

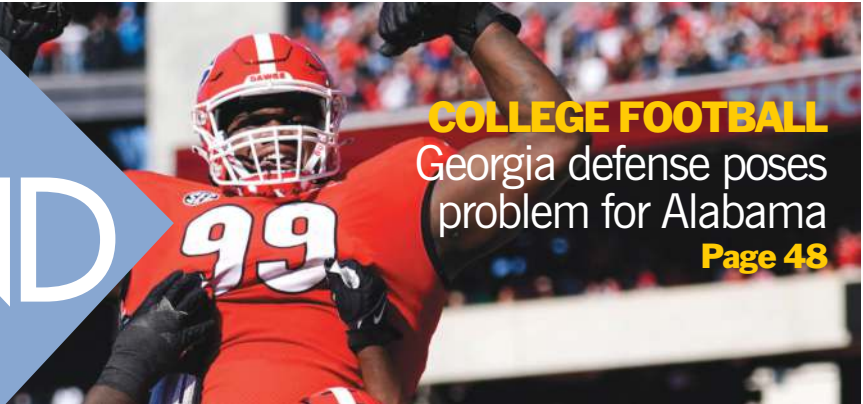
TRAVEL: Take aim at seated archery in Japan **Page 24**

TV: 'Get Back' tackles Beatles myths **Page 30**

GAMES: Battlefield 2042 fun but still buggy **Page 15**

EUROPE & PACIFIC WEEKEND EDITION

COLLEGE FOOTBALL
Georgia defense poses problem for Alabama **Page 48**



STARS AND STRIPES®

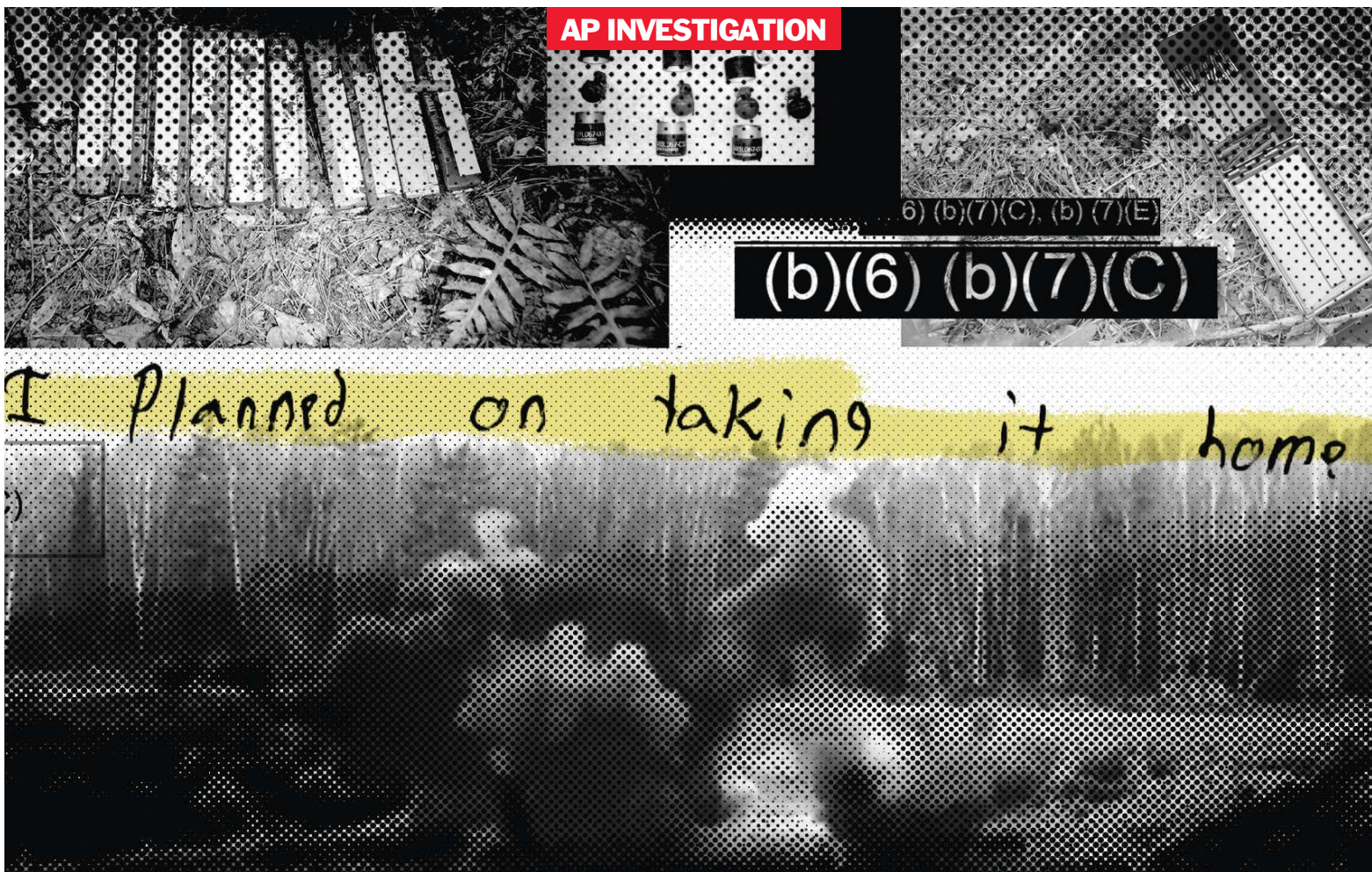
stripes.com

Volume 80 Edition 165 ©SS 2021

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2021

平成12年4月5日 第三種郵便物認可 日刊(土日除く)
発行所 星条旗新聞社 〒106-0032 東京都港区六本木7丁目23番17号 定価 ¥100

\$1.00



An illustration combines a defendant's written statement in the case of explosives he stole from Camp Lejeune, N.C., evidence photos of fragmentation grenades and C4 explosives, document exemption blocks and a screenshot of an explosion from a demolition exercise video.

AP

US, South Korea to update joint wartime plans as reaction to North

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — The U.S. and South Korean militaries will update their plans for potential war with North Korea, their civilian leaders said Thursday, an announcement that follows the communist regime's new weapons tests this year.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and South Korean Defense Minister Suh Wook agreed to update the policy that guides their respective militaries, the Strategic Planning Guidance, following their annual security meeting Thursday in Seoul.

But whether the amended plans will alter the way the allies exercise their forces together was left unanswered. North Korea, which views the annual joint military exercises as a precursor to a full-scale invasion of its country, repeatedly calls for the allies to halt them.

Austin, during a joint press briefing with his South Korean counterpart, did not discuss fu-

SEE PLANS ON PAGE 6



CHAD MCNEELEY/Defense Department

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin listens to South Korean Prime Minister Kim Boo-kyum during the Korea Defense Veterans Association reception in Seoul, South Korea, on Wednesday.

A ticking time bomb

US military explosives vanish, emerge in turbulent civilian world

By KRISTIN M. HALL,
JUSTIN PRITCHARD AND JAMES LAPORTA
Associated Press

The Marine Corps demolition specialist was worried — about America, and about the civil war he feared would follow the presidential election.

And so, block by block, he stole 13 pounds of C4 plastic explosives from the training ranges of Camp Lejeune.

"The riots, talk about seizing guns, I saw this country moving towards a scary unknown fu-

ture," the sergeant later wrote in a seven-page statement to military investigators. "I had one thing on my mind and one thing only, I am protecting my family and my constitutional rights."

His crime might have gone undetected, but authorities caught a lucky break in 2018 as they investigated yet another theft from Lejeune, the massive base on coastal North Carolina. In that other case, explosives ended up in the hands of some high school kids.

These are not isolated cases. Hundreds — and possibly thousands — of armor-piercing

grenades, hundreds of pounds of plastic explosives, as well as land mines and rockets have been stolen from or lost by the U.S. armed forces over the past decade, according to an ongoing Associated Press investigation into the military's failure to secure all its weapons of war. Still more explosives were reported missing and later recovered.

Troops falsified records to cover up some thefts, and in other cases didn't report explosives as missing, investigative files show.

SEE TICKING ON PAGE 7

BUSINESS/WEATHER

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	Azores	..	..	\$4.270	..
Germany	\$3.640	\$4.091	\$4.355	\$3.980	Change in price	..	..	-1.2 cents	..
Netherlands	..	\$4.759	\$5.040	\$4.623	Change in price	..	..	..	..
U.K.	..	\$4.005	\$4.269	\$3.894	Change in price	..	..	-1.2 cents	No change

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	South Korea	\$3.459	..	\$4.169	\$3.799
Japan	..	\$4.159	..	\$3.789	Change in price	-1.0 cents	..	-2.0 cents	no change
Okinawa	\$3.449	..	..	\$3.789	Change in price	-1.0 cents	-1.0 cents	-1.0 cents	-1.0 cents

*DieselEFD **Midgrade
For the week of Dec. 4-10

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	South Korea (Won)	1,176.47
Euro costs (Dec. 3)	Switzerland (Franc)	.9189
Dollar buys (Dec. 3)	Thailand (Baht)	33.88
British pound (Dec. 3)	Turkey (New Lira)	13.4871
Japanese yen (Dec. 3)		
South Korean won (Dec. 3)		
Commercial rates		
Bahrain (Dinar)	.3770	
Britain (Pound)	1.3317	
Canada (Dollar)	1.2801	
China (Yuan)	6.3765	
Denmark (Krone)	6.5587	
Egypt (Pound)	15.7105	
Euro	.8820	
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7930	
Hungary (Forint)	319.59	
Israel (Shekel)	3.1633	
Japan (Yen)	112.97	
Kuwait (Dinar)	.3025	
Norway (Krone)	9.0879	
Philippines (Peso)	50.50	
Poland (Zloty)	4.05	
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7513	
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3672	

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Interest Rates Discount rate	0.75
Federal funds market rate	0.09
3-month bill	0.06
30-year bond	1.78

WEATHER OUTLOOK

FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



FRIDAY IN EUROPE



SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



TODAY IN STRIPES

- American Roundup 12
- Comics 14
- Crossword 14
- Faces 13
- Opinion 15
- Sports 17-24

STARS AND STRIPES

However you read us, wherever you need us.

Mobile • Online • Print

EUROPE

CustomerService@stripes.com

+49 (0) 0631.3615.9111
DSN: 314.583.9111

MIDDLE EAST

CustomerService@stripes.com

+49 (0) 0631.3615.9111
DSN: 314.583.9111

PACIFIC

PacificAdvertising@stripes.com

+81 (42) 552.2511
DSN: 315.227.7310

Round-the-world news for America's military.

Stripes.com supplies constant updates, on news of interest — including reports from our overseas military bases in Europe, Pacific, Southwest Asia and the Mideast, and coverage of the Pentagon and Capitol Hill.

Also available on mobile apps for Android and iOS.

STARS AND STRIPES

Mobile • Online • Print

MILITARY



WYATT OLSON/Stars and Stripes

Sailors load water into a car at the Navy Exchange just outside of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, on Wednesday.

Petroleum detected in school's water system near Hawaii military housing

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — Preliminary tests disclosed the presence of petroleum in tap water from an elementary school near Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, the Hawaii Department of Health said Wednesday.

Samples collected Tuesday from Red Hill Elementary School, which is near military housing and uses the Navy's water system, were tested at a lab at the University of Hawaii and found positive for a "petroleum product," the health department said in a news release.

Samples have been sent to Eurofins Scientific in California for further analysis, the health department said.

Residents of several military housing communities on and around the joint base began complaining of foul-smelling tap water on Sunday. Some have complained of an oily sheen. Others have complained of illnesses and rashes.

The Navy and the health department have tested scores of water samples from homes, but results have been inconclusive.

The health department has received more than 175 complaints, while the Navy said in a Facebook post Tuesday evening that roughly 200 residents have called in to request testing of foul-smelling water.

The health department has advised residents in homes using the Navy water system to avoid using tap water for drinking, cooking and oral hygiene.

In homes where odor or sheen has been detected, the health department advises residents to not

even use the water for bathing, dishwashing or laundry.

The commander of Navy Region Hawaii, Rear Adm. Timothy Kott, said during a town hall meeting Tuesday night that Navy technicians had sampled and flushed lines from the three wells that supply water to roughly 7,000 homes.

The Navy had tested another 80 samples arising from residents' complaints, he said during the gathering at Moanalua Terrace, one of the affected Navy housing communities.

No trace of "hydrocarbons" was found in any of the samples, he said.

The Navy sent samples to a lab in Washington state where more sensitive testing could detect much more minute levels of "hydrocarbons, fuels and oils." They expected results as early as Wednesday.

The Navy set up three water distribution sites on or near affected neighborhoods.

Early Wednesday morning, about a dozen cars pulled up to the huge water tanker over a 30-minute span, where sailors filled one- and five-gallon jugs for residents of affected communities.

Nadine Johnson, who lives in Onizuka Village on the joint base, popped open the back of her SUV for a five-gallon container.

"We have an odor," she said. "Not strong, but definitely noticeable. It's some kind of chemical smell."

They first noticed it Sunday night.

"Our kids came out of the bathroom and said there's something wrong with the water," Johnson said.

One resident attending Tuesday's town hall asked Kott whether the water might have been contaminated on purpose given the communities' connection to the military.

"We see no indications of a chemical attack," Kott said. "I can understand why you may think that."

Some residents wonder whether leakage from the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility might be to blame for the befouled water.

The World War II-era tanks have long been a source of contention, with some arguing that the site should be permanently shut down. The Navy has maintained that it is essential to national security.

The commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, Adm. Samuel Paparo, on Monday ordered a command investigation of a leak of a water-fuel mixture earlier this month from a fire suppression drain line downhill from the facility. He also ordered a review of a May incident in which about 1,600 gallons of jet fuel leaked out of a pipeline at the facility.

"I know there's frustration," Kott said at the town hall. "I know there's disappointment. The bottom-line fact is that we just do not have any testing that has revealed the source of the smell or the odor."

The Navy has set up a website for updates, info and resources at <https://cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrh/om/joint-base-pearl-harbor-hickam-water-resources-and-updates.html>.

olson.wyatt@stripes.com
Twitter: @WyattWolson

Rand says US Army has to 'thread the needle' with Russia

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

U.S. Army moves to shore up Europe's deteriorating security situation could help solve the dilemma of how to check Russian aggression without sparking a dangerous escalation, the Rand Corp. think tank says in a new report.

The report argues that the Army will need to find a balance between deterrence and provocation in its approach to great-power adversaries like Russia.

"For example, the Army could take the lead in examining potential constraints in the deployment, posture and capabilities of ground forces in the European region in ways that would enhance stability," Rand wrote in the report, which is titled "Stabilizing Great-Power Rivalries."

Ground forces, with an emphasis on light units over heavy tank brigades, could "thread the needle" in the tensions with the Kremlin, according to Rand. A step too far would be to put armored brigades in the Baltic states, the report contends.

It calls armored brigades "among the most provocative capabilities to rivals."

The study, which traces the history of rivalries between large powers and examines the factors that can provoke conflict, says there are "serious grounds for concern" over the stability of American relations with both Russia and China.

The report focuses on recommendations for the Army. It comes as the United States and fellow NATO members deal with a sharp rise in tensions with Russia, which the West fears is poised to reinvade Ukraine.

"The Army, like all services, will serve the nation's interests most effectively if it continuously thinks in terms of stabilizing the rivalries rather than merely providing capabilities to threaten the adversary," says the report.

It goes on to say that the military will need to look beyond just adding military capabilities in both Europe and the Pacific if it wants to avoid risky provocation.

"The deterrent effect of capability decisions is only half of the equation," Rand wrote. "When making decisions about posture or capability development, the United States should also consider their effects on stability."

One factor driving U.S.-Russia tensions is conflicting views over what amounts to escalatory behavior in Ukraine, which Russia in-

"The deterrent effect of capability decisions is only half of the equation."

Rand Corp.

"Stabilizing Great-Power Rivalries"

vaded in 2014. It seized Ukrainian military bases and eventually annexed the Crimean Peninsula.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly complained that a U.S. and allied military presence in and around Ukraine amounts to a "red line," implying that such activity could be grounds for another invasion.

Meanwhile, the U.S. and NATO reject the notion that Ukraine is part of Russia's sphere of influence. They contend that Kyiv has the right to integrate more with the West.

"The post-2014 breakdown in relations is traceable directly to the culmination of competition for influence over an area that is far more central to Russia than to the United States," Rand said.

Among military security analysts, there is a long-running debate on whether the U.S. should forward-station brigades in the Baltics and Poland.

Some proponents of such action say a permanent tank presence would offer a better deterrent against Russia.

Rand's latest study, however, says the Army should emphasize lighter units and take advantage of recently established Security Forces Assistance Brigades, which specialize in training partners and are a "useful way of enhancing deterrence without deploying provocative capabilities forward."

The Army could also develop concepts that would enable smaller, lighter units to better defend against enemy heavy armor or maritime assault forces, Rand said.

The report concludes that the military "will increasingly have to think in terms of stability as it works to help the United States manage this challenging new era of competition."

vandiver.john@stripes.com
Twitter: @john_vandiver

PACIFIC

Operation Christmas Drop marks 70th year

By SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

Operation Christmas Drop will soon return to Micronesia, which opted out of the Defense Department's longest running humanitarian-assistance mission last year due to concerns about the coronavirus.

During the annual, weeklong operation — now in its 70th year — C-130J Super Hercules cargo planes drop large bundles of donated food, tools, clothing, toiletries, toys and other supplies to thousands of people living on tiny South Pacific islands.

Airmen in Santa hats are scheduled to fly the season's first sorties on Sunday out of Andersen Air

Force Base, Guam.

The Federated States of Micronesia — Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae — along with the Republic of Palau are among more than 55 remote islands that will receive 400- to 600-pound bundles during this year's drops, which run through Dec. 13, Pacific Air Forces said in a recent statement.

Palau received extra aid last year when Micronesia decided not to participate because of COVID-19.

The primary participants are the 36th Wing at Andersen, the 374th Airlift Wing out of Yokota Air Base, Japan, and the 15th Wing from Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, the statement said.

They'll be joined by the Japan Air Self-Defense Force, which is participating for the seventh time, and the South Korean air force, which is joining for the first time, Staff Sgt. Juan Torres, a spokesman for the 374th Airlift Wing, said in an email Wednesday.

Four Guam-bound Super Hercules, which will deliver 200 bundles of aid, departed Yokota on Wednesday to join in the effort, Torres said.

Operation Christmas Drop began unofficially during yuletide season in 1951 when the crew of a B-29 Superfortress bomber noticed people waving at them from Kapin-gamarangi in Micronesia. They

parachuted a bundle of supplies to the denizens of the isolated island, and a tradition was born.

The mission inspired the 2020 Netflix love story "Operation Christmas Drop," which is centered on the annual military tradition and was filmed at Andersen. Shots from the 2019 operation were used in the film, and its Hollywood crew volunteered to sort donations on their days off.

The aerial deliveries also enable aircrews to develop and maintain combat readiness while delivering items provided by private donors, charitable organizations and the University of Guam to more than 22,000 residents across the remote

islands, the statement said.

"This training mission is not only a tradition but provides relevant and real training necessary for our Airmen and partner nations in the Indo-Pacific region," PACAF commander Gen. Ken Wilsbach said in the statement.

All pilots and crewmembers arriving on Guam are fully vaccinated and anyone handling donations will wear gloves and masks, according to the statement. All donation boxes will be left open and untouched for hours before they're packed.

robson.seth@stripes.com
Twitter: @SethRobson1

March of soldiers ends with piles of Christmas presents in S. Korea

By DAVID CHOI

Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — U.S. soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division marched on Thursday with rucksacks filled with toys and other gifts to donate to South Korean orphanages for Christmas.

The temperature at 6:30 a.m. stood at 23 degrees Fahrenheit when about 60 soldiers and their family members began their 3-mile trek at Camp Humphreys, the largest U.S. military base overseas.

The marchers filled their rucksacks with the gifts they planned to donate, then shouldered their loads and hiked to 2nd ID headquarters. They left their gifts under a Christmas tree in the lobby.

Some participants wore the Army's duty uniform during the march, while others wore festive hats and Christmas-themed outfits that included flashing lights.

One person wore a sweatshirt that said, "Merry Christmas You Filthy Leg," an apparent reference to a quote from the holiday movie "Home Alone 2" and the endearing moniker for troops who are not Airborne qualified.

Amanda Nguyen, an adviser for the 2nd ID Soldier and Family Readiness Group, reached out to local orphanages and organized the event. Nguyen, who grew up in a military family, said she was gifted toys through a similar event as a child because her family could not afford them.

"I love giving back this way," she told Stars and Stripes on Thursday. "I think it was great, especially for our first year of doing it here. I love how many people turned out; I love how hard that they worked. And I love how generous they were."

Inside the rucksacks were toys, books, crayons and other items for children. The gifts are expected to

be donated to local orphanages based on age groups by this week, Nguyen said.

Army Capt. Shawn Droge, the battalion chaplain, brought two of his kids to the ruck march and said it "was a great way that we can all come together and celebrate the season."

"With this being a [ruck march] for toys, this gives us an opportunity to bring some toys and give to the community just to show our appreciation and our love," Droge said. "This was a great opportunity for high morale and do something different; kind of loosen up for a bit."

Army Pfc. Sigourney Guyermelli of the 2nd ID Headquarters Support Company, said she was glad she made the march, despite the morning's freezing temperatures.

"It's really good for the community; it shows that we're not just here," she said. "We actually care



JAZZMIN SPAIN/Stars and Stripes

Soldiers unload rucksacks filled with toys and other gifts at 2nd Infantry Division headquarters, Camp Humphreys, South Korea, on Thursday. The presents will be donated to South Korean orphans.

about the people around here and we really enjoy that."

U.S. military units throughout South Korea have sponsored similar events to give back to communities outside their gates.

U.S. Forces Korea, the command responsible for roughly 28,500 troops in the country, part-

nered with the Korean National Red Cross to donate blood during a time of need amid the COVID-19 pandemic. About 65 people stationed at Humphreys donated their blood during a drive in July.

choi.david@stripes.com
Twitter: @choiboy

Air Force recovers 2 fuel tanks that fell from F-16 on Japanese town

By JOSEPH DITZLER

Stars and Stripes

The Air Force has located two external fuel tanks that reportedly fell from an F-16 fighter onto a coastal town in northeastern Japan earlier this week, according to a statement Thursday from Misawa Air Base.

The pilot jettisoned the tanks from the Fighting Falcon during an in-flight emergency before landing at Aomori Airport around 6 p.m. Tuesday, the 35th Fighter Wing at Misawa said. The wing said the tanks will be returned to Misawa.

The plane landed without incident, but one of the tanks came down near homes and the town hall in Fukaura, roughly 100 miles west of the base, according to local po-

lice and the Tohoku Defense Bureau. No injuries were reported, although police said a sidewalk handrail was damaged.

The wing first reported the tanks fell into a nonresidential area but later Wednesday acknowledged one tank apparently fell near homes.

"The first fuel tank was found in the town of Fukaura" on Wednesday, according to the wing on Thursday. "The second fuel tank was found in a wooded area in the town of Fukaura, and will be returned to Misawa AB by the recovery team."

The aircraft remains parked at Aomori Airport west of Misawa Air Base undergoing inspection and repairs by a team from the

35th Maintenance Group, according to the wing. It did not disclose the nature of the in-flight emergency.

The wing did not respond Thursday to a call the previous day by Japanese Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi to ground its F-16s temporarily until it confirms the fighter jets are safe to fly.

"We have maintenance, safety and environmental experts working around the clock to bring these fuel tanks and our aircraft back to Misawa safely," Col. Timothy B. Murphy, the 35th Fighter Wing vice commander, said in Thursday's statement. "We appreciate the continuous cooperation and understanding from our neighbors in Japan as we work through this in-

cident."

The incident is under investigation, according to the wing. It said further details are forthcoming.

The defense bureau on Tuesday protested the incident to Misawa's commander, calling it "extremely regrettable," and of concern to officials and local residents, a bureau spokeswoman said. It asked the Air Force to identify the cause of the incident as soon as possible and to take preventative measures, she added.

Government spokespeople in Japan customarily speak to the media on condition of anonymity.

The F-16 remained on the runway until just after midnight Wednesday, causing the cancellation of seven commercial flights

Tuesday evening, an airport spokesman said. Commercial flights resumed Wednesday morning, he said.

ditzler.joseph@stripes.com
Twitter: @JosephDitzler



Premium Beef Jerky and Wild Game.

Nearly 50 different flavors made from steak. We ship to SPO/APOs. Gift boxes available. Free shipping for orders over \$100.

beefjerkyx.com/kissimmee

MILITARY

Holiday hit returns as military revs up Santa watch site

By PHILLIP WALTER
WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

A joint U.S.-Canadian military organization that monitors potential threats from the air and sea is readying its beloved annual ritual of tracking Santa Claus' journey around the world on Christmas Eve.

On Wednesday, the North American Aerospace Defense Command launched its Santa-tracking website, which will provide live updates on his whereabouts beginning Dec. 24.

In the meantime, visitors to nordsanta.org can find a countdown to Christmas, festive games, a Christmas song playlist — including some performed by military musicians — and other features in several languages.

A NORAD Tracks Santa app is

also available in the Apple App and Google Play stores, while additional tracking opportunities can be found on various social media accounts run by the organization.

NORAD and its predecessor, the Continental Air Defense Command, CONAD, have been tracking Santa's Christmas Eve whereabouts since 1955, when an advertisement by Sears Roebuck & Co. in Colorado Springs, Colo., misprinted a telephone number for children to call Santa.

The published number was actually the CONAD commander-in-chief's operations hotline.

Recognizing the mistake, the director of operations at the time, Col. Harry Shoup, had his staff tell children who called that radar was being monitored for indications of Santa making his way south from the North Pole.



ALEXANDRA M. LONGFELLOW/U.S. Air Force

The NORAD Tracks Santa Operation Center on Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., on Dec. 24, 2019, the last Christmas before the coronavirus pandemic.

CONAD personnel provided live updates on his location, and thus the tradition was born.

The phone line will be open this year, too. But callers to 877-446-6723 might get a recorded message instead of speaking to a live operator.

“Due to COVID concerns, the NORAD Tracks Santa Operations Center will have fewer phone operators, so callers who do not reach a volunteer will hear a regularly updated recording as to Santa's current location,” the NORAD statement said.

Millions of people around the world who want to know Santa's whereabouts visit the NORAD Tracks Santa website every year, the organization said.

wellman.phillip@stripes.com
Twitter: @pwwellman



WE CAN HELP YOU BE YOUR HEALTHIEST

Open Season is November 8 – December 13

  **BlueCross
BlueShield**
Federal Employee Program.

fepblue.org/wecan

MILITARY

Ramstein spent over \$56M on Afghan refugees in 2 months

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The air wing at Ramstein Air Base in Germany reported spending \$56.3 million on its efforts to house and process Afghan refugees, with plans to spend another \$50 million in continued efforts, according to a new Pentagon report.

The report, published Wednesday by the Defense Department Inspector General's Office, found Ramstein's 86th Air Wing spent the funds to support nearly 30,000 evacuees at the base between Aug. 18 and Sept. 14, when officials for the inspector general made a visit to the base to investigate conditions there.

More than 120,000 people were evacuated from Afghanistan by American personnel in the final weeks of the 20 years that U.S. forces fought in that country. The last U.S. forces left Afghanistan on Aug. 30.

Those costs at Ramstein were in part attributed to \$38 million in "contracting costs," \$5.3 million owed to reimburse a supply chain operations wing for equipment pulled from war reserve materiel and about \$6.5 million in food and labor expenses, according to the report.

"All fiscal year 2021 costs they incurred were replenished with overseas humanitarian disaster and civic aid funding," according to the report. "[The air wing] stated that U.S. Air Forces in Europe, the U.S. European Command, the Secretary of the Air Force and others were coordinating to identify funding to cover fiscal year 2022 costs."

Ramstein was one of the major U.S. bases overseas to host and screen refugees before they could be transported to one of eight military installations in the United

States to continue their visa processing. Other screening locations included Rhine Ordnance Barracks in Germany, Naval Station Rota in Spain, Naval Air Station Sigonella in Sicily, Camp As Sayliyah in Qatar and Camp Buehring in Kuwait.

While Ramstein was first told to prepare to receive about 2,500 evacuees on Aug. 18, that number grew to 28,517 by Aug. 31, according to the report. About 98% of the evacuees were Afghans, and 742 were American citizens.

Ramstein received the first group of evacuees on Aug. 18, Air Force Gen. Glen VanHerck, the top commander for U.S. forces in North America, told reporters at the Pentagon on Aug. 25.

"Upon landing, evacuees were subject to standardized in-processing by military personnel before being assigned to a living area on the facility," according to the IG report.

The base provided medical and security screenings, checking all evacuees for wounds, disease, contraband and weapons.

All evacuees older than 12 were also biometrically screened, with troops collecting their personal information, fingerprints, iris scans and photographs.

The information was electronically compared to Defense Department, Department of Homeland Security and FBI databases.

"At the peak of the initial evacuee influx, in-processing took nearly two days from the time an Afghan evacuee arrived on the flight line until the Afghan evacuee was assigned lodging," according to the report. "At one point, there were over 1,500 Afghan evacuees in line [for screening] and an additional 3,000 Afghan evacuees either in the waiting area or still waiting to de-

plane."

To help address the backlog, Ramstein personnel worked 24 hours a day, with all 86th Air Wing troops supporting the effort mandated to work 12-hour shifts, six days each week, according to the report.

On Aug. 26, the air wing's commander also canceled all military leave through the end of September "to maximize available support" and canceled or suspended base events, "including youth sport seasons," according to the report.

The personnel provided Afghans resources including food and water, clothing, bathrooms, showers, medical tents, worship areas and housing, according to the report.

That housing included more than 200 large tents pulled from war reserve stocks that were set up on a flight line.

The report details some challenges in the first days and weeks of the Ramstein operation. For example, while all military personnel were required to wear masks to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, IG investigators "did not see any Afghan evacuees wearing masks during our walk-through."

Further, some brawls were reported among the evacuees as tensions ran high over meal shortages and morale was hurt by a policy separating women from men in housing areas.

"Afghan evacuees in food lines were unhappy with the distribution methods, resulting in very tense environments involving physical altercations," the report states. "There were some difficulties with assimilating various tribes in the tents, which resulted in various disagreements and issues."

There were also "significant



CHRISTOPHER BRECHT/86th Airlift Wing/Public Affairs

U.S. airmen hand out meals to evacuees from Afghanistan as part of Operation Allies Refuge at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, on Aug. 27.

challenges related to the bathroom," as evacuees were "urinating and defecating on the floor of living and shower areas, causing health concerns in the pods," according to the report.

Those problems were later resolved with some policy shifts, modifying the food distribution process and providing education on proper bathroom usage, the report states.

The IG report, however, was overall complimentary to the air wing, noting the challenges inherent to "having only a few days to figure out how to house and sustain more than 30,000 Afghan evacuees when the initial estimate was for a small number of evacuees — mostly Americans."

Still, the report noted the "significant costs to the command" to execute the mission.

In addition to the tens of millions spent, the operation strained Ramstein's staffing with 80% of its security forces staff, 71% of its communications team and 38% of its U.S. forces police squadron

pulled from their regular duties to support the mission.

"The [air wing] reported that it canceled, suspended or altered other important activities that support its mission, including training and exercises," according to the report.

Readiness was also hurt when the air wing had to use tents, sleeping bags, medical equipment and other supplies from its own stock, the IG investigators concluded.

"By using its organic equipment and supplies, the [air wing] may not have sufficient resources available for future rapid response missions," according to the report.

While the report only provided a snapshot of overall relocation efforts by focusing on the operations at Ramstein, the Defense Department Inspector General's Office will issue a report on each site visited that was involved in the evacuation.

doornbos.caitlin@stripes.com
Twitter: @CaitlinDoornbos

Plans: Policy update follows North Korea's 5 weapon tests since September

FROM PAGE 1

ture plans but noted that any changes "will be made together." He described the joint exercises, which were scaled back to virtual settings rather than involving large numbers of troops in the field, as both effective and a priority.

The strategic plan, first signed in 2010, needed revision to address emerging threats and situational changes, Suh said at the briefing.

"There have been changes to the threats that we face, as well as changes to our military organization," Suh said through a translator, "... as well as changes in the

combined defense structure."

A ministry official, speaking on a customary condition of anonymity, told Stars and Stripes on Thursday that the two militaries agreed to update the plan and specific details were yet to come.

A joint statement from the U.S.-South Korean Security Council on Thursday specified that the updated strategic plan would "deter North Korea's threats ... and provide guidelines to military operational plans for responses in case of necessity."

Since September, North Korea conducted five weapon tests that renewed tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

The regime separately fired a ballistic missile from a train, launched a long-range cruise missile, test-fired a hypersonic short-range missile, claimed to have launched a new anti-aircraft surface-to-air missile and said it fired a "new type" of submarine-launched ballistic missile.

South Korea has also made recent military advances. In September, it became the first country without nuclear weapons to successfully test-fire its own submarine-launched ballistic missile.

The United States has also changed its military stance in South Korea.

The battalion-sized 5-17th

Heavy Armed Reconnaissance Squadron, which was on rotational deployments to South Korea, is expected to be permanently stationed on the peninsula by next year.

The Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division Artillery from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., moved to South Korea in September.

Austin and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Mark Milley traveled to Seoul this week to meet with South Korean leaders. The two sides reaffirmed the military alliance as well as ongoing plans to relocate U.S. assets from Seoul to Pyeongtaek's Camp Humphreys,

the largest U.S. military base overseas.

"The two leaders underscored the importance of conducting the [U.S.-South Korea Military Committee] meeting in-person to demonstrate the strength, credibility and flexibility of the military alliance," the Defense Ministry said in a statement referring to Milley and his Korean counterpart, Gen. Won In-choul. "Gen. Milley emphasized the United States' commitment to [South Korea] and its continued commitment to providing extended deterrence."

choi.david@stripes.com
Twitter: @choiboy

MILITARY

Ticking: In many cases, military doesn't know explosives are missing

FROM PAGE 1

Sometimes, they failed to safeguard explosives in the first place.

The consequences of those failures can be deadly.

In August, an artillery shell exploded at a Mississippi recycling yard. Chris Smith suddenly found himself cradling a co-worker who was bleeding profusely from his legs. The man died right there.

"For no reason at all," Smith said in an interview.

Two days later, an intact shell was found at the scrap yard.

The AP unearthed dozens of explosives investigations by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, Army Criminal Investigation Command and Defense Criminal Investigative Service. In the majority of these 63 cases, the military didn't realize explosives were gone until someone recovered them where they shouldn't be.

These were not rusty war trophies cast out of grandpa's attic. They were taken from military shipments or bases.

Military officials said thieves in the ranks are a small minority of service members and that — compared to overall stockpiles — the amounts of lost or stolen explosives are minuscule.

"We want to get the number to zero, so there is no loss, but it doesn't mean that we don't take seriously losses that happened," Pentagon spokesman Lt. Col. Uriah Orland said.

The AP's AWOL Weapons investigation has shown that poor accountability and insider thefts have led to the loss of more than 2,000 military firearms since 2010. Some guns were used in civilian crimes, found on felons or sold to a street gang.

In response, Congress is set to require that the military give lawmakers detailed loss and theft reports every year.

One thing those reforms won't do: Make it harder to steal explosives such as C4.

Explosives already are harder to account for than firearms.

While troops check guns in and out, explosives are distributed with the presumption they will be detonated. Although at least two people are supposed to sign consumption reports, it's an honor system.

Spokespeople for the four armed services described explosives security as a high priority and said they could account for nearly all explosives. The amounts that are missing add up, however, given the military's vast supplies.

AP sought detailed loss or theft data from 2010 through 2020.

The Army provided a chart that totaled nearly 1,900 entries for missing explosives, about half of

which it said were recovered. The majority was described as C4/TNT. Other categories included artillery, mortars, land mines, grenades, rockets and armor-piercing 40 mm grenades shot from a launcher.

Despite a painstaking, manual records review, Army researchers couldn't always determine amounts, spokesman Lt. Col. Brandon Kelley said. So, for example, it was not possible to know exactly how many pounds of C4/TNT were represented in the 1,066 entries, Kelley said.

The Air Force provided a chart that reported about 50 pounds of C4, more than 800 feet of detonating cord and several dozen 40 mm armor-piercing grenades had disappeared without being recovered.

The Navy said that only 20 hand grenades have been stolen, with all but two recovered. When the AP produced military investigative records showing an additional 24 grenades were reported missing from a ship's armory in 2012, Navy spokesman Lt. Lewis Aldridge said the case was "beyond the 2-year local records retention requirement."

The Marine Corps released data that was too unclear to calculate a precise tally. AP's rough analysis showed that thousands of armor-piercing grenades and hundreds of pounds of plastic explosives were reported lost or stolen. "Some of it was later recovered and often these reports are attributed to human error, such as miscounts or improper documentation," Capt. Andrew Wood said.

Naval Criminal Investigative Service files obtained under the Freedom of Information Act gave an inside picture of the two insider theft cases at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.

As demolition experts, both had exceptional access to C4.

During the summer of 2016, Sgt. Travis Glosser feared Hillary Clinton would beat Donald Trump in the presidential election, and society might disintegrate. So he began accumulating leftovers until he had what he described as "a respectable amount" of C4 — 10 blocks, weighing nearly 13 pounds.

"I mean, you know how crazy the world is nowadays," Glosser told an NCIS agent in June 2018, when he surrendered.

After Trump won, he buried the explosives until word began circulating that another demolition specialist and sergeant, Alex Krasovec, was being investigated for explosives theft.

Glosser eventually confessed, then led bomb handlers to the munitions.

Both Krasovec and Glosser

pleaded guilty to theft of military property. Each was sentenced to less than two years of confinement in military prison, and both were knocked down in rank. Krasovec was booted from the service with a bad conduct discharge; Glosser is appealing his case.

Glosser's wife told the AP he would not comment. Under questioning from authorities, he insisted he never planned to wreak havoc and said he had no ties to a militia.

"At no time did I ever intend or even think about selling, giving, or even showing anyone" the explosives, he wrote. "I also have never had any intent to harm anyone."



U.S. MARINE CORPS/AP

A block of TNT is shown as Marines train in the background at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. Explosives, issued on an honor system, are harder to account for than firearms in the military.

GEICO

HEADING ABROAD?

Take us along for the journey.

Overseas insurance is an easy way to protect your car, motorcycle, and personal property when you temporarily move to a different country. With GEICO overseas insurance, you could get the same low rates and high-quality GEICO customer service that you get in the States.

Why else should you choose GEICO for overseas insurance?

- Knowledgeable agents familiar with local insurance requirement
- American style policies, written in English
- Convenient international offices
- Flexible payment plans
- Premiums that do not increase during the policy period, even if exchange rates change
- When you return to the United States, you may be eligible for a preferred rate with GEICO

The above is meant as general information and as general policy descriptions to help you understand the different types of coverages. These descriptions do not refer to any specific contract of insurance and they do not modify any definitions, exclusions or any other provision expressly stated in any contracts of insurance. We encourage you to speak to your insurance representative and to read your policy contract to fully understand your coverages. Overseas coverages for Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom are provided by non-affiliated insurance companies through GEICO Financial Services, GmbH, a GEICO affiliate, representing Miraccon Versicherungsagentur GMBH. Overseas coverages for Italy is provided by non-affiliated insurance companies through GEICO Financial Services, GmbH, a GEICO affiliate, representing Nubis Compagnia di Assicurazione SpA. Overseas coverages for Spain is provided by non-affiliated insurance companies through GEICO Financial Services, GmbH, a GEICO affiliate, representing Patria Hispana. Overseas offices other than Kaiserlautern are operated by independent contractors. Some discounts, coverages, payment plans and features are not available in all states, in all GEICO companies, or in all situations. GEICO is a registered service mark of Government Employees Insurance Company, Washington, DC 20076; a Berkshire Hathaway Inc. subsidiary. GEICO Gesko image © 1999-2019. © 2019 GEICO

MILITARY

McConnell slow walks defense spending bill

BY DAVID CATANESE

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Back in early October, Mitch McConnell took to the Senate floor to thrash Democrats for leaving the annual bill that funds national defense “in procedural limbo for months.”

His No. 2, Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, joined him weeks later to complain, “We can’t afford to wait any longer to deal with it.”

Yet now, as Democrats attempt to push through the \$768 billion stipend for the Pentagon as the year careens toward a close, it’s McConnell who wants to slow things down, requesting a “reasonable number of amendments” during a “normal process” on the Senate floor.

“The Democratic Leader wants to block the Senate from fully and

robustly debating a number of important issues,” McConnell charged. “The [National Defense Authorization Act] is not finished yet. So the Senate cannot be finished yet either.”

Democrats have a hunch as to why the Republican leader is pumping the brakes on legislation he’s even said must pass — and eventually will pass. The more time Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer is consumed with hammering out an agreement on the defense appropriation, the less time he has to muscle through President Joe Biden’s largest legislative prize: the \$2.2 trillion Build Back Better social spending bonanza, which cleared the U.S. House just before Thanksgiving.

“When we tried to get consent to move on this package of [NDAA]

amendments, our Republican colleagues came down to the floor and objected not once but seven times,” Schumer complained on Tuesday. “So we have had ample debate. This has been a fair and bipartisan and reasonable process that has showed respect to the other side. But this is a new Republican Party, unfortunately.”

McConnell wants more — potentially significantly more than the 18 amendments originally agreed to by the chair and ranking Republican member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, even though there were only seven amendments in 2020, when McConnell was majority leader.

That rolling amendment process could jumpstart if an agreement is worked out. The impetus for an accord could simply be the

other more imminent deadline: the expiration of government funding on Friday, which both parties have pledged to avoid.

If the overall NDAA gets stuck, there is likely to be an escape hatch through a continuing resolution that funds the nation’s defense for the interim. But foreign policy experts contest the main consequence from the standoff is how it is viewed by U.S. allies and foes.

“Since the NDAA is the one bill that people always expect to pass, Congress hung a lot of amendments on it — like the CHIPS Act — that are themselves important for national security,” said James Lewis, the director of the Strategic Technologies Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. “Not passing these

amendments creates problems and probably confirms the Chinese in their belief that we are dysfunctional.”

The CHIPS Act, for instance, includes \$50 billion for domestic semiconductor research, design and manufacturing, meant to keep competitive pace with rival nations. It should easily clear the Senate, if it can earn a vote.

McConnell has cited other issues he believes should be debated as part of the defense bill, including Russian President Vladimir Putin’s aggression towards Ukraine and the consideration of sanctions against the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, a Russian gas line.

Even if the NDAA gets delayed and possibly dragged into after the New Year, it wouldn’t be unprecedented.

US, Japanese forces rehearse defending Japan during exercise

BY SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

CAMP ZAMA, Japan — The U.S. and Japan are holding a large-scale command post drill involving thousands of troops, a year after holding a scaled-back, mostly virtual version of the exercise.

The two-week Yama Sakura drills began Thursday with 3,500 U.S. and Japanese troops at locations across the Pacific. The exercise runs through Dec. 13 and is designed to hone the command-and-control skills they’d need to respond to a crisis.

The training also prepares the allies’ ground forces to fight together against an enemy force.

The U.S. and Japan have “increased the scope of the exercise” designed to hone skills in cross-domain and multidomain operations, the commander of the U.S.

Army’s I Corps, Lt. Gen. Xavier Brunson, told troops gathered at Camp Zama — U.S. Army Japan’s headquarters just outside Tokyo — for the start of the training.

There are 3,000 Japanese and 1,500 U.S. participants partnering at multiple levels, said USARJ spokesman Maj. Elias Chelala.

For example, I Corps is working with Japan’s Ground Component Command; the Hawaii-based 25th Infantry Division is working with Japan’s Middle Army; and the Okinawa-based 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade is working with Japan’s Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade, he said in an email Wednesday.

On Monday, 170 soldiers and equipment from the 25th Infantry Division arrived at Camp Itami in Hyogo prefecture for the exercise, according to a Facebook post by I Corps that day.

“This exercise effectively demonstrates to regional adversaries the readiness, commitment and capability of the U.S. and Japanese military forces to defend Japanese sovereignty and maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific,” Chelala said.

Troops will train at Itami and Zama; Joint Base Lewis-McCord, Wash.; and Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, he said.

“There is also an Australian contingent of around 30 personnel that are here to observe the exercise,” he said. “Although it is a command-post exercise through computer simulations, the participants practice the latest concepts involving multidomain and cross-domain operations through live, virtual and constructive aspects.”

robson.seth@stripes.com
Twitter: @SethRobson1



SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

Military leaders gather for the start of the multinational Yama Sakura exercise at Camp Zama, Japan, on Thursday. From left: Col. Corey Shillabeer of the Australian Defence Force; Maj. Gen. Tatsuo Tarumi of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force; Lt. Gen. Xavier Brunson, I Corps commanding general; Maj. Gen. Joel Vowell, commander of U.S. Army Japan; and Brig. Gen. Cayle Oberwarth, I Corps deputy commanding general for operations.

Retired general files legal petition against congressman in T-shirt row

BY ROSE L. THAYER

Stars and Stripes

A retired two-star Army general filed a petition in a Texas court against a member of the House Armed Services Committee, claiming the freshman congressman is withholding information on shared businesses that sell T-shirts to troops at Fort Benning, Ga.

The disagreement between retired Maj. Gen. Timothy Haake and Rep. Pat Fallon, R-Texas, arose shortly after Fallon was elected to Congress in north Texas, according to court documents filed in Denton County, Texas.

Fallon, a former Air Force officer, and Haake began a business

deal in 2008. But Fallon requested last year to buy Haake’s portion of the two companies as part of Fallon’s financial divestment to meet House ethics rules before being sworn into office in January 2021, according to the court documents.

“Fallon explained to [Haake] that the purpose of the ‘buy-out’ was part of a larger transaction whereby Fallon would liquidate all of his ownership interests in the [Fort] Benning companies and sell such interests to his relatives,” according to the petition.

Haake then pressed Fallon to see the companies’ financial records, but he said Fallon has declined to do so for more than nine months.



Fallon

Austin Higginbotham, a spokesman for Fallon, declined to comment on the petition, but he said Fallon’s “transfer of all personal business affairs was fully approved by the House Ethics Committee.”

In their 2008 agreement, Haake was granted 10% of “profits interest” in two businesses, Recon

Haake’s petition calls for Fallon and his wife, Susan Fallon, to be deposed and for the couple to provide documents related to the businesses.

Sportswear and Jackets, LLC, and American Airborne Store, according to the court documents, which were filed Oct. 29. The two companies sell T-shirts at Fort Benning.

Fallon has similar businesses that operate at Sheppard Air Force Base and Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland Air Force Base, both in Texas, Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., Fort Sill, Okla., and Fort Jackson, S.C., according to court documents.

The deal also entitled Haake to 10% of “capital interest” in any subsequently formed businesses operating at Fort Benning. Haake said he now believes Fallon has other businesses operating at the

Georgia base and he is owed money as part of their agreement.

Virtus Apparel LLC is one of the companies from which Haake might be entitled to profits, according to the petition. Fallon earned more than \$212,000 in a year from Virtus Apparel, according to a financial disclosure form that Fallon filed in August with the House clerk’s office.

He listed earned income from two additional clothing companies that totaled more than \$280,000 for the same year.

Thayer.rose@stripes.com
Twitter: @Rose_Lori

VIRUS OUTBREAK



LISA LEUTNER/AP

A man takes part in a demonstration against the country's coronavirus restrictions in Vienna, Austria, on Nov. 20.

Omicron, delta spell return of unpopular restrictions

By **LORI HINNANT**
Associated Press

PARIS — Greeks who are over age 60 and refuse coronavirus vaccinations could be hit with monthly fines of more than one-quarter of their pensions — a get-tough policy that the country's politicians said will cost votes but save lives.

In Israel, potential carriers of the new omicron variant could be tracked by the nation's domestic security agency in seeming defiance of a Supreme Court ruling from the last go-round.

Weekly protests in the Netherlands over the country's 5 p.m. lockdown and other new restrictions have descended into violence, despite what appears to be overwhelming acceptance of the rules.

With the delta variant of COVID-19 pushing up cases in Europe and growing fears over the omicron variant, governments around the world are weighing new measures for populations tired of hearing about restrictions and vaccines.

It's a thorny calculus made more difficult by the prospect of backlash, increased social divi-

sions and, for many politicians, the fear of being voted out of office.

"I know the frustration that we all feel with this omicron variant, the sense of exhaustion that we could be going through this all over again," British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Tuesday, two days after the government announced that masks would be mandatory again in stores and on public transportation and required all visitors from abroad to undergo a COVID-19 test and quarantine. "We're trying to take a balanced and proportioned approach."

New restrictions, or variations on the old ones, are cropping up around the world, especially in Europe, where leaders are at pains to explain what looks like a failed promise: that mass vaccinations would mean an end to widely loathed limitations.

"People need normality. They need families, they need to see people, obviously safely, socially distancing, but I really think, this Christmas now, people have had enough," said Belinda Storey, who runs a stall at a Christmas market in Nottingham, England.

In the Netherlands, where the curfew went into effect last week, mounted police patrol to break up demonstrations against the new lockdown, which is among the world's strictest. But most people appeared resigned to rush through errands and head home.

"The only thing we can do is to listen to the rules, follow them and hope it's not getting worse. For me it's no problem. I'm a nurse. I know how sick people get," said Wilma van Kampen.

In Greece, residents over 60 face fines of \$113 a month if they fail to get vaccinated. The fines will be tacked onto tax bills in January.

About 17% of Greeks over 60 are unvaccinated despite various efforts to prod them to get their shots, and nine in 10 Greeks currently dying of COVID-19 are over 60.

"I don't care whether the measure will cost me some extra votes in the elections," Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said Wednesday after lawmakers passed the measure. "I am convinced that we are doing the right thing, and I am convinced that this policy will save lives."

Biden launching winter booster, testing campaign

By **ZEKE MILLER**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden was set to kick off a more urgent campaign for Americans to get COVID-19 booster shots Thursday as he unveils his winter plans for combating the coronavirus and its omicron variant with enhanced availability of shots and vaccines but without major new restrictions.

The plan includes a requirement for private insurers to cover the cost of at-home COVID-19 tests and a tightening of testing requirements for people entering the U.S. regardless of their vaccination status. But as some other nations close their borders or reimpose lockdowns, officials said Biden was not moving to impose additional restrictions beyond his recommendation that Americans wear masks indoors in public settings.

Biden said Wednesday that the forthcoming strategy, which was to be unveiled during a speech at the National Institutes of Health, would fight the virus "not with shutdowns or lockdowns, but with more widespread vaccinations, boosters, testing and more."

The White House released details of Biden's plan early Thursday, in advance of the speech.

The Biden administration has come to view widespread adoption of booster shots as its most effective tool for combating COVID-19 this winter. Medical experts have said boosters provide enhanced and more enduring protection against COVID-19, including new variants.

"There's a national campaign to get the 100 million eligible Americans who have not yet gotten their booster a booster," White House COVID-19 response coordinator Jeff Zients said Thursday on CBS.

Much remains unknown about the omicron variant, including whether it is more contagious, whether it makes people more seriously ill and whether it can

thwart the vaccines.

About 100 million Americans are eligible for boosters under current U.S. policy, with more becoming eligible every day. Convincing those who have already been vaccinated to get another dose, officials believe, will be far easier than vaccinating the roughly 43 million adult Americans who haven't gotten a shot despite widespread public pressure campaigns to roll up their sleeves.

And while Biden's vaccination-or-testing requirement for workers at larger employers has been held up by legal challenges, the president on Thursday planned to renew his call for businesses to move ahead and impose their own mandates on workers so they can stay open without outbreaks.

In an effort to encourage more people to take the booster doses, the Biden administration is stepping up direct outreach to seniors — the population most vulnerable to the virus. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services will send a notice to all 63 million Medicare beneficiaries encouraging them to get booster doses, the White House said. The AARP will work with the administration on education campaigns for seniors.

So far about 42 million Americans, about half of them seniors, have received a booster dose. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention this week broadened its booster dose recommendation to cover all Americans aged at least 18 starting six months after their second dose of the mRNA vaccines from Pfizer or Moderna.

Beginning next week, the White House said, all travelers to the U.S., regardless of nationality or vaccination status, will need to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test within one day of boarding their flights. That's down from three days right now for those who have been vaccinated, in an added precaution against the omicron variant.

HAVE YOU BEEN INJURED?

Defense Base Act Legal Representation

Including Non-US Citizens

If you work for a company under contract with the United States Government outside the U.S. and fall ill or are injured at work, you may have the right to pursue a claim in the U.S. for benefits under the Defense Base Act. This law protects and applies to all injured employees, regardless of their citizenship or nationality. Under the law, you may be entitled to select a doctor and to payment of wages if restricted from working.

Hire Us Online Now!
www.barnettandlerner.com

For a FREE consultation
888.732.7425

**Barnett, Lerner, Karsen,
Frankel & Castro**
Professional Association
Attorneys and Counselors at Law

NATION

Deal reached on spending measure

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Congressional leaders reached agreement Thursday on a stopgap spending bill to keep the federal government running through mid-February, though a temporary shutdown was still possible with some Senate Republicans holding out over the Biden administration's COVID-19 vaccine mandates for some workers.

The House was expected to take up the spending measure later in the day. It would extend spending to Feb. 18, keeping it at current levels, though \$7 billion is included to support Afghanistan evacuees.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, had been pushing for the legislation to cover a much shorter time period, but Republicans were insistent that more time was needed to work out differences on a spending bill covering the entire fiscal year.

"The end date is February 18. While I wish it were earlier, this agreement allows the appropriations process to move forward toward a final funding agreement which addresses the needs of the American people," DeLauro said in a statement.

If the House approves the measure, as expected, the bill would then be considered by the Senate for passage ahead of a midnight Friday deadline. But conservative Republicans opposed to Biden's vaccine rules want Congress to take a hardline stand against the mandated shots, even if it means shutting down federal offices over the weekend.

One GOP senator after another left a private lunch meeting Wednesday voicing concern they will be blamed for even a short stoppage of the federal government that will not play well with the public. In the Senate, any single senator can hold up proceedings to stall a vote.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck

Schumer said Democrats are prepared to support the funding bill and urged Republicans not to engage in shutdown politics.

"Our Republican colleagues, meanwhile, can either work with us to move the process quickly through the chamber, or they can engage in obstructive tactics that will make a government shutdown almost a certainty," said Schumer, D-N.Y.

Political backlash over the Biden administration's coronavirus vaccine mandates has been building for months. The White House sees the vaccinations as the quickest way to end the pandemic that has claimed more than 780,000 deaths in the U.S. Wednesday sparked fresh fears, with the country's first detected case of a troubling new variant. During the last government shutdown battle in September, Republicans also tried to halt the vaccine mandate.

As the political arguments mount over slapping vaccine requirements on some groups of workers, so too have legal challenges. Courts have been knocking back the Biden administration's vaccine mandates — including a ruling this week blocking enforcement of a requirement for some health care workers.

For some Republicans, the court cases, along with their own worries about a potentially disruptive government shutdown, are shifting them away from engaging in a high-stakes shutdown.

"One of the things I'm a little concerned about is: Why would we make ourselves the object of public attention by creating the specter of a government shutdown?" said Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, a party leader.

Minority leader Mitch McConnell has been publicly upbeat that there will be no shutdown of the federal government.

"We're going to be OK," McConnell, R-Ky., told reporters in the halls of the Capitol.



PAUL SANCYA

Mourners grieve at Oxford High School in Oxford, Mich., on Wednesday.

Michigan teen, 15, is charged in shooting at Oxford High School

Associated Press

OXFORD TOWNSHIP, Mich. — The parents of a teenager accused of killing four students at a Michigan school were summoned to discuss his behavior just a few hours before the violence, a sheriff said.

The disclosure was made Wednesday as Ethan Crumbley, 15, was charged as an adult with two dozen crimes, including murder, attempted murder and terrorism for a shooting Tuesday at Oxford High School in Oakland County.

"He deliberately brought the handgun that day with the intent to murder as many students as he could," assistant prosecutor Marc Keast said while successfully arguing for no bail for Crumbley and a transfer to jail from a juvenile facility.

No motive was offered. But prosecutor Karen McDonald said the shooting was premeditated, based on a "mountain of digital evidence" against Crumbley.

Investigators found that he had recorded a video the night before the bloodshed in which he discussed killing students, Lt. Tim

Willis of the sheriff's office said.

"This was not just an impulsive act," McDonald told reporters.

During his arraignment, Crumbley replied, "Yes, I do," when asked if he understood the charges. Defense attorney Scott Kozak entered a plea of not guilty.

Earlier, Sheriff Mike Bouchard told reporters that Crumbley's parents were called to the school Tuesday "for behavior in the classroom that was concerning." The teen remained in school, however, and the shooting occurred a few hours later.

Bouchard didn't say what had worried school officials. He said investigators believe the gun was already in the 1,700-student school.

"There is nothing that he could have faced that would warrant senseless, absolutely brutal violence on other kids," the sheriff said, noting that Crumbley had an additional 18 rounds of ammunition when he was arrested.

In court, Keast said Crumbley entered a bathroom with a backpack and came out with a semi-automatic handgun, firing at students while moving down the hallway. The four students who were killed were 16-year-old Tate Myre, 14-year-old Hana St. Juliana and Madisyn Baldwin and Justin Shilling, both 17.

Three students were in hospitals Wednesday night, including a 17-year-old girl in critical condition, the sheriff's office said. Others who were injured were discharged.

Deputies rushed to the school around lunchtime Tuesday and captured Crumbley within minutes of the shooting. His father bought the 9 mm Sig Sauer gun last week, according to the sheriff.

It was the deadliest school shooting since the Santa Fe, Texas, High School massacre in 2018, according to The Associated Press/USA TODAY/Northeastern University Mass Killings database. The U.S. has had 31 mass killings this year of which 28 involved firearms.

McDonald said charges were being considered against Crumbley's parents.



Crumbley

Christmas tree buyers face reduced supplies along with higher prices

Associated Press

ALAMEDA, Calif. — Even Christmas trees aren't immune to the pandemic-induced shortages and inflation plaguing the economy.

Extreme weather and supply chain disruptions have reduced supplies of both real and artificial trees this season. American shoppers should expect to have fewer choices and pay up to 30% more for both types this Christmas, industry officials said.

"It's a double whammy — weather and supply chain problems are really hampering the industry," said Jami Warner, executive director of the American Christmas Tree Association, an industry trade group. "Growers have been hard hit by floods, fires, smoke, drought, extreme weather conditions."

Record-breaking heat and wildfires in late June took a heavy toll on Christmas tree farms in Oregon and Washington, two of the na-

tion's largest growers.

Warner could not provide an estimate of how many fewer trees there will be this year but because it takes up to 10 years to grow, the crop loss will be felt for many seasons to come.

The shortage of truck drivers is making it harder and more expensive to transport live trees from farms to stores and tree lots.

Warner's advice: "Shop early. If you see something you like, buy it."

At Crystal River Christmas

Trees, owner Dale Pine and his nephew Stacy Valenzuela struggled to get enough trees to sell at their tree lot in Alameda. Many of its suppliers in Oregon lost trees in the triple-digit heat wave.

"It was looking pretty grim for a while," Valenzuela said. "Every single day you're on the phone checking, 'Hey, you got anything? If you do, send it my way.' So a lot of work to get these trees on the ground this year."

Crystal River had to raise prices

this year because the costs of trees, labor and truck delivery have all gone up, Valenzuela said.

Alameda resident Ian Steplowski came to Crystal River lot to buy a Silvertip tree with his wife and two young kids the day after Thanksgiving.

"We're having shortages of everything and of course it had to take Christmas trees," Steplowski said. "Definitely noticing everything's a bit more expensive this year already."

YOU COULD WIN YOUR ENTIRE **MILITARY STAR**® BALANCE PAID IN FULL!



8TH ANNUAL

“YOUR HOLIDAY BILL IS ON US” SWEEPSTAKES

ALMOST \$290,000 AWARDED SINCE 2014!

5 GRAND PRIZE WINNERS!

Every time* you use your **MILITARY STAR** card, you'll automatically be entered for a chance to win!

NOVEMBER 1–DECEMBER 31, 2021

GRAND PRIZE

5 WINNERS

ENTIRE BALANCE
account credit

Minimum prize \$2,500



2ND PRIZE

10 WINNERS

\$1,000
MILITARY STAR
account credit



3RD PRIZE

25 WINNERS

\$500
MILITARY STAR
account credit

*Valid anywhere MILITARY STAR is accepted as tender of payment. Every purchase you make with your MILITARY STAR card from November 1–December 31, 2021 automatically counts as one entry. No purchase is necessary to enter or win. A purchase does not increase the chances of winning. Visit MyECP.com/CustomersAds/Page/Exchange for sweepstakes details.



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police: Bank robber out of jail, robs again

FL BELLEAIR BEACH — A serial Florida bank robber once dubbed the “I-4 bandit” was arrested for a new holdup just months after his release from prison, police said.

David Marc Ratcliff, 55, was caught after a brief chase in the Gulf Coast town of Belleair Beach following a robbery at a Wells Fargo branch in nearby Clearwater, authorities said.

Ratcliff was released from federal custody in June after serving most of a 25-year prison sentence for committing a string of bank robberies in the late 1990s, according to federal Bureau of Prisons records.

Those earlier 19 robberies were linked by Interstate 4, which bisects central Florida, giving him the “bandit” nickname.

Neighbor catches girl tossed from burning home

MO ST. LOUIS — A St. Louis man was hailed as a hero after he caught a 3-year-old girl tossed by her mother from the second-floor window of a burning home.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that the fire broke out in an apartment building in north St. Louis. Authorities said Arnez Merriweather, 30, lives in the complex in a building next to the one that caught fire.

Smoke was so thick that Merriweather and others couldn't get inside to help with the rescue, so a woman came to the window and tossed the child to him.

The girl and her mother were taken to a hospital for treatment of minor injuries.

Avalanche delays city's holiday tradition

AK ANCHORAGE — A holiday tradition in Alaska's largest city for more than 60 years got off to a dim start this year.

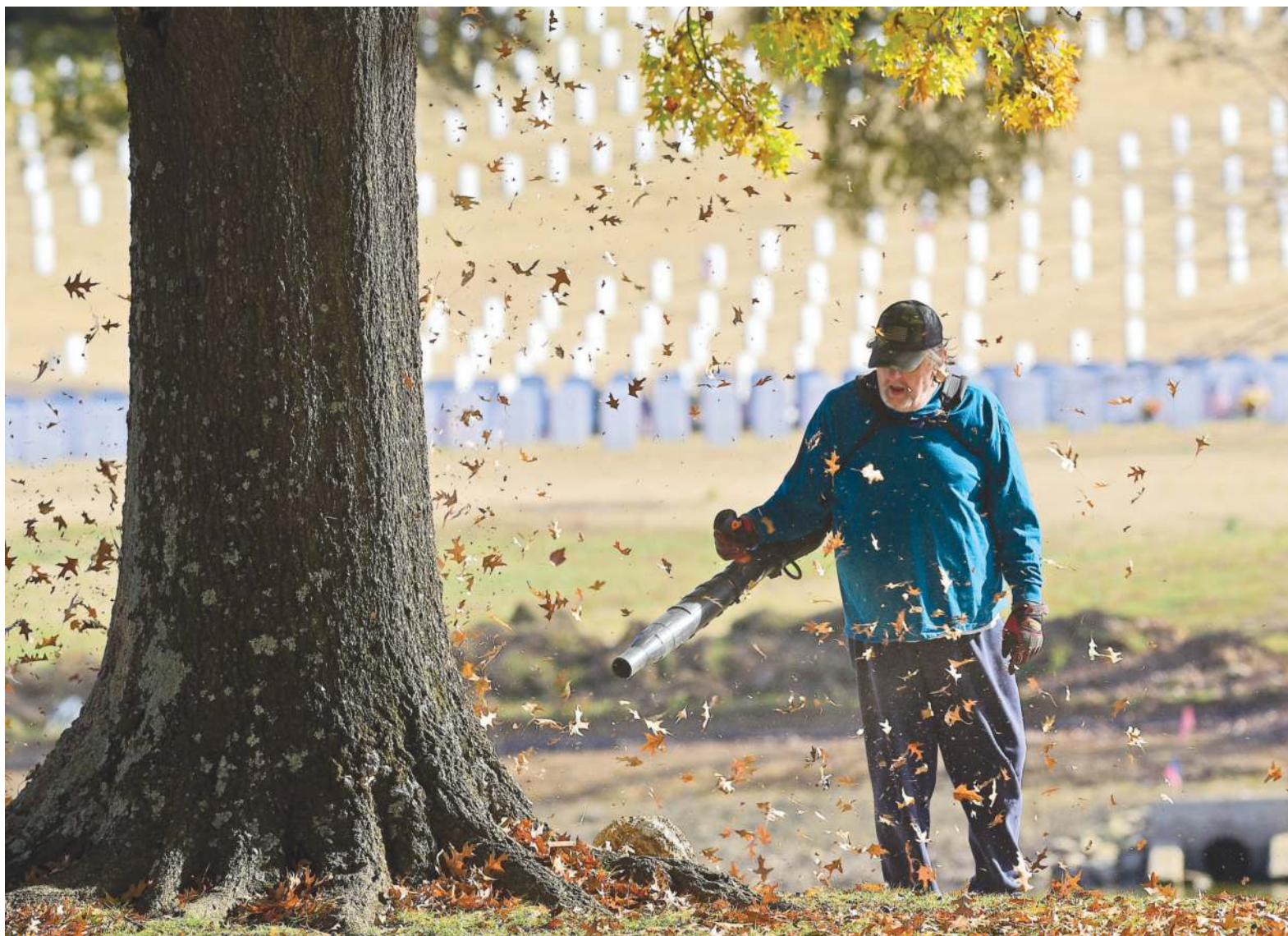
A 300-foot wide, brightly illuminated star situated high above Anchorage in the Chugach Mountains is traditionally lit the day after Thanksgiving. However, when military crews arrived to light the star, only about half of the 350 or so bulbs worked.

Airmen worked for three days in extreme conditions and cold temperatures before finding the cause of the problem.

A small avalanche rained down rocks and snow on the star, which is situated at about the 4,000-foot level of Mount Gordon Lyon, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson spokesperson Erin Eaton told The Associated Press.

Police: Driver stole lumber, led chase

NC WILSON'S MILLS — A driver stole a trailer loaded with lumber from a North



ROBIN RUDD, CHATTANOOGA (TENN.) TIMES FREE PRESS /AP

Blowing in the wind

Steve Wade of Warren County, Tenn., uses a leaf blower to gather acorns at the National Cemetery in Chattanooga. Steve and his son, Chris Wade, have harvested acorns for over 20 years. According to Chris Wade, they strive for reforestation of the oak tree, and other native species, in the Middle Tennessee area.

Carolina construction site and led law enforcement officers on a high-speed pursuit on Thanksgiving Day, authorities said.

A Wilson's Mills police officer stopped a pickup truck leaving a building site with a load of lumber since there had been a lumber theft at the same site a week earlier, Chief A.Z. Williams said.

After stopping in the middle of the road, the driver sped off and got on U.S. Route 70 going the wrong way, Williams said. Eventually the driver got onto the right side of the road and reached speeds of up to 100 mph, he said.

In the truck, police found a loaded AR-15, cocaine and marijuana, Williams said. Two men and a woman were arrested and face multiple charges, he said.

Volunteers rescue bird with plastic on beak

IL EVANSTON — A sandhill crane that couldn't eat because a piece of plastic was wedged on its beak is on the mend after getting a helping hand from a group of suburban Chicago volunteers.

Shana Conner, a volunteer with the Chicago Bird Collision Monitors, helped rescue the crane after getting a call that the troubled bird had been seen in Rogers Park.

THE CENSUS

180 The approximate number of acres of the Potomac River offshore that were closed to shellfish harvesting after a sewage overflow. The Maryland Department of the Environment issued an emergency order closing the offshore from the St. George Island area of St. Mary's County after inspectors determined that sewage likely entered the river. The department estimates about 2,500 gallons entered the river and about 11,000 gallons were vacuumed from ditches. Sewage spills in the St. George Island area prompted temporary closures in St. George Creek about two weeks ago and in January.

Scott Judd, one of the volunteers, said the crane didn't give up without a struggle. But they finally netted it and Conner pulled the plastic piece from its beak. The bird was then placed in a cage and soon laid down.

The bird was taken to the Willowbrook Wildlife Hospital for treatment.

4 firefighters hurt in ceiling collapse

NY NEW YORK — Four New York City firefighters suffered minor injuries when part of a ceiling collapsed on them as they were battling a blaze at an upper east side restaurant, authorities said.

The fire started in a restaurant on the ground floor of a five-story apartment building on First Avenue and spread to the floors above, a fire department spokesperson said.

More than 160 firefighters re-

sponded to the fire, the spokesperson said.

The four firefighters who were injured in the partial ceiling collapse were treated at a hospital, authorities said.

Ancient trees illegally cut down inside monument

NM ALBUQUERQUE — Several dozen ancient alligator juniper trees were illegally cut down at El Malpais National Monument in western New Mexico, and authorities with the National Park Service are trying to find out who's responsible.

Known for their unique furrowed bark, alligator junipers grow very slowly. A seed can take up to 18 months to mature after pollination and the growth rate for young trees is about 0.6 inches per decade, slowing even further as they get older.

Officials said the trees that were cut down were likely hundreds of

years old.

The initial illegal tree cutting discovery was reported in 2020. But park law enforcement monitoring the area and over the past year have reported additional trees cut down, with the latest incident happening in October.

13-year-old arrested in carjacking after chase

CA ANTIOCH — A 13-year-old boy suspected in a carjacking was arrested after leading police on a chase and crashing the stolen vehicle in the parking lot of an Oakley coffee shop, police said.

Antioch police officers spotted the vehicle after it was carjacked in Oakland and when they began to follow it, it drove through Antioch and into neighboring Oakley, the East Bay Times reported.

The driver lost control of the vehicle after hitting the center median and collided with a decorative boulder in the parking lot of a Starbucks in Oakley, Antioch police Sgt. Rick Hoffman said in a statement.

A male ran from the vehicle and after a search in a nearby neighborhood, Antioch and Oakley police officers arrested the 13-year-old from Concord, he said.

From The Associated Press

WEEKEND



Disney+ photos

THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

Peter Jackson's exhaustive new documentary on the recording of what became the Beatles' final album brings new clarity to the familiar narrative about the band's breakup

Page 30

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY



BARBARA HADDOCK TAYLOR/Baltimore Sun

Joy Poole of Middle River, Md., delivers bags of clean laundry to a client's home. She is a "Sudster" on the SudShare app, a gig worker who picks up laundry from clients and washes it at her home.

Uber for your clothes

Maryland father and son roll out laundry service app nationwide

BY LORRAINE MIRABELLA
Baltimore Sun

As a teenager, Nachshon Fertel co-founded a business that grew out of the piles of laundry his mother did for her family of seven in Pikesville, Md.

His mom, Ari Fertel, spent way too many hours washing, drying and folding. She challenged her son, then a high school sophomore with a knack for technology, to reimagine the time-consuming chore. She envisioned a laundry service version of Uber. He created a mobile app.

SudShare, which the teen launched four years ago with his father, an entrepreneur, now has customers in 400 cities who pay other people to wash their clothes. The service employs an army of gig-economy contractors, paid by the pound, to wash those clothes in their home laundry rooms.

"Our competition is your washer and dryer," said Mort Fertel, Nachshon Fertel's father and SudShare's CEO. "The vision is to change America's experience with laundry and to make the washer and dryer obsolete."

Why do laundry, he said, when you can "just tap the app, take the laundry bag and put it on your patio and you're done."

Like Uber, SudShare works through a scheduling app and on-demand pickup — of laundry, that is. For \$1 per pound and a \$20 minimum, customers can leave bags of clothes at their doors to be picked up, washed, dried, folded and delivered the next day.

The contractors who take on

laundry jobs, called "Sudsters," can accept or decline work in their communities as they see fit. The company says it has 54,000 contractors in cities and towns across the U.S. who earn 75 cents, plus tips, on the dollar. SudShare keeps the rest.

Doing laundry has changed little since the automatic washing machine debuted in middle-class homes in the 1950s, but the Fertels believe the timing for an app-based laundry delivery service is right. Consumers use app-based services to pay others to grocery shop, deliver meals from restaurants and drive them places, and the coronavirus pandemic accelerated those trends.

During the health crisis, people found themselves reevaluating how they spend their time, and "I don't know too many people wanting to spend it doing laundry," Mort Fertel said.

Joy Poole, a 38-year-old Middle River, Md., resident, started SudShare gig work last year after her hours at Middle River Aerospace Systems were reduced at the start of the pandemic. She lost not only regular hours but also the overtime she counted on, and needed the extra income. Now she works at the plant by night, installing parts for Boeing 747 aircraft engines, and washes clothes for customers at home by day.

Poole's sister told her about SudShare, and it appealed to her because she always has enjoyed doing laundry for herself and her son and daughter.

"It's like a hobby, almost," she said. "Once my hours picked up at work, I couldn't stop. I became

used to it and had gained relationships with customers."

The app lets customers request particular "Sudsters" and rate them. Poole said she gets a lot of requests and accepts about two jobs per day, which vary in load size. Poole said she has customers of all ages, families, single people and even an Airbnb business.

Nachshon Fertel, one of a set of 20-year-old triplets among the family's five children, all homeschooled through eighth grade by their mom, was finishing 10th grade when his mother approached him with her laundry idea. His father saw a business opportunity and funded it.

"I've always looked for ways to help my parents, and I hated doing laundry," said Nachshon Fertel, who taught himself to build mobile apps with the help of Google and wanted to "help my parents and help the world."

He spent about a year building a test version of the app, then another year perfecting the live version, all while attending a Jewish boarding high school with his brother Moshe in Norfolk, Va.

By his senior year, Nachshon would attend classes in the morning and work on the business in the afternoon, earning science credits developing the app.

SudShare started in Baltimore, with the family initially doing laundry for clients. They began signing up contractors, then repeated the process in an expansion to several East Coast cities. This year, the business took off, and the service now is offered in most urban areas in the U.S.

GADGETS

Noise-canceling earbuds a great choice for gift-giving

BY GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

True wireless earbuds are undoubtedly going to be a popular item on this year's holiday gift lists. Soundcore's Liberty 3 Pro true wireless noise-canceling earbuds are a great choice for that list.

The earbuds can be customized, but right out of the box the sound is great with clear audio, the right amount of bass and noise cancellation. Listening to everything from eclectic playlists to Sunday football on a dog walk was great at all volume levels.

Inside each Bluetooth earbud is a 10.6mm coaxial dual driver and personalized active noise-canceling. Soundcore has developed the active noise cancellation to adapt to the users' volume level and the person's ears. Their proprietary HearID technology studies how sound moves within your ears as well as the level of in-ear pressure. It then creates a tailored profile that optimizes noise reduction for you, your ears and your surroundings.

A big concern I often hear about true wireless earbuds is the fear of them falling out and being lost. Soundcore goes the extra mile to give you the right fit with a triple-point ergonomic shape, and built-in ear pressure relief, which adds up to comfort. In the box are four sizes each of flexible ear wings and liquid silicone ear tips. The air-filled wings are perfect for an extra level of security and comfort.

A compact storage and charging case is included. A single charge is good for up to six hours with the ANC on, eight hours with it off. The compact USB-C charging case will yield another three full charges to extend the playtime even further. Recharge the case with the included USB-C cable; LED lights on the front show the level of power remaining.

For calls, the Liberty 3 Pro earbuds have six microphones with AI-uplink noise reduction, which translates to crystal-clear hands-free calls.

Tap controls on the earbuds are responsive for play, pause and ANC controls. The tap controls can be customized with the free Soundcore app along with options for equalizer presets, 3D surround sound and noise-canceling profiles.

The Liberty 3 Pro comes in gray, black,

frost white and dusk purple. Online: us.soundcore.com; \$169.99

ONANOFF BuddyPhones are kid-safe headphones with volume limitation settings.

To help prevent irreversible hearing loss issues, the over-the-head BuddyPhones feature three SafeAudio settings (94dB TravelMode, 85dB KidsMode and 75dB ToddlerMode) to protect children from hearing damage. The settings limit the volume settings to safe recommended levels.

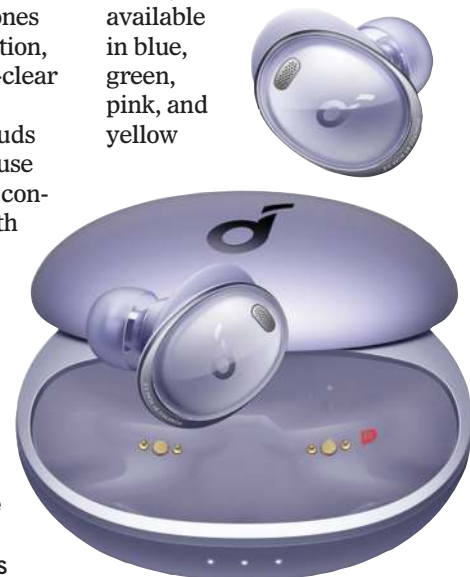
In a recent press release touting the safety of the headphones, ONANOFF shared that the CDC estimates 12.5% of children and adolescents aged 6-19 years have suffered permanent damage to their hearing as a result of earphones and devices turned to a high volume.

I enlisted my neighbor's daughter for testing. After a few days of use, she said she loved them and wouldn't give them back. There were no complaints from the 8-year-old on the volume level limitations, and she loved the comfort and sound.

Other features include StudyMode, which helps isolate voices from other sounds, producing crisper, clearer vocals that make for a much-improved listening experience. With BuddyLink, the BuddyPhones are perfect for sharing one device to view and learn together.

A detachable beam microphone with passive noise cancellation is included for online communication. The wireless headphones have a 20-hour battery life, an adjustable headband and feature ear cushions made with hypo-allergenic sweat-resistant fabric. A soft travel bag is included for the foldable headphones.

Online: buddyphones.com; \$59.99 for wireless, \$29.99 for wired, both available in blue, green, pink, and yellow



Soundcore's Liberty 3 Pro true wireless earbuds have active noise cancellation.

SOUNDCORE/TNS

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



EA/TNS

Battlefield 2042 features emergent gameplay that is a hallmark of the franchise. Players will uncover moments where the unexpected happens because of the skills of competitors or, owing to the new climate change-based storyline, the chaos of the weather.

Is Battlefield 2042 worth playing now?

Latest entry to the military shooter franchise needs work but, like past titles, will likely be good after a few updates

By GIESON CACHO
The Mercury News

When perusing a game on the shelves or a digital shop, players face three decisions: They can buy it, forget it or wait on it. Few titles are worth the immediate purchase, and plenty more can be ignored altogether. The last category is more complicated, and that's where Battlefield 2042 sits.

It's clearly not a finished project with the bugs and glitches that have plagued the early access period of its launch, but that's expected for Electronic Arts' military shooter. The past few iterations have never been complete on release day, but DICE and the other developers behind the series tend to improve on the title so that it ends up being the game they envisioned.

Near-future warfare

Battlefield 2042 takes place in the near future in a world devastated by climate change. Sandstorms have taken over Doha, Qatar. Container ships have been abandoned for scrap along the coast of Alang, India. Even Antarctica has become a battleground as the warmer climate has made the continent more inhabitable and exploitable for resources.

In this dire landscape, players take on the role of non-patriated people or No-Pats. These are refugees from collapsed nations where extreme weather has created famine and other catastrophes. These are people without a country and they become mercenaries aligned with either

the U.S. or Russia as the two superpowers engage in another conflict.

It's a different take on World War III, and one that acts as a strong scaffolding for the multiplayer-only game. First off, players choose from 10 No-Pat specialists who have a unique perk and a gadget. Their characteristics make them suited for different roles in a fight. Assault classes are built to attack and outflank opponents. Engineers specialize in defense and controlling areas. Recons act as scouts, spotting advancing enemies and weakening them from the shadows. Support specialists bolster the squad, resupplying or healing them.

These are general roles, with each specialist having a unique way of fulfilling their niche. Players can further customize the specialists by configuring them with different weapons, grenades and tools. It's possible to create an assault trooper who has explosives or a support medic who can also repair vehicles.

Initially, players have access to a limited number of specialists, weapons and vehicles, but as they level up by playing matches, they earn more options and gain access to more characters. The progression feels balanced so that players will earn several pieces of gear over an hour-long session.

Bigger than ever

What makes Battlefield different from other military shooters is the size and scale of the battles. Competitors such as Call of Duty and Halo have a more arcade-like flow to the confrontations. Matches are fast-paced with threats constantly around the corner. On the other hand, Battlefield 2042 has enormous maps, ones

that now accommodate 128 players. With so much space and so many players, you often have to travel to the action and approach objectives from different angles. It takes a few matches to adjust to the combat loop and constantly changing conflict.

Taken altogether, Battlefield 2042 matches are 85% chaos. That's made worse by the lack of voice chat at launch. Helicopters will fire down on squads holding a capture point. Trucks will roar through the battlefield, running over friends and foes alike. Explosions will erupt unexpectedly as players rush a building. Ten percent of matches (it could be higher depending on the diverse battlegrounds) will be gunfights in close quarters. It's the type of fighting that Call of Duty fans will be familiar with.

Chaotic serendipity

The other 5% are the "what the heck" moments. Every so often, players will see that attack chopper explode and its flaming wreck fall on a squad creating an orgy of death. Other times a tank rushing to a control point can crush enemies after falling off a cliff. These emergent gameplay moments are what the franchise is built on, and Battlefield 2042 tries to expand on that by introducing weather-fueled moments to the maps.

Players will find tornadoes tear through the landscape in India. They cut out communications and introduce more chaos as players try to avoid the natural disasters. In Hourglass, sandstorms reduce visibility and force players to take cover.

Last squad standing

This all-out warfare is the foundation of Battlefield 2042. DICE also incorporated a

new mode called Battlefield Hard Zone, which is comparable to a battle royal rule set. Players jump into a four-member squad and they'll have to compete against eight other units. The group will have to collect intel and survive together until they can extract that data. Rival squads are also going after the data and players will have to battle them. If a squad is wiped out, they're out.

Battlefield 2042 has the same tense moments as a battle royal, as the number of squads go down and players have to use teamwork to survive. If allies go down, they can still be resurrected by redeployment machines scattered on the map or purchased beforehand. Hard Zone as a mode has potential but again it's hamstrung by an incomplete game that lacks voice chat and polish.

Lastly, Battlefield Portal is an option that lets players create their own rule set using assets and maps from different franchise eras. Players won't get a huge number of options, but this lets players who want a trip down memory lane to experience older maps through new lenses. The same shooting and mechanics from Battlefield 2042 stick around but players can create interesting scenarios such as VIP Fiesta, where one team has to eliminate the mark on the rival team. In a twist, dying gives players a different gear set each time.

Like the rest of Battlefield 2042, this mode has potential but players will have to wait and see if this mode and the rest of the game pans out.

Platforms: PC, Xbox One, Xbox Series X|S, PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5

Online: ea.com/games/battlefield/battlefield-2042

WEEKEND: MOVIES

Christmas classics to watch this year

Here's a guide to holiday favorites, both new and old, and where to stream them

By ADAM GRAHAM
The Detroit News

But what to watch, an old-time favorite or a new-school entry in the Christmas canon? There are plenty of both available across the top streaming services, and that's without resorting to watching the latest big-city-ad-exec-comes-home-for-the-holidays-and-learns-the-true-meaning-of-a-small-town-Christmas tale on the Hallmark Channel (although there's something to be said for the comfort of those, as well).

Here are 10 Christmas favorites — some new, some old — and where to stream them this holiday season:

'Elf'

Will Ferrell is Buddy, an overgrown elf, who exists on sugar — the more the merrier — in Jon Favreau's 2003 holiday hit that made Ferrell, who had just left "Saturday Night Live" at the time, a big-time movie star in his own right. Buddy the Elf has since become a veritable brand — catch his likeness on three different flavors of International Delight coffee creamer — and it all comes back to the joyful delight of Ferrell's performance in this cuddly holiday comedy. (HBO Max)

'Die Hard'

Welcome to the party, pal. The 1988 Bruce Willis classic's Christmas status has been debated so much that even President Obama once weighed in (he said it wasn't a Christmas movie, and he was wrong), but this action classic is every bit a Christmas movie (as is its sequel, 1990's underappreciated "Die Hard 2") and is worth celebrating every year because just like the best holiday traditions, it never gets old. (available for rental on Amazon Prime Video)

'Jingle Jangle: A Christmas Journey'

A joyous, spirited, inventive Christmas musical, writer-director David E. Talbert's holiday fantasy stars Forest Whitaker as Jeronimus Jangle, an inventor and toymaker whose creations are the stuff of childhood dreams. When his apprentice, Gustafson (Keegan-Michael Key), steals his book of ideas, well, it's time for a Christmas miracle to save the day, and this festive, fantastical tale delivers the goods. (Netflix)

'Home Alone'

There's a new version on Disney+ this year that isn't half bad, but the original is tough to top. Macaulay Culkin — whose brother, Kieran, plays the biggest jerk in an entire cast of jerks on HBO's "Succession" — gets left home alone for the holidays and has the time of his life, until a pair of pesky robbers come knocking at his door. Violence ensues, but it's the sweet heart at the center of this Christmas tale that makes it stand the test of time. (Disney+)

'Miracle on 34th Street'

What did they watch on Christmas before this 1947 holiday classic? Edmund Gwenn stars as a department store Santa at Macy's who claims he's the real McCoy and is put on trial to find out the truth. Writer-director George Seaton's warmhearted tale was nominated for Best Picture — it lost to "Gentleman's Agreement" — but went on to earn Academy Awards for Best Supporting Actor and a pair of writing awards, on its way to becoming an all-time Christmas classic. (HBO Max)

'It's a Wonderful Life'

The story of George Bailey (James Stewart), an average man who gets the chance to see what life would have been like without his existence, is one of those movies that's on TV so often it can feel like you see it every year even if you don't actually sit down and watch it. But the 1946 Christmas staple still has plenty to offer, including a message of togetherness and a lesson that "each man's life touches so many other lives," which is still important to remember today. (Amazon Prime Video)

'National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation'

He's just a family man who wants everyone to be together at



Will Ferrell, right, and Bob Newhart star in "Elf," a 2003 comedy about Buddy (Ferrell), who discovers he's not a real elf and leaves the North Pole to find his biological father.



Netflix

"Klaus" is an animated story about Santa's (J.K. Simmons) friendship with a postman (Jason Schwartzman).

the holidays. Is that so much to ask? The 1989 Chevy Chase vehicle grows in stature every year because it acknowledges everything that makes the holidays the holidays, from the alternating stress and warmth of family to the feeling of accomplishment of hanging your Christmas lights just so. (HBO Max)

'Kiss Kiss Bang Bang'

Writer-director Shane Black is a real sucker for the holidays, and he's used Christmas as a backdrop for his movies including "Lethal Weapon," "The Long Kiss Goodnight," "Iron Man 3" and "The Nice Guys." Here, he casts a pre-"Iron Man" Robert



WARNER BROS., DISPATCH/TNS

Chevy Chase and Beverly D'Angelo star as a suburban couple hosting a crowd in "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation."

Downey Jr. alongside Val Kilmer in a black comedy crime noir with plenty of flash, style and, oh yeah, holiday cheer. (available for rental on Amazon Prime Video)

'Fatman'

Mel Gibson plays a grizzled, hard-nosed Chris Cringle, a workin' stiff just like the rest of us, in this hard-boiled Christmas tale that prefers a shot and a beer to a glass of egg nog. Walton Goggins is a riot as a psychotic hit man who wants Santa dead, leading to a bloody showdown in the snow in writer-directors Eshom and Ian Nelms' comedic action drama, which puts a mod-

ern spin on familiar holiday happenings. Ho ho holy cow, this movie is nuts. (Peacock)

'Klaus'

There's lots to love in this sweet, nostalgic, hand-drawn animated tale, with J.K. Simmons as the voice of Santa Claus and Jason Schwartzman as a postman who befriends him. But perhaps most welcome, at least this holiday season, is the fact that it employs the voice talents of the late Norm Macdonald, who died this year at age 61, who plays a wry boat captain who sounds exactly like, well, Norm Macdonald. And Christmas could use a little more Norm. (Netflix)

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

10 destinations inspired by TV, film

By NATALIE B. COMPTON
The Washington Post

Movies and TV offer an escape from our normal lives, but sometimes they can inspire an actual escape. Media has the power to create in-demand travel destinations. Just look at Croatia and its “Game of Thrones” tourism surge, or New Zealand’s “Lord of the Rings” fame.

As people begin plotting their trips for 2022, we put together some ideas based on what people are watching in 2021.

‘Searching for Italy’

Those dreaming of traveling, eating and drinking like Stanley Tucci are encouraged to book a flight to Italy (obviously).

Where you go can be based on your favorite episode, such as Florence to see the “wine windows” built between the wrath of the Black Death in the 1300s and the Italian Plague in the 1600s, or Modena to taste the world’s greatest balsamic vinegar.

For a trip with the best chance for a direct flight, head to Rome to hunt for its four pastas: amatriciana, cacio e pepe, carbonara and gricia.

‘Dune’

Space travel may only be viable for the super rich, but “Dune” fans can pretend to have an interstellar adventure by visiting two of the movie’s epic filming locations.

For the much greener Caladan experience, plan a trip to Norway to see the Nordfjord coast, Kinn Island (you can take a boat from Floro to get there) and Myresanden beach on the Stadlandet Peninsula. You can also go with Norway Adventures on an eight-day filming locations tour.

To reenact spice-tripping scenes from Arrakis, visit the place where they were filmed in Wadi Rum, a protected desert in Jordan. Also known as the Valley of the Moon, this destination has also been used to film major movies such as “Star Wars,” “Lawrence of Arabia” and “The Martian.” Immerse yourself in the desert by staying in one of the Bedouin-run camps that run from luxurious options to still-spectacular traditional ones.

‘Squid Game’

The South Korean survival drama “Squid Game” became Netflix’s most-watched series of all time. As a result, online searches for flights to its filming locations are surging, although it’s still not easy to visit South Korea because of the pandemic.

Once South Korea tourism does reopen, plan your trip to Jeju Island (a popular destination for hiking), Seoul and Daejeon (the country’s fifth-largest metropolis).

‘Impeachment’

Fans of the third installment of FX’s “American Crime Story” can book a vaca-



MARIO PEREZ/HBO

The hotel staff in “The White Lotus” wave to guests in the first episode. Fans can stay at the Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea, which was featured in the show, for \$1,500 a night or at a more affordable, locally owned property on the island.

tion to our nation’s capital, although it was filmed on sets in Los Angeles. To follow the storyline, head to the Watergate Hotel in Foggy Bottom where Monica Lewinsky, played by Beanie Feldstein, lived, or cross the Potomac River and visit the Ritz-Carlton in Pentagon City, where you probably won’t be questioned by the FBI.

‘Emily in Paris’

Part of the appeal of Netflix’s “Emily in Paris” is the show’s backdrop, particularly during its debut in October 2020 when Americans couldn’t travel to the titular city.

With Season 2 coming out this December and France open for tourism, the series provides inspiration for a trip perfect for influencers-in-training. That means planning stops to Instagram-worthy places featured in the show, such as Café de Flore (one of the oldest cafes in the city), the Palais Garnier opera house, the Pont Alexandre III bridge and Hotel Plaza Athénée.

‘Jungle Cruise’

The on-screen adventures of Dr. Lily Houghton and skipper Frank Wolff are based on one of Disney’s most famous rides. Fans can travel to Disneyland in Southern California and board the original ride, which debuted in 1955, or plan a vacation to Orlando’s Disney World. Recently, Disney announced updates to the ride, saying it will remove “negative depictions of ‘natives.’” Both parks will also look a little different during the pandemic;

expect new rides and COVID-19 protocols.

‘The White Lotus’

Luckily for fans of “The White Lotus,” the property featured on the show exists in real life. For about \$1,500 a night, you, too, can stay at the Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea, as long as you follow Hawaii’s coronavirus travel restrictions. Just pray your trip isn’t as disastrous as the hotel guests’ on the show.

If the Four Seasons is a little too pricey for you, check out the locally owned properties on the island, such as the Old Wailuku Inn at Ulupono or Iao Valley Inn, located on 37 acres adjacent Iao Valley State Park.

‘Mare of Easttown’

Fans of the hit (bleak) show “Mare of Easttown” are causing a scene at filming locations in Wallingford, Pa., to the point that Nether Providence Township police are telling the public it is “not cool” to trespass.

Instead of freaking out locals, stay in one of the decidedly-not-bleak bed-and-breakfasts in the area, like the Gothic Revival chalet-style Gifford-Risley House or the Inn at Grace Winery.

‘Luca’

“Luca” may be a Disney and Pixar animated movie about a couple of Italian kids who can turn into sea monsters, but you can still plan a trip to the fictional movie’s real-life location.

The city where the coming-of-age tale takes place is based on the Italian coastal destination Cinque Terre. It is worthy of a visit even if you’re not a rambunctious little boy trying to find your place in the world. Note that pre-pandemic, the destination was struggling with overtourism, so a trip outside of peak summer travel would help you avoid crowds and respect locals. Before you go, get to know Italy’s travel restrictions for foreign visitors.

Additionally, if you choose to hike between the picturesque towns, do not wear flip flops on the trail; you can face fines or be banned. Improper footwear has resulted in numerous accidents that required mountain rescue teams.

‘The French Dispatch’

Wes Anderson’s latest movie is described as a 20th-century “love letter to journalists” set in a charming, fictional French city. The director found the charm and preserved architecture for the project in Angoulême, which has a population of about 42,000.

Nicknamed the “balcony of the southwest,” Angoulême is an hour away by train from Bordeaux. The city is known for its classic car race, the Circuit des Remparts, which takes place annually on the third weekend of September.

‘Ted Lasso’

AppleTV’s “Ted Lasso” won people’s hearts over for being nice. No violence, no depressing plotlines — just a pleasant story about an American football coach in London trying to do his best.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Nestled among the pines

Designer camper cabins offer chic overnights among the trees in Minnesota

By RACHEL HUTTON
Star Tribune

When the morning sun peeked into our camper cabin at Whitetail Woods Regional Park, I almost thought I'd awoken as a bird. My nest was, in fact, a boxy, mod bunkhouse, cantilevered into a stand of evergreens. I looked through the cabin's glassy back wall and watched the thin, towering trunks sway in the barest breeze. I never would have noticed their invisible rhythm if not for my uncommon perch.

In late 2014, Dakota County opened the park, located between Rosemount and Farmington, Minn., and began taking reservations for its three treehouse-style camper cabins. Within 30 minutes, there were more than 200 requests for overnights. They've been booked nearly solid ever since.

The uniqueness of the cabins, designed by Minneapolis-based HGA architects, initially drew me to Whitetail Woods. But once I arrived, I discovered the park's location and amenities were ideal for a quick, nature-intensive getaway. My family could hike and bike through the park's 450-some acres of woods, wetlands and prairie. Then, after communing around the campfire, we'd sleep on mattresses, with roof overhead. The exurban spot was close enough to have pizza delivered, but felt far more secluded.

The Department of Natural Resources operates about 100 camper cabins across Minnesota's state park system — rustic, one-room structures positioned somewhere between a tent and motel room. They're sparsely furnished with bunk beds (BYO bedding) and a dining table. Most are outfitted with electric heat and power, though a few basic models supply only a wood stove. They're meant to be utilitarian, and that's how they feel.

Though Dakota County's Whitetail cabins are nearly as spartan, their design makes the overnight experience more special. The ones I've visited, dubbed the Pine Forest cabins, were built on a slope, with the backs on stilts. From afar, they resemble angular telescopes, trained on the trees.

The trio are placed close enough to one another that a marshmallow roasting stick could practically reach the neighbors' fire pit. But being tucked back in the trees creates a sense of privacy.

Inside, the 250-square-foot wood-lined boxes feel snug as a sauna. Each contains double-wide bunk beds, a foldout couch and a dining table. The sleek lines of tongue-and-groove pine and the roof's upward slope draw the eye to the focal point: sliding glass doors leading to the cabin's deck, jutting into the boughs. And oh, that view. It's easy to see why the cabins won awards from the national and state chapters of the American Institute of Architects.

The first time my family stayed in a Whitetail camper cabin, in August 2020, we could hardly pry my preschoolers off the beds, enamored as they were of bouncing on the upper bunk.



RACHEL HUTTON/Minneapolis Star Tribune

The Pine Forest camper cabins are a signature amenity of Whitetail Woods Regional Park. The Department of Natural Resources operates around 100 camper cabins — some are sparsely furnished one-room structures — within the Minnesota park system.



Large windows offer great views and bring plenty of light into the Pine Forest camper cabins' sleeping and dining areas.

But once we coaxed them outside, there was more than enough to explore between the 100-plus miles of trails and the scenic overlooks of Empire Lake. Whitetail Woods was created from scratch, all at once, on land purchased from a family that had formerly used it for hunting and farming. Wildlife management areas on two sides of the park insulate it from encroaching development.

We soaked up the sounds of cicadas and crickets and woodpeckers. We followed a fluttering monarch through the prairie. Thistles grew taller than our heads. But we also appreciated having flush toilets and showers close to our cabin, whose shady site remained surprisingly cool

If you go

Whitetail Woods Regional Park

Where: 17100 Station Trail, Farmington, Minn.

Reservations: Cabins up to 120 days in advance at co.dakota.mn.us/parks/parks/Trails/WhitetailWoods. Cancellations are posted at [facebook.com/dakotacountyparks](https://www.facebook.com/dakotacountyparks). Cost: \$90/night, plus an \$8 reservation fee. Park entry is free.

despite the heat.

Upon our return, I logged onto the Dakota County website at 6 a.m. and reserved the remaining two cabins for the next Saturday available, a year away.

This summer, friends joined us in the adjacent cabin. The park's renovated Fawn Crossing Nature Play Area had reopened, delighting the kids with its climbable stumps, water pump and giant, fort-building sticks.

Rain began to fall just as we were roasting our hot dogs. But with the help of a few umbrellas, we finished cooking and retreated to our cabin.

We ate at the dining table and watched the storm from the couch. When thunderbolts cracked and water poured, I was relieved to have something sturdier than tent fabric protecting me from the elements.

A year ago, Whitetail Woods opened two Prairie View cabins, located just a short walk away from the Pine Forest trio. The newcomers have been nearly 100% occupied, too.

The Prairie cabins share the Pines' clean, contemporary aesthetic, but they're sited at the top of a hill. Contrasting the forest cabins' "portrait"-style framing of the pine plantation, the new cabins' "landscape" orientation displays a sweeping vista of the Vermillion River Valley. The footprint and interiors are similar, save for the prairie-style's wraparound porches, larger bottom bunks and air conditioning units.

Planners envisioned the chic little cabins as a signature amenity that could be a regional draw. "Something just beyond what you might expect," explained Katie Pata, operations supervisor with Dakota County Parks. "With a wow factor."

The cabins' cool design had, indeed, lured my family to a park we wouldn't have otherwise visited. It feels a little far from our Minneapolis home for a day trip. But the drive is relatively short for an overnight destination, and yet far enough from the city for a refreshing change of scenery.

"There's something about staying in a space for 24 hours," Pata said. "You feel the pulse of the park. ... It appeals to the senses in a different way."

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Where Britain's royalty resides

Chances are you aren't visiting Britain on invitation from the Queen — neither am I — but that doesn't mean you can't visit some of her residences in Great Britain. In addition to Windsor Castle, London's Kensington, Buckingham and Hampton Court palaces — and the more remote Balmoral Castle in the Scottish Highlands — are great places to put yourself in royal shoes for a day.

British royalty has been calling Windsor home since the days of William the Conqueror — almost a thousand years ago — who built the first fortified castle on a chalk hill above the Thames. Later kings added on to his early designs, rebuilding and expanding the castle and surrounding gardens. Today it's the favored castle of Queen Elizabeth II, who considers Windsor her primary residence.

Day or night, the castle — claimed to be the largest and oldest occupied castle in the world — dominates the town of Windsor. William the Conqueror built the first fortification in the

late 11th century for himself and his occupying Norman forces. With easy access to London via the River Thames and a hunting forest nearby, later royals soon began enhancing the site as a sumptuous palace.



Rick Steves

The castle's spectacular St. George's Hall is the site of state banquets, when a single table is set stretching the length of the hall, seating 160 guests. A visit to the ornate state rooms — open whenever the queen isn't in residence — includes an up-close peek at Queen Mary's Dolls' House.

The castle grounds are also home to St. George's Chapel, where Harry and Meghan said their vows. Dating from about 1500, and one of the finest examples of Gothic architecture in England, it holds the tombs of 10 sovereigns, including Henry VIII and his favorite wife, Jane Seymour.

Back in London, Kensington Palace is on the royal radar be-



CAMERON HEWITT/Ricksteves.com

A statue of Queen Victoria greets visitors to her birthplace in central London — Kensington Palace.

cause it's the home of Prince William and his family, among others. While some of the palace is open to the public, the royals' private quarters are off-limits.

Kensington Palace has long been associated with Queen Victoria, who was born here in 1819. Sitting primly on its pleasant parkside grounds in central London, the palace is immaculately restored.

Unless you're in London in August or September — or on Her Majesty's A-list — it's unlikely you'll get a peek inside the royal birthplace of Prince Charles: Buckingham Palace. The Queen opens 19 of her palace's lavish state rooms to the public — but only in late summer when

she's out of town.

Fifteen miles up the Thames is Hampton Court Palace, the 500-year-old royal hangout that was a favorite of Henry VIII, Elizabeth I and Charles I. The stately palace includes some impressive Tudor rooms. Its industrial-strength kitchen was capable of keeping 600 schmoozing courtiers fed. The sculpted garden features a rare Tudor tennis court and a popular maze.

The royals don't limit themselves to England. Queen Elizabeth II and her family spend a good part of the summer at Balmoral in the Scottish Highlands.

Balmoral has been home to royals since 1848, when Queen Victoria and Prince Albert vis-

ited and fell in love with this remote part of Britain. In that same year, when the rest of Europe was ensnared in anti-royalist, pro-democracy revolutions, Victoria purchased Balmoral Castle and its vast 50,000-acre estate. The queen proceeded to embrace Highland culture, which led to something of a renaissance in the local way of life.

Today, Balmoral welcomes the public for much of the year. However, access is limited: You can roam the gardens, see some exhibits in the stables, but only visit one room in the palace.

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

Handcrafted keepsakes make wonderful holiday gifts

Holiday gift shopping should never be a chore but rather a joy of the season. Master craftsmen and enthusiastic amateurs alike offer a range of hands-on activities year-round that result in items sure to be treasured by their makers and ideally suited to gift giving. Those with craft-loving friends or family members might instead wish to gift them an experience that allows them to conjure up a master work of their very own. Here are just a few items one might create under expert guidance.



Karen Bradbury

Create perfume in Grasse: The town of Grasse on the French Riviera has been known for its perfume industry for centuries, and a handful of makers of sweet scents offer the chance to blend one's own fragrance. Galimard's Studio des Fragrances offers a two-hour session. Participants learn how perfumes are built based on a head, heart and base note, and, seated in front of an organ containing 127 such notes, are instructed in the art of creating a harmonious and well-balanced formula. The 55-euro price tag includes a diploma, a personalized 100 ml bottle of eau de parfum and the safekeeping of the formula in a confidential database for reordering purposes. Online: tinyurl.com/vad8w5uj

Work with mosaics in Brenta: The "Arte della Corte" studio is located in Brenta, Italy's Lombardy region, northwest of Milan. Here, individuals interested in the art of mosaics have the chance to learn more about its history and evolution. Under the instruction of a trained master, participants will learn how to create a composition of glass or marble tiles and how to work the pieces with pincers, pliers and other tools of the trade. Two hours of instruction go for 25 euros, bookable through the Airbnb experiences platform. Online: cortedibrenta.blogspot.com

Paint a mask in Venice: An essential element of the



galimard.com

Grasse, France, is known as the world's perfume capital. Galimard's Studio des Fragrances offers a two-hour perfume workshop to create one's own signature scent.

Venetian carnival tradition is the wearing of a mask to disguise one's identity. The Atelier La Bauta in Venice offers various courses, including an hourlong course in which participants can paint and decorate the mask they have chosen from more than 60 papier-mâché models and take their finished works home. The experience costs 40 euros per person and is available on a drop-by basis. A 90-minute course in creating the papier-mâché mask itself is also available; advance recommendations are recommended. Online: labauta.com/workshop/?lang=en

Learn the art of glass-blowing in Murano: The island of Murano, just north of Venice, is world-renowned for its glass-blowing traditions. The Wave Murano Glass Studio offers a three-hour course in the art of glass-blowing, a physically demanding task carried out in a hot and chal-

lenging environment. Following a training session, participants will blow their own small glass artifact. As the piece needs adequate time to cool and dry, it can be picked up later or shipped. Sessions cost 242 euros and are bookable on the Airbnb experiences platform. Online: wavemuranoglass.com

Make chocolate in Brussels or Bruges: The Belgian Chocolate Workshop offers a 2.5-hour workshop allowing participants to create two types of chocolates, filled pralines or mendiants, in which dried fruit pieces are mounted on chocolate discs. The skills introduced include how to temper chocolate, craft pralines and make a chocolate ganache filling. The workshop concludes by making a cup of hot chocolate from the leftover bits. A box containing some 35 chocolates is the tasty reward for one's efforts. The cost at either studio is 38 euros. Online: belgianchocolateworkshop.com

Craft silver jewelry in Market Bosworth: A 3.5-hour course offered in a workshop in the market town in Leicestershire, England, allows participants to craft their own unique silver pieces. Working with a type of metal clay that becomes hallmark-quality silver, students design, create, fire and polish a piece of jewelry that will be ready to wear home at the end of the course. The course costs 60 euros and is bookable through the Airbnb experiences platform. Online: airbnb.com/experiences/2525609

Brew beer in Hamburg: The Landgang Brauerei, a brewery in Germany's second-largest city, regularly offers a six-hour course in the art of beer brewing. Under the tutelage of a craft beer expert, participants get hands-on with the brew process and develop skills that can be applied to the art of home brewing. The course is rounded out by a tour of the facilities, snacks and plenty of fresh beer to enjoy while working. The beer brewed on the day can be taken home to mature in its own time. The course fee is 159 euros. Online: landgang-brauerei.de

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

A sublime experience in Mallorca

Husband and wife hike a zigzag path to a small shack on a cliff to try the best paella the island has to offer

By **BOB DROGIN**

Special to *The Washington Post*

There are destination restaurants, out-of-the-way and often over-priced fine-dining joints run by celebrity chefs who attract limos full of foodies and their followers.

Then there is Sa Foradada.

It supposedly had some of the best paella in Mallorca, Spain's largest island. And my wife and I were determined to try it on a recent trip.

But the tiny, rustic eatery clings to a wind-swept rocky promontory jutting into the western Mediterranean, a site so remote that you can only reach it by sea or on foot. (More information at restaurantesaforadada.com)

We tried booking a water taxi from Port de Sóller, about five miles up the coast. It was supposed to drop us at a secluded cove where we could climb steep stone stairs to the restaurant. But the captain decided the seas were too rough, and he again canceled when we retried three days later.

So we hiked in. We had been told to climb over a metal gate off a side road at Son Marroig, the former estate of an Austrian archduke, to find the unmarked trail. From there, we zigzagged down a mountain track for nearly an hour, through terraces of gnarled olive trees and lush pines, and onto a narrow rocky spit flanked by crashing surf.

We finally reached what looked like a shack on a cliff. Just below it, a chain with a red stop sign blocked the path. A woman dressed in black appeared. "Do you have a reservation?" she asked pleasantly.

We did, and we were given a table along the rail, overlooking the turquoise sea. Sunlight dappled through a roof of matted reeds. A jagged precipice across the cove was pierced by a natural hole, like a dragon's eye, the forat in the local Catalan dialect that gives the hole-in-the-wall restaurant its name.

We ordered a pitcher of sangria with cava, Spanish sparkling wine, and settled in for an extraordinary three-hour lunch.

We had come to Mallorca to visit friends at their graceful seaside villa in Portopetro, on the southeast coast. The quiet fishing village seemed a perfect bolt-hole in the second autumn of the pandemic. The health agency for Mallorca and the other Balearic Islands claims more than 80 percent of the eligible population



PHOTOS BY FRANKIE DROGIN/For The Washington Post

Paellas simmer over the wood fire in the open-air kitchen at Sa Foradada. The tiny, rustic eatery clings to a wind-swept rocky promontory jutting into the western Mediterranean. The only way to get there is to walk or take a water taxi.

is vaccinated against the coronavirus. And Spain's restrictions are so tight for foreign visitors that we almost didn't get in. (More information at mallorca.org/en)

"I can't go," my wife had declared after she tried to check in online the day before our flight to Madrid. "They won't accept my name."

The problem was that her U.S. passport was in her maiden name, while her vaccination records showed her married name. Because they didn't match, the Spanish online health portal wouldn't issue her the QR code required to board the flight or enter the country.

A day of increasingly frantic calls and emails to health agencies and government offices led nowhere. Then the Spanish consulate sent an unsigned email suggesting we try our luck at the airport.

At the Iberia counter, a very patient ticket agent spent more than an hour reviewing our documents, consulting her supervisors and tweaking the app until

SEE MALLORCA ON PAGE 21



Limestone cliffs line part of the coastline of Mallorca, Spain's largest island.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Mallorca: The paella alone is worth the trip to Spain's largest island

FROM PAGE 20

the QR code magically appeared on my wife's phone.

We had to show that QR code at four checkpoints after we landed in Palma, Mallorca's largest city. And every restaurant, shop and other indoor site we entered during our two-week stay required masks. I rarely saw anyone defy the rules.

Mallorca is best known as a playground for the super-rich, and a local English-language website, the Majorca Daily Bulletin, did not disappoint in its coverage. Headlines announced that Prince Albert of Monaco had arrived, as had the "world's most avant-garde super yacht."

However, mostly German and English tourists flock here. They are the latest in a very long line of foreign invaders: the Phoenicians came in around 8th century B.C., followed by Roman legions, marauding Vandals, Moors, Ottoman Turks and others.

With so much history, and 1,400 square miles, there's lots to see.

Barbary corsairs built coastal watchtowers in the 17th century that still flank several harbors. We walked across the Pont Romà, an arched stone bridge in Pollença that the Romans built 2,000 or so years ago and is still in use.

In Palma, we admired the immense Cathedral of Santa Maria, which dates to the 13th century and is one of the tallest Gothic structures in Europe. The honey-colored basilica, which took 400 years to build (and was rebuilt after an earthquake in 1851), was erected over a Moorish mosque, which itself sat on a Roman fortification. (More information at catedraldemallorca.org/en)

Today, La Seu, as the cathedral is known, looms over Palma's Old Town, a busy warren of handicraft shops, tapas bars, historic palacios and sunny plazas. After wandering the cobbled streets one morning, we ducked into the Mercat de l'Olivar, a vast indoor food market, and found high-table seats at Ostras, one of the stalls along the wall.

Soon we were gorging on heaping plates of grilled razor clams, cockles, octopus with potatoes, shrimp and more. The bill for three, including a bottle of cava, was \$98.

One could fashion a tour to Mallorca just to visit the ancient windmills, the terraced vineyards (Pliny the Elder, who wrote extensively about wine in the 1st century, was a big fan of Mallorca's terroir), the countless fairs and festivals, or even the many lighthouses, including one in Portopí that was built seven centuries ago and is still working.

Late one afternoon, we drove up to one of Mallorca's best-known monasteries, the Sanctuary of Sant Salvador. It was built atop a mountain during the Black Death, the 14th-century pandemic that wiped out much of Europe's population, when friars believed the cool air at about 1,500 feet would keep the plague at bay. It didn't. But the views are breathtaking.

Beaches are a big draw on Mallorca, although be forewarned: In many places, that means spreading your towel on stones or slabs of rock, not sand. But Moorish-style manors, with horseshoe arches and keyhole windows, often sit beside boxy, white, Bauhaus-inspired villas on the coastal escarpment, so the discomfort is probably worth it.

We spent most of our second week hiking the rugged trails and visiting the medieval villages tucked under the craggy cliffs and jagged ridges of the Serra de Tramuntana in northwest Mallorca. UNESCO has listed the mountains as a World Heritage site, like Yellowstone National Park.

The Tramuntana are especially known for their drive-if-you-dare roads. So, early one morning, we jumped in our rented Audi and headed for the village of Sa Calobra, the endpoint of one of those only-in-Europe, impossibly serpentine roads with loopy, hairpin turns and crazy S-curves on vertiginous cliffs by the sea.

"Bond. James Bond," I announced as we whipped around the first dizzying switchback. Then another. And another. We dodged bicyclists, oncoming cars and the odd



FRANKIE DROGIN/For The Washington Post

The medieval village of Valldemossa hugs a hillside in the Serra de Tramuntana. UNESCO has listed the mountains as a World Heritage site. The Tramuntana are particularly well known for their cliff-hugging mountain roads.

goat for more than an hour on the wild, winding road. Then, to my amazement, a tiny red Fiat passed me, buzzing by before disappearing around a blind turn. I realized I was driving so slowly, I was blocking traffic. My ego quickly deflated.

At the bottom, we parked and walked down to the Bar Playa La Calobra, one of several seaside cafes in the tiny settlement. We grabbed a table on the veranda and ordered restorative cortados and apple cake. My ears perked up when the tinny sound system played the theme from "Mission: Impossible." I felt better.

A nearby path led to two dimly lit tunnels carved through solid rock and out to a small, pebbly beach. Families and couples sunned on blankets or swam in the tiny cove that once sheltered smugglers and pirates. We instead shouldered our day packs and began hiking up a deep canyon known as the Torrent de Pareis.

The gorge is subject to dangerous flash floods when it rains, but the sky thankfully was clear. Steep limestone walls, sculpted by wind and water into twisted cracks and grottoes, soared hundreds of feet high as we clambered over, under or around huge boulders. Swallows wheeled in and out of the shadows.

After 90 minutes or so, we met three college-age hikers scrambling down. How far to the top, we asked. About four hours, one said. And 2,200 feet up, the second said.

"You'll need ropes," the third added helpfully.

We did not have ropes. Or four hours. We settled for the picnic we had brought along — paper-thin slices of salty-sweet Ibérico ham on fresh dark bread — and turned back.

Which brings me to our lunch at Sa Foradada.

Our table — one of 25 on two terraces — offered a clear view of the open-air kitchen. We watched cooks juggle blackened pans of simmering paella and other dishes on a forge-like grill set over a blazing wood fire.

It was a reminder of the dish's humble origins. Back in the early 1800s, farmworkers near Valencia used a shallow pan to cook short-grained rice (the Moors first planted the grain in Spain) over wood fires, tossing in any ingredients they could find, for a filling one-dish lunch.

Today, paella — the word is from patella, or small pan, in Latin — is arguably Spain's best-known culinary export. Yet the precise ingredients, and how they should be cooked, are hotly disputed.

Valencians insist their calcium-rich water is required

to flavor the stubby rice. Fans farther north in Barcelona covet the socarrat, the crunchy dry crust that forms on the rice after all the water has evaporated.

Some aficionados demand mussels, clams, squid and shrimp. Others prefer chicken, rabbit, pork and snails, citing paella's peasant roots. Peas or no peas? Spicy chorizo and crayfish have been known to join the mix.

They all sounded pretty good to me.

So after diving into grilled red shrimp and a salad as starters, we decided on the mixed paella: saffron-flavored rice with seafood, vegetables and meat cooked over a sofrito, or flavor base, of garlic, onions, tomatoes and peppers.

After 45 minutes or so, the waiter brought a steaming pan to our table and spooned the golden-hued mixture onto our plates. That's another no-no in some parts of Spain, where it's said paella must be eaten straight from the pan.

The dish was rich, smoky and dense with flavor, unlike any paella I had eaten before. A salty breeze from the sea only enhanced the taste. We topped off with fresh-baked coconut carrot cake to fortify ourselves for the two-mile uphill hike back.

After paying the \$126 bill, I approached the manager and chief chef, Lidia Fernández Morell. We chatted under dangling ropes of garlic and peppers as she garnished five pans of paella, flipped a grilled dorado and stirred two huge pots of seafood stock, all while feeding pine boughs into the fire.

Her parents, Emilio and Magdalena Fernández, began cooking paella on the cliffs in the 1970s, she told me, and steadily built the business despite the desolate site.

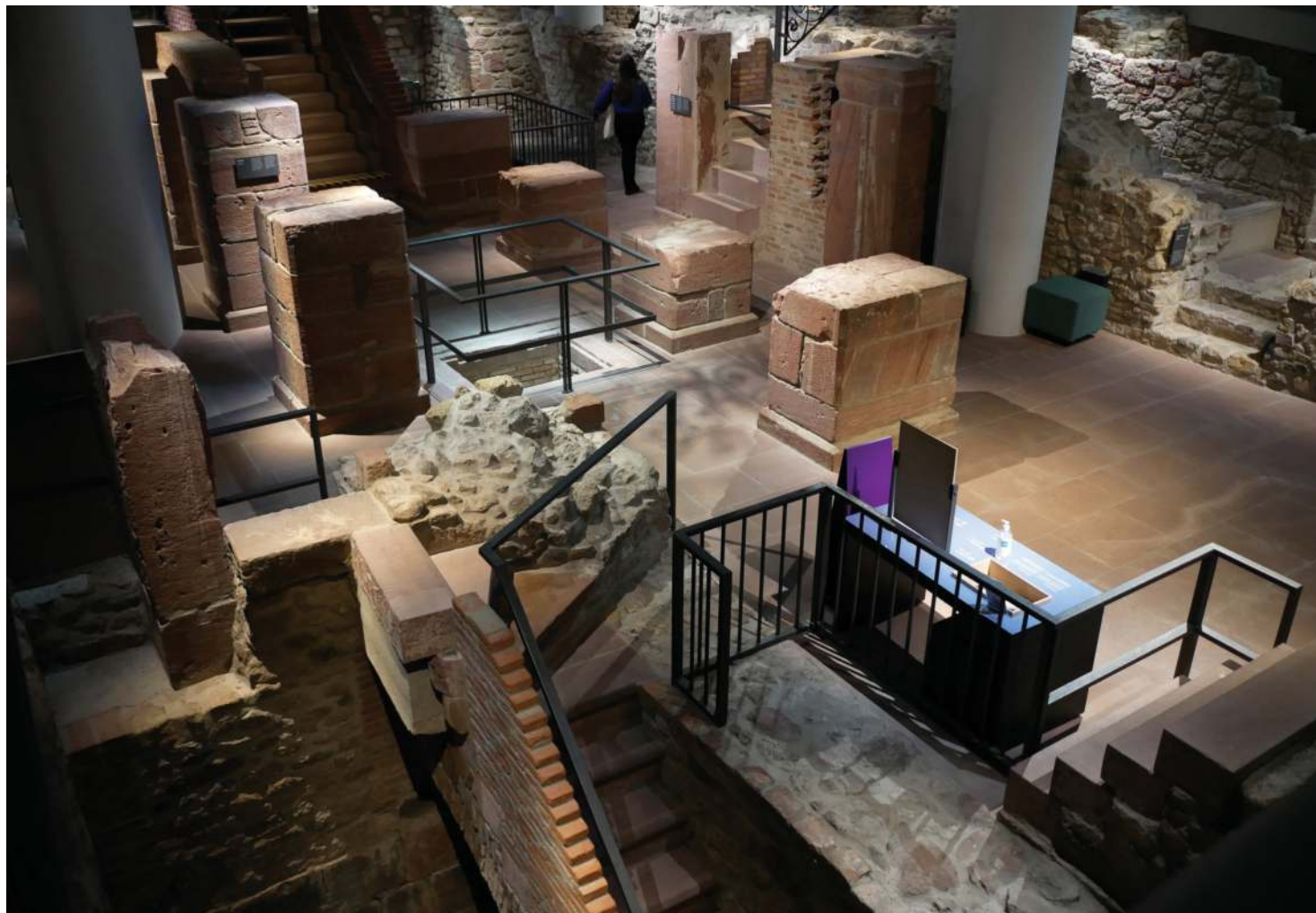
Now, she and her sister supervise a staff of 10, serving lunch six days a week from April to October. (It closed for most of 2020 because of the pandemic and only opened in late July this year.) Reservations are recommended two weeks ahead in summer, and hike-ins are often turned away.

I said I was pleased her paella didn't have a socarrat crust on the bottom, because I find the taste bitter. "We can make it, but people here don't like it," the chef agreed.

So is it the best paella in Mallorca, I asked. "People say so," the chef said with a shrug. "I don't know."

Nor do I. But it hardly mattered. The experience was sublime.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

The foundations of houses of the Judengasse can be seen at the Museum Judengasse. The foundations were discovered during construction of the building in 1987 and incorporated into the customer service center of Frankfurt's municipal utilities company.

On the QT

Address: The Jewish Museum (Juedisches Museum) is at Bertha-Pappenheim-Platz 1, and the Museum Judengasse, is at Battonnstrasse 47, both in downtown Frankfurt.

Parking: For the Jewish Museum, the Am Theater parking garage (Willy-Brandt-Platz 5) is closest.

For the Museum Judengasse, park at the Dom/Roemer (Domstrasse 1) or Konstabler (Toengengasse 8) garages. If the weather is nice, you can park at the Roemer and walk to both museums. All cost 2 euros per hour weekdays and 1 euro per hour Sundays and German holidays.

Public transportation: Take subway U1 through U5 and U8, or trams 11 and 12 to the Jewish Museum. Get off at the Willy Brandt-Platz stop. For the Museum Judengasse, take subway U4, U5 to the Konstablerwache station or tram 11 or 12 to Battonnstrasse station.

Hours: The Jewish Museum is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Thursday. Closed on Monday.

The Judengasse Museum is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday to Sunday. Closed Monday.

Costs: Admission to the Jewish Museum and Museum Judengasse is 12 euros; for the museums and temporary exhibits, 14 euros. Entrance to Museum Judengasse only is 6 euros. Children and teenagers up to 17 years of age get in free. Entrance to both museums is free on the last Saturday of the month.

Food: FLOWDELI, the kosher cafe in the Jewish Museum, it is open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday.

Information: Online: juedischesmuseum.de.

There is an airport-like security check at the entrance to both museums.

Michael Abrams

Telling a story of Frankfurt's people

Two museums display the history of the Jewish community that calls the city home

By MICHAEL ABRAMS
Stars and Stripes

For more than 800 years, the Jewish community was a part of Frankfurt's history. It was once the second largest in Germany, behind only Berlin.

Then came the dark days of the 20th century when they were deported and murdered by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Today, Frankfurt again has a thriving Jewish community. Their history, from the Middle Ages to the present, can be traced at two places: the Jewish Museum and the Museum Judengasse.

The Jewish Museum first opened in 1988, housed in the 19th century Rothschild Palais on the banks of the Main River. It featured artifacts and displays of Jewish life from about 1100 to the 1950s. In 2015, the museum closed for renovations and to build an extension.

Unfortunately, technical problems with renovations kept the museum closed for five years, not reopening until late 2020.

It might have been worth the wait. The museum is more modern and spacious, and includes interactive exhibits.

The new extension, dubbed the Lichtbau because of all the light that falls through its windows, contains a library, exhibit space, a cafe, a conference room and a bookstore.

The permanent exhibit looks at Jewish

history in Frankfurt from 1800 to today.

The top floor starts with the present, then works its way from the past, through the Holocaust and exile. There are many videos here worth watching, including interviews with eyewitnesses to the past and present.

Also worth seeing is the painting of Moses by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim and the unusual "The Five Maccabees" Hanukkah candelabrum by Benno Elkan.

The second level of the museum is dedicated to tradition and ritual. Here you can see Torah rolls and a Talmud, a case with circumcision instruments, models of two destroyed Frankfurt synagogues and "Ask the Rabbi," a video installation by Timm Ringwaldt.

The bottom floor covers family and everyday Jewish life and features the history of the Rothschilds, the Frankfurt banking/industrialist family, and the Frank family, whose best-known member, Anne, brought the Holocaust to us all at a very personal level with her diary.

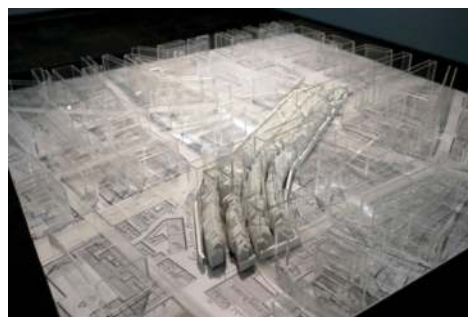
About a mile away from the Jewish Museum, the Museum Judengasse has a unique history and location inside the building housing the Frankfurt utilities company.

In 1987, the construction of the building unearthed the foundations of five houses and two baths of the old Jewish ghetto, the Judengasse.

SEE MUSEUMS ON PAGE 23



On the wall of Frankfurt's Old Jewish Cemetery, opposite Museum Judengasse, is a memorial with 11,908 small blocks each inscribed with the name of a Jewish Frankfurt resident who was deported and murdered during the reign of Nazi terror.



A model of modern Frankfurt at the Museum Judengasse shows where the Judengasse ghetto would be.



One of the exhibits in the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt is the concentration camp jacket of Friedrich Schafranek.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Everything it's quacked up to be

The hunt for delicious duck in Berlin leads to Erdinger am Gendarmenmarkt

BY IMMANUEL JOHNSON
Stars and Stripes

My quest to find the best version of a duck dish from the northwestern German city of Oldenburg led me to a surprising place: the Bavarian-style Erdinger am Gendarmenmarkt, an eatery smack dab in the heart of Berlin.

For unfamiliar American readers, this is a little like looking for southern barbecue at a Tex-Mex restaurant in Boston. But it had good reviews from Tripadvisor and was recommended by staff at the hotel where I was staying, so I had to see for myself what the hype was about.

Erdinger is a popular wheat beer that has been brewed in Bavaria for more than 130 years, according to the restaurant website.

And it's fun to get a taste of Bavaria in northern Germany, which has some fine breweries but far less domestic and international renown. Erdinger says its beer is exported to more than 90 countries. I happily enjoyed a glass while poring over the menu.

As for the aforementioned Oldenburger duck, fortunately most German food isn't as complicated as regional specialties might be in other countries. I was impressed with it for the most part, though I thought it could have been more tender.

The bread dumplings served with the dish brought back Thanksgiving memories because they tasted similar to stuffing, and the cabbage was exceptional.

Pasta lovers should try the spaetzle, specifically the one with Allgau cheese, Zillertal mountain cheese and roasted onions. It comes with a side salad.

The cheeses mixed well together and the salad was one of the best I've ever had. One portion of this will fill up most people, and the price is reasonable.

For dessert, I indulged in a treat with an Austrian twist that is a favorite at Erd-



Kaiserschmarrn at Erdinger am Gendarmenmarkt. The Austrian dessert favorite is cut-up caramelized pancake with apple sauce and vanilla ice cream.

Erdinger am Gendarmenmarkt

Address: Jagerstrasse 56, Berlin

Hours: Monday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 12 a.m.

Prices: Between 1.50 and 30 euros. Most credit cards accepted.

Menu: Available in English and German and online at erdingerberlin.de.

Contact info: Phone: +49 30208-799800; email: events@erdingerberlin.de

Immanuel Johnson

inger: kaiserschmarrn. It's basically cut-up pancake caramelized with apple sauce and vanilla ice cream.

The restaurant also offers another dessert, apple strudel with vanilla sauce.

Berlin by train from Grafenwoehr or Vilseck is between four and five hours. Some routes offer the high-speed ICE train, which is what I would recommend.

You may receive an email from



PHOTOS BY IMMANUEL JOHNSON/Stars and Stripes

Half of an Oldenburger duck accompanied with bread dumplings and cabbage is one of the most popular dishes at Erdinger am Gendarmenmarkt in Berlin.

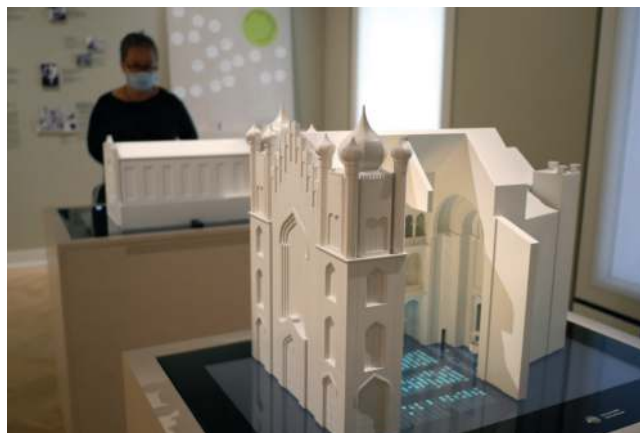
Deutsche Bahn offering you a first-class upgrade for about 10 euros. The upgrade is well worth it and includes access to select DB lounges.

Should you opt to drive, parking on the

street is possible, but if you're looking to spend a night or two in the city, the train is painless minus the occasional delays.

johnson.immanuel@stripes.com
Twitter: @Manny_Stripes

Museums: Modern buildings preserve history of Frankfurt's Jewish community



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

A cutout view of Frankfurt's Main Synagogue at the Jewish Museum in Frankfurt, and in the background is a model of the synagogue of the Israelite Religious Society. Both were destroyed by the Nazis.

FROM PAGE 22

When the city only wanted to document the finds and keep on building, protest erupted.

A compromise was found — the building would be constructed around the excavations. Five years later, the Museum Judengasse opened.

In 1462, the city's Jews were forced to move to the cramped quarters of the Judengasse, which means Jewish alley.

At one time, more than 2,700 people lived in 195 houses.

Only about 300 yards long, and at its widest, six yards, it was gated at each end, and the gates were closed at night and on Christian holy days.

In 1796, French troops bombarded Frankfurt and destroyed the northern end of Judengasse. After that, the Jews were no longer forced to live there.

The ghetto was torn down and redeveloped but remained the center of Jewish life, with the city's main synagogue there.

It was destroyed by the Nazis in November 1938, and the World War II bombings of Frankfurt demolished much of the surrounding area.

The museum was renovated and redone in 2016, its collection expanded with pre-1800 items from the Jewish Museum. Inside, you can walk through the excavations and see the relics uncovered here.

There are exhibits on the houses and the people who lived here, but also displays on how the inhabitants interacted with the outside, Christian world.

Don't miss the video that shows the transformation of the ghetto over the centuries.

Opposite the museum's entrance is the Old Jewish Cemetery, used from 1272 to 1828.

On its wall is the centerpiece of the Neuer Boerneplatz memorial, 11,908 small blocks set into the wall, each inscribed with the name of a Frankfurt Jew who was deported and murdered during the Holocaust.

abrams.mike@stripes.com
Twitter: @stripes_photog

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

Feudal lords, fearing rebellion, would allow peasants to practice archery only when seated, which led to the establishment of Shihan Mato, or a Japanese style of seated archery.

Take your best shot

For fun that's on target, try Shihan Mato seated archery at Obi Castle Town in Japan

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

Shihan Mato is a style of Japanese archery in which the shooter unleashes arrows at a target from a seated position.

The sport started in lands governed by the Shimazu clan during a time of warfare between 1467 and 1603 in modern-day Miyazaki prefecture on Japan's southern island of Kyushu. Archery is an ancient tradition

in Japan. The earliest known images of people shooting bows in the country date to the Yayoi period, from 500 B.C. to 300 A.D.

Kyudo archery is the most common form of the sport in Japan and was the type practiced by samurai.

However, peasants living in Shimazu lands were allowed to practice archery only when seated because their feudal overlords feared they might use their bows to rebel.

You can try out this ancient art at Obi Castle Town in Miyazaki's Nichinan City for a small fee.

Archers can either kneel on a mat or sit on a small platform and shoot at targets about 27 feet away.

The arrows you fire are quite long — about 3 feet — and tend to veer slightly to the right of where you're aiming. The folks at the range have added a little dot left of the target for people to shoot at.

The lightweight bows and short distance to the target make the sport something that doesn't require much strength to compete in. It's an activity that older people and men and women can participate in together.

Early 20th-century film of Japanese people doing Shihan Mato archery shows huge crowds of people who look a little tipsy. It was common for people to drink local shochu before competing.

Obi Castle Town Archery

Location: 9-1 Obi, Nichinan, Miyazaki 889-2535

Directions: The archery range is next to a public parking lot and bathrooms and a short walk from Obi Castle.

Hours: 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily; last entry at 4 p.m.

Prices: Adults, 310 yen (\$2.73); children, 210 yen (\$1.85) for 10 arrows.

Information: Phone: 0987-25-1905

Seth Robson

In recent years, drinking has been banned at official contests, but some locals say the sport isn't fun without alcohol.

If you hit the target, an employee will bang a drum; a bulls-eye gets you a small prize.

robson.seth@stripes.com
Twitter: @SethRobson1



Dream about your next vacation with

DESTINATION PARADISE

STARS AND STRIPES

Pick up the magazine or get it online



WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Do one thing, and do it well

Fujitaya near Hiroshima only serves eel; it earned them a Michelin star

By JONATHAN SNYDER
Stars and Stripes

The world-renowned floating torii on Miyajima near Hiroshima is closed for restoration, but the island boasts one of the world's best spots for grilled eel, and it is still open.

The Fujitaya restaurant serves only one set meal, anago-meshi, which is conger eel on a bed of rice with three small side dishes. Popular side dish options include pickled vegetables and liver.

This longstanding restaurant does this one dish so well, it received a one-star rating from the Michelin Guide in 2018. The prestigious rating doesn't mean you'll break the bank for a meal, however. The main course runs about \$22, with \$7 for each side dish.

Other restaurants serve their versions of conger eel, but Fujitaya stands apart. Its ingredients are sourced at the local fish mar-



**AFTER
HOURS
JAPAN**

Fujitaya

Location: 125-2 Miyajimacho, Hatusukaichi, Hiroshima 739-0588

Directions: A short walk from the Daishoin Temple.

Hours: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday through Tuesday, but may close early if the eel sells out

Prices: About \$22 for the main dish; \$7 for appetizers

Dress: Casual

Information: Phone: 829440151

Jonathan Snyder

ket every morning, made to order and served up hot and fresh.

Conger eel has a savory flavor that melts in your mouth. The eel is deboned and simmered, and its head and spine make the stock that is seasoned with soy sauce



JONATHAN SNYDER/Stars and Stripes

Fujitaya near Hiroshima, Japan, serves only one set meal, anago-meshi, which is conger eel on a bed of rice with three small side dishes. Get there early because the restaurant closes when they run out of food.

and used to cook the accompanying rice.

The eel is filleted and grilled with a soy-based sauce. Expect a short wait while your order is prepared.

During peak tourist season on

the island, it's not unusual to find a long line out the door at Fujitaya. It's open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday through Tuesday, but the restaurant will close for the day once it runs out of food.

An English menu is available,

but the staff does not speak much of the language. Ample seating is available at the bar, at tables and chairs or on traditional Japanese seating.

snyder.jonathan@stripes.com
Twitter: @Jon_E_Snyder

Aromatic spice paste enlivens Balinese pork

By CHRISTOPHER KIMBALL
For The Associated Press

Whether it's an entire spit-roasted pig or the more accessible skillet-braised shoulder, pork frequently is the focus of feasts during religious festivals in Bali, a pocket of Hindu tradition in majority-Muslim Indonesia.

One particularly delicious dish is babi guling, a fork-tender pig roast seasoned with a long list of spices and aromatics. We used one of our favorite spice cabinet shortcuts — the blend garam masala, which includes cumin, cardamom, cinnamon, mace, black pepper, coriander and sometimes more.

Leaving the fat on the surface of the pork roast — but scoring it with a knife — creates a surface to which the seasoning paste can adhere.

Roasted pork shoulder with turmeric and lemongrass

Ingredients

4 medium shallots, peeled and quartered

3 lemongrass stalks, dry outer layers discarded, trimmed to

bottom 6 inches and cut into 1-inch lengths

3 tablespoons packed brown sugar

2 tablespoons neutral oil

1 tablespoon garam masala

1 tablespoon ground turmeric

Kosher salt and ground black pepper

5-pound boneless pork shoulder roast, untrimmed

Directions

Heat the oven to 300°F. In a food processor, process the shallots, lemongrass, sugar, oil, garam masala, turmeric, 1 tablespoon salt and 2 teaspoons pepper to form a paste. With a knife, score a crosshatch pattern into the surface fat on top of the roast. Rub the paste onto all sides of the roast and into the cuts. Place the pork fat side up on a rimmed baking sheet and roast until the center reaches 195°F, about 4 hours. Let rest for 30 minutes, then cut into slices for serving.

Optional garnish: Thinly sliced scallions OR chopped fresh cilantro OR lime wedges OR sambal OR a combination.

Serves 8 to 10.

Thank you for sponsoring the monthly planner!

2022 Stars and Stripes Monthly Planner is now available

Please join us in paying kudos to NEX Regional Food Service Japan for sponsoring our monthly planners for Mainland Japan distribution. We appreciate the support!

WEEKEND: FOOD

‘Vegan, at Times’

Seinfeld’s wife wants to encourage people to cook without meat or dairy, even occasionally

By MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

Jessica Seinfeld became a vegan almost by stealth. The cookbook author and philanthropist started quietly making separate meals for herself without dairy or meat.

“I just started doing it myself and experimenting with it and not talking about it and kind of

seeing how I would feel,” she says. “I undeniably felt better.”

Over time, she has managed to win over her three teenage kids and her husband,

comedian Jerry Seinfeld, who all eat vegan these days. Now, she’s hoping to recruit even more with her new book “Vegan, at Times.”

With more than 120 recipes — from vegetable spring rolls with peanut butter dipping sauce to red curry with zucchini noodles — Seinfeld hopes the book can inspire more meatless Mondays (and maybe a few meatless Thursdays, too).

“I don’t know if I’ll ever get to be 100% vegan. That isn’t really my plan. My plan is to just do a really good job every single day with eating more vegetables, less meat and less dairy, and I’m succeeding,” she said.

“Vegan, at Times,” written with Sara Quessenberry, is a judgment-free book with practical recipes that avoid dairy and meat. They can be prepared from ingredients at any store and made in 30 minutes or so. Seinfeld hopes readers can ease into veganism. (There’s even a chapter titled “How Not to be an Annoying Vegan.”)

“Myself and my family and lots of people that I know felt really intimidated by the aura around veganism, which is that it’s strict and it’s militant and unless you do it at 100%, you are not welcome,” she says. “I have a real issue around shaming people for their food choices. I just think that food is a privilege and it’s a pleasure. And if you are able to put food on your table and make choices, you shouldn’t complain about how anybody eats.”

The book is broken up into breakfast, mealtime, snacks, desserts and sauces. It leans on such veggies as chickpeas, sweet potatoes and cauliflower, like sloppy Joes that uses cannellini beans and cauliflower florets. For those craving barbecue, she broils eggplant slices and puts

them in hot pita pockets with homemade coleslaw.

Jen Bergstrom, senior vice president and publisher at Gallery Books, says Seinfeld has a talent for creating accessible, affordable and approachable recipes.

She says the book’s collection of plant-based options “will appeal to even the biggest carnivore. I’ve tried a number of the recipes myself, with very tasty results, including my personal favorite, sweet potato tacos with corn salsa. I look forward to readers discovering the pleasure of going vegan, whether occasionally or every day.”

The fast-casual chain Chipotle is popular in Seinfeld’s family, so the author challenged herself to re-create the taste of their dishes at home without meat. Hence her cauliflower rice and beans, which her 16-year-old son admitted he was surprised to like.

She also makes mac and cheese with a plant-based cheddar and cashew or almond milk. “You can’t go from zero to 60 with people. You have to wade in slowly. And so I make their favorites, but I make them vegan.”

“Vegan, at Times” is Seinfeld’s fifth cookbook and she’s also the president and founder of the Good+ Foundation, a non-profit that provides services, educational resources, tangible goods and support for low-income families. She turned to veganism after her doctor recommended eating less dairy and meat. She also embraces its benefits for the planet and animals.

Seinfeld says she was stunned early in the pandemic when giant meat-processing plants would not close despite their workers becoming sick. She thought the priorities were skewed.

“I just thought, we’re so addicted to meat in this country that we can’t even keep workers safe and we can’t even shut down,” she says. “That really made an impression on me, it really bothered me, and that was when I went full-on into this concept.”

She has found inspiration in recipes from outside America, where meat and dairy aren’t the star of every dish. “How do we inch towards a healthier lifestyle overall as a country? If we look at other countries, it makes it feel more doable to me.”

Whatever she’s doing seems to have worked. Two of her three children are in college, but her teenage son and husband are stepping up. “We just committed as a family a couple of nights ago to four week nights a week going vegan,” she says.



Macaroni and cheese made using the recipe, right, from the book, “Vegan, at Times; 120+ Recipes for Every Day or Every So Often,” by Jessica Seinfeld with Sara Quessenberry, is shown above.

MARK WEINBERG, GALLERY BOOKS/AP

Macaroni and Cheese

Serves: 6

Total time: 55 minutes

Active time: 35 minutes

For the macaroni and cheese:

½ teaspoon kosher salt, plus more for pasta water
1 pound short pasta, such as cavatappi, elbows or small shells
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

5 tablespoons all-purpose flour
4½ cups unsweetened cashew or almond milk

16 ounces (4 cups) shredded plant-based cheddar cheese (We like Violife)

2 tablespoons nutritional yeast
1 teaspoon dry mustard
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

⅓ teaspoon cayenne pepper

For the breadcrumb topping:

1 cup panko or coarse dried breadcrumbs
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

¼ teaspoon kosher salt

⅓ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 clove garlic

2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat leaf parsley, for serving

Directions:

Position the oven rack about 8 inches from the top and heat the oven to 400 degrees F.

Make the macaroni: Bring a large pot of water to a boil, then salt it. Add the pasta and cook until it’s a few minutes short of al dente (it will continue to cook in the oven). Drain into a colander and pass under cold running water to stop the cooking. Shake out any excess water.

Meanwhile, to make the cheese sauce, in a large pot or Dutch oven, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the flour and cook, stirring with a wooden spoon, for about 3 minutes to cook out the raw flavor of the flour. Add 1 cup of the milk and whisk until it forms a smooth paste. Continue to whisk in the remaining milk a little at a time, at first, to avoid lumps. Let the mixture reach a simmer while whisking often, paying attention to the corners where the flour can collect.

Remove from the heat and add the cheese, nutritional yeast, dry mustard, the ½ teaspoon salt, the black pepper and the cayenne pepper. Whisk until creamy and smooth. Add the pasta and stir well to coat. Taste for salt; you may want to add a little more. Scrape the mixture into a 9-by-13-inch baking dish.

Make the breadcrumb topping: In a small bowl, stir together the breadcrumbs, oil, salt and pepper. Grate in the garlic and stir to combine.

Sprinkle the breadcrumbs over the macaroni and cheese. Bake for about 15 minutes, or until the sauce is bubbling. Then turn on the broiler and broil for 1 to 3 minutes, until the breadcrumbs are golden brown. Let cool for 5 minutes before serving and sprinkle the top with the parsley.

WEEKEND: BOOKS

Describing life's saddest, loneliest experiences

'Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows' gives readers the words to express the emotions they've felt but could never name

BY JEN ROSE SMITH
Special to *The Washington Post*

Feelings are fleeting, but finding words for them brings solidity — or even solidarity — to moments both ebullient and dreary. Witness “languishing,” a word that flew across social media feeds after a New York Times story called it the “dominant emotion of 2021.” Naming that diffuse malaise was oddly comforting.

Words for obscure emotions remind us we have company in our most private moments, writes John Koenig in his prologue to “The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows,” a compendium of words he invented (or reinvented, in some cases). Koenig is taken with the “aches, demons, vibes, joys and urges that are humming in the background of everyday life,” he writes.

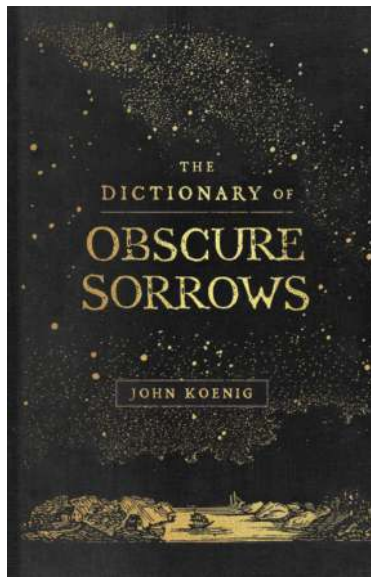
Take for example “zielschmerz,” the throb of dread that sometimes hits when you’re on the cusp of realizing a long-held dream. Or perhaps you’ve savored a moment of “nyctous,” which Koenig defines as “feeling quietly overjoyed to be the only one awake in the middle of the night.”

Koenig began coining and compiling such words on his website in 2009, a foray followed

by a YouTube channel and TED Talk. Some of Koenig’s creations have, Pinocchio-like, come to life and escaped into the wider world. His 2012 neologism “sonder,” which Koenig called “the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own,” is the namesake for, among other things, several studio albums, a hospitality company and eateries in California, Wisconsin and Kosovo.

Some of Koenig’s words are cobbled from snippets of European languages, while others are simply pulled from the world’s bargain bin of used-but-still-useful vocabulary. For example, Koenig’s adjective “idlewild” — “feeling grateful to be stranded in a place where you can’t do much of anything” — is borrowed from the original name of John F. Kennedy International Airport.

Flipping through the book may bring jolts of recognition. After posting “sonder” on his website nearly a decade ago, Koenig writes that he received an avalanche of emails from readers thanking him for putting words to a feeling they’d experienced but never named. Entries in the dictionary range from pithy definitions to mini essays on modern life’s anxieties.



It’s not all whimsy, and a philosophy of language weaves through the dictionary. Koenig, who works in advertising, encountered such ideas as an undergrad at Macalester College and remains entranced by the subtleties of language. Words “function as a kind of psychological programming that helps shape our relationships, our memory, even our perception of reality,” Koenig writes. He quotes the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein’s aphorism that “the limits of my language are the limits of my world.” In the most extreme version of this reasoning

— a theory called linguistic determinism that’s almost entirely shunned by linguists — our native tongues imprison our minds, leaving us capable only of understanding the feelings and concepts our languages allow. That can’t be the case: Think of the readers Koenig encountered who immediately recognized their previously unnamed experiences reflected in words like “sonder.”

A scaled-back version of this idea, however, has currency among some linguists, researchers and psychologists. In his 2010 book “Through the Language Glass: Why the World Looks Different in Other Languages,” Israeli linguist Guy Deutscher argued that the words we use can subtly channel our experiences and habits of mind. Neuroscientist Kristen Lindquist, who leads the University of North Carolina’s Carolina Affective Science Lab, has found that words help crystallize quicksilver emotional experiences into something more recognizable. Psychologist Tim Lomas created an interactive lexicography of emotion words in languages from Akkadian to Zulu, positing that expanded sentimental vocabularies enrich our inner lives. (The Lomas lexicography includes several entries drawn from Koenig’s writings.)

And it’s undeniably thrilling to find words for our strangest feelings. “The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows” is most compelling when Koenig casts light into lonely corners of human experience.

“In language, all things are possible,” he writes. “No sorrow is too obscure to define.” Some of these words have particular resonance for a world rocked by a pandemic that has left many isolated in the extreme.

Take “kenopsia,” the eerie, echoey feeling of a busy place, such as a shopping mall or downtown boulevard, when it is suddenly emptied of people. Or “solsysium,” a kind of delirium arising from spending too much time by yourself.

In a sense all words are made up by someone, at some time. It’s an idea that lends living, breathing languages like ours their precarious charm: The things we say across the breakfast table, or whisper in a lover’s ear, are simply made-up words we’ve deemed useful enough to keep in circulation.

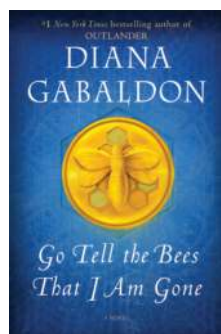
“A word is only real if you want it to be,” Koenig writes.

It’s a defense of language’s endless creative possibility, and a fitting coda to an enchanting book of made-up words turned real.

‘Go Tell the Bees That I Am Gone’ worth the wait for ‘Outlander’ fans

BY ELIZABETH HAND
Special to *The Washington Post*

There’s nae doubt that legions of readers will be raising a wee dram or two to celebrate the publication of “Go Tell the Bees That I Am Gone,” the latest installment of Diana Gabaldon’s sweeping *Outlander* saga. The series began with the eponymous novel in 1991, followed by eight sequels (including this one), four



related novels and several novellas and short stories, adding up to over 12,000 pages. There’s also a graphic novel and a musical, but who’s counting?

Newcomers to the ongoing story, along with those only familiar with the huge-

ly successful TV series (Season 6 will air next year), might be forgiven for sneaking an extra tot of single malt to fortify them for the new book, which clocks in at 928 pages. The title references an old Celtic custom of telling bees important family news — a death, birth, marriage — so that they can carry it to the next hive or swarm. In this case, the bees might also bear word of murders, kidnappings, unexpected births, betrayals or numerous deceits, along with

an ordination and some casual blackmail, just to liven things up.

The novel opens in the summer of 1779, on Fraser’s Ridge in the American North Carolina Colony. Jamie Fraser, Highland Scot and paterfamilias of a large and complexly related clan, has settled there with his time-traveling wife, Claire. Claire is an outlander (a stranger) from the mid-20th century who, after many years living in the 17th century, has mostly adapted to life among folks unfamiliar with penicillin, automobiles or Dr. Seuss. A World War II British Army nurse, Claire now uses her skills as a healer to tend to the many residents of Fraser’s Ridge. These include Brianna, her daughter fathered by Jamie but raised in the 20th century by Claire and her former husband, as well as Brianna’s husband, Roger, and their children, additional outliers from the future. The extended Fraser clan also includes children born out of wedlock, stepchildren, adopted children (and adults), along with lovers and spouses acquired in the decades since Jamie and Claire first met. The book contains three *Outlander* family trees, which are somewhat helpful.

Still, it’s been seven years since Gabaldon’s previous novel: Even hardcore fans may feel as though they’ve been thrown into the midst of a huge family reunion, only half-recalling who’s who and why they should remember them. The

first few hundred pages of “Go Tell the Bees,” while well-told, move slowly, as Gabaldon reacquaints us with not just Claire and Jamie but their far-flung network of family, friends and frenemies, some of them now on opposing sides of the U.S. War of Independence. A new name or character is introduced on almost every page, and few escape without a backstory.

A Jacobite rebel before he emigrated to America, Jamie sides with the Patriots but is tolerant of his Loyalist tenants on the Ridge. Yet things heat up as the conflict grows more dire and closer to home. There are stirring accounts of the sieges of Charles Town (now Charleston, S.C.) and Savannah; excursions to Philadelphia and Upstate New York, with a memorable sojourn among the Mohawks; and appearances by such historical figures as Francis Marion, the Swamp Fox, whom Roger (raised in the 20th Century) finds “Not quite what the romantic moniker ‘Swamp Fox’ conjured up.” Coats are turned, friends are betrayed, lives are lost. One of the many things that Gabaldon does superbly is show how great events aren’t history to those who live through them but simply everyday life, with children to be fed, clothes to be mended, the dead to be buried. And yes, whiskey to be quaffed, in celebration or in mourning.

At first, time travel doesn’t play a huge role in the novel. When it does, it’s mostly

represented by books — “Green Eggs and Ham,” treasured by Claire and Jamie’s grandchildren; a precious copy of the Merck Manual that Claire references when setting bones and performing surgeries. But literature takes on a more ominous role when Jamie comes across a history of the American Revolution penned by Claire’s former husband from the 20th century. In it, Jamie finds his own name among the list of those killed at the Battle of Kings Mountain, N.C., in October, 1780.

Is it possible to outrun your own death? Could you countenance doing so, at the cost of honor and the knowledge of your own small part in a crucial battle for American independence? Yet what if one learns, as another character does, that a small act could change the course of world history, almost certainly for the better?

Gabaldon’s vast and sweeping account of the Revolutionary War is so intricately plotted and peopled that one is amazed she could conceive and write it in only seven years. Despite its scope, many of the finest moments are small ones, especially those that depict Claire and Jamie’s enduring love and passion as they enter their 60s. Readers may find themselves choking up as the book nears its cliffhanger ending. It may be another seven years before the next and final *Outlander* volume, but I’m betting it will be worth the wait.

WEEKEND: MUSIC



BYPASSING THE BOSS

'No Nukes' footage shows power of E Street Band despite Bruce Springsteen's early aversion to film

BY DAVID BAUDER
Associated Press

If there's one thing Bruce Springsteen's fans can find fault with in their hero, it's his early aversion to film cameras.

Because of that, there is very little onscreen documentation of Springsteen onstage in the mid-to-late 1970s, when the power and majesty of the E Street Band combined with youthful exuberance for some truly epic concert experiences. Without a ticket and a good memory, they passed you by.

That makes last week's release of a 90-minute film that shows them performing at the "No Nukes" benefit concerts in September 1979 significant for fans and music historians. It's found money.

Before a friendly crowd at New York's Madison Square Garden, Springsteen and his gang of Jersey toughs crackle with pent-up energy. They'd been off the road in 1979, recording "The River," and are thrilled to be before an audience again. Their typical four-hour show was condensed into 90 minutes. Sharing a bill with artists like Jackson Browne, Graham Nash and Bonnie Raitt, they burned to show peers what they could do.

SEE BYPASSING ON PAGE 29

Bruce Springsteen performs with the E Street Band at New York's Madison Square Garden during a concert sponsored by Musicians United for Safe Energy (MUSE) on Sept. 22, 1979.

AP

WEEKEND: MUSIC

Isbell talks vaccines, Scorsese and wild year

BY CHRIS RIEMENSCHNEIDER
Star Tribune

As he heads into the final stretch of a year that put him at the forefront of the vaccine debate and several other controversies, Jason Isbell only has one regret about the way he heavy-handedly handled 2021's COVID problem.

"I spent too much time arguing about something that shouldn't have been an argument in the first place," the Alabama-reared country-rocker said.

Five months after he and his workhorse band the 400 Unit played their first shows of summer — all requiring proof of vaccine or negative COVID tests to attend — Isbell is still on the road. In the interim, he made a lot of headlines for his rigid policies, and several other hot topics, too.

Still, it's hard to argue with the results. Isbell proudly pointed them out in an interview the week before Thanksgiving from his home outside Nashville.

"We were still able to go out and play a lot of shows," he said, "and we saw only a very small drop in attendance, which might've happened anyway. And honestly, the people who did show up made up for it at the merch table because they were excited to be there."

"I can't say we still provided a 100% safe environment for everybody, but it felt better than doing nothing."

No one could accuse Isbell of doing nothing when it comes to the causes and controversies of the day.

When fast-rising country music star Morgan Wallen — who covered Isbell's "Cover Me Up" on his latest album — was caught on tape drunkenly spewing racial

epithets, Isbell condemned Wallen's actions and pledged to donate all his royalty money from Wallen's album to the NAACP.

When the 2020 election proved nail-bitingly close in Georgia, Isbell promised that a winning turnout of blue voters would prompt him to make an album of cover songs from the Peach State (where his former band, the Drive-by Truckers, formed).



Isbell

Which brings us to Isbell and the 400 Unit's latest release, "Georgia Blue." The follow-up to their Grammy-nominated 2020 record "Reunions," the new charity album features remade songs from R.E.M., Otis Redding, James Brown, The Black Crowes, Indigo Girls, Cat Power, Drivin' n' Cryin', Vic Chesnutt and more. Vocal duties are shared by Isbell's wife and violinist Amanda Shires (a renowned singer/songwriter on her own) and guests such as Brandi Carlile and Julien Baker.

Those aren't the only cover songs Isbell and the band prominently put out in 2021. Their version of "Sad But True" from Metallica's expanded "Black Album" has become a minor radio hit. He also covered his late friend and hero John Prine's "Souvenirs" for a new tribute album.

Most surprising of all: Isbell spent part of the year making a movie with Martin Scorsese. He and fellow Americana music star Sturgill Simpson were cast opposite Leonardo DiCaprio and Jesse Plemons in the iconic director's adaptation of the 1920s-era Oklahoma saga "Killers of the

Flower Moon."

"I think they mainly wanted us for our accents," the novice actor quipped, "but I'll take it."

Here's more of what Isbell had to say as he wraps up perhaps the wildest year of his 20-plus-year career.

On covering Metallica: "I didn't want to go into it and pretend we're a metal band. We probably could pull it off, but I don't think that'd add anything to the collection. So we tried to do something different, knowing it might be polarizing to some people, and it has been. But then we just found out it's also the No. 1 song in Amarillo at the moment."

On covering Prine for "Broken Hearts & Dirty Windows, Vol. 2": "That was hard. Really hard. It's hard for me to get through any of John's songs right now. The wounds are still open and the memories still strong. But they're so beautiful. That one in particular, I saw John sing it at a funeral years ago for somebody his family was close to, and I thought, 'How does he do it?' Because he didn't choke up. So I thought if he could do it, then so could I."

On making "Georgia Blue": "It was a different challenge for us in that it took out the part where we had to do a bunch of homework before going into the studio. We just kind of showed up and started recording. We already knew the songs were great, so that pressure was gone. It was like driving a really nice rental car: The songs don't belong to you, so you just have fun and try not to [muck] it up too bad."

On donating his royalties from Wallen's record, which still sold well even after the singer's racist tirade was revealed: "I think what Morgan said was a lot worse

than what the Dixie Chicks said, or what Chely Wright said when she came out as gay. Country music has a history of really turning its back on people over certain things, and then welcoming other people back in with open arms.

"It's true he is just a kid, and he was drunk. I don't think that's enough to make you say the things he said, though. I think the problem is the way he was raised, and I think that's the problem with a lot of country music: They have one very particular story that the business is trying to sell, and that narrative is the white male American story."

On whether he has regrets about his prolific and sometimes provocative Twitter account: "Nah, the only regrets I've had on Twitter were before I got sober. I don't go after people unless they're notable figures or politicians. If somebody else comes to my page and disagrees with me, if they do it in a way that's civilized, then I will disagree back in the same manner. But if somebody comes in hot, I'm not going to apologize for the intensity of my counter-punch."

On the oft-heard complaint that he is "losing half his audience" for his strong stance on vaccines and other politicized issues: "I haven't noticed we've taken any kind of hit, honestly. Every time somebody gets mad and throws our records in the trash, I think there's somebody else who says, 'Oh, maybe I'll check this guy out because of this.' And I certainly don't feel like our audience is divided down the middle. It might be half if I was Jimmy Buffett and had this huge, broad audience. But I think a lot of my audience is close to where I am ideologically anyway."

Bypassing: Superstition kept Springsteen away from cameras

FROM PAGE 28

Little wonder, then, to see them burst onto the stage with a roaring version of "Prove it All Night." That's exactly what they intended to do.

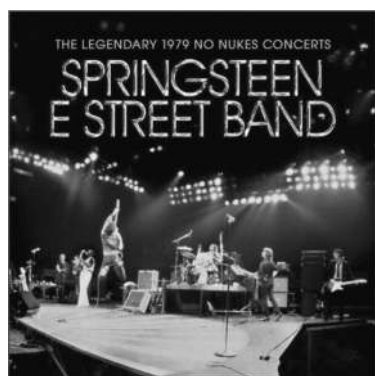
When filmmaker Thom Zimny first reviewed the footage, it was without sound, and he could still tell something special was happening.

"You see them explode on-screen," he said. "The sheer force of E Street at this point was amazing to see."

Springsteen explains that superstition led him to keep cameras away in those days, something about a musician not wanting to look too closely at his bag of tricks.

"I don't want to see what I'm doing, because it might change what I'm doing," he said recently, "and what I'm doing is working for me and it's working for the audience."

It's different now; all of Springsteen's shows are filmed. Back in 1979, the "No Nukes" concert escaped the film phobia because a crew was on hand to make a documentary on the benefit for



Shore Fire Media

"The Legendary 1979 No Nukes Concerts" features previously unreleased performances from the MUSE benefit concerts.

alternatives to nuclear energy.

There actually wasn't much incentive for filming shows in the pre-MTV, pre-YouTube days, said Chris Phillips, editor and publisher of Backstreets, the website for Springsteen news. With no real outlet on television or the movies, "you were just playing rock 'n' roll," he said.

As a result, footage of more than snippets of Springsteen onstage then are relatively rare, he said. One show in Phoenix

turns up on YouTube, recorded by his record company for a commercial to promote Springsteen in parts of the country where he wasn't well known yet. Portions of a Houston show, taken for an arena's in-house use, survive. So does a recording of Springsteen's first show in London, at the Hammersmith Odeon in 1975.

A couple of Springsteen's performances appeared on the "No Nukes" documentary and album. Mostly, the footage remained locked away in a vault until Zimny was given access.

He turned it into the film that is being released now partly as a pandemic project.

"It was something that I did because I missed the band so much," Zimny said.

Unlike much of the surviving footage of Springsteen from those days, Zimny was working with quality film, shot by a crew that could provide multiple angles. Still, there are imperfections: images of Steve Van Zandt's solo on "Jungleland" are missing, perhaps because they were re-loading cameras.

Zimny kept to the running list of the shows, held on back-to-back nights (including Springsteen's 30th birthday), and including some different encores — the "Detroit medley" of covers one night, a performance of Buddy Holly's "Rave On" another. The shows included sneak peeks of "Sherry Darling" from "The River" and the upcoming album's title cut, and a duet with Browne on "Stay."

Rabid fans were always aware this footage had to exist, somewhere, Phillips said. Its emergence is a treat for the Backstreets editor, too: He didn't see Springsteen live until the "Born in the USA" tour five years later.

"After waiting 40 years for this, it does not disappoint," he said. "It's an amazing thing, with tempos that are off the charts."

That's evident when they play "Born to Run." Decades into the song's existence, its appearance in concert is now a karaoke-like ritual — the lights go up, everyone sings along.

It was still a relatively new song in 1979, and the band attacks it on "No Nukes" with a

double-time ferocity.

The film also illustrates how vital Clarence Clemons was to the show: Catch how he and Springsteen make eye contact during "Rosalia," launching an extended choreography. Springsteen leans on him, literally and figuratively. With Clemons and organist Danny Federici now dead, the band's not the same.

The "No Nukes" film is on sale as a DVD or Blu-Ray disc, in separate packages with audio CDs of the music. The film won't be available on streaming services until next year; audio began streaming Nov. 19.

Zimny described how Springsteen, now 72, was juiced when he was first shown the concert footage, and quickly sang along with his 30-year-old self on the screen.

"We were young; we were kids," Springsteen said during a recent public screening in New Jersey. "What the film is packed with is youthful energy at a level that was surprising even to me when I saw it. It's a great document of the band at a very, very specific moment."

WEEKEND: ENTERTAINMENT

'Get Back' dispels, confirms Beatles myths

Disney+ documentary series created from nearly 60 hours of mostly unseen film, 150 hours of audio recordings

By DAVID BAUDER
Associated Press

For 50 years, the fixed narrative had the Beatles' "Let It Be" recording session as a miserable experience with a band where members were sick of each other, sick of their work and in the process of breaking up.

The nearly 8-hour, Peter Jackson-produced documentary culled from film and recording outtakes of those sessions instead reveal a self-aware band with a rare connection and work ethic that still knew how to have fun — yet was also in the process of breaking up.

The "Get Back" series unspooled over three days starting on Thanksgiving on Disney+.

Produced by a Beatlemania for fellow Beatlemania, it can be an exhausting experience for those not in the club. But the club is pretty big. Beyond the treats it offers fans, "Get Back" is a fly-on-the-wall look at the creative process of a band still popular a half-century after it ceased existence.

Jackson, the Academy Award-winning

maker of the "Lord of the Rings" series, was discussing another project with the Beatles when he inquired about what happened to the outtakes of director Michael Lindsay-Hogg's 1969 "Let It Be" film.

Nearly 60 hours of film taken over three weeks existed, mostly unseen, and the band had been considering what to do with it. Jackson took that material, as well as 150 hours of audio recordings, and spent four years building a story.

He approached it with the fear that it might be a depressing slog.

Lindsay-Hogg's film is viewed as a chronicle of the band's demise — unfairly, in Jackson's view — because it was released shortly after the breakup was announced. Individual Beatles reinforced the notion with negative comments about the experience, where they had given themselves a tight deadline to write and record new material in preparation of a live show, with cameras following it all.

"I just waited for it to go bad," Jackson said. "I waited for the arguments to begin. I waited for the conflict to begin. I waited for the sense that they hated each other. I

waited for all the things I had read in the books, and it never showed up."

Oh, there's conflict. History overshadows the enjoyable moments revealed in the outtakes, like John Lennon singing "Two of Us" as a Bob Dylan impersonator, or he and Paul McCartney challenging each other to a run-through without moving their lips. Jackson restores the balance.

"The connection was incredible," drummer Ringo Starr recalled in a recent Zoom interview. "I'm an only child (but) I had three brothers. And we looked out for each other. We looked after each other. We had a few rows with each other — that's what people do. But musically, every time we would count in — one, two, three, four — we were into being the best we could be."

Jackson follows the sessions day by day from their start in a cavernous film set that was eventually abandoned in favor of their familiar London recording studio, to the brief rooftop performance that was the last time the Beatles played in public.

The filmmaker is sensitive to the idea that he was brought in to "sanitize" the sessions, pointing out that "Get Back" depicts George Harrison briefly leaving the band, an event Lindsay-Hogg was not permitted to show.

That moment unfolded after a morning where Harrison watched, silently stewing, as Lennon and McCartney displayed their tight creative connection working on "Two of Us" as if the others weren't there. When a lunch break came, Harrison had something more permanent in mind.

"I'm leaving the band now," he says, almost matter-of-factly, before walking out.

After a few days, and a couple of band meetings, Harrison was coaxed to return. The morning he does, the film shows he and Lennon reading a false newspaper report that they had come to blows, and faced off in boxing stances to mock it.

Jackson's project dispels and reinforces pieces of conventional wisdom that have solidified through the years.

Myth No. 1: McCartney was a control freak

Verdict: Partly true. The film shows Harrison visibly chafing at McCartney giving him and other band members instructions on how to play and cajoling them into a decision on a live concert. The band had been somewhat aimless since the 1967 death of manager Brian Epstein. McCartney had taken on the "daddy" role, and isn't entirely comfortable with it.

"I'm scared of me being the boss, and I have been for a couple of years," he says. "I don't get any support."

Myth No. 2: Yoko Ono broke up the Beatles

Verdict: Not true. She's there at virtually every recording session, but mostly as a benign force sitting next to Lennon. The other Beatle spouses all show up in the studio, although not as often. At one point, McCartney even makes a prescient joke

"I just waited for it to go bad. I waited for the arguments to begin. I waited for the conflict to begin. I waited for the sense that they hated each other. I waited for all the things I had read in the books, and it never showed up."

Peter Jackson

producer of "The Beatles: Get Back"



Apple Corps Ltd.

Ringo Starr, Paul McCartney, John Lennon and George Harrison play for the last time in public, as shown in "The Beatles: Get Back."

SEE TRUTH ON PAGE 31

WEEKEND: ENTERTAINMENT

Truth: Band breakup not as contentious as originally thought

FROM PAGE 30

about her.

"It's going to be such an incredible comical thing in 50 years time — they broke up because Yoko sat on an amp," he says.

The afternoon after Harrison left, the remaining Beatles clearly take out their frustration with some aggressive, atonal music, and Ono takes over his microphone — a spellbinding moment.

Myth No. 3: They essentially turned into 4 solo artists

Verdict: Not true. They're constantly collaborating, seeking and taking advice. At one point, Harrison confesses to Lennon that he's been having trouble completing the line that became "attracts me like no other lover" in "Something." Lennon suggests using a nonsense phrase — "attracts me like a cauliflower" — until something better emerges.

Through the film, viewers can see how the song "Get Back" emerged from McCartney working out a riff on the side, to he and Lennon trading lyrical suggestions and throwing out an idea to make it a song criticizing anti-immigrant sentiment, to the full band working out the arrangement. Pleased with the final result, it's Harrison who suggests immediately releasing it as a single.

"A glimpse of them working together is an enormously important artifact, not just for Beatles fans but for anybody who is creative," said Bob Spitz, author of "The Beatles: The Biography," published in 2005.

Myth No. 4: Filming showed the Beatles breaking up

Verdict: Essentially true. It becomes clear that Lennon and Harrison's enthusiasm for being Beatles is waning. Lennon is clearly in love with Ono; McCartney tells Harrison and Starr that if it ever came down to a choice between her and the Beatles, Lennon would go with her.

Harrison, growing creatively, is becoming uncomfortable with his secondary role. He talks with Lennon about doing a solo album because he has enough songs written to fill his "quota" on Beatles albums for another decade. As if to prove his point, the Beatles rehearse Harrison's majestic "All Things Must Pass," but decline to record it.

In the film, Lennon and Starr also discuss a meeting with Rolling Stones manager Allen Klein about taking over the Beatles' business, foreshadowing a bitter split with McCartney.

"The whole thing is full of mini-stories," Jackson said.

Jackson, who had been expected to make a conventional documentary, said he was nervous taking his much longer final product back to McCartney, Starr and the families of Lennon and Harrison.

"But they came back and said, 'great; don't change a thing,'" he said.



HULTON ARCHIVE, GETTY IMAGES/TNS

James Stewart, as George Bailey, hugs actor Karolyn Grimes, who plays his daughter Zuzu, in 1946's "It's a Wonderful Life."

'It's A Wonderful Life' still resonates

2 of the film's living cast members reflect on its impact more than 7 decades later

BY RODNEY HO

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

"It's a Wonderful Life," Frank Capra's story about redemption and a life fulfilled, bombed at the box office when it was released widely in early 1947 (after a December 1946 premiere).

The 1947 Christmas movie that became the classic of its time? "Miracle on 34th Street."

For decades, "It's a Wonderful Life" was largely forgotten until 1974 when Republic Pictures failed to renew its copyright protection. The film lapsed into the public domain, meaning anyone could show the film without obtaining permission or paying royalties. Its ubiquity on broadcast TV over the next two decades fueled its popularity and gave the film a second life.

Since 1994, NBC has had exclusive broadcast rights to the film after Republic Pictures proved it owned the original story and the music.

Now it's hard to imagine American life without the film. It was ranked No. 20 of the 100 greatest films in 2007 by the American Film Institute. Capra and stars Donna Reed and Jimmy Stewart in interviews said it was their favorite film they ever worked on.

It's also a treasure that keeps on giving for living cast members Jimmy Hawkins, who played 4-year-old Tommy Bailey, and Karolyn Grimes, the 6-year-old Zuzu Bailey, who uttered the famous line, "Look, Daddy. Teacher says, 'Every time a bell rings, an angel gets his wings.'"

The movie, though, was just a footnote in their lives until the late 1970s.

"I started hearing more about it then," said Hawkins in a recent Zoom interview with The Atlanta Journal-Constitution to promote the 75th anniversary Blu-Ray DVD release, which came out Nov. 16. "People were holding trivia parties. I thought, 'Wow! This suddenly got big!'" He remained an actor in the 1950s and 1960s and worked with Reed on "The Donna Reed Show" from 1958 to 1966.

Grimes got out of show business in her teens after her mother died from early-onset Alzheimer's disease and her father was killed in a car accident. Her life was suffused with tragedy. Her first husband died in a hunting accident. One of her children committed suicide. And her second husband died of cancer. She didn't even see "It's a Wonderful Life" until she was 40 years old.

"I was enthralled with the messages from that movie when I first saw it," Grimes said. "I knew then why it was very special and I could understand why I started getting fan mail and people wanted to have interviews with me."

Back in 1980, she had no idea how journalists even tracked her down because her name had changed and there was no Google back in the day. But the publicity enabled her to reunite with Stewart and Reed, and Grimes became the unofficial ambassador of the movie.

Over the past four decades, she has attended countless screenings, benefits and conventions. She helped create a museum for the film and returns each De-

cember to Seneca Falls, N.Y., the model for the movie's small-town Bedford Falls, for the "It's a Wonderful Life" Festival.

For Grimes, the film's message is timeless: "How each person's life touches another and we're given an opportunity to make a difference. That's so important."

She even likes the colorized version, which is available on the DVD.

"You can see so much more in the background you can't see in the black-and-white version," she said. "Paramount makes it really crisp and beautiful."

"Some people don't like black-and-white, so whatever it takes to get the message out, that's fine," Hawkins added.

Hawkins said people have come up to both of them and said watching the film kept them from killing themselves. And even at age 79, he said he feels like he's four all over again when he thinks about the movie.

"When people ask us questions about being on the set, you click back into it," Hawkins said. "It's so vivid. It seems like a million years ago or just yesterday."

The movie itself is pretty dark on multiple levels and Grimes thinks people, coming out of World War II, weren't quite ready for it yet.

Stewart himself wasn't sure he wanted to even act again after flying naval planes over Germany but, as Hawkins said, actor Lionel Barrymore, who plays the miserly Mr. Potter in the film, convinced Stewart to do it.

"The film is like the cream in the coffee," Hawkins said. "It just rises to the top."

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

BY ANGELA HAUPT

Special to *The Washington Post*

Carrie Verrocchio has a theory: Once you go bidet, you never go back. She's so smitten with the toilet attachment that sprays water to clean your bum that her family had one installed in each of their four bathrooms — and they're shopping for a travel bidet, a water-bottle-sized contraption to use when they're on the road.

Where to start on the appeal?

"It's feeling clean all the time," says Verrocchio, 55, a motivational speaker who lives in Binghamton, N.Y. "You know how when you go to the bathroom, you have to wipe a zillion times with dry paper? You don't do that with the bidet. It literally just rinses it off, puts it in the toilet and you pat dry. I wish we'd done it years ago."

Nikki Webster, 47, a writer from the United Kingdom who now lives in Florida, similarly considers her bidets essential.

"When you wipe, you're basically wiping what can be reached," she says. "When you spray, you get into every nook and cranny, which leaves you way cleaner."

Indeed, health experts generally agree that bidets elevate the bathroom hygiene experience, at least when used properly. What's less clear is whether they serve any medical purpose beyond that: While there's some indication that they could, for example, be helpful for those with hemorrhoids or mobility issues, research isn't conclusive, and there are concerns that bacteria could fester on the device; plus, users could be scalded if the water gets too hot.

Even if they're not a medical necessity, bidets exploded in popularity in the United States during the pandemic — and they've long been common in Europe and Asia. These devices, which come in different styles, squirt water at your genital and anal areas after you use the toilet. Converts say they're far more hygienic than toilet paper, as well as more eco-friendly because you use less toilet paper.

"Remember when the pandemic first hit and there was a shortage of paper products?" Webster says. "At our house, no problem. We never stressed about searching for toilet paper — it wasn't even a concern."

Over time, bidet aficionados also find them to be cost-effective. You can get a simple bidet attachment for about \$50, while a stand-alone bidet could cost a few thousand.

The surge in use among Americans is a validating moment for James Lin, who launched the e-commerce site Bidet King in late 2009, after visiting his grandmother in Taiwan and getting acquainted with her bidet.

"It was one of those experiences where the glass shatters



iStock

Bidets, whether stand-alone or attached, spray water at your anal and genital areas after you use the toilet. Some consider them to be more cost-efficient, sanitary and eco-friendly than toilet paper.

Are bidets better?

Health experts weigh in on pros, cons of the cleaning devices, particularly popular during the COVID-19 toilet paper shortage

and you can't put it back together," he says.

After a decade of diligently selling the devices, orders suddenly skyrocketed during the pandemic, when paper products became scarce.

"To say there was a spike is kind of putting it lightly," he says. "Sales increased by 20, 30 times over the course of two to three weeks, to the point where you couldn't buy a bidet if you really wanted to. Everyone was out of stock."

Inventory is now back to normal, he reports, though interest remains high.

As Lin puts it, those who discover the bidet "can't shut up about it — they tell their neighbors and friends and all that."

Here's a look at what health experts say about the pros and cons of bidets:

The pros

Washing instead of wiping is, in many ways, a no-brainer, says Evan Goldstein, an anal surgeon in New York City and founder of Bespoke Surgical. He regularly recommends bidets to his patients.

"From a hygiene perspective, it just clearly makes sense," he says. "You're able to get rid of any extra residual that's there. The bidet has always been part and parcel to anal hygiene."

Less wiping: Goldstein says Americans have a tendency to over-wipe: Desperate to be clean, we rub toilet paper against ourselves again and again, irritating

the skin and sometimes even causing tiny cuts or bleeding. While toilet paper can be abrasive, a bidet delivers a more soothing stream of water to sensitive areas.

Wiping might not be entirely eliminated, though: Goldstein notes that it's still important to

"From a hygiene perspective, it just clearly makes sense. You're able to get rid of any extra residual that's there. The bidet has always been part and parcel to anal hygiene."

Evan Goldstein

NYC anal surgeon, founder of Bespoke Surgical

fully dry yourself after using the toilet — otherwise, excess moisture could lead to an infection.

He suggests using a little bit of toilet paper or a cloth towel to pat yourself dry; not wet wipes, which can vex the skin, especially if used consistently. (Some bidets have a built-in air dryer, but those

models tend to be pricier.)

"The reality is that most people, when they switch to a bidet, they're mad at themselves that they didn't use it earlier, and they consider it a game changer," Goldstein says. "It's hygiene at its finest."

Good if you have problems with mobility: Bidets are often particularly helpful for people with mobility issues, including those with arthritis, morbid obesity or Parkinson's disease, says Christine Lee, a gastroenterologist at the Cleveland Clinic. The device minimizes the need to use your wrist to get to difficult spots on your underside.

"If you can't quite reach — or if you have a spinal cord injury, and you have less sensation, so you're not quite sure where you're wiping — well, those kinds of things can decrease the quality of hygienic practices," she says.

The bidet is a convenient way to guarantee a thorough cleaning. Plus, Lee says, some seniors with poor hand-eye coordination who aren't able to trim their nails accidentally cut themselves while wiping, leading to pain and infection. Indeed, a study published in *Gerontologist* found that bidets improved "comfort in toileting and cleanliness" among nursing home residents ages 75 and up.

Helpful if you have issues in that area: There's limited research on bidets, but a few studies suggest potential health benefits. Using one might make sense for those with hemorrhoids and anal fissures, since it reduces pressure

in the rectum and is a relatively gentle experience. And people with pruritus ani, the technical term for itchy anus, are often cautioned to avoid toilet paper, leading them to bidets.

"There have been clear anecdotal reports of people with hemorrhoids where the bidet helps," says John Swartzberg, a clinical professor emeritus in the School of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley. But beyond those testaments and a pool of preliminary studies, there's "not a lot of science to support" the impassioned claims of bidet lovers, he says. For example, some advocates believe bidets prevent urinary tract infections, but Swartzberg says there's no evidence of that.

The cons

Concern about bacteria: A bidet isn't a slam-dunk better toileting experience: Some research raises concerns. One large study, for example, indicated that regularly using a bidet altered the good bacteria in a woman's vagina.

The study would "have to be repeated" for researchers to draw any conclusions, Swartzberg says.

Another study, involving a Japanese hospital, found that 254 out of 294 bidet nozzles were contaminated with infection-causing organisms such as *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Enterococcus* spp.

Maintenance and cleaning: That's a good reminder of one of the golden rules of bidet ownership: You need to regularly clean it. In many cases, running a damp cloth over the nozzle will suffice; it's typically best to avoid harsh chemicals, though that will vary depending on your specific model.

"If you properly maintain it, as far as cleaning and upkeep, then it could be just as hygienic — if not more — than toilet paper," Lee says.

Potential scalding: It's also important to pay attention to your bidet's water pressure and temperature: If either is too high, you could experience scalding or otherwise agitate your bottom.

Having a professional plumber install your bidet, and reading the user manual, can help you avoid such misfires, Lee says.

The bottom line

Do we all need a bidet? Swartzberg owns one, so he certainly understands the appeal.

"We put one in when we remodeled about 10 years ago, and now there's a competition in the household for who gets to use that toilet," he says.

But aside from cleanliness, there's no compelling medical reason to use one.

"It's personal preference," he says. "People who like them tend to really like them. But from a medical standpoint, I don't think it's better or worse."

WEEKEND: FAMILY



Should snitches get stitches?

Experts offer parents advice for teaching kids when it's okay to tattletale

By **KELLY HOOVER GREENWAY**
Special to *The Washington Post*

Recently, my 6- and 10-year-old sons were playing basketball in our driveway. While this should have been time for me to enjoy a peaceful, quiet house, my younger child soon came barreling through the front door with an urgent question. “Mom, is it true? Do snitches really get stitches?!”

It ends up, his brother learned this refrain not from another kid, but from a counselor at his summer camp, and of course passed it along to his brother. My older son explained, when I pressed him, that the counselor encouraged campers to work things out among themselves instead of reporting all their skirmishes to an adult.

This left me feeling rather torn.

I agree that children must learn how to handle peer conflict in mature ways. However, this idea that reporting information to an adult automatically equates to “snitching” or being a “tattletale” dismisses the important role trusted grown-ups can play in helping kids and teens navigate complicated situations.

No, we don’t want our children running to us every time they feel slighted or want to get a peer (or sibling) in trouble. But when we imply that speaking up will jeopardize their relationships with their friends, we risk losing a vital line of communication between parent and child — one that becomes even more important as they grow older.

It’s a tricky issue to navigate for both kids and their caregivers, due in no small part to our tendency to send mixed messages with regard to this topic. When our children are young, we teach them the rules: no hitting, no biting, treat others the way you want to be treated. But as soon as they report that someone else isn’t playing by those rules, we say, “No one likes a tattletale.” This does not elicit trust from our little ones.

“It’s important for parents and caregivers to understand that children want support, but [once they start school] they are now part of the bigger world, so they don’t want to break those social contracts either,” says Joshua Castillo, a Los Angeles-based parenting coach and early childhood consultant. If we want our kids to feel safe giving us information, it’s crucial we establish early on what our help will look like when they do. “Help doesn’t mean the adult is going to save you. Your role is to help the kid think it through and understand their options [for problem-solving].”

She calls this “deconstructing the context” and urges parents to resist pitting one child against another by asking things like, “Who made you feel bad?” Instead, she suggests going back to the initial point of connection (what they were doing at the time) and then figure out where the disconnect (not the “wrong”) occurred. “If your kids get accustomed to you saying, ‘I can see that situation got tricky. Let’s play it back. How did it all start?’ they will give you more details to work with.” In doing this, she explains children won’t feel scared to confide in you because you’ve coached them early on to see you as a reliable source.

As our children grow, so do their bonds with friends, which can make the stakes higher for revealing information to the grown-ups in their life. Pinkie promises, being sworn to secrecy and the threat of “stitches” all lead to an internal conflict: to tell or not to tell?

Judging by the statistics, when it comes to peer conflict such as bullying, most of our children are choosing not to talk. Genevieve Rivera, executive director for American SPCC (Society for the Positive Care of Children), reports that only a tiny percentage of children who are being bullied tell their caregivers. Somewhat surprisingly though, young people cite fear of parental repercussions, not necessarily those of their friends, as one of the main reasons they don’t want to share their struggles.

Rivera notes that children (yes, even the ones who are being bullied) worry they’ll have their phone taken away or be told they can’t play with a particular person anymore. Because of this, she says caregivers must “be the calm in the chaos” if their children tell them about bullying or other upsetting behaviors taking place.

One strategy Castillo recommends for maintaining open lines of communication while also respecting your child’s need for privacy is to create an “idea jar” where everyone in the family writes down tricky situations they’d like to discuss. No one gives specific names or whether a situation is real or hypothetical, but it gives the family a chance to sit down together, discuss and play out a number of different scenarios in which support might be needed.

It’s entirely possible to imagine a relationship with our kids where this topic isn’t binary: either they talk to us or they solve issues on their own. If we can remember that our role is to support, not solve, and we show up as reliable, trustworthy sources, then perhaps a new scenario can emerge — one where snitches no longer need to get stitches.

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Finding goodness and light in a hectic season

It’s December, and we haven’t managed to snap a decent picture for our annual family photo cards. I haven’t even started buying gifts for my various relatives, friends, family, neighbors and pets. I haven’t baked Francis’ favorite Cranberry Pinwheels or Hayden’s favorite Onion Swiss Bread or Grammy’s favorite Cheese Ball. I haven’t moved the Elf on the Shelf from his box in our basement.

And I’m embarrassed to say, we haven’t even bought a tree yet.

The stress is beginning to build, but I won’t panic because I already did the one thing that keeps me grounded through the holidays.

No, I didn’t put a shot of Jameson in my morning coffee. I didn’t book a flight to Cancun to hide from my family. And I didn’t convert to Buddhism to avoid the holiday altogether.

All I did was plug in my old ceramic Christmas tree.

If you were born before 1990, you know what I’m talking about. Our mothers, aunts and grandmothers made them at local ceramics shops back in the day. When I was a kid, it seemed there was a ceramic Christmas tree glowing in the window of every house in town.

Problem was, we didn’t have one in our brick ranch. Why? My mother thought they were tacky. Sigh ...

Sometimes, we visited our friend’s house, which had a huge ceramic tree in the front window. I couldn’t stop staring at it. The vivid colors of the plastic pegs, glowing from the light bulb within, seemed impossibly pure. Cobalt blue, emerald green, golden yellow, ruby red and hot magenta. It was an irresistible feast for my ceramic-tree-deprived eyes.

To me, that lighted tree somehow symbolized everything good about the holiday season.

Twenty years later, I was pushing our stroller through a seedy indoor flea market in an abandoned strip mall in Virginia Beach when I saw it.

I have no idea what possessed me to wander into the flea market, but three aisles in, past the creepy dolls, the handbag knockoffs and the suspicious electronics, there it was — a beautiful 1971 ceramic Christmas tree gleaming like a beacon in that broken-down strip mall.

“Eleven dalla?” the Filipino vendor suggested. I counted out the paltry sum and took my prize home. There on my kitchen counter, radiating precious jewel tones beside my toaster, was my sanity.

The mesmerizing sight of the vintage tree transported me away from the mayhem. Away from the obligation to spend hundreds on meaningless gift cards for people we hardly know. Away from the photo cards mailed out to so many recipients, there’s no time to even sign our names. Away from the distraction of cellphones. Away from the 24-hour lineup of holiday television programming on our digital video recorders.

Instantly, the lighted tree catapulted me back to childhood. To a time before the internet, digital photos, virtual reality, Black Friday, Cyber Monday and Throwback Thursday.

When we scratched the frost off of our windows with our fingernails, and couldn’t wait to get outside. When we ate all our peas at dinner because “A Charlie Brown Christmas” was airing soon. When Christmas cards were special because we only got 10. When we lounged under the tree in footed pajamas, gazing into the colors of the dangerously hot incandescent bulbs, our bellies full of chocolate chip cookies.

When the holidays, and life in general, were simple and sweet.

Nowadays, the first thing I do to prepare for the holiday is plug in my ceramic Christmas tree to remind me of the simple joys of the season. But there’s no need to run out to a seedy indoor flea market in search of a handmade relic like mine. Just find the simple things that bring goodness and light to your holiday.

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

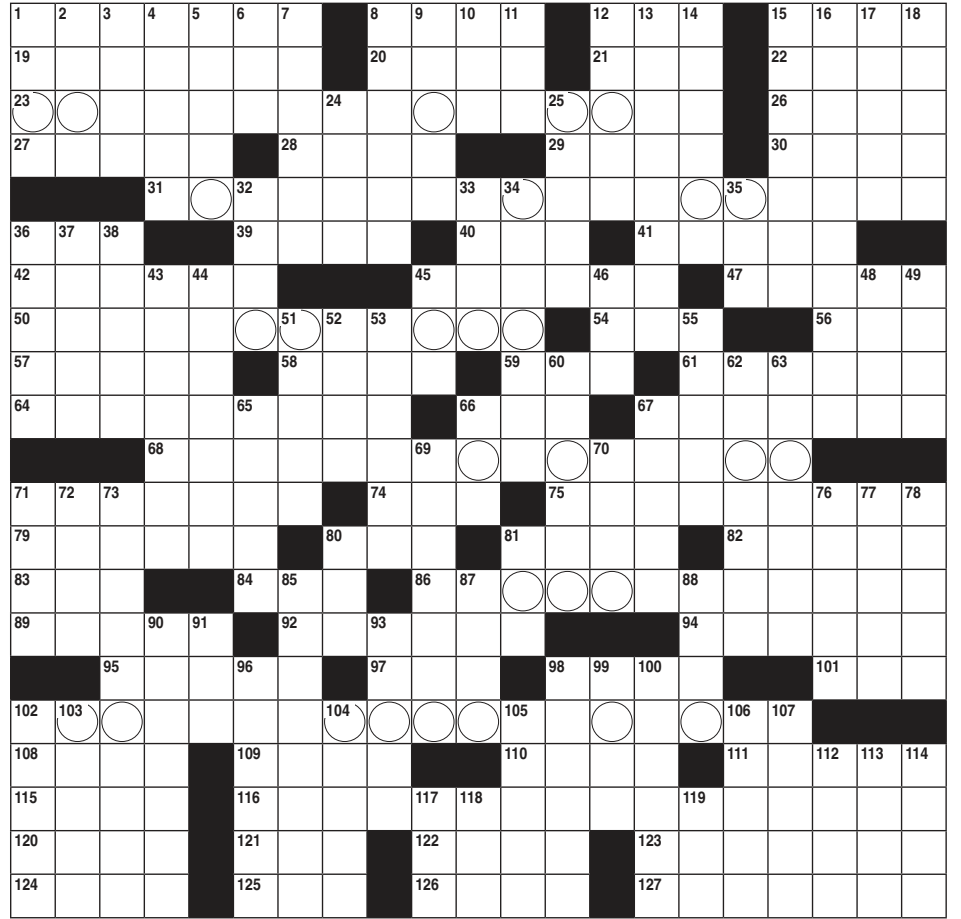
NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

SCREEN SHARING

BY ADAM WAGNER / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Adam Wagner, of Oakland, Calif., is a senior copywriter for an ad agency in San Francisco. He got interested in crossword construction a few years ago after he saw puzzles by some of his former Brown University classmates in The Times. The idea for this one came to him one night when he was in bed ("second only to the shower in terms of where my best ideas come"). He got up and spent the rest of the night finding theme examples. — W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Lets extra light in, in a way
 - 8 Get on the stick?
 - 12 Music-genre prefix
 - 15 Arm of the Dept. of Homeland Security
 - 19 Deforestation, for example
 - 20 Not home
 - 21 Pool tester
 - 22 Line through two poles
 - 23 Salma Hayek: 1996, 2002
 - 26 Bop on the head
 - 27 Driven, say
 - 28 "___ Flux" (onetime sci-fi series)
 - 29 Yellow belly?
 - 30 Pair in gossip
 - 31 Dev Patel: 2008, 2016
 - 36 Jerkwad
 - 39 What remains, with "the"
 - 40 Quail : bevy :: ___ : parliament
 - 41 Liechtensteiner's currency
 - 42 Amount of tips earned by a street performer, maybe
 - 45 Equipment used to play the oldest organized sport in North America
 - 47 Choose
 - 50 Brad Pitt: 2001, 1995
 - 54 Accompanier of smoke
 - 56 Texter's "I think . . ."
 - 57 Catherine of "Schitt's Creek"
 - 58 Outstanding finds
 - 59 Broadband inits.
 - 61 "You mean I'm wrong?!"
 - 64 Utilize a company policy for new parents, say
 - 66 When tripled, playful onomatopoeia for shooting laser beams
 - 67 "Here, have a taste"
 - 68 Owen Wilson: 2005, 2006
 - 71 Baseless rumors
 - 74 The lowest número primo
 - 75 Pickup line?
 - 79 It's at the beginning of this clue
 - 80 Noted fashion monogram
 - 81 Equal
 - 82 "Sunrise" singer Jones
 - 83 Focus of some smartphone updates
 - 84 Before, in poetry
 - 86 Joaquin Phoenix: 2014, 2013
 - 89 Problems with phonograph records
 - 92 Contents of college blue books
 - 94 Early online forum that popularized terms like "FAQ" and "spam"
 - 95 Put on again
 - 97 Some dolls sold in a Universal Studios gift shop
 - 98 When "Alexander Hamilton" is sung in "Hamilton"
 - 101 Mathematician Lovelace
 - 102 Al Pacino and Robert De Niro: 1974, 1995 (twice!)
 - 108 Brother of 99-Down
 - 109 Ramirez of "Grey's Anatomy"
 - 110 Historic trade ally of the Monacan people
 - 111 Dark yellow shade
 - 115 -elect
 - 116 Modern tech feature for watching two programs on one screen . . . or an alternative title for this puzzle
 - 120 Bug-eyed
 - 121 High-value deposit
 - 122 Shore soarer
 - 123 Absolutely devoured
 - 124 Takes from
 - 125 TV's "___ Lasso"
 - 126 Name on a toy truck
 - 127 Places for rubs and scrubs
 - 8 Tush
 - 9 Thanks (to)
 - 10 Actress Gadot
 - 11 Olive ___
 - 12 In any way
 - 13 Sleazeballs
 - 14 Kind of muscle
 - 15 Chess's ___ Caruana, onetime youngest grandmaster in U.S. history (14 years 11 months)
 - 16 Flowerhorn cichlids and vampire tetras, for example
 - 17 Worker who wants to strike?
 - 18 "Go on, shoot"
 - 24 Sister brand of Saucony and Stride Rite
 - 25 Small valleys
 - 32 Cybersquatters make fake ones
 - 33 What 2 is vis-à-vis 1
 - 34 "Hmm . . ."
 - 35 Badger
 - 36 Barrels of fun
 - 37 Satirist ___ Baron Cohen
 - 38 Entree served with a knife
 - 43 Price jockeying of competing airlines
 - 44 Not paying attention
 - 45 Walgreens competitor
 - 46 ___ Khan of Khan Academy fame
 - 48 Prefix with present
 - 49 Goes to hell
 - 51 "Golly gee!"
 - 52 Stock ticker symbol for a longtime clothing brand
 - 53 Corrects in text
 - 55 Brought on
 - 60 River of old song
 - 62 "Clever ___ are never punished": Voltaire
 - 63 [swoon]
 - 65 Meat Loaf's "Rocky Horror" role
 - 66 Surfaces, e.g.
 - 67 Start of many a limerick
 - 69 Massive adversary
 - 70 Whom you might ask, "Where will I be in 10 years?"
 - 71 Forensic pros, in brief
 - 72 Words of eventual understanding
 - 73 "Fraid not"
 - 76 Supermodel Shayk
 - 77 Went up against
 - 78 Sorority letter
 - 80 Shortest answer from a Magic 8 Ball
 - 81 Measures of acidity
 - 85 Modern joust venue, informally
 - 87 Org. with a noted bell
 - 88 Van Gogh's "La ___ Étoilée"
 - 90 Walking sticks?
 - 91 Packed-house inits.
 - 93 Went after
 - 96 Expensive Super Bowl purchase
 - 98 Shower times
 - 99 Brother of 108-Across
 - 100 Timorous
 - 102 Member of a Turkic group
 - 103 Onetime streaming platform of the 2010s
 - 104 Took a bow?
 - 105 Submissions to a casting director
 - 106 Like wool sweaters, often
 - 107 Teensy bits
 - 112 Thick component of orange juice
 - 113 Broca's ____, segment of the brain linked to speech
 - 114 Snoring symbols in Surrey
 - 117 [That smells terrible!]
 - 118 Regret
 - 119 ___ sense
- DOWN**
- 1 Expert
 - 2 Song title shared by hit singles for Ja Rule and Flo Rida
 - 3 In the ___
 - 4 High points
 - 5 Kind of force created by the moon
 - 6 Ending with "brown." or "auburn."
 - 7 What tahini is made from



GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

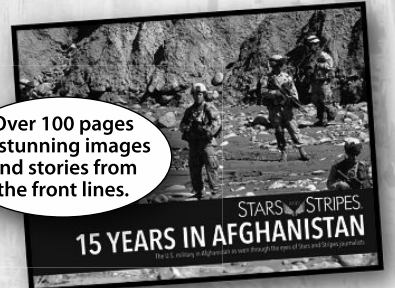
RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



STARS AND STRIPES 15 YEARS IN AFGHANISTAN

The story of the U.S. military's role in Afghanistan, as seen through the eyes of Stars and Stripes journalists covering America's longest war.

Only **\$14.99** with Free Shipping



ORDER NOW at www.stripesstore.com

FACES

Return to love

‘A Castle for Christmas’ is the first rom-com Cary Elwes has done since ‘The Princess Bride’

BY PETER SBLENDORIO
New York Daily News

Decades after he was crowned rom-com royalty for “The Princess Bride,” Cary Elwes fell in love with the genre all over again with his new movie.

The English actor stars in Netflix’s “A Castle for Christmas,” and though it might seem inconceivable, the film is Elwes’ first romantic comedy since he portrayed the heroic Westley in “The Princess Bride” back in 1987.

“I avoided picking that genre simply because that film had pretty much covered that for me, and I didn’t feel like I wanted to try and compete with it,” Elwes said. “But here I am, some 30 years later, and I couldn’t pass up the opportunity of doing this one. Firstly, because the role was so interesting to me, to play someone so totally different.”

Released last week, “A Castle for Christmas” stars Elwes as the Scottish duke Myles, who operates a scenic estate and largely isolates himself from the outside world.

His life is flipped upside down when he meets Brooke Shields’ Sophie Brown, a popular American author who retreats to Scotland after upsetting her rabid readers by killing off a fan-favor-

ite character.

“Myles has run through all the money, and now he’s looking to sell his castle. The buyer who shows up is this character played by Brooke who is the complete antithesis to Myles,” Elwes, 59, said.

“She’s an extrovert and she’s filled with joie de vivre, which he’s certainly not, and she really rubs him the wrong way, so there’s great elements of comedy there. They’re very much oil and water, the two of them.”

The actors shot scenes at the real Dalmeny Castle in South Queensferry, Scotland. Elwes, who has Scottish roots on his mother’s side, says getting the chance to connect with his heritage was part of why he wanted to make the movie, as was working with Shields.

“Brooke’s character is all about connecting with people, connecting with her past, connecting with the present and being present,” Elwes said. “My character, Myles, just wants to be left alone, really. She teaches him about loneliness and not being alone, and opens his eyes to the possibilities of really living life.”

In the years between his rom-com roles, Elwes starred in adventure films such as “Robin Hood:



MARK MAINZ, NETFLIX/TNS

Cary Elwes, left, stars as Myles, a duke in charge of a large Scottish estate who wants to be left alone, and Brooke Shields plays Sophie Brown, a romance author who retreats to Scotland after stirring up the ire of her fans, in “A Castle for Christmas,” now streaming on Netflix.

Men in Tights” and “The Jungle Book,” portrayed Dr. Lawrence Gordon in the “Saw” horror flicks, and played recurring characters on the TV series “Stranger Things” and “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel.”

He’s also set to appear in the Guy Ritchie-directed spy movie “Operation Fortune: Ruse de guerre” and the Tom Cruise-led

“Mission Impossible 7,” both due out next year.

“If I’m afraid of the role, that’s usually a good motivator for me,” Elwes said. “If it’s something I’m not sure I can do, and yet the director somehow sees there’s something in me that can deliver something, that’s usually a good motivator for me. I rush toward the things I’m afraid of.”

Elwes said he “didn’t realize how much” he missed starring in romantic comedies until he worked on “A Castle for Christmas.”

“It’s a film about love,” Elwes said. “It’s a film about family. It’s a film about friends. I think, between those three things, they hit the most important notes of the holiday season.”

‘It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia’ becomes the longest-running sitcom ever

From wire reports

With the premiere of its 15th season Wednesday on FX, “It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia” became the longest-running live action comedy series ever. The sitcom beats out classic series “The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet,” which ran for 14 seasons from 1952 to 1966.

The sitcom — ostensibly about a group of friends who own and run a Philadelphia bar, but actually about a group of truly awful people — has thrust Philadelphia into the cultural spotlight, leaving many wondering if they can visit Paddy’s Pub and others wondering if the city is really full of miscreants like the “gang.”

The show, which premiered in 2005, was created by Philadelphia native Rob McElhenney, and also stars fellow actors Charlie Day and Glenn Howerton. The show centers on the group of friends trying — and failing — to run Paddy’s Pub, the fictional Irish bar in a nondescript part of the city.

When the show began, the characters were flawed, silly and selfish, constantly trying to get one over on the other and launching schemes that included buying tanks of gasoline to resell at a higher price and charging people to witness a water stain that appeared to be in the shape of the Virgin Mary.

But as the show has gone on, the group has devolved into people who often relish backstabbing and conning their way through life. Somehow, the sitcom remains hilarious and the gang endearing to watch.

The show, for all of its sometimes dark humor, has elevated Philadelphia in the eyes of the public, said Pete Caniglia,



BONNIE WELLER, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER/TNS

“It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia” star and creator Rob McElhenney, far right, poses with his wife, Kaitlin Olson, center, and castmates Charlie Day, left, Glenn Howerton and Danny DeVito in 2009.

social media manager at Neff, a Philadelphia marketing agency.

“I think it’s brought a lot of Philly culture to the forefront. The show is super popular all around. Especially on social media, I’m constantly seeing ‘It’s Always Sunny’ memes,” he said.

“It shows our culture and shows what Philly is all about, said Caniglia. “The toughness of it and how fun they can be.”

Bad Bunny is Spotify’s 2021 most-streamed artist while Olivia Rodrigo has top song

Bad Bunny hopped to the top of Spotify’s most-streamed list yet again.

The Puerto Rican rapper led all artists worldwide with more than 9.1 billion streams on the music service in 2021, Spotify announced Wednesday.

The company didn’t release every individual performer’s streaming totals, but said Bad Bunny’s lofty number of listens was enough to surpass Taylor Swift, who finished second on the global ranking.

It’s the second year in a row that Bad Bunny, whose hits include “Mia” and “La Cancion,” has led all artists in Spotify streams.

Making the feat more impressive is that Bad Bunny didn’t come out with a new album in 2021, though he did release hit songs with “Volvi” and “Yonaguni.”

The third through fifth most-streamed artists in the world this year were BTS, Drake and Justin Bieber, respectively.

Another top performer in 2021 was Olivia Rodrigo, whose hit “Drivers License” was the most-streamed song both globally and in the U.S. The song, which was the pop star’s debut single, garnered more than 1.1 billion streams this year.

Rodrigo’s “Good 4 U,” meanwhile, finished second on the U.S. list, and fourth globally. Both songs appeared on the 18-year-old Rodrigo’s debut album, “Sour,” which came out in May.

“Chief Chat” is a military-exclusive Facebook live program created to keep Soldiers, Airmen and military communities connected during this challenging time. The “Chief” in “Chief Chat” is the Exchange’s senior enlisted advisor, Chief Master Sgt. Kevin Osby.



UPCOMING CHATS



PAST EPISODES

WATCH NOW AT

shopmyexchange.com/chiefchat

't's the season

...for tax-free shopping & military exclusive pricing!
Fa-la-la-la-la...



Find holiday gifts, decor & stocking stuffers galore at shopmyexchange.com/ads

All honorably discharged Veterans are eligible to shop their military exchanges online, tax-free for life.

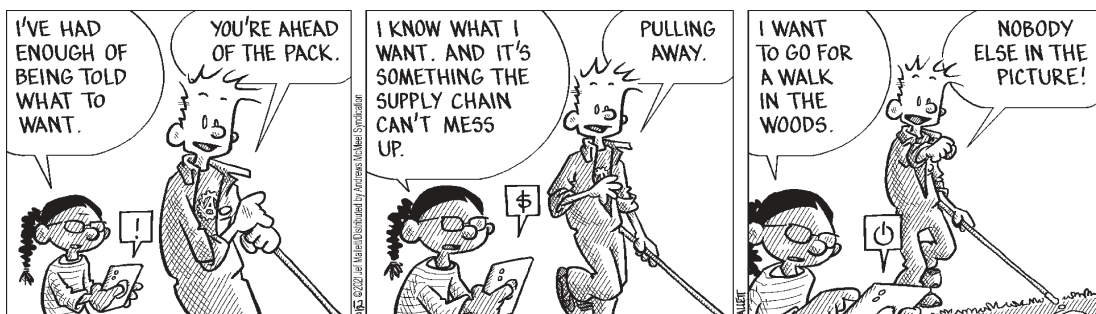
The Department of Defense expanded in-store military exchange and commissary shopping privileges as well as MWR resale facility use to all Veterans with service connected disabilities.

Learn more about veteran shopping benefits at ShopMyExchange.com/vets.



The Exchange is a Department of Defense Organization.

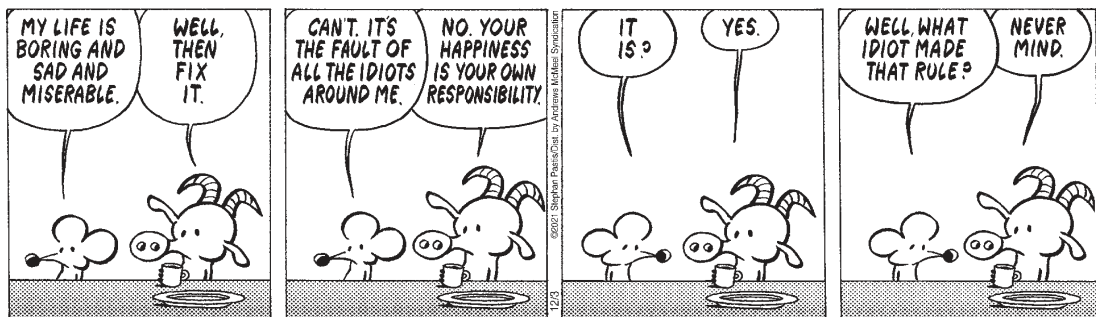
Frazz



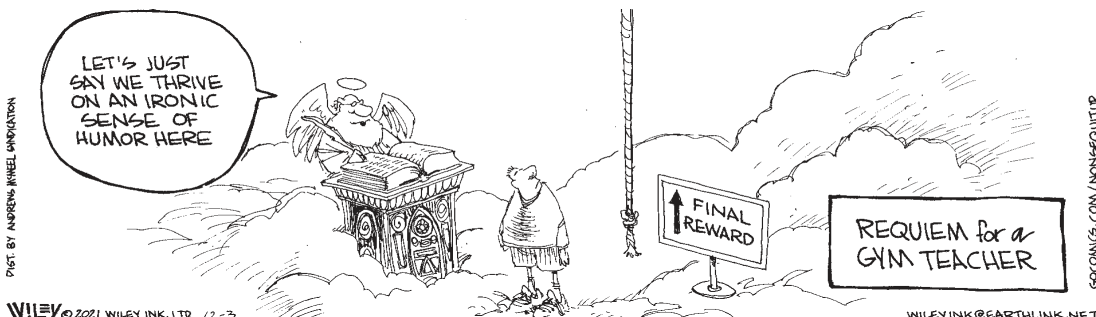
Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



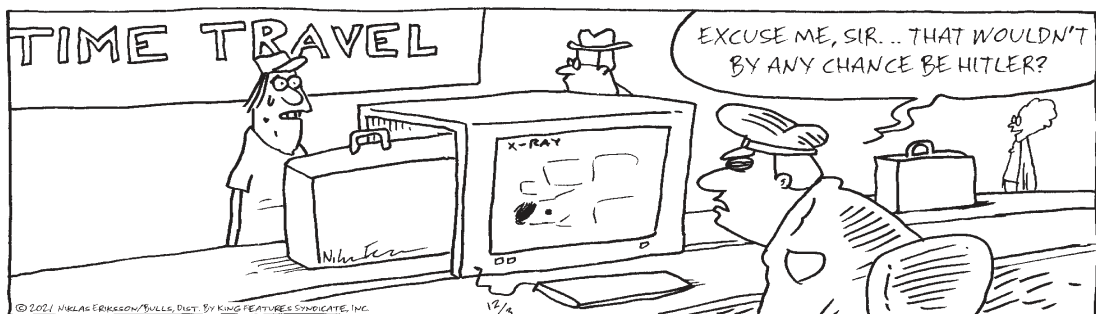
Non Sequitur



Candorville



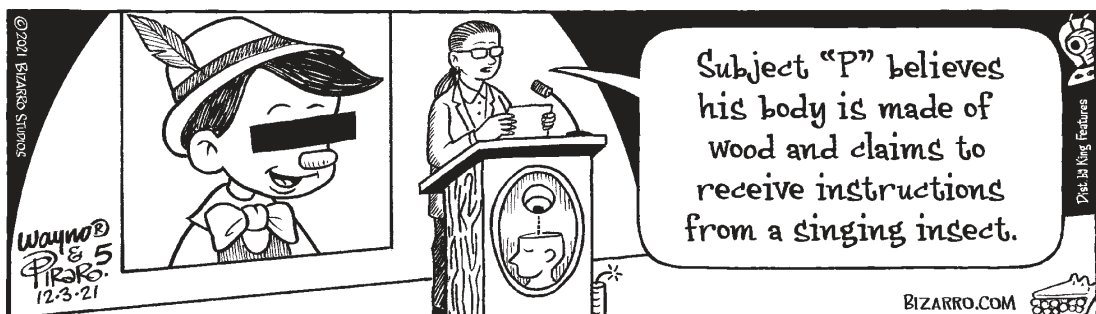
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15			16						17			
		18							19			
20	21				22	23						
24				25					26	27	28	
29				30					31			
32			33						34			
			35						36			
37	38	39				40						
41					42	43					44	45
46					47					48		
49					50					51		

ACROSS

- 1 Canine cry
- 4 Beach crawler
- 8 Con job
- 12 — Aviv
- 13 Bagel feature
- 14 Pequod captain
- 15 Fleet of ships
- 17 Turkish money
- 18 Greet silently
- 19 Records
- 20 Mountain crest
- 22 Hurt severely
- 24 Stallion's mate
- 25 Imaginary
- 29 Rage
- 30 Varieties
- 31 Baton Rouge sch.
- 32 Name in someone's honor
- 34 Afrikaner
- 35 River blockers
- 36 Obey a comma
- 37 Commence
- 40 German mister
- 41 Ibsen's home
- 42 Moving, as in a group
- 46 In — (shortly)
- 47 Classic Kinks song
- 48 Vast expanse
- 49 Electronics giant

DOWN

- 22 Shopping centers
- 23 Pot starter
- 25 Froth
- 26 Thrive
- 27 Applications
- 28 Entice
- 30 Read quickly
- 33 Madness
- 34 Fir coat
- 36 Pie variety
- 37 Fluffy scarves
- 38 Old U.S. gas brand
- 39 Hidden valley
- 40 Spanish greeting
- 42 Winter ailment
- 43 Texter's guffaw
- 44 Born
- 45 "How frustrating!"

Answer to Previous Puzzle

C	L	O	G		P	E	P		G	P	A	S		
H	E	R	O		A	V	A		R	E	L	O		
E	A	S	T		N	A	P		A	A	A	S		
W	H	O	O	P	I		A	P	P	S				
					B	E	C	K	Y	S	H	A	R	P
O	B	J	E	T		R	A	T		N	E	O		
L	A	U	D		D	I	S		S	T	E	P		
D	U	B			G	A	L		T	U	S	K	S	
E	M	I	L	Y	B	L	U	N	T					
					L	I	M		S	T	U	C	C	O
B	E	A	N		L	I	U		R	A	R	A		
A	O	N	E		E	R	R		E	T	A	T		
A	N	T	S		S	A	Y		D	E	B	S		

12-3

CRYPTOQUIP

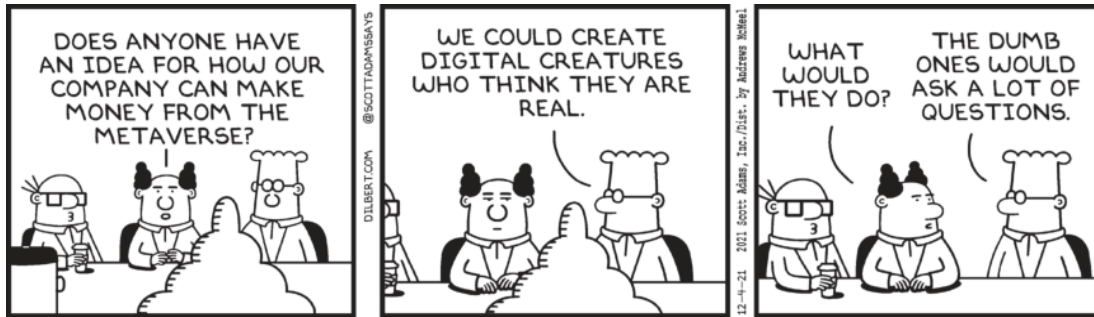
V D A G K X S I J O X J T R O A K G P
 D K G Z O V A J A Z R P O, V D K S
 X I T U P C I T D K F A I E F R I T O U C
 X K U U A P S D A B ? S I B E I C O.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: NOTED ACTRESS WHO WAS ESPECIALLY KNOWN FOR HER TEARFULLY SENTIMENTAL PORTRAYALS: MAUDLIN KAHN.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals A

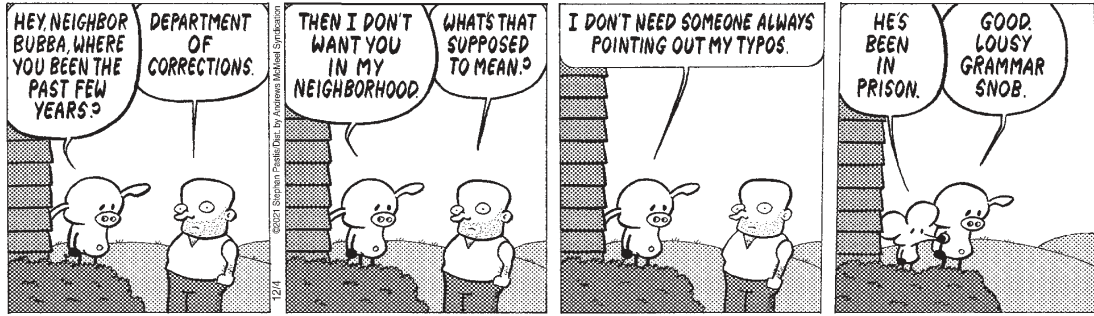
Frazz



Dilbert



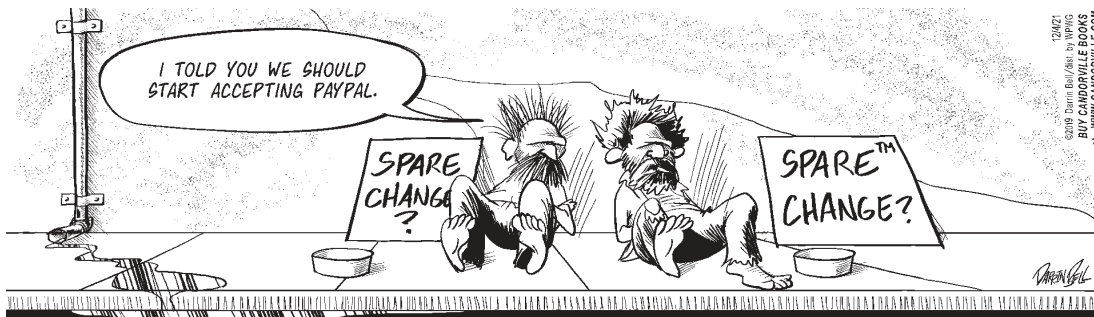
Pearls Before Swine



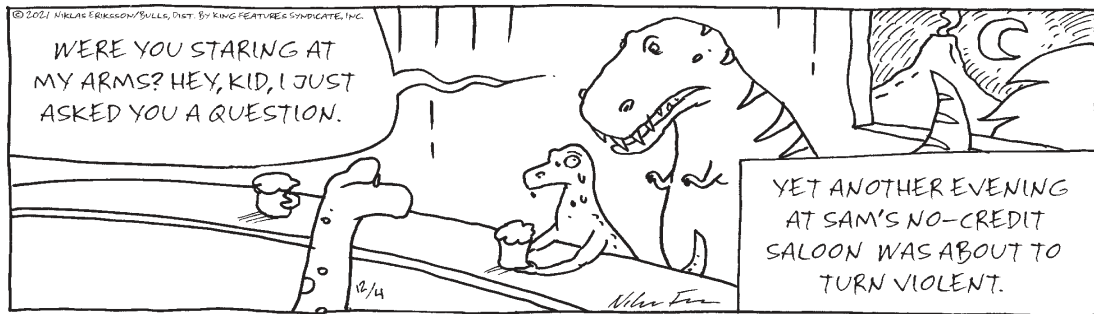
Non Sequitur



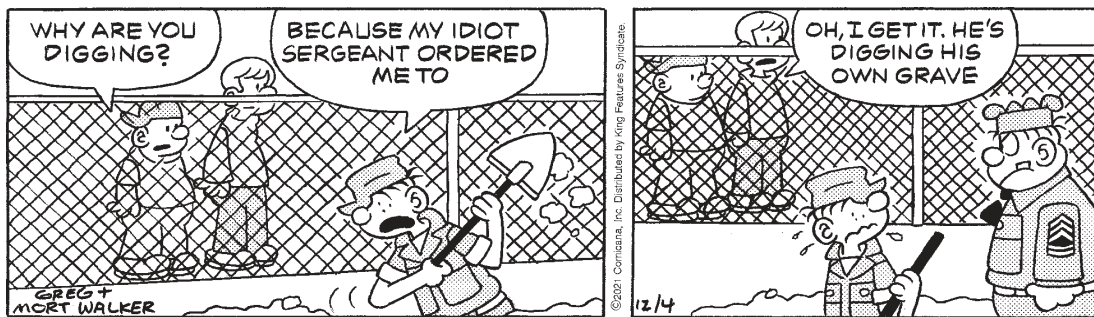
Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12					13					14		
15					16					17		
18					19				20			
			21	22			23	24				
25	26	27					28			29	30	31
32								33				
34					35		36					
			37				38					
39	40	41			42	43			44	45	46	47
48					49				50			
51					52				53			
54					55				56			

ACROSS

- 1 Satchels
- 5 Rebuff
- 9 YouTube upload (Abbr.)
- 12 Nevada neighbor
- 13 — colada
- 14 Epoch
- 15 Actor's quest
- 16 Race place
- 17 Jamie Foxx biopic
- 18 Oscar-winner Moreno
- 19 Old Oldsmobile
- 20 Cookouts, briefly
- 21 Bikini half
- 23 Outback bird
- 25 Training book
- 28 Lustrous
- 32 Singer Travis
- 33 Valuable violin
- 34 Lessened
- 36 Coffers
- 37 Before
- 38 Corn serving
- 39 Swerve
- 42 Bank account amt.
- 44 Pyramid part
- 48 Director DuVernay
- 49 Museo display
- 50 Make — for it (flee)
- 51 Trench
- 52 French perfume brand

- 53 Schreiber of "Ray Donovan"
- 54 Golfer Ernie
- 55 Catch sight of
- 56 Indolent

- 24 "Three Sisters" sister
- 25 1959 Kingston Trio hit
- 26 Wall St. whiz
- 27 Long of "Soul Food"
- 29 Tax-collecting org.
- 30 D.C. baseballer
- 31 Gridiron stats
- 35 Rubbish
- 36 Bloody Mary garnish
- 39 Smoke an e-cig
- 40 Satan's forte
- 41 Vittles
- 43 At the summit of land
- 45 Opera house solo
- 46 Canal zone
- 47 Jealousy
- 49 Citric beverage

DOWN

- 1 Duelist Aaron
- 2 Yours (Fr.)
- 3 John in "Atlas Shrugged"
- 4 Skin moisturizer
- 5 Helix shape
- 6 Prime-time hour
- 7 Cancels
- 8 Inlet
- 9 Part of speech
- 10 Baghdad's land
- 11 Calendar squares
- 20 Turkey brand
- 22 Critic, often

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	R	F		C	R	A	B		S	C	A	M	
T	E	L		H	O	L	E		A	H	A	B	
F	L	O	T	I	L	L	A		L	I	R	A	
				W	A	V	E		T	A	P	E	S
A	R	E	T	E		M	A	I	M				
M	A	R	E		F	A	N	C	I	F	U	L	
I	R	E		S	O	R	T	S		L	S	U	
D	E	D	I	C	A	T	E		B	O	E	R	
				D	A	M	S		P	A	U	S	E
B	E	G	I	N		H	E	R	R				
O	S	L	O		F	L	O	C	K	I	N	G	
A	S	E	C		L	O	L	A		S	E	A	
S	O	N	Y		U	L	A	N		H	E	H	

12-4

CRYPTOQUIP

D V N R H U L Q V H F U E N S X E ' R
M K E S K B E N X H D L K J H K
O K F E Y Y E K Q W H F O U V R V K R V E B
X V H N L K J : J N V J M V V K - V H N .
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN ACTORS CRUISE AND HANKS WERE KIDS, WHAT COULD YOU HAVE OBVIOUSLY CALLED THEM? TOM BOYS.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals W

STARS AND STRIPES

OPINION

Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher
Lt. Col. Marci Hoffman, Europe commander
John Rodriguez, Europe chief of staff
Lt. Col. Michael Kerschbaum, Pacific commander
Michael Ryan, Pacific chief of staff

EDITORIAL

Terry Leonard, Editor
leonard.terry@stripes.com

Robert H. Reid, Senior Managing Editor
reid.robert@stripes.com

Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation
moores.sean@stripes.com

BUREAU STAFF

Europe/Mideast

Erik Slavin, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief
slavin.erik@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9350; DSN (314)583.9350

Pacific

Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief
kidd.aaron@stripes.com
+81.42.552.2511 ext. 88380; DSN (315)227.7380

Washington

Joseph Cacchioli, Washington Bureau Chief
cacchioli.joseph@stripes.com
(+1)(202)886-0033

Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
bowers.brian@stripes.com

CIRCULATION

Mideast

David Schultz, District Manager
schultz.david@stripes.com
xsscirculation@stripes.com
+49(0)152.5672.5036; DSN (314)583-9111

Europe

Karen Lewis, Community Engagement Manager
lewis.karen@stripes.com
memberservices@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9090; DSN (314)583.9090

Pacific

Mari Mori, customerhelp@stripes.com
+81-3 6385.3171; DSN (315)227.7333

CONTACT US

Washington

tel: (+1)202.886.0003
633 3rd St. NW, Suite 116, Washington, DC 20001-3050

Reader letters

letters@stripes.com

Additional contacts

stripes.com/contactus

OMBUDSMAN

Ernie Gates

The Stars and Stripes ombudsman protects the free flow of news and information, reporting any attempts by the military or other authorities to undermine the newspaper's independence. The ombudsman also responds to concerns and questions from readers, and monitors coverage for fairness, accuracy, timeliness and balance. The ombudsman welcomes comments from readers, and can be contacted by email at ombudsman@stripes.com, or by phone at 202.886.0003.

Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) is published week-days (except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA. Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. This newspaper is authorized by the Department of Defense for members of the military services overseas. However, the contents of Stars and Stripes are unofficial, and are not to be considered as the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government. As a DOD newspaper, Stars and Stripes may be distributed through official channels and use appropriated funds for distribution to remote locations where overseas DOD personnel are located.

The appearance of advertising in this publication does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense or Stars and Stripes of the products or services advertised. Products or services advertised shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

© Stars and Stripes 2021

stripes.com

Shadow war in space is heating up fast

By JOSH ROGIN

The Washington Post

When Russia blows up a satellite in space with a missile (as it did last month), or when China tests a new hypersonic missile (as it did in October), the ongoing arms race in space leaps into the news. But in between these “Sputnik”-like moments, outside the public’s view, the United States and its adversaries are battling in space every day.

While Washington officials and experts warn of the risks of an arms race in space, the United States’ adversaries are constantly conducting operations against U.S. satellites that skirt the line between intelligence operations and acts of war. The pace of conflict is intensifying, according to a top Space Force general, who told me that China could overtake the United States to become the top power in space by the end of the decade.

“The threats are really growing and expanding every single day. And it’s really an evolution of activity that’s been happening for a long time,” Gen. David Thompson, the Space Force’s first vice chief of space operations, told me in an interview on the sidelines of the recent Halifax International Security Forum. “We’re really at a point now where there’s a whole host of ways that our space systems can be threatened.”

Right now, Space Force is dealing with what Thompson calls “reversible attacks” on U.S. government satellites (meaning attacks that don’t permanently damage the satellites) “every single day.” Both China and Russia are regularly attacking U.S. satellites with non-kinetic means, including lasers, radio frequency jammers and cyber attacks, he said.

Thompson repeatedly declined to comment on whether China or Russia has attacked a U.S. military satellite in a way that did permanent or significant damage, saying that would be classified if it happened. The Chinese military is quickly deploying ground-based systems for doing battle in space, such as lasers that can damage nosy U.S. intelligence community satellites, which could be considered an act of war.

“The Chinese are actually well ahead [of Russia],” Thompson said. “They’re fielding operational systems at an incredible rate.”

Both the Russians and the Chinese are working on satellites that can attack other satellites, he said. For some time now there have been reports that China was developing a satellite that could claw another satellite or grab one with a robotic arm or a grappling hook. The Chinese government has several reasons to want to disable U.S. satellites, which have been useful in revealing concentration camps built to intern Uyghur Muslims and new Chinese nuclear missile silo fields.

In 2019, Russia deployed a small satellite into an orbit so close to a U.S. “national security satellite” that the U.S. government didn’t know whether it was attacking or not, Thompson said. Then, the Russian satellite backed away and conducted a weapons test. It released a small target and then shot it with a projectile.

“It maneuvered close, it maneuvered dangerously, it maneuvered threateningly so that they were coming close enough that there was a concern of collision,” he said. “So clearly, the Russians were sending us a message.”

China is building its own version of satellite-based global positioning systems, said

Thompson. That’s in addition to the “couple of hundred” intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance satellites China has now deployed to watch over any part of the globe. China is also putting satellites into space at twice the rate of the United States, meaning that if nothing changes on our end, China will surpass the United States in capability in space in a few years, he estimated.

“We are still the best in the world, clearly in terms of capability. They’re catching up quickly,” he said. “We should be concerned by the end of this decade if we don’t adapt.”

While China is quickly weaponizing space, its government points fingers at the United States, claiming that Washington is the diplomatic stumbling block. There are reports that the Biden administration is reaching out to Beijing to establish new negotiations for a nuclear arms control, as well as international norms for cyberspace and space, but U.S. officials say that China won’t meaningfully engage.

The U.S. military is trying to speed up the procurement and deployment of space assets by creating structures like the Space Rapid Capabilities Office and the Space Development Agency, he said. Thompson’s idea is to deploy a large number of relatively low-cost satellites in constellations that increase the resiliency of U.S. space assets if they come under attack.

Conventional thinking about how to deter an enemy from attacking on the ground, by sea or in the air doesn’t apply to space. New doctrines and norms for space need to be established, mostly by diplomats. That work will take years. Meanwhile, the arms race in space is heating up, and the U.S. risks losing it if it doesn’t recognize this reality.

US must respond to Iranian attack on Al Tanf base

By THOMAS SPOEHR

The Heritage Foundation

In October, an Iranian militia group calling themselves the “Allies of Syria” launched five suicide drones at the only publicly acknowledged U.S. base in Syria, Al Tanf, home to more than 200 troops. Thanks largely to a timely warning from Israel, there were no casualties.

Noting that the attack was “coordinated and deliberate” Central Command spokesman Capt. Bill Urban said that the U.S. would respond “at a time and place of our choosing.” Over 30 days later, that response has yet to come.

This failure to act signals a lack of U.S. resolve. Worse, it invites further attacks on U.S. forces throughout the region.

A small dusty base at a key road intersection in southeastern Syria, Al Tanf is the center of U.S. efforts to train and support friendly Syrian militias. The drones attacking the base Oct. 20 reportedly carried a toxic mixture of high explosives, shrapnel and ball bearings. Only two of the drones exploded. The others were examined and identified as Iranian-made. That analysis later proved unnecessary, when Iran trumpeted the attack as a “major success” and suggested more strikes will follow.

Just a few days ago, it was reported the strike was ordered in response to Israeli airstrikes in Syria. Israel routinely strikes Iranian militia forces and facilities near its border with Syria.

But here’s the problem: A U.S. official stated that the Iranians were reportedly reluc-

tant to attack Israel for fear of retaliation. Let that sink in for a moment. The “Allies of Syria” opted not to attack Israel because they knew such a move would result in an immediate reaction. Instead, they struck an American base.

With neighbors like Lebanon and Syria, Israel lives in an admittedly tough neighborhood. To survive Israel has learned that when you are hit, you hit back immediately, otherwise your adversary will take your lack of response for weakness.

Israel has also learned that it doesn’t matter whether your adversary’s punch doesn’t land. Even if you manage — via luck or intervention — to avoid injury, the fact that your opponent tried to kill you should be treated the same as an attack that succeeds in causing casualties.

Today, there is much talk in Washington about deterrence. Most of those discussions revolve around China and Taiwan. Up for debate are questions such as whether it is better to be explicit in our intent to help defend Taiwan, or whether China could be deterred by tools such as diplomatic levers or economic sanctions (hint: It won’t). Often overlooked is the fact that deterrence operates on multiple levels.

There is the long-range, strategic deterrence conducted to persuade another state (say, China or North Korea) not to start a war. But there is also day-to-day deterrence that sends the important message that a country and its armed forces are not to be trifled with.

When you make potential adversaries understand that if they attack an American position or troop, they will regret it, you effectively give deployed troops another layer of armor.

The U.S. has done this in the past. Just two days after an Iranian militia group killed two U.S. troops and one British service member in a rocket attack in 2020, the Pentagon responded by killing five militia members and destroying enemy weapons facilities in Iraq. Message sent.

Building day-to-day deterrence is not easy nor for the faint of heart; it takes years of resolute action to build a solid reputation.

That standing can also quickly evaporate. In 2016, when Iran captured and humiliated 10 American sailors in the Persian Gulf and the U.S. humbly pleaded for their release, our reputation suffered.

We are now seeing this play out again with the Iranian militia’s attack on Al Tanf. Reportedly out of fear of antagonizing Tehran and thereby dousing its hopes to resurrect the Iran nuclear talks, the Biden administration is choosing to ignore a deliberate attack on one of our bases.

Failing to respond to that attack places the thousands of U.S. forces in the Middle East at increased risk and further weakens a reputation that is already in question after the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Former Secretary of Defense James Mattis is remembered for saying he wanted the Marine Corps to exemplify the statement, “no better friend, no worse enemy.”

That is a worthy goal for the armed forces as a whole. It’s past time to send a message that, if you attack a U.S. base, you will pay a price.

Retired U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Thomas Spoehr is the director of The Heritage Foundation’s Center for National Defense.

SCOREBOARD

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Schedule

Friday's games
SOUTHWEST
 UTSA (11-1) vs. W. Kentucky (8-4), Conference USA Championship at San Antonio
FAR WEST
 Utah (9-3) vs. Oregon (10-2), Pac-12 Championship at Las Vegas
Saturday's games
SOUTH
 Louisiana-Lafayette (11-1) vs. Appalachian State (10-2), Sun Belt Championship at Lafayette, La.
 Jackson State (10-1) vs. Prairie View (7-4), SWAC Championship at Jackson, Miss.
 Alabama (11-1) vs. Georgia (12-0), SEC Championship at Atlanta
 Wake Forest (10-2) vs. Pittsburgh (10-2), ACC Championship at Charlotte, N.C.
MIDWEST
 N. Illinois (8-4) vs. Kent State (7-5), MAC

Championship at Detroit
 Cincinnati (12-0) vs. Houston (11-1), American Athletic Conference Championship at Cincinnati
 Iowa (10-2) vs. Michigan (11-1), Big Ten Championship at Indianapolis
SOUTHWEST
 Oklahoma State (11-1) vs. Baylor (10-2), Big 12 Championship at Arlington, Texas
FAR WEST
 San Diego State (11-1) vs. Utah State (9-3), Mountain West Championship at Carson, Calif.
 Southern California (4-7) at California (4-7)

NCAA FCS playoffs

Second Round
Saturday's games
 Incarnate Word at Sam Houston
 UT-Martin at Montana State

S. Illinois at North Dakota State
 Kennesaw State at ETSU
 Holy Cross at Villanova
 South Dakota State at Sacramento State
 E. Washington at Montana
 SE Louisiana at James Madison

NCAA Division II playoffs

Quarterfinals
Saturday's games
 Angelo State vs. Colorado Mines
 NW Missouri State vs. Ferris State
 Shepherd vs. Kutztown
 Bowie State vs. Valdosta State

NCAA Division III playoffs

Quarterfinals
Saturday's games
 Mary Hardin-Baylor vs. Linfield
 Muhlenberg vs. Mount Union
 Rensselaer vs. North Central
 Central (Iowa) vs. Wis.-Whitewater

PRO FOOTBALL

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	8	4	0	.667	336	190
Buffalo	7	4	0	.636	326	182
Miami	5	7	0	.417	234	279
N.Y. Jets	3	8	0	.273	199	334

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tennessee	8	4	0	.667	304	290
Indianapolis	6	6	0	.500	340	283
Houston	2	9	0	.182	164	292
Jacksonville	2	9	0	.182	173	283

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	8	3	0	.727	263	240
Cincinnati	7	4	0	.636	309	226
Pittsburgh	5	5	1	.500	224	267
Cleveland	6	6	0	.500	254	267

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	7	4	0	.636	281	250
Denver	6	5	0	.545	228	196
L.A. Chargers	6	5	0	.545	273	293
Las Vegas	6	5	0	.545	259	295

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Dallas	7	4	0	.636	326	250
Washington	5	6	0	.455	229	282
Philadelphia	5	7	0	.417	304	273
N.Y. Giants	4	7	0	.364	202	253

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	8	3	0	.727	347	253
Atlanta	5	6	0	.455	199	302
New Orleans	5	6	0	.455	257	249
Carolina	5	7	0	.417	236	253

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Green Bay	9	3	0	.750	283	242
Minnesota	5	6	0	.455	281	276
Chicago	4	7	0	.364	179	254
Detroit	0	10	1	.045	174	289

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Arizona	9	2	0	.818	310	202
L.A. Rams	7	4	0	.636	299	263
San Francisco	6	5	0	.545	280	248
Seattle	3	8	0	.273	209	226

Thursday's game

Dallas at New Orleans

Sunday's games

Arizona at Chicago
 Indianapolis at Houston
 L.A. Chargers at Cincinnati
 Minnesota at Detroit
 N.Y. Giants at Miami
 Philadelphia at N.Y. Jets
 Tampa Bay at Atlanta
 Jacksonville at L.A. Rams
 Washington at Las Vegas
 Baltimore at Pittsburgh
 San Francisco at Seattle
 Denver at Kansas City
Open: Cleveland, Tennessee, Carolina, Green Bay

Monday's game

New England at Buffalo

Thursday, Dec. 9

Pittsburgh at Minnesota

Sunday, Dec. 12

Atlanta at Carolina
 Baltimore at Cleveland
 Dallas at Washington

Jacksonville at Tennessee
 Las Vegas at Kansas City
 New Orleans at N.Y. Jets
 Seattle at Houston
 Detroit at Denver
 N.Y. Giants at L.A. Chargers
 Buffalo at Tampa Bay
 San Francisco at Cincinnati
 Chicago at Green Bay
Open: Indianapolis, Miami, New England, Philadelphia

Monday, Dec. 13

L.A. Rams at Arizona

NFL Injury Report

NEW YORK — The National Football League injury report, as provided by the league (DNP: did not practice; LIMITED: limited participation; FULL: Full participation):

SUNDAY

ARIZONA CARDINALS at CHICAGO BEARS — ARIZONA: DNP: OL Kelvin Beachum (NIR-resting player), OL Rodney Hudson (NIR-resting player), OL Justin Pugh (calf). LIMITED: WR DeAndre Hopkins (hamstring), QB Kyle Murray (ankle), S James Wiggins (knee). FULL: OL Max Garcia (knee). **CHICAGO:** DNP: DE Mario Edwards Jr. (ribs), WR Marquise Goodwin (foot/ribs), DT Akiem Hicks (ankle), LB Sam Kamara (concussion), TE Cole Kmet (groin), WR Allen Robinson II (hamstring), LB Roquan Smith (hamstring). LIMITED: QB Justin Fields (ribs). FULL: DB Tashaun Gipson Sr. (chest).

BALTIMORE RAVENS at PITTSBURGH STEELERS — BALTIMORE: DNP: CB Anthony Averett (shoulder/ankle), TE Nick Boyle (knee), C Bradley Bozeman (shin laceration), WR Devin Duvernay (thigh), OLB Justin Houston (NIR-resting player), OL Patrick Mekari (ankle), T Cedric Ogbuehi (thigh), FB Patrick Ricard (foot/thigh), CB Chris Westry (thigh), CB Tavon Young (illness). LIMITED: WR Miles Boykin (finger), DT Calais Campbell (concussion), LB Patrick Queen (ribs), CB Jimmy Smith (neck). **PITTSBURGH:** DNP: OL Zach Banner (illness), CB Joe Haden (foot), QB Ben Roethlisberger (pectoral/right shoulder), LB Robert Spillane (knee), OL Trai Turner (coaches decision). LIMITED: WR Chase Claypool (toe). FULL: TE Pat Freiermuth (concussion), LS Christian Kuntz (hip).

DENVER BRONCOS at KANSAS CITY CHIEFS — DENVER: DNP: RB Melvin Gordon III (shoulder/hip), T Calvin Anderson (ankle/knee), TE Eric Saubert (ankle), G Dalton Risner (back), DE Shelby Harris (ankle), CB Ronald Darby (illness). LIMITED: G/C Quinn Meinerz (knee), ILB Baron Browning (back), T Bobby Massie (ankle), S Kareem Jackson (neck), WF Tyrie Cleveland (hamstring), OLB Bradley Chubb (ankle). FULL: S Caden Sterns (shoulder), DL Mike Purcell (thumb), QB Teddy Bridgewater (tibia). **KANSAS CITY CHIEFS:** DNP: CB Rashad Fenton (knee), WR Mecole Hardman (not injury related), WR Tyreek Hill (not injury related - personal matter). LIMITED: T Lucas Niang (ribs). FULL: FB Michael Burton (pectoral), CB Chris Lammons (hip), G Kyle Long (knee), LB Dorian O'Daniel (shoulder), CB L'Jarius Sneed (knee).

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS at HOUSTON TEXANS — INDIANAPOLIS: DNP: DT DeForest Buckner (knee, foot), TE Jack Doyle (knee), C Ryan Kelly (knee), LB Darius Leonard (ankle, wrist), G Quenton Nelson (ankle), S Andrew Sendejo (calf). LIMITED: T Eric Fisher (knee). **HOUSTON:** DNP: WR Danny Amendola (knee), S Terrence Brooks (hamstring), WR Chris Conley (illness), WR Brandin Cooks (illness), RB David Johnson (illness, thigh), C Justin McCray (concussion), C Cole Toner (illness), DE DeMarcus Walker (hamstring), QB Deshaun Watson (not injury related - personal matter). LIMITED: DE Jonathan Greenard (foot), DE Jacob Martin (shin).

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS at LOS ANGELES RAMS — JACKSONVILLE: DNP: DT Malcolm Brown (toe), CB Shaquill Griffin (concussion), DT Davon Hamilton (knee), LB Myles Jack (knee), LB Damien Wilson (ankle). LIMITED: LB Dakota Allen (shoulder), CB Tyson Campbell (shoulder), RB James Robinson (heel, knee). FULL: P Logan Cooke (left knee). **LOS ANGELES RAMS:** DNP: RB Darrell Henderson (thigh), CB David Long (illness). LIMITED: WR Odell Beckham (hip), WR Ben Skowronek (back). **LOS ANGELES CHARGERS at CINCINNATI BENGALS — LOS ANGELES CHARGERS:** DNP: S Alohi Gilman (quadricep), CB Asante Samuel Jr. (concussion). LIMITED: G Matt Feiler (ankle), DE Trey Marshall (ankle). FULL: CB Tevaughn Campbell (toe), LB Kenneth Murray Jr. (ankle). **CIN-**

CINNATI: DNP: HB Chris Evans (ankle), C Trey Hopkins (ankle), DE Khalid Kareem (illness), CB Darius Phillips (knee/calf), OT Riley Reiff (ankle), WR Auden Tate (calf), WR Mike Thomas (illness).

MINNESOTA VIKINGS at DETROIT LIONS — MINNESOTA: DNP: LB Anthony Barr (knee/hamstring), S Camryn Bynum (ankle), LB Ryan Connelly (quadricep) RB Dalvin Cook (shoulder), T Christian Darrisaw (ankle). LIMITED: CB Mackensie Alexander (ribs), CB Bashaud Breeland (groin), LB Eric Kendricks (biceps), DB Sheldon Richardson (knee), LB Nick Vigil (ribs), DT Armon Watts (knee). **DETROIT:** DNP: OLB Trey Flowers (knee), WR KhaDarel Hodge (illness), CB Bobby Price (shoulder), LB Jalen Reeves-Maybin (shoulder), T Penei Sewell (illness), RB D'Andre Swift (shoulder). LIMITED: WR Trinity Benson (knee), DE Michael Brockers (knee), T Matt Nelson (ankle). FULL: G Halapoulivaati Vaitai (concussion).

NEW YORK GIANTS at MIAMI DOLPHINS — NEW YORK GIANTS: DNP: LB Trent Harris (ankle), FB Cullen Gillaspia (calf), DB Adoree Jackson (quadricep), WR John Ross (illness), TE Kyle Rudolph (ankle), WR Sterling Shepard (quadricep), TE Kaden Smith (knee), WR Kadarius Toney (oblique/quadricep). LIMITED: QB Daniel Jones (neck). **MIAMI:** DNP: G/T Jesse Davis (NIR-resting player), CB Trill Williams (hamstring). LIMITED: CB Xavien Howard (NIR-resting player), G Rob Hunt (back), S Brandon Jones (ankle/elbow), CB Byron Jones (NIR-resting player), RB Phillip Lindsay (ankle), LB Jaelan Phillips (hip), TE Adam Shaheen (knee). FULL: S Jevon Holland (ankle), WR Jaylen Waddle (glute), WR Preston Williams (knee).

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES at NEW YORK JETS — PHILADELPHIA: DNP: DT Fletcher Cox (not injury related - resting player, back), RB Jordan Howard (knee), RB Boston Scott (illness), WR DeVonta Smith (illness). LIMITED: DE Derek Barnett (ribs), LB T.J. Edwards (ankle), QB Jalen Hurts (ankle), DE Taron Jackson (neck), T Lane Johnson (not injury related - resting player), C Jason Kelce (not injury related - resting player, knee), RB Miles Sanders (ankle), DE Josh Sweat (knee). **NEW YORK JETS:** DNP: WR Corey Davis (groin), DT Forlorunso Fatukasi (back), DT Sheldon Rankins (knee), TE Trevon Wesco (ankle). LIMITED: DE John Franklin-Myers (hip), T Morgan Moses (knee), LB Quincy Williams (calf). FULL: QB Zach Wilson (knee).

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS at SEATTLE SEAHAWKS — SAN FRANCISCO: DNP: DL Nick Bosa (NIR), LB Dre Greenlaw (groin), CB Davontae Harris (concussion), C Alex Mack (NIR), RB Elijah Mitchell (NIR), WR Deebo Samuel (groin), RB Trey Sermon (ankle), LB Fred Warner (hamstring), T Trent Williams (NIR). LIMITED: RB Ja'Mycaal Hasty (ankle), DL Maurice Hurst (calf), DL Kentavious Street (wrist). **SEATTLE:** DNP: LB Benson Mayowa (knee), G Gabe Jackson (NIR), G Damien Lewis (elbow), T Duane Brown (NIR), T Jamarco Jones (back), CB Tre Brown (knee), WR DK Metcalf (foot), RB Rashaad Penny (hamstring), LB Carlos Dunlop II (NIR). LIMITED: RB Alex Collins (abdomen), RB Travis Homer (calf), SS Jamal Adams (groin), LB Jordyn Brooks (hip), CB D.J. Reed (knee), T Brandon Shell (shoulder). FULL: CB Sidney Jones IV (shoulder), LB Cody Barton (quadricep).

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS at ATLANTA FALCONS — TAMPA BAY: DNP: WR Antonio Brown (ankle), WR Jaelon Darden (concussion), S Mike Edwards (knee), DE William Gholston (wrist), G Aaron Stinnie (knee). LIMITED: G Ali Marpet (abdomen), DT Vita Vea (knee), LB Devin White (quadricep). FULL: CB Jamel Dean (shoulder), LB Jason Pierre-Paul (shoulder). **ATLANTA:** DNP: DE Jonathan Bullard (ankle), DT Grady Jarrett (not injury related - resting player), RB Cordarrelle Patterson (not injury related - resting player). FULL: LB Deion Jones (shoulder), CB Kendall Sheffield (hamstring).

WASHINGTON FOOTBALL TEAM at LAS VEGAS RAIDERS — WASHINGTON: DNP: S Landon Collins (foot), C Tyler Larsen (knee), RB J.D. McKissic (concussion), G Wes Schweitzer (ankle), CB Benjamin St-Jeste (concussion). LIMITED: RB Antonio Gibson (shin), WR Curtis Samuel (groin), G Brandon Scherff (knee), TE Ricky Seals-Jones (hip), TE Logan Thomas (hamstring). **LAS VEGAS:** DNP: DE Carl Nassib (knee), LB Patrick Onwuasor (hamstring), TE Darren Waller (back, knee). LIMITED: WR DeSean Jackson (calf), LB Nick Kwiatkoski (ankle), CB Keisean Nixon (ankle). FULL: CB Brandon Facyson (concussion), DT Johnathan Hankins (shoulder), WR Zay Jones (shoulder), LB Marquel Lee (ankle), G John Simpson (ribs, knee).

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Wednesday's men's scores

EAST
 Boston U. 56, George Washington 54
 Bowling Green 78, Duquesne 70
 Brown 73, Mass.-Lowell 63
 CCSU 73, Holy Cross 67
 Fordham 68, St. Francis Brooklyn 46
 Hofstra 81, Princeton 77
 Iona 78, Marist 71
 Loyola (Md.) 78, Chicago St. 64
 Miami 63, Penn St. 58
 Navy 75, William & Mary 56
 Providence 72, Texas Tech 68
 Rhode Island 64, Harvard 57
 Saint Joseph's 79, Binghamton 57
 Seton Hall 85, Wagner 63
 St. Bonaventure 93, Coppin St. 81
 St. Francis (Pa.) 93, Bucknell 67
 Stony Brook 80, American U. 57
 Temple 73, La Salle 57
 UMB 98, Columbia 60
 Vermont 83, Dartmouth 65
 Villanova 71, Penn 56
 Virginia Tech 62, Maryland 58
 Yale 82, Lehigh 72

SOUTH
 Appalachian St. 90, Boyce 29
 Auburn 85, UCF 68
 Coastal Carolina 80, South Carolina 56
 FAU 83, Stetson 73
 FIU 77, Florida Gulf Coast 61
 Florida A&M 76, Fort Valley State 63
 Georgia 82, Memphis 79
 LSU 66, Ohio 51
 Louisiana Tech 87, Texas Southern 60
 Louisiana-Monroe 104, Centenary 67
 Mercer 73, Kennesaw St. 71
 Middle Tennessee 73, UT Martin 61
 Morehead St. 59, Georgia Southern 51
 NC Central 67, SC-Upstate 65
 NC State 104, Nebraska 100, 4OT
 Norfolk St. 74, UNC-Wilmington 69
 North Alabama 72, MVSU 58

North Carolina 72, Michigan 51
 Richmond 73, Wofford 64
 South Alabama 85, Southern Miss. 55
 Troy 81, Rust College 48
 UAB 70, ETSU 56
 UNC-Asheville 65, The Citadel 58
 W. Carolina 102, Warren Wilson 47
 Winthrop 82, Hartford 75
 Wiscconsin 70, Georgia Tech 66

MIDWEST
 Akron 88, Marshall 86
 Bradley 71, N. Iowa 69
 Cincinnati 59, Miami (Ohio) 58
 Dayton 93, Alabama St. 54
 Illinois St. 79, Missouri St. 74, OT
 Iowa St. 83, Ark.-Pine Bluff 64
 Kansas St. 71, Albany (NY) 43
 Loyola Chicago 88, Indiana St. 76
 Michigan St. 73, Louisville 64
 N. Illinois 55, E. Illinois 45
 S. Illinois 54, Evansville 52
 Texas A&M-CC 83, Rio Grande 77
 W. Illinois 93, Ball St. 80
 Xavier 78, Cent. Michigan 45

SOUTHWEST
 Abilene Christian 108, Dallas 65
 Arkansas 97, Cent. Arkansas 60
 Incarnate Word 93, Our Lady of the Lake 66
 Oklahoma 74, Florida 67
 SMU 83, UNLV 64
 Stephen F. Austin 90, Lincoln (CA) 54
 Wichita St. 60, Oklahoma St. 51

FAR WEST
 Colorado St. 86, UALR 55
 Dixie St. 99, Bethesda 67
 Fresno St. 63, San Diego 43
 Oregon 71, UC Riverside 65
 Seattle 78, McNeese St. 62
 Southern Cal 93, Utah 73
 UC Davis 63, Pacific 57
 UCLA 73, Colorado 61
 Utah Valley 72, BYU 65, OT
 Washington St. 51, Arizona St. 29

DEALS

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL Major League Baseball American League

BOSTON RED SOX — Agreed to terms with C Kevin Plawewski on a one-year contract.

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Agreed to terms with INF Leury Garcia on a three-year contract.

DETROIT TIGERS — Agreed to terms with INF Javier Baez on a six-year contract.

KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Agreed to terms with RHP Taylor Clarke on a one-year contract.

LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Agreed to terms with RHP Raisel Iglesias on a four-year contract. Designated RHP Sam Selman for assignment.

MINNESOTA TWINS — Agreed to terms with OF Byron Buxton on a seven-year contract. Agreed to terms with RHP Dylan Bundy on a one-year contract with a club option for 2023.

SEATTLE MARINERS — Agreed to terms with RHP Andres Munoz on a four-year contract with options for 2026, 2027 and 2028.

TAMPA BAY RAYS — Agreed to terms with RHP Corey Kluber on a one-year contract.

TEXAS RANGERS — Agreed to terms with 2B Marcus Semien on a seven-year contract and INF Corey Seager on a ten-year contract. Agreed to terms with RHP Jon Gray on a four-year contract.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Agreed to terms with RHP Kevin Gausman on a five-year contract and RHP Yimi Garcia on a two-year contract.

National League
ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Agreed to terms with RHP Mark Melancon on a two-year contract.

CHICAGO CUBS — Agreed to terms with C Yan Gomes on a two-year contract with a club option for 2024. Agreed to terms with OF Clint Frazier and OF Michael Hermosillo on one-year contracts. Agreed to terms with RHP Marcus Stroman on a three-year contract.

LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Agreed to terms with INF/OF Chris Taylor on a four-year contract. Designated INF Sheldon Neuse for assignment.

MIAMI MARLINS — Agreed to terms with OF Avisail Garcia on a four-year contract with an option for 2026.

NEW YORK METS — Agreed to terms with RHP Max Scherzer on a three-year contract and INF Eduardo Escobar on a two-year contract with a club option for 2024.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Named Kevin Gregg vice president of baseball communications. Agreed to terms with RHP Corey Knebel and INF Johan Camargo on one-year contracts. Designated RHP Adonis Medina for assignment.

PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Agreed to terms with C Roberto Perez on a one-year contract.

SAN DIEGO PADRES — Agreed to terms with RHP Luis Garcia on a two-year contract. Agreed to terms with RHP Robert Suarez on a one-year contract.

SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS — Agreed to terms with LHP Alex Wood on a two-year contract.

BASKETBALL National Basketball Association

NBA — Forfeited Chicago and Miami their next available second-round draft pick for violating rules governing early free agency discussions.

FOOTBALL National Football League

BALTIMORE RAVENS — Signed DBs Robert Jackson and Blake Countess to the practice squad. Placed K Jake Verity on the practice squad injured reserve.

CHICAGO BEARS — Signed DB Dee Virgin to the practice squad.

DALLAS COWBOYS — Activated WR Amari Cooper from the reserve/COVID-19 list.

DENVER BRONCOS — Placed C Brett Jones on the reserve/COVID-19 list.

DETROIT LIONS — Signed LB Curtis Bolton to the practice squad. Waived DE Da'Shawn Hand from injured reserve with a settlement. Released T Darrin Paulo from the practice squad.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Designated DB Khari Willis to return from injured reserve to practice.

LAS VEGAS RAIDERS — Signed LS Carson Tinker.

LOS ANGELES RAMS — Designated LB Justin Hollins to return from injured reserve to practice.

MIAMI DOLPHINS — Designated WR Devante Parker and OL Greg Mancz to return from injured reserve to practice.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS — Designated

NHL

Lemieux sticking with Penguins

Franchise icon says he'll still be a force despite sale of team

BY MARK BELKO
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

For nearly 40 years, Mario Lemieux has been the heart and soul of the Pittsburgh Penguins. And he's vowing that won't change even as Fenway Sports Group takes over the team.

In his first comments since news broke that FSG would be taking a controlling interest in the Penguins, Lemieux made it clear that he still will stay involved.

"As the Penguins enter a new chapter, I will continue to be as active and engaged with the team as I always have been and look forward to continuing to build on our success with our incoming partners at FSG," Lemieux said in a statement Monday.

He added that FSG has "an organizational philosophy that mirrors the approach that worked so well" during the 22 years he and California billionaire Ron Burkle have owned the team.

FSG and the Penguins formally announced the transaction Monday after the Boston sports conglomerate signed a purchasing agreement to take control of the franchise.

Lemieux and Burkle, who won three Stanley Cup championships together as co-owners, "will remain part of the ownership group and will be closely aligned with FSG," according to the statement. Both are expected to have minority stakes in the team.

Under the arrangement, FSG will be the general partner and have control over the team and Lemieux and Burkle will be limited partners. The exact stakes each will hold has not been divulged.

The transaction still must be approved by the National Hockey



Pittsburgh Penguins co-owners Mario Lemieux, right, and Ron Burkle ride in the Stanley Cup victory parade on June 14, 2017 in Pittsburgh. The Penguins were sold this week to Fenway Sports Group.

"I will continue to be as active and engaged with the team as I always have been and look forward to continuing to build on our success."

Mario Lemieux

Former Penguins owner in a statement after selling the team to FSG

League board of governors. That potentially could happen at its meeting next week. Closing is expected before the end of the year.

According to the release, Lemieux, a Pittsburgh sports icon who guided the Penguins to two Stanley Cup championships as a player, "will continue his role guiding hockey operations for the organization."

As expected, the team's core management also will remain in

place. That includes CEO David Morehouse, chief operating officer Kevin Acklin, coach Mike Sullivan, general manager Ron Hextall and president of hockey operations Brian Burke.

The deal is valued at \$900 million, according to a source close to the Penguins, setting the benchmark for NHL franchises.

It is far above the sale prices for the Arizona Coyotes and the Carolina Hurricanes — valued at \$300 million and \$425 million, respectively — in recent years. The Penguins are currently valued at \$650 million by Forbes.

In the announcement, FSG chairman Tom Werner said the new ownership "will work diligently to continue building on the remarkable Penguins' tradition of championships and exciting play."

"We are particularly excited to welcome Mario Lemieux and Ron Burkle to FSG and have the utmost respect for all they have done to build the Penguins into the perennially successful franchise we know today," he said.

In his own statement, Burkle stressed that the Penguins "will be in good hands with FSG, and Mario and I are here to support them,

committed as much as we've always been to the success of the franchise."

As part of the deal, FSG also will gain control of PPG Paints Arena, which is owned by the Pittsburgh-Allegheny County Sports & Exhibition Authority (SEA), and the development rights to the 28-acre former Civic Arena site across the street in the lower Hill District.

In addition to the NHL, the SEA also must approve the transaction. That could happen this month as well.

"I think it's good for the city. I think it's good for the fans. The sooner we get it done and get it concluded, it will be better for everyone," said state Senator and SEA board chairman Wayne Fontana.

"I personally will be thrilled to see the new ownership come in and take an additional perspective on how to be a winner, how to maintain a winning team, and how to make that development of the 28 acres even better. A new perspective would be great," he added.

FSG, Morehouse said in a statement, "brings everything we could ask for in an ownership partner to help continue the historic success of the Pittsburgh Penguins."

Lemieux and Burkle have co-owned the franchise since 1999, when they bought it in bankruptcy. Neither has drawn a salary since taking over the team.

FSG, valued at more than \$7 billion, is the owner of the Boston Red Sox, Liverpool Football Club of the English Premier League, Roush Fenway Racing of NASCAR and 80% of the New England Sports Network.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Toronto	24	17	6	1	35	74	52
Florida	22	15	4	3	33	82	60
Tampa Bay	21	12	5	4	28	67	60
Detroit	24	12	9	3	27	67	75
Boston	19	11	8	0	22	57	53
Buffalo	22	8	11	3	19	64	77
Montreal	24	6	16	2	14	55	85
Ottawa	20	4	15	1	9	48	79

Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	23	14	4	5	33	82	57
Carolina	21	15	5	1	31	67	47
N.Y. Rangers	21	14	4	3	31	64	55
Pittsburgh	23	10	8	5	25	65	66
Columbus	20	12	8	0	24	67	65
New Jersey	20	9	7	4	22	59	63
Philadelphia	21	8	9	4	20	50	65
N.Y. Islanders	17	5	10	2	12	32	52

Western Conference

Central Division							
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Minnesota	22	15	6	1	31	83	66
St. Louis	22	12	7	3	27	75	62
Nashville	22	12	9	1	25	64	63
Dallas	20	11	7	2	24	57	56
Winnipeg	22	10	8	4	24	60	61
Colorado	19	11	7	1	23	76	64
Chicago	21	7	12	2	16	45	67
Arizona	23	5	16	2	12	42	82

Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Edmonton	21	16	5	0	32	82	61
Calgary	22	13	4	5	31	72	43
Anaheim	24	13	8	3	29	81	70
San Jose	22	12	9	1	25	60	60
Vegas	22	12	10	0	24	71	70
Los Angeles	21	9	8	4	22	57	59
Seattle	23	8	13	2	18	68	81
Vancouver	24	8	14	2	18	59	76

Wednesday's games

N.Y. Rangers 4, Philadelphia 1
Vancouver 6, Ottawa 2
Toronto 8, Colorado 3
Detroit 4, Seattle 3, SO
Anaheim 6, Vegas 5
Edmonton 5, Pittsburgh 2

Thursday's games

Buffalo at Florida
Chicago at Washington
Colorado at Montreal
Ottawa at Carolina
St. Louis at Tampa Bay
San Jose at N.Y. Islanders
Boston at Nashville
New Jersey at Minnesota
Columbus at Dallas
Calgary at Los Angeles

Friday's games

San Jose at N.Y. Rangers
New Jersey at Winnipeg
Vegas at Arizona
Calgary at Anaheim
Edmonton at Seattle

Saturday's games

St. Louis at Florida
Buffalo at Carolina
Colorado at Ottawa
Columbus at Washington
Montreal at Nashville
N.Y. Islanders at Detroit
Tampa Bay at Boston
Toronto at Minnesota
Chicago at N.Y. Rangers
Pittsburgh at Vancouver

Sunday's games

San Jose at Columbus
Tampa Bay at Philadelphia
Chicago at N.Y. Islanders
Los Angeles at Edmonton
Toronto at Winnipeg
Calgary at Vegas

Scoring leaders

Through Wednesday				
	GP	G	A	PTS
Leon Draisaitl, EDM	21	20	21	41
Connor McDavid, EDM	21	15	25	40
Alex Ovechkin, WSH	23	19	18	37
Nazem Kadri, COL	19	9	20	29
Evgeny Kuznetsov, WSH	23	7	20	27
Mikael Granlund, NSH	22	5	20	25
Kirill Kaprizov, MIN	22	7	18	25
Johnny Gaudreau, CGY	22	9	16	25
John Tavares, TOR	23	11	14	25
Troy Terry, ANA	23	15	10	25
Brad Marchand, BOS	18	9	15	24
Steven Stamkos, TB	20	11	13	24
Matt Duchene, NSH	22	13	11	24
Kyle Connor, WPG	22	14	10	24



A statue of Lemieux, left, stands in front of the PPG Paints Arena. Fenway Sports Group, which purchased the Penguins this week, will also gain control of the arena.

GENE J. PUSKAR/AP

NBA

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Brooklyn	15	6	.714	—
Boston	12	10	.545	3½
New York	11	10	.524	4
Philadelphia	11	11	.500	4½
Toronto	9	13	.409	6½
Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Washington	14	8	.636	—
Miami	13	9	.591	1
Atlanta	12	10	.545	2
Charlotte	13	11	.542	2
Orlando	5	18	.217	9½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	14	8	.636	—
Chicago	14	8	.636	—
Cleveland	12	10	.545	2
Indiana	9	15	.375	6
Detroit	4	17	.190	9½
Western Conference				
Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	11	9	.550	—
Memphis	11	10	.524	½
San Antonio	6	13	.316	4½
New Orleans	6	18	.250	7
Houston	5	16	.238	6½
Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Utah	14	7	.667	—
Portland	11	11	.500	3½
Minnesota	11	11	.500	3½
Denver	10	11	.476	4
Oklahoma City	6	15	.286	8
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	18	3	.857	—
Golden State	18	3	.857	—
L.A. Lakers	12	11	.522	7
L.A. Clippers	11	11	.500	7½
Sacramento	9	14	.391	10

Wednesday's games	
Atlanta 114, Indiana 111	Orlando 108, Denver 103
Washington 115, Minnesota 107	Cleveland 111, Miami 85
Boston 88, Philadelphia 87	Dallas 139, New Orleans 107
Houston 114, Oklahoma City 110	Milwaukee 127, Charlotte 125
Sacramento 124, L.A. Clippers 115	
Thursday's games	
Chicago at New York	Milwaukee at Toronto
Oklahoma City at Memphis	Detroit at Phoenix
San Antonio at Portland	
Friday's games	
Cleveland at Washington	Miami at Indiana
Minnesota at Brooklyn	Philadelphia at Atlanta
Orlando at Houston	New Orleans at Dallas
Boston at Utah	L.A. Clippers at L.A. Lakers
Phoenix at Golden State	
Saturday's games	
Denver at New York	Chicago at Brooklyn
Miami at Milwaukee	Memphis at Dallas
San Antonio at Golden State	Boston at Portland
L.A. Clippers at Sacramento	
Sunday's games	
Utah at Cleveland	Charlotte at Atlanta
Washington at Toronto	New Orleans at Houston

Leaders					
Through Wednesday					
Scoring					
	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Durant, BKN	20	207	120	571	28.6
Curry, GS	20	183	82	556	27.8
Rebounds					
	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Gobert, UTA	21	61	244	305	14.5
Jokic, DEN	16	42	178	220	13.8
Assists					
	G	AST		AVG	
Paul, PHO	21	213		10.1	
Harden, BKN	21	196		9.3	

AROUND THE LEAGUE

Bucks rebound from slow start

After an eight-game win streak, defending champion Milwaukee is no longer languishing below .500

BY NOAH TRISTER
Associated Press

The defending champions are beginning to look the part again.

It wasn't long ago that the Milwaukee Bucks were languishing under .500, but after an eight-game winning streak, they've moved back toward the top of the Eastern Conference standings. Milwaukee's run has been overshadowed a bit by Phoenix's 17-game winning streak and Golden State's 18-3 start to the season. Now, the Bucks — and their conference finals opponents, the Atlanta Hawks — are showing signs that they've shaken off their early struggles.

"At the start of this season, going through some trying times, I think we were all just happy it was at the beginning of the season," guard Jrue Holiday said. "We know how this league goes, how the games go. It's always ebbs and flows. We know that we can make a run at any time."

The Bucks haven't lost a game when Holiday, Giannis Antetokounmpo and Khris Middleton have all played. Holiday missed about two weeks early in the season with a sprained ankle, and when he returned, Milwaukee blew a 21-point lead in a Nov. 5 loss to the Knicks.

When Milwaukee faced Atlanta in a conference finals rematch Nov. 14, the Hawks were on a six-game losing streak and the Bucks entered the game at 6-7 on the season. Atlanta won by 20, the start of a seven-game winning streak that pushed the Hawks back above .500. That run ended Saturday, but Milwaukee hasn't lost since that blowout against Atlanta.

The Bucks' streak began when Middleton returned from an eight-game COVID-related absence Nov. 17. Antetokounmpo scored 47 points in a win over the Los Angeles Lakers.

While the Warriors and Suns have opened up some distance on the rest of the West, the Bucks (14-8) are one of four teams within 1½ games of East-leading Brooklyn (15-6). There have been some surprises at the top of the conference. Chicago (14-8) and Washington (14-8) have had early success after significant off-season changes, and Charlotte (13-11) isn't far behind.

That's not how the top half of the conference was necessarily expected to look, but it took a little while for Milwaukee to hit its stride, and even after its recent winning streak, Atlanta (12-10) isn't above the play-in zone. Philadelphia (11-11) has lost seven of its last 10.

It's not a shock to see the Bucks look less than dominant from time to time. They finished with the seventh-best record in the league last season before winning the title as a No. 3 seed.

Recently, they've taken advantage of a fairly favorable schedule. The first five games of their winning streak were at home, when they faced the Lakers with LeBron James out, then Oklahoma City, Orlando twice and Detroit. Then they went on the road and beat Denver with Nikola Jokic out before winning at Indiana and at home against Charlotte.

To their credit, the Bucks' recent victories haven't been all that close. Before a two-point win over the Hornets on Wednesday, the previous four were by 31, 21, 11 and 18 points.



PHOTOS BY DOUG MCSCHOOLER/AP

Above: Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo dunks during a game at Indianapolis on Sunday. Below: Bucks guard Jrue Holiday (21) drives to the basket.

"We know how this league goes, how the games go. It's always ebbs and flows."

Bucks guard Jrue Holiday
On the team's resurgence after a slow start

"Maybe we just kind of wear 'em down with Khris and Giannis, then Jrue comes and one of them hopefully breaks the wall, breaks the dam," coach Mike Budenholzer said. "We're able to get some separation."

Three of Milwaukee's last five opponents have scored 100 points or fewer.

"Just the connectivity, guys working and covering for each other and scrambling," Budenholzer said. "Jrue at the front of the defense and I think Bobby (Portis) is improving and giving us lots of little things and plays and effort. Guys are just competing, trying to get stops."

The highlight of the Bucks' upcoming schedule may be a pair of meetings with Miami

(13-8) in a span of five days — on Saturday night at Milwaukee and then Dec. 8 at Miami.

When the teams met Oct. 21, the Heat won 137-95 over a Milwaukee team that was missing Holiday, Portis and Brook Lopez. Antetokounmpo and Middleton played less than half that game with the score out of hand.



NFL/COLLEGE FOOTBALL



TONY AVELAR/AP

San Francisco 49ers running back Elijah Mitchell escapes the grasp of Minnesota Vikings defensive tackle James Lynch during the first half of their game on Nov. 28 in Santa Clara, Calif.

Rookie Mitchell turning into big find for Niners

By JOSH DUBOW
Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Elijah Mitchell has been one of the NFL's biggest surprises this season.

Whether it's going from overlooked sixth-round project out of Louisiana-Lafayette into one of the league's productive backs as a rookie, or his knack on nearly every run for the San Francisco 49ers to churn out a couple of extra yards, Mitchell exceeds expectations.

"He competes for every single yard," coach Kyle Shanahan said. "One of the biggest things for me as a play-caller is when I see with my own eyes, that it's going to be second-and-10 and I start to look down and think about what I'm calling next. Then people in the box tell me it's second-and-6. I don't totally believe him because I saw that he was going down and I don't realize that he fell forward and got 4 yards. When it's like that, which he does all the time now, you keep going, it helps you keep doing it."

Mitchell has been consistently doing that all season as he is fourth in the NFL with 86.6 yards rushing per game and second among all backs with 3.84 yards per carry after contact, according to Pro Football Focus.

Mitchell has helped spark a running game that has led the Niners (6-5) to get back into playoff position in the NFC as San Francisco has overcome the loss of starter

"There's some stuff to his game that the more he plays, the more you realize that he's a special young player and there's a reason why he's having productivity."

Mike McDaniel

49ers offensive coordinator on rookie running back Elijah Mitchell

Raheem Mostert in the season opener by finding a back who may not be quite as fast, but makes up for it with his power.

"Elijah hits the holes downhill, like Raheem does. He's not going to run 23 mph, but that 5 yards in between where he gets the ball through the line of scrimmage, he's just so explosive and so fast," tight end George Kittle said. "I think guys think, 'I'm going to get him with an arm tackle because he's not the biggest back in the world.' But he just runs through arm tackles."

Mitchell was a bit of an afterthought when he was drafted in the sixth round after San Francisco had already traded up to take Trey Sermon in the third round to join a group that also included Mostert, Jeff Wilson Jr., Wayne Gallman and JaMycal Hasty.

But the Niners quickly realized in training camp that they might have found a gem in Mitchell and

he has proven them right.

"There's some stuff to his game that the more he plays, the more you realize that he's a special young player and there's a reason why he's having productivity," offensive coordinator Mike McDaniel said. "You'd have no way of knowing. Even grainy Louisiana-Lafayette tape wouldn't tell you that."

Mitchell is just the latest unheralded back to have success in the Shanahan system with Bobby Turner as running backs coach.

Mitchell credits Turner for instilling the toughness in him that allowed him to handle the ball 32 times last week despite a broken finger.

"Really it just starts in the room," Mitchell said. "That's just something that our position coach Bobby T expresses a lot, keep driving and protecting the ball. So it just starts with the mindset and we always talk about that."

Playoff expansion talks inch forward

By RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

DALLAS — The latest meeting on expanding the College Football Playoff wrapped up without a resolution Wednesday as the people involved agreed to keep talking.

CFP Executive Director Bill Hancock said there remains a strong consensus among the management committee, comprised of the 10 major college football conference commissioners and Notre Dame's athletic director, to expand the four-team playoff field.

But how and when? A proposed 12-team model remains at the heart of the discussions and there is still hope it can be implemented for the 2024 season. Which conferences would be ensured access to the field is still up for debate.

"I thought there was a chance we'd get to the end today," Big 12 Commissioner Bob Bowlsby said. "We didn't and there were good and appropriate reasons why we didn't. There are people in the room that are differently situated and they therefore have different perspectives. And they were healthy discussions. I think we made good progress, but we aren't done."

The next scheduled meeting is January around the College Football Playoff championship game in Indianapolis, but it is possible the commissioners could meet sooner.

Mountain West Commissioner Craig Thompson said there are still some who would rather expand only to eight teams. Others are adamant eight won't work.

"I was part of a group that brought forward a recommendation of six conference champions and six best remaining teams — or you can stay at four," said Southeastern Conference Commissioner Greg Sankey, one of four members of the subcommittee that worked for two years on the 12-

team model put forth nearly six months ago.

Where do things stand with that original proposal?

"Well, it's certainly not been approved," Sankey said. "Otherwise, we wouldn't be having this conversation today."

The seven-hour meeting at a hotel at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport was the sixth in-person gathering of the management committee since the subcommittee's proposal was unveiled in June.

In the morning, a room was prepared for the possibility that a news conference could be held to announce the commissioners had reached consensus on an expansion model. A podium was set up in front of a backdrop of College Football Playoff logos, facing about a half dozen chairs for reporters in attendance.

By early afternoon, that setup was being broken down.

Instead of making big news, a short statement from Hancock was released at the conclusion of the meeting. Thompson, Bowlsby and Sankey then took turns informally speaking with reporters outside the meeting room on their way to the elevators.

Big Ten Commissioner Kevin Warren, Atlantic Coast Conference Commissioner Jim Phillips and Pac-12 Commissioner George Kliavkoff did not speak with reporters.

Those commissioners, all relatively new to playoff talks, were skeptical of the process from the start and became even more leery of how quickly it was moving toward 12 teams after it was revealed the SEC would be adding Oklahoma and Texas to the league in the next few years.

They pushed to revisit the possibility of expansion to only eight teams, though the obstacles to getting agreement on that were plentiful.



LM OTERO/AP

College Football Playoff Executive Director Bill Hancock, right, looks on as Mark Keenum, Mississippi State president and chairman of the CFP presidents group, speaks with reporters on June 22 in Grapevine, Texas.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



BUTCH DILL/AP

Alabama wide receiver John Metchie III celebrates after scoring during the fourth overtime to defeat Auburn 24-22 on Nov. 27.

Formidable: Alabama's offense not at full strength for SEC championship

FROM PAGE 48

of the season and second of the game.

But Alabama still ranks seventh in passing and total offense, averaging 341.8 yards per game through the air and 492.2 overall.

Young has passed for 3,901 yards and 40 touchdowns against just four interceptions. He's completing 68.9% of his passes.

"It's like he's composed at all times and has great presence in the pocket, great distributor of the ball," Georgia coach Kirby Smart said. "Knows where all his outlets are. Can draw the defense to him and dish the ball, much like a point guard in basketball.

"This is just one of the best I've seen as far as quick release and getting the ball out, distributing the ball really good."

Then there's the backfield, where Saban said he has never been down to one scholarship runner.

Others moved to the position as emergency fill-ins, but that could be the plight his players face in this one if Robinson can't go.

Sanders has run for 221 yards and two touchdowns.

No. 4 Alabama (11-1, 7-1 SEC) vs. No. 1 Georgia (12-0, 8-0)

AFN-Sports

10 p.m. Saturday CET

6 a.m. Sunday JKT

"We've got to get them ready to play the game," Saban said. "There's nothing else we can do about that. Injuries are a part of the game."

The Crimson Tide has leaned heavily on Robinson at times, but Young's biggest weapon has been Williams, along with fellow 1,000-yard receiver John Metchie III.

Williams has been the big-play threat, with 1,261 yards, 13 touchdowns and a 20.67-yard average per catch. Metchie has 90 catches for 1,045 yards and seven touchdowns.

He also has plenty of faith in the Alabama offense even facing by far its biggest challenge.

"I'm extremely confident," Metchie said. "I think we're concerned about ourselves more and playing our best brand of football, knowing that we're going against a really good defense. But I think for us, it's just playing our best brand of football."

Defenses clash for Big 12 title

Associated Press

Often, the chatter heading into the Big 12 championship game focuses on dynamic offenses and a quarterback chasing the Heisman Trophy.

This time, it's more about old-school, hard-nosed defense. Fifth-ranked Oklahoma State (11-1, 8-1 Big 12, No. 5 CFP) and ninth-ranked Baylor (10-2, 7-2, No. 9 CFP) take game-changing units into Saturday's title matchup.

The Cowboys' defense is one of the nation's best. The team ranks third nationally in total defense, fifth in scoring defense, sixth in rushing defense and are the best at limiting third-down conversions. Fourth-year defensive coordinator Jim Knowles is a finalist for the Broyles Award, given to the nation's top assistant coach.

"They all hung with me a few years ago when they might have thought I was being a little bit of a 'not nice guy,' let's put it that way," Knowles said after the team surrendered just 143 yards in a 55-3 win over Kansas earlier this season. "Not quite the words I used. But they hung in and they believed. And I just think now, you're seeing the fruits of that."

Oklahoma State super senior linebacker Malcolm Rodriguez ranks second in the Big 12 with 8.9 tackles per game and sixth with 13.5 tackles for loss. Defensive end Brock Martin has 10.5 tackles for loss and linebacker Devin Harper and defensive end Tyler Lacy each have 10.0. Safety Kolby Harvell-Peel has three interceptions.

Cowboys freshman defensive end Collin Oliver has 12.5 tackles for loss and ranks third in the Big 12 with 9.5 sacks. He got the game-deciding sack against Oklahoma.

"It's a good group top to bottom, and you know, as you watch them,



IAN MAULE/AP

Oklahoma State linebacker Devin Harper tackles Oklahoma wide receiver Jadon Haselwood, left, in Stillwater, Okla., on Nov. 27. The Cowboys rank third nationally in total defense.

No. 9 Baylor (10-2, 7-2 Big 12) vs. No. 5 Oklahoma St. (11-1, 8-1)

AFN-Sports

6 p.m. Saturday CET

2 a.m. Sunday JKT

you don't just see like a ton of weaknesses on tape," then-Sooners coach Lincoln Riley said as his team prepared for Oklahoma State last week. "Like, they don't have an area where you just point to and say, 'That's just killing them.' They've got good, good playmakers at all levels."

So does the Bears, who ranks 17th nationally in scoring defense, 19th in rushing defense and 12th in third-down conversion defense.

Baylor's Jalen Pitre plays the STAR position, a hybrid of linebacker, safety and cornerback. He leads the Big 12 with 15.5 tackles for loss and three fumbles recovered. He also has forced three fumbles.

He was thrilled when coach Dave Aranda and defensive coordinator Ron Roberts presented the option of moving him from li-

nebacker to a role that better highlights his versatility.

"I understood what the position entailed and what it demanded, and the different things that the position held," Pitre said. "And so I'm thankful that they moved me to the position and it has been a great ride. He lets me, you know, be free. Lets me do a lot of things inside the defense."

Linebacker Terrel Bernard averages 6.9 tackles per game, though he was out with a knee injury when Oklahoma State beat Baylor 24-14 in the regular season.

"I think Terrel is one of those guys that when he's just in the huddle and he's in it, there's just an added confidence that comes with," Aranda said. "Because of his maturity and his resilience and his preparation, you just feel like he's a coach on the field."

Big 12 title games have averaged just over 56 points the past four years, but the over/under this year is 46.5, according to FanDuel Sportsbook — a clear nod to those defenses.

Source: Notre Dame set to promote coordinator Freeman to head coach

Associated Press

Notre Dame is working on a deal to promote defensive coordinator Marcus Freeman to head coach to replace Brian Kelly, a person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press on Wednesday night.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because nothing had been finalized, though the first piece of the Fighting Irish's plan to regroup after Kelly left for LSU earlier this week had already fallen into place.

Offensive coordinator Tommy Rees informed Notre Dame he would remain with the Fighting Irish instead of joining Kelly in Baton Rouge, La. The Irish released a video on Twitter of Rees telling the team he was staying put.

The next step is elevating the 35-year-old Freeman, who would become the second Black head football coach at Notre Dame after Tyrone Willingham (2002-04).

The person told AP that Kelly also had interest in bringing Freeman to LSU. Kelly left Notre Dame after 12 seasons and with the Fighting Irish still in contention for a spot in the College Football Playoff. He was introduced Wednesday as the Tigers' coach.

Notre Dame athletic director Jack Swarbrick, who was scheduled to attend a CFP expansion meeting in Dallas, instead spent

Wednesday in South Bend, Ind., meeting with Rees and Freeman.

The 29-year-old Rees, a former Fighting Irish quarterback, returned to the team as quarterbacks coach in 2017 and was promoted to offensive coordinator in 2020.

Freeman, 35, joined Kelly's staff this year after being hired away from Cincinnati. Landing Freeman, who was also being pursued by LSU last offseason, was considered a major victory for Kelly and Notre Dame.

Freeman, a former Ohio State linebacker, is considered a rising star in college coaching and in his time with the Irish he has played a major role in assembling a recruiting class that's ranked No. 5 in the country by 247 Sports two weeks before signing day.



Freeman

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Pitt, Wake well-armed in battle for ACC title

BY WILL GRAVES
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Kenny Pickett didn't get specific. He didn't need to. The goal the Pittsburgh quarterback set for himself when he made the surprising decision to return in 2021 rather than enter the NFL Draft covered all the bases.

"I want to be the best," said Pickett, who was named the ACC's Most Valuable Player on Wednesday. "That's always been my goal since I was young. And it's something that, you know, you continue to work for."

A goal that's come tantalizingly close for Pickett over the last three months. All he's done since September is rewrite a majority of the school's record book — surpassing the likes of Hall of Famer Dan Marino in the process — while leading the 17th-ranked Panthers (10-2) to their second appearance in the ACC title game and mounting a Heisman Trophy campaign that's morphed from unlikely to dark horse to legit.

Yet he won't be the only quarterback on the field Saturday night in Charlotte, N.C., whose name is on the Heisman ballot.

Like Pickett, Wake Forest redshirt sophomore Sam Hartman has put together a season few saw coming. Like Pickett, he's turn-



ed the Demon Deacons' record book into his own personal dry-erase board. Like Pickett, he's done it while leading No. 18 Wake Forest (10-2) to a division title and a chance at a conference championship.

"I think (Pickett) and Sam are very similar," Demon Deacons coach Dave Clawson said. "That's your first- and second-team all-ACC quarterbacks. You have two guys that are competitors, that play with courage, that make plays with their feet and have great arm strength and can make every throw."

Pickett and Hartman connected during visits to the offseason passing camp run by Hall of Famer Peyton Manning. Maybe it's not a coincidence that both players — and



PHOTOS BY MARY SCHWALM, ABOVE, AND ADRIAN KRAUS, LEFT/AP

Above: Wake Forest quarterback Sam Hartman has passed for 34 touchdowns and run for 10. Left: Pittsburgh quarterback Kenny Pickett has broken many of Dan Marino's records and has thrown 40 touchdown passes and run for four this season.

No. 17 Pittsburgh (10-2, 7-1)
vs. No. 18 Wake Forest (10-2 7-1)
AFN-Atlantic
2 a.m. Sunday CET
10 a.m. Sunday JKT

their teams — took a massive leap forward in 2021. Pickett ranks fifth in the country in yards passing (4,077) while Hartman is ninth (3,711).

Pickett's 40 touchdown passes are second in the nation, just a few spots ahead of Hart-

man's 34.

Hartman has run for 10 touchdowns while Pickett has managed four on the ground, a dip from previous years, partly out of a conscious effort by Pickett to avoid unnecessary hits and partly because he's got so many weapons around him that he no longer needs to make something out of nothing with his feet.

AP sports writer Aaron Beard in Winston-Salem, N.C., contributed to this report.

STARS AND STRIPES

How many candies are in the jar?

Best guesses win a gift card!

\$75



Exact Guess: \$75

Closest Guess: \$25

Nov. 22nd to Dec. 5th



Visit Facebook.com/StripesPacific to enter.

MLB

Teams spend big, then MLB locks out players

BY JAKE SEINER
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Before getting locked out, players loaded up Wednesday as big league teams unlocked their coffers for an unprecedented spending spree.

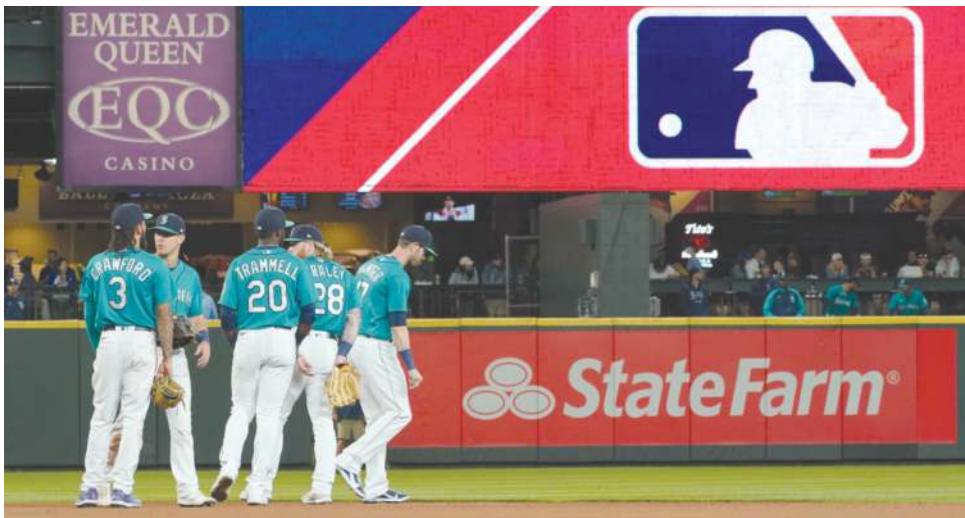
Major League Baseball clubs committed to a one-day record \$1.4 billion in salaries Wednesday, hours before the league locked out players following the 11:59 p.m. expiration of the sport's collective bargaining agreement.

Six nine-figure contracts were handed out, including two by the Texas Rangers — shortstop Corey Seager got \$325 million over 10 years and infielder Marcus Semien will make \$175 million over seven years.

The Detroit Tigers got infielder Javier Báez for a \$140 million, six-year deal, ace Max Scherzer was assured \$130 million over three years from the New York Mets, and right-hander Kevin Gausman landed with the Toronto Blue Jays for \$110 million over five years. Twins center fielder Byron Buxton also finalized a \$100 million, seven-year contract to remain with Minnesota.

It was the first time teams combined to spend over \$1 billion in a single day.

"This is actually kind of fun," Scherzer said. "I'm a fan of the game, and to watch everybody sign right now, to actually see



TED S. WARREN/AP

Seattle Mariners gather as the MLB logo is shown during a game June 18 in Seattle. After clubs spent \$1.4 billion in signings on Wednesday, the league locked out players.

teams competing in this kind of timely fashion, it's been refreshing because we've seen freezes for the past several offseasons."

The 27 deals announced Wednesday totaled \$1,423,250,000, part of roughly \$2 billion in new contracts handed out since the end of the World Series ahead of the CBA expiration.

"This year was a situation where we re-

ceived some calls early and had some interest in what we were asking for," said Semien, a free agent for the second straight year. "It became easier to narrow a decision down. What it came down to was an opportunity to build something."

The union and league are likely headed for a protracted labor dispute after the average major league salary fell on opening day

in 2021 for the fourth consecutive season.

Players and teams alike may have feared the chaos of a limited free-agency window in the spring if the lockout goes that long. That spurred agents, general managers and owners to act before rosters froze.

"It was 50-50," Báez said. "We didn't know what was going to happen when the deadline comes. I was just making sure I wanted to be with one of the best teams."

Teams won't be able to communicate with their players during the shutdown.

"We were talking about that yesterday. It's funny how you sign it and the next day you're shut out," Seager said. "They've been upfront with me. I know what to expect from them. They know what to expect from me. They know I'm going to come prepared. They know I want to be prepared."

Plenty of big names remain on the board, though. Star shortstop Carlos Correa, first baseman Freddie Freeman, third baseman Kris Bryant, shortstop Trevor Story and outfielder Nick Castellanos are still free agents and might have to wait until spring or later to find a home.

Right-hander Nick Martinez was close to an agreement with the San Diego Padres but didn't get it completed before the owners locked out players, according to a person with knowledge of the talks.

STARS AND STRIPES

SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market




Transportation
944

VEHICLE SHIPPING SERVICES

- International Shipping
- Import & Export
- Inland trucking (U.S. & Europe)
- Door to door pick-up/delivery service

GERMANY

Phone: +49-(0)6134-2592730

Toll-free: 0800-CARSHIP (Germany only)

E-Mail: info@transglobal-logistics.de

WEB: www.transglobal-logistics.de

UNITED KINGDOM

+44-(0)1638-515714

enquiries@carshipuk.co.uk

www.carshipuk.co.uk

U.S.A

+1-972-602-1670 Ext. 1701

+1-800-264-8167 (US only)

info@tgal.us

www.tgal.us

For 2nd POV Shipments - Offices / Agencies near Military Installations



LOGISTICS EUROPE GMBH



Are you in the picture?



Reading Stars and Stripes gives you a better handle on issues that affect you most.

No one covers the bases the way we do.



Transportation
944

Ship Cars and Containers to and from the USA




OPENING HOURS: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mon - Fri

0800-522-6274 or 800-WSA-SHIP (972-7447)

For a free rate request, please email: info@worldwide-ship.de


Visit our Website: www.worldwide-ship.de

Off Duty? Amuse Yourself!



Concert, events, TV, movies, music, video games, celebrity antics...

Get entertained with...



SPORTS



Sixth-round surprise

RB Mitchell putting together impressive rookie campaign with 49ers » **NFL, Page 44**

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Formidable challenge

No. 1 Georgia's top-ranked 'D' could be too much for QB Young, No. 4 Alabama



By JOHN ZENOR
Associated Press

The going only gets tougher for Alabama's normally explosive offense. While the Crimson Tide were held out of the end zone for the first 59 minutes and 36 seconds by Auburn, now they face the nation's top defense.

Heisman Trophy front-runner Bryce Young and the fourth-ranked Crimson Tide are gearing up to square off against No. 1 Georgia on Saturday in the Southeastern Conference championship game.

Making matters more challenging, Alabama tailback Brian Robinson Jr. is nursing a left leg injury and his status is uncertain for the game. If he can't play, that leaves Trey Sanders as the Tide's only healthy scholarship running back



Young

against a defense allowing a nation's best 6.9 points and 229.7 total yards per game.

The Bulldogs' formidable front seven, led by defensive lineman Jordan Davis and linebacker Nakobe Dean, is also a huge challenge for an Alabama offensive line that has struggled at times.

"What really motivates us is to make sure we come with our 'A' game," Crimson Tide left tackle Evan Neal said. "We're all competitors, man. It's what it's all about. You're the best? Okay, let's line up and go out there and play. That's what it's all about."

Alabama didn't come with its best for that Auburn game, even if the Tide ultimately turned a

10-0 fourth-quarter deficit into a 24-22 quadruple-overtime victory.

Alabama mustered just 68 yards on 30 first-half plays and allowed seven sacks in the game.

Young led the Crimson Tide to 217 fourth-quarter yards, including a 97-yard drive over the final 95 seconds.

The finishing flourish rescued the team's playoff hopes and vaulted Young back to leading Heisman candidate status, according to FanDuel Sportsbook.

Leading receiver Jameson Williams also missed most of the game after a first-half targeting penalty in punt return coverage. The winning touchdown pass with 24 seconds left went to freshman Ja'Corey Brooks, just his fourth catch

SEE FORMIDABLE ON PAGE 45



Notre Dame set to promote Freeman to head coach
Page 45

Above: Georgia defensive lineman Jordan Davis (99) is lifted into the air by running back Zamir White and offensive lineman Justin Shaffer after scoring against Charleston Southern on Nov. 20 in Athens, Ga.. Davis and the rest of the Bulldogs' formidable front seven could pose a stiff challenge to Alabama and Heisman Trophy front-running quarterback Bryce Young.

JOHN BAZEMORE/AP

Owners spend big, then lock out players » **MLB, Page 47**

