

STARS AND STRIPES®

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Facebook group to servicemembers:

DON'T BE AN IDIOT

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Facebook group created Tuesday is slamming servicemembers who post controversial photos and comments on social media.

The group — Military Social Media Idiots — has one message: "If you are wearing the uniform, DON'T POST PICTURES OF YOURSELF THAT WILL DISGRACE THE UNIFORM."

The group's mission is to expose servicemembers who post those kinds of images and comments so the offenders will get punished and others will be deterred from such activity, according to the administrators.

SEE IDIOTS ON PAGE 2

A series of viral images has brought scrutiny to servicemembers who post controversial content on social media. In the latest incident, officials at Fort Carson, Colo., are investigating reports that Pfc. Tarijka Sheffey, top, posted a photo on Instagram of herself deliberately avoiding saluting the flag.

Stars and Stripes illustration

Lawmakers hold hearing on deadly 'Extortion 17' crash

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Was the mission doomed from the start? Were Taliban fighters tipped off? Were fallen servicemembers treated with dignity and respect?

A congressional oversight

committee held a controversial hearing Thursday to get answers to questions surrounding the high-profile shoot-down of an American helicopter in Afghanistan and the way that the remains of the fallen servicemembers were handled.

On Aug. 6, 2011, an American

CH-47 Chinook helicopter with the call sign "Extortion 17" was shot down by Taliban insurgents while transporting a fast-reaction team of special operations forces to assist Army Rangers in a battle against insurgents in Wardak province.

The event raised many ques-

tions over the planning and execution of the SOF mission, as well as the way that memorial ceremonies and the transfer of remains were conducted. Even the decisions to hold a hearing and who was allowed to testify were controversial.

SEE CRASH ON PAGE 8

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"We don't see it that way. We do not believe this should be an East-West, Russia-United States. This is not 'Rocky IV,' believe me. We don't see it that way."

— Secretary of State John Kerry, saying Russia shouldn't view the situation in Ukraine through the prism of the past

See story on Page 11

MILITARY

Pentagon says Syria should hand over its chemical weapons faster

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is urging Syria to move faster on its promise to hand over its chemical weapons.

Defense Department spokesman Col. Steve Warren said that so far, only one batch of the government's most toxic chemicals has been shipped out of the coun-

try. It was mustard gas.

The government led by President Bashar Assad has missed at least two deadlines in the past two months to remove chemicals.

A U.S. cargo ship loaded with equipment to neutralize the chemicals is waiting in Europe to destroy the most dangerous parts of the stockpile.



Winter watch

U.S. soldiers patrol at Manas air base outside Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on Tuesday. The base started closing, and U.S. troops began using its replacement in Romania as they transit into and out of Afghanistan.

VLADIMIR VORONIN/AP

TOP CLICKS ON STRIPES.COM

The most popular stories on our website:

1. Facebook group to servicemembers: Don't be an idiot on social media
2. 'Scary' tattoo ban passed at popular beach for servicemembers in Japan
3. Colorado soldier accused of avoiding flag salute
4. Pentagon budget cuts take first toll in Japan, England
5. Colorado soldier accused of avoiding flag salute

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The Academy Awards



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Idiot: Group urges careful thought before posting photos

FROM FRONT PAGE

"I'm going to put a stop to this one way or another," the page creator(s) said. "If you have a screenshot of a soldier or other military serviceman disgracing the uniform, please message the page. We may or may not post it. Please give details of where it was posted."

Photos on the site show servicemembers doing a variety of things that many would consider inappropriate for someone in uniform to be doing on social media, including:

- Posing in states of undress.
- Grabbing one's crotch while saluting.
- Using profanity and racially charged language.

Going forward, the group will focus on the most egregious cases.

"There is WAY too many photos of people posing with their shirts off to even contemplate, so we're just going to go after those who [are serious offenders]," the administrators wrote Wednesday.

The image that first appeared on the site is a screenshot of an Instagram post made by Pfc. Tariqah Sheffey, who uses the handle "sheffeynation," in which she suggests that she avoided a flag ceremony.

Sheffey posted a photo of herself with the following caption: "This is me lying on my back in my car hiding so I don't have to salute the 1700 flag. KEEP ALL YOUR 'THAT'S SO DISRESPECTFUL/HOW RUDE/ETC.' COMMENTS TO YOURSELF, cuz, right now, IDGAFFFF!"

An official at Fort Carson, Colo., where Sheffey is stationed, said in

an email that Sheffey's command is aware of her social media post and they are reviewing potential courses of action.

Military Social Media Idiots already has struck a chord with many members of the military community. Its Facebook page has gotten more than 10,500 "likes" as of Thursday afternoon, a day after the site was created.

The group has some advice for servicemembers who are active on social media.

"If you are a person considering making a career in the military ... think really hard about what you post. When you become a leader, your picture showing up on the internet half naked is going to completely undermine your ability to lead, ESPECIALLY if you are a female leading male soldiers ... You want to take sexy pictures of yourself and send it to your girlfriend? Great, go for it. Just don't post them on instagram, facebook, twitter, tumblr, whatever. When you do, it is out there for the world to see. Regardless of your privacy settings."

Gen. Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has expressed concerns that current and future servicemembers don't realize the potential for social media to ruin their military careers.

"I worry a bit about ... the young men and women who are now in their teens, early teens, and who probably underestimate the impact of their persona in social media and what impact that could have later in life on things like security clearances and promotions and selections," he said at a veterans conference in Washington in December.

Brett Griffith, a former servicemember who commented on the page, said soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who post inappropriate pictures are unworthy of wearing the uniform.

"THE ONLY pictures I have of myself in Uniform are me wearing it properly with nothing but PRIDE in myself and my farmer Unit ... Those who wear it improperly or have no respect for it, do not need to be granted the HONOR of putting it on," he wrote.

The administrators posted the following message from a "fan" of the group:

"You must ensure your virtual conduct is as patriotic and honorable as the service you represent."

Some commenters questioned the way the administrators are pursuing their goals.

"I feel like [the page] is being run by [someone] that is just trying to nail soldiers for dumb stuff when most of this stuff should be handled by their team leaders and squad leaders," said David Lynch, a retired Army soldier. "When I was in the Army I always had that mentality that if my soldiers were [expletive] up, let me handle it. Don't outsource to others."

Another commentator, Adam Pellin, also criticized the site.

"I can see the point of this page," he said. "But it's sad that a page like this actually exists. Putting these [people] on display for everyone to see I think may inadvertently have a negative effect. You say they are disgracing the uniform in a public forum, so how is sharing their pictures to even more people going to help?"

Others praised the group.

"I am a fan of the site and hope it helps deter Soldiers from making career ending social media mistakes, both the Soldiers who post outrageous photos and the Soldiers whose comments also constitute career ending social media mistakes," wrote Eileen Hernandez, an Army officer.

The administrators defended their exposure strategy.

"[We're doing it this way] because obviously it is NOT being handled in house," they wrote.

Social media posts of servicemembers doing inappropriate things have recently triggered high-profile investigations and suspensions of the personnel involved.

Stars and Stripes reported on two controversial photos that went viral on social media earlier this month, including one depicting an airman pretending to make out with the POW/MIA emblem and another showing National Guard soldiers posing disrespectfully in front of a military funeral training casket. The military has launched investigations into both cases.

"Commenting, posting or linking to material that violates the UCMJ or basic rules of Soldier conduct is prohibited," Army Staff Sgt. Dale Sweetnam, of the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, said in a news release in February 2012. "It is important that all Soldiers know that once they log on to a social media platform, they still represent the Army. The best way to think about it is, if you wouldn't say it in formation or to your leader's face, don't say it online."

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MILITARY



ADAM L. MATHIS/Stars and Stripes

Army and Air Force Exchange Service and commissary services at RAF Menwith Hill, England, will have their presence reduced in response to the reduction of 500 personnel at the base by October 2016.

Technology led to decision to cut personnel at Menwith Hill

By ADAM L. MATHIS
Stars and Stripes

RAF MILDENHALL, England — A technological streamlining of operations at RAF Menwith Hill is behind the decision to cut some 500 servicemembers and civilians at the base in central Britain.

U.S. European Command announced Wednesday that the 421st Air Base Group, which provides base support at Menwith Hill, "and other U.S. military units will be deactivated."

A worldwide Department of Defense review found that operations at Menwith Hill could be streamlined by doing the same job with more technology and fewer personnel "so that kind of drove the reduction," said Capt. Michael Hertzog II, a spokesman for U.S. Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa.

Hertzog could not elaborate

about the nature of technology involved or which operations were being streamlined at the National Security Agency base in Yorkshire.

He alluded to wider improvements in computer and information technology.

"It's fairly consistent with ... what's been going on across the spectrum ... as we improve everything from ... server capacity to the hardware that we're using," Hertzog said in a telephone interview. "We're doing more with less."

The reduction in operation personnel also will affect support staff, which led to plans for downsizing the 421st Air Base Group into a squadron, he said. It has not yet been decided how many airmen will make up the squadron.

Squadron Leader Geoff Dickson, the Royal Air Force commander at Menwith Hill, said Wednesday that the reductions

will affect all areas of the base and they "will be spending the next few months deciding what the exact footprint will be for RAF Menwith Hill."

The reductions, however, will cut into the Army and Air Force Exchange Service and commissary locations at the base, which is more than 100 miles from the majority of other U.S. bases with those services in England.

"AAFES will still offer products for sale and so will DeCA (Defense Commissary Agency), but it's not going to be the same facility footprint that it is now," Hertzog said.

Dickson said the change will not affect the base's mission capability.

"There will be no impact on the mission whatsoever, and Menwith Hill is not closing and the mission will continue," Dickson said.

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Admiral: Weapons cuts provide most savings for DOD

By TONY CAPACCIO
AND ROXANA TIRON
Bloomberg News

WASHINGTON—Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's proposed reductions in military compensation, such as housing allowances, amount to only about 10 percent of cuts being sought over the next five years, the No. 2 U.S. military official said Wednesday.

"These savings are gradual, measured and fair," Adm. James Winnefeld, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said at Bloomberg Government's Defense Transformation conference in Washington.

“These savings are gradual, measured and fair.”

Adm. James Winnefeld, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

by trimming the Army's ranks, Winnefeld said. "So we are taking a lot more risk there."

The five-year plan that Hagel presented on Feb. 24 is about \$130 billion less than projected last year — even before automatic cuts known as sequestration, the admiral said in an interview. Compensation savings account for about \$12 billion over that period, with about \$1 billion in 2015, he said.

Hagel outlined a fiscal 2015 budget intended to achieve the \$45 billion in savings needed to stay within a \$496 billion cap imposed by spending limits revised under a congressional budget deal in December.

Members of Congress indicated they will challenge his efforts to reduce the Army's ranks by 6

percent to about 490,000 personnel by 2015 from about 522,000 today.

Congress also has regularly resisted efforts to cut benefits to military personnel.

Reps. Adam Smith, D-Wash., and Randy Forbes, R-Va., — two senior members of the House Armed Services Committee — Wednesday called for the reversal of the automatic budget reductions.

Those cuts are scheduled take full effect again in 2016.

Forbes, the chairman of the House Armed Services Sequestration subcommittee, said at the conference that the defense budget needs to be increased to thwart national security threats, from the Middle East to Venezuela.

"We need a bigger budget," he said.

Forbes acknowledged the political difficulty in the Republican-led House of preventing even further reductions in the defense budget.

He said defense supporters need to make the case for national security and defense technology to small-government Republicans who want to cut the federal budget.

Smith, the top Democrat on the Armed Services committee, said readiness and preparation for future wars will remain constrained without some changes to increasingly costly military benefits.

"That is what leads to a hollow force," Smith said.

Hagel's proposals to slow compensation cuts included the reduced housing allowance and cuts in subsiding for commissaries on military bases.

He said his recommendations "favor a smaller and more capable force" that "can defeat more technologically advanced adversaries."

Official: Troop levels in South Korea not affected by Pentagon cuts

By ASHLEY ROWLAND
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Sweeping proposed cuts to military spending and troop levels will not affect U.S. military operations in South Korea, and the U.S. military rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region will be preserved, a top defense official said Wednesday.

"The importance of our relationship with Korea and the importance of our commitment to South Korea and the troops on the peninsula is not affected by our plans," Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense Christine Fox said during a forum at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington.

Fox said a proposal to shrink the num-

ber of Army personnel to between 444,000 and 450,000 would give U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno "enough flexibility to meet the requirements that any Korean contingency would require and sustain our commitment to the forces on the peninsula and protect the homeland and do something else."

"But the smaller the force, the less else you can do. But ... it's not Korea. Korea is set and was an input," she said.

The U.S. maintains a constant force presence of 28,500 on the Korean Peninsula as a deterrent to North Korea, though the number of boots on the ground is higher due to the burgeoning use of rotational deployments.

Approximately 800 members of the 1st

Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment from Fort Hood, Texas, are now in South Korea for a nine-month deployment. The 1-12 CAV brought with it about 40 M1-A2 Abrams tanks and 40 M2-A3 Bradleys, which will remain in Korea for follow-on rotations.

South Korean defense officials said this week that they were not worried about the impending budget cuts, citing previous assurances from the U.S. that sequestration would not affect U.S. Forces Korea troop levels or readiness.

Even though the Air Force announced Wednesday that it will reduce the number of troops at Misawa Air Base's intelligence gathering units by 500 over the next 1½ years, Fox said the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific remains critical, citing Marine

Corps deployments to Australia and trips to the region by top U.S. officials including President Barack Obama as examples of U.S. commitment to that rebalance.

She said the budget and personnel cuts, while painful, were necessary and warned that "without far-sighted bipartisan action by the Congress, sequestration will return in FY 2016." That would cut defense spending by more than \$50 billion per year through 2021, she said.

The Department of Defense budget plan announced this week would "help remedy some of the damage already caused by sequestration" and provide \$1.5 billion more over the next five years than sequestration funding, she said.

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MILITARY

Reid: Vets bill headed toward Senate defeat

By ALAN FRAM
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said a \$21 billion Democratic measure enriching health care, education and job-training benefits for veterans seemed headed for defeat Thursday, and he blamed Republicans.

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell countered that Democrats were mirroring the bill in election-year politics.

Both parties generally favor helping the nation's 22 million veterans and their families, especially ahead of the November elections. The measure's apparent demise underscored the political maneuvering that abounded this year, when Congress seems stalemated and able to achieve little.

This week, Republicans tried ending the vet-

erans measure to make it less expensive and to add new penalties against Iran for its nuclear program. President Barack Obama strongly opposes that step, saying international talks on Iran's nuclear program must be given more time.

Similar legislation drew 59 Senate co-sponsors, and an Iran vote potentially could embarrass the White House.

Reid, D-Nev., blocked a vote on the Iran amendment and others, and Republicans seemed ready to use a procedural move Thursday to derail the entire bill.

Reid said he hoped veterans groups were watching what Republicans were doing on the bill "because it will be defeated. That was their aim from the very beginning."

McConnell, R-Ky., complained that Reid was denying Republicans a chance to help shape the legislation, and he said many

lawmakers disagree with Obama's approach to Iran.

"It's shameful that Senate Democrats would seek to score political points by rushing to the floor a bill" Republicans weren't given a chance to reshape, McConnell said.

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, said Wednesday that it would be "extremely disrespectful to the men and women who have put their lives on the line" to block the legislation because of the dispute over Iran.

"The American people don't want to see serious legislation sabotaged because of political partisanship," Sanders said.

Republicans said Reid was shielding Democratic senators from a difficult vote.

"What Reid would like to do is take all the votes and push them past the November election," said North Carolina Sen. Richard Burr, top Republican on the Veterans Committee.

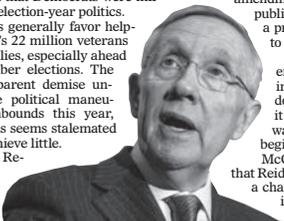
It will take 60 votes to keep the bill alive,

and that's more than the 53 Democrats and two Democratic-leaning Independents who are likely to go that way.

The bill would make many veterans without service-connected injuries eligible for treatment at Department of Veterans Affairs' medical facilities. It would expand the dental, chiropractic and fertility treatments the VA provides, bolster programs for veterans who suffered sexual abuse and increase the use of alternative medicine such as yoga for stress.

More veterans would be eligible for in-state tuition at public universities. Some benefits for spouses of deceased veterans would improve, and aid to relatives caring for a wounded veteran would be expanded to include those who served before the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

The department would be required to publicly report more data on its handling of veterans' benefit claims. That and other steps are designed to eat into the VA's backlog of 390,000 claims that have been awaiting action for more than 125 days.



Hagel on the defense budget: It's going to be a tough sell

By WALTER PINCUS
The Washington Post

The first shots in this year's battle over the Defense Department budget have been exchanged, with Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's opening salvo fired Monday and quickly drawing heat from Congress, veterans groups and lobbyists.

The former senator from Nebraska has prepared for an extended political fight. He's trying

ANALYSIS

to set the terms of the debate by speaking out about the fiscal 2015 Pentagon reductions and sending top aides into verbal combat a week before President Barack Obama's budget is released Tuesday.

Hagel appears to be taking a page from his predecessor Robert Gates' book, "Duty," in which Gates described trying to limit criticism in 2009 of a newly sworn-in President Obama by announcing his own controversial cut to an inflated Bush defense proposal before the Obama budget numbers were released.

On Tuesday, Hagel discussed the budget during three appearances, two before military audiences. In addition, acting Deputy Defense Secretary Christine Fox spoke to the McAleese Defense Programs Conference on Tuesday and to the American Enterprise Institute on Wednesday. Adm. James Winnefeld Jr., vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, spoke Wednesday at Bloomberg Government's defense summit.

While the main target is Congress, Hagel hopes to generate early support by explaining his proposals to the troops, service families and national security experts before they get distorted during the expected debate.

"It's going to be a tough sell," he told a group of former Pentagon officials and journalists at a Tuesday morning session at the Pentagon. He knows that budget



Rear Adm. Kirby, right, briefs Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel before he takes questions from the media during his visit to Fort Eustis, Va., on Tuesday to speak to soldiers about the Army's future.

hawks now battle defense hawks on Capitol Hill and that there's no guarantee all Republicans will support Pentagon spending as they did when he was a senator.

For the new times, there will be three 2015 defense budgets.

Obama will send up one based on numbers in the 2013 agreement between Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash. That one allows \$496 billion for core defense spending but is about \$45 billion below what Obama projected last year would be needed.

To close the gap, Obama has another proposal: an Opportunity, Growth and Security Initiative with \$26 billion for defense and \$30 billion for other spending. He will propose a package of spending and tax reforms to pay for it.

The third defense budget, assembled by Hagel's team, will show what fiscal 2015 and future

years would look like under sequester levels, because, the secretary said, "sequestration-level cuts remain the law ... for fiscal year 2016 and beyond" if Congress doesn't act. Fox noted that it would require defense cuts from earlier projects of more than \$50 billion annually through 2021.

Hagel uses the sequester projections as ammunition. For example, under current planning the Army would be cut to 490,000 personnel; Hagel's plan would trim it over the next five years to 440,000 or 450,000. Sequester levels returning in 2016 would require a cut to 420,000, a level that Gen. Raymond Odierno, the Army chief of staff, has said won't support current strategy.

Hagel's early efforts are an effort to address objections voiced about his plan and provide a sense of what's to come. The main subjects:

■ Creating a "hollow Army," Hagel, addressing Army troops at Fort Eustis in Newport News, Va., said he is trying to reduce the force structure as is done after every war, but "in a responsible, glide-path way."

"I suppose we could just have a lot of people and just keep training them and training them and training them, thinking that, well, maybe another Iraq or Afghanistan will come," he said.

Instead, he said, the reality is that "we can't continue to keep everybody trained and compensated. ... We cannot allow a so-called 'hollow force' or too many members just to have too many members. ... That's not fair to the members who stay in."

■ The administration is balancing the budget on the backs of those who serve. Winnefeld said personnel compensation savings — limiting pay increases, rais-

ing Tricare health fees, seeking a 5 percent increase in the rent allowance — "only amount to 10 percent of the savings we're suggesting out of what constitutes fully one-third of our budget." The other 90 percent of savings comes from "the other two-thirds, which pays for modernization and readiness as well as end-strength cost," Winnefeld said. Fox said the expectation was that "these initiatives [would] save \$11 billion over the next five years."

■ Over several years, commissaries are to lose \$1 billion of their \$1.4 billion annual direct subsidy, but still have free rent and pay no taxes. Overseas commissaries and those in remote sites will continue to get subsidies.

■ No change in retirement programs is expected until after the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission report, which is expected next February. The Pentagon supports grandfathering in those now in the programs. At Langley Air Force Base near Newport News on Tuesday, Hagel said Pentagon officials had not been consulted about the Ryan-Murray proposal, now repealed, that imposed a 1 percent cut in the retirement pay of those under 62. "We would have been opposed to it," he said.

It has been almost 13 months since Hagel's confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee and a year since he was sworn in.

On Tuesday, he recalled the teaching of Tom Osborne, the former University of Nebraska football coach who said the first quarter of a game was the time to build internally and the second was the time to play.

The Hagel set to appear before Armed Services on the defense budget Wednesday sees himself heading into the second quarter, prepared with far more expertise than the nominee who stumbled in answering questions a year ago.

EUROPE

173rd trades Afghanistan for Africa in upcoming exercise

By NANCY MONTGOMERY

Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — For the last decade, the go-to place for the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team was Afghanistan. The brigade deployed there four times after a 2003 tour in Iraq.

Now, with combat tours ended for the foreseeable future as the U.S. prepares to have all combat troops out of Afghanistan by the end of the year, brigade paratroopers are headed, somewhat unexpectedly, somewhere different.

About 135 paratroopers with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment are going to Cameroon, in central Africa. They will be participating starting in mid-March in an annual U.S. Army Africa exercise called Central Accord.

It's a first for the 173rd, whose soldiers have been busy either deploying to Afghanistan or returning.

"We've never done an exercise with USARAF," said Maj. Mike Weisman, brigade spokesman. "This is the first time it lined up

is the beginning of a beautiful friendship between the 173rd and U.S. Army Africa.

The brigade is headquartered in Vicenza, as is USARAF. But it's a part of U.S. Army Europe, which had to agree to lend the troops to USARAF.

Under the Army's year-old concept of regionally aligning forces with specific combatant commands, the go-to unit for the U.S. Africa Command is the Fort Riley, Kan.-based 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

Weisman said the 173rd aims to be the "unit of choice for any commander around the globe" and is positioned to do it.

"One of the best parts of the 173rd being forward-located in Europe is that we can fill operational needs of other geographical commanders," he said.

"We've got the infrastructure in U.S. Army Europe to move troops and support to AFRICOM or CENTCOM rapidly," he said, referring to U.S. Africa Command and Central Command, which is responsible for the Middle East and Afghanistan.

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Stars and Stripes

Soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team salute during a casing of the colors ceremony at Caserma Ederle in Vicenza, Italy, in June before deploying to Afghanistan.

Two jumps with Cameroonian paratroopers, using U.S. aircraft and parachutes, have been planned as part of the upcoming exercise. One is sort of a ceremonial "wing exchange" employing Cameroonian jump masters; the other is more tactical. The landing field features 7-foot-tall grass, Weisman said.

"They're clearing that now," Capt. Dwayne Steppe, company commander, said this week. "There's still the giant termite mound, though."

Steppe, like most of his troops, has never been to Africa. But he

said they were happy to be tasked with the training.

"This is just a great opportunity to train with African partners," he said. "We're just going to go down there and get after it with them."

In the spirit of team-building, the paratroopers were also planning to play in a soccer tournament, which was requested by the Africans, who are avid and expert players. Steppe said he expected to lose.

"I think I have one guy that's played soccer," he said.

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EUROPE

DOD voids some debts in LQA dispute

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — The Defense Department will not impose new debts on nearly 700 overseas civilian workers who the department says received housing allowances erroneously, the Pentagon's top personnel official said this week.

In May, 659 workers, mainly in Europe and the Pacific, were told that because of administrative mistakes they improperly received overseas housing allowances. They were told they would have to obtain special debt waivers so they would not have to repay all past allowances received.

Months later, those employees learned they could be on the hook for an additional round of debts in connection with other benefits associated with Living Quarters Allowances. Now, the DOD says it will not conduct an audit to determine the extent of those debts and will grant a blanket extension that enables workers to continue receiving those associated benefits until their LQA expires in May.

"I have determined that because of the cost of conducting audits of associated allowances and establishing any associated debts would likely exceed the amount that would be collected, no audits of associated allowances will be conducted," Jessica

Wright, the DOD's acting undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, wrote in a Tuesday memorandum. "Further, no action will be taken to pursue collection of these associated allowance debts in the future."

The move was welcomed by the employees, who have been critical of the DOD's handling of the matter. However, employees say blanket debt waivers should also be extended to housing allowances. Tuesday's decision applies only to additional allowances workers have received, such as Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance; student travel; post-differential; foreign transfer; separation maintenance;

and home services.

In early 2013, the DOD ordered an audit of locally hired personnel overseas in connection with a new interpretation of rules governing who is eligible to receive Living Quarters Allowances, which helps cover the cost of rent and utilities.

Employees argue that the new interpretation of regulations should not be applied retroactively and that the department should honor their original hiring agreements. Numerous senior military commanders have sided with the workers, urging the DOD to restore the benefits. So far, the DOD has rejected those requests.

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Navy civilian facing fraud charges for accepting Italy housing payments

By STEVEN BEARDSLEY
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — A Navy civilian accused of accepting more than \$360,000 in illegal housing benefits and forging documents during a 10-year tour in southern Italy was arraigned on theft and perjury charges in a U.S. federal court Wednesday.

Steven William Ashton, 41, was employed by the Navy as the NATO and Host Nations Program manager for the Europe, Africa and Southwest Asia region. He was arrested at the Naples base in Capriuchino last Friday after a grand jury indictment and flown to Norfolk for a first appearance, the Justice Department said.

The indictment accuses Ashton of filing the lease to his girlfriend's condominium with the base housing office in 2005, which enabled him to receive a monthly reimbursement of 2,200 euros, or about \$3,000, for rent.

Ashton, who was otherwise eligible for a housing benefit, never paid rent on the condominium, according to the indictment.

Federal rules prohibit housing benefits for employees living in a spouse-owned apartment. Ashton married his girlfriend in 2006 but never modified the lease, the indictment says.

Ashton was questioned by a Naval Criminal Investigative Service agent, Ashton said he had moved the lease to his father-in-law's name in 2006, according to the indictment. He told the agent that after his father-in-law died in 2007, he continued to pay rent, in cash, to a trust in the man's name.

Prosecutors charge that Ashton then gave the agent a copy of a lease he claimed was made in 2006 but that agents determined had recently been forged.

As his tour in Naples neared its end in October 2011, Ashton is alleged to have forged a series of documents allowing him to stay at the base two more years.

One of the documents justified the extension of the tour and was forwarded to Italian authorities for a permit to stay, the indictment says; another gave him ac-

cess to reduced-price gasoline and on-base amenities such as the commissary and exchange; and a third allowed him to renew the security card that grants access to the base, buildings on the base and equipment inside. Ashton forged signatures on the documents with computer editing software, according to the indictment.

Prosecutors say Ashton also faked several Coast Guard documents to fool Navy officials into granting his boat reduced-price moorage in the Bay of Naples. The alleged scam allowed him to avoid more than \$28,000 in fees.

Ashton is identified online as the CEO of Blackgrid Consulting, whose website offers work in "engineering and logistics services" and touts relationships with commercial and government entities. Blackgrid was registered in Delaware in 2010, according to online records, and it is registered with the Defense Contract Management Agency. It's unclear if the business has been awarded any defense contracts.

A brief biography on the business website says Ashton worked for the Defense Department prior to starting Blackgrid and formerly served as an officer in the Navy's Civil Engineering Corps, where he worked in humanitarian and peacekeeping operations across the world.

The indictment charges Ashton with six counts of making false statements, each punishable by a fine and up to five years in prison; one count of falsifying records in an investigation, which can be punished with a fine and a maximum prison sentence of 20 years; and a count of theft and conversion, which is punishable with a fine and up to 10 years in prison.

The case was investigated by NCIS and the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. Ashton was charged by a grand jury in the Southern District of Iowa, his home state.

A spokesman for the region command that employed Ashton did not respond to a request for comment by deadline.

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Courtesy of John Provan

Soldiers pose with a looted painting by Edouard Manet discovered in a mine by men of the U.S. Army's 90th Infantry Division on April 7, 1945.

The real monuments men: Wiesbaden ground zero for WWII artifact recovery

By MATT MILLHAM
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — At the end of World War II, the U.S. military found itself in custody of the largest art collection on the planet.

This relatively obscure fact is making headlines now thanks to Hollywood and George Clooney's film "The Monuments Men."

John Provan, an American historian who lives in Germany, told Stars and Stripes the real-life story depicted in the movie is something about which Americans should be proud.

"Never before had an Army that was winning a war given a rat's ass about the cultural remains or cultural highlights of not only a country but a continent basically that was being defeated," Provan said.

But that's exactly what the "Monuments Men" — and women — of the Allies' Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives section did.

While stomping around Europe, the Nazis pulled off the greatest art heist the world had ever seen, stealing cultural treasures from every country they set foot in.

To counter the possible destruction of what Provan describes as 5,000 years worth of cultural heritage the U.S. led the creation of the MFAA, a unit of some 345

"I think it's something that you should look back upon and realize, 'Wow, that's something where the military did an awful lot of good.' Just imagine going to a museum today and not seeing the 'Mona Lisa' or the 'Nefertiti.'"

John Provan
American historian

men and women who were experts in the artistic and cultural history of the continent.

In the last year of the war, the MFAA tracked and hunted down items stolen by the Nazis. When the war was over, it returned more than 5 million articles — everything from paintings and sculptures to furniture and jewelry.

One of the major collecting points for processing the recovered war booty was Wiesbaden, where the Army commandeered the building that is now the Wiesbaden Museum, less than 5 miles from the current headquarters of U.S. Army Europe.

"It's something that I'm sure that no soldier nowadays gives any consideration of," Provan said. "But I think it's something that you should look back upon and realize, 'Wow, that's something where the military did an

awful lot of good.' Just imagine going to a museum today and not seeing the 'Mona Lisa' or the 'Nefertiti.'"

The movie makes its Army and Air Force Exchange Service theater debut in Europe on March 7.

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PACIFIC

Soil tests find no dioxins at Kadena schools

By Travis J. Tritten
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — New tests on soil from schools at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa have found no danger of herbicides or dioxin despite fears over contaminated metal drums unearthed at a nearby soccer field, the Air Force announced Thursday.

The tests conducted this month by U.S. labs confirmed the results of earlier Air Force air and soil testing conducted around Amelia Earhart Intermediate School and Bob Hope Primary School. No trace was found of banned herbicides, and all other pollution was below safety standards, the service said.

Hundreds of military parents and residents have been on edge as Japanese workers removed 83 rusty drums — some contaminated with high levels of defoliant and dioxin — over the past nine months from an off-base Okinawa City recreational area that is within sight of the schools and a playground.

During a town hall meeting last month, some parents demanded additional testing as a safety measure for students, despite Japanese findings that the pollution had not spread across the soccer field or gotten into the ground water, and Air Force assurances that the schools were “completely safe.”

On Thursday, the service said it has completed its probes into the pollution. “These results conclusively characterize and confirm

that no contaminants have migrated from the excavation site to Kadena Air Base and that the [school] recreational area does not pose a health concern to the staff and students in the area,” said an Air Force statement that included the testing data. “No further surveillance is required.”

The soil samples from the schools were sent to three commercial labs in the United States that tested for dioxin, herbicides, PCBs, fuel constituents, metals and fluoride. Traces of some common environmental pollutants were found but none at a level deemed a health threat, the Air Force said.

Many residents have expressed fears of exposure to dioxin, which has been linked to cancer, reproductive and developmental problems, immune system damage and hormone imbalances.

Japanese tests on the drums found dioxin and the herbicide 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid. The latter’s use in commercial defoliants was discontinued in 1985 because of concerns over dioxin contamination, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The land where the soccer field is located was used by the Air Force until 1986, when it was turned over to the municipality. The Air Force has said it believes the barrels and other recovered debris were part of fill used to elevate the soccer field site after the land was returned.

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Appeal of ex-soldier convicted in BB gun shooting dismissed

Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea’s highest court on Thursday dismissed the final appeal of a former U.S. soldier convicted of firing a BB gun at pedestrians and hitting a South Korean police officer with his car.

The Supreme Court’s decision means that Christian Lopez-Morales will serve the entirety of his three-year sentence, according to a court spokesperson. The former staff sergeant was convicted, along with Pfc. Wendy Fuentes, in Seoul Central District Court last September of firing BBs at a crosswalk in the crowded Itaewon entertainment district. They drove away, triggering a high-speed chase that led to a third soldier being shot in the chest by a South Korean policeman.

Anyone convicted of a crime at the district court level in South Korea automatically has the right

to two appeals.

The March 2013 incident sparked considerable attention in South Korea and prompted public calls for the military to do more to prevent troop misbehavior.

Lopez-Morales, formerly Fuentes’ superior, pleaded guilty in a general court-martial in May to military charges of dereliction of duty, adultery, four specifications of making a false official statement and three specifications of failure to obey an order or regulation, according to the Eighth Army. He was sentenced to eight months of confinement, demoted to E-1 and given a dishonorable discharge.

Fuentes was assessed the maximum fine under South Korean law, 5 million won (about \$4,600), and a higher court proceeding. She was reduced in rank from E-4 to E-3 and fined a month’s pay at a court-martial.

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‘Scary’ tattoo ban passed at popular beach for servicemembers in Japan

By Erik Slavin
and Hana Kusumoto
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The party is about to slow down for patrons of one of Japan’s most popular beaches, and it may be over altogether for servicemembers displaying “scary” tattoos.

The Zushi city council passed an ordinance that includes a host of restrictions at its beach, which is regularly packed on weekends with young adults from the Tokyo region during summer. Zushi is a 10-minute train ride from Yokosuka Naval Base, making its beach one of the most accessible for sailors.

The restrictions include a ban on barbecues and alcoholic drinks outside the restaurants and wooden structures that line the beach during summer, city official Masashi Koizumi told Stars and Stripes on Thursday.

Perhaps the biggest issue for servicemembers is the part of the ordinance that bans the display of tattoos that, in Koizumi’s words, scare other beachgoers.

A single, small tattoo would be acceptable, while full body tattoos would not, city officials said. It means remains unclear exactly how a scary tattoo display will be defined.

Tattoos are traditionally associated with yakuza organized crime in Japan, though that is changing among young people, particularly

‘Public morals [at Zushi Beach] have worsened every year. The residents have said that they wished for summer to pass quickly and that they just have to endure it.’

Masashi Koizumi
Zushi city official

those who have traveled abroad.

Irezumi — the elaborate tattoos found on the bodies of many tattoo members — are generally distinguishable from other tattoos.

Despite that, many traditional hot springs and other businesses in Japan either ban people with tattoos or require patrons to cover them up.

The city is establishing a committee to come up with more specific rules for the law, which will take effect in late March.

The ordinance will ban loud music and is expected to require beach houses, which operate temporarily on the sand each summer, to close by 6:30 p.m., Koizumi said.

Zushi Beach lies across the street from an affluent neighborhood populated by many retirees.

The city has received complaints from residents for about 10 years, but those complaints have markedly increased recently, Koizumi said.

The low point for many in the community was when two men were stabbed at night on the beach last July.

Japanese media later reported that one of the victims died and that yakuza involvement was suspected.

“Public morals [at Zushi Beach] have worsened every year,” Koizumi said. “The residents have said that they wished for summer to pass quickly and that they just have to endure it.”

Zushi Mayor Ryuichi Hirai said on the city website that he will do everything he can to “bring back [the] Zushi beach that is safe and pleasant.”

City officials said there won’t be a punishment or fine for breaking the rules, but that security guards and other officials posted at the beach could leave violators to either stop or leave the beach.

U.S. Navy officials said Thursday that they could not comment because they had not spoken with Zushi officials about the ordinance.

The city plans to notify the military once the specifics of the new ordinance are agreed upon, Koizumi said.

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MILITARY

DOD tells of huge rise in sex assault reports

By CHRIS CARROLL

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — About 5,400 instances of sexual assault or “unwanted sexual contact” were reported within the U.S. military last fiscal year, a 60 percent rise from 2012, the Pentagon said Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the Army reported it had suspended hundreds of sexual assault response coordinators, recruiters and others in “a range of missteps including sexual assault and alcohol abuse.”

The Pentagon’s preliminary sexual assault tally for fiscal 2013, which ended Sept. 30, has risen since late December, when the military reported slightly more than 5,000 incidents. The number would rise again before a final report for 2013, Pentagon spokesman Lt. Col. Cathy Wilkinson said.

In fiscal 2012, military members reported 3,374 instances of

unwanted sexual contact. Defense officials estimated the true number was about 26,000, based on a “prevalence survey” given to troops.

The survey, which indicates that fewer than 20 percent of such incidents are reported, is conducted every other year, meaning no estimate for the total number of incidents will be available for 2013.

The latest number came out in panel discussion during a Senate hearing Wednesday to discuss the links between sexual assault, PTSD and suicide. The hearing was run by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., who’s spearheading an effort to overhaul prosecutions of serious crimes in the military to better protect sexual assault victims.

Gillibrand said late Wednesday that her bill, the Military Justice Improvement Act, had received unanimous consent from senators to move forward to debate on the Senate floor. Although a majority

of senators had indicated they support the bill to strip military commanders of authority over major criminal prosecutions, not enough have yet signed on to bypass a filibuster that opponents have promised.

More than 600 of the incidents, or about 11 percent, occurred prior to servicemembers’ entering the military, Wilkinson said. In 2012, only 3.4 percent of reports were from events prior to military service.

Defense officials regard the increase as a sign that confidence in the military sexual assault reporting system is growing, she said.

The Army, which announced it had disqualified 588 of about 20,000 soldiers in “positions of trust,” is in the process of deciding whether those suspended can remain in the service, a spokesman at the Pentagon said.

“To date, 79 are pending separation from the Army,” Col. David H. Patterson Jr. said. “However,

others could face further actions from their commands.”

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel last May ordered the services to conduct a “stand-down” to review the credentials and backgrounds of recruiters and sexual assault response personnel.

In August, the Army announced it had suspended 55 sexual assault counselors, drill instructors, recruiters and others, less than one-tenth of the eventual number pulled out of their jobs.

“The Army continues to ensure that those in positions of personal trust have the right tools, skills and background needed to carry out their duties effectively,” Patterson said. “We will continue working to better ensure we select the very best people for these posts, and that the chain of command knows what is expected of them, and how important this work is to the Army.”

According to a report in USA Today, the Navy disqualified five personnel, while the Air Force

and Marines suspended no one.

Pentagon officials said part of the reason the Army found so many more people to suspend may have resulted from Hagel’s order from last spring and reviewing the records of drill sergeants and other trainers as well.

Hagel’s spokesman, Rear Adm. John Kirby, said the defense secretary supported the Army’s initiative to cast a wider net than absolutely required in an effort to stamp out sexual assault.

“Nothing is more important to Secretary Hagel than the health and well-being of our troops and their families,” Kirby said. “He was happy to learn that the Army widened the scope of their review and he is grateful for the work they have done to get a better grip on a very difficult issue and hold people accountable.”

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Crash: Incident was the greatest loss of US lives during Afghanistan War

FROM FRONT PAGE

“If I did not believe that a majority of families wanted a forum like this to exist, we would not be conducting this hearing,” Rep. Jason Chaffetz, the chairman of the oversight committee, said in his opening remarks.

“There are other families and their representatives who have contacted the subcommittee and expressed grave concern about this hearing,” Rep. John Tierney said. “They’ve asked for privacy and they seek closure. So ... we should acknowledge that not all of the families affected by this tragedy support these proceedings.”

Another source of controversy surrounded the decision not to allow family members of the fallen servicemembers to testify. Five defense officials spoke at the hearing. A plan to have a second witness panel comprising some family members was abandoned in favor of having them submit written statements expressing their concerns, Foreign Policy reported.

“We have tried our best to treat all the families’ interests equally knowing that there’s a wide-ranging spectrum of perspectives given the sheer number of families and people that are engaged in this,” Chaffetz said at the beginning of the hearing.

The crash killed 30 U.S. servicemembers, including 25 special operations personnel, some of whom were part of SEAL Team Six, the unit that carried out the raid on Osama bin Laden’s compound in Pakistan. Five Army National Guard and Reserve crewmen also died, as well as eight Afghans who were part of the team carrying out the mission.

The shooting down of “Extortion 17” constitutes the greatest loss of American life from a sin-



HEATHER GRAHAM-ASHLEY/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

A CH-47 Chinook helicopter serves as a backdrop for a memorial service in Olathe, Kan., for the air crew killed Aug. 6, 2011, when their CH-47 was shot down in Afghanistan.

gle battle in the history of the Afghanistan War. It is also the most disastrous incident in the 27-year history of U.S. Special Operations Command.

Another point of controversy was the tactics employed during the operation, including the decision to fly into an area where the aircraft could be easily shot down.

Garry Reid, the principal deputy assistant secretary of de-

fense for special operations and low-intensity conflict, said that the task force employed “sound tactics,” but acknowledged that the unit did not achieve the element of surprise because the preceding battle likely put the insurgents on a heightened state of alert and other aerial assets failed to identify the Taliban who were positioned to shoot down the aircraft.

Another decision that was criti-

cized was the choice of using the conventional Chinook instead of the one designed for special-operations missions.

Reid said that no U.S. military aircraft has effective countermeasures for RPGs, and that using a different aircraft wouldn’t have made any difference in the outcome.

Some lawmakers asked whether Afghan forces tipped off the Taliban before the mission took

place, enabling the insurgents to prepare to ambush the aircraft.

Reid said that was highly unlikely because no Afghans were informed of the mission ahead of time except the members of the team, and there were no external communications before the mission was launched.

Events surrounding memorial ceremonies and the way that the remains were handled upset some families of the fallen servicemembers. Some were angry that the military filmed a memorial ceremony in Afghanistan without their permission.

Reid said that was routine practice until the policy was changed by U.S. Central Command last year.

Another source of concern involved reports that an Afghan colonel who spoke in Arabic at the memorial ceremony in Afghanistan insulted the fallen American servicemembers. Reid said it was his understanding, based on talking to those who listened to the remarks, that the colonel praised the fallen servicemembers and denigrated the enemy, but that the colonel’s remarks were “subject to interpretation.”

Others were upset about the fact that when the caskets of the fallen members of the team were returned to Dover Air Force Base, Del., they were draped with 30 American flags as well as eight Afghan flags.

Air Force Col. John Devillier, commander of Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations, said that decision was made because officials could not identify the remains and distinguish between the Americans and the Afghans until a medical examiner looked at the bodies.

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NATION

Ariz. governor's veto aimed at own party's right

By **BOB CHRISTIE**
The Associated Press

PHOENIX — Republican Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer slapped down the right wing of her own party, vetoing a bill pushed by social conservatives that would have allowed people with sincerely held religious beliefs to refuse to serve gays.

The conservative governor said she could not sign a bill that was not only unneeded but would damage the state's improving business environment and would divide its citizens.

Senate Bill 1062 had set off a national debate over gay rights, religion and discrimination and subjected Arizona to blistering criticism from major corporations and political leaders from both parties.

Loud cheers erupted outside the Capitol building immediately after Brewer made her announcement Wednesday night.

Brewer pushed back hard against the GOP conservatives who forced the bill forward by citing examples of religious rights infringements in other states.

"I have not heard one example in Arizona where a business owner's religious liberty has been violated," Brewer said. "The bill is broadly worded and could result in unintended and negative consequences."

She chastised the GOP-controlled state Legislature for sending her a divisive bill instead of working on a state budget that continues her economic expansion policies or an overhaul of Arizona's broken child welfare system, her top priorities.

In a reference to the gay mar-



Brewer



ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP

Gay rights supporters Rachel Butas, right, and Jo Jo Halko kiss Wednesday in Phoenix after learning that Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer vetoed a bill to allow refusal of service to homosexuals.

riage debate that has expanded across the nation, she reached out to the religious right with sympathy but said 1062 was not the solution.

"Our society is undergoing many dramatic changes," she said. "However, I sincerely believe that Senate Bill 1062 has the potential to create more problems than it purports to solve. It could divide Arizona in ways we cannot even imagine and nobody could ever want."

The bill was designed to give added protection from lawsuits to people who assert their religious beliefs in refusing service to gays or others who offend their beliefs. Opponents called it an

open attack on gays that invited discrimination.

Arizona was thrust into the national spotlight last week after both chambers of the state legislature approved the bill. As the days passed, more and more groups, politicians and average citizens weighed in against it. Many took to social media to criticize the bill.

Prominent business groups said it would be another black eye for the state that saw a national backlash over its 2010 immigration-crackdown law, SB1070, and warned that businesses looking to expand into the state may not do so if bill became law.

Obama plan aims to help minority boys' odds

By **JOSH LEDERMAN**
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Long before he arrived at the White House, Barack Obama was the son of a single mother, challenged and tempted by the same societal ills that disproportionately keep blacks impoverished and behind bars. Now the nation's first black president is unveiling a new initiative aimed at breaking down those obstacles, and pledging to continue the fight long after his presidency ends.

Joined at the White House by young men of color, Obama on Thursday was calling on America's businesses, philanthropists and government leaders to join forces to put more boys on a path toward successful lives. Foundations were to announce pledges to spend at least \$200 million over five years to promote that goal as Obama launches his "My Brother's Keeper" initiative.

Those organizations, which include prominent groups like the Ford Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, will seek to coordinate their investments to create and bolster programs that keep youths in school and out of the criminal justice system while improving their access to higher education. The White House said it expects money for the programs to grow "exponentially" as major businesses start to pitch in.

Obama also will sign a presidential memorandum creating a governmentwide task force to evaluate the effectiveness of various approaches so federal and local governments, community groups and businesses will have best practices to follow in the future.

An online "What Works" portal will provide public access to data about programs that improve outcomes for young minority men.

Texas AG vows to appeal gay marriage ruling

By **CHRIS TOMLINSON**
The Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott's office was working on an appeal Thursday of a federal judge's decision to lift the state's ban on gay marriage.

U.S. District Judge Orlando Garcia ruled a day earlier that the ban was unconstitutional. The judge is enforcing the law to remain in place to give Abbott time to appeal to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, noting that the issue likely will end up at the U.S. Supreme Court.

13 are exposed to radiation at NM plant

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Employees who were working at the nation's underground nuclear waste dump when it started leaking didn't show signs of external contamination, but officials say biological samples show 13 workers suffered some exposure to radiation.

The U.S. Department of Energy and the contractor that runs the Waste Isolation Pilot Project declined to comment further on the preliminary test results announced Wednesday, saying they would discuss the issue at a news conference Thursday afternoon.

"It is important to note that these are initial sample results," the DOE and Nuclear Waste Part-

nership, the plant operator, said in a joint statement. "These employees, both federal and contractor, will be asked to provide additional samples in order to fully determine the extent of any exposure."

All employees who were working at the southeastern New Mexico plant when the leak occurred late Feb. 14 were checked for contamination before being allowed to leave, the news release said. Biological samples also were taken to check for possible exposure from inhaling radioactive particles.

Elevated radiation levels have been detected in the air around the plant, but officials have said the readings are too low to constitute a public health threat.

Abbott, the leading candidate to replace Republican Gov. Rick Perry, took a conciliatory tone after the ruling. He said "there are good, well-meaning people on both sides" of the same-sex marriage debate, but he insisted that states have the right to set their own marriage laws.

He said Texas voters did just that in 2005 by passing a constitutional amendment that defines marriage as between a man and a woman.

"As the lower court acknowledged today, it's an issue that will ultimately be resolved by a higher court," Abbott said, adding that

Texas would begin that process by appealing to the 5th Circuit.

In his ruling, Garcia said marriage was an individual right that a voter-approved constitutional amendment couldn't deny. He said his decision was not made "in defiance of the great people of Texas or the Texas Legislature," but in compliance with the U.S. Constitution and Supreme Court precedent.

"Without a rational relation to a legitimate governmental pur-

pose, state-imposed inequality can find no refuge in our United States Constitution," he wrote.

Garcia's ruling added to a tangled web of court rulings, state laws and legal opinions across the country that is expected to end up before the U.S. Supreme Court. There are civil rights lawsuits in 24 states asking courts to overturn bans on state gay marriages, and gay rights groups have won recent victories in other conservative states.

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INATION

Boston Marathon security plan includes ban on bags

By DENISE LAVOE
The Associated Press

BOSTON — This year's Boston Marathon will have a "no bags" policy as part of stepped-up security following last year's deadly bombing, the Boston Athletic Association announced Wednesday. Marathon runners typically are allowed to bring bags or backpacks to keep personal items. Those bags are bused between the starting line in Hopkinton and the finish line in Boston.

This year, runners will not be allowed to bring backpacks or bags, which will also not be allowed in certain areas near the start or finish line, or along the 26.2-mile course.

Runners will be given a chance to check gear in Hopkinton on the morning of the marathon to allow them to have a change of clothing at the end of the race. The athletic association said it will provide clear plastic bags for that purpose.

Twin bombs placed in backpacks near the 2013 finish line killed three people and injured more than 260. Prosecutors say two spectators were responsible.

Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, 20, is awaiting trial and faces the possibility of the death penalty on 30

'We are going to strike a good balance between public safety and security, and ensuring that this is a celebratory and festive event like it has always been.'

Kurt Schwartz
Massachusetts undersecretary for public safety

federal charges, including using a weapon of mass destruction. His brother, Tamerlan Tsarnaev, died following a gunbattle with police several days after the marathon. State, local and federal law enforcement officials have been meeting for months to prepare a stringent security plan for this year's April 21 marathon.

The new rules were outlined in an email sent by the athletic association to registered runners.

Costumes covering the face or non-form-fitting, bulky outfits will also be prohibited.

Glass containers and any container larger than one liter will be banned.

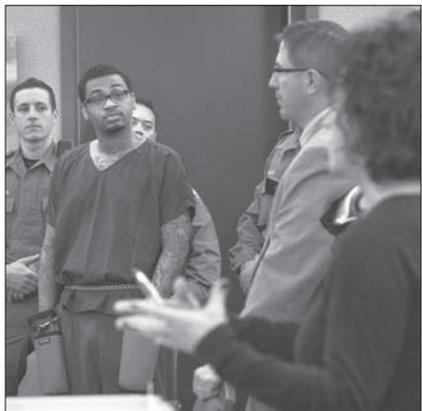
The list of prohibited items for runners also includes strollers, suitcases and rolling bags, weight vests or any type of vest with pockets, except for lightweight running vests, which will

be allowed.

The BAA said runners will be allowed to wear small fanny packs to carry food, medicine, identification, cellphones or other necessary small items. They can also bring water bottles, but they must be one liter or smaller. Organizers are discouraging runners from wearing headphones, but they will be permitted.

Kurt Schwartz, the state's undersecretary for public safety, said officials are trying to maintain the excitement of marathon while at the same time ensuring the safety of the thousands of marathon participants and spectators.

"We are going to strike a good balance between public safety and security, and ensuring that this is a celebratory and festive event like it has always been," Schwartz said



JEFF SCHEID, LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL/AP

Self-proclaimed pimp and accused killer Ammar Asim Faruq Harris listens while prosecutor Lisa Luzaich, right, speaks during sentencing in Clark County District Court on Wednesday.

Vegas Strip shooting and crash suspect sentenced to 16 years in rape case

The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — A self-described pimp was sentenced Wednesday to 16 years to life in Nevada state prison in a rape and robbery case that served as a prelude to his death penalty trial later this year in a Las Vegas Strip shooting and fiery crash that left three people dead.

Ammar Asim Faruq Harris, 27, stood with his shackled hands in orange mitts and declined to speak before his sentencing Wednesday in Clark County District Court.

His lawyer, Robert Langford, told Judge Kathleen Delaney that Harris will appeal his conviction and sentence, and that Harris wasn't the bad person he had been made out to be.

"His history is not as bad as they say," Langford said. "There is going to be an appeal of this. That's why he doesn't want to address the court."

Prosecutor Lisa Luzaich cast Harris as a repeat felon who bragged that he made a living exploiting and abusing women even before a jury in Las Vegas found him guilty in September of raping and robbing an 18-year-old woman at a Las Vegas condominium in June 2010.

Harris has never been convicted of pimping. He was convicted

in South Carolina in 2004 of felony possession with intent to sell a stolen pistol and in Atlanta of misdemeanor marijuana possession.

In the months before the shooting, Harris posted Internet videos of himself fanning a wad of \$100 bills and boasting about luxury cars, prostitutes and women who paid him. Records showed he lived in Miami, Atlanta and Las Vegas.

Luzaich said Harris' marijuana conviction was a plea bargain stemming from a felony charge.

"There's nobody who can show he's a productive member of society," the prosecutor said.

Harris is due for trial Sept. 28 in the Strip shooting and crash that killed an aspiring rapper, a cab driver and a taxi passenger a little more than a year ago.

He is accused of shooting from a black Range Rover and mortally wounding aspiring rapper Kenneth Cherry Jr. behind the wheel of a Maserati sports car after the two men exchanged words at a casino table stand.

The Maserati sped forward and crashed into a taxi, igniting a fireball that killed cab driver Michael Boldon and passenger Sandra Sutton-Wasmund, of Maple Valley, Wash.

The motive was not clear.

The suspect was expected to appear in court for the first time Thursday.

From The Associated Press

Bus driver shooting probed as hate crime

The Associated Press

DAYTON, Ohio — Authorities said Wednesday that they are investigating whether the shooting of a bus driver who said a book of Bible verses in his pocket helped stop two bullets could have been a hate crime.

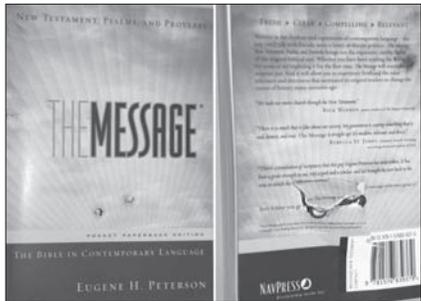
Bus driver Rickey Wagoner, who is white, told Dayton police that he was outside his bus early Monday when three black men shot at him, with two bullets hitting the book in his shirt pocket and one hitting his leg. He said he was also stabbed in the arm.

Wagoner, 49, was released from the hospital Tuesday.

Police Chief Richard Biehl said Wednesday that he became concerned about the possibility of a hate crime after reading the initial police report and that he forwarded the report to the FBI's Dayton office.

FBI spokesman Rick Smith said agents will help determine whether the shooting was a hate crime, a federal civil rights violation.

Biehl said Wednesday that po-



DAYTON POLICE VIA THE DAYTON (OHIO) DAILY NEWS/AP

This is the book of Bible verses that bus driver Rickey Wagoner was carrying when he was attacked early Monday, with two bullets hitting the book in his shirt pocket.

lice recovered a .25-caliber semi-automatic pistol and a knife along with four spent rounds and three live rounds from the gun. He said the spent rounds match the number of shots heard on an audio recording from the bus.

Biehl said there were no witnesses and no video of the shooting.

Police are analyzing evidence that includes the knife, shell casings, bullets and the gun.

A driver for the Greater Dayton Regional Transit Authority, Wagoner said he stopped the bus to check a mechanical problem

around 5 a.m. Monday when the men approached him. Wagoner told police he fought back and grabbed the gun and that the men ran away. Wagoner told police he fired at them before driving the bus to safety and calling for help.

Police on Wednesday displayed a photo of the book that showed where two bullets entered through its cover. When asked about the book's thickness, police used as an example a book that appeared to be about an inch thick.

Wagoner told police he just started carrying the book about a week earlier.

Ohio man expected to survive after 14 shots

CINCINNATI — Police said a man is expected to survive after being shot 14 times.

The Cincinnati Enquirer reported that the 35-year-old man was rushed to a hospital Wednesday night after he was riddled with bullets in the arms, legs and

body.

The man's girlfriend drove him to the hospital after the attack in Cincinnati. A 32-year-old man was arrested a few hours later and charged with felonious assault.

The suspect was expected to appear in court for the first time Thursday.

From The Associated Press

WORLD

Officials: Bombings kill at least 26 in Iraq

BAGHDAD — A bomb hidden on a motorcycle exploded at a second-hand market in Iraq's capital, the deadliest of a series of bombings Thursday around Baghdad that killed at least 26 people, authorities said.

The motorcycle market blast struck Baghdad's sprawling eastern Sadr City district as night fell on at least 17 people and wounding 38, officials said. It appeared as though the motorcycle bomb had been slipped in among the other bikes on display, officials said.

Two other bombs struck across the capital targeting minibus crossovers ferrying home laborers at the end of the workday. In Sadr City, officials said a bomb attached to a minibus exploded, killing five civilians and wounding 14. Another bomb stuck on a minibus killed four and wounded 11 in the northern Shaab neighborhood, authorities said.

UK to consult on rules for 3-parent embryos

LONDON — Britain is starting a public consultation on rules allowing scientists to create embryos using DNA from three people — a man and two women — to prevent mothers from passing on potentially fatal genetic diseases.

Britain's department of health said Thursday the consultation is intended to gather as many views as possible before introducing its final regulations.

The consultation isn't meant to debate whether the controversial techniques should be allowed, but simply how they should be used. The proposed rules have been published online and the government is inviting people to respond online or by mail by late May.

About one in 200 children every year in Britain is born with a mitochondrial disorder, faults in a cell's energy source that are contained outside the nucleus in a normal egg. Mistakes in the mitochondria's genetic code can result in diseases such as muscular dystrophy, epilepsy, heart problems and mental retardation.

S. Korea: N. Korea fired missiles into waters

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea fired four suspected short-range missiles into its eastern waters Thursday, South Korea defense officials said, in an apparent effort to protest ongoing U.S.-South Korea military exercises that Pyongyang calls a rehearsal for invasion.

The launches weren't expected to raise tension as North Korea routinely tests short-range missiles and it has recently sought better ties with South Korea in what outside analysts say is an attempt to win badly-needed foreign investment and aid. The rival Koreas this month held their first reunions of Korean War-divided families in more than three years.

The projectiles that landed off North's eastern coast were believed to be short-range missiles with a range of more than 125 miles.

From The Associated Press

Officials urge calm as Russia drills

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and NATO's top official on Thursday called on Russia to avoid an escalation along its border with Ukraine, where a surprise Russian military exercise has stoked concerns about a possible armed conflict.

"I urge Russia not to take any action that could escalate tension or create misunderstanding," NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen told journalists after a ministerial meeting in Brussels.

Hagel, during a subsequent news conference, echoed those concerns, saying he was keeping

a close eye on the Russian war games.

In Ukraine, weeks of anti-government clashes and bloody protests forced Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, who is now on the run, out of office last week. Tensions remain high in the country amid concerns of separatism in Ukraine's Russian-speaking Crimea region. Groups of gunmen seized control of local government buildings in Crimea on Thursday and raised the Russian flag, The Associated Press reported.

Rasmussen called on all sides to "cool down."

"I urge all parties to step back from confrontation, refrain from provocative actions and return to

the path of dialogue," Rasmussen said during a news conference in Brussels that was streamed live on the Internet.

Hagel echoed that call. "This is a time for very cool, wise leadership, on the Russian side, and on everybody's side," Hagel said, as quoted by the AP.

There are no indications the Russian military drills are a prelude to any intervention.

"We have no information indicating that Russia has any plans to intervene militarily," Rasmussen said.

Nonetheless, the situation in Ukraine has prompted concerns about a return to old Cold War political battles between Russia and the West, with Ukraine as a key

piece on the geopolitical chess board.

In an interview with MSNBC on Thursday, Secretary of State John Kerry said Russia shouldn't view the situation in Ukraine through the prism of the past.

"So we're hoping that Russia will not see this as a sort of a continuation of the Cold War," Kerry said. "We don't see it that way. We do not believe this should be an East-West, Russia-United States. This is not "Rocky IV," believe me. We don't see it that way."

NATO defense ministers, who met with Ukrainian officials on Thursday, said the alliance would press ahead with plans for security cooperation with Ukraine.

vandiver.john@stripes.com

Russia reportedly sheltering Ukraine's president

By KARL RITTER
AND DALTON BENNETT
The Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine — Russia scrambled fighter jets to patrol its border and reportedly gave shelter to Ukraine's fugitive president as pro-Russian gunmen stormed offices of Ukraine's strategic region of Crimea, deepening the crisis for the new Ukrainian government even as it was being formed.

The moves pose an immediate challenge to Ukraine's new authorities as they seek to set up an interim government for the country, whose population is divided in loyalties between Russia and the West. Ukraine's new prime minister said the country's future lies in the European Union but with friendly relations with Russia. Moscow, meanwhile, has launched a massive military exercise involving 150,000 troops and has put fighter jets on patrol along the border.

A respected Russian news organization reported that the fugitive president, Viktor Yanukovich, who was driven out of Kiev by a three-month protest movement, was staying in a Kremlin sanatorium just outside Moscow.

"I have to ask Russia to ensure my personal safety from extremists," Yanukovich said in a statement carried by Russian news agencies on Thursday. He said he still considers himself president and sees the new Ukrainian authority as illegitimate.

Shortly afterward, the same three Russian news agencies quoted an unnamed Russian official saying that Yanukovich's request for protection "was satisfied" on the territory of Russia.

Russian news agencies later reported that Yanukovich will hold a news conference Friday in the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don.



EFREM LUKATSKY/AP

Anti-Yanukovich demonstrators take part in a rally Thursday at Parliament in Kiev, Ukraine.

of Ukraine." He warned that any move by Russian troops off of their base in Crimea "will be considered a military aggression."

"Unidentified people with automatic weapons, explosives and grenades have taken over the governmental buildings and the Parliament building in the autonomous region of Crimea," he said. "I have given orders to the military to use all methods necessary to protect the citizens, punish the criminals and to free the buildings."

Turchynov was to leave for Simferopol later Thursday in hopes of reaching a peaceful end to the standoff there, Ukraine's ambassador to NATO, Thor Dolhov, told The Associated Press in Brussels.

"And the most important thing is now to avoid clashes and use of force, violence," Dolhov said.

In Kiev, lawmakers chose Arseniy Yatsenyuk as the new prime minister. He will face the hugely complicated task of restoring stability in a country that

is not only deeply divided politically but on the verge of financial collapse. Yatsenyuk, 39, served as economy minister, foreign minister and parliamentary speaker before Yanukovich took office in 2010, and is widely viewed as a technocratic reformer who enjoys the support of the U.S.

Shortly before the lawmakers chose him as the leader of the new Cabinet, Yatsenyuk said Ukraine doesn't want a fight with Russia, but insisted the country wouldn't accept the secession of the southern Crimea region.

He said Crimea "has been and will be a part of Ukraine."

Yanukovich fled after riot police attacked protesters in Kiev's central square, killing more than 80 people, and European and Russian officials intervened. He has not been seen publicly since Saturday, when he said he remained the legitimately elected president — a position that has been backed by Russia.

Russia's respected RBK news

organization reported Wednesday evening that Yanukovich was staying at the Barvicha sanatorium, which is run by the presidential administration's property department.

The spokesman for that department, Viktor Khrekov, told the AP on Thursday that he has no information about that.

The RBK report was impossible to confirm, but security at the Ukraina Hotel was unusually heavy late Wednesday, with police watching from parked vehicles outside and guards posted throughout the lobby. Some of Yanukovich's allies, also reported to have been at the hotel, may have still been there.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman also said he had no information about Yanukovich's reported arrival in Moscow.

In a clear warning to Ukraine, Putin on Wednesday ordered massive military exercises involving most of the military units in western Russia.

WORLD

In school, off streets



PHOTOS BY FARAH ABDI WARSAMEN/AP

Mohamed Aden works on his exercises in a school classroom in Mogadishu, Somalia, in January.

Opposed by militants, free education for Somali children proving popular

By ABDI GULED
The Associated Press

MOGADISHU, Somalia — Two years ago, Mohamed Aden was a shoe shiner in Mogadishu, walking the streets of the Somali capital in search of clients even as his friends attended school. Now the 12-year-old boy sits proudly among classmates.

For Aden, a poor boy whose family lives in a derelict building in a Mogadishu slum, the transition from streets to classroom might never have happened without a new government-run program called Go2School that seeks to give a free elementary school education to at least 1 million children.

Many in Somalia are happy with the new program, but the country's al-Qaida-linked militant group earlier this month warned that schools are legitimate targets for attack. Sheikh Ali Mohamed Hussein, a senior al-Shabab official, told reporters the educational program seeks to secularize Somali children.

Despite a long history of such anti-education threats, the donor-funded program has proved popular with parents as well as children who otherwise would have no opportunity to get even

the most basic education in a country with one of the worst literacy rates in the world.

On a recent morning, Aden gleefully worked on an English exercise as a teacher stood by the blackboard offering instruction to dozens of boys and girls at Mogadishu's Macalin Jamaac School, where some 700 students are trying to catch up on lost school time. Launched late last year, the program already has enrolled more than 35,000 students in 16 schools across the country.

"I'm happy now because I am learning at a school," Aden said. "I'm going to become a doctor when I finish studying."

Abdiwahid Sheikh Ahmed, the school's principal, said his goal is "to bring many lost children back to school."

The U.N. children's agency, UNICEF, is urging donors to keep the program running. Only 42 percent of Somali children attend primary school, according to one estimate by the U.N. Of those, only about a third are girls.

The poor attendance rates are partly a legacy of instability in the Horn of Africa nation. Public schools collapsed in the decades-long chaos that followed the collapse of Somalia's central government in 1991. Schools, ex-



A teacher works with a student in Mogadishu in January.

pensive to run and often targeted by Islamic militants as agents of so-called Western indoctrination, were among the hardest hit.

Although some private schools exist, few Somalis can afford the tuition in a country where many live in extreme poverty. Annual per capita income was \$107 in 2011, according to U.N. data.

Unable to go to school, many Somali children have ended up on the streets, offering cheap

labor at building sites. Others have been targeted as potential recruits for a terrorist campaign by Islamic rebels.

Somali education officials believe many children can be lured to the classroom as the country gradually becomes more peaceful. The program is funded by the U.N. and countries including Qatar, a key supporter of Somalia's president. Parents have to pay only for uniforms and scholastic

materials for their children.

"So far, the program is going well," said Mohamed Abdiqadir Ali, a director at Somalia's Education Ministry. "We want to increase the low enrolment rate in the country. We are also considering setting up mobile schools in the rural areas and regions."

Boys sit side by side with girls in schools run under the Go2School program, a gender mix that has alarmed some parents in this conservative Muslim country. Many keep their daughters away.

Ali, the Education Ministry director, said they have yet to design a standard national school curriculum, raising questions about the quality of teaching now offered. Some teachers said that often their monthly pay comes late, and others were said to have stopped teaching because of safety concerns amid militant threats.

Some critics, noting the country's lack of strong institutions, worry that the program may be derailed by official corruption.

"It's the most excellent program Somalia is undertaking in decades, but there's question of its sustainability, given the country's corruption background," said Mohamed Ali, a retired university professor in Mogadishu.

NATION

'We need the iPhone of guns'

The Armatix iP1 pistol and the iW1 active RFID watch use the Armatix Smart System for gun access and use. A Smart System gun will shoot only if it is within range of the watch.



Armatix

Will the arrival of smart guns transform the industry?

By MICHAEL S. ROSENWALD
The Washington Post

One of California's largest firearm stores recently added a peculiar new gun to its shelves. It requires an accessory: a black waterproof watch.

The watch's primary purpose is not to provide accurate time, though it does. The watch makes the gun think. Electronic chips inside the gun and watch communicate with each other. If the watch is within close reach of the gun, a light on the grip turns green. Fire away. No watch means no green light. The gun becomes a paperweight.

A dream of gun-control advocates for decades, the Armatix iP1 is the country's first smart gun. Its introduction is seen as a landmark event in efforts to reduce gun violence, suicides and accidental shootings. Proponents compare smart guns to automobile air bags — a transformative add-on that gun owners will demand. Gun-rights advocates are already balking, wondering what happens if the technology fails just as an intruder breaks in.

James Mitchell, the "extremely pro-gun" owner of the Oak Tree Gun Club, isn't one of the skeptics. His club's firearms shop is the only outlet in the country selling the iP1. "It could revolutionize the gun industry," Mitchell said.

The implications for the iP1's introduction are potentially enormous, both politically and economically. Lawmakers around the country have been intrigued by the possibilities. New Jersey passed a hotly contested law in 2002 requiring that only smart guns be sold in the state within three years of a smart gun being sold anywhere in the country. A similar measure made it through the California Senate last year, and at the federal level, Rep. John Tierney, D-Mass., also has introduced a mandate.

Although National Rifle Association officials did not respond to requests for comment about smart-gun technology, the group fiercely opposes "government mandates that require the use of expensive, unreliable features, such as grips that would read your fingerprints before the gun will fire," according to the website of its lobbying arm, the Institute for Legislative Action. "And NRA recognizes that the 'smart guns' issue clearly has the potential to mesh with the anti-gunner's agenda, opening the door to a ban on all guns that do not possess the government-required technology."

The arrival of smart-gun technology also comes amid a flurry of interest in the concept from investors who think the country is ready for new, innova-

tive gun-control ideas. Last month, Ron Conway, a Silicon Valley titan and early investor in Google and Facebook, launched a \$1 million X-prize-like contest for smart-gun technology.

"We need the iPhone of guns," Conway said, noting how the new iPhone 5s can be unlocked quickly with a fingerprint. "The entrepreneur who does this right could be the Mark Zuckerberg of guns. Then the venture capitalists like me will dive in, give them capital, and we will build a multibillion-dollar gun company that makes safe, smart guns."

Smart guns will have huge appeal to buyers, advocates say. "If you have two cars and one has an air bag and one doesn't, are you going to buy the one without the air bag?" said Belinda Padilla, president of Armatix's U.S. operation. "It's your choice, but why would you do that?"

Some of the sharpest criticism comes from an unlikely corner — the Violence Policy Center, a staunch advocate of reducing gun violence.

Policy Center officials argue that the new technology is unlikely to stem gun homicides, which often occur between people who know each other, and that personalization will have no effect on the more than 300 million guns in circulation. The organization also questions whether the technology would deter the nearly 350,000 incidents of firearm theft per year, though some of the proposed technologies are add-ons installed on existing guns.

Perhaps most importantly, the Violence Policy Center worries that smart guns will increase the number of gun owners, because marketing around safety could sway those previously opposed to guns to make their first purchase.

"We are very skeptical of what this technology can accomplish," said Josh Sugarmann, the organization's executive director. "You're really affecting a very small portion of the gun-buying public."

Proponents of smart guns dispute the criticism. They point to studies that hint at potentially significant reductions in gun deaths, particularly high-profile ones among children. In 2010, children accounted for 9 percent of the 606 unintentional or accidental gun deaths in the United States. A smart gun could prevent those deaths, proponents say.

"These guns are not going to rescue us from the 32,000 gun deaths a year but they are going to materially reduce gun deaths in the United States," Teret said.

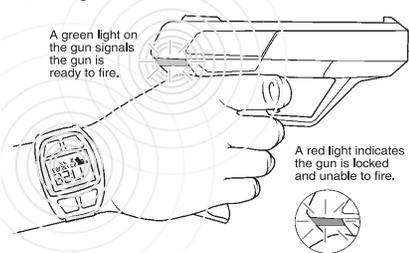
The cost is high. Armatix's iP1, a .22-caliber pistol, is \$1,399 — plus \$399 for the watch. A 40-caliber Glock handgun can be had for about \$600.

How it works

Some new types of guns feature safeties that are more than mere mechanical switches. Firearm manufacturers are applying digital technology to guns to make them safer and less likely to be used by anyone other than the owner.

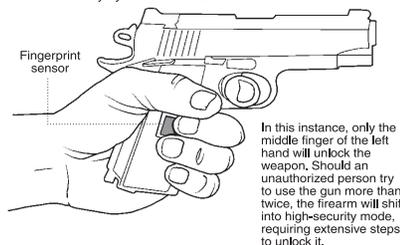
The wristwatch key

This gun broadcasts radio frequencies. If a wristwatch transponder worn on the wrist — and activated by a personal identification number — is adjacent to the gun, the watch will return a signal to unlock the gun.



The fingerprint key

Guns equipped with a fingerprint-recognition system on the grip can be fired only by authorized users.



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Planes report being targeted by laser lights

MA NEWTON—The Federal Aviation Administration is investigating reports that someone pointed a laser light at the cockpits of two airplanes in the Boston area.

Also, police in Newton, just west of Boston and Logan Airport, are looking into a report from a driver that a man pointed a green laser at him and other drivers Tuesday night, about two hours before the planes were allegedly targeted.

One plane had left Boston and was heading to Atlanta; the other was en route to Boston and flying over Providence, R.I. The FAA pinpointed the coordinates to Forte Park in Newton; police responded but did not find anyone.

Pizza Hut closed after urination incident

WV KERMIT — A Pizza Hut in southern West Virginia, where a district manager was caught on surveillance video urinating into a sink, is closing permanently.

The video dated Jan. 29 shows the manager at the Kermit, W.Va., restaurant urinating in a metal sink in a food preparation area. The incident occurred after business hours. The employee was fired.

Pizza Hut Corp. spokesman Doug Terfehr said Wednesday the decision to permanently close the restaurant was made Feb. 19, the day after the video surfaced.

Pot advocates take case to Elections Board

DC WASHINGTON—The District of Columbia should set aside the warnings of its attorney general and let voters decide whether they want to legalize marijuana possession in the nation's capital, advocates for the measure argued Tuesday before the D.C. Board of Elections.

The marijuana advocates are seeking to make Washington one of the first East Coast cities to legalize marijuana possession. If it successfully gets the measure on the November ballot, legalization has a strong chance of being approved, according to a recent Washington Post poll.

Last week, D.C. Attorney General Irvin Nathan urged the Elections Board to reject the proposed ballot initiative, saying it would put at least one aspect of District of Columbia law in conflict with federal law. He warned that federal law would still require the city to kick out those residents of public housing who are convicted of drug possession, even if District of Columbia law no longer considered it a crime.

2 hurt in falls from Mardi Gras floats

LA NEW ORLEANS — Two men were injured falling from floats in a Mardi Gras-season parade Sunday, despite a city ordinance requiring riders to wear a safety belt or harness.

The first man fell from a float in the Krewe of Alla parade

THE CENSUS

\$10M

avoid having to change their lifestyle, plan to sell most of the coins. Although the face value of the gold pieces adds up to about \$27,000, some of them are so rare that coin experts say they could fetch nearly \$1 million apiece.

The value of a cache of rare gold coins that a couple out walking their dog discovered in the shadow of an old tree on their property in Northern California.

Nearly all of the 1,427 coins, dating from 1847 to 1894, were in uncirculated, mint condition, according to veteran numismatist Don Kagan, who is representing the couple. He said Tuesday that the couple, who wish to remain anonymous to the public, plan to sell most of the coins. Although the face value of the gold pieces adds up to about \$27,000, some of them are so rare that coin experts say they could fetch nearly \$1 million apiece.



Coin grader David Hall poses with recently found gold coins in Santa Ana, Calif.

AP



CHRISTOPHER CHUNG, SANTA ROSA (CALIF.) PRESS DEMOCRAT/AP

Rider in the rain

Bidur Pokharel shields himself from the rain as he bikes along Yutupa Avenue in Santa Rosa, Calif., on Wednesday. Much-needed rain fell in Northern California at the outset of what the parched state hopes is the start to a one-two punch of stormy weather.

about 4:15 p.m. Sunday and was in stable condition when brought to a hospital, said Liz Belcher, a spokeswoman for New Orleans Emergency Medical Services. The second man fell from a separate, double-decker float about 5:30 p.m. and was taken to the city's trauma center in critical condition, Belcher said. The hospital later told her that he had been stabilized. She did not have the men's names or ages.

The New Orleans Fire Department's pre-parade inspection found the floats met the rules, Belcher said.

Convicted murderer loses nickname appeal

CT HARTFORD — A Connecticut man found guilty of killing four people has failed to convince the state Appellate Court that his convictions should be thrown out because he was referred to by his nickname — "Killer" — at trial.

Marco Camacho was convicted in the 1996 murders of four people

inside a Southington home. Prosecutors say he and an accomplice went to the house to collect a \$400 drug debt, and when they were not paid, Camacho became enraged and shot everyone inside.

Camacho appealed, arguing in part that a witness at the trial referred to him as "Killer" even after being told by the judge not to use the nickname.

The court ruled Monday that Camacho's lawyer failed to prove the use of the name prejudiced the jury enough to warrant a mistrial.

Portraits by Bush to be exhibited at library

TX DALLAS — Portraits painted by former President George W. Bush will be featured in an exhibit at his presidential library this spring.

The exhibit titled "The Art of Leadership: A President's Personal Diplomacy" will open in early April at the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum in Dallas.

The exhibit exploring relationships Bush formed with other world leaders will feature more than two dozen portraits by Bush that have never been exhibited.

Bush, who left office in 2009, has taken up oil painting in recent years.

Artifacts, photographs and personal reflections will also be on display.

Police seek suspect in poisoned meatballs case

CA SAN FRANCISCO — San Francisco police say they have found dozens of meatballs suspected to be poisonous in a Twin Peaks neighborhood where a similar incident happened last year.

Animal Care and Control officers are asking for the public's help in tracking down whomever hid the meatballs in areas where dogs and cats could find them.

Acting Lt. Denise BonGiovanni said she found 34 meatballs hidden in carports, behind stairwells, along curbs and in bushes

on Saturday. She said a resident handed her another ball of raw meat she took from her dog.

The San Francisco Chronicle reported police will test them to determine if they are poisonous.

Stolen '65 VW Beetle found 40 years later

TN NASHVILLE — The owner of a 1965 Volkswagen Beetle discovered in Detroit nearly 40 years after it was stolen says he never stopped thinking about that car.

Joe MacDonald, of Knoxville, Tenn., said he used to buy Beetles to fix up and sell. He had many of them, but he says he never stopped grieving for the red convertible that he had running "slick as a ribbon" before it was stolen.

The car was found in January when federal border agents checked the paperwork as it was about to be shipped overseas for restoration. MacDonald said he learned the car had been located from a reporter at WBR-TV.

From wire reports



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FAITH

Not the least bit rattled

Death of snake-handling pastor doesn't shake worshippers' belief

By TRAVIS LOLLER
The Associated Press

Three days after pastor Jamie Coots died from a rattlesnake bite at church, mourners leaving the funeral went to the church to handle snakes.

Coots, who appeared on the National Geographic Channel's "Snake Salvation," pastored the Full Gospel Tabernacle in Jesus Name church founded by his grandfather in Middlesboro, Ky. The third-generation snake handler was bitten during a service on Feb. 15 and died later at his home after refusing medical help. Now his adult son, Cody, is taking over the church where snakes are frequently part of services.

"People think they will stop handling snakes because someone got bit, but it's just the opposite," said Ralph Hood, a professor of psychology at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, who has been studying snake handlers for decades. "It reaffirms their faith."

The practice of snake handling in the United States was first documented in the mountains of East Tennessee in the early 20th century, according to Paul Williamson, a professor of psychology at Henderson State University, who, along with Hood, co-wrote a book about snake handlers called "Them That Believe." In the 1940s and 1950s, many states made snake handling illegal (it's currently illegal in Kentucky), but the practice has continued, and often law enforcement simply looks the other way.

The basis for the practice is a passage in the Gospel of Mark. In the King James Version of the Bible, Mark 16:17-18 reads: "And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Snake handling gained mo-



DAN HENRY, CHATTANOOGA (TENN.) TIMES FREE PRESS/AP

Pastor Jamie Coots prays during a service at the Full Gospel Tabernacle in Jesus Name church in Middlesboro, Ky., on Dec. 11. Coots died on Feb. 16 after being bitten by a rattlesnake.

mentum when George Hensley, a Pentecostal minister working in Southern states in the early 1900s, recounted an experience where, while on a mountain, a serpent slithered beside him. Hensley purported to be able to handle the snake with impunity, and when he came down the mountain he proclaimed the truth of following all five of the signs in Mark. Hensley later died from a snakebite.

Today the practice is most common in Southern Appalachian states, and snake handlers often use native rattlesnakes and copperheads. Such churches are independent, and often call themselves "signs following" churches.

Andrew Hamblin, who co-starred on "Snake Salvation," said he was with Coots when he died.

"I held him in my arms when he took his

last breath," said Hamblin, who is pastor at the Tabernacle Church of God in the nearby community of LaFollette, Tenn.

He believes that Coots, 42, would have died Feb. 15 no matter what; if not by a snake, then a stroke or some sort of accident.

"God's appointed time of death trumps everything," Hamblin said.

Williamson said believers describe the feeling they get when they are handling snake. "Like a high, but a greater high than any drug or alcohol. It's a feeling of joy, peace, extreme happiness."

He said that many snake handlers believe that when God anoints them, they will be protected, but they still recognize there is danger. For instance, if the spirit leaves them and they don't put down the snake quickly

'People think they will stop handling snakes because someone got bit, but it's just the opposite. It reaffirms their faith.'

Ralph Hood
professor of psychology at the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga, who has been studying snake handlers for decades

enough, they could be bitten.

Coots had handled snakes many years and had been bitten several times, always relying on prayer, and not medical help, to heal him. In "The Serpent Handlers: Three Families and Their Faith," a book focusing on prominent snake-handling families, Coots is interviewed and describes a bite that took part of his finger, saying he had done something he shouldn't have done (he doesn't say what) and God was punishing him. Describing another painful bite, Coots says he was bitten after the spirit had moved out of him but he continued holding the snake for egotistical reasons.

At church service a week after Coots died, both Cody Coots and his mother handled the rattler that killed his father, said Williamson, who attended the service. Calls to the Coots family have not been returned.

Williamson said he has documented 91 snake-bite deaths among serpent handlers since 1919. Between 350 and 400 people die from snake bites in the U.S. each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Williamson said questions of why a snake-handling believer dies from a bite are no different from the questions believers of various faiths have about why bad things happen to good people.

Coots' death was the second snake bite death at his church, which was founded in 1978. Melinda Brown, 28, a mother of five, died in 1995, two days after she was bitten by a rattlesnake during a service.

Coots was a 23-year-old pastor, and Brown spent the two days it took her to die at Coots' house. At the time, Coots told reporters that Brown decided to put her fate in God's hands rather than go to the hospital.

Brown's husband, John Wayne "Punkin" Brown, continued to handle serpents after his wife's death. He was killed by a snake in 1998, at age 34, while preaching at an Alabama church.

His last words to the congregation were, "No matter what else, God's still God."

Junior McCormick tests his faith by handling a rattlesnake during services at the Church of the Lord Jesus in Kingston, Ga., in 1995. Church members believe that if they have faith in God, they will be protected from harm as they handle the serpents.

AP





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FACES

Farmiga: 'Bates Motel' drama only on screen

BY LAURI NEFF
The Associated Press

In the television show "Bates Motel," Vera Farmiga's character has a dysfunctional relationship with her future serial-killer son Norman, played by Freddie Highmore. In reality, Farmiga says, she and Highmore share a much healthier bond: He's even her child's godfather.

Farmiga says Highmore immediately bonded with 5-year-old Fynn in Vancouver, Canada, where "Bates Motel" is filmed and Farmiga and her family moved for the duration of the series. The Oscar-nominated actress says Highmore, whose family is in London, has become something of a surrogate son himself, playing swords and Legos with Fynn on the weekends. Farmiga, who also has a 3-year-old daughter with her husband, musician Renn Hawkey, says Highmore has become such a fixture in Fynn's life that she and her husband decided it's "a relationship that deserves the title."

On screen, though, the relationship will not go as smoothly between Farmiga's character, Norma Bates, and her son in season two of A&E's modern-day "Psycho" prequel. Farmiga says Norma seems optimistic at the start of the season despite the violent and deadly encounters of season one, her reveal that she was

sexually abused as a child and the question of whether Norman murdered his high school teacher.

"At the beginning of season two, she thinks she's got her neuroses under control," Farmiga said in a recent interview.

Norma is also open to romance again with Michael Vartan ("Alias") joining the show as her love interest.

Norma, the actress says, doesn't think she has any choice but to persevere.

"You're a single mother of this child that you feel is potentially unraveling," she said of Norman, who maintains his newfound interest in taxidermy in the hotel basement.

Anyone familiar with "Psycho" knows this is a story that doesn't end well, and Farmiga says despite Norma's attempt to put a positive spin on their lives, the situation quickly worsens. Farmiga says the teacher's death "is a big source of this orientation and terror for Norman, which in turn Norma will try to sort of solve."



Highmore

Vera Farmiga stars on the television series "Bates Motel."

AMY SUSSMAN, INVISION/AP



AP

Aaron Paul wants in on spinoff

The Associated Press

If Aaron Paul gets his way, "Breaking Bad" fans can expect to see Jesse Pinkman calling on Saul Goodman — and perhaps calling him some names — in the spinoff series centered on a sleazy lawyer.

Paul says he'd had "serious talks" with "Better Call Saul" co-creator Vince Gilligan about returning to his character, a low-level drug dealer before he linked up with Bryan Cranston's Walter White to produce methamphetamine.

"Anything Vince is involved with, I'm there," Paul said in an interview while promoting the upcoming "Need For Speed" movie. "I owe him my entire career. And the idea of jumping into the skin of Jesse Pinkman again in his lighter days — because it's all a prequel — it would be fun."

The Emmy-winning "Breaking Bad" ended last year; Gilligan told reporters last month that he'd be asking its actors to make cameos in "Better Call Saul," which will star Bob Odenkirk and is set to premiere in November on AMC.

One actor who definitely won't be involved is Dean Norris, who played White's brother-in-law. Norris is starring in the series "Under the Dome," set to premiere its second season on CBS this summer. "I don't think they'll let me do a little cable show," he said in an interview this week. "I think that experience was that experience. I'm not a big fan of kind of revisiting something that has already been done. But I think it's going to be awesome. So I can't wait to see it."

Other news

■ **Jim Lange**, the first host of the popular game show "The Dating Game," has died at his home in Mill Valley, Calif. He was 81. He died Tuesday morning after suffering a heart attack, his wife Nancy told The Associated Press Wednesday. Though Lange had a successful career in radio, he is best known for his television role on "The Dating Game," on which he appeared for more than a decade.

■ **Gisela star Allison Williams**, 25, is engaged to marry boyfriend Ricky Van Ven, her rep Lindsay Galin confirmed Wednesday. Van Ven is a co-founder of the comedy website CollegeHumor.

■ A California jury has ordered Lisa Kudrow to pay her former manager \$1.6 million in residuals from her work on "Friends."

Stars' red carpet secrets include surgery, wigs, tape

BY SANDY COHEN
The Associated Press

The flawless looks about to be unveiled on the Oscars red carpet have been months in the making and require an army of experts.

With perhaps the highest concentration of cameras anywhere in the world that night, plus millions of viewers keenly critiquing every outfit, Oscar's red carpet is the ultimate runway, where designers and their muses are discovered and celebrated. Hair and makeup trends are established. New style-setting stars are crowned. And sartorial scorn is heaped upon those who make even the slightest misstep. All that perfection takes a lot of preparation. Here's a look at the standard steps and secret tricks that stars employ to get red carpet ready:

THE SKIN: That dewy complexion isn't all makeup. Stars spend at least a week prepping for an Oscar appearance, says celebrity makeup artist Melanie Mills. They might do a cleanse to expel toxins and drop weight, she said, along with seaweed wraps to further detoxify and slim down. Mills also recommends a traditional Korean spa-style body scrub a few days prior to the show "to really get that skin exfoliated and super glowing."



Find out more on the best picture nominees: get a printable ballot and the latest news at stripes.com/oscars2014

A facial and spray tan follow.

Show-day makeup takes about two hours, she said. One of her secrets: using body makeup before foundation for a "sunny, gorgeous, lit-from-within glow" that stays on all day — and won't transfer onto men's jackets during the many industry-requisite hugs.

"You should also mist yourself with a setting spray," she said, "especially if you're going to be schmoozing with a lot of men in black tuxedos."

THE HAIR: Skilled hairstylists can give stars a temporary eye lift with a lace-front wig, says Michael Shaun Corby, global creative director for Alterra Haircare. Using nylon thread, he sews a patch of lace into tight pin-curls, which helps lift the brows and smooth wrinkles around the eyes. "Then we top it with a \$7,000 wig and no one knows

our little secret!" he said.

THE BODY: Besides a clean diet the week before the big show, trainer Harley Pasternak recommends that his Oscar-bound clients take at least 12,000 steps a day and do resistance exercises that improve their posture. "When you're on the red carpet," he said, "it's really all about confidence and posture."

Botox and facial fillers can be done a few days before the ceremony, but face lifts, liposuction and the increasingly popular butt implants need to be done months in advance, says celebrity plastic surgeon Dr. Peter Fodor, who estimates "at least 80 percent" of the stars on the Oscar carpet have done something surgical to enhance their appearance.

THE CLOTHES: Stylists scour fashion shows to find the freshest looks for the Academy Awards, says stylist Brad Goreski. One found, what goes underneath and alongside are priorities. Custom and couture dresses have built-in foundations, he said, but other outfits need special consideration. Double-stitch tape is a stylist's No. 1 tool. Besides keeping fabric in place, it can also create the appearance of firmer skin, Goreski said.

Another key to making a red carpet splash? Color.

NATION



'Built like a tank'

Snow fun: Clunky bikes with fat tires catching on

By ROGER PHILLIPS
Idaho Statesman

MCCALL, Idaho — You've probably seen these in a bike shop, in a bike rack, or even hanging from the ceiling of a bar or restaurant and wondered, "What the heck is that?"

They're known as "fat bikes," rather than "fat tire" bikes, which was an early nickname for all mountain bikes.

Fat bikes sport oversized balloon tires run at low air pressures that are specially designed to ride on packed snow and other surfaces.

So what's it like to ride one? In short, it's like riding a bicycle. There's no special technique involved. You just get on and ride, and that's what makes them fun.

While they're sometimes called "snow bikes," they're actually more versatile and used for all kinds of riding, from snow to sand to commuting.

Kathy Muench, of McCall, and her husband, Steve, were looking for another activity to do during winter, and a pair of fat bikes caught their attention.

"We were pretty excited from the get-go," she said. "You look at these things and go, 'Oh my gosh, look at that bad boy.'"

They started riding on snow — both groomed cross-country trails and snowmobile trails — then branched to frozen lakes and firm snow during spring, as well as dirt roads, singletrack and beaches.

"The more you're on it, the more fun it gets," she said.

On a recent weekend, it was the trails at Jug Mountain Ranch near McCall that lured them back onto their bikes.

"We've been on our bikes more than we've been on our skis this winter," Kathy Muench said.

I borrowed Jug Mountain Ranch manager David Carey's bike and joined them on the trail system about 2 miles east of Lake Fork.

Carey has welcomed the bikes on Jug Mountain's groomed trail system, and he's experimenting with a smaller, narrower groomer that compacts some of the ranch's singletrack trails so they can be used during winter.

The interest in fat bikes isn't limited to McCall and other mountain towns.

Jeremy Whitman, manager of Meridian Cycles, has five fat bikes in the shop's rental/demo fleet, and the shop has sold 25 of them this winter. He sees fat bikes on Foothills trails, and even in downtown Boise.

Idaho Mountain Touring in Boise also rents and sells them, and several bike shops around the Treasure Valley sell them.

The cartoonishly large tires and stocky,

'When the skiing is bad, the snow biking is good.'

Sharon Sell
fat bike rider

rigid frames make them look like throwbacks to the original mountain bikes, and also something entirely different than what people are used to seeing.

"On any given day, I will have five customers come in at the shop just to look at a fat bike," Whitman said.

It's also not the young, fast and fit looking for a second, third or even fourth bike. It's common for middle-aged riders to ride them because they're stable, simple, durable and fairly low-maintenance bikes.

"They're kind of built like a tank," Kathy Muench said.

The bikes were originally built for the Iditabike, an endurance race in Alaska that's run during winter. Their popularity has exploded in Alaska, according to Dave and Sharon Sell, who split their time between Boise and Anchorage.

Fat bike riders are as common on the trail systems there as Nordic skiers, and the two sports can complement each other because most skiers prefer softer snow, while firmer conditions favor bikes.

"When the skiing is bad, the snow biking is good," Sharon Sell said.

While the sale of fat bikes has grown in Idaho and beyond, it's still a niche sport, and people are figuring out new ways to use the bikes.

Like mountain biking 30 years ago, fat bikes — especially riding on snow — are fairly new to Idaho, and will likely grow and evolve.

"It's the early stage for us, and the early stage for the sport," Carey said.

FAT BIKE TIPS

I'm no expert, but I want to pass on some things I learned as a first-time fat bike rider.

☞ Relax. It's just a bike, and although it looks big and bulky, it feels like a regular bike. It's not as nimble as your average mountain bike, but there's nothing about a fat bike that should intimidate you if you know how to ride a bicycle.

☞ Dress for exertion. Wear lighter layers than you would normally wear for cold weather, and breathable fabrics so you don't get damp from sweat. Remember to factor in the wind chill when you're going downhill. If you start feeling hot, peel a layer, especially before a prolonged climb, then put it back on for the descent.

☞ For your first time, go with flat pedals and soft-soled shoes or boots. As you become more comfortable on the bike, you might switch to clip-in shoes and pedals.

☞ Soft or fresh snow is harder to ride than groomed, hard-packed or crust snow. Fat bikes aren't powder machines, which is good because there are lots of other fun things to do on fresh snow.

☞ A higher gear works better to plow through soft snow. You're more likely to break traction in a lower gear, but you don't want to burn yourself out in a higher gear. Find a compromise.

☞ Stay off the front brake on the downhill. Descend slowly until you become comfortable with the traction, or lack thereof. Brake far in advance of corners, steep downhill or obstacles.

☞ If you're losing traction while climbing, shift your weight toward the rear tire so it gets better grip.

☞ Pedal seated rather than trying to stand and grind up a steep section. You will maintain more consistent traction and balance.

☞ Enjoy the scenery. Fat bikes go slower than your average mountain bike goes on dirt. Pedal, relax and enjoy the fact you're riding on snow in a beautiful environment.

☞ Not all groomed cross-country ski trails are open to fat bikes. Jug Mountain Ranch and Tamarack Resort allow them on their trails, but they're not allowed on the Bear Basin cross-country trail west of McCall, or on the trails at Ponderosa State Park.

☞ Do not ride on the ski tracks set by the groomer. They are needed for traditional cross-country skiers. Also, yield to skiers like you would hikers.

☞ You can ride fat bikes on groomed snowmobile trails, but snowmobilers probably won't expect you out there, so ride with caution. Consider using a headlight and/or red flashing rear light to make yourself more visible, especially on an overcast day. Remember, parking lots and trail grooming are paid for directly by snowmobilers. You're a guest on their trails.

By Roger Phillips

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Agency to investigate GM recall effort

By Tom Krisher
The Associated Press

DETROIT — The U.S. government's auto safety watchdog is investigating whether General Motors acted quickly enough to recall 1.6 million older-model small cars in a case linked to 13 deaths.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said Wednesday night that it opened the probe "to determine whether GM properly followed the legal processes and requirements for

reporting recalls."

The agency has the authority to fine GM as much as \$35 million under legislation that went into effect late last year. The previous maximum fine automakers faced per incident was \$17.35 million. Automakers must report evidence of safety defects within five days of discovering it.

On Tuesday, GM doubled the number of cars in the recall for faulty ignition switches. The problem has been linked to 31 front-end crashes that caused the 13

deaths. The company also issued a rare apology, saying its process to examine the problem was not robust enough when it surfaced about a decade ago.

A chronology of events filed Monday with NHTSA by GM shows it knew of the problem as early as 2004.

Since undergoing a painful bankruptcy in 2009, GM has removed layers of bureaucracy, improved the quality of its vehicles and is quicker to issue recalls when problems occur. However,

the admission that its procedures were lacking 10 years ago shows how the old culture can still haunt the automaker.

On Feb. 13, GM announced the recall of more than 780,000 Chevrolet Cobalts and Pontiac G5s (model years 2005-07). Then on Tuesday, it doubled up, adding 842,000 Saturn Ion compacts (2003-07), and Chevrolet HHR SUVs, Pontiac Solstice and Saturn Sky sports cars (2006-07). Most of the cars were sold in the U.S., Mexico and Canada.

EXCHANGE RATES

| | |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Military rates | \$1.4035 |
| Euro cents (Feb. 28) | \$0.7125 |
| Dollar buys (Feb. 28) | \$1.71 |
| Japanese yen (Feb. 28) | 100.00 |
| South Korean won (Feb. 28) | 1,039.00 |

Commercial rates

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Bahrain (Dinar) | 0.3770 |
| British pound | \$1.6673/0.5998 |
| Canada (dollar) | 1.1145 |
| China (Yuan) | 6.1331 |
| Denmark (Krone) | 5.4577 |
| Egypt (Pound) | 0.9631 |
| Euro | \$1.3687/0.7306 |
| Hong Kong (Dollar) | 0.7766 |
| Hungary (Forint) | 227.63 |
| Israel (Shekel) | 3.5141 |
| Japan (Yen) | 102.16 |
| Kuwait (Dinar) | 0.2820 |
| Norway (Krone) | 6.0626 |
| Philippines (Peso) | 44.69 |
| Poland (Zloty) | 3.705 |
| Saudi Arabia (Riyal) | 3.7506 |
| Singapore (Dollar) | 1.2656 |
| South Korea (Won) | 1,068.54 |
| Switzerland (Franc) | 0.8891 |
| Thailand (Baht) | 32.60 |
| Turkey (New Lira) | 2.2206 |

(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., U.S. dollars), rates are based on the rate which 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.)

MARKET WATCH

Feb. 28, 2014

Dow Jones Industrials +18.75
16,199.41

Nasdaq composite +4.48
4,292.06

Standard & Poor's 500 +0.04
1,845.16

Russell 2000 +7.77
1,181.72

EUROPE GAS PRICES

| Country | Super E10 | Super unleaded | Super plus | Diesel |
|-----------------|------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| Germany | \$3.681 | \$3.852 | \$4.250 | \$4.254 |
| Netherlands | +6.4 cents | +6.0 cents | +5.5 cents | +2.8 cents |
| Change in price | -- | +4.763 | \$5.061 | \$5.109 |
| UK | -- | +1.1 cents | +1.2 cents | +1.2 cents |
| Change in price | -- | \$3.787 | \$3.895 | \$4.189 |
| Azores | -- | +6.0 cents | +5.5 cents | +2.8 cents |
| Change in price | -- | -- | \$4.482 | -- |
| Belgium | -- | -- | no change | -- |
| Change in price | -- | \$3.851 | \$4.006 | \$4.266 |
| Turkey | -- | -- | no change | no change |
| Change in price | -- | -- | \$4.445 | \$4.122 |
| Italy | \$3.936 | -- | -- | no change |
| Change in price | no change | -- | -- | \$4.277 |

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

| Country | Unleaded | Super unleaded | Super plus | Diesel |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| Japan | -- | \$3.689 | -- | \$4.069 |
| Change in price | -- | +6.0 cents | -- | +3.0 cents |
| Okinawa | \$3.439 | -- | -- | \$4.09 |
| Change in price | -2.0 cents | -- | -- | +3.0 cents |
| South Korea | \$3.699 | -- | \$4.039 | \$4.269 |
| Change in price | +6.0 cents | -- | -- | -- |
| Guam | \$3.689* | \$3.859 | \$4.029 | -- |
| Change in price | +6.0 cents* | +6.0 cents | +5.0 cents | -- |

* Diesel EFD ** Midgrade
For the week of March 1-7

WEATHER OUTLOOK



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

Friday's US temperatures

| City | Hi | Lo | Wthr | Chatanooga | 51 | 22 | Pcity | Fort Wayne | 22 | 42 | Pcity | Louisville | 37 | 12 | Pcity | Pocatello | 49 | 35 | Cldy | Clay | Sioux City | 25 | 4 | Snow |
|-------------------|----|----|-------|------------------|----|-----|-------|------------------|----|-----|-------|----------------|----|-----|-------|-----------------|----|-----|-------|--------------------------|------------|-----|-------|------|
| Ablene, Tex | 79 | 48 | Pcity | Cheyenne | 38 | 27 | Cldy | Fresno | 62 | 51 | Rain | Lubbock | 36 | 42 | Cir | Portland, Maine | 25 | 8 | Cir | Sioux Falls | 19 | -4 | Snow | |
| Akron, Ohio | 19 | 0 | Cldy | Chicago | 21 | -4 | Cldy | Goodland | 40 | 28 | Cldy | Macon | 57 | 26 | Cir | Portland, Ore. | 55 | 46 | Cldy | South Bend | 19 | -11 | Cldy | |
| Albany, N.Y. | 18 | 3 | Cir | Cincinnati | 32 | 6 | Pcity | Grand Junction | 53 | 33 | Cldy | Madison | 16 | -11 | Snow | Providence | 25 | 9 | Cir | Spokane | 33 | 27 | Snow | |
| Albuquerque | 64 | 38 | Cldy | Cleveland | 17 | 1 | Cldy | Grand Rapids | 15 | -8 | Cldy | Medford | 59 | 38 | Cldy | Pueblo | 60 | 35 | Pcity | Springfield, Ill. | 32 | 5 | Cldy | |
| Allentown, Pa. | 21 | 2 | Cir | Colorado Springs | 55 | 33 | Cldy | Great Falls | 0 | 0 | Snow | Memphis | 53 | 25 | Cldy | Raleigh-Durham | 44 | 23 | Cir | Springfield, Mo. | 40 | 23 | Snow | |
| Amarillo | 70 | 39 | Cir | Columbia, S.C. | 53 | 29 | Pcity | Green Bay | 11 | -5 | Cldy | Miami Beach | 78 | 63 | Cir | Rapid City | 69 | 52 | Pcity | St. Petersburg | 18 | 13 | Snow | |
| Anchorage | 38 | 31 | Cir | Columbus, Ga. | 58 | 30 | Cir | Greensboro, N.C. | 41 | 22 | Cir | Midland-Odessa | 80 | 41 | Cldy | Reno | 51 | 39 | Rain | Tallahassee | 66 | 28 | Cir | |
| Ashville | 46 | 28 | Cir | Columbus, Ohio | 27 | 5 | Pcity | Hartford | 20 | 5 | Cir | Milwaukee | 18 | -5 | Cldy | Richmond | 33 | 18 | Cir | Tampa | 70 | 47 | Pcity | |
| Atlanta | 53 | 28 | Cir | Concord, N.H. | 22 | 5 | Cir | Harrisburg | 21 | 5 | Cir | Miami Beach | 10 | -10 | Snow | Roanoke | 36 | 16 | Cir | Toledo | 17 | -11 | Pcity | |
| Atlantic City | 25 | 10 | Cir | Corpus Christi | 76 | 52 | Cldy | Helena | 9 | 9 | Snow | Missoula | 23 | 23 | Snow | Rochester | 13 | 0 | Cldy | Topeka | 43 | 21 | Rain | |
| Austin | 74 | 44 | Cldy | Dallas-Ft. Worth | 76 | 52 | Cldy | Honolulu | 81 | 66 | Cldy | Mobile | 30 | 19 | Cldy | Rockford | 19 | -12 | Cldy | Wichita | 49 | 30 | Pcity | |
| Baltimore | 24 | 10 | Cir | Dayton | 27 | 2 | Pcity | Houston | 71 | 46 | Cldy | Montgomery | 59 | 26 | Cir | Sacramento | 57 | 51 | Rain | Tulsa | 60 | 35 | Cir | |
| Baton Rouge | 65 | 33 | Pcity | Daytona Beach | 69 | 43 | Pcity | Indianapolis | 52 | 21 | Cldy | Nashville | 46 | 18 | Cldy | St. Louis | 33 | 13 | Snow | Tupelo | 56 | 22 | Cldy | |
| Bilings | 70 | 39 | Cir | Denver | 51 | 8 | Pcity | Indianapolis | 32 | 5 | Cldy | New Orleans | 64 | 39 | Cir | St. Thomas | 85 | 74 | Cir | Washington | 27 | 16 | Cir | |
| Birmingham | 55 | 24 | Cir | Des Moines | 21 | 4 | Snow | Jackson, Miss. | 64 | 28 | Cir | New York City | 21 | 15 | Cir | St. Thomas | 85 | 74 | Cir | Washington | 27 | 16 | Cir | |
| Bismarck | 55 | 35 | Cir | Detroit | 15 | -19 | Cir | Jacksonville | 63 | 37 | Pcity | Newark | 22 | 10 | Cir | Salem, Ore. | 59 | 44 | Cldy | W Palm Beach | 76 | 59 | Cldy | |
| Boston | 24 | 9 | Cir | El Paso | 75 | 49 | Cir | Janeau | 32 | 19 | Cir | Norfolk, Va. | 22 | 25 | Cir | Salt Lake City | 56 | 39 | Pcity | Wichita | 49 | 30 | Pcity | |
| Bridgeport | 21 | 7 | Cir | Elkins | 30 | -1 | Cir | Kansas City | 37 | 19 | Rain | Oklahoma City | 67 | 37 | Cir | San Antonio | 82 | 45 | Cir | Wikes-Barre | 16 | 1 | Cir | |
| Brownsville | 76 | 57 | Pcity | Erie | 13 | -1 | Pcity | Knoxville | 49 | 20 | Pcity | Omaha | 25 | 7 | Snow | San Diego | 65 | 57 | Rain | Wilmington, Del. | 23 | 10 | Cir | |
| Buffalo | 11 | -2 | Cldy | Eugene | 58 | 44 | Cldy | Lake Charles | 63 | 38 | Cir | Orlando | 73 | 47 | Pcity | San Francisco | 59 | 51 | Rain | Yakima | 45 | 35 | Cldy | |
| Burlington, Vt. | 14 | 3 | Pcity | Evansville | 34 | 11 | Cldy | Lansing | 14 | -14 | Cldy | Paducah | 37 | 16 | Snow | San Jose | 57 | 50 | Rain | Youngstown | 18 | -1 | Pcity | |
| Caribou, Maine | 13 | 0 | Cldy | Fairbanks | 24 | -2 | Cldy | Las Vegas | 63 | 51 | Rain | Pendleton | 44 | 38 | Cldy | Santa Fe | 61 | 33 | Cldy | Yuma | 61 | 33 | Cldy | |
| Casper | 24 | 20 | Snow | Fargo | 5 | -13 | Cir | Lexington | 35 | 10 | Pcity | Peoria | 27 | 12 | Cir | St. Ste-Marie | 9 | -17 | Cir | St. Ste-Marie | 9 | -17 | Cir | |
| Charleston, S.C. | 56 | 34 | Pcity | Flagstaff | 47 | 30 | Rain | Lincoln | 29 | 10 | Snow | Philadelphia | 22 | 10 | Cir | Savannah | 58 | 34 | Pcity | Yuma | 61 | 33 | Cldy | |
| Charleston, W.Va. | 38 | 10 | Pcity | Flint | 12 | -13 | Pcity | Little Rock | 53 | 27 | Cldy | Phoenix | 76 | 57 | Cldy | Seattle | 52 | 43 | Cldy | Pompano Beach, Fla. | 58 | 34 | Pcity | |
| Charlotte, N.C. | 48 | 24 | Cir | Fort Smith | 56 | 31 | Cldy | Los Angeles | 61 | 56 | Rain | Pittsburgh | 23 | 1 | Pcity | Shreveport | 64 | 36 | Cldy | Lo-Wed., 25, Clark, Wyo. | | | | |

National temperature extremes

Hi: Wed., 88, Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and Cl. Pompano Beach, Fla.
Lo: Wed., 25, Clark, Wyo.

Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Get Fuzzy



Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | | |
| 12 | | | 13 | | | | | 14 | | | | |
| 15 | | | 16 | | | | | 17 | | | | |
| 18 | | | | | | 19 | 20 | | | | | |
| | | 21 | | | 22 | | | | 23 | 24 | 25 | |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | | | 29 | | | | 30 | | | |
| 31 | | | | | 32 | | | | 33 | | | |
| 34 | | | | | 35 | | | | 36 | | | |
| 37 | | | | | 38 | | | | 39 | | | |
| | | 40 | | | | | 41 | | | 42 | 43 | 44 |
| 45 | 46 | 47 | | | | 48 | 49 | | | | | |
| 50 | | | | | | 51 | | | | 52 | | |
| 53 | | | | | | 54 | | | | 55 | | |

ACROSS

- 1 Peace, to Pablo
- 4 Resorts international?
- 8 Access Moore
- 12 Singer DiFranco
- 13 Rodgers collaborator
- 14 Peruse
- 15 Sway
- 17 Too
- 18 "Sing some more!"
- 19 Without delay
- 21 "Monty Python" opener
- 22 Procession of trucks
- 26 Gangsters' girlfriends
- 29 Marceau's persona
- 30 Swelled head
- 31 Vicinity
- 32 Brooks or Blanc
- 33 Llamas' land
- 34 Vast expanse
- 35 "Holy cow!"
- 36 Agriculture goddess
- 37 Curving outward
- 39 Distant
- 40 Parisian pal
- 41 Ganchi, for one
- 45 Supermarket lineup
- 48 Shake violently
- 50 Reed instrument
- 51 Met melody
- 52 White wine cocktail

DOWN

- 1 Walking gait
- 2 In due time
- 3 Galvanizing material
- 4 Skins' opponents
- 5 Sheets of glass
- 6 Joan of —
- 7 Sign painter's aid
- 8 Haggard
- 9 Moray, for one
- 10 Mid-May honoree
- 11 Altar affirmative
- 16 Kin of "Presto!"
- 20 "Alley —"
- 23 Swerve
- 24 Shrek, e.g.
- 25 Annie Lennox's "No More I Love —"
- 26 Not fern.
- 27 Sandwich treat
- 28 Slender
- 29 Spell-down
- 32 Popular foreign cuisine
- 33 Lost, in Lyon
- 35 Jewel
- 36 Artist's surface
- 38 Bud holders
- 39 The end
- 42 Sorts
- 43 Largest of the seven
- 44 Dweeb
- 45 Bliss
- 46 Honest politician?
- 47 Tier
- 49 Raw rock

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

2-28

CRYPTOQUIP

J H E OVRWCLY JA JZGQZYQW
 J Z YBQ UEZW ARCYB RH
 AURGQZJE, J ACOORAQ
 JY A E LVREYJZ LVQEYJRZ.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN AN ALGERIAN GUY WORKS TO SUPPORT HIMSELF AND HIS WIFE, I'D SAY HE'S MAKING DINAR FOR TWO.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: J equals I

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OPINION

Take off rose-colored glasses on Cuba

Miami Herald editorial

The scathing reply delivered by Sen. Marco Rubio on the Senate floor this week in response to Sen. Tom Harkin's report of a visit to

Cuba was a well-aimed and well-justified verbal cannonball. Harkin had it coming. Let's be clear about this: There is room for debate about the U.S. trade embargo of Cuba and whether it should be replaced. Indeed, open debate should be encouraged.

There is certainly room for discussion about finding a more effective way for the United States to help the Cuban people and, at the same time, promote U.S. goals in the hemisphere. Sacred cows have no place in foreign policy.

But any discussion about daily life in Cuba that glosses over, or completely ignores — as Harkin did — the punishing nature of the Cuban regime is intellectually dishonest, not to say naive.

Harkin believes the United States should abandon its policy of seeking Cuba's isolation. His farm state of Iowa benefits from any trade improvement that would increase agricultural exports to Cuba, of course. Still, it's his opinion, and he's entitled to express it without arousing anyone's temper. But U.S. policy toward Cuba is one thing, and the tyrannical, dictatorial nature of the Cuban government is another. How can there be any debate about the latter?

Harkin recently visited eastern Cuba and returned to deliver a report on the Senate floor about the idyllic countryside and the wonders of Cuban medicine, with a brief how, as well, to the state education system.

Even assuming he's right — a debatable point — he forgot to say that whatever "benefits" the Cuban state offers its people have come at the price of taking their liberty. That's a bad bargain in anyone's book.

His constituents in Iowa wouldn't make that deal, and neither did the Cuban people, not willingly.



MIKE HEINTZ, KEV WEST (FLA.) CRITZEN/PA

Coast Guard members attend to the last of three Cubans who tried to windsurf across the Florida Straits before an ambulance arrives at U.S. Coast Guard Base Key West, Fla., on Feb. 21. The migrants fled Jibacoa, Cuba, on Feb. 18. All three men survived.

There's not enough room to once again lay out all the many crimes of the Castro regime. We'll settle for the opening words of the latest Human Rights Watch report on Cuba:

"Cuba remains the only country in Latin America that represses virtually all forms of political dissent. In 2012, the government of Raul Castro continued to enforce political conformity using short-term detentions, beatings, public acts of repudiation, travel restrictions and forced exile."
And that's just for openers. Maybe Harkin would have gotten a more accurate impression of what daily life is really like if he had spoken to Cuban dissidents, the courageous individuals who dare to keep the spirit of freedom alive on the island by willingly risking their lives and liberty.

Rubio, a Florida Republican, rightly responded to the speech by the Democrat

from Iowa with sarcasm and indignation, tying the Castro regime to the Venezuelan government's harsh response to street protests over failed economic policies based on Cuba's discredited model.

"Let me tell you what the Cubans are really good at," Rubio said. "What they are really good at is repression... They have exported repression in real time, in our hemisphere, right now."

Rubio ended by making a good suggestion to his colleagues: Go ahead, visit Cuba, but be sure to talk to those who dare to speak the truth even at the cost of punishment by the government.

"I bet you're going to hear something very different than what you got from your hosts on your last trip to the wonderful Cuba, this extraordinary socialist paradise. Because it's a joke. It's a farce."
It's a joke, but no one's laughing.

If felons get to vote, do they get to have guns?

BY FRANCIS BARRY

Bloomberg News

Suddenly the left doesn't think U.S. Sen. Rand Paul is so crazy after all.

A week after restoring their general Eric Holder made a strong case for restoring voting rights to felons, the Kentucky Senate joined the Kentucky House in approving a constitutional amendment restoring rights to many felons, and Paul prefers the broader version passed by the Democratic-controlled House in his home state.

Voting rights for felons is an issue of convergence for liberals and libertarians. But it invites another question: What about gun rights?

That is, if citizens who have paid their debt to society should regain their constitutional right to vote, as Holder argued, why should they not regain their constitutional right to own a gun as well?

It's a question Paul and other conservatives — not to mention the National Rifle Association — increasingly will be asking.

Federal law prohibits all felons from possessing guns, but states may restore felons' gun rights after restoring their civil rights — the right to vote, sit on juries and hold office. In 11 states that happens automatically for nonviolent felons, and some states even allow violent felons to recover their gun rights. In most states, however, all felons must petition to have their gun rights restored. In Kentucky, only a pardon from the governor can restore gun rights,

and the same is true for voting rights.

Holder's case for restoring voting rights to felons rests partly on race. The numbers are indeed unsettling. Across the country, 1 of every 13 black citizens is barred from voting. In Florida, Kentucky and Virginia, the number is 1 of every 5. Those disparities also hold true for citizens denied the right to own a gun.

If laws disproportionately deny black citizens a constitutional right, isn't that wrong, no matter what the right? Holder played into this argument, but the issue isn't so black and white.

The Supreme Court has granted states substantial leeway to restrict both voting and gun rights based on criminal behavior. The key question is, what purpose is served by doing so?

Disenfranchising felons doesn't serve as a deterrent to would-be criminals. It's hard to picture a group of bank robbers worrying about whether they'll be able to vote in the next congressional election before donning ski masks. Nor does it aid in their rehabilitation; if anything, it further ostracizes them from society.

It does, however, allow society to prevent citizens who have broken laws from participating in decisions about what those laws should be. And that, the argument goes, protects society. But what risk does society actually run by allowing ex-cons to vote? Based on the experience of states that have done so, none.

Now turn that same question to gun rights. What risk does society run by allowing ex-cons to possess guns? Based on

the evidence, a substantial risk. Felons reoffend at a high rate. Allowing them to do so with a gun in their hands puts society in grave danger. And there are many instances — some documented in a 2011 New York Times expose — of felons who committed violent crimes after having their gun rights restored.

A blanket restoration of felons' gun rights would pose a real danger to society. Not so with voting rights. Nevertheless, any blanket ban on the exercise of rights is bound to create injustices, and just as some states have made it too easy for violent felons to recover their gun rights, some states have made it too hard for nonviolent offenders to recover theirs. A strong case can be made that those who pose the least risk to society — perhaps nonviolent first offenders with no drug convictions — should have their gun rights restored after they have served their time and completed their probation or a minimum waiting period with no rears.

Congress could ensure that states are not unduly depriving people of their gun rights by requiring them to restore rights in certain narrow categories of cases. And maybe — just maybe — that idea could create an opening for new bipartisan legislation that would, while restoring gun rights to a significant number of people, close loopholes in the background-check system that would keep guns out of the hands of the truly dangerous.

Francis Barry is a member of the Bloomberg View editorial board.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

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

Chance to right-size military

Nesbary

In crafting a military budget for a nation not at war for the first time in 13 years, the challenge is to transform U.S. forces to meet changing security demands while slashing spending.

There is pain and risk in the plan that Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel previewed this week to meet those twin imperatives. But the transformation has to happen, and the \$496 billion military budget for 2015 that the administration will send to Congress next week — down from \$520 billion in 2014, not counting \$92 billion for the war in Afghanistan — is a reasonable blueprint.

It would reduce troop strength in every military branch, active and reserve, while increasing only special forces. For instance the Army would be cut from 520,000 active-duty troops to about 450,000, the smallest number in decades. Overhead would be slashed through cuts in headquarters budgets and civilian personnel. An entire class of Air Force fighter jets would be eliminated. And active-duty military personnel would get a pay raise of only 1 percent.

The downsizing is appropriate, but it isn't risk-free. Hagel said it would create wage gaps in training and diminish the U.S. military's capability to execute extended or simultaneous ground operations.

But the public has no stomach for long, grinding ground wars like those in Iraq and Afghanistan. The threat from nations with nuclear arsenals and the specter of terrorism, which is better met with small, mobile special forces. Deep troop cuts would enable the military to hit spending targets in the Budget Control Act of 2011 while sustaining readiness and technological superiority, a necessary balance.

That's a goal that can't be met real. Hagel warned that a return to the deep, across-the-board cuts slated for 2016 under sequestration would compromise national security. That's debatable, but Congress can't keep demanding savings while rejecting attempts to actually cut spending. It can't continue pumping up military pay and benefits that have risen 40 percent more than growth in the private sector since 2001 — and more than the Department of Defense requested. Congress can't keep rejecting benefit cuts, such as the small reduction in cost-of-living increases for some military retirees, and then repeated this year. It can't continue favoring weapons systems based on where they're built rather than whether they're needed, or rejecting the department's request to close domestic bases, as it has for two years.

There's an opportunity to create the military the nation needs. Congress must seize the moment.

Kim can't run from atrocities

The (Cleveland) Plain Dealer

Michael Kirby, the chief of a special U.N. commission on North Korea that has issued a nearly 400-page interim report on human rights abuses in the oppressive state, said he was "moved to tears" after his surveillance team had information that crimes against humanity.

Let's hope the world is moved enough and shocked enough to hold Kim Jong Un and other senior North Korean leaders responsible for these horrendous abuses. Meanwhile, the reported atrocities cry out for Security Council condemnation and continued investigations. The commis-



sion's final report is due to be released next month.

As Kirby, a retired Australian judge, told the BBC recently: "Bearing witness, collecting the stories ... can sometimes bear fruit a little later."

Eyewitness accounts provide overwhelming evidence of state-sanctioned executions, torture, arbitrary imprisonment and even infanticide, reminiscent of Nazi Germany, according to the interim report.

North Korea vigorously disputes the findings, and the atrocities have not been independently verified because of the secretive nature of the regime. Kirby says the North Korean government refused to participate in the investigation or to allow the commission to visit to judge for themselves. However, more than 80 witnesses painted a picture of the Hermit Kingdom as hell on earth.

Kirby warned Kim in a letter that he, as head of state and leader of the military, and his lackeys could be held responsible for atrocities at the International Criminal Court in the Hague.

Realistically, that's unlikely to happen soon since Kim and his minions are in control of a nuclear arsenal. The U.N. findings also could push the rogue nation into even more isolation and paranoia, especially since Kim still appears to be trying to consolidate his internal control after becoming head of state in late 2011 following the death of his father, Kim Jong Il.

But no leader and no state last forever. When North Korea finally crumbles and its leadership tries to evade responsibility for its crimes, this report and others like it might be strong enough and detailed enough to stand in their way.

Let VW have nonunion council

Jackson (Tenn.) Sun

Controversy surrounding last week's vote by Volkswagen workers rejecting unionization under the United Auto Workers ended up casting doubt on whether the world's second-largest automaker would expand operations in Tennessee. We believe the focus is on the wrong issue.

What the German company wants is to establish a works council at the plant. It operates works councils at every other Volkswagen plant. Works councils represent blue-collar and white-collar workers in helping negotiate working conditions such as safety and production issues, but not pay. Volkswagen is highly supportive of works councils as good for the company and good for workers. More important, no one appears to be in opposition to establishing such a works council at the Chattanooga plant.

Republican Sen. Bob Corker, who helped recruit Volkswagen while mayor of Chattanooga, spoke out strongly against workers approving the UAW. He even went so far as to claim he had inside information that the company would not expand the plant to

produce the new midsize sport utility vehicle if workers chose to unionize. Corker's remarks have been roundly criticized as interfering with the vote.

The one person who has made sense during the controversy is Gov. Bill Haslam. He told the Tennessee legislature and worked with companies that are unionized and nonunionized. He said the state has no union litmus test in recruiting economic development. He also pointed out that Tennessee's right-to-work status and a largely nonunionized workforce has been a major factor in recruiting Japanese companies. He also noted that the move toward unionization could dissuade smaller manufacturing suppliers from locating in Tennessee. These are sensible facts and observations.

What no one seems to be asking is why Volkswagen can't have a works council without having the United Auto Workers represent rank-and-file workers. Apparently, this is somehow a function of U.S. labor law.

It is clear from Volkswagen management that the company remains neutral on the union issue. What also is clear is that Volkswagen wants a works council in Chattanooga. Worker rejection of the UAW should not be allowed to endanger Volkswagen expansion in Tennessee. ... If we fail to fix this problem, Mexico is in line to get production of the new SUV.

Ukraine can't return to Russia

The (Charleston, S.C.) Post and Courier

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich abruptly ended his post last weekend, leaving Ukraine's protest movement momentarily victorious. It was an ignominious defeat for a corrupt leader who has sought to counter to every turn the popular forces opposed to his misrule.

But virtually at the moment of victory, Ukraine faces the strong possibility that the nation's eastern Russian-speaking provinces will secede and call in Russian troops to defend them, opening up a new chapter in Ukrainian turmoil.

Avoiding this potentially chaotic split and turning the victory for Ukraine's pro-democracy movement into a peaceful and stable government will call for wise decisions by Ukraine's new leaders, firm support for a peaceful outcome by Europe and the United States, and a Russian decision to stop meddling in Ukraine. Good luck on that last condition.

Secession sentiment apparently is strong in the Russian-speaking Crimea, an isolated peninsula that already considers itself an "autonomous republic" within the Ukraine. A major Russian naval base at Sevastopol has nearly 30 years to run on a lease from the Ukrainian government, so there are already 25,000 Russian military personnel in the Crimea, giving Russia strong leverage.

Russian President Putin would like to end the breakup of the Soviet empire that led to Ukrainian independence and create a "Eurasian Customs Union" trading bloc to compete with the European Union. He used a combination of trade sanction sticks and economic support carrots last year to persuade Yanukovich to turn down an association with the European Union and create closer economic ties to Russia. It was that decision that triggered the student protests in November that culminated in the collapse of Yanukovich's authority on Saturday.

Ukraine also has another problem to deal with — a plummeting economy. Russia is contributing to the problem by putting on hold the economic support it offered Yanukovich.

The interim Ukraine government must take steps to shore up national support in the eastern provinces that lean to Russia. Meanwhile, Europe and the U.S. should move swiftly to prop up the Ukrainian economy, and counter Putin's effort to undermine it.

EU and U.S. support is essential to bolster Ukraine's democratic forces and possibly avoid a civil war in Eastern Europe. Putin shouldn't be allowed to seize this moment to realize his imperial dreams.

Be honest about Syria policy

The Kansas City (Mo.) Star

Here he told President Barack Obama explaining his policy in Syria is that particular country — Libya — at this particular moment, we were faced with the prospect of violence on a horrific scale. We had a unique ability to stop that violence."

Judging by the administration's tepid response to even ghastlier violence in Syria, this "unique ability" was the critical determinant in Libya — not the moral imperative to end the violence.

An international coalition that included the Arab League was in favor of airstrikes in Libya, the rebels were united and it was a relatively low-risk, high-yield engagement. Conversely, Syria has more robust air defenses and its religious makeup — as well as the opposition — is dangerously stratified.

But Syria is more troubling than Libya in every conceivable way. There are more than 8 million internal and external refugees and almost 140,000 people have perished, compared with 1.5 million refugees and 30,000 deaths in Libya.

Beyond the revolting human cost, there are serious strategic concerns. Al-Qaida is becoming more entrenched and intends to use Syria as a base for future operations. The Russian presence in Syria is being used by the worst refugee crisis in recent history. Sectarian tensions have been inflamed by Saudi and Iranian proxies, spurring violence in other parts of the region. Yes, Syria is a more difficult situation, but there's a lot more to lose.

Obama sounded impressively authoritative when he declared to the American and Libyan people: "As president, I refuse to wait for the images of slaughter and mass graves before taking action." There's no shortage of excruciating images from Syria, either, but Obama continues to wait. Assad's chemical weapons may be neutralized, but the regime is happy to go about the business of slaughter with conventional weapons (clever ones, too, such as barrel bombs) with shrapnel and hot oil.

Blatant rhetorical inconsistency serves as a good warning — never take high-minded presidential reassurances at face value. That goes for "rejecting the forces of tyranny" or "anchoring global security" as well, comments Obama made in his speech last September about chemical weapons in Syria. Yes, the canisters, shells and gas are now secure. The people of Syria and our interests in the Middle East, on the other hand, aren't. Let's be honest about it.

SCOREBOARD

Sports on AFN

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

Pro baseball

Spring training AMERICAN LEAGUE

| Team | W | L | Pct |
|-------------|---|---|-------|
| Detroit | 1 | 0 | 1.000 |
| Oakland | 1 | 0 | 1.000 |
| Boston | 0 | 0 | 0.000 |
| Chicago | 0 | 0 | 0.000 |
| Kansas City | 0 | 0 | 0.000 |
| Los Angeles | 0 | 0 | 0.000 |
| Minnesota | 0 | 0 | 0.000 |
| Seattle | 0 | 0 | 0.000 |
| Tampa Bay | 0 | 0 | 0.000 |
| Texas | 0 | 0 | 0.000 |
| Cleveland | 0 | 1 | 0.000 |
| New York | 0 | 1 | 0.000 |

NATIONAL LEAGUE

| Team | W | L | Pct |
|---------------|---|---|-------|
| Arizona | 1 | 0 | 1.000 |
| Cincinnati | 1 | 0 | 1.000 |
| Pittsburgh | 1 | 0 | 1.000 |
| Colorado | 0 | 0 | 0.000 |
| Milwaukee | 0 | 0 | 0.000 |
| New York | 0 | 0 | 0.000 |
| St. Louis | 0 | 0 | 0.000 |
| San Diego | 0 | 0 | 0.000 |
| Atlanta | 0 | 1 | 0.000 |
| Los Angeles | 0 | 1 | 0.000 |
| Philadelphia | 0 | 1 | 0.000 |
| San Francisco | 0 | 1 | 0.000 |

Note: Split-squad games count in standings; games against non-major league teams do not.

Wednesday's games

- Detroit at Atlanta, 7 p.m.
- Toronto 4, Philadelphia 3, 7 innings
- Pittsburgh 6, N.Y. Yankees 5
- Cleveland 3, San Francisco 2
- Cincinnati 8, Cleveland 3
- Arizona at L.A. Dodgers 3
- Thursday's games
- Philadelphia vs. Toronto at Cinedia.
- Pittsburgh vs. N.Y. Yankees at Tampa.
- Atlanta vs. Detroit at Lakeland, Fla.
- Texas vs. Kansas City at Surprise, Ariz.
- Arizona (ss) vs. Chicago Cubs at Mesa.
- Arizona (ss) vs. L.A. Dodgers at Glendale.
- Milwaukee vs. Oakland at Phoenix
- Cleveland vs. Cincinnati at Goodyear.
- Friday's games
- Minnesota vs. Boston at Fort Myers.
- Miami vs. St. Louis at Jupiter, Fla.
- Los Angeles vs. Toronto at Dunedin.
- Philadelphia vs. St. Louis at Clearwater.
- N.Y. Yankees vs. Detroit (ss) at Lakeland.
- Baltimore vs. Tampa Bay at Port Charles.
- Washington vs. N.Y. Mets at Port St. Lucie.
- Texas vs. San Diego at Peoria, Ariz.
- Chicago Cubs vs. L.A. Angels at Tempe.
- Arizona at San Francisco
- Milwaukee vs. San Francisco
- Cincinnati vs. Cleveland at Goodyear.
- San Francisco (ss) vs. Oakland at Phoenix
- Kansas City vs. Texas at Surprise.
- Chicago White Sox vs. L.A. Dodgers at Glendale, Ariz.
- Florida vs. Arizona at Scottsdale.
- Houston vs. Atlanta at Kissimmee.

Saturday's games

- Philadelphia vs. N.Y. Yankees at Tampa.
- Atlanta vs. Washington at Viera, Fla.
- Toronto 4, Baltimore 2 at Sarasota, Fla.
- Houston vs. Detroit at Lakeland, Fla.
- Tampa Bay vs. Pittsburgh at Bradenton.
- Boston vs. Minnesota at Fort Myers.
- St. Louis vs. Miami (ss) at Jupiter, Fla.
- Miami (ss) vs. N.Y. Mets at Port St. Lucie.
- San Diego vs. Kansas City at Surprise.
- L.A. Dodgers vs. Milwaukee at Phoenix.
- Colorado vs. Cincinnati at Goodyear.
- Texas vs. Oakland at Phoenix
- Cleveland vs. Chicago White Sox at Glendale, Ariz.
- San Francisco vs. Chicago Cubs at Mesa, Ariz.
- Arizona vs. Seattle at Peoria, Ariz.
- Milwaukee vs. Arizona at Scottsdale.
- Arizona vs. Philadelphia
- Chicago Cubs vs. Arizona at Scottsdale, Ariz.

College basketball

Wednesday's men's scores

EAST
 American U. 64, Navy 55
 Bloomfield 85, Caldwell 77
 Boston U. 71, Army 70
 Bucknell 85, Lehigh 61
 Case Western Reserve 66
 Drexel 56, Col. of Charleston 45
 Holy Cross 63, Loyola 67
 Indiana (Pa.) 50, Slippery Rock 32
 La Salle 75, St. Bonaventure 67
 Pittsburgh 66, Boston College 59
 UMass 70, Rhode Island 67
 Villanova 67, Butler 48

SOUTH

Auburn 83, UNC Wilmington 51
 Coastal Carolina 70, Presbyterian 51
 Delaware 70, UNC Charlotte 57
 Florida A&M 104, Edward Waters 69
 Gardner-Webb 78, Charleston Southern 76
 George Mason 69, Richmond 60
 LSU 78, Texas A&M 67
 High Point 65, VMI 49
 Lehigh-Rhine 77, Collier 68
 Lincoln Memorial 77, Carson-Newman 60
 Mississippi 70, Alabama 67
 North Carolina 85, NC State 84
 O'Connell 61, Truett McConnell 71
 Radford 82, Campbell 76
 UNC Greensboro 73, Kent State 73
 Tennessee 75, Mississippi St. 68
 Towson 69, James Madison 66
 Tulane 72, FAU 64
 UConn 61, James Madison 66
 UConn 61, South Florida 56
 Wake Forest 66, Wake Forest 66
 William & Mary 73, Hofstra 74
 Winthrop 107, UNC Asheville 100, UT

WEST

Belmont 34, SIU-Edwardsville 75
 Boise State 69, Kansas 73
 Buffalo 69, Ohio 64
 DePaul 69, Michigan 42
 Illinois 60, Nebraska 49
 Iowa State 69, Illinois 59
 Michigan 62, Virginia 66
 Miami (Ohio) 65, Akron 61
 Michigan St. 69, Purdue 78, OT
 N. Illinois 74, Toledo 66
 North Dakota 69, N. Dakota 69
 Notre Dame 65, Georgia Tech 62
 W. Michigan 69, Ball St. 67

SOUTHWEST

Texas 74, Baylor 69
 Fresno St. 67, Stanford 64
 Arizona St. 67, California 59
 San Diego 57, Stanford 64
 Arizona 76, Boise St. 56
 UNLV 67, Michigan St. 67

TOURNAMENTS

Appalachian State Conference
First Round
 St. Andrews 77, Montreat 71

Second Round

St. Augustine's 74, Shaw 59
Cascade Conference
First Round
 Coll. of Idaho 92, E. Oregon 65
 NW Christian 86, S. Oregon 74
 Oregon Tech 69, Concordia 61
 Northwest U. 70, Warner Pacific 65

Seminials

Susquehanna 69, Catholic 66
Liberty League
 Hobart 78, Clarkson 69, OT

MIAA Tournament

Calvin 64, Albion 55
MAC Tournament
 Colgate 66, Union 66
 Bethel (Minn.) 70, Augsburg 67
 Gustavus Adolphus 66, St. John's (Minn.) 64

MAC Tournament

William Paterson 69, Rutgers-Newark 66
NSIC Tournament
First Round
 Augustana (SD) 56, Northern St. (SD) 64
 Minn. St.-Mankato 76, Minn.-Crookston 60
 Minn. St.-Morhead 68, Concordia (St.) 66

Second Round

SW Minnesota 82, 86
 Minn. St. Cloud 52, Sioux Falls 75

Deals

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL
American League
CHICAGO - Released RHP Markel Cleto off waivers from Kansas City. Designated INF Jake Elmore for assignment.
LOS ANGELES ANGELS - Agreed to terms with RHP Ryan Howard.
PHILADELPHIA - Agreed to terms with LHP Pedro Figueroa, Michael Kirkman, RHP Ryan Howard, RHPs Miles Mikolas, Ben Rowen, Nick Denorfino, RHPs Taylor and Matt Reynolds, C Robinson Chirinos, INF Jurickson Profar and OF Alex Castellanos on a one-year contract.
NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE - Released LW Memphis Grizzlies - Reassigned G Jarrod Annan to Fort Wayne (NBA).
SACRAMENTO KINGS - Signed G Orlando Johnson off waivers from Phoenix.
WASHINGTON WIZARDS - Signed Drew Gooden off waivers from Phoenix.
FOOTBALL
CLEVELAND BROWNS - Released LB D'ovoni Jackson.
INDIANAPOLIS PACERS - Signed RB Michael Hill. Re-signed S Chris Banjo.
PHILADELPHIA - Agreed to terms with OT Jason Peters on a five-year contract.

Upper Iowa 86, Minn. Duluth 81

Wayne (Nebr.) 88, Bemidji St. 76
 Michigan 87, Minn. 56
WHAC Tournament
First Round
 Cornerstone 83, Concordia (Mich.) 57
 Duquesne 72, Indiana Tech 49
 Indiana 75, Aquinas 67
 Northwestern Ohio 83, Lourdes 69

WHAC Tournament

First Round
 Wis.-La Crosse 60, Wisconsin Dshoksh 61
 Wis.-Platteville 70, Wis.-Stout 53

Wednesday's women's scores

EAST
 Albany (NY) 60, New Hampshire 47
 American U. 63, Navy 55
 Army 75, Boston U. 44
 Georgetown 65, Hartford 51
 Bucknell 87, Lehigh 78
 Fordham 71, George Mason 52
 Holy Cross 69, Loyola (Md.) 49
 Indiana (Pa.) 75, Slippery Rock 48
 La Salle 88, Duquesne 63
 Lafayette 81, Colgate 70
 Maine 94, Mass.-Lowell 65
 Manhattan 50, St. Peter's 41
 Marquette 74, St. John's 61
 Rutgers 67, Temple 58
 St. Bonaventure 74, George Washington 64
 Stony Brook 66, Vermont 57
 Virginia 69, Virginia Tech 37

SOUTH

Charlotte 79, Marshall 68
 FAU 87, Marshall 68
 Lehigh-Rhine 77, Collier 68
 Lincoln Memorial 80, Carson-Newman 70
 Louisiana-Monroe 76, South Alabama 70
 Middle Tennessee 70, East Carolina 59
 Old Dominion 75, Louisiana Tech 64
 Oklahoma 67, St. John's 67
 Richmond 73, VCU 60
 South Carolina 66, Georgia Tech 65
 Southwestern Miss. 72, Ark. 45
 Tulsa 65, Tulsa 61
 Va. Interm. 60, Columbia (SC) 70

MIDWEST

Akron 88, Miami (Ohio) 63
 Creighton 70, Seton Hall 50
 Dayton 67, Saint Louis 58
 Detroit 61, Wake Forest 64
 Kansas St. 76, Kansas 68
 Minn. St. (Mankato) 106, Minn.-Crookston 63
 Michigan St. 69, E. Michigan 72
SOUTHWEST
 Iowa St. 86, Iowa State 69
 North Texas 66, Texas 66
 Texas A&M Commerce 69, Texas Woman 62

TEXAS-ARLINGTON 85, GEORGIA ST. 70

UT 78, UTSA 65
 W. Kentucky 75, Texas St. 45
First Round
 Colorado St. 84, UNLV 64
 Fresno St. 78, Boise St. 72, OT
 Fresno St. 78, Montana 69
 San Diego St. 77, San Jose St. 63
 Utah Valley 69, Utah Valley 69
 Wyoming 73, Air Force 32
TOURNAMENT
CIAC Tournament
 Quaker 66, Johnson C. Smith 47
 Shaw 71, Lincoln (Pa.) 56
 Virginia St. 85, St. Augustine's 60
 Virginia St. 73, St. Augustine's 60
CUNYAC Tournament
 Semifinals
 Baruch 65, Brooklyn 46
 Hunter 74, Albany 65
Liberty League
 Semifinals
 Vassar 81, William 66
NSIC Tournament
First Round
 Augustana (SD) 50, Minn. St. (Morhead) 66
 Concordia (SLP) 81, Minn. Duluth 72
 Mary 72, Winona 61
 Northern St. 66, Northern St. 67
 Northern St. (SD) 73, SW Minnesota 64
 Sioux Falls 85, St. Cloud 82
 Wayne (Nebr.) 72, Bemidji St. 42

HOCKEY

National Hockey League
COLLUSION BLUE JACKETS - Activated F Ryan Garbork off injured reserve. Recalled D Cody Colton from Springfield (AHL).
MINNESOTA WILD - Acquired F Brad Boyes off waivers from Los Angeles.
MINNESOTA WILD - Acquired G John Curry and D Ryan Suter from Iowa (AHL).
PLACED D - Recalled F Marco Scandella and F Jason Zentgraf from Iowa (AHL).
MONTREAL CANADIENS - Recalled D Benoit Briere from Iowa (AHL).
NASHVILLE PREDATORS - Assigned G Pekka Rinne to Norfolk on a conditioning loan.
OTTAWA SENATORS - Recalled G Andreanne Hogue from Birmingham (AHL).
TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING - Recalled F Vladimir Namestnikov from Syracuse.
WASHINGTON CAPS - Recalled LW Nicolas Deschamps and D Julien Brullette from Hershey (AHL).
Major League Soccer
CHICAGO FIRE - Named Nelson Rodriguez president of Chicago U.S.
OKLAHOMA CITY THUNDER - Signed D Jimmy Ockford and loaned him to New York (NASL) for the 2014 season.

Tennis

Mexican Open

Wednesday
At The Fairmont Acapulco Princess
First Round
 Purse: Mex. \$1.45 million (WT500)
Women, \$250,000 (Int'l.)
Surface: Hard-Outdoor
Singles
 Kevin Anderson (Zim.) def. Africa, def. Sam Querrey (USA), def. United States, 7-6 (2), 6-4, Gilles Simon (6), France, def. Donald Young (United States), def. Alexander Alexandrov (Ukraine), def. Filip Horstke (Czech Rep.), def. David Ferrer (1), Spain, def. Feliciano Lopez (7), 6-2, 6-2, David Goffin (Belg.), def. Dudi Sela, Israel, 7-4(7), 6-2, 6-2, Igor Dimitrov (4), Bulgaria, def. Marcos Baghdatis, Cyprus, 6-1, 6-4, Ernesto Llagostera (7), Latvia, def. David Goffin (Belg.), 6-1, 3-6, 7-6 (5), Andy Murray (2), Britain, def. Joao Sousa (Portugal), 6-3, 6-6.

Second Round

Alya Tomljanovic, Croatia, def. Victoria Dulovic (United States), 6-3, 6-6, Dominika Cibulkova (1), Slovakia, def. Yarina Wickmayer, Belgium, 7-5, 6-2, Christina McHale (United States), def. Kimiko Date-Krumm, Japan, 7-5, 6-1, Marina Erakovic (6), Croatia, def. Bojana Jovanovski (6), Serbia, 6-4, 6-4, Jelena Jankovic (6), def. Aleksandra Wozniak, Canada, 6-1, 6-4, Caroline Garcia, France, def. Sharon Fichman, Romania, 6-3, 6-4, Eugenie Bouchard (2), Canada, def. Christina McHale (United States), 6-3, 6-4, Katarina Konecni (3), Estonia, def. Julia Goepfert, Germany, 6-4, 4-6, 7-6.

Women

Second Round
 Alya Tomljanovic, Croatia, def. Victoria Dulovic (United States), 6-3, 6-6, Dominika Cibulkova (1), Slovakia, def. Yarina Wickmayer, Belgium, 7-5, 6-2, Christina McHale (United States), def. Kimiko Date-Krumm, Japan, 7-5, 6-1, Marina Erakovic (6), Croatia, def. Bojana Jovanovski (6), Serbia, 6-4, 6-4, Jelena Jankovic (6), def. Aleksandra Wozniak, Canada, 6-1, 6-4, Caroline Garcia, France, def. Sharon Fichman, Romania, 6-3, 6-4, Eugenie Bouchard (2), Canada, def. Christina McHale (United States), 6-3, 6-4, Katarina Konecni (3), Estonia, def. Julia Goepfert, Germany, 6-4, 4-6, 7-6.

Men

First Round
 Eric Butorac (4), United States, and Radek Stepanek (6), Czech Republic, def. Jeremy Chardy and Gilles Simon, France, w/o play.
 Jarkko Nieminen, Finland, and Edouard Roger-Vasselin, France, def. Adrian Panarariu and Stephane Robert, France, 6-3, 6-3.
 Feliciano Lopez, Spain, and Max Mirnyi, Belarus, def. Ivo Karlovic, Croatia, and David Marrero, Spain, 6-3, 6-3.
 Philipp Kohlschreiber, Austria, and Matthew Edmond, Australia, def. Alejandro Portales, Colombia, and Daniel Garza, Mexico, 5-7, 6-3, 10-4.
 Santiago Gonzalez, Mexico, and Scott Lipsky, United States, def. Jean-Julien Royer, Netherlands, and Horia Tecau (2), Romania, 6-4, 4-6, 10-8.

Women

First Round
 Christina McHale, United States, and Alisa Tomljanovic, Croatia, def. Kimiko Date-Krumm, Japan, and Heather Watney, Britain, 7-6 (3), 3-6, 10-4.
 Christina McHale, United States, and Yarina Wickmayer, def. Ashley Barco, Australia, and Marina Erakovic (3), New Zealand, 6-4, 7-6 (5).
TOURNAMENT
 Ineta Melnikyte, Lithuania, def. Ineta Melnikyte, Czech Republic, def. Sharon Fichman, Canada, and Maria Sanchez, United States, 6-3, 6-2.
 Kristina Mladenovic, France, and Galina Visnina, Russia, def. Katerina Krizkova, Mexico, and Ana Sofia Sanchez, Mexico, 6-0, 6-0.

Brazil Open

Wednesday

At Ginásio do Itaipava
Sao Paulo
 Purse: \$100,000 (WT250)
Surface: Clay-Outdoor
Singles
Second Round
 Federico Delbonis, Argentina, def. Nicolas Pietrangeli (6), Argentina, 6-3, 6-3.
 Horacio Zeballos, Argentina, def. Guido Pella, Argentina, 6-4, 6-4.
 Alibek Montano, Spain, def. Joao Souza, Brazil, 6-4, 2-3, retired.
 Nicolas Pietrangeli (6), Argentina, def. Potito Starace, Italy, 7-6 (2), 6-3, 6-2.

First Round

Sean Sebastian Cabal and Robert Farah (2), Colombia, def. Nicolas Monroe,

College baseball

Wednesday's scores

SOUTH
 Belhaven 8, Talladega 5
 North Carolina 6, Wake Forest 2
 Dayton at Kentucky, pp'd., weather
 Virginia Tech 7, Carson-Newman 4
 Virginia Tech 7, Carson-Newman 4
 Evansville 8, Vanderbilt 3
 High Point 7, N.C. Greensboro 4
 Lehigh-Rhine 8, N. Greenville 9

AP spotlight

Feb. 28
 1940 - College basketball is televised for the first time. The CBS 248ers transmits a basketball doubleheader from New York's Madison Square Garden. Pittsburgh plays Fordham and New York University plays Georgetown.
 1960 - The United States hockey team scores six goals in the third period to beat Czechoslovakia 7-2 in the gold medal in the Winter Olympics at Squaw Valley, Calif.

United States, and Simon Stadler, Germany, 4-6, 3-6, 10-6.
 Marcelo Gonzalez and Juan Monaco, Argentina, def. Guillermo Cezar and Marcelo Demoliner, Brazil, 6-7 (4), 7-6 (7), 10-3.
 Pablo Cuevas, Uruguay, and Horacio Zeballos (4), Argentina, def. Guillermo Cermak, Czech Republic, and Mikhail Elmet, Russia, 6-3, 6-4, 6-3.
 Daniele Bracciali, Italy, and Leonardo Mayer, Argentina, def. Lorenzo Lorenzi and Filippo Volandri, Italy, 7-5, 6-4.
 Andre Bergem, Germany, and Martin Ermer, CRO, def. Alexander Horsthaase, Netherlands, and Christopher Kas, Austria, 6-3, 6-4, 6-3.
 Guillermo Garcia-Lopez, Spain, and Phillip Oswald, Austria, def. Alexander Peya, Austria, and Bruno Soares (1), Brazil, 3-6, 6-4, 10-7.

Dubai Championship

Wednesday
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
 Purse: \$2.36 million (WT500)
Surface: Hard-Outdoor
Singles
Second Round
 Novak Djokovic (1), Serbia, def. Roberto Bautista Agut, Spain, 6-1, 6-3.
 Novak Djokovic (1), Serbia, def. Czech Republic, def. Sergiy Stakhovych, Ukraine, 6-2, 6-1, 6-4.
 Philipp Kohlschreiber (6), Austria, def. Radek Stepanek, Czech Republic, 6-2, 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-4.
 Jo-Wilfried Tsonga (5), France, def. Nikolay Davydov, Russia, w/o play.
 Philipp Kohlschreiber (6), Austria, def. James Ward, Britain, 6-1, 7-6 (3).
 Philipp Kohlschreiber (6), Austria, def. Andreas Seppi, Italy, 6-3, 6-4.
 Lukas Rosol, Czech Republic, def. Dmitry Tursunov (8), Russia, 6-4, 7-6 (3).
 Matek Jaziri, Tunisia, def. Somdev Devdevaram, India, 6-3, 6-4.

Quartals and Florian Mayer

Germany, def. Juan Martin del Potro, Argentina, and Radek Stepanek, Czech Republic, w/o play.
 Alexander Zverev, Poland, and Lukas Dlouhy, Czech Republic, def. Lukas Rosol, Czech Republic, 6-3, 6-2.
 Andreas Seppi (1), Spain, def. Dmitry Tursunov (8), Russia, 6-4, 7-6 (3).
 Matek Jaziri, Tunisia, def. Somdev Devdevaram, India, 6-3, 6-4.

Double

First Round
 Mahesh Bhupathi, India, and Denis Shkoderov, Bulgaria, def. Oliver Marach, Austria, and Florin Mergea, Romania, 6-6, 3-16, 14-14.

Quartals and Florian Mayer

Germany, def. Juan Martin del Potro, Argentina, and Radek Stepanek, Czech Republic, w/o play.
 Alexander Zverev, Poland, and Lukas Dlouhy, Czech Republic, def. Lukas Rosol, Czech Republic, 6-3, 6-2.
 Andreas Seppi (1), Spain, def. Dmitry Tursunov (8), Russia, 6-4, 7-6 (3).
 Matek Jaziri, Tunisia, def. Somdev Devdevaram, India, 6-3, 6-4.

Brazil Cup

Wednesday

At Federcopa Catarinense de Tennis Florianopolis, Brazil
 Purse: \$235,000 (Int'l.)
Surface: Hard-Outdoor
Singles
 Kiara Zakaria, United Arab Republic, def. Alice Lim, France, 6-3, 6-3.
 Mariana Figueiredo, Brazil, def. Paula Ormaecenas (8), Argentina, 6-2, 6-2.
 Alexandra Dulgheru, Romania, def. Teliana Pereira, Brazil, 7-5, 6-2.
 Monica Niculescu (2), Romania, def. Danka Kovacic, Montenegro, 6-3, 6-1.
 Mariana Figueiredo, Brazil, def. Spain, def. Kiki Bertens, Netherlands, 6-3, 6-2.

First Round

Vania King, United States, and Barbra Zhabava Strycova (1), Czech Republic, def. Irina Glushko, Ukraine, and Katarina Pitlor, Romania, 6-3, 6-2.
Quartals
 Julia Glushko, Israel, and Paula King, Poland, def. Tamas Babos, Hungary, and Jarmila Gajdosova, Australia, 4-6, 6-3, 10-3.
 Francesca Schiavone, Italy, def. Silvia Tomic, Croatia, 6-3, 6-3.
 Netherlands, and Stephanie Vogt, Liechtenstein, 6-4, 6-4.
 Anabel Medina-Parraguez, Spain, and Yaroslava Shvedova, Kazakhstan, def. Elena Baltacha, United Kingdom, and Thorpe Franca, France, 6-3, 4-6, 10-8.
Double
 Vania King, United States, and Barbra Zhabava Strycova (1), Czech Republic, def. Catalina Castano and Mariana Dutra-Moura, Colombia, 6-1, 6-2.

Kentucky St. at Lincoln Memorial, pp'd., weather

North Carolina St. at Louisville, pp'd., weather
 Wake Forest at Wake Forest, pp'd., weather
 11th Line at 11th Line
 Wake Forest at Wake Forest, pp'd., weather
 Wake Forest at Wake Forest, pp'd., weather
FAR WEST
 Baker St. at Fresno St., pp'd., weather

1971 - Jack Nicklaus wins the PGA Championship by beating Billy Casper by three strokes.

1981 - Houston's Calvin Murphy throws the first no-hitter in the major leagues, in a game against San Diego, Sunday, Feb. 22, 1981.
 1993 - Iolanda Chen of Russia sets a world record in the triple jump with a jump of 47 feet 10 inches.
 1995 - Iolanda Chen of Russia sets a world record in the triple jump with a jump of 47 feet 10 inches.
 1995 - Iolanda Chen of Russia sets a world record in the triple jump with a jump of 47 feet 10 inches.

NHL

Scoreboard

| Eastern Conference | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Atlantic Division | | | | | | | |
| GP | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA | |
| Boston | 58 | 37 | 15 | 8 | 79 | 136 | |
| Tampa Bay | 58 | 30 | 25 | 7 | 168 | 145 | |
| Montreal | 59 | 23 | 31 | 6 | 149 | 164 | |
| Toronto | 60 | 22 | 36 | 6 | 178 | 182 | |
| Detroit | 59 | 27 | 26 | 8 | 165 | 164 | |
| Ottawa | 59 | 26 | 22 | 11 | 63 | 169 | 191 |
| Florida | 58 | 22 | 29 | 5 | 131 | 183 | |
| Buffalo | 59 | 17 | 34 | 8 | 115 | 178 | |
| Metropolitan Division | | | | | | | |
| Pittsburgh | 59 | 24 | 24 | 8 | 83 | 196 | 138 |
| N.Y. Rangers | 59 | 32 | 24 | 3 | 67 | 155 | 146 |
| Philadelphia | 59 | 20 | 33 | 6 | 86 | 162 | 161 |
| Columbus | 59 | 23 | 25 | 5 | 63 | 170 | 161 |
| Washington | 59 | 27 | 23 | 6 | 63 | 171 | 175 |
| Carolina | 58 | 26 | 23 | 9 | 61 | 146 | 151 |
| New Jersey | 59 | 24 | 23 | 13 | 61 | 135 | 146 |
| N.Y. Islanders | 60 | 22 | 30 | 8 | 56 | 164 | 200 |

| Western Conference | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|----|-----|----|-----|-----|
| Central Division | | | | | | | |
| GP | W | L | OT | Pts | GF | GA | |
| St. Louis | 58 | 39 | 13 | 6 | 84 | 196 | 136 |
| Chicago | 60 | 35 | 17 | 14 | 84 | 207 | 163 |
| Minnesota | 59 | 37 | 15 | 9 | 79 | 179 | 159 |
| Minnesota | 59 | 31 | 21 | 6 | 69 | 145 | 147 |
| Dallas | 58 | 27 | 21 | 10 | 64 | 164 | 164 |
| Winnipeg | 60 | 28 | 26 | 6 | 62 | 168 | 176 |
| Nashville | 59 | 25 | 24 | 10 | 60 | 146 | 180 |
| Pacific Division | | | | | | | |
| Anaheim | 60 | 20 | 33 | 7 | 87 | 196 | 147 |
| San Jose | 59 | 37 | 16 | 6 | 80 | 175 | 142 |
| Los Angeles | 60 | 32 | 22 | 6 | 70 | 145 | 132 |
| Dallas | 58 | 27 | 21 | 10 | 64 | 164 | 164 |
| Phoenix | 58 | 27 | 18 | 10 | 64 | 163 | 169 |
| Calgary | 58 | 22 | 29 | 7 | 51 | 137 | 179 |
| Edmonton | 60 | 20 | 33 | 7 | 47 | 153 | 199 |

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

Wednesday's games

Buffalo 5, Boston 4 (OT)

Detroit 2, Montreal 1, OT

Los Angeles 6, Colorado 4

Vancouver 1, St. Louis 0

Thursday's games

Toronto at N.Y. Islanders

Chicago at N.Y. Rangers

San Jose at Philadelphia

Montreal at Pittsburgh

Detroit at Ottawa

Washington at Florida

Tampa Bay at Nashville

Phoenix at Winnipeg

Carolina at Dallas

Los Angeles at Calgary

Minnesota at Edmonton

Friday's games

San Jose at Buffalo

Phoenix at Colorado

Minnesota at Vancouver

St. Louis at Anaheim

Saturday's games

Washington at Boston

New Jersey at N.Y. Islanders

N.Y. Rangers at Philadelphia

Florida at Columbus

Winnipeg at Nashville

Tampa Bay at Dallas

Carolina at Los Angeles

Toronto at Montreal

Pittsburgh at Chicago

Calgary at Edmonton

Wednesday

Canucks 1, Blues 0

St. Louis 0 0 0-0

Vancouver 0 0 1-1

Third Period—1, Vancouver, Hansen 10

(Sesitto), 11:13.

Shots on Goal—St. Louis 6-11-3-20.

Vancouver 14-17-35.

Power-play opportunities—St. Louis 0 of 3, Vancouver 0 of 2.

Goals—St. Louis, Halak 24-9 (35 saves total), Vancouver, Lack 9-8-3 (20-20).

A=18,910 (18,910). T=2:26.

Kings 6, Avalanche 4

Los Angeles 1 3 2-6

Colorado 2 2 0-4

First Period—1, Los Angeles, Regehr 3 (Kopitar, Toffoli), 5:48. 2, Colorado, O'Reilly 22 (Holden, McGinn), 11:17 (pp).

3, Colorado, Parenteau 11 (Gauthier), 16:32.

Second Period—4, Los Angeles, Stoll 7 (Brown, King), 2:4. 5, Colorado, McMillan 10 (Gauthier, Regehr), 8:57 (pp), 6, Colorado, Benoit 3 (MacKinnon, Stastny), 15:42 (pp). 7, Los Angeles, Kopitar 18 (Williams, Vovrovc), 16:48. 8, Los Angeles, Carter 21 (Richards, Greene), 18:53.

Third Period—3, Los Angeles, Kopitar 19 (Carter, Toffoli), 3:13 (pp). 10, Los Angeles, Williams 15 (Doughty), 19:48 (en). 28, Colorado 8-10-11-29.

Power-play opportunities—Los Angeles 1 of 3, Colorado 3 of 5.

Goals—Los Angeles, Jones 9-4-0 (29 shots-25 saves), Colorado, Giguere 9-5-0 (27-22).

A=16,754 (18,007). T=2:30.

Red Wings 2, Canadiens 1 (OT)

Detroit 1 0 0 1-2

Montreal 0 0 1 0-1

First Period—1, Detroit, Bertuzzi 7 (Franzen, Alfredsson), 14:01 (pp).

Third Period—2, Montreal, Gionta 12 (Briere, Markov), 19:31.

Overtime—3, Detroit, Nyquist 15 (Franzen, DeKeyser), 4:32.

Shots on Goal—Detroit 8-9-9-4-30.

Montreal 7-2-8-3-20.

Power-play opportunities—Detroit 1 of 1, Montreal 0 of 2.

Goals—Detroit, Howard 13-13-9 (20 shots-19 saves), Montreal, Budaj 6-4-2 (30-28).

A=21,273 (21,273). T=2:30.

Sabres 5, Bruins 4 (OT)

Boston 1 2 1 1-5

Buffalo 2 2 1 1-5

First Period—1, Buffalo, Girgensons 6 (Flynn, McBain), 3:32. 2, Boston, Kelly 5 (Soderberg, Barkowski), 10:47.

Second Period—3, Buffalo, Myers 7 (Hodson, Ehrhoff), 6:25 (pp). 4, Buffalo, Flynn 5 (Leino, McBain), 9:10. 5, Boston, Chara 14 (Lucic, Krug), 11:01 (pp). 6, Boston, Marchand 20 (Gimlin), 17:46.

Third Period—7, Boston, Lucic 18 (Krug, Ignat), 9:45 (pp). 5, Buffalo, Moulton 16 (Girgensons, Leino), 19:07.

Overtime—3, Buffalo, D'Agostini 4, 22.

Shots on Goal—Boston 7-18-7-1-33.

Buffalo 7-11-7-1-25.

Power-play opportunities—Boston 2 of 4, Buffalo 1 of 5.

Goals—Boston, C.J. Johnson 11-3-1 (26 shots-21 saves), Buffalo, Ernoth 2-12-5 (32-29).

A=19,070 (19,070). T=2:26.

Scoring leaders

Through Feb. 26

GP G A PTS

Sidney Crosby, PIT 58 28 50 78

Ryan Getzlaf, ANH 56 29 38 67

John Tavares, NYI 59 24 42 66

Phil Kessel, TOR 60 31 34 65

Patrick Kane, CHI 59 27 36 63

Alex Ovechkin, WAS 55 40 20 60

Cory Perry, ANH 60 30 30 60

Kyle Okposo, NYI 59 24 35 59

Patrick Sharp, CHI 59 28 30 58

Evgeni Malkin, PIT 47 18 40 58

Claude Giroux, PHI 59 19 37 57

Martin Sturges, TB 58 21 36 56

Tyler Seguin, DAL 56 24 32 56

Max Pacioretty, MON 58 20 36 56

Nicklas Backstrom, WSH 59 11 45 56

Joe Thornton, SJ 59 8 48 56

Roundup

Red Wings top Canadiens in OT

The Associated Press

MONTREAL — There was something familiar about the way the checking of Mike Babcock's Detroit Red Wings smothered the Montreal Canadiens on Wednesday night.

It was almost exactly the way Canada won the gold medal under Babcock at the Olympics in Sochi.

And, it worked again this time as Gustav Nyquist's rebound goal with 28 seconds left in overtime led the Red Wings past the Canadiens 2-1.

"(Babcock) always stressed that we play this way," said Johan Franzen, who returned from a concussion to assist on both of Detroit's goals. "This is how you win games."

"Especially coming down the stretch here and going into the playoffs, this is how you have to play hockey. You've got to track like never before, and always be above their guys and make it small for them so you can create turnovers. Then you give your team a lot of opportunities."

Franzen set up a power-play goal 14:01 into the first period by Todd Bertuzzi for Detroit.

Captain Brian Gionta scored for Montreal with 29 seconds left in regulation time after Peter Budaj was pulled for an extra attacker.

There were a handful of Olympians on both sides who had tricked back over the past week as their teams were eliminated.

It made for slow, scrambling hockey with few good scoring chances on either side. Detroit had a 30-20 shot advantage and fans booed as Montreal tested Jimmy Howard only twice in the second period.

"I'm sure guys noticed the time difference a bit," Nyquist said. "You have to battle through it. It was the middle of the night in Sochi, but we've been back for three days and we're starting to get it back. We'll get some sleep



RYAN REMIRO, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Montreal Canadiens right wing Brendan Gallagher (11) is stopped by Detroit Red Wings goalie Jimmy Howard (35) in the first period of Wednesday's game in Montreal. The Red Wings won 2-1 in overtime.

before we play in Ottawa (on Thursday night)."

The Canadiens salvaged a point when Gionta collected a puck at the side of the net in a scramble and backhanded the tying goal into the top corner.

"The execution was not there tonight for both teams," Montreal coach Michel Therrien said.

"Both teams played solid defensively. There wasn't much space on the ice, but we put ourselves in position to get a point. It's disappointing that we didn't score in overtime or get to the shootout."

Franzen fed Bertuzzi at the edge of the crease for a power-play goal 14:01 into the game after P.K. Subban was called for roughing to put Detroit up 1-0.

Bertuzzi returned to the lineup after missing eight games with an upper-body problem. Franzen had sat out six in a row and 21 of the last 22 with his concussion.

In overtime, Franzen tipped Danny DeKeyser's shot and the rebound went to Nyquist for a shot into an open side.

Sabres 5, Bruins 4 (OT): Matt D'Agostini outpaced Zdeno Chara to a loose puck and scored 22 seconds into overtime, lifting host Buffalo to a win over Boston.

Matt Moulson forced overtime by scoring with 53 seconds left in regulation in a game the Sabres won after squandering a 3-1 second-period lead. Brian Flynn had a goal and assist, while Tyler Myers and Zemgus Girgensons also scored for Buffalo.

Kings 6, Avalanche 4: Anze Kopitar had two goals, including the decisive score in the third period, and visiting Los Angeles rallied to beat Colorado.

Kopitar's second goal of the night and 19th of the season put the Kings, who trailed by two goals midway through the second period, back in front.

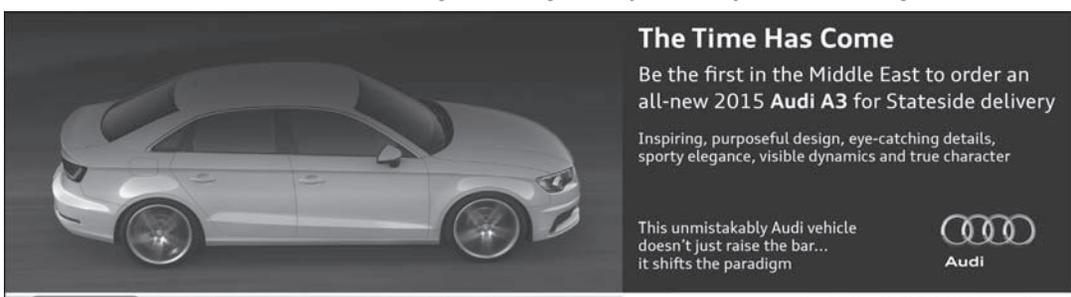
Canucks 1, Blues 0: Jannik Hansen scored the game's only goal and Eddie Lack made 20 saves for his third shutout of the season as host Vancouver blanked St. Louis, ending a seven-game losing streak.

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NFL

Pick 6: Standout combine performances

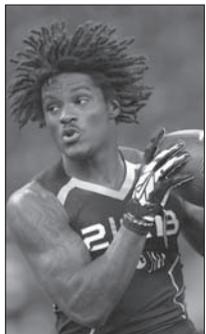
By DAVE CAMPBELL
The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — The NFL scouting combine will never turn a projected first-round pick into an undrafted free agent, or vice versa.

By this point in the careers of these prospects, their size has been established. So have their smarts. The film of their college performances is indelible, the basis of the evaluation for every team in the league. But over the four-day event at Lucas Oil Stadium, there are always players who help or hurt themselves, even if ever so slightly, when their speed, agility and strength is on display with the rest of their peers. Some even stand out by skipping certain drills.

Here are six notable performances from this year's combine in Indianapolis:

1 Go Johnny Go: Johnny Manziel, like fellow top-tier quarterback prospect Teddy Bridgewater, opted not to throw for scouts over the weekend, preferring to wait until his pro day workout at Texas A&M. But while Bridgewater skipped the 40-yard dash, too, Manziel zipped right through it in 4.68 seconds. At 6 feet and less than 210 pounds, Manziel is smaller than the prototype for the position, but as he showed often in college he has the speed to make all kinds of excitement happen on the field.



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Kent State running back Dri Archer likely helped boost his draft status by running the 40-yard dash in 4.26 seconds, the best time of the year.

4 Fast is fast: Kent State running back Dri Archer is a fringe prospect in this draft, at a mere 5-foot-8 and 175 pounds coming off an injury-affected senior season. He's considered a late-round pick, but Archer sure helped himself by running the 40-yard dash in 4.26 seconds, the best official time this year and a hair behind Chris Johnson's 2008 record of 4.24. Archer can also return kickoffs, which gives teams an other value to consider.



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

South Carolina defensive lineman Jadeveon Clowney runs a drill Monday at the scouting combine in Indianapolis.

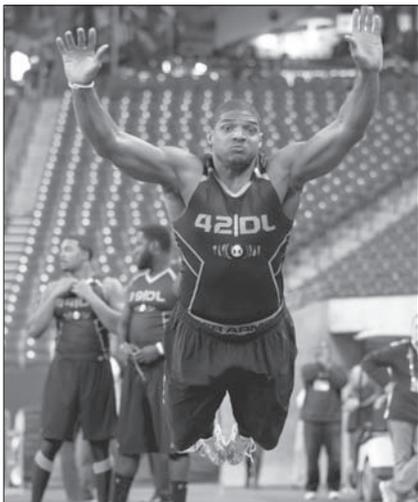
2 Confounding Clowney: After a substandard 2013 season for South Carolina, defensive end Jadeveon Clowney has been dogged by questions about his work ethic and focus. But his blend of physical traits at 6-foot-5 and 265 pounds is so promising that he could still be the first pick in the draft. For him to fall out of the top five

would be almost unfathomable.

This, then, was fitting. He ran the 40-yard dash in 4.53 seconds, the fastest at his position, but managed only 21 repetitions of the 225-pound bench press, fewer than several defensive backs and running backs and even a punter. Pat O'Donnell of Miami NFL Network analyst Mike Mayock summed up

the enigma nicely.

"I already think I know what he is: he's the scariest, freakiest, physical specimen I've ever seen since I've been doing this," Mayock said. "However, that doesn't mean I'm saying he's the best defensive lineman in the draft or the best player in the draft because he worries me with some of the red flags."



NAM Y. HUN/AP

Missouri defensive lineman Michael Sam, hoping to become the first openly gay player in the NFL, didn't boost his stock at the combine.

3 Sam struggles: As the Southeastern Conference co-defensive player of the year for Missouri, Michael Sam has proven his pass-rushing prowess. He has made headlines for his quest to become the league's first openly gay player.

But ultimately, the biggest issue with Sam is he has the skills and the build that's caught between a defensive end in a 4-3 scheme and an outside linebacker in a 3-4 system. The "tweener" label could keep him as a mid-round pick at best.

Sam didn't boost his stock at the combine much, either. He ran the 40 in 4.91 seconds, hardly in Clowney's company. He also had the lowest vertical jump, 25 1/2 inches, and the second-fewest bench press reps, 17, among those at his position who participated.



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Justin Gilbert ran the fastest 40 time among defensive players.

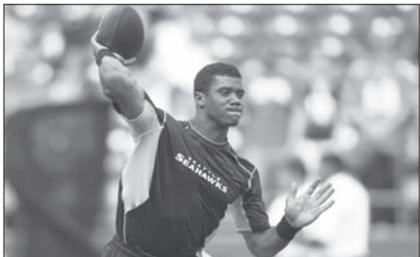
6 Not-so-little brother: Minnesota safety Brock Vereen is projected a late-round pick at best, but the younger brother of New England running back Shane Vereen ran a 4.47 in the 40, the 11th-fastest among all defensive players and second among safeties. Vereen also fared well in agility drills and led his position with 25 reps on the bench press.

Asked over the weekend about whether he wanted to be drafted higher than his brother — a long-shot goal because the Patriots took their Vereen in the second round in 2011 — Vereen brushed that off.

"I think the biggest part of me just wants to hit him," Vereen said. "I just can't wait until we meet on the field."

5 Gilbert gets a boost: The depth of talent at so many positions this year might have left the cornerbacks a bit overlooked, but in this pass-driven league there is never a time when they've been more valuable. After Michigan State's Darqueze Dennard, the other guy at this position with a consensus first-round grade is Oklahoma State's Justin Gilbert. He ran the fastest 40 time among defensive players with a 4.37.

SPORTS BRIEFS/NBA



Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson will participate in a Cactus League game with the Texas Rangers on Monday.

Briefly

Eagles give Kelce, Cooper new deals

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — The Philadelphia Eagles have agreed to a five-year contract with wide receiver Riley Cooper and a seven-year deal with center Jason Kelce.

Cooper would become a free agent next month after a break-out season in which he set career highs in receptions (47), yards receiving (835) and touchdowns (eight). Kelce was signed through 2016, and the new deal adds four years to his contract. He was part of an offensive line that helped the Eagles lead the NFL in rushing while setting a franchise record for points (442).

The moves were announced Thursday, a day after All-Pro left tackle Jason Peters signed a new five-year contract.

The Eagles went 10-6 and won the NFC East title in Chip Kelly's first season as coach after going 4-12 in 2012.

QB Wilson to play in Cactus League game

SURPRISE, Ariz. — Russell Wilson is getting on the diamond again.

The Texas Rangers expect Seattle's Super Bowl-winning quarterback to participate in a team workout and then be in uniform for a Cactus League game when Wilson visits camp Monday.

The Rangers selected Wilson from the Colorado Rockies in the Triple-A portion of baseball's December draft at the winter meetings.

D'Antoni: 'Keep it in house'

Lakers coach addresses comments made by frustrated Gasol

By CLAY BAILEY
The Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Los Angeles Lakers coach Mike D'Antoni says he understands the frustration that led to critical comments from Pau Gasol, but wishes the star center had not lashed out publicly.

D'Antoni addressed Gasol's comments before Wednesday's night game against the Memphis Grizzlies, saying much of the frustration comes from losing and a change in the team's style of play.

Following Tuesday night's 118-98 defeat at Indiana, the Lakers' leading scorer criticized the club for a lack of discipline and expressed frustration with Los Angeles using smaller lineups.

Gasol mentioned everything from selfish play to D'Antoni's offense as problems.

The Lakers have lost three straight and seven of eight after falling 108-103 to the Grizzlies on Wednesday night. Injuries to Kobe Bryant, Steve Nash and others have left Los Angeles with the worst record in the Western Conference.

"I just made some remarks of how I felt after the (Indiana) game," Gasol said after Wednesday's loss.



D'Antoni

"Yes, there was some frustration, but I don't think it was anything out of line or nothing that went too far. I stated something obvious to me."

The Lakers remain 14½ games out of the final playoff spot in the West and the bulk of their players are in the final year of their contracts. The nucleus of the teams that made the Lakers a force in the conference is pretty well down to Gasol and role players.

Still, D'Antoni wasn't happy that Gasol criticized the team in the media.

"The thing I just don't appreciate—and I think every coach, and it should be everybody—you just keep it in house," D'Antoni said during his press news conference. "It's very easy to come over and talk about your frustrations. We'll try to work something out and figure it out for now. But to go to (the media) and to do it in the paper is disturbing. I just don't think that's the way to go."

D'Antoni said against big teams like Indiana and Memphis, it doesn't do much good to challenge their strength inside by trying to match up with them. He prefers to counter with a smaller lineup and move the ball up and down the floor. He said the strategy worked against Indiana until foul trouble changed the approach.

"We went big, and it all came down because they're a better big team than we are," D'Antoni said of the Pacers. "If you are overmanned a little bit and you try to match up with them, it's not going to work out."

The Lakers coach said he understands Gasol being frustrated by a lack of ball movement and everybody wanting to shine in their contract year. The problem is when everyone wants to shine.

"Everybody's looking for a contract on the team, and when the ball doesn't share, then your numbers go down and you get frustrated, and then you lash out," D'Antoni said. "The place that it is in the dressing room among us."

Gasol characterized the comments as "not that big of a deal." "It was just the emotions and the frustrations of a tough loss," he said.

Webb shoots 66 to grab 1-shot lead in Singapore

SINGAPORE — Karrie Webb birdied six holes to shoot a 6-under 66 and take a one-stroke lead after the opening round of the HSBC Women's Champions on Thursday.

Sweden's Caroline Hedwall and American Paula Creamer were tied for second place after shooting 5-under 67 at Sentosa Golf Club, a stroke ahead of 2012 tournament champion Angela Stanford and Taiwan's Teresa Lu in fourth.

Webb started the year off strongly by winning her fifth Women's Australian Open title earlier this month.

Schmidt Peterson hires Villeneuve for Indy 500

INDIANAPOLIS — Jacques Villeneuve is ready to make an IndyCar comeback.

Schmidt Peterson Motorsports said Wednesday it has hired Villeneuve to race in this year's Indianapolis 500, 19 years after the Canadian driver first drank the milk in Victory Lane. The 500 is scheduled for May 25.

Felton says arrest not distraction

The Associated Press

GREENBURGH, N.Y. — Raymond Felton is determined to keep personal turmoil from affecting what was already his most trying season professionally.

A day after his arrest on felony weapons charges, Felton returned to practice with the New York Knicks on Wednesday, saying that was "not a distraction" to the team.

Felton spoke for less than a minute and did not take questions. He thanked family, friends and teammates for their support and insisted his thoughts were on the Knicks' game Thursday night in Miami.

"This is not a distraction to this team," he said. "I'm focusing on finishing out this season, finishing out these games with my teammates and going down to Miami, focusing on this next game at task versus the defending champs."

The Knicks are barely hanging on in the playoff race and Felton's struggles have been among their biggest problems. Slowed by nagging leg injuries early, he's averaging a career-worst 10.4 points on 40.3 percent shooting for a team with a 21-36 record. He's also dealing with the breakup of his marriage, and he was arrested early Tuesday after authorities said a lawyer for his wife turned into a police precinct a loaded semi-automatic handgun

allegedly belonging to the point guard, claiming she no longer wanted it in their home.

Felton was released on \$25,000 bail, and his next court appearance is scheduled for June 2.

Knicks coach Mike Woodson said he never considered not letting Felton play against the Heat.

"The bottom line is Ray is a part of our team, and as his coach I'm going to support him and make sure he's doing everything the right way from here on out, and to try to get him to just concentrate on basketball and practice and playing games," Woodson said.

Felton was charged with criminal possession of a weapon in the third degree and criminal possession of a firearm. The firearm charge is punishable by up to four years in prison. The weapons charge is punishable by up to seven years in prison.

He had turned himself into police not long after a 110-108 loss to Dallas dropped the Knicks farther back in the playoff race. His wife, Ariane Raymond-Felton, filed for divorce last week, according to court records, and Felton acknowledged recently dealing with personal problems.

He said he wouldn't comment on the case, referring any questions to his lawyer.

"But other than that, I'm here to concentrate on this team, finish this season out with the New York Knicks and see what happens, man," Felton said.

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PHOTOS BY TONY GUTIERREZ/AP

Pitchers Taijuan Walker, above, and James Paxton, below, are expected to solidify the back end of Seattle's rotation.

Seattle puts hopes in Paxton, Walker

By TIM BOOTH

The Associated Press

PEORIA, Ariz. — When James Paxton and Taijuan Walker were included in the Seattle Mariners' major league camp last spring, it served as a reward for their performance in the minors with no real expectation that their major league debuts were imminent.

This year, the top two pitching prospects in the organization aren't just in camp to get experience throwing against a major league roster. They know the Mariners want them to win jobs coming out of spring training to solidify the back end of the rotation.

That changes the game a little bit.

"After having that time in the big leagues and feeling that I belong I come into this camp feeling like I think I can do it and I have a chance of starting the year with the club," said Paxton, a tall 25-year-old left-hander. "I feel good about where I'm at right now and I'm looking forward to getting out there and competing."

Paxton and Walker are the biggest names among a foursome of young pitchers vying for rotation spots. Erasmo Ramirez has the most experience of the young group and could end up in the rotation as well, and Brandon Maurer started last season in the rotation before being sent to the minors.

But Paxton and Walker are the focus. They have been followed and analyzed in the farm system. They both had brief stints with Seattle at the end of last season that only ramped up their future hopes. Paxton made four starts, going 3-0 with a 1.50 ERA. Walker made three starts with a 1-0 record and 3.60 ERA.

"It was great, I thought," Walker said. "Just getting in the big leagues where you want to be to the highest level you can be at, going out there and just facing big league hitters, the travel, the big league clubhouse, just seeing how it all is, just getting a taste of what



it was all like. It was definitely motivation."

There is concern that Walker is falling behind. He showed up for camp with a sore throwing shoulder and has been limited to throwing off flat ground so far. The hope is to get him throwing in the bullpen soon but he's not scheduled as one of the starters for the first week of spring training games.

"I wouldn't say I'm concerned at this particular time," manager Lloyd McClendon said. "Obviously, he's a little bit behind. I remember we were in spring training 1990 and we had three weeks to get ready and we got ready to play baseball in three weeks. So I'm not that concerned as we speak right now. I don't know what's going to happen in the next week but we'll see."

The expectations placed on Walker were amplified when McClendon said in late January he would be disappointed if Walker was not part of the rotation when the regular season began.

"I wanted to come into camp and fight for a spot because we have a lot of great pitchers fighting for those spots," Walker said. "No matter what he said I wanted to come in here fighting for a spot because nothing is ever guaranteed and no spot is given to you. You have to go out and work for it or someone is going to take it."

No particular hurry

Nats aren't rushing Strasburg's debut

By CARL KOTALA

The Associated Press

VIERIA, Fla. Even so, the Washington Nationals aren't rushing his spring debut.

Strasburg isn't scheduled to pitch in the Nationals' first two exhibition games. The team hasn't announced when Strasburg, Gio Gonzalez or Doug Fister will make their first appearances this spring.

"It's just kind of the way it stacks up," Nationals manager Matt Williams said Wednesday. "There's no meaning behind it one way or the other. It's how he feels and how we stack that rotation."

"I've talked with (pitching coach Steve McCatty) a lot about it and it's just kind of the way it falls," he said.

Williams added things will likely change following the team's off-day on March 18. That's when the Nationals could start setting up their rotation for the regular season.

The Nationals will open exhibition play Friday in Port St. Lucie against the New York Mets with Taylor Jordan getting the start. Jordan Zimmermann is set to start in Washington's spring home opener against Atlanta on Saturday.

Strasburg is listed for a bullpen session Saturday.

Asked about his schedule, Stras-

burg replied: "I'm not really sure right now ... Talk to the guys who make the schedule."

Strasburg should make his first appearance of the spring next week. Neither he nor the team seemed to be too concerned about when that will be.

"He is perfectly fine," Williams said. "He feels great. He's ready to go on the day that he pitches."

The 25-year-old right-hander, who went 8-9 with a 3.00 ERA last season, made clear that there are no health issues for him.

"I feel good," he said. "Ready to rock."

Strasburg threw a live batting practice session on Wednesday and looked strong. He is continuing to work on his slider this spring.

"It's good," he said. "I feel different when I throw a good one and when I throw a bad one. I got some good results. The hitters said it looked good."

Notes: The Nationals posted their lineup for Friday's spring opener against the Mets and one of their three starting outfielders — Bryce Harper, Jayson Werth and Denard Span — will be making the trip.

‘He feels great. He’s ready to go on the day that he pitches.’

Matt Williams
Nationals manager
on Stephen Strasburg



Stephen Strasburg isn't scheduled to pitch in Washington's first two exhibition games.

PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS/AP

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Hoyas hindered in new Big East

Missing players, uneven schedule has kept Georgetown from playing at consistent level

By JOSEPH WHITE
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It seemed appropriate that John Thompson III was fiddling with a stop-watch as he stood in the lobby of Georgetown's on-campus gym, speaking about a Hoyas team that has ventured far off-script. Time is running out in a season in which "start," "stop" and "reset" became more than just buttons to press during a practice drill.

"Right in the middle of the season, you almost have to reinvent yourself," Thompson said Wednesday. "We've had to do it, and we're still in a position where we can play our way into the [NCAA] tournament. But we've done things much differently now than we were at the start of the year."

If the new Big East hasn't exactly caught college basketball by storm, Georgetown can be blamed for a failure to supply at least part of the thunder and lightning. Picked to finish second in the preseason coaches' poll, the Hoyas (16-11, 7-8) have been so inconsistent that, if the regular season ended today, they would be one of the four bottom-rung teams forced to play an extra game in the conference tournament.

Creighton and Villanova, both nationally ranked in the top 10, are the class of the reconfigured

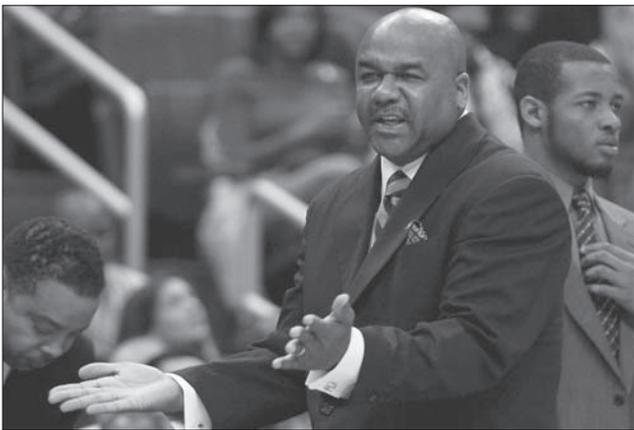
conference, while Georgetown is one of five teams floating precariously around the NCAA tournament bubble. One of Thompson's primary goals this season was to end a string of early round NCAA exits — missing the tournament altogether wasn't supposed to be the solution.

But 6-foot-10, 350-pound UCLA transfer Joshua Smith, a major cog in Thompson's plans, played only 13 games before he was ruled out for the season for academic reasons. Junior forward Greg Whittington, who had academic problems last season and then knee surgery, never suited up at all. Jabril Trawick missed five games with a broken jaw.

The result is that Thompson is trying to figure out his team in February and into March, instead of in November. He has a group who can lose a big lead as fast as it can build one, and vice versa. Simply put: There have been too many times when guards Markel Starks and D'Vauntes Smith-Rivera carry a disproportionate share of the load, leading to nights like a 22-point loss at St. John's and a 15-point loss at Seton Hall.

"We can't win with just those two," Thompson said.

Complicating matters has been a new schedule that was put together under less than ideal circumstances as the conference rushed to relaunch itself. The



CHUCK MYERS/MCT

Georgetown coach John Thompson III questions a referee's call in a game last month. Thompson is trying to figure out how to get the Hoyas to play consistently as the league and NCAA tournaments near.

'We're still in a position where we can play our way into the [NCAA] tournament. But we're doing things much differently now than we were at the start of the year.'

John Thompson III
Georgetown coach

Hoyas routinely play two games in three days.

"We've had more one-day prep games than anyone in the league," Thompson said. "I think the scheduling aspect will be better [next season]. I think there's a lot of inequities with how the schedule was put together this year."

And, while the Big East's trademark physical style of play still

exists, the league has a different vibe.

"You definitely miss the teams like Louisville, Syracuse, UConn," Trawick said. "But at the same time I think the Big East is the still the Big East. It's still a good conference. You've got great teams, great coaches. You can see — we lost some games we didn't think we were going to lose.

You can never take the Big East lightly, especially with the team we've got right now."

The Hoyas boarded their bus in the parking lot to their road trip to Milwaukee for Thursday's game against Marquette. The Golden Eagles beat the Hoyas in overtime in a messy game last month, an outcome so disheartening that Thompson afterward declared his team in a "funk" and joked that his players would have to keep his spirits up, instead of the other way around.

"It was definitely a point where we were a little frustrated," Smith-Rivera said. "That was a game we feel like we should've won, or could've won. It was definitely a tough loss, so this game is definitely big for us."

Obit: Gonzaga's success, NCAA tournament upsets both helped bury the 'mid-major' designation

FROM BACK PAGE

"For a game between two mid-majors, or whatever you'd call us, it had anything you could ask for."

It was a throwaway comment, but one that took hold, becoming part of the college basketball lexicon as the NCAA tournament exploded in the 1980s into a high-profile event. Suddenly, any program with a small budget or little name recognition was saddled with the description of "mid-major," back then an endearing term for the scrappy underdogs.

"March Madness is not made on the Kentucky and Dukies and North Carolinas," offered Southern Illinois coach Barry Hinson. "March Madness is made by VCU, Butler and Wichita State."

Yet it was the madness of March that started to bury the term mid-major.

Perhaps no program has been as hard on its health as Gonzaga, which made the Elite Eight in 1999 and has been to the NCAA tournament every year since, earning a No. 1 seed last season.

All that success has changed the way the program is viewed. The Bulldogs are invited to prestigious tournaments such as the Maui Invitational, and are scheduling home-and-home series — often in NBA-style arenas that seat bigger crowds — against the likes of Kansas State.



AP

George Mason made a memorable run to the Final Four in 2006.

They're not the only ones to shrug off the mid-major label.

George Mason didn't look anything but major in reaching the Final Four in 2006. Neither did Butler when it made back-to-back national championships a few years ago, beating another so-called mid-major in VCU in a riveting 2011 national

semifinal.

"I think that people that know really our league, and not just us, but other teams in our league, they know we play a major college schedule, in non-conference for sure," San Diego State coach Steve Fisher said. "And we not only play them, but we have beaten enough of them."

That's why every March, the term mid-major became more difficult to apply.

That continued with the latest round of conference realignment. When Creighton left the Missouri Valley for the Big East, did the Bluejays suddenly become major? And when entirely new conferences such as the American Athletic combined schools from each side of the debate, did it become a major conference or a mid-major one?

"I do think it's interesting that Creighton was one of the top teams with us the last couple years in this league," said Marshall, whose Shockers already have wrapped up the Missouri Valley title. "Now they go to the Big East, considered an elite league, and they're dominating the league, and us with them gone are having to justify our (30-0) record. That's an interesting quandary."

For its part, the NCAA insists that it never labels teams as majors or mid-majors, but it sure becomes a point of discussion — or dissension — every time Selection Sunday rolls around.

"We don't get into conference details," said Wake Forest athletic director Ron Wellman, the chairman of the Division I men's basketball committee. "We pay no attention to what a team's label publicly might be, whether it's mid-major, major. That is not a factor that we look at."

Now, it may not be a factor looked at by anybody.

The Shockers are receiving first-place votes, and Saint Louis remained No. 10 in this week's Top 25. San Diego State rose to No. 6 before a recent loss, and schools such as Southern Methodist and New Mexico — schools formerly known as mid-majors — are also appearing in the polls.

Thus, the death of the term mid-major appears to be at hand.

It is survived by other more meaningful ways to compare teams, such as RPI, one of the metrics used by the NCAA selection committee. It was preceded in death by the peach basket, short-shorts and other basketball novelties that ultimately outgrew their relevancy.

"You mention Wichita State and San Diego State," Indiana State coach Greg Lansing said. "Those two teams, as far as I'm concerned, are high majors. That's how they should be viewed."

AP Sports Writer Bernie Wilson in San Diego contributed to this report.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL



GENRY BROOME/AP

North Carolina's Marcus Paige, right, drives to the basket for the game-winning shot in overtime against North Carolina State's T.J. Warren during Wednesday's game in Raleigh, N.C.

Paige's last-second shot lifts Heels over Wolfpack

By AARON BEARD
The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Back and forth Marcus Paige and T.J. Warren went, knocking down shots and piling up points to turn the latest meeting between rivals North Carolina and North Carolina State into a can-you-top-this show.

In the end, Paige had the biggest shot to keep the 19th-ranked Tar Heels rolling through February.

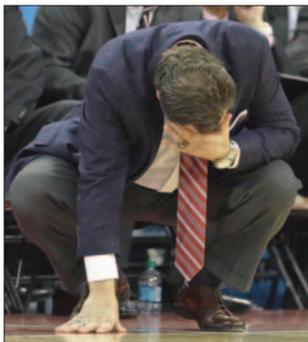
Paige hit a driving basket with 0.9 seconds left in overtime to cap his career night and help the Tar Heels beat Warren's Wolfpack 85-84 on Wednesday night.

Paige finished with 35 points — 31 after halftime — and seven three-pointers for the Tar Heels (21-7, 11-4 Atlantic Coast Conference), who won their 10th straight. UNC needed every bit of that production to outlast the Wolfpack (17-11, 7-8) and Warren, the league's leading scorer who finished with a career-high 36 points.

"It was quite a scoring exhibition by both of us," Paige said. "It would be a knock to say that my teammates weren't giving it their all, but at the same time, two great shot-makers were making a lot of shots."

The Tar Heels were down 11 points in the first half and by six with less than 2 minutes left in overtime, but clawed back to win in a classic finish between nearby rivals that featured seven lead changes and seven ties after halftime.

Paige finished 11-for-21 from the field overall and 7-for-12 from three-point range in 41 minutes. It marked the 12th time this season Paige has scored in double figures after halftime after scoring four or fewer points in the first half.



GENRY BROOME/AP

North Carolina State coach Mark Gottfried reacts during the second half.

It was the most points by a UNC player since Harrison Barnes scored 40 in the 2011 ACC tournament semifinals against Clemson. It also marked the first time a UNC player hit seven threes since Will Graves did it in the 2010 NIT final against Dayton.

Warren finished 13-for-25 from the field and scored 26 points after halftime.

Roundup

Arizona gets even by rolling over Cal

The Associated Press

TUCSON, Ariz. — Nick Johnson scored 22 points, Kaleb Tarczewski added 16 and No. 3 Arizona turned its rematch with California into an 87-59 rout Wednesday night.

Cal won the first meeting 60-58 on a last-second jumper by Justin Cobbs that sent the students pouring out the court.

Arizona (26-2, 13-2 Pac-12) ran away from the Bears early in the rematch, using a big, first-half run and good shooting (50 percent) all game to prevent the season sweep.

T.J. McConnell had 13 points and six assists, and Rondae Hollis-Jefferson provided a lift off the bench with 12 points and 10 rebounds. Johnson also had seven rebounds and five assists after struggling the first game against the Bears.

Cobbs had 12 points for Cal (18-10, 9-6), which lost for the 17th time in 19 games at McKale Center.

No. 8 Villanova 67, Butler 48: Darrun Hilliard and James Bell scored points each to lead the host Wildcats.

Villanova (25-3, 13-2 Big East) survived one of its worst 20-minute of the season to win for the ninth time in 10 games.

The Wildcats needed almost the first 10 minutes of the game to score 10 points, missed eight of their first nine three-point attempts, and didn't have a player reach double digits in scoring until midway through the second half.

No. 12 Virginia 65, Miami 40: London Perrantes scored a career-high 15 points and the host Cavaliers opened the second half with a 16-5 run on the way to their 12th consecutive win.

Perrantes hit all four of his three-point attempts and Malcolm Brogdon also scored 15 points for Virginia (24-5, 15-1 Atlantic Coast Conference). The victory was Virginia's school-record 17th straight at home in conference play and assured it of one of the top two seeds in next month's conference tournament.

No. 15 Iowa State 83, West Virginia 66: Georges Niang scored 24 points and DeAndre Kane had 17 and 11 rebounds as the host Cyclones got their seventh win in eight games.

Naz Long had 15 points on five three-pointers for Iowa State (22-5, 10-5 Big 12), which has recorded three straight 10-win seasons in league play for the first time.

Iowa State rolled despite playing nearly the entire second half without star Melvin Ejim, who sat because of foul trouble.

16 Michigan 77, Purdue 76 (OT): Glenn Robinson III got a late bank shot to roll in as time expired in overtime for the visiting Wolverines.

Warren capped a remarkable rally. Michigan (20-7, 12-3 Big

Ten) trailed by as many as 19 points in the first half, 13 at halftime and never led until the opening basket of overtime.

Robinson finished with 17 points while Nik Stauskas had 15.

No. 24 Texas 74, Baylor 69: Cameron Ridley had 20 points and 10 rebounds and made a big defensive play with a block in the final minute as the host Longhorns held on.

Jawan Felix scored 21 points on seven three-pointers for Texas, which led by 18 points in the first half but saw Baylor pull within one late.

Isaiah Taylor scored 13 points for the Longhorns (21-7, 10-5 Big 12), including a twisting left-handed layup that put Texas ahead 72-69.

Service academies

Boston University 71, Army 70: John Papale came off the bench to score 19 points as the visiting Terriers narrowly edged the Black Knights.

Maurice Watson, Jr. had 16 points and Travis Robinson added 11 for Boston (21-9, 14-3 Patriot). Army led 33-23 at the break but Boston came back strong midway through the second with a 13-4 run sparked by a Papale three-pointer at 10:41 to lead 58-53 with 7:30 to play.

The Black Knights tied it up at the 2-minute mark, 66-66, with the help of back-to-back buckets by Kyle Wilson.

The Terriers responded with Papale and Watson combining for 4-for-4 from the line to put BU back up 71-68.

In the final seconds, Army's Dylan Cox sank a layup to come within one but did not draw a foul, ending the Black Knights' chances.

Army (13-15, 9-8) was led by Kevin Ferguson with 20 points and 10 rebounds.

American U. 64, Navy 55: John Schoof and Darius Gardner scored 15 points each, leading the visiting Eagles past the Midshipmen and securing the second seed in next week's Patriot League tournament.

American (17-11, 13-4) knocked down 10 of 24 three-pointers as it wrested the lead from Navy (9-19, 4-13) in the second half of a close contest that saw four ties and eight lead changes.

The Eagles compiled 15 assists, nearly twice Navy's eight, and Gardner and Schoof had four each. With American leading 27-26 at the break, Gardner drained a three-pointer to open the second half.

But Navy put together a 7-0 run to lead 35-33 on a jumper by Brandon Venturini, who led Navy with 18 points and five assists. Worth Smith added 11 points and nine rebounds.

Two free throws by Schoof with 8:41 remaining boosted American ahead for keeps, 43-42.

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COLLEGE BASKETBALL

OBITUARIES

'Mid-major,' 37

BY DAVE SKRETTA
The Associated Press

RIP, "mid-major." It was a good run. The term that for years has derisively referred to programs residing somewhere outside the major conferences of college basketball has died. It was 37 years old.

Mid-major had been on life support for nearly a decade as schools such as George Mason, VCU, Butler and Wichita State crashed the Final Four. What had previously been the bastion of blue bloods such as North Carolina, Kentucky and Duke was thrown open to schools with tiny enrollments and modest fan bases, yet enough talent to shake the college basketball establishment.

Its last breath might have come in a ragged gasp as the Shockers rose to No. 2 in the nation this week and Saint Louis elbowed Michigan State and others out of the top 10.

Several coaches had similar reactions: "It's about time," Wichita State's Gregg Marshall said.

"We travel in private planes. We sell out every game. We treat our program the same as a high major in every way," Marshall said. "Besides, who decides what a mid-major is, anyway?"

The term was born in 1977, when Jack Kvacz — then the coach of Catholic University — was asked about a nip-and-tuck game against Howard University, and he summarized it thusly:

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STEPHEN HAAS/AP

Although the term "mid-major" had been in poor health for many years, the ascension of the Missouri Valley Conference's Wichita State to No. 2 in the country likely led to the derogatory label's passing.

