



THE END OF THE MAP

REVIEW

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. WSJ

BIG-BOX BAROLO? A Surprising Place to Buy Wine OFF DUTY

VOL. CCLX NO. 147

WEEKEND

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NEWS CORPORATION COMPANY DOW JONES

SATURDAY/SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22 - 23, 2012

WSJ.com

How 'Cliff' Talks Hit the Wall

Behind Scenes, Boehner Failed to Sell Republicans on Taxes, While Obama's Spending Plans Rankled

By Patrick O'Connell and Peter Nicholas

WASHINGTON—Congressional leaders and President Barack Obama called Friday for a return to negotiations on the impending "fiscal cliff" a day after talks cratered in acrimony. A1

ing a deal with the White House to let tax rates rise for upper-income people. Mr. Boehner, irritated with the White House, was finding it hard to keep his troops in line as details of his negotiations with Mr. Obama leaked out. In the speaker's office just off the Capitol's majestic rotunda that afternoon, he told his top lieutenants that he was already thinking about a pared-down backup plan. "In the absence of an agreement, 'Plan B' is the plan," he told his deputies, according to a script he read them that afternoon. One by one, they came out in

Not the End of the World, but... How the talks would restart remains unclear... A8 Economy at risk after showing signs of recovery... A8 Dow drops 120.88 as traders seek shelter... B1

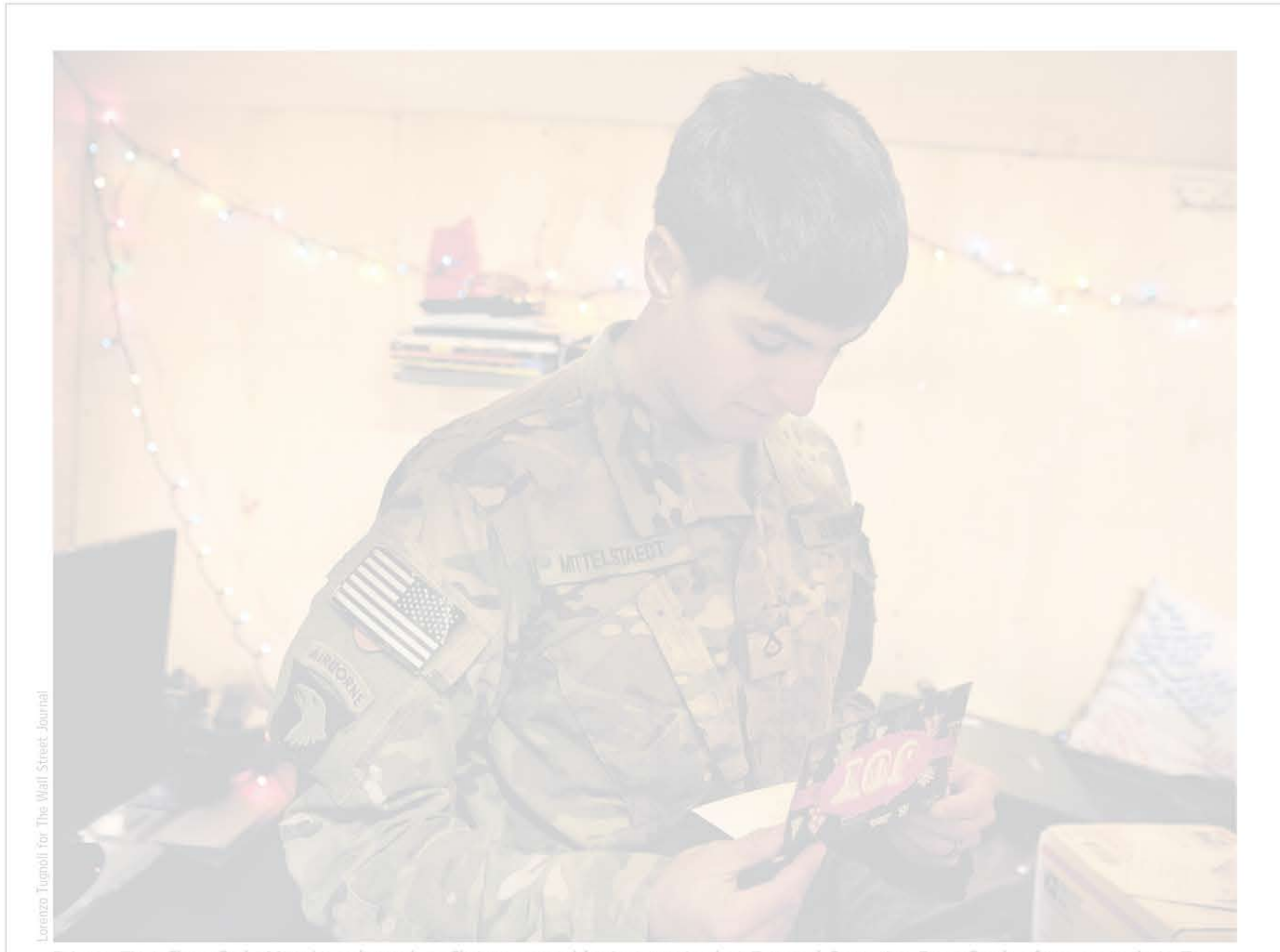
long-term budget woes and deferring the battle until next year. A review of the negotiations, based on interviews with a dozen aides and lawmakers, suggests the problems lay in Mr. Boehner's inability to coax his rank-and-file to support a deal that raises taxes on higher-income Americans. Another factor was what Republicans saw as President Obama's unwillingness to bend when a deal was in sight, jamming the speaker with a deal his party couldn't swallow. The negotiations offer little evidence November's election Please turn to page A6

What's News World-Wide

- The NRA called for armed guards in schools. The gun-rights lobby said predators have exploited the fact that schools are gun-free zones and urged Congress to appropriate whatever is necessary to put police officers in every school. Former Rep. Asa Hutchinson will lead the NRA's effort to develop a school shield program. A4
Congress and Obama called for a return to negotiations on the impending "fiscal cliff" a day after talks cratered in acrimony. A1
Obama tried to break the cliff impasse by urging lawmakers to pass a stripped-down budget plan. A8
Obama nominated John Kerry as secretary of state, as the president rebuilds his foreign-policy team. A6
Italy's Monti resigned, setting the stage for a raucous election season over which he and his government's legacy will loom large. A10
Thousands of looters ransacked stores in Argentina for a second day in the latest challenge to Kirchner. A9
Mexico's Congress passed an overhaul to the country's educational system. A9
The Mayan calendar finished its cycle, but life—and parties—continued. A10

Business & Finance

- Motorola is working on a sophisticated handset, but the Google unit is running into some obstacles in its effort to provide more potent competition for Apple. A1
The economy's promise, reflected in November consumer spending and durable-goods orders, could be derailed by uncertainty from the fiscal-cliff talks. A8
Titan Advisors has told clients it decided to withdraw all its investment from SAC Capital, which is facing regulatory scrutiny. B2
The Dow industrials fell 120.88 points, or 0.9%, to 13190.84, but it and other indexes gained on the week. B1
The NYSE takeover deal includes an array of potential fees that tightly bind it and ICE to their pact. B2
ArcelorMittal took a write-down of \$4.3 billion on the value of its struggling European division. B4
Shares of RIM fell 23% over worries about a new service-fee structure. B1
The pharmacy in Massachusetts linked with a deadly fungal meningitis outbreak filed in bankruptcy court. A8
The four largest Greek banks are in need of a capital boost of \$36 billion.



Private First Class Cody Mittelstaedt reads a Christmas card he just received at Forward Operating Base Gardez from a couple in Texas.

On Afghan Odyssey, Gifts to Troops Brave Ambushes, Bombs

By Maria Abi-Habib

GARDEZ, Afghanistan—Back home in Watertown, Minn., Courtney Mittelstaedt selected her husband's Christmas gifts with the care and sweet mischief of a newlywed. She bought Legos, a plastic duck in a Santa Claus suit and Christmas tree-shaped marshmallows, "his favorite candy," said Mrs. Mittelstaedt, a 20-year-old hairdresser. She used Spider-Man wrapping paper to remind him of the last time they went to the movies, before her husband, Army Private First Class Cody Mittelstaedt, went to war 7,000 miles away. "He's gone and Christmas is so hard

without him," said Mrs. Mittelstaedt, who married last year. "Buying gifts and wrapping them up for him makes me feel like he's involved and he's here with me." Her husband's presents will join 6.4 million pounds of mail the U.S. Postal Service estimates it will ferry this month from families, friends and kindly strangers to U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Senders pay roughly \$15 to send an average-size package. After Mrs. Mittelstaedt wrapped, sealed and addressed the gifts to Forward Operating Base Gardez, she took them to her post office, where the workers know her by name. She has become a regular customer, sending packages of letters, toys and candy at least once a

week since her husband was deployed overseas three months ago. "Everything is so serious there, it's war," she said. "So when he gets the packages I want him to smile and not think about his day. I don't know if it takes off the weight, and I'm sure it doesn't work like that, but I can pretend, I guess." Postal Service offices across the U.S. funnel packages to Afghanistan through its International Service Center in Newark, N.J. Then they travel by air—usually via Manama, Bahrain—to Bagram Airfield outside of Kabul, according to a Postal Service spokeswoman. From Kabul, the delivery of Christmas Please turn to page A13

Motorola is primarily working on two fronts: devices that will be sold by carrier partner Verizon Wireless, such as the "Droid" line of smartphones, and the X phone, these people said. Motorola is also expected to work on an "X" tablet after the phone, the people added. Meanwhile, Google must manage complex relationships with smartphone makers that use its Android mobile-device software—particularly with Samsung Electronics Co., a Motorola rival that has become the No. 1 smartphone maker with Google's help. Dennis Woodside, a former Google top sales executive who is now Motorola's chief executive, declined to discuss products under development. But he said in an interview that the company is "investing in a team and a technology that will do something quite different than the current approaches." He said while Motorola has "fallen under hard times," it "now has the support of a shareholder in Google that has resources to do big things." He added that only one billion of the world's seven billion people use smartphones, calling that "an incredible opportunity." For the X phone, an initiative being led by former Google product manager Lior Ron who worked on the Google Maps Please turn to the next page

Everybody Pines for That Christmas Tree Smell, but It Can Be a Tall Order Artificial Trees Don't Have It Naturally—That's Why Santa Brings Us ScentSicles

By Shira Ovide

Laura Benson calls herself a "scent person." On her desk at home in Centennial, Colo., she keeps a bottle of Coppertone sunscreen lotion that she flips open now and then for a whiff of the beach. But every holiday season, Mrs. Benson's artificial Christmas tree left her pining for the aroma of real evergreens. "That's of course one of the hardest things about artificial trees," she says. "They don't smell like real trees." Then last year, Mrs. Benson bought a five-and-half-inch-long pine-scented ornament that she says makes her family's artificial tree smell real. Mrs. Benson also tucked one of the scented ornaments into a basket in her dining room usu-

ally filled with dried flowers. She sometimes sniffs the tree for another reminder of the holidays. "I don't know if it's every bit as good as the real thing," she says of the ornaments, called ScentSicles. "But if you did a blind smell test, it would probably be hard to tell the difference." Sometimes, all we want for Christmas is the smell. And some Americans, whether they're pro-fir or pro-faux, are turning to homemade potions or manufactured scents to spruce up the holidays. As they say in Southern California, it's beginning to smell a lot like Christmas. People long have used decora-

tive candles, potpourri or air fresheners to liven the holidays, or, as Febreze commercials make clear, to make garbage smell like a day in May. Some people use low-cost tricks such as soaking pine needles in water placed at the base of trees or tossing pine cones in the fireplace. Today, people seeking smells-like-Christmas have more options than ever. Sean Selman, a 40-year-old communications official, tried out a Fraser Fir candle as an alternative to the effort of trimming his Atlanta apartment with garlands of greenery. Mr. Selman knew the candle was just the thing when he opened the box at his

office desk. "Everyone's head popped up and said, 'What's that smell?' Why does it suddenly smell like a Christmas tree in here?" he says. People seeking holiday-odor oomph say Christmas just feels wrong if the smell is off. Pamela Dalton, an olfactory scientist with the Monell Chemical Senses Center, in Philadelphia, says the link between warm emotions and evergreen may be strong because people don't typically use conifer scents at other times of the year. "There's a uniqueness to that particular association that makes it a little more salient," Dr. Dalton says. Scent-seeking sometimes goes awry. Last year, Ruth Kaplan of Austin, Texas, took home a free Please turn to page A13



Artificial Tree

Inside NOONAN A17 When Childhood Fears Come True CONTENTS Opinion... A15-17 Books... CS-C10 Sports... A14 Cooking... D1-4 Stock Listings... B9-10 Corporate News... B13-4 Style & Fashion... D5-6 Heard on Street... B14 Travel... D7-8 Ideas Market... C4 Weather Watch... B13 Letters to Editor... A16 Wknd Investor... B7-10