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STARS AND STRIPES®

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Russia welcomes the world for the opening ceremony

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sochi 2014 of the

The United States team arrives during the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, on Friday night.

PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

Pentagon drops plan to retire USS George Washington

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon will not retire one of its nuclear-powered aircraft carriers after the White House intervened to head off a political fight, the Wall Street Journal reported late Thursday.

The military had proposed mothballing the USS George Washington, reducing the U.S. carrier fleet to 10, to deal with across-the-board spending cuts known as sequestration, imposed by Congress. That irked a bipartisan group of lawmakers, who called on Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel in a letter last week to preserve what they see as a potent symbol of American power.

The behind-the-scenes battle illustrates how politics can complicate the task of wringing savings from the U.S. military budget, the Journal noted. Facing pressures from defense contractors and local communities, lawmakers often oppose cuts to military bases, aircraft and shipbuilding programs and weapons systems.

A 2013 strategic review by Hagel on the impact of the mandated spending cuts found the U.S. could reduce the carrier fleet to eight or nine — still equal the number of carriers operated worldwide by seven other nations.

It soon became clear that any proposal endorsed by the White House to retire an

aircraft carrier likely would have been blocked by Congress, opening Democrats to election-year criticism, officials familiar with the discussions told the paper.

White House officials headed off the issue by telling defense officials in recent days that they would provide extra money — in effect raising the military's proposed budget — to allow the Navy to extend the life of the George Washington, which was commissioned July 4, 1992. While spending levels are set by Congress, requests such as these from the White House generally are backed by lawmakers.

SEE GW ON PAGE 2



Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

The White House headed off a political fight by telling defense officials that it would provide money to extend the life of the USS George Washington.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Hope you have a warm coat, funnyman."

— President Barack Obama, who jokingly said he was making Jay Leno the U.S. ambassador to Antarctica in a video clip that aired Thursday night during Leno's final appearance as host of "The Tonight Show."

See story on Page 13

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COMING SOON

Science & Medicine

Study: People slow to react are more likely to die prematurely



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MILITARY



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER HLAD/Stars and Stripes



Sending the message home

Top: Lance Cpl. Felipe Cantu, a Marine with Brigade Headquarters Group-Afghanistan out of Camp Pendleton, Calif., records a Valentine's Day message for his wife from Camp Leatherneck, Helmand province. More than 50 Marines and sailors with Marine Expeditionary Brigade-Afghanistan braved the freezing temperatures, high winds and light snow for the chance to send a video message back home.

Left: Marines wait in line Thursday for a chance to record messages for their loved ones.

GW: Slowing procurement of Ford-class cited as option

FROM FRONT PAGE

That makes the cost of maintaining and operating aircraft carriers and their strike groups a tempting target for cuts. Retiring older carriers and reducing operating costs would free up money to invest in modernized weapons and ships, officials told the Journal.

During the Reagan defense buildup, the Navy grew to 15 carriers. The number fell to 14 in 1992 and stood at 12 between 1994 and 2007. In 2007, the number of ships was reduced to 11 with the decommissioning of the first USS John F. Kennedy.

The Navy currently plans to build one new carrier every five years at a cost of about \$13 billion each.

Bryan Clark, a defense analyst at the nonpartisan Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, told the Journal that it makes sense to reduce the fleet by one or two carriers and invest in new submarines or stealthy aircraft and bombers.

But he said far more money could be saved by slowing procurement of new Ford-class carriers, which require fewer crewmembers and can launch planes more quickly, rather than retiring the George Washington 25 years early.

Current plans call for the Navy to build one new carrier every five years at a cost of about \$13 billion each.

Other defense analysts believe the Pentagon should allow the overall size of the fleet to shrink through the retirement of older carriers, but continue to build more modernized carriers.

"Once you break the production of carriers," said David Berteau, a defense analyst with the nonpartisan Center for Strategic and International Studies, "you will not have a carrier industrial base."

Ex-Army doctor charged in \$7.3M fraud

The Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas — An ex-Army doctor in Texas has been indicted in a \$7.3 million health care scam.

The 65-count federal indictment announced Thursday in El Paso names Dr. Richard Craig Rooney, of Medina, Wash. Rooney worked at William Beaumont

Army Medical Center in El Paso and Carl R. Darnall Army Medical Center at Fort Hood.

His wife, Dr. Angie Unchi Song, and her father, Charlie Takhyun Song, of Grapevine, Wash., were indicted, as was his wife's company, Spondylos Consulting LLC. Also indicted were Julia Lynn Eller, of Allure Spine LLC in

Charlotte, N.C.

The counts include conspiracy to commit wire fraud and money laundering. Eller allegedly provided cash so Rooney would use Allure Spine products.

Both physicians were with patients Friday and couldn't comment. Eller couldn't immediately be reached for comment.

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



HENDRICK SIMOES/Stars and Stripes

Rear Adm. Sean Buck, the director of the 21st Century Sailor office, addresses a group of E-6 and below sailors at an all-hands call on Naval Support Activity Bahrain on Thursday.

Navy's 21st Century office promotes sailor resources

By HENDRICK SIMOES
Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — In a room with some 300 E-6 and below sailors, only about a dozen raised their hands when the head of the Navy's 21st Century Sailor office asked if they were familiar with his posts on the Navy's official blog site, Navy Live.

This lack of familiarity with the office has been a common theme in Rear Adm. Sean Buck's discussions with sailors Navy-wide.

Buck, the first director of the 21st Century Sailor office, is in the second month of a six-month worldwide tour to promote the office to sailors — few of whom appear to be aware of its existence.

"I realize by talking to sailors around the fleet that none of you have any idea who I am, what this office is, and the fact that it exists," he told a crowded room Thursday at Naval Support Activity Bahrain.

The office, established last year, is responsible for helping sailors with a wide variety of challenges. It encompasses programs dealing with such matters as sexual assault, sexual harassment, suicide prevention, fitness, and alcohol and substance abuse.

Though some servicemembers may regard 21st Century as just another program or campaign in a vast array of them, Buck says that is not the case.

"This is meant to be the umbrella one that will have legs and stick around and endure," Buck told Stars and Stripes. "I am out on this campaign to advertise what my office is, what we do and why we exist."

He said his office aims to look out for the complete health of sailors — physical, social, spiritual and mental — by coordinating the Navy's various programs and efforts.

However, online efforts to build awareness of the office have not been as effective as Navy officials had hoped, leading Buck to adopt an old-fashioned approach — all-hands calls where he asks sailors directly about the best way to communicate to them, especially the junior ones.

Buck said he's learning on his worldwide tour that Facebook may not be the best marketing solution. He said a sailor told him that "all you old people stole Facebook from young people," eliciting laughter and nods from the group of mostly young sailors in the room. "I'm looking for ideas on how I can best communicate to you," he said.

When Buck asked who uses Vine — a mobile app for sharing seven-second videos — nearly all 300 sailors in the room raised their hands.

"I will do much better to advertise what we provide to you as resources ... I realize I need to broaden the efforts in a big way," he said.

Buck said the biggest issue on his agenda is the prevention of sexual assault. "It's a nuclear hot issue," he said, praising the Navy's progress but acknowledging that there is a long way to go.

Buck told sailors his "number one goal" in combating sexual assaults is reducing the number of alcohol-related incidents throughout the Navy. Seventy percent of sexual assaults are associated with alcohol misuse, according to Buck. "I'm convinced if we reduce ARIs, we will have a significant impact on reducing all that other destructive behavior."

After meeting with various groups of junior and senior sailors in Bahrain on Thursday, Buck went out to visit ships out to sea in the 5th Fleet area of responsibility.

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Enrollment down in Marines tuition assistance program

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

BASEBO NAVAL BASE, Japan — The number of Marines receiving tuition assistance has decreased drastically this fiscal year, signaling that new eligibility restrictions could have far-reaching impact on the popular subsidized college course program.

For the first quarter of fiscal 2014 — which ended Dec. 31 — there were 3,341 enlisted Marines and 282 officers in the program, Marine Corps officials said. That is about a 75 percent decrease from the number of Marines enrolled in the first quarter of fiscal 2013 and a 65 percent decrease from the first quarter of fiscal 2012. The 13,502 Marines who participated in the first quarter of fiscal 2013 accounted for nearly half of the 28,662 Marines who enrolled that year.

Marine officials cautioned that it was too soon to blame the drop on the new restrictions that went into effect in October, and said the policy changes were not driven by cost savings.

"It is difficult to speculate at this time because the drop could be the cause of a variety of reasons, such as government shutdown and deployment," said Marine and Family Programs Division's Shawn Conlon. "The primary purpose of the (change) was policy driven, to help Marines focus and master their Marine Corps profession. It was not spending driven and no particular savings target or goal was expected."

The drastic decrease in Marine enrollment could save the Corps and the Defense Department tens of millions of dollars, according to calculations made by Stars and Stripes using the cost per credit hour, average course load and the drop in enrollment.

The Marine Corps announced changes and eligibility restrictions to its program in September. At the time, they were the most drastic changes to come from the four service branches facing a looming budget battle in Congress, stinging wounds caused by sequestration and the potential for a government shutdown adding to the fiscal uncertainty.

"The primary purpose of the (change) was policy driven, to help Marines focus and master their Marine Corps profession. It was not spending driven and no particular savings target or goal was expected."

Shawn Conlon

Marine and Family Programs Division

Changes to tuition assistance

Before Oct. 1, 2013, tuition assistance for U.S. servicemembers paid up to \$250 per credit hour, with an annual cap of \$4,500. Since then, the Army, Air Force and Marines have placed some restrictions on the benefit.

Marines	Policy took effect Oct. 21, 2013
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marines must complete two years' service before being eligible. First-time applicants limited to one course at a time, unless the Marine has an associate's degree or has completed 60 academic credit limits and has a grade-point average of 2.5. TA funds will be divided into fiscal quarters. Once quarterly funds have been depleted, requests will be deferred until the next quarter.
Army	Policy took effect Jan. 1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caps the benefit to 16 hours per fiscal year to soldiers who meet Army requirements and have no adverse notations in their files. Soldiers must complete one year of service before being eligible. For post-baccalaureate degree, TA available only for soldiers who have completed 10 years of military service.
Air Force	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Airmen required to obtain supervisor approval for all requests. Supervisors may deny requests for any factors that would impede the airman's ability to complete the course. TA for foreign language courses will not be approved if they are part of a degree or are on the approved language shortage list. TA will not be approved for airmen seeking a degree at the same level as they currently hold, with some exceptions.
Navy	No changes

Stars and Stripes

The changes were supposed to go into effect Oct. 1, 2013, but were delayed by the government shutdown, which kept the program shuttered until Oct. 21.

Marines are barred from applying for tuition assistance if they are in their first two years of service, are ineligible for promotion or had not completed certain military training courses. First-time applicants were limited to a single course unless the servicemember had an associate's degree or 60 academic credits and a minimum grade point average of 2.5.

Modifications were also made to the way funds were managed. Funds are now allocated quarterly.

In the past few years, the Corps has found itself in a precarious situation regarding the popular benefit. Between fiscal 2009 and 2013, tuition assistance was slashed by \$19 million. During the same period, the number of Marines participating climbed by 2,232.

The total budget for Marine Corps tuition assistance in fiscal 2014 is \$44 million, Conlon said. As of Nov. 15, \$3.5 million had been spent, disbursed among installations worldwide.

On Okinawa, home to 19,000 U.S. Marines, those seeking tuition assistance have even further restrictions to make sure the funds are stretched as far as possible, according to a Marine Corps Installations Pacific spokesman.

Marines are only being authorized to take a single course. If a Marine is near the completion of a degree program, he or she can submit an official degree completion plan for review and consideration of as many as two courses.

"Due to cuts in tuition assistance funds, it is paramount that tuition assistance be authorized in a fiscally responsible manner," Staff Sgt. Kenneth Lewis said in a statement to Stars and Stripes.

"Determination of credit hours per student will be established by the local Education Services Officer per military installation."

Conlon said that the service had not tracked Marines' response to the new policy.

The Marines are not alone in making changes to tuition assistance. Starting Jan. 1, the Army also instituted eligibility restrictions and caps on semester hours.

Air Force officials have made some changes to tuition assistance policy as well, such as requiring airmen to get approval from supervisors for requests for aid and not allowing airmen to pursue a degree at the level of one they already hold.

The Navy has not made changes for fiscal 2014, Navy officials said.

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MIDEAST



PHOTOS BY MASSOUD HOSSAINI/AP

Tolo TV staffers work in the control room at their office in Kabul on Monday. Tolo is Afghanistan's most popular channel, with an estimated 10 million viewers.

Afghanistan enjoys journalism boom

Election coverage shows growth of new media outlets

By KAY JOHNSON
The Associated Press

KABUL — In a crowded room overlooking a gleaming television studio, Tolo TV's election team is strategizing for Afghanistan's presidential debate when the room suddenly goes dark. The staff doesn't miss a beat.

The 13 men and three women just keep on talking about soundboards, cameras and the taking of questions via Twitter until the station's generator kicks in and the overhead lights flicker back on.

"It's just technical difficulties," explains Mujahid Kakar, the Tolo anchor and moderator of the upcoming debate among six of the main contenders vying to succeed President Hamid Karzai in the April 5 election.

The moment is a reminder of the difficulties of reporting in an impoverished country torn by war. Yet, in many ways, Afghan media coverage of the crucial campaign that kicked off this week resembles what you'd see in any other modern democracy, with newspaper candidate profiles and political talk shows on numerous TV and radio stations.



Mujahid Kakar, Tolo TV anchor and mediator of Afghanistan's first presidential debate talks on the phone at his office in Kabul.

And on Tuesday, for the first time, major contenders for the presidency introduced themselves to the nation in a televised debate.

The proliferation of Afghan media in the past 12 years is one of the most visible bright spots of the fraught project to foster a stable democracy, even as the NATO military mission in Afghanistan nears its end with the country still riven by war with Taliban insurgents and mired in corruption and poverty.

Given that the Taliban banned television as sinful and allowed only one religious radio station before they were driven from power in 2001, the sheer number of media outlets — dozens of TV channels, more than 100 radio stations and

hundreds of newspapers — is stunning. That they are mostly free to set their own agenda is even more so.

"It goes against some of that common wisdom that it's all doomed," said Nader Nadery, chairman of the Free and Fair Election Foundation, an Afghan pro-democracy group.

What's not clear is what the future holds for all these media outlets after this year, when most foreign troops will go home and much of the billions in aid dollars is expected to be reduced.

For now, though, Afghan news outlets are enjoying a moment in the sun. Newspapers in Dari and Pashto, the country's main languages, are full of campaign coverage.

With Afghanistan's low literacy levels, radio and television dominate the media landscape, with 63 percent of all Afghans listening to radio regularly and 48 percent watching television, according to research conducted in 2010 for the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Tolo TV is by far the most popular channel, with an estimated 10 million viewers tuning in to its mixture of news, sports and light entertainment.

While most of Afghanistan's television fare is tame by Western standards — female reporters wear headscarves, and imported Turkish soap operas are censored to mask any show of skin by women — the flourishing entertainment and news have drawn the ire of many religious conservatives.

Sadaf Amiri, 23, anchor of a political talk show on Tolo, knows that firsthand from the threats and the cold shoulders from some of the more conservative politicians she has interviewed.

"For a woman, working in the media is a threat in itself, whether someone threatens us personally or not," Amiri said. "But I have been threatened."

Whether the relatively free press will remain in Afghanistan is not certain. Still, Nadery argues that this year's unprecedented level of campaign coverage illustrates that Afghanistan has changed in fundamental ways in the past 12 years.



“For a woman, working in the media is a threat in itself, whether someone threatens us personally or not. But I have been threatened.”

Sadaf Amiri
Tolo TV political talk show anchor

MILITARY



RICCARDO DE LUCA/AP

Italian army Lt. Barbara Balanzoni shows a picture of herself with a cat as she arrives Friday at the military court in Rome.

Italian reservist acquitted in cat rescue court-martial

The Associated Press

ROME — An Italian military court has acquitted an army reserve doctor of disobedience for helping a cat who had trouble delivering a litter of kittens on a military base in Kosovo in 2012. Army medical reservist Lt. Barbara Balanzoni said after her acquittal Friday she was disciplined, and later charged, after Italian soldiers asked her to help

a cat whose last kitten was still-born. Balanzoni said the cat, which she named Agata, would have died without intervention. She was accused of violating protocol that states animals must be tended by veterinarians. Balanzoni said none was on base. Balanzoni's lawyer, Aldo Aredud, said she still faces charges of defamation and insults, which he said were the result of escalating tension following the cat incident.

Cyber Command specifics take shape at Fort Gordon

By WESLEY BROWN
The Augusta (Ga.) Chronicle

AUGUSTA, Ga. — The Army's latest Cyber Command projections show that building a new headquarters on Fort Gordon will cost more than \$225 million in construction and renovations, which officials said could include expanding parts of the National Security Agency's complex. Fort Gordon spokesman J.C. Mathews confirmed this week that there is a proposal to build onto the John Whitelaw Building — as it is commonly called by the NSA — to house elements of the Army Cyber Command's new headquarters. Potential new construction has been set at \$170 million. If approved, the project would be in addition to \$56 million worth of renovations planned for a Cyber Command that will include a central headquarters, a center of excellence, additional Army intelligence units and growth to existing Navy and Air Force operations.

By 2019, the Cyber Command is projected to add 2,600 military, 900 civilian and 200 contractor jobs to the Army post's workforce. The Cyber Center of Excellence will boost the post's student population by about 500 servicemembers annually, figures show. In all, the estimated growth will result in 5,620 military, civilian and contractor family members moving to the Augusta area, based on Army modeling projections. The total includes 2,150 spouses and 1,800 children, two areas of growth that officials believe will greatly raise the demand for off-post housing and schools. "Other than a very small number of houses to accommodate senior personnel assigned to these elements, there is no additional housing construction planned for the installation," Mathews said. "Virtually all these new personnel will reside in the local community, and since no additional housing will be built on the fort, it

is likely that virtually all school-age children will attend schools in the off-post community." The lack of additional on-post housing has led a Philadelphia-based education consultant to suggest to the Richmond County Board of Education that it authorize a new K-8 school for the west Augusta area. Consultant Bill Montgomery said the school would accommodate the expected growth from the Cyber Command and would support a population shift to west Augusta during the past decade. Montgomery said that there is also new construction in that area and that more building permits have been pulled for two-and three-bedroom apartment complexes. The timeline for the new K-8 school is unclear, because the Richmond County system would use money from the next phase of special purpose local option sales tax to pay for it. All the new schools and renovations in the past 10 years have used the tax money.

N. Texas man pleads guilty to impersonating general

The Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — A North Texas man who deceived family, friends and government officials into believing he was a U.S. Army brigadier general pleaded guilty to impersonating a public servant. Michael Douglas McDowell also admitted to bigamy, for marrying a woman while still married to his estranged wife. He was sentenced Tuesday to five years' probation in each case, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported. McDowell, 57, spun a web of lies that lasted for years as he claimed a long military career that included secret intelligence work. He was sometimes seen with a briefcase handcuffed to his arm. He had a Washington phone number with a voicemail informing callers that someone from his "command staff" would call

back. His medals and ribbons included the Distinguished Service Cross. His car featured Purple Heart recipient license plates. He had persuaded the Texas Department of Public Safety to issue him driver's licenses without his picture or fingerprints because of his work as an intelligence officer. "For the better part of 15 years, this defendant perfected the art of stolen valor," Tarrant County prosecutor Joshua Ross said. "The lengths to which he was willing to go were prolific, including wearing an officer's uniform and medals, as well as obtaining purple heart license plates, none of which was earned. He even wore a uniform to his marriage to a woman who believed him to be a military officer, and who was not aware of his other marriage." Ross called McDowell's actions

"profoundly offensive." Defense attorney Charles Burgess did not return messages left for him by the Star-Telegram and The Associated Press. The ruse came undone when McDowell visited Fort Worth police Chief Jeff Halstead in 2012, offering him a tour of the White House or the Pentagon, according to the Star-Telegram. He initially had met the chief two years before, giving him rank as colonel, but told him in the later visit that he'd been promoted. Halstead noticed McDowell's ill-fitting suit and a strong smell of cigarettes — an impression not befitting a high-ranking officer — and asked his investigators to check his background. They learned he never served in the military. Police later seized military uniforms and apparent military records from his Fort Worth home.

Man who shot injured vet's dog gets 25 years

An Augusta man who broke into the home of an injured soldier and shot her service dog was sentenced Thursday to the maximum possible — 25 years in prison. Retribution isn't always a bad concept, especially in the case of a decorated war hero who was willing to give her life for the U.S. before she had even become a cit-

izen, Judge Daniel J. Craig said. After hearing the evidence, a Richmond County Superior Court jury took less than 15 minutes to convict Joshua Patterson, 33. The May 7, 2012, burglary and wounding of Kinga Kiss-Johnson's dog, Balto, turned their lives upside down, she said. Their lives had been settling into normalcy, with Balto providing Kiss-Johnson the independence she lost when the enemy attacked her ve-

hicle in Afghanistan in late 2007. Her neck and back were broken. She had a brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. Kiss-Johnson said Thursday that the judge was in the best position to decide Patterson's sentence. Her mother taught her to forgive, but she didn't want such a crime to happen to someone else. Kiss-Johnson said, with Balto and her husband by her side.

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From McClatchy-Tribune

NATION

Washington gridlock reaches crossroads

By TOM RAUM

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama and Congress stand at a junction.

The road the country has traveled for the past five years is beginning to come to an end. The Federal Reserve, which pumped \$3 trillion into the economy to keep the Great Recession from

ANALYSIS worsening, is withdrawing its financial life-line amid signs

of fresh economic growth. The nation's gross domestic product is inching up and annual federal budget deficits are heading down.

How Washington policymakers respond to the improvements in the economy may even sow the seeds for more cooperation in Washington.

But don't count on it.

Finger-pointing still abounds between the Democrats who control the White House and the Senate and the Republicans who control the House of Representatives ahead of midterm elections later this year that will determine control of Congress for the remainder of Obama's presidency.

"The president's policies are not working," declares House Speaker John Boehner, a Republican.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a Democrat, counters: "We cannot have a country that's par-



PHOTOS BY J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., left, and House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, speak Thursday at the Capitol in Washington.

alyzed because of a group of people — the group of people who are the tea party-driven Republicans in Congress."

"There are no winners here," suggests Obama, with just less than three years to go to complete his economic legacy. "The American people are completely fed up with Washington."

Even as public confidence in the economy is improving, polls also show that Americans' approval of Congress is at or near record lows.

More key fiscal battles are looming after self-inflicted wounds like last fall's government

shutdown and repeated debt-limit crises during the past few years.

The federal government once again is about to bump into the limit on its borrowing authority, which is set by law. Last October's deal to end the 16-day partial government shutdown suspended the debt ceiling until Feb. 7. That's Friday.

Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew has urged Congress to act quickly to raise the debt limit, saying "at some point very soon," probably by month's end, he'll run out of delaying strategies, and the nation could default for the first time ever on some of its debt.

"This can and should be a breakthrough year for our economy." Lew told the Bipartisan Policy Center. "The table is now set for us to build on the economic progress that we have made over the last five years — and it is incumbent on Washington to be part of the solution, and to avoid the brinkmanship of recent years that has done so much to diminish economic momentum."

Some congressional Republicans are looking for concessions from the administration in exchange for their support on the debt limit increase.

Republicans constantly blame

Obama and Democrats on Capitol Hill for a range of problems, beginning with the president's rocky rollout of his health care overhaul and expensive government programs. Democrats accuse Republicans of triggering the government shutdown and advocating hurtful spending cuts on social programs.

Both parties are mindful of the enormous public anger that the shutdown ignited and its damage to the economy. Many don't seem quite as eager to go to the mat again, especially on the fast-approaching debt ceiling.

Standard & Poor's called the October shutdown, which furloughed 800,000 federal workers, a \$24 billion drag on the U.S. economy. The bipartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates the shutdown, together with a cutback in government spending and higher taxes that took effect last year, subtracted 1.5 percentage points from last year's economic growth, extending the nation's long crawl out of the deep 2007-2009 recession.

"The single biggest impediment to a stronger economic recovery has been the years of dysfunction in Washington and the policies that have emerged," suggests Steven Rattner, a longtime Wall Street executive who was Obama's auto-bailout adviser in his first term.

Obama signing farm bill that trims food stamps

By NEDRA PICKLER

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama is carrying out a presidential duty that he hasn't had a lot of opportunity to perform recently: signing into law a major piece of bipartisan legislation.

Obama planned to sign a far-reaching farm bill Friday at Michigan State University, a rare celebration of Washington political compromise being held in heartland America. The bill expands federal crop insurance and ends direct government pay-

ments to farmers, but the bulk of its cost is for the food stamp program that aids 1 in 7 Americans.

The bill cuts food stamps by \$800 million per year, or about 1 percent, one-fifth of the cut approved last fall by the Republican-led House. Conservatives remain unhappy with the bill and its subsidies for groups ranging from sheep farmers to the maple syrup industry.

A partisan dispute over food stamp spending held up the legislation for two years, and last fall lawmakers were warning of an impending spike in milk prices

without a deal on the bill, which contains federal dairy supports. The prospect of compromise seemed bleak at the time, when lawmakers couldn't even pass a budget to keep the government running.

The first thing Obama did after a deal finally was reached to end the partial government shutdown was to call on Congress to build on that progress by passing the farm bill, along with a budget and an immigration overhaul. In four months he's gone 2 for 3, with chances for immigration legislation appearing increasingly iffy.

Obama promised in his State of the Union address last week to make 2014 a year of action, using his presidential powers besides pushing a Congress that usually is reluctant to go along with his ideas. In that spirit, he's coupling the signing of the farm bill with a new administration initiative to boost exports called "Made in Rural America."

According to a draft of the initiative, Obama plans to direct his administration to work on connecting rural businesses with federal resources that can help sell their products and services abroad. The

steps he's directing agencies to take include hosting five regional forums for rural businesses, training Agriculture Department staff in all 50 states to advise on export opportunities, and putting on a national conference to highlight successful projects.

The program's creation comes as U.S. farmers are sending record exports overseas — more than \$140 billion in the past year, driven in large part by increasing demand from China. But administration officials say additional opportunities exist for farmers and other rural business owners.

Lawmakers reach agreement on paying doctors for Medicare

By NOAM N. LEVY

Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — In a rare bipartisan agreement, congressional leaders have settled on a plan to fix Medicare's system for paying physicians, potentially ending years of uncertainty that often held up fees for doctors who care for the nation's senior citizens.

The proposed fix still must be paid for, requiring lawmakers to come up with as much as \$150 billion in savings from elsewhere in the budget.

But there is optimism on Capitol

Hill that the federal government will finally replace a dysfunctional, 17-year-old system designed to control Medicare spending by limiting annual increases in physicians' reimbursements. That system was widely seen as broken, and year after year, Congress refused to hold the line on those fee limits.

Speaking to reporters Thursday, House Speaker John A. Boehner, R-Ohio, also said he was hopeful a permanent fix could be passed this year.

Senior lawmakers who worked

on the deal acknowledged that paying for the fix remains challenging. But the proposal has the crucial support of senior Democrats and Republicans on key committees, including the Senate Finance Committee, as well as the House Ways and Means and the Energy and Commerce committees.

Under the proposal, the old limits would be ditched, and fees would increase 0.5 percent annually during the next five years.

More important, Medicare would move away from pay-

ing doctors for each procedure they perform. Instead, the federal insurance program for the elderly increasingly would pay physicians based on their performance, rewarding doctors who hit quality targets and whose patients got healthier.

Many health experts and physicians' groups believe that this will create incentives for improving care and controlling costs. Several leading medical groups applauded the deal.

"This legislation is the product of months of unprecedented

bipartisan, bicameral work to reach this landmark agreement," said Dr. Ardis Dee Hoven, president of the American Medical Association.

The old system, known as the sustainable growth rate, was particularly galling to many doctors because each time Congress ignored the fee limits, it often spurred an eleventh-hour search for money to offset the cost. During that time, physicians faced the prospect of deep cuts in Medicare fees that would have been required by the formula.

NATION

Children of MLK battle over his estate

By KATE BRUMBACK
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Facing the latest in a string of legal battles with her brothers, the daughter of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., is seeking to portray herself as the true heir to her father's legacy.

Bernice King has been outspoken this week in her opposition to what she said is a plan by her brothers, Dexter King and Martin Luther King III, to sell their father's Nobel Peace Prize medal and personal traveling Bible. Bernice has possession of both items, and her brothers asked a judge last week to order her to turn them over.

"I take this strong position for my father because Daddy is not here to say for himself, 'My Bible and my medals are not to be sold,'" she said at a news conference Thursday from the pulpit of the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church, where her father and grandfather were pastors.

"When the record books are written, let it be said that there was at least one heir who tried to further the legacy," she later added.

King's heirs agreed in 1995 to sign over rights for many inherited items to the Estate of Martin Luther King Jr. Inc., the brothers' complaint filed in a court in Atlanta says. Bernice King has repeatedly acknowledged the validity of that agreement but is now refusing to hand over the Bible and medal, the complaint says.

Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968. His widow, Coretta Scott King, died in 2006. The King children have profited from their father's legacy. In 2006, Sotheby's auctioned off 10,000 documents from their collection for \$52 million, with the siblings receiving equal shares of the money.

They also haven't shied from legal battles that push their family disputes into the public eye — struggles that many believe have tarnished the family name.

David J. Garrow, a historian whose book, "Bearing the Cross:



The children of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King — from left, Martin Luther King III, Dexter King, the late Yolanda King and Bernice King — stand next to a crypt dedicated to their parents in Atlanta in November 2006.

W.A. HAREWOOD/AP



“When the record books are written, let it be said that there was at least one heir who tried to further the legacy.”

Bernice King, daughter of Martin Luther King Jr.

together. But when Yolanda died in May 2007, that year was gone.

Just more than a year after Yolanda's death, the long-simmering dispute between the three remaining children boiled over, with three lawsuits filed among the siblings in as many months. The disputes between the three have mostly involved aspects of control of their parents' legacy, and most often in the past, the fights pitted Bernice and Martin against Dexter.

Bernice said she's aware that many people may roll their eyes and say, "Here the King children go again." But this time is different, she said. These two items are sacred and reflect the very essence of their father: a man of God and a champion of peaceful protest.

In response to repeated emails and calls, a lawyer for the King estate, which is controlled by Dexter and Martin III, sent a copy of the 1995 agreement among the siblings. The lawyer offered no comment.

Garrow, the historian, said King's Bible should go to a museum or somewhere it can be seen by everyone. "The fundamental bottom line here is that the King children have no clue what their father's legacy really means," the historian said. "Martin Luther King Jr. was the most unselfish, ungreedy person who ever lived."

kept disagreements to themselves. After their mother died in January 2006, it was the oldest daughter, Yolanda, who held the siblings

Low on natural gas, Calif. told to power down

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Water isn't the only resource running short in California. The drought-stricken state is also low on natural gas.

With a move that usually comes in the height of summer when temperatures are soaring and air conditioners blasting, Californians were urged to voluntarily cut their electricity use after frigid weather across the U.S. and Canada caused a shortage of natural gas at Southern California power plants.

The so-called Flex Alert, in which residents are asked to turn off unneeded lights, avoid using large appliances or equipment and turn off electrically powered heaters, was allowed to expire at 10 p.m. Thursday, nine hours after it began.

The shortage was only in Southern California, but the north was asked to do its part, too.

"Statewide electricity and gas conservation will help free up both electricity and gas supplies for Southern Californians," the California Independent System Operator, which runs the state's power grid, said in a statement.

There was no immediate call for an extension of the alert, but it wasn't clear whether more could be coming.

Stephanie McCorkle, a spokeswoman for the grid operator, said Southern California has become increasingly dependent on natural gas-fired plants since the decision last year to shutter the troubled San Onofre nuclear power plant, which is located between Los Angeles and San Diego.

When it was operating, the twin-reactor San Onofre plant produced enough power for 1.4 million homes.

According to 2010 California Energy Commission research, 53 percent of the power generated in the state comes from natural gas.

Record amounts of natural gas are being burned for heat and electricity across North America. Research firm Bentek Energy said in a statement that domestic natural gas production dropped about 1 percent in January from the previous month. That doesn't include Alaska or Hawaii.

"The recent and persistent cold in the U.S.

Northeast and Midwest regions affected overall production this month, given that wells can't freeze during very cold weather," Jack Weixel, Bentek's director of energy analysis, said in a statement. Bentek analyst Luke Jackson said gas supplies entering Southern California pipelines have been considerably lower the past two days because of high gas prices and strong demand in Texas, the Pacific Northwest and the Rocky Mountain states, which has crimped gas supplies for Southern California.

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas, which operates most of that state's electric grid, asked people to reduce electric use until noon Friday.

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Postal Service bill that includes rate hike clears Senate committee

By LISA REIN
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — A proposed rescue plan for the financially strapped U.S. Postal Service took a step forward Thursday when a Senate committee passed a bill that would end Saturday delivery in the future and make permanent a recent, temporary increase in the cost of stamps.

The bipartisan bill would also restructure the Postal Service's health insurance program and a \$5.5 billion annual payment the

agency must make toward health costs of future retirees, two shifts that would cut significant costs.

The bill cleared the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee nine to one, with Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., casting the lone "no" vote. Tester said afterward that the changes would hurt mail delivery to rural areas and threaten the Postal Service's mission of universal service. Six senators were absent from the vote.

Thursday's action follows last year's approval of a postal over-

haul by a House committee. Key differences among the two-day delivery, which the House bill would allow postal officials to start immediately — will probably be ironed out in a conference committee once each bill reaches the House and Senate floors.

The Postal Service welcomed the Senate panel defeated an amendment from Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., that would overturn a federal ban on guns in post offices. But the senators approved a measure from Sen. Mark Begich, D-Alaska, that would allow licensed gun holders to carry guns in post

office parking lots as long as the state already allows them.

Begich said he wants gun owners to avoid being charged with a crime if they collect their mail at their local post office after hunting and leave their gun in the trunk or back seat of their car.

The Postal Service welcomed the Senate committee vote. The bill "provides the framework to return the organization to financial stability," the agency said in a statement. "The bill also provides the Postal Service with the necessary flexibility to develop innovative products and services for the

American public and to grow the business."

The vote on the broader bill, after a year of negotiation by the panel's top Democrat and Republican, however, left two key stakeholders unhappy.

Postal unions said the bill would cut services and thousands of jobs by eliminating Saturday service and shifting mail delivery to the curb from the doorstep.

Commercial mailers, meanwhile, oppose a provision to allow higher postal rates that's designed to bring the mail agency billions of dollars in new revenue.

NATION

Anti-gang efforts tame Chicago street violence

By DON BABWIN
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — The low point so far in Chicago's closely watched battle with street gangs may have been the day that Michelle Obama came home for the funeral of a teenage honor student.

A year ago, the city's bloodiest January in more than a decade had just ended. On Feb. 9, 2013, the first lady stood in a church mourning 15-year-old Hadiya Pendleton, who had been shot dead in a gang dispute she had nothing to do with. It happened just a mile from the Obamas' Chicago house.

Since then, the number of homicides and other violent crimes that turned Chicago into a national symbol of gun violence has fallen sharply.

The city led the nation in homicides in 2012 with more than 500. It ended 2013 with 415 homicides — the lowest total in nearly a half-century but still far more than any other U.S. city, including much larger Los Angeles and New York.

The overall crime rate fell last year to a level not seen since 1972, and the number of shooting incidents involving victims 16 and younger dropped 40 percent in 12 months, city officials say.

Some wonder whether the decline is a result of spending nearly \$100 million on police overtime. But city officials insist the numbers are evidence that changing police tactics and creating and expanding after-school jobs and mentoring programs for young people are paying off.

Nobody believes the problem has been solved. Yet Hadiya Pendleton's great uncle, Nathaniel Pendleton, feels more hopeful. "It's a long way from people feeling like they can sit out on their porches," he said. "But it is getting a little better."

On the day of the first lady's visit, Chicago's violence problem was making international headlines, posing an enormous challenge to Mayor Rahm Emanuel, a former White House chief of staff. The mayor stressed that the problem mostly affected gang-plagued neighborhoods on the city's South and West sides and

that police were doing everything possible to contain it.

In response, authorities launched a multipronged effort that started with a gang audit, a massive pooling of information about specific gangs and their members.

"We identified gang turfs, membership, who's in conflict with who, put it into a database and put that into the hands of beat officers," Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy said in an interview with The Associated Press.

With that information, he said, officers could focus on particular gangs and members and move quickly into areas where gangs might attack each other.

McCarthy, formerly the police chief in Newark, N.J., and a high-ranking commander in New York, said officers also have alerted gangs that if one of their members kills somebody, police will go after everyone in the gang for any infraction — from "welfare fraud to failure to pay taxes."

McCarthy said he's expanding on a system his predecessor, Judy Weis, launched when Weis met with gang members to deliver the same message — a move that some alderman criticized as coddling criminals.

Today, the department also provides gang members with information about social services and even sets up meetings between them and the parents of murder victims "to give them a sense of what they are doing to the community."

McCarthy said it's the largest program of its kind in the nation and will be expanded this year.

So, too, will the department's so-called "heat lists" of people deemed likely to kill or be killed. Officers gathered statistics showing that associates of murder victims are 100 to 500 times more likely to end up on either side of a slaying. Last summer, they hand-delivered letters to 25 people warning them of those dangers and asking what police could do to help.

Since then, some have been arrested for low-level offenses, but none has been a victim or an offender of gun violence, McCarthy said.



MATT ROURKE/AP

A man inspects an ice-covered tree Wednesday that took out a utility line and landed atop a minivan after a winter storm in Philadelphia.

Cold weather stays amid power-restoration effort

By MARK SCOLFORO
The Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Utility crews aren't getting much relief from the weather as they work to restore electricity to hundreds of thousands of people in Pennsylvania and Maryland two days after an ice storm downed power lines and trees.

Forecasters said the cold weather gripping the mid-Atlantic on Friday is expected to remain in place through the weekend, and snow was possible. Utility companies reported more than 325,000 customers without power in Pennsylvania, along with about 50,000 in Maryland. Officials had said they hoped to have most of them back online by the end of the day Friday, but in some cases it may take much of the weekend.

PECO, the dominant electricity provider in the Philadelphia area, reported more than 288,000 customers out Friday morning in the five-county area. First Energy had about 27,550, almost all west of the city in York County, where there were also almost 4,000 PECO customers without power. And PPL reported 5,728 outages, most of them in Lancaster County, also west of Philadelphia.

Amtrak, meanwhile, said full service between Philadelphia and Harrisburg was being restored Friday after tracks have been cleared of fallen trees and debris, but riders may see delays of up to a half-hour.

Crews from as far away as Canada and Arkansas have been called in to help out, and officials are comparing the scope of the damage to a hurricane. Some who might not get power back for several days sought warmth — or

Snowstorm hammers Oregon, Washington

The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Chilled and snow-battered residents of western Oregon and southwest Washington braced for a promised second punch from a rare and powerful snowstorm after the first installment dropped more than a foot of snow on parts of the Pacific Northwest.

Forecasters said a second low-pressure system was expected to spread snow into northwest Oregon on Friday afternoon, possibly bringing another 6 to 12 inches of snow.

Adding to concerns about Friday's commute was freezing

rain in the Eugene and Corvallis areas of the Willamette Valley and on the central Oregon coast, said Colby Neuman, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Portland.

Temperatures in the low 20s and teens were forecast early Friday, Neuman said.

Thursday's storm left one person dead in a massive Interstate 5 pileup in southwest Washington, caused multiple other wrecks and closed schools and offices.

Many school districts in the region canceled Friday's classes as well.

at least somewhere to recharge their batteries — in shopping malls, public libraries and hastily established shelters.

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett said after an aerial survey of the storm's aftermath on Thursday that crews put a priority on restoring electricity to hospitals, nursing homes, communications facilities and sewer plants.

"This storm is in some respects as bad or maybe even worse than Hurricane Sandy," he said during an appearance in the Philadelphia suburbs. He said a shipment of electrical generators from the federal government was on its way to Pennsylvania.

He said he was urging electric

utilities "to move as fast as they can, but they have to do it within the parameters of safety."

About 200 people took advantage of seven shelters in three suburban Philadelphia counties, according to the American Red Cross of Southeastern Pennsylvania. Shelters also were open in central Pennsylvania.

The Northeast's second winter storm of the week dumped more than a foot of snow in some places on Wednesday, forcing schools, businesses and government offices to close, snarling air travel and sending cars and trucks sliding on slippery roads and highways. It also left a thick coating of ice on trees and power lines.



M. SPENCER GREEN/AP

Cleopatra Pendleton, the mother of slain teen Hadiya Pendleton, speaks about gun violence at a news conference in October in Chicago. Looking on from left are Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy and Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez.

NATION

Smithsonian exhibit displays photographs of top 100 who embody the concept of cool

By PHILIP KENNICOTT
The Washington Post

Cultural concepts are always fuzzy, but that doesn't make them useless. We may never know the exact beginning or end of Romanticism or the Gilded Age, or where lies the line between art and entertainment, or what distinguishes great talent from genius. But that doesn't make those concepts hollow, just fluid and approximate.

A new entertaining and insightful exhibition at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery confronts one of the most dynamic and hard-to-define concepts in American cultural life — the cool. "American Cool" broaches its subject through photographs of people who helped define and embody the cool since before the idea had even taken definite form, to the current day when it is highly questionable if the "cool" is still meaningful.

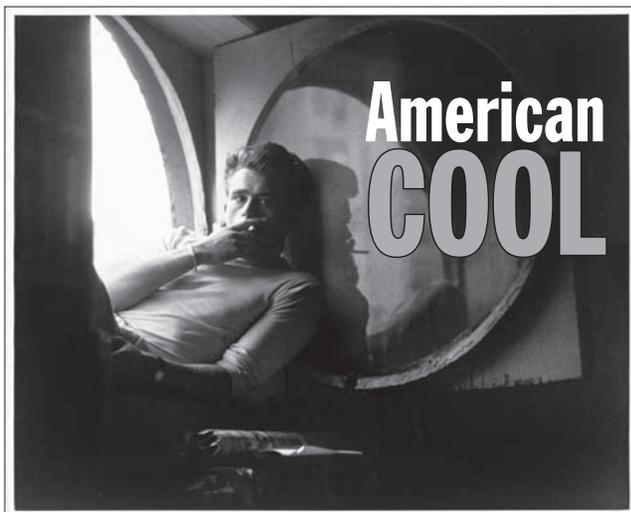
If you want to know how porous the category is, consider all of the following, officially inducted into the realms of the cool by this exhibition: Walt Whitman, Frederick Douglass, H.L. Mencken, Buster Keaton, Jackson Pollock and Susan Sontag. They join artists, entertainers and celebrities who are more traditionally and obviously defined as cool: Lester Young (who plays the central historical role in defining and promoting the idea of cool), Humphrey Bogart (the first and greatest mass-market embodiment of the cool) and Jack Kerouac (who helped export the cool from jazz to broader counter-culture application).

To govern what seems at first like a highly subjective free-for-all, curators Joel Dinerstein and Frank H. Goodyear III laid down a four-part test for each of the 100 people included. First, they must have made an original artistic contribution, with a signature style; second, they must have in some way been rebellious or transgressive; third, they must have iconic status; and fourth, they must have left a significant cultural legacy.

But even those parameters can't contain the many things we think are definitional about the cool, the aura of mystery, the stoical indifference to criticism, the attitude of self-possession and seemingly superficial indifference to questions of dress and personal style.

In a catalog essay accompanying the exhibition, Dinerstein piles on with yet more things that are the opposite of cool: "To be cool is not to be nice or good or heroic, essentially a pop culture phenomenon and distinctly American. Other cultures have similar ideas — machalache, sangfroid, sprezzatura — but they are not 'cool.' Sprezzatura dates back to Castiglione's "Book of the Courtier," which prized a seemingly effortless virtuosity in all things, from art to social behavior. Sangfroid is distinctly French, a sense of composure and equilibrium, especially under fire.

These are, according to the curators, concepts derived from aristocratic entitlement, whereas American cool is generally working class, an "earned individuality" rather than an inherited sense of self-worth; perhaps, though the aristocratic definition of these ideas was breaking down around the same time that this exhibition posits the origins of the cool.



Photos courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery

Among the people selected for the exhibition are actors James Dean, above, Marlon Brando, below right, and actor/singer Frank Sinatra, below left.

‘Cool has an edge and a dark side: To be cool is not to strive to be fabulous ... or saintly.’

Joel Dinerstein
co-curator

zatura — but they are not "cool." Sprezzatura dates back to Castiglione's "Book of the Courtier," which prized a seemingly effortless virtuosity in all things, from art to social behavior. Sangfroid is distinctly French, a sense of composure and equilibrium, especially under fire.

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Walt Whitman — the first personality featured in the exhibition, which calls him "the guiding light of American bohemia" — published "Leaves of Grass" in 1855; in 1844, Alexandre Dumas began serializing "The Count of Monte Cristo," in which a self-made working-class young man assumes an aristocratic name and character to exact revenge on his enemies. Few characters in literature are more suave, self-possessed, disciplined, eccentric and alluring — in a word, cool. And none of that was technically interesting.

But the authors have a point. In America, at least, cool is distinctly lower or middle class, reflecting its origins in African American culture, where it was a compensation mechanism for living under the brutal regime of racism.

When Lester Young said "I'm cool," writes Dinerstein, "it meant, 'I'm



keeping it together in here against invasive social forces."

Frederick Douglass, whose oratory was fiery, not cool, merits its inclusion in the exhibition because, according to Goodyear, he used a carefully constructed photographic identity to challenge preconceptions about race and African American men. "Though he lived prior to cool's popularization, his cultivation of this mask of stylish stoicism presaged the rebellions of others who sought to live within yet also apart from the mainstream."

Stylish stoicism is an excellent phrase. But as the exhibition charts the historical evolution of the cool, "stylish stoicism" fits less well with the later, counter-cultural appropriation of the cool. Transgression becomes more important than style and talent, even directionless, purposeless, self-destructive transgression.

When Marlon Brando's character in the 1953 film "The Wild One" is asked, "Hey, Johnny, what

are you rebelling against?" and he answers, "Whaddaya got?" — the cool has clearly gone through a critical permutation. Brando is, of course, featured in the exhibition, looking sad, innocent and distracted in a 1950 image by Philippe Halsman.

The exhibition situates this evolution of the cool in the period from 1960 to 1979, but it was clearly nascent earlier than that. "Cool & Counterculture: 1960-1979" is one of the most fascinating and provocative stretches of the show, including diverse figures from Andy Warhol and Paul Newman to Jack Nicholson and Bill Murray. One particularly evocative juxtaposition places a reprint of a 1966 photograph of Muhammad Ali with his fist thrust directly into the camera lens next to a 1971 image of Clint Eastwood holding an enormous handgun in a visually analogous confrontation with the viewer. Clearly, the concept has become elastic if it can encompass a black boxer playfully enacting an aggressive identity and a white actor appealing to working class (and often racist) fantasies of public order and vigilantism.

The exhibition ends with what it calls "The Legacies of Cool: 1980-present." Here we find David Byrne (definitely cool), Steve Jobs (geek cool), Willie Nelson (long-haired, hippie stoner cool) and Jon Stewart (really). Shows the most telling image is a photograph of skateboarder Tony Hawk going a move in his kitchen. His young son sits at the kitchen counter while his wife cradles a baby.

The dishwasher is open, there are decorative plates above the standard-issue wooden cupboards and the whole thing screams suburbia. The wall text notes his success as an entrepreneur, with a popular line of sports equipment and a video game series.

In an interview, Dinerstein acknowledged that old ideas about transgression may not be so important any more. What matters now is "new strategies for individuality."

The exhibition is heavily focused on celebrity, though there are some surprises (the Hawaiian surfer Duke Paoa Kahanamoku appears in a circa 1915 photograph). But as the concept of the cool becomes more and more open-ended, it's unfortunate that it isn't extended further beyond popular music and film.

Susan Sontag definitely seems a worthy inclusion, but are there no classic musicians, ballet dancers or post-structuralist philosophers who are cool? Was the great violinist Jascha Heifetz cool? Or just cold? Was the literary theorist Jacques Derrida cool? Or just instable?

It's also unfortunate that the cool isn't treated more critically as a concept. There is a dark side of cool — dumb, impassive, disengaged, dismissive and even violent (see the oeuvre of Quentin Tarantino). Think of the racist cool for school" and all that implies. Although "geek" cool makes a brief appearance in the person of Jobs (on a motorcycle), the rise of geeks and nerds as positive cultural archetypes may be a sign of aesthetic resistance against the stupid underbelly of cool.

WORLD

U.S. diplomat apologizes for profane remark

By ANNE GEARAN

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The top U.S. diplomat for Europe apologized Thursday for comments about the European Union that were — to put it lightly — undiplomatic.

“F--- the E.U.,” Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland said in a private telephone call that was intercepted and leaked online.

In the call, Nuland, a former U.S. ambassador to NATO and State Department spokeswoman, was dismissively referring to slow-moving European efforts to address political paralysis and a looming fiscal crisis in Ukraine.

But it was the blunt nature of her remarks, rather than U.S. diplomatic calculations, that seemed exceptional.

Nuland also assessed the political skills of Ukrainian opposition figures with unisexual candor and, along with the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, Geoffrey Pyatt, debated strategy for their cause, laying bare a deep degree of U.S. involvement in affairs that Washington officially says are Ukraine’s to resolve.

State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki acknowledged that the recording was authentic and said Nuland had apologized to E.U. officials. But U.S. officials were also quick to point the finger at Russia, which has bristled

at U.S. involvement in Ukraine.

The recording “was first noted and tweeted out by the Russian government. I think it says something about Russia’s role,” White House press secretary Jay Carney told reporters.

The recording surfaced on YouTube on Thursday, just as Nuland arrived in Ukraine for talks. It also was widely viewed on a Russian-language website, where it appeared online along with a photo montage of Nuland, Pyatt, and opposition figures. The Russian caption reads, “Puppets of the Maidan,” the colloquial name for Kiev’s Independence Square.

Illicitly recorded material is a staple of politics in former So-

viet republics, where it’s known by its Russian name “kompromat,” meaning “compromising materials.”

The political crisis in Ukraine erupted last fall, when President Viktor Yanukovich abruptly pulled out of a trade partnership with the European Union and announced that the country would join a Russian economic alliance instead. That offer came with a \$15 billion loan that U.S. and European officials came close to calling a bribe.

Russia had threatened Ukraine with trade sanctions if it signed the E.U. pact and made little secret of its desire to retain influence over Ukraine and Yanukovich, who was the Kremlin’s

preferred candidate when he was elected in 2010.

Russia has lent about \$3 billion, but suspended the balance of the loan after Yanukovich’s political concessions to the opposition last month.

The European Union’s foreign policy chief visited Kiev this week with new offers of financial help for Ukraine’s growing economic problems. The package is widely seen as an effort to counter Russian influence.

The State Department did not say exactly when the recorded conversation took place, but it came after Yanukovich’s Jan. 25 offer to include two senior members of the opposition movement in his government.



JEROME DELAY/AP

Muslim residents flee the Central African Republic capital of Bangui in a mass exodus escorted by Chadian troops on Friday.

Christians cheer as Muslims flee CAR city

By JEROME DELAY AND KRISTA LARSON

The Associated Press

BANGUI, Central African Republic — Thousands of Muslims fled for their lives from the capital of Central African Republic on Friday, climbing aboard trucks guarded by heavily armed Chadian forces. One man who fell off a truck subsequently was killed and his body was mutilated, highlighting the savagery faced by those Muslims who stayed behind.

The convoy of some 500 cars, trucks and motorcycles made its way toward Chad, a predominantly Muslim neighboring country. Crowds of Christians cheered as the convoy passed out of town. The exodus witnessed by Associated Press journalists comes after two months of sectarian violence in the capital that has targeted Muslims accused of collaborating with the now-sidelined rebel government.

In recent weeks, angry mobs have set fire to mosques and have

brutally killed and mutilated Muslims. On Wednesday, one Muslim suspected of having aided last year’s rebellion was attacked for 15 minutes with knives, bricks and feet. Uniformed soldiers then paraded his body through the streets before it was dismembered and set ablaze.

“It really is a horrific situation. All over Bangui, entire Muslim neighborhoods are being destroyed and emptied,” said Peter Bouckaert, emergencies director for Human Rights Watch, who has gotten trapped Muslims to safety under the guard of peacekeepers. “Their buildings are being destroyed and being taken apart, brick by brick, roof by roof, to wipe out any sign of their once existence in this country,” he added.

Some trucks broke down even before they could leave Bangui and had to be abandoned. The passengers jumped aboard other trucks, facing constant jeering, threats and stone throwing from the watching crowd.

“The Christians say the Muslims must go back where they came from, that’s why we are going home,” said Osmani Benui as she fled Bangui. “We had no possibility to stay on because we had no protection.”

Central African Republic is a predominantly Christian country, with a sizeable Muslim population in its north near the borders with Sudan and Chad. An alliance of Muslim rebel groups from the north united to overthrow the president of a decade last March, though their grievances were political and economic — not religious.

The rebels known as Seleka quickly became bitterly despised by Christians in the capital after the fighters went on looting sprees, raping and killing civilians at random. An armed Christian movement known as the anti-Balaka, aided by loyalists of ousted President Francois Bozize, began retaliating several months later.

Rights group: Iraq holding thousands of women illegally

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Iraq authorities are illegally detaining thousands of women, including many subjected to torture, the threat of sexual abuse and other ill treatment despite promises of reform, Human Rights Watch said Thursday.

The findings by the New York-based rights group raise new concerns about Iraq’s ability to handle those detained in massive security sweeps targeting militants amid an escalation in violence. International rights groups are worried about the weakness of the Iraqi judicial system, accusing it of being plagued with corruption and falling short of international standards.

Human Rights Watch said that women have been held for months or even years without charges before seeing judges. Many were rounded up on suspicion of terrorist activities by male family members. Interviews of detainees described being kicked, slapped, raped or threatened with sexual assault by security forces.

“Iraqi security forces and officials act as if brutally abusing women will make the country safer,” said Joe Stork, deputy Middle East and North Africa director of Human Rights Watch. “In fact, these women and their relatives have told us that as long as security forces abuse people with impunity, we can only expect security conditions to worsen.”

Vatican hits back at UN committee for abuse report

By NICOLE WINFIELD

The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican struck back Friday at a U.N. human rights committee that issued a scathing report on sex abuse by priests, accusing it of straying beyond its mandate and contradicting the U.N. as a whole by adopting the “prejudiced” positions of anti-Catholic advocacy groups.

The Vatican said the U.N. committee had ignored both the Holy See’s unique status and its efforts to address the abuse crisis in recent years, noting that it had provided this information to the committee in writing and in person. It blasted what it called the “absolutely anomalous” publicity the committee gave its report and promised a full response at a later date.

The Geneva-based committee on Wednesday accused the Vatican of systematically placing its own interests over those of victims by enabling priests to rape and molest tens of thousands of children through its own policies and its code of silence.

It recommended the Vatican immediately remove any priest suspected or known to have abused children, open its archives on abusers and the bishops who covered up for them, and turn the cases over to law enforcement.

The Vatican was taken completely off-guard by the severity of the report and, slow to respond, issued a series of increasingly critical and articulated responses that culminated with Friday’s lengthy statement by the Vatican spokesman, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, on Vatican Radio.

WORLD



AP photos

Divaldo Aguiar, who plays the part of Pachenchu, lies inside a mock coffin as villagers splash rum into his mouth during the Burial of Pachenchu celebration at a cemetery in Santiago de Las Vegas, Cuba, on Feb. 5.

Cubans 'bury' man alive in mock funeral

By ANNE-MARIE GARCIA
The Associated Press

SANTIAGO DE LAS VEGAS, Cuba — Cuban villagers staged a mock funeral and burial of a living man this week in a boozey festival that has become an annual tradition in a small town near Havana.

A tractor pulled a trailer slowly through the streets in the early morning carrying the man in a coffin and a four-piece tropical band. Behind it, dozens of people drank, clapped and sang to the music, as a white-haired woman pretending to be the bereaved widow wept loudly for the "deceased."

"What a good man he was," Carmen Zamora cried, dabbing at her eyes with a kerchief. "He's leaving me all alone. I don't want them to bury him in the ground. My God, no."

The celebration in Santiago de Las Vegas, about 12 miles south of the Cuban capital, has been held each Feb. 5 for the last 30 years and is known as the Burial of Pachenchu.

But the atmosphere is more street-party than funeral.

"I never miss this party. I tell my boss and take a day off work," said Rebeca Morera, 50, shaking her hips to the music. "This is a tradition of my town where I was born and raised. We can't lose it."

The bash kicked off Wednesday with the slow procession to the local cemetery. Pallbearers carried the coffin of "Pachenchu,"



Carmen Zamora, who plays the widow, center, stands near the coffin holding Divaldo Aguiar.

'Being reborn is the most beautiful thing there is in life.'

Divaldo Aguiar
villager who plays the part of Pachenchu

who's known the other 364 days of the year as Divaldo Aguiar, to an open grave and used ropes to lower it six feet under.

A man masquerading as a priest in a flowing blue frock made the sign of the cross over the grave and muttered, "rest in peace."

Then villagers splashed rum into Aguiar's mouth from above, and he opened his eyes and climbed out of the tomb.

"Being reborn is the most beautiful thing there is in life," said Aguiar, who said he

has played "Pachenchu" for several years running.

The tradition was born on Feb. 5, 1984, when villagers got the idea of putting on a mock burial to mark the end of local carnival season. It took its name from the title of a play that had been shown in what was then the town theater.

"Pachenchu" is not representative of any real person, living or dead, explained Alvaro Hernandez. "He's a product of popular imagination," Hernandez said.

Chinese director pays \$1.2M for having 3 kids

BEIJING — Chinese authorities say film director Zhang Yimou and his wife have paid more than \$1.2 million in fines for having three

children in violation of China's strict family-planning rules.

A district of the eastern city of Wuxi said in an online notice that its family planning office on Friday received one lump-sum payment from Zhang and Chen Ting for the hefty fine.

Rumors became public last year that Zhang fathered more children than allowed by China's family-size policy that limits most urban families like his to one child. He agreed in December to cooperate with a government investigation.

Zhang is one of China's best-

known directors with films such as "Hero" and "House of Flying Daggers." He also designed the opulent opening and closing ceremonies for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

From The Associated Press

'House' leads to patient's diagnosis

By MARIA CHENG
The Associated Press

LONDON — If you're unlucky enough to be stricken with a rare medical condition, you'd better hope your doctor watches the right television show.

That was the lesson for one German man with severe heart failure and a puzzling mix of symptoms including fever, blindness, deafness and enlarged lymph nodes, which baffled doctors for months.

The 55-year-old man was diagnosed only when he was referred to Dr. Juergen Schaefer, a fan of the U.S. television medical drama, "House."

"After five minutes, I knew what was wrong," said Schaefer, who works at the Center for Undiagnosed Diseases in Marburg, north of Frankfurt.

He said the man's symptoms matched up almost perfectly with a patient on an episode in which the fictional Dr. Gregory House, played by British actor Hugh Laurie, identified cobalt poisoning as the cause. The series ended in 2012 after an eight-year run.

Schaefer regularly uses the television series to teach medical students. When he saw the patient with heart failure in May 2012, he had recently prepared a lecture on the show's cobalt poisoning case, where House's future mother-in-law falls ill after receiving a faulty metal hip.

Though the German patient's fragments of the ceramic hip remained and a heart transplant, Schaefer and colleagues immediately tested his cobalt levels after he complained his problems started after his last operation to replace a broken ceramic hip.

Schaefer said some small fragments of the ceramic hip remained and were grinding into the metal replacement, which leaked cobalt and chromium into the patient's bloodstream. Once the hip was replaced, the patient's heart got better and his other symptoms improved.

Schaefer and colleagues wrote about their experience in a case report published online Friday in the journal, *Lancet*. The patient wasn't identified.

"We would have diagnosed this even without Dr. House," Schaefer said. "You could have also typed his symptoms into Google and gotten the diagnosis."



Schaefer

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Judge says headlight speed trap warning OK

MO ST. LOUIS — It's a common practice among drivers who pass through a speed trap: Flash your headlights at approaching cars as a warning to slow down. Now, a federal court judge in Missouri says penalizing drivers for the headlight flash violates their First Amendment right to free speech.

U.S. District Judge Henry E. Autrey in St. Louis on Monday issued a preliminary injunction prohibiting the St. Louis County town of Ellisville from citing and prosecuting drivers who flash their lights to warn of radar and speed traps. Ellisville's city attorney said there are no plans to appeal.

The order stems from a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri on behalf of Michael Elli. On Nov. 17, 2012, Elli flashed his headlights to warn oncoming vehicles of a radar set up by Ellisville police.

An officer saw the flash and pulled Elli over, citing him for a city ordinance violation, though a similar statute exists in Missouri law. Elli was told he would likely face a fine of up to \$1,000 if convicted.

PETA member wants memorial for chickens

GA GAINESVILLE — An animal rights advocate wants to place a roadside memorial in Georgia to remember several chickens killed in a highway wreck.

A member of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals filed an application for the memorial Wednesday with the Georgia Department of Transportation.

If approved, a memorial would be placed at the Hall County site where a truck hauling live chickens overturned Jan. 27.

Sarah Segal of Atlanta wrote in her application that she wants to place a 10-foot tombstone memorial for one month on the right of way of U.S. 129 to mark the deaths of the chickens.

The drivers of both the chicken truck and the other vehicle involved were not seriously injured.

Dispute splits band of real-life superheroes

MI PETOSKEY — A dispute between two men over leadership of a costumed band of self-professed real-life superheroes has escalated into a battle of insults.

Mark Williams, who dresses up as Batman to patrol the northern Michigan community of Petoskey, and Adam Besso, who hails from the Detroit area and is nicknamed "Bee Sting," became friends after Williams got in trouble with police in 2011.

But now their dispute has split the dozen-member Michigan Protectors group.

"He is an abusive, neglectful, thieving, boastful, cowardly crook," Williams said. "He belongs in jail, and I will see him there."

Williams, a part-time landscaper, has drawn attention for patrol-

THE CENSUS

3

The number of people arrested in connection with the theft last month of a rare, multimillion-dollar Stradivarius violin. Police said Thursday that a violin that could be one stolen from a concertmaster has been recovered in Milwaukee. Prosecutors confirmed Wednesday that two men, ages 41 and 36, and a 32-year-old woman, are in custody in connection with the case.



Eric Gav/AP

Frolic with the flock

A young girl chases pigeons and ducks at a park Tuesday in San Antonio.

ling in Petoskey. He was arrested in 2011 after being spotted atop a building while wearing a Batman costume. He was arrested again in 2012 for interfering with police at an accident scene.

Besso was arrested in 2012 as he patrolled near Flint while wearing a bulletproof vest, a black leather jacket with a bee logo, shin guards and knee pads. When Besso got out of jail, he rejuvenated the dormant Michigan Protectors, but some wanted Williams to be co-leader.

"He has to tear others down to feel better about himself," Besso said. "He's like 'Lord of the Flies' with a slightly better version of dirt bags."

City cracks down on jaywalking after deaths

NY NEW YORK — There is an unwritten rule in New York City: When the light is red, you cross the street if it's safe to do so.

There is also a written rule: When the light is red, you wait for it to turn green before stepping off the curb.

To the chagrin of some pedestrians, police last month began enforcing the written rule in the wake of a streak of pedestrian deaths — at least a dozen so far

this year. The deaths underscored the perils of walking in a city awash in taxis, tour buses, delivery vans, emergency vehicles, impatient commuters and yes, jaywalkers, darting among vehicles as they dash toward the subways, seek shortcuts across long blocks and hurry home to escape the cold.

"It's an epidemic we're facing," Mayor Bill de Blasio said after the third death in nine days on Manhattan's Upper West Side, where a 9-year-old boy and a 73-year-old man died in separate incidents on Jan. 10. On Jan. 19, a 26-year-old woman died in the same area when she was clipped by an ambulance and was hurled into the path of another vehicle.

Suspect in 3 states held after wild chase

MO PINEVILLE — A man wanted in three states was captured in southwest Missouri after a chase that included two car thefts and ramming a sheriff's car.

Authorities said Douglas Brown, 46, is wanted in South Carolina, Ohio and Louisiana for charges including burglary, assault and theft of weapons. Brown was charged Wednesday in McDougal County with tampering with a

motor vehicle.

The Joplin Globe reported the chase began Tuesday near Noel when Brown refused to pull over for a traffic stop. McDonald County authorities pursued him into Oklahoma and then back into Missouri.

He was finally arrested after Missouri State Highway Patrol officers chased him to Southwest City, where he hid behind a home.

Brown's being held in McDougal County on \$2,500 bail.

Volunteer pays for full lunches at school

TX HOUSTON — A volunteer at a Houston-area elementary school who noticed some students were getting a smaller lunch of cold cheese sandwiches is digging into his own pocket to cover delinquent meal accounts so every child can get the same full lunch tray.

Kenny Thompson is a volunteer tutor and mentor at Valley Oaks Elementary in Houston. He said he asked about the lunch differences after hearing about some Utah students who lost meals because of nonpayment.

Thompson said that likely was the reason for smaller meals at his school. He learned more than

60 children were on reduced-price lunches because parents couldn't afford the daily fee of 40 cents.

He provided \$465 to eliminate the deficits.

Thompson said children shouldn't have to worry about finances.

Would-be burglar scared by singing fish

MN ROCHESTER — Big Mouth Billy Bass apparently got the best of a would-be burglar in Minnesota.

Authorities in Rochester say the motion-activated singing fish apparently scared off an intruder who tried to break into the Hooked on Fishing bait and tackle shop.

The novelty bass had been hung near the door and would start singing "Take Me to the River" whenever someone entered the shop.

The Olmsted County Sheriff's Office said the fish was found on the floor after the intruder knocked it down while breaking the door to get in late Sunday or early Monday.

Sgt. Tom Clayman would-be burglar left without stealing anything, including cash that had been left in "a very visible spot."

From wire reports

TELEVISION

‘So long, farewell, auf wiedersehen, goodbye. If Fallon tanks, you’ll be back here next year.’

Jack Black
actor/comedian in the “Farewell song” to Jay Leno



STACIE MCCHESNEY, NBC/AP

From left, Carol Burnett, Sheryl Crow, Jack Black, Chris Paul, Jay Leno, Jim Parsons, Kim Kardashian and Oprah Winfrey perform Thursday during the “Farewell Song” on Leno’s final episode of “The Tonight Show” in Burbank, Calif.

Jay Leno says goodnight to late night

By FRAZIER MOORE
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Make way for Jimmy Fallon.

“The Tonight Show” host Jay Leno ended a stellar if sometimes stormy run Thursday night with high emotion at concluding what he termed “the greatest 22 years of my life.”

Calling himself “the luckiest guy in the world,” Leno went out on top, which was where he stayed for most of his stretch as the successor to “King of Late Night” Johnny Carson.

His exit, not entirely by choice, now clears the deck for yet another chapter of the 60-year-old talk show, with Fallon taking over as “Tonight” moves back to New York from its longtime Los Angeles home on Feb. 17.

“You’re very kind,” Leno told his audience at the start of his last monologue. “I don’t like goodbyes. NBC does. I don’t care for them.”

He had said goodbye to “The Tonight Show” before. His first departure came in 2009, when he was briefly replaced by Conan O’Brien but reclaimed the show after a messy transition and O’Brien’s lackluster ratings. At the time, Leno was moving to a prime-time show on NBC; this time, he’s out the door and has said he’ll focus on comedy clubs and his beloved

car collection.

“I don’t need to get fired three times,” he cracked. “I get the hint.”

Looking sharp in a black suit and bright blue tie, Leno was greeted by a standing ovation from the VIP audience. The typically self-contained comic betrayed a bit of nervousness, stumbling over a few lines in his monologue as he looked back comically.

“When I started hosting, Justin Bieber wasn’t even born yet,” Leno marveled. “That’s why we called those ‘the good old days.’”

The worst part of leaving NBC’s employ, he joked: “Now I’ll have to sign up for Obamacare.”

But later Leno was serious, even choking up when he shared that he’d lost his mother the first year he became “Tonight” host, his dad the second and then his brother.

“And after, that I was pretty much out of family, and the folks here became my family,” he said of the crew and staff.

The tender moments had a heightened effect on a show that was mostly aiming for laughs, with traditional monologue

Leno drew a bead most often on Bill Clinton

A study of Tonight Show host Jay Leno’s joke topics since 1992 shows former President Bill Clinton drew more than one out of 10 of his monologue jokes.

43,892

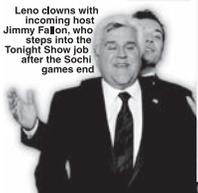
Monologue jokes since 1992

Top political targets

- Bill Clinton █ 4,607
- George W. Bush █ 3,239
- Al Gore █ 1,026
- Barack Obama █ 1,011
- Hillary Clinton █ 939
- Dick Cheney █ 873
- Monica Lewinsky █ 871
- Bob Dole █ 452
- John McCain █ 426
- Mitt Romney █ 361

Top celebrity targets

- O.J. Simpson █ 796
- Michael Jackson █ 505
- Martha Stewart █ 298
- Paris Hilton █ 153
- Lindsay Lohan █ 113
- Robert Blake █ 121
- Anna Nicole Smith █ 85
- Roger Clemens █ 50
- Tonya Harding █ 49
- Alex Rodriguez █ 19



SOURCES: Center for Media and Public Affairs, MCT Photo Service

and his last guest Thursday.

Crystal sang Leno’s praises during the show, saying the late-night host made America feel a little better at bedtime and invoking his predecessor, Johnny Carson.

Leno’s “Tonight” tenure was second in length only to Carson’s 30 years.

Crystal and Leno, longtime friends, reminisced about the old days, with Leno recalling how Crystal and other comedians visiting his town, Boston, stayed in Leno’s apartment.

Leno told how he was poised to make his network debut on Dean Martin’s show in 1974 when news came that President Richard Nixon had resigned in the Watergate scandal. Leno’s appearance didn’t happen.

“Making me the last guy screwed by Nixon,” Leno said.

Garth Brooks performed his touching song “The Dance” before Leno’s likewise touching farewell remarks.

“Now that I brought the room down,” Leno joked, he asked Brooks to lighten it up.

Another Brooks’ song, “Friends in Low Places,” closed out the show.

Leno, 63, has said he plans to continue playing comedy clubs, indulging his passion for cars and doing such TV work as comes his way — other than hosting on late-night.

‘When I started hosting, Justin Bieber wasn’t even born yet. That’s why we called those “the good old days.”’

Jay Leno

ENTERTAINMENT

No laughing matter

Actor Will Forte makes impressive transition to dramatic roles

By CHRIS KOMPANIK
Special to The Washington Post

Like many “Saturday Night Live” veterans, Will Forte came up through improv group the Groundlings, where his classmates included Maya Rudolph and Kristen Wiig. But his initial gigs were on the writing side — first as a staffer on the short-lived “Jenny McCarthy Show” and then on the “Late Show with David Letterman” and “That ‘70s Show.” And those experiences inform Forte’s acting.

“If I were doing somebody else’s sketch, in my head I’d be thinking about if they were happy with this. I would be very tentative,” Forte recalls. He admits that “SNL” executive producer Lorne Michaels noticed this reservation and almost didn’t bring him back to the cast after his second season. “The stuff I would write on my own, I would always do 100 percent, but he knew I was tentative with the other stuff.”

One of those characters was MacGruber, an outsized send-up of MacGyver and ‘80s nostalgia. When Forte left “SNL” in 2010, it was on the heels of a “MacGruber” movie spinoff written with “SNL” friends John Solomon and Jorma Taccone and co-starring Rudolph and Wiig. “We made exactly the movie we wanted to make,” Forte says. This made the critical and commercial failure of it harder to process despite the slow crawl it’s now making towards cult status. “We’re going to write a sequel at some point, but I don’t know if anyone will let us make it.”

Forte, 43, has a disarming humility about him. When asked about his recent turn to dramatic roles, he offered: “It’s hard enough getting comedy acting jobs — it’s not like I’m the go-to guy for comedy roles — so I didn’t think it was anywhere in the realm of possibility.”

That realization opened up when Oscar-nominated short-film director Steph Green approached him about appearing in her feature debut, “Run and Jump,” which received its world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival last year and is available on video on demand. “I don’t know why Steph Green thought of me for it, but we have the same agent. It’s a small-budget movie, and I guess she just had an inkling that I’d be right for the role. I thought the script was really cool and what the heck, I get to go to Ireland.”

He remembers calling friends during the first week of filming to voice mounting regrets and suspicions that he was out of his depth. “I was very self-conscious about how I was doing and hadn’t had any of my major scenes yet, but I was so nervous.” Once they started to film those scenes, he began to get used to the vulnerability.

“Like with ‘Nebraska,’ it’s much closer to who I am in real life,” Forte explains of his character, Ted Fielding, a brilliant American doctor who moves in with a family to observe the young husband, who has just suffered a rare stroke that has drastically altered his personality. Despite his sensitivity, Fielding is quite clueless in identifying his own emotions.

“Everyone seems to be like this,” Forte relates. “You’re so good at giving advice when somebody goes through a breakup. You have all the answers. But when you go through your own breakup, you can’t take any of your own advice. It’s so much easier to look from the outside in.”

Those who remember Forte parading on screen in “MacGruber” completely naked — while “holding” a strategically

placed stick of celery — might find it hard to believe the actor could be susceptible to shyness.

“You do things in comedy that seem like they would be embarrassing, but it’s nowhere near as trying to seem realistically emotionally open in front of a camera,” he says. “It’s really terrifying.”

Once he got over those reservations, he was eager to jump back in when Alexander Payne (one of Forte’s favorite directors) was looking for a lead for “Nebraska.” “I was always such a fan of his because the stuff I would do in comedy was big and absurd most of the time and watching his stuff, it all comes from such a grounded place. I always had a real intense respect for that.” He wasn’t expecting to get the part, but he did.

“Alexander Payne is the master. It was such a great experience. I will never forget it,” he gushes while remembering his initial fear about never even having taken

‘It’s hard enough getting comedy acting jobs ... so I didn’t think it was anywhere near the realm of possibility.’

Will Forte
on being offered more dramatic roles

an acting class when his co-star was Hollywood icon Bruce Dern. “Here’s this legend who’s worked with these amazing people: John Wayne, Jack Nicholson, et cetera. I just thought: Is he going to be comparing me with these guys?”

Dern — and Forte spent a lot of time in the pickup truck in which their father and son characters drive to Nebraska to claim a fake sweepstakes prize that the father has pinned his hopes to — not just to buy a new truck, as he often claims, but to regain the respect of his son who has his own reasons for wanting an excuse to leave town.

Dern’s character of Woody reminds Forte of his own grandfather, whom he describes as “lovably gruff.” “He was a very loving guy, but a man of few words. That’s exactly how my grandpa would have reacted to Mount Rushmore had we had a chance to go to it together,” Forte comments on Woody’s bemused indifference on seeing the national landmark with his son.

“It’s hard to put a label on it because it has really funny parts, but I wouldn’t call it a comedy,” Forte says of “Nebraska.” “He would always say, ‘Find the truth of the scene, and be in the moment,’” Forte recalls of Dern’s advice to him. “I’d never taken acting classes, so it just seemed like words, but after awhile, I got what he was saying. I realized that that is all comedy is, too. Just trying to be in the moment of each scene and find the truth of it. Commit to that situation. Comedy is just a different situation.”

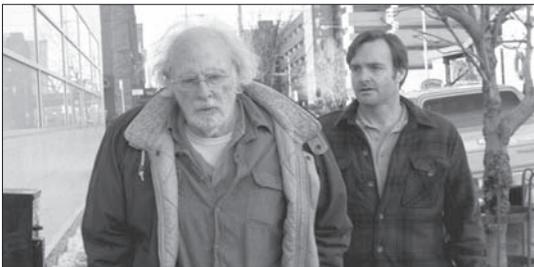
Forte’s next project brings him back to writing, but it’s walking the same fine line between comedy and drama. He’s developing a series, “The Last Man on Earth,” for Fox that imagines a virus that has wiped out the entire world, leaving just one man, who discovers miraculously that a woman’s survived, too.

“The answer to his prayers, another person. They can restart the population, but the only problem is they hate each other. They don’t get along, so they’re forced to try to figure that out,” Forte says.



AMY SUSSMAN, INVISION/AP

Former “Saturday Night Live” cast member Will Forte is pursuing a new chapter in his career with dramatic roles in “Run and Jump” and Oscar-nominated “Nebraska.”



PARAMOUNT PICTURES/AP

Will Forte, right, and Bruce Dern are father and son in the movie “Nebraska.” “(Dern) would always say, ‘Find the truth of the scene, and be in the moment,’” said Forte, recalling the acting great’s advice while the two were filming.

LIFESTYLE

G.I. JOE TURNS 50

World's first action figure remains a popular brand



A G.I. Joe belonging to collector Tearle Ashby, who owns about 2,000 of the action figures. Collectors plan to celebrate Joe's birthday on Saturday.

BY CHRIS CAROLA
The Associated Press

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y.

GI. Joe is turning 50. The birthday of what is called the world's first action figure is being celebrated by collectors and the toy maker that introduced it just before the nation plunged into the quagmire of the Vietnam War — a storm Joe seems to have weathered pretty well.

Since Hasbro brought it to the world's attention at the annual toy fair in New York City in 1964, G.I. Joe has undergone many changes, some the result of shifts in public sentiment for military-themed toys, others dictated by the marketplace.

Still, whether it's the original "movable fighting man" decked out in the uniforms of the branches of the U.S. military, or today's scaled-down products, G.I. Joe remains a popular brand.

"Joe stood for everything that was meant to be good: fighting evil, doing what's right for people," said Alan Hassenfeld, 65, the former CEO for Pawtucket, R.I.-based Hasbro Inc., whose father, Merrill, oversaw G.I. Joe's development in 1963.

It's Don Levine, though, then the company's head of research and development, who is often referred to as the "father" of G.I. Joe for shepherding the toy through design and development. Levine and his team came

up with an 11½-inch articulated figure with 21 moving parts, and since the company's employees included many military veterans, it was decided to outfit the toy in the uniforms of the Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force, with such accessories as guns, helmets and vehicles.

Levine, who served in the Army in Korea, said he got the idea for the moveable figure as a way to honor veterans. He and his team knew the product wasn't in Hasbro's usual mold, and it took years of pitches before Merrill Hassenfeld gave it the company's full backing.

It remained popular until the late 1960s, as opposition to Vietnam intensified and parents shied away from military-related toys.

In the '80s, Hasbro shrank Joe to 3½ inches, the size of figures made popular by "Star Wars."

Over the decades, G.I. Joe has spawned comic books, cartoons, two movies starring Channing Tatum, and a G.I. Joe Collector's Club and its annual convention, GIJoeCon. But for many G.I. Joe fans of a certain age, the newer products hold no appeal.

"The 12-inch G.I. Joe built that company," said Tearle Ashby, 49, who lives in the New York village of Ballston Spa. "The stuff they put out now is garbage."

On Saturday, Ashby — who owns about 2,000 of the figures — and other collectors plan to bring their 12-inch G.I. Joes to the New York State Military Museum in Saratoga Springs to celebrate the 50th birthday.



PHOTOS BY MIKE GROLL/AP

G.I. Joe figures on display at the New York State Military Museum in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. A half-century after its introduction, the iconic figure is being celebrated with a display at the museum.

5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT JOE

1 You say it's your birthday: G.I. Joe was introduced in February or March 1964, depending on whom you ask. Collectors and the manufacturer, Hasbro Inc., say it was February at the American International Toy Fair in New York. Fair organizers say the event was held in March that year.

2 Toy as tribute: Don Levine, Hasbro's head of research and development, came up with the idea while returning home from combat as an Army infantry sergeant in the Korean War. "We protected each other and loved each other," Levine said. "Something had to be done to honor these people."

3 40 years to fame: G.I. Joe hit shelves in time for Christmas 1964, going on sale for \$4 apiece in boxes identifying him as "America's Moveable Fighting Man." It was inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame in 2004, six years after Barbie was enshrined.

4 A death and a rebirth: Sales sank in reaction to the Vietnam War, leading to a line "Adventure Team" G.I. Joes that played down the military connection. Production was halted in the 1970s. In the early 1980s, G.I. Joe was reintroduced as 3½-inch figures.

5 Passionate fan base: It has an official G.I. Joe Collector's Club, which holds an annual "GIJoeCon" convention. This year it's in April in Dallas.

— The Associated Press

LIFESTYLE

Duo aim to make science fun

Stephen Voltz and Fritz Grobe (aka the Diet Coke and Mentos guys) release new DIY experiment guide



screenshots from eepyard.com

Stephen Voltz, left, and Fritz Grobe, demonstrate their famous Diet Coke and Mentos experiment. The duo recently released "How to Build a Hovercraft," which features more than 24 DIY science projects and how-to instructions.



By WILLIAM HAGEMAN
Chicago Tribune

Stephen Voltz and Fritz Grobe have built an empire on Diet Coke and Mentos.

Voltz, a lawyer and former stage performer, and Grobe, a world-class juggler and a former mathematics student at Yale, latched on to the Diet Coke-and-Mentos-geyser phenomenon a few years ago. They got all science-y and turned a backyard "Hey, watch this" trick into a spectacular, frothy show (for proof, go to eepyard.com, and take a spin through the video library).

They did not stop there. They create Internet-ready experiments in their lab in

Maine; they give corporate presentations about creativity and innovation; they post wonderfully strange videos. Now they have added a book to their résumé, "How to Build a Hovercraft." It contains more than 24 amazing DIY projects — such as the self-crushing can, the bar of soap that becomes a mound of foam in seconds and the multiple paper plane launcher — and the well-explained science behind them.

"We were looking for that combination of fun and science," Grobe says. "This is the kind of book I wanted in college. It's what I want now."

The two self-proclaimed mad scientists took time out from their latest projects to talk about the book. This is an edited transcript of the interview.



In their laboratory deep in the woods of Buckfield, Maine, Voltz, left, Grobe and their creative team spend countless hours searching for ways they can make ordinary objects do extraordinary things.

Chicago Tribune: Is all you do — eepyard.com, the book, the speaking engagements — an offshoot of the Mentos phenomenon?

Grobe: Yeah, absolutely. ... When we first started experimenting with Coke and Mentos, we were getting really small geysers. It took us an embarrassingly long time to realize we were in Maine, and the temperature affects the size of your geysers. So that got us thinking about the sci-

ence of Coke and Mentos. No one was looking at the science part.

Where do ideas come from? Suggestions from people, things you stumbled upon?

Voltz: A mix of those and a fair amount of great stuff on the Internet, once we learned to find cool stuff.

Grobe: We're always looking for ideas where ordinary objects can do extraordinary things.

Do you have a favorite experiment?

Grobe: Right now my favorite is the paper airplane squadron. That's the one we've been pushing further and further. Just this week we launched 48 planes simultaneously.

Which one has gotten the most attention?

Grobe: The hovercraft certainly attracts attention. There's nothing like building your own hovercraft.

Voltz: If you can cut plywood, you can do it in an hour. And any-

one can ride. I'm over 6 feet, 200 pounds, and I can use it.

Grobe: For Thanksgiving, I gave my father a ride in the hovercraft. He's in a wheelchair now, but we strapped him in, and he went for a ride.

Who is the audience for these experiments, kids or adults?

Voltz: We aim all our stuff at adults. But everything is made so it's completely kid-friendly. We do stuff we love or stuff that makes us crack up or makes us say, "That's cool." Then we try to explain it.

What's the progression on the experiments, first researching and figuring out the science, then building it?

Voltz: We build it first and see if it works, see if it's as promised. Some fall apart at that point. Then we try to figure out what's the science, research it and write it up.

Grobe: Since our quest is always, "How far can we take it?" we do it over and over and see what are the different twists we can put on this and look for an opportunity to make it even bigger.

The paper airplane squadron, you can buy an individual launcher, and very quickly. But if you want to, there are also the plans to launch 10 at once. (That) kind of thing: Here's step 1, but if you're still curious, here's step 2 and step 3 and beyond.

You've been doing these things for a while now. Do you still experience a sense of wonder?

Voltz: Absolutely. **Grobe:** Every day I get to go into the lab and try something I've never tried before and sometimes try things I never thought possible. We just launched our new paper airplanes than I ever thought I'd see in the air at once. I live for those moments.

HEALTH & FITNESS

Feeling stressed? Keep it to yourself

By JEFF STRICKLER

Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

We can easily pick up second-hand stress from the people around us. We also can pass it on.

Debra Safyre was standing in line at a deli in Minneapolis waiting to order lunch when she was hit by a sudden wave of anxiety.

"There was no reason for me to be triggered that way," she said. "Then I noticed the person in front of me. She was jittering so badly, shaking so badly, that I was responding to her stress — and I didn't even talk to her."

Her experience was not unusual.

Secondhand stress — tension that we pick up from the people and activities around us — is a natural defense mechanism that helped keep our ancestors alive, said Dr. Amit Sood, an expert on stress at the Mayo Clinic. But as soon as we pick up that tension, we risk becoming carriers, passing it to any friends, family members or co-workers — and, yes, even strangers — whom we encounter.

"Stress travels in social networks," he said. "It is highly, highly contagious."

Fortunately for Safyre, founder

of Safyre Catalyst, a Richfield, Minn.-based company focusing on personal and group energy management, she quickly realized where

her surprise anxiety was coming from and was able to move away from its source.

"It's kind of like a tuning fork," she said of secondary tension. "When you hit a tuning fork, everything around it starts vibrating with it. It's the same thing with stress. If stress is a very strong vibration around you, you're going to start reacting to it."

The impact that secondhand stress has on us has only recently been appreciated by psychologists, said Dr. Berendina Numan, co-founder of the Center for Counseling and Stress Management, with offices in Minneapolis and Minnetonka, Minn.

"It's been only the last 10 years" that the topic has been explored in much depth, she said. "There hasn't been enough research to know all the answers about secondhand stress."

Doctors do know that stress in small doses is essentially a good thing, Sood said. It's part of the body's warning system that creates the fight-or-flight response and generates a surge of energy that helps us deal with a crisis. But excessive or prolonged stress can lead to health issues ranging from headaches to heart problems.

Anxiety and tension can be picked up, passed on as easily as germs, may impact physical, mental health

Protecting oneself from secondhand stress begins with identifying its causes, said Dana Kadue, owner of Life Flow Coaching in Minneapolis.

"The first step is awareness of the things around me that create stress in my life," Kadue said. "It's all about self-awareness, discovering when the stress shows up."

Start the investigation with who's around at the time, Sood suggested.

"Many of us have partners, supervisors, colleagues or neighbors who are stress-provoking," he said. "How do I recognize these people? These are the people I feel judged by too much. I feel anxious when I'm meeting them. I try to avoid being with them. I find these people unpredictable. They often have high expectations, and I feel like I have to be perfect with them; they are very rigid. And I've often found that many of these people have different moral values than mine."

Once you've identified the problem people, you have three basic courses of action: You can change them. You can get away from them. Or you can learn to protect yourself from them.

The first two have limited applicability. A person might be open to constructive criticism about their behavior, but it must be presented in a way that doesn't put them on the defensive, Sood said. Even then, there's no guarantee they'll be responsive.

Getting away from the irritant is not always a viable option, either, especially for someone whose stress is coming from a boss or co-worker in a job they don't have the financial wherewithal to leave.

Which brings us to the third option: learning how to avoid falling victim.

"Stress resilience is something we can work on," Kadue said. "It's about responding to the stress rather than reacting to it." Both Kadue and Safyre recommend finding something supportive — it can be a photograph, a memory or an object like a bracelet — that generates pleasant thoughts that allow you to ground yourself during a stress-inducing situation.

"Stay in touch with it so you're not lost in their energy," Safyre said. "If you have a confrontation, tell yourself, 'I'm not going to allow this to happen.'"

The source of the stress is not always a person, Numan said. "Sometimes just walking into a place that is set up similar to one where you had a stressful experience will do it," she said. Or it could be a sound or smell triggering the reaction, Kadue said.

"We can be totally oblivious as to what's causing the stress," Safyre said.

"It's all about investigating. Pay attention to how you're responding. And you have to be very observant" about what's happening at the time.



Excessive or prolonged stress can lead to health issues ranging from headaches to heart problems.

MCT illustration

VIDEO GAMES

For those unfamiliar with “Might & Magic,” the series is a first-person computer RPG with very few frills and a punishing difficulty level that rewards patience and proper planning. “M&MX” is no different. Gamers won’t find romance options, unlimited potions or lengthy cut scenes here.

Why they will find, however, is a challenging game full of close-encounters, deep dungeons that might take several attempts to conquer and a series of areas that are designed to ensure you will lose. Fans of games like “Demon’s Souls” or “Dark Souls” should feel right at home with the challenge level in “M&MX.”

The game starts with players having to create a party of four adventurers from a pool of 12, each with their own abilities, strengths and weaknesses.

This isn’t just lip service, either. Party creation and what classes are taken will greatly affect play style. Like many old-school games, it’s very possible to create a party that will make the game far more difficult than it has to be.

The classes range from the typical warrior types that soak up damage and the magic-wielding glass cannons to the more mixed classes like Crusaders and Blade-dancers. Some classes will have access to skills and schools of magic that others won’t. Picking enough classes to have each type of magic is highly recommended, as there is very little overlap in what each does.

For instance, if the party lacks somebody who can use Earth magic, the team will lack a powerful (and fairly necessary) healing spell. Choose wisely.

After a short story segment, the band of heroes (inexplicably called Raiders in the game) are set ashore in a small seaside town in the world of Ashan and set loose to do pretty much whatever they’d like. Quests can be picked up from townsfolk or found through exploration and generally can be tackled at any point.

Again, the challenge level comes into play here. Some areas are far too difficult to venture into right away, so while exploration is the entire point of the game, saving often is really recommended. There will be many areas where creatures lurk right around a corner that can crush a lower-level party right away, and the areas are not marked as such.

Trial and error are a big part

A legacy of pain

‘Might & Magic X’ delivers on old-school difficulty

By MICHAEL S. DARNELL / Stars and Stripes

“Might & Magic X: Legacy” is a tough-as-nails role-playing game with few concessions given over to modern game design.

It’s a throwback to when computer games required vast amounts of reading, note taking and even spelling in order to be successful. It’s exceptionally challenging, utterly devoid of hand-holding, and a game that will not be completed in a weekend.

And that’s why it’s quietly become the best game of the fledgling New Year.

This entry in the long-running “Might & Magic” series from Limbic Entertainment and publisher Ubisoft is really more of a resurrection than a sequel, as the series had lain dormant for more than a decade. In fact, “Might & Magic” would likely still be on the pile of forgotten games, alongside the “No One Lives Forever” and “Jet Grind Radios” of the world, if not for creative director Julien Pirou who badgered Ubisoft for three years for permission to make the game.

Thankfully, Pirou’s persistence paid off because “M&MX” is a fantastic game.



Photos courtesy of Ubisoft

“Might & Magic X: Legacy” has pledged to respect the tried-and-tested tradition of its illustrious ancestors as it leads you to epic adventure and quests while exploring the wild peninsula of Ayn.

of old-school game design, and “M&MX” revels in it. There are great awards in the form of valuable treasure and powerful relics hidden around the world, but none of them are just handed to

players. They have to be earned, and like all things earned, the feeling of accomplishment is all the sweeter for it.

Like most RPGs, combat is inevitable. Monsters infest every

corner of the world, popping up even in the most innocuous locations. Combat in “M&MX” is turn-based. Various factors, from class to stat allocation, will determine how many attacks each

Overall grade: **A**

character gets per turn. Each action, including using healing potions, takes a turn. What that means is players will always have to balance using a healing ability against trying to take out an opponent before he kills a nearby dead party member. That makes each fight a unique challenge — none of them are cakewalks.

Most fights will end with party members either close to death or out of mana, and neither regenerate outside of combat. Instead, each party has supplies that act as a campsite that heal health and mana and which can be purchased at town shops in limited quantities.

Certain status ailments like poison need to be healed with their own potions though, so camping out isn’t a one-stop solution for everything.

What’s interesting about this mechanic is that while you can continue to buy these supplies, it’s not really possible to just use them after every battle. Everything in the game is limited. Enemies don’t respawn after an area is cleared. Treasure chests are limited and randomized. There is, as of yet, no endless dungeon. So the amount of gold and experience points you can use to increase skills and abilities are in limited supply.

This forces players to really think about every decision they make. Do you spend your hard-earned gold on a shiny new sword or a batch of healing potions? That choice — and the consequence of that choice — is what makes the entire game work.

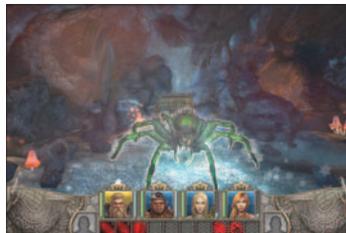
The world refuses to just let you win. Instead, it presents players with a vast expanse of explorable territory, full of danger and reward, and dares you to conquer it. If that sounds like your type of game, “Might & Magic X: Legacy” might be the game for you.

Bottom line: If you’re the type of gamer who is up for a challenge and doesn’t mind a little old-school flavor, you owe it to yourself to give “Might & Magic X: Legacy” a try.

Grade: A

Online: youtube.com/watch?v=Ys6f5g9bZs

darnell.michael@stripes.com

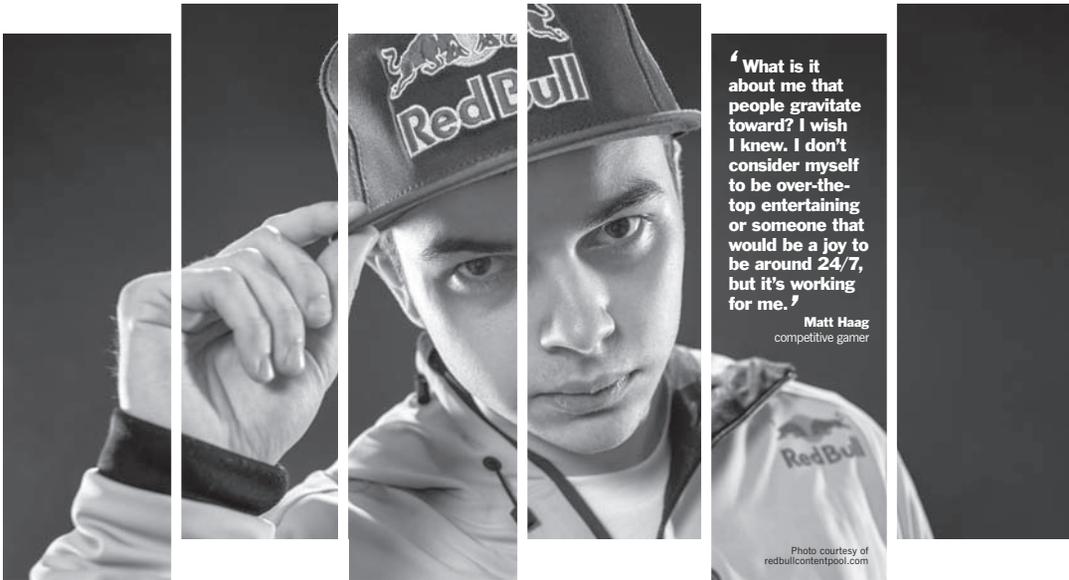


In the role-playing game, users will control the destinies of four adventurers as they become entangled in the political machinations and intrigues unfolding in and around Karthal.



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

VIDEO GAMES



‘What is it about me that people gravitate toward? I wish I knew. I don’t consider myself to be over-the-top entertaining or someone that would be a joy to be around 24/7, but it’s working for me.’

Matt Haag
competitive gamer

Photo courtesy of
redbullcontentpool.com

If he plays it, they will watch

Pro gamers enjoy celebrity, income from heeding the ‘Call’

By JOHN KEILMAN
Chicago Tribune

Matt Haag used to be just another suburban kid going to high school, working at McDonald’s and aggravating his parents by spending endless hours on his Xbox.

Today the lanky, dark-eyed 21-year-old is a global celebrity to an enormous number of young people, very few of whom know him as Matt. They call him Nadeshot, master of the virtual submachine gun, a guy who makes a six-figure living playing the video game “Call of Duty.”

Haag is among a handful of Chicago-area men who have found a lucrative niche in the booming world of competitive video gaming. Under the name OpTic Gaming, they have snared corporate sponsors, built flourishing YouTube channels and earned a small fortune in tournament winnings.

When they play, even in minor online matches, tens of thousands of people watch. When they feud, their gamer handles incite some of the hottest trending on Twitter. Even Haag, a player so popular that fans pay \$4.99 a month just to watch him practice, doesn’t fully understand it.

“What is it about me that people gravitate toward? I wish I knew,” he said between rounds of a recent online tournament. “I don’t consider myself to be over-the-top entertaining or someone that would be a joy to be around 24/7, but it’s working for me.”

The money and attention are signs that after decades of hype, “eSports” are finally putting a digital foot in the mainstream. Fans are packing sports arenas to watch

top gamers battle for prize money. Major League Gaming, an organization that broadcasts matches online, saw consumption of its video more than triple last year, reaching 54 million hours.

Competitive video gaming burst from the computer lab in 1972 with barroom games of Pot, and tournaments swiftly followed. Kotaku, a gaming news website, says Stanford students mounted the first one later that year, featuring a game called “Spacewar!”

A few people made money from arcade-based competitions, but journalist Rod Breslau of the website onGamers said the scene didn’t really take off until the late 1990s, when a virtual shoot-’em-up called “Quake” allowed players to battle over the Internet.

“The whole industry is based off of that,” he said.

Computer video games such as “StarCraft” became wildly popular in Asia during the 2000s, Breslau said, especially in South Korea, where television stations broadcast matches, major tech corporations handed out sponsorships and top gamers became celebrities.

Competitive gaming was much more casual in the U.S., but communities formed around a few games, including “Call of Duty,” a bestselling title that gives players the perspective of military operatives as they chase each other around bullet-pocked landscapes.

One of those caught up in the fledgling culture was Hector Rodriguez, a 20-something gamer from Wheeling, Ill. He joined a few friends in online matches and got hooked on the strategy and teamwork de-

manded by the game.

But in 2009, he moved away from competition to focus on the game in a different way. Under the name of his team, OpTic Gaming, he put videos onto YouTube showing everything from “Call of Duty” strategies to tournament highlights to equipment reviews.

He quickly became aware of a ravenous appetite for content related to the game: One early effort, an artfully edited montage of sniper kills accompanied by a rap and metal soundtrack, has attracted nearly 6 million views to date.

YouTube pays content creators a slice of the advertising revenue their videos bring in. Google did not respond to a query seeking comment, but various YouTubeers peg the rate at roughly \$2 per 1,000 views, with some getting significantly more — and Rodriguez saw enough potential in the venture to quit his insurance job and devote himself full time to OpTic.

“For nine months, I didn’t get paid a single dime,” said Rodriguez, now 33.

Rodriguez decided to extend awareness of the OpTic Gaming brand by forming a new competitive team. After asking around, he offered a spot to Haag.

Haag built his gaming chops playing various titles, but switched his allegiance to “Call of Duty” in 2007 when his parents gave him the game for Christmas.

He was an instant addict, playing up to eight hours a day. He developed reflexes fast and precise enough to dispatch foes a split second after they appeared on screen, and soon, he was winning a few hundred dollars at small competitions.

That changed after he joined OpTic.

Live video game tournaments had become major attractions, complete with giant video screens, elaborate stages and play-by-play announcers, and in 2011, a year after Haag graduated from high school, he and three teammates took first place in a Los Angeles competition put on by Activision, the publisher of “Call of Duty.” Their prize was \$400,000.

Haag said he viewed the win as a freak occurrence, not something he could count on to make a living. So at Rodriguez’s urging, he concentrated on building a fan base online.

“He explained how they were monetizing their content on YouTube, and they were making ad revenue every single month,” Haag said. “It was a solid stream of income you could rely on every paycheck.”

Haag pumped out videos, mixing game-play lessons and tournament travelogues with reflections on heavy subjects such as death and religion. His audience was modest at first, but in mid-2013, after a year of good tournament results, the release of a new “Call of Duty” game and a move to the “OpTic House” — a home and practice space that team members share in the northwest suburbs — the numbers exploded. Today his channel has received more than 65 million views.

Haag found other income sources, too, from a sponsorship with energy drink-maker Red Bull to a channel on Twitch.tv, a website that lets fans watch their gaming idols practice and play for hours on end — gamers get a piece of the ad revenue and the \$4.99 monthly subscription fee that allows fans to comment on the action.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

US jobless rate drops to 6.6 percent

By Christopher S. Rugaber
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Hiring was surprisingly weak in January for the second straight month, likely renewing concern that the U.S. economy might be slowing after a strong finish last year.

The Labor Department said employers added 113,000 jobs, less than the average monthly gain of 194,000 in 2013. That follows December's tepid increase of just 75,000. Job gains have averaged only 154,000 the past three months, down from 201,000 in the preceding three months.

Still, more people began looking for work in January, a sign that they were optimistic about finding work. Some of these people found jobs, thereby reducing the unemployment rate to 6.6 percent. That's the lowest rate since October 2008.

The number of unemployed veterans dropped slightly from last year at this time, though female veterans experienced a slight rise

The Labor Department said employers added 113,000 jobs, less than the average monthly gain of 194,000 in 2013.

in unemployment.

Cold weather likely held back hiring in December, economists said, but the impact faded in January. Construction firms, which sometimes stop work in bad weather, added 48,000 jobs last month.

The figures follow recent signs of economic weakness in the United States and overseas that have sent stock prices sinking. Upheaval in developing countries has further spooked investors. All the turmoil has renewed doubts about the Federal Reserve's next steps.

The anxiety marks a reversal from a few weeks ago, when most analysts were increasingly hopeful about the global economy. U.S. growth came in at a sturdy 3.7 percent annual pace in the second half of last year. The Dow Jones industrial average finished 2013 at a record high. Europe's economy was slowly emerging from a long recession. Japan was finally perking up after two decades of stagnation.

But then came December's weak job total. And on Monday, an industry survey found that manufacturing grew much more slowly in January than in December. A measure of new orders in the report sank to the lowest level in a year. That report contributed to a dizzying 326-point plunge in the Dow Jones industrial average.

Also this week, automakers said sales slipped 3 percent in January. And last week, a measure of signed contracts to buy homes fell sharply, according to the National Association of Realtors.

On a more hopeful note, a survey of service sector companies, including retailers, banks and restaurants, found that they grew faster in January than in December.

Friday's report showed that some higher-paying industries added jobs in January.

Factories created 21,000 new positions. Professional and technical services, which includes architects and engineers, added 20,000.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Feb. 10)	\$1.3916
Dollar buys (Feb. 10)	€0.7186
British pound (Feb. 10)	\$1.67
Japanese yen (Feb. 10)	99.00
South Korean won (Feb. 10)	1,049.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3771
British pound	\$1.6394/0.6100
Canada (dollar)	1.1006
China (Yuan)	6.0633
Denmark (Krone)	5.4924
Egypt (Pound)	7.7585
Euro	\$1.3587/0.9267
Hong Kong (Dollar)	0.7865
Hungary (Forint)	236.70
Israel (Shekel)	3.5308
Japan (Yen)	102.46
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2826
Norway (Krone)	6.8989
Philippines (Peso)	45.09
Poland (Zloty)	3.00
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7506
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2670
South Korea (Won)	1,074.20
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9014
Thailand (Baht)	32.81
Turkey (New Lira)	2.0023

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

MARKET WATCH

Feb. 8, 2014

Dow Jones Industrials	+188.30	15,628.53
Nasdaq composite	+45.57	4,057.12
Standard & Poor's 500	+21.79	1,773.43
Russell 2000	+10.33	1,103.93

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	4.75
Federal funds market rate	0.07
3-month bill	0.04
30-year bond	3.67

WEATHER OUTLOOK

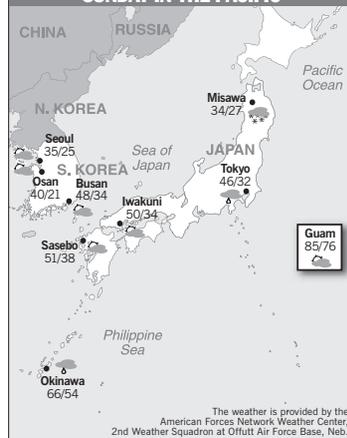
SATURDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



SATURDAY IN EUROPE



SUNDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

Saturday's US temperatures

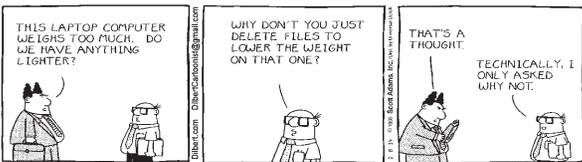
City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	Chatanooga	50	31	Cldy	Fort Wayne	20	-2	Snow	Louisville	34	19	Snow	Pocatello	37	28	Snow	Sioux City	21	7	Snow
Ablene, Tex	63	32	Pdly	Cheyenne	30	18	Cldy	Fresno	60	45	Rain	Lubbock	60	27	Pdly	Portland, Maine	15	11	Pdly	Sioux Falls	16	5	Snow
Akron, Ohio	22	1	Cldy	Chicago	21	1	Snow	Goodland	28	11	Cldy	Macon	60	38	Cldy	Portland, Ore.	31	26	Snow	South Bend	19	-1	Snow
Albany, N.Y.	24	8	Pdly	Cincinnati	29	12	Cldy	Grand Junction	38	21	Cldy	Madison	18	-1	Snow	Providence	30	13	Cldy	Spokane	21	6	Cldy
Albuquerque	53	29	Pdly	Cleveland	19	2	Cldy	Grand Rapids	19	5	Snow	Medford	49	37	Rain	Pueblo	42	12	Cldy	Springfield, Ill.	27	10	Snow
Allentown, Pa.	32	12	Cldy	Colorado Springs	44	20	Cldy	Great Falls	7	-6	Cir	Memphis	43	24	Cldy	Raleigh-Durham	45	35	Rain	Springfield, Mo.	34	18	Cldy
Amarillo	51	22	Cldy	Columbia, S.C.	54	38	Rain	Green Bay	4	-4	Snow	Miami Beach	83	71	Pdly	Rapid City	18	2	Cldy	St. Louis	72	61	Cldy
Anchorage	21	12	Pdly	Columbus, Ga.	59	39	Cldy	Greensboro, N.C.	46	34	Snow	Midland-Odessa	68	34	Pdly	Reino	51	37	Rain	Tallahassee	65	46	Rain
Ashville	49	30	Cldy	Columbus, Ohio	57	37	Snow	Hartford	27	11	Snow	Milwaukee	16	2	Snow	Richmond	29	29	Snow	Tampa	72	60	Cldy
Atlanta	56	40	Pdly	Concord, N.H.	27	7	Pdly	Hartford Spring	14	2	Cldy	Missoula	21	9	Snow	Rochester	22	3	Cldy	Tucson	63	48	Cldy
Atlantic City	38	19	Cldy	Copus, Ohio	62	38	Cldy	Helena	27	4	Cldy	Missoula	21	9	Snow	Rockford	19	-3	Snow	Topeka	29	13	Cldy
Austin	60	37	Pdly	Dallas-Ft. Worth	57	29	Pdly	Honolulu	80	63	Cldy	Montgomery	61	35	Cldy	Sacramento	59	49	Rain	Tucson	69	39	Cir
Baltimore	33	23	Snow	Dayton	22	5	Snow	Houston	63	35	Cldy	Nashville	44	24	Cldy	St. Louis	35	14	Cldy	Tulsa	40	22	Cldy
Baton Rouge	61	38	Cldy	Daytona Beach	69	60	Rain	Huntsville	53	29	Cldy	Nashville	44	24	Cldy	St. Petersburg	37	28	Cldy	Tulsa	40	22	Cldy
Bilings	12	1	Cldy	Denver	37	19	Cldy	Indianapolis	25	8	Cldy	New Orleans	60	45	Cldy	St. Thomas	84	75	Rain	Waco	64	29	Pdly
Birmingham	58	31	Cldy	Des Moines	23	6	Snow	Jackson, Miss.	57	32	Pdly	New York City	30	21	Cldy	St. Thomas	84	75	Rain	Washington	35	25	Cldy
Bismarck	8	-5	Cldy	Detroit	17	-2	Snow	Jacksonville	63	50	Rain	Newark	40	32	Rain	Salem, Ore.	37	28	Snow	W. Palm Beach	83	68	Cldy
Boise	35	25	Snow	Duluth	13	-9	Pdly	Janeau	29	16	Pdly	Norfolk, Va.	40	32	Rain	Salt Lake City	45	32	Cldy	Wichita	35	12	Pdly
Boston	30	13	Cldy	El Paso	63	35	Cir	Kansas City	29	12	Cldy	North Platte	24	6	Cldy	San Angelo	71	31	Cir	Wichita Falls	49	22	Cir
Bridgeport	20	15	Cldy	Elkins	33	16	Snow	Key West	71	51	Pdly	Okla.ahoma City	68	39	Pdly	San Antonio	69	36	Cldy	Wichita Falls	49	22	Cir
Brownsville	60	32	Cldy	Erie	21	6	Cldy	Knoxville	48	29	Cldy	Omaha	23	8	Cldy	San Diego	63	53	Pdly	Wichita Falls	26	9	Cldy
Buffalo	21	6	Cldy	Eugene	39	32	Snow	Lake Charles	61	38	Pdly	Orlando	75	60	Cldy	San Francisco	59	53	Rain	Wilmington, Del.	35	20	Snow
Burlington, Vt.	24	9	Pdly	Fairfield	33	18	Cldy	Lansing	2	-2	Cldy	Pasadena	36	17	Cldy	San Jose	59	53	Rain	Youngstown	21	1	Cldy
Caribou, Maine	17	4	Pdly	Fairbanks	-6	-20	Cir	Las Vegas	65	44	Pdly	Pendleton	23	17	Snow	Santa Fe	49	23	Pdly				
Casper	24	9	Snow	Fargo	5	-12	Cir	Lexington	35	18	Cldy	Peoria	27	5	Cldy	St. Louis	14	-3	Cldy				
Charleston, S.C.	57	43	Rain	Flagstaff	47	22	Pdly	Lincoln	24	7	Cldy	Philadelphia	34	21	Cldy	Savannah	58	46	Rain				
Charleston, W.Va.	38	22	Snow	Flint	18	1	Cldy	Little Rock	41	24	Cldy	Phoenix	72	46	Cir	Seattle	36	27	Cldy				
Charlotte, N.C.	53	36	Cldy	Fort Smith	45	26	Pdly	Los Angeles	65	51	Pdly	Pittsburgh	24	4	Snow	Shreveport	57	32	Pdly				

National temperature extremes: Hi: Thu., 85. Op. Locata, Fla. and Miami. Lo: Thu., -47. West Yellowstone, Mont.

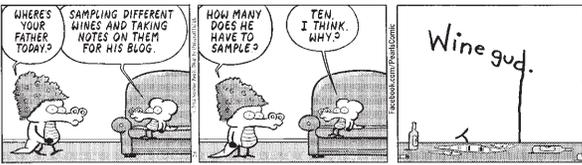
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



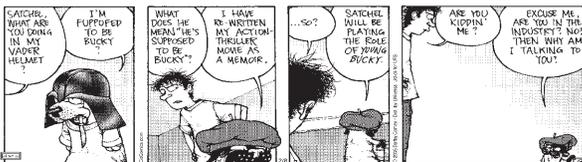
Non Sequitur



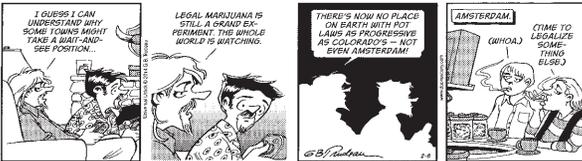
Candorville



Get Fuzzy



Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	
12					13					14			
15					16					17			
18					19					20			
			21	22		23	24						
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32								33					
34						35				36			
										37			
39	40	41				42	43			44	45	46	47
48						49							
51						52							
54						55							

ACROSS

- 1 Cicatrix
- 5 "The Laughing Cavalier" artist Frans
- 9 Lingerie buy
- 12 Not pizzicato
- 13 Sandwich treat
- 14 Tear
- 15 Amateur night prop
- 16 Wee
- 17 — and outs
- 18 Saber's cousin
- 19 Took off
- 20 Teased
- 21 Greek consonant
- 23 Acapulco gold
- 25 Made
- 28 Caught
- 32 Show hunger
- 33 Blog's ancestor
- 34 Colored ring
- 36 South Carolina river
- 37 Deteriorate
- 38 Branch
- 39 Shrek, e.g.
- 42 Hem partner
- 44 Colorful fish
- 48 Compete
- 49 Big name in jeans
- 50 Uncontrolled revelry

DOWN

- 1 Wise one
- 2 Harvester's gathering
- 3 Teen woe
- 4 007 portrayer
- 5 Dragster's car
- 6 Met melody
- 7 Fab Four surname
- 8 Sauce source
- 9 Vivacity
- 10 Orange coat
- 11 Church section
- 20 "The French Connection" author
- 22 Greeting
- 24 Echolocation apparatus
- 25 Rx overseer
- 26 Bobby of hockey
- 27 Fish eggs
- 29 Cudgel
- 30 Preceding
- 31 Easter egg preparation
- 35 Goddess of wisdom
- 36 Lumberjack's task
- 39 Finished
- 40 Donate
- 41 Oboe insert
- 43 Shakespeare's river
- 45 Incite
- 46 Enthusiastic
- 47 Stevenson villain
- 49 Part of UNLV

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

2-8

CRYPTOQUIP

BWBHOWHU FZRZUZZ FWTR
TEZCZ ZIZCMWRZ'U GPIWCJFZ
GWVS JFZQ JU TEJBBZS

BWFFPWZU : QPUE-IJOOZ.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: PLAY ABOUT A GUY WHO FELT HE NEEDED TO BE THE MOST STRICT: "THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING STERNEST."
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals E

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OPINION

Pressure building on VA hospital projects

By REPS, MIKE COFFMAN
 AND ANN KIRKPATRICK

It is time for the federal government to fulfill its promise to our nation's veterans and get our VA hospitals built, on time and without excessive and avoidable cost overruns. That's why we are pushing bipartisan legislation to reform a broken bureaucratic system that has been harming our nation's veterans and wasting precious taxpayer resources. As a Republican from Colorado and a Democrat from Arizona, respectively, we stand united in our desire to see the Aurora VA hospital in Colorado and others around the country completed. To do that, we need serious reform of how the Department of Veterans Affairs manages the construction process.

Last year, the House veterans' affairs subcommittee for oversight and investigations (O&I) held a hearing titled "VA Construction Policy: Failed Plans Result in Plans to Fail." That hearing, led by the full House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) held a hearing on "Confronting Persistent Challenges in VA Major Construction and Lease Programs."

The takeaway from these hearings, which is self-evident from the titles, is that the VA struggles with the construction of health care facilities.

At a subcommittee hearing last year, the Government Accountability Office testified that delays in hospital construction projects in Aurora, Orlando, Fla.; Las Vegas and New Orleans are, on average, 35 months behind schedule at \$3.6 billion over budget. Those numbers are simply unacceptable, for both taxpayers and veterans in need of care.

As the chairman and ranking member for O&I, respectively, we are disheartened by the findings of our subcommittee's investigations into these projects, detailing gross mismanagement in every aspect of major medical facility construction — including design, operations, change orders,

and payments to prime contractors and subcontractors.

At best, this pattern of mismanagement indicates utter incompetence; at worst, it shows complete disrespect to our nation's veterans and to the American taxpayer by the VA's Office of Construction and Facility Management.

We are committed to working with the VA to solve these problems because we should do everything in our power to help the VA provide veterans with quality care. In fact, Congress as a whole has made substantial efforts to increase funding for the VA and its programs despite being in a time of serious budget constraints. However, VA officials have not only squandered these taxpayer dollars but has also weakened the public's trust in their ability to plan, budget, manage and ultimately construct major medical facilities.

Veterans in Colorado, Florida, Nevada and other states are now waiting years for their facilities to be completed. The VA claims the Aurora project will be completed by April 2015, but all evidence points to that deadline being unrealistic. Additionally, the completion date for the project in Orlando was pushed back to December 2014 — making it now two years behind schedule.

Unfortunately, even after numerous congressional hearings and inquiries, VA officials have done little to convince us they can meet any of their goals on time.

That is why we introduced legislation to live the Haverton dream in 1973. My idea of racy was to go to the shopping center alone, and my addictions ran to Ring Dings and Gino Gians, but seeing that impossibly lovely blond girl become a ravaged runaway in the space of 75 minutes taught me that being out of control was fatal. So in this way, I rarely drink more than a glass of wine a week, and only then with a steaming plate of macaroni before me. I refuse to yield to the suddenly hip zeitgeist of legalizing pot because, dude, it's like, dude, no worse than booze and, dude, it's like so racist to lock up black kids, dude, when white suburban kids are doing the same thing. You know, dude?

Then again, this isn't about pot. This is about one aspect of the whole addiction narrative that people are usually afraid to touch with a 10-foot syringe, because it invites comments like the one that I got when I called Phil Seymour Hoffman selfish. Ah, got your attention, did I? Were you expecting some sad eulogy to the departed artist? Not here, and not now. If you want that, google "Hollywood loves Phil" and any number of wonderful articles about his cinematic and theatrical genius will pop up. But for those who are still there, let me say to someone on Facebook, who then called me an unfeeling bitch: Drug addicts may be diseased, but they are also selfish as hell.

I'll give you a moment to digest that, even though I suspect I've lost most of my readers. But for those who are still there, let me explain why I think Hoffman deserves our

to provide oversight for each existing VA major medical facility project currently under construction. The goal is to make sure that the GAO recommendations are fully implemented and to take any additional steps necessary to help reduce both the cost and the delays that have plagued these projects. We think this legislation was drafted and introduced late last year, we delayed in bringing it up in order to see if conditions at the four VA hospital construction sites might improve.

Unfortunately there are no significant changes to warrant any further delays in moving forward with this proposal.

This emergency manager will be appointed from the ranks of the Army Corps of Engineers, which, according to the GAO's report dated March 2013, has institutional knowledge and expertise in construction and, unlike the VA, consistently completes similar projects for the Department of Defense on-budget and on-time. The Army Corps of Engineers will also provide oversight for the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs committees so that we in Congress can be apprised of the progress — or the lack of — on our subcommittee during the 113th Congress. Our work, along with H.R. 3593, will help to ensure the VA has proper oversight and expertise guiding the management and ultimate completion of the Aurora VA Medical Center, as well as the other projects highlighted by the GAO.

Our veterans cannot simply hope the VA improves. Rather, we must take action to push these projects forward.

Rep. Mike Coffman, a Colorado Republican, is chairman of the House veterans' subcommittee for oversight and investigations. Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick is an Arizona Democrat. He is the subcommittee's ranking member.

Hoffman's death: Don't mourn this selfish act

By CHRISTINE M. FLOWERS
 Philadelphia Daily News

I remember watching a made-for-television movie in 1973 that changed my life. Not that I had much of it to change at age 11. Still, it grabbed me by the throat in the way that only a poorly filmed, terminally earnest public-service announcement ever could. "Go Ask Alice" was based on the book that every parent wanted every adolescent to read, and is still a necessary part of growing up. Some people think it's too simplistic, something along the lines of a Nancy Reagan "just say no to the bad drugs" riff.

But the book scared me enough to keep me from ever trying drugs. Heck, I've never even smoked a cigarette and refuse to take the suggested two Tylenol PM when one is enough. The movie, though, sealed the deal. Watching the early '70s version of a downward spiral looks almost quaint in retrospect. I've studied it on YouTube, and it amazes me how beautiful "Alice" looks when she's picking through the trash looking for something to eat after a heroin binge. (I mean, how did she keep that Bonne Bell lip gloss looking so fresh?)

And yet, the 11-year-old inside of me, still in close contact with the police on YouTube, and it amazes me how beautiful "Alice" looks when she's picking through the trash looking for something to eat after a heroin binge. (I mean, how did she keep that Bonne Bell lip gloss looking so fresh?)

No quite, but almost. No matter how pedestrian the technical value, and no matter how ridiculous William Shakespeare's play would be on pants, that movie still resonates. It marked

me at a time when it was important to be marked. Granted, there was little to no chance that I was going to become a high-lying Haverton drug addict in 1973. My idea of racy was to go to the shopping center alone, and my addictions ran to Ring Dings and Gino Gians, but seeing that impossibly lovely blond girl become a ravaged runaway in the space of 75 minutes taught me that being out of control was fatal.

So in this way, I rarely drink more than a glass of wine a week, and only then with a steaming plate of macaroni before me. I refuse to yield to the suddenly hip zeitgeist of legalizing pot because, dude, it's like, dude, no worse than booze and, dude, it's like so racist to lock up black kids, dude, when white suburban kids are doing the same thing. You know, dude?

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Ah, got your attention, did I? Were you expecting some sad eulogy to the departed artist? Not here, and not now. If you want that, google "Hollywood loves Phil" and any number of wonderful articles about his cinematic and theatrical genius will pop up. But for those who are still there, let me say to someone on Facebook, who then called me an unfeeling bitch: Drug addicts may be diseased, but they are also selfish as hell.

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anger. People who have diseases usually do everything in their power to find a cure. My own father, who died of a debilitating death from lung cancer, traveled thousands of miles in search of hope. Disease came to him and he fought it mercilessly, raging against the dying of the light.

And to be totally candid, this is personal. People close to me have died this way Hoffman did and left behind children who have had shadowy wh memories of them. It is a ferocious loss to the survivors. Addiction specialists will tell you that addicts are trapped by biology and psychology, and many times they are too weak to fight. I don't believe that. The human spirit is strong, not neutered, and we have within us the ability to stare down mortality and best to drugs, especially when three dependent lives were created in the interim.

Hoffman had kicked an addiction two decades before. He'd made three wonderful children with his partner. He might have had a disease, but he also had an obligation to those children. Two decades should be enough to immunize you against turning back to drugs, especially when three dependent lives were created in the interim. That's the end of "Go Ask Alice," the addict dies. That was supposed to shock us into understanding, help us reject drugs and think twice before even dipping in. Crude as it was, the message was potent.

Hoffman ignored it, because he had a disease. And because he was selfish.

Christine M. Flowers is a lawyer and Philadelphia Daily News columnist.

OPINION

Can't cure what ails GOP health care plan

BY MICHAEL HILTZIK
Los Angeles Times

Evidently fed up with accusations that their "repeal and replace" plan for Obamacare has consisted of a whole lot of "repeal" and not even a tiny bit of "replace," Senate Republicans last week unveiled an actual, detailed health care reform proposal.

The Patient Choice, Affordability, Responsibility and Empowerment Act (referred to as CARE) bears the paternity of Sens. Richard Burr, of North Carolina; Tom Coburn, of Oklahoma; and Orrin Hatch, of Utah. It preserves some of the things people like most about the Affordable Care Act — insurance for those with pre-existing conditions, for example — but does so in a way that's guaranteed to fall most of those affected. Among other things, it eliminates minimum coverage standards written into the ACA, including items like maternity coverage, which will inevitably make insurance more expensive for women relative to men.

The proposal incorporates some provisions that are the same as those favored by Republicans, and others that are already known to be ineffective. Some health care experts have been kind to the measure, perhaps out of desperation to find something nice to say about Republican health care policy. ("A real set of initiatives, rather than a flimsy set of slogans" — Jonathan Cohen, of the New Republic.)

But health economist Austin Frakt is probably on the money when he observes, "It's clearly designed to serve the objectives of the campaign(s) — 2014 and then, perhaps, 2016 — not as an effort to engage in good-faith negotiation with Democrats on health policy."

The measure isn't yet a full-fledged bill, but more of a white paper for discussion; it hasn't been "scored," or costed out, by the Congressional Budget Office. But because the senators put so much effort into the CARE Act, let's give it a closer look.

The proposal claims that it offers "common-sense, patient-centered reforms that reduce health-care costs and increase

access to affordable, high-quality care." Whether it will reduce costs is debatable; but if it does, it will do so by making "affordable, high-quality care" less accessible.

According to an analysis by the nonpartisan Center for Health and Economy endorsed by the bill's sponsors, much of the premium reduction claimed for the measure comes from steering Americans into narrow provider networks — limiting their choices of doctors and hospitals. It also expands the range in which insurers can adjust premiums for age from the ACA's 1-to-3 (they can charge their eldest enrollees more than three times their youngest) to 1-to-5.

Those two provisions perpetuate two issues with the Affordable Care Act most often cited by its critics: people discovering they can't see their previous doctors or go to their choice of hospitals, and older enrollees being confronted with sticker shock at the premiums on exchange-issued individual plans. The CARE Act acknowledges that narrow provider networks are a fact of life in the health care market, and allows higher premiums for older consumers than the ACA.

The CARE Act also raises a heap of more for the U.S. Treasury by capping tax deductions for employer-sponsored insurance. That's supposed to yield more than \$1 trillion over 10 years through what, according to GOP orthodoxy, would be the equivalent of a tax increase. Further savings of nearly \$200 billion would come from "Medicaid reform." That amounts essentially to block-granting states with federal funds and allowing them to design their Medicaid programs themselves.

Because we already know that states with a high proportion of uninsured citizens and substandard public health care programs are low-income, uninsured individuals, Medicaid to serve their residents, this is a formula for more (or less) of the same.

The sponsors assert that the ACA's Medicaid provision, through which the federal government covers more than 90 percent of the cost of expanding the program to cover more low-income uninsured individuals, places federal taxpayers "on the hook for 90 cents on the dollar of care provided



Amanda Deardorff, left, a health enrollment navigator with Open Door Health Solutions, helps Valerie Keizer sign up for coverage under the Affordable Care Act in Muncie, Ind., in December. The Republicans' health care reform proposal is titled the Patient Choice, Affordability, Responsibility and Empowerment Act.

to working adults above poverty." They say "this is unfair to the low-income mother with children, or the elderly blind person."

What ever could they mean by that? These are the people who benefit most from Medicaid; because the federal assistance is covered by income tax, it's financed largely by middle-class and upper-income taxpayers, not by low-income mothers with children. To say they and the elderly blind are being treated unfairly by a program that ensures they get medical care is to conjure up a new definition of the term "unfair."

The GOP plan cuts off premium subsidies at 300 percent of the poverty line, compared with 400 percent for the ACA. That means millions of Americans would be left without financial assistance provided by Obamacare. The Republicans would exclude all noncitizens from financial assistance, even those here legally; because nearly 20 percent of the uninsured are noncitizens, that's another huge exclusion.

What about the most important consumer protection in the ACA — the outlawing of exclusions for pre-existing conditions? The GOP version of this linchpin of affordable care is a provision guaranteeing renewable

insurance for everyone who can maintain their coverage for at least 18 months — let it lapse within that time frame, and you can be stranded without any reasonably priced coverage at all.

This is certainly the most cynical provision in the CARE Act. The most important reason that people go uninsured is because they can't afford coverage. Those who lose it, often because of a layoff, could be doomed to fall further behind the reach of coverage under the GOP plan because they would have to pay for their own medical expenses in the interim — and those can be ruinous. ... The sponsors will argue that the dire consequences of lapsed coverage will encourage people to keep their insurance come hell or high water, but those who simply can't afford insurance in the GOP world will be badly stuck. ...

From the GOP standpoint, the bill's virtue lies in those words "choice," "responsibility" and "empowerment," which are Republican shibboleths. But it undermines the affordability and accessibility of health insurance in countless ways, and it should be shunned like a bad disease.

Michael Hiltzik is a Los Angeles Times columnist.

New farm bill should've united parties in opposition

By JOEL MATHIS and BEN BOYCHUK
McClatchy-Tribune News Service

Almost nothing happens on a bipartisan basis in Washington these days, but there is one exception: the farm bill. This week, the Senate easily passed a bill to spend \$11 trillion on agriculture and related programs over the next decade. The bill expands insurance for farmers, but also cuts food stamps by \$90 a month for 1.7 million people in the program. And that's just the start.

Is the new farm bill a bonfire or a blessing? Joel Mathis and Ben Boychuk, the RedBlueAmerica columnists, debate the issue.

JOEL MATHIS

This is your government in the 21st century: Lawmakers can agree on almost nothing except that profitable businesses need more government subsidies, but out-of-work and poor Americans get less.

This is a bill that guarantees rice farmers never have to worry about having even an average market for their crop. The Wall Street Journal reports: "The federal subsidy in the House bill guarantees farmers of Japonica Rice that if market prices drop below 115 percent of the average price of all types of rice, they will get a government

payment to make up the difference."

This is a bill that guarantees big profits to giant banks. Think Progress reports: "Much of the roughly \$59 billion taxpayers spend on the new farm programs over the past decade ends up with financial companies rather than farmers. The 18 insurance companies that participate in the federal crop insurance program banked \$10 billion in profit over the past decade and have made money on the program every year since 2005." — *Progress*

This is a bill that subsidizes the sugar industry; that pays \$100 million to promote maple syrup; that gives \$200 million to a "market access program," which gives food companies money to advertise abroad — including, reportedly, an effort to sell American wines to the French.

Good luck with that. While banks and corporations are counting their taxpayer-funded profits, though, actual hungry Americans might go just a bit hungrier — some food stamp recipients will lose up to \$90 a month from their meal subsidies. Too bad they don't have Congress lining up to do their bidding.

"This thousand-page, trillion-dollar mess is less a compromise between House Republicans and Senate Democrats than it is collusion between both parties against the American people, to benefit the special interests at the expense of the national in-

terest," Republican Sen. Mike Lee wrote about the farm bill. He's right.

Conservatives say the government shouldn't pick winners and losers. That's precisely what the farm bill does. It's a bipartisan bonfire.

BEN BOYCHUK

On this, liberals and conservatives can agree: The farm bill is an affront to the principles of small government, fiscal prudence and good sense. There is simply nothing "conservative" about the 10-year, \$1 trillion monstrosity and Republicans should be ashamed to have voted for it.

But vote they did. Even some tea party stalwarts caved. In the end, just 63 House Republicans had the nerve to buck their GOP leadership and vote against the bill. And to what end?

Farmers aren't hurting. Not the big ones, anyway — and the big ones are the major beneficiaries of the bill. According to the Department of Agriculture, U.S. farmers last year earned a net income of \$13.1 billion, up 7 percent from the previous year. Did your income grow 7 percent last year? If so, lucky you! In reality, of course, most U.S. families have seen their incomes stagnate or decline in the years since the Great Recession.

The GOP bill's supporters point to its "reforms," which include eliminating di-

rect payments to farmers. But the subsidies aren't gone; they're just really well hidden. Now, the government will further subsidize crop insurance, which farmers can collect when prices fall below a certain threshold — not unlike the old direct payment system.

What's more, the new bill permanently enshrines the sugar subsidy, which the American Enterprise Institute's Tim Carmody rightly described as "Washington's least defensible corporate welfare bonfire." And that's saying something!

Liberals detest that the bill cuts \$8 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — food stamps. But that amounts to about 1 percent of the budget over the next decade from a program rife with fraud and abuse.

So the farm bill reforms practically nothing, yet U.S. consumers can expect to pay more for anything containing sugar, just as they're already paying more for corn, for wheat, for soybeans, and for milk.

Who benefits then? Not taxpayers, obviously. Any way you slice it, corporate welfare for agribusiness not only survives, it thrives under this awful bill.

Ben Boychuk is associate editor of the Manhattan Institute's City Journal. Joel Mathis is associate editor for Philadelphia Magazine.

SCOREBOARD

Sports on AFN

Go to the American Forces Network website for the most up-to-date TV schedules. myafn.net

Tennis

Royal Guard Open Thursday
At Club Navale de Campo Las Salinas
Vina del Mar, Chile
Purchase: \$467,000 (W7250)
Surface: Clay, Outdoor
Singles
Nicolas Almagro (3), Spain, def. Martin Alund, Argentina, 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Open Sud de France

Thursday
At Arena Maillol
Mentonville, France
Purchase: \$654,000 (W7250)
Surface: Hard-Indoor
Singles
Denis Istomin, Uzbekistan, def. Dmitry Tulin, austria, 6-3, 6-3, 6-3.

Zagreb Indehors

Thursday
At Dom Sportova
Zagreb, Croatia
Purchase: \$654,000 (W7250)
Surface: Hard-Indoor
Singles
Daniel Eddi, Brazil, def. Michael Berrer, Germany, 1-6, 6-1, 7-6 (4).

Thursdays men's scores

75 Bryant 79, CCSU 68
Caldwell 53, North Carolina 53
Caldwell 94, Felician 85
Concordia (N.Y.) 77, Dominican (N.Y.) 75

Men's schedule

Saturday
Fairleigh Dickinson Tech CCSU
Virginia Tech at Pittsburgh
Lafayette at Boston U.

College baseball

Thursday's scores
Hamden-Sydney at Christopher Newport, tied, conference
Randolph-Macon vs. Huntington, p.p.d., weather

College basketball

Thursdays men's scores

75 Bryant 79, CCSU 68
Caldwell 53, North Carolina 53
Caldwell 94, Felician 85
Concordia (N.Y.) 77, Dominican (N.Y.) 75

South

73 Appalachian St. 54, The Citadel 45
Austin Peay 75, Tennessee St. 65
Barrett 87, Belmont Abbey 76

Midwest

73 Bluefield 70, Lindsey Wilson 64
Brescia 110, Indiana Kokomo 78
Campbellsville 75, Cumberland 72

West

201 Davidson 109, Sanford 88
ETSU 44, N. Kentucky 50
FLU 78, UAB 72

Midwest

73 Bradley 63, Loyola of Chicago 54
Cincinnati 53, UConn 58
Indiana St. 69, Oakland 55

South

73 Abilene Christian 80, Houston Baptist 18
Arkansas 85, SE Louisiana 71
E. Texas Baptist 93, Concordia-Austin 78

West

73 Alameda 68, UALR 57
Incarate Word 82, Texas A&M-Cc 78
Louisiana-Lafayette 92, Texas-Arling 100

Far West

73 Alaska 88, Montana-Billings 74
Brigham 87, Oregon 65
BYU 89, Santa Clara 76

Far West

73 Alaska 88, Montana-Billings 74
Brigham 87, Oregon 65
BYU 89, Santa Clara 76

Coll. of Charleston at Towson
Mass.-Lowell at UMBC
Navy at Army
Mount St. Mary's at Bryant

South

73 Virginia Tech 75, North Carolina 45
Jacksonville at Stetson
Charleston Southern at VMI

Midwest

73 Kentucky at Mississippi St.
Longwood at Coastal Carolina
Middle Tennessee at FIU

West

73 Arkansas at Vanderbilt
Arkansas at Winthrop
Austin Peay at Belmont

Midwest

73 North Carolina at Wake Forest
Nebraska at Northwestern
Cleveland St. at Wright St.

South

73 North Carolina at Wake Forest
Nebraska at Northwestern
Cleveland St. at Wright St.

West

73 Texas A&M at Rice
Arkansas at Incarnate Word
Louisiana-Lafayette at Texas St.

Far West

73 Alaska 88, Montana-Billings 74
Brigham 87, Oregon 65
BYU 89, Santa Clara 76

Far West

73 Alaska 88, Montana-Billings 74
Brigham 87, Oregon 65
BYU 89, Santa Clara 76

Marshall at Tulane
UConn at UConn

Michigan St. at Wisconsin
Bowling Green at Detroit
Oakland at Valparaiso

Drake at Indiana St.
Kansas at Bradley
Illinois St. at Loyola of Chicago

Marshall at Tulane
UConn at UConn

Michigan St. at Wisconsin
Bowling Green at Detroit
Oakland at Valparaiso

Drake at Indiana St.
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Oakland at Valparaiso

Drake at Indiana St.
Kansas at Bradley
Illinois St. at Loyola of Chicago

Marshall at Tulane
UConn at UConn

Michigan St. at Wisconsin
Bowling Green at Detroit
Oakland at Valparaiso

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Deals

Thursday's transactions
BASEBALL
MLB PLAYERS ASSOCIATION - Named Victor Martinez as assistant player program developer.

AMERICAN LEAGUE
BALTIMORE ORIOLES - Agreed to terms with C Matt Wieters on a one-year contract.

AMERICAN LEAGUE
HOUSTON ASTROS - Agreed to terms with RHP Jeremy Williams on a one-year contract.

AMERICAN LEAGUE
TAMPA BAY RAYS - Agreed to terms with Wilson Perdomo, OFs David Christian and Jeremy Moore, C Eddy Rodriguez and RHP Juan Sandoval on minor league contracts.

NATIONAL LEAGUE
ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS - Agreed to terms with OF Mark Trumbo on a one-year contract.

NATIONAL LEAGUE
CHICAGO CUBS - Agreed to terms with 2B Darwin Barney on a one-year contract.

NATIONAL LEAGUE
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS - Agreed to terms with RHP Pat Neshek on a minor league contract.

BASKETBALL
NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION - Named Miami G Mario Chalmers as first vice president.

NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION
CLEVELAND CAVALIERS - Fired general manager Chris Grant. Named vice president of basketball operations Jeff Grubb acting general manager.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
NEW YORK GIANTS - Named Bob Moore wide receivers coach.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
CLEVELAND BROWNS - Named coach, Chris DiMarco and Derik Keyes coordinators. Gary Kubiak defensive coaches, Richard Hightower offensive coordinator.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
NEW YORK GIANTS - Named Steve Spagnuolo defensive coordinator. Ryan Pickens assistant special teams coach.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS - Named Brock Olive assistant special teams coach.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
OLIO ASSISTANT SPECIAL TEAMS COACH - Acquired George Edwards defensive coordinator, Mike Priefer special teams coordinator.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
NEW YORK GIANTS - Named Ryan Jeff Davidson offensive line coach.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
PITTSBURGH PANTHERS - Named Ryan Pickens assistant special teams coach.

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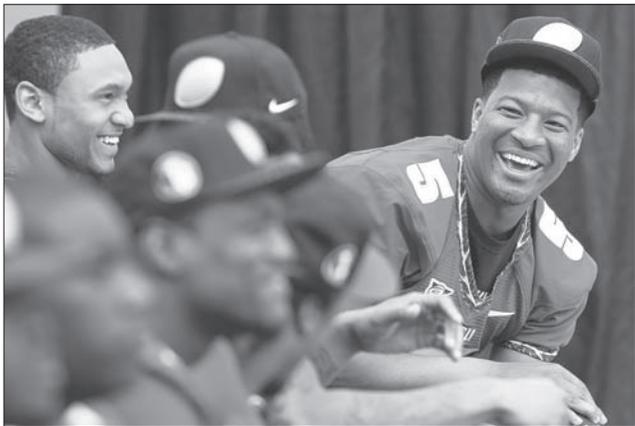
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SPORTS BRIEFS/MLB



MIKE EWEN, TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT/AP

Heisman Trophy winner and FSU quarterback Jameis Winston, right, told the Associated Press on Thursday that he plans to play two more years of college football. Winston, a redshirt freshman this year, will be eligible for the NFL Draft after next season.

Briefly

FSU's Winston planning to play for 2 more years

The Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Florida State quarterback Jameis Winston says Seminoles coach Jimbo Fisher was on the money when he stated the Heisman winner might play two more years of college football.

Winston told The Associated Press Thursday that's indeed his plan.

The redshirt freshman says he and Fisher — who said Wednesday he believes Winston will be in Tallahassee two more years — have a good relationship, "so whatever he says most likely is true... Obviously I'm a big baseball person, so that's an accurate statement because I plan on playing baseball next season."

Winston is expected to be the closer for Florida State's baseball team. Many NFL Draft experts believe Winston would have been a high first-round pick, possibly No. 1 overall, if he was eligible for this year's football draft.

Penguins D Kris Letang out after having stroke

PITTSBURGH — Pittsburgh Penguins defenseman Kris Letang will be out for six-plus weeks after having a stroke.

Penguins general manager Ray Shero announced Friday that Letang had a stroke last week. Shero says Letang will be treated with blood thinners, adding the stroke is not expected to threaten his career.

Letang's last game was Jan. 27 against Buffalo. He has 10 goals — matching a career high — and 18 assists in 94 games this season for the Eastern Conference-leading Penguins.

He signed a \$58 million, eight-year contract extension last summer when he was entering the last year of his deal.

Letang says he hopes letting the public know about his stroke will encourage people to seek medical help if they experience symptoms associated with a stroke.

Eastwood saves touring director from choking

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. — Clint Eastwood added another starring role at the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am — life saver.

Eastwood attended a volunteer party on the eve of the PGA Tour event when he noticed tournament director Steve John choking on a piece of cheese. The 83-year-old actor quickly performed the Heimlich maneuver Wednesday night at the Monterey Conference Center.

John said Friday the Hollywood actor saved his life. He said Eastwood immediately saw that he was in trouble and lifted the 202-pound tournament director three times about a foot off the ground.

Eastwood told The Carmel Pine Cone it was his first time using the Heimlich maneuver.

Trumbo, Diamondbacks agree at \$4.8 million

PHOENIX — The Arizona Diamondbacks avoided arbitration with Mark Trumbo by agreeing Thursday to a \$4.8 million, one-year contract with the outfielder.

Arizona acquired Trumbo from the Los Angeles Angels in December in a three-team trade that also included the Chicago White Sox. Trumbo hit 34 home runs last season and 32 in 2012. He has 95 home runs since reaching the major leagues in 2011.

In other MLB news:

■ Catcher Matt Wieters and the Baltimore Orioles avoided salary arbitration by agreeing to a \$7.7 million, one-year contract, a raise of \$2.2 million.

The 27-year-old hit .235 with 22 homers and 79 RBIs in 148 games last year and has a .255 batting average with 87 homers and 328 RBIs over parts of five years in the major leagues. He can become a free agent after the 2015 season.

■ A person familiar with the deal tells The Associated Press reliever Carlos Marmol and the Miami Marlins have agreed to a \$1.25 million, one-year contract.

An All-Star in 2008, Marmol is 23-32 with a 3.46 ERA, 730 strikeouts and 385 walks in 504 games — all but 21 with the Cubs.

■ A person familiar with the negotiations tells The Associated Press that reliever Fernando Rodney and the Seattle Mariners have agreed to a \$14 million, two-year contract.

Hall of Fame slugger Kiner dies at age 91

By BEN WALKER
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Ralph Kiner was a smash as a slugger, launching so many home runs over the left-field wall at old Forbes Field that fans nicknamed it his corner.

Years later, as one of baseball's most beloved broadcasters, he became a big hit in a new "Kiner's Korner."

Kiner, the Hall of Famer whose frequent malaprops endeared him to New York Mets listeners for more than a half-century, died Thursday. He was 91.

The Hall of Fame said Kiner died at his home in Rancho Mirage, Calif., with his family at his side.

"He was a jewel," Mets Hall of Famer Tom Seaver said.

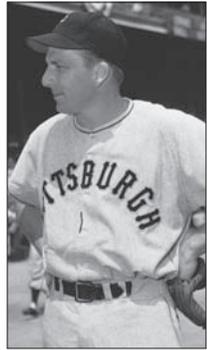
Kiner hit 369 home runs during a 10-year career cut short by back problems. He debuted with Pittsburgh in 1946 and won or tied for the National League lead in homers in each of his first seven seasons.

He was popular off the field, too. His Hollywood pals included Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra, he squired Liz Taylor and Janet Leigh, and he played himself in the 1951 film "Angels in the Outfield."

Kiner became a Mets announcer in their expansion season of 1962, working 17 years as a trio with Bob Murphy and Lindsey Nelson. Kiner called their games for 52 years in all, including a handful of them last season.

Kiner was already a fixture on the Mets' airwaves when he was inducted into the Hall in 1975. He was elected with just one vote to spare in his 15th and final year on the Baseball Writers' Association of America ballot.

The six-time All-Star outfielder still ranks sixth all-time with a home run every 14.1 at-bats. He averaged more than 100 RBIs per season and hit .279 with the Pirates, the Chicago Cubs and



AP Photo

The Pittsburgh Pirates' Ralph Kiner, seen here on July 11, 1950, passed away at the age of 91 on Thursday at his home in Rancho Mirage, Calif.

Cleveland.

When he retired, Kiner was sixth on the career home run list.

To generations of TV viewers and radio listeners, his postcareer acclaim was as great as the honors he earned on the field.

"Kiner's Korner" was a delight for players and fans alike, where stars would join Kiner for post-game chats.

"I loved going on 'Kiner's Korner.' I enjoyed talking baseball with Ralph, especially learning about players from his era," former Mets star Dwight Gooden said. "But what really made it special was every time you went on, you got a \$100. For a rookie like me in 1984, a \$100 was a big deal."

The Mets named the home TV booth at Shea Stadium in his honor. The Pirates retired Kiner's No. 4.

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NHL

Roundup

Capitals rally, overtake jets

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON—Secretary of State John Kerry, the most powerful politician in the house, performed a ceremonial puck drop to send the Olympians on their way.

Alex Ovechkin, the biggest hockey star in the arena, scored his league-leading 40th goal to give his team the lead in the third period.

Set aside those two larger-than-life names for a moment, however, and look at the who who occupy the score sheet for the crucial tying goal early in the third period of the Washington Capitals' 4-2 win over the Winnipeg Jets on Thursday night.

Patrick Wey (second NHL game), Julien Brouillette (first NHL game), Tom Wilson (second NHL goal).

"It was a simple play, but it was nice that we ended up scoring," Wey said. "And I'm really excited."

Simple but effective. Wey passed cross-ice to Brouillette, who then deliberately shot wide of the net to set up a cannon off the boards that eventually made its way to Wilson.

"The play Brou made, banking it off the boards like that, I thought that was a great play," Washington coach Adam Oates said. "And obviously it worked, the offense was right.... It gave us a lot of life."

Wey and Brouillette had tied game in the night before, having been recalled from Hershey of the AHL to serve as the third defensive pairing because the Capitals had run out of healthy bodies.

"From what I expected," Oates said, "they were fantastic."

The Wey-Brouillette-Wilson goal made the score 2-2, setting the stage for Ovechkin.

Canadiens 5, Canucks 2: Max Pacioretty scored three goals for his third career hat trick — despite missing two penalty shots — to help host Montreal to a victory that extended Vancouver's losing streak to six games.

Ryan White and Tomas Plekanec also scored for Montreal, while Carey Price made 42 saves.

Blues 3, Bruins 2 (OT): T.J. Oshie scored 3:29 into overtime, leading host St. Louis to a victory over Boston.

Oshie blanketed the puck in from the side of the net as the Blues, who had a 3-2 shootout win Nov. 21 in Boston, swept the season series.

Red Wings 3, Panthers 1: Gustav Nyquist scored the go-ahead goal in the second period, helping lift visiting Detroit over Florida. Brian Lashoff and Daniel Alafredsson also scored and Jimmy

Howard made 23 saves as the Red Wings ended a four-game road losing streak.

Oilers 2, Rangers 1: Nail Yakupov scored with 1:38 left in regulation to give visiting Edmonton a win over New York.

Ryan Smyth also scored for Edmonton, which is 5-5 in its last 10. Ben Scrivens made 35 saves.

Flyers 3, Avalanche 1: Steve Mason stopped 38 shots, and Mark Streit and Michael Raffl scored goals, leading host Philadelphia past Colorado.

Mason blanketed Detroit 5-0 on Jan. 28 and stopped the Los Angeles Kings 2-0 on Feb. 1. He was only 2:50 away from his fourth shutout of the season, and third in five games, when Nathan MacKinnon beat him for his 21st goal of the season. Mason stopped his first 33 shots.

Flames 4, Islanders 2: David Jones scored the tiebreaking goal late in the third period and rookie Reto Berra made 28 saves as visiting Calgary beat New York.

Jones banked the puck off the Islanders goalie Evgeni Nabokov from a sharp angle at 14:28 to lift the Flames to their sixth victory in seven games and their first at Nassau Coliseum since 2004.

Senators 3, Sabres 2: Milan Michalek scored his second goal of the game with 23 seconds left as host Ottawa defeated Buffalo.

The Sabres had fought back to tie the game with two third-period goals, but Senators captain Jason Spezza found Michalek in the slot and the beat Jonas Enroth over the shoulder for the winner.

Maple Leafs 4, Lightning 1: Jonathan Bernier made 33 saves and visiting Toronto beat Tampa Bay.

Mason Raymond, Jay McClement, James van Riemsdyk and Tyler Bozak scored for Toronto, which was coming of a 4-1 loss Tuesday night at Florida.

Wild 3, Predators 2 (OT): Nino Niederreiter's goal with 2:44 left in overtime lifted Minnesota to a victory over Nashville, its fifth straight home win.

Jason Brodin and Zach Parise scored early to offset two goals for the Predators by Craig Smith, who raised his team-leading total to 18. Carter Hutton made 33 saves.

Kings 2, Blue Jackets 1 (OT): Jonathan Quick beat fellow Olympic goalender Sergei Bobrovsky with 24 saves, Jake Muzzin scored the tying goal early in the third period and Robyn Regehr got the winner 2:33 into overtime to help host Los Angeles beat Columbus.

In the final game for both clubs before the Olympic break, the Kings snapped a four-game losing streak with their second victory in 12 games.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division	GP			W			L			OT			Pts			GF			GA		
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	56	28	16	4	64	119	123	56	28	16	4	64	119	123	56	28	16	4	64	119	123
Tampa Bay	57	32	20	5	69	164	143	57	32	20	5	69	164	143	57	32	20	5	69	164	143
Montreal	58	31	21	6	68	144	144	58	31	21	6	68	144	144	58	31	21	6	68	144	144
Toronto	59	31	22	6	68	175	181	59	31	22	6	68	175	181	59	31	22	6	68	175	181
Washington	57	27	19	11	62	144	159	57	27	19	11	62	144	159	57	27	19	11	62	144	159
Ottawa	58	26	21	11	63	167	184	58	26	21	11	63	167	184	58	26	21	11	63	167	184
Florida	57	22	28	7	51	136	178	57	22	28	7	51	136	178	57	22	28	7	51	136	178
Buffalo	57	25	24	8	58	133	172	57	25	24	8	58	133	172	57	25	24	8	58	133	172

Metropolitan Division

Pittsburgh	57	24	23	5	62	183	134	57	24	23	5	62	183	134
N.Y. Rangers	58	31	24	3	65	151	143	58	31	24	3	65	151	143
Philadelphia	57	29	23	5	63	165	158	57	29	23	5	63	165	158
Washington	57	29	23	5	63	165	158	57	29	23	5	63	165	158
Carolina	58	26	23	9	61	168	175	58	26	23	9	61	168	175
New Jersey	57	23	21	13	59	133	142	57	23	21	13	59	133	142
N.Y. Islanders	52	29	8	15	62	162	195	52	29	8	15	62	162	195

Western Conference

Central Division			GP			W			L			OT			Pts			GF			GA		
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA			
Chicago	59	35	10	14	84	207	61	59	35	10	14	84	207	61									
Los Angeles	56	36	12	6	82	192	130	56	36	12	6	82	192	130									
Colorado	57	36	16	5	77	169	151	57	36	16	5	77	169	151									
Minnesota	57	31	21	10	69	145	147	57	31	21	10	69	145	147									
Winnipeg	58	25	28	5	55	124	159	58	25	28	5	55	124	159									
Nashville	58	25	26	5	61	165	177	58	25	26	5	61	165	177									

Pacific Division

Anaheim	59	34	14	5	85	191	145	59	34	14	5	85	191	145
San Jose	58	36	16	6	78	172	140	58	36	16	6	78	172	140
Los Angeles	59	31	22	6	68	139	128	59	31	22	6	68	139	128
Vancouver	57	27	22	8	62	161	163	57	27	22	8	62	161	163
Phoenix	56	26	20	10	62	160	167	56	26	20	10	62	160	167
San Jose	57	22	28	7	51	128	159	57	22	28	7	51	128	159
Edmonton	59	20	33	6	46	152	197	59	20	33	6	46	152	197

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Wednesday's games

Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Chicago 2, Anaheim 0

Thursday's games

Calgary 4, Dallas 1, OT; Edmonton 2, N.Y. Rangers 1; Philadelphia 3, Colorado 1

Friday's games

Philadelphia 3, Washington 2; Montreal 5, Vancouver 2

Saturday's games

Chicago at Phoenix; Calgary at San Jose

Sunday's games

Calgary at Philadelphia; Pittsburgh at Tampa Bay

Ottawa at N.Y. Islanders; New Jersey at Washington

Philadelphia at Dallas

Thursday

Flames 4, Islanders 2

Calgary 4, Islanders 2 (OT) 1-1-2
N.Y. Islanders 2, Flames 4 (OT) 1-1-2
Second Period—1, Calgary, Monahan 16 (Colborne, Russell), 14:25; 2, Calgary, Spezza found Michalek in the slot and the beat Jonas Enroth over the shoulder for the winner.

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Flames 4, Islanders 1

Calgary 4, Islanders 1 (OT) 1-1-2
Philadelphia 3, Islanders 1 (OT) 1-1-2
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Washington right wing Alex Ovechkin celebrates his goal during the third period of Thursday's game against Winnipeg in Washington. It was Ovechkin's 40th goal of the season. Washington won 4-2.

Capitals 4, Jets 2

Winnipeg 1, Capitals 4 (OT) 1-0-2
First Period—1, Washington, Brouillette 12 (Johansson, Weir), 4:56; 2, Winnipeg, Little 18 (Ladd), 13:02

Second Period—1, Winnipeg, Byfuglien 15 (Sotgiu, Jokinen), 10:25

Third Period—4, Washington, Wilson 2 (Brouillette, Wey), 3:38; 5, Washington, Ovechkin 60 (Backstrom, Altzer), 7:46; 6, Washington, Brouillette 13 (Johansson, Carrick), 15:15

Shots on Goal—Winnipeg 14-16-36; Washington 11-12-30

Power-play opportunities—Winnipeg 0 of 1; Washington 0 of 4

Goals—Winnipeg 2: Javelec 18-2:24 (30 shots-26 saves); Washington, Holtby 16-12 (26-34)

A-18:06 (18,506). T-2:27

Senators 3, Sabres 2

Buffalo 0, Senators 3 (OT) 0-2-2
Ottawa 1, Senators 3 (OT) 1-2-3

Second Period—1, Ottawa, Ekbladsson 15 (Niederreiter), 4:02; 2, Nashville, Smith 17 (Hutton), 5:50; 3, Minnesota, Parise 19 (Niederreiter), 9:02; 4, Buffalo, Ennis 13 (Stafford, Leitao), 10:25; 4, Buffalo, Stafford 10 (Enroth), 15:46; 5, Ottawa, Michalek 10 (Spezza, Niemi), 19:37

Shots on Goal—Buffalo 7-13-12-32; Ottawa 11-12-36

Power-play opportunities—Buffalo 0 of 0; Ottawa 1 of 1

Goals—Buffalo, Enroth 11-5:15 (36 shots-33 saves); Ottawa, Anderson 19-15 (22-32)

A-18:42 (33,155). T-2:24

Maple Leafs 4, Lightning 1

Toronto 0, Maple Leafs 4 (OT) 1-3-4
Tampa Bay 0, Maple Leafs 4 (OT) 0-1-2

First Period—1, Toronto, McClement 15 (Kullem, Rielly), 7:57

Second Period—2, Toronto, McClement 3 (Clarkson, Lulij), 2:19; 3, Toronto, van Riemsdyk 23 (Gunnarsson, Kessel), 8:10

Third Period—2, Toronto, 13:27 (pp.)

Shots on Goal—Toronto 12-10-14-36; Tampa Bay 9-14-11-31

Shots on Goal—Buffalo 7-13-12-32; Ottawa 11-12-36

Power-play opportunities—Toronto 0 of 1; Tampa Bay 0 of 1

Goals—Toronto, Bernier 21-16:05 (34 shots-33 saves); Tampa Bay, Bishop 22 (21 shots-24 saves); Minnesota, Kumpser 8-3 (18-16)

A-19:20 (19,204). T-2:38

Wild 3, Predators 2 (OT)

Nashville 0, Wild 3 (OT) 0-0-2
Minnesota 2, Wild 3 (OT) 0-1-3

First Period—1, Minnesota, Brodin 8 (Niederreiter), 4:02; 2, Nashville, Smith 17 (Hutton), 5:50; 3, Minnesota, Parise 19 (Niederreiter), 9:02; 4, Buffalo, Ennis 13 (Stafford, Leitao), 10:25; 4, Buffalo, Stafford 10 (Enroth), 15:46; 5, Ottawa, Michalek 10 (Spezza, Niemi), 19:37

Shots on Goal—Nashville 9-9-6-11-36; Tampa Bay 9-15-3-36

Power-play opportunities—Nashville 0 of 2; Minnesota 1 of 5

Goals—Nashville, Hutton 13-8:4 (36 shots-33 saves); Minnesota, Kumpser 8-3 (18-16)

A-18:76 (17,954). T-2:26

Red Wings 3, Panthers 1

Detroit 0, Red Wings 3 (OT) 0-2-3
Florida 1, Red Wings 3 (OT) 1-1-0-1

First Period—1, Florida, Upshall 10 (Koecky, Weaver), 19:34

Second Period—2, Detroit, Alafredsson 13 (Abdelkader, Kronwall), 6:30 (pp.)

Third Period—4, Detroit, Lashoff 1 (Birn, Kronwall), 15:40 (pp.)

Shots on Goal—Detroit 11-12-10-33; Florida 2-16-24

Power-play opportunities—Detroit 1 of 7;

COLLEGE BASKETBALL



AL BEHRMAN/AP

Cincinnati forward Justin Jackson (5) celebrates with forward Titus Rubles, left, after Cincinnati took the lead in the second half of Thursday's game against Connecticut in Cincinnati. The Bearcats won 63-58.

Bearcats best Huskies

By JOE KAY

The Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Even Oscar Robertson wanted to see more of the Sean Kilpatrick show.

The Hall of Famer sat court-side and watched the senior guard score 26 points and get a team-high 12 rebounds on Thursday night, rallying No. 7 Cincinnati to a 63-58 victory over No. 22 Connecticut.

The Bearcats (22-2, 11-0 American Athletic) got their 15th straight win with Kilpatrick finishing it off at the free-throw line in the closing seconds. During a late timeout, Robertson raised his hand in a shooting motion toward Kilpatrick, who knew what

he meant.

Kilpatrick's response? A "take-it-easy" motion. "He kept giving me the signal to shoot," Kilpatrick said. "I told him to relax."

The Bearcats trailed for most of the game, their first with a No. 7 ranking that is their highest in 10 years. A crowd of 12,432 — their biggest of the season — watched them win.

Cincinnati has won 18 straight at home, including all 16 this season. The Bearcats are off to their best start in 12 years.

"That's what we've been hoping for," forward Titus Rubles said. "It's good to see the city excited for Cincinnati basketball again. We definitely enjoyed the crowd

today. It was a big factor in helping us with our energy."

Justin Jackson had six of his 15 points and blocked a shot during a 13-4 run that rallied Cincinnati midway through the second half. Jermaine Sanders' two free throws with 18.5 seconds left gave Cincinnati a 61-58 lead.

UConn's Niels Giffey missed a three-point attempt, and Kilpatrick got the rebound, and was fouled and made both free throws.

Shabazz Napier scored 16 points for the Huskies (17-5, 5-4) who were playing their highest-ranked opponent this season. They are 2-2 against Top 25 teams, with wins over Florida and Memphis and losses to Louisville and Cincinnati.

Spartans rout Penn State in Payne's return

By NOAH TRISTER

The Associated Press

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Adrian Payne returned and Keith Appling sat out.

Just another night in this injury-plagued season for Michigan State, which is still right there at the top of the Big Ten standings.

"I just feel that we're in the hunt right now," Spartans coach Tom Izzo said. "After what we've gone through, we're in the hunt, and that's what I told our players. You've got to be in the hunt before you get a chance to win a championship."

Payne scored 12 points in his first game back from a foot injury, and the ninth-ranked Spartans kept pace in the league race with an 82-67 victory over Penn State on Thursday night.

Payne hadn't played since Jan. 7 because of a sprained foot, but although he didn't start Thursday, he did play 18 minutes, going 5-for-9 from the field.

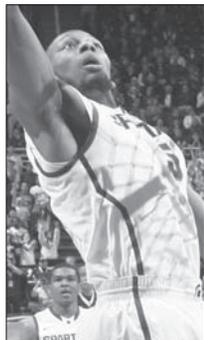
"It felt good to be back on the court," Payne said. "Overall, I'm satisfied."

The Spartans (20-3, 9-1 Big Ten) were still nowhere near full strength. Appling, who has been dealing with a wrist problem, sat out, and Brandon Dawson is still out with a broken hand.

Kenny Kaminski scored a career-high 19 points for the Spartans.

Tim Frazier scored 22 points for Penn State (12-11, 3-7), which had its three-game winning streak snapped.

Despite all of its injury woes, Michigan State is tied for first with rival Michigan atop the Big Ten. Everyone else in the conference is at least three games



AL GOLDS/AP

Michigan State's Adrian Payne scored 12 points in his first game back from a foot injury, helping the Spartans to an 82-67 win over Penn State on Thursday in East Lansing, Mich.

back.

Payne missed Michigan State's loss to Michigan late last month, and the crowd gave him a nice ovation when he reported to the scorer's table to check in for the first time Thursday. Payne entered with 16:21 left in the first half and made his first shot, from just inside the three-point line.

"It was like Willis Reed coming off the bench," Penn State coach Patrick Chambers said referring to the New York Knicks captain's dramatic playoff appearance in 1970. "The crowd was going crazy — standing ovation."

No. 2 Arizona holds off Oregon

By JOHN MARSHALL

The Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — Arizona's offense was disjointed, the shots weren't falling, the free throws clanging one after another.

Playing without injured forward Brandon Ashley for the first time, the second-ranked Wildcats looked out of sorts on the offensive end, leaving them in jeopardy of their first losing streak of the season.

Good thing they know how to play defense, particularly when the game is on the line.

Digging in over the closing minutes, Arizona overcame a rough shooting night to win in their first game without Ashley, grinding out a 67-65 victory over Oregon on Thursday night.

"Our defense down the stretch is what we rely on," said Nick Johnson, who led Arizona with 18

points. "We have all year."

The Wildcats needed it against Oregon.

Coming off its first loss of the season, Arizona (22-1, 9-1 Pac-12) labored offensively without Ashley, who is out for the season with a foot injury suffered last Saturday in a loss at California.

The Wildcats went 4-for-16 from three-point range, missed 16 free throws and had a tough time even getting into their set plays.

They turned up the pressure with the game on the line and, as they have for much of the season, found a way to make the big plays when they needed to.

Point guard T.J. McConnell missed seven of his first eight shots before dropping in a three-pointer with 90 seconds left to give Arizona the lead.

Johnson went 5-for-16 from the field, but kept fighting his way through it and hit 5 of 6 free

throws in the final 47 seconds.

Oregon (15-7, 3-7) held its composure in one of college basketball's toughest road arenas, keeping the Wildcats at bay well into the second half.

When Arizona turned up the pressure and the fans in the McCale Center turned up the noise, the Ducks had no answer.

Oregon had a couple of key turnovers late and missed 3 of 4 free throws while shooting toward the raucous Arizona student section in the final 23 seconds.

Joseph Young and Jason Calliste had 14 points each and Danyean Dotson added 12 for the Ducks in another oh-so-close loss.

"They're hurting," Oregon coach Dana Altman said. "This is their third two-point loss. I just told them we've got to be resilient. It hurts having an opportunity and not being able to finish.



JOHN MILLER/AP

Arizona's Aaron Gordon (11) recovers a loose ball in front of Oregon's Mike Moser (0) during the second half Thursday in Tucson, Ariz. Arizona won 67-65.

OLYMPICS



Games open with hope, hubris

Schedule
Saturday
Alpine Skiing
 Men's 5 downhill
 Men's 10km Sprint
Biathlon
Cross-Country Skiing
 Women's 7.5km/7.5km Skiathlon
Figure Skating
 Ice Dance Team short dance
 Women's Team short program
 Pairs Team free program
Freestyle Skiing
 Women's Moguls Qualification
 Women's Moguls Finals
Ice Hockey
Women
 Group A: United States vs. Finland
 Group A: Canada vs. Switzerland
Luge
 Men's Singles (Runs 1 and 2)
Ski Jumping
 Men's Individual Qualification (normal hill)
Snowboard
 Men's Slopestyle Finals
 Women's Slopestyle Semifinals
Speedskating
 Men's 5000
Sunday
Alpine Skiing
 Women's Super Combined (downhill)
Biathlon
 Women's 7.5km Sprint
Cross-Country Skiing
 Men's 15km/15km Skiathlon
Curling
Men
 Russia vs. Britain
 Sweden vs. Sweden
 Denmark vs. China
 Germany vs. Canada
Figure Skating
 Men's Team free program
 Women's Team free program
 Ice Dance Team free dance
Ice Hockey
Women
 Group B: Sweden vs. Japan
 Group B: Russia vs. Germany
 Men's Singles (Runs 3 and 4)
Ski Jumping
 Men's Individual (normal hill) First Round and Final
Snowboard
 Women's Slopestyle Finals
 Women's 3000
Monday
Alpine Skiing
 Women's Super Combined (slalom)
Biathlon
 Men's 12.5km Pursuit
Curling
Women
 China vs. Canada
 Switzerland vs. United States
 Russia vs. Britain
Men
 United States vs. Norway
 Denmark vs. Russia
 Canada vs. Switzerland
 Sweden vs. Britain
 Switzerland vs. Denmark
 Canada vs. Canada
 Russia vs. United States
 South Korea vs. Japan
Freestyle Skiing
 Men's Moguls Qualification
 Women's Moguls Final
 Women's Slopestyle Qualification
Ice Hockey
Women
 Group A: United States vs. Switzerland
 Group A: Finland vs. Canada
Luge
 Women's Singles (Runs 1 and 2)
Short Track Speedskating
 Men's 1500 Heats
 Women's 1000 Heats
 Men's 1500 Semifinals
 Women's 1000 Relay Semifinals
 Men's 1500 Final
Speedskating
 Men's 500 (Races 1 and 2)
Tuesday
Alpine Skiing
 Women's downhill
Biathlon
 Women's 10km Pursuit
Cross-Country Skiing
 Men's and Women's Individual Sprint
Curling
Men
 Canada vs. Sweden
 United States vs. China
 Britain vs. Germany
 Norway vs. Russia
Women
 Britain vs. United States
 South Korea vs. Switzerland
 Denmark vs. Japan
 China vs. Russia
Men
 Denmark vs. United States
 Norway vs. Germany
 China vs. Switzerland
Figure Skating
 Pairs short program
Freestyle Skiing
 Women's Slopestyle Finals
Ice Hockey
Women
 Group B: Germany vs. Sweden
 Group B: Russia vs. Japan
Luge
 Women's Singles (Runs 3 and 4)
Ski Jumping
 Women's Individual (normal hill) First Round and Final
Snowboard
 Men's Halfpipe Qualification
 Men's Halfpipe Semifinals
 Women's Halfpipe Finals
Speedskating
 Women's 500 (Races 1 and 2)

By ANGELA CHARLTON
 AND NATALIYA VASILYEVA
 The Associated Press

SOCHI, Russia — A crowning achievement of Vladimir Putin's Russia kicked off Friday with a celebration of its past greatness and hopes for future glory, most especially for a raucous group of Russian athletes who marched into the rollicking opening ceremony of the Sochi Olympics with a message.

To the best athletes in the world, who they've invited to the edge of the Black Sea to compete on ice and snow, they sang: you're "not gonna get us."

Just after the sun set over the Caucasus Mountains and along the seashore just outside Fish Olympic Stadium in the wet-paint-Fresh Olympic Park, Russian TV star Yana Churilkoyna shouted to a crowd still taking their seats: "Welcome to the center of the universe!"

For the next two weeks, it certainly is for the 3,000 athletes who will compete in 98 events, more people and contests than ever at the Winter Games.

The opening ceremony and subsequent games are Russia's chance to tell its story of post-Soviet resurrection to the world, and dispel the anger, fear and suspicion that has marred the buildup to these most expensive Olympics ever.

The ceremony was a celebration of Russia and presented Putin's vision of a country with a rich and complex history emerging confidently from a rocky two decades and now capable of putting on a major international sports event.

Putin was front and center, looking down from his box high above the stadium floor as the real stars of the games — those athletes, dressed in winter wear



MARK HUMPHREY/AP

Artists perform Friday during the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

of so many national colors to ward off the evening chill and a light man-made snow — walked onto a satellite image of the earth projected on the floor, the map shifting so the athletes emerged from their own country.

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As always, Greece — the birthplace of Olympic competition — came first in the parade of nations. Five new teams, all from warm weather climates, joined the Winter Olympics for the first time. Togo's flagbearer looked dumbstruck with wonder, but those veterans from the Cayman Islands had the style to arrive in shorts!

The smallest teams often earned the biggest cheers from the crowd of 40,000, with an enthusiastic three-person Venezuelan team winning roars of approval as flag bearer and alpine skier Antonio Pardo danced and jumped along to the electronic music.

Only neighboring Ukraine, scene of a tense and ongoing standoff between a pro-Russian president and Western-leaning protesters, could compete with

those cheers. That is, until the Russians arrived.

Walking in last to a thundering bass line that struggled to overcome the ovations from the hometown crowd, the Russians revealed in all the attention. Their feeling could perhaps best be summed up by Russian singers Tatu, who hit "Not Gonna Get Us" accompanied them to their seats.

Russians place huge significance in the Olympics, carefully watching the medal count — their dismal performance in Vancouver four years ago is on the minds of many. These games are particularly important for Russians, many of whom are still insecure about their place in the world after the end of the Cold War and the years since that have seen dominance of the United States and China.

Bracket: Blowouts led to warning from IOC president

FROM BACK PAGE

have been characterized by laughable mismatches, often with double-digit victories by the top-tier teams against opponents who show they don't belong on the same ice.

The spate of round-robin blowouts led IOC President Jacques Rogge to warn the sport's governing body after Vancouver, "We cannot continue without improvement."

So changes were made. Instead of two evenly matched groups, the eight countries competing in Sochi were split up so that the top four teams in the world rankings will be in one group and the next four in another. After the round robin, the top two teams in Group A receive a bye into the semifinals; the next two go into the quarterfinals to play the top two teams in Group B.

The bottom two teams in Group B have no chance to medal.

"We of course know that progress takes time, and that the U.S. and Canada have top-quality programs, but we certainly hope to see many competitive games in Sochi," said Adam Steis, a spokesman for the International Ice Hockey Federation. The format was tested out in the last two



PETR DAVID JOSEK/AP

Canada goalie Charline Labonte eyes a puck during a practice session Thursday in Sochi, Russia. Most expect to see Canada and the United States play for the gold medal, as is usually the case.

world championships, and the international governing body liked the results. While at the Vancouver Olympics almost half of the games

— nine of 20 — had a five-goal difference or more, there were five blowouts in 21 games at the 2012 worlds and four in '13.

"Keeping this in mind, we can reasonably expect tighter and more competitive games in Sochi," Steis said. "Of course it is impossible to predict what is going to happen, but at least the past seems to indicate that."

For the United States, that means first-round games against Switzerland, which took bronze at the 2012 world championships; against Finland, which won the bronze medal at the Vancouver Games; and, of course, against archrival Canada.

Group B will include Russia, which lost 13-0 to the U.S. in the last Olympics; Sweden, which lost 13-1 to Canada in Vancouver; Germany, which did not qualify for the 2010 Games; and Japan, which hasn't qualified for the Olympics since Nagano in 1998.

Steis also pointed to the ability of different countries to reach the podium at the world championships as a possible effect of the changes. While the world championship finals have remained a North American affair, three different teams have won the bronze medal in the past three years.

OLYMPICS

Suited for success

US hoping high-tech outfits give them medal edge

By **RAF CASERT**
The Associated Press

SOCHI, Russia — Forget about the sharpest blades and think “tightest suit” instead. For nations like the Netherlands and the United States, those skintight suits could provide the edge to top the Olympic speedskating medals table.

No wonder the sartorial arms race heats up before every Olympics.

“It is a psychological game,” said Bert van der Tuuk, who designed the top suits for the Dutch and Russian teams.

But he says there is science involved too — every four years, there are improvements over the suits that won previous Olympic titles. How much though, remains up for heated debate.

“The difference between winning and losing is partly determined by clothing,” the Dutch skater turned suit designer said in an interview with The Associated Press.

In a sport where margins of victory are sometimes measured in hundredths of seconds, a little less drag, a bit of fabric that keeps a skater in the perfect position, might be just enough to make the difference between a golden glow and obscurity.

For Ireen Wust, the Dutch double gold medalist from Turin 2006 and the Vancouver Games four years ago, the feeling that

“The difference between winning and losing is partly determined by clothing.”

Bert van der Tuuk

Former Dutch speedskater who designed suits for Russia and Netherlands

she is well taken care of, gives her the peace of mind to disregard the whole issue.

“I don’t spend energy on subjects like that, because I cannot change it and it won’t bother me,” she said after a training session in the orange-and-blue Dutch suit.

No nation matches the Netherlands’ relentless commitment to speedskating and the country often has the medal tally to prove it.

But when the Olympics roll around, it is the United States that often puts up the toughest battle. That applies to their suits too — with some hyperbole thrown in.

“THE FASTEST SPEEDSKATING SUIT IN THE WORLD,” was how the Under Armour company described the Mach 39 American suit, developed together with the U.S. aerospace and defense company Lockheed Martin.

It has the U.S. skaters convinced.

“It’s definitely helpful thinking that you have the fastest skin. It’s a confidence booster,” said Brian Hansen, who will compete in the 500, 1,000 and 1,500 meters.

He said the skinsuit has special rivets, seams, bumps and even a diagonal zipper to improve speed. He acknowledges though that it is so tight on some skaters it feels like it restricts their breathing.

Van der Tuuk is not impressed. “They claim to have the fastest suit, but they haven’t tested our suit yet,” he said. Van der Tuuk said he tried some of the elements used in the U.S. suit but rejected them as adding no value.

No American was complaining about their suit in the run-up to Saturday’s opening race, the men’s 5,000. And Jilleanne Rookard was convinced the U.S. team has the edge.

“I did notice that the Dutch had a similar technology,” she said. “We still have a couple advantages that they don’t.” What are those? “I’m not really allowed to talk about anything super specific,” she said.

Wust, in her third Olympics with a third, improved, suit to go with it, is counting on her own sheer power and speed.

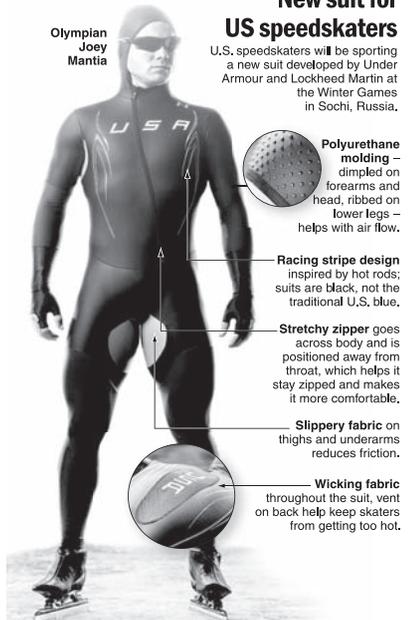
“Even if they really have a very fast suit, I still want to beat them,” she said.



sochi 2014

New suit for US speedskaters

U.S. speedskaters will be sporting a new suit developed by Under Armour and Lockheed Martin at the Winter Games in Sochi, Russia.

Olympian
Joey
Mantia

SOURCE: Under Armour

GRAPHIC: Chicago Tribune

MCT

Briefly

American freestyler Kloser out with broken leg

The Associated Press

KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia — American Heidi Kloser had to pull out of the Olympics after injuring her right leg during a training run before moguls qualifying.

Kloser tore knee ligaments and broke her femur following a crash Thursday night, only moments before she was supposed to head to the starting gate.

Kloser’s father, Mike, posting on his Facebook page, said Heidi asked him if he still considered her an Olympian even though she didn’t make it to the starting line in her first games.

“We said, of course she is,” Mike Kloser wrote.

The 21-year-old Kloser was fourth in the World Cup standings coming into the Olympics.

Putin: Sports should be focus of Sochi Olympics

SOCHI, Russia — Russian President Vladimir Putin says sports should take center stage during the Winter Olympics and not debate over gay rights.



Andy Wong/AP

The United States’ Heidi Kloser is stretchered off the course after crashing in a warm up run before qualifying in the women’s moguls at the Rosa Khutor Extreme Park on Thursday.

A Russian law banning gay “propaganda” from reaching minors has drawn strong international criticism and calls for boycott of the Sochi Games from gay activists and others.

In a meeting with Dutch Prime

Minister Mark Rutte on Friday ahead of the opening ceremony of the 2014 Games, Putin said the focus should now turn to the Olympics.

In a tweet from his official Twitter account, Rutte says he

“Expressed the concerns of the Dutch government and populace about human rights and specific rights of LGBTs (lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgenders) in Russia.”

Nyman earns final spot on US downhill squad

KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia — Austria and the United States completed their squads for the Olympic men’s downhill.

Steven Nyman earned the fourth and final U.S. spot, edging out Erik Fisher and Jared Goldberg with a solid training run Friday. He joins Travis Ganong, Marco Sullivan and Bode Miller.

The Austrians will go with Matthias Mayer, Max Franz, Georg Streitberger and Klaus Kroell for Sunday’s race. Mayer was the fastest through the tricky course during Friday’s training.

US coach Sasha Rearick said he used the second training session as a “one-run shootout,” with Nyman tied for 18th. Fisher and Goldberg wound up several spots behind.

Passenger tried to hijack plane to Sochi

ANKARA, Turkey — A passenger on board an Istanbul-bound flight Friday claimed there was a bomb on board and tried to hijack the plane to Sochi, Russia, where the Olympics are kicking off, an official said.

The plane from Kharkov, Ukraine, landed safely at Istanbul’s Sabiha Gokcen airport, but 110 passengers are still on board and authorities are trying to convince the alleged hijacker to give himself up. Habi Soluk, the country’s Transport Ministry undersecretary, told NTV television. The station reported the man had been subdued, but there was no immediate confirmation of that.

Soluk said the man rose from his seat, shouted that there was a bomb on board and tried to enter the locked cockpit. The pilot signaled that there was a hijack attempt and the airport was placed on high alert.

Pegasus Airlines confirmed in a brief statement that there was a “bomb threat” aboard their flight from Kharkov.

OLYMPICS

BOBSLED

American program best it's ever been

By TIM REYNOLDS
The Associated Press

When USA-1 crossed the finish line and claimed four-man gold at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, the American bobsled program looked as good as ever.

It might be better now.

Steven Holcomb is still in the front seat of perhaps two gold-medal contenders that will represent the U.S. at the Sochi Games. But he's hardly the only hope the Americans have on the Olympic stage. Co-starring this time is a women's team that has as good a chance at winning gold, along with some new two-man sleds built by BMW that are likely the fastest in the sport.

"We've had great results this year, so I'm pretty happy with the way it's performing," Holcomb said. "We're working hard to make sure that these sleds go as fast as they possibly can. We've been testing things left and right, week to week... it's all part of the process."

Holcomb and his team — Steve Langton, Curt Tomasevich and Chris Fogt — will be among the favorites for gold in the four-man race, the last of the Olympics.

By then, the Americans might already have a medal hanging out.

Women's bobsled might generate as much buzz for the Americans as anything else on the track in Sochi, and it's not just because of the star power generated by two-time Summer Olympic hurdler Lolo Jones and Olympic gold-medalist sprinter Lauryn Williams being selected to the squad as push athletes.

Drivers Jamie Greubel and Elana Meyers have been medal contenders on the World Cup circuit in just about every stop this season, and Meyers — a 2010 Olympic bronze medalist as a push athlete — will likely have a top pusher in Aja Evans in her sled.

Jones and Williams have proved their mettle with World Cup medals, and in Williams' case, that's doubly impressive considering she's been a bobsledder for less than six months.

Williams and Jones will become the ninth and 10th Americans to compete in both the summer and winter Olympics. Williams has a chance to be only the second to win gold in both.

And Holcomb should have a shot at a medal as well, given the technological advancement of the sleds BMW built for the Americans. The U.S. hasn't won two-man gold since 1936 and two-man gold since 1936 and didn't medal in that race since 1952.

Of course, Holcomb's no stranger to streak-busting. The U.S. didn't have a four-man bobsled gold in 62 years before Vancouver.

Here's five things to watch in Olympic bobsledding:

1 Uphill climb: The Sochi track is unusual because of the three uphill portions. Obviously, that's a deterrent to speed, but more importantly it also means that any



MATTHIAS SCHRADER/AP

Driver Steven Holcomb, front, relies on team Curtis Tomasevich, Steven Langton and Christopher Fogt to get the sled off to a quick start.

mistakes drivers make going into those climbs could prove devastating to medal chances. A little bit of lost speed could turn into a big problem in a hurry.

2 All nations: Any number of nations could medal in bobsledding this year, showing that there might be more elite-level sliders than ever. The Americans, Germans, Canadians, Latvians, Russians and Swiss are among those firmly in medal chances, and all would be downright disappointed if they didn't get to make at least one trip to the podium.

3 Kiriassis finale? At 39, this will likely be the final Olympics for German star Sandra Kiriassis, still widely considered the top women's pilot of all-time. She lacks the speed at the start that her younger, more athletic challengers have, but she more than makes up for it in driving skill.

4 They're back: For the first time since 2002, Jamaica is sending a bobsled to the Olympics. Pilot Winston Watts will be at the controls of the two-man sled, the Jamaicans' only in Sochi. It's the fourth Olympics for Watts (who previously went by Watt), and he'll turn 47 a day after the Opening Ceremony.

5 O... Russia!? Pierre Lueders is at home for his second straight Olympics. He raced for Canada at the 2010 Vancouver Games, his fifth straight time representing his country. This year, he's coaching the Russians. It's not uncommon for people from one country to coach another nation's team, but Lueders was the face of Canadian bobsledding for about two decades.

Athletes make their push for medals, not glamour

By TIM REYNOLDS
The Associated Press

The pay is awful, the workplace is freezing, making a mistake is about the only way to get noticed and trips down the mountain are always accompanied by some big-time turbulence.

Such is life as a bobsled push athlete.

Glamour-seekers need not apply. They are the offensive linemen of bobsledding, anonymous yet essential. Drivers get all the credit, but on race day it's often the push athletes who make all the difference — and the corps of pushers who'll cram into the sleds that the U.S. has taken to the Sochi Olympics may be the world's best.

"I think it's the deepest group we've ever had," U.S. Bobsled and Skeleton Federation CEO Darrin Steele said.

Hoping to win medals in two-man, four-man and women's bobsledding in Sochi, the U.S. has spent tons of time and money on making their sleds as fast as possible for sliding's biggest races. But ultimately, winning and losing on the Olympic stage will largely hinge upon how effective the people who will be pushing those sleds are in their five-second explosive stints of work when the light turns green.

While keeping perfect time with the driver, the push athlete has to run at the same pace down an icy slope, find a way to get that sled going as fast as humanly possible before jumping inside, then remain low in an aerodynamic position for the rest of a trip that looks smooth on television but is actually quite bumpy.

"I love that extra emphasis of the Olympics because that's our biggest race," said U.S. veteran pusher Curt Tomasevich, who was part of the team

that won four-man gold at Vancouver in 2010 and is making Sochi his final Olympics. "That's what keeps you going. When it's every four years it's four times the commitment, and it means even more to an athlete when they get there."

In addition to the sessions they all spend in a gym in a constant quest to get stronger and faster, the push athletes typically also serve as sled crews. They help pack the crates to ship the sleds around the world. They spend hours several days a week sanding down the steel runners, by hand, buffing away even the tiniest imperfections. And they don't really get much of a say in anything; the driver, pretty much, is the boss.

"I didn't know what to expect," women's pusher Lauryn Williams said. "I didn't know how much was involved, or how much I was going to like it."

Williams, Lolo Jones and Aja Evans are the three women on the Olympic push roster, all of them competing in the Winter Games for the first time.

Tomasevich, Steve Langton and Chris Fogt will be with Steven Holcomb in USA-1 for the four-man race in Sochi. Tomasevich has won golds on both the Olympic and world-championship stages, Langton helped push Holcomb to two- and four-man world titles in 2012, and Fogt was with now-retired pilot John Napier for the Vancouver Games.

They crashed out of that race, and Fogt has been waiting for a second chance since.

"No one will ever ask, 'How did you race in Altenberg?' No one will ever ask, 'How did you race in Park City?' either," Fogt said. "It's always, 'How was your race at the Olympic Games? And for the past four years, I've had to say we didn't finish the race. That's been a lot of my motivation. I've worked my way up and those days when I don't want to train, not wanting to answer that question anymore has added fuel to my fire."

SPORTS



Wildcats barely bounce back

Coming off first loss, No. 2 Arizona edges Oregon | **College basketball, Page 28**

WINTER OLYMPICS

Bracket bullies

Dominance of US, Canada in women's hockey forces new tournament format

By JIMMY GOLEN
The Associated Press

SOCHI, Russia

For women's hockey, the game between the United States and Canada is the highlight of the Olympics and it usually comes with the gold medal at stake.

This year, the wait will be a little shorter.

Because of a change in the format designed to cut down on opening-round blowouts, the U.S. and Canada will meet in the preliminary round for the first time since the sport joined the Winter Games in 1998. The teams could ultimately play again in the gold medal game on Feb. 20, but they'll have a more difficult road to get there.

"It's going to be tough, but you don't want easy games to make it far," American defenseman Megan Bozek said. "It's the hard that makes it great."

Since women's hockey became an Olympic sport, it has been dominated by the North American rivalry that has played out in every world championship title game and all but one Olympic final. But the days or weeks leading up to the gold medal games

SEE BRACKET ON PAGE 29

Inside:

- US bobsledders riding high, Page 31
- Suits aid speedskaters, Page 30
- Opening ceremony, Page 29

The tournament

Group A					Group B				
	W	OTW	OTL	L		W	OTW	OTL	L
United States.....	0	0	0	0	Russia.....	0	0	0	0
Canada.....	0	0	0	0	Sweden.....	0	0	0	0
Finland.....	0	0	0	0	Germany.....	0	0	0	0
Switzerland.....	0	0	0	0	Japan.....	0	0	0	0

Teams receive 3 points for a regulation victory, 2 points for an overtime or shootout victory, 1 point for an overtime or shootout loss and no points for a regulation loss.

After the preliminary round robin, the bottom two teams in Group A will play the top two teams in Group B in the quarterfinals. The winners move on to play the top two teams in Group A in the semifinals.

SOURCE: The Associated Press

U.S. player Lyndsey Fry controls a puck during a practice session Friday in Sochi, Russia.

PETR DAVID JOSEK/AP

Portland's Lillard competing in three All-Star events

NBA, Page 27

Hall of Fame slugger Ralph Kiner dies at age 91

MLB, Page 25