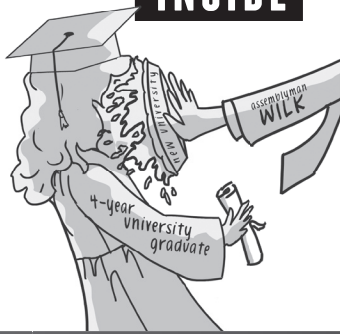




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'Star Trek' screenwriter discusses his career and time here as a student



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A degree is not only about passing a test; it's a life-long lesson

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NHL playoffs: predicting the East and the West

FREE

DAILY SUNDIAL

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1, 2013 | VOL. 54, ISS. 112 | WWW.DAILYUNDIAL.COM

HIGHER EDUCATION GETS A RAISE



ILLUSTRATION BY JENNIFER LUXTON / VISUAL EDITOR

President Obama requests \$155 billion for Pell Grants, work study and changes to loan interest rates, tax benefits

HANSOOK OH
SENIOR STAFF

In his education budget for fiscal year (FY) 2014-15, President Obama has requested almost \$155 billion in

federal student aid assistance, which includes certain higher education programs, a modest increase in the maximum Pell Grant award, campus-based aid and changes to loan interest rates and tax benefits.

If Obama's proposed budget is approved by Congress, the maximum Pell Grant award will stretch to \$5,785, a \$140 increase from the prior year.

More than \$35 billion in Pell Grant aid - a \$2 million increase in awards from the 2013-14 FY - will be divided into 9.4 million different awards.

David Feldman, a graduating senior majoring in creative writing, said that increasing the maximum Pell Grant is important to help students who are increasingly non-traditional.

"The maximum is truly not enough,

especially in this economy where a lot of people in their mid-20s and 30s are going back to school," Feldman said. "They are not going to be able to get the same types of loans and backing as if they would if they were under a certain age and their parents could sign off on that."

Obama also plans to expand and replace the current Perkins Loans pro-

gram, providing \$8.5 billion in new loans, more than eight times the current \$1 billion in loans available.

According to the budget, loans would reach up to 2,700 more post-secondary education institutions, and "savings from the new program would be reinvested in the Pell Grant program

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LA COMMUNITY SERIES

See PHOTOS page 4



TREVOR STAMP / CONTRIBUTOR

Esteve Mena, 23, is finally ready to build his own jarana guitar. Mena poses with a piece of African mahogany, which he's using to make the jarana.

Text messages ease the college transition

A system of peer mentoring gives students an increased chance of success in switching from high school to college

MELISSA SIMON
SENIOR STAFF

In a recent paper published by two Harvard graduate students, it was found that the use of text messaging and peer mentoring kept students from falling through the cracks before entering college.

Ben Castleman, a doctoral candidate in the Quantitative

Policy Analysis program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education that co-authored "Summer Nudging: Can Personalized Text Messages and Peer Mentor Outreach Increase College Going Among Low-Income High School Graduates?" with Lindsay Page, said the paper is about two interventions designed to increase access among students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The first intervention is a peer mentor program in which college students reach out to high school graduates

to offer help and encouragement, as well as give some first-hand experience, Castleman said. The second intervention is a text message campaign where students receive personalized reminders of key tasks they need to complete.

"These interventions emerged from a series of projects we have worked on to provide students additional supports during the summer after high school; a time period which has

See **TEXTING**, page 3

THE DAILY SUNDIAL'S
2013 HOUSING GUIDE
On stands May 2nd

EDUCATION

Continued from page 1

to help maintain the maximum Pell award.”

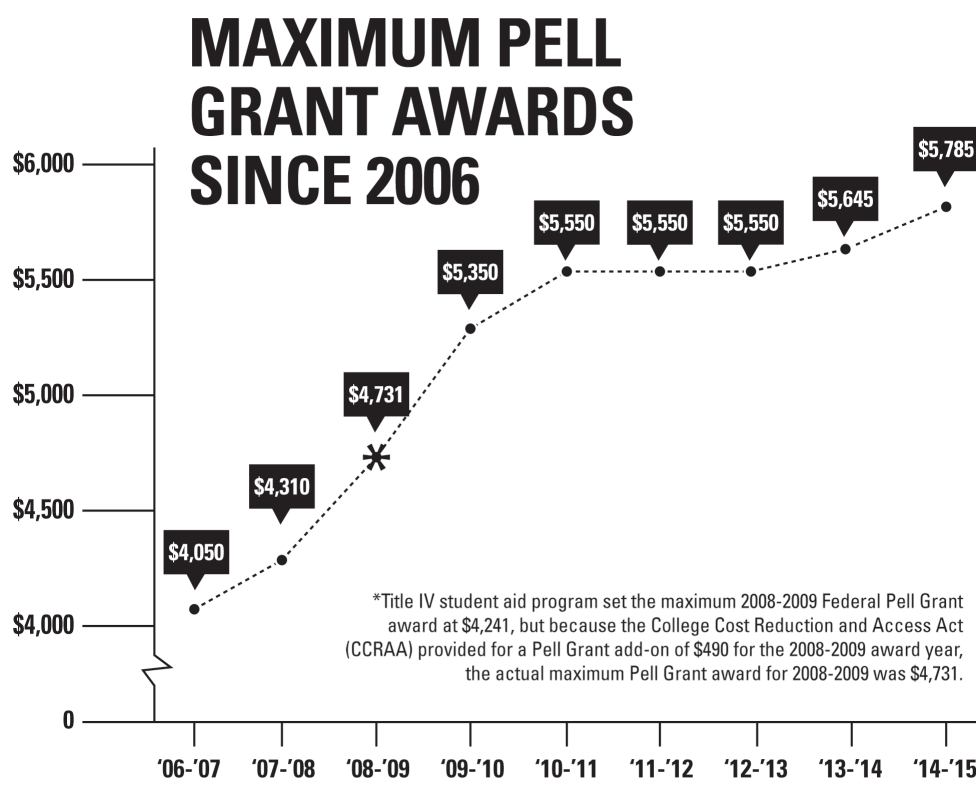
Loan interest rates would also be restructured.

The rate would be determined at the beginning of the academic year based on the 10-year U.S. Treasury note rate. Different types of loans would add to the treasury note rate in increments of percentage points (0.93 for Subsidized Stafford Loans, 2.93 for Unsubsidized Stafford loans and 3.93 percentage points for PLUS loans).

Borrowers who are not in default (regardless of when the loan was accessed) would be eligible to repay their debt in the Pay As You Earn program. This would allow borrowers to make payments not exceeding 10 percent of their discretionary income and forgive the balance after 20 years of payments.

Feldman said the 10 percent cap will be beneficial to students who may not make much money right after graduation.

“If you graduate with a B.A. with an English degree, it takes you a year to find a job as a teacher somewhere. They are making \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year, and they are \$20,000 to \$40,000 in debt,” Feldman said. “In the greatest country in the world, there is no excuse for someone with a four-year education to have to go hungry because there is a larger percentage of their pay that needs to go to pay back the loan.”



The current Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) program, which gives grants to students who want to become teachers, would be replaced by a new Presidential Teaching Fellows program, giving grants to states for students attending “high-performing teacher preparation programs.”

According to the budget, students attending successful programs in their final year of their study could receive up to \$10,000 in scholarship.

One of the most significant increases in campus-based

funding is in the Federal Work Study program. Obama wants to allocate \$1.1 billion to Federal Work Study, a \$150 million increase from the prior year.

If his budget is approved, the extra funding will help to supplement the 5.1 percent decrease in the 2013-14 academic year, when the sequester officially takes place.

Lili Vidal, director of the Financial Aid and Scholarship Department, said the sequester will only slightly reduce the Work Study program at CSUN next school year and

will still be more funding than the department received during the current school year.

About \$1.29 million will be available for up to 500 students next year. This year about 447 students are holding Work Study jobs, Vidal said.

She added that it is too early to speculate how the 2014-15 year will play out, regardless of Obama’s budget.

Vidal is more concerned with whether or not the Higher Education Opportunity Act, which determines federal student aid and expires at the end of 2013, will be renewed.

CAMPUS VOICE

LUIS RIVAS AND HANSOOK OH / SENIOR STAFF

What do you think of Obama’s proposed education budget?



SANDRA MONTES

LIBERAL STUDIES

“It’s going to cover their tuition, and that’s a big help, because a lot of students cannot pay for their education. I wouldn’t be paying as much and I wouldn’t be as worried. It wouldn’t take as long for me to pay my loans.”



ALAN CASTILLO

UNDECIDED

“The increase in the maximum of Pell Grants so I could get more money would help me out a lot more. I could probably stay in my apartment, instead of having to move back home.”



APRIL GEHRKE

ART

“If they are going to increase the Pell Grant maximum, I will take what I can get.”



EDUARDO AGUIRRE

CTVA

“Obama is actually making moves on education, the reason the world goes ‘round. It’s about damn time Obama does something about education.”

UNIVERSITY STUDENT UNION, INC.

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TEXTING

Continued from page 1

typically been overlooked as an important stage in students' transition from high school to college," he said.

Cheryl Spector, director of Academic First Year Experiences at CSUN, said the transition from high school to college is complex and varies from student to student.

"It really depends a great deal on the student's preparation, prior experience and general readiness," she said. "Readiness comes in at least two flavors: there's academic readiness and then there's social readiness."

Academic readiness includes things such as how many challenging classes a student took in high school, while social readiness includes how prepared a student is to move into a huge new environment, Spector said.

Gabby Faretta, a senior liberal studies major, said her transition into her junior college went pretty smoothly because she had help from counselors at her high school and did her own research.

"I didn't have any problems or get lost," she said. "Maybe a peer mentor might have been helpful as someone to show you around and tell you where your classes were and other things like that."

Selena Jackson, an undecided freshman, said her transition from high school to college was interesting because she chose to enroll in later classes so she could sleep in.

"In high school they baby you by keeping you on a schedule and they don't do that in college," she said. "Also, you pretty much know everyone and their business in high school because you've been together for so long. In college you don't know anyone and it's like starting over in a sense."

Castleman said they partnered with several education agencies across the county and randomly assigned some college-intending students to one or both of the interventions, while others were in a control group where they only received the same support if they initiated it.

"The majority of students in the four partner sites with whom we partnered qualified for free- or reduced-price lunch, which we used as a proxy for students' socioeconomic status," he said. "While the majority of our sample was from low- or lower-income backgrounds, we also included students in each partner site who were from more moderate or higher income levels."

The text messaging intervention had a large impact on students living in communities with lower levels of education as well as lower income. The peer mentor intervention increased enrollment at four-year institutions by more than four percentage points, with even larger impacts among males and students who were uncertain which specific college they planned to attend as of high school graduation, Castleman said.

Spector said she has seen the peer mentor programs at

work and they seem to be pretty effective for all students looking to come to CSUN, but she is unsure of the text messaging intervention.

"I think that (text messaging) would be highly individual," she said. "Would it creep you out as a 17-year-old that you're getting this text from a stranger you don't know? I don't know. It could work, especially if it were part of a coordinated campaign where a student was informed in other ways like, 'Soon you'll be getting a text message from so-and-so.'"

Faretta said the text messaging seems to be too impersonal, especially coming from someone you do not know.

"Getting a text from someone I don't know, it would kind of be like, 'Why I am getting these? Who are you?' she said. "It's almost worse and more annoying than all those emails you get that you never read."

Jackson, who went through the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), was given a peer mentor to help make her transition smoother.

"About one month before the beginning of the semester you do a mandatory walk through of the campus with a mentor in smaller groups," she said. "This really helped because on the first day I knew which buildings my classes were in and where I needed to go. You also got contact info to stay in touch with your mentor if you had any questions throughout the semester."

Spector, who called her-



CHARLIE KALJO / SENIOR STAFF

Cheryl Spector, Director of First Year Experience, at her office in the Cielo Suit in Sierra Hall. She is the course director of University 100, a freshman seminar geared towards prompting students to reflect on their personal life choices and academic habits.

self thrifty, said she would be hesitant for CSUN to invest and spend money on another program if the text messaging was automated. She noted the portal alerts and the fair bit of contact the campus already has with students.

"I do think the 'nudge' part of this is a good one," she said. "Nudging is active and that's good. I think we are active and I'm hoping that whichever office would do this particular outreach to however many new freshmen have already figured out a coordinated effort."

Castleman said they are primarily focusing on wheth-

er students enrolled in college or not.

"We will continue to follow students longitudinally to see if the interventions impacted not only whether they enrolled in college, but also whether they persisted and succeeded in college," he said.

The text messaging in particular is a system that could be easily adopted by school districts or educational agencies because texting is such an integral part of students' lives, Castleman said.

"The cost of sending the messages, once the system is in place, are quite low, and it's fairly straightforward to personalize

and automate the information that is sent to students," he said. "Particularly as districts face limited budgetary resources, we think text messaging could be an effective and affordable strategy to help students go to college."

Jackson said she liked the idea of a text message to remind her of important tasks she needed to do before school started, especially since she said she can be forgetful.

"The transition isn't necessarily hard but it can be scary," she said. "These messages could bring comfort to those who might be scared or need a little extra guidance."

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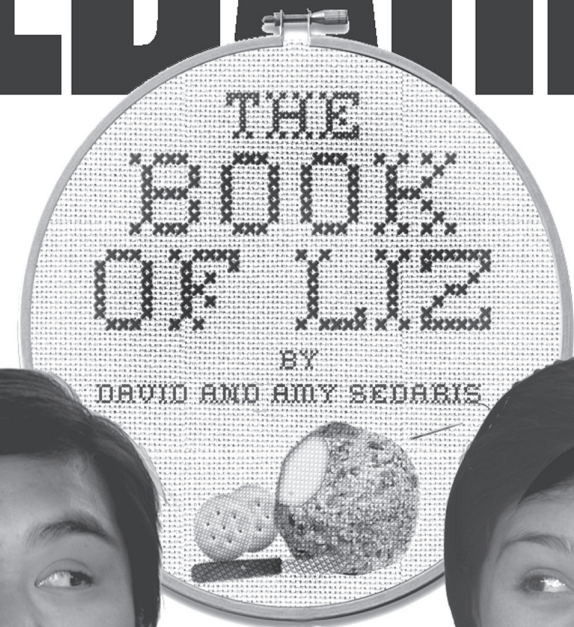
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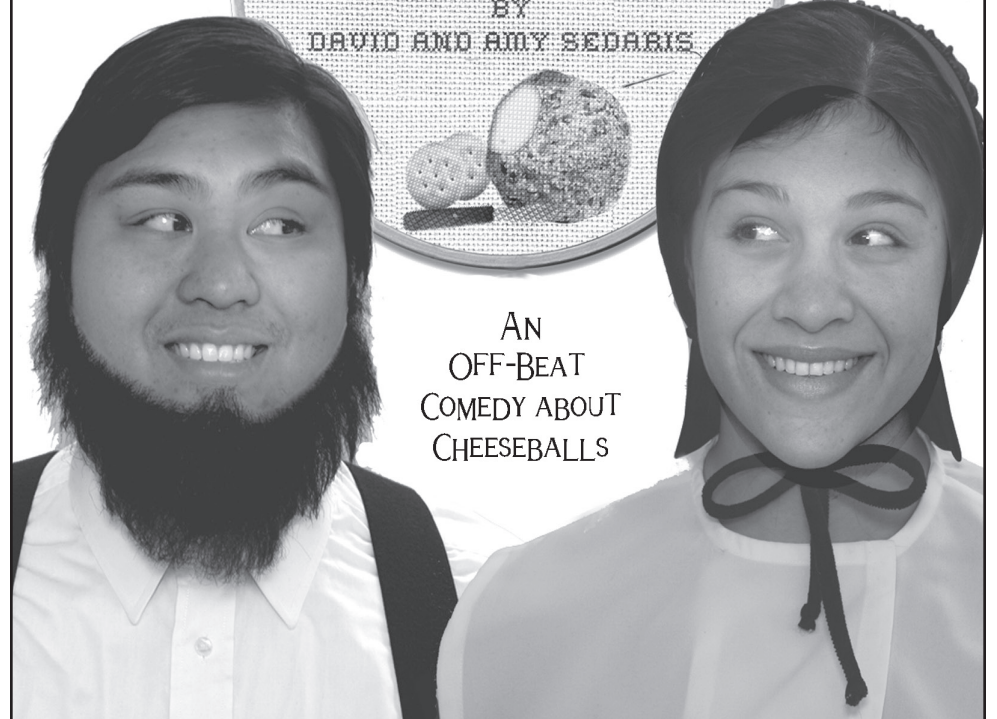
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LA COMMUNITY PHOTO SERIES

Musician fine tunes his craft

Los Angeles community member builds his own Mexican-style guitar by using lumber yard resources

PHOTOS AND STORY BY
TREVOR STAMP
CONTRIBUTOR

Esteve Mena, 23, has been curious about building guitars for a while. He always thought to himself that building guitars would be a cool trade to have.

Mena is also a musician, and has years of experience playing the guitar, which helped spark his interest in building one. He realized, after working at a lumber yard for a year, that it was an ideal time to start working on the guitar with the resources he was surrounded by at his job.

With resources in hand, Mena set out to build a jarana, which is a Mexican style guitar, inside the garage behind his home in Monrovia, Calif.

Jaranas are typically made from one piece of wood, aside from the fret board and top body piece. Mena decided to use an African mahogany piece of wood to build his jarana.

He expressed a spiritual-like reflection when he spoke about the wood used for his jarana.

"I think this is just like the sec-

ond life or the second chance for the tree," Mena said.

During the whole process, Mena felt nervous about what he was doing. He had no experience doing carpentry work, let alone building a guitar, and was extra careful when making the first cut.

Once he started, however, he began to grow a strong connection with his project.

"It's sort of like when a car builder puts a car together, he sort of talks to that car," Mena said. "He has that connection, you know, like that physical connection."

Passion is what kept Mena from stepping away from the project. He said it's exhilarating creating something with his own hands. "Building something with your hands, is building something with your mind," Mena said during a Skype call after the fifth day of working on his guitar.

Although Mena is not yet finished with the jarana, he expressed that he would love to make more guitars in the future. He again cites his passion for building as a reason for continuing with this trade. "I have to be happy with what I'm making," Mena said. "In order for me to keep going."



Even during the late hours working on his jarana, Mena maintains his glowing sense of humor. Mena strikes an exaggerated smile for the camera while using a band-saw to cut out the neck of his jarana.



Esteve Mena, 23, is finally ready to build his own jarana guitar. Mena poses with a piece of African mahogany, which he's using to make the jarana.



Mena uses a drill press to hollow out his jarana. Jaranas are typically made from one piece of wood, aside from the fret board and top piece of the guitar. The thinner block that Mena is using should give the guitar a shallower tone.



Mena uses a band-saw to cut out the blank for his jarana.



After cutting out a blank for his jarana, Mena sands down the sides to begin shaping the guitar.



While still not done with his first guitar, Mena takes a moment to reflect on how far he has come building the jarana. "I have to be happy with what I'm making, in order for me to keep going," he said.



Mena's father looks on as Mena measures where his fret board will fit on the jarana he is building. Mena has received support and advice from his father while working on his jarana.

Matador Reporter

Associated Students News and Announcements

Final Flip

Pancakes are delicious,
yes they are.

Pancakes are delicious,
i smell them from afar.

I like my pancakes delicious,
there is no other way.

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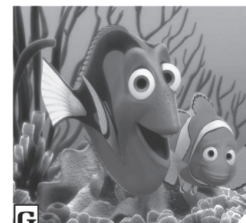
August 15
Sing-A-Long Grease



June 13
Brave



July 11
Toy Story 3



August 1
Finding Nemo



August 22
Pitch Perfect



June 20
Jurassic Park



July 18
Elf



August 8
Bridesmaids



August 29
Anchorman



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MAY 1, 2013

Opinion

OPINION@SUNDIAL.CSUN.EDU

Education is more than just classes

MICHELLE REUTER
DAILY SUNDIAL

Ah, spring! The weather is getting warmer, birds flutter through the soft California breeze and, on college campuses throughout the state, students are beginning to realize the end is nigh. Well, the end of the spring semester, anyway. Finals are upon us. Semester projects and research papers are coming due. Some of us will even see the culmination of years of hard work and sacrifice when we graduate with the degrees we have damn near killed ourselves to complete.

Chumps.

Apparently, we've been going about this whole getting-an-education thing the wrong way. There's no need to actually attend classes, engage in scholarly debate or even write a single analytical paper. According to Assemblyman Scott Wilk (R-Santa Clarita), all you need to do is pass a test.

Wilk, who earned a B.A. in political science from CSU Bakersfield, has proposed a bill that would establish a fourth collegiate system in the state. It would be called the New University of California and it would not actually have any classes.

It would, however, have tests.

According to the text of AB 1306, "the New University of California shall provide no instruction, and the mission of the university shall be limited to issuing college credit and baccalaureate and associate degrees to any person capable of passing the examinations administered by the university."

Wow. Talk about teaching to the test. Or, rather, not teaching to the test. This is probably the logical culmination of that stellar bit of educational legislation we've all grown to know and love, No Child

Left Behind. Years of evaluating students from Miami to Seattle with the same, out-of-touch standardized test questions has finally led to this. One thing we've learned from years of state testing - it's one thing to be able to regurgitate answers on a Scantron. It's another thing entirely to have actually learned something.

Now, learning is no longer a necessary step in earning a bachelor's degree. Hell, you don't even have to go to any of those annoying classes. This bill allows students to simply test out of all those **t r o u b l e - s o m e c o l l e g e c o u r s e s .**

Have these students really learned anything? Eh, who knows? If they pay the money to take the test, that's good enough for Wilk.

Sadly, I can see the impetus behind this bit of legislation. As a returning student, I'm about 10-years older than the average college kid. I have some life experience, duking it out in the job market and it would have been nice to get some kind of credit for that. I remember thinking how absurd that, as a former actor, I was spending two evenings a week at a mandatory public speaking class. English 101 was a bit of a joke, since I had read most of the books on the syllabus years ago. It might have been nice to simply test out and move on.

I would have missed out on some pretty cool stuff, though. That evening class at Valley College taught me how to put my thoughts together in such a way as to support an argument. Going out with my fellow students after class taught me that you don't

challenge the president of the debate team at pub games. At least not after your third beverage. Yeah, I'd read "Frankenstein" in AP English before, but I'd never gotten to discuss the philosophical implications of Mary Shelley's "Modern Prometheus" as it compared to the visual symbolism of Blade Runner.

Education is more than proving we can

fill in the right bubble when the state asks us to. College is more than passing finals. There is a method to some of this madness. We're supposed to get frustrated, dread a class or two. And then, we're supposed to be able to look back and realize that even though we're young and invincible, we did actually learn something. Even if we didn't, we can at least be proud we made it through.

Then there are the classes we actually look forward to. That profes-

sor who makes you look at something in a whole new way. The classroom discussions that turn your worldview on its ear. The friend you studied with who is still your friend twenty years later. There are no tests that can be administered for those kinds of learning experiences.

There are some real practical problems with this idea as well. Who's going to risk their reputation by supplying accreditation for this little endeavor? Part of earning credits for a college course is the time spent actually studying and attending the class. If there is no class, how will the credits work? How much

will it cost to take the tests? If we fail do we get a do-over? Can we apply our tested-out-of credits to a really-show-up university?

This bill is an insult to anyone who has ever spent time working towards a degree. It's a big slimy loogie-in-the face to students who have worked multiple jobs to put themselves through school. Anyone who has ever pulled an all-nighter before finals or sweated it out before a class presentation should be offended that this politician, who got his degree the old-fashioned way, would propose this hackneyed short-cut to a real education.



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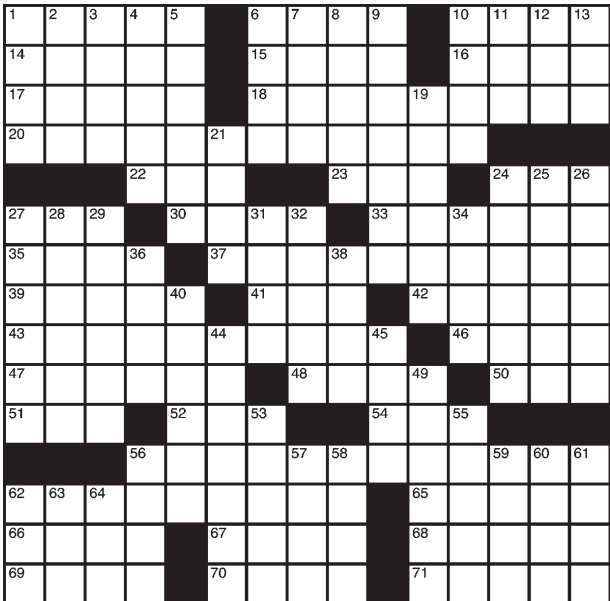
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By Erik Agard

5/1/13

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

R	E	B	S		P	E	R	I	L	A	S	T	I	
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A	C	M	E	S		T	O	M	A	H	A	W	K	S
L	O	A	D		A	B	L	A	R	E	A	O	L	
L	L	C		I	C	E		I	C	E	T	A	O	
O	O	H		D	E	S	O	T	O		M	E	L	T
T	R	I	M	E	S	T	E	R		A	U	R	A	S
			N	A	E		D	E	A	L	S			
S	T	E	T	S	O	N		M	O	I	S	E	S	
P	R	A	T		B	E	E	R	B	U	C	K	E	T
C	A	G	E		I	R	A	T	E		A	Y	L	A
A	Y	E	S		T	O	T	E	R		L	E	S	T

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- 2 Banned orchard spray
- 3 "Miss Independent" R&B singer
- 4 Can't contemplate
- 5 "Michael, Row the Boat Ashore" river
- 6 Schism group
- 7 Peter or Paul, but not Mary
- 8 Ship's lowest 70-Across
- 9 Consults
- 10 Son of Cronus and Rhea
- 11 "Angry Birds," e.g.
- 12 New beginning?
- 13 Japanese dough
- 19 Hit the road
- 21 Intentionally fail to invite
- 24 Recorded, nowadays
- 25 Sorry sort
- 26 Obama left it in November, 2008
- 27 Capital WSW of Madrid
- 28 Game sanctuary?
- 29 Kept together, as sheep
- 31 Doll's cry
- 32 Place with a cheer named for it
- 34 Inexperienced one
- 36 Zip
- 38 Yahtzee need
- 40 "Tricked you!"
- 44 Turned from green to red, perhaps
- 45 Kin of -trix
- 49 Costello's partner
- 53 Blazing
- 55 Brooklyn's ___ Island
- 56 Quite the fox
- 57 Abbr. in a bank ad
- 58 Onionlike veggie
- 59 "To serve, not to be served" group
- 60 Ascent
- 61 Stowe antislavery novel
- 62 Place to unwind
- 63 Year in Madrid
- 64 Puffed cereal with a Berry Berry variety

DOWN

- 1 Door part

Classified Ads

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Loving couple need help starting their family. \$5,000 cash plus \$500 for travel expenses to the fertility clinic in Thousand Oaks. Must be Asian, between 19-27 years old with a healthy family background. Please contact Arlene for more information: email arlene.rees@gmail.com or call her at (805) 778-1122. Please mention code "mockingbird6569" to reference this ad.

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Solution to today's sudoku

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

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

sudoku

How to play:
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

Solution above.



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COLUMN

NHL first round playoff predictions

EASTERN CONFERENCE



COURTESY OF MCT

Penguins forward Sydney Crosby (87) and defenseman Kris Letang warm up before a home game.

SUZANNA BEZVAN
CONTRIBUTOR

Pittsburgh v. New York Islanders

Pittsburgh v. New York Islanders – Pittsburgh will take this because of their stacked roster of all-star players from the past and present. Avoiding injuries to Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin will be necessary to advance. If their roster remains intact they can make the finals. The Penguins won four out of five games against the Islanders this season. New York can only be successful if John Tavares steps up and continues to be the all-star player that he has been all season. He is their x-factor. I just don't see a team like the Islanders that barely made it to the playoffs beating the powerful Penguins

PREDICTION: Pittsburgh in 5.

Montreal v. Ottawa

One man from Montreal, defenseman P.K. Subban, will decide this series on both offense and defense. Getting struggling goalie Carey Price back into form and he will be a great factor. Ottawa will be a small challenge, because they have sniper forwards like Daniel Alfredsson and Jason Spezza. However, Spezza has had a pretty bad season and has only scored two goals. They are both up there in age so their time is winding down. Ottawa needs help from all lines to be successful against Montreal, including their goalie Craig Anderson who was one of the NHL's top goalies before his ankle injury back in February. He needs to regain his form if the Senators have any chance of upsetting the Canadiens.

PREDICTION: Montreal in 6.

Washington v. New York Rangers

The Rangers started getting hot at the right time. Their goalie, "King Henrik" Lundqvist, has been consistent all season while the team was struggling to score goals. He has always kept them in games and given them a chance to win. Rick Nash and Brad Richards have finally started to score goals. They are going to be major factors for the Rangers in the series. Washington can make this difficult for the Rangers because Alex Ovechkin has finally started playing like himself. After struggling all season and scoring fewer goals, he was rejuvenated in April by scoring 14 goals. Winning the Rocket Richard Trophy for most goals in a season with 32, his offensive power will be necessary for an upset. His positive presence on the ice affects how the rest of the team will play. It's going to be a classic matchup.

PREDICTION: Rangers in 7

Boston v. Toronto

Boston will take this one because they have more depth throughout the whole roster. They have one of the best forwards ever in Jaromir Jagr. His arrival at the trade deadline made them a more balanced team. The x-factors for the Bruins will be forward Milan Lucic, who has had a mediocre season overall and goalie Tuukka Rask. Lucic needs to elevate his game and Rask has been up to the number one goalie task since the departure of Tim Thomas. He proved himself in the regular season but is he ready to lead the team into the playoffs? The Maple Leafs have good forwards in Phil Kessel, Joffrey Lupul, James Van Riemsdyk, Tyler Bozak, and a strong hitting and goal scoring defenseman Dion Phaneuf, who is in his prime at 28. Their goalie Reimer also needs to step up his game. Boston won the series against Toronto in the short season 3-1-0.

PREDICTION: Boston in 6.

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Minnesota v. Chicago

This should be the easiest series for the President's Trophy winners. Minnesota struggled to make it into the playoffs, while Chicago has been setting records all season long, like their 24-consecutive points in a game streak. Overall Chicago is a better team than Minnesota. Minnesota has a long way to go to be able to compete with Chicago, defensively and offensively. This season they've beaten the Wild in regulation, but the Wild did win once in a shootout. However, there are no shootouts in the playoffs. Chicago had a good start this year and remained consistent throughout the season; the Wild have not. I definitely think they have what it takes to make it all the way to the finals.

PREDICTION: Chicago in 4.

Detroit v. Anaheim

The Ducks have had an accomplished short season in 2012-2013. This is a really intriguing series between two teams moving in opposite directions at the season's end. While the Ducks raced to the top at the start of the season, they struggled in April. Meanwhile, the Red Wings finally got their blue liners healthy. They now head into the playoffs having won four games in a row. Detroit also won two of the three games in the season series. These two teams are no strangers to each other when it comes to playoff matchups. However, this year the series will come down to the play of Detroit goaltender Jimmy Howard. If he can steal a game or two, the Red Wings will advance. If he struggles like he has in the past, the Ducks may move on.

PREDICTION: Detroit in 6.

San Jose v. Vancouver

San Jose has been up and down all season. While they started off hot, they struggled for most of February. However, they have played phenomenally at home. They have a great group of forwards and their goaltender Antti Niemi is one to watch out for. The Sharks beat Vancouver in all three of their meetings in regulation. Sure, Vancouver is talented, and with talks of their goaltender Roberto Luongo being traded, they will be playing as well as they always do. What makes it interesting is that neither team has ever won a Stanley Cup, so it will definitely be a physical series.

PREDICTION: Sharks in 7

Los Angeles v. St. Louis

Even though the Kings and Blues have only met three times this season, the Kings have beat St. Louis by at least two goals each time. Going back to last year, the Kings swept the Blues 4-0 in the playoffs. St. Louis' goaltender Brian Elliot has gotten much better this season, but the Kings top forwards can make things very difficult for him. Their ability to score on him may still be in the back of his mind. While playing against the defending champions will be a battle, the Blues will put their best foot forward. The Blues have players now that weren't there earlier in the regular season that will impact their play. Both teams are equally physical, in defense, with strong forwards. There are things such as bigger, more powerful guys on the ice and scoring more goals that the Kings dominate them in. The Blues bitterness from last year may come out. But in the end, Los Angeles' top goal scorers, like Jeff Carter, who is fourth in the NHL, will help the Kings advance to the next round.

PREDICTION: Kings in 6.



COURTESY OF MCT

Kings forward Anze Kopitar (11) embraces defenseman Drew Doughty after a goal.