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MD Edition

News Analysis



A New York City Police Department Emergency Services officer patrols outside the New York Stock Exchange. AP photo

America won't be intimidated

By BETSY HART
Scrapps Howard

Like many Americans, especially those of us who live on the East Coast, I'm kind of nervous about a pre-election terrorist attack.

Remember, terrorists attacked Spain days before its national election last spring. That turned what had looked to be a sure victory for the pro-American government into a win for the anti-American opposition, which promptly promised to pull Spanish soldiers out of Iraq.

In other words, the Spanish electorate caved to terrorism and gave appeasement a new name.

(Almost immediately after that response by the Spanish, terrorist attacks in Iraq itself escalated to a new pitch. I don't think it was a coincidence.)

So now the question is, if al Qaeda and related terrorist organizations have been emboldened by what happened in Spain, will they try the same thing in the United States before our national elections Nov. 2, in the hope of getting rid of President Bush?

I think it all depends on how much the terrorists know about American culture. Because there is no doubt that such an attempt on the part of the terrorists would do nothing but send Bush back to a second term by overwhelming margins.

America isn't like Spain. We are not like any other country. America just isn't intimidated. We rise to the challenge.

This doesn't have a whole lot to do with Bush. If John Kerry were the sitting president up for re-election when such an attack occurred days before Americans went to the polls, he'd be the one re-elected by overwhelming margins. In fact, in such a situation, I'd vote for the guy. Seriously.

It's sort of like young siblings fighting, squabbling, calling each other names, thinking their siblings are the biggest idiots anybody has ever been asked to live with, and being glad to share their opinions with anybody who will listen. But, woe to the outsider who says anything at all unkind about a child's sibling; the child's protective hackles go up. "How dare you say such a thing about my brother!"

When it comes to outsiders who would hurt America, we stand together.

America just has a core of steel, a resolve, a patriotism unmatched, it would seem, anywhere else. In fact, this is partly what drives other countries nuts, but who cares?

It's many of those same countries that look to us to

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Life at Sea

Pushed by currents, hidden by fog, a diver realizes: 'They left me'

The first part of a three-part serial narrative on an abandoned scuba diver off the California coast.

By CHELSEA CARTER
Associated Press

It's called "May Gray" or "June Gloom," the blanket of fog and low clouds that settles across Southern California's coastal waters during spring and summer. It typically burns off by early afternoon, making way for those blue skies that you see in postcards.

But some days, it settles in, blotting out the crowded, current-threaded sea lanes

between Santa Catalina Island and the Southern California coast.

The trip that Dan Carlock was taking in these waters would feature a backdrop of Catalina rising from the ocean — if it were sunny. But on this Sunday in April, the fog was extra heavy, the clouds extra low. Visibility was just 300 feet in spots.

When Carlock boarded the Sundiver at dawn, he saw only a wall of gray and white.

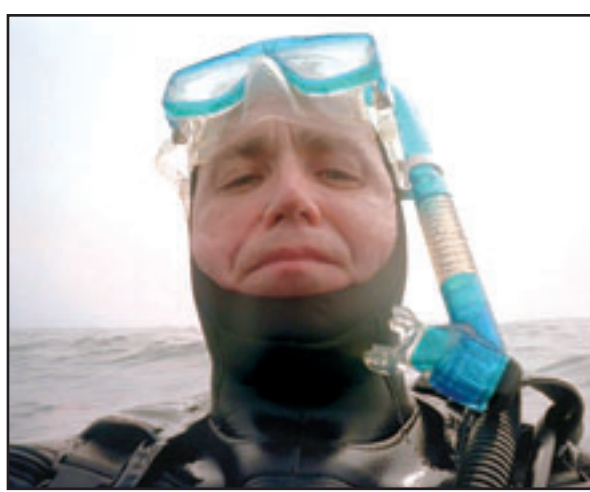
The gloom would blind recreational boaters and confuse even big commercial shippers. It would hamper rescuers whose job it is to keep safe

all of those sharing these chilly Pacific waters.

Certified for advanced open-water dives, Carlock had been looking forward for weeks to the trip with the Ocean Adventures Dive Co. — 17 recreational divers, three dive masters and a captain. It was a chance to get away from his job as a technical engineer with Boeing Satellite Systems, a position where he sometimes felt as though he was in a "vulcan mindmeld with his computer."

For an hour after leaving the port near Long Beach, the boat rumbled toward the first dive location, the

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Dan Carlock, floating in the Pacific Ocean, made this photo of himself after his diving boat left him in the fog 10 miles off the California shore April 25, 2004. AP photo



Ron Livingston is the man caught in a love rectangle in "Little Black Book." Photo by Zude Rosenthal

Livingston living large

By BRIAN TRUITT
Sunday staff writer

He'll talk about being in the cult hits "Swingers" and "Office Space." He'll even speak proudly of that Emmy nomination he got from "Band of Brothers."

But his ice-hockey skills? Ron Livingston doesn't have a lot to brag about in that regard.

He plays a pro hockey scout named Derek in "Little Black Book," but what's more important than on-the-ice matters is what Derek is or isn't hiding in his little black book — in the modern-day form of a Palm Pilot.

Derek's significant other, Stacy (Brittany Murphy), starts getting hints that her boyfriend might be keeping some things about his exes from her, a plot which thickens greatly after she snoops in his Palm Pilot when he's away on business. To get to the bottom of things, Stacy — with the help of a co-worker (Holly Hunter) — ingratiate herself to three women from Derek's past: a brainy gynecologist (Rashida Jones), a flighty supermodel (Josie Maran) and a likable gourmet chef (Julianne Nicholson).

Instead of being the antagonist in all this, Derek is more a nice guy trapped in a bad circumstance. "That was kind of important," Livingston says. "I thought that was a trap to fall into with this character. If you play him like the villain, then you end up feeling like you're just watching the wrong movie. Everybody has those people in their lives that always seem to be dating the wrong people, and after five minutes, you just go, 'Well, leave him.' And after 10 minutes you go, 'Leave him!' And then after 20 minutes you go, 'I don't care. I can't listen to you anymore.'"

"You have to understand: a) why Stacy wanted to go out with this guy; and b) why the rest of the ex-girlfriends wanted to hang out with him. If he was a nasty lousy guy, then that wouldn't make sense and you'd think less of all these girls because of that."

JRNL: Deep down, what kind of guy is Derek?

RL: I think honestly he's just an average typical guy and the conflict at the heart of this movie is not so much between these two individual people or between men and women in general, although there's a little bit of that in there. I think it's between the beginning parts of a relationship, where it's about a surface thing and you're infatuated with each other and you put on your cologne and you comb your hair and you smile, and you don't meet people on the first date and say "Hi, nice to meet you. Here's your flowers and some candy and let me tell you all of these horrible things about my past." And the second stage of the relationship, where all of a sudden now you have to start bringing that stuff out.

JRNL: Is coming clean about past relationships important?

RL: I think so, in anything that's

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Pulling their Weight

Lightweight crew can create a dangerous cycle for female rowers near the limit

Mary Higgins (far right, facing front), a T.C. Williams graduate, rowed on the Wisconsin lightweight varsity eight that won the Intercollegiate Rowing Association National Championship this spring.

Courtesy of Wisconsin Athletics

At first glance, Marisa Guarinello looks like a coxswain. She's 5-foot-2 and slight. She could get lost in a sea of tall rowers.

But she's strong. And she's competitive. And she's always been an athlete.

When Guarinello gave up long-distance running after her sophomore year at West Potomac High in Alexandria, Va., she wasn't about to stop her athletic endeavors.

So she took up crew, and not as a coxswain.

Because there is a category for

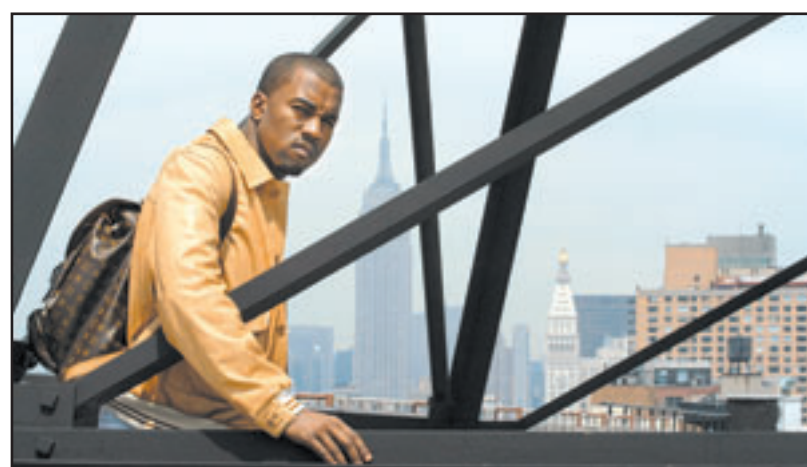
lightweight rowers, she made the varsity after just one year and went on to a successful collegiate career.

Her story is typical.

Rowing is the fastest growing sport in the Washington, D.C. area. More than 2,000 athletes competed last spring for the 41 area schools that are members of the National Capital Area Scholastic Rowing Association.

But only eight rowers and one coxswain can compete in each boat. Weight classes are one way to create more opportunities. At the high school

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Kanye West

Producer turned MC doesn't need critics to tell him he's good — he knows it

SCENE A5

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the COVER

When the ship is gone, does hope remain?

SEA, from Page A1
massive Eureka oil rig. Later in the day, the boat would take the divers to a shipwreck 10 miles away.

Only when the captain powered down the engine at about 8:30 a.m. did Carlock realize they were there. Suddenly, he made out the looming form of the rig, one of a cluster of man-made metal islands about 7 miles off the coast of Newport Beach, southwest of Los Angeles.

At 6-feet-2, Carlock cuts an imposing figure, his build magnified in a black wet suit.

He's an engineer whose world is driven by rationality — logic and method dictating action. That's one reason he likes diving. He pays attention to the smallest details. On this day, besides his underwater camera and slate, he snapped a whistle to his wet suit and carried a yellow-green neon safety tube that can be inflated as both a marker and a flotation device.

He had never needed the safety equipment. But years of instruction had drilled into his head: Always carry it.

Carlock was among the first group into the water, which was cloudy with a stiff current — the kind that required a hard swim to get underneath the rig's main platform. The water's fierce tug would cause the captain to keep a second group aboard the Sundiver, canceling their dive here.

Once under the rig, Carlock and the others were told to stay within the rig's structure during their dive. That way, they could use the rig's columns to keep from

being swept along. It was about 8:45 a.m., and Carlock headed down into the darkness.

A breakfast of eggs

Heavy fog also had settled in over White's Landing, a cove along Catalina Island, nearly erasing the tall wooden masts of the Argus, a century-old ship once used to haul goods from Greenland to Spain.

These days, the ship hauls more precious cargo. Owned by the Orange County Council Newport Sea Base, a Boy Scouts of America affiliate, it offers sailing adventures to scouting groups from around the country.

At 8:45 a.m., the crew and its passengers were finishing a breakfast of eggs. It was the second half of a two-day trip for Boy Scout Troop 681 out of Rancho Bernardo, a few miles north of San Diego.

This was heady stuff for the group of 20, 17 scouts and three parents. A day earlier, the boys had climbed a mast to the crow's nest. They swung out on ropes and dropped into the ocean.

They also conducted a man-overboard drill, which required the Boy Scouts to locate an object — a "pretend person," it was called — in the water and point it out so the crew could rescue it.

The exercise was to show the scouts that the crew in the Argus' small rescue boat might not be able to see a person at water level. On the deck of the tall sailing ship, higher above the sea's surface, you can see better.

But the training did not go well. When first mate Al Sorkin threw the "pretend

person" in the water, half the boys failed to point.

"If that was one of you, you would drown," Sorkin scolded, "because we wouldn't find you."

At age 50, Sorkin had some of the bearing of a pirate in the movies, and he could be gruff. But the scouts loved him — and they listened.

They did the drill again, and this time they got it right.

Today, they had a different challenge: They were in the middle of a fog bank.

Capt. Fred Bockmiller, who at 72 had helmed the Argus for more than 25 years, knew the heavy fog meant it would take longer to guide the ship back to port in Newport Beach, about 22 miles as the crow flies across the busy shipping lanes.

Most modern ships are made of metal. The Argus was made of wood. Though it had a metal beacon, the wooden hull meant it could be missed by radar on other vessels, including the enormous cargo tankers. Bockmiller decided to leave early.

He ordered the anchor hauled up, then quickly discovered the first problem of a day that would have many. The Argus' hydraulic lift was broken.

Hand over hand, the boys and the crew brought the dead weight up manually — a tedious process "taking forever," thought scout Christian Clemesha, a slight 16-year-old with a dark mop of hair.

'They left me'

Fifteen minutes into the dive, at about 30 feet, pressure started to build in Dan Carlock's ears. He



First mate Al Sorkin, left, works on a sail cover near Captain Fred Bockmiller aboard the Boy Scout tall ship Argus in Newport Beach, Calif., in May. *AP photos*

stopped, waiting for his ears to equalize, or "pop." If he continued down without equalizing, he risked damage to his eardrums.

Carlock waited. The other three in his group continued without him.

It only took seconds for Carlock's ears to pop. Then he followed the bubbles from his group, passing downward into near blackness.

But soon the bubbles were gone.

At 108 feet down, still not

seeing the others in his dive team, Carlock halted again. Where were they? he wondered. Still no bubbles in the inky water. He considered what to do, then decided there was just one choice. Carlock began the slow ascent to the surface.

Reaching a depth of 15 feet from the top, where thin light filtered down, he stopped for a routine three-minute decompression, to allow the body to adjust to the change in pressure.

When Carlock finally broke the surface, he was alone.

The oil rig was in the wrong place. The current had pushed him out from under it, and was still pushing him. In the fog, he thought he could see the outline of the Sundiver — but then it disappeared.

Following scuba diving safety protocols, he unclipped his whistle and blew, trying to get the attention of the boat crew.

He blew again and again and again.

But the whistle's high pitch competed with the groaning fog horn on the rig and the rumbling engines of the boat. There was no sign

that anyone heard him.

Surely, he thought, when the crew took a head count, they would realize he was missing and come looking for him. After all, he had signed out on the boat's dry erasure board that tallies each dive group.

He hoped they'd hurry. There was another location they were all supposed to dive on today, that shipwreck. Treading water, he waited.

Time passed slowly. He blew the whistle some more. Nothing happened.

After an hour, at about 10 a.m., an uncomfortable thought was settling in. Carlock could no longer hear the boat's engine.

He had not heard the sounds of others surfacing; he had not heard the Sundiver throttle up and pull away from the rig. But the message of the silence was clear to Carlock.

"They left me," he said to himself.

Unable to see anything, waves breaking over him, pushing him aimlessly in a Pacific Ocean turned black by fog, he was getting worried.

The warmth of his wet suit

had long been lost in the 60-degree water. His arms were beginning to go numb. His legs were weak.

The engineer in him tried to take command.

Determined to stay rational, to record what was happening — though maybe, he thought grimly, it would be just for those who'd find his remains — he unhooked the underwater camera from his wet suit. He aimed it at his watch and snapped two pictures. Then he turned the camera toward himself at arm's length, snapping two more.

He reached for his diving slate and used the pencil to write the time: 10:28.

It had been two hours now. He fought a rising panic. Soon hypothermia would set in. How long could he last out here? How many more hours?

Then another thought came: If he survived to dusk in these cold waters, that, he knew, was when the Great White sharks feed.

The next installment of "Lost at Sea" will appear in the Sunday Journal's August 15 edition.

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The Boy Scout tall ship Argus lies docked in Newport Beach, Calif., in May.

We're not like any other country

NEWS, from Page A1
keep the world free.

Last summer, my family had a young French girl visiting us for a few weeks. (Yes, French.) A lot of things really amazed her. The size of houses, the size of cars, the fact that American news shows had virtually nothing to say about foreign countries, unless it directly impacted the United States. ("Madam Hart, in America do the news shows ever talk about what is happening in other countries?") "Um, well, yes, if we're at war with them or something..."

But what she found most incredible were the American flags. Flags everywhere. Flags on homes, flags on cars, flags in yards, flags on shirts, even flags on pens in souvenir

stores.

She just couldn't get over it, and I think she was rather appalled by it. She explained that in France such displays would be unthinkable. One might see French flags on Bastille Day and at the Olympics, and that's about it.

(I refrained from pointing out that such national sentiments may be part of the reason the French needed, oh, a bit of help from us in World War II.)

The point is only that America is different. A lot of people may hate that about us, but that difference has kept the United States and, I would argue, the Western world free.

I do not know if the terrorists understand that. (For that matter, I suppose there's a possibility they want a strong

American president who will fight them. Who knows what goes on in these people's minds?)

I hope and pray there are no such attacks on American soil (or elsewhere, for that matter) in the days leading up to our election. I only know that if any of the terrorists are thinking that an attack on American soil days before Americans go the polls could help unseat the sitting administration, they are wildly mistaken. They will have once again sorely underestimated America, and brought themselves one step closer to destruction.

Betsy Hart, a frequent commentator on CNN and the Fox News Channel, can be reached by e-mail at mailto:hart@aol.com.