

"All the News
That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

Late Edition

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ISLAMIST THREAT WITH QAEDA LINK GROWS IN NIGERIA

ALARM SHOWN BY WEST

Fears of a New Hotbed
of Terror With Strikes
Nearly Every Day

By ADAM NOSSITER

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria — A shadowy Islamist insurgency that has haunted northern Nigeria — surviving repeated, bloody efforts to eliminate it — appears to be branching out and collaborating with Al Qaeda's affiliates, alarming Western officials and analysts who had previously viewed the militants here as a largely isolated, if deadly, menace.

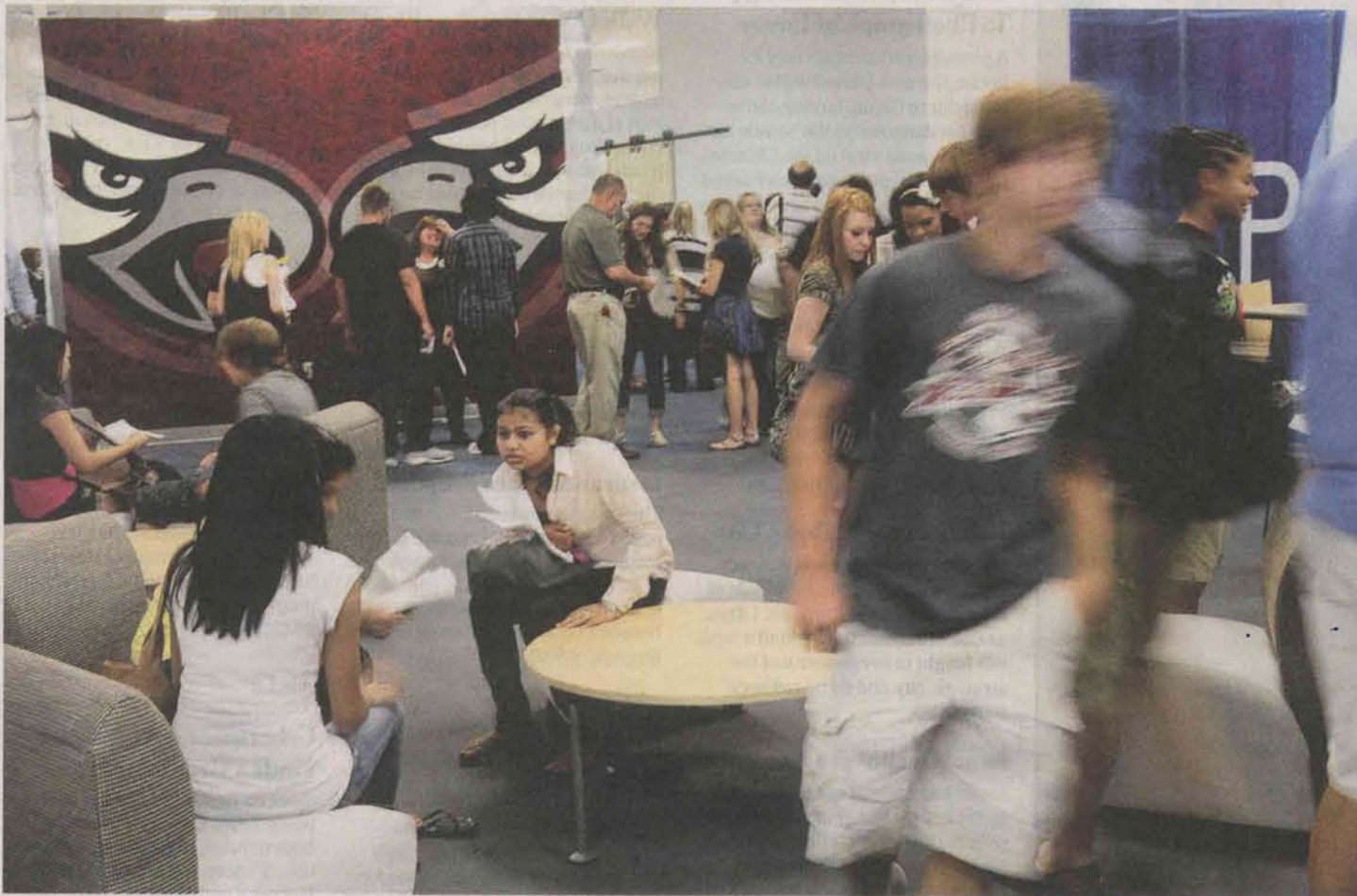
Just two years ago, the Islamist group stalking police officers in this bustling city seemed on the verge of extinction. In a heavy-handed assault, Nigerian soldiers shelled its headquarters and killed its leader, leaving a grisly tableau of charred ruins, hundreds dead and outmatched members of the group, known as Boko Haram, struggling to fight back, sometimes with little more than bows and arrows.

Now, insurgents strike at the Nigerian military, the police and opponents of Islamic law in near-daily assaults and bombings, using improvised explosive devices that can be detonated remotely and bear the hallmarks of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Western officials and analysts say. Beyond the immediate devastation, the fear is that extremists bent on jihad are spreading their reach across the continent and planting roots in a major, Western-allied state that had not been seen as a hotbed of global terrorism.

In the past two years, Boko Haram has met and trained with Qaeda affiliates outside the country, American and Nigerian officials and analysts say, and the group has begun waging a propaganda campaign that includes conference calls with reporters — another sign of its growing sophistication.

"Where are they getting this knowledge of I.E.D.'s?" said Kashim Shettima, the new governor here. "Some of them went as far as Sudan. Why? I believe they are making efforts to reach out to the global terrorism network."

The Nigerian government appears to have only a shaky grasp



STEVE HEBERT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Joplin High's students on Wednesday at their new school, which reopened at a shopping mall after being destroyed in a tornado.

Bashing E.P.A. Is New Theme In G.O.P. Race

By JOHN M. BRODER

WASHINGTON — The Environmental Protection Agency is emerging as a favorite target of the Republican presidential candidates, who portray it as the very symbol of a heavy-handed regulatory agenda imposed by the Obama administration that they say is strangling the economy.

Representative Michele Bachmann of Minnesota wants to padlock the E.P.A.'s doors, as does former Speaker Newt Gingrich. Gov. Rick Perry of Texas wants to impose an immediate moratorium on environmental regulation.

Representative Ron Paul of Texas wants environmental disputes settled by the states or the courts. Herman Cain, a businessman, wants to put many environmental regulations in the hands of an independent commission that includes oil and gas executives. Jon M. Huntsman Jr., the former Utah governor, thinks most new environmental regulations should be shelved until the

Joplin Defies Odds, Just by Opening Schools

By A. G. SULZBERGER

JOPLIN, Mo. — When the schools here were reduced to red-brick rubble in the deadly tornado three months ago, abruptly ending classes just before final exams, district leaders made a promise that seemed like a long shot: the new school year would start on time.

And on Wednesday, right on schedule, students were reunited for the first day of school, streaming excitedly into makeshift buildings that replaced the nine schools damaged or destroyed by the tornado and marking the end of a difficult summer.

Exchanging the usual first-day greetings — the boys slapping hands, the girls embracing — ju-

niors and seniors shared their schedules and marveled at the modern touches of the new Joplin High School, built in just 55 days out of what was a vacant department store at the back of a shopping mall.

Even for students like Ariana Dudley, a senior who watched her home collapse around her and is now living in a trailer, there was less talk of tragedy than of the flat-screen televisions on the school walls and the new laptops each student received, reminders of the money and other donations that poured into Joplin after the tornado.

"We're trying to get the school year started without thinking about all the bad stuff," she said.

The school year arrives as the city continues to regain its foot-

ing after the tornado killed 160 people, the most in the United States in more than a half-century, and destroyed thousands of homes as it tore across a third of Joplin on May 22.

The cratered landscape has been tidied somewhat since then, and there are signs of rebirth like the wood frames of replacement homes, the "opening soon" declarations on rebuilt businesses and the green shoots on the storm-stripped trees, raising the hope that at least a few of them may survive.

The most anticipated indication of progress, one that led residents of a nearby retirement home to line the street cheering for the arriving teenagers, has been the opening of the schools.

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JUSTICE INQUIRY IS SAID TO FOCUS ON S.&P. RATING

SEEKING EX-EMPLOYEES

Questions Over
Given to Mortgage
Securities

By LOUISE STOKES

The Justice Department is investigating whether the largest credit ratings agency, Standard & Poor's, in the years leading up to the financial crisis, according to people interviewed by the department and another branch of such interviews.

The investigation began after Standard & Poor's cut the United States' AAA credit rating last month, but it is likely to focus on the political firestorm that surrounded that action. The agency's secretive practices and its analysts, claiming to be objective, found an error in its debt ratings.

In the mortgage inquiry, the Justice Department is asking about instances where the company's analysts awarded lower ratings to mortgage-backed securities that were guaranteed by other S&P business managers, according to people with knowledge of the interviews. If the government can find enough evidence to support a case, which is likely to happen, it could undercut a longstanding claim that the agency's ratings are independent business concerns.

It is unclear if the Justice Department investigation will also look at the other two ratings agencies, Moody's and Fitch, or only at S&P.

During the boom years, S&P and other ratings agencies reaped record profits as they stowed their highest ratings on bundles of troubled mortgage loans, which made them appear less risky and therefore more valuable. They failed to anticipate the deterioration that came in the housing market and devastated the financial system.

Since the crisis, the agencies' business practices and have been criticized from all corners, including in congressional hearings and reports.

The New York Times

Caution: Women Playing

By AMY SOHN

I DON'T wear shorts in public!" shouted Sophie Franks Staub, a rangy 41-year-old stay-at-home mother, from her spot on a sand court on Pier 25 in Hudson River Park. Yet she was indeed wearing them, as were two dozen other women in their 30s and 40s, all barefoot as they learned to play beach volleyball on a buttery night in July.

It was the latest "play date" offered by a group called Mice at Play, which seeks to bring play and fun into the lives of oversched-



RICHARD PERRY/THE NEW YORK TIMES

IT'S A DATE An evening of beach volleyball was a scheduled event for the group Mice at Play.

uled New York women. Past events have included a bartending course, a Harlem Renaissance theme night, trapeze lessons, a "survival skill" hike, a burlesque class and, perhaps inevitably, pole dancing.

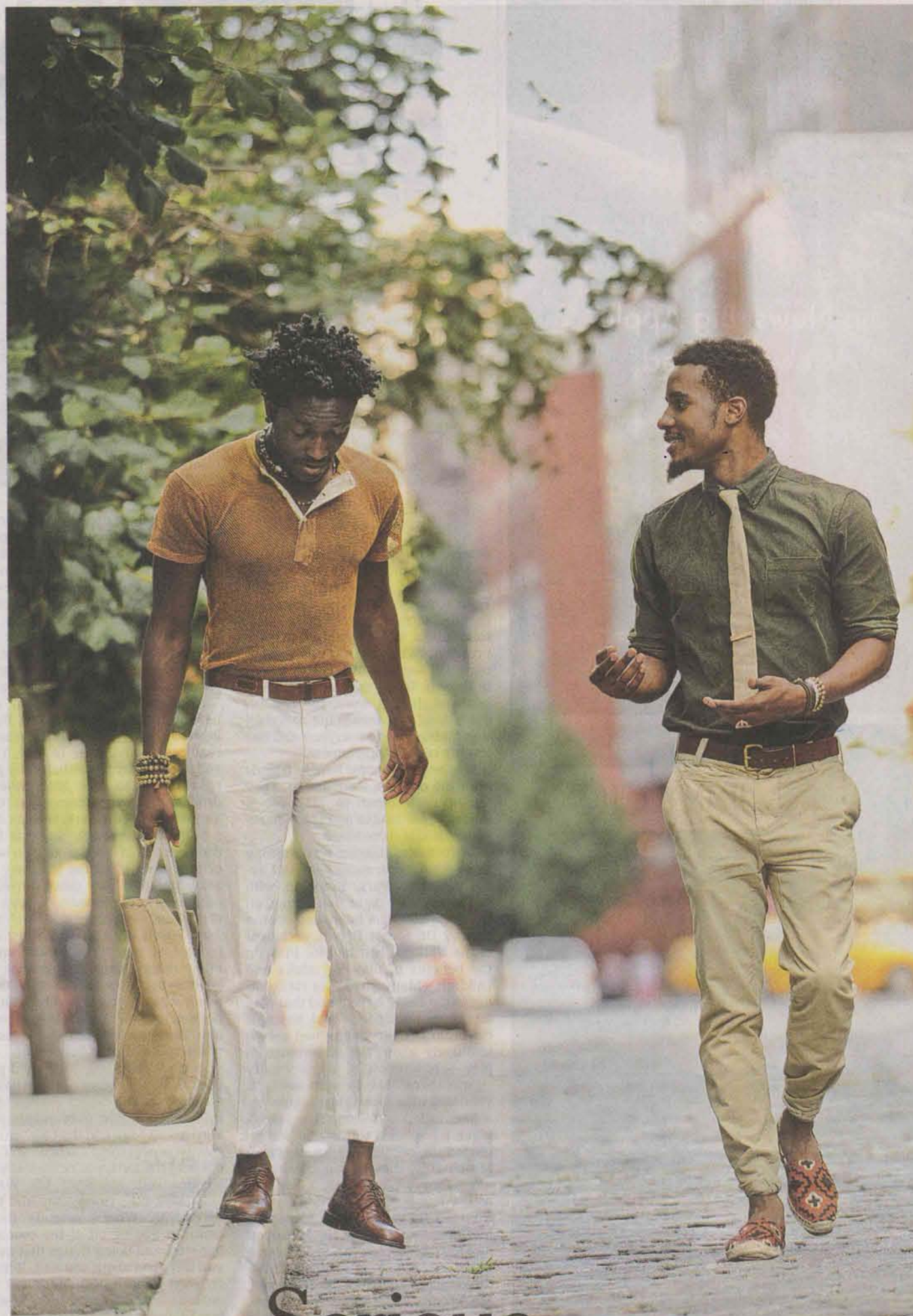
"I needed an impetus to remember how to do stuff," said Ms. Franks Staub, a frequent attendee. "I used to do stuff, and then I had kids, and I stopped."

In honor of Bastille Day, the teams were named the Marie Antoinettes and the Les Misérables; the former had red ribbons around their necks. The games were short on skill and long on hilarity, with the "mice" shouting things like "I am seriously PMS-ing!" and "Have we officially started playing?" As the sun set over the river, shirtless men on the next court peered over curiously.

The Les Miz Mice won, 4 games to 1. Afterward the two teams devoured a picnic dinner of vichyssoise, quiche and brioche in Battery Park City and sang "La Marseillaise." Ribbons stayed on necks.

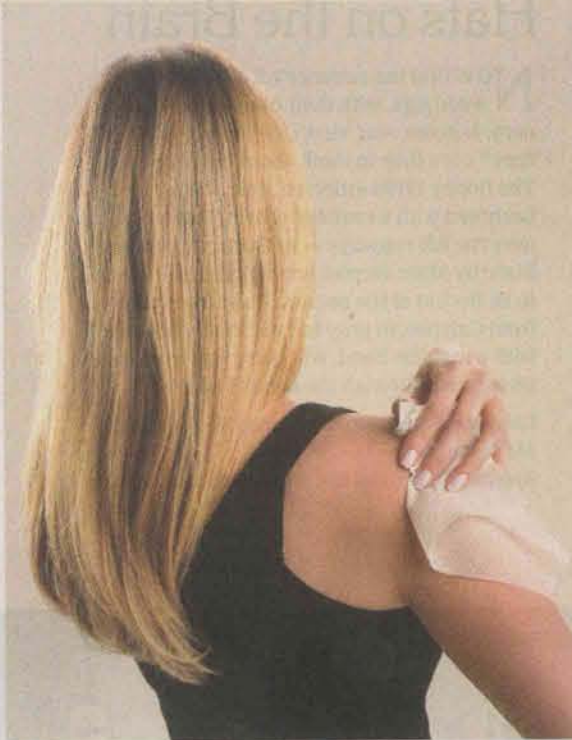
The group was founded informally in 1998 by Nadia Stieglitz, now 47, at her apartment in Park Slope, Brooklyn. Then a publishing ex-

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Serious

Wipe On, Wipe Off: March of the Towelette



By STEPHANIE ROSENBLOOM

WANT to simplify your beauty routine? Wish you could zoom through airport security without a Ziploc bag of little bottles?

Perhaps it's time to revisit the wipe. No, not the moist, lemony towelette you use to degrease your fingers after gnawing on hot wings. That's the old wipe. The new wipe is bigger, softer and engineered to do the work of nearly any bottled beauty product.

These upscale wipes are infused with sunscreen, self-tanner, hair serum, deodorant. They remove nail polish, dirt, maybe even wrinkles. And they are becoming ubiquitous as brands scramble to satisfy consumer demand.

"A year ago they weren't as mainstream and available for multiple purposes," said Tracy Ogden, a spokeswoman for Amazon.com's Health and Personal Care, and Beauty divisions, where a search for beauty wipes turns up about 800 results. "Now customers can buy wipes for anything."

Are these towelettes a minimalist's dream, or expensive Wet Naps? Your intrepid reporter tested an all-wipe beauty routine to find out.

Given the season, I had to try sunscreen. Keeping a few wipes in my tote bag might prevent burns during alfresco brunches and impromptu strolls. And packing for vacations would be much simpler: no more playing chemist in the bathroom, siphoning lotion into teeny travel bottles that inevitably begin leaking somewhere over the Atlantic Ocean.

"This is a game changer," my brother declared from a beach chair as he rubbed an arm with a Doctor T's Supergoop! SPF 30+ Sunscreen Swipe. Goodbye, messy lotions that turn his olive skin Kabuki white. I liked Dr. Dennis Gross Skincare's Powerful Sun Protection SPF 30 towelettes because they felt damper. After all, another advantage that sunscreen wipes have over lotion is that they're refreshing. One member of our sunbathing party even used a Shady Wipes Daily Sun Protection wipe with SPF 30 to whisk away sweat as we departed the beach. (The brand makes "after-sun" wipes, but they emit an earthy scent you'd expect to emanate from a Catskills hillside, not your body.)

If you prefer, you can get your tan from a wipe instead of the sun. But first, some advice on use: I found that unfolding the wipe, slowly dragging it up your leg (think "paint the fence" from "The Karate Kid") and then going over it again in a circular motion ("wax on, wax off") works best. Also: squeeze a dollop of body lotion on your hands first to prevent tanning your fingertips. The

A NEW APPROACH There is a potion-infused wipe, pad or towelette for nearly every body part and task — facial cleansing, nail polish removers, deodorants, self-tanners, sunscreens and replacements for a post-workout shower. Various brands are scrambling to satisfy consumer demand. Below from left, products from Dr. Dennis Gross, Neutrogena, Ms. & Mrs. and L'Oréal.



best brand will depend on your skin color. I'm fair, and Sonia Kashuk's Sunless Tan Body towelettes in golden for Target gave my legs a pretty glow without turning them the color of Tang. There are four wipes in a pack (for \$9.99), and I used one for each leg. (That adds up, Ms. Kashuk: please put more in the box.) L'Oréal's Sublime Bronze Self-Tanning Towelettes for Body in medium dried darker. Being pale, I anticipated a "catanastrophe." Yet after a shower the

color was lovely: slightly browner than the Kashuk and, at \$7.99 for six wipes at Drugstore.com and Amazon, cheaper, too.

Facial wipes, intended to remove makeup, have also become common, offered by brands like Philosophy, MAC, the Body Shop and Ole Henriksen. Be cautious if you have sensitive skin, though. Even wipes claiming to be gentle stung my eyes. And my nose. Towelettes meant to smell of fruit often

smell like candy or dessert liqueur. One night I emerged from the bathroom smelling like SweetTarts. Another night I climbed into bed smelling like a Creamsicle. A third evening, I was indistinguishable from limoncello.

Comodynes Make-Up Remover for all skin types was an exception. Made in Barcelona, it smells fresh and didn't irritate my skin. Inspired, I also tried Comodynes Easy Peeling New Face Effect wipes, to exfoliate. Never mind

whether that accomplished Tiny rough bumps all over the face. The brand also makes wipes to remove self-tanner. Other wipes that do my skin include Neutrogena's Calming Makeup Remover Towelettes and Biore's Makeup Removing Towelettes (which ought to be a verb).

Body wipes also tend to smell like baby powder and can be reminiscent of the baby wipes on babies. Yet I was pleasantly surprised by the futuristic-sounding Human Propulsion Laundry Power Shower Refreshing Wipes package says the wipes are — and gym equipment. I was enthused about cleaning my shoes with the product also meant for a St. Louis Cardinals shirt, but I can't argue with the rest of the world.

One Saturday, I slicked on the brand's diminutive emergency deodorant. I'm giving the wipe a pass, considering it was 88 degrees and I was sweating. I recoiled from me. Was it a roll-on, stick or spray? A pinch, though, it beats the Ms. & Mrs. brand makeup remover. The brand's makeup wipes, all of which come in small packets so you won't mistake them for the no-frills wipes of old (though you might mistake them for condoms). I also tried the brand's polish remover. A thick wipe, bigger than a stick of gum, it took several coats of polish, making for tropical getaways and touch-ups.

When shopping for wipes, look for labels if you want to avoid toxic ingredients. Wipes were tested on animals or contain parabens. Also, many are not biodegradable; some include Josie Maran and Yes to My Skin.

Wipe packs cost anywhere from \$3 to \$34. Whether they're a smart purchase depends on how many you use. You'll typically need scores of wipes to protect every inch of your body (all summer). You'll typically need a pack for your buck with a bottle.

Will I be packing wipes on my next trip? You bet. Will I suddenly find myself in a supply on hand to wipe away messier moments? Nah. So good to get a little sand in your

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