ISIS releases video of Niger ambush on US troops

By John Vandiver
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Islamic State militants have released a video that purportedly shows scenes from an October ambush in Niger in which four U.S. soldiers were killed.

The video, circulated on social media on Sunday, shows a small team of U.S. troops under heavy gunfire. Overlaid with music and propaganda messages, it opens with militants appearing to assemble before the ambush.

The nine-minute video then cuts to the view from a U.S. soldier’s helmet, seized by the militants after the attack, which shows the ambush in graphic detail. This part of the video suggests the troops were heavily outgunned, with the sound of fire pouring in from several directions.

The military said it was aware of the ISIS propaganda video and asked that the imagery not be released.

A portion of the video shows the Americans crouching behind their Toyota Land Cruiser and a truck. The soldiers fired smoke grenades, which could have been used to shroud their position and to guide in airstrikes.

SEE NIGER ON PAGE 5
US aircraft carrier arrives in Vietnam for historic port visit

BY TYLER HLAVAC
Stars and Stripes

The USS Carl Vinson pulled into Danang Bay on Monday, becoming the first American aircraft carrier to visit Vietnam since the war there ended more than four decades ago.

The four-day port call — which U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Dan Kritenbrink called an "enormously significant milestone" that shows "U.S. support for a strong, prosperous, and independent Vietnam" — will include more than 5,000 sailors from the Carl Vinson, the guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Champlain and the guided-missile destroyer USS Wayne E. Meyer.

Servicemembers will participate in cultural and professional exchanges during community service projects, sports competitions and receptions, a Navy statement said. The 7th Fleet band will perform free concerts.

Sailors also will visit a center for victims of Agent Orange, a defoliant used by the U.S. military during the war, according to a report in The New York Times. The chemical has caused major health problems for many individuals who were exposed.

"Through hard work, mutual respect, and by continuing to address the past while we work toward a better future, we have gone from former enemies to close partners," Kritenbrink said in the Navy statement.

The U.S. normalized relations with Vietnam in 1995 and lifted its fall patrol late last year. The Carl Vinson is filling in for the Japan-based USS Ronald Reagan, the Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier. The Ronald Reagan began its Selected Restricted Availability maintenance period in January at Yokosuka Naval Base after completing its fall patrol late last year.

"Increased cooperation between the two countries in economic, diplomatic and military areas would serve as a counterbalance to Beijing's expansionism," the statement said.

The Carl Vinson is anchored Monday at Tien Sa Port in Danang, Vietnam.

Correction

A March 1 story about a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on the proposed 2019 Cyber Command budget should have said Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, asked Adm. Mike Rogers, who leads U.S. Cyber Command and the National Security Agency, which federal agency or military command takes charge during a cyberattack.
**Slur found on Okinawa base theater marquee**

**By Matthew M. Burke**

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The Marine Corps is investigating the posting of a racial slur to a base theater marquee on Okinawa.

The incident happened Sunday at Camp Hansen — home to 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, 9th Engineer Support Battalion and 12th Marine Regiment — Marine officials said.

The slur, a derogatory term for blacks, was made from existing letters on the marquee advertising the Marvel film "Black Panther," which features a predominantly black cast.

The movie was scheduled for a 3 p.m. showing, according to the Army and Air Force Exchange Service website.

It is unclear how someone would have gained access to the roof to change the letters.

Marine officials said the slur has been removed.

“Marine Corps Installations Pacific is aware of an incident that occurred aboard Camp Hansen involving the posting of a racial slur on an AAFES marquee,” Marine officials said in a statement issued Monday afternoon.

“Such actions and language are not tolerated by the Marine Corps.”

Anyone with information about the incident is asked to contact the Camp Hansen Provost Marshal’s Office at 098-969-4165 or DSN 315-623-4165.

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**USS Wasp leaves Sasebo for patrol**

**By James Bolinger**

Stars and Stripes

The USS Wasp has left Sasebo Naval Base for the first time since arriving at its new homeport in Japan earlier this year.

The amphibious assault ship — which some have dubbed a mini Aircraft Carrier — arrived at its new homeport in Japan earlier this year.

The amphibious force, headquartered at White Beach Naval Facility, Okinawa, arrived at Sasebo Jan. 14 to replace the Bonhomme Richard after a 28,400-mile journey from Norfolk, Va. It was deployed after being diverted from a trip to the Caribbean to assist in disaster-relief efforts following the January earthquake and tsunami that devastated the islands.

The Bonhomme Richard, which has been homeported at Sasebo since April 2012, will remain there for an undetermined period before heading to its new home in San Diego, where it will undergo maintenance and upgrades.

b Bolinger.james@stripes.com

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**Sailor to be dishonorably discharged for dealing drugs**

**By Carl Prine**

The San Diego Union-Tribune

A drug-dealing sailor from Naval Air Station Lemoore lost her appeal and will be dishonorably discharged from the military.

The woman said she cleaned up her act in jail but military appellate judges were not swayed.

In a decision issued last Monday, the Navy-Marine Corps Court of Criminal Appeals in Washington, D.C., upheld a non-judicial punishment proceeding out of Aviation Structural Mechanic Airman Jasmine N. McClendon on May 11 after her court-martial in San Diego.

As part of a plea deal with Navy prosecutors that capped her prison sentence at 14 months, McClendon admitted to distributing narcotics at Lemoore, near Fresno, violating the terms of a previous administrative punishment and multiple drug abuse charges.

The military judge ordered her reduced to the Navy’s lowest rank and removed from the service on a dishonorable discharge.

That type of discharge is reserved for the most serious military crimes and can be dismissed only at a general court-martial proceeding. A dishonorable discharge triggers a wide range of other sanctions, including the loss of veterans’ benefits and the right to possess firearms.

McClendon’s attorneys argued that the discharge was too severe and cited her struggles with addiction, difficulty adjusting to Navy life after enlisting at the age of 17, her rehabilitation efforts during 127 days of pretrial confinement and later helping Naval Criminal Investigative Service agents crack down on illicit drug sales.

While incarcerated, McClendon began to study Buddhism, later helping Naval Criminal Investigative Service agents crack down on illicit drug sales.

Writing for the panel, Navy Senior Judge Capt. Frank D. Hatchinson pointed out that McClendon committed her crimes while serving 60 days of restriction following nonjudicial punishment for abusing cocaine.

Towed a “Captain’s Mast” in the Navy, this punishment typically involves restricting servicemembers to quarters, imposing extra duties and cellphone confiscation, plus other forms of discipline designed to correct misconduct instead of sending a sailor to a court-martial trial.

While living in a restricted barracks, however, McClendon kept drug paraphernalia and introduced cocaine, methamphetamines, marijuana, LSD and marijuana products to fellow sailors there, using her banned cellphone to facilitate the delivery of the drugs, court records show.

McClendon can appeal the decision to the United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces in Washington, but her case has yet to be added to its docket.
From wounded to welcomed: Marine vet returns to Cam Lo

By Corey Dickstein  Stars and Stripes

CAM LO, Vietnam — In March 1968, rockets and mortar fire crashed down on Lynn Stermoller in this central Vietnamese village, leaving the Marine littered with shrapnel.

On Monday, a different barrage greeted him—a flood of schoolchildren welcoming him and others with smiles and questions.

“I am glad to meet you,” Phan My, 15, said in near-fluent English, offering Stermoller, Marine veteran Bill Hutton and Timothy Davis, the founder of The Greatest Generations Foundation, a Coca-Cola from her home around the corner.

The bearded Stermoller, 68, beamed at the teen’s gesture.

“It is nice to come back and look around and see everything’s changed. It’s really nice to see that,” he said of the village that has blossomed from a collection of grass huts into a modern district center with paved roads, a schoolhouse and a sprawling soccer complex.

It’s his first trip back in five decades. “None of this was here,” he said. “It was entirely different.”

Stermoller and Hutton are among 15 Vietnam veterans visiting the battlefields where they fought, as part of a program established by Davis’ foundation.

Facing a bombardment of questions from Phan and two dozen other students gathered in the streets, Stermoller, of Stephenville, Texas, handed out American flag lapel pins and shook hands with the children before walking to Phan’s house to meet her family.

He asked the students and their teacher—a 37-year-old man who gave his name only as Phi—about their knowledge of the war he fought in their homeland.

He explained that he and the other veterans he was traveling with harbored no ill will toward the Vietnamese people.

By Kirk Gamel  Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The United States and South Korea will begin negotiations this week on sharing the cost of stationing about 28,500 American troops on the divided peninsula, the Foreign Ministry said Monday.

Talks about shouldering the burden between the two allies have often been bumpy, but they’re expected to be more contentious this year as President Donald Trump has signaled he may press for the South to increase its year-long defense contributions.

The countries also face concerns about a possible rift as Seoul examines the promise of efforts to engage with the North despite Washington’s hard line on efforts from a collection’s nuclear weapons program.

The current special measures agreement, which was reached in 2014 and has South Korea paying about $890 million this year, or just under half of the total, expired Dec. 31.

The first round of talks on the 10th SMA will be held from Wednesday to Friday in Honolulu with veteran diplomat Chang Won-sam leading the South Korean side and State Department official Timothy Betts leading the U.S. delegation, according to a South Korean defense ministry official.

“The delegations from the two sides will be trying to reach an agreement that helps strengthen the South Korean-U.S. alliance and joint defense readiness,” the ministry said. “Our government is trying to plan reasonable results that can be accepted by our people.”

It didn’t say how long the talks were expected to last, but the final deal must be ratified by both countries by the end of the calendar year.

The 2014 agreement took months to gain approval amid South Korean concerns over a lack of transparency about how the funds are spent by the U.S. side.

South Korea has seen its share of the nonpersonnel costs for U.S. forces in South Korea rise to around 960 billion won ($8.2 billion) annually in 2018. The country was hit by a $1 billion price tag for the controversial battery, but the White House later walked back those comments.

Anticipating a tough stance by Trump, Moon appointed Chang, who was then ambassador to Sri Lanka, last year to begin preparing for the negotiations.

South Korean Defense Minister Song Young-moo reportedly expressed concern last month that Washington may demand that Seoul pay more for the deployment of an advanced U.S. missile defense system known as the THAAD in a remote southeastern area.

Trump demanded last year that Seoul pay what he called a “$1 billion price tag” for the controversial battery, but the White House later walked back those comments.

Kim Dong-yub, a professor at South Korea’s Kyungnam University, said there are still concerns about how the funds are spent despite new oversight provisions in the 2014 agreement.

“I think the biggest problem in the defense cost-sharing issue is transparency of execution,” he said.
Members of the Syrian Red Crescent distribute medicine for civilians Monday in Douma, eastern Ghouta, a suburb of Damascus, Syria.

Aid convoy enters besieged rebel-held Damascus suburbs

By Zeina Karam
Associated Press

BEIRUT — Desperate for food and basic medicines, many of the besieged and bombarded Syrian civilians in Damascus’ eastern suburbs Sunday, after coming under attack by a small group of U.S. soldiers, who appeared to have been separated from the rest of their team.

The delivery would be the first to the region in nearly three weeks and the first to Douma, the largest and most populous town in eastern Ghouta, since November. U.N. officials had said that lack of approvals and consensus among the warring parties, as well as the limited duration of a daily, five-hour Russian-ordered humanitarian pause, had made aid delivery impossible.

Eastern Ghouta, home to some 400,000 people, has been under a crippling siege and daily bombardment for months. More than 400,000 people, has been under a crippling siege and daily bombardment for months. More than 400,000 people, has been under a crippling siege and daily bombardment for months. More than 400,000 people, has been under a crippling siege and daily bombardment for months.

By Susan Fraser
Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkish police detained four Islamic State suspects as part of an investigation into a possible attack on the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, the country’s state-run news agency reported Monday.

The arrests came as the embassy was closed Monday over an unspecified security threat.

The Anadolu Agency said police detained four Iraqi nationals in connection with the threat against the embassy. Two of them were detained on a bus at a security check on a highway linking the Black Sea city of Samsun to Ankara. Two others were detained in Samsun by police acting on information they provided, the report said.

The agency identified the suspects by their first names only.

Security was high outside the U.S. Embassy on Monday, and police searched pedestrians before allowing them to enter the street where the embassy and other buildings are located.

The U.S. Embassy said on its web page late Sunday that the mission would be closed due to a security threat and urged U.S. citizens to avoid the embassy as well as large crowds. It also advised citizens to “keep a low profile.”

Embassy spokesman David Gainer said the mission would open Tuesday but would not provide visa services or services to American citizens — in an apparent measure aimed at limiting visits and minimizing risks to the public.

“The appreciation of continuing support we receive from the Turkish National Police and Turkish security services in making our facilities as safe as possible,” Gainer said.

Earlier Monday, police detained 12 ISIS suspects in Ankara and were searching for eight others, Anadolu reported, although it was not clear if those arrests were linked to the threat against the U.S. Embassy.

The Ankara chief prosecutor’s office said in a statement that all of the suspects captured in the police operation were foreign nationals who were trying to recruit members for ISIS.

Turkey holds 4 ISIS suspects over US Embassy threat

FROM FRONT PAGE

U.S. officials have said French air support didn’t arrive until two hours after the attack. U.S. troops didn’t call in for air support until about one hour after the assault, military officials have said. The apparent delay could have been a result of radio communication problems.

With no place to take cover, two soldiers broke into a sprint, the video shows. One soldier fell after being shot. Moments later, a helmet cam video shows the soldier shot again at close range as masked militants appear around him.

Killed in the ambush were Sgt. La David Johnson and Staff Sgts. Bryan C. Black, Jeremiah W. Johnson and Staff Sgt. Dustin M. Wright.

The roughly 40-person U.S.-Nigerian patrol, which included 12 U.S. soldiers, came under attack on the morning of Oct. 4 by about 50 ISIS fighters as the unit was returning to its camp. The propaganda video showed only a small group of U.S. soldiers, who appear to have been separated from the rest of their team.

The patrol had left the Nigerian capital of Niamey on Oct. 3 to meet with local leaders near the village of Tongo Tongo, about 53 miles to the north.

U.S. Africa Command continues to investigate the attack and whether U.S. troops had sufficient resources to carry out patrols where different militant groups operate. The military says its forces are deployed as advisors to local troops.

In the wake of the ambush, some lawmakers are questioning the wisdom of the Niger mission.

“We don’t know exactly where we’re at in the world military and what we’re doing,” Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said on NBC’s “Meet the Press” after the attack. There are about 800 American troops in Niger.

AFRICOM, expected to wrap up its investigation in the coming weeks, condemned the video.

“The release of these materials demonstrates the depravity of the enemy we are fighting,” AFRICOM said in a statement.

“We encourage the news media to denounce the propaganda success by not purchasing, showing or bringing under consideration these images as it re-victimizes the affected families, amplifies IS atrocities and aids their recruiting.”

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Niger: AFRICOM condemns video, urges news media not to buy, show it
Trump-Netanyahu visit comes amid legal distractions

By Josh Lederman

WASHINGTON There’s much to celebrate but plenty of cause for trepidation, too, as President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Monday at the White House.

As all his talk about brokering the “ultimate deal” between Israelis and Palestinians, Trump’s long-awaited peace plan has yet to arrive, even as Palestinians and other critics insist it will be dead on arrival. And although Israel’s government is overruled by Trump’s recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital — with a U.S. embassy set to open in the holy city in May — misgivings are percolating under the surface over Iran, where Washington and Trump’s efforts so far to crack down on Israel’s arch-enemy as lacking.

One major, growing concern is that the United States is acquiring to Iran’s growing presence in Syria and influence in Lebanon — two Israeli neighbors.

“If we don’t come up with a strategy against Iran, we’re going to make Israel go to war here pretty soon,” Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said Sunday on ABC’s “This Week.”

Swirling legal investigations distracting both leaders at home, and a looming half-trial for Trump’s son-in-law and would-be peace negotiator, Jared Kushner, have added to the mix of politics, personalities and historical grievances that have always hindered Israel-Palestinian peace efforts. An already volatile situation now looks even more combustible than normal.

Netanyahu arrived in the United States over the weekend as Washington was gearing up for the annual conference of AIPAC, the powerful pro-Israel lobby. He held a meeting and working lunch with Trump on Monday and will deliver a speech later in the week. Top-ranking U.S. officials including Vice President Mike Pence and U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley will also address the conference.

A pointed reminder of his troubles at home, Netanyahu and his wife were questioned separately by police for hours on Friday before the prime minister left the next day for Washington. Those interviews were part of an investigation into a 2015 campaign case involving the country’s telecommunications giant, and police have recommended indicting Netanyahu on corruption charges in two other cases, as well.

The Trump family has legal problems of its own. Kushner, Trump’s point man for the Middle East, is under intense scrutiny over his business dealings as special counsel Robert Mueller barrels forward with his Russia probe. Kushner has also been stripped of his top security clearance in another blow to his credibility as an international negotiator.

Kushner’s peace proposal is near completion, U.S. officials have said, but Palestinians have already written off Trump’s administration as a viable mediator. The U.S. embassy there from Tel Aviv. A ribbon-cutting for an interim facility is being planned to coincide with the 70th anniversary of Israel’s independence.

Israel Ambassador Ron Dermer, who spoke at the Martin and Coretta King Unity Breakfast, said she felt a mixture of emotions Sunday, saying she would “forever” remember Trump’s decision.

A crowd poses for a photo during the annual commemoration of “Bloody Sunday,” the day in 1965 when voting rights protesters were attacked by police as they attempted to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala.

‘Bloody Sunday’ commemorated in Ala.

By Michael R. Sisak

Associated Press

SELMA, Ala. — Several members of Congress joined civil rights activists and others Sunday afternoon for the annual commemoration of a day of racial violence in Selma, Ala., dating to 1965. A bipartisan group including Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., led the crossing of the Edmund Pettus Bridge. It was to recall “Bloody Sunday,” when voting rights protesters were attacked by police as they attempted to cross the bridge.

“It’s very meaningful to come back here, to come back to this historic site and be here with so many wonderful people. It’s a beautiful day here today in Selma,” Lewis said as he was surrounded by his peers, the Selma Times-Journal reported.

Lewis, then a young organizer, was among those injured then. That violence set the stage for the Selma-to-Montgomery march, which helped build support for congressional approval of the Voting Rights Act months later.

Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., who spoke at the Martin and Coretta King Unity Breakfast, said she felt a mixture of emotions walking across the bridge.

“I’m nervous and I’m excited,” Harris said. “It’s bittersweet.”

“It’s sadness and pain at the thought of what they endured 53 years ago, but it’s also inspiration about again fighting for the best of who we are and honoring those who have been heroes and are still heroes.”

The annual celebration drew tens of thousands of people in 2015, when then-President Barack Obama spoke near the base of the bridge as former President George W. Bush listened.

Bill Cosby goes to court in an effort to stop his accusers from testifying

By Michael R. Sisak

Norristown, Pa. — Bill Cosby went to court on Monday to stop some of his dozens of accusers from testifying at his April 2 sexual assault retrial.

Cosby’s retooled defense team, led by former Michael Jackson lawyer Tom Mesereau, is due to clash with prosecutors over the potential witnesses at a pretrial hearing.

Cosby, 80, walked into the courthouse in suburban Philadelphia Monday morning on the arm of his spokesman. Judge Steven O’Neill spoke briefly from the bench before adjourning into chambers for a conference with prosecutors and Cosby’s lawyers. O’Neill outlined the matters that need to be resolved, including whether as many as 19 women can testify against Cosby and if his lawyers can discuss his civil settlement with accuser Andrea Constand.

O’Neill noted that since this is a new trial, none of his rulings on issues from the first trial will carry over. He didn’t express confidence that they’ll resolve everything in the two days allotted for the pretrial hearing, “but we certainly try,” O’Neill said.

Prosecutors raised the prospect of calling as many as 19 women to the witness stand, including model Janice Dickinson, in an attempt to show that an alleged 2004 assault that led to Cosby’s only criminal charges was actually part of a five-decade pattern of him drugging and harming women.

Jurors did not have that context when they ended Cosby’s first trial last year in a deadlock. A judge allowed just one other accuser’s testimony but barred any mention of about 60 others who have come forward to accuse Cosby in recent years.

The only other hints jurors got of Cosby’s past came from deposition excerpts from 2005 and 2006 in which he admitted getting quaaludes to give to women he wanted to have sex with.

Cosby’s lawyers are urging O’Neill to again limit the number of accusers allowed to testify. They argue that some of the women’s allegations date back to the 1960s and are “virtually impossible to defend against.”

Cosby’s lawyers argue that the other accusers’ accusations are largely unsubstantiated and are not enough to meet the strict legal standard for allowing prosecutors to present evidence of a defendant’s prior bad conduct. They said they would seek to delay the retrial if any of the women were allowed to testify so they could have more time to investigate their claims. Jury selection is slated to begin March 29.

Monday’s hearing came just 10 days after Cosby’s daughter, Ensa, 44, died of kidney disease. His lawyers have given no indication they would seek to delay the hearing or his retrial.

In January, Cosby emerged from a long period of near-seclusion to have dinner with friends at a restaurant and give his first comedy performance in more than two years. Legal experts said the nights on the town appeared to be an effort to rebuild his good-guy image.
Ohio race shows how NRA flexes political muscle

Associated Press
WASHINGTON — The National Rifle Association pounced when former Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland, a Democrat running for the U.S. Senate, declared at an AFL-CIO event in Cleveland that the death of conservative Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia “happened at a good time.”

NRA men are heroes to many gun owners, and the NRA alerted its members to Strickland’s displeasure. It was part of a barrage by the group to portray its one-time ally as an anti-gun politician interested only in money and power. Strickland’s constituents are divided on the battleground state Ohio two years ago is a window into how the right’s umbrella group wields its political muscle. That clout will be on display heading into the 2018 midterm elections as gun control advocates demand swift action following the Feb. 14 shooting at a high school in Parkland, Florida.

The NRA’s deep pockets and bare-knuckled approach leave little room for ideologically aligned candidates when compared with the large sums it spends on potent get-out-the-vote operations and ad campaigns.

NRA-funded advertisements on cable networks and the internet can make the difference from the moment voters first learn about a candidate up to election day; carefully crafted to warn members of candidates that, if elected, they will come for their guns.

But the NRA actually donates small amounts of money to candidates when compared with the large sums it spends on potential get-out-the-vote operations and ad campaigns.

NRA-funded advertisements on cable networks and the internet can make the difference from the moment voters first learn about a candidate up to election day; carefully crafted to warn members of candidates that, if elected, they will come for their guns.

Unlike independent expenditure limits for campaigns, PACs are capped for each elections. Unlike independent expenditures, donations from individuals are capped for each five-year election cycle. Portman said the NRA’s money represented just 1 percent of the more than $700 million his campaign raised in 2016, and he denied the group acquired any leverage through the donations.

The NRA’s Political Victory Fund ran its first ad against Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown in 2016 for his seemingly weak position on gun control. The Ohio Senate race was still competitive, and the 30-second spot illustrates how the NRA portrays a candidate who didn’t back it as a traitor for turning his back on gun rights.

Strickland said the NRA succeeded in shifting the impression many Ohioans had of him. Suddenly it didn’t matter as much that he was a steelworker’s son who’d grown up on a dirt road in the state’s Appalachian region. Or that he was raised among gun owners and just a few years before the Senate race earned the NRA’s A+ rating.

Strickland served in Congress for more than a decade until 2006, when he successfully ran for governor with the NRA’s backing. He lost to Republican John Kasich as the economic woes gripping the state. Strickland did, and won over Portman two years later, the state more than a month before the election. Nearly 70 percent of the NRA’s 2016 budget was used to target Democrats, with Hillary Clinton topping the list of candidates the group sought to defeat. Trump went to backing Donald Trump and congressional Republicans who’ve consistently supported the NRA’s political agenda and assorted efforts by Democrats to approve gun control measures.

Pressure for at least modest firearms restrictions is growing after 17 people were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, which raises the stakes for the NRA. Trump stunned GOP allies last week when he urged substantial changes to the nation’s gun laws. After meeting with Trump, NRA leaders declared he and his administration “don’t want gun control.”

The figures compiled by OpenSecrets show that in Ohio the NRA spent nearly $1.6 million to oppose Strickland in the 2016 Senate race as they worked to support the Republican incumbent, Sen. Rob Portman.

The NRA donated $39,990 directly to Portman’s campaign, the same amount the group gave to 12 other Republican lawmakers. Unlike independent expenditures, donations from individuals are capped for each five-year election cycle. Portman said the NRA’s money represented just 1 percent of the more than $700 million his campaign raised in 2016, and he denied the group acquired any leverage through the donations.

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Police officers stand guard as Orono High School students arrive for school in Orono, Minn., on Feb. 22, one day after a threat posted on social media caused the school to go on lockdown.

After Parkland, even idle threats to schools get a tough response

BY STEVE KARNOWSKI
Associated Press
MINNEAPOLIS — Fifteen students in one Florida school district are facing felony charges and prison time for allegedly making threats since the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School massacre. Meanwhile, an autistic Minnesota high school student whose alleged threat led to a six-hour lockdown in juvenile court and has received an outpouring of sympathy.

The Feb. 14 killings of 17 people in Parkland, Fla., have ignited a wave of copycat threats, as happen after nearly every high-profile school shooting. Most prove unfounded but cause big disruptions to schools while tying up police for hours or even days.

Experts say authorities’ swift responses underscore a climate in which even idle threats result in serious consequences.

The Volusia County Schools system in east-central Florida isn’t taking chances. Sheriff Michael Chitwood made it clear he had a zero-tolerance policy as threats began after Parkland. On Thursday, he went further, saying students or their families would have to pay the costs of the investigations — at least $1,000 and sometimes much more.

District spokeswoman Nancy Wait said the message is clear: We’re not joking around.

“Unfortunately, that word didn’t get to the students, and we started seeing more students making threats in the classroom, and that was frightening to their classmates,” she said. “Most of the time these students didn’t have access to weapons, but they were still making threats to shoot up their schools.”

The Educator’s Safety Network, which tracks reports of school threats and violent incidents across the country, has documented a spike since Parkland. The Ohio group counted 797 threats for various kinds, including gun and bomb threats. The threats were made mostly via social media (331) and verbally (119).

That amounts to about a seven-fold increase in the usual rate, director of programs Amy Klingler said.

She expects consequences of post-Parkland threats to be harsher than before.

“They almost have to be,” she said. “Do we want to do this for the rest of the school year? Do we want to have this constant chaos and fear, and people being upset? How much learning is going on?”

It’s not clear yet what the consequences will be for an autistic boy whose social media threat to shoot up Orono High School in suburban Minneapolis prompted a lockdown Feb. 21 that kept students confined to classrooms for nearly six hours. Prosecutors won’t say what the charges are because it’s a juvenile case.

The community’s reaction was unusually sympathetic. Another student’s mother set up a GoFundMe campaign with the boy’s family’s permission that by Sunday was near its $40,000 goal to help cover the family’s legal and treatment expenses. Claire Winkler Bennett wrote on the fundraising page that some kids on the autism spectrum don’t have the language or social skills to adequately express their needs.

ENROLL NOW FOR SPRING CLASSES
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Intro to UMUC Europe on 14 March.
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While an outside group accuses running for governor, has Trump's son, President Donald Trump, of "abandoning" the Indiana, three Republicans running for Senate were not impressed with Donald Trump's approval rating at 86 percent overall. The impression of a Trump White House at war with its enemies is stoking the atmosphere. "It's about he's our Republican president and if we don't stand together and we don't defend the party and conservative ideas, no one is," said Brennan Steinhaus, an Austin-based Republican strategist. A Quinnipiac University survey in late February put Trump's approval rating at 86 percent among Republicans but just 57 percent overall. As Republicans brace for a difficult election this November — the president's party typically loses congressional seats in the midterm cycle — they could have asked for a gentler warm-up than Texas, where the GOP holds such a commanding edge that most election-year drama dissolves once the primaries are done. Democrats haven't won a statewide race since 1994 and are not seen as favored to flip any of the six congressional seats opened up by GOP retirements on Capitol Hill. Among those leaving is U.S. Rep. Lamar Smith, who in January lauded Trump's physical fitness and said Americans were better off getting their news straight from Trump than from the media. Some of the 18 Republican candidates in Texas aren't stopping. Outsider candidate Mauro Garza said he is running because "Donald Trump said I could be here." According to the Trump administration, Russia has been working to disrupt the 2016 election — and whether the president obstructed justice in response to the probe. The White House also offered new, strategic, nuclear weapons that would leave U.S. missile defense systems "useless." His comments were accompanied by a video showing Russian nuclear weapons in Florida, where Trump often spends weekends and vacations at his Mar-a-Lago resort. Trump has withheld any critical words for Putin and only recently acknowledged Russia meddled in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. However, he has thumbed his nose at Putin's televised threats of war. The White House also panned the Kremlin for backing Syrian President Bashar Assad's military offensive in Eastern Ghouta, which is controlled by opposition forces as that country's yearslong conflict continues. Trump and May "agreed that the regime's Russia and its Iranian sponsors must immediately and fully implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 2401, which calls for an immediate ceasefire across Syria," the White House said in the statement. "The leaders condemned sharply the bombing in East Ghouta."
President Donald Trump listens during a meeting with steel and aluminum executives Thursday in Washington.

**President links tariff relief to NAFTA talks**

**By Zeke Miller and Kevin Freking**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Monday said North American neighbors Canada and Mexico will get no relief from his new tariffs on steel and aluminum imports unless a “new and fair” free trade agreement is signed.

The Trump administration says the tariffs are necessary to preserve the American industries — and that doing so is a national security imperative. But Trump’s latest tweets suggest he’s also using the upcoming tariffs as leverage in ongoing talks to revise the North American Free Trade Agreement. The latest round of a nearly yearlong renegotiation effort is concluding this week in Mexico City.

The tariffs will be made official in the next two weeks, and White House officials said Monday, as the administration defended the protectionist decision from critics and in the face of opposition from major trading partners.

In his comments, however, Trump hinted he may be considering exemptions for additional countries.

“China wins when we fight with Europe,” he said on CBS’ “Face the Nation.” “I’m not a Chinaophile. I’m a China watcher. I know China. They are a very formidable country.”

Trump said he is considering “righting the balance” for the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade pact that the United States abandoned in 2017.

The president said Monday that the World Trade Organization, which he previously blasted for giving China special status, “is a terrible deal” that is “in the process of being negotiated” with other countries.

**Trump expresses openness to talks with North Korea**

By Emily Heil
The Washington Post

On Saturday night, President Donald Trump was not having the sort of evening he prefers. For starters, he was dressed in white-tie finery, not the golf-ready khakis he favors on weekends. He was surrounded by the very members of the mainstream media he routinely derides. And his entertainment was skits and musical acts, some of which poked fun at him.

Nothing about Trump’s attendance at the annual dinner of the Gridiron Club, an elite gathering of journalists, made a lot of sense. But there he was at the Renaissance Washington Hotel for the club’s 133rd annual gathering, accompanied by first lady Melania Trump, Presidents since William McKinley have dutifully shown up at the Gridiron’s formal clambake, which has evolved into an evening of goofy entertainment by the journalists and jokey monologues by a prominent Republican and Democrat.

But Trump gamely turned some of the evening’s gags into a punch line, describing an overture that Pyongyang had extended to Washington.

“I actually called him the other day,” Trump said. “We had a good conversation. And I said, ‘We would like to talk,’ and he said, ‘So would we, but you won’t. As far as the risk of dealing with a madman is concerned, that’s his problem, not mine.’”

The president said he has been “working very hard” with China to resolve its trade surplus with the U.S., and added that he believes a deal is possible.

“I like chaos. It really is good.”
**President Donald Trump**

President Trump’s GOP allies on Capitol Hill have little use for the tariff approach. They argue that other industries that rely on steel and aluminum products will suffer. The cost of new appliances, cars, and buildings will rise if the president’s program before talks could begin, a demand Pyongyang on Sunday dismissed as “preposterous.”

In his comments, however, Trump hinted he may be considering other options, saying “maybe positive things are happening” and “we will be meeting, and we’ll see if anything positive happens.”

A U.S. official said Washington would insist that any talks focus on denuclearization, but that it would not demand Pyongyang disarm first or set other preconditions to meet. For its part, North Korea wants international recognition of its role as a nuclear power, a position the U.S. and its allies say they cannot accept.

But some progress appeared in sight. On Sunday, North Korea’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs dismissed U.S. demands that it give up its nuclear arsenal. But it also said dialogue with Washington was possible and that it hopes to find “a peaceful solution” to the conflict.

Trump believes his “maximum pressure” campaign to isolate North Korea from the world economy through trade, banking and shipping restrictions has made Kim more willing to engage with South Korea, and ultimately with Washington.

In recent weeks, Trump has repeatedly claimed credit for North Korea’s decision to send a delegation to the Olympic Games and have its athletes walk with South Korean athletes in the opening ceremony, although leaders in Seoul and Pyongyang arranged the episode themselves.

North Korea surprised U.S. intelligence officials last year by making rapid advances in its weapons programs. It tested intercontinental ballistic missiles that the first time appeared capable of reaching the United States, and it tested a thermonuclear device in September that was far more powerful than earlier versions.

U.S. officials say it is only a matter of time, perhaps less than a year, before Pyongyang masters the ability to build a bomb small and robust enough to be launched atop a long-range ballistic missile and thus pose a direct threat to the United States.

The Trump administration has tried to push China and Russia to further cut trade with North Korea, pressured other countries to cut diplomatic ties with Pyongyang, and added new banking and human rights sanctions against Kim’s government.

In addition, Trump has asked the Pentagon to update U.S. military options to prevent North Korea from launching a nuclear strike.
Yemeni immigrants focus on future in US amid war back home

BY JEFF KAROUB
Associated Press

DEARBORN, Mich. — Ibrahim Alhasbani is like generations of Middle Eastern immigrants in the Detroit suburb of Dearborn. He fled war, came with dreams and worked for others until he could strike out on his own.

Now, like an increasing number of people from Yemen who have come to the United States, he sees a long-term future outside the country he left and seeks to bring aspects of his native country into America.

"Here you build, over there you have memories," said Alhasbani, owner of Qahwah House, a cafe that serves coffee made from beans harvested on his family's farm in Yemen's mountains. "I live here, so this is the main thing. This is what's going to help first build my career, build my business ... and help the people over there."

Yemenis have been coming to the U.S. for more than a century — especially since the 1960s — but in recent years, they have been planting stronger roots, raising their profile and looking outward — opening upscale restaurants and cafes and running for political office. And in cases like Alhasbani, they are making Yemeni culture a key part of the business proposition.

It's a path that's not unusual for first- and second-generation immigrants in the U.S. For Yemenis, the shift is also a reaction to chaos in their homeland, where a devastating civil war has killed more than 10,000 people and displaced 2 million.

"People are coming here and bringing their resources here," said Sally Howell, an author and associate professor of Arab American Studies at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. "In the past, they weren't really committed to here. Now, the situation has been so bad in Yemen for so long, they're doing what other refugees and exiles do: They're acknowledging their future is here."

The highest U.S. population of Yemenis is in the Detroit area, where Syrian and Lebanese immigrants had already settled and became more prominent in business. Unlike their Arab neighbors, many Yemeni men came alone and didn't have relatives follow them, so they were more likely to go back and forth between the U.S. and their homeland.

"We're not going back to Yemen like we did before," said Rasheed Alnozili, publisher of The Yemeni American News. "We learn from Lebanese. They built here then they built there. We made a mistake: we built there, now we built here. We learned late, but we're still in process."

Areas of New York City, San Francisco, Chicago and Buffalo, N.Y., also have Yemeni communities. About 43,000 people of Yemeni ancestry are in the U.S., according to a 2015 census survey.

However, advocates say the number is much higher because of historical undercounting and has significantly increased since last survey because of deteriorating conditions in Yemen, which fell into chaos following its 2011 Arab Spring uprising that removed longtime autocrat Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Then, in September 2014, Shiite rebels known as Houthis seized the Yemeni capital of Sanaa after driving out the internationally backed government of President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi. A Saudi-led coalition backing Hadi has been fighting to defeat the Iran-backed Houthis since March 2015.

Dearborn and the Detroit enclave of Hamtramck have several sit-down restaurants specializing in Yemeni cuisine. In Hamtramck, where a Yemeni serves on the majority-Muslim City Council, there are also shops devoted to Yemeni sweets and sub sandwiches.

"The real difference today is that Yemeni are representing Yemen to the public, not just having ethnic Yemeni restaurants in tightly knit Yemeni enclaves," Howell said.

At Qahwah House, the goal is not only to serve Yemeni-style coffee, with its alluring tastes of cardamom and ginger, but also to impart information about Yemen's history and culture. The country is, as the National Coffee Association notes, where coffee cultivation and trade began, though Ethiopia boasts of being the birthplace of the discovery of coffee.

"That's why I want to ... be like a messenger for my country — give the right picture about the people over there and the coffee," said Alhasbani, whose brother was blind when a bomb exploded near his family's home several years ago.

In Hamtramck, Abraham Al-Ayyash, a first-generation Yemeni who is running as a Democrat for state Senate, is inspired by those who have struggled and recalls an uncle who died last year in Yemen after an airstrike. "I’ll always remember that in the work that I do ... I’ll be reminded that people before me kind of had to toil and sweat to make this possible."

Ibrahim Alhasbani, owner of Qahwah House, pours coffee as he prepares a dessert in Dearborn, Mich.
Snow slows California’s plunge back into drought

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Welcome drifts of fresh snow await California’s water managers on their late-winter survey of the vital Sierra Nevada snowpack Monday after a massive winter storm slowed the state’s plunge back into drought.

The storm piled snow by the foot in the mountains, forcing Department of Water Resources officials to postpone the measurement for a few days.

“We didn’t feel like it would be safe” for water officials and news crews who turn out for the monthly winter assessment of Sierra snowpack to make the trek during last week’s storm, said Chris Orrock, a spokesman for state water officials.

The storm brought parts of California more rain in hours than they received during all of February, typically one of the wettest months of the year. In Southern California, the storm brought what was only the second significant rainfall of the past year to some areas, prompting water managers to question whether he’s really innocent. He would qualify for more than $1 million. to question whether he’s really innocent. He was no longer credible. The case helped in- spire a Michigan law aimed at compens- ating those wrongly convicted. Perjury, bad evi- dence — all have led him to a prison cell.

Yet the state now is vigorously resisting releasing Gavitt for his request for money, going so far as to question whether his release would be safe. The case helped in- spire a Michigan law aimed at compens- ating those wrongly convicted. Perjury, bad evi- dence — all have led him to a prison cell.

“It’s like a slap in the face… I thought we lived in America, where the accused doesn’t have to prove innocence… They’re judging me all over again,” said Gavitt.

Gavitt’s attorney general’s office aren’t convinced he should be paid.

“Although Mr. Gavitt is no longer guilty beyond a reasonable doubt of the crime initially charged, there certainly is circumstantial evidence that supports he is not innocent of wrongdoing,” prosecutor Kyle Butler said in a letter to Attorney General Bill Schuette.

Michigan is among 32 states and the District of Columbia that provide money to those wrongly convicted. Perjury, bad evidence — all have led him to a prison cell.

But Schafer’s successor and the Michigan attorney general’s office aren’t convinced he should be paid.

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MICHIGAN

DETROIT — David Gavitt spent 26 years in prison for the deaths of his wife and two daughters before a prosecutor agreed that the evidence behind his arson conviction was no longer credible. The case helped in- spire a Michigan law aimed at compens- ating those wrongly convicted.

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“The property had been untouched for 10 years. You had so much grass, you could have sold it for hay.”

Frank Gehlke, chief of the California Cooperative Snow Surveys Program for the Department of Water Resources, conducts a snow survey near Echo Summit, Calif., last month.

Water, still plans to vote in April on increased funding for conser- vation programs, spokeswoman Rebecca Kimitch said.

“One storm isn’t going to… make up for what has been a very dry few months,” Kimitch said.

California’s rainy season is often this kind of a cliffhanger, Daniel Swain, a climate scientist at the University of California, Los An- geles, said last month.

The state is dependent on a handful of significant storms for its water, so things can turn around quickly, he said.

NATION

NATION

Tyson’s former Ohio home becoming house of worship

Associated Press

WARREN, Ohio — A garishly appointed Ohio mansion that heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson once called home and subsequently fell into disrepair is being converted into a house of worship.

The Living Word Sanctuary Church has been cleaning up the property in Trumbull County’s Southington Township, roughly 25 miles south of Cleveland, since the 25,000-square-foot mansion was donated to the church several years ago.

“The property had been untouched for 10 years,” Living Word Pastor Nicholas DeJacimo told the Warren Tribune-Chronicle. “You had so much grass, you could have sold it for hay.”

But Schafer’s successor and the Michigan attorney general’s office aren’t convinced he should be paid.

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The mansion is a considerable step up. The church has been holding services at a YMCAs. The sanctuary the church hopes to have ready by year’s end is an area where Tyson and his guests splashed in an indoor pool. A four-bay garage is being turned into young classrooms and a nursery. Tall steel cages where Tyson kept four tigers have been dismantled for a pavilion.

The second-floor master suite featured mirror-covered walls and ceiling, a whirlpool spa and two bathrooms.

“We heard there were some crazy parties here,” DeJacimo said. “We will turn this into a room where women can get ready for a wedding.”

The church offices and meeting rooms are being built on the second floor.

It’s unclear which of the mansion’s design features can be attributed to Tyson or the previous owner. It was built in 1979. Tyson bought in 1989 for $300,000 and sold it 10 years later for $1.3 million to Paul Monea, an infomercial entrepreneur best known for marketing Tae-Bo exercise videos. Monea was sentenced in 2007 to 13 years in federal prison for money launder- ing. The mansion was bought in 2010 for $600,000 and then donated to the church for a tax write-off.

The church’s up-front investment was $550,000 to clear back taxes.

Tyson returned to the mansion in 1995 after serving time in Indiana for rape and lived there while training at promoter Don King’s camp in nearby Orwell, according to the newspaper. Tyson befriended neighbors during training runs and played basketball with kids on his court.

People stop by hoping for a look inside Tyson’s former home, DeJacimo said. He said the mansion “got dropped in our lap.”

“Tell everyone, ‘This was meant for us.'”

By Ed White

Associated Press

DETROIT — David Gavitt spent 26 years in prison for the deaths of his wife and two daughters before a prosecutor agreed that the evidence behind his arson conviction was no longer credible. The case helped in- spire a Michigan law aimed at compens- ating those wrongly convicted.

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NATION

Mich., man cleared of murder now fighting for compensation

By Ed White

Associated Press

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“You don’t know how to put this — anger,” said Gavitt, 59, who works the midnight shift at a tub manufacturer. “It’s like a slap in the face… I thought we lived in America, where the accused doesn’t have to prove innocence… They’re judging me all over again.”

Gavitt’s claim under Michigan’s Wrongful Imprisonment Compensation Act — $50,000 for each year in prison — would seem like a slap dumb. The evidence used to convict him was thoroughly discredited through major advances in fire science, and Ionia County prosecutor Ron Schafer in 2012 declined a second trial.

But Schafer’s successor and the Michigan attorney general’s office aren’t convinced he should be paid.

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Gavitt was convicted of arson and murder in 1986 in a tragedy that stunned the small town of Ionia, 130 miles northwest of De- troit. His wife, Annette, and their daughters, ages 3 and 11, died. Wearing only jeans, Gavitt was rushed to a hospital where he spent weeks recovering from severe burns.

He insisted the fire in the living room was an accident. But experts testified that burn patterns in the living room were typi- cal of an intentional fire and that traces of gasoline were detected.
Shell, Eni go on trial in Nigerian bribery case
Associated Press

MILAN — A corporate bribery trial billed as the biggest in history opened Monday against the Shell and Eni oil companies as well as former and current executives, all charged in a $1.1 billion scandal to win control of one of Nigeria’s most lucrative oil blocks.

The size of the two oil companies makes the trial the biggest, according to anti-corruption campaigners, who also say it is unprecedented that Eni’s current CEO, Claudio Descalzi, remains in his post while he faces such serious charges.

“We have never seen a sitting CEO of an oil major go on trial for bribery,” said Barnaby Face, a campaigner with activist group Global Witness.

The trial was later postponed until May 14 for technical reasons. The Nigerian government and four nongovernmental organizations, including Global Witness, submitted requests to be considered damaged parties in the proceedings, which would allow them to participate in the prosecution.

Descalzi is one of 13 individuals charged in the case involving the 2011 purchase of the OPL245 block. Other defendants include his predecessor, Paolo Scaroni; two former top Shell executives; a former Nigerian oil minister; and a series of middlemen and advisers. The companies themselves are also corporate defendants.

Milan prosecutors allege that $520 million of the $1.1 billion paid into an escrow account was converted into cash and distributed as bribes, while several hundred million more went to a former oil minister.

North Korean leader hosts South’s envoys in care visit
By Kang Kang
Bloomberg

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un held talks with top aides to South Korea’s Moon Jae-in in Pyongyang on Monday, the president’s office said, in the first meeting between the leader of the isolated nation and officials from Seoul since he took power in 2011.

National Security Office head Chung Eui-yong and National Intelligence Service chief Suh Hoon were in the North Korean capital to seck to persuade Kim to start talks with the U.S. on denuclearization and stave off a potential conflict over his nuclear program.

The envoys also planned to discuss with Pyongyang officials the release of three American citizens detained in North Korea.

Kim hosted the envoys for a dinner that started at 6 p.m. Seoul time, a spokesman for Moon told a briefing. The delegation arrived around 2:50 p.m.

The South Korean envoys are due to travel to Washington later this week to discuss the results of their discussions with the Trump administration. Their two-day trip follows a visit by Kim’s sister to South Korea last month, when she invited Moon to meet her brother for what would be the first inter-Korean summit for 11 years.

The meeting “shows Kim Jong Un wants to achieve his inter-Korean objectives laid out in his New Year’s Day address,” said Duyeon Kim, visiting senior research fellow at the Korean Peninsula Future Forum in Seoul. “It places much importance on the envoys’ visit while continuing his peace offensive tactics toward the South and portraying his country as normal, modern and peace-loving.”

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang told reporters in a regular briefing in Beijing earlier Monday that China hopes the interaction between the two Koreas could bring about talks between North Korea and the U.S.

He added that China stands ready to play a positive role to realize denuclearization and achieve lasting peace on the peninsula.
China pledges growth; embraces term limit end

BY JOE MCDONALD
Associated Press

BELING — China's government pledged Monday to deliver robust growth, pursue advanced technology and boost military spending while urging the public to embrace President Xi Jinping's rule as its ceremonial legislature prepared for changes to allow Xi to stay in power indefinitely.

The plan to end constitutional limits on Xi's term as president has overshadowed the meeting of the National People's Congress, which usually is used to showcase economic initiatives and plans for social programs and other government work.

In a nearly two-hour speech to the legislature, Premier Li Keqiang did not mention the scrapping of term limits but emphasized the primacy of Xi, 64, and the ruling Communist Party he leads in all aspects of Chinese life.

The slide toward one-man rule under Xi, already visible in the armed forces in recent decades, has fueled concern that Beijing is eroding efforts to guard against the excesses of autocratic leadership and make economic regulation more stable and predictable.

The president's office has few powers, but Xi's posts as ruling party general secretary and chairman of the commission that controls the party's military wing, the People's Liberation Army, already have no term limit. By tradition since the early 1990s, one person has held all three posts at the same time.

On March 11, the week before the annual meetings of China's parliament, local media reported that Xi was denouncing his attempt to abolish term limits as really to make China medieval again, not to make China great again.

He also criticized those who wanted to stop the government's momentum of economic reforms, including a share of GDP and the budget that has soared to the equivalent of 270 percent of annual economic output.

The move to consolidate even more power under Xi comes as foreign governments, already wary of China's expanding influence abroad, are closely watching shifts toward greater authoritarianism.

China's investments abroad in technology and banking are under closer scrutiny, while foreign companies and governments complain that Beijing hampers access to its markets in violation of its free-trade commitments.

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China to boost defense spending in 2018

BY CHRISTOPHER BODEEN
Associated Press

BEIJING — China's defense budget will rise 8.1 percent to $151 billion this year as the country prepares to launch its second aircraft carrier, integrate stealth fighters into its air force and field an array of advanced missiles able to attack air and sea targets at vast distances.

This year's defense budget after the United States.

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German equality boss wants change to anthem

BY KIM CHEUNG
Associated Press

BERLIN — A German equality official reportedly wants to change the country's national anthem to make it gender-neutral, including by removing a reference to “the Fatherland.”

The Weekly Bild am Sonntag reported that Kristin Rose-Moehring, secretary of state for the Federal Ministry of Women and Family Affairs, said the anthem is “archaic” and reported that Kristin Rose-Moehring, secretary of state for the Federal Ministry of Women and Family Affairs, said the anthem is “archaic” and that she was working on a new version.

The newspaper reported that Rose-Moehring is in charge of the German government's efforts to promote gender equality.

The German anthem, "Die Wacht am Rhein," translates to "The Watch at the Rhine." It features a reference to "Vaterland" and says "Die Wacht am Rhein, deutsches Vaterland, wie erkennst du dichselb?"

A Paris court convicted Carlos, who goes by the name of Ilie Ramirez Sanchez, last year and handed him a life sentence.

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Carlos the Jackal back on trial for Paris attack

Associated Press

PARIS — The Venezuelan ex-BOSS car bomb attacker known as Carlos the Jackal went back on trial Monday for a deadly 1974 grenade attack on a Paris shopping arcade.

A Paris court convicted Carlos, who goes by the name of Ilie Ramirez Sanchez, last year and handed him a life sentence.

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China Prime Minister Li Keqiang delivers a work report at the opening session of the annual National People's Congress on Monday.

Associated Press

China will increase its defense budget by 8 percent to $173 billion this year as the country prepares to expand its military assets.

Associated Press

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Parkland school shooting claims 1 more victim

By JOHN M. CRISP
Tribune News Service

The shooting in Parkland, Fla., had many victims. Seventeen killed. At least 15 wounded. Scores of family members and friends whose grief is incommensurable. And a nation of schoolchildren who have good reason to think America's schools are no longer safe. Many of these victims will never be whole again.

But here's what I suspect will be an unpopular acknowledgement of one more tragic of this grim affair: Broward County Deputy Scot Peterson.

Peterson was one of the first responders to the shooting. Allegedly he took up a tactical position outside Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School while Nikolas Cruz killed victim after victim inside.

Peterson contends that he was confused about the rules of engagement and made a false report of a casualty on the football field. He says that he was following protocol. This explanation is at least plausible.

But critics, eager to assign blame, found themselves in the same position that, in World War II, was unable to find the heroism of a naval commander who, in the face of a naval engagement, was too timid to defend his ship against the enemy. Instead he steamed away from the battle.

The captain then returned to his cabin and killed himself with a hand grenade.

This is the sort of haunting, life-destroying guilt that Peterson faces. Sometimes people simply freeze in the face of danger. No one really knows how he or she will be, or be not.

But if Peterson failed to do his duty, so have many others, including our culture as a whole, which continues to ask first responders to engage shooters by whom they are completely outnumbered.

Dressed in body armor and carrying a pistol, which is no match for a semiautomatic AR-15 with a high-capacity magazine. A fully automatic assault rifle (which produces a stream of bullets until the trigger is released) can deliver more firepower, but the semiautomatic (one bullet fired per trigger pull) is an extremely destructive combat weapon.

In fact, The New York Times noted recently that for decades American troops have been trained to open fire on the assumption that assault weapons in semiautomatic mode rather than automatic mode.

Analysis of the Florida shooting indicates that Cruz discharged his semiautomatic weapon at a rate of 1,500 rounds per second, several times faster than Ameri- can infantrymen are trained to fire. And the AR-15's standard magazine holds up to 30 rounds.

In short, we're asking a lot of Peterson to take on this kind of firepower with a standard service pistol. And he couldn't have known how many shooters were in the school. Would you have the courage to enter the building?

To be better known for his self-aggrandizing imagination than his empathy, was confident: "I really believe I'd run there even if I didn't have a weapon."

But like the students at Parkland, I call BS. Trump has no idea what he would do in the same circumstance, nor do any of us. Schwarzenegger is saying that he's more of a bluffer than a fighter, more inclined to criticize people who have demonstrated their courage, such as Sen. John McCain and former Secretary of State John Kerry, than to perform acts of brav- 11.5

If Trump wants to show courage, he should take on the National Rifle Association and support a ban on high-powered, military-style guns, which he can do through the gun magazines, both automatic and semiautomatic. Until our political leaders can muster this sort of courage, we will continue to have more martyrs.

And we'll continue to ask first responders — and armed teachers — to face up to firepower that they are untrained to deal with. So I'm asking a lot of Peterson to take on this kind of firepower with a standard service pistol. And he couldn't have known how many shooters were in the school.
Looking at the news
A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons

Walt Handelsman/ Tribune Content Agency

Jeff Danziger/ Washington Post News Service

Jack Ohman/ Washington Post Writers Group

Lisa Benson/ Washington Post Writers Group

Walt Handelsman/ Tribune Content Agency
Woman wins Keys conch contest, gets proposal

**FL** KEY WEST — A Florida retiree won the women's division victory in Key West's annual Conch Shell Blowing Contest — and a marriage proposal from a fellow competitor.

Mary Lou Smith impressed the judges Saturday with long blasts on the fluted, pink-lined shell which she followed with a joyous, accepting duet with Rick Race after his onstage proposal.

Judges evaluated entrants from children to seniors on the quality, novelty, duration and loudness of sounds they produced.

**Man dons bulletproof vest, is fatally shot**

**TX** HOUSTON — Houston police said a man who put on a bulletproof vest at a party was killed when another man attending the party fired a shot at him.

Police are searching for the man who fired the fatal shot early Sunday. Investigators said forensics tests will determine if the gunshot went through the vest or struck an uncovered area.

Police believe six to eight people were attending the party.

**Text for drug customer goes to deputy instead**

**SC** SUMTER — Authorities said a man wanting to sell drugs got himself and two of his friends arrested by accidentally texting a police officer instead of a customer.

Sumter County deputies said the officer received a text about 2 a.m. Thursday offering to sell marijuana. Authorities said the deputy texted back and arranged the sale in less than three hours.

Deputies said in a statement they stopped the drug dealer's car on the way to the sale and found several bags of marijuana and scales. They arrested three of four people in the car on marijuana charges.

**Crossing guard charged with selling pot on job**

**PA** SELINSGROVE — A Pennsylvania crossing guard has been charged with selling marijuana at her post.

Kathryn Miller, 31, was arrested March 27 while working at an intersection near Selinsgrove Area High School.

Police alleged she sold marijuana to an informant four times last month, including twice while at her job.

Selinsgrove Area Superintendent Chad Cohrs told WNEP-TV that Miller has been suspended. He said she has worked as a crossing guard since 2012.

Miller was jailed on charges including delivery of a controlled substance.

**Man hit by lightning: Memory ‘got erased’**

**UT** LAS VEGAS — A Utah man who was struck by lightning while playing golf said the time between being hit and waking up was a blur.

The amount of military pension pay a recently retired county jail guard in Texas is accused of taking from the bank account of his long-deceased uncle. Federal officials allege Burrie Joseph Haynes, a detention officer for the Fort Bend Sheriff's Office until last month, stole the money from 1996 to 2016 in the form of retirement pay to Air Force veteran Joseph McKinley Wells, who died in 1996.

**Bringing the boom**

**KS**-TV reported that Justin Hofer, 38, a father of five, was taken to a burn trauma center in Las Vegas after he was struck Friday afternoon.

Hofer said he remembers seeing four in 20 percent of his body and will need skin grafts on his legs but said he is going to be home in St. George relatively quickly.

Trump name taken off impeachment class

**CA** SAN DIEGO — San Diego State University is changing the name of a class that sparked public criticism.

The name of the course? "Trump: Impeachment, Removal or Conviction?"

The university announced Wednesday that it was dropping Trump's name from the title.

The course covers the history, procedures and constitutional grounds for removing presidents as well as presidential immunity. It also reviews all 19 impeachments in U.S. history.

The one-unit weekend class began Friday. It's offered to the public through the university's extended studies program.

Frias close bakery, will open a brewery

**ME** BUCKSPORT — Two Maine friars say they are closing down their iconic bakery to open up a brewery.

The Bangor Daily News reported Friar's Bakehouse in Bangor would close Friday after more than 18 years in operation. Franciscan Brothers Donald Paul and Kenneth Leo said they plan to open their new venture, the Friar's Brewhouse Tap Room, this month.

The brew house will be located in Bucksport, much closer to the friars' monastery.

City's last drive-thru wedding chapel closes

**NV** RENO — The last drive-thru wedding chapel in Reno has heard its final vows.

The Reno Gazette-Journal reported George Flint, 83, opened the Chapel of the Bells in 1962, and he closed its doors for good Wednesday.

His daughter, Margaret Flint, said she doesn't think there's a "novelty for the stereotypical chapel wedding anymore."

The wedding industry in western Nevada has declined. Washoe County in 1978 issued more than 36,000 marriage licenses. The county issued fewer than 8,000 last year.

Python weighs less than deer it ate

**FL** NAPLES — Researchers in Florida said they found an 11-foot-long, invasive Burmese python that had consumed a deer that weighed more than the snake.

The Naples Daily News reported that wildlife biologists tracking the siltary creatures in southwest Florida found one of them had eaten a white-tailed deer fawn.

Biologist Ian Bartoszek said the fawn weighed 35 pounds; the snake weighed 31.5 pounds. Bartoszek said it was the largest python-to-prey weight difference he had measured.

Burmese pythons were brought to South Florida as pets in the late 1970s. They were released into the wild, and have become a problematic, invasive species.

Man injured in jump inside Atlanta airport

**GA** ATLANTA — Authorities said a man who jumped over an upper-floor railing in an Atlanta airport was hospitalized with serious injuries.

WXIA-TV reported Wednesday that the man's jump from the second story was recorded on social media.

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport Policy and Communications Director Reese McCranie said two passengers had been arguing when one became "visibly irate and belligerent."

Atlanta police spokeswoman Stephanie Brown said the man appeared to be intoxicated and began threatening other travelers outside the Terrapin Brewery in Concourse D. He jumped over the rail as airport personnel arrived at the scene.

Brown said the man was “alert, conscious and breathing” when medical staff took him away.

From wire reports
Oscars’ TV audience dropped, early ratings show

The early ratings for ABC’s telecast of the 90th Oscars are down from last year and may be an all-time low.

The broadcast, which lasted nearly four hours, averaged a 12.9 rating in the 56 overnight markets measured by Nielsen. That was down 16 percent from last year’s comparable figure, a 22.4 rating. The national audience count will be issued later.

The 2017 ceremony garnered 33.9 million viewers, the lowest since the 2008 ceremony hosted by Jon Stewart drew the smallest audience in Academy Awards history: 32 million viewers.

Los Angeles Times

OSCARS 2018: PARTIAL LIST OF WINNERS

BEST PICTURE “The Shape of Water”

DIRECTING Guillermo del Toro, “The Shape of Water”

ACTRESS IN A LEADING ROLE Frances McDormand, “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri”

ACTOR IN A LEADING ROLE Gary Oldman, “Darkest Hour”

ACTRESS IN A SUPPORTING ROLE Allison Janney, “I, Tonya”

ACTOR IN A SUPPORTING ROLE Sam Rockwell, “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri”

ORIGINAL SCORE Alexandre Desplat, “The Shape of Water”

ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY Jordan Peele, “Get Out”

ADAPTED SCREENPLAY James Ivory, “Call Me By Your Name”

ANIMATED FEATURE FILM “Coco”


Los Angeles Times

BEST PICTURE, BEST DIRECTOR: Guillermo del Toro and the cast and crew of “The Shape of Water” accept the award for best picture at the Oscars on Sunday at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. Del Toro won the Oscar for best director.

By Lindsey Bahr
Associated Press

Hold one year ago, the 90th Academy Awards would have very likely been a rose-colored nostalgia fest.

But this year, with a culture-wide reckoning over decades of sexual misconduct, a film business in decline, a volatile political climate and the fact that last year the esteemed shlock couldn’t even manage to present its biggest award correctly, the film academy and host Jimmy Kimmel on Sunday staged a complex and sometimes incongruous dance of attempting to both honor and atone for the past.

In many ways, the show inside the Dolby Theatre went exactly as planned — scripted, tight, full of past-looking montages, forward-thinking speeches and produced to appeal to all. Presenters Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty got a best picture redo, (“What happened last year was Waterhouse under the bridge,” Kimmel quipped) and 86-year-old Rita Moreno got to wear her dress from the 1962 ceremony again.

The awards also effectively skirted the awkwardness of having an accused man in the spotlight by shifting around long-held presenter traditions and having Jodie Foster and Jennifer Lawrence present the best actress award instead of Casey Affleck. Emma Stone got her Natalie Portman moment, presenting the directing award to “four men and Greta Gerwig.” Activists like #MeToo creator Tarana Burke were included in a song segment. And three Harvey Weinstein accusers, Ashley Judd, Salma Hayek and Annabella Sciorra, were given a moment to themselves on stage for nothing more than the fact that they were brave enough to speak up before a hopeful video played highlighting a changing industry, post #MeToo and more diverse.

The video highlighted Greta Gerwig, the fifth woman to ever be nominated for best director, Yance Ford, the first transgender nominee for “Strong Island,” Dee Rees, whose “Mudbound” scored a historic cinematographer nomination and the Pakistan-born Kumail Nanjiani, nominated for “The Big Sick.”

The nominees signaled a renaissance. The winners told a slightly different story.

With a more diverse, more international and younger infusion of voting members into the film academy, the movie in love with movies still won the top awards. Guillermo del Toro’s fantasy romance, “The Shape of Water,” won best picture, director, score and production design.

“Growing up in Mexico, I thought this could never happen,” del Toro said. “It happens.”

The acting awards, which have been locked in recent years, went to the expected winners: Frances McDormand won best actress for “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri!” and her co-star Sam Rockwell won for his supporting performance. Gary Oldman picked up the best actor prize for transforming into Winston Churchill in “Darkest Hour” and Allison Janney for becoming Tonya Harding’s mother in “I, Tonya.”

There were glimpses of progress, in Chile’s “A Fantastic Woman,” which starred the transgender actress Daniela Vega, won best foreign film. Disney and Pixar’s celebration of Mexican culture, “Coco,” took best animated feature, as well as best song for “Remember Me.”

“The biggest thank you of all to the people of Mexico,” said director Lee Unkrich to loud applause. “Marginalized people deserve to feel like they belong. Representation matters.”

And Jordan Peele became the first African-American to win best original screenplay for his horror sensation “Get Out.”

Peele said he stopped writing it “20 times,” skeptical that it would ever get made. “But I kept coming back to it because I knew if someone would let me make this movie, that people would hear it and people would see it,” said Peele. “So I want to dedicate this to all the people who raised my voice and let me make this movie.”

Even McDormand used her moment on stage to make a statement on behalf of women. “If I may be so honored to have all the female nominees stand with me,” McDormand said. “We all have stories to tell and projects we need financed,” she added, before uttering the phrase “inclusion rider,” referring to actors signing contracts that mandate a film’s gender and racial inclusivity.
Third time’s a charm

Volvo XC40 is a crossover in a smaller, sportier package

By Larry Printz
Tribune News Service

Is the third time a charm? If you’re Volvo, the answer is yes.

Having already offered the XC90 and XC60 crossover SUVs, the Swedish automaker is launching the compact XC40 for 2019. And while you might think that the last thing the world needs is another premium compact crossover, some time with this little love will convince you otherwise.

But before we get to that, a bit of background.

Volvo’s new trucklet is 174.2 inches long, but at 65.2 inches high it’s as tall as an XC60, allowing for 8.3 inches of ground clearance and 20-inch wheels. Like the Scalable Product Architecture, or SPA, which underpins the XC 90 and XC60, the XC40 employs the company’s new Compact Modular Architecture, or CMA, which will underpin Volvo’s 40-series cars as well as parent company Geely’s forthcoming marquee Lynk & Co. CMA has a fixed dash-to-axle ratio. In other words, the distance between the leading edge of the dashboard and the front axle is set and can’t be changed. However, the rest of the platform can.

That said, the styling of the XC40 is a departure for the brand. Volvo didn’t want to make the XC40 look like a smaller version of its larger siblings. Instead, it possesses its own identity, one meant to appeal to younger buyers and dubbed by Volvo as a “tough little robot.” That explains the available white roof on entry-level T4 models and a black roof on T5 models, as well as the optional 20-inch rims and funky window shape on the rear doors. But it works. Unlike its competitors, the XC40 doesn’t possess the styling of its larger siblings awkwardly shrunk down, looking as if it were left in the dryer too long.

The same proves true inside, where some of the styling hallmarks of Volvo’s larger crossovers carry over, but it’s rendered with a sporty flair. The driver faces a 12.3-inch digital instrument cluster, while the center of the instrument panel is anchored by a vertically oriented nine-inch touchscreen. Thankfully, it employs the same easy-to-use Sensus Connect software from its bigger brothers and includes standard Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and an optional wireless phone-charging pad.

And while you may be smitten by the concave metallic trim that decorates the dash, there are other unique touches that are worth noting. If you’re lacking a Y-chromosome, you’ll be thrilled to discover that the XC40 has a bag hook that flips out of the top of the glovebox door. If you suffer from allergies, you’ll be happy to know that the center console was designed to be large enough to hold a tissue box. And once those tissues are used, you can place them in the integrated removable trash bin, which is also useful for denizens of the drive-thru. And check out those spacious front-door map pockets. Working with Harman Kardon, designers moved the woofers to the dashboard from the doors. The spaciousness continues in the cargo hold, with almost 21 cubic feet of space. Usefully, there’s a spot to hold the cargo cover when not in use.

But the space most buyers care about is for passengers, and it’s here where Volvo delivers. There’s adult-size space both front and rear, although the rear seat cushion is a little low. The flip is that this furnishes remarkable head room, even as the rear styling renders the rear seat a bit claustrophobic. Leather trim is standard.

When it comes time to move, you’ll find a turbocharged 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine under the hood, although how much power you get depends on which model you choose. The entry-level front-wheel-drive T4’s engine produces 187 horsepower and 248 pound-feet of torque. The all-wheel-drive T5 delivers 248 horsepower and 258 pound-feet of torque. Both engines are paired to an eight-speed automatic transmission.

Volvo provided pre-production T5s to sample, and according to the automaker, 0-60 mph comes up in 6.1 seconds. Certainly the T5’s engine has the muscle to move this little beastie with moxie, powering through corners, especially when changing the driving mode from Comfort to Dynamic. Don’t think of using Eco unless you’re lacking a pulse. This markedly awakens the XC40’s responses, although it doesn’t transform this into a sports car. Instead, this is very athletic Volvo, and there’s nothing wrong with that. For the XC40 still delivers the sort of handling/comfort balance that’s long been a hallmark of the brand’s vehicles. There’s little drama, whether pushing hard through a corner on your favorite back road, encountering neglected roads at too high a speed, or tackling the cut and thrust of the daily commuter grand prix. The XC40’s demeanor absorbs all that you can throw at it while remaining quiet, comfortable and composed.

And being a Volvo, it’s loaded with safety gear, but you know that.

In the end, what sets the 2019 Volvo XC40 apart isn’t just its attractively distinctive look but its reimagining of the best aspects of Volvo crossovers in a smaller, sportier package.

Is the third time a charm? You bet is.
Round-the-world news for America’s military.

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States mull sanctuary status for pot businesses

By Becky Bohrer
Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska — Taking a cue from the fight over immigration, some states that have legalized marijuana are considering providing so-called sanctuary status for licensed pot businesses, hoping to protect the fledgling industry from a shift in federal enforcement policy.

Just hours after U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced Jan. 4 that federal prosecutors would be free to crack down on marijuana operations as they see fit, Jesse Arreguin, the mayor of Berkeley, Calif., summoned City Councilman Ben Bartlett to his office with a novel idea.

Berkeley already was the first city in the nation to formally declare itself a sanctuary city on immigration, barring city officials from cooperating with federal authorities. Why not do the same thing with marijuana? Last month, it did.

“We knew we had to do something,” Bartlett said. “This is a new engine of a healthy economy.”

Others soon followed Berkeley’s lead. Alaska, California, and Massachusetts lawmakers are among those with similar bills pending, though the chances for passage is unclear.

Alaska state Rep. Adam Wool, who owns a movie, restaurant and concert venue with a liquor license in Fairbanks, said he introduced his bill as both a statement and a precaution.

“If the federal government wants to prosecute someone for breaking federal law, I guess they have every right to do that,” said Wool, a Democrat from one of Alaska’s major marijuana-growing areas. “I’m just saying, we will have no obligation to assist them.”

Sessions’ announcement invalidates a 2013 policy that allowed for legalized marijuana to flourish by limiting federal enforcement of the drug, as long as states prevented it from getting to places it was outlawed and kept it from gangs and children. His action also unsettled the industry and spooked potential marijuana industry investors. Marijuana is still illegal under federal law.

Casey O’Neill remembers helicopter enforcement raids of grow sites in California when he was growing up in the 1980s. It was then that his parents, carpenters who grew small amounts of cannabis, became schoolteachers, he said.

He now helps run a farm that produces vegetables and marijuana for medical use near Laytonville, Calif., and is glad lawmakers are looking at ways to push back against the federal government.

Over the years, enforcement “has been uneven, we’ll say, and that’s kind of one of the things about it. It just means that everybody’s always afraid, and that’s hard,” he said.

Dale Gieringer, director of California NORML, a marijuana advocacy group, said California has a lousy history with the federal government on marijuana enforcement.

“I don’t think the feds care too much about marijuana in Alaska, to tell you the truth,” he said. “But marijuana has been a big industry in this state, so we’re sort of on the front lines. There’s no apparent panic in the industry over Sessions’ change in policy, given limited federal resources and prosecutors’ having had discretion in bringing cases all along. But there isn’t complacency, either.

“I don’t think the federal government is going to effectively step in and wipe us out of business. I just find that hard to believe at this point,” said Jennifer Canfield, who co-owns a state-licensed marijuana cultivation operation and retail store in Alaska’s capital city, Juneau.

“But they can make it hard for us.”

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

ACROSS
1. Carton sealer
5. Slave
9. Status follower
12. Baldwin of "Aloha"
13. Mine, in Marseille
14. Olympics chant
15. Sausage dog
17. "A spider!"
18. Monet's supply
19. Actions
21. Church leader
24. Country singer
25. Regrets
26. Manly guard dog
30. Doctrine
31. Enjoy
32. Bar order
33. Curly-tailed dog
35. Cauldron
36. Poet Sandburg
37. 19th president
38. Anatomical sac
40. Ticked (off)
42. One-time link
43. Tall, slender dog
48. Tic --- toe
49. Impale
50. Lady of the house
51. Bashful
52. Longings
53. Skedaddled

DOWN
1. Wee bit
2. In the manner of
3. Chest muscle
4. Canyon comebacks
5. Sainrist Mort
6. Flightless bird
7. Director Howard
8. Hoe down
9. Misanthrope
10. Ship launched in 1934
11. Fender bender
12. New York State
13. Game of four
14. Take me!
22. Rife with foliage
23. Rule of the people
24. Madonna's "Take me"
26. Willy Wonka's creator
27. Egg (Puff)
28. Out of the storm
29. Reporter's quest
31. Rough
34. Existed
35. Needing money
36. Sneaky laugh
38. Cave creatures
39. Hexagonal state
40. Seabird
41. Peeper
44. Shad product
45. Web address
46. Scot's denial
47. Lemon

Answer to Previous Puzzle

CRYPTOQUIP

Y H Y B E A Y H, H F L M V C S O U C Y
V S W W L M Q A T X S S J O Q T C Y B T
H M J U H Q D S B T V S W E Y U Y
Q M H T E S S D Q M X F Y Y

Yesterday's Cryptquip: PROMINENT TALK-SHOW HOST KNOWN FOR HIS JOYFUL, ENERGETIC, SPIRITUALLY MANNER: JAUNTY CARSON.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: F equals B
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Bradley Beal scored 22 points point lead but never trailed.

Toronto  improved to 26-5 at Air

Skal 18 points and 13 rebounds, scoring most of his points from inside 5 feet.

Eastern Conference

Pacers 98, 95

Indiana 35, 3-2, 21, 10, 17, 12. Parks 59, 3-1, 27, 13, 34, 23, 4-0 6-11 7-7, 36-45.

Raptors 103, Hawks 98

Charlotte 21, 22, 26-29, 98

Tigers 21, 20, 25-32.

Hawks 113, Suns 112

Phoenix 16, 2-6, 2-3, 25, Bend-

Nets 120, 101

Charlotte 5-2, 3-1, 22-32, 2, 19, 26-29, 11-22, 8, 6-13, 7-11, 9, 0-0 3-12 1-4.

Clippers 123, Nets 120

Brooklyn 2-1, 0-0 6-6 6-6, Crab-•

NBA

Raptors guard DeMar DeRozan (10) shoots over Charlotte Hornets guard Kemba Walker during Sunday’s game in Toronto. DeRozan scored 19 points in the Raptors’ 103-98 victory.

Surging Raptors hold off Hornets

Associated Press

TORONTO — DeMar DeRozan scored 19 points, Jonas Valanciunas had 18 points and 13 rebounds for Indiana, which almost gave away a 17-point lead but never trailed. Bradley Beal scored 22 points and had a career-high 11 assists for Washington.

Kemba Walker scored 27 points for Charlotte.

NBA

Skal 18 points and 13 rebounds, scoring most of his points from inside 5 feet.

Bucks 118, 76ers 110

Philadelphia 3-7-0-0, Saric 3-5-3-3, Embiid 6-12-4-10, Simmons 6-9-3-12, Redick 2-0-0-0, Phinisee 2-7-3-8, McCollum 2-2-0-3, Playfair 2-0-0-0, Beasley 0-1-0-0, Button 0-0-0-0, Fournier 0-0-0-0, Embiid 6-12-7-19, Bledsoe 6-12-7-25, Antetokounmpo 7-13-25, Williams Jr. 7-13-24, Turner 7-12-21, Dallas 21 (Oladipo 10), Total Fouls—New Orleans 21, 19, 17, 11, 34-26. Technicals—New Orleans coach Pelicans (Defensive three second). A—19,796 (19,200).

Bucks guard Bradley Beal, left, is hit by Indiana’s Victor Oladipo but does not get a foul call during Sunday in Washington.

Raptors 103, Hawks 98

Charlotte 21, 22, 26-29, 98

Tigers 21, 20, 25-32.

Hawks 113, Suns 112

Phoenix 16, 2-6, 2-3, 25, Bend-
Role: Wade willing to do whatever it takes to help

FROM BACK PAGE

He's just not starting.

"I started embracing it when I was at the previous team, because I'm a winner," Wade said. "I'm always about doing whatever I can to help whatever team I'm on be in its best position. I've done that my whole life. It's not just now. I've done it in the Olympics, I've done it all over the place, it's nothing away from who I am or what I've accomplished."

Before now, the last season that Wade played and wasn't a full-time starter was the summer of 2008 — on the U.S. Olympic team at the Beijing Games, where he was the leading scorer on the way to a gold medal. Prior to that, he thinks it was his fourth-grade team.

"It really is similar to the role he had with the USA team," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "He'd come in and be a force of nature."

There have been some signature moments already in his second stint with the Heat. Wade's winner against Philadelphia last week was the 12th of his career. In the first 29 seasons of Heat basketball, only two players posted consecutive 25-point games off the bench. Wade is already the third name on that list.

At home against Detroit on Saturday, he was screened with "M-V-P" and "We Want Wade" chants.

"The guy is just a great player," said Piston coach Stan Van Gundy, Wade's first coach with the Heat in 2003. "Has been since he walked into the league. He's done it all over the place. It takes whatever it takes to help whatever team I'm on be in its best position. I've done that my whole life. It's not just now."

It has also been emotional, as South Florida tries to recover from last month's shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High that left 17 people dead — including a boy whose parents chose to bury him in a Wade jersey. Wade met with the family of that teen, bury him in a Wade jersey. Wade that left 17 people dead — including a boy whose parents chose to bury him in a Wade jersey.

"I want to be my best self," Wade said. "If I'm on the bench to start games, if I'm on the bench to end games, as long as we're winning. That's all I care about."

By the numbers

Dwyane Wade is just the third Miami Heat player to post consecutive 25-point games off the bench.

Career game-winning baskets by Wade, including last Tuesday's clinching jumper in a 102-101 victory over the 76ers.

Stats deceptive on Cards' arms

Wade agrees, saying the return to play in South Florida has been an emotional lift. That's all I care about.

"We've seen some things that we want to improve on," Matheny said. "We've seen some really good things that would have been the third out of the inning on a ground ball. Wade hit a deep fly ball to right field. The statistics, he says, don't tell the whole story.

"Obviously guys are trying to get ready for the season," Matheny said. "You want to see them compete. You want to see some glimpses of things that they have been working on over the winter or are currently working on."

Take Michael Wacha's outing on Sunday, which wasn't a statistical work of art, but wasn't as bad as the final line might indicate, either.

The 28-year-old righty allowed two runs and five hits in three innings against Houston.

With runners on first and second and one out in the second, Evan Gattis hit a comebacker that caught Wacha in the right shin and bounded away for an infield hit. What could have been an inning-ending double play instead prolonged an inning, leading to the Astros' first run.

"I thought yesterday was better," Matheny said of Wacha's outing on Sunday. "You saw less mistakes at the middle of the plate, middle of the zone and height. He was better at the top. I thought the breaking ball looked sharper. Featured some good curve balls."

In his first spring appearance, expected opening day starter Carlos Martinez allowed one run and walked three in 1 1⁄3 innings, but allowed two hits against the Minnesota Twins on Thursday, in Jupiter, Fla.

"I felt good," Wacha said. "Just missed a few spots where I let them put it in play."

One out away from his ending his day, Wacha tried to sneak a 2-2 fastball past Jose Altuve. The American League MVP lofted a deep fly ball to right field that would have been the third out of the inning on most days, but on Sunday it rode a brisk win over the right field wall for Altuve's first home run of the spring.

"The scoreboard really didn't translate," Matheny said. "A lot of ground balls that kind of found their way through. Pop up that made it's way out."

"It's not wise for us around here to make any kind of wholesale conclusions of what we've seen so far," Matheny said. "We've seen some really good things and we've seen some things that we want to improve on."
Fitzpatrick’s skills might force teams to rethink position

BY MICHAEL MAROT
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS

Minkah Fitzpatrick understands the value of his skill set.
At 6-foot-1, 201 pounds, he hits like a safety. His speed, hip movement and feet might make him more tailored to cornerback.

So the Alabama star is spending this weekend explaining to NFL scouts he can excel at either, both or some combination of the positions.

“It’s a different kind of position, kind of like a combination between safety and corner,” said Fitzpatrick, describing the slot corner spot he played in college.

“I like to play both safety and corner, so I think slot corner is optimal for my abilities.”

If true, Fitzpatrick would be one of the rarest commodities in football — a tweener with an actual fit.

Traditionally when players at the NFL’s annual scouting combine are explaining what position suits them best, it’s because team executives aren’t sure where they should play and the player’s draft stock drastically drops.

But Fitzpatrick’s physical gifts could make him a trend-setter in a league that has become increasingly more pass-happy and places a premium on versatility.

He was recruited as a true corner back, moved to safety as a junior before the 2015 season, won the starting job and never relinquished it. Coach Nick Saban was so impressed he usually paired Fitzpatrick on the opponent’s top receiver, one-on-one.

And when it came time for Fitzpatrick to make an impact.
After being selected to the SEC all-freshman team in 2015, he earned first-team All-American honors in 2016 and 2017.
Now he’s off to the NFL, where teams are trying to figure out what Saban once did — the best place for Fitzpatrick to play.

“I think he could play all six defensive back positions. Both corners, both safeties, nickel and dime linebacker,” NFL Network draft analyst Mike Mayock said Saturday.

“He’s the only guy I can say that about. Now, is that a good thing or a bad thing? I’ve had a couple of coaches say to me, ‘Hey, is he a difference-maker? Is he a nickel? Where’s his ball production?’ He had six picks two years ago, but only had one this year.

But I look at [his versatility] as a positive.”

Mayock’s sentiment may explain why Fitzpatrick appears to have a slight edge on his competition right now. He’s projected to be a top-five pick.

Some expect Ohio State’s Denzel Ward, a true cornerback, to be selected in the top 10 with Florida State safety Derwin James the only other defensive back tabbed for the top 20.

The workouts in Indianapolis, which conclude Monday, will help define what that actual pecking order in April.

But one thing working in Fitzpatrick’s favor: work ethic.

While growing up in New Jersey, he sometimes helped his father fix trucks.

After the family’s home collapsed during Hurricane Irene in 2011, Fitzpatrick helped his parents rebuild.

And when the Catholic high school he attended provided peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to students who couldn’t afford school lunches, Fitzpatrick ate them up.

So when he arrived at the combine, less than two months away from possibly hitting a multimillion-dollar jackpot, the reality finally hit.

“It’s really crazy,” Fitzpatrick said. “I remember the second time I got here, I was laying in bed, looked up at the ceiling and just started smiling.”

Yes, it’s been a long trek here for Fitzpatrick and his family.

Yet he hasn’t forgotten his blue-collar roots, his humble perspective on life and his passion for football. It’s served him well, so far.

“I think he’s going to go out there and run like a corner, have the size of a safety, and if you’re a defensive coordinator and take him in the top 10, you’ve got to have a plan,” Mayock said. “What is he? Is he his safety, is he my corner, is he my nickel? Or is he a piece that I can match up with week to week against a big wideout or a tight end? How you use him is ultimately going to determine the value of him.”

Michigan wins 2nd straight Big Ten Tournament title

NEW YORK — Xavier Simpson was a catalyst on both ends of the floor, running Michigan’s efficient offense and leading its lock-down defense, and the No. 15 Wolverines beat No. 8 Purdue 75-66 on Sunday to repeat as Big Ten Tournament champion.

Back-up big man Jon Teske scored 14 points to help fifth-seeded Michigan (28-7) become the first team to repeat since Ohio State in 2010 and ’11.

Fitzpatrick finished with 10 points, five assists and five rebounds, and Moe Wagner led Michigan with 17 points, despite playing only 17 minutes because of foul trouble.

Isaak Haas led Purdue (28-6) with 23 points.

No. 10 Cincinnati 62, No. 11 Wichita State 57

In a battle between two teams vying for a conference title, Greg Elliott scored 19 points and the visiting Bearcats beat the Shockers 67-57.

Jared Ridder scored 19 points for Wichita State (24-6, 14-4).

No. 25 Houston 81, UConn 71

Rob Gray scored 30 points, Corey Davis Jr. had 17 and the host Cougars held off UConn.

Gray was 10-for-15 from the floor for Houston (24-6, 14-4 American Athletic Conference). Jalen Adams had 22 points and six assists for UConn (14-7, 7-11).

Conference championships

Lipscomb 108, Florida Gulf Coast 96: Madness.
That’s the only way to explain this.

Lipscomb led by 29 points at halftime, went up by 32 in the second half, then saw the lead get shredded down to five — on the road against a Florida Gulf Coast program that has squeezed the utmost from nearly every opportunity it has gotten in March since becoming the “Dunk City” NCAA darlings five years ago.

“We’ve experienced every emotion imaginable,” Lipscomb coach Casey Alexander said.

With that, it’s time to experience another: The Bisons are going to the NCAA Tournament for the first time.

Garrison Mathews scored 33 points and the second-seeded Bisons — once on the brink of all-out collapse — recovered just well enough in the final minutes to beat top-seeded FGCU in the Atlantic Sun Conference title game on Sunday and win the league’s automatic berth into the field of 68.

Lipscomb (23-9) shot 65 percent from the field, an utterly ridiculous 87 percent from two-point range, and took 47 free throws to FGCU’s 28 on the way to dethroning the two-time reigning A-Sun champion Eagles (23-11).

“Couldn’t be happier,” Alexander said. “Someone asked me how I was feeling. I don’t even know.”

Radford 55, Liberty 52: Carlik Jones had clear instructions: Take the final shot of regulation and leave no time on the clock for Liberty to counter.

The freshman did just that, and swished a three-pointer at the buzzer on Sunday, giving Radford a 55-52 victory in the Big South championship and its first NCAA Tournament berth since 2009.

The result, Jones said, was better than the Highlanders’ execution.

Radford (22-12) called timeout with 13 seconds left, setting up the final play. It was meant to be a double screen, but as Jones dribbled away the time, one of his teammates forgot his role, forcing Jones to make his move with about three seconds remaining.

“I had to let it go,” he said. “You shoot it, and I looked at it after a while and I was like, ‘That’s good,’ he said.

That’s it of the greatest feelings ever.”

Officials reviewed the play to be sure no time was left on the clock, and once that was confirmed, Radford fans began celebrating.

Jones had 13 points and six assists to lead the Highlanders, who’ll carry a seven-game winning streak into the tournament.

Loyola-Chicago 65, Illinois State 49: Step aside, Northwestern. Take a seat, DePaul. For now, Loyola-Chicago is the king of Windy City basketball.

The Ramblers earned their first NCAA Tournament appearance in 33 years with a 65-49 win over Illinois State in the Missouri Valley Conference championship game on Sunday in St. Louis.

Donte Ingram scored 18 points and Cameron Krutwig added 11 points and nine rebounds for Loyola-Chicago (28-5), which reached the Sweet 16 in its last NCAA tournament appearance, in 1985.
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**Notes:**
- **Loyola's Carson Shanks, right, celebrates as Illinois State player in background, reacts to loss in the Missouri Valley Conference tournament championship game Sunday in St. Louis. Loyola beat Illinois State 65-49 and secured the automatic bid to the NCAA tournament.**
- **Seminars**
- **Second Round**
- **Third Round**
- **Quarterfinals**
- **Semifinals**
- **Championship**
Forsberg charged down the ice and it got in.”

with 1:06 left in regulation with end and tie it up and end up get-

It was a pretty good all-around ef-

little better as the game went on.

in their latest effort against the

of what he saw from his players

Bednar said he still liked a lot

this season.

But at the same time we can’t get

the road is ridiculous right now.

“Getting four out of four wins on

we can come back,” Forsberg said.

4-0 trip, winning the last two in

4-3 on Sunday. They completed

of overtime and the Predators

remain the NHL’s hottest team.

Predators beat Avs in OT

Semyon Varlamov, back, as defenseman Tyson Barrie trails the play in overtime Sunday in Denver.

NHL

“Getti

Nashville has won nine straight

games at home .

and Colorado. Staal and Parise

consecutive road losses at Arizo-

Minnesota beat Detroit.

Tuesday, March 6, 2018

Denver — Nashville pulled

a 4-0 win over Phoenix on

Tuesday, also eliminating the

Kings from playoff contention.

Arizona 64 20 34 11 51 154 211

Ottawa 64 22 32 10 54 174 225

Detroit 65 26 29 10 62 170 193

Toronto 67 39 21 7 85 220 190

Boston 63 40 15 8 88 209 158

Buffalo 65 20 34 11 51 154 211

Ottawa 64 22 32 10 54 174 225

Detroit 65 26 29 10 62 170 193

Toronto 67 39 21 7 85 220 190

Boston 63 40 15 8 88 209 158

Buffalo 65 20 34 11 51 154 211

NHL

9 of 27 (23 shots-33 saves). Colorado, Dubnyk 18-11-7 (35-34).

Harvick dominates in Sin City

Victory comes on heels of last week’s win in Atlanta

By Greg Beacham
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — From his dynamic opening laps to his comfortable cruise to the finish, Kevin Harvick was the safest bet in Sin City this weekend.

Harvick’s air of inevitability increased with each lap around the Las Vegas Motor Speedway on Sunday, and the rest of the NASCAR Cup field must be a bit worried about how they’re going to catch up this year.

Harvick raced to his second straight NASCAR Cup win with a dominant performance in Vegas on Sunday, earning his 100th career win across the three national series.

“There was no catching that 4 (car),” second-place finisher Kyle Busch said. “He was on rails, and lights out.”

Harvick followed up his stellar performance last weekend in Atlanta with another victory in his Stewart-Haas Racing Ford. He led a track-record 214 of the 267 laps, won all three stages and capably held off Busch’s late hometown charge to win in Vegas for the second time in four years.

These last two weeks, we’ve just hit on everything we needed to,” said Harvick, who cruised home 2.9 seconds ahead of Busch. “My (team has) done their homework on a number of things. Just really proud of everybody."

Busch got close to his second career victory in his hometown with his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota, but couldn’t overcome the dominant leader. Kyle Larson finished third after winning the Xfinity Series race on Saturday, while defending champion Martin Truex Jr. was in fourth and pole-sitter Ryan Blaney in fifth.

Harvick has already matched his Cup win total from last season in three races — and he’s headed to Phoenix, where he has won five times since 2012.

Harvick also took a moment to savor a milestone. Only Richard Petty, Kyle Busch and David Pearson have won more races across the three national circuits. Harvick, the 42-year-old Californian with plenty of good years left on his tires, clearly has a shot at the all-time mark.

“It’s been a lot of years accumulated with a lot of great race teams and situations,” Harvick said. “When you tag that triple-digit number to it, it really lets you realize that you’ve been fortunate to accomplish a lot of things.”

Not many wins are more emphatic than Harvick’s 100th.

Harvick led 144 of the first 160 laps and comfortably won the first two stages. He was fourth out of the end-of-stage caution after Stage 2, with Joey Logano getting in front with an exceptional pit stop.

But Harvick reclaimed the lead off another restart with 73 laps to go after Kurt Busch wrecked along with Chase Elliott. Harvick emerged from his last pit stop with a three-second lead on Brad Keselowski, and Busch couldn’t catch up.

Here are more things to know about the race on the Strip:

Doing recon: For the first time, NASCAR is returning to Vegas in the fall for a second race, which will also be the playoff opener. Teams used this trip to gather data and information for the return trip in September, although the temperature could easily be 50 degrees higher than the balmy 53 degrees at Sunday’s race.

“The adjustments we made today are going to help in the fall,” Kyle Busch said. “(Although I think the track is going to be a lot slower with the heat.)"

Kubu can’t do: Kurt Busch’s career-long victory drought in his hometown continued. Busch lost control and ran Elliott into the wall shortly after a restart early in the final stage. The crash necessitated a long caution for fluid cleanup. The 39-year-old Busch has never won at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, which was built while he grew up in town. Kurt Busch failed to win the Cup race in Vegas for the 17th time. He has started on the pole twice, but has only one top-five finish here despite calling it a top priority in his career.

Winning big: Harvick was even more dominant in Vegas than Truex was last year. Truex led all three stages and 150 laps last year on his way to a victory that propelled him into his championship season.

Three strikes: The car chiefs for Jimmie Johnson and Ross Chastain were ejected after their cars failed inspection three times during the pre-race checks. Johnson had to start at the back after his chief, Jesse Saunders, got the gate. Johnson also will have practice time taken away next week in Phoenix. The seven-time champion still rallied to finish 12th.

Comeback story: Josh Frankos, the tire-changer on Darrell Wallace Jr.’s Richard Petty Motorsports team, injured his hand while preparing for the Vegas race and was sent to a hospital on Sunday morning. Michael Hubert filled in for him on pit road. The injury couldn’t keep Frankos down, however: He returned to the track for the race.
Reinventing Wade
3-time NBA champion embracing latest role

By Tim Reynolds
Associated Press

This is not the first reinvention of Dwyane Wade. Or the second. Or the third.
His 15 NBA seasons have been a series of role changes — the latest being where the most celebrated player in Miami Heat history watches five younger players start games while he waits for a chance to enter as a sub. But nearly a month after the trade that brought him back to the Heat, Wade has zero complaints.

"The finished product of Dwyane, you guys have seen me win three championships and all that," Wade said. "But I've had so many different roles in my life in playing basketball. I came off the bench for a long time before y'all knew who I was. I'm 36 years old. These guys are the future of this organization and this team. I'm definitely not the future. I'm cool with that."

Still, he's vital to Miami's hopes right now.
Wade is clearly going to play a sizable role in the Heat's playoff push, in all sorts of ways. The savvy veteran who can be a de facto assistant coach in the locker room, on the practice floor and on the bench.

The guy who makes Miami crowds roar simply by removing his warmups checking into games. The closer, who'll be on the floor in the most critical minutes of games.

SEE ROLE ON PAGE 27

Inside:
■ Surging Raptors top Hornets, Page 26

Harvick dominates, earns 2nd straight win » Page 31