



# NEVER THE SAME

Scranton Prep senior plays through his grief. Sports, B1

# Greetings from Earth

Health & Science, B7



NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA'S LARGEST NEWS TEAM

# The Times-Tribune

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2016

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★ FINAL



## Experts favor voting upgrade

### Paperless machines leave no trail, make tampering difficult to detect

**OBAMA VS. TRUMP**  
President likes his chances in hypothetical race for third term. Trump says "No way!" **A12**

**BY MICHAEL RUBINKAM AND FRANK BAJAK**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALLENTOWN — Jill Stein's bid to recount votes in Pennsylvania was in trouble even before a federal judge shot it down Dec. 12. That's because the Green Party candidate's effort stood little

chance of detecting potential fraud or error in the vote — there was basically nothing to recount.

Pennsylvania is one of 11 states where the majority of voters use antiquated machines that store votes electronically, without printed ballots or other paper-

based backups that could be used to double-check the balloting. There's almost no way to know if they've accurately recorded individual votes — or if anyone tampered with the count.

More than 80 percent of Pennsylvanians who voted Nov. 8 cast their ballots on such machines, according to VotePA, a nonprofit seeking their replacement. VotePA's

Please see **VOTES**, Page A5



In October, a technician prepares voting machines to be used in the 2016 presidential election in Philadelphia.

ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE



Sallie Noto of Scranton takes a package from Boscov's sales clerk Linda Plunkett-Fortuna on Monday.

## HOLIDAY SHOPPERS RETURN

On a day known for gift exchanges, consumers also bought into sales.

**BY JIM LOCKWOOD**  
STAFF WRITER

'Twas the day after Christmas and all through the stores, gift returns mixed with sales galore.

Shoppers flocked to retail outlets in Lackawanna County on Monday to return and exchange presents, spend gift cards and take advantage of sales and bargains.

Carolee MacDonald got out early to avoid lines while returning wrong-size clothing she bought for her son, and to scoop up some post-Christmas Day mark-downs. After stops at Macy's at the Viewmont



Dominic Scattone of Throop returns his grandson's present at Toys R Us in Dickson City on Monday.

"It (Dec. 26) used to be big with exchanges; now it's big with people getting gift cards and wanting to spend them right away."

**Steve Vituszynski**  
Boscov's manager

Mall and Kohl's, both in Dickson City, Ms. MacDonald went to Boscov's at the Marketplace at Steamtown in Scranton, where she found deals on gift

wrap, ribbon and tissue paper that were too good to pass up.

Along with storewide sales, Boscov's Trim-a-Home department offered

75-percent-off Christmas decorations and related items. Ms. MacDonald said she will store the ribbon and wrap for next Christmas, and use the white tissue paper for other gifts throughout the year.

Known as a day for exchanges and returns, Dec. 26 also typically ranks among the holiday season's biggest shopping days.

A December holiday survey of consumers by the National Retail Federation found that 48 percent of respondents planned to take advantage of in-store, after-Christmas sales, up from 47 percent last year.

Gift cards also help drive post-Christmas Day shopping.

"It (Dec. 26) used to be big with exchanges; now it's big with people getting gift cards and wanting to spend them right away," said Boscov's manager Steve Vituszynski.

The National Retail Federation said

Please see **RETURNS**, Page A5



IVAN SEKRETAREV / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Women place flowers in front of the Alexandrov Ensemble building in Moscow, Russia, on Monday.

## Kremlin says terror unlikely in plane crash

Investigators are looking into tech malfunctions, pilot error

**BY VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV AND VERONIKA SILCHENKO**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SOCHI, Russia — The Kremlin on Monday played down the possibility that a terror attack might have downed a Syria-bound Russian plane, killing all 92 people on board, as the nation observed a day of mourning for the victims, including most members of a world-famous military choir.

The Tu-154 owned by the Russian Defense Ministry

crashed into the Black Sea early Sunday two minutes after taking off in good weather from the city of Sochi. The plane was carrying members of the Alexandrov Ensemble, often referred to as the Red Army Choir; to a New Year's concert at a Russian military base in Syria.

About 3,500 people, 43 ships and 182 divers have been sweeping a vast crash

Please see **PLANE**, Page A5

## Rail head optimistic about route to NYC

Organization seeks grant to study costs and update data.

**BY BORYS KRAWCZENIUK**  
STAFF WRITER

When plans to build a passenger train route between Scranton and New York City derail, Larry Malski assumes his chief role: eternal optimist.

In the parlance of children's railroad books, the president of the Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Rail-

road Authority always sees the little engine that could.

With the train seriously discussed for 25 years already, forever delayed and still years, if ever, from reality, Mr. Malski points to reasons to be cheerful.

First, the authority has applied for a \$150,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission to fund a \$300,000 study that will update cost estimates

Please see **RAIL**, Page A5

### Good morning

A shower  
High: 49°  
Low: 28°  
Weather, B10

Subscriptions..... 570-348-9190  
Classified ads..... 570-348-9157

Business..... C1 Horoscope..... C3  
Classified..... C4 Lottery..... A2  
Comics..... C2-3 Obits..... B8-10  
Editorial..... A10 Sports..... B1  
Healthy/Sci..... B7 TV..... C5

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## Poll: Americans hopeful things will get better in 2017

In wake of grueling 2016, many respondents expressed optimism about the coming year.

**BY EMILY SWANSON AND VERENA DOBNIK**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Emotionally wrenching politics, foreign conflicts and shootings at home took a toll on Americans in 2016, but they are entering 2017 on an optimistic note, according to a new poll that found that a majority believes things are going to get better for the country next year.

### TOPIC OF THE Times

Americans who responded to the Associated Press-Times Square Alliance poll weren't thrilled with the year. Only 18 percent said things for the country got better; 33 percent said things got worse, and 47 percent said it was unchanged from 2015.

On a personal level, they

were optimistic about 2017.

Fifty-five percent said they believe things will be better for them in the coming year than in the year that just concluded. That's a 12-point improvement from last year's poll.

Americans interviewed about the poll's results expressed some of that optimism.

"Next year will be better than this year, because people will have more jobs and they'll have more money to spend," said Bourema Tamboura, a

Harlem resident behind the wheel of a New York car service.

"I'm hoping 2017 will be better," added Elizabeth Flynn, 62, an elementary school teacher from Peabody, Massachusetts. "You've got to be optimistic, and I'm going to try."

Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say 2016 was worse for the country than 2015. And Republicans are especially likely to feel that 2017 will be even better for them personally.

"I'm hoping 2017 will be better. You've got to be optimistic, and I'm going to try."

**Elizabeth Flynn**  
62-year-old elementary school teacher

thetimes-tribune.com

**Most-read stories**

1. Police: Dalton man shot in Wilkes-Barre on Christmas Eve
2. Air Force veteran continues to aim high in helping others
3. Attorneys seek to limit evidence in Old Forge sex abuse case
4. Pop superstar George Michael dies of heart failure at 53
5. At work for the holiday, firefighters and police officers get a sweet treat

**Poll questions**

**Today we ask:** Did you get any gifts you want to return or exchange? Log on to vote.

**Yesterday we asked:** Did anyone in your household have work on Christmas?



Yes: **26%**  
No: **74%**

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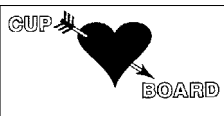
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**Whatzit**

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.



Whatzit's solution: Cupboard love

**Lotteries**

**Pennsylvania**

- Pick 2, Mon., 1:35 **6-7 (0)**
- Pick 2, Mon., 7 **1-4 (8)**
- Pick 3, Mon., 1:35 **5-7-3 (0)**
- Pick 3, Mon., 7 **7-4-0 (8)**
- Pick 4, Mon., 1:35 **93-71 (0)**
- Pick 4, Mon., 7 **1-2-2-5 (8)**
- Pick 5, Mon., 1:35 **21-5-16 (0)**
- Pick 5, Mon., 7 **18-0-12 (8)**
- Treasure Hunt, Monday **7-11-13-21-26**
- Cash 5, Monday **5-10-16-30-32**
- Match 6, Monday **9-15-22-24-42-49**
- Cash-4-Life, Monday **4-12-29-31-36+1**
- Powerball, Saturday **28-39-42-51-52+21**
- Power Play: **2**
- Mega Millions, Friday **21-30-39-60-69+15**
- Megaplier: **5**

Today's "Pennsylvania Cash 5" jackpot will be worth at least \$325,000.

Thursday's "Pennsylvania Match 6" jackpot will be worth at least \$3 million.

**New Jersey**

- Pick 3, Monday **5-1-5**
- Pick 4, Monday **5-2-9-5**
- Pick 6 Xtra, Monday **7-10-25-29-32-43+3**

**New York**

- Daily, Monday **2-1-7**
- Win 4, Monday **5-4-7-9**
- Lotto, Saturday **4-48-51-52-54-57+18**

**History**

**On this date in NEPA**

- 100 years ago**, the high school student strike entered its second day in Scranton. Students that did report to school said teachers were giving them extra work because of the strike, a claim the school district denied.
- 75 years ago**, U.S. Sen. James Davis asked Gov. Arthur James to recommend that the War Department build an ammunition depot in the anthracite region of Pennsylvania instead of Franklin County.
- 50 years ago**, Scranton Mayor James Walsh signed the 1967 city budget into law but he said he was doing it with reservations. He said vetoing the budget served no purpose.
- 25 years ago**, the slopes at Montage Mountain were packed with people, some trying out their new ski gear. Management said over 2,000 people enjoyed the slopes.
- 10 years ago**, a downed power line caused problems along the Scranton-Carbondale Highway in Dickson City.

**Almanac**

- Today is **Tuesday, Dec. 27**, the **362nd day** of 2016. There are **four days left** in the year.
- In **1904**, James Barrie's play "Peter Pan: The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up" opened at the Duke of York's Theater in London.
- In **1932**, New York City's Radio City Music Hall first opened.
- In **1968**, Apollo 8 and its three astronauts made a safe, nighttime splashdown in the Pacific.
- In **1979**, Soviet forces seized control of Afghanistan. President Hafizullah Amin, who was overthrown and executed, was replaced by Babrak Karmal.
- In **1985**, American naturalist Dian Fossey, 53, who had studied gorillas in the wild in Rwanda, was found hacked to death.
- In **2015**, death claimed Harlem Globetrotter Meadowlark Lemon at age 83.

**Name dropper**

Got a name to drop? We're looking for news and notes about local people. Send info to The Times-Tribune YES! Desk at [yesdesk@timeshamrock.com](mailto:yesdesk@timeshamrock.com)



**Baking at St. Mary's Villa are, clockwise from left: Charles Dulcey, Rosemary Palumbo, Genevieve Barna (hidden), Michaline Temperino, Joan Mast, Meghan Loven, Croce Sklareski, Helen Moran, Mary Allen and Frances Hayduk.**

**Seniors bake for youth group**

Residents at St. Mary's Villa had baking day — and raised dough for the Youth Group at St. Catherine's Church in Moscow.

The group of seniors baked for their "Cookie and Candy Walk" fundraiser, David Kaminski, villa marketing director, said in an email. They "enjoyed each other's company and discussed Christmas cookie recipes while baking," he said.

Among those joining in were Mary Allen, Elma Anderson, Genevieve Barna, Charles Dulcey, Catherine Foytack, Genevieve Grigalonis, Francis Harrigan, Frances Hayduk, Dorothy Hoffman, Mary Clare Kearney, Meghan Loven, Joan Mast, Helen Moran, Rosemary Palumbo, Helene Rice, Jacob Schlittler, Croce Sklareski and Michaline Temperino.

**Super students**

Marywood University's music, theater and dance department's production of "To Kill a Mockingbird" received recognition from



**Student performers of Marywood University's production of "To Kill a Mockingbird" will receive recognition from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival next month. From left: Charles Gorden, theater program director; Helena Rankin; Amanda Hirschler and Markis Blackwell.**

the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. Markis Blackwell of Scranton, who played Tom Robinson, and Amanda Hirschler of Factoryville, who played Maudie Atkinson, are nominated to participate in the Irene Ryan Scholarship Award Competition at the Regional Festival in January at Montclair State University. The Irene Ryan Scholarship program awards 16 \$500 scholarships annually. Helena Rankin

of Groton, New York, will be recognized for excellence in stage management ... Nicholas Alexander Norris of Noxen, a junior majoring in civil engineering at Clarkson University, received the Barbara Hewitt Lowers Endowed Scholarship.

**High notes**

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeastern Pennsylvania annual ONE Campaign committee members, includ-

ing Erwin Kost Jr., chairman, and Michael Ferguson, John Kramer Jr., Paul Lantz, Jerry Mahon and Jason Wiggins, are working toward a goal of raising \$81,000 in three months. The campaign provides unrestricted funds to support club programs and services to community youth. To donate to the Annual ONE Campaign, call 570-342-8709, ext. 110, or visit [www.bgcnepa.org](http://www.bgcnepa.org).

— TERRY BONIFANTI

**Retired state employees hold Christmas luncheon**



**The Pennsylvania Association of Retired State Employees, Lackawanna and Wyoming Chapter, held its annual Christmas luncheon at Al Mia Amore, Dickson City. A Toys for Tots collection was held in conjunction with the event. From left: John Adamsky, chapter president; Cpl. Jeffrey Vik; Sgt. Roger Torres; Ted Chrusch; Eileen Soranno; Tom O'Neill, regional vice president; Helen Coggins; Nina Falciglia; and Mary Ann Ketchur.**

**Washington West group sponsors Toys for Tots**



**The Washington West Association sponsors Toys for Tots at its Christmas party. From left: Crissy Schwartz, vice president; Linda Butler, treasurer; 1st Sgt. Shawn C. Kelly; Gunnery Sgt. Mario Pucci; and Kay Crockenberg, president.**



**Felicity Jones**

**People in the News**

**'Rogue One' tops new releases**

LOS ANGELES — It was an intergalactic holiday at movie theaters as "Rogue One" blasted past a spate of new releases to hold onto the top spot at the weekend box office.

The "Star Wars" story, which stars Felicity Jones, added another \$96 million to its coffers over the four-day holiday period, according to studio estimates Monday.

"The power of the 'Star Wars' brand made it the odds-on favorite to be the No. 1 film on Christmas weekend despite a massive amount of competition," said Paul Dergarabedian, media analyst for box-office tracker comScore.

That left the weekend's many new releases in a race for second place. The animated animal musical "Sing" claimed that spot with \$56 million. The Jennifer Lawrence-Chris Pratt space tale "Passengers" opened in third with \$23.1 million, followed by the R-rated comedy "Why Him?" with \$16.7 million. The video-game adaptation "Assassin's Creed" debuted in fifth place with \$15 million.

— ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Obituaries**

- Lucille H. Esagro.....B9
- Edna Mae Fisher.....B10
- Phyllis F. Fowler.....B9
- Claire N. Fox.....B9
- Dylan M. Gatens.....B8
- Ann Algar George.....B10
- William J. Gilpin.....B9
- John A. Greco.....B8
- Edith Lynch.....B10
- Shirley L. Marks.....B9
- Helen R. McHale.....B10
- Alfred Mursch Jr.....B9
- Anthony M. Nardella.....B9
- Richard Osenkarski.....B8
- Mary Panettieri.....B9
- Rose Mary Podhyski.....B10
- Wanda K. Riegi.....B8
- Elizabeth Roche.....B9
- Pani Martha Zeleniak.....B8

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**CORRECTIONS**

It is our policy to correct errors promptly on the first page of the section in which they occur. Wire service errors will be corrected on this page. To report an error, please call the Metro Desk at 570-348-9121.

# Two ex-employees sue U of S

## Claim they lost their jobs over medical issues

BY TERRIE MORGAN-BESECKER  
STAFF WRITER

Two former employees at the University of Scranton are suing the college, alleging officials retaliated against them for seeking accommodations for medical issues.

In separate lawsuits filed in federal court, Joseph Merrick of Scranton claims he was fired for taking time off under the Family Medical Leave Act. Linda Smith of Scranton alleges she was retaliated against in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Mr. Merrick's suit, filed last week by attorney Frank Tunis Jr. of Scranton, says he was employed as a custodian and developed an unspecified medical condition that required him to request intermittent leave under the FMLA starting in October 2014.

On July 16, 2015, he was fired for excessive absenteeism, even though some absences included leave that was approved under the FMLA.

Ms. Smith's lawsuit, filed Dec. 7 by attorney Oluwengba O. Abiona of Philadelphia, says she was employed as a secretary with the university's residence life department since November 2007.

In September 2012, she developed hypothyroidism, anxiety and hearing loss and requested the college provide her a reasonable accommodation to allow her to continue working.

The suit alleges Ms. Smith's supervisor subjected her to a hostile work environment because of her request. Ms. Smith was transferred to the theology/religious stud-

ies department in retaliation for her complaints about the harassment. She was fired in July 2015 despite never being advised of problems with her performance.

Stan Zygmunt, spokesman for the university, said it does not comment on pending litigation.

**Contact the writer:**  
tbeseker@timeshamrock.com,  
@tmbeseckerTT on Twitter

# A growing love for learning at new preschool

Discovery MI in Scranton plans to open second classroom in January.

BY SARAH HOFIUS HALL  
STAFF WRITER

Luke Golembeski, 5, sat at a table at the Discovery MI Preschool, putting together a trinomial cube. "You have to sort them," he said, as he separated the blocks and prisms by size for the activity that helps teach math, spatial and logistical skills.

At another table at the Montessori preschool on East Mountain in Scranton, a group worked with Play-Doh, rolling it out and cutting it into squares and triangles — the parts needed to make houses, the students explained.

"These are happy, well-adjusted kids who love learning and hopefully develop a lifelong love of learning," said Stacy Nivert, president of the school's board.

## Kindergarten in fall

Just four months after the school opened, its founders will open a second preschool classroom in January and plan to start offering kindergarten in the fall.

"We've had an overwhelming response. I'm really excited about it," said teacher Amanda Therkorn, who will become the educational director in the spring.

The private, nonprofit school will be able to accommodate 40 preschool and kindergarten students.

Two multi-age classrooms will include both groups of students, with the kindergarten students receiving more advanced instruction. The school will also continue its mission of having one-third of its students from low-income families, with financial assistance available, Ms. Nivert said. Officials hope to have state approval for the kindergarten by April.

The first preschool

classroom opened in September, the result of parents coming together when the state forced the Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School to close its preschool. The school, located inside the Irish Cultural Society on Beech Street, offers a Montessori curriculum using a multiple intelligence theory, similar to what was offered at the charter school.

The state forced the charter school's pre-kindergarten program to close last year because state law prohibits charter schools from operating pre-K programs.

## Not enough choices

"Our goal has always been to help address the critical shortage of preschools," Ms. Nivert said. "There aren't enough choices for families."

This year, tuition for full-day preschool is \$590 a month, and the half-day program is \$395 a month.

In a recent health and well-being class, the children learned about corn and what makes it pop. Students also take art, Spanish, gym and music classes each week.

"I hope they're getting an education for the whole child," Ms. Therkorn said.

For information, visit [mydiscoverypreschool.org](http://mydiscoverypreschool.org).

**Contact the writer:**  
shofius@timeshamrock.com,  
@hofiushallTT on Twitter



BUTCH COMEGYS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Alexandria Zackoski, 3, does a pouring-funnel work exercise at the Discovery MI Preschool in the East Mountain section of Scranton.



BUTCH COMEGYS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Callen Evans, 4, works on spindles, a mathematical exercise, at the Discovery MI Preschool in Scranton.



BUTCH COMEGYS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Luke Golembeski, 5, works on a trinomial cube exercise at the Discovery MI Preschool.

# Riverside schools 'united'

Students, teachers say they are adjusting well to redistricting.

BY SARAH HOFIUS HALL  
STAFF WRITER

TAYLOR — Redistricting in Riverside has brought the school district back together.

Four months into a plan that brought all elementary students in the same grades to the same schools, officials said both students and teachers have adjusted well.

"We're going to reap the benefits for years to come," Superintendent Paul Brennan said.

Kindergarten through second-grade students now attend Riverside Elementary West in Taylor, and third-through sixth-graders attend Riverside Elementary East in Moosic. Each school had previously offered kindergarten through fourth grades, with all district students attending fifth and sixth grade at the Moosic school.

The change allows better curriculum development and collaboration among teachers and an earlier integration with classmates, Mr. Brennan said.

"I love that we're all together," kindergarten teacher Dawn Loney said.

There had previously been a divide between students who went to school in Taylor versus those who attended school in Moosic, she said.

"Now friendships are formed from kindergarten on," she said.

With all grade-level teachers in the same buildings, collaboration is also easier, kindergarten teacher Alison Harchar said.

With all of the younger students in the same building, officials can focus more on early intervention and are planning the first formal kindergarten graduation ceremony, Mr. Brennan said. Staff at the third-through sixth-grade school can also focus more on other age-appropriate activities, he said.

Mr. Brennan said he likes to use the phrase "united in one heart" when talking about Riverside.

"Now we're united from the start," he said.

**Contact the writer:**  
shofius@timeshamrock.com,  
@hofiushallTT on Twitter

# Program to keep motorists informed of road emergencies

The 511PAConnect initiative is similar to the Amber Alert notifications, officials say.

BY CLAYTON OVER  
STAFF WRITER

Motorists now have a new way to receive information should they end up stuck in an emergency road closure.

Called 511PAConnect, the system is similar to Amber Alert notifications that law

enforcement send out about missing children. It works like this: when personnel from the Pennsylvania Turnpike or the state Department of Transportation identify a potential long-term emergency road closure of four hours or longer due to a crash or weather conditions, they'll notify Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency personnel. PEMA will then issue a wireless emergency alert geo-targeted to those in or approaching the impacted area.

*"It is important for motorists to recognize that the system will only work in areas with cellphone service and that this is not a substitute for calling 911 if you have an actual emergency in your vehicle."*

Richard D. Flinn Jr.  
PEMA director

The message will direct people in the area to visit [511PAConnect.com](http://511PAConnect.com), where they can enter their phone



number to register to receive updates about the closure via text message or phone call and also safety tips, said Carl

DeFebo, a spokesman for the turnpike.

People will also be asked to answer questions like what kind of vehicle they are driving and the number of people inside, which will help responding agencies, Mr. DeFebo said.

"It really helps us pinpoint our response," Mr. DeFebo said.

Once the incident is rectified, those who registered for the alerts will automatically be unsubscribed and their information erased from

the system.

"This system will only be used for emergencies that will last for a sustained period," PEMA Director Richard D. Flinn Jr. said in a release on the initiative. "It is important for motorists to recognize that the system will only work in areas with cellphone service and that this is not a substitute for calling 911 if you have an actual emergency in your vehicle."

**Contact the writer:**  
cover@timeshamrock.com,  
@ClaytonOver on Twitter

# Prof under fire for racist tweet

Educator says his 'White Genocide' comment was meant to be satirical.

BY MICHAEL RUBINKAM  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

A Drexel University professor has been summoned to a meeting with school officials after he tweeted a Christmas Eve message that appeared to support "white genocide."

George Ciccariello-Maher, who is white and an associate professor of politics at the Philadelphia university, told The Associated Press by email Monday that his Christmas Eve message to nearly 11,000 Twitter followers — "All I Want for Christmas is White Genocide" — was meant to be satirical.

Drexel was not amused, condemning Mr. Ciccariello-Maher's tweet and saying in a statement it was "taking this situation very seriously." "While the University recognizes the right of its faculty to freely express their thoughts and opinions in public debate, Professor Ciccariello-Maher's comments are utterly reprehensible,

deeply disturbing, and do not in any way reflect the values of the University," Drexel said.

Mr. Ciccariello-Maher, whose online biography says his academic specialties include "race and racism," said Drexel apparently didn't understand "the content or the context" of his tweets. The professor told AP he was mocking what he called the "imaginary concept" of white genocide, which he says was invented by white supremacists.

"It is a figment of the racist imagination, it should be mocked, and I'm glad to have mocked it," he said.

Mr. Ciccariello-Maher followed up his initial tweet by praising the "massacre" of whites in Haiti during the country's slave uprising and revolution more than two centuries ago.

Though his Twitter account is private, he is a prolific tweeter, and his weekend messages spread quickly online. He said he has received hundreds of death threats. The professor said Drexel's statement "sends a chilling message."



MARK MORAN / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Robert McCracken's replica ranch has grown at his home in Nanticoke.

# Nanticoke man's diagnosis leads to new model hobby

Unable to spend time outdoors, his display of miniatures brings ranch inside.

BY BILL WELLOCK  
STAFF WRITER

NANTICOKE — The last time Robert McCracken went fishing was about four years ago.

Kidney failure has kept the 64-year-old off the lake and away from his rod and rifle since 2012, two years before he was diagnosed with the condition, which he is now treating.

The last three months, however, have brought a new hobby into his life, one that brings a miniature representation of the outdoors into his living room.

Mr. McCracken wanted to buy his fiancée, Janetlee Holderman, a model train set, but only found gifts out of his budget.

"Then I told her, 'I have an idea,'" he said, pointing to a table in the living room. "This was the idea."

At Ms. Holderman's apartment on East Noble Street in Nanticoke are dozens of small plastic farm animals and two replica barns arranged on a table, complete with hay Mr. McCracken purchased at Tractor Supply Co. in Hanover Twp. and real grass.

### A few animals

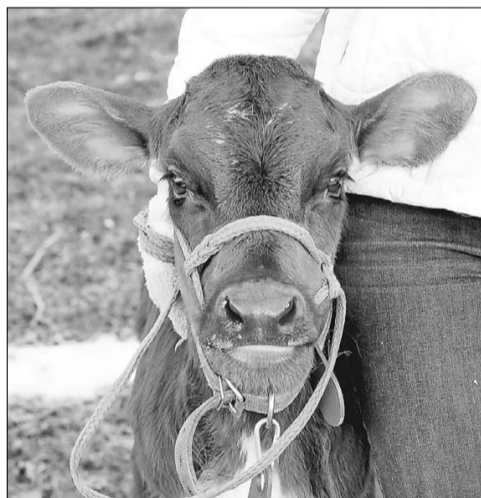
The replica ranch is his new hobby. It started as a few animals on an end table and now takes up a folding table along one living room wall. A cowboy hat hangs above the menagerie.

Mr. McCracken said he spends hours on the project each day, adding details to make it his own, such as small yellow ropes tied around the figurines' necks, paper bearing his imaginary "Circle Farms" logo on the roof of each miniature barn and cereal arranged in a container as a substitute for feed. He has named his cattle and horses and even "branded" his livestock with a red marker. The digit "1" inside a circle lets visitors know the ani-



MARK MORAN / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Robert McCracken and his fiancée, Janetlee Holderman, look over the display.



MARK MORAN / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Marty, a 6-week-old Lineback calf, was brought to Robert McCracken's house as a surprise by Lindsey Sutton and her staff of the Lands at Hillside Farms.

mals belong to Mr. McCracken's herd.

Ms. Holderman has contributed some touches, such as three small statues that Mr. McCracken calls "our watchmen" and a miniature wishing well.

"What ranch doesn't need a wishing well?" she said.

Mr. McCracken is now "addicted" to the display he has created. He sprays a fine mist of water on the grass and hay to keep it moist, spends hours each day researching ranching and watches videos on YouTube of rodeos and ranchers bringing in a herd of cattle. He is filling a notebook with his agricultural education.

He recently called The Lands at Hillside Farms so he could talk to a staff member there to learn more about the cows on that farm. Mr. McCracken and Lindsey Sutton, the organization's director of education, chatted for about a half hour about topics such as the breeds at the farm, their diet and how much milk they produce.

### Appreciation

"He really had an appreciation for what our farmers and our cows do. It was definitely unique, but very welcome," Ms. Sutton said.

Last Tuesday, the staff from Hillside Farms even surprised Mr. McCracken

with a visit from a live calf. "I walked out there and there she was," Mr. McCracken said. "She was adorable."

While growing up in New Jersey, Mr. McCracken bagged feed at an agriculture store and bought a horse when he was 15. He eventually came to own five horses, rented space at a barn to house the animals and rode them in parades. He later sold the horses and moved to Pennsylvania after his parents died.

### Source of comfort

Besides providing a welcome pastime, the display is a source of comfort.

"You might laugh at this, but even though they're fake, it's like they're our kids," Mr. McCracken said of his dozens of plastic cows and horses. "In the morning, I can't wait to come out here."

"I never thought to do something like this. I like coming out at night when we're relaxing and looking at it," Ms. Holderman said.

Cassandra Smith lives in the same building as Mr. McCracken and Ms. Holderman and has seen the display grow.

"Every couple days, he'll have me come over. There's always something new to see," she said.

Her daughter, 4-year-old Hannah Whitmire, has seen living horses and cows near her father's home in Berwick. She gave Mr. McCracken's likenesses a thumbs-up, and explained her 2-year-old sister's thoughts on the ranch.

"She likes it," Hannah said.

Mr. McCracken and Ms. Holderman plan to continue the display. The ranch's future includes a possible expansion to other parts of the living room, perhaps requiring a dip into the capital expenditures budget for another table.

At least one lifestyle change has taken hold of this replica urban rancher that is probably rare in the real profession. "Now, I feel funny eating steak," Mr. McCracken said.

Contact the writer: bwellock@citizensvoice.com, @CVBillW on Twitter

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### Scranton

**Book discussion:** Albright Memorial Library Social Justice Book Club discussing Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "We Should All Be Feminists," Jan. 9, 6:30 p.m., book available to borrow at the Library or receive 40 percent off ordering through Library Express Bookstore, Marketplace at Steamtown.

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### No court notes

The Lackawanna County Courthouse was closed Monday in observance of the Christmas holiday. Court notes will resume Wednesday.

# VOTES: Paperless results difficult to verify

FROM PAGE A1

Marybeth Kuznik described the proposed recount this way: "You go to the computer and you say, 'OK, computer, you counted this a week-and-a-half ago. Were you right the first time?'"

## Glaring danger

These paperless digital voting machines, used by roughly 1 in 5 U.S. voters last month, present one of the most glaring dangers to the security of the rickety, underfunded U.S. election system. Like many electronic voting machines, they are vulnerable to hacking. But other machines typically leave a paper trail that could be manually checked. The paperless digital machines open the door to potential election rigging that might not ever be detected.

Their prevalence also magnifies other risks in the election system, simply because error or fraud is harder to catch when vote counts can't be verified. And like other voting machines adopted since the 2000 election, the paperless systems are nearing the end of their useful life — yet there is no comprehensive plan to replace them.

"If I were going to hack this election, I would go for the paperless machines because they are so hard to check," said Barbara Simons, the co-author of "Broken Ballots," a study of flawed U.S. voting technology.

Dr. Stein described her recount effort as a way to ensure that the 2016 election wasn't tainted by hacking or fraud. There's no evidence of either so far — a fact federal Judge Paul Diamond cited prominently in his decision halting the Pennsylvania recount.

## Vulnerable system

Dr. Stein pursued similar recounts in Wisconsin and Michigan, to little avail. Those states use more reliable paper-based voting technologies. (The Electoral College certified Donald Trump's presidential victory



ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

**Brian Varner, a principal researcher at Symantec, inserts an identifying chip card into an electronic voting machine as he demonstrates how to hack an electronic voting machine at a Symantec office in New York in September.**

last week.) But a cadre of computer scientists from major universities backed Dr. Stein's recounts to underscore the vulnerability of U.S. elections. These researchers have successfully hacked e-voting machines for more than a decade in tests commissioned by New York, California, Ohio and other states.

Dr. Stein and her witnesses said worries about fraud were justified given U.S. charges that Russia meddled in the 2016 presidential campaign. Emails of top Democrats were hacked and leaked. Over the summer, hackers also tried to breach the voter registration databases of Arizona and Illinois using Russia-based servers, U.S. officials said. Election networks in at least 20 states were probed for vulnerabilities.

"It's a target-rich environment," said Rice University computer scientist Dan Wallach. Researchers would like to see the U.S. move entirely to computer-scannable paper ballots, because paper can't be hacked.

The U.S. voting system — a loosely regulated, locally managed patchwork of more than 3,000 jurisdictions over-

seen by the states — employs more than two dozen types of machinery from 15 manufacturers. Elections officials across the nation say they take great care to secure their machines from tampering. They are locked away when not in use and sealed to prevent tampering.

All of that makes national elections very difficult to steal without getting caught.

But difficult is not impossible. Dr. Wallach and his colleagues believe a crafty team of pros could strike surgically, focusing on select counties in a few battleground states where "a small nudge might be decisive," he said.

## Tech outdated

Most voting machines in the U.S. are at or near the end of their expected lifespans. Forty-three states use machines more than a decade old. Most run on vintage operating systems such as Windows 2000 that predate the iPhone and are no longer updated with security patches.

On Nov. 8, election officials across the U.S. handled numerous complaints of aging touchscreens losing calibration and casting votes for the wrong candidate.

But while many experts agree the U.S. voting system needs an upgrade, no one wants to pay to fix it.

Money flowed after the 2000 Florida recount debacle, when punch-card technology was discredited by hanging chads. Congress appropriated \$4 billion for election upgrades; states raced to replace punch cards and lever machines with digital technology.

But when that money ran out, so did the ability of many states to address security concerns overlooked in their initial rush. Four in 5 U.S. election officials polled by New York University's Brennan Center last year said they are desperate to replace equipment but lack the cash.

Voters in poorer areas suffer disproportionately, the center found. Data collected in Virginia, Ohio, Minnesota and Colorado suggests the poor are more apt to encounter failing machines.

In Virginia, wealthier counties near Washington have upgraded technology while lower-income counties in the state's southwest have not been able to afford it, said Edgardo Cortes, the state elections commissioner.

# PLANE: Site searched

FROM PAGE A1

site for bodies of the victims and debris, and dozens of drones and several submersibles also have been involved in the search. Rescue teams so far have recovered 11 bodies and numerous body fragments, which have been flown to Moscow for identification.

Divers have located parts of the plane's fuselage and other fragments, but the search for the jet's flight recorders will likely prove challenging as they lack underwater locator beacons for easy spotting common in more modern planes.

Officials sought to squelch speculation that the crash might have been caused by a bomb planted on board or a portable air defense missile.

But some aviation experts pointed that the crew's failure to communicate any technical problem and a large area over which fragments of the plane were scattered point at a possible explosion on board.

Evidence of a bombing of a Syria-bound military flight would badly embarrass the Kremlin, highlighting Russia's extreme vulnerability to attacks even as it boasts its success in Syria after Aleppo fell into President Bashar Assad's hands.

President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, told reporters that an attack isn't a likely scenario. Transport Minister Maxim Sokolov, who oversaw the rescue efforts, said

investigators were looking into a possible technical fault or pilot error as the most likely reasons behind the crash.

But some experts remained skeptical, noting that the crew would have reported any technical glitch.

"Possible malfunctions ... certainly wouldn't have prevented the crew from reporting them," Vitaly Andreyev, a former senior Russian air traffic controller, told RIA Novosti, adding that an "external impact" was the most likely reason.

Russia's main domestic security and counter-terrorism agency, the FSB, said it has found "no indications or facts pointing at the possibility of a terror attack or an act of sabotage on board the plane."

The plane departed from the Chkalovsky military airport just outside Moscow and stopped in Sochi for refueling early Sunday. The FSB said border guards and military servicemen were protecting the plane as it sat on the tarmac in Sochi, and the chief pilot along with the flight engineer personally monitored the refueling. The agency said that a border guard officer and a customs official were the only ones to briefly come on board in Sochi.

Some Russian media pointed at lax security at Chkalovsky outside Moscow where the plane was based, saying that it's quite porous compared to civilian airports.

# RETURNS: Shoppers exchanging presents

FROM PAGE A1

Federation survey also estimated that 22 percent of consumers receiving gift cards will use them as quickly as possible, up from 20 percent last year; while 41 percent will watch for really good sales to maximize value, and 19 percent will save gift cards for rainy days.

Gift cards were among Ms. MacDonald's Christmas presents, along with money and lottery tickets. She did not return any of those gifts.

"I don't return what I get. Santa knows what I want," Ms. MacDonald said.

Eileen Noble of Charlestown, R.I., who was in town visiting family in Dunmore, went to Boscov's for "some exchanges, some returns" of gifts.

Meanwhile, at Toys-R-Us, in Dickson City, Dominic Scattone of Throop returned a Lego City box set that his young grandson received as a gift.

Erin Powell, also of Throop, returned a Hatchimal.

"The hottest gift of the season," she said. "My son got two for Christmas."

**Contact the writer:** jlockwood@timeshamrock.com, @jlockwoodTT on Twitter



MICHAEL J. MULLEN / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Eileen Noble exchanges a package with help from Boscov's clerk Sarah Cruz on Monday morning.**

# RAIL: Project cost could end up close to \$1B

FROM PAGE A1

and other data. Lackawanna County, the state Department of Transportation and other agencies will match the other \$150,000.

"Our last numbers are eight or nine years old," Mr. Malski said.

By a 2006 estimate, the project would cost \$551 million, but state Secretary of Transportation Leslie Richards has said the cost could end up closer to \$1 billion.

Second, U.S. Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen, R-New Jersey, is the new chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, which has a major say in all federal spending. He has long advocated for the train, mainly because it cuts right through his district. Mr. Frelinghuysen played a role in talking New Jersey Transit into re-installing tracks on a 7.3-mile stretch of the trackless but straight 28-mile Lackawanna Cutoff and renovating a tunnel near Roseville, New Jersey. The 7.3 miles will extend New Jersey's service from Port Morris to Andover. So far, 4.1 miles of track are back.

New Jersey Transit is qualifying contractors and engineers to fix the tunnel and extend the track, agency spokesman Jim Smith said. The agency hopes to award contracts to design the project and begin construction next year. The job is expected to take two years to finish. The cost of extending the track to Andover alone is \$61.6 million, Mr. Smith said.

Third, Mr. Frelinghuysen has a new colleague on the Appropriations Committee: Matt Cartwright, D-17, Moosic. The legislator has turned the train's revival into his main mission in Congress.

That means the two congressmen whose districts would benefit most from the project sit on one of Congress' most powerful committees.

"That's how you get things done," Mr. Malski said.

Fourth, Republican President-elect Donald Trump advocates rebuilding the nation's highways, bridges, airports, railroads and other infrastructure. He wants to spend \$1 trillion — that's trillion with a "T" — on infrastructure.

"If that comes to fruition, then that's going to be a major impact that we can tap into," Mr. Malski said.

After the 7.3 miles is built, the cutoff's remaining 21 trackless miles become the largest final obstacle to having tracks all the way to Scranton.

"The whole process revolves around the next 21 miles," Mr. Malski said. "Our whole battle is the next 21 miles."

Many obstacles and questions remain, finding construction money chief

among them along with proving a need. Ms. Richards has repeatedly said the train will have to prove the 133-mile excursion can compete with buses on trip time.

The last time a passenger train ran between Scranton and New York City was Jan. 5, 1970. Mr. Malski rode that last train and believes he can ride the next one.

"The stars are aligning," he said.

**Contact the writer:** bkrawczenluk@timeshamrock.com

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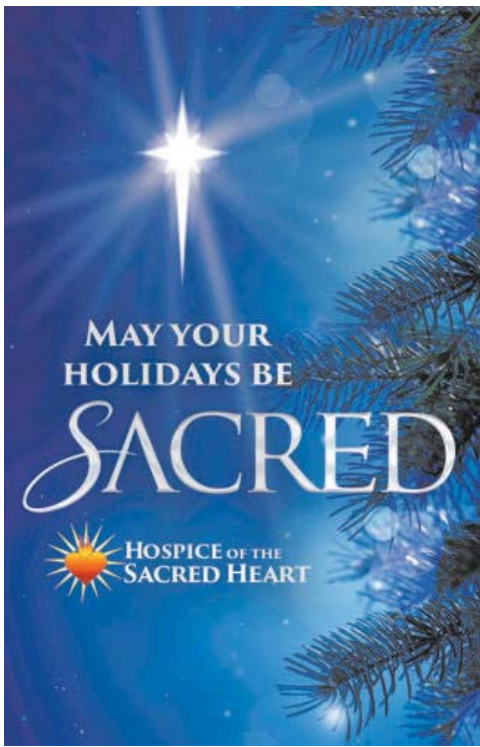
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**Boys & Girls Club Christmas party**



The annual Christmas party for children at the Boys & Girls Club was held with funds raised from the Capt. James R. Minicozzi fifth annual Memorial Race. Committee members and helpers include, from left: John Trapani, event co-chairman; Mike Rescigno, Dave Bieri, Danny Lovallo, Anthony Summa, Jim Baress, chapter president; Michael Giallorenzi, Mary Marrara, co-chairwoman; Matthew Martini, Pat Gianni, Leslie Minicozzi Galacci, chairwoman for event; Bella Cappellano Server, Don Galacci, owner of Alfredo's; Wilbur Cruz, Dr. Al Giallorenzi and Palma Gianni.

**BRIEFS**

**CARBONDALE TWP.**

**Utz truck driver injured in crash**

Emergency personnel took one man to the hospital after he was thrown from his vehicle in a crash Monday afternoon.

The crash happened at about 12:35 p.m., when the driver of an Utz potato chip truck traveling westbound on an icy Salem Mountain Road lost control of the vehicle and struck a utility pole, Carbondale Twp. police Chief Richard Russian said. The truck spun 360 degrees, and the driver, who was not wearing a seatbelt, was thrown through the window of the driver side door, the chief said.

Crews took the driver, a 42-year-old man, to Geisinger Community Medical Center in Scranton with broken ribs and he is in fair condition, Chief Russian said.

— CLAYTON OVER

**DUPONT**

**Water main break interrupts service**

Pennsylvania American Water Co. crews worked into the night Monday to repair an 8-inch water main break on Main Street, water company spokeswoman Susan Turcmanovich said.

The break occurred Monday morning between Grant and Coolidge streets, she said in an email.

About 30 customers were still without water at 10 p.m. Monday, but the company estimated the repairs would be completed overnight. A tanker for potable water was stationed at Dupont Hose Company, Ms. Turcmanovich said.

— JIM LOCKWOOD AND CLAYTON OVER

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PennDOT District 4 employees prepare to deliver gifts to children. Front from left: Lori Shalkowski, John Arcangelo, Peggy Voldenberg and Marsha Boland. Second row: Jen Borino, Chris Rood, Tom Capitano and John Pivovarnik. Third row: Steve Walsh, Joe Cerra, Dave Lucas, Chuck Davis and Mike Kelly. Employees provided gifts to 68 preschool children from Lackawanna County Head Start, adopted a family of three from Catholic Social Services in Luzerne County and three children from Adopt an Angel Program in Lackawanna County.



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# U.S. sold \$40 billion in weapons in 2015

## Topped list in global market

BY THOM SHANKER  
THE NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — The United States again ranked first in global weapons sales last year, signing deals for about \$40 billion, or half of all agreements in the worldwide arms bazaar, and far ahead of France, the No. 2 weapons dealer with \$15 billion in sales, according to a new congressional study.

Developing nations continued to be the largest buyers of arms in 2015, with Qatar signing deals for more than \$17 billion in weapons last year, followed by Egypt,

which agreed to buy almost \$12 billion in arms, and Saudi Arabia, with over \$8 billion in weapons purchases.

Although global tensions and terrorist threats have shown few signs of diminishing, the total size of the global arms trade dropped to about \$80 billion in 2015 from the 2014 total of \$89 billion, the study found. Developing nations bought \$65 billion in weapons in 2015, substantially lower than the previous year's total of \$79 billion.

The United States and France increased their overseas weapons sales in 2015, as purchases of U.S. weapons grew by about \$4 billion and France's deals increased by over \$9 billion.

The report, "Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 2008-2015," was

*"Concerns over their domestic budget problems have led many purchasing nations to defer or limit the purchase of new major weapon systems."*

Catherine A. Theohary

A national security policy specialist at the Congressional Research Service

prepared by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, a division of the Library of Congress, and delivered to legislators last week. The annual review is considered the most comprehensive assessment of global arms sales available in an unclassified form. The report adjusts for inflation, so the sales totals are comparable year to year.

Constraints on the expansion of foreign weapons sales

are "due, in part, to the weakened state of the global economy," wrote Catherine A. Theohary, a national security policy specialist at the Congressional Research Service and author of the study.

"Concerns over their domestic budget problems have led many purchasing nations to defer or limit the purchase of new major weapon systems," she added. "Some nations have chosen to limit their purchasing to

upgrades of existing systems and to training and support services."

Russia, another dominant power in the global arms market, saw a modest decline in orders for its weapons, dropping to \$11.1 billion in sales from the \$11.2 billion total in 2014. Latin American nations, in particular Venezuela, have become a focus of marketing for Russian arms, the study found.

China reached \$6 billion in weapons sales, up from its 2014 total of more than \$3 billion.

Among arms manufacturers that also are NATO allies, Germany has found success in marketing naval systems to the developing world, while Britain has done the same with warplanes, according to the report.

The most significant U.S. overseas weapons sales last year included new agreements with Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Qatar and South Korea.

Overall, the largest buyers of weapons in the developing world in 2015 were Qatar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Pakistan, Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Iraq. After the United States, France, Russia and China, the study found that the major global arms suppliers were Sweden, Italy, Germany, Turkey, Britain and Israel.

# Texas ponders response to abortion ruling

Supreme Court said two provisions of state's law were unconstitutional.

BY SMANTHA KETTERER  
THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

AUSTIN, Texas — This summer's Supreme Court ruling on abortion could put a wrench in Texas' plans to further restrict the procedure in the spring, experts say.

Whether legislators will err on the side of caution is a different question.

"States like Texas are going to try to continue to push the envelope," said Matthew Wilson, a political science professor at Southern Methodist University. "I don't think legislatures are going to be dissuaded from passing abortion decisions based on existing decisions."

In Whole Woman's Health

v. Hellerstedt, the Supreme Court ruled that two provisions of Texas' law were unconstitutional — one that would have required abortion clinics to have admitting privileges into hospitals, and another that would have made clinics adhere to standards of ambulatory surgical centers.

The court ruled that the restrictions would place an undue burden on women and that the state didn't provide enough evidence that the law would benefit women's health.

Abigail Aiken, a political science professor at the University of Texas at Austin, said that if Texas lawmakers wanted to venture back into similar laws, they'd be walking into a "legal minefield."

"It's pretty clear in the Whole Woman's Health decision that laws that are masquerading as protecting

*"There is still a legitimate state interest in protecting fetal life. Our opponents don't want to talk about that."*

John Seago

Legislative director for Texas Right to Life,

women's health are not going to fly anymore," Ms. Aiken said. "I think that's kind of closed the door on that for now."

Arguments that women's health would benefit from abortion restrictions are going to be more susceptible to legal challenges in the future, said Amanda Allen, state legislative counsel for the Center for Reproductive Rights, the group that sued the state in the Supreme Court case.

"The relationship between the restrictions that Texas wanted to enforce and the actual impact on improving

women's health was zero," Ms. Allen said. "The court is really going to closely scrutinize those types of arguments moving forward."

But the Supreme Court didn't consider one provision of Texas' 2013 law — one that prohibits abortion in Texas after 20 weeks of pregnancy. John Seago, legislative director for Texas Right to Life, said abortion bills that use the basis of "fetal life" as an argument are more likely to be implemented.

"There is still a legitimate state interest in protecting fetal life," Mr. Seago said. "Our opponents don't want

to talk about that."

But so far, lawmakers haven't filed many bills that argue in support of protecting fetal life.

One of the bills filed for the spring would require aborted or miscarried fetal tissue to be buried or cremated. The Center for Reproductive Rights has sued the state on the measure, and a judge will hear the case in early January.

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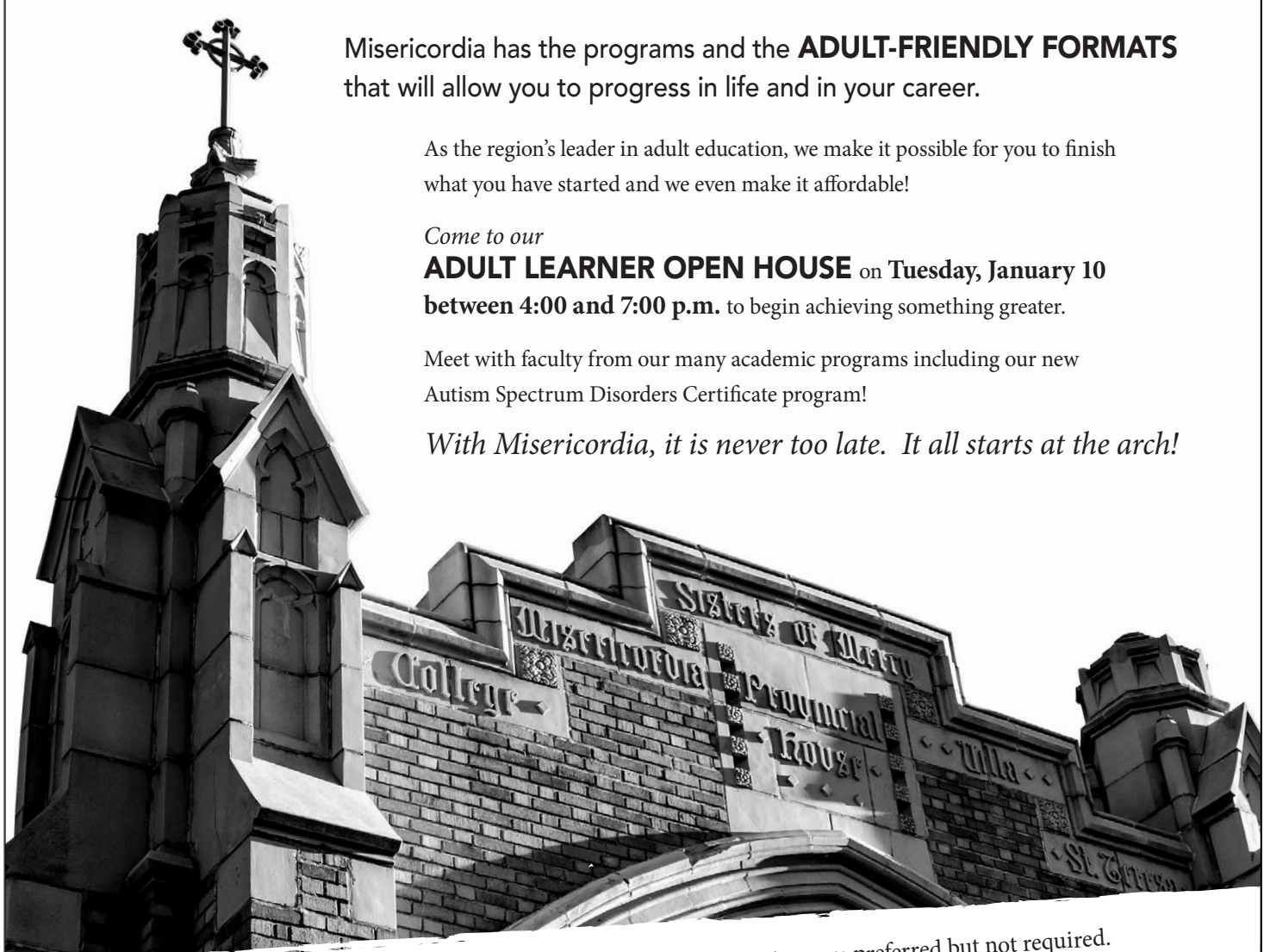
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A8

# Solution in Syria 'a grand bargain'?

## Joint effort likely to shape country's fate

BY PHILIP ISSA  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIRUT — Under different circumstances, Syrian President Bashar Assad's capture of Aleppo would project an aura of invincibility. He has survived nearly six years of revolt.

Instead, it has underscored his dependence on outside powers.

Turkey, Iran, and Russia have tilted recent events in his favor, and it is those three players — and perhaps the

incoming Trump administration — that are now best placed to determine Syria's endgame.

The three nations met in Moscow last week for talks on Syria that pointedly included no Syrians, indicating they prefer to pursue a grand bargain among great powers rather than a domestic settlement and the opposition.

The warming of ties between Russia and Turkey, who back opposing sides of

the civil war, may prove to be a game changer, potentially helping to end a conflict that has confounded the world's top diplomats for more than five years.

Their joint efforts on Syria — there is now talk of a nationwide cease-fire — reflect a desire to establish spheres of influence. Turkey might drop its support for rebels fighting Mr. Assad in exchange for freedom of movement in a border region where its troops are battling

the Islamic State group and trying to curb the advance of U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish forces.

Hassan Hassan, a Syrian analyst at the Washington-based Tahrir Institute, called the Moscow summit "a perfect example of how the Syria solution is now about a grand bargain whereby other countries negotiate on behalf of Syrians."

Syria's army was only able to win the battle of Aleppo with Russian support and the aid of thousands of Iran-backed militiamen from

across the region. Turkey struck a deal with Russia to manage the rebels' surrender when they were on the verge of total defeat.

Turkey was an early backer of the rebels, allowing them to retreat and rearm across its largely porous border. But as Syrian Kurdish forces — answerable neither to Mr. Assad nor to his opponents — have expanded their canton along the border, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has come to view them as a greater threat than Mr. Assad.

Turkey sees the main Syrian Kurdish faction as an extension of the Kurdish insurgency raging in its southwest. It has also grown increasingly concerned about IS following a series of attacks. The Syrian Kurds are battling IS, but Turkey describes both as "terrorists" who must be eliminated.

In August, Turkish troops and allied Syrian forces poured across the border, and in the following weeks they drove IS from its last strongholds along the frontier and halted the Kurdish advance.

## Replacing health law vexing to the GOP

Different factions have different ideas on the issue.

BY RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Republicans are united on repealing President Barack Obama's health care law, but ideologically and practically speaking,

they're in different camps over replacing it. Getting the factions together won't be easy.

Some Republicans would revise and rebrand "Obamacare," junking unpopular provisions like its requirement that most Americans carry health insurance, while preserving well-liked parts. Others would rip up the Affordable Care Act, or ACA, and not replace it.

President-elect Donald Trump and Republican congressional leaders will have to unite the groups on complicated changes affecting the financial and physical well-being of millions of people. For some constituents in fragile health, it's literally a life-and-death debate.

Republicans have "a really narrow path," says Grace-Marie Turner of the Galen Institute, a free-market health care research organization. "They've got to deal with the politics of this, they've got to make sure they come up with good policy, and they also have process challenges."

Success is not guaranteed, and Republicans may come to regret that their party defined itself as totally opposed to "Obamacare."

Yet House Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady seems unfazed by the challenge. "It's like tax reform," says Mr. Brady, R-Texas, explaining that many pieces will be pulled together. "Unlike Obamacare, which ripped up the individual market, this will be done deliberately, in an appropriate timetable."

Republicans say they will move quickly to repeal the ACA, while suspending the effective date to allow them to craft a replacement.

Many Republicans may quietly be in this contingent, but fear being accused of promoting "Obamacare-lite."

They'd strip out some of the ACA's taxes and requirements. The unpopular "individual mandate" to carry health insurance or risk fines could be replaced with other persuasion short of a government dictate. Rules on insurers would be loosened.

But popular provisions such as protecting those with pre-existing health conditions would be retained in some form, as well as financial assistance for low- and moderate-income people.



MICHAEL CASEY / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Richard Higgins, whose family's well water has been contaminated by a suspected carcinogen from a Dartmouth dump site, looks down at one of many test wells installed to monitor the groundwater in Hanover, N.H. Dartmouth College said it has been cleaning up contamination where scientists dumped carcasses of lab animals in the 1960s and 1970s.

## CONTAMINATED | Groundwater pollution from dead Ivy League lab mice worries neighborhood.

BY MICHAEL CASEY  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

HANOVER, N.H. — Neighbors of Dartmouth College property where for years the Ivy League school disposed of mice and other small animals used in science experiments say they fear pollution from the site has contaminated their groundwater and they worry the school hasn't been completely upfront with them.

The site has contaminated the well water of at least one family, that of Richard and Debbie Higgins, who blame a variety of health problems on it, including rashes, hair and skin loss and dizziness. Even their dogs were not spared, they say, with one urinating blood and another vomiting.

"We have been drinking the water for years and we had no idea, absolutely no idea," Ms. Higgins said.

Few nearby residents even knew the half-acre plot on the college's Rennie Farm was used from the 1960s until 1978 to dump carcasses from "tracer experiments," in which scientists used radioactive compounds to see how things moved through life systems. A nearby site also contained remains of human cadavers and stillborn fetuses used in medical classes.

The obscurity of the fenced site changed in 2011, when Dartmouth chose to clean it up, removing 40 tons of carcasses and soil from scores of unlined pits that were legal at the time they were dug. That led to the discovery of hazardous waste and low-level radioactive materials and eventually evidence that at least one chemical used in the animal experiments, the suspected carcinogen 1,4-dioxane, had leaked into the groundwater.

It was initially found at 50 times the state standard of 3 parts per billion on the site and more recently as high as 600 parts per billion in the ground. The chemical has been linked to eye, nose and throat irritation and, in long-term exposure, to liver and kidney damage, according to



MICHAEL CASEY / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Debbie and Richard Higgins, whose well water has been contaminated by a suspected carcinogen from a Dartmouth dump site, look at a map on their kitchen table in Hanover, N.H., which shows where the contamination has spread.

"We have been drinking the water for years and we had no idea, absolutely no idea."

Debbie Higgins

Resident whose well water is contaminated

the Environmental Protection Agency.

The 1,4-dioxane was eventually found to have migrated off the site and contaminated the Higginses' well across the street, about 800 feet from the site — at twice the state standard. They learned in September 2015 that their well was polluted, and now depend on bottled water supplied by Dartmouth for cooking and drinking.

The news has rattled the semi-rural neighborhood, sparking anger and fear among dozens of homeowners who worry the plume will reach their own wells and damage their property values. Many contend Dartmouth was too slow to respond once it found the contamination and has been reluctant to provide full details of what was on the site — something the college denies.

## Japanese PM in Hawaii for memorial visit

### He will not apologize for attack, spokesman says

BY BRIAN SKOLOFF

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe laid wreaths at various cemeteries and memorials Monday ahead of a visit to the site of the 1941 bombing that plunged the United States into World War II.

Mr. Abe landed at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam and then headed to National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, where he laid a wreath. He stood for a moment of silence at the cemetery near downtown

Honolulu, which is known as Punchbowl.

He later visited a nearby memorial for nine boys and men who died when a U.S. Navy submarine collided with their Japanese fishing vessel in 2001. At the Ehime Maru Memorial, he again laid a wreath and bowed his head.

Today, he'll be the first Japanese prime minister to visit the memorial that honors sailors and Marines killed in the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Japan's former leader Shigeru Yoshida went to

Pearl Harbor six years after the country's World War II surrender, but that was before the USS Arizona Memorial was built. Mr. Yoshida arrived at Pearl Harbor in 1951, shortly after requesting a courtesy visit to the office of Adm. Arthur W.R. Radford, commander of the U.S. Pacific fleet. The office overlooked Pearl Harbor, offering a direct view of the attack site.

The memorial will be closed to the public today when Mr. Abe visits the his-

toric site, joined by President Barack Obama, who is vacationing in Hawaii with his family.

The importance of the visit may be mostly symbolic for two countries that, in a remarkable transformation, have grown into close allies in the decades since they faced off in brutal conflict. At the same time, it's significant that it took more than 70 years for U.S.-Japanese relations to get to this point.

Mr. Abe won't apologize for Japan's attack when he visits, a government spokesman said earlier this month.



MARCO GARCIA / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe arrives at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on Monday in Honolulu.





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OUR OPINION

# Safety function of government

Lackawanna County Commissioner Lauren Cummings apparently thinks her job is to scold her constituents for their woeful irresponsibility — supposed character flaws that drive up the costs of wretched government.

Several weeks ago the tea party Republican claimed credit for an ordinance that would have tripled fees for assessment appeals as a means to discourage property owners from filing them. Ms. Cummings scolded appellants for supposedly passing on higher costs to those good property owners who don't challenge unfair assessments. This, after Ms. Cummings herself has refused to consider reassessing property values for the first time since 1968 — a longtime failure of responsibility by politicians such as herself, which is the fundamental reason that so many residents file appeals in the first place.

Then, last week, Ms. Cummings voted against pedestrian safety. She voted "no" on a county allocation of \$75,000 to enable the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority to secure a \$700,000 state grant. That money will be used to improve safety along the authority's Lackawanna River Heritage Trail.

About 300,000 people walk, run and bike along portions of the trail, and that number is certain to increase as trail development continues. The upgrade project is for eight places in Scranton where the trail intersects with busy roads.

Scranton Police Chief Carl Graziano told the commissioners that the lack of controlled crossings strains police resources and creates dangerous conditions.

But what does he know? According to Ms. Cummings, the cost of creating safe conditions is unfair to the government. The problem isn't the physical facts on the ground, it's a widespread lack of personal responsibility.

"This is just more money being spent for someone to cross the road. If people don't know how to cross the road, I don't know what's happening to this society when we actually have to hold them by the hand and make them safe to cross the road."

Sure, there might be some blind corners, or kids on the trail who run into roadways, or slow-moving older walkers, but what's that compared with the costs of a well-marked crosswalk and road signs?

Perhaps she is right. Think how much money the government would save if only they didn't have to put flashing lights on school buses, expensive traffic signals at intersections and flashing lights and bells at railroad crossings.

Actually, of course, public safety is a core government function. Ms. Cummings should cross the ideological road to accept that responsibility.

# Warrant by supposition

The debate about the degree to which FBI Director James Comey adversely affected Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton's campaign likely will go on long after President-elect Donald Trump leaves office.

Mr. Comey entered uncharted waters 11 days before the presidential election when he informed Congress that the FBI was examining emails on a laptop owned by Anthony Weiner, estranged husband of Huma Abedin, a confidante of Mrs. Clinton. That raised anew the prospect that the FBI had reopened an investigation into Mrs. Clinton's use of a private email server as secretary of state, which Mr. Comey had, in effect, closed by saying that there were no grounds for any criminal charge.

Two days before the election Mr. Comey acknowledged that the new inquiry had come to nothing, but by that time millions of people already had voted through early-voting systems in their states.

Last week, a federal judge unsealed documents underlying Mr. Comey's actions. They reveal a fishing expedition by the FBI and blithe approval by a federal magistrate of a search warrant based only on broad supposition as probable cause.

Instead, the emails proved to be mostly routine correspondence between Mrs. Clinton and Ms. Abedin — evidence more so of the FBI's inappropriate assertion of itself into an election rather than of any wayward conduct by either of the two women.

Mr. Comey has much to answer for in this case. Now, it should stand as a warning to judges to demand true probable cause before suspending individuals' privacy.



YOUR OPINION

### Anti-education pick

Editor: President-elect Donald Trump has every right to pick his Cabinet. He won with a campaign based on racism, lies and ignorance so it should surprise no one as he picks people similar to him to run our government.

One pick, however, really stands out. Betsy DeVos has never been a teacher, coach, principal, or school district administrator. She has never been elected to a school board and never worked for a state or federal department of education. Based on that résumé, she is unprepared to lead the U.S. Department of Education as secretary.

So, why was she picked? Maybe because she not only pushed for expensive charter schools to replace traditional public schools, but wanted them unregulated in Michigan. Even without regulations, Michigan's charter schools do poorly when compared to its traditional public schools. Maybe she got the nod because she pushed for school vouchers, an expensive, controversial gimmick that draws money away from public schools.

Mr. Trump wants to spend \$20 billion on vouchers for city residents, with nothing for rural kids.

Or was Mrs. DeVos selected because she and her husband donated millions to Republican Party candidates this year? That seems to be the same type of pay-to-play deal Mr. Trump used to criticize Hillary Clinton.

The Republicans pro-business agenda is clear. People like Mr. Trump and Mrs. DeVos unapologetically want to kill our nation's public schools with their overpaid, unionized teachers to make room for for-profit schools. There are billions to be made by corporations in this if they educate only some of the nation's children. So what if most kids — rural kids, those affected by poverty, minority populations and kids with disabilities — are left behind? That's just the cost of doing business, right?

Is this the deal Trump supporters wanted?

JOSEPH ROGAN  
EYNON

### Conspiracy concern

Editor: I am not usually a conspiracy theorist, but I admit to a suspicious nature concerning the alleged Russian hacking and involvement in the presidential election.

In baseball, when a third-base coach signals to a batter to bunt in a suicide-squeeze situation, there is a designated move for the batter to make to acknowledge he has received the sign and is on board.

So, let's just say the Russians and Donald Trump's presidential campaign somehow decided to do a deal to hack into the Democratic National Committee's web site and pass the results to someone who would make anything embarrassing public, say Wikileaks.

So, the signal could have been passed from Russian hackers to the Trump campaign, perhaps through Paul Manafort, who at the time was Trump's campaign manager and who was revealed to have had done millions of dollars in political consulting work for the exiled former president of Ukraine. That man, coincidentally, was given safe haven in Russia by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The return signal, the offer from Russia had been received, could have come in any specific remark by Trump, perhaps the one that urged Russia to find the alleged 30,000 missing Hillary Clinton emails, or even in a statement made with specific wording at a debate.

The deal was then completed, Trump had received the signal from the Kremlin and his specific response gave Russians the go-ahead, so he was on board.

It's a long shot, I know, but just suppose...

JOE MIEGOC  
CARBONDALE

### Fake news outlet

Editor: Addressing the issue of fake news, here's a few new items:

■ President-elect Donald Trump claims he would have won the popular vote, too, if the Russian vote had been counted.

■ Georgia and Florida residents have been surprised to learn the swamp the president-elect really plans to drain is really the Okfenokee.

■ The president-elect is too busy taking victory laps to receive daily national security briefings. Instead, he will rely on exchanges of early morning tweets with his old friend, Russian President Vladimir Putin.

■ Trump proves he is smarter than the generals by naming retired ones to top positions in his administration. He says he wants to show them his big brain personally and claims it's huge.

■ He also offers 10 percent discounts to his high-end resorts and hotels for all men who are either unemployed or underemployed. Proof they voted for Trump is required for the discounts.

Well, at least I hope they are fake stories.

JERRY DIPASQUALE  
PECKVILLE

### Bad fracking rap

Editor: A Dec. 14 editorial ("EPA report defines issue") fails to provide readers with accurate, fact-based information regarding Pennsylvania's strong and effective natural gas regulations. Readers deserve the facts.

First, the Environmental Protection Agency report indicates that hydraulic fracturing, a tightly regulated 60 year-old technology that's helped enable America's historic energy revolution, does not threaten our drinking water resources. Second, here in Pennsylvania, natural gas production and over-

all safety continues to progress. In 2015, for example, the commonwealth produced a record amount of clean natural gas without a single confirmed case of impacted drinking water supplies, according to the Department of Environmental Protection.

In fact, top Obama administration officials have confirmed that the process of hydraulic fracturing is a safe, proven technology that's leading to a healthier environment and stronger economy. U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz said in 2013 that there has not been "any evidence of fracking, per se, contaminating groundwater" and EPA administrator Gina McCarthy confirmed that "responsible development of natural gas is an important part of our work to curb climate change."

Our industry is absolutely focused on environmental, worker and community safety — and we support strong, common-sense regulations. Despite claims attempting to suggest otherwise, Pennsylvania's natural gas development-related regulations are some of the nation's tightest. Third-party and independent groups such as the State Review of Oil and Natural Gas Environmental Regulations — a nonprofit environmental review organization — tout our strong and effective regulations.

As Pennsylvania continues to be a leader in America's energy revolution — and as our elected officials debate our energy future — let's remember to stick to the science and the facts.

ERICA CLAYTON WRIGHT  
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# Building with purpose

SHENZHEN, China — While Donald Trump has been deciding whether to go *mano a mano* with China's leaders, I've been traveling from Beijing to Shanghai to this southern city, with a stop at China's technology capital in Shenzhen.



**TRUDY RUBIN**  
*Commentary*

I've seen an infrastructure network of bullet trains, glistening new rail stations and airports — all of them with clean toilets — that Americans can only dream of.

Trump has promised to produce an infrastructure bonanza, but we have no idea what he will deliver. According to a June study by the McKinsey Global Institute, infrastructure investment has fallen in 10 major economies, including the United States, since the 2008 financial crisis, while China is building like crazy.

China spends more on economic infrastructure annually than North America and Western Europe combined," the report said.

The massive Beijing South Railway Station, built in 2008, is bullet-train only with hundreds of people seated in an enormous waiting room. Somehow the crowds are amazingly orderly, surrounded by neon billboards and all manner of eateries, with a busy Starbucks at one end. The 909-mile trip from Beijing to Shanghai takes five hours, with plush red seats and young women attendants wheeling service carts with food down the aisles.

Shanghai itself is a massive infrastructure project. When I first visited in 1986, the Pudong district — east of the Huangpu River and across from the historic city center — was little more than a marsh, and Shanghai was a city of bicycles with hardly any cars. Today, Pudong has morphed into China's financial center and looks like New York on steroids, with elegant high-rises lit up in neon at night in bright colors as a backdrop to the river.

Shanghai's main interna-

vincial government spending, in ways that will never happen in the United States. According to Bloomberg, China spent more than \$10.8 trillion in infrastructure in the last decade alone. Government and foreign investment, bonds, local taxes, and vehicle purchase taxes helped pay for construction. China's completed national expressway network is almost all toll, with a nationwide E-Z pass-type system.

The Chinese infrastructure splurge was meant in part to offset weak economic growth. Some studies argue that much of it may not have been cost-effective. Yet as I travel through China's train stations and airports, there seems to be a lesson here.

Perhaps the Chinese government has built overcapacity (for now). Perhaps money was wasted. But attractive train stations and airports, along with decent roads, help Chinese travel in comfort and safety, help businesses grow, and convince ordinary citizens their country is on the right track. Riding a bullet train smoothly from Beijing to Shanghai makes me cringe at the creaky shaky Amtrak Acela Express. Passing quickly through security at Shanghai's airport makes me wonder why lines at Kennedy or Philadelphia move so slowly. Visiting spotless rest rooms makes me despair over the crummy bathrooms at just about every American train station I pass through.

We must do better, for American morale and to remain a global leader. And doing better will require a coherent plan from the White House, not just helter-skelter private projects.

Over to you, President-elect Trump.

**TRUDY RUBIN** is a columnist for The Philadelphia Inquirer. [trubin@phillynews.com](mailto:trubin@phillynews.com).

### TOMORROW'S COLUMNISTS

Richard Cohen  
David Brooks

# Saving key to college

BY TIMOTHY A. REESE  
GUEST COLUMNIST

College costs too much for too many, and the price continues to rise.

To meet those costs many Pennsylvanians are forced to choose between thousands of dollars of debt, or the harsh realities of never achieving their dream of higher education.

Today, college graduates leave school with more debt than ever. There has been a tremendous increase in those who carry student debt compared with the previous generation. In 1993 less than 1 percent of new four-year graduates had loans. As of 2015, 68 percent of our graduates had college loans.

The problem is especially acute when considering the average cost of published tuition and fee prices between 2011-2012 and 2016-2017 rose by 9 percent in the public four-year sector, by 11 percent at public two-year colleges and by 13 percent at private non-profit four-year institutions, after adjusting for inflation, according to the College Board. In fact, Pennsylvania has the fifth-highest tuition costs in the country, according to the CollegeCalc's website.

Sadly according to the Institute for College Access and Success, Pennsylvania students face an average loan debt of \$34,798—the second-highest in the country; 71 percent of the state's graduates carry some debt.

But it doesn't have to be that way. The Pennsylvania Treasury offers two 529 college savings plans that allow residents to save for their choice of higher education for as little as \$15 a month. The plans grow tax-free and when used for qualified higher education expenses, such as tuition, room and board, mandatory fees and textbooks, are tax-exempt.

Both provide flexibility to pay for college expenses at most higher education institutions across the country, be they colleges, trade schools or vocational options. The primary difference between the plans is the way savings grow.

The PA 529 Guaranteed Savings Plan (GSP) is a lower-risk plan in which savings help keep pace with the rising costs of tuition without worrying about the volatility of the stock market. The PA 529 Investment Plan features low fees and more than a dozen conservative and aggressive investment options.

Both plans are a good investment. An almost record \$467 million was contributed on behalf of 207,000 beneficiaries saving for higher education with the PA 529 College Savings Program.

Significantly, families who used their PA 529 GSP accounts for higher education collectively gained \$58

million in growth by saving in the plan in the last fiscal year and almost \$548 million since the plan's inception, a nearly 43 percent cumulative growth.

The GSP fund is actuarially funded at slightly more than 116 percent as of September 30.

Families taking withdrawals this year from the PA 529 IP plan had collective gains of \$26 million and \$106 million since the plan's inception.

Every dollar saved in these plans is a dollar that doesn't need to be borrowed to pay for higher education. In addition, when you save for college, the interest works for you.

When you borrow for higher education, interest works

*"Families ... collectively gained \$58 million in growth by saving in the plan in the last fiscal year."*



**REESE**  
Timothy Reese  
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against you. Ultimately, by relying on loans to fund education instead of saving, the total out-of-pocket cost could be more than double.

The choice is clear: Saving even a small amount for higher education is a sound strategy—save as much as you can within your means. Higher education is a great investment. Over a lifetime, the gap in earnings potential between a high school diploma and a higher education degree is more than \$1 million.

Inspire big dreams by opening or contributing to a Pennsylvania 529 College Savings Program account for your children, grandchildren or another future student. Our plans are simply one of the best ways Pennsylvanians can save for whatever their choice of higher education might be — college, vocational or trade school. By doing so, your gift can transform lives and shape futures in profoundly positive ways.

To learn more or contribute to or open a PA 529 account, visit [www.PA529.com](http://www.PA529.com) or call (800) 440-4000.

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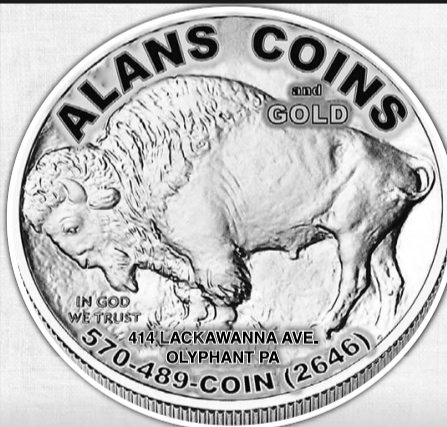
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# Tech for mental health

BY BRADLEY D. STEIN  
GUEST COLUMNIST

New modes of capturing and sharing health data already have begun to transform the way health care providers practice medicine in this country: One such initiative is the "learning" health-care system, a symbiotic relationship in which practice informs research and research informs practice.

The conversation about learning health care systems has mostly been restricted to the realm of physical health care. But the same budding promise of a learning health care system exists in the realm of behavioral health care and the tools are in place to make it happen.

Better capturing and sharing the vast amounts of health data generated each year through behavioral health research and clinical practice can lead to the creation of a behavioral health care system that continuously improves — or, in other words, that "learns" from its successes and failures — and that is able to harness technologies to improve care in ways never before possible.

When providers use new electronic technologies to log

observations, treatment decisions or lessons learned from routine clinical care, they at the same time can be adding to and improving the knowledge base. Providers can now have immediate access to the knowledge base while they are caring for patients.

The thinking behind this concept was that leveraging technological advances to make better use of the best available data would help rein in costs and improve quality and safety. This makes sense whether the health care is physical or behavioral.

Imagine a behavioral health care system in which every patient's experience can contribute to the overall knowledge of how best to treat behavioral health disorders; in which local innovations are shared, and in which evidence will continually improve the understanding of the pros and cons of different approaches to diagnosing, treating and preventing behavioral health problems. Imagine a system in which providers can at once contribute to the evidence base and benefit from it at the point of care. This is the potential of a learning

behavioral health care system.

A transformation to such a system is within reach. Not only is there a road map for how to proceed, but the technologies needed to improve care are accessible. Passage of the Affordable Care Act and the expansion of the federal Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act have paved the way for the delivery of behavioral health services on par with general medical services.

Building a learning behavioral health system will require the buy-in of researchers and providers. A successful transformation will depend on building consensus around common metrics for high-quality care, relevant outcomes and contextual factors, fostering partnerships between researchers, providers and clinical and community settings, creating a "data commons" to pool information and designing tools that allow for real-time feedback.

Expanding the discussion to focus on behavioral, as well as physical health care is a worthy goal, one that has the potential to enhance the delivery of behavioral health care, and ultimately improve outcomes, for millions of Americans.

**BRADLEY STEIN** is a senior scientist at the RAND Corp. and an adjunct professor of psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh.

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# After Clinton, what's next for women?

## Successors study why she lost

**BY CATHEEN DECKER**  
LOS ANGELES TIMES

WASHINGTON — The first woman president was supposed to make history by accumulating such deep experience that few could deny her ability to serve as commander in chief.

Hillary Clinton did that, and lost. Now women politicians and those working to elect them — Democrats and Republicans alike — are sifting through her defeat to understand what her loss means for future women candidates and to find a future path.

Their effort is complicated by the very things that made Mrs. Clinton's nomination both inevitable and troubled: her singular standing and unique negatives.

While the number of women elected to office has grown markedly over the decades, polling shows that in a race for the White House they still must demonstrate they are capable of commanding the government and in particular the U.S. military, a masculine institution despite its

### ANALYSIS

own gender strides.

That inevitably conflicts with another voter demand: for a fresh face — like that, say, of President Barack Obama, who defeated Mrs. Clinton in the Democratic primaries in 2008 in part because he appealed to voters' desire for change.

"You can't get those qualifications, get that resume, while also being able to present yourself as a change candidate," said Kelly Dittmar, an assistant professor of political science at Rutgers University-Camden and a scholar at Rutgers' Center for American Women and Politics.

"Men aren't held to the same standard of proving their credentials."

Mrs. Clinton's experience won her plaudits from voters who throughout the campaign saw her as best prepared to assume the presidency. That may have helped her win the popular vote, but she lost the electoral college to a man who had never before run for elective office or served in government.

Most damaging, she was unable to fully benefit from the advantages that usually flow to a woman candidate — being seen by voters as more honest, trustworthy and both



OLIVIER DOULJERY / ABACA PRESS / TNS  
**Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton delivers her concession speech Nov. 9 from the New Yorker Hotel's Grand Ballroom in New York City.**

a unifier and the one who most cares about constituents' concerns.

That has left a puzzle: How much of the loss reflected Mrs. Clinton's particular vulnerabilities, how much involved opposition that any future woman candidate may face?

Unquestionably, Mrs. Clinton faced unique problems: and her decision as secretary of state to use a private email server, which led to extended controversies; media coverage of separate Democratic emails now believed to have

been hacked by Russian operatives; and a relentless line of assault casting her as corrupt, first by primary challenger Bernie Sanders and later by Donald Trump.

She also faced a unique opponent, Mr. Trump, whose image of swashbuckling masculinity shaped the campaign more than any of Mrs. Clinton's milder efforts to use gender to her advantage.

Mrs. Clinton's supporters have been left counting smaller victories, like the fact that she won more votes than any candidate ever, apart from Mr. Obama.

They are also casting Mrs. Clinton's reach for history as part of a decadeslong effort that, by definition, includes stumbles.

"It's been a struggle, it's always been a struggle — that's the nature of the fight for equality," said Sen. Barbara Boxer, the California Democrat who was elected in 1992, a year when the number of women senators tripled.

"The fact that we got to have first woman nominee of a major party is an enormous breakthrough, and we'll build on that," she said.

But others suggest that this year's campaign portends trouble for whichever women come next.

At a recent panel discus-

sion at Harvard's Institute of Politics, which included representatives from both campaigns, Mr. Trump's manager, Kellyanne Conway, argued that the country was ready to elect a woman president — just not this particular woman in a year in which voters demanded change.

"On gender, it wasn't a hypothetical," she said of voters' options. "It was Hillary. So it's not just a woman; it's one that people had lived with for quite a while."

That drew a pained response from Mrs. Clinton's media strategist, Mandy Grunwald, who suggested that Mrs. Clinton had rare standing to be seen as a potential commander in chief, given her tenure as secretary of state, U.S. senator from New York and as a first lady deeply involved in policy matters.

"You may think the coun-

try is ready for a woman, any old woman, just a different one. There are very few people who will ever meet that test," Mrs. Grunwald said, adding: "I hope I am wrong."

Mrs. Clinton's campaign was a real-world test that shined a bright light at some of the downsides of women's candidacies.

The degree of punishment she took from voters concerned about perceived ethical lapses was one of those. Throughout the campaign, prompted by broadsides from Mr. Sanders and Mr. Trump, voters were sharply critical of Mrs. Clinton when it came to honesty and truthfulness.

The virulence of their sentiments suggested that women, usually held in high regard on those fronts, suffer more than male candidates when seen as not meeting that standard.

# Obama vs. Trump: Who would've won

Dispute erupts over outcome if contest was different.

**BY JOSH LEDERMAN**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

HONOLULU — In an alternate universe in which President Barack Obama ran for a third term against Donald Trump, who would have won?

No surprise: The president and the president-elect disagree.



CAROLYN KASTER / ASSOCIATED PRESS  
**President Barack Obama speaks during an event Sunday in Hawaii.**



EVAN VUCCI / ASSOCIATED PRESS  
**President-elect Donald Trump speaks during a rally Dec. 15 in Hershey.**

failed to secure a majority of electoral votes despite winning the popular vote by millions.

Yet Mr. Obama said he's spoken to people across the U.S. who have told him the direction he pursued "is the right one," a sentiment he said extends even to some people "who disagreed with me." He suggested Democrats' failure in the election may have stemmed from the prevailing assumption that Mrs. Clinton's victory was all but assured.

"If you think you're winning, then you have a tendency — just like in sports — maybe to play it safer," Mr. Obama said.

Though Mr. Obama railed against Mr. Trump during the campaign, he's largely held his tongue since the Republican's

Election Day victory, in large part to ensure a smooth transition of power. He and Mr. Trump have spoken regularly by phone, and Mr. Trump has praised his predecessor for the graciousness with which he's handled the process.

But in recent days, points of tension between their two teams have started to emerge, driven by Mr. Trump's picks of Cabinet nominees who have vowed to dismantle much of what Mr. Obama has accomplished. The Obama administration has also been dismayed by requests from Mr. Trump's team for information they fear could be used to try to identify and then eliminate bureaucrats who have worked on Obama priorities like climate change

and women's rights overseas.

Mr. Obama, who is vacationing in Hawaii, was prohibited by the Constitution's 22nd Amendment from running for a third term. But Mr. Obama has said even if there weren't term limits for presidents, he believes it's important for the country to have a change of leadership after eight years. He's also suggested his wife, first lady Michelle Obama, would have had little patience for a third term in the White House.

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**HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL**

# Western Wayne takes tournament title

*Rovinsky records double-double in win over Foresters in championship.*

**BY JOBY FAWCETT**  
 STAFF WRITER

FOREST CITY — Players for Western Wayne couldn't help but sport broad smiles as they accepted their medals.

Each one as happy as the next, but few as thrilled as their coaches.

Playing with tenacious defensive intensity while executing on offense in critical spots, the Wildcats defeated host Forest City, 50-37, on

Monday to capture the championship of the Forest City Rotary Tournament.

"This is very special," said Luke Pike, a senior who had 24 points in two wins, including six in the title game, and earned all-tournament honors. "We have been trying real hard to get better and have been working hard in practice.

"It feels great to be tournament champs."

Western Wayne, under the guidance of former Old Forge coach Al Semenza, who in his first season with the program brought in several of his former players to

complete his staff, including former Riverside head coach Andrew Bennie, improved to 4-2 overall.

In the previous six seasons, the Wildcats won eight of 137 games and had six straight seasons with at least 20 losses.

Despite those numbers, this group played with confidence in the title game after losing in the final of the Cal King Tournament last week.

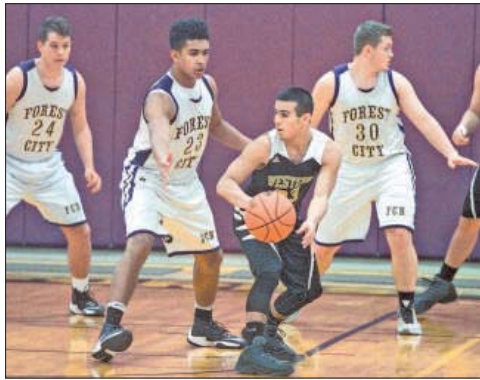
Zach Rovinsky, a 6-foot-3 freshman who proved to be a rising star in the paint, had a game-high 21 points and 10 rebounds. Sophomore Dahl-

ton Frisbee, the tournament most valuable player, had 11 points and three steals, adding to his 12 points in a semifinal win over Mountain View.

"We really wanted to win," Frisbee said. "We knew the defense was the main focus. We had to hold them under 40 points and then we knew we could have a chance. Offensively, we had to make plays and we did."

Forest City (1-5) got off to a fast start as Kolby Rotella and Jared Paulin, who also earned an all-tournament spot, hit back-to-back 3-pointers in the opening two minutes.

Please see **WILDCATS**, Page B4



JAKE DANNA STEVENS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Western Wayne's Kobe Sauter makes a pass against Forest City during the Forest City Rotary Tournament.

**LYNETT TOURNAMENT**

# SOLACE ON, OFF COURT

Brown overcomes loss with help of family, friends



BUTCH COMEGYS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Scranton Prep's Jake Brown has strong support from his family and teammates as he works through the death of his mom, Meg.

*Scranton Prep senior shared 17 years with his mom before her death in the spring.*

**BY JOBY FAWCETT**  
 STAFF WRITER

Jake Brown knows things will never be the same.

When he comes home from school, her smile and robust laugh don't fill the room any more, but are a pleasant memory.

He looks up into the stands during basketball games and no longer sees his mom, Meg.

He misses her with all of his heart.

And is grateful to have had her in his life.

Her tragic sudden death in the spring dealt a crushing emotional blow to the Scranton Prep senior. He fights through the sadness with the strength he draws from the love in his

Please see **PREP**, Page B3



**Today's opening round games**  
 At Lackawanna College Student Union

| Girls  | Boys                                   |
|--|--|
| Scranton Prep vs. Abington Heights<br>1 p.m. | Holy Cross vs. Scranton<br>6 p.m.      |
| Dunmore vs. Scranton<br>2:30 p.m.            | Scranton Prep vs. Dunmore<br>7:30 p.m. |

**Inside**

- Senior Nick Maldonato's passion for Dunmore strong. Page B3
- List of past boys and girls Lynett Tournament champions. Page B3

**HS GIRLS BASKETBALL**

# West drops Lady Vikes

*Jefferson scores 31 to lead Invaders over Riverside.*

**BY MARTY MYERS**  
 STAFF WRITER

TAYLOR — For three quarters, West Scranton didn't give Destiny Jefferson much help.

While West's senior standout was keeping the fifth-ranked Invaders close to No. 6 Riverside, the rest of her teammates made just 4 of 28 shots.

But when it was needed, Jefferson's teammates came through in the clutch in the final eight minutes, helping West edge the Lady Vikes, 50-47, in Monday's semifinal in the Taylor Lions Tournament.

"I thought they did a tremendous job stepping up," said Jefferson, who scored 31, had eight rebounds, three blocks and two steals. "They were pressuring me so Tatum (Repshis) our freshman, Neveah (Ross), Raven (Rozina), Nadya (Brown), Kaila (O'Neil), they all stepped up, and that was very big for us."

Prior to the fourth, anyone not named Jefferson was 4 for 28 from the field, and West (5-2) trailed, 34-33.

"I felt it," Jefferson said of her team's increased intensity in the fourth quarter. "Coach (Leo) Ciullo talked to us a little bit, so we had to do what we had to do."

That was a little something from a lot of players.

Ross drilled a 3 off Repshis' feed to start the fourth,

Please see **WEST**, Page B4



JEFFERSON

**HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL**

# QB Cavallaro claims Cesare honors

*Delaware Valley senior broke area record, compiling 2,809 yards passing.*

**BY JOBY FAWCETT**  
 STAFF WRITER

Matt Cavallaro has shown great leadership and poise as the quarterback and the senior class president at Delaware Valley High School.

And after a record-breaking season on the football

field, the Delaware Valley senior received a prestigious honor, which rewards excellence on and off the field.

On Monday, Cavallaro, The Times-Tribune Offensive Player of the Year, earned the 25th annual Fiore Cesare Award and Scholarship at an afternoon luncheon at the Radisson Hotel. It is presented by the Scranton Chapter of Football Officials and Peoples Security Bank.

Abington Heights athlete

Colin McCreary and North Pocono linebacker/fullback Tyler Musgrave were the runners-up.

"It's a great honor," said Cavallaro, who in addition to his excellence on the field, serves as class president, is a member of the National Honor Society and volunteers time to his church and local food bank. "It really reflects on my teammates and our coaches. All the hard work in the off-season and in the season.

"It's just exciting to see the faces and the people that won it in the past, and the people here. It's definitely an honor. There is not much more you can ask as a high school football player."

Cavallaro, who is aiming to play ice hockey in college, is the second recipient of the award from Delaware Valley.

Bryan Schor, who will lead James Madison into the

Please see **CESARE**, Page B3



MICHAEL J. MULLEN / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Matt Cavallaro, left, of Delaware Valley accepts the 25th annual Fiore Cesare award from Marty Boyer, chapter secretary of Scranton PIAA officials, Monday.















ASK THE DOCTORS

## Every home should have first-aid kit

**Q**—Our young son fell off his skateboard recently, and the items my wife and I needed to tend to his cuts and scrapes were scattered throughout the house. Now we want to assemble a home first-aid kit. What should it contain?

**A**—A well-stocked first-aid kit is an important safety feature for every home. And while first-aid kits are available for purchase, you can easily put one together yourself.

Take an afternoon to evaluate your family needs, make a list, then hit your local drugstore.

With a home first-aid kit, you're preparing to deal with three basic types of medical issues — injury, infection and allergy.

Everyday injuries include scrapes, cuts, splinters, burns, sprains and stings. Infections may range from an inflamed wound to fever, a sore throat or the flu. You'll also want to be prepared for common allergic reactions such as the rash from poison oak and poison ivy, and itching and swelling from insect stings.

It's important that if anyone in your family has severe food allergies or a respiratory condition such as asthma, you stock a backup of the appropriate medication. Mark each item with its expiration date and replace as needed. It's a good idea to keep a separate checklist, which will make it easy to know when it's time to replace that inhaler or EpiPen.

So how do you build a first-aid kit?

Start with a container such as a plastic storage tub, a tackle box or a tote bag with separate compartments. It should be easy to open, easy to carry, and have enough room for everything to be organized and recognizable at a glance.

Delegate one compartment for personal items — those allergy medications we talked about or backup doses of any other vital medications your family members may need. You'll also want to include a list of emergency phone numbers.

For a family of four to deal with common emergencies, you should have:

- Two absorbent compress dressings.
- 25 adhesive bandages of assorted sizes.
- One adhesive cloth tape.
- Antibiotic ointment and antiseptic wipes.
- Ibuprofen.
- Acetaminophen.
- An instant cold compress.
- Non-latex gloves.
- Hydrocortisone ointment.
- A pair of scissors and a set of tweezers.
- A 3-inch and a 4-inch roller bandage.
- 10 sterile gauze pads (3 by 3 inches and 4 by 4 inches)
- An oral thermometer that is not glass and does not contain mercury.
- Two triangular bandages.
- A good first-aid instruction booklet. It's also wise to consider a version of this kit for your car.

**ASK THE DOCTORS** is written by Robert Ashley, M.D., Eve Glazier, M.D., and Elizabeth Ko, M.D. Send questions to askthedoctors@mednet.ucla.edu, or write: Ask the Doctors, c/o Media Relations, UCLA Health, 924 Westwood Blvd., Suite 350, Los Angeles, CA, 90095.

# Out of this world greetings planned

Organization wants to say "hello" to distant planets.

BY LISA M. KRIEGER  
 THE MERCURY NEWS

After decades of fruitless scanning the skies for alien messages, scientists say it's time to try a basic rule of etiquette: Say "hello" first.

A new San Francisco-based organization called METI, or Messaging Extra Terrestrial Intelligence, plans to send signals to distant planets, rather than waiting for them to call Earth.

By the end of 2018, the project aims to send some conversation-starters via radio or laser signals to a

rocky planet circling Proxima Centauri, the nearest star other than the sun, and then to more distant destinations, hundreds or thousands of light years away.

It would be the first effort to send powerful, repeated and intentional messages into space, targeting the same stars over months or years.

"If we want to start an exchange over the course of many generations, we want to learn and share information," said Douglas Vakoch, president of METI and former director of Interstellar

Message Composition at the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence Institute in Mountain View, California, known as SETI.

Founded last year, METI will host two workshops next year, one in Paris and the other in St. Louis. It also plans to start raising the \$1 million needed annually to staff and build or borrow a powerful transmitter in a remote location.

Part of the mission will be to figure out how to craft the perfect message to say "Hello."

Like much else in science, the project has turned contro-

versial. Some ask: If aliens are hostile, do we really want them to know where we are?

We shouldn't draw attention to ourselves, say science fiction writer David Brin and theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking.

"We have almost zero idea of whether aliens are likely to be dangerous," physicist Mark Buchanan wrote in the journal Nature Physics.

Other experts say it's worth waiting until we're better conversationalists — and, then, use well-established groups with international consultation.

"Babbling babies are not

always appreciated during adult conversation," said Andrew Fraknoi, chairman of the astronomy department at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills. "Listening and learning is how children become adults, and why not try that for a while?"

Others endorse the effort. "I'd be happy to see this done," said Seth Shostak, senior astronomer with the SETI Institute. "I think there's something to be learned, nothing to be feared, and at least the possibility of discovering something truly revolutionary: We have company nearby."



JIM WILSON / THE NEW YORK TIMES

**Matthew Krummel, a researcher at the University of California, San Francisco, looks at immune cells in organs and tissues in his lab on campus. Dr. Krummel co-published a paper in 1995 showing tumors could be eliminated with the use of immunotherapy drugs, though the side effects for mice sometimes included loss of skin pigmentation.**

# 'We are playing with fire'

An unleashed immune system can attack cancer, and organs

BY MATT RICHEL  
 THE NEW YORK TIMES

As Chuck Peal lay in a Waterbury, Connecticut, emergency room one Sunday in early September, doctors furiously tried to make sense of his symptoms. Peal, 61, appeared to be dying and they were not sure why.

He slipped in and out of consciousness, his blood pressure plummeted, his potassium levels soared and his blood sugar spiked to 10 times the normal level. A doctor suspected a heart attack, but uncertainty left him urgently researching the situation on his phone.

This was not a heart attack. Mr. Peal's body was attacking itself, a severe reaction by his immune system that was a side effect of a seemingly miraculous cancer treatment aimed at saving his life.

In the seven weeks prior, doctors at Yale University had combated Mr. Peal's melanoma with two of the most promising drugs in cancer treatment today. These medicines work by stimulating the immune system to attack cancer as ferociously as it does other threats, like viruses and bacteria.

### Serious risks

Immunotherapy drugs have been hailed as a breakthrough in cancer treatment, attracting billions of research dollars and offering new hope to patients out of options. But as their use grows, doctors are finding that they pose serious risks that stem from the very thing that makes them effective. An unleashed immune system can attack healthy, vital organs, notably the bowel, the liver and the lungs, but also the kidneys, the adrenal and pituitary glands, the pancreas and, in rare cases, the heart.

Doctors at Yale believe immunotherapy is causing a new type of acute-onset diabetes, with at least 17 cases there so far. Mr. Peal's among them. In cancer clin-

ics around the world, and in drug trials, myriad other side effects are showing up. Studies are finding that severe reactions occur nearly 20 percent of the time with certain drugs, and in more than half of patients when some drugs are used in combination.

### Rare side effects

Another recent paper found that 30 percent of patients experienced "interesting, rare or unexpected side effects," with a quarter of reactions described as severe, life-threatening or requiring hospitalization. Some patients have died, including five in recent months in clinical trials of a new immunotherapy drug being tested by Juno Therapeutics Inc.

The upshot, oncologists and immunologists say, is that the medical field must be more vigilant as these drugs soar in popularity. And they say more research is needed into who is likely to have reactions and how to treat them.

"We are playing with fire," said Dr. John Timmerman, an oncologist and immunotherapy researcher at the University of California, Los Angeles, who



ANGEL FRANCO / THE NEW YORK TIMES

**Chuck Peal, who was treated for melanoma with immunotherapy drugs, developed acute-onset diabetes, which doctors believe was an effect of the immunotherapy drugs, hailed as a breakthrough in cancer treatment.**

recently lost a patient to side effects. The woman's immunotherapy drugs had successfully "melted away" her cancer, he said, but some weeks later, she got cold and flu-like symptoms, and died in the emergency room from an inflammatory response that Dr. Timmerman described as "a mass riot, an uprising" of her

immune system.

"We've heard about immunotherapy as God's gift, the chosen elixir, the cure for cancer," he said. "We haven't heard much about the collateral damage."

Despite the warnings, physicians like Dr. Timmerman remain hugely supportive of drugs that are saving the lives of people who would otherwise die. Far better to cope with diabetes, hepatitis or arthritis, the thinking goes, than to die. Most reactions are not nearly so bad and are treatable.

The rub, doctors and researchers say, is that the medical system — from front-line nurses to oncologists to emergency rooms — is too often caught off guard. This is happening for a number of reasons: The drugs are new so many side effects just have not been seen. Symptoms appear at random, sometimes months after treatment, and can initially seem innocuous. Finally, oncologists are trying to treat patients with a combination of two or more immunotherapy drugs, hoping for more effective treatment but sometimes getting amplified risks.



GREGG VIGLIOTTI / THE NEW YORK TIMES

**Dr. Harriet Kluger, a Yale oncologist, at the Smilow Cancer Hospital in New Haven, Conn. Dr. Kluger, along with other doctors at Yale, believe immunotherapy drugs, which have been hailed as a breakthrough in cancer treatment, are also the cause of other potentially life-threatening health risks.**



## Additional obits on Page B10

## Claire N. Fox

December 25, 2016



Thomas LaCapra and fiancée, Kirstin Knee, of Scranton; Holly LaCapra of Waverly Twp.; and Ryan LaCapra, of Waverly Twp.; great-grandson, Evan LaCapra, of Scranton; as well as nieces, nephews and cousins.

In addition to her beloved husband, she was preceded in death by her son, Kevin; and sister, Gloria Cerra.

The funeral will be Thursday from the Carlucci-Golden-DeSantis Funeral Home Inc., 318 E. Drinker St., Dunmore, with Mass of Christian Burial at 11 a.m. in Immaculate Conception Church, Taylor Avenue and East Gibson Street, Scranton. Interment to follow in Cathedral Cemetery, Scranton.

Friends may call Wednesday from 4 to 7 p.m. at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly asks that memorial contributions be made in Claire's name to the IHM Retirement Fund, c/o the IHM Center, 2300 Adams Ave., Scranton, PA 18509.

To offer a condolence or for further information, visit [www.TheDunmoreFuneralHome.com](http://www.TheDunmoreFuneralHome.com).

Surviving are a son, Gary Fox and wife, Lynn, of Waverly Twp.; and daughter, Susan Kolankoski and husband, Robert, of Scranton; grandchildren, Elizabeth Demek, of Scranton; Christopher Fox, of Scranton; Jessie Fox, of Bristol, R.I.; Kathryn Fox, of New York, N.Y.;

## Elizabeth Roche

December 26, 2016



She was preceded in death by 10 siblings.

Elizabeth will be dearly missed by her family and friends.

The funeral will be Thursday from the Albert P. O'Donnell Funeral Home, 2025 Green Ridge St., Dunmore, with a Mass of Christian Burial at 9:30 a.m. at St. Mary of Mount Carmel Church, 322 Chestnut St., Dunmore. Interment, Dunmore Cemetery. Friends may call Wednesday from 5 to 7 p.m. All those attending the funeral are asked to proceed directly to the church on Thursday.

Memorial contributions may be made to Traditional Home Health and Hospice, 113 W. Drinker St., Dunmore, PA 18512.



sister, Catherine Froncek.

The funeral will be Wednesday at 10 a.m. with Mass of Christian Burial at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Archbald. Interment will be private. Viewing hours will be from 9 to 10 on Wednesday at St. Thomas Church, Archbald.

Arrangements are under the care and direction of the Louis M. Margotta Funeral Home.

Visit the funeral home website for online condolences or directions.

## Anthony M. Nardella

December 24, 2016



Anthony M. Nardella of Dunmore, passed away Saturday, Dec. 24, at the Gino J. Merli Veterans Center following an illness. His wife, the former Edith Fango, preceded him in death.

Born in Scranton, he was the son of the late Louis and Angelina DePaldo Nardella. He was a proud Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, earning several medals and commendations. Before his retirement, he was employed as a supermarket manager by Food Fair Produce, and had also worked for the United States Post Office.

Tony was a strong advocate of education. Never having been afforded the opportunity of a formal education for himself, he made sure his children and grandchildren received the best education. He led by example, and at the age of 40 he worked hard and received his GED, an accomplishment he was very proud of.

Tony was a member of the generation very often referred to as the "Greatest Generation." He epitomized that generation, possessing the great values, God, family, strong work ethic and a vision of a better world. He was a member of St. Mary of Mt. Carmel Parish.

Surviving are two sons, Anthony Nardella and wife, Susan, Dunmore and Phila-

## William J. Gilpin

December 24, 2016



William J. Gilpin, 81, of Dunmore, died Saturday in the Dunmore Health Care Center. He was preceded in death by his wife, the former Grace Juliano in 2004, and to whom he was married for 47 years.

Born in Moosic, son of the late Milton and Ann Swantek Gilpin, he was a graduate of Thaddeus Stevens College with a degree in electrical construction. He served in the Army from 1958-1960 as a fourth-grade specialist air defense missile fire control crewman. Additionally, he served in the active Army Reserve Corps for two and a half years. Before retirement, he had been employed by the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport for over 21 years as a maintenance supervisor.

He was a loving and devoted husband who enjoyed traveling with his wife, and also hunting, antique cars and World War II history. He was a member of SS. Anthony and Rocco Parish in Dunmore, as well as the Taurus Club in Scranton.

Surviving are his sister, Shirley Gilpin Anderson, of New Jersey; nieces, nephew and cousins, including his caregivers, Paulette and

## Lucille H. Esagro

December 18, 2016

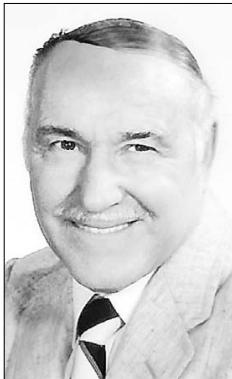
Lucille H. Esagro of North Scranton passed away Sunday, Dec. 18, 2016, at Geisinger Community Medical Center following an illness. She was the widow of Frank Esagro.

Born in Madison Twp., she was the daughter of the late Julius and Pearl Benzeleski Barako. She was a longtime member of Holy Rosary Church, now Mary, Mother of God Parish, also a former member of the Columbus Club and the Zonta Club.

Surviving are two sons, Thomas (Ann) and Frank, Scranton; six grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; a sister, Carol; a brother, Joseph.

She was preceded in death by a daughter, Barbara Pinto; a son, James Esagro.

The funeral will be held Friday, Dec. 30, 2016, from the Solfanelli-Fiorillo Funeral Home Inc., 1030 N. Main Ave., Scranton, with Mass of Christian Burial at 9:30 a.m. in Mary, Mother of God Par-



## Alfred Mursch Jr.

December 24, 2016

Alfred Mursch Jr. passed away following a lengthy illness of multiple myeloma on Saturday, Dec. 24, 2016, at Hospice of the Sacred Heart, surrounded by his family.

Born Jan. 23, 1944, in Scranton, he was the son of the late Alfred Sr. and Mary Krottenthaler Mursch. Al was a 1962 graduate of Scranton Technical High School, a sergeant of the Air Force, having served during the Vietnam Era, stationed at Lockland A.F. Base and Elmondorf A.F. Base in Anchorage, Alaska.

He was an avid motorcyclist and learned how to ride on a 1947 Indian Chief and also a 1940 Chief. Al was a member of the Matchless Owners Club of North America, the Velocette Owners Club of North America, American Motorcyclist Association, the Springfield Indian Motorcycle Club of North America, the Norton Owners Club of North America, the Pocono Crash Test Dummies Motorcycle Club and the Black Diamond Beemers. He also loved fly fishing, especially at the Roaring Brook and Butternut Creek. Before his retirement, he was

employed by Anemostat Products, Scranton Division for 35 years.

Alfred is survived by his sister, Mary Mursch Hendricks and her husband, Paul Hendricks Sr.; nephew, Paul Hendricks Jr.; nieces, Carolyn Diehl and Christine Chippa; and several great-nieces and great-nephews, all of Scranton.

Preceding him in death was his brother, Charles, who passed away at 13 months old.

The family would like to thank Dr. Carl Barcigian and his entire staff, and Dr. Richard Gratz for all the excellent care they provided.

Funeral arrangements will be privately held at the convenience of the family and are entrusted in the care of the Louis J. Rapoch Funeral Home, 420 Church St., Archbald.

For online condolence, visit [RapochFuneralHome.com](http://RapochFuneralHome.com).

## Shirley L. Marks

December 25, 2016

Shirley L. Marks, 80, of Scranton, died Sunday at Linwood Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Her companion, George Knight, died in 1982.

Born in Scranton, daughter of the late Stanley Marks and Hazel Obidinski, she was a member of Embury United Methodist Church and attended West Scranton High School. Before retirement, she was employed by Snyder Cigar.

Shirley enjoyed bingo, family picnics, music, dancing and a good party. Most of all, she enjoyed spending time with her children and grandchildren.

Surviving are two daughters, Robin Vogel and husband, Randy, Durysa; Helen Scanlon and husband, Brian, Pittston; a son, John "Peach" Marks and companion, Arielle Wilczek, Pittston; two sisters, Beverly Syrillo, Moscow; and Judy Keller, Taylor;

## Phyllis P. Fowler

December 26, 2016

Phyllis P. Fowler of Bear Creek Twp. died Monday at the Timber Ridge Healthcare Center.

Born in Oak Creek, Colo., she was the daughter of the late Thurman and Pearl Bills Plew.

Surviving are daughters, Barbara Southward and husband, Roger, Bear Creek Twp.; and Henrietta Graves, Richland, Wash.; numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2016

# Some holiday gifts might not fly



TIM GRUBER / THE NEW YORK TIMES

Kyle Christy flies his DJI Phantom 4 drone in North Saint Paul, Minn., on Friday. Drones may draw scrutiny from airlines depending on the strength of their lithium-ion batteries.

## Virtual reality headsets, drones at mercy of airlines

BY CHRISTINE NEGRONI  
 THE NEW YORK TIMES

The presents have been unwrapped. The batteries have been charged. Chances are, a few of those new gizmos may be designed to make air travel less stressful and more productive.

Even so, when it is time to board the flight home after the holidays, some gifts simply might not fly.

Devices powered by lithium-ion batteries can cause problems, and airlines balk at virtual reality headsets.

Last holiday season, hoverboards went on airlines' own Do Not Fly lists because of

their propensity to catch fire. This year, expect drones to draw scrutiny, depending on the strength of their batteries.

Under the International Civil Aviation Organization's dangerous goods regulations, lithium-ion batteries with power greater than 100 watt-hours are not allowed on passenger aircraft without advance approval of the airline. Batteries with power greater than 160 watt-hours are not allowed in passenger carry-on or checked baggage.

Kyle Christy, 30, an auto repair manager with the state of Minnesota, said he often

flies with the drones he uses for his freelance job as an aerial photographer.

"A lot of drone batteries are based off milliamp hours," he said. "The airlines don't give the formulas to crunch the numbers to see if they fall under the proper watt-hour restrictions."

With their phones, tablets, cameras and laptops, many passengers carry several battery-powered devices onboard. On a wide-body jet, that could add up to more than 1,000 batteries in the passenger cabin. And sometimes they do catch fire.

That's why when the Sam-

sung Galaxy Note 7 smartphone was recalled in September, the U.S. Department of Transportation banned them from all flights.

Airline websites typically offer detailed lists of banned, restricted or dangerous goods. But it is difficult to keep up with the marketplace, as with this year's hot-selling virtual reality headsets.

Wearing the goggles and ear-covering headphones can make users oblivious to their surroundings. This is why some airlines have begun prohibiting their use during taxi, takeoff and landing.



WILSON RING / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Organizers want to make the Union Arena in Woodstock, Vt., the nation's first skating rink to go "net zero" on energy, meaning no costs spent on electricity or heating fuel.

## Putting a chill on energy costs

Ice rinks across the country look for ways to lower — or eliminate — power bills.

BY WILSON RING  
 ASSOCIATED PRESS

WOODSTOCK, Vt. — A small community skating rink that was once in danger of folding is working on a long-term plan to eliminate its biggest single expense — its energy bill — by becoming what its leaders believe would be the country's first with no costs for electricity or heating fuel.

The plan includes upgrading the existing equipment at Woodstock's Union Arena for efficiency, finding ways to reuse some of the heat generated by the power-sucking compressors used to make ice and, finally, buying solar panels that will be erected elsewhere.

While the long-term plan to eliminate the power bill, making the rink "net zero," is in its early phases, the rink's electricity consumption from early November to early December was down 12.5 percent from the same period a year ago, said Harold Mayhew, the president of the Union Arena Board of directors and an architect who specializes in skating rinks.

"If you can make a hockey rink a net zero building, you can make anything net zero," said Mr. Mayhew, who designed the rink at Maine's Bowdoin

"Utilities is what kills the rinks."

Paul Moore

Board of Governors for Falmouth Youth Hockey in Massachusetts

College, which opened in 2009 and became the nation's first hockey rink to be certified by The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program, or LEED, that rates buildings for their energy efficiency.

Energy costs are typically the largest bills for skating rinks, which use huge amounts of electricity to run the equipment that makes and maintains the ice used by hockey players, figure skaters and others, such as curlers.

"Utilities is what kills the rinks," said Paul Moore, the chairman of the Board of Governors for Falmouth Youth Hockey in Massachusetts and the coach of the Falmouth High School hockey team. He has worked to reduce his facility's electric bill by installing 4,400 solar panels on the roof and in a nearby parking lot that produces just short of 1 megawatt of electricity, enough for about 164 homes.

Through a deal with a utility, the Falmouth facility is guaranteed for 10 years and \$85,000 a year savings on its electric bill, but it's not down to zero.

"This has been huge for us," Mr. Moore said. "We're a nonprofit. The youth hockey organization owns the rink, so this allows us to continue our mission statement of keeping tuition low and keeping ice rates low."

Across the country, rinks large and small are always looking for ways to save energy and therefore money, said Kevin McLaughlin, the senior director of hockey development at USA Hockey, the organization that oversees most youth hockey programs in the country.

For example, he said, at the University of Colorado, excess heat from the skating rink's ice system is used to heat the water in the swimming pool. National Hockey League teams are also working to save energy, and the NHL's Greener Rinks initiative is sharing best practices with the small community rinks.

"Community rinks are the front lines of our game," said Omar Mitchell, NHL's vice president for corporate and social responsibility.

## Middle class perseveres despite perils

BY ADAM BELZ

MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE

MINNEAPOLIS — Money's tight for Curtis Griesel, mostly because of the costs of health care and college tuition, but he still considers himself middle class.

Household income for Mr. Griesel, his wife and their three teenage sons is in the ballpark of the metro area median. They live in a Bloomington home built in 1955, don't own a lot of expensive things, can afford to pay their bills, travel and save a little money.

To Mr. Griesel, it's not getting harder to be middle class, it's getting harder to meet middle class expectations.

"I think our cultural expectations have elevated, and I think it's because of our consumer culture," he said.

Income for Americans in the middle rose at a modest but steady rate over the past 40 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office. And prices for consumer goods have dropped while quality has improved.

That economic reality contrasts with perceptions that the middle class has stagnated since the 1970s. Those perceptions have been shaped in part by politicians but also by the fact that the rich have fared even better, with bigger income gains.

Some economists try to cut through the political din to point this out, but it's been a futile effort. Nearly two-thirds of Americans believe government does too little to help the

*Income for Americans in the middle rose at a modest but steady rate over the past 40 years, according to the Congressional Budget Office.*

middle class, and politicians are eager to agree.

"There is a lot of bipartisan consensus about the fiction that the middle class is deteriorating," said Scott Winship, a visiting fellow at the Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity in Austin, Texas.

Nobody disputes that the recession and slow recovery have hurt middle-class incomes in the past 15 years. But when it comes to the longer-term story, the CBO and economists like Terry Fitzgerald at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis have arrived at a different conclusion: Middle class prosperity is gradually rising.

The CBO reported that after-tax income for households that are not in either the top or bottom 20 percent of Americans rose 41 percent from 1979 to 2013, taking into account the rise of health insurance as a form of compensation, more government payments to people, the smaller size of the typical household, and the lower federal taxes that middle-income Americans pay.

## Department stores more like landlords

Macy's, Sears may invite other retailers to take their spaces.

BY SUZETTE PARMLEY  
 THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

PHILADELPHIA — Empty nesters often downsize into space better suited to their new needs. So do ailing department stores that sit empty due to new competition and the rise of digital shopping.

Last month, Macy's Inc. announced it was forming a strategic alliance with Brookfield Asset Management to increase the value of its real estate portfolio. That portfolio is getting trimmed as falling traffic means fewer bricks-and-mortar stores.

Macy's — like Sears — is suddenly taking on more the



ED HILLE / PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER / TNS

The Macy's in Plymouth Meeting is nearly void of customers last month.

role of landlord than department store. Both are looking to profit by inviting other retailers — and even new-concept department stores — into their old spaces.

Soon after Christmas, the parent of Macy's and Bloomingdale's is expected to identify 100

Macy's stores that will close in early 2017 — on top of 38 that closed earlier this year.

Enter Brookfield, which has experience in managing assets in retail, office, multifamily, industrial and hospitality.

Under the partnership, Brookfield has exclusive rights

for up to 24 months to create a "predevelopment plan" for each of about 50 Macy's stores. The retailer can add stores and land to the deal.

Sears, another faded mall anchor, has also been in parking mode for the last few years. In July 2015, it created New York-based Seritage Growth Properties, an independent real estate investment trust, or REIT, to better manage its remaining assets.

Seritage gets 78 percent of its rent from Sears Holdings, which occupies all but 11 of 266 stores. Sears pays Seritage rent of \$4.31 per square foot on average, which is far below market rate.

Seritage aims to capture higher rates by slicing up Sears anchor stores into smaller spaces and re-leasing them.

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**DEAR ABBY**  
Advice

**Dear Abby:** I recently realized that my mother-in-law stole several of my prized possessions. It seems that my husband's brothers, who helped us move when we lost our home, took the items (obviously at her request and with her approval) instead of placing them in the storage unit as instructed.

I am furious at her and my husband's brothers. How should I deal with this? I want to confront her and let her know that I am aware of her betrayal, but my husband is a great man, and I hate to hurt him in this process.

When I told him I was aware that his mother had stolen from us, he said he would make it up to me and that his mother is old (she's 81) and I should let it go. However, every time I visit her home and see my things it hurts. How should I deal with this? I feel raped. — Furious in Tennessee

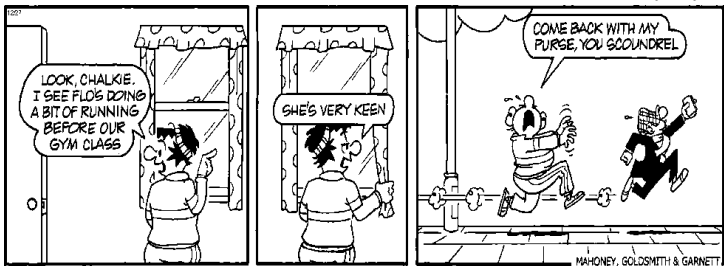
**Dear Furious:** If the items are replaceable, let your husband do as he promised. If they are heirlooms, you will either have to wait until she dies to reclaim them or go over there and demand that she give them back.

**Dear Abby:** I am a senior-aged man who swims three times a week at a nearby fitness center. I shower there after each swim. Seldom do I use the shower in my apartment. My son has reprimanded me strongly for not showering daily. He asserted that by not showering every day and by using a public facility when I do, I am practicing "very poor hygiene." I believe that my hygiene routine is acceptable and in line with common practice, but I'm concerned that in order to visit with him in the future, I will first need to take a shower. Am I wrong here, or is he? — Not Showering Enough

**Dear Not Showering:** With apologies to William Shakespeare: To shower or not to shower, that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of your son's criticism or to stand up for yourself (in a sea of sniping) is up to you. From where I sit — far downwind — if you can pass the smell test, showering three times a week is all that's necessary for proper hygiene. Do not allow your son to shake your self-confidence.

**Dear Abby** is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

**ANDY CAPP**



**CRANKSHAFT**



**DUSTIN**



**WORD SLEUTH**

REMOVE LETTERS TO FIND SOMETHING TO EAT

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

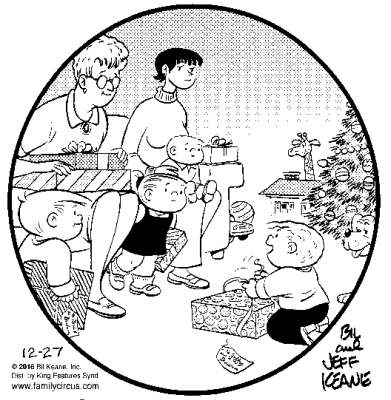
Monday's unlisted clue: REWORD  
Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.  
Tuesday's unlisted clue hint: A PERSONAL BELIEF

Balcony Chimps Furnished Snouts  
Beatniks Edgings Mediate Snowpack  
Benefit Fortuity Peaks Stoup  
Bereaved Friends Salvador

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**THE FAMILY CIRCUS**

By Bil & Jeff Keane



"Boy, Grandma! Aren't you glad you have all of us to give presents to?"

**NTKAH**  
O O O O O  
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**DEGNU**  
O O O O O

**MAREYC**  
O O O O O

**DASILM**  
O O O O O

**JUMBLE**

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME  
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the cartoon.

Print your answer here: O O O O O O O O O O O O

Previous Answer: HYENA MOGUL BUNDLE CAMERA  
When it came to making money selling grapes, the grower — MADE A BUNCH

**WISHING WELL**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 2 |
| A | A | A | C | T | S | S | I | C | C | A | S | C |
| 6 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 3 |
| M | B | E | C | E | E | L | O | A | T | P | I | M |
| 8 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 7 |
| T | F | M | O | I | C | T | S | O | O | Y | H | L |
| 8 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 4 |
| A | D | T | C | E | O | S | R | U | A | N | I | R |
| 3 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 8 |
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| 7 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| L | S | O | V | A | O | E | S | D | K | E | E | W |

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number is more than 6, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

By Smythe

**CROSSWORD**

- 1 Thick chunk  
5 Candy-heart word  
8 Highland hillside  
12 First-rate  
13 Kimono sash  
14 Boxing arbiters  
15 Unpunished  
17 Lawman Wyatt  
18 Junior  
19 Rowing need  
20 "Hammerin' Hank"  
21 Kenny G's instrument  
22 Noah's craft  
23 Mover's rental  
26 Hidden danger  
30 Crooned  
31 Lay down the lawn  
32 Memory method  
33 Italian wine

- 35 Uses a blowtorch  
36 Comic Romano  
37 "The Bells" author  
38 Taking offense  
41 Lair  
42 Wood-shaping tool  
45 Mr. Stravinsky  
46 Totally safe  
48 — gin fizz  
49 Busy insect  
50 Crème — crème  
51 Locus  
52 Sticky stuff  
53 Bar

- DOWN  
1 Back talk  
2 Crazy laugh  
3 Shortly  
4 Wager  
5 Eco-friendly  
6 Modern character  
7 Compete  
8 Escape  
9 Caboose  
10 Roundish  
11 "Baseball Tonight" channel  
16 Young horse  
20 Curator's concern  
21 Like diet soda  
22 Help

**Solution time: 22 mins.**



Yesterday's answer 12-27

By Eugene Sheffer

**PEANUTS**

By Charles M. Schulz



**MARMADUKE**

By Brad & Paul Anderson



"No, I am not trying to insult you by showing them a burglar alarm."

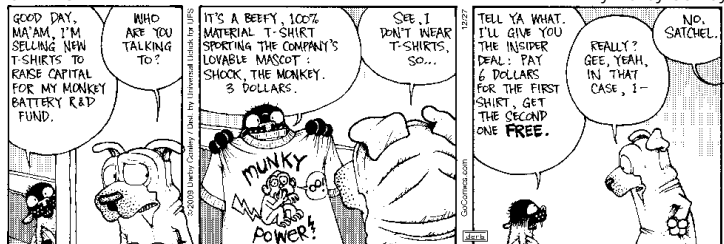
**CLOSE TO HOME**

By John McPherson



"I TOLD you to be sure to read the fine print in the airline's frequent-flyer program!"

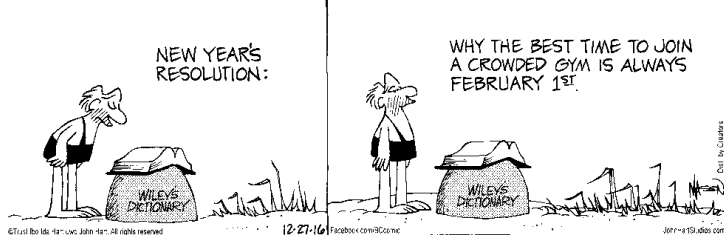
**GET FUZZY**



By Darby Conley

**B.C.**

By Mastroianni & Hart



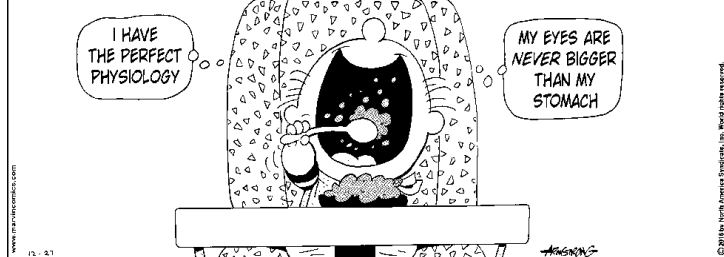
**MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM**

By Mike Peters



**MARVIN**

By Tom Armstrong



**WIZARD OF ID**

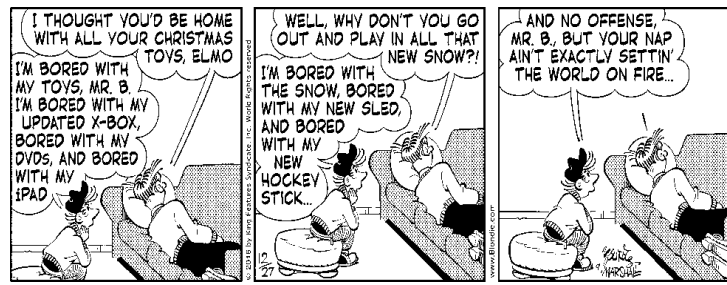
By Parker & Hart





**BLONDIE**

By Dean Young & John Marshall



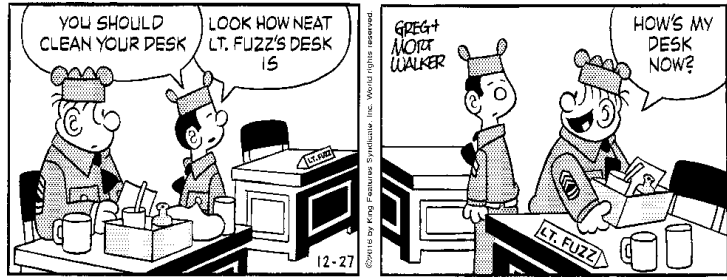
**HAGAR THE HORRIBLE**

By Chris Browne



**BETLE BAILEY**

By Mort, Greg and Brian Walker



**ZITS**

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



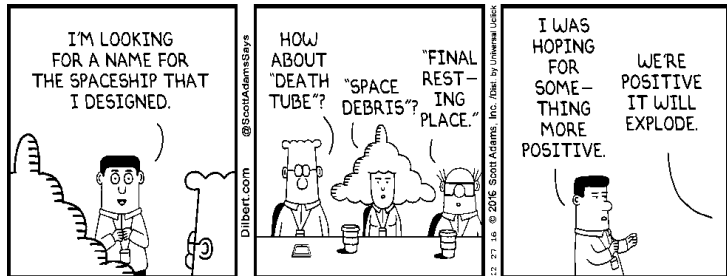
**HI AND LOIS**

By Brian and Greg Walker and Chance Browne



**DILBERT**

By Scott Adams



**MUTTS**

By Patrick McDonnell



**JUDGE PARKER**

By Francesco Marciuliano & Mike Manley



**FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE**

By Lynn Johnston



**CROSSWORD**

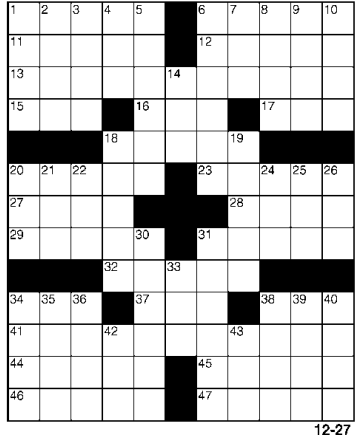
By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Nuts' partners
  - 6 Home style
  - 11 German sub
  - 12 Nebraska city
  - 13 Pay phone parts
  - 15 Boxer Norton
  - 16 Have dinner
  - 17 Kid's spinner
  - 18 Insertion sign
  - 20 Photo collection
  - 23 Under sedation
  - 27 Sugar source
  - 28 Carry on, as war
  - 29 Sword metal
  - 31 Make passes at
  - 32 Stopwatch button
  - 34 Commotion
  - 37 "So that's it!"
  - 38 Opponent
  - 41 Football runs
  - 44 Praline bit
  - 45 Deplete
  - 46 Sacked out
  - 47 Fall guy
- DOWN**
- 1 Doe's mate
  - 2 Clarinet's cousin
  - 3 Beef cut
  - 4 Shoe color
  - 5 Flow
  - 6 Like some lines
  - 7 Aussie bird
  - 8 Shopper's aid
  - 9 "Dear me!"
  - 10 Coarse file
  - 14 Corn unit
  - 18 More adorable
  - 19 Namely
  - 20 Crunch targets
  - 21 Charter collector
  - 24 Butter square
  - 25 Sense of self
  - 26 Animal's lair
  - 30 Memo-rized
  - 31 Get exciting
  - 33 That lady
  - 34 Phone downloads
  - 35 Swordfight
  - 36 Formerly
  - 38 Worry
  - 39 Burden
  - 40 Catch sight of
  - 42 Keg need
  - 43 Much of N. Amer.

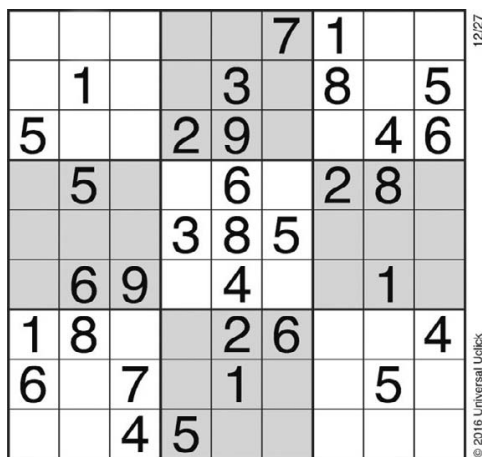


Yesterday's answer

THOMAS CROSSWORD BOOKS 1-81 Send \$4.75 (check/m.o.) for each book to 628 Virginia Dr., Orlando, FL 32803



**SUDOKU PUZZLE**



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

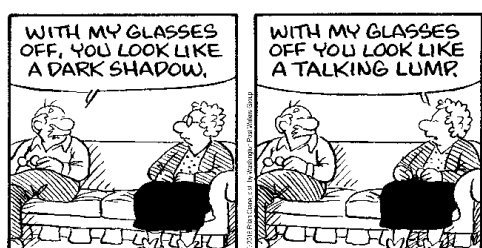
Previous Puzzle Answer

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 8 |
| 6 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 1 |
| 3 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 5 |
| 7 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 4 |
| 8 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| 1 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 7 |
| 2 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 9 |
| 9 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 6 |

Complete the grid so every row, column and 3 x 3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

**PICKLES**

By Brian Crane



**GARFIELD**

By Jim Davis



**HOROSCOPE**

By EUGENIA LASCAT

UNITED FEATURE SYNDICATE  
**Aries** (March 21-April 19):

A short trip will change the way you see others or the beliefs you have lived by for so long.

**Taurus** (April 20-May 20): The incentive to match your purchases with discipline and hard work will pay off. Personal gains can be made.

**Gemini** (May 21-June 20): Put in overtime or update your resume and send it out to interesting online job postings.

**Cancer** (June 21-July 22): Reach out to the people you have worked with through past employment or someone you met during your school days.

**Leo** (July 23-Aug. 22): Playing games or helping put things together for someone who can't put you in the spotlight and boost your popularity.

**Virgo** (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): When faced with change, embrace the inevitable and use your intelligence to navigate your way through any situation.

**Libra** (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Short trips, visiting people you love and doing things with family members will enhance your day.

**Scorpio** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Tune out if someone is using emotional blackmail to sway you. Stay fixed on what's important and what you enjoy doing the most.

**Sagittarius** (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Consider what will make you happy and do whatever it takes to turn your dreams into a reality.

**Capricorn** (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Rely on your intuition to help you make the best choice. Don't feel the need to follow what others do. Make your own plans.

**Aquarius** (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Make a difference and lend a helping hand. What you do for others will turn into a rewarding experience for you.

**Pisces** (Feb. 19-March 20): Getting together with peers outside of work or the classroom will give you a chance to build a stronger alliance that can help you in the future.

**BRIDGE**

By PHILLIP ALDER

NEWSPAPER ENTERPRISE ASSOCIATION

North 12-27-16

- ♦ A K Q J 10
- ♦ K
- ♦ A K Q 5
- ♦ 8 7 5

West East

- ♠ 8 7 6 4 3
- ♥ 2
- ♦ J 9 8 3
- ♣ A J 2
- ♠ 5 2
- ♥ A J 9 3
- ♦ 6 4 2
- ♣ 10 9 6 3

South

- ♦ 7
- ♥ Q 10 8 7 6 5 4
- ♦ 10 7
- ♣ K Q 4

Dealer: North  
Vulnerable: Both

|       |      |       |          |
|-------|------|-------|----------|
| South | West | North | East     |
| 2♥    | Pass | 2♣    | Pass     |
| 3♥    | Pass | 4♥    | All Pass |

Opening lead: ♠ 3

A.N. Orymous said, "A winner listens; a loser just waits until it is their turn to talk."

Bridge winners know that some losers cannot wait; they must be eliminated immediately. In today's deal, how can South avoid four losers in his four-heart contract after West leads the spade three? Also, what were West's more-effective leads, and what do you think of the auction?

I agree strongly with South's two-heart positive response. Here, over three hearts, North would have done best to sign off in three no-trump, but that could have been really silly because the club suit might have been wide open.

Given the trump break, West would have defeated the contract by leading the club ace (or her low heart, but that would not be recommended). Then East could have sat back and waited for three trump tricks to fall into her lap.

West led a spade in the optimistic hope that her partner could ruff in quickly. She chose the three as a suit-preference signal for clubs, the lower-ranking of the other two side suits.

Now, though, declarer led a second high spade at trick two and discarded one club loser. Then South played a third spade. East would have done best to ruff with her heart ace and shift to a club, but she ruffed low. South overruffed, crossed to the board with a diamond and led another spade: ruff, overruff. Now declarer played a trump and got home with an over-trick, his only losers being the rounded-suit aces.







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