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IN YOUR WORDS

Efforts to reset the clock in Spain

I believe that the Spanish custom of a long break in midafternoon and extended business hours into the evening predates Franco and has more to do with the blistering heat common on the Spanish Central Plateau between April and October. The siesta evolved as an effort to increase productivity by allowing workers to eat and then sleep during the hottest part of the day, return and work until 7 or 8 o'clock. . . . I don't know of many climatologists who predict cooler Spanish summers in the future, so maybe leave well enough alone.

JULIAN FERNANDEZ, DALLAS

Nap? I'm Spanish and I've been working in Madrid for 30 years and I've never taken a siesta. I agree with the article that our workdays are longer than in the rest of Europe, but the myth of our lack of productivity is not always true. I've worked with English, Americans, Italians, French . . . and we are not less prepared than they are. The real problem is that with these schedules, it is almost impossible to reconcile our professional and personal lives.

ANA, MADRID

The rest of the world should be embracing the Spanish model where quality of life, time with family and friends, enjoying the smaller things in life is not sacrificed to being another cog in the wheel, living ones life to produce for others.

ALAN GARY, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

An unequal injury toll in Sochi

Great to see an honest assessment of the gender difference. Some of this is simple physics: The women are lighter than the men and were barely clearing some of the jumps in border cross for lack of speed. With a lower power-to-weight ratio, they also have a harder time absorbing some landings.

SEAMUS MCMAHON, NEW YORK

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IN OUR PAGES

1939 Vacation Plan to Aid Cinemas

The French cinema industry, which has been fighting certain government financial and social laws affecting the movie business, learned over the week end its financial difficulties may be ameliorated somewhat by an amendment to the paid vacation law. Vacation pay due actors, musicians and other theatrical employees engaged in the motion picture, theater or other entertainment industries, would not exceed a "ceiling" equal to three times the minimum wage or salary rate fixed by collective contract, according to the measure. The amendment is designed to limit exceptionally heavy vacation payments in the case of high-salaried performers.

1964 Yugoslavia Sees Bias

BELGRADE Yugoslavia today [Feb. 19] accused the United States of discriminating against it by cutting off military aid because of its continued trade with Cuba. The charges came in a statement issued by Dusan Blagojevic, the official spokesman of the Foreign Ministry. "Yugoslavia firmly backs the principle of free trade and navigation in international relations. This action visibly is not in accordance with these principles because it represents one-sided action and a measure of discrimination," Mr. Blagojevic said.

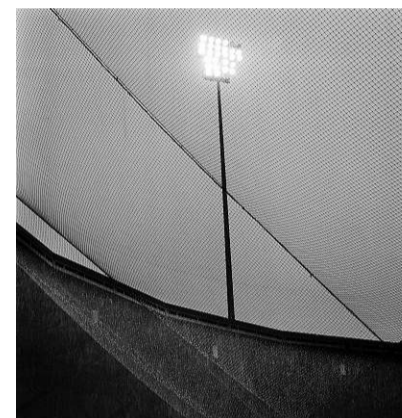
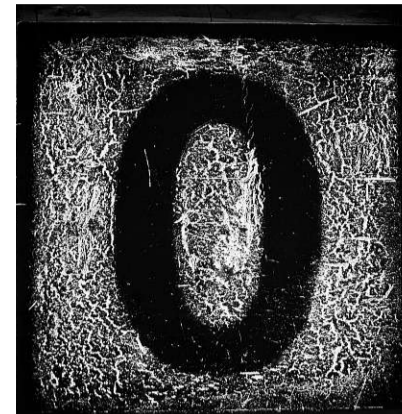
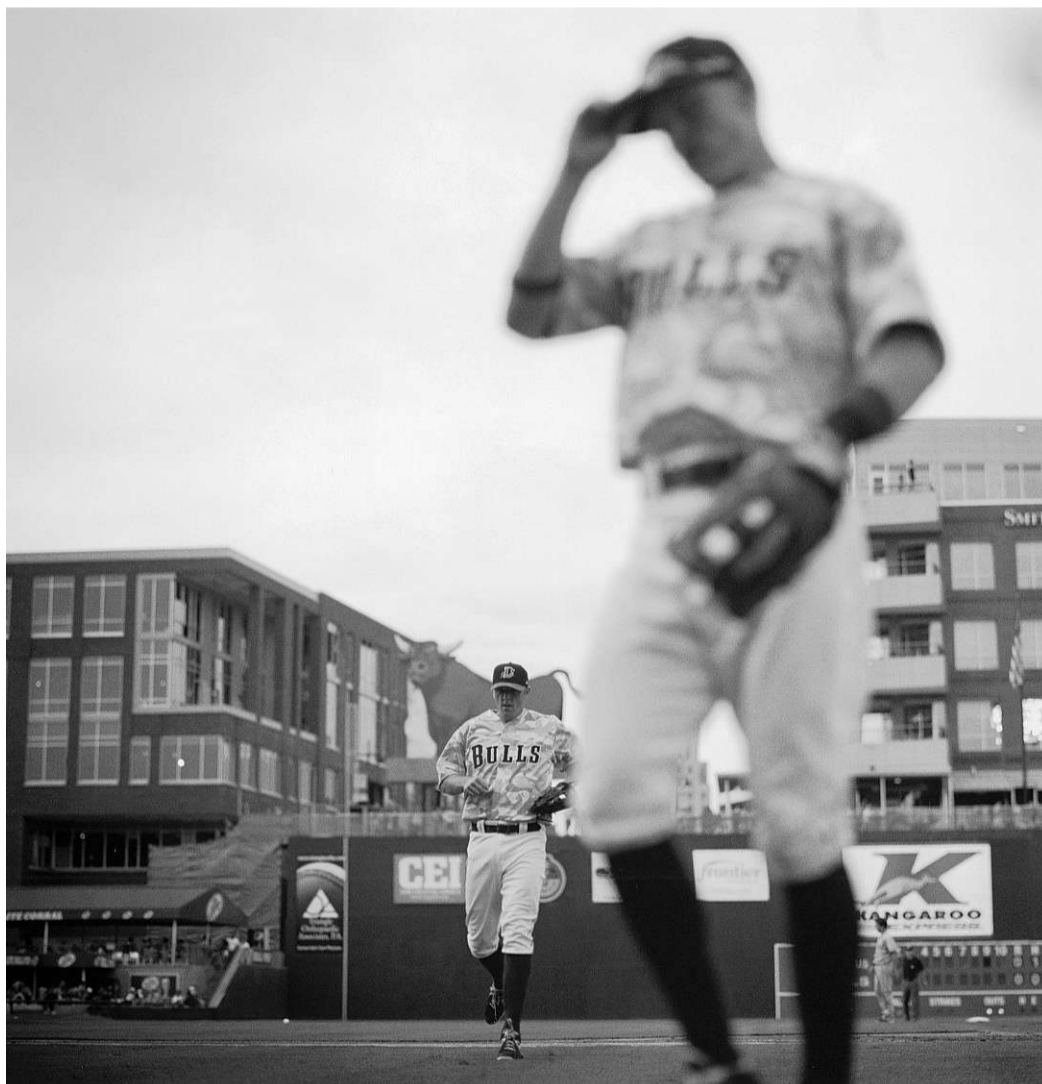
Find a retrospective of news from 1887 to 2013 in *The International Herald Tribune* at iht-retrospective.blogs.nytimes.com

Gems at a baseball diamond



PHOTOGRAPHS BY HIROSHI WATANABE

HOMAGE On the 25th anniversary of the release of the movie "Bull Durham," a series of exhibits celebrate the Durham Bulls, the Tampa Bay Rays' minor league team featured in the movie. A group of photographers was invited to document the Bulls' 2013 season. The resulting exhibition and book, "Bull City Summer," is to open on Sunday at the North Carolina Museum of Art, in Raleigh.



ON DISPLAY The photographers included Alec Soth, Hank Willis Thomas, Kate Joyce and Hiroshi Watanabe. Mr. Watanabe, 62, grew up in Japan and had never shot a sports photo until taking part in the project. Lack of experience photographing sports, as well as not being from the South, gave him a

different perspective. "I decided to focus on the mechanics, how everything works together, besides the baseball players," he said. His images on this page, like the one at top left, of the manual scoreboard operator, reflect Mr. Watanabe's interpretation of the game. lens.blogs.nytimes.com

Demanding answers on surveillance



Didi Kirsten Tatlow

LETTER FROM CHINA

BEIJING As Edward J. Snowden's revelations of the extent of spying by the United States National Security Agency roiled the world last June, Xie Yani, a Beijing lawyer, asked the Chinese Ministry of Public Security to tell him about Chinese security officials' spying on their own citizens, especially regarding online and telephone communications.

That was on June 25. An answer to Mr. Xie's freedom of information request came on Aug. 19 — a filled-in box on a standard bureaucratic form next to the line: "Not within the parameters of government information."

A Kafkaesque moment, but not unexpected, Mr. Xie said in an interview.

"I did write back to say that by law they should supply more information, but it was just to express my opinion," he said with a small smile.

Mr. Xie, 38, who has defended political dissidents, journalists and adherents of the Falun Gong spiritual movement,

as well as less controversial cases, said he filed his request for two reasons.

First, he truly wished to know. Second, he wanted to make a point: In an era of expanding surveillance nets emanating from the United States and other countries, the threat to private individuals is immense. But what goes on in China is a total black box despite the existence of freedom of information rules.

"There's no way to compare the U.S. situation with what's happening here," he said. "It's not the same."

"Look at Baidu," China's biggest Internet search engine, "and Google," he said. "Google has some problems, but Baidu is totally in the government's pocket."

"Though there is some connection with the U.S. situation, or with Europe, I'm still pretty optimistic, as those places are democracies, and they have freedoms. The people have morals, and they have faith. It may not prove too big a problem."

"But in China, authoritarianism is intensifying, and that may yet have really serious consequences. Such a world would be one where only a few people have all the money and rights, and they will control everyone else. The majority will be vulnerable and in a weak position."

"If the U.S., China and Russia all continue to build a global security network," and if ordinary people don't resist such intrusions, he said, "then, well, we are moving toward an era of appeasement."

Last June, Mr. Xie self-published a book of his collected Internet writings titled "Roads of Faith." He said he was not a Christian, but beliefs and morality were important to him.

His warnings about the threat to liberty from overarching surveillance echo the debate in Europe, where anger at N.S.A. spying runs high.

"Why we have to fight now," ran a headline in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on Feb. 6 to a column by Martin Schulz, a German Social Democrat and president of the European Parliament who hopes to be the next president of the European Commission.

"If we want to remain free, we must defend ourselves and change our politics," the headline continued, with Mr. Schulz singling out data mining by companies and secret services as threats.

In Europe, "we are still only facing an all-penetrating technology, but not a totalitarian political will," he wrote.

But that could change. So what is needed is a new social movement with a "liberal, democratic and socially minded understanding of the state" to safeguard human dignity, insist on the protection of personal privacy and data, and change the game in favor of individuals and rights.

The German newspaper also published a commentary by Berthold Kohler, a senior editor, warning that Germany and the rest of Europe must guard against a "dependency" on the United States and, increasingly, China "that they have slipped into in the digital world."

All familiar issues to Mr. Xie. "We have to rethink the rules of the game, around the world," he said.

In China, certainly. But everywhere else, too, said Mr. Xie, who suggested, when he filed his information request last June, that a global group be set up to address the challenge.

EMAIL: pagetwo@nytimes.com

Mavis Gallant, 91, a chronicler of uprooted lives and loss

BY HELEN T. VERONGOS

Mavis Gallant, an acclaimed short-story writer who was abandoned as a child and later left Canada for Europe, where she made her name writing about the dislocated and the dispossessed, died on Tuesday at her home in Paris. She was

OBITUARY

91. Georges Borchardt, her literary agent, confirmed her death.

Ms. Gallant, who was born in Montreal to an American mother and a British father, was sent to boarding school when she was 4 and spent much of her childhood afterward without a family. When she found her literary voice as an expatriate in Paris, she created a writing life that consciously excluded the ties of marriage and children.

And yet despite this seeming unsettledness — or perhaps because of it — her stories convey a deep-rooted sense of place, inviting the reader into a Paris walk-up or a sheet-shrouded marble hall in Montreal. These were not just settings for Ms. Gallant. Canada, France and even the United States drove her meditations on regional identity, nationalism

and its extremes, and the defining and restricting powers of a mother tongue.

"Hearts are not broken in Mavis Gallant's stories," Eve Auchincloss wrote in *The New York Review of Books*. "Roots are cut, and her subject is the nature of the life that is left when the roots are not fed."

The *New Yorker* published Ms. Gallant's short stories for more than 40 years — 116 of them, said Steven Barclay, a friend and lecture agent. The pieces became familiar to readers for their embrace of life's paradoxes: They could be tender yet cruel, tragic yet funny. Told in exquisite detail, they are threaded with ironies and reveal lives with enough histories and thwarted dreams to inspire novels.

"Every character," Ms. Gallant wrote, "comes into being with a name (which I may change), an age, a nationality, a profession, a particular voice and accent, a family background, a personal history, a destination, qualities, secrets, an attitude toward love, ambition, money, religion and a private center of gravity."

Mavis de Trafford Young was born on Aug. 11, 1922, to Benedictine Wiseman and Stewart de Trafford Young. Her parents, Protestants, sent her to a Roman

Catholic boarding school run by French-speaking nuns. Her father died when she was 10, she told *The New York Times* in an interview, "and my mother had already fallen in love with another man." Her mother married that man and left Canada, placing Mavis in the care of a guardian. She attended 17 schools in Canada and the United States, "all recalled with horror," she said.

After high school, she worked for the National Film Board of Canada and as a newspaper feature writer at *The Standard* in Montreal. While working in Canada, Mavis Young, still a minor, married a musician, John Gallant, but the marriage was short-lived, ending in an amicable divorce. She had no immediate survivors.

Pursuing fiction, she had a breakthrough in 1950, when *The New Yorker* accepted her story "Madeline's Birthday," about a displaced teenage girl living with a suburban Connecticut family.

Encouraged, Ms. Gallant challenged herself to make a living from her writing within two years. After trying out Venice, Budapest, Dubrovnik and other places, she settled in Paris, near Montparnasse, and cleared her slate of encumbrances. "She has quite deliberately chosen to



IAN BARRETT/THE CANADIAN PRESS, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS
Mavis Gallant in Montreal in 1981. Short stories were her preferred form.

have neither husband nor children, those two great deterrents to any woman's attempt to live by and for writing," the novelist and poet Janice Kulyk Keefer wrote in "Reading Mavis Gallant" (1989).

The first of her many story collections, "The Other Paris," was published in the United States in 1956. Among her nonfiction titles is "Paris Notebooks: Essays and Reviews" (1986), which includes her observations, published by *The New Yorker*, about the 1968 student uprisings in Paris.