

Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
Sumy State Teacher's Training University named after A.S. Makarenko

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ACADEMIC WRITING: THE BASICS

Manual

Sumy - 2019

УДК 811.111:003-028.42(075.8)

К50

*Рекомендовано до друку вченою радою Сумського державного педагогічного університету імені А.С.Макаренка
(Протокол № 3 від 28 жовтня 2019 року)*

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К50 Academic Writing ; the Basics : Manual / Л. І. Клочко, О. О.Теренко. – Суми : ФОП Цьома С. П., 2019. – 88 с.

У посібнику систематизовано лексичні одиниці, що відображають ключові категорії, які використовуються при написанні наукових статей та дисертації. Класифіковано статті відповідно до наукових напрямів, які можуть бути використані для розвитку та перевірки рівня сформованості реферативних умінь. Підбрано тексти для визначення рівня сформованості лексичної та граматичної компетентності.

Посібник адресовано магістрам та аспірантам немовних спеціальностей.

УДК 811.111:003 - 028.42 (075.8)

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INTRODUCTION

Academic Writing : the Basics is a developmental research skills for students and postgraduates. It focuses on key structures and provides ample opportunities for practice through extensive and varied excersises.

A characteristic feature of this manual is inclusion of ways of scientific writing, in particular, establishing the importance of topic, highlighting a problem, highlighting a controversy in the field of study, highlighting inadequacies of previous studies, highlighting knowledge gap in the field of studies, stating the purpouse of research, indicating significance, indicating limitations, outlining structure, explaining keywords. This manual also deals with such research aspects as research methods, describing characteristics of the sample, indicating reasons for sample characteristics, statements of positive result, statements of negative result, reporting reaction, statememts of result, unexpected outcome, commenting on findings, suggestions for future work.

Provided texts are aimed at checking the level of grammar and lexicl competences formation. Newspaper articles are a tool for checking the level of development of working with scientific literature skills.

We would like to express our gratitude to Shkolyarenko V. I., Bidyuk N. M. and Danilyuk S. S. for giving first-rate recommendations for this manual and it would be impossible to give adequate thanks, so a simple acknowledgment must suffice, along with an expression of regret that time and circumstances did not permit us to incorporate all excellent suggestions.

Unit 1. The Schemes of Introduction.

1. Writing Introductions

There are many ways to introduce an academic essay or short paper. Most academic writers, however, appear to do one or more of the following in their introductions:

- establish the context, background and/or importance of the topic;
- indicate an issue, problem, or controversy in the field of study;
- define the topic or key terms;
- state of the purpose of the essay/writing;
- provide an overview of the coverage and/or structure of the writing.

Introductions to research articles and dissertations tend to be relatively short but quite complex.

Some of the more common moves include:

- establishing the context, background and/or importance of the topic;
- giving a brief synopsis of the relevant literature;
- indicating a problem, controversy or a knowledge gap in the field of study;
- establishing the desirability of the research;
- listing the research questions or hypotheses;
- providing a synopsis of the research method(s);
- explaining the significance or value of the study;
- defining certain key terms;
- providing an overview of the dissertation or report structure;
- explaining reasons for the writer's personal interest in the topic.

Examples of phrases which are commonly employed to realise these functions are listed below.

Note that there may be a certain amount of overlap between some of the categories under which the phrases are listed.

Purpose	Original Word/Phrase	Recommended Substitute
To express the purpose of a paper or research This paper/ study/ investigation...	aims to	This paper + [use the verb that originally followed "aims to"] or This paper + (any other verb listed above as a substitute for "explain") + who/what/when/where/how X. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "This paper applies X to Y," instead of, "This paper aims to apply X to Y."• "This paper explores how lower sun exposure impacts moods," instead of, "This paper aims to address the impact of lower sun exposure on moods."

To introduce the topic of a project or paper • The paper/ study/ article/ work... Prior research/ investigations...	discusses presents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • surveys • questions • highlights • outlines • features investigates
To describe the analytical scope of a paper or study • The paper/ study/ article/ work... Prior research/ investigations...	considers analyzes explains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluates • interprets • clarifies • identifies • delves into • advances
To preview other sections of a paper Section X...	covers deals with talks about	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outlines • highlights • sketches • assesses • contemplates [any of the verbs suggested as replacements for “explain,” “analyze,” and “consider” above]

2. Describing the scope of a current project or prior research.

Describing the analytical elements of a paper

Purpose	Original Word/Phrase	Recommended Substitute
To express agreement between one finding and another • This paper/ study/ investigation	supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • substantiates • confirms • corroborates • underlines
To present contradictory findings • This paper/ study/ investigation	calls into question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • challenges • disputes • rebuts • refutes • disproves • debunks • invalidates • rejects • questions
To discuss limitations of a study	The limitations of this paper include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These investigations, however, disregards... • This method/ approach fails to... • This study only... • ...falls short of addressing/ identifying / illustrating... • A drawback/disadvantage of this framework is... • This framework, however, solely pertains to...

3. Discussing results

Purpose	Original Word/Phrase	Recommended Substitute
To draw inferences from results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The data... • These findings... 	suggest show	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extrapolate • deduce • approximate • derive • extract • evidence
To describe observations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [Observed event or result]... 	appeared was observed to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manifested • surfaced • materialized • yielded • generated • perceived • detected

4. Explaining the impact of new research

Purpose	Original Word/Phrase	Recommended Substitute
To explain the impact of a paper's findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This paper/ study/ investigation 	demonstrates shows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • illustrates • proves • evidences • strengthens (the position that)
To highlight a paper's conclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This paper/ study/ investigation 	establishes proves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attributes • illustrates • advances (the idea that)
To explain how research contributes to the existing knowledge-base <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This paper/ study/ investigation 	offers introduces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ushers in • proffers • conveys • promotes • advocates • introduces • broach (issue) • reveals • unveils • exposes • unearths

Unit 2. The Ways of Scientific Writing.

1. Establishing the importance of the topic for the discipline

A key aspect of X is

X is a classic problem in

A primary concern of X is

X is at the heart of our understanding of

X is an increasingly important area in applied linguistics.

Investigating X is a continuing concern within

Central to the entire discipline of X is the concept of

X and Y have been an object of research since the 1960s

X is a major area of interest within the field of

The issue of X has received considerable critical attention.

X has been studied by many researchers using

One of the most significant current discussions in legal and moral philosophy is ...

2. Highlighting a problem

However, a major problem with this kind of application is

Lack of X has existed as a health problem for many years.

However, these rapid changes are having a serious effect on

Despite its safety and efficacy, X suffers from several major drawbacks:

However, research has consistently shown that these students lack

There is increasing concern that some Xs are being disadvantaged

Despite its long clinical success, X has a number of problems in use.

Questions have been raised about the safety of prolonged use of

Along with this growth in X, however, there is increasing concern over

3. Highlighting a controversy in the field of study

To date there has been little agreement on what

One major issue in early X research concerned

The issue has grown in importance in light of recent

One observer has already drawn attention to the paradox in

Questions have been raised about the safety of prolonged use of

Debate continues about the best strategies for the management of

In many Xs, a debate is taking place between Ys and Zs concerning

This concept has recently been challenged by X studies demonstrating

The debate about X has gained fresh prominence with many arguing that

More recently, literature has emerged that offers contradictory findings about

One of the most significant current discussions in legal and moral philosophy is
One major theoretical issue that has dominated the field for many years concerns

The controversy about scientific evidence for X has raged unabated for over a century.

The causes of X have been the subject of intense debate within the scientific community.

The issue of X has been a controversial and much disputed subject within the field of

In the literature on X, the relative importance of Y has been subject to considerable debate.

4. Highlighting inadequacies of previous studies

Researchers have not treated X in much detail.

Previous studies of X have not dealt with

Half of the studies evaluated failed to specify whether

Most studies in the field of X have only focused on

Most studies in X have only been carried out in a small number of areas.

The generalisability of much published research on this issue is problematic.

The experimental data are rather controversial, and there is no general agreement about

Such expositions are unsatisfactory because they

The research to date has tended to focus on X rather than Y.

Research on the subject has been mostly restricted to limited comparisons of

The existing accounts fail to resolve the contradiction between X and Y.

However, few writers have been able to draw on any systematic research into

However, much of the research up to now has been descriptive in nature

However, these results were based upon data from over 30 years ago and it is unclear if

Although extensive research has been carried out on X, no single study exists which

X's analysis does not take account of nor does she examine

5. Highlighting a knowledge gap in the field of study

What is not yet clear is the impact of X on

No previous study has investigated X .

There has been little quantitative analysis of

The neurobiological basis of this X is poorly understood.

Until recently, there has been no reliable evidence that
In addition, no research has been found that surveyed
Little is known about X and it is not clear what factors
This indicates a need to understand the various perceptions of X that exist among
So far this method has only been applied to
So far, however, there has been little discussion about
However, far too little attention has been paid to
However, the evidence for this relationship is inconclusive
However, much uncertainty still exists about the relation between
However, there have been no controlled studies which compare differences in
In contrast, very little is known about X in non-mammalian vertebrates and in
Although
While
Whilst
some research has been carried out on X, no single study exists which
no studies have been found which
no controlled studies have been reported.
only two studies have attempted to investigate
the mechanism by which has not been established.
there have been few empirical investigations into
there is very little scientific understanding of
Apart from Smith, there is a general lack of research in
Despite this, very few studies have investigated the impact of X on
Several studies have produced estimates of X, but there is still insufficient data for

6. Indicating the focus, aim, argument of a short paper

This paper contests the claim that
This paper will review the research conducted on
This paper will focus on/examine/give an account of
This paper seeks to remedy these problems by analysing the literature of
This paper examines the significance of X in the rise of
This essay critically examines/discusses/traces
This account seeks to
In this paper I argue that
In the pages that follow, it will be argued that
This paper attempts to show that
In this essay, I attempt to defend the view that

The central thesis of this paper is that

The aim of the paper is to provide a conceptual theoretical framework based on....

The purpose of this paper is to review recent research into the

7. Stating the purpose of research

The major objective of this study was to investigate

The aim of this study was to clarify several aspects of

The aim of this study is to investigate the differences between X and Y.

The aim of this research project has therefore been to try and establish what

The main aim of this investigation is to assess the doses and risks associated with

The aim of this study is to shine new light on these debates through an examination of

The objectives of this research are to determine whether

The main purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of

This paper investigates the usefulness of

This thesis intends to determine the extent to which and whether

This thesis will examine the way in which the

This research examines the emerging role of X in the context of

This case study seeks to examine the changing nature of

This dissertation seeks to explain the development of

This dissertation aims to unravel some of the mysteries surrounding

This study systematically reviews the data for...., aiming to provide

Part of the aim of this project is to develop software that is compatible with

There are two primary aims of this study: 1. To investigate 2. To ascertain

Drawing upon two stands of research into X, this study attempts to

One purpose of this study was to assess the extent to which these factors were

This study seeks to obtain data which will help to address these research gaps.

This study therefore set out to assess the effect of X, and the effect of

8. Research questions or hypotheses

The central question in this dissertation asks how

This research seeks to address the following questions:

In particular, this dissertation will examine six main research questions:

The hypothesis that will be tested is that

The key research question of this study was whether or not

This study aimed to address the following research questions:

Another question is whether

9. Synopsis of the research design, method, source(s) of data

Five works will be examined, all of which

Data for this study were collected using

This dissertation follows a case-study design, with in-depth analysis of

This study was exploratory and interpretative in nature.

The approach to empirical research adopted for this study was one of

The methodological approach taken in this study is a mixed methodology based on

By employing qualitative modes of enquiry, I attempt to illuminate the

This work takes the form of a case-study of the

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this investigation.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was used in the data analysis.

Qualitative and quantitative research designs were adopted to provide

A holistic approach is utilised, integrating X, Y and Z material to establish

The research data in this thesis is drawn from four main sources:

The study was conducted in the form of a survey, with data being gathered via

10. Indicating significance

This project provided an important opportunity to advance the understanding of

This study provides an exciting opportunity to advance our knowledge of

This is the first study to undertake a longitudinal analysis of

The findings should make an important contribution to the field of

Therefore, this study makes a major contribution to research on X by demonstrating

The study offers some important insights into

This study aims to contribute to this growing area of research by exploring

There are several important areas where this study makes an original contribution to

11. Indicating limitations

The thesis does not engage with

Due to practical constraints, this paper cannot provide a comprehensive review of

It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the

The reader should bear in mind that the study is based on

Another potential problem is that the scope of my thesis may be too broad.

A full discussion of X lies beyond the scope of this study.

12. Giving reasons for personal interest

My main reason for choosing this topic is personal interest.

I became interested in Xs after reading

This project was conceived during my time working for X. As a medical advisor, I witnessed ...

I have worked closely with X for many years and

It is my experience of working with X that has driven this research.

13. Outlining the structure

The main questions/issues addressed in this paper are: a), b) and c).

This paper has been divided into four parts. The first part deals with

The essay has been organised in the following way.

This paper reviews the evidence for

This paper begins by It will then go on to

The first section of this paper will examine

This paper first gives a brief overview of the recent history of X.

My thesis is composed of four themed chapters.

The overall structure of the study takes the form of six chapters, including this introductory chapter.

Chapter Two begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions of the research, and looks at how

The third chapter is concerned with the methodology used for this study.

The fourth section presents the findings of the research, focusing on the three key themes that

Chapter 6 analyses the results of interviews and focus group discussions undertaken during

The remaining part of the paper proceeds as follows:

The final chapter draws upon the entire thesis, tying up the various theoretical and empirical strands

in order to

.... and includes a discussion of the implication of the findings to future research into this area.

Finally, the conclusion gives a brief summary and critique of the findings .

Finally, areas for further research are identified.

14. Explaining Keywords (refer to Defining Terms)

Throughout this paper, the term X will refer to

Throughout this dissertation, the term X will be used to refer to

In this article, the acronym/abbreviation XYZ will be used.

According to Smith, X can be defined as follows: “....”

The term X is a relatively new name for, commonly referred to as

While a variety of definitions of the term X have been suggested, this paper will use the definition first suggested by Smith (1968) who saw it as

15. General descriptions of the relevant literature

A large and growing body of literature has investigated

More recent attention has focused on the provision of

Much of the current literature on X pays particular attention to

Over the past decade most research in X has emphasized the use of

There is a large volume of published studies describing the role of

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on

The generalisability of much published research on this issue is problematic.

During the past 30 years, much more information has become available on

A considerable amount of literature has been published on X. These studies

The first serious discussions and analyses of X emerged during the 1970s with

What we know about X is largely based upon empirical studies that investigate how

16. General reference to previous research or scholarship: normally more than one author

Traditionally, it has been argued that (Smith, 1982; O’Brien, 1984).

Surveys such as that conducted by Smith (1988) have shown that

Many historians have argued that (e.g. Jones, 1987; Johnson, 1990; Smith, 1994).

There is a consensus among social scientists that(e.g. Jones, 1987; Johnson, 1990)

Recent evidence suggests that (Smith, 1996; Jones 1999; Johnson, 2001)

Recently, in vitro studies have shown that X can (Patel *et al.*, 1997; Jones *et al.*, 1998).

Several studies investigating X have been carried out on

Several attempts have been made to (Smith, 1996; Jones 1999;).

Several studies thus far have linked X with Y (Smith, 2002; Jones 2004;).

Several studies have revealed that it is not just X that acts on (Smith, 1996; Jones)

Several biographies of Brown have been published. Smith (2013) presents

The geology of X has been addressed in several small-scale investigations and

Data from several sources have identified the increased X and Y associated with obesity.

Previous studies have reported (Smith, 1985; Jones, 1987; Johnson, 1992).

Previous research has indicated that various X indicators have a positive impact on

Previous research findings into X have been inconsistent and contradictory (Smith, 1996;)

Numerous studies have attempted to explain (for example, Smith , 1996; Kelly, 1998;)

A number of authors have reported analyses of trends in X that demonstrated

A number of studies have found that (Smith , 2003; Jones, 2004).

A number of studies have examined X (e.g. Smith, 2003; Jones, 2005), but to date none has

Xs have been identified as major contributing factors for the decline of many species (1).

X has also been shown to reverse the anti-inflammatory effects of Y in murine-induced arthritis.

Twenty cohort study analyses have examined the relationship between

At least 152 case-control studies worldwide have examined the relationship between.....

Other studies have considered the relationship

The relationship between X and Y has been widely investigated (Smith, 1985; Jones, 1987)

The causes of X have been widely investigated (Jones, 1987; Johnson, 1990; Smith, 1994).

Factors thought to be influencing X have been explored in several studies.

It has been suggested that levels of X are independent of the size of the Y (Smith *et al.*, 1995).

It has conclusively been shown that X and Y increase Z (Smith *et al.*, 1999; Jones, 2001).

It has been demonstrated that a high intake of X results in damage to (Smith, 1998;).

17. Describing Methods

In the Methods section of a dissertation or research article, writers give an account of how they carried out their research. The Methods section should be clear and detailed enough for another experienced person to repeat the research and reproduce the results. Where the methods chosen are new, unfamiliar or perhaps even controversial, or where the intended audience is from many disciplines, the Methods section will tend to be much more extensive. Typical stretches of text found in this section of a research article or dissertation along with examples of the kind of language used for these are listed below. Note that for most of the functional categories in this section, the verbs are written in the simple past tense.

18. Describing previously used methods

To date various methods have been developed and introduced to measure X:
In most recent studies, X has been measured in four different ways.
Traditionally, X has been assessed by measuring....
Different authors have measured X in a variety of ways.
Previous studies have based their criteria for selection on
The use of qualitative case studies is a well-established approach in
This test is widely available, and has been used in many investigational studies.
Case studies have been long established in X to present detailed analysis of
Recently, simpler and more rapid tests of X have been developed.
Radiographic techniques are the main non-invasive method used to determine
A variety of methods are used to assess X. Each has its advantages and drawbacks.
Data were gathered from multiple sources at various time points during

19. Giving reasons why a particular method was adopted or rejected

A case study approach was used to allow a
Qualitative methods offer an effective way of
A quantitative approach was employed since
The design of the questionnaires was based on
The X method is one of the more practical ways of
The semi-structured approach was chosen because
The X approach has a number of attractive features:
The second advantage of using the multivariate method is
For this study, the X was used to explore the subsurface
It was decided that the best method to adopt for this investigation was to
The study uses qualitative analysis in order to gain insights into

It was considered that quantitative measures would usefully supplement and extend the

Many of the distributions were not normal so non-parametric signed rank tests were run.

One advantage of the X analysis is that it avoids the problem of

However, there are certain drawbacks associated with the use of

The main disadvantage of the experimental method is that

A major problem with the experimental method is that

There are certain problems with the use of focus groups. One of these is that there is less

20. Indicating a specific method

X was prepared according to the procedure used by Patel.

The synthesis of X was done according to the procedure of Smith (1973).

X was synthesised using the same method that was detailed for Y, using

This compound was prepared by adapting the procedure used by Zhao. (1990).

An alternative method for making scales homogenous is by using

Samples were analysed for X as previously reported by Smith. (2012)

21. Describing the characteristics of the sample

Eligibility criteria required individuals to have received

A random sample of patients with was recruited from

Forty-seven students studying X were recruited for this study.

Just over half the sample (53%) was female, of whom 69% were

Of the initial cohort of 123 students, 66 were female and 57 male.

Only children aged between 10 and 15 years were included in the study.

Eligible women who matched the selection criteria were identified by

The students were divided into two groups based on their performance on

All of the participants were aged between 18 and 19 at the beginning of the study....

Two groups of subjects were interviewed, namely X and Y. The first group were

The project used a convenience sample of 32 first year modern languages students.

Participants were recruited from 15 clinics across, covering urban and rural areas

The initial sample consisted of 200 students, 75 of whom belonged to minority groups.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 17 male offenders with a mean age of 38 years

Publications were only included in the analysis if

Articles were searched from January 1965 until April 2010.

A systematic literature review was conducted of studies that

All studies described as using some sort of X procedure were included in the analysis.

22. Indicating reasons for sample characteristics

Criteria for selecting the subjects were as follows:

The area of study was chosen for its relatively small

Five individuals were excluded from the study on the basis of

A small sample was chosen because of the expected difficulty of obtaining

The subjects were selected on the basis of a degree of homogeneity of their

A comparison group of 12 male subjects without any history of X was drawn from a pool of

23. Describing the process: infinitive of purpose

In order to identify the T10 and T11 spinous processes, the subjects were asked to

In order to understand how X regulates Y, a series of transfections was performed.

To establish whether,

To measure X, a question asking was used.

To see if the two methods gave the same measurement, the data was plotted and

To control for bias, measurements were carried out by another person.

To rule out the possibility that X, the participants were

To determine whether ..., the cells were incubated for

To enable the subjects to see the computer screen clearly, the laptop was configured with

To increase the reliability of measures, each X was tested twice with a 4-minute break between

To compare the scores three weeks after initial screening, a global ANOVA F-test was used

The vials were capped with to prevent

The process was repeated several times in order to remove

In an attempt to make each interviewee feel as comfortable as possible, the interviewer

24. Statements of positive result

Strong evidence of X was found when
This result is significant at the $p = 0.05$ level.
There was a significant positive correlation between
There was a significant difference between the two conditions
On average, Xs were shown to have
Interestingly, for those subjects with X,
A positive correlation was found between X and Y.
The results, as shown in Table 1, indicate that
A two-way ANOVA revealed that
Further analysis showed that
Further statistical tests revealed

25. Statements of negative result

There was no increase of X associated with

There were no significant differences between

No significant differences were found between

No increase in X was detected.

No difference greater than X was observed.

No significant reduction in X was found compared with placebo.

None of these differences were statistically significant.

Overall, X did not affect males and females differently in these measures.

A clear benefit of X in the prevention of Y could not be identified in this analysis.

Only trace amounts of X were detected in

26. Highlighting significant, interesting or surprising results

Interestingly, the X was observed to

Interestingly, this correlation is related to

The more surprising correlation is with the

The most surprising aspect of the data is in the

The most striking result to emerge from the data is that

The correlation between X and Y is interesting because

Interestingly, there were also differences in the ratios of

The single most striking observation to emerge from the data comparison was

27. Reporting a reaction

When X cells were stimulated with Y, no significant difference in the number of Z was detected.

However, stimulation of X cells with Y did not increase the

Following the addition of X, a significant increase ($P < 0.05$) in the Y was recorded.

With successive increases in intensity of the X, the Y moved further to

28. Reporting results from questionnaires and interviews

The response rate was 60% at six months and 56% at 12 months.

Of the study population, 90 subjects completed and returned the questionnaire.

Thirty-two individuals returned the questionnaires.

By the end of the survey period, data had been collected from 64 individuals, 23 of whom were

This section of the questionnaire required respondents to give information on

Respondents were asked to indicate whether

Respondents were asked to suggest other reasons for

There were 53 responses to the question: '....?'

The total number of responses for this question was

The overall response to this question was poor.

In response to the question: '....?', a range of responses was elicited.

In response to Question 1, most of those surveyed indicated that

The overall response to this question was very positive.

When the participants were asked, the majority commented that

Other responses to this question included

The majority of those who responded to this item felt that

70% of those who were interviewed indicated that

Almost two-thirds of the participants (64%) said that

Just over half of those who answered this question reported that

Over half of those surveyed reported that

Approximately half of those surveyed did not comment on

Of the 62 participants who responded to this question, 30 reported an increase in

Of the 148 patients who completed the questionnaire, just over half indicated that

A small number of those interviewed suggested that

Only a small number of respondents indicated that

Some participants expressed the belief that

One individual stated that '....' And another commented '....'

A minority of participants (17%) indicated that
One participant commented: ‘’
Another interviewee alluded to the notion of

29. Observations about qualitative data

The themes of X and Y recurred throughout the dataset.
Five broad themes emerged from the analysis.
Two discrete reasons emerged from this. First Second
A number of issues were identified
This theme came up for example in discussions of
A recurrent theme in the interviews was a sense amongst interviewees that ...
These views surfaced mainly in what respects
There was a sense of X amongst interviewees
A variety of perspectives were expressed
A common view amongst interviewees was that
Issues related to X were not particularly prominent in the interview data.
In their accounts of the events surrounding
As one interviewee said:
As one interviewee put it:
For example, one interviewee said:
Talking about this issue an interviewee said:
Another interviewee, when asked ..., said:
The extract/comment below shows
Some interviewees argued that while others
Some felt that while others considered that
Two divergent and often conflicting discourses emerged
Whilst a minority mentioned that... all agreed that...

30. Transition statements

If we now turn to
A comparison of the two results reveals
Turning now to the experimental evidence on
Comparing the two results, it can be seen that
The next section of the survey was concerned with
In the final part of the survey, respondents were asked

31. Summary and transition

These results suggest that

Overall, these results indicate that

Together these results provide important insights into

Taken together, these results suggest that there is an association between

In summary, these results show that

The results in this Chapter indicate that The next Chapter, therefore, moves on to discuss the

32. Statements of result: usually with reference to results section

The current study found that

The most interesting finding was that

In this study, Xs were found to cause

The results of this study show/indicate that

This experiment did not detect any evidence for

On the question of X, this study found that

The most important clinically relevant finding was

Another important finding was that

In the current study, comparing X with Y showed that the mean degree of

X provided the largest set of significant clusters of

It is interesting to note that in all seven cases of this study

The results of this study did not show that .../did not show any significant increase in

33. Unexpected outcome

Surprisingly, X was found to

What is surprising is that

One unanticipated finding was that

Surprisingly, no differences were found in

This finding was unexpected and suggests that

It is somewhat surprising that no X was noted in this condition

Contrary to expectations, this study did not find a significant difference between

However, the observed difference between X and Y in this study was not significant.

However, the ANOVA (one way) showed that these results were not statistically significant.

34. Reference to previous research: support

These findings further support the idea of

This finding confirms the association between

This study confirms that X is associated with

These results match those observed in earlier studies.

The results of this study will now be compared to the findings of previous work.

The findings of the current study are consistent with those of Smith and Jones (2001) who

These results are consistent with those of other studies and suggest that

This finding supports previous research into this brain area which links X and Y.

This finding corroborates the ideas of Smith and Jones (2008), who suggested that

This finding is in agreement with Smith's (1999) findings which showed

It is encouraging to compare this figure with that found by Jones (1993) who found that

Increased activation in the X in this study corroborates these earlier findings.

The present findings seem to be consistent with other research which found

This also accords with our earlier observations, which showed that

These results agree with the findings of other studies, in which

In accordance with the present results, previous studies have demonstrated that

The findings observed in this study mirror those of the previous studies that have examined the effect of

This study produced results which corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work in this field.

There are similarities between the attitudes expressed by X in this study and those described by (Smith, 1987, 1995) and Jones (1986).

35. Commenting on findings

However, these results were not very encouraging.

These findings are rather disappointing.

The test was successful as it was able to identify students who

The present results are significant in at least major two respects.

These findings will doubtless be much scrutinized, but there are some immediately dependable conclusions for

The results of this study do not explain the occurrence of these adverse events.

36. Suggestions for future work

Further work is required to establish this.

This is an important issue for future research.

Several questions remain unanswered at present.

There is abundant room for further progress in determining ...

Further research should be done to investigate the

Research questions that could be asked include

Future studies on the current topic are therefore recommended.

A further study with more focus on X is therefore suggested.

Further studies, which take these variables into account, will need to be undertaken.

In future investigations, it might be possible to use a different X in which

In further research, the use of this data as X could be a means of

However, more research on this topic needs to be undertaken before the association between X and Y is more clearly understood.

Unit 3. The Texts for Checking Practical Skills.

SKIING

Skiing is one of the most popular sports in the world. According to recent estimates, about one hundred million people ski regularly or occasionally.

Sliding across the snow on skis is also one of the most ancient methods of transport known to man. It has been demonstrated that men were already travelling across the snow by means of primitive skis before the invention of the wheel. In the Asiatic region of Altai and in Scandinavia, for example, the remains of skis have been found which date back to 4,000 BC. Further evidence is supplied by ancient cave paintings which depict people skiing, and a Norwegian saga which tells the story of an invasion of its territory 8,000 years ago by a tribe of skiers who came from the north.

Nowadays, skiing, apart from being a sport, has become a big industry and a notable feature of leisure culture. Ski resorts and all the activity that they generate are the main source of wealth in many mountain regions, which were previously remote and inaccessible. And far from its once elitist image, skiing is now enjoyed by an increasingly broader spectrum of society.

1. Answer the following questions using your own words.

- a) How do we know that primitive men travelled across the snow by means of skis?
- b) How has this sport benefited mountain regions?

2. Are the following statements true (T) or false (F)?

- a) Primitive skis were invented before the wheel.
- b) You need to have a lot of money to go skiing.

3. Find a word or phrase in the text which, in context, is similar in meaning to:

- a) principal
- b) wider

4. Choose a, b, or c, in each question below. Only one choice is correct.

1. Sliding across the snow on skis ...
 - a) is the most ancient method of transport.
 - b) is the most popular means of transport.
 - c) is one of the oldest forms of transport.
2. It has been demonstrated that...
 - a) people from Altai invented skis.
 - b) people travelled across the snow on skis from 4,000 BC.
 - c) skiing was the most popular sport between 4,000 and 2,000 BC.

3. Nowadays skiing ...
 - a) is a cultural tradition.
 - b) is just a sport.
 - c) is an important part of leisure culture.
4. At present, this sport...
 - a) is open to most people.
 - b) has an elitist character.
 - c) is only available to a sector of society

5. Composition (100-150 words approximately). Choose one of the following topics.

1. Do you think that skiing is elitist, or is it open to anyone? Explain why.
2. Write a letter to a friend about an incident which happened to you in the snow.

DEADLY BIRD FLU TYPE DETECTED

THE slaughter of thousands of turkeys is under way today as officials battle to stamp out Britain's first outbreak of the potentially deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu.

Scientists confirmed the avian flu which killed more than 2,000 birds on a Bernard Matthews farm at Holton, near Halesworth in Suffolk, is the highly pathogenic Asian strain.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has dramatically increased the area where restrictions are in force in East Anglia to

control the H5N1 outbreak.

The Restriction Zone, in which poultry must be kept isolated from wild birds and movements must be licensed, covers 2,090 square kilometres (806 square miles) of east Suffolk and south east Norfolk. It extends to the A47 just south of Norwich in the north, the A140 in the west, and almost to Felixstowe in the south.

Around 159,000 birds on the farm where the outbreak was identified are being killed, Defra said. But Government officials were keen to reassure the public there was no need to panic, as the risk to humans was “negligible” Turkeys first began falling ill on Tuesday, and by Thursday Defra had been informed and restrictions were in place around the farm itself. Yesterday, tests at the European Union laboratory in Weybridge, Surrey, confirmed the dangerous form of avian flu on the Suffolk farm.

QUESTIONS

1. Answer the following questions using your own words but taking into account the information in the text.

- a. Where was the disease first found?
- b. When did the disease first begin?

2. Are the following statements TRUE or FALSE? Identify the part of the text that supports your answer by copying the exact words.

a. The type of avian flu detected is highly dangerous:

b. East Anglia is not going to be a restricted area:

c. This disease is very dangerous for humans:

3. Find a synonym for each of the words below from these six options

SLAU	BATT	OUTBRE	ISOLA	WIL	COVER
Opposite to domesticated					
Fight					
Staying alone, separated from the others					
Measure, reach					

4. Choose a, b, or c in each question below. Only one choice is correct

1. The bird flu killed
 - a. two thousand birds.
 - b. one hundred, fifty-nine thousand birds.
 - c. all the birds in two thousand and ninety square km.
2. The place where the disease was found was in
 - a. Norfolk.

QUESTIONS

1. Answer the following questions using your own words.

a. Why is English more important than other colonial languages?

b. Why is English so important in India?

2. Are the following statements true or false?

a. Professor Lal manages a writers' workshop in India.

b. Malcom Muggeridge said that Indians are left-handed.

3. Find a word or phrase in the text which, in context, is similar in meaning to:

States (v): _____

Higher education: _____

4. Choose *a*, *b* or *c* in each question below. Only one choice is correct.

1. The way English is spreading is

a. something normal.

b. absolutely unusual.

c. quite uncertain.

2. The use of English is

a. as frequent as other colonial languages.

b. less frequent than other colonial languages.

c. more frequent than other colonial languages.

3. In India and Nigeria, English

a. has a general use.

b. is used only in the streets.

c. is used by newspapers and the people who read it.

4. India

a. has fewer English speakers than Great Britain.

b. has 840 different languages.

c. has more English speakers than Great Britain.

5. Composition (100-150 words). English and Spanish in the world.

RESEARCHERS SAY JOGGING ALONE IS UNHEALTHY

A newly published report indicates that jogging could have adverse health effects, especially for those who do it alone. A team of researchers from Harvard University has suggested that going for a run on your own is not as healthy as previously believed and is nowhere near as beneficial as jogging as part of a group. They suggested it could actually be detrimental to one’s health. Experiments conducted on rats indicated that running alone raises stress levels and stifles brain cell regeneration. Professor Elizabeth Gould, who led the research, said: “These results suggest that, in the absence of social interaction, a normally beneficial experience can exert a potentially deleterious influence on the brain. ”

The researchers monitored two groups of rats on exercise wheels. One group exercised alone, the other as part of a rodent jogging team. After two weeks, the scientists conducted tests to ascertain the rate of brain cell growth in all of the test animals. The results revealed that the communal joggers had double the amount of new brain cells as the solo runners. Professor Gould concluded that: “When experienced in a group setting, running stimulates neurogenesis (brain cell growth). However, when running occurs in social isolation, these positive effects are suppressed. ” Joggers around the world should perhaps take the research with a pinch of salt and remember that jogging is healthier than the rat race.

QUESTIONS

1. Answer the following questions using your own words but taking into account the information in the text.

a. According to the text, is jogging alone beneficial for our health? Why?

b. Has this piece of research been tested on humans?

Are the following statements TRUE or FALSE? Identify the part of the text that supports your answer.

a. _____ *Jogging with rats stimulates the brain cell production.* Evidence: _____

b. _____ *Jogging rats produce more brain cells if they do it in group.* Evidence: _____

3. Find a synonym for each of the four words from these six options. s from these six options. (1 point)

REPORT	RESEARCHER	STIFLE	MONITOR	ASCERTAIN	PINCH
--------	------------	--------	---------	-----------	-------

- a. Watch:
- b. Small amount:
- c. Discover, check:
- d. Piece of research:

2. The relationship between our modern lifestyle and physical inactivity.

KATE MOSS: I WILL FACE POLICE

EXCLUSIVE She collapses after our story.. then goes on 13-hour party

DEFIANT Kate Moss partied for 13 hours after finally agreeing to be quizzed by police over cocaine abuse.

The 32-year-old model kicked off her birthday celebrations at 3pm on Saturday by sipping champagne in the bar of the Ritz Hotel in Paris.

She returned to the hotel at 4 am after a private dinner party with about 10 friends including fellow models Naomi Campbell and Rosemary Ferguson.

They did not surface until midday yesterday when room service was told to deliver to Kate's £1,000 a night suite.

On Saturday the Mirror exclusively revealed that fed-up police were threatening to arrest and handcuff Kate.

The globe-trotting model has spent four months avoiding their requests for an interview following our expose of her cocaine use.

Hours after Saturday's story appeared Kate's representatives moved to fix an interview date. The model is now expected to be questioned within a month.

An insider said last night: "At last she seems to be seeing sense".

"She's played this wrong from Day One. Kate has been given the completely wrong advice and has spent the four months since the scandal seemingly annoying the police. It's only made matters worse for her."

QUESTIONS

1. Answer the following questions using your own words but taking into account the information in the text.

a. Who did Kate have a party with?

b. Are police angry with Kate? Why?

2. Are the following statements TRUE or FALSE? Identify the part of the text that supports your answer.

a. _____ Rosemary Ferguson was accused of taking cocaine: _____

b. _____ Kate Moss was interviewed by police for 13 hours: _____

c. _____ Kate Moss will eventually have an appointment with police: _____

3. Find a synonym for each of the four words from these six options. (1 point)

Quiz	Kick off	Sip	Fed-up	Avoid	Question
------	----------	-----	--------	-------	----------

a. Start: _____

b. Angry: _____

c. Drink: _____

d. Keep away from: _____

4. Choose *a*, *b*, or *c* in each question below. Only one choice is correct. (1.5 points)

1. Kate Moss

- a. had a celebration when she turned 32.
- b. had a celebration with 32 police officers.
- c. had a celebration with 32 friends.

2. The Mirror said

- a. that police wanted to have a party with Kate.
- b. that police were unhappy with Kate.
- c. that police enjoyed Kate's party very much.

3. Someone said that

- a. Kate had behaved in the best way after her addiction to cocaine was made public.
- b. Kate had behaved wrongly after her addiction to cocaine was made public.
- c. Kate had been given good advice after her addiction to cocaine was made public.

5. Composition (130-150 words). In your opinion, are drugs common among models?

MCPARADOX

In Millau, a small town in France, some 15,000 protesters cheered yesterday when local farmer activist Jose Bove rode by in a hay wagon. This marked the beginning of Bove's trial on charges of destroying the local McDonald's last August.

Bove argued that the world's biggest restaurant chain is the unacceptable face of globalization, a supplier of 'garbage food', and an engine of cultural hegemony.

Protests against McDonald's are becoming increasingly familiar in France, England, Germany and Italy. You might think that Europeans hated McDonald's, except for one inescapable fact: they ate \$9.6 billion worth of burgers last year. There are now 4,943 McDonald's in Europe, and the company plans to raise the number to about 6,000 by 2002. McDonald's is not short of words when it comes to defending itself. First of all, they claim that few multinational companies are more locally owned in the countries where they are based. Secondly, they say they provide employment for 250,000 people (often derisively called 'Mcjobs'). And finally, in a part of the world where life is getting faster, McDonald's is offering service and convenience to help people cope with the pressures-while at the same time steering local diets away from tradition and toward processed food.

1. Answer the following questions using your words.

- a) What are Bove's arguments against McDonald's?
- b) How does McDonald's justify itself?

2. Are the following statements true (T) or false (F)?

- a) 15,000 people protested by riding by in a hay wagon.
- b) By 2002, McDonald's intends to have around 6,000 restaurants in Europe.

3. Find a word or phrase in the text which, in context, is similar in meaning to:

- a) person or firm that provides you with something
- b) to increase

4. Choose a, b, or c, in each question below. Only one choice is correct

1. Bove was taken to court for ...

- a) riding through a village in a hay cart.
- b) vandalizing a McDonald's restaurant.
- c) eating garbage food.

2. Bove argued ...

- a) that McDonald's is a cultural firm.
- b) that McDonald's represents globalization, which is negative.
- c) that McDonald's is the world's biggest restaurant chain.

3. Protests against McDonald's ...

- a) are familiar events in France.
- b) are becoming increasingly common in certain countries.
- c) are not very serious in France, England, Germany and Italy.

4. McDonald's ...

- a) employs thousands of people.
- b) is called McJobs in France.
- c) teaches people to live faster.

5. Composition (100-150 words approximately). Choose one of the following topics. (4 points)

- 1. Why do you think some people prefer to eat in restaurants like McDonald's?
- 2. Will fast food replace the traditional Mediterranean diet? Give reasons.

SOPHIE AND EDWARD EXPECTING ROYAL BABY

Sophie Wessex is pregnant and expecting a Royal baby in December, Buckingham Palace revealed today.

Prince Edward and his wife are said to be "absolutely thrilled and excited with the news" of a "much wanted" baby.

A palace statement said: "Their Royal Highnesses the Earl and Countess of Wessex are very pleased to announce that the Countess of Wessex is expecting a baby in December.

"The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh and members of both families are delighted with the news." A spokeswoman for the Countess of Wessex said Sophie was feeling a "little tired" but was "absolutely fine".

She added that Sophie, at home today in Bagshot Park, Surrey, would withdraw from official engagements on doctor's advice.

The news comes after tragedy struck the Royal couple in December 2001 when Sophie, 38, lost a baby after suffering an ectopic pregnancy.

The Queen, Prince Philip and Sophie's parents were told about the pregnancy over the weekend.

QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions using your own words.

a. Is it the first time that Sophie gets pregnant?

b. Will Sophie keep her official engagements?

1. Are the following statements True or False?

- a. The Queen will have another grandchild in December.
- b. The Queen was told about the pregnancy two weekends ago.

2. Find a word or phrase in the text which, in context, is similar in meaning to:

ANNOUNCED:

VERY HAPPY:

3. Choose a, b or c in each question below. Only one choice is correct.

4. The birth of the baby is going to happen

- a. over the weekend.
- b. in December.
- c. next month.

- 5. The Queen and Prince Philip
 - a. are very excited about the news.
 - b. are very surprised about the news.
 - c. are celebrating it with friends.
- 6. Prince Edward and his wife live in
 - a. Wessex.
 - b. Buckingham Palace.
 - c. Bagshot Park.
- 7. This pregnancy is Sophie's
 - a. first pregnancy.
 - b. second pregnancy.
 - c. third pregnancy.

8. Composition (100-150 words) How many children would you like to have in the future?

SOLDIER ADMITS GUILT OVER IRAQ PHOTOS

Lynndie England, the U.S. soldier who was photographed holding a naked Iraqi prisoner on a leash, pleaded guilty to prisoner abuse and other charges today. She confessed to seven charges, including conspiracy, maltreatment of prisoners, dereliction of duty and indecent acts. England faces a maximum prison term of sixteen years, although it is likely she will receive less. Her lawyers will present evidence before a jury that she has mental health problems and learning disabilities. The ringleader of the photo abuse scandal, Charles Graner, was sentenced in January to ten years in prison and will receive a dishonourable discharge.

The photographs of England and her colleagues humiliating and abusing Iraqi detainees at the Abu Ghraib prison shocked the world last year and sparked outrage in Arab nations. There was widespread condemnation of the U.S. military and calls for Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to resign. Despite fervent claims that orders for the abuse came from high up in the U.S. chain of command, only low-ranking soldiers have been brought to trial. England's lawyers have argued that Lynndie was acting on orders from above to “soften up” the prisoners before interrogation. The feeling is still widespread that Ms England and her colleagues are being used as scapegoats.

QUESTIONS

1. Answer the following question using your own words.

a. How long is England going to be in prison?

b. What is the opinion of the Arab countries regarding these facts?

2. Are the following statements *True* or *False*?

- a. Orders for the abuse came from high up in the chain of command: _____
- b. Many believe Lynndie is being unfairly used to shoulder the blame: _____

3. Find a word or expression in the text which, in context, is similar in meaning to:

- a. Fury: _____
- b. Abandonment: _____

4. Choose *a*, *b*, or *c* in each question below. Only one choice is correct.

- 1. England admitted that
 - a. she was not guilty.
 - b. she was not very tough on the prisoners.
 - c. she was guilty.
- 2. England has been
 - a. the only soldier sentenced.
 - b. sentenced together with another soldier.
 - c. sentenced together with other low-rank soldiers.
- 3. According to the jury, England is
 - a. totally healthy
 - b. a bit insane and has problems with her learning skills.

- c. physically unhealthy.
- 4. According to some sources, the orders to abuse the prisoners came from
 - a. higher rank military men.
 - b. her sergeant.
 - c. the Defence Secretary.

5. Composition (100-150 words) Are *these facts usual during war time?*

RED PLANET RENAISSANCE

Just five years ago, astronomers viewed Mars as an essentially dead world. Recent discoveries made by the Mars Global Surveyor spacecraft and gleaned from Martian meteorites have changed that opinion.

The new picture of a 'youthful Mars' not only confirms that geological activity occurred abundantly in the first two thirds of Mars's history, but also that it has continued until comparatively recently, and probably persists up to the present day. These findings will have a dramatic effect on the human exploration of Mars, and the quest to learn whether life ever existed there.

In the next few decades the subsurface layers of Mars will be examined in a search for Martian microbes, either past or present. The test of whether life evolved on Mars is a major scientific problem because an answer either way would have profound consequences. If life did evolve on Mars, what was it like and what was its basis at the molecular level? If life never appeared on Mars, why didn't it, and does this mean that humanity is alone in the universe?

1. Answer the following questions using your own words.

- a) What was the most recent and surprising finding about Mars?
- b) What would scientists have to answer if it was proved that life had never appeared on Mars?

2. Are the following statements true (T) or false (F)?

- a) The findings were made five years ago.
- b) There may be active volcanoes on Mars.

3. Find a word or a phrase in the text which, in context, is similar in meaning to:

- a) considered, regarded
- b) developed gradually

4. Choose a, b or c, in each question below. Only one choice is correct.

- 1. The new evidence has been obtained ...
 - a) while looking for Martian meteorites.
 - b) by a space station where there were meteorites.
 - c) by a space vehicle and after studying Martian meteorites.
- 2. The discovery of geological activity on Mars means that...
 - a) there was life on Mars a long time ago.
 - b) there could be microbial life on Mars.
 - c) there is microbial life on Mars today.
- 3. The writer suggests that...
 - a) these discoveries will be of great importance in the search for life on Mars.
 - b) liquid water does exist today on the surface of Mars.
 - c) these discoveries do not confirm geological activity
- 4. Microbes will be searched for ...
 - a) by taking photographs.
 - b) by studying meteorites.
 - c) by examining parts of the ground.

5. Composition (100-150 words approximately). Choose one of the following topics.

- 1. If any kind of life was discovered on Mars, what would be the consequences?
- 2. We are alone in the universe. Do you agree?

WHY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU

People need to be active to be healthy. Our modern lifestyle and all the conveniences we've become used to have made us sedentary - and that's dangerous for our health. Sitting around in front of the TV or the computer, riding in the car for even a short trip to the store and using elevators instead of stairs or ramps all contribute to our inactivity. Physical inactivity is as dangerous to our health as smoking!

Add up your activities during the day in periods of at least 10 minutes each. Start slowly ... and build up. If you're already doing some light activities move up to more moderate ones. A little is good, but more is better if you want to achieve health benefits.

Scientists say accumulate 60 minutes of physical activity every day to stay healthy or improve your health. Time needed depends on effort - as you progress to moderate activities, you can cut down to thirty minutes, four days a week.

Physical activity doesn't have to be very hard to improve your health. This goal can be reached by building physical activities into your daily routine. Just add up in periods of at least ten minutes each throughout the day. After three months of regular physical activity, you will notice a difference - people often say getting started is the hardest part.

I. Answer the following questions using your own words

a. Why is physical activity so important for people?

b. How can you include physical activity in your life?

II. Are the following statements true (T) or false (F)?

- Smoking is less dangerous than physical inactivity.
- You do not need more than sixty minutes a day to be fit.

III. Find a word or phrase in the text which, in context, is similar in meaning to:

- inactive
- fit

IV. Choose a, b, or c, in each question below. Only one choice is correct

1. Nowadays people ...
 - a) are less active than in the past.
 - b) are more active than in the past.
 - c) are as sedentary as they used to be.
2. Time needed for physical activity depends on ...
 - a) health
 - b) effort
 - c) money
3. You can improve your health ...
 - a) integrating physical activity into your timetable.
 - b) eating less and less during short periods of time.
 - c) relaxing and keeping cool.
4. People say that...
 - a) they do not have time for physical activity.
 - b) getting into physical activity is the most difficult part.
 - c) getting into physical activity is not so difficult.

4. Choose a, b or c in each question below. Only one choice is correct.

1. Some Harvard researchers claim that jogging alone
 - a. is not healthy.
 - b. is as healthy as it was thought.
 - c. is not as healthy as it was thought.
2. Jogging alone
 - a. increases the production of brain cells.
 - b. increases the size of the brain.
 - c. reduces the production of brain cells.
3. The report suggests that if you decide to go jogging
 - a. you should do it on your own.
 - b. you should do it with someone else.
 - c. you should do it when your brain tells you.

4. Composition (130-150 words). Give your opinion about the information supplied by the text.

Unit 4. The Scientific Articles for Checking Practical Skills.

SPORT

CHINESE BADMINTON PLAYER RETIRES

LONDON - The disgruntled crowd at Wembley Arena booed and loudly urged the now-dishonored badminton players to get off the court. **Yu Yang** of China apparently is going one step beyond that, putting down her racket good; and will hit the shuttlecock no more. She took the step of announcing the move herself through social media—Tencent Weibo – saying goodbye to “dear badminton.”

This came after eight female badminton players from China, South Korea and Indonesia – including Yu and her doubles partner, **Wang Xiaoli** – were kicked out of the Olympic Games by the sport’s international federation Wednesday for seeming tank round-robin matches to get an easier draw in the quarterfinals.

The fallout from the seemingly unprecedented mass disqualification continued. Reports in China added to the intrigue behind the scenes. Team officials said that Wang injured her right knee in the midst of pre-match warmups, causing the highly regarded doubles team to hold back against the South Koreans.

The online badminton publication Badzine ran an article late last year, analyzing match statistics from tournaments in 2011 and concluded: “More than 20 percent of matches is either not finished or not played wen Chinese shuttlers play against their own compatriots. Chinese shuttlers met each other 99 times on the circuit this year, and 20 matches were either not played and all (11 walkovers) or played partially before one of the opponents retired (9 retirements)”.

“This shows that 20.20% of matches between Chinese shuttlers were not completed in 2011. These figures have to be put in perspective as China has the largest contingent of players at high level – more than a third of matches played between compatriots (99 of 289 matches) are played between Chinese shuttlers. Never the less, it has raised some questions amongst the badminton community.”– Lisa Dillman

Swimmer Weltz enjoys the ride

If the U.S. swim team were to present a Pierre de Coubertin Award, to the athlete who most exemplified the Olympic founder’s motto that participating in the Games was more important than winning, Scott Weltz would win in a landslide. He placed fifth in Wednesday’s final of the 200-

meter breaststroke, with **Daniel Gyurta** of Hungary setting a world record. “I feel like a part of history,” Weltz said. “I’m just happy with his whole Olympic experience. I don’t have any regrets.” To say Weltz was a longshot to make the Olympic team would be a severe understatement. He never had won any event in a major meet. He swam four events in the 2008 Olympic trials, finishing 30th, 38th, 65th and 67th.

In 2010, after Weltz had concluded his NCAA career at UC Davis, the school cut its men’s swim team. Although Olympic-caliber swimmers generally train with one another, and with a club team, Weltz trailed with the UC Davis women’s team. USA swimming did not include his biography in its media guide for the Olympic trials. Weltz stunned the swimming community by winning the 200 breast, and with it a ticket to the Olympics. “I’m just enjoying the ride,” he said. “Obviously, I wanted to medal. But I’m not going to hang my head. I did the best I could. I had fun with it.” Before the trials, **Michael Phelps** had no idea who Weltz was. Before Weltz, swam here, Phelps wished him good luck. - Bill Shaikin

Race tightens

Updating the always-fascinating medal race at the Olympics: Heading in to Thursday’s action, China led the overall table with 17 golds and 30 medals, and the United States was second with 12 golds and 29 overall and after Thursday? Talk about a dead heat, in terms of gold. The Chinese picked up one gold and the

Americans collected six, giving both countries 18. - Lisa Dillman

U.S. WOMEN EARN GOLD

WINSOR, England – After capturing the gold medal four years ago in Beijing the U.S. women’s eight filled a bottle with water from the rowing venue and brought it home.

It remained sealed for nearly four years, until the American crew arrived last month at Eton Dorney, the bucolic rowing center where the 2012 Olympic regatta is being held. Once there, they christened their boat with the Chinese water in an effort to infuse some of that previous good fortune.

It apparently worked.

The American women’s eight boat beat Canada in a much-anticipated showdown Thursday, winning them U.S.’ first rowing gold at these Games and contorting the crew’s six-year winning streak.

Covering the course in 6 minutes 10.59 seconds, the United States led the entire racer, Canada finished second after a slow start, and the Netherlands claimed third.

The U.S. crew members – coxswain Mary Whipple and rowers Caryn Davies, Caroline Lind, Eleanor Logan, Meghan Musnicki, Taylor Ritzel, Esther Lofgren, Zsuzsanna Francia and Erin Cafaro – threw up their arms and screamed in celebration after crossing the finish line. Many of them wobbled as they stepped off the boat, their legs shaking like jello from 2,000 meters of sheer exertion.

And though several members joked about the magical powers of their Beijing bottle, they all acknowledged it required more than a few ounces of brownish water to protect a rowing dynasty.

“I think it takes selflessness and the ability to come together as a group,” Whipple said. “On the one side, it’s just one 2K race. But on the other side, it’s the Olympic Games. We just wanted to be up there, look each other in the eye – even though we are facing backward – and just enjoy it, one stroke at a time.”

The U.S. boat is unbeaten in major competitions since 2006, though Canada came within .03 of a second of the American crew at the World Cup in Lucerne, Switzerland. In this year’s U.S. eight, there are six holdovers from the Beijing Games, two of whom also won silver in 2004.

Having stood atop the podium for the third time, the U.S. is now tied with Romania and the most gold medals in the event.

“That is an American dynasty, baby,” said Francia, the Hungarian – born model who has won two Olympic gold medals and four world championships with the U.S. crew. “It’s just so special.”

A few members of the Canadian boat appeared to have been crying shortly before a post-race news conference, though they insisted they all had shed happy tears. At least two rolled their eyes when asked how they could end America’s rowing reign.

“They won’t be the same USA team (four years from now) and we won’t be the same Canadian team, so you cannot predict anything,” said longtime Canadian coxswain Lesley Thompson-Willie, 52, whose silver medal Thursday made her the second-oldest person ever to win a rowing medal.

Canada made a strong final sprint Thursday, as it bested the U.S. boat in the last 500-meter split but still lost by 147 seconds. Despite a shaky finish by the U.S., Whipple says she never doubted her crew would be adding another medal to its trophy case.

“When we launched, it was game over,” she said. “I felt so much power. When we took our stride, that was beautiful. We were a little high. I just told them to breathe... to be present that whole time. It was magical.”

BILLINGSLEY HAS ANOTHER GOOD EFFORT

“This shows what this team wants to do,” outfielder Shane Victorino said. “It’s about now. We don’t want to wait around.”

The Phillies want more than salary relief in exchange for Lee. They now have the option of holding onto Lee, which is what General Manager Ruben Amaro Jr. told reporters in Philadelphia they would do, or trade him to the Dodgers by Sunday.

Victorino, who was acquired from the Phillies on Tuesday, guessed it would be “tough” for the Dodgers to acquire Lee.

“He’s Cliff Lee,” Victorino said. “The Phillies are going to want a lot for him.”

Major league player involved in a trade would have to first clear waivers, meaning the Dodgers probably won’t be able to offer anyone of value from their active roster. The Dodgers are also short on premium prospects.

Lee is owed about \$7 million for the remainder of this season. He is owed \$25 million annually from 2013-2015 and his contract includes a \$27.5 million option for 2016 that becomes guaranteed if he meets certain performance benchmarks. Lee will be 38 at the end of the 2013 season.

Even before making a play for Lee, the Dodgers added more than \$40 million to their payroll in the previous 10 days by adding Victorino, Hanley Ramirez, Randy Choate and Brandon League. They took on almost \$3 million more Friday when they traded for Blanton.

The Dodgers off-the-field activity overshadowed affine performance on the field. With F.J. Ellis hitting two home runs in a game for the first time in his career, Chad Billingsley winning his third consecutive start and Ramirez driving in a pair of runs, the Dodgers ended a three-game skid to remain half a game behind the first-place San Francisco Giants in the National League West.

Ellis has hit 10 home runs this season, more that he hit in the last four years combined between the majors and triple. His second homer of the game was to the opposite field.

“I’m waiting for the drug tester to come and find me,” Ellis said, jokingly.

Meanwhile, Billingsley improved to 3-0 since returning from the 15-day disabled list on July 23. Billingsley held the Cubs to a run and four hits over seven innings.

Ramirez, who was 0 for 10 in his first three home games as a Dodger, was two for four. He stretched a single into a double and scored in the fifth inning, then drove in two runs with a single to right-center that knocked Cubs starter Jeff Samardzija out of the game in the sixth.

MORA'S SENDING A NEW MESSAGE

Richard Brehaut missed six games with the broken leg last season. He has yet to prove he can be consistent. Freshmen Jerry Neuheisel and T.J. Millweard are even less experienced than Hundley, who at least has a year of practice under his belt.

Hundley can run at least as well as he can pass. He doesn't have the strongest arm in the quarterback competition, but his accuracy improved significantly during the spring. His elusiveness as a runner could give the Bruins an effective wrinkle.

UCLA has a new sideline leader in Mora, two new coordinators and, in Hundley, a likely new leader on the field too. That's one question answered.

Here are six others:

Can the new guys coach?

Highly regarded recruiting classes have not developed into highly respected teams in recent season.

Mora has set a no-nonsense tone. Assistants Adrian Klemm, Demetrice Martin and company have shown their recruiting prowess. Offensive coordinator Noel Mazzone is an out-of-the-box thinker. But how will it play on Saturdays?

ULCA went 38 years without firing a head football coach. Athletic Director Dan Guerrero has fired three in 10 years. Bruins fans will have to give Mora two, maybe three season before asking whether the \$11.235 – million (plus incentives) investment was well spent.

Can the Bruins tackle?

The basics have eluded the Bruins at times, as was evident from the 11 white-clad pylons that USC players ran around, over and past in a 50-0 victory last November.

The Bruins gave up 400 or more total yards seven times last season, and 500 or more three times. Arm tackling was too often in vogue. Mora switches to a 3-4 alignment this season, but whether you play a 4-3, a 3-4 or a 1-10, you have to tackle.

Can the Bruins block?

Last year's offensive line produced a solid running game, but the Bruins' pass protection was hit-and-miss-meaning the quarterback was often hit after a lineman missed. There were 29 sacks.

The return of tackle Xavier Su'a – Filo from a Mormon mission is a big help. Guard Jeff Baca is the only other lineman who goes into camp having already won a starting job.

Can the Bruins cover?

The Bruins are thinnest in the secondary, a dangerous thing in a conference that added offensive swashbucklers Mike Leach at Washington State and Rich Rodriguez at Arizona.

Cornerbacks Aaron Hester and Sheldon Price are solid, but there are depth issues. Antony Jefferson, who has battled injuries the past two seasons, could be a key component.

Safety is just as thin. Free safety Tevin McDonald seems ticketed for a big season, but the most experienced strong safeties are Dalton Hilliard, who was moved to running back, and Andrew Abbott, a converted cornerback.

Can Johnathan Franklin do what USC couldn't do in 1986, catch Gaston Green?

Franklin ran for 976 yards last season and 1,127 in 2010. He sits 1.162 yards shy of Green's UCLA career record of 3,731 yards. And he seems well-suited for Mazzone's philosophy of getting players in one-on-one situations.

Can newcomers help?

Freshmen defensive lineman Ellis McCarty was the best bet to play immediately, but he will miss the start of camp after undergoing arthroscopic knee surgery.

Carl Hulick has a good shot at center and tackle Simon Goines will get a long look. Cornerback Ishmael Adams, cornerback Marcus Rios, wide receiver Jordan Payton, linebacker Jeremy Castro and linebacker Aaron Porter could also be in the mix.

BARKLEY ISN'T A LOCK FOR HEISMAN TROPHY

Beginning Sunday

Times staff writer Chris Dufresne takes a daily look at college football's best teams, starting with No. 25 and ending with No. 1.

USC is not to blame, nor is Redd. Nor is, really, the NCAA. But this is what happens when you make rules up as you go.

2. The Heisman Trophy is USC quarterback Matt Barkley's to lose, but he can lose it. Remember, last year, the trophy was Stanford quarterback Andrew Luck's to lose, and he lost it to a Baylor quarterback.

Robert Griffin III put instant pressure on Luck's campaign with his breakout performance in Baylor's 50-48, opening-weekend win over Texas Christian.

The opening-week game that could put similar pressure on Barkley: Michigan, with quarterback Denard Robinson, plays Alabama at Arlington, Texas. An RGIII-type performance against the defending national champion on national TV would instantly elevate Robinson's status.

3. Strike up the bans. The one-year bowl penalty imposed on Central Florida this week sets up two games this year in which both schools will be ineligible for the postseason. Central Florida plays at sanctioned Ohio State on Sept. 8, and Ohio State travels to Penn State on Oct. 27.

It should be noted that UCF is appealing its bowl ban. And good luck with that.

4. Zach Mettenberger, the incoming quarterback for Louisiana State, started in college at Georgia. Former Oregon State starter Ryan Katz is at San Diego State throwing passes to onetime USC receiver Brice Butler.

Lache Seastrunk, the highly touted tailback from Texas who got Oregon in an NCAA mess, is eligible this year at Baylor. Connor Wood, a former quarterback at Texas, is at Colorado.

Wisconsin, which last year used North Carolina State transfer quarterback Russell Wilson to win the Big Ten, is counting on Maryland transfer Danny O'Brien. And ex-Notre Dame pass thrower Dayne Crist has joined forces at Kansas with former Irish Coach Charlie Weis.

5. Three teams outside the NFL East capable of ending the Southeastern Conference's six-year BCS title reign:

- USC. History bodes well for the Trojans. This year's BCS title game is in South Florida, where USC scored historic postseason wins in 2002 (Orange Bowl versus Iowa) and 2004 (BCS title versus Oklahoma).
- Oregon. The Ducks have won three straight Pac-12 Conference titles and played Auburn to a last-second loss two years ago in the title game.
- Oklahoma. You don't have to remind Sooners fans that it's been more than a decade since Bob Stoops won that national title against Florida State.

6. First-year Washington State Coach Mike Leach will pull off at least one significant upset. Best hunches are the opener at Brigham Young, his alma mater, or home games against California (Oct. 13), UCLA (Nov. 10) or Washington (Nov. 23).

7. Jim Mora, UCLA's new sheriff, is moving training camp this year to San Bernardino, where Wild West lawman Wyatt Earp spent part of his life. Earp was famous for his part in the "Gunfight at the OK Corral."

Mora has his hands full with "The Over-the-Wall Gang."

8. When did Steve Spurrier become Chuck Knox? Coaching the Tampa Bay Bandits in the United States Football League, Spurrier once ordered an on-side kick on the opening kickoff. His pass-first Florida offense was called "Fun-and-Gun." Entering his eighth season at South Carolina, though, Spurrier won a school-best 11 games last year with a cloud-of-dust blueprint.

South Carolina finished 95th nationally in passing, but its defense was No. 2 against the pass and No. 3 nationally. The Gamecocks this year will lean on running back Marcus Lattimore, returning from a knee injury.

“If we can’t throw it very well, we’re not going to try,” Spurrier recently said. Who is this guy?

9. School not ranked in USA. Today coaches’ preseason top 25 poll that should have been: Utah.

School in the top 25 probably ranked too high: Florida State at No. 7.

10. The Insight Bowl has changed sponsors and will now be called the Buffalo Wild Wings Bowl. Ticket prices, we hear, will range from “mild” to “Jammin’ Jalapeno” and “Blazin’.

OLYMPIAN TAX HURDLE

A bill would exempt winners from paying on prizes

WASHINGTON – Getting into the Olympic spirit before leaving for summer recess, lawmakers introduced legislation to exempt U.S. medal winners from paying taxes on their “hard-earned medals.”

“Only the U.S. tax code can turn the ‘thrill of victory’ into the agony of victory,” Reps. Mary Bono Mack (R- Palm Springs) and G.K. Butterfield (D-N.C.), sponsors of a bill to eliminate the tax, said in a statement.

The issue has caught fire on Capitol Hill since Americans for Tax Reform highlighted Olympic medal winners’ potential tax liability.

Lawmakers from both parties have jumped on the issue.

“Leave it to our government to punish team USA for their success on behalf of all Americans,” Rep. Ted Poe (R-Texas) said on the House floor after the U.S. women’s gymnastics team won gold at the London Games.

On Friday, Rep. Dave Camp (R-Mich.), chairman of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee, added his influential endorsement to letting Olympians “enjoy their medals and awards without having to worry about whether they can pay the taxes.”

Olympians who win medals also receive a cash prize: \$25,000 for gold, \$15,000 for silver and \$10,000 for bronze from the U.S. Olympic Committee.

A gold medal winner will pay the IRS up to \$8,986, according to the Americans for Tax Reform Foundation. Silver medal winners face a tax of up to \$5,385, and bronze medal winners up to \$3,502, the group says.

But the group’s calculations have generated controversy of their own.

PolitiFact, a fact-checking project of the Tampa Bay Times, noted on its website that athletes can deduct un-reimbursed expenses. “Any accountant worth their salt should be able to get the rate of tax on medal winnings much below \$9,000, and maybe even to zero,” it said.

Americans for Tax Reform responded that its primary claim stands up: the prizes are taxable.

And so Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) introduced the Olympic Tax Elimination Act.

“Olympians who dedicate their lives to athletic excellence should not be punished when they achieve it,” he said.

Ken Johnson, an aide to Bono Mack, added: “For every Michael Phelps, there are hundreds of other U.S. athletes who don’t ‘cash in’ on their fame. This is more about the teenage gymnast who comes home with a \$10,000 tax bill, but can’t write off the cost of a personal trainer.... It’s a simple – and pretty inexpensive way – to say ‘thank you’ for their hard work and sacrifices.”

At Northwestern University School of Law, senior lecturer David Cameron said he’d be surprised if the IRS goes after medalists for taxes on the fair-market value of their gold, silver and bronze medallions. But he believes the agency does pay close attention to dollar prizes.

“Paying your taxes is not punishment,” said Cameron, associate director of the school’s tax program. “Why should we treat someone who earns \$25,000 by running a race differently than a person who earns \$25,000 by digging a ditch?”

Matthew Gardner at Citizens for Tax Justice also questioned assertions about the potential tax liability medal winners could face. The legislation, he said, would “add to the complexity and loopholes that everyone agrees are a problem.”

“Our revenues are dwindling; the rich pay less and less in taxes every year and the tax code needs reform yesterday,” he said. “With this kind of opportunistic legislation, these lawmakers are part of the problem, not the solution.”

Given the gridlock in Congress, this bill might require legislative gymnastics worthy of a gold medalist to advance.

U.S. GYMNASTS BACK ON TOP

This is only the second team gold for the United States and the first on foreign soil. The other came in 1996 in Atlanta, when Bela Karolyi ran the team. Now Bela’s wife, Martha, is in charge, and Bela gave her his full appreciation. “This is her team,” he said. “It’s all her.”

The Americans were great front-runners in the final. The team competed first on vault. As if destiny wanted a good joke, the first American competitor was Wieber. She had left the same floor in tears two days earlier when her error-filled qualification performance kept her from advancing to the all-around final.

But Wieber landed a solid vault, and the 17-year-old let herself smile when a score of 15.933 was posted. (The maximum score possible on an exercise varies according to difficulty).

Douglas came next and was a little better, soaring through the air, her toes pointed, her knees unflinching on the landing. She earned a 15.966, but that seemed almost nothing after Maroney finished. Even though she is competing with a broken toe, it seemed as if Maroney launched herself so high she might never come down.

And when she did land, a person in the crowd yelled, “Holy Maroney. Her score of 16.233 was, by far, the highest of the night on the apparatus, and from there no team was ever within a point of the Americans”.

John Geddert, the personal coach for Wieber, said this team gold was some good consolation for Wieber, the defending world all-around champion. She stunningly didn’t reach the Olympic all-around final after finishing third among the Americans in qualifying; only two women per country can qualify.

“And this is the best team all-time,” Geddert said. “Others might disagree, the 1996 team might disagree. But this is the best team. Difficulty-wise, consistency-wise, this is USA’s finest.”

That 1996 Olympic team earned the name “Magnificent Seven” for its Atlanta performance.

Maroney, the 16-year-old from Long Beach, came up with a name for this team. “Fierce Five,” she said. “We’re the fiercest ever and we’re all babies.”

Teams can have only five members now, down from 1996’s seven, and none of these five is older than the 18-year-old Raisman.

The youngest is 15-year-old Ross, from Aliso Viejo, who kept pretending to take a bite out of her new jewelry. The gold medal seemed almost heavier than Ross. “It feels so fabulous,” she said. “That’s a good word, right?”

The Americans have now earned a team medal in six straight Olympics. Only Romania, which has been on the Olympic podium every year since 1976, has a better record.

Floor exercise became a team celebration for the up just before them, imploded. Both Anastasia Grishina and Ksenia Afanaseva had major falls, and by the time Raisman started her dancing, tumbling party, all the U.S. girls were jumping and hugging.

“I was screaming so loud I almost passed out,” Maroney said. Of all the Americans, competitors and coaches, it was Martha Karolyi who was the calmest at the end.

“This is a fantastic achievement,” she said. “But we don’t need to get our noses up”.

“We will just keep working hard. Without work, you don’t achieve anything.”

THEY'RE ON LITERAL FAST TRACK

Jessica Ennis of Britain, Carmelita Jeter of U.S. highlight strong first day

LONDON – When Britain's Jessica Ennis set an Olympic heptathlon hurdles record Friday morning, she also set the pace for the opening day of track and field competition.

In the first event at a jam-packed Olympic Stadium, she ran the 100-meter hurdles in 12.54 seconds, breaking the Olympic heptathlon hurdles record set by Jackie Joyner-Kersey in 1988. In Friday's finale Tirunesh Dibaba of Ethiopia defended her 10,000-meter Olympic title in a world-leading time of 30 minutes 20.75 seconds, followed by Kenyans Sally Kipyego (30:26.37) and Vivian Cheruiyot (30:30.44) in personal-best times.

Thirteen of the top 14 finishers in the 10,000 ran national-, personal- or season- best times. Americans Amy Hastings at 31:10.69, Janet Cherobon-Bawcom at 31:12.68 and Lisa Uhl at 31:12.80 hit personal bests while finishing 11th, 12th and 13th.

In distances short and long, with hurdles to conquer or nothing between them and the finish line but raindrops, athletes covered ground in astonishingly fast times Friday. "It felt nice," Cheruiyot said of conditions in the stadium. "The wind was very quiet. I enjoyed it."

Besides Ennis, who led the heptathlon through four events, the most eye-opening performance was by Carmelita Jeter of Gardena, whose blazing 10.83 in the first round of the 100 was the fourth-best time in the world this season. Blessing Okagbare of Nigeria ran a personal-best 10.93 in another heat.

Jeter will be joined in Saturday's semifinals by teammates Tianna Madison – whose 10.97 was .01 off her season best – and a slowstarting Allyson Felix (11.01).

Jeter dashed past reporters without discussing her performance, but other athletes said the Mondo track had helped them fly and fans' enthusiasm had kept them aloft.

"It's a very fast track. I love it. I loved the crowd," said Kerron Clement, whose season-best 48.48 in the first round of the 400 hurdles led all three Americans into Saturday's semifinals. "The crowd's great on the first day. I'm pretty impressed by that."

Rain was falling Friday morning when Sanya Richards-Ross ran a strategically low-powered 400 in 57.78 and advanced to Saturday's semifinal with Francena McCorory (50.78) and Dee-Dee Trotter (50.87). But Richards-Ross said she could still tell that the track would produce good times.

My turnover felt really great on this track and I didn't feel like I was giving 100%, so I think it's going to give us a lot back when we're actually running very hard," she said.

Felix didn't like her start – "I completely missed it," she said – but liked the track. "It feels really good," she said. "It feels great to have it be a full stadium and feel all the energy. It's exciting to finally be underway."

Ennis felt the energy too. "I never knew I was going to run as fast, but to get a personal best on day 1 is amazing," she said.

Ennis is the heptathlon leader through four events with 4,158 points, but Austra Skujyte of Lithuania set an Olympic heptathlon shotput record and is second with 3,974 points. Canada's Jessica Zelinka is third at 3,903, a point ahead of Ukraine's Lyudmyla Yosypenko.

Hyleas Fountain of Daytona Beach, Fla., the Beijing heptathlon silver medalist, is fifth with 3,900 points. Sharon Day of Costa Mesa couldn't get her rhythm on the high jump and ranks 18th with 3,740 points entering Saturday's three final events. Chantae McMillan of Rolla, Mo., is 25th.

Thrower advances

Defending women's discus gold medalist Stephanie Brown Trafton of Galt, Calif., advanced to Saturday's final with the day's fifth-best throw, 212 feet 10 inches, on her third and final attempt. The other U.S. competitors, Aretha Thurmond and Gia Lewis-Small-wood, didn't advance.

U.S. competitors

Leonel Manzano of Marble Falls, Texas, led the three Americans in the men's 1,500 into Sunday's semifinals. He was timed in 3:37.00, Matt Centrowitz of Arnold, Md., at 3:41.39 and Andrew Wheating of Eugene, Ore., at 3:40.92. Evan Jager of Algonquin, Ill., the U.S. record holder in the 3,000 steeplechase, qualified for Sunday's final with a time of 8:16.61, second-best of the day. Donn Cabral of Glastonbury, Conn., also moved on but Kyle Acorn of Mesa, Ariz., didn't advance.

Long jumper Marquise Goodwin of Dallas led his qualifying group with a leap of 26 feet 7¹/₄ inches to reach Saturday's final. Will Claye of Phoenix also advanced with a jump of 26-23/4. But George Kitchens Jr. of Augusta, Ga., was eliminated.

Kibwe Johnson of Sacramento qualified for the hammer throw final with a sea-son-best toss of 253-2. A.G. Kruger of Ashland, Ohio, was eliminated... Amanda Smock of Melrose, Minn., the lone U.S. entrant in the women's triple jump, didn't advance past the qualifying round.

NATURE

WHAT YOUR NOSE KNOWS

And other amazing facts about your senses

Sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell: our five senses are what help us make, well, sense of the world around us. But scientists are still discovering how they work—and how you can sharpen yours. Read on for a comprehensive look at the new science of your senses.

SIGHT

THE HUMAN EYE IS AN exceptional tool for gathering light; it can distinguish among 500 shades of gray spot the light of a candle 14 miles away. But for all the eye's extraordinary ability, seeing is a function of the brain—humans' visual cortex is more developed than that of any other mammal.

Vision demands that the brain differentiate foreground from background, and edges from lines – skills that even the world's most powerful computers have been unable to match. Your brain makes sense of shapes and symbols by putting them together like a jigsaw puzzle, organizing fragments into a coherent whole. (Movies work because the brain stitches a series of frames into an unbroken stream.) We develop this ability as infants – which explains why patients who grew up blind but have had their sight restored often struggle to understand what they are seeing: their brains can't initially distinguish an object from its background, or accurately separate two overlapping objects. (A chair and desk would be perceived as a single flat image, like an abstract painting made of rectangles). Optical illusions work by exploiting the mind's tendency to try to find order in patterns – a face in the pock marks on a cement wall or make sense of an impossible image, like the endless climbing staircase in an Escher drawing.

HEARING

IN SOUTH SUDAN, NEAR the border with Ethiopia, a tribe known as the Mabaan reportedly live in a place of such quiet that their ability to hear has become astonishingly acute. The legend has it that even the oldest Mabaan can make out the words of another tribesman whispering to him from across a wide field. In theory, at least, any one of us could do the same, provided we spent our lives similarly sheltered from noise. At birth, our ears are pristine organs, capable of discerning among more than 300,000 sounds. (After years of exposure to loud noises, the hair cells on the cochlea, in the inner ear, flatten, becoming less sensitive). Yet even as we age, our eardrums remain finely tuned – they can pick up sounds so faint that the eardrum itself moves a distance less

than the diameter of a hydrogen molecule. (This sensitivity developed to protect us from predators).

Our brain processes sounds a thousand times faster than images and vestibular sounds even as we sleep. This constant bath of noise affects everything from our concentration to our health. Researchers have found that living in loud areas can raise blood pressure by an average of 5 to 8 percent. Even our ancestors understood how sound could damage as well as delight: the word noise comes from nausea, the Latin word for sickness. But sound can also be a positive force. A study conducted on premature infants, for instance, found that they were able to leave the hospital sooner if soft music was played while they slept.

TASTE

TASTE, DESIGNED IN part to help us reject harmful foods, has long served as the body's primary defense against poison. As befits its role, the system is lightning fast: the body can detect taste in as little as .0015 seconds, compared with .0024 seconds for touch and .013 seconds for vision.

To be tasted, food molecules must fall into a cluster of cells called a taste bud, more than 10,000 of which are spread over the tongue, palate, and inner cheek. The taste bud sends a signal to the brain, which then determines everything from whether a food tastes "safe" which in most cases means it's not too bitter - to whether we enjoy it. In a part of the brain known as the anterior cingulate, tastes get married to an emotional reaction: disgust for rotten meat, say, or delight for a sweet strawberry. But while some tastes are innate - nearly all humans are born with a sweet tooth - there's also evidence that taste can be nurtured. Studies have shown that babies prefer foods they first "tasted" in the womb, or while nursing. (Traces of certain flavors, including garlic and vanilla, turn up in amniotic fluid, and also in breast milk.)

More recently, food scientists have found ways to manipulate our likes and dislikes. One chemical, extracted from a West African fruit, binds to taste receptors in a way that makes even the sourest lemon taste as sweet as lemon pie. Food scientists have jumped on the discovery, scrambling to devise additives that would trick our taste buds into perceiving sweetness in the absence of actual sugar.

TOUCH

OF ALL YOUR SENSES, touch is the most difficult to fathom doing without. With hundreds of nerve endings in every square inch of skin, your body functions like an antenna, receiving a constant stream of information

ranging from the firmness of the chair you're sitting on to the heat of the sun through the window. Touch is the first sense we develop in utero, and it is crucial to survival. Babies can die from lack of it, and as adults, touch helps to protect us from harm. Some nerves are specialized to feel texture and pressure, others to detect temperature or register pain. Nerves known as proprioceptors sense the position of our body parts in space enabling us to cross our arms with ease, or lean out a window without falling. But touch influences us more subtly as well. A recent study from Yale University found that people seated on soft chairs during mock negotiations with a car dealer were likely to make an offer several hundred dollars greater than people who were seated on hard chairs sign of how the brain interprets comfort (the physical sensation) as evidence of broader well-being.

SMELL

SMELL MAY BE OUR MOST evocative sense. Studies have shown that people can recall a scent with 65 percent accuracy after one year; visual memory sinks to 50 percent after just a few months. And because smells are processed by the same part of the brain that handles memories and emotions - the temporal lobe - we respond to them with rare intensity. Decades later, a passing scent may summon a memory of our first-grade classroom, one so vivid that we seem transported across time and space.

Though not on a par with our canine friends', the human nose is still something of a marvel. An ordinary person can pick up a whiff of skunk when the amount of scent in the air is less than one ten-trillionth of an ounce. The nose can also determine where a smell is coming from, pointing you - for better or worse - toward the source. Still, our sense of smell is deeply individual: some people can't smell mushrooms; others can't sniff out freesia. These differences are mostly genetic, but simpler things - small physiological changes and factors like mood and medication (antibiotics, statins, and blood pressure drugs can all affect our sense of smell) - enhance or diminish our ability to detect odors. In fact, it's believed that we never experience a smell the same way twice, since the sensitivity of our nose changes from hour to hour and day to day.

GOING FOR THE GOLD

Looking for a fun - and profitable - way to spend your next free Saturday? Join the thousands of amateur prospectors digging for buried treasure.

THE MOTHER LODE Goldhounds meet the second Friday of every month at the Veterans Memorial Hall in Auburn, Calif. On a recent night, a burly member named Mike Bowers was at the podium, sharing the tricks he's used to unearth gold nuggets over nearly three decades. In the audience, men

with wild beards and weathered faces seemed to be channeling the forty-niners who first settled this historic town in the Sierra foot-hills. But they were joined by moms in sweatpants, retirees in golf jackets, and hipsters in knit caps. What brings them together is one of the nation's fastest-growing pastimes: gold hunting. In the past five years, membership in the Gold Prospectors Association of America (GPAA) has risen 83 percent, to 45,000. The reason isn't hard to fathom: since 2008, as household budgets have tightened, the price of gold has doubled, soaring past \$1,500 an ounce. And the U.S. Geological Survey estimates that 18,000 metric tons remain undiscovered, scattered through two dozen states. "There's gold from Alaska to Alabama if you know where to look," says GPAA spokesman Brad Jones. Seasoned prospectors consult vintage maps, geological records, even diaries from prospectors of yore. In the field, they "read" the ground for telltale signs, like quartz outcroppings or gravel bars. But for newbies, the surest way to learn how to pinpoint the shiny stuff - and extract it - is to join an organization like the GPAA or the Goldhounds, which can offer training, equipment, and weekend outings. "We're getting more and more families," Jones says. "Kids love to dig around looking for treasure."

Bowers, 57, leads expeditions through the Mother Lode - the 120-mile ribbon of mineral-rich outback that inspired California's original gold rush. His biggest find: a nugget worth \$5,000. But coming home empty-handed hardly fazes him - he just loves the thrill of the hunt. "When you're out there digging, you feel like part of the old miners' clan," he says.

The morning after the Gold-hounds' meeting, my wife, Julie, and I join a group of members in the parking lot of an Auburn diner, then caravan down a muddy track into a pine-forested canyon, where we park near a mine abandoned in the 1850s. As the others fan out through the gullies, Julie and I follow Bowers up a red clay dome. We pass a rusty tin coffeepot hanging from a branch - left by a 19th-century prospector, dug up by a modern one.

The air is crisp and the view is gorgeous, with snowy peaks lining the horizon. After taking in the scenery for a few minutes, we get down to business. Gold hunters choose their tools to suit the setting: pans and sluice boxes for probing river muck; motorized dry washers for sifting desert dust. Today, we're using metal detectors, ideal for locating nuggets hidden under thin topsoil. "You can find gold the old-time miners never knew was there," Bowers says.

He shows us how to calibrate our borrowed detector and listen for the shift in its mosquito like whine that indicates a "hit." Within minutes, Julie gets one. Bowers scrapes up soil with a plastic scoop and pours it out incrementally. At last, a nugget the size of a rice grain glitters in the sun. I find my own fleck soon after, by late afternoon we've collected half a dozen more.

TREES GET MYSTERIOUS CLIPPING

Caltrans says the rogue trimming improves the visibility of enormous signs, but an ad firm denies involvement.

The mysterious felling of roughly two dozen trees near city billboards has provoked finger pointing between state transportation officials and an advertising firm, and added fuel to a heated debate involving outdoor advertising in Los Angeles.

Vandals apparently used chain saws to cut back the trees, which had been planted along the 10 and 405 freeways under a California Department of Transportation landscaping initiative. It seems the rogue tree cutters wanted to increase the visibility of enormous ads erected by the World Wide Rush advertising company, said Daniel Freeman, a Caltrans deputy district director for maintenance.

“I can’t imagine why anyone else would want to cut down these trees,” Freeman said.

The advertising firm says it had nothing to do with the matter.

Paul Fisher, a Newport Beach lawyer representing World Wide Rush, accused officials of looking for ways to get around federal rulings that limit the city’s ability to ban digital signs and large ads known as “supergraphics,” which cover entire buildings.

Freeman said the trees were cut back in December and January, just before World Wide Rush put up supergraphics for Tropicana juice on a parking structure at the Sherman Oaks Galleria and a six-story building on National Boulevard, near the 10 Freeway.

The damaged landscaping included a row of 15-foot Brisbane box evergreens that were cut down to 3 or 4 feet, Freeman said. Caltrans had planted the trees near the Galleria at a cost of about \$2,500 to \$3,000 each, in order to screen the 405 Freeway, he said.

“I am particularly annoyed that these were the ones that got hit,” Freeman said. “These were essentially brand new.”

Five or six more trees were felled near the building on National Boulevard, he said, along with five belonging to the shopping mall.

Katherine Defever, a Galleria representative, said mall officials were baffled when they noticed the destruction and had initially assumed that Caltrans officials were cutting back landscaping themselves.

Freeman said Caltrans was notified of the cutting by City Atty. Rocky Delgadillo, who filed criminal charges in January against World Wide Rush and National Investment Co. – owners of the building at 10801 National Blvd. – for allegedly putting up an unauthorized sign and violating safety regulations.

World Wide Rush contends the charges are in contempt of a federal ruling that found a 2002 city ban on new billboards unconstitutional. Although that decision is under appeal, the company won an injunction preventing officials from banning supergraphics at 34 buildings, including the one on National.

Freeman said the sign on National violates the California Outdoor Advertising Act, which gives Caltrans control over advertising displayed within 660 feet of a freeway. The department is conducting its own investigation into the matter, he said.

While Freeman hopes to replace the damaged landscaping, he said the department would not be able to afford to put in mature trees like the ones that were lost.

PINNACLES MAY REACH NEW HEIGHT

The House passes a bill to make the Central California volcanic wonderland a national park.

WASHINGTON – Pinnacles National Monument in Central California – known as a volcanic wonderland and a climber’s paradise – would become the 59th U.S. national park under a bill that cleared the House on Tuesday with bipartisan support.

The bill creating Pinnacles National Park is aimed at raising the national profile of the site, named a monument by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908. The bill now goes to the Senate.

The 26,000-acre site, with its towering rock formations, has played a crucial role in the recovery of the California condor and draws its name from the volcanic spires that were formed by the eruption of the Neenach Volcano more than 23 mil-lion years ago.

“Pinnacles is a rare American landscape that will be even more significant as a national park, attracting new visitors to experience its oak savannas, grasslands, dramatic volcanic spires and caves,” said Paul Spitler, director of wilderness policy at the Wilderness Society.

If approved by the Senate and signed into law by President Obama, the bill would make Pinnacles – already a unit of the National Park Service – the first new national park since Great Sand Dunes National Monument in Colorado was elevated to a national park in 2004.

The Pinnacles bill moved through the House after its chief sponsor, Rep. Sam Farr (D-Carmel), lined up a Republican, Rep. Jeff Denham of Atwater, as a co-sponsor and agreed to GOP demands to drop a proposed nearly 3,000-acre expansion of wilderness areas within the new park.

Farr said the new designation would more accurately define “this jewel of Central California and all it has to offer.” He told colleagues on the House floor Tuesday that the change also could increase tourism and boost the economy of the area.

The designation has the support of California Sens. Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein.

But Fair, who has spent a decade seeking the designation, expressed concern that the end of the congressional session was approaching. “Our biggest enemy is time,” he said.

Filmmakers Ken Burns and Dayton Duncan, who produced the PBS documentary “The National Parks: America’s Best Idea,” wrote in a letter of support to lawmakers that elevating a monument to a national park “alters its place in the American imagination.”

“The Grand Canyon was just as wide and deep when it was a national monument as it is now as a national park, but the change enhanced its status in the eyes of the public – and in doing so increased its lure to visitors from our nation and abroad,” they wrote.

“So, too, a Pinnacles National Park, simply by its new designation, would attract and demand greater attention to the remarkable treasures the monument has to offer.”

The 397 units of the National Park Service range from battlefields to historic sites. Eight of the 58 national parks are in California.

GROWERS EYEING CROPS

‘You worked hard all year to get your crops, and there’s a chance you’ll lose it all tonight.’

Temperatures on Saturday night were expected to dip as low as 25 degrees, triggering freeze warnings across Southern California.

“It’s not unusual for us to get these cold snaps this time of year, but it’s one of the colder ones we’ve had in a while,” said Curt Kaplan, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service’s Oxnard office.

Starting Monday, cold Santa Ana winds will sweep in from the desert, keeping temperatures low but stirring up the air enough to eliminate most of the threat to the citrus crop. By Wednesday, temperatures should begin to rise.

“These next few nights will be extremely critical nights,” said John Nelsen, president of California Citrus Mutual, an association of the state’s 3,900 citrus growers, the majority of which are family farmers.

The year had been off to a good start, with a particularly flavorful crop of mandarins and good sugar content across the state. The association has sold up to \$300 million in citrus already, with another \$1 billion still on the trees.

“We were looking at a very profitable year,” Nelsen said.

But a cold snap can change that in hours. In January 2007, citrus growers lost 60% of the state’s crop to freezes. In 1998 it was 85%. The worst season in memory was the Christmas freeze of December 1990, when a week of temperatures in the teens defoliated the orchards, leading to a total loss for that season and the one after, Nelsen said.

It’s those memories that keep citrus farmers like Gless up patrolling their orchards all night like an expectant father pacing outside the delivery room.

Gless’ great-grandfather raised citrus and melons in Texas. His grandfather moved the family to El Toro, Calif., and slowly bought up acreage in Riverside, Hemet and the Coachella and Central valleys.

Gless grew up in Riverside and learned to drive a tractor at 8. Patrolling the orchards during winter cold snaps has become a way of life, one his wife and 2-year-old son are still getting used to. As he wends his way through the dark orchards in Hemet, his father is doing the same in the Central Valley while his grandfather monitors the frost alarms from Riverside.

When low temperatures are forecast, they’ll order extra water and run it all night, helping the ground to hold on to some of the heat it absorbed during the day.

With 3 ½ acre-feet of water needed for every acre of land, that can quickly get costly.

Each of their citrus ranches has an automated thermometer that can be called from the warmth of bed.

But small changes in topography can mean a swing of several degrees across an orchard of a few hundred acres.

That leads to long, tedious nights of patrolling and waiting for the temperature to hit that magic number for citrus farmers: 29 degrees.

When it does, Gless springs into action. Thanks to air-quality rules, the smudge pots citrus farmers once used to bum sooty diesel fuel are a thing of the past.

Instead, Gless and his crew will fire up dozens of giant propane-powered wind machines. With one machine for every 10 acres of grove, it can take hours to get them all started.

The wind they create stirs up the inversion layer, mixing the cold air that settles low with the layer of warmer air that sits atop it like a blanket.

Taken together, the water and wind can raise the temperature in an orchard by as much as five degrees, enough to save a year’s worth of work from being sold for juice.

It will be a few days before Gless and his fellow citrus growers cut into their fruit and look for the signs of freezing that tell them if their measures worked.

SPRING STORM DOESN'T EASE DROUGHT FEARS

System snarls roads and drops half an inch of rain on downtown L. A., but totals are still only 21% of normal for the season.

A late-season rainstorm that swept through Southern California on Friday provided some respite from what has been a parched spring.

But the area's heaviest rain in 11 months didn't budge this season from its distinction as the driest on record.

The storm hit Ventura County in the morning and swept east through the South land, bringing half an inch of rain to down-town by late afternoon. That bumped the total rainfall since July 1 to 3.16 inches – 21% of where it should be at this time of year: 14.65 inches.

Although the slick roads inconvenienced commuters and led to numerous traffic accidents, the storm provided a welcome shower of moisture to the area.

“From the national forests to the coasts, we needed this,” said Bill Patzert, a climatologist at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in La Canada Flintridge. “This doesn't put a ding in the drought, but it's sure going to look nice this weekend. Everybody's garden is going to be greened up.”

March, typically one of the wettest months, was bone dry this year. Downtown Los Angeles saw a paltry 0.05 inches.

Rainfall typically starts to drop off in April, making this storm a bit of a surprise to meteorologists.

“It's a little late to get the heavy storm of the season,” said Jamie Meier, meteorologist with the Los Angeles / Oxnard office of the National Weather Service. “April storms are very unpredictable. It seems more unusual than it is because we've gotten so little so far this year.”

The lack of rainfall was a factor in early season wildfires that swept through hillsides in the last month, including one near Burbank and another that damaged homes in Beverly Hills.

Fire officials said the rains would do little to prevent more fires.

“Even if there is a little bit of growth with these rains, it's not going to do too much good in the long run because so much dead vegetation has accumulated from the dry spell,” said d'Lisa Davies, spokeswoman for the Los Angeles Fire Department. “We've been lucky that we haven't experienced any mudslides.”

EPA SAYS ORMOND BEACH TOXIC WASTE HAS STABILIZED

An 11-week project has made the Halaco slag piles less of a threat to the nearby wetlands.

A mountain of hazardous waste created by a shuttered metals recycling plant adjacent to Oxnard's Ormond Beach wetlands has been stabilized, federal regulators announced Friday as they took government officials on a rain-soaked tour of the site.

Ventura County Supervisor Kathy Long and representatives of Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Rep. Lois Capps (D-Santa Barbara) piled into two sport utility vehicles and were taken on a guided tour of the 43-acre beachside property formerly operated by Halaco Engineering Co. The tour was organized by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officials, who are over-seeing the \$5-million project.

Rob Wise, the agency's on-site coordinator, said the 11-week stabilization project involved reshaping the giant slag piles on the eastern side of the property into one pile to make them less susceptible to erosion and to keep them from sloughing into wetlands. The consolidated pile remains 40 to 50 feet high, but Wise said most of the man-made mountain is now covered by coir matting, made of coconut fiber, which reduces dust and helps keep the heap intact.

New surveys will provide a better estimate of just how much waste is left after nearly 40 years of smelting aluminum and magnesium at the Halaco facility, which shut down in 2004 after the company went bankrupt. Wise's current estimate of 710,000 cubic yards of waste is enough hazardous material to fill more than 1,000 standard-size homes.

Concerns about trespassers – who left behind graffiti and tire tracks from off-road vehicles and bicycles – have prompted the city of Oxnard to consider condemning buildings on the property so they can be removed.

“What the community wants is to demolish, tear down and get rid of the ugly eyesore that we now have great concerns about,” said Long. “If I could just wave a wand and this whole site is gone tomorrow, that would be our best possible outcome.”

At Tuesday's supervisors' meeting, Long is expected to urge her colleagues to formally support placing the Halaco property on the national priority list so it can be designated a federal Superfund site. The designation would provide additional funding for long-term cleanup.

Friday's tour was also a chance for officials to meet Wayne Praskins, regional EPA project manager for the Superfund program, who will oversee longterm cleanup at Halaco. Praskins estimated it would take at least two years just to determine what needs to be done to make the property safe for humans

and the wetlands' wildlife.

Preliminary estimates suggest it could cost more than \$150 million to remove the Halaco waste and transport it to approved landfills, Wise said.

HOTELS BEGIN TO WARM TO 'CARBON OFFSETS'

EVERY day you stay at a hotel, you may burn enough fossil fuels to release more than 33 pounds of carbon dioxide, the bad boy of global warming, into the atmosphere.

But don't worry. Open your wallet, and all is forgiven, or at least that's the pitch of a growing number of programs.

Among the latest is Travel Green, announced in February by Sustainable Travel International, a nonprofit company in Boulder, Colo. It markets what it dubs Mini-Green Tags to hotels and guests. The proceeds, it says, will fund conservation and renewable energy, such as solar and wind power.

The idea is based on so-called carbon offsets that Expedia and other companies offer as optional purchases to customers who take air trips. Such offsets, designed to help counter carbon-dioxide emissions that travel generates, are spreading through the lodging industry.

Since March, Brussels-based Rezidor Hotel Group, which runs Radisson, Regent and other chain hotels in the Mideast, Europe and Africa, has allowed guests in these regions to use loyalty points to buy carbon offsets through London-based Carbon Neutral Co.

Leading Hotels of the World, a New York-based marketing association of 440 luxury hotels, was planning to implement Travel Green by the end of last week. And at Bonneville Hot Springs Resort in Bonneville, Wash., which helped pilot the program, some guests attending a conference last fall bought Mini-Green Tags.

But what were they really buying? And should you buy it too?

The answer is complicated. Such efforts are helpful but not a panacea, some activists say.

"These kinds of programs are useful tools for raising awareness about global warming," said Jenny Powers, spokeswoman for the Natural Resources Defense Council in New York. "But the first goal should be to reduce your carbon footprint."

As a guest, you can reduce your footprint by patronizing hotels that reuse towels, recycle water and waste, garden with drought-resistant plants, use solar heat and take other conservation measures.

Look for action, not talk, said Brian T. Mullis, president of Sustainable Travel International: "Are they engaged in sustainability or 'green-washing'?"

Among hoteliers highly regarded for conservation is Denver-based Xanterra Parks & Resorts, which uses alternative energy and tracks waste output at its lodges in Yellowstone, Grand Canyon and other national parks. A few hotels, such as the Orchard Garden in San Francisco, are built to eco-friendly guidelines.

Despite these initiatives, Mullis said, “The bottom line is that some amount of greenhouse gas is inevitable.”

Just how much takes some calculating, much of it theoretical. On the basis of government statistics on energy use, and figuring that a typical hotel room maybe 300 square feet, Mullis estimated that a one-day stay results in the release of 33.7 pounds of carbon dioxide. The cost to offset that with renewable energy is about 48 cents, he added.

Mullis expects Mini-Green Tags to retail for \$1. Depending on how the hotel runs the program, less than 43 cents may go to alternative energy funded through the program’s partners, the nonprofit Bonneville Environmental Foundation in Portland, Ore., and My Climate, a Swiss-based nonprofit.

Indeed, a Travel Green brochure touts “additional revenue” for hotels. One version would work like this, Mullis said: his company sells tags to hotels for 50 cents per tag, of which 42.5 cents goes to eco projects and 7.5 cents covers program costs. The remaining 50 cents of the \$1 that the guest pays goes to the hotel, an amount that “we hope they’ll use” for eco projects, he added.

On the other hand, Leading Hotels of the World plans to absorb the full cost, said Marshall Calder, senior vice president of marketing. He said it would donate 50 cents for each night’s stay booked on its new website, www.lhwgreen.com (which was expected to go “live” by today); by phone using a special code; or through a link on www.sustainabletravelinternational.org – but not on Leading Hotels’ main website.

The booking data allow them “to measure consumers’ enthusiasm” for sustainable tourism, Calder said.

However hotels handle carbon off-sets, there’s potential to do well by doing good. Sales of Mini-Green Tags, Mullis said, will develop wind power in Washington and Oregon and build hydroelectric power stations in India.

They may also help eco-guilty guests sleep more easily – after switching off all the lights.

SPACE CASE

AS SHIPMENTS GO, IT WAS ROUTINE – about half a ton of supplies – except it was delivered by the first commercial flight to the International Space Station. Space X partnered with NASA in this new model, the brainchild of Elon Musk, who’s behind Tesla electric cars as well.

Musk left South Africa at 17, earned two U.S. undergraduate degrees and then made serial piles of dough pioneering online payment systems, including the one that became PayPal. Musk's persona inspired aspects of the portrayal of Tony Stark in "Iron Man," but his aspirations seem more like Buzz Lightyear's – to infinity, and beyond.

When the rover "Curiosity" lands on Mars on Sunday, will you be thinking, "That's what SpaceX will be doing one day"?

That's always been a goal of SpaceX. We're hoping to develop the technology to do that in probably 12 to 15 years.

Would you go to Mars?

I would. The first flight would be risky; if I felt comfortable that the company's mission will continue, that my kids have grown up, then I'd be on the first mission.

People mention you in the same breath as Richard Branson and Virgin Galactic, but his space effort seems more tourist-driven and yours more industrial and scientific.

I've nothing against tourism; Richard Branson is brilliant at creating a brand, but he's not a technologist. What he's doing is fundamentally about entertainment, and I think it's cool, but it's not likely to affect humanity's future in a significant way. That's what we're trying to do.

The thing that got me started with SpaceX was the feeling of dismay – I just did not want Apollo to be our high-water mark. We do not want a future where we tell our children that this was the best we ever did. Growing up, I kept expecting we're going to have a base on the moon, and we're going to have trips to Mars. Instead, we went backwards, and that's a great tragedy.

Shouldn't government be doing projects like this?

Government isn't that good at rapid advancement of technology. It tends to be better at funding basic research. To have things take off, you've got to have commercial companies do it. The government was good at getting the basics of the Internet going, but it languished. Commercial companies took a hand around 1995, and then it accelerated. We need something like that in space.

SpaceX couldn't have gotten started without the great work of NASA, and NASA's a key customer of ours. But for the future, it's going to be companies like SpaceX that advance space technology and deliver the rapid innovation that's necessary.

But government can fund a space program without worrying about profits or stockholder returns. A commercial company could run into trouble, and there goes the program.

That's why I'm the majority shareholder in SpaceX. When I've recruited investors, I've made sure they're like-minded. SpaceX will create a great deal of value over the long term, but there will be times when that horizon is beyond what some investors would be comfortable with. I'm going to make sure I have sufficient control of the company to optimize for the very long term.

The movies provide us with two space future models: "Star Trek," where a government agency governs space, versus "Alien," where a private space mining company makes its own rules.

We need a new archetype. I've talked to James Cameron about this. He's got a script for a realistic Mars mission because there's not been a good Mars movie. That's another thing that bugs me: The Mars movies have been so bad. I mean, honestly! And it's going to be tricky getting funding for another Mars movie after "John Carter." It was a good comic book, and they totally screwed up the movie.

The plaque the NASA astronauts left on the moon says, "We came in peace for all mankind." Would that be true if there were a commercial free-for-all in space?

I think the body of regulation will grow – hopefully not too much. Sometimes we are a little over-regulated, and this can be difficult for new industry, particularly one that involves physical safety. There must be some ability to experiment to advance the state of the art.

In the early days of aviation there was a great deal of experimentation and a high death rate. We don't want that – the public would not be accepting – but by the same token we can't have a situation where no deaths are ever allowed, because that would put innovation in a coffin too.

Apropos of Tesla Motors, you've said in 20 years half the new cars produced will be electric. What, we'll still have to drive cars? We won't move by means of molecular disassembly?

That'd be nice! There may be something cooler than a car in 20 years, but the most likely outcome is that we'll still have cars and they'll be predominantly electric.

When you came to the U.S., it was the primary destination for the kind of enterprise you wanted to do. Is it still?

It is. If you want to have a significant impact on the world, the United States is the best place to do that. I'm not suggesting that things couldn't be better. We should be asking ourselves, have we made the environment better or worse? And I think it's really important that we stop sending college and graduate students back to their home countries.

Don't we have enough homegrown talent for those jobs?

If you're trying to create a company, it's like baking a cake. You have to have all the ingredients in the right proportion. There's certain special skills, especially in advanced engineering, that are the limiting factor in creating new companies; we send these people home after training them in our graduate schools.

One of the toughest things I've found is to recruit top-notch manufacturing talent. That's where I've had to go overseas. For a few decades, it just wasn't where the smartest kids in the class in America went. We had far too many smart people in the U.S. go into finance and law!

Speaking of finance, you must make Wall Street nervous with your companies' roller-coaster fortunes.

SpaceX has been profitable for four years and probably this will make it a fifth, and Tesla should be profitable next year and for the foreseeable future.

Profit is simply more money coming in than going out, and for a company where that's not true, it will cease to exist at some point, and it should.

Commercializing space, electric cars – aren't you spread a little thin?

I've been going past the red line on the gauge for a while now. It's honestly not been fun, but I have to continue for a bit longer because for Tesla in particular, we're at the stage where the company's survival is in question.

The market has given us a good evaluation. We have great supporters and great detractors. The detractors have a point, that the last successful car company started in America 90 years ago. DeLorean and Tucker brought cars to market, but they were unable to scale up production and reach profitability. The next six months will decide whether Tesla will be the first new successful car company in a century.

Do you think the last best hope of Earth isn't on Earth?

I'm reasonably optimistic about the future, especially the future of the United States, for the century at least. But it's important we get out there and explore the stars, both for defensive reasons and ensuring the continued existence of consciousness.

PRIVATE LIVES

The three founders - Carly Brien, Hayden Slater, and Hedi Gores, all L. A. natives devised a perfect plan for a simple idea while fulfilling a need. In 2009, Brien, who had been living in New York City, returned home to take care of her mother, who had fallen gravely ill. She immersed herself in the teachings of holistic medicine and consulted with Slater, a childhood friend, who had just returned from a wellness-and-cleansing workshop in Asia, and with Gores, who

was also well versed in the concept of a healthy mind in a healthy body. After finding a dearth of “pressed-juice shops where I could easily get my mom the nutrients she needed (and that I needed!),” explains Brien, she and her two friends decided it was time to start “juicing.” “Our goal was simple: to get juice to as many people as possible,” says Brien. Together, they took the next year off to set up their juice business.

Pressed Juicery offers all types of elixirs, from the stable of green and root blends (which include ingredients such as kale, spinach, ginger, and carrots) to detox brews (lemon, cayenne, mint, grapefruit, and so forth) and fruitier concoctions. And yes, there are three- and fiveday cleanse kits too. Added supplements for specific needs - including energy, antioxidants, and cold- and fluster-busters - are also available. And not to be missed are the delicious signature drinks: coconut mint chip, coconut cinnamon, and almond milk - they taste like dessert, but they’re actually good for you. Swear to God.

The company, which now has two more locations – one in Malibu and one in West Hollywood – and a delivery service, has not advertised. It has grown through word of mouth and has benefited from celebrity tweets – the Olsen twins, Zooey Deschanel, Gwen Stefani, Demi Moore, and Reese Witherspoon are all devotees – and other forms of social media. The partners never set out to be the next cool thing or part of any juice trend. And yet, “one of our proudest moments,” says Brien, “was when, weeks after we opened, we learned that Pressed had become sort of a status symbol among kids in elementary and middle school. That’s right. Kids thought it was cool to drink green juice. It is unbelievably gratifying.” No matter what your age, it’s never too early to start drinking.

HISTORY

EGYPT TARGETS ISLAMISTS IN TOWN RAID

CAIRO – In what could presage a broader strike against Islamists who have been attacking Coptic Christians in the Nile Valley, Egyptian security forces on Monday swept into a community where supporters of deposed Islamist President Mohamed Morsi had in effect seized control.

The Christian minority in the central town of Dalga, about 175 miles south of Cairo, reported a harsh campaign of intimidation in recent weeks by militants who burned churches and shook down individuals, demanding protection-money in the form of an archaic “tax” on non-Muslims. About one-sixth of the town’s 120,000 residents are Christians.

But Egyptian authorities played down the army and police offensive in Dalga and appeared reluctant to portray it as having been launched in support of beleaguered Copts. An Interior Ministry official described the operation as

targeting “wanted criminals,” and reported the arrests of 56 people and the seizure of several weapons caches.

By contrast, an army campaign against Islamist groups operating in the rugged Sinai Peninsula has been trumpeted by Egyptian officials. At a news conference in Cairo on Sunday featuring slickly produced videos of soldiers and tanks, the chief army spokesman, Col. Ahmed Ali, vowed that the Sinai campaign would continue until Islamist “terrorists” in the vast desert region were brought to heel.

Christians in Egypt have long complained that the government is indifferent to the persecution they suffer. In Minya, where Dalga is located and Christians make up a greater share of the population than they do nationwide, government offensives may be driven less by a desire to defend religious minorities than by a keen awareness that the area is a stronghold of Gamaa Islamiya, an ally of Morsi’s Muslim Brotherhood movement.

Islamists have challenged government control in several other communities in Minya, local officials have reported.

After the dawn offensive in Dalga, residents told the Associated Press that they were ordered to stay indoors and the town’s entrances were sealed off while security forces conducted house-to-house searches for Islamist militants. Army helicopters hovered overhead.

Christians became the targets of violent attacks after Morsi, the country’s first democratically elected president, was ousted in an army-backed coup July 3. Six weeks later, hundreds of the deposed president’s followers were killed by security forces who broke up sprawling pro-Morsi protest camps in the capital and elsewhere. After that, the situation in Dalga deteriorated drastically, with Islamists holding sway and demanding Morsi’s reinstatement.

Egypt has been roiled by turmoil since the massive popular uprising that drove autocrat Hosni Mubarak from power in 2011. Islamists surged to the political forefront after that, but Morsi’s yearlong rule was deeply unpopular across the political spectrum, and many Egyptians applauded when security forces pushed him from power and staged a wide-ranging roundup of Muslim Brotherhood leaders.

In recent weeks, the political scope of the crackdown has moved beyond the Brotherhood and other Islamist groups to include moderate-minded activists, along with academics and journalists.

The interim government last week extended a nationwide state of emergency that gives the authorities broad powers to suppress dissent, and a curfew imposed more than a month ago remains in force, though its hours have been shortened.

CREWS LIFT COSTA CONCORDIA UPRIGHT

GIGLIO, Italy – Twenty months after it capsized off the Italian coast in a disaster that killed 32 people, the Costa Concordia cruise ship emerged from the Mediterranean on Monday thanks to a painstaking \$800-million salvage effort.

Fifty-six giant pulleys slowly heaved the half-submerged vessel back to an upright position in a 19-hour operation that went into the early hours of Tuesday, revealing a section of hull darkened by rust and algae during months underwater.

“The rotation has finished its course, we are at zero degrees, the ship is resting on the platforms,” said Italy’s civil protection chief, Franco Gabrielli, at a 4 a.m. news conference on Giglio island, where he was applauded and cheered by residents.

“It could not have gone better than this,” said Franco Porcellacchia, an engineer working on the salvage for ship owner Costa Cruises. “It was a perfect operation.”

The 950-foot-long, 114,000-ton vessel had laid impaled on two underwater granite outcrops since January 2012, when it ran aground after Capt. Francesco Schettino attempted a “sail past” maneuver close to Giglio. Schettino is standing trial on charges of manslaughter and abandoning his ship.

About 4,200 passengers and crew were forced to scramble into lifeboats or plunge into shallow water after the ship ran aground. Thirty-two people drowned, some of them sucked under by whirlpools created as the ship tilted.

The Costa Concordia is believed to be the biggest ship to be hoisted back upright after capsizing. The technique, known as parbuckling, has been used in the past, notably on warships, including the battleship Oklahoma, which was righted by the U.S. military in 1943 after it was bombed during the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.

During months of careful preparation by U.S. company Titan Salvage and its Italian partner, Micoperi, more than 1,000 bags of cement were laid underwater and six underwater platforms were built for the cruise ship to be righted onto.

“It was like being in ancient Egypt, watching the construction of the pyramids,” said Giglio Mayor Sergio Ortelli.

By noon Monday, after three hours of hauling during which the pulleys exerted 6,000 tons of pressure, the ship was wrenched free from the two granite outcrops, which had penetrated 18 feet into the hull.

Needing to rotate 65 degrees, the ship slowly turned throughout the afternoon until massive metal boxes – some the height of 11-story buildings – that were welded to the exposed side of the ship touched the water.

By midnight, salvage workers based in a control center on a barge off the bow of the ship switched off the pulleys and opened valves in the boxes to allow water in at 1,000 cubic feet a minute, adding the necessary ballast to bring the ship down onto the platforms.

As it rose out of the water, two large indentations could be seen on the side of the ship where it had been pinned to the rocky outcrops.

Marine biologist Giandomenico Ardizzone, who has been monitoring the seabed for the ship's operator, Costa Crociere, noted that the vessel was being moved from rocks sloping upward to the shore to platforms about 100 feet down.

"Everyone expects the ship to rise up, but it will appear the opposite," he said before the end of the operation. "Once it is settled, the water will rise up to Deck 7 [of the ship], which is almost at the bridge."

When the ship is deemed stable, metal boxes will be added to the formerly submerged side of the ship. Then, water will be pumped out of the boxes on both sides, floating the vessel so it can be towed in spring to a port, probably on the Italian mainland, to be taken apart.

Fears that a slick of paint, residual fuel, small quantities of heavy metal and rotting food – including more than 3 tons of melon, more than 130 gallons of olive oil and 8 tons of beef – would emerge from the ship proved unfounded, officials said.

Looking ahead, Micoperi project manager Sergio Giroto said salvage workers would now get onboard to clean up and remove safes to restore valuables to passengers.

"I would like to strip all the cabins down to the metal to take a few thousand tons of weight off the ship, which will make it sit higher in the water and could affect the choice of port we take it to," he said.

Ortelli, the mayor, said he was in favor of keeping the platforms, which cover an area larger than a football field, for use as an artificial reef to attract divers after the Costa Concordia departs.

Ardizzone said that during his months of diving around the ship and the platforms, he had noticed shoals of fish eyeing the structure, possibly as a future home.

AMENDING CONGRESSIONAL PAY

GREGORY Watson's college essay received a C – and changed America.

The next time someone goes on about how one citizen can't make a difference in this country or how the political system cannot be changed, tell them the story of Watson and the 27th Amendment. On Constitution Day, Sept. 17, the power of the individual citizen in America is not dead.

In 1982, a University of Texas political science professor assigned an essay about the governmental process. Watson, then a student, came across a long forgotten constitutional amendment proposed in 1789 and chose that topic for his paper.

Rep. (and future president) James Madison had proposed that any pay increase Congress voted for itself would not take effect until after the next election. That way, current representatives could not vote themselves a self-serving immediate pay raise, and would have to risk that any vote for a raise could benefit successors who might be ideological or political rivals.

Watson, now a policy analyst for GOP Texas state Rep. Bill Callegari, thinks the founders were right to be concerned, giving a modern era example.

“Congress in December 1981 had given itself a unique tax break applicable only to members of Congress and tried to hide it in a bill to address the needs of persons in the coal mining industry who became afflicted with black lung disease,” Watson told me in an interview. “In my mind, that was nothing more than a backdoor pay raise for members of Congress.”

Though Congress passed Madison’s amendment, it failed to achieve the required ratification from three-quarters of state legislatures to become law. Watson felt that recent events merited reconsideration of the amendment, yet his essay earned a C.

“Both the [teaching assistant] and the professor took the position that the issue was trivial, so trivial in fact that to them it was a nonissue,” Watson recalled. “Both also took the position that what was then a 192-year-old proposed constitutional amendment was no longer pending before the state legislatures.”

Watson’s solution: make it a live issue before state legislatures.

Over the next decade, Watson embarked on a one-man mission to revive moribund state ratifications, raising awareness coast to coast and stoking anti-Congress public sentiment. Starting in Maine in April 1983 and ending in Michigan in May 1992, Watson slowly resuscitated the proposal almost single-handedly.

“I was the one who did all of the letter writing, faxing and telephone calling to the state law-makers,” Watson said. “In many cases, I even went so far as to supply the state legislators with a draft model resolution to use in their state in order to accomplish ratification.”

The 27th Amendment, proposed in September 1789, was ratified by the last state needed in May 1992. No other constitutional amendments have passed since.

With modern political polarization at unprecedented levels, could a constitutional amendment ever occur again?

“Yes,” Watson said, “because if a proposal is very, very, very common sense ... state lawmakers in both parties in the state capitals will realize that the American

people – and the voters in then particular state – would want them to support it.

“The problem,” he acknowledged, “is getting it out of Congress and over to the states.”

Watson believes a more likely scenario is the one set forth in a provision in Article V of the Constitution, under which three-quarters of states ratify first, triggering Congress to follow. No amendment has ever passed this way, but with Congress solidly gridlocked, there’s a first time for everything. “Congress refuses to send to the states for ratification even the most common-sense proposals for amending the U.S. Constitution,” Watson said.

Watson sees contemporary amendment proposals worth considering, citing a proposal introduced in August by Reps. Ron DeSantis (R-Fla.) and Matt Salmon (R-Ariz.). It would “stop Congress from arrogantly exempting itself from the laws that it deems fit to impose upon the rest of the American people,” Watson explained.

Watson’s story exemplifies the power of one ordinary individual to effect change at the highest government levels – perhaps a uniquely American ideal. The 27th Amendment curtailed congressional pay raises; since its 1992 passage, congressional pay has increased 34.4% (and has remained unchanged since 2009) relative to 67.1% inflation. By contrast, congressional pay had skyrocketed 44.7% in the five years before passage of the amendment.

In an era in which many Americans feel their voices go unheeded at the highest levels of public policy decision-making, Watson is the opposite of disillusioned. “Back then, I was dependent on communicating via U.S. Postal Service – and at considerable monetary expense, to say nothing about how laborious and time-consuming the process was,” Watson said. “Today, by contrast... an entire state’s lawmakers could be communicated with through email at the mere click of a mouse.”

ART

NEW PACT FOR PHIL MUSICIANS

The contract with the L.A. orchestra means a new season can begin as planned.

BY MIKE BOEHM

Dodging the labor strife that has descended on other recent negotiations over orchestral musicians’ pay, the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the union representing its musicians announced Monday that they’ve reached a new four-year contract that lifts wages by just less than 1% a year.

At the end of four years, the minimum yearly wage for the Phil's more than 100 musicians will be \$154,336, up 3.8% from the \$148,700 minimum in the contract that expired Sunday. The minimum wage scale had risen 17% over the previous four-year contract. Certain orchestra members earn more than double the contractual minimum.

The agreement, which runs through mid September 2017, means the 2013-14 season can begin unperturbed with a planned gala concert Sept. 30 featuring Yo-Yo Ma and more concerts marking the 10th anniversary of Walt Disney Concert Hall (opened Oct. 23, 2003).

In a joint news release, management and the union said they were pleased with the outcome. "Our members enthusiastically ratified the contract," said Vincent Trombetta, president of Professional Musicians, Local 47, the Los Angeles local of the American Federation of Musicians that represents the Phil's musicians. "The union is encouraged that the parties were able to join together and overcome the obstacles present in today's difficult bargaining and economic environment."

The smooth transition to the new contract contrasts with work stoppages over wages and working conditions that have characterized a number of other negotiations between top U.S. orchestras and their players. In March, San Francisco Symphony musicians went on strike for 18 days, leading to cancellation of an East Coast tour and of concerts in their home concert hall. Management initially proposed a 2% pay increase over three years; it sweetened that to 4.5% over 26 months to end the strike, resulting in a minimum salary of about \$148,000 by mid-2015.

Chicago Symphony musicians went on strike for two days last September before signing a new agreement. "The collegial spirit in which issues were addressed and a new contract reached are emblematic of the collective commitment of the musicians, Gustavo Dudamel the Phil's music director and the board and staff of the L.A. Phil to maintain the very finest musical organization," Deborah Borda, the orchestra's president, said in the announcement.

The announcement said the contract also includes a housing allowance for musicians; "new contributions" to their retirement plan, which resembles a 401 (k); and "restructured healthcare plan offerings" aimed at "managing expenses." Where many orchestras have struggled since the 2008-09 recession, the Phil has registered a cumulative budget surplus of \$28.8 million in the three postrecession fiscal years for which its public tax returns are available. It has declined to provide figures for the fiscal year that will end Sept. 30.

A CLEANING MAKES DIFFERENCE

When does a Jackson Pollock painting look more like a Jackson Pollock painting?

Simple: When it's clean.

That's the not altogether surprising thought that came to mind when I dropped by the J. Paul Getty Museum's conservation lab the other day to check out progress on Pollock's monumental 1943 "Mural." Star of the collection at the University of Iowa Museum of Art, the epic painting had arrived in Los Angeles a year ago for extensive treatment.

Conservators have recently finished removing the coat of varnish apparently applied to the surface sometime in the 1970s – no small task for 160 square feet of canvas (it's roughly 8 feet tall and 20 feet wide).

It's to be expected that a newly cleaned painting will look somewhat different from the way it had, but I was frankly unprepared for just how different – how fresh and kinetic – "Mural" looks now.

Color contrasts are emphatic. Patches of white canvas are bright rather than dim. While wholly abstract, several flickering suggestions of animal forms are vivid. Layers of visual space have opened up, created by what the artist called his "stampede" of painterly shapes and rhythms.

The gestural dynamism known to have had such an impact almost 70 years ago, when the commissioned painting was first unveiled in collector Peggy Guggenheim's Manhattan apartment, has returned in force. My jaw dropped.

The veil of varnish had tamped everything down. Perhaps its most detrimental effect was the uniform sheen of reflected light across the surface that it caused. In hindsight, "Mural" looked less like a painting than like a giant photomural of a painting.

Not anymore. "Mural" is back.

The next job for conservators will be to design a big, sturdy new stretcher for it. That will first require deciding whether to make it a precise rectangle or one that will take into account the picture's slight downward bow. (The canvas appears to sag slightly in the center, pulling up the bottom edges at the right and left and leaving sections of unpainted canvas.) Once the chosen design is built, the entire canvas will be removed from the current stretcher and affixed to its new support.

The aim is to have everything finished by the spring. Then "Mural" will be put on temporary display at the Brentwood museum before returning home to lucky Iowa. If you've seen the painting before, be prepared to be surprised.

ACTORS DISPLAY AGILITY

Shakespeare's Richard II is often referred to as the poet king and not uncommonly played as something of an effete cartoon dreamed up by Oscar Wilde. (Ralph Fiennes brought a Liberace flair to the role in the Almeida Theatre Company's production that came to the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 2000.) A master of figurative language, he treats words as if they were precious curios, symbols to be admired rather than action plans to be put into effect.

To call his management style capricious would be an understatement: England is at the mercy of his whims, which are tolerated by dukes and earls until their property is threatened. A keen observer of the sociology of power, Shakespeare understood that aristocrats would put up with all manner of political eccentricity – just don't mess with their real estate.

Dressed in body-hugging all black, John Sloan plays Richard with youthful selfabsorption in Kubzansky's adaptation. Locked in a squalid dungeon, he behaves as though he was a spoiled Ivy Leaguer sentenced to the loony bin for acting a little nutty. He's haunted by misdeeds and rattled by his miscalculations, but his expression nonetheless screams, "How can this be happening to me?"

As the play travels back in time, we discover just how this spoiled darling got into such hot water. Prancing around with a ruby- and emerald-encrusted gold crown and waving a priceless scepter as though it were the hot new accessory of the season, he can't understand why he's being called away from his playfellows to settle disputes between angry nobles, played by Jim Ortlieb and, the real discovery of this production, the stupendously agile Paige Lindsey White.

White is mesmerizing as the banished son of John of Gaunt, Henry Bolingbroke, who returns with troops after his father's estate is ransacked to pay for the king's elective war against the Irish rebels. But she's just as adept in the role of Queen Isabel and in fact could probably have performed "R II" as a solo show, though that would have prevented us from admiring Sloan's flamboyant Richard and Ortlieb's heartbroken John of Gaunt.

Given the number of characters in the play, the logistics of Kubzansky's production might seem dizzying, but the staging sorts out the action with remarkable fluidity. Names are announced unobtrusively and the acting is so nimble, with hardly an extraneous gesture, that it's easy to accept the way in which Ortlieb and White keep transforming from one figure to the next.

"RII" impresses most as a feat of ingenious stagecraft. The scenic design by Kaitlyn Pietras is stunningly spare, enlivened by a screen backdrop upon which lines from this most poetic of history plays are projected. Jenny Foldenauer's costumes and props help to flesh out a world that is a purely theatrical construction, neither medieval nor modern day but some dreamlike amalgam.

If the second half of the adaptation isn't quite as riveting as the first, it's probably because we have already experienced Richard in captivity and the deposition consequently doesn't have the same suspenseful build. All credit to Sloan, however, for rising in emotional majesty at the play's conclusion.

The production is remarkably concentrated, but some of the textual pruning diminishes the chorus of democratic voices that is perhaps the key to Shakespeare's political vision. The commoners are given short shrift.

There is no need whatsoever for a Shakespeare production to make a case for a play's continued relevance, but "Richard II" engages concerns that continue to bedevil us today. "R II" resists making modern parallels and focuses instead on the theatrically vibrant tale of a ruler who is never more kingly than when giving up his crown. On this score, it succeeds brilliantly.

AT WWII MUSEUM VETS TAKE CENTER STAGE

Officially, the occasion was the dedication of a new \$35-million pavilion at the National World War II Museum here. Tom Brokaw spoke, as did two U.S. senators and various dignitaries. Visitors studied the vintage aircraft, including a B-29 and P-51 Mustang hanging from the ceiling of the imposing U.S. Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center.

But the day was really about the old men.

They're no longer quick, and many shuffled along with canes and walkers. Some rode in wheelchairs. For most, their hair, what's left of it, has turned white. And the hundreds attending the dedication couldn't get enough of them.

"Thank you for your service" was heard again and again, followed by, "May I have your autograph?" and, "May I take your picture?"

The veterans, typically, were modest.

"Somebody threw a war and I showed up. Everybody showed up," said William Blakel, 92, of Wichita, Kan.

The museum was the brainchild of author and historian Stephen Ambrose. It was originally conceived as a museum about D-day and opened on June 6, 2000, the 56th anniversary of the invasion of Normandy. In time it extended its mission to tell the story of the U.S. in World War II, both home and abroad.

As U.S. Sen. Mary L. Landrieu (D-La.) put it, Ambrose and other historians and planners believed books alone could not capture the war experience. The museum aims to "tell a story that refuses to stay on the pages," she said.

On Saturday many stories were of family, not heroics or battle.

Jack Emerson, 89, of Metairie, La., volunteered right out of high school and went on to fly bombers over Italy. He was the eldest of three children, and the day he left for basic training in Texas "everybody was in tears." He was told to write home every day.

And he did – for a while.

After earning his wings he was a second lieutenant, and as seen in an old photo, handsome, too. He “had a good time” as young men will do, he said. For days he didn’t write.

Then he got a telegram, serious business because only important people got telegrams. “Jack call home,” his sister wrote. “Momma’s worried about you.”

Blakel, who served in the Army Air Corps, recalled racing home to Ransom, 111., in 1945 for Thanksgiving. He made it with three days to spare – and met his daughter for the first time. She was 18 months old.

At the museum he smiled and looked at the daughter, Sharon Temanson, who joined him for the dedication. With her father off at war she had slept in her mother’s bed, until this strange man showed up before Thanksgiving.

“You weren’t too happy with me,” Blakel recalled. Saturday’s ceremony, though steeped in the past, also looked to the future. “Today is as much about the next generation as the greatest generation,” said Louisiana Lt. Gov. Jay Dardenne.

Also present were high school and middle school students who wrote winning essays for a contest held in conjunction with National History Day. Students from all 50 states and the District of Columbia marched into the ceremony accompanied by a World War II veteran.

Current members of the military were sprinkled throughout the crowd, often towering over the old men.

When “The Star-Span-gled Banner” began, the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines, old and young, raised their right arms in salute. Some stooped, some stood ramrod straight. Some have memories of Saipan and Anzio, others of Baghdad and Kabul.

And all together, they held the salute.

CHEVROLET HAS BEEN A BETTER RECORD COMPANY THAN COLUMBIA RECORDS EVER WAS TO ME

The song, which was included on Mellencamp’s May 2003 album of reworked blues and folk standards, *Trouble No More*, made news even before it was released. In the fall Mellencamp and his wife, the supermodel and photographer Elaine Irwin-Mellencamp, landed in the headlines again when they posted an open letter on his Web site, mellencamp.com, titled, in part, “It’s Time to Take Back Our Country.” The Mellencamps called for an end to what they described as the “political ‘hijacking’ of Iraq” and the chilling effect on free speech that had crept into the national discourse. Though they were spared the kind of public thrashing that the Dixie Chicks got that March when lead singer Natalie Maines told a London concert audience that she was “ashamed the

president of the United States” is from Texas, the Mellencamp family’s politics did not go unnoticed on their home turf. Elaine Irwin-Mellencamp recalls the time that she, her husband, and their sons, Hud, 12, and Speck, 11, were driving in town when a local radio station played “To Washington” and invited listeners to comment, prompting one man to call up and say, “I don’t know who I hate worse, John Mellencamp or Saddam Hussein.” Mostly, the criticism was implied in the cold stares and whispers of some of the locals whom the Mellencamps encountered on a regular basis.

A few times, the rocker’s clan found themselves on the wrong end of some drive-by mudslinging. Because their 60-acre compound, with its stucco mansion, sits on the serene Lake Monroe, Irwin-Mellencamp says a number of boaters floated near their banks and shouted obscenity-laced tirades at the house. Irwin-Mellencamp won’t forget the time that a boat carrying a profanity-spewing topless woman pulled close to the house while she and her family were having dinner. Irwin-Mellencamp tried to confront the group, but they eluded her. She did the same when someone slipped a nasty anonymous note into her car while her sons were working off excess energy at the local rock-climbing center. Irwin-Mellencamp says she went back into the facility and urged whoever had planted the note to come down off the wall and debate the matter face-to-face. No one descended.

Mellencamp says his neighbors have long known that he is “a liberal,” but admits he was shocked by some of the “emotional” reactions that he encountered locally after word spread about “To Washington”: “I thought, Wait a minute—you guys have known me for 30 years. You don’t know who George Bush is. This guy just showed up. You’re going to take his word over mine?”

Mellencamp considered a form of silence after *Trouble No More*. He had tired of the music-career grind, and, free and clear of any record-label obligations after leaving first Mercury and then Columbia, he says, “I had pretty much decided I didn’t want to make any more records.” He considered turning full-time to painting, a passion of his, but then, he says, he had a conversation with the old-school record executive Doug Morris, chairman of Universal Music Group, which owns the Republic label. The artist says Morris asked him, “Why don’t you go make a great record?”

Mellencamp took the bait, on his own terms. He says *Freedom’s Road* is his only obligation to Universal, and he is hell-bent on having it heard. Well aware that commercial radio doesn’t play the decision to license the album’s first single, the rousing “Our Country,” for a Chevy-truck ad campaign. (He had established a relationship with the automaker in 2005 when Chevy briefly licensed a fragment of his song “Now More than Ever” for another campaign.) In a world where the latest

Rolling Stones tour seems to have more sponsors than some NASCAR drivers, Mellencamp's decision to lend his voice and image to a series of Chevy ads hardly seems cataclysmic – until you consider that in previous decades he was one of the most strenuously anti-commercial rock artists out there. In 1991, he'd even chided fellow midwesterner Bob Seger in print for licensing his song "Like a Rock" for – that's right – a Chevy-truck campaign. "I guess he needed the money," Mellencamp told the Los Angeles Times.

When I mention this to Mellencamp, he doesn't flinch. "It was a whole different scenario back then," he tells me. "Of course, I was 15 years younger than I am now. But there were many avenues at the time for people to get their music on the radio, and MTV was big. There were a lot of ways to get your music played then, as opposed to now."

That defense hasn't stopped the press from taking shots at Mellencamp and Chevy. Last October, The New York Times accused Mellencamp of having "elastic" political values. "He and his spouse once wrote a jeremiad against the Bush administration that said, in part: 'It is time to take back our country. Take it back from political agendas, corporate greed and overall manipulation,' the paper noted. "That was in 2003. Now he's sitting on the fender of a Chevy truck, strumming a guitar and singing, 'Well, I can stand beside ideals I think are right, and I can stand beside the idea to stand and fight.' He can also stand beside a nice shiny truck, if the fee is right."

Mellencamp looks at it another way. When Chevy handed him the creative freedom that he's often fought for at his labels, he took it. "Pretty much, Chevrolet has been a better record company than Columbia Records ever was to me," he says.

On my last day with Mellencamp, I see a man determined to make a great record. I meet him in the control room at Belmont Mall. For the last day and a half, he, members of his band, and veteran sound engineer Don Smith (the Rolling Stones) have been huddled around a mixing board obsessing over the sound of "My Aeroplane," one of the last tracks to be completed for the album. It's got a guitar sound that can raise gooseflesh, and hopeful lyrics in which Mellencamp sings of escaping the bonds of the earth so that he can write the "perfect" song. "It'd be a song for the people / It'd be a song that everybody could sing along." The men listen to the track dozens of times while Mellencamp, in jeans, sits in his inviolable space on the left side of the mixing room's couch, his legs up on an ottoman, looking like James Dean's Jett Rink in *Giant*. After suggesting a number of tweaks, Mellencamp finally yells, "Print it," and a CD copy of "My Aeroplane" is handed to him.

Next comes a crucial test for the song. Mellencamp and Mike Wanchic, a Kentucky boy who has been his guitarist for close to 30 years, exit to Belmont

Mall's parking lot, past the space reserved for Elvis Presley, and head for a cream-colored Audi convertible – Elaine Irwin-Mellencamp's car – which Mellencamp has driven to his studio for a purpose. The two men squeeze their middle-aged frames into the sporty car, insert the CD, crank up the volume, and once more "My Aeroplane" fills the air. After all the sweat and rhetoric, that's what it boils down to: good friends, good music, and a pretty woman's car. The two men sit there bopping their heads and tapping their knees, a little more creakily than they did 25 years ago, but looking like all they ever wanted they got from rock 'n' roll.

VEGAS: COMING SOON TO AN AIRPORT NEAR YOU

Aisle, window or Las Vegas? Now visitors to the Bob Hope Airport in Burbank, Calif., can make Vegas hotel reservations, purchase show tickets and nightclub passes, reserve a round of golf or book a tour as easily as they choose their seat on a plane.

Located at Gate A4, Terminal A, the fully staffed VEGAS.com concierge desk allows airline passengers to purchase a variety of Vegas products just steps away from their departure gate. "We can't imagine a better pre-flight perk for outbound passengers to Vegas," said Howard Lefkowitz, president of VEGAS.com. "Giving customers immediate access to shows and restaurants and other activities - in the down-time just before they arrive in our city - is a convenient service that we are proud to be the first to offer."

The booth is open daily from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. to service the thousands of airline passengers departing on the more than 15 daily flights for Vegas. Agents at the concierge desk said the booth is a hit with passengers looking to make last-minute reservations.

"Really, you can't lose with this job," said VEGAS.com Bur-bank concierge Michele Lumley. "People are going to Vegas to have fun and party and that's what we help them to do."

Besides last-minute shoppers, Lumley said a number of people use their pre-flight downtime to plan future Las Vegas trips. Agents at the VEGAS.com desk have helped plan anniversary celebrations, company retreats and more.

MASTERPIECE THEATRE

Paintings by Johannes Vermeer, Rembrandt van Rijn, Claude Monet, Edouard Manet, Andy Warhol and more have all graced the walls of Wynn Las Vegas.

So it comes as no surprise that "Le Reve," the show at Wynn Las Vegas, is also a masterpiece.

French for "the dream," "Le Reve" shares its name with a Pablo Picasso painting owned by Wynn. Where the 1932 painting explores a single intimate

moment - Picasso's mistress Marie-Therese Walter caught in sensual dishabille asleep in a chair – the show explores all the possibilities this single image suggests. The result is a stunning ode to the human spirit that equals the masterwork that supplied it with a name.

"Le Reve" is a journey of the soul as told through a dream. It explores concepts of damnation, redemption, lust, love, loss and laughter all the while presenting amazing acrobatics, aquatics and even flight.

"Le Reve means the dream, and my aim is to create an entirely new universe, to transport the spectators into a unique world where the theater, performance and audience become one and the same reality. To take you on a magical, sacred journey that touches your emotions in a way that is different to anything I have done before," said show creator Franco Dragone.

From the moment you enter the Le Reve Theater that journey begins. Designed in the round, its circular banks of seats evoke memories of ancient amphitheaters where theater and spectacle were one. The design also serves a practical purpose, ensuring that no seat is more than 12 rows from the liquid stage.

Overhead, a massive domed ceiling houses a bank of digital screens that offer fantastical views of the heavens, while surrounding the audience are three clock towers, like the points on some strange compass.

A recent \$8 million renovation serves to reinforce the venue's unique atmosphere. Wynn Las Vegas has made the extraordinary decision to reduce the venue's number of seats from 2,087 to 1,606. This allows the hotel to offer some of the widest and most luxurious theater seats in Vegas.

It also facilitated the creation of the Strip's first ever bottle-service VIP theater seats. Dubbed the Champagne Circle, these seats are only available as part of a special VIP Indulgence package. Guests seated in them enjoy complimentary Perrier-Jouet champagne, chocolate-covered strawberries, plush lounge seating and the ultimate insider's look at "Le Reve" - a video screen that shows behind-the-scenes, underwater and overhead shots before and during the show.

The remodel also reimagined the colors and decor of the theater. Gone are the cold blue walls and seats, replaced with deep reds and bronzes - a color palette inspired by the Picasso painting. All the changes serve to better unite the show and the theater, erasing the line between stage and audience to the point where you become a part of the dream that is "Le Reve."

This integration is further reinforced with Le Reve's pre-show. About 15 minutes prior to show time, characters begin to rise from Le Reve's pool like primordial beings - lizards, horned devils and angelic women. Four white-suited angel-clowns make their way through the audience. These comedic figures reappear throughout the show acting as both guide and comic relief like a demented

melding of archangels and lounge act.

Then, with a burst of fire rolling across the lake, "Le Reve" begins with a torrent of images seemingly torn from the collective human subconscious. Here a broken and blasted tree rises from the lake. Figures cling to its branches only to dive into the pool, surface and climb the tree again – the struggle of life captured in a few fleeting moments. Others fly, reaching for the heavens only to be cast back down into the watery abyss – Michelangelo's Last Judgment hauntingly brought to life.

Men and women meet in a dance of lust and love where the simple sight of legs clad in red heels can transform a swimmer into seductress. Rain falls in a downpour, snow softly descends and even the celestial heavens come alive.

Through it all, characters appear and disappear, emerging from the lake as though born there, diving down from the heavens like avenging angels, crawling out from the audience as though drawn forth from those seated in the theater. A single woman, an homage to Picasso's dreamer, appears throughout the show, the center of the maelstrom, she anchors the chaos allowing us to travel with her on this strange journey.

"Le Reve" delivers all the spectacle expected of a Las Vegas show with death-defying acrobatics, amazing special effects and a unique stage that appears to transform into any form imaginable. But what elevates this show to an artistic masterwork is its ability to touch the human spirit.

Demonic and divine, "Le Reve" finds both in the human soul, leaving you to wonder have you woken from the dream or are you still there?

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Навчальне видання

КЛОЧКО Лариса Іванівна
ТЕРЕНКО Олена Олексіївна

ACADEMIC WRITING: THE BASICS

Manual

Комп'ютерний набір *Л.І. Клочко, О.О. Теренко*
Комп'ютерна верстка *С.П. Цьома*

Підп. до друку _____.____.2019.
Формат 60x84/16. Гарнітура Times New Roman.
Папір офсетний. Друк цифровий. Ум. друк. арк. 5,12.
Ум. фарб.-відб. 5,12. Обл.-вид. арк. 4,39.
Тираж 100 пр. Вид. № ____.

Видавець і виготовлювач:
ФОП Цьома С.П. 40002, м. Суми, вул. Роменська, 100.
Тел.: 066-293-34-29.

Свідоцтво суб'єкта видавничої справи:
серія ДК, № 5050 від 23.02.2016.