

NCAA BRACKET, B2
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In the News

STORIES AND PHOTOS FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wisconsin survivor recalls Iwo Jima

Raymond Miller helped write a book about the battle that changed his life the minute the ramp on his landing craft went down. **Page A2**

Differing accounts about bus crash

Passengers and witnesses to a horrific New York City crash that sheared the top off a bus and killed 14 people told investigators that the driver's account didn't match up to what they saw. **Page A2**

Elton John tickets go on sale today

Today is the day. If you're looking to snag an Elton John ticket, they go on sale at 11 a.m. La Crosse Center Director Art Fahey says your best bet is to go online at ticketmaster.com. Tickets are also available at the La Crosse Center. The concert is at 8 p.m. Tuesday, April 19. Tickets are \$29, \$79 and \$129. Tickets will be available at ticketmaster.com, at all Ticketmaster outlets, the La Crosse Center Box Office and charge-by-phone (1-800-745-3000). There is a six-ticket limit per customer.



2nd explosion shakes Japan

SOMA, Japan (AP) — The second hydrogen explosion in three days rocked Japan's stricken Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear plant Monday, sending a massive column of smoke into the air and wounding six workers. It was not immediately clear how much — if any — radiation had been released.

The explosion at the plant's Unit 3, which authorities have been frantically trying to cool after a system failure in the wake of a massive earthquake and tsunami, triggered an order for hundreds of people to stay indoors, said Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio

Edano. The blast follows a similar explosion Saturday that took place at the plant's Unit 1, which injured four workers and caused mass evacuations. Japan's nuclear safety agency said the workers injured Monday were all

See JAPAN, A5



A man holds his baby as they are scanned Sunday for levels of radiation in Japan.

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MONDAY PROFILE: MARK MEIER



ERIK DAILY/LA CROSSE TRIBUNE

Mark Meier shows off his crocheted Star Trek afghan. The WIZM radio producer also is a master of the Siberian stitch.

Tuned into crochet

Radio guy finds hobby to go with TV-watching habit

By GERI PARLIN
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Meet Mark Meier, mild-mannered WIZM morning show producer.

He does weather updates, likes to write, watches a lot of TV, and he's a master of Siberian stitch crochet.

That's right, he crochets. "I'm boring," he said. "Crocheting isn't really a very social thing to do. You don't chat and chat."

At least, he doesn't. He only crochets, in fact, because, "My wife was haranguing me about just sitting and watching TV."

To take advantage of his couch potato lifestyle, she suggested he learn to crochet.

So he did.

No big deal. He just had to learn to control the tension of the yarn, and then he was churning out mittens and hats. But in a climate like Wisconsin, he found the mittens too flimsy. When dropping off donated mittens at The Salvation Army he felt embarrassed because

he figured they weren't going to stop anybody's fingers from freezing.

So he invented Siberian stitch, a super heavy-duty crochet style that makes a better mitten and coincidentally allows him to crochet reversible patterns.

Or, at least, he thought he invented it. Turns out that this style of crochet has been around a long time and is most notably used when making potholders. Because if there's one thing old-time crocheters know, it's not to use a flimsy potholder when taking a casserole out of the oven.

But those old-time crocheters were mostly doing solid colors, he said, and Siberian stitch allows him to crochet a thicker pattern in a variety of colors.

Once he figured that out, he started looking for images he wanted to recreate in yarn. He found them online and uses a process called graphgan, in which he downloads the image and then transfers it to graph paper so he can enlarge the image.

And the image he most wanted to enlarge was the USS Enterprise, so he could make a graphgan for a friend who was a Trekkie. But the graphgan turned out to be so large — "He can wrap it around himself three times" — that Meier intends to make it again, but smaller.

Because he's using Siberian stitch, the images on his graphgan are different on each side. It's a process that's not difficult, he said, but involves counting and keeping track of where you are on the front and back as you crochet. He lost his place only once, he said, and points out a few stitches of white that should have been black. It's a glaring error to him and not so noticeable to anyone else.

In all, the king-size graphgan took him 120 hours stretched over 55 days. He figures it took him about 45 minutes to crochet each row.

Now that he's got this crochet-ing down to a science, he's got some tips for beginners. Don't tackle something as large as an afghan for your first project. Mittens or potholders are better for beginners.

"And if you're going to make an afghan, don't start it in the summer," he said, because while it's cozy to be covered in yarn as you knit your way through February and March, it's not quite so pleasant in July.

So is crocheting his new passion?

"Not really," he said. "It's just something I do. If the doctor told me I had to stop crocheting tomorrow, I could stop."

WISCONSIN

Budget plan adds money for DNA tests

MADISON (AP) — Gov. Scott Walker wants to spend close to \$1 million to stave off another burgeoning DNA backlog at the state crime labs, even though Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen declared the problem solved a year ago and the state faces a looming budget deficit.



Walker

State Justice Department data show submissions from police have steadily increased over the past year, but agency officials say they're keeping up, turning around cases within the agency's deadlines.

The attorney general said he wants to make sure the backlog doesn't become a problem again. He asked Walker, a fellow Republican, for six more analysts in the governor's executive budget. Walker complied, laying out \$770,000 in additional tax dollars to fund them over the next two fiscal years. The Legislature will take up the budget proposal in the coming months.

"With the incredible number of submissions, we need more staff," Van Hollen said. "We're not shy about doing what we need to do to make sure we don't have a backlog again."

Walker wants to fund the additional analysts even though he says Wisconsin is broke. The state is faced with a \$3.6 billion shortfall, a hole so deep Walker says he has had to propose cutting \$834 million from schools and stripping public workers of their collective bargaining rights.

Walker's budget proposal includes a justification saying he must address rising caseloads.

"Law enforcement is one of the core functions of government," Walker's spokesman, Cullen

See DNA LABS, A5

BOX OFFICE

Estimated ticket sales for the weekend:

1. "Battle: Los Angeles," \$36 million.
2. "Rango," \$23.1 million.
3. "Red Riding Hood," \$14.1 million.
4. "The Adjustment Bureau," \$11.5 million.
5. "Mars Needs Moms!" \$6.8 million.
6. "Hall Pass," \$5.1 million.
7. "Beastly," \$5.1 million
8. "Just Go With It," \$4 million.
9. "The King's Speech," \$3.6 million.
10. "Gnomeo & Juliet," \$3.5 million.

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Spanking 1-year-olds common in depressed dads

CHICAGO (AP) — Just like new moms, new fathers can be depressed, and a study found a surprising number of sad dads spanked their 1-year-olds.

About 40 percent of depressed fathers in a survey said they'd spanked kids that age, versus just 13 percent of fathers who weren't

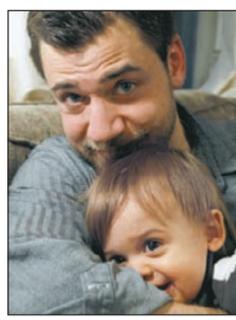
depressed. Most dads also had had recent contact with their child's doctor — a missed opportunity to get help, authors of the study said.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and many child development experts warn against spanking children of any age. Other studies have shown that kids who are

spanked are at risk of being physically abused and becoming aggressive themselves.

The researchers said spanking is especially troubling in children who are only 1, because they could get injured and they "are unlikely to understand the connection

See SAD DADS, A5



Chris Illuminati, 33, holds his son, Evan. The Lawrenceville, N.J., writer and stay-at-home dad read postpartum brochures given to his wife and found himself silently answering yes to questions about symptoms, including feeling unusually down, trapped and resentful.

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