles final: No. 3 Kristina Mladenovic, France, and Daniel Nestor, Canada, vs. No. 7 Martina Hingis, Switzerland, and Leander Paes, India.

Sunday forecast: Chance of showers, high of 68.

— The Associated Press

The muted fist pump, she said, was just for fun.

"I'm like, 'C'mon.' It just goes to show you I have more fun on the court. I would have never done that three years ago, four years ago," said Williams. "So I just kind of made a little sarcasm after that."

On her third match point, she let her racket go before hearing a call on what she thought was an ace.

"I thought, 'Wow this is it, I did it,' only to hear let. I was like, 'OK Serena,'" she said.

So she fell back on her biggest weapon, firing another ace — her

15th of the set and 18th of the match. This time, after checking it was official, she bounced around like a little child.

"I'm so honored to be here and to hold this 19th trophy," Williams said. "I didn't think it would happen this fast, to be honest, but it feels really good."

Williams, at 33 years and 127 days, became the oldest winner of the Australian women's title in the Open era and moved into outright second place on the list of major winners in the Open era, moving clear of Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova on 18.

No. 20 is her next objective, and her next chance is at the French Open.

"When I think about Paris, I don't think about 20. I just think about winning there," said Williams, who didn't reach a quarterfinal in a Grand Slam between her wins at the 2013 and 2014 U.S. Opens.

On the men's side, Fabio Fognini and Simone Bolelli became the first all-Italian team to capture a Grand Slam men's doubles title in more than 50 years after beating French pair Nicolas Mahut and Pierre-Hugues Herbert 6-4, 6-4.

Novak Djokovic has won all four times he's reached the Australian Open final and is aiming to maintain his 100 percent record when he takes on Andy Murray in Sunday's singles final.

NHL/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

NHL roundup

Despres, Pens top Devils in OT

The Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — The struggling Pittsburgh Penguins could have given up against the New Jersey Devils.

They trailed by a goal in the third period, and goalie Cory Schneider was stopping everything and getting baited out by some pings off the posts.

But the Penguins hung in and pulled out a much-needed win. Defenseman Simon Despres scored 2:21 into overtime, and the Penguins rallied to beat the Devils 2-1 on Friday night.

"The way things have been going lately, we could have just accepted this as a loss, but we all stayed with it," said Chris Kunitz, who forced overtime with a power-play goal with 3:11 left in regulation. "That was the key. We stayed with it, stayed focused, kept that pressure on."

The loss spoiled a magnificent performance by Schneider, who made 41 saves.

The winning goal came after Schneider made a close-in stop on Brandon Sutton. The Penguins kept the puck in the zone, and Despres' shot from inside the blue line beat a screened Schneider.

"I didn't get a great look at it," Schneider said. "I think he came one way and shot it back the other through a screen. It just got a piece of the post and went in. It was a nice shot."

Devils president and general manager Lou Lamorello said Schneider's performance was one of the best he has seen by a goalie in a while.

"He gave us a chance to win, more than a chance to win," Lamorello said. "It's a shame he didn't get the win. Certainly the team would get the win, but he deserved a better fate."

Marc-Andre Fleury made 13 saves for the Penguins, who fell behind 1-0 when Devils forward Steve Bernier scored on a wrap-around 6:08 into the third period.

New Jersey failed to tie its season-best, three-game winning streak. Pittsburgh won for the second time in seven games (2-3-2).

"We talked about that, the last couple of days, that most importantly, we had to stay with it," Penguins coach Mike Johnston said. "We were playing our game. We played a good game. We didn't flinch when they scored. We did whatever it took to get the game-winning goal."

Schneider stopped the first 37 Pittsburgh shots and seemed on the verge of his third shutout of the season when Peter Harrold took a high-sticking penalty with 3:29 left in regulation. The Penguins needed only 18 seconds to tie it 1-1. Sidney

Crosby, who had been stopped point blank earlier in the period by Schneider on a nice setup by David Perron, took a shot from the right circle that hit Schneider in the chest. Defenseman Adam Larsson couldn't clear the puck, and Kunitz fired the rebound into the net for his 15th goal.

Blues 3, Hurricanes 2 (SO): Kevin Shattenkirk scored in the shootout, and visiting St. Louis struck for his fourth straight win.

Ryan Reaves and David Backes scored in regulation for the Blues, and Jake Allen made 26 saves before stopping all three Carolina shooters in the tiebreaker.

Defensemen Justin Faulk and Ryan Murphy scored for Carolina, which had its three-game winning streak snapped, but the Hurricanes have earned points in nine of 11 January games.

Avalanche 3, Predators 0 (SO): Semjon Varlamov made 23 saves for his fourth shutout of the season, and host Colorado beat Nashville.

Jarome Iginla, Maxime Talbot, and Gabriel Landeskog had goals for the Avalanche, who earned an important win in their pursuit of a playoff berth.

Colorado is trying to stay in the thick of the race after a slow start to the season. The Avalanche are two points behind Calgary for the second wild-card position in the Western Conference but they have played one more game than the Flames.

Canucks 5, Sabres 2: Ryan Miller made 22 saves in his first game against his former team, and host Vancouver sent Buffalo to its 14th straight regulation loss.

Chris Higgins had a goal and assist, and Bob Horvat, Yannick Weber, Nick Bonino and Radim Vrabata also scored for the Canucks, who snapped a two-game skid. Christopher Tanev added two assists.

Chris Stewart had both goals for the Sabres (14-33-3).

Blackhawks 4, Ducks 1: Patrick Kane had two goals and an assist, and Patrick Sharp assisted on every Chicago goal in a victory over host Anaheim.

Captain Jonathan Toews and Duncan Keith also scored for the Blackhawks, who beat the NHL-leading Ducks for the third straight time at Honda Center. Jeremy Crawford made 21 saves as Chicago controlled the meeting of Western Conference powers, taking a three-goal lead in the second period.

Rickard Rakell scored with 9:54 play and Frederik Andersen stopped 29 shots for the Ducks, who have back-to-back losses in two games after a six-game winning streak.



Juho Cortez/AP

New Jersey goalie Cory Schneider is unable to keep a shot from Pittsburgh's Simon Despres from going into the net during Friday's game in Newark, N.J. Pittsburgh won 2-1 in overtime.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division						
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	50	15	3	66	163	132
Montreal	47	31	13	7	165	108
Detroit	49	28	12	9	165	145
Florida	46	21	15	10	114	129
Toronto	50	22	4	48	144	152
Ottawa	47	19	19	9	129	134
Buffalo	50	13	31	9	94	179

Metropolitan Division						
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
N.Y. Islanders	48	25	15	1	65	157
Pittsburgh	48	24	13	8	64	125
Washington	48	24	14	9	59	144
N.Y. Rangers	46	15	8	58	125	111
Philadelphia	50	21	27	7	49	139
Columbus	47	22	23	4	45	119
New Jersey	49	18	22	9	45	117
Carolina	48	17	25	6	40	124

Western Conference

Central Division						
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Nashville	48	31	15	6	68	145
St. Louis	48	31	13	4	66	116
Chicago	49	26	12	2	64	112
Winnipeg	50	26	16	8	60	147
Colorado	50	21	18	11	53	141
Minnesota	48	18	27	6	51	152

Pacific Division						
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Anaheim	50	32	12	6	70	147
San Jose	49	26	13	8	58	127
Vancouver	47	27	17	3	57	120
Calgary	47	25	20	5	40	127
Vancouver 2	47	12	32	5	54	139
Arizona	48	17	26	5	40	161
Edmonton	48	17	25	6	40	157

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.
Friday's games:
 St. Louis 3, Carolina 2, SO
 Pittsburgh 2, New Jersey 1, OT
 Colorado 3, Nashville 0
 Vancouver 5, Buffalo 2
 Chicago 4, Anaheim 1

Saturday's games:
 Washington at Montreal
 N.Y. Islanders at Detroit
 Toronto at Philadelphia
 Carolina at N.Y. Rangers
 Florida at New Jersey
 Los Angeles at Boston
 Columbus at Tampa Bay
 Edmonton at Calgary
 Chicago at San Jose

Sunday's games:
 St. Louis at Montreal
 Arizona at Washington
 Nashville at Pittsburgh
 Minnesota at Vancouver
 Philadelphia at Vancouver
 Anaheim at N.Y. Rangers
 Winnipeg at Calgary
 Edmonton at San Jose

Friday

Penguins 2, Devils 1 (OT)
 Pittsburgh 2, New Jersey 1
 New Jersey 0, 0 1 1-2
 6:08, 2 Pittsburgh, Kunitz 15 (Crosby, Letang), 16:49 (pp.)

Overtime: 3 Pittsburgh, Despres 2 (Sutter, Letang), 2:21
 3-43, New Jersey 4-3 7-0-14
Power-play opportunities—Pittsburgh 2 of 3; New Jersey 0 of 2

Goals—Pittsburgh, Fleury 23-10 (5 14 shots; 3 saves); New Jersey, Bernier 17-19 (5 43-41).
A—16,592 (17,625), T—2:31.

Blues 3, Hurricanes 2 (SO)

St. Louis 3, Carolina 2
 Carolina 1, 1 0 0-3
 St. Louis won shootout 1-0

First Period—St. Louis, Reaves 5 (Ott, Goff), 1:48; 2:1, St. Louis, Backes 17 (Prangue, Oshie), 3:25; 3, Carolina, Faulk 10 (McClennan, Malone), 10:57

Second Period—4, Carolina, Murphy 1 (Nash, Jo-Staah), 14:19 (pp.)
Shootout—St. Louis, 1 (Oshie, Ng, Shattenkirk); Carolina, 0 (Rask, Ng, Terry, Ng, E.Staal, Ng)

Shots on Goal—St. Louis 8-10-11-3-32, Carolina 9-10-6-3-28

Power-play opportunities—St. Louis 0 of 1; Carolina 1 of 1
Goals—St. Louis, Allen 14-5-2 (28 shots; 35 saves), Carolina, Khudonov 13-11, Ward 11-17-4 (32/35 17r, 29-29).
A—13,687 (18,680), T—7:21

Avalanche 3, Predators 0

Colorado 3, Nashville 0
 Colorado 1, 1 0 0-2

First Period—1, Colorado, Talbot 4 (MacKinnon, O'Reilly), 13:49

Third Period—2, Colorado, Iginla 16 (Duchene, Tanguay), 5:54; 3, Colorado, Landeskog 10 (MacKinnon), 18:49 (en.)

Shots on Goal—Nashville 7-8-8-23, Colorado 9-10-9-28

Power-play opportunities—Nashville 0 of 2; Colorado 0 of 4
Goals—Nashville, Mazanc 0-1-0 (27 shots; 35 saves), Colorado, Varlamov 13-10 (23-23).
A—18,064 (18,007), T—7:23

Canucks 5, Sabres 2

Buffalo 2, Vancouver 1
 Vancouver 1, 1 0 0-2

First Period—1, Buffalo, Stewart 8 (Ennis, Girgensons), 4:00 (pp.) 2, Vancouver, Horvat 4 (Kassian, Matthias), 19:36

Second Period—3, Vancouver, W. Weber 4 (Higgins, Knyl, 1:45 (pp.), 4; Vancouver, Bonino 11 (H.Sedin, D.Sedin), 4:19 (pp.) 5, Buffalo, Stewart 9 (Flynn, Zadorov), 14:16 (pp.)

Third Period—6, Vancouver, Higgins 7 (Tanev, Hamulus), 5:51; 7, Vancouver, Wabata 19 (Tanev, H.Sedin), 19:25 (en.)

Shots on Goal—Buffalo 9-8-6-22, Vancouver 11-12-15-38

Power-play opportunities—Buffalo 2 of 6; Vancouver 2 of 4
Goals—Buffalo, Hackett 0-1-0 (37 shots; 35 saves); Vancouver, Miller 24-11-1 (22-20).
A—16,570 (18,910), T—2:26

Blackhawks 4, Ducks 1

Chicago 4, Anaheim 1
 Anaheim 1, 1 2 1-4

First Period—1, Chicago, Toews 15 (Kane, Sharp), 9:20

Second Period—2, Chicago, Keith 7 (Sharp), 9:16; 3, Chicago, Kane 24 (Sharp, Richards), 13:06 (pp.) 5, Chicago, Kane 25 (Sharp, Oduya), 13:25

Third Period—4, Anaheim, Rakell 5 (Rydz, Sharp), 1:06 (pp.) 5, Chicago, Kane 28 (Sharp, Oduya), 13:25

Shots on Goal—Chicago 13-14-6-33, Anaheim 7-8-8-22

Power-play opportunities—Chicago 0 of 3; Anaheim 3 of 5
Goals—Chicago, Crawford 19-1-1 (22 shots; 21 saves); Anaheim, Andersen 27-7; 3-37 (17,174), T—2:25

Calendar

Feb. 21 — Stadium Series: Los Angeles vs. San Jose at Santa Clara, Calif.

Wildcats roll over Beavers

By JOHN MARSHALL
 The Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — T.J. McConnell jumped into passing lanes for steals and reached in to strip unsuspecting players of the ball.

When he wasn't doing that, Arizona's gritty point guard was deflecting passes, hounding every dribble and, of course, diving on the floor for loose balls any chance he had.

With a leader like that, it's no wonder the Wildcats turned their rematch with Oregon State into a rout.

Sparked by McConnell's career-high eight steals, No. 6 Arizona ran its swarming defense to near perfection in a 57-34 win over Oregon State on Friday night.

"You can make the argument that no player we've recruited in our seven or eight recruiting classes has had more of an impact on winning games than T.J.," Arizona coach Sean Miller said. "And he does it in all facets."

Arizona (20-2, 8-1) was in a good defensive groove since losing to Oregon State earlier this month and held Oregon, the Pac-12's top-scoring team, to 56 points on Wednesday.

The Wildcats were even better against the methodical Beavers, Arizona played its usual aggressive man-to-man and was better with help defense after struggling against the Beavers in the earlier meeting.

McConnell was the catalyst, helping the Wildcats force Oregon State to commit 17 turnovers — 12 on steals.

Rondae Hollis-Jefferson and Brandon Ashley helped protect the rim, and the Wildcats got into the Beavers' shooters, holding them to 28 percent from the floor. Arizona also shut down Beavers leading scorer Gary Payton II, holding him to six points on 3-for-13 shooting.

Ashley finished with 12 points and Hollis-Jefferson had 11 for the Wildcats, who have won 34 straight home games.

"Our defense was great tonight," said McConnell, who also had seven points and six assists.

Oregon State (14-7, 5-4) handed Arizona its only conference loss earlier this month by attacking Arizona's defense. The Beavers were the ones on their heels in the rematch, unable to get anything to fall inside or out against the Wildcats' pressure.

Oregon State went 3-for-15 from the three-point range and Payton, who averages 13.2 points, never seemed comfortable against Arizona's attacking defense.

Olaf Schachtenaar led the Beavers with eight points.

"They had a lot of possessions and they got a lot of deflections," Oregon State coach Wayne Tinkle said. "I think that caused a lot of frustration for some of our guys."

SUPER BOWL

SEAHAWKS-PATRIOTS MATCHUP

BY BARRY WILNER

The Associated Press

Matchups for the Super Bowl on Feb. 1 between the Seattle Seahawks and New England Patriots at University of Phoenix Stadium:

When the Seahawks (14-4) have the ball:

If the Patriots can tame the Beast, they will have a big head start toward a fourth NFL championship since 2001. RB **Marshawn Lynch (24, right)**, will try to impose his will on a solid but not overwhelming defense led by DT Vince Wilfork (75), DE Rob Ninkovich (50), LBs Jamie Collins (91) and Dont'a Hightower (54). If Lynch is slowed, that leaves the onus for running on QB **Russell Wilson (3, below right)**. While highly capable — he rushed for 849 yards and six TDs in 2014 — Wilson would prefer balance on offense.

When he throws, he must avoid the interceptions that plagued him vs. Green Bay for the NFC title. Not that Wilson was always off-target, with two of his picks being off tips by WR Jermaine Kearse (15). But he was not nearly as precise as usual.

Kearse, who caught the winning TD pass in the past two NFC title matches, was targeted on all four interceptions against the Packers. He'll see plenty of CBs Darrelle Revis (24) and Brandon Browner (39), a Seahawk last season, and could struggle getting open deep. S Devin McCourty (32) also will help in coverage on WR Doug Baldwin (89) and TE Luke Willson (82).

One thing Seattle won't do is lose faith even when things aren't working on offense. And behind an unsung offensive line led by LT Russell Okung (76) and C Max Unger (60), they won't back off, either.



Coaching

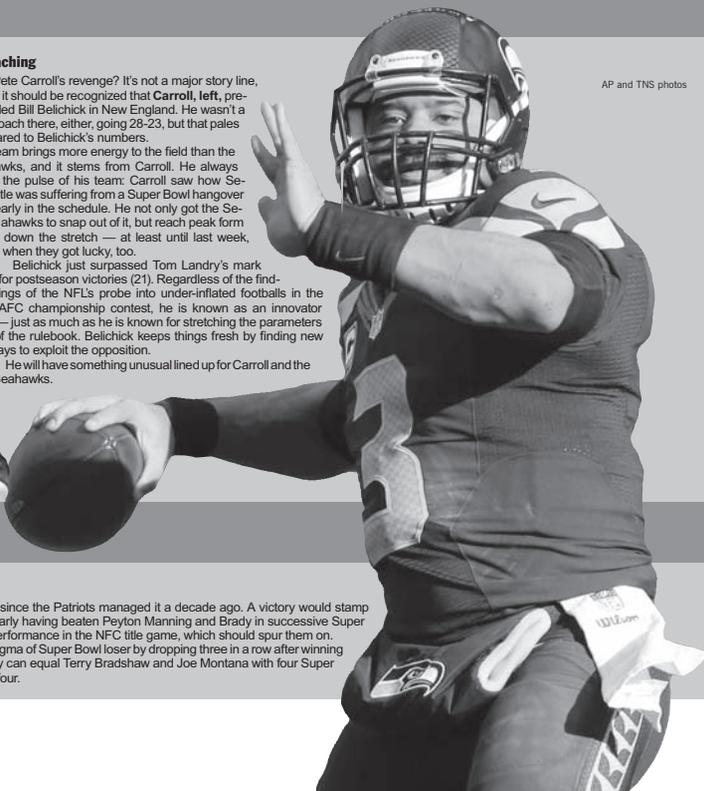
Pete Carroll's revenge? It's not a major story line, but it should be recognized that Carroll, left, preceded Bill Belichick in New England. He wasn't a bad coach there, either, going 28-23, but that pales compared to Belichick's numbers.

No team brings more energy to the field than the Seahawks, and it stems from Carroll. He always has the pulse of his team: Carroll saw how Seattle was suffering from a Super Bowl hangover early in the schedule. He not only got the Seahawks to snap out of it, but reach peak form down the stretch — at least until last week, when they got lucky, too.

Belichick just surpassed Tom Landry's mark for postseason victories (21). Regardless of the findings of the NFL's probe into under-inflated footballs in the AFC championship contest, he is known as an innovator — just as much as he is known for stretching the parameters of the rulebook. Belichick keeps things fresh by finding new ways to exploit the opposition.

He will have something unusual lined up for Carroll and the Seahawks.

AP and TNS photos

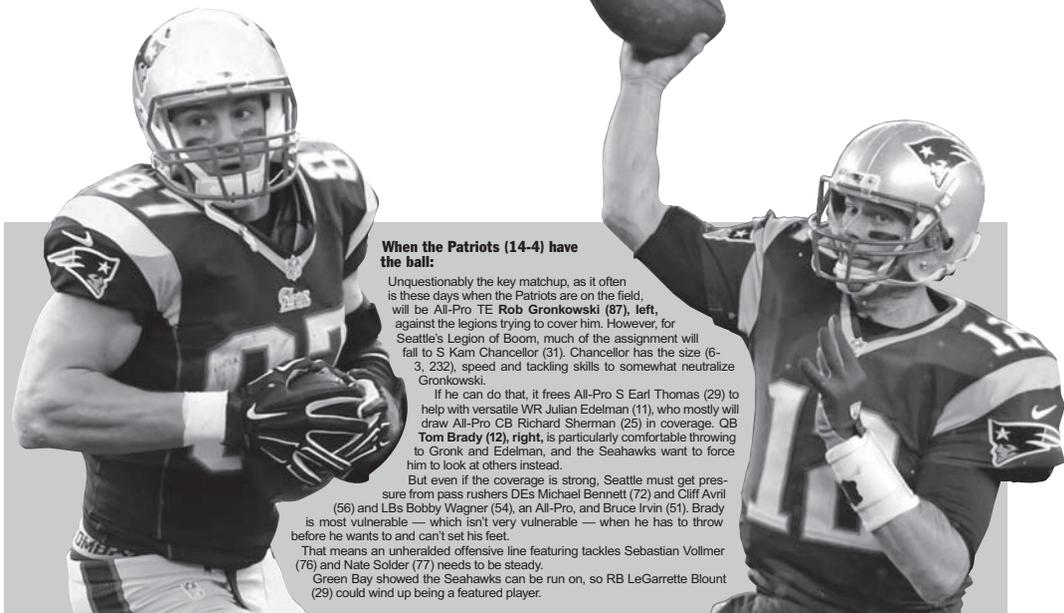


Intangibles

Seattle seeks to become the first repeat winner since the Patriots managed it a decade ago. A victory would stamp these Seahawks as an all-time great team, particularly having beaten Peyton Manning and Brady in successive Super Bowls. The Seahawks also come off a mediocre performance in the NFC title game, which should spur them on.

New England, of course, doesn't want to add a stigma of Super Bowl loser by dropping three in a row after winning in its first three trips with Brady and Belichick. Brady can equal Terry Bradshaw and Joe Montana with four Super Bowl rings, while Belichick can tie Chuck Noll with four.

SUPER BOWL



When the Patriots (14-4) have the ball:

Unquestionably the key matchup, as it often is these days when the Patriots are on the field, will be All-Pro TE Rob Gronkowski (87), left, against the legions trying to cover him. However, for Seattle's Legion of Boom, much of the assignment will fall to S Kam Chancellor (31). Chancellor has the size (6-3, 232), speed and tackling skills to somewhat neutralize Gronkowski.

If he can do that, it frees All-Pro S Earl Thomas (29) to help with versatile WR Julian Edelman (11), who mostly will draw All-Pro CB Richard Sherman (25) in coverage. QB Tom Brady (12), right, is particularly comfortable throwing to Gronk and Edelman, and the Seahawks want to force him to look at others instead.

But even if the coverage is strong, Seattle must get pressure from pass rushers DEs Michael Bennett (72) and Cliff Avril (56) and LBs Bobby Wagner (54), an All-Pro, and Bruce Irvin (51). Brady is most vulnerable — which isn't very vulnerable — when he has to throw before he wants to and can't set his feet.

That means an unheralded offensive line featuring tackles Sebastian Vollmer (76) and Nate Solder (77) needs to be steady. Green Bay showed the Seahawks can be run on, so RB LeGarrette Blount (29) could wind up being a featured player.

Rosters

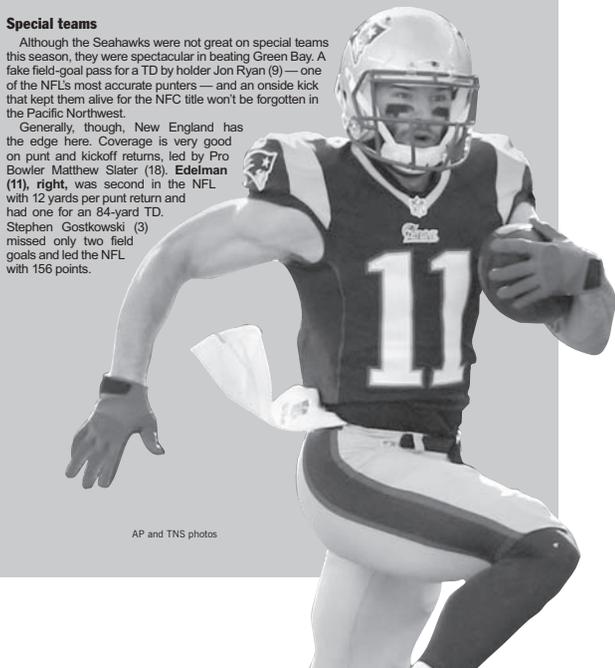
No.	Player	New England Patriots	Pos	Ht	Wt
3	Stephen Gostkowski	K	6-1	215	
6	Ryan Allen	P	6-2	215	
10	Jimmy Garoppolo	QB	6-2	225	
11	Julian Edelman	WR	5-10	200	
12	Tom Brady	QB	6-4	225	
18	Matthew Slater	WR	6-0	210	
19	Brandon LaFell	WR	6-3	210	
21	Malcolm Butler	CB	5-11	190	
23	Patrick Chung	S	5-11	210	
24	Darrelle Revis	CB	5-11	198	
25	Kyle Arrington	CB	5-10	190	
26	Logan Ryan	CB	5-11	195	
27	Tavon Wilson	S	6-0	215	
28	James White	RB	5-10	205	
29	LeGarrette Blount	RB	6-0	250	
30	Duron Harmon	S	6-1	205	
32	Devin McCourty	S	5-11	195	
34	Shane Vereen	RB	5-10	205	
35	Jonas Gray	RB	5-10	225	
36	Brandon Bolden	RB	5-11	220	
39	Brandon Browner	CB	6-4	221	
43	Nate Ebner	S	6-0	210	
46	James Develin	RB	6-3	255	
47	Michael Hoomanawanui	TE	6-4	260	
48	Danny Akin	C	4-25	255	
50	Rob Ninkovich	DE	6-2	260	
52	Jonathan Casillas	LB	6-1	227	
54	Dont'a Hightower	LB	6-3	270	
56	Akeem Ayers	LB	6-3	255	
58	Darius Fleming	LB	6-2	255	
59	Chris White	LB	6-3	238	
61	Marcus Cannon	P	6-5	335	
62	Ryan Wendell	C	6-2	300	
63	Dan Connolly	G	6-4	305	
66	Jordan DeVay	C	6-6	317	
66	Brian Stork	C	6-4	310	
67	Josh Kline	DE	6-3	285	
71	Cameron Fleming	DT	6-6	325	
72	Joe Wellman	DT	6-2	300	
75	Vince Wilfork	DT	6-2	325	
76	Sebastian Vollmer	DT	6-8	320	
77	Nate Solder	DT	6-8	320	
80	Danny Amendola	WR	5-11	195	
81	Tim Wright	TE	6-4	220	
82	Josh Boyce	WR	5-11	205	
88	Brian Tyms	WR	6-3	204	
89	Rob Gronkowski	TE	6-6	265	
90	Zach Moore	DE	6-6	275	
91	Jamie Collins	LB	6-3	250	
94	Chris Jones	DE	6-1	309	
96	Chandler Jones	DE	6-6	265	
96	Seawar Siliga	DE	6-2	325	
97	Alan Branch	DT	6-6	325	

No.	Player	Seattle Seahawks	Pos	Ht	Wt
3	Russell Wilson	QB	5-11	206	
4	Steven Hauschka	K	6-4	210	
5	B.J. Daniels	QB	5-11	217	
7	Tavaris Jackson	QB	6-2	225	
9	Jon Ryan	P	6-0	217	
13	Chris Matthews	WR	6-5	218	
15	Jermaine Kearse	WR	6-1	209	
19	Bryan Walters	WR	6-0	190	
20	Jeremy Lane	CB	6-0	190	
22	Robert Turbin	RB	5-10	222	
23	Jerome Johnson	S	5-10	212	
24	Marshawn Lynch	RB	5-11	215	
25	Richard Sherman	CB	6-3	195	
26	Steven Terrell	S	5-10	197	
27	Thaddeus Simon	CB	6-3	202	
28	Marcus Burley	CB	5-10	189	
29	Earl Thomas	RB	5-11	202	
31	Kam Chancellor	S	6-3	232	
33	Christine Michael	RB	5-10	221	
35	Deshawn Shead	CB	6-2	220	
41	Byron Maxwell	CB	6-1	207	
46	Will Tukuafu	RB	6-4	293	
49	Clint Gresham	C	6-3	240	
50	K.J. Wright	LB	6-4	246	
51	Bruce Irvin	LB	6-3	248	
52	Brook Coyle	LB	6-2	245	
53	Malcolm Smith	LB	6-0	226	
54	Bobby Wagner	LB	6-0	241	
56	Cliff Avril	DE	6-3	260	
57	Mike Morgan	LB	6-3	226	
60	Max Unger	C	6-5	305	
61	Lemuel Jeanpierre	G	6-5	301	
64	J.R. Sweezy	G	6-5	298	
65	Patrick Lewis	G	6-11	311	
66	Keaton Mitton	G	6-4	293	
67	Landon Colton	DT	6-1	300	
68	Justin Britt	TE	6-6	325	
70	David King	DE	6-4	300	
72	Michael Bennett	DE	6-4	274	
76	Russell Okung	DT	6-5	310	
77	James Carpenter	G	6-5	321	
78	Alvin Bailey	TE	6-5	320	
79	Garry Gilliam	W	6-5	306	
81	Kevin Norwood	W	6-5	199	
82	Luke Wilkerson	TE	6-5	252	
83	Ricardo Lockette	WR	6-2	211	
84	Cooper Helfert	TE	6-6	239	
88	Tony Moeaki	TE	6-3	252	
89	Doug Baldwin	WR	6-5	189	
93	O'Brien Schofield	DE	6-3	242	
94	Kevin Williams	DT	6-3	311	
95	Demarcus Bobbs	DE	6-2	282	
99	Tony McDaniel	DT	6-7	305	

Special teams

Although the Seahawks were not great on special teams this season, they were spectacular in beating Green Bay. A fake field-goal pass for a TD by holder Jon Ryan (9) — one of the NFL's most accurate punters — and an onside kick that kept them alive for the NFC title won't be forgotten in the Pacific Northwest.

Generally, though, New England has the edge here. Coverage is very good on punt and kickoff returns, led by Pro Bowler Matthew Slater (18). Edelman (11), right, was second in the NFL with 12 yards per punt return and had one for an 84-yard TD. Stephen Gostkowski (3) missed only two field goals and led the NFL with 156 points.



AP and TNS photos

SUPER BOWL



MATT SLOCUM/AP

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell speaks during a news conference for Super Bowl XLIX on Friday in Phoenix.

Goodell: 'We want the truth'

Commissioner says league will pursue investigation of deflated footballs 'vigorously'

By MARK MASKE
The Washington Post

PHOENIX — NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, in his first public comments on the controversy surrounding the New England Patriots' use of under-inflated footballs during the AFC championship game, said Friday he has a "responsibility to protect the integrity of the game" and pledged that the league will continue to pursue its investigation of the incident vigorously but fairly.

"We want the truth," Goodell said at his annual news conference two days before the Super Bowl. "That's what I think our fans want. That's what our clubs want. And so what we want to do is make sure that we find that truth. If there are violations of the rules, we take them seriously, particularly when they deal with the integrity of the game and the rules."

Goodell conceded it has been "a tough year" for him and the league, beginning with the sharp criticism that Goodell received in September for the NFL's handling of the Ray Rice, Adrian Peterson and Greg Hardy abuse cases. Goodell said he has learned difficult lessons during a humbling experience but reiterated he intends to remain on the job.

Responding to a question about whether he could imagine any set of circumstances that would lead to him resigning or being fired, Goodell said: "No, I can't. Does

that surprise you?

"Listen, it has been a tough year. It's been a tough year on me personally. It's been a year of, what I would say, humility and learning. . . . We take that seriously. It's an opportunity for us to get better. It's an opportunity for us, for our organization, to get better. So we've all done a lot of soul-searching, starting with yours truly. And we have taken action."

A season that began amid turmoil for the NFL is ending the same way as Sunday's Super Bowl matchup between the Patriots and Seattle Seahawks arrives. The league has determined that the Patriots used under-inflated footballs, in comparison to NFL specifications, in the first half of the AFC title game but has not determined whether that was done deliberately by the team.

"We take seriously anything that potentially impacts the integrity of the game," Goodell said. "We are focusing principally on two questions: Why were some footballs used in the game that were not in compliance with the rules? And was this the result of deliberate action? I want to emphasize we have made no judgments on these points and we will not compromise the investigation by engaging in speculation."

Goodell left open the possibility of tougher penalties being imposed if it is determined that the Patriots willfully violated league rules.

Clash: Chancellor rare defender who can match up with Gronkowski

FROM BACK PAGE

Even the NFL anticipated the potential matchup: Both Gronkowski and Chancellor sat at the same podium on media day.

"I guess it was destiny. It was destiny for us to have the same seat," Chancellor said.

While Seattle nickel cornerback Jeremy Lane said last week that he didn't think Gronkowski was that good, most of the Seahawks have been respectful of his skill.

Rightfully so.

Gronkowski might have been better in 2011, but considering the injuries he's overcome, 2014 could be his most impressive season. He had 51 receptions and eight touchdowns in the final eight games of the regular season and another 10 receptions and two scores already in the playoffs. Only once this season did Gronkowski have fewer than three catches in a game.

"Aw man, Beast Mode. He's an animal, man," New England wide receiver Brandon LaFell said stealing a phrase normally used to describe Lynch. "When you put a corner on him, he's too small. When you put a safety on him, he's too slow, man. You know, when Gronk is out there doing his thing he is demanding a double team and if he's not being double teamed, he's out there making plays for us."

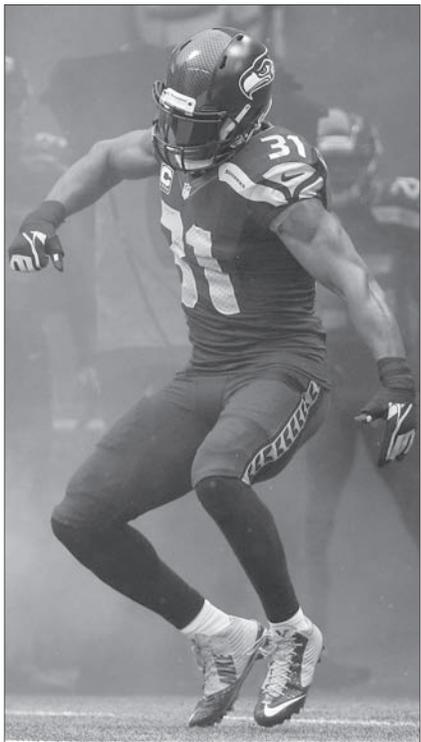
The difference with Seattle is they have Chancellor — a safety with a linebacker build and cornerback speed — who can match up with Gronkowski. Many felt it was Chancellor and not Malcolm Smith who should have been Super Bowl MVP a year ago. It was Chancellor's hit on Demaryius Thomas on Denver's second possession that set the tone for Seattle's rout.

"That hit alone could have gotten him Super Bowl MVP," Sherman said. Seattle struggled earlier in the season defending tight ends, breaking from a trend of being able to shut down elite players at that position in the past. San Diego's Antonio Gates caught three touchdowns in Week 2 against Seattle and Oakland's Mychal Rivera had eight catches and two TDs in early November.

Those performances were outliers. Against most elite tight ends, Seattle has been at its best. In two games last season against New Orleans, Jimmy Graham had a combined four catches for 50 yards against the Seahawks. Vernon Davis hasn't caught more than three passes against Seattle in five games over the past two seasons. Julius Thomas was limited to four catches for all of 27 yards in last year's Super Bowl romp.

"They definitely have an image of being physical. They've got an image of coming out and being ready to dominate," Gronkowski said.

Why is Seattle so good at defending tight ends? A lot of credit falls to Chancellor. His size,



DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

The Seattle Seahawks' Kam Chancellor jumps as he is introduced before the NFC championship game against the Green Bay Packers in Seattle. Many felt Chancellor's play in last year's Super Bowl win over the Denver Broncos warranted MVP consideration, and while the honor ultimately went to Seattle linebacker Malcolm Smith, there is little argument that it was Chancellor's effort that set the tone for what turned into a Seahawks rout.

Did you know

Patriots TE Rob Gronkowski was held to fewer than three catches just once during the 2014 season.



SOURCE: The Associated Press

speed and strength can counter the matchup problems many tight ends create.

But the rest of Seattle's defensive scheme was formulated so Chancellor is not alone. Especial-

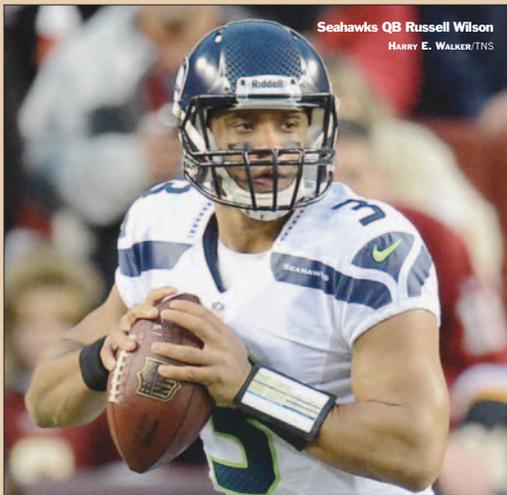
ly when Seattle is playing zone defense, responsibility is placed on linebackers K.J. Wright and Bobby Wagner to cover those "hook areas" as defensive coordinator Dan Quinn calls it, where tight ends often roam.

"You have to have the speed to play when the quarterback throws it how fast can you close and make the tackle. I think the speed and the length of K.J. in specific, allows him to do that and Bobby, his instincts to know after the ball is thrown, we've all seen the speed that he has to close," Quinn said. "And then when we play man-to-man, both of those guys are able to match up, whether it be on tight ends or backs, again due to their speed and cover ability. I think it's a combination of the way we play zone, their speed to do it, their quarterback keys and the ability for them to play in man-to-man."

SUPER BOWL



Patriots QB Tom Brady
CURTIS COMPTON/TNS



Seahawks QB Russell Wilson
HARRY E. WALKER/TNS

Who will win and why

The case for the Patriots

By **HOWARD ULMAN**
The Associated Press

Go ahead, pile on the Patriots. Declare the Bill Belichick-Tom Brady era over after they split their first four games this season. Call them cheaters when their footballs lose too much air. Predict the Legion of Boom will bring the hammer down on Rob Gronkowski.

Then jump on the New England bandwagon.

Watch one of the greatest quarterbacks ever lower the pressure on himself with handoffs to big LeGarrette Blount and quick passes to small receivers Julian Edelman and Danny Amendola. See the second-best defense in the Super Bowl silence Marshawn Lynch's running and put the burden on Russell Wilson to move the Seattle Seahawks with his arm and legs.

Finally, concede that the Lombardi Trophy raised by New England owner Robert Kraft on Sunday night is well deserved, no matter how much fans of 31 other teams dislike the leader with the hoodie and the scowl — and his fourth Super Bowl championship as coach of the Patriots. “No matter what goes on around this game or outside this locker room, whatever it may be, you have to be ready to play,” defensive tackle Vince Wilfork said. “We can’t let any distraction alter our course of what we want to be and how we want to do it.”

They want to be champions. How can

they do it against the NFL's best defense? Start with Brady getting rid of the ball fast to a runner or receiver. Or let Gronkowski occupy two defenders after lining up wide, in the slot or beside a tackle. Or toss in some trickery — maybe a double reverse or even a flea-flicker.

There's no end to Belichick's football imagination.

What would he like to establish early? “What I'd like to establish is the lead,” he said Friday, flashing a rare grin he breaks out in the Super Bowl spotlight as if trying to show there's more to him than X's and O's and victories.

“He has the fight, the will and the determination to go out there and destroy anybody who's in his way.”

Darrelle Revis
Patriots CB
on QB Tom Brady

The Seahawks are the first team to lead the NFL in points and yards allowed for two straight years since Chicago in 1985, when the Bears pummeled the Patriots 46-10 in the Super Bowl, and 1986. And in their last eight games, the Seahawks have allowed just seven points in the fourth quarter.

Belichick has the perfect partner in Brady — a two-time Super Bowl MVP who holds numerous postseason passing records and brings great intensity and intelligence.

“He has the fight, the will and the determination to go out there and destroy anybody who's in his way,” cornerback Darrelle Revis said.

New England was the NFL's fourth-highest scoring team, averaging 29 points per game. It won't need that many to deny Seattle a second straight title and win the Super Bowl for the first time in 10 years.

Prediction: Patriots 24, Seahawks 21.

The case for the Seahawks

By **TIM BOOTH**
The Associated Press

The sideshow is over, which means Marshawn Lynch can go back to not talking and this realization can become obvious again: The Seattle Seahawks are still the best defensive team in football.

And as we saw in last year's Super Bowl, defense still usually wins.

“We've got a lot of big-name guys, but you would never know because they work like they're just average players,” Seattle linebacker Bruce Irvin said.

“They never let the starting get to their head and I think that's the biggest difference. Guys always come to work ready to work. I think that separates us from a lot of teams that we practice our tails off. We bust our butts during the week so when Sunday comes it's much easier.”

Therein lays the challenge in Seattle's attempt on Sunday to become the first team in a decade to win back-to-back Super Bowl titles. For as important a role as Lynch might end up playing, whether Seattle is lifting a second straight Lombardi Trophy will be dictated by its defense.

The outcome is certainly deeper than just how Seattle plays defensively. Has Seattle fully recovered emotionally from the NFC title game and its remarkable comeback against Green Bay just to get to the Super Bowl?

Can Russell Wilson be an effective passer against a New England secondary

that with Darrelle Revis and Brandon Browner is far better than the one Wilson faced as a rookie? And where is Lynch's head after a week where he was the center of attention?

The difference is Seattle's defense has shown it's capable of overcoming those problems to win games.

All they need is another Super Bowl title to add credence to their status.

So how does Seattle earn a second title with its defense? By not giving up big plays. They allowed only 39 plays of 20 or more yards the entire regular season and just 17 of those in the final eight games.

And that's not the Patriots' strength. New England ranked 26th in the league in offensive plays of 20 or more yards.

Make the Patriots move in small chunks. Get to Tom Brady just enough to throw off his timing. Make sure LeGarrette Blount and the New England run game doesn't get started. And keep Rob Gronkowski from taking over the game.

Sounds like a lot. But if successful, Seattle will be put in position to do what no team has done before because of the way it's been constructed.

They are talented. They are still young. And they have most of their core players together through at least the 2017 season with financial flexibility. Some of that extra money will be consumed by a new contract for Wilson, but there will still be room to supplement what Seattle has already created.

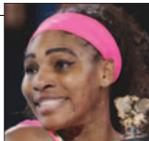
Prediction: Seahawks 23, Patriots 19.

“We practice our tails off. We bust our butts during the week so when Sunday comes it's much easier.”

Bruce Irvin
Seahawks LB
on team's work ethic

SPORTS

Unparalleled dominance
Serena tops Sharapova in Aussie final for 19th major victory » Page 25



SUPER BOWL XLIX

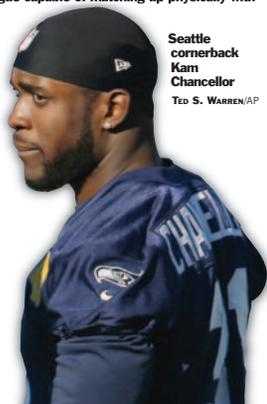


Clash of the Titans

ELAINE THOMPSON/AP

In this Oct. 14, 2012, file photo, the New England Patriots' Rob Gronkowski is tackled by the Seattle Seahawks' Kam Chancellor in the second half of a game in Seattle. The matchup between Chancellor and Gronkowski is one well worth watching, as Chancellor is one of the few safeties in the league capable of matching up physically with the All-Pro tight end.

Matchup between Pats TE Gronkowski, Seahawks S Chancellor worth watching



Seattle cornerback Kam Chancellor

TED S. WARREN/AP

By TIM BOOTH
The Associated Press

On some point Sunday it will happen. At least everyone hopes it happens.

The biggest, most athletic tight end in football will be running downfield and be met in a full-speed collision with the hardest-hitting strong safety in the game today.

What will happen when the NFL's version of Thunderdome comes to the Super Bowl, featuring Rob Gronkowski in one corner and Kam Chancellor in the other?



Super Bowl XLIX
New England Patriots vs. Seattle Seahawks at Phoenix
AFN-Sports
Midnight Sunday CET

"I don't know. I'll be sitting there with popcorn," Seattle's Richard Sherman said. "It'll be good football."

There are a bevy of important individual matchups when New England and Seattle meet on Sunday. Will Tom Brady throw at Sherman? Can the Patriots' defensive front slow down Marshawn Lynch? What about LeGarrette Blount trying to run against the best defense in the NFL? All those factors could matter in the final outcome. Trumping them all might be whether Chancellor and the Seahawks are able to keep Gronkowski under control.

SEE CLASH ON PAGE 30

More preview coverage of Super Bowl XLIX inside:

■ Patriots, Seahawks each have reasons for optimism on Sunday, Page 31 ■ Matchup breakdowns, Pages 28-29