

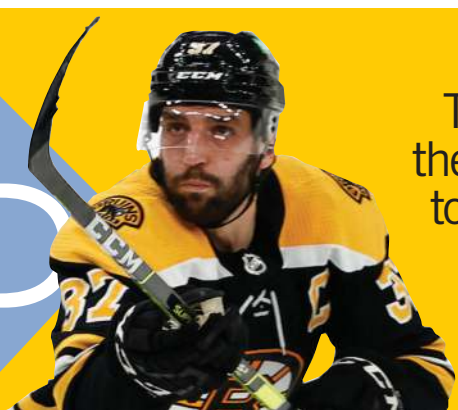
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EUROPE  
& PACIFIC

WEEKEND  
EDITION



**NHL PLAYOFFS**  
Teams relied upon their clutch captains to reach 2nd round  
**Page 48**

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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PACIFIC



## Rumble in the jungle

Marines train on Okinawa for island warfare

UJIAN GOSUN/U.S. Marine Corps

**U.S. Marines participate in force-on-force training during Jungle Warfare Exercise in the Northern Training Area on Okinawa, Japan, on May 24. This unscripted exercise tested and strengthened the Marines' ability to fight a well-equipped enemy on Pacific islands.**

By **SETH ROBSON**  
*Stars and Stripes*

**S**nakes, spiders and thick jungle added realism to training on Okinawa, where Marines spent last week honing skills they'd need to fight and win against a well-equipped enemy force on Pacific islands.

About 800 Marines participated in the Jungle Warfare Exercise in Okinawa's Northern Training Area from May 24 to 28. The scenario pitted members of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, out of Camp Lejeune, N.C., against an opposing force from 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment out of Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

The training simulated the sort of engagements Marines might face going up against a peer-level adversary contesting key maritime terrain in the first island chain, which runs through Okinawa, Taiwan, the Philippines and Borneo.

The area is the focus of great power competition between the U.S. and China, which claims sovereignty over Taiwan and numerous other islands in the region, some of which are administered by neighboring countries.

China has been rapidly modernizing its military and building up amphibious forces that could be used to seize contested territory.

The event last week was the largest such event in the Northern Training Area in decades, said Maj. Kurt Stahl, a 3rd Marine Di-

SEE RUMBLE ON PAGE 7

## Air Force couple, both victims of sexual assault, say disparity in treatment shows gender discrimination

By **ROSE L. THAYER**  
*Stars and Stripes*

When Air Force officers Alex Gibson and Josh Dobhailen first met at the service's Intelligence Officer Course in 2017, each was recovering from a sexual assault. They married later that year, believing that their similar trauma allowed them to quickly bond.

■ **Military leaders wary of changes in sexual assault policy**  
**Page 3**

After a stint in Florida, the Dobhailens moved across the country to Tra-

vis Air Force Base, Calif., in February 2020, in part to get distance from Alex's accused perpetrator.

After just four months at Travis, police called to inform the couple that her perpetrator might be living at an address near them. Meanwhile, Alex suf-

SEE DISCRIMINATION ON PAGE 4



**Alex, left, and Josh Dobhailen are both victims of sexual assault and recently disclosed this information to their units to attend therapy. Josh's career was unaffected. Alex's security clearance was suspended and she may lose her military career.**

Alex Dobhailen

# BUSINESS/WEATHER

## EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel					
Germany	\$3.302	\$3.725	\$3.974	\$3.530	Azores	..	..	\$3.874	..
Change in price	+0.7 cents	+0.5 cents	+0.9 cents	+0.2 cents	Change in price	..	..	+0.9 cents	..
Netherlands	..	\$4.191	\$4.496	\$4.163	Belgium	..	\$3.058	\$3.332	\$3.081
Change in price	..	+0.7 cents	+0.7 cents	+0.7 cents	Change in price	..	No change	No change	No change
U.K.	..	\$3.624	\$3.873	\$3.429	Turkey	..	..	\$3.759	\$4.030*
Change in price	..	+0.5 cents	+0.9 cents	+0.2 cents	Change in price	..	..	+0.9 cents	No change

## PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel					
Japan	..	\$3.769	..	\$3.319	South Korea	\$3.109	..	\$3.779	\$3.329
Change in price	..	+1.0 cents	..	No change	Change in price	+1.0 cents	..	+1.0 cents	No change
Okinawa	\$3.089	..	..	\$3.319	Guam	\$3.099	\$3.529	\$3.779	..
Change in price	No change	..	..	No change	Change in price	No change	+1.0 cents	+1.0 cents	..

\*DieselEFD \*\*Midgrade  
For the week of June 4-10

## EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates			
Euro costs (June 4)	\$1.19	South Korea (Won)	1117.32
Dollar buys (June 4)	0.7986	Switzerland (Franc)	.9032
British pound (June 4)	\$1.38	Thailand (Baht)	31.19
Japanese yen (June 4)	107.00	Turkey (NewLira)	8.7063
South Korean won (June 4)	1082.00		
Commercial rates			
Bahrain(Dinar)	.3767		
Britain (Pound)	1.4110		
Canada (Dollar)	1.2107		
China(Yuan)	6.4032		
Denmark (Krone)	6.1235		
Egypt (Pound)	15.6800		
Euro	.8234		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7580		
Hungary (Forint)	285.23		
Israel (Shekel)	3.2531		
Japan (Yen)	110.11		
Kuwait(Dinar)	.3010		
Norway (Krone)	8.3752		
Philippines (Peso)	47.80		
Poland (Zloty)	3.67		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7506		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3271		

## INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Interest Rates Discount rate	0.75
Federal funds market rate	0.09
3-month bill	0.02
30-year bond	2.28

## WEATHER OUTLOOK

### FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



### FRIDAY IN EUROPE



### SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



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

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## MILITARY

# Leaders wary of changes in sex assault policy

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Military service leaders are privately expressing reservations about removing sexual assault cases from the chain of command, The Associated Press has learned, striking a note of caution as momentum builds toward changing a military justice system that has come under increasing criticism.

In memos to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, the service leaders laid out their concerns about the growing push to shift prosecution decisions on sexual assault and possibly other major crimes to independent judge advocates. They said the shift could decrease the number of prosecutions, delay cases and potentially provide less help for victims.

While they indicated they are open to changes and improvements in the justice system, most were worried about how that would be done while ensuring no unintended harm is done to unit leadership or readiness. Several said it would create additional burdensome bureaucracy, according to officials familiar with the memos.

Several officials described the memos to the AP on the condition of anonymity because they have not been made public. The memos submitted to Austin were from the civilian secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force and from the National Guard.

The reservations expressed by

service leaders could provide a measure of ammunition for those in Congress who oppose taking the chain of command out of sexual assault prosecutions. Supporters of change, however, argue that the current system has failed to address to a problem that has long plagued the military.

Officials said that all service leaders recognize that change is virtually certain and that they agree more needs to be done to improve and professionalize the judge advocate corps. But they are concerned about how quickly changes are being made and whether there is room for negotiation about how they are implemented.

Earlier this year, an independent review commission created by Austin recommended that the prosecution of sexual assaults be shifted to judge advocates reporting to a civilian-led Office of the Chief Special Victim Prosecutor. The independent judge advocates would decide two key legal questions: whether to charge someone and whether that charge should go to a court martial.

Members of Congress are also pushing for a similar — and in some respects more expansive — change. Because any such change would amend military law, it will require an act of Congress and cannot be done unilaterally by Austin.

A longtime advocate for changing the policy is Sen. Kirsten Gil-

ibrand, a New York Democrat, who now has bipartisan, filibuster-proof support for a bill that would take prosecution decisions out of the chain of command for major crimes, including sexual assault, rape and murder. The legislation has been stalled in a procedural struggle in the Senate that supporters see as an effort to delay and water down the bill.



Austin

In testimony on Capitol Hill last week, Austin said the military must not be afraid to change how it addresses the problem of sexual assault. He added: "Clearly what we've been doing hasn't been working."

Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, previously opposed removing commanders from the process, but he told the AP and CNN recently that he had changed his mind. While he has not publicly endorsed any specific change, he said the time had come to try something different because "we've been at it for years, and we haven't effectively moved the needle."

Austin sought input from the service leaders on the review board's recommendations, and he is now assessing their memos before he reaches a conclusion on his own, final recommended

change. He met with service secretaries and chiefs on Tuesday to discuss the issue. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said Austin held a "listening session" to hear their concerns in person.

Officials said the Army expressed doubts about the accuracy of any data suggesting that removing commanders from the process will result in more sexual assault prosecutions. The acting Army secretary, John E. Whitley, in the memo, said that the change could reduce commander effectiveness and accountability and may reduce criminal convictions, officials said.

As a result, Whitley said, more cases may be settled with administrative discipline, and that can erode victims' trust in the system.

The Navy offered some support for the change. Acting Navy Secretary Thomas Harker, in his memo, said the Navy agrees with the concept of having an independent judge advocate. But he said there are a number of questions and concerns about how the change is implemented. A key Navy and Marine Corps concern is that the shift may cause delays in prosecutions, particularly since many sailors and Marines are deployed overseas or on ships for month-long tours.

Acting Air Force Secretary John Roth also said the force was open to new approaches, including removing cases from the chain of command, officials said.

But he cautioned that the change could inadvertently have a negative impact on commanders' leadership or accountability. The Air Force said commanders play a critical role in prevention, victim support and creating a respectful command climate, and any changes must not erode that.

Several expressed opposition to the recommendation that the new special victim prosecutor office be under the jurisdiction of the Defense Department, rather than having offices overseen by each military service.

The military service memos were signed by the three men serving as acting secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force — all holdovers from the Trump administration. Since then, Christine Wormuth has been confirmed as the Army's new secretary, but she took office after the memos had been finalized.

Wormuth has not specifically addressed the recommendations, but in a message to the force on Wednesday she said: "We must also eliminate harmful behaviors that undermine readiness. There is no place in our Army for sexual harassment and assault, domestic violence, extremism, or racism." During her recent Senate confirmation hearing she also said that the Army must put more focus on improving the command climate at all levels so younger soldiers feel safe and able to make complaints if needed.

## Eyeing China, Defense budget puts emphasis on weapons development

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Emphasis on high-end weapons development in the Defense Department's proposed 2022 budget is crucial to maintaining the U.S. military advantage amid rising tensions with China, the Pentagon's director of hypersonics said Wednesday.

The Defense Department budget released Friday allotted \$112 billion to research, development, testing and evaluation of defense systems — the largest-ever amount earmarked for that purpose in department history — to compete with what Pentagon officials described as the "pacing threat" of China.

Beijing has already fielded hypersonic weapons such as the Dong Feng-17 hypersonic glide vehicle, capable of speeds of up to Mach 10, according to the Washington think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies' Missile Defense Project, which studies ballistic and cruise missiles around the world.

"The budget dropped for '22 is a very important statement from the department about the importance of hypersonics," said Mike White, principal director for hypersonics in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering. "We've got strong commitment from the new administration for our strategy and moving forward to really rapidly mature and deliver hypersonic-based capabilities."

Hypersonic missiles fly at least five times the speed of sound. The U.S. does not have any deployed now, but is developing such strike systems that can travel about 500 miles in 10 minutes, White said during a webinar presented by CSIS. The U.S. stockpile of subsonic long-range missiles takes about an hour to reach the same distance.

"You can just look at the compression of the timescale on the battlefield — that's going to be a critical value proposition for the hypersonic systems," White said. "If you are in a battlefield timescale environment where [adver-

saries] are launching strike packages that take on the order of minutes and our strike packages take on the order of hours, that's a time-scale asymmetry that we need to make sure we're not allowing to stand."

The budget for fiscal year 2022, which begins Oct. 1, requests a 5% boost in its research, development, testing and evaluation, part of which will be spent on developing and procuring hypersonic capabilities. Hypersonics will become more critical to maintain the U.S. defense advantage as adversary capabilities continue to improve, White said.

"We're going into a highly contested environment that is defined by our adversaries' very thoughtful development of high-end systems that challenge our domain dominance in space, in the air and at sea," he said. "We have to make sure that we've got enough flexibility to be able to deliver effects from multiple domains so that we don't make their problem too easy for them."



ELLIOT VALDEZ/Defense Media Activity

**In March, the Army began delivering the first prototype hypersonic equipment to soldiers with the arrival of two training canisters.**

White said the United States must diversify its weapons as adversaries develop capabilities that could challenge key American assets, such as aircraft carriers. For example, China's Dong Feng-26 missile is dubbed by analysts as the "carrier killer" for its reported ability to strike a moving target from as far away as 960 miles.

"If I have an effect that's only go-

ing to come from a carrier and they keep my carriers out because they've got DF-21s and DF-26s or whatever, then I kind of lose," White said. "So, I want to be able to present multiple opportunities to deliver the effects I need to deter [adversaries]."

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## MILITARY

**Discrimination: Female captain fears career is coming to an end****FROM PAGE 1**

ferred a miscarriage, and the stress of it all left them both reeling.

Both are captains who work in military intelligence for different units on base, and they each decided to self-identify with leadership about their past assaults, which had been formally reported, and seek behavioral health treatment. While Josh, 26, received support from his leadership, Alex, 29, said her job and her security clearance were taken from her and she now faces a medical board evaluation that could end her military career.

"It means a lot to me to wear this uniform," Alex said. "I've seen, I hate to say it, a lot of gender discrimination or a lot of retaliation or reprisal over this last five-year journey since my assault."

Alex's perpetrator was in the process of separating from the military at the time of the assault in 2016, she said. Her commander at Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D., where the assault occurred, deferred to the civilian authorities to prosecute.

"The easiest way to sum it up is the base commander there ended up saying to certain staff members, 'She can't tell me she didn't know what she was expecting when she let him into her house.' And that was a just in the second month of my investigation and that pretty much dictated how the rest of my case went," Alex said.

The local authorities declined to prosecute the case. Only about 5% of all sexual assault cases in the United States lead to an arrest, according to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network.

The Air Force Office of Investigation handed Josh's case over to German state authorities to investigate, he said.

To try to save her military career, Alex hired an attorney to help file formal complaints and other documents to escalate her concerns to the levels above her immediate command that could intervene. Together, Alex and Josh decided to speak out about the disparity in their treatment for seeking help at the same time for the same issues. Since she began speaking up, she said other women in her unit have come to her and told her they have also faced discrimination.

"I love my Air Force. I love my military, but in order for us to advance and move forward and to put an end to the gender discrimination or even racial discrimination or ... the retaliation or reprisal that victims face in the military, somebody's got to be willing to do something. It seems like the harder I ... try to do something to bring attention to it, the worse it's getting to me here."

**Clearance suspended**

Losing a security clearance for seeking mental health services is

rare, according to the Defense Department. The military has released information for service members to counter concerns after a Rand study in 2018 found it to be a leading reason for people to not seek treatment.

"This is not the case," according to a 2020 fact sheet from the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency. "A detailed analysis of denial and revocation statistics involving psychological conditions clearly demonstrates that a cleared individual is not likely to lose or fail to gain clearance eligibility after seeking mental health care or experiencing mental health symptoms."

Between 2012 and 2018, only 12 out of 2.3 million clearance adjudications were denied because of psychological issues, according to the fact sheet. None of those 12 was related to an individual seeking care.

"There are absolutely no words. My whole intent and purpose was to go and get help to handle the situation responsibly so I can be everything that I needed to be to my airmen and to my people, and to do the best at my job," Alex said. "Because I'm a sexual assault victim and because of my gender, and because of my willingness to say something, I ended up being that one in 2.3 million-person statistic. It shows the disparity between my husband and me."

The Travis Air Force Base Public Affairs Office said it could not speak directly to Alex's situation because of privacy concerns, but said "commanders have discretion to remove members' local access to classified information."

Any suspension or revocation of security clearances rests with the Defense Department's Consolidated Adjudication Facility.

"Our leadership takes these allegations seriously and ensures all service members are treated with dignity and respect," base officials said. "Seeking mental health services does not affect one's ability to gain or hold clearance eligibility. Adjudicators regard seeking mental health treatment as a positive step in the security clearance process. It is important for the cleared workforce and prospective employees to understand there are no automatically disqualifying conditions or treatments."

By contrast, avoiding care when needed can raise security concerns, officials said.

Alex said she received her highest authorized clearance after her assault, after she initially received therapy and was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. She then set up a new intelligence shop at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida and received high marks on her evaluations.

In her role at Travis, she continued to receive positive reviews for her work until the moment she



ALEX DOBHAILEN

**Both captains in the Air Force, Alex and Josh Dobhailen said the reactions of their leadership at Travis Air Force Base, Calif., show that gender discrimination still exists within the military for victims of sexual assault.**

told her leadership about her past assault and need to return to therapy.

"The next business day after I went to mental health and identified as a sexual assault victim, informally, I was removed from my job," Alex said. "I stopped being included in all the meetings and everything like that."

Her chain of command suspended her clearance at the local level and moved her to a position that doesn't require one. After eight months, her commander served Alex paperwork to revoke her clearance. The news came about a week after she met with personnel from the Inspector General, the Office of Special Investigations and Security Forces to report the misconduct of her command, said Allison Weber, Alex's attorney.

While the Inspector General is looking into the case on some level, the two criminal investigative agencies have declined to move forward, Weber said.

"I've undergone proper evaluations by accredited individuals, and I've been cleared, and I still have not been returned my security clearance," Alex said. "I love my husband and I would never want anything bad to happen to him, but it can be hard sometimes to come home every day and ride in the same car on the way home and see that we are experiencing the same thing. We're both reco-

Weber said.

But it wasn't only the way Alex's unit reacted to her need for treatment that has felt unfair or strange to the couple. As the two officers attended therapy, Josh's therapist, who was the flight commander of the clinic, told him his wife was "too far gone," even though he was not her care provider, Josh said.

"I was told by my therapist that of the two of us, only one of us can be saved to have a career in the military. I was told that at this point my therapist believed that was me. So he said he was going to do everything he could to focus in on me," Josh said. "And I'm just sitting here like, 'Where's this coming from? There's no reason for it.'"

**'Lives the core values'**

Meanwhile, his wife's unit tried to force her into a command-directed mental health evaluation without reason. Soon after, she learned they intended to send her before a medical evaluation board for lower back pain, something she has never been treated for, she said.

Her physical evaluation board liaison officer has made that point clear to try to stop the process, but it has not worked. Medical boards tend to move faster than security clearance evaluations, which means Alex could be medically retired before the clearance issue is resolved, Weber said.

Travis Air Force Base officials declined to comment on the medical board evaluation because of privacy concerns. A statement regarding the process in general said it's "designed to determine whether a service member's long-term medical condition enables him/her to continue to meet medical retention standards, in accordance with military service regulations."

Joining the Air Force was a childhood dream for Alex. Her husband described her as the "poster child" for the Air Force, because of her enthusiasm to serve.

"She quite literally lives the core values day in and day out, and also with her performance. She's exactly what you imagine when you see all the recruiting videos," Josh said.

"If you look at the word uniform, it's so everybody's the same. So when people look at us, they should not be looking at who's wearing the uniform, whether you're male or female, whether you're African American, whether you're Asian, whether you're white. What matters is what you stand for and what you do. And there are certain individuals in our service that do not see it that way."

vering from our sexual assaults and his career has been completely untouched and his career will recover, if it really had any ramifications at all. But I'm most likely staring down the end (of) my career in the next couple of months."

Weber, a former Army JAG officer working with Tully Rinckey PLLC, said she responded to the paperwork. If the command went forward and sent the request to revoke her security clearance to the Defense Department, it will take months until they hear any updates.

Adjudicators could disagree with the command's decision or ask for additional information, Weber said. An appeal process exists that could also grant Alex an opportunity to fight a decision to revoke her clearance.

Instead of stonewalling the officer, Weber said "the United States military, and specifically the Air Force, needs to improve the way they work with military sexual assault victims who continue to serve."

"Capt. Dobhailen did exactly what she's been trained to do — seek help when needed, keep her leadership informed of her status and work to overcome any hurdles to return to duty. The military should not use her self-referral for treatment against her to justify removing her from her position, suspending her clearance and/or threatening to separate her,"

## MILITARY

## Reservist faces probe after campaigning in uniform

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
Stars and Stripes

The Army is investigating a Reserve officer for wearing his uniform while promoting his campaign for Congress on a right-wing television network and making statements that denigrated President Joe Biden, service officials said.

First Lt. Alex Stovall, 26, is a chaplain candidate in the Army Reserve who has announced he is running as a Republican for a House seat representing Arizona's 9th Congressional District. A spokesman for the Army Reserve said Tuesday that the service was aware Stovall had appeared in his combat uniform during an interview about his campaign on the One American News Network last month and he had publicly questioned Biden's legitimacy as commander in chief.

"We are aware of the situation and are investigating," said Army Lt. Col. Simon Flake, an Army Reserve spokesman. "The U.S. Army Reserve follows the Department of Defense's long-standing policy regarding service member involvement in partisan political campaigns to avoid the perception of DoD sponsorship, approval or endorsement of any partisan political candidate, campaign or cause. Standard procedural steps are being taken to ensure the investigation is conducted in a timely and thorough manner and appropriate rights will be afforded to all involved."

Flake declined to detail specifics Tuesday about the probe into Stovall's actions.

Service members serving in a Reserve capacity are allowed to run for partisan political office, though they must not appear in uniform as part of their campaign or use their military service to imply Defense Department "sponsorship, approval or endorsement" of their activities, according to department directive 1344.10.

Stovall's appearance in uniform, which he told OANN during the interview occurred after he "got a last-minute call" to military duty, violated that directive, according to Mikey Weinstein, the founder and president of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, which advocates for the separation of church and state within the military.

Weinstein also accused Stovall of illegally denigrating the president. In an April 14 appearance on the streaming radio network Gun Freedom Radio, Stovall said he did not consider Biden a legitimate president.

"We saw the inauguration of the — well, I don't think he's president — [what]ever, you



ALEX STOVALL FOR CONGRESS/Facebook

**First Lt. Alex Stovall is chaplain candidate in the Army Reserve who has announced he is running as a Republican for a House seat representing Arizona's 9th Congressional District.**

would call this sleepy guy in office," Stovall said on the radio program.

In a May 29 tweet, Stovall also attacked comments made by Biden about a young girl. The first lieutenant wrote: "Resident Biden believes a 6 year old looks 19[.] In or out of uniform I will never accept these comments as normal or acceptable[.] How many people feel good about his statements? ... [I'll] wait. I said what I said."

The tweet was in reference to Biden's apparent attempt one day earlier to compliment a young woman on stage with him during a speech that he gave at Joint Base Eustis-Langley, Va. Biden told the crowd the young woman with her family at the event "looks like she's 19 years old, sitting there like a little lady with her legs crossed." According to the New York Post, the girl "appeared to be elementary-school age."

Stovall did not respond to a request for comment Wednesday. In an interview with Military.com, he defended his actions, telling the website that he had not broken any rules or regulations. Military.com reported Tuesday that Stovall ended the interview abruptly after he was asked about specific allegations.

In an open letter to Biden, Weinstein called for Stovall to be prosecuted under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, labeling his actions "one of the most repulsive acts of criminal contemptuousness towards a U.S. president by a uniformed member of the Department of Defense (DoD) we at MRFF have ever heretofore witnessed."

Under UCMJ Article 88, a commissioned officer in the U.S. military is barred from using "contemptuous words against" top officials, including the president. Those found guilty under Article 88 face up to one year in military prison, forfeiture of all pay and dismissal as a commissioned officer.

"Mr. President, MRFF is respectfully asking you to ensure, as our American military's commander in chief, that [1st Lt.] Alex Stovall is justly, expeditiously, aggressively and visibly punished for his incredibly reprehensible actions, as detailed in this open letter to you," Weinstein wrote in the letter to Biden dated Tuesday. "Sir, we simply cannot have Army [first lieutenants] bragging and boasting about calling our president a pedophile and illicitly leveraging their military status to win elections to Congress in blatant violation of DoD regulations, directives, instructions and the UCMJ!"

Stovall also faces accusations of embellishing his service.

He has in several instances claimed to be an Army chaplain, but his service records show he is a chaplain candidate, essentially a chaplain-in-training. Stovall appears to have in recent days altered his campaign's Twitter profile to reflect he is a chaplain candidate and not a full chaplain. His campaign website's "About me" page, however, still reads that he was "a prior non-commissioned officer who served overseas as a chaplain," as of Thursday.

Stovall's service records show he first enlisted in the Army in 2013. They also show he has received an Overseas Service Ribbon, indicating he has deployed outside the United States.

Stovall, in campaign material

and broadcast appearances, has said he is running for Congress in Arizona to oppose Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., who he labeled in a campaign advertisement as a socialist who "hate[s] ... God and America."

"I don't fight for this country to watch it be taken over by AOC," Stovall said in the ad, using Ocasio-Cortez's initials.

Stovall's Army records show he has not served in combat.

If Stovall wins the seat — in a district that voted 61% last year to reelect Democratic Rep. Greg Stanton — he would become the youngest Black Republican ever elected to Congress.

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## MILITARY

# US airman works to help Kenyan village

By KYLE ALVAREZ  
Stars and Stripes

RAF MILDENHALL, England — An encounter with a Maasai tribesman during a deployment to Kenya created a lasting bond for Air Force Tech. Sgt. Fariht Gomez, who is spearheading a grassroots effort to get supplies to a village whose economy was hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic.

Gomez, who is based at RAF Lakenheath in England, first visited the Maasai Mara National Reserve in 2018 while deployed to Kenya on a civil engineering construction mission. The villagers there, many of whom lived in homes built from sticks and mud with grass-thatched roofs, made a deep impression.

At the time, the people living near the Oseki Mara Camp were trying to build a school. Gomez made a donation after talking with Dennis Shinka, the camp's co-owner and host.

"His drive and need resonated with me on a personal level," Gomez said.

Now the village, which relies on tourism as a main source of income, is trying to rebound once again.

"2020 was an especially bad year for us," said Shinka, whose camp helps support multiple villages. "Apart from the total shutdown of tourism, we also lost thousands of livestock to a foot and mouth (disease) outbreak."



Maasai villagers gather in southern Kenya, where Air Force Tech. Sgt. Fariht Gomez first visited in 2018.

The donations "slowly but surely helped us rebuild our lives," Shinka said.

The village that Gomez supports has a little over 400 people and is part of a larger community of nearby villages.

"Over the last couple of years, the local tribesman and I built a good rapport," Gomez said. "The school they built not too long ago has been destroyed by a fire. Knowing that I cannot support [them] every time they need, due to financial constraints or my personal life, weighs on me from time to time. All the same, I try to support them when I can."

In early 2020, Gomez moved to RAF La-



PHOTOS BY FARIHT GOMEZ

Tech Sgt. Fariht Gomez, right, and other service members package supplies donated by the RAF Lakenheath community in April to help a Maasai village in southern Kenya.

kenheath, which was when he saw the need to "go big" with his fundraising.

"I hoped that with social media and wing support we would be able to deliver aid that would not only help with their education and lifestyle, but also with (personal protective equipment) to combat the pandemic," he said.

Gomez set up collection points around the base and asked people to drop off items at their convenience. He collected around two tons of supplies, including clothing, shoes, school supplies and PPE.

The amount of supplies collected was greater than any previous year, which brought up another problem: the cost.

The bill for sending supplies came to around \$5,000. Gomez's friend, Tech. Sgt. Stephanie Hunt, suggested he start a GoFundMe page to help with the costs.

"Even though he did not receive the full amount requested, around \$2,000, it is still better than him spending the full amount himself," Hunt said.

The Maasai villages in the area are grateful for Gomez's help, Shinka said.

"From his (first) visit, Gomez did promise to support the community," Shinka said. "We are very happy he kept his promise."

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## States hit by disasters seek larger Guard forces

By SARAH CAMMARATA  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Dozens of House lawmakers from Florida, Texas and California want to increase the size of National Guard forces in their states as years of growing extreme weather events has put a strain on troops who are helping to respond.

In a letter to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin dated June 1, 59 House members from some of the most populated U.S. states expressed concern over a lack of resources to fulfill the range of mis-

sions facing the National Guard.

"Strain on the National Guard has been building for years as hurricane response in Florida, winter storm, and flood rescue in Texas, and combatting wildfires in California has been persistent," the lawmakers wrote in the letter.

Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, testified to Congress last month that Guard members from 22 states supported 22 severe weather events in 2020 and a record of 12 storms.

"The extraordinary circum-

stances of the past year have highlighted the strain our Guard units have been under for too long, potentially hurting recruitment, retention, and readiness," the lawmakers wrote.

The states represented by the lawmakers have the lowest Guard member-to-civilian ratios in the country, they wrote.

Limited resources have put greater demands on Guard families because of the Guard bureaus' lack of ability to rotate personnel.

The effort was mostly led by

members of the House Armed Services Committee, including Reps. Mike Waltz, R-Fla., Stephanie Murphy, D-Fla., Ken Calvert, R-Calif., Jimmy Panetta, D-Calif., and Ronny Jackson, R-Texas, and Marc Veasey, D-Texas.

Recommendations from an internal report by the National Guard Bureau sent to Congress in April included the Guard "may need to evaluate reallocating mission sets to other geographic areas to keep pace with changing demographics across the country."

The lawmakers asked Austin to

review the recommendations of the report titled "Impact of U.S. Population Trends on National Guard Force Structure," as well as resource allocations to increase the size of Guard bureaus in the three states.

"We have an obligation to ensure that these civilian warriors, and our state bureaus, have the resources they need to fulfill the full range of missions we task them with," the lawmakers wrote.

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## Fort Hood soldier arrested in death of toddler in Arizona

By ROSE L. THAYER  
Stars and Stripes

A Fort Hood soldier was arrested at the Army base in Texas on charges of murder and child abuse in Tempe, Ariz., where local law enforcement said his actions led to the death of his girlfriend's 13-month-old child in January 2019.

Fort Hood law enforcement arrested Pfc. Khairee Ammar Patton, 21, on May 25 without incident, according to base officials.



Patton

Bell County Jail in Texas listed him as an inmate Wednesday as he waits to be extradited to Maricopa County in Arizona and arraigned on a second-degree murder charge, two counts of child abuse and a charge for failure to provide care.

Patton is assigned to the 15th Brigade Support Battalion within

the 1st Cavalry Division, according to Fort Hood. His arrest is related to an investigation from more than two years ago, according to the Tempe Police Department.

On Jan. 9, 2019, officers were called to Cardon Children's Medical Center, now named Banner Children's, where a 13-month-old child was in critical condition after being transported from a Phoenix urgent care facility.

Patton initially told staff at the

urgent care facility that he was the child's stepfather, though police determined he was the boyfriend of the child's mother. Patton later said he was alone with the child while his girlfriend was at work and the toddler had hit his or her head on a stereo, according to police.

Police did not name the child, the mother or release the child's gender.

The attending doctor told police that the injuries did not match Pat-

ton's account because they were not consistent with an accidental injury.

The injuries indicated abuse, police said.

The toddler was pronounced dead at the hospital.

Tempe detectives said Fort Hood criminal investigators have been coordinating with them since Patton's arrest.

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## PACIFIC

# US bases find 17 cases in Japan, S. Korea

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — The U.S. military in Japan and South Korea reported 17 new cases of COVID-19 as of 6 p.m. Thursday.

Kadena Air Base on Okinawa had seven people test positive for the coronavirus respiratory disease “over the last few days,” according to a base Facebook post Wednesday evening.

Four became ill with COVID-19 symptoms and self-isolated. The remaining three were already quarantined as close contacts of previously infected individuals.

Naval Air Facility Atsugi, 26 miles southwest of Tokyo, reported three new coronavirus cases Thursday, according to a post on its Facebook page. A sailor and two base employees tested posi-

tive after displaying symptoms. Their infections were confirmed sometime after May 24, said base spokesman Sam Samuelson.

U.S. Forces Korea had four service members and three family members test positive after arriving at Incheon International Airport on commercial flights May 16, 18, 25, 29 and Sunday, according to a U.S. Forces Korea news release Wednesday.

Five tested positive on the mandatory COVID-19 test before entering quarantine and two tested positive on the test required to exit quarantine. All seven were isolated at either Camp Humphreys or Osan Air Base, according to USFK.

Starting Friday, travelers to Japan from another 15 U.S. states, including Arizona, California and New York, are required to spend

three days in quarantine in a government-designated facility upon entering, according to a Facebook post by the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. The 15 states join a list that already includes Florida, Michigan, Minnesota and Tennessee.

However, travelers associated with the U.S. Defense Department are not required to comply with the quarantine order, according to U.S. Forces Japan.

The Enhanced Quarantine Alert does not affect individuals under the status of forces agreement, according to an email Thursday to Stars and Stripes from USFJ spokesman Marine Staff Sgt. Jonathan Wright. SOFA defines the legal status of the U.S. armed forces stationed in host countries.

Japan reported 3,037 new coronavirus cases on Wednesday,

down 1,496 from the same day last week, the Yomiuri newspaper reported. The government has counted 750,000 cases during the pandemic and more than 13,000 deaths, according to the World Health Organization.

Tokyo on Wednesday reported another 487 people newly infected with the coronavirus and 13 deaths, according to public broadcaster NHK. New infections are 256 fewer than the same day last week, continuing a trend.

Osaka prefecture, the nation's second-largest metro area, reported 213 new coronavirus patients Wednesday and 27 deaths, according to NHK. While the number of deaths is up 11 from a month prior, the number of cases has fallen dramatically in recent weeks. There were 845 new patients on May 3, according to data.

Okinawa prefecture reported 297 new infections Wednesday, according to NHK.

Japan's top coronavirus adviser on Wednesday called for the Tokyo Olympics, scheduled to begin on July 23, to be scaled down “as much as possible,” Kyodo News reported Thursday.

Speaking to a House of Representatives committee in Tokyo, Shigeru Omi, an infectious disease expert and head of the government subcommittee on the virus, said hosting the games during a pandemic is “not normal.”

Tokyo and nine other prefectures, including Osaka and Okinawa, are in a state of emergency through June 20.

Stars and Stripes reporter Joseph Ditzler contributed to this report.  
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## Rumble: Marines prepare to face peer-level force in island jungles

FROM PAGE 1

vision spokesman, during a conference call Wednesday.

At the start of the exercise, 3rd Battalion Marines air assaulted into the jungle while others arrived in small boats to secure key maritime terrain, said Maj. Matthew Chomiak, 33, assistant operations officer for 4th Marine Regiment, which oversaw the exercise, during the same call.

Meanwhile Marines from 2nd Battalion arrived in helicopters to seize an objective, he said.

The Marines battled it out with blank ammunition in engagements refereed by observer controllers before the larger 2nd Battalion force was victorious, Chomiak said.

The training tested the Marines' ability to insert, persist and establish command and control and situational awareness in a tough environment that replicates the conditions they would face fighting in the first island chain, he said.

The Marines trained to tap into joint force support such as aircraft and artillery, Chomiak said.

The Marines traveled light, carrying items they could pack into a helicopter or move on golf-cart sized Utility Task Vehicles, which can also be carried by MV-22 Os-

prey and CH-53 Super Stallion aircraft, Maj. William McCabe, 35, of York, Pa., operations officer for 3rd Battalion, said during the call.

“I would rather be out in the jungle than in an office,” said Staff Sgt. Drew Toboy, 32, of Detroit, another member of 3rd Battalion on the conference call.

The Marines have done plenty of force-on-force training but, in recent years, it has usually been done in a desert or urban setting, he said.

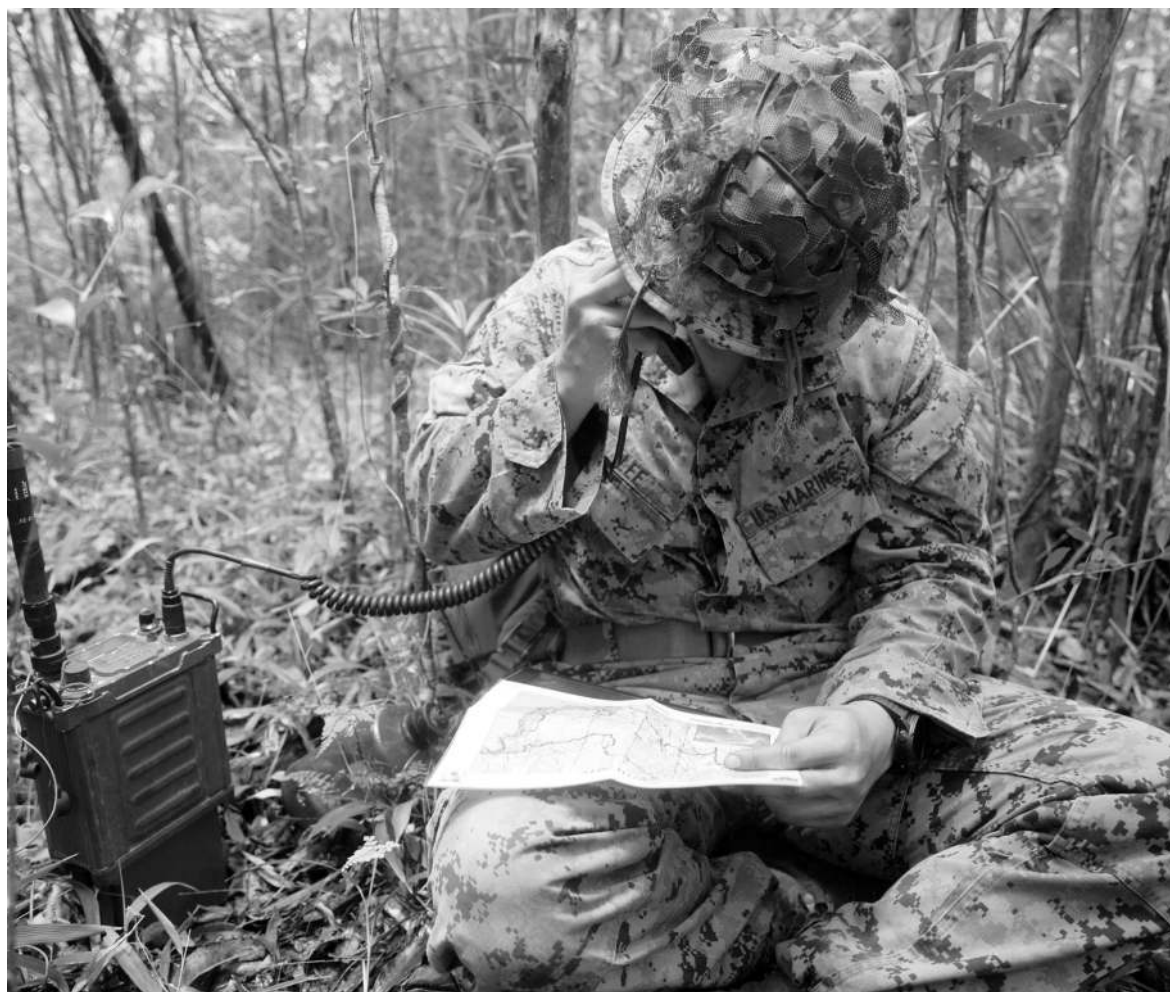
“It's not easy operating in the jungle,” he said, noting that visibility there is only 65 to 100 feet.

Another 3rd Battalion Marine, Cpl. Justin Rohn, 24, of San Bernardino, Calif., said he expected to go to either the desert or the jungle when he enlisted.

“The toughest thing was negotiating the terrain and trying to make movements through it,” he said of the training area. “It is always changing, and no map will be able to accurately depict it.”

The Marines traversed about 25 miles of jungle during the event and “expected to be drenched in sweat after every movement,” he said.

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UJIAN GOSUN/U.S. Marine Corps

First Lt. Eunwon Lee, the fire support team leader with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, calls for fire support during a jungle warfare exercise at Okinawa's Northern Training Area on May 26.

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## WAR ON TERRORISM

## Afghan pilot once denied refuge arrives in US

BY J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — An Afghan air force pilot who had been promised refuge in America last fall, only to be rejected at the last minute, finally arrived on U.S. soil Wednesday with his family.

Mohammed Naiem Asadi, his wife, Rahima, and their daughter Zainab, 5, have been conditionally approved for parole, a temporary status for noncitizens to come to America, U.S. immigration services said in a letter to the family.

"This is a real recognition that this man's life is in significant danger in Afghanistan," said the family's lawyer, Kimberly Motley, who came to Kabul to escort the family to America.

The family passed through immigration and plans to file for asylum in the U.S., Motley said in an interview Monday.

Asadi, a helicopter pilot reputed to have killed more insurgents than anyone else in the Afghan air force, received a rare endorsement by the Pentagon last fall to move to the U.S. with his family because he was in "imminent danger of being killed by the Taliban."

But the Defense Department later withdrew its approval, saying that senior officials had not been consulted.

The decision angered former advisers who vouched for Asadi's bid to come to America. As a major in the Afghan air force, Asadi protected the life of a downed U.S. pilot last year and, by one former chief warrant officer's estimate, had been in the cockpit for 70% of all missions in southern Afghanistan in recent years.

"It's shameful what happened on that last day, that someone changed their mind in the DOD," said Andy Miller, a retired Army chief warrant officer who helped train Asadi. "At the last minute, the rug was yanked out from under them."

Asadi and his family received death threats from the Taliban that were determined credible by U.S. investigators last fall.

The Taliban have launched attacks all over the country as U.S. and NATO troops withdraw from Afghanistan, with assassinations killing politicians, journalists and military personnel. The continuing violence has raised calls for the U.S. to protect or evacuate Af-

ghans under threat for working with them.

However, a Pentagon spokesman told The Wall Street Journal last year that so many military personnel are under threat that letting them all seek refuge in America would "absolutely gut the Afghan security forces."



Asadi

Some advisers who supported Asadi's bid to come to America acknowledged that helping one of the country's few elite pilots leave the country weakens its ability to stave off the Taliban.

But in addition to threats from the Taliban, Asadi feared retribution from the Afghan military for trying to leave the country with his family.

Pilots who report threats against them often receive little sympathy and may be threatened with punishment or imprisonment, said Niloofar Rahmani, Afghanistan's first female fixed-wing pilot and also a client of Motley. She was granted asylum in America in 2018 after receiving

numerous death threats.

After the U.S. military withdrew its endorsement, Asadi and his family went into hiding, first at Bagram Airfield and then in a house on the outskirts of Kabul while he reapplied for refuge in America.

With the family's departure from Afghanistan, supporters of the family hope to greet the Asadi family in person soon. Among these is Capt. Laurie Witherspoon, an Army chaplain who met the family as they hid at Bagram last fall. She said she began visiting the family regularly, giving stuffed animals and coloring books to their daughter.

The chaplain said she spoke with the family almost daily over the last six months.

"Lots of emotional highs and lows," Witherspoon said in a text message. "Asadi's faith, humility and courage has strengthened the roots of our international friendship."

Once the family comes to America, Witherspoon said she plans to help give English lessons to Rahima, in exchange for Afghan cooking classes.

The family's supporters in

America have set up a charity drive, at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-the-asadi-family>, to help with their living expenses.

As the family prepared to leave Afghanistan on Tuesday, Zainab played with a rose and said "good-bye" to people in English as her parents loaded their luggage into a car bound for the airport.

While in the air Wednesday on the way to the family's new home, the former pilot Asadi reflected on his life growing up in a small rural village, and then flying in the skies in the war ravaging his country. He recalled the friends he lost, and thanked those who helped him come to America. He wrote that he hoped for peace one day in Afghanistan. He remained hopeful for a life without fear in America.

Before landing on U.S. soil, he wrote: "I am glad that today it was proved once again that humanity knows no boundaries and human beings can embrace each other with love in all their differences."

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## Parents still searching for loved ones, answers after bombing of school

BY J.P. LAWRENCE AND  
ZUBAIR BABAKARKHAIL  
*Stars and Stripes*

KABUL, Afghanistan — Abdullah Ahmadi still hasn't seen his daughter in the weeks since three bombs killed at least 85 students and wounded 186 at a girls' school in the Afghan capital.

Ahmadi refuses to believe that Shukria, 18, is dead. He searches for her each day, with the idea that she might have been brought to a hospital with minor wounds, after he found a singed notebook of hers at the site.

"No one knows what happened," Ahmadi said.

Since the May 8 attack on the Sayed al-Shuhada school, located in a neighborhood with a large Shiite minority presence, no one has claimed the attack or been held responsible by the Kabul authorities.

The lack of answers and ongoing questions of security as U.S. and foreign forces prepare to leave the country have left many in the community angered and worried, but also determined to preserve the education rights gained by women in the city since the fall of the Taliban two decades ago.

Fatima Jafari, the headmistress of the school in western Kabul's Dasht-e-Barchi neighborhood, said she knew Shukria. The 11<sup>th</sup> grader had been marked present that day.

Jafari doubts Shukria is truly missing, and wonders whether the girl's body vanished in the force of the blast. None of the other wounded girls saw her at any of the hospitals, Jafari said.

Like others, Jafari has vivid memories of the horror of that day.

"I still feel that sound of that explosion in my ears sometimes," she said, "and get really terrified when I cross that place when going to the school."

As many as 100 other survivors of the attack are struggling with trauma and psychological conditions, Afghanistan's Tolo News reported.

Despite the trauma, survivors of the attack still want to go to school, Jafari said.

"I haven't seen any family taking their girls out of the school," she said. "They believe in education and they will continue to learn."

The Afghan government blamed the Taliban, who denied



J.P. LAWRENCE/Stars and Stripes

Abdullah Ahmadi holds a picture of his daughter Shukria, 18, on Monday. Shukria has been missing since a bombing killed more than 60 students at a girls' school in western Kabul, Afghanistan, on May 8.

the attack. Islamic State militants, who consider the ethnic Hazara Shiites religious apostates, have often targeted the area.

Victims' families have urged the Afghan government to explain how so many of their daughters died that day. The country's second vice president, Sarwar Danesh, recently announced a plan to protect Dasht-e-Barchi.

But the announcements mean little to those who lost loved ones in the attack.

"This is the responsibility of the government to find what exactly has happened," said Rohullah Ahmadi, Shukria's uncle.

Shukria loved poetry, drawing, and above all, wanted to be a news anchor, her father said.

He is angry at the government's

lack of response to the bombing and fears for his country's future in light of the U.S. withdrawal. But he remained optimistic he would one day see his daughter again.

"I am 100% hopeful," he said. "She is not dead."

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## NATION



JOSH EDELSON/AP

Boat docks sitting on dry land at the Browns Ravine Cove area of drought-stricken Folsom Lake, currently at 37% of the normal capacity, in Folsom, Calif., on May 22.

## Droughts ravage reservoirs in California ahead of hot summer

Associated Press

OROVILLE, Calif. — Each year Lake Oroville helps water a quarter of the nation's crops, sustain endangered salmon beneath its massive earthen dam and anchor the tourism economy of a Northern California county that must rebuild seemingly every year after unrelenting wildfires.

But now the mighty lake — a linchpin in a system of aqueducts and reservoirs in the arid U.S. West that makes California possible — is shrinking with surprising speed amid a severe drought, with state officials predicting it will reach a record low later this summer.

While droughts are common in California, this year's is much hotter and drier than others, evaporating water more quickly from the reservoirs and the sparse Sierra Nevada snowpack that feeds them. The state's more than 1,500 reservoirs are 50% lower than they should be this time of year, according to Jay Lund, co-director of the Center for Watershed Sciences at the University of California-Davis.

Over Memorial Day weekend, dozens of houseboats sat on cinderblocks at Lake Oroville be-

cause there wasn't enough water to hold them. Blackened trees lined the reservoir's steep, parched banks.

In nearby Folsom Lake, normally bustling boat docks rested on dry land, their buoys warning phantom boats to slow down. Campers occupied dusty riverbanks farther north at Shasta Lake.

But the impacts of dwindling reservoirs go beyond luxury yachts and weekend anglers. Salmon need cold water from the bottom of the reservoirs to spawn. The San Francisco Bay needs fresh water from the reservoirs to keep out the salt water that harms freshwater fish. Farmers need the water to irrigate their crops. Businesses need reservoirs full so people will come play in them and spend money.

And everyone needs the water to run hydroelectric power plants that supply much of the state's energy.

If Lake Oroville falls below 640 feet — which it could do by late August — state officials would shut down a major power plant for just the second time ever because of low water levels, strain-

ing the electrical grid during the peak demand of the hottest part of the summer.

In Northern California's Butte County, low water prompts another emotion: fear. The county suffered the deadliest U.S. wildfire in a century in 2018 when 85 people died. Last year, another 16 people died in a wildfire.

Walking along the Bidwell Canyon trail last week, 63-year-old Lisa Larson was supposed to have a good view of the lake. Instead, she saw withered grass and trees.

"It makes me feel like our planet is literally drying up," she said. "It makes me feel a little unsettled because the drier it gets, the more fires we are going to have."

Last year was the third driest year on record in terms of precipitation. Temperatures hit triple digits in much of California over the Memorial Day weekend, earlier than expected. State officials were surprised earlier this year when about 500,000-acre-feet of water they were expecting to flow into reservoirs never showed up.

"In the previous drought, it took (the reservoirs) three years to get this low as they are in the second year of this drought," Lund said.

# GOP senator, Biden discuss infrastructure

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — For nearly an hour, President Joe Biden and the top Senate Republican negotiating infrastructure met behind closed doors — two seasoned legislators engaged in another round of conversations, but emerging with few outward signs of tangible progress ahead of a deadline next week.

The White House billed the private meeting Wednesday as more of a conversation with West Virginia GOP Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, rather than a formal negotiation. No new offers were expected to be presented. More than anything, the session in the Oval Office was seen through the political lens of the president and Republicans trying to show the public what Americans say they want — a willingness to work together, even if no deal is within reach.

Biden and Capito had a "constructive and frank conversation," according to a White House official granted anonymity to discuss the private talks. The senator's office said she is encouraged by the ongoing conversations. The two agreed to reconnect Friday.

Still, talks over Biden's top legislative priority have been moving slowly, a daunting undertaking given the massive infrastructure investment, and time for a deal is running out. The administration has set a June 7 deadline to see clear direction and signs of progress.

"The fact that the president is having Sen. Capito here today and has been having ongoing discussions with Republicans in the Senate and that he's eager to find a path forward on bipartisanship work certainly tells you, I think, what you need to know about what

he thinks about working with people even when there's disagreement," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said ahead of the afternoon session.

Privately, the president has sized up the GOP's latest \$928 billion offer as unworkable, in large part because it taps unused COVID-19 funds. Instead, Biden wants to hike the corporate tax rate — a nonstarter for Senate Republicans — to generate revenue for his \$1.7 trillion package.

Friday's next round of talks between Biden and the Republican senator would overlap with the release of the May jobs report, as private economists estimate a meaningful increase from the disappointing April figures. May's jobs figures could provide evidence as to whether Biden's earlier \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package has helped put the country on track to recover the jobs lost to the pandemic.

Heading into the meeting, Capito was expected to reup the GOP's push to repurpose the coronavirus relief fund to pay for infrastructure investments, said Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, who has tasked her to lead the discussions.

"That's the key to getting a bipartisan agreement," McConnell said at a press conference in Kentucky. He said he particularly wants to halt unemployment assistance that he says is preventing Americans from returning to work.

For Republicans, the corporate tax hikes are a red line they will not cross. They instead want to pay for the infrastructure investment with virus aid money as well as gas taxes and other fees on consumers.

## US jobless claims drop to 385K, another pandemic low

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans seeking unemployment benefits fell last week for a fifth straight week to a new pandemic low, the latest evidence that the U.S. job market is regaining its health as the economy further reopens.

The Labor Department reported Thursday that jobless claims dropped to 385,000, down 20,000 from the week before. The number of weekly applications for unemployment aid, which generally reflects the

pace of layoffs, has fallen steadily all year, though it remains high by historical standards.

The decline in applications reflects a swift rebound in economic growth and the job market's steady recovery from the coronavirus recession. More Americans are venturing out to shop, travel, dine out and congregate at entertainment venues. All that renewed spending has led companies to seek new workers.

Employers have added 1.8 million jobs

this year — an average of more than 450,000 a month — and the government's May jobs report on Friday is expected to show that they added an additional 656,000 last month, according to a survey of economists by the data firm FactSet. The economy remains down 8.2 million jobs from its level in February 2020, just before the virus tore through the economy.

AnnElizabeth Konkel, economist at the Indeed Hiring Lab, noted that the number of people who are collecting traditional

state unemployment benefits rose by 169,000 in the week of May 22 to nearly 3.8 million.

"Reviving a labor market after a deadly pandemic is complicated," she said. "Not all indicators move at the same speed or take the same recovery path. Hopefully, the COVID-19 cases continue to decline as the number of fully vaccinated individuals rises. Fully returning to pre-COVID normal is essential to a full labor market recovery."

## NATION

# Home stops taking in 'at-risk' youths after gun battle

Associated Press

DELTONA, Fla. — A Florida children's home that two children ran away from before engaging sheriff's deputies in a gun battle this week will stop accepting "at-risk" children, officials said.

The 14-year-old girl and 12-year-old boy left the Florida United Methodist Children's Home near Deltona on Tuesday and broke into a house where they found guns and ammunition, Sheriff Mike Chitwood said. They began firing on Volusia County Sheriff's deputies who were searching for them. Deputies finally shot and wounded the girl, who was reported to be in stable condition after surgery, the sheriff said.

"What the hell is the Department of Juvenile Justice doing? Sending these kids to places that can't handle them," a visibly angry Chitwood said. The girl had been in trouble various times over the past year, accused of stealing puppies and setting fires, the sheriff said.

Juvenile justice officials said in an email that the children's home

they ran away from is not a part of its program.

"When a youth is arrested in Florida, the courts determine whether or not they are held in secure detention or released into the community," the statement said.

The children's home, meanwhile, announced a 30-day moratorium on accepting "at risk" children, after which it will only take them when they can adequately care for them. The home's Emergency Shelter Care program currently houses three such children, the statement said.

"The level of children who are being sent to us through Emergency Shelter Care at times is beyond the scope of our capabilities to provide the care required and limits who we can serve as part of our mission," Kitwana McTyer, President and CEO of the home, said in the statement.

McTyer said Tuesday's incident is "the result of the system failing our children." She said these children "are in desperate need of care in the appropriate setting, which is a higher level of care than we provide."

## Candidate interrupted by sex toy on drone, punched

Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — A New Mexico sheriff who is running for mayor of Albuquerque was interrupted while on stage at a campaign event by a flying drone with a sex toy attached to it and a man who punched him.

Bernalillo County Sheriff Manuel Gonzales' campaign said the Democrat was unharmed and "will not be intimidated."

The Albuquerque Journal reported that a video posted on Facebook shows Gonzales answering questions from the audience while standing on a stage at an events center when the drone bearing the sex toy started buzzing near the stage.

A sheriff's office report said the owner of the event center grabbed the device and that 20-year-old Kaelan Ashby Dreyer unsuccessfully tried to grab it.

The report said Dreyer turned his attention to Gonzales, swinging his fist and calling him a "tyrant." A deputy wrote that Dreyer punched Gonzales' hands and was then removed from the event by deputies.

Gonzales said at a news confer-

ence on Wednesday that he believed Dreyer was with several companions and spotted someone standing on the other side of a fence who he believes was flying the drone.

"It became so distracting from the sound and everything, I couldn't really get my point across," Gonzales said.

Dreyer has been charged with petty misdemeanor battery and misdemeanor resisting, evading or obstructing an officer. According to a deputy in the report, Dreyer said that he did not intend to hit Gonzales, but was upset at the way Gonzales answered a question and intended to swing his fist through the air.

Gonzales suggested Wednesday that the stunt with the drone may have been sent by the rival campaign of incumbent Mayor Tim Keller, also a Democrat. Keller's campaign condemned the stunt as "disruptive, rude and immature" and denied any involvement.

Dreyer denied to the Albuquerque Journal that he was working for Keller's campaign and said he's not a fan of the incumbent either.



DARIO LOPEZ-MILLS/AP

Minors lie inside a pod at the Donna Department of Homeland Security holding facility, in Donna, Texas, in March.

## Texas' move to close shelters for migrant kids alarms groups

Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — A move by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott to shutter more than 50 shelters housing about 4,000 migrant children could seriously disrupt a national program that already faces strained capacity to properly care for minors crossing the U.S.-Mexico border alone.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which cares for migrant children, said Wednesday that it did not intend to close any facilities but that it was "assessing" the Republican governor's late Tuesday disaster declaration. The proclamation directs a state agency to deny or discontinue licenses for child care facilities sheltering migrant children within 90 days.

Groups that represent migrant children and reunite them with their families said the order could be harmful because it may mean more minors are sent to mass-scale, unlicensed facilities that attorneys and advocates say endanger their health and safety. Abbott argues that the federal government can't force Texas to keep issuing state licenses in response to a federal problem.

The U.S. government funds 56 shelters in Texas, out of about 200 licensed shelters in the country. The last census taken on May 19 showed 4,223 children in 52 of those state-licensed shelters, according to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

The agency was directed to remove the licenses and sent a notice to providers Wednesday telling them to wind down oper-

ations by Aug. 30.

After that date, it says, "if you are still providing care for individuals who are not lawfully present in the United States under a contract with the federal government, HHSC will take necessary steps to comply with the proclamation."

The highly unusual move to order a disaster declaration — usually reserved for natural disasters or health crises — comes amid Abbott's criticism of record numbers of border crossings in recent months. He has increased the presence of the Texas Department of Public Safety and National Guard in south Texas.

Abbott also has been critical of emergency facilities that lack state licenses, which may end up taking in more children if his order succeeds in shuttering smaller shelters.

In April, Texas officials announced they were investigating three reports alleging abuse and neglect at a San Antonio coliseum holding more than 1,600 migrant teens. There also have been abuse or neglect investigations at state-licensed facilities, and Texas lists 18 total citations between April and May.

Some critics worry the disaster declaration could set a precedent for other Republican governors to thwart efforts by the Biden administration to increase capacity in a network of licensed shelters. Governors in Iowa and Nebraska have rejected federal requests to house migrant children, saying they oppose President Joe Biden's stance on caring for minors before they are

reunited with family in the U.S.

"This is a transparent and troubling ploy to politicize a humanitarian crisis," Krish O'Mara Vignarajah, head of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, said in a statement. "Because Texas-based shelters comprise a significant portion of U.S. capacity, this order could do real damage, and to the serious detriment of children's well-being."

The increasing arrival of migrant children has tested the Biden administration, with the U.S. government picking up nearly 19,000 children traveling alone across the Mexican border in March and more than 17,000 in April.

The record-setting numbers come as the administration decided to exempt unaccompanied children from federal pandemic-related powers to immediately expel most migrants from the country without giving them an opportunity to seek asylum.

The pandemic also has meant less capacity at small and medium-size shelters that care for minors. The program lost thousands of beds due to COVID-19 restrictions, bringing down the tally to about 7,100 by February.

Doing away with more state-licensed shelters is a "wrongheaded approach," said Wendy Young, president of Kids in Need of Defense, which provides legal services to immigrant children.

"At a time when the United States needs far more licensed placement settings for unaccompanied migrant children, the order threatens to leave the nation with far less," Young said.

## WORLD

# Netanyahu foes push for quick vote to end his 12-year rule

By LAURIE KELLMAN  
Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's opponents pushed Thursday for a quick parliament vote to formally end his lengthy rule, hoping to head off any last-minute attempts to derail their newly announced coalition government.

The latest political maneuvering began just hours after opposition leader Yair Lapid and his main coalition partner, Naftali Bennett, declared they had reached a deal to form a new government and muster a majority in the 120-member Knesset, or parliament.

The coalition consists of eight parties from across the political spectrum with little in common except the shared goal of toppling Netanyahu after a record-setting 12 years in power. The alliance includes hardliners previously allied with Netanyahu, as well as center-left parties and even an Arab faction — a first in Israeli politics.

Netanyahu lashed out at his foes

on Thursday, signaling that he will continue to exert pressure on former allies who joined the coalition.

"All members of Knesset who were elected with right-wing votes need to oppose this dangerous leftist government," he wrote on Twitter.

The drama riveted Israelis at a time when tumult has not been in short supply: four inconclusive elections in two years followed by an 11-day war in the Gaza Strip last month that was accompanied by mob violence between Jews and Arabs in cities across the country. The country is also emerging from the coronavirus crisis that caused deep economic damage and exposed tensions between the secular majority and the ultra-Orthodox minority.

Yet the political debate has focused squarely on Netanyahu, who is facing corruption charges — and whether he should stay or go.

"We never had a coalition like this," said Hillel Bar Sadeh at a coffee shop in Jerusalem. "We like to have a new spirit, we like to have

some unity."

The owner of the coffee shop, Yosi Zarifi, said he trusts that Netanyahu will return to power — and distrusts the coalition.

"Everybody is clear that this trick will not last, there won't be any glue (to keep it together) here," he said.

The anti-Netanyahu bloc announced the coalition deal just before a deadline at midnight Wednesday. The agreement triggered a complex process that is likely to stretch over the next week.

The coalition has a razor-thin majority of 61 votes in parliament. Now the question is whether the group's votes will hold together in order to name a new parliament speaker, who would then preside over a vote required to confirm the new government.

If the group can't manage that, the current speaker, who is a Netanyahu ally, could use his position to delay the vote and give Netanyahu more time to sabotage the coalition.

# China now vaccinating at fast pace after slow start

By HUIZHONG WU  
Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan — In the span of just five days last month, China gave out 100 million shots of its COVID-19 vaccines.

After a slow start, China is now doing what virtually no other country in the world can: leveraging the power and all-encompassing reach of its one-party system and a maturing domestic vaccine industry to administer shots at a staggering pace. The rollout is far from perfect, including uneven distribution, but Chinese public health leaders now say they're hoping to inoculate 80% of the population of 1.4 billion by the end of the year.

As of Wednesday, China had given out more than 704 million doses — with nearly half of those in May alone. China's total is roughly a third of the 1.9 billion shots distributed globally, according to Our World in Data, an online research site.

The call to get vaccinated comes from every corner of society. Companies offer shots to their employees, schools urge their students and staffers, and local government workers check on their residents.

That pressure underscores both the system's strength, which makes

it possible to even consider vaccinating more than a billion people this year, but also the risks to civil liberties — a concern the world over but one that is particularly acute in China, where there are few protections.

"The Communist Party has people all the way down to every village, every neighborhood," said Ray Yip, former country director for the Gates Foundation in China and a public health expert. "That's the draconian part of the system, but it also gives very powerful mobilization."

China is now averaging about 19 million shots per day, according to Our World in Data's rolling seven-day average. It's still unclear how many people are fully vaccinated — which can mean anywhere from one to three doses of the vaccines in use — as the government does not publicly release that data.

Zhong Nanshan, the head of a group of experts attached to the National Health Commission and a prominent government doctor, said on Sunday that 40% of the population has received at least one dose, and the aim was to get that percentage fully vaccinated by the end of the month.

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# WEEKEND



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DISNEY/AP

# HATE COUTURE

## WEEKEND: GADGETS &amp; TECHNOLOGY



Feels Good Man Film LLC

Cartoonist Matt Furie draws Pepe the Frog in the documentary “Feels Good Man.” An NFT — non-fungible token — of Furie’s original 2006 drawing recently sold at an online auction for the equivalent of nearly \$1 million.

# Back in the picture

## Pepe cartoonist is trying to reclaim character through NFTs

By MICHAEL CAVNA  
*The Washington Post*

**M**att Furie is a patient man. After many on the internet co-opted his most famous cartoon creation more than a decade ago, he was long willing to live and let live. And when his same Pepe the Frog character popped up on the forefront on the crypto-art scene about five years ago, Furie watched from the sidelines and waited.

Now, he’s moving fully into the world of NFTs and their experimental possibilities.

In April, an image of Pepe — the first authentic crypto-art of Furie’s iconic character — sold at auction for about \$1 million. And the artist is planning to unveil a universe of collectible NFT characters — some of them his latest takes on Pepe.

To Furie, the NFT realm is about more than coin. During the era of Donald Trump, extremist social media users adapted Pepe so often that the Anti-Defamation League deemed it a hate symbol. But the exploding world of crypto-art is allowing the cartoonist to reclaim a character who was never meant to stand for much beyond love, peace, hedonism and altered-state chillaxin’.

“The NFT world is new, and there are a lot of optimistic people creating cool things,” Furie says of his interest in exploring non-fungible tokens — unique digital files whose origins and ownership can be verified. “Pepe does not have the baggage here that he does in the ‘real world,’ and I like working with utopians and optimistic freethinkers. There are so many possibilities.”

Furie became intrigued when his cousin Frank Musarra, a Brooklyn-based multimedia artist, contacted him in February with an invitation to show his work on Chain/Saw, a new online gallery of crypto-art featuring like-minded creators. Musarra envisioned a “middle ground between crypto-utopian zealotry and grouchy anti-tech naysayers.”

They soon were on a Zoom call with dozens of fellow artists, kicking around ideas about just what the site would look like. Furie embraced the opportunity to show the world he was much more than the Pepe Guy. Yet as the site’s April launch neared, Furie and Musarra, the site’s official founder, knew something was missing. “We both felt pressure to show a Pepe NFT,” says Furie, who’s based in Southern California.

The cartoonist found a scan of the original 2006 “Boy’s Club” comic art in which Pepe utters his catchphrase, “Feels good man” — the panels that launched countless memes across online forums and platforms.

In an April auction, Furie put a digital token of the art up for

sale as “Pepe the Frog NFT Genesis.” The winner was a prolific but secretive collector who goes only by the handle “punk4156.” The top bid: 420 in Ethereum currency for the stoner frog, as recorded on the OpenSea marketplace — which converted at the time to about \$1 million.

So why is ownership of a Furie art token called “1pantsdown-pee.jpg” worth a million bucks? “It’s my view that this will eventually be one of the most valuable digital originals in the world,” punk4156 told Whitehot Magazine of Contemporary Art, noting that given how widely the Pepe image has been copied, the original “should rightfully be our generation’s Mona Lisa.”

This week, Furie is planning to unveil PEGZ — Pog-like digital portraits of his creature characters in 2-D, 3-D and animated form. “Everything else is a bootleg, and I’m very inspired by bootlegs in my life and in my art,” he says — including Grateful Dead mixtapes — “but nothing beats the real thing.”

Furie enters this world fascinated, too, by its sense of community — intrigued by how NFTs can “provide a tangible connection between a digital artwork and a collector who owns it.”

Many people are minting their unique works as NFTs because blockchain technology — as a ledger of transactions across a network of computer systems — can now create a fixed digital record proving who owns each work. So creators are selling electronic tokens of everything from music to social media content — including the viral “Charlie Bit My Finger” video (which fetched \$760,999 at auction) and Twitter chief executive Jack Dorsey’s first tweet (\$2.9 million).

“This new space is laying the groundwork for the Internet 3.0,” Furie says. “In the future, you’ll be able to trace memes back to their source.”

And as Giorgio Angelini, writer-producer of the documentary “Feels Good Man,” puts it: “Pepe is the ur-meme.”

As chronicled in that film, Pepe has had many online lives: The anthropomorphic frog jumped from the panels of a relatively obscure comic about benign bro-creatures, transmogrified into a meme on the forums of 4chan and was posted on social media by such pop singers as Katy Perry and Nicki Minaj. But Pepe’s image was also swiped by the alt-right and white supremacist groups and plunged into the political mainstream during the 2016 presidential election cycle, with Donald Trump Jr. sharing an image of Pepe among GOP figures, in a spoof movie poster titled “The Deplorables.”

“The NFT space allowed him to claim something that was his,” Musarra says. “This is something that has evaded him for years, and this was a powerful thing.”

## GADGETS

## Video security doorbell that’s easy to install

By GREGG ELLMAN  
*Tribune News Service*

It wasn’t that long ago when video security doorbells were considered advanced, high-tech gadgets requiring professional installation. While they are still high-tech, products like the Ezviz DB1C show how easy it is to add a much-needed layer of security.

The Ezviz DB1C connects to your existing doorbell wiring ensuring that the camera is always powered.

A feature of Ezviz DB1C that stood out is the Wi-Fi connection to dual-band Wi-Fi of both 2.4GHz and 5GHz. If the router is close, a 5GHz frequency connection provides a faster speed at the shorter range.

The 2.1mm, f2.4, view angle lens provides a 170-degree vertical field of view in 1080p HD. When the doorbell button is pressed, it initiates a notification to the Ezviz app on the user’s smartphone. From there you’ll see who is at the front door along with two-way audio communication.

Another great feature, which was easy to test, is the new Ezviz AI algorithm, allowing the DB1C to send alert notifications only when people are detected. The American flag outside my front door has always been a problem

for doorbell cameras until now. The new algorithm didn’t send alerts for the flag blowing in the wind.

It’s in your control what the camera detects with the settings for motion alerts in the app. The app manages and controls all Ezviz products including indoor and outdoor security cameras.

A built-in microSD slot supports your memory cards up to 256 GB of recorded content. Video and images can be stored in the Ezviz Encrypted Cloud with different payment plan options available to store up to 30 days of video history.

As stated by Ezviz, the data transmission between the camera and the Ezviz Cloud is encrypted from end to end using AES 128 bit encryption, TLS encryption protocol and multiple authentication steps.

Measuring 5.05-by-1.82-by-0.76 inches, the DB1C video doorbell has a built-in speaker, white faceplate and an IP65 water-resistant rating, so it can withstand outdoor mounting. Night vision captures content up to 16 feet away. The DB1C is also compatible with Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant.

Online: ezvizlife.com; \$79.80



Ezviz/TNS

The Ezviz DB1C

## WEEKEND: MOVIES

# Bigger isn't always better

Theater industry exec says midrange films would help bring audiences back and shouldn't be ceded to streaming

By ANN HORNADAY  
The Washington Post

Memorial Day has always been a do-or-die weekend for Hollywood. As the unofficial beginning of summer, it has launched myriad "Star Wars," "Indiana Jones" and "Mission: Impossible" installments, not to mention family films like "Aladdin" and "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End."

This year, the stakes were even higher. With theaters reopening in earnest after being shuttered due to the coronavirus pandemic, studios that had been delaying big movies tested the waters with high-profile titles. Disney brought "Cruella," a splashy live-action origin story starring Emma Stone, to in-person theaters, while Paramount finally released "A Quiet Place Part II," the highly anticipated sequel to John Krasinski's 2018 horror film, whose crafty sound design made it that rare movie that had to be seen in theaters. According to the website

the-numbers.com, "Cruella" earned about \$21.5 million in theaters through the Memorial Day weekend, and the "Quiet Place" sequel took in about \$47.5 million through the same time period.

It's understandable that studios would lure audiences out of their pandemic cocoons with spectacle and reliable genres like horror: "F9," the latest iteration of the hugely successful "Fast and Furious" franchise, has already done impressive business overseas, earning more than \$239.7 million since opening on May 19. (It opens in the U.S. on June 25.) "Spiral," a spinoff of the "Saw" movies starring Chris Rock and Samuel L. Jackson, has become another big hit, earning about \$19.7 million through the Memorial Day weekend, despite dismal reviews. Over the next

several weeks, such seemingly surefire blockbusters as "Black Widow" and "The Suicide Squad" will arrive in multiplexes, as well as the musical "In the Heights" and "Space Jam: A New Legacy," starring LeBron James and Bugs Bunny.

The message to stir-crazy audiences is unmistakable: The movies are back! And they're way too big to watch on a laptop! That message isn't wrong, but it might be incomplete.

While studios double down on the bigger-louder-noisier strategy — their business model for the past several years — they're ignoring movies that have been just as successful at getting rear ends in seats: medium-budget, human-scale movies that don't feature big stars in Spandex suits or fighting CGI aliens in front of a green screen. It wasn't all that long ago that movies like "Magic Mike" and "Girls Trip" became must-see theatrical experiences, not just because they were funny and hugely entertaining on the screen, but because whooping at

**"It's not that people don't want to go to the movie theater; it's that there's not enough of what they want to see. That's why we need that range of movies. We need everything, frankly."**

Patrick Corcoran  
vice president, National Association of Theater Owners

Channing Tatum's umbrella dance or laughing at Tiffany Haddish was exponentially more enjoyable in a crowd.

It's the same impulse that made "My Best Friend's Wedding" a summer phenom in 1997, a pattern followed more recently by "Bridesmaids" and "Crazy Rich Asians." (Inevitably, industry experts called these "surprise" sleeper hits, noting that they "overperformed" at the box office, overlooking the fact that their momentum is often spurred by female audiences that have long been ignored by Hollywood.)



Hulu

**Strait-laced high school student (Kuhoo Verma, right) and her slacker best friend (Victoria Moroles) have 24 hours to hunt down a Plan B pill in America's heartland in "Plan B," a film that's available only on Hulu.**

Another example of the mid-range summer hit is "Legally Blonde," the delightful Reese Witherspoon comedy that came out in 2001. It's now part of a library of films recently acquired by Amazon from MGM. It's unclear the extent to which future MGM movies will open in theaters or go straight to Amazon's Prime streaming service.

MGM's "Respect," the Aretha Franklin biopic starring Jennifer Hudson, is still scheduled to open in theaters in August, as is "CODA," a crowd-pleasing coming-of-age tale that Apple TV+ picked up at Sundance. Along with "Stillwater," an international thriller starring Matt Damon that opens in July, they exemplify the kind of movie that Hollywood has increasingly ceded to streaming — a strategic mistake, according to Patrick Corcoran, vice president and chief communications officer at the National Association of Theater Owners (NATO).

"Look at the ratings for the Oscars and the Golden Globes, and think about what movies got talked about, and for how long," Corcoran says, adding that a film's theatrical presence is "vital" to creating awareness. Without it, he observes, "movies have been missing from the cultural conversation, big and small."

Case in point: a popular sub-genre of the summer sleeper hit genre, the teen raunch-com, such as "American Pie" and "Superbad." The new movie "Plan B," about two girls on the hunt for a morning-after pill in the exurbs



Focus Features

**Camille Cottin, Matt Damon and Lilou Siauvaud star in "Stillwater," the type of drama increasingly ceded to streaming.**

of South Dakota, has all the trappings to become a similarly beloved breakout hit. But it's available only on Hulu, meaning that even if it's a success for the streamer in terms of views and subscriptions, it has little chance of achieving the pop-zeitgeist liftoff that a national theatrical run still provides.

In recent weeks, NATO's CEO, John Fithian, has been meeting with studio executives to encourage them to make a wide range of movies available to theaters, not just the "F9s" and "Suicide Squads" of the world.

"We have big movies that bring in big audiences, but the overall audience is made up of small audiences that add up to a big audience," Corcoran says.

"We don't want to send a message that this (type of movie) isn't here for you. And you never know what's going to break out and ... become a huge movie."

If Hollywood has any hope of achieving the \$11 billion at the box office it earned before the pandemic — and stopping the slide in admissions that started more than a decade ago — it must recommit to the kind of midrange comedies and dramas that millions of people mean when they say "movie."

"It's not that people don't want to go to the movie theater; it's that there's not enough of what they want to see," Corcoran says. "That's why we need that range of movies. We need everything, frankly."

## WEEKEND: MOVIES



Emma Thompson, left, and Joel Fry, right, in "Cruella."



Emma Stone, right and bottom, who also was a producer, had nearly 50 costumes in the film.

DISNEY PHOTOS/AP



# Sew impressive

## In a punk 'Cruella,' dogs play second fiddle to designs

BY LINDSEY BAHR  
Associated Press

German punk princess Nina Hagen isn't the most obvious inspiration for a Disney movie, but "Cruella" is not your typical Disney movie. The live-action origin story about the black-and-white-haired cartoon supervillain is less about a maniacal dalmatian-skinner than an aspiring designer with a punk sensibility out to disrupt the stuffy ways of the past in 1970s London.

Departments like hair and makeup and costume design work overtime to blend into the fabric of a film. In "Cruella," the story itself gives them the spotlight. So director Craig Gillespie and star and producer Emma Stone enlisted some of the best in the business to help: Two-time Oscar-winning costume designer Jenny Beavan, who has mastered everything from Merchant Ivory period films like "A Room with a View" to the post-apocalyptic looks of "Mad Max: Fury Road," and BAFTA-winning hair and makeup designer Nadia Stacey, who transformed Stone into an 18th century social climber in "The Favourite."

"I never thought I would do it. It was never a film that would come up in my range of stuff because I'm not really into fashion," said Beavan. "Of course, I was around in the '70s. This film and script triggered my memory of what it was like."

With the script and Gillespie's comprehensive mood board and soundtrack in mind, Beavan and her team set off both designing originals and scouring London's vintage stores for real pieces and things that had at least the spirit of the '70s, when the buttoned-up styles of Dior and Balenciaga were giving way to the likes of Vivienne Westwood with zippers and holes everywhere.

"It was just really fun," Beavan said. "Every time we

produced something new, (Stone) seemed to take to it like a duck to water and make it work. She is, absolutely and without a doubt, totally fabulous."

One of the final looks that stood out for Beavan was Cruella's military-styled jacket paired with a big skirt and Doc Martens.

Stacey said she was given one rule for Cruella: The black and white hair needed to be on the same sides as in the cartoon. Anything else was fair game.

"I sort of went at it with a punk spirit, like, you know, I'm just going to do this and go for it and see what happens," Stacey said. "The punk revolution was such a change in fashion and music and makeup and hair. It does really kind of follow the narrative of Cruella as well."

Stacey found inspiration not only in Nina Hagen but Blondie frontwoman Debbie Harry, who she said often paired edgy stylings with pink lipsticks.

"That sparked an idea that I could make stuff punky or messed up but keep a beauty element to it, which makes it not just period and punk, it gives it a fresh take and makes it modern," Stacey said. "So if you are doing a really graphic, harsh (look), you can do a softer beauty lip with it. Or if she's hanging off a garbage truck, she can still have pink and blue jewels that contradict with the situation. There's that kind of juxtaposition, a real clash of things that I tried to keep in mind when creating."

One of Stacey's most striking looks (and one that many beauty bloggers have already re-created and sent to her) features Cruella with a black spray paint mask across her eyes with the words "The Future" stenciled out. The font, she said, was inspired by a Sex Pistols

album cover.

Stone, she said, was game for anything. She didn't have to dye her hair for the role, but Stacey said she would have in a heartbeat.

"I weighed in a bit, but there were geniuses that were creating her look," Stone said. "Putting on all of that really did make you feel like Cruella de Vil."

The endeavor was an epic undertaking with a reported \$200 million budget. There were some 277 costumes for the principal cast, 47 changes for Cruella/Estella and 33 for Emma Thompson's Baroness.

"Every week I'd come in and my (assistant director) would be like, 'Oh, we've got a big week this week,' and I said, 'Every week is a big week.'

We have four to six hundred extras and balls and galas," Gillespie said. "We were just racing all the time."

One gala scene alone required 152 wigs and dressing 149 members of the supporting cast. Another pivotal party had 80 dresses and 88 wigs, each of which required four hours of prep.

"I've never seen such attention to detail before," said actor Kirby Howell-Baptiste, who plays Anita Darling. "It also just kind of felt like a party, like, the scene where we were outside and essentially, like, at a rock concert felt just like that."



Jenny Beavan, a two-time Oscar winner (and 10-time nominee), designed the costumes for "Cruella."



## WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS



GREENWICH ENTERTAINMENT/TNS

**“Moby Doc” is a peek behind the curtain of oddball musician and producer Moby.**

## ‘Moby Doc’ explores the global star’s rise and fall

BY ADAM GRAHAM  
*The Detroit News*

Moby knows you probably don’t like him and you probably don’t want to see a documentary about him.

Weirdly, that’s why he made “Moby Doc,” his unconventional, self-effacing, self-aggrandizing look at his rise and fall (and rise and fall, again) and why any of it matters in the grand scheme of things.

In terms of the planets and the universe and the cosmos, the life of the electronic musician, producer and DJ doesn’t really matter. But while we’re all here on this planet, tales of celebrity are captivating, and Moby’s is full of the triumphs and the tragedies, the sex, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll that we’ve grown accustomed to in these tales.

The 55-year-old doesn’t tell his story in a linear fashion: There are arty flourishes, “Twin Peaks”-style interludes, moments of staged narratives and a constant questioning of the music documentary form.

Beyond those matters — some of which work, others of which don’t — there’s the story of Richard Melville Hall, a loner born in Harlem, N.Y., who gravitated toward music and animals because people never quite made sense to him. Naturally, he went on to be a global star and was forced to deal with everything that came along with it, good and bad. Moonshots and crash landings ensue.

Director Rob Gordon Bralver frames “Moby Doc” as a farce, a peek behind the curtain and ultimately as a cautionary tale of fame, and in it Moby comes off as a ball of contradictions: sad, confident, vulnerable, human, indestructible.

Say what you will about the man: There’s nothing you can come up with that he hasn’t already said or thought about himself.

“Moby Doc” is unrated. Running time: 92 minutes. Now available on demand.

# A different kind of superpower

In ‘Cruella,’ the stylish prequel to ‘101 Dalmatians,’ formidable opponents Emma Stone, Emma Thompson go head to head in a battle of wills, outfits

BY MOIRA MACDONALD  
*The Seattle Times*

Imagine “The Devil Wears Prada” on steroids, set in ’70s London, with Anne Hathaway’s character vengeful rather than sweet. Sounds kind of great, right?

When I first heard about “Cruella,” the live-action Disney origin story of the “101 Dalmatians” villain Cruella de Vil, I may have rolled my eyes a bit. This is me going back in time to retract that eye-rolling: “Cruella” is an absolute kick, and if you’ve been looking for a reason to go back to movie theaters, here it is.

The fashion alone, designed by the great Jenny Beavan (an Oscar winner for “A Room with a View” and “Mad Max: Fury Road”), is worth the ticket price; if that doesn’t do it for you, there’s also slyly brilliant work from the two Emmas — Stone and Thompson — working hard to upstage the gorgeous outfits in which they’re swathed.

Directed by Craig Gillespie (“I, Tonya,” “Lars and the Real Girl”), “Cruella” feels like a wildly imaginative superhero movie, but with fashion instead of superpowers. (Actually, fashion is the superpower.) It begins, as all origin stories do, with a flashback: Young Estella — Cruella is a teasing nickname her loving mother gives her, for the girl’s dark side — struggles to



Emma Thompson is the Baroness, a couture icon, in “Cruella.”

fit in as a child, thanks to her two-toned hair and quick temper. Her mother agrees that they should move to London, but something terrible happens on the way.

Fast-forward 15 years or so and Estella (Stone) is an embittered grifter, surviving on her street smarts but dreaming of being a fashion designer. An opportunity at a famous London department store — Liberty’s, beautifully handling its star turn — turns into a job with The Baroness (Thompson), the world’s most famous couturier.

Need I tell you that Stone and Thompson make formidable opponents? Stone, speaking in a dark-syrup British accent, makes Estella/Cruella slightly feral and wickedly smart; she’s got a way of narrowing her eyes at people that makes you worry that they might burst into flames. (At one point, appropriately, she wears a red gown seemingly made of fire.)

Thompson, tottering around under turbans and enormous pastries of hair — the Baroness’ look is slightly dated; Estella’s is up-to-the-minute London punk — is a queen who’s scornful of her kingdom. “Go” is her most frequent word, delivered witheringly; though I quite liked her clenched-teeth delivery, to a luckless maid, of “You’re. In. The Way.” Though there’s never any doubt who will prevail in this battle of wills — the movie isn’t called “Baroness,” after all — it’s a fair fight, and you find yourself rooting for both of them.

Crammed full of ’70s music and insanely chic eye candy, “Cruella” is a more-is-more treat, right down to its unexpectedly sweet coda (stick around as the credits start). Bring on the summer movie season! If the rest are as much fun as this ... well, that’s what we all deserve right now, isn’t it?

“Cruella” is rated PG-13 for some violence and thematic elements. Running time: 134 minutes. Now playing in theaters and streaming on Disney+ (Premier Access).



PHOTOS BY DISNEY/AP

From left to right: Paul Walter Hauser, Emma Stone and Joel Fry costar in “Cruella,” the origin story of Disney villain Cruella de Vil.

## WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

# Conjuring up more terror and thrills

‘Devil Made Me Do It’ another satisfying witch hunt with Lorraine and Ed Warren

By **KATIE WALSH**  
Tribune News Service

In 2013, a movie about a haunting called “The Conjuring,” starring the charismatic duo of Vera Farmiga and Patrick Wilson as real-life paranormal investigators Lorraine and Ed Warren, helmed by “Saw” and “Insidious” auteur James Wan, proved so popular it spun out into a multi-film universe with a signature style.

Sequels and spinoffs filled with old fables and creepy dolls shot with carefully choreographed long takes have tumbled into theaters year after year since, from the “Annabelle” trilogy, to “The Nun,” to “The Curse of La Llorona.” The third Warren-focused film, “The Conjuring: The Devil Made Me Do It,” takes an investigative approach to a good old-fashioned demonic possession, covering the true case of Arne Johnson, the first murder suspect to plead “not guilty by virtue of possession.” “La Llorona” director Michael Chaves is behind the camera, working from a script by “Conjuring 2” writer David Leslie Johnson-McGoldrick.

Johnson-McGoldrick’s facility with both the tropes of the “Conjuring” films, and the Warren’s relationship, keeps the film swift and emotionally resonant, while Chaves pushes the cinematic aesthetic to the max. Thematically and stylistically, Chaves dialogues not just with the previ-

ous films in the trilogy, but also with “The Exorcist,” particularly in the opening sequence that depicts the possession of young David Glatzel (Julian Hilliard).

The Warrens have a deep library of lore from which to mine scary stories, but the case of David Glatzel and Arne Johnson is deeply disturbing. It’s 1981, and the Warrens are summoned to assist in the exorcism of 8-year-old David, during which his older sister’s boyfriend, Arne (Ruairi O’Connor), demands the demon take him instead. When he later murders his landlord, the Warrens urge his lawyer to argue Arne was possessed. As Ed (Wilson) asserts, if the court assumes the presence of God every day, they may as well assume the devil is present too. The challenge for the Warrens is to prove Arne was possessed, not to any church, but a court, and their investigation sets them tracking down cursed totems they presume to have been placed by a satanist.

The “Conjuring” movies coax belief out of the audience by visualizing Lorraine’s psychic visions, but the central conceit of these films is the interplay between proof and faith, the seen and unseen, the recorded and the unrecordable. Like its predecessors, “The Devil Made Me Do It” manifests the act of recording and collecting evidence: tapes, photographs, evil objects collected and sealed in a basement gallery, as well as the blind, loving faith in



WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT/AP

Paranormal investigators Vera Farmiga, left, and Patrick Wilson star once again in a third “Conjuring” movie, “The Devil Made Me Do It.”



WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT/AP

Ruairi O’Connor plays a man who paranormal investigators attempt to prove has been possessed.

what only one person can see. That beautiful, unknowable friction between the earthly and the metaphysical is physically embodied by Ed and Lorraine themselves.

In the first two films, Wan deployed a roaming camera that played with point of view in such a way as to trap the viewer into lines of sight that suggested terrors

just out of frame. Chaves, working with franchise cinematographer and camera operator Michael Burgess, also works with the idea of vision, but takes a far more bombastic approach than Wan’s more sleek, sophisticated style. Several sequences are genuinely rattling, sowing chaos with sound and shadow, and one climatic scene pitting light against dark both literally and figuratively is terrifying, especially because it’s Ed and Lorraine who are at odds.

For the many reasons that this franchise works, Farmiga and Wilson are chief among them, as they take what could otherwise be hokey 1970s ghost-hunter characters and infuse them with a deep sense of faith, humanity, and above all, love. Indeed, “The Devil Made Me Do It” is ultimately an expression of Ed and Lorraine’s love story, which, naturally, started at the movies.

“The Conjuring: The Devil Made Me Do It” is rated R for terror, violence and some disturbing images. Running time: 112 minutes. Now playing in select theaters.

## Teen sex comedy ‘Plan B’ follows familiar but solid formula

By **JAKE COYLE**  
Associated Press

A painfully awkward sexual encounter. An impromptu road trip. A tested friendship. No, the outlines of Natalie Morales’ “Plan B” aren’t revolutionary. This is the tried-and-true framework of the high-school comedy. But teen comedies, almost as a rule, are made by their leads. And with Kuhoo Verma and Victoria Moroles, “Plan B” is overwhelmingly a winner.

Morales’ film seems destined to be compared to Olivia Wilde’s “Booksmart,” in theaters almost exactly two years ago. Both are helmed with a veteran filmmaker’s sense of timing by actors-turned-first-time-directors. (Morales has been a familiar face in film and TV for the past 15 years.) Both feature a pair of breakthrough performances. And both bring a funny, feminist spin to a traditionally boyish and often boorish movie genre.

But “Plan B” has a comic rhythm and perspective of its own. And while most teen comedies have gone for packed movie theaters, “Plan B” — more scruffily indie, more all-the-way R-rated — is only streaming. So it’s fitting that the characters of “Plan B” offer us a new phrase in the streaming lexicon that can sit alongside “Netflix and chill”: “Disney-plus and thrust.”

Verma, who had a small role in “The Big Sick,” stars as Sunny, the high-achieving, low-self-esteem daughter of demanding Indian American parents. Her best friend Lupe (Moroles, from MTV’s “Teen Wolf” and the Disney Channel’s “Liv and Maddie”) is more self-possessed than

most adults. But her brash style and two-toned hair are regularly ridiculed by her more conservative father. Both Sunny and Lupe are outsiders in small-town South Dakota, where their ethnicities are only foggily understood.

The sharp-witted script, by Prathi Srinivasan and Joshua Levy, is best in the movie’s first half, set largely around high school and, as the genre’s laws decree, at a party thrown by Sunny when her parents are away. If you think you’ve seen enough Sex Ed scenes by now, you’ll want to make an exception for one with Rachel Dratch as an in-over-her-head teacher, helpless when her students take a car metaphor for virginity and run with it. The party scene, too, has its tropes (a poorly concocted punch) and its unique touches. Sunny, feeling spurned by her crush (Michael Provost), ends up in the bathroom instead with Kyle (Mason Cook), a sincere kid into both magic and Jesus — and to Sunny, about the most regrettable person in South Dakota to lose her virginity to.

The next morning, panic sets in and Sunny needs a morning-after pill. Yet when Lupe (speaking for the too-ashamed Sunny) asks the pharmacist (Jay Chandrasekhar, the comedy director-actor of “Super Troopers”), he declines on the basis of the state’s “conscience clause,” which gives pharmacists a right of refusal due to religious beliefs.

Here, “Plan B” doesn’t turn sober, by any means. There are still scenes to come involving a drug-dealer’s pierced penis, an accidental dose of speed and a stolen car. But the film’s inherent setup is, like the comic equiv-



HULU

“Lupe,” Victoria Moroles, left, accompanies her friend “Sunny,” Kuhoo Verma, in a scene from “Plan B.”

alent to “Never Rarely Sometimes Always,” a poignant commentary on the hurdles to abortion. Sunny and Lupe drive Sunny’s mom’s Honda minivan to a Planned Parenthood in Rapid City, a three-hour trip that turns longer and more surreal than most Dakota drives. Here, “Plan B” sometimes drifts off course, but all of their adventures are a reminder why the typical conquests of the teen comedy are more complicated for young women.

Pointed as the message of “Plan B” is, nothing supersedes just letting these two characters — traditionally bit players at best in high-school comedies — be themselves.

“Plan B” is unrated, but contains language, sexual situations, drug use and graphic nudity, all involving teens. Running time: 107 minutes. Now streaming on Hulu.

## WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



HandyGames

**Chicken Police - Paint it RED!** follows anthropomorphic investigators around a noirish city to solve a crime.

# Noir title rules the roost

Chicken Police - Paint it RED! a dryly hilarious animal adventure

By **CHRISTOPHER BYRD**

Special to *The Washington Post*

There is a perfect little joke at the start of the closing credits for *Chicken Police - Paint it RED!* It would be rash of me to give away the punchline — it's a slight thing — but it so thoroughly fits the spirit of what came before that it made me chuckle. Usually, I get fidgety during credit sequences, but not here. I was pleased to look at photographs of the people who created this love letter to the noir genre that made me lol many, many times.



*Chicken Police* is a mash-up of classic noir such as “The Big Sleep” and internet culture. In an interview with the web site [bg4ghub](http://bg4ghub.com), the game's writer/director Bánk Varga said the seed for the project arose from a YouTube video “where two real roosters provide justice in someone's backyard.” There

is something inherently meme-worthy about the game's signature sight of a rooster decked out in a necktie and a trench coat. It gives added zest to observations such as: “She had a bygone look in her eyes, older than this ancient building and perhaps the whole city itself. Or maybe I'm just drunk. But she was the first womanly thing in place for a long time, so I had to give her a chance.”

Santino “Sonny” Featherland utters those lines at the beginning of the game after a mysterious lady appears in his less-than-tidy office. On suspension from the Clawville Police Department, Sonny has been boozing it up and getting by as a private detective operating out of a hotel room. His New Year's night becomes interesting after Deborah Ibaneza, an alluring impala, hires him to look into a job for her employer, Natasha Catzenko, a nightclub owner. Widely considered the most desirable woman in the city, Catzenko has received threatening messages that touch on a secret from her past. Although Sonny has been counting down the days until his retirement, he decides to accept the case.

With the help of Sonny's ex-partner, Marty Mac-Chicken, a gun-loving agitator with keen intuition who plays the straight man to the sad-sack and dryly comedic Sonny, the *Chicken Police* delve into Clawville's demimonde. The case takes them to the workplaces of informants, a high-end brothel, the office of a shady medical professional and the home of the city's most notorious gangster.

*Chicken Police* is studded with a few basic mini-games that task players with things like tracing the knots of a rope to make a quick escape or picking off targets at a shooting range. These distractions amount to little more than filler. The real amusement simply comes from chatting up the menagerie of anthropomorphic animals who are generally some combination of jaded, guarded and broken, with a touch of don't-give-a-damn.

Flipping through the screenshots I took of the game, I laughed again when I saw Mullen, an old beaver who runs the city's most venerable newsstand, verbally jab Marty with the compliment: “Anyway, you look good. You're in good shape. You look more like a turkey than a rooster, if you ask me.”

Naturally, over the course of his investigation, Sonny interrogates suspects. During these episodes, players are given a small range of questions to choose from and are graded at the end of the interrogation on the pertinence of their choices. Ultimately, these conversations lead to low-stakes investigation scenes where players must try to draw connections between clues and suspects.

The game's point-and-click puzzles are basically speed bumps between its dialogue chat boxes which, all together, works in its favor. Kerry Shale, who voices Sonny, delivers an outstanding Humphrey Bogart impersonation. Shale is given plenty of good zingers to work with, and the rest of the voice cast also make the residents of Clawville endearing.

In the tiny pantheon of visual novel/adventure games of which I am a fan, *Chicken Police - Paint it RED!* has a spot.

**Platforms:** Mac, PC, PlayStation 4, Xbox One

**Online:** [handy-games.com/en/games/chicken-police](http://handy-games.com/en/games/chicken-police)

# Latest MLB The Show spectacular but flawed

By **EBENEZER SAMUEL**

*New York Daily News*

The future of baseball is bright with Fernando Tatis Jr. MLB's new superstar in the making hits home runs, steals bases and plays a defensively challenging position (shortstop) with aplomb. Then again, he also strikes out a ton and has yet to play a full injury-free season.

He's equal parts spectacular and flawed — and that makes him the perfect coverboy for *MLB The Show 21*. The latest baseball video game from the team over at San Diego Studio is as groundbreaking as they come, the first time Sony's

published its title on both PlayStation and Xbox platforms, complete with a data vault shared between the two consoles, and crossplay online action. It's an instant triumph that gets more people playing one of the best sports games of the past decade.

And yet it's a flawed experience, slightly sluggish on Microsoft's highest-level console, with little annoyances throughout. It's also a game that's seen limited evolution in some areas. Make no mistake: *MLB The Show 21* is plenty of fun, just like Tatis Jr. Just like Tatis, it has plenty of room for improvement, too.

The good, however, is plentiful. You get the standard flood of sports games modes, a collectible card mode, a spectacular Road to the Show mode and a strong Franchise mode. And the standard gameplay is a site to behold, especially on next-gen consoles. It's a fully customizable experience that continues to scale as impressively as any sports game, courtesy of dynamic difficulty settings for both pitching and hitting, which adjust as your gameplay adjusts.

Getting better at hitting? Eventually, you'll go from beginner difficulty to advanced as the game watches you improve. Struggling with pitch mix and timing after coming back to the game after several weeks? Watch your difficulty slide slightly, until you adapt and ascend again. This isn't a new feature, but it's executed as fluidly as ever.

The gameplay itself is also highly versatile. Hitting, fielding, baserunning and pitching can all be tuned the way you want, creating more or less challenge and inviting plenty of playstyles. And however you play, you'll be greeted by the most visually complete baseball game you've ever seen on the field.

Players, hitting stances, pitch-

ing idiosyncrasies and stadiums all feature more detail than they ever have. *MLB The Show* has always been a good-looking game, but forging onto a new era of consoles creates the expected elevation in visuals, with stronger lighting and many more little details. This feeds onto the field, where every hit seems to have its

own story. There are more options for how balls glance off your bat than ever before. Defenses too seem smarter, shifting more frequently, to mirror a real-life game that's been defined by the shift more than ever.

It's satisfying to play *MLB The Show 21* in any situation,

even online. Only once has the game dropped on me, and the action smartly shifts between gameplay and cutscene so seamlessly that neither you nor your opponent will realize if somebody's taking a few seconds to guess the next pitch. This is *MLB The Show*'s best online experience yet. Good thing, too, since it spans across both consoles.

It's sad, however, that the Franchise mode still hasn't taken any appreciable steps forward. It's a solid enough experience, to be sure, and it's plenty of fun. But the list of things missing from the Franchise mode is growing longer and longer. Every other sports game out there lets you build custom draft classes, but not *The Show*. *NBA 2K* tracks advanced stats, but *The Show* hasn't embraced the Franchise era and doesn't give you hard-hit data, launch angle data, or anything that feels current with the new analytics era of baseball. In fact, its stat tracking feels more convoluted this time around, buried in a new menu structure that seems to waste screen real estate.

Essentially, the Franchise's biggest issue is that stat-keeping. Baseball is a game that's historically been about its numbers, but historical stat-keeping is limited, and the menu design overall just doesn't prioritize any of the special numbers about baseball. The fundamental on-field gameplay in *MLB The Show* is as good as ever, but not getting the franchise right, after several years of failing to give the mode any TLC, is a bothersome issue. To be fair, *MLB* isn't alone in this (*Madden* has barely touched its franchise either), but *MLB* fans do deserve better.

**Platforms:** PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, Xbox One, Xbox Series X/S

**Online:** [theshow.com](http://theshow.com)



## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## Italy's Riviera: Beyond the Cinque Terre

Here's a reminder of the fun that awaits us in Europe at the other end of this crisis.

When it comes to basking in the beauty of the Italian Riviera, the Cinque Terre is tops for me. But there's much more to this region on the Mediterranean coast than those famous five villages.

A handful of charming towns lie within an hour of the Cinque Terre, with posh ports set against rugged mountain backdrops that have drawn poets, authors and romantics over the years from Lord Byron to Elizabeth Taylor.

To the north of the Cinque Terre is a trio of beach towns: Levanto, the northern gateway to the Cinque Terre; Sestri Levante, stunningly situated on a narrow peninsula flanked by two beaches; and Santa Margherita Ligure, a thriving city with an active waterfront and easy connections to yacht-happy Portofino. At the south end of the Cinque Terre is the pretty resort of Porto Venere.

When most people imagine the "Italian Riviera," they're thinking of the shimmering resort towns north of the Cinque Terre, with their big, stately, Old World hotels looming over crowded

pebble beaches.

These towns can be user-friendly home bases for day trips along the Riviera coast, but they're also worth visiting in their own right.



Rick Steves

Levanto, just minutes north by train of the Cinque Terre resort town Monterosso, is the handiest. Graced with a long, sandy beach, it's packed in summer with surfers and families. The rest of the year, it's just a small, sleepy town with kids playing in the square and locals whizzing around on bicycles. Levanto also offers an easy, level hike (or bike ride) to the sleepy village of Bonassola. Serious hikers can tackle the tough route to Monterosso.

A bit farther away, and with a little less train service, is Sestri Levante, a charming town on a peninsula squeezed between two crescent beaches.

The most appealing town north of the Cinque Terre — but also the most distant (one hour by train) — is Santa Margherita Ligure. This easygoing, old-school resort town has an enjoyable urban bustle and a hand-



CAMERON HEWITT/Ricksteves.com

A bike ride between Levanto and the village of Bonassola includes views of the Italian Riviera's coastline.

ful of sights (including the Baroque Basilica of Santa Margherita), along with easy access to posh Portofino. While Portofino's velour allure is tarnished by a nonstop traffic jam in peak season, Santa Margherita Ligure has a breezy harborfront with a beach promenade, and its aristocratic architecture hints at old money.

From Santa Margherita Ligure, you can take a bus to Portofino, but a boat makes the 15-minute trip with more class and scenery, and without traffic. You can also hike between the towns.

Portofino is the movie star's Italian Riviera. The yacht-harbor resort with grand scenery — and its jewelry shops, art galleries and couture boutiques filling a

humble village shell — has the sheen of new money. It's the kind of place where the sailing masts are taller than the houses. The tiny harbor, classic Italian architecture and wooded peninsula make it an appealing destination.

Rick Steves ([www.ricksteves.com](http://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](mailto:rick@ricksteves.com) and follow his blog on Facebook.

## Less populated countries ideal for socially distanced vacations

As we stand poised to welcome the return of travel, there are many different notions as to how a vacation should look in times not yet fully back to normal. While some can't wait to sip café au lait along a crowded sidewalk in Paris, others are longing for open spaces offering more solitude than socializing. Here are a handful of ideas for vacations on less-trodden terrain.

## Iceland



Karen Bradbury

It's lonely at the bottom for Iceland, which ranks last in terms of population density among European countries. Tourism has been an important part of the Icelandic economy since the financial crisis of 2008 led to a sharp drop in the value of the Icelandic krona and the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano two years later turned a spotlight on the awesome force of its nature. Within the space of a decade, tourism morphed from a negligible part of the national economy to its major driver.

A favorite means of exploring this rugged land is upon the back of an Icelandic horse. Much loved for their compact size, friendly character, intelligence and unique gait, the rugged animals transport riders across lava springs, black sand beaches and pristine streams. Farm families across the land offer single or multi-day tours and often offer accommodation in rustic cabins. An eight-day, all-inclusive tour of the eastern fjords on horseback, rated as challenging, offers mountains and seascapes by day, storytelling and farm stays by night, and dining like a local. A tour slated for August goes for \$2,489. Online: [tinyurl.com/262mv9mc](http://tinyurl.com/262mv9mc)

## Norway

The second-least densely populated nation of continental Europe following Russia has its longest coastline. With



iStock

Hikes such as Sweden's Kungsleden Trail, shown here wending through a birch forest near Adolfsstrom, allow for as much social distancing as one could hope for.

its abundance of fresh air and unspoiled waters, fishing in both the sea and freshwater lakes is popular with locals and international tourists alike. Icy lakes teem with brown trout, perch, pike, grayling and Arctic char. Salmon fishing here is legendary. A visit to the far north in midsummer carries the bonus of constant light, but harder types might wish to time their visits between January and April, when a large species of cod known as skrei migrate past the coasts of Lofoten, Senja and Vesterålen.

For those on a budget in a country where nothing comes cheap, chipping in with friends to rent a rustic wooden cabin makes good sense. Self-catering facilities allow guests to cook their own meals, including their catches of the day. A license is a must to fish in freshwater, and fishing for salmon, sea trout or Arctic char incurs additional charges. Fjord and sea fishing require no license. Online: [tinyurl.com/y2bdd4pf](http://tinyurl.com/y2bdd4pf)

## Sweden

Throughout much of Europe, camping in the wild is either illegal or falls into a gray area. In Sweden, Norway, Ireland, Estonia, Latvia and Spain, pitching a tent on public lands is permissible. Hikers, cyclists and horseback riders in Sweden can set up camp outside towns for not longer than two days. Campfires are not permitted.

The Kungsleden, or King's Trail, is a long-distance hiking route running some 270 miles between Abisko in the north and Hemavan in the south. The trail is divided into four portions, each of which takes about one week of hiking to complete. The northernmost stretch between Abisko and Kebnekaise is the most popular, and peak hiking season runs between mid-June to late September. Manned huts along the routes are available. Online: [tinyurl.com/wj7nf357](http://tinyurl.com/wj7nf357)

## England and Wales

The some 2,000 miles of canals, rivers and reservoirs that formed the backbone of the transportation network during the industrial revolution now provide green spaces to humans and wildlife alike. These waterways are used for a number of recreational purposes, including holidays aboard a longboat. These sturdy craft with bunks, shower facilities and a galley can be piloted by novices, and there's no license required for captains of parties less than 12. With one gear to go forward and one for reverse, a crash course is all that's needed before one sets off.

Vacationers can opt to hire a canal boat for an afternoon or weeks on end. Ample moorings, many of which are free, make stopping to pick up supplies, checking out historical sights or dropping by the local pub a dawdle. Boat hire companies abound along the country's most scenic routes. One such company, Drifters Waterway Holidays, operates out of 45 bases in England, Scotland and Wales. Online: [drifters.co.uk](http://drifters.co.uk)

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL



# To save, or to splurge?

## How to talk about a budget with your more affluent travel companions

BY BAILEY BERG

Special to *The Washington Post*

For some travel companions, the “money talk” wasn’t part of their pre-pandemic planning ritual. But as people start replanning trips canceled by the pandemic or begin booking their first big vacation for the After Times, it’s probably going to be more necessary.

“It’s hard to tell where people are at now,” said Nick Holeman, head of financial planning for Betterment. “Maybe people had to dip into emergency funds or aren’t able to pay off their credit cards in full for the first time due to the pandemic. Now, more than ever, it’s important to have those discussions.”

Even with those closest to us, talking about money can be challenging. When travel is thrown in, it can be made more stressful, because neither party wants to feel like they’re being held back or made to spend more than they can.

But if you’re willing to have those conversations upfront, it can make the trip more enjoyable, because you won’t be spending your time away constantly looking at a banking app. Here are some tips from financial experts as well as frequent travelers about how to navigate those talks.

### How to start the conversation

Because discussing money can often be considered taboo or triggering, Beth Williams, founder of Future Wallet, suggests wading into the conversation by first chatting about what the ultimate goal of the trip is.

“Getting everyone aligned and excited about that can be a helpful way to start off the money conversation,” Williams said. From there, the willingness to be vulnerable and provide others with the range that they would be comfortable spending kicks off the very necessary conversation.

“Being able to take that first step and say ‘I value our friendship, and I’m excited about sharing this time with you, so I also wanted to share something that’s been on my mind,’ which, for example, could be that you’re in a different financial situation than before,” Williams said. “That language is useful in helping talk about a budget.”

Holeman also thinks language and intent matter when going into discussions about money.

“Even just framing it as ‘Hey, I want to make sure every-

one is relaxing and enjoying themselves and having fun together, so let’s have this convo early and make sure we’re all on the same page,’” Holeman said. “It lets people know that you’re not trying to necessarily take charge of things or be judgmental, rather you want everyone to feel comfortable.”

Generally, Williams said, people appreciate the transparency; nobody wants to realize too late that they have entirely different perceptions of what they want to spend on a trip. Conflict often occurs when people waited until too far into the planning process to raise issues with costs.

If conversations become confrontational, Williams suggested asking open-ended questions to better understand the other person’s motivations.

“Asking them more about why spending more on this element is important to them helps you understand them and helps them feel heard,” Williams said.

For instance, if your friend says they want to stay at an inclusive resort because they want a break from cooking, a compromise could be that you share a cheaper Airbnb and offer to handle meals.

### Setting budgets (and expectations)

Traveler Elizabeth Sweet said when traveling, whether with a partner, family or friends, setting budgets and expectations go hand-in-hand. While there are myriad ways to increase or lower costs, if you and your companions are coming from wildly different places, it can be challenging to meet in the middle.

“I think it’s important to be realistic and say ‘OK, if my friend is looking to spend \$10,000 on a trip and I’m looking to spend \$3,000, then we’re looking at very different trips and experiences,’” Sweet said.

For that reason, Lacey Cobb, a certified financial planner with Personal Capital, recommends discussing ballpark budgets well before landing on a destination. It might be a moving target, but it’s a helpful reference point for nailing down larger expenses.

“It really comes down to setting expectations upfront,” Cobb said. “If you handle the hard conversations first, then it allows you to relax on vacation and not be constantly worrying about money.”

Cobb added that having that conversation ahead of time

also means you’re able to plan better and can look for ways to reduce costs.

Another element of expectation setting, traveler Arianna Mears said, is repayment plans. If one person puts the lodging on their credit card, it should be discussed how and when they will be paid back beforehand, so it doesn’t devolve into a larger conflict on the road. She also recommended SplitWise, an app that lets you keep track of balances and expenses.

### Making room for flexibility

While pre-booking some activities helps with sticking to the budget, it’s important to not over-plan.

Mears said the key to group happiness is to leave plenty of room for flexibility when making itineraries — it allows for people to opt into the larger trip but pick and choose activities they would prefer to spend their money on. That could look like alternative options or simply free time. It is better to split up for a few hours and have everyone do something they enjoy than have anyone feeling resentful about being made to do something they weren’t completely on board with.

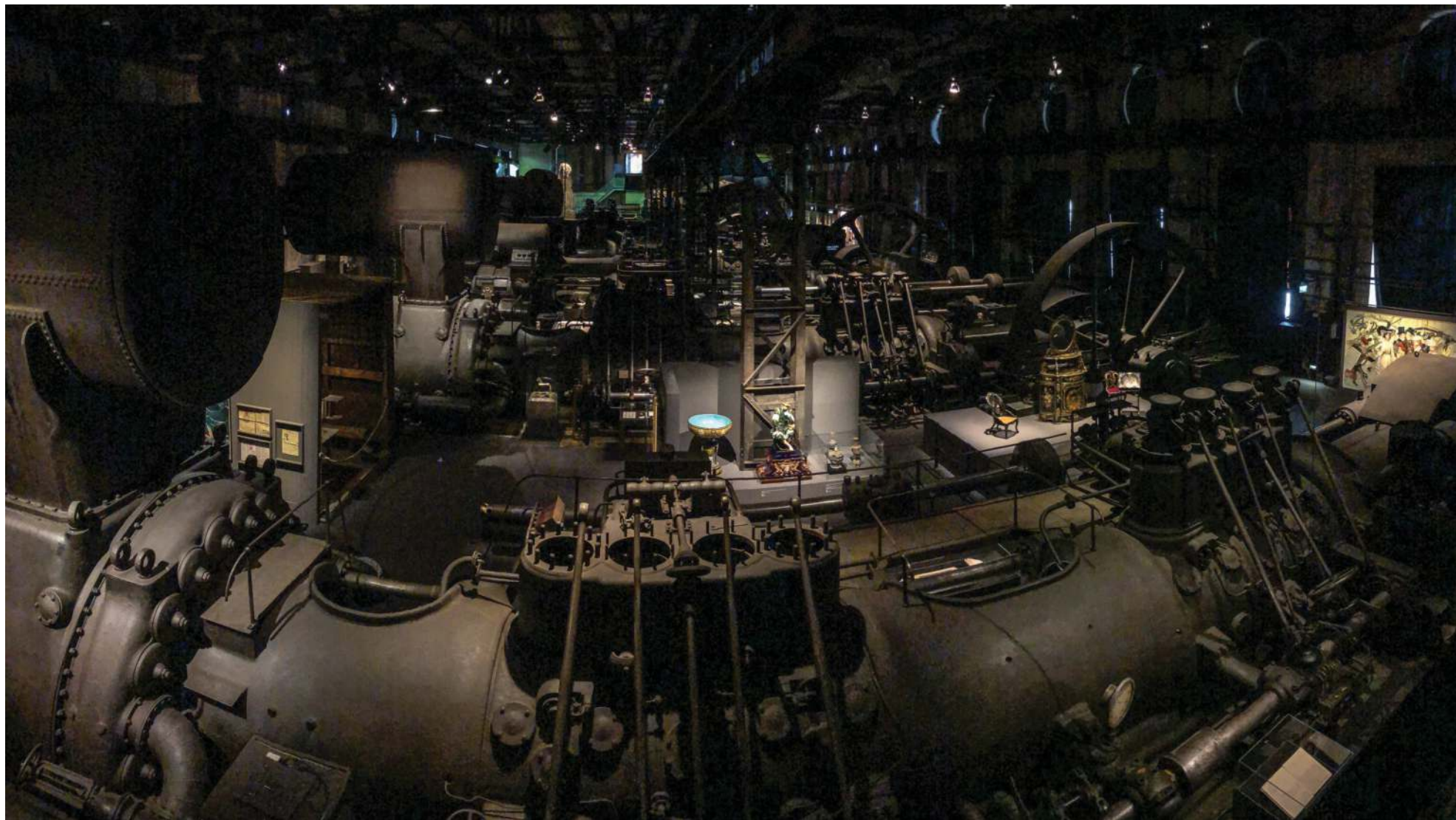
“I think if you truly respect your travel partners, you are also accepting and don’t make them feel bad about not joining in on an activity,” Mears said. “I think that’s a really important component that people don’t always talk about: It’s okay for somebody to stay back or do something different.”

### Enjoying your time together

Beyond money, many people’s travel-related priorities have changed during the pandemic, ranging from what experiences are important to them and who they spend their time with. For many people, the driving factor for planning trips right now is a desire to see those they care about.

“I’ve found, at least with my friends, that we’re just more hungry for human interaction with those that are close to us, regardless of what we’re doing,” Holeman said. “I think it makes those conversations easier. They’re like, ‘Hey, we’ll make this work. I just want to see you, catch up, connect, see that you’re doing well, and be able to have some new memories with you.’”

## WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



PHOTOS BY BRIAN FERGUSON/Stars and Stripes

The first room you enter at Voelklingen Ironworks is the Blower Hall. The room is filled with the machinery that would have been used when the ironworks was operational.

# Imposing edifice of a bygone era

Voelklingen Ironworks museum west of Kaiserslautern combines industry and art on a colossal scale

BY BRIAN FERGUSON

*Stars and Stripes*

With its massive Industrial Revolution-era machines and science fiction movie set atmosphere, you would think that Voelklinger Huette was the birthplace of the steampunk trend.

Classified as a World Cultural Heritage Site, the ironworks was the first monument from the era to be included on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

When I asked my 9-year-old daughter if she wanted to come along, she said sure, even though I had no idea what we would see.

The site has just reopened after closing due to coronavirus measures. They require visitors to make reservations online and have either a negative COVID-19 test or proof of vaccination before entering.

We arrived at the enormous plant after just over an hour drive west of Kaiserslautern.

The first room visitors enter is the Blower Hall, where huge generators made compressed air for the blast furnaces. Artifacts and images depicting life in the ironworks adorn the hall.

From there, we explored the almost 15-acre complex that dominates the city of Voelklingen. Walkways and bridges lead you through a maze of corridors and rooms, each more interesting than the next. It becomes easy to imagine the immense heat generated by the ore and ma-

## On the QT

**Location:** Rathausstrasse 75-79, 66333 Voelklingen, Saarland. Google maps leads you to the parking area.

**Cost:** 17 euros per adult; free for 18 and under, or 27 and under with student ID. Tickets available online.

**Times:** Daily 10 a.m. until 7 p.m.

**Information:** Phone 06898-910-0100; Online: voelklinger-huette.org

Brian Ferguson

chines, and how workers must have felt in that environment.

If you want to brave the site without a map, like we did, good luck. We got lost at least three times. I would suggest one of the English maps available at the entrance.

There are seven distinct regions in the factory. Next time I'll use the map because we missed the science center, which my daughter would have enjoyed.

The site is also open to the arts and is currently featuring an exhibit called Mon Tresor, or My Treasure, with items from around Europe.

The ironworks combines industry with technology, art and culture; there are regular theater and concert performances there. It's the most entertaining museum I have ever visited, and my daughter loved it. This place would make a great location for the ultimate game of hide and seek.

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Voelklingen Ironworks is a 15-acre complex that dominates the city of Voelklingen in Germany. Classified as a World Cultural Heritage site, it was the first monument to the Industrial Age to be added to the UNESCO World Heritage list.



Tons of iron machinery is displayed in the Blower Hall at Voelklingen Ironworks in Voelklingen, Germany.



Monorail cars were used to fill the six blast furnaces with raw materials at Voelklingen Ironworks in Voelklingen.

## WEEKEND: FOOD &amp; DINING



PHOTOS BY KYLE ALVAREZ/Stars and Stripes

Kelly Alvarez serves a cup of breakfast tea just before our food platter arrives May 24 at Barleycorn in Mildenhall, England. Aside from English sandwiches and baked goods, the shop offers teas served in vintage china.

# A spot of English tradition

Barleycorn in Mildenhall greets Americans with a bit of history, a marvelous tea

By KYLE ALVAREZ  
Stars and Stripes

I was walking around the streets of Mildenhall when I caught the scent of freshly baked goods, which led me a little farther to an unassuming shop called Barleycorn.

Upon walking in the door, it feels like a warm and welcoming environment. It's a combination of the friendly people working there and the handmade baked goods the shop has to offer.

"We get a lot of people that have come from the States who don't have friends and family here," said owner Shelby Foord, as she was hand-mixing scone batter in a bowl. "So, we try to make them feel comfortable and give them a taste of what English culture is like."

Foord's sentiment is visible in the shop's aesthetic. The walls are decorated with polka dots, shelves of vintage china and baskets of baked goods. The display counter was inviting, with an assortment of sandwiches, scones, cakes, freshly baked bread, hams, cheeses and salads. One of Barleycorn's main draws is afternoon tea service. It's been at the heart of English food culture since the 19th century, though tea drinking itself in English goes back farther than that.

"Tea time originated from the Duchess of Bedford, a lady in waiting for Queen Victoria," Foord said. "She used to get hungry between lunch and dinner so she would sneak food and drink into her bedroom. Queen Victoria thought it was a great idea and then



**AFTER  
HOURS  
ENGLAND**

## Barleycorn

**Address:** 30 Market Street, Mildenhall, Bury St. Edmunds, IP28 7EF.

**Hours:** Tuesday – Friday 9:30 am – 3 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.; Sunday and Monday closed

**Prices:** Afternoon tea \$25.50 per person, breakfast platter \$22.66, deli platter \$17, cheese board \$14.16, quiche of the day \$13.46, sandwiches \$9.21, various pastries and light bites from \$2.83 - \$7.08, coffee and soft drinks \$2.83 - \$4.25.

**Information:** Phone: +44 7914 398555; Online: facebook.com/barleycornmildenhall

Kyle Alvarez

made it a thing in her court where you go and get dressed up and have tea time together."

These tidbits of English history are offered to anyone who shows interest.

"Sometimes, though, people just come for the cake and scones, and that's fine too," she said with a chuckle.

After the history lesson, I ordered the afternoon tea and was fascinated with the display. It was a tower of fresh food, elegantly presented on china.

There were savory ham and chutney sandwiches and others with egg and mayonnaise. Scones with clotted cream and jam accompanied them.



A variety of cakes and sandwiches accompany a traditional afternoon tea service May 24 at Barleycorn in Mildenhall, England.

The second tier had two buttercream cakes with jam filling alongside two brownies topped with whipped frosting. Four pastries with English sausages at their centers crowned the third tier.

It all came with, of course, English breakfast tea. It was served in vintage teacups, each with a unique design.

Much of what Barleycorn offers is handmade, while the rest is outsourced to small businesses in the area.

"Supporting local businesses is important to us," Foord said. "It also means that everything we offer is fresh."

Barleycorn has been in business for the past four years, and they offer catering as well as event hosting in their adorable garden out back.

alvarez.kyle@stripes.com  
Twitter: Kalv2931

## Potato salad from Cyprus a regional specialty

By GRETCHEN MCKAY  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

If you're looking to spruce up your side dishes with a more global focus, consider Yasmin Khan's lush new book, "Ripe Figs." It takes readers on a culinary journey through the Mediterranean, with seasonal vegetable-forward dishes from Turkey, Greece and Cyprus that would add flavor to any cookout, picnic or barbecue.

This easy potato salad is a regional specialty of Cyprus. Traditional potato salad is made with mayonnaise and hard-boiled eggs, but here, olives, lemon, capers and fresh herbs give it a zesty lift.

However you enjoy the salad — it can be eaten hot, cold or at room temperature — you'll want to toss the potatoes in the dressing while they're still warm so they can absorb the flavors.



GRETCHEN MCKAY/Post-Gazette

### Cypriot Potato Salad

#### Ingredients

2 pounds new potatoes  
1 teaspoon salt, plus more for seasoning  
Finely grated zest from 1 medium unwaxed lemon  
¼ red onion, finely sliced  
½ cup kalamata olives, roughly chopped  
2 tablespoons capers, drained and rinsed  
Handful of fresh mint leaves, finely chopped  
Handful of fresh cilantro, finely chopped  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

2 tablespoons lemon juice  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

#### Directions

Peel potatoes or leave the skin on. Cut potatoes into large (2-inch) chunks. (I used halved unpeeled baby potatoes.)

Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil. Add 1 teaspoon salt and the potatoes to the pot and boil for about 12 minutes or until they are tender. Drain and place in a serving bowl.

Add the remaining ingredients, along with ¼ teaspoon salt and a good grind or two of black pepper.

Serves 4.

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

# Travel more, stress less

Scott Keyes' life was changed by the hunt for cheap airfares. Now he shares his finds with other travelers

By KATE SILVER

Special to The Washington Post

**W**hen Scott Keyes answers the phone, he is giddy. It's late April, and he has just found out about a ridiculous deal to Japan: \$202 round trip, from several cities in the United States. "I'm so, so excited. Oh, man," he says. "This has been like a week like nothing else I've seen in terms of the number of deals."

At age 34, Keyes is a cheap flight hunter, to the extreme. What started as a hobby in 2013 has now grown into a business called Scott's Cheap Flights, which employs nearly 40 people and has more than 1 million subscribers (there's a free and a paid option) who are all interested in the same thing: Getting great deals on airfare. Keyes' personal and professional mission is encouraging people to take more vacations by traveling on the cheap. In fact, that is the title of his new book, which was published last month: "Take More Vacations: How to Search Better, Book Cheaper, and Travel the World."

From Keyes' excitement on the phone, it is clear he still gets a rush from the hunt, even when it's not a deal he is planning to use himself. Take this one to Japan: He says it's painful to pass it up, but he and his wife are expecting their second child soon, so he'll settle for living vicariously through subscribers who end up purchasing tickets. (The site doesn't sell plane tickets; it just publishes deals that his team finds.) "It's just so exciting to see, especially after the past year where so many of us have not been able to get that joy of travel, to have an exciting trip to look forward to," he says.

His hobby turned obsession turned business allows him the pleasure of knowing that cheap flights aren't going to waste — and people are, indeed, taking more vacations.

Start-up stories often begin in a garage. Keyes' story began with a trip to Milan. It was 2013, and Keyes was a 26-year-old freelance journalist. His income was low, but his travel aspirations were high. He



Scott's Cheap Flights

The discovery of a cheap flight to Milan in 2013 inspired the creation of the company Scott's Cheap Flights, founded by Scott Keyes, right. Keyes shares his finds with other travelers through the business. Also pictured: the company's CEO Brian Kidwell, left.

knew cheap flights were out there, and he decided to dedicate himself to finding them. He dove into message boards and searched myriad sites and came upon a \$130 round-trip ticket from New York to Milan. He had never even considered going to Milan, but at that price, he figured, why not? With that, he learned his first cheap-flight lesson: First find the deal, then plan the trip.

When friends and colleagues heard him talking about the cheap Milan ticket, they wanted in on the secret. They asked him to share his future cheap-flight finds, so he started a newsletter for a small group of people. He didn't yet see the business potential, though. "A savvy, aspiring entrepreneur would have realized in that moment, 'Oh, my gosh, you know, there's an opportunity here. This could be a busi-

ness. People clearly want this thing,'" Keyes says. "But that was not me. I was not a savvy, aspiring entrepreneur."

Over the next 18 months, friends referred other friends to the newsletter, and it grew from a few dozen recipients to nearly 400. In 2015, Business Insider published a story about Keyes and his

SEE AIRFARE ON PAGE 25

**"It's not just the money that you're saving, but it lets you take more trips, better trips. ... It ends up bringing vacation back to its core, which is something that's supposed to take away our stress rather than add to our stress."**

Scott Keyes  
Scott's Cheap Flights

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## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

**Airfare:** Cheap flights are about more than money

FROM PAGE 24

cheap-flight pursuits, and, practically overnight, 5,000 people signed up for the newsletter, prompting the newsletter host service to charge him \$50 because he had exceeded the contact limits in the free plan.

Here's where the wheels start turning. Although Keyes hadn't planned to make money off his hobby, he wasn't willing to lose money on it, either. So he decided to try a little experiment and see if people would be willing to pay \$2 a month to get emails about the deals. He was flabbergasted when, in the first month, 100 people signed up. And the next month, another 100 people signed up. "I felt like Scrooge McDuck, just like swimming through gold coins," he says. "I could not believe what I had stumbled upon here."

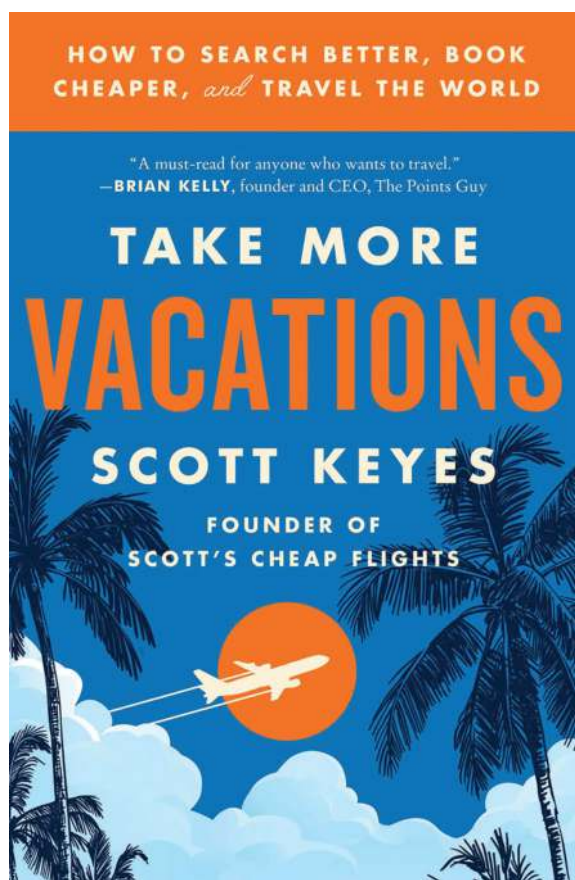
Keyes decided it was time to bring in someone more entrepreneurial than himself. He had recently met Brian Kidwell, a business-minded ideas kind of guy, who was also working in the travel start-up space. Keyes approached him to come on board as co-founder in late 2015. Around that time, Kidwell — who is now CEO, while Keyes has the title of chief flight expert — recalls they were bringing in about \$2,000 per month from subscribers. Then, in February 2016, Condé Nast Traveler published an article about the site, and revenue shot up to \$21,000. In May of that same year, they launched the website ScottsCheapFlights.com, and the reputation — and business — has been growing ever since.

Kidwell says one of the things subscribers appreciate about Scott's Cheap Flights is its approachable tone, thanks to Keyes' own personality. "People really felt like Scott was just this friend sending them deals that he found," Kidwell says. "He really is that friend. He's such an easygoing, laid-back person. He's authentic, he cares about everyone that he interacts with, and he's just an all-around good human being."

Brian Kelly, who is founder and CEO of travel rewards site the Points Guy, says Keyes is known for being a nice, knowledgeable guy who is doing exactly what he set out to do: Offer advice on cheap flights. "I think what separates Scott from a lot of others in the travel space is he knows cheap flights and he sticks to it. Instead of trying to reinvent the wheel and monetize through other areas of the travel industry, he knows the flights world, he has a great team and technology stack to scour for those deals, and he delivers on that," Kelly says, via email. "Overall, I think he is providing a great service to consumers to save money and to also get out there and explore destinations you might not have considered."

Among travelers themselves, Keyes and his business — which devotees refer to as SCF — have developed something of a cult following. "SCF has totally changed the way I decide when and where to travel," says Victoria Kelly, 59, who lives in Charleston, S.C. Kelly first subscribed to Scott's Cheap Flights about four years ago. Before that, she says, she would find an occasional cheap flight from Charleston, but it might have three stops. When she started getting emails from SCF, she realized that there were incredible deals out there, and she just needed to change her approach to be flexible with her timing, destination and departure city. She ticks off the places she has gone with pride: New York to Rome for \$220 round trip; New York to Paris for \$300 round trip; Charlotte to Madrid for \$274 round trip; Orlando to Munich for \$350 round trip; Charlotte to St. Thomas for \$85 round trip. "Whenever I see something, even if it's not a city I want to go into, it's like, well how close is that to something? Where could we go from there? What do we want to do with that?" she says. "Some women get excited about the shoe sales. I get excited about the travel sales."

Dawn Taylor, 54, who lives in Kansas City, Mo., has also become an enthusiastic follower of Scott's



HarperCollins Publishers

**Scott Keyes' book "Take More Vacations: How to Search Better, Book Cheaper, and Travel the World," released May 11, offers tips for finding cheap airfares to anywhere in the world.**

Cheap Flights. Since 2017, she has traveled round trip to Belize (\$368), Seychelles (\$685), Croatia (\$401) Puerto Rico (\$335), Montreal (\$294) and Madrid (\$429). Before subscribing to SCF, Taylor says she believed travel was expensive. Now, she takes two international trips a year, and booking the next trip is always on her mind. "If I don't eat lunch out at the restaurant twice a week at work, then in four months it's a plane ticket," she says. "I'm constantly thinking in those terms."

She is especially excited for her next trip: In 2022, she will be traveling to Tokyo for \$280 round trip, having purchased one of the flights that Keyes was so giddy about.

Keyes wants people to take more vacations. It has become his mantra, and he tells people they can do that by prioritizing cheap flights. "It's not just the money that you're saving, but it lets you take more trips, better trips. You're happier after the trip, you're happier before the next trip. It ends up bringing vacation back to its core, which is something that's supposed to take away our stress rather than add to our stress," he says.

Travel isn't just about getting away from it all. It's also about seeking. Cheap flights can be a portal to learning, discovering, meeting new people, finding new opportunities. In his book, Keyes talks about how he met his wife, Anya, thanks to cheap travel. At the time, he was living in Mexico and she was living on the East Coast, and they met and hit it off on a beach in Puerto Rico. They stayed in touch, and cheap travel allowed for regular meetups. It was on a cheap trip to Hong Kong — after hiking up Victoria Peak in the middle of the night — that Keyes asked her to marry him. Now, they have a 2-year-old daughter and the aforementioned child on the way.

So when Keyes has to pass up cheap flights — like the one to Japan — it may smart a little. But he can't help but be grateful for all that cheap travel has already brought, beyond the trips themselves. And even though he can't travel as much as he used to, he can still use his cheap-flight hunting skills for good, helping subscribers score inexpensive airfare and explore the world, never knowing which encounters could shape their lives.



iStock

**Airlines have pushed pause on serving alcohol as disruptive behavior by air travelers seem to be occurring more frequently.**

## Airlines propose ban on alcohol to rein in unruly passengers

BY HANNAH SAMPSON  
*The Washington Post*

After a marked increase in disruptive — and sometimes dangerous — behavior by passengers, some airlines are changing their plans to start selling alcohol in the cabin again.

Southwest, which banned a woman for allegedly assaulting a flight attendant last week, said it would postpone the return of alcohol sales to an unspecified time after an earlier pause due to the pandemic. The carrier had planned to resume sales on flights to Hawaii this month and other flights next month.

"Given a recent uptick industry-wide of incidents in-flight involving disruptive passengers, we're pausing previously announced resumption of alcohol service onboard," the airline said in a statement, adding that it would still expand its selection of soft drinks and coffee. "We realize this decision will be disappointing for some customers, but we feel it to be the right decision now in the interest of safety and comfort of all onboard."

American followed suit, telling flight attendants in a memo on May 30 that it was suspending alcohol in the main cabin. Alcohol will still be offered during flights in business and first class.

The memo said many passengers might have more anxiety than usual and might not be familiar with the COVID-era flight changes, and it acknowledged that some "deeply disturbing situations" had occurred recently.

"We also recognize that alcohol can contribute to atypical behavior from customers onboard and we owe it to our crew not to po-

tentially exacerbate what can already be a new and stressful situation for our customers," said the memo from Brady Byrnes, the airline's managing director of flight service training and administration.

The airline stopped selling alcohol in the main cabin last March and had previously said it would return later this summer. The May 30 memo said alcohol sales would be suspended through Sept. 13, when the federal mask mandate for planes, airports and other public transportation is set to expire.

"While we appreciate that customers and crew members are eager to return to 'normal,' we will move cautiously and deliberately when restoring pre-COVID practices," Byrnes wrote.

United said that as of June 1, beer, wine and hard seltzer will be available on most flights over 800 miles. It had previously planned to make it available on flights longer than 200 miles, or about an hour, but decided to take "a more cautious approach to the roll out." The airline did not give a reason for the change.

Airlines have reported a sharp rise in the number of passengers behaving badly on flights in recent months, including drinking their own alcohol, assaulting flight attendants and refusing to wear masks. The Federal Aviation Administration said last week that it had received 2,500 reports of unruly behavior since the beginning of the year, including 1,900 reports of passengers disobeying federal face-mask requirements.

The agency has announced civil penalties against at least 22 passengers since February.

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

# Paradise in black, white and blue

Dr. Beach says Hawaii's powerful Hapuna Beach is best in US for 2021

BY CALEB JONES  
Associated Press

**C**ruising along the west side of Hawaii's Big Island, the landscape is dominated by ancient volcanic flows and jagged shorelines. Then you get to Hapuna Beach.

There, the contrast of black lava rock, white sand and blue water means you have arrived in paradise — at least that's what "Dr. Beach" believes.

"It's like an oasis," said Stephen Leatherman, who has been ranking U.S. beaches on his annual list under the alias "Dr. Beach" for three decades.

The sand "looks super white there because of the black lava beside it," he said. "I think the contrast makes you think, 'Oh my gosh, I've never seen sand so white in my life.'"

Hapuna Beach State Park was ranked the best beach in the U.S. in Leatherman's review of sandy shorelines for 2021.

Leatherman, a coastal scientist and professor at Florida International University, hopes his 31st annual list will encourage people to get out and leave the past year of pandemic struggles in the rearview mirror.

He acknowledged that people will have to pay extra to get tested for COVID-19 before coming to the islands. "Hawaii is a really special place, and so I think it's worth it," he said.

Kandi Miranda, who owns Manuela Malasada Company and runs a food truck near Hapuna Beach State Park, was born and raised on the Big Island. She was able to stay open for locals throughout the pandemic and is optimistic about the return of visitors.

"There was a lot of darkness at that time; I mean, everyone was closing," she said of the early days of the pandemic. "I wanted people to know that through good times and bad, we would still be there."

Miranda said Hapuna Beach is a powerful place — both spiritually and literally. "It's unapologetically magical," she said.

When the water is calm, it's a great place to be, Miranda said. But when the ocean rises and big waves begin to crash, it can be "really dangerous."

"It's beautiful, but there's a very strong undertow there," she said.

Growing up on Hawaii Island, a place of active volcanoes, towering waterfalls and huge sea cliffs, she learned to respect nature.

"The ocean in general in our culture is a really powerful place," she said. "It's very healing, but you know the way that we grew up, it gives but it takes away, right?"

Leatherman agreed and said that while Hapuna has a well-trained group of lifeguards and is great for swimming and snorkeling on calm days, the winter swells can be deceiving.

Rip currents cause "the greatest loss of life that we have at beaches," he said. "I'm trying to give people a better understand-



MICHAEL DARDEN/AP

Stephen Leatherman, a coastal scientist and professor at Florida International University, also known as "Dr. Beach," has named Hapuna Beach Park on the Big Island of Hawaii, pictured in the summer of 2006, as the best beach in the country in his 2021 list.

## Dr. Beach's Top 10 for 2021

1. Hapuna Beach Park on Hawaii's Big Island
2. Coopers Beach in Southampton, N.Y.
3. Ocracoke Lifeguarded Beach in the Outer Banks of North Carolina
4. St. George Island State Park in Florida
5. Lighthouse Beach, Buxton, Outer Banks of North Carolina
6. Duke Kahanamoku Beach on Oahu's Waikiki
7. Caladesi Island State Park in Dunedin and Clearwater, Fla.
8. Coronado Beach in San Diego
9. Beachwalker Park in Kiawah Island, S.C.
10. Coast Guard Beach in Cape Cod, Mass.

From The Associated Press

ing of rip currents because a lot of people don't understand them. They say 'We can't see them, then they're probably not there.'"

Leatherman uses 50 criteria to evaluate beaches, with the most important categories being safety and cleanliness.

Leatherman uses data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to grade the beaches on water quality and has been to all of the beaches on his list.

Beaches in Hawaii are consistently ranked high, and in recent years he has given them extra points for prohibiting smoking.

"First of all, it's a health issue," he said of wafting cigarette smoke. "But the biggest thing is disposal of the cigarette butts. People look at beaches like a giant ash-tray."



CALEB JONES/AP

A woman walks on Waikiki Beach in April 2020 in Honolulu. Kahanamoku Beach, on the west end of Waikiki Beach and in view of the iconic Diamondhead volcano in the distance, has been named the sixth-best beach in the country by "Dr. Beach."

Cigarettes "are the number one form of litter in terms of numbers," Leatherman said.

For the first 25 years of rankings, any beach that won the top spot on Leatherman's list was ineligible for inclusion in subsequent years. But in 2015, Dr. Beach cleared the slate to allow any beach in the nation to once again be eligible, though new winners are now being retired.

Last year, Leatherman chose a beach outside of Hawaii because, he said, island lockdowns and quarantine rules made it nearly impossible for people to visit.

"I know a lot of people have been vaccinated," he said. "And so I think this year it's fine for Hawaii to be on the list. And I encourage people to go there."

"You can really social distance on the Big Island," Dr. Beach added.

## WEEKEND: FOOD &amp; DRINK

SCOTT SUCHMAN  
For The Washington Post

## Bubbles and booze

The newest hard seltzer offerings from Truly, White Claw and other brands are put to the test just in time for summer

By EMILY HEIL  
The Washington Post

**H**ard seltzer first stormed the warm-weather drinking scene in 2019 with such ferocity that the season will go down in pop-culture history as the “Summer of White Claw.”

Beverage companies are hoping that this year’s party scene will be similarly swimming in the fizzy drink particularly beloved by younger drinkers. Big Beverage has reason to be optimistic: A recent UBS forecast predicts hard seltzer sales will reach \$15 billion by 2025.

To meet the seemingly unquenchable demand, some of the most recognizable beverage brands are offering a slew of new offerings just in time for “Shot Girl Summer,” which seems to be the moniker the zeitgeist is favoring for this year’s season of patio and poolside hangs.

Some of these new kids on the seltzer block are far different than their progenitors. Market leaders White Claw and Truly have debuted new versions of their popular quaffs that at 8% alcohol by volume and 220 calories are far boozier and heavier than the light-and-bright drinks they’re known for.

We put the boozed-up offerings to the test.

### Truly Extra

**Flavors:** Black raspberry and peach mango  
**Calories:** 220  
**Alcohol by volume:** 8%

Truly’s entry into this subgenre was our panel’s least favorite by about 880 social distancing lengths (that’s a mile in pre-pandemic speak). Syrupy and cloying, it elicited some primal reactions. A sample: “Nooooo!” “Oh, no, no, no.” From another, a scrunched-up face silently communicated the verdict.

Different tasters imagined both flavors as the product of cough syrup mixology: The blackberry was “like if you mixed Dimetapp and Robitussin together,” one suggested, while the peach mango prompted another to imagine a demented bartender “pour[ing] Dimetapp in with the syrup on the bottom of a Dole’s peaches can.”

### White Claw Surge

**Flavors:** Blood orange and cranberry  
**Calories:** 220  
**Alcohol by volume:** 8%

Our tasters didn’t love this beefed-up version from the reigning champion of the seltzer aisle, but they at least favored it over the Truly Extra. Lighter bodied and easier-drinking, it packed a punch without aiming for a taste-bud-assaulting technical knockout.

Most preferred the blood orange, which had a bit of pleasant citrusy bite, over the cranberry — but even that earned some praise, with one taster finding it engagingly (and relatively) “subtle.”

### Cacti

**Flavors:** Pineapple, lime and strawberry  
**Calories:** 150  
**Alcohol by volume:** 7%

This concoction from beer giant Anheuser-Busch and Travis Scott, the rapper who has lent his name to everything from Nike shoes to Reese’s Puff cereal, proved divisive. Some detected notes of Jolly Ranchers, Kool Aid and ... medicine. One bemoaned the subtlety of the lime — “it’s so plain” — while another found the dearth of faux flavor made it bearable. Some tasters liked the punchy pineapple, while others found it had a “bitter back end.”

“I feel like that kombucha meme, where I’m not sure how I feel,” said one taster, referring to a TikTok of a woman tasting fermented tea for the first time and alternating between a grimace of distaste and an expression that indicates she might like it after all.

### Michelob Ultra Organic

**Flavors:** Citrus, mango-apricot, mixed berry  
**Calories:** 90  
**Alcohol by volume:** 4%

The flavors of this offering scored points, with one likening it to a nostalgic, albeit grown-up, “juice box.”

But the textures were a major drag for others: After a few sips, tasters detected a filmy coating on the roofs of their mouths. And it literally fell flat in one category, with one taster pouring out a sample into a glass and observing that the bubbles dissipated almost instantly.

### Topo Chico

**Flavors:** Lemon-lime, mango, strawberry-guava and pineapple  
**Calories:** 100  
**Alcohol by volume:** 4.7%

This much-awaited entry into the market from the beloved maker of non-boozy fizz had bubbles to spare.

“I love aggressive bubbles,” enthused one taster. “Like, I want to hear them in my ears.” Those pops and a hint of a mineral edge made the drink more refreshing than its brethren, the panel concluded.

While we generally gave the brand high marks, there was one glaring exception — the mango was the breakout loser of the otherwise likable bunch. One imbibor complained that it was like “drinking perfume.”

### Spindrift Spiked

**Flavors:** Pineapple, mango, lime and black tea and lemon  
**Calories:** 82-95  
**Alcohol by volume:** 4%

The all-around, unanimous crowd favorite won us over with its natural fruit flavors and un-cloying sweetness. Each can contained a relatively high percentage of fruit juice (between 7 and 10%).

Like Topo Chico, the boozy Spindrift closely resembles its nonalcoholic precursors, so if you’re already a fan of the brand’s zero-proof cans, they’re worth a try.

The tea and lemon concoction, in particular, brought to mind a crisp Arnold Palmer. “I would crush quite a few of these,” said one new fan.

The Spindrift’s more juice-forward profile reminded some of cocktails and inspired one taster to imagine taking things in an even boozier direction, which also sort of defeats the point of hard seltzer’s easygoing ABVs: “I want to make a gin cocktail with this,” she said.

## WEEKEND: MUSIC



# ORIGEN STORY

Colombian singer-songwriter Juanes covers the music that inspired him on 10th album

BY SIGAL RATNER-ARIAS  
*Associated Press*

**A**fter experimenting with different types of music, Juanes returns to his roots with “Origen,” a covers album in which he pays tribute to the most influential artists in his life and career, from Joe Arroyo and Bruce Springsteen to Bob Marley and Juan Luis Guerra.

Through 12 songs including Carlos Gardel’s “Volver,” Joaquín Sabina’s “Y Nos Dieron Las Diez” and Bob Marley’s “Could You Be Loved,” the Colombian rock star travels to his childhood and adolescence for his 10th studio album.

“I think it was something that my soul was asking for,” Juanes said in a recent video interview from Miami. “After experimenting with different types of music, at this point in my career and at my age I realized that returning to that origin was very necessary.”

The album encompasses styles as diverse as tango, merengue, heavy metal, folk, reggae, vallenato, pop and, of course, rock. It includes the singles “El Amor Después Del Amor” by Fito Páez, in a rock and gospel version, and Springsteen’s classic “Dancing In The Dark” as a slower folk and in Spanish.

Released on May 27 by Universal Music Latin, “Origen” is accompanied by a documentary on Amazon Prime, produced by José Tillán and directed by Kacho López, in which Juanes explains why he chose each of the songs. He also talks to Guerra, Sabina and Páez about their songs, and channels iconic performances from the ’60s through the ’80s including the first Beatles appearance on “The Ed Sullivan Show.”

The two-time Grammy and 23-time Latin Grammy winner told the AP about the influence of Kraken — a rock band from his native Medellín — on his decision to be a musician and laid out how he plans to make music from now on.

Answers have been edited for brevity and clarity.

SEE STORY ON PAGE 29

Juanes performs at the Latin Recording Academy Person of the Year gala in his honor at the MGM Conference Center on Nov. 13, 2019, in Las Vegas.

AP



“Origen,” the latest release by Juanes, includes a wide variety of covers in Spanish and English.

# WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS

## John Hiatt with the Jerry Douglas Band

Leftover Feelings (New West Records)

On “Leftover Feelings,” the powerhouse pairing of John Hiatt and Jerry Douglas starts by introducing a new musical form: the 12-bar blues gone green.

“I’ve got a long black electric Cadillac,” goes Hiatt’s opening verse. “She’ll go a thousand miles on a charge.”

Such is the spark created by this smart collaboration. Hiatt remains at the top of his game at age 68, his

unvarnished tenor still a fount of wit and wisdom, while Douglas and his crack combo elevate the already charming melodies and buttress the rustic grooves. No drummer needed. The sweet twang of Douglas’ Dobro and lap steel season the set, which he produced.

It helps that Hiatt brought excellent material to the recording sessions, held in Nashville’s historic RCA Studio B. Hiatt sings about a colicky baby on “Little Goodnight,” offers love counsel on “Buddy Boy” and gives the term “hollow roots” new meaning on “Sweet Dream.” The spirited “Keen Rambler” echoes a Chuck Berry car song, but it’s about walking.

Eyes will well in response to “Light of the Burning Sun,” a wrenching remembrance of Hiatt’s eldest brother and the life he led before committing suicide in the early 1960s.

“Doing his job, doing his best,” Hiatt sings, “sell-



Patrick Sheehan

**Singer-songwriter John Hiatt, left, and Dobro/lap steel player Jerry Douglas are an inspired pairing.**

ing burnt orange and avocado green kitchens all across the Midwest.”

“Leftover Feelings” shows the blues can come in any color.

— Steven Wine  
Associated Press

## St. Vincent

Daddy’s Home (Loma Vista)

Every St. Vincent album comes with a fresh concept and persona.

On 2014’s “St. Vincent,” singer and shape-shifter Annie Clark was a “near future cult leader.” On 2017’s “Masseduction,” she was “like a dominatrix at a mental institution,” peeling off wicked guitar solos while done up in latex and high heels.

With “Daddy’s Home,” Clark time-travels back to 1970s New York. She’s calling the new aesthetic “Gena Rowlands in a Cassavetes film,” evoked in a “color palette of the world of ‘Taxi Driver.’”

Musically, that means touches of early ’70s Stevie Wonder funk and swirling Pink Floyd prog, hard-hitting horns on the opening “Pay Your Way In Pain,” and gauzy interludes on several tracks that turn into drifting mood pieces. She continues to work with New Jersey producer-to-the-stars Jack Antonoff — also a go-to guy for Taylor Swift, Lorde and Lana Del Rey, among others.

“Daddy’s Home” also has an autobiographical bent, on the title track, which is about the return of Clark’s father from prison after serving 10 years for his role in a stock-manipulation scheme.

After that news broke in the tabloid press, Clark decided to take control of the narrative in the endearingly tender song. “You still got it in your government green suit, and I look down and out in my fine Italian shoes,” she sings. “We’re tight as a Bible with the pages stuck like glue.”

At its best, the new album is richly rewarding. “Down and Out and Downtown” gurgles with an inviting warmth.

But “Daddy’s Home” often fails to connect: The mean streets Clark is inhabiting have been well trodden, and the soulful milieu she’s chosen isn’t a natural fit for an artist who has previously specialized in operating at a cool distance.

— Dan DeLuca  
The Philadelphia Inquirer



# Story: Musician uses documentary to channel artists he admires

FROM PAGE 28

**AP: The album includes 12 songs. Were any left that you would have liked to include?**

**Juanes:** So many! I made a giant playlist of songs that had connected with me in my life, but we chose these 12 for many powerful reasons. These are the ones that had more impact on the memory of my youth, my adolescence, my childhood. It was an incredible exercise to put on another song sort of like a dress, as if I were an actor.

**And you don’t only wear it metaphorically. In the documentary, you channel the Beatles and other artists, transforming yourself with wigs and makeup and outfits. What was that like?**

We had a lot of fun doing this documentary. We wanted to have that visual element and also we took a risk by doing this, because we said, “What if we are like the Beatles in ‘The Ed Sullivan Show’, when they came to the United States, but singing ‘Volver’ by Gardel, or Juan Gabriel?” It was so fun just to experience that kind of acting.

**You also show in the documentary the reactions of some creators of the original songs to your covers. What was Bruce**

**Springsteen’s response to your Spanish version of “Dancing in the Dark”?**

He loved the song. We sent the song to his management months ago before we shot the documentary, and he loved it. He said, “OK, this is good for me; you guys can release that.” And for me, that was huge, you know? We got his OK, and that was really important. Not just from him, but from all the other artists.

**You sing “Could You Be Loved” in English. Why translate “Dancing in the Dark”?**

You know, when I went to Bruce Springsteen’s song and I saw the lyrics, I found the song very powerful in a way that is very human and very vulnerable, and I think at that point — that was during COVID — I just wanted for all Spanish-speaking people to understand it. And we take the song like to a mid-tempo, it’s more like a folk kind of vibe, but with the lyrics in Spanish, it sounds so powerful. I just love it.

**You played quite a bit with the rhythms of the songs. Guerra’s “La Bilirrubina” is no longer only a merengue, for instance.**

Part of the initial idea was not to stay close to the original because competing

against those versions would be impossible. So what we did was getting away as much as we could, while respecting the melody and the tempo of the song and the tonality of most of the songs. I co-produced this album with Sebastián Krysz, and our work together was very special. It was like when we were in school and the teacher said “free drawing,” that you could do whatever you wanted, and that creative freedom was very cool — being able to go for the bachata, the reggae, bringing elements of Colombian percussion, the guitar’s rock, the drums. And the way we recorded the album was very organic; there is nothing programmed here, these are people playing. I really needed that too.

**You talk in the documentary about the band Kraken and what a great influence it had on you. What memories do you have of that time?**

Well, with Kraken, I was in high school and I remember Hugo Restrepo going to school and it was as if a hero came to school because he was Kraken’s guitarist. And at that time there was no rock music playing on commercial radio, it was something impossible. Kraken was one of those

first outstanding bands. It was the first rock concert I went to, and to see how this character and the band itself impacted me — when I saw them I said: “Wait! I want to be up there! I want to do that for life.” It transformed me so much that I remember that concert like it was yesterday.

**Now that you’ve gone back to your origins, where do you see yourself moving forward?**

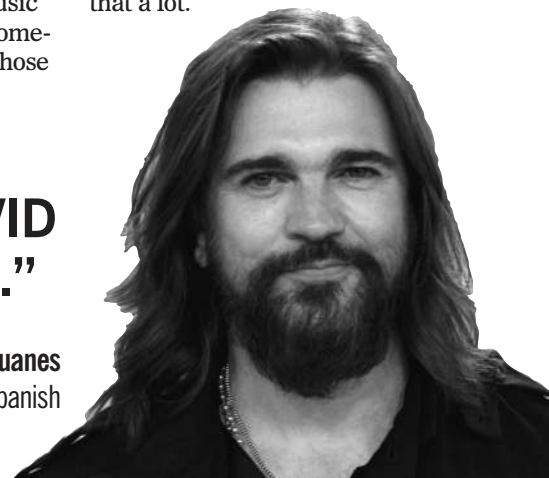
I’m definitely gonna keep going in the same direction, close to this sound, you know, organic and rock-oriented, and also bring elements from folk music like percussion, all the percussion from the Pacific and the Atlantic and the Caribbean; I really love that kind of thing. I wanna play with musicians. I wanna feel the drum behind me and the bass guitar and the guitar and the keyboards, and I wanna feel that on the stage and also on the recording studio, because I’ve been experimenting with different types of music and actually I work by myself with a computer most of the time, but I wanna record again with musicians. I really love that, and I missed that a lot.

**“I found the song very powerful in a way that is very human and very vulnerable, and I think at that point — that was during COVID — I just wanted for all Spanish-speaking people to understand it.”**

Juanes

on his decision to sing Bruce Springsteen’s “Dancing in the Dark” in Spanish

TAIMY ALVAREZ/AP



## WEEKEND: BOOKS

## Making people 'feel like they're really there'

CNN anchor Jake Tapper researched 1960s Hollywood and politics for 2nd historical thriller, 'Devil May Dance'

BY ELLEN GRAY

*The Philadelphia Inquirer*

**F**act and fiction become partners in "The Devil May Dance," a new novel by Philly's Jake Tapper that the CNN anchor set in the Rat Pack world of early 1960s Hollywood.

In the sequel to Tapper's 2018 bestseller, "The Hellfire Club," the fictional New York congressman Charlie Marder and his zoologist wife, Margaret, find themselves on the West Coast, mixing it up with Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Dean Martin and JFK's brother-in-law, Peter Lawford. It's all at the behest of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, who's acquired leverage over the Republican congressman and is using it to gather information about Sinatra's ties to mob boss Sam Giancana.

Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard, "Psycho" star Janet Leigh, Shirley MacLaine and director John Frankenheimer also put in appearances.

We talked with Tapper, whose nonfiction work includes the 2012 bestseller "The Outpost," about why even made-up stories require research and about why you shouldn't bother Googling the lyrics for the Sinatra song "The Devil May Dance."

This interview has been edited and condensed.

**Philadelphia Inquirer: One thing your fiction has in common with your nonfiction is the level of research.**



**Tapper:** For nonfiction, it's because I want to get the facts right. For fiction, it's because I want to make people feel like they're really there. I wasn't alive in 1962, and I didn't hang out with the Rat Pack. I thought that if I knew what I was talking about, it would be more believable than if I went purely by my own imagination.

**The bibliography and list of sources for "The Devil May Dance" go on for several pages, which is a lot for a novel. Did you do most of the research before you started writing? Or did you get to points in the story where you needed to know more, and went back down the rabbit hole?**

I do a lot of research, and then

I make the outline and start writing. But while I'm doing that, I'm also looking [for more details]. For instance, [there is] a scene in the book that takes place in April 1962 in Los Angeles, and, oh, Dodger Stadium opened. And then I'm off and running with a little more research.

And just to be clear, the books in the bibliography, I skimmed them; I read parts of them. I didn't read every one of them cover to cover. But as a journalist, you want to make sure that you attribute your sources.

**Research is also a time-honored journalistic technique for avoiding writing. You have other excuses not to write, including a full-time job,**

**yet you manage to keep publishing. When do you write?**

When I'm writing, I try to have a rule of writing for at least 15 minutes a day. Because everyone can find 15 minutes in their day. Even if you have a busy day, you can find 15 minutes before you go to bed or at lunch. And if that's what you do, at the end of the week you have an hour, 45 minutes of writing under your belt. That's three or four pages. That's something.

More often than not, if you sit down for 15 minutes, you look up and an hour has gone by. So that's just my rule. It's like a commitment to anything, you know, whether it's diet or exercise, or writing, or staying in touch with your relatives, you just have to make the commitment and then do it.

But this was also fun. It's enjoyable for me, and hopefully for the reader, to dive into this world that I created.

**For all the seriousness of some of the issues at the heart of this book, it's also over-the-top enough to be escapist. Was writing this a good break from the daily news cycle, and the pandemic?**

Yes. God, yes. It was a great escape from covering the madness of Washington, D.C., and also the tragedy, the nonstop sadness of the pandemic.

The book is based on a universe of facts, but some wild things happen in it. I tried to stretch it as far as I could go. I set

scenes in places that are fun for the reader, hopefully. Like I'm not going to set a scene in a library; I'm going to set a scene at the Academy Awards.

Certainly, it was a welcome break in my day to go hang out with Sinatra for an hour or two, in Rancho Mirage or Las Vegas. As a way of clearing my mind.

**At the insistence of your editors, you mention at the end of the book that there's no point in Googling the Sinatra song "The Devil May Dance" because you made it up, along with a couple of other songs whose lyrics are included.**

So I knew from ["The Hellfire Club"] that you're only allowed to quote one line of a song, according to the lawyers at Little, Brown. Songwriting lyrics are a valuable commodity. When I handed this in, and it has lyrics for songs, including "The Devil May Dance," which Sinatra sings at the Academy Awards, the lawyers were so frustrated. They said, "Have you not been listening to anything we're saying? You can't quote an entire Frank Sinatra song; you can't do that."

And I said, "It's not a real song. I wrote it; I made it up." And they were so relieved. That's the greatest compliment you could give me, that the lawyers were mad.

**Did you also have a tune in mind for "The Devil May Dance"?**

No, no, no. And even if I did, you couldn't get me to sing it.

## Charlie's wife Margaret now an action hero in 'Hellfire Club' sequel

BY COLETTE BANCROFT

*Tampa Bay Times*

CNN's Jake Tapper gets away from the pressures of covering current politics by writing novels about historical politics.

Tapper published three nonfiction books, including the bestselling "The Outpost" in 2012, before turning to fiction. His new book, "The Devil May Dance," is his second historical thriller featuring fictional U.S. Congressman Charlie Marder and his scientist wife, Margaret.

Set in the early 1960s, it sends the Marders on an undercover mission that sounds groovy and glamorous: Hang out with Frank Sinatra and his famous Rat Pack in Los Angeles to find out just how tight the singer's ties to the Mafia are.

It is indeed groovy and glamorous, and it also nearly gets them killed, several times. Not to mention the dead girl in the trunk of their rental car ...

Tapper's first novel, "The Hellfire Club,"

published in 2018, was set in Washington, D.C., in the late 1950s. It introduced Charlie as a rookie member of Congress and Margaret as a reluctant political spouse. Amid the high political drama of the McCarthy era, the two discovered an ugly conspiracy rooted in blackmail and power.

"The Devil May Dance" takes place about eight years later. Charlie is a moderate "Eisenhower/Rockefeller Republican" (a species now extinct) ensconced in his congressional seat and more acclimated to Washington's backscratching protocols. But that doesn't prepare him for a phone call from his father, Winston Marder, a powerful Republican political operative. Winston needs his son's help because he's in jail at the Tombs in New York, charged with consorting with notorious criminals.

He's been put there by one of his worst enemies: Robert Kennedy, U.S. attorney general and brother of the recently elected president. "Find out what Bobby wants and give it to him," Winston tells Charlie.

What Bobby wants is for Charlie and Margaret to undertake that secret mission. The situation with Sinatra is complicated. The singer is an enthusiastic supporter of

President Kennedy and campaigned for him avidly. But his mob ties are not exactly secret, and Robert Kennedy has directed the energies of the Department of Justice toward bringing down organized crime. (And that's just the tip of the criminal/political iceberg.)

The attorney general tells Charlie they know that mob boss Sam Giancana, a close friend of Sinatra's, has asked the singer for a favor. He has to know what the favor is. All Charlie has to do is "cozy up to Frank and find out," and he'll be doing a service to his country. Oh, and getting Winston out of jail.

Charlie was the main character in "The Hellfire Club," and he's still co-protagonist, but Margaret more than reclaims her time in "The Devil May Dance." From early on, we know she chafes at having put her career as a zoologist on hold to have kids, though she loves them dearly. She's all in on the Hollywood mission in part because she's just plain bored with being a polite political wife, and she turns out to be a born action hero.

It's Margaret who sniffs out a connection in the case to the newly organized Church

of Scientology — and heads straight for its LA headquarters and a scary run-in with L. Ron Hubbard, whose literal clutches she escapes by making highly unauthorized use of the religion's vaunted E-meter.

Charlie has a pretty impressive scene in which he faces off with John Wayne — and wins — but it's Margaret who tears into Sinatra in a confrontation over Hollywood's complacency about the sexual exploitation of teenage girls — and gets a surprising response.

Sinatra is the most intriguing and fully developed of the book's famous characters, but Tapper deftly sketches all of them. The book is deeply researched, and he incorporates some actual conversations and performances, which can be shocking in their casual expressions of racism and misogyny, all too true to the era.

"The Devil May Dance" is rich in research, packed with pop culture and historical detail. The book is set six decades ago, but neither politics nor show business have changed as much as we might hope. Tapper connects the dots, but does it with a light hand that doesn't slow down the Marders' adventures.



## WEEKEND: TELEVISION



A dish from episode one, "Our Roots," is shown above.

# Mirror to the American diet

Netflix's limited series 'High on the Hog' reveals that the roots of many US dishes are in Africa

By **BILL ADDISON**  
*Los Angeles Times*

The macaroni pie is ready, so steamy and golden you want to reach through the television screen to scoop up a big helping. Historian Leni Sorensen hovers over a kitchen hearth at Monticello, the Virginia plantation built by Thomas Jefferson. She uses a pot hook to remove the cast-iron lid and reveal the casserole dish inside the baking vessel.

"Oh, it's sizzling," she says, the sound audible in the background like distant applause.

Then the camera zooms in on a sight familiar to generations of Americans: grated orange cheddar melted into a glossy blanket over tube-shaped pasta.

"It's beautiful," says Stephen Satterfield, the host of the limited series "High on the Hog: How African American Cuisine Transformed America," which debuted May 26 on Netflix.

Cooking the late-1700s-era recipe comes in the third of the show's four episodes, which focuses on the contributions of the chefs enslaved to the earliest presidents of the United States. They include Hercules (sometimes known as Hercules Posey), who cooked for George Washington, and James Hemings, whom Thomas Jefferson sent to France for training. Hemings perfected the recipe for what so many of us know and love today as mac and cheese. When bartering successfully for his freedom, Hemings wound up training his younger brother Peter to take over his responsibilities. Historical records can trace how a lineage of cooks from Jefferson's kitchens spread throughout the growing nation, circulating Hemings' base of knowledge.

"High on the Hog" is a revolutionary moment for American food and travel television programming. It has the come-hither trademarks of the genre — the fascinating glimpses into regional and international cultures, the sweeping cinematography of, say, South Carolina coastline and dusty Texas trails, the shots of shrimp sputtering in oil on the stove and barbecued beef being sliced slo-mo into lush slivers.

The difference lies in the piercing axiom that drives the series: The roots of our national foodways stem from Black hands and minds. Mapping that veracity fills the beautiful, absorbing and sometimes painful frames.

The show takes its name — and its blueprint — from the invaluable 2011 book by scholar and cookbook author

Jessica B. Harris. Her "High on the Hog: A Culinary Journey From Africa to America" weaves academic research with personal narrative, tracking foods of the African diaspora and positioning the ways that Black cooking traversed class and often fueled enterprise throughout our fast-evolving history.

Both the book and the series open in the Dan-Tokpa Market in Coconou, Benin, the small West African country that was once a major departure point for the transatlantic slave trade. Harris joins Satterfield in this first episode. The food stalls hold up mirrors to their American diets: They remark on bushels of okra, banter about the differences between yams and sweet potatoes and linger over various shades and textures of rice. They share a lunch in which pepper sauce makes the meal. The two of

**James Hemings, whom Thomas Jefferson sent to France for training, perfected the recipe for what so many of us know and love today as mac and cheese.**

them visit scenes of past horrors and meet strangers for a meal that feels remarkably like a reunion. Harris all but passes a baton to Satterfield, sending him back to America to follow the narrative ripples that their time in Benin sets in motion.

Satterfield has worn many hats: chef, sommelier, journalist and, in his current day job, a founder of Whetstone Media. He is a natural on screen. Charismatic and inquisitive, he also shows a remarkable ability to hold emotional space for the chefs, writers, farmers and other tradespeople as they relate their tales. You see it in his eyes. He isn't simply a personality ushering you along on a journey; he's personally invested in this effort to reclaim and clarify Black culinary identity.

He's also brilliant at describing dishes: You want to be there as he talks through his first sip of Bellevue broth in Philadelphia or samples Jerrelle Guy's Juneteenth-in-



Netflix photos

"High on the Hog: How African American Cuisine Transformed America" host Stephen Satterfield and Dr. Jessica B. Harris, whose book served as a blueprint for the show, appear a scene from episode one.

spired raspberry-hibiscus cheesecake in Houston.

For Satterfield, his participation in "High on the Hog" is another facet of his mission to reframe ownership of food media, I would not be here. The Food Network, Jacques [Pepin], Julia [Child], Martha Stewart: Consuming this kind of media was so formative that I decided as a teenager to dedicate the rest of my life to food. Now we have a whole generation of Black youth who are going to see this program. I know how high the stakes are."

"I can't even begin to speculate what the show's impact will be," he says, "but I can tell you that had it not been for food media, I would not be here. The Food Network, Jacques [Pepin], Julia [Child], Martha Stewart: Consuming this kind of media was so formative that I decided as a teenager to dedicate the rest of my life to food. Now we have a whole generation of Black youth who are going to see this program. I know how high the stakes are."

Satterfield also said yes because of the Black creators involved, including Los Angeles-based executive producers Karis Jagger and Fabienne Toback, Academy Award-winning director Roger Ross Williams, film director Yoruba Richen and producer Jonathan Clasperberry.

"Why does this team matter? Because stories are central to power," Satterfield says. "People who don't have power are written out of the story, which is why we could get all the way to 2021 and say, why haven't we seen this story about macaroni and cheese told this way on television before? We have the opportunity for the first time to tell our own story in our care. It's rare and powerful."

Harris left many threads for the producers to follow.

"The themes are so strong in the book: survival, self-reliance, entrepreneurship, connectivity," Jagger and Toback conveyed through a joint email. "There were stories we gravitated to in the book that we were really attached to and felt were necessary to the series: Carolina Gold Rice, Hercules Posey, James Hemings, the catering families of Philadelphia, Thomas Downing ... We wanted to interweave history, modern influences and locations in forming the narrative structure."

Harris also cleared paths for them to Chicago; to New Orleans; through Prohibition to the civil rights era; to immigrants with African heritage from the Caribbean, Central and South America; and to other cultural crossroads via Africa.

During a meal filmed for the show in Philadelphia, chef Omar Tate notes that "a lot of times our history is dark ... but there is so much beauty between the lines."

The four episodes of "High on the Hog" are an incredible, belated start to floodlighting the achievements of Black culinarians. This limited series could — should — be endless.

## WEEKEND: HEALTH &amp; FITNESS

# Better brain function just a break away

Experts offer tips to maximize productivity at work by recognizing, optimizing our limited ability to focus

BY KERI WIGINTON

Special to *The Washington Post*

**M**y mind gets a little fuzzy when I concentrate for too long. So, to protect my focused time, I rearranged my life, trading a steady salary as a multimedia journalist covering the tech world for flexibility as a freelance writer focusing on health and wellness. Working less, not more, holds the key to my productivity.

I do the bulk of my work in four or five 55-minute chunks throughout the day, taking half-hour breaks when my mind starts to wander. This schedule puts me in good company. Although there's not much hard science behind it, a lot of productivity gurus push the idea that we get our best work done with about four or five hours of focus a day.

They came up with this range partly because of a well-known study of music training, led by psychologist K. Anders Ericsson, that inspired the "10,000-hour rule." (The concept, popularized by writer Malcolm Gladwell, is that it takes at least 10,000 hours of deliberate practice to become an expert at something, although Ericsson has said this is an oversimplification.) What's the connection to four or five hours of focus? That's how long the "best" students in Ericsson's research tended to practice.

Such a schedule is not uncommon among the accomplished, according to Alex Soojung-Kim Pang, a Silicon Valley writer and consultant who specializes in productivity. Alice Munro, Charles Darwin and Gabriel García Márquez are among the creative people with similar habits, a topic Pang dedicated a chapter to in his 2016 book, "Rest: Why You Get More Done When You Work Less."

"Rather than working super long hours, they maximized the amount of depth of focus time they had per day," he said, "and really protected that and organized their day so they could put in about 4 or 4½ hours of really intensive deep work."

While there isn't extensive research into working and focus, the four-to-five-hour sweet spot sounds about right to Kalina Michalska, a developmental neuroscientist and assistant professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of California at Riverside. She stops short of applying this number to everyone, however. Humans have individual differences "in attentional networks and circadian rhythms," she said.

There are also differences in how we manage our emotions, something most workers have had to deal with during the coronavirus pandemic.

"We've all been

under a lot of stress and anxiety for the past year," said Borna Bonakdarpour, a behavioral neurologist and assistant professor of neurology at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago. "That, by itself, affects our focus."

Pandemic aside, Bonakdarpour said the main culprits behind our limited ability to focus are cognitive overload and energy use.

"When you increase the metabolism of the brain, it comes with byproducts that need to be cleared out and cleaned," he said. "The brain needs to rest." According to Bonakdarpour, research shows that for every two hours of focused work, "you need about 20 to 30 minutes to break."

Of course, some of the work we do doesn't require 100 percent of our attention, Bonakdarpour added.

"That's why you can kind of get through even when you're tired," he said. "But as a general principle, your brain is functioning at a lower level." Studies show that as our focus slides, we're less motivated, we make more mistakes and we get distracted more easily.

This truth is recognized in some professions where attention failure can be life-threatening. Air traffic controllers, for example, only manage live traffic for an average of about four hours out of their eight-hour shifts, according to the Federal Aviation Administration.

But most of us are not air traffic controllers with bosses who understand the limits of focus. If we only have four or five hours of peak attention within a normal workday, how can we optimize them? Here are some tips from our experts.

## Work in chunks to rest the brain

Michalska first tried the Pomodoro method: You work for 25 minutes, then rest for three to five minutes. After four of those blocks, you take a half-hour break. But she found herself more focused on the timer than her work. She eventually settled into a longer period: "I try to do 45 minutes, and then I take a break."

## Schedule your breaks

Michalska takes five-minute rests after her working blocks, making sure she leaves extra time for lunch. She recommends planning your week with your downtime as a priority.

"I would put in the breaks first," she said. "Put in the run, the lunch, the break. Otherwise, you're never going to do it."

In her schedule, she also leaves a little room for transitions between tasks, which include writing, researching, teaching, and meeting with students. She said these buffers felt counterintuitive at first, but they help keep her on schedule.

"You need a little time to shift the task, to get water, to take a walk, the mail comes, somebody calls," she said. "I would fall behind, because something unexpected would happen when I didn't put a little downtime in between."

While work breaks can feel like roadblocks, you might be surprised at what happens when you give your thoughts a little room.

"Your creative or subconscious mind doesn't stop working while you're waiting in line for coffee or you're taking a walk around the block," Pang said. This can lead to "those moments of insight that we've all had."

## Avoid work during downtime

Bonakdarpour goes for a walk during his breaks, because physical activity boosts blood flow and brain function. But a conversation with a colleague can also help, he said. Just make sure you "talk about things that don't have anything to do with work."

## Rest more when you overwork

We all have days or weeks when deadlines pile up. But your concentration doesn't have to suffer if you occasionally overwork. In fact, deadline crunches can sharpen your focus and help you work faster.

"A little bit of positive anxiety — I've got to get this done by this time — can boost

brain function and productivity," Bonakdarpour said. "But the thing is, it does take energy. The next day, you may feel tired. And you need to consider that and plan for it."

## Protect your most creative time

You probably have a certain time of day when you're most productive. If possible, tell your boss and colleagues you're going to set aside those hours for focused work, and you'll get to your other work outside that time.

"I'm not particularly effective from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.," Michalska said. "So, I just schedule all my emails at that time, when I don't have to think that much."

## Keep tabs on your productivity

You can think about your focused time kind of like your finances, meaning you should create a detailed list of how you spend it.

"Every 15 minutes, jot down what you're actually doing," Michalska said. This can be tedious at first, she said, but it'll show you how often you make a snack or check social media when you think you're working.

## Guard against interruptions

My most productive days are when work feels so effortless that I fly through my breaks because I don't feel the need for them. This state of "flow" — a term coined by Hungarian psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi — is when "you feel stretched to the edge of your abilities but not beyond them," Pang said.

To cultivate an environment to make flow more likely, limit your distractions; research has found that it can take from 30 seconds to 60 seconds to refocus on a task when your attention is diverted to a second one. I set "do not disturb" on my devices. I don't get alerts for emails, text messages or news headlines.

This kind of disconnection might seem impossible where you work. But a growing number of companies are redesigning their workdays so employees can unplug for several hours each week, Pang said. "They carve out time where everyone can be heads down, a little antisocial, ignore the Slack channel, not answer the phones and just concentrate on their most important tasks."

It's a simple shift, he said, but it goes a long way in boosting worker productivity and well-being.

"There are plenty of people who've recognized that it's possible to change work," he said, "and to change it for the better."



## WEEKEND: FAMILY



ROBERT COHEN, ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH/TNS

**Jenny Berla helps her twins Isla, left, and Elodie with their masks as they approach their sister's school to pick her up after class May 19. Berla, who is planning to send the girls to kindergarten this fall, is concerned that dropping mask mandates before young children are eligible for vaccinations leaves them open to risk.**

# One less layer of protection

As mask mandates lift, some parents worry for their unvaccinated kids

BY MICHELE MUNZ  
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

**J**enny Berla has three children, 5-year-old twins and an 8-year-old. And they are really sick of nature hikes, she said.

But, after Berla, her Type 1 diabetic husband and their elderly parents were vaccinated against COVID-19, she looked forward to doing more things with her kids this summer, such as visiting museums, taking theater classes and going on float trips.

Then in mid-May, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said it was safe for vaccinated people to go without masks in most settings. St. Louis and St. Louis County governments quickly lifted mask mandates that had been in place for months. Many businesses followed.

The announcements, which came despite the fact that less than half of the adult population is fully vaccinated, took many people by surprise.

Berla, 38, of Olivette, Mo., suddenly feels a layer of protection between the coronavirus and her children — too young to get vaccinated — is gone. Unvaccinated people are expected to continue wearing a mask in public because they can still spread the virus, but she worries they will not consider the risk and go without.

While she knows a vast majority of children with COVID-19 have no or mild symptoms, she wishes mask mandates stuck around until younger kids became eligible for the vaccine, especially as doctors learn more about the long-term effects of an infection and how the vaccines perform against emerging variants.

“We might never know all these things, but just giving them a chance to be vaccinated first would be nice,” Berla said.

Berla joins many parents trying to navigate a new world where people are ditching masks and returning to normal while their young children — anxious for interaction after a year of mostly virtual school or having to avoid day care — are still at risk of getting the coronavirus.

Tami Bowen, 46, of St. Charles, Mo., home-schooled her children ages 8 and 10 this past year. Her 10-year-old has dwarfism along with heart and breathing issues and difficulty focusing in virtual classes.

Going into stores are often the only time they are around others, Bowen said. Now they will not go into any business where customers can go mask-free.

“If stores stop requiring them, that will just be more social isolation until they lower the age of who can get vaccinated,” Bowen said.

It is too soon to lift mandates, she said. “I feel like the percentage of adults refusing to be vaccinated is too high.”

Adults with diseases that weaken their immune systems and the effectiveness of vaccines share the same concerns as young parents about the CDC’s new recommendation, which came as the pace of vaccinations has slowed.

The CDC based its recommendation on growing research showing that being fully vaccinated greatly reduces the risk of getting infected and spreading the virus to the others. The seven-day average of new cases in the U.S. — just over 31,000 — is at its lowest level since June.

Among U.S. adults ages 65 and over who are most at risk from COVID-19, about 85% are either fully vaccinated or on their way. Deaths from the virus at their lowest numbers since July, and hospitalizations are dropping to levels not seen since the pandemic began to ramp up in April.

Experts say without mask mandates, children and vulnerable groups can still take precautions to navigate public spaces safely.

Dr. Ericka Hayes, a pediatric infectious disease specialist with St. Louis Children’s Hospital, said parents can find comfort knowing that a tight-fitting, multi-layer mask worn over the nose and mouth can still protect their children.

“Even if there are individuals who are dishonest enough to not be wearing a mask if they are not vaccinated,” Hayes said, “you can feel confident that if you are consistently wearing that mask and doing the social distancing, which you should be doing as well, that certainly wearing the mask themselves is highly protective.”

Hayes said while vaccinated parents can safely go without a mask around their children, many may wear one when venturing out to model the behavior in their kids who have to stick with mask-wearing. Others might choose to stay masked in public if someone in their family has a weak immune system.

“Those may be scenarios where people may choose to continue to wear masks,” she said. “I think for every household, they kind of have to consider and weigh the risks and benefits.”

## THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



## Picking my battles with the Mutilation Generation

Our 26-year-old son hasn’t trimmed his beard in three years and wears a brown Walmart sweatshirt every day. Our 23-year-old daughter had her café au lait hair dyed orangey copper. Our 20-year-old daughter wears long, wildly-painted fingernails and a fake nose ring.

If I had my way, they’d be clean cut and all natural, but I encourage these semi-permanent fashion choices. Why? Today’s kids are under pressure to take risks to fit in, often in the form of permanent tattoos and body piercings.

My parents had it so easy. They never worried that I might come home with a tattoo on my thigh or a bolt through my cheek, because back then, only punk rockers and ne’er-do-wells did that kind of thing.

Well ... unless you count Navy sailors.

But today, it doesn’t matter how well we raise our kids. It doesn’t mean a hill of beans what socio-economic category your family falls into. It’s irrelevant whether your kids are on the Dean’s List or in detention, whether your kids want to be doctors or ditch diggers, whether they aspire to live in the White House or the Big House.

Today, behavior that was once reserved for the fringes of society has become mainstream. It’s no longer a question of whether our kids will get tattoos or body piercings, but when.

In 1984, my college dorm mate shoved a needle through my left earlobe and into a raw potato, then inserted a tiny gold stud. That night while dancing to Duran Duran at the frats, I sported my new asymmetrical ears with confidence. The third earring seemed to scream, “Look! I’m not the geek you thought I was!”

That was about as daring as we got back in the ’80s. But being cool now requires elaborate tattoos and piercings on every body part imaginable: tongues, cheeks, eyebrows, lips, nostrils, and nipples, to name a few.

While we were stationed in Germany, I was at my daughter’s indoor soccer tournament when the moms on either side of me struck up a conversation.

“When I turned 40, I got my lower back tattoo and ...”

“Me too!” the other mom interrupted, lifting her shirt to show an Asian symbol. “I’m not exactly sure what it means.”

The moms went on to complain that their jeans irritated their belly button rings, and I began to worry.

With everyone (and their mother, literally) mutilating their bodies these days, to what extremes will our kids go to set themselves apart? And, what will happen when they age?

Does a lower back tattoo that says “Juicy” end up looking more like “Jeewillickers” after stretch marks, age spots and spider veins? Will Grandma look sexy when it peeks out of her elastic waistband during morning calisthenics at The Happy Acres Retirement Village? Maybe Grandpa will stop eating rice pudding long enough to wheel his chair over and slap her on the tush. Grandma might wink at him, because only she knows that under all that half-chewed rice, his dentures are hiding a tongue piercing he got when he was 18.

Should we give in and buy our kids gift cards from “Needles R Us”? Should we accompany them for their first bolt-fitting and take them out for ice cream afterwards? Should we pick out tattoo designs for ourselves to fit our parental lifestyles? (I might start with a nice frying pan on my hip, or maybe a laundry basket on my ankle.)

No, we shouldn’t embrace body mutilation any more than we should keep badgers as pets, but we should keep trying to talk sense to our kids.

My husband and I made a family rule: If you want to get a permanent tattoo or body piercing, you must be a financially independent adult. In the meantime, you are welcome to let your semi-permanent freak flag fly as long as we are paying for your phone, car, tuition, health insurance, room or board.

And if you really want to take risks, leave your body unaltered and become a true non-conformist.

Read more at [themeatandpotatoesoflife.com](http://themeatandpotatoesoflife.com), and in Lisa’s book, *The Meat and Potatoes of Life: My True Lit Com*. Email: [meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com](mailto:meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com)

# WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

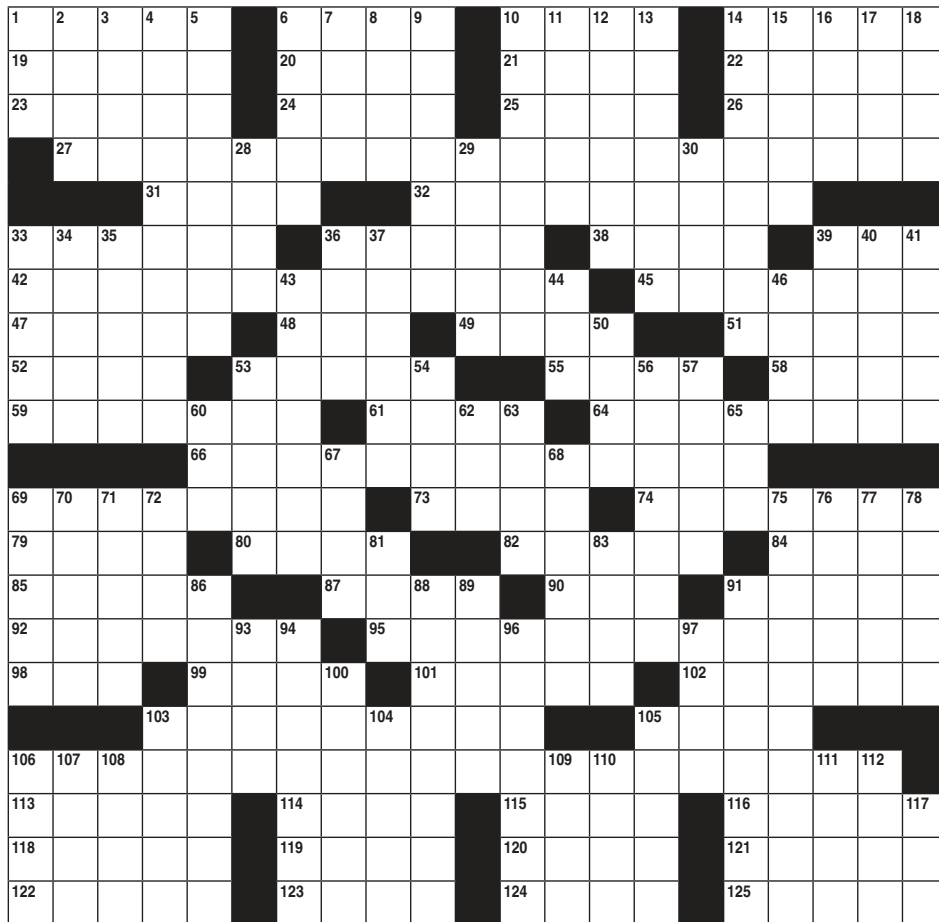
## NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

### YOU DO THE MATH

BY JENNIFER NEBERGALL / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Jennifer Nebergall, of Boulder, Colo., is a former finance director at the University of Colorado. She started doing crosswords several years ago over Sunday brunch as a weekly tradition with her husband. Since the birth of their child, though, they have shifted to doing crosswords during naptime. Jennifer writes, "Having spent my career in finance and analytics, this theme appealed to my dual loves of math and wordplay." It is Jennifer's crossword debut. — W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Supply for an ultimate Frisbee team
  - 6 2019 box-office flop described by one critic as "Les Meowsérables"
  - 10 Picks the brain of
  - 14 Extemporizes
  - 19 "Why should \_\_\_\_?"
  - 20 Feeling tender
  - 21 Apartment, in real estate lingo
  - 22 How spring rolls are cooked
  - 23 Oscar-winning actress born Mary Louise
  - 24 One side of a 2015 nuclear agreement
  - 25 It's irreversible
  - 26 University of Florida athlete
  - 27 "That was great!" — "No, it stank!"
  - 31 Setting for Jo Nesbo's best-selling crime novels
  - 32 They have stems and white heads
  - 33 Mild, light-colored cigars
  - 36 Have because of
  - 38 Drive (from)
  - 39 Recurring pain?
  - 42 Route 70 in {Route 10, Route 95, Route 101, Route 70, Route 25}
  - 4 5 Snitch
  - 47 Hit film set aboard the spaceship Nostromo
  - 48 Cereal grain
  - 49 Fastener that leaves a flush surface
  - 51 Modern party-planning tool
  - 52 Lofty
  - 53 Collector's item
  - 55 Word after combat or cowboy
  - 58 What two Vikings have explored
  - 59 Royal staff
  - 61 Sort represented by the 🍌 emoji
  - 64 Fruits often used in sushi
  - 66 Cattle in [cattle/pigs]
  - 69 Burrito condiment
  - 73 Vodka mixer
  - 74 Hopeless predicament
  - 79 Birthstone for Hillary Clinton, Kamala Harris and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
  - 80 Toffee bar brand
  - 82 What the nose knows
  - 84 Major move, for short
  - 85 "... unless you disagree"
  - 87 Naturally occurring hexagonal crystals
  - 90 "Dames at \_\_\_\_" (Broadway musical)
  - 91 Was fed up
  - 92 Comics character with the dog Daisy
  - 95 Bear x tiger
  - 98 "Billions" airer, for short
  - 99 Et \_\_\_\_
  - 101 Hamilton, to Burr
  - 102 Green cards, informally
  - 103 Offering to a houseguest
  - 105 Hardly any
  - 106 Car in {plane, car, train, horse, car, car, train}
  - 113 Pong company
  - 114 Shakespeare character who inquires, "Are your doors lock'd?"
  - 115 Greet grandly
  - 116 Provide funding for
  - 118 Was accepted
  - 119 \_\_\_\_ mess, English dessert of berries, meringue and whipped cream
  - 120 Its merchandise often comes with pictorial instructions
  - 121 "Set Fire to the Rain" singer
  - 122 Part of a golf club
  - 123 Mathematician Descartes
  - 124 Credit-application figs.
  - 125 PC platform popular in the 1980s
  - 12 Long, loose robe
  - 13 Leave momentarily
  - 14 Brief evocative account
  - 15 Diarist Nin
  - 16 "Hello \_\_\_\_" (old cellphone ad line)
  - 17 Subatomic particle
  - 18 Some nice cameras, for short
  - 28 Wife of Albert Einstein
  - 29 Wipe out, slangily
  - 30 "\_\_\_\_ deal"
  - 33 Has a tête-à-tête
  - 34 Pale pinkish purple
  - 35 Light-footed
  - 36 Muhammad's father-in-law
  - 37 Cause of a smudge
  - 39 First work read in Columbia's literature humanities course
  - 40 Like some news coverage
  - 41 Squeeze
  - 43 "Nice going!"
  - 44 Crux of the matter
  - 46 Rating for risqué shows
  - 50 \_\_\_\_-in-the-hole (British dish)
  - 53 Whale constellation
  - 54 Massive ref. books
  - 56 Have things in common
  - 57 Like music that uses conventional keys and harmony
  - 60 Org. whose website has a "What Can I Bring?" section
  - 62 Summer Olympics host before Tokyo
  - 63 They may come in a boxed set
  - 65 Summer hrs. in Iowa
  - 67 Co. captains?
  - 68 First line of a Seuss classic
  - 69 Parts of cars and stoves
  - 70 High-profile interviewer of Harry and Meghan
  - 71 Style of "Roxanne" in "Moulin Rouge!"
  - 72 Drawn out
  - 75 Easterlies
  - 76 Done again
  - 77 Chef Waters who pioneered the organic food movement
  - 78 Mrs. \_\_\_\_, "Beauty and the Beast" character
  - 81 Kind of vaccine used against Covid
  - 83 Slippery
  - 86 Partly
  - 88 Two-person meeting
  - 89 Certain sots
  - 91 Words often replaced when singing "Take Me Out to the Ball Game"
  - 93 Disney character who says "Some people are worth melting for"
  - 94 Less sportsmanlike
  - 96 Where the King lived
  - 97 Tennis's Nadal, familiarly
  - 100 Make sparkling
  - 103 Font flourish
  - 104 Tease
  - 105 Cartographic collection
  - 106 In Touch and Out, for two
  - 107 Texter's "Then again ..."
  - 108 Cloud contents
  - 109 Trees under which truffles might grow
  - 110 "De \_\_\_\_" (response to "Merci")
  - 111 Took too much, for short
  - 112 \_\_\_\_ contendere
  - 117 \_\_\_\_ Moore, antipoverty entrepreneur of the Robin Hood Foundation



### DOWN

- 1 Grow faint
- 2 Coffee-order specification
- 3 Garment whose name sounds like an apology
- 4 Sign of distress
- 5 Like many wildflower seeds
- 6 Boutros Boutros-Ghali's home city
- 7 Nearly 5,000 square yards
- 8 Comparative word
- 9 Matched up
- 10 What has interest in a car?
- 11 Sound of disdain

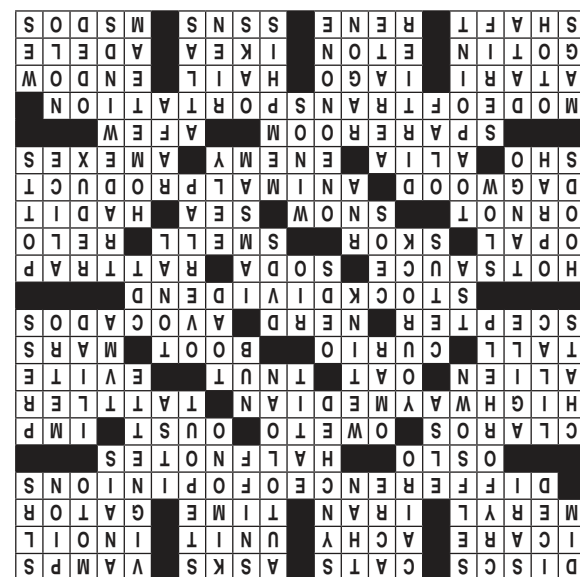
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- 112 \_\_\_\_ contendere
- 117 \_\_\_\_ Moore, antipoverty entrepreneur of the Robin Hood Foundation

## GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

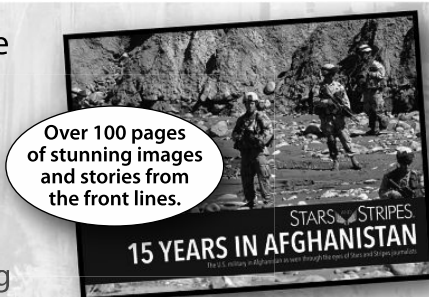
## RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



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## FACES

# Building in some fun

Host Will Arnett dusts off his dad jokes for 'Lego Masters'

BY BROOKE LEFERTS  
Associated Press

Will Arnett's playful sarcasm is serving him well these days as both the host of Fox's "Lego Masters," where his "dad jokes" kill, and on his podcast, "Smartless," where he banters with pals Jason Bateman and Sean Hayes.

Teasing comes naturally to the actor, as does working with Legos. He's been the voice of Batman in "The Lego Movie" franchise and is hosting and executive producing season two of "Lego Masters," a reality brick building competition that premiered this week. With access to 5 million Legos, budding amateur architects put skills and creativity to the test, building motorized mini parade floats, an earthquake tower and demolition derby, while vying for a \$100,000 prize.

"Smartless" features Arnett, Bateman and Hayes, who are friends in real life and decided to take their love of poking fun at each other public with a conversational podcast that features surprise guest stars like Kamala Harris and Gwyneth Paltrow. The acting trio launched it during the pandemic, and it's been a hit with listeners.

Arnett, a father to three boys, says he often feels like a big kid, "in pursuit of having fun" with his latest gigs. In a recent interview with The Associated Press, he talks about his humor, visiting the "Lego Masters" set with his sons, and one of his favorite podcast guests.



Fox/AP

"Lego Masters" Judge Jamie Berard, left, chats with host Will Arnett on the set. The reality brick building show's second season premiered on Fox this week.

**AP: Does the "Lego Masters" set put you in the mood to host?**

**Arnett:** It's like being on this, like, crazy Lego spaceship, destination: have fun! We're on this amazing set where you have all these building tables or these huge bins filled with 5 million Lego pieces. It's absurd, in the best way. It's so fun and definitely puts me in the mood.

**Do you ad-lib a lot on the show?**

I just got to be myself and kind of goof around. And I make mistakes and I make jokes and I say stuff that is dumb. My kids call them 'dad jokes,' I call them 'bad jokes,' and I just try to go out there and have fun. We do have something scripted. We have a really funny writer who helps me ... but I just want to get out there and make people feel comfortable.

**Have your older boys visited the set?**

My 10-year-old is nuts for it, so they come to set all the time. They can't believe it. And you've got to remember, they've been around a

lot of Lego stuff because I've done a lot of Lego stuff over the years. You'd think that their interests would have waned. It has not! You walk out on that set and if you're somebody who's into Lego, it's like, 'Oh my God!' because Lego does stir up that sort of creative juice in people. And when you get on that set, you think 'I could build anything!' And so my kids are super into it, and I will say, we watch it at home.

**Sounds like you're having fun with the guests on the "Smartless" podcast.**

There is no premise to the show. We start recording the moment we log on. We've never once discussed what we're going to talk about, ever. And the guest is truly a surprise to the two of us, to Jason, Sean and me. So we have a lot of fun doing it. Having, like, Maya Rudolph, who is one of my favorite people on the planet, having her come on and talk to Maya for an hour and laugh until you can't breathe. I mean, it's just ... so much fun.

## CBS wins ratings war for 13th year

Associated Press

In a designation that feels a little less significant every year, CBS has finished the 2020-21 television season as the nation's most-watched television network for the 13th consecutive time.

CBS averaged 6.28 million prime time viewers in the Nielsen company's measurement of live-plus-seven viewing, which includes everyone who watched a particular program live and within the next week. CBS has won 18 of the past 19 years, the one-time exception being Fox when "American Idol" dominated TV.

Increasingly, however, the measurement doesn't reflect how people experience television, because it excludes streaming services and bingeing of programs outside of their first-week window.

Even though the pandemic kept more people at home, CBS' prime-time viewership was down 18% from the previous year, as was second-place NBC's. ABC was down 14% and Fox lost 33% of its audience, Nielsen said.

The CBS drama "NCIS," which aired its first episode in September 2003, was the most popular scripted show, averaging 12.5 million viewers per week. It has been TV's most popular drama for 11 of the past 12 years, a streak interrupted only by NBC's "This Is Us."

In a positive sign for the network, its second most popular show was the rookie drama "The Equalizer," starring Queen Latifah.

## Every acting role Taylor Swift has ever had, from 'CSI' to 'Cats'

BY CHRISTI CARRAS  
Los Angeles Times

Are you ready for Taylor Swift's next big-screen appearance?

A couple years after starring in Tom Hooper's certified flop of a film adaptation of "Cats," the pop superstar and sporadic actor appears to have landed on her feet, booking her newest acting role in a star-studded project from director David O. Russell.

This week's casting news comes on the heels of what has already been a busy professional period for Swift, who has released three studio albums in less than a year. Before "Fearless (Taylor's Version)" and "Evermore" came "Folklore," which clinched the singer-songwriter's third Grammy for album of the year in March.

Between hit singles and chart-topping albums, the decorated musician has starred in a smattering of film and TV projects alongside a number of A-list actors. While we await her latest cinematic turn, here's a timeline of Swift's previous credits, from "CSI" to "Cats."

### 'CSI: Crime Scene Investigation' (2009)

Despite her music industry fame, Swift's acting career began like many others': with a guest-starring role in "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation."

In the ninth season of the CBS procedural drama, Swift portrayed rebellious teenager Haley Jones.

### 'Valentine's Day' (2010)

Hot off her first album of the year Grammy for "Fearless," Swift made her feature film debut in the vignette-



UNIVERSAL PICTURES/TNS

Taylor Swift played fun and flirty Bombalurina in "Cats."

style romantic comedy "Valentine's Day" in February 2010.

The country-pop powerhouse portrayed shallow high school student Felicia Miller alongside onscreen love interest Taylor Lautner, the "Twilight Saga" actor whom Swift later dated. Also among the cast of Garry Marshall's holiday-themed film were Julia Roberts, Jamie Foxx, Anne Hathaway, Jessica Alba, Kathy Bates, Jessica Biel, Bradley Cooper, Queen Latifah, Jennifer Garner, Ashton Kutcher, Patrick Dempsey, Shirley MacLaine and George Lopez.

### 'The Lorax' (2012)

With two live-action credits under her belt, Swift next experimented with voice acting for an animated adaptation of Dr. Seuss' "The Lorax."

The seasoned vocalist joined the cast as girl-next-door Audrey, a new character who doesn't appear in Seuss' book. Rounding out the top-billed "Lorax" ensemble were Zac

Efron, Danny DeVito, Ed Helms, Jenny Slate, Nasim Pedrad and Betty White.

### 'New Girl' (2013)

In the sophomore season of the sitcom "New Girl," Swift made a brief cameo as Elaine, a guest at the wedding of Shivrang (Satya Bhabha) and Cece (Hannah Simone).

When the ceremony is eventually called off, Elaine reunites with her former flame, Shivrang, to "go to Vegas and elope!"

### 'The Giver' (2014)

In the critically panned film adaptation of Lois Lowry's dystopian novel "The Giver," Swift portrayed Rosemary, a former Receiver of Memory and daughter of the Giver (Jeff Bridges) whose story is unraveled through flashbacks.

In addition to Swift and Bridges, the movie also starred Alexander Skarsgard, Odeya Rush, Brenton Thwaites and Meryl Streep.

### 'Cats' (2019)

After a five-year acting hiatus, Swift returned to the big screen as the fun and flirty Bombalurina in "Cats," based on Andrew Lloyd Webber's Broadway musical of the same name.

As with her first feature film, the Grammy winner was just one of several prominent entertainers to be converted into a computer-enhanced feline for this theatrical trainwreck. Also among the sprawling ensemble were Jennifer Hudson, Ian McKellen, Judi Dench, Jason Derulo, James Corden, Rebel Wilson and Idris Elba.

# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Police: Driver hits headstones at cemetery

**CO** DENVER — Authorities in Colorado have launched an investigation after a woman drove her car into multiple headstones at Fort Logan National Cemetery in Denver on Memorial Day.

The Denver Police Department said the woman sideswiped two vehicles parked in the cemetery parking lot before continuing on and crashing into the headstones, KMGH-TV reported.

"It just got worse and worse," said Antonio Moran, who was at the cemetery during the incident honoring his veteran family members. The car drove through the lawn, hit other vehicles and slid into multiple gravestones, Moran said, noting there were several people at the cemetery at the time of the crash.

No injuries were reported, and police did not immediately reveal how many headstones were damaged. Some headstones were completely ripped out of the ground and others were broken in half, Moran said.

The driver was arrested and is being held on suspicion of driving under the influence, police said.

## Vandals take Elvis' name off sign at his birthplace

**MS** TUPELO — Elvis Presley's birthplace in Mississippi is offering a \$1,000 reward to figure out who took the word "Elvis" off the landmark's sign.

The museum discovered the first name taken from the "Elvis Presley Birthplace, Museum & Chapel" sign over the weekend. The word "Elvis" had been written as the rock 'n' roll pioneer's signature.

The museum in Tupelo isn't sure exactly when the brick sign was damaged.

The entire sign was stolen three months ago and had just recently been replaced, WTVA-TV reported.

The singer's birthplace also survived a tornado moving nearby in early May.

The site includes the restored two-room house built by Presley's family for \$180. He was born there in January 1935.

## Man banging skateboard sends shoppers fleeing

**TX** DALLAS — Panicked shoppers rushed out of Dallas mall on Memorial Day after a man banged a skateboard on the ground in the food court and made hand gestures as if he was shooting, police said.

"That sound obviously caused a panic," Dallas Police Chief Eddie Garcia said. "When the crowd started running the individual focused on that and then began doing hand gestures as if he was shooting into the the crowd, which then further escalated the situation."

Garcia said police got a call at 1:27 p.m. Monday reporting an active shooter at NorthPark Center. He said that within three minutes, off-



DON CAMPBELL, THE (ST. JOSEPH, MICH.) HERALD-PALLADIUM/AP

## Just a bit outside

Eli Gould, 5, of St. Joseph, Mich., plays baseball with his father, Michael Gould, on Tuesday, at Milton Park in St. Joseph.

duty officers at the mall had confronted the man. On-duty officers responded a minute later.

Police said that the man was taken into custody and transported to an area hospital for a medical evaluation. Garcia said the man did not have a gun.

## Woman treated for burns after attack with liquid

**MD** ABINGDON — A Maryland woman was treated for apparent chemical burns after she said two people yelled homophobic remarks and threw liquid at her, the Harford County Sheriff's Office said.

The woman told deputies that it happened in the Home Goods store parking lot in Abingdon on May 27, according to a news release posted on social media. The woman said two people in a small black car yelled homophobic remarks at her, then threw an unknown liquid at her before driving off.

At first, the woman believed the liquid was water and she continued with her day, but an hour later, her skin began itching and she went to an urgent care for treatment of what appeared to be chemical burns.

## Firefighters save more than 100 rabbits from blaze

**NE** HOLDREGE — Firefighters in south-central Nebraska saved more than 100 rabbits from a fire that threatened their large hutch in Holdrege, officials there said.

The fire broke out about 4 p.m. Monday on a property in southwest

## THE CENSUS

**200** The approximate number of people defrauded of more than \$2.5 million in romance and other online scams for which nine men have been apprehended and indicted, prosecutors said. Grand jury indictments in federal court in Charleston, W.Va., charged the men with mail fraud, wire fraud, money laundering and receipt of stolen property, prosecutors said in a news release Tuesday. The men live in the U.S., but six of them are Nigerian citizens and two are from Ghana. According to the indictments, victims, many of whom are elderly, were coerced into sending money to bank accounts controlled by the defendants from 2016 to 2020.

Holdrege, the Kearney Hub reported. The fire began in a workshop and spread to a lean-to livestock shelter.

Holdrege Assistant Fire Chief Jim Wagner said the fire was only a couple of feet from the structure that housed between 100 and 150 rabbits when firefighters were able to pull the animals to safety.

The fire was quickly extinguished, and not one was injured, Wagner said. He was unaware of any animals being lost in the blaze.

## Ex-postal worker fined for destroying cash-filled mail

**KS** WICHITA — A former postal worker in eastern Kansas has been ordered to pay \$1,100 in fines and restitution for destroying mail and presumably stealing cash contained in that mail.

Dennis Tapscott, 24, of Emporia, was fined Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Wichita, the Wichita Eagle reported. He was ordered to pay a \$500 fine, \$575 in restitution and a \$25 special assessment fee.

Tapscott pleaded guilty last week to one count of delaying mail. Prosecutors said that between August 2019 and January 2020, Tapscott

opened and destroyed mail containing cash that was intended for 12 other people in Greenwood and Lyon counties.

Court documents did not explicitly state whether Tapscott kept the money from the mail he destroyed, but he was ordered to repay the victims for the cash they never received.

## Boy shot by man returning paintball fire with gunfire

**FL** MIAMI — Thinking his home was under attack, a Florida homeowner shot and wounded a 10-year-old whose father had driven him to participate in a drive-by shooting with a paintball gun, police said.

Michael Williams, 26, told Opa-locka police his son begged him to drive by a home where young people were gathered Sunday night so he could fire his paintball out the window, according to a police report released Tuesday.

Williams drove by the home as his son fired off several rounds, police said. The homeowner confused the paintball for real gunfire, telling police he thought his family was being attacked. He fired one shot, which

struck the child. The boy then lost his balance and was run over by his father's vehicle, police said.

No additional details on the child's injuries or condition were released. Williams drove the child home and his mother called 911, according to police.

The Miami Herald reported that the father was charged with child neglect with great bodily harm.

## Car crashes through wall of historic home/museum

**ME** YORK — A historic Maine home that has been converted into a museum suffered extensive structural damage when a car crashed through an outside wall.

The car struck the Emerson-Wilcox House in York at about 11 p.m. Saturday, Old York Historical Society Executive Director Joel Leffever said in a Facebook post on Sunday. No one was hurt.

"Over the next several days and weeks we will work to evaluate the structural integrity of the building, and move collection objects to safety," he wrote. "Together with the Elizabeth Bishop Perkins Trust, which owns the house, Old York will evaluate next steps towards restoration and repair."

Because the house was not scheduled to open to the public this season, nothing was on display in the room where the car entered, he said.

The more than 250-year-old building has been used as a general store, tavern, tailor shop, post office and home, according to the society.

From wire reports



# 246 STRONG

YEARS



## HAPPY 246<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY, U.S. ARMY!

Dear Service Members, Retirees, Veterans and Military Family Members,

The Army & Air Force Exchange Service joins the Nation in celebrating the U.S. Army's 246th birthday.

Soldiers have put others' comfort and safety before their own, with many giving their last full measure of devotion.

One of these heroes was Father Emil Kapaun, a phenomenal Soldier and chaplain who gave his life for his fellow Soldiers during the Korean War. In 2013, Father Kapaun, the most decorated chaplain in American history, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for heroism.

Today, Soldiers honor the legacy of heroes like Father Kapaun as they steadfastly serve during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Exchange thanks all Soldiers—past and present—who make life better for us all. Here's to the greatest land force in the world. The Exchange is honored to serve those who serve.

Soldier For Life!

Tom Shull  
Director/CEO



**EXCHANGE**  
ARMY & AIR FORCE EXCHANGE SERVICE

Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



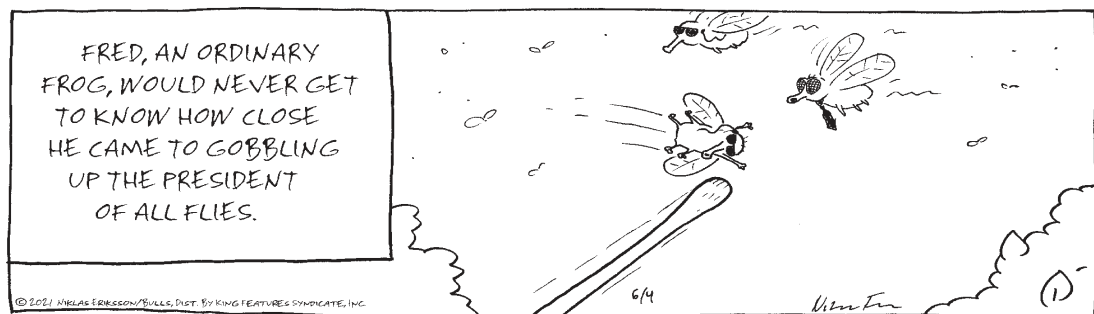
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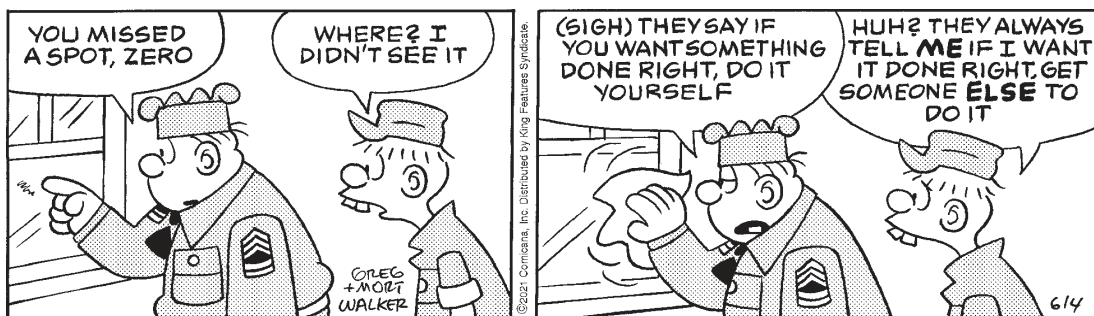
Candorville



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				57			

ACROSS

- 1 Sean of "Rudy" (Abbr.)
- 6 Heart chart
- 9 Venomous viper
- 12 Stage
- 13 Dundee denial
- 14 TV pioneer
- 15 Pugilist
- 16 Fashion designer and film director
- 18 Flu symptoms
- 20 Mosque VIP
- 21 Hit show letters
- 23 "— -haw!" (rodeo cry)
- 24 Andean beast
- 25 Engine noise
- 27 Defy authority
- 29 Saudi neighbor
- 31 New Hampshire town
- 35 Coffin stands
- 37 Ostrich kin
- 38 Terrible
- 41 Not 'neath
- 43 Guitar's kin
- 44 Baby elephant
- 45 Sums
- 47 Tom Cruise legal thriller
- 49 Remote locations?
- 52 Fair hirer, in ads
- 53 Marseilles monarch
- 54 Poet's muse
- 55 Speck

- 56 Sailor's "yes"
  - 57 Feudal farmers
- DOWN**
- 1 NYPD alert
  - 2 HBO competitor
  - 3 Schedule C, for example
  - 4 "Got it"
  - 5 Brash
  - 6 Main dish
  - 7 "Get Smart" evil agency
  - 8 Jewel
  - 9 Bakery lure
  - 10 "Vamoose!"
  - 11 "Top Chef" host Lakshmi
  - 17 Wood repair paste
  - 19 Haunting
  - 21 CIA operative

- 22 Regret
- 24 Superman foe Luthor
- 26 Snub
- 28 Plague
- 30 Zilch
- 32 To date
- 33 Comics cry
- 34 Singer Carly — Jepsen
- 36 Rent sharer
- 38 Played a part
- 39 "Yippee!"
- 40 Swift
- 42 Demolishes, in Dover
- 45 Helen's home
- 46 Traditional tales
- 48 401(k) alternative
- 50 Justice Dept. agency
- 51 "Mayday!"

Answer to Previous Puzzle

R	E	B	A		D	A	L		A	C	E	D		
E	R	A	S		E	M	I		R	A	V	I		
D	I	B	S		S	I	P		M	M	I	V		
S	Q	U	E	A	K			A	R	A	B	L	E	
					S	T	S			U	N	O		
F	O	B	S		E	B	B	T	I	D	E	S		
E	D	U			T	E	E			I	F	I		
D	E	S	P	I	S	E	D			T	A	G	S	
					T	O	N			S	P	A		
E	G	O	I	S	T				I	M	B	U	E	D
D	O	U	R			E	N	D			O	R	C	A
G	Y	R	O			L	E	E			O	D	O	R
E	A	S	T			L	O	S			S	U	N	K

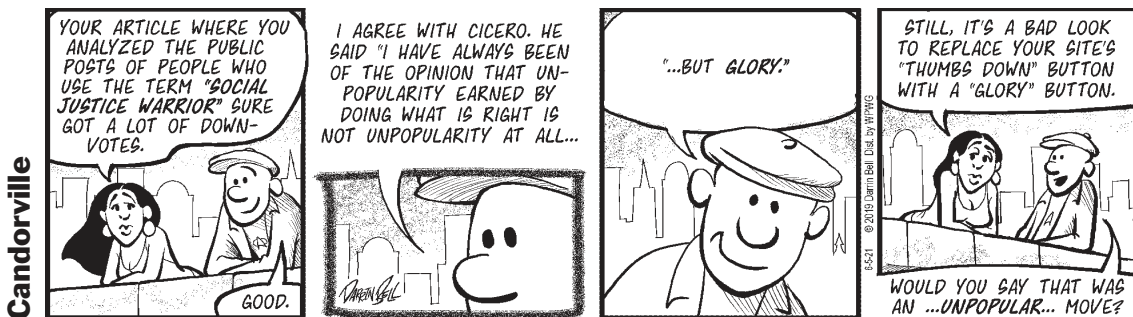
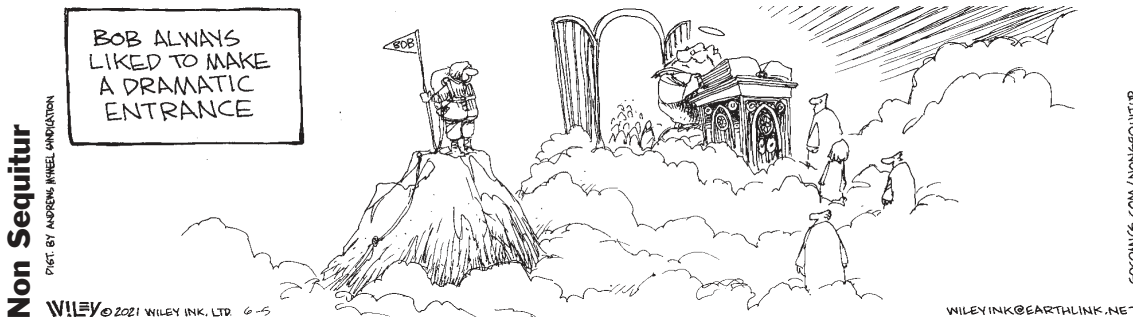
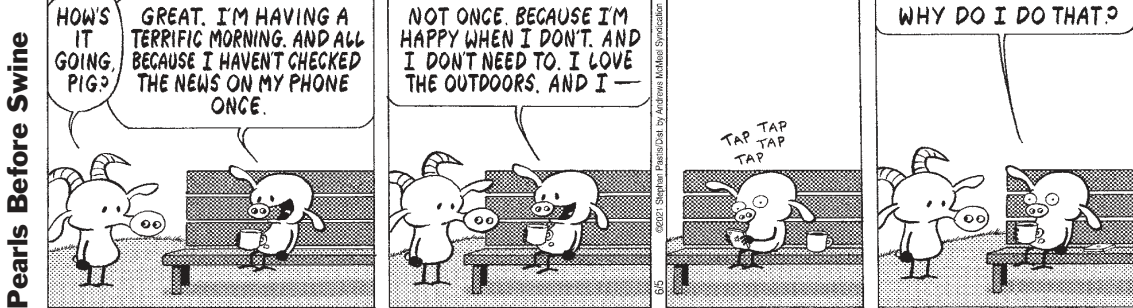
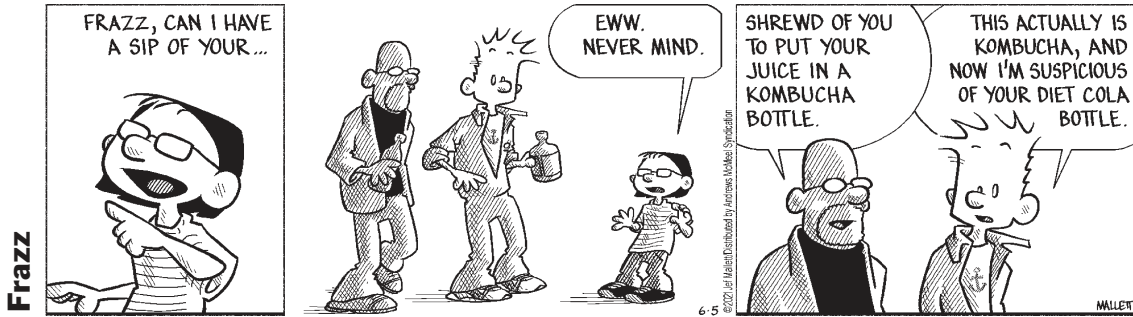
6-4

CRYPTOQUIP

VRZSP GUMJH URZU VZJSHG  
 Z GWAGUZPUSZE ZGGMJUNHPU  
 MY GDRHJSVZE DJMLWVUG  
 YMJ GDMJUG: AZEE-NZJU.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE HARDWARE STORE CLERKS OUGHT TO WEAR WHILE THEY'RE WORKING? WRENCH-COATS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals B



**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				

- ACROSS**
- 1 Attempted
  - 6 Humiliate
  - 11 Baby rocker
  - 12 Cuba's Fidel
  - 14 St. Ignatius of —
  - 15 Hire
  - 16 Batting stat
  - 17 Cattle breed
  - 19 USN officers
  - 20 Enlist again
  - 22 Resort
  - 23 "Night" author Wiesel
  - 24 Ed of "Elf"
  - 26 Draw in
  - 28 Game official
  - 30 Comic Philips
  - 31 Misbehaves
  - 35 Figure of speech
  - 39 Emit coherent light
  - 40 Asian electronics giant
  - 42 Perry's creator
  - 43 "Nasty!"
  - 44 Worrier's words
  - 46 Energy
  - 47 Top Hun
  - 49 Experience anew
  - 51 Countrified
  - 52 "Ironic" singer Morissette
  - 53 Type of trapshooting
- DOWN**
- 1 Treasure stores
  - 2 Sci-fi zapper
  - 3 Chapel vow
  - 4 First lady of scat
  - 5 College VIPs
  - 6 Get going
  - 7 Cote calls
  - 8 Request
  - 9 "Streetcar" cry
  - 10 Steamy
  - 11 Barton of the Red Cross
  - 13 Start
  - 18 Transcript no.
  - 21 Intrinsically
  - 23 Wear down
  - 25 Old Olds
  - 27 Texter's "I didn't need to know that!"
  - 29 Amusing bit of trivia
  - 31 "Are you calling me —?"
  - 32 Prickly plant
  - 33 "For shame!"
  - 34 Casual shirt
  - 36 California university city
  - 37 "Twelfth Night" countess
  - 38 Viral web sensations
  - 41 Gem weight
  - 44 Nastase of tennis
  - 45 Depend (on)
  - 48 Mineral suffix
  - 50 Napkin's place

**Answer to Previous Puzzle**

A	S	T	I	N		E	K	G		A	S	P	
P	H	A	S	E		N	A	E		R	C	A	
B	O	X	E	R		T	O	M		F	O	R	D
			F	E	V	E	R	S		I	M	A	M
S	R	O		Y	E	E		L	L	A	M	A	
P	U	R	R		R	E	B	E	L				
Y	E	M	E	N	I		E	X	E	T	E	R	
			B	I	E	R	S		R	H	E	A	
A	W	F	U	L		O	E	R		U	K	E	
C	A	L	F		T	O	T	A	L	S			
T	H	E	F	I	R	M		S	O	F	A	S	
E	O	E		R	O	I		E	R	A	T	O	
D	O	T		A	Y	E		S	E	R	F	S	

6-5

**CRYPTOQUIP**

RW QMEEZRLSL ZCXA CPOHLS  
 NHOYPASAPJ CSSCRDAE  
 YAGWANS QPALLAEDALL, ZCXA  
 SZAJ GACNZAE DACG-XCDC?

**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** CHAIN STORE THAT CARRIES A SUBSTANTIAL ASSORTMENT OF SPHERICAL PRODUCTS FOR SPORTS: BALL-MART.  
**Today's Cryptoquip Clue:** Z equals H

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## It's not 'mission accomplished' in Afghanistan

By MADIHA AFZAL

Special to The Washington Post

It appears that President Joe Biden's announced withdrawal from Afghanistan is proceeding ahead of schedule, with all U.S. troops set to depart by mid-July, and NATO and allied forces keeping to that schedule as well. But if the president wants to tie a neat bow on U.S. involvement in Afghanistan — saying, as he has, that the logic for the war ended once al-Qaida was gutted and Osama bin Laden killed — it reveals a stunning lack of introspection about the United States' role in the conflict that will continue in Afghanistan.

It is true that the president had no good choice on Afghanistan, and that he inherited a bad deal from his predecessor. But in announcing an unconditional withdrawal, he made the situation worse by throwing out the minimal conditions U.S. special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad had negotiated under the Trump administration.

The refrain from the Biden administration is that the United States is not abandoning Afghanistan, that it will aim to do right by Afghan women and girls, and that it will try to nudge the Taliban and Kabul toward a peace deal using a diplomatic tool kit. But the narrative ignores much of the reality on the ground. On May 8, at least 90 people, many of them schoolgirls, were killed in a horrific terrorist attack outside a high school in Kabul. The Taliban denied responsibility but have increased attacks across Afghanistan. The fighting between the Afghan security forces and the Taliban has intensified in various cities; in other district centers, Afghan forces have surrendered to the Taliban.

Meanwhile, the Taliban have repeatedly refused to come to the administration's proposed Istanbul conference on Afghanistan

— and now, after intense efforts, say they'll only attend if the conference is short, low-level and doesn't involve decision-making on critical issues. They've made a farce of the whole process, an outcome many of us predicted given the unconditional withdrawal. Afghanistan almost certainly seems headed for greater violence, with embassies rapidly reducing their presence or shutting down altogether due to security concerns, as the Australian Embassy recently announced. One can imagine how tone-deaf a "mission accomplished" narrative sounds to Afghans living this reality.

The U.S. choice came with costs attached to each decision. With staying, the cost was potential U.S. troop casualties and a fear that things would not change on the ground. With leaving comes the cost of a deeper conflict in Afghanistan and a backsliding of progress made there over the past two decades. In many ways, the costs of staying seem shorter-term and borne by the United States, while the costs of leaving will be predominantly borne by Afghans over a longer time horizon. Yet, even if those costs seem remote now, history tells us that they will be blamed on the United States.

Biden, as the Economist put it, seems to have "little time for a losing cause." His decision also reflects his administration's foreign policy for the American middle-class paradigm, which focuses on domestic considerations over international ones (and is this so different from Trump's "America First"?). The irony, though, is that the American middle class largely doesn't care about Afghanistan — their ambivalence gave way to support for this decision once it was announced, but it wouldn't be hard to visualize the public approving of a scenario that kept a couple thousand troops there for a while longer.

What's perhaps most disturbing is the narrative the president has presented along with the rationale for withdrawal: that we went to Afghanistan to defeat al-Qaida after 9/11, that mission creep led us to stay on too long and, therefore, it is time to get out. This takes an incomplete view of U.S. agency in the war in Afghanistan. The narrative implies that the civil conflict in Afghanistan today did not originate with us — that this more than 40-year war began with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, preceded us and will follow our departure.

The fact of the matter is that, by beginning the campaign in Afghanistan in 2001 and overthrowing the Taliban, who were then engaged in their draconian rule, and installing a new government, we began a new phase of the Afghan conflict — one that pitted the Kabul government and the United States against the Taliban insurgency. The Afghan people did not have a say in the matter. That we are leaving Afghan women, children and youth better off in many ways after 20 years is due to us, and we should be proud of that. But that we are leaving them mired in a bloody conflict is also due to us, because we could not hold off the Taliban insurgency, and we must reckon publicly with that.

If this is an administration that takes U.S. leadership seriously — and I think it is — it should do away with the simple narrative it has presented thus far, and reckon with our role and responsibility in this latest iteration of the Afghan conflict. Far from making us appear weak, such honesty would garner the United States respect and credibility on the world stage.

Madiha Afzal is a David M. Rubenstein Fellow at the Brookings Institution and the author of "Pakistan Under Siege: Extremism, Society, and the State."

## The world should learn from India's COVID cataclysm

By MIHIR SWARUP SHARMA

Bloomberg Opinion

In cities at least, India's nightmarish second wave of COVID-19 finally seems to be ebbing. Delhi has brought its test positivity rate below 2% for the first time in two months. The pandemic's scars won't be easily erased, however — and they should be a warning to other developing nations. Those countries must learn from India's experience if they don't want to repeat it.

The first and most obvious lesson is to avoid overconfidence. A relatively small change in how transmissible the coronavirus is can have large, non-linear effects on how fast it spreads. That means strategies that kept the pandemic at bay in 2020 won't necessarily work in 2021. As new variants emerge, health authorities might need to lock down more firmly and in a more targeted fashion to remain safe.

To do so, they'll also need to test more widely and perform more genomic sequencing so that they can track which variants are spreading in the population and where. This won't be easy. Even India, with an extensive scientific establishment, ranks 102nd in the world in the proportion of reported cases sequenced. Other emerging nations will struggle even more.

Richer nations should help. As a recent paper in Science pointed out, there are significant legal barriers to sharing of samples and data internationally. These need to be addressed so virus samples can move across borders quickly. Countries such as the U.K. that

have built vast genome sequencing capacity will have to dedicate some of it to tracking samples from other parts of the world.

Emerging nations also need to learn the right lessons about limited health care capacity. The tragic scramble in cities such as Delhi for hospital beds, oxygen cylinders and medicines need not be replicated elsewhere. Indian states that established triage systems — telling those with symptoms whether they should go to a hospital or a care center, and which ones had beds free — managed the pressure on their creaky public health machinery better than others. Local authorities should make plans to set up similar systems in their countries, including by phone and online.

Doctors now have a wealth of data about which therapeutic treatments are most effective and which shouldn't be tried. Patients' families spent sleepless nights trying to get hold of convalescent plasma or drugs such as remdesivir before the Indian health establishment eventually admitted they were largely ineffective and dropped them from treatment protocols. High-flow oxygen therapy was overused, leading not just to a shortage of medical oxygen but to some extremely nasty additional diseases.

Similarly, other governments know now that when the curve starts steepening, a new variant is detected or test positivity rises above danger levels, they should swiftly establish a centralized task force to allocate hospital

resources and prescribe the right therapies.

Finally, and most importantly, all nations should now understand that vaccines work and that interfering with their supply is dangerous. The Indian government has argued that "if just one country shuts down raw material production, the entire supply chain breaks down." Even the locally made Covaxin vaccine from Bharat Biotech International Ltd. uses 360 ingredients from 10 countries — 200 of them from the U.S. Countries such as the U.S. and U.K., which have subverted supply chains to prioritize their own needs, have a lot to answer for.

Meanwhile, Indian manufacturers' shift to supplying huge domestic needs first has meant that vulnerable countries in the rest of the emerging world are waiting too long for their shots. International cooperation over the next weeks and months must focus on ensuring that the vaccine supply chain is repaired, export bans end, more manufacturing capacity is created and the existing stock of vaccines is shared more equitably.

What happened in India could happen anywhere. But it need not if India's government, its peers in the emerging world and the world's richer nations learn the right lessons, work together — and show a little humility about this awful disease.

Mihir Swarup Sharma is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He is a senior fellow at the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi and head of its Economy and Growth Programme. He is the author of "Restart: The Last Chance for the Indian Economy."

# SCOREBOARD/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

## PRO BASKETBALL

### WNBA

#### EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Connecticut	7	2	.778	—
New York	5	2	.714	1
Atlanta	4	2	.667	1½
Washington	2	4	.333	3½
Chicago	2	5	.286	4
Indiana	1	8	.111	6

#### WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	6	1	.857	—
Las Vegas	5	3	.625	1½
Phoenix	4	3	.571	2
Los Angeles	2	3	.400	3
Dallas	2	4	.333	3½
Minnesota	1	4	.200	4

#### Tuesday's games

Connecticut 74, Las Vegas 67  
Dallas 79, Los Angeles 69  
Phoenix 84, Chicago 83  
Seattle 88, Indiana 73

#### Wednesday's games

No games scheduled.

#### Thursday's games

Las Vegas at New York  
Chicago at Phoenix  
Indiana at Los Angeles

#### Friday's games

Atlanta at Minnesota  
Dallas at Seattle

#### Saturday's games

Las Vegas at Washington  
Chicago at Los Angeles  
New York at Connecticut

## COLLEGE GOLF

### NCAA Men's Championships

At Grayhawk Golf Club  
Scottsdale, Ariz.

Yardage: 7,289; Par: 70

#### Wednesday Championship

Pepperdine 3, Oklahoma 2

Jonathan Brightwell, Oklahoma, def. Dylan Menante, Pepperdine, 1 up.

Joe Highsmith, Pepperdine, def. Garrett Reband, Oklahoma, 4 and 3.

Clay Feagler, Pepperdine, def. Ben Lorenz, Oklahoma, 1 up.

Logan McAllister, Oklahoma, def. Joey Vrzich, Pepperdine, 1 up.

William Mouw, Pepperdine, def. Quade Cummins, Oklahoma, 4 and 3.

William Mouw, Pepperdine, def. Quade Cummins, Oklahoma, 4 and 3.

### French Open

#### Wednesday

At Stade Roland Garros  
Paris

Purse: Euro 16,404,509

#### Surface: Red clay

#### Men's Singles

#### Second Round

Alexander Zverev (6), Germany, def. Roman Safiullin, Russia, 7-6 (4), 6-3, 7-6 (1).

Casper Ruud (15), Norway, def. Kamil Majchrzak, Poland, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4.

Federico Delbonis, Argentina, def. Pablo Andujar, Spain, 4-6, 6-1, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Laslo Djere, Serbia, def. Miomir Kecmanovic, Serbia, 4-6, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-3.

Henri Laaksonen, Switzerland, def. Roberto Bautista Agut (11), Spain, 6-3, 2-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Fabio Fognini (27), Italy, def. Marton Fucsovics, Hungary, 7-6 (6), 6-1, 6-2.

John Isner (31), United States, def. Filip Krajinovic, Serbia, 7-6 (6), 6-1, 7-6 (5).

Alejandro Davidovich Fokina, Spain, def. Botic van de Zandschulp, Netherlands, 6-4, 6-4, 5-7, 2-6, 6-4.

Kei Nishikori, Japan, def. Karen Khachanov (23), Russia, 4-6, 6-2, 2-6, 6-4, 6-4.

Stefanos Tsitsipas (5), Greece, def. Pedro Martinez, Spain, 6-3, 6-4, 6-3.

Reilly Opelka (32), United States, def. Jaume Munar, Spain, 6-3, 6-2, 3-6, 7-5.

Marcos Giron, United States, def. Guido Pella, Argentina, 7-6 (2), 6-1, 6-7 (3), 6-4.

Pablo Carreno Busta (12), Spain, def. Enzo Couacaud, France, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.

Cristian Garin (22), Chile, def. Mackenzie McDonald, United States, 4-6, 4-6, 7-6 (7), 6-3, 8-6.

Steve Johnson, United States, def. Thiago Monteiro, Brazil, 6-3, 6-7 (2), 7-6 (2), 3-6, 6-3.

Daniil Medvedev (2), Russia, def. Tommy Paul, United States, 3-6, 6-1, 6-4, 6-3.

#### Women's Singles

#### Second Round

Ana Bogdan, Romania, def. Naomi Osaka (2), Japan, walkover.

Tamara Zidansek, Slovenia, def. Madison Brengle, United States, 6-4, 6-1.

Daria Kasatkina, Russia, def. Belinda Bencic (10), Switzerland, 6-2, 6-2.

Marketa Vondrousova (20), Czech Republic, def. Harmony Tan, France, 6-1, 6-3.

Sorana Cirstea, Romania, def. Martina Trevisan, Italy, 6-4, 3-6, 6-4.

Katerina Siniakova, Czech Republic, def. Veronika Kudermetova (29), Russia, 7-6 (7), 5-7, 7-5.

Polona Hercog, Slovenia, def. Caroline Garcia, France, 7-5, 6-4.

Paula Badosa, Spain, def. Danka Kovinic, Montenegro, 6-2, 6-0.

Danielle Collins, United States, def. An-

## PRO SOCCER

### MLS

#### EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
New England	5	1	2	17	11	7
Philadelphia	4	2	2	14	9	5
Orlando City	3	1	3	12	8	4
NYFC	3	2	2	11	13	7
CF Montréal	3	3	2	11	10	9
Columbus	3	2	2	11	7	6
Nashville	2	0	5	11	9	6
Atlanta	2	1	4	10	9	7
New York	3	4	0	9	10	10
D.C. United	3	5	0	9	8	11
Inter Miami CF	2	4	2	8	8	13
Toronto FC	1	4	2	5	8	12
Chicago	1	5	1	4	4	11
Cincinnati	1	4	1	4	6	15

#### WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Seattle	5	0	3	18	14	3
Sporting KC	5	2	1	16	15	10
LA Galaxy	5	2	0	15	11	11
Colorado	4	2	1	13	12	8
Houston	3	3	2	11	11	12
San Jose	3	5	0	9	11	12
Portland	3	4	0	9	9	11
Real Salt Lake	2	1	3	9	9	7
LAFC	2	3	2	8	8	9
Vancouver	2	4	1	7	6	9
Austin FC	2	4	1	7	5	8
Minnesota	2	4	1	7	6	11
FC Dallas	1	3	3	6	8	11

#### LA Galaxy 1, San Jose 0

D.C. United 3, Miami 0

Sporting Kansas City 3, Houston 2

Colorado 3, FC Dallas 0

Minnesota 1, Real Salt Lake 1, tie

#### Sunday, May 30

Philadelphia 3, Portland 0

Austin FC at Sporting Kansas City

#### Saturday, June 12

Austin FC at Sporting Kansas City

### NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Orlando	3	0	1	10	6	3
Washington	2	1	1	7	4	4
Portland	2	2	0	6	8	4
North Carolina	1	1	1	4	6	2
Reign FC	1	1	1	4	2	2
Gotham FC	1	1	1	4	1	1
Houston	1	2	1	4	5	6
Louisville	1	1	1	4	2	5
Chicago	1	2	1	4	3	7
Kansas City	0	2	2	2	2	5

#### Wednesday, May 26

Orlando 2, Portland 1

Chicago 2, Kansas City 0

Washington 2, Houston 1

#### Friday, May 28

North Carolina 5, Louisville 0

#### Saturday, May 29

Houston 2, Chicago 1

#### Sunday, May 30

Portland 1, Gotham FC 0

Orlando 1, Kansas City 0

Washington 1, Reign FC 0

#### Saturday's games

North Carolina at Chicago

Reign FC at Gotham FC

Louisville at Portland

#### Sunday's games

Orlando at Washington

Houston at Kansas City

## PRO GOLF

### World rankings

#### Through May 30

1. Dustin Johnson	9.98
2. Justin Thomas	8.34
3. Jon Rahm	8.21
4. Bryson DeChambeau	6.98

### TENNIS

helina Kalinina, Ukraine, 6-0, 6-2.

Victoria Azarenka (15), Belarus, def. Clara Tauson, Denmark, 7-5, 6-4.

Madison Keys (23), United States, def. Leylah Annie Fernandez, Canada, 6-1, 7-5.

Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (31), Russia, def. Ajla Tomljanovic, Australia, 6-2, 6-3.

Serena Williams (7), United States, def. Mihaela Buzarnescu, Romania, 6-3, 5-7, 6-1.

Aryna Sabalenka (3), Belarus, def. Aliaksandra Sasnovich, Belarus, 7-5, 6-3.

Elena Rybakina (21), Kazakhstan, def. Nao Hibino, Japan, 6-3, 6-1.

#### Men's Doubles

#### First Round

Dominik Koepfer, Germany, and Emil Ruusuvuori, Finland, def. Aljaz Bedene, Slovenia, and Jackson Withrow, United States, 6-1, 6-4.

Hugo Nys, Monaco, and Tim Puetz, Germany, def. Adrian Mannarino and Quentin Halys, France, 7-6 (5), 6-2.

Oliver Marach, Austria, and Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, Pakistan, def. Santiago Gonzalez, Mexico, and Marcelo Demoliner, Brazil, 3-6, 7-5, 6-2.

Luke Saville and Max Purcell, Australia, def. Albano Olivetti and Gregoire Barrere, France, 6-2, 6-7 (2), 7-6 (10).

Sander Gille and Joran Vliegen (14), Belgium, def. Andrea Vavassori and Lorenzo Sonego, Italy, 6-4, 6-4.

Robin Haase, Netherlands, and Jan-Lennard Struff, Germany, def. Matthew Ebden and John-Patrick Smith, Australia, 6-3, 6-4.

Jo-Wilfried Tsonga and Dan Added, France, def. Albert Ramos-Vinolas, Spain, and Ricardas Berankis, Lithuania, 7-6 (1), 6-2.

Raven Klaasen, South Africa, and Ben McLachlan (15), Japan, def. Lucas Pouille and Mathias Bourgue, France, 6-3, 6-2.

Nicolas Mahut and Pierre-Hugues Herbert (6), France, def. Jonny O'Mara and Cameron Norrie, Britain, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3.

Jonathan Erlich, Israel, and Lloyd Harris, South Africa, def. Diego Schwartzman and Federico Coria, Argentina, 6-1, 6-2.

Yen-hsun Lu, Taiwan, and Yoshihito Nishioka, Japan, def. Julian Knowle, Austria, and David Pel, Netherlands, 6-4, 6-1.

Matt Reid and Alex de Minaur, Australia, def. Divij Sharan, India, and Federico Delbonis, Argentina, 3-6, 7-6 (11), 6-4.

Nikola Pichler, Serbia, and Tomislav Brkic, Bosnia-Herzegovina, def. Jordan Thompson and Alexei Popyrin, Australia, 7-5, 6-7 (4), 6-3.

#### Women's Doubles

#### First Round

Bethanie Mattek-Sands, United States, and Iga Swiatek (14), Poland, def. Aubane Droguet and Selena Janicijevic, France, 6-0, 6-1.

Yulia Putintseva, Kazakhstan, and Cris-

### DEALS

#### Wednesday's transactions

#### BASEBALL

#### Major League Baseball American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Optioned RF Tyler Nevin to Norfolk (Triple-A East). Recalled LHP Zac Lowther from Norfolk.

LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Purchased the contract of RHP Jake Petricka from High Point (Atlantic League). Reassigned RHP Jake Petricka to Salt Lake (Triple-A West).

MINNESOTA TWINS — Placed C Mitch Garver on the 10-day IL and OF Rob Refsnyder on the 7-day IL, retroactive to June 1.

NEW YORK YANKEES — Optioned 1B Mike Ford to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (Triple-A East). Recalled RHP Brooks Kriese from Scranton/Wilkes-Barre.

SEATTLE MARINERS — Outrighted INF Eric Campbell to Tacoma (Triple-A West) after clearing waivers. Recalled RHP Robert Dugger from Tacoma (Triple-A West). Placed RHP Justin Dunn on the 10-day IL, retroactive to June 1.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Placed RHP A.J. Cole on the 10-day IL, retroactive to May 30. Recalled RHP Jeremy Beasley from Buffalo (Triple-A East) and will be active for tonight's game.

#### National League

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Designated 2B Domingo Leyba for assignment. Acquired 3B Ildemaro Vargas from Pittsburgh for cash considerations.

ATLANTA BRAVES — Optioned CF Cristian Pache to Gwinnett (Triple-A East).

MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Optioned RHP Alec Bettinger to Nashville (Triple-A East).

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Recalled RHP Kyle McGowan from Rochester (Triple-A East). Placed RHP Stephen Strasburg on the 10-day IL.

#### BASKETBALL

#### National Basketball Association

DETROIT PISTONS — Named John Beilein senior advisor/player development.

#### Women's National Basketball Association

DALLAS WINGS — Waived F Kristine Anigwe. Traded the contract of G Dana Evans to Chicago in exchange for a 2022 third round draft pick, the right to swap 2022 first-round draft picks, and the contract of G Shyla Heal.

CHICAGO SKY — Waived G Stephanie Watts. Announced G Lexie Brown granted a hardship release.

#### FOOTBALL

#### National Football League

BALTIMORE RAVENS — Waived DT Braxton Hoyett. Signed DT Jovan Swann. Placed DT Xavier Kelly and WR Donte Sycenieux on Injured Reserve.

CAROLINA PANTHERS — Waived QB Tommy Stevens. Signed WR C.J. Saunders.

CHICAGO BEARS — Signed OL Larry Borom, DB Thomas Graham Jr., RB Khalil Herbert, WR Dazz Newsome and DL Khyiris Tonga.

CINCINNATI BENGALS — Signed DE Joseph Ossai. Signed WR Ja'Marr Chase to a four-year contract. Placed LS Dan Godsil on the reserve/retired list.

DETROIT LIONS — Waived DT John Atkins.

GREEN BAY PACKERS — Signed CB Eric Stokes to a four-year contract.

LOS ANGELES RAMS — Signed CB Robert Rochell and DB Daylan Lake.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS — Signed CB Tye Smith to a one-year contract.

## NHL PLAYOFFS

# Canadiens' win marred by late hit

Associated Press

WINNIPEG, Manitoba — Jesperi Kotkaniemi and Eric Staal scored early goals and Montreal beat the Winnipeg Jets 5-3 on Wednesday night in Game 1 of the second-round series, a victory tempered by a scary late-game hit on Canadiens center Jake Evans.

Playing on his 25th birthday, Evans was taken off the ice on a stretcher with 57 seconds left after being crushed in the head and shoulder area by Jets center Mark Scheifele an instant after tucking in an empty-net goal.

Evans chased down the puck behind the net, tightly circled back around the goal cage and scored just before Scheifele's sent him crashing to the ice.

Scheifele was given a major for charging and a game misconduct.

Montreal interim coach Dominique Ducharme called the hit "vicious" and "useless," and said Evans had not yet been taken to a hospital.

"No, he's still here, he's being evaluated," Ducharme said. "He's doing better, but before I came here he was still being evaluated."

In 2018 during a Canadiens' rookie showdown game, Evans was hit and taken off the ice on a stretcher to a hospital and then put in concussion protocol.

Game 2 of the best-of-seven series is Friday night in Winnipeg.

"It was a dirty hit, but the league's going to take care of it," Canadiens defenseman Joel Edmundson said. "If he gets back in the series, we're going to make his life miserable, but I think the league's going to do a good job with that."

Nick Suzuki and Brendan Gallagher also scored for Montreal, Edmundson and Jeff Petry each had two assists and Carey Price made 27 saves. Adam Lowry, Derek



JOHN WOODS/AP

The Canadiens' Jake Evans, lower right, is protected as he lies motionless on the ice after getting hit by the Jets' Mark Scheifele during the third period of Game 1 of their second-round playoff series Wednesday, in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

**"If (Scheifele) gets back in the series, we're going to make his life miserable, but I think the league's going to do a good job with that."**

Joel Edmundson

Canadiens defenseman, on Jets center Mark Scheifele

Forbort and Kyle Connor scored for Winnipeg, and Connor Hellebuyck stopped 28 shots.

Fans were allowed inside Bell MTS Place for the first time this season. The Manitoba government allowed 500 fully vaccinated health-care workers to attend.

It was Winnipeg's first game since May 24, when it swept the Edmonton Oilers. Montreal overcame a 3-1 series deficit and eliminated the Toronto Maple Leafs on Monday night in Game 7.

Kotkaniemi described the hit on Evans as "disgusting."

"No respect for the other players out there," he said. "I'm not saying anything more than that."

Kotkaniemi bumped fists with Evans as he was being wheeled off the ice.

"Just seeing him moving after a thing like that, it's huge," Kotkaniemi said. "Even getting the fist bump, you know, it's great to see that. I'm feeling much easier now just knowing he's OK."

Jets coach Paul Maurice acknowledged it was a big hit by Scheifele.

"Well, hopefully the young man is going to be all right," Maurice said. "It's a heavy, heavy hit. There's no doubt about that. I'm sure the league will have its opinion."

Jets captain Blake Wheeler expressed concern about Evans.

"Just hope he's OK," Wheeler said. "I mean, that's it. Really, that's all. That's the concern. It's never good to see a guy on the ice for that amount of time and the stretcher out is scary."

## Scoreboard

### Second round

(Best-of-seven; x-if necessary)

#### Tampa Bay 2, Carolina 0

Tampa Bay 2, Carolina 1  
Tampa Bay 2, Carolina 1  
Thursday: at Tampa Bay  
Saturday: at Tampa Bay  
x-Tuesday, June 8: at Carolina  
x-Thursday, June 10: at Tampa Bay  
x-Saturday, June 12: at Carolina

#### Boston 1, N.Y. Islanders 1

Boston 5, N.Y. Islanders 2  
N.Y. Islanders 4, Boston 3, OT  
Thursday: at N.Y. Islanders  
Saturday: at N.Y. Islanders  
Monday: at Boston  
x-Wednesday, June 9: at N.Y. Islanders  
x-Friday, June 11: at Boston

#### Montreal 1, Winnipeg 0

Wednesday: Montreal 5, Winnipeg 3  
Friday: at Winnipeg  
Sunday: at Montreal  
Monday: at Montreal  
x-Wednesday, June 9: at Winnipeg  
x-Friday, June 11: at Montreal  
x-Sunday, June 13: at Winnipeg

#### Colorado 2, Vegas 0

Colorado 7, Vegas 1  
Wednesday: Colorado 3, Vegas 2  
Friday: at Vegas  
Sunday: at Vegas  
x-Tuesday, June 8: at Colorado  
x-Thursday, June 10: at Vegas  
x-Saturday, June 12: at Colorado

## Clutch: Captains leading the way

FROM PAGE 48

ously a key part," Islanders forward Mathew Barzal said of Lee. "He's been doing everything he can on the sidelines to be a great teammate and great captain on the outside."

Stamkos knows all about that after becoming the first captain in more than 50 years to hoist the Cup after not playing in the final game. Lee could join that rare company if New York wins its first title since 1983.

The rest of the captains who are playing are making good on the sports cliché of leading by example.

Nowhere is that more true than Colorado. At 19 years and 286 days, Landeskog became the youngest captain in NHL history in 2012, and in his ninth season with the "C," he took exception to a hit from Blues forward Brayden Schenn on linemate Mikko Rantanen in the Avalanche's playoff opener and set the tone for the series with a Gordie Howe Hat Trick: a goal, an assist and a fight.

"The way he played, the way he showed up for every game, that's a sign of a real true lead-

er," teammate Andre Burakovsky said. "He's huge for this team."

Staal was huge for the Hurricanes beyond his OT heroics against the Predators, showing the same leadership tendencies of brother Eric, who was the franchise's captain from 2009-2016.

"When you have a guy like that as your leader who does it each and every shift, doesn't take any shifts off, it's easy for the other guys to look at that and react the same way," GM Don Waddell said.

That's Bergeron, too. He succeeded Zdeno Chara as captain when the defensemen left for Washington, and it's easy to forget Bergeron didn't have the "C" on his chest the entire time.

"He plays a game that you need to play to win," linemate Brad Marchand said. "We love when he scores some big goals and he does it a lot, but his game is measured a lot more by the way he plays and his defensive game and two-way game and his responsibility, so don't let that get lost with the goals that he scores. But we love when he does that, too."

# Rantanen puts Avalanche up 2-0 with OT winner

Associated Press

DENVER — Mikko Rantanen found himself in the middle of an on-ice swarm from teammates after scoring the winner.

Wonderful and all, but he wanted to make sure the real star of the show received his fair share of the credit, too — goaltender Philipp Grubauer.

Rantanen scored a power-play goal 2:07 into overtime, Grubauer outdueled fellow Vezina Trophy finalist Marc-Andre Fleury and the Colorado Avalanche beat the Vegas Golden Knights 3-2 on Wednesday night to take a 2-0 lead in their second-round playoff series.

"Grubi bailed us out today. He had a really, really good game," Rantanen said. "He's basically the reason why we got to OT."

Rantanen was the reason it ended in quick fashion. He took a cross-ice pass from Nathan MacKinnon and sent a liner over the shoulder of Fleury to set off a celebration in front of a boisterous crowd. The goal came with Reilly Smith in the penalty box for slashing Rantanen.

"Not our best game, but still found a way," Rantanen said. "That's what we've been doing the whole year. Sometimes we haven't been feeling it and Grubi's been awesome and stealing some wins for us — like today. That's what you need if you want to win the Cup."

It was Rantanen's second career overtime winner in the playoffs. The first came in a Game 5 victory over Calgary on April 17, 2019, in a first-round series.

The Golden Knights weren't pleased with the slashing call.

"Just a soft call," Vegas coach Pete DeBoer said. "I can't even blame the refs. Because they're fighting the embellishment of grabbing your face, or falling down, or dropping your stick every period. I can't even blame the referee on it. They fooled them on it."

Brandon Saad and Tyson Jost also scored for the Avalanche, who've won six in a row to start the postseason, tying the franchise mark set in 1987 when the team was based in Quebec.

Grubauer had 39 saves in becoming the first goaltender in franchise history to pick up six straight victories to start a postseason.

"It's really important," Avalanche coach Jared Bednar said of having a goaltending who can steal games in the playoffs. "I thought his performance was exceptional."

Alec Martinez and Smith had goals for the Golden Knights, who controlled large portions of the action after two full days off following a 7-1 loss in Game 1. A fresh Fleury provided a big boost. He didn't play in the series opener after a grueling seven-game series with Minnesota. Fleury stopped 22 shots.



JACK DEMPSEY/AP

The Avalanche's Mikko Rantanen, center, is congratulated by teammates after scoring in overtime of Game 2 against the Vegas Golden Knights on Wednesday in Denver.

## NBA PLAYOFFS

## Scoreboard

<b>First Round (Best-of-seven) x-if necessary</b>
<b>Eastern Conference</b>
<b>Philadelphia 4, Washington 1</b>
Philadelphia 125, Washington 118 Philadelphia 120, Washington 95 Philadelphia 132, Washington 103 Washington 122, Philadelphia 114 <b>Wednesday:</b> Philadelphia 129, Washington 112
<b>Brooklyn 4, Boston 1</b>
Brooklyn 104, Boston 93 Brooklyn 130, Boston 108 Boston 125, Brooklyn 119 Brooklyn 141, Boston 126 Brooklyn 123, Boston 109
<b>Milwaukee 4, Miami 0</b>
Milwaukee 109, Miami 107 (OT) Milwaukee 132, Miami 98 Milwaukee 113, Miami 84 Milwaukee 120, Miami 103
<b>Atlanta 4, New York 1</b>
Atlanta 107, New York 105 New York 101, Atlanta 92 Atlanta 105, New York 94 Atlanta 113, New York 96 <b>Wednesday:</b> Atlanta 103, New York 89
<b>Western Conference</b>
<b>Utah 4, Memphis 1</b>
Memphis 112, Utah 109 Utah 141, Memphis 129 Utah 121, Memphis 111 Utah 120, Memphis 113 <b>Wednesday:</b> Utah 126, Memphis 110
<b>Phoenix 3, L.A. Lakers 2</b>
Phoenix 99, L.A. Lakers 90 L.A. Lakers 109, Phoenix 102 L.A. Lakers 109, Phoenix 95 Phoenix 100, L.A. Lakers 92 Phoenix 115, L.A. Lakers 85 <b>Thursday:</b> at L.A. Lakers <b>x-Saturday:</b> at Phoenix
<b>Denver 3, Portland 2</b>
Portland 123, Denver 109 Denver 128, Portland 109 Denver 120, Portland 115 Portland 115, Denver 95 Denver 147, Portland 140, 2OT <b>Thursday:</b> at Portland <b>x-Saturday:</b> at Denver
<b>Dallas 3, L.A. Clippers 2</b>
Dallas 113, L.A. Clippers 103 Dallas 127, L.A. Clippers 121 L.A. Clippers 118, Dallas 108 L.A. Clippers 106, Dallas 81 <b>Wednesday:</b> Dallas 105, L.A. Clippers 100 <b>Friday:</b> at Dallas <b>x-Sunday:</b> at L.A. Clippers
<b>Conference semifinals (Best-of-seven) x-if necessary</b>
<b>Eastern Conference</b>
<b>Milwaukee vs. Brooklyn</b>
<b>Saturday:</b> at Brooklyn
<b>Philadelphia vs. Atlanta</b>
<b>Sunday:</b> at Philadelphia
Utah vs. L.A. Clippers-Dallas winner, TBD Phoenix-L.A. Lakers winner vs. Denver-Portland winner, TBD

## Hawks, Young soar into second round

By BRIAN MAHONEY  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Trae Young was preparing for his first postseason when a message popped into his phone.

Atlanta interim coach Nate McMillan wanted to tell his point guard that he was built for this time of a year, the kind of praise that can build a young player's confidence as he heads into unfamiliar territory.

It was a nice gesture. Also, an unnecessary one.

"He didn't tell me nothing I didn't already know," Young said. "I have confidence in myself. I know I'm built for this."

His team might be, too.

The Hawks soared into the second round by beating the New York Knicks in five games. Atlanta wrapped the series up with a 103-89 victory on Wednesday night and will play top-seeded Philadelphia in its first appearance in the Eastern Conference semifinals since 2016.

Just 14-20 when they fired Lloyd Pierce on March 1, the Hawks are 32-12 since. They had the best record in the East after McMillan took over, and Young said he isn't satisfied with just one series victory.

"I know what this team is capable of and like I've been saying all year, we have a squad and a team that can surprise a lot of people," Young said. "But we're not going to surprise ourselves because we know what we're capable of."

The Knicks beat them in all three meetings during the regular season and the teams split the first two games of the series in New York. But Atlanta dominated from there, winning each of the last three games by double digits.

The key was Young, who averaged 29.2 points and 9.8 assists in the series. He closed it out with 36 points and nine assists, bowing to the crowd that had jeered him in every game after hitting a three-pointer with under a minute to play.

Even while cursed at and even spat on by a



WENDELL CRUZ/AP

Atlanta Hawks guard Trae Young, left, had 36 points and nine assists to help his team beat the Knicks 103-89 on Wednesday in New York to advance to the Eastern Conference semifinals.

fan in Game 2, he was never rattled by the New York crowd. He probably won't be now by the notoriously tough fans in Philadelphia.

"Some respond better than others. Some have different responses. Trae feeds right into it," Hawks forward John Collins said. "He wants the pressure. He wants the spotlight. He thrives in it."

Atlanta is much more than just Young. Knicks coach Tom Thibodeau credited the

Hawks for finding shooters to put around him, which keeps the floor spaced for Young's drives into the lane and lobs to center Clint Capela or passes to open teammates at the three-point line when defenders close on him.

New York's defense, which limited teams to the fewest points per game and lowest shooting percentage during the regular season, was never able to corral Young.

Now it's Philadelphia's turn to try.

## Without Embiid, 76ers eliminate Wizards in 5

By DAN GELSTON  
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Ben Simmons challenged Seth Curry during an afternoon "Call of Duty" session to score 30 points and send the 76ers into the next round of the playoffs. With Joel Embiid hurt, Simmons told Curry he would do his part and get a triple-double.

Maybe there's something to this pregame gaming hobby.

"Clearly Seth listens to Ben so we're going to use Ben as a translator for Seth from this point forward," Philadelphia coach Doc Rivers said.

Fire up the console for another round.

Curry scored a playoff career-high 30 points and the Sixers beat Washington 129-112 on Wednesday night to end the Eastern Conference series in five games, overcoming Embiid's absence because of a knee injury.

Atlanta awaits after beating New York in Game 5 later Wednesday. Game 1 is Sunday in

Philadelphia. Sixers fans couldn't wait, chanting "We want Brooklyn!" as the seconds ticked off in Game 5.

Embiid gets a few extra days of rest.

With an NBA title still in sight, the team will need its injured franchise center — healthy and ready to roll — in the second round against Atlanta.

"Jo's been huge for us all year. It's only right we give him as much time as he needs to get right and come back and help us win it all," Curry said.

Tobias Harris added 28 points and teamed with Curry and Simmons to carry the offensive load with Embiid out. Simmons had 19 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds to keep top-seeded Philadelphia in the hunt for its first championship since 1983.

Embiid is day to day with a small lateral meniscus tear in his right knee and he was reduced to the Sixers' biggest cheerleader as they put the misery of last season's



MATT SLOCUM/AP

76ers forward Tobias Harris had 28 points in his team's 129-112 victory Wednesday over the Washington Wizards in Philadelphia.

first-round sweep behind them.

Embiid gave a sneak peek that the injury suffered in a Game 4 loss might not keep him out very long. The NBA MVP candidate had the crowd going wild when he hit the court for pregame warm-ups. He shot jumpers around the perimeter, fadeaways, even some free throws — all without any sort of noticeable knee brace under his white leggings.

## Jazz take care of Grizzlies, turn attention to Round 2

By TIM REYNOLDS  
Associated Press

This time, a 3-1 lead didn't get away from the Utah Jazz.

And now comes the next challenge: The second round of the NBA playoffs.

The NBA's No. 1 overall seed is headed to the Western Conference semifinals after Donovan Mitchell scored 30 points and the Jazz beat the Memphis Grizzlies 126-110 on Wednesday night to advance. Utah won four consecutive contests after dropping Game 1, and now awaits the winner of the series between Dallas and the Los Angeles Clippers.

It felt like forever to Mitchell, who hasn't been to the second round since his rookie season — the 2018 playoffs.

"For me, personally, it's just something that I wanted to accomplish," Mitchell said. "It's not the end goal, but it's definitely something to appreciate along the way. We did what we're supposed to do, but at the end of the day you've got to appreciate

where you're at, too, because it can get lost in the shuffle of everything.

"It's a moment that I'll enjoy for the night, and then get ready to play whoever it is next round."

The Jazz probably wouldn't mind if that Mavericks-Clippers series — Dallas prevailed in Los Angeles on Wednesday night to take a 3-2 lead in that matchup, one where the road team has won every game — goes the distance, if for no other reason that it'll give starting point guard Mike Conley more days off. Conley's right hamstring was the lone major issue for Utah on Wednesday night, forcing him to leave the game in the first half with what the team called soreness.

Concern is merited. Conley has been sidelined twice already this season by issues involving the same hamstring.

"He'll get evaluated after the game and over the course of the next 24 hours," Jazz coach Quin Snyder said. "We'll be able to tell you more then."

## NFL/AUTO RACING

## June arrival gives teams flexibility

By ROB MAADDI  
Associated Press

Now that the calendar has turned to June, NFL teams can trade or release players and spread the salary cap hit over two years instead of one.

That doesn't mean Aaron Rodgers is going anywhere but the Packers couldn't afford to deal him from a financial standpoint until now. Other star players such as Julio Jones and Zach Ertz are more likely to be moved.

The Philadelphia Eagles already released wide receiver Alshon Jeffery and defensive tackle Malik Jackson with a post-June 1st designation and the Minnesota Vikings did the same with tight end Kyle Rudolph.

With the salary cap expected to increase up to \$208.2 million in 2022, teams have more flexibility to make blockbuster moves now that this important date has arrived.

Here's a look at some players who could be traded or released:

### Aaron Rodgers

The reigning NFL MVP has expressed his frustration with the Packers, but the team has insisted he's staying in Green Bay. The Packers would have incurred a \$38.4 million dead cap charge in 2021 by trading Rodgers before Tuesday. The Eagles took a record \$33.8 million hit this year when they sent Carson Wentz to Indianapolis. By waiting to move Rodgers, the Packers would free up \$22.85 million in salary cap space in 2021 and another \$25.5 million for 2022 while clearing the contract off the books entirely for 2023.

Of course, the club hasn't reached the point it wants to part with the three-time league MVP.

"We want him back in the worst way," Packers coach Matt LaFleur said last month during the team's rookie minicamp. "I know he knows that and we'll continue to work at it each and every day."

### Julio Jones

The seven-time Pro Bowl wide receiver said last week that he's ready to

leave Atlanta. The Falcons have salary cap issues and Jones counts \$23 million against it for 2021. Trading him now can save Atlanta \$15 million.

The 32-year-old Jones had 51 receptions for 771 yards and three touchdowns in nine games last season. He's guaranteed \$15.3 million this season but it's possible a team looking to acquire him will restructure his deal.

### Zach Ertz

The three-time Pro Bowl tight end said goodbye to Philadelphia in a tear-filled news conference after the season, but Eagles general manager Howie Roseman hasn't found an acceptable trade offer.

The 30-year-old Ertz is coming off his worst season in which he caught just 36 passes for 335 yards and one TD in 11 games. He's scheduled to earn \$8.5 million this season.

Trading or releasing Ertz would clear \$8.5 million in cap space for the Eagles this year. He'd count \$4.2 million in dead money in 2021 and \$3.6 million in 2022.

### Deshawn Watson

The three-time Pro Bowl quarterback wanted out of Houston, but his future is uncertain after 22 women filed lawsuits alleging Watson sexually assaulted or harassed them. Houston police and the NFL are investigating the allegations.

The Texans would've incurred \$21.6 million in dead cap money if they traded Watson before now. That number has been reduced to \$5.4 million. Still, his off-the-field issues must be resolved first.

"I have nothing to say about Deshaun," Texans coach David Culley said last week.

### Russell Wilson

The seven-time Pro Bowl quarterback became the topic of trade speculation when he raised questions about whether Seattle was doing enough to put a winning product around him, but Seahawks coach Pete Carroll and general manager John Schneider squashed those rumors in April.

Seattle would've taken a \$39 million cap hit by trading Wilson already. The amount has been reduced to \$13 million.



BRUCE KLUCKHOHN/AP

Wide receiver Julio Jones is likely on his way out of Atlanta. Jones said last week he was ready to leave the Falcons.



PHOTOS BY NELL REDMOND/AP

NASCAR Cup Series driver Kyle Larson (5) leads the pack to start the Coca-Cola 600 last weekend at Charlotte Motor Speedway in Concord, N.C. Larson won the race from the pole position.

# Return to normalcy

## NASCAR enjoys regular weekend in Charlotte

By PETE IACOBELLI  
Associated Press

CONCORD, N.C.

Practice, qualifying, happy fans and a Hendrick Motorsports driver winning at Charlotte Motor Speedway: It doesn't get much more normal than that in NASCAR these days.

"It just feels like we're back," car owner Rick Hendrick said Sunday night after his newest driver, Kyle Larson, won the Coca-Cola 600 for the team's record-setting 269th NASCAR victory.

Marcus Smith, CEO and president of Speedway Motorsports and general manager of Charlotte Motor Speedway, said he spoke with so many spectators thrilled to watch a race in person, along with others who loved competing.

"They were thrilled to be back in what feels like a full-speed NASCAR race," a smiling Smith said.

Slowly but surely in a sport built on speed, NASCAR is regaining its pre-pandemic ways. That was evident at Charlotte where the weekend routine looked like it did before the COVID-19 pandemic called for protective masks and contact tracing.

There was a familiar feel to qualifying on Saturday. And then there was the crowd, some 50,000 or so who filled the track.

"It's just nice to actually qualify the way we used to qualify and have people around," driver Ryan Newman said.

The protocols shifted earlier this month. Teams were permitted to bring VIPs and sponsors to events starting at Darlington Raceway three weeks ago.

Charlotte was given the green light two weeks ago by state officials to have as many people as racetrack officials could bring in. That's the case for races later this summer, too.

NASCAR will stage a road race this week at Sonoma, Calif., that will be limited to 33% of the 47,000-seat capacity.

Nashville Speedway, the next track where practice and qualifying is scheduled ahead of a race, is sold out for the Ally 400 on June 20. (In between Sonoma and Nashville is the All-Star Race at Texas Motor Speed-



NASCAR Cup Series driver Ryan Newman, left, smiles for a photo with a fan.

way on June 13.)

Those with tickets are eager to see what could shape up as a wild summer, with some of the biggest names in the sport trying to break through to victory lane.

Denny Hamlin and Kevin Harvick, who combined for 16 victories in 2020, have yet to take a checkered flag with only 11 races left in the regular season. Hamlin leads in points on the strength of nine top-five finishes while Harvick sits in ninth place.

Kyle Busch, who finished third in the 600, was grateful to see people in the seats, even if they weren't pulling for the two-time NASCAR Cup Series champion.

"When we first started coming back to these races fans were at, the boos were back and everything felt like it was getting back to normal," Busch said. "It's nice having them, and they enjoy coming back."

NASCAR shut down in March 2020 along with the rest of the sports world due to COVID-19. Some three months later, the sport took its first cautious steps — no fans in attendance — with races at Darlington and Charlotte.

Almost a year later, there was little evidence of masks or that anyone was worried about the coronavirus.

Tents and campers filled the open areas around the track. The large fan concession area also included a place for those who wished to get vaccinated.

## FRENCH OPEN/OLYMPICS

# Top-ranked Barty departs with hip injury

2019 champ trailed 6-1, 2-2 when she had to retire; Djokovic, Federer make it through to third round

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN  
Associated Press

PARIS — Bothered by a painful hip, top-ranked Ash Barty retired Thursday from her second-round match at the French Open, leaving the clay-court Grand Slam tournament without any of the top three women in the rankings.

The 2019 champion trailed 6-1, 2-2 when she signaled that she couldn't continue against Polish opponent Magda Linette on Court Philippe Chatrier.

"I was battling the pain, and it just became too severe, and like I said, was becoming unsafe," Barty said of the injury that had flared up during training before the tournament.

Top-ranked Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer, both former champions, advanced to the third round.

Federer beat Marin Cilic 6-2, 2-6, 7-6 (4), 6-2 for his ninth win in 10 meetings against the big-serving Croat and fifth in majors.

"I think I played a really good match, I surprised myself a bit. I didn't think I could play at this level for 2 1/2 hours against Marin," Federer said. "I still think the level was high, I tried everything and I had some very good moments, notably in the tiebreak. I finished by serving really well. It shows I have something in reserve, I have some energy left and that's really good for my confidence."

The eighth-seeded Federer next faces unseeded Dominik Koepfer.

Federer looked sharp, and could even afford to get a little distracted, arguing with chair um-

pire Emmanuel Joseph after being given a time warning for slow play during the second set on Court Philippe Chatrier.

Federer even asked Cilic for his opinion.

"Marin, am I playing too slow?" he asked.

Cilic suggested he was.

But after winning in the first round on Monday, Federer spoke about the strange feeling of having to handle his own towel, because of coronavirus rules, and how it upset his rhythm. He argued the point to Emmanuel, and to Cilic.

"I understand the rule," Federer protested to Cilic. "(But) I'm going from one corner to the next trying to get my towel. I'm not doing it on purpose."

Federer, whose 40th birthday is Aug. 8, hadn't appeared on the Grand Slam stage since Jan. 30, 2020, when he lost to Djokovic in the Australian Open semifinals.

They could meet here, since they are in the same side of the draw along with defending champion Rafael Nadal — who is level all time on 20 major titles with Federer.

Djokovic made brief work of beating clay-court specialist Pablo Cuevas 6-3, 6-2, 6-4, saving eight of the nine break points he faced. The 18-time Grand Slam champion next plays unseeded Lithuanian Ricardas Berankis.

Nadal was set to play during the night session on his 35th birthday, with fans having to leave the grounds by 9 p.m. because of coronavirus rules.

In addition to Barty's departure, No. 2 Naomi Osaka withdrew after



MICHEL EULER/AP

**Australia's Ashleigh Barty waves goodbye as she retires with an injury as she was playing against Poland's Magda Linette during their second round match at the French Open in Paris, France, Thursday.**

the first round — she said she is going to take a break from competition for mental health reasons — and No. 3 Simona Halep pulled out before the tournament began because of a leg injury.

This is only the third time at any Grand Slam tournament in the professional era, which began in 1968, that the top two women's seeds are gone before the third round. It also happened at the French Open in 2014 (No. 1 Serena Williams and No. 2 Li Na) and the U.S. Open in 2018 (No. 1 Halep and No. 2 Caroline Wozniacki).

In the buildup to this year's French Open, Barty played 13 matches on clay and won 11. She posted a record of 27-5 and won three singles titles before Roland Garros. But she was forced to retire in the quarterfinals in Rome in May because of an injury to her right arm. She said that injury had healed and did not hamper her in Paris.

"It's heartbreaking," Barty said. "We have had such a brilliant clay-court season, and to kind of get a little bit unlucky with timing, more than anything, to have something kind of acute happen over the weekend and just kind of run out of time against the clock is disappointing."

The Australian started the match with her left thigh banded and it was immediately clear she could not move properly. Too slow to chase her opponent's shots, she struggled in long rallies and with her first serve.

Barty called for a medical timeout at the end of the opening set, then briefly left the court for treatment. She stopped after Linette hit

an ace. Barty then walked to the net to shake the 45th-ranked player's hand.

Already dealing with her hip problem in the first round, Barty had struggled through a 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 win over 70th-ranked Bernarda Pera.

"We did everything, absolutely everything we could, to give myself a chance," Barty said. "It was a small miracle that we were able to get on court for that first round. Again, today it was no better and getting worse again."

Barty decided not to defend her title last year because of the coronavirus pandemic, choosing instead to remain home in Australia.

After ending a four-match losing streak on clay in the previous round, 2020 runner-up Sofia Kenin advanced to the third round with a 7-5, 6-3 win over Hailey Baptiste.

Kenin has had a tough start to the season. The 2020 Australian Open champion from the United States underwent an emergency appendectomy in Melbourne in February and her record was 7-8 entering the clay-court Grand Slam.

Coco Gauff is living up to her career-best ranking at the French Open.

Ranked 25th at age 17, Gauff advanced to the third round by beating Wang Qiang 6-3, 7-6 (1). Gauff earned her first clay-court final when she beat Wang in Parma, Italy, less than two weeks ago.

Gauff has 23 match victories this season and only three women have more. She won the girls' singles title at Roland Garros three years ago.

## OLYMPIC BRIEFS

### 10,000 volunteers drop 50 days before Olympics

The countdown clock for the Tokyo Olympics hit 50-days-to-go on Thursday, and the day also brought another problem for the delayed games.

About 10,000 of 80,000 unpaid volunteers for the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics have told organizers they will not participate when the games open on July 23.

Organizers said some dropped out because of worries about COVID-19. Few volunteers are expected to be vaccinated since most will have no contact with athletes or other key personnel.

Only about 2-3% of Japan's general population has been fully vaccinated in a very slow rollout that is just now speeding up. Conversely, the IOC expects at least 80% of athletes and residents of the Olympic Village to be fully vaccinated.

"We have not confirmed the individual reasons," organizers said in a statement. "In addition to concerns about the coronavirus infection, some dropped out because they found it would be difficult to actually work after checking their work shift, or due to changes in their own environment."

### Walsh-Jennings' bid for sixth Olympics denied

Three-time beach volleyball gold medalist Kerri Walsh Jennings was defeated in her bid to reach a sixth Olympics when she and partner Brooke Sweat lost in a qualifying match Wednesday in Ostrava, Czech Republic.

The early-round loss to the Netherlands means the U.S. pair could not overtake fellow Americans Kelly Claes and Sarah Sponcil on the international tour point list. Two-time Olympic medalist April Ross and her partner, Alix Klineman, have already clinched a berth in Tokyo, and there is a quota of two teams for each country in each of the women's and men's fields.

"It's a terrible, terrible feeling," Walsh Jennings said after the match.

### Sciocchia ejected as U.S. baseball advances

U.S. manager Mike Sciocchia was ejected after Philadelphia prospect Luke Williams hit a two-run triple in a four-run sixth inning, and the United States rallied to beat the Dominican Republic 8-6 Tuesday night in Olympic baseball qualifying to advance to the super round of the Americas tournament. On Wednesday, Seattle Mariners prospects Julio Rodriguez and Luis Liberato hit early home runs, and the Dominicans coasted to a 13-3 rout of Nicaragua to advance as well.



CHRISTOPHE ENA/AP

**Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates towards the crowd after defeating Uruguay's Pablo Cuevas in their second round match.**

# GYMNASTICS

## Who will be joining Biles, Mikulak on Olympic team?

By WILL GRAVES  
Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — World and Olympic champion Simone Biles can start getting ready for Tokyo. Six-time national champion Sam Mikulak, too.

After that, however, the picture of who will make the U.S. men's and women's Olympic gymnastics teams is murky at best. And the athletes who will try to take another step toward that goal this week in the U.S. Championships know it.

"I feel like at this point it's anybody's game," 2016 Olympic alternate MyKayla Skinner said.

Maybe because it is.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the one-year postponement of the Tokyo Olympics forced the athletes who were pointing toward the summer of 2020 to recalibrate.

The 24-year-old Skinner figured she'd be retired by now. Instead, she found herself training at Dickies Arena on Wednesday alongside the 24-year-old Biles and 32-year-old world champion and Olympic silver medalist Chellsie Memmel.

The three "old girls" as Skinner put it are among the 31 women in the field, the most for the U.S. Championships since 1995. The decision to push the Tokyo Games to 2021 allowed a wave of first-year seniors like 16-year-old Skye Blakely to crash the party. It also opened the door for Memmel to mount an unlikely comeback.

Throw in the dearth of international assignments — usually a good barometer of who the serious Olympic contenders are — over the last 16 months and it gives nationals a much more uncertain vibe than usual.

Skinner vividly remembers knowing who she was competing against during the run-up to the 2016 Rio Olympics. The picture was crowded. Stacked, too, with 2012 Olympic champion Gabby Douglas and three-time Olympic gold medalist Aly Raisman among those vying for one of the spots.

For Biles, everything through the U.S. Olympic Trials later this month is a warm-up for what awaits in Tokyo. She can afford a slip here or there. The others trying to join her, not so much.

The issue is much the same on the men's side, where Mikulak figures to be a lock to reach his third Olympics barring an injury. The 28-year-old who is still searching for his first Olympic medal, insists he's not taking anything for granted.

"It's kind of like I'm getting my



AJ Mast / AP

Simone Biles performs her floor routine during the U.S. Classic in Indianapolis on May 22. Biles is a lock to make the Olympic squad.

life senioritis vibes where everything is just like nostalgic and I'm just trying to appreciate it as much as I can, because I think for so long I haven't appreciated it the way it should have been," Mikulak said. "Because I'm like, 'Oh, I'll be back next year.' I'm always just looking for the next year as well. Now it's like, 'Oh, there's not going to be a next year.'"

Yul Moldauer, the 2017 national champion and a three-time world

championship team member, believes the Olympic delay leveled the playing field in a way. With no recent history to bank on, everyone is starting over in a way.

"It gives the younger guys hope, it gives the older guys a chance to show," Moldauer said. "It's going to be crazy. It's going to be exciting. And I think it's cool because we're all so close together it's going to be who performs well."

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# MLB

## Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	35	22	.614	—
Boston	32	23	.582	2
New York	31	25	.554	3½
Toronto	29	25	.537	4½
Baltimore	19	37	.339	15½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	33	22	.600	—
Cleveland	30	24	.556	2½
Kansas City	27	26	.509	5
Detroit	23	32	.418	10
Minnesota	22	33	.400	11
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Oakland	33	25	.569	—
Houston	31	24	.564	½
Seattle	28	29	.491	4½
Los Angeles	25	30	.455	6½
Texas	22	35	.386	10½
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	27	21	.563	—
Philadelphia	26	29	.473	4½
Atlanta	25	28	.472	4½
Miami	24	30	.444	6
Washington	23	29	.442	6
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	32	23	.582	—
St. Louis	31	25	.554	1½
Milwaukee	29	26	.527	3
Cincinnati	24	29	.453	7
Pittsburgh	20	34	.370	11½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Francisco	34	21	.618	—
San Diego	34	23	.596	1
Los Angeles	33	23	.589	1½
Colorado	22	34	.393	12½
Arizona	20	37	.351	15

**Wednesday's games**  
 Baltimore 6, Minnesota 3  
 N.Y. Yankees 4, Tampa Bay 3  
 Houston 2, Boston 1  
 Oakland 6, Seattle 0  
 Chicago White Sox at Cleveland, ppd.  
 Chicago Cubs 6, San Diego 1  
 N.Y. Mets 7, Arizona 6  
 Washington 5, Atlanta 3  
 Toronto 6, Miami 5  
 Colorado 6, Texas 3  
 L.A. Dodgers 14, St. Louis 3  
 Philadelphia at Cincinnati, ppd.

**Thursday's games**  
 Tampa Bay at N.Y. Yankees  
 Boston at Houston  
 Detroit at Chicago White Sox  
 Minnesota at Kansas City  
 Seattle at L.A. Angels  
 Washington at Atlanta  
 Texas at Colorado  
 Miami at Pittsburgh  
 Arizona at Milwaukee  
 Cincinnati at St. Louis  
 Chicago Cubs at San Francisco  
 N.Y. Mets at San Diego

**Friday's games**  
 Boston (Eovaldi 6-2) at N.Y. Yankees (TBD)  
 Cleveland (Civale 7-2) at Baltimore (Akin 0-0)  
 Houston (Greinke 5-2) at Toronto (Ryu 5-2)  
 Tampa Bay (Fleming 5-3) at Texas (TBD)  
 Detroit (Turnbull 4-2) at Chicago White Sox (Keuchel 4-1)  
 Minnesota (Shoemaker 2-6) at Kansas City (TBD)  
 Seattle (TBD) at L.A. Angels (Ohtani 1-1)  
 Miami (Poteet 2-1) at Pittsburgh (Brubaker 4-4)  
 Washington (TBD) at Philadelphia (Wheeler 4-2)  
 L.A. Dodgers (Urias 7-2) at Atlanta (Anderson 4-2)  
 Arizona (Peacock 2-1) at Milwaukee (Houser 3-5)  
 Cincinnati (Castillo 1-8) at St. Louis (Kim 1-3)  
 Oakland (Montas 5-5) at Colorado (Gray 4-5)  
 Chicago Cubs (Arrieta 5-5) at San Francisco (Webb 4-3)  
 N.Y. Mets (TBD) at San Diego (Musgrove 4-4)

**MLB calendar**  
**July 11-13** — Amateur draft, Denver.  
**July 13** — All-Star Game, Denver.  
**July 25** — Hall of Fame induction, Cooperstown, N.Y.  
**Aug. 12** — New York Yankees vs. Chicago White Sox at Dyersville, Iowa.  
**Aug. 22** — Los Angeles Angels vs. Cleveland at Williamsport, Pa.



CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/AP

The Cubs' Kris Bryant watches his hit during a May 7 game against the Pittsburgh Pirates in Chicago. Bryant is hitting .317 this season.

# Bryant showcases versatility

## Cubs Slugger displaying MVP form while playing different positions

BY JAY COHEN  
 Associated Press

CHICAGO — The Kris Bryant watch is on. The sweet-swinging slugger is playing like an MVP again, and he could be the biggest name on the trade market this summer.

While baseball is watching Bryant, waiting to see what the Chicago Cubs do, the 29-year-old Bryant is watching Kyler Bryant, waiting to see what his precocious son does next.

“Anytime there’s baseball on TV, he points and says ‘Daddy,’ even if it’s a different team,” a grinning Bryant said. “Like no, I’m right here. Listen, look.”

Hard to blame Kyler, who turned 1 in April. Dad is everywhere these days.

Bryant’s versatility — while producing offensive numbers that belong alongside his NL MVP season in 2016 — is a big reason why Chicago is on top of the NL Central once again, helping the Cubs go on a 22-9 run while dealing with a rash of injuries.

Bryant has made at least five starts at five different positions: third base, first base and each of the three outfield spots. He is batting .317 with 12 homers heading into a seven-game West Coast trip, ranking among the NL leaders with 36 RBIs, a .598 slugging percentage and a .996 OPS.

“I mean he’s definitely hitting the high fast-ball better,” manager David Ross said. “I think that’s a mechanical issue he worked on in the offseason. I see a confidence, I see him on the attack in the box.”

### DID YOU KNOW?

Cubs slugger Kris Bryant has made at least five starts at five different positions: third base, first base and each of the three outfield spots. He is batting .317 with 12 homers heading into a seven-game West Coast trip, ranking among the NL leaders with 36 RBIs, a .598 slugging percentage and a .996 OPS.

SOURCE: Associated Press

Bryant struggled with injuries during the pandemic-shortened season last year, batting a career-low .206 with four homers in 34 games. He also went 0-for-8 with two strikeouts as Chicago was swept by Miami in the NL Wild Card Series.

Brushing off his health or any significant mechanical adjustments, Bryant offered a simpler explanation for his success this year.

“It’s just who I am,” he said. “You go through ups and downs throughout your whole career. You have a hundred at-bats that are good, a hundred at-bats so-so, a hundred at-bats that are bad, and sometimes they just happen at different points.”

With every swing, every routine day at a new spot in the field, Bryant is adding to a tricky situation for Chicago’s front office. After helping the Cubs win the World Series in 2016 and spending the beginning of his big league career with the team that drafted him No. 2 overall in 2013, Bryant is eligible for free agency after this season.

Asked about the possibility of a contract extension, Bryant made it sound as if there hadn’t been any conversations with the Cubs for a while, not even during spring training. After

consistently saying in the past that he was willing to listen, he cast doubt on the possibility of getting a deal done ahead of next month’s trade deadline.

“I feel like it has passed,” Bryant told the AP. “I think usually if something gets done it’s always in spring training. Why would anybody want to talk about it during the season? It’s just a distraction.”

“But, yeah, I don’t know. I just feel like the last couple years, I’ve always felt like I would get traded, and that was always in my mind, reading about it.”

Bryant said he feels extension talks at this point are “just a disservice to the people involved.”

“And it just doesn’t really happen too often, so it’s like status quo not to do that,” he said.

That means Bryant could be on the move before the July 30 deadline, even if Chicago is in contention. Or president of baseball operations Jed Hoyer could hold onto Bryant, giving the Cubs a better chance of a second straight division title, but also raising the possibility of losing him this winter with nothing coming back in return.

Shortstop Javier Báez and first baseman Anthony Rizzo also are eligible for free agency after this season, further complicating matters. Bryant rested during Wednesday’s 6-1 victory over San Diego, but Báez and Rizzo each had a big day as the Cubs improved to 32-23 by completing a three-game sweep of the Padres.

Hoyer said last month there were no contract discussions going on with the players. But he acknowledged it made sense to reach out again before the trade deadline.

## SPORTS

## Barty out with injury

Painful hip forces top-ranked female to withdraw » French Open, Page 45



## NHL PLAYOFFS

## Clutch captains

Second-round teams all relied on team leaders in order to advance

BY STEPHEN WHYNO  
*Associated Press*

**R**ight about the time the Boston Bruins made a “C” change by naming Patrice Bergeron captain, the Vegas Golden Knights decided to have a captain for the first time and knew Mark Stone was the only man for the job.

“It became clear that he is the leader of the team,” Vegas general manager Kelly McCrimmon said. “Him wearing the ‘C’ allowed him to take another step both as a player, as a teammate and then of course as a leader on our team.”

The next step is the second round, and every team to advance did so in large part because of a captain leading the way. Bergeron scored twice in Boston’s first-round series clincher, Stone had five points to help the Golden Knights survive Minnesota in seven games, Colorado’s Gabriel Landeskog put up eight points in a sweep of St. Louis and Carolina’s Jordan Staal scored an overtime winner in a hard-fought series against Nashville.

After the Tampa Bay Lightning won the Stanley Cup last year despite Steven Stamkos playing just one playoff game — and scoring a memorable goal in the Final — this NHL post-season is showing the value of captains at the most important time of the year.

“There’s obviously a lot of responsibility that comes with being a captain,” said Stamkos, who had two points in Tampa Bay’s clinching game against Florida to give him eight in the series. “You want to go out there and do whatever it takes to win, and the teams that are advancing, usually their leadership group and the guys that need to step up have stepped up.”

Every healthy captain of a team that won in the first round recorded at least four points, and those who couldn’t take the ice — like New York Islanders captain Anders Lee, a fixture around the rink as he rehabs his season-ending knee injury — became rallying points.

“We’re playing for each other and he’s obvi-

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**Pictured, from top: Carolina Hurricanes captain Jordan Staal; Boston Bruins captain Patrice Bergeron; and Vegas Golden Knights captain Mark Stone.**

AP photos

Coach K retiring after 2021-22 season » College hoops, Page 41

