Checkpoint Charlie bans actors posing as US soldiers

By John Vandiver and Marcus Kloeckner
Stars and Stripes

Actors dressed as U.S. soldiers at Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin have been banned from the iconic Cold War location because of their aggressive and abusive way with tourists, city officials said.

Passersby were "literally forced to pay for a picture with the actors," Stefanie Kunze, a spokeswoman for the district in Berlin that houses the former border crossing, said in an email.

Following several complaints from citizens and tourists, local authorities decided to take action and bar the soldier impersonators from the popular tourist site, she said.

The ban comes as Germany celebrates 30 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The impersonators, who were from the casting agency "Dance Factory," were verbally abusing and even following tourists who refused to offer donations after having their pictures taken with them, the German newspaper "Blick" reported.

SEE ACTORS ON PAGE 4

FAST AND FEARLESS

Belgian Malinois is ideal breed of dog to track down insurgents, trainer says

By Nancy Montgomery
Stars and Stripes

The canine that led the charge into a tunnel to corner Islamic State's top terrorist has a soft, cuddly side, said the man who helped train the famous military working dog.

"You could come here and visit and I could put him in your lap," trainer and former Air Force Master Sgt. Ken Licklider said. "Conan would crawl up and let you feed him a bonbon."

On the other hand, under certain circumstances, you could be the bonbon.

Conan, who was wounded after cornering Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in a dead-end tunnel in a compound in Syria, just before the ISIS leader blew himself up along with two children, is a Belgian Malinois.

The breed is generally considered fiercer, faster, more driven and perhaps less intelligent than the German shepherd it's been gradually replacing in the military and law enforcement.

German shepherds "do try to think things through more than a driven Malinois," said Licklider, who owns Vohne Liche Kennels. The company contracts with Special Operations Command to provide their forces with "multi-purpose canines"—dogs trained to track insurgents, subdue armed terrorists, sniff out weapons and explosives, parachute out of planes and fast-rope out of helicopters.

"I don't want the smartest dog," Licklider said. "I want the ones that storm the beach under a hail of machine-gun fire and think they're going to live through it."

Sometimes referred to as "Malligators," the breed once used for herding has been widely embraced by the U.S. military.

"There was no better dog to handle the effects of war," Licklider said. "Some people have told me that Conan was able to calm a wounded soldier by lying with him."

SEE MALINOIS ON PAGE 4
Turkey says Kurdish fighters still at Syrian border

BY MEHMET GUZEL
Associated Press

SURUC, Turkey — Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called Tuesday for Russia and the United States to keep to their promises and ensure that Syrian Kurdish fighters pull out of a so-called safe zone along Syria’s northern border with Turkey.

In his weekly speech to ruling party legislators, Erdogan said Syrian Kurdish fighters were still present in some of the border areas in northeastern Syria. That’s despite two cease-fire agreements — brokered by the U.S. and Russia — that halted Turkey’s military offensive to allow Kurdish fighters to pull back from the border. Erdogan also said Turkish troops were being attacked by some Syrian Kurdish fighters from areas they had retreated to, adding that Turkey would not “remain a spectator” to these assaults.

“We will do what is necessary, as we have in the past,” Erdogan said, without elaborating.

Erdogan later told reporters that U.S. troops were conducting joint patrols with the Syrian Kurdish fighters despite the agreement with Turkey. Separately, Turkey’s Defense Ministry said Kurdish fighters detonated a car bomb in Tal Abyad on Tuesday, but that no one was hurt in the attack. The ministry said the perpetrator was caught but it provided no further details.

Turkey considers the Kurdish fighters to be terrorists because of their links to Kurdish militants fighting inside Turkey.

Afghan president, Chinese FM discuss Taliban dialogue

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi have discussed a planned meeting in Beijing that would include Afghan figures and Taliban representatives.

That meeting — known as an “intra-Afghan dialogue” — was to take place last month but has been postponed. No new date has been set. The last time it was held was in July in Qatar.

The dialogue is a separate process from the U.S.-Taliban talks that collapsed in September. Tuesday’s Afghan statement says Ghani and Wang under-scored the Afghan government and people’s role in the peace process. Ghani insists his government must lead any dialogue with the Taliban, though the insurgents refuse to talk to government representatives.

The future of his office is also uncertain as Afghanistan awaits the long-overdue results of September presidential elections.

Turkish official: Al-Baghdadi’s sister captured in northwestern Syria

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Turkey captured the elder sister of the slain leader of Islamic State in northwestern Syria on Monday, according to a senior Turkish official, who called the arrest an intelligence “gold mine.”

Little is known about the sister of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The Turkish official said the sister, known as Rasmia Akad, 65, is suspected of being affiliated with the extremist group. He did not elaborate.

Awad was captured in a raid Monday evening on a trailer container she was living in with her family near the town of Azaz in Aleppo province. The area is part of the region administered by Turkey after it carried out a military incursion to chase away ISIS militants and Kurdish fighters starting in 2016. Allied Syrian groups manage the area, known as the Euphrates Shield zone.

The official said the sister was with her husband, daughter-in-law and five children. The adults are being interrogated, he said, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with government protocol.

“What she knows about [ISIS] can significantly expand our understanding of the group and help us catch more bad guys,” the official said.
Navy’s top submeriner taking over STRATCOM

By Corey Dickstein
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Navy’s top submariner will take over command of the U.S. military’s nuclear enterprise after his unanimous confirmation by the Senate last week to become the leader of U.S. Strategic Command.

Vice Adm. Charles Richard will be promoted to four-star admiral when he takes the helm of STRATCOM at Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska following his confirmation Thursday. Richard has most recently been serving as the Navy’s submarine forces commander since August 2018. He has also served in recent years as the deputy commander at STRATCOM, according to his Navy biography.

Richard will replace Air Force Gen. John Hyten, who was confirmed in September to become the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the No. 2 ranking officer in the U.S. military.

In his new command, Richard will be responsible for the three-legged U.S. nuclear enterprise, which can deliver nuclear arms from land-, sea- and air-based missiles and by using aircraft.

Richard, like his recent predecessors, listed upgrading the nuclear triad among the top priorities within STRATCOM when he testified Oct. 24 before the Senate Armed Services Committee. The nuclear enterprise, he testified, must be modernized as soon as possible to ensure the United States can maintain a legitimate nuclear deterrent against adversarial nations such as China and Russia.

“We have delayed and life-extended the triad systems to the maximum extent possible,” Richard said. “What I mean by that is we are bumping into physics and engineering limits.”

Richard adopted the same opinion as several past STRATCOM bosses on the potential for the United States to use nuclear weapons first in a time of conflict. The admiral said America should retain the right to use such power first, telling the Senate committee that adopting a so-called no-first-use policy could leave allied nations questioning whether they might need their own nuclear deterrent.

“I think adoption of a no-first-use policy would have a significant negative effect on our commitments to our allies,” he said.

No-first-use policies have been championed by several lawmakers in Congress including Rep. Adam Smith, D-Calif., the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, and Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and one of the front-runners among Democrats seeking the presidential nomination in 2020.

Richard is a 1982 graduate of the University of Alabama who has served the vast majority of his career in the submarine community but has also completed assignments at the Pentagon and within STRATCOM, according to the Navy.

Richard will take over command of U.S. Strategic Command after being confirmed by the Senate last week.

He has commanded submarines including the USS Parche and the since-deactivated Submarine NR-1, a one-of-its-kind nuclear-powered, deep-submergence vessel used in a variety of missions including ocean research and installing underwater equipment. His other submarine assignments include service aboard the USS Portsmouth, the USS Asheville and the USS Scranton, according to the Navy.

Richard has also commanded Submarine Squadron 17 in Bangor, Wash., and Submarine Group 10 at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay in Georgia and directed the Undersea Warfare Program at the Pentagon.

With Russia and China modernizing their military equipment, including their own nuclear forces, as they attempt to gain influence across the globe, Richard said the United States must invest in its nuclear enterprise to retain its power and military superiority.

“With the return to great-power competition — we must never lose sight of the fundamental nature and importance of our nation’s strategic forces,” Richard told the Senate committee last month. “A powerful, ready triad remains the most effective way to deter adversaries from conducting attacks against the U.S. and our allies.”

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US fleets conduct drills to boost security in East Africa

By Scott Wyland
Stars and Stripes

The Navy’s 5th and 6th fleets are conducting exercises in tandem to help East African and Indian Ocean nations combat seagoing crimes and other threats in the region.

This first-time coupling of the sea policing drill Cutlass Express with the large-scale International Maritime Exercise, or IMX, will boost security efforts among the more than 60 participating navies as well as the two U.S. fleets whose theaters border each other, the Navy said.

“As we all know, crime at sea doesn’t heed any imaginary lines that we’ve drawn that separate our fleets,” Rear Adm. Nancy Lacore, 6th Fleet’s vice commander, told Stars and Stripes. “They flow freely across the Indian Ocean regardless of where we put a line down.”

Cutlass Express, hosted by U.S. Africa Command and Naval Forces Europe and Africa, is taking place a few months early to run concurrently with the broader IMX, hosted by Naval Forces Central Command.

The three-week dual exercise runs until Nov. 16. Most of the two fleets’ drills are separate but in proximity. The fleets will exercise together in the Gulf of Aden, practicing explosive ordnance disposal, port protection and other defensive tactics.

In Cutlass Express, 18 navies are training to spot, raid and search ships during simulations near Djibouti, Seychelles, Madagascar and Mauritius. Some of the exercises will be done by the S8 taking part in IMX, which includes nations in active or observer roles.

In the past, IMX focused on countering mines, defending against missiles and combating fast-attack vessels, such as the ones Iran commonly uses.

Mine countermeasures training will continue this year, but other scenarios will focus on protecting infrastructure, boarding techniques, explosives disposal and patrol force operations.

The two fleets’ commands are sharing information, including for sea policing. The teamwork will better enable one fleet to hand off policing to the other when criminal activities cross boundaries, Lacore said.

The exercise helps African navies police seaborne crimes such as illegal fishing, gun running and unlawful ship fueling, Lacore said.

The region’s growing economy and improved infrastructure feed illicit activities as much as legal ones, threatening the countries’ stability and leaving them more open for violent extremists and U.S. rivals to exploit, said Christopher Jasparro, national security affairs professor at the Naval War College.

U.S. efforts to bolster regional security, including through naval exercises, are well-regarded in Africa, Jasparro said, so it’s important that the U.S. keep at it.

“Not only can this help build security and help combat common threats, but it also gives the U.S. influence, leverage and goodwill in a region where it faces competition from countries like Russia and China,” Jasparro said.

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Space-available mail to take longer to get to Europe

By Jennifer H. Svan
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Mom will have to know that sweater is a little late, but unlike that little slip of a letter to send it by space-available mail from the States to an Air Force post office in Europe in time for the end-of-year holidays.

Starting Nov. 16, space-available mail sent from the U.S. to Air Force-service post offices in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands will once again cross the Atlantic by boat, taking between a month and 45 days to arrive, according to the USAFE Air Postal Squadron officials said Tuesday.

Space-available — or deferred — mail costs less to ship to APO/FPO addresses overseas than priority and express mail services. It is needed by ground across the U.S. and, until last spring, was put in containers and shipped by boat across the ocean.

But even though space-available mail wasn’t filling the shipping containers, the Air Force was still paying for a full container. Since May, the USAFE Air Postal Squadron has been paying to transport space-available mail by commercial air from the U.S. to Europe along with more expensive priority and express mail, said Lt. Col. Derek Molloy, USAFE Air Postal Squadron commander.

“It ended up costing a little more, but not a whole lot more” to fly the mail over to Europe, Molloy said. As a result, “anything coming space available and priority, I’m putting here around the same time.”

That’s about to change, he said. With the added mail volume expected for the holidays, the Air Force “can fill the containers,” he said.

That, and the fact that it “becomes prohibitively expensive” to use air transportation for all classes of mail during the holidays, mean the Air Force in Europe will go back to putting space-available mail on ships until the end of the holiday mailing season, around Jan. 15, Molloy said.

Bulky items exceeding 108 inches in length and girth combined are usually sent space-available.

“If somebody tries to order tires in December, it’s going to take a long time,” Molloy said, but most items that service members need and their families would normally get from the States for the holidays probably won’t be affected.

“Items sent space-available via military mail from Europe to the States will continue to be shipped by air and then by ground once they arrive in the U.S., USAFE air postal squadron training manager Lionel Rivera said.

The Air Force flies all mail, no matter the class, and that is not expected to change during the holidays, said Ray Johnson, a Wing Management Command-Europe.

“Concurrently, the Air Force is getting all of its mail,” Johnson said.

The task of tracking down insurgents, biting armed terrorists, finding weapons caches and just generally scaring the expletive out of everything that faced them, according to a Volhke Lichte website essay.

Israeli soldiers also prefer Malinois, said Dr. Hagai Schermann, a doctor and researcher who led a study that documented how often military dogs bite events, the study found.

Malinois are “more aggressive and less careful,” Schermann said soldiers told him. “That’s why they prefer Malinois. They say German shepherds are too smart. They didn’t want to attack the terrorists.”

Schermann’s 2017 study found that the 78 soldiers who took part in the research were bitten 139 times, and about half were bitten by their own dogs, usually during training.

“Belgian Malinois were involved in a majority of bite events,” the study found.

“I can definitely see how they could be super-aggressive through bad bloodlines or training, Licklider said. “It’s all about buying the right animal and doing the right training,” he said. “In the 80s and 90s, we were getting dogs that would flat-out eat you. But we got smarter.”

Still, even the sweetest Malinois might not be the right dog for a family pet, Licklider said.

That was at the direction of the Secret Service, which also uses the breed to patrol the White House grounds.

As for their earnings, “We made at most 700 euros a day. And we paid tax on that,” he told German newspaper Der Tagesspiegel. The fake soldiers might have had a word with tourists who didn’t pay them 3 euros after having a picture taken, but they made up for it.

“Soldiers who didn’t pay them 3 euros might have had a word with tourists and that they made up for it,” Ray Johnson, a Wing Management Command-Europe.

Chief Petty Officer John E. Hasselbrink, 41, a fire control technician on the Pearl Harbor submarine USS Illinois, had consumed “at least” seven drinks prior to the April 15 shooting and had a blood alcohol level of 0.25 — three times the legal threshold for driving, the Navy report said.

Navy probe finds no misconduct by sailor who was fatally shot

A Navy submariner who was fatally shot through the locked front door at a frightened neighbor’s house in 2018 “did not kick the door, bang on it, yell, or otherwise show aggressive behavior,” according to a Navy “line of duty” investigation that found no misconduct.

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BY DINO GRANDONI
The Washington Post

The U.S. Air Force is seeking to ass
control over as much as two-thirds of a
wildlife refuge in Nevada for training
trains and testing weapons, according to a
legislative proposal sent by military plan
ners to the Department of the Interior and
obtained by The Washington Post.

The military's test and training range already encompasses much of a vast stretch of southern Nevada desert
originally set aside for bighorn sheep, des
tortoise, and other wildlife. But the U.S.
Fish and Wildlife Service retains primary
authority over the refuge to halt military
activities that would otherwise disturb key
habitats for plants and animals.

The draft legislation would carve out 1.1
million acres of Desert National Wildlife
Refuge to be used primarily for the mili
tary purposes and only “secondarily” as a
nature preserve. The military wants to add as much as 260,000 acres of the ref
uge — the largest in the contiguous United
States — to the testing range.

In a statement, the Air Force said it is working with Interior officials to amend the
proposed legislation and that the ver
sion obtained by the Post is “not the cur
rent draft.”

The Air Force says it needs the extra
space as a safety buffer for the testing.
new and more powerful weapons and that
no new areas would be bombed, adding
that it plans to physically disturb no more
than 35 acres in the expanded range.

“The Air Force has conducted a four
year process which included all identified
stakeholders to very much the best way to
meet the emerging test and training re
quirements,” it said.

Melissa Brown, an Interior Department
spokeswoman, also suggested the draft
legislation would be changed before being sent to Congress for inclusion in the next
annual defense policy bill, known as
proposals submitted for the 2021 NDAA are being reviewed and will inevitably
change as it goes through the process,” she
said.

The draft bill, which is subject to chang
es by Interior officials before being sub
mitted to Congress, gives the military the
authority to do much more than just
expand its testing grounds. It would jett
ison an environmental review that has hap
pened every 20 years and exempt the area
from wildlife refuge law, opening the way
for the Air Force to mine sand, gravel and
other materials from within the refuge for
construction.

Some nearby residents, environmental
groups and Native American tribes worry
the proposal — outlined by the Air Force
late last year but fleshed out in detail in the
military’s draft bill — would render much
of the desert wilderness north of Las Vegas
a refuge in name only.

Jenny Keating, a federal lands policy an
alist at the nonprofit Defenders of Wildlife
who reviewed the draft bill, said it would
“pull the teeth out of refuge law.”

“The Air Force’s damaging proposal
represents not just an existential threat
to Desert National Wildlife Refuge but to
the integrity of the refuge system itself,” she
added.

The push to expand military testing in
the refuge has sparked fierce opposition
from the Moapa Band of Paiutes, whose
ancestral lands extend across the test ing
range and refuge, as well as beyond

Last year, the tribe adopted a resolution
outlining its objections, which included
concerns about how the move would cur
tail access to sacred sites, damage cultural
artifacts and harm the bighorn sheep with
which tribal members share a strong
connection.

Greg Anderson, who chaired the tribe
last year and served on its tribal council for
the preceding five years, said in a phone
interview that Air Force officials have con
sulted with tribal officials but have failed
to carry out their pledges to protect sensi
tive sites in the past.

“He pointed to Pungwa
ter Cave, a site on the tribe’s former lands
on which ordnance has been dropped.

You can see the projectiles in the walls,”
Anderson said, adding that incidents like
that have prompted him to mistrust the Air
Force’s promises: “They’re not doing what
they’re saying they’re doing,” he said.

The fact that the tribe’s 358 members
will have to get special clearances to ac
cess sacred sites is equally problematic,
he added. “They’ve already taken away all
our land,” Anderson said, referring to the
2.3 million acres the Moapa Band of Pai
utes used to control.

In the resolution, the tribe noted that its
creation stories describe how its people en
tered the mountains and left as sheep.

“Do we ascribe authority over the refuge
to oil and gas drilling?”

Rep. Steven Horsford, a Democrat whose
district encompasses the refuge, is vehe
mently against the proposal.

“I will do everything in my power to
preserve this untouched habitat,” he said.

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General Dynamics gets multibillion-dollar Navy sub deal

BY TONY CAPACCHIO
Bloomberg

The U.S. Navy has reached an agreement with General Dynamics Corp on a multibill
lion-dollar deal to buy the next batch of Vir
ginia-class attack submarines, according to
the service.

After protracted negotiations, the deal was cut from 11 submarines to nine, with an op
tion to buy a 10th vessel in 2023, because funding was running more than $1 billion short,
according to service documents and congressional correspondence. The value of the result
agree wasn’t disclosed.

“We have reached a multiyear agreement
“and are working to announce a contract” by
Dec. 31, Navy spokesman Danny Howard
said in a statement. “It will achieve significant
savings, will include important lethality en
hancements” and “provide critical stability to
the industrial base. Further information will
be available upon contract award,” he said.

Elizabeth Power, a spokeswoman with
General Dynamics’ Electric Boat unit, which
makes the Virginia-class sub with Hunting
ton Ingalls Industries Inc, said, “We have
been working closely with the Navy and stand
ready to support their needs. The contract
being contemplated allows us to maintain a
stable Virginia-class build rate.”

By law, the Pentagon must submit a detailed
justification for proceeding with a multiyear
contract, including outlining “significant
savings” that would be realized over annual
purchases that give Congress more oversight.
Last week, the Defense Department sub
mitted to congressional defense committees a
proposal certifying savings of 6.8%, or $1.8
billion, from a nine-ship contract.

Ellen Lord, the Pentagon’s acquisitions
chief, said in letters to the four defense com
mittees that “while there are sufficient funds”
to execute the program through 2024, “there
are shortfalls” in fiscal 2022 and 2023 that
the Navy has committed to address in its next
budget proposal.

Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Conn., and Rob Wit
tman, R-Va., the Democratic chairman and
ranking Republican on the House Armed
Services seapower panel, wrote Defense Sec
retary Mark Esper in September to “express
our very serious concern” over the “reduced
scope for the contract due to funding short
falls.” They represent districts where the
subs are built or workers live.

Navy Secretary Richard Spencer acknowl
edged in a Sept. 27 reply to lawmakers the
reduction to nine submarines with an op
tion to add at least one. The Navy “has been in
negotiations” to “achieve a balanced ap
proach with full considerations of technical
risk, the industrial base capability and fleet
requirements.”
WASHINGTON — It started with a warning to watch her back; that people were “looking to hurt her. From there, former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch told House investigators, it escalated into a chilling campaign to fire her as President Donald Trump and his allies allied in Eastern Europe for political advantage at home.

Testimony from Yovanovitch, released on Monday, offered the first word-for-word look at the closed-door House impeachment hearings. Inside, Democrats and Republicans are waging a pitched battle over what to make of Trump’s efforts to get Ukraine’s leaders to investigate political rival Joe Biden, Biden’s son and Democratic activities in the 2016 election.

The transcript came out on the same day that four Trump administration officials defied subpoenas to testify, acting on orders from a White House that is fighting the impulse of some in Congress to investigate with all its might. Among those refusing to testify: John Eisenberg, the lead lawyer at the National Security Council and, by some accounts, the man who ordered a rough transcript of Trump’s phone call with Ukraine’s leader moved to a highly restricted computer system.

During nine hours of sometimes emotional testimony, Yovanovitch detailed efforts led by Rudy Giuliani and other Trump allies to get her fired by putting her to a foreign country.

As he so often does, Trump released the rally meant for a fellow Republican into a venue to air his own grievances against a litany of familiar foes, including the news media and the House of Representatives.

The impeachment inquiry also exposed a quid pro quo in which Trump offered military aid to Ukraine in exchange for that probe into Biden and his family.

Democrats believe the memo shows evidence of a quid pro quo in which Trump offered military aid to Ukraine in exchange for that probe into Biden and his family.

Trump supporters packed Rupp Arena, the famed home of the University of Kentucky basketball team, and roared when Trump saluted Bevin.

Beshear, meanwhile, spent the day campaigning in western Kentucky and, despite Trump’s presence, focused on state issues.

Ex-ambassador: Ukrainian told her to watch her back

Yovanovitch

WASHINGTON — It started with a warning to watch her back; that people were “looking to hurt her. From there, former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch told House investigators, it escalated into a chilling campaign to fire her as President Donald Trump and his allies allied in Eastern Europe for political advantage at home.

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The transcript came out on the same day that four Trump administration officials defied subpoenas to testify, acting on orders from a White House that is fighting the impulse of some in Congress to investigate with all its might. Among those refusing to testify: John Eisenberg, the lead lawyer at the National Security Council and, by some accounts, the man who ordered a rough transcript of Trump’s phone call with Ukraine’s leader moved to a highly restricted computer system.

During nine hours of sometimes emotional testimony, Yovanovitch detailed efforts led by Rudy Giuliani and other Trump allies to get her fired by putting her to a foreign country.

As he so often does, Trump released the rally meant for a fellow Republican into a venue to air his own grievances against a litany of familiar foes, including the news media and the House of Representatives.

The impeachment inquiry also exposed a quid pro quo in which Trump offered military aid to Ukraine in exchange for that probe into Biden and his family.

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Beshear, meanwhile, spent the day campaigning in western Kentucky and, despite Trump’s presence, focused on state issues.

Ex-ambassador: Ukrainian told her to watch her back

Yovanovitch

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US notifies UN that it is withdrawing from Paris climate agreement

WASHINGTON — The United States has begun the process of pulling out of the landmark 2015 Paris climate agreement.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Monday that he submitted a formal notice to the United Nations that America’s carbon pollution cuts and called the Paris deal an “unfair economic burden” to the U.S. economy. From there, former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch told House investigators, it escalated into a chilling campaign to fire her as President Donald Trump and his allies allied in Eastern Europe for political advantage at home.

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MILWAUKEE — Milwaukee police arrested a man suspected of throwing battery acid on a Hispanic man who said his attacker asked him, “Why did you come here and invade my country?”

Police said Monday they arrested a white man suspected in Friday night’s attack and were investigating the case as a hate crime. They refused to release his name pending charges, but the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel identified him as Clifton A. Blackwell, 61, a military veteran whose mother said had struggled with post-traumatic stress. Mahud Villalaz suffered second-degree burns to his face. He said the attack happened after a man confronted him about how he had parked his car and accused him of being in the U.S. illegally. Villalaz, 42, is a U.S. citizen who immigrated from Peru.

The attack comes amid a spike in hate crimes directed at immigrants that researchers and experts on extremism say is tied to mainstream political rhetoric. Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett expressed shock at the attack and blamed President Donald Trump for inciting hatred against minorities. The president has repeatedly referred to migrants attempting to cross the U.S.-Mexico border as an “invasion.”

“To single out someone because they’re from a Hispanic origin is simply wrong. And we know what’s happening,” said Barrett, a Democrat. “Everybody knows what’s happening. It’s because the president is talking about it on a daily basis that people feel they have license to go after Hispanic people, and it’s wrong.”

White House spokesman Judd Deere said the Trump administration has “repeatedly condemned racism, bigotry and violence.” “The only person responsible for this heinous act is the person who committed it, and it’s disgusting the mayor of Milwaukee would rather point the finger at the president of the United States for political reasons instead of responsibly confronting the violence in his own community,” Deere said in a statement.

Jacqueline P. Blackwell, of California, told the Journal Sentinel that her son had moved to Milwaukee seeking to get help. The man also accused him of being in the U.S. illegally and of invading the country. He said he ignored the man and moved his truck to another block. When he returned to the restaurant, the man was waiting for him with an open bottle, Villalaz said.

He said he moved to another restaurant but the man followed him and said, “You cannot park here. You are doing something illegal.” He said the man also accused him of invasion.

That’s when he says the man tossed acid at him. Villalaz turned his head, and the liquid hit the left side of his face.

Mahud Villalaz, of Milwaukee, gestures to the burns on his face at a news conference Saturday, one day after a man threw acid at him.

Family: Suspect in acid attack a vet with PTSD

IMAGE

Mahud Villalaz, 42, a U.S. citizen who immigrated from Peru, suffered second-degree burns to his face after a man threw acid at him. The attack comes amid a spike in hate crimes directed at immigrants that researchers and experts on extremism say is tied to mainstream political rhetoric. Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett expressed shock at the attack and blamed President Donald Trump for inciting hatred against minorities. The president has repeatedly referred to migrants attempting to cross the U.S.-Mexico border as an “invasion.”

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Family: Suspect in acid attack a vet with PTSD
**SC abortion bill up for vote but faces iffy future**

**By Jeffrey Collins**

Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — South Carolina could get closer to being the latest state to pass a ban on almost all abortions Tuesday as a proposal faces another vote, but the bill’s future is murky because it does not include exceptions for victims of rape and incest.

The state Senate Medical Affairs Committee is expected to pass the measure along to the full Senate floor for a possible 2020 election-year fight.

The “heartbeat abortion” ban would make almost all abortions illegal in South Carolina after a fetal heartbeat is detected, usually around six weeks after conception.

The bill already faced an iffy future next year because some more moderate Republicans senators don’t want to waste days fighting a proposal they believe will die in court. Instead suggesting lawmakers should wait and see what happens with court challenges to similar measures passed into law in other states. They suggest that if the bans elsewhere prevail, then South Carolina could follow suit.

Similar bills have passed in recent years in Louisiana, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi and Ohio. Missouri approved a ban on abortions after eight weeks of pregnancy, and Alabama lawmakers simply outlawed all abortions. All of them remain tied up in courts.

Another roadblock to South Carolina’s bill may have been put up last month by its most ardent supporters. The bill passed the state House allowing exceptions for pregnancies caused by rape or incest. A Senate subcommittee removed those exceptions.

South Carolina already had an abortion showdown in 2018 after Democratic Sen. Brad Hutto, of Orangeburg, who has fought restrictions on the procedure for decades, altered a bill banning a specific type of abortion to ban on almost all abortions. Hutto then dared lawmakers to pass the total ban.

Moderate Republicans couldn’t support the proposal, which failed. Democrats have added a seat since that election.

The heartbeat abortion bill passed the South Carolina House last year after the rape and incest exceptions were added on the House floor following a speech by Rep. Nancy Mace, a Republican from Charleston, who told for the first time how she was raped when she was a teen.

Gov. Henry McMaster enthusiastically supported a ban even before it was changed in the House. He has promised to sign the bill if it passes.

Sen. Richard Cash put the incest and rape ban back in the bill. The Republican from Powdersville was elected in 2017 in a campaign promising to do all he could to end abortion.

“There are no easy answers in such a situation, but I believe there are right answers,” Cash said, condemning rape and incest as terrible crimes as he proposed the amendment at last month’s meeting. “Whether you mean to or not, you are punishing a person wrongfully for something he or she had nothing to do with.”

Democratic state Sen. Kevin Johnson said he wished Republicans spent as much time on the care of living children as what goes on inside a pregnant woman’s womb.

“I don’t think we can attribute to these measures the tens of thousands of people who die from diseases. We’re saying, although you were innocent and were raped, you’ve got to carry that baby for nine months,” the Democrat from Manning said. “That’s just kind of horrific.”

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**Study: Fires made more frequent by alien grass**

**Associated Press**

WASHINGTON — For much of the United States, invasive grass species are making wildfires more frequent, especially in fire-prone California, a new study finds.

Twelve non-native species act as “little arsonists,” said study co-author Bethany Bradley, a University of Massachusetts professor of environmental conservation.

Wherever the common Mediterranean grass invades, including California’s southern desert, fires flare up three times more often. And cheatgrass, which covers about one-third of the Inter- mountain West, is a big-time fire promoter, Bradley said.

“I would not be surprised at all if invasive grasses are playing a role in the current fires, but I don’t think we can attribute to them directly,” Bradley said.

University of Utah fire expert Phil Dennison, who wasn’t part of the study, said it makes sense.

“In a lot of ways, California was ground zero for invasive grasses,” he said. Much of California’s native perennial grassland was replaced by Mediterranean annual grasses over a century ago.

“This study doesn’t look at invasive grasses in the areas that are burning in California, but invasive grasses are contributing to the fires there.”

Experts say the areas burning now in California are more shrubs and grasses than forests, despite what President Donald Trump tweeted over the weekend.

“This is a global problem,” said University of Alberta fire expert Mike Flannigan, who wasn’t part of the study but also said it makes sense. “I think with climate change and human assistance, we are moving to a grass world. One region they should have mentioned is Hawaii, where wildfires are increasing in large part due to invasive grasses.”

Invasive species are spreading more because of climate change as warmer weather moves into new areas, said study lead author Emily Fusco, also of the University of Massachusetts.

New England and the mid-Atlantic are seeing new invasive and more flammable grasses, Bradley said.

The study in Monday’s journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences looks at the connections between a dozen species of invasive grasses and fires nationwide, finding fires occur more often in places with the non-native grasses. The study did not find a link between invasive grasses and the size of the fires.

Four of the species, including cheatgrass and common Mediterranean grass, are in California. Those grasses get dry and then, watch out, Fusco said.

“When you start a fire, normally you want kindling,” Fusco said. “The grasses are, more or less, like kindling.”

If someone lights a match and throws it in the middle of a forest, it is unlikely a fire will start, but throw it in a field of cheatgrass, “and odds are that it’s going to catch,” Bradley said.

“We are the reason that invasive species are here. We are the reason that they get spread around,” Bradley said.

Flannigan noted that invasive plants that are not grasses also need the wildfire problem.

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**Ohio woman is mauled to death by her dogs at home**

**By Lawrence Budd**

Dayton (Ohio) Daily News

An Ohio man said he knew the two Great Dane dogs police suspect killed his wife were aggressive and had urged his wife to get rid of them.

Dr. Mary Matthews, 49, of Warren County, died after being mauled by her dogs in her home Friday, said Doyle Burke, chief investigator for the Warren County Coroner’s Office.

She was found by her husband, Dale, in the home where they lived with two Great Danes, according to police and jail records.

“They are both very aggressive,” Burke said, citing information from the husband and local authorities.

Evidence in the house indicated that Matthews was attacked on the first floor and was able to guard the dogs outside, “then basically bled to death,” Burke said.

Clearcreek Township police were called to the home by her husband about 2:24 p.m. for a possible drug overdose, according to jail and police records. He had been in jail for two days for failure to pay child support.

Matthews was found in the bathroom near the front door. Blood was found in the garage, the entryway into the house and the laundry room, as well as in the bathroom and other parts of the house, according to an incident report.

The husband confirmed the black dog was “vicious” and indicated “if his wife was alone and they attacked, she would not have been able to defend herself because of her small stature,” Clearcreek Township Officer Wendy Williams wrote in the report.

Matthews’ body was marked by numerous cuts and punctures, as well as a gouged left ankle. She was pronounced dead at 4:28 p.m., according to the police report.

Neighbors reported being awakened at 3 a.m. by the “dogs barking and whining outside.”

“It appears that she was able to get them outside but perhaps didn’t recognize the extent of her injuries and felt she could handle things on her own,” Blaha said.

The dogs were found on an enclosed porch, according to the Warren County Animal Warden Nathan Harper.

The dogs were turned over to the Warren County dog warden and were euthanized Saturday after the victim’s husband released them to the county.

The dogs are to be tested by the health department for rabies, Harper said.

Harper’s office had been called to the same home in 2018 for bites involving a different Great Dane, but not for incidents with the dogs involved in Friday’s fatal incident.

“These dogs had bitten them in the past, had bitten other people in the past,” Burke said.

Matthews’ cause of death was pending toxicology screening but was apparently due to multiple dog bites, Burke said.
Authorities give details on California jailbreak

Associated Press

MONTEREY, Calif. — Two inmates charged with murder broke out of a California jail over the weekend after climbing through a hole they made in a bathroom ceiling of their housing unit and then squeezing through a wall before finding an escape hatch, authorities said Monday.

Santos Fonseca, 21, and Jonathan Salazar, 20, made the hole measuring about 8 inches tall and 22 inches wide in the guard’s blind spot and then slipped into the walls of the jail Sunday in the city of Salinas, Monterey County sheriff’s Capt. John Thornburg said.

“Those are a part of the Regimented Treatment Program at the prison on Monday in Taft, Okla. They were among about 462 inmates freed across Oklahoma on Monday.

“Inmates being released from the Eddie Warrior Correctional Center walk through a line of inmates that were a part of the Regimented Treatment Program at the prison on Monday in Taft, Okla. They were among about 462 inmates freed across Oklahoma on Monday.

“I have met many women in here who came from a medium or maximum-security prison who have already served 18 or more years,” Harjo said. “It’s ridiculous.”

NATION

462 inmates set free in Oklahoma

BY SEAN MURPHY
Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — More than 450 inmates walked out the doors of prisons across Oklahoma on Monday as part of what state officials say is the largest single-day mass commutation in U.S. history.

The release of inmates, all with convictions for low-level drug and property crimes, resulted from a bill signed by new Republican Gov. Kevin Stitt. The bill retroactively applied misdemeanor sentences for simple drug possession and low-level property crimes that state voters approved in 2016.

Stitt has made reducing Oklahoma’s highest-in-the-nation incarceration rate one of his top priorities and has appointed reform-minded members to the state’s Pardon and Parole Board.

Releasing the inmates will save Oklahoma an estimated $11.9 million from the cost of continuing to keep them behind bars, according to the governor’s office.

The board last week considered 814 cases and recommended 527 inmates for commutation. How- ever, 65 are being held on detaine- ers, leaving about 462 inmates to be released on Monday.

“It feels amazing to be on the other side of the fence,” said Tess Harjo, 28, who was released Monday in Taft.

Harjo was sentenced to 15 years in prison after her Okmul-gee County conviction last year for possession of methamphet- amines. She said she was sur- prised at the number of women she met in prison serving long sentences for drug crimes.

“I have met many women in here who came from a medium- or maximum-security prison who have already served 18 or more years,” Harjo said. “It’s ridiculous.”

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Associated Press

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Santos Fonseca, 21, and Jonathan Salazar, 20, made the hole measuring about 8 inches tall and 22 inches wide in the guard’s blind spot and then slipped into the walls of the jail Sunday in the city of Salinas, Monterey County sheriff’s Capt. John Thornburg said.

“We consider them danger- ous,” he said. “Please dial 911 if anybody does see them or knows where they are.

Investigators have not deter- mined how long they worked on making the hole or if anyone else helped them escape the jail in the farming city of about 160,000 people roughly 100 miles south of San Francisco. They were report- ed missing at 8:15 a.m. Sunday, Thornburg said.

There was another escape about five years ago, when an inmate climbed through a venti- lation duct in a different housing unit, he said.

Fonseca and Salazar had been behind bars since last year and were awaiting trial on murder counts and “numerous other fel- ony charges” in separate cases, authorities said.

Fonseca is accused of shoot- ing Lorenzo Gomez Acosta, 37, to death on June 2, 2018, while the victim sat in his car on a video call with his wife in Mexico, the Californian newspaper in Salinas reported.

Fonseca told police that his gang leader told him to kill some- one to prove he was still loyal to the “Boronda gang,” Detective Gabriela Contreras testified. Acosta was reportedly chosen at random.

Three days later, Fonseca shot and killed Ernesto Garcia Cruz, 27, in a Salinas park, authori- ties allege. He told police that the gang leader also ordered the slaying and that he picked his girlfriend’s ex-boyfriend “so I could send him a message,” Contreras said, according to the newspaper.

Salazar was arrested in the shooting death of Jaime Marti- nez, 20, as the victim drove in Salinas with his girlfriend and 18-month-old son, the newspaper reported. The woman was shot and treated at a hospital, while the child wasn’t hurt.

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Survey says kids watching online videos more than doubled in 4 years

By Martha Irvine
Associated Press

The number of young Americans watching online videos every day has more than doubled, according to survey findings. They’re glued to them for nearly an hour a day, twice as long as they were four years ago.

And often, the survey found, they’re seeing the videos on services such as YouTube that are supposedly off-limits to children younger than age 13.

“It really is the air they breathe,” said Michael Robb, senior director of research for Common Sense Media, the nonprofit organization that issued the report last week. The group tracks young people’s tech habits and offers guidance for parents.

The survey of American youth included the responses of 1,677 young people ages 8 to 18. Among other things, it found that 56% of 8- to 12-year-olds and 69% of 13- to 18-year-olds watch online videos every day.

In 2015, the last time the survey was conducted, those figures were 24% and 34%, respectively. The margin of error was plus or minus 2.8 percentage points.

Overall screen time hasn’t changed much in those four years, the survey found. The average teen, ages 8 to 12, spends 99 minutes a day watching videos — up from 94 minutes in 2015. Among the teens surveyed, only a third said they enjoyed watching traditional television programming “a lot,” compared with 45% four years ago. Half of tweens said the same, compared with 61% in the last survey.

YouTube was their overwhelming first choice for online videos, even among the tweens who were surveyed — three-quarters of whom say they use the site despite age restrictions. Only 23% in that age group said they watch YouTube Kids, a separate service aimed at them and even younger children. Of those, most still said they preferred regular YouTube.

“With a lot of pressure on a parent to figure out what they can reasonably filter,” Robb said.

When presented with the findings, YouTube said that in the coming months it will share details on ways the company is rethinking its approach to kids and families.

For now, Farshad Shadloo, a spokesperson for YouTube, a subsidiary of Google, reiterated the company’s terms of use on age: “YouTube is not a site for people under 13.” Among other things, the company also cited its restriction filters and YouTube Kids.

Even so, many children with online access are adept at getting access to regular YouTube or other streaming content — partly because their parents are overwhelmed, said Sarah Domoff, an assistant professor of clinical psychology at Central Michigan University who studies tech’s impact on youth and families.

Those parents could certainly be doing more to track screen time, she said. But as she sees it, filters on services such as YouTube also aren’t adequate.

“It’s really hard to block out certain things unless you’re really standing over your child,” Domoff said. That’s especially hard to do when devices are portable.

Inspiring ‘Chalkbus’

VW bus painted like a chalkboard draws folks together in Utah city

AMERICAN FORK, Utah — No matter where he parks his Volkswagen bus coated in chalkboard paint, Jonathan Sherman comes back to find great new art adorning the sides.

Once a week, he washes it and creates a new canvas for the amateur artists of American Fork, Utah, who are inspired to fill its sides.

The story behind what has become known as the “Chalkbus” even inspired a minidocumentary by college students, the (Utah County) Daily Herald reported.

The idea to make it a rolling chalkboard came to Sherman when the bus was due for a new paint job and he painted it black matte primer and then gazed over at his daughter drawing chalk on the sidewalk. He invited her to try, and the van and the plan were formed.

“People were like, ‘Oh, you shouldn’t do that. People are going to draw all kinds of horrible things on there,’ you know. ‘You’re asking for trouble,’” Sherman said. “People really haven’t drawn anything bad on there. They always draw cool things.”

He started driving the bus several years ago and frequently finds drawings when he parks it at the movie theater or grocery store. When he finds someone drawing on the bus, he leaves them alone to finish before talking with them.

“It’s always a positive conversation,” he said.

Sherman, a licensed marriage and family therapist, said the bus seems to provide something people are missing. He takes it each year to the Out of Darkness Suicide Prevention Walk in Salt Lake City and lets people draw on it there.

“A lot of people are really disconnected in society. And a lot of people suffer in silence,” he said. “Anywhere I can find a little small connection, I think it just alleviates a little bit of burden somewhere for somebody to know that, you’re seen and you matter.”

A group of Utah Valley University students were inspired by the bus and made a documentary about it. One of the students, Tyler McKinnon, called it a life-changing experience to work on the film.

“I’ve just noticed how many meaningful connections have come as a result of or have come because of the existence of the Chalkbus,” McKinnon said. “Because the Chalkbus exists, I’ve made friends that I wouldn’t have made. I’ve had opportunities that I wouldn’t have had.”

Sherman also uses the bus to let local bands play inside as he drives around. The recent third edition of the “Chalkbus Sessions” featured a band of local middle school teachers called Mid-Life Crisis.

Sherman said the bus gives him a chance to embrace his inner hippie.

“I want people to have peace, love and happiness.”
**NATION**

Investigator finds Arpaio aids ignored order to halt immigration sweeps

**By Jacques Billeaud**
Associated Press

PHOENIX — A court-appointed investigator concluded that high-ranking managers for former Maricopa County immigration sweeps targeting Latinos, as documented by a former deputy sheriff whose arrest revealed that deputies were pocketing money from people they detained.

The investigator also found an internal probe was whitewashed to shield the managers from accountability.

The findings come as both Arpaio and a former top manager identified in the investigation are running in the 2020 Republican primary to lead the job of sheriff of Maricopa County, Arizona's most populous.

Their findings cover alleged misconduct in Arpaio's office from late 2011 through 2016. Arpaio, who became nationally known for his hard line on immigrants in the country illegally, lost his post in 2016.

Arpaio, who has called himself the toughest U.S. lawman, was convicted of misdemeanor criminal contempt of court for refusing to stop his traffic patrols.

The investigator found that the sheriff's immigration sweeps had been ordered and 4,300 traffic stops without documenting the seizures and putting those items in storage as evidence.

The deputy sheriff, Ramon Armendariz, in 2014 reported his home had been burglarized and found a ball gun at an imaginary burglar in his garage. He believed he had been burglarized, but police found him firing a pepper spray at an imaginary burglar.

Investigators at his house found illegal drugs, hundreds of items and evidence bags of sheriff's office evidence that had been opened and 4,300 traffic stops without documenting the seizures and putting those items in storage as evidence.

The findings are part of the investigation into why managers did not properly supervise deputies.

Arpaio and Sheridan questioned whether the release of the investigator's reports was politically motivated, even though the investigation was ordered whether or not voter rolls are hacked, he said.

Cybereason ran two similar war games during the past year in Boston with federal officials, Boston police and Massachusetts State Police.

As voters headed to the polls Tuesday in Virginia's odd-year contest, federal officials and local police were making sure how adversaries could disrupt next year's contest without hacking any election systems at all.

As voters headed to the polls Tuesday in Virginia's odd-year contest, federal officials and local police were making sure how adversaries could disrupt next year's contest without hacking any election systems at all.

Officials from the FBI, Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security, worked with police in Arlington, Va., to game out how to respond if hackers from Russia or elsewhere in 2020 disrupt election polling places, shut down streetlights or hijack radio and TV stations to suppress voter turnout and raise doubts about election results.

The exercise underscores how hackers could disrupt elections in an election without changing any votes. That's particularly concerning because many of these potential targets are far more vulnerable than voting machines.

"If you can prevent people from getting to the polls ... if you can effectively disenfranchise certain segments of the population, that's far more disruptive to the republic than taking out a few voting machines," said Sam Curry, chief security officer at Cybereason, the company that organized the war game.

"These sorts of role-playing games have become a common method for federal, state and local officials to hone their election defense but the scope is rarely so broad. The event is a prime example of how official investigations as tainted by biased and unprofessional review that has been opened and 4,300 traffic stops without documenting the seizures and putting those items in storage as evidence.

The hope is that folks realize that there's a cyber dimension to everything," Curry said. "What I want is for them to go home and say, 'let's start doing the prep work in peacetime. Let's make sure we're ready when the crisis comes and we know exactly who to call.'"

Black activist who led neo-Nazi group dies amid bid to destroy it

**By Joseph Marks**
The Washington Post

A black activist who took control of one of the nation's largest neo-Nazi groups — and vowed to dismantle it — has died amid a legal fight over who would lead the group.

James Stern died Oct. 11 after getting hospice care for cancer, according to his attorneys, Bob Ross, and a friend, Arne Edward List. Stern, 55, died at home in Moreno Valley, Calif., List said.

"James was a very unconventional crusader," Ross said Monday, praising his client’s "quiet confidence."

Earlier this year, Stern told The Associated Press and other news outlets that he persuaded the American Nazi Party, a neo-Nazi group led by Jeff Schoep, to give him control of the group. Schoep said he has been entirely tricked into the transfer.

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Police: Man fatally stabbed over new Popeyes sandwich

**Associated Press**

OXON HILL, Md. — Police are calling on a suspect to surrender in a fatal stabbing over a chicken sandwich at a Popeyes restaurant in Oxon Hill.

One man accused the other of cutting in front of him in the chicken sandwich line at an Oxon Hill Popeyes on Monday morning. Prince George’s County police spokeswoman Jennifer Donelan told news outlets.

Their fight then spilled outside where one of the men stabbed the other.

Police said the 28-year-old victim was from the Washington area. He died less than an hour later.

The suspect remains at large. Police said the other man had been high on drugs or had a ball gun at an imaginary burglar in his garage. He believed he had been burglarized, but police found him firing a pepper spray at an imaginary burglar.

Black activist who led neo-Nazi group dies amid bid to destroy it

**Associated Press**

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Bumper crop of reptiles means more calls

By Soumya Karlamanga
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — Bo Slyapich seeks what no one else wants to find. On a recent morning, he waded into grass so high and so thick that his legs disappeared from view. He crouched low and then lay on his stomach as he scoured the backyard of a house above Pacific Coast Highway.

The homeowner looked on from a safe distance. Luna, the family dog, barked as Slyapich invaded her territory, but he kept busy. Slyapich was trying to flush out rattlesnakes from under a rock, inside a dirt hole or behind a leafy plant. For 30 minutes he hunted his prey — climbing and crawling, prodding and poking with sticks and tongs — plotting a course with the confidence and caution that come from decades of experience.

Southern California is home to at least half a dozen snake removal services that extricate the animals from their hideouts and take them away, allowing families to safely spend time in their yards. When Slyapich and other experts complete their missions, they often leave awe in their wake.

Rattlesnakes can be found up and down the state, which means, in theory, calls for assistance can come from a variety of locations. But rattlers are frequently associated with hills and mountains, and the multimillion-dollar mansions nestled among them. Slyapich’s clients have included Jamie Foxx, Dwayne Johnson, Howie Mandel, Ellen DeGeneres and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

You might think that the continuing development of what was once wilderness would reduce the rattlesnake population near homes, that our desire to tame nature will, ultimately, drive them away from where humans settle. But it often seems the opposite is true. The sprawl that upends snake habitats may make backyard encounters even more likely.

In July, Slyapich is called back to the same home year after year. He visits some properties monthly. One client has spotted more than 100 rattlesnakes on his property this summer.

Slyapich is well aware of the ironies of his job. He often says to customers, “We build our homes on their homes; we just build nicer ones.”

Bumper-crop year

On this morning, Slyapich, 61, wielded tongs to pick through brush in the backyard of the home above PCH. The home’s owner, Jonathan Markiles, said that two days earlier his landscaper spotted a rattler in the garden.

“It’s been a busy year for rattlesnakes and the people who stalk them, Slyapich said. Heavy rains allowed for more vegetation, which created more food for rodents. Fat rodents meant healthier snakes and, therefore, more baby rattlesnakes, sometimes as many as 20 in a single litter, he said.

“It’s just one of those bumper crop years,” Slyapich said in a voice that is somehow both gravelly and sing-song — part-surfer, part-cowboy, fitting for an explorer of the California coast.

But a drought year can mean more business for Slyapich as well. During dry years, snakes leave their homes to search for water from sprinklers and other manufactured sources. And more rattlers emerge after a fire, slithering through their charred habitats to find sustenance.

People think snakes are going to come after them, follow them, chase them down. Snakes don’t do that — especially our snakes.

Coming up empty

Stomping through grass with his knee-high camo boots, Slyapich pointed his thermal gun at the ground to take temperature readings. Because snakes cannot generate their own body heat, they gravitate toward land that is 75 to 85 degrees, he said. Locating those spots can help Slyapich locate the snakes.

In the morning chill, Slyapich didn’t find anything in Markiles’ yard. But when he walked into the neighbor’s backyard, he spotted mouse droppings, which suggested that snakes may have something to eat just a few steps away.

If the snake were to return, killing it would be considered self-defense, Slyapich said. The wrangler’s preference is to catch and release the rattlers in the wilderness, but he would rather his clients kill them than be bitten, he said.

“Shovel, shotgun and two-by-four all work,” he said.

Snake wrangler

Slyapich’s family moved to Calabasas from North Hollywood in 1964 when he was 6. The boys in the neighborhood treated the nearby mountains as their playground, and the older kids taught him how to catch animals.

His mother, a science teacher, encouraged his curiosity. He handled lizards and snakes, sometimes putting them down his shirt.

“It was the Wild West, so they were basically our play toys,” he said.

A self-described adrenaline junkie, Slyapich spent a decade after college catching snakes as a commercial diver.

He then worked as a movie stuntman, but eventually his snake wrangling skills became known among the crew. Production companies began hiring him to clear sets of snakes before shooting movies and TV shows.

About 15 years ago, Slyapich started to offer his services to families and local businesses. For nine months of the year, he is reachable 24/7, answering calls from frustrated homeowners who have spotted snakes not just in their yards, but in their car engines, pools, garages, bedroom closets, toilets, stoves, cabinets and refrigerators.

In Southern California, “fires, floods and rattlesnakes” are part of the deal, Slyapich said. “The real estate agents just don’t disclose the rattlesnake part.”

Maria Nelson, one of his longtime clients, lives on 25 acres in the hills just north of Thousand Oaks. Two rattlers have made it inside her house over the past 15 years, but she has spotted even more in the yard.

“I stopped counting at 100 last year,” said Nelson, 73.

A 911 call for a rattlesnake will summon the volume of calls from people who say they have lived in a home for 35 years and had never seen a snake until now is increasing, and Slyapich believes that continued construction in once-remote areas is displacing the creatures.

“I’m going places I’ve never been before,” he said. “We’ve changed nature.”

When Slyapich arrived at his next destination, a home in Oak Park, owner Galit Naor showed him a cellphone video of her sons hacking at a rattlesnake with shovels outside the front door.

It was one of three snakes Naor’s family had seen in the front yard in the past two weeks, she told Slyapich. When she works in her makeshift office in the garage, she propels her feet up on the desk, afraid of what might slide over them down below, she said, adding, “One more snake and I’ll sell the house.”

Common phobia

Fear of snakes is one of our most common phobias, experts say. One snake catcher said some of his customers are so scared of the reptiles they can’t look at his business card because it has a drawing of a snake.

Studies have found that babies’ eyes become unusually wide when they see snakes, suggesting people innately distrust them. Scientists say humans probably evolved to fear snakes because of the threat they posed to our ancestors, but that nervousness is reinforced by their place in the cultural imagination.

In the Harry Potter books, villain Voldemort’s trusted pet, Nagini, is a snake. Adam and Eve were famously derailed by a snake. The fearless Indiana Jones hates one thing: snakes. Calling someone “a snake” isn’t a compliment.

“It’s not really fair — snakes are given an unjust reputation,” said Rutgers University psychology professor Vanessa LoBue. “What else are 40 percent of adults professing to be afraid of? Other than death?”
By Rebecca Santana
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Against the modern backdrop of oil refineries, strip malls and gated communities, hundreds of reenactors will gather Friday in western Louisiana to remember a time when slavery flourished as a blight on America and some enslaved people fought back.

They plan to reenact the largest slave rebellion in American history — dressed in period costumes and holding machetes or rifles, they will march 26 miles over two days from the sugar plantation country along the Mississippi River to the New Orleans suburbs.

“It’s going to be an amazing experience,” said artist Dread Scott, who conceived of the project and whose works address racial injustice and oppression.

“Seeing hundreds of black folk with machetes and muskets and sickles and sabers, flags flying, chanting to traditional drumming, is going to be an amazing moment,” he said. “And people would be like, ‘What am I looking at? This doesn’t make sense.’ It will be an area where people can learn a lot and think a lot.”

Reenactments have long been a staple of Civil War heritage in the South, where people don Confederate and Union uniforms and stage mock battles. But this effort seeks to illustrate the struggle over slavery that came to be the heart of that war.

Scott first envisioned it about eight years ago. He’d wanted to stage a slave rebellion reenactment — maybe Nat Turner’s 1831 uprising in Virginia — but then a colleague told him about the uprising in Louisiana.

Slaves across a stretch of plantations organized for months before launching their rebellion on Jan. 8, 1811. Over two days the group grew to an estimated 200 to 500 people, according to Daniel Rasmussen’s book “American Uprising: The Untold Story of America’s Largest Slave Revolt.”

Their goal was to march on New Orleans and establish a free republic. The rebellion was inspired in part by the Haitian revolution but conceived by people born in Louisiana and Africa, said Ibrahim Seck, the director of research at the Whitney Plantation and a historical adviser to the reenactment.

Most were field hands who toiled in hot, wet and humid conditions that contributed to their 13% yearly death rate, he said. Rasmussen writes that slaves in Louisiana’s sugar plantations faced “more brutal punishments and lives shorter lives” than elsewhere in North America.

Scott said the project sprung from his interest in how people liberate themselves and in slavery’s continuing effects on America today. He was also intrigued to learn about the little-known rebellion’s goals and how close it came to success.

“You can’t actually understand American society if you don’t understand slavery, and you can’t understand slavery if you don’t understand slave revolts,” he said.

The reenactment comes at a time of heightened racial tension in the United States following the election of President Donald Trump in 2016. One of the most contentious episodes came in August 2017 when hundreds of white nationalists descended on Charlottesville, Va., to protest the planned removal of a Confederate statue. One person was killed when a white nationalist plowed his car into a crowd of counterprotesters.

Bob Snead, who heads the arts group Antenna that’s producing the reenactment, said that was a key turning point. Some questioned whether the reenactment should go on, but Snead said there was also a strong feeling that the project was more important than ever.

Organizers have taken precautions. They’ll have law enforcement and private security, and reenactors are advised not to engage with anyone along the route who might harass them.

The very public nature of the project should help, Scott said. They’ve reached out to area residents and will have lots of community involvement.

Scott emphasizes that the reenactment is a community effort in which months and years of preparation that brought people together and are as much a part of the art as the event itself. They’ve held outreach events in the parishes the marchers will traverse. They’ve filed for permits, staged rehearsals and held sewing circles where participants have come together to create costumes.

Part of the challenge was that there were few paintings of slaves to refer to, said Allison L. Parker who’s responsible for the costumes. She combed through pictures of runaway slaves and paintings and images of enslaved people in South America and the Caribbean for research.

For many of the black participants, the event was important to highlight the fact that enslaved people did not accept their fate. They fought back.

Julie Joseph has been coming to the sewing circles and will take part in the reenactment. She said black history in America is often overlooked.

“This project, it’s highlighting the tenacity and the resilience that the people who were enslaved had to want to break free, to want to create their own republic,” she said. “I think that’s something that’s been really encouraging to me and something that’ll be really encouraging to a lot of other black people to know that I come from fighters.”

After a climactic battle between the slaves and planters, the group is planning to march on New Orleans. Scott said he did not want to end by focusing on the brutality of white people but on the concept of black people trying to create their own republic.

“I’m choosing to focus on a vision of freedom and emancipation,” he said.
Teen vaping climbs, fueled by Juul’s mint flavor

By Lindsey Tanner
Associated Press

New research shows U.S. teens who use electronic cigarettes prefer those made by Juul Labs, and mint is the favorite flavor for many of them, suggesting a shift after the company stopped selling fruit and dessert flavors in stores.

The results are in a pair of studies published Tuesday, including one that details previously released figures indicating that U.S. sales to underage use of e-cigarettes shows no signs of slowing down.

An estimated 28% of high school students said they used e-cigarettes within the past month, according to the report, based on a national survey conducted earlier this year. That amounts to 5.3 million young people, compared with about 3.6 million last year, despite federal law that prohibits sales to those under 18.

“Exemptions for mint and menthol are problematic if we’re really thinking about preventing kids from using these products,” said Jessica Barrington-Trimis, co-author of study led by University of Southern California researchers.

The government report, surveying almost 20,000 young people, also found that Juul is the preferred brand for 66% of high school e-cigarette users. Most of them used flavored e-cigarettes, and among those who did, nearly 60% favored mint or menthol.

A separate study, led by University of Southern California researchers, doesn’t have the same appeal as mint. The study found that mint was the most popular flavor among Juul users in 10th and 12th grades and the second-most popular among middle-schoolers.

Bouchet-Horwitz, who was not involved in the studies, “Rather than giving up when they can’t get their particular flavor, they’re switching to a flavor that is more available.”

“E-cigarettes typically heat a solution that contains nicotine, which makes cigarettes and e-cigarettes addictive. They have been sold in the U.S. for more than a decade and are often pitched as a lower-risk nicotine source for adult smokers,” she said.

Both studies have taken steps to prohibit flavored e-cigarettes, and in September, the Trump administration proposed a nationwide ban, including mint and menthol. An announcement is expected soon from the Food and Drug Administration.

But health groups and anti-vaping advocates worry that regulators may be backing away from the original proposal.

“Exemptions for mint and menthol are problematic if we’re really thinking about preventing kids from using these products,” said USC study co-author Jessica Barrington-Trimis.

Flavors are banned for traditional cigarettes in the U.S., except for menthol.

San Francisco-based Juul, the best-selling vaping brand in the country, stopped selling some flavors last year in stores and only sold them online. Last month, the company voluntarily halted all sales of its fruit- and dessert-flavored e-cigarette pods, leaving only mint, menthol and tobacco-flavored products on the market.

Facing multiple state and federal investigations, Juul has pledged to not lobby against the federal flavor ban. The Vapor Technology Association, which represents the industry, is pushing back against a ban with a marketing campaign.

Juul representatives did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the new research.

Members of biker club deliver donated breast milk for babies in NYC

By Cathy Free
Special To The Washington Post

Alyssa Marko, a member of New York City’s Sirens Women’s Motorcycle Club, got an emergency call in the summer of 2016 from someone in her Brooklyn synagogue.

A woman in the synagogue was adopting a premature baby and she wanted her tiny son to have breast milk. The caller asked: Could Marko jump on her bike and bring an order of donated breast milk to the hospital?

Marko grabbed her helmet and road jacket, slid onto her Triumph road jacket, slid onto her Triumph and headed straight to pick up 48 bottles of milk from the newly formed New York Milk Bank — a nonprofit group that distributes donated breast milk to new parents who are unable to produce their own or have an insufficient supply.

It was just days earlier that the Sirens had volunteered to help the milk bank with deliveries. And in a moment of her worlds colliding — biking and her synagogue — Marko got the call.

The two-hour drive to the hospital in Middleton, N.Y., was her first run for the “Milk Riders” — the club’s new nickname. “I packed the bottles in ice inside the saddlebag,” she said. “That was a good idea. It never got too warm.”

The New York Milk Bank was started in 2016 by nurse practitioner Julie Bouchet-Horzvit, who, when she was a lactation consultant, realized that the love of many women went to waste. “It feels wonderful that I was able to bring him this wonderful gift,” she said.

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“Moms of sick or premature infants make up the majority of deliveries, but we have also sent donor milk to LGBTQ families and parents who are surrogates, people who have adopted or are fostering babies and moms who can’t produce enough milk on their own,” she said.

Mothers who come in themselves to pick up milk orders are “more than anything, grateful to the women who have donated the milk,” she said.

For Elizabeth Shelley, a family nurse practitioner who lives in New York City and her husband and their son, Teddy, 17 months, there was no question that she would donate her excess breast milk to the New York Milk Bank as her son grew older and didn’t need as much.

She said that she was inspired by the kindness of a friend who gave her more than two gallons of her own breast milk after Teddy was born and doctors determined that Shelley wasn’t producing sufficient milk for him.

“This friend came over and gave me more milk than I needed,” she said, Shelley, 32.
Beirut, Lebanon, on Tuesday. Lebanese troops faced resistance as they reopened roads closed by the protesters.

**Lebanese army reopens roads closed by protesters amid scuffles**

By Hassan Ammar
Associated Press

BEIRUT — Lebanese troops deployed Tuesday in different parts of the country to reopen roads and main thoroughfares closed by anti-government protesters faced resistance in some areas, leading to scuffles.

In most places, protesters withdrew peacefully as the troops moved in. But in Beirut’s northern suburb of Zouk Mosbeh, a scuffle erupted when some demonstrators refused to move away from the main highway linking Beirut with northern Lebanon.

Several protesters were detained by troops. One protester, an older man, fainted and was rushed away in an ambulance; the Lebanese Red Cross later said he was in stable condition.

Human rights activist Wadhah Al-Asmar said dozens were detained during the scuffles north of Beirut.

Anti-government protesters have been holding demonstrations since Oct. 17, demanding an end to widespread corruption and mismanagement by the political class that has ruled the country for three decades. The protesters have paralyzed Lebanon by closing roads inside cities as well as major highways.

“We are not defying the army but we want our demands to be met,” said hairdresser Elie Abdou, 29, in Zouk Mosbeh. “We want a technocratic government; we want the poor to have food and medical care.”

The protesters have been demanding the new Cabinet not include politicians but consist of experts who can work on getting Lebanon out of its economic crisis.

Also in Beirut, in the nearby area of Jel el-Deeb, troops chased after protesters who were closing a major road, running after them into streets until they hid inside a church.

Troops also opened the highway linking Beirut with southern Lebanon and several major avenues in the capital.

**Cartel attack kills at least 9 US citizens**

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — Drug cartel gunmen ambushed three SUVs along a dirt road, slaughtering at least six children and three women — all of them U.S. citizens living in northern Mexico — in a grisly attack that left one of their vehicles a burned-out, bullet-riddled hulk, authorities said Tuesday.

The dead included 8-month-old twins. At least five other youngsters were wounded by gunfire.

Mexican Security Secretary Alfonso Durazo said the attackers may have mistaken the group’s large SUVs for those of rival gangs.

All of the victims were believed to be members of the extended LeBaron family, who live in a decades-old settlement founded by an offshoot of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and have run afoul of the drug traffickers over the years. A LeBaron was killed a decade ago after denouncing the cartels.

In a tweet, President Donald Trump immediately offered to help Mexico “wage WAR on the drug cartels and wipe them off the face of the earth.”

Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador rejected that approach, saying his predecessors waged war, “and it didn’t work.”

A relative said the victims lived in the hamlet of La Mora in Sonora state, about 70 miles south of Douglas, Ariz.

A number of extended Mormon families live in farming communities clustered around the Chihuahua-Sonora state border. Many members were born in Mexico and thus have dual citizenship. While some of the splinter groups were once polygamous, many no longer are.

The group was attacked Monday while traveling in a convoy of three SUVs toward Pancho Villa in Chihuahua. The relative asked not to be named for fear of reprisals.

The relative said he had located the burned-out SUV containing the remains of his nephew’s wife and her four children — the twin babies and two other children. Authorities said the Chevy Tahoe’s gas tank had apparently been hit by gunfire and exploded.

“The mafia vehicles got her and four of her kids and ... burnt them to a crisp,” said the relative.

Two women and two other children were later found dead.

The six children killed were 8 months old, 2, 10, 11 and 12, according to family members.

**Protesters killed as Iraq tries to reopen main port**

By Qassim Abdul-Zahra
Associated Press

BAGHDAD — At least three anti-government protesters were killed in clashes with security forces in southern Iraq, officials said Tuesday as authorities tried to reopen the country’s main port, which had been blocked by demonstrators for three days.

Security and medical officials said a protester was killed and eight more were wounded in Unum Qasr, a key oil terminal on the Persian Gulf. The Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights, a semi-official agency, said two people were killed and 23 wounded in clashes in the southern city of Nasiriyah.

The officials, who speak on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to reporters, said security forces in Unum Qasr were firing live ammunition and tear gas, and that protesters seized an armored vehicle.

Iraq has seen massive anti-government demonstrations in Baghdad and across the mostly Shiite south since Oct. 25. The protests are calling for an overhaul of the political system established after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, accusing the government and major political parties of corruption and incompetence.

Security forces have killed at least 267 protesters since early October during two major waves of protests. In southern Iraq, protesters have rampaged and torched the offices of political parties linked to Iran, and Sunday night they attacked the Iraqi Consulate in the Shiite holy city of Karbala.

In Baghdad, protesters crossed a bridge over the Tigris River on Monday and clashed with security forces near the headquarters of state-run TV and the prime minister’s office. At least five protesters and a member of the security forces were killed and scores were wounded. The protesters set tires and dumpsters ablaze within 500 yards of the prime minister’s office, sending huge clouds of black smoke into the sky.

Netblocks, a group that monitors worldwide internet access, reported a major shutdown by Iraqi authorities overnight, with usage in Baghdad and southern Iraq dropping to 19% of normal levels. It said the internet was partially restored early Tuesday, but that “some networks are still offline and social media and messaging apps remain blocked or degraded.”

Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi has expressed support for the protesters’ demands and condemned violence on all sides while resisting calls to step down. He has called on the protesters to reopen roads so that life can return to normal, saying the disruptions caused by the protests are costing the country billions of dollars.

He met with senior judicial and security officials at the Federal Police Headquarters late Monday to discuss ways to restore stability while preserving the right to protest and to protect private property, according to a government statement.

Iraq holds regular elections, but its politics are dominated by Shiite Islamist parties, many with close ties to Iran. The protesters, who mainly come from the Shiite majority, say their leaders have enriched themselves while letting the economy and infrastructure crumble.

Anti-government protesters set fires while security forces fire live ammunition and tear gas in Baghdad on Monday. On Tuesday, officials said at least three protesters were killed in separate clashes.
**N. Korea: Terrorism blacklist hits talks**

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea said Tuesday the U.S. redesignation of Pyongyang as a sponsor of terrorism is dimming prospects for nuclear diplomacy between the countries.

The North’s statement comes as the country is escalating its pressures on the United States over a stalemate in nuclear negotiations. Last week, North Korea test-fired projectiles from what it called a newly developed “super-large” multiple rocket launcher in the country’s first weapons test in nearly a month.

The North’s Foreign Ministry said Tuesday the State Department’s terrorism blacklist report released last week provokes again the United States maintains a “hostile policy” and “inverterate repugnancy” toward North Korea.

“This is an insult to and perfidy against a dialogue partner,” said the statement carried by state media. “The channel of the dialogue between (North Korea) and the U.S. is more and more narrowing” due to the U.S. stance.

North Korea had been on the terrorism blacklist for two decades after its agents were blamed for the bombing of a South Korean airliner that killed 115 people in 1987. It was delisted in 2008 as Washington tried to entice North Korea into a nuclear deal. But the Trump administration relisted it in 2017, saying the North repeatedly supported acts of international terrorism.

The most glaring recent case was the assassination of Kim Jong Nam, the estranged half brother of leader Kim Jong Un, using VX nerve agent at a Malaysian airport in 2017.

Last year, North Korea and the United States launched on-and-off diplomacy under what terms North Korea would give up its advancing nuclear arsenal. But the talks largely have stalled since the second summit between Kim and President Donald Trump collapsed in February due to disputes over sanctions on North Korea.

Negotiators met in Stockholm last month but made no meaningful progress.

South Korea’s spy agency told lawmakers in a closed-door meeting Monday it expects the U.S.-North Korea talks to resume by early December at the latest, according to Lee Eun-jae, one of the lawmakers who attended the meeting.

North Korea has demanded the United States work out mutually acceptable proposals to salvage the nuclear diplomacy by year’s end.

Some experts say North Korea could perform more weapons tests in the coming weeks as it approaches the end-of-year deadline.

**Hong Kong’s Lam says she has Xi’s backing to tackle recent unrest**

Associated Press

HONG KONG — Hong Kong’s embattled leader, Carrie Lam, said Tuesday that she has received the backing of Chinese President Xi Jinping in her handling of five months of anti-government protests that have rocked the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

Xi and Lam held talks in a surprise meeting Monday night on the sidelines of a trade event in Shanghai amid signals from China’s central government that it may tighten its grip on Hong Kong to quell the unrest that has at times challenged Chinese rule.

Lam told a news conference in Shanghai that Xi had expressed “care and concern” during their brief meeting, and said he had given support for measures taken by her government to end the crisis. She promised that Hong Kong will “strive to stamp out violence with strict law enforcement.”

Lam said she was disturbed by mounting injuries during the protests, including an incident early Monday that left a university student wounded at a carpark building after police fired tear gas. Hospital officials said the youth was in critical condition. Police couldn’t immediately provide details.

Lam said investigations would be carried out to determine exactly what happened, and that the case drove home the government’s message that violence must cease.

Television footage showed riot police firing bullets at the building after objects were hurled down at the street at them when they chased off a mob. Minutes later, a parked car caught fire with unconscious youth on the second floor of the building. He was believed to have plunged from the third floor, local media said.

Earlier Tuesday, Hong Kong Chief Secretary Matthew Cheung said Xi’s meeting with Lam was a “vote of confidence” in the city’s ability to tackle the unrest and underlined the importance that Beijing attaches to the Asian financial hub.

**New Delhi struggles with foul air**

Associated Press

NEW DELHI — Sakshi Chauhan has not left her house in a quiet inner-city slum in the Indian capital for the past six days on her doctor’s orders.

The 22-year-old call center operator is recovering from a severe throat infection, and the thick smog now blanketing New Delhi has made even breathing dangerous.

“The moment I step outside, I can’t breathe properly,” she said. “I have never seen this level of pollution in my entire life.”

The 20 million residents of New Delhi, already one of the world’s most polluted cities, have been suffering for weeks under a toxic haze that is up to 10 times worse than the upper limits of what is considered healthy.

Air pollution in New Delhi and northern Indian states peaks in the winter as farmers in neighboring agricultural regions set fire to clear land after the harvest and prepare for the next crop season. The pollution in the Indian capital also peaks after Diwali celebrations, the Hindu festival of light, when agricultural regions set fire to clear land after the harvest and prepare for the next crop season. The pollution in the Indian capital also peaks after Diwali celebrations, the Hindu festival of light, when farmers are burning stubble to protect their fields from pests.

A declared public health emergency has remained in place in the city for the past five days. Schools have stayed closed and authorities have been handing out free anti-pollution masks to children.

New Delhi’s government has introduced a system that restricts many private vehicles from taking to the roads for two weeks, with only vehicles with even-numbered license plates allowed on even-numbered days. It has ordered firefighters to sprinkle water from high-rise buildings to settle the dust, tried to snuff out garbage fires and ordered builders to cover construction sites to stop dust from enveloping the area.

India’s health minister earlier played down the health consequences of the dirty air, insisting it is mainly a concern for those who have pre-existing lung conditions. Doctors in the capital, however, say many of their patients these days are complaining of ailments that stem from the filthy air they breathe.

Dr. Sallil Sharma, a throat specialist, said that 95% of the patients he has been treating over the last 10 days are sick because of the foul air.

“I have patients from all age groups and most of them are nonsmokers who complain of breathlessness, chest congestion, fatigue and weakness,” Sharma said. “In some cases, I had to put some patients on ventilators because they couldn’t breathe.

“We are right in the middle of a health emergency,” he said.

A study published in The Lancet estimated that in 2017, air pollution killed 1.24 million Indians — half of them younger than 70, lowering the country’s average life expectancy by almost 1.7 years.

India’s Supreme Court on Monday said the capital choking every year “could not be allowed in a civilized country.”

In a ruling that followed petitions filed by activists, the top court’s judges ordered an immediate end to the practice of farmers burning their fields in the neighboring states surrounding the capital.

**Chinese President Xi Jinping makes surprise meeting with Carrie Lam in Shanghai, China, on Monday.**

But pro-democracy lawmaker Claudia Mo warned of a tougher stance by Beijing.

China’s official Xinhua News Agency reported that Xi expressed his government’s “high degree of trust” in Lam but also “demanded unwavering efforts to stop and punish violent activities.”

“They called for more dialogue and efforts to improve people’s livelihoods in one of the world’s most expensive cities.”

China’s Communist Party last week indicated it may try to find a way to enact anti-subversion laws in Hong Kong, after similar measures were shelved previously due to public opposition.

The protests began in early June against an extradition bill that would have allowed suspects to be sent for trials in mainland China, which many saw as infringing on Hong Kong’s judicial freedoms and other rights that were guaranteed when the former British colony returned to China in 1997.

**Chinese President Xi Jinping shakes hands with Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam at a meeting in Shanghai, China, on Monday.**

**Hong Kong’s Lam says she has Xi’s backing to tackle recent unrest**

Associated Press

HONG KONG — Carrie Lam, the embattled leader of Hong Kong, told Chinese state media Tuesday that she has received the backing of President Xi Jinping in her handling of five months of anti-government protests that have rocked the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

Xinhua news agency reported that Xi told Lam that he was “concerned” about the protests and said they had violated the one-China principle.

U.S. President Donald Trump collapsed in February due to disputes over sanctions on North Korea.

Hong Kong’s Lam says she has Xi’s backing to tackle recent unrest
Couple arrested after son left home alone

RI  NEWPORT — A Rhode Island man and his wife were arrested for locking their 2-year-old son in a bedroom and leaving him home alone.

The Newport Daily News reported Lazaro Shemeley, 37, and Leah Shemeley, 25, were charged with cruelty or neglect of a child Friday. A judge issued both a no-contact with the child order.

Lazaro Shemeley was initially arrested on a domestic disorderly conduct charge. Leah Shemeley reportedly left the couple's child at home to attend her husband's arraignment Friday morning.

She told police she left the child with a babysitter, but authorities received a call about a crying child apparently left at home.

Couple accused of breaking in, squatting

DE  LEWES — A husband and wife accused of breaking into a Delaware home with the intention of staying there have been charged.

A Delaware State Police news release says Ray Pollard, 46, and Michelle Pollard, 42, of Dagsboro were arrested Saturday afternoon in Lewes.

Master Cpl. Melissa Jaffe said the couple parked their minivan in the garage and their 16-year-old child was inside the vehicle. The owners of the Lewes home weren’t at home at the time.

The Pollards have been charged with burglary, resisting arrest, endangering the welfare of a child and other offenses.

Police say man slept in theater to rob it

TN  NASHVILLE — Police in Nashville are searching for a man they say paid for a movie ticket and spent the night inside a theater waiting to rob the business once it opened.

Metro police identified Lloyd Eugene Rhodes, 57, on Friday as a suspect in a theft and robbery at an AMC theater at gunpoint the day before.

News outlets reported that investigators think Rhodes bought a movie ticket and hid inside the theater during closing. When an employee opened the business the next morning, police say Rhodes pointed a gun at her and demanded cash.

He’s also accused of stealing the employee’s cellphone and car.

Cause of widespread grass fire probed

KS  BURRINGTON — Authorities are investigating the cause of a grass fire that burned about 300 to 400 acres in central Kansas.

Harvey County spokesman Kyle McCaskey said in a news release that emergency crews responded around 1 p.m. Sunday to an area northeast of Burrington. The Wichita Eagle reported that as of about 4:30 p.m. Sunday, firefighters had stopped the spread of the flames.

No injuries or damage to homes was reported. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Woman reunited with wallet lost 15 years ago

WV  HUNTINGTON — A West Virginia woman has been reunited with a wallet she lost in 2004.

Catrina Napier told WCHS-TV she got the wallet back on Friday after a student found it in a Spring Valley High School bathroom.

Michael Thyree said he found the wallet in the rubble of a bathroom ceiling that collapsed. He said he reached out to Napier on social media.

Among the items inside the wallet were a driver’s license, a Social Security card and high school photos.

Napier said she doesn’t know how her wallet ended up in a ceiling but suspects that pranksters were behind it. She said she’s glad to get back “a little piece of your childhood that you had forgotten about.”

Police charge man with stabbing 4 at pizzeria

VA  NORFOLK — Police in Virginia charged a man with stabbing four people at a pizza restaurant.

Norfolk police said Joshua Fishers, 30, turned himself in Friday after a stabbing Thursday at Cogans Pizza.

When first responders arrived, they found a 24-year-old man suffering from multiple stab wounds. The man was taken to Sentara Norfolk General Hospital with life-threatening injuries.

Officers found three other men had also been stabbed. They were treated for non-life-threatening injuries.

Police told WVEC-TV that the three men were injured while attempting to break up a fight.

Fisher’s name was charged with four counts of malicious wounding.

Reservist relieved of her Fair Queen duties

IL  ROCKFORD — A Rockford woman crowned Miss Illinois Illinois Fair Queen will keep her title but won’t be allowed to perform duties associated with the honor.

The Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs, which runs the pageant, said in a Saturday statement that Alexi Bladel will keep the title until January when a successor is named. Her name will remain on a historical roster, but she’s “released” from duties.

The association declined to give a reason, citing privacy.

Bladel’s family said her decision to join the U.S. Army Reserve led to the dismissal, but a pageant chairman told the Rockford Register Star it wasn’t a factor.

Bladel is expected to graduate from basic training this month.

Firefighters rescue surveyor stuck in mud

ME  FREEPORT — Freeport firefighters said a surveyor had to be rescued when he became stuck in mud up to his waist.

Deputy Fire Chief Eric Sylvain told the Times Record the episode unfolded Sunday in a pond that has been drained near Interstate 95 by Exit 22 in Freeport.

He said the more the man wiggled, the more he became stuck. A Freeport police officer nearly became stuck and retrieved Sylvain said it took 90 minutes for firefighters to get the man to safety.

Firefighters used a system of ladders across the mud to reach the man and then used shovels and straps to free him.

Officials said the surveyor was exhausted but was not hurt.

Police say man threw chihuahua at cousin

FL  ST. PETERSBURG — A Florida man faces a misdemeanor battery charge for picking up a chihuahua in a metal cage and hurling it at his cousin during an argument.

Stephene Johnson was released Oct. 30 from the Pinellas County Jail, but he was ordered not to return to the home he shares with his cousin.

The Tampa Bay Times reported that Johnson threatened to harm his cousin during an argument and then threw the cage with the 1-year-old Chihuahua named Roscoe inside.
Outkast, R.E.M. Neptunes are nominated for Songwriters Hall

The Neptunes, the innovative production-writing duo of Pharrell Williams and Chad Hugo who shaped pop and urban radio from the '90s well into the 2000s thanks to crafting hits for Britney Spears, Jay-Z and Justin Timberlake, are nominated for the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

Joining the Neptunes as nominees for the 2020 class are other visionaries who have carved out their own space in the music universe: rap icons Outkast and rock pioneers R.E.M.

Twenty-four acts are competing for the 2020 class, including Mariah Carey, Patti Smith, Journey, Vince Gill, Gloria Estefan, the Isley Brothers, former Journey frontman Steve Perry, the Isley Brothers, former Journey frontman Steve Perry, among others.

Coates’ debut novel is Carnegie finalist

Ta-Nehisi Coates’ first novel, “The Water Dancer,” is among the nominees for an Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence. Coates’ narrative of an enslaved person’s journey to freedom is a fiction finalist, along with Valeria Luiselli’s “Lost Children Archive” and Myla Goldberg’s “Feast Your Eyes.” The nonfiction nominees are Maria Popova’s “Figuring,” David Treuer’s “The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present” and Adam Higginbotham’s “Midnight in Chernobyl: The Untold Story of the World’s Greatest Nuclear Disasters.”

The finalists were announced Monday by the American Library Association, which presents the awards. Winners in each category receive $5,000, made possible in part by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Winners will be announced Jan. 26.

Other news

• Not everyone is happy the Paris Review will give the Hadada Award to Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Richard Ford at the magazine’s annual spring revel. Pulitzer winner Viet Thanh Nguyen was among those on Twitter who noted the Hadada has only been given to white writers. Others, including author Roxane Gay, cited Ford’s history of hostile behavior toward writers who criticized his work. In 2004, he spat on Colson Whitehead after Whitehead wrote a negative review of Ford’s “A Multitude of Sins.”

• Carol Burnett will be among the familiar faces加盟ing “Mad About You” revival. Sony Pictures Television announced Monday that Burnett will reprise her sitcom-creating role as the mother of Helen Hunt’s character.

• Last week, FX chief executive John Landgraf announced that after concerted efforts almost 60 percent of the writers on FX shows are women and people of color, and that more than half of the original episodes the network produces are directed by women. That impressive achievement, which Landgraf intended as a response to reporting that showed his network lagging far behind in this regard, is a sharp rebuke to anyone who says it’s simply just too hard to hire anyone other than white men. And it has produced some great, insightful television, including the groundbreaking historical drama, “Pose.”

• But Landgraf, who has demonstrated just what executives can achieve if they really dedicate themselves to transforming their workforce, cannot answer two other questions: What choices might women or people of color make if they were truly free to run a network in accordance with their tastes and instincts? Who might they hire, and what stories might those people tell?

Thanks, Hollywood white guys, but your work isn’t finished yet

BY AYSSA ROSENBERG
The Washington Post

About halfway through “Terminator: Dark Fate,” I found myself checking my watch. It wasn’t that I was bored. Rather, I wanted to confirm my suspicion that I had made it a full hour into a $185 million action blockbuster before the first significant male character — or at least the first significant male character who is more than a flat embodiment of relentless evil — made his appearance. “Terminator: Dark Fate” isn’t a great movie, but that first half is particularly unusual and enjoyable, a mother-maiden-crone three-ender that uses freeway chases and brutal fight scenes to explore grief and the relationship between tenderness and ferocity.

It’s also a story crafted by a group of men. As such, “Terminator: Dark Fate” is one of several recent examples of how good things can get when white men in Hollywood actually make an effort to tell stories about people who don’t look like them. It’s also proof of how much farther we have to go.

“Terminator: Dark Fate” follows Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton), an embittered survivor of relentless cyborg attacks; Grace (Mackenzie Davis), a cyborg who even more than his predecessors feels less like a person than a ruthlessy efficient manifestation of male violence. Sure, Arnold Schwarzenegger’s T-800, now going by the name of Carl, shows up eventually. But he’s mainly here to serve the story of a woman coming into her powers.

I’m delighted that “Terminator: Dark Fate” exists. But the “Terminator” movies, and the care for Sarah Connor that James Cameron has shown over the years, don’t make me think that the 65-year-old Canadian producer and director can carry the banner of women in action movies all by himself. Rather, his outsider’s observations about what it’s like to be a woman against the world make me want more women to get the chance to tell the world what masculinity looks like to them.

The same is true for “Watchmen,” Damon Lindelof’s continuation of Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons’s landmark comic series. It’s wonderful that a showrunner like Lindelof is giving the remarkable actress Regina King the chance to play the superheroine Sister Night and putting her at the center of his show, as well as hiring writers such as playwright Stacy Anna Osei-Kuffour and “The Good Place” and “Master of None” veteran Cord Jefferson. But the fact that Lindelof can do it makes the need for women and nonwhite people to tell superhero stories more urgent.

“I want to know what women think about women and power; their opinions are vital to our fate, after all. I want even more badly to see what the people who have typically been stuck as damsels in distress or in sidekick roles (when they haven’t been reduced to racist caricatures) in such stories think about superpowered white men.”

I want to know what men think about women and power; their opinions are vital to our fate, after all. I want even more badly to see what the people who have typically been stuck as damsels in distress or in sidekick roles (when they haven’t been reduced to racist caricatures) in such stories think about superpowered white men. The results might not be quite so heroic or so flattering as the men who have engineered the superhero age in entertainment tend to imagine.

Last week, FX chief executive John Landgraf announced that after concerted efforts almost 60 percent of the writers on FX shows are women and people of color, and that more than half of the original episodes the network produces are directed by women. That impressive achievement, which Landgraf intended as a response to reporting that showed his network lagging far behind in this regard, is a sharp rebuke to anyone who says it’s simply just too hard to hire anyone other than white men. And it has produced some great, insightful television, including the groundbreaking historical drama, “Pose.”

But Landgraf, who has demonstrated just what executives can achieve if they really dedicate themselves to transforming their workforce, cannot answer two other questions: What choices might women or people of color make if they were truly free to run a network in accordance with their tastes and instincts? Who might they hire, and what stories might those people tell?

I’ve long been grateful to Cameron for his interest in women and our concerns, and I’m grateful to Lindelof and Landgraf, too. But I’ll be even happier if and when the entertainment industry reaches a point where I am not so painfully aware of how far we still have to go and I don’t have to be so thankful for exceptions.
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For 2nd POV Shipments - Offices / Agencies near Military Installations

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For Uighurs in China, every day is Kristallnacht

By Fred Hiatt
The Washington Post

n China, every day is Kristallnacht.

Eighty-one years ago this week, in what is also known as the “Night of Broken Glass,” hundreds of synagogues and Jewish businesses were destroyed in Berlin. Forty thousand Jews were arrested. Half of Germany were damaged or destroyed, along with thousands of Jewish-owned businesses. It is a day of shame.

During the collapsed Sweden negotiations, the deal on the table appeared to be a swap of the nuclear facilities at Yongbyon and maintenance peace through crisis management and de- terrence, not repeating failed demands for denuclearization as an unrealistic one and should not be the goal of a third summit.

Summits for their own sake with photo ops are not the kind of diplomatic ball rolling, but there is a limit to how long that will be worth the effort. The United States can deter North Korea indefinitely, but time is running out for Trump to make a deal. Even without Kim’s self-imposed deadline, South Korea and the United States have limited control over events on the Korean Peninsula and either side could even delay negotiations. All these dates are coming fast, and now the im- pact is all the more incalculable.

Combined, all of this means any agree- ment, when or if it comes, in a third summit will necessarily have to be modest — and set a strong foundation for future progress.

Thankfully, liaison offices fit the bill and are a better means to advance U.S. secu- rity and national interests than a message

Stars and Stripes is the world’s largest news organization dedicated to covering the military community. With a global presence and over 1,300 journalists, we deliver the stories that matter to our service members and their families.

For Uighurs in China, every day is Kristallnacht
McDonald’s CEO learns workplace romance perilous

**By Alexandra Olson and Dee-Ann Dubbin**
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Workplace romance is often romanticized — think Bill and Melinda Gates or Michelle and Barack Obama. But when the relationship involves two people with unequal power, it can also be fraught with peril, especially in the #MeToo era.

McDonald’s CEO Steve Easterbrook is only the latest chief executive to be ousted over a consensual relationship with an employee. Increasingly, U.S. companies are adopting policies addressing workplace romances, a trend that began well before the #MeToo movement galvanized a national conversation surrounding sexual misconduct.

Addressing workplace romance can be complicated, but many companies require any gray areas by forbidding managers, especially C-suite executives, from having relationships with subordinates given the potential for favoritism or lawsuits if the relationship sours.

There are questions about whether consent is truly possible when the power imbalance is especially great. Many women who have been harassed or wronged share their #MeToo stories have said they feared the consequences of saying no to a powerful person who could influence their careers.

“That power difference can create a dynamic where the relationship can never truly be consensual,” said Debra Katz, Katz Marshall & Banks.

Easterbrook’s departure comes as McDonald’s steps up its efforts to stop sexual harassment after dozens of employee complaints. Over the last three years, more than 50 McDonald’s employees have filed cases alleging sexual harassment with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or in state courts, according to Fight for $15, a labor advocacy group.

In August, the fast-food chain unveiled a program to teach its 50,000 U.S. employees how to recognize and report harassment and bullying. Franchisees — who own 95% of McDonald’s 14,000 U.S. restaurants — aren’t required to offer the training, but the company expects them to provide it.

McDonald’s said Easterbrook violated company policy forbidding managers from having romantic relationships with direct or indirect subordinates. In an email to employees, Easterbrook said the relationship was a mistake and he agreed “it is time for me to move on.” He was replaced by Chris Kempczinski, who recently served as president of McDonald’s USA.

Time’s Up, a group that fights harassment and has been supporting workers’ legal cases, said Easterbrook’s departure should provide an opportunity for McDonald’s to do more, including making sexual harassment training mandatory.

“Under the new leadership of Chris Kempczinski, McDonald’s has an opportunity, and obligation, to act to ensure that all of its locations are safe and equitable for all,” said Jennifer Klein, chief strategy and policy officer at Time’s Up.

Easterbrook followed in the footsteps of Intel Chief Executive Brian Krzanich, who resigned last year after the chipmaker found he was engaged in a relationship that violated a “nonfraternization” policy that applies to all managers.

Other CEOs who have been pushed out over consensual relationships include Darren Huston, of online travel company Priceline; Brian Dunn, of Best Buy; and Harry Stonecipher, of aerospace company Boeing.

In 2005 — the year Stonecipher was pushed out — just a quarter of workplaces had policies addressing consensual relationships, according to the Society for Human Resources Management.

By 2013, the number had increased to 43%, according to a SHRM survey that year of 384 of U.S. workplaces that had policies on workplace romance. A 2015 SHRM study that one-third of American adults have been in a romantic relationship with someone at work.

Many human resources professionals, however, believe it’s unrealistic to adopt a blanket ban on workplace romance. A SHRM survey from January 2019 found that one-third of American adults have been in a romantic relationship with someone at work.

“People meet at work. It’s not an uncommon place for romantic relationships to start,” said John Gannon, an employment law attorney with Skoler Abbott in Springfield, Mass.

A growing trend among small companies is to sponsor happy hours for their staff to increase camaraderie, said David Lewis, CEO of OperationsInc, an HR consulting firm. Those events can be fertile ground for romantic relationships, so it’s hard for business owners to then tell staff when they start to break up or quit, he said.

Lewis said he has seen a big increase in business owners asking for on-site training sessions for employees to raise their awareness on harassment.

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**WEATHER OUTLOOK**

**WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

- Baghdad: 85°F, partly cloudy
- Riyadh: 86°F, sunny
- Doha: 85°F, cloudy
- Djibouti: 86°F, sunny

**WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE**

- Airbus: 48°F, sunny
- Brussels: 49°F, sunny
- Paris: 52°F, sunny
- Berlin: 49°F, sunny
- London: 50°F, sunny
- Amsterdam: 52°F, sunny

**THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC**

- Honolulu: 79°F, sunny
- Tokyo: 65°F, sunny
- Okinawa: 69°F, sunny
- Guam: 85°F, sunny

**MARKET WATCH**

- Dow Jones: 114.75
- NASDAQ: 46.80
- Russell 2000: 6.07

**INTEREST RATES**

- Prime rate: 4.75%
- Discount rate: 2.25%
- Federal funds rate: 2.25%
- 30-year bond: 2.25%

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**EXCHANGE RATES**

- Euro (Nov. 6): €1.1357
- British pound (Nov. 6): $1.61
- Japanese yen (Nov. 6): ¥106.03
- South Korean won (Nov. 6): 1,268.00

**WEATHER**

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**SCOREBOARD**

**College basketball**

**Monday's transactions**

**BASEBALL**

**American League West**

**BOSTON RED SOX**

- Reassigned RHP Kaminskas to the 60-day IL.
- Reassigned RHP Lane to Pawtucket (PA).

**CLEVELAND INDIANS**

- Reassigned INF Jones from San Diego (AHL).

**MINNESOTA TWINS**

- Reassigned 2B Arruebarrena to New Hampshire (AHL).
- Reassigned RHP Polanco and RHP Santana to Elizabethton (Bowie, NJ) (AHL).
Stars and Stripes

MISAWA AIR BASE, Japan — Throughout their high school years, Aiko Galvin said she’d heard constant comparisons of her older brothers Daniel and Mickey, each of them Yokota cross country and track stars. Daniel won the Far East cross country title in 2015; would Mickey ever measure up to that?

“I know how much Mickey feels about being compared to Danny,” Aiko Galvin said after the two paired up Tuesday to win the team-relay portion of the Far East meet at Misawa’s Gossner Memorial Golf Course. “This was for Mickey.”

Mickey, a senior, and Aiko, a sophomore who on Monday won the individual 3.12-mile race, led throughout the relay, which involved pairs of runners, one girl and one boy, taking turns running two 2.5-kilometer legs each for a total of 10 kilometers, or 6.24 miles.

“Very proud,” said Dan Galvin, the siblings’ father and longtime Panthers coach.

Aiko took the lead almost immediately on Tuesday and the two kept the lead through each baton exchange to the finish under pastel-blue skies with temperatures in the mid-40s.

The Galvins finished the 6.24 miles in 36 minutes, 18.1 seconds. The closest finishers in trail were Matthew Inamine and Nana Rich-ter of St. Mary’s and Seisen, who won the D-I title in 37:20.7.

Mickey and Aiko embraced at the finish and tears brimmed in Aiko’s eyes. “He’s always cheer- ing for me,” she said of her older brother. “I just didn’t want to let Mickey down.”

“Tired. Happy. Mickey Galvin said of the victory, “I’m happy that we won and that it came in my final race.”

“Eight years ago, when Danny entered the ninth grade, I knew I would have one of mine running for me for the next 10 years. I have two more to go with Aiko now,” Dan Galvin said.

From New Rochelle, N.Y., where he runs for Division I Iona, Daniel Galvin watched portions of the race via his father’s mobile phone. He says the best is yet to come for Mickey.

“It’s an exciting way for him to finish, but I’m excited to see how he does in track” during spring, Daniel Galvin said. “I don’t think it’s done for Mickey yet.”

Yokota won the D-II school ban-nner but had its four-year streak of winning D-II boys team title snapped by Okinawa Christian. Yokota edged Zama 4-7 for the overall banner.

“The boys felt a little emotion-al” about that, but winning the overall school title “more than made up for it.”

While St. Mary’s and Seisen took the top two spots in the D-I team relay, Kinnick put four pairs in the top 10, enough to give the Red Devils the overall banner for the third time in four years.

“It’s the culmination of a lot of hard work,” Kinnick coach Luke Voth said. “Meeting goals is always rewarding.”

The Red Devils were thought to be rebuilding this year, but Ha-nokhelihay Gailson transferred in last spring and won Monday’s individual race, and freshman Manzi Siibo and the girls “sur- passed expectations they had for themselves,” Voth said.

It helped to have a group of guys who knew how to win,” Voth said. “At the start of the year, we didn’t know how the girls would do, but every one of them stepped up.”

High School: DODEA Pacific

Galvin duo’s relay win lifts Yokota to D-II title

BY DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

Yokota senior Mickey Galvin and sophomore Aiko Galvin teamed up to win the Far East cross-country relay on Tuesday.

Top Scores for Week 9

| 90 | USAFR1PILOT | Middle East |
| 89 | ewert1 | Europe |
| 88 | ckendziara | United States |
| 86 | 2damax | Europe |
| 85 | Lek-cellent | Pacific |
| 84 | armydude1212 | Pacific |
| 84 | cowboy48 | United States |
| 82 | LunchMoney | Europe |
| 81 | KINGKAPP | Pacific |
| 81 | seachickens | Europe |

Top 10 Overall Scores

| 813 | gbpack | Europe |
| 793 | 820th Horseman | Middle East |
| 786 | Review16 | United States |
| 779 | PurplePeopleEaters | Pacific |
| 779 | cowboy48 | United States |
| 779 | hansenbh | Middle East |
| 769 | jeanlontenot | United States |
| 766 | gobrownies43 | Europe |
| 760 | LunchMoney | Europe |
| 757 | JFKF4853 | Middle East |

Week 10 DEADLINE

12 Noon US Central Time, Every Thursday

Log in every week during the 2019 NFL Season and make your picks for the winners of the upcoming NFL games. Earn points for every winning team you pick and at the end of the season, you may find yourself the winner.*

There is no cost to participate, but you must register to play. Rules and restrictions apply. See official rules of play on nfl.stripes.com.
**Fortune: Cards begin season ranked in Top 25**

**FROM BACK PAGE**

The players’ dorm.

In just his second year, Chris Mack has the Cardinals opening the season ranked in the Top 25. “It was just like, imagine that you get knocked down by a boxer and the ref is counting, helping you up,” senior guard Ryan McMahon said.

“All right when you stand up, the ref doesn’t even say time back in and the other boxer comes in and just punches you again while you’re still trying to get your wherewithal.

“We had just kind of recovered from that first scandal and then boom, we got hit with another one... I’m just I’m glad I stuck it out and stayed around.”

It would have been hard to blame McMahon if he hadn’t stuck around.

The school had acknowledged it was being investigated in a federal corruption investigation of college basketball. Ten people were initially arrested, including an Adidas executive alleged to have paid the family of former Louisville recruit Brian Bowen to attend school. Bowen never played for the Cardinals and transferred to South Carolina.

That announcement came just months before the NCAA vacated 123 victories and Louisville’s 2013 men’s basketball title as discredited and paid the family of former Louisville native Dwayne Sutton. Now they lead one of the Cardinals' most experienced rosters in years.

Mack has also made a splash on the recruiting trail, signing high school All-America forward Samuell Williamson and St. Joseph’s graduate transfer Lamarr McDaniel. They’re the type of character they have in mind.

With all of the lofty projections of reaching the Final Four, Mack reminds the Cardinals that they haven’t done anything yet.

But the former Xavier coach also believes they can meet the high expectations.

“I was left with tremendously talented players,” said Mack, noting Sutton, McMahon and others were recruited by Pitino. “Those guys are our stalwarts, our warriors, our better players, our most experienced players. I’ve coached them really hard, and our staff has coached them hard. The type of character they have, they’ve allowed them to be coached, maybe by somebody they didn’t sign up for.

Do we satisfied with the pre-season ranking? If I were to show that satisfaction to you all (media) about where our program is, I’d think I’d be a little hypocritical to our players.”

**Not to be overlooked**

**Bassey tops list of mid-major players to watch**

**By Steve Megargee**

Associated Press

A Morant provided an inspiration to all small-school players when he earned All-America honors at Murray State last season and went to the Memphis Grizzlies with the second overall pick in the NBA Draft.

There doesn’t appear to be anyone of Morant’s caliber in the mid-major and low-major ranks this season, but there remain plenty of productive per-
formers and pro prospects from outside the largest conferences.

Western Kentucky center Charles Bassey was having a productive freshman season last year while watching Morant rise to stardom about 100 miles away. Bassey enters this season as one of the top pro prospects from any college that isn’t in a major conference or in the pre-season Top 25.

“Guys that go to smaller schools still get drafted,” the 6-foot-11 sophomore said. “It’s not about the school. The school doesn’t get you drafted. You get yourself drafted by the way you play and stuff like that.”

Although he plays outside the major conferences, Bassey isn’t exactly a sleeper.

He’s rated the nation’s No. 6 overall prospect in his high school class, according to composite rankings of recruiting sites compiled by 247Sports. Bassey is the rare five-star prospect to sign with a mid-major program. He plays for a Western Kentucky staff that includes its legal guardian, Hennessy Auriantal, as an assistant coach.

Bassey averaged 14.6 points, 10 rebounds and 2.4 blocks while helping Western Kentucky go 20-14. He was one of five finalists for the Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Award given to the nation’s top college center.

There’s a rundown of some other players to know from non-Top 25 teams in mid-major or low-major conferences.

**Antoine Davis, G, Detroit Mercy**

Height: 6-1

Class: Sophomore

Notes: Davis ranked third among all Division I players in scoring (26.1) last season and made 132 three-point baskets to break the NCAA freshman record previously owned by two-time NBA Most Valuable Player and former Davidson star Stephen Curry. Davis ranked second among all Division I players last year in three-pointers per game with 4.4.
A primer, starting with Garden party

By John Marshall
Associated Press

Virginia starred in the ultimate redemption story last season, rolling to a national championship a year after being the first top seed to get knocked off by a No. 16. Seven long months later, college basketball is finally back.

The 2019-20 season charges out of the starting blocks with a blueblood doubleheader this week and a nonconference slate full of must-see games.

So get ready, we’ve got a rundown of the top teams, players and early season matchups in what figures to be another wild ride.

Top teams

Michigan State. Even with shooting guard Joshua Langford’s foot injury, the Spartans are loaded and aiming for another Final Four run under Tom Izzo.

Kentucky. Coach Cal has another top-10 recruiting class and some veterans to go with the newcomers. Another deep March run could be coming.

Kansas. The Jayhawks were charged with major NCAA violations before the season started. If they’re allowed to play in the NCAA Tournament, they could charge through the bracket with what may be coach Bill Self’s deepest roster since the 2008 title game.

Duke. Zion, R.J. and Cam are gone, but the Blue Devils may be deeper and more balanced. They also have Tre Jones back.

Louisville. The Cardinals could go from scandal to title in two short years under Chris Mack. They’re that good.

Maryland. Deep, talented, mature. Those Ters are built for a deep March run.

Top players

Cassius Winston, Michigan State. Usually isn’t the tallest or most athletic player on the floor. Almost always the best player on the floor.

Markus Howard, Marquette. Lift up defenses with a variety of stepback threes and crafty drives as a junior. Expect even more now that he decided to come back.

Jordyn Newa, Louisville. Scores in bunches, knocks down threes, backs down smaller players in the paint, rebounds, snatches steals. Yeah, the 6-foot-9 junior can do it all.

Myles Powell, Seton Hall. Emerged as a star last season. Figure on the trajectory continuing upward.

James Wiseman, Memphis. The 7-1 freshman has been projected as the No. 1 pick in next year’s NBA Draft. Until then, expect him to dominate college hoops.

Kerry Blackshear Jr., Florida. The grad transfer from Virginia Tech was a huge get for the Gators.

Mid-major monsters

Utah State. Coach Craig Smith has quickly built a juggernaut in Logan. Keep an eye on volume-scoring guard Sam Merrill.

Saint Mary’s. Randy Bennett has nearly everyone back from last year’s NCAA Tournament team, led by high-scoring guard Jordan Ford.

Virginia Commonwealth. Like lockdown defense? The Rams are for you.

Davidson. Jon Axel Gudmundsson and Kellan Grady are going to make the Wildcats fun to watch, possibly create a buzz not seen near Charlotte since Steph Curry tore through the NCAA Tournament.

Mid-major monsters

Michigan State vs. Kentucky, Nov. 5, New York. No. 1 against No. 2 in Madison Square Garden? Yes, please.

Kansas vs. Duke, Nov. 5, New York. No. 3 vs. No. 4 at the Garden will make for one hard-to-top doubleheader.

No. 8 Gonzaga at No. 21 Arizona, Dec. 14. McKale Center is going to be rockin’ when two of the West’s best teams meet.

No. 4 Duke at No. 1 Michigan State, Dec. 3. Blue blood showdown, Izzo vs. Coach K, talent bursting at the seams. Going to be a fun night in East Lansing.

No. 17 Utah State at No. 20 Saint Mary’s, Nov. 29. Marquee game of the mid-major schedules.

Gerry Broome/In

With guard Tre Jones, left, back to lead a deep and balanced team, Duke won’t fall far from last year despite losing Zion Williamson, R.J. Barrett and Cam Reddish to the NBA.

By Eddie Pells
Associated Press

For coaches and other leaders in college basketball, the approach of the upcoming season has been nothing like business as usual.

Not in Indianapolis, where lawyers at the NCAA are busy trying to circumvent a newly passed law that threatens the foundation of an enterprise built on a simple commandment: Thou shall not pay players.

Not in California, where that law was passed, and where the clock is now ticking. It goes into effect in 2023.

And certainly not in Kansas, where the storied Jayhawks face serious questions about whether they will remain eligible come March in the wake of NCAA allegations of recruiting fraud that could sink both the program and its Hall of Fame coach, Bill Self.

“Absolutely, Kansas will always pursue the NCAA’s approach,” Self said last week. “I’d like to think I will as well.”

These two issues will serve as background noise, though — not quiet enough to completely be forgotten, but almost certainly not loud enough to drown out the frenzy the sport produces during its three-week title chase at the end.

Trouble is, Kansas could have company.

North Carolina State got an NCAA notice in July, and Arizona, Louisville, LSU and USC have been under scrutiny in the wake of the FBI’s investigations and subsequent court cases detailing back-channel deals between shoe companies, agents and recruits.

That Kansas could have company isn’t surprising. North Carolina State is in a league — the Atlantic 10 — that produces during its three-week title chase at the end. It’s almost like the Tar Heels are going from scandal to title in two short years under Chris Mack.

But can North Carolina State, Arizona, Louisville, LSU and USC have company?

It’s hardly the first time a major college is watching closely. Some have drafted similar legislation and names and likenesses.

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Booker scores 40, helps Suns hand 76ers first loss

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Devin Booker was pouring in buckets from every corner of the court during the second half and the home crowd loved every minute of it, sending the Phoenix Suns to a 114-109 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers on Monday night.

The 23-year-old guard did a lot of losing during his first four seasons in the desert.

That’s why these moments — even though it’s very early in year five — are feeling awfully good.

“That’s the love I get here. It’s been unconditional since day one,” Booker said. “It’s good to feel the energy in there. The fans are getting what they want — a hard-working team that pushes the ball every night.”

Phoenix (5-2) continued its run as one of the most surprising teams in the NBA, knocking off four of five in losing five of seven, including five from the field, including 3-for-4 from three-point range, and 7-for-3 on free throws.

“I’ve said for a while: He’s a complete basketball player,” Phoenix coach Monty Williams said. “He shot 17-for-24 from the field against the team that has the most wins in the league. That’s why these moments — the 23-year-old guard did a lot of losing during his first four seasons in the desert.

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Bruins center Brad Marchand, left, licks the puck past Pittsburgh Penguins goalies As a point for a second time during the first period of Monday’s game in Boston. Marchand scored two goals, including the game-winner, in the Bruins’ 6-4 victory.

**Eastern Conference**

**Atlantic Division**

1. Boston 14 6 4 4 — 12 67 27 1
2. Buffalo 14 5 8 1 — 11 43 32 1
3. New Jersey 14 6 4 4 — 11 43 32 1
4. Philadelphia 13 5 7 1 — 9 37 41 2
5. New York 13 4 7 2 — 9 33 41 2

**Central Division**

1. St. Louis 15 7 4 4 — 9 42 28 2
2. Colorado 14 6 5 3 — 9 37 30 2
3. Minnesota 14 4 8 2 — 9 33 33 2
4. Nashville 14 5 5 4 — 9 39 34 2
5. Dallas 14 3 8 3 — 9 30 37 2

**Pacific Division**

1. St. Louis 15 7 4 4 — 9 42 28 2
2. Anaheim 14 6 5 3 — 9 37 30 2
3. San Jose 14 5 5 4 — 9 39 34 2
4. Vancouver 14 5 6 3 — 9 37 33 2
5. Arizona 14 4 8 2 — 9 33 33 2

**Western Conference**

**Central Division**

1. St. Louis 15 7 4 4 — 9 42 28 2
2. Colorado 14 6 5 3 — 9 37 30 2
3. Minnesota 14 4 8 2 — 9 33 33 2
4. Nashville 14 5 5 4 — 9 39 34 2
5. Dallas 14 3 8 3 — 9 30 37 2

**Pacific Division**

1. St. Louis 15 7 4 4 — 9 42 28 2
2. Anaheim 14 6 5 3 — 9 37 30 2
3. San Jose 14 5 5 4 — 9 39 34 2
4. Vancouver 14 5 6 3 — 9 37 33 2
5. Arizona 14 4 8 2 — 9 33 33 2

**Bruins roundup**

By Ronald Blum

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Madison Bumgarner was among 10 free agents who received $17.8 million qualifying offers from their former teams Monday that likely will decrease demand for the 30-year-old left-hander.

Bumgarner, the 2014 World Series MVP, went 9-9 with a 3.90 ERA in 34 starts this year after two injury-shortened seasons. Some owners also might be discouraged from making a qualifying offer to left-handed reliever Will Smith.

Nine of the pitchers received the qualifying offers among the 168 free agents, including right-handers Gerrit Cole (Houston), Stephen Strasburg (Washington), Max Scherzer (New York Mets) and Jake Odorizzi (Minnesota).

The others given the offers were third baseman Anthony Rendon (Washington) and Josh Donaldson (Atlanta), first baseman Jake Arrieta (Chicago White Sox) and outfielder Marcell Ozuna (St. Louis).

On the day before free agents can begin talking with teams, free agents can begin talking with teams, only three years and $62.5 million owed as part of the $10 million, five-year contract he signed after teams had reported to spring training in February.

Elvis Andrus is staying with the Rangers after the shortstop agreed to a two-year, $26 million deal with a $13 million option for 2020. He was eligible for arbitration.

The New York Yankees failed to reach four-year, $100 million deal with free-agent starting pitcher Masahiro Tanaka, making him a free agent.

**Bumgarner gets qualifying offer**

Madison Bumgarner received a $17.8 million qualifying offer Monday from the San Francisco Giants, a move that likely will decrease demand for him in the free-agent market. Bumgarner went 9-9 with a 3.90 ERA over 34 starts this season.
Finding franchise QB fickle no matter draft position

By Rob Maaddi
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Finding a franchise quarterback is a tough job that often defines the career of a personnel boss in the NFL.

In Philadelphia, general manager Howie Roseman is praised for landing Carson Wentz after trading up twice to secure the No. 2 pick in the 2016 NFL Draft. Wentz led the Eagles to a division title in his second season and finished third in NFL MVP voting.

Chicago Bears GM Ryan Pace tried the same strategy the following year, trading up three times with a talented quarterback, Mitchell Trubisky. It seemed like a good pick when Trubisky led Chicago to 12 wins and a division championship his second season.

But Trubisky and the Bears (3-5) are struggling this year and every football fan in Chicago is quick to point out that Pace passed on Patrick Mahomes (No. 10) and Deshaun Watson (No. 12) to select Trubisky.

Wentzeasily outplayedTrubisky on Sunday in Philadelphia’s 22-14 win over the Bears. Trubisky finished just 10-21 for 125 yards. Chicago’s offense was so bad in the first half — five three-and-outs, 9 total yards — that some observers wondered why Bears coach Matt Nagy didn’t bench Trubisky for veteran Chase Daniel.

“We knew that we could collectively be better,” Nagy said when asked if he considered a quarterback change. “Again, it was us as a unit overall. Whether it was the offensive line, running backs, wide receivers, tight ends and the quarterback, in general we didn’t start fast.”

Trubisky had no chance against the Eagles (5-3). His frustration was obvious.

“It’s not playing up to what we know we are capable of,” he said. “It’s making simple mistakes. It’s getting out-executed, getting outplayed when we know we are capable of much more, when we know we have more inside of us than when we know we are talented but we are still coming up short. There is a lot of really simple things that we did last year that we do in practice that on game day we are coming up short. And that’s why you have this crappy feeling, and that’s where the frustration comes. Losing sucks.”

Wentz gets his share of criticism in Philly, especially from those still hung up on Nick Foles leading the team to a Super Bowl title after the 2017 season and a playoff win last season. Foles was 10-3 filling in when Wentz was injured over the past two seasons.

He left for Jacksonville in free agency and Wentz got a contract extension that includes $108 million guaranteed.

“We have a lot of guys changing out and just keep building the chemistry but I can definitely play better and I think as an offense we’ll just keep getting better,” Wentz said after completing 26 of 39 for 239 yards and one TD.

Other quarterbacks drafted among the top five picks since 2016 are having varying degrees of success. Jared Goff, selected first overall by the Rams in 2016, is 31-19 since his rookie year. He’s a two-time Pro Bowl selection and already led Los Angeles to the Super Bowl.

Baker Mayfield, chosen No. 1 by Cleveland in 2018, has followed up an impressive rookie year with a dreadful season. The Browns are 2-6, and Mayfield has seven touchdowns and 12 interceptions.

Sam Darnold, picked No. 3 by the Jets, is 5-13 in two seasons. His team lost Sunday to previously winless Miami.

Some of the quarterbacks who’ve fared well recently were undrafted or picked on Day 2 and Day 3 of the draft.

Kyle Allen, signed as an undrafted free agent by Carolina last year, is 5-1 with nine TDs and four interceptions filling in for Cam Newton.

Gardner Minshew, a sixth-round pick by Jacksonville this season, replaced Foles after he got injured Week 1 and is 4-4 with 13 TDs and four picks.

Brandon Allen, a sixth-round pick by the Rams in 2016 and claimed on waivers this season, was 10-3 filling in when Wentz got injured Week 1 and is 4-4 with 13 TDs and four picks.

Mason Rudolph, a third-round pick by Pittsburgh in 2018, is 3-2 since Ben Roethlisberger suffered a season-ending injury.

It’s far too early to make a determination on the careers of any of these young quarterbacks, but one thing is certain: There are no sure hits no matter draft position.

Eagles quarterback Carson Wentz passes under pressure against the Chicago Bears on Sunday in Philadelphia GM Howie Roseman is mostly praised for landing Wentz.

Ex-Browns safety Whitehead ‘deeply regretful’ for rant

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Jermaine Whitehead apologized Tuesday for his alarming postgame social media rant, a tirade that led to his release by the Browns.

Whitehead was cut Monday after he posted several threaten-ing and profane messages on Twitter following Cleveland’s 24-19 loss in Denver on Sunday.

The 26-year-old safety directed his tirade against Patrick Mahomes and Deshaun Watson on Twitter, saying: “I’mma kill you.”

On his Instagram page, Whitehead expressed remorse.

“I would like to take this opportunity to apologize for my actions following our game with Denver,” he wrote. “That was totally out of character for me. I do not justify my actions, but was extremely frustrated with the way I had played and our team losing because of it. I was playing with a broken hand, but that is no excuse for my actions, and I am deeply regretful.”

During his news conference Monday, Browns coach Freddie Kitchens reiterated the team’s postgame statement that called Whitehead’s posts “totally unacceptable and highly inappropriate.”

Whitehead started the Browns’ first eight games, and he entered Sunday’s game leading the team’s secondary in tackles. The Browns signed him one year ago after he was released by Green Bay. The Packers cut him for punching a New England lineman in a game.

Dolphins offense loses top runner, receiver

DAVIE, Fla. — Miami Dolphins running back Mark Walton was suspended Monday without pay for the next four games for violating NFL conduct and substance abuse policies.

The suspension stems from Walton being arrested three times under pressure against the Chicago Bears on Sunday, following our game with Denver,” he wrote. “That was totally out of character for me. I do not justify my actions, but was extremely frustrated with the way I had played and our team losing because of it. I was playing with a broken hand, but that is no excuse for my actions, and I am deeply regretful.”

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The suspension stems from Walton being arrested three times last offseason in his hometown of Miami. He was sentenced in August to six months’ probation after pleading no contest to a misdemeanor weapons charge.

Walton became a starter in Week 5 and leads the Dolphins with 201 yards rushing. Meanwhile, wide receiver Preston Williams’ breakout season with the Dolphins is over.

The undrafted rookie will miss the final eight games with a knee injury suffered against the New York Jets, coach Brian Flores said Monday.

Williams was a pleasant surprise amidst Miami’s dismal start this season. He has 32 receptions, which leads the Dolphins and is tied for the most among rookie wide receivers in the NFL. He also leads Miami with 429 yards receiving and caught two touchdown passes Sunday.

Flores declined to give details about the injury and said it’s not yet known whether Williams will be ready for training camp next year.

Walton, a former University of Miami star, was drafted in the fourth round in 2018 by the Cincinnati Bengals. They released him after his arrests, and he signed in May with the Dolphins.

They had been aware of the likelihood of his suspension. Walton will be eligible to return to the active roster Dec. 2 following the Week 13 game against the Eagles.

Kalen Ballage, who has rushed just 70 yards on 35 carries this year, will likely replace Walton as the starter for Miami (1-7) on Sunday at Indianapolis.

Last week the Dolphins traded running back Kenyan Drake to Arizona, even with Walton’s suspension looming.
Dallas wide receiver Michael Gallup stays in bounds as he flips over the goal line to score during the fourth quarter of the Cowboys’ 37-18 victory over the New York Giants on Monday night in East Rutherford, N.J. Dallas moved a half-game ahead of Philadelphia in the NFC East.

Cat, Dak bring bad luck to Giants

Prescott throws 3 TD passes after animal crossing as Dallas again defeats New York

**By Tom Canavan**

Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — First, the black cat ran on the field.

Then the Dallas Cowboys scampered past the New York Giants.

Dak Prescott shook off an interception on his first pass and threw for three touchdowns, and the Cowboys turned three Daniel Jones turnovers into 13 points on their way to a 37-18 victory over the Giants in a Monday night game that was briefly delayed in the second quarter by an elusive feline.

“Things weren’t good up to that point,” Prescott said about the game before the cat appeared. “It could only get better from there. I definitely thought about that. I guess we’ll start rolling now that the chippy fourth quarter belonged to Dallas and Prescott, who completed 22 of 35 passes for 210 yards. He has thrown for 12 TDs against New York too. It’s two or three plays a game where we hand it off, not just the offense, it’s defense and special teams, Thomas said. “We’re making young mistakes, If we could only get better from there. I definitely thought about that. I guess we’ll start rolling now that the chippy fourth quarter belonged to Dallas and Prescott, who completed 22 of 35 passes for 210 yards. He has thrown for 12 TDs against New York too. It’s two or three plays a game where we hand it off, not just the offense, it’s defense and special teams, Thomas said. “We’re making young mistakes, If we could only get better from there. I definitely thought about that. 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Reversal of fortune

Louisville back in contention in wake of 2 major scandals

BY GARY B. GRAVES
Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Louisville is back in the national championship conversation after the basketball program was knocked on its heels amid the fallout of embarrassing scandals, including the school’s involvement in a federal investigation into college basketball and escorts performing in

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Inside:
- Top teams, must-see nonconference games, Page 27
- Major changes on horizon as season starts, Page 27
- Plenty of notable players from mid-majors, Page 26

Louisville native Dwayne Sutton, left, is one of the players who stuck around after Louisville’s basketball program was rocked by two scandals.

Don Petersen / AP

Marchand powers Bruins past Penguins
NHL, Page 29

Booker helps Suns hand 76ers first loss
NBA, Page 28