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Free to Deployed Areas

QUEST FOR COPPER

Afghan mining threatens Buddhist relics

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An Afghan archaeologist cleans around Buddha statues inside a cave near Mes Aynak, Afghanistan, last month. The hills overlooking this ancient trade-route city, where the buried treasures of Afghanistan's Buddhist history hide beneath sandy soil, are so rich in copper that they gleam green in the morning sun.

RAHMAT GUL/AP

Family of US hostage is hopeful she's alive

Jordan calls Islamic State's claim 'criminal propaganda'

BY FELICIA FONSECA AND BRIAN SKOLOFF
The Associated Press

PRESCOTT, Ariz. — The parents of a 26-year-old American who Islamic State extremists say was killed in an airstrike in Syria said in a statement addressed to group leaders that the claim of their daughter's death concerned them but they were still hopeful she was alive.

The Islamic State group said on Friday that Kayla Jean Mueller of Prescott, Ariz., died in a Jordanian airstrike, but the government of Jordan dismissed the statement as "criminal propaganda," and the U.S. said it had not seen any evidence to corroborate the report.

Mueller is the only known remaining U.S. hostage held by the Islamic State group.

If the death is confirmed, she would be the fourth American to die while being held by Islamic State militants. Three others — journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff and aid worker Peter Kassig — were beheaded by the group.

"You told us that you treated Kayla as your guest, as your guest her safety and well-being remains your responsibility," Mueller's family said in a short statement released Friday.

The dad leading to her family's home in Prescott remained blocked off Saturday by Yavapai County Sheriff's vehicles. Sheriff's spokesman Dwight D'Evelyn said the FBI was with the family and deputies would have a presence there indefinitely. He did not know if anyone from the U.S. State Department had visited with them.

Mueller is an aid worker who previously volunteered with organizations in India, Israel and the Palestinian territories. Her identity had not been disclosed until now out of fears for her safety. Her family said she was taken hostage by the Islamic State group on Aug. 4, 2013, while leaving a hospital in Syria.

SEE HOSTAGE ON PAGE 4

Refugees see al-Qaida-linked militants as Syria's best option

BY SLOBODAN LEKIC
Stars and Stripes

ZATARI CAMP, Jordan — With the world's attention focused on the Islamic State, Syrian refugees say rival al-Qaida-affiliated rebels are gaining support inside Syria, even among moderate factions battling Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime.

And in some parts of Syria, including the so-called southern front just north of the Jordanian border, Jabhat al-Nusra — also known as the Nusra Front and listed by the State Department as a terrorist group — appears to be working so closely with American-backed groups that the two have become virtually indistinguishable operationally.

Such fusing between moderates and religious extremists could undermine the Obama administration's effort to expand training for moderate Syrian insurgents to fight the Islamic State group.

The U.S. military plans to send about 400 instructors to Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia to train a vetted force of 5,000 fighters to take on the Islamic State. Congressional critics have complained that weapons sent to "moderates" such as the U.S.-backed Free Syrian Army could end up in extremist hands — a possibility that appears more likely if those supposed pro-U.S. troops are working closely with al-Qaida-linked fighters.

SEE SYRIA ON PAGE 5



SLOBODAN LEKIC/Stars and Stripes

Hussein al Jalani, with his son and daughter, sits in his home in the Zaatari refugee camp in northern Jordan last month.

QUOTE
OF THE DAY

"It shocks the conscience of the community, of the nation. This was not a teaching moment. Not now. Not ever."

— Lt. Andy Binder of the Lincoln County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, on a mock kidnapping of a boy, 6, designed by his mother, aunt and grandmother

See story on Page 10

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MILITARY

Obama releases foreign policy goals

By CHRISTI PARSONS
AND W.J. HENNIGAN
Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Facing Republican charges that President Barack Obama has a muddled strategy to deal with global crises, the White House released a foreign policy blueprint Friday that it says shows a readiness to take on adversaries and to rally allies and partners to the fight.

The document, called the National Security Strategy, defends Obama's approach to the conflict in Ukraine and to fighting Islamic State militants in Syria and Iraq. It also argues that current crises shouldn't threaten long-term strategies to fight terrorism and climate change and to engage with the world, particularly Asia, from a strong leadership position.

The proposal is heavy on the idea of American leadership in a world of increasingly complex problems. It is Obama's second and final National Security Strategy, a document required annually by Congress but last updated in 2010 — before the Arab Spring uprisings, the civil war in Syria, the rise of Islamic State and the conflict in Ukraine.

"On all these fronts, America leads from a position of strength," Obama wrote in an introduction. "But this does not mean we can or should attempt to dictate the trajectory of all unfolding events around the world.

"We must recognize that a smart national security strategy does not rely solely on military power," he said. "The challenges we face require strategic patience and persistence."

The plan affirms the White House's current course in every world region. The U.S. will con-



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAS/AP

President Barack Obama steps off the Marine One helicopter during his arrival Friday on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington.

tinue to work to fight immediate threats, it says, while also fighting long-term problems such as disease, cyberthreats and extreme poverty. Climate change in particular is an "urgent and growing threat" to national security, the report says.

Some of Obama's advisers are suggesting that the U.S. should take a more aggressive approach in some hot spots. Last week, Ashton Carter, the president's nominee to lead the Pentagon, told lawmakers he might advise providing weapons to Ukraine as it battles Russia-backed separatists, something Obama has resisted but the White House has said is reconsidering.

The 29-page document emphasizes partnership with Congress, something Republican lawmakers argue has been lacking. The blueprint dovetails with a White House effort to win congressional authorization for the use of military force in the fight against Islamic State, the militant group that has seized large areas of Syria and Iraq.

For critics, the document does

little to shed light on Obama's plans and guiding principles.

"When you try to do everything at once like the administration has done here, you end up with a bunch of generalities," said Anthony Cordesman, a senior military analyst at the nonpartisan Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "You have a document that has no real guidance, no real priorities and no real substance."

The strategy fails to address shortcomings in U.S. foreign policy on such places as Syria, Afghanistan and Russia, said Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution.

"There was little new ground broken on policies where improvement is needed," he said. "But it would be slightly unfair to expect all of that out of a broad strategy document."

Republican lawmakers say the onus is on Obama to sell the American people on a new authorization for the use of military force, and on his foreign policy plan more broadly.

But the overdue report to Con-

gress reveals a "conflict between perception and reality," said Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"The president puts an emphasis on climate change as a means to address our national security, which is nothing new and not a strategy," Inhofe said. "It's his same old arguments but in new packaging. He knows that his domestic agenda does nothing to address global temperatures or sea levels while it instead will dramatically affect electricity reliability and affordability for all Americans."

National Security Adviser Susan Rice pushed back Friday against the suggestion that Obama's administration is aimless.

Without U.S. leadership in the last few years, she said, Ebola would be spreading, Russia would have gone unpunished for aggression in Ukraine, Iran would be under no pressure to engage in negotiations over its nuclear program and there would be no global coalition against Islamic State.

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WAR/MILITARY



MINING THREATENS ANCIENT AFGHAN SITE

The Associated Press

MES AYNAK, Afghanistan — Treasures from Afghanistan's largely forgotten Buddhist past are buried beneath sandy hills surrounding the ancient Silk Road town of Mes Aynak — along with enough copper to make the land glow green in the morning light.

An estimated 5.5 million tons of copper, one of the biggest deposits in the world, could provide a major export for a war-ravaged country desperately in need of jobs and cash. But the hoped-for bonanza also could endanger rare artifacts that survived the rule of the Taliban and offer a window into Afghanistan's rich pre-Islamic history.

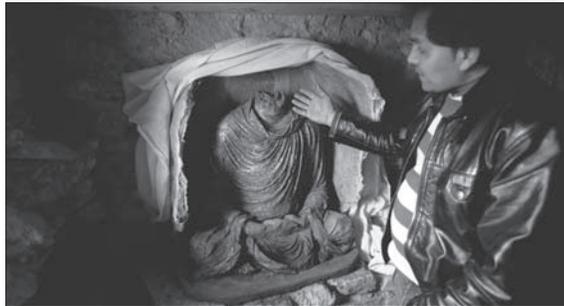
"The copper mine and its extraction are very important. But more important is our national culture," said Abdul Qadir Timor, director of archaeology at Afghanistan's Culture Ministry. "Copper is a temporary source of income. Afghanistan might benefit for five or six years after mining begins, and then the resource comes to an end."

The government is determined to develop Afghanistan's estimated \$3 trillion worth of minerals and petroleum, an untapped source of revenue that could transform the country. The withdrawal of U.S.-led combat forces at the end of 2014 and a parallel drop in foreign aid have left the government strapped for cash. It hopes to attract global firms to exploit oil, natural gas and minerals, ranging from gold and silver to the blue lapis lazuli for which the country has been known since ancient times.

Beijing's state-run China Metallurgical Group struck a \$3 billion deal in 2008 to develop a mining town at Mes Aynak with power generators, road and rail links, and smelting facilities. Workers built a residential compound, but were pulled out two years ago because of security concerns. Nazifullah Salazarai, a spokesman for President Ashraf Ghani, said the government is determined to finish that project.

Archaeologists are scrambling to uncover a trove of artifacts at the site dating back nearly 2,000 years that shed light on a Buddhist civilization that stretched across India and China, reaching all the way to Japan.

"The more we look, the more we find," archaeologist Aziz Wafa said as he scanned hill-tops pock-marked with bowl-shaped hollows where copper powder once was melted down and painted onto ceramics. Excavators have found silver platters, gold jewelry and a human skeleton as they have uncovered the contours of a long-lost town that once hosted elaborate homes, monasteries, workshops and smelters.



PHOTOS BY RAHMAT GUL/AP

Above: Abdul Qadir Timor, director of archaeology at the Ministry of Information and Culture, speaks about the history of the headless Buddha statue inside a cave in Mes Aynak, Afghanistan.

Top: Timor, left, views Afghanistan's Mes Aynak valley.

Behind Wafa is a cave in which three Buddhas are seated around a dome-shaped shrine known as a stupa. Two are headless; one was decapitated by looters who entered through a tunnel. The other head was removed by archaeologists and was placed in storage along with thousands of other items.

Movable objects, including sculptures, coins and ceramics, are stored at the National Museum in Kabul. Larger objects, including stupas measuring 26 feet across and statues of robed monks 23 feet tall remain at the sprawling site, which is closed off and protected by a special security force. The roads are lined with armed guards and the archaeologists have no telephone or Internet access.

Experts believe that proselytizing Buddhist monks from India settled here in the 2nd century A.D. Like today's miners, they were enticed by the copper, which they fashioned into jewelry and other products to trade on the Silk Road linking China to Europe.

The site was discovered in 1942 and first was explored in 1963, but the excavations ground to a halt for two decades during the Soviet invasion, the civil war and the brutal rule of the Taliban in the late 1990s. Osama bin Laden ran a training camp at Mes Aynak in the years leading up to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and the subsequent U.S.-led invasion.

Until the giant Buddhas of Bamiyan were dynamited by the Taliban in 2001, few knew that Afghanistan was once a wealthy, powerful Buddhist empire. It still does not feature on the local educational curriculum, which ignores the country's pre-Islamic past. But at Mes Aynak, the eroded remains of enormous feet testify to the colossal Buddhas that once towered over the valley.

Low world copper prices and a slowing Chinese economy have bought time for the archaeologists to uncover more artifacts, while the government seeks to find a way to unearth the copper without ruining relics.

The government has asked the U.N. cultural agency to survey mining sites and to draw up plans to protect and preserve cultural heritage, said Masanori Nagaoka, UNESCO's head of cultural affairs in Afghanistan.

The request is rooted in hope for better days, when tourists might replace the tense guards scanning the valley.

The archaeological value of the site "will outlast the life cycle of the Aynak mine," an anti-corruption group called Integrity Watch Afghanistan said in a report. "The relics found could be a perpetual tourist attraction and would provide a new symbol of the historical foundation of the region and people."

1st time in 13 years: Afghan conflict not on NATO agenda

The Associated Press

BRUSSELS — The war in Afghanistan is in NATO's rearview mirror.

For the first time in 13 years, the conflict was not on the meeting agenda as the alliance's defense ministers gathered in Brussels Thursday.

Instead, NATO members focused on the latest military conflicts facing the alliance — the threat of Islamic extremists flowing out of North Africa and the Russian-backed separatists battling Ukraine's government forces along the country's eastern border.

One reason the Afghan War was not included on the agenda, according to U.S. officials, was that the fledgling government in Kabul has yet to appoint a new defense minister. So there was no local minister to provide allies with an update.

Also missing from the NATO session was the top U.S. military commander in Afghanistan, Army Gen. John Campbell. As generals have rotated through the job, they have been a constant presence at these meetings. But his absence in Brussels was still another reminder of how much things have changed, and that the war has slid down NATO's priority pole.

The U.S. now has only slightly more than 10,500 troops in Afghanistan, down from more than 100,000 at the war's peak. And there are only few thousand troops from a handful of other coalition nations participating in Operation Resolute Support, which is aimed at advising and assisting the Afghan forces.

U.S. Air Force Gen. Philip Breedlove, the top NATO commander, told reporters the U.S. plan to reduce its forces in Afghanistan to less than 10,000 is very close to completion. He said that allied troops, who were delayed in their arrival in Afghanistan, are now almost all in.

"The U.S. and the NATO combat mission in Afghanistan is largely over, the war there has not stopped."

"We should not expect that we would not have soldiers in harm's way and even soldiers that may be captured or lost," he said. "We have a non-combat mission in a combat zone and the war goes on."

Also, there are U.S. troops, including special operations forces, who continue to conduct counterterrorism operations there.

Looking ahead to the coming summer fighting season, Breedlove said the insurgents will "try to prove that the Afghans are not capable" as NATO forces leave.

He said U.S. commanders are concerned that as the NATO troops come out, there will be areas where the insurgents will have more freedom to move around and conduct attacks, and the Afghans will have to be ready to counter that. So far, Breedlove said, the insurgents have not been able to gain and hold new ground.

WAR ON TERRORISM

Iraq PM: Steps must precede move on Mosul

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

MUNICH, Germany — Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi on Saturday laid out a series of steps that must be taken ahead of launching an offensive to retake Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, which was seized by Islamic State fighters last summer with little opposition.

During a question-and-answer session at the annual Munich Security Conference, al-Abadi declined to state when such a campaign might start, though U.S. Central Command chief Gen. Lloyd Austin told the Wall Street Journal last month that an offensive could start by spring or early summer.

Al-Abadi said there are four key

conditions that must be met: Iraqi security forces must be ready, and that requires delivery of more heavy arms, munitions and training; coordination between Iraqi and Kurdish peshmerga forces must be increased; support must be gained from the people of Mosul, a Sunni-dominated city long suspicious of the Shiite-led government in Baghdad; and there must be air and reconnaissance support from the U.S.-led coalition that has been bombing Islamic State positions in Iraq and Syria for months in support of Iraqi and Kurdish forces.

Al-Abadi said there were signs of growing support in Mosul, that "hearts and minds" were being won over. He estimated that a few thousand fighters in the city were

poised. "The people of Mosul must be with us," he said.

If all those conditions are met, an offensive could be launched in short order, al-Abadi said, though he suggested it could be three to four months.

Last year, Iraq and the international community were taken by surprise when Islamic State fighters, who had gained strength and territory in neighboring Syria, stormed across the border to take control of large swaths of the country. When Islamic State fighters arrived in Mosul, Iraqi forces fled and city residents welcomed the militants.

Al-Abadi said his government has taken strides to try to bring about reconciliation between Sunnis and Shiites. He pointed to

the recent addition of 4,000 Sunni fighters in Anbar province who have taken up the fight against the Sunni Islamic State as a sign of Iraq coming together.

"That is a huge departure from what has been the case before," he said, al-Abadi has been under pressure to reconcile Iraq's Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish populations. His predecessor, Nouri al-Maliki, was accused of favoring Shiite allies and alienating Iraq's Sunni population, which some analysts say contributed to the Islamic State fighters' swift advance in Iraq, as many Sunni areas welcomed them.

In the Journal interview, Austin said planning for an offensive is under way.

"If we did things alone or with

some of the other allies on the ground, it could move faster," Austin told the paper. "But the Iraqis have to do this themselves."

Austin told the Journal that he has not yet determined whether to recommend that U.S. ground troops accompany local units pushing into Mosul, but he said the military would "do what it takes."

While in Munich, al-Abadi said he has received new pledges of support, including what could be interpreted as a promise from Germany of arms, trainers, and high-tech equipment to track down foreign fighters.

"I would quite simply say we must not lose this war," al-Abadi said. "It is threatening the whole world at the moment."

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Hostage: Jordanian official calls militants' claim 'illogical'

FROM FRONT PAGE

"The common thread of Kayla's life has been her quiet leadership and strong desire to serve others," Mueller's family said.

Jordan has been launching airstrikes against the extremist group in response to a video released this week that shows captive Jordanian pilot Lt. Muath al-Kaseasbeh being burned to death in a cage.

Al-Kaseasbeh, whose F-16 came down in December while conducting airstrikes as part of a campaign against the militants by a U.S.-led coalition, was believed to have been killed in early January.

The Islamic State group said in a statement that Mueller was killed in the militants' stronghold of Raqqa in northern Syria during midday prayers in airstrikes that targeted "the same location for more than an hour."

It published photos purportedly of the bombed site, showing a severely damaged three-story building, but offered no proof or images of Mueller.

The statement said no Islamic State militants were killed in the airstrikes, raising further questions about the veracity of the claim.

Jordanian government spokesman Mohammed al-Momani said it was investigating.

"But as a first reaction, we

think it's illogical and we are highly skeptical about it. How could they identify a Jordanian warplane ... in the sky? What was the American lady doing in a weapons warehouse?" al-Momani said.

"It's part of their criminal propaganda. They have lied that our pilot is alive and tried to negotiate, claiming he is alive while they had killed him weeks before," he added.

American officials said they also were looking into the report. Bernadette Meehan, spokeswoman for President Barack Obama's National Security Council, said the White House has "not at this time seen any evidence that corroborates" the claim.

"We are obviously deeply concerned by these reports," she added.

A U.S. official said coalition aircraft did conduct bombing near Raqqa on Friday, but he had nothing to confirm the claim that the American captive was killed in the airstrike. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss the issue with reporters.

Mueller had been working in Turkey assisting Syrian refugees, according to a 2013 article in The Daily Courier, her hometown newspaper. She told the paper that she was drawn to help with the situation in Syria.

"For as long as I live, I will not let this suffering be normal," she said. "It's important to stop and realize what we have, why we have it and how privileged we are. And get that place, start caring and find a lot done."



KARIM KADIM/AP

Baghdad municipal workers help clean the site of a suicide bombing that targeted a street filled with hardware stores, killing more than 20 people and wounding at least 45, in the Iraqi capital's southeastern neighborhood of New Baghdad on Saturday.

Bombs kill at least 40 in Baghdad

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Ahead of Baghdad ending a decade-old nightly curfew, bombs exploded across the Iraqi capital Saturday, killing at least 40 people in a stark warning of the dangers still ahead in this country torn by the Islamic State group.

The deadliest bombing happened in the capital's New Baghdad neighborhood, where a suicide bomber detonated his explosives in a street filled with hardware stores and a restaurant, killing 22 people, police said.

"The restaurant was full of young people, children and women when the suicide bomber

blew himself up," witness Mohamed Saed said. "Many got killed."

The Islamic State group later claimed the attack, saying their bomber targeted Shiites, according to the SITE Intelligence Group, a U.S.-based terrorism monitor. The militants now hold a third of both Iraq and neighboring Syria in their self-declared caliphate.

A second attack happened in central Baghdad's popular Shorja market, where two bombs some 25 meters (yards) apart exploded, killing at least 11 people, police said. Another bombing at the Abu Cheer outdoor market in southwestern Baghdad killed at least

four people, police said.

In Tarmiya, a Sunni town 30 miles (50 kilometers) north of Baghdad, a bomb blast killed at least three soldiers in a passing convoy, authorities said.

Hospital officials confirmed the casualty figures. All officials spoke on condition of anonymity as they weren't authorized to brief journalists. No group claimed the other attacks.

The bombings came as Iraq prepared to lift its nightly midnight-to-5 a.m. curfew on Sunday. The curfew largely has been in place since 2004, in response to the growing sectarian violence that engulfed Iraq after the U.S.-led invasion a year earlier.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Syria: Nusra Front gains support with refugees

FROM FRONT PAGE

Even if the U.S.-led campaign of airstrikes and training manages to help degrade the Islamic State, it could also lead to the ouster of Assad and his replacement with a leadership that includes members or supporters of an al-Qaida-linked group.

"The FSA and the al-Nusra are the same people," said Amwar Nofal, a preacher in one of many makeshift mosques in this sprawling refugee camp 70 miles northeast of the Jordanian capital of Amman. "They are our own sons and neighbors, we know them well."

During numerous interviews at this camp, just five miles south of the border with Syria, refugees spoke of the close cooperation between U.S.-backed moderates and the Nusra Front. Several refugees said that individual fighters and even entire units routinely switch back and forth between the al-Qaida-affiliated group and the moderate FSA.

Analysts say that much of Nusra's appeal stems from its humanitarian work and good governance in areas under its control.

"Nusra Front adherents are observant Muslims, but much less extreme than the Islamic State," said Mohammad Abu-Ruman, a Jordanian expert on militant groups. "Many Jordanian volunteers, as well as those who have joined Nusra Front, are less extreme ideologically appeals to young Jordanians."

Both organizations share the same roots. The Islamic State's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who assumed command of the organization in the final two years of the U.S. occupation of Iraq, helped found the formation of the Nusra Front by sending cadres to Syria when the revolt against Assad began in 2011.

The Nusra Front's leadership decided to break with the Islamic State when al-Baghdadi insisted in 2013 that the "brothers in jihad" merge under his leadership.

Although both organizations want to replace Assad's regime with a Sunni Islamic state, Nusra has focused on building up local networks and gaining grass-roots support among local populations. In contrast, the Islamic State has preferred to rule the areas it has conquered through fear and brutal coercion of the inhabitants, according to analysts.

Jordan, which borders Syria and Iraq, is home to 1.5 million Syrian refugees and about 450,000 Iraqis. Almost all of the Syr-

ians at Zaatari are members of the Sunni Muslim majority and are vehemently opposed to Assad's secular government, comprising mainly the Shiite Alawite sect. Although Nusra fighters may be cooperating with the more moderate anti-Assad rebels in the south and elsewhere, there have also been clashes between the two in the north.

Last October, Nusra fighters routed U.S.-backed militias in the northwestern province of Idlib near the Turkish border, and reportedly seized large quantities of U.S. and other Western-supplied weapons and ammunition.

Rivalry in the north, however, doesn't appear to have affected cooperation in the south. The two groups have worked together to prevent the Islamic State from making inroads into south, including the main southern border town of Daraa, where the Syrian revolt began.

"The people of Daraa will not allow Daesh to come to our area," said Hussein al-Jalam, a merchant from Daraa, who referred to Islamic State by its Arabic acronym. "Nobody in this camp supports Daesh; it is a despicable group."

Mohammad Radwan
Daraa refugee

But Jalam, who with his wife and two small children, lives in one of the ubiquitous prefabricated metal containers that house many of Zaatari's inhabitants, also condemned the U.S.-led coalition airstrikes against Islamic State militias in Iraq and northern Syria, saying they were also hitting Nusra positions and killing innocent civilians.

In addition to hitting Islamic State forces, U.S. airstrikes in Syria have targeted the so-called Khorasan group, which Washington describes as an al-Qaida cell planning attacks against the West. But Syria's moderate rebels have criticized the strikes, saying they actually hit Nusra troops fighting alongside them against government forces in the northern province of Aleppo.

The Khorasan group comprises a team of seasoned al-Qaida veterans, including



SLOBODAN LEXIC/Stars and Stripes

The entrance to the Zaatari refugee camp in northern Jordan, which houses Syrians displaced by the civil war in that nation. Al-Qaida-affiliated rebels such as Nusra Front are gaining support among the refugees.

bomb-makers, planners, facilitators, and money men, seeking to recruit foreign volunteers fighting the Assad regime for operations against the West, said Ed Blanche, a Beirut-based analyst and member of London's International Institute for Strategic Studies. While the group operates under Nusra's auspices, it is not part of the militia, he added.

"The Khorasan group is with Jabhat Nusra, but not of it," Blanche said. But that distinction appeared lost on the refugees at Zaatari, who unanimously condemned the U.S. bombing of the Khorasan group.

"Al-Nusra is certainly much better than Daesh," said Lina Farwan, a high school teacher of sociology who fled Daraa last year with her husband and two small children. "The U.S. bombing is not helping reduce Daesh's influence in Syria, (but) God willing Nusra will prevail."

Jordanian analysts have warned that the widespread support for Nusra in the refugee camps may not be representative of public opinion in Syria as a whole. Almost all of those housed in the camps are Sunnis from the Daraa area, which has close tribal ties with clans just across the border in Jordan.

"The Nusra Front has managed to find a base in Daraa because it is part of the social fabric there. Many of its followers are from Daraa, not outsiders like in the case of Daesh," said Abu-Ruman, the Jordanian analyst.

Nusra was nurtured by the undeclared support from Jordan and Saudi Arabia for a while," Abu-Ruman said. "Most of the arms going to the Free Syrian Army ended up with Nusra."

While Nusra militants have been successful against Islamic State forces in the south, they have fared much worse in other parts of Syria. Its forces were beaten last year in fighting around the provincial capital of Deir ez-Zour, where the Islamic State is now in control.

Sitting under a plastic tent blow away on the side by desert winds and snow earlier this month, Daraa refugee Mohammad Radwan, 39, said he yearns to go back home to a post-Assad Syria.

"I envision a free Syria under Nusra's rule," he sighed. "It is the best option for the future."

Jamal Halaby in Amman contributed to this report.
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UAE sends F-16s to Jordan to fight Islamic State

By KARIN LAUB
The Associated Press

AMMAN, Jordan — The United Arab Emirates said Saturday it ordered a squadron of F-16 fighters to Jordan, which an official said would participate in airstrikes on the Islamic State group if the UAE earlier suspended its involvement.

The UAE fighter jets will participate in airstrikes on Islamic State targets, said a Jordanian official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak about the issue to journalists.

The UAE announcement, carried by the state news agency WAM, did not say what role the

Emirati warplanes would play. An Emirati official declined to elaborate.

Both countries are members of a U.S.-led military coalition against the militants.

Late last year, the UAE suspended its airstrikes after a Jordanian pilot crashed over northern Syria and was captured by the militants, U.S. officials have said. The UAE, which hosts air bases used by American and coalition partners, has not commented on suspending its strikes.

The militants recently released a video showing them burning the Jordanian pilot, Lt. Muattib al-Kassabeh, to death while he was trapped in a cage. The images angered Jordan and the region.

Jordan has pledged harsh retaliation and said it would intensify strikes on Islamic State group targets. Starting Thursday, Jordanian jets have carried out daily attacks, according to the military and state media.

Jordan's interior minister, Hussein al-Majali, told the state-run al-Rai newspaper in comments published Saturday that Jordan will go after the militants "wherever they are."

The most recent airstrikes are "the beginning of a continued process to eliminate them and wipe them out completely," he said of the militants who control about a third of neighboring Syria and Iraq.

The heightened confrontation

has raised concerns about possible Islamic State group attacks in Jordan.

The minister said security services have a tight grip and are ready for "anyone who wants

to interfere in the security of Jordan."

He urged Jordan to report suspicious behavior, particular in neighborhoods with large numbers of non-Jordanians.

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MILITARY

Family seeks answers in veteran's death

Former Marine killed her 3 children, and then herself

BY BRAD SCHRADE

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

ATLANTA — One aunt gets tearful as she ponders the devastating loss of Kisha Holmes and her children. Another expresses frustration at the VA's response both before and after the deaths of Holmes, a veteran with mental health problems, and her kids. And another wonders how the family will manage funerals for so many at once.

In the week since the Holmes family's tragic end in a Georgia apartment, people have struggled to understand why the 35-year-old former Marine would kill her three children and then herself. The authorities — from investigators to officials at the Department of Veterans Affairs — have offered few clues.

Holmes' three aunts, in town from New York and North Carolina, have faced a similar dearth of information as they've struggled to understand how Holmes, who moved to Atlanta more than four years ago with dreams of becoming a state trooper, drifted into depression and then tragedy.

"I just wish they could have caught this," said Gloria Williams, a paternal aunt from the New York borough of Brooklyn. "They (the VA) were aware of what she was going through. I think it could have been prevented. That's the sad thing about all this. As if this could have been prevented. She could have been here and those children could have been here. That is what really disturbs me deeply."

The family questions if the VA and its mental health officials did enough to help Holmes, a combat veteran who had recently become pregnant and was struggling with suicidal thoughts and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Holmes, her two sons — Justin, 10, and Kai, 4 — and her 9-month-old daughter, Faith, were discovered Jan. 27 by an apartment maintenance worker in Austell, west of Atlanta. Holmes had just completed a program for homeless veterans a year ago, and had been trying to get back on her feet through a housing voucher program for veterans that helped pay for her apartment. But she had missed a pair of mental health appointments in December and the VA had identified her as a high risk for suicide.

"If they knew something was wrong, why didn't they do something about it?" said Joanne Lumpkin, a paternal aunt in



COURTESY OF FAMILY/John Spink, Atlanta Journal-Constitution

The family of Kisha S. Holmes, center, is left with questions, but few answers, in the death of the Marine veteran, who killed her children and took her own life in her Austell, Ga., apartment in January.

They (the VA) were aware of what she was going through. I think it could have been prevented. That's the sad thing about all this. Is that this could have been prevented. ♪

Gloria Williams
paternal aunt

from North Carolina. "If she had missed two appointments. Why didn't they come looking for her? They knew she had three kids."

A more immediate and pressing concern for the family is how they will cover the funeral arrangements for Holmes and two of her children. Her oldest was buried Monday at a service in Virginia handled by his father. The other two children have different fathers.

As of Wednesday, the VA had not contacted the family, the aunts said, so they reached out to the agency themselves. The family met in the afternoon with Atlanta VA officials, but there was no resolution to their request for help with the funerals.

The aunts thought the VA would cover the costs but they are not so sure now, according to Stella Holmes-Hughes, a maternal aunt from Brooklyn.

The aunts played a crucial role in Holmes' life growing up. Holmes' parents were never married and Holmes was put in foster care at age 6 after her mother, who has mental health issues, was unable to care for her. At different periods in her life, she lived with her aunts.

She graduated from Catholic school in Brooklyn and went into the Marines at age 18. She was a proud Marine and saw combat before being discharged in 2003 after about four or five years of service.

A year or two after leaving the mili-

tary, she moved to Norfolk, Va., and got married.

The aunts recall the joy she felt when her oldest son, Justin, was born and how important being a mother was to her identity. She celebrated each of Justin's developmental milestones, they said.

Her marriage became troubled during the pregnancy with Justin, they said, and it eventually ended.

Holmes moved to Georgia more than four years ago with hopes of becoming a state trooper.

She was pregnant with her second child, Kai, as she made the move. After Kai was born, she started to drift from the family, her aunts recall, and her phone calls became less frequent. As the new year arrived, they planned to reconnect with her; one aunt hoped to persuade her to return to New York.

"I made a vow; I said, 'This year, I'm going to find Kisha. I have to find Kisha,'" said Williams, who had made it one of her New Year's resolutions. "And this is what came up. I didn't think it was going to be this."

Contractor again tries to get Abu Ghraib lawsuit tossed

BY MATTHEW BARAKAT

The Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — A defense contractor that supplied interrogators at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq argued Friday that it can't be sued for abuses that occurred there because its employees were working in tandem with military personnel whose judgment about conducting wartime operations shouldn't be questioned by a federal judge.

Four former inmates at Abu Ghraib sued a subsidiary of Arlington-based CACI International Inc. back in 2008, saying

CACI employees conspired to torture them to soften them up for interrogations.

CACI has been seeking to have the case dismissed ever since, and the lawsuit has bounced around among trial judges and appellate courts on a variety of legal issues.

Friday's hearing centered on the "political questions doctrine," which says judges should not preside over intractable policy issues that are questions of politics, rather than questions of law.

CACI's lawyer argued Friday that the company can invoke that

defense on behalf of its civilian contractors because they were working under the direct supervision of the military.

Lawyer John O'Connor said bringing the case to trial would "require the court to second guess sensitive military judgments."

Baher Azmy of the Center for Constitutional Rights, representing the four Iraqi men, said the evidence shows that CACI interrogators filled a vacuum in military leadership and took it upon themselves to order military police to torture detainees in advance of interrogations. He cited

depositions given by military police who were court-martialed in the Abu Ghraib scandal, stating that CACI interrogators gave them specific instructions on how to soften up detainees.

"We're not questioning military judgments. We're seeking to enforce them," Azmy said, saying that the torture suffered by the four detainees is in clear violation of Army policy. The men allege that they were beaten, shocked, stripped naked and sexually assaulted, and suffered other forms of torture.

U.S. District Judge Gerald

Bruce Lee, who heard Friday's arguments, said he will issue a written ruling at a later date.

Lee had previously rejected CACI's efforts to get the case tossed out under the political question doctrine. But in 2013 he dismissed the case on other grounds, saying there is no evidence in the case that any of the plaintiffs suffered injuries that could be directly attributed to any CACI personnel.

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond revived the lawsuit last year, and directed Lee to re-evaluate the political question issue.

NATION



NAM Y. HUN/AP

Children line the exterior of KinderCare Learning Center on Thursday in Palatine, Ill., where five infants infected with measles were enrolled.

Chicago-area measles cases put spotlight on day care centers

By LINDSEY TANNER
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Measles infections in five babies at a suburban Chicago day care center reveal a potential weak link in public-health efforts to contain the disease, officials said Friday, explaining that infants who are too young to be vaccinated and in close quarters are among the most vulnerable to the virus.

"They're sort of like the canary in the mine," said Dr. Tina Tan, an infectious disease specialist at Chicago's Lurie Children's Hospital.

State regulations in Illinois and elsewhere generally require vaccinations for older children in day care centers, but measles shots are not recommended for children younger than 1. And like most states, Illinois does not require vaccinations for day care

center staffers.

"Unfortunately, there is no requirement. But this is on our radar," said Melaney Arnold, spokeswoman for the Illinois Department of Public Health.

The cases are among more than 100 nationwide this year, most of them linked with a Disneyland outbreak. Ten other young children at the suburban center were exposed and are being monitored for symptoms.

This year's cases also include an infant at a Santa Monica, Calif., day care center that closed temporarily last week. Fourteen infants from that center have been quarantined at home for three weeks.

Dr. Julie Morita, acting commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health, said this year's outbreaks highlight the major reasons for immunizations against a rare disease. The shots

are not just for self-protection. They also provide what experts call "herd immunity" — protection for those too young or too sick to be vaccinated, including infants in day care.

"We have always felt like this was a vulnerable population ... in a potentially risky setting because there are a lot of kids who are together," Morita said.

Measles can cause a cough, a runny nose and a rash. Infants are vulnerable to rare but dangerous complications that include pneumonia, deafness, permanent brain damage and death.

Illinois authorities were seeking the source of the day care outbreak but said there was no evidence it's linked with the Disneyland cases. Possible sources include unvaccinated older children or adults who recently traveled overseas.

6 from Bosnia accused of giving aid to terrorists

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Six Bosnian immigrants have been accused of sending money and military equipment to terrorist fighters overseas, including the Islamic State group and al-Qaida in Iraq.

An indictment unsealed Friday in U.S. District Court in St. Louis said the defendants donated money themselves and in some cases collected funds from others in the U.S. and sent the donations overseas. It says two of the defendants used some of the money to buy U.S. military uniforms, firearms accessories, tactical gear and other equipment, which was shipped to people in Turkey and Saudi Arabia who forwarded the supplies to terrorists.

The supplies and money eventually made their way to fighters in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere, according to the indictment. Money also was sent to support family members of terrorist fighters, the indictment says.

The indictment alleges the conspiracy began no later than May 2013 and that the defendants used email, phones and social media websites including Facebook to communicate using coded words, such as "brothers," "lions" and "Bosnian brothers."

All six people who are charged are natives of Bosnia who were living in the U.S. legally. Three are naturalized citizens; the other three had either refugee or legal resident status, according to U.S. attorney's office.

The indictment names Ramiz Zijad Hodzic, 40, his wife, Sedina Unkic Hodzic, 35, and Armin Harcevic, 37, all of St. Louis County; Nihad Rosic, 26 of Utica,

N.Y.; Mediha Medy Salkicevic, 34, of Schiller Park, Ill.; and Jasminka Ramic, 42 of Rockford, Ill.

All face charges of conspiring to provide material support and resources to terrorists and with providing material support to terrorists. Rosic and Ramiz Hodzic also are charged with conspiring to kill and maim people in a foreign country.

The indictment says that last July, Rosic tried to board a flight from New York to Syria to join the fight.

The U.S. attorney's office said five of the defendants have been arrested; the sixth is overseas, but the Justice Department declined to say exactly where.

Online court records do not list defense attorneys for any of the defendants. According to court records, the Hodzics had a first appearance before a U.S. magistrate judge in St. Louis on Friday and the court said it would appoint attorneys for them.

The property manager at the complex where the Hodzics live told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch that the couple had been living there for 1½ years with their three children. Larry Sorth, and his wife, Joyce, said they were surprised by the arrests and that the couple were friendly.

"She was very sweet, to tell you the truth," Joyce Sorth said of Sedina Hodzic.

In a news release announcing the charges, the U.S. attorney's office said the crimes of conspiring to provide material support and providing material support carry penalties ranging up to 15 years in prison. Conspiring to kill and maim people in a foreign country carries a penalty of up to life in prison.

Obama participates in long-requested meeting with Muslims

By MICHELLE BOORSTEIN
The Washington Post

President Barack Obama's schedule this month epitomizes the complicated relationship he has with his most supportive group of religious voters: Muslims.

On Thursday, the president took to the podium before an annual D.C. gathering of Christians — the National Prayer Breakfast — and reminded the audience that Christians shouldn't "get on their high horse" about the connection between the Islamic State and Islam. He noted the Crusades, the Inquisition and slavery — all undertaken "in the name of Christ." The day before, Obama hosted an event that Muslim-American leaders said was the first occasion in six years that a Muslim-only group has had a significant roundtable

with the president.

Yet in two weeks, the White House is scheduled to host a key summit about violent extremism that is likely to focus on Muslim militants, an ongoing framework that angers many Muslim-American leaders and is a thorn in their relationship with the president.

"A grave concern for many is that the government views us through a security lens and not through the broad role we play in American life and society," said Farhana Khera, executive director of the civil rights group Muslim Advocates. "We thought it was crucial to have a sit-down meeting with the president about our hopes and dreams before they are potentially bringing in Muslims [at the Feb. 18 summit] to talk about extremism and violence."

The hourlong meeting Wednesday after-

noon included about a dozen leaders from across the spectrum, including Khera, prominent African-American scholar Sherman Jackson, comedian Dean Obeidallah (who joked in a piece called "Muslims Infiltrate the White House! Me Included!" that he had pondered how to steal official plates and glasses) and Maya Berry of the Arab American Institute.

Several participants said the meeting stood out for its main topics — health care, racial profiling and employment — rather than extremism, which they said isn't something the typical Muslim, even Muslim leaders, can do much about. Many Muslim-Americans consider the link many make between their faith and extremism to be deeply prejudicial and want the president to speak more often about Muslims in other contexts.

"When you look at the number of terrorist incidents [in the United States] in the last 13 or 14 years, the vast majority have been perpetrated not by Muslims but by eco-terrorists and right-wing types. Our concern is with government programs seeking to address extremism that focus on American Muslims and that kind of skew the public's mind and also skew how government resources are spent when there is a great diversity of threat facing our country," said Khera.

"The Paris attacks and Boston Marathon attacks underscore that we need law enforcement focusing where they have legitimate leads and known suspects," Khera said. "Like every other community, we care about the safety of our communities, and if we learn about a criminal act, we should report it to law enforcement."

NATION

NBC launches probe of anchor's Iraq claims

By DAVID BAUDER
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — NBC News has assigned the head of its investigative unit to look into statements anchor Brian Williams made about his reporting in Iraq a dozen years ago, an episode that ballooned into a full-blown credibility crisis for the network.

NBC News President Deborah Turness announced the probe in an internal memo on Friday. Williams has apologized for falsely saying on the air that he was in a helicopter hit by a rocket-propelled grenade in Iraq in 2003, and Turness said Friday he expressed his regrets to his colleagues for the impact the episode has had.

"As you would expect, we have

a team dedicated to gathering the facts to help us make sense of all that has transpired," Turness wrote. "We're working on what the best next steps are."

Richard Esposito, who has worked at the Daily News, Newsday and ABC and is now at NBC, is leading the investigation.

An NBC investigative reporter called Stars and Stripes reporter

Travis Tritton on Friday. Tritton was first to report that there were questions about Williams' account of what happened in 2003.

Williams, who has been widely chastised, anchored "Nightly News" from New York on Friday, making no mention of the criticisms of his work.

Questions also were raised about statements Williams made

on coverage of Hurricane Katrina, which was one of his proudest moments at NBC. In a 2006 interview, Williams twice referenced seeing a body float down a street in the French Quarter in New Orleans.

The remarks drew suspicion because during Katrina, there was relatively little flooding in New Orleans' French Quarter.

Insurer says hackers tried to breach system in December

By BRANDON BAILEY
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The hackers who stole millions of health insurance records from Anthem Inc. commanded the credentials of five different employees while seeking to penetrate the company's computer network — and they may have been inside the system since December.

Anthem said this week that hackers stole names, Social Security numbers and other sensitive information for up to 80 million Anthem customers, in a breach that was first detected on Jan. 27. That's when an Anthem computer system administrator discovered outsiders were using his own security credentials to log into the company system and to steal data.

Investigators now believe the hackers somehow compromised the credentials of five different tech workers, possibly through a kind of "phishing" scheme that could have tricked a worker into unknowingly revealing a password or downloading malicious software.

The company also confirmed Friday that it found that unauthorized data queries with similar hallmarks started as early as Dec. 10 and continued sporadically until Jan. 27. Attempts may also have been made earlier in 2014, said Kristin Binns, a spokeswoman for Indianapolis-based Anthem, the nation's second-largest

health insurer.

Those earlier attempts, including the one on Dec. 10, were deflected by the company's network security defenses, Binns said. Like most companies, Anthem routinely deflects a variety of attempts to make unauthorized access to its systems, she added.

The hackers succeeded in penetrating the system and stealing customer data sometime after Dec. 10 and before Jan. 27, Binns said. She declined to be more specific, saying the matter is still under investigation. Binns was confirming details of an Anthem corporate email that was first made public by an industry blog, CSO Online.

Experts say it's not unusual for sophisticated hacking groups to make repeated attempts to penetrate a computer system before they succeed.

"They may try to compromise them every single day, until the company makes a mistake or one individual makes a mistake," said Jaime Blasco, lab director at AlienVault, a Silicon Valley cybersecurity firm that has investigated other hacking attempts but is not involved in the Anthem case.

Anthem's security consultants have said the breach resulted from a "sophisticated" attack by hackers using techniques usually associated with organized financial crime rings or groups working for the government of some country. Blasco said that appears likely.

Obama: Scaling back college savings benefits wasn't worth it

By NEDRA PICKLER
The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — President Barack Obama said Friday that he dropped a widely criticized plan to scale back tax benefits for college savings accounts because the savings weren't worth it.

Obama, who revealed that he uses the 529 savings accounts for his own daughters, said he looked at reducing the tax savings because the accounts tend to be used by "folks who were a little more on the high end." He said other taxpayers struggled to save enough to participate.

About 12 million families take advantage of college savings plans, in which money can eventually be withdrawn with no tax on earnings to pay for postsecondary education costs. About half the accounts were held by families making more than \$150,000, according to a 2012 report by the Government Accountability Office.

The administration initially estimated that scaling back the tax breaks would

bring in about \$1 billion over 10 years. Obama had planned to use the savings to help fund his proposal to make two years of community college free for all. "Our thinking was you could save money by eliminating the 529 and shifting it into some other loan programs that would be more broadly based," Obama told a crowd of nearly 400 at a town hall meeting at Ivy Tech Community College.

But he quickly backed off after lawmakers from both parties objected.

"It wasn't worth it for us to eliminate it," Obama said. "The savings weren't that great. So we actually, based on response, changed our mind and are going to be paying for the two years of free community college with other sources."

Obama's remarks were his first on the matter since the White House announced the shift last week, saying the issue had become a distraction. The president's comment came in response to a question from a woman who said she uses the accounts to help her grandchildren.



PROVIDED BY ST. JOSEPH'S WOMEN'S HOSPITAL/APF

Parents Maxxandra Ford, left, and Allen Denton hold Avery Denton, who weighed 14.1 pounds at birth, at St. Joseph's Women's Hospital in Tampa on Jan. 29.

Fla. mom delivers 14-pound baby after surprise pregnancy

The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — A Florida woman who delivered a 14.1-pound baby says she didn't know she was pregnant until her third trimester.

Officials at St. Joseph's Women's Hospital in Tampa say Maxxandra Ford delivered her son, Avery, on Jan. 29. The say the infant is the heaviest born at the hospital, and one of the largest-ever born in the state.

Ford tells television stations WFLA and

WFTS that after rapidly gaining weight last fall, doctors confirmed she was 35 weeks into her pregnancy. Ford said she initially thought she was having twins.

After 18 hours of labor, Ford naturally delivered Avery, who remains in neonatal intensive care but is expected to go home soon.

Ford, who also has a 1-year-old son and 5-year-old daughter, says she "just melted" when she finally held Avery.

NATION



PHOTO COURTESY OF JEFFERSON COUNTY DEPT. OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT/AP

As much as 7 inches of rain have fallen over 24 hours on the east side of the Olympics where the Duckabush River is flooding the town of Brinnon, Wash., the National Weather Service said.

Calif. storm disrupts travel

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A windy storm sweeping down the West Coast knocked down trees, ripped through freeway and street signs, delayed hundreds of flights and knocked out power for thousands of people in California and Nevada.

Up to 10 inches of rain was expected over the weekend in parts of the drought-stricken region, but the rainfall won't make a significant dent in California's historic drought.

Still, the storm is a welcome change after six dry weeks in the Bay Area. For the first time in recorded history, there was no measurable rainfall in downtown San Francisco in January, when winter rains usually come.

It would take 150 percent of the average rainfall for California to recover from the dry period, state water resource officials say. But snow is more important than rain because snowpack supplies about a third of the water needed by residents, agriculture and

industry.

About 26 miles west of Seattle, an overflowing river inundated at least a half dozen homes on the Olympic Peninsula. Rescuers went door to door in Brinnon to check homes on a road partially blocked by a mudslide, Jefferson County Emergency Management spokeswoman Keppie Keplinger said.

Three people were rescued from a flooded pickup truck Friday morning, but none was injured, she said.

In the Sierra Nevada spanning California and Nevada, strong winds blinded drivers, causing multiple car crashes. The wind snapped massive trees, closed ski resorts around Lake Tahoe and knocked out power to thousands.

A 134 mph gust recorded early Friday near the Mount Rose Ski Resort southeast of Reno led the facility and two others to close.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, power lines were snapped by falling trees and the wind ripped through freeway and street signs. More than 60,000 people lost

power.

San Francisco International Airport saw delays of up to 90 minutes and about 175 flights canceled Friday.

The storm is expected to drop rain through Sunday, and the National Weather Service issued a heavy-rain, high wind-gust and flash-flood warning for the region through Monday.

Rain has been nearly nonexistent across much of California and Nevada since Dec. 20, halting hopes for the drought to improve. California's second snow survey this winter found the Sierra Nevada snowpack is far below normal after a dry, unusually warm January. A greater snowpack translates to more water for California reservoirs to meet demand in summer and fall.

Water resources managers said heavy rain and cooler temperatures in the next three months would be required for the snowpack to build and give Californians hope for beginning to recover from the drought this year.

Report: Fewer drivers drinking, more using drugs

By Joan Lowy
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of drivers on the road with alcohol in their systems has declined by nearly one-third since 2007, but there has been a large increase in drivers using marijuana and other illegal drugs, a government report released Friday found.

The report by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said the share of drivers who test positive for alcohol has declined by more than three-quarters since the agency first began conducting roadside surveys in 1973.

But the latest survey, conducted in 2013 and 2014, also found that 22 percent of drivers tested positive for at least one drug that could affect safety. That includes illegal drugs as well as prescription and over-the-counter medications.

The anonymous surveys have been conducted five times over the last 40 years. They gather data in dozens of locations across the country from drivers who agree to participate.

Mark Rosekind, head of the safety administration, credited anti-drunk driving efforts for the decline in drivers who test positive for alcohol, but said "there is no victory as long as a single American dies in an alcohol-related crash."

About 8 percent of drivers during weekend nighttime hours were found to have some alcohol in their system, and 1.5 percent were found with .08 percent or higher breath alcohol content — the legal limit in every state. Drivers with any alcohol in their systems and drivers testing greater than .08 were both down by about 30 percent from the previous survey in 2007. Both groups

are also down by more than three-quarters since the first survey in 1973.

At the same time, more than 15 percent of drivers tested positive for at least one illegal drug, up from 12 percent in 2007. The number of drivers with marijuana in their systems grew by nearly 50 percent over the same period of time, 8.6 percent in 2007 to 12.6 percent in 2014.

"The rising prevalence of marijuana and other drugs is a challenge to everyone who is dedicated to saving lives and reducing crashes," Rosekind warned.

A second survey, the largest of its kind, assessed the comparative risk of drunk and drugged driving. The study was conducted in Virginia Beach, Va., over a 20-month period and involved the collection of data from more than 3,000 drivers involved in a crash, and more than 6,000 crash-free drivers for comparison.

That survey found that marijuana users are more likely to be involved in accidents, but that the increased risk may be due in part because marijuana users are more likely to be part of demographic groups at higher risk of crashes generally. In particular, marijuana users are more likely to be young men — a group already at high risk.

Unlike with alcohol, drivers high on pot tend to be aware that they are impaired and try to compensate by driving slowly, avoiding risky actions such as passing other cars, and allowing extra room between vehicles. On the other hand, combining marijuana with alcohol appears to eliminate the pot smoker's exaggerated caution and to increase driving impairment beyond the effects of either substance alone.

Investigators ask whether third rail made train crash deadlier

By Jim FitzGerald
and Jennifer Peltz
The Associated Press

VALHALLA, N.Y. — It was a hellish scenario investigators had never seen before: 400 feet of electrified third rail snapped into 12 pieces and speared a commuter train during a fiery collision with an SUV. Now officials want to know whether the rail's unusual design explains why the crash was so deadly.

The 39-foot lengths of rail sliced through the first car of the train "like daggers going into the heart of that chamber," Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., said Friday after getting a chilling look at the

blackened, mangled wreckage.

The SUV driver and five train passengers were killed Tuesday evening in the rush-hour collision in Valhalla, about 20 miles north of New York City. The SUV had stopped on the tracks, between the lowered crossing gates, for reasons still unclear to investigators.

Metro-North, which operates in New York and Connecticut, is believed to be the only U.S. commuter railroad that uses the "under-running" or "under-riding" configuration: A metal "shoe" slips underneath the third rail rather than skimming along the top. Some have questioned whether the collision caused the

shoe to pry up the third rail.

"This has never happened before, and this is a rare configuration of a third rail," said Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y. "Do those two add up to the explanation for this terrible, terrible tragedy? Very possible."

National Transportation Safety Board vice chairman Robert Sumwalt said Friday the agency aims to answer that question among many others from the crash, a rare and unusually fiery instance of passenger deaths among the thousands of train-auto collisions each year.

"We will figure out the crash dynamics as far as how that could occur," Sumwalt said.

He said the agency also is exploring when power was cut to the third rail, which is designed to be de-energized if it breaks. But for whoever anyone was killed or maimed by the 12 spears, NTSB spokesman Eric Weiss said that is not known and investigators will have to create a diagram of where people were and collect information on their injuries.

Steve Dreyer, a former Federal Railroad Administration official who teaches railway management at Michigan State University, said it is impossible to say whether the design was a factor in the fire without testing how the "under-running" system would have reacted in the same

situation.

To transportation lawyer Andrew Maloney, the third rail "is probably the most important issue in the accident." The design could have caused the shoe to act like a crowbar, said Maloney, who represents victims of a 2013 Metro-North derailment.

The third rail is a common feature of subway systems. Among the nation's 28 commuter railroads, only Metro-North and the Long Island Rail Road use third rail systems, according to the American Public Transportation Association. Others use overhead wires or other forms of power.

NATION

Mo. family arrested for boy's mock kidnapping

Plot was supposed to teach 6-year-old fear of strangers

By JOEL CURRIER

St. Louis (Mo.) Post-Dispatch

LINCOLN COUNTY, Mo. — Police said a 6-year-old boy was terrorized last week in a mock kidnapping designed by his mother, grandmother and aunt to teach him to distrust strangers.

Police said Nathan Firoved, 23, lured the boy into his pickup truck after the child got off his school bus earlier last week. Firoved also used his cellphone to videotape the boy getting into his pickup truck, and sent the clip to one of the three women charged in the fake kidnapping.

The boy's mother Elizabeth Hupp, 25, grandmother Rose Brewer, 58, and aunt Denise Kroutil, 38, planned the ruse with Firoved to teach the child about "stranger danger" because they thought he was "too nice" to people, police say.

"It shocks the conscience of the community of the nation," Lt. Andy Binder of the Lincoln County Sheriff's Department said Friday. "This was not a teaching moment. Not now. Not ever."

After telling the boy he would never "see his mommy again" and that he would be "nailed to the wall of a shed," Firoved then showed the child a handgun and told him he would hurt him if he didn't stop crying.

Firoved bound the boy's hands and feet with plastic bags, covered his face with an adult-sized jacket so he couldn't see, and drove him to the boy's home and left him blindfolded in the basement, authorities said. The boy's aunt, Kroutil, removed his pants and told him he could be sold into "sex slavery."

Brewer, Kroutil and Hupp cooperated with detectives. Firoved refused and asked for a lawyer, court records say. Hupp told investigators she was at work while her son was being kidnapped, and that she asked Firoved to stop sending her videos of the plot because they were "alarming" and caused significant distress to view them" but did nothing to stop the stunt.

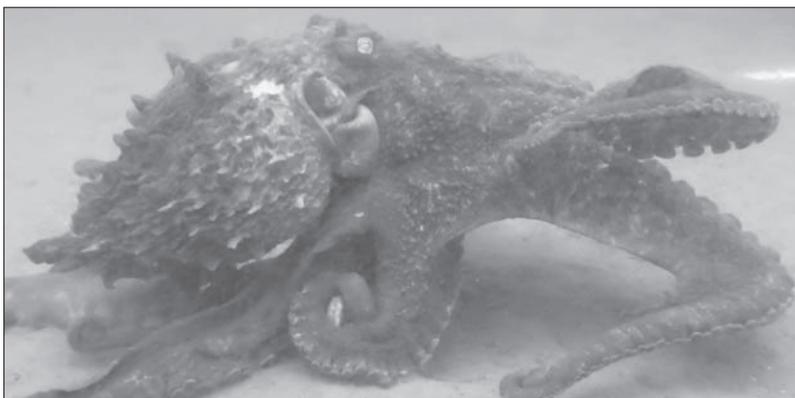
"That's not a way to teach no one a lesson," said a neighbor Alan Williams, 58, who has lived across the street from the boy's home since December. "He's always gonna think about that his whole life."

According to court documents, Kroutil told detectives she, Brewer, Hupp and Firoved realized their plan "would be perceived as an actual kidnapping if law enforcement/local authorities became privy" and would support Firoved in explaining its intent.

Brewer and Kroutil were charged Thursday with felony kidnapping, felonious restraint and abuse or neglect of a child. Hupp was charged with felony kidnapping and abuse or neglect of a child.

Lincoln County Prosecutor Leah Askey said the case was one of the strangest she's seen.

"What it really comes down to, as a mother, you do everything you can to protect your children," Askey said. "I'm just amazed by any parent who thinks this would be a solid plan for a 6-year-old."



ANDREA PETERSEN/AP

A giant pacific octopus is shown swimming in the Puget Sound near Edmonds, Wash., in this video image from the Seattle Aquarium.

Divers conduct underwater octopus census

The Associated Press

PUGET SOUND, Wash. — To check on the health of the giant Pacific octopus population in Puget Sound off the Northwest coast, an unusual census takes place every year. Volunteer divers, enlisted by the Seattle Aquarium, take to Washington's inland waters to look for their eight-tentacle neighbors.

THE BIGGEST IN THE WORLD: Weighing as much as 150 pounds with tentacles that can span as long as 20 feet, the giant Pacific octopus lives up to its name. It's the biggest octopus in the world, and it calls the waters off Seattle home, part of its vast range over the Pacific Ocean.

"The Puget Sound offers good habitat, water temperature and an abundant food source for them," said Kathryn Kegel, a Seattle Aquarium biologist.

Known as one of the smartest creatures in the sea, the giant Pacific octopus leads a relatively short life, between three and five years. They are terminal maters, meaning once they mate, they die soon after.

"They are big hunters of crab, clams, scallops, things like that," Kegel said.

Because the giant Pacific octopus is not on federal endangered- or threatened-species lists, there are no current studies on the Puget Sound population. In fact, it's unknown how many live in the area, Kegel said.

That's where the Seattle Aquarium and its troops of volunteer divers step in.

AN INFORMAL BUT INFORMATIVE CENSUS: From the waters off Seattle to



MANUEL VALDES/AP

Seattle Aquarium staffers Tim Carpenter and Kathryn Kegel and volunteer diver Kevin Tower check their gear before entering the waters of the Puget Sound near Seattle.

the maritime border with Canada, 27 divers looked for the giant Pacific octopus, or G.P.O. as it's called, at 11 sites around Puget Sound last month. The aquarium asked the divers to count how many octopuses they saw, note the depth of their finding and the type of hiding spot.

This year, the census counted 28 octopuses, while divers found 17 last year.

"We've been watching the numbers go up, then kind of go down, then kind of go

back up," Kegel said. "That could be having to do with population and mating. As they all peak and mate, they slowly die off, then they start to grow back up again."

The volunteer nature of the census means the count is not rigidly scientific, she said.

Two years ago, after a diver killed an octopus, state wildlife officials changed the rules to carve out protected habitat for octopuses. They used the data from the census as well as information from the dive community.



METRO FIRE SACRAMENTO/AP

A horse, named Phantom, is shown stuck in an outdoor bathtub on Feb. 4 in this video image from Metro Fire Sacramento. Phantom was stuck for about 25 minutes.

Horse rescued from bathtub

ORANGEVALE, Calif. — Sacramento county firefighters rescued a horse that had gotten stuck in a bathtub.

Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District spokeswoman Capt. Michelle Eidam said the horse was dancing around in her stall, protecting her food trough when she suddenly fell in Wednesday. Her food trough is a bathtub.

The horse, named Phantom, was completely stuck in the bathtub for about 25 minutes with her feet up in the air. Her owner saw the horse fall and called the fire department.

A rescue crew responded to the scene and between the firefighters and the family, they were able to prop the bathtub on its side and pull Phantom forward onto her feet.

From The Associated Press

WORLD



ANEES MAHYOUB/AP

Yemeni people hold a rally to protest against Shiite rebels' announcement of taking over the country in Taiz, Yemen, on Friday. The rebels, known as Houthis, announced that they have taken over the country and dissolved parliament. Arabic writing on the banners that reads, "We reject the coup."

Yemen rebels take control

Houthis dissolve parliament; US resumes drone strikes

By Zaid al-Alayya and Paul Richter
Los Angeles Times

SANAA, Yemen — Amid deepening political turmoil here, the United States has resumed drone strikes against al-Qaida's most feared franchise without seeking approval from the Shiite Muslim rebels who have tightened their control of a government once considered a close American ally.

The insurgents, known as Houthis, dissolved Yemen's parliament Friday and announced plans to set up interim bodies to run the government, a move that opponents said amounted to a coup. The capital was calm but tense Friday night as armed men loyal to the movement quickly filled the streets.

Saturday, Yemeni security officials said a device exploded in a street leading to the capital's presidential palace, wounding three people, according to The Associated Press. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to release the information otherwise.

The AP also reported thousands of people took to the streets of several Yemeni cities on Saturday to protest the takeover of the government.

In the capital, Sanaa, rebel gunmen fired in the air to disperse the protesters — beating them back with sticks and clubs. Protest marches were also held in the cities of Hodeida, Taiz and Ib.

Yemen has been roiled by uncertainty since the Houthis

seized the presidential palace and put U.S.-backed President Abdu Rabu Mansour Hadi under house arrest on Jan. 22, leading him and his Cabinet to tender their resignations.

Over the last two years, Hadi had strongly supported U.S. military and CIA drone strikes and special operations raids against al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, known as AQAP. The Yemen-based group has repeatedly sought to bomb U.S. airliners and last month claimed responsibility for the massacre of 12 people at the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in Paris.

The Houthis surged out of their northern stronghold in September and claimed large tracts of Yemen, including much of Sanaa. The U.S. was forced to halt drone strikes in November as a three-way power struggle raged between Hadi's security forces, the Houthis and AQAP.

Although Houthi fighters have battled the al-Qaida branch, which is Sunni Muslim, the Shiite Muslim insurgent group is deeply suspicious of American aims in Yemen and is publicly opposed to the drone strikes. U.S. officials believe the Houthis have received financial and military support from Iran.

American officials in Yemen have been in indirect communication with the Houthis, but have not begun a working relationship, according to U.S. officials familiar with the diplomacy who requested anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter. Instead, the Obama

administration pressed ahead on its own and launched three drone strikes against AQAP targets in the last two weeks.

"The attacks 'are a pretty clear signal that the U.S. is not going to step away from what it considers to be very much in its national security interest,'" said Stephen Seche, who was U.S. ambassador to Yemen from 2007 to 2010. "The message is, 'You can rest assured we're going to be very diligent about doing what we feel we have to do.'"

In the most significant raid, a drone-launched missile on Jan. 31 killed Harith bin Ghazi Nathari, a spiritual leader of AQAP and a member of its top command. The militant group announced his death online.

The political crisis deepened with the Houthis' latest move to seize power.

In a statement read Friday on a Houthi-affiliated TV channel, the rebels said they were fulfilling "the will of the people" in nullifying the parliament.

The group said a new interim assembly would be formed, with various factions represented, and that the assembly would in turn pick a five-member council to run Yemen's day-to-day affairs.

Swift objections were sounded by opponents, who include Sultan Aradah, governor of Marib, a province east of Sanaa where major electrical installations are located. Aradah said that his province's tribal leaders were holding urgent consultations, but that they considered the Houthis' actions a coup d'etat.

Merkel draws fire for standing against arming of Ukraine

By John Vandiver
Stars and Stripes

MUNICH, Germany — German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Saturday remained steadfast in her opposition to arming Ukraine, sparking a lively debate at the annual Munich Security Conference with political leaders from other western countries who favor such a move.

Fresh from a round of talks in Kiev and Moscow together with French President Francois Hollande in hopes of achieving a diplomatic solution to the crisis, Merkel argued adamantly against arming the Ukrainian military.

"I cannot envisage any situation in which the improved equipment of the Ukrainian army will convince Putin he will lose militarily," Merkel said, referring to Russian President Vladimir Putin, with whom she and Hollande met on Friday. "And that is the reality of the day. You have to look reality in the eye."

That stance drew sharp criticism from other heads of state and political leaders attending the three-day conference, which provides a forum for discussion of a wide range of security issues.

With heavy fighting continuing, even after all sides agreed to a ceasefire in September, and recent territorial gains by the separatists, some Western officials say economic sanctions that have weakened Russia's economy but failed to change Moscow's stance on Ukraine are insufficient.

During a question and answer session following Merkel's speech, Sen. Bob Corker, a Republican from Tennessee, told the German chancellor it was her country's resistance to sending in arms that has so far given the White House pause. President Barack Obama

has yet to decide on the matter and reportedly shares some of Merkel's concerns.

"I think most in the U.S. Congress would like to see all of us participate in defensively arming Ukraine," Corker said.

Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves also questioned Merkel's position, saying Ukrainian troops, armed with weapons from the 1970s and '80s, have no chance against separatists who have advanced Russian systems, according to NATO officials.

"The question is, would it be all that different if the weapons of the Ukrainian army were somewhat different," Merkel said. "I have my doubts."

From the audience of decision-makers and security experts, the chancellor received a healthy round of applause, but Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, who accuses Russia of not only supplying arms to the separatists but also sending in troops, sat in solemn silence. In written answers to questions from the German newspaper Die Welt published Thursday, Poroshenko appealed for more NATO support, including "delivery of modern weapons for protection and defense against the aggressor."

"Ukraine wants peace. But peace has to be defended, and for that we need a strong army with new, modern weapons," Die Welt quoted Poroshenko as saying.

Russian officials have repeatedly denied they are providing troops and armor to the separatists in eastern Ukraine, where fighting has raged since Moscow annexed Ukraine's Crimea peninsula in March.

Vandiver, john@stripes.com

109 Boko Haram fighters killed in Niger attacks

The Associated Press

NIAMEY, Niger — A total of 109 Boko Haram fighters were killed by soldiers responding to attacks on two towns in Niger near the border with Nigeria on Friday, Niger's defense minister said.

In a statement read on state television late Friday, Mahamadou Karjiro said soldiers were killed and 17 wounded in fighting in the towns of Bosso and Diffa. He said two soldiers were missing and a civilian was also killed.

"Calm has returned to the two localities and the situation is under control," Karjiro said.

Chadian troops supported Niger's soldiers in Bosso, and Boko Haram suffered "heavy casualties" in Diffa, he said. It was not

possible to verify the figures he provided.

Boko Haram has openly threatened to attack other countries taking part in the military effort against their insurgency, which is blamed for 10,000 deaths over the past year. Niger has joined Cameroon, Chad and Benin in pledging to send troops to fight the extremists, who have waged a five-year rebellion against the Nigerian government.

Niger is already home to tens of thousands of refugees who have fled the terror group's attacks in Nigeria.

In Cameroon, regional leaders were expected to conclude a meeting on Saturday to finalize plans for a coordinated military response.

STARS AND STRIPES

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OPINION

Critics seize on Obama religion remarks

By JULIE EILPERIN

WASHINGTON
 President Barack Obama has never been one to go easy on America. As a new president, he dismissed the idea of American exceptionalism, noting that Greeks think their country is special, too. He labeled the Bush-era interrogation practices, euphemistically called "harsh" for years, as torture. America, he has suggested, has much to answer given its history in Latin America and the Middle East.

His latest challenge came Thursday at the National Prayer Breakfast. At a time of global anxiety over Islamist terrorism, Obama noted pointedly that his fellow Christians, who make up a vast majority of Americans, should perhaps not be the ones who cast the first stone.

"Humanity has been grappling with these questions throughout human history," he told the group, speaking of the tension between the compassionate and murderous acts religion can inspire. "And lest we get on our high horse and think this is unique to some other place, remember that during the Crusades and the Inquisition, people committed terrible deeds in the name of Christ. In our home country, slavery and Jim Crow all too often was justified in the name of Christ."

Some Republicans were outraged. "The president's comments this morning at the prayer breakfast are the most offensive I've ever heard a president make in my lifetime," said former Virginia Republican governor Jim Gilmore. "He has offended every believing Christian in the United States. This goes further to the point that Mr. Obama does not believe in America or the values we all share."

Obama's remarks spoke to his unsparring, sometimes controversial, view of the United States — where triumphalism is often overshadowed by a harsh assessment of where Americans must try harder to live up to their own self-image. Only by admitting these shortcomings, he has argued, can we fix problems and move beyond them.

"There is a tendency in us, a sinful tendency, that can pervert and distort our faith," he said at the breakfast.

But many critics believe that the president needs to focus more on enemies of the United States.

Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, called Obama's comments about

Christianity "an unfortunate attempt at a wrongheaded moral comparison."

What we need more is a "moral framework from the administration and a clear strategy for defeating ISIS," he said, using an acronym for the Islamic State group.

Obama spoke a day after meeting with Muslim leaders in what participants said was his first roundtable with a Muslim-only group since taking office. The Muslim leaders argued that they feel their community has faced unfair scrutiny in the wake of terrorist attacks overseas. Although the White House released only a broad description of the meeting, which touched on issues including racial profiling — participants said it gave them a chance to express their concerns directly to the president.

Farhana Khara, executive director of the civil rights group Muslim Advocates, one of 13 participants, said the session gave Obama a chance to focus on Muslim Americans the way he has done with other constituencies, such as African-American and Jewish groups.

Obama emphasized the need to respect minorities in his speech Thursday, saying it was part of the obligation Americans face as members of a diverse and open society. "And if, in fact, we defend the legal right of a person to insult another's religion, we're equally obligated to use our free speech to condemn such insults — and stand shoulder to shoulder with religious communities, particularly religious minorities who are the targets of such attacks."

For the president, the prayer breakfast represented a role he has played before: explaining to Americans why others might see things differently. Joshua DuBois, who headed the White House Office of Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships until Obama was elected, served as an informal spiritual adviser, said the president is conscious of the fact that Islam is an abstraction for much of the general public.

"The president, as a Christian, knows many American Muslims," DuBois said. "Unfortunately, a lot of folks on our country don't have close relationships with Muslims. The only time they're hearing about Islam is in the context of the foreign policy crisis or what's happening with ISIS."

In the past, Obama has used stark, personal terms to describe ongoing tensions between African-Americans and America's white majority. When discussing the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the February 2012 shooting of Trayvon Martin, a black teenager, he spoke of being trailed while

shopping in a department store and hearing the lock on cars click as he walked down the street.

But he has also framed the most incendiary aspects of race relations — whether it's the moment when his former pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright, thundered "God damn America" from the pulpit or the shooting of another unarmed young black man, Michael Brown — as an opportunity to test the concept of American exceptionalism.

But each of these admissions of fault — whether it's Obama's acknowledgment during his 2009 Cairo speech that the United States was involved in the 1953 coup overthrowing the government of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh or the suggestion that America has "a moral responsibility to act" on arms control because only the United States had "used a nuclear weapon" — has drawn sharp criticism from opponents.

Obama has argued that the United States is exceptional because it responds to its citizens' frank assessments of whether it lives up to its core values. And he has defended the exceptional role it plays in the world given its military power and political traditions, like when Obama decided to intervene in Libya on the grounds that it is not in America's nature to stand by while a civilian population is threatened.

But he has always argued that straying from those values, as he believes happened during the George W. Bush administration, weakens the United States. "We went off course," he said early in his presidency of the detention and interrogation practices of his predecessor, and he pledged to end torture, close the military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and correct what he defined as mistakes America made during the country's "season of fear."

Critics say that Obama is chastising the wrong people.

"The evil actions that he mentioned were clearly outside the moral parameters of Christianity itself and were met with overwhelming moral opposition from Christians," Moore said. He added that while he understood Obama's attempt to make sure "he is not heard as saying that all Muslims are terrorists, I think most people know that at this point."

Julie Eilperin wrote for The Washington Post.

Expansion of license-plate tracking is alarming

The Orange County (Calif.) Register editorial

In the post-9/11 world, our government spies on us. Once-unfathomable concept has now become almost expected for the average American. Many rationalize this imbalance favoring security over privacy with the assumption that if they have nothing to hide, they have nothing to worry about.

However, it continues to surprise just how often, and when, the government chooses to intrude on everyday life. News of the Drug Enforcement Administration's mass surveillance program is only the most recent reminder of the extent to which everyone is being watched.

A license-plate tracking system originally

conceived to keep tabs on gun runners and drug traffickers along the southern border has morphed into a nationwide compendium of America's highways and byways, and those who use them.

From its justifiable origins, the program has expanded into a national dragnet capable of seemingly tracking anyone who passes within view of the DEA's 53 cameras or the countless others deployed in collaboration with local police agencies. Data from law enforcement agencies feed license-plate data into the central system used in El Paso, the American Civil Liberties Union has discovered.

While it is true that law-abiding citizens are largely free of suspicion, they are not above it, as recently evidenced by a DEA

proposal — since dropped — to scan the license plates, for tracking purposes, of anyone attending gun shows. Such conduct seems to assume criminality from an otherwise legal behavior.

With cameras arrayed along freeways for all intents and purposes to monitor traffic mitigation and for safety, with such an alarming expansion in the scope of this largely secret DEA program, even the most seemingly innocuous programs can be viewed with suspicion in our creeping surveillance state. Americans must ask more of their government about the scope and nature of its security apparatus. If the government has nothing to hide, it has nothing to worry about.

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OPINION

Pot reform could unlock GOP millennial votes

By STEVEN MOORE
CQ-Roll Call

Despite the stereotypical image of the stoner who is so lacking in motivation he can't get off the couch, a look at recent elections shows that marijuana actually does motivate people — to vote. And the phenomenon is most profound among millennials, as illustrated in the presidential swing state of Florida last November.

Those who want to see a Republican in the White House should take note — millennials could be the deciding vote in 2016, and marijuana law reform could be a key issue.

Last fall, a constitutional amendment to legalize marijuana for medical uses fell short of the 60 percent required for passage in Florida. Amendment 2 went down with 57 percent, still making it about half a million votes more popular than Republican Gov. Rick Scott.

Any Republican with presidential ambitions should pay attention to the youth and vigor shown by the 2014 Florida exit polls. Despite a historically low voter turnout nationwide, 10 percent more Floridians voted in 2014 than in 2010. That statistic is all the more remarkable considering that traditionally unengaged millennials increased their percentage of the electorate by 6 points, while ever-reliable seniors' share shrank 10 points.

The phenomenon of marijuana law reform initiatives driving increased youth participation is not limited to Florida, but few other states play the swing role in presidential politics that Florida plays. For perspective, Colorado in 2012 saw voters younger than 29 increase their share of the electorate by 11 percentage points over 2008. The state of Washington saw an increase of 4 percent for that same demographic over the same time period.

Medical marijuana advocates pledged shortly after Election Day to put another initiative on the Florida ballot in 2016, elevating marijuana law reform from a state issue to a national issue — national because most strategists see few options for a Republican in the White House if Democrats win Florida.

Millennials in Florida voted for Obama at a rate of 61 percent in 2008 and 66 percent in 2012, yet Republicans John McCain lost Florida by three points and Mitt Romney by just one. With the margin so slim, and the trend over time going the wrong way, Republicans don't necessarily need to win millennials, they just need to not lose them so badly. The question becomes "What can Republicans say about marijuana law reform that will alienate neither millennials nor the Republican base?"

That needle may not be terribly difficult to thread. Republicans have mixed views on marijuana law reform. An October '14 Gallup poll shows that nationally, 1 in 3 conservatives and 4 in 10 Republicans favor making

marijuana completely legal. The numbers are in line with the national surveys CampaignGrid uses for its marijuana voter-modeling project. Exit polling in Florida shows that 37 percent of conservatives and 40 percent of Republicans are for Amendment 2.

Over the last decade, national polling indicates a significant shift in opinion that favors legalization. In 2006, a Pew Trusts survey showed 32 percent of Americans felt marijuana should be legal. By 2014, that number jumped to 54 percent. The rapid increase is being driven by two demographics: the aforementioned millennials, and Republicans. Republican support for marijuana legalization has nearly doubled since 2006.

So far, the marijuana law reform debate has been

centered in the states, and would probably stay there were it not for the disproportionate influence the state of Florida has on presidential elections.

That said, at the end of last year, congressional Republicans waded into the matter by using the appropriations process to stop implementation of a local marijuana reform law passed by voters in the District of Columbia, helping elevate the issue into the national spotlight.

Going forward, congressional Republicans might want to consider carefully how they address marijuana law reform in the 114th Congress. Using congressional hearings as a stage for knee-jerk, prohibitionist rhetoric may drive away the unique intersection of millennial and Republican voters likely to decide next year's razor-thin presidential margins in Florida. Alternatively, addressing the issue in a thoughtful and strategic manner may serve to bring these voters into the GOP tent, and help assure a Republican in the White House.

Steven Moore is a former Republican leadership aide in the House of Representatives, and currently managing director at the digital political consultancy CampaignGrid. CampaignGrid has modeled every American voter online by their propensity to support or oppose marijuana law reform. The firm was active in three of the five marijuana law reform elections in 2014. He wrote this for the CQ-Roll Call.



2016 elections: Don't mess with Iowa as first caucus state

By JONATHAN BERNSTEIN
Bloomberg News

If it's a year before the Iowa caucus, it must be time for someone to complain that voters there and in New Hampshire are the first to cast ballots for the presidential candidates. As Philip Bump of the Fix asks, why not let a big, diverse state — California — go first?

If it was true that a few voters in Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina and Nevada were the big players in presidential-nomination politics, then Bump and the other anti-Iowans would have a case. But that isn't how many political scientists believe nominations are won.

The primaries and caucuses (as I've argued) no longer the main arena, as they were in the 1970s and 1980s. Rather, they are a version of what they were before 1968: a way for the parties to gather information.

Party actors — the politicians, campaign and governing professionals, activists and donors, formal party officials and staff, and party-aligned groups and media — coordinate with one another and compete over the nomination. Their decisions and resources help determine what happens in Iowa. So, for example, Hillary Clinton, John Edwards and Barack Obama had all outpaced Joe Biden, Bill Richardson and Chris Dodd in (national) party support well before the Iowa caucuses in 2008.

Party influence from outside the state doesn't totally control what happens in Iowa, as surprise finishes such as Rick Santorum's in 2012 and others going back to Pat Robertson's in 1998 demonstrate.

But here's where party actors come in as the most important interpreters of caucus and primary results. If a winner (say, Sen. Paul Tsongas in New Hampshire

in 1992) has little support besides the voters in one small state, he'll get little help — money, favorable publicity, volunteer hours — from that victory. On the other hand, a disappointing finish from a candidate with solid party support (Bill Clinton's second place in New Hampshire in 1992, John McCain's fourth place in Iowa in 2008 or even Hillary Clinton's third place showing in Iowa that year) won't necessarily deliver a knockout blow.

True, by the time most Democrats got to vote in primaries in 2008, they could only choose Obama or Clinton, while Iowans had six other options. But what did it matter? If Dodd or even more improbably Dennis Kucinich had managed to score well there despite lack of party support from outside Iowa, they would not have gotten much further.

Let's look closer at the 2012 Republican contest. After Santorum's surprising victory in Iowa,

he wasn't able to capitalize on it because he had little support in the "invisible primary" leading up to the caucuses. Relatively little money came in to his campaign. He didn't receive major endorsements from high-profile Republicans or party-aligned groups, which could have flooded New Hampshire or South Carolina with volunteers. It might have been different if a candidate with more party support, such as Rick Perry, had scored an early upset win.

The parties are better off sticking with the status quo. Keeping the small states first reduces chances that a single state's quirks will make a difference to the eventual outcome. If Iowa votes for Pat Robertson or New Hampshire puts Pat Buchanan first (as it did in 1996), only a few delegates are at stake, and the process moves on with no problems. But a candidate with a flukish strong finish in California would have enough

delegates nailed down to cause a fair amount of trouble.

So why not mix it up and switch to other small states? The party actors have become experts in interpreting the results from the current early states, and swapping in different ones runs the risk that their results will be misinterpreted. A fluke victory might be seen as more significant than it is.

Bottom line: The nomination process, Iowa included, may look messy, but it's working just fine.

This is also the case against a national primary. Multicandidate primaries are unstable, and random things can happen. The state-by-state sequence protects the parties from fads, and allows time for careful vetting of the candidates without worrying about overreactions to minor revelations about them.

Jonathan Bernstein is a Bloomberg View columnist.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

2 students hurt in shooting at high school

MD FREDERICK — Police in Maryland were searching for suspects early Thursday after two students were shot outside a high school basketball game.

The Wednesday night shooting at Frederick High School sent game-watchers running for cover as frantic parents rushed to the scene to make sure their children were OK.

The two students were flown to a hospital in Baltimore with injuries not believed to be life-threatening, Frederick Police Capt. Richard Hetherington said. He did not know the students' ages or genders, and he said the shooter or shooters were still at large.

A motive for the shooting was not immediately clear and an investigation into the identity of the shooter or shooters was ongoing, Hetherington said later in a statement.

Woman delivers twins on side of highway

NE LINCOLN — A Kansas woman rushing toward Lincoln after her water broke delivered twins on the side of the highway.

The Lincoln Journal Star reported that Laura Clark, 36, of Barnes, Kan., told her husband, Kevin Clark, 39, to pull over Thursday morning and call 911 because one of the babies had already been born.

After placing the call, Kevin Clark said he wrapped the baby in a blanket and tied off the umbilical cord, and then the second one was born.

Lancaster County Sheriff's Capt. Ben Houchin said rescue crews arrived shortly after the second birth and took the babies to Elyria Medical Center in Elyria, Kan. in Lincoln, where the newborn boy and girl are doing well.

5 convicted in jail-led corruption scandal

MD BALTIMORE — Three jail workers and two inmates were convicted in a massive jailhouse corruption scheme where gang leaders, judges ruled the institution, impregnated corrections officers and directed crimes inside and outside the jail walls, federal prosecutors said Thursday.

The federal jury's convictions — and three acquittals — came after a trial for eight people who didn't plead guilty after a sweeping 44-person indictment was handed down in 2013.

One of those to plead guilty and testify at the trial was Tavon 'Bulldog' White, whom prosecutors described as a Black Guilla Family gang commander and the architect of the conspiracy. White became prosecutors' most valuable asset and said he directed guards motivated by sex and money to smuggle in drugs and cellphones.

Man stuffs toilet with potatoes in cry for help

PA UPPER DARBY — Police said a suburban

THE CENSUS

O

The number of voters who turned out for an uncontested election for three school board seats in the rural southeastern New Mexico town of Hagerman. The Roswell Daily Record reported that officials are now trying to determine what to do. The three candidates needed at least one vote each to be elected. Chaves County Clerk Dave Kurko said that because they aren't incumbents, they don't remain in office automatically absent a replacement being elected. Hagerman Schools Superintendent Ricky Williams said the school board will consider the matter on Feb. 23 during its next meeting.



PHOTOS BY COREY PERRINE, NAPLES (FLA.) DAILY NEWS/AP



Wings of WWII

World War II veteran Dr. Bob Kasper reacts while talking with friend and Air Force veteran David Longfield-Smith, not shown, as they inspect the interior of the nose-gunner position on a B-17G Flying Fortress bomber Thursday en route from the Florida Keys Marathon Airport to Naples (Fla.) Municipal Airport. The B-17G, which was used during WWII, will sit alongside a B-24J Liberator and North American TP-51C Mustang for public viewing this weekend at the Naples airport as part of the Collings Foundation 2015 Wings of Freedom Tour.

Left: Co-pilot Robert Pinksten is seen Thursday in "Witchcraft," the B-24J aircraft that is also part of the tour.

Philadelphia man stuffed his toilet with potatoes in a desperate attempt to get the attention of his inattentive building maintenance staff.

The Philadelphia Daily News reported that Ralph Curry, 43, still didn't get satisfaction after causing his toilet to overflow on Jan. 31.

Police said Curry then pulled a fire alarm, causing a dozen families to flee their Upper Darby apartment complex.

Curry's charged with false alarms to agencies of public safety, recklessly endangering another person and disorderly conduct. He's free on bail pending a March 4 court appearance.

Man crashes Jeep, robs house, kids, kills cat

NY OYSTER BAY COVE — Police have arrested a New York man on a variety of charges following a rampage Wednesday through Oyster Bay

Cove, a suburban neighborhood.

Nicholas Patrikis is accused of crashing a Jeep, breaking into a nearby home and killing a cat while ransacking the place. He then allegedly menaced passing drivers with a kitchen knife and boarded a school bus, on which he robbed two students.

Patrikis pleaded not guilty Thursday to charges including burglary, robbery, animal cruelty, weapon possession and criminal mischief. Bail was set at \$100,000.

Overweight man drops 85 pounds to enlist

WA OLYMPIA — Jeremy Phillips played football and competed in track at Black Hills High School in Tumwater, where he graduated in 2012. But his weight had reached 300 pounds last year when he tried to enlist in the Army, and the Army said no, no, no. Phillips, 21, was rejected three

times because of his weight.

The Olympian reported that soldiers from the Armed Forces Recruiting Center in Lacey worked out with Phillips to help him burn calories.

Phillips worked off 85 pounds, and he finally passed the physical on the fourth try. He's counting on losing 25 more pounds in basic training.

State to pay \$545K to settle harassment suit

NY ALBANY — New York state taxpayers will pay \$545,000 to settle a lawsuit brought by two former legislative staffers who say they were sexually harassed by their boss, former Democratic Assemblyman Vito Lopez.

Under the settlement announced Thursday, Lopez will pay an additional \$35,000 to the women and their attorney.

In a statement, the two women, Victoria Burhans and Chloe Ri-

vera, said they hope their story serves as a "strong reminder" to lawmakers that they are accountable for their behavior.

Museum to develop rules on 'selfie sticks'

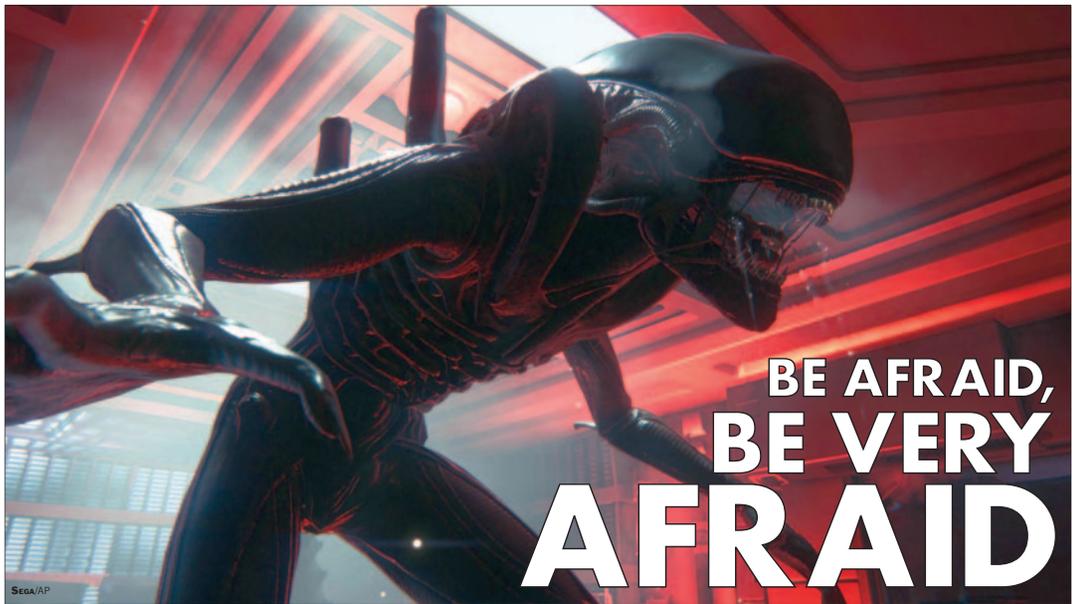
DC WASHINGTON — Millions of visitors to museums on the National Mall may soon have to leave their selfie sticks at home.

The Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum last week banned selfie sticks, which are hand-held camera mounts for self-portraits. The move follows similar bans in New York City museums.

Hirshhorn spokeswoman Kelly Carnes said Friday that the museum made the policy as a preventative measure to protect artwork and visitors from potential harm. The Smithsonian museums already ban tripods and camera stands.

From wire reports

VIDEO GAMES



Sega/AP

'Alien: Isolation' involves more covering than killing

By CHRISTOPHER BYRD
The Washington Post

“You look like hell,” a friend of mine said when she visited me on the day I finished “Alien: Isolation.” I didn’t bother to contradict her since I’d spent the past few days walled up in my apartment with the curtains drawn against the inviting sunshine. In that state of suspended twilight, vanity washed away and I found myself doing things at odd hours, like shaving at 3 a.m. Over the course of the 30 or so hours that I spent with the game, I also missed phone calls and texts because of the earphones clamped on my head.

Those earphones were my best defense against the aliens, robots, and terrified humans caught in between them, all of whom wanted to do me harm. Judging by my frayed nerves, I’d say that The Creative Assembly’s homage to “Alien” — the 1979 film directed by Ridley Scott — is, on a visceral level, a success.



“Alien: Isolation” is a powerful nostalgia stimulator. The game’s ‘70s-era environmental details — like the metal coil of a public phone, or the chunky plastic buttons of a boombox, or the fiddly nature of an analogue tuner that’s constantly losing its signal — might waft you into your own private reverie.

Apart from these material details, the game also lifts from the maternal themes present throughout the movie. In the game, you play as the daughter of the iconic Ellen Ripley, immortalized in the films by Sigourney Weaver, who graces the game with her vocal talents.

Amanda serves as an engineer at Weyland-Yutani, the same company for which her mother worked as a warrant officer. She chose her employment because it placed her near to where Ellen’s ship, the USCSS Nostromo, went missing. During the game’s opening cutscene, Samuels, a well-meaning synthetic — a human-looking android — interrupts Amanda’s manual labor. She is aloof to his presence until he tells her that a ship recovered the flight recorder from the commercial vessel where her mother was a member of the crew. For 15 years — the game is set in 2137 — Amanda has waited for news of her mother’s fate. So she signs on with the tiny delegation assigned to retrieve the flight recorder from Sevastopol, the decommissioned space station where it’s being housed.

When Amanda and two co-workers try to board Sevastopol, an accident occurs that separates her from her companions. As Amanda begins exploring the station, searching a way to reconnect with her group, she passes along graffiti-streaked walls that bespeak a climate of upheaval. Evidently, the employees at Sevastopol were not happy about being made redundant; however, the slogans decorating the walls also hint at a threat besides a jobless future.

A general supposition of mine is that you can predict the quality of almost any horror-driven narrative by measuring how long the monster is withheld from view. “Alien: Isolation” fared well on this litmus test by devoting a good amount of time to inculcating a sense of foreboding. You get your first full sense that something has gone terribly awry after Amanda comes upon a common area where row after row of body bags line the floor. Listening to the squeal of the bags’ plastic beneath her feet establishes a mood as effective as any line of dialogue.

When the monster eventually appears, your best option

is to slink away as quietly as possible. “Alien: Isolation” conforms to the survival-horror genre by accenting its protagonist’s vulnerability. Know that if and when you slip up, Amanda’s demise usually transpires with quick, no-frills brutality. Thus, the most sensible way to approach the game is to avoid conflict whenever possible. Adapting myself to the needs of this logic, I spent most of the game covering under desks and hospital beds and in lockers so as to wait out any menaces nearby. With respect to these situations, I must say that I’ve never empathized with another video game character’s bated breath to a similar degree. This game modulated my breathing patterns with startling frequency.

Ultimately, the premise is simple. Retrieve the recorder and get off of Sevastopol. Between Amanda’s separation from her co-workers and her escape, one is led through many blind alleys and through numerous tasks that do not result in forward momentum. Still, these fruitless adventures, though exhausting, are worth taking.

Sound design is crucial in horror and science-fiction creations like this because it coaxes the viewer to imagine their own gallery of nightmares. With that in mind, I would advise against any but the most skilled or masochistic players from setting the game on hard, the recommended difficulty setting. The game shines most brightly when you’re dodging between temporary havens, catching glimpses of what might kill you. Conversely, dying repeatedly in the same spot can numb you to the shock of such an eventuality.

Revisiting the Scott film, one is stuck by the crew’s on-going debates about their responsibilities and compensation. The movie can be read as an allegory about the importance of work in our lives. Viewed from this angle, the game’s seemingly endless quests acquire a symbolic resonance. Sure they’re tedious but they also subvert the notion that what you’re playing is a game that exists solely to give you a fun, easily manageable adventure. The friction generated from an exciting new occupation buckles beneath the tedium of the work involved. And by golly, you will ache to get off that damned space station as much any of the other souls stuck on it.

If you’re the sort that believes that there is nothing strange about art making impractical demands of its audience, “Alien: Isolation” offers a gripping experience that might sap you in all of the right ways.



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

MUSIC

WHO WILL REIGN SUPREME?

Sam Smith is an unlikely Grammy favorite

By GLENN GAMBOA

Newsday

Leave it to Howard Stern to cut to the chase about Sam Smith and this year's Grammy race.

"That's how good that song is," Stern said recently about Smith's "I'm Not the Only One." "He's fat and he's gay, and little girls worship him. That's when you know you have a good song, and you have a good voice."

The British soul singer is an unlikely underdog turned Grammy favorite. He has managed the rare feat of being nominated in all four top categories, securing six nominations total to tie him with Beyoncé and Pharrell for the lead going into Sunday's ceremonies.

Smith's accomplishment is even more remarkable, considering this year's crop of surprisingly pop-oriented nominations, where the Recording Academy's push for relevance seemingly has them valuing popularity over artistry.

For decades, the Grammys generally saved some top nominations to introduce new artists to the public or highlight works of high artistic merit as new converts rushed to support artists they saw on the show. This year, all the album of the year nominees debuted in the Top 3, including Beyoncé's "Beyoncé" and Ed Sheeran's "X" that reached No. 1.

The Recording Academy took an even more pop-oriented turn in the record and song of the year categories, where all the nominees were Top 10 hits. That's a far cry from the 2012 Grammys, when Bon Iver's "Holocene" was nominated for both record and song of the year without charting in the Billboard Hot 100.

Does the Recording Academy really believe there was no other more worthy nominee than Iggy Azalea's popular but lightweight "Fancy"? Or is it more interested in keeping up ratings for the awards show and the interest of young music fans?

There really is a world of difference between Smith and Azalea, who will compete for record of the year and for best new artist. Azalea is more of a traditional pop star, while Smith, 22, is the kind of artist the Grammys like to champion, a young singer

who embraces older musical styles.

For that reason, many think Smith has a chance at a sweep of the top four categories — which hasn't been done since Christopher Cross did it in 1981.

However, Smith doesn't think it will happen. In fact, Smith is actually rooting against a sweep, telling Rolling Stone recently that Beyoncé's surprise album "Beyoncé" should win album of the year.

Beyoncé's album changed the way record labels looked at their release plans, as she rolled out "Beyoncé" with no pre-release fanfare, no introductory single or video. Its sound was equally forward-thinking, stretching the definition of today's R&B as she included spoken-word elements, dance rhythms and her own rapping.

Although Beyoncé is the woman with the most Grammy nominations ever and has 17 wins under her belt, she may not have widespread Academy support this year.

The other leader of the night, Pharrell, has an odd Grammy year, as he is up for three of the album of the year nominations for his work as a producer on "Beyoncé" and Sheeran's "X," as well as his own "Girl" album. That means that even if he sweeps his other categories for best music video, best pop solo performance and best urban contemporary album, he can only win four awards.

So who will end up the night's big winner? Well, Beyoncé will likely have a tough fight in the best music film category against the Oscar-winning documentary "20 Feet From Stardom," making it likely that she and Smith will tie, if she takes the album of the year Grammy over Smith.

But given the boost Smith will get from the awards and live performance, he will be the night's big winner, regardless of how the awards turn out.



Beyoncé



Sam Smith

Invision/AP photos

CRITIC GLENN GAMBOA'S GRAMMY PREDICTIONS

RECORD OF THE YEAR

"Fancy," Iggy Azalea feat. Charli XCX
"Chandelier," Sia
"Stay With Me (Darkchild Version)," Sam Smith
"Shake It Off," Taylor Swift
"All About That Bass," Meghan Trainor
Should win: "All About That Bass." Trainor's anthem was part of 2014's zeitgeist, touching on self-empowerment and body issues, while also mashing up hip-hop and girl groups in the most memorable way.

Will win: "Stay With Me." It's the sweetest ode to a one-night stand that most Grammy voters have ever heard.

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

"Morning Phase," Beck
"Beyoncé," Beyoncé
"X," Ed Sheeran
"In the Lonely Hour," Sam Smith
"Girl," Pharrell Williams
Should win: "Beyoncé." Not only did the album change the way the industry thinks of new release rollouts, it brought spoken-word performance and varied song structures into R&B, while still rolling out future classics like "XO."
Will win: "Beyoncé."

SONG OF THE YEAR

"All About That Bass," Meghan Trainor
"Chandelier," Sia
"Shake It Off," Taylor Swift
"Stay With Me (Darkchild Version)," Sam Smith

"Take Me to Church," Hozier

Should win: "Stay With Me." This songwriter's award should go to Smith for crafting such a raw, honestly emotional plea for companionship, cloaked in old-fashioned soul.
Will win: "Stay With Me." However, Hozier's "Take Me to Church" could be a dark horse winner.

BEST NEW ARTIST

Iggy Azalea
Bastille
Brandy Clark
Haim
Sam Smith
Should win: Sam Smith. This is the closest thing to a lock that Smith has among his nominees.
Will win: Sam Smith.

BEST POP VOCAL ALBUM

"Ghost Stories," Coldplay
"Bangor," Miley Cyrus
"My Everything," Ariana Grande
"Prism," Katy Perry
"X," Ed Sheeran
"In the Lonely Hour," Sam Smith
Should win: "X." Ed Sheeran maintains his charm during his move into more complicated, more pop-oriented songs.
Will win: "In the Lonely Hour." Sam Smith's soulful songs balance new and old just the way Grammy voters like them.

BEST ROCK ALBUM

"Ryan Adams," Ryan Adams
"Morning Phase," Beck
"Turn Blue," Black Keys
"Hypnotic Eye," Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers
"Songs of Innocence," U2
Should win: "Hypnotic Eye." Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers strike an angry, populist tone and back that up with the rock sound that has made them legends.
Will win: "Turn Blue." The Black Keys have deservedly become Grammy favorites and this solid record won't shake that bond.

BEST ALTERNATIVE MUSIC ALBUM

"This Is All Yours," Alt-J
"Reflektor," Arcade Fire
"Melophobia," Cage the Elephant
"St. Vincent," St. Vincent
"Lazaretto," Jack White
Should win: "Reflektor." Arcade Fire's decade album showed how it is possible to create songs that can move the soul and the feet.
Will win: "Lazaretto." Jack White's wild rock riffs blend country, indie-rock, hip-hop and blues. How alternative is that!

BEST COUNTRY ALBUM

"Riser," Dierks Bentley
"The Outsiders," Eric Church
"12 Stories," Brandy Clark
"Platinum," Miranda Lambert
"The Way I'm Livin'," Lee Ann Womack

Should win: "Platinum." Miranda Lambert deserved an album of the year nomination for this well-crafted country masterpiece. She'll take this home today.

Will win: "Platinum." Horry, Eric Church.

BEST URBAN CONTEMPORARY ALBUM

"Sail Out," Jhene Aiko
"Beyoncé," Beyoncé
"X," Chris Brown
"Mali Is...," Mali Music
"Girl," Pharrell
Should win: "Beyoncé." The album defines what urban contemporary music can really accomplish.
Will win: "Beyoncé." There's no real competition here aside from Pharrell.

BEST RAP ALBUM

"The New Classic," Iggy Azalea
"Because the Internet," Childish Gambino
"Nobody's Smiling," Common
"The Marshall Mathers LP.2," Eminem
"Ozymandus," Schoolboy Q
"Black Hollywood," Wiz Khalifa
Should win: "Nobody's Smiling." Common shows how hip-hop can be a teaching tool as well as entertainment.
Will win: "The Marshall Mathers LP.2." Eminem has already won this category five times. No reason why this shouldn't be No. 6, though if Iggy Azalea somehow pulls it out, it will blow up into the night's biggest controversy.

MUSIC

FRANKLY, IT WORKS

Dylan gets tangled up in Ol' Blue Eyes on new collection of standards

Bob Dylan

Shadows in the Night (Columbia)

Bob Dylan has never called "Shadows in the Night" a Frank Sinatra tribute album. The idea seems nuts: one of the last century's greatest songwriters challenging perhaps its greatest voice, on Sinatra's turf. No wonder it was the butt of jokes before anyone heard a note.

The fact remains that each of the 10 standards here, written between 1923 and 1963, was recorded by Sinatra. Some, like "Some Enchanted Evening" or "That Lucky Old Sun," are fairly well known, others more obscure. Dylan closed his past few concerts with one of them, "Stay With Me."

The precise, and even more intimidating, comparison is Sinatra's superb 1955 concept disc, "In the Wee Small Hours." For these are all songs that come to mind when the night gets long, when missed opportunities, regrets and lost loves come to mind. They're the songs you'd expect the 73-year-old man sitting at the end of the bar to request. Here they are performed in muted fashion, not with an orchestra, but with Dylan's band, supplemented by a mournful pedal steel guitar and the occasional subtle horn.

The hushed arrangements put even more emphasis on a voice that, let's face it, was never considered classic even before being ravaged by age. The remarkable thing is that he pulls it off, with crooning you've never heard from Dylan before. Unlike his holiday album from a few years back, where his croak played like unintentional comedy at times, he works hard to do justice to the songs and setting. Don't toss your Sinatra discs aside. By the time Dylan reaches for the last line in album closer, "That Lucky Old Sun," you're rooting for him to nail it. He does.

The disc is consistent with Dylan's later-period emphasis on classic American songcraft and material that evokes mortality. It is very specific in its appeal. Yet when it's time to turn down the lights and pick up a tumbler, you could do far worse.

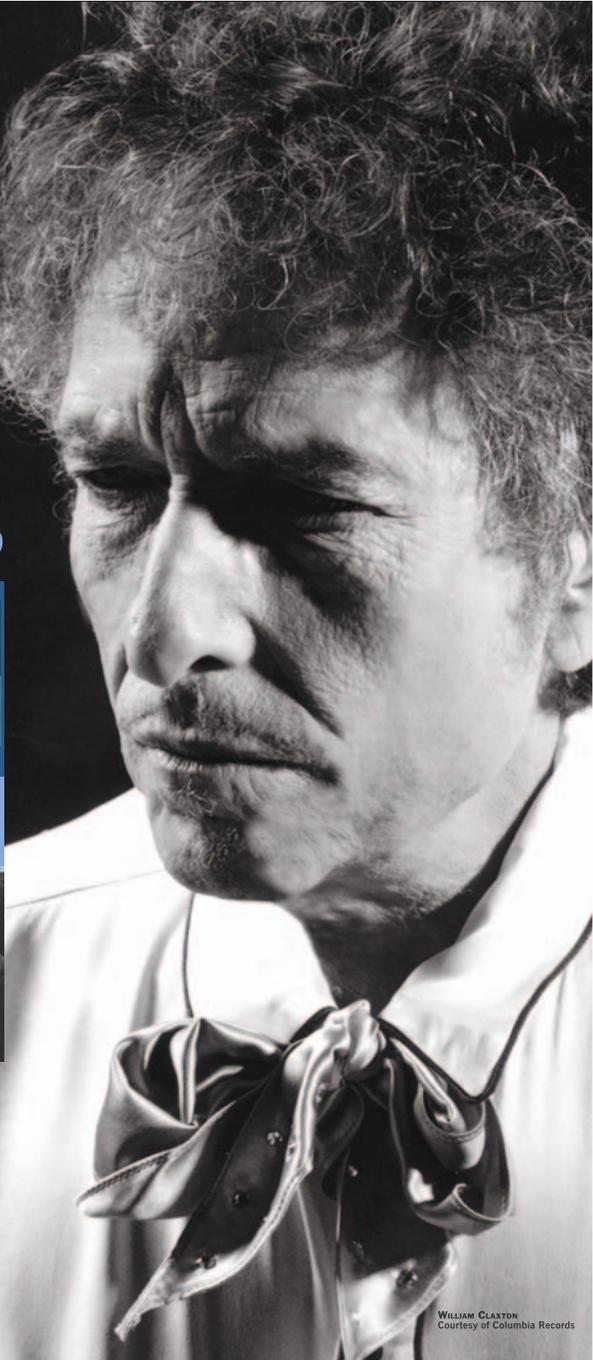


Bob Dylan's new album evokes Frank Sinatra's 1955 concept album, "In the Wee Small Hours."



— David Bauder
The Associated Press

WILLIAM CLAXTON
Courtesy of Columbia Records



LIFESTYLE



Left: Donna Zang moves a pallet in her garage workshop in Pleasant Hills, Pa.

JOHN HELLER, PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE/TNS

Pallets repurposed

Crafters create furniture from found wood

BY LIZBETH GRAY
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Imagine having an unlimited supply of free building material along with lots of ideas for how to use it. Welcome to the wide and wonderful world of pallet furniture.

The Internet has allowed people around the world to share plans and ideas for reusing the 1.5 billion wooden pallets used each day in the United States to load and transport goods, according to the National Wooden Pallet & Container Association.

Browse Pinterest for a few minutes and you'll turn up a treasure trove of ideas, everything from a tiered lighted platform bed frame and kitchen cabinets to a wall garden or garden paths. If you're looking to buy, a search on Etsy returned more than 20,000 items for sale.

Dr. Alex Yergiyev, a pathologist at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center by day, transforms into a pallet carpenter in his free time. Working in the neighborhood on the banks of the Susquehanna River provides a ready supply of abandoned or free pallets. He figured it was not only a good "green" way to do something for the environment, but also "I don't

have to buy it."

He's not even sure how he got started. "I think I found something online and thought it was a cool idea," he said.

Looking for a way to relax, he happened upon images of pallet furniture one night when Web surfing and things snowballed from there.

One of Yergiyev's first pallet projects was a buffet, built from plans he found online. He's received several offers for his pallet buffet but decided to keep it.

"It fits really nice in my house," he said.

He does sell some of his other work. Wine racks are \$50 and entry tables \$150.

Donna Zang also builds pallet furniture, but it's more than a hobby. A third-grade teacher in the West Jefferson School District, she started a pallet business last year. Its success is something of a surprise to her.

"We do what is called crafty Christmas, where you have to make your gift," she said.

Last year, she decided to make a wine rack from pallets for her brother. One person wanted one and then another. Suddenly, she was in the pallet up-cycling business. She created a Facebook page to promote it: "Pal-

let Restorations: We See Pallets Differently."

"I wasn't sure I would sell one. But within 12 hours, I had 10 orders, and that was in the first day," said Zang.

She sells wine racks for \$50-\$60, coffee tables for \$250, end tables for \$125 and towel racks for \$45. Frames and accessories range from \$15 to \$40.

Her creative process is very organic. "Things kind of just grow in my mind. Then I just pray that it's going to work out."

In the past year, she has gotten good at hunting pallets. "My eyes are always looking."

The next step is taking them apart, sanding and cleaning. That's where her boyfriend, Patrick Connelly, comes in handy.

"I joke he's my only employee," she said.

She and Yergiyev caution that not all pallets are right for reuse.

Older pallets might have been treated with formaldehyde, a potential carcinogen, but all of the pallets made today are heat-treated, which is safe.

Neither crafter had formal carpentry training. For plans and ideas, they recommend websites such as 1001 Pallets, 101 Pallet Plans or 99 Pallets.



Pallet works by Dr. Alex Yergiyev of Brighton Heights, Pa. (right): A clock, top; a rustic picture frame, above; and a buffet table, below.

PHOTOS BY BILL WADE,
PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE/TNS



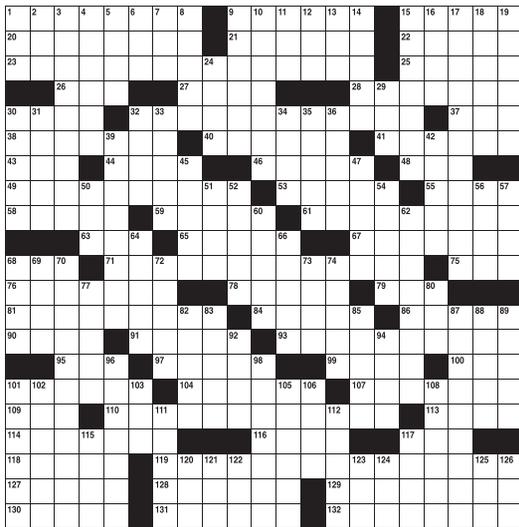
CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

THIS N' THAT

BY DAVID STEINBERG / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

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 - 80 Slangy greeting
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 - 106 Greater or lesser follower
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 - 121 Cellular messenger
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 - 124 Picaresque quibble
 - 125 Brass producer, briefly
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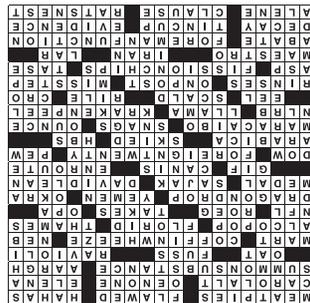


GUNSTON STREET CLASSIC



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

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



KNOWLEDGE

ARCHIVE PHOTO OF THE DAY

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IS POWER.

Stripes BLOGS

Get your fair share from our award-winning journalists at Stripes.com/blogs.

PACIFIC SPORTSBLOG

PACIFIC STORM TRACKER

OMBUDSMAN

GADGETS & CHARTS

New phone? Download these apps now

A flood of new smartphones are off the shelves and being used as we get into the second month of 2015. For some, it is their first foray with powerful capabilities. We've broken down the apps you should download immediately to get started with your iPhone or Android device. Enjoy your first smartphone, says Netflix, The Weather Channel, Spotify and more.

Evernote: Write notes of all types, from short lists to lengthy research, and access them on any device. Also, collect Web articles, handwritten notes and photos to keep all the details in one place.

Netflix: Netflix is a popular subscription service for watching TV series and movies, and now has our number. This Netflix mobile app delivers the best experience anywhere, anytime. Get the free app as a part of your Netflix membership, and you can instantly watch thousands of TV episodes and movies on your phone.

Longform Stories: A solid app that features free longform articles, magazine articles, feature stories and more.

Waze: Waze is a community-based traffic and navigation app. Join drivers in your area who share real-time traffic and road info to save time and gas money and improve daily commuting for all. It's free.

2048: The fun and addictive math-puzzle game is simple to use and will challenge your abilities. Swipe to move the tiles, when two tiles with the same number touch, they merge into one. When a 2048 tile is created, the player wins. Before you know it, you'll be muttering 8, 16, 32, 64, 128 around the house.

Spotify: With Spotify, you have access to artists and albums, or you can create a playlist of your favorite songs. Want to discover new music? Choose a ready-made playlist that suits your mood or get personalized recommendations. Listen for free on mobile, or use the subscription service to listen to any song available on Spotify, anytime.

Star Walk: This app costs \$2.99 in the iTunes and Google Play stores, but it turns your new iPhone into a mini planetarium. It's an interactive star chart in the night sky, following your movement in real time. Go outside, point the phone in the direction of your view, and be prepared to be amazed. Isn't science fun?

The Weather Channel: The simple-to-use and popular app allows you to check today's forecast, or take a look at the long-term forecast. The app is free in the Google Play and iTunes stores.

Google Maps: The Google Maps app has comprehensive maps in more than 200 countries and includes a voice-guided GPS navigation and live traffic conditions. It's free in the iTunes and Google Play stores.

Kindle App: Turn your smartphone into a Kindle by downloading this app. Any book or magazine you've purchased on a Kindle will now be in your pocket.

Shazam: Shazam is a great way to identify songs and other artists. In seconds, you'll know the name of any song, or more about what you're watching — tap Shazam to

start your journey. Never again will you think, "I wish I knew the name of that song."

Hulu: Many popular shows are available the day after they air with the Hulu app. If you subscribe to Hulu Plus, you can watch more than 100,000 TV episodes, including current episodes and full seasons. Also, enjoy current and previous seasons of reality shows such as Top Chef.

Yelp: Whether you are looking for an open parking spot or a coffee shop nearby, Yelp is your local guide to finding just the place to eat, shop, drink, relax and play. You can discover local businesses, search for nearby restaurants, shops and services, and filter results by neighborhood, distance, rating, price and what's open now.

YouTube: Get the official YouTube app for Android and Apple phones and tablets. See what the world is watching, subscribe to channels, share with friends and watch on any device.

Find my iPhone: This Mac and iOS app is a solid safety blanket. It lets you locate your iPhone, iPod Touch or iPad, iCloud can help you figure out where it is.

Words with Friends: New Words With Friends is a free social word game where your skills are tested. Find the best opponent for you by browsing players' profiles in Community Match, or sharpen your skills anytime and anywhere with offline Solo Play.

MLB.com At Bat: It's the offseason, but stay connected to the latest Hot Stove breaking news or relive the excitement from 2014 with what many call the top sports app of all time. If you're not a baseball fan, download it anyway, just to see how a super sports app should work.

Map My Run: Track pace, distance, calories and time with audio alerts. For a runner, this is a key app.

Flappy Nyan: Wondering if it's possible to play games on your new phone? Of course it is, but start with something easy, Flappy Nyan asks, "Do you think that only a bird can flap its wings and fly? Ask Nyan Cat for the answer in her newest adventure in Flappy Nyan!" It's a free, fun, simple game in the iTunes and Google Play stores. Have fun. Before you know it, your entire phone will be filled with games.

Sudoku: If math puzzles are your thing — of course they are — there are a few worthwhile free Sudoku games, including Super Sudoku. Take a look at the iTunes or Google Play stores to see which one you like best.

Minicraft — Pocket Edition: This is a more complex game, and it may be a bit much for most new smartphone users. But if you have kids, this app, which costs \$6.99, will keep them busy for hours. The Pocket Edition includes survival and creative modes. — David Reich-Hale/Newsday

ON THE COVER: A selection of current characters shows that network television is, as a rule, more racially diverse than it was 15 years ago.

Photos courtesy of ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox

GADGET WATCH

Tiny heater packs plenty of power

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

Honeywell's tiny Heat Bud HCE100 personal heater is the perfect gadget for most of the country this time of year.

First, it's built with a great safety feature: If it's not on a flat surface or gets knocked over, it turns off.

The ceramic heater doesn't have a lot of bells and whistles; just turn it on to high or low settings to warm yourself.

At just 5-by-4-by-7.8-inches, you'll be amazed at how little guy it can sit under a desk and — using only 250 watts of energy at the high setting — warm you all over.

It's built with ceramic technology, which I had to look up for its significance. What I found from thermospac.com in summary is "Ceramic heaters are coil-based units that utilize a fan to draw air through a special conducting ceramic element and then direct it outward. Because the ceramic core is larger than the heating coils, it can operate at a lower temperature, continuously releasing the same amount of energy over a larger area."

If a bigger heater is needed, Honeywell has plenty to choose from.

Online: honeywell.com; \$24.95

How many times have you seen something you might like, but thought "Nah, I don't need it but then again it would be really handy if you had it." The MOS, Magnetic Organization System, is just that item.

It's pretty simple. Just open the box and put it on your desk; the setup is complete.

The system magnetically keeps your charging cables organized and accessible by holding onto the connectors. But the most important design element for me is it keeps the cables from falling behind the desk when not in use.

It won't slide on the table (earthquake aside) since it has a slide-proof pad built into the triangle-shaped device.

If by chance you're using a non-magnetic charging cable such as the original Apple 40-pin cable — I still keep one on my desk (even though it's never used) — not a problem. The system comes with magnetic cable ties to attach them.

What makes it a complete system is the

included wall-mount adhesive to complement the triangle device available in anodized aluminum (\$39.95), black and white polycarbonate finishes (\$19.95).

Online: mosorganizer.com

Backfire's compact Camplight Backpack is the latest addition to the company's innovative flashlight line.

It uses Camplight technology, which frees your hands if you're using it in an active or adventurous environment.

If you're wearing a backpack, just clip it on or attach it to a belt loop, tent or whatever will hold it securely. Once clipped, it rotates and pivots to enable it to shine in most any direction; use it in flashlight, lantern or strobe mode with the push of a button.

The exterior has a rubberized finish fused with stainless fittings along with hi-impact ABS plastic to give it a rugged feel.

The light uses up to 125 lumens in high mode; 65 lumens in low mode, and the flashlight uses up to 75 lumens of light. It meets IPX4 international weather standards and even floats.

Three AAA batteries keep it shining bright up to 28 hours, depending on the mode it's used in. Online: blackfire-usa.com; \$34.99

Ballistic Case Co.'s protective case for the iPhone 6 is designed to keep your device protected and gives you access to all the smartphone's functions.

The reason I like this case for supreme protection is that it does the hardcore work without the hard-core looks and bulk many similar cases have.

You have your choice of six models, each offering a different amount of protection.

The Hard Core (\$59.99) is just that. You can drop it from up to 12 feet and expect the smartphone to be safe. All four corners have extra protection for the drops and bangs as well as a built-in screen protection layer.

The Jewel (\$19.99) is much better looking and can only be dropped from 6 feet and keeps your screen exposed, but that's where the tempered glass screen protector (sold separately) comes in.

Online: goballisticcase.com

Honeywell's Heat Bud HCE100 personal heater can warm you up using only 250 watts of energy at the high setting.

TNS



ITUNES MUSIC

Top 10 songs on the iTunes Store for Feb. 8:

1. "Uptown Funk" (feat. Bruno Mars), Mark Ronson
2. "Thinking Out Loud," Ed Sheeran
3. "Sugar," Maroon 5
4. "FourFiveSeconds," Rihanna, Kanye West and Paul McCartney
5. "Take Me to Church," Hozier
6. "Love Me Like You Do," Ellie Goulding
7. "Blank Space," Taylor Swift
8. "Are You Ready for Me?" Meghan Trainor
9. "Centuries," Fall Out Boy
10. "Time of Our Lives," Pitbull and Ne-Yo

— Compiled by TNS

SPOTIFY MUSIC

The most streamed tracks on Spotify from Jan. 26-Feb. 1:

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

— Compiled by The Associated Press

ITUNES MOVIES

Top 10 movies downloaded from the iTunes Store for Feb. 4:

1. "John Wick"
2. "Fury"
3. "Birdman"
4. "The Judge"
5. "Dracula Untold"
6. "Dumb and Dumber To"
7. "Gone Girl"
8. "Lucy"
9. "The Giver"
10. "The Homesman"

— Compiled by TNS

VIDEO GAMES

The Editors of Game Informer rank the top 10 games for February:

1. "Evolve," PS4, Xbox One, PC
2. "Dying Light," PS4, Xbox One, PC
3. "The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask 3D," 3DS
4. "Life Is Strange: Episode One" — Chrysalis," PS4, Xbox One, PS3, 360, PC
5. "The Talos Principle," PC
6. "Resident Evil HD Remaster," PS4, Xbox One, PS3, 360, PC
7. "#IDARB," Xbox One
8. "Hand of Fate," PC
9. "Saints Row: Gat out of Hell," PS4, Xbox One, PS3, 360, PC
10. "Grim Fandango Remastered," PS4, PC, Vita

— Compiled by TNS

APPS

Top 5 new free apps for Feb. 4:

1. CROSSROAD
2. Crissy Road
3. Big Win Football 2015
4. Bingo Fever-Valentine's Day
4. Texas Holdem — Live Poker 2
5. GO Keyboard — Emoji, Emoticons

Top 5 free apps for Feb. 4:

1. Trivia Crack
2. Facebook Messenger
3. Facebook
4. Instagram
5. Snapchat

— Compiled by TNS

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BUSINESS/WEATHER

TurboTax resumes processing state returns, ups security

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — TurboTax, the country's most popular do-it-yourself tax preparation software, halted processing state tax returns for about 24 hours because of a spike in fraudulent filings.

Intuit, the company behind TurboTax, said it resumed filing of state returns at about 6 p.m. Eastern time Friday with increased anti-fraud measures, a day after halting the process when state agencies reported a rise in filings with stolen personal information.

Most victims found out that a fraudulent tax return was submitted in their name when they either received a rejection notice from the IRS or when they spoke with Intuit spokeswoman Julie Miller.

There haven't been issues with federal returns to date because

the Internal Revenue Service has implemented stronger fraud detection policies, Miller said.

Intuit is working with security company Palantir to investigate the problem.

So far, there has been no security breach of Intuit's systems, the company said. Instead, it believes personal information was stolen elsewhere and used to file returns on TurboTax.

Miller linked the problem to recent security breaches at large companies. Just this week, Blue Cross Blue Shield insurer Anthem Inc. said hackers gained access to the Social Security numbers, names, addresses and other personal information of about 80 million people. It follows other security breaches at JPMorgan Chase and several retailers, including Home Depot and Target.

"You have a pretty rich pool of data out there in the world," Miller said.

Intuit said state tax returns already filed when the halt began on Thursday will be transmitted as soon as possible.

TurboTax processed 30 million tax returns last year, Miller said. Rival H&R Block Inc., which also sells tax preparation software, did not respond to a request for comment.

Another tax preparer, Liberty Tax Inc., said it is letting TurboTax customers file state returns for free at its more than 4,000 locations around the country. Jackson Hewitt Tax Service also said TurboTax customers who were unable to file their state returns could file for free through its online service. Shares of Intuit Inc., based in



PAUL SANUMA/AP

A customer looks at a copy of TurboTax on sale at Costco in Mountain View, Calif., in January 2013.

Mountain View, Calif., fell \$3.88, or 4.2 percent, to close at \$87.83 Friday.

MARKET WATCH

Feb. 6, 2015

Dow Jones industrials	-60.59
Nasdaq composite	-20.70
Standard & Poor's 500	-7.05
Russell 2000	-3.24
	1,205.46

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Feb. 9)	\$1.1738
Dollar buys (Feb. 9)	€0.8519
British pound (Feb. 9)	\$1.57
Japanese yen (Feb. 9)	\$114.00
South Korean won (Feb. 9)	1,061.00

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.5232/0.6565
Canada (dollar)	1.2530
China (Yuan)	6.2366
Denmark (Krone)	6.5741
Egypt (Pound)	7.6343
Euro	\$1.1318/0.8835
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7528
Hungary (Forint)	270.41
Israel (Shekel)	3.8987
Japan (Yen)	112.81
Kuwait (Dinar)	6.2955
Norway (Krone)	7.6281
Philippines (Peso)	44.34
Poland (Zloty)	3.67
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7208
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3542
South Korea (Won)	1,098.24
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9269
Thailand (Bath)	32.65
Turkey (New Lira)	1.4812

(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., currencies of countries other than the United States) check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	4.75
Federal funds market rate	0.12
3-month bill	0.02
30-year bond	2.53

WEATHER OUTLOOK

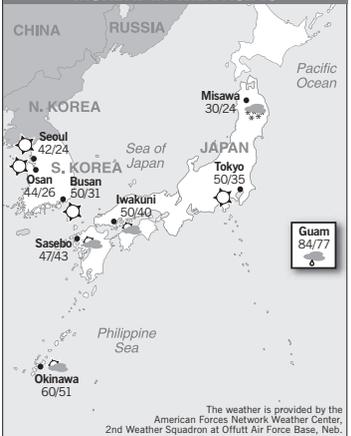
SUNDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



SUNDAY IN EUROPE



MONDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

Sunday's US temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	Chatanooga	59	47	Cldy	Fort Wayne	41	23	Rain	Louisville	55	39	Cldy	Pocatello	56	37	Pldy	Sioux City	42	27	Cldy
Ablene, Tex	74	40	Cir	Cheyenne	60	35	Cir	Fresno	67	48	Rain	Lubbock	73	36	Cir	Portland, Maine	12	12	Snow	Sioux Falls	41	27	Cldy
Akron, Ohio	43	24	Rain	Chicago	36	21	Rain	Goodland	67	33	Cir	Macon	66	50	Cir	Portland, Ore.	53	48	Rain	South Bend	40	22	Cldy
Albany, N.Y.	25	21	Snow	Cincinnati	52	34	Rain	Grand Junction	52	33	Pldy	Madison	57	34	Cldy	Providence	32	26	Snow	Spartanburg	50	41	Cldy
Albuquerque	66	35	Cir	Cleveland	42	21	Rain	Grand Rapids	35	16	Cldy	Medford	58	46	Rain	Pueblo	70	30	Cir	Springfield, Ill.	45	28	Cldy
Allentown, Pa.	41	31	Cldy	Colorado Springs	64	33	Pldy	Great Falls	58	36	Pldy	Memphis	64	47	Cldy	Raleigh-Durham	66	48	Cldy	Springfield, Mo.	64	36	Pldy
Amarillo	68	38	Cir	Columbia, S.C.	73	48	Cir	Green Bay	25	12	Cldy	Miami Beach	78	64	Cir	Rapid City	61	39	Pldy	St. Louis	71	60	Cir
Anchorage	15	8	Cldy	Columbus, Ga.	65	52	Pldy	Greensboro, N.C.	44	26	Cir	Midland-Odessa	73	35	Cir	Reno	59	39	Cir	Tallahassee	71	52	Cir
Asheville	62	45	Pldy	Columbus, Ohio	49	27	Rain	Harrisburg	44	20	Cldy	Milwaukee	33	18	Cldy	Richmond	66	47	Cir	Tampa	73	57	Cir
Atlanta	62	49	Pldy	Concord, N.H.	17	14	Snow	Hartford	59	27	Pldy	Mpls-St Paul	31	17	Cldy	Roanoke	65	48	Cir	Toledo	42	20	Rain
Atlantic City	48	40	Cldy	Corpus Christi	79	54	Pldy	Helena	57	32	Pldy	Missoula	45	29	Cldy	Rochester	26	16	Snow	Topeka	60	32	Cir
Austin	69	49	Pldy	Dallas-Ft Worth	74	45	Pldy	Honolulu	78	68	Cir	Mobile	52	32	Pldy	Rockford	47	18	Cir	Wichita	69	37	Rain
Baltimore	56	40	Cldy	Dayton	49	27	Rain	Houston	78	55	Pldy	Montgomery	71	50	Pldy	Sacramento	63	51	Rain	Tulsa	72	40	Cir
Baton Rouge	73	56	Cldy	Daytona Beach	72	52	Pldy	Huntsville	60	47	Cldy	Nashville	61	43	Cldy	St. Louis	63	35	Cldy	Tupelo	64	47	Cldy
Billings	60	34	Pldy	Denver	65	38	Cir	Indianapolis	49	28	Cldy	New Orleans	74	56	Pldy	St. Petersburg	71	60	Cir	Waco	70	23	Snow
Birmingham	65	49	Pldy	Des Moines	42	27	Cldy	Jackson, Miss.	72	50	Cldy	New York City	40	30	Cldy	St. Thomas	84	77	Pldy	Washington	58	45	Cldy
Bismarck	35	22	Cldy	Detroit	39	28	Snow	Jacksonville	72	48	Cldy	Newark	43	30	Cldy	Salem, Ore.	55	49	Rain	W. Palm Beach	77	62	Cldy
Boise	61	49	Cldy	Duluth	22	7	Cldy	Juneau	25	22	Snow	Norfolk, Va.	63	47	Cir	Salt Lake City	60	44	Cir	Wichita Falls	69	37	Cir
Boston	29	24	Snow	El Paso	74	42	Cir	Kansas City	55	31	Pldy	North Platte	61	26	Cir	San Angelo	76	42	Cir	Wichita Falls	77	39	Cir
Bridgeport	64	24	Cldy	Elkins	52	38	Cldy	Key West	54	41	Cldy	Okla.ahoma City	64	38	Cir	San Antonio	79	51	Pldy	Wilkes-Barre	36	31	Snow
Brownsville	82	57	Cir	Erie	39	19	Rain	Knoxville	58	45	Cir	Omaha	46	27	Cldy	San Diego	71	58	Pldy	Wilmington, Del.	49	39	Cldy
Buffalo	27	15	Snow	Eugene	56	50	Rain	Lake Charles	73	54	Cldy	Orlando	76	54	Pldy	San Francisco	64	54	Rain	Yakima	49	31	Rain
Burlington, Vt.	16	12	Pldy	Fairbanks	57	35	Cldy	Lansing	35	16	Snow	Paducah	59	38	Cldy	San Jose	67	48	Rain	Youngstown	41	23	Snow
Caribou, Maine	4	-10	Cir	Fargo	15	-33	Cir	Las Vegas	72	52	Pldy	Piedmont	61	46	Cldy	Santa Fe	63	29	Cir				
Casper, Wyo.	54	35	Cir	Flagstaff	61	25	Cir	Lexington	54	41	Cldy	Pearla	39	24	Cir	St. Marie	51	-1	Cldy				
Charleston, S.C.	69	48	Cir	Flagstaff	61	25	Cir	Lincoln	51	28	Pldy	Philadelphia	48	37	Cir	Savannah	70	49	Cir				
Charleston, W.Va.	59	42	Cldy	Ft. Worth	37	16	Snow	Little Rock	66	44	Cldy	Phoenix	84	56	Cir	Seattle	57	49	Cir				
Charlotte, N.C.	66	51	Cir	Fort Smith	72	41	Pldy	Los Angeles	73	58	Cldy	Pittsburgh	44	29	Rain	Shreveport	71	48	Cldy				

National temperature extremes

Hi: Fri., '85, Bakersfield, Calif., and Yuma, Ariz.
Lo: Fri., '29, San Rancak, N.Y.

SPORTS BRIEFS

NIT to experiment with different rules

The Associated Press

With scoring plunging to historic lows, the NCAA said Friday it will experiment with a shorter shot clock at this year's NIT to see if that can jumpstart college basketball's lagging offense.

The tournament will feature a 30-second shot clock instead of the traditional 35-second clock that has been in play since 1993, with officials examining the effect on the games and taking the data to the men's basketball rules committee for review in May.

"Without actually implementing it in a game, you're just talking about it in theory," Dan Gavitt, NCAA vice president of men's basketball championships, said on Friday. "By actually putting it in a game with good teams, great coaches, competitive situations over a three-week time period, you'll actually get results and data that can either verify some of your theories or dispute them."

The NCAA will also expand the restricted area under the basket from 3 feet to 4 feet to see if it curbs the amount of collisions at the rim. Coaches who play in the tournament will be surveyed about their experience, and the rules committee will look at all the data to consider future rules changes, which could be adopted as soon as May if they gain enough support.

Last year, Division I men's teams averaged 67.5 points per game, the lowest number since the 1951-52 season. The 35-second clock and a more physical style of play that has evolved over time are among the biggest reasons coaches point to when identifying reasons for the decline.

A-rod, Yanks to meet before spring training

NEW YORK — Alex Rodriguez plans to meet with New York Yankees' officials before reporting to spring training.



David Kamp/AP

New York Yankees third baseman Alex Rodriguez plans to meet with team officials before reporting to spring training. Having served a one-season suspension for violations of baseball's drug agreement and labor contract, Rodriguez is due to start workouts at the team's spring training complex on Feb. 26.

Having served a one-season suspension for violations of baseball's drug agreement and labor contract, Rodriguez is due to start workouts at the team's spring training complex on Feb. 26. His relationship with some team officials was strained in 2013 as he tried to avoid a suspension.

Yankees general manager Brian Cashman, speaking to reporters before the Connecticut Sports Foundation dinner Friday in Uncasville, said the planned meeting was discussed a day earlier when he and assistant general manager Jean Afterman spoke with Jim Sharp, a lawyer for Rodriguez. The intended meeting was first reported by the Boston Globe.

"Alex considers everything

with the Yankees to be family business, and family business stays within the family," spokesman Ron Berkowitz said in an email.

In other baseball news:

■ Free agent outfielder Nate Schierholtz has agreed to a minor league contract with the Texas Rangers after hitting a career-worst .195 last year.

Schierholtz, who turns 31 on Feb. 15, split last season with the Cubs and Washington, which agreed to a deal on Aug. 18, four days after Chicago released him.

■ Oakland Athletics pitcher Jarrod Parker has lost his salary arbitration case after missing the entire 2014 season.

Parker was given an \$850,000 salary on Saturday by Eliza-

beth Neumeier, Robert Herzog and Mark Irvings instead of the \$1.7 million he sought. The sides argued their positions a day earlier.

Arkansas extends Biellema's contract

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. — Arkansas has seen enough of Bret Biellema in two seasons to make it want the former Wisconsin coach to stick around a while longer.

Following its first winning season in three years, the school announced the signing of its football coach to a two-year contract extension on Saturday, keeping Biellema with the Razorbacks through 2020.

Biellema, who led to the Razorbacks to a 7-6 season and their first bowl game in three seasons last year, will also receive a raise from his previous \$3.2 million salary making an average of \$4.25 million annually over the six-year deal. He'll make \$4 million this year with annual raises of \$100,000 after that, culminating with a base salary of \$4.5 million in 2020.

Maple Leafs trade 2 to Lightning for draft pick

TORONTO — The Toronto Maple Leafs traded forwards Carter Ashton and David Broll to the Tampa Bay Lightning on Friday for a conditional seventh-round pick in 2016.

Ashton, a 2009 first-round draft pick, has no points in seven games this season for the Lightning and served a 20-game suspension for performance-enhancing drugs.

Broll, a sixth-rounder in 2011, played five games for Toronto last season and has split time this season between the AHL's Marlies and ECHL's Orlando Solar Bears.

By unloading Ashton and Broll, the Leafs cleared space that allows them to acquire two more

contracts before the March 2 trade deadline. The NHL limit is 50, and this trade gets them to 48.

In other NHL news: ■ Minnesota Wild forward Matt Cooke will miss the next six weeks after undergoing surgery to address a sports hernia.

Cooke had surgery Friday in St. Louis.

Cooke missed 22 games earlier this season with a hip injury. The team believes the sports hernia may have developed as a result of Cooke playing through pain in his hip.

Boston mayor meets with Olympic opposition

BOSTON — Boston Mayor Marty Walsh met with the group No Boston Olympics on Friday night to discuss its concerns about bringing the 2024 Summer Games to the city.

Chris Dempsey, one of the group's founders, told The Associated Press that the meeting was productive and friendly.

"We feel as if we have a lot of common ground with the mayor," Dempsey said after the meeting that lasted more than an hour. "Things like protecting taxpayers, making sure the bid is something that works for the city and for neighborhoods, even improving the process and making it more transparent."

The meeting came one day after the first of nine scheduled sessions to allow residents to have their say. Several hundred people crowded into a room at Suffolk Law School near the Boston Common on Thursday night, with most of them expressing doubts about the benefits of hosting an Olympics.

The mayor repeated his promise that no taxpayer money would go to the operation of the games. But he made the case that being an Olympic city would give Boston a boost in tourism and international stature.

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GOLF

Mickelson joins other big names missing cut

English leads by 2 strokes at Farmers

By DOUG FERGUSON
The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Tiger Woods is gone from Torrey Pines, and Phil Mickelson joined him Friday by missing the cut.

In a tournament that quickly lost a big chunk of its star power, Harris English played another bogey-free round for a 6-under 66 on the North Course to build a two-shot lead Friday in the Farmers Insurance Open.

Mickelson, who worked hard to get into shape in the offseason and was as optimistic as ever, was done in by his short game. The best he could manage was a 72 on the North Course, and he missed the cut by two shots. It was the first time since 2002 that Mickelson missed the cut in back-to-back weeks on the PGA Tour.

Woods withdrew after 11 holes Thursday, citing tightness in his lower back. For the first time, Woods and Mickelson failed to make the cut in the same tournament in consecutive weeks on the PGA Tour.

"My putting is beyond pathetic," Mickelson said. "And if I can't get back to the levels of 2013, I'm not sure what I'm going to do. Because this is very frustrating."

Mickelson is not playing the last two weeks of the West Coast Swing because his kids are on spring break.

He was in good company leaving early. Justin Rose, at No. 5 the highest-ranked player at Torrey Pines, also shot 70 on the North and missed the cut. So did Hideki Matsuyama, who three-putted for par on the closing hole on the South Course to miss by one shot; Jordan Spieth, who needed an eagle on the 18th on the South to make the cut and hit it in the water; and Dustin Johnson, playing for the first time since a six-month break to get professional help for "personal challenges."

"The last two days, I think normally I probably would be at least 5 or 6 under right now instead of even par," Johnson said. "But I'm happy with where it's at. Just a little rusty, that's all."

Even those who are still around had a tough time, particularly Phoenix Open winner Brooks Koepka.



PHOTOS BY GREGORY BULL/AP



Above: Harris English, right, speaks with his caddie, Brian Smith, before hitting his tee shot on the 18th hole of the north course during the second round of the Farmers Insurance Open on Friday in San Diego. Left: Phil Mickelson tips his hat after finishing on the ninth hole of the north course. While English found himself with a two-shot lead heading into the weekend, Mickelson will be heading home after missing the cut for a second straight week.

He reached the par-5 18th in two on the South Course and a two-putt birdie would have put him three shots out of the lead. Koepka missed his 6-foot birdie attempt, and then missed a pair of 2 1/2-foot putts and wound up five-putting for double bogey. That gave him a 74 and he was six shots behind.

English was at 10-under 134, two shots ahead of Nick Watney (65), Jhonattan Vegas (69) and Martin Laird, who had another 68. Laird was tied for the lead with two holes to play in Phoenix last week until a bogey-double bogey finish.

Most pleasing to English was a clean

card going into the weekend. He was on the ropes early on Thursday he chipped through the green on the par-3 11th hole on the South and was facing certain bogey. But he chipped in for par, and he has only had a few close calls with bogey ever since.

Jimmy Walker (66), Jason Day (65) and Ian Poulter (71) led a large group at 6-under 138. The cut was at 1-under 143.

Still, nothing summed up the day — the entire week — than when Mickelson finished his hole. A stream of fans four-wide stretched for 100 yards on the path toward the exit, dozens of them wearing blue sleeved shirts that read, "Team Phil."

Roundup

Wiesberger leads Malaysian Open

The Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — Bernd Wiesberger is well positioned to cap a superb month of golf with victory in the Malaysian Open after shooting a 9-under 63 on Saturday, taking a two-shot lead going into the final round.

He moved to 17-under 199 overall at Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club, two strokes ahead of Spain's Alejandro Canizares, who finished his roller-coaster round eagle-birdie-bogey to card a 68.

Defending champion Lee Westwood struggled for much of the round before picking up birdies on his final two holes to sit three off the pace following a 69.

The Englishman is in a tie for

third on 14-under alongside compatriot Paul Waring, who carded a 65 featuring two eagles, six birdies and three bogeys.

The round of the day belonged to Indian Anirban Lahiri, who produced a bogey-free 62 that put him in outright fifth on 12-under.

They are all chasing the white-hot Wiesberger, who has started 2015 with a tied sixth in Abu Dhabi, third in Qatar and tied fourth at the Dubai Desert Classic to move into the world's top 50 for the first time.

PGA Tour: Brittany Lincicome and Sun Young Yoo topped the leaderboard in the wind-swept Bahamas LPGA Classic when second-round play was suspended because of darkness.

In wind gusting to 35-40 mph, Yoo completed a first-round 70 and shot 69 in the second to match Lincicome at 7 under on Atlantis Resort's Ocean Club course.

Lincicome was 2 under in the second round with 13 holes left. She shot a 68 on Thursday.

After rain delayed play Thursday, only half of the players were able to finish the second round Friday. In May 2013, the inaugural event was reduced to three 12-hole rounds because of flooding.

Second-ranked Inbee Park, Dori Carter, Jenny Shin, Kelly Shon were 6 under. Shin and Shon shot 71, Carter had a 72, and Park was 1 under for the round with 13 holes left.

Lydia Ko, playing her first

event since taking the No. 1 spot in the world ranking, was 3 under after rounds of 72 and 71. The 17-year-old New Zealander tied for second last week in the season-opening event in Florida, to break Tiger Woods' record as the youngest player to reach No. 1.

Champions Tour: Tom Pernice Jr. closed with a double bogey for a 6-under 66 and a share of the first-round lead with Paul Goydos and Bart Bryant at the Allianz Championship in Boca Raton, Fla.

Pernice, second behind Rocco Mediate two years ago at Broken Sound, hooked his drive into the water on the difficult par-4 ninth. After a drop, he hit a 3-wood short of the green and missed a 9-foot putt.



JOSHUA PAUL/AP

Bernd Wiesberger tees off on the second hole during the third round of the Malaysian Open at Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Saturday.

NFL



BRIAN PETERSON, STAR TRIBUNE/AP

Adrian Peterson signs a poster for Brady Vixayvong of Eagen as he and his wife Ashley leave the federal court house in Minneapolis. The NFL Players Association's attempt to have Minnesota Vikings running back Adrian Peterson reinstated has been taken under advisement by a federal judge. U.S. District Judge David Doty heard arguments from the NFLPA and the NFL on Friday.

Judge takes Peterson arbitration arguments under advisement

By **DAVE CAMPBELL**
The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — The latest dispute between the NFL Players Association and the NFL over the league's personal conduct policy was aired Friday in federal court, as Adrian Peterson listened to arguments about his suspension that the union is trying to have overturned.

"I felt like I got a fair hearing, for once," the Minnesota Vikings running back said to reporters on his way out.

It was more criticism of the disciplinary process that Peterson and the union have derided as arbitrary and unfair since punishment was levied by the NFL after the running back was charged in a child abuse case involving his son. He resolved the case with a plea bargain last year.

Peterson did not speak at the hour-long hearing in front of U.S. District Judge David Doty, who has overseen much of the league's labor matters over the past three decades. Doty took under advisement the NFLPA's petition to nullify the decision by arbitrator Harold Henderson to reject Peterson's appeal of the suspension that is in effect through at least April 15.

Doty did not provide a timetable for his decision. "I always like good arguments. They make my job harder, but it's always good," Doty told the attorneys in attendance.

The basis of the NFLPA's argument is that the enhanced six-game punishment for players involved with domestic violence, announced in August and finalized in December, was unfairly and retroactively applied to Peterson. The injuries to his 4-year-old son occurred in May.

Peterson and the union would prefer a ruling before March 10, when the league's free agency and trading period starts. If the Vikings decide not to

bring Peterson back for the 2015 season at his scheduled \$12.75 million salary, the process of trading or releasing him or redoing his contract will be complicated by the expiration of the punishment put in place by Commissioner Roger Goodell.

Peterson, for his part, said he wants to return to the Vikings.

"Of course," was his answer to that question, smiling as he turned to walk with his wife and agent toward their waiting ride.

NFLPA attorney Jeffrey Kessler accused Henderson, a former league executive, of being biased and straying from the collective bargaining agreement in his ruling on the appeal with "his own brand of industrial justice."

The NFL's primary response to the claims is that the collective bargaining agreement holds power over the dispute, not the court. Judges rarely overrule arbitration decisions.

Dan Nash, a lawyer for the league, told Doty that Kessler was simply trying to "re-litigate" the merits of Peterson's appeal that were already rejected by Henderson.

"Nash called the retroactivity argument 'a red herring' and said proving 'evident partiality' by Henderson was impossible.

On one point, Doty pressed Nash about league executive Troy Vincent's conversation with Peterson while the disciplinary process was unfolding. "Don't my lying eyes tell me that Mr. Vincent told Mr. Peterson that he was going to get two games?" Doty asked.

The union's claim is that Vincent told Peterson he'd only receive a two-game suspension under the old policy. But Vincent testified to Henderson during the appeal hearing that he did not make that guarantee. Nash argued that, even if Vincent's promise were true, it was irrelevant because of a lack of evidence that Peterson acted on that advice.

Briefly

Abuse claim made against RB Randle

Wire reports

Police say they are investigating a domestic abuse claim against Dallas Cowboys running back Joseph Randle made by an ex-girlfriend a day after his arrest at a Kansas hotel on a drug charge.

The 22-year-old mother of Randle's child filed for a protective order Wednesday in district court in Wichita, Kan., saying the incident occurred the same night the 23-year-old Randle was arrested on a marijuana possession charge at a hotel after a woman called 911.

He was not taken into custody Tuesday on the drug charge. No charges related to domestic violence have been filed.

Police dropped the marijuana charge Friday, but spokesman Lt. James Espinoza says other charges are possible.

Bush denies involvement in Sharper case

The lawyer for Reggie Bush said the Lions running back denies allegations made in a Louisiana courtroom recently that he gave ecstasy to women while hanging out with accused rapist Darren Sharper in Las Vegas.

"This is outrageous," Bush's California-based attorney Shawn Holley told the Free Press. "I can say to you on the record that Reggie adamantly, vehemently and unequivocally denies all of the statements in that article. We are demanding a retraction from The

Advocate and Reggie is considering taking legal action."

Lions on clock to re-sign Suh after contract voids

The final year of Ndamukong Suh's rookie contract officially voided Friday, and now the Detroit Lions are on the clock to re-sign their all-pro defensive tackle.

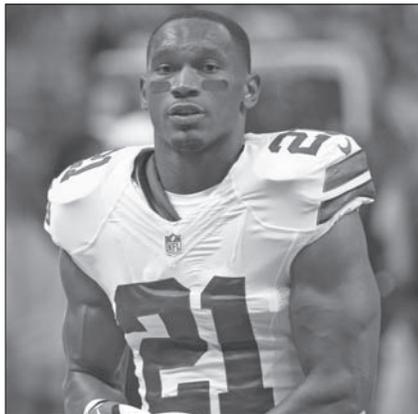
The Lions are the only team that can officially talk contract details with Suh until the three-day free agent negotiating period opens March 7.

RB Bell gets probation for drug charges

Pittsburgh Steelers running back Le'Veon Bell was admitted into a court program Friday morning that, if completed successfully, will lead to the marijuana charges filed against him last summer being dismissed.

Bell, 22, was admitted into the Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition program before Common Pleas Judge Robert C. Gallo. The ARD program is for first-time offenders of nonviolent crimes, where charges can be dismissed and expunged if the defendant fulfills certain requirements.

The 15-month probationary program will require Bell to abstain from drugs and alcohol, complete any recommended treatment, pay a \$100 fee and court costs and complete a safe driving class.



DAVE MARTIN/AP

Wichita police have dropped a drug charge against Dallas running back Joseph Randle, according to police spokesman Lt. James Espinoza. Randle is now facing a domestic abuse claim from his ex-girlfriend, who says the incident took place the same night the 23-year-old Randle was arrested on a marijuana possession charge at a hotel after a woman called 911.

NHL



JAY LAPRETE/AP

Columbus' Curtis McElhinney, left, makes a save against St. Louis' Joakim Windstrom during the third period of Friday's game in Columbus, Ohio. The Blue Jackets beat the Blues 7-1.

Roundup

Columbus ends St. Louis' point streak at 13 games

The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — In a game matching teams going in different directions, everything got turned upside down.

Nick Foligno set a career high with his 19th and 20th goals of the season and also had an assist, and the Columbus Blue Jackets had their most productive game in a 7-1 victory over the St. Louis Blues on Friday night.

The defeat ended the Blues' seven-game winning streak and franchise-record 13-game point streak (12-0-1) — and the Blue Jackets' three-game skid. "We're not in any position to relax," Foligno said of the Blue Jackets, who began the night closer to the worst record in the NHL than the last playoff spot. "That's honestly the momentum now. We don't have the room to take a shift off, a period off. We need to continue to work and to try and win."

Ryan Johansen scored his first NHL short-handed goal, Corey Tropp tallied for the first time in 66 games and Cam Atkinson, Matt Calvert and Scott Hartnell also scored for Columbus. Curtis McElhinney had 32 saves and Brandon Dubinsky had two assists. Johansen also had two assists.

St. Louis started the night just two points behind Anaheim for the best record in the league.

"We knew it was going to be a tall task," Dubinsky said. "We came out and played the way we're capable."

Riddled by injuries, the Blue Jackets had been stumbling for the last month. They had lost four of their last five at home. The seven goals were a season-high.

"I don't know if we needed necessarily a 7-1 game, but we needed a win," coach Todd Richards said. "They're a very, very good hockey team. Obviously, to win 7-1 leaves you with a good feeling."

Blues coach Ken Hitchcock had a decidedly bad feeling. "That was a rested team. They outplayed us. We looked unfocused at times," he said. "We've kind of trended this way for the last three games. It caught up to us. This team finished us off."

Devils 4, Maple Leafs 1: Patrik Elias scored his 400th career goal and host New Jersey sent Toronto to a franchise-record 11th straight loss.

Cory Schneider had 33 saves, giving up a third-period power-play goal to Tyler Bozak. Tuomo Ruutu, Steve Bernier and Jaromir Jagr also scored as the streaking Devils won their third straight

for the first time since the start of the season and improved to 8-2-2 in the last dozen games.

Capitals 3, Ducks 2 (SO): Evgeny Kuznetsov and Nicklas Backstrom scored shootout goals, while Philipp Grubauer stopped 23 shots in his first NHL action of the season and host Washington defeated Anaheim.

After Alex Ovechkin, Washington's third shooter, failed to score, Anaheim had a chance to extend the game. But Grubauer stopped Ryan Kesler. Jakob Silfverberg scored the Ducks' lone shootout goal.

Blackhawks 2, Jets 1 (OT): Brandon Saad scored in overtime to lift visiting Chicago.

Patrick Kane also scored for the Blackhawks, while Corey Crawford made 20 saves.

Mark Scheifele scored for the Jets, who entered on a 0-4-1 skid since the All-Star break and were outscored 23-11 during that span.

Penguins 4, Flames 0: Marc-Andre Fleury got his NHL-leading eighth shutout of the season and Sidney Crosby contributed two goals and an assist for visiting Pittsburgh.

David Perron and Brandon Sutter also scored for Pittsburgh, which moved past the Islanders atop the Metropolitan Division.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division		Central Division		Pacific Division			
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Tampa Bay	53	33	13	4	72	155	129
Detroit	51	30	12	9	69	152	129
Montreal	52	27	17	4	67	132	114
Boston	51	27	17	7	61	136	127
Florida	50	27	17	2	60	135	142
Ottawa	50	20	21	9	49	138	140
Toronto	53	22	27	4	48	148	164
Buffalo	51	24	24	3	53	97	184

Western Conference

Central Division		Pacific Division					
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	
Nashville	51	33	12	4	72	155	129
St. Louis	52	34	14	4	72	166	138
Chicago	52	32	18	2	66	157	119
Winnipeg	54	26	18	10	62	147	142
Colorado	52	27	19	11	62	124	166
Minnesota	50	24	20	6	54	138	140
Dallas	51	29	20	8	54	162	167

Friday's games
 Washington 3, Anaheim 2, SO
 New Jersey 4, Toronto 1
 Columbus 7, St. Louis 1
 Chicago 2, Winnipeg 1, OT
 Pittsburgh 4, Calgary 0

Saturday's games
 N.Y. Rangers at Nashville
 Los Angeles at Tampa Bay
 N.Y. Islanders at Boston
 Dallas at Buffalo
 Edmonton at Toronto
 New Jersey at Montreal
 Columbus at Ottawa
 Colorado at Minnesota
 Detroit at Arizona
 Pittsburgh at Vancouver
 Carolina at San Jose

Sunday's games
 Chicago at St. Louis
 Nashville at Florida
 Philadelphia at Washington
 N.Y. Islanders at Buffalo
 Anaheim at Tampa Bay
 Dallas at N.Y. Rangers
 Colorado at Winnipeg
 Montreal at Boston

Monday's games
 Edmonton at New Jersey
 Los Angeles at Columbus
 Vancouver at Minnesota
 Arizona at Chicago
 Calgary at San Jose

Friday

Blackhawks 2, Jets 1 (OT)	
Chicago	0 1 0 1-2
Winnipeg	1 0 0 0-1

First Period—1, Winnipeg, Scheifele 8 (Perreault), 4:17.
Second Period—2, Chicago, PKane 26 (Richards, Sharp), 2:50.

Overtime—3, Chicago, Saad 16 (PKane, Rozelle), 9:01.
Shots on Goal—Chicago 8-6-6-2-22, Winnipeg 9-2-3-0-22.

Power-play opportunities—Chicago 0 of 3; Calgary 0 of 4.
Goals—Chicago, Crawford 20-12-2 (2, shots-20 save), Winnipeg, Hutchinson 14-7-2 (2, shots-17 save).
A—15,016 (15,004), T—2:32.

Devils 4, Maple Leafs 1

Washington won shootout 2-1	
Toronto	0 0 1-1
New Jersey	4 0 1-4

First Period—1, New Jersey, Kautz 6 (Fraser, Tootoo), 9:32.
Second Period—2, Washington, Elias 7 (Zajac, Merrill), 1:33, 3, New Jersey, S.Bernier 5 (Larsson, Gomez), 13:31.
Third Period—4, Toronto, Bozak 15 (Kessel, Gardiner), 11:51 (pp), 5, New Jersey, Jaros 11 (Larsson), 17:15.

Shots on Goal—Toronto 10-11-13-34, New Jersey 15-15-17.
Power-play opportunities—Toronto 1 of 2, New Jersey 0 of 1.
Goals—Toronto, Reimer 6-11-0 (17 shots-13 saves), New Jersey, Schneider 19-15 (34-33).
A—15,594 (17,625), T—2:19.

Capitals 3, Ducks 2 (SO)

Anheim won shootout 1-0	
Washington	1 0 1 0-2
Washington	0 1 1 0-3

First Period—1, Anheim, Kesler 15 (Silfverberg, Lindholm), 18:15 (pp).
Second Period—2, Washington, Chimer 5 (Kuznetsov, Brogauer), 4:15.
Third Period—3, Washington, Carlson 6 (Kuznetsov, Chimer), 10:44, 4, Anheim, Perry 23 (Kesler), 13:45.

Shootout—Anheim 1 (Silfverberg), New Jersey 0, Backstrom 6, Ovechkin (NG).
Shots on Goal—Anheim 10-7-6-2-25, Washington 6-12-13-3-34.
Power-play opportunities—Anheim 1 of 2; Washington 0 of 1.
Goals—Anheim, Bryzgalov 1-3-1 (34 shots-22 saves), Washington, Grubauer 1-0-0 (25-23).
A—18,506 (18,506), T—2:41.

Blue Jackets 7, Blues 1

St. Louis	
St. Louis	0 1 0-1
Columbus	2 3 2-7

First Period—1, Columbus, Foligno 19 (Dubinsky, Tropp), 10:44, 2, Columbus, Atkinson 10 (Hartnell, Johansen), 18:16.
Second Period—3, Columbus, Johansen 20 (Anisimov), 5:06 (sh), 4, Columbus, Tropp 1 (Tyrin, Foligno), 8:26, 5, St. Louis, Slesaty 10 (Bomsemster, Gunnarsson), 11:14 (pp), 6, Columbus, Foligno 20 (Wisniewski, Dubinsky), 15:17.

Third Period—7, Columbus, Calvert 7 (Johnson, Boti), 5:58, 8, Columbus, Hartnell 11 (Johansen), 15:21.
Shots on Goal—St. Louis 8-8-17-33, Columbus 8-16-3-30.

Power-play opportunities—St. Louis 1 of 4; Columbus 0 of 3.
Goals—St. Louis, Elliott 16-6-2 (14 shots-10 saves), Allen (8:26 second, 19-16), Columbus, McElhinney 6-8-1 (33-32).
A—16,321 (18,144), T—2:24.

Penguins 4, Flames 0

Calgary	
Calgary	2 1 1-4
Pittsburgh	0 0 0-0

First Period—1, Pittsburgh, Perry 13 (Crosby, Kunitz), 5:46, 2, Pittsburgh, Suter 11 (Despres, Scuderi), 18:10.
Second Period—3, Pittsburgh, Crosby 16 (Crosby, Kunitz), 4:17, 4, Pittsburgh, Crosby 17 (Kunitz, Letang), 5:17.
Third Period—0, Pittsburgh 11-12-7-30, Calgary 7-7-7-21.

Shots on Goal—Pittsburgh 11-12-7-30, Calgary 0 of 4.
Goals—Pittsburgh, Fleury 25-11-5 (21 shots-21 save), Calgary, Hiller 17-15-2 (24-20, 6), 15:39 (third, 6-6).
A—15,289 (15,289), T—2:22.

Calendar

Feb. 21 — Stadium Series: Los Angeles vs. San Jose at 8 p.m. at T-Mobile Arena, Calif.
 March 2 — NHL trade deadline.



LUIS M. ALVAREZ/AP

Washington's Jason Chimer, right, scores a goal against Anaheim goalie Ilya Bryzgalov during the second period of Friday's game in Washington. The Capitals won 3-2 in a shootout.

SKIING

Miller not sure if he'll race again

By Pat Graham
The Associated Press

BEAVER CREEK, Colo. — Bode Miller said if his crash at the world championships was indeed his last race he's all right with that because his career has been "an amazing ride."

In his first interview since surgery on his severed right hamstring tendon, Miller told The Associated Press on Friday he is still deciding whether to return next season. The 37-year-old skier and his wife have a baby due in May, and Miller doesn't want to race if he "can't commit the time and energy to get the preparation done."

"The preparation is pretty demanding, requires summers and requires unbelievable commitment to fitness and the dry-land program," he added. "That's just really hard to juggle with my priorities right now. I love racing. But I just don't know."

The six-time Olympic medalist sustained a deep cut when his ski sliced him in the crash during the super-G. Another cut inside severed the tendon. He tried to get doctors to sew up only the outside — and deal with the tendon later — so he could race Saturday in the downhill.

"If I was tougher than I am, I probably could've had them sew the thing up and leave the hamstring tendon completely cut," Miller said.

Hard to question his toughness, Miller has made a living out of recovering from big crashes and injuries. He had back surgery in November, but returned in time to race at the worlds, his goal all along.

Miller was skiing well Thursday and in the lead and already looking toward the next gate. That's when the one he was passing proved troublesome.

"The gate just didn't break away," said Miller, who's from Franconia, N.H. "It really stuck on my arm and just jerked me down. It was so quick. I had no chance to make a recovery."

He skied down to the finish, waved to the crowd, hugged his family and then went to the hospital for surgery.

A day later, he was still feeling "a little banged up."

But he quickly added, "I would be skiing today if I hadn't got that tendon. When I first did it, I really thought I'd be OK. The cut they showed on TV? There was another cut inside of that one that cut the tendon in half. That was the deal breaker."



SHINICHIRO TANAKA, PENTAPHOTO/AP

Bode Miller crashes Thursday during the men's super-G at the alpine skiing world championships in Beaver Creek, Colo.



ALESSANDRO TROVATI/AP

Lindsey Vonn goes past a gate during the women's downhill Friday at the alpine skiing world championships in Beaver Creek, Colo.

Vonn tries to regroup

After 2 races, American has only a bronze

By Pat Graham
The Associated Press

BEAVER CREEK, Colo. — Two races, one medal for Lindsey Vonn. Not gold, either, but bronze.

This wasn't exactly the start the skier from nearby Vail was hoping for at the world championships in front of a home crowd.

"But there are still events left for Vonn. She announced after her fifth-place finish in the downhill Friday that she was going to compete in the giant slalom and the Alpine combined, an event that combines the times of one run of downhill and one of slalom. Never mind she hasn't been in a slalom race in years, she's going to give it a go."

Nothing to lose. "Although my chances of doing something there are slim, I will definitely be giving 110 percent effort," the 30-year-old Vonn said. "Hopefully, make a miracle happen."

So far, these worlds have been dominated by Slovenia's Tina Maze and Austria's Anna Fenninger. Maze won the downhill race by 0.2 seconds over Fenninger.

Three days earlier in the super-G, Fenninger held off Maze by 0.03 seconds.

"We are sharing our wins and good races," Fenninger said. "That's why we are good friends."

Maze has a chance to medal in every event at worlds. Should she do that, she will join some elite company.

At the 1999 worlds in Beaver Creek, Lasse Kjus of Norway captured five medals (two golds, three silvers). It's a lot of skiing and not many skiers attempt this sort of feat.

"I know I can do this. I knew that before I came here," Maze said. "Of course, it's in my mind, but thinking about it makes no sense. You have to go day by day, from discipline to discipline. I know I can get it."

Especially with Fenninger pushing her. "I was at the start, watching Anna skiing down. I knew she would be the one to beat," Maze said. "I saw her having really good run. If I come down (in first), it's a good sign. I don't know what Lindsey has, because (Thursday) she didn't have a good training."

It spilled over. She was off to a fast start up top, much to the delight of the capacity crowd. But she faded in the curvy middle section and wound up fifth.

"Honestly, I did the best I could," said Vonn, who won a bronze in the super-G, the only medal the Americans have through three races. "I fought the whole way down. I was so focused. I visualized the course a thousand times. It just wasn't a great run. It was a good run, but not a top-five-worthy run. There's not a lot to be sad about."



Marco Trovati/AP

Slovenia's Tina Maze celebrates on the podium after winning the women's downhill. It was her second medal after winning silver in the super-G.

NBA



JOHN BAZEMORE/AP

Hawks center Al Horford is fouled by Golden State center Marreese Speights as he drives to the basket on Friday in Atlanta. Horford had 12 points and 14 rebounds as the Hawks topped the Warriors 124-116 in a showdown between the NBA's two conference leaders.

Roundup

Hawks take down Warriors

Atlanta prevails in showdown between conference leaders

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The Atlanta Hawks climbed back to the top of the NBA standings by leaning on their depth.

Jeff Teague scored 23 points and the Atlanta Hawks overcame Golden State's one-two backcourt punch with balance, beating the Warriors 124-116 on Friday night in a showdown between the NBA's two conference leaders. Seven Hawks scored in double figures.

"I think we share the ball more than they do," said Atlanta's Dennis Schroder, who had nine points and seven assists off the bench. "I think that's why we won the game tonight."

The anticipated matchup did not disappoint. It was tied 52-all at halftime and Atlanta led by four entering the final period.

Back-to-back three-pointers by Mike Scott and Kyle Korver, who each had 17 points, helped stretch the lead.

The Hawks (42-9, 824) passed the Warriors (39-9, 813) for the league's best record.

It was tempting for all — with the possible exception of Hawks coach Mike Budenholzer — to view the game as a possible NBA Finals preview.

"I don't think one bit about that," Budenholzer said without a smile after the game.

The Warriors leaned on their one-two punch of Klay Thompson, who had 29 points, and Stephen Curry, who had 26 with nine assists. Golden State had only two other scorers in double figures.

Al Horford had 12 points and 14 rebounds, despite playing only eight minutes in the second half due to foul trouble, and Paul Millsap had 21.

Nine of the 11 points Teague scored in the final frame came on free throws.

"They were good," said Warriors coach Steve Kerr. "They were better than us. We broke down defensively. They had a lot to do with that because of

the way they stretch you out."

Timberwolves 90, Grizzlies 89: Ricky Rubio shook off an ankle injury in the fourth quarter to score eight points in the final 1:47 and host Minnesota snapped Memphis' winning streak at eight.

Pacers 103, Cavaliers 99: C.J. Miles had 26 points, George Hill converted a key four-point play and host Indiana ended Cleveland's winning streak at 12 games.

Spurs 98, Heat 85: Kawhi Leonard had 24 points and his team beat visiting Miami in their first meeting since San Antonio's victory in the NBA Finals.

Nets 92, Knicks 88: Brook Lopez had 22 points and nine rebounds, and Jarrett Jack made a clutch three-pointer with 13.8 seconds left to help Brooklyn beat visiting New York.

Rockets 117, Bucks 111: NBA scoring leader James Harden had 33 points and hit three of his team's 15 three-pointers in Houston's victory over visiting Milwaukee.

Raptors 123, Clippers 107: DeMar DeRozan scored 24 points, Kyle Lowry had 21 and host Toronto overcame a 20-point deficit to hand Los Angeles its fourth loss in five games.

Suns 100, Jazz 93: Marcus Morris scored 24 of his career-high 34 points in the first half and had a career-best 12 rebounds in host Phoenix's victory over Utah.

Magic 103, Lakers 97 (OT): Tobias Harris had a career-high 34 points and host Orlando snapped a 10-game losing streak with the victory over Los Angeles.

Celtics 107, 76ers 96: Jared Sullinger had 22 points, eight rebounds and seven assists to help Boston beat visiting Philadelphia for its third straight victory.

Pistons 98, Nuggets 88: Greg Monroe had 21 points and a career-high 21 rebounds and host Detroit cruised past slumping Denver.

Game: C Whiteside's 2K ratings on the rise

FROM BACK PAGE

"He DM'd me. I kind of responded back. I thought it was funny," Whiteside said of the Twitter exchange with the Heat turning their attention to Friday night's game against the San Antonio Spurs, the final stop on their four-game trip that got off to a shaky 1-2 start. Miami wound up losing to the Spurs, 98-85, to finish the trip 1-3.

Whiteside said the social-media fallout regarding his 2K passion has been another element of his unexpected celebrity.

"It's funny to me. I'm enjoying it," he said. "I've been playing 2K since I was young. And we always joked around, saying if my player was ever in the game, if you make it to the NBA, you want your rating to be as good as possible."

"So it's funny when you're playing as yourself on there, and you know you can do stuff, but you can't do it (in the game)."

That's why he requested a higher rating for his mid-range shooting, an unexpected aspect he has played in recent games. And he's not shy about taking them, with a jumper the only shot he missed during his 12-for-13 performance in the 102-101 loss to the Timberwolves.

Asked about the reply he received, Whiteside said, "It's just kind of what you do on the court. I hit a couple of mid-range jumpers, so he might add a better rating."

For now, Whiteside said he has been unable to unlock or secure any cheat codes of his video version, even as he cozies up to the game's staff.

"Nah, I need some, though," he said with a smile.

Spoelstra said the video-game Whiteside is the least of his concerns.

"As long as it's not stopping him from coming to work an hour and a half before, an hour and a half after," he said. "As long as he's committing to the player-development program that we talked about when I met with him eyeball to eyeball, I don't care about that."

"Maybe if he was doing that instead of committing to the player development, then I'd be."

And, no, he has never played the game.

"I have just heard from my nephew that the coach of the Miami Heat doesn't look like me," Spoelstra said. "He's eight."

Spoelstra explained that when it was his turn to have his image digitized for the game, the special equipment broke.

Until this return to the league and breakthrough, Whiteside said he had to create his own Hassan Whiteside video version. He did not go so far, though, as to scan his image into the game.

"Nah," he said, "I never did that. It was just another guy. I was a point guard, 6-7."



WINSLOW TOWNSON/AP

The Celtics' Marcus Thornton has his shot blocked by Miami center Hassan Whiteside. The strong play of Whiteside has been a pleasant surprise for the Heat after they signed the 25-year-old in November after he played last season in Lebanon and China.

SPORTS



Earning their wings
Hawks get statement win over
West-leading Warriors » **Page 31**

NBA

Rating game

Whiteside's quest for digital respect paying real dividends for Heat

By IRA WINDERMAN
The Sun Sentinel

The desire from Hassan Whiteside has been relentless — to make his mark, to prove his worth, to show how he rates — on NBA 2K15.

OK, perhaps it hasn't reached that point. And it's safe to say that making points with Miami Heat coach Erik Spoelstra remains the priority over the video game.

But since he mentioned his passion for the game — and improving his rating — the emerging center has decided to ride the video wave beyond nights such as Wednesday in Minnesota, when he had 24 points and 20 rebounds.

That had him this week going back and forth with NBA 2K digital-marketing manager Ronnie Singh about the expanding diversity of his repertoire.

From Whiteside's Twitter account: "I hope you see this mid range jumpers and lobs I got that."

From Singh's, "I see you bro."

Already, Whiteside's rating has gone from the upper 50s to the high 70s, a formula that is updated through the web based on the center's nightly performances.

SEE GAME ON PAGE 31

Miami Heat center Hassan Whiteside has been one of the surprises of the season so far in the NBA. The former NBA afterthought has raised eyebrows with his often dominant play, while lobbying to see his player rating rise accordingly in the hit video game NBA2K15.

DAVID SANTIAGO, EL NUEVO HERALD/TNS



Tweet relief



NBA 2K 2K15
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He deserved it, he asked (vine.co/v/OThZrDj97h) & he got it. Roster update live: @youngwhiteside has moved from 59->77 w/ eraser #NBA2K15

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English leads, Mickelson misses cut in San Diego » **Page 26**