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STARS AND STRIPES®

stripes.com

Volume 82 Edition 79 ©SS 2023

FRIDAY, AUGUST 4, 2023

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

\$1.00

Typhoon batters Okinawa

Khanun might hit island again

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — As Okinawa cleaned up from Typhoon Khanun on Thursday, forecasters warned that the storm was likely to return for a second assault on the island.

The typhoon left behind flooding, uprooted trees and power outages on Okinawa. It also injured 42 people, a spokesman for Okinawa prefectural police said Thursday.

Two deaths are being investigated

SEE TYPHOON ON PAGE 8

Damaged buildings are seen Wednesday in Naha, Okinawa.

AP



US may put armed troops on commercial ships in Strait of Hormuz

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
AND JON GAMBRELL
Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The U.S. military is considering putting armed personnel on commercial ships traveling through the Strait of Hormuz, in what would be an unheard of action aimed at stopping Iran from seizing and harassing civilian vessels, five American officials told The Associated Press on Thursday.

Since 2019, Iran has seized a series of ships in the strait, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, as part of its efforts to pres-

sure the West over negotiations regarding its collapsed nuclear deal with world powers. Putting U.S. troops on commercial ships could further deter Iran from seizing vessels — or escalate tensions further.

The contemplated move also would represent an extraordinary commitment in the Mideast by U.S. forces as the Pentagon tries to focus on Russia and China. America didn't even take the step during the so-called "Tanker War," which culminated with the U.S. Navy and Iran fighting a one-day naval battle in 1988 that was the Navy's largest since World War II.

While officials offered few details of the plan, it comes as thousands of Marines and sailors on both the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan and the USS Carter Hall, a landing ship, are on their way to the Persian Gulf. Those Marines and sailors could provide the backbone for any armed guard mission in the strait, through which 20% of the world's crude oil passes.

Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment from the AP about the U.S. proposal. Five U.S. officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the proposal,

acknowledged its broad details. The officials stressed no final decision had been made and that discussions continue between U.S. military officials and America's Gulf Arab allies in the region.

Officials said the Marines and Navy sailors would provide the security only at the request of the ships involved. One official described the process as complex, saying any deployment likely also would require approval of the country under which the ship is flagged and the country under which the owner is registered. So far, that has yet to happen.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	Azores	..	..	\$4.853	..
Germany	\$4.139	\$4.645	\$4.964	\$4.509	Change in price	..	..	+13.9 cents	..
Netherlands	..	\$4.905	\$5.178	\$4.975	Turkey	..	..	\$4.652	\$4.637*
U.K.	..	\$4.581	\$4.900	\$4.445	Change in price	..	..	+13.9 cents	-21.6 cents

Fuel prices are updated daily. These prices are effective Aug. 4. The change in prices is from July 28.

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	South Korea	\$3.829	..	\$4.659	\$4.199
Japan	..	\$4.629	..	\$4.179	Change in price	+16.0 cents	..	+14.0 cents	+22.0 cents
Okinawa	\$3.809	..	..	\$4.179	Guam	\$3.819**	\$4.319	\$4.639	..
Change in price	+17.0 cents	..	..	+23.0 cents	Change in price	+16.0 cents	+14.0 cents	+14.0 cents	..

*DieselEFD **Midgrade
Pacific prices for the week of Aug. 4-10

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Commercial rates	
Euro costs (Aug. 4)	\$1.07	Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound (Aug. 4)	\$1.24	Britain (Pound)	1.2661
Japanese yen (Aug. 4)	139.00	Canada (Dollar)	1.3358
South Korean won (Aug. 4)	1264.00	China (Yuan)	7.1754
		Denmark (Krone)	6.8232
		Egypt (Pound)	30.9530
		Euro	0.9156
		Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8060
		Hungary (Forint)	360.43
		Israel (Shekel)	3.6971
		Japan (Yen)	142.65
		Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3076
		Norway (Krone)	10.3001
		Philippines (Peso)	55.62
		Poland (Zloty)	4.09
		Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7513
		Singapore (Dollar)	1.3421
		South Korea (Won)	1302.93

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

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	8.50
Interest Rates Discount rate	6.00
Federal funds market rate	5.33
3-month bill	5.43
30-year bond	4.17

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

North Korea offers response over US soldier

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — North Korea has responded to inquiries about the fate of Army Pvt. Travis King, according to the Pentagon, but has not disclosed further information about the soldier who dashed across the Demilitarized Zone dividing the two Koreas last month.

“As you’ve heard us say previously, U.N. Command did communicate or provide some communication via well-established



King

communication channels through the Joint Security Agency,” press secretary Air Force Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder told reporters at the Pentagon on Tuesday. “I can confirm [North Korea] has responded to [U.N. Command] but I don’t have any substantial progress to read out.”

The command did not immedi-

ately respond to a request for comment by phone Thursday.

Ryder’s comments echo that of British Lt. Gen. Andrew Harrison, the U.N. Command deputy commander, during a news conference in Seoul on July 24.

“The primary concern for us is Private King’s welfare,” he said.

Harrison said the command and North Korea were in contact but declined to go into specifics due to the possibility his comments “could prejudice that process.”

North Korea’s state-run Korean

Central News Agency has yet to issue a statement on King’s status since his dash across the border on July 18.

The 23-year-old cavalry scout spent six weeks in a South Korean prison for assault and was facing more administrative punishment in the United States, military officials have said.

King was released from prison on July 10 and a few days later was booked on the flight back to his home station at Fort Bliss, Texas. Military escorts saw King to the

airport’s security checkpoint — the farthest point that they could go without a ticket — but did not actually see him get on the plane.

King was part of a U.N. Command-sponsored tour group at the heavily guarded border when he “willfully and without authorization” ran into North Korea’s section of the Joint Security Area, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin told reporters the next day.

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Lawsuits challenge Pentagon, VA policies on fertility treatment

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

A women’s organization representing troops and veterans and a former Air Force service member filed lawsuits Wednesday against the Pentagon and Department of Veterans Affairs over restrictive fertility assistance policies, arguing they discriminate against single people and same-sex couples.

The two federal lawsuits filed by the New York City chapter of the National Organization for Women, or NOW-NYC, and veteran Ashley Sheffield challenge the legality of limiting health care coverage for in vitro fertilization, or IVF, treatments to married couples who can use their own sperm and eggs and have a proven service-connected health issue that affects fertility.

“We are seeking to eliminate discriminatory conditions from the military IVF policies so that no service member or veteran is denied the care they need to start a family solely because of who they love, their choice of whether or not to marry or the precise source of their family fertility challenges,” said Sonia Ossorio, president of NOW-NYC. “They serve our country, they deserve better.”

IVF is considered the most effective form of reproductive assistance and can cost tens of thousands of dollars without insurance.

The Defense Department has been providing coverage for IVF treatments through the Tricare health care system for about a decade, and Congress authorized the VA to follow suit in 2017. Both policies strictly limit eligibility, contrasting with IVF services afforded to other federal employees that do not discriminate by sexual orientation or marital status, according to the NOW-NYC suit.

“IVF is the only fertility treatment that the VA restricts cover-

age for in this way,” said Yael Caplan of the Yale Law School Veterans Legal Services Clinic, which helped file the lawsuit. “Beginning next year, other health care plans for federal employees, except for active-duty service members, will be required to cover IVF drugs without comparable eligibility restrictions.”

Research indicates service members and veterans experience infertility at higher rates than civilians. A 2018 study by the Service Women’s Action Network found 37% of female active-duty troops struggled with infertility, a rate three times the national average. About 30% of female veteran respondents said they had trouble conceiving or carrying a baby to term.

The pervasiveness of the problem is linked to a variety of factors, including combat-related injuries, exposure to toxins that damage fertility, sexual assault in the military, and frequent moves and demands of life in the service that force many service members to delay marriage and parenthood.

To access IVF services, service members and veterans must have documentation proving their infertility was caused by a service-related illness or injury. The NOW-NYC lawsuit argues this requirement unlawfully excludes women who suffer from unrecognized conditions that impact fertility, such as damage caused by ill-fitting combat gear designed for male bodies, trauma from sexual assault and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Perhaps most egregiously, the IVF policies of the Pentagon and the VA leave out service members and veterans who are unmarried as well as about 6% of service members who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, the lawsuit alleges.

About 48% of active-duty troops



RON MOONEY/U.S. Army

Sgt. Amanda Boatner, a licensed practical nurse, places fetal heart rate and uterine contraction monitors in preparation for an evaluation at Martin Army Community Hospital at Fort Moore, Ga., in March.

and 37% of veterans are single.

A spokesperson for the Defense Department said it would be inappropriate to comment on ongoing litigation. Terrence Hayes, the VA’s press secretary, said the White House’s budget proposal for fiscal 2024 included expanded access to IVF for veterans but was left out of legislation negotiated with Republicans to raise the debt limit in exchange for spending cuts.

“Despite these legal limitations, all enrolled veterans can access a wide-range of reproductive health care at VA — and we encourage veterans to come to us for their reproductive care,” Hayes said in a statement, noting the VA has no restrictions on fertility assessments and counseling, hormone therapies, fertility medications, artificial insemination, egg freezing, sperm cryopreservation and other fertility services.

NOW-NYC said several of its members have been harmed by discriminatory IVF coverage.

One active-duty service member unsuccessfully tried several rounds of another fertility treat-

ment with her wife before deciding they needed to pursue IVF for the best chance to start a family. The treatment will not be covered by Tricare, however, because the couple is same-sex and needs donor sperm to conceive. The Defense Department prohibits the use of gametes from third parties.

Another member, a Marine veteran, was deemed ineligible for IVF coverage because she is not married to her long-term male partner and lacked a confirmed service connection for her infertility diagnosis, according to the claim. She had attempted various fertility treatments for more than five years.

“The military preaches the importance of families in our mission but when the time comes for some of us to build our own, we are told we don’t qualify,” a NOW-NYC member in the service said in a statement. “Discriminatory requirements should not hold us back from building the families we have suffered so much to have.”

Last month, the women’s organization wrote to the Justice Department requesting the Defense

Department and VA immediately suspend enforcement of their IVF policies. A senior Justice Department official acknowledged receiving the request but there has not been a substantive response from the Pentagon or the VA, according to the NOW-NYC lawsuit.

The separate lawsuit filed by Sheffield, the Air Force veteran, alleges the VA denied her IVF coverage because she is married to a woman. Sheffield said injuries that she suffered in service led to health conditions that have affected her fertility.

“Like so many LGBTQ+ veterans, I honorably served in the armed forces, and I earned the health benefits that millions of veterans enjoy. I’m shocked and disappointed that the VA is denying me and other veterans IVF benefits because we’re in same-sex marriages,” Sheffield said in a statement. “We are entitled to equal treatment, and we should no longer be treated as second-class citizens.”

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MILITARY

Australia drills end with beach assault

By SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

SHOALWATER BAY TRAINING AREA, Australia — Hovercraft packed with troops and armored vehicles zoomed onto a beach during the culminating event of Talisman Sabre, a massive exercise involving 30,000 mostly American and Australian troops on the southern continent.

The drills conclude Friday after two weeks of training on land, air, sea, cyber and space capabilities by more than a dozen allied and partner militaries, including those of European and Pacific nations. The closing ceremony in Brisbane will be off limits to the press.

The amphibious assault began with paratroopers from the U.S. Army's 11th Airborne Division parachuting onto Williamson Airfield in central Queensland early Wednesday morning.

Indonesian paratroopers arrived in a second wave two hours later, according to Lt. Gen. Greg Bilton, the Australian Defence Force's chief of joint operations. Bilton, who observed operations Wednesday afternoon from sand dunes at Langham Beach, was deputy commander of U.S. Army Pacific from November 2014 to March 2017.

The attack's next phase involved MV-22 Osprey aircraft launched from the amphibious assault ship USS America and Japanese CH-47 Chinook helicopters from the helicopter destroyer JS Izumo.

The Ospreys and Chinooks ferried Marines and Japanese soldiers to landing zones where they



PHOTOS BY KELLY AGEE/Stars and Stripes

A U.S. Marine helps carry out an amphibious assault during Talisman Sabre training near Stanage Bay, Australia, on Wednesday.

took up positions to protect forces arriving in four hovercraft, Lt. Col. Glenn Baker, commander of the Camp Pendleton, Calif.-based 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, told reporters near the beach.

U.S. Navy hovercraft emerged from the USS Green Bay and USS Ashland, zoomed onto the beach and dropped off more Marines, trucks and armored vehicles.

The forces prepared to battle Australian troops role-playing as the enemy defending high ground, headquarters facilities and radar sites along the coast.

Australia's strong relationship with U.S. forces predates Talis-

man Sabre, which has been held every other year for two decades, Bilton said.

"What's different is now there's a multinational relationship," he said. "There's evidence of that today with the Japanese."

Indo-Pacific forces worked with U.S. and Australian troops during the drills, Bilton said. More, including Thailand, the Philippines, Singapore and India, are likely to join the next Talisman Sabre in 2025.

"The important part this year is the European participation," he said, as German troops and U.S. Marines marched nearby. "There is strong European interest in the region. They see these exercises



U.S. Navy hovercraft from the USS Green Bay and USS Ashland land on Langham Beach during the Talisman Sabre finale near Stanage Bay, Australia, on Wednesday.

as an opportunity for their militaries to operate in this environment."

Australian forces were scheduled to partner with South Korean troops in another beach assault this week.

However, the Australian amphibious ship HMAS Adelaide diverted to the recovery operation for four Australian aviators lost July 28 when their MRH-90 Taiwan helicopter ditched in waters off Queensland.

Human remains have been found, Bilton said Thursday in a report by Australian broadcaster ABC.

"Due to the nature of the debris field, positive identification of the remains is unlikely to occur until we recover more of the wreck-

age," he said.

South Korean troops launched from the amphibious assault ship ROKS Marado and conducted their own scaled-back beach landing at a different east coast beach ahead of the other forces, Bilton said.

U.S. Marines and sailors partnered with Japanese amphibious troops during the Langham Beach landings, he said.

Japan and Australia recently signed a reciprocal access agreement that will facilitate training in each other's territory.

"We are a launch platform for Japan to operate into the Western Pacific," Bilton said.

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German sailors ramp up training alongside US Marines

By SETH ROBSON

Stars and Stripes

SHOALWATER BAY TRAINING AREA, Australia — Members of the German navy's Sea Battalion got their first taste of amphibious operations alongside U.S. Marines this week on Australia's eastern coast.

The 210 German troops' presence in large-scale Talisman Sabre drills, involving mostly U.S. and Australian service members over the past two weeks, comes as European militaries turn their attention to the Indo-Pacific.

During Wednesday's amphibious operation, about 20 German sailors launched on U.S. Navy hovercraft from the amphibious transport dock ship USS New Orleans, landed on Langham Beach, and maneuvered into the training area with U.S. Marines from Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment.

Sea Battalion platoon leader Capt. Jonas Linke, working with the Marines for the first time, said



KELLY AGEE/Stars and Stripes

Staff Sgt. Jakob Tedsen, a German sailor, said he will be training with U.S. Marines again in the Northern Coasts exercise in Estonia.

the amphibious troops have much in common.

"We are part of the navy with the same task as the Marines," he said.

The motorized company of about 80 Marines, equipped with

half a dozen trucks, had orders to secure the beachhead, its commander, Capt. Kyle Thompson, told Stars and Stripes after coming ashore.

"We are securing a big hill with an enemy headquarters and mor-

tars on it," he said of a mission planned for the next day.

Lt. Gen. Alfons Mais, chief of the German army, was in Australia ahead of the drills and visited the Townsville Field Training Area in Queensland, the Australian Defence Force said in a July 24 statement.

"This exercise is very exciting for our personnel and, as well as testing our preparedness and procedures, I want our personnel to gain experience of the country and build relationships," he said. "We share a lot in common with Australia and the region and we want to portray ourselves as a reliable partner."

The German troops have been getting to grips with local wildlife such as kangaroos and spiders, Linke said.

"We are missing the German summer, but we love the beer, and we love the nights in Brisbane," he said of liberty the troops took ahead of the drills in Queensland's largest city. "It's the most wel-

coming for us."

Germany's government has recently placed more emphasis on engagement with the Indo-Pacific, Linke said.

"Each year it is either the army, the navy or the air force going there," he said. "They just declared the Pacific as an area to be focused on."

It's the first time most of the German sailors have trained with U.S. Marines, who have only a small presence in Germany.

Another German sailor, bushy bearded Staff Sgt. Jakob Tedsen, waited with his comrades to move inland.

German sailors can grow beards if their whiskers are tidy and don't interfere with a gas mask, he said.

The tall Tedsen — a fan of NBA star Nikola Jokic and the Denver Nuggets — said he will take a couple of weeks off at home before heading to Estonia for Northern Coasts, another exercise with U.S. Marines.

MILITARY

Beach community feeds, houses Marines during drills

BY KELLY AGEE
AND SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

STANAGE BAY, Australia — Talisman Sabre is a big deal for this isolated beach community on Australia's eastern coast, according to Bevon Haynes, who has owned and operated the Plum Tree Store here for three decades.

"That's why a lot of people are staying here now," he said ahead of an amphibious landing this week by U.S. Marines and Japanese and German soldiers.

The troops were participating in Talisman Sabre, a massive, two-week exercise by 30,000 troops from more than a dozen countries. The drills kicked off July 21 and conclude Friday.

Many in the small beach community brought chairs atop sand dunes overlooking nearby Langham Beach to watch the Marines and Germans arrive on four hovercraft.

American, Japanese and Australian troops have been dropping in regularly over the past few weeks, said Haynes, who wore a Talisman Sabre polo shirt Wednesday featuring art of Marines and soldiers raiding a beach and an MRH-90 Taipan helicopter.

Eighteen Marines and dozens of Japanese soldiers are renting houses owned by Haynes in Stanage Bay.

His wife, Marie, brings them an Australian breakfast each morning, he said. An Aussie breakfast typically consists of ba-



KELLY AGEE/Stars and Stripes

U.S. Marines chat with locals during Talisman Sabre training near Stanage Bay, Australia, on Wednesday.

con, eggs, toast and tea or coffee.

The Marines aren't allowed to drink alcohol during the exercise, but their favorite brew before the action began two weeks ago was a local one called Great Northern,

Haynes said.

Talisman Sabre has brought troops to Stanage Bay every other year for more than a decade, Haynes said.

In 2019, Marines "liberated" the town

from Australian soldiers playing the enemy, he recalled.

During Talisman Sabre, locals passed out an Australian treat, Tim Tams, an Australian brand of chocolate cookies, to Marines and snapped photos with them.

"My team has been out here for a few days," Marine Staff Sgt. Austin Bail, of the Amphibious Reconnaissance Platoon, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, told Stars and Stripes on Wednesday. It's his first trip to Australia.

"We've seen the locals in their own environment," Bail said. "So, finally being able to interact with them is nice. They're really friendly folks, and they seem super happy to have us here and they have been super supportive of everything we are doing here."

Large numbers of rare sea turtles hatch on the beach between November and February, outside the exercise season, said bystander Yvonne Burns.

Burns owns a house near the beach and has invited friends and family to watch the drills since 2017.

"It is amazing, seeing all the big boats coming in and meeting all the military members, taking photos," Burns' daughter, Nicole Svendsen, said Wednesday.

"This is not the norm. We know how privileged and blessed we are."

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MILITARY

Soldier saves father, girl from drowning

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

ATLANTA — Army Pvt. Matthew Cole said he anticipated what was about to happen when he heard an alarm and noticed two people relaxing on a small island in the Chattahoochee River.

A young girl and her father were about to get caught in rising river water in downtown Columbus after a nearby dam was opened, and the Fort Moore infantry trainee sprang to action, Army post officials said.

“I saw what was going to happen before it happened,” Cole said. “They were wading across the wa-

ter, and it was rising too high. I started running before they even got stuck and started going under the water.”

Cole was credited with saving both of their lives after jumping into the rising river adjacent to the city’s River Walk on Memorial Day to grab the 3-year-old girl and swim her safely to shore. Cole’s actions allowed the father to swim to shore, as well.

Cole was walking along the River Walk with his family while celebrating his recent completion of the Basic Combat Training portion of Fort Moore’s Infantry One Sta-

tion Unit Training course, when he saw the pair eating lunch on an exposed piece of land in the middle of the river, according to Fort Moore, formerly Fort Benning. When Cole heard alarms go off to indicate the dam just north of downtown had been opened, he was immediately concerned, he said.

When he saw the rising waters pulling the pair downstream, he

took off and jumped into the river.

“The dad was holding his little girl up,” Cole said. “I grabbed her and then swam down to the riverbank and got her out.”

Cole was recently recommended for an Army award and is expected also to receive an honor from local authorities for his life-saving actions that day, Fort Moore spokesman Zach Harris said Wednesday.

Local authorities were called as Cole rescued the girl.

Cole, who is assigned to the 198th Infantry Brigade, is expected to graduate Aug. 25 from One Station

Unit Training — the Army’s 22-week initial entrance training for all recruits bound for the infantry, Harris said.

“We’re so glad that Pvt. Matthew Cole was there that day,” said John Shull, a division chief and fire marshal with the Columbus fire department. “I have every reason to believe that he made a tremendous impact, and there’s a very strong possibility that the 3-year-old and the father would not be there today if it wasn’t for the brave acts of Pvt. Cole.”

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Cole

Caroline Kennedy relives father’s swim to safety after PT-109 crash

BY JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

U.S. Ambassador to Australia Caroline Kennedy and her son, Jack Schlossberg, swam the Burkett Strait in the Solomon Islands on Wednesday to mark the 80th anniversary of the rescue of her father’s PT-109 crew.

John F. Kennedy — elected president in November 1960 and assassinated three years later — served as a naval officer in the Pacific during World War II. The wartime ordeal of PT-109, a patrol torpedo boat, added to his reputation as a leader as he vied against Richard Nixon for the White House.

“Eighty years ago, President Kennedy swam between Plum Pudding Island (now Kennedy Island), Naru Island, and Olasana Island — multiple times, at night — to save himself and his PT-109 crew,” the U.S. Embassy in Australia tweeted at 7:49 a.m. Wednesday.

Caroline Kennedy, 65, and Schlossberg, 30, John F. Kennedy’s only grandson, recreated the approximately 3-mile swim to

“commemorate the heroism and perseverance of the President and his crew,” the embassy tweeted.

The night of Aug. 2, 1943, John F. Kennedy, later the nation’s 35th and youngest president, and a handful of crewmen survived the PT boat’s collision with a Japanese destroyer in the strait. Kennedy — a former member of Harvard’s swim team but with a bad back injured in the collision — led his men on a swim to safety the next morning.

Kennedy history provides a reminder of the Solomon Islands’ link to the United States as the island nation firms up ties with U.S. rival China.

Under an agreement signed July 11, the Solomon Islands will increase its cooperation with China on “law enforcement and security matters,” The Associated Press reported. The islands’ growing ties with China alarms surrounding nations, including Australia and the United States.

Speaking Tuesday in the Solomon Islands at an official commemoration of PT-109, Caroline Kennedy recalled her father’s leg-

acy and the islanders who helped him and his crew.

“This place made President Kennedy the man he was,” she said, according to a transcript. “And he never forgot the men who rescued him. They belonged to a complex network of brave and highly skilled men operating behind enemy lines to gather intelligence, provide information, conduct insurgency operations, and rescues.”

The PT-109 story became legend during the early 1960s, when Kennedy occupied the White House. Two elements of the narrative stood out: Kennedy pulling an injured crewman through the water and a rescue message scratched on a coconut.

In the darkness after the collision, Kennedy found Patrick McMahon, severely burned on his face and hands, and hauled him back to a piece of the boat that was still afloat, according to the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

At sunrise, Kennedy, despite his own injuries, led his men toward a small island several miles away,



U.S. EMBASSY AUSTRALIA

U.S. Ambassador to Australia Caroline Kennedy and her son, Jack Schlossberg, on Thursday swam the route her father, President John F. Kennedy, covered as a naval officer in World War II.

towing McMahon, “a strap from McMahon’s life jacket clenched between his teeth,” according to the story.

Two islanders, Eroni Kumana and Biuku Gasa, found them six days later and went for help, carrying a message Kennedy had carved into a coconut shell. The PT-109 survivors were rescued the next day.

Caroline Kennedy and her son

were photographed beachside Wednesday with the Solomon Scouts, whose forebears delivered the coconut message to the Navy.

“It gave me a renewed appreciation of the heroism of my father and his crew, and the Solomon Scouts,” the ambassador said in the tweet. “It was so meaningful to do this with my son, Jack.”

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Soldier killed in Stryker crash in Bavaria remembered

BY ALEXANDER RIEDEL
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — The U.S. Army identified the soldier who was killed when a semitruck collided with her armored Stryker vehicle on a highway in Bavaria earlier this week.

Army officials on Thursday said 1st Lt. Hailey Hodsden, a platoon leader with the 2nd Cavalry Regiment’s 4th Squadron, was killed Tuesday in the crash near the village of Tirschenreuth.

The 24-year-old Dripping Springs, Texas, native was traveling in the Stryker when it merged onto northbound Autobahn 93 about 11:15 a.m. Tuesday.

A semitruck traveling in the right lane

collided with the Stryker, Weiden highway police said.

Preliminary findings indicated that Hodsden was looking out from an open hatch when the collision occurred.

The hatch struck and injured Hodsden, who was later pronounced dead at a local hospital, police said.

The accident happened about 40 minutes north of Grafenwoehr Training Area, the Army’s largest permanent training area in Europe.

Hodsden graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where she played on the rugby team.

She commissioned as an armor officer and had been serving in the 2nd Cavalry

Regiment for just over a year, a U.S. Army Europe and Africa statement said.

“Hailey was an exceptional leader,” Lt. Col. Joseph Byerly, 4th Squadron commander, said in the statement.

“As the Saber family mourns her loss, we are reminded of the courage and commitment that she displayed each day. She was a true example for others to emulate.”

No other soldiers traveling in the Stryker were injured during the collision, the Army and German officials said.



U.S. ARMY

First Lt. Hailey Hodsden.

Stars and Stripes reporter Michael Slavin contributed to this report.
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MILITARY

Show to tell story of Black battalion

By **DOUG G. WARE**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army's 761st Tank Battalion, known as the Black Panthers, was the first Black tank unit to fight in combat in World War II and will be the subject of a documentary to air later this month.

"The history of Blacks in the military, war, it's always been heroic," said actor Morgan Freeman, who narrates the History Channel documentary and is also one of its producers. "The big difference is who knows about it. ... The lack of recognition does nothing to deny the history."

Freeman, who served in the Air Force, took part in a panel discussion Wednesday at the Pentagon about the documentary, titled "761st Tank Battalion: The Original Black Panthers." He was joined by other producers and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

The tank battalion was activated at Louisiana's Camp Claiborne in 1942. The unit consisted mostly of Black soldiers at a time when the military was still segregated. It wasn't until 1948 that then-President Harry Truman ordered the desegregation of the armed forces and Black troops were allowed to be in units with white troops.

After training in Texas, the 761st was deployed to Europe, where the unit fought in the Battle

of the Bulge in late 1944 and early 1945. Jackie Robinson, who would become the first Black man to play Major League Baseball, was a first lieutenant in the Black Panthers.

"These men took their wartime experiences with them into the Civil Rights Movement," said Charles Bowery, executive director of the U.S. Army Center of Military History. "[Robinson] was formed by that experience."

After the Battle of the Bulge, the tank battalion was sent to Germany and fought through the Siegfried Line as well as several towns and cities. It was one of the first American units to meet the Soviet army in Austria. In May 1945, the battalion helped to liberate the Gunskirchen concentration camp there. The war ended a few months later and the 761st was deactivated in 1946 after 183 days of combat.

The 761st Tank Battalion was a highly decorated unit — having earned more than 300 Purple Hearts, nearly a dozen Silver Stars and one Medal of Honor. The battalion also later received the Presidential Unit Citation, which is given for extraordinary heroism. The name Black Panthers arose from the battalion's patch, which depicted a fierce panther with its mouth open and a slogan beneath that read, "Come Out Fighting."



U.S. Army

Soldiers from Dog Company of the 761st Tank Battalion, known as the Black Panthers, check equipment before leaving England for combat in France in the fall of 1944. The battalion, the first Black tank unit to fight in combat in World War II, will be the subject of a documentary to air later this month.

The two-hour documentary on the tank battalion, which will air Aug. 20, will "explore in-depth the major battles they faced both overseas while in combat and back home in the United States,"

the History Channel states on its website, noting it also includes an interview with Austin, the first Black defense secretary.

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Navy sailors arrested on security charges

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Two U.S. Navy sailors have been arrested on charges related to national security and tied to China, U.S. officials said Thursday.

A 22-year-old sailor assigned to a ship in San Diego was arrested Wednesday on a charge related to espionage involving conspiracy to send national defense information to Chinese officials, according to the U.S. officials, who were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Another sailor was arrested at Naval Base Ventura County north of Los Angeles and charged with conspiracy and receipt of a bribe from a Chinese official, the U.S. officials said. It was unclear if the two cases were related.

The U.S. Justice Department declined to comment when contacted by The Associated Press. Federal officials were expected to release more details at a press conference scheduled in San Diego later Thursday.

WWII paratrooper who carried beer in helmet for wounded dies

By **J.P. LAWRENCE**
Stars and Stripes

An American paratrooper who became a legend in Belgium during World War II for carrying beer in his helmet to give to the wounded has died, the Army's 18th Airborne Corps said Thursday.

Vincent Speranza, who served in the 101st Airborne Division during the Battle of the Bulge, died Wednesday at age 98, the airborne corps said in an online tribute.

"Rest in Peace, Vinny," the unit based at Fort Liberty, N.C., said in a Twitter post.

Speranza went from New York City to the battlefields of Europe, where he fought on the front lines against the Nazis and helped liberate concentration camps, according to an online Department of Veterans Affairs biography.

His claim to fame occurred during the Battle of the Bulge, in which American troops thwarted the last major German offensive on the Western Front in a fight lasting from Dec. 16, 1944, to Jan. 28, 1945.

Speranza found himself in a foxhole in Bastogne, Belgium. He and his fellow soldiers were running short on supplies and ammuni-



BERNARDO FULLER/U.S. Army

Vincent Speranza, who served in the 101st Airborne Division during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II, salutes during a ceremony in Belgium in 2015. He died Wednesday at age 98.

tion, and were surrounded by German forces.

A wounded friend asked Speranza for something to drink, he

recalled during a visit with troops in Alaska in 2013, Stars and Stripes reported at the time.

Speranza found a working tap at a devastated tavern nearby, and he twice filled his helmet with beer to bring back to injured comrades. His act of kindness would become a celebrated tale in Belgium.

Residents had seen his beer-carrying mission, and years later a brewery in Bastogne created Airborne Beer, which was served in helmet-shaped ceramic bowls, Speranza's VA biography said.

Visiting Bastogne in 2009, Speranza said he had found his foxhole still there. Dutch and Belgian military officials told him that the legend of his exploit is still told.

Speranza was surprised to learn of his fame. After the war, he focused on being a history teacher and a father, he said during a visit to Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff in 2021, according to a university statement.

"After being a machine gunner at the Battle of the Bulge, winning a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star and (spending) two decades as a public school teacher, Airborne Beer is what I'm famous for," he

said.

Speranza participated in veteran events in Europe during his later years, sharing his stories and experiences with younger generations.

In March of this year, he skydived once again as part of a ceremony commemorating WWII paratroopers.

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MILITARY

Better care urged for sex assault victims

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

The military should improve its handling of the needs of service members who are victims of sexual assault, sexual harassment and domestic sexual abuse, the Government Accountability Office recommended in a new report.

Personnel who experience sexual trauma may develop chronic mental health conditions and are more likely to leave the military, making recruitment and retention challenges more severe, the watchdog agency said in a report released Wednesday.

As a result, the Pentagon needs to shore up patient confidentiality and privacy as well as access to care for victims of sexual trauma, the GAO concluded.

Unwanted sexual behavior is an umbrella term referring to sexual harassment, sexual assault and do-

mestic sexual abuse that occurs during military service.

The GAO conducted its audit from August 2021 to August 2023 after Congress asked the agency to review the state of behavioral health in the military and service members' experiences with unwanted sexual behavior.

Data reviewed by the agency from fiscal years 2015 through 2021 showed that more than 350,000 veterans and service members screened positive for trauma related to experiences with unwanted sexual behavior.

Requiring referrals for long-term care and failing to prioritize behavioral care appointments for service members who disclose sexual assaults remain barriers to treatment, the GAO found.

Although confidential counseling is available at VA centers, long-term behavioral health care still

requires a referral from a military provider, and that may be a deterrent, according to the report, which contains more than a dozen recommendations.

For example, the Pentagon should consider whether access to VA care could be granted without a referral for some service members, such as those for whom disclosure is not necessary to minimize mission risks. The Defense Department concurred and said it will look at ways to improve access to care and reduce the stigma for sexual assault victims.

The GAO also recommended the military clarify how and when medical care should be prioritized for victims of unwanted sexual behavior and how providers should screen for potential victims.

None of the 18 military providers in the report knew of guidance requiring them to prioritize already

hard-to-get appointments for behavioral health. Wait times for appointments can be up to four months unless a patient is suicidal, providers said.

Reviewing separation data, the GAO found service members who had reported unwanted sexual behavior left the military "at substantially higher rates than the overall active-duty population."

Separation rates from active-duty service for those reporting sexual trauma ranged from 37% in the Air Force to 60% in the Marine Corps, compared with just 12% of the active-duty population at large in the military during the six-year review period, the report said.

The Pentagon does not know the extent to which unwanted sexual behavior may have factored into those separation decisions, the GAO found.

More than 350 codes describe the

basis for separation from the military, but a Pentagon official told the GAO that developing a designation for separations connected to unwanted sexual behavior hasn't been considered.

Without this information, victims may not qualify for related medical exams and higher-level reviews of involuntary separations, factors that may affect their eligibility for veterans benefits, the report said.

In addition, the report raised concerns about confidentiality regarding Military Health System Genesis, the Pentagon's new electronic health record.

A primary care provider said because of such concerns, some facilities rely on paper charts in reported sexual assault cases, according to the GAO.

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Typhoon: Power outages persist

FROM PAGE 1

as possibly typhoon related.

None of those are connected to the U.S. military.

Khanun — in the waters between China and Japan's southwestern islands Thursday afternoon — was forecast to weaken before turning toward Okinawa again over the weekend, according to the Joint Typhoon Center and the 18th Wing's weather flight. The storm is expected to pass 94 miles north-northwest of Kadena at about 10 p.m. Saturday, with 69 mph sustained winds and 86 mph gusts.

U.S. military bases entered a tropical storm watch at 10 a.m. Thursday; hazards remain, although destructive winds of 57 mph or greater are not forecast.

By 1 p.m. Thursday, electricity had been restored to 75,000 of the 225,000 homes left without power, according to the Okinawa Electric Power Co. Approximately 1,800 employees were working to restore service.

Khanun, which means jackfruit in Thai, slammed into Okinawa on Tuesday night. Its center came as close as 60 miles southwest of Kadena at 4 a.m. Wednesday, weather flight commander Capt. William Hanson said at the time.

Wind gusts reached 145 mph, according to Japan's Meteorological Agency. Twelve inches of rain fell on Okinawa's capital, Naha. Recovery efforts began Thursday on U.S. bases. Service members at Camp Fos-

ter and Kadena Air Base picked up branches and piled debris.

The Camp Foster theater lost two doors during the storm. One, on the first floor, was blown off its hinges and deposited 90 feet away.

The line to purchase groceries Thursday at the Foster commissary stretched the length of the building.

Staff Sgt. Bruce Caca, 35, a contracting officer on Foster, said he sheltered in place at his base home with his wife and three children.

"I was in a group chat with my Marines — some I know lost power on Camp Lester and Kadena Air Base," he said in front of the Army and Air Force Exchange on Thursday morning. "This one wasn't so bad for us, fortunately, because we live on Foster, so we did not lose power and my wife stocked up on food."

Power outages and light flooding struck Kadena, an important air transportation and fighter hub, but the base reported no major emergencies or injuries, wing spokesman Staff Sgt. Juan Torres Chardon said by email Thursday. The 18th Civil Engineer Squadron worked into the afternoon to restore utilities and make sure roads and facilities were safe.

No Marines were injured during the storm and III Marine Expeditionary Force had accounted for 100% of its personnel, spokesman Capt. Brett Dornhege-Lazaroff



FRANK ANDREWS/Stars and Stripes

Maintenance workers discard a door at Camp Foster, Okinawa, on Thursday.

said by email Thursday. The unit was working to assess damage and provide information and resources to impacted Marines and sailors.

Naha Airport, closed Tuesday and Wednesday, reopened Thursday, though 125 flights were canceled, the airport website said.

The first departure, an All Nippon Airways flight to Tokyo's Haneda International Airport, departed at 1:15 p.m.

Okinawa's expressway remained closed Thursday afternoon while crews checked for damage and cleared debris, a spokesman for West Nippon Expressway Co. Ltd. said by phone. The company was not sure when the expressway would reopen. He said he was authorized to speak only on condition of anonymity.

Stars and Stripes reporters Frank Andrews and Dave Ornaier contributed to this report.

US service members, civilians injured in traffic accident in Germany

BY ALEXANDER RIEDEL
Stars and Stripes

BRAKE, Germany — Nine people were injured Thursday morning when a U.S. soldier lost control of his van on the rain-soaked roadway and veered into oncoming traffic, resulting in a head-on collision with another vehicle, Delmenhorst police said in a statement.

Six service members between the ages of 21 and 34 were traveling north on route B212 in Brake, 31 miles northwest of Bremen, around 7:30 a.m., when the 24-year-old driver crashed into a Dacia car driven by an 83-year-old man, police said Thursday afternoon.

Both vehicles came to a standstill on the shoulder and cycle

path. Firefighters rescued the driver and an 82-year old female passenger who were trapped inside the car and had suffered serious injuries. They were airlifted to hospitals by rescue helicopters, police said.

An 85-year-old woman suffered minor injuries and was transported to a hospital by ambulance.

The U.S. service members had

slight injuries and were treated at local hospitals, police said.

A total of 75 rescue workers and responders assisted with the emergency. The road was closed for several hours, police said.

The collision caused about 20,000 euros in total vehicle damage, police said.

Military officials were not immediately available for comment

Thursday afternoon.

The accident comes two days after an Army officer was killed in Bavaria after a semitruck collided with the Stryker she was riding inside, marking the third U.S. active-duty military death on German roads this year.

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EUROPE

NATO nations fear Russian, Belarusian provocations

By VANESSA GERA
Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — Polish and Lithuanian leaders held an urgent meeting Thursday in a strategically sensitive area where their NATO nations border Belarus and the Russian territory of Kaliningrad, warning that they are bracing for provocations from Moscow and Minsk in the area.

The meeting came two days after two Belarusian helicopters flew briefly at low altitude into Polish air space, in what was viewed as a provocative move. Both nations on NATO's eastern flank have increased their border security following the arrival of thousands of Russia-linked Wagner group mercenaries just across their borders in Belarus after an aborted mutiny in Russia in June.

"Russia and Belarus are increasing the pressure on the borders, increasing the number of their provocations, and we must be aware that the number of these provocations will grow," Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said at a news conference with Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda.

The Belarusian Foreign Ministry denied that its country's helicopters entered Poland. Local Polish residents posted photos on social media of helicopters with Belarusian insignia flying above.

They met in Suwalki, a town in the Suwalki Gap, a sparsely populated stretch of land running 60 miles along the Polish-Lithuanian border. Also known as the Suwalki Corridor, the stretch of territory links the three Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia with the rest of the NATO alliance. It separates Belarus, an ally of Russia, from Kaliningrad, a heavily

militarized exclave of Russia located on the Baltic Sea which is separated from the Russian mainland.

Military analysts in the West have long viewed the Suwalki Gap as a potential flashpoint area in case of a standoff between Russia and NATO.

They worry that if Russia were to ever seize the Suwalki Gap, it would leave Lithuania and the other two Baltic states, Latvia and Estonia, cut off from Poland and other NATO allies.

Nausėda said he believes the Suwalki Gap remains a vulnerable place, even though Sweden — located across the Baltic Sea — is on track to join NATO.

"Some people say the agreement reached at the NATO summit on Sweden's future membership is changing the geopolitical situation, and the strategic importance of the Suwalki Corridor is diminishing. I certainly do not agree with this view and I believe that the Suwalki Corridor remains a potential target of provocation by both Russia and Belarus," Nausėda said.

The NATO countries on the eastern flank have felt under pressure for a couple of years.

Large numbers of migrants from the Middle East and Africa began arriving two years ago at the borders of Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. European leaders have accused Belarus leader Alexander Lukashenko, an ally of Russia, of opening the migration route in an act of "hybrid warfare" aimed at creating instability in the West.

Now concerns have grown further since the Wagner troops began arriving in Belarus after their short-lived mutiny in Russia.

Poland's Morawiecki, said last weekend that some 100 Wagner fighters in Belarus had approached the border with Poland, specifically a strategically sensitive area known as the Suwalki Gap.

"Now the situation becomes even more dangerous," Morawiecki told reporters. "This is certainly a step towards a further hybrid attack on Polish territory."

Tuesday's helicopter incident added further to the concerns.

Poland's Ministry of Defense reported that incident to NATO, which said Wednesday that it is monitoring the situation.

"NATO is closely tracking the situation along its eastern borders, including yesterday's incident where two Belarussian military helicopters briefly crossed into Polish airspace at low altitude," a NATO official said on customary condition of anonymity. "We are in close contact with the Polish authorities on this matter, and we will continue to do what is necessary to ensure all Alliance territory remains secure."

Poland, Lithuania and Latvia say they have been deploying more troops and equipment to their borders.

Guntis Pujats, head of Latvia's State Border Guard, told Latvian media Wednesday that security risks in the immediate vicinity of the Belarus border have been high since Minsk started using migrants as a tool of "hybrid warfare" but have grown with the arrival of the Wagner group. He said border guards have started training a special task force in response.

Lithuania's President Gitanas Nausėda said this week that it would be tempting for the Wagner



BELARUS' DEFENSE MINISTRY/AP

Screen grab taken from video released July 20, Belarusian soldiers of the Special Operations Forces and mercenary fighters from Wagner private military company attend the weeklong maneuvers conducted at a firing range near the border city of Brest, Belarus.

group to use its presence near the Lithuanian border "for various provocations."

"So I think the threat is serious," Nausėda said during a visit Monday to a site on the border with Belarus where seven Lithuanian officers were murdered by Soviet paratroopers 32 years ago.

Others have suggested that one shouldn't overestimate the capabilities of the armed group.

Laurynas Kasciunas, chairman of the Seimas National Security and Defense Committee, told reporters that Wagner mercenaries in Belarus with their current combat power do not pose a conventional military threat. Whether they pose a great threat in the future, he said, "will depend on further scenarios, how they are armed and their orders."

In Poland, some critics of the government believe that it is overstating the threat in order to present itself as tough on security

ahead of parliamentary elections this fall. Opposition leader Donald Tusk accused the ruling party of using Wagner to stoke fear ahead of the elections, something the party has denied.

Some Poles also faulted the authorities for refusing to initially acknowledge that the Belarusian helicopters had entered Poland's airspace on Tuesday. At first, the military insisted that the Belarusian aircraft had not entered Poland. But after local residents posted photos on social media of aircraft with Belarusian insignia several kilometers from the border inside Poland, the Defense Ministry put out a statement saying it was true.

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, said earlier this week the United States views the Wagner group — whose forces have fought in Ukraine and also operated in Africa — as a threat.

Russian shelling strikes landmark Ukrainian church

By HANNA ARHIROVA
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russian shelling on Thursday damaged a landmark church in the southern city of Kherson that once held the remains of a renowned 18th-century Russian commander.

Ukraine's emergency service said four of its workers were wounded in a second round of shelling as they fought the fire at St. Catherine's Cathedral. Four other people were wounded in the first shelling attack, which also hit a trolleybus, the prosecutor general's office said.

The shelling followed the severe damage sustained by a beloved Orthodox cathedral in a missile strike last week in Odesa

and underlined the war's risk to the country's cultural monuments. Fighting has intensified in multiple regions as Ukraine's military steps up a counteroffensive to reclaim Russian-occupied territory.

The Kherson church, dating from 1781, is one of the city's most notable buildings. It once was the burial spot for Prince Grigory Potemkin, a favorite of Russian Empress Catherine the Great. Potemkin exerted Russian control through the southeast parts of modern Ukraine and annexed the Crimean Peninsula.

His remains were removed last year while the city was still under Russian occupation. Russian forces withdrew from Kherson

last November in the face of a Ukrainian counteroffensive.

Potemkin engineered the 1784 annexation of Crimea from the Crimean Khanate. His name entered popular speech because of stories, now widely doubted, that he erected fake settlements called "Potemkin villages" to impress Catherine during her long journey through Crimea and the southern territories.

The Ukrainian president's office said two people were killed over the past day in Russian attacks — one in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk province and one in Zaporizhzhia province.

The Ukrainian air force said Russia launched a wave of 15 Shahed drones against the Kyiv

region but all were shot down. The governor of the capital region, Ruslan Kravchenko, said there were no injuries or damage.

Ukraine's military also continued to launch attack drones deep into Russia. The Russian Defense Ministry said six Ukrainian drones were downed in the Kaluga region, about 90 miles south of Moscow, the latest incident following attacks that twice hit buildings in the Russian capital that house some government ministries.

Kaluga Gov. Vladislav Shapsha reported another drone was shot down later Thursday.

After enduring nearly nine months of Russian occupation, Kherson was recaptured by Uk-

rainian forces in November of last year, marking a momentous victory for Ukraine and a humiliating defeat for the Kremlin.

The Ukrainian recapture of Kherson instantly made the city the front line in the country's south and a target of daily Russian attacks, mostly artillery and drone attacks coming from Russian-held territory across the Dnieper River.

The relentless strikes often result in reports of civilian casualties.

In early June, Kherson was shattered by the war-related collapse of Kakhovka dam, which flooded areas near the riverbank and forced thousands of residents to evacuate.

NATION

Phoenix heat withering famed saguaro cactuses

By **TERRY TANG**
Associated Press

PHOENIX — After recording the warmest monthly average temperature for any U.S. city ever in July, Phoenix climbed back up to dangerously high temperatures Wednesday. That could mean trouble not just for people but for some plants, too.

Residents across the sprawling metro are finding the extended extreme heat has led to fried flora, and have shared photos and video of their damaged cactuses with the Desert Botanical Garden. Nurseries and landscapers are inundated with requests for help with saguaros or fruit trees that are losing leaves.

Phones have been “ringing non-stop” about everything from a cactus to a citrus tree or ficus, said Sophia Booth, a landscape designer at Moon Valley Nursery, which has nearly a dozen locations across the Phoenix suburbs.

“A lot of people are calling and saying their cactus is yellowing really hard, fell over or like broken arms, that sort of thing,” Booth said. “Twenty-year-old trees are losing all their leaves, or they’re turning a crisp brown.”

She advises people to give water and specialty fertilizer to a distressed tree or plant every other day and not to trim them.

At the Desert Botanical Garden, three of the treasured institution’s more than 1,000 saguaro cactuses have toppled over or lost an arm in the last week, a rate officials there said is highly unusual.

These saguaros, a towering trademark of the Sonoran Desert landscape, were already stressed

from record-breaking heat three years ago, and this summer’s historic heat — the average temperature in Phoenix last month was 102.7 degrees Fahrenheit — turned out to be the cactus needle that broke the camel’s back.

“Since 2020, we have had elevated mortality in our population of saguaros compared to mortality rates pre-2020,” said Kimberlie McCue, the garden’s chief science officer. “So part of our thinking is that there are still saguaros today that were compromised from what they went through in 2020. And that this could be sending them over the edge.”

Saguaros can live up to 200 years and grow as tall as 40 feet. Some in the Desert Botanical Garden date beyond its opening 85 years ago, and the largest there measure almost 30 feet, according to McCue.

People commonly assume cactuses are made to endure scorching heat, but even they can have their limits, McCue said. It wasn’t just this summer’s 31-day streak of highs at or above 110 degrees Fahrenheit, but also the multiple nights when the low never dipped below 90 degrees. Nighttime is when cactuses open their pores to get rid of retained water and take in carbon dioxide, she explained.

“With water loss, if they become dehydrated, that can compromise the structural integrity they have in their tissues,” McCue said.

A cactus’ size can also influence its susceptibility, said Kevin Hultine, the garden’s director of research, and bigger plants with more mass are more prone to the



Ross D. Franklin/AP

Kristen Kindl, Living Collections Coordinator at the Desert Botanical Garden, examines a damaged saguaro cactus after multiple arms dropped off it at the Desert Botanical Garden on Wednesday in Phoenix.

effects of heat and drought.

“Larger (and older) plants have more arms and thus, they tend to be the first to start to lose structural integrity,” Hultine said via email. “The first sign of heat-related stress in a population are arms falling from large plants.

Eventually, the entire plant might fall over from the stress.”

There is hope that the arrival of thunderstorms during the monsoon season, which traditionally starts June 15, could bring more delayed moisture that will help struggling flora. The U.S. mon-

soon is characterized by a shift in wind patterns that pull moisture in from the tropical coast of Mexico. It sets up differently in other parts of the world. In Arizona, about half the rain that falls during the year comes during the monsoon.

Waves grow up to 13 feet tall in California as Earth warms

By **JULIE WATSON**
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Waves are getting bigger and surf at least 13 feet tall is becoming more common off California’s coast as the planet warms, according to innovative new research that tracked the increasing height from historical data gathered over the past 90 years.

Oceanographer Peter Bromirski at Scripps Institution of Oceanography used the unusual method of analyzing seismic records dating back to 1931 to measure the change in wave height.

When waves ricochet off the shore, they collide with incoming waves and cause a ripple of energy through the seafloor that can be picked up by seismographs designed to detect earthquakes. The greater the impact, the taller the wave is.

Until now, scientists relied on a network of buoys by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Admin-



Shmuel Thaler/AP

Powerful waves batter the Capitola Wharf after a storm destroyed a section of the structure Jan. 5 in Capitola, Calif.

istration that collect data on wave height along U.S. coasts, but that data along the California coast only went back to 1980.

“Until I stumbled upon this data set, it was almost impossible to make that comparison with any kind of reliability,” Bromirski said.

To go back further, Bromirski gathered a team of undergraduate students to analyze daily seismic readings covering decades of winters. It was a slow, painstaking process that took years and involved digitizing drums of paper records. But he said it was important in learning how things have changed over nearly a century along California’s coast.

They found that average winter wave heights have grown by as much as a foot since 1970, when global warming is believed to have begun accelerating. Swells at least 13 feet tall are also happening a lot more often, occurring at least twice as often between 1996 to 2016 than from 1949 to 1969.

Bromirski was also surprised to find extended periods of exceptionally low wave heights prior to about 1970 and none of those periods since.

“Erosion, coastal flooding, damage to coastal infrastructure

is, you know, something that we’re seeing more frequently than in the past,” Bromirski said. “And, you know, combined with sea level rise, bigger waves mean that is going to happen more often.”

Changes in waves are showing up in other ways, too.

“There’s about twice as many big wave events since 1970 as there was prior to 1970,” Bromirski said.

The study, published Tuesday in the *Journal of Geophysical Research: Oceans*, adds to the evidence that climate change is causing massive shifts in the world’s oceans. Other studies have shown waves are not only getting taller, but also more powerful.

Damage from intense storms and massive surf is already playing out. This winter, California’s severe storms and giant waves collapsed bluffs, damaged piers and flooded parts of the state’s picturesque Highway 1.

NATION

Woman punches her way out of cinder block cell at home

By GENE JOHNSON AND CLAIRE RUSH
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — A woman who escaped her kidnapper by punching her way out of a homemade cinder block cell at a home in southern Oregon likely saved other women from a similar fate, authorities said, by alerting them to a man they now suspect in sexual assaults in at least four more states.

Negasi Zuberi posed as an undercover police officer when he kidnapped the woman in Seattle, drove hundreds of miles to his home in Klamath Falls and locked her in the garage cell until she bloodied her hands breaking the door to escape, the FBI said Wednesday.

Zuberi, 29, faces federal charges that include interstate kidnapping, and authorities said they are looking for additional victims after linking him to the other assaults. Authorities have not yet said publicly in which states those

attacks took place.

“This woman was kidnapped, chained, sexually assaulted, and locked in a cinderblock cell,” Stephanie Shark, the assistant special agent in charge of the FBI’s Portland field office, said in a news release. “Police say she beat the door with her hands until they were bloody in order to break free. Her quick thinking and will to survive may have saved other women from a similar nightmare.”

After the woman escaped from his home in Klamath Falls, Zuberi fled the city of roughly 22,000 people but was arrested by state police in Reno, Nev., the next afternoon, the FBI said.

Court records did not yet list an attorney who might speak on Zuberi’s behalf. He has not yet been assigned a public defender in Oregon as he’s still being transferred from Nevada, which can take several weeks, said Kevin Sonoff, a spokesperson for the U.S. attorney’s office in Oregon.

A grand jury in Portland on

Wednesday returned an indictment charging Zuberi with interstate kidnapping and transporting an individual across state lines with intent to engage in criminal sexual activity. He could face up to life in prison if convicted.

According to the FBI, Zuberi went by the names Sakima, Justin Hyche and Justin Kouassi, and he has lived in multiple states since 2016, possibly including California, Washington, Oregon, Colorado, Utah, Florida, New York, New Jersey, Alabama, and Nevada.

Two Nevada State Patrol officers tracked Zuberi down at a Walmart parking lot in Reno the next day, July 16, the complaint says. He was in his car holding one of his children in the front seat while talking to his wife, who was standing outside the vehicle. He initially refused to get out of the car when the officers asked and instead cut himself with a sharp object and tried to destroy his phone, according to the complaint. Zuberi eventually surrendered,



FBI/AP

A makeshift cinderblock cell in Klamath Falls, Ore., allegedly used by 29-year-old Negasi Zuberi.

and the child wasn’t harmed.

The Klamath Falls rental home where Zuberi allegedly took the woman is owned by the city’s mayor, Carol Westfall, and her husband, Kevin, according to property records.

“We are shocked and dismayed

by what has occurred,” the Westfalls, who declined to comment on their interactions with Zuberi, said in an email. “We applaud the actions of the woman who helped capture this person and prevent him from committing further atrocities.”

Appeals court upholds ruling giving Ind. trans students bathroom access

Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — A federal appeals court has upheld a lower court ruling that transgender students in Indiana must have access to the bathrooms and locker rooms consistent with their gender identities.

The 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling Tuesday upheld a preliminary injunction from the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana last year ordering the Metropolitan School District of Martinsville and the Vigo County Schools to give the transgender students such access.

Ken Falk, legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana, issued a statement welcoming the appeals court ruling.

“Students who are denied access to the appropriate facilities are caused both serious emotional and physical harm as they are denied recognition of who they are. They will often avoid using the restroom altogether while in school,” Falk said. “Schools should be a safe place for kids and the refusal to allow a student to use the correct facilities can be extremely damaging.”

Martinsville Superintendent

Eric Bowlen said in an email “We are reviewing the decision and evaluating available options.”

The Vigo County School Corp. said in a statement it was reviewing the decision with legal counsel.

The court opinion said that the U.S. Supreme Court will likely step in to hear the case, or cases similar to it.

The case originally required John R. Wooden Middle School in Martinsville to allow a seventh-grader identified only as A.C. to have access to the restroom while litigation continued.

Bud Light sales plunge after boycott over campaign with trans influencer

Associated Press

Anheuser-Busch Inbev reported a drop in U.S. revenue in the second quarter as Bud Light sales plunged amid a conservative backlash over a campaign with transgender influencer Dylan Mulvaney.

The world’s largest brewer said Thursday that revenue in the United States declined by 10.5% in the April-to-June period from a year earlier, “primarily due to the volume decline of Bud Light.”

It has lost its place as America’s best-selling beer after more than two decades, slipping into second place in June behind Mexican lager Modelo Especial, which is also owned by the Belgium-based ABInBev.

The company faced blowback after sending a commemorative Bud Light can to Mulvaney, who posted it to her millions of social media followers.

Conservative figures and others called for a boycott of Bud Light,

while Mulvaney’s supporters criticized the beer brand for not doing enough to support her. Mulvaney has said she faced bullying and transphobia, criticizing the brand for not reaching out to her amid the furor over their partnership.

The beer giant said overall revenue rose 7.2% in the second quarter, to \$15.1 billion, from the same period a year ago as global brands such as Stella Artois and Corona made up for the loss in Bud Light sales.



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WORLD

Iranian paramilitaries drill on disputed islands

BY NASSER KARIMI
AND JON GAMBRELL
Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard launched a surprise military drill Wednesday on disputed islands in the Persian Gulf, just as the U.S. military increases its presence in the region over recent ship seizures by Tehran.

The drill focused primarily on Abu Musa Island, though the Guard also landed forces on the Greater Tunb Island as well, Iran's state-run IRNA news agency reported. Swarms of small, fast boats took part, along with paratroopers, drones and truck-launched surface-to-sea missile systems, footage aired on state television showed.

"We always try for security and tranquility; it is our way," the Guard's chief, Gen. Hossein Salami, said in a televised address during the drill. "Our nation is vigilant, and it gives harsh responses to all

threats, complicated seditions and secret scenarios and hostilities."

Salami later told state TV: "There is absolutely no need for the presence of America or its European or non-European allies in the region."

The drill comes as thousands of Marines and sailors on both the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan and the USS Carter Hall, a landing ship, are on their way to the Persian Gulf. Already, the U.S. has sent A-10 Thunderbolt II warplanes, F-16 and F-35 fighters, as well as the destroyer USS Thomas Hudner, to the region.

The Pentagon has said the deployment is "in response to recent attempts by Iran to threaten the free flow of commerce in the Strait of Hormuz and its surrounding waters." Some 20% of the world's oil passes through the narrow waterway connecting the Persian Gulf to the wider world and the U.S. views it as crucial to both its national security and keeping global energy prices stable.

Meanwhile, Iran now enriches uranium closer than ever to weapon-grade levels after the collapse of its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

The use of Abu Musa and Greater Tunb in the drill also provides another message to the region. Those two islands remain claimed by the United Arab Emirates, home to Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Iran's late shah seized the islands in 1971 just before the UAE became an independent country and Tehran has held the islands since. Lesser Tunb Island was also seized.

Seizing those islands reminds Iran's neighbors of its military might as Tehran's diplomats have been trying to convince Gulf Arab countries allied with the U.S. that "foreigners" aren't needed to secure the region.

Meanwhile, Iran has been trying to signal its displeasure over recent comments about the islands made by Russia, which Tehran has supplied with bomb-carrying drones



SEPAHNEWS/AP

Iranian Revolutionary Guard speedboats move during a drill on disputed islands in the Persian Gulf, on Wednesday, just as the U.S. military increased its presence in the region over ship seizures.

for their war in Ukraine. Russia earlier this summer in a joint statement with the Gulf Cooperation Council called for "bilateral negotiations or the International Court

of Justice" to decide who should control the islands. That prompted an outcry in Iran and Tehran summoned the Russian envoy over the remarks.

Hundreds rally in Niger, as new junta seeks to justify its coup

Associated Press

NIAMEY, Niger — Hundreds of people rallied in support of Niger's ruling junta in the capital on Thursday, denouncing France and others who have criticized a recent coup — as the country's military leaders sought to exploit anti-Western sentiment to shore up their takeover.

As numbers began to swell at a demonstration organized by the junta and civil society groups on Niger's independence day, protesters in Niamey pumped their fists in the air and chanted out support for neighboring countries that have also seen military takeovers in recent years. Some waved Russian flags, and one man brandished a Russian and Nigerien flag sewn together.

Last week's coup toppled President Mohamed Bazoum — whose ascendancy marked Niger's first peaceful, democratic transfer of power since its independence from France. It has been accompanied by strident anti-French sentiment and raised questions about the future of the fight against extremism in Africa's Sa-



SAM MEDNICK/AP

A supporter of Niger's ruling junta holds a placard reading "Long Live Russia, Long Live Niger and Nigeriens" at the start of a protest called to fight for the country's freedom and push back against foreign interference, in Niamey, Niger, on Thursday.

hel region, where Russia and Western countries have vied for influence.

The State Department on Wednesday ordered what it said was the temporary departure of nonessential embassy staff and

some family members from Niger as a precaution. It said its embassy would remain open. Pentagon press secretary Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder said that the State Department had not requested U.S. military assistance for the departure.

The coup has been strongly condemned by Western countries and the West African regional bloc known as ECOWAS, which has threatened to use force to remove the junta if they don't hand back power to Bazoum. As tensions have grown in the capital and the region, many European countries have moved to evacuate their citizens.

It remains unclear whether the majority of the population supports the coup — and in many parts of the capital, people went about their lives on Thursday as normal.

In an address to the nation on Wednesday, the new military ruler, Gen. Abdourahmane Tchiani, lashed out at those who have condemned the coup and called on the population to be ready to defend the nation.

Tchiani said Niger will face difficult times ahead and that the "hostile and radical" attitudes of those who oppose his rule provide no added value. He called harsh sanctions imposed last week by ECOWAS illegal, unfair, inhuman and unprecedented.

The bloc has set a deadline of Aug. 6 for the junta to reinstate Bazoum, who remains under house arrest. Its sanctions include halting energy transactions with Niger, which gets up to 90% of its power from neighboring Nigeria, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency.

France has 1,500 soldiers in Niger who conduct joint operations with its military against jihadis linked to al-Qaida and Islamic State, and the United States and other European countries have helped train the nation's troops. Niger was seen as the West's last reliable partner in the region, but some in the country see Russia and its Wagner mercenary group, which operates in a handful of African countries, as a powerful alternative.

The new junta has not said whether it intends to ally with Moscow or stick with Niger's Western partners, but that question has become central to the unfolding political crisis. Neighboring Mali and Burkina Faso — both ruled by juntas — have turned toward Moscow.

Man drives onto sidewalk, stabs pedestrians at mall in S. Korea

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — A man rammed a car onto a sidewalk Thursday in South Korea, then stepped out of the vehicle and began stabbing people at a shopping mall. Authorities said at least 14 people were wounded in the country's second mass stabbing in a month.

At least five people were hurt by

the car, and nine others were stabbed in the attacks that occurred in a crowded leisure district near a subway station in the city of Seongnam, according to Yoon Sung-hyun, an official from the southern Gyeonggi provincial police department.

Authorities arrested a suspect in his 20s at the scene and were questioning him. Police did not identify

the man.

The head of the National Police Agency described the attack as "virtually an act of terrorism."

An official at Gyeonggi's provincial fire department, Ha Donggeun, said at least two people were hospitalized in serious condition.

Photos from the scene showed forensic units examining the halls of

the AK Plaza, where the stabbings took place. A white Kia hatchback with a broken front window and ruptured front tire could be seen on a sidewalk near the subway station.

A witness, Hwang Hee-woon, told YTN television that he "heard a sound from the first floor that seemed like a scream, so customers and shop workers were gathering on

the rails of the second-floor near the escalator to see what was happening below."

"Suddenly, someone told us the person who committed the crime was coming up to the second floor, so we ran away in panic," he said.

Last month, a knife-wielding man stabbed at least four pedestrians on a street in Seoul, killing one person.

WEEKEND



Hello Kitty meets
Animal Crossing
Video games, Page 18

Boys to men

Greta Van Fleet grows into a band capable of much more than '70s mimicry on new album, 'Starcatcher'

Music, Page 28



Neil Krug

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY

Could AI actually take over world?

Expert weighs in on the credibility of the Entity in latest 'Mission: Impossible' flick

BY SHIRA OVIDE
The Washington Post

The latest in the "Mission: Impossible" movie franchise features a villainous artificial intelligence called the Entity. Spooky, right?

Like many fictional AI, including Skynet in the Terminator films and HAL 9000 from "2001: A Space Odyssey," the Entity is up to no good.

There's a race between the good guys and the bad guys to take command of this all-knowing, out-of-control AI before it destroys the world in some unspecified way.

Sure, sure, sure, the latest "Mission: Impossible" has amazing stunts and action sequences. I had fun watching it.

But my technology-obsessed brain wondered: How plausible is the Entity? How does it stack up against other supercomputer baddies in popular culture? And how seriously should we take fake AI in movies, anyway?

To explore these questions, I spoke with Alex Hanna, director of research at the Distributed AI Research Institute and co-host of the "Mystery AI Hype Theater 3000" podcast. (An edited and condensed version of our chat follows.)

Maybe it seems silly to have deep conversations about movie AI villains, but fiction matters. Made-up artificial life forms going back to "Frankenstein," Isaac Asimov's robot novels and Iron Man comics have influenced

our beliefs about real-world AI.

This piece comes with an obligatory spoiler alert: It discusses some plot details of "Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One."

But reading this won't ruin the movie for you. The plot is not the point. (The Washington Post's Ann Hornaday gave it three out of four stars.)

The Washington Post: Does the Entity accurately portray the real capabilities of AI?

Hanna: No. It's absurd.

Why? What's implausible about the Entity?

The idea that the Entity can hack into basically any electronic system — that it can listen and see everything happening in the world and learn from it — is pretty ridiculous. None of the current AI technologies can do this autonomously.

The Entity has such foresight that it can predict who is going to do what in the future down to the second, and game every possibility with humanlike ingenuity. That's not possible.

The Entity also has intent. [Tom Cruise's character] Ethan Hunt wants to shut down or control the Entity, and it is like the robots from Isaac Asimov's fiction in that it's trying to protect itself.

My colleague Emily M. Bender says that these machines don't understand anything. Understanding is exclusive to sentient beings.

Are there more realistic AI technologies in this movie?



PARAMOUNT PICTURES, ZUMA PRESS/TNS

Superspy Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise) and thief Grace (Hayley Atwell) hang on for dear life in the epic train-crash set piece that concludes "Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One."

Yes. Facial recognition is so commonplace in this movie that it's not even seen as AI. It's used by the American intelligence agencies, by the Italian police and by Hunt's team.

The depictions track with a lot of representations of facial recognition in popular media — that the software has true sight and can identify who is a terrorist. But this technology in the real world messes up all the time.

There's also a moment in this "Mission: Impossible" movie in which [a character named Benji Dunn] is in a self-driving car and he hops over to the passenger seat. He puts on his seat belt as if to say, I don't trust this thing.

That's an existing AI that's still questionable, and the movie makers had enough thought to make a character insecure about it. That was great.

Are there examples of other AI in popular media that you think are accurate?

No. The perennial problem is that technology and computing are portrayed in popular media as magic.

Even in this "Mission: Impos-

sible," the idea is once the good guys get a key to access the Entity's source code, the AI can be controlled. That's a misunderstanding. Even if you had the source code of an AI, it wouldn't tell you what you need to know.

You'd also need the model weights in a neural network to be able to replicate any of its decision-making. You would need to know which data it has access to.

Do you like any technology-related entertainment?!

I love [the android character] Data in "Star Trek" because he aims to be more human to improve his relationships with his crew mates — as opposed to his evil twin, Lore, who wants to kill humans and accrue power.

The movie "Hackers" isn't realistic, but I love it for the motley crew of people who are trying to take down a mega corporation. Plus a young Jonny Lee Miller and Angelina Jolie are fun.

This is all fictional. Why do fake depictions of AI matter?

Science and science fiction co-create each other.

Representations of AI can influence how we think about real-world AI because they can assign those real-life models too much agency or power.

But real-world AI is much more narrow, and destroys lives with much less public carnage — for example, facial recognition and predictive policing software.

Do you believe that some technologists' current fears of AI triggering human extinction are influenced by fictional killer machines?

I don't know. Fears of out-of-control artificial entities have a long history. Frankenstein's monster is a cautionary tale about man's hubris.

If you were writing a fictional AI villain for a movie, what would it be?

It might be AI systems used as a cudgel by bosses to break the backs of workers. Those are the kinds of AI uses that Hollywood writers' and actors' unions are talking about now.

Those depictions would be more like labor movies than "Mission: Impossible." But I'd watch that.

Miofive Dash Cam Dual has front- and rear-facing cameras

BY GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

Every time I test out dash-cams, their quality and functionality are so amazing that I think they can't get any better.

Such is the case with the Miofive Dash Cam Dual with bumper-to-bumper coverage. The dashcam can be permanently wired into your vehicle or connected via the 12-volt cable to the vehicle's cigarette lighter (my preferred, easier route). Either way, once the camera is powered on, you can dig through some great features or just let it roll.

The dual part means it has front- and rear-facing cameras,



MIOFIVE/TNS

The Miofive Dash Cam Dual's front-facing camera records in 4K while the rear-facing camera records in 2K.

each with a 140-degree angle of view. The front camera has a 2.2-inch display; both have been tested to operate in temper-

atures from 14 degrees to 113 degrees Fahrenheit.

Recordings from dashcams are most useful in the event of a

crash, but thankfully all I recorded were some boring road videos — nothing worth watching. One thing that was obvious when reviewing the footage was its superb quality. The front camera records in 4K while the rear records in 2K.

The Miofive recordings are looped, overlapping the newest over the oldest. When a specific clip is needed, pressing an emergency button will lock the recorded video and prevent it from being overwritten.

Another great feature I fortunately didn't get to test was the Miofive's G-sensor, which works even while parked. It detects bumps and impacts, triggering

the camera to record one minute of video evidence of hit-and-run incidents or vandalism, which will be great when filing a police report and insurance claim.

The dashcam has other features, including GPS and Sony Starvis night vision technology, to capture high-resolution footage without daylight.

The Miofive app is the control center. The footage is easily transferred via Wi-Fi to the app for viewing on a smartphone or tablet. The dash cam settings are also easily controlled in the app, which has a user-friendly dashboard.

Online: miofive.com; \$249.99

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS



PARAMOUNT PICTURES/AP

From left, April O'Neil, voiced by Ayo Edebiri; Donatello, "Donnie," voiced by Micah Abbey; Raphael, "Raph," voiced by Brady Noon; Michelangelo, "Mikey," voiced by Shamon Brown Jr.; and Leonardo, "Leo," voiced by Nicolas Cantu, in a scene from "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem."

An animated film worth shelling out for

The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles fight Ice Cube's supervillain Super Fly in 7th and possibly best film, 'Mutant Mayhem'

BY JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

There are some good gags and clever innovations in the animated "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem," but there is one brilliant idea: casting Ice Cube as the voice of the movie's mutant insect supervillain Super Fly.

It might have once been hard to foresee the value of having the emcee who rapped of "dropping bombs on your moms" as the MVP of a PG-rated kids movie. But we're now up to the seventh "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" film, not counting all the series and video games. That's a lot of movies for a bit of intellectual property that's clung more firmly to lunch boxes than it has to pop culture. For the turtles, it was getting to be time to either, as Ice Cube would say, "chickity-check yo' self" or try something new.

"Mutant Mayhem," now in theaters, can't entirely get over the feeling of treading over well-covered turtle ground. But if we must go once more into the ooze, the film by director Jeff Rowe (co-director of "The Mitchells vs. the Machines") and co-written by co-producers Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg, is probably the best of a not-so-stellar franchise. It's certainly the one most invested with that "teenage" part of the turtles' name. Plus, it's got Ice Cube as the fly who quotes from the O'Jays.

The animation is vividly textured, the beat is persistently hip-hop (Lauryn Hill, De La Soul, Ol' Dirty Bastard and others pack the electronic score by Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross) and the New York of the film is impressively detailed. But the most

important twist to this "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" iteration may be diving into the teenage-ness of its 15-year-old turtles.

If "Barbie" was balanced between Greta Gerwig's childhood memories and her adult feminism, "Mutant Mayhem" gives itself over more fully to the mindset of adolescence. That's in the gross-out humor and the comic book-like feel of the animation. But these are also recognizable teenagers who watch movies ("Ferris Bueller's Day Off"), pine for concert tickets and make goofy phone videos of themselves slicing watermelons.

What Donatello (Micah Abbey), Michelangelo (Shamon Brown Jr.), Leonardo (Nicolas Cantu) and Raphael (Brady Noon) really want is to fit in and go to high school like other teens. They have been relegated to the sewer ever since Splinter, a rat voiced by Jackie Chan, happened upon them after they were exposed as hatchlings to the same ooze that spawned Super Fly — who himself was the product of experiments by scientist Baxter Stockman (Giancarlo Esposito, fated to dubious laboratories).

Splinter has much the same opinion of the majority of the rats in "Ratatouille": Humans can't be trusted. (Splinter's particular fear is that they will "milk" him.) So the turtles have grown up underground, a little like the homeschooled family of "The Wolfpack," while yearning for the wider world.

They find a hint of it with a high-school journalist named April O'Neil (Ayo Edebiri), who wants to document, and thus prove to humankind, their decency. At the same, the turtles meet the charismatic

What others are saying

Directors Jeff Rowe and Kyler Spears showcase the turtles in a way we've never seen them before, utilizing a blend of 3D and 2D animation to create a unique, rough-hewn (on purpose) style that suggests children's book illustrations blended with teenage sketchbooks.

"Mutant Mayhem" is both a new direction for the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and a return to the past, symbolically, locating the material in the land of teenage imagination, memory, nostalgia and emotion. The animation style doesn't quite nod to comic books, but rather looks like a messy drawing that a fan might scribble in a notebook, with lopsided heads and visible drawing lines, as if done by crayon or pastel. The color palette is dark with pops of neon, giving it an early '90s look.

— Katie Walsh/TNS

Two things make "Mutant Mayhem" stand out from the crowd: the voice acting and the visuals. The young actors voicing the turtles not only bring a unique presence to each character, but when the four are together, it's an absolute cacophony of ribbing ridicule. ...

"Mutant Mayhem" is the rare TMNT outing that emphasizes the "teenage" part of the title, rather than "mutant," "ninja" or "turtles." This is a story of family and of friendship, with enough humor to keep it from getting too sappy and enough restraint to keep it from getting too sophomoric.

— Kristen Page-Kirby/ The Washington Post

Super Fly and his band of mutants. At first, they're fast-friends — "cousins," Super Fly says — but the turtles then start hearing of Super Fly's plans to turn all animals into mutants and eradicate the world of humans.

Some of the thunder of "Mutant Mayhem" has been stolen by "Into the Spider-Verse" and this year's "Across the Spider-Verse" — films that likewise upend the typical look of studio animation and do it with a pulsing soundtrack; but they did it more eclectically.

Yet this "Teenage Mutant Ninja Tur-

gles," while a half shell of those films, has its own low-key charms. It's goofier, grosser and mostly fun. The four turtles are never more than a hard-to-differentiate bale of overlapping dialogue of doubt and anxiety. But that first word in their name finally feels genuine. Seven films in, it's only right that Donatello, Michelangelo, Leonardo and Raphael should get a renaissance.

"Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem" is rated PG for sequences of violence and action, language and impolite material. Running time: 99 minutes. Now playing in select AAFES theaters.

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

Spectral streaming

Ghost flick picks span the genres

BY KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

It's first week in August and ghosts are on the brain. Two of the high-profile new movies in theaters last week were "Haunted Mansion," based on the Disney ride (and the 2003 movie starring Eddie Murphy), and "Talk to Me," a teen ghost story directed by YouTubers RackaRacka, aka brothers Danny and Michael Philippou. While the two films are tonally different, the shared themes brought up ideas about all kinds of ghost movies, from the funny to the scary to the melancholy. If you're in the mood for more haunting, check out these best ghost movies on streaming:

Not all ghost stories have to be horror movies. In fact, some of the most famous ghost movies are comedies, such as "Ghostbusters." The original 1984 film directed by Ivan Reitman is available to rent on all platforms. The 2016 remake is actually co-written by "Haunted Mansion" writer Katie Dippold, and that is also available to rent on all platforms. "Haunted Mansion" director Justin Simien dabbled into horror as well with his 2020 possessed hair-piece horror flick "Bad Hair," which is streaming on Hulu.

Two of the most famous ghost horror movies arrived within two years of each other, in the early '80s. First up, Stanley Kubrick's "The Shining" (1980), based on the Stephen King novel about a very haunted hotel. One of the greatest horror movies of all time, "The Shining" is streaming on Paramount+ and Showtime. In 1982, who could forget the line, "they're here," from Tobe Hooper's "Poltergeist"? Seemingly a haunted production of its own, "Poltergeist" stars Craig T. Nelson, JoBeth Williams and of course Heather O'Rourke as the tiny blonde Carol Anne who uttered that iconic warning. She tragically died from a sudden illness at age 12. Stream "Poltergeist" on Prime Video.

Another classic 1980 ghost movie from the Master of Horror is "The Fog," directed by John Carpenter. Starring the silken-voiced Adrienne Barbeau as a radio DJ in



COLUMBIA PICTURES, ZUMA PRESS/TNS

From left, Harold Ramis, Ernie Hudson, Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd star in "Ghostbusters," which is available to rent on all platforms. Its 2016 remake is also available to rent on all platforms.

the fictional Northern California town of Antonio Bay, "The Fog" features a host of ghosts from the deep in this atmospheric tale of mariner marauder specters who roll in with the mist. Stream "The Fog" on Prime Video.

A trio of 2000s horror films take on the 1970s spirit. First, the 2005 remake of "The Amityville Horror," starring Ryan Reynolds, anticipated the audience appetite for blockbuster haunting movies. Stream it on Tubi. The original 1979 movie starring James Brolin, Margo Kidder and Rod Steiger is streaming on Prime Video, the Roku Channel and Tubi. In 2013, James Wan took on real-life 1970s ghost hunters Ed and Lorraine Warren with "The Conjuring," streaming on Max. That film, starring Patrick Wilson and Vera Farmiga, has spawned a whole cinematic universe of ghost movies, all streaming on Max. Finally, "The Haunting of Hill House" auteur Mike Flanagan first showed his facility for ghost movies with the appealing sequel "Ouija: Origin of Evil" (2016), set in 1967

and starring Elizabeth Reaser and Lulu Wilson. Stream it (and "Hill House") on Netflix.

Again, not all ghost movies are scary, as stories about the afterlife can be about love, grief and all spectrum of human emotions. For something non-horror, check out David Lowery's meditation on grief through ghosts, "A Ghost Story" (2017), starring Casey Affleck and Rooney Mara, streaming on Paramount+, Showtime and Kanopy.

Another unconventional ghost movie is Olivier Assayas' 2016 film "Personal Shopper," starring Kristen Stewart as a woman working as a personal shopper in Paris while trying to get in touch with her dead brother and fielding strange text messages from the beyond. Stream it on Hulu, AMC+, Tubi and Kanopy. Finally, Jerry Zucker's 1990 film "Ghost" imagines a ghost story as an action romance, with Patrick Swayze starring as a dead man trying to protect his wife, played by Demi Moore. Stream it on Max.

Philippou brothers' debut 'Talk to Me' a horror high-five

BY MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

You've got to hand it to the Philippou brothers. They've taken an old horror cliché — a severed hand — and made something worth, well, applauding.

"Talk to Me," now in theaters stateside, is a stylish, well-crafted piece of filmmaking that marks the auspicious arrival of twin Australian filmmakers Michael and Danny Philippou.

Directed by the brothers from a script by Danny Philippou and Bill Hinzman, "Talk to Me" is modern and yet ancient, with just enough jump-cuts and zombies and dread, but not too much. It also downshifts out of madness in the final third to explore loss and guilt just when most films would ramp up the running-from-scary-guys part.

Our focus here are a pack of teens in Australia. Teens Down Under are pretty much the same



A24/AP

Sophie Wilde stars in horror flick "Talk to Me" as Mia, an Australian teen grieving the anniversary of her mother's suspicious death.

as they are everywhere — snarky, peer-pressure-y and clique-y. But in addition to stealing their parents' booze and smoking, these guys have a porcelain hand that is a doorway to hell.

Curiously, these teens don't sit around and play beer pong or

spin-the-bottle. They take turns holding the hand and inviting whatever bug-eyed, damp and foul demon to enter their body. (For not too long, though: 90 seconds sounds good before someone needs to cut the connection.) The kids film it all on

their phones and post it on social media. (Who should get royalties isn't clear.)

OK, let's talk about this hand, which initially just looks like one of those mannequin pieces you find in upscale jewelry stores to show off expensive rings. It's got loads of graffiti but looks pleasant enough. Underneath the porcelain we're told, might be the severed hand of a medium or a satanist. Don't ask a lot of questions about how some teens in suburban Australia got it. Talk to the hand.

What's surprising is the joy it brings to our weird group. Being possessed in this movie is a rush — an unconventional idea in the horror genre — even though the demon who briefly controls you can do embarrassing things, like make out with a dog. The script seems to be playing with notions of recreational drugs as much as horror here.

The heroine of this tale is

played by Sophie Wilde and it's her vehicle to stardom, too. It's a role that asks her to be sad, exuberant, frightened, deadly, possessed, lusty, mournful and vengeful. She is all those things and more. She's one to watch.

Her Mia is grieving the anniversary of her mother's suspicious death and a demon that may or may not be mom shows up during their little game. That leads the plot in the second half to go supernatural and where holes in the logic tend to stretch.

But there's no doubt the Philippou brothers have possessed us. Born and raised on YouTube — they cut their filmmaking teeth building RackaRacka (take that, fancy film schools) — they've crashed the party with a great debut. Welcome them warmly, just don't shake their hands.

"Talk to Me" is rated R for strong, bloody violent content, some sexual material and language throughout. Running time: 95 minutes.

WEEKEND: ENTERTAINMENT

'Back to the Future' goes Broadway

Musical adaptation hews closely to film, but stars say they don't want to 'impersonate' it

By MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

When actor Casey Likes watched "Back to the Future" growing up, his mom would always say he reminded her a lot of the film's star, Michael J. Fox. Something in the universe agrees: He's taken on Fox's classic movie role on Broadway.

The rising stage star plays Marty McFly for a musical adaptation of the beloved 1985 sci-fi comedy about a time-traveling duo who go back to the 1950s in a souped-up, gull-winged DeLorean.

"I remember growing up and just really, really loving the film. It kind of sat in that realm of, like, 'E.T.' and 'Close Encounters' — movies that came at a time when film was magical," says Likes, 21. "I hope we accomplish something kind of similar with Broadway."

The show, which won the Olivier Award for best new musical last year in London, arrives at the Winter Garden Theatre in New York this summer with a story by Bob Gale, who previously co-created and co-wrote the movie with Robert Zemeckis. It hews closely to the original, including having a DeLorean on stage and the shout "Great Scott!"

Broadway veteran and Tony Award-winner Roger Bart takes on Christopher Lloyd's role of Doc Brown, the oddball scientist with a knack for inventions. Bart recalls seeing "Back to the Future" in his early 20s when it first appeared in movie theaters. He watched with three friends from theater school and they were all secretly jealous of Fox.

"None of my friends — even knowing each other as well as we did — none of them, including

my mother, ever nudged me and said, 'No, no, kid. You're Doc Brown. Just be patient,'" the Tony-winner says, laughing.

Like the film, the musical centers on Marty McFly traveling back to his hometown in 1955. Once there, he gets caught up in the soap opera lives of his own teenage parents, including his mom, who develops a crush on her future son. He must reconnect mom and dad or he risks disappearing from history.

"We feel like it's very important — I'm sure Casey would agree — for the public to come to the show and recognize that they are seeing that story in a different form but with all of its charms very deeply intact," says Bart, whose Broadway credits include "The Producers," "Disaster!" and "Young Frankenstein."

New songs have been crafted by the film's composer Alan Silvestri and songwriter and producer Glen Ballard. Some Huey Lewis and the News songs from the movie also have been included, like the theme tune "The Power of Love" and "Back in Time," as well as Marty McFly's futuristic rendition of "Johnny B. Goode."

"We go back to the '50s, you get some songs that sound like 'Grease,' like 'Bye Bye Birdie.' And then we have some '80s moments in there that are very 'Footloose,'" Likes says. "It feels kind of like the greatest hits of not only rock 'n' roll, but of musical theater."

Both men are fans of the films — and both got to meet the original stars at a recent gala — but neither Bart nor Likes want to straitjacket themselves into the way Fox and Lloyd performed their roles.

"I don't want to impersonate the movie. I want to remind you



PHOTOS BY POLK & CO/AP

Roger Bart, left, plays Doc Brown and Casey Likes plays Marty McFly in "Back to the Future: The Musical." The show is playing at the Winter Garden Theatre in New York City this summer.

of the movie," says Likes, who made his Broadway debut last year as the Cameron Crowe-inspired lead character of the musical "Almost Famous." "There's a lot of things that Roger is doing that are similar, and there's a lot of things that I'm doing that hopefully are similar to Michael. But we're really just reminding you of their brilliance. Hopefully, at the same time, you're able to kind of go along the journey with our Marty and Doc."

In addition to being a cultural touchstone, "Back to the Future" was selected by the Library of Congress for preservation in the National Film Registry and the American Film Institute listed it as the No. 10 best science-fiction film. Bart thinks the movie's staying power is because it manages to straddle many worlds.

There's a time travel story and one about getting to know your parents as peers. There's a love story between Marty's parents and there's also a buddy movie — Marty and Doc putting their friendship on the line.

"Between all of these elements, it answers so many of the things that we love about that era of moviemaking and storytelling," Bart says. "I think that's one of the reasons why it has sort of stuck around so long."

Not to mention the fact that audiences can appreciate the story at different parts of their lives. Kids can enjoy the thrills and special effects; adults can be moved by the notion of meeting their own moms and dads.

"Part of its sustaining power is the fact that it can mean one



From left, Daryl Tofa, Nathaniel Hackmann, Will Branner, Casey Likes and Hugh Coles in "Back to the Future: The Musical." Just like in the film, Marty has to deal with Biff (Hackmann) and his cronies as he tries to reunite his parents George (Coles) and Lorraine (Liana Hunt).

"We feel like it's very important ... for the public to come to the show and recognize that they are seeing that story in a different form but with all of its charms very deeply intact."

Roger Bart

Doc Brown in "Back to the Future: The Musical"

thing at one age and another at another," Bart says.

Likes adds another reason: Marty initially wants to get back to his time period to reconnect with his girlfriend. But his reasons start to change — save Doc, save his family, save the world.

"As the show goes on, there's more stacked-up reasons as to why he has to get back. And I think that's a really interesting thing to think about in our own life," he says. "What would be our reasons to get back to our current life?"



"Back to the Future: The Musical" features some Huey Lewis and the News songs from the movie as well as new songs from the film's composer Alan Silvestri and songwriter and producer Glen Ballard.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



APPLE/TNS photos

Hello Kitty Island Adventure has an enormous world to explore including a sunken ship. Each region, and its shops, features a different Sanrio character.

Hello Kitty meets Animal Crossing

Island Adventure for Apple Arcade a life sim game with similar opportunities to explore, decorate, make friends

BY GIESON CACHO
Bay Area News Group

I can't believe I'm saying this, but I'm excited for a Hello Kitty game. The Sanrio character and her cute cadre haven't exactly set the video game world on fire with their projects, but Hello Kitty Island Adventure, which arrived on Apple Arcade on July 28, is different.

The title, by developer Sunblink, takes the Sanrio characters and blends them with an Animal Crossing-style game. It's a cozy life sim that follows the crew as My Melody gets invited to open up a gift shop at Big Adventures Park on Friendship Island. It sounds like a promising opportunity, but when the Sanrio crew arrives, they discover that the locale is in disrepair.

It looks like a Scooby-Doo ghost town, but not to fret; Hello Kitty and friends rally and decide to fix it up. That takes players on a 45- to 50-hour initial adventure.

"We're bringing a triple-A game to Apple Arcade," said Julian Farrior, Sunblink CEO. "It's multiplayer, open-world game that's about personal expression. It's endlessly extensible."

The lay of the island

Players create their own animal avatar and help spruce up the park, which has several themed biomes including an underwater realm, Mount Hothead (home of Aggretsuko), Spooky Swamp and Gemstone Mountain. Each region, and its



Players can decorate empty cabins in Hello Kitty Island Adventure to attract different visitors. With the right furniture and baubles, a visitor may even decide to stay.

shops, features a different Sanrio character. For example, Hello Kitty runs the café, where players can bake sweets for the island's inhabitants and visitors. My Melody takes on the Tom Nook role and assesses the player's overall vibe score while also selling items.

Each Sanrio character plays a role in Island Adventure's systems. The Hello Kitty café offers up a cooking mechanic and the treats players create help raise the friendship level for other friends they meet along the way. Increase a friendship level high enough, and players can invite the Sanrio character to help them explore the world.

The benefit of a partner is that each one

provides a bonus. Hello Kitty gives players a boost to cooking, and that's helpful when visiting places such as Mount Hothead, which has a pizza oven. Upgrading friendships also unlocks new side quests, cosmetics and upgrades to crafting, which is another system in Island Adventure. Players need to craft items to harvest resources and create gifts for the other Sanrio characters. Those presents are another way to increase buddy scores. Everything in the game is all about leveling up those friendships.

Cabins and puzzle elements

In addition, players will uncover empty cabins in the park. In another nod to Ani-

mal Crossing, players can decorate each one to attract visitors. If a cabin has the right furniture and baubles, a rotating visitor may even decide to stay.

Farrior said that visitors open up new storylines and it's a way for Sunblink to create more content beyond the initial campaign.

One of the elements that makes Island Adventure different from Nintendo's life sim is that Big Adventures Park is large, and to help players move around quickly, they can unlock fast travel points courtesy of Cinnamoroll. That's unlocked via mailboxes.

Another focus of the project is puzzles. The game is full of them, and Sunblink compared them to the shrines in the newest Legend of Zelda games. If players solve them, they can earn key items to boost a friendship, high-value furniture, hats and important crafting resources.

Island Adventure has an internal day and night structure. One day in the game is about 24 minutes, and then it cycles to night.

Different critters come out at specific times to encourage exploration. Unfortunately, there's no seasonal variety, but the characters will celebrate holidays with the first one being World Friendship Day, shortly after launch.

Island Adventure allows a friend to come in to help, and the game has three save slots per account. That means if a sibling wants to jump into your world, they can.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Perfume, chocolate and God in Cologne

On the banks of the Rhine, the city that Germans call “Köln” is home to Germany’s greatest Gothic cathedral, its best collection of Roman artifacts, a world-class art museum and a healthy dose of urban playfulness.

This river town in western Germany makes an ideal on-the-way stop — it’s a major rail junction, and its top sights are clustered near the train station. With a couple of hours, you can toss your bag in a locker, take a quick town walk, zip through the cathedral and make it back in time for your train.

Stepping out of the train station, you’re confronted with a modern hodgepodge of post-WWII architecture and the towering icon of Cologne: its cathedral. The city feels rebuilt — because it was. The Allies bombed Cologne hard in retaliation for Germany’s bombing of London. While 95 percent of Cologne was destroyed by WWII bombs, the cathedral held up fairly well. (It was hit by 14 bombs, but the skeletal Gothic structure flexed, and it remained standing.) In anticipation of the bombing, the glass and art treasures were taken to shelters and saved.

Cologne has long been a religious center — perhaps the most important in Germany. In 1248, its original cathedral burned down as workers were trying to replace it with something more mod — a style we

now call “Gothic.” While the current cathedral was built according to its original 13th-century plans, and the left (east) part was completed in the 13th century, the right half wasn’t built until the 1880s.

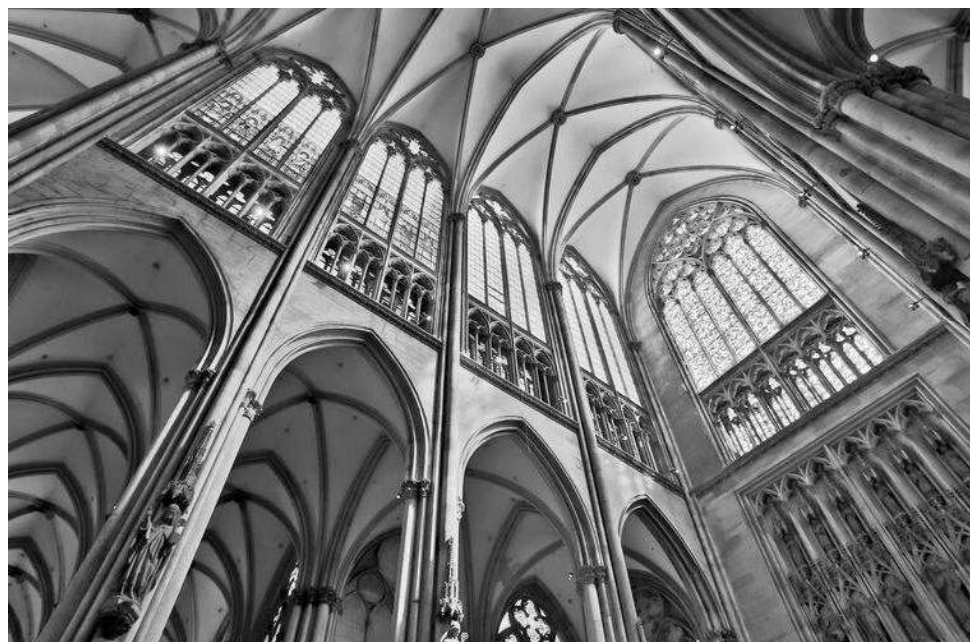
Step inside and you may notice feeling small — you’re supposed to. The church’s 140-foot-tall ceiling reminds us of our place in the vast scheme of things. Lots of stained glass — enough to cover three football fields — fills the church with light, representing God.



Rick Steves

Next to the cathedral are two notable museums — the Roman-Germanic Museum and Museum Ludwig. Through the Roman-Germanic Museum’s generous window, budget travelers can get a free look at the museum’s prize piece — an ancient mosaic floor. Once the dining-room floor of a rich Roman merchant, it’s actually in its original position (the museum was built around it). It shows scenes from the life of Dionysus ... wine, women and song, Roman-style. Inside the museum, you’ll find an elegant and fascinating display of Roman artifacts: glassware, jewelry and mosaics.

Next door and more enjoyable, Museum Ludwig offers a stimulating trip through the art of the last century, including American Pop, post-WWII art and edgy



DOMINIC ARIZONA BONUCELLI/Rick Steves' Europe

The nave of Cologne’s Gothic cathedral towers 140 feet above its visitors.

German masterpieces from the Haubrich collection. Josef Haubrich managed to keep his impressive collection of German Expressionist art out of Nazi hands (they considered it “decadent” art) and eventually gave it to the city. It includes works by the great Expressionists Max Beckmann, Otto Dix and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner.

Cologne’s most popular museum — a 10-minute riverfront walk from the cathedral — offers a different kind of decadence. The Chocolate Museum, cleverly billed as the “MMMuseum,” has three levels of displays that follow the cocoa bean from its origin to the finished product. Local historians, citing the “dumbing-down” of this generation of tourists, complain that this museum gets more visitors than all of Cologne’s other museums combined. Some visitors find that the museum

takes chocolate too seriously, and wish the free samples weren’t so meager — you’ll have to do your indulging in the fragrant gift shop.

After tantalizing your taste buds, it’s time to satisfy your sense of smell. Take a walk through the Old Town to 4711 Glockengasse, which claims to be the birthplace of the original Eau de Cologne (Germans call it “Kölnisch Wasser”). In 1810, the inventor stopped calling it medicine and started marketing it as a perfume, putting Cologne on the map. Locals claim Eau de Cologne was the first perfume based on alcohol (86 percent alcohol; the rest is herbal fragrances). The original “Cologne Water” runs in a fountain by the door.

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August brings a plethora of wine festival events to Germany

Fans of German wines have reason to rejoice. Over the next few weeks, chances to sample the goodness of the grape in the company of friends old and new comes about in the form of a head-spinning cascade of wine festivals. From fairly intimate affairs mostly attended by locals to massive Oktoberfest-style events attracting millions, a bit of insider information can make a visit more enjoyable.

Wiesbaden: Wiesbaden’s Rheingauer Weinwoche, or Rheingau Wine Week, offers visitors a step inside the world of Rieslings. From Aug. 11-20, 100 wine stands scattered around the brick-red Market Church will tempt guests with Germany’s most highly prized variety of white wine, alongside a lesser number of roses and reds. Musical entertainment from brass bands to hard rock is offered across three stages each evening.

Each year, one of Wiesbaden’s partner cities is invited to be the annual guest of honor; in 2023, the spotlight shines on San Sebastián, a city along Spain’s northern coast in the Basque region. At the red stand labeled number 1, festgoers will have the chance to taste wines made from grapes typical to the region, including tempranillo, viura, garnacha and albariño.

At stand 57, the ESWE utility company will dispense free water, and visitors using public transportation to reach the festival can pick up a voucher valid for a free drink at select wine stands. Online: tinyurl.com/5n7ktt29

Mainz: In contrast to many other city wine festivals, the Mainz Weinmarkt plays out in a stately park on the outskirts of town. Very near the Roemisches Theater train station, the Stadtpark hosts stages, an artist’s market and countless food and wine stands.

From Aug. 24-27 and again Aug. 31-Sept. 3, hundreds of



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Tasty German wines attract many revelers to a wide variety of wine festivals coming soon across Germany.

thousands of visitors will sample the wines of the Rheinhessen, Rheingau and Nahe growing regions. Those after a more sophisticated tasting experience might wish to make way to the Great Wine Capitals Wine Village, where wines from Lausanne, Switzerland, will be presented. On both weekends, a colorful program of music and activities is sure to amuse young visitors. Online: tinyurl.com/yaaaaw4p

Stuttgart: The Stuttgarter Weindorf, or Stuttgart Wine Village, perches prettily in the heart of Baden-Württemberg’s fine capital city. From Aug. 30-Sept. 10, the Market Square, Schiller Square and Kirchstrasse will play host to tens of thousands of enthusiastic oenophiles. This wine fest distinguishes itself from others with its uniquely Swabian folk decor — wooden huts embellished with grape vines and red checkered tablecloths.

Many of those in the know will be making their way to the stand run by the Jungwinzer, some 16 young and innovative winemakers from the Stuttgart region. Each vintner has a chance to man the stand on a rotating basis, meaning no two visits will never be the same. The stand is located in front of the terrace of the Alte Kanzlei.

The festivities officially kick off at 6:30 p.m. Aug. 30 with a ceremony featuring street music in the inner courtyard of the Alter Schloss. Another traditional activity takes place Sept. 5, when various politicians will be put to work stamping grapes with their feet, freshly washed of course. Those with kids might wish to visit on Sept. 3 or 10, when a program made up of face-painting, parades, sports and clowns will keep the young ones in thrall. Online: tinyurl.com/32f3hj6t

Bad Dürkheim: The name of world’s largest wine festival gives nothing away. The Wurstmarkt, or Sausage Market, is where the worlds of wine and volksfests collide. From Sept. 8-11 and again Sept. 15-18, this spa town along the German Wine Road is transformed into a pleasure zone catering to the broadest of tastes.

In the style of a giant agricultural fair back home, there’s a midway packed with loud, neon-lit rides capable of scaring even daredevils, games of luck and chance and meaty treats from the grill.

Those after a finer dining experience can make their way to an elegant white tent where a caterer serves Palatine specialties on porcelain plates with real cutlery.

One of the tents offers freshly tapped beers and live music on most evenings.

Events to make note of include a parade set for 5:30 p.m. Sept. 8, an autograph session with Kaiserslautern’s soccer team at 3 p.m. Sept. 12, and grandiose displays of fireworks at 9 p.m. Sept. 12 and 18. Online: bad-duerkheim.de



Karen Bradbury

WEEKEND: TRAVEL



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‘Attenzione, Pickpocket!’

TikTok watchdogs, travel writers offer their best crime-stopping tips to help tourists protect their belongings from thieves

BY TAMIA FOWLKES
The Washington Post

If you have scrolled through TikTok in July, there is a fair chance you’ve heard the rallying cry of Cittadini Non Distratti, an Italian organization whose name translates to “Undistracted Citizens.”

“Attenzione, Pickpocket!” a phrase popularized in online videos by 57-year-old Monica Poli, is a signal to unsuspecting tourists that someone is trying to take their things. Poli, a Venice local, spends her free time roaming the streets on the hunt for pickpockets. In the process, she has raised awareness for current and future tourists to protect their belongings.

Cittadini Non Distratti is one of several European anti-pickpocketing groups run by volunteers who film and call out thieves. The organization shares videos of criminals online and sends them to local police departments in an effort to combat what they see as a rampant spike in stealing after the coronavirus pandemic. Their videos show pickpockets covering their faces and running in the opposite direction, trying to make their way out of frame with snagged goods.

“We want to protect all of the tourists and let them know what is happening in Italy,” Poli told *The Washington Post* in an interview.

Her videos have spawned thousands of parodies and even a remixed TikTok song. (Poli says she is not a fan.) But she hopes more awareness can minimize harm and reduce tourists’ losses.

“If you are pickpocketed and you don’t go immediately to the police, the thief will stay free,” she said.

Who do pickpockets target?

Pickpockets look for distracted and unaware travelers.

“That’s not to say that anyone can be prey, but if you’re engrossed in your phone — you’re less attentive to what’s going on around you,” said Maria Pasquale, a Rome-based travel journalist and author. “I always carry my bag crossbody, never leave it sitting on or hanging off a chair out of my line of sight, and I am just that little more observant if I’m in a crowded area.”

These thieves are looking for “big-ticket valuables” on

display like cameras, designer bags, phones, expensive jewelry or an abundance of shopping bags. They are often seen in videos keeping a watchful eye on people’s pockets and bags and lingering behind someone as they walk.

Travel experts like Pasquale recommend a less-is-more approach to travel and sightseeing:

Money belts and belt bags can be worn under loose clothing and jackets. The small fabric pouches are less detectable than a large bag and can keep money and credit cards from slipping into the wrong hands. Cameras and phones can be connected to neck or wrist straps for easier access.

How do pickpockets distract tourists?

Videos of pickpockets shared by pages like Cittadini Non Distratti’s show some pickpockets using jackets draped over their arms to mask their hand movements. These individuals will get close to a tourist’s jacket pockets or bags and take their belongings.

Lazza Ramo, a 36-year-old pickpocket watcher in Milan, says tourists who store their luggage in overhead bins on trains are often targeted: “Once they reach their destination they find themselves without luggage, wallets, mobile phones.”

Other pickpockets will take bags off the ground or hanging from restaurant chairs while their target is distracted. Some work in teams, using one person to distract their target while the other attempts to take items.

“Look for a big hat or an open flowy shirt. They usually work in pairs or groups of three to four,” said Gillian Longworth McGuire, a Venice-based travel writer.

A 2006 article by Slate says teenagers are frequent suspects, due to lighter criminal consequences. Pregnant women, according to Poli, are also commonly identified as pickpockets in these incidents. She said they are more likely to receive shorter jail sentences than their male counterparts to accommodate their health needs.

Pickpockets will often bump into people, drop items in front of your walkway or spill food in an attempt to create chaos and distraction. These situations offer an opportunity to catch tourists off-guard.

Tourists should try to maintain distance from other

people and keep an eye on their personal items while crossing streets, walking up stairways or standing in lines.

How can I protect myself from pickpockets?

Hotel safes are a good place to store passports and other valuable goods during a trip abroad.

Tourists should limit the number of items they carry while out shopping, walking or sightseeing. If carrying a bag is necessary, use one that zips shut or closes securely.

Pasquale and McGuire recommend resources such as anti-theft bags with zippers, locks and cellphone necklaces that are sold at department stores or online.

Some popular products are the Uniqlo Nylon Crossbody Bag, Pacsafe Daysafe Anti-Theft Tech ECONYL Crossbody Bag, the Brevite Belt Bag and the Venture 4th RFID Safe Money Belt.

What do I do if I’ve been robbed?

Travel experts recommend using emergency services to address any threats to safety. Before traveling, tourists should identify the emergency services number in their region and save it in their phone’s contact. In Italy, Greece, Spain and the United Kingdom, travelers can call 112.

Hotel staff can guide tourists to safety resources and field requests to call the proper authorities. Additionally, travelers can contact the embassy of their native country for valuable resources and local assistance.

Before trying to shout or yell at a pickpocket, McGuire and Poli recommend getting the attention of authorities and people surrounding the area.

“I have never seen someone get violent when called out — they usually run. But obviously, someone should only do what they feel safe doing,” McGuire said.

Though Poli said pickpockets are usually not dangerous, in one instance, she was attacked by four women who were stealing from a tourist. The incident left her with mild neck injuries and a neck brace.

“It was four years ago,” she said. “They pushed me back, but I continued to do the same thing. I don’t care. You are in Italy. You must respect the tourists.”

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Going off the beaten track

Less crowded alternatives to major tourist traps well worth the detour

By NATALIE B. COMPTON
The Washington Post

On a sunny July morning in New York City, the line for the American Museum of Natural History flowed out the front door, down the steps and around the block. Once inside, visitors were packed elbow-to-elbow, stroller-to-stroller, all jostling to get a glimpse of the Hall of North American Mammals. It would not be worth it. I know this because I was in this crowd. I made the same mistake at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Van Gogh's cypresses aren't as majestic when you're only able to see them through the cell-phone screens of other visitors. As summer travel swells, concentrated crowds are making the most popular attractions miserable places to be. There is a time and place for tourist traps, but vacation time is too precious to be stewing in massive lines.

If you must see the Louvre, go knowing what you're getting yourself into. But if you're flexible, you can have a more relaxed time on a trip by choosing these quieter alternatives to major landmarks:

Skip the Pantheon for the Basilica of Sant'Agostino in Rome

Rome-based cookbook author and tour guide Katie Parla says this is not the summer to wing it in Italy, where the weather is hot and the crowds are huge.

"The kind of tourism that I enjoy — like fly by the seat of your pants, don't have any plans — it's really challenging to do that in the big cities now," she said. "There is no moment where the crowds are smaller and you can get in."

Parla says it's been a "nightmare" trying to get travelers into ticketed sites like the Colosseum. "Big tour companies buy up all the tickets," she said.

Earlier in July, the Italian Culture Ministry introduced a 5 euro ticket to enter the Pantheon, which has led to long lines and confusion. While the ancient Roman temple is a can't-miss for its architecture, paintings and notable burials, there's also plenty of art and history to peruse in lesser-known places.

"Rome has so much artwork in small churches," Parla said. "You can see works by Raphael and Caravaggio and Michelangelo with shockingly few crowds."

One such church is the Basilica di Sant'Agostino. Though you won't be able to visit Raphael's final resting place (he's buried at the Pantheon), you can see some of his frescoes along with a painting by Caravaggio for free.

Skip Kyoto's Fushimi Inari Shrine for Kasuga or Ise shrines

Since Japan reopened for travel last fall, the country's most popular sites, such as Tokyo Skytree and Kyoto's Arashiyama Bamboo Forest, have been swarmed with tourists. One particularly clogged social media magnet is Kyoto's Fushimi Inari Shrine; after a recent visit, travel writer Jake Emen described it as "swamped."

To appreciate stunning temples away from the masses, Naomi Mano, who runs the Tokyo-based travel company Luxurique, recommends nearby Nara, home to some of the country's oldest shrines. Kasuga Grand Shrine is similarly colored to Kyoto's Fushimi Inari Shrine's famous vibrant torii gates.

And because Nara is older than Kyoto, and also one of Japan's former capital cities, "it's just a lot more history to it," Mano said.

If you're feeling ambitious, Mano's more off-the-beaten-path option is the Ise Grand Shrine, a holy site estab-



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Avoid the chaos at the Parthenon: Go southeast of the Greek capital to Cape Sounion to see the Temple of Poseidon.



iStock

Kasuga Grand Shrine in Nara, Japan, is similarly colored to the Kyoto Fushimi Inari Shrine's famous vibrant torii gates. It's also a lot less crowded.

lished about 2,000 years ago. After appreciating the temples and surrounding forest, travelers and pilgrims are welcome to cleanse and purify themselves at the sacred Isuzugawa River.

"It's the top of all the shrines in all of Japan," Mano said. "It's where the emperor goes every year — it's a beautiful, very surreal destination."

Skip Edinburgh Castle for the Palace of Holyroodhouse

A trip to Scotland's capital may feel incomplete without a trip to Edinburgh Castle, one of the oldest forts in Europe. That may be why it's one of the most crowded sites on the Continent. Your best bet is to visit during off-peak hours, or skip it for another royal site.

Duncan Greenfield-Turk, managing director and chief travel designer for Global Travel Moments, recommends visiting Holyroodhouse, the official residence of the British monarch in Scotland. You can see the former chambers of Mary, Queen of Scots, and some of the most important jewels in the Royal Collection with far fewer crowds than at Edinburgh Castle.

Skip the Louvre in Paris for the Musée Carnavalet

Even with its timed ticketing system, the Louvre can feel like a zoo. For an alternative that's also an architectural and historic treasure, Kathleen Peddicord, who splits her time between Paris and Panama, recommends the Musée Carnavalet, a museum dedicated to the history of Paris.

The Carnavalet is made up of two mansions in the Marais district — the Hôtel Carnavalet and the former Hôtel Le Peletier de Saint Fargeau. It houses nearly 10,000 archaeological items, historic objects, photography and paintings that depict life in Paris. You'll find work from artists on display at the Louvre, such as 19th century painter Louis Bérard, and items owned by Marie Antoinette, Napoleon and Marcel Proust.

It's not just what's on display that's interesting, "it's also the rooms themselves that are worth seeing," Peddicord said in an email. And don't miss the gardens.

Skip the Acropolis in Athens for the Temple of Poseidon

Between extreme heat and wildfires, it's been a hot and dangerous summer in Greece. Earlier this month, the Acropolis in Athens shut down twice for several hours because of extreme temperatures. The monument's staff went on strike over dangerous conditions.

In addition, visitors face a new e-ticketing system debuting this month to control Acropolis crowds, which often clock in at more than 17,000 visitors a day. Avoid the chaotic scene and go southeast of the capital to Cape Sounion to see the Temple of Poseidon, said Emmanuel Burgio, founder of travel company Blue Parellel.

Dedicated to the god of the sea, Burgio says the ancient marble temple perched on a cliff's edge is one of the most important historical sites from Athens' Golden Age. If you check out the temple's reviews on Google, visitors report no wait times and no reservations needed.

Skip St. Mark's Square in Venice for Castello

Between a new "entrance fee" coming in 2024 and its #EnjoyRespectVenezia campaign, Venice is working to fight overtourism.

Parla recommends skipping the crowds at its most famous sites like the Piazza San Marco, or St. Mark's Square, and heading to the Castello neighborhood. There you'll find Le Stanze del Vetro, a gallery Parla loves that "always has incredible glass exhibitions." While you're in the area, stop by the Basilica of San Pietro di Castello, whose history dates back to the 7th century.

Duncan's alternative picks are another square, the Campo Santa Margherita in the Dorsoduro district and the open-air Rialto market. Both are guaranteed to be bustling with Venice locals.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Buerresheim Castle stands high on a rocky outcrop near Mayen, Germany. The kitchen garden (foreground) is not open to the public.

Standing firm throughout time

Germany's Buerresheim Castle lived in continuously for centuries, never taken in battle

BY MICHAEL ABRAMS
Stars and Stripes

Tucked away in the green forests of western Germany's Eifel region is Buerresheim Castle, an imposing fortress high on a rocky promontory that was built late in the 12th century.

Movie fans might recognize Buerresheim from "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade." Its exterior was used as the fictional Castle Brunwald, where Indy rescues his dad from the Nazis. The interiors were shot elsewhere.

Like many medieval castles in Germany, this one changed hands over the years, and one of these ownership transfers even led to a division of the castle in two.

Because the border of two archdioceses ran through the fortress, Buerresheim Castle was split into the Koelner Burg, owned by the archbishop of Cologne, and the Trierer Burg, belonging to his counterpart in Trier.

Later, the whole castle came into the possession of the noble von Breidbach family. Koelner Burg was abandoned and now is in ruins, but Trierer Burg was kept up and expanded. Today, it is a melange of towers, turrets, gables and mighty walls.

Despite the many owners, one thing sets Buerresheim Castle apart from many others in Germany: It never was taken or destroyed in battle.

Trierer Burg now consists of two buildings, the medieval fortress and the half-timbered Baroque residence. A tour is the only way to see inside, and visitors travel from the 15th century to the 20th century in the process.



The inner courtyard at Buerresheim with the half-timbered buildings of the 17th-century Baroque residence. Among the tour stops: a kitchen, hunting room and chapel.

They see the expansive old kitchen, which was the center of medieval life in the castle. The hunting room, like many others, is adorned with trophy antlers. The knights hall features two giant Flemish tapestries.

Nearby is the chapel. The glass discs in its windows are from the 13th century but were installed here in the 19th century. The tour ends in the Baroque amts-haus. In the ancestral hall is a gallery of family portraits of the castle's owners.

What makes Buerresheim so interesting is it was lived in continuously for centuries, and about 90% of the items displayed are original to their surround-

ings and were used by the inhabitants.

The last owner of the castle, Elisabeth von Westerholt-Gysenberg, lived there until she sold it in its entirety to the Prussian Rhineland Province in 1938. Following World War II, it fell to the state of Rheinland-Pfalz.

Visible in a large early 18th-century painting of the castle is a small town. This was Mayen, which still has a medieval feel, with narrow cobbled lanes, half-timbered buildings and an expansive market square.

It even has a castle, the Genoveva-burg. Built in 1280, it has, unlike Buerresheim, been destroyed many times.

On the QT

Directions: Use Schloss Buerresheim as the destination in navigation devices. The castle and Mayen are about 80 miles from Wiesbaden and about 60 miles from Spangdahlem.

Times: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Sunday and German holidays, Feb. 1 to March 14; 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Thursday through Sunday, March 15 to Oct. 31; and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Sunday and German holidays in November. Closed in December and January.

Last entrance is one hour before closing. Access to the inside of Buerresheim Castle is by tour only. The first tour starts at about 10:45 a.m. A guide booklet sold on site for 2.50 euros is worth buying. All tours are in German.

Costs: Admission is 5 euros for adults and 3 euros for children 7 and older. Parking at the castle is free. Expect to pay about 1.50 euros per hour for parking in Mayen.

Information: Online: kulturerbe-eifel-mosel.de/en/buerresheim-castle; mayen.de. Photography is not allowed on the tour.

Michael Abrams



The ruins of the Koelner Burg, one of the two former fortresses that make up Buerresheim. Koelner Burg was abandoned and is not able to be visited.



St. Clemens Church in Mayen, Germany, with its crooked steeple. Experts attribute the shape to construction errors.

Today, it hosts theater performances in the summer.

A curious sight in Mayen is the misshapen steeple of St. Clemens Church. Experts attribute its crookedness to construction errors that left it 5.5 feet off-balance.

But according to legend, when the devil was fooled by residents into helping build the church, he became angry and tried to tear down the steeple. He managed to get in only the twist seen today before the saint stopped him.

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WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Greek food lacks greatness in Naples

Hellenic fare at Magn' A Grecia in Vomero neighborhood without quintessential flavor punch the cuisine is known for

By ALISON BATH

Stars and Stripes

Gyros, moussaka and spanakopita are mainstays of Greek cuisine, so naturally they are served at Magn' A Grecia, a restaurant in the popular Vomero neighborhood of Naples, Italy.

Unfortunately, the Hellenic hits mostly missed the mark on a recent visit. Friendly and efficient service didn't make up for food that generally lacked the quintessential flavor punch that characterizes Greek cooking.

For example, the tzatziki served with many dishes was bereft of the requisite cucumber and garlic. That omission made the sauce a poor accompaniment for other dishes.

A companion and I chose our starters and main dishes from a menu offering a range of traditional Greek dishes but few surprises.

It included the usual gyros, souvlaki and fried potatoes with oregano. But other favorites, among them lemon soup, roasted lamb with orzo or potatoes and the pasta casserole with beef and bechamel known as pastitsio, were missing.

The menu is replete with appetizers but offers few main courses for vegetarians. Vegans, too, will find little from which to choose.

We started our meal with a generous portion of grilled halloumi cheese that arrived warm and was accompanied by a salad and tomatoes, cucumber and feta cheese on the side.

Unfortunately, the small pieces of bread served alongside were like focaccia. I would have preferred pita.

An appetizer featuring zucchini, eggplant and chickpea fritters was bland, relying on the disappointing tzatziki for flavor. It was a recurrent theme in our meal.

One addition to the fritter appetizer, a black-eyed pea salad with red and yellow peppers, was a pleasant surprise.

My first choice for an entree was the spanakopita, but I was informed the savory pastry with feta cheese, spinach, garlic, onion and dill was not offered that day.

So I opted for the only other vegetarian main dish on the menu, a blend of feta cheese and eggs wrapped in phyllo pastry called tiropita.

It was tasteless, although the phyllo was golden and crispy. I ate only half of one pastry.

My companion chose another appetizer, vegetables stuffed with rice, for her main dish,



PHOTOS BY ALISON BATH/Stars and Stripes

Magn' A Grecia in the Vomero neighborhood of Naples, Italy, offers outdoor dining along the street. Although wait times for a table are generally short, reservations are recommended on Friday and Saturday evenings.



Magn' A Grecia

Address: Via Raffaele Morghen 141 bis, Naples, Italy

Hours: 8 p.m.-midnight, Tuesday-Sunday; closed Monday. Reservations strongly recommended on Fridays and Saturdays.

Prices: 5-8 euros for most sides and appetizers; 8-20 euros for plates; 7.50-10 euros for desserts; and 3.50-20 euros for beer and wine.

Information: +39 081 1875 4386 (after 5 p.m.)

Alison Bath

although she would have preferred a vegetarian moussaka.

The dish traditionally is made with eggplant, potatoes, a meaty tomato sauce and bechamel, but some vegetarian versions are made with lentils or other ingredients.

The stuffed vegetables in-



Appetizers served on a recent visit included grilled halloumi cheese with cucumbers, tomatoes and feta cheese.

cluded two pieces of zucchini, a single mushroom cap and a large tomato, each filled with a mixture that seemed as if it had been made from instant rice and topped with cheese.

Again, the dish lacked gusto and the rice was underdone, but the vegetables were cooked nicely.

The restaurant offers wine by the glass or carafe and a small selection of beer. If you've got a sweet tooth, ask the waiter for the dessert of the day selection.



Zucchini, eggplant and chickpea fritters were one of the daily appetizers. Specials are priced from 8 to 20 euros.

We didn't try dessert during our meal.

On a recent Sunday evening, customer turnover was brisk and it didn't appear diners had to wait for a table. But reservations are recommended for Friday and Saturday evenings.

Magn' A Grecia's name translates to "Great Greece." Although the restaurant may scratch the itch for this type of food for some, it's far from great.

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One of the few vegetarian entrees is tiropita, which consists of feta cheese and eggs wrapped in crispy phyllo dough.



The stuffed vegetables with rice includes zucchini, a mushroom cap and a tomato.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Deadly beauty

Japan's Mount Asama is an active volcano, but hikers don't mind

By JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

Mount Asama is one of Japan's most active volcanoes, and its murderous 18th century eruption is a tragic page in the nation's history.

The 8,425-foot mountain killed more than 1,500 people on Aug. 5, 1783, when a pyroclastic flow — a fast-moving deluge of ash, lava and hot gases — blew out of Asama and started a mud flow that raced downslope into the Agatsuma River and continued for 125 miles.

The event is remembered as the Burning of Asama in Tenmei and probably contributed to the Great Tenmei Famine. Downstream, bodies were pulled from the muck and buried. Twenty-five survivors were carried with the mud as far as 25 miles from the volcano.

Today, Asama slumbers fitfully. It last erupted in August 2019, a monthlong fit of tremors and an ash plume that rose more than a mile high. From time to time the crater emits noxious gas, and sometimes at night an eerie incandescent glow illuminates the summit.

Since March 15, the mountain has been under a level 2 advisory from the Japan Meteorological Agency, meaning no one may come closer than 2 kilometers — 1¼ miles — from the summit. The mountain is expanding in places, however indiscernible to the naked eye, and the number of shallow, volcanic tremors has recently increased.

Still, the mountain is a popular hiking destination. Scores of people, including groups of seniors and children, filled a 7-mile loop trail on a Saturday in late July.

From Yokota Air Base in west-



PHOTOS BY JOSEPH DITZLER/Stars and Stripes

Morning clouds cling to the summit of Mount Asama, Japan, viewed from Mount Jakotsu on July 29. The narrow ridge line at Jakotsu is prone to rock falls, so hikers are warned to move quickly if an eruption seems imminent.

ern Tokyo, the trip to the trailhead is just over two hours on the expressways and costs about \$60 in tolls. A no-frills hike that skipped visits to the nearby volcano museum, onsens and shrine took just over seven hours.

A “lollipop” trail, one of several paths that reach the mountain, starts at the Takamine Kogen Hotel and visitor center at Takamine Kogen atop a twisty, two-lane mountain highway. Parking is free at the visitor center; come early for an open spot.

Morning mist floats through the forest of conifers until the trail breaks into the open with a vista of Asama and the long, high ridge to the north where the loop trail leads. Turn left to follow the trail to the ridgetop and several overlooks for a changing view of Asama and the neighboring cliffs as the sun and rising mist play on the mountains.

The area is part of Joshin-etsu Kogen National Park and the

shallow valley between the ridge and volcano rivals any view in Colorado or California. East of the volcano is Onioshidashi Volcanic Park, which preserves the landscape left behind by that 1783 disaster.

The loop trail is a challenging hike, but some stretches of it are downright easygoing. Root- and rock-infested sections give way to hardpacked earth punctuated with the occasional stone. Undergrowth yields to an open forest and the slant of morning light offers fine photographic potential.

The ridge trail is well marked and passes two peaks, Mount Kurofu and Mount Jakotsu. At Jakotsu, however, its character shifts from easy striding to rock clambering. Signs warn hikers to move quickly off this section if they “sense” an eruption, because this narrow ridge line is prone to rock falls. The looming

SEE ASAMA ON PAGE 25



Trails are well-marked around Mount Asama.

2023 READERSHIP SURVEY

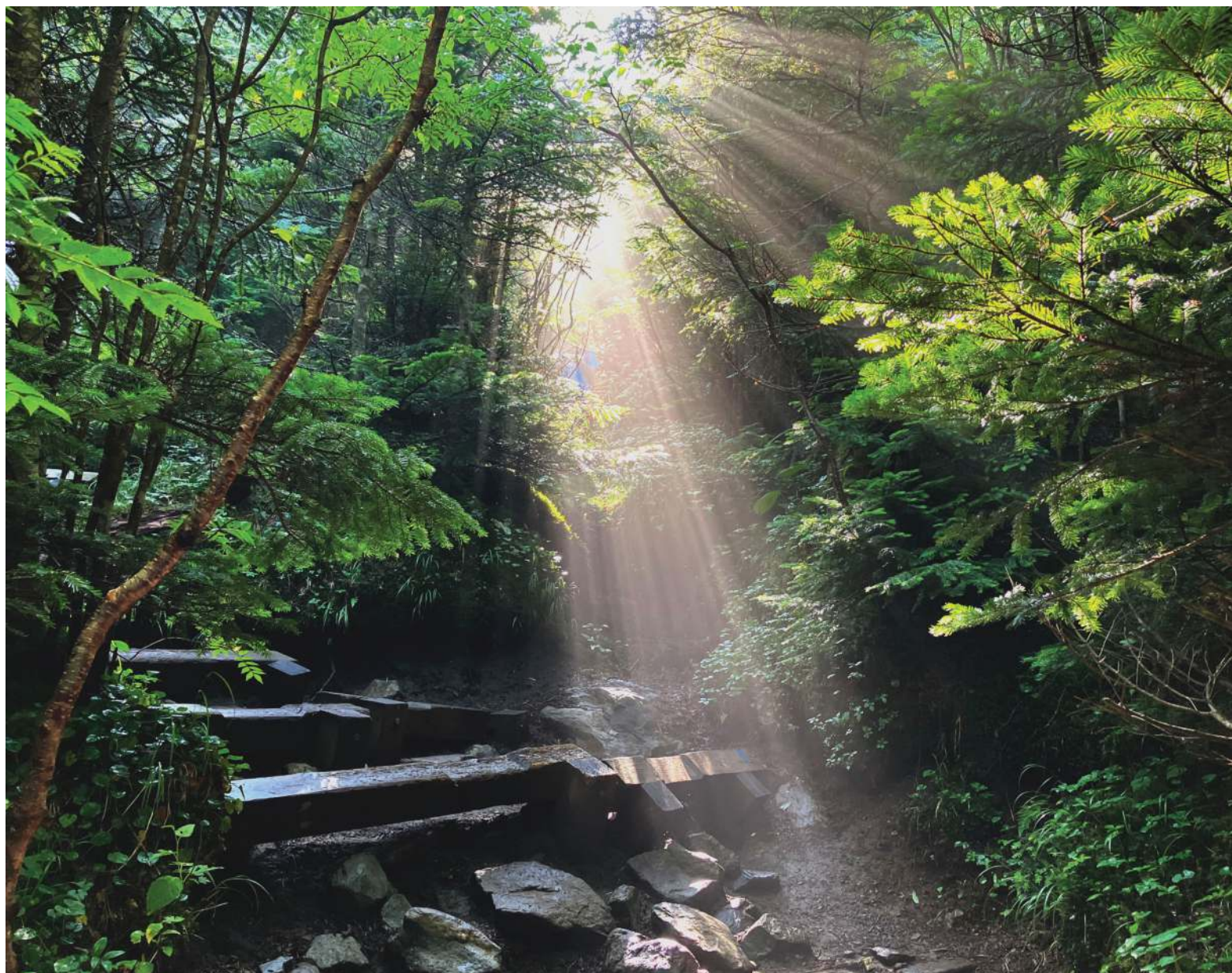
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WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



Orange cup fungi grow along the trail to Mount Asama.

On the QT

Directions: Set your GPS for Takamine Kogen Visitor Center, a two-hour drive from Yokota Air Base via the Kanetsu and Joshinetsu expressways. Parking is available at the center. The trailhead is across the street on the mountain highway between the center and an adjacent hotel.

Times: Dawn to dusk.

Costs: 8,200 yen, or about \$60, in tolls. The visitor center serves lunches and nearby onsens will ease those hiking muscles. Rail and bus service will get you there, too.

Food: Lunch is served at the Takamine Kogen Hotel and the adjacent visitor's center.

Information: Online: asama2000.com/green

Joseph Ditzler

Morning mist beckons hikers along the trail to Mount Asama on July 29. The area's natural beauty is obvious in forests and at viewpoints.

PHOTOS BY JOSEPH DITZLER/Stars and Stripes

Asama: Summit approaches closed, but other pleasant paths beckon

FROM PAGE 24

face of Asama evokes visions of incoming projectiles hurled in anger.

Eventually, the trail finds another junction and drops off the ridge to the valley floor at the foot of Asama, where the open landscape and intermittent vegetation will be familiar to any native of the Pacific Northwest. This is as close to the summit as hikers may get and as intimate a view.

The trail continues along the base, into a mixed conifer and deciduous forest to another trail junction. A left turn leads to Mount Maekake, one of two "summits" atop the volcanic cone and the one normally considered safe to visit. Instead, cables were

strung across the trail, and signs in Japanese and English warn hikers to go no farther.

Instead, continue going straight and enjoy the relative ease of this charming footpath. Take a right turn at the Yunodaira branch and head through bamboo grass and groves of trees, past the rocky summits on your left, and begin the slog uphill toward Kurofu to close the loop.

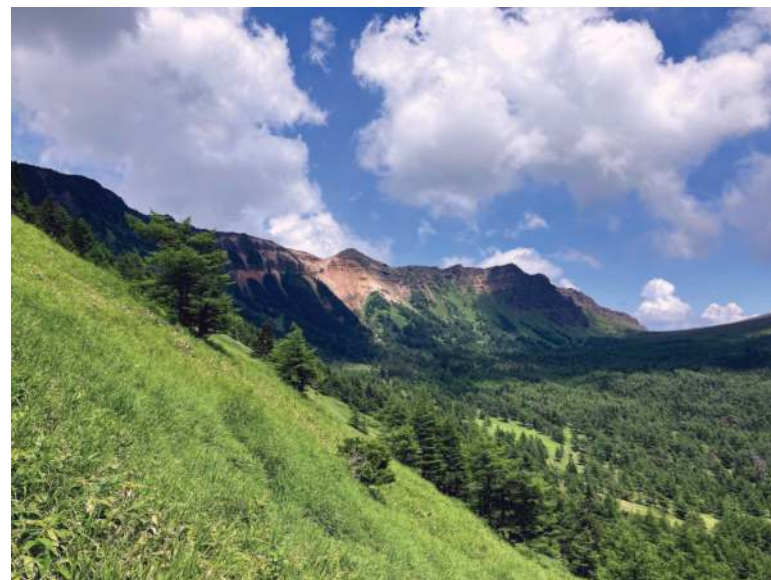
This section is out in the open, and though the temperature never exceeded 80 degrees at this altitude, the pitiless mid-afternoon sun called for a break or two and constant hydration. The slope at some points is in-your-face steep. This being Japan, however, a caretaker with

shears stood at the highest sections clearing the grass and nettles crowding the trail.

Atop the ridge, at the Tominoatama trail intersection, do yourself a favor and opt for the shorter Naka return course. It's a lot easier on the knees even though it, too, has a couple of steep, rocky parts that resemble empty streambeds more than they do footpaths.

Throughout the day, a steady flow of hikers grew stronger, evincing a disregard for the apparent hazard. Remember, if you go, the unpredictable volcano at any time may belch a cloud of deadly gas, choking ash or ballistic rock.

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A bold climb to the ridgetop facing Mount Asama qualifies this 7-mile hike as "challenging." Much drinking water is encouraged.

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WEEKEND: BOOKS



PHILIP CHEUNG/For The Washington Post

"I don't know who I'd be if I wasn't writing," Dean Koontz, 77, says. Koontz is the author of more than 110 books and released his latest, "After Death," in July.

Inside the mind of suspense master Koontz

Prolific author, 77, continues 2-books-a-year pace with this summer's 'After Death,' about a modern-day Lazarus

BY KAREN HELLER
The Washington Post

Few American writers sell as many books, live better or worry more than Dean Koontz.

"There are days that you think, 'I can't do this anymore,'" says Koontz, 77, author of more than 110 books that have sold more than 500 million copies in 38 languages. "Of all the writers I've ever known, I have more self-doubt. I'm eaten by it all the time."

Fears? He has a few.

Koontz writes terrifying stories of murder and mayhem, yet is incapable of watching a gory movie. He hasn't flown for 50 years after a flight he was on encountered serious turbulence and a nun on board proclaimed, "We're all going to die." He's not big on boats, either, after an anniversary cruise coincided with a hurricane. Mostly, Koontz stays put in Orange County, Calif. Easier, safer.

He installed a towering fence, which partially obstructs the view, to protect his

golden retriever Elsa from rattlesnakes. His 12,000-square-foot art-filled manse features the latest innovations to guard against wildfires. Still, every night Koontz places a freshly printed copy of whatever manuscript he's working on in the fridge — just in case of a conflagration.

So, write what you know.

Koontz is billed as the "international bestselling master of suspense," though he eschews labels and writes in multiple genres — supernatural, science fiction, young adult, manga, dog. Frequently, his books fuse several and are dusted with humor.

"You can't tie him down," his friend and fellow bestselling author Jonathan Kellerman says. "He just works all the time. He has a lot of anxiety but manages to channel it into fiction."

Ten hours a day, six days a week — more nearing the end of each book, "when momentum carries me like a leaf on a flood."

He revises constantly, an average of 20

times before he proceeds to the next page.

"When the writing is working, nothing stops me," he says. He worked 36 hours straight — twice — creating "Watchers," one of his most beloved books, first published in 1987. Due to stress and his former regimen of 13 Diet Cokes a day while writing, he developed a bleeding ulcer a decade ago and almost died. Koontz prohibits distractions. He doesn't read emails — his assistant or his wife, Gerda, print them out — and won't open a browser, even to check facts or the news.

"I never go online. Never. I don't trust myself," he says. "I know I'm a potential obsessive, and I don't want to waste time." Head down, nose to keyboard.

Koontz is warm, genial and prone to astonishing candor. Over lunch and a \$135 bottle of his favorite Caymus Cabernet, he weeps several times recalling his harsh childhood in rural Pennsylvania, with a father of such spectacular cruelty that he sounds hatched from a Koontz novel, and recounts how Gerda, his high school

sweetheart and wife of 56 years, saved him.

In the early days of their marriage, Koontz taught high school and worked in an anti-poverty program. He loved the students but was far from happy with the administrators. He sold a few science fiction short stories and novels published in paperback. Being a novelist was the long-held dream. Though he was raised in a house without books, writing became a refuge from the age of 8, when he would create stories and sell them to relatives for a nickel. Gerda made him a deal: write for five years and I'll support you. She told him, "If you can't make it in five years, you never will make it." He did, beating her deadline.

Koontz belongs to a small anomalous group of wildly popular, prolific authors who also regularly garner positive reviews. (Stephen King is another.) His books tend to include propulsive plots,

SEE KOONTZ ON PAGE 27

WEEKEND: BOOKS

Koontz: Author crafted his homes 'like stories'

FROM PAGE 26

often everyday heroes, true love and happy endings, though his childhood promised nothing of the sort.

"Dean believes — and I think this is reflected in his work — that good will prevail, and that kindness is a virtue worthy of celebration, even when circumstances seem dire," says Jessica Tribble Wells, executive editor of Amazon Publishing.

He dwells in that rarefied air of King, John Grisham and James Patterson, publishing blockbusters with legions of fans who inhale everything they write. Though he rarely travels, Koontz conducts virtual events, writes a monthly newsletter and responds often to ardent readers.

"All his characters are on an adventure. They want a normal life but get pulled into these situations. I believe Dean lives his books," says Kathie Salembier, 72, a retired bookkeeper in Fair Haven, Mich., who has mailed fan letters to only three luminaries: Elvis, Eminem and Koontz. The novelist responded three times. "My prized possessions," Salembier says.

When Koontz decided to change publishers in 2019, he received eight offers, all but one guaranteeing mid-seven-figure advances for each book. Many houses submitted marketing plans of one to three pages, he says, but Amazon Publishing's "must have been some 40 pages."

"What Dean wants is as many readers as possible," says Richard Pine, Koontz's co-agent along with Kimberly Witherspoon. "One of the things that got me reading his books is that he's such a better writer than he sort of needed to be." Koontz is withering about past editors who didn't believe in his promise.

Koontz writes two books each year. "The House at the End of the World" was released in January; "After Death" arrived in July. "At my age, it's kind of astonishing," he says.

Koontz doesn't do outlines. He feels they're constraining. He starts with characters, a premise, perhaps a scene or two. "Life Expectancy," one of his favorites, opens with a deranged, chain-smoking, aerialist-abhorring menacing clown named Beezo in a 1970s maternity waiting room.

"I give the characters free

will," he says. "The novel becomes organic and unpredictable and much more interesting to me."

When Koontz first discovered John D. MacDonald, who remains among his favorite authors, he devoured 34 books in 30 days. Koontz doesn't dwell on his ability to conjure up fresh stories.

"I'm always afraid that if I think about it too much, it will all stop," he says. Tribble Wells writes, in an email: "Dean is a rarity among writers: I've never known him to have writer's block."

Also, Koontz says, "I don't know who I'd be if I wasn't writing." It's the road map. He craves structure.

He and Gerda, who have no children, live in a gob-smacking home graced with a vast collection of art deco painting and furniture, Chinese art (mostly from the Han, Sung and Tang dynasties), Japanese sculptures and screens from the Meiji period and 10 canvases by contemporary painter Kenton Nelson, his style reminiscent of Works Progress Administration social realism. This house is a serious downsize from their previous 29,000-square-foot estate in Newport Beach, Calif., which took 10 years and three different archi-

itects to construct. He refers to the environment the couple has created as "Koontzland."

The Irvine house is maintained by a staff of five: three housekeepers, a house manager and an assis-

tant house manager. The garage, like everything else, is immaculate, regularly painted to remove all nicks and smudges. There's a spa, sauna and steam shower that he never uses, "but it relaxes me to look at it."

Koontz had the indoor pool (there's an outdoor one as well) removed to create a custom wood-paneled, exquisitely lit, Architectural Digest-worthy athenaeum for his collection of 20,000 books by other authors, mostly first editions. It was renovated in seven months during the pandemic, at substantial cost, with the exquisite custom cabinetry found throughout the home. He removed the gym to house a second library with nearly 9,000 unique editions of his own novels.

This is Koontz's temporary home.



PHOTOS BY PHILIP CHEUNG/For The Washington Post

Dean Koontz had the indoor pool of his 12,000-square-foot Irvine, Calif., house removed and installed a custom library of his 20,000 books by other authors, many of them first editions. In the works is another home nearby that has a better flow and a bigger yard for his golden retriever Elsa.

We take a brief drive in his Lincoln up the road in the same gated compound to visit the other house, where a fleet of tradespeople are working. The interior and exterior have been stripped to the studs. What is wrong with his current home? "Flow." Also, not enough yard for Elsa. They hope to have the renovation completed in two years, perhaps sooner.

"His other art, along with writing, is crafting these structures like stories. It's a very similar impulse," Koontz's co-agent Pine says. "The world of writing, and of design, along with Gerda and the dogs, are what really give him joy and focus him. For someone who doesn't want to leave, you might as well build a place that you don't want to leave."

It is an understatement to call Koontz and Gerda dog owners. His dust-jacket photos invariably include a photo of his dog. His books feature them. His author bio notes that he lives with Elsa and "the enduring spirits of their goldens Trixie and Anna."

Commemorative plaques for both golden retrievers are featured in a backyard meditation area, not unlike Graceland. The urns containing their cremains reside on a fireplace mantle in the couple's bedroom. Koontz and Gerda hope that, when their time comes, their ashes will be buried with them. The couple eats out regularly, patronizing only restaurants that allow dogs, and where Elsa is greeted like a rock star.

In 2009, Koontz published "A Big Little Life," about Trixie. Like many dog memoirs, it is also a memoir of its author, a vessel for his life story.



Commemorative plaques of Koontz's beloved deceased golden retrievers sit in a backyard meditation area. Their ashes reside in urns in Koontz's and his wife's bedroom.

Koontz shares plenty in that book. That he irons his underwear. That he isn't particularly fond of most other writers: "I found this community as a whole to be solipsistic and narcissistic and irrational." That the experiences of getting his books adapted to the screen have been mostly unrewarding, "because they're all blithering idiots in Hollywood." That editors doubted his ability to be a bestselling author. That he repeatedly proved them wrong.

That he lived in a house without an indoor bathroom until age 11. That his father was a difficult, violent, womanizing alcoholic, holding 34 jobs in 44 years. That life, despite his desire to search for goodness, can be punishing and unfair given that his mother, "a wonderful person," died at age 53 while his father, "who never met a vice he didn't like," lived

three decades longer.

Over a languorous lunch, Koontz shares more, including the time that his father pulled a knife on him when the writer was in his 40s.

"A mess of a person," Koontz says, "I took care of him financially but wouldn't let him live with us" for the final 14 years of his life.

Koontz remains amazed that his life turned out as well as it did. "I was the son of the town drunk. Where did the storytelling come from?"

He remains an optimist. In his books, good invariably triumphs. He says, "It's been my life experience, and it's the way I want life to be."

Koontz designed a better, bigger life than his childhood suggested.

He wrote himself a better story. More than 110 of them.

WEEKEND: MUSIC



CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP

From left: Danny Wagner, Josh Kiszka, Jake Kiszka and Sam Kiszka of the band Greta Van Fleet pose before the “Metallica Presents: The Helping Hands Concert,” in Los Angeles in 2022. Greta Van Fleet’s third album, the Dave Cobb-produced “Starcatcher,” was released July 21.

Catching stars and growing up

Greta Van Fleet return with an album they say ‘represents boys becoming men’

BY MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

Greta Van Fleet’s new album lists 10 tracks, but it’s really 9½. Halfway through, there’s a song fragment that runs barely past a minute. It’s like a nugget of distilled Greta Van Fleet.

“Runway Blues” has the bluster of the Rolling Stones, the driving force of Led Zeppelin, a dash of Humble Pie and some John Lennon solo work. It was captured spontaneously as the band came back from dinner and just started jamming.

“We just had a bit too much wine and I just sort of cracked into a riff and everybody kind of jumped on instruments,” says guitarist Jake Kiszka. “It’s really basic and it’s just a great example of what can be accomplished with pure attitude.”

The quartet show plenty of rock star attitude on “Starcatcher,” the Michigan-bred rockers’ third album. Their early sound and classic rock look was reminiscent of Zeppelin but has grown artistically, moving into

prog and psychedelic rock.

“‘Starcatcher’ represents boys becoming men in a way,” says Kiszka, 27, whose bandmates include twin brother and singer Josh, younger brother Sam on keys and bass, and family friend Danny Wagner on drums.

The band recorded much of the album in Nashville’s historic RCA Studios, where Elvis Presley, Dolly Parton and Waylon Jennings recorded.

“We learned from the old masters, the giants that walked the Earth,” says Sam Kiszka. “A lot of the record is take No. 1 — the conception of the idea.”

The first sprawling, ’60s-vibing single “Meeting the Master” made the top 40 of Billboard’s Hot Rock & Alternative Songs chart, hit No. 4 on Hard Rock Songs and was No. 12 on the Mainstream Rock Airplay chart.

“This is definitely some of my favorite material and some of my favorite songs that we’ve written together,” says Sam Kiszka. “I think that our ability to work with each other just keeps becoming more and more elevated, and that keeps evolving.”

“Sacred the Thread” was one of the first songs the bandmates agreed had to be on the record and which has hit No. 25 on the Hot Hard Rock Songs chart. The seeds were first planted in 2016, with Sam supplying the original chords for the chorus and Josh a melody. It kicked around in various forms over the years.

“I always find that the longer the song is that we’ve got sitting on a shelf, the better it turns out in the end,” says Jake Kiszka.

The final product is a soaring, cinematic anthem, with Josh Kiszka wailing some of his best lyrics to date: “I’ve caught the wind in a kite of dreams / In a flight of seams / Like freedom sewn / And the people roar/And the people soar.”

Their last album, “The Battle at Garden’s Gate,” had more elaborate arrangements, layers and chord progressions, lots of instrumental sections and strings under the guidance of super-producer Greg Kurstin.

This time Dave Cobb produced — as he has done for Chris Sta-

Greta Van Fleet

Starcatcher (Lava/Republic Records)

“Starcatcher” is the third studio from Greta Van Fleet, and the latest confirmation that the band’s love affair with the bombast of ’70s-era rock has not grown stagnant. We’ve come to know Greta Van Fleet from their early and obvious Led Zeppelin comparisons to the Grammy-winning ground they now lay claim to. We now accept this is not merely a trick of mimicry. They’ve grown.

“Starcatcher” offers lofty, searing songs right out of the gate. “Fate of the Faithful” is in immediate overdrive, and “Waited All Your Life” is full of powerful fits and starts, led by Josh Kiszka’s soaring vocals. “You’ve come from so far away! / And do you intend to stay? / Swim to shore / If this is what you’re looking for,” Kiszka belts out, his voice the additional instrument that moves the needle for the band’s sound.

His brother, bassist Sam Kiszka, said in a press release that the album represents “going back to our roots while moving forward at the same time.” They wanted something raw around the edges and found it. The growling guitar work blends nicely with the fantastical themes and lyrics.

It’s one thing to hear a musician’s work, their offering. It’s quite another to experience a band’s collective vision — in GVF’s case, that means building a sonic universe rooted in fantasy. The band continues to invite us to absorb the evolution of that vision.

— Ron Harris
Associated Press

SEE GRETA ON PAGE 29

WEEKEND: MUSIC

Greta: Band says new album is a 'love letter to minimalism'

FROM PAGE 28

pleton and Brandi Carlile — and he took the guys back to their roots as a live band, recording all the time to capture lightning in a bottle.

"Some of the objectives on 'Starcatcher' was to really focus on the individual instruments being played as opposed to something like 'The Battle at Garden's Gate,' the previous record, which I think is very, very layered," says Jake Kiszka.

"So this is a sort of a love letter to minimalism in a way. And I think it's also the record that we wanted to make at this particular time right after the pandemic, to sort of, like, juice the room up a little."

That's not to mean Greta Van Fleet, whose name was inspired by the octogenarian bluegrass musician Gretchen Van Fleet, threw away any equipment. In fact, they experimented with phaser pedals, alternate tunings and accessories like a B-Bender.

"It's just about texture, texture, texture — moving you dramatically to a different world, not only through the feeling or the emotion of what's going on musically, but also the sounds," says Sam Kiszka.

Members of the band moved to Nashville at the start of the global shutdown and that has led in part to Josh Kiszka



AMY HARRIS/AP

Daniel Wagner of Greta Van Fleet performs at the Bunbury Music Festival on June 1, 2019, in Cincinnati. The band is on a world tour in support of "Starcatcher."

publicly coming out, writing in an Instagram post last month that it is "imperative that I speak my truth for not only myself, but in hopes to change hearts, minds, and laws in Tennessee and beyond." The singer declined to talk about his decision to The Associated Press.

Kiszka's post came after Tennessee legislators passed a bill attempting to ban drag shows on public property where minors could be present, as well as another signed in March that bans gender-affirming healthcare for children.

The band's Starcatcher World Tour kicked off July 24 in Nashville at the Bridgestone Arena, with stops at Madison Square Garden in New York, The Kia Forum in Los Angeles, TD Garden in

Boston and Allstate Arena in Chicago.

"It'll be really fun to play more of this record live because the way that these songs are structured, there's a lot of room for improvisation," says Jake Kiszka. "It's very attitude-based. And so we get to take people on a whole new journey."

One song that may spark some intra-band debate playing live is "Runway Blues," that weird song fragment. Josh Kiszka has never been a fan and he didn't want it to grow into a full song, even though his brothers loved it.

"We really pushed for the entire thing to be on the record. But Josh, he just hates it too much," Sam says.

Jake sighs, laughingly: "This is a democracy, unfortunately."

'Barbie' soundtrack delivers a dreamhouse of Kenergy, ballads

BY JIM POLLOCK
Associated Press

The Barbie industrial complex has detonated, coating the planet in pink, sparkly fallout. For the blockbuster's soundtrack, "Barbie The Album," film director Greta Gerwig and music producer Mark Ronson corralled a set of huge artists at the top of their games and have come away with a raucous, joyous and, occasionally, touching compilation.

The soundtrack works because the contributors understood the assignment. Collectively, they deliver a dreamhouse of songs that are each at least a little better than they have to be. The tracks succeed both as cinematic elements and as standalone songs. The result is a worthy, danceable bookend to the classic "Saturday Night Fever" soundtrack of a generation before.

Gerwig has now delivered small, medium, large and stratospheric films with excellent soundtracks.

Her commitment to quirky rock songs and contemporary classical spans, with this latest endeavor, a whole slew of disco, hip-hop, K-pop, and a half-dozen other genres meld together into an impressively coherent package.

Lizzo gets the dance party started with the soundtrack's opener, "Pink," a bouncy confection that might be the most conventional movie song on the album. The artist

sells it with her characteristic smiling effervescence.

Dua Lipa's "Dance the Night" throws her megahit "Levitate" in the blender with strings reminiscent of golden-era Bee Gees and comes out with a modern disco classic. Ronson's production is razor-sharp and Lipa marches straight in with a casual self-assurance that deftly set the tone for the film in the early trailers.

The brand architects at Mattel must have suffered a few sleepless nights after tapping Nicki Minaj and Ice Spice for the next track, a reimagining of Aqua's "Barbie Girl." The song is (openly) a little profane and (slyly) a little raunchy, but the collaborators take the edge off with humor and a sense of fun.

Ken actor Ryan Gosling goes all in on "I'm Just Ken" with a hilariously earnest performance that somehow spans the arena rock of Journey and Broadway decadence of Andrew Lloyd Webber.

On "What Was I Made For?," Billie Eilish delivers a soft and surprisingly touching piano, um, Barb-ballad. Like "Hopelessly Devoted to You" in "Grease," Eilish and brother/producer Finneas get the existential-crisis moment just right by going simple and raw. Eilish has never sounded better.

The album closes with a surprise cover of the Indigo Girls' fan-favorite "Closer to Fine." Brandi Carlile and her wife, Cathe-



rine, stay respectful of the source material, delivering a lighter and more open interpretation that complements the original version.

There is plenty more good music within the 18 tracks. Sam Smith goes techno-glam on "Man I Am." Charli XCX delivers an instant road-trip staple with the propulsive "Speed Drive." Tame Impala provide a trippy dreampop interlude with "Journey to the Real World." Dominic Fike warms it up with Malibu-infused sunshine on "Hey Blondie."

It would be a reach to frame a project with this scope and budget as an underdog, but Ronson and Gerwig have executed a small miracle creating an eclectic sprawl of a soundtrack that can be enjoyed from start to finish.

Barbie has inspired millions of hours of pretend play over the decades. The artists involved have evidently devoted real energy to celebrate this jewel of childhood.

LINER NOTES

By Colin McGuire



Billboard Hot 100 No. 1: 'Seven,' Jung Kook feat. Latto

It's always fun to watch kids turn to adults in the music biz. One day, you're smiling, lip-synching to some innocent jingle about puppy love. The next, you drop a Latto collab where you end each chorus with the line, "I'll be f--- you right." Such is the case with BTS heartthrob Jung Kook, whose first foray into solo stardom comes at the perfect time to make a late play for Song of the Summer. Gone is the boy band innocence that made his group an international powerhouse; in is an edgier dose of cookie cutter pop that illustrates the American difference between bidding "Bye, Bye, Bye," before saying hello to a special "Señorita."

The best part is that it works: Any fan of pop can attest to the cold hard fact that the weekday-as-a-hook trope never fails (shout out to anyone who remembers Craig David's infectious "7 Days" from all the way back in 2000!). Jung takes that blueprint even further here, using all seven days as the core of the chorus before getting to that thing he wants you to know he'll do right. Asserting that over an up-tempo, European garage groove gives the track the energy it needs to succeed. Latto, as expected, adds even more attitude to the song as she drops a verse aided by an interesting tiny change in feel that gives the bridge a welcome soul.

It's all so sexy, mildly explicit, and above all, an announcement that the BTS crooner isn't a teenager anymore (to be fair, he actually hasn't been for a while — the guy will turn 26 in September). Still, Jung understands the universal language of what it takes to make a hit, no matter the age, and he's done it here with a solid first step into the batter's box. If nothing else, it'll have you humming the days of the week in your sleep. And for this time of year, when hot nights turn into sunny days ... only to turn back into hot nights without notice, there's value in remembering which one of those days it is.

With "Seven," Jung promises that as long as it ends in the letter "y," the party — and the lovin' — won't end.



EVAN AGOSTINI, INVISION/AP

South Korean singer Jung Kook, from the K-pop band BTS, performs solo on ABC's "Good Morning America" on July 14. Jung Kook is making a late play for Song of the Summer with "Seven."

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

From flaw to coveted facial feature

Freckles go from being a source of teasing to a beauty trend, partially spurred by the body-positivity movement

BY ASHLEY FETTERS MALOY
The Washington Post

When Hailey Buchanan was a little kid in the 2000s, other kids at school teased her for having freckles. She hated it. She came to hate the freckles themselves.

Then, as we all do, Buchanan, 23, grew up; she became an aesthetician and opened her own beauty studio in Puyallup, Wash., called Face Yourself Beauty. And perhaps you can imagine how she felt when she began to see — first on TikTok and Instagram, then, this year, in her own studio — women with spotless, even doll-like, complexions determined to get freckles. Years ago they were so undesirable as to draw taunts. “Now,” she says with an incredulous laugh, “it’s, like, the trend.”

Earlier this year, Buchanan added semi-permanent fake freckles to her menu of services. The freckles are similar in application to that of the eyebrow-tattooing procedure known as “microblading,” and can last up to three years before fading. This summer, Buchanan has done the procedure — which can take more than an hour and costs up to \$225 — for about two clients every week.

America has done a 180 on freckles. Freckle filters started to pop up on Snapchat and Instagram around 2019, adding the tiny sun-dappled dots to a photo subject’s image with the help of machine learning. Since then, technology aimed at adding faux freckles on the actual face has proliferated, in both studios like Buchanan’s and in American beauty-retail chains. When you search “freckle” on Ulta’s website, the results are a surreal mix of “dark spot clearing” serums and freckle-creation tools. (In the latter group: the Lime Crime Freckle Pen, the Nabla Freckle Maker and a tiny pointed detail brush with a perfectly freckle-sized tip.) And Freck, the self-identified original freckle-pen product introduced in 2017, has become the best-known name in the faux-freckle game, arriving in Sephora stores in 2021.

In a relatively short time, in other words, freckles have transformed from an imperfection to an acceptable trait to, now, a booming cosmetic industry. In part, that’s because attitudes — toward bodies, toward skin, toward certain so-called “flaws” — have changed. It’s also because, despite all that, beauty as a business hasn’t changed; it continues to decide and decree what is beautiful, then profit from con-



iStock

Americans are no longer trying to hide their freckles. Instead, some are actually buying products or using social media filters to give them faux freckles.

sumers’ desire to have it.

Freckles have had a bad reputation for pretty much ever, according to Susan Stewart, a Scottish librarian and the author of “Painted Faces: A Colourful History of Cosmetics.” In the 17th century, she notes, “they were considered the mark of the devil.” On a more practical level, too, freckles indicated that a person had been exposed to the sun — suggestive of working outside.

“If you had a pale face, you were probably upper class, elite,” Stewart says, “so that’s where makeup came in. White makeup, to cover up [freckles and create] their sort of ideal complexion: pale with a hint of rosy cheeks.”

So for much of history, people have been trying to get rid of their freckles. Medieval Arabic texts indicate that bitter almond was sometimes used to fade freckles and other discolorations, Stewart points out. And a 16th-century English writer and inventor named Sir Hugh Plat, Stewart notes, recommended washing one’s face “in the wane of the moon with a sponge,” and “with the distilled water of elder leaves letting the same dey into the skinne” to fade freckles. Jane Austen even mentions Gowland’s Lotion, a corrosive face treat-

ment, as a freckle remedy in her posthumously published 1817 novel “Persuasion.”

Two hundred and six years later, actress Megan Fox posed in a bikini on a sandy island for the cover of Sports Illustrated’s 2023 swimsuit issue, released in May, her usually uniform complexion dusted with a smattering

“When everyone’s doing it, you know, you want to do it, too. I do like it, though. I think they’re cute. I wish they were real.”

Christen Stevenson, 29
a Bloomfield, N.J. media buyer
who uses Freck

of light brown freckles. Immediately, “Glamour” published a guide on how to emulate the look.

Makeup artist Jenna Kristina, who added a multitude of faux freckles to Fox’s sprinkling of natural ones for the shoot (and has also recently used them on actress Zoey Deutch when she was on the cover of Vogue Thai-

land), tends to think of freckles as similar to a tan. When you come home from a wonderful summer vacation, makeup-free and rested, Kristina says, “you have freckles. And it’s almost like a mark of happiness, a mark of joy, a mark of a good time had.”

Similarly, the rise of self-tanning lotions — and oils, and mousses and foams — may help explain the rise of the faux freckle. That industry has been steadily expanding since 2021, a development often attributed to increasing awareness of skin health and the risks posed by real UV rays. Fake freckles may be one more way to enjoy a sun-kissed look without having to get the sun involved.

Kristina believes certain celebrities with natural freckles have boosted the movement toward acceptance — figures such as Lucy Liu, Gisele Bündchen, Alicia Keys and model Adwoa Aboah (whose face was the main image in a 2015 Vogue story about Black women who were embracing their freckles). Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, has called seeing her freckles Photoshopped out in magazines her “pet peeve.” Kristina also credits the body-positivity movement of the 2010s — which coincides, she says, with the last time a client asked her to cover their freckles.

“I have friends that are models and when they were younger, they couldn’t get booked to save their lives,” Kristina says. “Everybody would be like, ‘Can you cover their freckles?’”

But ever since the mid-2010s, her freckled friends’ likenesses have been in high demand. Freckled models were likely considered a subversive creative choice at first, but have since been described as a hallmark of the clean, pleasant, naturalistic direct-to-consumer marketing aesthetic that dominated the mid-2010s, alongside sans serif fonts. Of course, the great irony of the radical-acceptance era’s embrace of models with so-called skin imperfections is that it led to the creation and proliferation of yet another beauty product, one that retails at \$22 per .045 ounce. It took a long time for the beauty industry to buy into freckles; now, it’s selling them back with a markup.

This past spring, Christen Stevenson, a 29-year-old media buyer in Bloomfield, N.J., finally bought a tube of Freck after she and her friends had been exposed to tutorial after tutorial on TikTok for applying fake freckles.

With a pointed felt tip like that of a liquid eyeliner, Freck’s freckle pen darkens the skin within seconds. Best practices, according to the website and many users, are to make a natural-looking sequence of spots, give them five to 10 seconds, then blot the tiny constellation with a fingertip and “copy-paste” it elsewhere on the face. The technology is easy to navigate; varying size and opaqueness enough to avoid looking like a Cabbage Patch doll is considerably harder.

On days when she doesn’t feel like wearing makeup, Stevenson says, freckles offer a little something extra — a way to enjoy her own face without investing a full-glam amount of time on it.

“When everyone’s doing it, you know, you want to do it, too,” she says with a laugh. “I do like it, though. I think they’re cute. I wish they were real.”

That said, Stevenson has no plans to shell out for permanent fake ones. Long-lasting freckle tattoos, she says euphemistically, are “a choice.”

Indeed, microbladed brows and semipermanent freckles can linger for years — plenty long enough for, say, trends in brow shape to change. Or for freckles to go out of style again, leaving multitudes of fake-freckled consumers with a brand-new, age-old problem.

WEEKEND: TELEVISION



Max/AP

John Wilson looks at his camera in a scene from the documentary series “How to with John Wilson.” The final season of the series premiered July 28.

Using his camera to lean into the tension

Wilson, the filmmaker behind the docuseries ‘How to with John Wilson,’ reflects on how he approaches shooting, editing

BY KRISTA FAURIA
Associated Press

As John Wilson geared up to premiere the third and final season of his cult documentary series “How to with John Wilson,” the filmmaker reflected on how a video camera changes people’s behavior — and how he exploits that for his show. Each episode of the Emmy-nominated series starts off as a kind of “how to” video, but inevitably devolves into a hilariously bizarre and shocking portrait of humanity. In an interview with The Associated Press, Wilson shared how his style of cinematography was influenced by his time working for a private investigator, as well as his thoughts on how artificial intelligence will impact the future of filmmaking.

Season 3 of “How to” premiered July 28 on HBO and Max. The interview has been edited for clarity and brevity:

Associated Press: How are you feeling going into this final season?

Wilson: I cannot wait for it to come out. I have been sitting on this for a few months now, and there’s just so much I want to talk about with it. I think it’s the best season yet. I can’t wait.

I used to be a videographer and I covered breaking news for AP for a long time. The whole idea of that job is I’m coming into a situation with a camera trying to document it and I’m trying to not change it. But I’ve thought a lot about the ways that bringing a camera into a situation inherently does change it. I’m curious about the ways you’ve thought about that.

I’ve spent a lot of time in the documentary world and reading interviews and talking to people and studying what people

do. And I just find it so weird when people try to ignore the fact that the presence of a camera does fundamentally change the energy in a room. And so rather than trying to disguise that, I really like to lean into that instead, because the tension that a cameraperson creates, I find really interesting. And being able to have that be an element that makes something more dramatic is something I’m surprised more people don’t do.

So you’re saying you like to exploit that?

Yeah. I personally try to remove as much artifice as I can within the work, and that’s a huge part of it. It’s kind of funny. Sometimes I’ll interview someone and they already know the show and they may have even seen it. But other times, I’ll get through an entire interview with some-

one, and they’ll ask, ‘So who’s the host of this show?’ And I’ll be like, ‘Oh, it’s me.’ And they’ll be like, ‘Why don’t you have a cameraperson? Can you not afford one?’ And I’m just like, ‘Oh, no, I prefer this.’ And in their eyes, they just think that I’m, like, a really talkative cameraperson that’s about to lose their job because I keep interrupting the shot.

Do you go through each episode chronologically when you’re making it, or is it like you have all these different threads that you’re balancing at once?

Everything is happening at the same time. I’ll have six different episode titles in my head. And maybe I’ll see someone underneath scaffolding, for example, and I’ll maybe start talking to them about scaffolding and maybe they don’t have a very interesting take on it. So then I cycle through five episodes’ worth of questions because maybe I can still use them for something. And I have other people to help, other producers and stuff. And then it doesn’t really begin to congeal or take any shape until we’re in the edit. But I’m always shooting and editing with the editor simultaneously, and I have to tell them exactly what everything is for. So everything is happening at the same time. That’s the only way it can really happen.

In light of conversations about AI that are obviously big right now, I’m curious about your thoughts on the future of filmmaking as it relates to that.

I feel like AI is this unstoppable thing in a way. And I think it’s up to the filmmakers and the people creating this stuff moving forward to deliberately make human work. And I think people respond really well to that for a reason. I feel like there is eventually going to be some kind of division about what we choose to consume. And that may mean that the human stuff is made for no money because nobody wants to make it anymore. But that’s just the choice that creators will have to make.

I know this is going back kind of far, but I was curious about how you got the job for the private investigator after film school.

I found it on the etc. section of Craigslist classifieds, the place where they put work that can’t be categorized into any other area. It was for a video editor. And I went in and interviewed and I got the job and then when I asked what the company even was, they told me it was a private investigation agency. And that’s when I realized I wanted to stay.

And you feel like that experience informs how you think about and do your work now?

Yeah. I mean, it made me kind of want to shoot everything in a similar style or from a certain distance. There was just something really electrifying about watching people from a certain perspective that I wanted to mimic somehow.

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

Too warm to run outside?

Try aqua jogging, a lower impact alternative that can help athletes maintain their fitness

BY KELYN SOONG
The Washington Post

The suffocating summer heat and humidity can make even the most dedicated outdoor runner feel unmotivated. For those who want an alternative to running on the roads without losing their fitness, deep water running — or aqua jogging, as it's more commonly known — could be a useful supplementary cross-training exercise, experts say. Studies have shown that a well-trained runner can maintain their cardiorespiratory fitness for up to four to six weeks with aqua jogging.

I first tried aqua jogging several years ago after spraining my ankle. My doctor told me I could not run on land for six weeks. Aqua jogging, however, was allowed because it is not weight-bearing.

Many runners turn to deep water running as a last resort when they are injured, but healthy individuals can also benefit aerobically, said Sophie Heywood, a sports and aquatic physical therapist based in Melbourne, Australia.

We asked exercise scientists and running experts about how to get into aqua jogging and how runners can use it to their advantage:

Find the right pool, belt

You will need access to a pool that is deep enough so that your feet don't touch the ground. The depth of the water should be at least five inches less than your height, said Jennifer Conroyd, founder of the deep water exercise program Fluid Running and a USA Track & Field certified coach.

"Someone who is 5-foot-5 can run in 5-foot-deep water," she said.

A flotation belt around your waist will help your running technique, Conroyd said. There are different kinds of flotation belts available to purchase or rent online and at swimming pools.

Experiment to find the right belt, Heywood said. Wear one that is comfortable and has a similar shape all the way around, she suggests.

"I think some of the belts that have a bigger sort of volume of foam at the back can be difficult," Heywood said. "I think people feel like they're being pushed into a strange position."

Some regular aqua joggers choose to run without a flotation belt.

"It's harder," though, Conroyd said. "You can hold onto proper land running form for only about a minute."

Mimic running on land

The best way to aqua jog is to mimic running on land, experts say. Style instructions may vary, but you should lean forward slightly. The movement of the arms and legs should look similar to how they look during land-based running, Heywood said. Runners typically move back and forth in the pool during their workout.

Everything except your head and the top part of your shoulders should be underwater. Swing your arms from your shoulders, keep your elbows at a 90-degree angle and put your thumbs on your forefingers with a slightly clenched fist, said Garry Killgore, the director of athletics at Linfield University in Oregon. Killgore also serves as a professor of human performance at Linfield and is the author of a 2012 review that looked at the biomechanics of deep water running.

Work your legs up to a running motion. A cycling action of the legs is easier to start with and



iStock

When aqua jogging, wearing a flotation belt around your waist will help your running technique as will leaning forward slightly and attempting to mimic the motion of your arms and legs when you run on land.

will get your heart rate up, Heywood said, but practice replicating a running motion with your legs when you feel more confident in your balance and core control.

"Imagine extending the foot down and behind as if you were pushing off the ground as you would in a run," she said.

Try it several times

Getting used to running in the pool takes time. Runners should treat their first three sessions as a learning experience and not as a really hard workout, Heywood said.

Workouts can be continuous, easy running or intervals that alternate a minute or so at a comfortably hard pace and then 30 seconds at an easier active recovery pace. The sessions can be as short as 20 minutes, Killgore said.

Experts say aqua jogging is a helpful supplement to land running. In one small study, 11 competitive runners trained with deep water running instead of on-land training for four weeks.

Researchers found that the

runners maintained their 5K treadmill race performance with this method and that there were no statistical differences in performance markers such as maximal oxygen consumption and lactate threshold.

In another study, researchers examined the effect of a six-week deep water running program. They separated 16 runners into two groups — one did treadmill running and another did water running. Both groups followed the same workout schedule, which consisted of alternate high-intensity interval sessions and moderate-intensity recovery sessions.

Researchers found no difference between the groups' glucose concentration and maximal lactate levels, suggesting that aqua jogging can be an effective training alternative to land-based running.

Aqua jogging is not meant to replace all of your regular running, though, Killgore said.

Typically, your heart rate will be slightly lower while aqua jogging for the same intensity of exercise on land because of the

compression of water pushing more blood and fluid back to your central circulation, Heywood said. To increase intensity, increase your speed.

Make it social

Aqua jogging can sometimes be monotonous, so bring your headphones or a friend.

Susanna Sullivan, a full-time elementary school teacher and elite marathon runner based in Reston, Va., has incorporated deep water running into her routine since high school. Sullivan is in the pool about five days a week for 30 to 45 minutes as a supplement to her training on the road. She is set to compete for the United States in the marathon at the World Athletics Championships this month in Budapest.

Recently, Sullivan started wearing AirPods during her pool sessions: "I've ripped through so many books in the past year."

She also enjoys aqua jogging with other people.

"I love it when pool running ends up being my social hour," she said.

WEEKEND: FAMILY

Keeping tabs on your kids

Parents are using AirTags to track children too young to have a phone

BY HEATHER KELLY
The Washington Post

Stephanie Chin can always find her daughter. Between school, activities and friends, her 8-year-old's busy schedule takes her to various locations away from the family's Maryland home. At any time, Chin and her husband can open their smartphones to see their child's recent location on a map. They're getting it from two Apple AirTags tucked deep in her backpack.

"To some it might be overbearing because I worry so much, because she's my only [child]," says Chin. "It really comes down to what makes you more comfortable, and I'd rather be safe than sorry."

Chin is one of many parents and caregivers using tracking devices to keep tabs on children old enough to wander away but too young for a phone. It's an off-label use for the inexpensive \$29 Apple gadgets, which are meant to find things like keys wedged in a sofa or a purse left behind in a coffee shop. They work by ping-ponging any nearby Apple devices that can upload the recent location to the internet.

Adults are putting trackers in backpacks, on bikes or directly on kids for extra accuracy. Online, companies sell hundreds of colorful tracker holders for children including wristbands, keychains, lanyards and pins. Some caregivers sew them into jackets or tie them to shoes to protect them from their chaotic hosts.

When Apple released AirTags in 2021, the company clearly stated that they were not to be used for children or pets, only inanimate objects. The small print isn't stopping people. In addition to children, caregivers are using them for people with dementia or Alzheimer's, and pet owners are putting them in custom cat and dog collars.

Families use other trackers not meant for kids as well, like Tile and Chipolo. There's a growing market of GPS devices designed for children, like the Jibit tracker and Gizmo watch, which are more expensive, but have direct cellular connections for better accuracy. Eventually families move on to smartwatches and smartphones.

However it's done, tracking kids is a sensitive subject. Is it surveillance-culture gone overboard, a smart hack for managing a busy family, or a way to claw back some of the freedom previous generations had that's missing?

Sandi Bourbeau only used an AirTag with her son, now 13, for three months. He wanted to ride his bike around their neighborhood and hang out with his friends, but wasn't yet allowed to have his own phone. After checking on him regularly for the first few days, Bourbeau stopped looking unless she had a reason.

"To be honest, I felt weird about tagging him so I thought I would kind of kill two birds with one stone and tag the bike," said Bourbeau, who lives in Woodland Hills, Calif. "It was a steppingstone and it was a great way to discuss boundaries and alternatives."

Her son has since graduated to sharing his location from a smartphone. As with many families we spoke to, location tracking isn't one way. Bourbeau's son is allowed to see both parents' real-time locations.

Many adults trying AirTags first say they are most worried about access to social media, online bullying and everything else that comes with a real phone. AirTags offer them a low-tech way to put off the inevitable.

Experts have long been worried about the impact of more restrictive parenting on children's mental health and development.



iStock

Apple does not recommend using its AirTags to track children, but many parents find it convenient.

"Over the last four or five decades, there's been a huge decline in children's freedom to do things on their own," said Peter Gray, a research professor in psychology and neuroscience at Boston College who studies children's play. "To do things like walk to school by themselves, take public transit without some adult, even have a part-time job or play in the park without being constantly monitored by adults."

For people like Tara Mendola, a journalist raising three children in Philadelphia, low-tech tracking options aren't necessarily a tool to monitor children. They're also a practical way to see where everyone is and when they'll be home. And they're a way to afford children some of the same freedom their parents had as kids, before a walk alone outside was so fraught.

Mendola and her husband have given their 11-year-old a wristband with an AirTag in it, and while wearing it, he's allowed to bike around their neighborhood or go to the store. They recently gave their 8-year-old a similar wristband, though she's limited to wandering around their block. Both kids know about the devices and agreed to wear them, though the oldest sometimes chafes at having it.

"I want it to be something that increases their freedom not increases our surveillance of them," Mendola said. She's worried about cars, pools, stoves and fires, but not kidnapping. "Strangers worry me a lot less than concerned strangers. People who decide they need to call the police on your kid are the scary ones."

Apple is not against using technology to track children. The company openly markets its Apple Watch as a wearable GPS and communication device for kids not ready for a smartphone.

There are some key differences between the devices. An AirTag costs \$29, and the cheapest new Apple Watch with cellular and GPS starts at \$299. Unlike a smartwatch that needs to be charged daily, an AirTag has a replaceable battery that should last a year.

However, AirTag locations are less accurate and can have a larger delay when showing the most recent known location, making them riskier to use in time-sensitive situations. The devices don't have their own cellular connection and instead, tap the surrounding network of other Apple devices that can access the internet to pass on updates. Apple declined to comment on people using AirTags for kids.

"There really is a culture of fear and part of that is purposeful in that it's a way of marketing to parents," said psychologist Susan Linn, author of "Who's Raising the Kids? Big Tech, Big Business, and the Lives of Children." "It makes everybody in the family even more dependent on technology, and that's the purpose of all of these devices. To make the kids more dependent on them to make the parents more dependent on them, so you start to believe you can't live your life without them."

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



When three's a crowd, someone will get hurt

"She's been acting weird lately," my 22-year-old daughter, Lilly, said to her friend, Shannon, while they lounged around our kitchen banquette. "I don't get it. ... I thought the three of us were good friends." They went on chatting while I buzzed around the kitchen, wiping fingerprints off of the appliances.

As a mom, one of my favorite things has been hanging out with my kids and their friends after sleepovers, listening to their stories and helping to analyze their social dilemmas.

When I was an adolescent, I didn't talk to my mother about my social life. Not only was Mom busy with her career, kids were taught to respect that parents worked hard and shouldn't be bothered with trivial things.

Today's parents are more involved in their children's lives. Naturally, my kids fought my interference when they were teens. But as young adults, they seem to enjoy including me in their conversations.

"Maybe she's jealous that you two have been getting closer," I suggested to Lilly and Shannon.

"Yeah, all of a sudden she's bad-mouthing you. It's like she wants to turn me against you," Lilly said to Shannon.

The story sounded all too familiar. I'd experienced problems with friend trios, which often work initially, but often deconstruct, forming new bonds and spitting out a "third wheel." One friend always loses out.

As a young military spouse and mom, I frequently found myself on the fringe of social groups. But when the kids were small and I was managing our family chaos during deployments and TDY, I thought I'd finally made a true friend.

We differed in that she was a runner, fashionable and socially in demand. But we had other things in common — both Navy wives and stay-at-home moms with kids the same age. We met at Bunco, then set up playdates. Her second and my third pregnancies overlapped. They asked us to be godparents to their baby girl, and we accepted. Our husbands enjoyed each other's humor. We had deep conversations on weekends in the driveway, while the kids rode scooters and chased lightning bugs in the cul-de-sac. To me, it felt right.

However, a few years in, a distancing began that slowly unraveled the friendship. More importantly, the distancing unraveled me, exposing surprising character traits.

I recall two specific "hard slaps in the face" — clear indications that my friend was moving on. One Saturday, when our families had plans to meet up, she called and told me her "son was sick." The next day, her 6-year-old daughter came over to play with Lilly, and I asked, "How's your brother? Poor guy. Did he throw up last night?"

"No?" she replied, seemingly confused. "The Rogersons came over and we had so much fun!" The Rogersons were new friends that I knew, too. "Why did she lie to me? Why couldn't we all get together?" I thought, my ego bruised.

Another Saturday, four families, including my friend's family and the Rogersons, were playing cards and drinking beer. A bit tipsy, my friend and the Rogerson wife were calling each other "bestie," hugging and proclaiming, "I love you!" I felt hurt and confused. Once alone, I cried. "What the hell is wrong with me?!" I thought.

Our family received orders to Germany, and we eventually lost touch. Through it all, I learned that feeling cast aside brought out the worst in me. All of my deepest insecurities surfaced. My former friend didn't mean to hurt me, she simply wanted to make new friends. I needed to find inner strength and confidence to avoid crashing when relationships transitioned, as they often do for military spouses.

"Girls," I advised Lilly and Shannon, "don't hide that you two are becoming closer, but be compassionate. The truth may hurt, and she may act weird. But it's natural for friendships to change. She'll eventually understand and appreciate your honesty."

Read more at themeatandpotatoesoflife.com and in Lisa's book, "The Meat and Potatoes of Life: My True Lit Com." Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

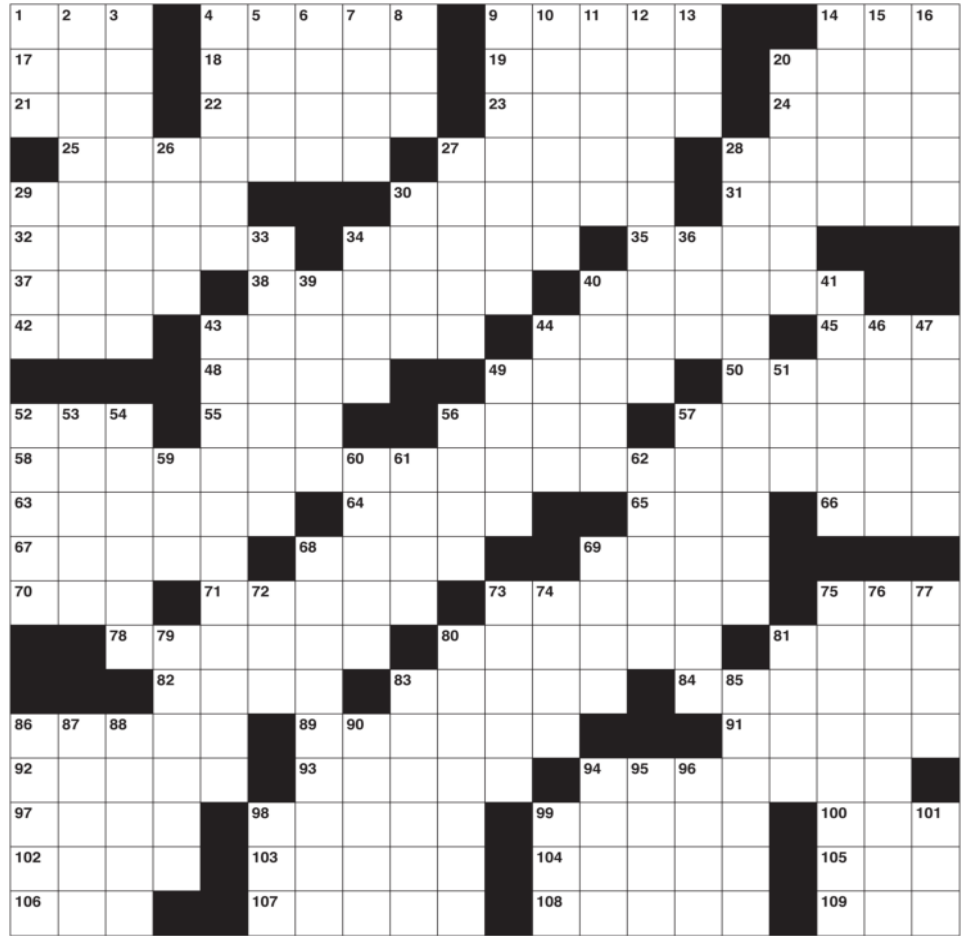
NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

AURAL SURGERY

BY CHANDI DEITMER / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

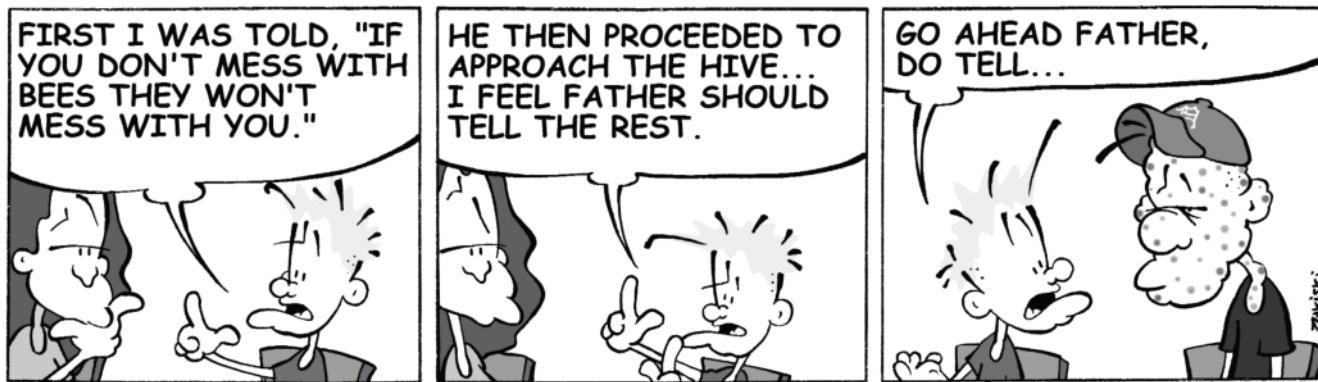
Chandi Deitmer, of Cambridge, Mass., is an editor for Elevate Labs, a brain-training app. Her crosswords have appeared in The Los Angeles Times, USA Today, The New Yorker, The Atlantic and numerous "indie" outlets. This is her fourth puzzle for The New York Times — all Sundays. Her starting point for it was 58-Across. Chandi says, "I love the space a Sunday puzzle affords to be playful." — W.S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Org. for Sandra Bullock in "Miss Congeniality"
 - 4 Shawarma wraps
 - 9 Tear things
 - 14 Sorry
 - 17 Dress (up), quaintly
 - 18 Dress up
 - 19 ___ nous
 - 20 Bring up to ___
 - 21 Nocturnal bird known for its distinct calls, informally
 - 22 -
 - 23 How things might go on the internet
 - 24 Fit
 - 25 ___ Moshfegh, author of the 2015 Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award-winning novel "Eileen"
 - 27 Collections of bets
 - 28 Response to a repeat introduction
 - 29 Respond to
 - 30 Some outdoor seats
 - 31 -
 - 32 14,000-foot volcano in California
 - 34 Hallmarks of Scottish accents
 - 35 Long walk
 - 37 Secret lairs
 - 38 -
 - 40 Grammy winner Hill
 - 42 Green beginning
 - 43 Lifted, as spirits
 - 44 Swelling
 - 45 Sch. with the mascot Sparky the Sun Devil
 - 48 Zakat, in Islam
 - 49 Equivalent of one gallon
 - 50 -
 - 52 Some roofing material
 - 55 Part of a day care schedule
 - 56 From India or Pakistan
 - 57 Wee, in one spelling
 - 58 Hit Mach I ... or a hint to answering eight pairs of consecutive entries in this puzzle
 - 63 Run for it!
 - 64 Beneficent
 - 65 Denomination of Boston's historic Charles Street Church: Abbr.
 - 66 Real so-and-so
 - 67 "Anything you want!"
 - 68 -
 - 69 Nibble (on)
 - 70 Substance banned for agricultural use in 1972, for short
 - 71 Style that flares out from the waist
 - 73 One crying "Help!"?
 - 75 Big money exec
 - 78 Growing season
 - 80 Former magazine that featured male nudes
 - 81 -
 - 82 Up there, so to speak
 - 83 Princess of Power, in the comics
 - 84 Let live
 - 86 2 vis-à-vis 8, 3 vis-à-vis 27, etc.
 - 89 -
 - 91 Lauder of cosmetics
 - 92 Amherst sch.
 - 93 Tied up
 - 94 Fade hairstyle sported by Grace Jones
 - 97 Stack up
 - 98 Skin marks
 - 99 Lollygagger
 - 100 -
 - 102 Among
 - 103 Lingered (on)
 - 104 Hit one out of the park
 - 105 Member org. of the Five Eyes alliance
 - 106 Something picked in an argument
 - 107 Habitat for vicuñas
 - 108 Some essays
 - 109 Couturier who created Le Smoking tuxedo, for short
 - 6 Tugboat jobs
 - 7 Side by side, maybe?
 - 8 Show shot in Studio 8H, for short
 - 9 Gobbles up
 - 10 Marriages
 - 11 Copy command on a keyboard
 - 12 Offensive line in football, say?
 - 13 Fleur de ___ (seasoning)
 - 14 "Same here"
 - 15 Irene ___ ("the Woman," to Sherlock Holmes)
 - 16 411
 - 20 Fresh
 - 26 Nonsense, to Brits
 - 27 Medicare section that covers prescription drugs
 - 28 Comment when trying to get a discussion back on track
 - 29 U.S. Davis Cup player for 10 years
 - 30 Slippery stuff
 - 33 Heap praise on
 - 34 Believes, so to speak
 - 36 Something to pray on
 - 39 Pep
 - 40 Like many true-crime dramas
 - 41 Aslan's world
 - 43 Overdraft fees, e.g.
 - 44 Cap'n's subordinate
 - 46 Fenced-in patches of mud
 - 47 ___ guide
 - 49 Reality show fodder
 - 51 ___ Lingus



- 52 Long-term security option, in brief
- 53 Responded to "Speak!"
- 54 Modernizes the equipment of
- 56 "___ forget ..."
- 57 Steamed food items eaten with the hands
- 59 Recipient of a 2008 govt. bailout
- 60 Scraping (by)
- 61 Browser destination
- 62 Language group of sub-Saharan Africa
- 68 "That's ... so ... crazy!"
- 69 Agog
- 72 Many do this on the beach
- 73 What an errant red sock may do in a load of whites
- 74 All ___
- 75 Humorously exaggerated
- 76 Exemption from consequences
- 77 Shoppe descriptor
- 79 Took a breather
- 80 Things revealing basic truths?
- 81 Like Zambia relative to Angola
- 83 Feed, as a pup might
- 85 Fades (out)
- 86 Holy text divided into suras
- 87 Savory quality
- 88 Suffer an embarrassing loss
- 90 Sped
- 94 Something that closes quickly
- 95 Capital of Togo
- 96 Parroted
- 98 Sidewalk snogging, e.g., for short
- 99 "Dexter" channel, familiarly
- 101 ___ Penn, actor who held a post in the Obama White House

GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

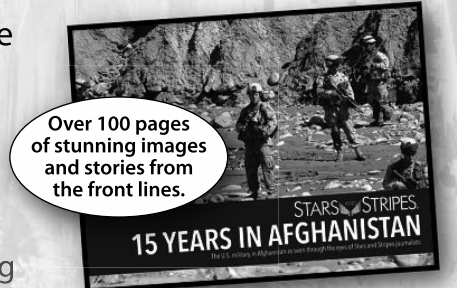
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Building her own brand

MATT BLAIR, HGTV/AP

Christina Hall stars on two HGTV shows: “Christina on the Coast” and “Christina in the Country.” Hall says “Christina in the Country” is “more feminine overall, more wallpapers, textures, a bit more glam” than “Christina on the Coast,” which is “more industrial and more modern.”

With two HGTV shows, former ‘Flip or Flop’ co-star Christina Hall finds solo success

By ALICIA RANCILIO
Associated Press

HGTV star Christina Hall promises not to judge your home if you invite her over.

“There’s literally zero judgment,” the TV personality said during a recent interview. “Unless you live in a hoarder house or it’s real gross or dirty, I’m not going to care. I’ve lived in different types of houses and places and situations.”

As the star of two shows on the network, “Christina on the Coast” and “Christina in the Country,” Hall has a talent for looking at a floorplan and picturing what could be changed to make a space more functional.

She enjoys renovating homes more than choosing decor or staging for prospective buyers.

“I like doing the big projects,” Hall explained. “I like taking down the walls and I like figuring out floorplans and how to make something more functional. I love choosing kitchen material, but I don’t love choosing furniture.”

Hall began her professional career in real estate, where she met her now ex-husband Tarek El Moussa. After spending a few years flipping houses, they got their own HGTV series “Flip or Flop,” showing the process of buying, improving and selling a home for profit. The two divorced in 2018 but continued to work together until 2022 when “Flip or Flop” aired its final episode after 10 seasons.

Hall first’s solo TV venture was “Christina on the Coast,” now airing its fourth season. On the show, Hall balances solo projects with her home life in Newport Beach, Calif. She’s a mother of three and is remarried to Josh Hall, a realtor and former police officer.

Her husband is featured on the shows and Hall says, “I think his answer would be it took a minute” to get comfortable on camera. “I feel like it might be weird to be thrown in with me because it comes naturally and I’ve been doing it for a long time. He looks back at old episodes

and is like, ‘Oh, gosh’ and cringing.”

The Halls also have a vacation home in Franklin, Tenn., a suburb of Nashville. The TV personality says there’s “a misconception” that she spends more time there than she actually does.

When she takes her kids to Tennessee, it’s a getaway.

“When we go there, we mostly cook at home, have quiet time and we’ll be on our property,” Hall said.

It also serves as the backdrop for “Christina in the Country.”

Hall has also considered expanding her work to encompass a “Christina Coast to Coast-type show” because, “we can go anywhere” but hesitates from thinking too much about it because she’s busy as is.

While filming in Tennessee, “We’re packing it in,” Hall said. “We go next week and we’re filming six straight days, we’re filming very long days, doing six houses. Then there’s something called B stories and it’s a background story of the show. Those are long days and I’m not going to lie, when I get back home I’m wiped out. My schedule in California is a bit easier.”

Both “Christina” shows have been renewed for new seasons. Hall has also considered expanding her work to encompass a “Christina Coast to Coast-type show” because, “we can go anywhere” but hesitates from thinking too much about it because she’s busy as is.

“Logistically, why it works in Tennessee is because we have a home there. We have clothes there. I don’t pack. We just go,” she said.

Hall says a challenge of her job is “everyone wants the same look, especially in California.”

“Houses have certain architecture,” she explains. “Unless you’re re-doing the architecture, you can’t have a midcentury modern house and then inside make it a farmhouse.”

She’s also noticed a difference in aesthetics working on her two shows: “‘Country’ is more feminine overall, more wallpapers, textures, a bit more glam. For ‘Coast,’ I see more industrial and more modern.” She adds that men seem more interested in the design in her California show while the women take the lead on home decisions in Tennessee.

For downtime, the self-professed “extroverted introvert” enjoys reading mystery thrillers and watches TV shows like “Beef” and “Righteous Gemstones” with Josh. She also likes to watch lighter fare including “Ginny & Georgia” and “Firefly Lane” on her own.

She says she does get recognized a lot and for the most part “people are respectful” but public encounters can be awkward: “Airports are where you catch people taking videos of you and they’re not very sly about it. Or they Google you right in front of you. Your face is on their phone, and they say, ‘Is this you?’”

Hall also says people have sat down at her booth in restaurants and started a conversation. “That’s a little weird,” she said.

Her kids are accustomed to camera crews and not shy.

She says her son Braeden recently asked to watch all his scenes in “Christina in the Country”: “He was laughing at himself because he’s such a ham.”

He asked why he isn’t on the show more and she says she tries not to overdo it: “I try to keep him to short days and doing fun things. The last thing I want is for them to say, ‘I don’t want to do this.’”

Report: Swift tour crew got giant bonuses

From wire reports

Taylor Swift doled out massive bonuses to the crew of her Eras Tour, proving that she may not be an “Anti-Hero” after all.

Swift, 33, gave \$100,000 each to truckers who have been hauling her equipment across the country, TMZ reported.

The “Bejeweled” singer handed out the bonuses last Saturday, sources told the outlet. Swift has one more stop on the U.S. leg of the Eras Tour, with six scheduled shows at SoFi Stadium in Southern California between Aug. 3 and Aug. 9.

An estimated 50 truckers drove Swift’s equipment across the country after the tour began March 17 near Phoenix, so the superstar paid up \$5 million total in trucking bonuses alone, according to TMZ. Band members, dancers, lighting and sound technicians, caterers and other staff on the tour also received end-of-the-road bonuses, which were described as “very generous.”



SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE/AP

Taylor Swift paid \$100,000 bonuses to the truck drivers on her Eras Tour, according to TMZ.

Other news

■ Country superstar Keith Urban and Kix Brooks of powerhouse country duo Brooks & Dunn will be inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame this year. The organization announced its newest inductees Thursday. They also include Casey Beathard and David Lee Murphy, in the contemporary songwriter category, and Rafe Van Hoy in the veteran songwriter category. They will be inducted Oct. 11 during the 53rd Anniversary Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame Gala held at the Music City Center.

■ Officials say a Vermont driver will be charged with gross negligence in the crash that killed actor **Treat Williams**. Vermont State Police said Tuesday that an investigation of the June 12 crash in Dorset concluded the vehicle pulled in front of Williams, 71. The actor was on a motorcycle and unable to avoid a collision. The driver is Ryan Koss, 35, of Dorset. He was cited Tuesday, released and ordered to appear in court in September to be formally charged.

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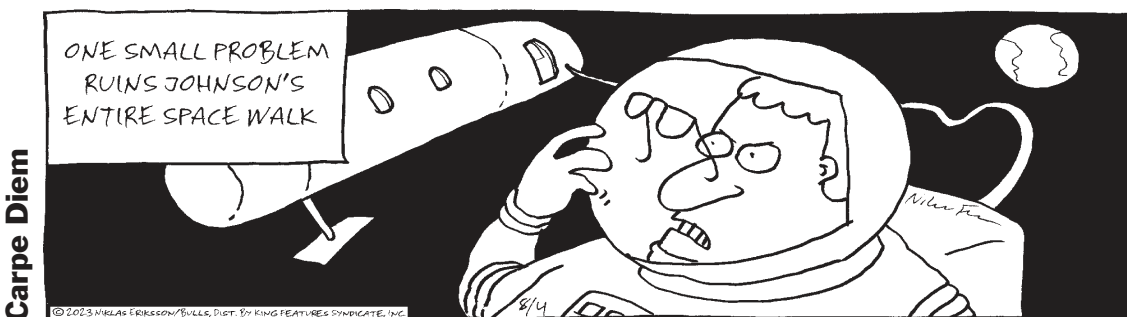
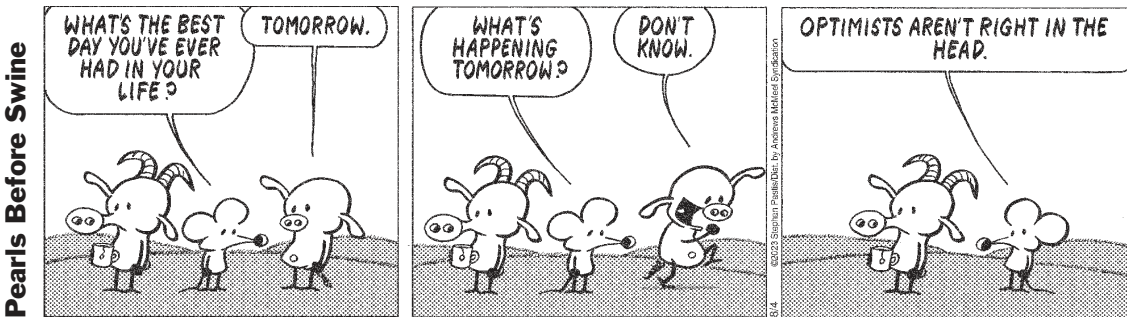
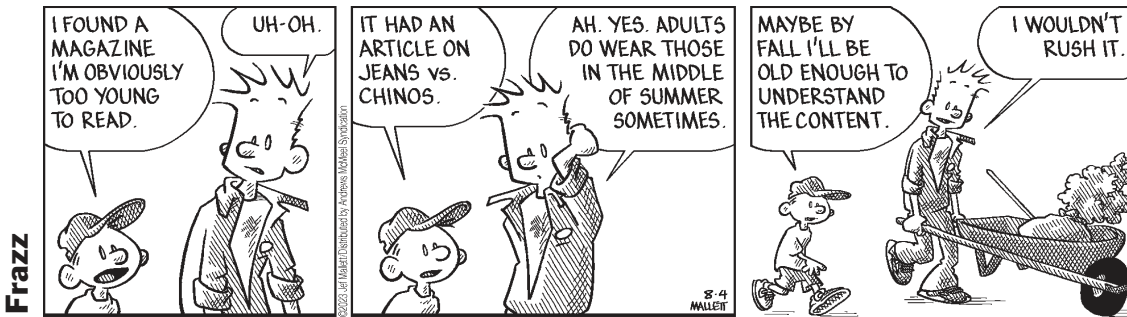


aafes.media/vets

Bizarro



Loose Parts



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		
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45	46	47				48	49					
50						51				52		
53						54				55		

ACROSS

- 1 IV measures
- 4 Pack cargo
- 8 Theatergoer's souvenir
- 12 Desk wood
- 13 "Downton Abbey" countess
- 14 Atmosphere
- 15 Garage entrance
- 17 Unightly
- 18 Skiing style
- 19 Victory
- 21 Its cap. is Brussels
- 22 Advil alternative
- 26 Leaves
- 29 Mork's planet
- 30 Oklahoma city
- 31 Has the flu
- 32 Bankroll
- 33 Ready, as for surgery
- 34 Writer Tarbell
- 35 Yoga pad
- 36 Spanish snacks
- 37 Chef Gordon
- 39 "Awesome, dude!"
- 40 Chum
- 41 Firstborn
- 45 Andean land
- 48 Common trash can spot
- 50 Done with
- 51 Pro votes

DOWN

- 23 Kvetch
- 24 Concept
- 25 Siestas
- 26 Twosome
- 27 Verdi heroine
- 28 Glitzy rock genre
- 29 Feedbag morsel
- 32 Ambushes
- 33 Rice field
- 35 Goat's cry
- 36 "Honor Thy Father" author
- 38 Eggs on
- 39 Pass along
- 42 Pitcher
- 43 Bagel seasoning
- 44 Youngster
- 45 Group of whales
- 46 Longoria of TV
- 47 Flushed
- 49 Permit

Answer to Previous Puzzle

S	I	R	S	E	A	C	H		A	E	R		
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8-4

CRYPTOQUIP

Q H B K I N Y U A D Y R J O A F
 H C I Q P B , Y O S K N K O - O Y S A F
 F C Q T L D Y P J Y C P Q A D , B K I ' U A
 P Y L A T D K R A N Y C F J I T S N A D .
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE SOD LAYERS' MEETING COULD GO ON FOR A VERY LONG TIME. THEY HAVE A LOT OF GROUND TO COVER.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals D

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Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) is published week-days (except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA. Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. This newspaper is authorized by the Department of Defense for members of the military services overseas. However, the contents of Stars and Stripes are unofficial, and are not to be considered as the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government. As a DOD newspaper, Stars and Stripes may be distributed through official channels and use appropriated funds for distribution to remote locations where overseas DOD personnel are located.

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OPINION

The 'summer of strikes' isn't living up to the hype

By JUSTIN FOX

Bloomberg Opinion

This is, you may have heard, the "summer of strikes." The summer of threatened strikes, at least — more than half the 650,000 workers said to be on or headed for the picket lines in the U.S. were United Parcel Service employees whose union, the Teamsters, now has a tentative deal with the company. Another looming strike just fizzled for a less happy reason: Perennially struggling trucking company Yellow ceased operations this week before its 22,000 Teamsters-represented workers could walk out. Without those strikers, this year's total seems unlikely to top 2018's 485,200 or 2019's 425,500 workers involved in stoppages of 1,000 workers or more, numbers that themselves were far below those of an average year in the 1950s, 1960s or 1970s, when the workforce was much smaller.

Still, the narrative underlying most "summer of strikes" media coverage — that private-sector unions in particular are feeling more confident and making more noise than they have in quite a while — is not incorrect. The strikers in 2018 and 2019 were mostly teachers and other state and local government employees, while this year most are employees of private companies. A lot of current private-sector organizing is on a location-by-

location basis with strikes that don't show up in the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics counts because they involve fewer than 1,000 workers, with the more inclusive Cornell-ILR Labor Action Tracker counting 224,000 workers involved in stoppages last year, nearly double the BLS tally of 120,600. The 340,000 workers who didn't go on strike at UPS because the company gave in to their wage demands should probably count as a significant union victory even if doesn't show up in the strike statistics. And according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' other main measure of strike activity, days on strike divided by total working time, this year may still prove a standout, at least by post-1980 standards.

That last significant spike, in 2000, was caused mainly by 135,000 members of the Screen Actors Guild and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (which have since merged) striking for five months. SAG-AFTRA's 160,000 current members walked out again on July 13, joining 11,500 members of the Writers Guild of America who went on strike in May, and as Lucas Shaw describes in the latest Bloomberg Businessweek, the issues at stake may not lend themselves to quick resolution. The United Auto Workers union also emphasized its preparedness to go on strike and stay out for a while as it entered contract negotiations last month on

behalf of 150,000 hourly employees of the Big Three Detroit automakers.

These standoffs are both unique. The UAW is one of the last big industrial unions; Hollywood is one of the only high-paying creative/professional sectors that's unionized. Only 6% of U.S. private-sector workers belonged to a union in 2022, the lowest percentage on record going back to 1900.

As already noted, much of the union action at the moment is at too small a scale to show up in the official strike statistics. Unions are trying to organize private-sector service workers and having to do it warehouse by warehouse and store by store. The Cornell-ILR tracker is full of evidence of this activity: 17 workers striking for a day at a Starbucks in Tucson, Ariz., four for three days at a Papa John's in Southern California, 60 for half a day at a suburban Detroit Amazon warehouse. It's a fascinating portrait of labor relations in ferment, and after a pandemic, a "Great Resignation" and big wage gains for lower-paid workers, who knows where we're headed. But until the private-sector unionization percentage stops falling, it seems way too early to paint it as a union resurgence.

Justin Fox is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist and author of "The Myth of the Rational Market." This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

Ever had 'password rage'? Consider these solutions

By MARK LEE GREENBLATT

Special to The Washington Post

Have you ever had "password rage"? You know, shouting at your computer screen, swearing or throwing a tantrum because you can't remember a password?

If your answer is yes, you're not alone. Even computer security professionals suffer from it. In a 2015 poll at an IT security conference, one-third of respondents admitted to feeling this way.

It's understandable. Being forced to create and remember a random string of letters, numbers and special characters for dozens of personal and professional accounts can be maddening. It inevitably leads to bad password practices: reusing the same password again and again for different accounts, writing passwords down, or worse, using easy-to-remember words — such as "password." And in implementing these bad practices, we could be opening the door for cybercriminals to gain access to our financial data or other personal information.

A recent inspection undertaken in my office at the Interior Department illustrates the risks. Our team tested whether the department's password controls were effective at preventing a malicious actor from gaining unauthorized access to its systems. To accomplish this, we used a common technique known worldwide, spending less than \$15,000 on a system designed to crack passwords using free, publicly available software and a custom word list.

And guess what? We successfully cracked more than 18,000 — or 21% — of the department's passwords, nearly 14,000 in the first 90 minutes of testing alone. The hacked passwords included those for hundreds of accounts belonging to senior department officials and hundreds belonging to employees with elevated privileges, such as system administrators. Some of our findings were surprising, given that we were testing govern-

ment systems containing potentially high-value information. For instance, "Password-1234" was the most commonly used password. In fact, five of the top 10 passwords included some variation of the word "password," along with "1234."

Even so, 99.99% of the hacked accounts met the department's password complexity requirements, which included the string of letters, numbers and special characters that every computer user is so familiar with. In other words, 99.99% of the passwords our team hacked were considered strong enough to thwart a hacker.

Why should you care about this problem with passwords at the Interior Department? My sneaking suspicion is that Interior employees are no different from most Americans in how they use passwords, so if this problem exists in my department, it could exist across the federal government and in business offices and private homes nationwide.

But here's the good news: There are solutions. We made two recommendations to the department, but they apply equally to anyone using a computer at a nongovernment job or at home. First, we recommended that the department adopt multifactor authentication across all IT systems. MFA is the gold standard for cybersecurity. It refers to the use of at least two factors to access computer systems. The factors usually fall into three categories: something you have (a digital token), something you know (a password) and something you are (a fingerprint or retinal scan). MFA requires at least two of those factors, such as a fingerprint plus a password.

MFA is already required on all federal systems — and has been for decades. But our inspection showed that the department didn't enforce MFA on an unknown number of systems. In fact, we found that nearly 90% of Interior's high-value IT systems allowed MFA to be bypassed or permitted authentication through passwords alone. We therefore recommended that the department prioritize im-

plementing MFA and requiring MFA methods that cannot be bypassed on all its systems.

Second, where MFA cannot be currently implemented, we recommended that the department move away from passwords and toward passphrases.

Here's why: As we've come to rely on passwords more in our daily lives, bad actors have become better and better at defeating them. This has created a "negative feedback loop": As password policies require more complexity, remembering passwords becomes more difficult, leading users to turn to simple, easy-to-remember patterns. According to the National Institute of Standards and Technology — the primary U.S. government agency for cybersecurity measurement, research and standards development — these common patterns have become easy targets for hackers, leading to additional password complexity requirements, in a never-ending cycle.

To make matters worse, passwords are not only hard to remember but also have the added benefit of being ineffective: Even complex passwords are remarkably easy for computers to guess. A computer can hack a password such as "Spr1ng*ish3re" relatively quickly. The better choice is a more easily remembered passphrase that strings together several unrelated words totaling more than 16 letters, such as "DinosaurLetterTrailChance." Though a computer can break a complex password in days, if not hours, it could take the same computer centuries to crack a passphrase. It's counterintuitive, but the facts are clear: Passwords are hard for a person to remember and easy for a computer to crack, while the opposite is true of passphrases.

I'm looking forward to the day when we have achieved widespread adoption of these two best practices. Then we can all be more secure — and avoid P@s\$w0rdR@ge.

Mark Lee Greenblatt is inspector general for the Interior Department and chair of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.

SCOREBOARD/MLS

PRO FOOTBALL

NFL preseason schedule

Thursday's game

N.Y. Jets vs Cleveland at Canton, Ohio

Thursday, Aug. 10

Houston at New England
Minnesota at Seattle

Friday, Aug. 11

Atlanta at Miami
Green Bay at Cincinnati
N.Y. Giants at Detroit
Pittsburgh at Tampa Bay
Washington at Cleveland
Denver at Arizona

Saturday, Aug. 12

Indianapolis at Buffalo
Tennessee at Chicago
N.Y. Jets at Carolina
Jacksonville at Dallas
Philadelphia at Baltimore
L.A. Chargers at L.A. Rams

TENNIS

Generali Open

Wednesday

At Tennis Stadium Kitzbuhel

Kitzbuhel, Austria

Purse: Euro 562,815

Surface: Red clay

Men's Singles

Round of 16

Tomas Martin Etcheverry (1), Argentina, def. Guido Andreozzi, Argentina, 6-2, 6-2.
Sebastian Baez, Argentina, def. Roberto Carballes Baena (6), Spain, 6-1, 6-2.
Alex Molcan, Slovakia, def. Sebastian Ofner (4), Austria, 4-6, 7-5, 7-6 (5).
Daniel Elahi Galan, Colombia, def. Daniel Altmaier (8), Germany, 3-6, 6-2, 7-6 (8).
Laslo Djere (5), Serbia, def. Thiago Seyboth Wild, Brazil, 7-6 (5), 6-3.
Pedro Cachin (3), Argentina, def. Albert Ramos-Vinolas, Spain, 7-5, 6-3.
Arthur Rinderknech, France, def. Yannick Hanfmann (2), Germany, 7-6 (3), 6-3.
Dominic Thiem, Austria, def. Zhang Zhizhen, China, 1-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Citi Open

Wednesday

At William H.G. FitzGerald Tennis Center

Washington

Purse: \$2,013,940

Surface: Hardcourt outdoor

Men's Singles

Round of 32

Jeffrey John Wolf (16), United States, def. Radu Albot, Moldova, 6-1, 6-3.
Ugo Humbert (13), France, def. Thanasi Kokkinakis, Australia, 7-6 (6), 1-6, 6-4.
Christopher Eubanks (11), United States, def. Sho Shimabukuro, Japan, 6-3, 6-4.
Jordan Thompson, Australia, def. Adrian Mannarino (7), France, 7-5, 6-4.
Daniel Evans (9), Britain, def. Gregoire Barrere, France, 2-6, 6-0, 6-3.
Yosuke Watanuki, Japan, def. Felix Auger-Aliassime (3), Canada, 7-6 (10), 7-6 (3).
Tallon Griekspoor (12), Netherlands, def. Liam Broady, Britain, 6-4, 6-2.
Andy Murray (15), Britain, def. Brandon Nakashima, United States, 7-6 (5), 6-4.
Gael Monfils, France, def. Alexander Bublik (6), Kazakhstan, 6-3, 6-4.
Taylor Fritz (1), United States, def. Zachary Svajda, United States, 6-3, 6-3.

Women's Singles

Round of 16

Belinda Bencic (6), Switzerland, def. Lauren Davis, United States, 6-1, 6-4.
Elina Svitolina, Ukraine, def. Daria Kasatkina (5), Russia, 6-2, 6-2.
Liudmila Samsonova (8), Russia, def. Sorana Cirstea, Romania, 6-1, 6-3.
Coco Gauff (3), United States, def. Hailey Baptiste, United States, 6-1, 6-4.
Madison Keys (7), United States, def. Jennifer Brady, United States, 6-4, 6-0.

Prague Open

Wednesday

At TK Sparta Praha

Prague

Purse: \$259,303

Surface: Hardcourt outdoor

Women's Singles

Round of 32

Ankita Raina, India, def. Barbora Strycova, Czech Republic, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.
Kateryna Baindl (8), Ukraine, def. Jule Niemeier, Germany, 5-0, ret.
Jaqueline Adina Cristian, Romania, def. Emiliana Arango, Colombia, 6-4, 6-3.

Los Cabos Open

Wednesday

At Solaz Resort & Spa Los Cabos

Los Cabos, Mexico

Purse: \$852,480

Surface: Hardcourt outdoor

Men's Singles

Round of 16

Alex de Minaur (5), Australia, def. Thiago Agustín Tiranté, Argentina, 6-2, 6-1.
Dominik Koepfer (7), Germany, def. James Duckworth, Australia, 6-2, 6-2.
Tommy Paul (3), United States, def. Felipe Meligeni Alves, Brazil, 7-5, 7-6 (7).
Borna Coric (4), Croatia, def. Jason Jung, Taiwan, 6-1, 6-2.
Ilya Ivashka (8), Belarus, def. Borna Gojo, Croatia, 5-7, 6-2, 6-4.
Nicolas Jarry (6), Chile, def. Gijs Brouwer, Netherlands, 7-6 (5), 4-6, 6-4.
Aleksander Kovacevic, United States, def. Cameron Norrie (2), Britain, 5-7, 7-6 (7), 6-4.
Stefanos Tsitsipas (1), Greece, def. John Isner, United States, 6-2, 6-4.

DEALS

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL

Major League Baseball American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Activated RHP Jack Flaherty. Optioned RHP Bryan Baker to Norfolk (IL).

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Recalled RHP Jimmy Lambert from Charlotte (IL).

CLEVELAND GUARDIANS — Recalled SS Bryan Rocchio from Columbus (IL).

HOUSTON ASTROS — Recalled RHP Ronel Blanco from Sugar Land (IL). Optioned LHP Matt Gage to Sugar Land.

KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Recalled LHP Cole Ragans from Omaha (IL). Optioned RHPs James McArthur and Jackson Kowar to Omaha. Activated LHP Tucker Davidson.

LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Activated RHP Dominic Leone. Optioned RHP Victor Mederos to Rocket City (FSL).

NEW YORK YANKEES — Announced OF Willie Calhoun elected free agency in lieu of accepting an outright assignment. Placed RP Domingo German on the restricted list. Activated RHP Keynan Middleton. Transferred the rehab assignment of RHP Jonathan Loaisiga from Tampa (FSL) to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (IL).

TAMPA BAY RAYS — Activated RHP Aaron Civale. Optioned RHP Ryan Thompson to Durham (IL).

TEXAS RANGERS — Activated C Austin Hedges. Optioned OF Bubba Thompson to Round Rock (PCL). Reinstated SS Corey Seager from the 10-day IL. Placed INF/OF Brad Miller on the 10-day IL.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Activated INF Paul DeJong. Placed SS Bo Bichette on the 10-day IL, retroactive to August 1. Recalled RHP Thomas Hatch from Buffalo (IL). Optioned RHP Nate Pearson to Buffalo. Agreed to terms with RHP Rowan Wick on a minor league contract.

National League

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Selected the contract of RHP Slade Cecconi from Reno (PCL). Placed RHP Austin Adams on the 60-day IL.

ATLANTA BRAVES — Placed RHP Daysbel Hernandez on the 15-day IL, retroactive to August 1. Activated LHP Brad Hand. Activated LHP Brad Hand.

CHICAGO CUBS — Placed RHP Marcus Stroman on the 15-day IL, retroactive to August 1. Activated RHP Jose Cuas. Released OF Trey Mancini.

CINCINNATI REDS — Sent RHP Tejay Antone to Louisville (IL) on a rehab assignment.

LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Designated RHP Tyson Miller for assignment. Reinstated RHP Ryan Pepiot from the 60-day IL.

MIAMI MARLINS — Activated 3B Jake Burger and 1B Josh Bell. Optioned SS Garrett Hampson to Jacksonville (IL).

MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Reinstated LHP Wade Miley from the 15-day IL. Optioned SS Owen Miller to Nashville (IL).

NEW YORK METS — Sent RHP Edwin Uceata to the Florida Complex League (FCL) on a rehab assignment. Activated RHP Phil Bickford. Optioned C Michael Perez to Syracuse (IL). Selected the contract of INF Nathaniel Arauz from Syracuse.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Release 2B Josh Harrison. Designated LHP Andrew Vasquez for assignment. Activated RHP Michael Lorenzen and SS Rodolfo Castro.

SAN DIEGO PADRES — Activated DH Ji Man Choi, RHP Steven Wilson, RHP Scott Barlow and 1B Garrett Cooper. Placed RHP Alek Jacob and LHP Tim Hill on the 15-day IL. Designated RHP Brent Honeywell for assignment. Recalled RHP Ray Kerr from El Paso (PCL). Optioned C Brett Sullivan to El Paso.

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Activated LHP Robert Garcia. Optioned RHP Hobie Harris and INF Luis Garcia to Rochester (IL). Waived OF Corey Dickerson.

BASKETBALL

National Basketball Association

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	20	6	.769	—
Connecticut	19	7	.731	1
Atlanta	14	12	.538	6
Washington	12	13	.480	7½
Chicago	10	15	.400	9½
Indiana	7	19	.269	13

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Las Vegas	24	2	.923	—
Dallas	15	11	.577	9
Minnesota	13	14	.481	11½
Los Angeles	9	17	.346	15
Phoenix	6	19	.240	17½
Seattle	6	20	.231	18

x-clinched playoff spot

Wednesday's game

Dallas 76, Seattle 65

Thursday's game

Atlanta at Phoenix

Friday's games

Connecticut at Indiana
Los Angeles at Washington
Chicago at Dallas
New York at Minnesota

Saturday's games

Seattle at Phoenix

GOLF

World rankings

Through July 30

1. Scottie Scheffler	11.96
2. Rory McIlroy	10.65
3. Jon Rahm	10.43
4. Patrick Cantlay	6.99
5. Viktor Hovland	6.42
6. Xander Schauffele	6.15
7. Max Homa	5.31
8. Cameron Smith	5.08
9. Brian Harman	4.96
10. Matt Fitzpatrick	4.94
11. Wyndham Clark	4.66
12. Jordan Spieth	4.50
13. Brooks Koepka	4.43
14. Tyrrell Hatton	4.41
15. Cameron Young	4.25
16. Keegan Bradley	4.23
17. Tony Finau	4.17
18. Tom Kim	4.10
19. Will Zalatoris	4.05
20. Sam Burns	4.00
21. Jason Day	3.97
22. Tommy Fleetwood	3.91
23. Collin Morikawa	3.86
24. Sepp Straka	3.72
25. Rickie Fowler	3.68
26. Justin Thomas	3.65
27. Sungjae Im	3.43
28. Kurt Kitayama	3.28



REBECCA BLACKWELL/AP

Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi is lifted by Josep Martínez after Messi scored against Orlando City during the second half of Wednesday's Leagues Cup match in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Messi's two goals propel Inter Miami

Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Lionel Messi continues to add goals in bunches while still adapting to a new team.

Messi scored in his third straight game and had his second consecutive multi-goal performance for Inter Miami in a 3-1 victory over Orlando City on Wednesday night.

“Something I said early on when we started, with him the most difficult things have become easier,” Inter Miami coach Tata Martino said. “But we are talking about a player that at the highest level of competition scores 40 goals a season.”

The Leagues Cup Round of 32 match was delayed 95 minutes because of thunderstorms.

Messi scored seven minutes into the match then added a second strike in the 72nd minute. The seven-time Ballon d’Or winner has five goals in three games since his highly-anticipated MLS debut July 21.

As he eluded the Orlando City backline, Messi stopped a pass from Robert Taylor on his chest, dribbled a couple of yards near the edge of the 6-yard box and converted a shot that landed under the crossbar.

The goal gave Inter Miami a 1-0 lead before Orlando tied it 11 minutes later.

Messi struck again when he re-

ceived a centering pass from Josep Martínez and flicked a right-footed shot inside the left post the put Inter Miami ahead 3-1.

“It is not illogical to think that he has scored five goals in three matches,” Martino said. “Sometimes I feel we overdo it coming up with greater adjectives. It just comes down to talking about the best player in the world.”

Martino also was quick to indicate how the second strike Wednesday came from Messi's right foot instead of the celebrated left foot that has scored from various angles in different situations.

“He's been doing the same for 17-18 years,” Martino said. “He said he was coming here to compete and win. He is fulfilling what he said.”

The win advances Inter Miami to the tournament Round of 16 against Dallas FC.

Inter Miami also had a scare early in the second half when Orlando's Mauricio Pereyra collided with Messi. Messi remained on the ground, favoring his jaw for a couple of minutes.

Messi received his first yellow card with Inter Miami after he was cited for a hard foul in the 21st minute.

Messi's former Barcelona teammate Jordi Alba made his Inter Miami debut when he entered the match in the 64th minute.

NASCAR

Cup Series has 4 spots open with 4 races left

Associated Press

Chase Elliott has four races remaining to save his season.

The 2020 NASCAR champion has raced for the title each of the last three years, but has yet to claim a spot in the 16-driver playoff field for 2023. NASCAR's most popular driver missed six races early after breaking his left leg and was suspended for another. Those absences have him sitting 20th in the Cup Series standings headed into Sunday's race at Michigan International Speedway.

Elliott goes to Michigan this weekend and then road courses at Indianapolis Motor Speedway and Watkins Glen before finishing the regular season at Daytona International Speedway on Aug. 26. There have been 12 playoff-eligible winners through 22 races, leaving four postseason spots to be decided this month.

The 10-race playoffs begin at Darlington Raceway on Sept. 3. Here's a look at other drivers on the bubble:

Kevin Harvick

Harvick is retiring at the end of this season, and the 2014 Cup champion wants to go out with a shot at a second title. He's sixth in the Cup standings, which would be good enough to make the playoffs without a victory providing there are not 16 unique winners.

With six career wins at Michigan, one at the Glen and two at Daytona, Harvick surely has to like his chances to punch his playoff ticket in August.

Brad Keselowski

Keselowski is 11th in the standings and would make the playoffs if there are not 16 different winners.

In his second year of ownership at rebranded RFK Racing, the 2012 champion is trying to get back into the playoffs after last year's rebuild at his new team. He missed

the playoffs for the first time in 15 seasons in 2022.

Bubba Wallace

Wallace is still looking for his first playoff berth. He is 15th in the standings, one of two Toyota drivers not already locked into the postseason. Wallace led a season-high 80 laps last week at Richmond International Raceway, but he faded late and finished a disappointing 12th.

He's usually a contender at Daytona, but surely doesn't want to go there needing to win.

Michael McDowell

The 2021 Daytona 500 champion is 16th in the standings, trying to get tiny Front Row Motorsports into the playoffs for the second time in team history. The team earned the automatic berth the year McDowell won the 500.

Although McDowell would be in if the regular season ended today, he has little room for error down the stretch and would need a victory if other new drivers win in the coming weeks.

Ty Gibbs

The reigning Xfinity Series champion is having a decent rookie Cup season for Joe Gibbs Racing and sits 17th in points. If Gibbs could snag a spot, JGR would have all four of its Toyotas in the playoff field.

Daniel Suarez

A playoff driver last year, Suarez is on the outside looking in, winless so far and 19th in points.

Ross Chastain, his teammate at Trackhouse Racing, has qualified and the Chevrolets are strong: Shane Van Gisbergen won for Trackhouse in his NASCAR debut on the downtown streets of Chicago, but he's not eligible for the playoffs.

Suarez has yet to find victory lane this season and has just six top-10 finishes through 22 races.



CHRIS CARLSON/AP

From left, Donny Allison, Jimmie Johnson and Chad Knaus pose for a picture after being selected for induction into the NASCAR Hall of Fame on Wednesday in Charlotte, N.C.

Johnson, Knaus join Allison as Hall of Fame selections

BY STEVE REED
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Together, Jimmie Johnson and Chad Knaus dominated auto racing for years.

It seems only fitting they were both selected for the NASCAR Hall of Fame on Wednesday.

Johnson, one of the most accomplished drivers in the sport's history, and his crew chief Knaus combined to win a record-tying seven Cup Series championships.

"It's very special and unique," Johnson said of going into the Hall of Fame with his friend. "When I knew my name was going on the ballot, and Chad's was as well, in the back of my mind I was really hoping this opportunity would come about."

They will be joined by former driver Donnie Allison, who got in via the pioneer ballot, as part of NASCAR's Class of 2024.

The induction ceremony will be held Jan. 19 in Charlotte.

Johnson's seven Cup Series titles tie him with Richard Petty and Dale Earnhardt for the most by a driver in NASCAR history, and his run of five consecutive championships from 2006 through 2010 remain a series record. He also won titles in 2013 and 2016.

Johnson's championships came during an era of change for NASCAR, as he earned titles under a variety of championship points formats and in three different generations of race cars.

Nicknamed "Superman," John-

son had a knack for coming up big at NASCAR's biggest races, winning all of the sport's crown jewel events at least twice. He won the Daytona 500 in 2006 and 2013, four Brickyard 400s (2006, '08-09, '12), four Coca-Cola 600s (2003-05, '14), two Southern 500s (2004, '12) and four All-Star Races (2003, '06, '12-13).

Johnson's 83 Cup wins rank sixth-most in NASCAR history, and they came at 20 different tracks.

Despite his accomplishments, the 47-year-old Johnson was not a unanimous selection. He received 93% of the votes from a panel of 57 that included NASCAR executives, drivers, crews chiefs, reporters and industry contributors.

Knaus, 51, came to Hendrick Motorsports as an assistant in the body shop, learning under Hall of Famer Ray Evernham as part of the "Rainbow Warriors."

They first met at a race in Homestead in 2001.

A few weeks later, Johnson, then a rookie on a fourth Hendrick Motorsports team, was paired with Knaus in the No. 48 Chevrolet, the start of one of the most productive partnerships in sports history.

Knaus said he was surprised and humbled to learn that he got into the Hall of Fame, receiving 81% of the votes.

"It's an honor to be here with Jimmie," Knaus said. "I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for Jimmie Johnson."

Johnson said his relationship with

Knaus wasn't always perfect given their competitive nature, but that they made it work.

"There were times we definitely butted heads, as I'm sure everybody heard on the radio," Johnson said. "But ultimately we had the same goal, and that was to be the best that we could. I never had anyone in my life push me as hard and as well as Chad Knaus."

For his part, Allison won 10 Cup Series races during his career.

The 83-year-old Allison was a member of NASCAR's famed "Alabama Gang" and an ambassador for the sport for more than 50 years.

"It's quite an honor to join the Hall of Fame, and it's just about as big of an honor to be in the Alabama gang," Allison said.

Allison is perhaps best known for his role in one of NASCAR's most famous moments — his 1979 Daytona 500 fight with Cale Yarborough during the sport's first nationally televised race. An intense battle for the win ended with both drivers wrecked and scuffling in the infield. The publicity from the altercation spurred the growth of NASCAR and remains one of the defining moments in the sport's history.

Janet Guthrie was named the Landmark Award winner for her outstanding contributions to the sport. Guthrie became the first woman to compete in a NASCAR Cup Series superspeedway race when she drove to a 15th-place finish in the 1976 World 600.



SKIP ROWLAND/AP

Chase Elliott interacts with fans during driver introductions for a NASCAR Cup Series race Sunday in Richmond, Va.

COLLEGE

Big Ten considering more from Pac-12

By RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

A group of Big Ten presidents has begun discussing the possibility of adding more West Coast schools to the conference if the Pac-12 continues to crumble, two people familiar with the conversations told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

The people spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the conversations were preliminary and the Big Ten was not going public with its internal deliberations.

Oregon and Washington would be the primary targets if the conference decided to make a move, one of the people said.

Yahoo Sports first reported the Big Ten was exploring the potential of adding more Pac-12 schools.

The Pac-12 is down to nine schools seemingly committed beyond this year, with Southern California and UCLA heading to the Big Ten in 2024 to make it a 16-team, coast-to-coast conference. Colorado is leaving the Pac-12 for the Big 12 next year, too. Colorado announced its move last week.

The Pac-12 is hoping to keep its remaining members together with a media rights deal that would make Apple TV the conference's primary home, ESPN reported Tuesday. The deal might not be enough to prevent more defections to the Big 12, with the remaining schools in the Four Corners region, Arizona, Arizona State and Utah, the prime targets.

The Arizona Board of Regents, which oversees both of the state's Pac-12 schools, scheduled a meeting for Thursday evening. The meeting is set to almost immedi-



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

UCLA is already headed out the door to join the Big Ten along with USC after this year, and Colorado is moving back to the Big 12. The Big Ten is having preliminary conversations about adding more teams from the Pac-12 if the league crumbles.

ately go into executive session with no public viewing.

On the agenda posted Wednesday night is listed is a "review of assignments for Arizona State University President Michael Crow and the University of Arizona President Robert Robbins," and "possible legal advice and discussion regarding university athletics."

USC's and UCLA's move to the Big Ten, announced in June 2022, were the first blows to send the Pac-12 reeling into un-

certainty over the past year.

The Big Ten vetted Pac-12 members Oregon, Washington, Stanford and California while maneuvering to add the Los Angeles schools, another person who was involved in that process told the AP.

While former Commissioner Kevin Warren kept the idea of more Western expansion alive in the Big Ten, a change of leadership seemed to cool down a desire for more growth in the league.

New Commissioner Tony Petitti said

during Big Ten football media days that expansion was not a priority.

"The Big Ten Conference is still focused on integration of USC and UCLA, but it's also the commissioner's job to keep chancellors and presidents informed about new developments as they occur," the Big Ten said in a statement Wednesday.

The Big Ten has been reluctant to add more schools because they won't increase the value of the seven-year, \$7 billion media rights deals with Fox, CBS and NBC that begin this season.

Expansion into the Northwest could provide some increased value to the Big Ten Network, one of the people familiar with the situation said.

Annual payouts by the conference to Big Ten schools through the length of those deals are projected to reach over \$60 million in just television revenue. Total conference payouts could reach \$90 million per year.

By comparison, the Big 12's recently agreed to extension with Fox and ESPN is projected to pay its members about \$32 million annually.

Any additional Big Ten expansion could not come at the expense of current member payouts, one of the people familiar with the situation said.

"It would definitely be a considerable reduction from the current rate," the person said.

But even a reduced payout from the Big Ten could top what the Pac-12 schools are likely to receive from their current conference under the Apple TV deal or what's available in the Big 12.

FSU wants new revenue model to stay in ACC

By MARK LONG
Associated Press

Florida State President Rick McCullough believes the Seminoles will have to consider leaving the Atlantic Coast Conference unless there is a "radical change to the revenue distribution."

McCullough made his remarks at a board of trustees meeting Wednesday, stoking more speculation that FSU is poised to break a grant of rights deal with the ACC and join another league.

"We are not satisfied with our current situation," McCullough said. "We love the ACC and our partners at ESPN. Our goal would be to stay in the ACC, but staying in the ACC under the current situation is hard for us to figure out how to remain competitive unless there were a major change in the revenue distribution. That has not happened."

McCullough said he, athletic director Michael Alford and others have spent a year trying to "fix the issue."

The ACC distributed an average of nearly \$39.5 million per school for full members for the 2021-22 season compared to \$49.9 million for the Southeastern Conference and \$47.9 million for the Big Ten.

"If we have to exit because we can't make it work, we just have to make sure we do what's right by this university."

Vivian de las Cuevas-Diaz
Florida State trustee

That gap is expected to grow to \$30 million a year once the power conferences add Oklahoma and Texas (joining the SEC) and UCLA and USC (joining the Big Ten).

And with the ACC mired in a TV deal with ESPN that lasts through the 2036 season, there's no foreseeable way to close a gap that could see ACC schools fall more than \$400 million behind some of their counterparts.

That kind of shortfall would hinder any school's ability to keep pace in an arms race that includes recruiting budgets, facility improvements, support staffs and coaching salaries. No one in FSU's virtual trustee meeting, however, suggested how the school might leave its current conference.

"I don't think anybody at this ta-

ble wants to be in this position to have to make the decision to go where we have to go," trustee Vivian de las Cuevas-Diaz said. "Having this deficit, it's huge. ... To me, I guess it's just sad to have this conversation. And part of it is as a fiduciary to this university, it's how do we do this eloquently, properly and ensure that we put Florida State in the best hands possible?"

"If we have to exit because we can't make it work, we just have to make sure we do what's right by this university."

To bolt the ACC, any school would need to pay an exit fee of three times its annual revenue (approximately \$120 million) and would need to navigate the grant in media rights to the ACC to be able to broadcast future games. If

not, all TV revenue a school generates from a new conference would have to be paid back to the ACC.

"We have to keep our lifeline going," trustee Deborah Sargeant said. "We don't want to have to do this, but we have to do what it takes to compete. I think we need to believe in ourselves and what we have."

Added trustee Justin Roth: "We would all love if every single planet aligned perfectly and tomorrow our TV contract ended and all three conferences or more conferences were offering us a deal and we could figure out what we want to do. But no matter what we do, that timing's not going to line up."

"For us, the alternative of just staying in this conference for the next 13 years and trying to wait for that perfect alignment of the stars is the equivalent of a death by a thousand cuts. And each cut is a \$30 million cut over the next 13 years. It's one thing to take a \$30 million cut last year and it's another to take another one this year. But to do this for 13 years?"

At least seven ACC schools — Clemson, Florida State, Miami, North Carolina, North Carolina State, Virginia and Virginia Tech — have had discussions about

breaking the grant-of-rights deal — a document that ties the conference together through 2036.

Conference ADs and presidents responded at the league's annual meeting in May by agreeing to consider a revised revenue-distribution model that would benefit the most successful teams beginning with the 2024-25 school year. The proposal would send a larger share of postseason revenue to the teams participating in those events rather than dividing it equally.

The tweak would coincide with the start of the expanded (and more lucrative) College Football Playoff. If you make the CFP, you get a larger share. The men's NCAA Basketball Tournament also would be divvied up based on performance, with deeper runs being rewarded.

Alford, FSU's AD, suggested the revisions could lead to more than \$10 million annually in extra revenue for a school. But even that would leave the ACC's top programs well behind the Big Ten and SEC.

"It'd be tough to run any other kind of company like this," FSU board chairman Peter Collins said.

MLB

Texas goes all-in in bid for title

Rangers add pair of big arms, eye deep October run

By **STEPHEN HAWKINS**
Associated Press

The Texas Rangers certainly expected to win a lot of games this season after bolstering their rotation with some proven veterans and hiring three-time championship manager Bruce Bochy last winter, a year after they committed a half-billion dollars for an All-Star middle infield.

Now there are thoughts of maybe winning it all.

“The way the guys have played has obviously made a change,” general manager Chris Young said.

“We came into the season focused on being a competitive club and playing meaningful games in September with a chance to play in October,” he said. “This team has done a great job of putting us in that situation here at the deadline. It was our responsibility to add to this team to make it even better.”

After Texas charged to the AL West lead, Young got a head start by acquiring hard-throwing reliever Aroldis Chapman a month ago. In the days leading up to the trade deadline, he added two more starters — three-time Cy Young Award winner Max Scherzer and lefty Jordan Montgomery, who came from St. Louis with reliever Chris Stratton.

“It just sends a message to the guys in the clubhouse that they believe in us,” said Andrew Heaney, one of the first-year Rangers, who hours after Tuesday’s deadline struck out 11 over six innings in a 2-0 win over the Chicago White Sox.

“These guys know that this front office, ownership is fully committed,” Bochy said. “It does a lot for a club when you get to the deadline and get the type of players that we got.”

The Rangers haven’t had a winning season since their last AL West title in 2016 and won only 68 games last year after signing shortstop Corey Seager and second baseman Marcus Semien. But they are now going all-in while big spenders like the New York Mets and San Diego Padres are fourth in their respective divisions when they anticipated being World Series contenders.

New York won 101 games in the regular season last year and came into 2023 with a record payroll that just a month ago was projected at around \$365 million. But the Mets are stepping back and had a stunning selloff of six players be-



PHOTOS BY TONY GUTIERREZ/AP

Above: The Rangers’ Ezequiel Duran and Marcus Semien high five pitcher Max Scherzer, right, who was traded to Texas by the New York Mets before Tuesday’s trade deadline. Left: Bruce Bochy, left, who won three World Series as manager of the San Francisco Giants, has provided a steady hand for the Rangers as they battle the Houston Astros for the AL West title.



fore the deadline. That included Scherzer and fellow three-time Cy Young winner Justin Verlander, also to the AL West when he re-joined reigning World Series champion Houston after only 16 starts for New York.

Texas will be responsible for only \$22.5 million of the \$58 million owed to Scherzer through next season, with the Mets paying the other \$35.5 million. That is the remainder of a \$130 million, three-year contract the pitcher agreed to before the 2022 season.

Scherzer was scheduled to make his Rangers debut on Thursday in a series finale against the Chicago White Sox. Montgomery will start Friday night against Miami.

“Similar to what I’ve said on the offense, this rotation now has

depth and some versatility as well, and we think it’ll serve us well,” said Young, a former big league pitcher.

The Rangers also have another former Mets pitcher with multiple Cy Young Awards, though two-time NL winner Jacob deGrom is out until at least late next season because of right elbow surgery. Texas won all six games started by deGrom, all before the end of April, after he signed a \$185 million, five-year deal in free agency last winter.

Before deciding to waive his no-trade clause and also exercise his player option for 2024, Scherzer reached out to deGrom to get a feel for the Rangers organization.

“The guys are playing hard and playing well together and that this was a good situation for him, and if

I were to come over, it’d be a great situation for myself as well,” Scherzer said of that conversation. “I believed what he said.”

Nathan Eovaldi became an All-Star again this season after joining Texas on a \$34 million, two-year deal that includes an option for 2025, though he is on the 15-day injured list and last pitched on July 18 — his only start since the All-Star break — because of a right forearm strain. Heaney signed a \$25 million, two-year deal last winter.

The pitchers added over the last week are reuniting with pitching coach Mike Maddux, who was first with the Rangers from 2009-15, including their only World Series appearances in 2010 and 2011. Scherzer was a back-to-back Cy Young winner in 2016 and 2017 during Maddux’s two seasons with the Washington Nationals, then Montgomery and Stratton were with the coach last year in St. Louis.

“I’m excited to work with Mad Dog again,” said Montgomery, who was 6-9 with a 3.42 ERA in 21 starts this season for the last-place Cardinals. “Just he knows pitching, he knows how to sequence and do everything, and just get outs. And I think he makes everybody better.”

Just like the Rangers are trying to be.

Scoreboard

American League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Baltimore	66	42	.611	—
Tampa Bay	66	45	.595	1½
Toronto	60	49	.550	6½
Boston	57	51	.528	9
New York	56	52	.519	10

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	55	54	.505	—
Cleveland	53	56	.486	2
Detroit	48	60	.444	6½
Chicago	43	66	.394	12
Kansas City	34	75	.312	21

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	62	46	.574	—
Houston	62	47	.569	½
Seattle	56	52	.519	6
Los Angeles	56	53	.514	6½
Oakland	30	79	.275	32½

National League

East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	69	37	.651	—
Philadelphia	58	50	.537	12
Miami	58	51	.532	12½
New York	50	57	.467	19½
Washington	46	63	.422	24½

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cincinnati	59	51	.536	—
Milwaukee	58	51	.532	½
Chicago	55	53	.509	3
Pittsburgh	48	59	.449	9½
St. Louis	48	61	.440	10½

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	61	45	.575	—
San Francisco	60	49	.550	2½
Arizona	57	52	.523	5½
San Diego	54	55	.495	8½
Colorado	42	66	.389	20

Wednesday’s games

- Houston 3, Cleveland 2
- Seattle 6, Boston 3
- N.Y. Yankees 7, Tampa Bay 2
- Toronto 4, Baltimore 1
- Texas 11, Chicago White Sox 1
- Atlanta 12, L.A. Angels 5
- Detroit 6, Pittsburgh 3
- Washington 3, Milwaukee 2
- San Diego 11, Colorado 1
- St. Louis 7, Minnesota 3
- Kansas City 4, N.Y. Mets 0
- Miami 9, Philadelphia 8, 12 innings
- Chicago Cubs 16, Cincinnati 6
- San Francisco 4, Arizona 2
- L.A. Dodgers 10, Oakland 1

Thursday’s games

- Philadelphia at Miami
- Chicago White Sox at Texas
- N.Y. Mets at Kansas City
- Baltimore at Toronto
- Arizona at San Francisco
- Houston at N.Y. Yankees
- Pittsburgh at Milwaukee
- Minnesota at St. Louis
- Cincinnati at Chicago Cubs
- Seattle at L.A. Angels
- Oakland at L.A. Dodgers

Friday’s games

- Atlanta (Fried 2-1) at Chicago Cubs (TBD)
- Washington (Corbin 7-11) at Cincinnati (Ashcraft 6-7)
- Tampa Bay (Littell 1-2) at Detroit (Olson 1-4)
- Kansas City (Lyles 2-12) at Philadelphia (Nola 9-7)
- N.Y. Mets (Peterson 3-7) at Baltimore (TBD)
- Houston (Brown 7-7) at N.Y. Yankees (Severino 2-5)
- Chicago White Sox (Clevinger 4-4) at Cleveland (Allen 4-4)
- Toronto (TBD) at Boston (Paxton 6-2)
- Miami (Luzardo 8-5) at Texas (Montgomery 6-9)
- Arizona (TBD) at Minnesota (TBD)
- Pittsburgh (Priester 2-1) at Milwaukee (Rea 5-4)
- Colorado (Flexen 0-5) at St. Louis (Wainwright 3-5)
- Seattle (Castillo 7-7) at L.A. Angels (Detmers 2-8)
- L.A. Dodgers (TBD) at San Diego (Darvish 8-7)

Calendar

- Aug. 20** — Philadelphia vs. Washington at Williamsport, Pa.
- Aug. 31** — Last day to be in organization to be postseason eligible.
- Oct. 1** — Regular season ends.

PRO FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME



TONY DEJAK/AP

Cleveland Browns tackle Joe Thomas celebrates after a 24-6 win over the Detroit Lions in a preseason game in Cleveland on Aug. 15, 2013. Thomas was voted into the Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility.

Tackle Joe Thomas was Cleveland's own iron man

BY TOM WITHERS
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Due to space limitations, Joe Thomas was given only 300 tickets to disperse among dozens of family members, former teammates, friends and other guests to attend his upcoming Pro Football Hall of Fame induction.

Not everyone made the cut.

"I invited all my Browns head coaches and quarterbacks, then ran out," he cracked.

At least Thomas can joke these days while reflecting on a stellar NFL career that included so many miserable, losing seasons in Cleveland — he played for six coaches and blocked for 20 different starting QBs — while at times pushing himself through debilitating pain just to stay on the field.

For 11 years, Thomas was a pillar of excellence for a franchise that has spent most of the past two-plus decades in disarray. An iron man, he

played 10,363 consecutive snaps, a streak believed to be a league record, before being forced off the field with a torn triceps midway through Cleveland's 0-16 season in 2017.

He was a technician on the field, his performance shaped by an endless quest for perfection. Outside the lines, Thomas was the consummate teammate.

Thomas played on just one winning team — the Browns went 48-128 with him — and he never made the playoffs, the only blemish on an otherwise flawless résumé.

"I'm not a guy who thinks about what could have been or things that were out of my control," Thomas told The Associated Press. "I'm very satisfied with my career, but certainly the big hole is not bringing a championship to Cleveland because that was my driving force since the day I got to Cleveland."

A 10-time Pro Bowler, six-time All-Pro and regarded as one of the

best left tackles in league history, Thomas was always there for his team and a city that embraced the Wisconsin native as one of its own from the moment he was drafted.

Despite numerous knee surgeries, crippling back spasms and needing pain medication in his final seasons simply so he could stand long enough to do weekly media requirements, Thomas never missed a single play in 167 consecutive games.

The Canton induction is his Super Bowl, and he's already given up thinking he'll be able to stay composed.

"I won't," he said. "The biggest challenge for me is that I make sure I recite the speech several times so if I do start to find my mind wandering in kind of the emotions of the moment, I can kind of turn into a robot hopefully and read the words so I can stay on task."

He always did.

Klecko ends 35-year wait after career of toughness, versatility

BY DENNIS WASZAK JR.
Associated Press

Joe Klecko was tangled up with an offensive lineman during a New York Jets game when fists, elbows and cusses started flying.

The scrum came to an abrupt end when Marty Lyons, Klecko's concerned teammate, ran up behind the big defensive lineman, put him in a bear hug and pulled him from the fracas.

It was the last time Lyons ever did that.

"He grabbed me and he said, 'You ever do that again, I'll kick your (butt) right here in front of everybody,'" Lyons said, chuckling at the memory from more than 40 years ago. "He says, 'You either fight with me or you leave me alone.' And right then and there, I knew I had a guy in the foxhole with me.

"If I ever got into a fight, No. 73 would come in there and he'd take those big hands and fingers and he'd just throw people."

Toughness, unmatched versatility, brute strength and unwavering loyalty were the hallmarks of a 12-year Hall of Fame career for Klecko, who was the heart of the Jets' "New York Sack Exchange" in the 1980s while teaming with Lyons, Mark Gastineau and Abdul Salaam on a dominant D-line.

"I grew up in the streets of a tough town and I used to get my butt kicked when I was a kid," said the 69-year-old Klecko, who was raised in Chester, Pa. "Fighting was part of life. And I didn't feel like there was anybody out there that I was going to take it from. I never made that my badge of courage or something like that.

"It's just how I played the game."

Klecko was a favorite among fans — many of whom still wear his jersey at games — and his teammates for his big plays, vicious sacks and constant support for his guys. He was the first, and still the only, player in NFL history to be selected to the Pro Bowl at three positions on the defensive line: end, tackle and



Klecko

nose tackle.

"The only thing that was important to me at the time, really, was winning," Klecko said. "Wherever I played or played hurt or whatever I did, I did for us to win the football game."

Klecko's induction into pro football's shrine in Canton, Ohio, on Saturday comes 35 years after he played his last NFL snap. He made it in as a senior candidate; Lyons and many others Klecko played with and against deemed the honor long overdue.

"The people in Canton finally woke up," said Lyons, whom Klecko chose to present him at the induction ceremony.

"Every time I turn the corner or I talk to someone, I go into someone's office that I do business with, it's, 'Hey, Joe, congratulations,'" Klecko said. "It's overwhelming in that way. It's something we've hoped for for a long time.

"The Hall of Fame — wow. It's pretty ... cool."

Klecko was a sixth-round draft pick by the Jets out of Temple in 1977 and quickly became a force on New York's defense as the anchor of the "Sack Exchange." He was twice selected an All-Pro and led the NFL with 20½ sacks in 1981, the year before the statistic was officially recognized by the league.

While Gastineau's flashy sack dancing antics drew more attention, Klecko's battles up front with O-linemen have become the stuff of legend. Fellow Pro Football Hall of Famers Dwight Stephenson, Anthony Muñoz, Joe DeLamielleure and John Hannah have raved for years about how Klecko was nearly impossible to block during his prime.

"You had to go through Joe," Lyons said. "This was Joe's team in the '80s. It was all about Joe, but Joe made it all about everybody else. He held everybody accountable."

Zach Thomas ran past blocks, doubt throughout career

BY ALANIS THAMES
Associated Press

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — The sun was already out the morning of Zach Thomas' first NFL training camp 27 years ago.

It was 8:45 a.m. — back when the Miami Dolphins held two practices a day. A gentle breeze wafted the smell of wet grass through the air.

Thomas, a fifth-round draft pick from a small town in northwest Texas, took in his surroundings. The Hall of Fame quarterback Dan Marino stood just across from him, but Thomas didn't bask in admiration for long.

"I was so focused, laser-focused just to make the team," he said.



Zach Thomas

Thomas knew then that he didn't look the part of a typical NFL linebacker. At 5-foot-11 and 228 pounds, Thomas was undersized and overlooked. He was barely scouted out of high school and originally recruited out of Texas Tech to play special teams for the Dolphins.

Miami selected him with the 154th pick in the 1996 NFL Draft — the 19th linebacker taken in a class that also includes Ray Lewis. Thomas spent the rest of his 13-season NFL career running through blocks, and doubt, en route to seven Pro Bowls, five All-Pro selections and

the fifth-most tackles in NFL history.

He made the Pro Football Hall of Fame in his 10th year of eligibility, and fourth straight as a finalist.

"Zach was tough, nasty and relentless," said former teammate Larry Izzo, a linebacker who played for Miami from 1996-2000. "He was a three-down linebacker who never left the field. He just made plays. Zach was a guy who always played with a huge chip on his shoulder, and that drove him to greatness. His play inspired his teammates, and Zach set the tone every time he stepped on the field."

Thomas had keen football instincts, and he was versatile. He covered tight ends, running backs, receivers. It didn't matter.

"The most unnerving thing about playing Miami was Zach Thomas calling out all of your plays," Hall of Famer Peyton Manning said in 2020. "He caused the most problems for me of any player I ever faced."

Thomas never complicated things on the field. For him, it was as simple as deciphering the run from the pass.

"I feel like that's where I got a great tip before they even snap the ball," he said. "Knowing the play, I feel like there were times I'd call it out, especially with Peyton because we're up there in the dome, it's quiet, you can hear their numbers, you can hear everything. You knew a play they were going to run, you let them know it. It's all such a mind game."

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP



HAMISH BLAIR/AP

Debinha, right, was devastated after Brazil's scoreless draw with Jamaica brought its tournament to an end.

Expanded field creates early drama for powers

BY CASSIDY HETTESHEIMER
Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Frequent Women's World Cup title contenders like the United States, Germany and Brazil are used to win-or-go-home scenarios — but rarely this early in the tournament. The high-stakes must-win-or-draw matches for top teams began in group play this year, in part thanks to the ripple effects of a format change. With the Women's World Cup now at 32 teams, no longer can any third-place finishers in the group stage advance to the round of 16.

"In general, we can say that at this tournament, what we expected happened," Germany coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg said ahead of her team's group-stage finale Thursday night against South Korea in Brisbane. "We had some close wins, faced some difficulties. We had games where we had to give everything."

After losing 2-1 to Colombia on Sunday, two-time World Cup champion Germany needed a win over South Korea to clinch a spot in the knockout rounds. It didn't happen. A 1-1 draw combined with Morocco's 1-0 victory over Colombia sent the Germans home.

No. 2 Germany isn't the only top contender that faced this situation in this year's tournament. Several teams have experienced unfamiliar — but not entirely unexpected or unwelcome — pressure to earn crucial points in their group-stage finales.

"We had to be ready, every game

Round of 16

Saturday, Aug. 5

Switzerland vs. Spain, **AFN-Sports, 7 a.m. Saturday CET; 2 p.m. Saturday JKT**
Japan vs. Norway, **AFN-Sports, 10 a.m. Saturday CET; 5 p.m. Saturday JKT**
Netherlands vs. South Africa, **AFN-Sports, 4 a.m. Sunday CET; 11 a.m. Sunday JKT**

Sunday, Aug. 6

Sweden vs. United States, **AFN-Sports2, 11 a.m. Sunday CET; 6 p.m. Sunday JKT**
Monday, Aug. 7

England vs. Nigeria, **AFN-Sports, 9:30 a.m. Monday CET; 4:30 p.m. Monday JKT**
Australia vs. Denmark, **AFN-Sports, 12:30 p.m. Monday CET; 7:30 p.m. Monday JKT**

Tuesday, Aug. 8

Colombia vs. Jamaica, **AFN-Sports, 10 a.m. Tuesday CET; 5 p.m. Tuesday JKT**
France vs. Morocco, **AFN-Sports, 1 p.m. Tuesday CET; 8 p.m. Tuesday JKT**

is hard," said Léa Le Garrec, a midfielder for No. 5-ranked France, which needed at least a draw against Panama on Wednesday to lock down a spot in the round of 16. France conceded the first goal before winning 6-3.

No. 7 Canada became the first reigning Olympic champion to fail to reach the Women's World Cup knockout round after losing 4-0 in its must-win finale against co-host Australia. No. 8 Brazil's streak of qualifying for the knockout stages through six consecutive World Cups was ended after a must-win finale against Jamaica ended in a draw.

Tensions were strung tight for the top-ranked U.S. team's group-stage finale against Portugal, because the Americans needed at least a draw — which they hung on for — to advance.

"I remember as a child watching the FIFA games and seeing results like 12-0," Germany midfielder Le-

na Oberdorf said. "I find it extremely interesting that we now see more close results and even ties."

This year, 32 teams qualified to compete in eight groups. In the past two Women's World Cups, 24 teams qualified to compete in six groups.

In the 24-team format, the top two finishers from each group plus the top four third-place finishers across all six groups advanced to the round of 16.

The inclusion of third-place finishers in the knockout rounds meant that wins in teams' first two matches, or a win and a draw, were almost certain to clinch them a spot in the knockout round.

This year, with no safety net for third-place finishers, a 1-1-1 group-stage record knocked out Canada, co-host New Zealand and Portugal, which was making its tournament debut. That record would have eliminated the defending World Cup champion U.S. had Portugal's late shot off the post had instead found the back of the net.

Increased parity in the women's game has been evident throughout group play. Now that only half of the 32 teams go on to the knockout rounds, versus two-thirds in the 24-team format, more of the higher-ranked teams are competing for fewer spots.

"We recognize how every single player is important and plays a significant role in the outcome," Oberdorf said. "This is how we keep the game interesting, and this should be our aim."

Cassidy Hettesheimer is a student at the University of Georgia's Carmical Sports Media Institute.

Instinct: US has 14 newcomers on squad

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nected offensively."

The team has 14 players who are making their first appearance in a World Cup, and for 12 of them, it's their first big international tournament. Coach Vlatko Andonovski focused on developing young talent after the U.S. settled for a disappointing bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics.

Andonovski rolled out the same lineup for the first two matches of the group stage against Vietnam and the Netherlands. The starters had never played together before.

Rapinoe and Rose Lavelle, who both scored in the 2-0 victory over the Netherlands in the World Cup final four years ago in France, had picked up injuries in the run-up to the tournament and their minutes were restricted.

When Lavelle was subbed into the group match against the Dutch last Thursday, she gave the team a second-half spark and served up the corner kick to Lindsey Horan for the goal that pulled the U.S. into a 1-1 draw.

Hoping to boost the attack, Andonovski changed things up against Portugal, starting Lavelle and replacing forward Trinity Rodman with Lynn Williams. Still, the scoring issues persisted.

Lavelle picked up her second yellow card in the match against Portugal, meaning she won't be available to play on Sunday in Melbourne.

Portugal nearly scored in stoppage time, but Ana Capeta's blast hit the post. A loss to the Portuguese would have sent the Americans home after the group stage for the first time at a World Cup or an Olympics.

Following the draw, former U.S. forward Carli Lloyd blasted the team as "uninspiring."

"Disappointing. They don't look fit. They're playing as individuals and the tactics are too predictable," Lloyd said on the Fox Sports postgame show.

Andonovski was asked after-

DID YOU KNOW?

The clash between the United States, the two-time reigning World Cup champions, and third-ranked Sweden will be their seventh meeting and tie the record for the most-played matchup in Women's World Cup history.

SOURCE: Associated Press

ward about Lloyd's comments.

"One thing that I want to say is that this team wanted to win this game more than anything else, and they've put everything they could in preparation for this tournament and in every game," Andonovski said. "To question the mentality of this team, to question the willingness to win, to compete, I think it's insane."

The U.S. is also missing Mallory Swanson's scoring punch and Becky Sauerbrunn's veteran leadership on the backline.

Swanson, the team's top scorer this year, tore her patella tendon in an exhibition match with Ireland in April. Then Sauerbrunn, the team's captain, announced in June that she was unable to get over a foot injury in time for the tournament.

The Americans, who have won a record four World Cups, had not needed the third and final group-stage match to clinch a spot in the knockout round since 2007.

The Netherlands now heads to Sydney to face South Africa, the second-place team from Group G. If the U.S. can beat Sweden in Melbourne, it's back to Auckland for the quarterfinals.

But there's no guarantee unless the team can find that 2019 magic again. And fast.

"I know this team and I know what we're capable of," Morgan said. "Just because it hasn't clicked every moment on the field and we're not putting goals in the back of the net doesn't mean that these aren't the right players for the job. The confidence is there, now we just have to prove it out on the field."



ABBIE PARR/AP

United States forward Megan Rapinoe has had her minutes limited in this year's World Cup and has yet to score a goal.

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Scoreboard

GROUP A							
	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Switzerland	3	1	2	0	2	0	5
Norway	3	1	1	1	6	1	4
New Zealand	3	1	1	1	1	1	4
Philippines	3	1	0	2	1	8	3

Thursday, July 20
New Zealand 1, Norway 0

Friday, July 21
Switzerland 2, Philippines 0

Tuesday, July 25
Philippines 1, New Zealand 0
Switzerland 0, Norway 0

Sunday, July 30
Switzerland 0, New Zealand 0
Norway 6, Philippines 0

GROUP B							
	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Australia	3	2	0	1	7	3	6
Nigeria	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Canada	3	1	1	1	2	5	4
Ireland	3	0	1	2	1	3	1

Thursday, July 20
Australia 1, Ireland 0
Nigeria 0, Canada 0

Wednesday, July 26
Canada 2, Ireland 1

Thursday, July 27
Nigeria 3, Australia 2

Monday, July 31
Australia 4, Canada 0
Ireland 0, Nigeria 0

GROUP C							
	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Japan	3	3	0	0	11	0	9
Spain	3	2	0	1	8	4	6
Zambia	3	1	0	2	3	11	3
Costa Rica	3	0	0	3	1	8	0

Friday, July 21
Spain 3, Costa Rica 0

Saturday, July 22
Japan 5, Zambia 0

Wednesday, July 26
Japan 2, Costa Rica 0
Spain 5, Zambia 0

Monday, July 31
Japan 4, Spain 0
Zambia 3, Costa Rica 1

GROUP D							
	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
England	3	3	0	0	8	1	9
Denmark	3	2	0	1	3	1	6
China	3	1	0	2	2	7	3
Haiti	3	0	0	3	0	4	0

Saturday, July 22
England 1, Haiti 0
Denmark 1, China 0

Friday, July 28
England 1, Denmark 0
China 1, Haiti 0

Tuesday, Aug. 1
England 6, China 1
Denmark 2, Haiti 0

GROUP E							
	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Netherlands	3	2	1	0	9	1	7
United States	3	1	2	0	4	1	5
Portugal	3	1	1	1	2	1	4
Vietnam	3	0	0	3	0	12	0

Friday, July 21
United States 3, Vietnam 0

Sunday, July 23
Netherlands 1, Portugal 0

Wednesday, July 26
United States 1, Netherlands 1

Thursday, July 27
Portugal 2, Vietnam 0

Tuesday, Aug. 1
Portugal 0, United States 0
Netherlands 7, Vietnam 0

GROUP F							
	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
France	3	2	1	0	8	4	7
Jamaica	3	1	2	0	1	0	5
Brazil	3	1	1	1	5	2	4
Panama	3	0	0	3	3	11	0

Sunday, July 23
France 0, Jamaica 0

Monday, July 24
Brazil 4, Panama 0

Saturday, July 29
France 2, Brazil 1
Jamaica 1, Panama 0

Wednesday, Aug. 2
France 6, Panama 3
Jamaica 0, Brazil 0

GROUP G							
	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Sweden	3	3	0	0	7	1	6
South Africa	3	1	1	1	6	6	4
Italy	3	1	0	2	3	8	3
Argentina	3	0	1	2	2	5	1

Sunday, July 23
Sweden 2, South Africa 1

Monday, July 24
Italy 1, Argentina 0

Thursday, July 27
Argentina 2, South Africa 2

Saturday, July 29
Sweden 5, Italy 0

Wednesday, Aug. 2
Sweden 2, Argentina 0
South Africa 3, Italy 2

GROUP H							
	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Colombia	3	2	0	1	4	2	6
Morocco	3	2	0	1	2	6	6
Germany	3	1	1	1	8	3	4
South Korea	3	0	1	2	1	4	1

Monday, July 24
Germany 6, Morocco 0
Colombia 2, South Korea 0

Sunday, July 30
Morocco 1, South Korea 0
Colombia 2, Germany 1

Thursday, Aug. 3
South Korea 1, Germany 1
Morocco 1, Colombia 0

Second-ranked Germany fails to advance after tie

By MOLLY LEE
Associated Press

BRISBANE, Australia — Two-time champion Germany failed to reach the knockout stage for the first time ever at the Women's World Cup after being held to a 1-1 draw by South Korea in a tense group finale.

Morocco's 1-0 win over Colombia in Perth added pressure on a German team that then needed to beat South Korea to advance. The last two group-stage games of the tournament kicked off simultaneously Thursday night on opposite sides of Australia.

When Morocco took a 1-0 lead over Colombia in stoppage time in the first half, it was suddenly make or break for Germany.

Even then, head coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg elected to wait to tell the players that another goal was essential.

"We heard at about 85 minutes," German goalkeeper Merle Frohms said. "Our coach didn't want to make us nervous by telling us at halftime."

Germany pushed for a late winner.

A would-be winning goal from Alexandra Popp overturned by VAR for offsides in the 57th. Just a few minutes later, Popp was close to scoring with another header but was denied by the crossbar.

Germany's final scoring opportunities came in the 11th and 12th minutes of stoppage time when two shots from Sydney Lohmann missed wide and high.

When the final whistle blew, the German players lingered on the field in a state of shock.



TERTIUS PICKARD/AP

Germany's Alexandra Popp, right, reacts after South Korea's goalkeeper Kim Jung-mi saved her shot on goal on Thursday.

"We are all very speechless," German midfielder Lena Oberdorf said. "Things didn't quite click. We didn't really show the combination we can show and we can play."

Despite all their past credentials, the Germany team is now painfully aware that the expanded 32-team draw and greater investment in the wider women's game makes progressing at the World Cup a more difficult proposition.

"It was just not enough for that tournament," Oberdorf said. "In women's football, the game is growing and it's not easy to come

to the round of 16. That's clear."

Popp is still one of the stars of the international game and her four goals were a bright spot for Germany at the tournament. She finished the group stage tied for the most goals with Japan's Hinata Miyazawa.

"We need some time to process what has happened and to be able to find some confidence again," said Popp, who scored on a towering header in the 42nd minute to tie the game. "At this stage, we know that our squad is good, but we were not good enough in these last two games."

Morocco makes more history, reaches knockout stage

Associated Press

PERTH, Australia — Morocco beat Colombia 1-0 to make it to the Women's World Cup knockout round, creating more history in a dramatic conclusion to the group stage of the 2023 tournament.

Morocco is the first Arab or North African nation to qualify for the Women's World Cup and now the first to advance beyond the group stage. That's something none of the other seven newcomers managed to do.

The victory also meant Morocco qualified in second place in the group, behind Colombia, and knocked two-time champion Germany out of the tournament. No. 2-ranked Germany needed a win over South Korea in a game being played simultaneously in Brisbane, but was held to a 1-1 draw.

The Moroccan players and coaching staff gathered on the



GARY DAY/AP

Morocco players celebrate after beating Colombia on Thursday in a Women's World Cup match. That put Morocco in the knockout round.

pitch after fulltime in Perth to watch the end of the Germany-South Korea game in Brisbane, which still potentially had a hand

in their World Cup fate.

"We had the phone and we started praying. We were praying while we were watching the game," said

midfielder Anissa Lahmari, who scored Morocco's goal in first-half stoppage time. "Afterwards it was just a complete explosion of joy."

If Morocco's qualification for the Women's World Cup inspired a generation, this run to the knockout stage will cement a legacy for the Atlas Lionesses.

The Moroccans were trounced 6-0 by Germany in their debut game in the tournament, but bounced back with consecutive wins.

The win over South Korea on the weekend was historic for the team, for Ibtissam Jraïdi scoring the Atlas Lionesses' first World Cup goal, and for another significant milestone — defender Nouhaila Benzina became the first player to wear a Hijab in a World Cup game at the senior level.

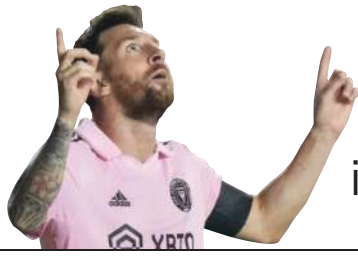
The game against Colombia was an even contest right through the

first half until Jraïdi was fouled in the penalty area in the dying seconds before the break. Ghizlane Chebbak's penalty attempt was saved, but Lahmari swooped on the rebound to put her team ahead of Colombia — and, just as importantly, the Germany team playing on the other side of the country.

Colombia had its best scoring chance in the 59th minute, when its 18-year-old superstar, Linda Caicedo, served a ball to the far post, which Daniela Montoya one-timed to the left of goalkeeper Khadija Er-Rmichi. The Moroccan goalkeeper made a reflex kick save, blocking the ball with just the front edge of her right cleat.

In the 69th, Caicedo, after a long run, stopped and leaned on the field barrier, reaching down to her left ankle and foot. She appeared hobbled for several minutes but stayed in the match.

SPORTS



Messi does it again
Inter Miami's new star scores 2 goals in victory over Orlando City » **MLS, Page 41**

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Missing that killer instinct



Americans lacking 2019 magic at this year's tournament

By ANNE M. PETERSON
Associated Press

The United States is clearly not the dominant team that won the 2019 Women's World Cup.

The Americans have advanced to the knockout stage at this edition of the tournament, but just barely after a 0-0 draw with Portugal in their final group match. After the final whistle on Tuesday night, Alex Morgan stood expressionless with her hands on her hips.

It was a look of frustration. If the Americans don't pick up their play, their run to a third straight World Cup title could soon be over.

With just one win and a pair of draws, the U.S. fell to second in Group E behind the Netherlands. The Americans now head to Melbourne, Australia, for a round of 16 match against Sweden, the top finisher from Group G.

The U.S. scored just four goals in group play — a sharp contrast to the 18 they scored in the group in 2019. In each of their first six matches four years ago in France, the Americans scored within the opening 12 minutes.

"I think there's things we can do better for sure, things we could do better from the last couple of games. But I'm not going to dwell on it. It is what it is," veteran Megan Rapinoe said. "We need to play better and we know that. We need to be a little bit more fluid and I think just a little bit more con-

"We need to play better and we know that."

Megan Rapinoe
US forward

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Draw with South Korea sends Germany packing **Page 47**

Morocco tops Colombia, earns spot in next round **Page 47**

The United States' Alex Morgan, right, reacts after a missed shot during Tuesday's Group E match against Portugal at the Women's World Cup in Auckland, New Zealand. The Americans won just one group stage match, settling for draws in the other two.

ANDREW CORNAGA/AP

Rangers add arms to go all-in on playoff run » **MLB, Page 44**

