

## ODDS AND ENDS

Associated Press

## Teen's plea for free Wendy's nuggets sets retweet record

RENO, Nev. — A Twitter plea from a Nevada teen for a year of free chicken nuggets from Wendy's is now the most retweeted post of all time.

Carter Wilkerson asked the fast food chain on Twitter last month how many retweets it would take for him to get free nuggets for a year. Wendy's replied, "18 million."

Wilkerson's screenshot of the exchange has moved past Ellen DeGeneres' viral tweet from the 2014 Oscars on Tuesday with more than 3.4 million retweets. Twitter confirmed the record to The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Dublin, Ohio-based Wendy's says Wilkerson has earned the nuggets despite not hitting the 18 million mark.

Wilkerson appeared on DeGeneres' show last month. She gave him a year's worth of Ellen-branded underwear and a television, but threatened to take the gifts back if he passed her.

## Sam the missing python slithers back to Alaska home

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — A 17-foot python that had caused concern in a community north of Anchorage, Alaska, since it went missing two weeks ago has returned home.

Matanuska-Susitna Borough Animal Care reports that Sam slithered back into view Monday in the living room of its owners' home in the town of Meadow Lakes.

Sam had attracted international media attention after it went missing 14 days ago.

One of its owners tells the borough's Animal Care department that Sam was fed a 25-pound rabbit before it disappeared.

Animal Care Officer Darla Erskine reported that the owner did not know where Sam had been hiding.

There are no wild snakes in most of Alaska.

## Norway reverse 40-year-old prohibition on reptiles as pets

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — The Norwegian government has reversed a 40-year-old ban to allow 19 kinds of reptiles to be held as pets.

Norway's Agriculture and Food Ministry which also handles laws concerning domestic animals published a list Thursday allowing nine species of snakes, seven kinds of lizards and three types of turtles as of Aug. 15. Amphibians are still not legal in Norway.

According to Norwegian Web-based news site Nettavisen, the Norwegian Food Safety Authority estimates there are about 100,000 illegal reptiles and it was difficult to enforce such a ban. Iceland is the only other Nordic country banning these animals, Netavisen said.



AP Photo/Michael Dwyer

A Wendy's restaurant in Providence, R.I. A Twitter plea from a Nevada teen for a year free chicken nuggets from Wendy's became the most retweeted tweet of all time.



Darla Erskine/Matanuska-Susitna Borough Animal Shelter  
A 17-foot python north of Anchorage, Alaska that had caused concern in a community since it went missing two weeks ago has returned home Monday.

## Daring deer licks barrel of Indiana turkey hunter's shotgun

DANVILLE, Ind. — Some daring deer approached a group of hunters in central Indiana and one was so unafraid that it licked the barrel of a shotgun and allowed one of the men to stroke its neck.

Perhaps they knew the men were hoping to bag a turkey? Leon Champine says the young animals didn't have their mother with them "to teach them what is dangerous."

Champine, of Indianapolis, told WXIN-TV that he and his friends encountered the inquisitive animals over the weekend in Hendricks County.

One of the men, Corey Cook, recorded video showing the deer wandering toward the camouflaged men who are hidden in the undergrowth. The video shows one nuzzling the barrel of a gun in the waning afternoon sunlight.

Champine calls it a "once in a lifetime encounter."

## Australia warns travelers to not bring in hitchhiking toads

CANBERRA, Australia — Australian quarantine authorities on Thursday urged travelers through Asia to avoid bringing in hitchhiking amphibians after a passenger arrived at an airport with a dead Indonesian toad in his shoe.

The Department of Agriculture of Water Resources warned travelers to check their luggage and other belongings for biohazards after toads from Thailand and Indonesia were found recently at three Australian airports. Authorities are confident that all the passengers were unaware they were carrying toads and were not smuggling wildlife.

The department's head of biosecurity Lyn O'Connor said a sniffer dog reacted to a shoe that an Australian was wearing as he arrived at Cairns Airport in northeast Australia.

The black-spined toad found by a biosecurity officer inside the shoe had only recently died and was probably alive when the passenger put the shoe on in Indonesia, O'Connor said in a statement.

A live banded bullfrog was found in a passenger's shoe at Perth Airport on Australia's west coast after a flight from Thailand, the department said. Officials could not immediately say on Thursday whether the passenger was wearing the shoe or had packed it in luggage.

A live black-spined toad arrived on a flight from Thailand at Melbourne Airport in southeast Australia where it was found in a woman's luggage, the department said.

The black-spined toad could significantly damage the Australian environment and could carry exotic parasites or disease, O'Connor said.

Australia has some of the world's toughest quarantine regulations in a bid to keep pests and diseases from infiltrating its isolated borders and destroying the country's unique wildlife. The strict quarantine policies captured global attention in 2015, when Johnny Depp and his then-wife, Amber Heard, were charged with illegally bringing their pet Yorkshire terriers into Australia, where Depp was working on a movie.

## Mormon church pulls older teens out of Boy Scouts

By BRADY MCCOMBS

Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — The Mormon church, the biggest sponsor of Boy Scout troops in the United States, announced Thursday it is pulling as many as 185,000 older youngsters from the organization as part of an effort to start its own scouting-like program.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints said the move wasn't triggered by the Boy Scouts of America's decision in 2015 to allow gay troop leaders, since Mormon-sponsored troops have remained free to operate according to their religious teachings.

Instead, the church said it wanted a new, simplified program more closely tailored to Mormon teenagers.

Boys ages 14 to 18 will no longer participate in Boy Scouts starting next year, according to the church. The Boy Scouts said the decision will affect 130,000 teens; the church put the number at 185,000.

About 280,000 Mormon

boys ages 8 to 13 will remain in the Scouts while the church continues to develop its own program, the Mormons said. The Boy Scouts put the number at 330,000.

The loss is only a fraction of the 2.3 million youths in the Boy Scouts of America, but the organization has been grappling with declining membership for years and has enjoyed an unusually close bond with the Mormon church for more than a century.

Joining the Boy Scouts is practically automatic among Mormon boys, with the church covering the cost of troops for congregations and strongly encouraging participation.

Boy Scouts of America spokeswoman Effie Delimarkos said the organization is saddened by the decision but understands the church's desire to customize a program.

For years, the church has been working to create a scouting-like program it could use around the world, since more than half of its nearly 16 million members are outside the United States. Scouting is

available only in the U.S. and Canada.

The church did not provide a timeline for the rollout of the program for younger age groups.

Like other conservative religions, the Mormon church opposes gay marriage and teaches that being in a homosexual relationship is a sin. The church initially said it was "deeply troubled" by the Boy Scouts' policy change on gays but stayed with the organization after receiving assurances it could appoint troop leaders according to its own religious and moral values.

Despite worries that that policy change would cause Boy Scouts membership to dip even further, the organization reported a strong 2016, with the number of Scouts close to stabilizing after a prolonged decline. The vast majority of units affiliated with conservative religious denominations have remained in the fold, still free to exclude gay adults.

In a statement, the church said that the Scouts' programs for teenagers 14 to 18 have

historically been difficult to implement with the religion, and that the new program will be tailored to foster Mormon teenagers' "spiritual, social,

physical and intellectual" development.

Mormon teenagers who want to continue working toward the Eagle Scout rank

will be able to that on their own while also participating in the new program, said church spokesman Eric Hawkins.

## 'It takes up the whole river!'

## US ports greet giant cargo ship

Associated Press

SAVANNAH, Ga. — The largest cargo ship ever to visit ports on the U.S. East Coast is so long the Statue of Liberty and Washington Monument could fit end-to-end along its deck and still leave room for Big Ben.

The COSCO Development arrived Thursday at the Port of Savannah after cruising past dozens of onlookers who cheered and took photos of the 1,200-foot (366-meter) vessel from Savannah's downtown riverfront.

Former ship's officer Andrew Evans exclaimed to his wife: "It takes up the whole river!"

The giant ship stopped in Norfolk, Virginia, earlier this week. From Savannah, it's heading to Charleston, South Carolina, before returning to Hong Kong.



Steve Bisson/Savannah Morning News

The container ship COSCO Development is guided under the Talmadge Bridge Thursday morning in Savannah, Ga., as the vessel sails up the Savannah River to the Port of Savannah.

It comes as Savannah and other U.S. ports scramble to deepen their har-

bors so such large ships can pass with full loads even at low tide.

## HAPPY NURSES DAY!

Thank you to our heroes in scrubs

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**National Nurses Day is May 12.**  
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