**FOOTBALL:** Georgia likes its chances with Daniels **Page 48**

**MUSIC:** Black women ruling hip-hop **Page 28**

**GAMES:** Deathloop's best element is surprise **Page 18**

EUROPE & PACIFIC WEEKEND EDITION

**MOVIES**
MCU expands with a new high for Asian representation
**Pages 15-16**

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# More than 25 deaths after Ida remnants slam Northeast

*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — A stunned U.S. East Coast faced a rising death toll, surging rivers, tornado damage and continuing calls for rescue Thursday after the remnants of Hurricane Ida walloped the region with record-breaking rain, filling low-lying apartments with water and turning roads into car-swallowing canals.

In a region that had been warned about potentially deadly flash flooding but hadn't braced for such a blow from the no-longer-hurricane, the storm killed at least 26 people from Maryland to New York on Wednesday night and Thursday morning.

At least 12 people died in New York City, police said, one of them in a car and eight in flooded basement apartments that often serve as relatively affordable homes in one of the nation's most expensive housing markets. Officials said at least eight died in New Jersey and three in Pennsylvania's suburban Montgomery County; one was killed by a falling tree, one

**SEE IDA ON PAGE 11**

AP

**In this image taken from video provided by motorist Scott Smith, a tornado is seen through a windshield behind the toll booth for the Burlington Bristol Bridge on Wednesday in Burlington, N.J.**

KYLEE GARDNER/U.S. Air Force

**Dr. (Maj.) Elaina Wild, the 379th Expeditionary Medical Group's chief medical officer, poses with mothers and their babies, whose faces have been obscured for security reasons, at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, on Aug. 28.**

# Unexpected delivery

## Al Udeid Air Base clinic improvised care for 9 Afghan evacuee newborns

BY CHAD GARLAND
*Stars and Stripes*

Nine babies have been born at the expeditionary medical clinic at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar since the base became a main stopover for evacuees leaving Afghanistan last month, even though the clinic was not set up for infants.

The 379th Expeditionary Medical Group's patient population increased tenfold overnight the first day of the evacuation, according to an Air Force statement Thursday that cited chief medical officer Dr. Elaina Wild, an Air Force major.

Wild, a family medicine doctor back home,

**SEE DELIVERY ON PAGE 7**

**RELATED**
Military crew describes 'apocalyptic' departure from Afghanistan
**Page 6**

# BUSINESS/WEATHER

## EUROPE GAS PRICES

Europe's gas prices were unavailable before press time

## PACIFIC GAS PRICES

| Country | Super E10 | Super unleaded | Super plus | Diesel | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Japan | .. | $3.919 | .. | $3.409 | South Korea | $3.219 | .. | $3.929 | $3.419 |
| Change in price | .. | No change | .. | +2.0 cents | Change in price | No change | .. | No change | +2.0 cents |
| Okinawa | $3.209 | .. | .. | $3.409 | Guam | $3.219 | $3.679 | $3.29 | .. |
| Change in price | No change | .. | .. | +2.0 cents | Change in price | No change | No change | No change | .. |

***DieselEFD **Midgrade**
**For the week of Sept. 3-9**

## EXCHANGE RATES

**Military rates**

| | |
|---|---|
| Euro costs (Sept. 3) | $1.16 |
| Dollar buys (Sept. 3) | 0.8227 |
| British pound (Sept. 3) | $1.35 |
| Japanese yen (Sept. 3) | 107.00 |
| South Korean won (Sept. 3) | 1129.00 |

**Commercial rates**

| | |
|---|---|
| Bahrain(Dinar) | 0.3768 |
| Britain (Pound) | 1.3817 |
| Canada (Dollar) | 1.2602 |
| China(Yuan) | 6.4549 |
| Denmark (Krone) | 6.2706 |
| Egypt (Pound) | 15.7012 |
| Euro | 0.8433 |
| Hong Kong (Dollar) | 7.7712 |
| Hungary (Forint) | 293.30 |
| Israel (Shekel) | 3.2082 |
| Japan (Yen) | 110.00 |
| Kuwait(Dinar) | 0.3007 |
| Norway (Krone) | 8.6498 |
| Philippines (Peso) | 49.84 |
| Poland (Zloty) | 3.80 |
| Saudi Arabia (Riyal) | 3.7503 |
| Singapore (Dollar) | 1.3432 |
| South Korea (Won) | 1158.08 |
| Switzerland (Franc) | 0.9156 |
| Thailand (Baht) | 32.44 |
| Turkey (NewLira) | 8.2822 |

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

## INTEREST RATES

| | |
|---|---|
| Prime rate | 3.25 |
| Interest Rates Discount rate | 0.75 |
| Federal funds market rate | 0.09 |
| 3-month bill | 0.05 |
| 30-year bond | 1.92 |

## WEATHER OUTLOOK

### FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

### FRIDAY IN EUROPE

### SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

## TODAY IN STRIPES


American Roundup ..... 36
Classified ..... 12
Comics ..... 38-39
Crossword ..... 38-39
Faces ..... 35
Opinion ..... 40
Sports ..... 41-48



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MILITARY

# Sailors, Marines have 90 days to get vaccine

By Alex Wilson
*Stars and Stripes*

Most U.S. sailors and Marines have less than 90 days to get vaccinated against COVID-19 or face disciplinary action, according to a recent order from the Secretary of the Navy.

Secretary Carlos Del Toro issued the order "effective immediately," in an Aug. 21 naval administrative message that apparently anticipated Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's command for mandatory vaccinations three days later.

Del Toro gave reservists 120 days to get vaccinated. The deadlines fall on Nov. 19 and Dec. 19 for active-duty service members and reservists, respectively.

"As the faithful maritime protectors of our country in peacetime and war, each of us must take ownership of our readiness to preserve and protect the force, and ensure the success of our mission," Del Toro wrote.

Dawson Roth/U.S. Navy

**Petty Officer 2nd Class Amanda Reyna prepares to administer a COVID-19 vaccine in spring 2021 in Bahrain.**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Aug. 23 granted approval to the two-shot Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, which had been under emergency use authorization.

The following day, Austin ordered all troops to get vaccinated, at the direction of their respective services.

Vaccinations within the U.S. military were voluntary under the emergency use authorization. Only the Pfizer vaccine is approved, so far, although the others are still available at military clinics.

Some service members may be exempt, including those taking part in COVID-19 clinical trials until they conclude, according to Del Toro's message.

However, unvaccinated sailors and Marines who previously contracted COVID-19 are not exempt, according to a separate administrative message from Vice Adm. W. R. Merz, deputy chief of naval operations for operations, plans and strategy.

Service members who received a medical exemption while vaccines were approved under an emergency use authorization will be reevaluated, according Merz's Aug. 21 message.

The vaccine mandate is a lawful order and failure to comply is punishable under Article 92 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, according to Del Toro and Merz.

"The Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps have authority to exercise the full range of administrative and disciplinary actions to hold non-exempt Service Members appropriately accountable," Del Toro wrote.

Punishments may include discharge from the service or disqualification for promotion or reenlistment.

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# Virus wave still breaking in Tokyo

By Joseph Ditzler
*Stars and Stripes*

TOKYO — The coronavirus continued to give ground in Japan's capital city but still added another 3,099 infections on Thursday, according to public broadcaster NHK.

For an 11th consecutive day, new cases in Tokyo were fewer in number than the week prior, according to Tokyo Metropolitan Government data. The prefecture reported 4,704 new infections on Aug. 26, a difference of 1,605.

Japan reported another 20,008 new cases Wednesday, and 71 deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center. More than 46% of the Japanese population, or 58.5 million people, are fully vaccinated.

Also Thursday, U.S. military bases in Japan said another 25 people had tested positive for COVID-19.

Eighteen people in the Marine Corps community on Okinawa have come up positive since Wednesday, according to a Facebook post by Marine Corps Installations Pacific. The command provided no further information. In August, the Marines reported 221 COVID-19 patients.

Okinawa prefecture, where the bulk of U.S. forces are stationed, reported 565 people had tested positive Thursday, according to the Department of Public Health and Medical Care.

Closer to Tokyo, Naval Air Facility Atsugi reported one new case on Thursday, a person who tested positive before exiting restricted movement, according to a base news release.

Sasebo Naval Base, on Kyushu Island, identified another six COVID-19 cases since Tuesday, according to a Facebook post by the naval base. One turned up during a medical screening and five fell ill with COVID-19 symptoms. The base has 15 patients under observation.

Yokosuka Naval Base, 38 miles south of Tokyo, closed the Green Street School Age Care facility Thursday for surveillance testing and close contact tracing after a "recently discovered" case of COVID-19 there, according to a post Wednesday evening on the base's Facebook page.

The Chili's restaurant on base was also closed until further notice after a staff member contracted COVID-19, according to a separate post Wednesday evening by the base. The restaurant was being cleaned and sanitized and its staff members tested, according to the post.

Aaron Kidd/Stars and Stripes

**Tokyo added another 3,099 coronavirus infections on Thursday.**

## South Korea update

U.S. Forces Korea reported another 22 people tested positive for COVID-19 between Saturday and Tuesday, according to a Thursday news release.

Three service members at Osan Air Base and one at Camp Casey turned up positive Saturday and Monday after developing COVID-19 symptoms.

Contact tracing discovered another six service members and a South Korean employee at Osan, two service members on temporary duty with USFK and one service member and two family members at Daegu between Saturday and Tuesday, according to the release.

Finally, two service members stationed at Camp Humphreys, two at Daegu and two at Osan tested positive on Saturday and Sunday short of embarking on international travel, USFK said.

South Korea reported another 1,961 coronavirus infections Wednesday, with Seoul accounting for 555 and Gyeonggi province, where Osan and Humphreys are located, accounting for 688, according to the Korean Center for Disease Control and Prevention on Thursday.

Stars and Stripes reporters Mari Higa and Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report.
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# DOD: Law for foreign vessels won't impact US Navy in South China Sea

By Alex Wilson
*Stars and Stripes*

U.S. Navy operations in the South China Sea won't be affected by a new Chinese law requiring foreign vessels to give notice before entering waters claimed by Beijing, according to the Defense Department.

An amendment to China's 1983 Maritime Traffic Safety Law that took effect Wednesday requires certain vessels to provide a checklist of information, including call signs, positions, estimated time of arrival and the next port of call, the Chinese state-run Global Times reported Sunday.

The amendment specifies that submersibles, nuclear-powered vessels and ships carrying dangerous substances, such as oil or chemicals, must notify Chinese officials before entering areas China claims as territorial waters, according to the Naval War College's Stockton Center for International Law.

The amendment was approved in April by China's Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

However, U.S. forces, under international law, will continue to transit those areas or operate in them, according to a Defense Department spokesman.

"The United States will continue to fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows," Lt. Col. Martin Meiners told Stars and Stripes in an email Wednesday.

The Navy's 7th Fleet routinely conducts freedom-of-navigation operations and transits through areas China has claimed as its territorial waters, including the Taiwan Strait and island chains in the South China Sea.

Most recently, the guided-missile destroyer USS Kidd steamed through the Taiwan Strait on Aug. 27, the Navy's eighth trip through the waterway this year.

The U.S. has long maintained that one nation's law "must not infringe" the rights of other nations under international law, Pentagon spokesman John Supple told Stars and Stripes in an email Wednesday.

"Unlawful and sweeping maritime claims, including in the South China Sea, pose a serious threat to the freedom of the seas, including the freedoms of navigation and overflight, free trade and unimpeded lawful commerce, and the rights and interests of South China Sea and other littoral nations," he said.

Beijing regularly criticizes U.S. Navy activity in areas it claims in the South China Sea, along with the U.S. position rejecting those claims.

"China's sovereignty, rights and interests in the South China Sea have been formed in the course of a long history," Zhao Lijian, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, said at a July 12 news conference. "They are supported by abundant historical and legal basis and upheld by the Chinese government all along."

No country objected to this position until the 1970s, Zhao added.

"The U.S. accusation that our maritime rights and interests in the South China Sea have no basis in international law totally runs counter to facts," he said.

Beijing's asserted claim over vast swaths of the South China Sea largely stem from the "nine-dash line," a demarcation adopted from a 1947 Chinese map. In 2016, a United Nations tribunal declared some of China's claims in the South China Sea unlawful under the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

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MILITARY

# New US-S. Korea cost-sharing deal takes effect

By David Choi and Yoo Kyong Chang
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — South Korea will spend nearly $125 million more this year to station American troops on the peninsula, according to a new cost-sharing deal that took effect Wednesday.

The Special Measures Agreement between South Korea and the United States determines the cost split for keeping roughly 28,500 U.S. troops in the country and employing South Korean civilians on U.S. military bases.

Seoul is expected to contribute $1.02 billion for 2021, a 13.9% increase to the $896.62 million it spent the previous year. The renewed agreement will retroactively apply to South Korea's contribution from last year, which was carried over from 2019 after negotiations for the agreement's renewal became deadlocked during President Donald Trump's administration.

Under the new six-year arrangement, Seoul's future contributions will be proportional to its overall defense budget, which has risen in recent years. In the past, South Korea's Special Measures Agreement contributions were determined separately.

The Ministry of Defense is expected to ask the National Assembly for a 4.5% increase to this year's overall defense budget of $43.7 billion, according to local news reports. That will also increase South Korea's contribution to the Special Measures Agreement.

Shin Beomchul, director of the Center for Diplomacy and Security at the Korea Research Institute for National Strategy, described the new agreement as "stable" and equitable for the time being.

"A majority of South Korean people support a strong alliance, so they agreed to increase the amount of budget," Shin told Stars and Stripes on Thursday.

However, the agreement may become inequitable due to the new provision that connects the Special Agreement to the overall defense budget, Shin said.

"It should not depend on the annual defense budget, but on the annual price increase," Shin said.

The ruling Democratic Party shared similar concerns, saying in a Tuesday statement that "synchronizing annual increase [rates] with the national defense budget could lead to excessive contributions."

The "South Korean government must negotiate annual increase rates of the agreement aside from national defense budgets in coming negotiations," the party's statement said.

South Korea's revised contribution is a modest increase from the estimated 13% hike Seoul initially offered the U.S. during negotiations last year, but far less than the amount sought by Trump. He described South Korea's past contribution levels as "peanuts" and demanded that it spend as much as $5 billion to keep U.S. troops on the peninsula.

The State Department during Trump's administration argued the U.S. "invests significant military resources" to maintain its presence in South Korea, namely, to deter threats from North Korea.

"Sustaining the costs of our global military presence is not a burden that should fall on the U.S. taxpayer alone but is a responsibility that should be shared fairly with allies and partners who benefit from our presence," the department said in 2019.

South Korean lawmakers from the National Assembly overwhelmingly supported the deal in a 133-11 vote Tuesday afternoon.

Following the vote, the ruling Democratic Party issued a statement saying the two countries are "now in a position to manage the alliance with more stable manner, without any necessity of yearly renegotiations."

South Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a separate statement Wednesday, said the new agreement "is expected to provide conditions for stable stationing of U.S. Forces Korea and greatly contribute to the enhancement of the … alliance."

Some lawmakers, such as Justice Party leader Bae Jin Gyo, voiced their opposition to the agreement.

"The value of the [South Korea]-U.S. alliance would be damaged and only unequal … relations would be left," Gyo said in a speech at the National Assembly on Tuesday. "We cannot, and must not, agree on the unreasonable demand that asks South Korea to raise its contribution, which is defense costs being used by the U.S. for the U.S.'s investments …"

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Fort Knox

**Firefighters use foam to extinguish a helicopter fire during a 2007 training exercise at Fort Knox, Ky.**

# 'Forever chemicals' found in groundwater near many sites

By John Flesher
*Associated Press*

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — High levels of toxic, widely used "forever chemicals" contaminate groundwater around at least six military sites in the Great Lakes region, according to U.S. Department of Defense records that an environmental group released Tuesday.

The Environmental Working Group said PFAS, an abbreviation for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, have oozed into the Great Lakes and pose a risk to people who eat fish tainted with the chemicals.

Pentagon documents show at least 385 military installations nationwide are polluted with PFAS, mostly from firefighting foam used widely in training exercises, the group said.

"If you are relying on well water and are near one of these bases where PFAS has been confirmed in the groundwater, you should be concerned," said Scott Faber, senior vice president of government affairs. "And you should be doubly concerned if you are near one of the hundreds of bases where PFAS is suspected but not confirmed."

Asked for comment, a Pentagon spokesman referred to remarks by Richard Kidd, deputy assistant secretary of defense for environment and energy resilience, during a July 14 public discussion on PFAS. Kidd said it would take "years to fully define cleanup requirements the department faces, and probably decades before that cleanup is complete."

"We are intent on making sustained progress on all PFAS challenges," Kidd said, adding that cleanup costs were estimated at $2 billion.

> **"We are intent on making sustained progress on all PFAS challenges."**
>
> **Richard Kidd**
> deputy assistant secretary of defense for environment and energy resilience

A review of department records showed PFAS has been detected at levels up to 213,000 parts per trillion at the former Wurtsmith Air Force Base in Oscoda, Mich., which closed in 1993, the Environmental Working Group said.

State officials discovered the contamination in 2010. The Air Force is treating PFAS-contaminated groundwater at some sites in the area, but local residents and members of Congress have called the actions insufficient and demanded a stronger and faster approach.

The environmental group said its study turned up high readings at five other Great Lakes bases.

Combined levels of PFOA and PFOS, two of the most commonly used chemicals in the group, reached as high as 1.3 million ppt at Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station in Niagara County, N.Y.

Other readings included 135,000 ppt of the compound PFHxS at General Mitchell International Airport in Milwaukee; 82,000 ppt of PFOA and PFOS at Alpena County Regional Airport in Michigan; 17,000 ppt of PFOS at Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Mount Clemens, Michigan; and 5,400 ppt of PFHxS at Duluth International Airport in Minnesota.

Most civilian airports also have firefighting foam containing PFAS and some have released it to the environment during emergency fire suppression and training, said Melanie Benesh, the group's legislative attorney. Federal regulations require that airports be equipped with foams meeting military specifications, although Congress has ordered the Federal Aviation Administration to allow foams without PFAS.

The Biden administration is developing national standards for triggering PFAS cleanups in drinking water and groundwater. The Environmental Protection Agency presently has a non-enforceable health advisory level of 70 ppt for PFOS and PFOA for drinking water.

PFAS compounds, first developed in the 1940s, are used in a variety of commercial and household products ranging from nonstick cookware to food packaging and water-repellent clothing. Foam containing PFAS has long been used to extinguish jet fuel fires.

The compounds are called "forever chemicals" because they don't break down in the environment or the human body and can accumulate over time. They have been linked to a variety of health problems including cancer, liver damage and decreased fertility.

AFGHANISTAN

# Qatar: Unclear when Kabul airport will reopen

*Associated Press*

KABUL, Afghanistan — Qatar's top diplomat said Thursday that experts are racing to reopen Kabul's airport but warned it was not clear when flights would resume, with many still desperate to flee Afghanistan's new Taliban leaders amid concerns over what their rule will hold.

In the wake of their rapid takeover, the Taliban have sought to calm those fears, including pledging to let women and girls attend school and allow people to travel freely. But many are skeptical, and Britain's foreign minister stressed the importance of engaging with the new rulers to test their promises.

In a reflection of those anxieties, dozens of women protested outside the governor's office in the western province of Herat to demand their rights be protected. They shouted slogans and urged the country's new leaders to include women in their Cabinet — a remarkable demonstration of the transformation in women's lives in the past 20 years.

When they last held power in the late 1990s, the Taliban imposed a repressive rule, meting out draconian punishments and largely excluding women from public life. On Thursday, Taliban fighters prevented the female demonstrators from seeing the governor as they demanded, but they did not break up the rally.

KHWAJA TAWFIQ SEDIQI/AP

**Taliban special force fighters stand guard outside Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Tuesday. The Taliban are in control of the airport, but it is closed for now.**

Amid uncertainty about Afghanistan's future, tens of thousands raced to flee the country in a frantic U.S.-run airlift that ended ahead of the final American withdrawal earlier this week. A suicide bomber targeted the evacuation efforts at one point, killing 169 Afghans and 13 U.S. service members.

Kabul's airport, a major way out of the country, is now in Taliban hands but is closed, and Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani warned Thursday that there's still "no clear indication" of when it will reopen.

A team of Qatari and Turkish technicians flew to Kabul on Wednesday to help restart operations at the facility, which the U.N. says is crucial to providing the country with humanitarian assistance. It remains to be seen, however, whether any commercial airlines will be willing to offer service.

"We remain hopeful we will be able to operate it as soon as possible," Al Thani told reporters in Doha. "We are still in the evaluation process. ... We are working very hard and engaging with the Taliban to identify what are the gaps and the risks for having the airport back up and running."

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu suggested that military flights — which could be used to evacuate more people — could potentially resume first.

Qatar, a tiny Gulf Arab sheikhdom that has played an outsized role in American efforts to evacuate tens of thousands of people from Afghanistan, said it remains in talks with other world powers to enable the capital's airport to resume commercial flights.

Appearing alongside Al Thani, U.K. Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab touched on concerns over how diplomatic and aid efforts will proceed as foreign powers confront a leadership whose members remain on terrorist watch lists around the world.

Although the United Kingdom won't formally recognize the Taliban "anytime in the foreseeable future," Raab said, "there is an important scope for engagement and dialogue to test the intentions and indeed the assurances that have already been made by the Taliban."

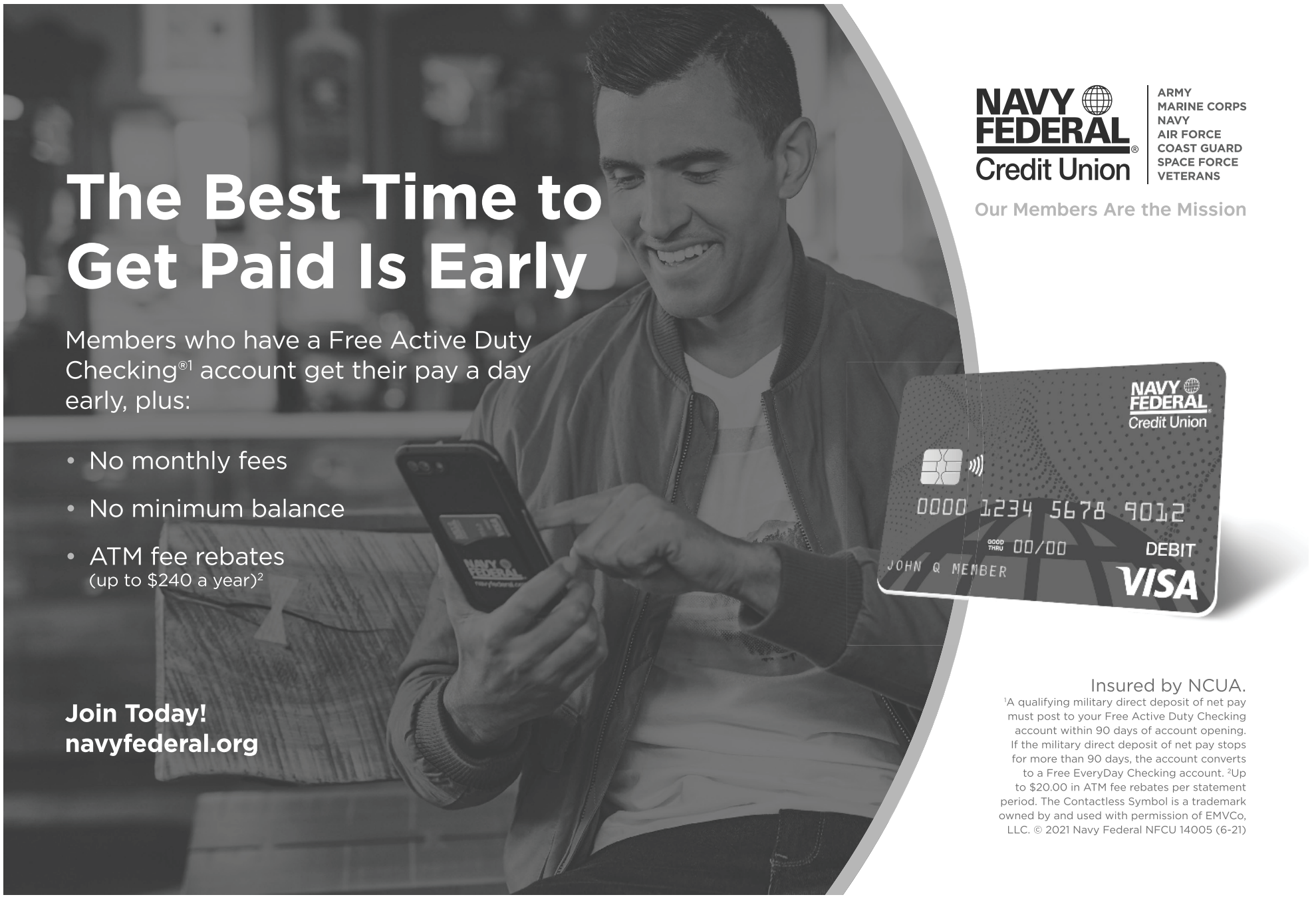
Those assurances range from creating a more inclusive government to protecting the rights of women to preventing international terrorist groups from using the war-scarred country as a base.

"In all of these areas," Raab said, "we will judge them by what they do, not just by what they say."

In Herat, the protesters had a similar message for the Taliban.

"The Taliban leadership is announcing women rights, but they should show it in action," said Friba Kabrzani, who helped organize a rally at the provincial governor's office.

"We want the world to hear us and we want our rights to be saved," Kabrzani said, noting that some families forbade women from joining the demonstration out of fear for their safety.



AFGHANISTAN

# Military crew describes 'apocalyptic' departure

By Lolita C. Baldor
*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — It looked like a zombie apocalypse.

For the U.S. military pilots and aircrew about to make their final takeoffs out of Afghanistan, the sky was lit up with fireworks and sporadic gunfire, and the airfield littered with battered shells of airplanes and destroyed equipment. Stray dogs raced around the tarmac, and Taliban fighters, visible in the darkness through the green-tinged view of night vision goggles, walked the airfield waving an eerie goodbye.

Lined up on the runway at the Kabul airport Monday night were the five last C-17s to leave the country after a chaotic and deadly airlift evacuation that marked the end of America's involvement in the Afghanistan War. In the final hours, there were no more rocket defense systems to protect them on the runway, and no one in the airport control center to direct them out.

"It just looked apocalyptic," said Air Force Lt. Col. Braden Coleman, who was in charge of monitoring the outside of his aircraft for artillery fire and other threats. "It looked like one of those zombie movies where all the airplanes had been destroyed, their doors were open, the wheels were broken. There was a plane that was burned all the way. You could see the cockpit was there, and the whole rest of the plane looked like the skeleton of a fish."

In interviews Wednesday with The Associated Press, members of the Air Force's 816th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron who flew out on the last military flights detailed their final fraught hours in what has been a dark, emotional and divisive U.S. exit from a war that now leaves the country in the hands of the same Taliban enemy it once ousted from power.

"It was just definitely very tense, and we were definitely all on edge watching everything going on to make sure that we were ready," said Air Force Capt. Kirby Wedan, pilot of MOOSE81, who led the final formation of five aircraft out.

Taylor Crul, U.S. Air Force/AP

**An Air Force aircrew, assigned to the 816th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, prepares to receive soldiers assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division on a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III aircraft in support of the final noncombatant evacuation operation missions at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Monday.**

Adding to the stress, she said, was that their planes were parked in an area of the airport that had been attacked and breached in the past. At one point during the night, a group of civilians got onto the airfield and tried to get to the aircraft, but they were stopped by Army troops securing the plane, said Wedan, who is the squadron's mission planning cell chief.

Right behind her C-17 was MOOSE92, where Coleman, the director of operations for the 816th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, was going through his own checklists for takeoff. When he was told to taxi up a bit farther, he stepped out of the plane to help direct the crew where to go.

"I had my NVGs on, my night vision goggles, and I had a Raven behind me following me out, making sure that I was, you know, safe," said Coleman, referring to a member of the specially trained security forces who protect Air Force aircraft. "It was a bit tense, I'm not going to lie. But I guess you don't really think of it at the time. You just ... do what you're trained to do."

For more than three hours, they methodically went through about 300 items on their checklists, packing up the last four Little Bird helicopters, and ensuring they had all their troops and equipment.

From Scott Air Force Base in Illinois, Gen. Jacqueline Van Ovost, commander of Air Mobility Command, watched on video screens as the aircraft lined up for takeoff. One screen showed a scroll of the mIRC chat stream — the online message application that the military uses to communicate. And she could hear the orders from Lt. Col. Alex Pelbath, a pilot who was serving as the mission commander for the final departure.

One by one, each C-17 was told to "clamshell" — or close up the ramp. Then Pelbath's final order: "Flush the force." With that, Wedan began to move her C-17 down the runway.

"It was definitely different. I've never been on an airfield where I didn't really have permission to take off," said Wedan, noting the absence of air traffic control in the tower.

As they lifted off in rapid succession, cheers broke out from the troops on board — most of them special operations forces and soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division.

"It was a visible relief," said Wedan. "You could tell that they had been working really hard. Many of them hadn't showered in a couple of weeks. They were all incredibly tired ... You could tell that they were just relieved to be out of there and that their mission was accomplished."

As the last C-17 cleared Kabul airspace, Pelbath delivered a welcome message: "MAF Safe" — shorthand for saying that the Mobility Air Forces were out of harm's way.

Maj. Gen. Chris Donahue, commander of the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division, had been the last soldier to walk up the ramp on the final C-17 to depart. He had been in charge of security for the evacuation mission. Soon after the aircraft were in the air, he sent his own message: "Job well done. Proud of you all."

Crammed onto the floor of the aircraft, exhausted troops found places to sleep. "Everyone was kind of sitting on top of each other — whatever we could do to have them get them on the aircraft and get them out," said Wedan.

Within 30 minutes, she said, most on her plane were asleep. Coleman agreed.

"I walked downstairs and they warned me not to go to the bathroom because there were too many people in front of the lav door," said Coleman. "There was one guy who had a box of water bottles that he was using for a pillow. I don't know how that could have been comfortable. But, hey, he was fast asleep."

Their flight to Kuwait was about four hours long.

Coleman said his plane was lucky enough to have extra toilets. Wedan's had just one — but her crew passed out candy.

"They're tired and they're resting now. But I think, for two-and-a-half weeks, you really saw why it was that a lot of us joined," said Coleman, who enlisted in 2001 after the Sept. 11 attacks that triggered the U.S. invasion into Afghanistan. "To see everybody step up to make this happen in the amount of time that it took to happen, to move 124,000 people out in less than three weeks. I mean, I couldn't be prouder to be a C-17 pilot today."

# Effort underway to rescue national girls' soccer team

*Associated Press*

They move from place to place at a moment's notice in a desperate bid to evade the Taliban — girls whose lives are in danger simply because they chose to play a sport they loved.

An international effort to evacuate members of the Afghanistan national girls' soccer team, along with dozens of family members and soccer federation staff, suffered a crushing setback last week after a suicide bombing at the Kabul airport killed 169 Afghans and 13 U.S. service members during a harrowing airlift.

Now frightened and desperate, the girls worry whether a far-flung coalition of former U.S. military and intelligence officials, congressmen, U.S. allies, humanitarian groups and the captain of the Afghanistan women's national team can get them and their loved ones to safety.

"They're just unbelievable young ladies who should be playing in the backyard, playing on the swing set, playing with their friends, and here they're in a very bad situation for doing nothing more than playing soccer," said Robert McCreary, a former congressional chief of staff and White House official under President George W. Bush who has worked with special forces in Afghanistan. "We need to do everything that we can to protect them, to get them to a safe situation."

The airport suicide bombing was carried out by Islamic State militants who are sworn rivals of the Taliban. The U.S. military has acknowledged that during the airlift, it was coordinating to some extent with the Taliban, who set up checkpoints around the airport for crowd control and, in the final days, facilitated the evacuation of American citizens.

The Taliban have tried to present a new image, promising amnesty to former opponents and saying they would form an inclusive government. Many Afghans don't trust those promises, fearing the Taliban will quickly resort to the brutal tactics of their 1996-2001 rule, including barring girls and women from schools and jobs. The Taliban have been vague on their policy toward women so far, but have not yet issued sweeping repressive edicts.

Most members of the Afghan women's team, formed in 2007, were evacuated to Australia last week.

But the girls, ages 14-16, and their families also could be targeted by the Taliban — not just because women and girls are forbidden to play sports, but because they were advocates for girls and active members of their communities, said Farkhunda Muhtaj, who is captain of the Afghanistan women's national team and lives in Canada.

"They are devastated. They're hopeless, considering the situation they're in," said Muhtaj, who keeps in contact with the girls and urges them to stay calm.

# AFGHANISTAN

## **Delivery:** Clinic team's knowledge is 'extremely useful' to help newborns

**FROM PAGE 1**

helped deliver the nine healthy babies, she said. The mothers are also doing well, she said.

"My faith in humanity is challenged every day by seeing the people we have to treat and the injuries they're sustaining," Wild said. "But it's restored every time I see what our medics and our people on the front lines are doing to save the lives of the evacuees."

The clinic team, which is made up largely of reservists, has had to improvise supplies and draw on the knowledge they bring from civilian jobs that Wild said were "extremely useful."

"It's interesting how the universe works," she said. "The group of people that are here right now are exactly the group of people that we needed when this hit."

Some work as optometrists or physical therapists in the service but are emergency medical technicians or labor and delivery nurses outside the military, the statement said.

Wild said members of the 379th EMDG sacrificed sleep and skipped meals to give to patients, and gave cold children the clothes off their backs.

Over 55,000 evacuees had been brought to the base as of Wednesday, with a single-day record of more than 17,500 housed on base, said a U.S. government official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the matter with Stars and Stripes. Most had already departed, the official said.

A large number of evacuees have needed medical treatment, officials said in Thursday's statement.

Among them were a woman who was in labor when her plane landed, a patient suffering complications from diabetes and people with open wounds.

Some children under 10 arrived last week with wounds from apparent rubber bullets, said a base resident, though it wasn't clear who shot them. The resident, who was not authorized to speak to the media, declined to be named.

One medical concern for base residents was the potential for a coronavirus outbreak amid the evacuation, leading officials to institute screening tests for those assisting and installation-wide mandatory mask wear, regardless of vaccination status, the government official said.

For Staff Sgt. Abigail Swanson, a medical technician assigned to the 379th Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron, the operation was a chance to do the job she wanted when she signed up.

"This is what the Air Force trained me to do," Swanson, a member of the North Dakota Air National Guard, said in a service statement.

"I am happy that I can help and use my skills in a situation like this."

U.S. Air Force

**Members of the 379th Expeditionary Medical Group take a picture while supporting Afghanistan evacuation operations at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar.**

KYLEE GARDNER/U.S. Air Force

**Dr. (Maj.) Elaina Wild, 379th Expeditionary Medical Group chief medical officer, examines an evacuee from Afghanistan before the woman gives birth at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, on Aug. 28.**

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MILITARY

# Ex-hospital head fired over assault allegation

BY ROSE L. THAYER
*Stars and Stripes*

An Army colonel who is a psychiatrist and commanded the hospital at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., has been accused of raping his family's live-in nanny 14 years ago when he served at Fort Stewart, Ga., according to documents provided to Stars and Stripes.

Since the accusation was levied against Col. Christopher Warner in September 2020, he was removed from command of Madigan Army Medical Center at Lewis-McChord and Army officials have conducted a sexual assault investigation. Warner, 47, received a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand, and now awaits a final review of the case on Sept. 27 to determine whether he will face further disciplinary action, according to documents.

His former nanny, Amber, said she called the Army with the allegations last year after speaking with a therapist. She told special agents with Army Criminal Investigation Command, known as CID, that Warner raped her three times and attempted a fourth in his family home in Georgia in 2007.

Stars and Stripes typically does not name the victims of sexual assault, but Amber chose to be identified by her first name.

Daniel Conway, an attorney for Warner, described the colonel as "a respected combat-tested physician that has helped thousands of patients."

"We have empathy for the complainant's feelings, but significant aspects of her story were proven untrue following an investigation. His case was handled appropriately by the command with advice of counsel and input from the complainant," Conway said in a statement.

Warner was assigned to Winn Army Community Hospital at Fort Stewart from 2005 to 2010, where he was chief of behavioral health medicine and the 3rd Infantry Division psychiatrist, according to the Coastal Courier newspaper. In 2016, he returned to command the Fort Stewart hospital.

Amber said she didn't think anyone would believe her story and for years tried to move on with her life, but she had trouble trusting people, suffered nightmares and had difficulty holding jobs where she had a male boss.

Last year, she again tried therapy, which has always been difficult for her because Warner is a mental health professional. After Amber described what happened to her, the therapist searched online for information about Warner and told Amber about his recent appointment as the JBLM hospital commander. They discussed the job allowed Warner power over other people and he was likely in

U.S. Army

**Col. Chris Warner, an Army psychiatrist, was removed last year from command of Madigan Army Medical Center at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. He will face a disciplinary hearing later this month.**

charge of a unit that provided treatment to victims of sexual assault. Amber said she doesn't know whether Warner ever harmed other women, but she decided that contacting the Army would prevent any other possible assaults.

JBLM announced Warner was pulled from his job at the helm of Madigan medical center on Oct. 2, less than three months after taking command. The brief base statement said it was in response to a CID investigation that was unrelated to the base or the hospital.

Warner, originally from Toronto, Ohio, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., in 1996 and then from the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences in 2000, according to the Army. He is certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and the American Board of Family Medicine.

Amber said, in part, it was Warner's credentials and status as a service member and doctor that made her feel safe in a job that required her to live in someone else's home.

## 'I don't have a choice'

Amber was 19 years old when she accepted the job to care for Warner's four children at the family's house in Richmond Hills, Ga. Warner, then 33, was set to deploy to Iraq after the birth of his fifth child, Amber said.

In the few months between Amber moving in and Warner's deployment, she said he raped her in her bedroom, in the family room and forced her to perform oral sex on him. Each time, his children were in the home, she said.

The discussions of sex began as hints toward Amber about a month after she moved into Warner's home in 2007. Over time, it escalated to Warner telling her that she would soon have to decide to have sex with him or leave the house and never work as a nanny again.

"It was basically, you know, I could have sex with him, and he could give me medicine to help make it easier for me. Or, he said that he could tell [his wife] that I came on to him, and that I would never have a nanny position again," Amber said. "He told me he didn't know what [his wife] would do, but that she had borderline personality disorder, and that could cause her to snap. So basically, in a way, he was hinting that he didn't know if [she] was capable of harming me."

On May 30, 2007, the night Warner's wife delivered their new baby, he returned home hours after the birth to rape Amber, she said.

He entered her room in the early morning hours, told her about the baby, and then locked the door, she said. He stood over her as she lay in bed, offered her an unknown prescription pill and said she had a decision to make. He began to list all the reasons why saying no to him would be bad for her.

"He's not giving me a choice. I don't have a choice. I don't want the kids to wake up. I don't know what he'll do if I say no," Amber said she thought to herself before eventually accepting the pill and her fate.

She said she's thought about this moment during the birth of her own three children.

"The memory of what happened to me haunted me, because Chris left the hospital," Amber said.

After the second rape, which occurred in the family's living room, he gave her a pill to prevent a pregnancy, she said. He forced her to perform oral sex one evening while the children were nearby brushing their teeth, she said.

He also attempted a fourth assault on Amber in the family's backyard, but stopped when his wife came out of the house.

## Recorded confession

Once Warner deployed, Amber felt relieved and even began to enjoy spending time with his wife. Then Warner began emailing Amber, asking for explicit photos.

A wooden bench used at the family's kitchen table fell onto her foot and fractured it. She used it as an excuse to get out of the house before Warner returned.

Months later, she emailed Warner's wife, who had felt hurt by Amber leaving and refused to speak to her. In the email, Amber told her everything that had happened. Warner then called Amber.

"He let me know that nobody would ever believe me. He said he apologized, and he preyed on me. I was a conquest and it felt good with the age difference," Amber said. "He said he knew what he did was wrong and that he wouldn't change it. He's sitting there telling me he knows, as a psychiatrist, how sick he is. He told me he's narcissistic and he can't help himself. That is one of the reasons why I am very concerned about other people."

When Amber decided to come forward last year, she suggested to the CID agents who were assigned to her case that she call Warner and get him to admit his guilt.

It worked, she said. Sitting at an outdoor picnic area of a public park a year ago, Amber spoke to Warner about everything that he did to her. Meanwhile, a special agent from JBLM listened in and recorded the conversation.

## Private punishment

Now a year since she first spoke with Army investigators, Amber said she feels betrayed the service has refused to disclose publicly the nature of the investigation into Warner and what discipline he has received or will receive. She told prosecutors she wanted to go to trial, but that didn't happen.

She has begun considering whether she should have gone to law enforcement in Georgia first, but the statute of limitations might have expired. Georgia law states rape without force must be prosecuted within seven years of the offense, and within 15 years if the perpetrator used force.

Amber said she decided to share her story publicly, because she worries the Army will bury what the officer did to her, which could allow him to continue to practice medicine or potentially harm someone else in the future.

"I still feel like people need to know, and I still feel like there was no justice," she said.

Base officials have declined to answer questions about Warner's removal, citing they are prohibited by privacy laws.

"Col. Warner was removed from his command and reassigned to another position while allegations against him were investigated. His case is pending final disposition and it is not appropriate for us to comment further at this time on disposition or personnel actions protected by the Privacy Act," said Col. Joey J. Sullinger, spokesman for I Corps, the headquarters that oversees JBLM.

A military protective order signed in October states Warner was being investigated for sexual assault and he could not contact Amber.

CID declined to comment or answer questions about their investigation "due to ongoing legal proceedings," said Chris Grey, a spokesman for CID.

Documents provided to Stars and Stripes show Warner received a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand, or GOMOR. Amber is preparing to testify at a hearing this month that could determine any final disciplinary action. Because of Warner's rank, the hearing will likely include a board of three general officers.

Sullinger declined to comment on whether Warner received a GOMOR and declined to answer any questions related to the case, including why the former I Corps commander, Lt. Gen. Randy George, found enough probable cause to remove Warner from his command and issue the GOMOR, but not enough to send the case to a court-martial.

A GOMOR is common in this situation, said Mickey Williams, a former military attorney. Now a civilian, he continues to represent service members from his Georgia-based law firm.

"What would be unusual is if that's the only thing that happened," said Williams, who is not affiliated with Warner's case. "Though I am seeing it more and more."

He said he believes a declining conviction rate for sexual assault in military courts has led to prosecutors bringing fewer cases to trial.

In 2010, the military had a 24% conviction rate, according to Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., who has advocated for reform of the military justice system for nearly a decade. By 2019, the conviction rate fell to 7%.

A GOMOR, which can be included in a soldier's permanent record and typically leads to a separation review board, requires a commander believe the allegation occurred. To have that evidence and forgo a court-martial is more common for sexual harassment, but not for sexual assault, Williams said.

The nonjudicial process that Warner does face could result in him leaving the Army, but the proceedings are private. It's unclear how the process could impact his ability to practice medicine or whether it could affect his civilian medical license, which is issued through Indiana. The Indiana Attorney General's Office declined to comment on whether they were investigating Warner. The Indiana licensing website shows his license expires in October 2023.

Williams said if the Army is going to review its credentials for Warner, it would require a separate review board with medical professionals. The Army did not say whether that is going to happen in this case.

Amber has already filed a victim impact statement for the GOMOR that Warner received and is now working on a statement that she can read in an upcoming hearing before a board of officers.

"I don't know if there's enough words to describe the pain and suffering I have been put through by Christopher Warner," she wrote in the statement. "He did not win. I finally am able to stand and tell my story. I do so in hope to help others."

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# NATION

JIM BOURG/AP

**Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., speaks with U.S. Capitol Police Sgt. Aquilino Gonell after a House select committee hearing on the Jan. 6 attack on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., in July.**

## Dems promote Cheney to vice chairwoman of Jan. 6 panel

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — House Democrats have promoted Republican Rep. Liz Cheney to vice chairwoman of a committee investigating the Jan. 6 Capitol insurrection, placing her in a leadership spot on the panel as some members of the GOP caucus are threatening to oust her for participating.

Cheney, a fierce critic of former President Donald Trump, has remained defiant amid the criticism from her own party, insisting that Congress must probe the Capitol attack, in which hundreds of Trump's supporters violently pushed past police, broke into the building and interrupted the certification of Joe Biden's presidential election victory.

"We owe it to the American people to investigate everything that led up to, and transpired on, January 6th," Cheney, R-Wyo., said in a statement as Democrats announced her promotion on Thursday. "We will not be deterred by threats or attempted obstruction, and we will not rest until our task is complete."

Cheney's appointment as vice chairwoman comes amid an effort by some Republicans to oust Cheney and Rep. Adam Kinzinger of Illinois from the GOP conference because they accepted their appointments to the panel from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. A draft letter by Arizona Rep. Andy Biggs to Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy obtained by The Associated Press calls Cheney and Kinzinger "two spies for the Democrats" whom Republicans cannot trust to attend their private meetings.

Cheney, who was booted from her position as GOP conference chairwoman earlier this year, has been undeterred by the criticism, despite serious primary challenges back home. The daughter of former Vice President Dick Cheney has formed the unlikely alliance with Pelosi in what she has framed as an existential fight for the party and for democracy itself.

"Every member of this committee is dedicated to conducting a non-partisan, professional and thorough investigation of all the relevant facts regarding January 6th and the threat to our Constitution we faced that day," Cheney said in the statement. "I have accepted the position of Vice Chair of the committee to assure that we achieve that goal."

# High court lets abortion law in Texas stand

BY JESSICA GRESKO
*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — A deeply divided Supreme Court is allowing a Texas law that bans most abortions to remain in force, for now stripping most women of the right to an abortion in the nation's second-largest state.

The court voted 5-4 to deny an emergency appeal from abortion providers and others that sought to block enforcement of the law that went into effect Wednesday. But the justices also suggested that their order likely isn't the last word on whether the law can stand because other challenges to it can still be brought.

The Texas law, signed by Republican Gov. Greg Abbott in May, prohibits abortions once medical professionals can detect cardiac activity, usually around six weeks and before many women know they're pregnant.

It is the strictest law against abortion rights in the United States since the high court's landmark Roe v. Wade decision in 1973 and part of a broader push by Republicans nationwide to impose new restrictions on abortion. At least 12 other states have enacted bans early in pregnancy, but all have been blocked from going into effect.

The high court's order declining to halt the Texas law came just before midnight Wednesday. The majority said those bringing the case had not met the high burden required for a stay of the law.

"In reaching this conclusion, we stress that we do not purport to resolve definitively any jurisdictional or substantive claim in the applicants' lawsuit. In particular, this order is not based on any conclusion about the constitutionality of Texas' law, and in no way limits other procedurally proper challenges to the Texas law, including in Texas state courts," the unsigned order said.

Chief Justice John Roberts dissented along with the court's three liberal justices. Each of the four dissenting justices wrote separate statements expressing their disagreement with the majority.

Roberts noted that while the majority denied the request for emergency relief, "the Court's order is emphatic in making clear that it cannot be understood as sustaining the constitutionality of the law at issue."

Justice Sonia Sotomayor called her conservative colleagues' decision "stunning."

"Presented with an application to enjoin a flagrantly unconstitutional law engineered to prohibit women from exercising their constitutional rights and evade judicial scrutiny, a majority of Justices have opted to bury their heads in the sand," she wrote.

## Intel shows extremist groups to attend upcoming Capitol rally

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Far-right extremist groups like the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers are planning to attend a rally later this month at the U.S. Capitol that is designed to demand "justice" for the hundreds of people who have been charged in connection with January's insurrection, according to three people familiar with intelligence gathered by federal officials.

As a result, U.S. Capitol Police have been discussing in recent weeks whether the large perimeter fence that was erected outside the Capitol after January's riot will need to be put back up, the people said.

The officials have been discussing security plans that involve reconstructing the fence as well as another plan that does not involve a fence, the people said. They were not authorized to speak publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The planned Sept. 18 rally at the Capitol comes as a jittery Washington has seen a series of troubling one-off incidents — including, most recently, a man who parked a pickup truck near the Library of Congress and said he had a bomb and detonator. Among the most concerning events: A series of unexploded pipe bombs placed around the U.S. Capitol ahead of the Jan. 6 insurrection remain unexplained and no suspect has been charged.

On Capitol Hill, the politics around fencing in the iconic building and its grounds were extremely difficult for lawmakers after the Jan. 6 insurrection. Many said they disliked closing off access, even as they acknowledged the increased level of security it provided.

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NATION

# Winds provide hope in Calif. wildfire battle

*Associated Press*

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, Calif. — With winds finally turning in their favor, firefighters are throwing all their resources into boxing a California blaze that was scant miles from Lake Tahoe and neighboring Nevada.

Three days of fiercely gusting winds had driven the Caldor Fire east through the rugged Sierra Nevada, forcing tens of thousands of people from the region of forests, mountain hamlets, resorts and alpine lakes.

The winds were expected to calm heading into the weekend, although the humidity remained low and the eastern side of the vast wildfire was still burning trees and running through explosively dry grasslands into rugged areas hard for firefighters to reach, authorities said.

The blaze was also throwing sparks that caught trees and created spot fires up to a mile ahead of the main wall of flames.

"We're battling what we can battle and waiting for those winds to subside," said Stephen Vollmer, a fire behavior analyst for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Even so, the forecast made fire officials cautiously optimistic.

The change could allow fire crews to get into densely forested areas to begin clearing toppled trees and branches that had blocked routes to remote communities, thus making it safer for evacuees to return, Vollmer said.

Fire crews from around the country were being thrown into the fight against the fire, which was just 23% contained after destroying at least 700 homes and other buildings since breaking out Aug. 14.

Climate change has made the West much warmer and drier in the past 30 years and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent, destructive and unpredictable, scientists say.

The Caldor Fire threatened at least 33,000 more homes and structures. On Wednesday, firefighters were ferried by boat to protect cabins at Echo Lake, a few miles south of Tahoe.

Heavenly Mountain Resort, Tahoe's largest ski area, was being used as a staging area by firefighters. The resort also brought out its big guns — snow-making devices that were being used to hose down buildings.

One spur of the fire was roughly 3 miles south of the recently evacuated city of South Lake Tahoe, moving northeast toward the California-Nevada state line, authorities said.

Crews worked to keep flames away from urban communities, where houses are close together and shopping centers, hotels and other structures would provide even more fuel.

Thick smoke has enveloped the city of South Lake Tahoe, which is all but deserted at a time when it would normally be swarming with tourists.

After casinos and stores closed on the Nevada side on Wednesday morning, evacuation holdouts lacking cars lined up outside the Montbleu resort and casino in Stateline, awaiting a bus to Reno.

On Wednesday, President Joe Biden issued a federal emergency declaration and ordered federal assistance to supplement state and local resources for firefighting efforts and relief for residents in four counties affected by the fire.

NOAH BERGER/AP

**A tree faller helps create a fuel break to control the Caldor Fire near Wrights Lake in Eldorado National Forest, Calif., on Wednesday.**

# US jobless claims reach a pandemic low as hiring strengthens

*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell last week to 340,000, a pandemic low, another sign that the job market is steadily rebounding from the economic collapse caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Jobless claims dropped by 14,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday. The weekly count has mostly fallen steadily since topping 900,000 in early January.

Vaccinations for COVID-19 have been supporting the job market by encouraging businesses to reopen or expand hours and consumers to return to restaurants, bars and shops. In response, employers across the country have been boosting hiring to meet a surge in consumer demand.

Still, a resurgence of cases tied to the highly contagious delta variant has clouded the economic outlook. COVID-19 cases are now surpassing 135,000 a day, up from fewer than 12,000 in early July.

The pace of weekly applications for unemployment aid is still high by historic standards. Before COVID-19 hit the United States hard in March 2020, the number averaged around 220,000 a week.

Filings for jobless aid have long been regarded as a real-time measure of the labor market's health. But their reliability has diminished during the pandemic. In many states, the weekly figures have been inflated by fraud and by multiple filings from unemployed Americans trying to navigate bureaucratic hurdles to obtain benefits. Those complications help explain why the pace of applications remains unusually high despite strong hiring.

The job market has been rebounding since the pandemic paralyzed economic activity last year and employers slashed more than 22 million jobs in March and April 2020. The nation has since recovered 16.7 million of the jobs, and economists have estimated that Friday's jobs report for August will show that employers added 750,000 more last month. Posted job openings — a record 10.1 million in June — have been rising faster than applicants have lined up to fill them.

A $300-a-week federal benefit, which was made available to the unemployed on top of their regular state jobless aid after the pandemic hit, will expire Monday. When it does, more than 11 million people in 35 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico will lose at least some benefits, estimates Greg Daco, chief U.S. economist at Oxford Economics. Of those, 8.9 million will lose all their jobless aid; 2.1 million will lose the $300-a-week federal check but will continue to receive state unemployment aid.

# Judge conditionally approves Purdue Pharma opioid settlement

*Associated Press*

A federal bankruptcy judge gave conditional approval Wednesday to a sweeping settlement that will remove the Sackler family from ownership of OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma and devote potentially $10 billion to fighting the opioid crisis that has killed a half-million Americans over the past two decades.

If it withstands appeals, the deal will resolve a mountain of 3,000 lawsuits from state and local governments, Native American tribes, unions and others that accuse the company of helping to spark the overdose epidemic by aggressively marketing the prescription painkiller.

Under the settlement, the Sacklers will have to get out of the opioid business altogether and contribute $4.5 billion. But they will be shielded from any future lawsuits over opioids.

The drugmaker itself will be reorganized into a new charity-oriented company with a board appointed by public officials and will funnel its profits into government-led efforts to prevent and treat addiction.

Also, the settlement sets up a compensation fund that will pay some victims of drugs an expected $3,500 to $48,000 each.

After an all-day hearing in which he analyzed the plan's pros and cons for a nonstop 6½ hours, U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Robert Drain said he would approve it as long as two relatively small changes were made. If so, he said, he would formally enter the decision on Thursday.

He said that while he does not have "fondness for the Sacklers or sympathy for them," collecting money from them through lawsuits instead of a settlement would be complicated.

The deal comes nearly two years after the Stamford, Conn.-based company filed for bankruptcy under the weight of the lawsuits.

Under the settlement, the Sacklers were not given immunity from criminal charges, though there have been no indications they will face any.

State and local governments came to support the plan overwhelmingly, if grudgingly in many cases. But nine states and others had opposed it, largely because of the protections granted to the family.

The attorneys general of Connecticut, the District of Columbia and Washington state immediately announced they will either appeal the ruling or explore the possibility of doing so.

NATION

# Ida's aftermath, recovery uneven across La.

*Associated Press*

NEW ORLEANS — In much of New Orleans, an ongoing power outage after Hurricane Ida is making the sweltering summer unbearable. But in some areas outside the city, that misery is compounded by a lack of water, flooded neighborhoods and severely damaged homes.

Four days after Hurricane Ida struck, the storm's aftermath — and progress in recovering from it — are being felt unevenly across affected communities in Louisiana. The levee system revamped after Katrina protected New Orleans from catastrophic flooding after Ida struck on Sunday with 150 mph winds, tied for the fifth-strongest hurricane to ever hit the mainland U.S.

The power was back on before dawn Thursday in parts of the city's central business district, Uptown, Midtown, New Orleans East and the Carrollton area, the electricity company Entergy announced. Utility crews also restored power to Ochsner's main hospital campus in Jefferson Parish and several hospitals near Baton Rouge.

About 35,000 of the 405,000 homes and businesses in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish had power Thursday morning, according to the poweroutage.us website. Statewide, 917,000 customers were without electricity, down from about 1.1 million at the height of the storm.

The hurricane tore apart water systems too. At least 600,000 customers had no running water, while hundreds of thousands of other homes and business were being told to boil their water before using it.

In New Orleans, city crews completely cleared some streets of fallen trees and debris and a few corner stores reopened.

Outside New Orleans, neighborhoods remained flooded and residents were still reeling from damage to their homes and property. More than 1,200 people were walking through some of Ida's hardest-hit communities to look for those needing help, according to the Louisiana Fire Marshal's office. President Joe Biden was scheduled to visit Louisiana on Friday to survey the damage, the White House said.

Gayle Lawrence lost two cars, refrigerators and almost everything in her garage to floodwaters in southern Louisiana's Plaquemines Parish. The garage was filled with marsh grass and dead fish. Scores of other homes in the neighborhood were also flooded.

"The house is solid. It didn't even move. But when the water came up, it destroyed everything," she said.

In Jefferson Parish, authorities on Wednesday were still waiting for floodwaters to recede enough for trucks carrying food, water and repair supplies to begin moving into Lafitte and other low-lying communities. The parish neighbors New Orleans and saw widespread destruction from Ida.

Parish President Cynthia Lee Sheng said a gas shortage was hampering hospital staff, food bank employees and other critical workers.

"Today, we're a broken community," Sheng told a news conference. "It won't always be that way."

JOHN LOCHER/AP

**A man walks down a flooded street in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida, on Wednesday in Lafitte, La.**

# Ida: Flooding swamps the Northeast

**FROM PAGE 1**

drowned in a car and another in a home. An on-duty state trooper in Connecticut was swept away in his cruiser and later taken to a hospital, state police and local authorities said.

In New York City, Deborah Torres said water rapidly filled her first-floor Queens apartment to her knees as her landlord frantically urged her neighbors below to get out, she said. But the water was rushing in so strongly that she surmised they weren't able to open the door.

"I have no words," she said. "How can something like this happen? And the worst is that there's a family downstairs with a baby, and they couldn't get out."

The remnants of Ida lost most of the storm's winds but kept its soggy core, then merged with a more traditional storm front and dropped an onslaught of rain on the Interstate 95 corridor, meteorologists said. The situation has followed hurricanes before, but experts said it was slightly exacerbated by climate change — warmer air holds more rain — and the urban setting, where expansive pavement prevents water from seeping into the ground.

The National Hurricane Center had warned since Tuesday of the potential for "significant and life-threatening flash flooding" and moderate and major river flooding in the mid-Atlantic region and New England.

Still, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio said the storm's strength took them by surprise.

"We did not know that between 8:50 and 9:50 p.m. last night, that the heavens would literally open up and bring Niagara Falls level of water to the streets of New York," said Hochul, a Democrat who became governor last week after former Gov. Andrew Cuomo resigned.

De Blasio said he'd gotten a forecast Wednesday of 3 to 6 inches of rain over the course of the day. The city's Central Park ended up getting 3.15 inches just in one hour of the deluge, surpassing the previous recorded high of 1.94 inches in one hour during Tropical Storm Henri on Aug. 21.

Water cascaded into subway tunnels, trapping at least 17 trains and forcing the cancellation of service throughout the night and early morning. Videos online showed riders standing on seats in cars filled with water. All riders were evacuated safely, officials said.

The FDR Drive in Manhattan and the Bronx River Parkway were under water during the storm. Garbage bobbed in the water rushing down streets. Some subway and rail service had resumed Thursday morning.

Among the other deaths reported in New York City, a 48-year-old woman and a 66-year-old man died after being found at separate residences, and a 43-year-old woman and a 22-year-old man both died after being found inside a home. Causes of death and identifications were pending.

The ferocious storm also spawned tornadoes, including one that ripped apart homes and toppled silos in Mullica Hill, N.J., south of Philadelphia.

Record flooding along the Schuylkill River in Pennsylvania inundated homes and commercial buildings, swamped highways, submerged cars and disrupted rail service in the Philadelphia area. In a tweet, city officials predicted "historic flooding" on Thursday as river levels continue to rise. The riverside community of Manayunk remained largely under water.

The rain in the region ended by daybreak Thursday as rescuers searched for more stranded people and braced for potentially finding more bodies.

MATT ROURKE/AP

**Vehicles are under water during flooding in Philadelphia on Thursday.**

Heavy winds and drenching rains punched a hole in the roof of a U.S. Postal Service building in New Jersey. Rain rushed through a terminal at Newark International Airport Wednesday and threatened to overrun a dam in Pennsylvania.

Meteorologists warned that rivers likely won't crest for a few more days, raising the possibility of more widespread flooding.

Rescues took place all over New York City as its 8.8 million people saw much worse flooding than from Henri, which was followed by two weeks of wild and sometimes deadly weather across the nation. Wildfires are threatening Lake Tahoe, Tropical Storm Henri struck the Northeast and Ida struck Louisiana as the fifth-strongest storm to ever hit the U.S. mainland, leaving 1 million people without power, maybe for weeks.

Amtrak service was canceled between Philadelphia and Boston.

At least 220,000 customers were without power in the region at one point, with most of the outages in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Southern New England awoke Thursday to inundated roads, commuter delays and an ongoing flash flood warning.

The National Weather Service said it was investigating a possible tornado touchdown on Cape Cod around 1 a.m. Thursday.

WORLD

# Disabled taekwondo athlete fights for Afghans in Japan

By Seth Robson
*Stars and Stripes*

MAKUHARI MESSE HALL, Japan — An Afghan taekwondo fighter displayed her country's red, black and green flag on her uniform during the first bout of Paralympic competition near Japan's capital city Thursday.

Zakia Khudadadi, 22, of Herat province, is the first female Afghan athlete to compete in the Paralympics since 2004.

She wore a white head covering when she entered the taekwondo octagon in a convention center in Japan's Chiba prefecture to the beat of hard rock band AC/DC's "Thunderstruck."

Donning head and torso protection colored red, she faced off against the slightly shorter Ziyodakhon Isakova, 23, of Uzbekistan, in blue, in the women's 44-49 kilogram weight category.

The class includes fighters with arm or toe amputations and impairments.

The Afghan held her own and was up a point in the first round but fell behind mid-contest and couldn't make up the difference, despite a flurry of kicks in the third round. Isakova won the battle 17-12.

Khudadadi, who wore an Afghan flag patch on her shoulder, didn't wait to talk to reporters. A smiling Isakova shared a few words in broken English about the fight, which was the pair's first encounter, she said.

The Uzbek fighter said she didn't think Afghan athletes were going to make it to the games due to the turmoil in their homeland, but was glad they got there.

"Afghan fighting, no good," she said of violence in the country. "Afghanistan, they good sports. I'm happy."

Afghanistan sent a small team to the Olympics in Tokyo during July and August, but the nation's Paralympians were not expected to compete after Kabul fell to the Taliban on Aug. 15.

Afghanistan's flag, carried by a volunteer, was one of the first to enter Tokyo's National Stadium during the Paralympics opening ceremony on Aug. 24.

Khudadadi, however, born with a disability, and her Afghan teammate, Hossain Rasouli, 24, who lost his left arm in a mine blast, arrived in Tokyo a week late, on Saturday.

They had been evacuated from Kabul and traveled to Japan via Paris, The Associated Press reported Tuesday.

Khudadadi's official Paralympic profile says she attended Eshraq Higher Educational University, Afghanistan, and took up taekwondo after Afghanistan's Rohullah Nikpai won bronze in the sport at the 2008 and 2012 Olympic Games.

"I clearly recall watching Nikpai notch up medals for Afghanistan," Khudadadi said in a quote on the Paralympics' official website. "I was inspired by him and decided to take up the sport and thankfully, my family also supported me."

Akifumi Ishikawa/Stars and Stripes

**Afghan taekwondo athlete Zakia Khudadadi, in red, shapes up to Uzbek Ziyodakhon Isakova during the Tokyo Paralympics in Chiba prefecture, Japan, on Thursday.**

Khudadadi won the first African 2016 Para-Taekwondo Championships in Egypt, according to the Paralympics website.

"I was thrilled after I received the news that I have got a wild card to compete at the games," Khudadadi said, according to the website. "I just want to be there with the other athletes from the world and give my best. It is an opportunity to show my ability and I will be so proud to stand with all of those athletes."

In a second bout Thursday night, Khudadadi lost 34-48 to Ukrainian Viktoriia Marchuk, 31.

Rasouli, a sprinter, missed his main event but competed in the long jump Tuesday at the National Stadium. He placed last in a 13-man competition with a jump of about 14.63 feet, the AP reported that day.

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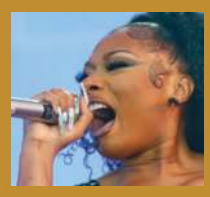
# WEEKEND



## Black women find strength in numbers

**Music, Page 28**

# EXPANDING UNIVERSE

**Simu Liu is pictured as the titular hero in a scene from "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings." Insets, from top: Tony Leung, Meng'er Zhang, Fala Chen and Awkawafina.**

PHOTOS BY MARVEL STUDIOS/AP

'Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings' is the first film in Marvel's massive movie franchise to feature an Asian hero and a predominantly Asian cast

**Page 15**

Video games — 18 Travel & Food — 19-26 Books — 27 TV — 30-31 Crossword — 34

# WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY

iStock

**A constantly full inbox can be overwhelming. Tips such as only checking your email at a certain time and dealing with messages in batches can help you get control of your inbox and get on with your day.**

# You've got mail

## Tips to get your inbox under control so you can get back to life

BY ANGELA HAUPT
*The Washington Post*

Marsha Egan has a theory: You either control your email, or it controls you.

I have 21,000 unread messages — in my personal account, not others I use for work — so it's safe to say I fall into the latter camp. Email overwhelm can be crippling: Good intentions to read every interesting newsletter or respond to old friends are flattened by a constant deluge of more, more and more messages, some marked "urgent" or accompanied by chains that take an hour to decipher.

"Email has become the biggest and worst interrupter the universe has ever experienced," says Egan, a workplace productivity coach and author of "Inbox Detox and the Habit of E-mail Excellence." "It's cheap, it's immediate, and you can copy 200 people if you want to."

It's also, many would agree, a giant headache and time suck.

Most employees spend about 28% of the workweek reading and answering emails, according to one analysis. Maura Thomas, a speaker and trainer on individual and corporate productivity whose upcoming book is "The Happy Inbox," says the first thing many of her clients do when they open their eyes in the morning is check their email. And the last thing they do before they go to bed at night is, you guessed it, refresh that inbox.

Part of taking control of our email, Thomas and other experts say, is establishing boundaries around when we check it. Here's advice on that and other ways to wrangle your inbox into order.

### Preventing email overwhelm

■ **Check your email just a few times a day.** In a perfect world, Jim McCullen would check his email twice before lunch and twice after. If you want to adopt such a schedule, enlist some help. "Turn off automatic send and receive," says McCullen, author of "Control Your Day," which details an email productivity method based on David Allen's "Getting Things Done."

Most platforms allow you to temporarily delay new messages from arriving in your inbox. You can also use a tool like Boomerang, which holds your emails until you want to receive them.

If your job requires more constant vigilance, aim to check your email "in between other things," not while you're focusing on one specific task, Thomas advises. And always process them in a batch, versus opening each email as it arrives.

■ **Adhere to the four Ds.** Egan applies "the four Ds" to every email she receives: do, delete, delegate or defer. If you deal with an email within two minutes, do it. If it'll take longer, defer — which is also known as triaging. Egan puts such emails into Folder A — which stands for "action" — and then sets reminders to return to them. You might also delete an email or delegate it to someone else. The key is to deal with each message before you move on to the next, rather than letting 10 (then 100) pile up unread. Treat your inbox as a place to receive and process messages, not store them.

■ **Turn off notifications.** Do you really need an alert for each new message? "Let me just end the suspense for you," Thomas says. "You have mail." Constant pop-ups or dings "just contribute to your habit of distraction," she says. "It makes it really difficult to stay focused for any period of time, and it chips away at patience." In addition to disabling notifications on your computer, she suggests doing the same for email on your phone.

■ **Don't think of your inbox as a to-do list.** Lots of people make this mistake, says Matt Plummer, CEO of Zarvana, which helps professionals become more productive. Your inbox is a delivery tool; it doesn't function properly as a place to itemize your tasks. Often, people think, "I'm going to need to respond to this email, so I should just leave it in my inbox," Plummer says. That's not effective. Instead, he recommends using a task-managing app like TickTick, which lets you log everything you need to do and integrate tasks with your calendar.

■ **Unsubscribe aggressively.** Think of your inbox as a garden you must prune, McCullen says. Those newsletters you haven't opened in six months? Unsubscribe. The place you once bought a hamburger from that now sends you deals every day? Unsubscribe. You can always check the website. Remember: Even looking at an email and deciding you don't need it steals valuable time, McCullen says.

GADGETS

# All-in-one computer stand and hub makes life easier

BY GREGG ELLMAN
*Tribune News Service*

If you own an Apple Mac Mini M1 desktop computer, **Satechi's new Stand Hub** with SSD Enclosure is a must-have.

The all-in-one hub does exactly what Satechi sets out for it to do, make everyday life more convenient by acting as a computer stand and a hub. It connects to the computer with a single USB-C connection via a built-in 5.4-inch cable from the back. There's no need for any other power supply.

The Satechi Stand Hub mirrors the Mac Mini in design with its brushed silver aluminum alloy finish. Measuring 7.8-by-7.8-by-0.9 inches, it sits perfectly under the Apple Mac Mini M1 computer with a top side platform that is raised to provide space to allow heat and air to ventilate, preventing overheating. Four rubber feet keep the hub raised off the desktop.

Easy-access hubs are built into the front, which includes a single USB-C port, three USB-A data transfer ports, SD and microSD memory card readers, and a 3.5 mm headphone jack. The USB ports are for syncing and data transfer, not charging.

But what makes this stand out is the bottom side SSD enclosure where you can add your SSD drive for storage expansion. Inside the SSD storage compartment is a small screwdriver and screw to assist with the simple installation. The Satechi site lists compatible SSD drives, which have been tested to work with the hub and include specifics from Kingston, Samsung, Western Digital and Adata.

Online: satechi.net; $99.99

**Creatives T60** desktop speakers impressed me in every aspect. The speaker pair is filled with features for use as a sound system with digital, analog and wireless connections and functionality for the work from the home office environment.

The sound the Creatives T60 produces is impressive, and just as impressive is the $79.99 price. Built into the compact Hi-Fi desktop speakers is audio technology featuring Clear Dialog and Surround, which are powered by Sound Blaster's audio expertise.

From the Creative site, Clear Dialog extracts the vocals and spoken dialogue through an audio processing technique, then intelligently enhances and amplifies them, allowing you to hear each syllable clearly, and without compromising other sounds. Surround identifies and enhances the spatial information of incoming audio via Sound Blaster's audio filters. The technology optimizes the listening experience for both two-channel and multi-channel source content resulting in a realistic listening experience.

Using the speakers from a laptop, stereo receiver and streaming via Bluetooth all produced great sound. The speakers have high volume levels, way more than my ears can take. The sound is well balanced and there are options to help achieve the desired mix of treble and bass.

Inside each speaker is a 2.75-inch full-range driver along with a built-in digital amplifier. Creatives BasXPort technology allows the right amount of bass without having a subwoofer.

The Creatives T60s can be connected wirelessly with Bluetooth 5.0 or USB-C for digital audio, which both worked perfectly in my review unit. Other ports for the AC-powered speakers include a 3.5mm aux-in (analog), a 3.5mm headphone port, and a 3.5mm port for plugging in an external microphone for communicating during meetings.

A 6-foot wire connects the pair of speakers, with the controls on one speaker used for controlling both. Front-facing buttons are used for power, volume, audio sound technologies, and switching between audio or your headset.

Online: us.creative.com

SATECHI/TNS

**The Satechi Stand Hub sits perfectly under the Apple Mac Mini M1 computer with a top side platform that is raised to provide a space to allow heat and air to ventilate, preventing overheating.**

WEEKEND: MOVIES

MARVEL STUDIOS/AP

**Tony Leung plays the titular Shang-Chi's father in the Marvel movie "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings."**

# Widening the circle

## Director, cast of Marvel's 'Shang-Chi' hope to open door to new culture, expand onscreen representation

**BY PETER SBLENDORIO**
*New York Daily News*

With their new addition to Marvel's superhero universe, the makers of "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings" hope to further represent the real world.

The movie is the first in Marvel's interconnecting film franchise to be led by an Asian hero and a predominantly Asian cast.

For director Destin Daniel Cretton, the mission was to tell an epic, relatable story that stays true to Chinese culture.

"Growing up in Hawaii, movies were always my window to other cultures and other experiences," Cretton told the Daily News. "When I watched a movie like 'E.T.' on Maui, that was seeing how high schoolers are in California.

"But it also allowed me to feel connected to those kids, because they're also struggling with a broken home life or insecurities or pain ... and they have the same dreams as me. It helped me to feel connected to people that were not like me. I hope that this movie is something that the Asian community can be very proud of, but I also hope it's a window to people who are not from this community to feel connected."

Simu Liu stars as Shang-Chi, who was raised as an assassin in China by his power-hungry father before fleeing his family and starting a low-profile life in San Francisco.

The movie, now in theaters, follows Shang-Chi as secrets from his past catch up to him and reunite him with his estranged sister, the formidable fighter Xialing, portrayed by Meng'er Zhang.

"Shang-Chi" marks the first film role for Zhang, who previously worked in theater in Nanjing and Shanghai, China. She's excited for audiences to meet her character.

"She is someone you don't want to mess with, because she can kick some butt," Zhang said. "I think she's really special. She's tough and unapproachable on the outside, but she really has the sensitive and vulnerable part deep down inside of her. She knows to stand her own ground and find her own voice. I think the world is gonna love her."

Zhang didn't know she was trying out for a Marvel film when she responded to an audition call for an actress who speaks Chinese and English. She realized the job was for "Shang-Chi" when she was flown out to do a screen test with Liu.

The movie leaves Zhang excited for the onscreen representation it provides.

"I'm so proud," she said. "For Asian kids growing up in Western countries, they can have a hero they can look up to and say, 'He looks like me.' This story is very heartwarming, and I think everyone can relate."

Cast members include Awkwafina, who plays Shang-Chi's best friend, and Tony Leung, who portrays the hero's father.

It was important, Cretton said, to be authentic in portraying the characters and their personal backgrounds.

"We very much are paying homage to Chinese culture and the rich history of kung fu films and martial arts films," Cretton explained. "We took incredible care into making sure that everything just felt real and relatable. Even though we are in [the Marvel Cinematic Universe] version of everything, we still want to make sure that the cultures of these communities that we are a part of ... can all be proud of this movie."

AMY SUSSMAN/TNS

**"Shang-Chi" director Destin Daniel Cretton, right, shown with actress Meng'er Zhang, says his mission was to tell an epic, relatable story that stayed true to Chinese culture.**

MARVEL STUDIOS/AP

**"This story is very heartwarming, and I think everyone can relate," says Meng'er Zhang, who plays Xialing, the estranged sister of Shang-Chi (Simu Liu, right).**

The film is filled with journeys of self-discovery for characters such as Shang-Chi and Xialing, the director said.

"All the characters, particularly in Shang-Chi's family, are learning over the course of our movie to deal with some pain that they have not been able to deal with since they were young," Cretton explained.

"They all have reacted to the traumatic experience in different ways, and over the course of our movie, as they are learning to revisit and redefine what that pain means to them, I think they're also able to look at the beautiful parts of their pasts."

# WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

PHOTOS BY MARVEL STUDIOS/AP

**Tony Leung, left, and Fala Chen appear in a scene from "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings."**

## Fighting with heart

### 'Shang-Chi' not like other MCU movies

BY KATIE WALSH
*Tribune News Service*

When it comes to the Marvel movies, the hope is that the talented directors they hire to helm each project can bring a bit of their own sensibility to the proceedings. Whether it's Taika Waititi's goofy humor that underscores "Thor: Ragnarok" or Ryan Coogler's sense of soulful sorrow in "Black Panther," the best of the Marvel Cinematic Universe reveals what's important to each filmmaker throughout the swirling action and densely packed lore of each superhero outing.

For Destin Daniel Cretton, the director and co-writer of "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings," the first MCU installment centered around an Asian superhero, what he brings is a sense of deeply felt humanism and a willingness to inspect complex family dynamics.

Cretton's work has always been suffused with empathy, from his breakout indie hit "Short Term 12" to his 2019 legal drama "Just Mercy," and he's tackled complicated families, both chosen and born, including in "The Glass Castle." Cretton is able to apply an emotional heft to "Shang-Chi," which follows a young Asian American man, Shaun (Simu Liu), as he learns to face his past and embrace his destiny as the superhero Shang-Chi.

Shaun's family has a long and mystical history, one he eventually has to explain to his best friend Katy (Awkwafina), on a transatlantic flight to Macau, after the two fight a machete-limbed supersoldier on a San Francisco city bus. Dropping his Americanized name, Shang-Chi tells Katy about his father, Xu Wenwu (Tony Leung Chiu-wai), a centuries-old warlord and leader of the shadowy crime organization the Ten Rings, powered by 10 ancient, magical bangles that confer superpowers on whomever can wear and wield them. Machete Man, aka Razor Fist (Florian Munteanu), was a not-so-subtle summons from dear old Dad.

**Simu Liu stars in "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings" as an Asian American who must embrace his superhero identity.**

That Shang-Chi's father functions as the antagonist of this story is intensely poignant. Shang-Chi and his estranged sister, Xialing (Meng'er Zhang), who has started her own underground fight club in his absence, have to come to terms with their father's actions and the dissolution of their family after their mother's death. But this personal healing comes while fighting him to protect their mother's village, where ancient evils are kept at bay. The casting and performance of the legendary and beloved Hong Kong movie star Leung, making his American film debut, lends itself to this layered villainous character, who is as tragic as he is dangerous.

But it's not all serious family tragedy in "Shang-Chi," which is extremely funny and playful, especially thanks to the casting of comedian Awkwafina as Shang-Chi's ride-or-die best friend. The charming Liu, a Chinese-Canadian actor and stuntman, holds his own with the comedy, and he's more than equipped for the combat, which unfolds in clean, crisp action sequences. The fight scene on the bus is especially impressive, combining martial arts, humor and a wild, out-of-control bus chase.

Though they can't resist the cliche MCU airborne climax, this time on the back of a writhing, ribbon-like dragon, and aside from some references and cameos, including a very funny Ben Kingsley reprisal of his Trevor Slattery character from "Iron Man 3," "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings" doesn't feel like just another MCU installment, which is a compliment. The characters are fresh and Cretton constantly emphasizes the emotional connections between them, crafting a modern, wuxia-informed martial arts movie with heart, which just so happens to feature a Marvel superhero. Shang-Chi is a welcome and very necessary addition to this universe.

"Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings" is rated PG-13 for sequences of violence and action, and language. Running time: 132 minutes. Now playing in select theaters.

## Tired tropes hit flat note in 'Cinderella'

BY KATIE WALSH
*Tribune News Service*

Classic stories and fairy tales continue to make the content rounds, whether that's because recognizable names are easier to sell, or perhaps because these old tales still have some life left in their lessons. Often these centuries-old stories work best when the time period is fully updated (e.g., Amy Heckerling's "Clueless") or the modern lessons are subversively subsumed into the archaic era's traditional customs and practices (e.g., Autumn de Wilde's "Emma"). However, the new musical "Cinderella," starring pop sensation Camila Cabello and written and directed by Kay Cannon, tries to have it both ways, pairing contemporary post-feminist tenets and anachronistic slang and pop songs with the ballgowns and social norms of Renaissance-era Europe.

It's a cute idea that's been pulled off before, notably in the 2001 film "A Knight's Tale," starring Heath Ledger. But here, it's a bit awkward and forced. Cabello's Cinderella is a big dreamer with entrepreneurial ambitions. Confined to the basement with her talking mice, she sketches fashion designs and sews ballgowns with the hopes of one day selling her dresses and becoming a businesswoman (are retail markets even a thing in this village?). The intent is to avoid a Cinderella whose entire fate hangs on marriage to a wealthy prince, so instead they've made her a rise-and-grind girlboss hustler, whose values clash with those of her evil stepmother Vivian (Idina Menzel) and stepsisters (Maddie Baillio and Charlotte Spencer) who want to marry for money.

That's a choice that may have landed with a bit more aplomb a few years ago, but in 2021, it's a tired trope. In fact, tropes and archetypes are the engine of this film, thinly sketched characters whose development seems to have been jettisoned for endless belting. In musical theater, the characters put their inner feelings into song, but these characters are mostly singing pop tunes that have been reverse-engineered into the plot, expressing sort of vague platitudes and affirmations like "ya gotta be," "whatta man," "material girl," "let's get loud," etc. There are a few original songs by Cabello and Menzel that fill in things a bit, but their sentiments merely scratch the surface.

This is Cabello's first film, and while she's a skilled singer and performer, her acting is overly cutesy, a bit grating and flip, which doesn't allow her character to achieve any depth. All of the main characters, including Nicholas Galitzine as Prince Robert, subscribe to this sort of "Disney Channel" acting style, which is sarcastic and glib and inherently insincere.

With such a great cast, it's disappointing that it feels like none of the side characters get much to do, spouting wink-wink feminist aphorisms, you-go-girl sentiments and therapy-speak confessions about their motivation. It's underwritten yet overstuffed with songs, and the production feels chintzy and airless.

This "Cinderella" is a lot like "Succession" for kiddos, with Ella trying to get her dresses in front of angel investors, and Robert resisting the power being handed to him. If anything, it's an acute reminder that marrying for the purposes of joining property isn't that far off from entering into a contract with an investor. It's cynical, because underneath it all, it's still about the money, honey. With all the songs, gowns and corny jokes, kids under 10 will likely love it, and frankly, that's who this is for, not the millennials or Gen Z kids who grew up with Brandy or Hilary Duff. Plus, they'll learn about the importance of having a solid business plan ready to go as soon as opportunity strikes.

"Cinderella" is rated PG for suggestive material and language. Running time: 113 minutes. Now streaming on Amazon Prime.

Amazon Studios

**Camila Cabello and Billy Porter share a scene in "Cinderella."**

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

# Redeeming the vacation comedy genre

## ‘Vacation Friends’ enjoyable enough that you won’t think of the time lost, trips missed because of the pandemic

BY LINDSEY BAHR
*Associated Press*

The pandemic has been cruel to more than a few movie genres, but have any been so hampered by the current state of the world as the vacation comedy?

Early on, it reminded us of what we couldn’t do, what we were postponing or canceling. It was an odd experience of wistfulness laced with bitterness watching people like Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon dine and drink their way through Greece. Perhaps that’s why a comedy as absurdist and fanciful as “Barb and Star Go to Vista Del Mar” clicked with so many. It was just unreal enough to be palatable and silly enough to be cathartic. And then, of course, came “The White Lotus,” the dark comedy set at a ritzy Hawaiian resort that appealed on one level to some deep-seated superiority of not being “those people.”

It’s certainly not the fault of the movies and shows, most of which (with the notable exception of “The White Lotus”) were made or at least conceived of well before March 2020. Still, a genre that generally goes down easy became a bit hard to stomach.

The latest entry is “Vacation Friends,” a long-gestating idea about a pair of mismatched couples who click on vacation that’s had everyone from Chris Pratt to Ice Cube in the lead. It finally started shooting, with Lil Rel Howery, John Cena, Yvonne Orji and Meredith Hagner now playing the foursome, in March 2020. Bad timing.

20TH CENTURY STUDIOS/AP

**From left, Lil Rel Howery, Yvonne Orji, Meredith Hagner and John Cena star in “Vacation Friends.”**

And yet, somehow out of the delays, the re-casting, the rewrites (Tom Mullen, Tim Mullen, Jonathan Goldstein, John Francis Daley and director Clay Tarver all have script credits), and the oddness of having to film in a pandemic, “Vacation Friends” came together to be a pretty fun time.

Howery plays Marcus, the straitlaced owner of a construction business who hopes to propose to his yuppie girlfriend Emily (Orji) on vacation in Mexico. Despite his meticulous planning, things go wrong from the start. But they get a lifeline when another couple, Ron (Cena) and Kyla (Hagner), invites them to crash in their presidential suite after being moved to tears by Marcus’ proposal.

Ron and Kyla are very extra. They are loud and a little obnoxious and make more than a few questionable decisions on behalf of their new friends, but it all comes from an undeniably good place. And they’re not rich either, as Emily assumes based on the ostentatious room. They spent every last dime on this vacation and are making the most of it.

It’s a classic comedy setup and after a few protests from Marcus and Emily, soon they learn to embrace the Ron and Kyla way and live as drunken free spirits on vacation. Extending the bit even further, Marcus and Emily get a rude awakening when their vacation friends literally crash their fancy wedding weekend. All the leads are fully committed and it’s a great showcase for Cena’s wild abandon as well as Howery in a different type of role.

There’s nothing especially revelatory about “Vacation Friends.” There are a few genuinely good laughs to be had involving drugs, golf and a catamaran, both during the vacation and the wedding. And there’s some tedium during the inevitable falling out segment. But it’s enjoyable in a way that doesn’t make you think about lost time and experiences over the past year. Not to put too much significance on “Vacation Friends,” but perhaps it’s a sign that we’re finally ready to enjoy lighthearted movies about chaotic vacations and destination weddings once again.

“Vacation Friends” is rated R for crude sexual references, language and drug content. Running time: 105 minutes. Now streaming on Hulu.

# Stars of ‘He’s All That’ lack charisma, chemistry

BY SONIA RAO
*The Washington Post*

The latest edition of “Did we really need this?” arrives to Netflix in the form of a TikTok star’s feature film debut: Addison Rae stars in “He’s All That,” a gender-swapped reimagining of “She’s All That,” the 1999 romantic comedy featuring Rachael Leigh Cook and Freddie Prinze Jr. as its leads.

The movie casts Rae in the Prinze role but updates the character for her generation. She plays Padgett Sawyer, a high-school-age beauty influencer who, after discovering that her boyfriend cheated on her, has a meltdown on Instagram Live. As a way to rebuild her self-confidence, the makeover expert accepts a classmate’s challenge to befriend an unsuspecting outcast, Cameron Kweller (Tanner Buchanan), and transform him into prom king material. Naturally, she falls for him.

This premise was already tired by the time “She’s All That” came around — the movie was loosely based on “My Fair Lady,” after all, itself a take on “Pygmalion” — but teen comedies don’t always need to avoid tropes to succeed. What matters most are the stars’ charisma and chemistry, as “He’s All That” director Mark Waters seems well aware, having helmed modern classics “Freaky Friday” and “Mean Girls.”

Unfortunately, the new film falters on both.

Rae doesn’t have too much to offer viewers. She’s an earnest actress, but lacks the vocal inflection and range of facial expressions required to give depth to Padgett. The character’s emotional arc involves her attempt to stop hiding behind her influencer status, whether in terms of the makeup she wears or her preoccupation with social standing. But Rae never convincingly drops the facade herself, a forced smile plastered onto her face until the credits roll.

So what hope was there for electric chemistry with Buchanan, whose character’s most notable trait is a wig as upsetting as his bleak outlook on the world? While a social outcast wouldn’t necessarily share the goofy sweetness of a character like “To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before’s” Peter Kavinsky, still the reigning heartthrob of teen rom-coms, Cameron’s sardonic nature could have led him to transform into a charmingly rebellious teenager akin to, say, Patrick Verona from “10 Things I Hate About You.”

Netflix

**Tanner Buchanan and Addison Rae are an unlikely pairing at the heart of “He’s All That.”**

Instead, we are meant to find Cameron interesting simply because he shoots photographs on film.

Buchanan tries his best with the material — written by R. Lee Fleming Jr., who also penned the original film — as do an array of supporting acts (Madison Pettis and Myra Molloy as Padgett’s friends, and Peyton Meyer as her ex). But some things just can’t be saved, not even by the nostalgic returns of “She’s All That” stars Cook and Matthew Lillard, who appear in small, unrelated roles.

In the end, “He’s All That” is not all that — not even a little bit of that.

“He’s All That” is rated TV-14 for coarse language and suggestive dialogue. Running time: 90 minutes. Now streaming on Netflix.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

# Secret to Deathloop: discovery

## Warning to future players: Stop reading if you'd like to save best part of game

BY MIKE HUME
*The Washington Post*

If you want to enjoy the true Deathloop experience, don't read previews about the game. Seriously. Stop right now.

Here's the thing: Deathloop's defining activity is not the elimination of eight boss-type characters, or breaking the time loop in which the protagonist is trapped. The game's core experience is about discovery — and not just plot points. It starts with discovering simply how to play the game.

Deathloop is a unique game. It reminded me, all at once, of Fallout, Hitman, Returnal, the movie "Memento" and the TV series "Lost." But when you pick up a Fallout title, for example, you mostly know what you're going to get and how to play. Deathloop, by contrast, asks you to play by its rules, which are fairly unique. And so, to explain how the game works is to spoil one of Deathloop's most enjoyable aspects: just learning its distinctive mechanics.

So, if you want to fully immerse yourself in the story of this game, stop reading. Have a nice day. Go outside. Read a book. Do literally anything aside from scrolling down and reading more. You can thank me later.

Arkane Studios photos

**The world of Deathloop is filled with crash-test-dummy-like foot soldiers called Eternalists who are tasked with killing players on sight.**

Without spoilers, we can share that so far — and we played about five hours of the game — Deathloop is an original, witty and stylized thinking-person's shooter from Bethesda and Arkane Studios. But if you really want to know more about Deathloop's mechanics and what the game's early hours are like, read on.

*Are you sure about this?*

*Really? You're still here? OK. I guess I don't blame you: Arkane's Deathloop is one of just a few PlayStation 5 exclusives to hit the market in 2021 and is, as such, one of the year's most anticipated titles.*

*Below, I'll go over what I've learned without spoiling any plot details.*

**Deathloop's early hours (which I still think you shouldn't read)**

The game's protagonist, Colt, wakes up on a beach complaining of a wicked hangover and knowing absolutely zilch. He doesn't know where he is. He doesn't know how he got there. He doesn't know why he feels hungover. He doesn't even know his own name. Deathloop sends players on a search for answers as basic as the main character's identity and as complex as the workings of the space-time continuum.

Eventually you'll figure out your ultimate task (breaking the time loop) and head off to explore the island of Blackreef. Rather than one big, open world, Blackreef is divided into four main explorable areas, each filled with crash-test-dummy-looking foot soldiers, called Eternalists, who are tasked with killing you on sight. There are also eight bosses, called Visionaries, who preside over the island and are likewise not fond of your desire to break the time loop.

Among the bosses is Julianna, Colt's foil, who has a nasty habit of popping up out of nowhere and trying to kill Colt. And she's better than the average bot because — and this is one of the cooler aspects of the game — players can choose to play as Julianna in an online version where they're tasked with killing another player who is completing the game as Colt. We haven't seen this in action yet; it could either be very cool or very troll-y.

The learning process begins on the aforementioned beach, where Colt stumbles ahead guided by the map's design and floating words that appear to be visual reminders from Colt's runs during previous loops. But are the words actually from Colt's memory, or something else? Should you trust them? The paranoia sets in and wreaks havoc on your decision-making.

Here's how that manifests in gameplay: Knowing that my progress would be lost upon death, and knowing that there was a time limit in which I had to complete my assignment of killing all eight bosses, in my early hours with the game I would often beeline to the objective, retrieve the information I needed to progress the game's plot and return to the safety of my home base in the island's tunnels, which acts as a checkpoint. Forget looting, forget exploring — time was of the essence.

There are a lot of prompts in the game spelling out the game's mechanics and how certain items or weapons work, as well as delivering a ton of information (too much for my liking). But the first prompt I can recall that referenced time indicated that I had two choices: to return to the tunnels or stay and explore the current map. What it didn't make clear was that when you're exploring the map, time essentially stands still.

Each day is broken into four stages of the day: morning, noon, afternoon and nighttime. Each time you return to the tunnels, time advances to the next stage. For example, if you explore the urban map of Updaam at noon, it will stay "noon" the entire time you're there no matter how long you spend exploring. When you leave to return to your home base in Blackreef's tunnels, the game moves to the next time frame, so noon becomes afternoon. After completing a stage at nighttime, the loop resets and you find yourself back on the beach.

Knowing this, you can better plan your runs, organizing them in a way so that you can find the bosses in specific places in specific times and line up the dominoes, so to speak, for your final mission of offing them all.

Doing so, we're told, will break the loop.

You progress in the game every time Colt discovers a new lead, information critical to breaking the loop, the game's principle quest. Colt can gather info on other things as well, including weaponry and slabs, which are objects that grant characters special abilities like teleportation, invisibility and rewinding the game to before Colt dies. Colt's weapons and movement abilities can be upgraded through the use of trinkets, which look like shiny credit cards and are scattered around Blackreef.

The information you uncover while combing through the game's four main maps (the slummy urban residential area of Updaam; the remote outpost of Fristad's Rock; the coastline of Karl's Bay; and the hulking central hub of the Complex) endures beyond the resetting of the time loop. The retention of your findings about Blackreef, the time loop, the Visonaries and Colt's role in all of it gives Deathloop a more satisfying sense of progress than Returnal, the PS5 bullet-hell roguelike that released earlier this year. Additionally, there's a way for Colt to retain his gear after the loop resets, which is achievable fairly early in the game.

The dialogue is witty and entertaining, with the banter between Julianna and Colt particularly enjoyable. And the game delivers more than a few early-game plot twists.

Mechanically, though, the game played a little stiff at times. The gun play is more Fallout than Call of Duty, which is fine in AI gunfights but might yield some frustration for first-person shooter fans going head-to-head against a human-controlled Julianna. There were also a few glitches in the early hours. More than once, the game lagged for a few seconds — an unusual feeling on the PS5.

Deathloop isn't the easiest game to grasp due to its originality, and its early hours are certainly a learning process. But so far, it's been an enjoyable series of lessons, well integrated with how the protagonist acts and feels, bringing the player right into the story. It will be nice, after the game releases Sept. 14, to see how that story ends.

**Platforms:** PlayStation 5; PC

**Online:** bethesda.net/en/game/deathloop

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

# Cicchetti crawlers make friends, memories

*Until European travel becomes fully open to Americans, here's a reminder of the fun that awaits us in Europe.*

Venice entertains millions of visitors during a normal year. It's particularly crowded with day-trippers when several cruise ships are in port. On a trip a few years ago, I was told by a Venetian friend that these days, almost every restaurant caters to the tourists. Then, with a sly smile, he added, "But there are still the cicchetti bars."

Cicchetti (pronounced chi-KET-tee) are the local appetizers that line the counters of little pubs all over Venice at the end of each workday. My favorite meal is what I call the "Stand-Up Progressive Venetian Pub-Crawl Dinner." In a town with canals and no cars, pub-crawling is easy and safe — perhaps even safer if you know how to swim. Tonight I'll visit a series of these characteristic hole-in-the-wall pubs, eating ugly-looking morsels on toothpicks and washing it all down with little glasses of wine. I look forward to the local characters I'll meet along the way. Cicchetti bars have a social stand-up zone with a cozy gaggle of tables. In some of the more popular places, the crowds spill happily into the street.

Venetians call this pub crawl the giro d'ombra. Giro means "stroll," and ombra — slang for a glass of wine — means "shade." It dates back to the old days, when a portable wine bar scooted with the shadow of the Campanile bell tower across St. Mark's Square. That wine bar is long gone, but the cicchetti bars remain, tucked away in the perpetual shade of the back streets.

While Venice is, it seems, sinking in tourist crowds, I'd bet 90 percent of those tourists gather along the glitzy shopping streets between the Rialto Bridge and St. Mark's Square. To find a characteristic cicchetti bar, you have to wander. I don't worry about getting lost — in fact, I get as lost as I can. I remind myself, "I'm on an island and I can't get off." Even though there generally aren't street names, when I want to find my way, I simply look for small signs on the corners directing me to the nearest landmark (e.g., "per Rialto").

Rick Steves

The cicchetti selection is best early, so I start my evening at 6 p.m. It's in the far reaches of Venice that I bump into the thriving little bacari (as the local pubs are called). I ask for "un piatto classico di cicchetti misti da otto euro" and get a classic plate of assorted appetizers for 8. I sample deep-fried mozzarella cheese, gorgonzola, calamari and artichoke hearts. Crostini (small pieces of toasted bread with a topping) are also a favorite, as are marinated seafood, olives and prosciutto with melon. Meat and fish (pesce) munchies can be expensive, but veggies (verdure) are cheap. Bread sticks (grissini) are free for the asking.

Part of the attraction is the funky decor. There are photos of neighborhood friends here for a family party, St. Mark's Square the morning after a wild Pink Floyd concert, Carnevale masks evoking a more mysterious past, and of old-time Venice, proving that people may change, but the buildings remain essentially the same.

Rick Steves

**At locally popular cicchetti bars in Venice, Italy, you can assemble a meal.**

Venetians kick off the experience with an aperitivo, a before-dinner drink. Know your options. A blackboard usually lists several fine wines that are uncorked and available by the glass. Most nights, I get a small glass of house red or white wine (ombra rosso or ombra bianco).

A man asks me, "Le dispiace se mi siedo qui?" (Do you mind if I sit here?) before sitting down next to me. It occurs to me that's a handy, polite phrase for making new friends. He orders a drink and food. When his plate of fish arrives, he picks up one of the tiny fish, delicately tied in a loop. Holding it by the toothpick that harpoons it, he looks at it lovingly, says, "Sei il mio piu bel ricordo" ("You are my most beautiful souvenir"), and pops it happily into his mouth. Pushing over his plate, he offers one of the fish to me.

Connecting with people makes a pub crawl more fun: You can meet an Italian, learn some Italian, eat better ... and collect your own beautiful souvenirs.

Rick Steves writes European guidebooks, hosts travel shows on TV and radio, and organizes European tours. You can email Rick at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

# Colorful leaf-peeping exploration opportunities abound

As the days grow shorter and a chill creeps into to the evening air, Europe's natural spaces prepare to give us one last show. While Scandinavia's northernmost forests are already starting to turn by the latter half of August, some countries of the Mediterranean reach their peak glory only in late October. The exact dates as to when nature's most stunning displays of colors reach their peak vary slightly from year to year, but wherever one might roam, the shoulder season, with its lower hotel prices, fewer travelers and relaxed pace, makes an ideal time for exploration of Europe's unspoiled corners.

Karen Bradbury

**Finland:** With roughly two-thirds of its land covered in forest, there are few places a would-be leaf peeper could go wrong. Whereas Helsinki and other points south reach their peak colors in late September or early October, northern Lapland starts its annual march to autumn much earlier, and for roughly two weeks in mid-September, the reds, yellows and auburns are at their dazzling best.

"Ruska" is the Finnish word for fall foliage; but in a country blessed with so much of it, two descriptive terms are used. Puuruska refers to the leaves on the trees turning color; maaruska refers to the bushes and plants on the ground taking on their vibrant fall shades.

As home to the largest ski resort in the country, Ruka, in Lapland, offers a well-developed infrastructure for visitors. The region offers a variety of activities throughout September, including hiking, cycling, river rafting and photography safaris. Nearby, the internationally recognized Kuusamo Nature Photo Festival takes place Sept. 10-12. Other reasons to visit Lapland in the fall include berrying, mushroom-picking and catching sight of the Northern Lights. Online: ruka.fi/en/autumncolours

iStock

**The Falls of Dochart, at Killin in Scotland, make for a dramatic autumn destination.**

**Scotland:** From mid-September, Scotland's autumn palette wows with shades of red, orange, bronze and crimson. Among the many areas recommended by Visit Scotland are this trio of destinations: Killin, on the edge of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, particularly the Falls of Dochart after a drenching rain; Lady Mary's Walk, in Crieff, Perthshire, where beeches are accompanied by poetry; and Queen's View, by Loch Tummel in Perthshire, which takes its name from a queen who visited 500 years ago. Online: tinyurl.com/zbupcc

**England:** Maples, mountain ash and beech make for splendid colors of display, but for something a little different, make way to the Wicken Fen Nature Reserve in Wicken, Cambridgeshire, the National Trust's oldest nature reserve and England's most famous fen. As summer wanes, the wetland landscape turns various shades of russet, which look all the more dramatic beneath a setting sun. The chance to spot owls and birds of prey as they migrate south is an additional attraction. Online: nationaltrust.org.uk/wicken-fen-nature-reserve

**Germany:** While the country's "Golden Autumn" might lack the breadth of palette seen elsewhere, there are many places to bask in the glory of the season, from the Alps to the islands of the North Sea. While there's no bad time to experience the unique landscape of the region known as Saxon Switzerland in the east of the country, the bizarre sandstone rock formations by the Elbe River are set off spectacularly by the yellow and orange leaves. The Malerweg, or Painter's Way, is a 72-mile trail leading past some of the region's most famous landmarks including the Königstein Fortress and Bastei Bridge. Online: tinyurl.com/238c6zas

**Switzerland:** Beeches, birches, larches and maples are the major characters in the autumnal pageant of colors. The Swiss Tourism website page features a foliage tracker informing travelers when and where the show of colors is presently at its best. An interactive map showing the current and predicted foliage colors is updated weekly from mid-August to early November. Fall destinations include Deborence and the Aletsch Arena in Valais, the Jura High Trail, Graubünden and the chestnut forests of the Lugano Region. Online: tinyurl.com/2j8jd58

**Italy:** From mid-September through the end of October, much of the country basks in gentle warmth and muted colors. Places to see this time of year might include the larch forests around Sorapiss, Fedora or other lakes in the Dolomites; the Mugello area in Tuscany, where the chestnut harvest season gives birth to many "sagra" food festivals honoring specific dishes; or Le Marche, where truffles and mushrooms are celebrated this time of year.

# WEEKEND: TRAVEL

PHOTOS BY MONICA RODMAN/The Washington Post

**Federal Air Marshals reenact a scene involving an unruly passenger. While this was only a reenactment, incidents in which flight crews have to handle dangerous behavior from passengers have been on the rise this year. Some crews are taking self-defense classes to learn how to handle dangerous behavior.**

# Fight and flight

## Self-defense courses teach air crews how to handle unruly plane passengers

BY NATALIE B. COMPTON
*The Washington Post*

"You want a drink, sir?"

The passenger looked up at the male flight attendant, then slurred a request for five more drinks. The flight attendant refused, causing the drunk traveler to become irate.

He lunged out of his seat toward the flight attendant, then an air marshal appeared, pummeling the unruly passenger. The man's hands were now cuffed behind his back.

This was just a drill. The drunk passenger was from the Federal Air Marshal Service. But the dangerous behavior flight crews are dealing with in the skies today is very real.

In a nondescript office building near LaGuardia Airport in Queens, N.Y., a group of real flight attendants watched the drill in a fake airplane, beginning their four-hour self-defense training run by the Transportation Security Administration. TSA has offered these classes across the country free of charge to flight crews since 2004, but they seem more relevant than ever.

As air travel began to rebound from its pandemic rock-bottom, so has bad passenger behavior. The Federal Aviation Administration has received nearly 4,000 reports of unruly passengers in 2021, an uptick from the 146 total reports received in 2019.

"This is the most dangerous and uncertain time in our entire history," said Sara Nelson, international president of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA.

Nelson says the pandemic has wreaked havoc on the profession for myriad reasons, from the fear of contracting coronavirus to the logistic issues of returning to an industry operating with a staffing shortage.

"Flight attendants are working longer days with shorter nights, wearing masks for 14, 15 hours a day ... having a harder time getting nutrition throughout the day and charged with keeping everyone safe on the plane," Nelson said. "Those are just the basics."

While most flights get from A to B without incident, the new stressors are driving flight attendants to seek out TSA's voluntary self-defense training.

"I just wanted to make sure that I'm prepared for anything that could happen," says Katie, a flight attendant attending the training at the Federal Air Marshal Service (F.A.M.S.) New York field office. So she could speak freely, she asked that her last name and employer to be kept private.

**Katie, a flight attendant, gets ready to practice some punches on the bag during a self-defense class.**

During her 17 years working in the industry, Katie was always interested in enrolling in the class, but because it only takes place at a handful of locations across the country, it was difficult to find the right free time in her travel schedule.

During the pandemic, the monthly four-hour classes were put on hiatus until July of this year. When Katie got an email announcing class openings in the New York area, she jumped at the opportunity to attend.

"I've been involved in situations before," she said. "And we have de-escalation scenarios that we try to run through to the best of our abilities, but sometimes it just gets to a level that we need a little extra defense training," she said.

After watching the pretend scenarios in the simulated airplane, the flight attendants were taken to a room with a padded mat floor to learn how to physically and mentally prepare themselves for aggressive-passenger interactions.

The instructors demonstrated how to stand, move and approach an attacker, as well as fight or defend themselves with their hands, elbows, palms, knees, feet and shins. Some techniques are standard, like a punch to the face. Others are new, like raking an attacker's face with your nails. The flight attendants wince at the mention of gouging an attacker's eyes.

"Remember, this guy is attacking you," the air marshal said, encouraging the class to keep their warrior mind-set.

Katie and the other flight attendants practiced their new techniques on the air marshals, punching bags and B.O.B.s, or "Body Opponent Bags," life-size dummies.

"I want you to strike through him," an air marshal told Katie's group of flight attendants while demonstrating a palm heel strike to a B.O.B. "I want you to take his head off."

SEE SELF-DEFENSE ON PAGE 21

# WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## Self-defense: Classes build self-confidence, teach basic skills

FROM PAGE 20

Judith, another flight attendant in attendance who requested to keep her last name and employer private, believes unruly passengers have been an issue for the airline industry for years. It is not just the pandemic triggering the latest violence.

"I think it's the many layers of stress," said Judith, who has been a flight attendant for nearly a decade. "There is the stress of getting to the airport, the stress of going through the security, stress of getting up early, stress of traveling, stress of family, traveling with family."

Stephanie Metzger, a supervisory air marshal in charge who was on-site for the training, said a big part of the class is to build self-confidence, as well as give flight crews critical self-defense lessons. The right mind-set is essential for carrying out the defenses.

"This is important training for flight attendants because it prepares them with the basic skills that are needed for them to be able to address unruly passengers on board aircraft," Metzger said.

Nelson agrees. Taking the class one time is not enough to turn flight attendants into self-defense experts, and it is not going to solve the issue of violence on planes, but "it gives just some basic maneuvers to help better protect yourself from getting hurt," she said.

The flight attendants finished the class sweating and tired. Despite the serious nature of the course, they ended on a high note, laughing and swapping contact information with the air marshals who encouraged them to return to the class whenever they would like.

Katie hopes she will be able to take refresher courses to keep her new skills fresh in her mind going forward.

"I hope that it doesn't get to the physical level, but more and more these days it has been sort of getting to the physical level," she said. "I think it's really important to make sure that you're prepared for that as well."

Judith, who had never taken self-defense or martial arts classes before her TSA experience, found the training rewarding, albeit conflicting.

"I don't want to hurt anybody. I never want to use these techniques on a real person," she said. "But it was surprisingly fun and very gratifying to see how a little technique can really do big changes."

# Getting in sync

## Hotel programs, smartphone apps take aim at jet lag

iStock

By Christopher Elliott
*Special to The Washington Post*

Cramped seats, mask requirements and surly service aren't the worst part of international airline travel. No, it's that awful feeling when they turn on the cabin lights in the middle of the night and try to serve you breakfast before landing. Fortunately, there are some new tricks for fighting jet lag.

Jet lag is a sleep disorder that affects people crossing several time zones quickly. It leaves your body's internal clock, better known as your circadian rhythm, out of sync with the local time zone.

Christopher Lee, author of the book "Jet Lag," says a disrupted circadian rhythm is becoming a more common problem — and not just because of air travel.

"One way of thinking about jet lag is that it is part of a broader pattern of technological innovation and time acceleration in the present," says Lee, an associate professor of history at Lafayette College in Easton, Pa.

There are some new services aimed at combating jet lag, ranging from hotel programs to smartphone apps. But the best way to avoid nodding off on your first day of vacation is to take some common-sense steps beforehand.

Jet lag leaves me feeling as if I've gotten half a night's sleep each night for an entire week. I once flew from New York to London and scheduled an interview for 8 a.m. the next day. About five minutes into the meeting, I dozed off. I had to reschedule the interview for the following afternoon. I returned to my room and tried, in vain, to sleep it off.

Pamela Losey used to commute across the Atlantic frequently. She says she thinks of the red-eye to London as a missed night's sleep.

"I once nodded off very briefly during a client meeting," says Losey, a garden designer from Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y. "But when they learned that I basically flew 24 hours just to be there, they were very kind."

Hotels are trying to help. The Hoshinoya Tokyo hotel has a deep-breathing spa regimen for people who arrive in Japan feeling a little disoriented. It also offers a three-day regimen of body-warming herb treatments and open-air baths to help you get acclimated to the 13-hour time difference between Japan and the East Coast. The hotel adjusts the humidity and brightness of your room to ease the transition, and a massage therapist shows you deep-breathing techniques to help you sleep.

In late 2019, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts began collaborating with celebrity trainer Harley Pasternak to create an anti-jet lag exercise routine for its hotels. The series of exercises, called Jet Lag Rescue, is meant to restore guests' circadian balance. It includes simple activities to raise your heart rate and engage your glutes, quads, hamstrings and calves, as well as a restorative sequence of stretches to ease aching muscles.

Of course, there's also an app for jet lag. It's called Timeshifter ($24.99 a year), and it allows you to create a personalized plan to avoid jet lag based on variables such as your sleep pattern and itinerary. You can even factor melatonin supplements into your regimen. The Minnesota-based business travel agency CWT announced last year a deal to distribute Timeshifter to all of its clients, so if you work for a large company with a managed business travel program, you might already have access to Timeshifter at no extra cost.

There are new preventive measures for jet lag, too. Steven Lamm, medical director of NYU Langone Health's Preston Robert Tisch Center for Men's Health, says a study published in 2018 showed that supplementing with the natural antioxidant Pycnogenol (a French maritime pine bark extract) reduced the duration and severity of jet lag symptoms.

"This research showed that supplementing with Pycnogenol actually reduced the duration of time individuals felt jet lagged by nearly 50 percent and improved feelings of fatigue, visual impairment and inability to sleep," Lamm says.

Tried-and-true ways of warding off jet lag include melatonin supplements (which help regulate the circadian rhythm) and prescription sleeping pills. I used melatonin on a trip to Africa a few years ago and had almost no jet lag.

On a recent flight from San Francisco to Lisbon, I tried a more natural approach. I bought a bag of pistachios, which are loaded with melatonin, and ate a handful every hour. I know it sounds, well, nuts, but my jet lag was minimal. It took me about two days to adjust to the eight-hour time difference.

If you go with a sedative, be mindful of the side effects. Always consult a physician before taking pills before a flight — and, as you would on the ground, avoid combining them with alcohol.

One of the best weapons against jet lag is common sense. The bone-dry aircraft cabin can dehydrate you quickly; drink lots of water. Don't sit in your seat for nine straight hours; get up and move around. And, for the sake of yourself and the travelers around you, stay away from alcohol. The "free" wine that's served in business class has a cost. When I was younger, I suffered from days of disrupted sleep after having a drink too many on a transatlantic flight.

Josephine Arendt, a professor emeritus at the University of Surrey in England, has proposed a potential defense against jet lag: a wearable sensor that measures light exposure and tells the wearer when to take melatonin.

Cindy Geyer, medical director at Canyon Ranch Lenox, a wellness resort in Lenox, Mass., says this approach shows some promise. In fact, aspects of Arendt's research have already been incorporated into the Timeshifter app.

"But, as of now, there's no current treatment yet available that can instantly shift our body's circadian rhythm to a new time zone," Geyer says.

# WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

The opulent interior of the Baroque basilica in Fulda, Germany. The church was built in the early 18th century and is dedicated to St. Boniface.

The Baroque Stadtschloss in Fulda, Germany, built in the early 18th century on the site of an earlier palace, is now the city hall and a museum.

# Full of history and splendor

## Fulda was founded as a post for the spread of Christianity and also housed US military for a time

By Michael Abrams
*Stars and Stripes*

Many Americans, especially those over 40, may have heard of the Hessian city of Fulda because of a nearby feature of the countryside, the so-called Fulda Gap.

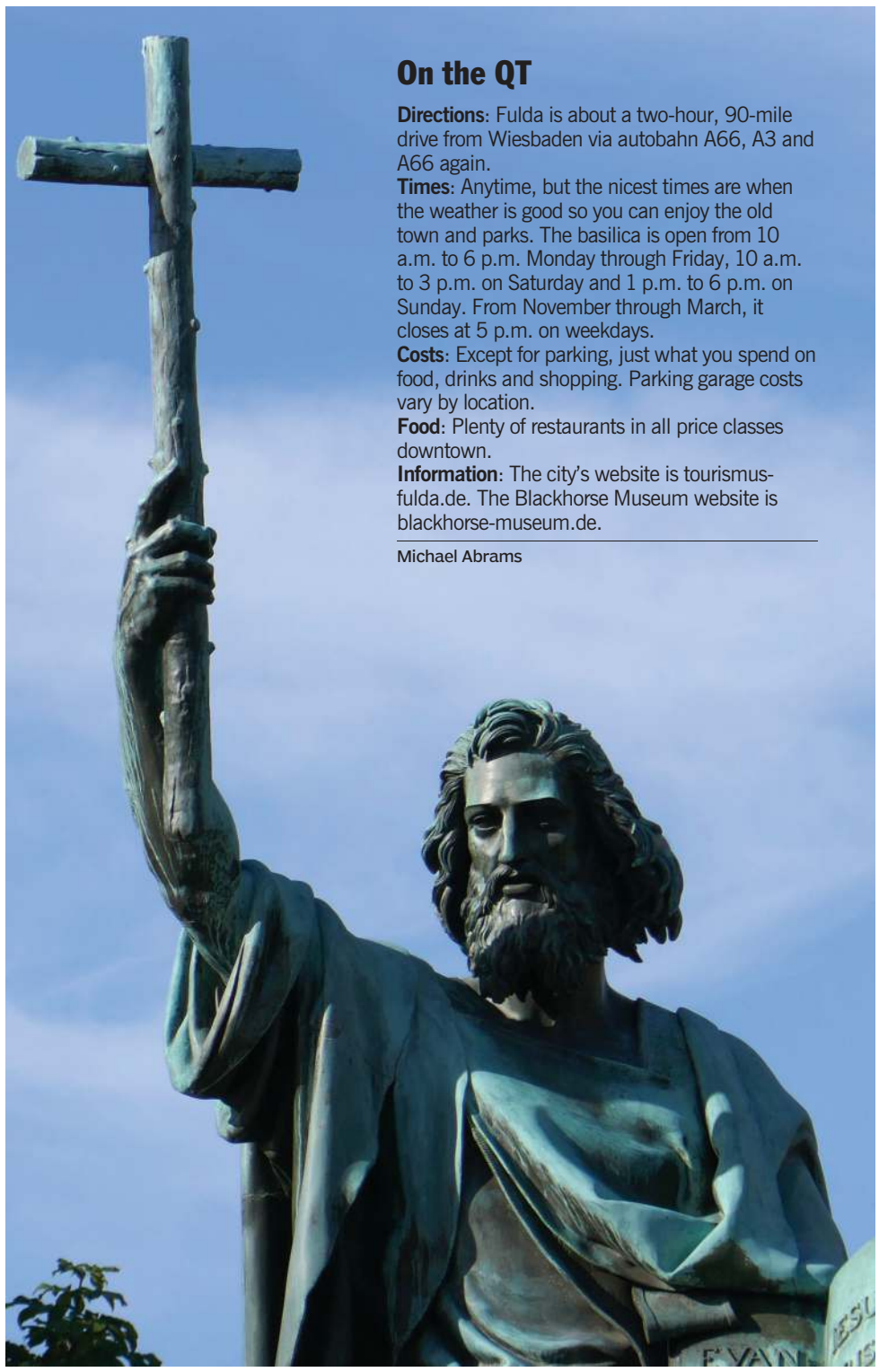
Here in a corridor between two mountain ranges, the Soviets and their Warsaw Pact allies would supposedly storm through to invade the West. The fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 put an end to that Cold War scenario.

Otherwise, most people know this central German city for its Baroque architecture, historic churches, medieval old town and lush parks.

Fulda dates to the mid-eighth century, when a monk named Sturmius founded a Benedictine monastery here. The city has always had a close relationship with the Catholic Church, and it is still a bishop's seat. The church's prince-abbots who lived here commissioned the construction of the Baroque buildings for which Fulda is famous.

Foremost is the cathedral, the Dom St. Salvator und Bonifatius, built between 1704 and 1712. The tomb of St. Boniface, the eighth-century missionary and bishop credited with bringing Christianity to Germany, is here and is a place of pilgrimage.

SEE FULDA ON PAGE 23



### On the QT

**Directions**: Fulda is about a two-hour, 90-mile drive from Wiesbaden via autobahn A66, A3 and A66 again.
**Times**: Anytime, but the nicest times are when the weather is good so you can enjoy the old town and parks. The basilica is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday and 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday. From November through March, it closes at 5 p.m. on weekdays.
**Costs**: Except for parking, just what you spend on food, drinks and shopping. Parking garage costs vary by location.
**Food**: Plenty of restaurants in all price classes downtown.
**Information**: The city's website is tourismus-fulda.de. The Blackhorse Museum website is blackhorse-museum.de.

Michael Abrams

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Fulda is the burial place of St. Boniface, the eighth-century missionary and bishop credited with bringing Christianity to Germany.

The old half-timbered rathaus, or city hall, in Fulda, Germany, dates to before 1500. The ground floor, now a glassed-in shop, was once used as a covered market.

The Hexenturm, or Witches Tower, in Fulda, Germany. It dates to the 12th century and was part of the town's medieval fortifications.

# WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

## **Fulda:** Medieval city dates back to 8th century

FROM PAGE 22

Across the street is the Stadtschloss, the former residence of the prince-abbots. Built in the early 18th century on the site of an earlier palace, it is today the city hall and a museum.

Its sumptuous interior is decorated in the Baroque and rococo styles. Three halls are of particular interest: the Imperial Hall, the Hall of Princes and the Hall of Mirrors.

Next to the Stadtschloss is the expansive residence garden, a great place to rest weary feet or to picnic. This Baroque orangerie was used for summer parties and receptions and for storage of the garden's lemon and orange trees in winter, hence its name.

A stroll through the old town is an interesting mix of historical architecture. But first, take a look at St. Michael's Church, to the right of the cathedral. The medieval building was constructed in the early ninth century. This round Carolingian chapel is one of the oldest church buildings in Germany.

The imposing old half-timbered rathaus, or city hall, was built before 1500. The ground floor, now a glassed-in shop, was once an open-sided covered market.

Across from it is the towering St. Blasius, the city's parish church. Built in the late 18th century, it was the last major Baroque building constructed in Fulda.

The cobblestone lanes of the old town take you past shops, taverns, restaurants and cafes down to the Hexenturm, or Witches Tower. It dates to the 12th century and was once part of the town's medieval fortifications.

Despite its name, it was not used to imprison women charged with witchcraft but was once indeed used as a women's prison.

Behind it is the small but wonderful dahlia garden. In summer, more than 30 types of the flower are in bloom.

There's not much left of American Fulda, once home to the 14th and 11th Armored Cavalry Regiments.

Some buildings of the former Downs Barracks are still used by the German police.

A softball field and tennis courts also remain. A former Defense Department school is still a place of learning and houses the Blackhorse Museum, which is temporarily closed.

And the control tower of Sickels Army Airfield still stands as a reminder of the U.S. military presence in Fulda.

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PHOTOS BY ALISON BATH/Stars and Stripes

**Buatta features hearty, traditional Neapolitan classics such as pasta with broccoli rabe and potato, left, and Genoese with broken ziti.**

# Mamma mia!

## Try Buatta for a Neapolitan meal with a mother's touch

BY ALISON BATH
*Stars and Stripes*

Buatta is so tucked away in Naples' Vomero neighborhood that it's easily overlooked by those not in the know.

They're missing out.

The woman-owned trattoria on a quiet, narrow street just off Via Enrico Alvino at Via Massimo Stanzione puts a spotlight on well-prepared, traditional Neapolitan cuisine in a carefully curated atmosphere that blocks out the chaos of Naples.

This is the food Italian mothers make.

The force behind Buatta is Angela Gargiulo, who opened the restaurant in 2012 with a focus on home cooking, a family atmosphere and creating a tranquil space.

Outside tables feature earth-tone linens and stoneware dishes amid twinkling lights, plants and other garden decor. Gone are the incessant noisy motorbikes, cars and pedestrians that add color but also distraction to meals at streetside restaurants in Naples' Centro Storico or Quartieri Spagnoli neighborhoods.

Inside, the setting is similarly cozy, with the feel more like eating at home than in a restaurant. That's just how Gargiulo wants it.

During our visit, we ordered the potato croquette with cheese and lemon, and eggplant meatballs to start. The croquettes arrived at a perfect temperature, not too hot, with the cheese gooey. The lemon flavor was subtle and not overpowering. The eggplant meatballs were large, moist and full of meaty chunks of eggplant, but were bland. Maybe try the parmigiana or gilded anchovies instead.

Pasta with potatoes and broccoli rabe featured perfectly cooked pasta mista, which is a blend of shapes. The bitterness of the rabe contrasted nicely against the richness of the cheese, pasta and potato. The Genoese with broken ziti had a rich, flavorful onion sauce and a tender chunk of beef. Portions were generous, and grated parmesan on the side added a tasty touch.

Of note are Buatta's salted cod dishes offered in an extensive variety of styles, such as with green chiles, peppers or escarole, or parmigiana. We didn't try them, but we'll be tempted to next time.

Desserts are made by Angelina, an artisan bakery and coffee bar just a few steps away also owned by Gargiulo.

On the night we visited, the trattoria's dessert menu included options such as a mixed berries tart and black cherry biscuits, but we settled on the tiramisu. We were not disappointed — tender lady fingers, creamy mascarpone with a light touch of coffee and chocolate.

Going to Buatta is like coming home. You know you're going to get a good meal, plentiful conversation and the feeling of being cared for.

bath.alison@stripes.com
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**AFTER HOURS ITALY**

### Buatta — Conversation Trattoria

**Address**: Via Cifariello al Vomero, 14, Naples
**Phone**: +39 349 605 9176 (reservations recommended)
**Hours**: Monday-Sunday, noon-3 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.
**Menu**: English and Italian; Online: buattanapoli.com/menu
**Prices**: Pasta dishes 8 to 14 euros; second course 8 to 10 euros; salted cod dishes, 13 to 15 euros.

Alison Bath

**Appetizers at Buatta include potato croquettes with cheese and lemon, and eggplant meatballs.**

# Berry good

## Berry Cottage pick-your-own farm and cafe offers quaint family fun near Yokota Air Base in Japan

BY RAY MCINTOSH
*For Stars and Stripes*

Just a 15-minute drive from Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo can bring you to a family-friendly garden that gives visitors a chance to pick their own fruit and try seasonal baked goods in an ethereal cottage environment.

An ideal day trip amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, Berry Cottage is a unique stop that allows for family fun while social distancing and staying within protective health guidelines.

Guests can enjoy the pure and simple activity of roaming the gardens to pick, or "hunt," as they call it in Japan, fresh seasonal fruits. After a quick tutorial on how to identify the most desirable berries and properly pluck them, visitors get 30 minutes to pick as much fruit as they want. Patrons pay by the weight of their pickings.

The entry fee for adults is 500 yen (about $4.60) and 300 yen for children in elementary school and younger. Berries cost around 216 yen per 100 grams.

Kiwi-picking season at Berry Cottage is October and November. Kiwis cost 600 yen per kilogram. The farm also has a raspberry picking season in June and July but had to cancel this year because of a lack of sufficient crops.

The cafe portion of Berry Cottage is a wood cabin-style building where guests can relax and enjoy baked goods made fresh from the property's seasonal produce. The café seats around 20 people.

During blueberry season this summer, the Berry Cottage menu included a blueberry tart that resembles an almond blueberry coffee cake for 660 yen; a rich and gelatinous blueberry cheesecake for 550 yen; and drinks like the creamy blueberry yogurt smoothie for 760 yen and their fresh blueberry juice for 660 yen. Outside the cafe, blueberry and raspberry ice cream was for sale for 350 yen per cone.

Below the cafe, they sell specialty candles for around 1,000 yen, bottles of blueberry wine for 3,000 yen, and various fruit or nature-themed knickknacks.

Reservations are required for berry picking and can be made by phone. They are not required if you just wish to dine at the cafe, but keep in mind that groups larger than four people will most likely not be able to sit at the same table due to limited space and coronavirus safety regulations.

The cafe and garden are kid-friendly but not stroller or wheelchair-friendly, and there are steep stairs to get to the café and cottage.

Berry Cottage is cash-only, and you must take off your shoes and change into provided slippers upon entering. There is no English on the menu, and the staff does not speak much English, but a translation app can help you maneuver ordering with ease.

Berry Cottage uses organic fertilizer and cultivates without chemical pesticides, according to signs and pamphlets around the store and garden. They claim that blueberries are the "most nutritious summer fruits (compared to peaches, pears and grapes)," rich in vitamins and antioxidants.

If you hope to make a homemade pie or cake with your berry loot, most recipes call for three to five cups of blueberries. When kiwi season starts in October, the adventurous can try a traditional Japanese confection called daifuku, a juicy dessert made by stretching mochi over a whole kiwi.

PHOTOS BY RAY MCINTOSH/For Stars and Stripes

**Guests can pick seasonal fruits at Berry Cottage, a farm and cafe not far from Yokota Air Base, Japan.**

**In addition to baked goods, Berry Cottage offers ice cream made from seasonal fruit.**

### Berry Cottage

**Location**: 2-11-5 Shinmachi, Ome, Tokyo 198-0024; Google Plus code: Q8P2+JG Ome, Tokyo
**Directions**: From the Higashi-Fussa Station entrance, turn left. At the Higashi Fukusei intersection, turn right onto Metropolitan Road 249. Stay on this road for 3.1 miles. Turn right onto Metropolitan Road 181. After 700 yards turn left, the farm will be on your right.
**Hours**: Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday.
**Prices**: $5 admission for adults, $3 for children, fruit by weight
**Dress**: Wear casual shoes you don't mind getting a little dirty.
**Information**: phone: 0428-31-3810; online: berry-cottage.com

Ray McIntosh

**Seasonal desserts at Berry Cottage, a cafe and farm in Ome, Japan, include homemade blueberry tarts.**

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WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

PHOTOS BY JUAN KING/Stars and Stripes

**Take a relaxing stroll through Showa Memorial Park in Tachikawa, Japan. Showa Memorial Park is an inviting green area where visitors can explore the quiet solitude of nature dotted with a touch of Japanese architecture.**

## On the QT

**Directions**: 3173 Midoricho, Tachikawa-shi 190-8558. About a 30-minute drive from Yokota Air Base. P96W+8W Akishima, Tokyo
**Times**: Open March 1 to Oct. 31 from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; April 1 to Sept. 30 from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends and public holidays; Nov. 1 to the end of February from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
**Costs**: Ages 14 and younger are free; 15 to adults pay 450 yen; and senior citizens 65 and older, pay 210 yen. Parking is 840 yen for cars and 260 yen for motorcycles.
**Food**: This large park has restaurants, a café, food vendors, and stands for ice cream and snacks and vending machines. Plenty of restroom facilities are also available.
**Information**: 042-524-1516; www.showakinen-koen.jp/guide-english/schedule-english

Juan King

**A small water-powered mill stands in the Komorebi Village area of Showa Memorial Park. The park is situated in a former U.S. military base in western Tokyo.**

# Exploration and solitude

## Showa Memorial Park in western Tokyo allows you to escape from the mundane

BY JUAN KING
*Stars and Stripes*

With plenty of space to explore, Showa Memorial Park, a former U.S. military base in western Tokyo, can be a wonderful a place to escape from the mundane.

I entered through the Sunagawa gate, one of four gates that open to this sprawling center city park, which offers a plethora of gardens, flowers fields and spaces to play and relax in Tachikawa. Parking in a lot nearby was about $8 for the day.

Just outside the entrance, a snack and gift store offers park information, including do's and don'ts. Strollers are OK, but leave drones, roller skates and radio-controlled vehicles at home. Rental bikes are available at some gates and may be used for up to three hours. Since this was my first trip, I opted to walk instead.

Past the entrance, I found some major greenery and many types of trees, including pine, one of my favorites. The rolling hills and landscape with a touch of Japanese architecture and design are pleasing to the eyes. Wide, paved paths offer plenty of room for walking, running and biking.

There is something for all ages, from the Children's Forest a little west of the Japanese Garden, to the Komorebi farm village that lies to the east of it. The Rainbow Pool, which costs an extra 2,500 yen for adults, 1,400 yen for children and 500 yen for preschoolers, has nine swimming pools to help cool you off from the summer heat. However, many are now closed due to the pandemic.

What stood out the most to me were the patches of solitude that I found within the park. I seemed to have the place to myself for long stretches of time. The coronavirus pandemic has trimmed the usual number of people frequenting the park, which can give the illusion that you are the only one there.

If you are feeling hungry or thirsty during your visit, stop by one of the many food vendors that offer more than enough to keep you going. On my way to the Dragonfly Marsh, I sampled a chocolate cone topped off with green tea soft serve ice cream from a gift and snack shop. I also had lunch at the Lakeside Restaurant, near the Rainbow Pool. It offered Japanese, Chinese and other familiar cuisine.

There's also a barbecue garden where, for a fee, you are provided with everything you need for cooking and enjoying a meal in the outdoors.

A tram runs to any destination inside the park, and stations, with benches, are situated in many places.

For photographers, this place is a spectacular gem. Photo opportunities are everywhere. The Japanese Garden area alone stands out as one of the top spots for capturing the essence of the park.

I sampled many of the attractions in this vast park during my three hours there, but I left much more behind for another visit.

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**A family stands in a field of flowers at Showa Memorial Park in Tachikawa, Tokyo.**

**Green tea soft serve ice cream on a chocolate cone is just one of many snacks available at Showa Memorial Park.**

**A tram carries people around the sprawling Showa Memorial Park. Bike rentals are also available.**

# Island spirit

## Awareness of cultural legends gives travelers deeper insight

BY WALTER NICKLIN
*Special to The Washington Post*

The Transportation Security Administration advisory to ticket holders departing Maui's Kahului Airport that day warned of "high travel volume." Arrive at least three hours before scheduled departure, the email warned. My wife and I dutifully did as instructed, but doing so didn't help. The agonizingly long line for security check, endlessly snaking back on itself, seemed more appropriate for Dulles International, LAX or JFK than an airport on one of the isolated islands in the Hawaiian archipelago.

What did help in mitigating the frustration was the nearby presence in an open courtyard of a 25-foot-tall cast-bronze statue of a stylized human form lifting high a huge, bright yellow star. But few in the long line of the understandably impatient, sweating and grumbling travelers seemed to notice. Putting things into cosmic perspective was this statue by Shige Yamada depicting the Polynesian myth of "Maui Releasing the Sun."

Becoming familiar with the ancient myths of the places you visit is not unlike being conversant enough in a foreign language to order from a restaurant menu without translation. You become less of a tourist, more like a native. Local legends serve as kind of a poetic travel guide, adding a layered, nuanced sense of time and place that travelers might otherwise miss. Embedded deep in cultural memory, they are as much a part of the heritage of a place as museums, monuments and iconic architecture.

According to one of the many legends associated with the Polynesian demigod Maui, he captured the sun at the 10,000-foot summit of Haleakala, a dormant shield volcano that created most of Maui the island's land mass. After receiving a promise from the sun to traverse the sky more slowly, so people would have more daylight, Maui released his captive.

Of the many interpretations of the possible truth to be found in this myth, the most relevant for anxious travelers hurrying to catch their flights has to do with the passage of time. The mythical Maui slowed it down, and visitors — if sufficiently relaxed — can let themselves experience "island time." That's what a Hawaiian vacation should be all about, after all. It's the same approach to time as required in the Hawaiian-born sport of surfing — bobbing in the ocean while patiently waiting for the perfect wave.

The ocean, with its turquoise waters and beautiful beaches, is, of course, what beckons tourists to the islands. And this summer, there was an immense crowd of visitors on both Maui and Oahu, like my wife and me, breaking free from months of pandemic lockdown.

But more than sunbathing and snorkeling, something "spiritual," for lack of a better word, awaits those made aware of Hawaiian origin stories. Passed on orally over the centuries, they recount how gods and demigods, personified in nature, helped Hawaiian ancestors make their way from other Pacific islands to create their new paradise.

Remarkably aligned with the science of evolution, an epic 2,000-line Hawaiian creation chant tells of life itself beginning in the sea with the marine invertebrates known as coral. As land rose from the ocean — thanks to Pele, the goddess of volcanoes — more complex creatures began to populate the earth.

The ocean gave birth, so it also offers solace in death. On Maui's west coast is a massive volcanic outcropping called Black Rock, where spirits of the recently deceased are said to leap into the afterworld to join their ancestors. A similarly situated and sacred Black Rock sits on the northwest coast of Rarotonga in the Cook Islands. On the Hawaiian island of Oahu, ancient folklore calls Kaena Point the "jumping-off" point for souls departing the living world. In New Zealand, the spirits of the dead leap off the headland at Cape Reinga on their journey to the afterlife.

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**A hiker stands at the edge of the Haleakala crater. According to one of the many legends associated with the Polynesian demigod Maui, he captured the sun at the summit of Haleakala. After receiving a promise from the sun to traverse the sky more slowly, so people would have more daylight, Maui released his captive.**

WALTER NICKLIN/The Washington Post

**Shells fused into a lava rock, found on a sandy Pacific beach, might take pride of place in any beachcomber's rock collection. But tourists should consider "Pele's curse." If they take one of Pele's volcanic rocks or a handful of sand, bad luck is said to befall them.**

Given this mythic ritual's ubiquity throughout the Pacific, unsuspecting tourists are well-advised to beware of "Pele's curse." If they take home as a cherished souvenir one of Pele's pretty volcanic rocks, the legend goes, or even a scoop of black sand, bad luck will surely befall them. Sure enough, rangers at the Volcanoes National Park on Hawaii's Big Island report receiving many packages of rocks from guilt-stricken visitors. Enclosed with the rocks are confessional notes blaming the rocks for such situations as IRS audits, divorces and job losses.

The superstition may be traced back to the fear that embodied in the rocks are the unlucky souls unable to make the journey to the afterlife. Even though island visitors can readily dismiss it, wisdom can still be found in this myth-based admonition. It speaks to an oral tradition of native reverence for the natural landscape — in the Hawaiian language, `aina. Unaware, disrespectful tourists risk picking the landscape clean and replacing rocks with plastic litter.

A childlike sense of wonder is at the heart of all these timeless fables, in the oft-stated worldview of American poet W.S. Merwin, who spent his final years restoring a Maui palm forest. Natural wonders spark the human imagination, as made clear in his poems. This ability to imagine both distinguishes us from all other creatures and allows us to connect with others.

So it is that mythology and folklore are fundamentally about connections and origins — how a particular place came to be. From the French, they're known as "pourquoi stories," or why something happened. More formally, they're known as "etiological tales." Rudyard Kipling called them "just-so" stories.

You don't have to travel from the U.S. mainland to encounter myths with an environmental message, which are well worth one's attention in this time of possibly catastrophic climate change. As in the Pacific islands, Native American storytelling wove humankind into nature — part of, not separate from. To think that people were somehow superior would not end well. Because of overfishing, for example, summertime visitors to New England won't find much cod on restaurant menus, even though it was once so abundant that it's how Cape Cod got its name.

Just up the coast, on the Gulf of Maine, a Penobscot Indian legend survives about a colorful character named Gluscabi, redolent of Shakespeare's Wise Fools. No matter how much game he hunts and bags, he always wants more. So he asks his grandmother to make a game bag big enough to hold all the world's animals, which she reluctantly does. When he captures so much game to realize the inevitable and terrible consequences, he just hopes he's not too late to ask her to undo it.

Even an extended European vacation would seem desultory without an acquaintance with the myths and legends that animate its culture. A visit to the Louvre in Paris, for instance, shows how dependent Western art is on Ancient Greek and Roman myths for provocative subject matter. The scenery spied on cruises on the Rhine and Danube rivers is layered with meaning found in fairy tales and folklore. For opera lovers, familiarity with Norse mythology eases a gateway into Richard Wagner's four-piece cycle "Ring of the Nibelung."

A ring is circular, of course. The very opposite of linear time, with its clocks, desk calendars and schedules. For true get-away-from-it-all vacations, therefore, just follow the cyclical magic of the sun, the moon and the seasons. That's what most myths counsel.

My last day in the Hawaiian archipelago was spent on Oahu's North Shore, legendary for its big-wave surfing. Along the sandy and rock-strewn beach, one particular small rock (the size of a golf ball) caught my eye. Polished yet pockmarked, this charcoal black sphere of basalt was accentuated by the white remains of coral somehow melded to part of its surface. As I picked it up, my fingers massage its sensuous, porous quality. I was tempted to put it in my pocket, but I didn't dare. To see it, to hold it briefly in my hand: that's enough, more than enough.

WEEKEND: BOOKS

# Navigating America as a teen immigrant

## ‘Refugee High’ an account of the 2017-2018 school year at Chicago’s diverse Roger C. Sullivan High School

**By Martha Anne Toll**
*Special to The Washington Post*

Is America a melting pot, or a collection of individuals from around the globe living at cross purposes? We tend to inhabit an unstable place between these two possibilities, embracing the mythology of an arms-wide-open America but shunning its reality. Successive waves of immigrants have sparked virulent backlash: Chinese, Irish, Italian, Central American, African, Jewish, Catholic, Muslim; you name it.

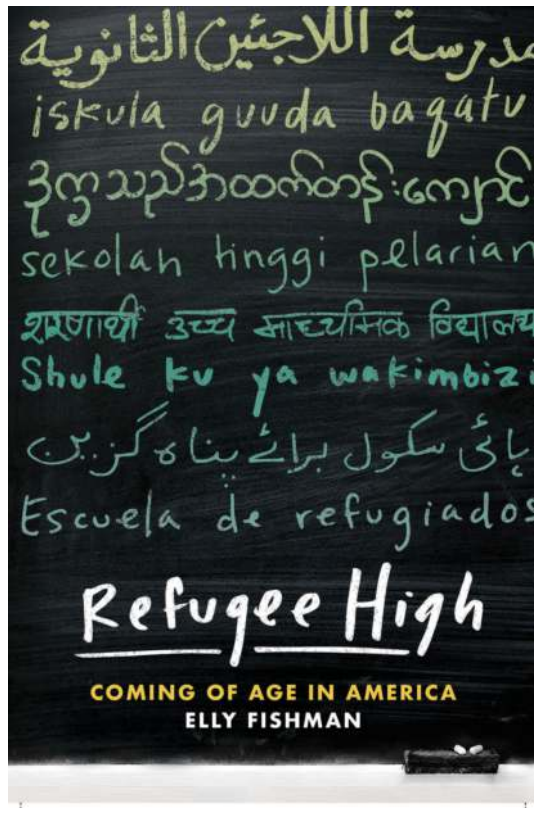
Roger C. Sullivan High School in Chicago has been a landing pad for immigrant and refugee students for a century. In addition to Chicago natives, Sullivan’s student body includes a polyglot (more than 30 languages) mixture of young people. Motivated by Donald Trump’s election and the protests against his ban on travel from certain Muslim-majority nations, journalist Elly Fishman spent 3 ½ years reporting what would become “Refugee High: Coming of Age in America,” her absorbing account of Sullivan’s 2017-2018 school year.

To develop her story, Fishman interviews Sullivan teachers and administrators as well as students and their families. She highlights families from Iraq; Guatemala; Congo via Nyarugusu, a refugee camp in Kigoma, Tanzania; Myanmar; and Syria. On the staff side, Fishman features Chad Adams, Sullivan’s principal; Sarah Quintenz, director of the school’s English-language learner program; and several others. “Refugee High” is organized around the months of the school year.

To arrive from a Rohingya refugee camp, or a camp in Tanzania, often with no English, and plunge into this intense microcosm of American life is a mind-bending prospect. Fishman does a wonderful job reminding us that even with their myriad, harrowing traumas, these students are kids. They live in the throes of teenage-hood, meaning acne and Rihanna. They are captivated by America’s alluring pop culture, the latest fashions and social media. They worry about homework. They angst over romance, use and sell illegal substances, and struggle with the school’s complex and all-important social life and its unwritten hierarchies.

Fishman ferries readers into these students’ apartments, many of which are sparsely furnished. We meet parents who have suffered unspeakable tragedy and dislocation, and now grapple with grueling night work and low or no pay. They mourn the loss of everything they once knew, including family and friends.

Students bear outsize burdens. Mariah from Basra,




Iraq, tries to kill herself, succumbing to pressure from family and Syrian students at Sullivan who see her as not religious enough. Students leave Sullivan for forced marriages or their families move, or they simply disappear from the roster. When a Congolese student is shot outside school and another threatened while biking home, one family leaves for Iowa, and other Congolese follow.

Senior Alejandro, who can be a loner, risks deportation despite having watched 10 people gunned down as he walked home from school in Guatemala City and his Guatemalan neighbor murdered on her front lawn to prevent her from testifying about her son’s killing. Enter Quintenz, who meets with Alejandro’s father to provide support. (His mother still lives in Guatemala, her safety a constant issue.) By keeping the son’s confidences, Quintenz gains Alejandro’s trust and helps with his appeal when he is turned down for asylum the first time.

Every high school needs a Sarah Quintenz, who updates the English-language learner curriculum because “what worked for Nepalese students didn’t always work for Syrian kids.” Far more than an academic adviser, Quintenz is an unflappable, endlessly creative, tireless advocate for her students. She holds them accountable while offering unconditional love.

Quintenz teaches them how to trick or treat on Halloween and organizes a mouthwatering international Thanksgiving where students arrive with dishes cooked at home. “I am from Ghana,” one student reads from a poem prepared for the occasion. “We live a peaceful life and eat fufu, which is made from ... plantain.” From the Syrian dish of maqlubeh to Somali sambusas to the Pakistani fast food brought by a Rohingya boy, this Thanksgiving meal nourishes in more ways than one.

Quintenz’s classroom is the “womb” where lovesick students find a tender listen as well as stern advice on birth control. Quintenz has been known to wash students’ uniforms when a laundromat is unaffordable and take kids to the Department of Motor Vehicles to qualify for driver’s licenses — no small feat for non-Americans. Things as simple as doorbells can be daunting, which Quintenz discovered when she learned that students were throwing rocks and breaking windows to visit neighbors.

Adams, Sullivan’s principal, is another hero. He grew up in Mississippi, and was one of a few white students in one of the state’s first busing programs at age 12 and “was often cornered and beaten up.”

After a beloved student was killed at a school where Adams was assistant principal, Adams developed post-traumatic stress disorder. He came to Sullivan not just to turn the school around but for “his chance to heal.” Sullivan was one of the worst-performing schools in the system when Adams arrived. He set to work transforming it from a place of harsh discipline to a school that focused on education and well-being; in other words, a school serious about providing its students a productive future.

Under Adams’ leadership, Sullivan has progressed from a “44 percent graduation rate to one where 90 percent of freshmen remain on track to graduate in four years.” With a jump in college-bound students, Sullivan has received a higher budget that translates into places for dozens more students.

In embarking on her research, Fishman aimed to answer four questions: “What does [the] political shift mean for refugees and immigrants who made it off the plane? What kind of America will they inhabit? What kind of America will they help build? And how will America take shape around them?”

These questions go to the heart of American identity. Although we Americans have a nasty habit of closing the door behind us, we are also capable of responding to our better natures.

“Refugee High” may not provide the answers, but it contains important messages. Fishman suggests that we ignore our growing xenophobia at our peril, for these students are creative, resilient, adaptive and caring. Her book is a shoutout to the value of public education. “Refugee High” showcases a school that is a welcoming landing pad for immigrants and refugees, and a launching pad for talented, productive, future generations of Americans.

# ‘My Heart Is a Chainsaw’ will delight fans of horror, slasher films

**By Ellen Morton**
*Special to The Washington Post*

I started reviewing movies for the local paper while in high school. My degree is in film. I’ve watched a lot of movies in nearly every genre — except horror. I’ve never been able to summon a desire to be terrified for fun.

Which is why Stephen Graham Jones’ “My Heart Is a Chainsaw” is such an accomplishment; it makes me want to watch all the horror. This novel is a paean to slasher films, a devotional about an acolyte written by an obsessive. And it’s a lot of fun.

The story follows Jade Daniels, a 17-year-old misfit who dyes her hair with shoe polish and food coloring and counts overalls and combat boots as wardrobe essentials. Her parents are absent or execrable, she has no friends, and every disappointment is “one more nail” in the coffin of Jade’s dreams. (By now, Jade sees the coffin as “pretty much all nails.”)

Horror is Jade’s only solace. For her, slasher movies are a religion, providing a comforting vision of order: “Everybody in a slasher cycle has a role,” she explains. “Isn’t that a line from the Bible, even?” When bodies start piling up in her small Idaho town — not just dead ones, but brutally dead — Jade’s most fervent prayer is answered: It looks like a slasher cycle is beginning.

Jade’s been preparing for this her whole life. She recruits the most likely final girl — the last character standing in a slasher, typically a beautiful beacon of goodness and strength — and tries to determine who might be wreaking unholy havoc. Her investigation takes twists, turns and detours past all the genre’s signposts while pragmatic characters offer more plausible explanations for the gruesome events. It’s a neat narrative trick that creates enough reasonable doubt that we can’t quite be certain what we’re in for. Even Jade isn’t positive.

“It’s not a for-sure thing yet, she reminds herself. It can still be wishful thinking on her part. When you’re wearing slasher goggles, everything can look like a slasher.”

Jade’s awkwardness and insecurities, her intractable obstinacy and her refusal to behave in a socially acceptable manner, all make her a believable nuisance to the adults in her life, who expect “Jade to continue being the burden she already is.” Despite all that, neither they nor we can help loving her. Though their resistance to her theories leaves her “flabbergasted to the point of no return,” she tries, tries and tries again. She’s respectful and patient, with an irrepressible sense of humor to balance out her sense of horror. We’re so much on her side that we find ourselves hoping for the worst.

When things get going, they really go gonzo, and we’re scrabbling to hang on by our fingernails throughout the climax. Everything promised in the first act is gleefully delivered in the third with comedy, pathos and a machete clutched in the hands of an unforgettable character.

WEEKEND: MUSIC

# Powerful pairings

## Hit collaborations between Black women are sparking golden age of female hip-hop

BY NATACHI ONWUAMAEGBU
*The Washington Post*

Turn on your car stereo. Or open one of Spotify's top hits playlists. Or peruse your TikTok feed. Or go to a cafe, mall, bar, a busy street corner and just listen. Before long, you'll hear it.

It's impossible to miss the recent slew of chart-topping, female-forward, hip-hop duets. From the record-breaking, headline-making "WAP" by Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion; to the otherworldly anthem by Doja Cat and SZA, "Kiss Me More"; to the recent and instantly trending "Rumors" that teamed up Lizzo and Cardi B, Black women have been choosing to feature, well, other Black women.

It's simple, according to Carl Chery, head of urban music at Spotify. We're in a golden age of female hip-hop.

"A year and a half ago in comparison to now, the field has expanded so much," Chery said. "You're seeing women who emerged as early as two years ago become stars. We've never seen this. I don't think there's ever been this many female rap stars, ever."

Men have long dominated hip-hop, and white executives have long dominated the music industry. In the (very recent) past, most Black female artists trying to make it big have found success by leaning on either of these pillars. Between the late '80s and early 2000s, Eve, Queen Latifah, Lil' Kim, Trina and Foxy Brown were among one of the first waves of successful women in hip-

SEE PAIRINGS ON PAGE 29

**Megan Thee Stallion performs at the Lollapalooza music festival on July 31 at Grant Park in Chicago. "WAP," Megan Thee Stallion's collaboration with Cardi B, broke the record for the biggest 24-hour debut for an all-female collaboration on YouTube and currently has more than 876 million plays on Spotify.**

ROB GRABOWSKI, INVISION/AP

# WEEKEND: MUSIC

## Halsey

If I Can't Have Love, I Want Power
(Capitol)

Halsey gave birth this summer, and she supplied her own baby gift — a terrific new album in a new musical direction.

The 13-track "If I Can't Have Love, I Want Power" sees Halsey teaming up with Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross of the rock band Nine Inch Nails and who are frequent movie soundtrack collaborators. It marks the most divergent sound in Halsey's career.

The album captures the thrill and fear of impending motherhood, and, as always, an artist looking with unsentimental harshness at their weaknesses. Reznor and Ross have imbued the project with their special brand of ambient and post-industrial dread.

Highlights include the driving synthesizer-and-drum-led "I am not a Woman, I'm a god" — a very NIN sound — and the rocking "Honey" with Dave Grohl on drums. She writes a lullaby for her baby on "Darling," with Lindsey Buckingham on guitar, "I'll kidnap all the stars and I will keep them in your eyes."

Reznor and Ross have not lost Halsey in a flood of noises and synths but made vehicles, with special touches here and there.

This is the sound of ambition, an evolution of Halsey's sound from the criminally underappreciated "Badlands" or the Romeo-and-Juliet concept album "Hopeless Fountain Kingdom" and 2020's busy, single-driven breakup album "Manic." It's the sound of a mom who can have it all: love and power.

— Mark Kennedy
Associated Press

## Sturgill Simpson

The Ballad of Dood & Juanita
(Thirty Tigers)

Sturgill Simpson knows how to do a concept record.

His latest, "The Ballad of Dood & Juanita," proves once again he is a prodigious musical chameleon. It couldn't be more different than his last album of original material, 2019's fuzz rock, eardrum-blasting anime soundtrack "Sound & Fury." In between, he recorded a couple bluegrass records covering his own songs.

The new record has more in common with the two most recent records, both released in the past year, and even employs the same top-notch band. Willie Nelson takes a guest turn on the track "Juanita."

"Dood & Juanita" is a tribute of sorts to Simpson's grandparents, attaching their names to fictitious characters in Civil War-era Kentucky. A dog, mule, some horses and Shawnee Indians figure prominently, as well.

Pure country, with some bluegrass, gospel and a cappella thrown in for good measure, it almost feels like a radio serial from the 1940s. There's even sound effects to help move the story along, including gun shots, stampeding horses and a crackling fire. All that's missing is an overly dramatic narrator.

Simpson said the entire project was completed in five days. It clocks it at a scant 28 minutes with several songs a couple of minutes long or less. While expertly crafted and executed, it's likely to be remembered more as a quirky, interesting curiosity, rather than a defining statement.

— Scott Bauer
Associated Press

## CHVRCHES

Screen Violence
(EMI/Glassnote Records)

The fourth studio album from Scottish synth-pop group CHVRCHES was already sounding great before they did something to push it into the realm of the spectacular.

They reached out to The Cure frontman Robert Smith, whose dark sound has been a touchstone to the younger band. That masterstroke produced "How Not to Drown," bridging a generational talent gap and anointing CHVRCHES as worthy successors: "I don't want the crown / You can take it now," Smith sings.

"How Not to Drown" is just one of the highlights of "Screen Violence," which examines anxiety, missed connections and misogyny, in real life and on screens. Members Lauren Mayberry, Martin Doherty and Iain Cook have a smoother, fuller and more assured sound.

The album kicks off with the terrific "Asking for a Friend" with lyrics that look back fondly at a broken love. The super "He Said She Said" is a less fond look at a controlling partner, and the anthemic "Good Girls" destroys unrealistic ideals and isn't polite: "I cut my teeth on weaker men / I won't apologize again," Mayberry sings.

You'll find yourself returning again and again to the lush and wistful "Lullabies" and the driving, electric "Final Girl," a song that plays with cinematic clichés and has a vibe reminiscent of The Smiths. And, of course, the blissfully perfect "How Not to Drown." It takes the crown.

— Mark Kennedy
Associated Press

# **Pairings:** Black women finding success on their own terms

**FROM PAGE 28**

hop. Most were led onstage by all-male recording agencies (Eve and the Ruff Ryders) or famous male rappers (Lil' Kim and Notorious B.I.G., Trina and Trick Daddy).

Recent female duets and features might prove this phenomena moot as Black women are producing some of their most listened-to songs with other Black women. They're doing so while discussing sex, drugs and female friendships.

"It's incredible," Chery said.

In 2019, Chery noticed the beginnings of this new wave of Black female artists. Acts such as City Girls, Lizzo, Doja Cat, Cardi B, Saweetie, SZA and Megan Thee Stallion were making a name for themselves on the heels of Nicki Minaj, Rihanna and Beyoncé's seemingly stand-alone successes, without the scaffolding of big names or record labels to prop them up.

"Meg isn't connected to anyone like that," Chery said. "She's standing up on her own."

"WAP," Megan Thee Stallion's collaboration with Cardi B, broke the record for the biggest 24-hour debut for an all-female collaboration on YouTube and currently has more than 876 million plays on Spotify, the most of any of Megan Thee Stallion's songs. In second place? "Savage Remix," her song with Beyoncé.

"Women are ruling," said Bktherula, a female rapper from Atlanta. "It's really amazing to just hear women everywhere all the time. You open TikTok, music apps, what do you hear? Black women."

The 18-year-old musician began recording music four years ago, but her career took off when her single "Left Right" went viral in 2019. Now she has more than 1 million monthly listeners on Spotify with her hit song nearing 15 million plays. Like Megan Thee Stallion, Bktherula doesn't shy away from broaching any subject matter in her music — but she does know that listeners, especially men, aren't used to seeing such confident Black women.

"They're seeing women, Black women, talking about whatever the hell we want to talk about, and for some reason they don't treat us like male rappers," said Bktherula. "When a guy talks about the same stuff, they're silent. If anything, I think it's better when women talk about sex and speak their mind."

When women do rap and sing about sex with the vulgarity typically reserved for men, however, it becomes mainstream news. The vivid lyrics and anatomical subject matter of "WAP" evoked ample pushback, especially from conservative pundits, and inspired Megan Thee Stallion's next single (the title of which is unprintable in a family newspaper) released this year. The song — which has lyrics like "I don't give a f— about a blog trying to bash me / I'm the s— per the Recording Academy" — has been listened to more than 90 million times on Spotify.

Over the past two decades, American culture has changed to allow for the release and praise of a song like "WAP," said Prince Charles Alexander, professor of music production and engineering at Berklee College of Music. Women speaking (or singing) about taboo subjects, while still considered risque, has become more commonplace and accepted. For instance, every time Rihanna dropped music between 2007 to 2013, her songs would chart. Her tongue-in-cheek 2011 hit "S&M" was no different, he said.

"The line from [S&M], 'Sticks and stones may break my bones but chains and whips excite me,' didn't evoke a lot of controversy," said Alexander. But there are still perceived limits to what a woman can rap about. Despite their often bawdy lyrics, female rappers are still viewed as nurturers.

"This is still an evolutionary response to things that men have been doing since the early '80s," said Alexander, who has worked with Usher, Mary J. Blige and Diddy. "What's interesting is not that women are responding, it's that it's being done by artists with a family-friendly brand. Because women are moms, aunties, sisters. Even though they are strippers, they are still nurturers. Even though they are prostitutes, they are still nurturers. Even though they are lawyers, they are still nurturers. In our male[-dominated] society, they still provide a certain amount of nurturing that males are still trying to figure out."

It is easy to highlight how far women have come in hip-hop. Chery has curated the "Feelin' Myself" playlist on Spotify for the last two years, highlighting female hip-hop artists and their breakthrough songs. "Even just by working on the playlist, I've seen so many new women rappers," he said. But the music industry is still led by men, regardless of how it may seem times have changed.

But the men in charge seem to have realized that women are popular and therefore profitable, said Alexander. That's due, in some part, to social media. Instagram, Facebook and even streaming services such as Spotify allow users greater control over the music they discover and choose to listen to. Once a song becomes popular, it can make the leap from your TikTok feed to a playlist like "Feelin' Myself," which boasts more than one million followers.

With an increase in popular female musicians, however, comes gendered insults and assumptions — especially from men within the industry. Jermaine Dupri, a 46-year-old producer and rapper, referred to Cardi B and other female rappers who discuss sex as "strippers rapping." DaBaby, who has collaborated with Megan Thee Stallion several times, made news for seemingly retweeting a joke about her allegedly being shot by Tory Lanez — an incident for which she was mocked and questioned.

Bktherula doesn't let that sort of hate bother her, though; being a Black woman in the industry is already difficult enough. She knows she's talented, and was before her music went viral.

"I think we're really starting to realize how freaking powerful we are," Bktherula said. "Us Black women are extremely talented. Other people are starting to see that and they're starting to gravitate towards us. But the hits have been there. And the talent has been there — for all of us."

> **"I think we're really starting to realize how freaking powerful we are."**
>
> **Bktherula**
> female rapper from Atlanta

# WEEKEND: TELEVISION

NETFLIX/AP

**From left, Hyun Bin, Seo Ji-hye, Son Ye-jin, Kim Jung-hyun and Oh Man-seok appear in scenes from the South Korean drama series "Crash Landing on You."**

# Translating the appeal of Korean TV shows

## Crowd-sourced editing, global streaming services, blending of genres boosting popularity of K-dramas in US

**By Alicia Rancilio**
*Associated Press*

Most nights around 10 p.m. when her family heads off to bed, Carol Holaday signs onto her computer. She's not falling down Internet rabbit holes or combing through social media at her San Diego home. Holaday is signing on to volunteer with the subtitle translation of Korean TV shows — often referred to as K-dramas — on the streaming platform Rakuten Viki.

"It's my secret treat," said Holaday, who has helped to subtitle 200 titles for Rakuten Viki, commonly just called Viki.

Viki has both original and licensed content from Japan, Korea, China and Taiwan and subscribers around the globe. Its largest audience is from the U.S., 75% of which is non-Asian. It offers a tiered subscription, or limited content available for free with ads.

The translator program enlists volunteers from beginners to contributors designated as gold status based on the quality and quantity of their contributions.

Holaday, who doesn't speak Korean, is an editor of subtitles. She looks at portions of video that have already been translated to English, and checks the grammar, word placement and spelling. Besides translators and editors, there are also "segmenters" who separate portions of video to be subtitled, so one person is not translating an entire episode.

Another proud, qualified contributor is retired attorney Connie Meredith. She even enrolled at the University of Hawaii to study Korean to become a better translator.

"The grammatical structure is so different from English that it's really, really difficult," said Meredith, who has worked on more than 500 titles for Viki. She said translating a 10-minute segment can take about two hours. "It's like a hobby to me. People say, 'You've done that much for free?' And I say, 'Why not?' I have nothing better to do with my time. And it's like doing a New York Times crossword puzzle for me, to solve the puzzle of language."

Makoto Yasuda, Rakuten Viki's chief operating officer, believes using a crowdsource method for its subtitles helps with accuracy. "If you have hundreds of people contributing to the quality of subtitles, then it becomes much better than a single professional translator working on the topics that they are not really familiar with."

He says the company's name Viki is derived from the words video and Wikipedia, the crowdsourced online encyclopedia site.

"Sites like Viki use fan translations, which is great, but it can be done in a hurry because people are anxious to see the dramas. So it's probably not as polished as you might get elsewhere," said Joan MacDonald, a Forbes contributor who covers Korean media.

Viki translations aren't just to English.

"A drama can translate into 20 different languages within 24 hours," Yasuda said. He said there's also often waiting lists to help translate on more popular shows. There are a small number of translators who do get paid, if for a show that doesn't have volunteers or a licensed series that already has subtitles.

The awareness of K-dramas outside Korea seems to be growing, MacDonald said. "The number of people that contacted me in the last year and a half to say, 'Oh, I just discovered K-dramas; what do you recommend?' It's significant."

Other streaming sites are also adding more Korean content to their offerings.

Apple TV+ has two Korean language projects in the works: one based on the animation series "Dr. Brain," and an adaptation of Min Jin Lee's novel "Pachinko" about four generations of a Korean immigrant family. That series will be available in Korean, Japanese and English.

This year, Netflix is investing nearly $500 million to produce Korean content and has partnered with big studios there including Studio Dragon and JTBC.

Some of Netflix's popular 2020 series included "Start-Up, "It's Okay to Not Be Okay" and "What's Wrong With Secretary Kim?"

Another that caused a sensation is "Crash Landing on You " starring actors Hyun bin and Son Ye-jin. The romance about a North Korean and South Korean aired on the paid channel tvN in South Korea and also on Netflix. Fans found their chemistry so believable, many believed there had to be a real relationship off-screen. The actors' representatives confirmed they were dating on New Year's Day.

MacDonald laughingly recalls hearing the news of the coupledom and thinking, "Wow, I am irrationally excited about this."

Streaming services have made television more globalized where it's easy to watch a show from another country, but MacDonald believes one reason for the popularity of K-dramas is because they blend genres like K-pop does. "It's kind of an overall thing, like [how] pop is not really one sound. A lot of things fit into it. You will have something like a horror rom-com that starts out as a gangster story, but it's really a Black comedy that keeps changing genres all the way through."

MacDonald says K-pop fans also gravitate to K-dramas because "a lot of K-pop stars are in dramas, and a lot of actors that are in dramas sometimes go on to have singing careers."

"There's a band that's very popular, Astro, and one of the singers, Cha Eunwoo, was in a drama earlier this year called 'True Beauty,' MacDonald said. "I saw 'True Beauty' and thought, 'Wow, he is great and he's in a band. I have to check that band out.'" Another example: Bae Suzy, formerly of the girl group Miss A, starred in "Start-Up."

Sara Wagner of South Lyon, Mich., grew up surrounded by Korean culture because her best friend of more than 40 years is Korean. "I would hang out at their house a lot and eat Korean food ... With the Internet, it became a lot more accessible to watch dramas."

Wagner also believes "Parasite" winning best picture at the 2020 Academy Awards increased interest in Korean cinema: "People ask, 'What else would you recommend?', and I say, 'Train to Busan.'"

She even keeps an Excel spreadsheet tracking K-drama storylines, themes, featured food, weather and endings of the shows she watches so she can recommend them to others.

A note by Wagner for "What's Wrong with Secretary Kim?" says: "There's a kiss in episode 12 that'll knock your socks off."

**"It's kind of an overall thing, like [how] pop is not really one sound. A lot of things fit into it. You will have something like a horror rom-com that starts out as a gangster story, but it's really a Black comedy that keeps changing genres all the way through."**

**Joan MacDonald**
Forbes contributor who covers Korean media

WEEKEND: TELEVISION

# Fiercest females on television

## As Kate Winslet mulls her return to Easttown as detective Mare, here are 6 strong women to watch

BY KARLA PETERSON
*The San Diego Union-Tribune*

Don't crack that celebratory bottle of Rolling Rock just yet. While HBO would love to air a second season of "Mare of Easttown" and viewers would kill to see more of Mare and her vape pipe, neither creator Brad Ingelsby nor star Kate Winslet have quite committed to bringing everyone's favorite small-town detective back for another round of crime-solving.

So what's a lovesick "Mare" viewer to do? You could cry over your cheesesteak, or you could dig into some of the best fierce-female performances currently streaming on a screen near you.

HBO Max

From the Zen serenity of Natasha Rothwell to the globe-trotting lunacy of Kaley Cuoco, here is a look at six seriously sensational TV women. While you wait for "Mare," they've got your back.

### Jennifer Coolidge and Natasha Rothwell: 'The White Lotus'

**(HBO Max and other streaming services)**

With its hothouse stew of family drama, class warfare and assorted personal dysfunctions, the White Lotus resort hotel is not the escapist Hawaiian paradise its rich, pampered guests signed up for. But for fans of first-class acting, this HBO miniseries of the same title is a slice of TV heaven.

As the resort's increasingly unhinged manager, Australian actor Murray Bartlett is the show's breakout star, and sight of Bartlett waltzing through the hotel in his salmon-colored blazer will put you in an instant state of viewing bliss. But save some love for veteran character actress Jennifer Coolidge ("Best in Show," "Legally Blonde") and "Insecure" wisecracker Natasha Rothwell, whose performances as a damaged guest and an empathetic spa manager are the soul at the heart of director-writer Mike White's canny satire.

Everything about the befuddled, grieving Tanya (Coolidge), the saintly Belinda (Rothwell) and their transactional friendship is ripe for lampooning. But White and the actresses give the characters and their relationship a respectfully funny depth that nudges "The White Lotus" from terrific to practically perfect. There will be Emmys.

### Kaley Cuoco and Zosia Mamet: 'The Flight Attendant'

**(HBO Max)**

To watch Kaley Cuoco on "The Big Bang Theory" was to love her for making the ditzy Penny so much more than a sexy second banana. But to watch Cuoco careening through "The Flight Attendant" is to be shocked and amazed. Shocked because Cuoco's performance as Cassie Bowden, an alcoholic party girl who may have killed a guy during a blackout, is amazing.

You can say the same for Zosia Mamet. The "Girls" star is a deadpan delight as Cassie's best friend Annie, a high-powered lawyer whose no-nonsense cool helps mask the reality that Annie works for very, very bad people. As Cassie lurches from one bad scene to another and Annie uses her wits and rule-skirting savvy to bail her out, Cuoco and Mamet have the edgy chemistry of spies who know their partners too well to trust them, but need them too much not to.

The eight-episode series is a dizzying mix of bloody violence, black humor and screwball-comedy energy, but with its crew of capable women in control, "The Flight Attendant" sticks its landing. It has been renewed for a second season. Here's hoping Cassie has Annie on retainer.

### Jennifer Aniston and Gugu Mbatha-Raw: 'The Morning Show'

**(Apple TV+)**

When it premiered in the fall of 2019 on Apple TV+, "The Morning Show" was more of a well-tailored punching bag than a TV show.

With its big stars (Jennifer Aniston! Reese Witherspoon! Steve Carell!) and #MeToo plot inspired by the downfall of Matt Lauer and Harvey Weinstein, the series was such a big prestige project, it really had nowhere to go but down. So it was no surprise when it was greeted with mixed reviews from critics who looked at the zillion-dollar cast and the Apple-related hoopla and were enthusiastically underwhelmed.

The bigger surprise is that "The Morning Show" is sharper than you'd think and tougher than it looks. The fishbowl world of the coddled co-anchors (Aniston as Alex Levy, Carell as the soon-to-be-disgraced Mitch Kessler) is examined in close, skeptical detail. The cynical tragedy-of-the-day demands of the news cycle do not get a pass, and the double-standard faced by women in the TV world is there in every well-observed frame.

But the show's best moments come during its exploration of the #MeToo minefield, which is where Aniston and Mbatha-Raw come in.

No one understands Alex's weird life except Mitch, and she loves him for it. But when the truth about Mitch comes out, Aniston unpeels multiple, painful layers of denial and complicity as Alex realizes how willfully blind she was to her co-anchor's predatory behavior. And as a young booker who is manipulated into having sex with Mitch and ends up getting promoted to shut her up, Mbatha-Raw gives a heartbreaking performance that captures the many shades of survivor's guilt, anger and terror.

The second season of "The Morning Show" debuts on Sept. 17. Set your alarm.

APPLE TV+/TNS

**Reese Witherspoon, left, and Jennifer Aniston are odd-couple broadcasting hosts in "The Morning Show."**

HBO/TNS

**Jennifer Coolidge plays a guest at a tropical resort and Murray Bartlett the concierge in the darkly funny "The White Lotus."**

HBO MAX/TNS

**Kaley Cuoco produces and stars in "The Flight Attendant."**

# WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

HEATHER KHALIFA, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/TNS

**Austin Kilaru, an emergency physician at Penn Presbyterian Medical Center, led research on whether some emergency department patients who would normally be admitted could safely recover at home.**

# No place like home to rest and heal

## Penn Medicine tests home-care program to help potential ER patients sick enough to be hospitalized avoid being admitted

BY STACEY BURLING
*The Philadelphia Inquirer*

On Feb. 28, David Campbell woke up with a terrible case of vertigo.

"I couldn't open my eyes without the room and all of the objects around me just spinning violently," he said. "Any slight movement of my head massively exacerbated the symptoms."

Campbell, a 58-year-old retired pharma director, couldn't walk. He had intense nausea. He called a family member, who carried him down the steps of his Northern Liberties, Pa., home and took him to Penn Presbyterian Medical Center's emergency department.

An electrocardiogram and a CT scan found nothing life-threatening. Over the course of a day and night in the department, he got medicines that helped the nausea and dizziness, but he was still sick enough that, under normal circumstances, he would have been admitted to the hospital. Instead, he entered a clinical trial supported by Penn Medicine and Independence Blue Cross that was testing an alternative to hospitalization: going home.

As part of the Practical Alternative to Hospitalization (PATH) program, Campbell got extra support from a team headed by emergency physician Austin Kilaru. A nurse practitioner called him every day to discuss his symptoms, explain vertigo and answer his questions. The program coordinated follow-up care with his primary care doctor.

Campbell was understandably worried about his disturbing symptoms. He didn't trust himself to decide whether he needed to go back to the hospital. He felt vulnerable, disoriented. The nurse calmed him.

"I've not needed someone in the past to help me manage caring for myself," he said.

After a few days, Campbell felt better. He emerged a fan of the experimental approach.

"It was phenomenal," he said. "I would imagine that, without it, the outcome would have been several unnecessary trips to the ER on my part." That, he said, would have added cost to the health system and inconvenience for him.

Kilaru, who has a masters in health policy, initially hoped to prevent emergency department visits entirely by sending home health nurses or paramedics to the homes of sick people. That proved difficult, because those patients still needed lab and imaging tests that were difficult to deliver at home.

He changed his focus to helping emergency patients avoid hospitalization. In 2018, a quarter of patients admitted to the hospital through Penn Presbyterian's emergency department stayed for two days or less, a sign that some had problems that could be managed elsewhere.

Working with Penn's Center for Health Care Innovation, Kilaru and his team developed a program that would identify patients who could safely go home and coordinate the personalized support they would need for about a week once they got there. That included nursing care, lab work, transportation, medication refills and physical therapy.

Extra support has become common after hospitalized patients are discharged, Kilaru said, but he believes Penn's emergency department program is unique.

Two pilot tests of PATH were successful. Results of one of them, which involved 30 patients, were published in April in the journal Healthcare. The most common diagnoses for participating patients were chest pain, heart failure and high blood sugar, the study found. Researchers estimated that the program reduced time in the emergency department for those patients by 8.2 hours and prevented hospital inpatient stays averaging 2.3 days. Four participants returned to the emergency department within the next 30 days.

Kilaru's team did a larger randomized trial with 72 patients this year. Results are still being analyzed, and Kilaru said he could not discuss them in detail before they are published in a medical journal.

"Our results look very promising," he said. The program itself is on hiatus now while the evaluation is underway.

Patients with COVID-19 were not included in the trial, but Penn had a similar program for those who sought help for infection in the emergency department.

COVID-19 was not on Kilaru's radar when PATH was conceived. Even before the pandemic, occupancy at Penn Presbyterian was often high, making it important to use available space wisely and increase outpatient capacity. COVID-19 surges have only emphasized the importance of reserving hospital beds for patients who really need them.

Independence Blue Cross chose to give Penn a grant to test PATH after hearing about it during a competitive pitch day, said Rodrigo Cerdá, an internist who is vice president of clinical care transformation at the insurer. His program seeks to improve health care value, which it defines as a combination of quality, patient experience, equity and cost.

"PATH was clearly one of the ones that has the most potential," he said.

Patients generally prefer to receive care at home, he said, and COVID-19 has pushed health providers to improve efficiency.

"COVID helps us sometimes to move faster because of being really careful with hospital capacity," he said.

Cerdá said PATH's results look "encouraging" so far. If that continues, IBC will figure out how it can change the way it pays for care at home to encourage wider use of the concept.

IBC is also interested in "hospital at home" models, which provide more complicated care at home. It is in discussions with providers, but no one is trying it yet.

Cerdá's program this year gave five Clinical Care Innovation Grants of about $200,000 each to study ideas ranging from enhanced primary care treatment for chronic kidney disease to automated text messaging for cancer patients on complicated, at-home chemotherapy regimens.

Kilaru said that both physicians and patients accepted the idea that some could go home.

"Patients loved it," he said. "The consistent thing that amazes me is that patients really do want to be at home."

Leslie Meeks, who was also part of the recent trial of PATH, went to Penn Presbyterian in early February with extreme gastric distress. Meeks, who would say only that she is in her "golden years," has had short stays in the hospital before.

"You don't get a lot of rest in the hospital, because there's a lot of things going on all the time," she said. "… It's just not very quiet and calming."

She got IV fluids and medications at home after she was stabilized at the emergency department. A nurse called every day. Meeks called once with a question. Her roommate was there to help her.

She thought it was a good experience. At the hospital, she said, "it's always busy. At home, you get more rest and you start feeling better."

**The most common diagnoses for participating patients were chest pain, heart failure and high blood sugar, the study found. Researchers estimated that the program reduced time in the emergency department for those patients by 8.2 hours and prevented hospital inpatient stays averaging 2.3 days. Four participants returned to the emergency department within the next 30 days.**

results of one PATH pilot test with 30 patients published in the journal Healthcare in April

# WEEKEND: FAMILY

iStock

**What mask is best? In short, a mask that your child will wear. Double-layered is probably most effective, though.**

# Wearability vs. protection

## Experts explain how parents can choose, care for masks for their kids

BY ELLIOT HASPEL
*The Washington Post*

This year's back-to-school supply list has an important line item: masks. With a rise in the delta variant, school mask mandates and recommendations from major medical groups that all children 2 and older should be masked in indoor group settings have sent parents into a mask-buying scramble.

With a dizzying variety of choices around not only brands, but types of face masks and how to care for them, parents have largely been left to fend for themselves as they try to protect their children and others. We asked infectious-disease specialists, pediatricians and other experts how parents should parse the mask questions.

### What kind offers the best protection?

There is a short answer and a long answer. The short answer is: A mask your child will tolerate.

"The most effective mask is a mask a child will wear and fits them properly. That's much more important than the filtration characteristics between the three different kinds of masks," says Eric Toner, an internist and senior scholar with the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security. The three types of masks that Toner referred to are cloth masks, surgical masks and N95s (plus their cousins, KN95s and KF94s).

Finding a mask your child will keep on during the school day was a point of common emphasis among all experts we spoke to.

The longer answer is that, compliance across mask types being equal, there are differences but not tremendous ones.

Toner says all three types of masks are effective at what is known as "source control," or stopping the spread of the virus outward if your child is the one infected. In terms of blocking incoming particles, all masks greatly reduce inhalation of virus-laden particles, with N95s blocking the most.

Even with the differences in filtration, though, all the experts we spoke to agreed that — even in the face of the delta variant — either a double-layered cloth mask or a surgical mask offer the best balance between wearability and protection. (To check if a cloth mask is double-layered, you should be able pull the separate layers of fabric toward opposite ends as if it were a double-layered blanket.)

### Are cloth masks with filters good options?

"Filters are a bit controversial because it's a bit unclear what kind of filter it is," says Emily Levy, a pediatric infectious-disease specialist at the Mayo Clinic. "So in general we recommend staying away from filters."

Aaron Prussin and Linsey Marr of Virginia Tech's Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering, who have created a public spreadsheet of child mask recommendations, write that they only recommend filters that "spans the mask. Smaller filter inserts are less effective because it is easier for air to flow around them rather than through them."

### How do I get my child to wear it all day?

Helping your child build good mask-wearing habits is generally more important than the materials the mask is made of. Several experts suggest including the child — particularly if they are younger — in the mask selection process.

"If children have a role in picking out a mask or decorating it, that can be really helpful in keeping the mask on their faces," says Yvonne Maldonado, a pediatric infectious-disease specialist at Stanford University and chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Committee on Infectious Diseases.

Bergen Nelson, a pediatrician with Virginia Commonwealth University Health Systems, talked about practicing and making a game out of it.

"Say, 'This your superhero costume — you're a superhero, wear your mask! Superheroes wear masks!'" she says. "Depending on the age and developmental level of the child, you can get them motivated in different ways. Some kids are very motivated to know that they're helping prevent the spread. Some kids like to be the superhero. Some kids might need an incentive: 'If you can go the whole time with your mask on, you can get a reward at the end of the day.'"

### How often should I change or wash them?

Fairly frequently. Levy says her rule of thumb is, "If you can see that the mask is soiled — markings externally or internally — it's probably time to wash it, and if it's disposable, it's probably time to get rid of it."

If a disposable mask is not soiled, it may be OK to reuse a couple times. The concern with reusing disposable masks is the loss of shape and a tight fit.

"If your goal is source control — to keep from spreading the virus to other people — even if you wore them 100 times, you'd still have good source control," Toner says. "They just start losing their efficacy for protecting you."

The Centers for Disease Control has a helpful website with information about cleaning and otherwise caring for masks.

## THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari

# Leave no witnesses: school-year secrets

"Did you have a good summer?" clusters of military moms in school parking lots asked each other last week. In response, we simultaneously gave the nurturing, motherly pat answer, "Yeah we had fun, but I only wish I had more time with the kids." We waved goodbye to our children, then headed home, appearing ready for a full and productive day.

But once our minivan doors closed, back-to-school reality hit us like a runaway school bus.

"I'm free," I muttered to myself, my eyes wide, my caffeine-affected fingers trembling against the steering wheel. "Finally ... free." In the time it took for me to round the circle and exit the school property, I'd thought of a million things I could do with my day now that there were no witnesses.

Over two decades of taking our three kids back to school at the end of each summer, I always found the feeling of being completely alone — unfettered by parental responsibilities, social mores, ethical codes and rules of human decency — quite liberating.

Seized with a pang of hunger, I realized that there was no one to stop me from opening the bag of cheese curls in the van's center console and pouring them directly into my upturned mouth. I switched the radio from the pop music station my girls insisted on to my favorite — the '80s channel — and bellowed "Karma Chameleon" as I negotiated traffic. At one stoplight, I flossed my teeth. At the next, I plucked my eyebrows.

At home, I spent a good 20 minutes on the floor snuggling with our dog, Moby, before planning my day. There was no one home to hear me talking to Moby out loud or to see him licking my face. There was no one there to balk, demand my attention or roll their eyes. There was no one to embarrass, shame or disgust.

It was just me. And it was wonderful.

Sure, we moms feel pangs of guilt at deceiving our children every year. Here they are, off at school, thinking that Mom is home jotting down new sandwich ideas, organizing their homework spaces and thinking nothing but nurturing thoughts. In reality, we are leading a secret double life.

With the freedom that the school year affords, we moms can mop our kitchen floors while singing the entire "Sound of Music" soundtrack, complete with "Lonely Goatherd" yodeling and "Climb Every Mountain" contralto vibrato. We can fold laundry while binge-watching DVRed episodes of "Bachelor in Paradise." We can meet our work friends out for long lunches, or stay home and eat logs of cookie dough all alone. We can join base bowling leagues, or teach ourselves to play the ukulele from YouTube videos. We can take a yoga classes, or take a nap wearing yoga pants.

Whatever we moms decide to do with our time, it's our little secret.

Our kids would be wise to keep up our little charade. After all, there's no sense in pointing out that the fried chicken on the table was cooked by Colonel Sanders. Our intentions are good, but we may have run out of time to cook dinner between spin class and that sale at the outlet mall. So just say, "This meal is delicious, Mom!" and be thankful that we had time to hit the drive-thru. Also, don't complain if Mom shows up late for practice pickups. You have no idea how hard it is to attend a friend's jewelry party and "like" all the funny cat videos on Facebook in one afternoon. Lastly, don't comment on new hairstyles, funky outfits or sudden tattoos. Mom may be finding herself, or recovering from a girls' night out — either way, it's her business.

Moms spend most of their time attending to their families' needs. So, once the kids are back in school, they deserve alone time to do whatever they darned well please.

Shhhhh ... mum's the word.

Read more at themeatandpotatoesoflife.com, and in Lisa's book, The Meat and Potatoes of Life: My True Lit Com. Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com.

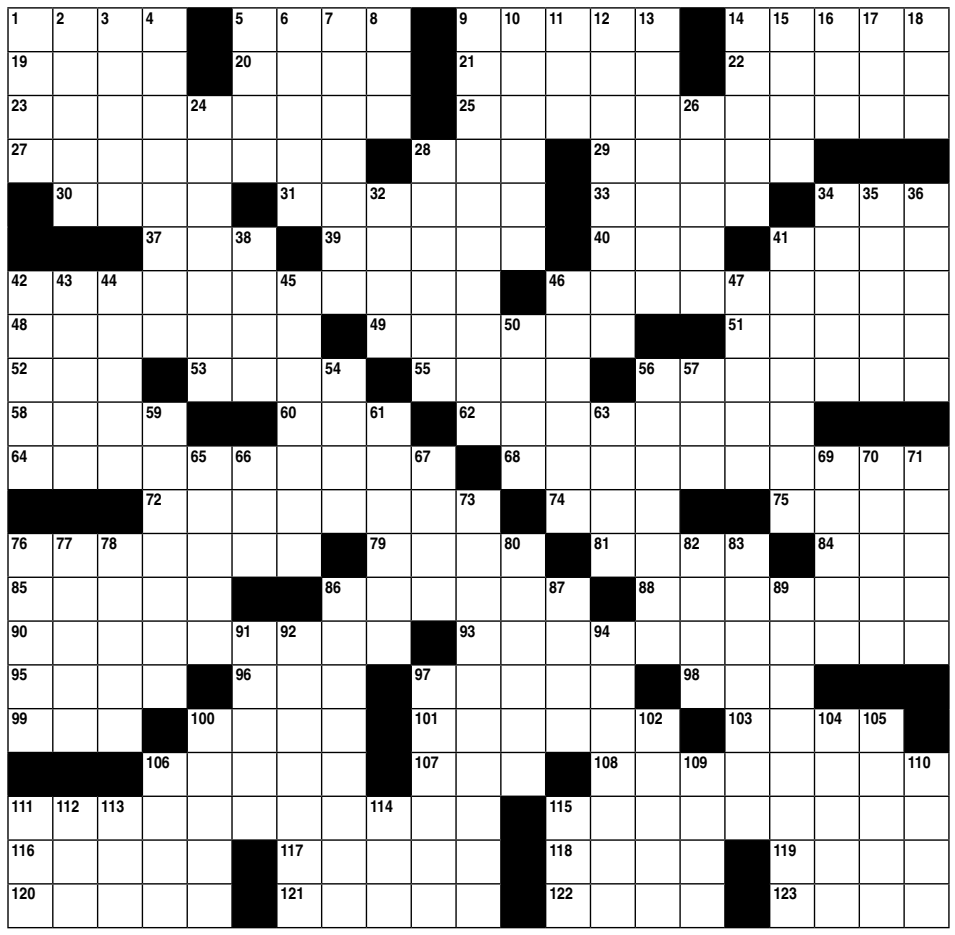
# WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

## NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

### RESETTLING LETTERINGS

BY STEPHEN MCCARTHY / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

**Stephen McCarthy, a native of Vancouver Island, British Columbia, is a Ph.D. student studying transportation modeling in Stockholm. He got his start in puzzles by solving cryptic crosswords in Toronto's Globe and Mail with his grandfather. Last year he began constructing American-style puzzles, incorporating some of the wordplay of cryptics in his themes and clues. This is a good example. Stephen's last Times crossword was "Maple Leaf," in June. — W.S.**



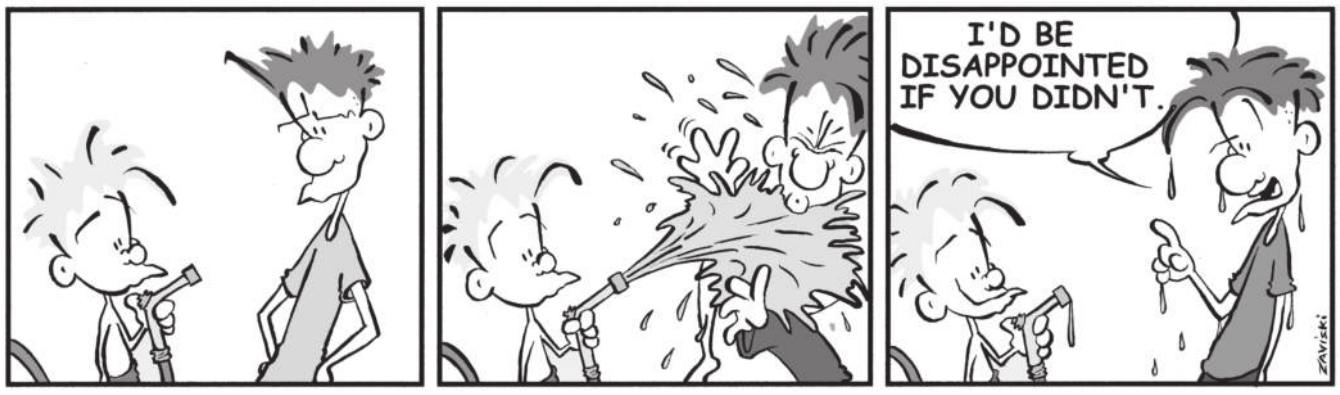
**ACROSS**

1 What a drawbridge may bridge
5 In that case
9 Control-tower installation
14 Pass
19 "That one's ____" ("My bad")
20 Amelia Bedelia, e.g.
21 "Go me!"
22 Member of a noble family
23 2004 film about a group of MALIGNERS
25 It might be put on for stage PAGEANTRIES
27 Annual film festival where "Saw" and "Get Out" premiered
28 "____ La La" (1964 hit)
29 Senator, e.g., for short
30 Avoids a bogey, perhaps
31 Being
33 Be hopping mad
34 Cool one
37 W.W. II hero, informally
39 Muletas are waved at them
40 Canon camera
41 Branch of Islam
42 You might be MARVELING AT this as it whizzes by
46 Sort of SCHEMATIC for Christian education
48 Like some casts
49 City nicknamed the Old Pueblo
51 French city near the Belgian border
52 Prefix with colonial
53 Tightfitting
55 Toni Morrison title heroine
56 Annual British acting award
58 Series of questions, maybe
60 Counterpart of elles
62 Opposite of never
64 Many relationships are INSTIGATED on one
68 Healthy eaters may give this A WIDE BERTH
72 Disrupt an online meeting, in a way
74 Mauna ____
75 Grp. that hasn't yet found what it's looking for
76 Wonder Woman and others
79 Valuable load for a mule
81 Influence
84 Pioneering gangsta rap group
85 Burdened
86 Just
88 Preferring one's own company, perhaps
90 They can be NOISELESS while stalking prey
93 Explorers of the UNTRAVERSED
95 Burden
96 Old cable-TV inits.
97 Fill in
98 Word repeated in "I ____, I ____, it's off to work I go"
99 Lick, say
100 "____ merci!" (French cry)
101 "On it, captain!"
103 "No need to make me a plate"
106 Five-letter word that replaces a four-letter word?
107 1980s gaming inits.
108 Not even
111 Writing done GRAPHICALLY
115 The Trojans lacked the FORESIGHT to turn this down
116 It's multilayered
117 You should always bring it to a competition
118 Children's author Blyton
119 Be taken aback
120 One way to cook a 116-Across
121 Unenthusiastic
122 They know the drill: Abbr.
123 Word after hard or before short

**DOWN**

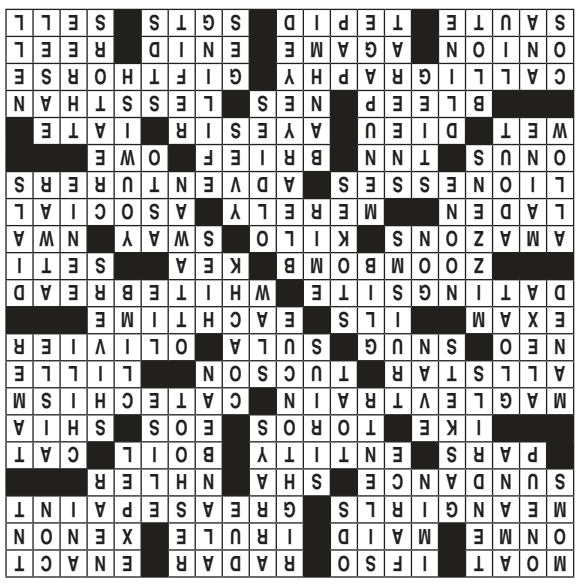
1 "My Two ____" (2015 Claudia Harrington children's book)
2 Top
3 Appliance brand since 1934
4 Pea shooters?
5 "Sign me up!"
6 Complete travesty
7 Feature of many British accents
8 Binges too much, for short
9 As if orchestrated
10 Indexed data structures
11 Directly
12 Fourth person to walk on the moon
13 Do a double take?
14 Boot
15 Almost
16 What makes Shrek shriek?
17 One side in a debate
18 It may be blown
24 They may be blown
26 House Republican V.I.P. Stefanik
28 Star in Canis Major
32 Just so
34 Hot-dog topper
35 Airline passenger request
36 Lion ____
38 "Dear ____ Hansen" (2017 Tony-winning musical)
41 Responds to br-r-r-isk weather?
42 Like zebras and lions
43 Voice with an Echo
44 Rub it in
45 "It is what it is" and others
46 Mike Krzyzewski, to Duke basketball fans
47 Rise
50 Hot-dog topper
54 A little too silky, maybe
56 Justin Trudeau, by birth
57 Don't believe it!
59 Aftmost masts on ships
61 Gives fuel to
63 Gets a move on, quaintly
65 Who can hear you scream in space
66 Ending with poly-
67 Title meaning "commander"
69 "____ Meenie" (2010 hit)
70 Battling
71 Rings up
73 Showing the effects of an all-nighter, say
76 Give one's blessing to
77 It has more coastline than California, surprisingly
78 Score after seven points, maybe
80 Certain radio format
82 Apropos of
83 "Like that'll ever happen!"
86 "Appetizers" or "Desserts," at a diner
87 International cosmetics company ____ Rocher
89 Content people?
91 Larsson who wrote "The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo"
92 Pooh-pooh
94 Common April activity, nowadays
97 Vietnamese sandwich
100 Group trying to sack a QB
102 Make over, as a ship
104 A crowd, they say
105 It has 104-Down legs
106 Obscure, with "out"
109 They may be set by industry grps.
110 Girl in "The Old Curiosity Shop"
111 sin/tan
112 Major Japanese carrier
113 "Kill Bill" co-star
114 You can chew on it
115 Some appliances

## GUNSTON STREET




"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

## RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



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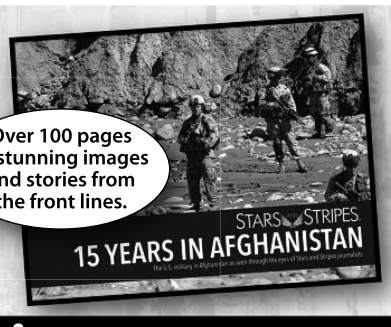


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FACES

# Bringing the magic

## The enchantment of Billy Porter, from 'Cinderella' to 'What If?'

BY JOSHUA AXELROD
*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

Magic has been a driving force of Billy Porter's most recent work.

The Pittsburgh native dabbled in some literal magic as a genderless fairy godparent dubbed the Fab G in "Cinderella," now available on Amazon Prime Video. Not only did he get to transform Camila Cabello's Cinderella into her ideal version of herself, but he also got to break down barriers of gender norms in the process.

"I'm excited to portray magic as having no gender," Porter told the Post-Gazette. "It's time to have different conversations. This interpretation of 'Cinderella' sort of turns all of the traditional and problematic tropes on their ear. It explodes these traditions into the stratosphere and creates a whole new language.

"The Fab G is a part of that interpretation. Art imitates life, life imitates art, and I am in the position and have the platform to show up in this role and hopefully move the conversation that exists surrounding it forward."

His other recent endeavor that inspired Billy to invoke the "M" word was "What If?", the coming-of-age high school dramedy that will serve as his directorial debut. He had been in Pittsburgh since July filming it before wrapping production last week.

"It was magical," he said of the experience. "It's my first feature film. To be able to come home and shoot and be embraced by the community and local crew is exceptional and so loving. We had such a great time. It's a love letter to Pittsburgh, and I'm so excited to be in the position to be able to do that. Hopefully this is just the start of much, much more."

Porter said he was "surrounded by love" on the Pittsburgh set of "What If?" in the form of local folks he had worked with before whom he brought in because he trusted them to help make his directorial dreams come true. That included "Hamilton" star and fellow Carnegie Mellon alumnus Renee Elise Goldsberry, whom Porter called to be in "What If?" because "I had to have my sister there."

He mentioned that the shoot went two days over for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was some less-than-desirable weather that prevented him from getting the shots he needed of various outdoor Pittsburgh staples like Point State Park, the Mount Washington overlook, and the outside of Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens.

"It rained for nine weeks straight," he said. "We had to reschedule all our outside money shots for the Pittsburgh love letter."

SONY PICTURES

**Billy Porter stars as the fairy godparent, Fab G, in "Cinderella," now streaming on Amazon Prime.**

Now that he's done filming "What If?," Porter can focus on his many other projects, which includes promoting "Cinderella." That movie was supposed to be released February in theaters, but the COVID-19 pandemic delayed it and eventually forced Sony into putting it out directly on a streaming service.

At this point, Porter is just happy that "Cinderella" is finally coming out and hopes it can serve as an "injection of joy" in dark times. That's the energy he tried to bring to a viral marketing stunt that saw him and co-stars Cabello, Idina Menzel and James Corden (decked out in a mouse costume that fits with his "Cinderella" character) stopping Los Angeles traffic to perform a rendition of Jennifer Lopez's "Let's Get Loud."

"It's all joy," said Billy of the flash mob that received some light internet mockery last weekend. "To show up and be able to promote something that is getting so much goodwill, that's what we all dream of. It's amazing."

Writer-director Kay Cannon wrote the Fab G with Porter in mind, he said. Cannon and her collaborators were "pulling from my energy I have in my everyday life" for the character, which, if you know anything about Porter, definitely comes across on screen.

Based on the way he responded to being asked if he wished he was in more of the film than just a few voice-overs and one extended musical number, he has clearly heard that question before.

"The fairy godmother is always in one scene," he said. "I don't know what y'all are talking about! She gives [Cinderella] the dress, some encouragement and that's it. That's the gig, y'all! Leave you wanting more."

It's quite a memorable scene, though, as Porter is decked out in a lavish outfit curated by costume designer Ellen Mirojnick that accents the "fashion as activism" vibe Porter has often employed throughout his career, in this case helping to facilitate "the masculinity conversation" he'd like the Fab G to inspire. Those physical decisions went as far as Porter opting to keep his goatee and deciding to cut a hair piece that he believed "pushed it too far into the feminism side."

Then there's the song itself that he gets to sing: "Shining Star" by Earth, Wind & Fire. In the original script he read, Fab G's song was "Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)" by Eurythmics.

"OK, I see what y'all want me to do," he said upon realizing his song had changed. "Y'all have laid the groundwork for me to come in and slay. ... 'Sweet Dreams' is a different kind of slayage from 'Shining Star.' They made the decision, I just showed up and fulfilled the assignment."

Porter has been slaying quite a few assignments lately, from "Cinderella" and "What If?" to his upcoming book "Unprotected: A Memoir," out Oct. 19, which he says "will be very useful to many, I hope." He was recently tapped to direct his next feature film, the queer teen comedy "To Be Real," for Amazon Studios.

How does he find time for all these creative pursuits?

"I'm an old gypsy, honey," he said. "I know how to work. I'm from Pittsburgh."

PARAMOUNT PICTURES/AP

**Tom Cruise portrays Capt. Pete "Maverick" Mitchell in a scene from "Top Gun: Maverick." Instead of opening Nov. 19, the "Top Gun" sequel will instead debut Memorial Day weekend next year.**

# 'Top Gun: Maverick' moves to 2022 as pandemic prompts film release delays

BY PETER SBLENDORIO
*New York Daily News*

"Top Gun: Maverick" will now land in 2022 as the theatrical release schedule underwent more big changes Wednesday.

The much-anticipated movie starring Tom Cruise has been pushed back to next May 27, the Daily News confirmed. The "Top Gun" sequel was previously scheduled to be released in theaters by Paramount Pictures on Nov. 19.

Paramount on Wednesday also moved another Cruise-led movie, "Mission: Impossible 7," from May 27 to Sept. 30, 2022.

Another shift Wednesday saw Sony move "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" back by a week into that Nov. 19 date vacated by "Top Gun."

"Jackass Forever," meanwhile, moved from Oct. 22 to Feb. 4, 2022.

Numerous theatrical releases been delayed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with the delta variant of the virus sparking the latest concerns within the theater-going industry.

"Top Gun: Maverick" and "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" are among the high-profile titles to experience multiple delays.

The new "Ghostbusters" now opens the same weekend as "King Richard," which stars Will Smith as the father of tennis greats Venus and Serena Williams. That film will arrive simultaneously in theaters and on HBO Max on Nov. 19.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Case against former police officer advances

**CO** LOVELAND — A former Colorado police officer involved in the rough arrest of an elderly woman with dementia should stand trial for assault, a judge ruled Monday.

District Judge Michelle Brinegar said there is probable cause for the charge against former Loveland police officer Austin Hopp, who will be arraigned later this month, the Loveland Reporter-Herald reported.

Hopp arrested Karen Garner in June 2020 after she left a store without paying for about $14 worth of items. His body camera footage shows him catching up to the woman as she walked through a field along a road. Gardner, now 74, shrugged and turned away from him and he quickly grabbed her arm and pushed her 80-pound body to the ground.

## Teen charged in shooting of fellow student

**NC** WILMINGTON — A teen has been charged after a student was shot during a fight at a North Carolina high school on Monday, the sheriff's office said.

Several students were fighting around 11 a.m. at New Hanover High School when a 15-year-old shot another juvenile, New Hanover County Sheriff Ed McMahon said at a news conference. The wounded student was taken to a hospital and his injuries aren't considered life-threatening, McMahon said.

Both teens are students at the school, according to county schools spokesman Russell Clark.

Authorities have arrested and charged the 15-year-old with attempted first-degree murder, assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill inflicting serious injury and weapons offenses, the sheriff's office said.

## Digging at dinosaur tracks site brings charges

**MA** HOLYOKE — Two men were arrested on suspicion of digging in an area of protected fossilized dinosaur footprints, authorities in Massachusetts said.

The men, from New Jersey and Connecticut, were seen by police on Saturday afternoon walking up the stairs at the site along the Connecticut River in Holyoke carrying out rocks and tools, Capt. Matthew Moriarty said. The men told police they did not think they were digging in the protected area.

"A check of the reservation map was made and it appears their digging was on the protected land," Moriarty said.

## Crematorium apologizes for condition of bodies

**ME** LEWISTON — A funeral home operator who is accused of leaving bodies unattended without refrigeration apologized through his attorney, who says the business owner was going through a personal crisis.

A letter from the attorney for Affordable Cremation Solutions owner Ken Kincer said the man was in the grips of substance abuse and that his life had become a "living nightmare," WMTW-TV reported.

The business was shut down and its funeral licenses were suspended in June by Maine's Board of Funeral Service. Investigators cited a public health violation because they found an odor of decomposition and the unrefrigerated bodies of 11 people in the basement.

CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

# Tour is full steam ahead

**A worker tends to the world's largest operating steam locomotive, Union Pacific's Big Boy No. 4014, during an overnight stop Tuesday in Kansas City, Mo. The locomotive, weighing 1.2 million pounds, started service in 1941 and was used for 20 years before it was retired and put on display at a California museum. In 2013 Union Pacific reacquired the locomotive and restored it to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad's completion. The stop was part of a monthlong 10-state tour of communities served by the railroad.**

## THE CENSUS

**154** **The number of years a factory in Portland, Maine, has been open,** either canning meats and vegetables or making baked beans. The iconic factory overlooking Casco Bay is going to cease production to make way for an institution affiliated with Northeastern University, officials said Monday. A nonprofit representing the Roux Institute at Northeastern is buying the waterfront property, which will be used for offices, classrooms and research space, in addition to restaurants and possibly a hotel, the Portland Press Herald reported. The B&M Beans factory dates to 1867 when Burnham and Morrill Co. began canning meats and vegetables. Baked beans came later. Production of baked beans will move to the Midwest, the company said.

## Ex-school officer charged with soliciting a minor

**SC** SPARTANBURG — A former South Carolina school resource officer faces criminal charges after police said she tried to solicit sexual activity from a 14-year-old student.

Agents with the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division arrested Caitlinn Lee Wooten on Tuesday. Wooten had previously worked as an officer with the Inman Police Department and served as a school officer at T.E. Mabry Middle School in Spartanburg County, according to a SLED news release.

Police said Wooten attempted to coerce the student into sexual activity while working at the middle school.

The 29-year-old is also accused of providing minors with nicotine and alcohol and distributing obscene material to a minor. She faces a misconduct in office charge as well.

## Some donations to help lawmaker might go back

**MN** ST. PAUL — Some donations to help with child care for a Minnesota lawmaker who recently cut off three fingers in a power saw accident will probably have to be returned, according to officials.

A GoFundMe web page was created to help Rep. Erin Koegel and her family as she recovers from the Aug. 22 accident. The Spring Lake Park Democrat lost control of a power saw, severing three fingers on her left hand. Doctors were able to reattach one of the three fingers.

As of Wednesday morning, nearly $8,800 had been raised on the web page, exceeding the $5,000 goal. But some of the donations raised eyebrows among those familiar with the state's lobbying law, the St. Paul Pioneer Press reported. The donations from some on the list would appear to be a violation of a state law that generally prohibits state lawmakers and other public officials and employees from accepting most gifts worth more than $5 from lobbyists.

## State: City skirted no-bid laws in rink renovation

**NJ** NEWARK — New Jersey's largest city violated state guidelines when it financed a $5.4 million contract to renovate a public ice skating rink when the cost should have been borne by the entity performing the work, a state comptroller's report released Wednesday concluded.

The report by acting State Comptroller Kevin Walsh found Newark didn't conduct a public bidding process when it selected Devils Renaissance Development, a private entity associated with the New Jersey Devils NHL team, to renovate the rink at the Sharpe James and Kenneth A. Gibson Recreation and Aquatic Center in East Newark.

The Devils play at Prudential Center arena in Newark.

Under New Jersey's Adopt-a-Park statute, a municipality can contract with a private entity for maintaining, operating or improving a public park without having to seek competitive pricing, as long as the agreement comes at no cost to the municipality. Newark issued $5.2 million in bonds in 2017 to pay for the project, according to the report.

## Museum develops new show about musicians

**KY** OWENSBORO — A new television show developed by the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum in western Kentucky is scheduled to be distributed by a cable channel later this year, officials said.

Each episode of "My Bluegrass Story" is filmed at the Hall of Fame in Owensboro and highlights different musicians who tell their stories and perform songs important to their careers, a statement from the museum said. The show is set to premiere on RFD-TV later this year.

From The Associated Press

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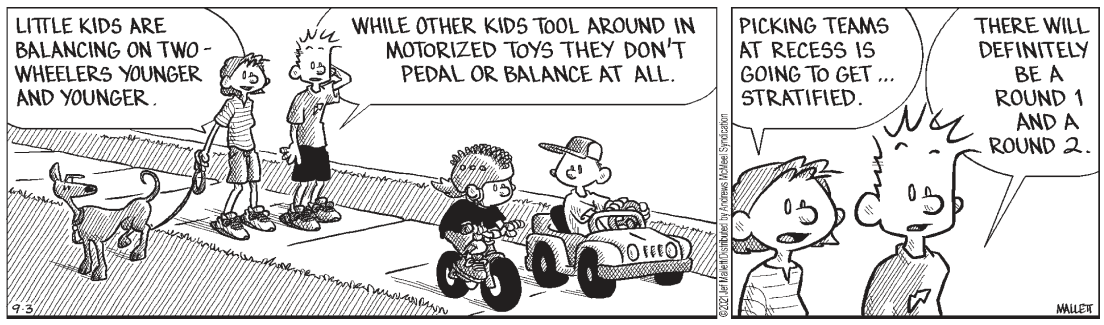
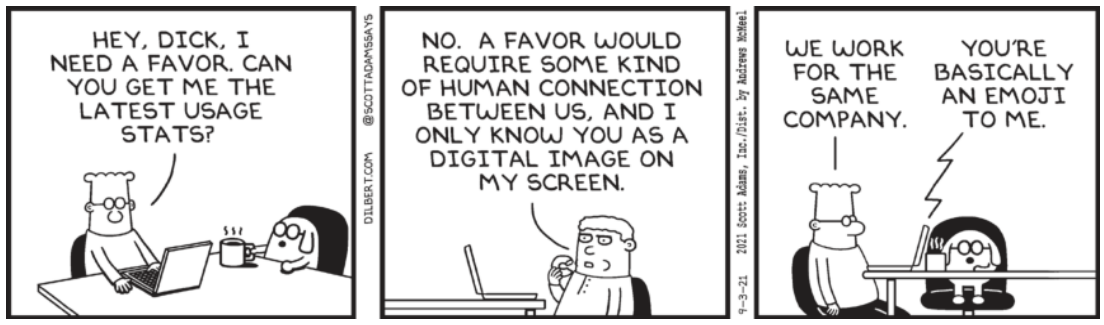
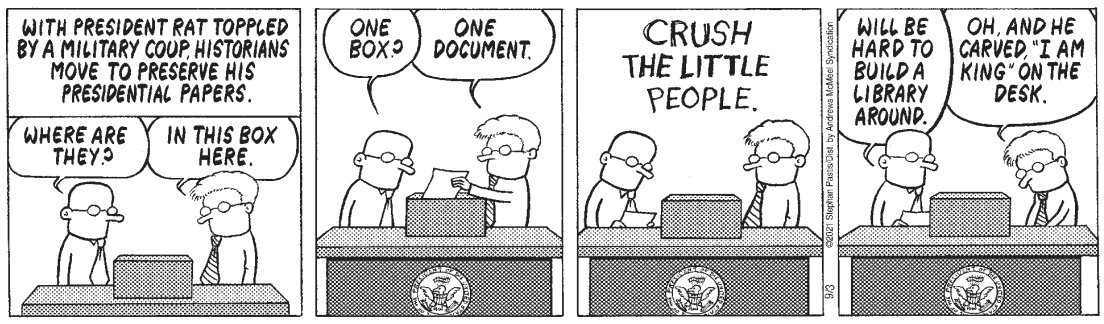
Frazz



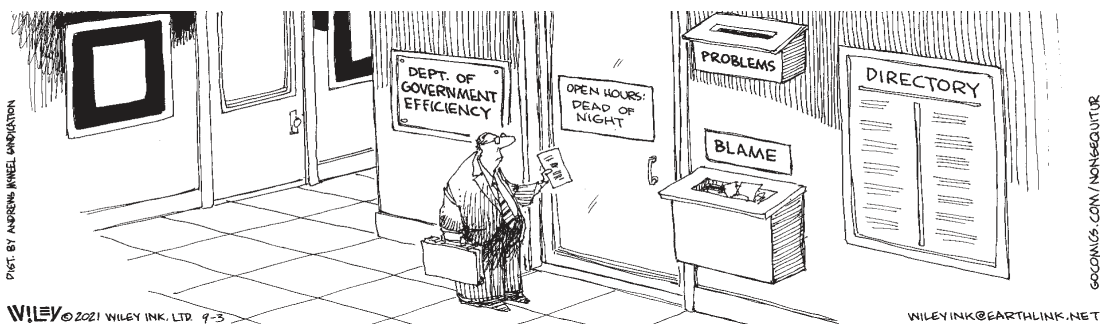

Dilbert




Pearls Before Swine

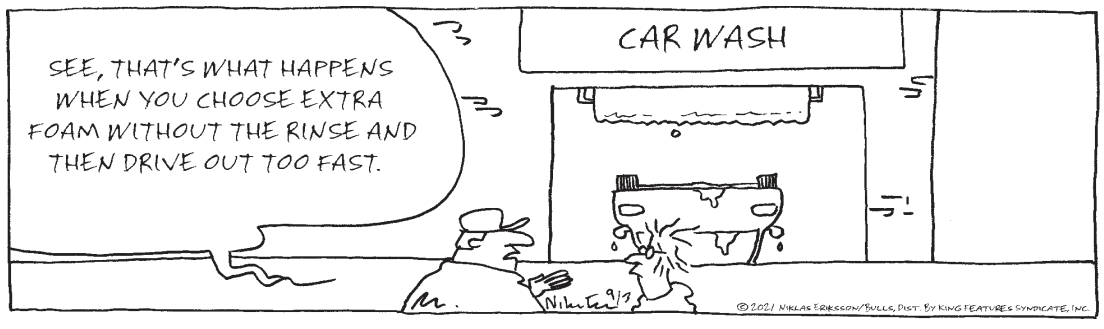



Non Sequitur




Candorville

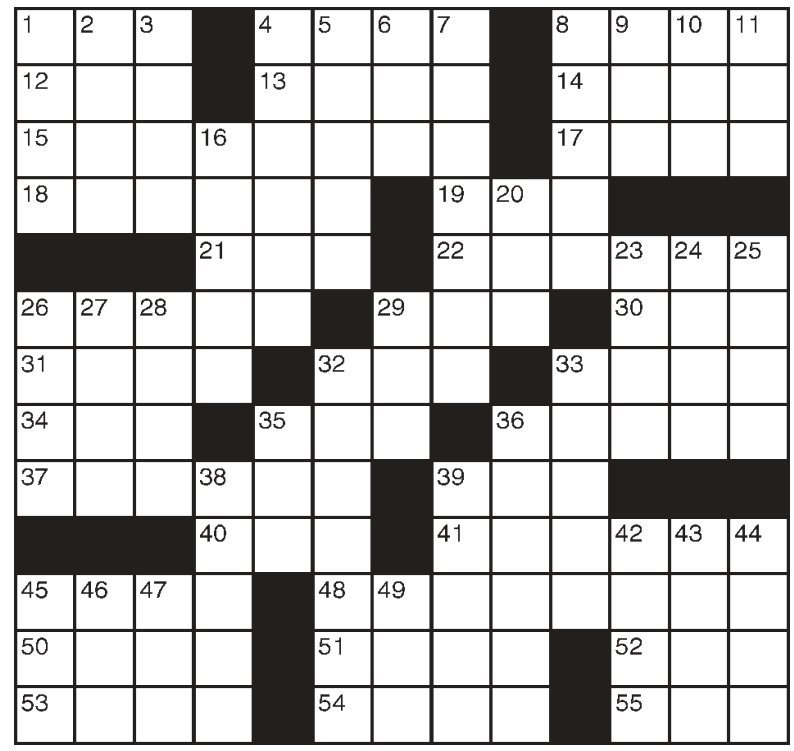
Carpe Diem




Beetle Bailey

Bizarro

## Eugene Sheffer Crossword



**ACROSS**

1 Rm. coolers
4 Gator's kin
8 Academic
12 Jazzy style
13 It grows on you
14 Charged bits
15 Deep fissure
17 Karate blow
18 Trig measure
19 Scratch
21 School support org.
22 Woodwind player
26 You're looking at them
29 French article
30 Sigma follower
31 Beatty and Rorem
32 Tax pro
33 Biting remark
34 Life story
35 "— Doubtfire"
36 Salsa singer Cruz
37 Pooch
39 Monopoly buys (Abbr.)
40 Trim the grass
41 Model Lauren
45 Test the waters
48 Lover of Troilus
50 Draft status
51 "Do — others ..."
52 Silent assent
53 Sharp
54 London gallery
55 Geological period

**DOWN**

1 Grade school basics
2 Apple center
3 Detail, briefly
4 Monk's music
5 Bob Marley, for one
6 Sue Grafton's "— for Outlaw"
7 Where fine Italian violins are made
8 Itty-bitty
9 Sound of delight
10 Sean — Lennon
11 Recipe abbr.
16 Smokes an e-cig
20 Honest politician
23 Slanted type (Abbr.)
24 Ganges wrap
25 Hefty horn
26 "Mad Money" network
27 "Star Wars" princess
28 Japanese noodle
29 Boom times
32 Short do
33 Defeats
35 6 on a phone
36 Fictional castaway
38 "That is to say ..."
39 Fictional Butler
42 Fork prong
43 Air freshener target
44 Zilch
45 Stir-fry pan
46 Hydrocarbon ending
47 Actor Billy — Williams
49 Genetic letters

**Answer to Previous Puzzle**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | O | R | M | | G | I | V | E | | L | O | G |
| A | L | A | I | | L | A | I | T | | A | T | A |
| P | A | R | K | B | E | N | C | H | | R | O | I |
| A | Y | E | A | Y | E | | | O | A | K | E | N |
| | | | D | E | | J | E | S | U | S | | |
| S | U | M | O | | S | O | L | | G | P | A | S |
| E | V | A | | | I | L | K | | | U | M | A |
| T | A | R | T | | L | T | S | | P | R | O | M |
| | | K | I | C | K | S | | D | R | | | |
| P | A | D | M | A | | | E | E | Y | O | R | E |
| U | N | O | | D | A | R | K | A | N | G | E | L |
| M | O | W | | R | I | N | G | | N | E | A | L |
| A | N | N | | E | R | A | S | | E | E | L | S |

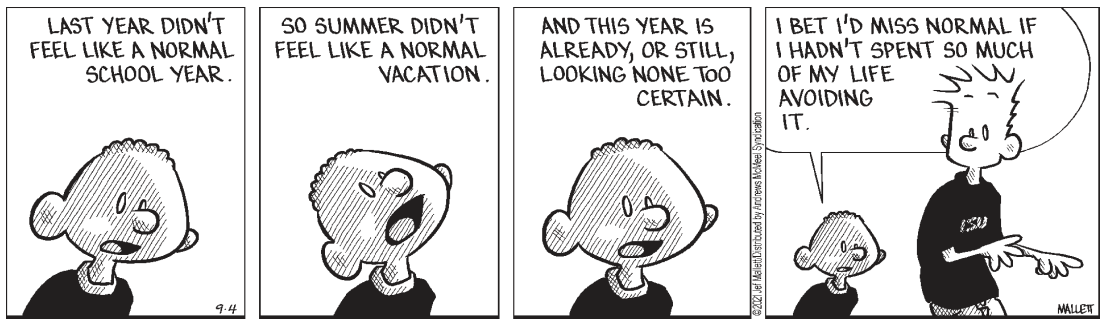
**9-3 CRYPTOQUIP**

SOYE BQKYIOCEH CB LALCRLNRY VQP LEX BCFYSLXB-KQACEH WPTBILWYLE, C BTZZQBY CI'B TZ VQP WPLNB.

**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** OUR ORCHESTRA CONDUCTOR HAS SUDDENLY GOTTEN A LOT LESS CORDIAL. NO MORE MAESTRO NICE GUY!

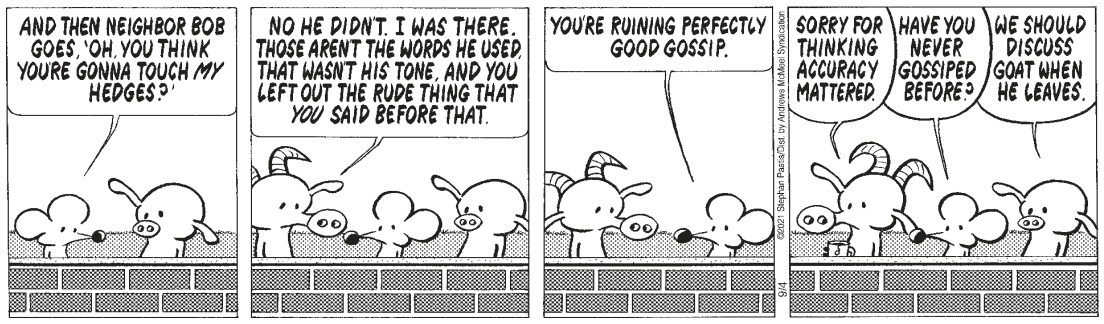
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals G

Frazz



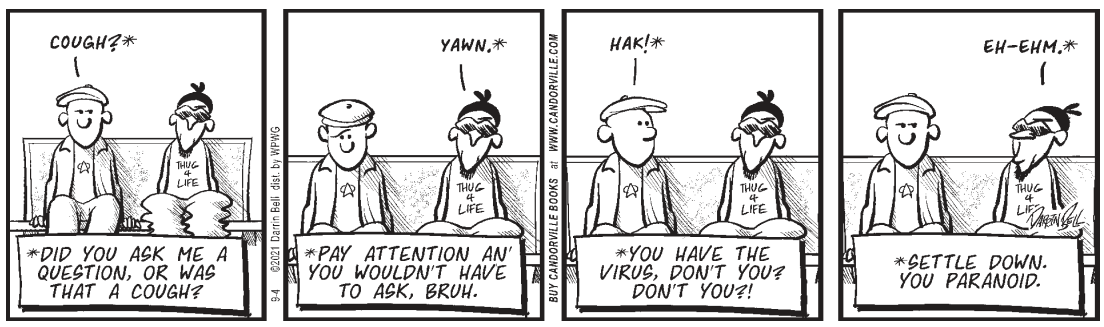

Dilbert

Pearls Before Swine

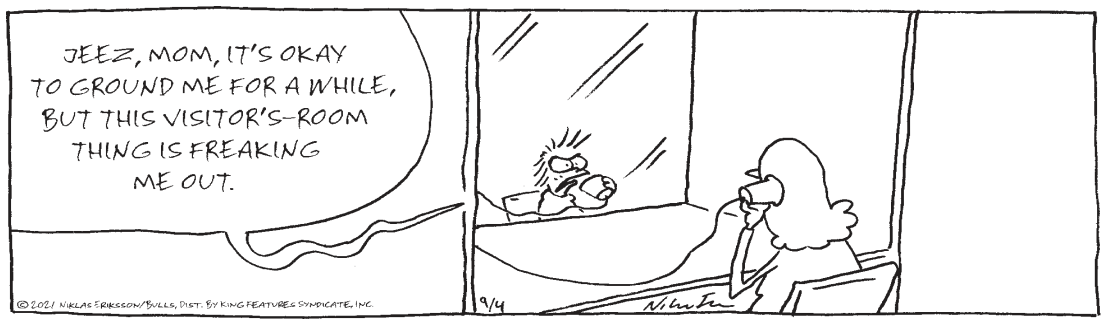



Non Sequitur

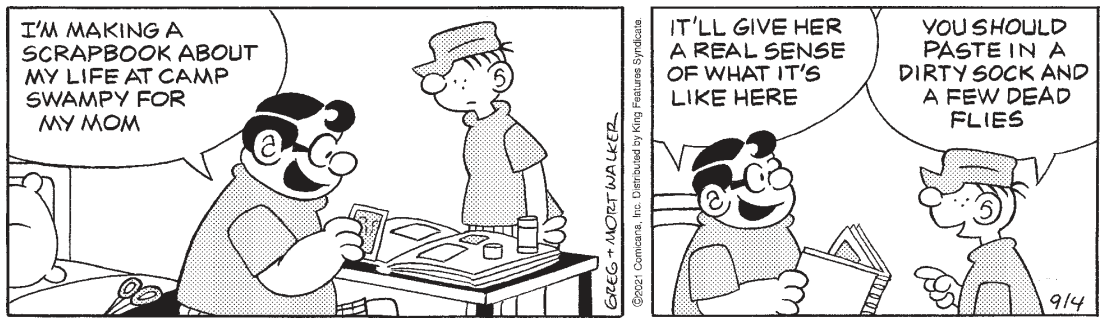
Candorville



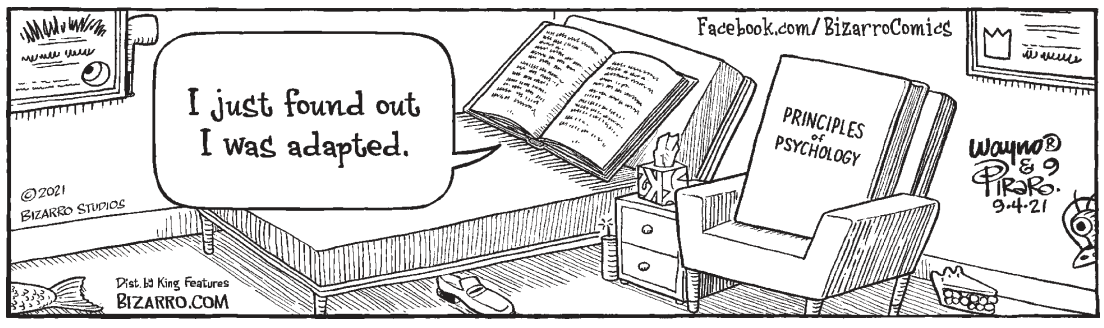

Carpe Diem



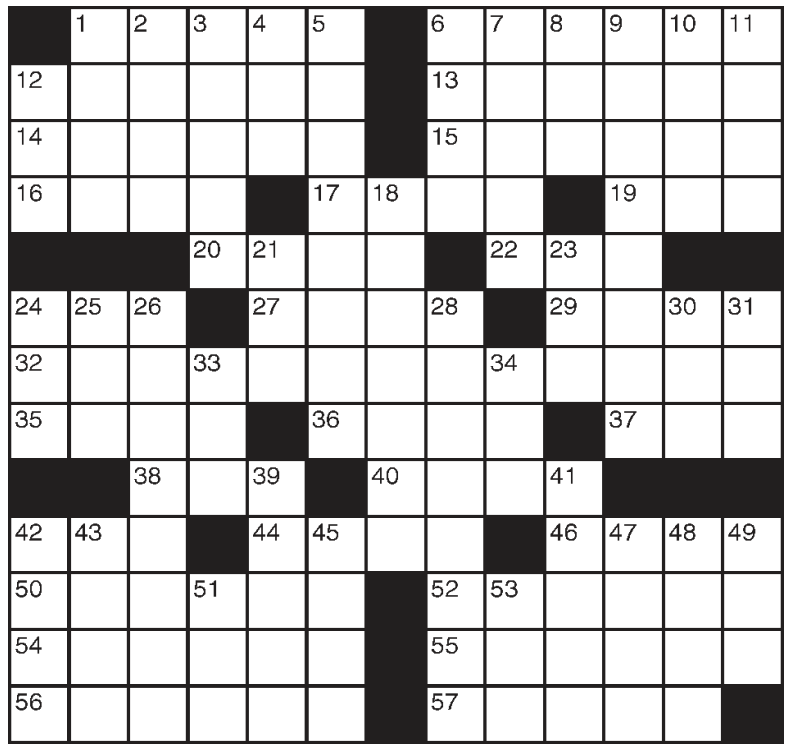

Beetle Bailey




Bizarro




## Eugene Sheffer Crossword



### ACROSS

1 Pizzazz
6 Guitarist Havens
12 Henner of "Taxi"
13 Quantity
14 Wunderkind
15 Zipper substitute
16 Toni Morrison novel
17 Monogram pt.
19 Understanding
20 Green gem
22 Canine cry
24 Rug cleaner, briefly
27 TV host Mike
29 Opera set in Egypt
32 1981 hit song by Journey
35 Poet Teasdale
36 Faxed
37 Stanley Cup org.
38 Refusals
40 Queens stadium name
42 Vintage
44 Small pie
46 Dazzle
50 Unemotional
52 Bistro, for one
54 "That makes me happy!"
55 Peaceful
56 Without difficulty
57 Dweebs

### DOWN

1 Honolulu's isle
2 Pitcher Hershiser
3 Rapper Nicki
4 Mideast org.
5 Cigar holders
6 Sitarist Shankar
7 "— man who wasn't there"
8 Gen.'s underling
9 Tom Sawyer's pal
10 Concerning
11 Harrow rival
12 AWOL pursuers
18 Annual celebration
21 Lob's path
23 Tatter
24 Beetle and Rabbit, briefly
25 "Eureka!"
26 Deep-fried franks
28 Genius
30 Homer's cry
31 Piercing tool
33 — Paulo, Brazil
34 Ultimate
39 Filch
41 Perfume compound
42 Tot's scrape
43 — Linda, Calif.
45 Opie's dad
47 Look after
48 "Topaz" author
49 The Big Apple, briefly
51 Roman 551
53 "— you serious?"

**Answer to Previous Puzzle**

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | C | S | | C | R | O | C | | M | O | O | T |
| B | O | P | | H | A | I | R | | I | O | N | S |
| C | R | E | V | A | S | S | E | | C | H | O | P |
| S | E | C | A | N | T | | M | A | R | | | |
| | | | P | T | A | | O | B | O | I | S | T |
| C | L | U | E | S | | U | N | E | | T | A | U |
| N | E | D | S | | C | P | A | | B | A | R | B |
| B | I | O | | M | R | S | | C | E | L | I | A |
| C | A | N | I | N | E | | R | R | S | | | |
| | | | M | O | W | | H | U | T | T | O | N |
| W | A | D | E | | C | R | E | S | S | I | D | A |
| O | N | E | A | | U | N | T | O | | N | O | D |
| K | E | E | N | | T | A | T | E | | E | R | A |

**9-4** **CRYPTOQUIP**

U H G Q U S W B V G U R Q Y Y E V B Y U C B C U S Q Y B W W N B P B S W E H Q C E D B X E M Y B Y , E S B P U T X W R Q N N X U P Q G M B D N E G Q D N E.

**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** WHEN SOMETHING IS AVAILABLE FOR ANY SIDEWAYS-MOVING CRUSTACEAN, I SUPPOSE IT'S UP FOR CRABS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals P

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# OPINION

## Dangerous backlash on civilian control of military

**By James Hohmann**
*The Washington Post*

Civilian control of the armed forces means that a president makes the big decisions about war and that U.S. troops will comply so long as his orders are lawful.

But the deadly evacuation of Kabul, mishandled though it was by President Joe Biden, illuminated a dangerous strain of thought inside the military about civilian control.

In a move that has already cost him his command, Marine Lt. Col. Stuart Scheller expressed "contempt" that the defense secretary, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and commandant of the Marine Corps executed the president's directive to withdraw from Afghanistan. Wearing his uniform, the active-duty battalion commander said in a Facebook video last Thursday: "Did any of you throw your rank on the table and say, 'Hey, it's a bad idea to evacuate Bagram Airfield …?' "

But Scheller went further, and seemed to call on men and women in uniform to rise up and resist civilian control. "Follow me, and we will bring the whole f—ing system down," the lieutenant colonel said in a follow-up video on Sunday. "They only have the power because we allow it," he added Monday on Facebook.

Such views — and Scheller's decision to express them — are as alarming as they are out of line. But many on the right have sought this week to cast Scheller as a martyr for their latest lost cause. Former President Donald Trump, who negotiated the abysmal deal with the Taliban that Biden implemented, shared a Free Beacon story about Scheller's comments. Rep. Dan Crenshaw, R-Texas, condoned the insubordination. "This guy is all class," the ex-Navy SEAL tweeted. The American Conservative called Scheller a "National Hero."

Scheller's remarks came in the same week that the group Flag Officers 4 America published an open letter signed by 87 retired generals and admirals that demanded the resignations of Army Gen. Mark A. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, himself a retired four-star general. "If they did not do everything within their authority to stop the hasty withdrawal, they should resign," the letter states. "Conversely, if they did do everything … then they should have resigned in protest."

These tensions aren't new, of course. Jim Mattis, a retired general, resigned in 2018 as defense secretary, a political appointment, after Trump unexpectedly announced a withdrawal of troops from Syria. Milley apologized last June after walking with Trump in his combat fatigues through downtown Washington after Lafayette Square was violently cleared of protesters. The Joint Chiefs chairman expressed regret that doing so "created the perception of the military involved in domestic politics."

Civil-military relations have been strained by 20 continuous years of combat since the Sept. 11 attacks. During this period, civilian chiefs tried to fight too many wars with too few troops, taxing the volunteer military. At the same time, service chiefs and combatant commanders too often prioritized their parochial agendas over their duty to provide candid advice to the commander in chief so he can make the most informed decisions possible.

"Our profession lost its way for a few years, and our voices came to be seen as part of the cacophony of special interests," retired Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs, told The Washington Post's David Ignatius recently.

One of the reasons the United States ended up with this messy pullout is because the Pentagon overplayed its hand in 2009. Insiders say Biden remains resentful over the role the brass played during the deliberations that led President Barack Obama to agree to a surge in Afghanistan. As vice president, Biden opposed deploying more troops and felt military leaders took advantage of a neophyte president by presenting him limited options and selectively leaking to the press to box him in.

Biden took the top job determined not to get rolled again by the brass. Austin and Milley advocated keeping 3,000 to 4,500 troops in the country, in addition to air support and contractors to help the Afghan army. The president felt he was showing intestinal fortitude by resisting pressure to maintain a residual force, which he insists would have led to an escalation of the conflict.

In making the "strategic" decision to get out, and setting the Aug. 31 deadline for withdrawal, Biden insists he followed the "tactical" recommendations of the commanders on how best to do so, which included giving up Bagram. Ultimately, though, he has repeatedly told Americans that the buck stops with him.

In a similar vein, Scheller also recognizes that he may pay a price for his decisions. The 41-year-old submitted a letter of resignation after his commanders told him he's lost their trust and confidence. "My chain of command is doing exactly what I would do," Scheller wrote on Facebook, "if I were in their shoes."

On Wednesday, in a since-deleted Facebook post, Scheller said he expects to be investigated for violating the code of military justice. "If it does go to court-martial, I will be found guilty, and will probably do some jail time," he said. "This will provide me a valuable opportunity to read, write, and contemplate."

It might also provide him with a chance to remind other members of the military that they must respect the chain of command.

James Hohmann is a Washington Post opinion columnist.

## China's video-game crackdown gives America an edge

**By Tae Kim**
*Bloomberg Opinion*

China is not a fan of video games. Earlier this week, a government agency announced new rules that would restrict the time that minors can play online games to about three hours a week — down drastically from a prior limit of roughly 10 hours. Beijing has said the constraints were imposed to protect its youth from becoming addicted to gaming and getting distracted from their studies. But are games really so dangerous to young minds?

I don't think so.

For decades, critics have called gaming a detriment to society without any hard proof. The negativity is an antiquated view that doesn't match reality. In fact, there is increasing evidence that video games can be beneficial in several areas. Let's start with the basics: Most parents know that games such as Microsoft's Minecraft and Roblox's platform can stimulate thinking, spark creativity and help develop problem-solving skills.

But that's just the beginning. Powerful technology titans have credited video games for putting them on a path to success. In 2015, Facebook Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg said he would never have gotten into programming if he hadn't played games when he was younger, adding that his passion for making games developed his technical skills. And it's not just coding. Gaming can help people advance in their professional careers. Shopify CEO Tobi Lutke said he has learned more about effectively running a business from playing Starcraft — a modern-day version of chess where players allocate resources with incomplete information — than he ever attained from reading books. "Strategy games look simple but they teach you complex system decision-making in a way that not much else can," he posted on social media. Researchers have backed up the claim: According to one academic study, performance in strategy games can indicate managerial competence among job applicants.

In a way, Zuckerberg and Lutke's stories are similar to my own. Video games were instrumental in sparking my lifelong interest in technology. When I was younger, I built a new computer nearly every year, mostly so I could figure out how to use the latest chip advancements to get the best performance from the latest Doom or Quake game. I wouldn't be here today without my interest in gaming.

It seems many lack understanding of what gaming entails today. I have played hundreds of hours of a game called Counter-Strike, in which every round requires constant game-theory-type thinking to anticipate what the opponent will do next, along with real-time verbal collaboration with team members on tactics to win. It's not just "twitch" ability or playing Ms. Pac-Man anymore. These are skills that are useful in life. And today's multiplayer games are also the means by which many young adults hang out with their friends.

Beyond all these things, there's the future: China's crackdown means its kids face the increasing prospect of falling behind their American counterparts in getting exposure to critical areas of innovation. Gaming has been the driving force behind numerous technologies, including graphics semiconductors, artificial intelligence, digital art and animation. The industry is already a massive market that is only going to get bigger. According to research firm Newzoo, nearly 3 billion people will spend about $176 billion this year, rising to $219 billion by 2024. And when the all-encompassing "metaverse" finally arrives with its fully functioning digital economy, you can bet gamers will have the leg up inside the virtual worlds.

That is not to say the gaming doesn't have issues. Addiction is a real problem for some players who can't moderate their activity. Regulators should scrutinize some of the industry's aggressive monetization practices. But the overall benefits should not be understated. Gaming is a vibrant entertainment hobby that brings joy and makes positive contributions to professional and social lives.

If you want your children to become the next Zuckerberg or Lutke, don't take away their video games. You may want to encourage them to play more instead.

Tae Kim is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering technology. This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

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| Orlando City | 9 | 4 | 8 | 35 | 30 | 24 |
| Nashville | 8 | 2 | 11 | 35 | 34 | 20 |
| NYCFC | 10 | 6 | 4 | 34 | 36 | 19 |
| Philadelphia | 8 | 6 | 8 | 32 | 28 | 23 |
| CF Montréal | 8 | 7 | 7 | 31 | 30 | 27 |
| D.C. United | 9 | 10 | 3 | 30 | 35 | 32 |
| Columbus | 7 | 9 | 6 | 27 | 25 | 29 |
| Atlanta | 6 | 7 | 9 | 27 | 25 | 28 |
| Chicago | 6 | 11 | 5 | 23 | 24 | 33 |
| Inter Miami CF | 6 | 9 | 5 | 23 | 21 | 31 |
| New York | 6 | 10 | 4 | 22 | 23 | 25 |
| Cincinnati | 3 | 9 | 8 | 17 | 21 | 37 |
| Toronto FC | 3 | 13 | 6 | 15 | 26 | 47 |

**WESTERN CONFERENCE**

| | W | L | T | Pts | GF | GA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Seattle | 12 | 4 | 6 | 42 | 35 | 19 |
| Sporting KC | 11 | 4 | 7 | 40 | 37 | 22 |
| Colorado | 11 | 4 | 5 | 38 | 30 | 20 |
| LA Galaxy | 11 | 8 | 3 | 36 | 35 | 35 |
| Minnesota | 8 | 6 | 7 | 31 | 24 | 24 |
| Portland | 8 | 10 | 3 | 27 | 29 | 39 |
| Real Salt Lake | 7 | 8 | 6 | 27 | 31 | 27 |
| Vancouver | 6 | 7 | 8 | 26 | 27 | 31 |
| San Jose | 6 | 7 | 8 | 26 | 24 | 29 |
| FC Dallas | 6 | 9 | 7 | 25 | 30 | 33 |
| LAFC | 6 | 9 | 6 | 24 | 28 | 31 |
| Austin FC | 5 | 12 | 4 | 19 | 20 | 29 |
| Houston | 3 | 9 | 10 | 19 | 24 | 34 |

**Note:** Three points for victory, one point for tie.

**Saturday, Aug. 28**

Nashville 2, Atlanta 0
Chicago 1, New York 0
LA Galaxy 3, Los Angeles FC 3, tie
New York City FC 2, New England 0
D.C. United 3, Philadelphia 1
Colorado 1, Sporting Kansas City 1, tie
Minnesota 2, Houston 1

**Sunday, Aug. 29**

FC Dallas 5, Austin FC 3
Vancouver 4, Real Salt Lake 1
Portland 2, Seattle 0

**Friday's games**

New York City FC at Nashville
New England at Philadelphia
Portland at Houston
Sporting Kansas City at Los Angeles FC

**Saturday's games**

Austin FC at Vancouver
Columbus at Orlando City
Miami at Cincinnati
FC Dallas at Real Salt Lake
Colorado at San Jose

**Friday, Sept. 10**

Orlando City at Atlanta
Portland at Vancouver

**Saturday, Sept. 11**

LA Galaxy at Colorado
Minnesota at Seattle
D.C. United at New York
New York City FC at New England
Toronto FC at Cincinnati
Columbus at Miami
Nashville at CF Montréal
Austin FC at Houston
Chicago at Sporting Kansas City
San Jose at FC Dallas

### NWSL

| | W | L | T | Pts | GF | GA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Portland | 10 | 4 | 2 | 32 | 24 | 11 |
| North Carolina | 8 | 4 | 4 | 28 | 22 | 9 |
| Reign FC | 9 | 7 | 1 | 28 | 23 | 18 |
| Orlando | 6 | 5 | 6 | 24 | 20 | 19 |
| Chicago | 7 | 7 | 3 | 24 | 19 | 22 |
| Washington | 6 | 5 | 5 | 23 | 19 | 18 |
| Gotham FC | 5 | 5 | 6 | 21 | 17 | 15 |
| Houston | 6 | 7 | 3 | 21 | 18 | 21 |
| Louisville | 4 | 8 | 4 | 16 | 13 | 23 |
| Kansas City | 2 | 11 | 4 | 10 | 9 | 28 |

**Note:** Three points for victory, one point for tie.

**Saturday, Aug. 28**

Chicago 3, Kansas City 0

**Sunday, Aug. 29**

North Carolina 0, Washington 0, tie
Orlando 1, Gotham FC 0
Reign FC 2, Portland 1
Houston 1, Louisville 0

**Wednesday's game**

Reign FC 1, Houston 0

**Saturday's games**

Chicago at Gotham FC
Reign FC at Louisville
Washington at Portland

**Sunday's games**

Houston at Orlando
North Carolina at Kansas City

**Friday, Sept. 10**

Gotham FC at Kansas City
Chicago at Houston

**Saturday, Sept. 11**

Louisville at Orlando

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

### Schedule

**Friday's games**
**EAST**
S. Connecticut (0-0) at CCSU (0-0)
**SOUTH**
North Carolina (0-0) at Virginia Tech (0-0)
Duke (0-0) at Charlotte (0-0)
Old Dominion (0-0) at Wake Forest (0-0)
**MIDWEST**
St. Francis (Pa.) (0-0) at E. Michigan (0-0)
South Dakota (0-0) at Kansas (0-0)
Michigan St. (0-0) at Northwestern (0-0)
**FAR WEST**
N. Colorado (0-0) at Colorado (0-0)
S. Dakota St. (0-0) at Colorado St. (0-0)
**Saturday's games**
**EAST**
Holy Cross (0-0) at Uconn (0-1)
Colgate (0-0) at Boston College (0-0)
Villanova (0-0) at Lehigh (0-0)
Marist (0-0) at Georgetown (0-0)
St. Anselm (0-0) at Merrimack (0-0)
West Virginia (0-0) at Maryland (0-0)
Marshall (0-0) at Navy (0-0)
Towson (0-0) at Morgan St. (0-0)
Umass (0-0) at Pittsburgh (0-0)
Bowie St. (0-0) at Delaware St. (0-0)
Bucknell (0-0) at Sacred Heart (0-0)
Bryant (0-0) at Rhode Island (0-0)
**SOUTH**
Louisiana-Monroe (0-0) at Kentucky (0-0)
Army (0-0) at Georgia St. (0-0)
West Florida (0-0) at McNeese St. (0-0)
Davidson (0-0) at VMI (0-0)
NC A&T (0-0) at Furman (0-0)
Howard (0-0) at Richmond (0-0)
Wofford (0-0) at Elon (0-0)
Alabama (0-0) vs. Miami (0-0) at Atlanta
St. Andrews (0-0) at Presbyterian (0-0)
Louisiana Tech (0-0) at Mississippi St. (0-0)
Gardner-Webb (0-0) at Georgia Southern (0-0)
Morehead St. (0-0) at James Madison (0-0)
E. Kentucky (0-0) at W. Carolina (0-0)
Virginia Union (0-0) at Hampton (0-0)
Miles (0-0) at Alabama St. (0-0)
Campbell (0-0) at Liberty (0-0)
Warner University (0-0) at Stetson (0-0)
Akron (0-0) at Auburn (0-0)
Monmouth (NJ) (0-0) at Middle Tennessee (0-0)
Nicholls (0-0) at Memphis (0-0)
Southern U. (0-0) at Troy (0-0)
North Alabama (0-0) at SE Louisiana (0-0)
E. Illinois (0-1) at South Carolina (0-0)
SC State (0-0) at Alabama A&M (0-0)
N. Illinois (0-0) at Georgia Tech (0-0)
FAU (0-0) at Florida (0-0)
Georgia (0-0) vs. Clemson (0-0) at Charlotte, N.C.
William & Mary (0-0) at Virginia (0-0)
ETSU (0-0) at Vanderbilt (0-0)
Southern Miss. (0-0) at South Alabama (0-0)
**MIDWEST**
Stanford (0-0) vs. Kansas St. (0-0) at Arlington, Texas
W. Michigan (0-0) at Michigan (0-0)
Fordham (0-0) at Nebraska (0-1)
Robert Morris (0-0) at Dayton (0-0)
Penn St. (0-0) at Wisconsin (0-0)
St. Francis (Ill.) (0-0) at St. Thomas (Minn.) (0-0)
Albany (NY) (0-0) at N. Dakota St. (0-0)
Miami (Ohio) (0-0) at Cincinnati (0-0)
Indiana (0-0) at Iowa (0-0)
Cent. Michigan (0-0) at Missouri (0-0)
N. Iowa (0-0) at Iowa St. (0-0)
Valparaiso (0-0) at Indiana Wesleyan (0-0)
Syracuse (0-0) at Ohio (0-0)
Oregon St. (0-0) at Purdue (0-0)
Norfolk St. (0-0) at Toledo (0-0)
UTSA (0-0) at Illinois (1-0)
Butler (0-0) at Illinois St. (0-0)
**SOUTHWEST**
Rice (0-0) at Arkansas (0-0)
Louisiana-Lafayette (0-0) at Texas (0-0)
Tulane (0-0) at Oklahoma (0-0)
Missouri St. (0-0) at Oklahoma St. (0-0)
Lane (0-0) at Ark.-Pine Bluff (0-0)
Tarleton St. (0-0) at Stephen F. Austin (0-0)
Texas Tech (0-0) vs. Houston (0-0) at Houston
Baylor (0-0) at Texas State (0-0)
Cent. Arkansas (0-0) at Arkansas St. (0-0)
Abilene Christian (0-0) at SMU (0-0)
Northwestern St. (0-0) at North Texas (0-0)
Kent St. (0-0) at Texas A&M (0-0)
Prairie View (0-0) at Texas Southern (0-0)
Duquesne (0-0) at TCU (0-0)
Bethune-Cookman (0-0) at UTEP (1-0)
**FAR WEST**
Fresno St. (1-0) at Oregon (0-0)
Lafayette (0-0) at Air Force (0-0)
North Dakota (0-0) at Idaho St. (0-0)
Montana St. (0-0) at Wyoming (0-0)
Simon Fraser (0-0) at Idaho (0-0)
Cal Poly (0-0) at San Diego (0-0)
San Jose St. (1-0) at Southern Cal (0-0)
Montana (0-0) at Washington (0-0)
LSU (0-0) at UCLA (1-0)
Sacramento St. (0-0) at Dixie St. (0-0)
New Mexico St. (0-1) at San Diego St. (0-0)
Nevada (0-0) at California (0-0)
BYU (0-0) vs. Arizona (0-0) at Las Vegas
Utah St. (0-0) at Washington St. (0-0)
**Sunday's games**
**SOUTH**
Jackson St. (0-0) vs. Florida A&M (0-0) at Miami Gardens, Fla.
Grambling St. (0-0) vs. Tennessee St. (0-0) at Canton, Ohio
Notre Dame (0-0) at Florida St. (0-0)
**FAR WEST**
Portland St. (0-0) at Hawaii (0-1)
**Monday's game**
**SOUTH**
Louisville (0-0) vs. Mississippi (0-0) at Atlanta

## DEALS

### Wednesday's transactions

**BASEBALL**
**Major League Baseball**
**American League**

**BALTIMORE ORIOLES** — Recalled RHP Dusten Knight and LHP Alexander Wells from Norfolk (Triple-A East).

**BOSTON RED SOX** — Placed SS Xander Bogaerts and INF/OF Yairo Munoz on the COVID-19 IL. Selected the contracts of INF Jack Lopez and RHP John Schreiber from Worcester (Triple-A East) and agreed to terms on major league contracts. Reinstated RHP Ryan Brasier from the 60-day IL. Reinstated INF/OF Danny Santana from the 10-day IL.

**CHICAGO WHITE SOX** — Placed SS Tim Anderson on the 10-day IL, retroactive to August 29. Recalled RHP Matt Foster and INF/OF Gavin Sheets from Charlotte (Triple-A East). Reinstated OF Billy Hamilton from the 10-day IL. Designated INF/OF Jake Lamb for assignment. Selected the contract of INF Romy Gonzalez from Charlotte and agreed to terms on a major league contract.

**CLEVELAND INDIANS** — Sent RHP Aaron Civale to Akron (Double-A Northeast) on a rehab assignment. Reinstated RHP Triston McKenzie and CF Harold Ramirez from the 10-day IL.

**DETROIT TIEGERS** — Reinstated RHP Wily Peralta and INF/OF Niko Goodrum from the 10-day IL.

**HOUSTON ASTROS** — Reinstated RHP Jose Urquidy from the 10-day IL. Recalled RHP Enoli Paredes from Sugar Land (Triple-A West).

**KANSAS CITY ROYALS** — Reinstated SS Adalberto Mondesi and LHP Jake Brentz from the 10-day IL. Recalled RHP Jackson Kowar from Omaha (Triple-A East).

**LOS ANGELES ANGELS** — Selected the contract of RHP Oliver Ortega from Salt Lake (Triple-A West) and agreed to terms on a major league contract. Recalled INF Luis Rengifo from Salt Lake. Transferrred LHP Patrick Sandoval from the 10-day IL to the 60-day IL.

**MINNESOTA TWINS** — Selected the contract of RHP Joe Ryan from St. Paul (Triple-A East) and agreed on terms for a major league contract. Reinstated RHP Randy Dobnak from the 60-day IL. Transferred RHP Kenta Maeda from the 10-day IL to the 60-day IL.

**NEW YORK YANKEES** — Recalled OF Estevan Florial and RHP Brooks Kriske from Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (Triple-A East).

**OAKLAND ATHLETICS** — Selected the contract of DH Khris Davis from Las Vegas (Triple-A West) and agreed to terms on a major league contract. Recalled C Austin Allen from Las Vegas.

**SEATTLE MARINERS** — Agreed to terms with manager Scott Servais on a multi-year contract extension. Promoted Jerry Dipoto to president of baseball operations and agreed to terms on a multi-year contract extension. Reinstated LHP Justus Sheffield from the 10-day IL. Recalled INF Kevin Padlo from Tacoma (Triple-A West).

**TAMPA BAY RAYS** — Recalled RHP David Robertson and SS Taylor Walls from Durham (Triple-A East).

**TEXAS RANGERS** — Reinstated 3B Charlie Culberson from the 10-day IL. Selected the contract of LHP Hyeon-Jong Yang from Round Rock (Triple-A West). Optioned 3B Ryan Dorow to Round Rock. Reinstated RHP Kohei Arihara from the 60-day IL.

**TORONTO BLUE JAYS** — Selected the contract of RHP Bryan Baker from Buffalo (Triple-A East) and agreed to terms on a major league contract. Recalled RHP Nate Pearson from Buffalo. Reinstated RHP Anthony Castro from the 10-day IL and optioned him to Buffalo (Triple-A East).

**National League**

**ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS** — Recalled OF Stuart Fairchild from Reno (Triple-A West). Reinstated RHP Luke Weaver from the 60-day IL. Acquired LHP Yaifer Perdomo and C J.J. D'Orazio from Toronto as the players to be named in the July 30 trade for RHP Joakim Soria.

**ATLANTA BRAVES** — Recalled RHP Jacob Webb and SS Orlando Arcia from Gwinnett (Triple-A East).

**CHICAGO CUBS** — Reinstated RHP Dillon Maples and RHP Adbert Alzolay from the 10-day IL.

**CINCINNATI REDS** — Recalled 2B Alejo Lopez and RHP R.J. Alaniz from Louisville (Triple-A East). Selected the contract of OF Delino DeShields from Louisville and agreed to terms on a major league contract.

**COLORADO ROCKIES** — Recalled RHPs Antonio Santos and Justin Lawrence from Albuquerque (Triple-A West). Selected the contract of RHP Julian Fernandez from Albuquerque and agreed to terms on a major league contract. Placed RHP Jon Gray on the 10-day IL.

**LOS ANGELES DODGERS** — Added RHP Ryan Meisinger and INF/OF Zach McKinstry to the active roster.

**MIAMI MARLINS** — Returned 1B Lewin Diaz to Jacksonville (Triple-A East). Reinstated LHP Trevor Rogers from the restricted list. Reinstated 3B Joe Panik from the 10-day IL.

**MILWAUKEE BREWERS** — Recalled C Luke Maile and RHP Justin Topa from Nashville (Triple-A East). Reinstated 1B Daniel Vogelbach from the 60-day IL. Transferred LHP Angel Perdomo from the 10-day IL to the 60-day IL. Placed C Manny Pina on the 10-day IL.

**NEW YORK METS** — Recalled OFs Albert Almora Jr. and Khalil Lee from Syracuse (Triple-A East). Optioned RHP Yennsy Diaz to Syracuse.

**PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES** — Selected the contracts of RHPs Cam Bedrosian and Ramon Rosso from Lehigh Valley (Triple-A East) and agreed to terms on major league contracts. Optioned RHP Seranthony Dominguez to Lehigh Valley. Placed SS Didi Gregorius on the restricted list. Transferred 1B Rhys Hoskins from the 10-day IL to the 60-day IL.

**PITTSBURGH PIRATES** — Recalled RHP Max Kranick from Indianapolis (Triple-A East). Selected the contract of RHP Shelby Miller from Indianapolis.

**ST. LOUIS CARDINALS** — Selected the contract of RHP Brandon Dickson from Memphis (Triple-A East) and agreed to terms on a major league contract. Transferred RHP Ryan Helsey from the 10-day IL to the 60 day IL. Recalled C Ali Sanchez from Memphis (Triple-A East).

**SAN DIEGO PADRES** — Reinstated RHP Dinelson Lamet from the 10-day IL. Transferred LHP Matt Strahm from the 10-day IL to the 60-day IL. Reinstated RHP Taylor Williams from the 60-day IL.

**SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS** — Placed RHP Johnny Cueto on the 10-day IL. Recalled LHP Caleb Baragar, RHP John Brebbia and INF/OF Thairo Estrada from Sacramento (Triple-A West).

**WASHINGTON NATIONALS** — Reinstated C Alex Avila from the 10-day IL. Selected the contract of LHP Alberto Baldonado from Rochester (Triple-A East) and agreed to terms on a major league contract.

**BASKETBALL**
**National Basketball Association**

**ATLANTA HAWKS** — Re-signed C Clint Capela to a veteran extension.

**DENVER NUGGETS** — Signed G Austin Rivers to a multi-year contract.

**HOCKEY**
**National Hockey League**

**NEW YORK ISLANDERS** — Re-signed Fs Anthony Beauvillier, Kyle Palmieri, C Casey Cizikas and G Ilya Sorkin to multi-year contracts.

**ST. LOUIS BLUES** — Signed D Colton Parayko to an eight-year contract extension.

**SEATTLE KRAKEN** — Signed F Riley Sheahan to a one-year contract.

**SOCCER**
**Major League Soccer**

**LOS ANGELES FC** — Loaned F Diego Rossi to Turkish Super Lig side Fenerbahce S.K.

**ORLANDO CITY SC** — Recalled F Jordan Bender from loan to Charlotte (USL Championship).

**SEATTLE SOUNDERS FC** — Named Freddy Juarez assistant coach.

## GOLF

### PGA Tour FedEx Cup leaders

**Through Aug. 29**

| | | Points | Money |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Patrick Cantlay | 4,302 | $7,638,805 |
| 2. | Tony Finau | 3,564 | $5,740,097 |
| 3. | Bryson DeChambeau | 3,189 | $7,426,415 |
| 4. | Jon Rahm | 3,063 | $7,705,933 |
| 5. | Cameron Smith | 2,821 | $5,851,867 |
| 6. | Justin Thomas | 2,371 | $6,537,153 |
| 7. | Harris English | 2,248 | $6,200,481 |
| 8. | Abraham Ancer | 2,241 | $5,816,565 |
| 9. | Jordan Spieth | 2,232 | $6,470,482 |
| 10. | Sam Burns | 2,214 | $5,160,030 |
| 11. | Collin Morikawa | 2,188 | $7,059,908 |
| 12. | Sungjae Im | 2,141 | $4,157,182 |
| 13. | Viktor Hovland | 1,951 | $5,048,772 |
| 14. | Louis Oosthuizen | 1,935 | $6,306,679 |
| 15. | Dustin Johnson | 1,890 | $5,001,136 |
| 16. | Rory McIlroy | 1,878 | $4,391,809 |
| 17. | Xander Schauffele | 1,854 | $5,240,653 |
| 18. | Jason Kokrak | 1,847 | $5,118,629 |
| 19. | Kevin Na | 1,816 | $3,625,982 |
| 20. | Brooks Koepka | 1,793 | $5,204,136 |
| 21. | Corey Conners | 1,684 | $4,007,567 |
| 22. | Hideki Matsuyama | 1,681 | $4,963,594 |
| 23. | Stewart Cink | 1,656 | $3,596,319 |
| 24. | Joaquin Niemann | 1,629 | $3,936,912 |
| 25. | Scottie Scheffler | 1,608 | $4,505,589 |
| 26. | Daniel Berger | 1,594 | $4,258,579 |
| 27. | Erik Van Rooyen | 1,448 | $2,211,281 |
| 28. | Sergio Garcia | 1,400 | $2,998,555 |
| 29. | Billy Horschel | 1,397 | $4,030,906 |

## AUTO RACING

### NASCAR Cup points leaders

**Through Aug. 29**

| | | Points |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Kyle Larson | 2,052 |
| 2. | Ryan Blaney | 2,024 |
| 3. | Martin Truex Jr | 2,024 |
| 4. | Kyle Busch | 2,022 |
| 5. | Chase Elliott | 2,021 |
| 6. | Alex Bowman | 2,015 |
| 7. | Denny Hamlin | 2,015 |
| 8. | William Byron | 2,014 |
| 9. | Joey Logano | 2,013 |
| 10. | Brad Keselowski | 2,008 |
| 11. | Kurt Busch | 2,008 |
| 12. | Christopher Bell | 2,005 |
| 13. | Michael McDowell | 2,005 |
| 14. | Aric Almirola | 2,005 |
| 15. | Tyler Reddick | 2,003 |
| 16. | Kevin Harvick | 2,002 |
| 17. | Austin Dillon | 686 |
| 18. | Matt DiBenedetto | 569 |
| 19. | Chris Buescher | 543 |
| 20. | Ricky Stenhouse Jr | 523 |
| 21. | Bubba Wallace | 519 |
| 22. | Ross Chastain | 518 |
| 23. | Chase Briscoe | 466 |
| 24. | Erik Jones | 453 |
| 25. | Daniel Suarez | 441 |
| 26. | Ryan Newman | 440 |
| 27. | Ryan Preece | 433 |
| 28. | Cole Custer | 395 |
| 29. | Corey Lajoie | 332 |

## TENNIS

### U.S. Open

**Wednesday**
**At USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center**
**New York**
**Surface: Hardcourt outdoor**
**Men's Singles**
**Second Round**

Alexei Popyrin, Australia, def. Grigor Dimitrov (15), Bulgaria, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (4), 4-0, ret.
Pablo Andujar, Spain, def. Philipp Kohlschreiber, Germany, 6-4, 6-3, 6-1.
Andrey Rublev (5), Russia, def. Pedro Martinez, Spain, 7-6 (2), 6-7 (5), 6-1, 6-1.
Daniel Evans (24), Britain, def. Marcos Giron, United States, 6-4, 7-6 (3), 2-6, 6-3.
Carlos Alcaraz, Spain, def. Arthur Rinderknech, France, 7-6 (6), 4-6, 6-1, 6-4.
Daniil Medvedev (2), Russia, def. Dominik Koepfer, Germany, 6-4, 6-1, 6-2.
Alex Molcan, Slovakia, def. Brandon Nakashima, United States, 6-3, 3-6, 1-6, 6-2, 6-4.
Botic van de Zandschulp, Netherlands, def. Casper Ruud (8), Norway, 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-4.
Henri Laaksonen, Switzerland, def. Cristian Garin (16), Chile, 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-2, 6-4.
Peter Gojowczyk, Germany, def. Dusan Lajovic, Serbia, 2-6, 6-4, 2-6, 7-5, 6-4.
Facundo Bagnis, Argentina, def. Marco Trungelliti, Argentina, 7-6 (4), 4-6, 6-3, 6-3.
Felix Auger-Aliassime (12), Canada, def. Bernabe Zapata Miralles, Spain, 7-6 (5), 6-3, 6-2.
Roberto Bautista Agut (18), Spain, def. Emil Ruusuvuori, Finland, 6-1, 6-3, 6-2.
Frances Tiafoe, United States, def. Guido Pella, Argentina, 6-1, 6-2, 7-5.
Stefanos Tsitsipas (3), Greece, def. Adrian Mannarino, France, 6-3, 6-4, 6-7 (4), 6-0.
Diego Schwartzman (11), Argentina, def. Kevin Anderson, South Africa, 7-6 (4), 6-3, 6-4.

**Women's Singles**
**Second Round**

Naomi Osaka (3), Japan, def. Olga Danilovic, Serbia, walkover.
Ons Jabeur (20), Tunisia, def. Maria Camila Osorio Serrano, Colombia, 6-0, 6-1.
Garbine Muguruza (9), Spain, def. Andrea Petkovic, Germany, 6-4, 6-2.
Simona Halep (12), Romania, def. Kristina Kucova, Slovakia, 6-3, 6-1.
Elina Svitolina (5), Ukraine, def. Rebeka Masarova, Spain, 6-2, 7-5.
Elise Mertens (15), Belgium, def. Valentini Grammatikopoulou, Greece, 6-2, 6-2.
Leylah Annie Fernandez, Canada, def. Kaia Kanepi, Estonia, 7-5, 7-5.
Victoria Azarenka (18), Belarus, def. Jasmine Paolini, Italy, 6-3, 7-6 (1).
Daria Kasatkina (25), Russia, def. Marketa Vondrousova, Czech Republic, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4.
Danielle Collins (26), United States, def. Kaja Juvan, Slovenia, 6-4, 6-2.
Aryna Sabalenka (2), Belarus, def. Tamara Zidansek, Slovenia, 6-3, 6-1.
Kamilla Rakhimova, Russia, def. Ekaterina Alexandrova (32), Russia, 6-4, 6-1.
Elena Rybakina (19), Kazakhstan, def. Caroline Garcia, France, 6-1, 6-4.
Barbora Krejcikova (8), Czech Republic, def. Christina McHale, United States, 6-3, 6-1.
Sloane Stephens, United States, def. Coco Gauff (21), United States, 6-4, 6-2.

**Men's Doubles**
**First Round**

Rajeev Ram, United States, and Joe Salisbury (4), Britain, def. Divij Sharan, India, and Kwon Soon Woo, South Korea, 6-3, 6-4.
Simone Bolelli, Italy, and Maximo Gonzalez (14), Argentina, def. Jan-Lennard Struff, Germany, and Cameron Norrie, Britain, 7-6 (5), 6-3.

**Women's Doubles**
**First Round**

Andreja Klepac, Slovenia, and Darija Jurak (8), Croatia, def. Kateryna Bondarenko, Ukraine, and Ankita Raina, India, 6-1, 6-1.

## PRO BASKETBALL

### WNBA

**EASTERN CONFERENCE**

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| x-Connecticut | 21 | 6 | .778 | — |
| Chicago | 14 | 13 | .519 | 7 |
| New York | 11 | 17 | .393 | 10½ |
| Washington | 10 | 16 | .385 | 10½ |
| Atlanta | 6 | 19 | .240 | 14 |
| Indiana | 6 | 19 | .240 | 14 |

**WESTERN CONFERENCE**

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| x-Las Vegas | 19 | 7 | .731 | — |
| x-Seattle | 18 | 10 | .643 | 2 |
| Minnesota | 16 | 9 | .640 | 2½ |
| x-Phoenix | 16 | 10 | .615 | 3 |
| Dallas | 11 | 15 | .423 | 8 |
| Los Angeles | 10 | 17 | .370 | 9½ |

**Wednesday's games**

No games scheduled

**Thursday's games**

Atlanta at Dallas
Los Angeles at Minnesota
Chicago at Las Vegas
New York at Seattle

**Friday's games**

No games scheduled

**Saturday's games**

Phoenix at Indiana
Washington at Minnesota

# NFL

DOUG MURRAY/AP

**Dolphins head coach Brian Flores, left, and quarterback Tua Tagovailoa talk on the sidelines during a preseason game. Flores steadfastly supported Tagovailoa as the team's starter.**

## Flores reiterates Tua is Dolphins QB

BY ALAIN POUPART
*Associated Press*

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — Miami Dolphins coach Brian Flores publicly expressed his support for quarterback Tua Tagovailoa on Wednesday, which may or may not tamp down speculation about the team's interest in Houston quarterback Deshaun Watson.

Tagovailoa will be the Week 1 starter against the New England Patriots on Sept. 12, Flores said.

"Yes. I don't know if I can be more clear," Flores said. "I don't know how many times I'll say it. I don't know how much more clear I can be here. Tua is the starter. I mean, if I need to say it again, I will."

Tagovailoa naturally was happy to hear Flores' comments.

"I think it means a lot, with it coming from the head coach," he said. "The support that I have from him, from the team, it means a lot. For me, I'm just focused literally on trying to get our guys ready for next week."

The Dolphins have declined to confirm or deny reports they have engaged in trade talks to acquire Watson, who has been accused of sexual assault and harassment in lawsuits filed by 22 women. He has denied the allegations.

No charges have been filed against Watson, who has made the Pro Bowl the past three seasons. His availability this season is unclear, and Houston police and the NFL are investigating the allegations against him.

Speculation regarding a possible trade has raised questions about Miami's commitment to Tagovailoa, a top-five draft pick last year.

"Tua is our quarterback," Flores said. "I think he has had a good training camp. I think he has made a lot of progress. I think he has made a lot of improvement. We're pleased with where he is."

Tagovailoa had a 6-3 record as a starter as a rookie after replacing Ryan Fitzpatrick after six games. He passed for 1,814 yards with 11 touchdowns and five interceptions.

## Chiefs' All-Pro Mathieu tests positive for COVID-19

BY DAVE SKRETTA
*Associated Press*

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — All-Pro safety Tyrann Mathieu has tested positive for COVID-19 and was placed on the league's reserve list Wednesday, though he could be back with the team soon and available for Week 1 against Cleveland.

Mathieu is fully vaccinated, a person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press, and NFL rules released in July say vaccinated players testing positive but are asymptomatic can return after two negative tests taken 24 hours apart.

The person spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity because players' vaccination details are not public knowledge.

The timing is fortunate in that the Chiefs planned to practice Thursday before taking the weekend off. They will resume their regular game-week preparation next week.

Mathieu has been an All-Pro each of his first two seasons in Kansas City. He is coming off perhaps the best season of his eight-year career, picking off a career-best six passes with 62 tackles and three tackles for loss.

Not surprisingly, the Chiefs are hopeful that they can sign him to a contract extension. Mathieu is entering the final year of a $42 million, three-year deal, and the two sides have had tentative discussions dating to the offseason.

## Scoreboard

**AMERICAN CONFERENCE**

**East**

| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Buffalo | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Miami | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| N.Y. Jets | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| New England | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |

**South**

| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Houston | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Indianapolis | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Jacksonville | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Tennessee | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |

**North**

| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Baltimore | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Cincinnati | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Cleveland | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Pittsburgh | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |

**West**

| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Denver | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Kansas City | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| L.A. Chargers | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Las Vegas | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**East**

| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dallas | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| N.Y. Giants | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Philadelphia | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Washington | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |

**South**

| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Atlanta | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Carolina | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| New Orleans | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Tampa Bay | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |

**North**

| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chicago | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Detroit | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Green Bay | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Minnesota | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |

**West**

| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arizona | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| L.A. Rams | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| San Francisco | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |
| Seattle | 0 | 0 | 0 | .000 | 0 | 0 |

**Thursday's game**

Dallas at Tampa Bay

**Sunday's games**

Arizona at Tennessee
Jacksonville at Houston
L.A. Chargers at Washington
Minnesota at Cincinnati
N.Y. Jets at Carolina
Philadelphia at Atlanta
Pittsburgh at Buffalo
San Francisco at Detroit
Seattle at Indianapolis
Cleveland at Kansas City
Denver at N.Y. Giants
Green Bay at New Orleans
Miami at New England
Chicago at L.A. Rams

**Monday's game**

Baltimore at Las Vegas

### Wednesday's transactions

**ARIZONA CARDINALS** — Signed WR Andre Baccellia, Ss Chris Banjo, James Wiggins, WR Greg Dortch, LB Kylie Fitts, OLs Sean Harlow, Koda Martin, TE Ross Travis, CB Jace Whittaker to the practice squad. Signed TE Bernhard Seikovits with an international exemption to the practice squad.

**ATLANTA FALCONS** — Signed OLs Willie Beavers, Sam Jones, Ryan Neuzil, OLBs Quinton Bell, George Obinna, ILB Emmanuel Ellerbee, RBs D'Onta Foreman, Caleb Huntley, WRs Juwan Green, Austin Trammell, TEs John Raine, David Wells, DL Chris Slayton and CB Chris Williamson to the practice squad. Released LS Josh Harris. Claimed G Colby Gossett off waivers from Cleveland.

**BALTIMORE RAVENS** — Signed NT Justin Ellis, DBs Anthony Levine, Jordan Richards, OTs Andre Smith, Adrian Early, DE Chris Smith, LB Blake Gallagher, QB Trace McSorley, WRs Jaylon Moore, Binjimen Victor, TE Tony Poljan, P Johnny Townsend and K Jake Verity to the practice squad.

**BUFFALO BILLS** — Signed OG Jack Anderson, DT Brandin Bryant, OL Jamil Douglas, QBs Jack Fromm, Davis Webb, WRs Tanner Gentry, Isaiah Hodgins, CBs Cam Lewis, Olaijah Griffin, Rachad Wildgoose, DE Mike Love, LB Joe Giles-Harris, TE Quinton Morris, S Josh Thomas and RB Antonio Williams to the practice squad. Signed LS Reid Ferguson. Placed WR Marquez Stevenson on injured reserve.

**CAROLINA PANTHERS** — Claimed G Michael Jordan off waivers from Cincinnati. Signed WR C.J. Saunders, C Sam Tecklenburg, RB Spencer Brown, S Kenny Robinson, RB Rodney Smith, WR Keith Kirkwood, WR Omar Bayless, T Aaron Monteiro, DE Frank Herron, S Jalen Julius, TE Stephen Sullivan and CB Rashaan Melvin to the practice squad. Released WR David Moore. Waived with an injury settlement RB Reggie Bonnafon.

**CHICAGO BEARS** — Placed LB Danny Trevathan and OT Teven Jenkins on injured reserve. Signed DBs Artie Burns and Marqui Christian. Waived WR Rodney Adams. Signed OLBs Charles Snowden, Sam Kamara, CBs Thomas Graham Jr., Artie Burns, RBs Artavis Pierce, Ryan Nall, WRs Isaiah Coulter, Dazz Newsome, K Brian Johnson, DT Auzoyah Alufohai, OLs Dieter Eislen, Arlington Hambright and DB Teez Tabor to the practice squad. Claimed WR Nsimba Webster off waivers from San Francisco.

**CINCINNATI BENGALS** — Claimed CB Nick McCloud off waivers from Buffalo and DE Wyatt Ray off waivers from Tennessee. Released WR Mike Thomas. Waived WR Trenton Irwin. Signed LBs Joe Bachie, Keandre Jones, CBs Tony Brown, Winston Rose, P Drue Chrisman, S Trayvon Henderson, TES Thaddeus Moss, Mason Schreck, RBs Jacques Patrick, Pooka Williams, Trayveon Williams, DE Noah Spence, G Keaton Sutherland, WRs Trent Taylor and DT Renell Wren to the practice squad.

**CLEVELAND BROWNS** — Signed WRs Ja-'Marcus Bradley, JoJo Natson, DT Sheldon Day, TE Jordan Franks, DEs Porter Gustin, Curtis Weaver, RB John Kelly, LB Elijah Lee, S Jovante Moffatt, QB Nick Mullens and FB Johnny Stanton to the practice squad. Signed DE Joe Jackson. Placed LB Jacob Phillips on injured reserve.

**DALLAS COWBOYS** — Signed QB Ben DiNucci, RB JaQuan Hardy, FB Nick Ralston, WRs Brandon Smith, Osirus Mitchell, TE Jeremy Sprinkle, OLs Braylon Jones, Isaac Alarcon, DLs Justin Hamilton, Austin Faoliu, CBs Deante Burton, Kyron Brown and Ss Darian Thompson, Tyler Coyle to the practice squad. Released P Bryan Anger. Claimed QB Will Grier off waivers from Carolina.

**DENVER BRONCOS** — Claimed CB Mike Ford off waivers from Detroit and RB Nate McCrary off waivers from Baltimore. Waived RB Royce Freeman and DL Jonathan Harris. Signed WRs Tyrie Cleveland, Seth Williams, Kendall Hinton, OTs Drew Himmelman, Quinn Bailey, TE Shaun Beyer, OL Austin Schlottmann, QB Brett Rypien, RB Damarea Crockett, DL Marquiss Spencer, CBs Nate Harrison, Mac McCain III and LBs Barrington Wade and Curtis Robinson to the practice squad. Re-signed DL Shamar Stephen and OT Cam Fleming. Placed CB Michael Ojemudia and RB Mike Boone on injured reserve.

**DETROIT LIONS** — Claimed K Austin Seibert off waivers from Cincinnati and WR Kha-Darel Hodge from Cleveland. Signed LB Tavante Beckett, OLB Rashod Berry, NT Miles Brown, S Jalen Elliott, K Zane Gonzalez, DE Bruce Hector, G Tommy Kraemer, TEs Alize Mack, Brock Wright, WRs Javon McKinley, Sage Suratt, RBs Dedrick Mills, Craig Reynolds, T Darrin Paulo and CB Nickell Robey-Coleman to the practice squad. Released SS Dean Marlowe and TE Darren Fells.

**GREEN BAY PACKERS** — Signed DLs Abdullah Anderson, Willington Previlon, QB Kurt Benkert, WRs Chris Blair, Equanimeous St. Brown, Juwann Winfree, G Ben Braden, G/Ts Jacob Capra, Cole Van Lanen, CB Kabion Ento, S Innes Gaines, LB Tipa Galeai, TE Bronson Kaufasi, K J.J. Molson and RB Patrick Taylor to the practice squad.

**HOUSTON TEXANS** — Signed TE Antony Auclair, QB Jeff Driskel, LB Hardy Nickerson, DL Derek Rivers, OL Lane Taylor, DB Jonathan Owens, WR Jordan Veasy, G Hjalte Froholdt, TE Paul Quessenberry, S Shyheim Carter, C Ryan McCollum and T Carson Green to the practice squad.

**INDIANAPOLIS COLTS** — Claimed CB Thakarius Keyes off waivers from Kansas City and CB Chris Wilcox off waivers from Tampa Bay. Waived S Andre Chachere and CB Marvell Tell III. Signed WRs Tarik Black, DeMichael Harris, Tyler Vaughns, LBs Curtis Bolton, Malik Jefferson, DT Andrew Brown, CB Anthony Chesley, DE Kameron Cline, Ss Sean Davis, Shawn Davis, TE Farrod Green, QB Brett Hundley, C Joey Hunt, RB Deon Jackson and OT Carter O'Donnell to the practice squad.

**JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS** — Signed CB Lorenzo Burns, DT Doug Costin, WRs Jeff Cotton Jr., Josh Hammond, Laquon Treadwell, Devin Smith, Phillip Dorsett II, RBs Nathan Cottrell, Devine Ozigbo, DB Brandon Rusnak, OLs K.C. McDermott, Badara Traore and Tre'Vour Wallace-Simms to the practice squad. Claimed WR Tyron Johnson off waivers from the Los Angeles Chargers. Waived DT Daniel Ekuale. Released S Josh Jones.

**KANSAS CITY CHIEFS** — Signed WR Marcus Kemp. Signed DE Damone Harris, WR Gehrig Dieter, DE Austin Edwards, T Prince Tega Wanogho, DT Tyler Clark, RB Derrick Gore, C Darryl Williams, LB Omari Cobb, WR Maurice French, WR Cornell Powell, S Zayne Anderson, CB Dicaprio Bootle, QB Shane Buechele and S Devon Key to the practice squad.

**LAS VEGAS RAIDERS** — Signed S Jordan Brown, TE Matt Bushman, G Lester Cotton Sr., RB B.J. Emmons, DE Gerri Green, T Devery Hamilton, CB Robert Jackson, C Jimmy Morrissey, OL Jeremiah Poutasi, RB Trey Ragas, LB Max Richardson, DT Niles Scott, WR Dillon Stoner, WR D.J. Turner and DE Kendal Vickers to the practice squad.

**LOS ANGELES CHARGERS** — Waived CB Brandon Facyson and DL Forrest Merrill. Signed WRs Michael Bandy, Joe Reed, RB Darius Bradwell, LB Cole Christiansen, DB Ben Deluca, OLB Emeke Egbule, DLs Breiden Fehoko, Joe Gaziano, Gs Nate Gilliam, Ryan Hunter and TE Hunter Kampmoyer to the practice squad. Claimed DB Trey Marshall off waivers from Denver and DE Eric Banks off waivers from the Los Angeles Rams.

**LOS ANGELES RAMS** — Signed WRs Landen Akers, J.J. Koski, RB Otis Anderson TE Kendall Blanton, T Chandler Brewer, DE Earnest Brown IV, DT Marquise Copeland, DBs Dont'e Deayon, Kareem Orr, Tyler Hall, G Jeremiah Kolone, LBs Micah Kiser, Justin Lawler, and OT Max Pircher to the practice squad.

**MIAMI DOLPHINS** — Claimed DB Elijah Campbell off waivers from New York Jets. Waived CB Jamal Perry. Signed T Adam Pankey, QB Reid Sinnett, WR Kirk Merritt, CB Javaris Davis and RB Gerrid Doaks to the practice squad. Waived CB Jomal Wiltz.

**MINNESOTA VIKINGS** — Waived DE Jalyn Holmes. Claimed TE Ben Ellefson off waivers from Jacksonville. Signed RBs Ameer Abdullah, A.J. Rose Jr., OT Zack Bailey, FB Jake Bargas, LB Tuf Borland, TE Zach Davidson, S Myles Dorn, Gs Dakota Dozier, Kyle Hinton, WRs Myron Mitchell, Whop Philyor, CBs Parry Nickerson, Tye Smith and DE Kenny Willekes to the practice squad. Placed WR Dan Chisena, RB Kene Nwangwu and TE Irv Smith Jr. on injured reserve. Signed DE Everson Griffen and LS Andrew DePaola. Released P Britton Colquitt.

**NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS** — Signed DL Tashawn Bower, DB Myles Bryant, OL James Ferentz, K Nick Folk, QB Brian Hoyer, TE Matt LaCosse, DL Bill Murray, WR Tre Nixon, OL Alex Redmond, DB D'Angelo Ross, OL Will Sherman and WR Kristian Wilkerson to the practice squad. Released LB Harvey Langi. Claimed RB Malcolm Perry off waivers from Miami.

**NEW ORLEANS SAINTS** — Claimed FB Adam Prentice off waivers from Denver. Released K Aldrick Rosas. Waived with an injury settlement DE Bryce Thompson and DE Marcus Willoughby. Signed RB Alex Armah Jr., WR Kawaan Baker, T Caleb Benenoch, DT Josiah Bronson Jr., DT Albert Huggins, LB Wynton McManis, DB Bryan Mills, DB KeiVarae Russell, WR Kevin White, WR Easop Winston Jr. and TE Ethan Wolf to the practice squad.

**NEW YORK GIANTS** — Claimed WR Collin Johnson off waivers from Jacksonville and LB Quincy Roche off waivers from Pittsburgh and LB Justin Hilliard off waivers from San Francisco. Released WR C.J. Board. Waived WR Dante Pettis and LB Trent Harris. Re-signed LS Casey Kreiter and WR C.J. Board. Placed WR John Ross and LB Elerson Smith on injured reserve. Signed WR Matt Cole, WR David Sills, WR, TE Nakia Griffin-Stewart, TE Jake Hausmann, OL Kenny Wiggins, OL Jackson Barton, OL Jake Burton, C Brett Heggie, DT David Moa, DL Willie Henry, LB Niko Lalos and DB Jordyn Peters to the practice squad. Signed RB Sandro Platzgummer to the practice squad as part of the NFL's International Player Pathway Program.

**NEW YORK JETS** — Signed TEs Dan Brown, Ryan Griffin and DB Sharrod Neasman. Signed RB Josh Adams, DL Ronald Blair, OL Grant Hermanns, CB Lamar Jackson, QB Josh Johnson, WR D.J. Montgomery, OL Jimmy Murray, LB Del'Shawn Phillips, DL Hamilcar Rashed, DL Tanzel Smart, WR Vyncint Smith, OL Isaiah Williams and TE Kenny Yeboah to the practice squad. Placed OL Conor McDermott, LB Jarrad Davis and S Ashtyn Davis on injured reserve. Waived CB Bless Austin and DE Jabari Zuniga. Claimed DE Timmy Ward off waivers from Kansas City and LB Quincy Williams off waivers from Jacksonville.

**PHILADELPHIA EAGLES** — Signed RBs Jason Huntley, Jordan Howard, CBs Craig James, Michael Jacquet, DE Matt Leo, C Ross Pierschbacher, LB JaCoby Stevens, Gs Kayode Awosika, Sua Opeta, DT Taequan Williams, S Grayland Arnold, OT Le'Raven Clark and WRs Travis Fulgham and John Hightower to the practice squad.

**PITTSBURGH STEELERS** — Signed WRs Rico Bussey, Cody White Steven Sims, RBs Trey Edmunds, Jaylen Samuels, OLs Chaz Green, John Leglue, TE Kevin Rader, DBs Mark Gilbert Donovan Stiner, G Malcolm Pridgeon, LBs Derrek Tuszka, Christian Miller, DE Daniel Archibong and S Karl Joseph to the practice squad. Placed OT Zach Banner, DL Stephon Tuitt and RB Anthony McFarland on injured reserve.

**SAN FRANCISACO 49ERS** — Signed OL Jake Brendel and CB Dontae Johnson. Placed CB Davontae Harris and DL Maurice Hurst on injured reserve. Signed DLs Alex Barrett, Darrion Daniels, WRs Travis Benjamin, River Cracraft, OLs Alfredio Gutierrez, Corbin Kaufasi, Senio Kelemete, Colton McKivitz, FB Josh Hokit, TE Jordan Matthews, QB Nate Sudfeld and LB Elijah Sullivan to the practice squad.

**SEATTLE SEAHAWKS** — Signed DTs Myles Adams, Jarrod Hewitt, Robert Nkemdiche, LBs Aaron Donkor, Jon Rhattigan, Gs Greg Eiland, Pier-Olivier Lestage, WRs Aaron Fuller, Penny Hart, Cade Johnson, Cody Thompson, RB Josh Johnson, TE Tyler Mabry and CB John Reid to the practice squad. Released QB Sean Mannion. Waived G Phil Haynes. Claimed G Dakoda Shepley off waivers from San Francisco and DB Nigel Warrior off waivers from Baltimore.

**TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS** — Signed WRs Cyril Grayson, Travis Jonsen, QB Ryan Griffin, G Jonathan Hubbard, TEs Codey McElroy, Deon Yelder, DLs Benning Potoa'e, Kobe Smith and OL Brandon Walton to the practice squad.

**TENNESSEE TITANS** — Claimed OL Corey Levin off waivers from New York Jets. Released QB Matt Barkley. Placed OL Cole Banwart on the reserve/COVID-19 list. Signed DB Briean Boddy-Calhoun, S Jamal Carter, FB Tory Carter, OLs Christian DiLauro, Jordan Roos, Derwin Gray, WRs Dez Fitzpatrick, Mason Kinsey, TE Miller Forristall, DLs Woodrow Hamilton, Naquan Jone and LB Jan Johnston to the practice squad.

**WASHINGTON FOOTBALL TEAM** — Signed DT Daniel Wise, RB Peyton Barber, DLs William Bradley-King, Gabe Wright, DE Bunmi Rotimi, OT David Steinmetz, LBs Jordan Kunaszyk, Jared Norris, Cs Keith Ismael, Jon Toth, CB Danny Johnson, S Jeremy Reaves OL Wes Martin, Bean Benzschawel and WR Antonio Gandy-Golden to the practice squad. Signed LB David Mayo. Placed S Darrick Foreest on the reserve/injured list.

# Grappling with fame

## US gold medalist Steveson having fun as he considers his next career move

By Cliff Brunt
*Associated Press*

Even an Olympic gold medalist has limits.

American wrestler Gable Steveson has been on the go since his dramatic last-second victory in the freestyle heavyweight final put him at the top of the podium in Tokyo. He blew the Gjallarhorn at a Minnesota Vikings preseason game, attended a Bellator MMA event and showed up at World Wrestling Entertainment's SummerSlam, stepping into the ring to celebrate bringing home the gold in front of more than 50,000 adoring fans.

He's living it up as he contemplates his next move.

"It's very new and something different that I haven't experienced, but I think I'm taking it very well and I'm staying the course how I should be," he said.

Even for a 21-year-old who seemingly has the world by the tail, being Gable Steveson can be overwhelming. Reality hit when he became so busy that he opted out of the World Championships in Oslo.

"It was actually really hard, to be honest, just because we planned on going way before we got to Tokyo," he said. "I was hoping that I was going to get a medal in Tokyo and I ended up with the gold. And so we planned on going and me and my coaches talked about it. And then when we won the gold and when I got home, it was just like I just got hit with a bunch of stuff that I had to do."

He also couldn't find time to meet with UFC president Dana White while in Las Vegas for SummerSlam.

"This story came out where it was like me kind of like ditching him," Steveson said. "When I got to Vegas for SummerSlam, I was just on the go all day and I had no time to see him. So I didn't ditch him. We'll connect soon. And I'm looking forward to that day."

Steveson walked to the ring at SummerSlam with another American Olympic gold medalist, Tamyra Mensah-Stock. Some fans were surprised that Steveson didn't seem awestruck as he walked down the aisle.

"People were like 'He didn't look like he wanted to be there,' " he said. "No. I was just comfortable in the ring and just, straight face and just doing a good job of being who I am. So it was nice. I was happy to be there."

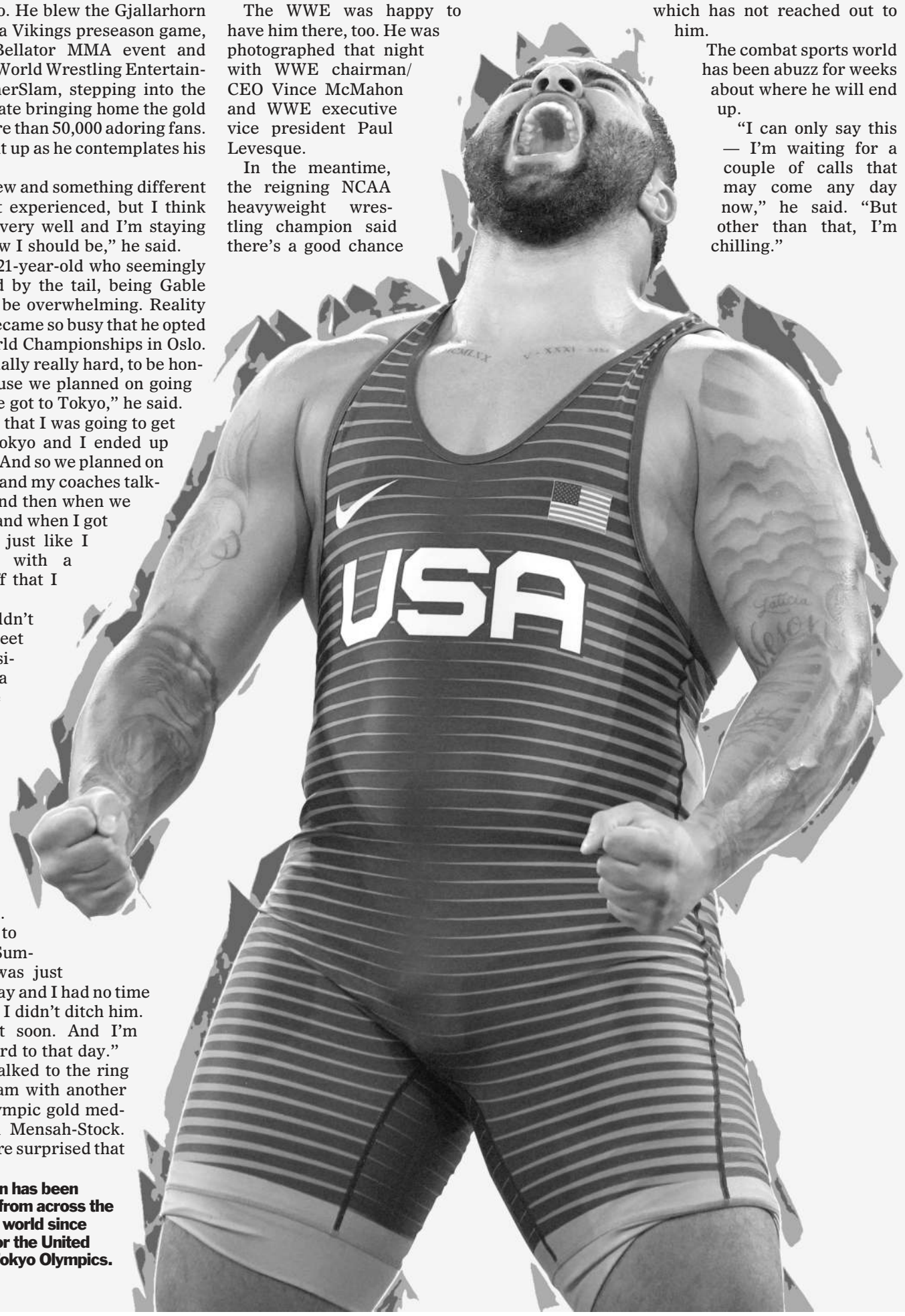
The WWE was happy to have him there, too. He was photographed that night with WWE chairman/CEO Vince McMahon and WWE executive vice president Paul Levesque.

In the meantime, the reigning NCAA heavyweight wrestling champion said there's a good chance he will show up at the University of Minnesota when classes start. That would position him to benefit from name, image and likeness income while he figures things out.

He has most often been linked with WWE and UFC, but said he's open to everything, including Bellator. He said he'd be willing to listen to All Elite Wrestling, which has not reached out to him.

The combat sports world has been abuzz for weeks about where he will end up.

"I can only say this — I'm waiting for a couple of calls that may come any day now," he said. "But other than that, I'm chilling."




**Gable Steveson has been fielding offers from across the combat sports world since winning gold for the United States at the Tokyo Olympics.**
Aaron Favila/AP

# Vaccinated players won't be subject to regular tests

By Tim Reynolds
*Associated Press*

Fully vaccinated NBA players and coaches are not expected to be subject to regular coronavirus testing this season, the league told its teams Thursday.

Exceptions to that policy will include situations such as a player or coach showing symptoms generally associated with the coronavirus or being exposed to an unvaccinated player who tests positive for COVID-19.

Those who are not fully vaccinated will need to be tested on all days involving practice or travel and likely will be tested twice on game days. They'll also have to wear masks at team facilities and during travel.

And everyone, regardless of vaccination status, will be expected to submit to an antibody test before the season "to better identify individuals with a limited or waning immune response to vaccination," the league said.

It is still unclear if players will need to be tested on off days, the league said.

Players, vaccinated or not, who return a positive or inconclusive test result again will be required to isolate immediately. It would likely be for 10 days if those test results are eventually confirmed as positive.

Teams will likely have to arrange seating in almost all situations — travel, meals, meetings, even locker-room setups — to ensure that players who are not fully vaccinated are not seated directly next to another player.

Earlier this week, the NBA told teams that in response to local regulations in New York and San Francisco, they would be required to be vaccinated unless exemptions for medical or religious reasons apply. The league also told teams that visiting teams would be exempt from those requirements in both cities but that the rules would apply to home teams, meaning the New York Knicks, Brooklyn Nets and Golden State Warriors.

The league has already told teams that anyone working within 15 feet of players, coaches and referees this season must be fully vaccinated. NBA referees who work games will also be fully vaccinated this season.

Training camps begin on Sept. 28.

SOCCER/US OPEN

# World Cup qualifying begins for Americans

BY RONALD BLUM
*Associated Press*

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador — They landed on a charter flight, just three veterans of the devastating defeat four years earlier along with 20 fresh faces and a new coaching staff.

Christian Pulisic and Zack Steffen were left behind.

Rebuilding over, the U.S. opened 2022 World Cup qualifying at El Salvador's Estadio Cuscatlán on Thursday night missing two of its top starters, one because of COVID-19 and the other because of back spasms. It was the start of an unprecedented schedule that features three matches in the first week and 14 in a 210-day span that for some will include five trans-Atlantic interruptions to their European club seasons.

This future could not have been imagined this when dejected U.S. players trudged off the field following the ignominious night in Trinidad that ended a streak of seven straight World Cup appearances.

"I remember where I was when when the U.S. failed to qualify back in 2017," said Matt Turner, who started in goal. "And to think about that moment from my couch and to be here now to, to have the opportunity to have a say in righting the ship is truly an honor."

Turner, who watched that night from Walpole, Mass., knows World Cup qualifiers in Central America and the Caribbean are far different from what players experience in Europe and in Major League Soccer.

"Bad pitches maybe," midfielder Weston McKennie said, "hot weather, maybe bad refs. It's just things we're going to learn on the way and I think it's things we're going to adapt to as a group."

The U.S. is ranked 10th, its highest since 2006, after winning the CONCACAF Nations League and Gold Cup, and El Salvador is 64th. Los Cuscatlecos have reached just two World Cups, in 1970 and 1982, and the U.S. has 18 wins, five draws and one loss in the matchup, which includes a 17-game unbeaten streak (15 victories). The U.S. won the most recent meeting 6-0 in an exhibition in December.

Three of the eight nations in regional finals qualify and fourth place advances to a playoff. But there rarely are easy games for the U.S. in Central America.

"The one thing that I learned from playing with the youth national teams in Central America would be that you can't be naive in these games," said midfielder Tyler Adams, who played at the 2015 CONCACAF Under-17 tournament in Honduras, and the 2017 Under-20 competition in Costa Rica. "When you go into these games being naive, thinking that they're going to be an easy game or that there's going to be opportunity to score a lot of goals, I think this is where you are able to make a lot of mental mistakes. And for us going into this game, we need to be prepared for a challenge, for a battle, that it might not be pretty football."

Pulisic returned to training Monday but hasn't played in a match since Aug. 14, missing Chelsea's last two games following a positive COVID-19 test — he was vaccinated and said he didn't show symptoms. He was left in Nashville, along with Steffen, who woke up Wednesday with back spasms.

U.S. coach Gregg Berhalter, a veteran of 14 qualifiers as a player from 2001-05, said Pulisic is uncertain for Sunday's qualifier against Canada in Tennessee.

Berhalter chose Turner over Ethan Horvath. Turner made his national team debut in January and allowed one goal in six matches at the Gold Cup over the summer. Horvath stepped in when Steffen injured a knee in the Nations League final against Mexico.

Berhalter anticipates rotating many players over the three matches.

MARK HUMPHREY/AP

**U.S. Men's National Team goalkeepers Matt Turner, left, and Ethan Horvath, right, warm up during practice Tuesday in Nashville, Tenn.**

PHOTOS BY FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

**Sloane Stephens returns a shot against Coco Gauff during their second-round match Wednesday at the in New York. Stephens, the 2017 champion, won 6-4, 6-2.**

# Stephens ousts Gauff; Osaka's foe withdraws

## Rain forces officials to close roof

BY HOWARD FENDRICH
*Associated Press*

NEW YORK — Three years ago, a reporter asked Sloane Stephens to point out a younger tennis player most fans might not have heard of yet, someone she thought could become a household name some day. Stephens paused to ponder, but not for long, before responding: Coco Gauff, then 14.

Stephens had first met Gauff several years earlier — they last hit together on a court in Florida when Gauff was 12 — and clearly knew what she was talking about. The world would quickly discover Gauff, too. The pair of friends met in an official match for the first time Wednesday night at the U.S. Open, and it was Stephens, the 2017 champion now ranked 66th, who pulled away for a 6-4, 6-2 victory over Gauff, now 17 and seeded 21st.

Afterward, the pair met at the net for a warm hug, before Stephens praised the player — and person — Gauff has become.

"I love Coco. I think everyone knows I love Coco. At the end of the match, I said, 'I love you.' She's such a great player and I feel so lucky to have seen her grow up and play since she was 8," Stephens told the Arthur Ashe Stadium crowd.

With the Ashe roof shut during a heavy downpour brought by remnants of Hurrican Ida — a tornado warning was in effect in the region and there was flooding around the grounds of the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center — the thump-thump-thump of the rain created a bass beat that drowned out the usual sounds of a tennis match. It was so loud Stephens could barely hear the questions during her on-court interview.

Only one other court at Flushing Meadows can be covered during bad weather, but even that was an issue Wednesday evening, because wind helped push rain through the space between the concourse and the retractable cover at Louis Armstrong Stadium — a gap there on purpose to provide natural ventilation. So the match between two-time major finalist Kevin Anderson and Diego Schwartzman was delayed for nearly a half-hour at 5-all in the first set while workers used air blowers to dry the playing surface, then stopped again early in the second set when the court got so wet that efforts to clear the puddles were abandoned.

Eventually, the tournament gave up on getting that match done in Armstrong and decided to move it to Ashe, where Schwartzman wrapped up a 7-6 (4), 6-3, 6-4 win just past 1 a.m., following the conclusion of French Open runner-up Stefanos Tsitsipas' 6-3, 6-4, 6-7 (4), 6-0 victory over Adrian Mannarino. Those moving on in the men's draw in the afternoon included No. 2 Daniil Medvedev, No. 5 Andrey Rublev and 18-year-old Spaniard Carlos Alcaraz, who takes on Tsitsipas next.

**Argentina's Diego Schwartzman wrapped up a 7-6 (4), 6-3, 6-4 win over South Africa's Kevin Anderson just past 1 a.m. after the match was moved from Louis Armstrong Stadium to Arthur Ashe Stadium due to rain.**

The conditions didn't matter at all to defending champion Naomi Osaka, who advanced in the morning when her second-round opponent, Olga Danilovic, pulled out of the tournament because of what she said was a viral illness — but not COVID-19.

Other past major title winners Simona Halep, Garbiñe Muguruza and Victoria Azarenka moved on more conventionally with straight-set wins.

# MLB/COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## Scoreboard

### American League

**East Division**

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tampa Bay | 84 | 49 | .632 | _ |
| New York | 77 | 56 | .579 | 7 |
| Boston | 76 | 59 | .563 | 9 |
| Toronto | 70 | 62 | .530 | 13½ |
| Baltimore | 41 | 91 | .311 | 42½ |

**Central Division**

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chicago | 78 | 56 | .582 | _ |
| Cleveland | 66 | 64 | .508 | 10 |
| Detroit | 63 | 71 | .470 | 15 |
| Kansas City | 59 | 73 | .447 | 18 |
| Minnesota | 58 | 75 | .436 | 19½ |

**West Division**

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Houston | 78 | 55 | .586 | _ |
| Oakland | 73 | 60 | .549 | 5 |
| Seattle | 72 | 62 | .537 | 6½ |
| Los Angeles | 66 | 68 | .493 | 12½ |
| Texas | 47 | 86 | .353 | 31 |

### National League

**East Division**

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Atlanta | 70 | 62 | .530 | _ |
| Philadelphia | 68 | 64 | .515 | 2 |
| New York | 65 | 67 | .492 | 5 |
| Washington | 55 | 76 | .420 | 14½ |
| Miami | 55 | 78 | .414 | 15½ |

**Central Division**

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Milwaukee | 82 | 52 | .612 | _ |
| Cincinnati | 72 | 63 | .533 | 10½ |
| St. Louis | 68 | 64 | .515 | 13 |
| Chicago | 59 | 75 | .440 | 23 |
| Pittsburgh | 48 | 85 | .361 | 33½ |

**West Division**

| | W | L | Pct | GB |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Los Angeles | 85 | 49 | .634 | _ |
| San Francisco | 84 | 49 | .632 | ½ |
| San Diego | 71 | 63 | .530 | 14 |
| Colorado | 61 | 72 | .459 | 23½ |
| Arizona | 45 | 90 | .333 | 40½ |

**Wednesday's games**

Colorado 9, Texas 5
Seattle 1, Houston 0
N.Y. Yankees 4, L.A. Angels 1
Toronto 5, Baltimore 4
Boston 3, Tampa Bay 2
Detroit 8, Oakland 6
Chicago Cubs 3, Minnesota 0
Chicago White Sox 6, Pittsburgh 3
Cleveland 5, Kansas City 3, 11 innings
Arizona 8, San Diego 3
St. Louis 5, Cincinnati 4, 7 innings, 1st game
Cincinnati 12, St. Louis 2, 7 innings, 2nd game
L.A. Dodgers 4, Atlanta 3
Milwaukee 5, San Francisco 2
Philadelphia at Washington, ppd.
Miami at N.Y. Mets, ppd.

**Thursday's games**

Oakland at Detroit
Boston at Tampa Bay
Cleveland at Kansas City
Philadelphia at Washington
Milwaukee at San Francisco
Miami at N.Y. Mets
Pittsburgh at Chicago Cubs
Atlanta at Colorado

**Friday's games**

Baltimore (Means 5-6) at N.Y. Yankees (Cortes Jr. 2-2)
Oakland (Manaea 8-9) at Toronto (Manoah 5-2)
Cleveland (Quantrill 4-2) at Boston (Eovaldi 10-8)
Detroit (Alexander 2-2) at Cincinnati (Gutierrez 9-5)
Minnesota (Dobnak 1-6) at Tampa Bay (Wacha 2-4)
Chicago White Sox (Keuchel 8-7) at Kansas City (Hernández 4-1)
Texas (Otto 0-0) at L.A. Angels (Ohtani 8-1)
Seattle (Anderson 6-9) at Arizona (Widener 2-1)
Houston (Valdez 9-4) at San Diego (Arrieta 5-12)
Pittsburgh (Brault 0-3) at Chicago Cubs (Mills 6-6)
N.Y. Mets (Hill 6-6) at Washington (Nolin 0-2)
Philadelphia (Gibson 10-5) at Miami (Alcantara 8-12)
St. Louis (Wainwright 13-7) at Milwaukee (Peralta 9-3)
Atlanta (Ynoa 4-4) at Colorado (Senzatela 3-9)
L.A. Dodgers (Price 4-2) at San Francisco (DeSclafani 11-6)

### Calendar

**Oct. 3 —** Regular season concludes
**Oct. 5 —** AL Wild Card Game
**Oct. 6 —** NL Wild Card Game
**Oct. 7 —** AL Division Series begins
**Oct. 8 —** NL Division Series begins
**Oct. 15 —** AL Championship Series begins

# New rule means fewer September call-ups for MLB

By Stephen Hawkins
*Associated Press*

ARLINGTON, Texas — This used to be the time of the season when MLB clubhouses and dugouts would get really crowded with the influx of September call-ups.

There would be plenty of roster reinforcements for contending teams, including extra pitchers and a few more position players on the bench down the stretch. Teams out of the playoff chase got an opportunity over the final month to take a look at lots of prospects while giving them a taste of the big leagues.

Now those roster expansions are much smaller, far from when teams could use their entire 40-man rosters once the calendar flipped to September.

Each team was allowed to add only two players to their rosters, from 26 to 28, on Wednesday.

"In previous years that number probably would've been a little bit higher in terms of guys we'd want to bring up in order to rest guys or even just provide some big league experience down the stretch for some young guys. So we're going to have some decisions to make," said Chicago White Sox general manager Rick Hahn, whose team has a big lead in the AL Central.

"I don't think two is enough, and I think 15 is too much because some teams will call up all 15 and some teams will call up four or five. You're either outmanned, or you'll outman them," said Dusty Baker, manager of the AL West-leading Houston Astros. "We've gone from one drastic measure to another one,"

Even before COVID-19 altered and shortened the 2020 season to only 60 games, MLB had decided to reduce the September call-ups while adding a 26th player to the roster full-time last year.

This will be the first full 162-game season with so few players available late, with every team required to have 28 on their rosters. Through 2019, teams had 25-man rosters until Sept. 1, and could then increase to as many as 40 — though they could settle anywhere in between, often creating unbalanced matchups.

"I've been outspoken in the past. I thought it was very unfair that teams played with different numbers of players in September," Seattle manager Scott Servais said. "Everybody should have the same number to play with.

**28**

New roster size this season in the final two months. This will be the first 162-game season with so few players available late. Through 2019, teams could increase their rosters to 40 beginning Sept. 1.

SOURCE: Associated Press

And some teams that were maybe fighting for a playoff spot, you'd look up and there's 36 guys on the roster, and other teams there might have been 28 or 29."

Teams have less flexibility with only two additional roster spots, which can make for difficult decisions even concerning players beloved by an organization.

That played a part in the way out-of-contention Pirates last week releasing veteran outfielder Gregory Polanco, the last remaining player from the group that helped guide Pittsburgh to three consecutive postseason berths from 2013-15.

"The rosters will expand, but they're not expanding the way they have in the past," Pirates manager Derek Shelton said.

Another significant change this summer is that minor league teams are playing well past Labor Day, when they used to end their seasons. Triple-A games go through the first weekend of October, the same as their parent clubs.

With his team in last place, Arizona manager Torey Lovulllo would want as many players as possible to evaluate. But he does like more manageable shortened rosters, and is mindful that players can still go back-and-forth between Triple-A and the Diamondbacks.

Minnesota Twins manager Rocco Baldelli favors the 28-man rosters in September and operating in a more traditional way, including the ability to make roster moves involving players still active in minor league games.

"The system right now makes a lot more sense than potentially bringing up 40 men, making 10 pitching moves a game, having three pinch-runners and two defensive replacements every game," Baldelli said. "It was a little circus-y at times the way games would be played in September and it doesn't even resemble the game we play all year long and now it will. I think that's a good thing."

Marcio Jose Sanchez/AP

**Southern California wide receiver Drake London, front, said focusing solely on football will help him improve on the 33 receptions for 502 yards and three touchdowns he had in six games last season.**

# London calling: With focus on football, USC WR ready to dominate

By Dan Greenspan
*Associated Press*

LOS ANGELES — When Drake London came down with the game-winning touchdown in Southern California's opener against Arizona State last year, the signature moment of what would be his breakout sophomore campaign came after nothing resembling a normal preseason.

London started 2020 playing basketball for the Trojans before the coronavirus pandemic led to a truncated Pac-12 football season.

But after focusing on one sport for the first time, expectations are even higher for what London can accomplish on the football field, starting when No. 15 USC hosts San Jose State on Saturday.

"He's done a great job of preparing and putting the work out there, you know. Now we got to just put it out there on Saturdays," wide receivers coach Keary Colbert said.

London said at Pac-12 media day in July that not having to alternate between football and basketball allowed him to improve all aspects of his gridiron game. During practice Tuesday, it was the added muscle on his 6-foot-5, 210-pound frame that stood out, allowing him to physically dominate defensive backs to an even greater degree after getting 33 receptions for 502 yards and three touchdowns in six games last season.

Quarterback Kedon Slovis has been equally impressed with London's improved attention to detail, much of which came from his work as an outside receiver during spring practice after mostly playing in the slot last year. When Slovis and London worked together over the summer, they focused on how to further maximize London's route tree no matter where he is on the field.

Where London will line up against the Spartans isn't certain because of uncertainty elsewhere in the receiving corps. Gary Bryant Jr., a sophomore who was expected to start and handle kick returns, will not be available after being placed in health and safety protocols, coach Clay Helton said.

But positioning won't matter given the degree of trust Slovis has in London. Slovis said he believes there isn't a coverage a defender can play that London cannot overcome.

"I think if the DB plays it a certain way, we can kind of find a way to counter that movement, so he's a great player. And it's kind of nice having that target out there where, even if they overplay a route, I think you have a back shoulder (throw) or some kind of opportunity for him," Slovis said.

Adjusting to the ball in the air is one of the more obvious examples of how London puts his hoops experience into practice as a football player. While he doesn't expect to play organized competitive basketball again, London knows his time as a multisport athlete has been invaluable in becoming a strong candidate for the Biletnikoff Award presented to college football's top receiver and other individual honors in his third season at USC.

"Of course I miss it, but I had to make a decision, and I made a decision to play football. But I will say that basketball has helped me like tremendously with my game," London said.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

# No. 3 Clemson rolling out revamped offense

## New-look Tigers open season against No. 5 Georgia

BY PETE IACOBELLI
*Associated Press*

**No. 5 Georgia vs. No. 3 Clemson**
AFN-Sports
Sunday 1:30 a.m. CET; 8:30 a.m. JKT

CLEMSON, S.C. — Clemson's revamped offense will get an early test when the third-ranked Tigers open the season Saturday night against No. 5 Georgia.

"We're going to know real quick what we're made of," Clemson guard Will Putnam said Monday.

It's the first time the Tigers have started the season against a ranked opponent since these same teams met in the first game of 2014, a 45-21 win by the Bulldogs that was highlighted by the college debut of heralded Clemson freshman Deshaun Watson. The quarterback would go on to help the Tigers to two Atlantic Coast Conference titles and the 2016 national championship.

Clemson's offense will have new starters at quarterback and tailback with the loss of ACC players of the year in Trevor Lawrence (the 2020 honoree) and Travis Etienne (who won in 2018 and 2019).

The Tigers are counting on talented sophomore quarterback D.J. Uiagalelei to seamlessly fill in for Lawrence, the No. 1 overall NFL draft pick of the Jacksonville Jaguars.

Things are less settled at running back, where Clemson might call on a group of eager players to take over for Etienne, who left as the ACC's career leader with 4,952 yards and 78 total touchdowns.

Offensive coordinator Tony Elliott is unsure if Lyn-J Dixon, Etienne's prime backup the past three seasons, would get the opening call in the backfield against Georgia.

"We're trying to figure that out," Elliott said.

But it's not because of anything Dixon hasn't done, he added.

"Probably the most competitive position since the spring has been at running back so I'm excited to see how that unfolds," Elliott said.

Behind Dixon, there are several players itching for carries, including sophomore Kobe Pace and five-star freshman Will Shipley.

Uiagalelei, when asked, said he had no idea who would get the first handoff of the season. Then again, the first carry might be from the 6-foot-4, 250-pound quarterback, who relishes running over and, sometimes, through defenders.

But Uiagalelei is anything but one dimensional: He can throw the ball well, too.

He showed that in his second college start — Lawrence was sidelined with COVID-19 for two games last season — at Notre Dame. Uiagalelei passed for 439 yards in a 47-40 overtime loss, which was a record for opposing passers against the Irish.

A week earlier, Uiagalelei led an 18-point second-half comeback for the Tigers in a win over Boston College in his first career start.

MATT CASHORE/AP

**Clemson is counting on talented sophomore quarterback D.J. Uiagalelei, pictured, to seamlessly fill in for Trevor Lawrence, the 2021 No. 1 overall NFL draft pick and now the starting quarterback for the Jacksonville Jaguars.**

Uiagalelei acknowledged things feel differently this week with him in full control of the offense.

"I know coming out the gate, I'm going to start game one," he said.

Uiagalelei and Clemson's offense will have Georgia's complete attention. Bulldogs coach Kirby Smart said having a potential College Football Playoff opponent to start the season has his team on high alert.

"All your guys come fired up and ready to play," Smart said. "We've started on them the last couple of days and you can see the energy starting to increase."

Elliott understands the hype surrounding a big game can some times overwhelm inexperienced players. However, he believes his group knows what's expected of them and has worked hard to live up to the standards set by previous Clemson teams.

The coach said last weekend Uiagalelei showed up at 7 a.m., three hours before practice, to watch film until it was time to work out.

"I want to be great," Uiagalelei said flatly.

It's an attitude Elliott believes runs throughout the Tigers' offense, no matter how many snaps anyone's had in their careers.

"For our guys, internally, they understand the responsibility that they have as the next man up," Elliott said. "They understand what the DNA and the lineage of this offense has been and it's their turn to put their mark on it."

# **Comfortable:** Daniels has Bulldogs thinking championship

**FROM PAGE 48**

Bulldogs take on the third-ranked Clemson Tigers in Charlotte.

If Daniels is hyped for the moment, it doesn't show.

"I approach it the same way I do anybody else — it's just another game of football," he insisted. "It's cool to have a game like this in Week 1. But if we beat Clemson by 100 and lose the rest of the season, we're not going to make it to the SEC (championship). And if Clemson wins by 100, we can still win the SEC if everything else goes out way."

It's clear this is the sort of game that Daniels has long expected to play a leading role in, going back to his days at Mater Dei High School near Los Angeles.

The private school has produced a plethora of top athletes across a wide range of sports, so there was plenty of attention on Daniels after he threw for more than 12,000 yards — with an astonishing 152 touchdowns and just 14 interceptions — over his high school career.

Daniels was one of the nation's top recruits — No. 1 on some lists — when he signed with Southern California ahead of the 2018 season. He quickly locked down the No. 1 job in preseason camp to become just the second true freshman quarterback to start for the Trojans in his first game.

BUTCH DILL/AP

**Georgia's JT Daniels speaks to reporters during Southeastern Conference Media Days on July 20, in Hoover, Ala.**

To that point, everything was going according to plan. But Daniels looked a bit overwhelmed that first season and USC struggled to a 5-7 mark. He held on to the starting job the next season, only to sustain a season-ending knee injury in the opener.

**"The distractions of the outside world really aren't distractions for JT. He has a single-minded focus all the time on being his best and being the best leader he can."**

**Kirby Smart**
Georgia Bulldogs coach

When it became clear the Trojans were going in a different direction, Daniels decided to transfer to Georgia. The Bulldogs needed a replacement for three-year starter Jake Fromm, but the newcomer wasn't fully recovered from his knee injury and started out working with the scout team in non-contact drills.

While Georgia struggled to settle on a starter — starting with redshirt freshman D'Wan Mathis, quickly switching to former non-scholarship backup Stetson Bennett, and then giving Mathis one last shot — Daniels stoically put in the work to persuade the Bulldogs that he was completely healthy.

"I was impressed with how he handled it," said Georgia linebacker Nakobe Dean, who got in a lot of work against Daniels in practice. "Coming from where he came from and who he was, how he handled being on the scout team, how he attacked it every day, gave us all the confidence in the world in him."

When Daniels finally earned the starting nod, the Bulldogs' hopes of winning the SEC had faded with losses to Alabama and Florida.

But his performance over those final four games — Daniels completed 67.2% of his throws for 1,231 yards, with 10 touchdowns and two interceptions — has given Georgia a huge boost of confidence heading into a season that has again raised hopes of claiming its first national title since 1980.

The California kid has quickly become one of the most popular players in the Bulldog Nation.

Daniels even landed an NIL sponsorship from Zaxby's, which operates a popular chain of fast-food chicken restaurants across the South.

But Daniels isn't thinking about chicken.

He's focused on the Tigers.

"I've been consistent with this," Daniels said. "If a deal makes sense and it's not a time factor, it's not going to take attention away from anything that matters, then we do it."

After last year's dizzying routine of quarterback musical chairs, Georgia coach Kirby Smart is thrilled to have the most critical position on the field locked down. Especially when the opener is against a team that has won a pair of national titles in the last five years.

"I am extremely confident in his preparation and his focus; that is not a concern for me," Smart said. "The distractions of the outside world really aren't distractions for JT. He has a single-minded focus all the time on being his best and being the best leader he can."

# COLLEGE FOOTBALL

LYNNE SLADKY/AP

**Miami starting quarterback D'Eriq King is back after injuring his right ACL and undergoing four months of daily rehabilitation. He leads the Hurricanes against Alabama on Saturday in the Chick-fil-A Kickoff.**

# Once and future King: QB's return buoys Canes' hopes

BY TIM REYNOLDS
*Associated Press*

**No. 1 Alabama vs. No. 14 Miami**
**Chick-fil-A Kickoff, Atlanta**
AFN Sports
Saturday, 9:30 p.m., CET
Sunday, 4:30 a.m., JKT

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — It was either the first or second day of Miami training camp. D'Eriq King was running a quarterback keeper. He planted his right foot in the turf, bent his surgically rebuilt knee, made a hard cut and took off.

Nothing bad happened.

Just like that, the Hurricanes' offseason became a success.

Much of the hope that No. 14 Miami carries into this season — and Saturday's season opener in Atlanta against No. 1 Alabama — is because of King, the sixth-year dual-threat quarterback who tore his right ACL in the Hurricanes' bowl game against Oklahoma State last December. He vowed that he'd be back to face the Crimson Tide and after seven near-constant months of rehabilitation he's ready to go against the defending national champions.

"Cutting, that was one of the final steps for me and my rehab," King said. "That's how I tore my knee. To get over that hump, to be able to say 'OK, can I cut?' ... honestly, for me, that was a big thing."

He's on pace to leave Miami as its career leader in completion percentage, no small feat at a place once known as "Quarterback U."

If this is going to be the year in which the Hurricanes return to title contending, King is almost certainly going to be the reason why.

To get here, King also had to be a great patient.

Having surgery on Jan. 4, seven months before training camp and eight months before the season opener, clearly meant there was no time to waste if King was to be ready to play against Alabama. He stayed overnight in the hospital after the surgery, and when he was discharged the next day was immediately taken by golf cart to the team's training room.

"I did rehab for about four hours that day," King said.

The rehab was intense and as a reward for good days, King would be allowed to go throw. Problem was, he couldn't stand. So, to ensure that he wouldn't damage the knee, someone would bring a stool onto the practice field, he'd take a seat and then fire off about 15 to 20 passes.

"It was almost like different stages of grief," Miami coach Manny Diaz said. "At first, there was denial. 'I'm not hurt that bad.' And then there's the anger. And then it was just time to move on to the next step. D'Eriq himself said he was angry for maybe a day or two, but then he put that aside and he got to work."

# Penix confident as No. 17 Hoosiers prep for No. 18 Iowa

BY MICHAEL MAROT
*Associated Press*

COREY SIPKIN /AP

**Indiana quarterback Michael Penix Jr. will play his first game back from a season-ending knee injury Saturday at No. 18 Iowa.**

Indiana quarterback Michael Penix Jr. is practically bursting with excitement.

He still trusts his strong arm, still makes nifty runs and, yes, remains completely confident his surgically repaired right knee will hold up when he starts taking hits. Now comes the hard part.

Penix makes his third straight opening-day start Saturday, this time leading the 17th-ranked Hoosiers into a game at No. 18 Iowa in one of the most highly anticipated season openers in school history.

"I'm 100% confident I'm going to have a great season this year and I'm not going to worry about injuries," he said Monday. "It's just go out and play football."

Teammates and coaches couldn't ask for anything more because they know when Penix plays free, Indiana is at its best. All the 6-foot-3, 218-pound junior has done in his first three seasons is deliver one of college football's top turnarounds.

When Penix arrived as a highly touted recruit out of Florida in 2018, the Hoosiers had the longest Top 25 drought among power-conference schools, had been to three bowl games in 25 years, hadn't produced a postseason win since 1991 and hadn't contended for a Big Ten crown in decades.

Penix's penchant for making big plays helped change everything.

He played in three games as a true freshman, all in backup duty, before suffering a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee. He helped make Indiana bowl eligible in 2019 by completing 68.8% of his throws for 1,394 yards with 10 touchdowns and four interceptions. The Hoosiers were 7-2 when doctors told Penix he needed season-ending surgery on his throwing shoulder.

While Penix's numbers dropped slightly last season, a stronger supporting cast allowed him to take Indiana on a seemingly implausible run after Big Ten presidents reversed course on canceling the season.

Behind Penix, the Hoosiers posted their best record in 54 years, made their first top-10 ranking since 1969 and a brilliant second half at No. 3 Ohio State had Indiana on the brink of an upset. Then Penix tore the ACL in his right knee on Nov. 28, setting up another grueling offseason of rehab.

Instead of fretting, Penix went to work and came back. He found his voice, on and off the field, and after being elected captain, Penix wants to deliver the kind of season Hoosiers fans haven't seen in generations.

The coaches believe in him.

"He's doing more than he's ever done in regards to every time we had a special teams period or a different type of period," coach Tom Allen said. "He he was always with the training staff doing extra work, with our weight room staff as well as our medical guys, just doing rehab and strengthening and conditioning and just doing extra things. He did that all fall camp. He even he did it last week."

# Faster, stronger, better: Penn State's Dotson seeks improvement

BY TRAVIS JOHNSON
*Associated Press*

**No. 19 Penn State**
**at No. 12 Wisconsin**
AFN Atlantic
Saturday, 6 p.m., CET
Sunday, 1 a.m. JKT

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — When he lines up to cover teammate Jahan Dotson, Penn State cornerback Tariq Castro-Fields goes through a mental checklist.

Dotson is faster now. He's stronger. He's always been intelligent. And after an offseason fueled by last season's disappointment, Dotson believes he's improved in all areas.

"He's gonna have a big year," Castro-Fields said. "What makes him special is, yeah, he has speed, but he controls his speed and his routes. He knows how to manipulate and get in blind spots. You mix speed with craftiness, that's when you make a great receiver."

Dotson — who as a freshman reminded coach James Franklin of a young Jerry Rice — returned for his senior year to prove something.

Although he led the team with 52 catches for 884 yards and eight touchdowns, he was stung by the Nittany Lions' 4-5 season. Dotson, Castro-Fields and safety Jaquan Brisker decided they wanted their time at the school to end differently.

Penn State, ranked No. 19, opens the season Saturday at No. 12 Wisconsin.

"We know we have a great challenge in front of us Week 1 from the jump and we're excited to take it on," Dotson said. "We've got a lot of guys this year who are ready to prove to the world that that team last year at Penn State was not us."

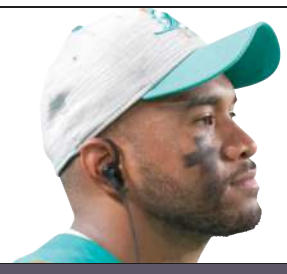
It's not a new feeling for Dotson. He's been motivated to improve before and points to an embarrassing moment in 2019 when the then-unbeaten Nittany Lions lost to Minnesota and fell out of the College Football Playoff race.

With his team driving with less than four minutes left, Dotson hauled in a pass over the middle but was caught from behind by a pair of Gophers defenders. Dotson all but tackled himself as he looked over his shoulders on what could've been a go-ahead score.

Since the Minnesota game, he's made it his mission to add speed. Body control and quickness have never been an issue for the former high school long jumper and hoops star, but he's shaved a few tenths of a second off his 40-yard-dash time by working with Penn State staff on his technique and conditioning.

He ran a 4.33 this summer and has described camp as the best one he's had yet.

# SPORTS



## Vote of confidence

Dolphins coach Flores reiterates: 'Tua is the starter' » NFL, Page 42

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

# Comfortable at QB

## No. 5 Georgia confident it has national championship caliber passer in JT Daniels

By Paul Newberry
*Associated Press*

JT Daniels starred for a powerhouse team in high school.

He launched his college career at one of the most storied programs in the nation.

Yet none of that quite prepared this laid-back Californian for the passion that goes along with playing for the Georgia Bulldogs, for playing in the Southeastern Conference.

"Football is just another thing on the West Coast vs. football being THE thing here," Daniels said. "I still remember the first time me and my family drove from the Atlanta airport to Athens and seeing all the Georgia Bulldog flags flying everywhere, to experience what it's like for football to be such a main focal point. I've loved it ever since I got here."

Now, in what very well could be his only full season as Georgia's starting quarterback, the Bulldogs and their red-and-black faithful are optimistic that Daniels can lead them to an elusive national championship.

He gave them a tantalizing glimpse of what he can accomplish after moving to the top of the depth chart late in the pandemic-plagued 2020 season.

Daniels guided the Georgia to four straight victories, throwing for 401 yards and four touchdowns in his Bulldogs debut against Mississippi State and capping the season by rallying the team to a last-second triumph over Cincinnati in the Peach Bowl.

But none of those opponents was on the level of Georgia's season opener Saturday, when the No. 5

SEE COMFORTABLE ON PAGE 46

**67.2%**

JT Daniels' completion percentage over the final four games last season, in which he totaled 1,231 yards with 10 touchdowns and two interceptions in four consecutive victories for the Bulldogs — numbers that have given No. 5 Georgia a huge boost of confidence heading into a season that has again raised hopes of claiming the school's first national title since 1980.

SOURCE: Associated Press

Georgia quarterback JT Daniels
Brynn Anderson/AP

## Stephens defeats Gauff in second round

» US Open, Page 44

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