

# The Voice of Experience VETERAN VOICE

35 cents

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2013

## Local Honor Flight gets ready to take off into Washington, D.C., melee

**Patrick McCallister**

FOR VETERAN VOICE

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**Editor's note:** Press time for this story was Monday, Oct. 14. Because of the dynamic nature of the partial government shutdown that began on Oct. 1 numerous changes can develop by publication. Many federal government offices weren't answering their press lines to answer inquiries, instead leaving messages for reporters that they're short on staff due to the shutdown and may take weeks to respond to interview requests.

World War II veteran John Domino has some childhood experience getting past barricades. "A football game was a quarter," he said. "We had no money." He hopes that experience doesn't come in handy when he goes to visit the National World War II Memorial.

Domino was a broke sports fan growing up in New Jersey. Buddies and he developed some ingenuity in getting past fences and into games.

"I'll find a way," he said.

On Saturday, Oct 19, Southeast Florida Honor Flight will take its 15th group of veterans to Washington, D.C., to visit the memorial on the National Mall and other sites.

Yeah, the memorial that's been a highly publicized flashpoint during the partial government shutdown that started on Oct. 1. At press time, Democrats and Republicans in Congress have been

unable to agree on a continuing resolution or budget to fund the federal government.

With news of barricades at the National Mall and Congress members showing up to greet Honor Flight veterans, things are likely to be different from previous flights.

Television and photographic images of Honor Flight veterans from other hubs heading past barricades at the National Mall to visit the memorial quickly became iconic. And political fodder. Southeast Florida's last flight was in September, before the shenanigans started. Folks at the hub are unsure what they'll encounter at the memorial, but hope for the best.

Domino, who served in the Army from 1943 to 1946, filled out an application to go on the flight back in June, long before there was any talk about shutdowns and closed memorials. He isn't interested in being an iconic image or making political statements by visiting the memorial. Frankly, Domino hopes the shutdown is finished history when he goes on his Honor Flight. But if it's not, he plans to see the monument up close. He has some experience getting around fences.

This trip, the Southeast Florida Honor Flight folks will have company likely because of the interest in the national Honor Flight program generated by unrequested attention it's gotten lately. A film crew from Fox News will go along with the Treasure Coast veterans.



See DC page 6 **The Pacific side of the World War II Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.** Photo courtesy of R.D. Smith

### Should furloughed workers be paid for time not worked?

Send your thoughts to:  
[info@veteranvoiceweekly.com](mailto:info@veteranvoiceweekly.com)

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT AND OUR OBJECTIVE

Veteran Voice is a weekly publication designed to provide information to and about veterans to veterans and to the broader community. Veterans are an integral part of their Florida communities, which currently have individual organizations of their own, such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the Vietnam Veterans of America and many other groups with a narrow focus, but no convenient way to connect to a wider population of veterans and to the community in general within a limited geographic area, their community.

The mission of Veteran Voice is to publish a weekly source of information that will provide, in one place, a listing of resources available to veterans, articles about changes in policies or organizations affecting veterans and events of interest to veterans as well as articles about veterans of interest to the general public.

Veteran Voice LLC is organized as a partnership of experienced newspaper executives with an interest in veterans and in the communities of Florida veterans and friends. Veteran Voice is a start-up intended to address a perceived lack of information readily available to veterans on programs and policies affecting them and objective reporting of veteran affairs to the public. To our knowledge, and based on comments from leaders of local veterans organizations, there was no media or website currently meeting this need until the launch of Veteran Voice.

We hope you agree, and will support this publication with your subscription. Without subscriptions there will be a limited number of people we can help, without which this mission will not be realized. As part of our commitment to supporting local veteran communities, we will donate 10 percent of our profits each quarter to qualified veteran charities recommended by you, our readers and subscribers. Please let us know what you think by emailing [news@veteranvoiceweekly.com](mailto:news@veteranvoiceweekly.com) or mailing your comments to us at **1919 S.W. South Macedo Blvd., Port St. Lucie, FL 34984.**

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Phone: (772) 337-5670  
Fax: (772) 337-5678  
veterans@stlucieco.org

### Dorothy J. Conrad Building

(formerly the Walton Road Annex Bldg.)  
1664 S.E. Walton Road, Suite 205  
Port St. Lucie, FL 34952  
By appointment  
Mon., Tues, Thurs, Fri \* 8:30 am-4:30 pm  
Wed \* 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

### St. Lucie County Community Services Bldg.

(Corner of Avenue D and 7th Street)  
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### Brevard Veteran's Services Office

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Fax: (321) 637-5432  
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Tony Reese, Veterans Service Office  
Supervisor  
Nick Ciotti, Veterans Service Officer  
(772) 288-5448

### Veterans Services Office

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435 S.E. Flagler Ave., Stuart, FL 34994  
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### VA Life Insurance Ctr., Phil., PA -

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### VA Regional Office - 1-800-827-1000

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### Pharmacy, VA Medical Center -

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1-800-321-1080

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1-800-772-8724

### Survivor Benefits (SBP),

Denver, CO - 1-800-435-3396

### Stuart VA Clinic - (772) 288-0304

Okeechobee County

### Veterans Services office

(863) 763-6441, Ext 5.  
Fax: (863) 763-0118.

### Orlando VA Medical Center

5201 Raymond St., Orlando, FL 32803  
(407) 629-1599 or (800) 922-7521

### Telephone Care

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### West Palm Beach Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center

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### Telephone Care

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# Secretary Shinseki warns veterans' checks could stop in November

**Patrick McCallister**  
FOR VETERAN VOICE  
patrick.mccallister@yahoo.com

**Editor's note:** Press time for this story was Monday, Oct. 14. Because of the dynamic nature of the partial government shutdown that began on Oct. 1 numerous changes can develop by publication.

Erik Shinseki, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, has a reputation for calling as he sees it. He softened no words to the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, which is chaired by Republican Jeff Miller, who represents Florida's 1st District, western Panhandle.

The former Army general said D-Day is coming for a lot of veterans and family members who depend on pensions, disability compensation and other benefits if Congress doesn't pass and the president sign a continuing resolution or budget to fully fund the federal government soon. Very soon.

"On 1 November, I will not be

able to pay the beneficiaries expecting these checks," Shinseki said at a hastily called committee meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 9.

Shinseki told the committee the Veterans Benefits Administration, VBA, is quickly running out of money from its mandatory-spending accounts. He said nationally more than 5 million veterans, surviving spouse and children usually get more than \$6 billion a month in pensions, disability compensation and benefits from the VBA.

"As that account has demands written against it, it is exhausted before the end of (October) at some point," he said. Shinseki added, "Before the end of the month, the account will not support claims in November."

The VA's financial faucet turning off could have a serious economic effect on Florida said Steve Murray, communications director of the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs. He said the state has more than 270,000 veterans with disabilities.

"A vast majority do receive some

sort of financial compensation," he said.

The state veterans department is not affiliated with the federal veterans department. It reports that Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin and Okeechobee counties have nearly 121,500 veterans among them collectively receiving about \$431 million a year in pensions, compensation and benefits. That doesn't include the federal dollars that flow into the area through VA programs such as medical facilities.

Wayne Teegardin, manager of St. Lucie County's Veteran Services Office, said he's hoping things don't come to empty mailboxes in November. But he's bracing himself. Normally, the office helps veterans file claims and appeals with the VA. However, Teegardin said United Veterans of St. Lucie County has an emergency fund that his office can refer veterans to for immediate help.

With a little more than 23,000 vets in the county drawing almost \$6.5 million in pensions, compensation and benefits a month,

Teegardin said that fund could be exhausted quickly if the VA checks don't come next month.

"I think they have \$6,800, which isn't a lot," he said. "We have other things in place. We have gift cards, food cards and fuel cards. We can do immediate assistance if a veteran is in need of immediate food."

Congressman Patrick Murphy, Jupiter Democrat representing the 18th District, isn't a member of the House's veterans committee. In a telephone interview after the hearing, the congressman said he'd read Shinseki's written testimony. It explained in explicit language, too, that come November the VBA won't be able to pay pensions, compensation and benefits.

"That's completely unacceptable," Murphy said. "It's one more reason this shutdown is an embarrassment and a disgrace on so many levels."

During the shutdown Murphy is donating his congressional pay to

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File photo by Patrick McCallister

Erik Shinseki, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, prepares to start a game of wheelchair basketball at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Spokane, Wash. The former Army general recently testified to the House Veterans' Affairs Committee that VA pensions, disability compensation and benefits won't go out next month if Congress and the president don't act fast to assure funding for them.

### CHECKS from page 3

the Renewal Coalition, a veterans re-integration program in Jupiter. A press release said he's doing so because federal employees are furloughed without pay. There have been moves in the House to pay them retroactively when they return to work.

In an interview before Shinseki's appearance before the committee, Congressman Bill Posey's office said veterans and surviving spouses and children should get their checks no matter what else happens during the partial federal shutdown that started on Oct. 1. Posey is a Republican from Rockledge representing Florida's 8<sup>th</sup> District. He's not on the veterans affairs committee.

Stuart Burns, chief of staff, said during the shutdown there's been much bipartisan concern in the House about keeping the VA fully operational during the shutdown.

"What we did last night, we passed a bill on the floor that basically would fund the rest of VA," he said in a phone interview. "That was passed on the House floor and was sent over to the Senate. Posey voted for it, and Murphy voted for it as well."

He added, "It would assure that all veterans would get paid (their full benefits)."

That bill, which had other provisions, would have to pass the Senate and get President Barack Obama's signature to be law. Democratic leadership in the Senate is refusing to consider individual spending bills from the House, insisting instead for a complete continuing resolution to keep the federal government fully operational. Burns said until there's a grand resolution to the shutdown, the Senate and President should move along with agreement points between House Republicans and Democrats, such as paying veterans' benefits.

"For us not to move it because we want one big bill doesn't make sense," he said.

Murphy said he has voted for measures to assure veterans and family members get pensions, compensation and benefits. However, he said doing so was second choice.

"This piecemeal approach isn't going to work," he said. "We have to reopen the entire government."

Murphy said that many of the bills in the House that would fund a partial government re-opening come with a poisoned pill for many Democrats and Republicans. He said they appear to be a tool for some Republicans to essentially shut down the federal government and reopen parts they want. House Republican leadership has resisted votes for a continuing resolution that would reopen the entire federal government.

Shinseki made a case for re-opening the entire federal govern-

ment to the committee. He said about a third of federal employees are veterans and the VA interacts with numerous federal agencies when examining claims and doing other duties. He said calling answering machines at other agencies hampers VA's ability to get its job done.

"I would say what is best for veterans and all of us right now is a budget for the entire federal government," he told the veterans affairs committee.

What's not at any risk for shutting down until next October is the Veterans Health Administration, VHA, said Joe Violante, legislative director of the Disabled American Veterans in an interview before Shinseki's testimony to Congress.

"If we are in a long-term government shutdown, the only thing that won't be affected for veterans will be their healthcare," Violante said.

That's because the VA health-care system receives advance appropriations from Congress. Ray Kelley, national legislative director of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, said the VHA's advance appropriations — which was enacted by Congress in 2009 to shield veterans health care from federal budget battles, such as the current shutdown — is more than a big IOU.

"VA has money in the bank," Kelly said in a phone interview. "That advance appropriation carved off some money and put it in the bank."

But that money is only for veterans health care. Posey voted for advance appropriations. Murphy wasn't in Congress at the time.

To get VA health care, veterans must apply for it. Their claims go to the VBA, which doesn't receive advanced funding.

Collette Burgess, public affairs officer at the VA's St. Petersburg office, said no matter what happens with the government shutdown, the VA has funding for processing new claims until late October at least. However, the VBA has cut its expenses.

"We are not working overtime," she said. "Due to the shutdown, the Veterans Benefits Administration will not be able to continue overtime for claims processors."

Shinseki told the committee that's one way the shutdown is paining veterans even if it's short. In May, the VA mandated overtime for its claims adjusters to reduce the claims backlog.

"Roughly 1,400 veterans a day are now not receiving decisions on their disability compensation claims due to the end of overtime," he said.

A couple years ago, the VBA had about a million claims that had awaited decisions for more than six months at any given

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# Government cover-up Benghazi 2012-U.S.S. Liberty 1967

Our embassy in Benghazi was viciously attacked in which our ambassador and three former SEALs were killed. Even though the ambassador had complained prior to the attack that our embassy needed additional security, his requests were ignored. During this deadly attack by overwhelming radical Muslims on our embassy our ambassador and the SEALs desperately asked our government for help. Any attempt to send help was on stand down by our government. It was ignored.

After the slaughter of our brave four Americans, the government has been covering up the truth as to what really happened in Benghazi before, during and after the attack.

The Senate Investigating Committee members have been trying to get answers but they have been stonewalled for over a year. Roll back to 1967 during the Israeli/Arabic War, our government ignored or allowed to cover up the death strike on the *U.S.S. Liberty* by Israel, where 34 sailors were killed and 171 were wounded. The

*U.S.S. Liberty* was a neutral communication/intelligence ship, which was in international waters and flying a large U.S. flag. It was deliberately attacked by Israel jet fighters and torpedo boats. The *Liberty* called for help to our nearby carrier force. President Lyndon Johnson had through Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara to order a stand down. Again, as in Benghazi, the help desperately needed was on stand down by our government.

The article in the *Veteran Voice* dated Sept. 13, 2013, entitled "*U.S.S. Liberty* survivor seeks answers, justice" reveals in detail by Warren Heaney of Jensen Beach how the *U.S.S. Liberty*



Domenick Scarlato

was attacked. There have been other articles in the past mirroring Warren Heaney's experiences, such as "Death Strikes the Liberty —

Thirty-four Killed and 171 Wounded" in the July 1007 American Legion magazine and also in the VFW 2005 magazine entitled "Remembering the *U.S.S. Liberty*." All these articles have the same theme. There is a government cover-up and people don't care. It has been more than 46 years and there has been no answers to the attack on the *U.S.S. Liberty* before, during or after its attack.

Is this what is going to happen to the scandalous Benghazi massacre? Push Congress to keep the investigations alive. We want answers now.

*Domenick Scarlato served in the U.S. Navy on active duty from 1944-48 and later in the Naval Reserve and National Guard. He holds a doctorate of education and because of his work in special education, has been involved in an advisory capacity while changes to national mental health care policies occurred over the last 50 years. He has been a St. Lucie West resident for 14 years.*

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Photo courtesy of Gabor Eszes

A panorama of the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC, USA.

### DC from page 1

Todd Tucker, the local hub's vice chairman, said veterans, guardians and organizers agree on one thing — Southeast Florida Honor Flight ain't about to let itself become anyone's political prop.

"I've been to the Memorial 13 or 14 times, and I've never seen a politician there, except for Bob Dole," he said. "I've never seen any of these (Congress members). It's a little disappointing that they found out that the World War II Memorial was closed and they rushed over there to be in front of the cameras."

Congressman Patrick Murphy, D-Jupiter, representing the 18<sup>th</sup> District, hopes to again be at Operation Homecoming when the veterans return to the Palm Beach International Airport.

That'll be at 8 p.m., and the public is urged to show up to greet the veterans. Murphy said he's been to Operation Homecoming before, and it'll give him a chance

to blend in with other well-wishers largely obscured from national television cameras. Tucker said he's seen Murphy at Operation Homecoming before, which started in April.

"I really hope by the 19<sup>th</sup>, the government is reopened," Murphy said.

The Office of Management and Budget, which reportedly directed the closures of more than 400 national park closures, didn't return requests for explanation by press time. A message warned that due to the government shutdown, the OMB was short on staff to respond to media requests for interviews.

However, the closures are due to the Antideficiency Act, an 1880s law aimed at strengthening Congress' constitutional hold on the federal purse strings.

The law forbids the executive branch from authorizing any expenditures that exceed what Congress has appropriated. Additionally, the executive is

largely forbidden from accepting voluntary services under the law, except in cases Congress has authorized.

The law has provisions for protecting people from harm and protecting property.

Murphy said he's certain about what Honor Flight veterans should do if they encounter barricades. He noted that his grandfather was a 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Screaming Eagle in World War II. "I know if he was here, he wouldn't think twice about jumping over the barricade," the congressman said.

Private contributions funded the National World War II Memorial, which was dedicated in 2004. The fundraising campaign, which started in the early 1990s, raised nearly \$200 million. Design and construction of the memorial cost about \$182 million. The remainder went to groundbreaking and dedication ceremonies, along with a maintenance fee required by the Commemorative Works Act.

Those funds went to the National World War II Memorial Trust Fund administered by the U.S. Treasury. The American Battle Monuments Commission is charged to use them exclusively for the memorial.

The Honor Flight Network is a national program that takes World War II veterans to see the memorial. The flights began, almost by accident, a year after it was erected. *Honor Flight Southeast Florida*, called a "hub," started in 2009.

In a previous interview, John Haddox — Martin County Commissioner, Palm City — said the county's current veterans service office supervisor, Tony Reese, more or less got the hub started. Haddox was the office's supervisor at the time. He retired and ran for the commission last year.

"They took it — it took off like crazy," Haddox said. "It was coor-

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*minated by the county's veterans service office."*

Among those that got involved early on was Martin County Firefighters and Paramedics, International Association of Fire Fighters Local 2959, which leads what's turned out to be the largest fundraisers for the flights: an annual fill-the-boot drive. Back in February, firefighters from Martin County and other agencies headed out to parking lots and street corners to ask folks to fill firefighters' boots with money. And fill they did this year.

Turner said that the fill-the-boot drive, which raised the funds for the Oct. 19 flight, brought in \$60,000. In a previous interview, John Davidson, the hub's operations coordinator, said flights cost about \$80,000 and carry 85 to 90 veterans.

There's a lot of urgency around everything Honor Flight does. According to a 2008 Associated Press estimate, the once 16.1

million World War II veterans are dying at a rate of more than 1,100 a day. Only about 2 million are living, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

No one has an exact daily death count, but the VA, AP and others have developed the same estimate by using long-form census data, VA data, and standard mortality tables. The VA estimates that America will have almost no World War II veterans by 2020.

Honor Flight trips are free to the veterans. They're accompanied by guardians, volunteers who pay to their own way to care for the veterans during their visits to Washington, D.C.

Turner said the hub has made protocols for dealing with barricades and National Park Service employee it could encounter at the World War II Memorial this flight. They're aimed at keeping all interactions cordial as possible. Turner said that as a fire department lieutenant, he understands the need for maintaining

a strong chain of command and following orders.

"I've become friends with a lot of the National Park Service employees," he said. "They're up there day in and day out. They're there by choice. They love the memorial. They love the veterans. I can only imagine what they're going through carrying out this order (to close the memorial)."

In addition to Honor Flight Southeast Florida, there's another local hub, Space Coast Honor Flight. That volunteer group also has a flight scheduled for Oct. 19. That flight is from the Orlando International Airport. That hub didn't provide anyone for interviews by press time.

*Honor Flight Southeast Florida is on the web at honorflightsefl.org. Space Coast Honor Flight is at spacecoasthonorflight.org. For more about the national Honor Flight Network, see honorflight.org. Information about the Washington D.C. World War II Monument is at wwiimemorial.com.*



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# Letter from the president to federal employees

From the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
FOR VETERAN VOICE

October 1, 2013

To the dedicated and hard-working employees of the United States Government:

The Federal Government is America's largest employer, with more than 2 million civilian workers and 1.4 million active duty military who serve in all 50 States and around the world.

But Congress has failed to meet its responsibility to pass a budget before the fiscal year that begins today. And that means much of our Government must shut down effective today.

I want you to know that I will keep working to get Congress to reopen the Government, restart vital services that the American people depend on, and allow public servants who have been sent

home to return to work. At my direction, your agencies should have reached out to you by now about what a shutdown means for you and your families.

Today, I wanted to take a moment to tell you what you mean to me - and to our country.

That begins by saying thank you for the work you do every day-work that is vitally important to our national security and to American families' economic security. You defend our country overseas and ensure that our troops receive the benefits they deserve when they come home.

You guard our borders and protect our civil rights. You help small businesses expand and gain new footholds in overseas markets. You guide hundreds of thousands of people each day through the glory of America's national parks and monuments, from Yosemite to the Statue of Liberty. And much more.



President Barack Obama

You do all this in a political climate that, too often in recent years, has treated you like a punching bag. You have endured three years of a Federal pay

freeze, harmful sequester cuts, and now, a shutdown of our Government. And yet, you persevere, continuing to serve the American people with passion, professionalism, and skill.

None of this is fair to you. And should it continue, it will make it more difficult to keep attracting the kind of driven, patriotic, idealistic Americans to public service that our citizens deserve and that our system of self-government demands.

Public service is noble. Public service is important. And by choosing public service, you carry on a proud tradition at the heart of some of this country's greatest and most lasting achievements.

In fact, more than 50 current or former Federal employees have received the Nobel Prize for their efforts. It was grants from the

See LETTER page 11

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**CHECKS from page 4**

time. Aggressive efforts, including the mandated overtime, greatly reduced that number to less than half by the end of the federal government's 2012-2013 fiscal year, Sept. 30. In an email, Violante said that last fiscal year the VBA processed almost 1.2 million claims, or about 12 percent more than it had the two previous fiscal years. In September alone, the VBA processed 129,488 claims. Shinseki also told the House veterans affairs committee that about 122,000 veterans were interred at national cemeteries last year, and due to furloughs, burials will slow.

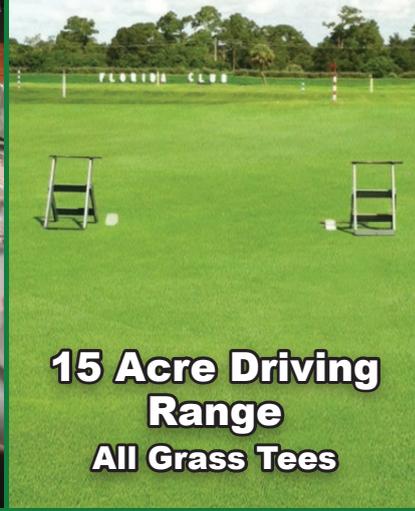
"We continue our burial services, just not at the rate we're used to," he said. Additionally, he said about 20 VA construction and more than 30 major leasing projects could be delayed if the partial shutdown continues. He said reopening the government in late October won't assure veterans and families will get paid on time. "That would not be able to turn on checks on 1 November, and that's my big concern here," he said. There have been moves in Congress in recent years to create advance appropriations for the entire VA to protect it from temporary budget battles.

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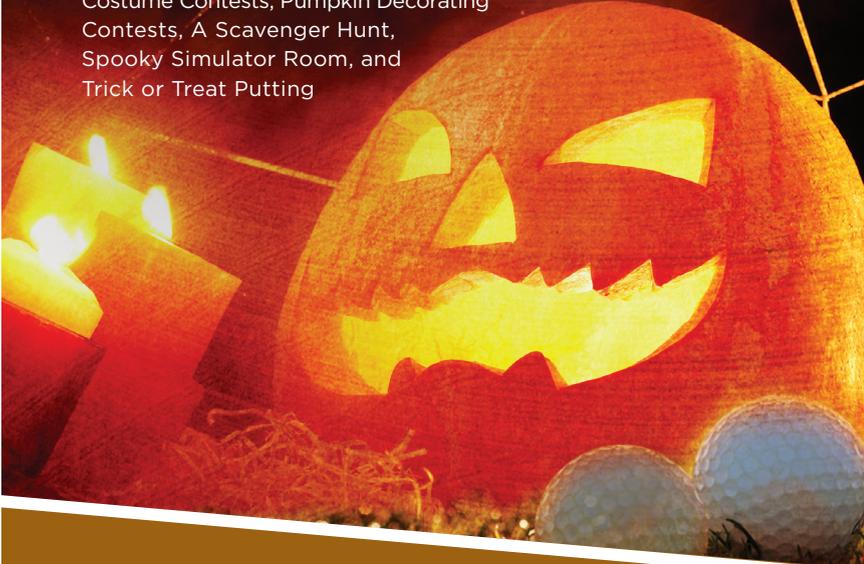
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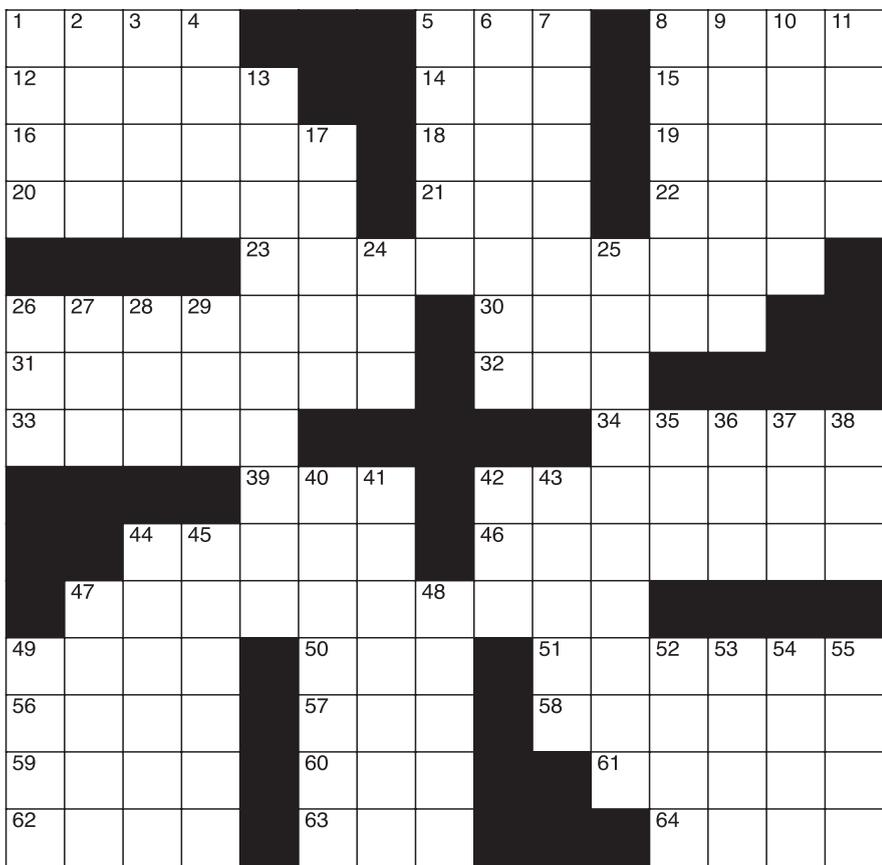
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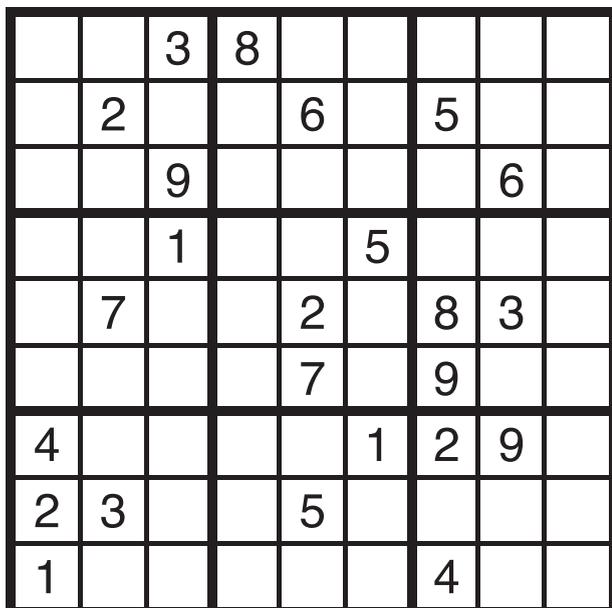
**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Pepsi is one
- 5. Kilocalorie (abbr.)
- 8. Canadian flyers
- 12. Bright fleshy seed covers
- 14. Exclamation of triumph
- 15. Dawn (Spanish)
- 16. Former Spanish currency
- 18. Illuminated
- 19. A benefit bestowed
- 20. Spanish beaches
- 21. Solid water
- 22. Baby flowers
- 23. Surrealistic comic strip
- 26. Uncontrollable tremors
- 30. Dapper
- 31. Ear shell
- 32. Russian river
- 33. #1 soup noodle brand
- 34. Relating to a tube
- 39. Air Reserve base (abbr.)
- 42. Relating to Deism
- 44. More dried-up
- 46. Pear-shaped vowels
- 47. Creator of 23 across
- 49. Leavened rum cake
- 50. "Much \_\_\_ About Nothing"
- 51. Two-sided discussion
- 56. Snakelike fishes
- 57. Fold
- 58. Removed writing
- 59. Away from wind
- 60. Small time unit (abbr.)
- 61. Look at with fixed eyes
- 62. Former Soviet bloc
- 63. Vision organ
- 64. Three-banded Armadillo

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. "Lil Abner" cartoonist
- 2. Pitcher Hershiser
- 3. Elvis's daughter
- 4. Mt. Lebanon resort town
- 5. Islamic civil and religious leader (var. sp.)
- 6. Mexican American
- 7. A sideways pass
- 8. Bunny
- 9. Threatening rain
- 10. Where one abides
- 11. Ardent devotees
- 13. Not moving
- 17. Ghastly pale from distress
- 24. Midway between E and SE
- 25. Writing materials sellers
- 26. Even golf score
- 27. Fabric of camel or goat hair
- 28. Hide from police: on the \_\_\_
- 29. Patti Hearst's captors
- 35. Universal Standard Time (abbr.)
- 36. British thermal unit
- 37. Own (Scottish)
- 38. Digital display material
- 40. Fall back to a former state
- 41. Tom \_\_\_, former LA mayor
- 42. Runs PCs
- 43. Wear away
- 44. Russian marten furs
- 45. Item used for 58 across
- 47. A Scottish Highlander
- 48. Rolls-\_\_\_, luxury car
- 49. Jeff Bridges' brother
- 52. Bay Area Transit Authority
- 53. As fast as can be done (abbr.)
- 54. Metric prefix for 10 to the 12th power
- 55. Frankenberg river

**SUDOKU**



**Serene scene**



Photo courtesy of Serge Melki

The Washington Monument and the reflecting pool reflecting a peaceful exterior outside the chambers of Congress, where the atmosphere is anything but peaceful as lawmakers continue to bicker and the government shutdown continues into its third week.

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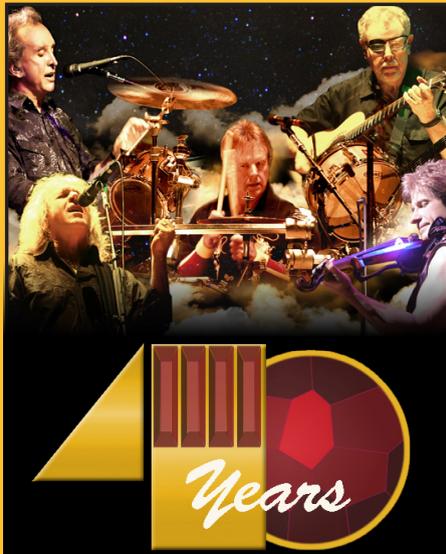
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