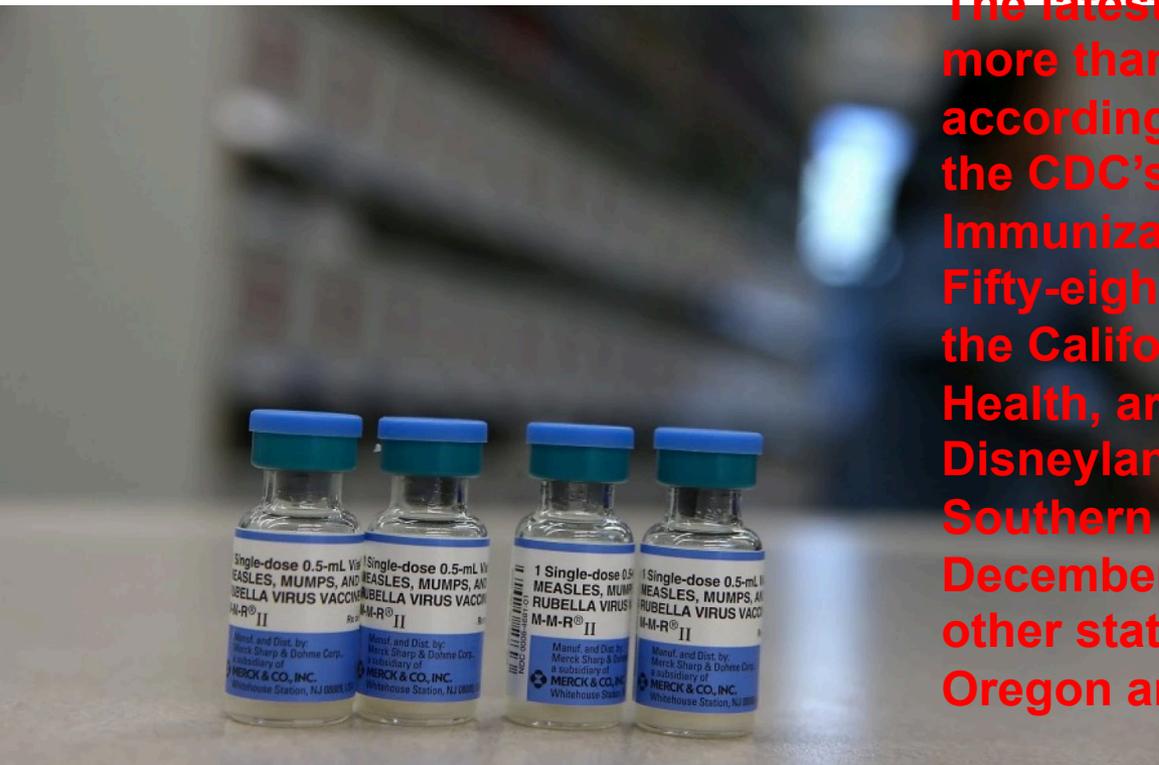


Current Events #9--USA



The Shot not Heard?



The latest measles outbreak has infected more than 100 people across 14 states, according to Anne Schuchat, director of the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. Fifty-eight of those cases, according to the California Department of Public Health, are traceable to an outbreak at Disneyland and another theme park in Southern California that began in late December and now has spread to six other states, including Utah, Washington, Oregon and Colorado.

The outbreak has generated sometimes fierce criticism of people who, for personal reasons or because they mistrust the vaccine, choose not to have their children immunized and prompted at least two school systems in California to ban unvaccinated students from school.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2015/01/31/amid-growing-vaccination-debate-measles-continues-to-spread-and-is-now-in-new-york-state/>

Know Where to Stop



Six people were killed and at least a dozen more were injured Tuesday evening when a Metro-North Railroad commuter train crashed into a sport-utility vehicle in Valhalla, in New York's Westchester County, authorities said.

The third rail, which powers the railroad, breached the train's interior Tuesday. An explosion blasted flames into the front two cars of the train along with the vehicle on the tracks, a black Jeep Cherokee that had stopped at a crossing on Commerce Street, officials said.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/seven-dead-after-metro-north-train-crashes-into-a-car-in-valhalla-n-y-1423012039>

Purse String Rumble



Mr. Obama's nearly \$4 trillion blueprint drew immediate scorn from GOP lawmakers who view the president's proposals for targeted tax increases aimed at boosting the middle class as untenable in light of their concerns over the federal budget deficit.

"At a time when Americans are still struggling to get by, this budget would add on even more costs and taxes," said House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R., Calif.). The White House says its plan can reduce the deficit by \$1.8 trillion, relative to current levels, over the next decade, through a combination of lower spending, economic improvements and tax increases.

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/obamas-budget-faces-gop-fight-1422899887>

Know When to Take a Selfie



Distraction caused by taking selfies is likely to blame for a plane crash that killed a pilot and his passenger in Colorado in May, according to the National Transportation Safety Board.

Investigators found an undamaged GoPro video camera near the wreckage and recovered its data card. Video from the card showed the 29-year-old pilot with several passengers on flights the previous day, and one nighttime flight shortly before the fatal trip, taking photos of himself with his cell phone, according to investigators.

"The camera's flash was activated and illuminated the cockpit area," the report said.

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/02/03/us/selfie-plane-crash/index.html>

Bigger Problems to Fry



A Wisconsin woman who brought a kangaroo into a McDonald's says she left the store voluntarily after a customer called police to complain.

Beaver Dam Police say they responded to an anonymous call about the woman, Diana Moyer, who brought a kangaroo, Jimmy, into the fast-food restaurant.

When police arrived, Moyer had the baby kangaroo wrapped in a blanket and tucked into a child's car seat, the Associated Press reported. Moyer told the responding officer that the kangaroo was a service animal to help her cope with emotional distress and produced a letter from a doctor.

<http://news.yahoo.com/kangaroo-mcdonalds-wisconsin-police-report-170025061.html>

Follow the Illegal Silk Road

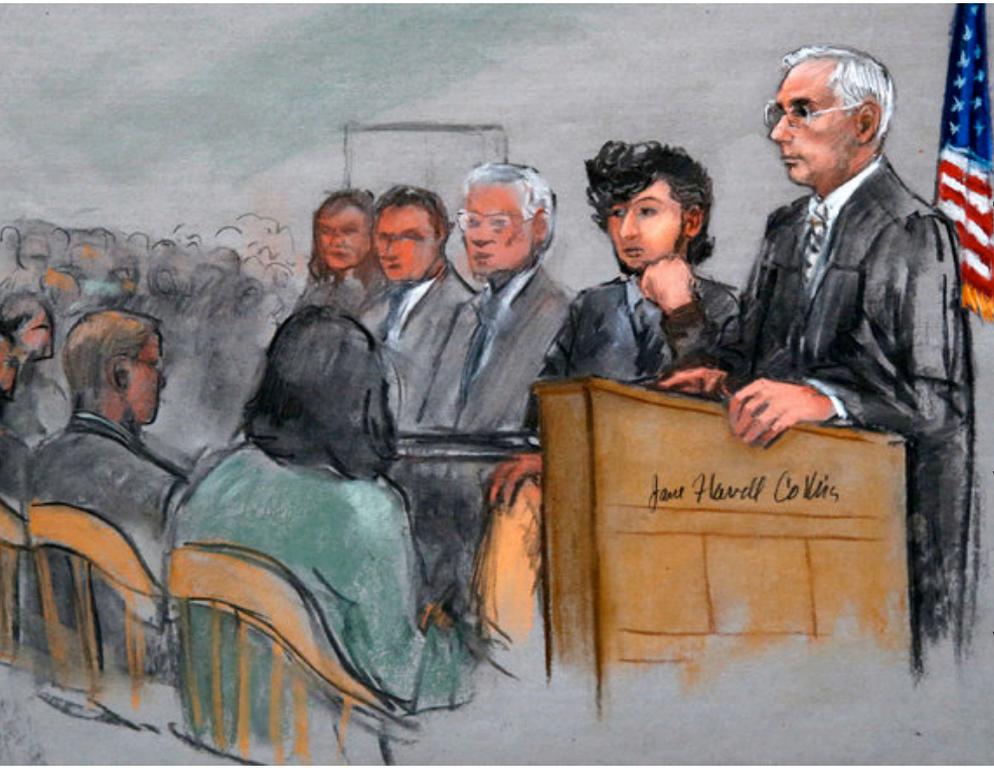


A jury has ruled Ross Ulbricht, the 30-year-old who founded the black market website Silk Road, guilty on all counts.

The FBI arrested Ulbricht in a sting operation in October 2013 accusing him of being the criminal mastermind running Silk Road where items such as narcotics, fake IDs and other illegal goods were sold using bitcoin for payment.

Preet Bharara, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, charged Ulbricht with seven counts including money laundering, drug trafficking and computer hacking among other things.

And So It Begins...



“Mr. Tsarnaev is accused of crimes that are potentially punishable by a sentence of death,” Judge George A. O’Toole Jr. of Federal District Court said in introducing the defendant to potential jurors.

Nearly two years after a set of dual explosions tore through this city’s premier athletic event, killing three people and wounding hundreds, Boston started its legal reckoning Monday with the young man accused of terrorizing the region where he grew up and betraying the country that embraced him with citizenship.

The trial is expected to last for months, bringing this city back through one of its most painful episodes. The atmosphere in the courthouse Monday seemed grave, heavy with the tragedy of the past and burdened by the responsibility that lay ahead.

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/06/us/boston-marathon-bombing-trial-dzhokhar-tsarnaev-jury-selection.html?_r=0

The Bruise of the Less Lethal



Under fire for fatally shooting an unarmed black teenager last year, the Ferguson Police Department in Missouri is currently testing a "less lethal" option for its sidearms.

It consists of a small ball-like device that is clipped on at the end of a gun. When fired, the bullet embeds itself into the ball as it hurtles towards the target, who can be knocked down from the force. But, more importantly, the person probably won't get killed.

<http://money.cnn.com/2015/02/05/smallbusiness/ferguson-police-less-lethal-gun/index.html>

Winter's Blanket



Boston has had more than 72 inches of snow in the past 30 days, breaking a record set in 1978, the National Weather Service says. The city has repeatedly been among the hardest-hit by several winter storms — and it could get another 4-6 inches later this week.

This morning, the weather agency's Boston office tweeted, "Another winter storm?!" — along with a map forecasting 4-6 inches of snow for much of Massachusetts and neighboring states.

<http://www.opb.org/news/article/npr-snowfall-obliterates-records-in-boston-another-winter-storm/>

Standoff in Alabama II



Probate judges across Alabama refused to issue marriage licenses on Monday in the face of a federal court ruling last month declaring the state's ban on same-sex marriages unconstitutional. The ruling took effect Monday.

More than a quarter of the county probate judges were reported to be complying with the federal judge's ruling, while the rest declined to issue licenses or kept their offices closed.

While some judges were complying and same-sex marriages were being performed in Alabama, the vast majority of probate judges were not participating. Fifty-three of the state's 67 probate judges were not issuing marriage licenses, according to the gay rights group Human Rights Campaign.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Justice/2015/0209/Defiance-in-Alabama-as-same-sex-marriage-ruling-takes-effect-video>

Rain, Rain...Keep Coming



Two hefty storms socked the West Coast over the weekend, delivering up to a foot of rain in some spots. But hopes that the so-called Pineapple Express would water down the historic drought gripping the region have been quashed by the fact that this precipitation river is too warm to make a difference.

“It hasn’t helped as much as you would think,” says AccuWeather meteorologist Ken Clark, based in southern California. “What you look for is for these storms to deliver a lot of snow to the Sierra snowpack because that snow gradually melts into summer and feeds the reservoirs.”

But the moisture in these storms came from tropical and sub-tropical areas such as Hawaii and is just plain too warm to deliver the necessary snowfall. Going forward, he points out that only 27 percent of the state’s water is in snow-covered areas, “and that’s very low.”

<http://www.csmonitor.com/Environment/2015/0209/Why-lots-of-rain-offers-little-relief-to-drought-stricken-California-video>

To Bomb, or Not to Bomb



President Barack Obama is poised in coming days to ask Congress for new authority to use U.S. military force against Islamic State militants, the White House said Thursday. But the top Republican in Congress warned it won't be easy to pass the measure and that it will be up to Obama to rally support from lawmakers and the public.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest responded that the administration is dedicated to getting a new authorization with support from Republicans and Democrats, and he didn't rule out that the new authorization could be formally submitted to Congress as early as Friday. That's even though Obama has argued new authorization isn't legally necessary and has been ordering airstrikes on militant strongholds in Iraq and Syria for months.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/obama-poised-to-request-authority-to-use-military-force-against-isis/>

Don't Fire Until...Okay, Fire Away



The Pentagon's research facility, DARPA, is in the process of developing the world's first smart bullet.

Given the project code name EXACTO, it aims to create the first small caliber bullet that could steer itself.

The smart bullets use a small optical sensor at the tip to send signals to tiny fins along the bullet's body. The fins then adjust the bullet's trajectory toward the target.

While these bullets are still in development, once released they could help American snipers overcome challenging weather conditions, such as high winds.



<http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/science/us-developing-bullet-can-steer-itself-video>

Big Wheels Keep on Rolling



Trains carrying mass loads of heavy crude oil from Canada's tar sands have begun moving through the Northwest, creating the potential for an oil spill in parts of Oregon and Washington where environmental agencies have no response plans or equipment in place.

Union Pacific now moves between seven and 10 of these mile-long trains of Canadian crude per month through Northwest states, according to railroad spokesman Aaron Hunt. They can carry more than a million gallons of oil.

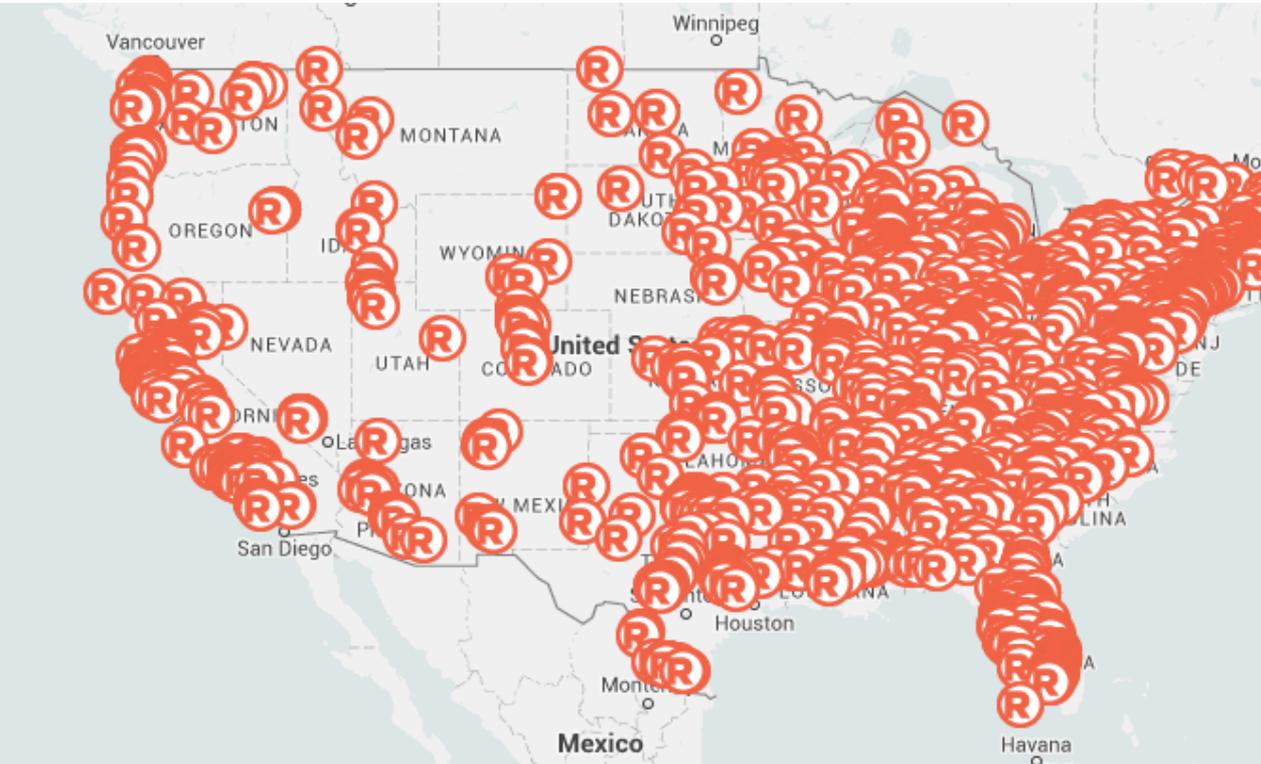
The trains originate in Alberta, moving through Idaho to Washington. From there, some are bound for refining in Western Washington and others travel along the Columbia River into Portland and south into California.

<http://www.opb.org/news/article/tar-sands-crude-oil-moves-through-northwest-in-mile-long-trains-as-spill-planning-lags/>

Say Goodbye

The closings are part of RadioShack's bankruptcy filing from this past Thursday. According to what staff from across the country told CNNMoney last week, many of the stores have already had their hours and inventories severely reduced, and merely a skeleton staff is left to sell off items at deep discounts.

The company has not said how many jobs will be lost from the store closings, or from the company giving up about one third of the floor space in its remaining stores to cell phone provider Sprint (S). RadioShack (RSHC) had about 21,000 employees as of its bankruptcy filing.



<http://money.cnn.com/2015/02/09/news/companies/radioshack-store-closings/index.html>