NATION
VA's new 'choice' health program off to slow start
Page 9

WAR
Plan to recapture Mosul worries some Iraqi officials
Page 4

NASCAR: Busch suspended indefinitely, to miss Daytona 500 » Page 31

STARS AND STRIPES®

Volume 73, No. 219B | © SS 2015 | MIDEAST EDITION | SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2015 | stripes.com | Free to Deployed Areas

JOSH SMITH/Stars and Stripes

An Afghan National Army soldier provides security along a highway during a patrol in Panjwai district in southern Afghanistan. The district has traditionally been a hotbed of Taliban support but last year saw a fragile peace settle over the area.

UNEASY PEACE

Panjwai district serves as a counterinsurgency model for the rest of Afghanistan, but can it last?

BY JOSH SMITH
Stars and Stripes

PANJWAI DISTRICT, Afghanistan

n early 2013 a group of Afghan and coalition soldiers climbed a hill inside what was then an American forward operating base at Sperwan Ghar.

"Do you think you can hold it?" an American officer asked Afghan National Army Lt. Col. Ghulam Dastager, gesturing over the dusty grape farms and marijuana fields.

"God willing," the Afghan leader said.

Two years after that meeting, residents and security forces say a fragile peace has settled over Panjwai, which has become an unlikely bright spot in the fight against the Taliban. The factors that led to this lull hold potential lessons, and warnings, for Afghan leaders and their international backers. The good news, Dastager said, is counterinsurgency efforts seem to have succeeded in taking advantage of a local backlash against the Taliban. But Panjwai remains in the heart of one of the most continuously violent areas in Afghanistan, and with insurgents vowing to fight on, government forces must prove to residents that they are here to stay.

SEE PANJWAI ON PAGE 3

Carter weighs Afghan course

Visit to nation is first as DOD chief

BY JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — The Obama administration may make significant changes to its plans for pulling American troops out of Afghanistan, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter said Saturday.

In remarks during a joint press conference with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani at the presidential palace in Kabul, Carter said that President Barack Obama is considering "a number of options" to enhance U.S. support to the Afghan National Security Forces.

Carter arrived in Afghanistan on Saturday.

The new Pentagon chief, who was sworn in Tuesday, is slated to meet with Afghan political leaders and American military commanders to discuss the way ahead.

U.S. troops in Afghanistan are training, advising and assisting the ANSF and carrying out joint counterterrorism operations. But current plans call for the 10,000 troop U.S. force level to be roughly halved by the end of this year. By the end of 2016, the American military footprint in the country would be reduced to an Embassy presence.

Carter said one option under consideration is changing the time line for the troop drawdown. Another would be altering the timing and sequencing of base closures.

SEE VISIT ON PAGE 2

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It was not a very good light to shine on any of us, so we just hid it."

— Department of Homeland Security employee familiar with a report on poor morale at the federal agency

See story on Page 7

TOP CLICKS ON STRIPES.COM

The most popular stories on our website:

1. Guilty plea ends another chapter in years-long Iraq War fraud investigation
2. US servicemembers make the 1st cut for a trip to Mars
3. Some holders of expired licenses will be able to drive in Rheinland-Pfalz
4. Leon Kent, who stopped a line of tanks at Battle of the Bulge, dies at 99
5. DODDS European basketball championships - Day 4

COMING SOON

Wired world

Dick Tracy's watch had nothing on these

TODAY IN STRIPES

American Roundup 14
Business 23
Comics ..... **Sunday comics, 19**
Crossword **Sunday comics, 19**
Gadgets & Charts 20
Lifestyle 15
Opinion 12-13
Sports 24-32
Weather 23

WAR/MILITARY

JONATHAN ERNST, POOL/SAP

U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter, second right, arrives to a news conference with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, center, at the Presidential Palace in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Saturday. Carter made his international debut with a visit to Afghanistan to see American troops and commanders, meet with Afghan leaders and assess whether U.S. withdrawal plans are too risky to Afghan security.

Visit: Defense chief discusses possible change to Afghan plan

FRONT FRONT PAGE

The potential moves would be intended "to ensure we have the right array of coalition capabilities to support our Afghan partners" and "the right force protection footprint for our remaining personnel," he said.

Army Gen. John Campbell, the commander of U.S. and international forces in Afghanistan, has told lawmakers and Pentagon officials that he wants to keep more troops at more bases for a longer period of time to support the ANSF in their ongoing fight against the Taliban.

Ghani said he plans to discuss troop levels and other security issues when he meets with Obama next month in Washington.

In their meeting Saturday, Carter and Ghani talked about the future of American counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan.

"I think it's safe to say … counterterrorism will be a continuing preoccupation and commitment of ours here … and we are discussing and rethinking the details of the counterterrorism mission and how the environment has changed here with respect to terrorism since we first laid out our plans," Carter said.

The Pentagon chief did not specify what changes might be made to the counterterrorism mission. But a senior U.S. defense official, speaking condition of anonymity, told reporters that the counterterrorism mission "is very much going to be a topic of discussion when Ghani comes to D.C., [including] whether or not there needs to be adjustments to the footprint and to the types of CT missions that our guys are conducting."

The official said it's possible the size of the U.S. counterterrorism element in Afghanistan might "not get smaller or simply not get smaller as fast" as planned.

One of the main reasons that Obama is willing to reconsider the Afghanistan plans that he laid out last May was the election of Ghani and the exit of former Afghan President Hamid Karzai. Ghani's predecessor often criticized the U.S. and its international partners and was wary of the foreign troop presence in his country. He also tried to limit coalition military activities and placed a ban on nighttime raids.

Ghani has embraced the military relationship with the United States. Shortly after taking office in September he ended the ban on night raids and signed a bilateral security agreement with the U.S. He also appointed his political rival, Abdullah Abdullah, to a high level position in his government.

"The most important factor influencing our thinking is the change that is represented by the unity of the government of President Ghani and Dr. Abdullah and what that means for the promise of certainty, predictability and progress that just a few months ago we couldn't have planned on," Carter said.

While in Afghanistan, the new defense secretary will meet with American military officials, including Campbell and Gen. Lloyd Austin, the head of U.S. Central Command. He will also meet with Afghan political leaders.

He said he plans to ask them for their assessment of:

- The performance of the Afghan security forces.
- American contributions to the fight against the Taliban.
- The battlefield situation and the prospects going forward.
- The best way that the U.S. can support the ANSF in the future.

Carter will also meet with U.S. troops in the field.

"The reason for (going to) Afghanistan in my very first week in office… is because this is where we still have 10,000 American troops, and they come first in my mind always," Carter said.

Although the U.S. combat mission in Afghanistan officially ended in December, American forces continue to participate directly in the fight.

The rout of the Iraqi army by members of the Islamic State group after the U.S. withdrew its troops from Iraq has raised concerns in Washington that something similar could happen in Afghanistan if the drawdown proceeds too quickly. People don't want to see the gains in Afghanistan squandered after so much American blood was spilled.

More than 2,300 servicemembers have died in Afghanistan since 2001, and another 20,000 were wounded.

"Our priority now is to make sure this progress sticks," Carter said. "Today we remember all of the men and women … who paid the ultimate price to make Afghanistan's progress possible … We honor them by ensuring that the U.S.-Afghan partnership is … strong and enduring."

harper.jon@stripes.com
Twitter: @JHarperStripes

WAR/MILITARY

Panjwai: District offers glimmer of hope to area

Photos by Josh Smith/Stars and Stripes

An Afghan National Army soldier provides security along a highway during a patrol in Panjwai district in southern Afghanistan. Afghan forces established a network of checkpoints after residents turned against the Taliban.

A drop in violence

Panjwai and its neighboring districts are often called the "birthplace of the Taliban," part of the area where the group's one-eyed leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar, first began to flex his political and military muscles in 1994.

But in early 2013, many of the district's residents had finally turned on the Taliban, accusing militants of disrespecting village elders and interfering with farming. In desperation, residents turned to government officials for help.

With foreign forces already preparing to withdraw, international and Afghan military leaders tried to take advantage of this so-called "uprising" in Panjwai. Perhaps learning from previous botched reactions in places like neighboring Uruzgan province, where residents were left to fend for themselves against insurgent forces, Afghan and U.S. troops established checkpoints and other strongholds throughout Panjwai.

Despite the potshots from a sniper that came whizzing over troops' heads while sitting in one such fort manned by Afghan local police in early 2013, the area was already quieting down compared to earlier deployments, American soldiers said at the time.

But the Taliban wouldn't go quietly. By that summer, Panjwai was by some counts one of the most violent districts in all of Afghanistan, said Graeme Smith, an analyst with the International Crisis Group who spent years living in Kandahar.

In 2014, however, the number of violent incidents dropped drastically. "Violence in Panjwai is roughly half of what it was in 2013," Smith said as he pored over tables of statistics in his office in Kabul.

That trend was confirmed by residents and security forces.

"Two years ago we stood up against the Taliban and now we can see the results: no Taliban and no problem," said Abdul Hodod, a local police commander who helped lead pro-government militias against the Taliban during the uprising.

Afghans around the country tell of situations in which the Taliban return after foreign or Afghan forces retired to their bases. But local support appears to have changed that all-too-common equation in Panjwai.

"Even our children know how to recognize a stranger who could be Taliban," Hodod said. "But the ANA and foreigners don't always recognize the Taliban. We were the key," Hodod said. Now insurgents have much less freedom to operate, he added.

"Before, people couldn't cooperate or support the government because the area was in the Taliban control and there were no government soldiers," said Sat Mohammed, a local council member in Panjwai. "Now we have soldiers, checkpoints and people feel safe to cooperate."

No easy task

The shift in Panjwai may offer a glimmer of hope for Afghan government forces, who have been taking a record number of casualties as fighting around the country continues. But while the trends in Panjwai itself are promising, they also hold warnings that the district could easily slide back into outright conflict, with disastrous results for residents as well as security forces, who are already stretched thin in other areas of the country.

Local support, government presence and other components of counterinsurgency that have played out favorably in Panjwai are well understood, yet much more easily stated than accomplished and maintained.

The district has long been the scene of what Maj. Gen. Robert Abrams, the former American commander in southern Afghanistan, called "a slugfest" between insurgents and coalition and Afghan troops. Years of operations had done little to break the Taliban's hold on Panjwai.

In 2006, for example, Operation Medusa saw Canadian forces inflict a serious blow to the Taliban, only to have the group retain its influence and return to the fight.

All that violence has often left residents caught in between.

Panjwai is also infamous for the massacre of 16 Afghan villagers — most of them women and children — outside Camp Belambay, a small U.S. Army base, in March 2012. An American soldier, Staff Sgt. Robert Bales, was sentenced to life in prison for those killings. It's a memory that complicated efforts to reach out to Panjwai's residents.

Afghan National Army Lt. Col. Ghulam Dastager rides in a Humvee during a patrol in Panjwai district in Kandahar province, Afghanistan. Dastager says so far a fragile peace has held in the district, but violence lurks all around.

If residents sense a wavering in government control, they may once again look to the Taliban, who have had success in other areas by establishing judicial systems and support networks seen as an alternative to a corrupt central government.

The government in Kabul and the NATO-led coalition have seen gains like those in Panjwai go up in smoke in other areas.

Gizab district in nearby Uruzgan was the scene of a similar uprising against the Taliban in 2010 that prompted coalition leaders to label the district a "great example" of stability.

But last year militant forces returned with a vengeance.

Fighting displaced some 500 families, and local officials said the district itself was on the brink of falling completely back under Taliban control.

It's not clear that even the tens of thousands of American and international troops sent during the troop surge of 2010 did much to blunt the insurgency, International Crisis Group's Smith argued.

"What we're seeing now is not so different from pre-surge numbers," he said. "The surge was designed to expand government control. And that has failed. In many places the Taliban are massing in ways not seen since 2006."

A long road

Holding on to potentially fleeting gains in places like Panjwai while trying to make progress in other districts will be a long process for the Afghan forces, who are fully responsible for taking on the entrenched insurgency now that NATO and American leaders have declared an end to their combat operations.

Though fighting in Panjwai may have dissipated, neighboring districts just a few miles away such as Maiwand and Ghorak have seen spikes in violence.

Taliban spokesman Qari Yousuf dismissed accounts of government support in Panjwai as propaganda and said the group's forces are planning new offensives.

"In these areas the government is calling anarchy peace," he said in a phone interview. "Villagers support us. In Panjwai and other districts we will be increasing attacks with new tactics to support the villagers and help them fight against the government cruelty."

Maj. Gen. Abdul Hamid commands the ANA's 205th "Hero" Corps based in Kandahar city. Two years ago, the coalition officially handed him and his troops control over the fight in southern Afghanistan.

Holding court in his greenhouse-turned-conference room complete with exotic birds and pungent tropical flowers, Hamid spoke of how squashing Taliban support in areas like Panjwai won't be enough if militants can still find havens across the border in Pakistan or in highly violent Afghan provinces.

"There was a time when we had many insurgents from Panjwai," he said over the sound of the twittering birds. "Now most come from Pakistan or Helmand. It is like squeezing a balloon. You make progress here, the militants go over there."

Nooruddin Bakhshi and Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report.
smith.josh@stripes.com

WAR ON TERRORISM

AP

Iraqi security forces hold a flag of the Islamic State group they captured during an operation outside Amirli, 105 miles north of Baghdad, Iraq, in October. Iraqi officials claim they haven't received the weapons needed for the Mosul operation.

Mosul attack worries Iraqi officials

Some question whether military will be prepared for spring offensive

By Lolita C. Baldor and Sameer Yacoub
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With the military operation to retake Iraq's second largest city from Islamic State militants just a few months away, questions persist about whether the struggling Iraqi military will be ready for the fight.

Iraqi officials continue to insist they haven't gotten the advanced weapons they need for the operation in the northern city of Mosul, and some question whether they will be ready for a spring offensive. But the Pentagon insists the U.S. has sent tens of thousands of weapons and ammunition and more is in the pipeline.

Hakim al-Zamili, the head of the security and defense committee in the Iraqi parliament, told The Associated Press on Friday that "any operation would be fruitless" unless the brigades are properly prepared and have the weapons they need.

"I think if these weapons are not made available soon, the military assault might wait beyond spring," he said. "The Americans might have their own calculations and estimations, but we as Iraqis have our own opinion. We are fighting and moving on the ground, so we have better vision and April might be too soon."

A U.S. Central Command official provided some details of the battle plan Thursday, saying the coordinated military mission to retake Mosul will likely begin in April or May and will involve up to 25,000 Iraqi troops. They have cautioned, however, that if the Iraqis aren't ready, the timing could be delayed.

The core of the fighting force will be five of Iraq's most accomplished brigades, who will go through additional U.S. training before the operation.

Al-Zamili said that while several of Iraq's units have gone through training recently, "these well-trained brigades cannot get involved in battles without being equipped with advanced and effective weapons that would enable them to penetrate enemy lines."

His comment reflects a common complaint from the Iraqi government, both in recent months and throughout much of the Iraq War. The U.S., however, has sent tens of thousands of weapons, ammunition, body armor and other equipment to the country.

According to a senior defense official, the U.S. sent nearly 1,600 Hellfire missiles to Iraq last year, and has already delivered 232 more. About 10,000 M-16 assault rifles are due to arrive in the next few weeks, along with 23,000 ammunition magazines. The U.S. also has delivered thousands of rockets, mortar rounds, tank rounds, .50-caliber rounds and 10,000 M-68 combat optical sights, a rifle scope commonly used by the U.S. military.

About 250 mine-resistant, armor-protected vehicles will be delivered in a few weeks, along with sophisticated radio systems for the MRAPs and more ammunition rounds, said the official, who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The public discussion of the operation, including how many Iraqi brigades would be involved and how Kurdish Peshmerga military would be used, triggered questions about whether it provided any key information to the enemy.

The operation itself comes as no surprise to the Islamic State group. Iraqi leaders have for months made it publicly clear that they were planning an operation to retake Mosul and that they were eager to get started. In addition, U.S. officials had already acknowledged they were beginning preparations for the Mosul mission, including using airstrikes to shut down supply lines the insurgents were using to get equipment or people in and out of the city.

Discussion about the operation also could give a public boost to the Iraqi forces, underscoring how committed they are to the mission. And it appeared to at least temporarily stifle what had been persistent criticism of the Iraq situation, including suggestions that the Islamic State had been gaining ground and momentum.

Islamic State militants overtook Mosul in June, as the group marched across large sections of Iraq and Syria, sending Iraqi forces fleeing. The military, plagued by corruption, low morale and insufficient training and equipment, has made little progress in regaining its footing since.

At this point, officials estimate there are between 1,000 to 2,000 Islamic State insurgents in Mosul.

Why the Pentagon laid out war plan

By Greg Jaffe
The Washington Post

ANALYSIS

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military is typically loathe to talk about future operations, but early last week a senior official laid out pretty detailed plans for an assault on Mosul, Iraq, for a roomful of reporters.

The somewhat unusual briefing outraged Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., who complained Friday in a letter to President Barack Obama that the "disclosures not only risk the success of our mission, but could also cost the lives of U.S., Iraqi, and coalition forces."

The two members of the Senate Armed Services Committee wanted to know whether the White House had signed off on the disclosures and demanded an investigation. "Those responsible have jeopardized our national security interests and must be held accountable," the lawmakers wrote.

So why did a senior military official spill the details of the war plan to rout the Islamic State from Mosul?

The answer: The Pentagon and Iraqi military commanders are hoping to avoid a massive, bloody battle in Iraq's second-largest city. "We want Mosul to look a lot more like the liberation of Paris than Stalingrad or Fallujah," said a senior military official familiar with the planning. In other words, U.S. and Iraqi commanders are hoping that they can convince most of the Islamic State fighters to leave the city before the big battle.

So far it remains unclear whether the strategy will work. The senior military official who briefed reporters on Thursday said that the assault on Mosul would likely begin in April or May and include between 20,000 to 25,000 troops. American war planes, and possibly helicopters, will provide air support to the Iraqi forces on the ground.

Most military officials believe that there are more than 2,000 Islamic State fighters currently in Mosul. It's unclear how the outnumbered enemy will react to the news of the coming assault by Iraqi forces. For now, though, it appears that the Islamic State fighters are determined to dig in for a hard fight, said military officials.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest told reporters Friday that he didn't know that U.S. Central Command officials would be briefing reporters. But the news of the disclosures didn't seem to bother him too much.

"I guess if I did sign off on these background briefings, then I'd be accused of ... micro-managing the Department of Defense, and I certainly wouldn't want to be accused of doing that," Earnest said. "Right?"

STARS AND STRIPES
However you read us, wherever you need us.
Mobile • Online • Print

EUROPE
ADVERTISING
KATHRYN PETERSON
peterson.kathryn@stripes.com
+49 (0) 173 313 6411

MIDDLE EAST
ADVERTISING
KATHRYN PETERSON
peterson.kathryn@stripes.com
+49 (0) 173 313 6411

PACIFIC
ADVERTISING
YUKO SAITO
CustomerHelp@Stripes.com
+81(3) 6385.3267 DSN 315.229.3267

WAR ON TERRORISM

Families hope for hostage policy changes

By Adam Goldman
The Washington Post

After Peter Theo Curtis, an American journalist, was kidnapped in Syria and later turned over to an al-Qaida's affiliate in the country, his family traveled to Washington. During a meeting with officials from the State Department, they asked what would happen if they paid off the kidnappers.

The answer was that they could be prosecuted under American law for providing a ransom to a terrorist group.

Nancy Curtis, Theo's mother, later told the FBI negotiator working closely with her family what had happened. "They'd have a hard time prosecuting if I was in the room with you," she recalled him saying.

The episode underlined the sometimes bewildering situation faced by families of Americans held hostage overseas. Now, as the White House nears the midpoint of a review of its hostage policies, families who have endured the crises are hopeful the government will become more open in its dealings with them and settle on one federal agency to be in charge of the process to eliminate interagency confusion.

Launched in December, the review is the culmination of months of complaints from the families of hostages kidnapped and killed in Syria by the Islamic State group. While the review may compel federal agencies to be more compassionate in their dealings with victims' families, it won't change fundamental U.S. policy on not paying ransom to terrorist organizations.

In a Dec. 17 letter sent to the families, Lisa Monaco, President Barack Obama's top counterterrorism adviser, made the administration's intent clear. "The scope of this review will not include a reconsidering of our no-concessions policy," Monaco wrote.

So far, 18 of 82 families invited to participate have been interviewed. Officials are interviewing others with relevant expertise, including Reporters Without Borders and a well-respected former FBI hostage negotiator. The review is expected to be completed this spring.

The FBI, State Department, Pentagon and U.S. intelligence community are all taking part in the review under the supervision of the National Counterterrorism Center. The effort is being led by Army Lt. Gen. Bennet Sacolick, director of strategic operational planning at NCTC.

Diane Foley, whose son James was the first American hostage to be killed by the Islamic State last year, said she met with Sacolick and walked away impressed. "He seemed to really listen," she said. "I left hopeful."

A key issue for the families is an accessible and informed point of contact in the government.

The State Department and the FBI have important roles when an American is kidnapped abroad.

Overseas Citizens Services, a directorate within the Bureau of Consular Affairs at the State Department, is responsible for working with families.

The State Department leads diplomatic efforts to free Americans held hostage or detained in a foreign country.

Because the FBI investigates crimes against Americans, it often has the greatest interaction with immediate relatives and access to sensitive intelligence collected by the CIA or National Security Agency.

Despite some vocal criticism of the way the government has handled the abductions, some families are appreciative.

Curtis, whose son was freed in August after nearly two years of captivity, praised the Boston-based hostage negotiator in the case as well as a case agent at the FBI Washington field office.

Still, Curtis wished the government had provided her with contact information for other American families whose relatives had been kidnapped in Syria. She said someone at the International Committee of the Red Cross let her know that Diane Foley also lived in the Northeast.

"Diane and I were really helpful for one another," she said.

In a long letter Curtis recently wrote to Sacolick, she took issue with the "siloing of the families."

"It's terrible that the other mothers didn't have the benefit of being able to talk with people in the same situation," she wrote.

Contact Baker today for a complimentary evaluation of transfer credit and military work experience. See an online class demo at **bakercollegeonline.com/demo**

CALL TO GET STARTED: **(800) 469-4062**

MILITARY FRIENDLY SCHOOL MF'15

Baker College strongly believes in the Principles of Excellence as outlined in Executive Order 13607 by being a participant of the Degree Network System (DNS), DANTES, GoArmyEd, and CCAF's AU-ABC Program. The college is a proud signer of the DOD MOU and is eligible to receive Federal military and Veteran education benefits.

ACCREDITED
NOT-FOR-PROFIT
100% ONLINE
NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED
LIFETIME EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE
NO APPLICATION FEE

Baker College® UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOL

BAKER Center for Graduate Studies GRADUATE SCHOOL

BAKER Online® bakercollegeonline.com

An Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action Institution. Baker College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission / 230 South LaSalle St., Suite 7-500, Chicago, IL 60604-1411 / 800-621-7440 / www.ncahlc.org. Baker Center for Graduate Studies' MBA program is also accredited by the International Assembly of Collegiate Business Education (IACBE). For more information about our graduation rates, the median debt of students who completed the program, and other important information, please visit our Web site at www.baker.edu/gainfulemployment.

6/4/0/0CO-RE/12

NATION

Sniper's last day comes into focus at murder trial

By Dan Lamothe
The Washington Post

STEPHENVILLE, Texas—The Rough Creek Lodge and Resort is a remote, 11,000-acre vacation spot where Chris Kyle had helped design the rifle range. It was a place where the Navy SEAL, depicted in the recent movie "American Sniper," hung out with fellow veterans, some of them struggling to find their places in civilian life. They bonded over a shared passion: shooting.

And Rough Creek was the place that marked the fatal intersection of two veterans of the war in Iraq: Kyle, often called the deadliest sniper in U.S. military history, and Eddie Ray Routh, a Marine Corps veteran who repaired small arms but never saw combat.

Kyle's final day — never fully understood and only glancingly depicted in the Clint Eastwood movie — has been drawn in great detail at Routh's murder trial in the county courthouse here.

The encounter originated with a mother's request for help for her troubled son. It ended with Kyle, 38, shot six times in an apparent ambush. His friend, Chad Littlefield, 35, also lay dead nearby, shot seven times.

The killing two years ago bewildered veterans and readers of Kyle's bestselling memoir, disbelieving that the survivor of four brutal combat tours in Iraq could be gunned down back home. His memorial service at the Dallas Cowboys' stadium drew thousands. The movie about his life is nearing $300 million in domestic box-office receipts.

Lawyers for Routh, who was arrested on the night of the killings, do not dispute that he shot the two men. But they are arguing to a jury that he should be found not guilty by reason of insanity. If convicted, Routh, 27, could be imprisoned for life without the possibility of parole.

Kyle agreed to meet with Routh at the request of the Marine's mother. Kyle's wife, Taya, testified that she knew the woman because she worked at the elementary school where the Kyle children, then 8 and 6, attended.

It is still unclear how much Kyle and Littlefield knew about Routh, who had been in and out of mental hospitals for at least two years before their encounter and was diagnosed with schizophrenia and psychosis, among other ailments. His family says he also suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder from his time in the military.

Kyle spoke with Routh at least once by phone before picking him up and he seemed as though he wanted to go to the range with him, Taya Kyle recalled.

The day of the shooting, the Kyles attended a basketball game for one of their children before Kyle and Littlefield drove from their hometown in Midlothian, about 35 miles southwest of Dallas, to Routh's home in Lancaster. They then drove another 90 miles to Rough Creek Lodge, planning to shoot for less than an hour before dropping Routh back to Lancaster, Kyle's wife testified.

On the way to Rough Creek, something appeared to make Kyle uneasy about Routh. Seated in the driver's seat of his black Ford F-350 truck, he sent a text message to Littlefield, next to him, about Routh, who was seated behind them.

"This dude is straight-up nuts," it said, the court heard. Littlefield agreed, asking Kyle in a text reply to watch his back.

The uneasy trio continued on to the range. They arrived at Rough Creek about 3:15 p.m., said Frank Alvarez, a manager at the resort. Kyle was a regular, and his company, Craft International, used the range to train servicemembers, police and civilians.

Taya Kyle testified that she called her husband while he was at Rough Creek and sensed a problem.

Sometime between 4:40 and 4:50 p.m., a wilderness guide at Rough Creek, Justin Nabours, found Kyle and Littlefield, each dead from multiple gunshot wounds. He had gone over to the range with a guest at the club and his son, a middle-school student who wanted to meet the Navy SEAL, Nabours said.

Kyle had been shot six times, including a "rapidly fatal" bullet to the back that pierced his aorta, and another to the jaw that caused a severe spinal cord injury, said Jeffrey Barnard, a doctor who performed autopsies on both victims.

Littlefield was hit seven times, including four that would have been instantly fatal, Barnard said. One of the gunshot wounds was to the top of the head, indicating it was likely fired while Littlefield was already on the ground, the doctor added.

Crime scene photos shown in court show Kyle lying on the dirt in front of an elevated deck from which rifles were fired at targets up to 1,000 yards away. Littlefield lay on the same deck nearby.

Both men were armed with .45-caliber 1911-style pistols, but neither gun had been unholstered or fired.

Prosecutors have not elaborated on how Routh initiated the attack. Kyle was killed with a .45-caliber pistol, while Littlefield was shot with a 9 mm Sig Sauer handgun, a distinctive weapon that is popular with Navy SEALs and had the Navy anchor engraved on it.

Both guns belonged to Kyle, and the Sig Sauer was found in Routh's possession, reloaded, later that night, authorities said.

Hollywood takes some liberties with reality

By Dan Lamothe
The Washington Post

The 87th Academy Awards are coming this weekend, and the military blockbuster "American Sniper" has been nominated for six Oscars, including Best Picture and Best Actor for Bradley Cooper's role as Navy SEAL sharpshooter Chris Kyle.

Some veterans groups and Kyle's family and friends have mostly praised the movie for its portrayal of urban combat in Iraq, Kyle himself, and veteran struggles with post-traumatic stress. However, the movie strays from the truth on some aspects of Kyle's life and deployments, making it an interesting film to put through The Washington Post's "Truth Teller" series.

For the second year in a row, The Post is fact-checking some of the major pictures up for Oscars. The effort includes "Selma," "The Theory of Everything," and "The Imitation Game" as well as "American Sniper."

Among the factual issues with "American Sniper:"

■ The emphasis on Syrian sniper Mustafa. The film depicts at great length the enemy sniper Mustafa, an apparent near-equal of Kyle's who once competed in the Olympics as a marksman. However, as The Post's World Views blog highlighted last month, it is unclear if that particular insurgent sniper ever existed. He is mentioned in just one paragraph in Kyle's memoir, in which Kyle says he never saw Mustafa.

The movie, on the other hand, shows Mustafa stalking Kyle and his Navy SEAL colleagues through multiple cities and deployments in Iraq over several years. Kyle eventually kills him with a shot of more than 2,100 yards — a major moment in the film and purportedly the SEAL's longest shot ever, as The Post noted in December. He did take a shot that long, but it hit an insurgent with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher, according to his book.

In reality, it's highly unlikely that one insurgent sniper would have appeared in that many different locations during the Iraq War. Jason Hall, the film's screenwriter, told The Post that including Mustafa in so much of the film acted as connective tissue and made Kyle's four deployments less "episodic." Kyle did not kill him.

Stars and Stripes staff explain their picks for the Academy Awards
Pages 16-18

■ Kyle's prominent use of the satellite phone. The film shows Kyle repeatedly on the phone with his wife, Taya, while on missions "outside the wire." Several times she listens to the sounds of combat from thousands of miles away, horrified.

In reality, Kyle wrote in his book that his wife experienced something like that just once. Hall, the screenwriter, told The Post in December that he expanded the use of the satellite phone in the movie so that viewers could see them communicate while he was deployed. The couple also used email, but that is not shown in the movie.

■ The death of fellow SEAL Ryan Job. Kyle witnessed two of his SEAL teammates get seriously wounded in combat. One of them, Ryan Job, took a gunshot to the face in 2006, and died in 2009 while in surgery. His death occurred after he got married and had climbed Mount Rainier, according to his obituary.

However, the film shows Job dying earlier, while Kyle is in Iraq on his last deployment. The altered timeline provided motivation for Kyle to kill the Syrian sniper in the movie.

■ Kyle's last day. In the film, Kyle is killed by an unnamed veteran who is struggling with mental issues. The man picks Kyle up at his house, and then the film moves to real footage of Kyle's funeral at the Dallas Cowboys stadium, a memorial service that drew thousands of people.

In reality, Kyle picked up the veteran — Eddie Ray Routh — at Routh's house. Routh shot and killed Kyle and his friend Chad Littlefield at a rifle range where the three men had gone to hang out. Routh stole Kyle's pickup truck and led police on a high-speed chase before he was captured.

Routh's murder trial is now underway. His lawyers, who do not dispute that Routh killed Kyle and Littlefield, are arguing for a verdict of not guilty by reason of insanity.

WARNER BROS. PICTURES/AP

Bradley Cooper appears in a scene from "American Sniper." The screenwriters strayed from the truth on some aspects of Kyle's life.

NATION

Agency studied low morale, studied it, and studied it more

By Jerry Markon
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Afflicted with the lowest morale of any large federal agency, the Department of Homeland Security did what comes naturally to many in government.

It decided to study the problem. And then study it some more.

The first study cost more than $1 million. When it was finished, it was put into a drawer. The next one cost less but duplicated the first. It also ended up in a drawer.

So last year, still stumped about why the employees charged with safeguarding Americans are so unhappy, the department commissioned two more studies.

Now, with the nation continuing to face threats to the homeland, some officials who have worked inside the agency acknowledge it should spend less time studying its internal problems and more energy trying to fix them.

"There's really no excuse for the department expending finite resources on multiple studies, some at the same time, to tell the department pretty much what everyone has concluded: that there are four to five things that need to be done for morale," said Chris Cummiskey, who left DHS in November after serving as its third-highest-ranking official. "You don't need $2 million worth of studies to figure that out."

Cummiskey added that DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson "understands this and is focused on delivering meaningful results for DHS employees."

Since taking over the department in late 2013, Johnson has focused on raising morale and stemming high turnover, problems that date to the George W. Bush administration. Many DHS employees have said in the annual government "viewpoint" survey of federal employees that the department discourages innovation and treats them in an arbitrary fashion. Others have described in interviews how a stifling bureaucracy and relentless congressional criticism makes DHS an exhausting place to work.

Johnson and deputy secretary Alejandro Mayorkas have "personally committed themselves to improving the morale and workforce satisfaction across the Department of Homeland Security," said Ginette Magana, a DHS spokeswoman. "They are directly engaging with employees, listening to their concerns, working diligently to improve employee recognition and training, and are focused on strengthening the skills and abilities of every employee. She said the studies constitute "a first step in a comprehensive process dedicated to tangible results."

At the same time, the department has continued to pay for even more outside reports.

"It's a big problem, not just at DHS but across the government," said Max Stier, president of the Partnership for Public Service, a nonprofit group that seeks to make government more effective. "You see study, study, study, and no execution or fulfilling of the recommendations."

Stier's group contributed to one of the most recent DHS studies, a $420,000 analysis completed late last year by the consulting firm Deloitte. But Stier said his help came with a caution. "It's time to get moving," he recalled telling department officials, "and not simply study the issue."

Three years ago, officials in the department's office of health affairs, which provides expertise on national security medical issues, began to wonder about the health of one of their own programs. In response to low scores on the viewpoint survey, officials had set up a program, DHSTogether, aimed at making DHS "one of the best places to work in the Federal government." But it wasn't working out.

So the department tapped the Institute of Medicine, which is part of the National Academy of Sciences, to find out why.

A committee of 11 experts visited about 25 DHS locations in Texas, New York and the Washington area. It produced a 268-page report at a price tag of $1.2 million.

The result: virtually nothing.

"It was not a very good light to shine on any of us, so we just hid it," said one DHS employee familiar with the report, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of fear of retaliation by supervisors.

Andrew Harrer/Bloomberg News

The Department of Homeland Security seal is displayed at the agency's headquarters in Washington in December.

The report, released in September 2013, concluded that DHSTogether had been starved of money and support from DHS leaders and devolved into little more than an ineffective suicide prevention program. The document made a series of recommendations to improve employee resilience and morale, calling it "imperative that senior leaders at DHS" get more involved.

One of those leaders was Rafael Borras, who had just taken over as acting deputy secretary, the department's number two post. "I've never seen it, never heard of it, didn't know they were doing it," he recalled. "At no time did anyone raise with me 'Oh, remember this study we did?'"

A DHS official said the department has taken several steps in response to the institute's study. These include setting up a leadership council, embarking on further research to measure employee resilience, and drafting a five-year DHS-wide strategic plan for workforce "readiness and resilience," as the study had urged.

When a congressional committee asked a year ago about what had come of the institute's study, DHS officials also cited the five-year plan, saying it would be presented to senior managers by May 2014.

Nearly a year later, that strategic plan remains merely a draft in DHS' computer system. A copy of a draft, obtained by The Washington Post, contains phrases such as "add introduction," "add conclusion" and "insert photos."

"There is no plan," said one DHS employee. "It just sat there and sat there and it sits today. We are clearly just running around doing studies, getting recommendations and not taking them."

The same month in 2012 that department officials signed the contract with the Institute of Medicine, they commissioned someone else to study virtually the same issues. DHS' office of health affairs awarded a $250,000 contract to the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress (CSTS) at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Md., to examine the DHSTogether program and the mental well-being of employees.

Though the contract has been extended twice, people familiar with it said the center produced nothing more than a short draft in August.

The draft offers an explanation for why the center had not made more progress. "Other entities had already engaged employees in efforts to assess morale," it said, and as a result, DHS employees were developing "interview/survey fatigue."

The document continued, "Several other studies with significant overlap to CSTS's work efforts were underway at the same time."

A department spokeswoman said the center's study is also expected to produce other steps, including employee resilience training and a briefing to senior DHS leadership.

DHS employees say the draft, itself, has been ignored inside the department.

During the past year, the department's concern with morale has intensified. The 2014 Best Places To Work in the Federal Government Survey, published by Stier's group, ranked DHS dead last among large agencies.

And the department has launched two more studies.

Wrong tax data sent to health care site users

By Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In a new setback for the health care law and the people it's supposed to help, the government said Friday it made a tax-reporting error that's fouling up the filings of nearly a million Americans.

After a successful sign-up season, the latest goof could signal new problems with the complex links between President Barack Obama's health care overhaul and the nation's income tax system.

Officials said the government sent the wrong tax information to about 800,000 HealthCare.gov customers, and they're asking those affected to delay filing their 2014 returns. The issue involves a new government form called a 1095-A, which is like a W-2 form for health care for people who got subsidized private coverage under Obama's law.

People can find out whether they're affected by checking their messages in their HealthCare.gov accounts. They also can check by phoning the federal customer service center at 800-318-2596.

Separately, California announced earlier that it had sent out inaccurate tax forms affecting about 100,000 households. The state is not part of the federal market but runs its own insurance exchange.

HealthCare.gov said in a blog post that the federal mistake happened when information on this year's premiums was substituted for what should been 2014 numbers. The website had a technology meltdown when it was launched back in 2013, but seemed to have overcome its problems this enrollment season.

"It's just another black mark on the administration's handling of the health care act," said Roberton Williams, a senior fellow at the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center in Washington. "They were hoping for a clean season."

"For many of these impacted taxpayers, the tax refund could be the single largest financial payout of the year," said Mark Ciaramitaro, H&R Block's vice president for health care. Many people due a refund file well before the April 15 deadline. "They are being told to wait," he added, "further delaying access to their tax refund."

On another matter, the administration also announced a special sign-up extension for uninsured people who would face the health care law's tax penalties for the first time this year.

Several million households could benefit from that grace period, which had been sought by Democratic lawmakers.

Uninsured people who go to file their taxes and learn they're facing a penalty will have between March 15 and April 30 to sign up through HealthCare.gov. Otherwise, they would not have had an opportunity until the fall. Fines for being uninsured are going up significantly in 2015.

The tax-document mistake was a self-inflicted wound after what Obama had personally touted as a successful open-enrollment season, with about 11.4 million people signed up.

On Capitol Hill, Democrats were frustrated, but they gave the administration some credit for disclosing the error early instead of letting the problem compound as tax season advances.

The White House downplayed the consequences. "It's a small percentage of overall tax filers," said spokesman Josh Earnest. "You're talking about less than 1 percent of people who file taxes."

At the Health and Human Services Department, Andy Slavitt, who oversees health insurance programs, said consumers affected by the problem will be notified starting immediately via phone calls and emails. They represent about 1 of every 5 HealthCare.gov customers who got subsidies in 2014.

An estimated 50,000 people who have already filed their taxes will receive special instructions from the Treasury Department, he said. All corrected forms are expected to be available by early March.

HELP IS ON THE WAY

We've been making loans of up to $10,000 to active duty military for over 64 years.

omni financial

Click Today...Cash Today® www.omnimilitaryloans.com "We love to say yes"®

NATION

Governor backs push to make Wisconsin right-to-work state

By Scott Bauer
The Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. — Gov. Scott Walker backed a surprise move Friday by Republican legislators to quickly vote on making Wisconsin a right-to-work state, an action the likely 2016 presidential candidate initially said should be delayed to avoid re-igniting massive pro-union protests.

Walker had expressed concerns to leaders in the GOP-controlled Legislature that rushing the divisive proposal could distract from his agenda, and in September — during the heat of his re-election campaign — he said he wouldn't support it this session. But after a series of private meetings with lawmakers, followed by an announcement that the bill would be voted on next week, Walker's spokeswoman said he would sign it.

"Governor Walker continues to focus on budget priorities to grow our economy and to streamline state government," his spokeswoman Laurel Patrick said in an email. "With that said, Governor Walker co-sponsored right-to-work legislation as a lawmaker and supports the policy."

Walker walked past reporters, declining to answer questions, at a National Governors Association meeting Friday in Washington.

Under right to work, unions are prohibited from reaching labor deals with businesses that require private-sector workers to pay fees to the union. Twenty-four other states already have the laws in place.

Walker rose to prominence in 2011, when he pushed through a law known as Act 10 that effectively ended collective bargaining for most public workers. That led to protests involving as many as 100,000 people at the state Capitol and a 2012 recall election that Walker won.

Unlike Act 10, which Walker proposed, the right-to-work push is coming from Republicans who control the Legislature.

"I think we can do this next week without it getting really ugly," said Republican Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald on WTMJ radio in Milwaukee. "We'll see next week whether the Capitol blows up. I don't know."

Unions were quick to criticize but were silent about whether they planned to organize massive rallies like those that went on for weeks in 2011.

Right to work is a "false promise for Wisconsin," said Phil Neuenfeldt, president of the Wisconsin AFL-CIO, in a prepared statement. "Right to Work will not create jobs and will lower wages for all workers,"

Dan Bukiewicz, president of the Milwaukee Building-Construction Trades Council, which represents union construction workers in the Milwaukee area, called right-to-work "an unneeded distraction."

"I haven't heard anybody come out from a business standpoint saying this is what they want," he said. "The residual results of this will hurt the citizens of Wisconsin."

There will inevitably be legal challenges to the law, but they are unlikely to succeed based on previous federal and state court rulings in Indiana and Michigan, said Paul Secunda, labor law professor and program coordinator for Marquette Law School's Labor and Employment Law Program in Milwaukee.

Proponents of right-to-work argue it will make Wisconsin more competitive and that workers should have the freedom to decide whether to pay and join unions, rather than having dues automatically withdrawn.

Passing right-to-work is a priority for Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, the statewide chamber of commerce that represents 3,800 large and small manufacturers and companies, local chambers of commerce and specialized trade associations.

Ex-Virginia governor's wife gets prison for corruption

The Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — The wife of former Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell was sentenced Friday to one year and 1 day in prison for her role in a bribery scheme that destroyed her husband's political career.

U.S. District Judge James Spencer sentenced Maureen McDonnell on eight public corruption counts.

Former Gov. Bob McDonnell, who had widely been considered a possible Republican vice presidential nominee in 2012, was sentenced to two years in prison last month after being convicted of 11 counts. He is free on bail while he appeals the convictions.

A jury in September found the McDonnells guilty of taking more than $165,000 in gifts and loans from Star Scientific Inc. CEO Jonnie Williams in exchange for promoting his company's nutritional supplements — primarily the tobacco-derived anti-inflammatory Anatabloc.

Among the gifts were about $20,000 in designer accessories and clothing for Maureen McDonnell and a $6,500 Rolex watch she gave her husband for Christmas.

McDonnell said can remain free on bond while she appeals the convictions, the judge said.

Steve Marcus, Las Vegas Sun/AP

Robert Meyers, the widower of shooting victim Tammy Meyers, speaks to reporters in front of the family home Thursday in Las Vegas.

Questions raised over Las Vegas shooting case

By Ken Ritter and Julie Watson
The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — It initially sounded like horrific fatal road rage: A Las Vegas mother of four who just finished giving her 15-year-old daughter a driving lesson followed by a driver they encountered on their way home, shot to death in front of their house.

But a police report released Friday gave a more detailed account of the late Feb. 12 incident, and raised new questions about whether the slaying of Tammy Meyers, 44, was truly a case of road rage or a neighborhood dispute that spiraled out of control.

The suspected gunman turned out to be a 19-year-old, who lived less than a block away and attended a nearby high school with two of Tammy Meyers' sons in 2011-12.

Meyers' husband, Robert Meyers, said his wife even tried to counsel Erich Milton Nowsch Jr. after his father committed suicide five years ago.

Nowsch

Nowsch wasn't driving, and didn't tell his friends he was angry about a traffic encounter. He said he thought someone was after him, according to the police report.

It wasn't immediately clear how authorities came to suspect Nowsch in the shooting, but the police report said he was questioned Tuesday, five days after the shooting and three days after Tammy Meyers was taken off life support.

Nowsch was being held at the time in juvenile custody on unspecified, unrelated charges.

Police said Nowsch told his friends after the shooting that he was a passenger in a silver Audi and saw a gun waved at him from a green car in a middle school parking lot and thought the occupants were after him.

Police said Meyers had taken her daughter, Kristal, to the school parking lot to practice driving the family's green 1993 Buick Park Avenue sedan. After Kristal tried her skills on some nearby residential streets, Tammy Meyers hopped back into the driver's seat about 10:50 p.m. to drive home.

That's when a silver car sped up behind them and then pulled alongside, according to the police report.

Kristal told authorities she reached over to honk the car horn as her mother kept driving.

The silver car cut in front of them, but Tammy Meyers turned down another street, according to police. The silver car popped up again, passing in a bike lane next to the curb and spinning out sideways in front of them, forcing the Buick to stop, according to the report.

Kristal Meyers told police later that a 6-foot-tall man got out and warned: "I'm gonna come back for you and your daughter."

Nowsch is about 5-foot-3 and 100 pounds.

Kristal said her mother hit the gas, sped around the silver car, and headed home.

The daughter told police she thought she spotted the silver car again before they reached home, where her mother told her to run in to get her brother, Brandon, 22.

Brandon Meyers told police he grabbed his Beretta 9 mm handgun, but told his mother she should call 911. He said he got into the car when she told him to come with her or she was going alone.

Tammy Meyers then drove to the place where the silver car had blocked their Buick to show her son, then began heading toward home when they spotted a silver car that sped off, according to the report.

They followed for several blocks, passing the middle school again, before the silver car stopped diagonally in the road and Brandon Meyers told police someone on the passenger side starting shooting.

Tammy Meyers backed up and sped toward their home, Brandon Meyers told police. As they pulled up, Brandon Meyers said he saw headlights approaching their cul-de-sac. The silver car turned onto their street.

As the silver car approached, Brandon Meyers told police a person leaned out the passenger window and opened fire.

Brandon Meyers fired three shots shot back, police said. The silver car backed out of the cul-de-sac and disappeared.

Brandon Meyers found his mother lying on the ground, bleeding from the head, and called 911.

The police report doesn't name the driver of the silver Audi. But authorities have said they are looking for another suspect.

Two friends said that Nowsch came to their apartment about 3:30 a.m. and told them that he had been involved in a shooting — unloading several shots at one location, and 22 shots in a second fusillade, according to the police report.

Police reported finding six .45-caliber bullet casings at the first shooting location, and eight in the cul-de-sac near the Meyers home. They also reported finding three 9 mm casings in the cul-de-sac.

Nowsch told his friends he thought the people in the car in the school parking lot were looking at him, and said he called a friend with the silver Audi to come pick him up, according to the report.

Nowsch displayed a handgun and .45-caliber ammunition to his friends and said he started shooting because he thought he saw a gun being pointed at him from the green car, according to the report.

"Got those kids," he told his friends, according to the report. "They were after me, and I got them."

Nowsch remained jailed Friday pending an initial court appearance Monday on suspicion of murder, attempted murder and firing a gun from a vehicle.

NATION

VA 'choice' health care program is off to slow start

By Matthew Daly
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Far fewer veterans than expected are taking advantage of a new law aimed at making it easier for them to get private health care and avoid the long waits that have plagued Department ofVeterans Affairs facilities nationwide.

Only 27,000 veterans have made appointments for private medical care since the VA started mailing out "Choice Cards" in November, the VA said in a report to Congress this month. The number is so small, compared to the 8.6 million cards that have been mailed out, that VA Secretary Robert McDonald wants authority to redirect some of the $10 billion Congress allocated for the program to boost care for veterans at the VA's 970 hospitals and clinics.

Republicans and Democrats insist the problem is the department and that it needs to do a better job promoting the choice program. They also want to change a quirk in the law that makes it hard for some veterans in rural areas to prove they live at least 40 miles from a VA health site.

The government measures the distance as the crow flies, rather than by driving miles, leaving thousands ofveterans ineligible.

The choice program was a key component of last year's sweeping law approved in response to reports that dozens of veterans died while waiting for appointments at a VA hospital in Phoenix, and that appointment records were manipulated to hide the delays. A series of government reports said workers throughout the country falsified wait lists while supervisors looked the other way, resulting in chronic delays for veterans seeking care and bonuses for managers who falsely appeared to meet on-time goals.

The law, signed by President Barack Obama in August, allows veterans who have waited more than 30 days for an appointment to get VA-paid care from a local doctor. It also allows veterans who live at least 40 miles from a VA hospital or clinic to get private care and makes it easier to fire VA employees accused of wrongdoing.

McDonald's bid to shift the money has met a bipartisan wall of opposition in Congress, where leaders said the landmark law they adopted last summer to overhaul VA has not been fully implemented. Taking money away from the choice program just three months after it was launched is premature, even irresponsible, lawmakers and veterans advocates said.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., one of the law's chief authors, said Congress not only would reject the idea "but refuse to even consider" it.

McDonald counters that the proposal would help ensure that "every veteran receives the care they have earned and deserve regardless of where they choose to get it from."

Dietary panel suggests tax on sugary foods

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A tax on sugary drinks and snacks is one way a government panel of nutrition experts thinks Americans can be coaxed into eating better. Some members of Congress are already pushing back on the idea, saying the panel has overstepped its bounds.

The panel's recommendations will help determine what gets into the new version of dietary guidelines being prepared by the Agriculture and Health and Human Services departments. The advice includes eating more fruits and vegetables and whole grains and limiting added sugars and fat.

However, the panel goes beyond previous versions of the dietary guidelines by suggesting a broad list of possible policy changes — a tax is just one — that could make it easier for people to follow that diet advice.

Other ideas put forth by the committee were placing nutrition labels on the front of food packages and requiring public buildings to serve healthier foods. The committee also suggested incentives for eating fruits and vegetables, though it didn't detail how that could work.

Congress weighed in on a draft of the report last December In a massive spending bill, lawmakers instructed Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack "to only include nutrition and dietary information, not extraneous factors" in the final guidelines.

Committee members say their panel was charged with looking at implications of its findings, and the policy changes were just suggestions.

"The idea is to stimulate thinking on how to get there," Barbara Millen, chairwoman of the committee, said.

Photos by Terra C. Gatti, Virginia Guard Public Affairs Office/AP

A Virginia Army National Guard aviation crew from the 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment delivers food, mail and medicine to iced-in Tangier Island, Va., on Thursday. The small island has been iced in since freezing temperatures descended earlier this month, making seaport deliveries impossible.

'Siberian Express' continues grip on Eastern US this week

The Associated Press

The deep freeze that broke records in hundreds of cities across the eastern half of the United States on Friday will last most of this week.

Another widespread round of ice, snow or freezing rain was slated to start falling Saturday from Missouri to the mid-Atlantic and as far south as Alabama and Georgia.

Even before the latest snowstorm, residents had to deal with school cancellations, power outages, road hazards and water main breaks from the punishing cold.

Here's a look at the latest weather and the effect it is having around the country:

■ "Polar vortex" is so last year. Forecasters are calling the record-setting bout of icy air the "Siberian Express" because winds coming from Russia are traveling over the Arctic Circle and pushing into Canada and the United States.

"We can almost show the trajectory from Siberia all the way to the U.S.," Bruce Sullivan, a senior meteorologist with the National Weather Service, said, noting meteorologists began using the term long ago.

■ Schools in Alabama sent students home early and NASA shut down its Huntsville facility Friday as a storm began unloading ice, sleet and snow.

■ Bitter cold temperatures have shattered decades-old records from Cincinnati to Washington to New York.

The National Weather Service said the low Friday got down to 6 degrees at Reagan National Airport, just across the Potomac River from Washington. At Baltimore's airport, the temperature dipped to a record low 2 degrees.

Residents of Tangier Island carry supplies delivered by the Sandston-based National Guard battalion.

In western Pennsylvania, temperatures dipped to minus 18 in New Castle, minus 15 in Butler and 6 below zero in Pittsburgh — all records.

Records also were set at Newark Liberty International Airport in New Jersey (1 degree); Trenton, N.J. (zero degrees); New York's Central Park (2 degrees); and Cincinnati (12 degrees below zero).

■ A Boston-bound commuter ferry carrying more than 100 passengers had trouble steering in the ice and had to be towed to port.

■ A 12-inch water main break in the Rhode Island town of Johnston, which interrupted service to about 1,000 customers, took about 16 hours for crews to repair. They battled through snow and frozen ground in below-zero temperatures to get to the broken pipe after using leak detection equipment to pinpoint the exact location.

And after a 6-inch water main broke in Rutland, Vt., and workers "braved the elements and were willing to get soaked to the skin" in brutally cold temperatures to fix it, the city's Public Works Department declared: "Mission accomplished" on its Facebook page.

■ The Virginia National Guard flew in food, medicine and mail to an ice-bound fishing and tourism outpost in the middle of Chesapeake Bay, 14 miles from the mainland.

Tangier Island's Mayor James "Ooker" Eskridge, played down its plight but said medicines were essential for those who could not get off the island. Tangier has no drugstore.

■ The deep freeze transformed Niagara Falls into an icy spectacle, encasing the trees around it into crystal shells and drawing tourists who are braving below-zero temperatures.

The Niagara River is flowing below the ice cover, so the falls aren't completely frozen.

But days of subzero temperatures have created a thick coating of ice and snow on every surface near the falls, including railings, trees and boulders. The massive ice buildup has become a tourist magnet.

CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

Reports: Russian conscripts fear being sent to Ukraine

The Associated Press

MOSCOW — When Alexander was due to finish his year of mandatory military service in October, his commander told him he had no choice: He had to sign a contract to extend his stay in the army and head to southern Russia for troop exercises.

The 20-year-old knew that meant he might end up fighting alongside pro-Russia separatists in eastern Ukraine. Other soldiers he talked to had been sent there.

His commanders "didn't talk about it, but other soldiers told us about it, primarily paratroopers who had been there," Alexander said in an interview with The Associated Press, which is not using his surname for his safety.

The former private first class ended his military service earlier this month. He avoided being sent to Ukraine — although not without first being threatened with prison for desertion.

Human rights groups have received dozens of complaints in the past month alone from Russian conscripts like Alexander who say they have been strong-armed or duped into signing contracts with the military to become professional soldiers, after which they were sent to participate in drills in the southern Rostov region.

"We receive messages from all over in which (soldiers) say that they're being sent again to Rostov for military exercises," said Valentina Melnikova, head of the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers, a group with a three-decade history of working to protect soldiers' rights.

"Those who have been there (to the Rostov region) before know that in actual fact it means Ukraine."

Because only contract soldiers can legally be dispatched abroad, worries are spreading among families that inexperienced young conscripts could be sent to fight in eastern Ukraine.

While Russia has denied it is sending arms and troops to support the separatists, since the summer dozens of soldiers have been reported killed by explosions during drills in the Rostov region — deaths that rights groups actually attribute to the conflict over the border in Ukraine. Weapons appear to flow freely across the frontier, and one group of Russian paratroopers was even captured in August, 30 miles inside the war zone.

So far, the Russian government has been able to keep a tight lid on information about any soldiers in eastern Ukraine through a shroud of official denials, harassment of independent reporters who cover the deaths, and carrot-and-stick pressure on the families of those killed. But rising concerns among families with young sons could pose a risk for President Vladimir Putin.

Russia's secrecy about the soldiers' deaths has an important precedent: During the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in the 1980s, the government released little information about those killed in the conflict. When the true numbers of casualties became known, the intervention turned unpopular.

More than 5,600 people have been killed since April in the fighting between Ukrainian troops and the rebels. It is unclear how many Russian soldiers have died in the conflict, as the Defense Ministry has rejected rights groups' requests on the number of soldiers killed on duty in 2014. But the rising casualty count among Russian soldiers specifically could prove decisive in Putin's thinking as he comes under pressure to prevent an expansion of the conflict that might put more Russians in the line of fire.

"This is a conflict that reaches pretty deep into the psyche of the Russian people. It's not a foreign conflict. ... It's something very close to home," said Dmitri Trenin, an analyst at the Carnegie Endowment in Moscow. "Military conquest, in my view, would not be supported by the Russian people, and I think everyone knows it," he added.

Russia requires almost all young men to serve in the army for one year at age 18, although many find ways to defer or avoid it. Those who want to have careers in the army can become professional soldiers by signing contracts for two or three years.

Alexander and his best friend in the unit both have pregnant girlfriends and had no intention of extending their army service. But they were told that they had already agreed to the trip, and that they couldn't back out.

"The phrase 'I'll put you in military prison if you don't sign the contract' explains everything," said Alexander, when asked why he and so many other conscripts collapsed under the pressure.

MSTYSLAV CHERNOV/AP

A pro-Russia convoy moves toward Donetsk, eastern Ukraine, in November. Russia has denied supporting separatists in Ukraine, but dozens of soldiers have been reported killed during drills in southern Russia. Rights groups say the deaths have occurred in Ukraine.

IVAN SEKRETAREV/AP

'Fascist coup' protest in Moscow

Thousands of protesters gathered in downtown Moscow on Saturday to demonstrate against what they describe as a "fascist coup" one year ago in neighboring Ukraine. The demonstrators gathered near Red Square on Saturday to protest events in Ukraine, where a pro-European protest movement last year led to the ouster of the country's Russia-leaning president on Feb. 21. The protesters included ultranationalist bikers, pensioners, war veterans, student organizations and other pro-government groups. Many waved Russian flags, others bore banners that said: "Die, America!" Police said that 35,000 people attended, though those numbers were impossible to verify independently.

Each side says other breaking the cease-fire

The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Ukraine's military and Russia-backed separatist rebels are accusing each other of continuing to mount attacks a week after a cease-fire was called.

Ukrainian security spokesman Col. Andriy Lysenko said Saturday that one serviceman was killed and 40 wounded in attacks over the past day.

He did not state a total number of attacks, but said there were 10 mortar attacks on Ukrainian forces in the village of Shyrokyne on the fringes of the strategic port city of Mariupol.

Lysenko said rebels continued to move equipment toward Mariupol.

Concerns persist that rebels aim to seize the city which would aid establishing a land corridor between mainland Russia and the Russia-annexed Crimea Peninsula.

The rebels claimed Ukrainian forces launched 15 shelling attacks overnight, including on parts of Donetsk, the largest rebel-controlled city.

An agreement reached by the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France called for the guns to go quiet last Sunday.

The warring sides were supposed to begin drawing back heavy weapons from the front lines on Tuesday, but international monitors say they've seen no sign of that yet.

Russian and Ukrainian military officials overseeing the hoped-for peace process announced Friday that the Ukrainian government and the rebels had worked out a plan to begin the weapons pull-out.

Heidi Tagliavini, an envoy for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe who led the talks with Russia and Ukraine that also included rebel figures, remained cautiously hopeful.

"There is not a single day in the Ukrainian conflict when we can feel sure what the next day will bring," she said.

WORLD

UNICEF: Group abducts 89 boys in South Sudan

KAMPALA, Uganda — An armed group in South Sudan has abducted at least 89 boys in a northern state, the U.N. children's agency said Saturday.

The boys, some as young as 13, were abducted near Malakal, the capital of Upper Nile state, according to a UNICEF statement.

Malakal, which is currently under government control, has recently seen intense fighting between rebel forces and government troops who accuse each other of violating multiple peace agreements.

Boko Haram kills 34 in northeastern Nigeria

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria — Suspected Boko Haram fighters killed at least 34 and injured several others in attacks on villages near Chibok and Konduga in Nigeria's northeastern Borno state earlier this week, residents and local officials said.

The gunmen attacked the Tamsu-Shehuri village on Wednesday night where they killed more than 12 people, said a resident.

"Many of them came riding on (motor)bikes and Hilux vans, and all of them were armed with rifles," said Aisami Bashir, a member of a local civilian protection militia.

Worker in China kills 3, injures 15 with a brick

BEIJING — A nursing home worker in central China accused of killing three elderly residents with a brick and injuring 15 other people had argued with his boss over unpaid wages, state media said Saturday.

Luo Renchu, 64, attacked elderly residents and staff at the privately run home in Hunan province about 2 a.m. Thursday, the first day of the Chinese New Year, the Shuangfeng county government said in a statement Thursday. Luo fled the scene and police were still searching for him Saturday.

Dubai residential skyscraper catches fire

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — One of the world's tallest residential towers caught fire early Saturday in Dubai's Marina district, sending hundreds of residents pouring into the streets as bright yellow flames raged several stories high. No one was reported killed.

The fire broke out about 2 a.m. in the 86-story Torch tower on the northeast end of the densely populated waterfront district, which is packed with multistory skyscrapers.

Dubai's police chief, Maj. Gen. Khamis Mattar al-Muzeina, said in a statement that firefighters put out the blaze before it caused serious damage.

Several balconies were damaged, and a number of people who sustained minor injuries were treated by ambulance crews at the scene, he said.

From The Associated Press

Yemen's ex-president flees capital

By Ahmed Al-Haj
The Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen — Yemen's former president left the capital after Shiite rebels who surrounded his house let him go under international and local pressure, aides close to him said Saturday.

The aides said former President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi left Sanaa and later arrived in Aden. They say Hadi later plans to leave the country to receive medical treatment.

Hadi has been under house arrest for several weeks following a coup by Shiite Houthi rebels. The rebels earlier captured the capital, Sanaa, in September.

The aides say the rebels let Hadi go after pressure from the United Nations, the U.S., Russia and local political parties.

The aides spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak to journalists.

Witnesses said Houthis and others in the area later ransacked Hadi's house and at least three people were seen each taking out a Kalashnikov assault rifle from the house.

Jamal Benomar, the U.N. envoy to Yemen, said Friday that rival factions, including the Houthis, have agreed on a new legislative body consisting of former and new lawmakers to serve during the country's upcoming transition period.

But a coalition of Yemeni parties voiced objections to the plan, describing it as an insufficient half-solution.

Ahmed Lakaz, spokesman of the Unionist Gathering Party, which is taking part in the dialogue, said the parties told the Houthis that they would be out of the process if Hadi was not freed.

Yemen has been locked in a political crisis since the Houthi rebels took over the capital and eventually forced the resignation of the elected, Western-backed president and dissolved the parliament while keeping Hadi under house arrest.

The political crisis cast also doubts on the United States' ability to continue its counterterrorism operations, especially with loss of Hadi, a strong U.S. ally.

However, the U.S. has continued to target al-Qaida's branch in Yemen, known as al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, with drone strikes. Tribal sources said Friday that two suspected al-Qaida members were killed in a drone strike in the southern province of Shabwa.

Meanwhile on Saturday, Houthis tried to storm a special forces base outside the capital, exchanging fire with troops there, most of whom are loyal to Hadi's predecessor, Ali Abdullah Saleh. The fighting killed three people, security officials said.

Saleh's aides say he considers the base key to his survival and would never allow it to fall under Houthi control, unlike most of Sanaa's other military installations, which are already in the rebels' hands. Those aides spoke on condition of anonymity because Saleh had not authorized them to speak to reporters.

Thousands also marched Saturday in support of Hadi in southern Ibb province, where they urged the Houthis to leave the region and to halt their interference in local affairs. Houthis opened fire, killing one demonstrator and wounding two, said security officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity as they weren't authorized to talk to journalists.

Greece, eurozone creditors reach deal on loan

By Lorne Cook and Pan Pylas
The Associated Press

Thanassis Stavrakis/AP

A busker plays music in front of a graffiti that refers to Greece's Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras in the traditional Plaka district of Athens on Saturday.

BRUSSELS — Greece and its creditors in the 19-nation eurozone reached an agreement Friday on extending the country's rescue loans, a move that is expected to ease concerns it was heading for the euro exit.

Athens will get an extension of four months, not six, as it had requested, said Jeroen Dijsselbloem, the eurozone's top official. In return, Greece has committed to make a series of unspecified reforms to be enacted during the coming months.

Friday's agreement was clinched just a week before Greece's 240 billion-euro bailout program expires. It is aimed at buying time for both sides to agree on a longer-term deal to ease the burden of Greece's bailout loans.

"We have established common ground again," Dijsselbloem said after the meeting in Brussels.

Following two weeks of tense negotiations, the final deal showed compromise by both camps. Even German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble, who in recent weeks had taken a tough line, said "this is an important step forward."

Investors appeared to breathe a sigh of relief and the Dow Jones index closed at a record high Friday as news of the Greek deal broke.

"This deal temporarily eases tensions and gives Greece breathing room to negotiate long term-debt relief," said Jay Jacobs, research analyst at Global X Funds. However, he warned that it could just set up another "potential future standoff four months from now if parties involved continue brinksmanship negotiating tactics."

Greece made the concession to not take any measures that might affect its budget targets. Previously, it had sought to loosen its budget somewhat. It also committed to provide a list of reforms based on its current bailout program for assessment on Monday. However, pensions would not be cut as previously planned.

The list will be reviewed immediately by representatives from the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the European Commission and they will report their findings to the eurozone bloc in a conference call.

If the institutions don't think the proposals are good enough, Greece will have to go back to the drawing board, and it would be facing financial trouble again. Its bailout ends at midnight on Feb. 28.

"If our list of reforms is not backed by institutions, agreement is dead and buried but it won't be shot down by the institutions," said Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis.

If the list of reforms is sanctioned, then it will be further detailed and agreed upon by the end of April.

Dijsselbloem said Friday's agreement was a "first step in this process of rebuilding trust" between Greece and its euro partners and allows for a strategy to get the country "back on track."

"Trust leaves quicker than it comes," he said.

Varoufakis claimed the deal was a win for his country because his government will be able to decide what reforms to propose.

"The weekend will be one of joy and creativity," he told reporters after the meeting. "We are writing our own reforms."

Varoufakis said the substance of Friday's deal was to all intents and purposes the same as the government's proposal to the eurozone on Thursday.

He also said the deal has put paid to the view that ATMs would run out of cash and that he had no doubts that the shares of Greek banks will rebound.

"Greek depositors will be reassured," he said.

STARS AND STRIPES

Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher
Lt. Col. Michael C. Bailey, Europe commander
Lt. Col. Brian Choate, Pacific commander
Harry Eley, Europe Business Operations
Terry M. Wegner, Pacific Business Operations

EDITORIAL

Terry Leonard, Editor
leonard.terry@stripes.com
Robert H. Reid, Senior Managing Editor
reid.robert@stripes.com
Sam Amrhein, Managing Editor International
amrhein.sam@stripes.com
Tina Croley, Managing Editor for Content
croley.tina@stripes.com
Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation
moores.sean@stripes.com
Joe Gromelski, Managing Editor for Digital
gromelski.joe@stripes.com

BUREAU STAFF

Europe/Mideast
Teddie Weyr, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief
weyr.teddie@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9310; cell +49(0)173.315.1881; DSN (314)583.9310

Pacific
Paul Alexander, Pacific Bureau Chief
alexander.paul@stripes.com
+81-3 6385.5377; cell (080)5883.1673
DSN (315)225.5377

Washington
Patrick Dickson, Washington Bureau Chief
dickson.patrick@stripes.com
(+1)(202)761.0908; DSN (312)763.0908
Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
bowers.brian@stripes.com
Amanda Trypanis, Design Desk Supervisor
trypanis.amanda@stripes.com

CIRCULATION

Mideast
Robert Reismann, reismann.robert@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9150; DSN (314)583.9150

Europe
Van Rowell, rowell.van@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9111; DSN (314)583.9111

Pacific
Mari Matsumoto, customerhelp@stripes.com
+81-3 6385.3171; DSN (315)229.3171

CONTACT US

Washington
tel: (+1)202.761.0900; DSN (312)763.0900;
529 14th Street NW, Suite 350, Washington, DC 20045-1301

Reader letters
letters@stripes.com

Additional contacts
stripes.com/contactus

OMBUDSMAN

Ernie Gates

The Stars and Stripes ombudsman protects the free flow of news and information, reporting any attempts by the military or other authorities to undermine the newspaper's independence. The ombudsman also responds to concerns and questions from readers, and monitors coverage for fairness, accuracy, timeliness and balance. The ombudsman welcomes comments from readers, and can be contacted by email at ombudsman@stripes.com, or by phone at 202.761.0587.

Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) is published weekdays (except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for $1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96338-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA, Postmaster. Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96338-5002.

This newspaper is authorized by the Department of Defense for members of the military services overseas. However, the contents of Stars and Stripes are unofficial, and are not to be considered as the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government. As a DOD newspaper, Stars and Stripes may be distributed through official channels and use appropriated funds for distribution to remote locations where overseas DOD personnel are located.

The appearance of advertising in this publication does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense or Stars and Stripes of the products or services advertised. Products or services advertised shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

© Stars and Stripes 2015

stripes.com

OPINION

JONATHAN ERNST/AP

Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, left, walks with Army Gen. John Campbell upon arrival Saturday at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan. Carter visited Afghanistan to assess whether U.S. withdrawal plans are too risky to Afghan security.

Don't go to zero in Afghanistan

BY MICHAEL O'HANLON
Special to The Washington Post

On Feb. 9, a U.S. drone strike in Afghanistan's Helmand province killed Abdul Rauf, an Islamic State leader attempting to spread the would-be caliphate's influence into South Asia. While key operational details have not been made public, we can make reasonable educated guesses based on past patterns: Most likely, the drone flew out of Kandahar Air Field, some 60 miles away, after days or weeks of surveillance by other unmanned aircraft. Further, some of the information used to find Rauf may have come from a joint U.S.-Afghan special operations raid against an al-Qaida leader, Abu Bara al-Kuwaiti, in Nangarhar province in October. According to The New York Times, that raid not only killed the Kuwaiti but also netted a computer chockfull of information on other extremists.

All of the above-noted U.S. resources — armed drones, surveillance assets, commandos — would have to be withdrawn from Afghanistan by the end of next year under President Barack Obama's plan to zero out combat units in that country before he leaves the White House. Attacks against the United States' most dangerous enemies would be much less effective in South Asia thereafter, because there is no other good place from which to stage them. The alternative would probably be to use aircraft carriers many hundreds of miles away in the Arabian Sea. Those distances would exceed the combat radius of almost all U.S. drones, require any helicopters making the trip to refuel in flight and add hourslong delays to missions. They also necessitate flying over countries that may not grant permission to use their airspace under such circumstances.

The Obama administration has the wrong mindset on our future U.S. military posture in Afghanistan. Exit should not be the strategy or objective. Protection of the homeland is the right metric. Instead of trying to leave by a given date, we should be planning to stay. The guiding philosophy should be to build an enduring partnership with Afghanistan to finally provide a real payoff for all our investment there — in durable bases allowing our forces to continue to target our most dangerous enemies in a part of the world where they still organize and operate.

Such counterterrorism capabilities have little to do with the nation-building enterprise in Afghanistan of the past 13 years. That mission is nearly done to a practical extent, and while Obama is being ambitious in his hopes that it can be finished before 2017, there is logic in trying to largely complete the job by then. There is, however, little logic in eliminating our regional counterterrorism capability by that point. We will almost surely still need it. We should have learned from recent experiences in Iraq and Syria, as well as Libya, Mali and other countries, that we cannot end the terrorist threat in a given country on our own timetable.

Of course, the pace of drone strikes and raids in the Pashtun areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan, historically used by al-Qaida and affiliates, can and should decline. Indeed, according to the Long War Journal, it already has — for example, after peaking at more than 100 in 2010, the number of U.S. drone attacks in Pakistan fell to 24 in 2014. But some need endures. Moreover, if extremists knew that the United States no longer had capabilities in the Pashtun belts, they would probably increase their presence there.

It is not realistic for the United States to expect Afghan forces to pursue al-Qaida and its offshoots for us after we leave the country. First, Afghanistan has no capability to fly drones in Pakistan; even if we could successfully transfer the needed assets and expertise to the Afghans, an unlikely prospect, such strikes would probably cause a crisis in Afghan-Pakistani relations.

Second, inside their own country, Afghanistan's army and police will continue to have their hands full with the Taliban. They may not have the capacity to go after key al-Qaida-linked targets, many of which matter much more to us than to them.

Keeping two to three U.S. bases in eastern Afghanistan — Bagram near Kabul, Kandahar in the south, perhaps Khost or Jalalabad in the east — would be adequate for counterterrorism purposes. With two or three operating areas, each with 1,000 to 2,000 Americans, the United States would have assets within 150 miles or less of the key areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. That is a comfortable tactical operating distance for both drones and helicopters carrying commandos.

Maintaining these bases might cost $5 billion to $10 billion per year. That is real money, but it is less than the effective cost of keeping naval assets in the Arabian Sea to do the same job much less well. It is far less than the $100 billion a year we spent at the peak of the war. And it is immeasurably less than the cost that could result from another large-scale terrorist attack against the United States.

Although the main purpose of such an enduring U.S. military presence in Afghanistan would be counterterrorism, there could be additional benefits. We could continue to mentor modest numbers of Afghan forces at those bases, above and beyond the training mission that will continue in Kabul under Obama's plan. These added forces could also provide us with political leverage that could reduce the chances of civil war in Afghanistan. This is the kind of leverage that we lost in Iraq after our 2011 departure — with tragic results.

With this approach, Obama will still have ended the main combat phase of two major wars on his watch. This legacy would be secure.

More important, the United States would be more secure, too.

The writer is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

OPINION

Tweeting against terrorism is a poor plan

By George F. Will

"We're here today because we all understand that in dealing with violent extremism, that we need answers that go beyond a military answer. We need answers that go beyond force."

— Vice President Joe Biden at the Countering Violent Extremism Summit, Feb. 17

Mohammed El-Sheikhy/AP

Libyan military soldiers fire their weapons at Islamic militias in Benghazi on Oct. 29.

WASHINGTON

The Obama administration's semantic somersaults to avoid attaching the adjective "Islamic" to the noun "extremism" are as indicative as they are entertaining. Progressives who believe that dialogues, conversations, engagements, conferences and summits are keys to pacifying the world have a peculiar solemnity about using certain words that are potentially insensitive. This mentality is perhaps especially acute in digitally drenched people who believe that Twitter and other social media have the power to tame turbulent reality.

The New York Times reports that the Obama administration is preparing to go toe-to-toe with the Islamic State using, among other munitions, "more than 350 State Department Twitter accounts." According to Richard Stengel, undersecretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs, "We're getting beaten on volume, so the only way to compete is by aggregating, curating and amplifying existing content."

Stengel, the Times reported, "said the new campaign against the Islamic State would carry out strategies now routinely employed by many businesses and individuals to elevate their digital footprints." As managing editor of Time, Stengel's messaging included the 2006 Person of the Year cover featuring a mirror-like panel, with the word "YOU" written on it, the message being that everyone was Person of the Year.

U.S. "countermessaging" against the Islamic State will use up to 140 characters to persuade people who are tempted to join in its barbarism — beheadings, crucifixions, burning people alive, etc. — that these behaviors are not nice. Stengel is upbeat about beating the Islamic State: "These guys aren't BuzzFeed; they're not invincible in social media."

Beyond a coming fusillade of tweets, the administration's arsenal against the Islamic State includes the Atrocities Prevention Board (APB). Its pedigree is better than its accomplishments.

After genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia, and a 2008 government task force on the prevention of atrocities, in 2009 President Barack Obama brought into his administration Samantha Power, author of a book on the policy challenge of genocide, "A Problem from Hell." She now is U.S. ambassador to the U.N., where she speaks with a notable absence of the administration's usual mushiness. She propelled Obama's 2012 announcement, at Washington's Holocaust Memorial Museum, of the APB. Obama's words were harbingers of what was to come:

"Remembrance without resolve is a hollow gesture. Awareness without action changes nothing. In this sense, 'never again' is a challenge to us all — to pause and to look within."

To *what*? Launched by this summons to introspection, the APB was therefore from inception in danger of being a hollow gesture, an exercise in right-minded awareness. In addition to the incurable mismatch between the APB's negligible means and its ambitious goals, the board has been wounded by two U.S. atrocity-related decisions. One resulted in what can be called a calamitous success, the other is an ongoing refutation of the APB's relevance.

Having declared the prevention of mass atrocities "a core national security interest," in 2011 Obama acted on the "R2P" principle — responsibility to protect. He would protect Libyans, particularly the people of Benghazi, from the government of Moammar Gadhafi. This quickly became a protracted attempt to achieve regime change by assassinating him with NATO fighter bombers. Today Libya is a failed state that imports and exports Islamic extremism, and no one accepts responsibility for protecting the nation's remnants.

Never mind. In 2012, a White House press release proclaimed that the administration "has amassed an unprecedented record of actions taken to protect civilians and hold perpetrators of atrocities accountable," specifically citing "leadership of a successful international military effort to protect civilians in Libya."

When the APB was created, the Syrian civil war had resulted in approximately 9,000 deaths, one-twenty-third of the total that chemical weapons, barrel bombs and conventional weapons have caused, so far. Decent people differ about what the administration could or should do about this. But surely it should bring its language into conformity with its capabilities and intentions. Specifically, it should stop saying things it does not mean, such as the prevention of atrocities being "a core national security interest." And it should stop the gaseous rhetoric about countering terrorism by elevating digital footprints, and about going "beyond force" by matching the messaging prowess of BuzzFeed. The APB does not even have a Twitter account. Perhaps this is the problem.

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

The appeal of Islamic State to a fractured Libya

By Noah Feldman
Bloomberg News

The expansion of the Islamic State's franchise into parts of Libya is horrifying, as the beheading of 21 Egyptian Coptic laborers shows. It's also frightening for a different reason. The essence of the Islamic State brand is the assertion of sovereign control over territory. Until now, Libya's post-revolutionary problem has been fragmentation. The emergence of the Islamic State there suggests that over time, Libya's problem could become the opposite: The Islamic State might create a unifying umbrella that would subject large parts of the country to its dangerous brand of control.

To understand what makes the Islamic State distinctively appealing to a global audience of radical Muslims, it's necessary to compare it with al-Qaida. From the time Osama bin Laden brought the organization into prominence in the late 1990s with the attacks on U.S. embassies in East Africa, al-Qaida followed an identifiable strategy. It promoted a defensive jihad against Western powers, with an emphasis on spectacular bombings to attract global public attention and goad the U.S. and other countries into retaliation. The Sept. 11 attacks were the epitome of this highly successful approach.

The crucial element of the al-Qaida strategy was to encourage local terrorist franchises to affiliate with the parent organization. Bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahri often didn't possess full operational control over the affiliates. That didn't matter. The various al-Qaida branches followed the general strategy pretty effectively — because within bounds, it worked for them.

But with the exception of brief moments during the U.S. occupation of Iraq and intermittent episodes in Yemen, al-Qaida never achieved sovereign control over territory. The reasons for this failure are complex; the most prominent was that al-Qaida never faced a situation where a true power vacuum existed. Its preference to ally itself with resistance movements matched the rhetorical justification of defensive jihad. It also meant that al-Qaida focused its efforts on places where there was an identifiable enemy to be fought.

The Islamic State's approach is the opposite. The organization rose to significance precisely because of the power vacuum created in Syria by the uprising against Bashar Assad. As a consolidated local power, its leadership gambled that conditions in Sunni Iraq weren't so different.

This was genius. Expanding to Iraq enabled the Islamic State to become something much greater than an al-Qaida competitor. Islamic State could claim to be, in fact, a state — an entity that exercises sovereignty. This plausible claim to territory was the necessary prerequisite for the declaration of a caliphate. And it was the reason Islamic State dropped the modifier "in Iraq and the Levant" from its name. Regionalized names were reminiscent of al-Qaida; Islamic State was aiming at something much bigger. The branding decision flowed logically from the strategy.

To radical Muslims, the assertion of sovereignty through the unification of disparate parts is deeply resonant. After all, the Prophet Muhammad's first and most important step to empire building was unifying Arabian tribes under the banner of Islam. Divided, the tribes suppressed and balanced one another. United, they swept through the late antique world, conquering at an astonishing rate of speed.

Islamic State lays claim to the mantle of the Prophet not only in the religious sense but also in the political sense. The early caliphate as imagined by Islamic State combined legitimate religious and political authority.

As a result, when franchises of Islamic State spring up in a place like Libya where a power vacuum exists, they have the potential to be much more significant than al-Qaida franchises were in the past. A new al-Qaida franchise meant suicide bombings and protracted war. But a new Islamic State franchise means more than just beheadings or burnings. It means some organized group thinks it can achieve sovereign control over territory — and hold it.

Of course, the franchisee may not be as skilled or as powerful as the brand would suggest. Anyone can commit murder and claim affiliation with Islamic State, like Amedy Coulibaly, the al-Qaida-trained terrorist who attacked the kosher supermarket in Paris.

Thus, the fact that the self-defense Islamic State branches in Libya are claiming affiliation doesn't mean that they will necessarily succeed in gaining local control, much less expand more broadly.

By most accounts, Islamic State fighters don't fully control any cities in Libya. It's important, however, that they are asserting such control — propaganda can fuel reality.

Libya is ripe for some ideological and organizational force with the capacity to reunify the country's varied regions and tribal groups. Since the fall of Moammar Gadhafi, no one has truly controlled the country. Since last summer, there hasn't even been a meaningful government.

Islamic State can be counted on to make a serious try, beginning province by province and eventually hoping to create some sort of centralized authority structure. The fact that its path to success isn't perfectly clear doesn't mean that we shouldn't worry about it.

Until now, the greatest concern about Libya has been its descent into fragmentation. But there's something worse than anarchy. Its name is Islamic State. And it's coming.

Noah Feldman, a Bloomberg View columnist, is a professor of constitutional and international law at Harvard and the author of "Cool War: The Future of Global Competition."

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

DAMON HIGGINS, THE PALM BEACH (FLA.) POST/AP

Surfing a tubular wave

Cheyne Cottrell kneels down to surf a narrow tube formed by a wave Thursday in Palm Beach, Fla. Scores of surfers were taking advantage of the high waves that accompanied the area's low temperatures and strong wind gusts.

Cops: Man getting high burns himself, home

PA PHILADELPHIA — A Philadelphia man was hospitalized in critical condition after police said he accidentally lit himself and a home on fire while getting high on drugs.

Police said the 29-year-old suffered second- and third-degree burns over 60 percent of his body in the fire early Friday in the city's Kensington section.

They said officers found the man on fire and running from the home at about 12:30 a.m. He was taken to Temple University Hospital. No other injuries were reported.

K-9 fired from force after biting 2 people

FL COCONUT CREEK — A police dog is being kicked off the force after biting a doughnut-shop worker and an officer in separate incidents.

Officials said 4-year-old Renzo had been with the Coconut Creek Police Department for more than a year. The Belgian Malinois bit an officer in November while tracking a suspect. On Feb. 11, he burst out of a patrol car and bit a Dunkin' Donuts worker in the calf.

The South Florida Sun Sentinel reported that Renzo and Officer Carl DiBlasi went to the doughnut shop to meet a police sergeant. The sergeant approached the patrol car and began to pet Renzo. The dog lunged at her, and DiBlasi struggled to restrain him. Renzo broke away and bit the worker who was nearby.

The retired dog will now live with DiBlasi.

Jailed man collects unemployment benefits

CT HARTFORD — Connecticut prosecutors say a New Haven man accused of collecting $4,000 in unemployment benefits while in jail has been arrested.

The Hartford Courant reported that a spokesman for the state's attorney's office said Candido Rivera, also known as Candido Quiles, was charged with first-degree larceny and unemployment compensation fraud.

The arrest warrant said Rivera fraudulently collected unemployment benefits between April and August of 2013 when he was jailed in New York. To collect unemployment benefits, a claimant must be available to work.

The warrant says Rivera had his girlfriend renew by telephone his benefit claim each week.

Retired officer accused of trying to kill his wife

CA HERCULES — Police say a retired San Francisco Bay Area police officer has been arrested and charged with attempted murder for allegedly firing shots at the home of his estranged wife.

The San Francisco Chronicle reported Thursday that John Goodner, 47, is being held in lieu of $1.8 million bail. Prosecutors have charged him with attempted murder, shooting into an occupied dwelling, making criminal threats and stalking, all felonies.

Goodner's estranged wife called 911 early on Jan. 28 saying she was awakened when someone shot into her Antioch house through a bedroom wall.

Police determined that Goodner had been stalking and threatening his wife and had fired numerous shots into the home.

2 police officers hurt after patrol cars collide

AZ PHOENIX — Two Phoenix police officers were hurt when their police vehicles collided as they tried to stop another vehicle.

KNXV-TV reported that the collision occurred Friday morning as one of the officers turned his vehicle.

The officers were taken to a hospital for treatment of minor injuries.

Man accused of setting fire to adult porn store

MI KALAMAZOO — A Kalamazoo man accused of burning down an adult entertainment store allegedly told police he wanted to eradicate porn.

The fire broke out Wednesday afternoon at Hollywood Nights in Kalamazoo. Witnesses reported seeing a suspicious man with an ax leaving the scene before the store went up in flames.

Police said the suspect was arrested several hours later after a brief police chase. He allegedly admitted to the arson.

The man is currently being held in the Kalamazoo County Jail and was expected to be charged Friday.

Crates of chickens fly out of tractor-trailer

PA NESCOPECK — Pennsylvania State Police are crying fowl after crates of live chickens hurtled off a tractor-trailer on a Pennsylvania highway and the birds flew the coop.

WNEP-TV reported that the feather-ruffling incident happened at around 6:30 a.m. Thursday on Interstate 80 in Nescopeck Township, near Berwick.

State police said they weren't sure how many chickens were on the loose.

4th-graders set sights on state vegetable

IL CHATHAM — A class of fourth-graders in central Illinois was learning about state symbols when students stumbled upon a puzzling question: Why does Illinois have a state fruit but no state vegetable?

The students at Chatham Elementary School, south of Springfield, could not abide the oversight.

The 9-year-olds turned to technology. They had a video chat with eighth-graders at Taylorville Junior High who taught them how a bill becomes a law. Then they used online surveys to poll students about which vegetable should be accorded the honor.

They got a state senator, Plainview Republican Sam McCann, to introduce a bill this month to designate sweet corn Illinois' vegetable of choice.

The (Springfield) State Journal-Register says the students aren't leaving anything to chance. They're drafting letters urging lawmakers to pass the bill.

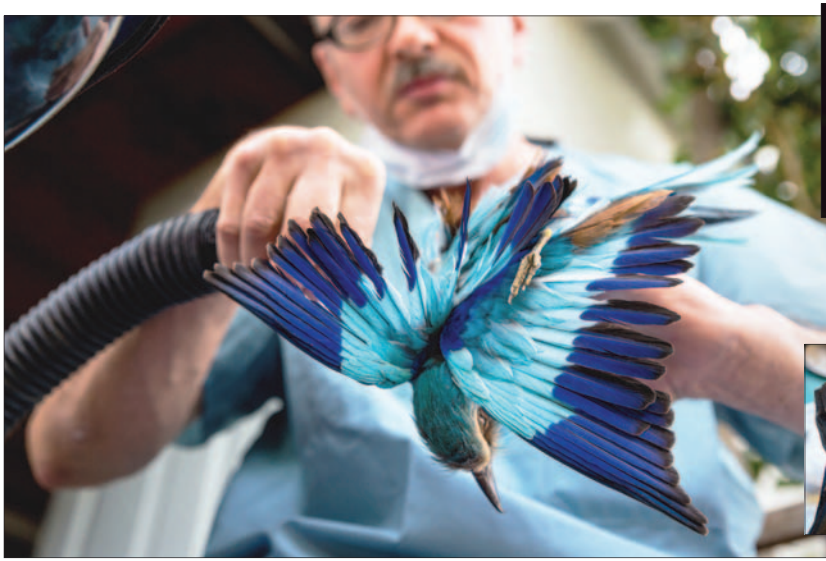
From wire reports

THE CENSUS

340

The weight in pounds of a 6-foot, 7-inch suspect sought by police in central Massachusetts for robbing a credit union about a week ago. Police have issued an arrest warrant for Joseph Naylor, 24, who's suspected of robbing the Leominster Credit Union on Feb. 12. Naylor, who is believed to be homeless, was described by witnesses as "very large." He was identified through surveillance images and is "well known" to police.

LIFESTYLE



Igor Caragodin at work: Adjusting the wire frame inside the wings and feet of a mounted Warbling Vireo, above; blow drying an Abyssinian Roller bird, left; and pushing the skin around the artificial eyes on the Abyssinian Roller bird, below.

BIRDMAN

Taxidermist turns feathered wonders into preserved specimens

By Jerome Campbell
Los Angeles Times

Igor Caragodin and his crew had been riding for hours in the bed of a dusty safari truck across the Burkina Faso savanna. The sun reached high in the sky and the sub-Saharan winds seared their faces.

The group had found a few common guinea fowl near dawn, but Caragodin was scanning the dry bushes for something else. Then he pointed toward a rustle in the leaves. On a low-hanging branch sat a brown hammerkop.

Hired local hunters moved nimbly through the bushes, then fired. The hunters retrieved the bird and gave it to Caragodin.

He nestled it, almost with reverence. And then he removed its entrails with surgical precision.

The bird, and many others he tracked down on this two-week expedition, would spend much of its afterlife in the taxidermist's hands before making a final flight to an exhibition in the U.S.

"I used to go out to the countryside as a child and watch birds for hours in the forest," said Caragodin, 55, after returning to his home in Los Angeles from Africa. "The way they seemed to stop for a moment before disappearing into the bushes was magical. Now I get to bring that moment to others."

You might call Caragodin a jet-setting taxidermist: Museums send him on all-expense-paid trips to find birds. Judges in international taxidermy competitions praise his uncanny ability to make them lifelike. Fellow taxidermists follow his work like they would a favorite actor's.

"Caragodin is the Anthony Hopkins of taxidermy," said David Moustifi, a commercial taxidermist. "He's not too self-confident, nor does he really like the attention. But his work is some of the best. You will be amazed when you see it."

Several times a year, Caragodin goes on expeditions for museums. Two weeks in South America for parrots. Three for kingfishers in Africa.

"We keep a short list of taxidermists," said Sievert Rohwer, former curator for the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture in Seattle. "But we deal with Caragodin because he has an extraordinary ability to mount birds."

Caragodin, who was born in the former Soviet republic of Moldova, was the chief taxidermist at the State Darwin Museum in Moscow when Rohwer discovered him in 1998. The Burke Museum has hired Caragodin to collect bird samples on several expeditions and mount unusual bird specimens, including a California condor.

On a recent day, Caragodin got to work in his garage studio.

Photos by Marcus Yam, Los Angeles Times/TNS

In his garage studio in Los Angeles, Caragodin fine tunes the feather formation of a mounted Abyssinian Roller bird.

Craning over an icebox, he sifted through bodies of North American swallows and chickadees, then lifted out a small bird.

Eyes closed and wings tucked, the colorful bee-eater seemed to be sleeping in his hands. Caragodin deftly spread its wings as if it could take flight. Two surgical incisions flanking the breast remain hidden among the feathers. A slip of the pink revealed its hollow chest cavity, soft and clean like suede.

"Shaping the bird is one of the most difficult processes because you have to really imagine the bird before you start working," said Caragodin, who opened his studio in California in 1999. "Every bird is different, so you have to think of each one as a new project."

Amateur taxidermists frequently reach out to Caragodin on taxidermy forums for advice. Fellow taxidermists ask for him to consult on small birds and reconstructing damaged skins.

"Birds are the most difficult to work with because of their size and delicacy," Moustifi said. "It's not something most people can attempt when they first start or after a few projects. You really have to know what you're doing."

At the 1999 World Taxidermy Championships, Caragodin took first place over hundreds of other taxidermists in a two-day competition.

"I could not believe it," he said. "This was my first international competition and I had won. There had to be a mistake."

He would go on to win first place at the next three international competitions and several at the state level.

After a career of jet-setting and accolades, Caragodin says he would trade it for less work and a few more hours of bird-watching.

He remembers following birds in the Moldovan countryside as a child. A rustle in a tree could become a goose chase. Decades later, he can still be found straying off the trails for birds near his house.

"When you rush through life, you miss these things," he said. "You miss these moments of something beautiful in nature. That's what I try to capture in my work."

THE ACADEMY AWARDS

Which will win?

Just eight films earned Academy Award nominations this year for best picture. The candidates have very little in common. Five of the eight are biopics or studies in historical events. One is a war story. One is a comedy. One was shot over a 12-year period. But they are all excellent films with unique and wonderful stories. While we don't pick a winner, Stars and Stripes staff share their takes on the films and why they are best picture nominees. The awards will be presented Feb. 23 on AFN-Movie.

'American Sniper'

The brouhaha surrounding "American Sniper" since its release has itself been something out of Hollywood.

Michael Moore and Seth Rogen tweeted and retreated. Sarah Palin, a huge fan of protagonist Chris Kyle, knocked those "Hollywood leftists" in her Palinesque way, saying "the rest of America knows you're not fit to shine Chris Kyle's combat boots." (She also took on Jesse Ventura, who had a running feud with Kyle while he was alive.) No less than famed academic Noam Chomsky chided reviewers who liked the movie, while the singularly tiresome Bill Maher called Kyle a "psychopath patriot."

Forget all that.

Forget all the noise around the movie; forget whether it is faithful to the book, or whether it explored Kyle's truthiness.

It's a damn good war movie.

Clint Eastwood alternately makes you an observer of Kyle — one forced to explore what he's going through emotionally as he decides whether it's necessary to kill a child — and puts you in the streets with the Marines. The urban battle scenes are harrowing; anyone who's gone house-to-house in Baghdad or Anbar will almost certainly find himself with his fists balled, wondering where the air support is.

Eastwood spends quite a bit of time on the toll these deployments took on Kyle, and on his young family, and by extension, what these wars have done to a lot of people. It feels very real, and judging by the reactions on social media, many who've been through it agree.

Bradley Cooper is terrific as Kyle. He is nominated for best actor, but has an uphill battle there. The film has five other nods. Go see the movie. But, as I discussed with a Marine friend, it's going to be a rough ride. Be ready.

— Patrick Dickson, Washington bureau chief

'Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)'

What happens when an aging actor, famous for playing a larger-than-life comic book hero, attempts to find redemption as an artist and relevance in the September of his years while simultaneously trying to do the same in his personal life and keep a grip on his sanity?

That's the focus of Alejandro Gonzalez Iñarritu's dark comedy "Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)," a beautifully shot film that moves seamlessly from scene to scene in much the way it moves between fantasy and reality.

The plot follows Michael Keaton's Riggan Thomson in the days leading up to the debut of a Broadway play he has adapted, is directing and stars in. It is clearly an impending disaster, until Thomson replaces his lead supporting male actor. Keaton proves again to be one of the great underrated actors of his generation. No doubt his own experience in a cape and cowl added a personal aspect to his work. His performance will resonate with anyone once at the top of their game but now trying to find a sense of purpose later in life.

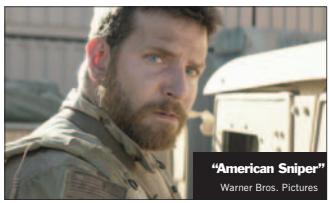
Edward Norton is a joy as the brilliant — but unpredictable — method actor who injects life into the play, and Emma Stone turns in an equally strong performance as Riggan's damaged and recovering daughter Sam.

Sadly, the script doesn't give Zach Galifianakis or Naomi Watts much to work with, and indeed, all characters fade into the background in the final third as it focuses on the conversation in Riggan's head. In retrospect, this, as well as a side plot involving a vindictive critic, led to what felt like some odd pacing and the telegraphing of a major plot element early in the film. Still, it is a satisfying exercise.

On a technical level it is brilliant, and the film, particularly in its exterior shots, captures a world you can almost taste in its warmth and grittiness. Accompanied by a powerful jazz drum-based score, the film has an offbeat, indie feel that makes it a wild card on Oscar night. It has been garnering its fair share of awards this season, but in the end might prove a little too "art house" for the Academy.

— Christopher Six, photo/graphics editor

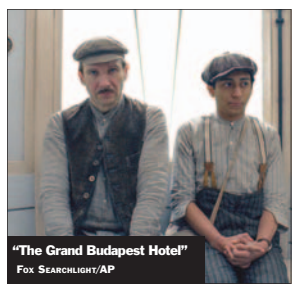
THE ACADEMY AWARDS



"American Sniper"
Warner Bros. Pictures

"Boyhood"
IFC Films/AP

"Birdman"
Fox Searchlight Pictures



"The Grand Budapest Hotel"
Fox Searchlight/AP

'Boyhood'

"Boyhood," director Richard Linklater's tale of a boy's journey to adulthood in Texas, was an audacious — if not impressive — undertaking right from the start. Linklater filmed the movie over 12 years, getting all the actors to commit to a project that they weren't certain would ever reach its conclusion. Viewers literally watch Mason Evans Jr. (Ellar Coltrane) grow from a 6-year-old to an 18-year-old over the course of 165 minutes. Joining Mason on the journey are his sister, Samantha (director Linklater's daughter, Lorelei, who also grows up onscreen), his mother Olivia (best supporting actress nominee Patricia Arquette) and his father Mason Sr. (best supporting actor nominee Ethan Hawke). Since his parents are already divorced when the movie begins, Mason Jr. experiences the ups and downs of his mother's multiple marriages to alcoholic and abusive husbands as well as his father's new wife and child, eventually culminating in Mason Jr.'s graduation from high school.

— Rich Killmon, sports copy editor

'The Grand Budapest Hotel'

For the past two years, I've been the Stars and Stripes staffer who has seen and predicted the best picture winner. Even though I saw two of the eight nominees this season, that will not be the case this year. Doesn't matter to me, though, as I am certain I saw the most fun of the best picture nominees: "The Grand Budapest Hotel."

The movie, released in March of last year, is a caper, a farce and a buddy movie wrapped into one. The Grand Budapest is a grand hotel in the old style, located in a fantasy Europe before the war. The hotel is managed by the concierge — Gustave, played by Ralph Fiennes. He is training a lobby boy, Zero, played by Tony Revolori. Gustave likes to keep the old ladies who visit the place very happy. When one of those ladies dies, she leaves him a painting — and the lady's son, angered, accuses Gustave of murdering her. The concierge and his lobby boy naturally steal the painting and take off to return to the Grand Budapest. What happens next is a series of strange happenings including a prison escape and a grand romance.

The film is charming and ridiculous and outrageous and funny. And it moves — there are no dull moments. It is also peppered with one of the best casts ever — including Adrien Brody, Jude Law, Edward Norton and Bill Murray — playing some of the most unique characters on film.

"The Grand Budapest Hotel," which is nominated for nine Academy Awards including best director for Wes Anderson, won best comedy or musical at The Golden Globes last month. I think that's the best this film can hope for. Comedies don't usually fare too well at the Academy Awards. But they make great viewing.

— Danielle L. Kiracofe, entertainment editor

'The Imitation Game'

"The Imitation Game," starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Keira Knightley, is a cerebral espionage thriller. Alan Turing and other mathematicians are hired by the British army in an effort to crack the Nazis' constantly changing Enigma code. At stake: World War II and the future of the free world. Long story short: Turing builds a machine (a precursor to modern computers) that breaks the code, but the team's accomplishments are classified and don't come to light until decades after the Allies' victory. To add insult to injury, Turing is publicly humiliated and sentenced to chemical castration for being a homosexual, which in 1950s Britain was illegal. He ended his life in 1954, years before the world knew Turing's role in saving it.

This film became a best picture contender on Cumberbatch's shoulders. An actor of awe-inspiring ability, he inhabits his subject in a nuanced, haunted performance that captures Turing's brilliant mind and his outsider's detachment. Just one example: When confronted with violence, Cumberbatch's face reflects the horror of being bullied as a child and being ridiculed for being different. The indignities suffered by Turing, and also Knightley's Joan Clarke, the only woman on the code-cracking team, are cringeworthy. However, the film's appeal lies in their achievements, and in a repeated line: "Sometimes it is the people who no one imagines anything of who do the things that no one can imagine."

— Sean Moores, managing editor for presentation

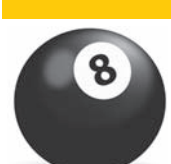
'Selma'

Just a few months after police killings of unarmed black men in Ferguson, Mo., and Staten Island, N.Y., "Selma" arrived as a most timely best picture nominee. The film, directed by Ava DuVernay, depicts the voting rights march led by Martin Luther King Jr. from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., in 1965. Well written and skillfully directed, it served as a biopic, a history lesson, and, upon reflection, a lesson in how history continues to repeat itself. There was some outcry over the lack of diversity in the Oscar nominations when DuVernay and David Oyelowo, who portrays King, were passed over. DuVernay is deserving, but there are eight best picture nominees and only five best director slots. It's Oyelowo's omission that seems particularly unfair. In a brilliant performance, the British actor embodies the fiery orator and the civil rights leader. He also gives us a man rather than a martyr, showing weariness, faults, frustration and King's moments of doubt. The speeches, written for the film, are stirring, but it is a scene in which King comforts a man whose unarmed grandson was killed by police that will break your heart. There's marching yet to be done.

— Sean Moores, managing editor for presentation

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

DID YOU KNOW? OSCAR TIDBITS AND FACTOIDS



In the acting categories, nine people are first-time nominees: Steve Carell, Benedict Cumberbatch, Michael Keaton, Eddie Redmayne, J.K. Simmons, Felicity Jones, Rosamund Pike, Patricia Arquette and Emma Stone. Previous winners are Robert Duvall, Marion Cotillard, Reese Witherspoon and Meryl Streep.

Bradley Coooper's nomination for "American Sniper" is his third consecutive acting nomination, after his supporting nomination for "American Hustle" and leading role nod in "Silver Linings Playbook." The last performers to receive three nominations in a row were Renee Zellweger and Russell Crowe.

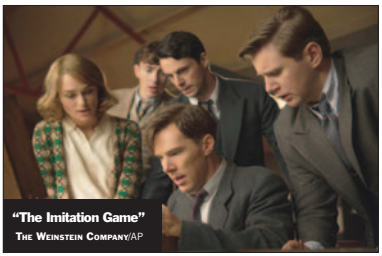
"The Grand Budapest Hotel" was the first of the best picture nominees to be released (March 6), and "Selma" and "American Sniper" the latest (Dec. 24).

For more news and features on the Academy Awards, go to **stripes.com/military-life**

Meryl Streep extends her lead as the most nominated performer with 19, thanks to Rob Marshall's "Into the Woods."

— From the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

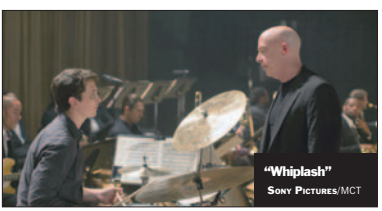
THE ACADEMY AWARDS



"The Imitation Game"
THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY/AP

"The Theory of Everything"
Focus Features

"Selma"
Paramount



"Whiplash"
SONY PICTURES/MCT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

'The Theory of Everything'

"The Theory of Everything" is a brief history of the marriage of renowned physicist Stephen Hawking and his first wife, Jane Wilde.

The trailers make you think this is a love story, and initially, that's what it is. Stephen and Jane meet cute at a college party, and fall for each other. After he is diagnosed with motor neuron disease and given two years to live, she tells him they will spend whatever time they have together, and they marry. But as the years wear on, and Hawking's work — and fame — increases, and his disease progresses, and Jane loses herself in supporting Hawking and their family, their marriage starts to come apart. (This isn't a spoiler — the Hawkings divorced in the 1990s, and the film is based on Jane Hawking's biography "Travelling to Infinity: My Life with Stephen.") Despite this, the film ends on an uplifting note, with an inspirational speech by Hawking, then a more quiet moment with family. The spin at the end of the movie sums up the film in an almost too-sweet turn.

The film has several strengths. The score is amazing and memorable. The script is solid. But the leads make this movie. Best actor nominee and favorite to win, Eddie Redmayne disappears into his role as Stephen Hawking. Best actress nominee Felicity Jones gives a wonderful and nuanced performance as a patient and devoted and struggling wife. Both are very, very good.

"The Theory of Everything" is nominated for five Academy Awards, including best screen adaptation.

— Danielle L. Kiracofe, entertainment editor

'Whiplash'

If you've played sports much, you've probably had that coach who believed that pushing athletes to the brink, and beyond, offering little in the way of encouragement, was the way to get the best out of them. Depending on who you are, that either helped you achieve more than you ever realized you could, or it really, really didn't.

"Whiplash" takes this "no pain, no gain" mentality a step or two further. J.K. Simmons plays a sadistic instructor at a music conservatory in New York City whose dream is to find and develop the next Charlie Parker — a jazz musician who would be the best; an uncompromising artist as well as an entertainer. The instructor, Fletcher, does a bit of directing but no real instructing that we can see. He tests his students by hurling personal insults at them — and sometimes chairs as well. Fletcher says that "there are no two words in the English language more harmful than 'good job.'" Those so encouraged will never try to become more, he believes.

Into this crucible steps Andrew (Miles Teller), whose dreams of becoming a jazz drummer surpass all other interests. He has no use for friends, and ends a promising romantic relationship on the assumption that the girlfriend will distract him from becoming great. Andrew immediately catches Fletcher's eye. Andrew is called up to the school's premiere competitive band, but Fletcher then uses every opportunity to savagely cut Andrew down and humiliate him in the most personal ways possible. Andrew wonders at first why no one in the band will so much as look at the director; he soon learns the hard way what attention from Fletcher means.

A love of jazz isn't a requirement for enjoyment of the movie's taut drama, and the somewhat sudden ending is strangely satisfying. After the stage is set, both Andrew and Fletcher have a couple of surprising moves up their sleeves that you might not see coming.

Reactions to the movie seem split. Despite garnering some acclaim last January at the Sundance Film Festival, "Whiplash" is probably the least known Academy Award best picture nominee. It's a very long shot to win the night's big prize. Simmons, however, a veteran character actor who just turned 60, could well walk away with the award for best supporting actor. And the sound mixing should be a lock — the drum sequences are amazing. The story is a small one, but surprisingly powerful. You'll cringe through much of the movie, but you'll probably enjoy it, and I guarantee that you won't forget it for a long time to come.

"Whiplash" is nominated for five Academy Awards — best movie, supporting actor, film editing, sound mixing and writing (adapted screenplay).

— Kate Maisel, features editor

Producers promise an Oscar night filled with magic and song

BY SANDY COHEN
The Associated Press

Lady Gaga. Jennifer Hudson. Common and John Legend. Adam Levine. Rita Ora. Tegan & Sara. Tim McGraw.

This isn't the lineup for an upcoming pop concert, but rather for the Academy Awards.

"We want to entertain," said Neil Meron, producing his third consecutive Oscar ceremony with Craig Zadan. "And there's no better entertainment than to do it with music."

Host Neil Patrick Harris will perform an original song by the Oscar-winning writers behind "Let It Go," the producers said. Called "Moving Pictures," the musical number will set a "subliminal theme" for the evening, Meron said.

"It really is celebratory about movies and yet it's kind of cheeky in a way," he said. "But yet it has a beautiful musical motif, which... we integrate throughout the show as kind of a call-back theme."

Added Zadan: "We didn't want to do a musical number that could have been on the Tonys, or anywhere else for that matter."

"It's a multimedia musical number," he said, "something that we've not done before."

Music is part of the production pair's professional DNA, though. The two produced the "Peter Pan" and "The Sound of Music" live TV specials, as well as the movie musicals "Hairspray" and "Chicago," which won the best picture Oscar in 2003.

The producers said they started booking musical acts even before they learned the year's nominees. But they were delighted with the nominated original songs.

"We were smiled upon in that respect," Meron said.

A spate of stars will bring those songs to life on the Oscar stage.

Common and Legend are set to perform their song, "Glory," from "Selma." Levine will sing "Lost Stars" from "Begin Again." Ora will take on Diane Warren's song from "Beyond the Lights," "Grateful." Tegan & Sara will join with The Lonely Island for "The Lego Movie" song, "Everything is Awesome." McGraw will perform Glen Campbell's song "I'm Not Gonna Miss You," from the documentary about his struggle with Alzheimer's, "Glen Campbell ... I'll Be Me."

The producers wouldn't say what Hudson, Gaga and other entertainers, including Jack Black and Anna Kendrick, will sing.

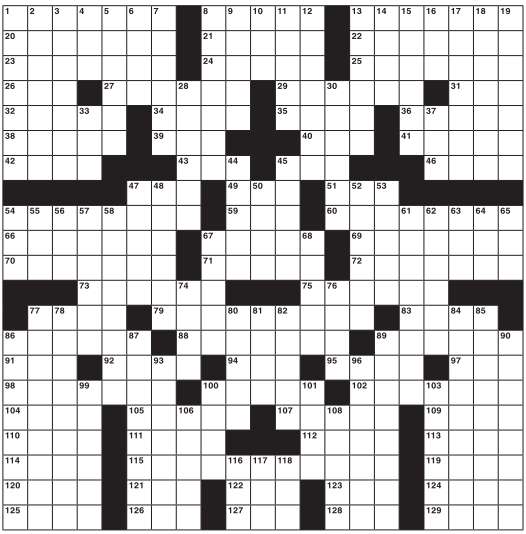
Suspense about their performances will have to stand in for the lack of suspense for most of the acting categories. Patricia Arquette of "Boyhood" and J.K. Simmons of "Whiplash" have locked up supporting-actor awards all season, and Julianne Moore is a shoo-in for the best actress Oscar for "Still Alice." The lead actor competition has some excitement, with Michael Keaton of "Birdman" and Eddie Redmayne of "The Theory of Everything" splitting many of the early honors.

CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

SPLIT ENDS

BY ELLEN LEUSCHNER AND JEFF CHEN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ



ACROSS

1 ''Everyone who's anyone is attending!''
8 Shoot for the moon
13 Much-anthologized Frank R. Stockton short story
20 Herald, as a new year
21 Mitchell heroine
22 One calling it quits
23 Is a rat
24 Chimes, e.g.
25 Short thing for a diva
26 Big ___
27 Rarely
29 Long John Silver, for one
31 Not standard: Abbr.
32 Word with coffee or water
34 Bird that's also the name of an Irish river
35 Sped
36 Canon competitor
38 Cookies with a ''Golden'' variety
39 Slowing, in music: Abbr.
40 Audible pauses
41 Knot again
42 Miranda warning receiver, informally
43 Remote button with ''+'' and ''–''
45 Govt. construction overseer
46 Founded, on city signs
47 Word before ''I didn't know that!''
49 Heavy metal band?
51 Some fraternity men
54 Proverbial matter of perspective
59 John who played Harold in the ''Harold & Kumar'' films
60 Question asked in classic 1970s ads
66 Jeopardized
67 Ask
69 Greek goddess of vengeance
70 Like Lake Mead or Lake Powell
71 Strunk and White topic
72 They're of no concern to cougars
73 ''M*A*S*H'' role
75 Cry from a damsel in distress
77 Part of I.M.F.: Abbr.
79 Stickup line
83 Just
86 Laughed harshly
88 Overstress
89 Foe of Mr. Fantastic in the comics
91 Reception vessel
92 Some samples
94 Figure skater Midori
95 ''Now it makes sense!''
97 Mop & ___
98 Frontier sheriff's badge
100 In the style of
102 Whistleblower's target?
104 ''Bye for now,'' in textspeak
105 Rummage (through)
107 No longer hungry
109 D.C. club
110 Indian music
111 Langston Hughes poem
112 William ___, British general in the Revolutionary War
113 Assist, as an outlaw
114 Colored like ink in ''Love's Labour's Lost''
115 Song by the Clash on Rolling Stone's ''500 Greatest Songs of All Time'' list
119 Material for many a ski lodge
120 Part of an Adirondack chair
121 ___ Conference
122 Command to Fido
123 Before
124 Tech grad: Abbr.
125 Gets fixed
126 Parisian possessive
127 ''Maid in Manhattan'' star, informally
128 Rx signers
129 General ___ chicken

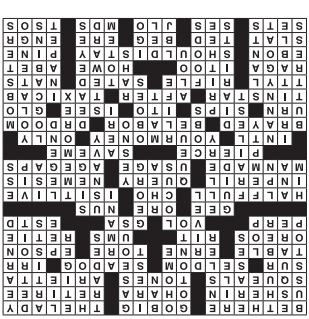
DOWN

1 Dot on a transit map
2 —
3 Cartoonist who wrote the caption ''Well, if I called the wrong number, why did you answer the phone?''
4 Titter sound
5 Backspaces, say
6 Incense
7 Eve who wrote ''The Vagina Monologues''
8 Mounted
9 —
10 Test ___
11 Beginning of an attorney's ending
12 Like four of the eight planets
13 Subjects of apprenticeships
14 Superman, e.g.
15 —
16 Rough position?
17 Ones in the oil field?
18 Historic filer for bankruptcy in 2013
19 Was lovesick, say
28 Blather
30 ___ Exchange
33 Cut (off)
37 April second?
44 Center of activity
45 Physicist Ohm
47 Virgil, for Dante
48 Queen of mystery
50 Flightless bird
52 Org. with the motto ''Not for self but for country''
53 Battle of the Alamo, e.g.
54 ''For ___'' (store sign around Father's Day)
55 California's Santa ___ River
56 I.C.U. worker
57 —
58 Most feeble
61 —
62 Map part
63 ''Life ___ Highway''
64 One given the velvet-rope treatment, for short
65 Sigmoid shape
67 Get in line
68 Kind of question
74 Kernel keepers
76 Prefix with -form
77 Crabby
78 Female with a beard
80 —
81 Stone who co-created ''South Park''
82 Cousins of clarinets
84 Little houses on the prairie
85 Indie band whose name means, literally, ''I have it''
86 Brace
87 Anaïs Nin and Franz Kafka, notably
89 Straight shooters?
90 Family members
93 Please, to a Puritan
96 Sommelier
99 Angles
100 Baseball family name
101 Pompom wielder's cries
103 Sulking
106 Things found in a pyramid
108 Sacred symbol
116 ___ Library (Austin, Tex., attraction)
117 Atl. Coast state
118 —

GUNSTON STREET

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

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



Look for the 70th Anniversary
Victory at Iwo Jima
special feature in your Feb. 23 issue.
Only from STARS AND STRIPES
See more online at stripes.com/iwojima

GADGETS & CHARTS

Game designer says no to thongs, gore

By Nicole Brodeur
The Seattle Times

Sometimes, a slight detour can create a completely new path not just for one person, but for a generation of women.

Kathie Flood was set on attending law school at Iowa's Drake University many years ago when she cut through the journalism school building to get to the parking lot. She spotted a flier on one of the bulletin boards; the school was looking for a programmer to put together a student database.

Flood got the job, and then got the bug for writing and programming — skills that would lead her to become one of the first women in Microsoft's game division and to create her own company, centered on games where fast cars and big guns aren't the main draw — and where women are inspired to play, or create their own games.

"If you want to make a different kind of game, you need a different demographic building the game," said Flood, who's 50 and lives in Kirkland, Wash.

Flood's Cascade Game Foundry and her new game, "Infinite Scuba," allow players to travel without leaving home. To explore undersea spaces and creatures without any gear. And, because it is Flood producing the game, the main character is a woman. Of normal proportions.

It's the polar opposite of what Flood calls "the granddaddy of violent games," "Grand Theft Auto (GTA)," a franchise with 14 titles, including "Chinatown Wars" and "The Lost and the Damned."

"The art is gorgeous," Flood said of the GTA series. "But I would love to see a studio take a chance. There are so many sequels of the same thing. We're trying to expand that pool a little bit.

"What if you took all this cool technology and used it to teach or help people explore the world? Make it a good use of your time instead of getting to the next level of 'Candy Crush.'"

No offense, she added quickly. She's a "Words With Friends" person.

"I understand why people are doing it," she said of games like 'Candy Crush.' "But the gamemakers specifically manipulate you to play more."

"Infinite Scuba" doesn't do that. It's quieter, slower, almost calming. The female diver encounters undersea animals and artifacts that need to be unlocked. There is a field guide to tell you what you're seeing.

Flood

"There's history, marine life, dive science," Flood said. "When you're done playing our game, it feels like it was a good use of your time and you learned something about a different environment, a different culture, without a plane ticket."

That experience might just be different enough to draw more women not only into gaming — but into making games as well.

To that end, Flood regularly speaks at Seattle-area schools about programming and game producing.

"I remember reading a list of careers (young women) aspire to," she said. "One of the top ones is to be a personal assistant to a celebrity, or a reality star."

"Infinite Scuba" came out of Flood's love of the environment and scuba diving — a skill she learned while working on a scuba game for Microsoft.

"Scuba diving is as close as I'll ever get to being an astronaut," Flood said. "You're weightless, you have a limited air supply and you get to see aliens."

But some people will never get that chance to see the water that way, and fall in love, like she did.

"In order for them to care about it, they have to experience it, whether it's firsthand or virtually."

For this game, which she described as "Indiana Jones meets Jacques Cousteau," Flood made the avatar a woman, with a figure modeled on a volleyball player who came in and modeled.

"Not surgically enhanced," Flood said. "Her thighs touch. They're tasteful. They're not in thongs. We want good role models."

GADGET WATCH

Phone app closes garage door when you forget

By Gregg Ellman
Tribune News Service

I've never had so much fun opening and closing my garage door.

The Iris Z-Wave Garage Door Controller allows me to open and, more importantly, close the door from anywhere with an app on my iPhone.

It's a great help for someone like me who often says to my wife, "Did we close the garage?" long after leaving our neighborhood.

Now when the question comes up, I just turn on the Iris app (free for iOS and Android), and check to see if my garage door is open or closed.

System installation is almost as easy as just turning on the app.

When using the Iris system for any of its add-on features (window or door alarms, security cameras, sprinklers, thermostat or the electronic pet door I saw demonstrated at the Consumer Electronics Show recently, to name a few), they must each be wirelessly connected to the Iris Smart Hub ($99).

The hub must be plugged into your existing Internet router with an Ethernet cable along with an AC adapter for power — both included with the hub. The instructions run you through a quick web-based setup, where you open an account with a username and password, then activate your hub.

Once activated, your hub must be within 100 feet of any Iris accessory you want wirelessly connected to it. Obviously the center of your house would be perfect, but if that's not possible, you can get an Iris Signal Extender ($29.99) to help.

I tested the system for a double-sized garage door. It took less than 10 minutes start to finish, and to my delight I didn't have to mess with anything electrical besides pulling a few AC plugs out and back in.

A sensor goes on the inside of the garage door (double-sided tape works), which comes with a replaceable coin-sized battery that should last a few years.

Then you'll need to figure out the best location and hanging solution for the Iris hardware. In my case, I used the included bracket to attach it to my existing garage door's brace. This way, there were no holes to drill or anything to attach.

The smart garage door controller system ($99) has two wires you must attach to your existing garage door's system.

Once it was connected and working, I checked all the other remotes I previously had to make sure they still worked — and they did.

Like I said, I've never had so much fun opening and closing my garage from anywhere in the country.

Online: lowes.com; prices vary for each part of the system, and kits are available

The new Ascent backpack from OGIO is built like a standard backpack, but it offers seemingly endless storage for anything from laptops to tablets to electronic accessories.

With all the storage space, the easy part is getting everything in; the hard part is remembering where you stored it.

The narrow design has padded compartments to keep everything safe from bumps and knocks, and is built with top-quality zippers and hardware.

The exterior is made from mountaineering-spec materials such as high tensile-strength rip-stop nylon to complete the authentic, rugged look. This design makes it wearable even in the most extreme outdoor elements.

Online: ogio.com/backpacks/ascent-pack; $99.99

The ThermaCELL Heated Insoles sound like something that wouldn't work, but doubters shouldn't have cold feet about trying out this product.

I've tried other foot warmers, but never did I imagine foot warmers that would need a USB charge. These must be charged for a few hours and will last for about five hours until another charge is needed.

TNS photos

They come in five sizes. If those don't suffice, there is some space for trimming on the sides of soles to create a better fit, but the thickness has to remain the same because of the battery and heat cells.

Sensors are built into the soles to generate the heat, and the temperature can be adjusted (off, medium or high) using a wireless remote.

The Insoles are water resistant, and the battery can be removed for charging while keeping the insoles in your shoes.

Online: heat.thermacell.com/heated-insoles-foot-warmers; $134.99

ITUNES MUSIC

Top 10 albums on the iTunes Store for Feb. 18:

1. "If You're Reading This It's Too Late," Drake
2. "Fifty Shades of Grey" (original motion picture soundtrack), various artists
3. "In the Lonely Hour," Sam Smith
4. "Morning Phase," Beck
5. "x," Ed Sheeran
6. "1989," Taylor Swift
7. "V," Maroon 5
8. "1000 Forms of Fear," Sia
9. "Hozier," Hozier
10. "2014 Forest Hills Drive," J. Cole

— Compiled by TNS

SPOTIFY MUSIC

The most streamed tracks on Spotify from Feb. 9-15:

1. "Uptown Funk," Mark Ronson
2. "Thinking Out Loud," Ed Sheeran
3. "Sugar," Maroon 5
4. "Take Me To Church," Hozier
5. "Earned It" — from the "Fifty Shades of Grey" soundtrack, The Weeknd
6. "I'm Not The Only One," Sam Smith
7. "GDFR (feat. Sage The Gemini and Lookas)" Flo Rida
8. "Stay With Me," Sam Smith
9. "Love Me Like You Do" — from the "Fifty Shades of Grey" soundtrack, Ellie Goulding
10. "Time of Our Lives," Pitbull

— Compiled by The Associated Press

ITUNES MOVIES

Top 10 movies downloaded from the iTunes Store for Feb. 18:

1. "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay — Part One"
2. "Birdman"
3. "The Theory of Everything"
4. "Big Hero 6"
5. "Dumb and Dumber To"
6. "St. Vincent"
7. "Nightcrawler"
8. "Penguins of Madagascar"
9. "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day"
10. "Gone Girl"

— Compiled by TNS

VIDEO GAMES

Game Informer rank the top 10 downloadable games for February:

1. "Apotheon," PS4, PC
2. "Life Is Strange," PS4, Xbox One, PS3, 360, PC
3. "The Talos Principle," PC
4. "Resident Evil HD Remaster," PS4, Xbox One, PC
5. "This War of Mine," PC
6. "Sunless Sea," PC
7. "Elite: Dangerous," PC
8. "Gravity Ghost," PC
9. "Grim Fandango," PS4, PC
10. "Never Alone," PS4, Xbox One, PC

— Compiled by TNS

APPS

Top 5 new free apps for Feb. 18:

ANDROID

1. Galaxy Online 3
2. ZigZag
3. Bingo Fever-Valentine's Day
4. TRANSFORMERS: Battle Tactics
5. Marble Heroes

Top 5 free apps for Feb. 18:

APPLE

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

— Compiled by TNS

Looking for a new field where you can stand out?

STARS AND STRIPES®

Veteran's Job Center

veteransjob.stripes.com

Find your next opportunity with employers who actively seek the experience of former military.

Post your resume and access 25,000 jobs for free.

STARS AND STRIPES

DAILY HEADLINES

Sign up to get the top stories of the day, emailed right to your inbox, every day!

TODAY'S TOP HEADLINES FROM STARS AND STRIPES.

STARS AND STRIPES

WEEKLY UPDATE

Subscribe to get each week's most important stories, along with other military news of note from bases around the world.

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

Get your news at: stripes.com/newsletters

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Rising dollar hits US corporate profits

By Matthew Craft
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The biggest obstacle for Coca-Cola and Pepsi these days isn't tied to taste tests, the declining popularity of sugary drinks or even their century-long rivalry. It's the surging U.S. dollar.

The two soda giants rely on overseas customers for roughly half of their revenue. When they turned in their quarterly results last week, both reported a drop in sales. The strong dollar made all the difference: Strip it out and shrinking sales suddenly rise.

The dollar has been a source of constant complaint this earnings season. Global corporations from Avon Products to Yum Brands have said their quarterly results would have been much better if it hadn't been for the rising dollar. For some, the currency's strength has meant the difference between a profit and a loss.

During the past year, the dollar has climbed 17 percent against other major currencies. The surging dollar and plunging oil prices are the main reasons analysts keep cutting their forecasts for corporate profits even though economists expect the U.S. economy to pick up speed.

Back in October, analysts estimated that companies in the Standard & Poor's 500 index would post profit growth of 11 percent for the final three months of 2014. That forecast now looks overly optimistic. With only a handful of companies left to report, corporate profits are on track to rise more than 7 percent, according to S&P Capital IQ.

Forecasts for this year have taken a much bigger hit. In December, for example, analysts projected that profits would increase 9 percent in the first quarter. Today, they expect them to shrink more than 2 percent over that same period.

A strong U.S. dollar might seem like a badge of honor, a reflection of U.S. economic power in the global economy, but for much of corporate America, it's bad for business. Almost half of all revenue for companies in the S&P 500 comes from outside the United States, mainly Europe and Asia. So when the dollar rises against the euro, it hurts in two ways: Prices of American-made goods become more expensive to customers in Europe, and goods that move off foreign shelves translate into fewer dollars, showing up as lower revenues and earnings on quarterly financial reports.

Take Avon Products, a company that depends on customers in Latin America for nearly half of its sales. The cosmetics company reported that its revenue fell 12 percent and adjusted earnings sank 41 percent. Erase the dollar's move against foreign currencies and the picture looks entirely different. Revenue would have climbed 5 percent, and adjusted earnings would have soared 29 percent.

Overseas sales used to provide a boost to U.S. companies. When the economy floundered during the Great Recession, firms expanded their businesses abroad, harnessing faster growth across Asia and South America.

What once looked like a prudent move, however, has come back to bite them. U.S. economic growth is outpacing Europe and Japan, and growth in China and other emerging giants has cooled off. The result: a rising U.S. currency means falling revenue for U.S companies.

MARKET WATCH

Feb. 20, 2015

Dow Jones industrials	+154.67	18,140.44
Nasdaq composite	+31.27	4,955.97
Standard & Poor's 500	+12.85	2,110.30
Russell 2000	+3.88	1,231.79

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates

Euro costs (Feb. 23)	$1.1623
Dollar buys (Feb. 23)	€0.8604
British pound (Feb. 23)	$1.58
Japanese yen (Feb. 23)	116.00
South Korean won (Feb. 23)	1,073.00

Commercial rates

Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	$1.5406/0.6491
Canada (Dollar)	1.2532
China (Yuan)	6.2555
Denmark (Krone)	6.5402
Egypt (Pound)	7.6333
Euro	$1.1411/0.8763
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7598
Hungary (Forint)	267.52
Israel (Shekel)	3.8541
Japan (Yen)	119.07
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2958
Norway (Krone)	7.5189
Philippines (Peso)	44.24
Poland (Zloty)	3.65
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7514
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3591
South Korea (Won)	1,109.79
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9421
Thailand (Baht)	32.54
Turkey (New Lira)	2.4518

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

INTEREST RATES

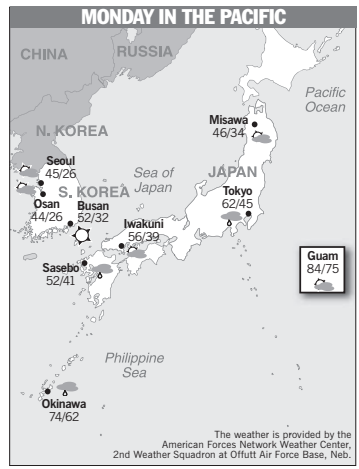
Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	0.75
Federal funds market rate	0.12
3-month bill	0.02
30-year bond	2.72

WEATHER OUTLOOK

SUNDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SUNDAY IN EUROPE

MONDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

Sunday's US temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	Chattanooga	47	30	Rain	Fort Wayne	19	-6	Cldy	Louisville	30	5	Snow	Pocatello	33	17	Clr	Sioux City	14	-3	Clr
Abilene, Tex	41	23	Cldy	Cheyenne	13	0	Snow	Fresno	60	45	Cldy	Lubbock	33	16	Cldy	Portland,Maine	40	13	Cldy	Sioux Falls	7	-5	Clr
Akron, Ohio	25	-9	Cldy	Chicago	12	-7	Snow	Goodland	19	8	Snow	Macon	70	47	Rain	Portland,Ore.	49	32	Clr	South Bend	16	-2	Snow
Albany,N.Y.	38	5	Cldy	Cincinnati	25	-2	Cldy	Grand Junction	41	23	Cldy	Madison	6	-12	Clr	Providence	38	16	Snow	Spokane	40	18	Clr
Albuquerque	47	28	Clr	Cleveland	24	-10	Cldy	Grand Rapids	15	-4	Snow	Medford	56	25	Clr	Pueblo	21	2	Snow	Springfield,Ill	17	-6	Cldy
Allentown, Pa.	36	11	Cldy	Colorado Springs	19	2	Snow	Great Falls	24	11	Cldy	Memphis	38	20	Cldy	Raleigh-Durham	52	33	Rain	Springfield,Mo	25	7	Snow
Amarillo	25	10	Clr	Columbia,S.C.	62	45	Cldy	Green Bay	5	-13	Clr	Miami Beach	79	67	Cldy	Rapid City	18	2	PCldy	Syracuse	29	-2	Snow
Anchorage	40	33	Rain	Columbus,Ga.	68	44	Rain	Greensboro,N.C.	51	29	Rain	Midland-Odessa	41	22	Cldy	Reno	43	25	Cldy	Tallahassee	77	58	Cldy
Asheville	50	30	Rain	Columbus,Ohio	23	-2	Cldy	Harrisburg	38	11	Cldy	Milwaukee	10	-7	Clr	Richmond	45	27	Rain	Tampa	76	62	PCldy
Atlanta	57	38	Rain	Concord, N.H.	39	8	Cldy	Hartford Spgfld	39	11	Cldy	Mpls-St Paul	1	-10	Clr	Roanoke	46	26	Rain	Toledo	22	-6	Cldy
Atlantic City	43	18	Rain	Corpus Christi	76	49	Cldy	Helena	28	7	Cldy	Missoula	30	6	Clr	Rochester	24	1	Snow	Topeka	21	5	Cldy
Austin	56	35	Cldy	Dallas-Ft Worth	40	26	Rain	Honolulu	81	67	Cldy	Mobile	68	45	Rain	Rockford	8	-11	Clr	Tucson	74	51	PCldy
Baltimore	39	17	Cldy	Dayton	22	-3	Cldy	Houston	64	39	Cldy	Montgomery	68	40	Rain	Sacramento	64	41	PCldy	Tulsa	31	14	Clr
Baton Rouge	65	41	Cldy	Daytona Beach	76	59	PCldy	Huntsville	44	26	Rain	Nashville	39	17	Cldy	St Louis	20	4	Cldy	Tupelo	44	23	Cldy
Billings	21	10	Clr	Denver	17	6	Snow	Indianapolis	20	-4	Cldy	New Orleans	71	47	Cldy	St Petersburg	75	64	PCldy	Waco	44	30	Rain
Birmingham	54	31	Rain	Des Moines	12	-3	PCldy	Jackson,Miss.	51	33	Cldy	New York City	40	13	Cldy	St Thomas	85	76	PCldy	Washington	41	21	Cldy
Bismarck	3	-5	Clr	Detroit	23	-9	Cldy	Jacksonville	77	56	PCldy	Newark	40	14	Cldy	Salem,Ore.	52	28	Clr	W. Palm Beach	80	67	Cldy
Boise	43	23	PCldy	Duluth	-3	-18	Clr	Juneau	41	35	Rain	Norfolk,Va.	49	29	Rain	Salt Lake City	40	26	Cldy	Wichita	23	12	Cldy
Boston	39	16	Snow	El Paso	66	40	Cldy	Kansas City	18	1	Cldy	North Platte	19	4	Cldy	San Angelo	47	28	Cldy	Wichita Falls	37	21	Snow
Bridgeport	38	12	Cldy	Elkins	36	8	Snow	Key West	75	69	Cldy	Oklahoma City	31	17	Cldy	San Antonio	58	36	Cldy	Wilkes-Barre	31	4	Cldy
Brownsville	79	64	Cldy	Erie	23	-12	Snow	Knoxville	42	28	Rain	Omaha	15	2	PCldy	San Diego	63	57	Cldy	Wilmington,Del.	39	17	Cldy
Buffalo	21	-4	Snow	Eugene	53	25	Clr	Lake Charles	63	37	Cldy	Orlando	81	61	PCldy	San Francisco	66	48	PCldy	Yakima	44	25	Clr
Burlington,Vt.	34	-3	Cldy	Evansville	27	4	Cldy	Lansing	15	-6	Cldy	Paducah	29	8	Cldy	San Jose	67	41	PCldy	Youngstown	25	-10	Snow
Caribou,Maine	31	5	Cldy	Fairbanks	35	17	Cldy	Las Vegas	62	47	Cldy	Pendleton	41	21	Clr	Santa Fe	42	20	Clr				
Casper	15	0	PCldy	Fargo	-6	-13	Clr	Lexington	31	5	Snow	Peoria	15	-6	Cldy	St Ste Marie	0	-18	Snow				
Charleston,S.C.	71	49	Cldy	Flagstaff	47	28	PCldy	Lincoln	17	1	Cldy	Philadelphia	39	18	Cldy	Savannah	73	54	Cldy				
Charleston,W.Va.	35	13	Cldy	Flint	18	-13	Cldy	Little Rock	39	22	Cldy	Phoenix	74	57	PCldy	Seattle	55	36	Clr				
Charlotte,N.C.	52	37	Rain	Fort Smith	39	22	Cldy	Los Angeles	64	54	Rain	Pittsburgh	31	-1	Cldy	Shreveport	47	30	Cldy				

National temperature extremes

Hi: Fri., 87, Dryden, Texas
Lo: Fri., -39, Roscommon, Mich. and Spincich Lake, Mich.

SCOREBOARD

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

Tennis

Rio Open

Friday
At Jockey Club Brasileiro
Rio de Janeiro
Purse: Men, $1.55 million (WT500); Women, $250,000 (Intl.)
Surface: Clay-Outdoor
Singles
Men
Quarterfinals

David Ferrer (2), Spain, def. Juan Monaco, Argentina, 6-3, 4-6, 6-2.
Andreas Haider-Maurer, Austria, def. Joao Souza, Brazil, 7-6 (4), 1-6, 6-4.
Fabio Fognini (4), Italy, def. Federico Delbonis, Argentina, 6-4, 6-7 (10), 7-6 (9).
Rafael Nadal (1), Spain, def. Pablo Cuevas (6), Uruguay, 4-6, 7-5, 6-0.

Women
Quarterfinals

Sara Errani (1), Italy, def. Beatriz Haddad Maia, Brazil, 3-6, 7-6 (2), 3-0, retired.
Irina-Camelia Begu (2), Romania, def. Julia Glushko, Israel, 6-1, 6-2.
Johanna Larsson (5), Sweden, def. Dinah Pfizenmaier, Germany, 6-4, 6-0.
Anna Schmiedlova (6), Slovakia, def. Veronica Cepede Royg, Paraguay, 6-3, 6-1.

Doubles
Men
Quarterfinals

Pablo Andujar, Spain, and Oliver Marach, Austria, def. Alexander Peya, Austria, and Bruno Soares (1), Brazil, 6-1, 4-6, 10-7.
Martin Klizan, Slovakia, and Philipp Oswald, Austria, def. Juan Sebastian Cabal and Robert Farah (2), Colombia, 3-6, 7-6 (6), 10-7.

Women
Semifinals

Irina-Camelia Begu, Romania, and Maria Irigoyen (1), Argentina, def. Hsu Chieh-yu, United States, and Elitsa Kostova, Bulgaria, 6-2, 6-2.
Ysaline Bonaventure, Belgium, and Rebecca Peterson, Sweden, def. Beatriz Haddad Maia and Teliana Pereira, Brazil, walkover.

Delray Beach Open

Friday
At Delray Beach Stadium & Tennis Center
Delray Beach, Fla.
Purse: $549,230 (WT250)
Surface: Hard-Outdoor
Singles
Quarterfinals

Donald Young, United States, def. Alexandr Dolgopolov (3), Ukraine, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4.
Bernard Tomic, Australia, def. Yoshihito Nishioka, Japan, 6-3, 6-1.
Adrian Mannarino (5), France, def. Lu Yen-Hsun, Taiwan, 3-6, 6-1, 6-1.
Ivo Karlovic (4), Croatia, def. Steve Johnson (7), United States, 6-2, 7-6 (4).

Doubles
Qurterfinals

Bob and Mike Bryan (1), United States, def. John-Patrick Smith, Australia, and Michael Venus, New Zealand, 6-1, 6-3.

Open 13

Friday
At Palais des Sports
Marseille, France
Purse: $720,500 (WT250)
Surface: Hard-Indoor
Singles
Quarterfinals

Roberto Bautista Agut (4), Spain, def. Dominic Thiem, Austria, 7-6 (7), 6-3.
Gael Monfils (7), France, def. Simone Bolelli, Italy, 6-4, 6-4.
Sergiy Stakhovsky, Ukraine, def. Stan Wawrinka (2), Switzerland, 6-4, 3-6, 6-4.
Gilles Simon (5), France, def. Jeremy Chardy, France, 7-5, 7-6 (6).

Doubles
Quarterfinals

Colin Fleming and Jonathan Marray, Britain, def. Pierre-Hugues Herbert and Nicolas Mahut (1), France, walkover.

Semfinals

Marin Draganja, Croatia, and Henri Kontinen (2), Finland, def. Rameez Junaid, Australia, and Adil Shamasdin, Canada, 6-3, 6-7 (4), 10-5.

Dubai Championships

Friday
At Dubai Tennis Stadium
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Purse: $2.513 million (Premier)
Surface: Hard-Outdoor
Singles
Semifinals

Karolina Pliskova (17), Czech Republic, def. Garbine Muguruza, Spain, 6-4, 5-7, 7-5.
Simona Halep (1), Romania, def. Caroline Wozniacki (3), Denmark, 2-6, 6-1, 6-1.

Doubles
Semifinals

Timea Babos, Hungary, and Kristina Mladenovic (8), France, def. Caroline Garcia, France, and Katarina Srebotnik (7), Slovenia, 3-6, 6-1, 10-5.
Garbine Muguruza and Carla Suarez Navarro (6), Spain, def. Alla Kudryavtseva and Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, Russia, 6-2, 6-3.

Auto racing

NextEra Energy Resources 250

NASCAR Camping World Trucks
Friday
At Daytona International Speedway
Daytona Beach, Fla.
Lap length: 2.5 miles
(Start position in parentheses)

1. (3) Tyler Reddick, Ford, 100 laps, 137 rating, 48 points, $91,804.
2. (7) Erik Jones, Toyota, 100, 115.4, 42, $58,057.
3. (9) Scott Lagasse Jr., Chevrolet, 100, 112, 0, $42,138.
4. (4) Austin Theriault, Ford, 100, 110.2, 41, $32,221.
5. (15) Ray Black Jr., Chevrolet, 100, 99.4, 39, $26,294.
6. (13) David Gilliland, Ford, 100, 88.1, 0, $22,729.
7. (28) Bryan Silas, Chevrolet, 100, 71.6, 37, $22,981.
8. (31) Matt Crafton, Toyota, 100, 68.9, 37, $22,883.
9. (30) Daniel Suarez, Toyota, 100, 74.8, 0, $20,786.
10. (19) Johnny Sauter, Toyota, 100, 89.9, 34, $20,638.
11. (1) Ty Dillon, Chevrolet, 100, 113.5, 0, $19,673.
12. (23) Korbin Forrister, Chevrolet, 100, 76.2, 32, $19,430.
13. (29) Tyler Young, Chevrolet, 100, 54.1, 32, $17,050.
14. (22) Norm Benning, Chevrolet, 100, 43.6, 30, $19,171.
15. (2) Travis Kvapil, Chevrolet, 93, 69.2, 29, $17,192.
16. (21) Ryan Ellis, Chevrolet, accident, 87, 61.2, 0, $16,798.
17. (5) James Buescher, Chevrolet, 85, 74.5, 27, $16,469.
18. (11) Jennifer Jo Cobb, Chevrolet, 77, 54.4, 26, $18,590.
19. (16) Matt Tifft, Toyota, rear hub, 64, 57.1, 25, $18,461.
20. (18) Joe Nemechek, Chevrolet, 62, 36.1, 24, $18,896.
21. (10) Spencer Gallagher, Chevrolet, 61, 68.8, 23, $18,267.
22. (26) John Wes Townley, Chevrolet, accident, 48, 60.9, 22, $18,138.
23. (14) Cameron Hayley, Toyota, accident, 48, 69.2, 21, $18,009.
24. (32) Timothy Peters, Toyota, accident, 48, 53.3, 20, $17,879.
25. (8) Chris Fontaine, Toyota, accident, 48, 69.5, 0, $15,650.
26. (20) Daniel Hemric, Chevrolet, accident, 48, 64.8, 18, $16,435.
27. (24) Todd Peck, Chevrolet, accident, 48, 50.8, 17, $15,241.
28. (6) Ben Kennedy, Toyota, accident, 20, 40.2, 16, $15,661.
29. (25) Justin Boston, Toyota, accident, 18, 34.5, 15, $14,550.
30. (17) Austin Hill, Ford, accident, 13, 39.6, 0, $14,050.
31. (12) Donnie Neuenberger, Chevrolet, accident, 13, 33.3, 13, $12,550.
32. (27) Justin Marks, Toyota, accident, 12, 25.9, 0, $11,550.

Race Statistics

Average Speed of Race Winner: 128.480 mph.
Time of Race: 1 hour, 56 minutes, 45 seconds.
Margin of Victory: 0.173 seconds.
Caution Flags: 6 for 28 laps.
Lead Changes: 14 among 7 drivers.
Lap Leaders: T.Dillon 1-16; M.Crafton 17; T.Dillon 18-21; T.Reddick 22; T.Dillon 23-24; T.Reddick 25-31; T.Dillon 32; T.Reddick 33-36; T.Dillon 37-50; T.Reddick 51; D.Suarez 52-56; A.Theriault 57-65; T.Young 66; D.Gilliland 67; T.Reddick 68-100.
Leaders Summary (Driver, Times Led, Laps Led): T.Reddick, 5 times for 46 laps; T.Dillon, 5 times for 37 laps; A.Theriault, 1 time for 9 laps; D.Suarez, 1 time for 5 laps; D.Gilliland, 1 time for 1 lap; M.Crafton, 1 time for 1 lap; T.Young, 1 time for 1 lap.
Top 10 in Points: 1. T.Reddick, 48; 2. E.Jones, 42; 3. A.Theriault, 41; 4. R.Black Jr., 39; 5. B.Silas, 37; 6. M.Crafton, 37; 7. J.Sauter, 34; 8. K.Forrister, 32; 9. T.Young, 32; 10. N.Benning, 30.

NASCAR Driver Rating Formula

A maximum of 150 points can be attained in a race.
The formula combines the following categories: Wins, Finishes, Top-15 Finishes, Average Running Position While on Lead Lap, Average Speed Under Green, Fastest Lap, Led Most Laps, Lead-Lap Finish.

Daytona 500 lineup

NASCAR Sprint Cup Series
After Thursday qualifying; race Sunday
At Daytona International Speedway
Daytona Beach, Fla.
Lap length: 2.5 miles
(Car number in parentheses)

1. (24) Jeff Gordon, Chevrolet, 201.293 mph.
2. (48) Jimmie Johnson, Chevrolet, 201.135.
3. (88) Dale Earnhardt Jr., Chevrolet.
4. (18) Kyle Busch, Toyota, 200.187.
5. (22) Joey Logano, Ford, 193.241.
6. (19) Carl Edwards, Toyota, 197.837.
7. (14) Tony Stewart, Chevrolet, 197.968.
8. (16) Greg Biffle, Ford, 197.477.
9. (15) Clint Bowyer, Toyota, 194.995.
10. (78) Martin Truex Jr., Chevrolet, 190.678.
11. (4) Kevin Harvick, Chevrolet, 197.994.
12. (21) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 193.282.
13. (5) Kasey Kahne, Chevrolet, 199.867.
14. (44) Reed Sorenson, Chevrolet, 194.978.
15. (1) Jamie McMurray, Chevrolet, 193.133.
16. (66) Mike Wallace, Toyota, 192.509.
17. (40) Landon Cassill, Chevrolet, 193.299.
18. (51) Justin Allgaier, Chevrolet, 196.532.
19. (35) Cole Whitt, Ford, 194.012.
20. (10) Danica Patrick, Chevrolet, 197.959.
21. (27) Paul Menard, Chevrolet, 198.325.
22. (31) Ryan Newman, Chevrolet, 198.177.
23. (95) Michael McDowell, Ford, 195.3.
24. (41) Regan Smith, Chevrolet, 197.976.
25. (23) J.J. Yeley, Toyota.
26. (38) David Gilliland, Ford, 195.346.
27. (46) Michael Annett, Chevrolet, 196.554.
28. (34) David Ragan, Ford, 194.452.
29. (42) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, 195.588.
30. (3) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet, 196.962.
31. (33) Ty Dillon, Chevrolet, 197.507.
32. (17) Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Ford, 196.816.
33. (43) Aric Almirola, Ford, 197.2.
34. (55) Michael Waltrip, Toyota, 190.517.
35. (20) Matt Kenseth, Toyota, 200.214.
36. (83) Johnny Sauter, Toyota, 198.22.
37. (6) Trevor Bayne, Ford, 197.256.
38. (9) Sam Hornish Jr., Ford, 197.243.
39. (2) Brad Keselowski, Ford, 193.357.
40. (47) AJ Allmendinger, Chevrolet, 198.212.
41. (13) Casey Mears, Chevrolet, 197.946.
42. (11) Denny Hamlin, Toyota.
43. (32) Bobby Labonte, Ford, Past Champion.

Failed to Qualify

44. (62) Brian Scott, Chevrolet, 197.828.
45. (29) Justin Marks, Toyota, 194.675.
46. (30) Ron Hornaday Jr., Chevrolet, 190.791.
47. (26) Jeb Burton, Toyota, 195.004.
48. (7) Alex Bowman, Chevrolet, 198.229.
49. (98) Josh Wise, Ford, 193.386.

Golf

Northern Trust Open

PGA Tour
Friday
At The Riviera Country Club
Los Angeles
Purse: $6.7 million
Yardage: 7,349; Par: 71
Partial Second Round

Retief Goosen	66-70—136	-6
Ryan Moore	69-68—137	-5
Graham DeLaet	70-67—137	-5
Justin Thomas	68-69—137	-5
Angel Cabrera	70-68—138	-4
Bubba Watson	70-69—139	-3
Derek Fathauer	66-73—139	-3
Jordan Spieth	69-70—139	-3
J.B. Holmes	70-69—139	-3
Paul Casey	70-69—139	-3
Seung-Yul Noh	71-69—140	-2
Vijay Singh	66-74—140	-2
Sergio Garcia	71-69—140	-2
Nick Watney	66-74—140	-2
James Hahn	66-74—140	-2
Carlos Ortiz	67-73—140	-2
Daniel Summerhays	66-74—140	-2
Tony Finau	70-70—140	-2
Bryce Molder	71-70—141	-1
Charles Howell III	71-70—141	-1
Keegan Bradley	73-68—141	-1
Jim Furyk	71-70—141	-1
Harris English	72-69—141	-1
Brendon Todd	69-72—141	-1
Charl Schwartzel	71-70—141	-1
William McGirt	68-74—142	E
Brian Stuard	71-71—142	E
Camilo Villegas	73-69—142	E
Dustin Johnson	70-72—142	E
Hunter Mahan	75-67—142	E
Ken Duke	72-70—142	E
Matt Jones	70-72—142	E
Matt Every	70-72—142	E
Vaughn Taylor	74-68—142	E

Australian Open

LPGA Tour
Friday
At Royal melbourne
Melbourne, Australia
Purse: $1.2 million
Yardage:6,741; Par: 73
Second Round
(a-amateur)

Ha Na Jang	71-69—140	-6
Lydia Ko	70-70—140	-6
Ariya Jutanugarn	69-71—140	-6
Charley Hull	71-71—142	-4
Amy Yang	73-70—143	-3
Jessica Korda	72-71—143	-3
Gwladys Nocera	71-73—144	-2
Mi Hyang Lee	75-70—145	-1
Christina Kim	74-71—145	-1
Julieta Granada	73-72—145	-1
Katherine Kirk	72-73—145	-1
Marion Ricordeau	72-73—145	-1
Melissa Reid	71-74—145	-1
Mina Harigae	75-71—146	E
Beatriz Recari	75-71—146	E
Minjee Lee	76-71—147	+1
Jenny Shin	76-71—147	+1
Marianne Skarpnord	75-72—147	+1
a-Christine Wolf	75-72—147	+1
Kelly Tan	74-73—147	+1
Mika Miyazato	73-74—147	+1
Chella Choi	72-75—147	+1
Tiffany Joh	72-75—147	+1
Ayako Uehara	72-75—147	+1
Paz Echeverria	71-76—147	+1
Karine Icher	75-73—148	+2
Kylie Walker	75-73—148	+2
Na Yeon Choi	74-74—148	+2
Shanshan Feng	74-74—148	+2
Catriona Matthew	74-74—148	+2
Holly Clyburn	73-75—148	+2
Ai Miyazato	73-75—148	+2
Mariajo Uribe	72-76—148	+2

College basketball

Friday's men's scores

EAST

Albany (NY) 70, Hartford 64
Alfred 98, Utica 84
Columbia 76, Brown 59
Harvard 69, Penn 46
Iona 72, Marist 68
Princeton 63, Dartmouth 56
Yale 62, Cornell 51

MIDWEST

Augustana (SD) 97, Upper Iowa 92
Cleveland St. 66, Green Bay 61, OT
Concordia (St.P.) 86, SW Minnesota St. 63
Martin Luther 65, Northland 54
Minn. Duluth 63, Mary 60
Minn. St.-Mankato 78, Sioux Falls 73
Minn. St.-Moorhead 99, Bemidji St. 61
Northern St. (SD) 64, Minn.-Crookston 54
Northwestern (Minn.) 64, Minn.-Morris 53
St. Cloud St. 93, Minot St. 85
St. Scholastica 61, Bethany Lutheran 59
Winona St. 82, Wayne (Neb.) 63

FAR WEST

Coll. of Idaho 100, Evergreen St. 67
Concordia (Ore.) 71, Oregon Tech 69
Warner Pacific 90, S. Oregon 78

EXHIBITION

E. Oregon 78, Northwest U. 72

Friday's women's scores

EAST

Columbia 83, Brown 74
Cornell 56, Yale 37
Marist 59, Iona 54
Marquette 72, Providence 64
Monmouth (NJ) 81, Niagara 69, 2OT
Penn 71, Harvard 61
Princeton 70, Dartmouth 31
Rider 58, Canisius 56
Seton Hall 95, Georgetown 68
St. John's 56, Villanova 51
Utica 76, Alfred 43

SOUTH

Kentucky Christian at Johnson, ccd.
Rhodes 78, Birmingham-Southern 53

MIDWEST

Augustana (SD) 61, Upper Iowa 44
Bradley 66, Loyola of Chicago 57
Concordia (St.P) 80, SW Minnesota St. 64
DePaul 78, Creighton 76
Drake 78, Evansville 69
Martin Luther 92, Northland 67
Minn. Duluth 73, Mary 40
Missouri St. 73, S. Illinois 57
N. Iowa 64, Indiana St. 29
North Central (Minn.) 60, Crown (Minn.) 55
Northern St. (SD) 68, Minn.-Crookston 52
Northwestern (Minn.) 64, Minn.-Morris 58
St. Scholastica 73, Bethany Lutheran 65
Wichita St. 46, Illinois St. 41
Winona St. 69, Wayne (Neb.) 56

SOUTHWEST

Concordia-Austin 59, Hardin-Simmons 51
Grand Canyon 75, Texas-Pan American 63
Houston Baptist 67, Incarnate Word 64
LeTourneau 60, Sul Ross St. 57
Lubbock Christian 86, St. Edward's 70
North Texas 74, FAU 55
Rice 80, FIU 59
South Carolina 73, Arkansas 56
Stephen F. Austin 71, Lamar 60
Texas-Arlington 55, Appalachian St. 45
Texas-Dallas 93, Mary Hardin-Baylor 68
UALR 63, Arkansas St. 61
Wayland Baptist 81, John Brown 55

FAR WEST

Arizona St. 68, UCLA 56
Oregon St. 66, Colorado 44
Southern Cal 77, Arizona 51
Utah 66, Oregon 64
Washington St. 83, Washington 72

EXHIBITION

Sioux Falls 74, Minn. St. (Mankato) 62

College hockey

Friday's scores

EAST

Bentley 1, Army 1, OT
Canisius 4, Mercyhurst 2
Niagara 6, Air Force 1
Robert Morris 4, RIT 3
Holy Cross 1, Sacred Heart 0
Dartmouth 3, Clarkson 2, OT
Colgate 2, Union (NY) 0
RPI 2, Cornell 2, OT
Brown 4, Princeton 1
Yale 2, Quinnipiac 2, OT
Utica 1, Nazareth 1
St. Lawrence 5, Harvard 1
Providence 3, UMass 2, OT
New Hampshire 4, UConn 1
Vermont 2, Merrimack 1
Notre Dame 2, Boston U. 2, OT
Mass.-Lowell 2, Boston College 2, OT
Northeastern 6, Maine 4

SOUTH

Ferris St. 2, Ala.-Huntsville 1

MIDWEST

Minnesota 2, Penn St. 1
Ohio St. 5, Michigan 3
N. Michigan 3, Bowling Green 2, OT
North Dakota 3, W. Michigan 1
Minn.-Duluth 3, Miami (Ohio) 1
St. Cloud St. 4, Neb.-Omaha 3
Bemidji St. 3, Alaska-Anchorage 2
Wisconsin 2, Michigan St. 1

FAR WEST

Denver 6, Colorado College 4

Deals

Friday's transactions

BASEBALL
Major League Baseball

MLB — Announced umpires Tripp Gibson, Will Little and Mark Ripperger have been named to the full-time Major League Umpiring staff. Announced the retirement of umpire Tim McClelland.
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF BASEBALL — Suspended Oakland minor league RHP Koby Gauna (Vermont-NYP) and Atlanta minor league RHP Richie Tate (Carolina-Carolina) 50 games each following second positive tests for a drug of abuse, a violation of the Minor League Drug Prevention and Treatment Program.

BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association

PHILADELPHIA 76ERS — Signed G Tim Frazier to a second 10-day contract.
SACRAMENTO KINGS — Signed G David Stockton to a 10-day contract.
SAN ANTONIO SPURS — Signed F Reggie Williams.

FOOTBALL
National Football League

CINCINNATI BENGALS — Terminated the contract of G Mike Pollak.
GREEN BAY PACKERS — Released LB Brad Jones.
ST. LOUIS RAMS — Named Chris Weinke quarterbacks coach.
SAN DIEGO CHARGERS — Agreed to terms with T King Dunlap on a four-year contract.

HOCKEY
National Hockey League

DETROIT RED WINGS — Recalled D Jakub Kindl from Grand Rapids (AHL).
EDMONTON OILERS — Recalled D Jordan Oesterle from Oklahoma City (AHL). Signed Fs Rob Klinkhammer and Ryan Hamilton to one-year contract extensions.
NEW YORK ISLANDERS — Recalled F Kael Mouillierat from Bridgeport (AHL).

MOTORSPORTS

NASCAR — Suspended driver Kurt Busch indefinitely after a Delaware judge said he committed an act of domestic violence against an ex-girlfriend and issued a no-contact order.

SOCCER
Major League Soccer

FC DALLAS — Signed F Michael Barrios.
TORONTO FC — Loaned F Gilberto to Vasco da Gama (Brazil).

COLLEGE

ILLINOIS — Announced men's redshirt junior basketball G Aaron Cosby will transfer.
N.C. STATE — Signed football coach Dave Doeren to a two-year contract extension through the 2019 season.

College baseball

Friday's scores

SOUTH

Albany (NY) at NC State, ppd.
Arkansas St. 8, Louisville 2
Ball St. 3, High Point 1
Berry 11-5, Park 3-6
Bowling Green at Morehead St., ccd.
Calumet at St. Catharine, ccd.
Carson-Newman 5, Anderson (SC) 0
Clemson 10, Maine 1
Erskine 9, Barton 0
Florida 4, Miami 3
Florida St. 7, Georgia 5
Ga. Southern 7, West Virginia 4
Hartford at Duke, ccd.
Huntington at Campbellsville, ccd.
King (Tenn.) 14, North Greenville 3
LSU 8, Boston College 3
Milwaukee at Louisville, ccd.
Mobile 4, Belhaven 2
Mount Olive 11, Southern Wesleyan 5
Notre Dame 8, Villanova 1
Ohio at Belmont, ccd.
Ohio Christian at Cumberlands, ccd.
Purdue-N. Central at Asbury, ccd.
Rhodes 10, Wheaton (Ill.) 6
Rutgers at Tennessee, ccd.
S. Illinois 4, E. Kentucky 1
Spring Arbor at Union (Ky.), ccd.
Tampa 11, GRU Augusta 3
Taylor 3-0, Bryan 2-8
UCLA 8, North Carolina 5
Valparaiso at Middle Tennessee, ccd.
Virginia 9, Marist 1
W. Illinois at Lipscomb, ccd.
W. Michigan 6, UT-Martin 4
Walsh at Trevecca Nazarene, ccd.
Wofford 5, Pittsburgh 3
Youngstown St. at Tennessee Tech, ccd.

SOUTHWEST

Castleton 6, Austin 2
Hardin-Simmons 4, Texas Lutheran 2
Houston-Victoria 11, Wayland Baptist 2
Howard Payne 5, Mary Hardin-Baylor 2
Louisiana College 1-4, LeTourneau 0-7
McMurry 3-10, SW Assemblies of God 0-0
Peru St. 13, Wayland Baptist 9
St. Edward's 8-2, Drury 0-6
Tarleton St. 10, Texas A&M-International 7
Texas A&M 9, Penn St. 3
Texas A&M-Kingsville 15, Texas College 4
Texas-Pan American 3, Abilene Christian 1
Texas Tech 8-5, N. Illinois 0-0
UTSA 8, Bryant 6
Wichita St. 14-6, Texas St. 1-1

TOURNAMENTS
Kleberg Bank College Classic
Second Round

Missouri 2, Sam Houston St. 0
Texas A&M-CC 6, Purdue 2

UTA Hilton Invitational
Opening Round

Houston Baptist 3, Michigan St. 1
Texas-Arlington 7, SE Louisiana 0

SPORTS BRIEFS/BOXING

Briefly

Reddick captures Truck Series race

The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Tyler Reddick checked his phone shortly after leaving victory lane and had 140 new text messages.

"That's unreal," he said.

Team owner Brad Keselowski quickly put it in perspective.

"You get 140 text messages for your first win, and after your 40th win, you get a text from your mom," Keselowski joked.

Either way, this was a victory Reddick may never forget.

With a little help from his teammate, Reddick won the Truck Series season opener Friday night at Daytona International Speedway.

Keselowski wanted a 1-2 finish, and for the final 20 or so laps, it looked as if he would get it. He settled for the next best thing.

Reddick held the lead down the stretch in the 100-lap race and had Theriault tucked in behind him on a final restart with six laps left. Theriault could have challenged for the lead, but chose to be a team player and block for Reddick.

"I hope I can do the same for him down the road," Reddick said. "It feels amazing. We got here in victory lane at Daytona. It's unbelievable."

Theriault spent the final few hundred yards blocking, preventing anyone from mounting a charge. Erik Jones pulled to the outside and beat Theriault to the finish line. Jones was second, followed by Scott Lagasse Jr., Theriault and Ray Black Jr.

Mayer leads Austrian downhill sweep

SAALBACH-HINTERGLEMM, Austria — In the space of two weeks, the Austrian downhill team has gone from "historical disaster" to a clean sweep of the podium

Olympic champion Matthias Mayer led an Austrian 1-2-3 finish in a World Cup race on home snow Saturday, marking the first such sweep in nine years for the once dominant "Wunderteam."

The feat came exactly 14 days after Austria failed to place a racer in the top 10 of the men's downhill at the world championships in Colorado for the first time in the history of the event — stretching back to 1931.

Mayer clocked 1 minute, 49.83 seconds down the rarely used Schneekristall-Zwolfer course to finish a slim 0.02 seconds ahead of Max Franz, who led both training runs. Hannes Reichelt placed third, 0.21 behind.

In other skiing news:

■ Giant slalom world champion Anna Fenninger used her 10th career World Cup victory to give the fight for the overall title new impetus.

The defending champion from Austria held on to her first-run lead to win a GS on Saturday in Maribor, Slovenia, reducing her deficit to overall leader Tina Maze of Slovenia by 100 points to just 84, with 12 races left.

In front of her home crowd, Maze fell with only two gates left in the first leg. Lindsey Vonn also failed to finish the opening run when the American crashed into the safety netting but escaped any serious injury.

Fenninger was 0.47 behind at the final split time but gained half a second on the German to finish in a total time of 2 minutes, 24.50 seconds and.

Tina Weirather of Liechtenstein came 0.30 behind, and American teenager Mikaela Shiffrin was third after the opening run but dropped to fifth, 0.54 off the lead.

Goosen hangs on to 1-shot lead at Riviera

LOS ANGELES — Retief Goosen rolled in a 30-foot birdie putt on his final hole Friday at Riviera to wind up in a spot he hasn't been in a long time — atop the leaderboard going into the weekend.

The late birdie gave Goosen a 1-under 70 and a one-shot lead over Ryan Moore, Graham DeLaet and 21-year-old rookie Justin Thomas.

Goosen hasn't won since 2009 and can't remember the last time he had a 36-hole lead. But even at 46, he has looked up to the task. Riviera is a stern test, and U.S. Open conditions have been mentioned. Goosen won two of those.

He was at 6-under 136, the highest 36-hole lead on the PGA Tour since the Quicken Loans National at Congressional. That's another U.S. Open course.

In other golf news:

■ World No. 1 Lydia Ko of New Zealand and Thailand's Ariya Jutanugarn shot 1-under 72s on Saturday to share the lead after the third round of the Women's Australian Open at Royal Melbourne.

Ko and Jutanugarn had 54-holes totals of 7-under 212, one better than South Korea's Amy Yang, who shot 70.

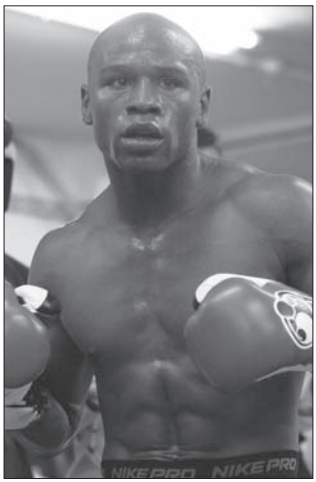
Julieta Granada of Paraguay and Australia's Katherine Kirk, also with 70s, were tied for fourth, three behind the leaders.

Orioles win salary arbitration with Aza

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Baltimore has beaten outfielder Alejandro de Aza in salary arbitration.

De Aza was awarded the Orioles' $5 million offer rather than his $5.65 million request on Saturday by James Oldham, Robert Herzog and Phillip LaPorte, who heard the case a day earlier.

De Aza hit .252 with eight homers and 41 RBIs last year for the Chicago White Sox and Orioles, who obtained him on Aug. 30 for a pair of minor leaguers. He made $4.25 million.



ALASTAIR GRANT, LEFT, AND RICK BOWMER, RIGHT/AP

Floyd Mayweather Jr., left, and Manny Pacquiao, right, will sqaure off on May 2 in a welterweight showdown that will be boxing's richest fight ever. Mayweather announced the bout on Friday after months of negotiations, posting a picture of the signed contract online.

It's on: Mayweather set to fight Pacquiao

BY TIM DAHLBERG
The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — The Fight is finally on.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. will meet Manny Pacquiao on May 2 in a welterweight showdown that will be boxing's richest fight ever. Mayweather himself announced the bout Friday after months of negotiations, posting a picture of the signed contract online.

"I promised the fans we would get this done and we did," Mayweather said.

The long anticipated bout at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas will almost surely break every financial record, and make both boxers richer than ever. Mayweather could earn $120 million or more, while Pacquiao's split of the purse will likely be around $80 million.

The fight, which matches boxing's two biggest attractions of recent years, has been in the making for five years. It finally came together in recent months with both fighters putting aside past differences over various issues — including drug testing and television rights — to reach agreement.

Pacquiao was sleeping in the Philippines when the fight was announced, but his camp issued a statement saying the fans deserve the long awaited fight.

"It is an honor to be part of this historic event," Pacquiao said. "I dedicate this fight to all the fans who willed this fight to happen and, as always, to bring glory to the Philippines and my fellow Filipinos around the world."

While the fight rivals the 2002 heavyweight title bout between Lennox Lewis and Mike Tyson for interest, it comes more than five years after the first real effort to put the fighters together in their prime. Most boxing observers believe both have lost some of their skills, though Mayweather remains a master defensive fighter and Pacquiao showed in his last fight against Chris Algieri that he still has tremendous quickness in his hands.

Still, Pacquiao is 36 and has been through many wars in the ring. And while Mayweather has been largely untouched in his career, he turns 38 on Tuesday.

> **'Manny is going to try to do what 47 before him failed to do, but he won't be successful. He will be No. 48.'**
>
> **Floyd Mayweather**
> Announcing scheduled fight with Manny Pacquiao

"I am the best ever, TBE, and this fight will be another opportunity to showcase my skills and do what I do best, which is win," Mayweather said in his announcement. "Manny is going to try to do what 47 before him failed to do, but he won't be successful. He will be No. 48."

Oddsmakers believe Mayweather will do just that, making him a 2½-1 favorite in the scheduled 12-round bout. The fight is expected to do record business in Nevada's legal sports books, with tens of millions wagered on the outcome.

It will also do record business at the box office — with the MGM expected to be scaled far higher than the $20 million live gate for Mayweather's 2013 fight with Canelo Alvarez. The pay-per-view revenue also is expected to be a record, though television executives said Friday they had yet to actually fix a price for people to buy the fight at home.

The fight will be televised as a joint venture between competing networks Showtime and HBO, which will share announcers with Jim Lampley and Al Bernstein reportedly handling the task at ringside.

Pacquiao began pushing hard for the fight after beating Algieri in November in Macau, and negotiations picked up last month when the two fighters met by chance at a Miami Heat basketball game and later talked with each other in Pacquiao's hotel room about making it happen.

Cavs top Wizards

Washington just 14-16 over last 30 games

By Howard Fendrich
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — LeBron James was not about to let teammate Kevin Love's flubbed attempt at a driving, two-handed dunk — the basketball smacked off the front of the rim — happen without some ribbing.

Especially not when James set aside first-half foul trouble to finish with 28 points in only 25 minutes Friday night, helping the surging Cleveland Cavaliers overwhelm the Washington Wizards 127-89 in a possible Eastern Conference playoff preview.

"I said something to him at halftime. Locker-room talk," James said with a smile, thinking about Love and his missed slam, about the only thing that went wrong for the Cavs on a night they handed the Wizards their biggest loss of the season.

"He laughed it off," James added. "We all laughed it off."

Easy to do on an evening like this.

Cleveland led by as many as 22 points before halftime and as many as 40 after to win for the 15th time in its past 17 games.

"I'm the leader of this team and I set the tempo. I set the pace," James said. "I set the aggressiveness and I just wanted the guys to follow me."

After the Wizards briefly made things interesting by pulling within 12 early in the third quarter, James hit consecutive three-pointers to make things comfortable for the visitors.

"That," said John Wall, the All-Star point guard who had 18 points and nine assists for Washington, "was kind of devastating."

The Cavaliers held the Wizards to 1-for-16 shooting on threes while going 14-for-33 themselves and produced the most points by a Washington opponent in a first quarter (35) and first half (65).

"They came to send a message, no question. Absolutely. That's what good teams do," Wizards coach Randy Wittman said about the Cavaliers. "That's where we've got to get."

Washington is 14-16 over its last 30 games, following a 19-6 start that prompted talk about whether the club was ready to be a real factor in the East.

Entering the first game for both teams after the All-Star break, the Wizards were fourth in the conference standings, and the Cavaliers were fifth. They now swap spots. If the clubs were to stay seeded 4-5 the rest of the way, they would meet in the first round of the playoffs.

And if Friday was any indication, the Wizards probably ought to hope that doesn't happen.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	37	17	.685	—
Brooklyn	22	31	.415	14½
Boston	20	32	.385	16
Philadelphia	12	42	.222	25
New York	10	44	.185	27

Southeast Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	43	12	.782	—
Washington	33	22	.600	10
Miami	23	30	.434	19
Charlotte	22	30	.423	19½
Orlando	18	39	.316	26

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	34	21	.618	—
Cleveland	34	22	.607	½
Milwaukee	31	23	.574	2½
Detroit	22	33	.400	12
Indiana	22	33	.400	12

Western Conference

Southwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Memphis	39	14	.736	—
Houston	36	18	.667	3½
Dallas	37	20	.649	4
San Antonio	34	21	.618	6
New Orleans	27	27	.500	12½

Northwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Portland	36	18	.667	—
Oklahoma City	29	25	.537	7
Denver	20	34	.370	16
Utah	20	34	.370	16
Minnesota	12	42	.222	24

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	43	9	.827	—
L.A. Clippers	36	19	.655	8½
Phoenix	29	26	.527	15½
Sacramento	19	34	.358	24½
L.A. Lakers	13	41	.241	31

Friday's games

Indiana 106, Philadelphia 95
Orlando 95, New Orleans 84
Toronto 105, Atlanta 80
Detroit 100, Chicago 91
Miami 111, New York 87
Minnesota 111, Phoenix 109
Cleveland 127, Washington 89
Dallas 111, Houston 100
Milwaukee 89, Denver 81
Utah 92, Portland 76
Sacramento 109, Boston 101
Golden State 110, San Antonio 99
Brooklyn 114, L.A. Lakers 105

Saturday's games

Oklahoma City at Charlotte
New Orleans at Miami
Phoenix at Chicago
Toronto at Houston
Sacramento at L.A. Clippers

Sunday's games

Cleveland at New York
Atlanta at Milwaukee
Washington at Detroit
Philadelphia at Orlando
Golden State at Indiana
Denver at Oklahoma City
Charlotte at Dallas
Memphis at Portland
Boston at L.A. Lakers

Monday's games

Philadelphia at Miami
Toronto at New Orleans
Milwaukee at Chicago
Minnesota at Houston
Boston at Phoenix
Brooklyn at Denver
San Antonio at Utah
Memphis at L.A. Clippers

Friday

Jazz 92, Trail Blazers 76

PORTLAND — Batum 3-6 2-2 8, Aldridge 5-16 4-5 14, Lopez 2-6 4-4 8, Lillard 7-15 2-2 19, Matthews 4-9 4-4 13, Kaman 3-5 0-0 6, Blake 0-1 2-2 2, McCollum 2-8 2-3 6, Leonard 0-5 0-0 0, Wright 0-1 0-0 0, Crabbe 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 26-72 20-22 76.

UTAH — Hayward 7-13 4-6 20, Favors 7-15 2-6 16, Gobert 2-3 0-0 4, Exum 1-4 0-0 3, Ingles 3-6 0-0 8, Booker 2-9 1-2 5, Burke 9-20 1-3 19, Hood 2-4 0-0 6, Millsap 3-7 0-0 9, Evans 1-1 0-0 2, Clark 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 37-83 8-17 92.

Portland	24	19	16	17—76
Utah	18	21	26	27—92

Three-Point Goals—Portland 4-22 (Lillard 3-9, Matthews 1-5, Blake 0-1, Batum 0-1, McCollum 0-2, Leonard 0-4), Utah 10-25 (Millsap 3-6, Hood 2-3, Ingles 2-3, Hayward 2-6, Exum 1-2, Booker 0-1, Clark 0-1, Burke 0-3). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Portland 46 (Aldridge 8), Utah 57 (Booker, Favors 9). Assists—Portland 12 (Batum 3), Utah 18 (Burke, Exum, Hayward 3). Total Fouls—Portland 13, Utah 21. Technicals—Kaman. A—19,911 (19,911).

Mavericks 111, Rockets 100

HOUSTON — Ariza 6-17 0-0 16, Motiejunas 3-8 0-0 7, Dorsey 3-3 0-0 6, Beverley 1-7 0-0 3, Harden 6-14 11-13 26, J.Smith 7-12 0-4 15, Brewer 4-11 2-5 10, Terry 3-8 0-0 8, Jones 3-7 3-4 9, Papanikolaou 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 36-87 16-26 100.

DALLAS — Parsons 4-9 4-4 13, Nowitzki 6-13 0-0 12, Chandler 5-9 0-0 10, Rondo 6-9 1-4 13, Ellis 5-13 2-2 12, Aminu 6-11 4-4 17, Harris 7-18 0-0 17, Jefferson 1-1 1-2 4, Barea 0-5 0-0 0, Villanueva 4-5 2-2 13. Totals 44-93 14-18 111.

Houston	20	23	24	33—100
Dallas	24	30	33	24—111

Three-Point Goals—Houston 12-37 (Ariza 4-11, Harden 3-5, Terry 2-7, Motiejunas 1-1, J.Smith 1-3, Beverley 1-5, Brewer 0-5), Dallas 9-24 (Villanueva 3-3, Harris 3-9, Jefferson 1-1, Parsons 1-3, Aminu 1-4, Nowitzki 0-1, Ellis 0-1, Barea 0-2). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Houston 58 (Jones 9), Dallas 56 (Chandler 14). Assists—Houston 20 (Harden 5), Dallas 26 (Harris 7). Total Fouls—Houston 22, Dallas 19. Technicals—Ellis. A—20,389 (19,200).

Nick Wass/AP

Cavaliers forward LeBron James overcame some early foul trouble to finish with 28 points in a 127-89 rout of the Wizards on Friday.

Nets 114, Lakers 105

BROOKLYN — Bogdanovic 7-13 2-2 18, J.Johnson 6-11 6-7 23, Plumlee 2-4 0-0 4, Williams 6-14 0-0 12, Anderson 4-6 3-4 14, Lopez 8-19 6-7 22, Morris 1-2 0-0 2, Brown 3-5 3-4 9, T.Young 4-8 0-0 8, Jordan 0-4 0-0 0, Jefferson 1-3 0-0 2. Totals 42-89 20-24 114.

L.A. LAKERS — Kelly 4-8 3-3 12, Black 1-4 1-2 3, Sacre 5-9 3-4 13, Clarkson 5-8 1-1 12, Ellington 3-10 2-2 8, Hill 5-15 2-4 12, Davis 8-10 0-3 16, N.Young 2-9 0-0 5, Price 2-7 2-2 6, Lin 6-9 5-8 18. Totals 41-89 19-29 105.

Brooklyn	34	22	40	18—114
L.A. Lakers	32	25	20	28—105

Three-Point Goals—Brooklyn 10-21 (J.Johnson 5-7, Anderson 3-4, Bogdanovic 2-7, Brown 0-1, Williams 0-2), L.A. Lakers 4-23 (Clarkson 1-3, Kelly 1-3, Lin 1-4, N.Young 1-5, Price 0-1, Ellington 0-7). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Brooklyn 53 (Lopez 14), L.A. Lakers 56 (Davis 14). Assists—Brooklyn 29 (Williams 15), L.A. Lakers 22 (Price 8). Total Fouls—Brooklyn 20, L.A. Lakers 18. A—18,997 (18,997).

Kings 109, Celtics 101

BOSTON — Turner 3-14 0-0 7, Bass 5-10 2-2 13, Zeller 9-16 4-4 22, Smart 5-15 4-9 16, Bradley 12-22 3-4 28, Crowder 3-11 0-0 6, Wallace 0-1 0-2 0, Young 1-3 2-5 4, Pressey 1-5 0-0 3, Randolph 1-3 0-0 2. Totals 40-100 15-26 101.

SACRAMENTO — Gay 9-18 8-8 28, Landry 0-0 0-0 0, Cousins 12-18 7-9 31, McCallum 3-7 0-0 8, McLemore 3-13 2-3 10, Thompson 3-4 0-0 6, Casspi 2-9 2-4 7, Williams 5-9 0-0 11, Miller 3-5 2-2 8. Totals 40-83 21-26 109.

Boston	27	24	23	27—101
Sacramento	28	28	26	27—109

Three-Point Goals—Boston 6-22 (Smart 2-9, Bass 1-1, Turner 1-2, Pressey 1-2, Bradley 1-4, Crowder 0-1, Wallace 0-1, Young 0-2), Sacramento 8-22 (McCallum 2-4, Gay 2-5, McLemore 2-7, Casspi 1-3, Williams 1-3). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Boston 53 (Bass 10), Sacramento 66 (Cousins 15). Assists—Boston 24 (Turner 8), Sacramento 26 (Casspi 6). Total Fouls—Boston 23, Sacramento 19. Technicals—Cousins. A—17,317 (17,317).

Bucks 89, Nuggets 81

DENVER — Chandler 8-20 0-0 19, Faried 4-11 0-1 8, Nurkic 5-9 1-3 11, Nelson 2-10 2-3 7, Gallinari 3-12 2-2 10, Arthur 1-6 3-4 5, Foye 2-6 0-0 5, Hickson 2-6 4-6 8, Green 3-4 2-2 8, Harris 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 30-84 14-21 81.

MILWAUKEE — Antetokounmpo 3-13 4-4 10, Dudley 4-8 2-4 11, Henson 6-8 2-2 14, Bayless 5-11 0-0 11, Middleton 4-10 5-5 15, Pachulia 4-10 0-0 8, Mayo 5-12 2-3 13, O'Bryant 1-1 1-2 3, Ennis 1-4 2-2 4. Totals 33-77 18-22 89.

Denver	21	23	21	16—81
Milwaukee	19	23	28	19—89

Three-Point Goals—Denver 7-26 (Chandler 3-12, Gallinari 2-6, Foye 1-3, Nelson 1-5), Milwaukee 5-14 (Middleton 2-4, Mayo 1-2, Dudley 1-3, Bayless 1-3, Antetokounmpo 0-1, Ennis 0-1). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Denver 51 (Nurkic 15), Milwaukee 58 (Antetokounmpo 9). Assists—Denver 18 (Nelson 7), Milwaukee 22 (Bayless 8). Total Fouls—Denver 19, Milwaukee 21. Technicals—Arthur, Denver defensive three second. A—16,110 (18,717).

Timberwolves 111, Suns 109

PHOENIX — Tucker 4-8 2-5 11, Mark. Morris 12-21 6-7 31, Len 4-10 3-3 11, Bledsoe 4-11 4-6 12, Green 5-14 0-0 12, Marc. Morris 5-9 2-4 14, Goodwin 3-6 5-6 12, Wright 2-4 0-0 4, Warren 1-6 0-0 2, Bullock 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 40-89 22-31 109.

MINNESOTA — Wiggins 9-15 2-2 20, Bennett 1-4 0-0 2, Pekovic 5-16 6-8 16, Rubio 2-10 5-6 10, Martin 10-16 7-9 28, LaVine 2-4 2-3 6, Dieng 6-8 3-6 15, Payne 0-5 1-2 1, Muhammad 3-4 1-2 7, Neal 2-4 0-0 6. Totals 40-86 27-38 111.

Phoenix	24	18	35	32—109
Minnesota	26	26	28	31—111

Three-Point Goals—Phoenix 7-17 (Marc.Morris 2-3, Green 2-6, Goodwin 1-1, Mark.Morris 1-2, Tucker 1-3, Bledsoe 0-2), Minnesota 4-15 (Neal 2-3, Rubio 1-3, Martin 1-6, Wiggins 0-1, Payne 0-2). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Phoenix 55 (Len 10), Minnesota 60 (Dieng 12). Assists—Phoenix 23 (Green, Bledsoe 6), Minnesota 24 (Rubio 14). Total Fouls—Phoenix 28, Minnesota 28. A—14,077 (19,356).

Heat 111, Knicks 87

MIAMI — Deng 3-9 7-8 13, Haslem 5-6 2-6 13, Whiteside 4-7 4-6 12, Chalmers 4-14 4-5 13, Wade 4-10 4-4 12, Ennis 2-6 0-0 4, Napier 6-11 2-2 18, Andersen 5-8 2-2 12, Johnson 5-8 1-2 14. Totals 38-79 26-35 111.

NEW YORK — Amundson 4-6 1-1 9, Early 1-7 0-0 2, Smith 2-7 0-0 4, Calderon 5-10 1-3 11, Galloway 7-14 2-4 19, Thomas 1-9 0-0 2, Aldrich 2-3 0-0 4, Bargnani 3-8 5-6 11, Hardaway Jr. 6-9 2-2 17, Wear 2-5 0-0 4, Acy 2-4 0-0 4. Totals 35-82 11-16 87.

Miami	25	33	29	24—111
New York	26	22	20	19— 87

Three-Point Goals—Miami 9-20 (Napier 4-5, Johnson 3-4, Haslem 1-1, Chalmers 1-7, Deng 0-1, Andersen 0-1, Ennis 0-1), New York 6-18 (Galloway 3-5, Hardaway Jr. 3-5, Bargnani 0-1, Acy 0-1, Calderon 0-3, Early 0-3). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Miami 65 (Whiteside 9), New York 37 (Smith, Bargnani 6). Assists—Miami 28 (Deng 8), New York 28 (Calderon 9). Total Fouls—Miami 18, New York 26. Technicals—Whiteside, New York defensive three second. A—19,812 (19,763).

Cavaliers 127, Wizards 89

CLEVELAND — James 12-21 1-3 28, Love 3-8 2-4 8, Mozgov 3-5 2-2 8, Irving 9-18 6-6 25, Smith 6-12 0-0 15, Thompson 2-5 2-2 6, Shumpert 4-8 1-2 12, Dellavedova 3-6 1-2 8, Miller 0-1 0-0 0, Jones 3-4 1-2 10, Harris 1-2 3-3 5, Haywood 0-0 2-2 2. Totals 46-90 21-28 127.

WASHINGTON — Pierce 3-10 3-3 9, Nene 8-11 2-2 18, Gortat 4-8 0-0 8, Wall 8-16 2-2 18, Porter 3-8 2-2 9, Humphries 3-5 1-1 7, Butler 1-6 0-0 2, Webster 1-5 2-4 4, Temple 1-4 0-2 2, Gooden 2-4 0-0 4, Blair 4-7 0-0 8, Sessions 0-2 0-0 0. Totals 38-86 12-16 89.

Cleveland	35	30	29	33—127
Washington	26	25	20	18— 89

Three-Point Goals—Cleveland 14-33 (Jones 3-4, James 3-5, Shumpert 3-6, Smith 3-8, Dellavedova 1-2, Irving 1-4, Miller 0-1, Love 0-3), Washington 1-16 (Porter 1-5, Webster 0-1, Wall 0-2, Pierce 0-4, Butler 0-4). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Cleveland 56 (Thompson 9), Washington 47 (Humphries, Gortat 6). Assists—Cleveland 28 (Irving 7), Washington 22 (Wall 9). Total Fouls—Cleveland 17, Washington 23. Technicals—Webster. A—20,356 (20,308).

Raptors 105, Hawks 80

TORONTO — J.Johnson 3-4 1-1 7, A.Johnson 5-9 0-0 11, Valanciunas 4-13 0-0 8, Lowry 4-10 1-1 10, DeRozan 9-16 2-2 21, Vasquez 3-10 0-0 7, Patterson 3-8 0-0 7, Williams 9-14 1-2 26, Hansbrough 1-2 1-2 3, Ross 1-8 0-0 3, Hayes 1-1 0-0 2, Fields 0-1 0-0 0, Stiemsma 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 43-96 6-8 105.

ATLANTA — Carroll 2-4 0-0 4, Millsap 5-15 1-4 11, Horford 3-9 0-0 7, Teague 3-9 5-6 11, Korver 3-13 3-4 11, Bazemore 3-7 2-3 10, Antic 1-4 3-4 5, Schroder 3-6 0-0 8, Scott 2-11 0-0 4, Mack 4-6 0-0 9, Jenkins 0-3 0-0 0, Muscala 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 29-88 14-21 80.

Toronto	26	23	28	28—105
Atlanta	26	19	13	22— 80

Three-Point Goals—Toronto 13-30 (Williams 7-10, A.Johnson 1-1, Lowry 1-2, Patterson 1-3, DeRozan 1-4, Ross 1-5, Vasquez 1-5), Atlanta 8-38 (Schroder 2-3, Bazemore 2-5, Korver 2-11, Horford 1-1, Mack 1-3, Carroll 0-1, Jenkins 0-1, Millsap 0-2, Antic 0-2, Teague 0-3, Scott 0-6). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Toronto 58 (Valanciunas 13), Atlanta 63 (Horford 12). Assists—Toronto 27 (Lowry 9), Atlanta 19 (Teague 5). Total Fouls—Toronto 20, Atlanta 10. A—18,968 (18,729).

Pacers 106, 76ers 95

INDIANA — S.Hill 2-4 0-0 5, West 4-9 0-0 8, Hibbert 4-9 0-0 8, G.Hill 2-8 3-4 7, Miles 6-12 3-3 17, Mahinmi 0-0 1-2 1, Watson 1-7 0-0 2, Stuckey 10-16 8-8 30, Scola 6-10 3-5 16, Rudez 4-5 0-0 10, Allen 1-1 0-0 2, Sloan 0-2 0-0 0. Totals 40-83 18-22 106.

PHILADELPHIA — Covington 2-10 4-4 8, Mbah a Moute 6-12 2-3 16, Noel 5-9 2-4 12, Frazier 5-9 1-3 13, Richardson 3-7 0-0 7, Thompson 2-6 0-0 5, Grant 5-11 5-10 16, Sims 0-4 3-3 3, McGee 1-3 0-0 2, Sampson 4-12 2-2 11, Aldemir 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 34-84 19-29 95.

Indiana	23	35	29	19—106
Philadelphia	16	24	28	27— 95

Three-Point Goals—Indiana 8-22 (Rudez 2-3, Stuckey 2-4, Miles 2-7, Scola 1-1, S.Hill 1-2, G.Hill 0-1, Sloan 0-1, Watson 0-3), Philadelphia 8-25 (Frazier 2-3, Mbah a Moute 2-5, Richardson 1-2, Thompson 1-3, Sampson 1-3, Grant 1-4, Covington 0-5). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Indiana 50 (West, Scola, Hibbert 7), Philadelphia 57 (Mbah a Moute 10). Assists—Indiana 24 (West, Stuckey, G.Hill, Watson 4), Philadelphia 18 (Frazier 7). Total Fouls—Indiana 23, Philadelphia 20. Technicals—Mahinmi. A—16,777 (20,318).

Magic 95, Pelicans 84

NEW ORLEANS — Cunningham 3-4 0-0 6, Davis 5-15 3-4 13, Asik 3-5 0-0 6, Evans 4-13 6-8 14, E.Gordon 4-8 0-0 11, Pondexter 3-4 6-8 13, Anderson 4-11 4-6 13, Babbitt 2-3 0-0 4, Fredette 0-3 2-2 2, Ajinca 1-3 0-0 2, Withey 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 29-69 21-28 84.

ORLANDO — Fournier 7-16 0-0 16, Frye 1-6 0-0 2, Vucevic 9-19 0-0 18, Payton 4-7 2-4 10, Oladipo 11-18 0-0 22, Dedmon 3-4 0-0 6, Green 4-6 0-0 9, Nicholson 2-6 1-2 6, A.Gordon 1-2 0-0 2, Ridnour 2-4 0-0 4, O'Quinn 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 44-88 3-6 95.

New Orleans	20	27	24	13—84
Orlando	19	24	30	22—95

Three-Point Goals—New Orleans 5-19 (E.Gordon 3-5, Pondexter 1-2, Anderson 1-6, Fredette 0-1, Evans 0-5), Orlando 4-18 (Fournier 2-6, Green 1-1, Nicholson 1-2, Ridnour 0-1, Oladipo 0-4, Frye 0-4). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—New Orleans 44 (Davis 11), Orlando 50 (Vucevic 13). Assists—New Orleans 21 (Evans 10), Orlando 22 (Payton 11). Total Fouls—New Orleans 11, Orlando 21. A—18,259 (18,500).

Warriors 110, Spurs 99

SAN ANTONIO — Leonard 5-7 1-2 12, Duncan 3-8 2-4 8, Baynes 6-12 0-0 12, Parker 0-4 2-2 2, Da.Green 1-4 2-2 4, Ginobili 4-7 0-0 8, Diaw 5-7 0-0 11, Mills 3-6 1-2 8, Splitter 3-5 2-2 8, Belinelli 4-8 0-0 9, Bonner 0-1 2-2 2, Joseph 2-5 3-4 8, Williams 3-7 0-0 7. Totals 39-81 15-20 99.

GOLDEN STATE — Barnes 7-11 0-0 16, Dr.Green 4-11 0-1 11, Bogut 2-4 0-0 4, Curry 8-17 5-5 25, Thompson 7-17 3-4 20, Lee 5-5 1-4 11, Iguodala 5-8 0-2 14, Barbosa 2-5 0-0 5, Speights 1-3 2-2 4, Livingston 0-1 0-0 0, Ezeli 0-2 0-0 0, Holiday 0-0 0-0 0, Rush 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 41-84 11-18 110.

San Antonio	29	26	13	31— 99
Golden State	27	35	27	21—110

Three-Point Goals—San Antonio 6-19 (Leonard 1-1, Joseph 1-1, Diaw 1-2, Belinelli 1-2, Mills 1-3, Williams 1-4, Parker 0-2, Ginobili 0-2, Da.Green 0-2), Golden State 17-33 (Iguodala 4-6, Curry 4-8, Dr.Green 3-6, Thompson 3-7, Barnes 2-4, Barbosa 1-2). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—San Antonio 51 (Baynes 10), Golden State 46 (Iguodala, Dr.Green, Bogut 6). Assists—San Antonio 25 (Parker 6), Golden State 29 (Curry 11). Total Fouls—San Antonio 20, Golden State 18. Technicals—Curry, Golden State Coach Kerr. A—19,596 (19,596).

Pistons 100, Bulls 91

CHICAGO — Dunleavy 0-5 0-0 0, Gasol 4-10 4-4 12, Noah 4-8 2-4 10, Rose 2-9 4-4 8, J.Butler 9-18 9-9 30, Snell 1-3 0-0 2, Gibson 7-13 1-1 15, Hinrich 3-4 0-0 7, Brooks 2-6 0-0 4, Mirotic 1-2 0-0 3. Totals 33-78 20-22 91.

DETROIT — C.Butler 6-10 6-6 20, Monroe 9-14 2-5 20, Drummond 7-18 4-13 18, Dinwiddie 5-9 1-2 12, Caldwell-Pope 5-11 0-2 12, Tolliver 0-3 0-0 0, Martin 0-3 0-0 0, Lucas III 4-8 0-0 9, Meeks 2-8 5-5 9. Totals 38-84 18-33 100.

Chicago	23	30	15	23— 91
Detroit	22	23	32	23—100

Three-Point Goals—Chicago 5-16 (J.Butler 3-5, Hinrich 1-1, Mirotic 1-1, Dunleavy 0-2, Brooks 0-2, Snell 0-2, Rose 0-3), Detroit 6-22 (Caldwell-Pope 2-3, C.Butler 2-5, Dinwiddie 1-2, Lucas III 1-4, Martin 0-2, Meeks 0-3, Tolliver 0-3). Fouled Out—Noah. Rebounds—Chicago 49 (Noah 14), Detroit 59 (Drummond 20). Assists—Chicago 16 (J.Butler 5), Detroit 19 (Dinwiddie 9). Total Fouls—Chicago 23, Detroit 23. A—19,053 (22,076).

NBA

John Amis/AP

Atlanta's Paul Millsap, right, shoots as Toronto's James Johnson, left, defends during the first half of Friday's game in Atlanta.

Roundup

Raptors roll over Hawks

Matchup of top two teams in East turns into rout

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The Toronto Raptors proved they're a team to watch in the Eastern Conference.

They also showed once again they can beat the Atlanta Hawks — and in convincing fashion.

The matchup of the Eastern Conference's top teams turned into rout as Toronto opened the second half of the season with a surprisingly lopsided 105-80 win over the Hawks on Friday night.

Lou Williams had 26 points while making seven of 10 three-pointers and DeMar DeRozan had 21 points for Toronto. The Raptors outscored the Hawks 28-13 in the third quarter to turn a close game into a 23-point lead.

Atlanta still has a 5½-game lead over Toronto in the Eastern Conference standings, but the Raptors won the season series 3-1. No other team has two wins over the Hawks.

Williams said the Raptors were motivated by Atlanta's similarly lopsided 110-89 win at Toronto on Jan. 16.

"We were embarrassed on our home court so we wanted to come out and play with that on our mind," Williams said.

The Raptors won with defense. Williams had four of Toronto's 15 steals — matching the team's season high. The Raptors blocked nine shots.

"We were scrambling," said DeRozan, who had three steals. "We tried not to let them get anything easy. We didn't want to let them get going, get a rhythm. As long as we do that, we can live with the outcome."

Atlanta's Al Horford said the Hawks wouldn't be worried about a matchup with Toronto if the teams meet in the playoffs.

"No. Give them credit, they're a great team," Horford said. "But we're a confident group."

Heat 111, Knicks 87: With Chris Bosh hospitalized in South Florida for tests and Goran Dragic not yet available, eight of nine players scored in double figures in visiting Miami's victory over New York.

Kings 109, Celtics 101: DeMarcus Cousins had 31 points and 15 rebounds, Rudy Gay scored 28 points and host Sacramento beat Boston to make new coach George Karl a winner in his return to the NBA.

Bucks 89, Nuggets 81: Khris Middleton scored 15 points, John Henson added 14 and host Milwaukee beat Denver in its first game since tweaking its roster at the NBA trade deadline.

Pistons 100, Bulls 91: Andre Drummond had 18 points and 20 rebounds to lead short-handed Detroit past visiting Chicago.

Pacers 106, 76ers 95: Rodney Stuckey scored a season-high 30 points off the bench, C.J. Miles added 17 and visiting Indiana beat Philadelphia for its fifth victory in six games.

Mavericks 111, Rockets 100: Devin Harris scored 17 points, Al-Farouq Aminu set season highs with 17 points and 12 rebounds, and balanced Dallas held on to beat visiting Houston.

Timberwolves 111, Suns 109: Kevin Martin scored 28 points and Andrew Wiggins added 20 to lead host Minnesota past Phoenix.

Magic 95, Pelicans 84: Victor Oladipo scored 22 points, and Nik Vucevic had 18 points and 13 rebounds in host Orlando's victory over New Orleans.

Jazz 92, Trail Blazers 76: Gordon Hayward scored 20 points, and Trey Burke had 19 points off the bench to help host Utah beat Portland.

Nets 114, Lakers 105: Joe Johnson scored 23 points and Brook Lopez added 22 off the bench, leading visiting Brooklyn to a victory over skidding Los Angeles.

Warriors pull away from Spurs

By Antonio Gonzalez
The Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — At the beginning of the night, Golden State Warriors coach Steve Kerr called the San Antonio Spurs a "measuring stick" for any team and the "gold standard" of basketball.

By the end, Kerr had plans to meet up with Spurs coach Gregg Popovich over a glass of wine — though his mentor didn't seem to be in a chatty mood.

Not after what Kerr's team just did.

Stephen Curry had 25 points and 11 assists, Klay Thompson scored 20 and the Warriors returned from the All-Star break to beat the Spurs 110-99 on Friday night.

"We probably won't even talk about the game," Kerr said.

Popovich poked his head out of the visiting locker room after the game, mimed an interview for a few seconds as a couple of reporters waited and immediately walked inside. He did not take questions.

For at least one night, Curry and the Warriors seemed to have all the answers for Popovich and his players.

Curry controlled the game the way he so often has this season, burnishing his MVP credentials by leading Golden State to big runs at the end of the second and third quarters.

The Warriors went ahead by 21 points entering the fourth, and Popovich rested his regulars the final 12 minutes.

"They're still a scary group," Warriors forward Andre Iguodala said. "You have to be locked in to play those guys."

Aron Baynes had 12 points and 10 rebounds, and Kawhi Leonard scored 12 points for San Antonio, which lost 119-115 at the Los Angeles Clippers on Thursday night in its first game back.

The Spurs are in the middle of a season-long nine-game trip sandwiched around the break, going 2-3 so far. It was the lone home game for the Warriors during an 11-game stretch wrapped around All-Star weekend.

"We shot very poorly and they didn't," San Antonio's Manu Ginobili said. "We didn't play that bad. They were just inspired and we couldn't make shots."

Marcio Jose Sanchez/AP

Golden State's Stephen Curry celebrates as his team takes a lead over San Antonio during the second half of Friday's game in Oakland, Calif. Golden State won 110-99.

MLB: AL SPRING TRAINING CAPSULES

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Baltimore Orioles

Manager: Buck Showalter (fifth full season).
2014: 96-66, first place, lost to Royals in ALCS.
Training Town: Sarasota, Fla.
First Workout: Feb. 20/25.
He's Here: OF Travis Snider, C J.P. Arencibia, RHP Eddie Gamboa, LHP Cesar Cabral.
He's Outta Here: OF Nelson Cruz, RF Nick Markakis, LHP Andrew Miller, C Nick Hundley, INF Steve Lombardozzi, 2B Jemile Weeks, OF Quintin Berry.
Going campin': The Orioles, who didn't add much to a team that won the AL East for the first time since 1997, hope the return of injured stars Matt Wieters and Manny Machado will make up for the loss of Markakis and Cruz. The Orioles will carefully monitor third baseman Machado, who claims to be 100 percent following knee surgery. The most significant competition during spring training will be between those players seeking to fill out the outfield. One big question: Can left fielder Alejandro De Aza replace Markakis at the top of the lineup? The rotation appears set, although 2014 disappointment Ubaldo Jimenez hopes to pitch well enough to squeeze his name onto the list. First baseman Chris Davis, whose 25-game amphetamine suspension ends after opening day, will try to regain his 2013 form.

New York Yankees

Manager: Joe Girardi (eighth season).
2014: 84-78, second place.
Training Town: Tampa, Fla.
First Workout: Feb. 21/26.
He's Here: LHP Andrew Miller, RHP Scott Baker, DH-1B-OF Garrett Jones, RHP Nathan Eovaldi, RHP Chris Martin, INF-OF Martin Prado, RHP David Phelps, LHP Justin Wilson, SS Didi Gregorius.
He's Outta Here: SS Derek Jeter, RHP David Robertson, RHP Hiroki Kuroda, OF Ichiro Suzuki, RHP Shawn Kelley, C Francisco Cervelli, RHP Shane Greene.
Going campin': Now that Jeter has retired, who becomes the face of the Yankees? Will it be ... A-Rod? Alex Rodriguez returns after his yearlong MLB suspension and turns 40 in July. No telling how much he has left. After making the playoffs in 17 of 18 seasons, New York has been absent the last two years. To get deep into October, they need Masahiro Tanaka, CC Sabathia, Carlos Beltran, Mark Teixeira and others to bounce back from injuries and Brian McCann, Jacoby Ellsbury, Brett Gardner to put up better numbers. Plus, New York must pick a closer with Robertson gone. Smooth-fielding Gregorius, acquired from Arizona, gets the first shot at succeeding Jeter. This is the first season since 1995 minus the Captain — they'll fill his spot at shortstop, they'll miss him much more in the clubhouse.

Toronto Blue Jays

Manager: John Gibbons (third season).
2014: 83-79, third place.
Training Town: Dunedin, Fla.
First Workout: Feb. 23/27.
He's Here: 3B Josh Donaldson, RHP Marco Estrada, RHP Liam Hendriks, C Russell Martin, LHP Juan Oramas, OF Michael Saunders, RHP Bo Schultz, 1B Justin Smoak, 2B Devon Travis, RHP Matt West.
He's Outta Here: OF Melky Cabrera, INF Juan Francisco, RHP Kendall Graveman, OF Anthony Gose, LHP J.A. Happ, RHP Casey Janssen, 3B Brett Lawrie, 1B Adam Lind, RHP Brandon Morrow, LHP Sean Nolin, OF Colby Rasmus, RHP Sergio Santos.
Going campin': By adding All-Star third baseman Donaldson and Martin to a lineup that already boasts shortstop Jose Reyes and sluggers Jose Bautista and Edwin Encarnacion, the Blue Jays feel confident their batting order will be among baseball's best. That's just as well, because plenty of question marks remain. A bullpen that struggled in 2014 had more departures than additions, leaving 22-year-old Aaron Sanchez (3 saves, 1.09 ERA in 24 games) the likely candidate to replace Janssen as closer. The outfield will look different after Cabrera and Rasmus left via free agency. Saunders, acquired from Seattle, will take Cabrera's spot in left, while the Blue Jays hope to find success in center by platooning Kevin Pillar and Dalton Pompey.

Tampa Bay Rays

Manager: Kevin Cash (first season).
2014: 77-85, fourth place.
Training Town: Port Charlotte, Fla.
First Workout: Feb. 23/28.
He's Here: INF Asdrubal Cabera, C Rene Rivera, RHP Kevin Jepsen, RHP Ernesto Frieri, C-DH John Jaso, OF Steven Souza Jr., RHP Burch Smith.
He's Outta Here: Manager Joe Maddon, executive vice president of baseball operations Andrew Friedman, OF Wil Myers, INF-OF Ben Zobrist, SS Yunel Escobar, C Ryan Hanigan, OF Matt Joyce, RHP Jeremy Hellickson, C Jose Molina, LHP Cesar Ramos, RHP Joel Peralta, INF-OF Sean Rodriguez.
Going campin': No AL team has undergone as much change as the budget-minded Rays, who lost Maddon and Friedman before overhauling the roster. Just four players from last year's opening-day lineup — Evan Longoria, James Loney, David DeJesus and Desmond Jennings — remain in the organization. Former team president Matt Silverman has taken over and has shown he's not afraid to take risks. He hired the 37-year-old Cash, who has no previous managerial experience. He's also reshaped the roster after finishing with a losing record for first time since 2007, putting together seven trades that sent a total of nine players packing, including Myers, 2013 Rookie of the Year, and Zobrist, the three-time All-Star. What's largely the same is the club's strongest asset, starting pitching: The Rays have Alex Cobb, Chris Archer, Drew Smyly and Jake Odorizzi penciled into a rotation that should get better when Matt Moore returns from elbow surgery this summer.

Boston Red Sox

Manager: John Farrell (third season).
2014: 71-91, fifth place.
Training Town: Fort Myers, Fla.
First Workout: Feb. 21/25.
He's Here: 3B Pablo Sandoval, OF Hanley Ramirez, LHP Wade Miley, RHP Rick Porcello, RHP Justin Masterson, C Ryan Hanigan.
He's Outta Here: LHP Jon Lester, OF Yoenis Cespedes, 3B Will Middlebrooks, C David Ross.
Goin' camping: Last place in 2012. World Series in 2013. Last place in 2014. Can the Red Sox ride the roller coaster again this season and go from worst to first a second time? The club signed Sandoval as its big offseason splash, and added former Boston farmhand Ramirez, too. But it didn't bring back Lester and didn't compete for the big names on the pitching market. The rotation of Clay Buchholz, Porcello, Miley, right-hander Joe Kelly and perhaps Masterson lacks an ace. The outfield is crowded with question marks.

Detroit Tigers

Manager: Brad Ausmus (second season).
2014: 90-72, first place, lost to Orioles in ALDS.
Training Town: Lakeland, Fla.
First Workout: Feb. 20/25.
He's Here: OF Yoenis Cespedes, RHP Shane Greene, RHP Alfredo Simon, OF Anthony Gose, RHP Alex Wilson, LHP Tom Gorzelanny, RHP Josh Zeid.
He's Outta Here: RHP Max Scherzer, RHP Rick Porcello, OF Torii Hunter, RHP Joba Chamberlain, SS Eugenio Suarez, LHP Phil Coke, UT Don Kelly, OF Ezequiel Carrera.
Going campin': After four straight AL Central titles, the Tigers look a bit more vulnerable following Scherzer's departure. The big issue heading into spring training is the health of sluggers Miguel Cabrera and Victor Martinez. Cabrera had ankle surgery early in the offseason, and Martinez had knee surgery Feb. 10. Martinez is expected back by the start of the season, and the Tigers are hopeful that Cabrera can continue to be one of the game's most productive hitters. After losing Scherzer and trading Porcello, Detroit slotted Greene and Simon into the back of the rotation. The bullpen remains a concern after a rough 2014. Closer Joe Nathan returns at age 40, hoping his second season in Detroit will be smoother than the first. Hard-throwing right-hander Bruce Rondon could give Detroit's bullpen a boost after missing 2014 with a torn ligament in his pitching elbow.

Kansas City Royals

Manager: Ned Yost (sixth season).
2014: 89-73, second place, lost to Giants in World Series.
Training Town: Surprise, Ariz.
First Workout: Feb. 20/25.
He's Here: RHP Edinson Volquez, DH Kendrys Morales, OF Alex Rios, RHP Kris Medlen, RHP Jandel Gustave, RHP Ryan Madson.
He's Outta Here: RHP James Shields, DH Billy Butler, OF Nori Aoki, LHP Scott Downs, RHP Aaron Crow, 2B Johnny Giavotella, INF Jayson Nix, OF Raul Ibanez, OF Josh Willingham.
Going campin': Just about the only way the Royals can build on last season is by winning it all. The long-downtrodden franchise ended a 29-year playoff drought in a big way, winning a wild wild-card game and then streaking all the way to Game 7 of the World Series, where it finally fell to the Giants. Kansas City lost one of the faces of the franchise in Butler and a fiery, dependable ace in Shields to free agency. But the notoriously frugal organization paid out for Volquez, Rios and Morales as replacements. But for all the changes, the real key to this season may be the returnees. Right-hander Yordano Ventura and left-hander Danny Duffy need to take the next step toward being front-line starters. And position players such as first baseman Eric Hosmer and third baseman Mike Moustakas need to provide more consistent run production. The defense should remain strong with Gold Glove winners Hosmer, catcher Sal Perez and left fielder Alex Gordon, along with slick shortstop Alcides Escobar. But can Kansas City's historically dominant bullpen deliver again? It returns intact with setup men Kelvin Herrera and Wade Davis ahead of All-Star closer Greg Holland.

Cleveland Indians

Manager: Terry Francona (third season).
2014: 85-77, third place.
Training Town: Goodyear, Ariz.
First Workout: Feb. 20/24.
He's Here: DH-1B Brandon Moss, RHP Gavin Floyd, RHP Shaun Marcum, RHP Anthony Swarzak.
He's Outta Here: DH Jason Giambi, INF Justin Sellers, C Chris Gimenez.
Going campin': The Indians were one of the least-active teams during the offseason for a reason. They've got most of their players — including a key core — under contract and didn't have a pressing need other than a big bat. Unfortunately, they're priced out of that market. Despite injuries and sub-par seasons from several notable players, Francona had his team in the playoff mix until the final week. The Tribe needs bounce-back years from second baseman Jason Kipnis, outfielder Michael Bourn and first baseman/right fielder Nick Swisher, who underwent surgery on both knees. Cy Young winner Corey Kluber and outfielder Michael Brantley are emerging superstars but they can't carry this squad. Defense will be a major emphasis this spring as the Indians try to cut down on a major-leading 116 errors.

Chicago White Sox

Manager: Robin Ventura (fourth season).
2014: 73-89, fourth place.
Training Town: Glendale, Ariz.
First Workout: Feb. 20/24.
He's Here: 1B Adam LaRoche, RHP Jeff Samardzija, RHP David Robertson, OF Melky Cabrera, LHP Zach Duke.
He's Outta Here: 1B-DH Paul Konerko.
Going campin': It's hard to say which Chicago team had a busier offseason. While the Cubs hired manager Joe Maddon and signed ace Jon Lester, the White Sox made moves that sent expectations soaring on the South Side. Now, they are hoping to contend in the AL Central after back-to-back losing seasons. They injected left-handed pop into their lineup when they signed LaRoche, complementing AL Rookie of the Year Jose Abreu, and added to the top of the order with the addition of Cabrera. He figures to slot into the No. 2 spot behind Adam Eaton. The White Sox also strengthened their rotation and their bullpen. Samardzija figures to take the second spot in the rotation between Chris Sale and Jose Quintana. Robertson, who had 39 saves in 44 chances with the Yankees, and Duke bolster a bullpen that tied for seventh in the majors with 21 blown saves and had the fourth-lowest save percentage (63.2).

Minnesota Twins

Manager: Paul Molitor (first season).
2014: 70-92, fifth place.
Training Town: Fort Myers, Fla.
First Workout: Feb. 23/28.
He's Here: RHP Ervin Santana, RF Torii Hunter, RHP Tim Stauffer.
He's Outta Here: Manager Ron Gardenhire, RHP Jared Burton, RHP Yohan Pino, RHP Anthony Swarzak, 1B-RF Chris Colabello, RF-1B Chris Parmelee.
Going campin': Molitor takes over for Gardenhire, who managed the team for 13 seasons. As a minor league instructor, Molitor had a strong influence on and gained the respect of many young players. Now, under greater scrutiny, he'll continue to help develop up-and-comers like shortstop Danny Santana, center fielder Aaron Hicks, left fielder Oswaldo Arcia, designated hitter Kennys Vargas and catcher Josmil Pinto, not to mention rising stars in center fielder Byron Buxton and third baseman Miguel Sano. Setting a confident tone for the season will be important for a team that has lost an average of 96 games over the last four years. A return to his standard of productivity by first baseman Joe Mauer is badly needed by the Twins, too.

Los Angeles Angels

Manager: Mike Scioscia (16th season).
2014: 98-64, first place, lost to Royals in ALDS.
Training Town: Tempe, Ariz.
First Workout: Feb. 20/25.
He's Here: LF Matt Joyce, LHP Andrew Heaney, C Drew Butera, LF Daniel Robertson, RHP Nick Tropeano, SS Roberto Baldoquin, LHP Cesar Ramos.
He's Outta Here: 2B Howie Kendrick, 2B Gordon Beckham, C Hank Conger, RF Brennan Boesch, RHP Yoslan Herrera, 3B John McDonald.
Going campin': Before the Angels can atone for last October's flop, they'll have to figure out how to emulate last summer's outstanding regular season. Two key contributors will start spring training slowly while recovering from injuries, but right-hander Garrett Richards and outfielder Josh Hamilton hope to be ready around opening day. Most of last season's roster returns alongside cornerstones Mike Trout and Albert Pujols, but the Angels have a glaring hole at second base with the trade of mainstay Howie Kendrick for tantalizing pitching prospect Heaney, who will compete for a rotation spot. But the spotlight will be firmly on Trout as he attempts to follow up his MVP season with even bigger achievements — most importantly in October.

Oakland Athletics

Manager: Bob Melvin (fifth season).
2014: 88-74, second place, lost to Royals in wild-card playoff.
Training Town: Mesa, Ariz.
First Workout: Feb. 20/25.
He's Here: INF Ben Zobrist, 3B Brett Lawrie, RHP Tyler Clippard, 1B Billy Butler, INF Marcus Semien, RHP Jesse Hahn, RHP Chris Bassitt, 1B Ike Davis, LHP Sean Nolin, RHP, Kendall Graveman, C Josh Fegley.
He's Outta Here: 3B Josh Donaldson, LHP Jon Lester, RHP Jeff Samardzija, SS Jed Lowrie, C Derek Norris, 1B-OF Brandon Moss, C John Jaso, RHP Luke Gregerson, RHP Jason Hammel, DH Adam Dunn, INF Alberto Callaspo, C Geovany Soto, INF Nick Punto, OF Jonny Gomes.
Going campin': It was another busy offseason in Oakland after the team's third straight postseason berth ended in a wild-card playoff loss to Kansas City. Key players like Donaldson, Samrdzija, Norris and Moss were traded while Lester, Lowrie and Gregerson left as free agents. Oakland has dealt away five of its seven All-Stars from last year. In all, GM Billy Beane made nine trades involving 27 players — and infielder Yunel Escobar twice — in an attempt to overhaul the team on the fly. With these deals, a staggering 28 of the 40 players on the roster were acquired by trades. The most important additions are Zobrist and Clippard. Zobrist will solidify second base and provide a middle-of-the-lineup hitter while Clippard can close until Sean Doolittle recovers from a shoulder injury.

Seattle Mariners

Manager: Lloyd McClendon (second season).
2014: 87-75, third place.
Training Town: Peoria, Ariz.
First Workout: Feb. 21/25.
He's Here: LHP J.A. Happ, C John Baker, DH Nelson Cruz, OF Justin Ruggiano, OF Seth Smith.
He's Outta Here: OF Michael Saunders, DH Kendrys Morales, OF Corey Hart, RHP Chris Young, 1B Justin Smoak, RHP Brandon Maurer.
Going campin': Welcome to the new world of high expectations for the Mariners. A year after acquiring Robinson Cano and finishing one-game out of the playoffs, the Mariners signed third baseman Kyle Seager to a seven-year extension, nabbed home run champ Cruz in free agency and added a suitable pair of outfielders in Justin Ruggiano and Seth Smith. Suddenly the Mariners are being viewed as one of the favorites, and not just in their division. Most of Seattle's roster is set headed into spring, with two exceptions: shortstop and one spot in the rotation. Chris Taylor and Brad Miller are vying for the starting job at shortstop. Taylor is the better glove, Miller has more potential at the plate. Seattle's rotation is mostly set with Felix Hernandez, Hisashi Iwakuma, James Paxton and Happ. The fifth spot will likely come down to Taijuan Walker, Roenis Elias and Erasmo Ramirez.

Houston Astros

Manager: A.J. Hinch (first season).
2014: 70-92, (fourth place).
Training Town: Kissimmee, Fla.
First Workout: Feb. 21/25.
He's Here: Manager A.J. Hinch, SS Jed Lowrie, C-OF Evan Gattis, OF Colby Rasmus, C Hank Conger, RHP Dan Straily, RHP Luke Gregerson, RHP Pat Neshek, 3B Luis Valbuena.
He's Outta Here: Manager Bo Porter, OF Dexter Fowler, C Carlos Corporan, RHP Michael Foltynewicz.
Going campin': The Astros look to take another step toward contention after making a 19-game improvement last year to end a stretch of three straight 100-loss seasons. They have a new manager in Hinch and are finally putting some money into the team after years of playing stripped down following trades to restock the once-barren farm system. They acquired Gattis and signed Rasmus to add more power to a lineup that ranked fourth in the majors with 163 homers in 2014 led by Chris Carter's 37. Houston also addressed its bullpen issues by signing Gregerson and Neshek, a pair of relievers who both had sub-2.15 ERAs last season. They didn't make any improvements to a rotation, which got a boost last season by the development of Dallas Keuchel and Collin McHugh. Two players to watch will be right fielder George Springer and first baseman Jon Singleton. Both were rookies last season and Springer was great, with 20 homers and 51 RBIs in 78 games before he was injured. But Singleton hit just .168 in 95 games.

Texas Rangers

Manager: Jeff Banister (first season).
2014: 67-95, last place.
Training Town: Surprise, Ariz.
First Workout: Feb. 21/26.
He's Here: Banister, LHP Ross Detwiler, RHP Kyuji Fujikawa, RHP Yovani Gallardo, RHP Anthony Ranaudo, C Carlos Corporan, INF Kyle Blanks, OF Ryan Ludwick, OF Delino DeShields, OF Nate Schierholtz.
He's Outta Here: Manager Ron Washington, OF Alex Rios, OF Daniel Robertson, C J.P. Arencibia, LHP Scott Baker, RHP Robbie Ross Jr., INF Luis Sardinas, RHP Alexi Ogando, LHP Neal Cotts.
Going campin': After its most losses since 1985, Texas goes to camp with a new manager, a few new pitchers and hopes that the big-money additions for last season (Prince Fielder and Shin-Soo Choo) stay healthy this year. Yu Darvish and lefty Derek Holland are back at the top of the rotation after missing significant portions last season with injuries. If all those key pieces come back strong, maybe last year will prove to be the anomaly that many Rangers officials believe it was.

MLB: NL SPRING TRAINING CAPSULES

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington Nationals

Manager: Matt Williams (second season).
2014: 96-66, first place, lost to Giants in NLDS.
Training Town: Viera, Fla.
First Workout: Feb. 21/26.
He's Here: RHP Max Scherzer, INF Yunel Escobar, RHP Casey Janssen, 2B Dan Uggla, 3B Ian Stewart, RHP Heath Bell.
He's Outta Here: 1B Adam LaRoche, 2B Asdrubal Cabrera, RHP Tyler Clippard, RHP Rafael Soriano, LHP Ross Detwiler, OF Nate Schierholtz.
Going campin': There's not much in the way of competition or roster questions for a team that had the best record in the National League for the second time in three seasons — and bowed out in an NL Division Series for the second time in three seasons, too. The biggest intrigue has to do with a couple of cornerstone players who could become free agents after this season: SS Ian Desmond and RHP Jordan Zimmermann. GM Mike Rizzo might decide to trade one or both if long-term contracts can't be reached; he also might let both play out this season to give the Nationals their best chance at finally making it deep into the postseason. Rizzo hedged against the possible departures of either by signing Scherzer to a deal worth about $200 million for seven years, and by trading for Escobar, who for now replaces Cabrera at second base. Also worth watching in Viera: How Ryan Zimmerman adjusts to his move across the diamond to first base.

Atlanta Braves

Manager: Fredi Gonzalez (fifth season).
2014: 79-83, tied for second place.
Training Town: Kissimmee, Fla.
First Workout: Feb. 21/26.
He's Here: RHP Shelby Miller, OF Nick Markakis, LHP Eric Stults, OF Jonny Gomes, RHP Jason Grilli, RHP Jim Johnson, C A.J. Pierzynski, RHP Mike Foltynewicz, INF Alberto Callaspo, OF Zoilo Almonte, RHP Arodys Vizcaino, RHP Michael Kohn, OF Eury Perez, INF Jace Peterson.
He's Outta Here: OF Justin Upton, OF Jason Heyward, C Evan Gattis, RHP Ervin Santana, RHP Aaron Harang, 2B Tommy La Stella, RHP David Carpenter, RHP Jordan Walden, RHP David Hale, C Gerald Laird, C Ryan Doumit, OF Emilio Bonifacio, INF Ramiro Pena, RHP Anthony Varvaro.
Going campin': The Braves fired GM Frank Wren with a week to go in a disappointing 2014 season and hired John Hart to begin the rebuilding process. He has given the roster a huge makeover, which isn't likely to pay dividends for at least a few years. Restocking the once-mighty farm system was a major priority, which is why Hart dealt three of his top hitters — Upton, Heyward and Gattis — while receiving only one player (Miller) who surely will be in the majors this year. The signing of Markakis indicated the Braves are still making a pretense of contending in the NL East, but it's hard to imagine how a team that already ranked among the worst offenses in baseball is going to turn things around with players such as Gomes, Almonte and Callaspo.

New York Mets

Manager: Terry Collins (fifth season).
2014: 79-83, tied for second place.
Training Town: Port St. Lucie, Fla.
First Workout: Feb. 21/26.
He's Here: OF Michael Cuddyer, OF-1B John Mayberry Jr., LHP Sean Gilmartin, C Johnny Monell.
He's Outta Here: OF Eric Young Jr., RHP Daisuke Matsuzaka, OF Bobby Abreu, RHP Gonzalez Germen.
Going campin': The spotlight will be on All-Star ace Matt Harvey as he returns from Tommy John surgery to lead a talented young pitching staff that has the Mets thinking playoffs for the first time in years. Harvey showed up at spring training 10 days early and said he'll accept whatever innings restrictions the team decides on. Coming off their sixth consecutive losing season, the Mets were first out of the gate in free agency last fall, signing Cuddyer to a $21 million, two-year contract. After that, they stayed quiet all winter. And while the pitching staff is full of promise, the lineup and defense remain question marks. Captain David Wright is coming off a left shoulder injury, and Curtis Granderson must provide more consistent power during his second season with the Mets. The club also hopes offseason elbow surgery will improve catcher Travis d'Arnaud's throwing. Wilmer Flores, a young hitter with a suspect glove, figures to get his shot at shortstop.

Miami Marlins

Manager: Mike Redmond (third season).
2014: 77-85, fourth place.
Training Town: Jupiter, Fla.
First Workout: Feb. 20/24.
He's Here: RHP Mat Latos, 1B-OF Michael Morse, 2B Dee Gordon, 3B Martin Prado, RHP Dan Haren, OF Ichiro Suzuki, RHP Aaron Crow, RHP David Phelps, RHP Andre Rienzo, RHP Preston Claiborne.
He's Outta Here: 3B Casey McGehee, RHP Nathan Eovaldi, 1B Garrett Jones, RHP Anthony DeSclafani, LHP Dan Jennings, LHP Andrew Heaney, RHP Chris Hatcher, RHP Arquimedes Caminero, RHP Kevin Gregg.
Going campin': The Marlins were thinking long-term when they signed slugger Giancarlo Stanton to a $325 million deal, but they want to win now. Three-quarters of the infield will be new following a busy offseason, and the Marlins strengthened an already solid rotation, raising expectations the team can end an 11-season playoff drought. Key questions in camp will include the health of Stanton, the status of Haren who is considering retiring, and the back end of the rotation. Stanton's season ended Sept. 11 when he was hit in the face by a pitch, and the Marlins are anxious to see that the NL home run champion is recovered. Redmond must fill out a rotation led by Latos and RHP Henderson Alvarez, with 2013 Rookie of the Year Jose Fernandez expected to return at midseason from elbow surgery.

Philadelphia Phillies

Manager: Ryne Sandberg (third season).
2014: 73-89, fifth place.
Training Town: Clearwater, Fla.
First Workout: Feb. 19/24.
He's Here: RHP Aaron Harang, RHP Clay Billingsley, OF Jordan Danks, INF Odubel Herrera, OF Jeff Francoeur, OF Xavier Paul, RHP Kevin Slowey.
He's Outta Here: SS Jimmy Rollins, RF Marlon Byrd, RHP A.J. Burnett, LHP Antonio Bastardo, RHP Kyle Kendrick, C Wil Nieves, OF Tony Gwynn Jr.
Going campin': The Phillies are in full rebuilding mode after dealing Rollins, Byrd and Bastardo. They've made it clear they want to move Ryan Howard and they're fielding offers for Cole Hamels and Jonathan Papelbon. Cliff Lee could be gone once he proves he's healthy. Chase Utley and Carlos Ruiz might be on the trading block during the season. Even the front office had a shakeup as Hall of Famer Pat Gillick returned as president, replacing David Montgomery. Expectations are low for these Phillies.

St. Louis Cardinals

Manager: Mike Matheny (fourth season).
2014: 90-72, first place, lost to Giants in NLCS.
Training Town: Jupiter, Fla.
First Workout: Feb. 20/25.
He's Here: OF Jason Heyward, RHP Matt Belisle, RHP Jordan Walden.
He's Outta Here: RHP Shelby Miller, RHP Pat Neshek, C A.J. Pierzynski, INF Daniel Descalso, 2B Mark Ellis, RHP Justin Masterson, OF Shane Robinson, RHP Tyrell Jenkins.
Going campin': Were it not for the shocking death of promising outfielder Oscar Taveras last fall, the Cardinals might have needed just minor tweaks coming off their 11th postseason appearance in 15 seasons. They'll begin the process of wooing Heyward, entering the final year of his contract. The trade with Atlanta cost them Miller, and they could use a young standout as part of their core with Matt Holliday entering the last two years of his contract. Carlos Martinez gets an extended shot at winning the vacant fifth spot in the rotation, with lefty Marco Gonzales also in the mix after a strong finish to his rookie year. Jon Jay comes to camp with a two-year contract and as the starting center fielder after fighting off a challenge from Peter Bourjos last year. Walden could inherit the setup job from the departed Neshek, who was a first-time All-Star, and Belisle figures as a swing man.

Pittsburgh Pirates

Manager: Clint Hurdle (fifth season).
2014: 88-74, second place, lost to Giants in wild-card game.
Training Town: Bradenton, Fla.
First Workout: Feb. 19/24.
He's Here: RHP A.J. Burnett, C Francisco Cervelli, INF Jung Ho Kang, OF Corey Hart, LHP Antonio Bastardo, RHP Radhames Liz.
He's Outta Here: C Russell Martin, RHP Edinson Volquez, SS Clint Barmes, 1B Ike Davis, OF Travis Snider, LHP Justin Wilson, RHP Jeanmar Gomez, 1B Gaby Sanchez.
Going campin': Pittsburgh proved its breakthrough 2013 was no fluke, surging to a second straight playoff berth last year. It ended with a quick exit at the hands of the World Series champion Giants. Then the Pirates re-signed starter Francisco Liriano to the richest free-agent contract in club history ($39 million for three years). Liriano anchors the rotation with Gerrit Cole. The biggest pitching questions are at the back of the rotation, where Jeff Locke and Brandon Cumpton compete for the fifth starter's spot while Charlie Morton recovers from hip surgery. The bullpen is searching for a little more depth. The lineup remains built around perennial MVP candidate Andrew McCutchen. Pedro Alvarez transitions from third base to first after struggling last season. The addition of Kang from South Korea should provide insurance up the middle — and maybe more.

Milwaukee Brewers

Manager: Ron Roenicke (fifth season).
2014: 82-80, third place.
Training Town: Phoenix.
First workout: Feb. 22/26.
He's Here: 1B Adam Lind, RHP Corey Knebel, INF Luis Sardinas, RHP Chris Perez, LHP Neal Cotts, LHP Dontrelle Willis, C Juan Centeno.
He's Outta Here: RHP Yovani Gallardo, RHP Francisco Rodriguez, 2B Rickie Weeks, 1B-3B Mark Reynolds, 1B Lyle Overbay, RHP Marco Estrada, LHP Zach Duke, LHP Tom Gorzelanny.
Going campin': How long will it take for this team to get over the bitter taste of last year's late-season swoon? The Brewers hope to move on quickly in spring training. Instead of a complete overhaul, GM Doug Melvin tweaked the roster that had been in first place for the first five months of 2014. Lind will be counted on to be the solution at first base while providing left-handed pop in a lineup where most of the power comes from the right side. Rodriguez could yet be back to close after saving 44 games last year. If not, Jonathan Broxton would get a shot to assume the role. But the Brewers ultimately believed that a full year of a healthy Ryan Braun will help cure the hitting woes that the feast-or-famine lineup slogged through in September. All eyes will focus on whether an offseason medical procedure will finally fix the nerve damage near Braun's right thumb that affected his swing. Young right-hander Jimmy Nelson's development will also bear watching. He's slated to rejoin the rotation after Gallardo was traded to Texas.

Cincinnati Reds

Manager: Bryan Price (second season).
2014: 76-86, fourth place.
Training Town: Goodyear, Ariz.
First Workout: Feb. 19/24.
He's Here: LF Marlon Byrd, RHP Burke Badenhop, RHP Kevin Gregg, RHP Raisel Iglesias.
He's Outta Here: RHP Mat Latos, RHP Alfredo Simon, LF Ryan Ludwick, INF Jack Hannahan.
Going campin': A lot of attention will be on first baseman Joey Votto, who missed 99 games last season and didn't play after July 5 because of strained muscles above his left knee. If he's back to his MVP form of 2010, an offense that struggled to score runs will be much better. The Reds also are looking to fill out a rotation missing Latos and Simon, who were traded in the offseason. Left-hander Tony Cingrani missed much of last season with a sore shoulder and will get a chance to win one of the spots. The other one is open to competition. The middle of the bullpen is a work in progress after a rough 2014. Leadoff hitter Billy Hamilton is working on his bunting and improving his steal percentage after an impressive rookie season.

Chicago Cubs

Manager: Joe Maddon (first season).
2014: 73-89, fifth place.
Training Town: Mesa, Ariz.
First Workout: Feb. 20/25.
He's Here: LHP Jon Lester, C Miguel Montero, CF Dexter Fowler, RHP Jason Hammel, RHP Jason Motte, C David Ross.
He's Outta Here: Manager Rick Renteria, 3B Luis Valbuena.
Going campin': After five straight losing seasons, the Cubs made it clear they're ready to make a jump. Hiring Maddon after they told Renteria he would return for a second season was the first big signal, and signing Lester to a six-year deal worth $155 million erased any doubt. They now have one of baseball's top managers along with a three-time All-Star leading the rotation. More than anything, there's a feeling of renewal and hope surrounding a long-downtrodden franchise. Talented shortstop Starlin Castro and first baseman Anthony Rizzo are coming off All-Star seasons. Promising prospects Javier Baez and Jorge Soler arrived in the majors last year and there are more in the pipeline, such as slugger Kris Bryant. Their development will be crucial if Chicago is going to return to contention.

Los Angeles Dodgers

Manager: Don Mattingly (fifth season).
2014: 94-68, first place, lost to Cardinals in NLDS.
Training Town: Glendale, Ariz.
First Workout: Feb. 20/26.
He's Here: SS Jimmy Rollins, 2B Howie Kendrick, C Yasmani Grandal, RHP Brandon McCarthy, RHP Joel Peralta, LHP Brett Anderson, RHP Juan Nicasio.
He's Outta Here: OF Matt Kemp, SS Hanley Ramirez, 2B Dee Gordon, RHP Dan Haren, RHP Brian Wilson, RHP Chris Perez, C Tim Federowicz.
Going campin': The Dodgers' 94 wins were the fourth-most in the majors last season, but their playoff failure against St. Louis is what sticks in their minds. That prompted an offseason of dramatic change, starting with a new front office and several roster moves. The team traded Kemp and Gordon, while Ramirez departed as a free agent. Among the big acquisitions are Kendrick and Rollins, along with Grandal, to help management achieve its goal of improved defense. Left-hander Clayton Kershaw led the majors in victories with 21 and ERA at 1.77 last season, when he became the first NL pitcher to sweep the MVP and Cy Young Awards since Bob Gibson in 1968. But his playoff struggles continued; he went 0-2 with a 7.82 ERA in the Division Series loss to St. Louis, something that will add to Kershaw's motivation.

San Francisco Giants

Manager: Bruce Bochy (ninth season).
2014: 88-74, second place, wild card, World Series champs.
Training Town: Scottsdale, Ariz.
First Workout: Feb. 19/24.
He's Here: 3B Casey McGehee, OF Nori Aoki.
He's Outta Here: 3B Pablo Sandoval, OF Michael Morse, 2B Marco Scutaro.
Going campin': The Giants are coming off their third World Series title in five seasons and hope to end their recent pattern of following a championship by missing the playoffs. The biggest offseason change was the loss of Sandoval, a postseason star who signed with Boston. McGehee takes Kung Fu Panda's spot at third base, but the Giants will need to find another way to fill the power void. Matt Cain missed the playoff run to undergo elbow surgery but should be healthy to start camp, adding depth to a rotation led by World Series MVP Madison Bumgarner. The Giants will watch Bumgarner closely in spring training after he became the eighth pitcher this century to throw at least 270 innings in the regular season and postseason combined. Bumgarner had two World Series wins and a five-inning save in Game 7.

San Diego Padres

Manager: Bud Black (ninth season).
2014: 77-85, third place.
Training Town: Peoria, Ariz.
First Workout: Feb. 20/25.
He's Here: OF Justin Upton, OF Matt Kemp, OF Wil Myers, RHP James Shields, C Derek Norris, 3B Will Middlebrooks, RHP Brandon Morrow, RHP Shawn Kelley, C Tim Federowicz, SS Clint Barmes, RHP Brandon Maurer.
He's Outta Here: OF Seth Smith, C Yasmani Grandal, SS Everth Cabrera, C Rene Rivera, RHP Joe Ross.
Going campin': First-year GM A.J. Preller gave the Padres a badly needed new identity with a dizzying series of trades in December that brought in a powerful outfield — Kemp, Myers and Upton — as well as Norris and Middlebrooks. Preller topped it off by signing Shields to a $75 million, four-year contract, the biggest free-agent deal in club history. The overhauled Padres go into spring training knowing they at least have a chance to compete with the $250 million Dodgers and World Series champion Giants at the top of the NL West. Preller still has work to do. He must decide what to do with injury-prone outfielders: Carlos Quentin, who has a no-trade clause and is owed $8 million, and Cameron Maybin, who is due $7 million.

Colorado Rockies

Manager: Walt Weiss (third season).
2014: 66-96, fourth place.
Training Town: Scottsdale, Ariz.
First Workout: Feb. 21/27.
He's Here: C Nick Hundley, RHP David Hale, RHP Kyle Kendrick, RHP Gus Schlosser, RHP John Axford, 2B Daniel Descalso, RHP Jorge Rondon.
He's Outta Here: RF Michael Cuddyer, 2B Josh Rutledge, RHP Juan Nicasio, RHP Rob Scahill, LHP Franklin Morales, RHP Matt Belisle.
Going campin': The Rockies finally parted ways with longtime GM Dan O'Dowd, who presided over just four winning seasons in his 15 years in Denver, and senior vice president Bill Geivett, who had an office in the clubhouse in one of the more unusual setups in baseball. But instead of going with an outsider, owner Dick Monfort promoted Jeff Bridich from player development director to GM. Bridich didn't make splashy offseason moves. Instead, he concentrated on adding experience and power to his rotation (Kendrick) and bullpen (Axford, Rondon, Diaz, Hale, Schlosser). Bridich was willing to listen to offers for oft-injured stars Troy Tulowitzki, Carlos Gonzalez and Justin Morneau, but wouldn't take less than full value. So, the Rockies are happy to have all three back for a fresh start in 2015. Colorado's biggest move over the winter was signing Hundley, the veteran who's expected not only to provide better defense behind the plate than Wilin Rosario did but also accelerate the progress of a relatively young pitching staff.

Arizona Diamondbacks

Manager: Chip Hale (first season).
2014: 64-98, fifth place.
Training Town: Scottsdale, Ariz.
First Workout: Feb. 20/25.
He's Here: 3B-OF Yasmani Tomas, RHP Jeremy Hellickson, RHP Allen Webster, LHP Vidal Nuno, RHP Rubby De La Rosa, LHP Robbie Ray.
He's Outta Here: Manager Kirk Gibson, C Miguel Montero, SS Didi Gregorius, LHP Wade Miley.
Going campin': There are changes galore for the Diamondbacks at the start of Tony La Russa's first full season as head of the franchise's baseball operations. Hale, most recently Bob Melvin's bench coach in Oakland, takes over for the fired Gibson, with Dave Stewart the new GM. Many questions loom. Only two pitchers, Hellickson and Josh Collmenter, seem to be locks to make the rotation, with a large group of contenders for the other three spots. Patrick Corbin, coming off Tommy John surgery, won't be ready until at least June. Then there's the void at catcher, where longtime minor leaguer and last year's backup, Tuffy Gosewisch, replaces Montero. The Diamondbacks will be looking to see if Tomas, their top offseason acquisition, can play third base. Otherwise he goes to left field, with another suspect defender in right: Mark Trumbo.

NHL

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Montreal	58	37	16	5	79	154	130
Tampa Bay	60	36	18	6	78	195	160
Detroit	56	32	14	10	74	163	143
Boston	58	26	21	9	65	151	154
Florida	57	26	19	12	64	141	157
Ottawa	56	23	23	10	56	159	160
Toronto	59	23	31	5	51	163	180
Buffalo	59	17	38	4	38	109	200
Metropolitan Division							
N.Y. Islanders	59	39	15	5	79	193	165
N.Y. Rangers	57	35	16	6	76	181	142
Washington	59	32	17	10	74	176	147
Pittsburgh	58	32	17	9	73	163	146
Philadelphia	58	24	23	11	59	155	170
Columbus	56	26	27	3	55	149	173
New Jersey	58	23	26	9	55	130	157
Carolina	57	21	29	7	49	129	155

Western Conference

Central Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Nashville	58	39	13	6	84	177	137
St. Louis	58	38	16	4	80	184	142
Chicago	59	35	19	5	75	175	138
Winnipeg	60	30	20	10	70	166	162
Minnesota	58	30	21	7	67	162	154
Dallas	58	27	23	8	62	181	185
Colorado	59	25	23	11	61	154	166
Pacific Division							
Anaheim	59	36	16	7	79	176	167
Vancouver	58	33	22	3	69	165	155
Calgary	59	32	23	4	68	171	156
San Jose	60	30	22	8	68	170	172
Los Angeles	57	27	18	12	66	159	151
Arizona	58	20	31	7	47	131	194
Edmonton	60	17	33	10	44	139	203

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

Friday's games

New Jersey 4, Vancouver 2
Carolina 2, Toronto 1
N.Y. Rangers 3, Buffalo 1
St. Louis 5, Boston 1
Colorado 4, Chicago 1
Anaheim 6, Calgary 3
Minnesota 4, Edmonton 0

Saturday's games

N.Y. Islanders at Washington
Nashville at Philadelphia
Winnipeg at Toronto
Columbus at Montreal
Florida at Ottawa
Carolina at New Jersey
Anaheim at Edmonton
Pittsburgh at St. Louis
Detroit at Dallas
Tampa Bay at Arizona
Los Angeles vs. San Jose at Santa Clara, Calif.

Sunday's games

Washington at Philadelphia
Boston at Chicago
Nashville at Buffalo
Vancouver at N.Y. Islanders
Florida at Pittsburgh
Tampa Bay at Colorado
Columbus at N.Y. Rangers
Dallas at Minnesota

Monday's games

Arizona at New Jersey
Detroit at Anaheim

Friday

Devils 4, Canucks 2

Vancouver	0	1	1—2
New Jersey	1	2	1—4

First Period—1, New Jersey, Elias 10 (Larsson, Henrique), 7:12.

Second Period—2, New Jersey, Tootoo 5 (Larsson, Schneider), :50. 3, New Jersey, Cammalleri 19 (Gelinas, Gomez), 2:58 (pp). 4, Vancouver, Kassian 6 (D.Sedin, H.Sedin), 6:23.

Third Period—5, Vancouver, Kassian 7 (H.Sedin, D.Sedin), 3:04. 6, New Jersey, Cammalleri 20 (Larson), 17:53 (en-sh).

Shots on Goal—Vancouver 2-11-10—23. New Jersey 7-11-9—27.

Power-play opportunities—Vancouver 0 of 3; New Jersey 1 of 3.

Goalies—Vancouver, Lack 6-7-2 (26 shots-23 saves). New Jersey, Schneider 21-22-5 (23-21).

A—14,822 (17,625). **T**—2:22.

Hurricanes 2, Maple Leafs 1

Toronto	1	0	0—1
Carolina	2	0	0—2

First Period—1, Carolina, E.Staal 18 (Faulk, Tlusty), 13:55 (pp). 2, Toronto, Kozun 1 (Booth, Holland), 17:53. 3, Carolina, Jo.Staal 3 (Tlusty, E.Staal), 18:09.

Shots on Goal—Toronto 12-6-6—24. Carolina 12-8-6—26.

Power-play opportunities—Toronto 0 of 4; Carolina 1 of 2.

Goalies—Toronto, Reimer 7-13-0 (26 shots-24 saves). Carolina, Ward 15-19-4 (24-23).

A—12,563 (18,680). **T**—2:22.

Rangers 3, Sabres 1

N.Y. Rangers	1	2	0—3
Buffalo	1	0	0—1

First Period—1, Buffalo, Moulson 9 (Mitchell, Gionta), :14. 2, N.Y. Rangers, Hagelin 14 (Miller, Boyle), 5:51.

Second Period—3, N.Y. Rangers, Nash 37 (D.Brassard, Staal), :37. 4, N.Y. Rangers, Zuccarello 12 (Nash, D.Brassard), 8:05.

Shots on Goal—N.Y. Rangers 16-15-12—43. Buffalo 6-6-13—25.

Power-play opportunities—N.Y. Rangers 0 of 4; Buffalo 0 of 3.

Goalies—N.Y. Rangers, Skapski 1-0-0 (25 shots-24 saves). Buffalo, Neuvirth 4-16-2 (43-40).

A—19,070 (19,070). **T**—2:32.

Blues 5, Bruins 1

Boston	1	0	0—1
St. Louis	0	4	1—5

First Period—1, Boston, Marchand 17 (Bergeron, R.Smith), 10:42.

Second Period—2, St. Louis, Lindbohm 1 (Gunnarsson, Schwartz), :48. 3, St. Louis, Pietrangelo 5 (Bouwmeester, Steen), 4:16. 4, St. Louis, Oshie 16 (Steen, Cole), 5:09. 5, St. Louis, Tarasenko 30 (Steen, Oshie), 13:59 (pp).

Third Period—6, St. Louis, Tarasenko 31 (Schwartz, Lehtera), 11:45.

Shots on Goal—Boston 8-11-8—27. St. Louis 3-8-4—15.

Power-play opportunities—Boston 0 of 5; St. Louis 1 of 3.

Goalies—Boston, Subban 0-1-0 (6 shots-3 saves). Rask (5:09 second, 9-7). Subban 0-1-0 (13:54 third). St. Louis, Allen 17-5-2 (27-26).

A—19,172 (19,150). **T**—2:25.

Avalanche 4, Blackhawks 1

Colorado	1	0	3—4
Chicago	0	1	0—1

First Period—1, Colorado, Barrie 8, 12:52.

Second Period—2, Chicago, Versteeg 12 (Richards, Rozsival), 9:05.

Third Period—3, Colorado, Landeskog 15 (O'Reilly, Barrie), 11:05 (pp). 4, Colorado, Barrie 9 (Iginla, Landeskog), 11:29 (pp). 5, Colorado, Stuart 2, 14:13.

Shots on Goal—Colorado 10-7-13—30. Chicago 9-12-7—28.

Power-play opportunities—Colorado 2 of 3; Chicago 0 of 2.

Goalies—Colorado, Varlamov 17-15-7 (28 shots-27 saves). Chicago, Crawford 23-13-4 (30-26).

A—22,103 (19,717). **T**—2:26.

Ducks 6, Flames 3

Anaheim	0	1	5—6
Calgary	1	1	1—3

First Period—1, Calgary, Stajan 4 (Colborne), 14:50.

Second Period—2, Calgary, Bouma 12 (Wideman), 11:02. 3, Anaheim, Cogliano 9 (Perry, Manson), 15:08.

Third Period—4, Anaheim, Beauchemin 5 (Cogliano, Rakell), 6:13. 5, Anaheim, Getzlaf 18 (Maroon, Lindholm), 8:53. 6, Anaheim, Palmieri 12, 11:35. 7, Anaheim, Silfverberg 9 (Maroon, Getzlaf), 14:45. 8, Calgary, Monahan 20 (Glencross, Gaudreau), 18:10 (pp). 9, Anaheim, Lindholm 6, 18:59 (en).

Shots on Goal—Anaheim 9-16-13—38. Calgary 11-8-9—28.

Power-play opportunities—Anaheim 0 of 1; Calgary 1 of 5.

Goalies—Anaheim, Gibson 4-4-0 (28 shots-25 saves). Calgary, Hiller 19-17-3 (37-32).

A—19,289 (19,289). **T**—2:31.

Wild 4, Oilers 0

Minnesota	2	1	1—4
Edmonton	0	0	0—0

First Period—1, Minnesota, Fontaine 6 (Folin, Parise), 10:18. 2, Minnesota, Niederreiter 19 (Koivu, Brodin), 15:06.

Second Period—3, Minnesota, Schroeder 3 (Vanek, Koivu), 15:50.

Third Period—4, Minnesota, Fontaine 7 (Parise, Granlund), 18:45.

Shots on Goal—Minnesota 8-13-8—29. Edmonton 5-5-5—15.

Power-play opportunities—Minnesota 0 of 0; Edmonton 0 of 1.

Goalies—Minnesota, Dubnyk 21-7-3 (15 shots-15 saves). Edmonton, Scrivens 11-18-7 (29-25).

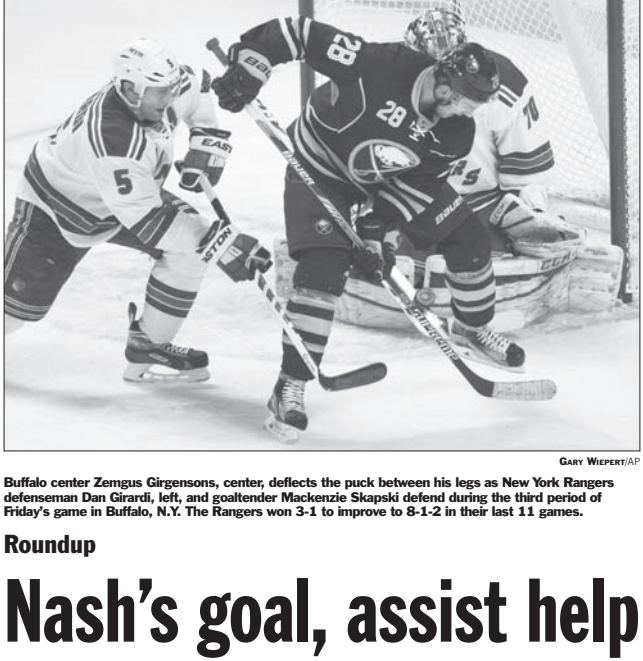
Scoring leaders

Through Feb. 20

	GP	G	A	PTS
Patrick Kane, Chi	59	27	36	63
Nicklas Backstrom, Was	59	18	45	63
Alex Ovechkin, Was	59	38	23	61
Jakub Voracek, Phi	58	19	42	61
John Tavares, NYI	59	29	31	60
Tyler Seguin, Dal	55	29	30	59
Rick Nash, NYR	57	37	21	58
Sidney Crosby, Pit	54	19	39	58

GERRY BROOME/AP

Toronto goalie James Reimer stops a shot on goal during the first period of Friday's game against Carolina in Raleigh, N.C.



GARY WIEPERT/AP

Buffalo center Zemgus Girgensons, center, deflects the puck between his legs as New York Rangers defenseman Dan Girardi, left, and goaltender Mackenzie Skapski defend during the third period of Friday's game in Buffalo, N.Y. The Rangers won 3-1 to improve to 8-1-2 in their last 11 games.

Roundup

Nash's goal, assist help Rangers roll by Sabres

The Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. — It took 14 seconds into his first NHL game for Mackenzie Skapski to give up his first career goal. The New York Rangers' 20-year-old goalie proved to be perfect over the rest of his debut.

After being beaten by Matt Moulson on the first shot, Skapski stopped the final 24 he faced in a 3-1 win over the Buffalo Sabres on Friday night. Rick Nash had a goal and assist, while Carl Hagelin and Mats Zuccarello also scored for New York.

"Super pumped," Skapski said, noting the victory came on his father's birthday. "I couldn't have scripted it better."

Even the opening minute?

"I think I rebounded well from that," Skapski said. "It's tough to really sit back right now and acknowledge I got my first NHL win, so hopefully there's many more."

Coach Alain Vigneault was pleased how Skapski and the Rangers responded to the opening goal, when Moulson was left untouched in front to redirect Torrey Mitchell's centering pass.

"It wasn't the way we wanted to start, but sometimes stuff happens on the ice," Vigneault said. "But after that, I thought we played a pretty solid game."

Blues 5, Bruins 1: Vladimir Tarasenko became the franchise's youngest player to score 30 goals in 23 years, getting the last two scores in host St. Louis' victory over Boston.

Tarasenko's 30th of the season capped the four-goal second and he got his 31st midway through the third. At 23 years, 65 days, he's the team's youngest 30-goal scorer since Brendan Shanahan got his 30th at 23 years, 63 days in 1991-92.

Avalanche 4, Blackhawks 1: Tyson Barrie had two goals and an assist, Gabriel Landeskog scored for the fifth straight game, and visiting Colorado beat Chicago.

Colorado used a pair of costly interference penalties on Chicago to win for just the third time in its last eight games. Brad Stuart added his second goal of the season when goaltender Corey Crawford badly misplayed his dump in from center ice.

Wild 4, Oilers 0: Devan Dubnyk stopped all 15 shots he faced for his sixth shutout of the season, leading visiting Minnesota past Edmonton.

The former Oilers goalie now has five shutouts in 16 games for Minnesota since being acquired in a trade with Arizona on Jan. 14. He improved to 5-0 this season against Edmonton.

Ducks 6, Flames 3: Ryan Getzlaf scored a fluke tiebreaking goal midway through the third period to key visiting Anaheim's five-goal outburst in the final 14 minutes.

Getzlaf's slap shot from the blue line went over the net and caromed back off the end boards, deflecting in off the back leg of Calgary goalie Jonas Hiller at 8:53 of the third to put Anaheim up 3-2. Francois Beauchemin had tied the score less than 3 minutes earlier.

Devils 4, Canucks 2: Mike Cammalleri scored twice in host New Jersey's victory over Vancouver.

Jordin Tootoo and Patrik Elias also scored, defenseman Adam Larsson had three assists and Cory Schneider had 21 saves against his former teammates to give New Jersey points in 12 of its last 14 games (9-2-3) at the Prudential Center.

Hurricanes 2, Maple Leafs 1: Eric Staal had a goal and an assist and host Carolina beat Toronto to sweep the three-game season series.

Jordan Staal had the other goal for the Hurricanes. Carolina goalie Cam Ward, playing in his 499th NHL game — all for the Hurricanes — had 23 saves. Brandon Kozun had his first NHL goal for the Maple Leafs.

Fast: Driver-crew chief relationship crucial to success

FROM BACK PAGE

Of course, that was after two successful races at Daytona — a place where Earnhardt is always among the favorites.

The real challenge will come when they're faced with adversity.

"I don't think we're even close to where we need to be," Ives said. "I feel like there's areas I'm going to have to improve big time. There's areas that Dale and I are slowly growing and continuing to make better. It's just going to keep on flourishing from here."

> **'Greg is a very bright young mind. When they're fast, they're going to be crazy fast.'**
>
> **Steve Letarte**
> Former crew chief for Dale Earnhardt Jr., on new crew chief Greg Ives

Earnhardt found consistent success alongside former crew chief Steve Letarte, who left the team at the end of last season to spend more time with his family. Letarte also took a job as a NASCAR analyst for NBC Sports.

Letarte revitalized Earnhardt's career after two mediocre seasons at powerhouse Hendrick.

"I think change is a necessity in the sport," Letarte said. "Greg is a very bright young mind. When they're fast, they're going to be crazy fast. I'll be interested to see how they rebound through the lows. There are lows. There are always lows. ... I put a lot of that on Dale. Dale puts a lot of that on himself. He's going to have to be the guy that keeps this team motivated and sharp. I don't question at all that Greg Ives is going to be in there sunup to sundown trying to make the cars faster. He's making the cars faster and Dale is going to have to try to embrace the rest of the team."

Ives is widely regarded as one of the most detail-oriented guys at Hendrick.

He cut his teeth while working under Jimmie Johnson's longtime crew chief, Chad Knaus — arguably the most cunning and calculated guy in the NASCAR garage. Ives served as race engineer for Johnson's run of five consecutive championships. And he guided Chase Elliott to the 2014 Xfinity Series championship at JR Motorsports, which is co-owned by Earnhardt.

"He's got a tough mental attitude," said Earnhardt, who will try to become the first driver since Sterling Marlin in 1995 to win consecutive Daytona 500s. "I think that he focuses real hard on his work, and I don't think he really will be too affected by anything on the outside. ... I just look forward to getting in there and seeing how we communicate."

The team didn't have the luxury of offseason testing, so they're "kind of starting from scratch here at Daytona," Earnhardt said.

"We're trying to build that communication and trust and starting to understand how we can talk and communicate and work together," he added. "That's going to be real important for us. I mean, I don't even know what it's like to sit in a hauler and be in that environment during the race weekend with him. A lot of new things to sort of work ourselves through, and I'm excited, nervous — not apprehensive — but very anxious and excited to go ahead and start working."

No one doubts the new combination will work and eventually land that Chase spot.

"He was the obvious choice," Letarte said. "There's no other name I could dream up ... that I could put in front of Greg's."

Terry Renna/AP

A window outside driver Kurt Busch's garage stall shows a reference to NFL player Ray Rice written by a spectator at Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Fla., on Friday.

NASCAR suspends Kurt Busch

Judge: 'Substantial likelihood' of future domestic violence

By Jenna Fryer
The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — NASCAR suspended Kurt Busch indefinitely on Friday after a judge said the former champion almost surely choked and beat an ex-girlfriend last fall and there was a "substantial likelihood" of more domestic violence from him in the future.

In a stunning move just two days before the season-opening Daytona 500, NASCAR said Busch would not be allowed to participate in any series activities until further notice given the "serious nature of the findings and conclusions" made by a Delaware judge involving the driver known as "The Outlaw."

Busch becomes the first driver suspended by NASCAR for domestic violence.

Chevrolet immediately suspended its relationship with Busch.

In a 25-page opinion explaining why he issued the no-contact order this week, Family Court Commissioner David Jones concluded that it was more likely than not that Busch abused Patricia Driscoll by "manually strangling" her and smashing her head into a wall inside his motorhome at Dover International Speedway last September.

The 36-year-old Busch has denied the alleged assault, which is the subject of a separate criminal investigation, but the judge said Driscoll's version of the incident was more credible than Busch's.

Driscoll said she was never motivated to have Busch punished by NASCAR.

"I reported a crime, just like anybody else who has been abused should do, because no one is above the law," Driscoll said. "I'm very encouraged that NASCAR is taking steps to recognize that domestic violence is a serious issue, and I hope that we see them develop a very clear policy on it."

Terry Renna/AP

In this May 22, 2014, file photo, Kurt Busch, left, stands with Patricia Driscoll at Charlotte Motor Speedway in Concord, N.C. In a stunning move just two days before the season-opening Daytona 500, NASCAR suspended Kurt Busch indefinitely on Friday after a judge said the former champion almost surely strangled and beat an ex-girlfriend last fall and there was a "substantial likelihood" of more domestic violence from him in the future.

It is Busch's third career suspension. He was suspended in 2012 by NASCAR for threatening a reporter, and for the final two races of the 2005 season by Roush-Fenway Racing after he was pulled over by police in Arizona.

The judge concluded that Busch did not appear to be a prototypical batterer who uses violence to subjugate or control, but that the incident instead was most likely a "situational" event in which Busch was unable to cope and to control his tendency to act out violently in response to stress and frustration, causing him to "snap."

At the same time, however, Jones said he believes there's real possibility that Busch will lash out again. Jones added that because Busch has a propensity to lose control in response to disappointing or frustrating situations involving racing and that "there is a substantial likelihood of acts of domestic violence by respondent against future intimate partners."

SPORTS

Ready to rumble

Mayweather, Pacquiao set for May 2nd showdown » Page 25

DAYTONA 500

Chief connection

Earnhardt-Ives partnership getting off to fast start

By Mark Long
The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.

Greg Ives plopped down in his chair, let out a sigh of a relief and asked, "Am I in the Chase now?"

Not quite.

But the newest Hendrick Motorsports crew chief is off to a rousing start in his first season with NASCAR's most popular driver and defending Daytona 500 champion Dale Earnhardt Jr.

With Ives tuning the No. 88 Chevrolet and calling the shots, Earnhardt won the first of two qualifying races at Daytona International Speedway on Thursday and will start third in the Daytona 500 on Sunday.

It's still way too early to assume the move will land Earnhardt in the Chase for the Sprint Cup championship for a fifth consecutive year or improve his chances of securing his first Cup championship.

But getting off to a strong start can be pivotal for any relationship, and the driver-crew chief connection is arguably the most vital in auto racing.

"The relationship is gelling as quick as I knew it would," said Ives, who cracked a few jokes after his first victory with Earnhardt on Thursday night. "When you bring great attitude, have some fun at the racetrack, have good finishes like, you're going to gel pretty quickly."

SEE FAST ON PAGE 31

Dale Earnhardt Jr, left, talks with crew chief Greg Ives during practice for the Daytona 500 at Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Fla., on Friday.

Terry Renna/AP

On eve of Daytona, NASCAR suspends Busch indefinitely » Page 31