

JetBlue Captain Rants About Bomb Midflight

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A JetBlue captain who ranted about Iraq and Afghanistan and claimed that a bomb was on a Las Vegas-bound flight was locked out of the cockpit, tackled and restrained by passengers Tuesday, passengers said.

The captain of Flight 191 from New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport had a "medical situation," and the co-pilot, who subsequently took command of the aircraft, diverted the plane to land in Amarillo, Texas, around 10 a.m., JetBlue Airways said in a statement.

Josh Redick, a passenger sitting near the middle of the plane, said the pilot "stormed out" of the cockpit.

Tony Antolino, a 40-year-old executive for a security firm, said the captain walked to the back of the plane, that he seemed disoriented and agitated, then began yelling about an unspecified threat linked to Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan.

"They're going to take us down, they're taking us down, they're going to take us down. Say the Lord's prayer, say the Lord's prayer," the captain screamed, according to Antolino.

Syria Accepts U.N. Envoy's Peace Plan

QAA, Lebanon (AP) — Syria accepted a cease-fire drawn up by U.N. envoy Kofi Annan on Tuesday, but the diplomatic breakthrough was swiftly overshadowed by intense clashes between government soldiers and rebels that sent bullets flying into Lebanon.

Opposition members accuse President Bashar Assad of agreeing to the plan to stall for time as his troops make a renewed push to kill off bastions of dissent. And the conflict just keeps getting deadlier: The U.N. said the death toll has grown to more than 9,000, a sobering assessment of a devastating year-old crackdown on the uprising that shows no sign of ending.

Annan's announcement that Syria had accepted his peace plan was met with deep skepticism.

"We are not sure if it's political maneuvering or a sincere act," said Louay Safi, a member of the opposition Syrian National Council. "We have no trust in the current regime. ... We have to see that they have stopped killing civilians."

Annan's plan calls for an immediate, two-hour halt in fighting every day to allow humanitarian access and medical evacuations. The plan also outlines a complete cease-fire, but that will take more time because Syria must first move troops and equipment out of cities and towns, government forces and the divided opposition must stop fighting, and a U.N.-supervised monitoring mission must be established.

Pope Prays For More Freedom In Cuba

HAVANA (AP) — Pope Benedict XVI prayed for freedom and renewal "for the greater good of all Cubans" before the nation's patron saint Tuesday, but the island's communist leaders quickly rejected the Roman Catholic leader's appeal for political change after five decades of one-party rule.

The exchange came hours before Benedict was to meet President Raul Castro, and possibly his brother and predecessor Fidel, behind closed doors in Havana on the pontiff's second day on the island.

Days after dismissing the Marxist ideology on which the Cuban system is based, Benedict continued to gently press themes highly sensitive to Cuban government in his prayer and short speech at the sanctuary of the Virgin of Charity of Cobre near the eastern city of Santiago.

"I have entrusted to the Mother of God the future of your country, advancing along the ways of renewal and hope, for the greater good of all Cubans," the pope said. "I have also prayed to the Virgin for the needs of those who suffer, of those who are deprived of freedom, those who are separated from their loved ones or who are undergoing times of difficulty."

It wasn't long before a top official back in Havana responded.

Tighter Security Imposed For SAT And ACT

MINEOLA, N.Y. (AP) — The millions of students who take the SAT or ACT each year will have to submit photos of themselves when they sign up for the college entrance exams, under a host of new security measures announced Tuesday in the aftermath of a major cheating scandal on Long Island.

The two companies that administer the tests, the College Board and ACT Inc., agreed to the precautions under public pressure brought to bear by Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice, who is overseeing the investigation. The measures take effect in the fall.

"I believe these reforms, and many others which are happening behind the scenes, will prevent the kind of cheating that our investigation uncovered and give high schools and colleges the tools they need to identify those who try to cheat," Rice said.

Rice has charged 20 current or former students from a cluster of well-to-do, high-achieving suburbs on Long Island with participating in a scheme in which teenagers hired other people for as much as \$3,500 each to take the exam for them. The five alleged ringers arrested in the case were accused of flashing phony IDs when they showed up for the tests. All 20 have pleaded not guilty.

In one instance, a young man allegedly produced ID and took the test for a teenage girl who had a name that could have been either male or female.

Justices Signal Trouble For Health Care Law

BY MARK SHERMAN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The fate of President Barack Obama's health care overhaul was cast into deeper jeopardy Tuesday as the Supreme Court's conservative justices sharply and repeatedly questioned its core requirement that virtually every American carry insurance. The court will now take up whether any remnant of the historic law can survive if that linchpin fails.

The justices' questions in Tuesday's hearing carried deeply serious implications but were sometimes flavored with fanciful suggestions. If the government can force people to buy health insurance, justices wanted to know, can it require people to buy burial insurance? Cellphones? Broccoli?

The law, pushed to passage by Obama and congressional Democrats two years ago, would affect nearly all Americans and extend insurance coverage to 30 million people who now lack it. Republicans are strongly opposed, including the presidential contenders now campaigning for the chance to challenge Obama in November.

Audio for Tuesday's court argument can be found at: <http://apne.ws/Hft6z3>.

The court focused on whether the mandate for Americans to have insurance "is a step beyond what our cases allow," in the words of Justice Anthony Kennedy.

But Kennedy, who is often the swing vote on cases that divide the justices along ideological lines, also said he recognized the magnitude of the nation's health care problems and seemed to suggest they would require a comprehensive solution.

He and Chief Justice John Roberts emerged as the apparent pivotal votes in the court's decision. The ruling is due in June in the midst of a presidential election campaign that has focused in part on the new law.

Though many of the justices asked tough questions and made strong statements, past cases have shown that those don't necessarily



OLIVIER DOULIERY/ABACA PRESS/MCT

Demonstrators for and against the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act march and chant outside the U.S. Supreme Court Building on March 27, 2012 in Washington, DC. The Supreme Court digs deep into health care this morning, as the justices consider the most important challenge to the law: compelling individuals to buy insurance or pay a fine.

ily translate into votes when it comes time for a decision.

Wednesday's final arguments — the third day in the unusually long series of hearings — will focus on whether the rest of the law can remain even if the insurance mandate is struck down and, separately, on the constitutionality of another provision expanding the federal-state Medicaid program.

The insurance requirement is intended to complement two unchallenged provisions of the law that require insurers to cover people regardless of existing medical conditions and limit how much they can charge in premiums based on a person's age or health.

The law envisions that insurers will be able to accommodate older and sicker people without facing financial ruin because the in-

surance requirement will provide insurance companies with more premiums from healthy people to cover the increased costs of care.

The biggest issue, to which the justices returned repeatedly during two hours of arguments in a packed courtroom, was whether the government can force people to buy insurance.

"Purchase insurance in this case, something else in the next case," Roberts said.

"If the government can do this, what else can it not do?" Justice Antonin Scalia asked. He and Justice Samuel Alito appeared likely to join with Justice Clarence Thomas, the only justice to ask no questions, to vote to strike down the key provision of the overhaul. The four Democratic appointees seemed ready to vote to uphold it.

Despite Gas Prices, Consumers Keep Rosy Outlook

BY ANNE D'INNOCENZIO

AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK — Americans are holding onto a rosier view of the U.S. economy as they focus on the good in a flood of mixed economic news.

Gas prices are up, but the stock market is, too. Home prices are down, but so is unemployment.

"The resilience suggests that jobs remain a more important concern for consumers than gasoline prices," said Mark Vitner, an economist at Wells Fargo Securities.

Gas prices have risen almost every day this month, yet the Consumer Confidence Index for March held nearly steady at 70.2, according to the New York-based private research group The Conference Board. February's reading, revised upward to 71.6, was the highest it's been in a year.

Consumer confidence is widely watched because consumer spending accounts for 70 percent of economic activity. Confidence has been fragile since the U.S. recession began in late 2007, despite several short-lived spikes.

Now, it appears to be rebounding as Americans seem to be looking at the proverbial glass as half-full despite continued weaknesses in the economy, including rising gas prices.

The measure is still significantly below the 90 reading that indicates a healthy economy — a level the index has not been near since the recession began in De-



NUCCIO DINUZZO/CHICAGO TRIBUNE/MCT

Gas prices are shown at a BP station in Chicago, Illinois on Monday.

ember 2007. But the current reading is a long climb from the 40 figure it hit last October, not to mention its all-time low of 25.3 in February 2009.

Confidence levels are closer to a stable economy than not, with Americans feeling more confident than they have in a long time.

Nicklas Johnson, a software engineer who has been with the same company for 14 years, said recruiters are starting to solicit him for jobs. That's making him more confident about spending a little more despite the fact that gas prices are rising and the value of his home has plummeted.

"I would be lying if I said gas prices aren't in the back of my

mind," said the 36-year-old who lives in San Mateo, Calif. "But I'm very optimistic that employment is rising ... I'm more encouraged about improvements in the job market than discouraged about inflation."

Johnson is like many Americans, who are more upbeat as the job picture improves. The economy has added an average of 245,000 jobs per month from De-

cember through February. And the unemployment rate has declined to 8.3 percent, the lowest in three years.

Adding to that, the stock market has risen at a healthy pace this year, making many Americans wealthier than they have been in the past few years. In fact, the Standard & Poor's 500 index came close to a four-year high on Monday.

But there are reasons for Americans to temper their optimism. The end of last year was the best for home sales in five years, but a continued drop in home prices suggests the housing market remains weak.

The widely-watched Standard & Poor's Case-Shiller home-price index, released Tuesday, showed that home prices fell in January for a fifth straight month in 16 of 19 major U.S. cities as modest sales increases have yet to boost prices.

And the biggest threat to consumer confidence is still gas prices. The Consumer Confidence survey of consumers, conducted from March 1 through March 15, showed shoppers' worries about inflation rose to the highest level in about a year, alongside a rise in gas prices.

It is with sincere and heartfelt gratitude

that we say Thank You to everyone that helped make "All American Beef Battalion" auction held Friday, March 9, 2012 such a huge success. It was a heartwarming and humbling day for us that we cannot begin to express our gratitude to all who contributed! It would be impossible to list everyone who made this event happen but would like to acknowledge just a few... The Yankton Livestock Barn-Dean, Sarah, Brian, Greg and all the employee's-JOB WELL DONE; KK93-Laurie Larsen promoting and being there live-YOU GOT THE MESSAGE OUT; First Dakota for donating all the food and helping serve-SERVICE DONE RIGHT; J&R Feeds-Jack Sieben for making the best sirloin sandwiches-DELICIOUS; VFW Post 791 Color Guard for beginning the auction-OUR VETERANS-OUR HEROES; Rose Healy for singing the National Anthem, your voice filled the barn-MUSIC FOR OUR HEARTS; Conklin Distributing for the 16' banner and Carol-ARTWORK AT IT'S BEST. To all who attended and all who donated in any way or form. There were so many; family, friends, acquaintances and even those we have never met, "YOU" made it happen. The sale was a record breaking day with estimation of donations to exceed \$43,000.00! The funds will be used to thank the 842nd EN CO with a steak, a hand shake and a Thank You when they return home. Because of the large amount of funds raised, many more of our brave soldiers across the nation returning home or going to serve us, will also be served by the "All American Beef Battalion." The good people of South Dakota love and appreciate our young men and women fighting for our freedom! Thank You to all our brave Veterans, past and present, making it possible for all of us to live in the land of the free, because of the BRAVE!

Godspeed
& God Bless America!

Kevin & Lori Huber

OBITUARIES

Denelda Shutt

Denelda Shutt, age 67 of Yankton passed away unexpectedly at her residence on March 22, 2012.

A Memorial Mass

will be at 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday, March

28, 2012 at St. Bened-

ict Catholic

Church, with Fr. Ken

Lulf officiating. Bur-

ial of the cremated

remains will be in St.

Boniface Cemetery

at approximately

1:30 p.m.

Visitations will

be one hour prior to the service at

the church. The Opsahl-Kostel Fu-

neral Home & Crematory, Yankton is

in charge of services.

Denelda was born July 22, 1944 in

Yankton, South Dakota to Ignatius

and Hildegard (Albrecht) Loecker.

She was baptized on August 6, 1944,

1st Communion on April 12, 1953

and confirmed on October 12, 1954,

all at St. Boniface Catholic Church,

Menominee, Nebraska. She gradu-

ated Yankton Senior High School on

May 31, 1962 and as a certified surgi-

cal technologist in 1973. She retired



Shutt

from Sacred Heart Hospital on December 31, 2011. Denelda married Robert Ballard on September 4, 1965.

To this union 2 sons were born, Brett and Brian. On September 3, 1972,

Denelda married David Shutt. From this union, 1 son, Brooks was born.

She loved her home, yard, gardening, birds and the outdoors in general. She spent much of her life outdoors, camping, fishing and hunting. Most of her spring and summer were spent tending to her yard and flowers. She also loved to travel and visited many places in her lifetime.

She is survived by her beloved dog, companion and friend, "Tuck"; sons, Brett (Jaimie) Ballard of San Antonio, TX, Brian (Virginia) Ballard of Yankton, SD and Brooks (Angela) Shutt of Austin, TX; seven grandchildren, Sarah Ballard, Brandi Ballard, Mason Ballard, Morraine Tirado, Ellie Tirado, Chase Tirado and Sierra Shutt; sister, LuAnn (Duane) Jones of St. Helena, NE.

She was preceded in death by her parents, brother, Harold and her special friend and companion, Mike Lowe.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
March 28, 2012

Helen Brooks

LAKE ANDES — Helen M.

Brooks, 81, died at Wagner Community Memorial Hospital in Wagner on Tuesday, March 27, 2012.

Funeral services are pending with Koehn Bros. Funeral Home, Lake Anides.

Kenneth Mellem

Kenneth Neil Mellem, 84, of Yankton died Monday, March 26, 2012, at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital in Yankton.

Funeral services are at 10:30 a.m. Saturday at Riverview Reformed Church, Yankton, with the Rev. Rodney Veldhuizen officiating. Burial will follow in Turkey Valley Cemetery rural Irene.

Visitation is 5-8 p.m. Friday, with a prayer service beginning at 7:30 p.m., at Hansen Funeral Home, Irene.

For obituary and online condolences, visit hansenfuneralhome.com.

Darlene Stratman

WYNOT, Neb. — Darlene D. Stratman, 73, of Wynot, Neb., died Tuesday, March 27, 2012, at the Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, Yankton.

Mass of Christian Burial is at 10:30 a.m. Saturday at Holy Family (Sacred Heart) Catholic Church, Wynot, with the Rev. Eric Olsen officiating. Burial will be in the Sts. Philip and James Cemetery, St. James, Neb.

Visitation is 4-8 p.m. Friday, with a vigil service at 7 p.m., at the church. Visitation will begin one hour prior to services on Saturday at the church.

Wintz Funeral Home, Hartington, is in charge of arrangements.

Yankton Transmission Specialists

• Transmissions • Drive Lines
 • Transfer Cases • Differentials

2 Year / 24,000 Guarantee

2409 East Highway 50
(605) 665-1175

Brightway Electric LLC
Yankton

Locally owned * Proudly Serving
 South Dakota and Nebraska.

Licensed ⚡ Insured ⚡ Warrantied Work
 Residential ⚡ Commercial ⚡ Service

Let us "Brighten" your way! *Bucket Truck Available*

Mike Suing
 605-760-3505

Rod McNatt
 605-661-9594

IN REMEMBRANCE

Shirley J. Schumacher

10:30 AM, Wednesday
 Holy Trinity Catholic Church
 Hartington

WINTZ & RAY
 FUNERAL HOME
 and Cremation Service, Inc.
 605-665-3644



WINTZ
 FUNERAL HOME INC.
 Hartington, Coleridge, Crofton
 402-254-6547

www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com