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# GLOBAL NEWS TODAY

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**YES. EVERYDAY.**

Sunday February 8, 2009

## Make passport plans now for Mexico and Canada trips

**Starting June 1, U.S. citizens will have to show a passport or other special document for land or sea travel. Be prepared for any hitches.**

By Jane Engle

If you're traveling outside the U.S. this year, here are two pieces of advice: Get or renew your passport now, and think twice before planning a car trip to Mexico or Canada in June.

That's when we may see the biggest change ever for Western Hemisphere travel. Starting June 1 (unless Congress changes the deadline), Americans will need to show a passport, a passport card or other special document to return to the U.S. by land or sea from Mexico and Canada.

Despite assurances from agencies involved, there may be glitches and delays. Two years ago, the last big change in entry rules -- requiring a passport for air passengers returning from Mexico, Canada, the Caribbean and Bermuda -- inspired a stampede of passport applications and created confusion at airports. Some travelers waited months for their passports, and others just stayed home.

Although passport demand has recently fallen along with wait times, and the State Department has ramped up staffing and facilities since 2007, the upcoming change will affect far more Americans than the 2007 rules change.

Just how many, though, is hard to quantify. Out of more than 1 million people, both U.S. and foreign citizens, who legally enter the U.S. each day, about three-fourths arrive by land from Mexico or Canada, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

But the agency doesn't keep track of how many are repeat crossers or use documents that won't be accepted after June 1, said spokeswoman Kelly Ivahnenko. So it can't predict how many Americans will need to order a passport or passport card by June.

What to do to be prepared? First, study up. Second, do some planning.

A little history: In 2004, Congress, reacting to issues raised by the Sept. 11 attacks, decided to plug a potential hole in border security that had allowed Americans to present various types of identification, such as driver's licenses, birth certificates or sometimes nothing, when reentering the U.S. from certain neighbor countries.

It passed a law that, when fully implemented, would require citizens of the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Caribbean countries and Bermuda to show passports or other secure documents that established identity and nationality in order to enter the U.S. from these nearby nations.

What followed were years of increasingly complicated rules, shifting deadlines and the Great Passport Meltdown of 2007, in which wait times for passports doubled to 12 weeks or more. Lobbyists for border countries, employers and travel industries joined the fray. Changes were phased in by mode of travel -- air, land or sea -- with plenty of exceptions.

It was not just where you traveled but how you traveled that determined what documents you would need. In January 2007, the U.S. government began requiring a passport to fly back to the U.S. from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda. In January 2008, it said it would stop accepting oral declarations at sea and land checkpoints. And on June 1, it plans to fully implement the new document requirements for land and sea crossings.

What you need now: Generally, you need a passport to enter the U.S. by air from any foreign country. If you enter by land or sea from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean or Bermuda, you may not need a passport, but you do need at least a birth certificate or other proof of citizenship, plus a government-issued photo ID, such as a driver's license. Children 18 or younger need only a birth certificate for land and sea entry from these areas.

What you'll need starting June 1: The same rules apply for air travel: passport required.

If you're arriving from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean or Bermuda by land or sea, you'll generally have several choices: a passport; a passport card, a new type of ID that the U.S. government began issuing last year; an enhanced driver's license, a new high-tech version offered by a few states; or so-called Trusted Traveler cards such as SENTRI and NEXUS for frequent border crossers.

There will be various exceptions for land and sea crossings from these destinations. U.S. and Canadian children younger than 16, for example, will need only proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate; in organized groups, the cutoff will be age 18. Passengers on cruise ships that sail round-trip from a U.S. port may need only a birth certificate and a government-issued photo ID (although the

cruise line or foreign countries they visit may require a passport.)

You'll find a summary of the current and new rules at a website maintained by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, [www.getyouhome.gov](http://www.getyouhome.gov).

How to get the right stuff: The State Department's travel website, [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov), (click on "Passports for U.S. Citizens") is one-stop shopping for information on passports and passport cards. It has instructions and forms.

But you don't have to go to D.C. or even to a regional passport agency (there are two in California, one in L.A. and one in San Francisco) to get these documents. If you're renewing, you can download the form from the State Department website and mail it in. If it's your first time, you can visit any one of thousands of so-called passport acceptance facilities, such as post offices, to get what you need.

Go to a passport agency only if you need your passport in less than two weeks for travel or less than four weeks in order to obtain a foreign visa. You'll need to make an appointment.

A passport costs \$100 for adults and \$85 for children younger than 16 (renewals are less); a passport card costs \$45 for adults and \$35 for children younger than 16

## Brazil: Four survive plane crash

A small plane headed to the jungle city of Manaus crashed Saturday in Brazil's Amazon with 20 people on board, officials said. Four survivors have been found. The plane was being used as an "air taxi" to ferry passengers between cities in the jungle when it crashed into the Manacapuru river about 50 miles southwest of Manaus, the capital of Amazonas state, a state government spokesman said. The plane reportedly was an Embraer EMB-110P1 model, a small twin turbo-prop plane that carries up to 21 people.

## FXDaily® - Daily table of currency exchange rates

*Base Currency: Mexican Peso, MXP on Sunday, February 8, 2009*

USD	14.2191 / 0.07053
CAD	11.6659 / 0.08603
AUD	9.6012 / 0.1046
EUR	18.4067 / 0.05452
GBP	21.0344 / 0.04771
JPY	0.1548 / 6.4845



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## MEXICO

### World, Nation Briefs: Mexico boosts security after robberies at airport

MEXICO CITY -- Mexico has assigned 100 more federal police officers to the capital's airport following a series of assaults on travelers who exchanged money. Five of the victims have been foreigners, including a French scientist who was killed. A Federal Police official said the reinforcement brings to 500 the number of federal officers patrolling the airport. Prosecutors say at least 18 people who were recently robbed outside the airport were apparently followed after exchanging money inside.

### History of the Mariachi

#### The Wedding of Musical Traditions

Prior to the arrival of Cortes the music of Mexico, played with rattles, drums, reed and clay flutes, and conch-shell horns, was an integral part of religious celebrations. Quickly, however, as Christianity spread, in many areas these instruments gave way to instruments imported by the Spanish: violins, guitars and harps, brass horns, and woodwinds. The Indian and mestizo musicians not only learned to play European instruments, but also to build their own, sometimes giving them shapes and tunings of their own invention.

Music and dance were important elements of Spanish theatrical productions, enormously popular throughout the Spanish speaking world during the colonial period. The typical Spanish theatrical orchestra of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries was comprised of violins (usually two), harp and guitars (or guitar variants). It was from this group that several of the most distinctive regional ensembles of Mexico developed, including the Mariachi.

#### Mariachi - What Does It Mean?

Musicologists and folklorists have argued for years over the origin of the word - Mariachi.

The explanation that appears most frequently - especially on record jackets and in travel brochures - is that it is a variation of the French word *mariage*, meaning wedding or marriage, and comes from the time in the nineteenth century when Maximilian, a Frenchman, was Emperor of Mexico. According to this myth the Mariachi was named by the French after the celebration with which it was most commonly associated. But this explanation, always regarded as highly doubtful by linguists, was totally discredited recently when a use of the word was found that predated the time when the French arrived in Mexico.

Currently, however, the best scholarly opinion is that the word *mariachi* has native roots. One theory is that it comes from the name of the wood used to make the platform on which the performers danced to the music of the village musicians. But whatever its true source - and the truth may never be discovered with absolute certainty - the word today has one meaning that is crystal clear: *Mariachi* means one of the most exciting and enchanting musical ensembles found anywhere in the world.

#### The Unique Make-Up of the Mariachi Ensemble

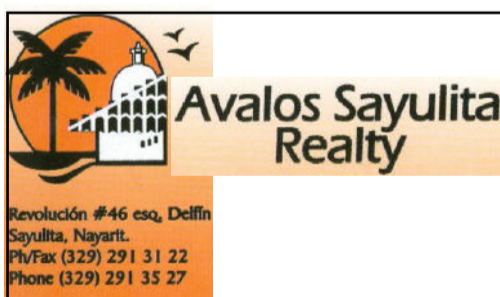
In the complete *Mariachi* group today there are as many as six to eight violins, two trumpets, and a guitar - all standard European instruments. Then there is a high-itched, round-backed guitar called the *vihuela*, which when strummed in the traditional manner gives the *Mariachi* its typical rhythmic vitality; a deep-voiced guitar called the *guitarrón* which serves as the bass of the ensemble; and a Mexican folk harp, which usually doubles the base line, but also ornaments the melody. While these three instruments have European origins, in their present form they are strictly Mexican.

The sound that these instruments combine to make is unique. Like the *sarape*, which often used widely contrasting colors side by side - green and orange, yellow and blue - the *Mariachi* used sharply contrasting sounds: the sweet sounds of the violins against the brilliance of the trumpets, and the deep sound of the *guitarrón* against the crisp, high voice of the *vihuela*; and the frequent shifting between syncopation and on-beat rhythm. The resulting sound is the heart and soul of Mexico.

The Beginning of the *Mariachi* We Know Today Although the origins of *Mariachi* music go back hundreds of years, in the form we know it the *Mariachi* began in the nineteenth century in the Mexican state of Jalisco - according to popular legend, in the town of Cocula. The *Mariachi* was the distinctive version of the Spanish theatrical orchestra of violins, harp and guitars which developed in and around Jalisco. In other areas such as Veracruz and the Huasteca region in the northeast, the ensemble evolved differently. By the end of the nineteenth century, in Cocula the *vihuela*, two violins, and the *guitarrón* (which had replaced the harp) were the instruments of the *Mariachi*.

The principal music played by these early *Mariachis* was the SON, the popular music of the day. A mixture of folk traditions from Spain, Mexico, and Africa, the son was found in many regions of the country. The son from Jalisco is called the son *jalisciense*. *La Negra* is the best-known example.

Sones from other regions include the son *jarocho* or *veracruzano*, from the region around the Gulf port of Veracruz; and the son *huasteco*, from northeastern Mexico. The most famous example of the son *jarocho* is *La Bamba*. A typical son *huasteco*, also known as the *huapango*, is *La Malagueña*.



It is interesting to note that there are some sones, such as *El Gusto*, which are common in all three regions and clearly date back to a common ancestor.

#### Mariachi and Dance

It is important to remember the son-and other types of *Mariachi* music- is not just music to be played and sung. From the very start it was music to be danced.

The traditional dance technique associated with both the son *jalisciense* and son *jarocho* is the *zapateado*, a distinctive type of footwork that originated in Spain. When dancing the *zapateado* the performers skillfully drive the heels of their boots or shoes into the dance-floor, pounding out swift, often syncopated rhythms which complement the different rhythm of the musical instruments. The *zapateado* can literally reduce even the most resistant dance floor to splinters because of the force with which it is danced.

Each of the regional variations of the son has its traditional style of dance. The *huapango* or son *huasteco*, for instance, like the son *jalisciense* and son *jarocho*, was originally danced on wooden platforms, in some areas mounted on earthen jugs. To dance the *huapango* the couples line up in opposing columns. The upper part of the body is held perfectly erect as the feet perform rapid, intricate, shuffling maneuvers. Today it is sometimes performed with a glass of water on the head to show off the dancer's incredible muscular control.

The lyrics of the sones frequently describe country life: in particular, the plants, animals and people of the region. These lyrics are highly suggestive, often using imagery of the courtship of farm animals to describe the relations of men and women. In the dance the movements of the performers often represent the farm-yard courtship described in the verses of the sones.

Another kind of music related to the son and intimately connected with a particular dance is the *jarabe*. The *jarabe*, which has many regional variations, is really a medley of dance pieces, including sones, danzas, *jotas*, and *polkas*. No discussion of *Mariachi* dance would be complete without mentioning the famous *Jarabe Tapatio* - the Mexican Hat Dance. Associated with Guadalajara in the state of Jalisco, it has become the national dance of Mexico. It is highly stylized, with prescribed movements and costumes. The male wears the classic outfit the Jalisco horsemen or *charro*, while the female the *China*, wears a hand-woven shawl and a bright sequined skirt.

By the 1930's *Mariachi* musicians had begun wearing the same *traje de charro*, consisting of a waist-length jacket and tightly fitted wool pants which open slightly at the ankle to fit over a short riding boot. Both pants and jacket are often ornamented with embroidery, intricately cut leather designs, or silver buttons in a variety of shapes. Prior to the 1930's, photographs show early *Mariachis* dressed in *calzones de manta*, and *huaraches*, homespun white cotton pants and shirts and leather sandals, the clothes worn by most peasants in Jalisco.

#### Coming of Age: *Mariachi* Vargas

Although the roots of the *Mariachi* go back hundreds of years, there are no Bachs or Beethovens in its early history because *Mariachi* music was the music of country people. Until the 1930's *Mariachi* groups were local and semi-professional. They were almost entirely unknown outside their own region.

This began to change about 60 years ago, when the *Mariachi* Vargas de Tecalitlán, founded by Gaspar Vargas in 1898, went from Jalisco to Mexico City. They were invited to play at the inauguration in 1934 of populist President Lázaro Cárdenas, one of whose great interests was to foster the native culture of Mexico. Catching the Presidents' enthusiasm

asm, urban sophisticates took the folk arts to their hearts, and the Mariachi Vargas instantly became the toast of the town. The initial success was only the beginning. Silvestre Vargas, who had taken over from his father as leader of the Mariachi Vargas in 1928, soon hired a trained musician, Rubí n Fuentes, as musical director.

Fuentes, still actively involved with the Mariachi Vargas more than fifty years later, is one of the towering figures in the development of the Mariachi. With the help of Silvestre Vargas, he standardized the arrangements of many of the traditional sones composed many exceptional new huapangos, and wrote arrangements for many of the legendary song writers and singers of his generation, including Pedro Infante, Miguel Aceves Mejía, Lola Beltrán, and José Alfredo Jiménez. By the 1950's he insisted that all his musicians read music. These innovations changed the way Mariachi music moved from one group to another. Gone was the total reliance of the musicians on their ears to pick up new songs, and techniques.

With this giant step toward professionalism coinciding with the development of recordings, radio

and film, the Mariachi Vargas was able to become the ideal that all other groups would emulate. With the addition of two trumpets, a classical guitar and more violins, by the 1950's the Mariachi ensemble had become a complete, adaptable orchestra, with the ability to retain its traditional base while it was assimilating new musical ideas and styles. The importance of Mariachi Vargas cannot be overestimated. Its arrangements have become the definitive statements of what the Mariachi should be.

The Mariachi at Special Occasions  
Mariachis often help celebrate the great moments in the lives of the Mexican people. With the serenata (serenade), the Mariachi participates in the rite of courtship. In a society where the young members of opposite sexes were kept apart, the serenata was a means of communication by which a young man could send a message of love to the woman of his heart. In many areas of Mexico, it is not unusual to be awakened by the sound of Las Mañanitas, the traditional song for saints days, or birthdays. The Mariachi is usually positioned strategically on the street beneath the window of the festejada, but the sound of its music echoes through the whole neighborhood. Mariachis are

## USA+CANADA

ground while you perform other phone functions (a deceptively simple trick missing on many of the pricier "multimedia" phones I've tested).

Now, that's not to say everything's rosy with the Renew. Its sound is loud and clear, all right, but it tends toward the tinny side, and I was bummed by the lack of a physical, dedicated volume rocker on the side of the phone (you must use the four-way navigational pad to tweak the volume, which can be awkward when the handset is pressed against your ear). Meanwhile, Web browsing over the GPRS-only data connection is painfully slow. And yes, T-Mobile offers several cheaper (as in, free) phones with sharper displays and more features.

That said, the Renew is a statement phone as well as a basic one—indeed, Motorola promises to invest in renewable-energy sources to compensate for the carbon emissions involved in building and distributing the handset. (There's even a postage-paid envelope in the box for sending your old phone to a recycling center.) If you're looking for the equivalent of a hybrid car in the world of cell phones, well ... this is it.

### **America's first first lady: Foxy or frumpy?**

*Historians use technology to revamp Martha Washington's image*

**By BRIGID SCHULTE WASHINGTON POST**

WASHINGTON — This just in: Martha Washington was hot. Or at least hotter than we thought.

Our image of the mother of our country, vague and insubstantial as it is, is drawn from portraits painted after her death showing a frumpy, dumpy, plump old lady, a fussy jumble of needlework in her lap, wearing what could pass for a shower cap with pink sponge rollers underneath.

But today, 250 years after Martha and George tied the knot, a handful of historians are seeking to revamp the former first lady's fusty image, using the few surviving records of things she wrote, asking forensic anthropologists to do a computerized age-regression portrait of her in her mid-20s and, perhaps most importantly, displaying for the first time in decades the avant-garde deep purple silk high

also commonly hired for baptisms, weddings, patriotic holidays, and even funerals. It is not unusual for the deceased to leave a list of favorite songs to be sung beside the grave at burial.

Mariachi music has been incorporated into the Roman Catholic Church's most sacred ritual: the Mass. The Misa Panamericana is a Mariachi folk mass, sung in Spanish, that uses traditional instruments to create vivid new interpretations of the traditional elements of the service: Angelus, Kyrie eleison, Gloria, Alleluia, Offertory, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei.

The first Mariachi Mass was the concept of a Canadian priest, Father Juan Marco Leclerc, and has been celebrated in Cuernavaca since 1966. It originally took place in a small chapel, but news of it spread so rapidly, and the crowds grew so large, that the regular Sunday Mariachi Mass had to be moved to the Cathedral of Cuernavaca. It is now frequently performed throughout Mexico, and in many areas in the United States where people of Mexican origin live.

### **Hands-on with Motorola's green "Renew" phone**

**Ben Patterson: The Gadget Hound**

I have to say, it's been years since I bothered to test a handset as basic as the Renew. Then again, it's not every day I get to review a cell phone made out of recycled water bottles.

Announced during CES and available now on T-Mobile (\$9.99 with a two-year contract, or \$59.99 without), the three-ounce Renew is not exactly, how shall I say ... packed with features.

No Bluetooth. No GPS. No video player. No camera. Wi-Fi? Please. Oh, by the way—2002 called, and it wants its 1.6-inch, 128 by 128-pixel display back.

That said, you'll be hard-pressed to find a greener handset than the Renew, starting with its brown cardboard package (made from post-consumer recycled paper) and ending with its plastic, green-and-black casing, which is both molded out of recycled water bottles—there's a first—and also "entirely recyclable," according to Motorola.

And while the Renew's features are indeed basic—just a bare-bones WAP browser and MP3 player, a few low-tech games, a basic calendar and address book—Motorola clearly took pains to get the basics right.

Example: Call quality on the CrystalTalk-enabled Renew is notably impressive, with callers sounding loud—way loud, actually, especially over the speakerphone—and clear. I didn't notice any echoing or drop-outs during my tests, although your mileage may vary depending on local coverage (and I've certainly heard my share of complaints from T-Mobile subscribers). Moto promises a whopping nine hours of talk time on a single charge, and yes—the Renew works with T-Mobile's MyFaves plan (good for unlimited calling to any five friends).

I was also surprised to find a microSD slot for memory expansion behind the Renew's battery, good for storing MP3s for playback over the music player (a wired stereo headset with a 2.5mm jack comes in the box). Again, don't expect an equalizer or album art, but there are shuffle and repeat modes available, and you can play tunes in the back-

heels studded with silver sequins that she wore on her wedding day. Take that, Sally Fairfax.

History is about to be revised.

"We always see Martha with a withered face in her old age. But she was quite a beautiful woman in her younger years, and Washington loved her deeply," said Edward Lengel, senior editor at the Papers of George Washington project at the University of Virginia. "What's happening now is revisionist. But I think it's a whole lot closer to the reality of what she was."

Contrary to popular opinion, even among some historians, Martha was not fat when she married George. Yes, she liked to read the Bible, but she devoured gothic romance novels, too. She capably ran the five plantations left to her when her first husband died, bargaining with London merchants for the best tobacco prices. And unknown to most, while George was courting her she had another suitor, a Virginia planter with much greater wealth and stature. In a little-known letter, Charles Carter wrote to his brother about what a beauty she was and how he hoped to "arouse a flame in her breast."

He was clearly sexually excited by her," said Patricia Brady, a historian who wrote the first revisionist biography of Martha a few years ago. "When Martha decided to marry George, she didn't marry him just to be a kind stepfather to her two children. He was a hunk, and I think she decided to make herself happy. People are just starting to see her as a real person."

The fact that so little is known about Martha is, in part, her fault. After George Washington died, she, as was the custom of well-known people then, burned their correspondence. So we know George wrote two youthful love letters bursting with yearning and passion to Sally Fairfax, even though she was the wife of his good friend. We have a really bad poem he wrote as a teen to a young Virginia beauty ("Rays, you have, more transparent than the sun ..."). We have no idea what he wrote to Martha.

But each generation of Americans, Lengel and other historians say, has played its part in solidifying Martha's stodgy image, transforming her into an icon of demure Victorian perfection in the 19th century and, in the antiheroic 20th century, the mousy, fat widow that dashing and virile Washington married only for money.

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Emily Shapiro, a curator at Mount Vernon, wandered through the museum on a recent day, pointing to the most famous images of Martha. All are, as one historian describes it, of the double-chinned Old Mother Hubbard variety. To Shapiro, the white-haired images, painted shortly after both George and Martha had died, fostered a sense of legitimacy for the fledgling country. "The country was still so young," she said. "I think it was reassuring to see its leaders as older, distinguished, stately and gray-haired people."

She stopped before a darkened case displaying Martha's wedding shoes, which even she and Mount Vernon Executive Director James Rees describe as a little sassy and definitely "over the top" for the time. Because the shoes are so delicate, they are displayed for only a few months every 10 years or so. The sparkly buckles are gone. And the once royal purple has faded to a soft lavender. But even after all these years, it's clear that these were some shoes.

"They were the Manolo Blahniks of her time," said Brady, the historian and author. "So much false information was given out about the stupid cherry tree and the wooden teeth, it's put this sort of a layer of dullness over him, and of course, if he's dull, she has to be dull. Nobody imagines that they were in love and in pain and liked to dance, that what real people go through, they went through."

In the 20th century, attempts to restore George's humanity inevitably led to fabrications and exaggerations about his love life and his military adventures, Lengel said. Early efforts to humanize Martha painted her as crabby and difficult to get along with.

In 1958, the Sally Fairfax letters surfaced at the Houghton Library at Harvard University. "I profess myself a Votary to Love," Washington wrote, confessing his love for Sally shortly before he was to marry Martha. The letters hit like a bombshell. A new narrative was born for the turbulent times, one of Washington marrying tired old Martha for convenience while pining for Sally. The defining books of the time took pains to portray Martha as a dull homebody and the second choice of history.

"Martha Washington was neither beautiful nor brilliant. She lacked artistic skill, except perhaps in fine needlework. The letters she wrote were an incoherent jumble of affection and gossip." That was James Flexner, the preeminent Washington scholar of the 1960s and '70s. He describes Washington's marriage to Martha as an "escape" from the burden of his passions for Sally. The 40-year union, he wrote, "began badly." Martha, he wrote disdainfully, was "diminutive and plump."

That sets off revisionist historians such as Brady. Although Martha had borne four children (only two of whom survived) by the time she met Washington, she hadn't packed on the pounds yet.

Brady examined purchase orders and clothes inventories of the time. "Martha was very short. (About 5 feet.) But she was not dumpy. We know that because of the account books that she and her first husband kept. Everything they ordered from England refers to her tiny hands, her tiny feet, her small waist, her slim arms," Brady said. "When you were buying at a distance like that, you had to be honest. If you said you were slim and they sent you a small dress and you weighed 200 pounds, it would really be a waste of money."

It was Brady who took a miniature watercolor-on-ivory portrait of Martha in middle age, which her

grandchildren said was a "striking likeness," to forensic anthropologists at the Louisiana State University Forensic Anthropology and Computer Enhancement Services, or FACES, Laboratory.

These scientists do age progressions to determine what kidnapped children might look like as adults. Brady asked whether they could reverse the same process: Use the bone structure of a middle-aged Martha to figure out what she would have looked like as a 25-year-old about to marry the future father of the country.

Mount Vernon bought the portrait, which hangs in the education center.

"I wanted to rescue her from old-ladyhood," Brady said.

In drawing a new portrait of their relationship, which perhaps might not have started in love, but grew into it, Brady relied heavily on the two letters from George that escaped Martha's fire. Both were written in the early days of the Revolutionary War. He addresses her as "My dearest." They are warm and filled with concern for her.

Lengel recently discovered a rare letter from Martha to George in 1777, where she calls him "My Love."

"There's enough circumstantial evidence really to show that they were very close," he said. "All these years, Martha has been an afterthought. It hasn't been until now that people have taken the time to see who she really was."

And the story that her purple wedding shoes have been trying to tell.

## EUROPE

### **In short, DomainKeys is a forger's worst nightmare**

DomainKeys is yet another way Yahoo! brings untold misery and grief to email forgers everywhere. Without boring you with too many details, it's an Internet standard developed in large part at Yahoo! that lets us confirm whether emails are really from their claimed domain.

It's always a good idea, however, to double-check and make sure a message is really from who it claims to be (for example, an email from Yahoo! should be from "...@yahoo.com" and not from a spoof domain like "...@y9ho00o.com").

If you're a postmaster interested in implementing DomainKeys to protect your domain, you can find more technical details at <http://antispam.yahoo.com/> and implementation information at <http://domainkeys.sourceforge.net>.

### **Germany, France dodge Afghanistan troop issue**

MUNICH – NATO's top official chastised Germany and France for refusing to commit more troops to Afghanistan, but the two European powers skirted the issue Saturday even while agreeing that Washington should not be left to fight international conflicts alone.

Vice President Joe Biden came to the Munich Security Conference amid expectations he would forcefully repeat President Barack Obama's calls for greater European troop deployments in Afghanistan, as Washington prepares to double American troops there to roughly 60,000.

But Biden kept his Afghan comments general in an apparent attempt to avoid a public dispute among allies.

He asked only for European "ideas and input" on a joint Afghan strategy "that brings together our civilian and military resources that prevents terrorists a safe haven and that helps Afghans develop the capacity to secure their own future."

Delegates said they thought the broad-brush approach Biden took was appropriate.

"Vice President Biden came to Munich today in the spirit of partnership," British Foreign Secretary David Miliband told AP Television News. "I think he set an ambitious agenda with big goals and high objectives and he called and challenged us to work with him and I think that's the right spirit."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel supported the general concept of more European mili-

tary backing of the U.S. through NATO, but did not address U.S. calls for additional European deployments in Afghanistan.

"International conflicts can no longer be shouldered by one country alone," she declared. "No country can go it alone, so the cooperative approach needs to be guiding us."

Germany has argued that its military is already too stretched to send troops beyond the 4,500 maximum it has committed to the relatively calm north of Afghanistan. About 3,500 are now there. Instead, it says the focus should be on civil reconstruction in conjunction with military security.

The French parliament voted in September to keep 3,300 French troops in the Afghan theater, but has no current plans to increase the French contingent.

French President Nicholas Sarkozy argued for a Europe more ready to defend itself instead of relying on others, but also managed not to touch on the Afghan troops issue.

"Does Europe want peace, or does Europe want to be left in peace?" he asked. "If you want peace, then you ... need to have political and military power."

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But NATO's exasperated secretary general, Jaap De Hoop Scheffer, said if Europe wants a greater voice, it needs to do more.

"The Obama administration has already done a lot of what Europeans have asked for including announcing the closure of Guantanamo and a serious focus on climate change," he said. "Europe should also listen; When the United States asks for a serious partner, it does not just want advice, it wants and deserves someone to share the heavy lifting."

De Hoop Scheffer added the same principle applies to Russian requests to be involved in Washington's plans to place a missile defense system in Eastern Europe.

He said Russia cannot talk of a new "security architecture" yet build its own new bases in Georgia and support Kyrgyzstan's plans to close the Manas air base, used by the U.S. to resupply troops in Afghanistan.

### Two's company for "ghost train"

BEIJING (Reuters) – Millions of Chinese cram trains to get to their home provinces for the Lunar New Year break, with tickets selling out fast, so it came as a surprise to two holidaymakers who found they were the only passengers.

The Chinese New Year break, or Spring Festival, is the biggest of two "Golden Week" holidays which give migrant workers their only chance of the year to return home with gifts for their families.

Standing-room if you are lucky only is the norm for many on journeys that can last days across the huge country, but these two had the whole train to themselves.

"There was no one and there was not enough heating or light," the Beijing Youth Daily quoted a passenger surnamed Zhang as saying. "When the train went through a tunnel, it was pitch black. It was like a ghost train."

It turned out that train L342, bound for Beijing from freezing Shanxi province last Wednesday, had been laid on as a "temporary" train to ease the crush, with no standard tickets or departure time, the newspaper said.

Only the two men had climbed aboard and the driver, for reasons known only to himself, had set off for Beijing.

"I could not get a standing-room-only ticket for the regular trains, how could there be no passengers on a temporary train?" an incredulous Zhang was quoted as saying.

The paper quoted a staff member at the station as saying the most probable explanation was that their station had not been allocated tickets.

China's Xinhua news agency said police had seized more than 6,600 train ticket scalpers during the train scramble over the holiday.

Police retrieved more than 40,000 scalped tickets, with a total face value of about \$730,000.

Kyrgyzstan's president announced this week his country was kicking Americans out of the base after securing more than \$2 billion in loans and aid from Russia. U.S. officials said Kyrgyzstan acted as a result of pressure from Moscow, but Russia and Kyrgyzstan denied that.

Biden urged European nations to take in Guantanamo detainees once the U.S. closes the detention facility for suspected terrorists. Several European nations are considering the U.S. request.

On Iran, Biden said the new U.S. administration was willing to negotiate but will isolate and pressure the Islamic Republic if it does not abandon its nuclear ambitions.

"We will draw upon all the elements of our power — military and diplomatic, intelligence and law enforcement, economic and cultural — to stop crises from occurring before they are in front of us," Biden said.

## WORLD NEWS

### 65 dead in Australia's worst fires in decades

*By TANALEE SMITH, Associated Press*  
HEALESVILLE, Australia – Towering flames razed entire towns in southeastern Australia and burned fleeing residents in their cars as the death toll from the country's worst fire disaster in a quarter-century reached 65 on Sunday.

At least 640 homes were destroyed in Saturday's inferno when searing temperatures and wind blasts produced a firestorm that swept across a swath of the country's Victoria state, where all the deaths occurred.

"Hell in all its fury has visited the good people of Victoria in the last 24 hours," Prime Minister Kevin Rudd told reporters as he toured the fire zone on Sunday. "It's an appalling tragedy for the nation."

Thousands of exhausted volunteer firefighters were still battling about 30 uncontrolled fires Sunday in Victoria, officials said, though conditions had eased considerably.

Government officials said the army would be deployed to help out, and Rudd announced immediate emergency aid of 10 million Australian dollars (\$7 million).

The tragedy echoed across Australia. Leaders in other states — most of which have been struck by their own fire disasters in the past — pledged to send money and volunteer firefighters. Funds for public donations opened Sunday quickly started swelling.

Underscoring Australia's size and its often-harsh landscape, thousands of residents of tropical northern Queensland state watched the blanket news coverage of the fires from homes soaked by floodwaters after weeks of drenching storms.

In Victoria, witnesses described seeing trees exploding and skies raining ash on Saturday as tem-

Iran asserts its intentions are purely peaceful.

The U.S. plans interceptor missiles in Poland and a radar station in the Czech Republic. Washington has said the system is aimed at preventing missile attacks by "rogue states" such as Iran, but Russian officials claim the true intention is to undermine Russia's defenses.

Saying defense shield plans remained on the table, Biden warned the U.S. would continue to have differences with Russia, including opposition to its efforts to carve out independent states in Georgia. But he said the two sides needed to cooperate on common interests.

"It was really a serious call to restart U.S. foreign policy — including, clearly, Russian-American relations," Konstantin Kosachev, head of the international relations committee in Russia's lower parliament house, said on Russian state-run Vesti-24 television.

peratures of up 117 F (47 C) combined with blasting winds to create furnace-like conditions.

Police said they were hampered from reaching burned-out areas to confirm details of deaths and property loss. But Victoria Police Commissioner Christine Nixon confirmed deaths at a dozen sites. The toll climbed higher in steps during the day, reaching 65 by Sunday evening and likely to rise further, said police spokeswoman Sgt. Creina O'Grady.

Australia's deadliest fires were in 1983, when blazes killed 75 people and razed more than 3,000 homes in Victoria and South Australia.

Police said charred bodies had been found in cars in at least two places — suggesting people were engulfed in flames as they tried to flee.

Health Minister Daniel Andrews said 78 people were hospitalized with burns. Dr. John Coleridge of Alfred Hospital, one of the largest in the fire zone, said injuries ranged from scorches on the feet of people who fled across burning ground to life-threatening burns. At least three would probably die, he said.

The fires were so massive NASA took satellite photographs of the smoke cloud.

Deputy Commissioner Kieran Walshe said police suspected some of the fires were set deliberately. He predicted it would take days to get all the blazes under control.

Victoria Country Fire Authority official Stuart Ord told Sky News some 460 square miles (1,190 square kilometers) had been burned by Sunday.

Marysville, a former gold rush town that was home to about 800 people 80 miles (130 kilometers) north of Melbourne, was almost completely wiped out.

"Marysville is no more," Senior Constable Brian Cross told The Associated Press as he manned a checkpoint Sunday in nearby Healesville on a road leading into the town. No deaths were reported in

Marysville, but police sealed it off because they feared bodies would be found there.

Television footage from Marysville showed a scene of utter devastation: house after house was a smoking ruin, with wooden beams in cinders, piles of blackened bricks and iron roofing sheets twisted in the heat. The police station, schoolhouse and pub were gutted. Burned-out cars littered the streets.

Townships in the Kinglake nearby district, a normally sleepy region of farms and weekend-getaway spots where at least a dozen people died, were also ruined.

Victoria Country Fire Service spokesman Hayden Lane said 640 houses had been confirmed de-

stroyed — 550 in the Kinglake district — and that tally was expected to rise.

"This is our house here — totally gone," Wayne Bannister told Sky News, standing with his wife Anita amid a tangle of blackened timber and bricks in Kinglake.

Another man, who was not named, described to Sky battling the flames with a garden hose until he heard first his car gas tank, then a house propane gas tank, explode. He and his wife fled through a window.

"It rained fire," he said. "We hid in our olive grove for an hour and watched our house burn."

Residents reported the fire tearing through the region at high speed, burning everything before it.

Temperatures in the area dropped to about 77 F (25 C) on Sunday, but along with cooler conditions came wind changes that officials said could push fires in unpredictable directions.

Dozens of fires were also burning in New South Wales state, where temperatures remained high for the third consecutive day. Properties were not under immediate threat.

Wildfires are common during the Australian summer. Government research shows about half of the roughly 60,000 fires each year are deliberately lit or suspicious. Lightning and people using machinery near dry brush are other causes.

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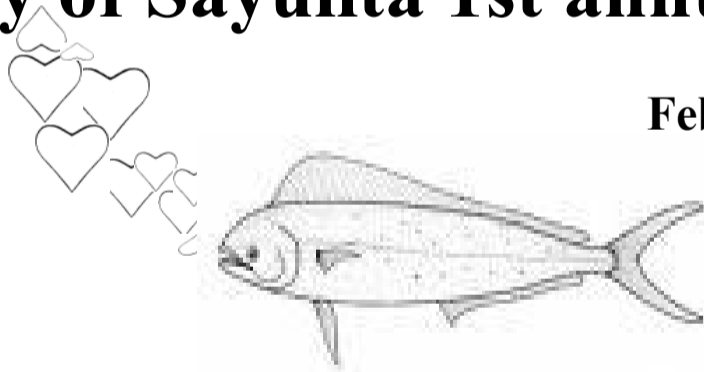
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