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Free to Deployed Areas

Inside

MLB

Braves' Chris Johnson not resting on last season's success

Back page



MOVIES

'Lego Movie' has other toymakers scanning aisles for next hit flick

Page 18



MILITARY

Examination of Air Force nuclear commands underway

Page 6

FACES

Comeback time? Deen lands \$75M investment deal

Page 18



MARK LENNIHAN/AP

Pedestrians use umbrellas as they walk through falling snow in the Chinatown neighborhood of New York on Thursday. Snow and sleet blanketed the East Coast from North Carolina to New England a day after sleet, snow and ice bombarded the Southeast.

WINTER WALLOP

Storm packs punch along East Coast | Page 12

Afghanistan releases 65 prisoners

'Dangerous insurgents' freed Thursday despite international objections

By HEATH DRUZIN
Stars and Stripes

KABUL — The Afghan government released 65 prisoners the U.S. deems "dangerous insurgents" Thursday, outraging its international military allies and their straining relations with Washington.

It is the latest chapter in a long-running dispute between Kabul and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force over the fate of prisoners captured on the battlefield by international forces and held at a military prison at Bagram Air Field, north of Kabul. U.S. military officials have said those being released are responsible

'This decision, which appears to have been made based on political calculations and without regard for due process before the Afghan courts, is a major step backwards for the rule of law in Afghanistan.'

Anders Fogh Rasmussen
NATO secretary-general

for the deaths of scores of international and Afghan troops, as well as civilians.

"It remains the position of (U.S. Forces-Afghanistan) that violent criminals who harm Afghans and threaten the peace and security of Afghanistan should face

justice in the Afghan courts, where a fair and transparent trial would determine their guilt or innocence," read a statement released by U.S. military command late Wednesday.

SEE PRISONERS ON PAGE 2

In DODDS-Europe, 'flipped classrooms' flourish

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — It's not a typical math class.

The 30 students in the Ramstein High School blended classroom are in different grades, working toward credit in different courses — Algebra

I, Geometry and Algebra II.

In one corner, students take a quiz. Others watch an online instructional math video. Some finish homework packets, raise their hands with questions or collaborate with each other.

There are no classroom lectures.

The teacher, Mike Brust, never sits down. For 90 minutes,

he moves from one student and topic to the next, grading quizzes, checking work, discussing homework problems, answering questions.

The room is buzzing with energy — and chatter.

"Not only are they on different topics, but they're on different subjects," Brust said during a recent class. "I have a lot

more gray hair than I used to. It's pretty crazy."

Welcome to "flipped mastery," an innovative approach to learning that a group of Department of Defense Dependents Schools-Europe teachers in Germany are using to help more students succeed in math.

SEE FLIPPED ON PAGE 4

QUOTE
OF THE DAY

"We, in my family, thought of him as the 'cleanup man.' Instead, he gets in office and he soiled it more."

— Raineelle Smith, a New Orleans resident who said she had voted for former Mayor Ray Nagin, who was convicted Wednesday on 20 criminal counts

See story on Page 9

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SOON



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TODAY
IN STRIPES

- American Roundup 17
- Business 20
- Comics 21
- Crossword 21
- Faces 18
- Faith 16
- Opinion 22-23
- Sports 24-32
- Weather 20

MIDEAST

Afghan women rally to protest violence

The Associated Press

KABUL — Afghan women marched in Kabul on Thursday to protest violence against women and a new draft law that activists say will severely limit justice for victims of domestic abuse.

Afghanistan's parliament recently passed a new criminal procedure code that would ban people from testifying against their own relatives. The legislation — awaiting signature from President Hamid Karzai — has prompted statements of concern from human rights organizations, the U.S. European Union and others.

Legal experts say the law would

seriously curb prosecutions involving violence against women, where relatives are often the only witnesses.

About 100 women marched through Kabul on Thursday, chanting "no more violence" and "justice, justice." Afghan women's rights activist Laila Jafari said the women were urging parliament and law enforcement agencies to better understand the problems facing Afghan women.

The march was organized as part of a global campaign called "One Billion Rising for Justice" and served as a timely opportunity for the women to speak out against the controversial new legislation.



MARTIN KOZ/Special to Stars and Stripes

Love is a battlefield

Sandbags form a heart-shaped barrier around a mortar tube at Combat Outpost Zornik in eastern Afghanistan's Paktia province in July.

Prisoners: US claims release violates Afghan agreement

FROM FRONT PAGE

The Afghan government took custody of the prisoners nearly one year ago, when the U.S. military handed over Bagram's Parwan Prison after a bitter dispute with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who said foreign control of the prison violated Afghan sovereignty.

The U.S. has claimed the release violates an agreement the Afghan government made to gain control of the prison, wherein they guaranteed the prisoners would not be released without facing trial. Karzai has defended the release, saying there was not enough evidence to hold the prisoners.

NATO's top official also expressed concern over the Afghan decision to release the 65 detainees.

"This decision, which appears to have been made based on political calculations and without regard for due process before the Afghan courts, is a major step backwards for the rule of law in Afghanistan, and poses serious security concerns," NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said in a statement.

The House Armed Services Committee chairman, Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon, released a statement late Wednesday calling

the prisoner release a "direct contravention" of the agreement.

"I am, frankly, appalled by the Karzai Government's complete lack of respect for our troops, men and women who are fighting to keep Afghanistan standing," McKeon said.

The issue has been simmering for weeks, and the number of prisoners to be released has been a moving target, with back and forth statements from U.S. government and military officials as well as the Afghan government.

Abdul Shakoor Dadras, head of the Afghan Review Board, which was tasked with reviewing the prisoners' cases, said there was no evidence to hold the prisoners and that their continued detention would have been illegal under Afghan law.

"These prisoners are released after deep reviews and investigations," he said in a telephone interview Thursday.

Calls to Karzai spokesmen went unanswered Thursday.

Ahead of the release, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan issued a statement to the media detailing some of the alleged crimes committed by prisoners slated to be freed as well as the evidence they claimed to have submitted to Afghan authorities. According to the statement, among those being freed are:

- **Mohammad Wali**, apprehended in Helmand province in May 2013. He is a suspected Taliban explosives expert who reportedly placed IEDs targeting Afghan National Security Forces and coalition forces. He was biometrically linked to two IED incidents, plus a latent fingerprint match to another IED in Helmand province. Wali's personal property tested positive for multiple types of explosives in a residue test after his capture.

- **Nek Mohammad**, captured in Kandahar province in May 2013. He is accused of facilitating rocket attacks against Afghan and coalition forces. He was apprehended with several 107mm artillery shells, mortar rounds and improvised explosive components, including at least 25 pounds of homemade explosives.

- **Mohammadullah** was apprehended in Paktia province in May 2013. He is believed to be a Haqqani network IED specialist who builds and places IEDs. Mohammadullah was biometrically linked to an IED and tested positive for four types of explosives in a residue test. He was captured with his Haqqani commander, Ehsanullah.

- **Ehsanullah**, captured in Paktia province in May 2013, is a suspected Haqqani network commander who plans IED operations

and attacks against ANSF and coalition forces. He was biometrically matched to a radio-controlled IED and tested positive for two types of explosives in a residue test.

The prisoner release flap comes amid the larger disagreement between Karzai and his international allies over the signing of a security agreement that would pave the way for a small contingent of foreign troops to stay in Afghanistan until the Dec. 31 deadline for all international combat troops to leave the country. If it is signed, there would likely be a force of roughly 10,000 foreign troops left in the country for training, advising and counterterrorism missions, but so far Karzai has said his successor must sign it.

Karzai is barred by the constitution from running for another term and will be replaced after Afghanistan's presidential election in April, though it could be months before his successor is known if the election goes to a second round. Washington has said that waiting until after the election is settled may not leave enough time to plan deployments.

Zubair Babakarkhail and Stars and Stripes editor Patrick Dickson contribute to this report. www.starsandstripes.com Twitter: @Druzin_Stripes



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MILITARY

Congress clears bill ending military pension cuts

By DAVID ESPO
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congress voted Wednesday to restore full cost-of-living pension increases for younger military retirees, completing a bipartisan capitulation to veterans groups that rose up against a modest cut when it was enacted less than two months ago.

The Senate voted 95-3 for the measure, one day after the House approved it, 326-90. The White House said President Barack Obama would sign it.

The overwhelming support the bill enjoyed, including being by many prominent deficit hawks, reflected the clout that veterans groups enjoy, particularly in an election year.

Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., who opposed the cut when it was first passed, said the legislation restores the benefits "and protects the budget savings achieved by the latest budget deal."

‘They just decided it was a way to save money. That’s not the proper way to do it.’

Sen. John McCain
R-Ariz.

The bill’s existence also underscored the chronic difficulty that lawmakers face when they try to restrain government benefit programs, which have largely escaped the impact of trillions of dollars in deficit cuts over the last three years.

“Year after year members of Congress simply refuse to stick by the budget discipline that we said we’d stick to. Exhibit one is before us today,” said Sen. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., who cast one of the three votes against the measure’s passage. Sens. Tom Carper, D-Del., and Dan Coats, R-Ind., also opposed the bill.

Under legislation that passed in December, annual cost-of-living increases for veterans age 62 and younger would have been held to 1 percentage point below the rate of inflation. The change would have begun in 2015.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars welcomed the reversal with a statement: “The world will remain a very dangerous and unpredictable place even after America ends its involvement in Afghanistan, and future military retirees will be required to serve just as long and perhaps sacrifice even more than their predecessors.”

Pentagon officials have said that reducing their personnel expenses is a top priority in view of budget cutbacks, and a commission is expected to make recommendations later this year on reining in costs.

Yet even lawmakers most familiar with the Pentagon’s budget said the cut enacted in December was a mistake.

“It was wrong to do it the way it was done. ... there wasn’t any hearing or anything,” said Sen.

John McCain, R-Ariz., of the agreement reached by Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash. “They just decided it was a way to save money. That’s not the proper way to do it.”

The savings to the government from the reduction was pegged at \$7 billion over a decade, but critics said it would cost individual veterans tens of thousands of dol-

lars over their lifetime.

The pensions go to veterans who retire after 20 years of service, regardless of their age. According to the Pentagon, nearly 2 million retirees are currently eligible, about 840,000 of them under age 62. For a sergeant first class who leaves the service at age 42 after two decades in uniform, the bill passed in December

would have meant an estimated \$72,000 in reduced pension payments from the government.

The bill headed to the White House would apply only to those already in the service. Newcomers to the military would still have their cost-of-living increases held below the rate of inflation when they begin retiring in two decades or more.

In agreeing to approve the House-passed bill, Senate Democrats backed off their insistence that the cost of restoring the full pension be allowed to add to the government’s deficit.

Instead, the measure offsets the price tag by extending previously approved cuts elsewhere in the budget for another year, until 2024.

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EUROPE

Flipped: Teaching method aims to put more responsibility in students' hands

FROM FRONT PAGE

Flipped learning is a growing trend in U.S. military and state-side classrooms. Students watch their teachers' video lectures at home and do their "homework" in class.

The idea is to free up class time for active learning. It allows the teacher to provide individualized instruction as students work through problems.

Built into the flipped classroom is the concept of mastery learning.

Instead of progressing through the curriculum in unison, turning in the same daily homework and testing on the same day, students in a "flipped mastery" class work at their own pace, completing a segment or topic in days or weeks.

Students may progress from one chapter or unit to the next only after passing a "mastery check." If they can't do quadratic equations, for example, they can't move on to radicals.

The method puts the responsibility for learning squarely on the students' shoulders, say the math teachers who piloted the "flipped mastery" program for DODDS-Europe.

"If you don't want to learn it, that's OK, but you are not moving on," said Spencer Bean, a "flipped mastery" math instructor at Ramstein. "So you're going to learn it and pass, or you're not going to learn it and fail. It's so black and white. It's on them."

Brust said that's made a huge difference for students.

"We've got way more motivated learners than in the past," he said. Before, kids resisted coming in for extra help during lunch or before or after school. "We just couldn't get them in, no matter what we did," Brust said. "Now they want to come in."

A fateful bus ride

Two of the educators who have adopted "flipped mastery" earned prestigious awards for their traditional math teaching.

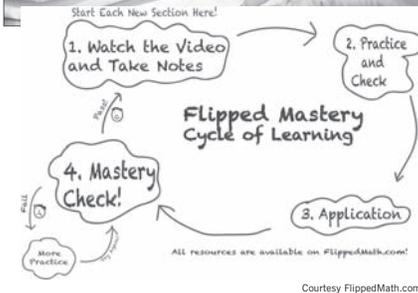
In 2010, Baumholder High School teacher Tim Kelly received them in, no matter what the presidential award for mathematics and science teaching, the nation's highest honor.

While in Washington to attend the award ceremony, he shared a bus ride with Aaron Sams, a fellow award recipient and a rural Colorado chemistry teacher. Sams and his colleague, Jonathan Bergmann, wrote about their efforts to "flip" their classroom and use mastery learning — or what they called "flipped mastery" — in their book "Flip Your Classroom:



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Spencer Renne, left, discusses his worksheet with teacher Mike Brust in his "flipped mastery" algebra and geometry class at Ramstein High School in Germany.



Watch a video about "flipped mastery" education at stripes.com/go/flipped

instruction and assessment.

"Flipped mastery" math seems to be working well. "I've seen some absolute great teaching going on, and I've seen kids excited about math," Greene said. She said education is about "trying different strategies to engage kids and increase their learning."

The Algebras' collaboration enabled them to flip more quickly than if they were working alone, with their classes sharing videos and materials. Each unit takes from 60 to 80 hours to complete, a process that includes recording and uploading a series of 12- to 15-minute video lectures and putting together hundreds of packets of practice problems, answer keys and corrective assignments for each lesson, as well as "mastery checks" and tests.

Everything is available on the Algebras' website, flippedmath.com, except the assessments, which are aligned to Department of Defense Education Activity standards, Kelly said.

After flipping Algebra I, they've since done the same for geometry and are finalizing Algebra II. Along the way they picked up Bean, the fourth Algebro, who this year teaches flipped mastery Algebra II at Ramstein and is beginning to flip pre-calculus classes with Brust.

Bean, who used to teach across the hall from Kelly at Baumholder, earned the presidential award in math and science in 2011. He initially had strong doubts about the merits of "flipped mastery" math. "I just don't see this working for

the kids who already struggle," he remembered thinking at the time. "How are they possibly going to be motivated to do anything?"

But he was curious. He would frequently observe Kelly's room, and he talked to his daughter, who was in Kelly's class.

"I couldn't believe these kids, who I knew in that community for a long time — and a lot of kids who were very difficult to motivate, behind grade level, and they were for the first time working hard at doing it," he said.

He was reluctant to revamp his teaching methods, especially on the heels of winning a prestigious teaching award. "I thought I was doing good stuff. ... I didn't want to switch, but this blows away the things I was doing in the past."

Since rolling out "flipped mastery" math, Kelly and his colleagues have seen more A's and B's and far fewer D's and F's.

After the first year of flipping, the Algebras compared their first semester of "flipped mastery" math with the same first semester a year ago of traditional math. Brust, Sullivan and Kelly had 77 D's and F's out of 265 students at the end of first semester traditional math during the 2010-11 school year. The number of D's and F's dropped to 29 at the end of the first full semester of flipping in 2011-12.

"Among all of us, no one failed first semester last year," Brust said. "We had kids fail second semester because they were so far behind. But in the past we always would have kids fail the first semester and therefore they can't go on to the second semester so they ... miss an entire year of mathematics credit."

SEE FLIPPED ON PAGE 5

Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day."

"I had never heard of it before," Kelly said.

He was intrigued. On returning to Baumholder, he talked it over with Brust and Kaiserslautern High School math teacher Corey Sullivan. "At first we just kind of dismissed it as a crazy idea: 'Our kids won't do homework. What makes you think they're going to watch your video at home?'" Kelly said the concept of pre-recorded lectures.

They also figured there was nothing to lose. "It was a big jump, just because it was new and unknown," Brust said. "We were frustrated with our results" using more traditional methods.

Students were continuing to fall through the cracks.

"We tried lots of things — we tried project-based learning; we tried cooperative groups," Kelly said. "The bottom line is, we would get students that were not prepared. They come to your classroom ... they don't know things they should know already. Then we expect them to learn algebra at a higher level. It just wasn't happening; they weren't doing the work. They were confused."

The 'Algebras'

What sold the teachers on "flipped mastery" was the "mastery."

"That's the key component that actually drives it, they have to master it or they cannot move on," Kelly said. "And that takes a lot of 'my student doesn't do homework' away. You have to do the work or you're just stagnant."

Kelly, Brust and Sullivan — who call themselves the "Algebras" — divided up the first units in Algebra I and hunkered down over spring break in 2011 to prepare a pilot program in "flipped mastery" math during the fourth quarter at their respective schools.

The administration at Baumholder was supportive, Kelly said. "It kind of helps a little if you win a presidential award," Kelly said. "You can go, 'Listen, I want to do this.' We made sure that if something wasn't right, we were really quick to fix it."

The approach also has been widely accepted by the DODDS-Europe leaders.

"We're always excited about educational innovation, especially one that works well for kids," said Terry Greene, DODDS-Europe deputy director for curriculum,

EUROPE

Flipped: Students risk falling behind in 'mastery' approach if they lack discipline, teachers say

FROM PAGE 4

While D's and F's for traditional classes are permanent, that's not the case with flipped math. If a student fails first semester but makes up the work in the spring, a grade change is entered to reflect the work.

A failure in second semester can be made up in summer school or by finishing the work in the fall of the following school year.

After failing a semester of geometry in traditional math last year at Kaiserslautern High School, Ramstein junior Mackenzie Van Wert, 17, has pulled up her grade in Brust's flipped math class this school year, where she's repeating geometry.

"My grade is a ton better because I'm able to learn at my own pace and it's a lot better teaching method, I think," she said.

She likes that she can watch the videos if she doesn't understand something. "If teachers are teaching in front of a board, you can't really play that back," she said.

"I would say it has given me a lot more confidence, has made me realize that math is something that I'm not incapable of doing," she said.

Freshman Cade Martinez, new to Baumholder this year, said he prefers flipped math over traditional math "because it better allows me to find where I have trouble at home and actually get

help with it at school."

When Kathy Zdumich's daughter, Elise, signed up to take flipped Algebra I last year at Baumholder as an eighth-grader, she was worried that the class would be self-taught with little teacher interaction.

"It proved just the opposite," she said. "Mr. Kelly was always there to help students and give them one-on-one attention."

The "flipped mastery" math teachers keep a minimal pacing calendar, with dates by which students should take unit tests. They're not forced to take those tests if they're not ready. But if they don't, their grades will temporarily dip, since a "zero" gets marked down for any missed test dates. The grade will go back up once the student takes the test.

Those zeroes are sometimes harder on the parents, Kelly said. "Sometimes parents will argue, 'Why is my kid getting a zero? I thought this was at your own pace?'"

"When you catch up, you get full credit," Kelly said.

Not for everyone

Ramstein math teacher LaShea Udoaka implemented a "modified flip" for her Algebra I classes.

She uses video lectures and daily mastery checks, but the class progresses together for the most part, she said, with test dates



"If they want to move ahead, they can; they can't be behind."

LaShea Udoaka

Ramstein High School math teacher

mandatory.

"If they want to move ahead, they can; they can't be behind," she said.

She agrees that traditional math instruction wasn't working for a majority of students. "You have to have interaction," she said.

But she's also not convinced that "flipped mastery" is the best method of learning for everyone.

"Flipped mastery is great if the student is disciplined enough to say, 'OK, I'm going to do a section a week ... I'm going to take three mastery checks a week to keep myself moving.'"

Students who aren't self-motivated need other options, she said.

"I will believe that flipped works better when we don't have the issues that we have at the end of every semester, where you have kids that are so far behind they're probably not going to finish ... and that happens."

"We don't know what to do with the kids who are still on Unit 3 and they should be on Unit 6."

Ramstein junior Jarrett Bloss, 16, a student in Bean's Algebra II class, said he's more of a fan of traditional math. He was struggling

to make up about two units after falling behind.

"You learn a lot, because if you don't pass it the first time, you have to redo it," he said. "But if you are lazy, like I am, you tend to get behind," sometimes so far that it can be discouraging.

With traditional instruction, you don't have a choice but "to get it done by a certain time," he said.

Students who fall behind in "flipped mastery" have the opportunity to pull up their grades, but it may mean extra work. DODEA now requires students to earn four credits of high school-level math to graduate. "Flipped mastery" math students who take more than a year to finish a course will have to double up or enroll in summer school, teachers say.

Not just in math

At Baumholder, Heidi Kretz is implementing "flipped mastery" grammar study in her 10th-grade language arts and world literature classes.

"I flipped last school year in the second semester, but at that time I started very small," Kretz said. "I

used podcasts, a grammar handbook and other Web sources."

"This year, I've begun the process of changing all units over into mini-lesson videos that I created."

Different teaching approaches she had tried didn't work.

"The students who 'got it' were bored, and the students who struggled continued to struggle," she said. "At the end of each unit, pass or fail, all moved on."

"What is most appealing to me is that, with a progressive mastery approach ... each student is responsible to master the material before moving on."

It's not easy, though, because of the time commitment, she said.

"Creating videos, handouts, mastery checks and corrective assignments takes an inordinate amount of time," Kretz said. "Teachers need to be sold on the benefits of mastery learning to make this work. They need to be aware that this approach is more time-intensive than traditional learning."

The "flipped mastery" math teachers said that despite the many extra hours involved in implementing a progressive mastery approach to learning, they would never go back to traditional instruction.

Students "learn when they're ready," Brust said. "There's no wasted time in class. You are working on what you need."

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MILITARY

Review of Air Force's ICBM force under way

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A major examination of the Air Force's scandal-ridden intercontinental ballistic missile force kicked off Wednesday, the commander of Air Force Global Strike Command said.

A 65-member team composed of Air Force, Navy and civilian experts is en route to Minot Air Force Base, N.D., to begin a bottom-up review of the ICBM force and look for ways to improve it. Missiles, ICBM support personnel, nuclear bomber crewmembers, Global Strike Command personnel, sailors from the Navy nuclear enterprise and outside business consultants from Executive Leadership Group Inc. will be part of the team.

They will talk to junior officers and enlisted personnel at all three ICBM bases to discuss their concerns and determine what the Air Force should do to address them, Lt. Gen. Stephen Wilson told an audience at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a think tank in Washington. The group will also seek input from servicemembers' families, Wilson said.

The review was triggered by embarrassing revelations about the Air Force's ICBM arm. In January, 92 nuclear missile launch officers at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont. were implicated in a cheating scandal related to monthly proficiency tests. That same month, 11 servicemembers throughout the Air Force's nuclear enterprise were implicated in an illegal narcotics investigation.

The team will focus on things that detract from mission effectiveness and morale of airmen.

"We're going to look at culture and determine do we have an integrity issue and what are those obstacles that we need to overcome in terms of mission and manning and resources and those other things we may have out there," Wilson said.

"The work they're going to accomplish I think will touch every aspect of the ICBM mission, and I think we'll have the opportunity to shape that for the next generation."

The group will brief Wilson on their findings at the end of the month.

Air Force leaders have said that those involved in the scandals will be held accountable, and senior officers might be held re-

sponsible as well.

When asked if the Air Force still had confidence in the commander of the 341st Missile Wing at Malmstrom, Col. Robert Stanley, Wilson demurred, saying it was premature to comment on any the status of any particular individual.

Stanley was nominated for the rank of brigadier general last month, before the scandals broke.

The Air Force and Navy are also conducting a broader 60-day review of the entire U.S. nuclear enterprise which was mandated by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel in the wake of the scandals. The Air Force has been directed to present an action plan to address the problems examined in the review.

Neither Wilson nor Air Force Secretary Deborah James, who also spoke at the event, would provide any insights into preliminary findings.

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1st Lt. Michael C. Behenna is flanked by his attorneys at Camp Speicher, Iraq in September 2008. Behenna, who was convicted of killing an Iraqi prisoner, has been granted parole.

GI who killed a prisoner in Iraq is granted parole

The Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — A former U.S. Army lieutenant convicted of killing an Iraqi prisoner has been granted parole, the Army said Wednesday.

Former 1st Lt. Michael Behenna was granted parole after serving five years of a 15-year sentence for his 2009 conviction on a charge of unpremeditated murder in a combat zone.

The Army Clemency and Parole Board denied Behenna's request for clemency, but granted him parole, according to Col. David Patterson. He said the decision was based on factors "including a strong parole plan with family and community support."

Behenna's parents, Scott and Vicki Behenna, of Edmond, previously have said their son would work on a cattle ranch and take classes at Oklahoma State University.

There was no dispute that Behenna was supposed to take the Iraqi prisoner home but instead took him to a secluded roadstead culvert, he stripped him naked and shot him twice after interrogating him at gunpoint about an April 2008 roadside bombing that killed two men under Behenna's command.

Behenna said he acted in self-defense when the man reached for Behenna's handgun. The Army argued he could not claim self-defense because he was conducting an unauthorized interrogation at gunpoint.

Senate bill would upgrade records of discharged gay troops

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
Stars and Stripes

SASEBO NAVAL BASE, Japan — A bill that would upgrade the service records of gay, lesbian and bisexual troops discharged due to sexual orientation and open the door to veterans benefits has been introduced in the Senate and referred to the Armed Services Committee for review, officials said.

The Restore Honor to Service Members Act was introduced Jan. 30 by Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y. The bill mirrors one introduced in the House in June by Rep. Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., and Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Wis.

Pocan has said the House bill has the bipartisan support of 140 members. However, it has yet to move forward.

The repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' was a watershed moment, ending institutionalized discrimination that unjustly targeted gay and lesbian members of the military," Schatz said in a statement from his office. "Yet thousands of former service members still bear the scars of that discrimination, with their military records tarnished with discharges other than honorable and marks on their records that compromise

their right to privacy.

"Many of these brave men and women that served our country are currently barred from benefits that they earned and are entitled to, and in the most egregious cases they are prevented from legally calling themselves a veteran. This needs to be corrected now."

Roughly 114,000 servicemembers were discharged because of sexual orientation between World War II and the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell" in September 2011, officials have stated. Many of those servicemembers, depending on the discharge classification and the state in which they lived, were treated as felons and precluded from voting and collecting unemployment and veterans' benefits, such as health

care and disability. Many were also discriminated against when applying for jobs and housing.

A lot has changed since the repeal of the 1993 law that banned gays and lesbians from serving openly in the military. Gay and lesbian servicemembers have been able to serve openly, marching in gay pride parades and having same-sex wedding ceremonies in on-base chapels. They have also seen benefits extended to their partners.

Organizations that represent LGBT servicemembers and veterans have applauded efforts to bring the bill to President Barack Obama's desk.

"LGBT veterans who served and sacrificed in silence during World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, as well as those who served

before and during 'Don't Ask Don't Tell' in the Gulf War, Iraq, and Afghanistan, deserve to see their service recognized and honored at long last," Denny Meyer, spokesman for American Veterans for Equal Rights, the national LGBT veterans service organization, said in the statement.

Should it pass, the bill would instill the repeal into law. All servicemembers who were discharged because of their sexual orientation would then receive a "timely, consistent and transparent" review, and those who served honorably would see their records upgraded. That would open the door to benefits.

Any indication of sexual orientation would be struck from service records, and consensual relations between same-sex cou-

ples would be decriminalized—bringing military law in line with Supreme Court rulings.

"We need to right discriminatory discharges for our veterans immediately," Gillibrand said in the statement. "A clean, honorable record is long overdue for veterans who were discharged solely because of who they love. Our veterans served our country courageously and with dignity and we must act to give them the appropriate recognition they deserve."

It is now up to Senate Armed Services Committee chairman Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., and others on the committee, including Gillibrand, to call for a hearing, Pocan spokesman David Kolosov said.

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STARS AND STRIPES

PACIFIC



ERIK SLAVIN/Stars and Stripes

Nago Mayor Susumu Inamine talks with reporters on Thursday.

Okinawa mayor is ready to fight Marine relocation

BY ERIK SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The mayor of a small city in Okinawa took his case to the world media Thursday in Tokyo, portraying the plan to build a Marine base there as one that fosters destruction of an ecological paradise and undermines democratic values.

Nago Mayor Susumu Inamine vowed to fight the relocation of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma to his city's rural Henoko district, which is one of the first steps in a major realignment of thousands of U.S. servicemembers in the Pacific.

Inamine faces an uphill battle. The United States considers the agreement to move the base final, and even Inamine said Thursday that the Japanese government "has not swayed in its resolve" to build it.

He indicated he plans to combat the plan with a mix of world appeals and local red tape, according to several of his comments.

"There are management areas where the mayor of Nago has certain authority and rights," Inamine said at a news conference. "I will be upfront about this. If different people come to me and say, 'We need permission for something,' if the premise is that they are going forward with this construction, then I will be uncooperative."

The two governments first talked in 1996 about moving Futenma from what was once a rural area but is now urbanized. A helicopter crash in 2004 at a nearby college intensified Okinawan protests to move the base off the island entirely.

Moving the helicopter base off the island would separate the Marines based in Okinawa from their transportation. The U.S. considers the island strategically significant because of its proximity to Taiwan and Southeast Asia. It is also within reach of the Korean Peninsula by air if additional forces were needed there quickly.

Inamine disputed that reasoning Thursday, saying that basing more than half of U.S. service-

members in Japan on the island of 1.4 million people was more about NIMBY — short for Not in My Backyard — on the part of mainland Japanese.

"Deterrence, geographical advantage — all of these arguments just no longer work," Inamine said. "I simply think it's a political decision. No one else in Japan wants these facilities."

Inamine spoke for about 40 minutes with foreign and Japanese reporters, followed by about an hour of questions. He distributed color brochures featuring underwater photos that make the waters off Henoko look like a wonderland of coral and marine life.

The material also included locations of the military's helicopter crashes over several years and a timeline of the Futenma issue, which began with the 1995 rape of an Okinawan girl by three U.S. servicemembers.

"If they try to force this issue in Okinawa, then they will invite criticism from all over the world," Inamine said.

Inamine said the national government's continued resolve to build the base amounts to a repudiation of democratic values. However, he said he would continue to lobby U.S. officials.

He met with the U.S. ambassador to Japan, Caroline Kennedy, during her trip to the island last week, and said he planned to visit Washington sometime after April. Inamine said he did most of the talking during the meeting with Kennedy and she listened intently to his viewpoints.

"She expressed a great deal of interest in the environmental issues," he said.

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Obama's Asia trip in April to include S. Korea

By ASHLEY ROWLAND
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — President Barack Obama will visit South Korea during his trip to Asia in late April, a period that traditionally has involved heightened tension on the peninsula as the two countries wrap up their annual spring training exercises.

The White House announced Wednesday that the president will visit Japan, South Korea, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Obama will meet here with South Korean President Park Geun-hye to "review recent developments in North Korea and our combined efforts to promote denuclearization, and discuss our ongoing implementation of the Korea-United States FTA," according to a White House statement.

Although the exact dates of Obama's trip haven't been announced, it will either coincide with or follow the annual Ford Eagle joint field training exercise,

scheduled for Feb. 24-April 18.

Last year's spring drills, which included the Key Resolve command post exercise, prompted a monthlong barrage of threats from North Korea, including a vow to turn Seoul and Washington into a "sea of fire" and a declaration voiding the armistice that effectively ended the Korean War. During the exercises, the U.S. took the unusual step of flaunting its military hardware, including a nuclear attack submarine and B-2 stealth bombers.

North Korea has called for the U.S. and South Korea to halt this year's exercises.

Whether Obama would bypass South Korea on his Asia trip has been a source of rampant speculation in Seoul, particularly because a stop in Japan was on the president's itinerary.

Tensions between Tokyo and Seoul have escalated in recent months over unresolved historical and territorial grievances, and a no-show from Obama would have

been viewed as a diplomatic snub and a sign that the U.S. places greater value on its relationship with Japan.

The president will meet with top leaders from each country on his itinerary and will discuss diplomatic and economic issues. In Japan, Obama and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will discuss the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact, as well as a range of regional and global diplomatic issues.

Obama's Asia trip will follow a visit to the region by Secretary of State John Kerry.

Kerry's Feb. 13-18 trip is to include stops in Beijing, Seoul, Abu Dhabi and Jakarta.

Kerry was scheduled to meet Thursday with South Korean officials in Seoul, and the diplomats were expected to discuss issues such as North Korea and the on-going tensions between Tokyo and Seoul.

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Yokota commander to be replaced Friday

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Aircraft maintainers at Yokota Air Base, Japan will welcome a new leader Friday, three months after their old commander was relieved of duty.

374th Airlift Wing public affairs officer Capt. Ray Geoffroy said by email Tuesday that Col. Kevin Sampels was relieved as commander of the 374th Maintenance Group in November due to "lack of confidence in his ability to lead."

The Maintenance Group consists of three squadrons that maintain C-130H, UH1N, and C-12J aircraft assigned to the Air Force's only airlift wing in the Pacific theater, according to information posted on Yokota's website.

Sampels, a dual-qualified aircraft maintenance and logistics readiness officer commissioned through Officer Training School in November 1990, was relieved following an investigation, Geoffroy said.

"No criminal charges were filed," he said. "Due to privacy act restrictions involving admin-

istrative actions, I cannot discuss specifics."

Geoffroy said the 374th has not recently failed safety inspections or experienced significant safety incidents other than a fatal on-base motorcycle accident in January.

Sampels is no longer stationed at Yokota, he said, adding that privacy considerations meant he could not identify his new assignment.

Col. Steven P. James will assume command of the 374th Maintenance Group on Friday, Geoffroy said.

From staff reports

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MILITARY

Married Marines paired on deployment to Afghanistan

By JENNIFER Hlad
Stars and Stripes

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan — It all started with a bulldog.

Sgt. Frances Johnson, then a lance corporal working in the public affairs office at Marine Recruit Depot San Diego, was tasked with taking care of the new mascot, Pfc. Belleau Wood. The puppy needed obedience training, so Johnson headed over to the recruit depot's kennels.

As luck would have it, the Marine who was supposed to help Johnson with the training was busy. So, Sgt. Andrew Johnson, a military dog handler, volunteered to help.

Now, less than four years later, Frances Johnson and Drew Johnson are married and deployed together to Helmand province as part of Marine Expeditionary Brigade-Afghanistan. Frances serves as the media chief for the unit, while Drew is the IED detector dogs program manager.

At first, Frances said, the couple were rarely able to see each other — just the occasional meal together in the chow hall. "It was frustrating," she said.

After a month in Afghanistan, the Johnsons have been approved to live together.



Sgt. Frances Johnson and Sgt. Andrew Johnson.

Staying on a sprawling base in buildings, not tents, and having access to Wi-Fi and other amenities is very different than Drew's first deployment, in 2005, when he was part of a unit pushing through Ramadi, Iraq. But he had no attachments on those deployments, he said — no wife, no kids, no girlfriend.

Then, it was "no big deal" to be outside the wire constantly for missions. Things have changed, but he is happy to be able to help his wife get her gear ready before a convoy, to give her advice about staying safe — he told her to use her knife if anyone gets too close — and to give her the guidance he did not have his first time around.

The Johnsons' family deployment almost didn't happen. Drew,

stationed at Camp Pendleton, Calif., was planning to get out of the Marine Corps and had told his supervisor he was looking for contracting work, while Frances had gotten orders to deploy to Afghanistan from her unit at nearby Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.

Then, Drew's supervisor told him there was a job available for a staff noncommissioned officer at Camp Leatherneck, and he could put Drew's name in for it. And so, Drew, said, it was just "sheer luck" that he got to go on his third deployment with his wife.

The couple's 2-year-old son, Noah, is living with Frances' mother in Denver while the two serve their yearlong tour, but they have been able to make video calls home every few days, they said.

Frances said she is planning to send a world map home so Noah can have a better idea of where Mommy and Daddy are, though they've already told him they are so far away that it's time for them to go to bed when it's morning where he is.

He was having a hard time getting off the calls at first, they said, but now he likes saying "night night" and telling his parents that it's time for them to go to bed, Frances said.

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Mail volume prompted hold on some packages to Italy

By STEVEN BEARDSLEY
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — Concerns over the volume of incoming mail for U.S. military personnel in Italy spurred customs agents in Rome to put a hold on some mail for two days last month, an Italian customs official and a Navy base commander said Thursday.

Although the hold was soon lifted, Italian and American officials continue to discuss possible changes to the system under which parcels and other airmail are delivered via Rome — and whether they would mesh with basing agreements between the two sides.

The official, who works for the Italian customs agency, said the office is concerned about the larger volume of packages for individuals from online shopping.

He said customs agents were trying to "redefine the procedures" of distributing packages, but he emphasized they would not levy taxes or customs duties against them, as Navy officials say they were initially warned. Such fees are prohibited by basing agreements, said the customs agency, who declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue.

The hold on American mail began abruptly in January as holiday packages were still arriving, according to Navy officials. Only packages entering the Rome airport, which feeds the military mail system for Navy bases in Naples and Sigonella, Sicily, were affected. Packages continued to enter the Army and Air Force system in Milan, another entry point.

The customs official said the number and nature of the packages received in Rome caused "chaos" in the Rome system.

Navy mail officials in Naples said Christmas is always a heavy period for mail. The number of packages this past holiday season was roughly the same as the year before, a base spokeswoman said.

Customs officials agreed to

resume processing the packages after meeting with Navy representatives, but they said the volume made it harder for them to police for violations, said Capt. Scott Gray, commander of the Navy base in Naples. They continued to hold 27 packages.

Gray said he was given guidelines by the agency that referred to prohibited items as well as value-added taxes and customs duties that could be applied to any item worth more than 22 euros, or about \$30. The bases passed that information on to their personnel.

U.S. Embassy officials became involved in the discussion, as it relates to basing agreements between the two countries, Gray said. Customs officials recently released the 27 packages being held, without charge.

Gray, who is not directly involved in the ongoing discussions, said he believes the issue now is how to reassure customs officials that the Navy is policing incoming items and is informing personnel what can and cannot be shipped.

Some items in the customs guidelines are already prohibited by military mail rules. Others, such as "footwear" and "apparel and sewn clothing," likely account for a significant portion of online orders by U.S. personnel.

Also prohibited under the guidelines is a hodgepodge of very specific or obscure items, including "typewriter ribbon" and "roasted ground coffee." Gray said that for now things are back to normal as embassy officials work toward a long-term solution.

"Everybody's being reasonable," he said. "We're resolving some interpretation issues and we think some of these issues will be resolved in the medium term. "The mail has continued to flow, and no fees or customs duties are being applied."

Cristina Woods contributed to this report.
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US military officials in Bahrain take precautions on protest anniversary

By HENDRICK SIMOES
Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain — U.S. military officials here took precautions Thursday to ensure the safety of U.S. personnel in anticipation of increased political unrest this weekend.

The tiny island kingdom, home to the U.S. Navy 5th Fleet, has been the site of sporadic demonstrations since February 2011, when the country experienced massive protests by citizens demanding political and economic reforms. Since then, the country has experienced an uptick in protests and violence around the Feb. 14 anniversary of that movement.

The Department of Defense Dependents Schools-operated Bahrain School was closed Thursday as a "prudent action," according to Navy officials. U.S. Navy 5th Fleet spokesman Cmdr. Jason Salata said the decision was based mostly on concerns over increased traffic and more police checkpoints throughout Bahrain.

"Closing the school today was one such prudent action," Salata said. "Other actions are up to individual leaders to adhere to guidance released by the Navy and the U.S. Embassy."

Earlier in the week, the U.S. Embassy issued a reminder to

citizens about increased protests, attempts to disrupt traffic and potential clashes with police for several weeks after the anniversary.

While 5th Fleet and base operations were running as normal, according to officials, some tenant units cut hours to allow workers to go home early.

A sign at the base post office informed customers of an early closing time Thursday for "safety reasons." Navy Federal had a sign notifying clients that it would be closing early Friday. Other units were making it an early day in connection with the upcoming three-day weekend in Bahrain which begins Friday.

According to Bahrain's Ministry of the Interior, there was vandalism in some villages Thursday morning that included burning tires and makeshift roadblocks.

A tweet on the ministry's Twitter page said police forces responded and restored order in the various incidents.

Police also responded to a morning attack on a school bus with Molotov cocktails. Police evacuated the bus and no injuries were reported. A video posted on the Ministry of Interior's YouTube page shows the incident.

"We encourage all personnel to stay current on their knowledge

of local events through the use of social media, local radio and newspapers, as well as official command and U.S. Embassy information releases," Salata said.

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NATION

Insurance sign-ups meet monthly goal in January

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR
AND KEVIN WINEYS
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — While states are having varying success getting people to sign up, January marked the first time since new health insurance markets opened last fall that a national monthly enrollment target was met.

The administration said Wednesday about 1 million people signed up for private insurance under the new health care law in January, extending a turnaround from early days when a dysfunctional website frustrated consumers.

An Associated Press analysis found that most states are still lagging when it comes to sign-ups under the law, and their success in getting those sign-ups could help determine whether the White House reaches its unofficial goal of having 7 million signed up by the end of March. Nearly 3.3 million people signed up from Oct. 1 through Feb. 1.

About a dozen states are high achievers in getting sign-ups.

Connecticut is the nation's top performer, signing up more than twice the number of residents it had been projected to enroll by the end of January. Massachusetts,

which pioneered the approach Obama took in his law, is at the bottom of the list, having met only 5 percent of its target.

Six Republican-led states — Florida, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, North Carolina and Wisconsin — are on pace or better. Residents are signing up despite strong political opposition to the health care law in some of those states.

"It's very, very encouraging news," Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said. "We're seeing a healthy growth in enrollment."

Officials are unable to say how many of those who signed up were previously uninsured — the ultimate test of the health care overhaul. And they don't know how many have sealed the deal by paying their premiums.

The numbers showed an uptick in the number of young adults signing up, now 25 percent of the total. Officials expect a last-minute surge of 18- to 34-year-olds before the end of open enrollment on March 31. Their premiums are needed to help with the cost of care for older adults.

Overall, 4 in 5 of those signing up were eligible for financial assistance with their premiums or out-of-pocket expenses.

New Orleans ex-mayor: from reformer to convict

The Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Sixteen years after he burst onto the New Orleans political scene as a charming, reform-minded businessman vowing to clean up city government, former Mayor Ray Nagin walked out of a federal courthouse as the glum embodiment of how far a politician can fall.

Nagin was convicted Wednesday on 20 criminal counts stemming from his two terms as New Orleans mayor from 2002 to 2010, including the recovery that followed Hurricane Katrina in 2005. He is scheduled for sentencing June 11 — his 58th birthday.

Nagin was a cable company executive and a political newcomer when he succeeded Marc Morial in 2002. Soon after taking office, he announced a crackdown on municipal corruption, starting with the city's vehicle safety inspection stations and issuing permits to nonlegitimate taxi drivers.

Federal prosecutors said his own corrupt acts began during his first term, continued through the Katrina catastrophe and flourished in his second term.

"We, in my family, thought of him as the 'cleanup man,'" said Rainelle Smith, 64, a New Orleans resident who said she had voted for Nagin. "Instead, he gets in office and he soiled it more."

"The heat got hot during the storm," said Jason Roland, 32, a former New Jersey resident who moved to New Orleans a few years after Katrina for a teaching job. "He couldn't handle that, so he said, 'Forget the people, I'm going to line my own pockets.' It's a disgrace.

"It was a just verdict, fair trial, so no excuses there," he said.

Nagin is perhaps best remembered for his impassioned pleas for help after the levees broke during Hurricane Katrina, and his city descended into chaos. He was convicted of accepting bribes in exchange for helping businessmen secure millions of dollars in city work.

The federal jury found Nagin guilty of 20 of 21 counts. He sat quietly at the defense table after the verdict was read. His wife, Seletha, cried quietly as she sat behind him.

Before the verdict, Nagin, 57, said outside the New Orleans courtroom: "I've been at peace with this for a long time. I'm good." Later, as a crowd of reporters and photographers swarmed him outside the courthouse, he was heard to say, "I maintain my innocence." His attorney said there would be an appeal.

U.S. District Judge Helen Bergeron ordered that bail for Nagin, now a Dallas resident, be modified to provide for "additional conditions of electronic monitoring and home confinement" pending sentencing.

Nagin, a Democrat, was indicted in January 2013 on charges he accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes — money, free vacation trips and truckloads of free granite for his family business — from businessmen who wanted work from the city or Nagin's support for various projects.

Nagin had vehemently denied it all during several hours of testimony that spanned two days of trial.

The only not-guilty verdict came on one count of bribery.

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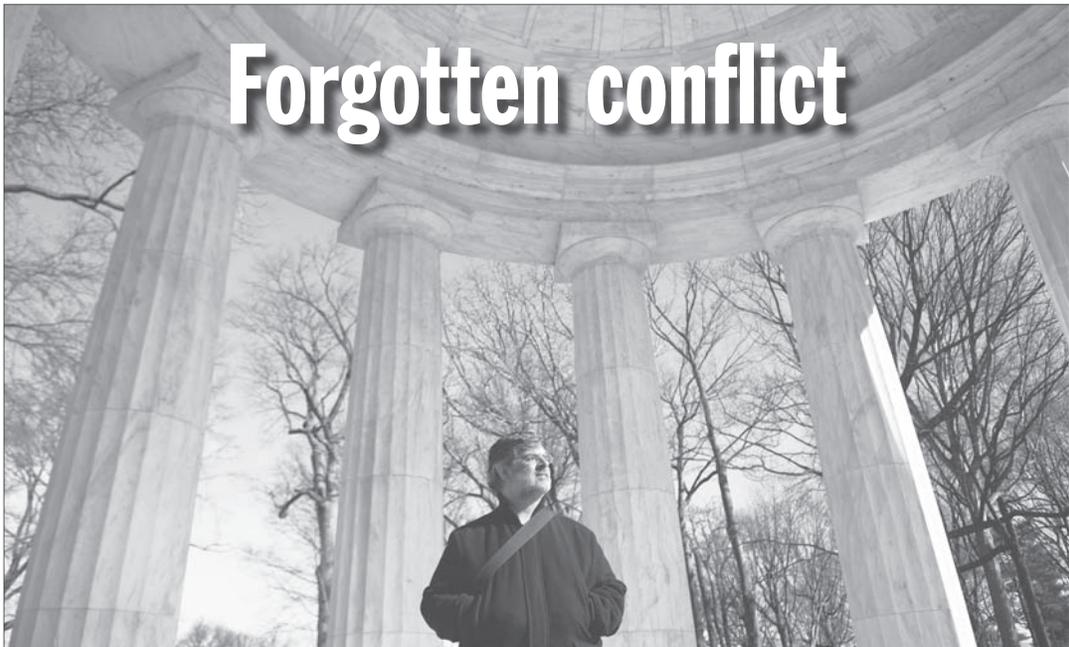
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NATION

Forgotten conflict



ASTRID RIECKEN/For The Washington Post

Mark Revitch, who is building an online database of every U.S. memorial to World War I, stands at the D.C. War Memorial in Washington on Jan. 31.

Historian building database of memorials to often-overlooked World War I

By MICHAEL E. RUANE
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — On Nov. 14, 1921, President Warren G. Harding and Army Gen. John Pershing set the cornerstone for Washington's colossal National Victory Memorial, at 6th Street and what is now Constitution Avenue.

World War I had just ended, and the huge edifice was planned, in part, to honor the sacrifice of Americans in "the Great War." There were to be stars representing each of the nation's war dead on the ceiling and an 11,000-seat auditorium inside.

After the foundation and a long set of stone steps were built, the project stalled. Money dried up. The war faded from memory. And the enterprise was scrapped.

With this year's start of the centennial of World War I (1914-18), Mark Levitch, a Washington art historian, has been scouring the country for memorials to the war that was to end all wars.

He has searched the Internet and has taken to the road in hopes of assembling, with the help of the public, a database of the war's forgotten monuments. He calls it the World War I Memorial Inventory Project.

He has found about 2,000 so far, including one mass-produced statue that was sold by a savvy sculptor at least 140 times to small towns across the country.

An estimated 5 million Americans served, and more than 100,000 died in the war.

Some memorials have been damaged, vandalized or stolen. Others have been torn down or are crumbling from neglect. Others remain moving tributes to the men and women who went off to the war.

Levitch estimates that there may be 10,000 World War I memorials in the United States.

He's also found records of monuments that came and went — fabulous but temporary victory arches in New York and in Washington, the latter a block from the White House.

He has learned of a few, like the giant victory building, that never got off the ground.

"In our country, we give most attention to World War II and the Civil War," he said in a recent interview. "World War I is very much overlooked."

Americans came late to the conflict. Even though the sprawling Meuse-Argonne Offensive in 1918 was probably the largest and bloodiest battle in American history, killing more than 25,000 Americans, scholars say it is barely remembered today.

The Civil War's Battle of Gettysburg, which claimed about 7,000 lives from both sides, and World War II's Battle of the Bulge,

which killed about 19,000 Americans, are much more famous.

At the time, World War I "was remembered ... as a momentous occasion for the United States," Levitch said. "It represented the ushering in of the American century ... [and] it made the U.S. a world power."

An estimated 5 million Americans served, and more than 100,000 died, many of them in the trenches and shell holes of France.

The United States didn't join its allies, primarily Britain, France and Russia, in the struggle against Germany and Austria-Hungary until April 1917. But large U.S. forces arrived at a crucial moment and played a major role in the victory.

Levitch, who lives in Washington's DuPont Circle area, is an author and a student of World War I who works as a contract writer at the National Gallery of Art.

He said that although the nation's monuments to World War I often go unnoticed, "they're everywhere."

"Many of them are very modest, simple honor rolls; and some of them are grandiose, by the greatest architects and sculptors of the day," he said.

The recently restored D.C. War Memorial was created in part by architect Nathan Wyeth, who designed the Oval Office in the White House.

The gilded figure atop the towering 1st Division Monument, south of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building in Washington, was sculpted by Daniel Chester French, who also worked on the Lincoln Memorial.

Then there was E.M. "Dick" Viquesney.

The little-known Indiana sculptor and monument salesman created the plain, metal statue of a charging soldier called the "Spirit of the American Doughboy" that today exists in towns all over the country.

The statue was mass-produced in the years after the war and was marketed to communities that did not have money for huge monuments, Levitch said.

Viquesney sent out brochures promoting his statue and providing a nine-point fundraising plan, complete with testimonials. "No community is too small or too poor to have its own doughboy memorial," his sales pitch went.

As a result, his "doughboys" exist in 39 states, according to a website, the E.M. Viquesney Doughboy Database.

Levitch said he first got the idea to catalogue World War I monuments in 2009 when he was unable to track down one that the French

were said to have given the United States. It was supposed to be in Arlington National Cemetery.

His survey does not include tombs, such as that of the Unknowns in Arlington or the beautiful National Cathedral tomb of the aviator Norman Prince.

"It's a tricky distinction," he wrote in an email. "Otherwise, it would be hard to exclude the tombstones of U.S. WWI fatalities from the inventory."

Washington has a forest of Civil War monuments, but there are also such World War I tributes as a haunting statue outside the Red Cross building honoring nurse Jane A. Delano and the 296 nurses who died during the war.

Elsewhere, New York City's old Polo Grounds sports stadium had a plaque honoring a baseball player, Eddie Grant, who joined the Army and was killed in battle in 1918.

Kansas City, Mo., has the soaring Liberty Memorial, home of the National World War I Museum. It's the most impressive such memorial in the country, Levitch said.

And tiny Kimball, W.Va., has the elegant Kimball World War I Memorial, a building dedicated to the service of blacks.

"Every one has a story," Levitch said. "And they're often great. There are narratives everywhere."

NATION

NM proposes sale of national historic landmark

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN
The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — A Western outpost made famous by the Buffalo Soldiers and the U.S. military's campaign to capture Geronimo is up for sale, one of a number of landmarks nationwide facing the wrecking ball amid tight budgets and a shift in Washington about what history is worth saving.

Abandoned now, Fort Bayard has become a drain on New Mexico's coffers, and the state is desperate for ideas as historic preservation has lost funding under the Obama administration.

"It's not good. We see this as a much larger comment on how we as a country want to tell our story and reflect our priorities," said Beth Wiedower, a senior field officer for the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

With most large-scale preservation efforts, it's not hard for the cost to outweigh sentimentalism. It's no different in south-western New Mexico, where the community is split over whether some of Fort Bayard's buildings need to be leveled to make way for fresh economic development.

"Some are pretty adamant about preserving the whole property, and then there are others who ask why tax dollars are being spent to maintain it," said Rep. Rudy Martinez. "Those are the questions coming up. Who's right? Who's wrong? We don't know."

Historic preservation was championed during the Clinton and Bush years, first with Hillary Clinton's founding of the Save America's Treasures program and later through Laura Bush's support for a program focused on preserving the country's cultural and natural heritage.

Funds dry up

However, the Obama administration pointed to the two programs for elimination in 2010, saying the benefits were unclear.

In the last three years, Congress helped bring an end to Save America's Treasures, which had leveraged some \$377 million of private and government funding for hundreds of projects, including the restoration of the flag that inspired "The Star-Spangled Banner" and Rosa Parks's bus.

Also, the grants awarded annually by the National Park Service for historic preservation are a fraction of what they once were, leaving communities with little other than a patchwork of tax credits to entice developers to give historic properties a second chance.

"The fund hasn't disappeared," said Barbara Pahl, who works with the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Colorado. "It's just the money that's available to help address it has."

The trust gets dozens of applications each year for its list of endangered historic places, from the home of the astronaut in Astrodome to the Worldport Terminal at John F. Kennedy International Airport to the boyhood home of Malcolm X and Houston's Astrodome.

In Texas, voters rejected a referendum last fall that would have authorized millions of dollars to be used to turn the Astrodome into a convention center. Many said the money could be better spent on other projects.

At Fort Bayard, the hospital's hallways have been empty for a few years, the officers' quarters are locked up and the parking garages are quiet.

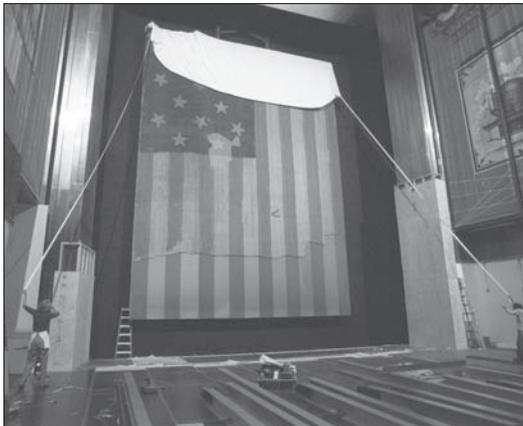
The fort has no asking price, but New



A group of 6th Cavalry officers, including Lt. John J. Pershing (fourth from left in the first row), and their families are shown at Fort Bayard, N.M., in 1886.

AP photos

Selling history



Workers at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington cover the flag that inspired "The Star Spangled Banner" prior to the flag's restoration, which was financed through the Save America's Treasures program.

Mexico General Services Secretary Ed Burckle is taking offers for the national historic landmark. Ads have been placed in the Wall Street Journal and New Mexico's largest newspaper.

With only four proposals submitted, Burckle said bids to demolish the old hospital will go out soon. Leaving it standing would have saved taxpayers more than \$4 million in demolition costs, but he said getting rid of it will improve the prospects for selling the entire property.

Historic significance

Standing at the Gila Wilderness' gateway, Fort Bayard was established in 1866 by the Army to protect miners and other settlers from the Apache. It was one of many outposts west of the Mississippi es-

tablished by the all-black Buffalo Soldier regiments tasked with battling Native American tribes.

With the capture of Geronimo in the 1880s, the Apache threat subsided and the fort transitioned to a research center and hospital for tuberculosis patients. During World War II, it was home to German prisoners of war.

The state estimates the 145,000-square-foot hospital costs about \$100,000 annually to maintain. The officers' quarters, historic theater and other buildings also are in need of repair.

"We understand that right now, it may not look as if it's got any real dollar value to the state, but it definitely has some historical significance," said Scott Terry, head of the Silver City/Grant County Chamber of



The empty Delta Air Lines Terminal 3 at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport was put on the 2013 list of Endangered Historic Places. The unique flying-saucer-shaped Worldport Terminal, built by Pan Am in 1960, was a symbol of the jet age.

Commerce.

A study commissioned by the state includes a long list of opportunities for Fort Bayard: a treatment center for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, a workforce development center, a business and industrial park and mixed housing.

Others have suggested it as a place for homeless veterans, a private military academy and even a ghost hunting hot spot.

State officials know the challenges of trying to sell a campus as complex as Fort Bayard, with its rich history and more than 400 acres. Aside from the tens of millions of dollars it would take to bring Fort Bayard's buildings up to code, there's the location.

"We're not kind of off the beaten path. We are off the beaten path," Terry said of Silver City, a town of about 11,000.

Fort Bayard is not alone when it comes to remoteness. Other historic properties in rural areas of Colorado and South Dakota are on the chopping block, but experts say finding new uses can result in an economic boon for communities that are struggling to attract new businesses and jobs.

"It's not just about saving a historic place or a landscape for the sake of saving it. It's very important to tell our story and to connect with our past," Wiedower said.

NATION



'Oh, not again'

KATIE CURRID, THE (STAUNTON, VA.) NEWS LEADER/AP

Ronald Shifflett walks with a shovel on Beverley Street in Staunton, Va., on Thursday after a snowstorm led to the accumulation of more than a foot of snow.

Another winter storm wreaking havoc along the East Coast after slamming South

By RON TOPT
AND MARK SCOLFORD
The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The latest storm to roll off nature's assembly line this bustling winter spread heavy snow and sleet along the Northeast corridor Thursday, while utility crews in the ice-enrusted South labored to restore power to hundreds of thousands of shivering residents.

The sloppy weather shuttered schools and businesses, made driving scary, grounded more than 6,000 flights on Thursday alone and created more back-breaking work for people along the East Coast, where shoveling out has become a weekly chore — sometimes a twice-weekly one. "Snow has become a four-letter word," said Tom McGargle, chairman of the Delaware County Council, in suburban Philadelphia.

Baltimore awoke to 15 inches of snow. Washington, D.C., had at least 11, and federal offices and the city's two main airports were closed.

Philadelphia had nearly 9 inches, making it the fourth 6-inch snowstorm of the season — the first time that has happened in the city's history. New York City had at least 8 inches. New England was receiving much smaller amounts. Parts of New Jersey had over 11 inches.

In New Cumberland, Pa., Ran-

dal Delvernois had to take a rest after shoveling his driveway. His snow blower had conked out.

"Every time it snows, it's like, oh, not again," he said. "I didn't get this much snow when I lived in Colorado. It's warmer at the Olympics than it is here. That's ridiculous."

At least 17 deaths, most of them in traffic accidents, were blamed on the storm as it made its way across the South and up the coast.

The victims included a truck driver in Ashburn, Va., who was working to clear snowy roads. He had pulled off the road and was standing behind his vehicle when he was hit by a dump truck.

Across the South, the storm left in its wake a world of ice-enrusted trees and driveways and snapped branches and power lines. About 750,000 homes and businesses were left without power in Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina and Alabama, with scattered outages reported in the mid-Atlantic.

More than 200,000 households and businesses in the Atlanta area alone were waiting for the electricity to come back on. Temperatures were expected to drop below freezing again overnight.

In North Carolina, where the storm caused huge traffic jams in the Raleigh area on Wednesday as people left work and rushed to get home in the middle of the day, National Guardsmen in high-



CLEM MURRAY, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/AP

A plow train heads south on Route 202 between Dilworthtown Road and Route 1 in Birmingham Township, Pa., on Thursday. The latest winter storm spread heavy snow and sleet over the mid-Atlantic and the Northeast on Thursday.

riding Humvees patrolled the snowy roads, looking for stranded motorists.

Some roads around Raleigh remained clogged with abandoned vehicles Thursday morning. City crews were working to tow the vehicles to safe areas where their owners could recover them.

By late Thursday morning, parts of northern Georgia had over 9 inches of snow, while North Carolina ranged from 6 inches in cities to up to 15 inches in mountainous areas. Parts of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania were reporting 15 to 18 inches.



ALLEN G. BREED/AP

A piece of police tape flutters from the mirror of a car abandoned on U.S. 1 in Raleigh, N.C., on Thursday.

WORLD



JOSEPH NAIN/AP

F-16 jets of Singapore Air Force aerobatics team the Black Knights perform a maneuver during the Singapore Airshow on Wednesday.

Restrictions limit business for drone makers

By KELVIN CHAN
The Associated Press

SINGAPORE — Military brass shopping at Asia's biggest defense expo this week have drones high on their to-buy list. But for U.S. manufacturers including General Atomics, which makes the Predator hunter-killer, there's one problem: They can sell to only a few countries because of tight export restrictions.

The controls give rival drone makers from countries such as Israel and China a chance to win more business in the growing global market for unmanned aerial vehicles, which one group forecasts to more than double in the next decade.

U.S. arms makers have been lobbying the government for several years to loosen the restrictions so they can sell their systems to more countries. They fear their established market is shrinking as domestic defense spending is squeezed and the U.S. military withdraws from Iraq and Afghanistan.

American aerospace companies are showing off the latest missiles, attack helicopters and fighter jets at the Singapore Airshow but they may find foreign rivals have the upper hand in cutting more deals for drones, also known as unmanned aerial vehicles.

"There are countries like Israel and China that have weapons-capable aircraft and they can sell, so it definitely hampers us with business not just in this region but around the world because we cannot compete," said Billy Gilliland, president of systems integration at General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc.

The company's Predator and Reaper are among the world's most widely deployed

"There are countries like Israel and China that have weapons-capable aircraft and they can sell, so it definitely hampers us with business not just in this region but around the world because we cannot compete."

Billy Gilliland
president of systems integration at General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc.

drones. They can loiter in the air for long periods to give their operators more time to verify targets before firing precision-guided warheads.

Exports of drones are tightly controlled by an agreement signed by members of a group called the Missile Technology Control Regime, which includes the United States, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan. The group has since expanded to 34 countries but Israel and China aren't members. The 1987 agreement was originally intended to curb the spread of ballistic missiles. Present-day concern about spreading advanced weaponized drone technology to countries or groups hostile to the U.S. is a factor in keeping the American restrictions in place.

Officials at companies such as Northrop Grumman, which makes the high-altitude Global Hawk, argue the restrictions hurt competitiveness in a market that Teal Group Co. forecasts to expand to \$11.6 billion in 2023 from \$5.2 billion last year.

At the same time, human rights groups and some U.S. politicians have been increasingly critical of drone strikes for killing civilians.

Israeli drone makers, including Elbit Systems Ltd. and Israel Aviation Industries Ltd., or IAI, had big displays at the Singapore Airshow.

IAI unveiled its Superheron drone, an upgraded version of its popular Heron. The company has sold drones to 20 countries, including Brazil and Turkey.

To compete for export business, General Atomics launched a drone model last year called the Predator XP that can't be armed. Gilliland said his company has been pitching for business to countries "all over the Pacific Rim." Only Britain, Holland and Italy have been allowed to buy the missile-ready version, the latter two only recently.

The XP has had a lukewarm reception because foreign militaries want the version that can carry out an airstrike.

The list price for a Predator XP system, including three aircraft, three ground stations and spare parts, is about \$50 million to \$60 million. So far only the United Arab Emirates has bought it. A Predator that can carry weapons is "substantially" more expensive, Gilliland said, though he declined to give a figure.

Shelling, airstrikes kill 51 in Syria

The Associated Press

BEIRUT — At least 51 people, including 13 rebels, died in a single day of Syrian government airstrikes and shelling of opposition-controlled districts of Aleppo, activists said Thursday as international mediators were trying to salvage faltering peace negotiations in Geneva.

The Britain-based Observatory for Human Rights said most of the victims were killed by airstrikes and barrel bombs dumped on eight rebel-held districts of the northern city Wednesday. The rest died from artillery shelling, sniper fire and in clashes between forces loyal to President Bashar Assad and rebels fighting to overthrow him.

The bombings in Aleppo, Syria's largest city, are part of a campaign by Assad's forces to wrest control of neighborhoods that were seized by rebels in mid-2012.

The Observatory has been documenting Syria's conflict since its start in March 2011 through a network of activists on the ground.

It released its report on the latest Aleppo casualties Thursday, ahead of a trilateral meeting between senior U.S. and Russian officials and U.N. mediator Lakhdar Brahimi and Syrian government and opposition representatives in Geneva.

The Observatory said at least 4,959 people have died in Syria in the three-week period since Jan. 22, when the government and opposition delegates sat down for the first round of face-to-face meetings in Geneva.

Car bomb kills 12 officers in Pakistan

KARACHI, Pakistan — A parked car bomb targeting Pakistan's elite police commando force killed at least 12 officers and wounded 55 people in the southern city of Karachi on Thursday, police said, raising doubts about the success of an ongoing peace process with the Pakistani Taliban.

Hours after the attack, Taliban spokesman Shahidullah Shahid claimed responsibility for the bombing, which took place as a bus with the officers was leaving a training complex.

As the bus drove by a parked van, it was exploded, police officer Rao Anwar said. Karachi police chief Shahid Hayat said the initial investigation suggested there was a remotely-detonated bomb on the van.

From The Associated Press

UK to Scotland: Back independence, lose the pound

The Associated Press

LONDON — Scotland has been warned that if it votes to leave the United Kingdom later this year, it walks away from the pound.

That's the hard-line message presented Thursday by U.K. Treasury chief George Osborne, who ruled out a currency union in a speech in the Scottish capital of Edinburgh.

The pound would not be an asset divided up after a "messy divorce," he said. The other major U.K. parties have supported that

"If Scotland walks away from the U.K., it walks away from the U.K. pound."

U.K. Treasury chief George Osborne

view.

"The pound isn't an asset to be divided up between the two countries after breakup as if it were a CD collection," he said. "The value of the pound doesn't lie in the paper and ink that's used to print it."

A key plank of the strategy presented by independence leaders is that Scotland would share the pound if they win the Sept. 18 referendum. Osborne ruled that out, arguing that the value of the pound lies in the "entire monetary system underpinning it."

Why, he asked, should the remaining U.K. members — England, Wales and Northern Ireland — shoulder the risk of a currency union should Scotland vote to break away?

"If Scotland walks away from the U.K., it walks away from the U.K. pound," he said.

On Wednesday, Deputy First Minister Nikola Sturgeon described advance word of Osborne's remarks as a bullying tactic. Scotland has had its own Parliament since 1999 and makes its own laws in many areas.

NATION



Connecting the world

TATAN SYUFLANA/AP

An Indonesian youth browses his Facebook page last June at an Internet cafe in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Facebook barrels ahead on 10th anniversary

By BARBARA ORTUTAY
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — It has been 10 years since a Harvard sophomore named Mark Zuckerberg created a website called Thefacebook.com to let his classmates find their friends online.

They did. And in the decade since, so have more than 1 billion people, not just American college students but also farmers in India, activists in Egypt and pop stars in South Korea.

Facebook has transformed how much of the world communicates. Zuckerberg's insistence that people use real identities, not quirky screen names, helped blur, if not erase entirely, the divide between our online and offline worlds. Long-lost friends are no longer lost. They are on Facebook.

From its roots as a website with no ads, no business plan and a hacker ethic, Facebook has grown into a company worth \$150 billion, with 6,337 employees and sprawling headquarters in the heart of Silicon Valley. Born in the age of desktop computers, three years before the iPhone's debut, Facebook is now mainly accessed on mobile devices. Many of those mobile users never had PCs.

"People often ask if I always knew that Facebook would become what it is today. No way," Zuckerberg wrote — where else — on his Facebook page Feb. 4.



PAUL SAKUMA/AP

Flowers are added to a Facebook sign in front of Facebook headquarters in Menlo Park, Calif., in May 2012.

"I remember getting pizza with my friends one night in college shortly after opening Facebook. I told them I was excited to help connect our school community, but one day someone needed to connect the whole world."

Facebook has had plenty of stumbles along the way, from privacy concerns to user protests when Facebook introduced new features, not to mention a rocky public stock debut in 2012. Even its origin was the subject of a lawsuit and a Hollywood movie. So far, Facebook has trudged on.

As Facebook enters its second decade, the company faces a new set of challenges in reaching the next billion users, the billion after that, and the one after that, including the majority of the world without Internet access. It must also keep the existing set inter-

ested even as younger, hipper rivals emerge and try to lure them there.

There are 1.23 billion Facebook users today, or roughly 17 percent of the world's population. Although that's far from connecting the whole world, Facebook is here to stay. It's reached critical mass.

"One of the things Facebook has been good at is that it's very easy to use and understand," said Paul Levinson, professor of communications and media studies at Fordham University. "It's a much friendlier system than any email system."

Javier Oliván joined Facebook Inc. as vice president of growth and analytics in 2007. It was a different time. Myspace was the dominant online hangout with 200 million members. Facebook had 30 million. Facebook's user base had been accelerating steadily, Oliván said, as it expanded from Harvard's campus to other colleges, then high schools and, in 2006, anyone older than 13.

Users in the U.K. and other English-speaking countries then began signing up.

About 2007, growth plateaued. "The thinking at the time was (that) we'll never have 100 million users," Oliván said. "That's when the growth team was created."

If Facebook was going to connect the world, as its mission states, it couldn't be an English-



PAUL SAKUMA/AP

Mark Zuckerberg smiles at Facebook headquarters in Palo Alto, Calif., in 2007. On Feb. 4, Facebook celebrated 10 years since Zuckerberg created the website that became Facebook.

only service. Facebook turned to its users to help translate the site. A Spanish version came in 2008, followed by dozens of others. Growth accelerated again, and volunteer translators are still adding new tongues, whether that's native African languages or pirate slang.

Facebook got its 100 million users by August 2008 and half a billion two years later. By 2012, a billion people were logging in to Facebook at least once per month.

Beyond language, another hurdle was mobile. The iPhone came along in 2007, and Facebook's iPhone app soon followed. But the app was slow and buggy, fueling concerns that it wouldn't be able to transform into a "mobile-first" company, as it wanted to be.

About the time of its initial public offering of stock, potential investors fretted about its ability to make money from mobile ads.

That's no longer an issue. Facebook's stock is trading near record highs. The majority of the company's advertising revenue now comes from mobile, rather than Web ads.

On any given day, 81 percent of Facebook's users are outside the U.S. and Canada.

"My day is not complete without checking my Facebook account," said Syaiful Anwar, 47, a restaurant owner in Pekanbaru on Indonesia's Sumatra island. "To find out what is happening in this world, to bring together my friends and relatives (is) now just a click (of a) mouse away."

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FAITH

Spirited summit a healer in Haiti

The Associated Press

BOIS-NEUF, Haiti — The Christian pilgrims crowded onto a barren mountainside in central Haiti by the thousands, seeking favors and spiritual renewal.

Organized by Our Lady of Fatima Bible Center, the three-day summit was among the largest of its kind in the Caribbean nation in recent years.

Although the center is Roman Catholic, the event had an evangelical feel, and some elements of Voodoo.

The gathering in the village of Bois-Neuf was called "Prayer, Penance and Conversion," and participants came with hopes of a better life for themselves or others.

Some brought their passports in hopes that their prayers might then secure a visa to leave impoverished Haiti. Others held aloft photos of sick family members in hopes that their prayers would cure them.

Amid the prayers, priests threaded the crowd splashing pilgrims with holy water, a gesture aimed at expelling malevolent spirits. A few people fell to the ground, shrieking as the priests prayed for bad spirits to leave their bodies.

Elsewhere, women carried baskets of fruit and vegetables on their heads as offerings.

The Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake in Haiti that killed tens of thousands of people and displaced 1.5 million others was on the minds of many at the gathering, and cited as a chief reason to have faith in God.

"If we don't convert, we will have another Jan. 12, 2010 — but



worse," the Rev. Jules Campion, director and founder of the center, told his congregation. "If we don't convert, Port-au-Prince won't be destroyed — it will disappear completely. You must convert!"



Clockwise from top: Christian pilgrims, one wearing a rosary, hold hands at a procession organized by Our Lady of Fatima Bible Center in Bois-Neuf, Haiti, during a three-day summit that was among the largest of its kind in the Caribbean nation in recent years; the Rev. Jules Campion leads the procession of pilgrims carrying a statue of Our Lady of Fatima; Campion douses a pilgrim in holy water; a priest removes a malevolent spirit from an attendee after she was splashed with holy water.

PHOTOS BY DIEU NALIO CHERY/AP

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

2 women get back lost wedding dresses

FL ST. PETERSBURG — Two Tampa Bay area women are now back in possession of their own wedding dresses nine years after a mix-up got them switched.

The Tampa Bay Times reported Wednesday that Marie Keeney was planning a ceremony to renew her vows with her husband of nine years. The planning came to a halt last year when she took the wedding dress out of the storage box and realized it wasn't hers.

Keeney, 45, contacted the dry cleaners that did the preservation, which found Keeney's dress and shipped it back.

An invoice that was also found showed that the other dress belonged to a Katherine Stephenson. The Times tracked down Stephenson living 3 miles from Keeney. Stephenson had long accepted that her dress had been lost. She picked it up last week.

Most Kissed Man an honored valentine

AL GREENSBORO — The Alabama Historical Commission is using Valentine's Day to celebrate a war hero who became known as "America's Most Kissed Man."

Li. Richmond Pearson Hobson was one of eight men who attempted to sink the USS Merrimac in 1898 to block Cuba's Santiago Harbor during the Spanish-American War.

Hobson and others were captured in the effort. After their release, the Navy sent the young, handsome war hero on a national tour, where women flocked to see the "Hero of the Merrimac." Newspaper accounts say one public kiss led to another until he reportedly kissed as many as 500 women at one stop.

The stories about "America's Most Kissed Man" grew and one account estimated he had kissed 10,000 women. The Historical Commission said he soon had a candy named after him called "Hobson Kisses."

UI professor hopes site helps with decisions

IL URBANA — Life is full of difficult decisions: What should I study in college? What should I have for dinner? Would life be better in a warmer, sunnier place?

A University of Illinois professor has created a website he hopes can help.

All Abbas said he created the website Ahoona.com for people to ask for help from other users for any kind of decision. Access is free and so far there about 10,000 registered users.

Users can ask for feedback. They also can use what Abbas calls a decision wizard and get advice on whether they're headed toward a good decision. There is also a database of other similar decisions made by Ahoona users.

Gay teen achieves Eagle Scout milestone

MD CHEVY CHASE — A 17-year-old is coming quickly to the Boy Scouts of Amer-



AP photos



Sinkhole swallows Corvettes

A sinkhole collapsed part of the National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green, Ky., on Wednesday, damaging eight cars but not shutting down the building. Museum spokeswoman Katie Frassinelli said six of the cars were owned by the museum and two — a 1993 ZR-1 Spyder and a 2009 ZR1 Blue Devil — were on loan from General Motors.

THE CENSUS

30

The number of years since Yuengling's Ice Cream was in production. Beer drinkers up and down the East Coast know Yuengling's Ice Cream as a 185-year-old Pennsylvania brewery. But Yuengling used to make ice cream, too, starting in 1920 at the dawn of Prohibition. Now Yuengling's Ice Cream is back, available in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, Delaware and New Jersey. This incarnation of Yuengling's Ice Cream is a separate company with no connection to the brewery. It says it has no plans to produce beer-flavored ice cream.



ica after years of turmoil and debate over its membership policy, with an openly gay 17-year-old in Maryland achieving the highest rank of Eagle Scout.

On Monday night, Boy Scout Troop 52, one of the nation's oldest, formed a circle and gave Pascal Tessier sustained applause and some handshakes and pats on the back. His achievement comes just weeks after the organization lifted its ban on gay youth.

For Tessier, it represents six years of work, 27 merit badges and projects in service, leadership and outdoor skills. He put all that at risk to advocate publicly against the Scouts ban on gays.

House panel passes 'Merry Christmas' bill

OK OKLAHOMA CITY — It was Christmas in February for members of an Oklahoma House committee Monday.

The House Common Education Committee approved by a 15-1 vote legislation saying that public school students, teachers and

other staff members can greet each other with such traditional phrases as "Merry Christmas," "Happy Hanukkah" and "Happy Holidays."

The committee passed the measure in spite of federal court rulings and U.S. Department of Education guidelines that say public schools already have the right to erect holiday displays with religious themes under certain circumstances and that students and teachers can greet each other with "Merry Christmas."

Uplifting messages to patients etched in snow

MN MINNEAPOLIS — Huge messages left in the snow on the frozen Mississippi River are giving patients at St. Cloud Hospital a lift.

At ground level, the patted-down snow doesn't look like much. But from the hospital windows above, the messages are quite clear. The latest are the words "love" and "believe," along with a peace symbol. Each time there's fresh snow,

there's a new message.

Nurse Mary Habiger has seen a man and woman in snowshoes stamping out the messages. She said the mystery man and woman seem well organized and plan their messages in advance.

Beauty queen bags buck during bow hunt

MO KANSAS CITY — Miss Kansas traded evening gowns for camouflage when she went out on a deer bow hunt in southeast Kansas.

Theresa Vail joined a December hunt in the Pratt area organized by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, JB Outfitters and Realtree Outdoors, which taped the hunt for a television show. The Kansas City Star reported.

"I like to hunt, and I'm not going to hide that. A woman can enjoy being out there bow hunting just as much as a man can," said Vail, who was also the first Miss America contestant to reveal her tattoos during the national pageant's swimsuit competition.

Vail got her shot at an 8-point buck in the final hour on the third day.

Man says he called 911 from bed of stolen truck

CO DENVER — A Lake-wood man who left his pickup running in his driveway — only to see it stolen — says he caught up with the vehicle, jumped into the bed and called 911 as the thief drove away.

Thomas Garcia told The Denver Post he started his truck, then returned to his garage no more than 20 feet away to put on his work boots. He looked up when he heard the engine rev and saw the truck backing out of the driveway.

Garcia said he was shoeless when he jumped into the bed and called 911. For the next several minutes, he said, he updated police on his location.

Police said the thief crashed the truck in west Denver before they arrived, and the driver fled.

From wire reports

FACES

TV funnyman Sid Caesar dies

By LYNN ELBER
The Associated Press

Sid Caesar, the prodigiously talented pioneer of TV comedy who paired with Imogene Coca in sketches that became classics and who inspired a generation of famous writers, died early Wednesday. He was 91.

Caesar died at his home in the Los Angeles area after a brief illness, family spokesman Eddy Friedfield said.

In his two most important shows, "Your Show of Shows," 1950-54, and "Caesar's Hour," 1954-57, Caesar displayed remarkable skill in pantomime, satire, mimicry, dialect and sketch comedy. And he gathered a stable of young writers who went on to worldwide fame in their own right — including Neil Simon and Woody Allen.

"The one great star that television created and who created television was Sid Caesar," said critic Joel Siegel on the TV documentary "Hail Sid Caesar: The Golden Age Of Comedy," which first aired in 2001.

While best known for his TV shows, which have been revived on DVD in recent years, he also had success on Broadway and occasional appearances.

If the typical funnyman was tubby or short and scrawny, Caesar was tall and powerful, with a clown's loose limbs and rubbery face, and a trademark mole on his left cheek. But Caesar never went in for clowning or jokes. He wasn't interested. He insisted that the laughs come from the everyday. "Real life is the true comedy," he said in a 2001 interview with The Associated Press. "Then everybody knows what you're talking about."



Sid Caesar



Warner Bros. Pictures

The computer-animated adventure "The Lego Movie" made \$69 million in its first weekend — and the studio behind it is planning a sequel. "If nothing else, people will see the success of 'The Lego Movie' and say, 'Hey, we can do that, too,'" said Lutz Muller, chief executive of Klosters Trading Corp. "But it will take more than just the wish to sell toys to make it a successful movie."

Toymakers look to build on success of Lego flick

By DANIEL MILLER
Los Angeles Times

The \$69-million opening of "The Lego Movie" last weekend has Hollywood film studios scanning the aisles of toy stores for the next hit.

In recent years, several film series based on action figures and other children's products have found major box-office success. Among those have been pictures based on the Transformers and G.I. Joe toy lines.

Although films based on toys aren't guaranteed hits, movie studios are attracted to such properties because of their massive built-in and often pre-sold audiences. Toy-centered films that find success also can unlock lucrative ancillary revenue streams, including more toys and related merchandise.

Movies based on the Ouija board game and The Hot Wheels toy car line are among the latest crop seeking that kind of success. Other beloved toys, including the Candy Land and Monopoly board games, also could be turned into films.

Warner Bros. has already begun developing a sequel to "Lego."

"If nothing else, people will see the success of 'The Lego Movie' and say, 'Hey, we can do that, too,'" said Lutz Muller, chief executive of Klosters Trading Corp., a consumer products consulting firm in Williston, Vt. "But it

will take more than just the wish to sell toys to make it a successful movie."

Indeed, there have been toy-based film missteps such as the 2012 flop "Battleship," which was born out of the high-profile partnership of Universal Pictures and Hasbro. A 1985 adaptation of the board game "Clue" also bombed.

Entertainment attorney Schuyler Moore, who represented the producers of "Goal!," a film trilogy largely financed by Adidas and featured the company's apparel, believes that the adaptation of toys into movies is part of a broader trend of companies entering the "content business" in earnest. "They key is whether the product works for a film," said Moore, a partner at Strock & Strock & Lavan.

In 2008, Hasbro Inc. in Pawtucket, R.I., one of the largest toymakers in the world, inked a deal with Universal Pictures to make at least four movies based on the toy company's products. But several projects were shelved, including a film based on the Stretch Armstrong action figure. Though the companies continue to work together — they are making the Ouija project — Muller said "Battleship" is a cautionary tale to toy makers should heed.

"The toy companies will do everything in their power to make sure (a film) sells as many toys as possible, and if they do that, it will take away from the attractiveness of the movie itself," Muller said. "I would not take

the success of Lego as a template for predictions because Lego... didn't just use "The Lego Movie" to promote Lego."

Though there have been disappointments, toy-based films are proven commodities at the box office. Each of the three "Transformers" films has grossed at least \$700 million worldwide. Both of the "G.I. Joe" pictures crossed the \$300-million mark. Those two franchises are based on properties controlled by Hasbro.

"There used to be a stigma around creating movies based on products," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for entertainment analytics firm Rentrak. "I think people are realizing that movies can come from virtually anywhere, and as long as the movies have some measure of quality then the stigma goes away."

Paramount's next "Transformers" picture, "Transformers: Age of Extinction," stars Mark Wahlberg and is scheduled to come out June 27. Universal Pictures' Ouija project, which Platinum Dunes and Blumhouse Pictures are producing, is slated for release Oct. 24. Universal will distribute Legendary Pictures' upcoming film based on the Hot Wheels die-cast toy cars.

Sony Pictures Entertainment, meanwhile, is developing a film based on Mattel's Masters of the Universe toy franchise, which includes the He-Man and Skeletor characters.

Celebrity chef Paula Deen cooks up comeback deal

The Associated Press

Paula Deen has found a key ingredient to bringing some sizzle back to her career — a cash infusion worth at least \$75 million from a private investment firm.

The Savannah, Ga.-based celebrity cook announced Wednesday that she's launched an umbrella company that will oversee her restaurants, cookbooks, product endorsements and other remaining slices of her media empire. The new company, called Paula Deen Ventures, said private-equity firm Najafi Cos. is investing \$75 million to \$100 million to help Deen make a comeback.

Deen's fortunes took a dive last year after comments she made under oath during proceedings in a lawsuit, namely that she had used racial slurs in the past, became public. The Food Network dropped Deen, as did pork producer Smithfield

Foods, book publisher Ballantine and several other companies that paid her to endorse their products.

In a statement, Deen praised the partnership with Phoenix-based Najafi and the decision to name Steven Nanulla, who has worked with Deen for the past two years, to serve as CEO of Paula Deen Ventures. "I know this is the right decision to lead my team, as we continue to share quality products with my fans — whose love and support have built my brands," Deen said.

Jahm Najafi, CEO of the Najafi Companies, said his firm has great respect for Deen's past success and is confident its investment will pay off.

US rappers banned from NZ

New Zealand immigration authorities Thursday banned Los Angeles rappers O.G. Future from entering the country after de-

ciding they pose a threat to public order.

The group was due to play an open-air concert with headline act Eminem on Saturday in Auckland.

Border Operations Manager Karen Urwin said authorities decided to decline visas to six group members after becoming aware of a 2011 incident in Boston in which some witnesses claimed group members incited fans to attack police officers. "It's not a decision we take lightly and not one that happens often," Urwin said.

Group member Tyler, The Creator vented his frustration on Twitter on Thursday.

"They said we were 'terrorist threats and bad for the society' or whatever. Sick," he wrote. He later tweeted, "I love NZ tho."

The hip-hop group, which is also known as Odd Future Wolf Gang Kill Them All, is known for its anarchic style and lyrics that canvas drugs, killing and rape.



AP

Chef Paula Deen has launched a new umbrella company for her cooking empire.

Other news

■ TV host Seth Meyers has scored a powerful guest for his first episode of "Late Night": Vice President Joe Biden. The vice president's office says Biden will appear on the show during the Feb. 24 premiere.

■ The sixth and final season of "Star Wars: The Clone Wars" will be shown exclusively to Netflix subscribers in the U.S. and Canada beginning March 7 as part of a licensing deal announced Thursday.

NATION

Being *the* CHANGE

Matt West views a computer screen at Nauset Regional High School in North Eastham, Mass.

MERRILL CASSIDY, CAPE COD (MASS.) TIMES/AP

Massachusetts teen tries to wean peers off violent video games

By K.C. MYERS

Cape Cod (Mass.) Times

EASTHAM, Mass. — In an effort to keep children younger than himself away from violent video games, Nauset (Mass.) Regional High School freshman Matt West has started a club to design and market nonviolent games.

West, 15, of Orleans, Mass., acknowledges he plays some of the games on Common Sense Media's most violent video game list, all of which are rated M — "mature" for ages 17 and older.

But, he said, 15 is a lot older than 9, the age at which he has seen young siblings of his friends begin playing "Grand Theft Auto," which is set in a city of prostitutes and drug dealers and features profanity, sex and lots of opportunities to shoot, run over and blow up your enemy.

West is the only student in an Outer Cape group targeting violence called Be the Change. It is made up of police officers, Nauset school staff and representatives of nonprofit agencies such as Child and Family Services of the Lower Cape. The Be the Change committee formed soon after the December 2012 school

shootings in Newtown, Conn.

Be the Change is sponsoring parent education forums to bring the murky reality of violent video games to light.

West became involved when as a youth representative on Together We Can, he attended a Be the Change meeting and was struck by what he heard: Extreme media violence consumption is linked to reduced function in the part of the brain that regulates decision-making and weighing consequences, according to brain research done by Indiana University.

The average American child is inundated by media, watching some type of screen an average of 6.5 hours a day, according to Lowell Monke, a founder of the nonprofit organization Alliance for Childhood.

Also, American children are 17 times more likely to die from guns than children in the next 25 highest-income countries combined, according to the Children's Defense Fund.

As a therapist who treats children, Sue Landers, co-leader of the Be the Change committee, has no doubt violent video

games can be addictive and destructive.

She recently made a home visit to an emotionally disturbed boy, age 12, who was addicted to the video game series "Call of Duty," which Common Sense Media lists as one of the 10 most violent video games on the market today.

The boy's grandmother, who is raising him, said the boy "would rather pee on himself" than stop the game, Landers said.

The mechanics

The "hands-on learning" of pressing the button or pulling a trigger is an extremely powerful method of teaching, Landers said.

Such exposure to constant murders without consequences desensitizes children to violence and reduces empathy, she said.

Gun manufacturers are often used as consultants during video game production to make sure the weapons in the game are realistic, Landers said. The gun manufacturers also have links to their products on the game websites, according to "Joystick Warriors."

"When kids know what I carry in my cruiser, that's bad," said Eastham police Sgt. Gus Schnitzer. "But they do. They know its name, how to load it and how to use it."

All that said, West says he likes video games. He plays "Saints Row IV" because of the beautiful cars, the planes and buildings. And he enjoys playing with his friends online.

Yet he is concerned — and so are some of his game-loving friends — to think of younger children watching scenes of sex or the killing of children, for example.

He thinks it may be possible to create games with realistic, well-rendered scenes of cities, cars and homes that will fascinate gamers but don't include all the violence.

Not computer-savvy himself, West said he hopes to get help from teenage programming wizards at Nauset High, Staples and elsewhere.

When he tells other teenagers about his idea, West said, "They are mad until I explain, 'You may like the games, but think about your younger brother or sister playing with them.'"

“They (other teenagers) are mad, until I explain, “You may like the games, but think about your younger brother or sister playing with them.””

Matt West

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Comcast to buy Time Warner Cable for \$45B

BY RYAN KAKISHIMA
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Comcast Corp., which already owns the NBCUniversal media empire, will buy Time Warner Cable Inc. for about \$45.2 billion in a massive deal that combines the top two U.S. cable TV companies and will create a dominant force in both creating and delivering entertainment to American homes.

The all-stock deal was approved by the boards of both companies.

It is expected to close by the end of the year, pending shareholder and regulatory approvals.

The price amounts to \$158.82 per share for Time Warner Cable's roughly 285 million outstanding shares and is about 17 percent above that stock's Wednesday closing price of \$135.31. It trumps a proposal by Charter Communications Inc. to buy Time Warner Cable for about \$132.50 per share, or \$38 billion in cash and stock.

Time Warner Cable shareholders will receive 2.875 Comcast

shares for every Time Warner Cable share they own. Once the deal is final, they will end up owning about 23 percent of the combined company.

Charter had pursued Time Warner Cable for months, but Time Warner Cable CEO Rob Marcus consistently had rejected what he called a lowball offer.

Even before the deal had been formally announced, it was being denounced. Public Knowledge, a Washington-based consumer rights group, said in a statement

Wednesday that regulators must stop the deal, because it would give Comcast "unprecedented gatekeeper power in several important markets."

"An enlarged Comcast would be the bully in the schoolyard," it said.

Shares of Time Warner Cable jumped more than 12 percent, or \$16.82, to \$152.13 Thursday morning after the deal was announced and a few hours before markets opened. Comcast shares edged up a penny to \$55.25.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Feb. 14)	\$1.4027
Dollar buys (Feb. 14)	€0.7129
British pound (Feb. 14)	\$1.71
Japanese yen (Feb. 14)	100.00
South Korean won (Feb. 14)	1,036.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.6629/0.6014
Canada (dollar)	1.1001
China (Yuan)	0.6035
Denmark (Krone)	5.4659
Egypt (Pound)	0.6963
Euro	\$1.3667/0.7317
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7559
Hungary (Forint)	228.06
Israel (Sheqel)	3.5114
Japan (Yen)	101.87
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2824
Norway (Krone)	6.1049
Philippines (Peso)	44.96
Poland (Zloty)	3.105
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7206
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2667
South Korea (Won)	1,064.54
Switzerland (Franc)	0.8940
Thailand (Bath)	32.58
Turkey (New Lira)	2.003

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Germany	\$3.545	\$3.724	\$3.301	\$4.214
Change in price	+1.7 cents	+1.2 cents	-1.3 cents	+2.6 cents
Netherlands	--	\$4.649	\$4.940	\$4.993
Change in price	--	+3.7 cents	+4.0 cents	-4.0 cents
U.K.	\$3.659	\$3.836	\$4.149	\$4.222
Change in price	--	+1.2 cents	+1.3 cents	+2.6 cents
Azores	--	--	\$4.482	--
Change in price	--	--	no change	--
Turkey	\$3.851	\$4.006	\$4.266	\$4.277
Change in price	--	no change	no change	no change
Turkey	--	\$4.445	\$4.082*	+2.6 cents
Change in price	--	--	no change	--
Guam	\$3.936	--	--	\$4.277
Change in price	no change	--	--	no change

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	--	\$3.478	--	\$3.869
Change in price	--	+1.0 cents	--	+2.0 cents
Okinawa	\$3.459	--	--	\$3.969
Change in price	no change	--	--	+2.0 cents
South Korea	\$3.559	--	\$3.019	\$4.229
Change in price	+1.0 cents	--	+1.0 cents	--
Guam	\$3.559*	\$3.739	\$3.909	--
Change in price	+2.0 cents	+2.0 cents	+1.0 cents	--

MARKET WATCH

	Feb. 12, 2014
Dow Jones Industrials	-30.83
	15,963.94
Nasdaq composite	+10.24
	4,201.29
Standard & Poor's 500	-0.49
	1,819.26
Russell 2000	+3.37
	1,132.54

* Diesel EFD ** Midgrade
For the week of Feb. 15-21

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	8.00
Federal funds market rate	0.07
3-month bill	0.01
30-year bond	3.72

WEATHER OUTLOOK

FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



FRIDAY IN EUROPE



SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



Friday's US temperatures

City	HI	LO	City	HI	LO	City	HI	LO	City	HI	LO	City	HI	LO
Arlington, Va.	66	43	Atlanta	64	39	Boston	38	32	Chicago	23	15	Dallas	64	39
Birmingham	55	33	Denver	68	40	Detroit	26	19	Fort Worth	68	40	Houston	72	48
Bismarck	29	17	Indianapolis	65	37	Los Angeles	68	42	Las Vegas	79	52	Los Angeles	80	53
Boston	38	32	Jacksonville	66	33	Madison	48	21	Memphis	49	34	Manassas	71	45
Brownsville	77	49	Kansas City	37	27	Miami	74	51	Miami Beach	74	51	Manassas	71	45
Buffalo	28	21	Knoxville	42	27	Minneapolis	66	41	Midland-Odessa	49	38	Manassas	71	45
Burlington, Vt.	30	25	Lake Charles	68	42	New Orleans	66	41	Midwest	52	46	Manassas	71	45
Caribou, Maine	26	25	Lansing	26	21	Portland	40	29	Missoula	43	27	Manassas	71	45
Casper, Wyo.	51	34	Las Vegas	79	52	Raleigh	47	30	Mobile	80	67	Manassas	71	45
Charleston, S.C.	59	31	Lexington	38	28	Reno	68	36	Montgomery	62	34	Manassas	71	45
Charleston, W.Va.	40	26	Lincoln	39	24	San Antonio	80	44	Nashville	47	30	Manassas	71	45
Charlotte, N.C.	43	29	Little Rock	55	33	San Diego	74	54	New York City	39	28	Manassas	71	45
			Los Angeles	80	53	San Francisco	61	51	Newark	40	29	Manassas	71	45
						Seattle	51	49	Norfolk, Va.	47	30	Manassas	71	45
						Shreveport	65	39	North Platte	45	23	Manassas	71	45
						Silver Spring	71	42	Oklahoma City	59	35	Manassas	71	45
						St. Louis	33	27	Omaha	34	21	Manassas	71	45
						St. Thomas	85	77	Orlando	69	42	Manassas	71	45
						St. Pete Beach	52	45	Pasadena	40	28	Manassas	71	45
						Tampa	67	48	Peoria	24	14	Manassas	71	45
						Toledo	41	26	Phoenix	86	55	Manassas	71	45
						Triana	55	32	Philadelphia	37	27	Manassas	71	45
						Tulsa	55	32	Phoenix	86	55	Manassas	71	45
						Tupelo	51	32	Portland	57	32	Manassas	71	45
						Washington	42	28	Portland, Ore.	50	44	Manassas	71	45
						Wichita	50	30	Providence	39	33	Manassas	71	45
						Wichita Falls	64	36	Rochester	30	22	Manassas	71	45
						Wilmington, Del.	38	26	Rockford	30	13	Manassas	71	45
						Yakima	42	35	Sacramento	66	52	Manassas	71	45
						Youngstown	28	21	St. Louis	33	27	Manassas	71	45
								St. Peterburg	65	50	Manassas	71	45	
								St. Thomas	85	77	Manassas	71	45	
								St. Pete Beach	52	45	Manassas	71	45	
								Tampa	67	48	Manassas	71	45	
								Toledo	41	26	Manassas	71	45	
								Triana	55	32	Manassas	71	45	
								Tulsa	55	32	Manassas	71	45	
								Tupelo	51	32	Manassas	71	45	
								Washington	42	28	Manassas	71	45	
								Wichita	50	30	Manassas	71	45	
								Wichita Falls	64	36	Manassas	71	45	
								Wilmington, Del.	38	26	Manassas	71	45	
								Yakima	42	35	Manassas	71	45	
								Youngstown	28	21	Manassas	71	45	

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 23 Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Get Fuzzy



Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12			13			14					
15			16			17					
18			19								
20		21	22			23	24	25	26		
		27	28			29	30				
31	32	33				34					
35					36		37				
38					39	40		41	42	43	44
					45			46			
48	49	50	51							52	
53						54				55	
56						57				58	

ACROSS

- 1 Edge
- 4 "Certainly"
- 7 Postpone
- 12 Blackjack component
- 13 In the manner of
- 14 Nome dome home
- 15 Invitation
- 16 Supreme
- 18 Quilters' gathering
- 19 Extra
- 20 Persian Gulf land
- 22 The lady
- 23 Pith helmet
- 25 Guitar's cousin
- 29 Slept soundly?
- 31 Check recipient
- 34 "Fidelio," e.g.
- 35 Stop container
- 37 Underwear with underwire
- 38 Pinnacle
- 39 "Caught ya!"
- 41 Speed along
- 45 Unaccompanied
- 47 Work with
- 48 Cougar
- 52 Small songbird
- 53 Startle
- 54 D.C. address
- 55 "Holy cow!"
- 56 The same
- 57 Historic time
- 58 Bobby of hockey

DOWN

- 28 St. Bernard's load
- 30 Neither mate
- 31 Bake sale org.
- 32 Joan of —
- 33 Kipper predecessor
- 36 Head light?
- 37 Flag
- 40 Hugh Laurie TV series
- 42 Expenditure
- 43 Wickerwork willow
- 44 Poetic rhythm
- 45 Bullets, et al.
- 46 Sicilian spouter
- 48 Scoundrel
- 49 Foreman foe
- 50 Sylvester, to Twety
- 51 Museum stuff

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

2-14

CRYPTOQUIP

Y S J C O R S U Q O R W E Z Z T E T A ' W
 R V S Z Z W D C W J Q I Y E A E A F
 H Q G T M Q G I J Q G G S J W Z U , H E Z Z

U O G S M E P W D S V G S M E P ?
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: YOU APPEAR TO BE OBSESSED WITH THAT PALE, DELICATE COLOR. YOU SHOULDN'T DWELL ON THE PASTEL.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals D

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Ernie Gates

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OPINION

After the song, why all the discord?

By MICHAEL SMERCONISH

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Bob Dylan took the Pepsi challenge and won.

On any other Super Bowl Sunday, there'd have been controversy over Dylan's concession of beer manufacturing to Germany and phone assembly to Asia (as he asked that we let Chrysler build your car). But Dylan's surrender of American exceptionalism in a commercial escaped controversy because of the kerfuffle that surrounded Coca-Cola's multilingual singalong. No matter that the song was "America the Beautiful"; the fact that it was presented in seven languages was six too many for some.

The reaction was immediate and, in some instances, vicious. CBS in Coke's hometown of Atlanta reported that the company's Facebook page became an electronic town square. There, a Minnesota-based church announced that it was throwing away all of its Coke products because "Mexicans singing the national anthem is an abomination." Another user said that "it's not bigotry to demand that we have a unified language," and if we don't, "we are no better than the third-world cesspool dwellers that refuse to lift themselves."

Videos of the commercial posted on YouTube also drew protests, including one observation that it was "sung by a bunch of foreigners." Time magazine reported that another blogger said, "We speak ENGLISH here, IDIOTS." Glenn Beck, fresh off a mea culpa tour, noted that the purpose was to "divide people."

No, the purpose was to sell product by striking a multinational chord on the eve of the Sochi Winter Olympics. Common sense dictates that before spending somewhere around \$4 million per 30 seconds to air an ad that was seen by 11.5 million people — the largest in American television history — Coke would have run it by a few focus groups to ensure it received the intended reaction. I suspect the "great" Americans who were offended by it are a distinct and endangered minority who weren't the targeted audience.

Reaction to the 60 seconds is a sign of the times. Consider that 43 years ago, the iconic American brand brought us "I'd Like to Buy the World a Coke," an ad that featured a few dozen singers in native garb who — in English — offered a song that was so well-received it spawned a commercial hit. Where the recent Super Bowl commercial focused on America, the predecessor was globally oriented. But that alone doesn't account for its hostile reception in certain quarters. Much has changed since 1971.

By JOSHUA KEATING

Slate

The Financial Times reports that Spain is considering a new change to its citizenship law, one that would allow the descendants of Jews expelled from the country during the Spanish inquisition to obtain citizenship.

Until now the descendants of Jews expelled from Spain during the 15th century — known as Sephardic Jews — could claim Spanish citizenship only after living in the country for two years, and then only if they renounced their previous nationality.

The new bill, which is still to be approved by the Spanish parliament, will allow the estimated 3.5m Sephardic Jews who are alive today to claim Spanish nationality without having to give up their current passport.



SUZANNE BAKER, SUN-TIMES MEDIA/AP

High school sophomore Sushmitha Suresh, of Aurora, Ill., sang a portion of "America the Beautiful" in Hindi in a Coca-Cola commercial that debuted during the Super Bowl.

Quick flashback: Richard Nixon was in the White House. The Baltimore Colts beat the Dallas Cowboys in the Super Bowl, 16-13, on a Jim O'Brien field goal. Evel Knievel jumped 19 cars in California. The Weather Underground exploded a bomb in a men's room at the U.S. Capitol. Joe Frazer defeated Muhammad Ali at Madison Square Garden. Charles Manson was sentenced to death. Stamps were 8 cents; gas was 40 cents a gallon. The voting age was lowered to 18. Walt Disney World opened in Orlando, Fla. There was a prison riot in Attica, N.Y. Led Zeppelin released its fourth album, featuring "Stairway to Heaven." And Archie Bunker debuted in "All in the Family."

Rob Reiner's "Meathead" character may have been smarter than Carroll O'Connor's Archie, but he never won the jousts in the Queens home they shared. And where whites were 80 percent of the American population, according to the 1970 census (which did not delineate Hispanics), Lionel Jefferson — Meathead's black contemporary — was a foil, never a threat. Politically, it was an Archie Bunker world, as evidenced by Nixon's 1972 clobbering of Democrat George McGovern in 49 of 50 states.

So, when a few dozen singers gathered on an Italian hillside to sing Coke wanting worldwide distribution, it was more cute than a cause for alarm. But now the numbers have changed.

Six years ago, Pew Research launched its Population Prediction, noting:

"If current trends continue, the popula-

tion of the United States will rise to 438 million in 2050, from 296 million in 2005, and 82 percent of the increase will be due to immigrants arriving from 2005 to 2050 and their U.S.-born descendants. ... The non-Hispanic white population will increase more slowly than other racial and ethnic groups; whites will become a minority (47 percent) by 2050."

Never mind that the very first image of this year's Coke commercial resembled Ronald Reagan on horseback. The ad was received by some as an in-your-face reminder of changing demographics, rather than, as intended, a reflection of the melting pot that makes the nation unique. I doubt that a similar version with a unified language would have been received much better.

A release coinciding with the airing of the commercial read in part:

"For 127 years, Coca-Cola has been proud to be a part of bringing friends and families together while memories are made," said Katie Bayne, president, North America Brands, Coca-Cola North America. "With 'It's Beautiful,' we are simply showing that America is beautiful, and Coke is for everyone."

Singing "America the Beautiful" in different languages poses no threat to our way of life. No one comes here to change our country. If their intent was to change our country to be more like the one they've escaped, I suspect they'd choose the easier alternative and stay home.

Michael Smerconish writes for The Philadelphia Inquirer.

500 years later, Spain wants its Jews back

While the biggest community of Sephardic Jews lives in Israel, other communities also exist in Latin America, Turkey, the US and other parts of Europe. The proposed offer of Spanish citizenship would also apply to them.

The law would be pretty unusual. A number of countries have laws to encourage members of their diasporas to return to the motherland. Ireland, for instance, will grant citizenship to people with Irish grandparents, though not — as Bill Clinton seems to believe — to anyone of "Irish descent." Israel's law of return will give citizenship to Jews from any country. Armenia passed laws in 2007 to grant dual citizenship to ethnic Armenians born in other countries.

But the Spanish law would apply to people who were expelled from the country, and not recently but five centuries ago. There are already questions about how

the Federation of Jewish Communities in Spain, which will vet the prospective returnees, will determine eligibility.

Part of this may be Spain looking to address one of the darkest periods of its history, but it's also worth noting that people are leaving the country in record numbers these days. As many as 700,000 people — roughly 1.5 percent of the population — may have departed for other countries since 2008.

Allowing Sephardic Jews to return may be one way of attracting new citizens without risking an anti-immigrant backlash. Some might tell me that, given the current political climate, the descendants of Muslims expelled during the Inquisition might have a longer wait.

Joshua Keating is a staff writer at Slate focusing on international news, social science and related topics. He was previously an editor at Foreign Policy magazine.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

The recovery is still too slow

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Job creation figures for January, released Feb. 7, continue to present a depressing picture of prospects for the U.S. economy. A pallid total of 113,000 jobs were created in January, on the heels of an even weaker 74,000 in December. The unemployment rate dropped from 6.7 percent to 6.6 percent, which is good, but it reflects more people dropping out of the labor force in the face of dim prospects.

Those new jobs do not even cover the number of new entries into the job market each month. At that rate of increase it would take years just to get back to pre-2008, pre-recession levels of employment.

Congress has not extended emergency jobless benefits, due mostly to Republican opposition. If there were any truth to some of the looney arguments in Washington for allowing the benefits to end on Dec. 28 — namely that such aid discourages the unemployed from seeking work — then more people should have been driven into the job market in January. But they were not.

Meanwhile, nothing elsewhere offers much in the way of prospects for improvement of the U.S. economy. Foreign markets, in particular the “Fragile Five” — Brazil, India, Indonesia, South Africa and Russia — have all seen investment dollars retreat as the Federal Reserve reduces its program of quantitative easing. And Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory, has seen its bond rating fall to junk status.

Hope in the spring (next month, officially) always reigns supreme, but it's hard to be hopeful based on this unpromising situation.

Keystone XL has passed tests

Chicago Tribune

The U.S. State Department finally has given the Keystone XL pipeline an unexpectedly “green” light. In a Jan. 31 report, the agency found the pipeline wouldn't cause significant environmental damage. It wouldn't promote more oil extraction. It wouldn't increase demand at U.S. refineries. And, contrary to the claims of many opponents of the long-proposed pipeline, its construction actually would lead to fewer greenhouse gas emissions than the likely alternatives for moving oil.

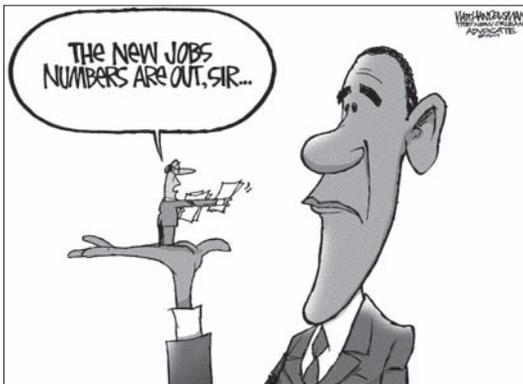
The State Department didn't formally approve the project, but it did give direct answers to the key environmental concerns that are present before the Obama administration. It's a good sign that the project will get a push on the project last June.

No, the pipeline would not be the environmental horror that the opponents allege. Yes, it would have a significant economic impact. It would create lots of jobs.

There are no more excuses for delaying this project. It's time for the U.S. president, Barack Obama's Building Trades Unions, which represent 3 million skilled craftsmen. “The time to construct this pipeline is now.”

Yes, now. The Obama administration should promptly approve Keystone XL — and boast about the environmental and economic benefits that it will now move forward. To review how we got to the gridlock that has stymied this project:

Keystone XL would link the rich oil sands of inland Canada to U.S. refineries and ports at the Gulf of Mexico. That is, the pipeline would be a safer and more reliable way to move oil from one part of North America to another, one that now moves primarily by barge, rail and truck.



Yet the Keystone XL project remains in limbo five years after its backers first sought the necessary approval from Washington. There's speculation that Democratic congressional leaders, for whom the proposal spells trouble no matter how the administration rules, will press Obama to keep a decision on ice until after the November midterm elections. The pipeline plan divides two Democratic constituencies: labor unions that want the job creation, and environmental groups opposed to further development of fossil fuel resources. These groups see thwarting Keystone XL as a step toward faster development of renewable fuel sources. Trouble is, no matter what Washington decides, Canada will extract this oil and consumers somewhere will use it; the question is whether it goes to U.S. refineries or to markets in China or elsewhere.

Republicans have pushed for approval — House Speaker John Boehner said the president's stall amounted to “economic malpractice.” But some of the president's allies have also stepped up the pressure for approval, including Democratic Sens. Heidi Heitkamp, of North Dakota, and Claire McCaskill, of Missouri. ...

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper has been pressing for years for U.S. approval of the \$5.4 billion pipeline. With the project, Canadian energy resources can be put to use more efficiently. Without it, Canada will work around the U.S., expanding its access to ports on its Atlantic and Pacific coasts. More oil will be transported by methods that carry a higher risk of accidents — witness the carnage last summer when a train loaded with oil exploded in the Canadian city of Lac-Mégantic, killing 47 people.

What's most striking in the State Department report appears deep in the fourth of its 11 volumes, under the heading Greenhouse Gas Impacts. Three scenarios if the pipeline isn't built.

■ If the oil instead moves to refineries by rail and tanker, greenhouse gas emissions would be 27.8 percent higher.

■ If the oil is transported by train to existing pipelines, emissions would be 39.7 percent higher.

■ If the oil goes to the Gulf solely by train, emissions would be 41.8 percent higher.

The obvious conclusion: The Obama administration should strike a blow for environmentalism and approve the Keystone XL project.

ObamaCare's warts on display

The Wall Street Journal

“ObamaCare” is useful shorthand for the Affordable Care Act not least because the law increasingly means whatever President Barack Obama says it does on any given day. His latest lawless rewrite ar-

rived Monday as the White House decided to delay the law's employer mandate for another year and in some cases maybe forever.

ObamaCare requires businesses with 50 or more workers to offer health insurance to their workers or pay a penalty, but last summer the Treasury offered a yearlong delay until 2015 despite having no statutory authorization. Like the individual mandate, the employer decree is central to ObamaCare's claim of universal coverage, but employers said the new labor costs — and the onerous reporting and tax-enforcement rules — would damage job creation and the economy.

Liberals insisted that such arguments were false if not beneath contempt, but then all of a sudden the White House implicitly endorsed the other side. Now the new delay arrives amid a furious debate about jobs after a damning Congressional Budget Office report last week, only this time with liberals celebrating ObamaCare's supposed benefits to the job market.

Well, which is it? Either ObamaCare is ushering in a worker's paradise — in which case by the White House's own logic exempting businesses from its ministrations is harming employees — or the mandate really is leading business to cut back on hiring and hours, and shifting workers to part time, as the evidence in the real economy suggests.

Under the new Treasury rule, firms with 50 to 99 full-time workers are free from the mandate until 2016. And firms with 100 or more workers now also only need cover 70 percent of full-time workers in 2015 and 95 percent in 2016 and after, not the 100 percent specified in the law.

The new rule also relaxes the mandate for certain occupations and industries that were at particular risk for disruption, like volunteer firefighters, teachers, adjunct faculty members and seasonal employees. Oh, and the Treasury also notes that, “As these limited transition rules take effect, we will consider whether it is necessary to further extend any of them beyond 2015.” So the law may be suspended indefinitely if the White House feels like it.

By now ObamaCare's proliferating delays, exemptions and administrative retrofits are too numerous to count, most of them of dubious legality. The text of the Affordable Care Act specifically says when the mandate must take effect — “after December 31, 2013.” — and does not give the White House the authority to change the terms. Changing an unambiguous statutory mandate requires the approval of Congress, but then this president has often decided the law is whatever he says it is. His administration's cavalier notions about law enforcement are especially notable here for their bias for corporations

over people. The White House has refused to suspend the individual insurance mandate despite the harm caused to millions who are losing their previous coverage.

Liberals say the law isn't harming jobs or economic growth, but everything this White House does screams the opposite.

End ban on Cuban research

Tampa (Fla.) Tribune

Florida is the only state in the nation that prohibits its university professors and students from collaborating with researchers and educators in Cuba.

The destructive law hurts Florida's scientists without penalizing Cuba.

As the Tribune's Paul Guzzo reports, a Florida Senate bill adopted in 2006 forbids the use of any money connected to a state university to be used for travel to nations on the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism, which includes Cuba.

The island nation is a socialist dictatorship but hardly a serious threat to the United States.

Yet the legislation treats the neighboring nation as though this were the Cold War era.

The law doesn't just handicap researchers. It also prevents Florida students from pursuing education opportunities in Cuba. Students from across the nation — or those from private institutions — can participate in studies in Cuba. Only students at Florida's schools are kept from interacting with Cubans.

This punishes Floridians, not the Cuban government.

Lawmakers should revisit the issue and see that Florida's sanctions against the free exchange of ideas and research is a policy more appropriate for a totalitarian state, not a democracy.

Gay rights take many forms

The Seattle Times

Legal and social recognition for gays and lesbians and their families is a work in progress across all aspects of civil and community life in America.

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder announced Saturday that same-sex couples will be treated equally by the Department of Justice. Another step forward.

Holder, putting affirmative actions behind a 2013 Supreme Court ruling about federal benefits, said same-sex couples and heterosexual couples will have the same rights and options on everything from tax filings to bankruptcy proceedings.

More clarifications are coming on equal treatment in the criminal justice system and that labyrinth — from not having to testify against a spouse to prison visits. As the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force noted about Holder's decisions on recognizing same-sex couples in Justice Department services, “This is very good news for the advancement of equality.”

Progress takes all forms. The legalization of same-sex marriage from Washington state to Minnesota and Rhode Island, among others, frames the broad change under way.

Change of attitudes about gays and lesbians and same-sex couples is the norm, not a novelty, for all aspects of American life. From religious venues to other nearly sacred elements of the culture, such as professional football.

A University of Missouri football player who NFL's potential announced he was gay before the draft. It is incumbent on the National Football League to acknowledge the breadth and wealth of talent available to sustain the game. Be open and honest about something that has been a reality forever.

America is a better place the more it acknowledges love and equality, and makes progress in equal treatment from matrimony to the halls of justice and the locker room.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Roundup

Buzzer-beater keeps Syracuse unbeaten

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Tyler Ennis made a 35-footer at the buzzer and No. 1 Syracuse remained unbeaten with a 58-56 victory over No. 25 Pitt on Wednesday night.

Syracuse (24-0, 11-0 ACC) and Wichita State are the lone undefeated teams in Division I.

With the Orange down by one with 4.4 seconds left, Ennis caught the inbounds pass and dribbled up the court before hitting the shot over two defenders.

Talib Zanna, who led Pitt (20-5, 8-4) with 16 points and 14 rebounds, hit two free throws to give Pitt a 56-55 lead before Ennis' winner.

It was Pitt's first loss at home to a top-five team in the 12-year history of the Petersen Events Center. The Panthers had been 9-0 against top-five teams and 13-1 against teams ranked in the top 10.

C.J. Fair led Syracuse with 14 points.

Pitt had a 54-48 lead with less than 2 minutes remaining, but Fair made a three-pointer with 1:40 to go. He then hit a jumper to make it 54-53 with 51 seconds left. After Pitt missed on the other end, Ennis made two free throws with 10 seconds left to give the Orange the lead.

No. 6 Villanova 87, DePaul 62: Darrun Hilliard scored 22 points, JayVaughn Pinkston had 14 points and 11 rebounds and the visiting Wildcats beat the Blue Demons for their sixth straight win.

Villanova (22-2, 10-1) made a season-high 15 three-pointers and had five players score in double figures in an efficient tuncup for Sunday's Big East showdown with Creighton. James Bell had 16 points and Ryan Arcidiacono finished with 14, including four threes.

Villanova opened a three-game trip with its eighth consecutive



KEITH SRANOCIC/AP

Syracuse's Tyler Ennis, left, celebrates with C.J. Fair after hitting a three-point shot with less than a second remaining Wednesday against Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh. Syracuse won 58-56.

Victory against DePaul (10-15, 2-10).

No. 14 Kentucky 64, Auburn 56: Andrew Harrison scored 16 points to help the visiting Wildcats overcome shooting struggles and hold on for a victory over the Tigers.

Kentucky (19-5, 9-2 Southeastern Conference) won its fourth consecutive game despite making just 17 of 55 shots (30.8 percent).

The Wildcats made 9 of 12 free throws over the final 2 minutes to put away the Tigers (11-11, 3-8) despite scoring 16 points below their season average.

No. 20 Memphis 76, Central Florida 70: Joe Jackson scored 18 points, Shaq Goodwin added 14 and the host Tigers used a late rally to beat the Knights.

Memphis (19-5, 8-3 American Athletic Conference) crafted a 15-2 run in the latter stages of the second half to break open a tight game.

Chris Crawford and Michael Dixon finished with 10 points each for Memphis.

Tristan Spurlock led the Knights (9-13, 1-10) with 18 points and 10 rebounds.

No. 24 UConn 83, South Florida 40: DeAndre Daniels scored 12 points to lead a balanced Huskies offense in a rout of the visiting Bulls.

Freshman Kentan Facey added 10 points for Connecticut (19-5, 7-4 American Athletic Conference), which held South Florida to just 12 baskets and 24 percent shooting.

Musa Abdul-Aleem had eight points for South Florida (12-13, 3-9) which has lost three of its last four games.

No. 8 Duke at North Carolina, ppd.: The Blue Devils' game at the Tar Heels was postponed because of a storm that brought enough snow and ice to paralyze many area roads. The game will be played Feb. 20.

Service academies

Holy Cross 66, Army 63: Dave Dudzinski scored 26 points and Justin Burrell added 10 with nine assists as the host Crusaders outlasted the Black Knights.

Holy Cross (15-10, 9-4 Patriot League) shot 43.1 percent from the field and hit 10 three-pointers. Malcolm Miller finished with eight points and eight rebounds.

Army (12-12, 8-5) shot 43.9 percent, but was 5-for-12 from the free-throw line. Kyle Wilson led the Black Knights with 23 points and Dylan Cox had 14.

The Black Knights erased an early nine-point deficit in the second half, taking a 51-50 lead with 6 minutes left.

Bucknell 78, Navy 57: Chris Hans scored 15 points to lead a balanced attack as the host Bison beat the Midshipmen.

Dom Hoffman added 14 points, all in the first half, as Bucknell (11-13, 6-7 Patriot League) built a 44-21 lead at halftime and cruised in the second half. Brian Fitzpatrick also had 14 and Cameron Ayers added 13. Those four starters combined to score 56 points.

Bucknell's other starter, Steven Kaspar, had three points, 10 assists, nine rebounds, and four steals as the Bison forced 18 turnovers, 14 coming from steals.

Air Force 51, San Jose St. 48: Max Von made two free throws after his steal with 10 seconds left and the visiting Falcons survived two Spartans three-pointers in the closing seconds to hold on for the win.

Air Force (10-13, 4-8 Mountain West Conference) scored the last four points of the game after San Jose State (6-18, 0-12) used an 11-1 run to take a 48-47 lead on a Dylan Alexander basket with 2:58 to play.

Air Force responded with Tre' Coggins' only basket of the game at 2:31, the last points before Von's free throws.

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BEN MAROOT/AP

Miami's LeBron James (6) is guarded by Golden State's Marreese Speights during the first half of Wednesday's game in Oakland, Calif. James' three-pointer in the final second gave Miami a 111-110 win.

NBA roundup

James' last-second three lifts Heat over Warriors

The Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — LeBron James capped one of his best games of the season in dramatic fashion, making a step-back three-pointer with less than a second remaining to carry the Miami Heat past the Golden State Warriors 111-110 on Wednesday night and into the All-Star break on a high note.

With teammate Dwyane Wade scratched from the lineup with a sore left foot, James shouldered the load for the two-time defending NBA champions. He finished with 36 points, 13 rebounds and nine assists, saving his best moment for last.

After fellow All-Star Stephen Curry hit a bank shot to start a three-point play that put the Warriors ahead by two, James let the clock tick down on the other end. He swished in a 27-footer with two-tenths of a second left over Andre Iguodala, then patted his chest and high-stepped on the sideline to leave the announced sellout crowd of 19,596 stunned and silent.

Clippers 122, Trail Blazers 117: Blake Griffin scored 36 points, Chris Paul had 20 points and 12 assists as host Los Angeles beat Portland in a back and

forth game that featured 40 lead changes.

Mavericks 81, Pacers 73: Monta Ellis had 23 points and nine rebounds and Dirk Nowitzki added 18 points to help visiting Dallas hand Indiana its third home loss of the season.

Rockets 113, Wizards 112: James Harden scored 35 points and his layup with 0.7 seconds remaining lifted host Houston over Washington. The victory sends the Rockets into the All-Star break with a season-best seven-game winning streak.

Spurs 104, Celtics 92: Tim Duncan scored 23 of his 25 points in the second half, powering injury-depleted San Antonio to a win over host Boston.

Timberwolves 117, Nuggets 90: Kevin Love started practicing early for All-Star weekend, making six of 11 shots from three-point range and totaling 32 points and 11 rebounds to lead host Minnesota over Denver.

Cavaliers 93, Pistons 89: Kyrie Irving's three-pointer as the shot clock expired with 27.2 seconds remaining keyed Cleveland's victory over host Detroit.

Raptors 104, Hawks 83: DeMar DeRozan scored 31 points, Kyle Lowry had 16 points and 13 assists as host Toronto snapped a

five-game home losing streak to Atlanta.

Grizzlies 86, Magic 81: Zach Randolph had 20 points, Courtney Lee added 17 and visiting Memphis held off Orlando. Memphis beat the Magic for the sixth straight time and enters the All-Star break having won eight of its last 11.

Nets 105, Bobcats 89: Paul Pierce scored 25 points to lead host Brooklyn over Charlotte. Deron Williams added 13 points and seven assists, and Andray Blatche scored 13 off the bench to help the Nets win their final home game before the All-Star break.

Kings 106, Knicks 101 (OT): Rudy Gay made the tying basket in regulation and a three-pointer in overtime that gave visiting Sacramento the lead for good, and Jimmer Fredette scored a career-high 24 points to help the Kings beat New York.

Pelicans 102, Bucks 98: Eric Gordon scored 21 points, center Alexis Ajinca added 16 as visiting New Orleans headed home for All-Star weekend with a victory over Milwaukee.

Jazz 105, 76ers 100: Alec Burks scored 10 of his 26 points in the final two minutes to lift host Utah over skidding Philadelphia.

Yanks captain Jeter to retire after 2014

By MIKE FITZPATRICK
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — They owned October year after year.

Derek Jeter and his baseball brothers — the gang that grew up champions.

There was Bernie Williams and Jorge Posada, Mariano Rivera and Andy Pettitte. Together, always together, they turned the New York Yankees into a dynasty.

One by one, they walked away from the game until Jeter was the last man standing in pinstripes.

Now, the captain is ready to retire, too. The last link to the latest run of Yankees dominance. Jeter revealed Wednesday that 2014 will be his final season, signaling the end of an extraordinary era not only for New York, but all of Major League Baseball.

"It is time for the next chapter," he wrote in announcing his decision with a long letter on his Facebook page.

Jeter was referring to his own life and his desire to pursue business, start a family, see the world on a summer vacation.

But he could have been talking about the Yankees — or the grand old game itself. And so the significance of Jeter's exit was hardly lost on anyone as praise poured in from all around.

Jeter and pals from Jimmy Key to Alex Rodriguez produced a generation of sustained success with the Yankees, almost two decades worth of winning by one

special group of players.

We may never see the likes of it again — in any sport.

"It has been an incredible honor having a front row seat for one of the great players of all time," New York general manager Brian Cashman said in a statement. "Derek has been a winner every step of the way."

Jeter has led the Yankees to five World Series titles and seven American League pennants in 19 seasons. They won four championships in five years from 1996-2000, the last three in a row to become baseball's most recent dynasty.

Those are surely his favorite numbers — and surely his favorite memories, with Bernie and Mo and Andy and "Sabo."

They were just kids then, really. Just kids beginning to build a legacy that included 17 playoff appearances in 18 years.

Joe Girardi was the catcher on that 1996 team, the one that ended an 18-year title drought in the Bronx. Now, he's entering his seventh season as manager of the Yankees. And still, the 39-year-old Jeter is prepping to play shortstop after injuries wrecked his 2013 season.

"He is unquestionably one of the greatest Yankees ever," said Hal Steinbrenner, the club's managing general partner. "He has meant so much to fans, the organization, my father and our family. I'm glad we have this year to celebrate everything he has meant to us and all the great things he still stands to accomplish."



CHRIS O'MEARA/AP

New York Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter hits the baseball on Wednesday at the Yankees' minor league facility in Tampa, Fla.

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MLB

Back in the swing

Athletics left fielder Cespedes puts 2013's struggles in past, prepares for new season

By JANIE McCauley
The Associated Press

With a shortened swing and newfound swagger after his most rigorous offseason of training yet that helped him pack on 15 pounds of muscle, Yoenis Cespedes wants to forget the frustrations of last year.

While the slugging left fielder has turned his attention to making better, more consistent contact, he still plans to regularly clear the fences for the Oakland Athletics — and the reigning Home Run Derby champion hopes that means hitting more than the 26 long balls he had last season.

“Possibly, I’ll have a little less power. If a home run went 430 feet, it will go 410 feet,” Cespedes said with a chuckle. “But maybe I can do it more often.”

As Cespedes looks back on what he considered a subpar second season in the majors, he points to not being “strong in mind” dealing with the ups and downs.

He became an unlikely Home Run Derby winner at the All-Star Game while celebrating his family’s long-awaited arrival to the Bay Area, but dealt with injuries and a notable decline in batting average.

“I think I should have been stronger mentally,” Cespedes said. “As an athlete, when things aren’t going your way, you have to be strong-minded. Maybe that was one of the reasons I didn’t do so well last year.”

So motivated was Cespedes, he took his offseason training up a notch. Not in volume, but rather the intensity in which he worked out in South Florida.

The 28-year-old Cuban defector has two seasons remaining on the \$36 million, four-year contract he signed in February 2012, but Cespedes indicated he is eager to lock up a long-term deal and even consider spending his career with a club he helped win improbable back-to-back AL West crowns.

“You’re always going to have highs and lows. Last year I got into this low and just couldn’t recover the whole season. In 2012, I had highs and lows,” Cespedes said.

He plans to better deal with those moments. The A’s are pleased with that growth.

“Obviously, there’s some toughness there, you see a guy that shows up in the big games and gets inspired by the big stage,” manager Bob Melvin said. “Sometimes it’s tougher on guys with that kind of talent to go through some struggles and there maybe needs to be, in his mind, some more fight to get through that. I think that’s maturity.”

Cespedes’ batting average dropped to .240 last season after he hit .292 with 23 homers and 82 RBIs as a rookie, but he still hit 26 homers and drove in 80 runs in 2013.

He acknowledges pitchers caught on to him a little bit last year. He began to make strides again in September when he focused on making contact.

“My first year, they didn’t know me as well and pitched me one way and the second year they knew me a lot better and I was not capable

of making the adjustments I needed to do,” he said. “I’m looking forward to making those adjustments.”

He has already made one: Cespedes said he is weighing in at 225 pounds, 15 higher than his listed playing weight last year.

“The thing that resonates with me is talking about shortening his stroke some, and he has done that at times

and has had success with it,” Melvin said. Cespedes has taken consecutive AL division series losses to the Tigers personally. He expects himself to do more, and he is already calling for the A’s to get back to the playoffs in a division featuring big-name new faces such as Robinson Cano in Seattle and Prince Fielder transplanted to Texas.

“I don’t know if we’re the favorite,” he said, “but the A’s are going to be in the playoffs again.”

‘As an athlete, when things aren’t going your way, you have to be strong-minded. Maybe that was one of the reasons I didn’t do so well last year.’

Yoenis Cespedes
On dealing with adversity in his second season



BEN MARCOT/AP

Encore: Johnson’s season helped the Braves through first year without Chipper Jones

FROM BACK PAGE

Johnson enjoyed a consistent season, hitting .330 before the All-Star break and .311 after the break. He didn’t hit below .273 in any month and finished with 12 homers and 68 RBIs in 142 games.

“I’m really proud of how last year went,” he said. “It’s something that I’ll never forget. ... It was definitely something that I don’t want to forget, but it’s a new season so you’ve got to move on quick. If you don’t, this game will leave you behind quick.”

Johnson’s solid season was important for the Braves in their first season following Chipper Jones’ retirement.

“Chris did a great job,” said general

manager Frank Wren. “He settled in and gave us quality at-bats all year long. I think it was nice to see because that was a big spot to fill.”

Johnson said the idea of replacing Jones “was tough at first.”

“The guy is a god around here,” he said. “Playing well definitely helped that. I think I did a good job, and it helped also coming into camp platooning with Juan. It wasn’t all on me.”

Playing with Houston and Arizona in 2012, Johnson hit .281 and set career highs with 15 homers and 76 RBIs. He said Braves batting coaches Greg Walker and Scott Fletcher helped him boost his aver-

age, even if that meant a slight reduction in his power numbers.

“I just think the coaching staff over here helped me realize what kind of player I want to be, what kind of hitter that I should be,” Johnson said. “I shouldn’t be a guy that’s going out there trying to hit 30 home runs. I need to take my hits going the other way, definitely going to right field. So that’s the guy I want to be. I want to be around 300 and if those other power numbers come, that’s fine.”

Johnson had more success swinging at pitches in 2013 than at the snow which shut down Atlanta last month. Johnson from Naples, Fla., said he was not prepared to

battle the frozen precipitation.

“It was nuts,” he said. “Our driveway is really steep. It was full of ice and snow. I’m from Florida. I don’t have a shovel or anything. I went out there with a broom. That didn’t work.”

It’s no wonder Johnson was smiling Friday as he watched workers load boxes from the Braves clubhouse on an equipment truck headed to spring training.

Braves pitchers and catchers reported for spring training on Thursday. Other players report on Feb. 18.

“It just got real,” he said. “It’s exciting. Today is a big day. I’m going home right now and start packing.”

OLYMPICS

Scoreboard

Medals count

At Sochi, Russia
(35 of 98 events)

Nation	G	S	B	Total
Norway	4	3	5	12
Netherlands	4	2	6	12
United States	3	5	4	11
Germany	2	7	2	11
China	1	4	2	7
Austria	1	4	0	5
Sweden	1	0	1	2
Switzerland	2	0	2	4
Slovenia	1	0	1	2
China	2	1	0	3
South Korea	0	2	1	3
Republic of Korea	0	2	1	3
Italy	0	2	1	3
Japan	0	2	1	3
Poland	0	2	1	3
Latvia	0	2	2	4
South Korea	0	1	1	2

Freestyle skiing

Thursday
At Krasnaya Polyana, Russia
Men's Slopestyle
Run 1

- Joss Christensen, Park City, Utah, 95.80
- Nick Goepfer, Lawrenceburg, Ind., 92.20
- Andreas Haatveit, Norway, 89.60
- James Woods, Britain, 86.60
- Henrik Harlaut, Sweden, 83.80
- Russell Henshaw, Australia, 80.40
- Alex Beaulieu-Marchand, Canada, 78.40
- Oystein Braaten, Norway, 66.40
- Joshua Wells, New Zealand, 60.60
- Alex Kenworthy, Telluride, Calif., 31.00
- Bobby Brown, Breckenridge, Colo., 29.20
- Alex Beaulieu-Marchand, Canada, 5.00

Run 2

- Joss Christensen, Park City, Utah, (95.80; 93.80) 93.80
- Alex Kenworthy, Telluride, Calif., (31.00; 93.60) 93.60
- Andreas Haatveit, Norway, (89.60; 92.80) 92.80
- Henrik Harlaut, Sweden, (83.80; 82.80) 82.80
- Aleksander Aurdal, Norway, (70.00; 81.80) 81.80
- James Woods, Britain, (86.60; 78.40) 78.40
- Bobby Brown, Breckenridge, Colo., (29.20; 78.40) 78.40
- Oystein Braaten, Norway, (66.40; 68.60) 68.60
- Nick Goepfer, Lawrenceburg, Ind., (92.40; 61.80) 61.80
- Joshua Wells, New Zealand, (60.60; 50.00) 50.00
- Russell Henshaw, Australia, (80.40; 28.80) 28.80
- Alex Beaulieu-Marchand, Canada, (50.00; 21.40) 21.40

Final Ranking

- Joss Christensen, Park City, Utah, (95.80; 93.80) 95.80
- Alex Kenworthy, Telluride, Calif., (31.00; 93.60) 93.60
- Nick Goepfer, Lawrenceburg, Ind., (92.40; 61.80) 92.40
- Andreas Haatveit, Norway, (89.60; 91.80) 91.80
- James Woods, Britain, (86.60; 78.40) 86.60
- Henrik Harlaut, Sweden, (83.80; 84.40) 84.40
- Aleksander Aurdal, Norway, (70.00; 81.80) 81.80
- Russell Henshaw, Australia, (80.40; 28.80) 80.40
- Bobby Brown, Breckenridge, Colo., (29.20; 78.40) 78.40
- Oystein Braaten, Norway, (66.40; 68.60) 68.60
- Joshua Wells, New Zealand, (60.60; 50.00) 50.00
- Alex Beaulieu-Marchand, Canada, (50.00; 21.40) 21.40

Speedskating

Thursday
At Sochi, Russia
Women's 1000

- Zhang Hong, China, 1:14.02
- Ireen Wust, Netherlands, 1:14.69
- Margot Boer, Netherlands, 1:14.30
- Chloe Chedoke, Russia, 1:15.44
- Lotte van Beek, Netherlands, 1:15.10
- Marrin Leenstra, Netherlands, 1:15.15
- Heather Richardson, High Point, N.C., 1:15.23
- Brittany Bowe, Ocala, Fla., 1:15.47

Other U.S. Finishers

- Sugar Todd, Milwaukee, 1:19.13
- Kelly Curran, Lorain, Ohio, 1:19.43

Short track

Thursday
At Sochi, Russia
Women's 500

- Li Juqiang, China, 44.188
- Liu Xingxin, China, 44.297
- Brittany Bowe, High Point, N.C., 44.311
- Marianne St-Gelais, Canada, 44.359

Final A

- Li Jianrou, China, 45.263
- Arianna Fontana, Italy, 51.250
- Park Seung-Hi, South Korea, 54.207
- NK. Elise Christie, Britain, PEN.

Luge

Thursday
At Krasnaya Polyana, Russia
Men Relay

- Germany 3 (Natalie Geisenberger, Felix Loch, Tobias Wendl, Tobias Arlt), 2:45.69
- Russia 1 (Tatiana Ivanova, Albert Denchenko, Alexander Denisov, Vladislav Antonov), 2:46.75
- Canada 1 (Alex Gough, Martin Rubeis, Andris Sicis, Juris Sics), 2:47.295
- Canada 1 (Alex Gough, Samuel Edney, Kristian Walker, Justin Smith), 2:47.395
- Sweden 1 (Sander Gasparini, Armin Zoeggeler, Christian Oberstolz, Patrick Gruber), 2:47.420
- United States 1 (Erin Hamlin, Remsen, N.Y., Chris Madzzer, Saranac Lake, N.Y., Christian Riccum, Woodlinville, Wash., Jayson Terdian, Berwick, Pa.), 2:47.555
- Austria 1 (Miriam Kastinger, Wolfgang Kindl, Andreas Linger, Wolfgang Linger), 2:48.477
- Poland 1 (Natalia Wlozyczynska, Marek Kuroski, Patryk Poreba, Karol Mikrut), 2:49.753

Biathlon

Thursday
At Krasnaya Polyana, Russia
Men's 20km
(Penalties in parentheses)

- Martin Fourcade, France, 49:31.7 (0)
- Erik Lesser, Germany, 49:43.9 (0)
- Evgeniy Garanichev, Russia, 50:06.2 (0)
- Simon Eder, Austria, 50:09.5 (1)
- Dominik Landstinger, Austria, 50:14.2 (0)
- Guillaume Beatrix, France, 50:15.5 (1)
- Emil Hegle Svendsen, Norway, 50:20.1 (1)
- Lowell Bailey, Lake Placid, N.Y., 50:57.4 (1)
- Tim Burke, Paul Smiths, N.Y., 54:21.4 (4)
- Russell Currier, Stockholm, Maine, 55:07.5 (4)
- Sveinsson, Norway, 59:04.3
- Leif Nordgren, Marine on St. Croix, Minn., 58:47.6 (6)

Cross-country skiing

Thursday
At Krasnaya Polyana, Russia
Women's 10k Classic

- Justyna Kowalczyk, Poland, 28:17.8
- Charlotte Kalla, Sweden, 28:36.2
- Theresa Johaug, Norway, 28:46.1
- Aino-Kaisa Saarinen, Finland, 28:48.3
- Mari Bjoergen, Norway, 28:51.2
- Vanessa Hänni, Germany, 29:04.3
- Kerttu Niskanen, Finland, 29:15.5
- Kerttu Niskanen, Finland, 29:16.7

U.S. Finishers

- Sadie Bjornsen, Winthrop, Wash., 29:39.4
- Spheald Caldwell, Peru, UT, 31:11.4
- Aud Sargent, Barco, VT, 31:15.1
- Christy Gersony, Anchorage, Alaska, 31:19.1

Skeleton

Thursday
At Krasnaya Polyana, Russia
Women
Trough Two Runs

- Elizabeth Yarnold, Britain, 1:56.89
- Noelle Pikus-Pace, United States, 1:57.33
- Alina Nikitina, Russia, 1:57.44
- Katie Uhlaender, United States, 1:57.58
- Olya Polytina, Russia, 1:57.75
- Maria Orlova, Russia, 1:57.99
- Anja Huber, Germany, 1:58.30
- Sarah Reid, Canada, 1:58.31
- Sophia Griebel, Germany, 1:58.63
- Marion Thoen, Germany, 1:58.67
- Shelley Rudman, Britain, 1:58.75
- Michelle Steele, Australia, 1:58.83
- Janine Flock, Austria, 1:58.86
- Katharine Eustace, New Zealand, 1:58.98
- Lelde Priedulante, Latvia, 1:59.04

Women's hockey

Preliminary round

Group A	W	OTW	OTL	Pts	GF	GA
Canada	3	0	0	9	11	2
United States	2	0	0	6	9	2
Finland	0	2	1	2	5	9
Switzerland	0	0	1	1	3	18

Group B

W	OTW	OTL	Pts	GF	GA	
Sweden	2	0	0	6	6	2
Russia	1	0	0	3	5	8
Germany	2	0	0	5	8	2
United States	0	0	1	1	4	4

Tuesday, Feb. 11

Sweden 2, Japan 1
Finland 4, Switzerland 3, 0T
Canada 3, United States 2
Wednesday, Feb. 13
Sweden 4, Japan 0
Thursday, Feb. 13
Sweden 4, Russia 1
Saturday, Feb. 15
Quarterfinals
Finland vs. Russia; Sweden loser Switzerland vs. Russia; Sweden winner

Men's hockey

Preliminary round

Group A	W	OTW	OTL	Pts	GF	GA
United States	1	0	0	3	2	1
Russia	0	1	0	0	2	5
Slovenia	0	0	0	0	0	5
Slovakia	0	1	0	0	1	7

Group B

W	OTW	OTL	Pts	GF	GA	
Finland	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canada	0	0	0	0	0	0
Norway	0	0	0	0	0	0
Austria	0	0	0	0	0	0

Group C

W	OTW	OTL	Pts	GF	GA	
Sweden	1	0	0	3	4	2
Switzerland	1	0	0	3	3	1
Germany	0	0	0	0	0	0
Czech Republic	0	1	0	0	2	4

Wednesday, Feb. 12
Sweden 4, Czech Republic 2
Thursday, Feb. 13
Finland 8, Austria 4
Russia 5, Slovenia 2
United States 7, Slovakia 1
Canada vs. Norway, Noon
Friday, Feb. 14
Czech Republic vs. Latvia
Sweden vs. Switzerland
Norway vs. Finland
Saturday, Feb. 15
United States vs. Sweden
Switzerland vs. Czech Republic
Sweden vs. Latvia
Sunday, Feb. 16
Austria vs. Norway
Russia vs. Slovakia
Slovenia vs. United States
Finland vs. Canada

Curling

Country	Men	W-L
China		4-0
Britain		4-1
Sweden		3-1
Norway		3-1
Denmark		2-3
United States		2-3
Russia		1-4
Switzerland		0-4

Wednesday, Feb. 12
United States 9, Denmark 5
Norway 8, Germany 5
China 5, Switzerland 4
China 1, Germany 2
Britain 4, Switzerland 2
Russia 4, Switzerland 1
Denmark 8, Sweden 5

Thursday, Feb. 13

Russia 7, Switzerland 6
Canada 7, Denmark 6
Britain 5, United States 3
Friday, Feb. 14
Sweden vs. Canada
United States vs. Germany
Canada vs. Norway
Britain vs. Denmark
Russia vs. Switzerland
China vs. Norway
Switzerland vs. Germany
Saturday, Feb. 15
Sweden vs. Germany
Denmark vs. Switzerland
Canada vs. Germany
Russia vs. China
United States vs. Canada
Britain vs. Norway
Sweden vs. Russia
Russia vs. Switzerland
China vs. Canada
Germany vs. Denmark
United States vs. Sweden

Country Women

Country	W-L
Canada	4-0
Sweden	5-1
Switzerland	4-2
South Korea	2-2
China	2-2
Russia	2-2
United States	1-3
Germany	0-5

Wednesday, Feb. 12

Japan 8, Russia 3
China 7, United States 4
Sweden 7, South Korea 4
Britain 3, Germany 3
Thursday, Feb. 13
Canada 8, South Korea 4
Britain 8, China 7
Sweden 9, Switzerland 6
South Korea 8, Russia 4
United States 8, Japan 6
Friday, Feb. 14
South Korea vs. China
Britain vs. Japan
United States vs. Denmark
Russia vs. Switzerland
Saturday, Feb. 15
Canada vs. Japan
China vs. South Korea
United States vs. Sweden
Britain vs. Switzerland
Denmark vs. Russia
Sunday, Feb. 16
Denmark vs. South Korea
Japan vs. Switzerland
Sweden vs. Russia
United States vs. Canada



DAVID J. PHILLIPS/AP

Gold medalist China's Zhang Hong, right, and Canada's Christine Nesbitt compete in the women's 1,000-meter speedskating race on Thursday at the Adler Arena Skating Center in Sochi, Russia.

Medals roundup

Zhang pulls stunner to win 1,000 gold

The Associated Press

SOCHI, Russia — Zhang Hong put up an early time that no one could beat, giving China its first gold medal ever in speedskating with a stunning victory in the women's 1,000 meters Thursday.

Zhang, who had not done much on the World Cup circuit this season, skated in the seventh of 18 pairs based on her midrange results. But she posted a remarkable time of 1 minute, 14.02 seconds, breaking the track record and just missing the Olympic mark set by Chris Witty at the 2002 Salt Lake City Games.

The Dutch ran their speedskating medal haul to 12. Ireen Wust silver in 1:14.69, while Margot Boer earned bronze in 1:14.90. American Heather Richardson was briefly in third place, but wound up seventh in 1:15.23. Britanny Bowe went in the next-to-last group and faded badly over the final lap, winding up eighth in 1:15.47.

Dominant again, Germany won the inaugural Olympic luge team relay on Thursday, with three already-golden champions joining forces to celebrate one more time at the Sochi Games.

Felix Loch, Natalie Geisenberger and the doubles team of Tobias Wendl and Tobias Arlt finished their runs in 2 minutes, 45.649 seconds, good enough to be Brazil's gear for the gold by 1.030 seconds. Latvia won the bronze.

It's the 31st luge gold medal for Germany, going back when the nation was split into east and west. All other nations have 13.

Short track speedskating

SOCHI, Russia — Li Jianrou extended China's dominance in the women's 500 meters Thursday, winning its fourth consecutive title after she was the only skater who didn't fall in the wild final.

As her rivals tried, Kowalczyk showed exactly why this is her signature event, powering forward toward the finish line to finish in 28 minutes, 17.8 seconds. Silver medalist Charlotte Kalla of Sweden was 18.4 seconds back, while Norway's Therese Johaug took bronze, 28.3 seconds behind.

Cross-country skiing

KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia — Poland's Justyna Kowalczyk ignored the pain in her injured foot and the warm weather helping down on the women's cross-country skiers Thursday to win Olympic gold in the 10-kilometer classical-style race.

As her rivals tried, Kowalczyk showed exactly why this is her signature event, powering forward toward the finish line to finish in 28 minutes, 17.8 seconds. Silver medalist Charlotte Kalla of Sweden was 18.4 seconds back, while Norway's Therese Johaug took bronze, 28.3 seconds behind.

Luge

KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia — Men's gold. Women's gold. Doubles gold. And now, team relay gold.

Biathlon

KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia — France's Martin Fourcade won his second biathlon gold medal of the Sochi Olympics on Thursday, overcoming an e-penalty minute to win the men's 20-kilometer individual race.

He also won the 12.5K pursuit on Monday, finished in 49 minutes, 31.7 seconds after missing one target in his second shooting.

Erik Lesser of Germany shot cleanly throughout and came 12.2 seconds behind to take silver for his first individual medal at a major championship. Yevgeny Garanichev of Russia earned bronze, finishing 34.5 off the lead after faulting once in his final shooting.

The 2010 gold medalist, Emil Hegle Svendsen of Norway, shot clean in the first two rounds, but missed his 12th target and finished seventh, 58.6 seconds behind Fourcade.

OLYMPICS

Men's hockey roundup

US opens tournament with rout of Slovakia

The Associated Press

SOCHI, Russia — With just one game to prepare for its Olympic showdown with Russia, the United States men's hockey team decided to cram an entire tournament's worth of hard work and highlights into one spectacular opener.

Paul Stastny scored twice during a six-goal barrage in the second period, and the Americans got off to a roaring start in Sochi with a 7-1 victory over Slovakia in preliminary-round play Thursday.

Ryan Kesler, David Backes, Phil Kessel and Dustin Brown also scored as the U.S. battered Slovakia for six consecutive goals in a 13:51 span, turning what was expected to be a tough matchup into a laughter with their relentless offense.

"I guess you never really expect to beat a team like that 7-1, and you never do it in a tournament like this," captain Zach Parise said. "We just capitalized on the chances we had, moved the puck well and used our speed."

Although the goal celebrations declined from elation to excitement to sheepishness while the score skyrocketed, the Americans answered any lingering questions about their offensive abilities and their aptitude on the big Olympic ice by decimating a Slovak roster studded with NHL players.

"You have to do a lot of skating out there on the big ice, but I think we handled it all right," said Kessel, who led the U.S. with two goals and an assist.

Jonathan Quick made 22 saves in his Olympic debut for the U.S., which hopes to improve on its silver-medal finish in Vancouver despite a roster that isn't thought to have the offensive power of Canada, Russia or Sweden.

In their only warmup for Saturday's game against Alex Ovechkin and the host Russians, the Americans had more than enough potency to leave Slovakia's two goalies battered.

"For the first time on the big ice for most of us, I thought we did pretty well," Stastny said. "Our strengths are our puck possession and our speed, and we were really able to use both of them. All four lines just kind of clicked, and so did our D-men."

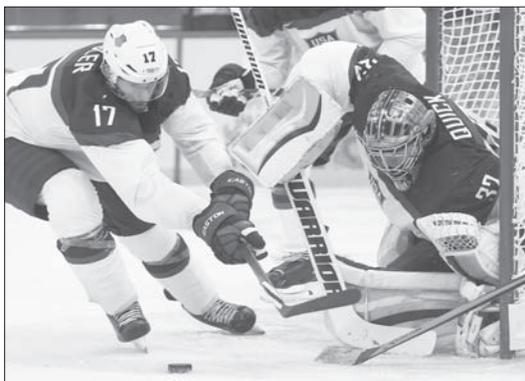
Jaroslav Halak stopped 20 shots before getting pulled when Stastny tipped home Kevin Shattenkirk's pass to put the Americans up 5-1 with their fourth goal in 12:04. Peter Budaj replaced Halak, but Kessel and Brown piled on goals in the next 1:47.

Tomas Tatar scored for Slovakia, which traveled to Sochi without high-scoring Marian Gaborik and veteran defenseman Lubomir Visnovsky due to injury. Nobody anticipated such a defensive collapse by a talented roster anchored by Stanley Cup-winning defenseman Zdeno Chara.

Slovakia's last two Olympic appearances have been humiliations: The Slovaks flew a third-period lead and lost to Finland in the bronze medal game in Vancouver, depriving them of their nation's first Olympic hockey medals.

"We're going to be better," said Tatar, the Detroit Red Wings' young forward. "We had a solid first period and then tied it. We've just got to play way better in our defensive zone. I think we're going to be ready to play the next game. We have a lot of talent in our locker room, and we're going to sort it out."

Russia 5, Slovakia 2: Alex Ovechkin had a goal and an assist in a breathtaking start and the Russians went on to win their



PETR DAVID JOSEK/AP

USA forward Ryan Kesler and goaltender Jonathan Quick defend against a shot by Slovakia during the third period Thursday in Sochi, Russia. The U.S. won its preliminary round opener 7-1. They play Russia, led by Alex Ovechkin, next.

Sochi opener.

Ovechkin scored 1:17 after the puck dropped with a wrist shot that made the crowd roar: The superstar made the flag-waving fans gasp in awe 2:37 later with a drop pass to set up Evgeni Malkin's goal that gave Russia a 2-0 lead.

The Slovenians were respectable for two-plus periods in their first Olympic hockey game ever.

Ziga Jeglic had two goals in the second period — one before Evgeni Malkin scored and one after — to pull Slovenia within a score of a talented team.

Russia created a cushion in the first half of the third period when Valeri Nichushkin and Anton Belov.

When the game was over, the team that is treated like rock stars in its country raised their sticks and got a standing ovation.

Slovenia has only one NHL player, Los Angeles Kings forward Anze Kopitar, whose father is the team's coach. Jeglic plays professionally in Germany.

Russia, meanwhile, has 16 players from the NHL.

Finland 8, Austria 4: Jarkko Immonen and Mikael Granlund scored two goals apiece as Finland opened preliminary-round play with a victory over Austria.

Jussi Jokinen and Petri Kontiola each had a goal and an assist for the Finns, who put 52 shots on beleaguered Austria goalie Bernhard Starkbaum despite playing the final two periods without captain Teemu Selanne.

The 43-year-old Finnish Flash had an assist in the first period of his record-equating sixth Olympics before settling out with an upper-body injury. Selanne should be fine for the Finns' next game, team spokesman Janne Lahti said.

Michael Grabner scored three goals in his Olympic debut for Austria. The New York Islanders forward scored 36 seconds into the first period, and Austria had two early leads before Finland took control.

Pushenko retires, drops out of Games

The Associated Press

SOCHI, Russia — Evgeni Pushenko's Olympics are over. His competitive career, too.

The Russian star retired Thursday just after he withdrew from the men's event at the Sochi Olympics for medical reasons.

The 31-year-old Pushenko is the only modern-era figure skater to win medals in four Olympics. He helped Russia win the team gold over the weekend.

"I think it's God saying, 'Evgeni, enough, enough with skating,'" said Pushenko, who originally was hurt in a training session Wednesday. "Age, it's OK. But I have 12 surgeries. I'd like to be healthy."

In warmups before the short program, he fell on a triple axel and said it felt "like a knife in my back." He skated toward his coaches while bent over, then tried to loosen up by skating around the Iceberg rink some more.

He then attempted another axel and botched it, shook his head

and consulted with coach Alexei Mishin. When Pushenko's name was announced to the crowd seconds later — to loud applause — he skated to the event referee and withdrew.

Before the latest injury, Pushenko said he planned to go out in style.

"I said to myself, 'Evgeni, you must skate. It's two more days, short and long program,'" the 2006 Olympic gold medalist said. He also won Olympic silver in 2002 and 2010.

Before leaving the ice, he held up both hands to the crowd as if to say he was sorry, and took a small bow.

He was Russia's only man in the competition, so the host country will have no finisher in the event.

Pushenko finished second at the Russian national championships and didn't appear headed for Sochi at all. He was added to the Russian roster late last month after a trial run-through in front



IVAN SEKRETAREV/AP

Russia's Evgeni Pushenko leaves the ice after pulling out of the men's short program figure skating competition Thursday for medical reasons.

of federation officials convinced them he was the country's best men's option.

"That decision paid off when he finished second in the team short program and first in the free skate, helping Russia to its first gold of the Sochi Games.

"Some people say we had this plan from the very beginning, but we did not," he said. "We were going to go to the end. If I really wished to withdraw after the team event, I would have."

Worker hit by bobsled breaks both his legs

By TOM WITHERS
The Associated Press

KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia — An Olympic track worker struck by a bobsled broke both legs and may have a concussion, IOC officials said Thursday.

The worker was on the track when he was hit by a forerunning sled near the finish line at the Sanki Sliding Center, just before the start of Thursday's two-man bobsled training.

"We still do not know why he was in this zone and exactly what happened," IOC President Thomas Bach said in a visit to The Associated Press office in Sochi.

Bach added that the worker "may be" has a concussion. Later, IOC spokesman Mark Adams told the AP: "I understand he is conscious and talking and has two broken legs."

Sochi organizers said the unidentified man was taken by helicopter to a hospital, but gave no other information about his injuries. Officials said the crash took place just before the finish line,

which would suggest that the sled likely had not yet started to brake.

"According to standard procedure, a warning signal was given ahead of the forerunners' bob beginning its run on the track," Sochi organizers said in a statement. "The reasons for the icemaker's presence on the track after the warning signal are currently being determined."

Also, officials said the huge team relay event scheduled to make its Olympic debut on Thursday will take place as scheduled.

Forerunning sleds are used before training and competition sessions to assess track conditions and make sure the facility is safe for racing. Also, people in the vicinity of the track are almost always alerted that a sled is in the track through public-address announcements, though it was unclear why the worker struck was unaware the session was beginning.

It's also unclear why the worker was on the track when the sled came out the final curve and approached the finish line.

OLYMPICS

Super-combined to test Ligety, Miller

By HOWARD FENDRICH
The Associated Press

KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia — Jode Miller is the defending Olympic champion in the super-combined. American teammate Ted Ligety was the 2006 Olympic gold medalist, is the reigning world champion and is tied for this season's World Cup lead in the event.

So one might have expected them to merit a mention when U.S. men's head coach Sasha Rearick began discussing whom he expects to perform well at the Sochi Games in the super-combined, which adds the times of one downhill run in the morning and one slalom run in the afternoon.

Croatia's Ivica Kostelic, whose father Ante set the slalom course, "is going to be strong," Rearick began. Then he mentioned another Croatian, Natko Zrnčić-Dim.

The next name off Rearick's lips after Thursday's last official training session on the downhill course was France's Thomas Mermillod-Blondin, a guy he noted "hasn't been on the podium yet really recently, but [is] skiing really well." Then came another Frenchman, Alexis Pinturault, who "of course" must be included, Rearick said.

Adding to the growing list, Rearick continued: "Some of the downhill guys that are light on their feet, quick on their feet, that can make decent slalom turns — the course setting suits them." That describes racers such as Carlo Janka of Croatia, and Peter Fill of Italy.

When was pointed out that he'd yet to make mention of his own top two entrants, Miller and Ligety, Rearick replied, "I'm telling you who the competition is," and then skied off to go oversee slalom practice on a nearby hill.

With temperatures topping 50 degrees this week, Friday's downhill start was pushed up to 10 a.m., one hour earlier than originally scheduled, in a bid to get going before sunshine softens the snow. The slalom is scheduled for 5½ hours later.

Miller was third fastest in downhill training Thursday, trailing Ondrej Bank of the Czech Republic and Dominik Paris of Italy. Downhill gold medalist Matthias

Mayer was fourth, with Kostelic — the silver medalist behind Ligety and Miller at the last two Olympics — sixth. Ligety was 11th, Pinturault was 12th, and Norway's Aksel Lund Svindal was among 16 racers who sat out.

After dominating training before last weekend's downhill race but then finishing eighth behind Mayer, Miller is hoping he'll be able to do well enough in that portion of Friday's race to make up for what he'll lose in the second leg.

But he figures that'll be tough. "Right now the downhill is so easy and so basic there's nothing challenging about it, really," said Miller, already the owner of a U.S.-record five Olympic medals. "There's no way to put any time on the slalom guys. Everyone just skis normal and everyone is within a second and a half or so."

Paris agreed.

He laughed at the idea of hoping for a 5-second lead after the downhill leg and added: "The slalom is so tough here that luck will count for a lot."

Like others, he's aware that Ante Kostelic is known for setting courses that are different from the World Cup fare.

On Thursday morning, Rearick skied down the slalom slope that will be used for the super-combined and noticed that the seemingly random placing of gates removes much rhythm.

"It's a course that's obviously intended to trap guys, to knock people out. There's no place on the course where you can really look for speed. So you have to ski smart from top to bottom," Rearick said. "His obvious strategy is to knock out as many guys as possible to hope for a medal for Ivica."

Ligety, meanwhile, is counting on a strong slalom showing.

And he's certainly confident that he can produce on race day, four days after having a disappointing-for-him Winter Games.

"I want to be able to try to get on the podium or win. I think that's well within my grasp, if I ski well," Ligety said. "I think the downhill's gotten better every run and I feel more and more comfortable. So I think hopefully tomorrow I can piece together a good run and then have a good run of slalom, as well, and hopefully that equals something metallic around my neck."



LUCA BRUNO/AP

Croatia's Ivica Kostelic makes a jump during men's downhill combined training Thursday in Krasnaya Polyana, Russia.



GERO BRELOER/AP

U.S. men's ski slopestyle medalists Gus Kenworthy (silver), left, Joss Christensen (gold), center, and Nicholas Goepper (bronze) celebrate on the podium Thursday in Krasnaya Polyana, Russia. It was just the third time in Winter Games history that the U.S. swept an event.

US sweeps slopestyle skiing

By WILL GRAVES
The Associated Press

KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia — Don't worry, Team USA. The shredder kids have your back.

Americans Joss Christensen, Gus Kenworthy and Nick Goepper swept the podium in men's slopestyle skiing Thursday, putting on a spectacular show to boost America's lagging medal count and provide the U.S. team with a jolt from a mountain whose vibe is more spring break than Winter Olympics.

"I am shocked," Christensen said. "I am stoked to be up here with my friends. America, we did it." With style and dominance to spare.

The podium sweep was just the third for the U.S. in Winter Olympic history, joining men's figure skating in 1956 and men's halfpipe snowboarding in 2002. All four U.S. gold medals in Sochi have come at Rosa Khutor Extreme Park, and Thursday's haul came 15 hours after Kaitlyn Farrington and Kelly Clark grabbed gold and bronze in women's halfpipe snowboarding.

"It's crazy," Goepper said. "I think it's going to give the U.S. a lot more confidence and it's going to get a lot of people really excited."

The Americans were certainly fired up.

Goepper and Kenworthy raised Christensen on their shoulders following what amounted to a victory lap during Christensen's last run down the mountain. The good friends wore flags as capes in the giddy aftermath of their victory in the sport's Olympic debut.

Christensen was the last slopestyle skier named to the Olympic team, getting the nod over, among others, former world champion Tom Wallisch. The 22-year-old from Park City, Utah, was easily the best on a sun-splashed day where the weather was so warm that teammate Bobby Brown — who finished ninth — wore only a T-shirt in the finals.

It's that kind of easy, breezy attitude that permeates a sport predicated on having a good time and testing the limits of what is possible. Nobody is closer to that limit than a U.S. team that has clearly separated itself from the rest of the world.

"It's the kind of thing you don't even let yourself think about," U.S. coach Skogen Sprang said of the medal sweep. "I still don't believe it happened."

To be honest, neither could Christensen. He came to Russia hoping to find a spot on the podium. Instead, he owned it, throwing down four practically flawless runs over the series of rails and jumps that are the equivalent of a skier's playground.

Christensen's three off-axis jumps at the end of his first qualifying run totaled 10 full spins in the span of 1.5 seconds — all coming while he skied over the ramp backward. His first run in the finals won the



SERGI GERS/AP

American Joss Christensen, 22, scored a 95.80 on his first run in the slopestyle skiing finals to win the gold medal.

gold, and his second would have been good enough to win silver.

"I can't believe we made it," Christensen said. "It's been a long journey."

A painful one, too. Christensen lost his father J.D. in August and got the news while training in New Zealand. The last six months have been a mix of grieving and renewed focus for a skier whose lengthy list of injuries includes a pair of broken wrists and microfracture surgery in his knee.

It all slowed Christensen, but didn't stop him. "I hope I made my father proud," he said. "Through all the injuries I've had, he's always supported me and never said stop. I hope he's looking down and smiling. Did it for him."

Christensen's first run in the finals produced a 95.80, giving the rest of the 12-man field a target to beat. None could top the kid with the floppy blonde hair and easy smile that seems to embody a sport that often looks like it's just a bunch of guys taking turns showing off.

Kenworthy, from Telluride, Colo., was already planning to head back home with a family of stray dogs that call the streets of Sochi home. Now they'll have some company — a silver medal. He raised his arms over his head after his second finals run and laughed when his score of 93.60 was revealed.

Goepper, the gold medal favorite from Lawrenceburg, Ind., dropped a 92.40 during his first finals run but couldn't top it in the second. He smacked his skis against the second rail feature, ending his chance of leapfrogging Christensen.

"I feel amazing," he said. "I think today was the best display of skiing we have ever seen in our sport, so I am so happy."

SPORTS



Man on a mission
Cespedes eager to improve
upon 2013 season | **Page 28**

MLB

Ready for an encore

Braves third baseman
Chris Johnson isn't
resting on his success

BY CHARLES ODUM
The Associated Press

Chris Johnson is taking the same approach to the 2014 season he used one year ago, when he was fighting for a starting job.

Don't try telling Johnson he's a lock to start at third base for the Atlanta Braves after finishing second in the National League in hitting in 2013. Johnson is determined to work even harder this off-season to prove he deserves the job.

Hard work paid off last season, when Johnson hit .321, finishing second in the NL to Colorado's Michael Cuddyer. Johnson said he doesn't dare change that successful approach, so he was back at Turner Field last Friday, just as he had been every day of the informal pitchers' camp for the past two weeks.

"I'm really superstitious so I'm trying not to make it any different," Johnson said. "I'm trying to come into camp trying to win a job. That's my mentality, just because I want to continue to progress and have a real good year. I'm trying everything to keep my mind on the same path as last offseason, so that's why I'm here. "I'm trying to stay on that path as much as possible."

One year ago, Johnson was expected to share playing time with Juan Francisco. Johnson quickly won the job outright, and Francisco was traded to Milwaukee on June 3.

SEE ENCORE ON PAGE 28

Although he's the Atlanta Braves' starter at third, Chris Johnson is applying the same work ethic he used last season when he was expected to platoon.

DAVID GOLDMAN/AP



Slopestyle sweep

Christensen strikes gold as shredders from the US ski to 1-2-3 finish | **Page 31**



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- Hockey: US men open with big victory, Page 30
- Figure skating: Plushenko withdraws, says he's retiring, Page 30