Regime change marked Mizzou's year in sports

COLUMBIA, Mo. • University of Missouri chancellor R. Bowen Loftin surprised followers of Mizzou athletics in February with further proof that regime change was well under way at the state’s flagship institution.

Loftin, shortly after making his first major hire since taking over the throne of Mizzou’s campus, threw reporters a curveball. It was fuzzy and green.

With Mack Rhoades on board to replace longtime athletics director Mike Alden, Loftin suggested that Mizzou should revive a men’s tennis program that was last seen getting shut down during the 1990s because of budget strains.

Tennis, anyone? No, really. Anyone?

Adding another non-revenue sport would hardly register as sweeping change — Rhoades, in office since late April, has since tabled his boss’s idea — but it served a subtle reminder that under Loftin, Rhoades and university system president Tim Wolfe, all hired since 2012, a new breed of cat rules the biggest yard in Boone County.

“We talk about why not Missouri?” Rhoades said earlier this spring. “Why can’t Missouri be the best athletics program in the country? Why can’t it be? I haven’t heard a good answer yet.”

Before we peek ahead to the Tigers’ future, there’s time to review a memorable year in Mizzou sports that ended with last week’s NCAA outdoor track championships. It was a year that delivered a little bit of everything.

Some we’ve seen before: Gary Pinkel’s football team winning the SEC East led by a punishing defensive line.

Some nobody wants to see again: First-year men’s basketball coach Kim Anderson nearly suspended as many players as he won games.

Some we never saw coming: Alden’s stunning decision to step down after 17 years on the job.

Signature wins and losses played out on the fields and courts, while individual athletes and coaches commanded the spotlight. But nobody grabbed our attention during the 2014-15 school year more than the man who shook up Mizzou athletics with his sudden announcement in late January.
ALDEN STEPS DOWN

Nobody expected Mike Alden to preside over MU athletics forever, but as many bullets as he dodged during his time in charge, it appeared only one man could bring down the don of Tiger Town. Himself.

He did just that on Jan. 29, first sharing the news with department employees in a hastily called meeting at Mizzou Arena. Whispered speculation linked Alden to a job with the NCAA or perhaps the SEC. Or he was leaving for another high-paying AD position, right?

“I will never be an AD again,” he later said. “I don’t have an interest in working at the conference level and don’t see myself in that area. Are there other areas that could come up that I don’t even know about? Sure, that could be. But, for me, I’m really looking forward to being on the academic side of things.”

In joining the Mizzou faculty at the School of Education, Alden left behind a complicated legacy strewn with epic achievements, topped off by his hiring of Pinkel and Mizzou’s lucrative move to the SEC, mixed with impossible-to-ignore missteps, none worse than a clumsy handling of sexual assault allegations involving his athletes. Above all, he handed off a department in better shape than the one he inherited in 1998.

“This is not a fixer-upper,” said Rhoades, who came to MU after six years as AD at Houston. “The job that Mike has done here in his 17 years and his staff has been tremendous. The challenge is how do you take something where Mike has continued to raise the bar and take that momentum and continue to raise that?”

BEASTS OF THE SEC EAST

The buzz of Missouri’s breakthrough football season in the SEC officially wore off Oct. 11. Out to repeat their division championship, the Tigers slumped to 4-2 with a 34-0 home loss to Georgia. Two weeks earlier Mizzou had suffered the unthinkable, a home loss to Big Ten doormat Indiana. Maybe 2013 was a fluke after all. Maybe not.

Led by their relentless defense, the Tigers won their next six games and got just enough help around the division to clinch another East title. Atlanta was no haven in another SEC championship game defeat — Alabama pummeled the Tigers 42-13 — but Pinkel’s team salvaged an 11-win season with another January bowl victory, taking down Minnesota in the Citrus.

Did anyone at Mizzou have a better year than Gary Pinkel? He was voted SEC coach of the year after his fifth season of double-digit wins.

ANDERSON HITS BUMPS

Kim Anderson’s debut season as men’s basketball coach began with a thud heard around the state and quietly ended four months later with a in-and-out cameo at the SEC tournament. Along
the way in a nightmare 9-23 season, the Tigers suffered a 13-game losing streak, the longest in team history, went winless on the road against Division I opponents and finished last in the top-heavy SEC. Very little went right during the team’s worst season since 1959, starting with a home loss to Missouri-Kansas City in the regular-season opener. With five freshmen in the rotation, Anderson struggled to find the right combinations to generate offense as the Tigers averaged just 60.5 points per game, the team’s worst scoring average since 1952.

Making things more difficult, seven of Anderson’s 11 scholarship players served suspensions of varying length.

ON TOP, FOR A WHILE

Brian Smith was disappointed his wrestling team had to settle for fourth place at the NCAA championships in March, which goes to show how far the program’s come under his watch. During a brilliant run to the national meet in St. Louis, the Tigers captured another Mid-American Conference championship, took down powerhouse Iowa to win the National Duals title and earned the No. 1 national ranking heading into the season’s final week of competition. All that success couldn’t translate to the mats in St. Louis, where a few losses doomed the Tigers’ chances to break the school’s 50-year national championship drought.

But all wasn’t lost for Smith’s program. Mizzou finished with a program-best five All-Americans.

RAY OF LIGHT

Defensive end Shane Ray’s junior season was eventful, to say the least. In his first season as a starter along Mizzou’s NFL-in-training defensive line, Ray shattered the school’s single-season sack record, finishing with an SEC-best 14.5 to earn consensus All-American honors. The Kansas City native was also named the SEC defensive player of the year. Mizzou’s Citrus Bowl win over Minnesota proved to be his final college game. To no one’s surprise, Ray entered the NFL draft with hopes of becoming a top-10 pick.

Instead, his stock tumbled some when Ray was cited for marijuana possession during a traffic stop four days before the draft. The Denver Broncos didn’t blink at Ray’s mistake and traded up to nab the pass rusher with the 23rd pick, making him Mizzou’s seventh first-rounder since 2009.

Other top stories • Missouri baseball bounces back, retains coach Tim Jamieson. … Prized football recruit Terry Beckner Jr. of East St. Louis signs with Mizzou. … Mizzou women’s basketball team has best conference finish since 2006. … Defensive coordinator Dave Steckel leaves Mizzou to become head coach at Missouri State.

MALE ATHLETE

Drake Houdashelt, wrestling
Houdashelt wasn’t the headliner during Mizzou wrestling’s unblemished regular season and run to the nation’s No. 1 ranking, but by season’s end he was the Tigers’ lone national champion. Wrestling in front of a home crowd in St. Louis at the NCAA championships, the Fort Zumwalt West graduate scored a late takedown in sudden victory to outlast Edinboro’s David Habat 3-1 in the 149-pound title match. He joined Ben Askren, Mark Ellis, Max Askren and J’Den Cox in MU’s fraternity of national champions. “It’s crazy,” Houdashelt said after the championship match. “Honestly, every night when I’m laying down in my bed, all I do is imagine myself hugging all my coaches after winning. To do it, it still feels unreal. … I always give my best effort, and it paid off.”

Houdashelt finished his career with four conference championships and three All-American places and established himself as one of the all-time greats to come through coach Brian Smith’s program.

**Shane Ray, football**

Ray came to Mizzou in 2011 as an undersized edge rusher who played with an edge. By his junior year, Ray learned to harness his emotions and became the latest in Mizzou’s long line of standout defensive linemen. Like Michael Sam the year before, Ray earned All-American and SEC defensive player of the year honors. He teamed with senior Markus Golden to give the Tigers their most productive tandem of pass rushers in team history.

**Alan Waters, wrestling**

Waters closed one of Mizzou’s greatest wrestling careers with a 34-1 record and All-American recognition at the NCAA championships. The Kansas City native suffered a crushing loss in the semifinal round but recovered to salvage a third-place finish. His 136 career victories stand second all-time at Mizzou, trailing only two-time national champion Ben Askren’s 153.

**FEMALE ATHLETE**

**Jill Rushin, track and field**

After a disappointing performance in the discus at the SEC outdoor championships, Jill Rushin needed to regroup for the shot put competition. She gathered teammate Kearsten Peoples and LSU’s Tori Bliss so they could pray together “As a person you want to be upset when things don’t go your way,” said Rushin, the senior from Jackson, Mo., “but as an athlete you have to have a positive attitude and you can’t linger about things when they don’t go the way you want them to.”

Things went her way in the shot put — a long way. Rushin repeated as the SEC outdoor champion, edging Bliss and Peoples for the league crown in Starkville, Miss. One of the most decorated female throwers in team history, Rushin closed her Mizzou career last week with an All-American finish at the NCAA championships in Eugene, Ore., taking seventh for her first podium finish outdoors. In February, Rushin finished fifth at the indoor championships. Once
overshadowed by Peoples in the MU program, Rushin fed off their daily competitions and emerged as one of the elite throwers in the country.

**Jordan Frericks, basketball**

Injuries tested Mizzou’s depth all season, but the 6-1 junior from Quincy, Ill., was coach Robin Pingeton’s stabilizing force, leading the Tigers with 13.2 points a game, 9.9 rebounds, 1.5 steals and 1.4 blocks. Frericks scored in double figures 23 times and posted a dozen double-doubles on her way to second-team All-SEC honors. The Tigers had their best conference record (7-9) and highest conference tournament seed (No. 7) in nine years.

**Emily Crane, softball**

The junior right fielder was among the SEC’s elite all-around players in the regular season, hitting .356 with a .456 on-base percentage while committing just two errors. The converted second baseman and No. 2 hitter in Ehren Earleywine’s potent lineup was MU’s only first-team All-SEC selection and also made the league’s All-Defensive team.

**NEWCOMERS OF THE YEAR**

- Tanner Houck, baseball
- Amanda Sanchez, softball
- Paige Lowary, softball
- Willie Miklus, wrestling
- Kenya Dennis, football

**Emergency Responders Train for Emergency at MURR**

The crimes and misdemeanors of science used to be handled mostly in-house, with a private word at the faculty club, barbed questions at a conference, maybe a quiet dismissal. On the rare occasion when a journal publicly retracted a study, it typically did so in a cryptic footnote. Few were the wiser; many retracted studies have been cited as legitimate evidence by others years after the fact.

But that gentlemen’s world has all but evaporated, as a remarkable series of events last month demonstrated. In mid-May, after two graduate students raised questions about a widely reported study on how political canvassing affects opinions of same-sex marriage, editors at the journal Science, where the study was published, began to investigate. What followed was a frenzy of second-guessing, accusations and commentary from all corners of the Internet: “Retraction” as serial drama, rather than footnote. Science officially pulled the paper, by Michael LaCour of the University of California, Los Angeles, and Donald Green of Columbia, on May 28, because of concerns about Mr. LaCour’s data.

“Until recently it was unusual for us to report on studies that were not yet retracted,” said Dr. Ivan Oransky, an editor of the blog Retraction Watch, the first news media outlet to report that the study had been challenged. But new technology and a push for transparency from younger scientists have changed that, he said. “We have more tips than we can handle.”

The case has played out against an increase in retractions that has alarmed many journal editors and authors. Scientists in fields as diverse as neurobiology, anesthesia and economics are debating how to reduce misconduct, without creating a police-state mentality that undermines creativity and collaboration.

“It’s an extraordinary time,” said Brian Nosek, a professor of psychology at the University of Virginia, and a founder of the Center for Open Science, which provides a free service through which labs can share data and protocols. “We are now seeing a number of efforts to push for data repositories to facilitate direct replications of findings.”

But that push is not universally welcomed. Some senior scientists have argued that replication often wastes resources. “Isn’t reproducibility the bedrock of science? Yes, up to a point,” the cancer biologist Mina Bissell wrote in a widely circulated blog post. “But it is sometimes much easier not to replicate than to replicate studies,” especially when the group trying to replicate does not have the specialized knowledge or skill to do so.

The experience of Retraction Watch provides a rough guide to where this debate is going and why. Dr. Oransky, who has a medical degree from New York University, and Adam Marcus, both science journalists, discovered a mutual interest in retractions about five years ago and
founded the blog as a side project. They had, and still have, day jobs: Mr. Marcus, 46, is the managing editor of Gastroenterology & Endoscopy News, and Dr. Oransky, 42, is the editorial director of MedPage Today (he will take a position as distinguished writer in residence at N.Y.U. later this year).

In its first year, the blog broke a couple of retraction stories that hit the mainstream news media — including a case involving data faked by an anesthesiologist who later served time for health care fraud. The site now has about 150,000 unique visitors a month, about half from outside the United States.

Dr. Oransky and Mr. Marcus are partisans who editorialize sharply against poor oversight and vague retraction notices. But their focus on evidence over accusations distinguishes them from watchdog forerunners who sometimes came off as ad hominem cranks. Last year, their site won a $400,000 grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, to build out their database, and they plan to work with Dr. Nosek to manage the data side.

Their data already tell a story.

The blog has charted a 20 to 25 percent increase in retractions across some 10,000 medical and science journals in the past five years: 500 to 600 a year today from 400 in 2010. (The number in 2001 was 40, according to previous research.) The primary causes of this surge are far from clear. The number of papers published is higher than ever, and journals have proliferated, Dr. Oransky and other experts said. New tools for detecting misconduct, like plagiarism-sifting software, are widely available, so there’s reason to suspect that the surge is a simple product of better detection and larger volume.

Still, the pressure to publish attention-grabbing findings is stronger than ever, these experts said — and so is the ability to “borrow” and digitally massage data. Retraction Watch’s records suggest that about a third of retractions are because of errors, like tainted samples or mistakes in statistics, and about two-thirds are because of misconduct or suspicions of misconduct.

The most common reason for retraction because of misconduct is image manipulation, usually of figures or diagrams, a form of deliberate data massaging or, in some cases, straight plagiarism. In their dissection of the LaCour-Green paper, the two graduate students — David Broockman, now an assistant professor at Stanford, and Joshua Kalla, at California-Berkeley — found that a central figure in Mr. LaCour’s analysis looked nearly identical to one from another study. This and other concerns led Dr. Green, who had not seen any original data, to request a retraction. (Mr. LaCour has denied borrowing anything.)

Data massaging can take many forms. It can mean simply excluding “outliers” — unusually high or low data points — from an analysis to generate findings that more strongly support the hypothesis. It also includes moving the goal posts: that is, mining the data for results first, and then writing the paper as if the experiment had been an attempt to find just those effects. “You have exploratory findings, and you’re pitching them as ‘I knew this all along,’ as confirmatory,” Dr. Nosek said.
The second leading cause is plagiarizing text, followed by republishing — presenting the same results in two or more journals.

The fourth category is faked data. No one knows the rate of fraud with any certainty. In a 2011 survey of more than 2,000 psychologists, about 1 percent admitted to falsifying data. Other studies have estimated a rate of about 2 percent. Yet one offender can do a lot of damage. The Dutch social psychologist Diederik Stapel published dozens of studies in major journals for nearly a decade based on faked data, investigators at the universities where he had worked concluded in 2011. Suspicions were first raised by two of his graduate students.

“If I’m a scientist and I fabricate data and put that online, others are going to assume this is accurate data,” said John Budd, a professor at the University of Missouri and an author of one of the first exhaustive analyses of retractions, in 1999. “There’s no way to know” without inside information.

Here, too, Retraction Watch provides a possible solution. Many of the egregious cases that it posts come from tips. The tipsters are a growing cadre of scientists, specialized journalists and other experts who share the blog’s mission — and are usually not insiders working directly with a suspected offender. One of the blog’s most effective allies has been Dr. Steven Shafer, the current editor of the journal Anesthesia & Analgesia who is now at Stanford, whose aggressiveness in re-examining published papers has led to scores of retractions. The field of anesthesia is a leader in retractions, largely because of Dr. Shafer’s efforts, Mr. Marcus and Dr. Oransky said. (Psychology is another leader, largely because of Dr. Stapel.)

Other cases emerge from issues raised at post-publication sites, where scientists dig into papers, sometimes anonymously. Dr. Broockman, one of the two who challenged the LaCour-Green paper, had first made public some of his suspicions anonymously on a message board called poliscirumors.com. Mr. Marcus said Retraction Watch closely followed a similar site, PubPeer.com. “When it first popped up, a lot of people assumed it would be an ax-grinding place,” he said. “But while some contributors have overstepped, I think it has had a positive impact on the literature.”

What these various tipsters, anonymous post-reviewers and whistle-blowers have in common is a nose for data that looks too good to be true, he said. Sites like Retraction Watch and PubPeer give them a place to discuss their concerns and flag fishy-looking data.

These, along with data repositories like Dr. Nosek’s, may render moot the debate over how to exhaustively replicate findings. That burden is likely to be eased by the community of bad-science bloodhounds who have more and more material to work with when they pick up a foul scent.

“At this point, we see ourselves as part of an ecosystem that is advocating for increased transparency,” Dr. Oransky said. “And that ecosystem is growing.”
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Bird flu might be to blame for pricier eggs

MICHAELA MARSHALL DUNGEY, 1 hr ago

COLUMBIA — If a single fowl in a flock tests positive for avian influenza, or "bird flu," the entire flock has to be put down. More than 37 million egg-laying chickens have died during a nationwide bird flu outbreak since January.

In Missouri, three flocks — more than 50,000 birds — have been euthanized because of the flu, according to statistics from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Iowa alone has lost more than 30 million birds, effectively wiping out half of the egg laying chicken population in the country's number one egg-producing state. Of the Missouri farms affected, two raised turkeys and were commercial farms, and one was backyard farm that raised a variety of poultry.

The virus was first detected in December. The most recent report came from Iowa on June 9, where a flock of 2,500 was killed.

Bird flu has contributed to the loss of 179 flocks in Iowa and Minnesota — accounting for more than 80 percent of the 222 flocks affected. Of those 222 backyard and commercial flocks, only 20 of them were backyard flocks.

Since outdoor birds cover more ground, MU College of Veterinary Medicine professor Daniel Shaw said, indoor birds might be more affected since they come in closer contact with each other. Local open-range egg producers have not been as affected by the virus as commercial operations, where the birds are kept in closer quarters.

Because Iowa has lost half of its egg supply, Shaw said, he expects egg prices in Missouri to rise as a result of the diversion of Missouri eggs into Iowa. Monthly data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that, since the first case of bird flu, the cost of one dozen large Grade A eggs is
on average of 5.5 cents higher compared to prices in 2014. The Kansas City Star reported that in the Midwest, the price of a dozen eggs has risen to $2.62, up from $1.40 in 2014.

Local impact

Harold's Donuts' egg supplier has raised prices about 30 percent in the last few weeks, baker Melissa Poelling said. Each day, she added, the business uses between 60 and 120 eggs, which it buys from a national egg provider.

Stuart Abrams, who manages Strange Donuts, noted that the company been paying more for eggs recently. The Velvet Cupcake has also noticed a rise in egg prices, employee Amanda Allen said.

Despite the price increase, all three bakeries haven't raised prices, a trend that MU agriculture economics professor Ron Plain said most affected restaurants will follow. Plain emphasized that it will take awhile to replenish all of the flocks that have been lost.

Jake Davis, a co-owner of the Root Cellar grocery store, said he suspects that local farms, and farms who use cage-free and organic practices, will be less affected by the spreading flu.

"Generally, this is a confined animal feeding operation problem which is generated basically by confining animals and not giving them access to sunlight or air circulation," Davis said. "That basically causes the flu to sweep through entire flocks 10,000 birds at a time, where most of our producers are producing outdoors and the birds have room to roam."

For some grocery stores, the future might require some patience as the egg market recovers.

"The avian flu will have long-term effects, and we have been told to prepare for wild market fluctuations over the next few years as the industry rebuilds," Tara Deering-Hansen, assistant vice-president of communications for Hy-Vee said in an email.

Austin Stanton, who raises more than 20,000 open-range egg-laying chickens along with his brother Dustin, suspects that geese or feed trucks visiting multiple farms might have spread the
Austin Stanton added that he and his brother do their own feeding on their farm, Centralia-based Stanton Brothers Eggs.

"All you can do is pray to God and hope He blesses you and hope it doesn’t come to your farm," he said.

Leigh Lockhart, who owns downtown Columbia vegetarian restaurant Main Squeeze, said the restaurant hasn't paid extra recently for eggs from its supplier, Share Life Farms, which is located in Marshall, Missouri. Share Life raises its birds outside, gives them organic feed and is separated from the nearest farm by a comfortable 10 to 12 miles.

Cafe Berlin and Uprise Bakery also haven't experienced any change in egg prices. Employees at both restaurants said they source their eggs from local farms.

**COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN**

Local pediatrics traveling to Republic of Georgia to fight infant mortality

SOPHIA ZHENG, 18 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Two pediatricians and two nurses from Columbia will fly Tuesday to the Republic of Georgia to teach doctors there how to breathe life into Georgian babies.

Physicians Patricia Blair and John Pardalos are volunteering to spend two weeks in Georgia with the nonprofit organization A Call to Serve International to train doctors on resuscitation techniques for infants. They will take with them two nurses, Erin Kuhl of Columbia and Courtney Kater of St. Louis, and dozens of boxes of medical supplies, medicines and equipment to the city of Dmanisi, in a rural Georgian region called Kvemo Kartli.

Blair is the founder and the president of A Call to Serve International, which has a prolonged history of providing medical aid to Georgia. Since the organization was founded in 1992, it has
provided more than $10 million per year in medical and food assistance to more than 100,000 Georgians, according to previous Missourian reporting.

This year, Blair said she hopes to help doctors in Georgia save more babies at birth.

**Blair is a trauma surgeon, and Pardalos is director of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at MU Women’s and Children’s Hospital.**

The project is intended to train local doctors and nurses in establishing airways 30 seconds after birth to help babies breathe air into their lungs, Blair said.

Pardalos said that during the first 30 seconds after birth, doctors and nurses check babies’ heart rates and skin colors. When babies' heart rates drop far below 100 beats per minute or their skin doesn’t pink up, that means they could need extra help with their lungs.

Blair said that within the first five minutes after a baby is born, functionality of the lungs can determine whether he or she will survive.

“If they don’t breathe at all, they don’t have a chance,” she said.

Pardalos said babies with heart defects normally don't show symptoms until one or two days after birth.

Blair said Georgia has a very high infant mortality rate. According to United Nations Data Retrieval System, the average infant mortality rate in Georgia from 2010 to 2015 was about three times the European average for the period.

Pardalos said the inability to establish airways during the first five minutes of a baby's life has been the main cause of the high death rate among Georgian newborns. Low temperatures in delivery rooms also are a factor.

Blair said that because they lack the needed knowledge and equipment, Georgian doctors have watched hundreds of babies die in front of them.
Blair and Pardalos plan to take eight rubber baby model kits, 20 medical kits, medicines and baby warmers on the trip. Each medical kit includes a thin tube perfect for an infant’s windpipe, an air pump and a flashlight for medical use.

They will train between 20 and 40 Georgian pediatricians, obstetricians and nurses during their time in the country.

Sitting in a conference room at MU Women and Children's Hospital, Pardalos demonstrated how to flash a light down a baby’s windpipe for the doctor to see where to insert the tube. After pumping air into a baby’s lungs, the baby could try to start breathing independently.

Pardalos said the process takes only about 30 seconds. If a kit is inaccessible in the delivery room, though, a baby’s destiny could be in doubt. He said he and Blair also will train the Georgian doctors on heart medications and equipment used to squeeze air into a baby’s nose if he or she struggles with breathing during the first few minutes of life.

Pardalos said about 10 percent of newborn babies need extra help with breathing after birth.

Blair said in addition to teaching people how to use this equipment, she and Pardalos will stand by in delivery rooms to supervise and provide help to Georgian doctors and nurses if necessary.

Members of 52 Rotary clubs encompassing 41 central and southern Missouri counties have donated $120,000 to this project over the past two years. MU also donated medical supplies worth $4,000 to the project, Blair said. In July, $40,000 of the total donation will be used to launch a one-year prenatal care program to educate local mothers-to-be about how to avoid complications during pregnancy, reducing the risk for the mother and the baby at birth.

Blair said the Columbia group will visit eight hospitals, including A Call to Service's Women’s and Children’s Wellness Center and Dmanisi Civic Hospital in Dmanisi; Gudasuri Hospital in Tbilisi; and Mangelsi, Rustavi, Garabani, Bolsini and Marguali hospitals in the Kvemo Kartli region.
A Call to Serve International also will lend assistance in Georgia's capital city, Tbilisi, which was flooded overnight on Sunday. The disaster killed at least 15 people, according to reporting on civil.ge. Blair said that because of a previous partnership with A Call to Serve Georgia, she will help assess damage and advise disaster specialists on response measures.

The outreach team will return on June 30.

Blair said this trip is only the start of longer partnership with Georgian doctors and nurses to help babies. They will leave behind their equipment so that Georgian doctors and nurses can train their colleagues across the region and continue providing emergency breathing kits from the U.S. for another year until Georgian doctors and nurses find local supplies.

Two doctors and two nurses from Columbia will travel Tuesday to Dmanisi, Georgia, a central Asian country, to train Georgian doctors in treating newborns with breathing issues. The country has a high infant mortality rate.