

The Sunday Californian

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Rebels advance on Gadhafi's hometown, repel assaults

BY NANCY YOUSSEF AND JONATHAN LANDAY
McClatchy Newspapers

BENGAZI, Libya — A ragtag rebel force in pickup trucks and commandeered tanks advanced Saturday from eastern Libya on Moammar Gadhafi's heavily defended hometown of Sirte as their counterparts in the western city of Zawiyah repulsed fresh assaults by the dictator's forces, witnesses and news reports said.

"We have decided to die or finish the regime of Gadhafi," Ahmed, a fighter in Zawiyah, said by telephone after hours of fierce combat. "This is

a catastrophe. This is a real war."

In the eastern city of Benghazi, the rebels' leadership council sought to begin instilling some coordination and discipline on the largely leaderless uprising, naming a three-member crisis committee to oversee military and foreign affairs. It also called on the United States to impose a no-fly zone on the North African country to keep Gadhafi's air force on the ground, a move the Obama administration is considering.

Meanwhile, two U.S. Air Force C-130 transport planes flew from the Tunisian town of Djerba to Cairo 132

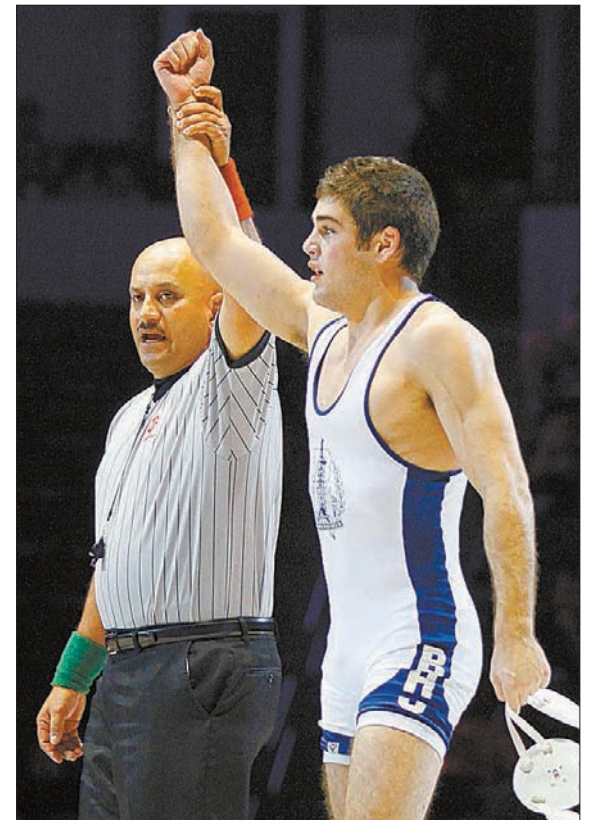
Egyptians who fled Libya's burgeoning civil war, according to State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley.

The flights were the first staged since President Barack Obama on Thursday directed U.S. humanitarian flights to help repatriate tens of thousands of foreign workers who have been stuck for days at the Egyptian and Tunisian borders with little food and water, poor hygienic conditions and no way home.

Thousands of people are believed to have been killed and wounded in the upheaval that erupted when

Please see **LIBYA / A3**

A dominant Driller — again



JOHN HARTE / SPECIAL TO THE CALIFORNIAN

Bryce Hammond of Bakersfield High defended his state championship at 160 pounds Saturday night. See story on Page C1.

Sorrow over classroom fire



CASEY CHRISTIE / THE CALIFORNIAN

Melissa Reynish and her daughter Lacey, left, were among many saddened to find out about the fire that destroyed classrooms at the Olive Knolls Christian School early Saturday morning. See story on page B1.



Lois Henry:
The Kern River needs your help, **B1**

Inside

Emily Procter talks about growing up adopted, her hard-won pregnancy, and how both have shaped her love of family.



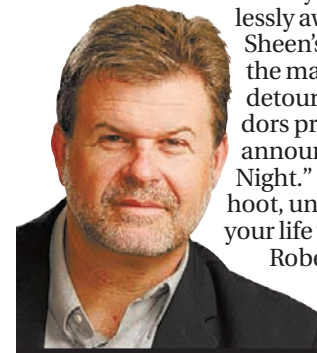
Opinion

Tiger blood and ice hockey

There's a foreboding that hangs over Charlie Sheen's every frenetic outburst, a sense that something's about to blow. As the recklessly enabling national media breathlessly await the next bizarre chapter, Sheen's Adonis DNA (though probably not the manic sitcom actor himself) takes a detour into Bakersfield, where the Condors professional hockey team has announced plans for "Charlie Sheen Night." Sheen's warlock media tour is a hoot, unless you've dealt with someone in your life who refuses to take his meds.

Robert Price in Opinion.

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Counterfeits tempt many retailers despite the risks

BY JOHN COX
Californian staff writer
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The designer label looked a little suspicious to shopper Rachele Ott as she eyed a glitzy black handbag for sale at a small store on the edge of downtown Bakersfield.

Maybe it was a knockoff, maybe it wasn't. But it looked good to her and the price was right.

"I'll buy a purse that looks like the real one," she said.

Such is the dilemma facing retailers in Bakersfield and across the

country. In this economy especially, some shoppers are tempted to buy cheap imitations rather than spend big on genuine brand-name merchandise.

At the same time, merchants who do carry bogus goods face the threat of being busted for trafficking in counterfeit goods — a federal crime.

How big a risk they face is hard to gauge. Local and federal law enforcement agencies acknowledge that the proliferation of knockoffs forces them to use com-

mon sense in deciding whom to target.

On top of that, it can be hard to know what's real and what's fake. Police may be able to tell the difference because they get special training paid for by industry. But small retailers looking for the best wholesale prices generally have to use their own judgment.

The stakes go well beyond fines and jail time. Industry representatives and law enforcement officials say bogus products — from CDs

Please see **COUNTERFEIT / A3**

Wrongly convicted face uphill battle to obtain any financial compensation

BY MARIE C. BACA
California Watch

Jeffrey Rodriguez was in line at the Department of Motor Vehicles when he was identified as the man who robbed an employee at an auto-parts store the night before.

He spent more than five years in a Santa Clara County jail before being released in February 2007 — declared factually innocent of the crime, his arrest and conviction expunged from

the record.

But when Rodriguez, now 32, applied for compensation from a state fund for the wrongly convicted — \$138,100 in his case — a three-person state panel denied his request. As he soon found out, there are degrees of innocence in California.

Rodriguez is one of 44 Californians released from prison since 2000 who have been denied money after a hearing before the state's victim com-

penensation board, which can award \$100 a day for each day spent behind bars after a wrongful conviction.

Out of the 132 people who have filed claims during that timeframe, 11 former inmates have been awarded compensation, with payments ranging from \$17,200 to \$756,900, for a total cost to taxpayers of more than \$3 million.

Fourteen former inmates are

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