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Inside

MLB PREVIEW

Baseball in the midst of transformation as season gets underway

Back page



MILITARY

House bill would give federal employees a 3.3 percent raise

Page 4



MILITARY

Nuclear commanders fired in Air Force cheating scandal

Page 2

WORLD

Are Internet rumors of mandatory N. Korean haircuts a baldfaced lie?

Page 19



Congress puts brakes on military pay reform

Lawmakers urge Pentagon to wait for study results before making changes to salary, benefits

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Lawmakers and advocacy groups said this week that Defense Department requests for changing military compensation are premature, suggesting that any congressional action along those lines

might be postponed for years.

To slow the growth in personnel costs in order to spend more money on combat readiness, the DOD proposed the following when it submitted its fiscal 2015 budget request earlier this month:

- Limit pay raises for active-duty servicemembers.

- Reduce the basic housing allowance subsidy.

- Reduce commissary subsidies.

- Manage Tricare costs by increasing the cost-sharing burden for users.

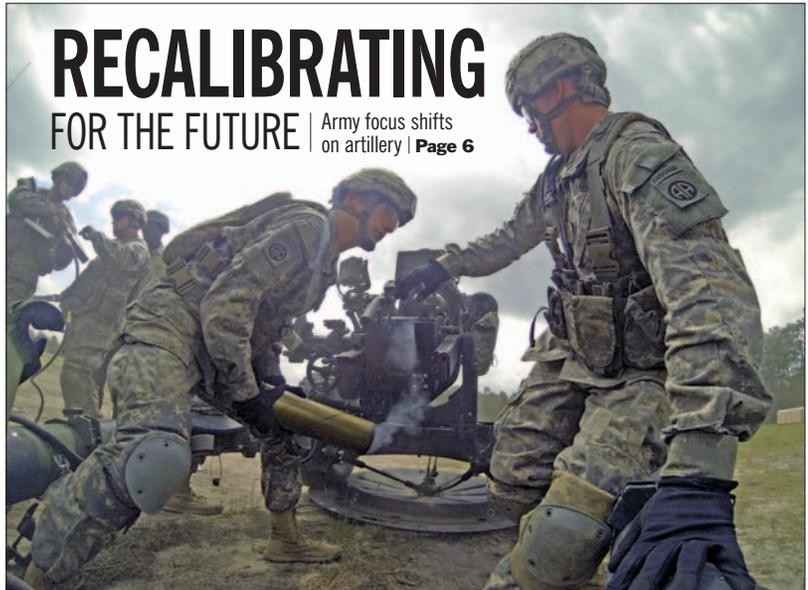
But members of Congress on both sides of the aisle said the Pentagon should wait until

the congressionally mandated Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission, which is doing its own comprehensive review of military pay and benefits, presents its findings and recommendations to Congress before moving forward with its own plans.

SEE REFORM ON PAGE 4

RECALIBRATING

FOR THE FUTURE | Army focus shifts on artillery | Page 6



Courtesy of the U.S. Army

U.S. Army artillerymen with 3rd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, clear the new all-digital M119A3 105 mm lightweight howitzer at Fort Bragg, N.C., in April 2013. U.S. Army field artillery needs to return to more traditional, force-on-force conflicts, supplemented by modern, mobile technology, a U.S. general said.

Army grooming regulations roll back wartime leniency

By MATT MILLHAM
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany—The Army is cracking down on tattoos, dental ornamentation and haircuts in a long-awaited update to uniform and appearance rules that could make it harder to enlist and advance up the ranks.

The new rules aren't yet public, but a 57-page document the Army posted online about the regulations

indicates the service is tightening standards that had been relaxed to allow more people to qualify for service at the heights of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Most notably, the new policy comes down hard on tattoos by redefining what "indecent" means, limiting the size and number of tattoos allowed and disallowing ink on the head, neck, wrists and hands.

SEE GROOMING ON PAGE 2

FEMALE UNAUTHORIZED HAIRSTYLES



Courtesy of the U.S. Army

A new 57-page document outlines many of the Army's latest grooming standards set to take effect Tuesday.

QUOTE

OF THE DAY

“The whole thing was over in 30 seconds. It was like being hit by a 747.”

— Robin Youngblood, who was among the first of 16 people to be rescued by helicopter after Saturday's mudslide in Washington.

See story on Page 8

TOP CLICKS

ON STRIPES.COM

The most popular stories on our website:

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2. Navy: Sailor in Norfolk base shooting died protecting colleague
3. House bill would give federal workers a 3.3 percent raise
4. Pentagon: Some US commissaries may close due to budget cutbacks
5. US to commit more forces to NATO efforts in Eastern Europe

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SOON



Music
Skrixlex

TODAY

IN STRIPES

- American Roundup 14
- Business 20
- Comics 21
- Crossword 21
- Faces 18
- Faith 16
- Opinion 22-23
- Sports 24-32
- Weather 20

MILITARY

Army getting fussier about appearance

By **MATT MILLHAM**
Stars and Stripes

The claims of sergeants major complaining about relaxed Army grooming and appearance standards are coming to an end.

A leaked document about upcoming changes

to the Army **ANALYSIS** Regulation 670-

1 — Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia — outlines rules that largely return the service to a more innocent time, when neck tattoos were no-gos and female soldiers' hair buns were no wider than their heads.

The official Army website has yet to publish the updated regula-

tion, which reportedly was signed into effect by Army Secretary John McHugh on March 6.

But the leaked 57-page document, titled “Uniform Policy Leaders Training,” is essentially a guide to how to fit in in a smaller, fussier Army, one that has time to nitpick about hair and mustaches and teetobags and mouth tattoos now that the war's almost over.

A lot of the stuff makes total sense. For instance, who wouldn't expect a female soldier's wig to look natural? And of course the camouflage pattern on your backpack has to match the camouflage pattern of your uniform — this isn't Nam.

But some of the new rules, well, let's just say the Army's going above and beyond.

The training document dedicates four full pages to female hair-don'ts, including some abominations so absurd that it's hard to believe the Army had to bring them up at all. One woman's hair looks like a giant moth at rest, for example. But as with any rule that seems dumb, it's probably there because somebody did it.

The document says nothing about the venerated “Rangerhawk,” but its flat-top cousin, the “horseshoe,” gets gunned down in broad daylight along with the “landing strip” — better known

to humans as the Mohawk.

If those rules seem finicky, they're pretty much no biggy compared with the obsessive inter-est the Army's taking in ink.

Here, the Army takes aim at two trends that, according to extensive Internet research, are popular only among the kinds of folks who generally can't score high enough on the ASVAB to get into the military: mouth and eye-lid tats. One would think it would be enough to just say, “Don't get tattoos on your face.” Nope. The Army goes a smidge further, banning tattoos INSIDE THE MOUTH AND EYELIDS.

Because, yup, that's a thing.

Grooming: New rules ban all kinds of dental ornamentation

FROM FRONT PAGE

The training program does not specify how the decency standard has been redefined.

Soldiers who already have tattoos in off-limits areas will be allowed to stay in the service, but people who want to join won't be allowed in if they have ink on their heads, faces, necks or wrists, or if they have tattoos with content that violates the Army's new, stricter standards. Enlisted soldiers with too much ink in vis-

ible areas won't be allowed to become an officer.

To make sure everybody's following the rules, commanders will have to document all tattoos above the neckline and below the elbows or knees and file that information — including photos — in their soldiers' official records. After that, commanders will have to perform annual checks for new tattoos.

Those found to have violated the rules “must be processed in accordance” with the new regula-

tion, according to the document. It's not clear what that processing entails, but it notes that “most of the appearance and grooming chapter are punitive.”

That goes for restrictions on grooming, fingernails and jewelry, too.

For men, grooming standards remain largely unchanged, save for the addition of three off-limits hairstyles: the Mohawk, the horseshoe and the teardrop.

Hair standards for women are laid out in more explicit terms

that effectively reduce style options. Ponytails, though, are now allowed during physical training. Also specific to women: Colored nail polish is now off-limits.

All new in the revision are rules that ban all manner of dental ornamentation, from gold caps to jewels to unnatural shaping. The rules also prohibit all kinds of willful self-mutilation, such as tongue bifurcation and ear gauging.

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Correction

The March 27 opinion page column by Katie Miller, “Female GIs have worked hard to be treated as equals,” contained incorrect information and lacked a source for presented data.

It should have read: A 2010 study from the Williams Institute found that although, from 1997 to 2009, women constituted between 14 percent and 15 percent of military personnel, they were more than twice that proportion — 30 percent — among those discharged under DADT during that same time period.

By **ROBERT BURNS**
The Associated Press

Commanders fired in AF cheating flap

cheating happened.

In a bid to correct root causes of the missile corps' failings — including low morale and weak management — the Air Force also announced a series of new or expanded programs to improve leadership development, to modernize the three ICBM bases and to reinforce “core values” including integrity.

Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James, the service's top civilian official, had promised to hold officers at Malmstrom accountable once the cheating investigation was completed and the scope of the scandal was clear. None of the nine fired commanders was directly involved in the cheating,

WASHINGTON — The Air Force fired nine mid-level nuclear commanders Thursday and will discipline dozens of junior officers at a nuclear missile base in response to an exam-cheating scandal that spanned a far longer period than originally reported.

Air Force officials called the moves unprecedented in the history of the intercontinental ballistic missile force, which has been rocked by a string of security lapses during the past year, including a failed safety and security inspection last summer at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont., where the

but each was determined to have failed in his or her leadership responsibilities.

Investigators determined that the cheating, which officials originally said happened in August or September last year, began as early as November 2011 and continued until November 2013, according to a defense official who spoke on condition of anonymity in order to reveal details before James' announcement. It involved unauthorized passing of answers to exams designed to test missile launch officers' proficiency in handling “emergency war orders,” which are messages involving the targeting and launching of missiles.



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MILITARY

Military officials plead for OCO funding

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military will need war funding for years to come, despite the fact that most troops will be out of Afghanistan by the end of this year, service officials told lawmakers Thursday.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, the Pentagon has received \$1.5 trillion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as other special operational activities like disaster relief and evacuation efforts. Those overseas contingency operations, or OCO, funds come on top of the DOD base budgets, which are supposed to be used to fund procurement, training, maintenance, and other initiatives that the Pentagon undertakes in peacetime.

The enacted base budget for fiscal 2014 was \$496 billion, and DOD received \$85 billion for OCO.

But the military has also been using OCO to train troops, refurbish and modernize its equipment, maintain bases and force presence outside of Afghanistan, and do other activities not directly related to the war effort. Pentagon leaders want that extra money to continue flowing in an era when Congress has put caps

on the base budget.

A final OCO request has not yet been made for fiscal 2015, but in budget documents, the DOD listed \$79 billion as a "placeholder" figure.

"Any transition from OCO to base at the current base topline or, worse, under sequester laws, would drive all of our bases down, and our limited budget will pressurize our already difficult decisions as we work to balance our force structure, modernization and readiness," Vice Adm. Joseph Mulloy, deputy chief of naval operations for integration of capabilities and resources, told members of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness on Thursday. "Without additional supplemental funding, I'm concerned that all three of these areas will suffer."

Representatives of the other three services echoed those concerns.

Lt. Gen. James Huggins, Army deputy chief of staff for operations, said his service will need OCO funds for another two to three years to reset the force and prepare for future missions.

Lt. Gen. Glenn Walters, the Marine Corps' deputy commandant for programs and resources, told the subcommittee that the

‘Until we are able to [move those funds to the base budget], we have a responsibility to provide the necessary OCO resources to allow our troops to do the job we asked them to do.’

Rep. Rob Wittman, R-Va.

chairman, House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness

Marines will need OCO money for "several years."

Lt. Gen. Burton Field, Air Force deputy chief of staff for operations, plans and requirements, said air bases in the Middle East which are funded through OCO need to continue to be funded regardless of the situation in Afghanistan due to ongoing threats in the region.

All four warned that programs in the base budget will also suffer if they don't have OCO money for fiscal 2015 by the beginning of October because they will have to take money out of the base budget to pay for operations in Afghanistan through the end of the year.

Some analysts believe DOD leaders and lawmakers use some OCO funds as a budget gimmick to get around baseline budget

limits and fund things that should be in the base budget.

"What we've seen is a migration of things that used to be funded in the base budget to be funded in the OCO budget request," Todd Harrison, a military budget expert at the independent Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, said during a conference call earlier this month. "... Why would folks in DOD and Congress be doing this? Well, the OCO budget is not subject to the budget caps under the Budget Control Act."

"So this is an uncapped funding stream that exists for DOD, and both the administration and Congress have been more than willing to use it to soften the impact of sequestration," he said. "I think that this is a pretty dan-

gerous situation for DOD to be in with being so heavily dependent on the OCO funding ... because that funding stream could disappear quickly?"

Rep. Rob Wittman, R-Va., the chairman of the subcommittee, said he wants OCO funding to continue in the years ahead.

"Some would characterize OCO as unnecessary after 2014," Wittman said. "However, the fact of the matter is that the rapidly broadening scope of challenges now facing our military has led the department to become increasingly dependent on OCO to support enduring activities — activities beyond Afghanistan's borders that must continue after combat operations have ended.

"OCO funds a multitude of enduring high-priority activities like building partner capacity, providing humanitarian assistance, conducting training exercises and performing intelligence functions," he said.

"Until we are able to [move those funds to the base budget], we have a responsibility to provide the necessary OCO resources to allow our troops to do the job we have asked them to do."

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MILITARY

Pay increase for federal workers?

House Democrats are pitching a 3.3 percent increase in 2015

By **PATRICK DICKSON**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A group of House Democrats has introduced a bill that would give federal workers a 3.3 percent pay raise in 2015, far more than President Barack Obama has requested.

Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-Va., introduced the bill, which was co-sponsored by several Democrats.

The Federal Adjustment of Income Rates Act would provide the pay increase to all federal employees in calendar year 2015.

"Federal workers deserve to be compensated for the vital role they play in the lives of millions of Americans," one co-sponsor, Rep. Jim Moran, D-Va., said in a statement. "These are the men and women finding lifesaving cures at NIH, catching criminals, sup-

porting our troops and protecting the environment.

"They have bills to pay and families to support. After three years of pay freezes and too many furloughs, they've earned this modest, decent raise."

The bill does not cover military members.

Federal workers received a 1 percent pay raise in January, and the president has requested a 1 percent raise for 2015.

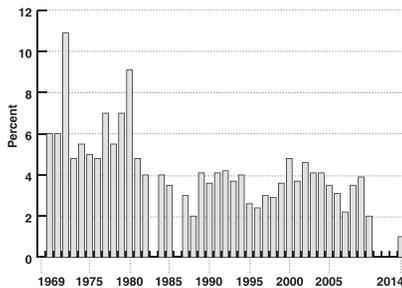
Obama froze federal pay rates for two years starting in 2011, and Congress extended the hold through 2013, The Washington Post noted.

Some federal workers received performance awards and higher compensation through promotions during that time.

"Federal employees have seen their standard of living deteriorate

History of federal raises

A group of House Democrats has introduced a bill to give federal workers a 3.3 percent raise in 2015 after a few years of stagnant wages. This chart shows every federal raise since 1969.



SOURCES: Congressional Research Service; Cornell University

Stars and Stripes

in recent years due to a three-year pay freeze, unpaid furloughs and higher retirement contributions for newer workers," said J. David Cox Sr., president of the American Federation of Government Employees, the largest union organization for federal workers.

"A 3.3 percent pay raise would help federal employees recoup some of that lost income and ensure the government is able to re-

cruit and retain the high-caliber workers that taxpayers expect."

The bill goes to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, of which Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., is the ranking member, and another co-sponsor of the bill.

No date has been set for when it will be taken up.

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Navy seeks motive in Norfolk shooting

By **BROCK VERGAKIS**
The Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. — Autopsies have been performed on a sailor and a civilian who died in a shootout aboard a guided-missile destroyer docked at a Virginia Navy base, an official said Thursday.

The autopsies were conducted at a naval medical center in Portsmouth, Va., on Tuesday by a doctor from Dover Air Force Base, Del., where the office of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner is based, official spokesman Paul Stone said.

The shooting deaths occurred Monday night at Naval Station Norfolk when the USS Mahan was docked pier-side.

The Navy has said Petty Officer 2nd Class Mark Mayo, 24, a master-at-arms from Hagerstown, Md., was killed by a civilian truck driver who had disarmed the USS Mahan's petty officer of the watch and used her weapon to fire the fatal shots.

Mayo was working security on the base and stepped between the civilian and the disarmed sailor to save her life, according to the Navy.

The Navy has not released the name of the civilian, who was killed by Navy security. On Thursday, the Navy Times identified him as Jeffrey Tyrone Savage, quoting sources familiar with the Navy's investigation.

Savage, 35, of Portsmouth, Va., had been in and out of jail, according to court records cited by the Navy Times.

Navy officials have said there's no indication the attack was planned or had any link to terrorism. Investigators have also said there's no indication the civilian had a previous relationship with the ship or anyone on it.

Officials are still searching for answers about why the civilian drove onto base using a transportation credential for access, walked onto a pier and up a ramp toward the ship before being confronted by security. A hospital ship was docked at the same pier.

The Navy has said the civilian shouldn't have been on the installation — the world's largest — the night of the shooting, and investigators are reviewing why he was allowed.

Autopsy results will include a toxicology report that would indicate whether there were any drugs or alcohol involved, Stone said.



Mayo

Reform: Changes due to Congress by February 2015

FROM FRONT PAGE

"DOD is moving down a path of making changes prior to the information that is supposed to be collected by this commission," Rep. Joe Heck, R-Nev., said during a House Armed Services subcommittee hearing Tuesday.

"Why aren't we waiting? Why aren't we waiting for this group that's going out and holding stakeholders meetings that's supposed to come back with an objective view of how we need to modernize compensation and retirement before we start nickel-and-diming all these programs?"

"The proposal before us includes numerous reductions in pay and benefits, about which many — including myself — have serious concerns," Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., said while chairing a Senate Armed Forces subcommittee hearing Wednesday. "Each of these reductions is significant in and of itself, but I am extremely concerned about the cumulative effect on all of these cuts, especially on the junior members of the force and their families. These benefit programs are being made, I would note, while the [MCRMC] has yet to finish its work."

The MCRMC's recommendations aren't due to Congress until February 2015, which means any changes stemming from them probably wouldn't go into effect until fiscal 2017 at the earliest. The Pentagon said compensation changes are needed much sooner than that to preserve combat capabilities in an era where fis-

“If it's just a number it's very easy to cut. [But] if it's families and people and real lives, it is less easy to cut.”

Sen. **Kirsten Gillibrand**
D-N.Y.

cal constraints are necessitating trade-offs.

"We canceled seven combat training rounds this year," Lt. Gen. Howard Bromberg, the Army deputy chief of staff for personnel, told the House subcommittee. It's really degrading the near-term readiness... So that friction that we're creating, it takes us so long to build that back.

"We've got to make these nearer-term savings in the next couple of years," Bromberg said. "Otherwise, we're going to dig ourselves into a hole that we're just not going to be able to get out of well past [2020], and then if full sequestration goes into effect, it we're going to dig deeper and deeper."

"For the Marine Corps ... reset is significant, based on our many years at war," Sheryl Murray, Marine Corps assistant deputy commander for manpower and reserve affairs, told House lawmakers. "Our equipment reset is critical. Our commandant recognized we can't wait for a few more years. We must support these initiatives that have gone forward."

If Congress rejects the DOD's proposals, the military will have

to cut training and weapons buys by \$2.1 billion next year and \$31 billion over the next five years to stay under the defense budget caps imposed by Congress, according to Pentagon Comptroller Robert Hale, who testified before the Senate subcommittee Wednesday.

Acting Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Jessica Wright told lawmakers that the DOD has finished its examination of the issues and doesn't need to wait on the MCRMC to put forth its recommendations.

"We believe that we have the sufficient analysis and rigor to make the decisions on Tricare, BAH [and] commissaries," she said at the Tuesday hearing.

The DOD plans to wait for the MCRMC to finish its work before making any decisions about changing the retirement system, according to officials.

Congress has to approve any changes to pay and benefits that the DOD or the MCRMC recommended before they go into effect.

Representatives of military advocacy groups who testified in front of the Senate subcommittee Wednesday blasted the

DOD's plans, saying they would hurt recruitment and retention and place an unfair financial burden on troops and their families. They said the MCRMC should be allowed to finish its work before any compensation reform steps are taken.

"The administration's proposals to cut pay increases, reduce housing allowance, eliminate commissary savings and increase health care costs all at the same time pose significant risk to the financial well-being of military families," Kathleen Moakler, government relations director for the National Military Family Association, told senators. "We can't stress [enough] how important it is for the commission to finish their work [because] they are really doing due diligence to try to look at the entire compensation picture. [What] military families ... didn't expect was the volley of hits to their pocketbook that were the budget proposals."

Gillibrand urged military advocacy groups to keep opposing the Pentagon's current proposals.

"This is going to be a very long debate, and so I urge constant advocacy in every state because I think people have to see the face and understand the family impacts of these types of decisions," she told the panel members. "If it's just a number it's very easy to cut. If it's families and people and real lives, it is less easy to cut."

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MILITARY

US, Japan finalize land turnover

Dates set to enact 2004 agreement; Ikego housing units to be cut

By **ERIK SLAVIN**
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — U.S. Forces Japan will return two properties to Japan and trim the number of new housing units planned for the Navy's Ikego housing area, Japanese and U.S. military officials said Wednesday.

The turnover of the Fukuya and Kamiseya communications sites — which comprise nearly 800 acres of land — was first agreed upon in 2004.

The 2004 agreement also included the return of the Navy's Negishi housing area and represented the largest planned return of mainland Japanese property since the 1970s. However, the agreement stalled, in

part because of failed municipal lawsuits that attempted to block new housing construction at Ikego, which was also part of the 2004 agreement.

This week, the two governments announced that Fukuya would be turned over by June 30, while the Kamiseya site will be handed over by June 2016.

Both sites, located in Kanagawa prefecture, were used only for storage and training. Naval Air Facility Atsugi spokesman Greg Kuntz said Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the U.S. now plans to build 171 housing units — down from 385 — on its property at Ikego, a defense ministry spokesman said.

A Japanese Ministry of Defense spokes-

man told Stars and Stripes that the U.S. side proposed the reduction to 171 units out of concerns that more units would cause too much congestion at Ikego, which is about 4 miles from Yokosuka Naval Base.

The two governments did not announce a handover date for Negishi, a property in Yokohama where hundreds of Navy personnel live.

However, Navy officials have been placing fewer families assigned to Yokosuka in the area. The area's only school, Byrd Elementary, will close at the end of the current school year.

Stars and Stripes reporters Seth Robson and Hana Kusumoto contributed to this report.
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By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

DOD, Coast Guard civilians eligible for expedited US airport screening

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Civilian Defense Department and Coast Guard employees will soon be eligible for the same expedited screening that servicemembers receive at 115 U.S. airports.

Beginning April 15, some 800,000 DOD and Coast Guard civilians will be able to "opt in" to the Transportation Security Administration's pre-check expedited screening program, according to an American Forces Press Service news release. All military and Coast Guard personnel, including those in the reserves and the National Guard, already are eligible for the program, which began in March 2012.

Participating members can keep shoes, light outerwear and belts on during preflight screening, and can keep laptops inside their cases. They also may have a compliant liquids and gels bag in a carry-on bag in select participating lanes, officials said.

To participate in the program, DOD and Coast Guard civilian employees must first opt in online at dmcd.osd.mil/milconnect, officials said.

Military personnel and DOD and Coast Guard civilian employees who want expedited screening must also provide their DOD identification number — the 10-digit number on the back of their common access card — when making travel reservations, officials said.

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Home Depot charity helps fix, build 10,000 homes for vets

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Nonprofit organizations backed by the Home Depot Foundation have built or repaired more than 10,000 homes for veterans as part of its grant program.

The foundation, supported by contributions from the Atlanta company and its vendors, has handed out more than \$65 million since 2011 to organizations that renovate or build houses for veterans across the U.S.

The Home Depot Foundation has pledged to provide \$80 million in grants by spring 2015. President Kelly Caffarelli expects the foundation to continue working on housing issues after that, especially as military cuts take effect and more vets look for homes.

"As long as there are veterans that need help with their housing, I think we'll continue trying to help," Caffarelli said.

The increasingly expensive housing mar-

ket could pose problems for people leaving the military in the next few years, especially if they are also looking for jobs, said Christopher Ptomey, the director of federal relations for Habitat for Humanity.

"With the economy still struggling and housing getting to expensive levels again, we need to have a serious policy discussion to ensure we're fulfilling our commitment to (veterans)," he said.

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MILITARY

General: Artillery training still highly valued

By ADAM L. MATHIS
Stars and Stripes

LONDON — U.S. Army field artillery is preparing for future wars by returning to Cold War-era tactics as supplemented by modern, mobile technology, a U.S. general said.

Though counterinsurgency has been at the center of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the recent past might not be the best guide to new threats, participants at the Future Artillery conference in London, hosted by Defense IQ, said this week.

Maj. Gen. Mark McDonald, commander of the Fires Center of Excellence at Fort Sill, Okla., told Stars and Stripes on the margins of the conference that U.S. artillery has to regain the capability to fight in more traditional, force-on-force conflicts.

His vision of artillery training re-emphasizes 20th-century-style tactics but with 21st-century doctrine. Soldiers are trained less on training to fire guns manually, by doing calculations themselves, and would instead rely more on the digital tools.

"We've got most of the pieces in place to be able to train the digi-

tal system. What we have to do is get everybody really comfortable with it, train with it more often, so that's their go-to system," McDonald said.

McDonald's concerns about artillery preparedness were discussed at several years ago in a white paper subtitled "The Impending Crisis in Field Artillery's Ability to Provide Fire Support to Maneuver Commanders." The authors of the white paper urged the Army to resume training on larger-conflict skills and to do so soon "before we lose so much expertise that we have to reconstitute the branch from the ground up."

The authors noted that some artillery officers cited concerns of unpreparedness in commanding a battery of guns because they had spent so much time serving in nonartillery roles.

"They didn't sign up for motorized infantry, transition team membership, 'in lieu of' transportation units, detainee camp guards or any other of a number of hole-filler duty descriptions," the authors wrote. "They wanted to be artillery officers and ended up being anything but."

Maj. Aaron Bright, another



HANNAH FRENCHICK/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 377th Field Artillery Regiment, 17th Fires Brigade fire M777 howitzer rounds during a field training exercise at Yakima Training Center, Wash., in 2011. This week's Future Artillery conference in London discussed the future of artillery.

conference participant, is an example of that lack of experience.

Bright, who is a U.S. exchange officer at the Royal School of Artillery in the U.K., did three tours in Iraq, all of them in an infantry

role. He said U.S. artillery should train for more traditional conflicts because not every conflict will look like the recent ones.

Still, he thinks that recent wars have contributed to the artill-

ery's capabilities and that concerns about unpreparedness are overstated.

"During the 20th century, artillery was the biggest killer on the battlefield by far," he said. "Afghanistan and Iraq have been just one more steppingstone, one more addition to what we can do."

McDonald concurred, saying that artillery had gained "considerable experience" at providing support to a wide area but that now "our emphasis is going to go back toward combined-arms maneuver."

"Though he said there is a "training shortfall we have to overcome," he characterized U.S. artillery as being "in reasonable shape."

He said the U.S. is working on introducing a digital, hand-held device for forward observers that would instantly transmit targeting information. That device is a couple of years away.

When the transition to digital is complete, "it will provide a more effective use of our artillery," McDonald said.

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3rd Special Forces troops receive 8 Silver Stars, 28 Bronze Stars

By DREW BROOKS

The Fayetteville (N.C.) Observer

They risked their lives in Afghanistan to save their fellow soldiers, and now they'll be honored among their peers on Fort Bragg.

Soldiers of the 3rd Special Forces Group were to receive dozens of medals in an award ceremony Thursday at the North Carolina base.

Lt. Gen. Charles Cleveland, commanding general of U.S. Army Special Operations Command, will present eight Silver Stars, 28 Bronze Stars for valor, 36 Army Commendation Medals for valor and 27 Purple Hearts, according to officials.

The eight soldiers receiving Silver Stars are Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Brown, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jason W. Myers, Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan J. Feynew, Sgt. 1st Class David A. Blish, Warrant Officer Robert A. Hinsley, Staff Sgt. Nicholas C. Lavery, Staff Sgt. Robert B. Ashwell and Master Sgt. Charles P. Ritter.

Myers and Ritter also will receive Purple Heart medals for being injured in Afghanistan, officials said. Brown will also receive an Army Commendation Medal for valor and two Purple Hearts, and Lavery will also receive a Bronze Star for valor and three Purple Hearts.

The Silver Stars All recognize seven different actions spread from November 2011 to May 2013, according to award documents.

The soldiers risked their own safety to help injured Afghan civilians and stepped into enemy fire to better direct air support and communicate with superiors.

In one case, a soldier is being

honored for catching a grenade in his hands and throwing it away before jumping on an Afghan soldier to shield him from the blast.

In another, a soldier physically pushed another away from danger and then stepped in front of him to shield him from bullets.

The following are brief accounts of their actions, based on award citations and accompanying narratives:

■ Myers and Brown are being honored for actions during a rescue attempt near Bagram Air Field on Nov. 10, 2011, when insurgents assaulted the Chamkani District Center, seizing control of the complex, killing three members of the Afghan National Police and taking hostages.

Myers assembled a five-man force composed of two Green Berets and three Afghans to move into the district center. Inside, the team was met by insurgents with automatic weapons.

Myers rushed into a room and immediately killed an insurgent who was throwing grenades. He was wounded in the hands, arms, buttocks and legs in the process.

After being wounded, he entered the complex three times to fight barricaded suicide bombers. Once hostages were rescued, he led efforts to clear booby-trapped rooms.

Brown rushed to the complex through a nearby bazaar and then knelt in front of a door to enter the center. With insurgents firing from the second floor of the building, Brown led the efforts to clear adjoining rooms.

Entering one room, an insurgent immediately threw a grenade over Brown's shoulder. Brown shouted "grenade!" and

caught the explosive with his hands before hurling it to an unoccupied corner of the building. He then ran to grab an Afghan police officer, shielding him from the blast with his body.

Injured and in shock from the blast, Brown continued to assist in the clearing of the complex and rescue of the hostages.

■ Drew will be honored for actions during a combat operation near Bagram in April 2012.

He led an element of Afghan soldiers to the Upper Kamdesh village to talk with district leadership. Following the meeting, the forces came under attack, and Drew positioned himself in harm's way to better direct the response to the attack.

Drew "continuously placed himself in the kill zone to protect his partner force and local civilians," according to a narrative.

After an Afghan woman was shot in the chest, Drew rushed into incoming fire to administer first aid and give support until a helicopter could evacuate her.

Throughout the 15-hour attack, he repeatedly exposed himself to "swinging machine-gun and sniper fire" to protect civilians, Afghan soldiers and government officials.

■ Blish is being honored for actions during a combat mission in October 2012 in Wardak province, where he volunteered for multiple dangerous tactics, exposing himself to enemy fire to maintain communications and direct air support.

He then volunteered to move into a known enemy safe haven to assess the effectiveness of the air support, again coming under fire from insurgents.

Blish insisted on pushing forward, despite having no cover, and was able to recover enemy weapons and kill five more insurgents.

Returning to his team, Blish and his men were again ambushed, and Blish called in a medical evacuation to help a wounded team sergeant.

Hinsley led a 15-soldier element that was ambushed in a local bazaar. During the two-hour fight, he exposed himself to enemy fire to allow others the chance to reach cover. He also risked himself by crossing an open area to retrieve a grenade launcher and other weapons that proved vital to the soldiers' defense.

■ Lavery is being honored for actions in March 2013 in Wardak province. While on a joint patrol with Afghan Special Forces, Lavery and others were attacked by an Afghan National Police officer.

With roughly two dozen friendly fighters injured in the initial attack, Lavery was able to save one soldier by pushing him out of the way of enemy fire while stepping in front of him to take the brunt of the bullets.

Lavery was immediately wounded in his leg, with his femur shattered and femoral artery severed. Despite his wounds, Lavery continued to protect soldiers, yelling directions while covering other bullets.

■ Ashwell is being honored for

actions in April 2013 in Kunar province. Ashwell and other special operations troops and Afghan fighters were sent to rescue friendly forces surrounded in a compound by the Taliban.

Ashwell and another soldier took control of a nearby compound to establish a position from which to mount the rescue efforts. He then rushed through gunfire to rescue a fallen soldier and carry him back to safety.

■ Ritter is being honored for actions in May 2013 in Kapisa province. He was serving as a mentor to Afghan soldiers when they came under attack one morning from enemies within 55 yards of their position.

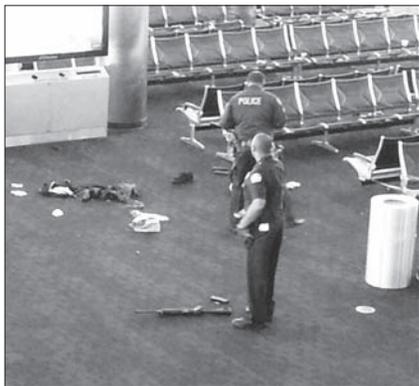
After several hours of fighting, Ritter led a small force of Afghan and U.S. soldiers to attempt to ambush the insurgents. They cut off and killed enemy fighters moving in for an attack.

With an Afghan commando wounded, Ritter disregarded his own safety to move down an alleyway to rescue the commando.

Ritter was wounded three times during the rescue, including a wound to his back, yet moved the commando to safety.

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NATION



Police stand near a weapon at Los Angeles International Airport after a gunman opened fire in the terminal, killing one person and wounding several others, Nov. 1.

TSA wants armed police at checkpoints after shooting

By TAMI ABDOLLAH
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Transportation Security Administration recommended Wednesday that armed law enforcement officers be posted at airport security checkpoints and ticket counters during peak hours after a review of last year's fatal shooting at Los Angeles International Airport.

The 25-page report to Congress obtained by The Associated Press makes 14 recommendations that do not carry a price tag and are somewhat dependent on local authorities who provide airport security.

While airport security has been beefed up since 9/11, the shooting exposed communication problems and gaps in police patrols that left an LAX terminal without an armed officer for nearly 3½ minutes as a gunman targeted TSA officers with a rifle Nov. 1.

The AP has reported that the two armed airport police officers assigned to Terminal 3 were on break that morning and hadn't notified dispatchers as required. Months earlier, LAX had changed staffing plans to have officers roam terminals instead of

staffing checkpoints such as the one the gunman approached.

TSA conducted the review of nearly 450 airports nationwide after Officer Gerardo Hernandez was killed in the agency's first line-of-duty death. Two officers and a passenger were wounded. Paul Ciancia, 24, a Pennsville, N.J., native, has pleaded not guilty to 11 federal charges, including murder of a federal officer.

The review found that most TSA officers are concerned for their safety and want better security.

Report recommendations include requiring TSA employees, who are unarmed, to train for an active shooter incident. It specifically discarded the notion of creating an armed unit of TSA officers.

TSA Administrator John Pistole has said he doesn't believe more guns at checkpoints are the solution, but the union representing 45,000 TSA officers said the recommendations strengthen their position to create an armed unit of TSA officers.

While the report is being presented to Congress, there is no specific action lawmakers must take.

Hyams, of the airport police. The investigation, which involved officers going undercover among baggage handlers, began after a string of reports of luggage thefts from terminals, runways and planes, police said.

"We believe that there has been a culture of being able to take property that wasn't theirs, and that's what we want to be able to put a stop to," Capt. Ray Maltez told KABC-TV.

Those arrested were primarily employees or ex-employees of contracting companies hired to handle luggage and do not work for the airport, Hyams said.

From The Associated Press

Secret Service agents also had trouble on Miami trip

Netherlands misadventures were on heels of car wreck

By CAROL D. LEONNIG,
DAVID NAKAMURA
AND MICHAEL BIRNBAUM
The Washington Post

As the U.S. Secret Service arrived in the Netherlands last weekend for a presidential trip, managers were already on high alert to avoid any more embarrassing incidents involving agents.

Two counter-sniper officers had been involved in a car accident during a presidential visit to Miami two weeks earlier, according to several people with knowledge of the incident. The driver was administered a field sobriety test because his breath smelled of alcohol, but he passed and was not arrested.

With that in mind, Secret Service supervisor George Hartford issued a warning to a group of agents gathered for dinner in Amsterdam on Saturday night: Go out if you want, but stay out of trouble.

By the next morning, Hartford was pounding on the hotel door of a junior agent, 34, who had passed out drunk in a hallway and later had to be lifted into his room by several hotel employees, accord-

That night on the town created another highly public embarrassment for the elite Secret Service, which is still attempting to recover from a tawdry drinking-and-prostitution scandal two years ago during a presidential trip to Cartagena, Colombia.

ing to a hotel spokesman and two other people familiar with the incident. The agent claimed to have no memory of the events.

That night on the town created another highly public embarrassment for the elite Secret Service, which is still attempting to recover from a tawdry drinking-and-prostitution scandal two years ago during a presidential trip to Cartagena, Colombia.

The new incident — which unfolded in the hotel where President Barack Obama was scheduled to arrive the following day — prompted immediate condemnation Wednesday from lawmakers in Washington. Sen. Ronald Johnson, R-Wis., said the agency has a "systemic" problem of rowdy and inappropriate behavior by its agents, who are sworn to protect Obama and other senior officials from harm.

White House spokesman Jay

Carney told reporters flying on Air Force One on Wednesday that Obama had been briefed on the Netherlands hotel incident.

The president believes "that everybody representing the United States of America overseas needs to hold himself or herself to the highest standards," Carney said, adding that Obama retains confidence in Secret Service Director Julia Pierson.

After the unconscious agent was found in the hall Sunday morning, the hotel staff alerted White House staff that it had relayed the news to Secret Service managers, according to the people familiar with the incident.

After a series of interviews, agency managers concluded that the passed-out agent and two others who went drinking with him had violated new rules meant to prevent improper conduct on official trips.

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NATION

Wash. mudslide brings tales of heroism, loss

The Associated Press

DARRINGTON, Wash. — As the search for Washington state mudslide victims entered its fifth day Wednesday, rescuers and residents at the scene brought back tales of heroism, loss and the dangers that remain. Here are a few of their stories:

'Over in 30 seconds'

Robin Youngblood and another woman were the first of 16 people to be rescued by helicopter after Saturday's slide. Responders found them caked in mud from head to toe and perched on part of a roof floating in 3 feet of water.

Youngblood described the disaster Wednesday, saying she was in her home when she heard a noise and looked outside to see a 20-foot wall of mud coming straight toward her. "The whole thing was over in 30 seconds," she said. "It was like being hit by a 747."

She and the unidentified woman clung to the roof, which acted as a life preserver, and waved to a rescue helicopter. They were hypothesized when the chopper approached.

Snohomish County Crew Chief Randy Fay said the women and other survivors were immobilized by what he described as "walking shock."

Youngblood was able to salvage a painting of a Native American figure, and asked Fay as she was hoisted into the helicopter to save it. "That's all she's got left," Fay



ELANE THOMPSON/AP

Robin Youngblood, right, smiles Wednesday in Arlington, Wash., after embracing Snohomish County helicopter crew chief Randy Fay, who helped rescue her from a deadly mudslide days earlier.

said. "I'm so glad I could do that."

Mother, child reunited

While that first helicopter rescue was underway, the crew spotted a young child alone, partially sunken in mud with nothing and nobody around him.

Two men on the ground also saw the boy, Jacob Spillers, 4,

and one was able to work his way through the deep, sucking mud to reach him, Fay said.

Less than an hour earlier, Jacob was home with his father and three siblings when the mudslide struck. His mother, Jonielle Spillers, was at work.

The helicopter hovered over the child and man while Fay jumped out onto a nearby mound. He as-

sisted the man in moving Jacob to him and onto the helicopter.

The man tried to walk back through the debris field but started sinking again, so the helicopter rescued him too.

Jacob was able to reunite with his mother, but his other family members are still missing.

"The good news is, mom and kid are back together, so that's

what you hang on to," Fay said.

Demonstrating hope

About 200 people shared hugs and tears while singing "Amazing Grace" in a vigil for the people lost in the mudslide.

Some of those gathered Tuesday evening at Legion Park in Arlington said they wanted to help but had nowhere else to lend a hand. Many held candles and prayed. Pastor Chad Blood, of the Life-way Foursquare Church, said the vigil demonstrated hope and that the community is standing with the victims.

Lasting impact

The slide's destruction has cut off the main route for residents of the logging community of Darrington. Washington Highway 530 is one of a handful of east-west roadways in the northern part of the state.

It passes the mill, the town's major economic driver, as well as businesses in Seattle's suburbs where some residents work. The highway could be closed for weeks or months, leaving residents to face increasing drive times and gas costs as they navigate the detour through the mountains.

"Some of us are coming back to earth to a certain degree," Mayor Dan Rankin said. "We're all — it's a huge challenge for the folks here. And I keep on reminding us that this is not this week, this isn't next week; this is going to impact us for months and years to come."

Officials: Number missing in disaster falls to 90

BY BRIAN SKOLOFF AND LISA BAUMANN
The Associated Press

DARRINGTON, Wash. — Washington authorities reduced the number of people missing from a community wiped out by a mudslide to 90 as the families and friends of those still unaccounted for begin to confront the reality that some may never be found.

The official death toll remained at 16, with an additional eight bodies located but not recovered, Snohomish County Emergency Management Director John Pennington said. Authorities said they expected more bodies to be found Thursday.

The number of missing had been fluctuating — at one point reaching as high as 220 — but authorities were able to verify that 140 people reported missing had been located, Pennington said Wednesday. That left 90 people missing, plus 35 others who may or may not have been in the area at the time of the slide.

The revised numbers came at the end of a rain-soaked fifth day of searching for survivors in the small community of Oso, southeast of Seattle. But as time passes and the death toll continues to rise, the chances grow increasingly dim of finding people alive amid the debris.



MARCUS YAM, THE SEATTLE TIMES/AP

From left, Darrington Fire District 24 volunteer firefighters Jeff McClelland, Jan McClelland and Eric Finzimer embrace on Wednesday in Darrington, Wash., after saying a prayer. They were among the first to respond to the mudslide.

With little hope to cling to, family members of the missing are beginning to realize their loved ones may remain entombed forever inside a mountain of mud that is believed to have claimed more than 20 lives.

Becky Bach watches and waits, hoping that search crews find her brother and three other relatives who are missing in Washington

state's deadly mudslide.

Doug Massingale waits too, for word about his 4-month-old granddaughter. Searchers were able to identify carpet from the infant's bedroom, but a log jam stood in the way of a more thorough effort to find little Sanoah Huestis, known as "Snowy."

"It just generates so many questions if they don't find them,"

Bach said. "I've never known anybody to die in a natural disaster. Do they issue death certificates?"

Search crews using dogs, bulldozers and their bare hands kept slogging through the mess of broken wood and mud, but authorities have acknowledged they might have to leave some victims buried.

Trying to recover every corpse would be impractical and dangerous.

The debris field is about a square mile and 30 to 40 feet deep in places, with a moonlike surface that includes quicksandlike muck, rain-slickened mud and ice. The terrain is difficult to navigate on foot and makes it treacherous or impossible to bring in heavy equipment.

To make matters worse, the pile is laced with other hazards that include fallen trees, propane and septic tanks, twisted vehicles and countless shards of shattered homes.

Two Washington National Guard Black Hawk helicopters arrived at the site Wednesday to relieve sheriff's helicopter crews that had been working since Saturday.

"The Black Hawks' sole mission is body removal," said Bill Quistorf, chief pilot for the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office.

As families grieved, officials were pressed again Wednesday about multiple reports from years ago that showed the potential for catastrophic landslides in the area.

Pennington said authorities took steps to mitigate risks and warn people of potential dangers, especially after a 2006 landslide in the area. But the sheer size of this disaster was overwhelming.

Seismometers showed no earthquake triggered Saturday's landslide, but seismic signals show there were two major slides during the event, about four minutes apart.

Information about the landslide readings was posted Wednesday on the Pacific Northwest Seismic Network blog by Kate Allstadt, a researcher at the University of Washington.

She writes the landslide was detected on 17 seismic stations up to 170 miles away. The closest was 7 miles away.

The show the biggest slide started at 10:37 a.m. and lasted more than two minutes. That was the slide that hit the town of Oso.

There was a second slide at 10:41 a.m. That may have been slumping onto the debris. They were followed by more than a dozen smaller slides for more than an hour.

NATION

California lawmaker accused in weapons, campaign cash case

By PAUL ELIAS
AND SUDDHIN THANAWALA
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A state senator who authored gun control legislation asked for campaign donations in exchange for introducing an undercover FBI agent to an arms trafficker, according to court documents.

The allegations against Sen. Leland Yee were outlined in an FBI criminal complaint that names 25 other defendants, including Raymond Chow, a one-time gang leader with ties to San Francisco's Chinatown known as "Shrimp Boy," and Keith Jackson, Yee's campaign aide. The affidavit accuses Yee of conspiracy to deal firearms without a license and to illegally import firearms.

Yee is also accused of accepting tens of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions and cash payments to provide introductions,

help a client get a contract and influence legislation. He or members of his campaign staff accepted at least \$180,000 in cash in campaign contributions from undercover FBI agents in exchange for carrying out the agents' specific requests, the court documents allege.

Investigators said in documents released Wednesday that Yee discussed helping the agent get weapons worth \$500,000 to \$2.5 million, including shoulder-fired missiles, and explained the entire process of acquiring them from a Muslim separatist group in the Philippines to bringing them to the U.S., according to an affidavit by FBI agent Emmanuel V. Pascua.

Yee said he was unhappy with his life and told the agent he wanted to hide out in the Philippines, the document said. "There's a part of me that wants to be like you," he told the undercover agent. "You know how I'm going to be like you? Just be a free agent there."

The introduction with the trafficker took place at a San Francisco restaurant earlier this month, according to the documents. Yee said he wouldn't go to the Philippines until November.

"Once things start to move, it's going to attract attention. We just got to be extra-extra careful," he said, according to court documents.

Chow and Yee were arrested Wednesday during a series of raids in Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay Area.

Yee was released from custody shortly before 7 p.m. on a \$500,000 unsecured bail. He left the federal courthouse in San Francisco without comment.

Ex-gang leader was hailed as role model

SAN FRANCISCO — A former gang leader with ties to San Francisco's Chinatown who was praised for cleaning up his public image after serving more than a decade in prison now faces up to 95 years behind bars on money-laundering and other charges.

The allegations against Raymond Chow — nicknamed Shrimp Boy — were outlined in an FBI criminal complaint that names 25 other defendants.

Recently, Chow, the leader of the San Francisco-based Ghee Kung Tong fraternal organization, had been held up as an example of successful rehabilitation.

The Sacramento Bee reported that Chow was commended by U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., in 2012 as a former offender who had become a community asset. He was also lauded by San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee for his "willingness to give back to the community."

He is now accused of money laundering, conspiracy to receive and transport stolen property, and conspiracy to traffic contraband cigarettes.

From The Associated Press

His lawyer, Paul DeMeester, said Lee plans to plead not guilty but declined to discuss the case in detail, saying it's complex. The complaint is 137 pages.

"The top priority was to get the senator released, and we were able to accomplish that," DeMeester said. "The future will hold a lot of work facing this case."

Jackson, a former San Francisco school board president and well-known political consultant who raised money for Yee's unsuccessful mayoral run in 2011 and his current bid for secretary of state, remained in custody.

Jackson, 49, did not enter a plea Wednesday as the FBI accused him of being involved in a murder-for-hire scheme and trafficking guns and drugs. He was denied bail and is due back in court Monday.

Yee was shackled at the ankles when he appeared in court Wednesday afternoon with 19 other defendants. His demeanor was downcast, and he looked nervously into the packed gallery.

Yee was charged with six counts of depriving the public of honest services and one count of conspiracy to traffic in guns without a license. If convicted on all the counts, he faces up to 125 years in prison.



JEFF SENER, THE CHARLOTTE (N.C.) OBSERVER/AP

Charlotte Mayor-elect Patrick D. Cannon speaks in uptown Charlotte, N.C., in November.

Charlotte mayor, facing corruption charges, quits

By MITCH WEISS
AND TOM FOREMAN JR.
The Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Mayor Patrick Cannon was getting ready to close the deal with the big-time developer, but was reluctant to take a briefcase containing \$20,000 while sitting in his city office.

"I just got to be conscious about that kind of stuff here, you know," Cannon told the fictitious developer, who was, in fact, an undercover FBI agent.

Yet when the "developer" left, the briefcase, given to Cannon in exchange for his offer to pull strings with important city officials, stayed behind, according to court documents.

Cannon, 47, was arrested Wednesday and was accused of accepting more than \$48,000 in bribes from undercover FBI agents posing as businessmen who

wanted to do work with North Carolina's largest city. He resigned Wednesday evening, less than six months after taking office.

It was a stunning fall for the Democrat who had risen from the city's public housing projects to become a successful businessman and politician.

According to the criminal complaint, Cannon accepted more than \$48,000 in cash, airline tickets, a hotel room and the use of a luxury apartment as bribes and solicited more than \$1 million more. If convicted on all charges, Cannon faces up to 50 years in prison and more than \$1 million in fines.

While working with the undercover agents, Cannon touted his close relationship with Republican Gov. Pat McCrory and a trip to the White House to meet with President Barack Obama and other administration officials, the

complaint said.

At one point, an undercover agent said to Cannon, "You're operating at quite a level, Patrick."

Cannon, a longtime radio show host and the founder of E-Z Parking, a parking management company, was elected mayor in November, replacing Anthony Foxx, who was named transportation secretary by Obama.

Cannon had an initial court appearance Wednesday and was released on \$25,000 unsecured bail. He did not return telephone calls seeking comment.

FBI agents posing as commercial real estate developers paid Cannon on five separate occasions between January 2013 and February 2014, according to the complaint. The mayor accepted cash in exchange for access to city officials responsible for planning, zoning and permitting, the complaint said.

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NATION

IRS chief, House panel clash over documents

By LALITA CLOZEL

Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The head of the Internal Revenue Service said Wednesday that it would take years to turn over all the documents subpoenaed by the House Oversight and Government Reform committee in its investigation of the IRS' alleged targeting of conservative groups.

During a confrontational hearing, IRS Commissioner John Koskinen said he needed more time to comply with the committee's request for the email correspondence of Lois Lerner, a former IRS official in charge of

the agency's nonprofit division.

Lerner refused to testify before the committee earlier this month, invoking her Fifth Amendment rights. That sparked a feud between committee Chairman Darrell Issa, R-Calif., and ranking Democrat Elijah E. Cummings, D-Md., who called Issa's investigation "one-sided" and "un-American" after Issa ordered Cummings' microphone turned off. Issa later apologized.

On Wednesday, Issa's anger was focused on Koskinen.

"Unfortunately, you've been more concerned with managing the political fallout than cooperating with Congress or at least

this committee," Issa said, accusing Koskinen of "slow rolling" his investigation.

Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., threatened to hold Koskinen and the IRS in contempt if the materials were not provided quickly enough.

Koskinen said delivering all the emails sent to and from Lerner and three other top IRS officials embroiled in the controversy would be a "fruitless task overwhelming the investigators." But he added, "If that's the way the committee wants to go, we will go that way."

But Koskinen said it would take several years to release all

requested documents, including tax-exempt-status applications from 2009 to 2013. He said the IRS first would need to review all documents and make redactions to ensure it did not improperly release personal taxpayer data or other sensitive information.

Koskinen defended his agency's cooperation with Issa's investigation and five other inquiries into the IRS scandal. The IRS has spent up to \$14 million and has compiled more than 690,000 pages of documents, he said.

But Republicans and a few Democrats on the committee pressed the IRS to deliver entire blocks of correspondence, instead

of batches of emails that respond to specific search terms related to the agency's mismanagement.

After an investigation last year, the Treasury's inspector general for tax administration said the IRS' actions did not appear to be driven by the White House and stemmed from low-level incompetence, not political bias. Some progressive groups also were targeted.

Rep. Gerald E. Connolly, D-Va., accused Issa on Wednesday of using the investigation to appeal to conservative voters.

"It's designed to get certain groups all riled up in time for the midterm elections," he said.

High court keeps guns away from those guilty of domestic violence

By DAVID G. SAVAGE

Tribune Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Wednesday strengthened a federal law that bars anyone convicted of domestic violence from possessing a gun.

In a 9-0 decision, the Supreme Court said the ban extended to anyone who had pleaded guilty to at least a misdemeanor charge of domestic violence, even in cases in which there was no proof of violent acts or physical injury.

The ruling overturns decisions in several regions, including the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in California, which had said the ban applied only to convictions that involved a "violent use of force."

At issue was a 1996 law in which Congress expanded an existing ban that applied to anyone convicted of a felony in a domestic violence case to include misdemeanor convictions.

"Domestic violence is not merely a type of 'violence,'" said Justice Sonia Sotomayor. "It is term of art encompassing acts that one might not characterize as 'violent' in a nondomestic context." It includes acts such as "pushing, grabbing, shoving, slapping and hitting," she said.

Sotomayor said Congress acted in 1996 to "close a loophole" in the law and to try to keep guns out of homes that had experienced domestic violence.

The decision in U.S. vs. Castleman restores the illegal gun possession charges against a Tennessee man who had pleaded guilty in 2001 to causing "bodily injury" to the mother of his child.

In 2008, James Castleman was charged with violating federal gun laws when he was caught with firearms.

A federal judge and the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed the charges because there was no proof he had "violent contact with the victim."

Ritual slaughter of animals is investigated in DC park

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Animal welfare officials are investigating whether a religious or ritualistic practice was behind the death of nine animals — six chickens, a pigmy goat and two pigeons — whose carcasses were found along an isolated path of Rock Creek Park in the District of Columbia.

Some of the animals had been decapitated. Some still had their heads, but their throats had been slashed. Investigators believe they were killed elsewhere and dumped in the park.

"They were sacrificed and left there," said Sergio Giacoppo, a vice president with the Washington Humane Society.

The nine carcasses were taken Wednesday to a laboratory in Virginia for necropsies. Veterinarians and investigators will look for clues that could point to a specific group of individual.

What they did may not be a crime — if the animals were killed in a humane way.

"You have to do it in one fell swoop," Giacoppo said. "It has to cause instantaneous death. Anything short of that, we can argue, is cruelty, and [we can] prosecute."

The animals were found Tuesday afternoon by a person walking along the path in a section of the park behind a large apartment complex.



RICHARD DREW/AP

Characters of the King Digital Entertainment game Candy Crush Saga walk the trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange on Wednesday before the company's initial public offering.

'Candy Crush' has slow market start

By HAYLEY TSUKAYAMA

The Washington Post

King Digital, the maker of the popular smartphone game Candy Crush Saga, got off to a slow start Wednesday in its debut on the New York Stock Exchange.

It closed its first day at \$19 per share, down more than 15 percent from its initial offering price of \$22.50.

The firm expects to raise about \$500 million from the IPO, which values the firm at about \$7 billion.

King's initial public offering has raised quite a few eyebrows, particularly given that the company reported that its core title — which is already losing some steam — accounted for 78 percent of all of its revenue in the final quarter of 2013. Ninety-five percent of its revenue comes from

just three titles: Candy Crush Saga, Pet Rescue and Farm Heroes Saga.

Looking at the number like that, it's easy to see King as a harbinger of another tech bubble — or at least as a possible repeat of Zynga's dud performance when it went public in 2012.

Although King's heavy reliance on just a few of its products is cause for concern, it's not exactly fair to tie the dot-coms of the tech bubble or even to Zynga, said James Gellert, chairman and chief executive of the financial services firm Rapid Ratings.

"These are very different companies," Gellert said of King and Zynga. "King is a more mature company, it's a profitable company and it's a larger company."

The key word there is profits, something that Zynga never

showed before its public debut. Twitter and Box — the coming IPO that has the tech world abuzz this week — also remain unprofitable.

The big question that everyone is going to ask, Gellert said, is whether 11-year-old King is a one-hit wonder or not. While the firm boasts 140 million active players for its sticky sweet puzzle matching game, some doubt it can ride that wave of success forever.

"Whether they can immediately replicate it or not, the question really is can they be a viable, long-term business that generates positive returns for their shareholders," he said. "And even if they do dip from a maturing 'Candy Crush,' it still has the profile of a healthy company and an efficient company that will be successful."

UKRAINE UNREST



PAVEL GOLOVIN/AP

Ukrainian soldiers transport their tanks Wednesday from their base in Perevalnoe, outside Simferopol, Crimea.

Poll finds crisis hurting Obama approval ratings

By JENNIFER CASS
AND BONNIE AGIESTA
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON—Foreign policy used to stand out as a not-so-bleak spot in the public's wariness assessment of Barack Obama. Not anymore. He's getting low marks for handling Russia's swoop into Ukraine, and more Americans than ever disapprove of the way Obama is doing his job, according to a new Associated Press-GFK poll.

Despite the poor performance reviews, Obama's primary tactic so far — imposing economic sanctions on key Russians — has strong backing.

Nearly 9 out of 10 Americans support sanctions as a response to Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, the poll indicates. About half of that group says the U.S. sanctions so far are about right, while the other half wants to see them strengthened, the AP-GFK poll found.

Most Democrats say the sanctions were OK, while a majority of Republicans find them too weak. "We're supposed to be a country that helps smaller countries in need," said Christopher Ashby, 20, a Republican in Albemarle, N.C., who wants a more powerful response. "Ukraine at this time is definitely in need."

Ashby, a stay-at-home dad caring for three young daughters, said, "When I look at Obama, I see my 5-year-old daughter looking at something that just happened and saying, 'What do I do?'"

Overall disapproval of the job Obama is doing ticked up to 59 percent — a record high for his presidency — in the poll released Wednesday. That's still well below the 69 percent disapproval rate that former President George W. Bush recorded in the AP-GFK poll in October 2008. Still, Obama's 41 percent approval rating is a sobering number for fellow Democrats running in this fall's House and Senate elections.

Americans are now divided over which party they would rather see in control of Congress. Democrats held a slight edge over Republicans in the January AP-GFK poll.

Obama gets lowest marks for his handling of the federal budget,

immigration and the economy. Support for Obama's education policies, which had been a strong point, dipped into negative territory this month, too.

Republicans have long criticized the president as too weak in asserting American power abroad. Yet until now, foreign policy hasn't been a drag on Obama's second term; Americans were about as likely to endorse his actions as to disapprove.

Now he's hit a new low on international relations — just 40 percent approval.

Majorities say they dislike Obama's handling of the Ukraine situation (57 percent) and his interactions with Russia (54 percent).

Almost half of those polled say they support imposing tougher sanctions if Russia pushes into new regions or other countries; only 14 percent are opposed. That backs up threats from Obama and Western allies to target Russia's economy with damaging sanctions if President Vladimir Putin goes further.

About a third of those surveyed said they oppose giving monetary aid to nations targeted by Russia. Only about 20 percent approve of financial support, while the biggest share is neutral. This week Congress is considering \$1 billion in loan guarantees for Ukraine sought by Obama.

The idea of lending any type of military support to Ukraine is unpopular, the poll says. Obama has said there are no plans to use military force to dislodge Russia from the Crimean Peninsula.

Richard Johnson, a politically independent retiree in Redmond, Wash., said the United States shouldn't have gotten involved at all, especially because many Crimean residents favor Russia.

"They're protesting in both directions, right?" Johnson said. "So I just feel like we've got enough problems here at home, why are we looking for more trouble?"

The AP-GFK Poll was conducted March 20-24 using KnowledgePanel, GFK's probability-based online panel designed to be representative of the U.S. population. It involved online interviews with 1,012 adults and has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.4 percentage points for all respondents.

UN General Assembly supports Ukraine unity

By EDITH M. LEDERER
The Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — The U.N. General Assembly approved a resolution Thursday affirming Ukraine's territorial integrity and calling the referendum that led to Russia's annexation of its Crimean Peninsula illegal.

The vote on the Ukraine-sponsored resolution was 100 countries in favor, 11 opposed and 58 abstentions.

The "yes" vote was higher than many diplomats had predicted, and the fact that more than half the 193 U.N. member states supported the resolution reflected widespread international opposition to Russia's military intervention and takeover of the strategic

Black Sea region.

Unlike the more powerful Security Council, resolutions in the General Assembly cannot be vetoed but are not legally binding.

Russia has blocked action in the Security Council where it has veto power as one its five permanent members. Even so, the 15-member council has held eight meetings on Ukraine as Western powers strive to keep up the pressure on Moscow.

Before the vote, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Deschytsha told the assembly that his country's territorial integrity and unity had been "ruthlessly trampled" by Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council entrusted to maintain

international peace and security, and in direct violation of the U.N. Charter.

"By voting in favor of this resolution, you vote in favor of the U.N. Charter while voting against or abstaining equals undermining it," Deschytsha said in urging a "yes" vote.

Russia's U.N. ambassador, Vitaly Churkin, urged a "no" vote, saying a historic injustice in Crimea has been corrected and its people had expressed their right to self-determination in wanting to join Russia.

He called the resolution "confrontational in nature" and said it would be "counterproductive" to challenge the results of the referendum.

Russia deeply linked to Obama priorities

By JULIE PACE
The Associated Press

BRUSSELS — Even as he criticizes Vladimir Putin and imposes sanctions on Russia, President Barack Obama is struggling with the consequences of his own earlier quest for a fresh start between Washington and Moscow.

From early in his presidency, Obama has engaged Russia

to help achieve some of his key goals, including preventing Iran from becoming a nuclear power and, more recently, solving the war in Syria before it spreads further in the Middle East. Now, he finds that the engagement may limit how hard he can hit back at Russia without toppling everything else.

White House officials insist that the U.S. can't go back to a business-as-usual relationship with Russia as long as Putin still has control of Crimea, the strategically important peninsula he annexed from Ukraine.

Exactly what might be changed is still being debated inside the West Wing. Susan Rice, Obama's national security adviser, said Russia's incursion in Crimea "is causing the countries and people of Europe and the international community and, of course, the United States to reassess what does this mean and what are the implications."

But even as officials warn of curtailed ties with Russia, they're seeking to insulate Obama's most pressing foreign policy priorities from any major harm that might result.

Examples are plentiful and worrisome:

■ Russia is part of the interna-

tional negotiating team working with the U.S. to strike a nuclear deal with Iran.

■ The Kremlin's participation is crucial to keeping Syria on track with a plan to rid Damascus of its chemical weapons stockpiles.

■ Russia also allows the U.S. to use an alternative to a supply route through Pakistan to bring military personnel and equipment out of Afghanistan as the war there comes to an end.

Then there's the International Space Station and Russia's agreement to ferry American astronauts to and from it. And the concern, more pointed in Europe but well-noted in the U.S., that a deeper rift with Russia could interrupt crucial energy supplies now flowing to European nations.

U.S. officials say they're skeptical Russia would spend any of these partnerships given that its own strategic interests are also at stake. Russia wants access to Iran's economy, which is now cut off from much of the world by U.S. sanctions. In Syria, Putin sees chemical weapons deals as a way to stave off a possible American military strike and the ouster of his allies in the Syrian government.

American officials say they instead want to cut cooperation in areas where Russia will suffer more than the U.S. That means stopping joint military operations and canceling trade talks that were eagerly sought by Moscow.

"We must meet the challenge to our ideals, to our very international order, with strength and conviction," Obama said Wednesday in Brussels. He closed three days of talks on the Russia dispute with European leaders in the Netherlands and Brussels.

The leaders' indefinitely cut



PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVIS/AP

President Barack Obama speaks in Orlando, Fla., on March 20.

Russia out of the Group of Eight assemblage of major nations, a step announced by Obama and Western allies during the president's trip. Western allies also agreed to impose broad economic sanctions on Russia if it advances further into Ukraine.

So far, U.S. efforts to isolate Russia don't appear to have changed Putin's calculus. After defying warnings from the West and moving troops into Crimea, he formally annexed the peninsula from Ukraine. He's also staged thousands of troops on Russia's border with eastern Ukraine, sparking fears in the U.S. and Europe that he may make a play for more territory.

The developments with Russia are hardly what Obama envisioned when he launched his "reset." The policy was aimed at soothing tensions sparked under the George W. Bush administration and paving the way for cooperation on issues like Iran and Afghanistan. But no one expected totally smooth sailing.

"There was never a belief anywhere that Russia was going to evolve into a NATO-like partner or a democracy," said Jeremy Shapiro, a former State Department official and current fellow at the Brookings Institution.

WORLD

Jet search cut short; more satellites discover objects

By ROB GRIFFITH
AND SCOTT McDONALD
The Associated Press

PERTH, Australia — Hints about the lost Malaysian jetliner piled up Thursday, but there was precious little chance to track them down. Bad weather cut short the hunt for possible debris fields from the aircraft as satellite data revealed hundreds more objects that might be wreckage.

Not one piece of debris has been recovered from the plane that went down in the southern Indian Ocean on March 8. For relatives of the 239 people aboard Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, it was yet another agonizing day of waiting.

"Until something is picked up and analyzed to make sure it's from MH370 we can't believe it, but without anything found, it's just clues," Steve Wang, whose 57-year-old mother was aboard the flight, said in Beijing. "Without that, it's useless."

Japan said it provided Malaysia with information from satellite images taken Wednesday show-

ing about 10 objects that might be debris from the plane, with the largest measuring about 13 feet by 26 feet. The objects were located about 1,560 miles southwest of Perth, Japan's Cabinet Intelligence and Research Office said.

A Thai satellite also spotted about 300 objects, ranging from 6 feet to 53 feet long, about 1,675 miles southwest of Perth, said Anond Snidvongs, director of Thailand's space technology development agency. He said the images, taken Monday by the Thaichote satellite, took two days to process and were relayed to Malaysian authorities Wednesday.

The objects were about 125 miles southwest of the area where a French satellite on Sunday spotted 122 objects. It's unknown whether the satellites detected the same objects; currents in the ocean can run about 2 mph and wind also could move material.

The announcements came after the Australian Maritime Safety Authority said it had to pull back all 11 planes scheduled to take part in the search Thursday because of heavy rain, winds and

low clouds. Five ships continued the hunt.

All but three of the planes — a U.S. Navy P-8 Poseidon, a Japanese P-3 Orion and a Japanese Gulfstream jet — reached the search zone, about 1,550 miles southwest of Perth, before the air search was suspended, AMSA spokesman Sam Cardwell said.

They were there "maybe two hours" and found nothing, Cardwell said. "They got a bit of time in, but it was not useful because there was no visibility."

In a message on its Twitter account, AMSA said the bad weather was expected to last 24 hours.

Planes have been flying out of Perth for a week, seeing a few small objects that might or might not be from the plane and nothing of the possible debris fields viewed by the Thai and French satellites. Even the few objects the planes saw seemed to vanish when aircraft went back for another look.

If and when any bit of wreckage from Flight 370 is recovered and identified, searchers will be able to narrow their hunt for the rest of the Boeing 777 and its



Aaron Favila/AP

A woman breaks into tears Thursday as she places a paper crane as a symbol for hope and healing during a ceremony in memory of passengers onboard the missing Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

black boxes, which could solve the mystery of why the jet flew so far off-course. The plane was supposed to fly from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to Beijing but turned away from its route soon after takeoff and flew for several hours before crashing.

Malaysian officials said earlier this week that satellite data confirmed the plane crashed into the southern Indian Ocean. On Thursday, Malaysia Airlines ran a full-page condolence advertisement with a black background in a major Malaysian newspaper.

"Our sincerest condolences

go out to the loved ones of the 239 passengers, friends and colleagues," read the advertisement in the New Straits Times. "Words alone cannot express our enormous sorrow and pain."

The extreme remoteness of the search area, its frequent high seas and bad weather all complicate the search.

"This is a really rough piece of ocean, which is going to be a terrific issue," said Kerry Sieh, director of the Earth Observatory of Singapore. "I worry that people carrying out the rescue mission are going to get into trouble."

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WORLD

Obama, pope have warm meeting at Vatican City

BY JIM KUHNHENN
AND NICOLE WINFIELD

The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — A visibly energized President Barack Obama held a nearly hourlong audience with Pope Francis at the Vatican on Thursday, expressing his great admiration for the pontiff and inviting him to visit the White House.

Although Obama and the church remain deeply split over abortion and contraception, Obama considers the pontiff a kindred spirit on issues of economic inequality, and their private meeting in the Papal Library ran longer than scheduled. After they emerged to cameras, Francis presented Obama with a copy of his papal mission statement decrying a global economic system that excludes the poor. Obama said he will keep it in the Oval Office.

The president and pope both appeared tense at the start of the audience, when they initially greeted one another, but then were all smiles by the end of the meeting and seemed to have

found a rapport, though they spoke through interpreters.

"It is a great honor. I'm a great admirer," Obama said after greeting the pope with a slight bow as they shook hands. "Thank you so much for receiving me."

Obama arrived at the Vatican amid all the pomp and tradition of the Catholic Church, making his way in a long, slow procession through the hallways of the Apostolic Palace led by colorful Swiss Guards and accompanied by ceremonial attendants. The president bowed as he shook hands with the pontiff in the Small Throne Room, before the two sat down at the pope's desk, as is custom for a papal audience.

The two were scheduled to meet for just half an hour, but their private discussion lasted 52 minutes. At the end, they exchanged gifts, with the pope offering Obama two medallions and a copy of his apostolic exhortation "The Joy of the Gospel."

"You know, I actually will probably read this when I'm in the Oval Office, when I am deeply frustrated and I am sure it will

give me strength and will calm me down," Obama said.

"I hope," the pope responded.

In a brief departure from all the formality, the metal support stilts being used to prop up the gifts repeatedly gave way, causing an audible crash that drew the consternation of the Vatican's protocol omsignors and a look from Obama. Eventually, aides gave up on using the stilts.

Obama presented the pope with a seed chest with fruit and vegetable seeds used in the White House Garden, mentioning that he understands the pope is opening the gardens at the papal summer residence to the public. The chest was inscribed with the date of their meeting and custom-made of leather and reclaimed wood from the Baltimore Basilica — one of the oldest Catholic cathedrals in the U.S.

"If you have a chance to come to the White House, we can show you our garden as well," Obama said. The pope responded "Why not," in Spanish.



GABRIEL BOUVS, POOL/AP

Pope Francis and President Barack Obama smile as they meet at the Vatican on Thursday.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP



DANIEL MEARS, DETROIT NEWS/AP

Old Glory flies again in downtown Detroit

From left, veterans Kevin Jones, David Tripplett, Irene Spooner, Mark Spooner and Jerry Sobrowski hold American flags as they are blessed before being raised in Hart Plaza in Detroit on Tuesday. A Michigan company and veterans groups brought back five American flags to downtown Detroit's Hart Plaza for the first time in more than a decade. The cash-strapped city removed the flags about 14 years ago and never replaced them due to budget constraints. Plans call for 20 to be installed by Flag Day on June 14.

Voters decide to turn dry city wet

MS POPLARVILLE — Poplarville voters have approved the sale of beer and light wine inside the city limits.

Complete, but unofficial, returns from Tuesday's election show 79 percent of those voting approved the beer sales.

Poplarville has been dry since the town was created in 1886. Mayor Brad Nicaise said this is the first time in more than 30 years that this issue has been voted on in Poplarville.

Plastic and paper bag users may face new fee

NY NEW YORK — The New York City Council is introducing a bill that would impose a 10-cent fee on plastic and paper bags used at grocery stores.

The measure is intended to spur shoppers to bring their own reusable bags. The fee is not a tax and would benefit store owners.

New York City residents use 1 billion disposable plastic bags a year. It costs the city \$10 million annually to ship used bags to landfills.

Similar measures are in place in Los Angeles, Seattle and Washington.

Man wants to change street name to My Way

MA GLOUCESTER — A Gloucester man wants to change the name of his street to My Way, not because he's a Frank

THE CENSUS

18,107

The number of boxes of Girl Scout cookies sold by Katie Francis, right, in seven weeks, breaking the organization's decades-old sales record. The sixth-grade student broke the record previously set by Elizabeth Brinton, who sold approximately 18,000 one year in the 1980s. Katie told The Oklahoma newspaper last month that there were only three ingredients needed to rack up large sales: a lot of time, a lot of commitment and asking everyone she met to buy.



\$12K

The amount of money stolen last week from the Citizens Bank & Trust in Burlington Junction, Mo., and was recovered Tuesday after tippers led authorities to a tree just across the border in rural southern Iowa. Authorities said that after the bank was robbed Friday, a man who saw two men enter the bank with masks covering their faces followed their car and called authorities, who chased the suspects. The men drove into Iowa and tried to conceal their vehicle before fleeing back into a wooded area in Missouri, where they were captured, said Nodaway County Sheriff Darren White. During that chase, the men allegedly hid the money in the tree.

Sinatra fan, but because he loves his wife so much. Bill Coletti has asked the city to approve the name change in honor of his wife of 24 years, Myra, who goes by My.

The road, with just the one house, is currently called Gilson Way after the home's previous owner. The Coletti has lived there 13 years and think it's time for a change.

The biggest opponent of the renaming may be My herself, who thinks they can come up with something with a little more pizzazz.

Man seeks return of heart pump controller

OR ALBANY — An Oregon man reported an unusual theft — someone stole the backup control system for the mechanical heart pump he must wear at all times.

The \$15,000 unit, the exterior portion of a Left Ventricular As-

sist Device, was stolen from Mark Dempsey's car sometime late Saturday or early Sunday while the vehicle was parked outside an Albany lounge.

The equipment was in what looks like a camera bag and was taken by someone who smashed the rear window.

Dempsey, 37, told the Albany Democrat-Herald he isn't interested in prosecuting the person who took the device. He just wants it back.

Lawmaker drops fight over university Sex Week

TN KNOXVILLE — A Republican lawmaker said he's dropping a legislative fight over the student-run Sex Week at the state's flagship public university.

Sen. Stacey Campfield, of Knoxville, and other lawmakers took issue with the use of student fees for the weeklong program about sex.

Earlier this week, the Senate passed a resolution decrying what it called the "radical agenda" of Sex Week.

Girl breaks dress code by shaving head for pal

CO GRANDJUNCTION— A Colorado girl who shaved her head to support a friend who went bald because of cancer treatment has been told she violated her school's dress code.

Kamryn Renfro, of Grand Junction, shaved her head to help Delaney Clements get through chemotherapy. Kamryn at first wasn't allowed to return to classes at Caprock Academy, the charter school she attends. The academy later said she could return.

The (Grand Junction) Daily Sentinel reported that the school board's chairwoman said the dress code is designed to promote uniformity and a nondistracting environment.

Woman freed after 32 years in '81 killing

CA LOS ANGELES — A 74-year-old California woman is free after serving 32 years of a life sentence for her role in a 1981 killing.

Mary Virginia Jones walked out of Century Regional Detention Facility in Lynwood on Monday and was met by joyful family and friends, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Jones was convicted of first-degree murder, kidnapping and robbery and sentenced to life without parole for a killing committed alongside boyfriend Mose Willis, who died while on death row.

She always maintained that the abusive Willis forced her at gunpoint to help him rob and shoot two drug dealers, one of whom died. Law students at the University of Southern California's Post-Conviction Justice Project took up her cause.

From wire reports

WORLD

Iran's leader urges regional unity in Afghanistan visit

The Associated Press

KABUL — In his first visit to Afghanistan as Iran's president, Hassan Rouhani has called for regional unity while at the same time saying international forces brought "destruction" to Afghanistan.

Rouhani and other regional leaders joined Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai in Kabul on Thursday in celebrating the Persian New Year, Nowruz.

Rouhani said Afghanistan has

been occupied twice by foreign countries — a reference to the Soviet Union in the 1980s, and the U.S. and allied troops who ousted the Taliban.

He said "they brought violence and extremists to this country." Iran opposes a security agreement that would allow thousands of foreign forces to stay in Afghanistan beyond the end of 2014.

Karzai has refused to sign the pact, but the main three contenders in elections to replace him said they would.

Pakistani officials hold direct talks with Taliban

BY MUNIR AHMED
The Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — A Pakistani government team held direct talks with the Taliban after traveling Wednesday to a secret location in the country's northwest, part of a push by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to strike a peace deal to end an insurgency that has killed thousands of people in recent years.

Although previous Pakistani governments have spoken directly with Taliban representatives, these are the first such negotiations since Sharif took office last June. During the past month or so, intermediaries representing the two sides have met and laid the groundwork for the talks.

Although previous Pakistani governments have spoken directly with Taliban representatives, these are the first such negotiations since Sharif took office last June. During the past month or so, intermediaries representing the two sides have met and laid the groundwork for the talks.

Maulana Samiul Haq, one of the Taliban negotiators, said the discussions lasted for seven hours and would resume later in the week. Haq, a cleric, said the talks were fruitful and helped the two sides understand each other better.

The Taliban spokesman, Shahidullah Shahid, also cast the meeting in a positive light. "The talks with the government team were held in a cordial atmosphere today," he said. "The two sides discussed all the issues, including how to exchange each other's prisoners and continue the cease-fire."

Shahid said the Taliban treated the government team as "guests" and that the team was on its way to a safe location.

Information Minister Pervaiz

Rashid did not share any details, saying only that "the government team is there for the talks with the Taliban, and the peace process is progressing well."

Earlier, Ibrahim Khan, a professor and cleric who has represented the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan — as the Pakistani Taliban is formally called — told reporters that the face-to-face discussions were aimed at ending the violence.

The talks originally were to have taken place on Tuesday, but bad weather prevented the government team, headed by Secretary for Port and Shipping Habibullah Khan Khattak, from traveling by helicopter to the northwest.

The negotiations come at a sensitive time for Pakistan, where daily militant attacks challenge the government's authority.

The Taliban, who operate in the northwest, have announced a cease-fire during the talks, but attacks claimed by their splinter groups have continued. Shahid, the TTP spokesman, has denied the group's involvement in the recent violence.

The main challenges of negotiating a peace settlement are the many groups and factions behind the violence. Many groups operate independently of the Taliban, including both local and foreign al-Qaida-linked militant outfits.

Before Wednesday, the two sides held only indirect talks, with the Taliban represented by Khan and Haq.



AP

Honoring the Great Escape

A group of 50 British air force officers march from the site of the Nazi Stalag Luft III prisoner camp near Zagan, Poland, on Tuesday to a British war cemetery in western Poland to mark 70 years since the Great Escape of Allied airmen and to honor 50 of them who were caught and executed. They started in rain from the place where 76 prisoners of war emerged from a tunnel on March 24 and 25, 1944. Only three airmen made it home. Fifty others were executed when caught, and 23 were sent to other camps but survived the war. The 1963 movie "The Great Escape," starring Steve McQueen, tells the story.

Philippines, Muslim rebel group sign peace accord

BY OLIVER TEVES
The Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine government signed a peace accord with the country's largest Muslim rebel group on Thursday, the culmination of years of negotiations and a significant political achievement for President Benigno Aquino III.

The deal grants largely Muslim areas of the southern Mindanao region greater political autonomy in exchange for an end to armed rebellion. But it will not stop all violence in a part of the country long plagued by lawlessness, poverty and Islamist insurgency. Implementing the ambitious accord also will be challenging.

Aquino and leaders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front witnessed the signing of the agreement in the presidential palace in Manila. Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, whose country brokered the peace talks, attend-

ed the ceremony.

"In signing this agreement, the two sides have looked not to the problems of the past, but to the promise of the future," Najib said. "After so many years of conflict, and so many lives lost, it is a momentous act of courage."

About 1,000 people attended the signing ceremonies, including guerrilla commanders wearing business suits instead of military uniforms who were stepping into the palace for the first time.

"For generations, fellow Filipinos in the (southern Mindanao) region were embroiled in a cycle of poverty, injustice and violence," Aquino said. "If we are to truly address the root causes of conflict, we must close the gap between the region and the rest of Filipino society."

Some in the crowd wiped away tears as presidential peace adviser Teresa Deles said in a speech: "Her own voice breaking: 'No more war! ... Enough!'"

The peace accord concludes formal negotiations that began in 2001. A cease-fire agreement had been in place since 1997 and has been largely observed by both sides.

More than 120,000 people have died in separatist violence since the 1970s in Mindanao, the main southern Philippine island. It is home to most of the country's 5 million Muslims, but Christians remain the overall majority.

Previous presidents, including Corazon Aquino, Aquino's mother, tried but failed to resolve the conflict, which has stunted growth in the region and helped foster Islamic extremism in the country and elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

Other insurgent groups in the south have vowed to keep fighting for full independence. The region is also home to the Abu Sayyaf, a Muslim extremist network with international links that the Philippine army is battling with American support.

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FAITH

A home for just a while

Families foster love, hope faith will follow

By ANNYSA JOHNSON
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

MILWAUKEE
Charonne and Kevin Ganiere never really pictured themselves as foster parents.

They'd always talked about adopting, maybe when their two small sons were older. But they couldn't envision bringing children into their lives, loving them as their own and then letting them go — back to their biological parents or an adoptive family. It just seemed too painful.

That was then. Today, the Ganieres are parents to five children younger than 10, including three toddlers welcomed through the local foster care system, with no guarantees that they will be able to adopt them.

Devout Christians, the Germantown, Wis., couple sees their change of heart as divinely inspired. Now they've launched a fledgling nonprofit aimed at encouraging more Christians to open their hearts and homes to children in temporary need of families and helping churches support their members who do so.

"There are a lot of kids in the greater Milwaukee area in need of a good, Christian home," said Charonne, who with husband Kevin is dual-licensed to take children both preapproved for adoption and those who are not.

"As we started going through the process, it just stirred our hearts to the greater need," she said. "Yes, there are kids who need to be adopted. But there are also kids who need a home for just a little while."

The Ganieres are founders of OneHope27, named for a Biblical passage that exhorts Christians to care for widows and orphans. The world, and similar initiatives around the world, are part of the larger so-called orphan care movement that has exploded in some Christian circles over the past two decades.

That movement had been dominated for years by international adoptions. However, that has waned as criticisms arose about corruption, the trafficking of children not truly orphaned and other concerns, and countries imposing tighter restrictions. As international adoptions declined from a peak of 24,000 in 2004 to 9,000 last year, many Christian organizations turned their attention to children in their home countries.

"In terms of foster care, there has always been a Christian presence but what we're seeing now is a significant growth in the engagement of ordinary Christians in fostering, fostering-to-adopt, mentoring and family preservation," said Jedd Medifind, president of the Christian Alliance for Orphans, which promotes its annual Orphan Sunday in churches across the country.

Advocates believe that good people with the right motives and proper training can



Above: Meals are hectic as Charonne Ganiere, center, solicits help from her children during preparations for dinner at their Germantown, Wis., home in March.

Left: Charonne and Kevin Ganiere hug one of their foster children. The Ganieres are a Christian couple who created a nonprofit to encourage other Christians to get involved in the foster care system in Wisconsin.

PHOTOS BY GARY PORTER, MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL/MCT

help improve the lives of children and families in their own communities.

"We've seen through Charonne and our other faith-based recruiters that there are a lot of great families out there," said Laura Goba, of Children's Hospital of Wisconsin Community Services, an agency that licenses foster families.

"It's not about being a savior to these kids. It's about supporting the children and their families," said Goba, whose agency is collaborating with OneHope27 on its recruitment efforts. "It's really about wrapping around the whole family, helping them heal and helping the kids go home."

At any one time, Milwaukee County has about 2,000 children in foster care, with fewer than 700 licensed foster families.

Across the state, some 6,000 children are in temporary need of care.

The Ganieres, who attend Life Church in Germantown, are piloting the program there and at two other sites — The Ridge Community Church in Greenfield and Christ Church in Mequon. They've compiled a list of about 25 other candidates, churches that have 30 or more foster families already in their pews.

The program will differ depending on the site, but it might include informational sessions for families exploring the possibility of foster care, get-togethers for foster families and their children, meal programs, clothing banks or other initiatives that would be helpful to foster families.

"Not everybody can foster a child," Ga-

nierie said. "But everyone can do something, whether that is a meal when a family gets a new placement, supplies or clothing donations, or just someone to talk to when kids are running around screaming and you need some sanity."

Families that are licensed to accept children in foster care are limited in just how much religious influence they can exert. Judges and placement agencies go out of their way to place children raised in a particular tradition with a family that holds similar beliefs. Likewise, foster parents are prohibited from forcing their religion on children they bring into their homes.

The Ganieres understand that and say it's not about strong-armed conversions but sharing the love of Christ whether that child embraces it or not.

"Children who come into foster care are there often because of abuse and neglect, and I can't think of anybody who needs love and hope more than they do," Ganiere said.

"Are we ever going to sit a child down and say you must accept Christ or you'll not move from that chair? No," she said. "That's not a relationship. It's about exposing them to the love and hope of Christ, and hoping they choose that for themselves later in life."

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FACES



“Scandal” actor Columbus Short was arrested Wednesday on a felony battery case filed after he knocked a man out during an altercation in a West Hollywood, Calif., restaurant on March 15.

“Scandal” star charged with felony

By ANTHONY MCCARTNEY
The Associated Press

Columbus Short, a lead actor on the television series “Scandal,” was arrested Wednesday on a felony charge that he seriously injured a man during an altercation at a restaurant earlier this month.

Short was arrested by police in Claremont, Calif., on a warrant issued in a case that alleges he committed a battery that caused serious bodily harm.

The actor was involved in a dispute with a man at a West Los Angeles, Calif., restaurant March 15 before Short hit the man and knocked him out, according to Los Angeles police and prosecutors. Further details about the altercation were not released.

Short, 31, plays attorney Harrison Wright on ABC’s hit series “Scandal.” Records show he was released Wednesday after posting \$50,000 bail. If convicted, Short faces up to four years in state prison. A date for his initial court appearance has not yet been set.

A phone number for Jeff Jacquet, Short’s attorney in another criminal case, had a full voicemail box, and a message sent via fax was not immediately returned.

Short was charged Feb. 14 with misdemeanor spousal battery and has pleaded not guilty in that case. A judge ordered him to stay away from his wife, Tuere Short, at a March 5 court hearing. Records show she filed for divorce last year but dismissed her petition earlier this year.

Flick is a nod to movies from Nolan’s childhood

By JESSICA HERNDON
The Associated Press

It’s tough to get writer-director Christopher Nolan to divulge details about the plot of his upcoming sci-fi movie “Interstellar.”

“We’re right in the thick of the first cut of the film,” he said on stage during a question and answer session at the annual movie-theater convention CinemaCon in Las Vegas on Wednesday. “So I can’t really say much about it right now.”

However, he did say that the tone of the time travel-focused project, of which scientist Kip Thorne is a producer, is very different than any of his previous films.

“For me, it’s about harking back to films I saw when I was a child,” he said. “I grew up in an era that was the golden age of the blockbuster, where something being a family film could be very broad and universal. I feel like that is something I want to see again. Something that looks at where we are as people, and where we might go.”

Co-written with his brother and frequent collaborator Jonathan Nolan — the two have worked on “The Dark Knight,” “The Dark Knight Rises” and “The Pres-



‘I grew up in an era that was the golden age of the blockbuster, where something being a family film could be very broad and universal. I feel like that is something I want to see again.’

Christopher Nolan
writer-director of “Interstellar”

tige” together — “Interstellar” is about “interstellar travel,” Nolan offered.

But just how the story will unfold when it hits theaters in November is still a mystery. In the trailer, snippets of archival aviation footage is shown as Matthew McConaughey talks about “the ability to overcome the impossible” via voiceover.

We also see a shot of the Oscar winner driving down a dusty road while tears are in his eyes and a little girl holding a man’s hand while watching the launch of what looks like a rocket.

McConaughey, along with Anne Hathaway and Jessica Chastain, stars in the film. Nolan said he “needed someone who

was very much an everyman” to play the male lead. McConaughey, he added, was an ideal choice.

“He is experiencing extraordinary events in the film and we are seeing them through his eyes. I didn’t know how much potential Matthew had until “Mad.” It showed me a side of his capabilities that I never knew was there. It’s a transformative performance.”

Though he did not reveal any of the locations where the film was shot, Nolan said the film was “shot like a documentary.”

He said he tried to stay away from creating scenes with CGI. “We put the people in the real environments,” he added.



SONY PICTURES/AP

First look at ‘The Amazing Spider-Man 2’

Sony Pictures debuted 30 minutes of 3-D footage of “The Amazing Spider-Man 2” — starring Andrew Garfield, as Spider-Man, left, and Jamie Foxx as Electro — at CinemaCon in Las Vegas on Wednesday night. Cut into multiple segments, a packed house at Caesars Palace previewed scenes explaining the death of Peter Parker’s parents, played by Campbell Scott and Embeth Davidtz, and the rekindling of Parker and Gwen Stacy, played by Emma Stone, as they graduate from high school.

‘Sherlock’ to Shakespeare: Benedict Cumberbatch to play Hamlet on London stage

The Associated Press

London’s Barbican Centre said Wednesday Benedict Cumberbatch will play Hamlet at the venue next year. The Lyndsey Turner-directed production of “Hamlet” will run August to October 2015, and the stint in the 1,160-seat venue is guaranteed to be a hot ticket. Cumberbatch has gained fans around the world for his role in the BBC TV drama “Sherlock” as cerebral sleuth Sherlock Holmes.

Producer Sonia Friedman called Cumberbatch “one of the most gifted and exciting actors of his generation.”

Cumberbatch, who appeared in the movies “12 Years a Slave” and “The Fifth Estate” won an Olivier theater award for his starring role in “Frankenstein” at Britain’s National Theatre in 2011.

Winfrey going on the road

Oprah Winfrey is taking a self-help show on the road to eight cities this fall, a two-day event giving fans a chance to see and possibly meet her.

The talk-show host and chief of the OWN television network said Wednesday the “Oprah’s The Life You Want Weekend” will include some of the personalities she has featured over the years. Also appearing will be “Eat, Pray, Love” author Elizabeth Gilbert and Pastor Rob Bell, with author Deepak Chopra at some of the tour stops.

Winfrey has done speaking engagements and held a few live “Oprah’s Life Class” events in recent years, but nothing of this scale, organizers said. Tickets start at \$99 and range up to \$999.

Startup offers movie investing

A new startup is offering wealthy investors a chance to finance movies starring Tom Hanks, Kate Winslet and Casey Affleck. The San Francisco-based Junction launched Wednesday. It’s a twist on the crowdfunding that has helped movies like “Veronica Mars” get made. It’s open only to those who make \$200,000 a year or have a net worth of more than \$1 million.

Junction investors share in potential profits, like normal film financiers. Contributors to projects on crowdfunding sites like Kickstarter receive rewards, like a copy of the script or a signed movie poster.

Junction films are already fully funded, but open to adding more investors.

Among the first projects are the John

Hillcoat-directed “Triple Nine,” with Affleck and Winslet, and the Dave Eggers adaptation “A Hologram for the King,” starring Hanks.

Snooki plans N.J. wedding

Officials in a northern New Jersey town are discussing whether to allow taping of an MTV show featuring Nicole “Snooki” Polizzi’s wedding.

The cast member of the reality series “Jersey Shore” and “Snooki and JWoww” spinoff intends to marry her fiancé, Jonni LaValle, at the Venetian banquet hall in Garfield in the fall. The couple has a 15-year-old son. Polizzi’s website says she’s planning a “Great Gatsby”-themed wedding.

WORLD

Appetite for whale is waning in Japan

BY MARI YAMAUCHI
The Associated Press

TOKYO — The greatest threat to Japan's whaling industry may not be the environmentalists harassing its ships or the countries demanding its abolishment, but Japanese consumers. They've lost their appetite.

The amount of whale meat stockpiled for lack of buyers has nearly doubled over 10 years, even as anti-whaling protests helped drive catches to record lows. More than 2,300 minke whales worth of meat is sitting in freezers while whalers still plan to catch another 1,300 whales per year.

Low demand adds to the uncertainty that looms ahead of an International Court of Justice ruling expected Monday on Japan's whaling in the Antarctic Ocean. The whaling is ostensibly for research, but Australia argued in a lawsuit that it's a cover for commercial hunts.

The stated goal of the research, which began in 1987, is to show that commercial whaling is environmentally sustainable, but a growing question is whether it is economically sustainable. Japan's government-subsidized whaling program is sinking deeper into debt and faces an imminent, costly renovation of its 27-year-old mother ship, Nisshin Maru.

"A resumption of commercial whaling is not a realistic option



INSTITUTE OF CETACEAN RESEARCH/AP

Japanese Institute of Cetacean Research workers measure a captured minke whale on the deck of a Japanese whaling ship in February 2009. Japan's whaling industry is experiencing a new threat — a decline in consumer interest in whale meat.

anymore, and the goal has become a mere excuse to continue research hunts," said Ayako Okubo, marine science researcher at Tokai University. "The program is used for the vested interests."

The research program began a year after an international ban on commercial hunting took effect. Japan is one of a few countries, including Norway and Iceland, which continue to hunt whales despite the moratorium. Activists from the group Sea Shepherd try to block the whalers by dragging ropes in the water to damage their propellers, and by lobbing smoke bombs at the ships, and through other methods.

Whale meat not used for study is sold as food in Japan. But according to Fisheries Agency sta-

tistics, the amount of whale meat stockpiled in freezers at major Japanese ports totaled about 4,600 tons at the end of 2012, from less than 2,500 tons in 2002. A Fisheries Agency official conceded that Sea Shepherd's efforts to harass whaling ships have kept the stockpile from growing even bigger. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to speak to the media.

Whale meat supplied half of Japan's protein needs 50 years ago, but today it's limited to specialty restaurants and school lunches in most of the country. It is a bigger part of the local diet in several coastal whaling towns allowed to conduct small-scale coastal whaling outside International Whaling Commission oversight.

N. Korean buzz on haircut rule: Fact or rumor?

BY ERIC TALMADGE
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Have all male university students in North Korea been ordered to get haircuts like their leader, Kim Jong Un? The Internet certainly says so.

The thinly sourced reports say an order went out a few weeks ago for university students to buzz cut the sides of their heads just like North Korea's leader. But recent visitors to the country say they haven't seen evidence of any mass haircutting.

The haircut reports started with a story by Washington-based Radio Free Asia, which cited unnamed sources as saying an unwritten directive from somewhere within the ruling Workers' Party went out early this month, causing consternation among students who didn't think the new do would suit them.

It also said the style reminded some of the kind of haircut associated with smugglers in bygone days.

Interesting. Weird. But reader beware: Many North Korea observers suspect it's a baseless rumor.

"I was there just a few days ago, and no sign of that," said Simon



Kim

Cockerell of Koyro Tours, which specializes in bringing foreign tourists to North Korea. "It's definitely not true."

AN AP Journalist in Pyongyang

also said he had not seen any recent changes in hairstyles among college students in the capital.

The North Korea-watching website NK News wrote a story debunking the rumor under the headline, "Why men's Kim Jong Un hairstyle requirement is unlikely true."

So maybe the barbers of Pyongyang are still sharpening their scissors. Or perhaps — like a lot of reported oddities about life in largely opaque North Korea — it's just hot air.

Choe Cheong-ha, a defector who left North Korea in 2004, said the country does have its own fashion police — members of a government-run youth organization who routinely check for people who are not dressed appropriately.

Egyptian military chief el-Sissi resigning his post to run for presidency

The Associated Press



el-Sissi

CAIRO — Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, the Egyptian military chief who last summer removed the elected Islamist president, has announced that he will run for president in elections expected next month, putting him on an apparent track to lead a nation beleaguered by ongoing turmoil and violence, a broken political order, a dilapidated economy and concerns over the chances for building a

democracy.

Wearing his military fatigues in a nationally televised speech, el-Sissi announced late on Wednesday he was resigning from the armed forces — a required step since only civilians can run for president. He declared that it was the last time he would wear his uniform because he was stepping down to run for president and continue to defend the country. He said he was "answering the demand of a

wide range of Egyptians."

El-Sissi, 59, is widely expected to win the vote and restore a tradition of presidents from military background that Egypt had for all but one year since 1952. He has been the country's most powerful figure since removing President Mohammed Morsi, and Morsi's once politically dominant Muslim Brotherhood has since been declared a terrorist group.

A nationalist fervor has gripped

the country since the removal of Morsi, who in 2012 became Egypt's first freely elected and civilian president. The ouster in July came after massive protests by millions against Morsi and the Islamists.

Since then, the military-backed interim government has waged a fierce crackdown on the Brotherhood, arresting thousands of members and killing hundreds of protesters in clashes.

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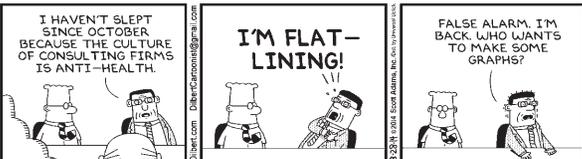
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Frazz



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					
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45	46	47				48	49					
50						51				52		
53						54				55		

ACROSS

- 1 Swabbie's tool
- 4 Grouch
- 8 Enthusiastic German asset
- 12 Commotion
- 13 Come in last
- 14 Tippy-top
- 15 Sink fixture
- 17 Relinquish
- 18 Undivided
- 19 Fictional TV planet
- 21 Part of UCLA
- 22 Subversive one
- 26 UPS rival
- 29 Lustrous black
- 30 Sapporo bash
- 31 Cupid's alias
- 32 1963 Paul Newman movie
- 33 Actress Jessica
- 34 Id counterpart
- 35 Trot
- 36 Stage a comeback
- 37 Back-related
- 39 Barbie's companion
- 40 Snoop
- 41 Busy
- 45 Labyrinth
- 48 Revelry
- 50 Burn remedy
- 51 Finished
- 52 Annoy
- 53 "The day the music..."
- 54 Prop for Potter

DOWN

- 1 Put together
- 2 Valhalla VIP
- 3 Tweet, e.g. group
- 4 Bleach brand
- 5 Kentucky Derby prize
- 6 Simile center
- 7 Toni Morrison novel
- 8 Some are one-eyed
- 9 Mimic
- 10 Clampett patriarch
- 11 Pink-slip
- 16 Heaps
- 20 Betrayer
- 23 Earth
- 24 First victim
- 25 Easter symbol
- 26 Nourish
- 27 Therefore
- 28 Entrance
- 29 Moonshine vessel
- 32 "Gee whiz!"
- 33 African language group
- 35 Jostle
- 36 "Guinness Book" entry
- 38 Haste
- 39 Singer Carpenter
- 42 "— bigger than a breadbox?"
- 43 Change
- 44 Moose kin
- 45 Frenzied
- 46 "The Greatest"
- 47 Orange "Sesame Street" Muppet
- 49 Actress Gardner

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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

3-28 CRYPTOQUIP

GW OQWGLBG JSANLTK KQWA
 PMI JPQA, GJL NBWGGSNJ
 SMNGQYALMGPTSNG BPQSLH
 P QWYMH OSOLO NOOPI.
Yesterday's Cryptquip: I SUPPOSE MANGERIE DENIZENS WHICH CRAWL ABOUT CLOSE TO THE GROUND MIGHT BE CALLED ZOO CREEPERS.
 Today's Cryptquip Clue: G equals T

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Ernie Gates

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OPINION

Obama's policies pol well, but he doesn't

By ROBERT KAGAN

Whether one likes President Barack Obama's conduct of foreign policy or not, the common assumption is that the administration is at least giving the American people the foreign policy they want. The majority of Americans have opposed any meaningful U.S. role in Syria, have wanted to lessen U.S. involvement in the Middle East generally, are eager to see the "tide of war" recede and would like to focus on "nation-building at home." Until now, the president generally has catered to and encouraged this public mood, so one presumes that he has succeeded, if nothing else, in gaining the public's approval.

Yet, surprisingly, he hasn't. The president's approval ratings on foreign policy are dismal. According to the most recent CBS News poll, only 36 percent of Americans approve of the job Obama is doing on foreign policy, while 49 percent disapprove.

That was consistent with other polls over the past year. A November poll by the Pew Research Center showed a 34 percent approval on foreign policy vs. 56 percent disapproval. The CBS poll showed a higher percentage of Americans approving of Obama's economic policies (39 percent) and a higher percentage approving his handling of health care (41 percent). Foreign policy is the most unpopular thing Obama is doing right now. And lest one think that foreign policy is never a winner, Bill Clinton's foreign policy ratings at roughly the same point in his second term were quite good — 57 percent approval; 34 percent disapproval — and Ronald Reagan's rating was more than 50 percent

at a similar point in his presidency. That leaves Obama in the company of George W. Bush — not the first-term Bush whose ratings were consistently high but the second-term Bush buried in the worst phase of the Iraq War.

Nor are Obama's numbers on foreign policy simply being dragged down by his overall job approval ratings. The public is capable of drawing distinctions. When George H.W. Bush's overall approval ratings were tanking in the last year of his presidency, his ratings on economic policy led the downward trend, but his foreign policy ratings stayed above 50 percent. According to the CBS poll, Obama's overall approval rating is 40 percent, four points higher than his foreign policy rating.

So we return to the paradox: Obama is supposedly conducting a foreign policy in tune with popular opinion, yet his foreign policy is not popular. What's the explanation? I await further investigation by pollsters, but until then I offer one hypothesis:

A majority of Americans may not want to intervene in Syria, do anything serious about Iran or care what happens in Afghanistan, Iraq, Egypt or Ukraine. They may prefer a minimalist foreign policy in which the United States no longer plays a leading role in the world and leaves others to deal with their own miserable problems. They may want a more narrowly self-interested American policy. In short, they may want what Obama so far has been giving them. But they're not proud of it, and they're not grateful to him for giving them what they want.

For many decades Americans thought of their nation as special. They were the self-proclaimed "leader of the free world," the "indispensable nation," the No. 1 super-

power. It was a source of pride. Now, pundits and prognosticators are telling them that those days are over, that it is time for the United States to seek more modest goals commensurate with its declining power. And they have a president committed to this task. He has shown little nostalgia for the days of U.S. leadership and at the same time has no interest in his job to deal with the "reality" of decline.

Perhaps this is what they want from him. But it is not something they will thank him for. To follow a leader to triumph in spires loyalty, gratitude and affection. Following a leader in retreat inspires no such emotions.

Presidents are not always rewarded for doing what the public says it wants. Sometimes they are rewarded for doing just the opposite. Bill Clinton enjoyed higher approval ratings after intervening in Bosnia and Kosovo, even though majorities of Americans had opposed both interventions before he took office. Who knows what the public might have thought of Obama had he gone through with his planned attack on Syria last August? As Col. Henry Stimson observed, until a president leads, he can't expect the people to "voluntarily take the initiative in letting him know whether or not they would follow him if he did take the lead." Obama's speech in Europe on Wednesday shows that he may understand that the time has come to offer leadership. Whether or not he does in his remaining time in office, perhaps his would-be successors can take note.

Robert Kagan, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, is an occasional contributor to The Washington Post and the author of "The World America Made." This column first appeared in The Washington Post.

Ending current setup could be a Net loss

By ANN McFEETERS

McClatchy-Tribune News Service

WASHINGTON

Here's a conundrum for our times.

The Internet has opened up free expression to millions of people around the world, including those who live in dictatorships. But the United States just announced it intends to give up oversight of the functioning of the Internet to an as-yet-unformed international organization. The idea is to give more government and private entities a bigger stake in controlling the Web. But it could also mean stifling the free flow of ideas.

You probably aren't surprised to know that this has created a huge international controversy, with pro-democracy advocates in a tizzy and academics engaged in full-throated debate. Most of us are scratching our perplexed heads.

You also might not be surprised to know that the widespread spying by the National Security Agency for the last six years has contributed to the brouhaha.

Is the Obama administration about to make a huge mistake with potentially disastrous ramifications for millions of peo-

ple around the globe?

Possibly. The Department of Commerce says that it was always intended that the U.S. oversight of the Internet over a group that doles out domain names and Internet address numbers would be temporary. The contract between the Commerce Department and the nonprofit Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or ICANN, which has been doing the daily, onerous task of technical management of the Internet in California, expires Sept. 30, 2015.

It is not clear what will take over the contract, with millions of Internet Protocol addresses and names to keep track of and manage. Commerce's contract with ICANN has worked well (Commerce always has had authority to veto ICANN's decisions), but Commerce says the "timing is right" for the new, more open work.

ICANN has matured as a competent, independent operation. But because of NSA's enthusiasm about tapping cellphones of world leaders and reading emails, many regard ICANN with suspicion because of its partnership with Commerce. Thus Commerce proposes to terminate it.

Former U.S. Trade Representative Peter just revealed that when he has important messages to convey, he sends them by snail mail because he is convinced he is being spied upon.)

But with governments increasingly being called "stakeholders" in the use of the Internet, many worry that repressive regimes get more control over the Internet, they will do what China has done — restrict access to citizens.

Commerce stresses that one of the goals of the transition from U.S. control of the administration of the Internet (by Commerce's White House-adjacent National Telecommunications and Information Administra-

tion) to international control is maintaining the "openness of the Internet."

Let's see how that is working right now. A few days ago Turkey's government banned Twitter because Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan was angry about leaks on social media that fueled a corruption scandal involving his government. He is worried about keeping his 11-year-old hold on power.

Commerce says the first step in the transition is creation of an oversight body that would "win the trust of crucial stakeholders around the world." Sure. Governments such as Russia and China will simply step aside and let well-meaning, humanitarian, benign nonprofits take over the most powerful communications tool ever invented.

There is an "out." If Commerce is convinced an international oversight body developed by ICANN would not be fair, uncorrupt, open and functional, ICANN's supervision could be extended as is. But the fallout would be extreme — the U.S. promises international control but then backs away from it?

We ponder the efficacy of international bodies such as the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency and the International Telecommunications Union and are left doubtful that an "independent" nonstate body, even one conceived by the global tech community, could oversee the complicated entity that is the Internet. Let alone maintain the innovation and fairness such a hungry beast demands.

How ironic and tragic if Edward Snowden's thoughtless unleashing of NSA secrets would end up endangering cyberspace in unforfeitable ways.

Ann McFeeters is an op-ed columnist for McClatchy-Tribune.

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.

Make it Hobby Lobby's choice The Detroit News

Hobby Lobby is the kind of business President Barack Obama says he loves. The family-owned company is successful, and its owners treat their employees like family. They receive better pay and benefits than many others in retail jobs, including wages well above the federal minimum.

But through Obamacare, the Department of Health and Human Services is requiring all businesses to provide a wide range of contraceptives free of charge to employees through their insurance plans. Part of that requirement goes against the religious beliefs of the family who owns Hobby Lobby, and they've brought a lawsuit against the Obama administration.

The company was founded by David Green in a garage in 1972. The family business has grown into more than 556 stores in 41 states with 16,000 full-time employees. Hobby Lobby pays its hourly employees 90 percent above the federal minimum wage and offers them generous insurance and retirement plans for a retail chain.

On Tuesday, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the Hobby Lobby case. This case was combined with a similar one out of Pennsylvania. The Greens are represented by the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, a nonprofit legal and educational institute.

The contraceptive mandate has created an uproar throughout the Catholic Church and beyond to the private sector. So far, 94 cases have been filed challenging the mandate — half are from for-profit companies like Hobby Lobby. The rest are from nonprofits. Eleven of the lawsuits are out of Michigan.

And Hobby Lobby owners do offer birth control to employees in their insurance plans. It's the drugs and devices that may induce an early abortion that they object to — only four out of 20 contraceptives the Obama administration wants employees to include.

Lori Windham, a Becket Fund attorney who is representing Hobby Lobby, says the law is on the side of Hobby Lobby. For instance, in a decision last June, the U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the religious rights of the Greens. Many of the other businesses and organizations challenging the mandate have had similar favorable rulings.

"We are hopeful," Windham said. If the Greens family doesn't win, Windham says this will set a "very disturbing and troubling precedent" that if you open a family business you forfeit your religious rights. And with that precedent, there would be few limits as to what the government could tell companies to do.

In a country that was founded on protecting basic, individual freedoms, that would be a hard case to make back — not to mention an affront to the Constitution. ... The Supreme Court should uphold the ability of people like the Greens to run a business without violating their conscience.

Can't just ignore ACA deadline The Kansas City (Mo.) Star

It's down to the wire, folks. Under the new federal health care law, March 31 is the deadline for signing up for health insurance, either through the federal marketplace, HealthCare.gov, or from a private insurer.



CHARLES DHRAPAK/AP

David Green, second from left, founder and chief executive officer of Hobby Lobby, walks with his wife, Barbara, center, and members of their family as they acknowledge a cheer from demonstrators at the Supreme Court on Tuesday.

If you aren't insured through an employer, you don't already have an individual policy, you have compelling reasons to act quickly. ... Going uninsured will cost you. The law requires a tax penalty for remaining uncovered. Depending on your income, you could end up paying anywhere from \$95 as a single adult to as much as \$10,150. A single person whose modified adjusted gross income is \$35,000 a year would be liable for a \$249 penalty. And you get nothing for your money. ...

Yes, Obamacare has been controversial. But it is the law, and millions of Americans are benefiting from it.

Even critics appreciate the law's consumer protections, especially a prohibition against insurers refusing affordable policies to consumers with pre-existing health conditions. And the only way to guarantee affordable coverage to sick people is to recruit healthy people into the insurance pool.

It's obvious how NRA operates Reading (Pa.) Eagle

Though the designee supports increased gun regulations, he'd play no role in forming policy.

The National Rifle Association's attack on President Barack Obama's surgeon general nominee is a too-common tale of corrupted power and political cowardice. It's also, apparently, on the verge of derailing Dr. Vivek H. Murthy's candidacy.

No doubt many NRA backers will blindly rejoice, but we caution that this story should dismay both guns-rights advocates and gun-control proponents.

Because the crux of the NRA's smear campaign simply bears no relevance to Murthy's would-be role as the country's top doctor. Murthy is Yale- and Harvard-educated. ... But the NRA began aiming its political guns at Murthy in a bullying February letter to Senate leaders, writing, "[There is a] likelihood he would use the office of surgeon general to further his pre-existing campaign against gun ownership."

It's true that Murthy advocates an assault weapons ban and mandatory training. Patching gunshot victims' gaping wounds when he was an emergency-room doctor likely helped shape Murthy's position that gun ownership is more a harmful than a helpful right.

Still, the NRA's arguments are specious. Forget that at his confirmation hearing

Murthy testified he had no intention of using the surgeon general's post to advance a gun control platform, because Murthy's intent has little to do with the fact that a surgeon general has no role in gun regulation formation. ...

Despite this nonconnection between Murthy's gun stance and a surgeon general's role, the White House is reportedly recalibrating its strategy on Murthy, and 10 Democrats from heavily pro-gun states have hinted they'd vote against him.

Shame on the NRA for exerting its alarmist might against a qualified candidate not in lockstep with its one-way agenda. Shame on Obama for not having Murthy's back. And shame on those Democrats for their me-first approach to politics.

Flight 370: need to know why The Dallas Morning News

One part of the mystery solved, another continues to build.

Malaysia's prime minister ended the rankest speculation with the announcement Monday that Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 was likely lost in the southern Indian Ocean.

It was, at least, a merciful gesture for loved ones of the 239 passengers and crewmembers after more than two weeks of agonizing over how and why a Boeing 777 could simply vanish — and whether they should hold out hope for a miracle.

A statement the airline sent to relatives said an analysis concluded that "none of those on board survived." The heartbreaking news let the families move on to a new phase of their grief.

Prime Minister Najib Razak's announcement also should end conjecture over certain implausible scenarios. ...

The detective work to piece together why the Beijing-bound plane went drastically off course is no closer to definitive answers, however.

Why did the plane's transponder abruptly go quiet as the plane neared Vietnamese airspace? Was there hidden meaning to the first officer's last words: "All right, good night?"

Was the crew overcome by a suddenly depressurized cabin? Why didn't passengers make any cellphone calls? Did lithium batteries in the plane's cargo hold ignite?

The answers are significant to both the flying public and an airline industry that desperately wants to address lingering doubts about safety. The Boeing 777 has

a remarkable safety record, with only two serious mishaps among hundreds of aircraft over 19 years. If it has an undiscovered vulnerability, analyzing that could save lives in the future.

First job matters down the line Deseret News, Salt Lake City

The rising rate of unemployment among teenagers is the perfect storm of social and economic trends that is clouding the future for American youth, particularly young men. Jobs are harder to come by. That scarcity is likely to continue as technology and automation replace jobs traditionally held by those first entering the workforce, and as long as government tinkers with policies that make it harder for companies to hire young people.

The consequences may be difficult to grapple with. Young men who are unable to find employment and vocational skills early in life are less likely to embark on a career path that ensures stability in adulthood. ...

One reason for hope is the programs springing up to provide apprenticeships for teenagers to gain real-world work experience as part of their secondary or post-high school educations. ...

In Utah, the rate of teenage employment is relatively high, according to an analysis by the Brookings Institute. The Provo area enjoys the nation's highest rate of employment among 16-19 year olds, at about 49 percent. The national rate is around 26 percent, down from about 45 percent in 2000. The higher job rate in Utah is attributed to several factors, primarily the influence of an overall low unemployment rate, a higher-than-average number of youth per capita, and a culture of attaining part-time employment at an early age.

That culture provides benefits to individuals and to society at large. To ensure that it continues, educators in Utah and nationwide should consider the kinds of initiatives to partner schools and businesses in apprenticeship programs. Existing programs could be expanded to a larger scale, extending their benefits.

Similarly, both local and national policymakers must remember not to harm to teenage employment prospects. Specifically, raising the national or state minimum wage laws are certain to narrow the opportunities available for younger workers.

Put Obama library in Chicago Chicago Sun-Times

Just say no to splitting up the Obama presidential library.

Say no to an annex in Hawaii.

Say no to a building at the University of Illinois.

Say no to a facility at Chicago State University.

Sometimes the whole really is better than the sum of its parts.

To realize its full potential, the Barack Obama presidential library and museum should be confined to a single site on Chicago's mid-South Side, with an striking distance of the University of Chicago. ...

The foundation overseeing the library last week laid out in broad terms its vision, making it a critical moment to draw a line in the sand.

The Sun-Times' Lynn Sweet said that document includes a reference to a "multi-unit facility," possibly a signal that the first couple is looking for more than one building and location. That potentially opens the door for a site in Hawaii or local sites beyond the mid-South Side.

The foundation expects to select a site in early 2015.

There is only so much money, so many artifacts, so much time. They should all be concentrated on Chicago's mid-South Side, giving each and every library visitor the richest and most rewarding experience possible.

SCOREBOARD

Sports on AFN

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

Deals

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL
AMERICAN LEAGUE
BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Assigned LHP Kelvin Herrera to AAA Bowie (L). Optioned RHP Steve Johnson and OF Henry Urube to Norfolk (L). Reassigned RHP Brian Birtcher and IF Alex Cassala to minor league camp.
CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Claimed RHP Jay Guerra off waivers from the L.A. Dodgers.
CLEVELAND INDIANS — Optioned RHP Josh Tomlin to Colorado (L).

DETROIT TIGERS — Selected the contract of SS Alex Gonzalez from Toledo (L).
KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Traded C Adam Moore to San Diego for a player to be named.
LOS ANGELES ANGELES — Waived RHP Jonny Lee for the purpose of granting him his unconditional release.
MINNESOTA TWINS — Released OF Jermaine Mitchell. Agreed to terms with pitcher Corey Lidle on a minor league contract.
PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Agreed to terms with OF Endy Chavez and C Humberto Quintero on minor league contracts.
ST. LOUIS BRAYNS — Released RHP Mark Lowe.
TEXAS RANGERS — Claimed RHP Seth Roster off waivers from the L.A. Dodgers after clearing Murphy off waivers from the Chicago Cubs. Placed RHP Tommy Hanson on irrevocable waivers for the purpose of giving him his unconditional release. Placed OF Engel Bettré on the 60-day DL.

National League
CHICAGO CUBS — Released C George Kottaras.
MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Optioned RHP Ryan Braun to AAA Milwaukee. Reassigned RHP Jose Valverde from Las Vegas (PCL). Optioned RHP Vic Black to Las Vegas (PCL).
ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Agreed to terms with RHP David Adams on a minor league contract.
SAN DIEGO PADRES — Agreed to terms with OF Jeff Francoeur on a minor league contract.

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Voided the option of RHP Ross Ohliver, who was placed him on the 60-day DL. Agreed to terms with OF Luke McCown on a one-year contract.
BASKETBALL
National Basketball Association
MILWAUKEE BUCKS — Signed D.J. Stipanovich to a 10-year contract.
Women's National Basketball Association
ATLANTA DREAM — Re-signed C Erika de Souza.

FOOTBALL
National Football League
KANSAS CITY CHIEFS — Signed DT Derrick Ross to a two-year contract.
NEW ORLEANS SAINTS — Agreed to terms with QB Luke McCown on a one-year contract.
HOCKEY
National Hockey League
ANHEIM DUCKS — Signed RW Matt Beleski to a two-year contract.
DALLAS STARS — Signed F Justin Dowling to a two-year contract.
DETROIT RED WINGS — Assigned F Pavel Buchnevich to AHL.
FLORIDA PANTHERS — Reassigned F Joey Crabb and D Ryan Whitney to San Antonio (AHL).
MONTREAL CANADIENS — Signed D Mark Bell to a two-year contract.
NASHVILLE PREDATORS — Assigned F Brent Sopel to AHL.
PHOENIX COYOTES — Recalled F J.T. Miller from Hartford (AHL).
PHOENIX COYOTES — Recalled F D Connor to AHL.
ST. LOUIS BLUES — Signed F Ryan Carpenter to a one-year contract.

SOCCER
Major League Soccer
MLS — Suspended Toronto M Jackson one game and fined him an undisclosed amount for aggressive inflammatory behavior during Cosmos's game.
NEW YORK COSMOS — Signed F Kyle Zito to a one-year contract.
COLLEGE
MID-AMERICAN CONFERENCE — Announced the UConn football team will be leaving conference after the 2015 season.
MUHLERBERG — Named Joshua Carter special teams coordinator.
RICE — Named Mike Rhoades men's basketball coach.
TARLETON STATE — Announced the return of the women's basketball coach Renee Hearne. Named Misty Wilson women's basketball coach.

College basketball

NCAA Men's tournament

EAST REGIONAL
Regional Semifinals
 At Nashville, Tenn., Friday, March 28 (29-7)
 UConn (28-8) vs. Iowa State (29-7)
 Michigan State (28-8) vs. Virginia (30-6)

Regional Championship
 Sunday, March 30
 Semifinal winners
SOUTH REGIONAL
Regional Semifinals
 At Memphis, Tenn., Friday, March 28 (29-7)
 Dayton (25-10) vs. Stanford (23-12)
 Florida (24-2) vs. UCLA (28-9)

Regional Championship
 Saturday, March 29
 Semifinal winners
MIDWEST REGIONAL
Regional Semifinals
 At Indianapolis, Friday, March 28 (29-7)
 Michigan (27-8) vs. Tennessee (24-12)
 Kentucky (26-10) vs. Louisville (31-5)

Regional Championship
 Sunday, March 30
 Semifinal winners
WEST REGIONAL
Regional Semifinals
 At Anaheim, Calif., Thursday, March 27 (29-7)
 Wisconsin (28-7) vs. Baylor (26-11)
 San Diego State (31-4) vs. Arizona (32-4)

Regional Championship
 Saturday, March 29
 Semifinal winners
WEST REGIONAL
Regional Semifinals
 At Anaheim, Calif., Thursday, March 27 (29-7)
 Wisconsin (28-7) vs. Baylor (26-11)
 San Diego State (31-4) vs. Arizona (32-4)

MEN'S NIT
Quarterfinals
Regional Semifinals
 At Louisville, Ky., Sunday, March 23, Belmont 68
 Florida State 61, Southern Miss 73
Wednesday, March 26
 Florida State 70 vs. Louisiana Tech 75
 SMU 67, California 65

At New York
Regional Semifinals
 Tuesday, April 1
 Minnesota (23-13) vs. Florida State (22-13)
 Clemson (23-13) vs. SMU (26-9)

Thursday, April 3
 Semifinal winners
CBI
Semifinals
Wednesday, March 25
 Siena 61, Illinois State 49
 Fresno State 71, Old Dominion 64

Best-of-three (1st round)
Monday, March 31
 Siena (24-9) vs. Fresno State (20-16)
Wednesday, April 2
 Fresno State at Siena
Friday, April 4
 x-Fresno State at Siena

CIT
Quarterfinals
Wednesday, March 26
 VMI 92, Columbia 69
 Pacific 75, San Diego 60
Thursday, March 27
 Towson State (20-10) at Murray State (20-11)

Boxing
Fight schedule
March 28
 At 4 Bets Casino & Lodge, New Town, S.D., "Boxing" 10 p.m. live telecast. Semifinals: Chris Ridd vs. Petr Petro; Miguel Gonzalez vs. Fernando Carrasco (8 rounds).
March 29
 At Berlin, Uyo Hernandez vs. Pawel Koldziejcz, 12, for Hernandez's IBF world title.
 At Newcastle, England, Stuart Hall vs. Martin Ward, 12, for Hall's IBF bantamweight title.
 At the Ballroom, Boardwalk Hall, Atlantic City, N.J., Sergey Kovalev vs. Cedric Braxton, 12, for Kovalev's WBO light heavyweight title; Thomas DuBourne vs. Karim Mayfield, 10, for the vacant NAIBF world title; Lowell Thomas vs. Radivoje Kaladzic, 10, cruiserweight title.
April 3
 At Fantasy Springs, Caserio, Indio, Calif., Luis Ortiz vs. Monte Barnett, 12.
 At Skyway, Washington vs. Skippp Scott, 10, heavyweight title.
 At Liacouras Center, Philadelphia, Pa., Amnour vs. Steve Cunningham, 10, for the USA heavyweight title.
 Stevens vs. Turcano Johnson, 10, middleweight title.
April 5
 At Stadthalle, Restock, Germany, Jurgens Braathem vs. Enzo Maccarelli, 12, for Braathem's WBO light heavyweight title; Tyrone Zuyge vs. George Saba, 10, super middleweight title.
 At Chihuahua, Mexico, Marco Antonio Rubio vs. Domenico Spadai, 12, for the Indio title.
April 6
 At Tokyo, Akira Yaegashi vs. Odion Zuleta, 12, for Yaegashi's WBC flyweight title.
 At San Juan, Puerto Rico, Naoya Iwano, 12, for Hernandez's WBC junior flyweight title.

NCAA Men's Division II tournament

Thursday, March 27
 At Evansville, Ind.
Saturday, March 29
 Central Missouri vs. Metro State
 West Liberty vs. S. Carolina Aiken
At Evansville, Ind.
Championship
 Semifinal winners

NCAA Women's tournament
LINCOLN REGIONAL
Regional Semifinals
 At Lincoln, Neb., Saturday, March 29 (29-6)
 UConn (36-0) vs. Ohio State (39-0)
 DePaul (24-9) vs. Texas A&M (26-8)

Monday, March 31
Regional Championship
 Semifinal winners
STANFORD REGIONAL
Regional Semifinals
 At Stanford, Calif., Sunday, March 30 (29-9)
 Stanford (30-3) vs. Penn State (24-7)
 South Carolina (28-4) vs. North Carolina (26-9)

Monday, March 31
Regional Championship
 Semifinal winners
NOTRE DAME REGIONAL
Regional Semifinals
 At Notre Dame, Ind., Saturday, March 29 (29-6)
 Kentucky (26-7) vs. Baylor (31-4)
 Notre Dame (34-0) vs. Oklahoma State (25-8)

Monday, March 31
Regional Championship
 Semifinal winners
LOUISVILLE REGIONAL
Regional Semifinals
 At Louisville, Ky., Sunday, March 30 (29-6)
 Tennessee (28-5) vs. Maryland (26-6)
 Louisville (32-4) vs. LSU (21-12)

Wednesday, March 26
 Washington State (23-10) at South Florida (21-12)
 Michigan (20-13) at Bowling Green (29-4)
 Utah Valley Hall (20-13) at Rutgers (24-9)
 Auburn (19-14) at Mississippi State (21-13)
 Minnesota (22-12) at South Dakota State (24-9)

Friday, March 28
 Colorado (19-14) vs. UTEP (26-7)

NCAA Women's Division II tournament
Wednesday, March 26
 At Erie, Pa.
 West Texas A&M vs. Pomona Southeastern
 Bentley 77, Cal Poly Pomona 62
Friday, March 28
Championship
 West Texas A&M vs. Bentley

Pro soccer
MLS
EASTERN CONFERENCE

Team	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Houston	2	0	0	6	6	2
Columbus	2	0	0	6	5	2
Philadelphia	1	1	1	4	5	4
Sporting KC	0	1	2	2	2	4
New York	0	1	2	2	2	4
New England	0	1	2	2	2	4
Montreal	0	3	0	0	0	4
D.C.	0	3	0	0	0	4

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Team	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
FC Dallas	2	0	1	7	7	4
Seattle	2	0	1	7	7	4
Vancouver	1	0	1	4	4	2
Real Salt Lake	1	0	2	4	4	2
Portland	1	0	1	4	4	2
Colorado	1	0	1	4	4	2
San Jose	0	1	1	1	1	4
Portland	0	1	1	1	1	4

Saturday's games
 Toronto at Philadelphia
 Sporting Kansas City at Colorado
 Toronto at Philadelphia
 Portland at FC Dallas
 Toronto FC at Real Salt Lake
 Columbus at Seattle FC
 New England at San Jose
Sunday's games
 Seattle at Vancouver
 Vancouver at Portland
 FC Dallas at Houston
 Real Salt Lake vs. Sporting Kansas City
Sunday, April 6
 Los Angeles at Chivas USA

Pro baseball

National League

East Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	0	0	.000	0
Miami	0	0	.000	0
Norfolk	0	0	.000	0
Philadelphia	0	0	.000	0
Washington	0	0	.000	0

Central Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	0	0	.000	0
Cincinnati	0	0	.000	0
San Diego	0	0	.000	0
Pittsburgh	0	0	.000	0
St. Louis	0	0	.000	0

West Division

Team	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	0	0	.000	0
Colorado	0	0	.000	0
San Francisco	0	0	.000	0
Arizona	0	0	.000	0

Tuesday's games
 No games scheduled
Wednesday's games
 No games scheduled
Thursday's games
 No games scheduled
Friday's games
 No games scheduled

Spring training

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Team	W	L	Pct
Tampa Bay	6	7	.464
Cleveland	18	8	.692
New York Yankees	11	4	.733
Los Angeles	18	6	.750
New York	15	5	.750
San Francisco	13	5	.733
Oakland	13	5	.733
Toronto	13	5	.733
Kansas City	11	4	.733
Chicago	9	4	.700
Houston	10	4	.714
Texas	10	4	.714
Minnesota	10	4	.714
Boston	9	3	.750

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Team	W	L	Pct
San Francisco	10	7	.588
Pittsburgh	12	6	.671
Miami	17	11	.607
Arizona	14	5	.733
Colorado	14	5	.733
Washington	14	5	.733
San Diego	10	12	.455
Florida	12	12	.500
Atlanta	12	14	.464
Cincinnati	12	14	.464
Philadelphia	11	12	.479
Los Angeles	6	10	.375
St. Louis	11	16	.407

Monday, March 31
 Semifinal winners

WNIT
Third Round
Wednesday, March 25
 Washington 62, San Diego 25
Thursday, March 26
 George Washington (23-10) at South Florida (21-12)
 Northwestern (17-15) at Indiana (20-9)
 Michigan (20-13) at Bowling Green (29-4)
 Utah Valley Hall (20-13) at Rutgers (24-9)
 Auburn (19-14) at Mississippi State (21-13)
 Minnesota (22-12) at South Dakota State (24-9)

Friday, March 28
 Colorado (19-14) vs. UTEP (26-7)

WNIT
Quarterfinals
 Toronto 10, N.Y. Yankee 6
 Detroit 1, Philadelphia 0
 St. Louis 5, Washington 2
 Atlanta 9, Miami 2
 St. Louis 2, Minnesota 2
 Baltimore (5) 5, Boston 4
 Houston 5, N.Y. Mets 6
 L.A. Angels 6, Oakland 2
 Toronto 5, Seattle 3
 Chicago White Sox 9, Cincinnati 5
 Cleveland 10, Milwaukee 2
 San Francisco 8, Colorado 2
 Arizona 14, Chicago Cubs 4
 Houston 5, N.Y. Mets 6
 Tampa Bay 4, Baltimore 6 (5) a tie fielding error

Thursday's games
 Washington vs. N.Y. Mets at Port St. Lucie, Fla.
 Atlanta vs. Detroit at Lakeland, Fla.
 Toronto vs. Philadelphia at Clearwater, Fla.
 Miami vs. St. Louis at Jupiter, Fla.
 N.Y. Yankees vs. Pittsburgh at Brandon, Fla.
 Chicago White Sox vs. Chicago Cubs at Mesa, Ariz.
 Houston vs. St. Louis vs. Milwaukee at Phoenix, Ariz.
 Arizona (ss) vs. Cincinnati (ss) at Goodyear, Ariz.
 Cleveland vs. Arizona (ss) at Scottsdale, Ariz.
 Minnesota vs. Boston at Fort Myers, Fla.
 Tampa Bay vs. Baltimore at Sarasota, Fla.
 L.A. Angels at L.A. Dodgers
 Oakland at San Francisco
Friday's games
 Boston vs. Minnesota at Fort Myers, Fla.
 Tampa Bay vs. Detroit at Lakeland, Fla.
 Miami vs. N.Y. Yankees at Tampa, Fla.
 San Francisco vs. Philadelphia
 N.Y. Mets vs. Toronto at Montreal, Quebec
 Houston vs. Texas at San Antonio, Texas
 Chicago Cubs at Milwaukee
 Cleveland vs. San Diego at San Diego, Calif.
 Chicago Cubs at Arizona
 Philadelphia vs. Seattle at Peoria, Ariz.
 L.A. Angels at L.A. Dodgers
 Oakland at San Francisco
Saturday's games
 Pittsburgh at Philadelphia
 Toronto FC at Real Salt Lake
 Quebec vs. Miami vs. N.Y. Yankees at Tampa, Fla.
 Minnesota vs. Boston at Fort Myers, Fla.
 Houston vs. Texas at San Antonio, Texas
 Detroit at Washington
 Toronto vs. Seattle at Milwaukee
 Seattle vs. Oakland at Scottsdale, Ariz.
 San Francisco vs. Oakland at Phoenix
 Chicago Cubs at Arizona
 Houston vs. Toronto at San Diego, Calif.
 L.A. Dodgers at L.A. Angels

Tennis

Sony Open

Wednesday
At The Tennis Center at Grand Park
Key Riscovany
Purse: Men, \$5.6 million (Premier 1000); Women, \$5.6 million (Premier 1000)
Surface: Hard-Outdoor
Singles
Men
 Novak Djokovic (2), Serbia, def. Andy Murray (6), Britain, 7-5, 6-3, 6-3
 Kei Nishikori (2), Japan, def. Roger Federer (5), Switzerland, 3-6, 7-5, 6-4

Quarterfinals
 Dominic Thiem (10), Slovakia, def. Agnieszka Radwanska (3), Poland, 3-6, 6-3, 6-3
 Li Ke (2), China, def. Caroline Wozniacki (1), Denmark, 7-5, 7-5

Men
Doubles
 Juan Sebastian Cabal and Robert Farah Colomina, def. Alexander Peya, Austria, and Bruno Soares (2), Brazil, 6-7, 6-4, 6-3
 Ryan Harrison and Jack Sock, United States, def. Daniel Nestor, Canada, and Nenad Zimonjic (6), Serbia, 6-7, 6-4, 6-3

Women
Doubles
 Martina Hingis, Switzerland, and Sabine Lisicki, Germany, def. Angelina Medina Garrigues, Spain, and Yaroslava Shvedova, Kazakhstan, 6-3, 6-3
 Cara Black, Zimbabwe, and Sania Mirza, India, def. Katarina Srebotnik (4), Slovenia, 6-4, 6-3

College basketball
Wednesday's scores
EAST
 Allegheny at Thiel, 67-57
SOUTH
 W.V. Marybale at Springfield, 66-41
 Berry 13, New York (Penn.) 5
 Bethel (Tenn.) 17, Freed-Hardman 9
 Carson Newman 6, King (Tenn.) 1
 Christian Brothers 7, Rhodes 3
 George Mason 10, Virginia Tech 10
 Louisville 5, W. Kentucky 3
 Miami 10, Hampton-Sydney 9
 Miami 4, Florida Gulf Coast 0
 Millsaps 12, Belhaven 5
 North Carolina 7-8, South 5-0
 NC State 11, UNC-Wilmington 2
 Valdosta State 10, East Carolina 3
 St. Augustine's 6, Clarin 3
 Spalding 10, Tennessee Tech 10
 Tennessee Tech 13, Miami (Ohio) 5
 Valdosta State 10, East Carolina 3
 Virginia 8, Longwood 1
 Virginia Intermont 10, Emory & Henry 4

MIDWEST
 Wake Forest 3, Elon 2, 12 Innings
 Winthrop 30, UNC-Charlotte 10
 Culver-Stockton 17, Avila 2-2
 North 3, Lamar 4
 Valparaiso 1
 Youngstown State 11, Indiana 4
SOUTHWEST
 Rice 3, Name 2
 Texas-Pan American at TCU, ccd.
 Oregon 12, San Francisco 2

College hockey
NCAA Division I tournament
NORTHEAST REGIONAL
At Worcester, Mass.
First Round
Saturday, March 29
 Boston College (20-10) vs. Denver (20-15)
Mass-Lowell (25-10-4) vs. Minnesota State-Mankato (26-13-1)
Championship
Saturday, March 30
 Semifinal winners
EAST REGIONAL
At Bridgeport, Conn.
First Round
Friday, March 28
 Union (N.H.) 2-0 vs. Merrimack (20-14-3)
Monday, April 6
 Merrimack (24-9-6) vs. Providence (21-10-6)
Championship
Saturday, March 29
 Semifinal winners
WEST REGIONAL
At St. Paul, Minn.
First Round
Saturday, March 29
 Minnesota (25-6-0) vs. Robert Morris (19-17-5)
Monday, April 6
 Duma (23-4-2) vs. St. Cloud State (21-10-5)
Championship
Saturday, March 30
 Semifinal winners
WEST REGIONAL
At St. Paul, Minn.
First Round
Saturday, March 29
 Minnesota (25-6-0) vs. Robert Morris (19-17-5)
Monday, April 6
 Duma (23-4-2) vs. St. Cloud State (21-10-5)
Championship
Saturday, March 30
 Semifinal winners
FROZEN FURY
At Philadelphia, Pa.
Semifinals
Thursday, April 3
 Northeast champion vs. East champion
Midwest champion vs. West champion
Championship
Saturday, April 12
 Semifinal winners

SPORTS BRIEFS

Djokovic beats Murray in Sony quarterfinals

The Associated Press

KEY BISCAYNE, Fla.—Novak Djokovic benefited from an erroneous call and claimed he didn't realize he had broken the rules. When Andy Murray walked to the net and challenged him about it, Djokovic responded with a shrug and a sheepish smile.

Murray lost the dispute, and the match. The pivotal ruling against the defending champion helped Djokovic win 7-5, 6-3 in the quarterfinals of the Sony Open.

Roger Federer was up a service break twice in the second set but lost to No. 20-seeded Kei Nishikori 3-6, 7-5, 6-4. Nishikori will play Djokovic on Friday.

The point that aggravated Murray occurred at the start of the 12th game, when he was serving at 5-6. Djokovic charged forward to volley a short ball and hit it for a winner.

Murray argued — and TV replays confirmed — he should have been awarded the point because Djokovic's racket was on the far side of the net when he hit the ball. Chair umpire Damian Steiner declined to change his call, and such rulings can't be appealed for video review.

Murray briefly discussed the matter with Djokovic.

"I went and asked Novak, and he told me he was over the net," Murray said.

"Look, it might be my mistake," Djokovic said. "I think I crossed the net with the racket. I didn't touch the net. Maybe the rule is that you are not allowed to pass on his side with the racket. I'm not sure. You tell me."

A flustered Murray committed unforced backhand errors on the next three points to lose the game and the set.

Murray took a lead in the second set but lost the final four games and the last 12 points. Afterward, he downplayed the bad call.

"I'm not angry," he said. "It maybe had a slight bearing on that game, but I was still up a break in the second set."



ALAN DIAZ/AP

Novak Djokovic hits a service return to Andy Murray during their quarterfinal match on Wednesday at the Sony Open tournament in Key Biscayne, Fla. Djokovic won in straight sets, 7-5, 6-3.

Nishikori will be playing in his second ATP Masters 1000 semifinal, and his first in 2½ years.

"I thought I really played well, especially in the third set," Nishikori said. "I was hitting balls deep and striking well. Everything was going well."

Federer was the runner-up to Djokovic at Indian Wells two weeks ago, and said he's pleased with his start to the year despite the latest loss.

"I just couldn't find my rhythm on the serve today, which was surprising," Federer said. "It's a bit frustrating, but Kei did well to stay with me. He was more consistent in the second and third, and in the end it's to his credit."

Li Na became the first Chinese woman to reach the Key Biscayne semifinals when she beat Caroline Wozniacki 7-5, 7-5. Li's opponent Thursday night will be Domini-

ka Cibulkova, who erased three match points in the second set — one when a call was overturned via replay — and beat Agnieszka Radwanska 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-3.

Six-time champion Serena Williams will play five-time runner-up Maria Sharapova in the other semifinal. Williams has beaten Sharapova 14 consecutive times.

F1 Malaysian GP plans to honor MH370 victims

SEPANG, Malaysia — Formula One teams, drivers and officials are preparing to honor the victims of flight MH370 at this weekend's Malaysian Grand Prix.

Sunday's race will be held at the Sepang circuit, adjacent to Kuala Lumpur's main airport where the ill-fated flight took off earlier this month. Authorities now say it is almost certain it crashed in the In-

dian Ocean, killing all 239 people aboard.

The Mercedes team, which is sponsored by Malaysian oil company Petronas, will have messages of support on its cars and driver helmets. Driver Lewis Hamilton said the tragedy is "just heart-breaking" and that "my heart and thoughts go out to the families and friends."

Asada in lead at worlds after record program

SAITAMA, Japan — Mao Asada of Japan set a world record on Thursday to finish first in the short program at the World Figure Skating Championships.

Skating to Chopin's Nocturne, Asada hit her trademark triple axel at the start of her routine and completed all her remaining jumps to finish with 78.66 points,

surpassing the previous record of 78.50 set by Yuna Kim at the Vancouver Olympics in 2010.

Carolina Kostner of Italy was second with 77.24 points followed by Julia Lipnitskaia of Russia, who had 74.54 points. Kim, the defending champion, has retired and Olympic gold medalist Adelina Sotnikova of Russia isn't competing at the worlds.

Akiko Suzuki, who is retiring after this event, was fourth with 71.02 points. Gracie Gold of the United States was fifth followed by compatriot Ashley Wagner.

Earlier, Aliona Savchenko and Robin Szolkowy of Germany won the pairs event, claiming their fifth title in the event since 2008.

Clark confirmed as head of MLB players' union

NEW YORK — Tony Clark was being confirmed as the new head of the Major League Baseball Players Association.

The former All-Star became acting executive director when Michael Weiner died Nov. 21, then was given the job in a unanimous vote by the union's executive board on Dec. 3. The union said Thursday that Clark was approved in a secret ballot and online vote conducted among players.

Hernia surgery ends season for Sens' Ryan

OTTAWA, Ontario — Ottawa Senators winger Bobby Ryan will miss the rest of the season because of a sports hernia. He is scheduled for surgery Thursday in Montreal.

General manager Bryan Murray says Ryan has been dealing with the injury since November. Ryan hoped to have the operation after the season but aggravated the injury last weekend.

Ryan has a team-high 23 goals with 25 assists this season. Murray says the team is confident he'll recover in time for a full summer of training.



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MLB PREVIEW



Popcorn, peanuts and snow blowers

M SPENCER GREEN/AP

Groundskeepers at U.S. Cellular Field in Chicago are using gigantic dryers placed underneath tarps to blow hot air on the field in an effort to thaw out the White Sox's home park, which had an estimated 30 inches of permafrost below the playing surface on March 17 after one of the most brutal winters the city has ever seen. Chicago's home opener is Monday against the Minnesota Twins and 10 of the White Sox's first 16 games are at home.

Grounds crews are scrambling to thaw out fields before Opening Day

By NOAH TRISTER
The Associated Press

In all his years as a groundskeeper for the Chicago White Sox, Roger Bossard has never faced anything quite like this.

The snow that piled up at U.S. Cellular Field could be dealt with easily enough. It's Chicago, after all. But the frost in the ground can be measured in feet, not inches.

To ready the field for the first pitch, Bossard is overseeing an effort akin to blowing a gigantic hair dryer under a tarp to pump hot air onto the field and thaw it out. Crews have been chipping away at ice near the right field line with shovels.

And Opening Day is a few days away.

"This has actually been the perfect storm for me," Bossard said. "I've been in this for 45 years and I've seen a lot of snow. Certainly, that's not hard to handle. ... My problem actually is the permafrost. I've actually never run into where I've got 30 inches of permafrost."

Groundskeepers all over baseball are scrambling to help their ballparks recover from months of snow and freezing temperatures that left fields looking more ready for cross-country skiers than bats and balls.

Like the White Sox, the Detroit Tigers are scheduled to play at home on Monday when the regular season begins in earnest with 13 games. The Minnesota Twins — who for so long played in the indoor confines of the Metrodome — have been digging out from their own snowy surroundings at Target Field. They at least have until April 7 before they have to play a home game.

Points farther south have been affected, too.

"It's rare that we get snow as bad as we've had this winter," said Nicole McPadyen, head groundskeeper at Camden Yards in Baltimore. Luckily, McPadyen caught a break: The snow is melting because the sun's reflection is heating the stadium.



DIANE WEISS/AP

Statues of Detroit Tigers' greets Hal Newhouser, left, Charlie Gehringer, center, and Hank Greenberg look over Detroit's Comerica Park, which was still covered in snow on March 13. The Tigers' home opener is Monday against the Kansas City Royals.

Baltimore got 26 inches of snow from December through February, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. That was almost a 50 percent increase from an average winter, but it was nothing compared to what Chicago (66.7 inches) and Detroit (78 inches) are dealing with. Boston had 56.4 inches over that three-month period, and Cleveland had 65.

The worst may be over in terms of cold weather, but the outlook for Opening Day isn't all that promising. From March 26 through Tuesday, there's a decent chance of below-normal temperatures all over the eastern half of the country, particularly near the Great Lakes.

Meanwhile, the clock is ticking.

"The back's against the wall a little bit," Bossard said.

Bossard estimated his crew removed

more than 400 tons of snow last weekend. Snow blowers and plows can help, but it's a delicate operation: Plows can only do so much before there's a risk of field damage.

Detroit also brought in heaters to blow hot air under the infield tarp. The Tigers haven't worried about the grass at Comerica Park because, well, there hasn't been any.

The Tigers are re-sodding their field after it was used for part of the NHL's Winter Classic festivities. The outfield right now consists of a sandy base that looks nothing like a baseball field.

A shipment of Kentucky bluegrass was scheduled to arrive Thursday and team vice president Ron Colangelo said this was essentially the timetable all along.

Colangelo said the process of installing the new grass should take only a few days, giving the team a bit of a grace period even

Cold openers

Weather forecasts for cities hosting possible cold-weather games on Opening Day:

	Lo	Hi	Weather
Cubs at Pittsburgh	41	62	Cloudy
Kansas City at Detroit	31	53	Cloudy
Washington at N.Y. Mets	39	50	Mostly cloudy
Boston at Baltimore	44	65	Partly cloudy
St. Louis at Cincinnati	37	67	Cloudy
Minnesota at White Sox	31	50	Showers

SOURCE: National Weather Service

if more bad weather comes through.

"Obviously, Mother Nature's been incredibly generous in the amount of snow that she's been offering," Colangelo said. "The plan is on schedule."

The Twins are also confident, and have a stadium built to handle the cold. They began playing at their open-air ballpark in 2010, and it's well equipped to combat the remnants of winter.

"We have a state-of-the-art heating system that allows us to keep the field at a constant temperature no matter what the winter brings," Twins president Dave St. Peter said. "We worry more about the seating bowl and making sure that the pedestrian plazas and walkways and gate locations are dry and ice-free and safe. We spend just as much time if not more on those areas."

The Twins begin the season on the road, something St. Peter said the team requests every season. Baltimore won't have that luxury — the Orioles are hosting the defending champion Boston Red Sox on Monday. That same day, the Tigers host Kansas City and the White Sox welcome Minnesota to what Bossard hopes will be a thawed-out opener on Chicago's South Side.

AP Sports Writers Dave Campbell and David Ginsburg contributed to this report.

MLB PREVIEW

Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Baltimore	0	0	.000	—
Boston	0	0	.000	—
New York	0	0	.000	—
Tampa Bay	0	0	.000	—
Toronto	0	0	.000	—
Central Division				
Chicago	0	0	.000	—
Cleveland	0	0	.000	—
Detroit	0	0	.000	—
Kansas City	0	0	.000	—
Minnesota	0	0	.000	—
West Division				
Houston	0	0	.000	—
Los Angeles	0	0	.000	—
Oakland	0	0	.000	—
Seattle	0	0	.000	—
Texas	0	0	.000	—
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	0	0	.000	—
Miami	0	0	.000	—
New York	0	0	.000	—
Philadelphia	0	0	.000	—
Washington	0	0	.000	—
Central Division				
Chicago	0	0	.000	—
Cincinnati	0	0	.000	—
Milwaukee	0	0	.000	—
Pittsburgh	0	0	.000	—
St. Louis	0	0	.000	—
West Division				
Los Angeles	0	0	1.000	—
Colorado	0	0	.000	1
San Diego	0	0	.000	1
San Francisco	0	0	.000	1
Arizona	0	2	.000	2
Sunday's game				
L.A. Dodgers (TBD) at San Diego (Cashner 0-0)				
Monday's games				
Chicago Cubs (Samardzija, 0-0) at Pittsburgh (Liriano, 0-0)				
Kansas City (Shields, 0-0) at Detroit (Verhulst, 0-0)				
Washington (Strasburg 0-0) at New York Mets (Lee 0-0) at Texas (Scheppers 0-0)				
St. Louis (Lester 0-0) at Milwaukee (Gallardo 0-0)				
Boston (TBD) at Baltimore (Tillman 0-0)				
Minnesota (Nolasco 0-0) at Chicago White Sox (Sale 0-0)				
St. Louis (Wainwright 0-0) at Cincinnati (TBD)				
Toronto (Dickey 0-0) at Tampa Bay (Friedel 0-0)				
Colorado (De La Rosa 0-0) at Miami (Price 0-0)				
San Francisco (Bumgarner 0-0) at Arizona (McCarthy 0-0)				
Cleveland (Masterson 0-0) at Oakland (Gray 0-0)				
Seattle (Hernandez 0-0) at Anaheim (TBD)				
Tuesday's games				
LA Dodgers at San Diego				
N.Y. Yankees at Houston				
Philadelphia at Texas				
San Francisco at Arizona				
St. Louis at Los Angeles				
Colorado at Miami				
Toronto at Tampa Bay				
Atlanta at Milwaukee				
Cleveland at Oakland				



GERALD HERBERT/AP

Yankees starting pitcher David Phelps pitches against Red Sox designated hitter David Ortiz with an empty infield during a defensive shift in the fourth inning of an exhibition game in Fort Myers, Fla., last Thursday. From the designer defenses taking over the game, to expanded replay, to opening day on a cricket ground in Australia, one thing is clear — baseball is changing.

Shift: Baseball seeing renewed focus on defense, alignments

FROM BACK PAGE

Even before the Dodgers and Diamondbacks started the season in Sydney, Major League Baseball's first regular-season games Down Under, there were serious setbacks.

Kris Medlen, Brandon Beachy, Jarrod Parker and Luke Hochevar were all out for the year with Tommy John surgery, and Patrick Corbin may soon join them.

Aroldis Chapman likely will miss at least two months after getting hit on the head by a line drive. There was no defense for that, not even those protective caps now in play for pitchers likely would've saved the Cincinnati reliever.

Defense, though, has rapidly become a major focus in the majors. Be it Dodger Stadium or Fenway Park or anywhere in-between, it's easy to spot the trend taking over baseball: Creative ways that clubs are positioning their fielders.

The Detroit Tigers even hired a defensive coordinator. Ever expect to hear about a defensive coordinator in baseball?

Matt Martin got that job, and pointed to the overloaded alignments Red Sox slugger David Ortiz sees on a daily basis.

"That's not out of the norm now. That is the norm. With left-handers, if you'd have seen this

25 years ago, the way they play Big Papi — and 15, 20 guys in the league playing like that — you'd be, 'What happened? Did I wake up and come to a softball game?'"

Makes perfect sense to Pittsburgh second baseman Neil Walker.

"The data is so undeniable, the defensive metrics are so prevalent," he said. "You have so much more information, you should use it."

"The data is so undeniable... You have so much more information, you should use it."

Neil Walker
Pirates 2B

posed to be? But we practice it, I practice my throws from extreme angles and I'm comfortable."

An hour later, Walker was standing in shallow right when Phillies slugger Ryan Howard batted in a spring training game. Walker made a diving stop on a hard

grounder, scrambled to his feet, but threw the ball past first base.

"It's not an exact science," he said.

Fielding always lagged far behind pitching and hitting in statistical analysis, mainly because it was hard to quantify glove work. Teams are trying hard to play catchup.

Baseball Info Solutions tracks defensive shifts, and reports there were 8,134 instances in the majors last season. That's way up from 4,577 in 2012, and far more than the 2,358 in 2011.

"It's not as much fun as it used to be," Tampa Bay manager Joe Maddon lamented. "Everybody's using it."

Maddon is a shifting maven, having employed four-man outfields and routinely putting three players on one side of the dirt at different depths.

In a recent exhibition, with a runner on third base, Maddon overshifted his infield in the middle of an at-bat. No luck. A wild pitch scored the run.

Maddon has a theory on why it took teams so many years to shift around.

"They were afraid they might be wrong," he said. "But it always made sense to adjust your fielders. Why would you play someone in a

place where a guy never hits it?" Scioscia's strategy paid off this month for the Los Angeles Angels when his repositioned left fielder handled a grounder and began a bases-loaded DP in extra innings. Williams, Washington's first-year manager, tried something with the bases loaded in the eighth and paid the price.

Offered San Diego manager Bud Black: "Yes, my thinking has changed."

"We will move," he said. So will the Reds, after new Cincinnati manager Bryan Price talks to his men on the mound.

"Pitchers can be pretty temperamental about defensive alignment. We know that," he said. "We want to have the discussion beforehand, not after."

St. Louis general manager John Mozeliak wants to start earlier, letting his minor leaguers get accustomed to moving.

Minnesota's Jason Kubel has been on the other side a lot.

The lefty hitter debuted a decade ago and rarely saw defensive shifts, if ever. Against the Yankees this month, he faced three fielders on the right side every at-bat.

"Now, I think it would be weird if I came up and saw that someone was moved," Kubel said.

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NHL/COLLEGE FOOTBALL

NHL roundup

Lundqvist, Rangers top Flyers

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Henrik Lundqvist didn't start this night with a cakewalk in his honor, and he didn't finish it with a shutout.

However, he and the New York Rangers skated off the ice Wednesday with a key 3-1 victory over the rival Philadelphia Flyers and an important two points in the Metropolitan Division playoff race.

Lundqvist stopped 30 shots and came within 1.53 of his second shutout in three games. That was enough to earn his 30th win — a mark he has reached eight times in his nine-season NHL career.

"It was huge. I thought we played a really strong game," said Lundqvist, who is in 24th place on the NHL win list with 306. "We just have to keep going, not think too much, just keep on our details."

Lundqvist was honored Monday for breaking the Rangers' records for career wins and shutouts.

The Rangers stretched their winning streak to five games and moved three points ahead of third-place Philadelphia by winning what could be a playoff preview. New York has eight games left while the Flyers have 10.

"It's going to pay off to not make it too complicated for ourselves or think about the standings," Lundqvist said.

Derek Dorsett scored in the first period, defenseman Ryan McDonagh added a goal in the second and Dominic Moore made it 3-0 in the third against Steve Mason, who made 26 saves.

The Flyers' Jarche Voraček scored his 21st goal off a faceoff with 1:53 to go to make it 3-1. Voraček scored for the third straight game.

McDonagh, who has been on an offensive hot streak recently, did it all in scoring his 14th of the season to give the Rangers a 2-0 lead. He stopped a clog attempt at the center of the blue line, skated into the right circle, and snapped off a wrist shot that nestled into the top right corner of the net.

Cautkus 5, Wild 2: David Booth scored two unassisted goals and Eddie Lack made 29 saves to lead the visiting Vancouver over Minnesota.

Zac Kassian, Daniel Sedin and Ryan Kesler also scored for Vancouver as the Canucks try to make a late push to overtake Phoenix and Dallas for the Western Conference's final wild-card playoff spot.

Ducks 3, Flames 2: Andrew Cogliano scored the go-ahead goal at 14:41 of the third period as visiting Anaheim beat Calgary.

Nick Bonino and Mathieu Perreault also scored for Anaheim, which kicked off a three-game road trip to Western Canada with its sixth road win in its last eight games away from Honda Center.

NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
x-Boston	73	45	17	11	104	230	153
Montreal	74	41	26	7	89	190	184
Tampa Bay	72	35	24	9	87	214	193

Metropolitan Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Pittsburgh	74	41	29	4	86	177	180
N.Y. Rangers	74	41	29	4	86	197	214
Philadelphia	74	38	27	7	83	205	204

Wild Card	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Columbus	72	37	29	6	80	204	196
Detroit	72	33	25	14	80	191	204

Washington	73	34	27	12	80	212	218
Toronto	74	36	30	8	80	216	231
New Jersey	72	31	28	13	75	175	187
Ottawa	72	29	29	14	72	205	243
Carolina	71	31	32	9	71	181	205
N.Y. Islanders	72	28	35	9	63	202	243
Florida	72	27	38	8	62	178	237
Buffalo	72	20	44	8	48	138	212

Western Conference

Central Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
x-St. Louis	72	49	16	7	105	233	163
Chicago	72	42	15	15	99	244	188
Colorado	72	45	21	6	96	221	198

Pacific Division	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
x-San Jose	72	47	18	7	103	227	177
x-Anaheim	72	47	18	7	101	231	182
Los Angeles	72	41	25	6	89	244	188

Wild Card	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Minnesota	71	35	26	11	85	182	183
Phoenix	73	35	26	12	82	202	207

Dallas	72	34	27	11	79	203	207
Vancouver	74	34	30	10	78	202	198
Winnipeg	72	32	30	10	73	202	213
Nashville	73	31	31	11	73	177	218
Edmonton	72	28	35	9	59	180	241

Notes: Top three teams in each division and two wild-card teams with the most points qualify for the playoffs. Two points awarded for a win, one point for overtime loss.

x = clinched playoff spot
Wednesday's games
 Vancouver 5, Calgary 2
 N.Y. Rangers 3, Philadelphia 1
 Anaheim 3, Calgary 2

Thursday's games
 Chicago at Boston
 Phoenix at New Jersey
 Los Angeles at Pittsburgh
 Montreal at Detroit

Friday's games
 N.Y. Islanders at Tampa Bay
 Dallas at Philadelphia
 Minnesota at St. Louis
 Buffalo at Nashville
 Vancouver at Colorado
 Winnipeg at San Jose

Saturday's games
 Toronto at Philadelphia
 Pittsburgh at Dallas
 Chicago at Ottawa
 New York at Columbus
 N.Y. Rangers at Calgary
 Anaheim at Edmonton

Sunday
 Philadelphia at Dallas

Wednesday
 Ducks 3, Flames 2

Anaheim 1 0 0 2-3
 Calgary 1 1 1 1-2
First Period—1, Anaheim, Bonino 18 (Vatner, Hiller), 16:57 (pp).
Second Period—1, Calgary, McGrattan 4 (Westgarth, Woodbury), 4:44, 2, Calgary, Suter 1 (Rohde, Silverberg), 12:41.
Third Period—4, Anaheim, Perreault 16 (Vatner, Maroon), 5:22, 5, Anaheim, Cogliano 21 (Rohde, Silverberg), 14:41.
Shots on Goal—Anaheim 9-16—9-34, Calgary 11-11-11-11.
Power-play opportunities— Anaheim 1 of 2, Calgary 0 of 2.
Goalies— Anaheim, Hiller 29-11-6 (34 shots-32 saves), Calgary, Maro 13-11-4 (24-31-5).

A—19,289 (19,289), T—2:29.

Rangers 3, Flyers 1

Philadelphia 0 0 1-1
 N.Y. Rangers 1 1 1 1-3
First Period—1, N.Y. Rangers, Dorsett 4 (Boyle), 8:41.
Second Period—2, N.Y. Rangers, McDonagh 5:34.
Third Period—3, N.Y. Rangers, D'Amore 6 (Hamilus, Hansen), 11:12, 6, Vancouver, Kesler 2 (Higgins), 12:01 (pp), 7, Minnesota, Niederreiter 12 (Haula, Suter), 12:25.

Shots on Goal—Philadelphia 15-10-6—31-30, N.Y. Rangers, 19-23-17-55.
Goalies— Philadelphia, Mason 30-17-6 (25 shots-22 saves), N.Y. Rangers, Lundqvist 30-22-4 (31-30).
A—18,006 (18,006), T—2:31.

Canucks 5, Wild 2

Vancouver 2 1 2 2-5
 Minnesota 1 1 1 1-2
First Period—1, Vancouver, Booth 7, 15:39, 2, Minnesota, Coyle 10 (Koviu, 11).
Second Period—3, Vancouver, Booth 8, 11:52, Vancouver, Suter 12 (Richardson), 19:02.

Third Period—5, Vancouver, D'Sedin 14 (Hamilus, Hansen), 11:12, 6, Vancouver, Kesler 2 (Higgins), 12:01 (pp), 7, Minnesota, Niederreiter 12 (Haula, Suter), 12:25.

Shots on Goal—Vancouver 30-19-17—31-30, Minnesota 19-15-7-31.
Power-play opportunities— Vancouver 4 of 4, Minnesota 2 of 2.
Goalies— Vancouver, Lack 15-14-4 (31 shots-28 saves), Minnesota, Kuehler 12-7-4 (12-9), Bryzgalov 0(0-3 third, 7-5).
A—19,014 (17,954), T—2:24.



PAUL BEATTY/AP

Northwestern quarterback Kain Colter, right, speaks while College Athletes Players Association President Ramogi Huma listens during a news conference in Chicago on Jan. 25. On Wednesday, the National Labor Relations Board issued a landmark ruling that gives football players at Northwestern University the green light to unionize.

Northwestern union ruling comes at bad time for NCAA

By TIM DAHLBERG

The Associated Press

They're battling in courtrooms and could one day meet over a bargaining table. About the only things the two sides in the debate over big-time college athletics agree on is that things are changing.

bringing in hundreds of millions in bloated television contracts. Coaches making the kind of salaries that late UCLA legend John Wooden wouldn't recognize. Athletes insisting on basic rights, if not outright cash.

And now a union for football players at Northwestern that would previously have been unthinkable in college sports.

A riling Wednesday that the Northwestern football team can bargain with the school as employees represented by a union may not by itself change the way amateur sports operate. But it figures to put more pressure on the NCAA and the major conferences to give something back to the players to justify the billions of dollars the players bring in and never see.

There's huge money at stake — nearly \$18 billion alone just in student-athletes coming on the Northwestern basketball tournament and bowl games. Already fighting a flurry of antitrust lawsuits challenging its control of college athletics, the NCAA can't afford too many more defeats.

"This is a colossal victory for student-athletes coming on the heels of their recent victories," said Marc Edelman, an associate professor of law at City University of New York who specializes in sports and antitrust law. "It seems not only the tide of public sentiment but also the tide of legal rulings has finally turned in the direction of college athletes and

against the NCAA."

For the NCAA, the timing of a National Labor Relations Board opinion allowing a union at Northwestern couldn't have been worse. In the middle of a tournament that earns schools close to \$1 billion a year, it is being taken to task not only for not paying players, but for not ensuring their health and future welfare.

"Fifty years ago the NCAA invented the term student-athlete to try and make sure this day never came," said former UCLA linebacker Ramogi Huma, the designated president of Northwestern's would-be football players' union. "Northwestern players who stood up for their rights took a giant step for justice. It's going to set a precedent for college players across the nation to do the same."

Maybe. The players currently at Northwestern may have graduated by the time the team gets a chance to bargain — if it ever does. The university is appealing the ruling to the full NLRB and the idea that football players are university employees is one that the NCAA will almost surely continue to fight.

"We frequently hear from student-athletes, across all sports, that they participate to enhance their overall college experience and for the love of their sport, not to be paid," the NCAA said in a statement. It was that love of the sport that drew going Wildcats quarterback Kain Colter — as well as a scholarship that university officials value at around a quarter million dollars. But Colter, backed by lawyers with the United Steel-

workers union, began the union push after growing disenchanted with the time demands placed on him in football that forced him to drop his plans for medical school.

Colter also worried about the long-term health risks of football long after players have left school. Players have said they want more research into concussions and other traumatic injuries, and insurance and guarantees that will be covered for medical issues later in life. They also want money for continuing education and for schools to offer four-year scholarship deals instead of year-to-year pacts.

By itself, the ruling could be little more than an irritant to private universities and the NCAA.

But combined with the antitrust lawsuits — one filed just last week by a prominent attorney called the organization an "unlawful cartel" — they present a clear challenge to the unique way college sports operates.

One of those suits, filed by former UCLA basketball star Ed O'Bannon, is scheduled for trial June 9 in California and is being carefully watched by those on both sides of the issue. O'Bannon, who led his team to the national championship in 1995, sued after seeing his likeness in a video game licensed by the NCAA without his permission.

“This is a colossal victory for student-athletes coming on the heels of their recent victories.”

Marc Edelman

Sports and antitrust law professor at City University of New York

NCAA TOURNAMENT

Last two national champs meet

Louisville, Kentucky renew state rivalry in Midwest regional semifinals

By GARY B. GRAVES
The Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Louisville's quest of fulfilling coach Rick Pitino's hopes for the Cardinals repeating as national champions and becoming a "mini-dynasty" hinge on beating archrival Kentucky.

That's going to be a tough challenge against the Wildcats, who have been a thorn in the Cardinals' side.

Eighth-seeded Kentucky (26-10) enters Friday night's Midwest regional showdown against fourth-seeded Louisville (31-5) with a 3-2 edge in the NCAA tournament and a 31-15 series lead. The Wildcats have won five of the last six against Louisville, including at the 2012 Final Four en route to their eighth national championship, and a 73-66 victory last year in Lexington on Dec. 28.

Kentucky would love to dash Louisville's dream of a third straight Final Four appearance, considering the Wildcats are trying to win their own second title in three years.

For Louisville to win, the Cardinals need to forget history and focus on what they've been doing to win 14 of their last 15.

"We're looking for revenge," former Louisville great Darrell Griffith said Wednesday. "We didn't play a good game at Kentucky, and they've got a real good team (that's) playing the way a lot expect them to play now."

"We've got a great team. We're undisciplined, but that doesn't matter. You see a lot of teams on the sidelines now. You play to your strengths and which team's strengths prevail is the one that's going to win. Everybody's got to have their 'A' game from here on out."



RICK STIGG, KANSAS CITY STAR/MCT

Louisville and Kentucky met in the 2012 Final Four, which Kentucky won 69-61 on the way to its eighth national championship.

Louisville's veteran squad aims to become the first repeat champion since Florida went back-to-back in 2006 and '07. Pitino set that as a goal and said before the season that the Cardinals have a chance to achieve "mini-dynasty" by repeating the table once again.

The Cardinals couldn't get it done in their first meeting with the latest group of heralded Kentucky freshmen, who began the season ranked No. 1, expectations of winning the school's ninth title and possibly going unbeaten. And now they're playing their

best basketball of the year.

While the unbeaten projection went bust with the Wildcats' loss to Michigan State in the season's third game — not to mention, several defeats down the stretch — they've revived their title prospects with an impressive post-season highlighted by Sunday's stunning upset of Wichita State.

The Wildcats seek another upset of a higher seed when they take on Louisville.

"It's a big step for" the Wildcats, said former Kentucky coach Joe B. Hall, who won the 1978 title. "They had a tough road in the second game against Wichita State, the only undefeated team in the tournament, and now they face Louisville."

"If they win that game, they'll (possibly) have to face a No. 2 seed (Michigan) and maybe have to face two No. 1 seeds."

Former Cardinals coach Denny Crum considers Friday's game a fitting challenge for Louisville's march toward another championship.

"It's a rival game and it means moving on to the next level in the NCAA tournament, getting to the round of eight and having a chance to make it to a Final Four again," said Crum, who won two titles with Louisville. "That's the biggest motivation. Sure, it's a rival game, but that's just part of it. Both want to win, and that's the way it should be."

Pitino has been on both sides of the rivalry, winning the 1996 title with Kentucky while going 6-2 against Louisville. With the Cardinals he's just 5-9 against the Wildcats and has called the 2012 Final Four loss to Kentucky in New Orleans one of the hardest to get over because of his belief in Louisville's title potential.

Games on AFN



No. 2 Michigan (27-8)
vs. No. 11 Tennessee (24-12)
AFN-Sports
Midnight Friday CET
8 a.m. Saturday JKT



No. 3 Iowa State (28-7)
vs. No. 7 Connecticut (28-8)
AFN-Xtra
12:15 a.m. Saturday CET
8:15 a.m. Saturday JKT



No. 4 Louisville (31-5)
vs. No. 8 Kentucky (26-10)
AFN-Sports
2:30 a.m. Saturday CET
10:30 a.m. Saturday JKT



No. 1 Virginia (30-6)
vs. No. 4 Michigan State (28-8)
AFN-Xtra
2:45 a.m. Saturday CET
10:45 a.m. Saturday JKT



ERIC GAV/AP

Coach Fred Hoiberg has Iowa State in the Sweet 16 for the first time in 14 years.

Fans embracing Iowa State's run

By LUKE MEREDITH
The Associated Press

AMES, Iowa — Iowa State coach Fred Hoiberg appears to be exceptional at everything except dancing, and he's put together a roster full of big personalities who play fast and typically come through in the clutch.

The Cyclones' fan base has found it easy to pull for this year's team.

If Iowa State keeps winning, the rest of the nation might soon follow suit. Hoiberg's endearingly awkward post-game dance moves — which became an Internet sensation after he was caught on camera in a joyous Iowa State locker room Sunday — also perfectly encapsulated the fun the Cyclones are having these days.

Iowa State set a school record with nearly 11,500 season tickets sold this season and turned the Big 12 title game in Kansas City earlier this month into a virtual home game.

Cyclones supporters should also be out in solid numbers Friday in New York

when third-seeded Iowa State (28-7) faces UConn (28-8) in its first Sweet Sixteen appearance in 14 years.

"Our players have really bonded with our fan base. They really seem to relate to them for whatever reason. You've got guys from not only all over the nation, but a couple of Canadian kids, different countries. But they're great kids, and I think people see that," Hoiberg said. "They're great in the community. I think people relate well to that, especially central Iowa."

None of the players with significant roles for the Cyclones have come from anywhere near Ames. But what the Cyclones share is a passion for the game and deep respect for Hoiberg, the former Iowa State star whose vision lured them all to a small college town tucked into seemingly endless tracts of farm land.

The best example might be Pittsburgh native DeAndre Kane, who has blossomed in Ames after a contentious split with Marshall in the offseason.

Kane, whose All-Big 12 season was high-

lighted by a game-winning drive in Sunday's win over North Carolina, has found redemption and a sense of community in just one season at Iowa State.

Sophomore forward Georges Niang, a wise-cracking kid from the Boston area, has endeared himself to fans with a charismatic personality and a game that's part point guard and part center.

Forward Dustin Hogue's leg-flailing enthusiasm for rebounding and dunks has made the Yonkers, N.Y., native a big hit.

Canadian Naz Long is beloved for his ability to hit clutch threes.

Monte Morris, a freshman from Flint, Mich., has made a strong first impression because of his remarkable poise.

Then there's senior Melvin Ejim, the Big 12 Player of the Year and an academic All-American from Toronto.

Ejim has been a rare constant in a program defined by change, and his willingness to embrace a new team dynamic each season has been crucial in the success of Hoiberg's transfer-heavy system.

NCAA TOURNAMENT



KUCHINO SATO/AP

Michigan State head coach Tom Izzo, right, talks to forward Matt Costello during the Big Ten Conference tournament. The Spartans have become a popular pick, including by President Barack Obama, to win the NCAA tournament. They play top-seeded Virginia in the regional semifinals Friday night.

Izzo eager to prove fans right

By LARRY LAGE
The Associated Press

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Tom Izzo hopes he has not changed much since succeeding Jud Heathcote at Michigan State nearly 20 years ago.

The national championship coach with six Final Four appearances acknowledged there's one way he's different for sure.

"Back 15 years ago, I wanted to prove everybody wrong," Izzo said Tuesday. "Now I kind of look at it the other way. I'd like to prove everybody right. And I'm more embracing that than I am panicking over it."

The fourth-seeded Spartans are slightly favored to beat top-seeded Virginia on Friday night and are a popular pick to win three more games for the school's third national title.

"The best team who plays the best is going to win," Izzo said. "And, that's what we've got to do, no matter who's the favorite, who's the underdog, where the bull's-eye is, who's picking you to win."

"I guess the only thing is I don't mind letting down alums, but man, the President, I don't want to let him down. That's a little bigger."

President Barack Obama is among the many people who have picked Michigan State to win it all.

"If Izzo can guide the Spartans to a second national title, NBA teams might make another run at hiring him.

The Atlanta Hawks and Cleveland Cavaliers are among the franchisees who have wanted him to make the leap to the league in the past, and USA Today has reported Detroit Pistons owner Tom Gores is "expected to go after," Izzo.

"I swear to you, I have not talked to one soul from the Pistons," Izzo said after Tuesday's practice.

Izzo said he has never met or talked to Gores, a Michigan State graduate.

"That's the funny thing, somebody said a month ago that that heard we talked on the phone," Izzo said. "I got a call about that."

NBA teams, and some colleges, have wanted to woo Izzo away from the place he has called home since 1983 — when Heathcote hired him as a part-time assistant — because he has won a lot, especially when it matters most.

Michigan State is in the round of 16 for the sixth time in the last seven years — the only school to pull off that feat — and for the 12th time in 17 years under Izzo.

The native of Iron Mountain has won 41 NCAA tournament games, a total that trails just four active coaches: Duke's Mike Krzyzewski, North Carolina's Roy Williams, Syracuse's Jim Boeheim and Louisville's Rick Pitino.

Virginia coach Tony Bennett was an assistant for his father, Dick Bennett, at Wisconsin 14 years ago when the Spartans beat the Badgers in the Final Four and went on to defeat Florida for the national championship.

"Truly one of the finest teams I've seen, individual talent, but team collective in terms of toughness and complete on both ends," Tony Bennett recalled. "Just a war and it was great to play in the Final Four, but it was hard to come by buckets in that game. I can remember a lot of people thought it wasn't the prettiest game, and maybe there's some truth in that, but it was so hard to get looks."

Izzo started sending four players after offensive rebounds early in his head-coaching career because getting to a missed shot to attempt another field goal was his best offense. He also has pressed his teams to play physical, man-to-man defense as soon as opponents cross halfcourt.

"Those principles have stayed with him just as his relentless work ethic has over the years."

"In so many ways, he hasn't changed," Michigan State athletic director and former roommate Mark Hollis said. "He has always had an attention to detail that served him well and he hasn't lost that. He has always developed genuine friendships all over campus — and everywhere else — because he figures one person can help another."

"The only difference is back in 1983, he got yelled at. Now, he's doing the yelling."

Spartans senior Adreian Payne, though, said those who see Izzo ranting and raving on the sideline and having nose-to-nose conversations with his players don't see the coach he knows when no one is around.

"Off the court, he talks to you about your game and your life," Payne said. "It's just love."

AP Sports Writer Hank Kurz Jr. in Richmond, Va., contributed to this report.

Harris' love-fest heading to NYC

By HANK KURZ JR.
The Associated Press

Joe Harris' senior season at Virginia has been something of a love-fest.

A first-team All-ACC selection as a junior, Harris was a third-team choice this year, a season when he assumed a lesser role in Virginia's offense, but a greater role in the Cavaliers' sense of togetherness.

With the Cavaliers having their best season in decades, and heading into a final 16 matchup against Michigan State on Friday night at Madison Square Garden, the signs of affection keep appearing.

"With the Cavaliers having their best season in decades, and heading into a final 16 matchup against Michigan State on Friday night at Madison Square Garden, the signs of affection keep appearing.

"Joe, pass me the rock," read a large orange sign displayed by a young lady at a Cavaliers' home game this season. On it was a drawing of a diamond ring, causing the clean-cut Harris to laugh. And blush.

"I mean, it was a creative sign. It looked good," he said, somewhat sheepishly.

Another woman arrived at the NCAA tournament displaying a sign asking Harris to the prom, and when the Cavaliers were beating Memphis 73-69 on Sunday night to earn their first trip to the Sweet 16 since the 1995 team reached the regional finals, a man held a sign professing his "man crush" on Harris.

In some respects, the man could have been coach Tony Bennett, who recruited the Chelan, Wash., native when he was at Washington State and convinced him to come try to make history when he took the Virginia job in 2009.

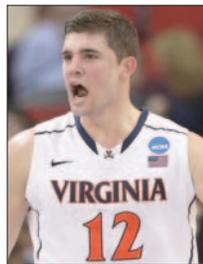
"He said that this is a place that's dying to be a basketball school. People here are just waiting for this team to get good and they have some history and it was something that he could establish on his own," Harris recalled. "It's very enticing to a young kid to tell him, 'You could be the start of changing the program around and be the foundation to what Virginia basketball could be in the future.'"

In four years, Harris has become such a Bennett disciple that he often uses the same words to explain what happened in games, a tendency that teammates have picked up on, and like having some fun with.

"Guys make fun of me quite a bit, saying that I'm like his son and stuff like that. They always joke around because we have a same barber so we have a similar haircut," Harris said, laughing. It was worse last season, before Penn State transferred forward Harris said, because Jesper gave him the best grief.

"He gave me this nickname, Jebediah, saying I was like the chosen child to coach Bennett," he said.

Like Bennett, Harris is rarely demagogic on the court, but while the Cavaliers rely on others



CHUCK BURTON/AP

Virginia guard Joe Harris played a smaller part in the team's offense this season, but helped start the team on stretch of 21 wins in 23 games, including capturing their first ACC tournament title in 38 years.

for an injection of energy and fire, it was Harris who made perhaps the biggest call of the season.

It came on New Year's Eve, a day after Virginia was embarrased 87-52 at Tennessee. Harris went to Bennett's office wanting to talk, and when he learned the coach was at home, that was Harris' next stop.

"I just told him ... I felt like we had underachieved up to this point in the season and I had higher expectations and I had envisioned the season going differently," Harris said of the meeting.

In the days that followed, players talked and things changed. Harris and Mitchell recognized that their roles needed to be more based on what they had to offer to a deeper roster this year than on what they had been expected to do a year earlier. The Cavaliers have won 21 of 23 games since, including their first Atlantic Coast Conference tournament title in 38 years.

Bennett, who used Harris as a decoy in a tie game against Pittsburgh, freeing up Malcolm Brogdon for a game-winning shot at the buzzer, said the senior knows there are times he needs to be more aggressive.

Harris was voted the most outstanding player of the ACC tournament, and has led them in scoring in three of five postseason games, including a 16-point effort in the victory against Memphis.

He's averaging 14.8 points in the postseason, up from 11.7 before that, to lead the team.

"I think one of Joe's strengths is he is unselfish, and we've talked about that, but I don't worry about him too much because he does seem to have a feel when to be assertive and look for stuff and when to let it come," Bennett said.

"I think Joe's feel is good. He needs to be aggressive, but with soundness."

SPORTS



Home sweet home

Pacers have clear path to home-court advantage after win over Heat | **Page 28**

MLB

Major shift

From designer defenses to instant replay, baseball is undergoing transformation

By **BEN WALKER**
The Associated Press

Mike Scioscia moved his left fielder onto the infield dirt, then watched him start a double play. Matt Williams tried a similar trick — he put his right fielder on the grass behind the mound, only to see a bases-loaded triple fly into the vacated spot.

All over the majors this year, the shift is on. From the designer defenses taking over the game, to expanded replay, to opening day on a cricket ground in Australia, baseball is changing.

Those scraggly beards of the World Series champion Boston Red Sox? Shaved off, mostly. Soon Derek Jeter will be gone, too. “You can’t do this forever,” the Yankees captain said. “I’d like to, but you can’t do it forever.”

Ryan Braun and the Biogenesis bunch are back in, recklessly crashing into catchers is an automatic out. Robinson Cano, Shin-Soo Choo and Japanese ace Masahiro Tanaka changed sides, as did Jacoby Ellsbury, Prince Fielder and Curtis Granderson.

Plus, there’s a rookie with real pedigree — sweet Hank the Dog got a second chance. He found a home in Milwaukee; no telling if he’ll later visit Petco Park.

This spring has been much rougher for others.

SEE SHIFT ON PAGE 27

‘It’s not as much fun as it used to be. Everybody’s using it.’

Joe Maddon

Rays manager, on the increased use of defensive shifts in MLB

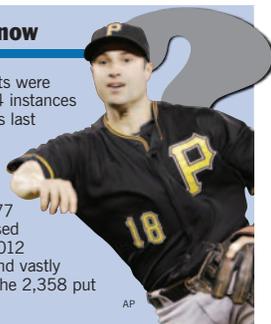
Tampa Bay Rays manager Joe Maddon is a shifting maven, having employed four-man outfields and routinely putting three players on one side of the dirt at different depths. The strategies Maddon has employed for years are now finding wider acceptance among MLB managers.

CHRIS O’MARA/AP

Did you know

Defensive shifts were used in 8,134 instances in the majors last season, a marked increase from the 4,577 shifts used in the 2012 season, and vastly more than the 2,358 put on in 2011.

AP



SOURCE: The Associated Press

