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EUROPE & PACIFIC

WEEKEND EDITION

MLB

Hall of Famer Tom Seaver, heart and soul of the '69 'Miracle Mets,' dies at 75

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U.S. Army/AP

Sgt. Maj. Thomas Payne, shown as a sergeant first class in 2012, will receive the Medal of Honor for his actions during a daring 2015 raid that rescued 70 hostages set to be executed by Islamic State militants.

Soldier will get Medal of Honor for Iraq rescue

By JAMES LA PORTA
Associated Press

DELRAY BEACH, Fla. — An American soldier who helped rescue about 70 hostages set to be executed by Islamic State militants in combat in a White House ceremony set to receive the Medal of Honor for actions during a daring 2015 raid, The Associated Press has learned.

Sgt. Maj. Thomas "Patrick" Payne, a Ranger assigned to the U.S. Army's Special Operations Command, will receive the U.S. military's highest honor for valor in combat in a White House ceremony set to be held on the 19th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

The medal approval was confirmed by two Defense Department officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak on the record. Payne was initially given the Army's second-highest award, the Distinguished Service Cross, for the special operations raid, which is being upgraded to a Medal of Honor.

Contacted by the AP on Monday, the Pentagon would not comment. The White House did not respond to an email inquiry.

SEE MEDAL ON PAGE 3



PACIFIC

Saluting service and sacrifice

Scaled-down ceremony marking 75th anniversary of WWII's end reflects on a generation's toil to turn 'peril into peace'

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

HONOLULU — Seventy-five years ago, 900 bombers and fighters filled the sky above Tokyo Bay, where 250 Allied ships were moored as Imperial Japan formally surrendered during a ceremony on the deck of the USS Missouri.

Thousands of servicemen crammed the decks and turrets of the battleship to view the historic signing on Sept. 2, 1945, bringing an end to World War II.

U.S. sailors aboard the USS Michael Murphy stand at attention while passing the Battleship Missouri Memorial on Wednesday during a ceremony commemorating the end of World War II. Japan formally surrendered on the deck of the Missouri on Sept. 2, 1945.

Danny Nater as
U.S. Marine Corps

On Wednesday, only a dozen veterans of the war were on the fantail of that ship in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to witness a commemoration marking the 75th anniversary of the war's end, their numbers thinned by time.

More than 100 veterans of the war had planned to attend — including 14 who were in Tokyo Bay 75 years ago — but event planners decided the risks posed by the virus were too great for veterans well into their 90s. The veterans who did attend live in Hawaii.

SEE WWII ON PAGE 5

BUSINESS/WEATHER

United plans to furlough 16K

Associated Press

United Airlines said Wednesday it plans to furlough 16,370 employees in October, a smaller number than the airline predicted in July because thousands of workers agreed to leave with the travel industry facing a slow recovery from the pandemic.

Airline officials had outlined 36,000 potential furloughs in July. Since then, thousands of workers took early retirement, buyouts, or long-term leaves of absence.

United officials said the forced job cuts will begin Oct. 1, when a prohibition on furloughs ends. They said the furloughs would be postponed if Washington approves another \$25 billion to help passenger airlines cover payroll costs.

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Unavailable at press time

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	\$2.939	+3.0 cents	--	+2.0 cents
Change in price	--	--	--	--
Okinawa	\$2.289	+4.0 cents	--	\$2.509
Change in price	+4.0 cents	--	--	+2.0 cents
South Korea	\$2.299	--	\$2.959	\$2.519
Change in price	+4.0 cents	--	+4.0cents	+1.0 cents
Guam	\$2.299**	\$2.709	\$2.949	--
Change in price	+4.0 cents	+4.0 cents	+3.0 cents	--

* Diesel EFD ** Midgrade
For the week of Sept. 4-10

EXCHANGE RATES

	Military rates	Commercial rates
Euro costs (Sept. 4)	\$1.16	0.3770
Dollar buys (Sept. 4)	60.2324	1.3293
British pound (Sept. 4)	\$1.30	1.3102
Japanese yen (Sept. 4)	103.00	6.8357
South Korean won (Sept. 4)	1,156.00	6.2520
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770	15.9209
British pound	\$1.3293	\$1,184.0/8,444
Canada (Dollar)	1.3102	7.7505
China (Yuan)	6.8357	302.89
Denmark (Krone)	6.2520	3.3620
Egypt (Pound)	15.9209	106.36
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7505	0.3057
Hungary (Forint)	302.89	8.9400
Israel (Shekel)	3.3620	48.55
Japan (Yen)	106.36	3.74
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3057	3.7504
Norway (Krone)	8.9400	1.3642
Philippines (Peso)	48.55	1,189.70
Poland (Zloty)	3.74	
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7504	
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3642	
South Korea (Won)	1,189.70	

Switzerland (Franc).....0.9100
Thailand (Baht).....31.42
Turkey (Lira).....7.4420
(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	0.25
Federal funds market rate	0.09
3-month bill	0.10
30-year bond	1.37

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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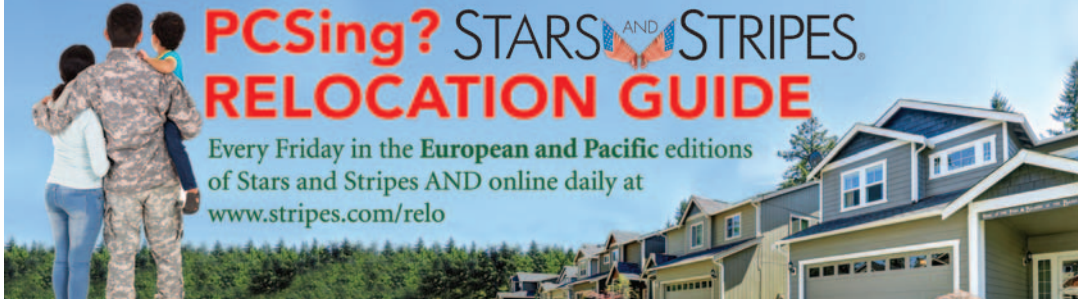
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PCSing? STARS AND STRIPES RELOCATION GUIDE

Every Friday in the European and Pacific editions of Stars and Stripes AND online daily at www.stripes.com/relo



MILITARY

Overseas post offices make digital switch

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — After months of delays, the switch to electronic customs forms at military post offices overseas was made Thursday without advance notice to customers in some areas.

The requirement “to complete online customs forms takes effect today,” U.S. Army Europe said in a statement Thursday. “The required systems are all operating, and clerks will no longer accept handwritten forms.”

The change is expected to cause longer lines and wait times, military postal officials have said.

The Postal Service began transitioning to electronic customs forms in March due to international regulations but granted military post offices an extension.

Military post offices in Europe and the Pacific were set to roll out the new requirement Aug. 13. Many installed a computer, printer and scale so customers could print a customs declaration form at the post office.

But shortly before the launch, the change was postponed “until further notice,” due to the Postal



Staff Sgt. Dustin Traylor of the 51st Fighter Wing uses a computer to fill out a customs form inside the post office at Osan Air Base, South Korea, on June 16

Service “discovering new issues with the process,” the postmaster at Yokota Air Base in Japan said at the time.

The Sept. 3 start wasn’t as widely publicized. The post offices at Yokota and Kadena Air Base in Okinawa put out a notice

of the new date last week on their Facebook pages.

In Germany, Ramstein/Kapaun Postal Operations announced the switch Thursday on its Facebook site, apologizing to customers for the abrupt change.

“Due to technical difficulties

and administrative oversight, our new CUSTOMS FORM roll out started today ... and you, our customers, were not properly informed,” the post said.

Base officials said Thursday confirmed that the new process was in use.

“So far we have not experienced any feedback from customers not happy with it,” said Kilian Blumlein, a Ramstein spokesman.

Packages found with handwritten customs forms in the mail after Sept. 13 will be returned to the sender, the Postal Service said.

Electronic labels can be completed at kiosks at military post offices or created and printed at home.

Those who know the weight of their package can pay their shipping costs online and drop off their packages after a clerk confirms the sizes and weights, officials have said.

Customers can still fill out handwritten customs worksheets when they mail their packages, but postal workers will need to type in all of the details to create electronic labels.

Customers shipping APO to APO should print a customs form without using the “Click-N-Ship” option, Ramstein/Kapaun Postal Operations said. The electronic form will say “postage required” in the upper-right corner. The finance clerk can send the package using priority or MPS, they said.

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Medal: Payne, unit pushed through hail of gunfire to rescue prisoners of ISIS militants

FROM FRONT PAGE

The medal will honor Payne’s actions in a daring pre-dawn raid on Oct. 22, 2015. Seeking to rescue 70 hostages held by ISIS, American and Kurdish commandos flew in CH-47 Chinook helicopters to the town of Hwujia, located roughly 9 miles west of Kirkuk.

The Kurdish Regional Government, the autonomous body that governs the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, had received a tip that the 70 prisoners, including peshmarga fighters, as the Kurdish forces are known, would soon be massacred by ISIS militants. Aerial photos of the compound showed what intelligence officials believed to be freshly dug mass graves where their bodies would be dumped.

The plan called for members of the American unit to support the Kurdish commandos in their op-

eration but not join in on the main effort to rescue the prisoners.

“Time was of the essence,” Payne said, according to a news release obtained by the AP and not yet made public. “There were freshly dug graves. If we didn’t act on this raid, then the hostages were likely to be executed.”

The raid began with a failure. Kurdish forces attempted to make a dynamic entry by blasting a hole in the compound’s outer wall, but the blast failed. The explosion alerted the ISIS militants, who opened fire on the Kurdish forces.

Payne and his unit climbed over a wall and entered the prison compound. The soldiers quickly cleared one of the two buildings known to house hostages. Once inside the building, the unit encountered enemy resistance. The team used bolt cutters to break the locks off the prison doors, freeing nearly 40 hostages.

Moments later, an urgent call over the radio was received from other task force members engaged in an intense gun fight at the second building.

Between 10 to 20 soldiers, including Payne and Master Sgt. Joshua L. Wheeler maneuvered towards the second building that Payne said was a “heavily-fortified building, which was partially on fire.” Kurdish commandos were pinned down by the gunfire.

At some point in his attempt to rescue the Kurdish forces, Wheeler was shot and killed. Wheeler was the first American killed in action since the U.S. launched renewed military intervention in Iraq against ISIS in 2014. 20 ISIS fighters were also killed in the operation.

The team scaled a ladder onto the roof of the one-story building under a savage fusillade of enemy machine-gun fire from below.



U.S. and Iraqi special forces free hostages from a prison controlled by Islamic State militants west of the Iraqi city of Kirkuk, in an image made from video taken by a helmet camera on Oct. 22, 2015.

From their roof-top vantage point, the commandos engaged the enemy with hand grenades and small arms fire, according to the press release.

ISIS fighters continued to exchange gunfire with the commandos as they entered the building. Payne moved to open another fortified door.

Once the door was kicked open, both American and Kurdish com-

mandos escorted about 30 more hostages out of the burning building that was about to collapse and under enemy gunfire.

Payne reentered the building two more times to ensure every hostage was freed. One of those times he had to forcibly remove one of the hostages who had been frightened to move during the chaotic scene, said Payne in the press release.

Judge: ‘No rational basis’ to bar HIV-positive military officers

Bloomberg News

A U.S. military policy that blocks HIV-positive service members from being commissioned as officers has “no rational basis,” a federal judge said in declining to throw out claims brought by graduates of the Air Force and Navy academies.

Five of the 10 claims in the lawsuit, in-

cluding equal protection under the Constitution, survived the government’s motion to dismiss the case in a ruling Wednesday by U.S. District Judge Richard D. Bennett in Baltimore. The ruling allows the suit to proceed toward a possible landmark trial.

“There is simply no basis to hold that officers must be free from HIV even if they

are physically capable of service and would otherwise be able to deploy,” Bennett wrote. “The military’s policy of withholding officer-commissions from HIV-positive service members renders those service members second-class citizens. That is precisely what the equal protection clause forbids.”

The Defense Department didn’t imme-

diately respond to a message seeking comment on the ruling.

The suit was brought by U.S. Naval Academy graduate Kevin Deese and an Air Force Academy graduate who is participating under a pseudonym. They’re represented by the LGBTQ advocacy group Lambda Legal.

MILITARY

Senators ask Esper to continue funding Stars and Stripes

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A bipartisan group of 15 senators urged Defense Secretary Mark Esper in a letter Wednesday to maintain support for Stars and Stripes, which could be forced to stop publishing by the end of the month without Defense Department funding.

“Stars and Stripes is an essential part of our nation’s freedom of the press that serves the very population charged with defending that freedom,” the senators of four Republicans and 11 Democrats — wrote in the letter. “Therefore, we respectfully request that you rescind your decision to discontinue support for Stars and Stripes and that you reinstate the funding necessary for it to continue operations.”

In February, Esper proposed ending the Defense Department’s funding of about \$15.5 million to Stars and Stripes. But the senators wrote such a decision should wait until Congress finishes work on the Pentagon’s fiscal year 2021 budget before moving to end the editorially independent news organization’s operations.

Shutting down Stars and Stripes “would have a significantly negative impact on military families,” the letter reads, highlighting the news organization’s unique reporting on issues including the military’s school system.

Last month, Pentagon officials instructed Stars and Stripes to prepare to cease publication on Sept. 30, the end of fiscal year 2020, despite House lawmakers’ already having approved two bills that would provide funding for Stars and Stripes in fiscal year 2021. The bills now must be reconciled with the Senate.

House-passed versions of the fiscal year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act and the Department of Defense Appropriations Act each included \$15.5 million of funding for Stars and Stripes. The NDAA sets annual Pentagon policy and authorizes spending priorities while the appropriations bill funds the department.

The Senate version of the NDAA did not authorize funding for the news organization. The Senate Appropriations Committee has yet to consider its version of the annual appropriations bill and it has not scheduled hearings to draft that legislation. Nine members of that committee — the four Republicans and five Democrats — were among the senators who signed the letter to Esper.

The Republicans who endorsed the letter are Sens. John Boozman of Arkansas, Jerry Moran of Kansas, Shelly Moore Capito of West Virginia, and Susan Collins of Maine. The Democrats are Sens.

Dianne Feinstein of California, Richard Durbin of Illinois, Patty Murray of Washington, Chris Van Hollen of Maryland, Jon Tester of Montana, Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, Doug Jones of Alabama, Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, Sherrod Brown of Ohio, Margaret Wood Hassan of New Hampshire, and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona.

The senators wrote Wednesday that there was “a real possibility” Congress would continue to fund Stars and Stripes in 2021.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S-C, sent a separate letter to Esper last month to convince the defense secretary to allow Stars and Stripes to continue publishing until Congress has completed its appropriations process.

In Graham’s Aug. 26 letter, he noted “strong support” for Stars and Stripes within Congress. The organization, he wrote, has adapted to the modern digital age and provides “timely and accurate news for more than 1.3 million readers a day” in print and online.

“As a veteran who has served overseas, I know the value that the Stars and Stripes brings to its readers,” wrote Graham, a former Air Force Reserve lawyer who retired as a colonel.

With the budget bills unlikely to be finalized by the Oct. 1 start of the new fiscal year, Congress is expected to adopt a continuing resolution to fund the Pentagon at 2020 levels until the NDAA and appropriations bills become law.

Under a continuing resolution, the senators wrote Wednesday, the Pentagon has “a legal obligation ... to not act on a termination of a program until a full-year appropriations bill is enacted.” Eliminating funds for Stripes before an appropriations bill is passed, they wrote “would preempt the funding prerogatives of Congress.”

The news organization uses its annual stipend largely to print and distribute newspapers to troops across the globe and to fund reporting efforts in conflict zones such as Afghanistan and Iraq. Those funds account for about half of the newspaper’s annual spending. The remainder of its funding comes from sales, subscriptions and advertising.

Esper moved to strip Stars and Stripes of funding after a defense-wide review of Pentagon spending practices. He told reporters in February that the money would be used for “higher-priority issues,” like purchasing modern weapons.

The senators wrote Stars and Stripes was “historically significant” and continuing to fund it would have a “measurable impact on the department’s bottom line.”



RAHMAT GUL/AP

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, center, former President Hamid Karzai, right, and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, left, watch the live broadcast of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar after the signing of a peace treaty at the presidential palace in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Efforts ramping up to start intra-Afghan peace talks

By KATHY GANNON
AND RAHIM FAIEZ
Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Officials on both sides of Afghanistan’s protracted conflict say efforts are ramping up for a start to intra-Afghan negotiations, a critical next step to a U.S.-negotiated peace deal with the Taliban. The talks, which will begin in Qatar where the Taliban maintain a political office, are intended to lay out a road map to a future Afghanistan, with the first item on the agenda expected to be a cease-fire agreement.

The peace deal, which calls for the intra-Afghan negotiations, was signed by the United States and the Taliban in February and was seen at the time as Afghanistan’s best hope at peace after four decades of war.

The deal was brokered to provide for America’s exit from Afghanistan after nearly 20 years of war and calls on the Taliban to fight against militant groups.

Washington has already begun

reducing its troop levels and will have less than 5,000 soldiers still in Afghanistan by November, down from around 13,000 when the deal was signed in February. This week, the government and the Taliban have quietly moved to reduce the last hurdle to the start of talks — the mutual release of remaining prisoners. Neither side has spoken publicly of the releases, but both Taliban and government officials who have spoken to The Associated Press said both sides have completed the releases as outlined in the agreement. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to speak on the record.

The Afghan government was to free 5,000 Taliban members, which it had been delaying, particularly on the final 400, and the Taliban were to free 1,000 government and military personnel. The latest holdup from the Taliban side was apparently over 22 Afghan commandos who they have now reportedly freed.

President Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, who heads

the High Council for National Reconciliation, the umbrella organization overseeing the government talks, said a reduction of violence or cease-fire will top their agenda.

Taliban political spokesman Suhail Shaheen earlier told The AP a cease-fire would be among the first items on the negotiation table. The group has reportedly completed its agenda, and its 20-member negotiation team reports directly to Taliban chief Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada.

Both sides have been short on specifics going into talks. But the Taliban have said in recent statements and interviews with The AP that they do not want to monopolize power, are ready to share power, accept that women should have the right to work and girls the right to school and be judges. They did say, however, that a woman would not be acceptable as a Supreme Court chief justice or president of Afghanistan. They have also talked of constitutional changes without offering specifics.

Fort Bliss NCO dies in collision

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — An Army sergeant died in a military vehicle collision during training at Fort Bliss, base officials said Wednesday.

Sgt. Roger Matamoros Chavarria, 27, a motor transport operator, was assigned to 123rd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, according to a news release.

The accident occurred late Friday evening, but no further details were provided.

The incident is under investigation by the Army Combat Readiness Center. Matamoros Chavarria enlisted in the Army from Key West, Fla., in November 2012, according to the news release. He has been stationed at Fort Bliss in west Texas since January 2019.

His awards include an Army Commendation Medal, three Army Achievement Medals, two

Army Good Conduct Medals, a National Defense Service Medal, an Afghanistan Campaign Medal, a Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, a Korea Defense Service Medal, a Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, an Army Service Ribbon, an Overseas Service Ribbon, four Certificates of Achievement, a Combat Action Badge and an Air Assault Badge.

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PACIFIC

WWII: Leaders reflect on war's impact 75 years after Japan's official surrender

FROM FRONT PAGE

"It is fitting that we are gathered here today on USS Missouri, where the conflict in the Pacific came to an end on this day in 1945," U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said during the 90-minute commemoration aboard the ship, now a museum called the Battleship Missouri Memorial.

"It now rests in the very harbor where more than 2,400 Americans paid the ultimate price nearly eight decades ago, at the beginning of World War II," Esper said.

The United States entered World War II after the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and Oahu island on Dec. 7, 1941. The Missouri is now moored on what was on the day of the attack called Battleship Row, which was decimated by the attack.

"On this day, on this deck, 75 years ago, we marked the end in the Pacific theater of a great global war that touched every man, woman and child of my parents' generation," said Hawaii Gov. David Ige, whose father was a member of the famed 442nd Reg-

imental Combat Team, which was composed primarily of soldiers of Japanese descent.

"It was won by an abiding belief in freedom and democracy and by the strength of character, courage and resilience that defied all odds," Ige said.

Noting that the commemoration had been drastically scaled back for original plans due to the pandemic, Ige said that was perhaps "for the best."

"In moments like these, we tend to get caught up in the pomp and circumstance and sometimes forget the real reason why we gather: all of these veterans," he said.

Wreaths presented by 14 nations — including Australia, Japan, South Korea, Russia and Germany — were placed on the ship during the ceremony in respect and tribute to the men and women who lost their lives during the war.

"Sept. 2 is the day the United States and our allies turned tragedy into triumph, violence into victory, fighting into freedom, loss into liberty and peril into peace," said Adm. Phillip Davidson, com-



75th Anniversary of the End of WWII Commemoration

Gen. Douglas MacArthur and others watch as an Imperial Japanese official signs a surrender document aboard the USS Missouri moored in Tokyo Bay on Sept. 2, 1945.

mander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, during the ceremony.

It was a day that marked "the very beginning of rules-based international order, an order responsible for some 75 years of peace, prosperity and security that helped to liberate not only hundreds of millions, but to lift billions out of poverty."

Although the U.S. fought beside China against Japan in World War II, Davidson offered a harsh assessment of the former ally.

"[A]n emboldened Communist

Party of China seeks to change the world to one in which Chinese national power is more important than international law," Davidson said. "Beijing is using a whole-of-Party approach to coerce, to corrupt and to contest the rules-based international order. Today, as we address the strategic threat of China and the other security challenges throughout the Indo-Pacific region, the memory of our greatest generation lives on. It lives on in our soldiers, our sailors, our airmen, our Marines and

our Coast Guardsmen today."

Esper described the war as "an inflection point in the history of our great nation and for humanity writ large.

"The global fight against tyranny and oppression cost more than 70 million lives and caused unimaginable loss for the United States and our allies," he said. "Virtually no household was left untouched by the scale or scope of its wanton destruction."

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MILITARY

Army receives its newest armored vehicle

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The Army received its first new multipurpose armored vehicle this week, marking a step toward replacing the Vietnam War-era M113 that gives troops less protection than more recently developed systems.

The Armored Multipurpose Vehicle will come in multiple variants to carry out missions ranging from command and control to medical evacuations and mortar carrying support, the military contractor BAE Systems said in a statement Tuesday.

"Finalizing the first AMPV for delivery marks a major milestone for the program and the U.S. Army," said Bill Sheehy, BAE's program director for the vehicle.

Getting the new AMPV has been a top modernization priority for the Army, which is expected to send at least some of the new vehicles to units in Europe.

The first vehicle delivered was a mission command variant that will improve an armored unit's ability to communicate while on the move, BAE said. The medical treatment and evacuation version is expected to serve as an "operating room on tracks" for soldiers

suffering life-threatening injuries, the company said.

"The AMPV has demonstrated outstanding survivability and force protection as well as flexibility and growth for the future," said Jeremy Tondrea, a BAE vice president.

The company said it will eventually deliver more than 450 vehicles in connection with its 2018 contract with the Army.

As the new AMPVs arrive, the Army will phase out the M113 armored personnel carrier, which already has been replaced by the Bradley Fighting Vehicle for front-line units, going back to the 1980s.

Still, the M113 continued to have a role for support units and troops. It was designed with an aluminum hull to make it lighter for transport, while still protecting troops against small-arms fire. But its vulnerabilities to roadside bombs during the war in Iraq forced the military to look for alternatives at the time, such as the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle, or MRAP.

The AMPV has completed nearly two dozen tests and has met or exceeded Army requirements, BAE said.

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BAE Systems

The Army's new Armored Multipurpose Vehicle will come in multiple variants to carry out missions ranging from command and control to medical evacuations.

US blocks websites registered by Iran-backed militia

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

The United States this week seized two websites run by an Iran-backed terror group linked to dozens of rocket attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq and the storming of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad in December.

The sites, Aletejahtv.com and Aletejahtv.org, were the media arm of Shiite militia group Kataeb Hezbollah, which the U.S. designated a terrorist organization in 2009.

The group published videos, articles and photos on the sites to "push their message and recruit followers for their violent causes," Assistant Attorney General for National Security John Demers said in a statement released Wednesday by the Justice Department.

After the sites were seized Monday, visitors were greeted with a message saying they had been taken down as part of a law enforcement action by a bureau within the Commerce Department. The sites were owned by an Arizona-based firm that allows website owners to stay private.

"We will not allow groups that have been rightfully prohibited from obtaining goods and services in the United States to use our internet services — especially to further their terrorist agenda," said Byung J. Pak, U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Georgia.

The State and Treasury departments designated Kataeb Hezbollah for sanctions over a decade ago for threatening, attacking and killing coalition and Iraqi security forces and for committing or posing a risk of terrorist activities.

The group is separate from the Hezbollah group in Lebanon, which is also backed by Iran.

Groups with those designations are prohibited under federal law from acquiring or using goods and services in the U.S., including website and domain services, without a license, the statement said. Kataeb Hezbollah did not get a license prior to using the domain names, it said.

The sites were registered by Scottsdale, Ariz.-based GoDaddy.com and administered by Domains by Proxy, headquartered in the same Phoenix suburb, according to the nonprofit Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, which manages the internet's domain name system.

Domains by Proxy is affiliated with GoDaddy and allows website operators to register their sites while remaining

anonymous. The government statement did not implicate either firm in wrongdoing.

The websites were seized by the Bureau of Industry and Security's Office of Export Enforcement, which is part of the Commerce Department.

The bureau "is committed to ensuring the stability of the Iraqi government and protecting our troops and Allied Forces against terrorist acts of violence," commerce official P. Lee Smith said in a statement.

"Attempts to surreptitiously utilize U.S.-based online networks and services to promote Iran-backed terrorist propaganda will immediately be disrupted, disabled and seized," Smith said.

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American captured in Syria pleads guilty to supporting Islamic State

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

A 24-year-old U.S. citizen captured in Syria and returned to Texas last year pleaded guilty in federal court to supporting Islamic State, prosecutors said.

Omer Kuzu was living in a northern suburb of Dallas in October 2014 when he told his parents that he and his brother were going camping near Houston, court filings stated.

Instead, they boarded a plane to Turkey. They snuck into Syria and then Iraq, where they trained with ISIS fighters.

In a Dallas federal court on Wednesday, Kuzu pleaded guilty to conspiring to provide material support to terrorism after spending five years handling communications for ISIS militants battling the U.S.-led coalition, the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Texas said. "The Department of Justice remains

committed to holding accountable those who have left this country in order to join and support ISIS," John C. Demers, assistant attorney general for National Security, said in a statement.

The news comes after the U.S. on Monday vetoed a United Nations resolution calling for the prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of ISIS fighters because it didn't include the repatriation of foreign fighters from Syria and Iraq.

Washington has warned that leaving some 2,000 foreign fighters in temporary detention centers run by its Syrian partners, the Syrian Democratic Forces, risks the possibility of jailbreaks and the creation of breeding grounds for extremists. It has urged its allies in Europe and elsewhere to repatriate their citizens.

The SDF captured Kuzu in March 2019, alongside some 1,500 other suspected militants in the town of Bagluz — ISIS's last territorial stronghold. He was handed over

to the FBI, questioned and eventually returned to Texas to face charges.

Kuzu and his brother were born in Dallas to Turkish parents, giving them dual citizenship, the FBI said.

They traveled to Turkey in late 2014, two months after the U.S.-led coalition began bombing ISIS positions and aiding Iraqi and Syrian forces.

After they reached Turkey, an "ISIS taxi" smuggled them into Syria, then on to Iraq, Kuzu said in plea papers. In Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city and one of the main cities of ISIS's self-styled caliphate, the brothers and about 40 others underwent five days of physical and weapons training.

Kuzu was then sent to Raqqa, the group's Syrian capital, to work in the ISIS telecommunications directorate. Soon afterward, he pledged allegiance to ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and the caliphate, he said in the plea papers.

"He was given a monthly stipend, a Chinese-made AK 47, and an ISIS bride," the statement said.

Court filings said he had a child with the woman and was given housing. He supported ISIS fighters in the field by setting up telecommunications gear, such as antennas. He also worked in an ISIS technology center.

After his capture in April 2019, he confessed to his role in the conspiracy to aid ISIS, which also involved his brother and other relatives, the criminal complaint said.

A second brother, a cousin and the cousin's wife were all in Syria supporting ISIS, which he admitted he knew was a terrorist organization, he told the FBI, according to court filings.

Kuzu's sentencing is scheduled for Jan. 22. He faces up to 20 years in federal prison.

VIRUS OUTBREAK

Marines on Palau offer training blueprint

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

Marine Corps efforts to dispose of unexploded bombs on Palau in recent weeks could serve as a blueprint for exercises in other parts of the Pacific during the coronavirus pandemic, according to a spokesman for the service.

One hundred Marines and sailors from Task Force Koa Moana of the I Marine Expeditionary Force conducted the bomb disposal along with medical engagements and airfield expansion on the islands of Peleliu and Angaur last month, task force spokesman 1st Lt. Oscar Castro, 29, of Pomona, Calif., said in a telephone interview from Guam on Thursday.

The Marines made extraordinary efforts to avoid bringing the coronavirus to Palau, which has yet to report a case of the disease, he said.

Those involved in the mission, which ended Aug. 28, were quarantined for three weeks before leaving California on July 21 on the USNS City of Bismarck, an expeditionary fast transport. They spent another two weeks in quarantine on arrival in Palau and were tested several times for the disease, Castro said.

"It's really great that we were able to abide by all the strict measures that were implemented," he said. "That's why we were successful."

The work on Palau went ahead at a time when other military engagements around the region,

such as the Balikatan exercise in the Philippines, have been canceled and other training efforts curtailed.

For example, this summer's multinational Rim of the Pacific drills were limited to activities at sea near Hawaii and a six-month Marine Corps training rotation to Australia has fewer than half as many troops as planned.

The work in Palau shows that other Marines can safely deploy in the midst of the pandemic, Castro said.

"It just proves that the Marine Corps can maneuver through any type of environment," he said.

The task force in Palau included a new type of Marine detachment charged with "littoral explosive ordnance disposal," or dealing with underwater bombs, Castro said.

The Navy contributed a medical team that included a physician, planner, environmental officer and corpsman.

There were also engineers who cleared airfields on Peleliu and Angaur, he said.

The task force cleared 14 unexploded World War II-era munitions, including six submerged munitions, Castro said.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper, who visited Palau on Aug. 27, thanked the task force for its work, after the boat he was riding on pulled up to the City of Bismarck, Castro added.

The Marines' visit boosted a local economy that relies on tourism and has been hit hard by the



Above: Marine Sgt. Jackie Tran, left, and Sgt. Brian Kim sweep a construction site for unexploded ordnance in Peleliu, Palau, on Aug. 7. Left: Marine Staff Sgt. Aaron Birdwell searches for unexploded ordnance near an airfield in Palau last month.

U.S. Marine Corps

pandemic, he said.

During the visit, the Marines and sailors also visited historical sites that are hallowed ground

for the Marines, such as Orange Beach and Bloody Ridge, where their predecessors fought fierce battles to wrest the island from

Japanese occupiers in 1944.

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Military won't be among first groups to receive vaccine

By **CAITLIN M. KENNEY**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Service members might not be at the front of the line to receive the coronavirus vaccine when it is ready, unless they are health care workers or at high risk of contracting the disease, according to a document outlining the possible order of distribution.

A four-phased approach for distributing a coronavirus vaccine in the United States has been recommended by the Committee in a document published Tuesday by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineer-

ing, Medicine. The organization provides independent policy advice.

According to the preliminary framework, the military was not set aside as an individual population group to be prioritized in any of the four phases. Instead, the document states "in the absence of a separate allotment of [coronavirus] vaccine to the U.S. military," the committee recommended personnel would receive the vaccine using the same priority criteria as civilians.

The four phases are organized into population groups, with those who are the highest risk of contracting the virus or

becoming severely sick receiving the vaccine first. Then workers in daily support industries, such as mail carriers, bus drivers and teachers, would be next, as well as those in homeless shelters and prisons. The third group would be children, young adults, and workers in industries such as restaurants and hotels. And finally, everyone else who do not fall into the criteria for the other three phases would then get the vaccine.

For each population group, the vaccine would also be prioritized geographically through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Vulnerability Index, ac-

ording to the report.

The Pentagon did not respond Wednesday to a request for comment about the document.

Pentagon officials have repeatedly said service members are less likely to be severely affected by the virus. The military now has about 1.2 million active-duty service members and 781,000 reservists, according to the report.

"We have a young, healthy, fit, robust demographic in the United States military," Defense Secretary Mark Esper said in March.

Army reservist is seventh US service member to die from coronavirus

By **CAITLIN M. KENNEY**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A 58-year-old Army reservist from Florida is the seventh service member, and fourth reservist, to die from the coronavirus, according to an Army Reserve official.

Sgt. 1st Class Clifford R. Gooding from Gulfport, Fla., died Aug. 28 in Largo from complications related to the coronavirus. Lt. Col. Simon Flake, a spokesman for the Army Reserve, said Thursday in a statement.

Gooding tested positive for the coronavirus on June 23 and he was admitted to Palms of Pasadena Hospital in St. Petersburg. When his conditioned worsened, he was transferred to the Largo Medical Center where he later died, according to Flake.

Gooding is survived by his wife and children.

Gooding was a full-time re-



Gooding

servist at the time of his death and his last assignment was as the maintenance supervisor for the 301st Field Hospital in St. Petersburg, according to Flake. He served in the Army for more than 27 years, 24 of which were with the Reserve.

His awards include the Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.

Gooding is the fourth Army reservist to die from complications related to the coronavirus. On Aug. 17, Master Sgt. Brian K.

Tolliver, 46, also died at Largo Medical Center after testing positive July 10. He was the command paralegal for U.S. Army Reserve Command's headquarters in Pinedas Park near Largo.

Spec. Curtis Fort, 61, of Roanoke, Va., died July 30 and was a radio and communications security repairer assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-319th Cadet Summer Training Battalion in Salem, Va.

Sgt. Simon Zamudio, 34, from Carpentersville, Ill., died May 22. He was assigned to the 371st The-

ater Movement Control Element at Fort Sheridan, Ill.

As of Wednesday, the military has had 38,424 cases of the coronavirus, 575 people have been hospitalized and 23,011 have recovered, according to Pentagon data.

Throughout the United States, there have had more than 6.1 million cases of the coronavirus and more than 185,000 deaths as of Thursday, according to Johns Hopkins University.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK ROUNDUP

CDC: Be ready for vaccine on Nov. 1

Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — The federal government has told states to prepare for a coronavirus vaccine to be ready to distribute by Nov. 1.

The timeline raised concern among public health experts about an “October surprise” — a vaccine approval driven by political considerations ahead of a presidential election, rather than science.

In a letter to governors dated Aug. 27, Robert Redfield, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said states “in the near future” will receive permit applications from McKesson Corp., which has contracted with CDC to distribute vaccines to places including state and local health departments and hospitals.

CDC urgently requests your assistance in expediting applications for these distribution facilities and, if necessary, asks that you consider waiving requirements that would prevent these facilities from becoming fully operational by November 1, 2020,” Redfield wrote.

He wrote that any waivers will not compromise the safety or effectiveness of the vaccine. The letter, Associated Press obtained the text, which was first reported by the CDC.

The Clatch also sent three planning documents to some health departments that included possible timelines for when vaccines would be available. The documents are to be used to develop plans for early vaccination when the supply might be constrained, according to one of the documents, which outlined a scenario in which a vaccine could be available as soon as the end of October.

“The COVID-19 vaccine landscape is evolving and uncertain, and these scenarios may evolve as more information is available,” the document reads.

Another of the documents says that limited COVID-19 vaccine doses may be available by early November and that supply will increase substantially in 2021.

It also states that initially available vaccines will either be approved by the Food and Drug Administration or authorized by the agency under its emergency powers.

The documents encourage health officials to work out now which groups to prioritize for a vaccine, identify providers who will administer vaccine, and take other steps to prepare. The planning documents were first reported by The New York Times.

Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON — The number of laid-off Americans applying for unemployment benefits fell to nearly 800,000 last week, a sign of possible improvement but

evidence that the viral pandemic keeps forcing many businesses to slash jobs.

The latest figures, released Thursday by the Labor Department, suggest that nearly six million after the eruption of the coronavirus, the economy is still struggling to sustain a recovery and rebuild a job market that was devastated by the recession. In the previous week, more than 1 million had sought jobless aid.

All told, the government said that 13.3 million people are continuing to receive traditional jobless benefits, up from 1.7 million a year ago.

The roughly 1 million people who keep applying for unemployment aid each week point to a sluggish pace of improvement. Before the pandemic struck the economy in March, the number of people seeking jobless aid had never topped 700,000 in a week, not even during the depths of the 2007-2009 Great Recession. The economy has recovered 9.3 million, or only 42%, of the jobs that were lost in March and April.

Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas on Wednesday reported its largest single-day increase in deaths from the illness caused by the coronavirus, while the number of active cases at the University of Arkansas' Fayetteville campus jumped to nearly 400.

The Department of Health reported 27 new deaths from COVID-19, bringing the state's total fatalities since the pandemic began to 841. But the department said 13 of the deaths were late reports, one of them dating back to May.

The state's top health official urged college students to avoid large parties and gatherings, as the cases at the University of Arkansas continued to rise. The school reported 185 new cases at its campus between Sunday and Tuesday, bringing its total number of active cases to 399.

“I realize that part of college life is the socialization that goes on, but in today's environment it is important to keep in mind the social responsibility you bear to the entire society,” Dr. Jose Romero, the state's health secretary, said. “Without your help, we cannot bring this pandemic under control.”

UA has been conducting testing on its campus through Thursday, which Romero has said will give the state a better sense of how prevalent the outbreak is there. Gov. Asa Hutchinson said he expected more than 1,000 test results from college students to come in over the next week.

California

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles City Council declared a fiscal emergency on Wednesday,



JOHN MINICILLO/AP

Pre-school teacher Mikki Laugier instructs students as they participate in an outdoor learning demonstration to display methods schools can use to continue on-site education during the coronavirus pandemic, Wednesday, at P.S. 15 in the Brooklyn borough of New York.

day, paving the way to furlough about 15,000 employees as the city struggles with an economic body blow from the coronavirus pandemic.

Another 1,280 employees would receive \$80,000 in cash incentives as part of an early retirement buyout program.

Mayor Eric Garcetti was expected to approve the measure, which aims to avoid outright layoffs.

The furloughs, which would begin Oct. 11, would require civilian employees to take up to 18 unpaid days off from work for the fiscal year that began in July.

That amounts to a 7% pay cut. Sworn police and fire employees are exempt. But civilian workers in those departments would be included.

California governments have struggled with the costs of trying to slow the spread of COVID-19. Months of business closures, unemployment and a crash in tourism have hit their bottom lines hard.

Florida

MIAMI — A Florida business owner who received more than \$2 million in coronavirus relief funds used about a third of that money to buy a new boat, authorities said.

Casey David Crowther, 35, of Fort Myers, was arrested Wednesday on a federal charge of making a false statement to a lending institution, according to court records. If convicted, Crowther faces up to 30 years in federal prison.

Crowther applied for a loan in April on behalf of his company, Target Roofing & Sheet Metal, Inc., according to a criminal complaint. Prosecutors said he claimed the funds would only be used for business-related purposes, such as retaining workers and paying bills.

But shortly after receiving the money, Crowther spent \$689,417 on a 2020 40-foot catamaran,

which he registered in his name, the complaint said.

Illinois

URBANA — The University of Illinois is ramping up enforcement of restrictions on student activity after more than 330 COVID-19 cases in two days on the school's Urbana-Champaign campus, school officials said Wednesday.

In an email to students, Chancellor Robert Jones said he expects all undergraduates to “limit their in-person interactions to only the most essential activities” for the next two weeks starting Wednesday evening.

“These include things like taking twice weekly COVID-19 tests, attending class, purchasing groceries and food, going to work, engaging in individual outdoor activity, attending religious services and seeking medical attention,” Jones wrote.

The University of Illinois isn't the only university in the state seeing a spike in COVID-19 cases. Illinois State University in Normal is reporting about 1,025 students have tested positive since the start of the fall semester two weeks ago, nearly 5% of the student body.

Kentucky

FRANKFORT — Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear signaled on Wednesday that he expects to extend his mask mandate again later this month, saying the facial covering requirement is “more important than ever” amid efforts to reopen schools and protect the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For a second straight day, the governor reported more than 800 new coronavirus cases in Kentucky. He said statewide cases appear to be “creeping up, and we need to watch it.” He later said the state is in “a dangerous place” in battling the outbreak.

With more than 1,600 confirmed cases in the past two days,

Kentucky was approaching a total of 50,000 cases since the start of the pandemic.

Beshear also reported 18 more virus-related deaths in Kentucky, raising the death toll to 36 in the past three days.

“That happens when we have the number of cases we have in Kentucky,” he told reporters.

Despite the high number of cases, the Democratic governor insisted that his requirement that people wear masks in public is working and indicated that the order will be extended again later in the month.

Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG — The administration of Gov. Tom Wolf on Wednesday moved to relax restrictions on spectators at some fall sporting events, though attendance might be impossible at high school volleyball and water polo, and difficult for football, because of statewide limits on mass gatherings.

The revised guidance says that “spectators may attend sporting events,” but they could toward the statewide gathering limits of 25 people indoors and 250 people outdoors.

Spectators must wear masks unless they're outside and can consistently maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet, the Wolf administration said.

Wolf has urged schools to cancel all youth sports until January to help stop the spread of the coronavirus. But the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, the governing body for Pennsylvania interscholastic sports, voted last month to move forward with the fall season, rejecting the governor's recommendation.

PIAA spokesperson Melissa Mertz said the organization is in “full support of spectators attending contests” but remains concerned about the 25-person limit for indoor events, saying it negatively impacts girls volleyball and water polo.

NATION

Budget deficit to hit record \$3.3T due to recession

By Andrew Taylor
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The federal budget deficit is projected to hit a record \$3.3 trillion as huge government expenditures to fight the coronavirus and to prop up the economy have added more than \$2 trillion to the federal ledger, the Congressional Budget Office said.

The spike in the deficit means that federal debt will exceed annual gross domestic product next year—a milestone that would put the U.S. where it was in the aftermath of World War II when accumulated debt exceeded the size of the economy.

The \$3.3 trillion figure released Wednesday is more than triple the 2019 shortfall and more than double the levels experienced after the market meltdown and Great Recession of 2008-09. Government spending, fueled by four coronavirus response measures, would register at \$6.6 trillion, \$2 trillion-plus more than 2019.

The recession has caused a drop in tax revenues have fallen, but the changes are not as dramatic as seen on the spending side, with individual income tax collections running 11% behind last year. Corporate tax collections are down 34%.

The economy shut down in the spring so people could be in isolation, in a failed national attempt to defeat the pandemic. That shutdown led lawmakers and President Donald Trump to pump money into business subsidies, larger unemployment benefits, \$1,200 direct payments and other stimulus steps that have helped the economy in the short term.

Most economists are untroubled by such huge borrowing when the economy is in peril, and the debt was barely a concern when a cornerstone \$2 trillion coronavirus relief bill passed almost unanimously in March.

But now that lawmakers and the White House are quarreling over the size and scope of a fifth virus relief bill, Republicans are growing skittish at the enormous costs

of battling the pandemic. The Democratic-controlled House passed a \$3.5 trillion measure in May, though House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., says she is willing to cut that figure to \$2.2 trillion.

Caseloads remain unacceptably elevated, however, as the virus exacts a painful, lingering toll on the economy and sentiment remains high for a fifth virus rescue package that would include money to reopen schools, patch state budgets and continue enhanced jobless benefits that have kept families afloat.

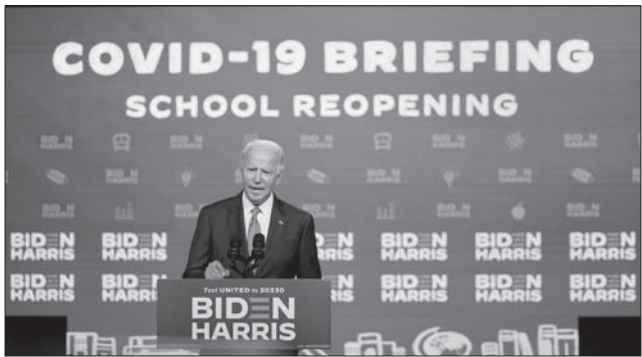
Among Republicans, there seems to be less ardor for a deal—at least at what they see as unfavorable terms. GOP leaders had been pressing for a package in the \$1 trillion range, but party talks during August have focused on a smaller package.

The enormous deficit is bringing the federal debt, as measured by the size of the economy, near levels not experienced since the end of World War II, when explosive borrowing to finance the war effort caused a historic spike. But those levels quickly receded during the postwar boom — something that won't happen now, since federal spending is now dominated by retirement programs like Medicare and Social Security, whose costs increase automatically with inflation and the ongoing retirement of the Baby Boom generation.

Deficit scolds have long warned that rising levels of debt will serve as a drag on the economy in the coming years. If interest rates rise too high, servicing the debt will put significant strain on the budget. The Federal Reserve has stepped in to keep credit markets stable and interest rates low for years as debt levels have risen.

By year's end, the publicly held national debt will total 98% of the U.S. gross domestic product. That compares with 79% of GDP at the end of 2019.

The CBO projected that the debt would exceed 100% of GDP in 2021 and set a new record high of 107% in 2021.



CAROLYN KASTER/AP

Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden speaks in Wilmington, Del., on Wednesday, about school reopenings.

Biden: Trump ignores pandemic, stokes unrest and solves neither

Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. — Joe Biden called the struggle to reopen U.S. schools amid the coronavirus a “national emergency” and accused President Donald Trump of turning his back on the pandemic while stoking passions over unrest in America’s cities.

The Democratic presidential nominee’s broadsides came a day ahead of his own trip to Kenosha, Wis., where Biden said he wants to help “heal” a city reeling from another police shooting of a Black man. The wounding of Jacob Blake and subsequent demonstrations have made the political battleground state a focal point for debate over police and protest violence, as well as the actions of vigilante militias.

Biden assailed Trump for his vilifying of protesters as well as his handling of the pandemic that has killed nearly 190,000 Americans and crippled the national economy, leaving millions out of work, schools straining to deal with students in classrooms or at home and parents struggling to keep up. An American president, Trump’s challenger declared, should be able to lead through multiple crises at the same time.

“Where is the president? Why isn’t he working on this?” Biden asked. “We need emergency support funding for our schools — and we need it now. Mr. President, that is your job. That’s what you should

be focused on — getting our kids back to school. Not whipping up fear and division — not inciting violence in our streets.”

Trump answered almost immediately with his own event in North Carolina, where he continued casting the protests generally as “violent mobs here at home” that must be met with a strong show of force. “These people know one thing: strength,” he said. If local leaders would ask for federal muscle, Trump said, “We’ll have it done in one hour.”

Trump later tweeted, “My Administration will do everything in its power to prevent weak mayors and lawless cities from taking Federal dollars while they let anarchists harm people, burn buildings, and ruin lives and businesses.” To that end, he signed a memorandum directing agencies to review federal funding sent to Seattle, New York City, Washington and Portland, Ore.

The opposing Biden and Trump events reflected the clear fault lines of the general election campaign. Each man casts the other as a threat to Americans’ day-to-day security, but Trump uses “law and order” as his rallying cry while Biden pushes a broader referendum on Trump’s competence, temperament and values.

Biden said Wednesday that he’d use existing federal disaster law to direct funding to schools to help them reopen safely, and he

urged Trump to “get off Twitter” and “negotiate a deal” with Congress on more pandemic aid. He repeated his assertions that a full economic recovery isn’t possible with COVID-19 still raging, and that reopening schools safely is a necessary part of both limiting the virus’ spread and allowing parents to return to work.

The Trump campaign noted in reply that the president has asked Congress for \$105 billion in aid for schools.

Addressing the ongoing unrest over racial injustice and policing, Biden told reporters he believes the Kenosha officer who shot Blake “needs to be charged.” Biden also called for charges in the death of Breonna Taylor, a Black woman killed in her Louisville, Kentucky, home by police in March. Biden did not name specific charges and said authorities must conduct full investigations.

Biden also called for legal action on citizens who’ve committed violence as part of civil unrest, a direct answer to Trump’s continued assertions that Biden backs violent protests.

The former vice president said he plans to meet in Kenosha with civic and business leaders and law enforcement. He also will meet with members of the Blake family; he’s already talked with some of them by phone. Blake remains hospitalized after he was shot seven times in the back.

US trade deficit surges in July to over \$63B, highest in 12 years

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. trade deficit surged in July to \$63.6 billion, the highest level in 12 years, as imports jumped by a record amount.

The Commerce Department reported that the July deficit was the largest gap between what America buys and what it sells to foreigners,

was 18.9% higher than the June deficit of \$53.5 billion.

The increase was driven by a record 10.9% increase in imports which rose to \$237.7 billion. Exports were also up, but by a smaller 4% to \$168.1 billion.

When Donald Trump campaigned for president in 2016 he pledged to sharply lower the

country’s large trade deficits, especially with China, which for years has been the country with the largest trade surplus with the United States.

But despite a number of high-profile trade battles and a renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico, America’s trade

deficits have remained stubbornly high.

For July, the deficit with China in goods totaled \$31.6 billion, an 11.5% increase from the June imbalance.

The goods deficit with Mexico hit a record high of \$10.6 in July. Trump has claimed the new free trade deal he has negotiated

with Mexico and China will be a boon for American workers and businesses.

The United States ran a deficit in goods trade of \$80.1 billion in July, the highest on record. The U.S. surplus in services, such as banking and insurance, declined to \$17.4 billion, the smallest services surplus since August 2012.

NATION



BARBARA GAUNTT, THE CLARION-LEDGER/AP

Mississippi Flag Commission members Katie Blount, left, and Commission Chairman Reuben Anderson talk with media after the commission voted the new magnolia flag to be on the November ballot for Mississippians to decide if they want it as the new state flag Wednesday in Jackson, Miss.

Magnolia could be replacing rebel symbol on Mississippi flag

Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. — Mississippi voters will decide whether to accept a new state flag with a magnolia to replace an old one legislators retired under pressure because it included the Confederate battle emblem that's widely seen as racist.

A commission voted 8-1 Wednesday to recommend the magnolia over one other final design that featured a shield with wavy lines representing water.

"We'll send a message that we live in the future and not in the past," former Mississippi Supreme Court Justice Reuben Anderson, the flag commission chairman, said after the vote.

The single design will go on the November ballot. If voters accept the design, it will become the new state flag. If they reject it, the design process will start anew — and Mississippi will re-

main a state without a flag for a while longer.

The commission decided Wednesday that leading to the November election, it will promote the magnolia flag by calling it the "In God We Trust" flag.

"More than any other time in our country, we need the mercy and grace of God," said commission member T.J. Taylor, who is an attorney and policy director for the state House speaker.

After the meeting Wednesday, the magnolia flag was raised on a pole outside the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson, where it fluttered in a brisk breeze.

Later in the day, Republican Gov. Tate Reeves praised the magnolia design.

"I think they did a good job," Reeves said. "It's, I think, a well-done flag."

Legislators shelved the Confederate-themed flag two months

ago against the backdrop of widespread protests over racial injustice. The flag had been divisive for decades in a state with a 38% Black population. The final push for change came from business, education, religious and sports groups — including, notably, the Mississippi Baptist Convention and the Southeastern Conference.

By law, the new flag cannot include the Confederate battle flag, and it must have the phrase, "In God We Trust." Requiring the religious phrase on the new flag helped persuade some conservative legislators to retire the old one.

The public submitted nearly 3,000 designs. The commission — with members appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor and House speaker — narrowed the choices to the final two last week.

Officer charged in shooting death of Black man in Walmart in California

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A San Francisco Bay Area police officer was charged Wednesday with voluntary manslaughter in the shooting death of a Black man inside a Walmart store in April.

The charge was filed Wednesday in the April 18 killing of Steven Taylor, 33, when San Leandro Police Officer Jason Fletcher, 49, responded to a call about an alleged shoplifter inside the store who was holding a baseball bat.

A 20-year veteran, Fletcher did not wait for backup and instead tried to grab the bat from Taylor, then fired his Taser and his service weapon, all in less than 40 seconds, Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O'Malley

said in a news release.

"Officer Fletcher's actions, coupled with his failure to attempt other de-escalation options rendered his use of deadly force unreasonable," O'Malley said.

Taylor's family is encouraged by the decision, said a statement issued by their lawyer.

"Mr. Taylor was suffering a mental health crisis and did not represent a threat to officers or the general public before being Tased and shot to death," the statement said. "Although this is an important first step in seeking justice, the family is eager to see Fletcher convicted and appropriately sentenced."

Police were called to the store by a security guard who reported a possible robbery. Fletcher,

the first officer to arrive, clarified with the security guard that it was not a robbery, then he relayed that information through his police radio, prosecutors said.

"Officer Fletcher did not wait for his cover officer and immediately contacted Mr. Taylor in the shopping cart area," they said.

Surveillance video showed Fletcher pulled out his service pistol at the same time he tried to take the bat from Taylor. Taylor pulled the bat from Fletcher's grasp and stepped away.

Shortly after, Fletcher shot Taylor twice with his taser. As Taylor struggled to remain standing, Fletcher shot him in the chest with his service weapon just as another officer arrived in the store, prosecutors said.

Video shows cops put hood on man who suffocated

Associated Press

A Black man who had run naked through the streets of a western New York city died of asphyxiation after a group of police officers put a hood over his head, then pressed his face into the pavement for two minutes, according to video and records released Wednesday by the man's family.

Daniel Prude died March 30 after he was taken off life support, seven days after the encounter with police in Rochester. His death received no public attention until Wednesday, when his family held a news conference and released police body camera video and written reports they obtained through a public records request.

"I placed a phone call for my brother to get help. Not for my brother to get lynched," Prude's brother, Joe Prude, said at a news conference. "How did you see him and not directly say, 'The man is defenseless, buck naked on the ground. He's cuffed up already. Come on.' How many more brothers gotta die for society to understand that this needs to stop?"

The videos show Prude, who had taken off his clothes, complying when police ask him to get on the ground and put his hands behind his back. Prude is agitated and shouting as he sits on the pavement in handcuffs for a few moments as a light snow falls. "Give me your gun, I need it," he shouts.

Then, they put a white "spit hood" over his head, a device intended to protect officers from a detainee's saliva. At the time, New York was in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic. Prude demands they remove it.

Then the officers slam Prude's

head into the street. One officer, who is white, holds his head down against the pavement with both hands, saying "calm down" and "stop spitting." Another officer places a knee on his back.

"Trying to kill me!" Prude says, his voice becoming muffled and anguished under the hood. "OK, stop. I need it. I need it," the prone man begs before his shouts turn to whimpers and grunts.

The officers appear to become concerned after he stops moving, falls silent and they notice water coming out of Prude's mouth.

"My man. You puking?" one says.

One officer notes that he's been out, naked, in the street for some time. Another remarks, "He feels pretty cold."

His head had been held down by an officer for just over two minutes, the video shows.

The officers then remove the hood and his handcuffs and medics can then be seen performing CPR before he's loaded into an ambulance.

Spit hoods have been scrutinized as a factor in the deaths of several prisoners in the U.S. and other countries in recent years.

A medical examiner concluded that Prude's death was a homicide caused by "complications of asphyxia in the setting of physical restraint." The report lists excited delirium and acute intoxication by phenylephrine, or PCP, as contributing factors.

Prude was from Chicago and had just arrived in Rochester for a visit with his brother. He was kicked off the train before it got to Rochester, in Depew, "due to his unruly behavior," according to an internal affairs investigator's report.

DC police: Shooting victim had 'brandished a firearm'

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Police officers in Washington, D.C., fatally shot a young Black man Wednesday who the department said had "brandished a firearm," prompting protests amid increased nationwide and local scrutiny over police practices.

The killing prompted a late-night face-off between police and dozens of protesters outside a city police station. Police identified the victim as 18-year-old Deon Kay of southeast D.C.

A subsequent statement from the Metropolitan Police Department said Kay was one of two people who fled Wednesday af-

ternoon when approached by uniformed officers who were investigating reports of a man with a gun in the area.

"During the foot pursuit, one of the suspects brandished a firearm. In response, an officer discharged their firearm one time, striking the suspect," the MPD statement said.

The other man who fled escaped from police, and Kay was taken to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead. The police statement included pictures of the handgun they say Kay had been carrying, as well of the gun of another of his companions who was arrested.

WORLD

N. Korea planning for military parade amid virus concerns

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — Recent satellite images indicate that North Korea has started rehearsing for a military parade, probably to celebrate the 75th anniversary of its ruling party, despite coronavirus concerns, a think tank said.

Two images taken 30 minutes apart on Monday show hundreds of vehicles parked in lots adjacent to the parade grounds and thousands of troops in formations, according to 38 North, a website that monitors activity in the North.

The rehearsals were held in an area of eastern Pyongyang that simulates Kim Il Square, named for the country's founder and the current leader's grandfather.

Such parades have been highly provocative in the past because they were used to showcase North Korea's arsenal of ballistic missiles, which are being developed as part of its nuclear weapons program.

The communist state has toned down such displays since it began engaging in diplomacy with the United States in 2018, including an unprecedented summit between leader Kim Jong Un and President Donald Trump in Singapore.

Those talks have stalled following a failed summit between the two leaders in February 2019 in Vietnam that exposed sharp differences over the extent of sanctions relief in exchange for disarmament steps.

At the beginning of the year, Kim declared that his country was no longer bound by a self-imposed long-range missile and nuclear testing moratorium and vowed to unveil a new strategic weapon.

Many observers have predicted that North Korea would hold a military parade on Oct. 10 to

mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of the ruling Workers' Party.

"These images provide the first evidence that rehearsals are underway," 38 North said in an article posted on Tuesday.

The rehearsals at the Miriam Parade Training Ground in Pyongyang, however, appear to have started slightly later than usual, possibly due to the coronavirus, anti-pandemic measures or recent severe flooding, according to the website.

Key differences in preparations this year include the lack of a "tent city" for troops participating in the parade. The area is now the site of a large construction project that has been underway for several months, 38 North said.

Make-shift shelters that used to be erected to protect and conceal heavy equipment being featured in the parade such as tanks and mobile missile launchers were also absent.

Instead, a large fenced-in area with about 10 garages was built on the lot, "making it now impossible to tell based on imagery alone how much or what kind of heavy equipment may be integrated into the parade," 38 North said.

"That said, numerous tire tracks in the newly concreted area servicing the garages indicate heavy activity has taken place in and around the garages," it added.

North Korea has not confirmed any coronavirus cases, but has imposed strict border closures and quarantines to prevent the spread of the respiratory disease.

Experts have expressed skepticism that the impoverished country could have escaped the global pandemic that began in neighboring China late last year.

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THE 10TH REGIONAL JAPAN COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS/AF

A Filipino crewmember of a Panamanian cargo ship is rescued by Japanese Coast Guard members in the waters off the Amami Oshima, Japan, on Wednesday.

Livestock ship carrying 42 crew sinks off Japan's coast

By MARI YAMAGUCHI
Associated Press

TOKYO — Japanese rescuers were searching Thursday for a livestock ship that a survivor said sank with 42 crew members aboard during rough weather off a southern Japanese island, the coast guard said.

A Filipino crew member was rescued late Wednesday after Japanese navy P-3C surveillance aircraft spotted him wearing a life vest and waving while bobbing in the water.

The man, who is currently hospitalized but in good health, told rescuers that the ship stalled when an engine stopped, then capsized after being hit by a powerful broadside wave and sank,

coast guard regional spokesman Yuichiro Higashi said.

The survivor, a chief officer, said he quickly put on a life jacket and jumped into the sea, following an instruction in an emergency onboard announcement. He has not seen any other crew members since then, Higashi said.

The 11,947-ton Gulf Livestock 1 ship was carrying 5,800 cows west of Amami Oshima in the East China Sea when it sent a distress call early Wednesday. The weather was rough in the area due to Typhoon Maysak.

The typhoon has since passed the area and the weather during the search is fine, Higashi said.

The ship's other crew members include 38 others from the Philippines, two from New Zealand and

two from Australia.

The ship left the port of Napier in northeastern New Zealand in mid-August and was on its way to Tangshan on China's eastern coast.

Its automatic identification system tracker gave its last position nearly two days ago, according to the ship-tracking website MarineTraffic.com. Based on that position, it was sailing in high winds of 66 miles per hour, MarineTraffic.com said.

The ship's operator, Gulf Navigation Holdings PJSC, based in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, declined to comment. The company, traded on the Dubai Financial Market and says it owns and operates chemical tankers, livestock vessels and other ships.

Turkey: Russia to hold live-fire exercises in Mediterranean

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkey has announced that Russia will hold live-fire naval exercises in the eastern Mediterranean, amid escalating tensions between Turkey and its coastal neighbors, Greece and Cyprus, over rights to search for energy resources in the region.

The navigational notice issued late Wednesday said the Russian exercises will take place Sept. 8-22 and Sept. 17-25 in areas of the Mediterranean where Turkish seismic research vessels are operating.

There was no immediate comment from Russia on the exer-

cises, which Turkey announced after the United States said it was partially lifting a 33-year-old arms embargo against ethnically divided Cyprus.

It's unclear why NATO member Turkey would announce such drills on Moscow's behalf, but the two countries have significantly strengthened their military, political and economic ties in recent years. They are coordinating closely in their military presence in Syria, while Turkey has purchased Russia's advanced S-400 missiles and has broken ground on a Russian-built nuclear power plant that will be located on its southern coast.

Turkey has reacted angrily to the U.S. move that it said went against the "spirit of alliance" between Washington and Ankara. It also warned that it would harm efforts to reunify Cyprus, which is split between Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot communities. Turkish officials have also vowed to take steps to guarantee the security of a self-declared Turkish state in the island's north.

Turkey's announcement comes at a time of increased friction between Turkey on the one side and Greece and Cyprus on the other over offshore energy exploration rights. Warships from Greece and Turkey have been shadow-

ing each other in recent weeks as Turkish survey vessels and drill ships continue to prospect for hydrocarbons in waters where Greece and Cyprus claim exclusive economic rights.

In Athens, Greek government spokesman Stelios Petsas said the planned Russian exercises were being "monitored by all the countries in the region, as well as our NATO allies and European Union partners."

The U.S. embargo, imposed in 1987, was designed to prevent an arms race that would hinder U.N.-facilitated reunification efforts for Cyprus. It was directed against the southern, Greek Cy-

priot part of the island, where Cyprus internationally recognized government is seated.

Washington said it was lifting the arms embargo against Cyprus for one year — with the option of renewal — to let it procure non-lethal equipment.

Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said Thursday that the lifting of the embargo will lead to a deadlock.

"If you lift the embargo on (Greek Cypriot-administered Cyprus) and try to disrupt the balance in this way, this will bring conflict, not peace. This will create a deadlock, not a solution," he said.

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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Man bites 2 officers who were arresting him

SD SIOUX FALLS — A Sioux Falls man bit two officers who were trying to arrest him for allegedly assaulting his girlfriend, according to police.

The 30-year-old man got in a fight with the woman while she waited for a ride from a friend, police spokesman Sam Clemens said.

The man started hitting the woman and threatened to kill her, he said. After the friend pulled up, the man and woman got into another vehicle and drove away. The friend called police.

Police found them nearby and when they tried to arrest the man he fought with them and bit two officers, the Argus Leader reported.

Officers said they found a methamphetamine pipe on the man who was being held on possible charges of aggravated domestic assault, aggravated assault on law enforcement and other counts.

Officials: Evicted tenant set fire to complex

LA NEW ORLEANS — A Louisiana woman facing eviction from her apartment has been accused of setting the 25-unit complex on fire, leaving a dog dead and 26 residents displaced, authorities said.

Jazlynn Major, 25, was arrested Tuesday in Huntsville, Texas, and charged with 26 counts of aggravated arson, news outlets reported.

Major appeared in court Monday and received a 24-hour eviction notice, requiring her to leave the Amies Paradise apartments in New Orleans by 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, according to First City Court Clerk Austin Badon.

Later that evening, witnesses told investigators that Major left her apartment around 8:40 p.m. Monday and a glow could be seen from her window. The glow grew brighter and witnesses realized it was a fire, officials said.

A New Orleans Fire Department spokesperson said 26 residents in 20 units left their apartments unharmed but a dog belonging to one of the residents died, the spokesperson said.

2 vehicles stolen before pursuit, surrender

WI WAUSAU — A man stole a van from a Wausau hospital at gunpoint and later an other vehicle before leading officers on a chase and ending with a standoff, according to police.

The gunman took the van from Aspirus Wausau Hospital shortly after 7 p.m. Tuesday, authorities said. An Aspirus employee was able to get out of the van without being hurt.

Officials said about 15 minutes later, that's when she received a call that the man had entered a residence, took the homeowner's car keys and stole the homeowner's vehicle after abandoning the hospital van in the driveway.

A Marathon County sheriff's deputy spotted the stolen car about a half hour later and a pursuit with speeds of more than 100



MAX BECHNER, THE (BATON ROUGE, LA.) ADVOCATE/AP

Support at school

Teachers and staff welcome students to Bissonet Plaza Elementary in Metairie, La. The Jefferson Parish Public School District started in-person classes with coronavirus restrictions including temperature checks and masks.

mph began.

A pursuing deputy pinned the stolen car against a tree in Weston and a standoff began with the armed man. Police say a Marathon County sheriff's lieutenant convinced the man to surrender after about 50 minutes.

Police: Woman escapes car with child to exit car

GA DULUTH — A woman jumped out of a moving car with her 1-year-old child to escape being kidnapped by a man who carjacked her vehicle, according to authorities in Georgia.

The man first approached the woman when she was eating by her car at a Lawrenceville gas station on Aug. 18, the Gwinnett County Police Department said in a statement posted Tuesday on Facebook.

Authorities said the man punched the victim multiple times on her face and reached for what she believed to be a gun. He then told her to get in the back seat of the car, where her child was sleeping, according to police. She obeyed, and police say the man drove off with the vehicle.

During the drive, officials said he demanded money from the woman and threatened to kill her. That's when she grabbed her child and jumped out of the car.

The man continued to drive,

and the victim's car was found abandoned the next day in Duluth, a city located about 12 miles northwest of Lawrenceville.

The victim was treated for injuries she sustained during the fall when police arrived. The child was not injured.

Pilots report jetpack flier near airport

CA LOS ANGELES — The Federal Aviation Administration said Tuesday it is investigating reports from airline pilots that someone was flying in a jetpack as they approached Los Angeles International Airport to land last weekend.

"Two airline flight crews reported seeing what appeared to be someone in a jetpack as they were on their final approaches to LAX around 6:35 p.m. PDT Sunday," the FAA said. The statement did not elaborate.

Fox 11 Los Angeles obtained recordings of communications between the aircraft and the tower.

"Tower, American 1997, we just passed a guy in a jetpack," one pilot said.

"American 1997, OK, thank you, were they off to your left side or your right side?" the controller asked.

"Off the left side at maybe 300 yards or so at our altitude," the pilot said.

K-9 agent can sniff out electronic storage items

TN NASHVILLE — The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation has added a pooch to the force who can sniff out hard drives, flash drives and other electronic storage devices that could hold evidence, especially in child exploitation cases.

The agency said a 2-year-old yellow Labrador Retriever named Zeus has a nose trained to detect a chemical compound used on practically all electronic storage items, even micro SD cards less than a millimeter thick.

TBI said Zeus will help find devices in hard-to-see places, including wall cracks, clothing, ceiling tiles, boxes, dirty laundry or the garage.

He also will serve as a comfort companion.

Man accused of posing as teen to enroll in school

GA MILEDGEVILLE — A 21-year-old Georgia man who allegedly claimed to be a homeless teenager was arrested after providing false information to enroll in a high school as a 14-year-old student, authorities said.

The Baldwin County Sheriff's Office was called to a report of an "unruly juvenile" last week and discovered Abay Holmes fighting

THE CENSUS

226 The amount of marijuana, in pounds, a Canadian man attempted to

smuggle into the U.S., federal prosecutors said Tuesday. Court documents filed in U.S. District Court in Burlington, Vt., said two Border Patrol agents were watching the woods along the Vermont border with Quebec on Monday when they first heard and then saw three men carrying large backpacks. When the men were about 40 feet from the agents the suspects dropped the backpacks and ran back toward Canada. After identifying themselves as Border Patrol agents, one agent fired a taser that incapacitated a suspect later identified as Scott Allen Cameron, the Border Patrol said. He has been charged.

with a woman who was trying to take away his school-issued laptop, Deputy Brandon Towe wrote in a report.

Capt. Brad King told McClatchy News the woman let Holmes, whom she thought was a homeless teen, stay at her home, but called police after the two got into a disagreement.

Investigators determined Holmes, who had enrolled at Baldwin High School under a fake name, did not have a legal guardian in Georgia. Authorities called the Department of Family and Children's Services to place the teen in a temporary home, but school officials and deputies found discrepancies between names and addresses on his records.

Fingerprints proved he was actually an adult.

Driver arrested after flipping farm combine

ND BERTHOLD — A man has been arrested for driving drunk after flipping a farming combine in a field in northwestern North Dakota.

Police say the combine landed upside down in the field near Berthold on Monday afternoon.

Authorities say the 45-year-old man was intoxicated and taken to the Ward County Jail in Minot.

The combine has extensive damage.

Tip leads to rescue of dozens of dogs, cats

MI PITTSFIELD TOWNSHIP — About four dozen dogs and cats have been rescued from a Pittsfield Township home.

A tip led investigators Friday to the home where they found 31 dogs and 14 cats, the Humane Society of Huron Valley said Tuesday. Two dogs were found dead.

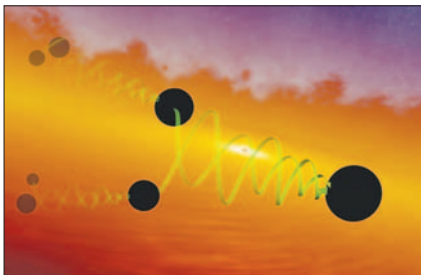
The agency said the animals had been living among raw sewage and feces. Some were underweight and several needed emergency medical care.

Investigators were expected to submit the case to authorities for possible charges.

Pittsfield Township is about 49 miles west of Detroit.

From wire reports

WORLD



LIGO, CALTECH, MIT, R. HURT (IPAC)/AP

This illustration depicts two black holes of about 66 and 85 solar masses spiralling into each other to form the GW190521 black hole.

Black holes merge into never before seen size

By SETH BORENSTEIN
Associated Press

Black holes are getting stranger — even to astronomers. They've now detected the signal from a long-ago violent collision of two black holes that created a new one of a size that had never been seen before.

"It's the biggest bang since the Big Bang observed by humanity," said Caltech physicist Alan Weinstein, who was part of the discovery team.

Black holes are compact regions of space so densely packed that not even light can escape. Until now, astronomers only had observed them in two general sizes. There are "small" ones called stellar black holes that are formed when a star collapses and are about the size of small cities. And there are supermassive black holes that are millions, maybe billions, of times more massive than our sun and around which entire galaxies revolve.

According to astronomers' calculations, anything in between didn't quite make sense, because stars that grew too big before collapse would essentially consume

themselves, leaving no black holes.

Star collapses couldn't create stellar black holes much bigger than 70 times the mass of our sun, scientists thought, according to physicist Nelson Christensen, research director of the French National Centre for Scientific Research.

Then in May 2019 two detectors picked up a signal that turned out to be the energy from two stellar black holes — each large for a stellar black hole — crashing into each other. One was 66 times the mass of our sun and the other a husky 85 times the mass of the sun.

The end result: The first ever discovered intermediate black hole, at 142 times the mass of the sun.

Because the detectors allow scientists to pick up the gravitational waves as audio signals, scientists actually heard the collision. For all the violence and drama, the signal lasted only one-tenth of a second.

"It just sounds like a thud," Weinstein said. "It really doesn't sound like much on a speaker."

Russia rebukes Germany's claim of Navalny poisoning

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman brushed off allegations Thursday that the Kremlin was involved in poisoning Putin's most determined critic, accusing Germany of not providing Moscow with any evidence about the condition of Russian dissident Alexei Navalny.

Navalny, a politician and corruption investigator, fell ill on a flight to Moscow on Aug. 20 and was taken to a hospital in the Siberian city of Omsk. He has been in an induced coma for more than a week in a Berlin hospital after being flown from Siberia to Germany for treatment more than a week ago.

German authorities said Wednesday that tests showed "proof without doubt" that he had been poisoned with a chemical nerve agent from the Novichok group. British authorities identified the Soviet-era Novichok as the poison used on former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter in England in 2018.

But Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov insisted Thursday that Russian authorities still had not received any evidence from Germany to back up their allegation.

"We haven't received any information so far," Peskov said. "We

hope that it will happen soon and will help figure out what caused the condition the patient is in right now."

Peskov reiterated that Russian specialists in Omsk tested Navalny for poisonous substances and didn't find any in his system. He said Russian investigators conducting a preliminary inquiry into Navalny's illness should know "what our German colleagues found and established."

Following his stay in Omsk, Navalny was moved two days later to Berlin's Charite hospital after German Chancellor Angela Merkel personally offered the country's assistance in treating him. He's now in stable condition, but doctors expect a long recovery and haven't ruled out that the 44-year-old Navalny could face long-term effects to his health.

Merkel on Wednesday called Navalny's poisoning an attempted murder that aimed to silence one of Putin's fiercest critics and called for a full investigation.

"There are very serious questions now that only the Russian government can answer, and must answer," Merkel said.

Asked about Peskov's comments on Thursday, Merkel said "naturally I am aware of what is being said now" but refused to comment further.

"I made a comprehensive state-

ment yesterday about what we will do now and in the coming days," she told reporters at the chancellery after meeting with Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven. "And of course a lot depends on the respective reactions by the Russian government. But I don't want to add anything further."

Germany's Justice Ministry has confirmed they have received Russia's request for information, but would not provide details on the response.

Leonid Volkov, Navalny's long-time ally and campaign strategist, told the German RTL broadcaster Thursday that an independent investigation in Russia is unlikely and put the blame in the Kremlin.

"An attack of such level and of such coordination couldn't be not authorized by Mr. Putin," Volkov said.

"I don't know what legal consequences this should be," he said. "But I know for sure what I want to have as an outcome, and this is the political or a moral, ethical consequence: I really want that no foreign leader ever would shake hands with Mr. Putin."

Lofven, joining a chorus of other world leaders, called for Russia to investigate and punish those involved.

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FACES

Tyler Perry has become a billionaire

Los Angeles Times

Oprah Winfrey would be proud.

Although media mogul Tyler Perry is still worth \$1.5 billion less than Winfrey, he has become a billionaire, according to Forbes.

The business magazine calculated that Perry's library of TV series and films — including his iconic Madea character, who stars in 11 movies — is worth \$320 million. Tyler Perry Studios, built on a former Confederate army base, clocks in at \$280 million.

But the producer didn't always own \$200 million worth of cash and investments, a \$60 million stake in BET+ and \$40 million in "homes and toys." Born into poverty in New Orleans, Perry was once homeless, living out of his car while working on his first play, "I Know I've Been Changed."

Winfrey saw one of Perry's early plays in Los Angeles before inviting him onto her talk show in 2001. It was there that she advised him to take control of his own empire.

"Perry has succeeded for two reasons: He has honed a product that too many others viewed as destined for the discount bin," Forbes wrote in its September cover feature. "And he made sure to control it all."

And Perry has a lot to control: His Atlanta studio alone comprises 330 acres; it's where he filmed the first TV series ("Sistas") produced entirely during the COVID-19 pandemic. It's also where R&B singers Monica and Brandy faced off on Monday for their high-profile Verzuz battle.

"I own the lights," Perry told Forbes. "I own the sets. So that's where the difference is. Because I own everything, my returns are higher."

Some skeptics reacted critically to the news.

Perry's content has been criticized at times for portrayals of the "angry Black woman" trope, sexism and homophobia.

Star with a capital 'S'

John David Washington shines bright in 'Tenet'

By LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

Christopher Nolan only casts movie stars as his leading men. From Leonardo DiCaprio and Hugh Jackman to Christian Bale and Matthew McConaughey, Nolan's actors are larger-than-life, capital "S" stars.

So it was more than a little exciting for John David Washington when Nolan handed him to anchor his most ambitious film to date, "Tenet," as a glamorous and cool spy known only as The Protagonist. The 36-year-old may be the eldest son of another capital "S" star, Denzel Washington, but lineage is hardly a guarantee in Hollywood at this level. Besides, he's only recently gotten started. He spent his 20s in a different career: professional football.

Technically, Washington started acting when he was 7, in a small role alongside his father in Spike Lee's "Malcolm X," and again a few years later in "Devil in the Blue Dress."

Just over five years ago, he started quietly auditioning for projects on his own, and landed the role of Ricky Jerret in HBO's "Ballers." But it wasn't until 2018 that he broke out in a big way, starring in Lee's "BlackKkklansman."

Washington might have Lee to thank for "Tenet" too. The director invited Nolan to the premiere of "BlackKkklansman" at the Cannes Film Festival, and the charismatic newcomer made an impression.

"I try not to have specific actors in mind when I'm writing because it would limit the character," Nolan said. "(But) seeing John David on screen, seeing how Spike had been able to open up the film to the audience through this character and through the way John David draws the audience in, it was very hard for me to get him out of my head after that when I was writing the script. He kept intruding."

Nolan arranged a meeting with Washington, found they shared a "common creative language," and soon enough they were embarking on what would be an arduous, six-month, seven-country shoot that would push Washington to his physical limits. Among the chal-

lenges were learning how to fight backwards and bungee-jump up a building in Mumbai (or at least the first 20 feet of it before the stunt team took over).

"The heights thing was really tough," Washington laughed. "But once I got over it, I felt very confident the rest of the film. No problem."

They decided early on that Washington's protagonist would be a different kind of spy than we're used to seeing.

"These characters are often portrayed with a lot of cynicism," Nolan said. "I just felt he could bring a generosity of spirit to the character, who is somebody who cares about what he is doing, cares about the people around him."

Washington found in his writer-director a surprisingly supportive collaborator who was just as concerned about the acting as he was the massive set pieces.

"Chris was very accommodating to the actor's process," Washington said. "There are some days where it felt like it had an indie movie quality to it. We were concentrating so much on why we're here and the motivations and the performance. ... He would say words like, 'Just take it for a spin.' I love that. I love hearing that. Falling flat on your face wasn't scary because of the environment he set."

■ 'Tenet' review on Page 22

Despite the stress and the physical and mental tolls of leading a \$200 million film, Washington was unflappable. Those who work with him compliment his positivity.

"He's a very generous person and a very warm presence on set," Nolan said. "That counts for a lot when you're in the long haul."

That warmth is part of what helps his character work, according to producer Emma Thomas.

"John David really does bring the audience along with him," she said. "He does this incredible thing where he's incredibly cool and incredibly fun to watch and at the same time somehow relatable. It's not an off-putting cool. It's a cool that pulls you in."

Washington is humbled by his relatively quick and massive success so far, working with two of Hollywood's most exciting directors in just a few years.

"I'm just grateful, and thank God every day for the opportunity to work, to be in this industry, to be able to create with my betters and learn," Washington said.

And while he won't get the big red-carpet premiere that would be standard in pre-pandemic times, he was able to screen the movie with his extended family in a safe, socially-distanced way.

"I remember my uncle shouting out after one of the fight sequences, like, 'OK, John David!' which in uncle language means,

"You're



John David Washington
REBECCA CABAGE, INVISION/AP

Disney streaming second season of 'Mandalorian' in October

Associated Press

Not even a pandemic and television production shutdown can keep Baby Yoda down. The second season of "The Mandalorian" will arrive next month.

An announcement on the Star Wars Twitter account Wednesday said new episodes would be available on Disney+ starting Oct. 30.

Created by Jon Favreau, the first live-action Star Wars television series became a major hit last season when it launched. It follows a stoic, duty-bound bounty hunter and his quest to protect a small being who's been christened by fans as Baby Yoda.

"The Mandalorian's" debut season will vie for a best drama Emmy Award this month. The status of a second season debut had been unclear until the industry-wide production shutdown because of the coro-

navirus pandemic. The show is created with "virtual production" techniques, including LED video walls that display alien landscape backgrounds.

The announcement tweet did not contain any footage or other details, only the show's title screen with the Mandalorian and Baby Yoda characters in silhouette.

Dwayne Johnson, family test positive for coronavirus

Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson shared some unfortunate news on his home front: He and his family tested positive for the coronavirus.

Johnson announced their diagnosis in an 11-plus minute video on Instagram on Wednesday. He said he was shocked after hearing their positive tests, calling the ordeal "one of the most challenging and dif-

ferences we've ever had to endure."

Johnson said the ordeal has made him more conscious. He made suggestions to combat the virus such as wearing a mask and committing to wellness.

Harry, Meghan make massive Netflix production deal

As expected, Prince Harry and Meghan have officially gone Hollywood. The couple has signed a Netflix production deal less than a year after announcing their step back from royal duties in the United Kingdom.

The British prince and former actress will produce films and series for the streaming giant. That includes scripted series, docuseries, documentaries, features and children's programming. The Times confirmed Wednesday.

The Sussexes already have a few projects in development with Netflix, including a nature docuseries and an animated series that celebrates inspiring women. The prince also worked closely with filmmakers on "Rising Phoenix," a documentary that began streaming last week in which he also appears.

Blanco Brown undergoes surgery after car accident

"The Git Up" singer Blanco Brown is in intensive care after suffering significant injuries in a head-on vehicle collision near Atlanta.

His record label, BBR Music Group, said the writer and producer was injured Monday and transported to a local hospital where he underwent a 12-hour surgery. Additional surgeries are expected.

WEEKEND



Best-bet Emmy
comedy nominees
Page 34

Embrace nostalgia

'Bill & Ted' return, David Copperfield gets a facelift and an infamous theme park is revisited among movie options competing with the long-awaited 'Tenet' for viewers' attention



'Bill & Ted' Face the Music' profile, Page 19; review, Page 22



'Class Action Park' profile
and review, Page 21



'Tenet' review, Page 22



'The Personal History of David
Copperfield' profile and review, Page 20

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY

Energetic solution

Scientists have figured out a way to store electricity in common bricks

By ANASTASIA GORELOVA
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Washington University scientists in St. Louis have figured out how to transform a simple red brick into a power source for electronic devices.

The amount of energy the bricks can store is small now — not enough to power up a laptop. But researchers see a time when just a few bricks could store enough energy to feed an entire home.

“We have demonstrated an idea that no one had thought of — that materials that we use for building a house can have dual function,” said chemistry professor Julio D’Arcy, who is leading the research. “That future can be a reality, and we can make it happen.”

If successful, D’Arcy’s bricks could provide a solution to one of the most vexing problems in the world of renewable power generation today: How to store unused energy as it is being created so businesses and homeowners can use it later. Solar panels, for instance, work well when it’s sunny. But they can’t be a building’s sole energy source, because most homes and offices

aren’t equipped to store energy for nighttime use. And, as storage technology exists now, it is bulky and expensive.

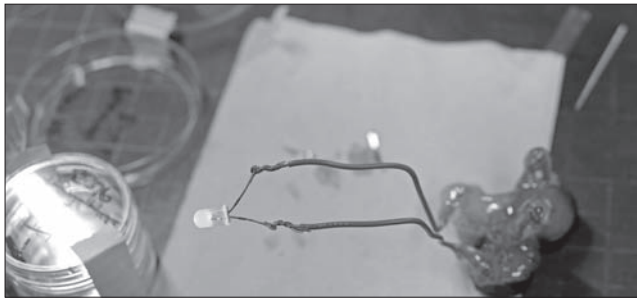
If D’Arcy’s plan works, bricks would become batteries, powering up homes and even entire communities, with each house sharing excess energy with neighbors.

Last month, the journal *Nature Communications* published a paper by D’Arcy and his team with early results, showing that they can make a brick store enough electrical energy to power up an LED light.

D’Arcy came to Washington U. six years ago from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His lab now studies the use of “green” chemistry — an approach that reuses waste products — to engineer new materials that conduct electricity.

The idea to convert bricks into units of energy storage came organically, D’Arcy said. “Every time I drive to work, I’m surrounded by bricks,” he said. “When we started looking at nature for inspiration, it was starting me in the face every day.”

A key to the breakthrough? Iron oxide, commonly known as rust — the pigment that gives a red brick its signature color.



CHRISTIAN GOODEN, ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH/TNS

A used brick battery charged one year ago still hold enough power for an LED light to glow for a few seconds after a jolt, as demonstrated at Washington University in St. Louis.

A regular brick from a local hardware store contains about 6% iron oxide. D’Arcy figured out that was enough to sustain a specific chemical reaction that would transform the inside of the brick.

He and his team put a brick into an oven heated to 320 degrees, and filled the oven with two gases: vaporized hydrochloric acid, to free up reactive ions of iron from rust, and a gas known as EDT, which reacts with the iron ions.

The product of that chemical reaction coated the brick’s internal pores with a net of minuscule fibers — fibers that conduct electricity.

At the end of the conversion process, the bricks change color. If they come out blue, D’Arcy knows they’ve done their job.

D’Arcy theorizes that his bricks — unlike renewable batteries, which can be recharged perhaps 100 times — can be recharged up to 10,000 times, and last at least 30 years.

Others in the field say D’Arcy’s work holds promise. “I think the study is good and very creative,” said Shoji Hall, assistant professor of materials science and engineering at Johns Hopkins University. “It never occurred to me that something like bricks could be used as templates to make energy storage materials.”

D’Arcy’s team still has a lot to do. It is now working to increase the amount of energy a brick can store by tinkering with chemicals infused into it.

The more bricks put together, the more energy can be stored.

But D’Arcy better likes the idea of having two bricks do the work of a thousand.

“At that point, it is a company that can actually create jobs in America. And that’s where we’re going with it,” said D’Arcy. “We know that this is the beginning of something, and it can be incorporated into our homes exactly where we need the energy.”

In St. Louis — a city that stands on the richest clay deposits in the United States — the sentiment hits close.

“This is a project that stems from home,” D’Arcy said. “These are the bricks that were produced from the mud here in Missouri, baked here in Missouri, and sold here at Home Depot.”

“It is an homage to St. Louis in many ways.”

GADGET WATCH

A pen and paper planner for the digital age

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

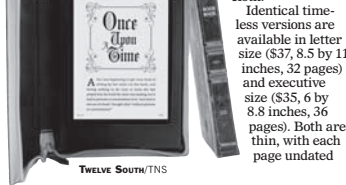
Rocketbook has partnered with Panda Planner to launch the **Rocketbook Panda**, a modern-day pen and paper planner with erasable technology to keep track of scheduling, plans and notes.

Rocketbook refers to the Panda Planner as the world’s first reusable, digitally connected planner, meaning it’s the last one you’ll ever need.

As tech-savvy as I consider myself to be, my life is filled with Post-it notes, even on my car’s dashboard.

Technology makes this planner stand out from the crowd because it’s built with innovative synthetic paper. This allows you to write smoothly with the included Pilot FriXion pen. To erase, wipe the page with a damp cloth or the included microfiber cloth.

Identical timeless versions are available in letter size (37, 8.5 by 11 inches, \$32, 6 pages) and executive size (\$35, 6 by 8.8 inches, 36 pages). Both are thin, with each page undated.



TWELVE SOUTH/TNS

and a daily template that helps you customize and organize your content. It’s divided into annual planning, goals, daily, weekly, monthly, notes and more. Depending on the sections, there are dot-grid, lined and blank pages.

Rocketbook’s mission is to help those who still want to hand write, but need to get the content into the digital world. With the help of the Rocketbook app (iOS and Android), the Panda Planner connects to any of the major cloud services like Dropbox, Google Drive and iCloud for uploading scanned content.

To do this easily, QR codes on the bottom of each page act as buttons for uploading. Once a button is assigned to your chosen cloud service and the page is marked with that icon, the app uploads it to the path you chose. Pages uploaded are also digitally enhanced and cropped for easy reading. Handwriting intelligence makes the Panda Planners searchable across platforms.

Once the content is either transferred, expired or just not needed, just wipe the page clean.

Online: getrocketbook.com; available in black, dark blue, scarlet and teal

Twelve South has launched one new product and an update to a great one.

The **BookBook for Kindle Paperwhite** (\$49.99)

is a vintage-inspired one-of-a-kind case made with hand-distressed, genuine leather, giving it the feel of a real book. A folding kickstand for hands-free reading is built in. It is compatible with Kindle Paperwhite 4 (10th Gen, 2019).

One of my favorite Twelve



TWELVE SOUTH/TNS

The Twelve South AirFly Pro lets you use wireless headphones with any headphone jack.

South products, the AirFly Pro (\$54.99) is now available in matte black. The pocket-sized adapter lets you use wireless headphones with any headphone jack. This includes airplane armrest ports, game consoles, treadmills and TVs with headphone out ports. I’ve even used it with my first generation iPod.

Setting it up is as simple as plugging the AirFly Pro into a 3.5 mm audio port and pairing it with up to two sets of wireless headphones.

Online: twelvesouth.com



ROCKETBOOK/TNS

Rocketbook refers to the Panda Planner as the world’s first reusable, digitally connected planner.

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

Getting the band together

How Hendrix, Mozart, Armstrong all wound up in 'Face the Music'

By JOSH ROTTENBERG
Los Angeles Times

Ever since the 1989 cult comedy "Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure" sent them traveling through time in a cosmic phone booth, slacker friends Ted "Theodore" Logan (Keanu Reeves) and Bill S. Preston Esq. (Alex Winter) have explored some profound historical and philosophical questions.

For example, what would Genghis Khan do if you set him loose in a suburban sporting goods store? If Billy the Kid, Socrates, Napoleon and Sigmund Freud were all hanging out, what would they talk about? And who would win if you played the Grim Reaper in a game of Twister?

Now, nearly 30 years after their last outing, 1991's "Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey," the dim-witted duo are back in an unlikely third installment in the series, "Bill & Ted Face the Music," which hit theaters and premium VOD on Aug. 28. And this time, there's a new and most exciting brain-tickler to ponder: If you were recruiting a supergroup of the greatest musicians from the greatest history of ever written in a world that could save the universe, who would you choose?

In "Face the Music," the heavy metal-loving but musically inept Bill and Ted, now deep into the doldrums of middle age, are given the impossible task of creating the greatest song ever written in an order to prevent the fabric of space and time from being ripped apart. (Just go with it.)

With no idea where to even start, the two begin a frantic dash through time in search of desperately needed musical inspiration. Along the way, they get critical help from their teenage daughters, Billie (Brittany Lundy Braun) and Thea (Samara Weaving), who assemble a group of legendary musicians from the past, including Louis Armstrong, Jimi Hendrix and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

The 10-plus-year effort to get "Face the Music" to the screen has been, in its own way, as twisty and improbable as Bill and Ted's onscreen journeys. From the outset, returning screenwriters Ed Solomon and Chris Matheson knew that the story of the third film, like the previous two, would be centered on music. But over the course of the project's development, as the creative team juggled and nailed down financing, the script went through numerous wildly different iterations.

"Originally there wasn't a supergroup — it was just Bill and Ted's kids," said Solomon, whose other credits include "Men in Black" and "Now You See Me." "When I wrote the script, I thought, 'What if we had this idea that the daughters, trying to help their dads, would put together this band. After that, it was just throwing out names: What about this person? What about that person? We were looking for characters that were iconic but also embodied different styles of music and that when put together would be really interesting and hopefully work together.'"

After kicking around possibilities like ragtime composer Scott Joplin and blues great Robert Johnson, Solomon and Matheson, along with director Dean Parisot ("Galaxy Quest") and music supervisor Jonathan Leary, zeroed in on pioneering jazz trumpeter Armstrong,



ORION PICTURES/AP

Keanu Reeves, right, and Alex Winter reunite in "Bill & Ted Face the Music" as middle-aged dads trying to fulfill their destiny.

“If you fill the movie full of extremely esoteric musicians, as brilliant as they might be, at some point are you losing the audience and not having as much fun? So we decided to stick with really well-known household names and just have fun with that.”

Jonathan Leary

music director, "Bill & Ted Face the Music"

rock legend Hendrix and Mozart.

"The conversation revolved around how recognizable we wanted the historical musicians to be," said Leary. "If you fill the movie full of extremely esoteric musicians, as brilliant as they might be, at some point are you losing the audience and not having as much fun? So we decided to stick with really well-known household names and just have fun with that."

Though comic works like the "Bill & Ted" films are generally allowed some liberties when it comes to the use of historical figures, the filmmakers faced certain restrictions when it came to Armstrong and Hendrix. While the two musicians — who are played in the film, respectively, by actors Jeremiah Craft and Daz'Mann Still — could be depicted as characters onscreen, their estates forbade their likenesses from being used in any advertising for the film, including on its poster.

More importantly, given the prohibitive cost to secure the rights, none of Armstrong or Hendrix's actual music could be used in the movie. Instead, the two are shown playing snippets of "When the Saints Go Marching In" and "Amazing Grace," both songs that are in the public domain. "We had to create things that were rights-free because we had a budget of just slightly above zero for the whole thing," Parisot said. (Orion Pictures declined to confirm the budget, but reports have pegged the film's production cost at \$25 million.)

To provide the actual music played onscreen by Leary, he covered and mixed, Leary brought in Grammy-nominated jazz trump-

eter Christian Scott and multi-instrumentalist Ray Suen, who supplied 50th Hendrix's guitar and Mozart's keyboard playing. "As someone who grew up playing the trumpet and then became a guitar player, when I read Louis Armstrong and Jimi Hendrix in a script, it jumps out at me, like we have to get this right," Leary said. "We said, 'We're not trying to copy Louis Armstrong and Jimi Hendrix. We want to play with the same passion and spirit and fire, but it's not at all an impersonation.'"

To help round out the historical supergroup, Solomon and Matheson landed on the idea of incorporating Ling Lun, who, according to ancient lore, is said to be the founder of Chinese music and is credited by texts dating back to circa 200 BC with pioneering the use of the bamboo flute. While Ling Lun has historically been referred to as a man, the "Face the Music" team decided to make the character female. (She is played in the film by Sharon Gee.)

"We wanted to diversify things, and to the degree that we could escape that part of the movie being too male-centric, we wanted to do that," Matheson said. "There were conversations: 'Can we do this? Can we make Ling Lun a woman?' And at the end, we just decided to do it. Ling Lun is possibly a mythic character so, well, who knows, right?"

To be fair, the "Bill & Ted" franchise has never exactly been huge on historical accuracy. (To cite just one example, when Bill and Ted time travel to 15th-century England in the first film, they are

■ **Movie review on Page 22**

ordered by some "royal ugly dudes" to be placed in an iron maiden, a torture device not invented until some 300 years later.) "Sometimes we'll hit a roadblock and we'll look at each other and go, 'Who else existed in the past that we can think of?'" Matheson said. "It's so sad and embarrassing to admit."

With the character of Death (played by William Sadler) brought back from "Bogus Journey" to serve as the supergroup's bass player, that left only a drummer. Rather than go with some late icon of the drumming world like, say, the Who's Keith Moon or Led Zepplin's John Bonham, Matheson and Solomon decided to create a wholly fictional character, a prehistoric woman named Grom who, according to the film, is the greatest drummer who ever lived and is played in the film by real-life drummer Patty Anne Miller, who has backed artists like Beyonce and CeoLoo Green.

"Grom didn't exist, but rhythm has been around forever," Parisot said. "So to bring in Paleolithic rhythm seemed like a cool thing to do."

Foo Fighters' frontman Dave Grohl came in to do a cameo, as did rapper and producer Kid Cudi, who plays a more expansive role as a quantum-physics-obsessed version of himself. "We heard that Kid Cudi was a huge 'Bill & Ted' fan, so we asked him if he'd be interested in playing this role," Solomon said. "We gave him the script and 90 minutes later he said, 'I'm in.'"

It remains to be seen whether "Face the Music" will harmonize with today's audiences. But for Matheson and Solomon, the fact that the film exists at all is a victory.

"We didn't expect that 'Bill and Ted' would last culturally," Solomon said. "I mean, the first movie got trashed. Your paper beat the crap out of us! We did not expect this thing would weirdly grow over three decades. It's like an investment that someone made for you 30 years ago that you forgot about and suddenly it's grown into something beautiful. It's kind of a miracle that it's here."

WEEKEND: MOVIES



Twentieth Century Fox/AP

Director Armando Iannucci turns a sprawling novel into "The Personal History of David Copperfield," starring Dev Patel (shown).

'Copperfield' soars with magnificent ensemble cast

By ANN HORNADAY
The Washington Post

I f ever a match were made in cine-literary heaven it would be Charles Dickens and Armando Iannucci, each a master of probing social criticism, slashing wit and floridly besotted love of language. So the fact that Iannucci's "The Personal History of David Copperfield" is a surpassingly lively and acutely observant flight of fancy doesn't come as a shock. Still, this cheeky, decidedly postmodern reinterpretation of Dickens' masterwork manages to surprise in myriad delightful ways. Iannucci captures the meaning and the music of the classic tale — about a young man defining and redefining himself through comfort and cruelty, penury and privilege — by way of a gifted cast. Jaireq Varsani lends winsome innocence to the title character as a youngster; once grown, the put-upon but reliably plucky David is played by Dev Patel with relaxed ease. "The Personal History of David Copperfield" is a supremely effective ensemble piece, stuffed with bursting with brilliant supporting performances by Hugh Laurie, Peter Capaldi, Tilda Swinton, Ben Whishaw, Rosalind Eliazar and Benedict Wong — pointedly race-neutral casting that, along with Iannucci's occasional cinematic flourishes, helps the narrative come to life with sunny, vibrantly amusing brio.

Along the way, Iannucci and co-writer Simon Blackwell have taken Dickens' characters to a point as David Copperfield will note that Barkis has unfortunately bitten the dust. But needs must in a sprawling story that, like Greta Gerwig's similarly energetic take on "Little Women" last year, ultimately becomes an ode to writing.

"The Personal History of David Copperfield" opens in a jewel-box theater and unfolds in vignettes that are staged to resemble storybook illustrations. You could say it's all too delicious for words, except that words are the point as David listens to everyone he encounters and furiously scribbles the best stuff down for later use.

The cosmopolitan gaggle of urchins, eccentrics, sharpies and rounders who populate "The Personal History of David Copperfield" look right at home in Victorian London, but also can't help but evoke the present-day, when the obstacles of class, caste and predatory capitalism stubbornly persist. Bold, playful and irrepressibly optimistic, "Copperfield" perfectly manifests the spirit of its hero: Amid struggle and suffering it digs for joy, and always manages to find it.

"The Personal History of David Copperfield" is rated PG for mature thematic material and brief violence. Running time: 115 minutes.

The sunny side of Dickens

Director Iannucci takes a lighter tone with 'David Copperfield' adaptation

By GARY THOMPSON
The Philadelphia Inquirer

The foul-mouthed British satirist Armando Iannucci, of "Veep" fame, wanted to do something optimistic after his last movie, and since that last movie was "The Death of Stalin," his more pleasant options were infinite.

"Stalin," a transparent warning about the rise of autocrats around the world, was the most scabrous of the political satires for which Iannucci had become infamous, and its relentlessly bleak and darkly comic tone left him searching, as another British humorist would say, for something completely different.

He turned to one of his personal heroes, Charles Dickens, taking on the enormous task of condensing the sprawling story of David Copperfield — the adaptation is officially titled "The Personal History of David Copperfield" — into a two-hour movie.

As befit Iannucci's mood, he removed or de-emphasized notes of melancholy and tragedy, and played up warm and whimsical elements in Dickens' story of an outcast who finds his way in the world as a writer.

He also threw casting wide open, so Dev Patel, as David, gets a chance to cross swords with Tilda Swinton (Betsey Trotwood), Peter Capaldi (Micawber) and Hugh Laurie (a wonderfully daft Mr. Dick). Nikki Amuka-Bird (Mrs. Steerforth) and Rosalind Eliazar (Agnes Wickfield) have plum roles.

The Inquirer talked to Iannucci about his literary hero, his unlikely foray in the PG realm and his choices in making David Copperfield, which is now in select theaters.

The Philadelphia Inquirer: David Copperfield is a deeply humane and compassionate movie — attributes that loom large in your previous work mainly by their conspicuous absence. What did it feel like to work in this emotional realm?

Iannucci: People associate the word "Dickensian" with sentimentality, but if you read the books, yes there are maudlin moments, but there are also kind of angry moments and moments of real passion and raw drama. And of course comedy. Lots and lots of just plain funny moments. He's celebrating people's variety, highlighting their eccentricity, their individuality. That for me is Dickens; that's what I've always been drawn to. I wanted it to be a celebratory film.

Dickens wrote for a mass audience. In that spirit, this movie has its arms open wide to everybody — in terms of the PG audience that can see it, in terms of the way you cast it.

I was conscious of the fact that this is a movie for all generations. My movies are usually full of cursing and swearing. This is the first thing I've made that (the parental guidance ratings) certificate allows anyone to see it, and I think different generations will take different things from it.

I said to everyone — cast and crew — at the start, "Imagine no one has made a period drama before and there are no rules, no conventions, no expectations." We just want to tell our story.

The movie is true to its 19th century setting in terms of the sets and costumes, but with an unmistakably contemporary feel.

I thought it was important that even though we really researched the look

— there is 1840s wallpaper and clothes and hair — I wanted the movie to have one foot in the present. But there was a thing about period drama that we wanted to get right: The characters don't know they're in one. They think they are in their own present day, so they should act like they are. People in the audience can feel that and connect with the characters.

Putting Dev in the role of David helps underscore the universality of Dickens' work and themes.

"David" is for anyone who wonders whether they're an outsider, whether they belong to the group that they are in or not.

Dev and I are of different generations, but we're both first generation from immigrant parents. My father came over from Naples after the Second World War and Dev's family, obviously he has an Indian background. Although we grew up in the U.K. and we feel British, there is a part of us that thinks we are something else; we are Other. Do people see us as Other? That is certainly an element of it. At the same time, I think it really celebrates individuality.

As funny as the movie is, it also invokes favorite Dickens themes — poverty, homelessness, debt, the exploitation of children. Orwell said he was that rare writer who could attack his country's institutions and not be hated for it.

That's right. And interestingly, the more successful he became, the more he got into the center of the establishment via fame and celebrity, the more angry the novels became. The closer up he gets to how the county and its empire work, the more frustrated he became, and the more he wanted to write about it.

WEEKEND: MOVIES



'A glitch in the matrix'

'Class Action Park' goes inside New Jersey's most dangerous waterpark

HBO Max

Action Park in Vernon, N.J., was an amusement park that heavily marketed its water-based attractions. The park closed in 1996.

By KATE FELDMAN
New York Daily News

Seth Porges didn't believe his own memories. The tech journalist, who lives in Brooklyn, grew up in Washington, D.C., and frequently visited New Jersey as a child to see his dad's family. And some of those trips ended up at Action Park in Vernon, N.J., a wild water park as famous for its seemingly unregulated rides as it was for tragedies during an almost 20-year run from 1978 to 1996.

"I grew up going to so many amusement parks: Universal, Disney," Porges said. "It was very clear, the second you walked in, that Action Park was not like those places."

Action Park is recalled by some as a pinnacle of teenage fun: A 2,700-foot-long alpine slide, speedboats that went up to 40 mph in a snake-infested pond, a bungee cord that dropped jumpers into frigid, mountain-runoff water below.

For others, it was a terrifying death trap that killed at least six people, including a 27-year-old Long Island, N.Y., man who was electrocuted by a live wire underwarter, and several people who drowned in the tidal wave pool.

"Class Action Park," an HBO Max documentary from Porges and collaborator Chris Charles Scott, tries to balance both versions.

"It was a glitch in the matrix," Porges said. "People who grew up in the '80s or '90s, we think the world works in a certain

way. The fact that Action Park existed for so long makes us question that. It flies in the face of the way we thought the world works."

The 90-minute documentary includes interviews with former park employees, an archival interview with the son of park founder Gene Mulvihill and comedian Chris Gethard and "Parks and Recreation" alum Alison Becker.

"Class Action Park" sounds unbelievable. Porges insisted it's not, but Scott, a Texas native, needed more convincing. "I was like, 'Seth, this would make a remarkable documentary,'" Scott told The News about their night at a bar. "But I still went home that night to look up if Seth was telling the truth."

The research took longer than either ex-

pected — few news outlets paid attention to the park — but almost all of the stories they heard were backed up.

"You have to be very skeptical when talking about Action Park because it's this place of such lore and such myth," Porges told The News. "But what you find is that most people are pretty honest about it because the truth is so crazy that there's no reason to make anything up."

Mixed with vintage footage from old news clips and a 1993 episode of MTV's "Headbanger's Ball" with Alice in Chains, "Class Action Park" both marvels at its subject and asks questions: How was this allowed to happen? Why would anyone go there? Who kept saying "yes" to Mulvihill? "Everyone knew this place was dangerous," Porges told The News. "It wasn't a bug, it was a feature."

At one point, the amusement park had to buy its own ambulances because the town of Vernon couldn't handle the influx of medical calls.

But it wasn't all fun and games and scrapes and bruises.

George Larsson was 19 when he was thrown off the Alpine slide and hit his head on a rock in 1980. After a week in a coma, he died.

His family settled with Mulvihill for \$100,000. An interview with the teen's mother, Esther, darkens the documentary and represents the worst parts of Action Park, but Porges and Scott said they couldn't ignore the reality just to maintain childhood nostalgia.

"The existence of Action Park is hilarious," Porges told The News. "It's an innately human reaction to just laugh. But we wanted to make sure we weren't just laughing at it. We had to acknowledge the human toll of it. A lot of our laughter isn't showing aside the injuries. It's a dark coping mechanism for that. People laugh about things they endured because they came out on the other side."

"There is no moral to 'Class Action Park,'" the directors said. Action Park existed in a bubble that likely couldn't be replicated, or should.

"It was such a formative experience for people who grew up in the New York/New Jersey area," Porges said.

"Everyone has an Action Park story. And it really was all true."

Wittily appalling documentary 'Class Action Park' well worth watching

By MICHAEL PHILLIPS
Chicago Tribune

From 1978 to 1996 — in summer movie terms, from "Animal House" to "Twister" — Action Park waterpark in Vernon, N.J., flung thousands upon thousands of sunburned, liquored-up, party-down thrill-seekers headlong into a notorious collection of poorly designed water slides, a 40 mph concrete Alpine coaster where the brakes didn't always work, and 60 mph go-karts. According to those who worked there and depending on the driver's risk tolerance and blood alcohol level, the go-karts sometimes veered off course and straight onto Route 94, which bisected the park itself.

Everything about Action Park could kill you. And it sometimes did, as the wittily appalling HBO documentary "Class Action Park" makes clear.

The half-witcracking, half-serious reminiscence grew out of an earlier 15-minute documentary, "The Most Insane Amusement Park Ever." That title does

not lie. With little safety oversight and, eventually, a series of fatal accidents, Action Park operated as a place where the usual rules of theme park engagement didn't apply. As more than one interview subject notes, it was like an '80s movie about latchkey kids in over their heads, running loose and wild.

Comedian Chris Gethard, a terrified Action Park regular as a kid and the ringer here, equates the experience to a rite-of-lonely-adolescence passage. "We felt like we were on our own," he says. "We felt like the world was an unsafe place." Action Park confirmed it.

Millions of kids in America can tell you about the stupid stunts they pulled, or the time they went way over the line trying this or that. Action Park was made for those kids, and their knucklehead parents. It had the deceptive distinction of offering a heavily advertised, healthy-seeming chaotic day in the sun. It promised excitement and it delivered, complete with skin abrasions, snake-infested lagoons where the "Kayak Experi-



HBO Max

Cannonball Loop, the infamous looping water slide, was only opened for brief periods during Action Park's existence.

ence" attraction was located and far, far worse.

The park's huckster-founder, Gene Mulvihill, provides the focus for writer-directors Chris Charles Scott and Seth Porges. Mulvihill bought two ski resorts in the Vernon township and realized he could make money in the offseason by building a waterpark of his unbridled dreams. What was touted as "the next Disney World" became a down-market expression of pure

adolescent id, where "you control the action!"

Action World featured three main areas: Alpine Center, Water World and Motor World. The Cannonball Loop dominated the talk at Water World. A long, high, steep tube, wetted down by sprinklers, sent customers plummeting into an upside-down hell before skidding onto a too-short runway puddle.

Some of the craziest details in "Class Action Park" involve

the initial testing phase of this attraction. Park security director Jim DeSaye recounts Mulvihill paying his employees \$100 to try out early iterations of the Loop. The first two kids, he says, came out with their "mouths all bloody." The next two came out with substantial skin lacerations, from the stray loose teeth embedded in the tube's padding.

"Gene didn't believe in the concept of insurance," Porges notes on-camera, detailing the Ceyman Island shell company Mulvihill established to self-insure, minimally, a business built on adrenaline and terror. Summers came and went, with the stories of dislocated shoulders and other injuries piling up.

Relying heavily on park employees' memories and stories, it's a worthwhile season's worth less. The '80s trappings, particularly the synthesizer-heavy score and the funny animated segments, evoke memories of a time before cellphones and helicopter parenting.

"Class Action Park" is rated TV-MA for language. Running time: 90 minutes. Now streaming on HBO Max.

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

A time-bending thriller for bended times

Nolan's 'Tenet' serves as a dazzling escape from pandemic woes

By JAKE COYLE
Associated Press

I went in fresh to "Tenet." I didn't have any real sense of the plot, yet, but it's more that it had been some five months since I was last in a movie theater. That's a long hiatus—a dark ages for sitting in the dark—for someone, anyone, used to going to the movies more days than not.

It's complicated, in a way, to parse the experience. There's the feeling of being back in a movie theater, and then there's the sensations particular to "Tenet." For Christopher Nolan, whose films build their conceptual architecture around the metaphysics of movies themselves, it's kind of one and the same. His movies are designed to unlock innate cinematic powers and glorify the almighty Big Screen—a lonely god these last few months.

As the first major film released in theaters since the pandemic began, "Tenet" has swelled in the minds of anxious moviegoers, adopting the role of savior. Nolan vs. COVID-19 is as much part of the drama of "Tenet" as anything on screen, and just as convoluted and disorienting. Seeing "Tenet" for this critic meant crossing numerous state lines and watching it at a nearly empty movie theater—a luxury of social distancing that won't be possible for most, even in reduced capacity theaters. At its best, moviegoing has always been thrilling, even dangerous. That may be doubly so right now.

For theatergoers, "Tenet" is just a movie. It won't beat the virus and it won't single-handedly save movie theaters. It won't even really blow your mind. But for much of its 150-minute running time, Nolan's globe-trotting sci-fi riff on the spy thriller will provide a dazzling escape, one dense with singular imagery and intelec-



Warner Bros.

The sci-fi thriller "Tenet" stars John David Washington, left, and Robert Pattinson.

tual puzzles. And, perhaps most vitally, it will give a cool, brutalist refresher of the movies' capacity for awe, for imagination, and, yes, for tiresome grandiosity.

Naturally, "Tenet" opens on a crowded auditorium. At an opera house in Kiev, just as the conductor is raising his baton, a barrage of bullets rings out and masked men take the stage. Outside, a squadron of covert American agents are stirred. They pick a local police patch for their shoulders, and one among them (John David Washington, known only as "the Protagonist" in the credits) maneuvers to rescue a man who sits in a closed balcony.

As he's trying to stop bombs from going off in the theater, an odd thing happens. Tussling with one of the terrorists, a bullet seems to fly backward into the gun. After being taken hostage and tortured, he blacks out. When he wakes up much later, he's told that he's been released from the CIA and been enlisted in a shadowy organization known as Tenet. The mission goes beyond borders, he's told. A Cold War

—"ice cold"—is brewing. He's to try to prevent World War III and an apocalypse worse than nuclear holocaust.

The details of this secret war—who's on what side, what's at stake—take a while to unspool. But just as Nolan's last film, the gorgeously synchronized WWII survival tale "Dunkirk," was arranged elementally by land, sea and air, "Tenet" is spliced between past, present and future. A heady genre movie that puts James Bond-like tropes through a collider, it's very much a companion piece to "Inception" (a heist movie with a sci-fi spin) and just as laden with continual explanation.

The central conceit here is that a rare mineral can reverse the entropy of objects. That means time travel, inverted weapons, car chases that speed both ways and the biggest blockbuster to ever look a little like the backward-running Pharcyde music video "Drop," by Spike Jonze. These weapons are the "detritus of a coming war," he's told; the future is attacking the past.

The Protagonist's journey brings him in touch with a British flier named Neil (a delightfully knowing and especially dashing Robert Pattinson; you want him always to say more than he does), a Mumbai arms dealer (Dimple Kapadia) and ultimately a Ukrainian oligarch named Andrei Sator (Kenneth Branagh). To reach the insulated Sator, the Protagonist finds an entry through his wife, Kat (Elizabeth Debicki), an art dealer who has come to detest her husband.

As a film, "Tenet" rumbles like a jumbo jet. Its sheer tonnage is what most strikes you. There are trucks and ships, giant turbines and helicopters, concrete masses and 747s. It's a literally heavy movie. The settings, which span from the Amalfi Coast to the "closed cities" of Russia, give "Tenet" a technological backdrop of ecological destruction. If anything, I wish Nolan had taken his future vs. past concept further, instead of situating it so firmly in the more familiar (in movies) world of black-market weapons dealers.

"Tenet" lacks the elegant mastery of "Dunkirk" or the cosmic soulfulness of "Interstellar," but it has a darkly grand geometry. As instruments in an abstraction, most of Nolan's protagonists verge on the hollow. Washington glides through the film with charisma and preternatural smoothness, but his character's inner life goes unexplored. Leonardo DiCaprio's Cobb in "Inception" wasn't so different, but the mission plunged directly into his subconscious. Nolan, a visionary filmmaker, can sometimes be too busy conjuring visions to build a character.

Time is Nolan's real protagonist, anyway. Its loss was the agony of "Interstellar." A ticking clock, on three different temporal tracks, measured "Dunkirk." In "Tenet," it moves in circles: backward and forward like waves in the ocean. It's a distinctive characteristic of the movies, and it's one you can feel Nolan investigating and experimenting with. It's easy to imagine "Tenet" was born in an editing suite, while a shot was rewound and epiphany struck.

"Tenet" is rated PG-13 for violence and action, and brief strong language. Running time: 151 minutes.

'Bill & Ted Face the Music' hits familiar beats of burnout besties' adventures

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

It's been 30 years since Alex Winter and Keanu Reeves charmed audiences as the goofy, time-traveling metal-heads Bill S. Preston, Esq., and Ted "Theodore" Logan in "Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure" and "Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey." In the third installment, "Bill & Ted Face the Music," Reeves and Winter revisit their quintessential burnout bestie characters in a film that offers up an easy dose of nostalgia.

In "Excellent Adventure," Bill and Ted had to pass history to avoid military school, which they did by assembling historic figures using a time-traveling phone booth. In "Bogus Journey," Bill and Ted escape from hell to win the Battle of the Bands as the Wyld Stallions. Many, many years later, they're still holding onto those rock 'n' roll dreams. In "Face the Music," written by original



ORION PICTURES/AP

William Sadler, center, reprises his role as the Grim Reaper in "Bill & Ted Face the Music," starring Keanu Reeves, left, and Alex Winter.

writers Chris Matheson and Ed Solomon, and directed by Dean Parisot, Bill and Ted face their midlife crisis.

The condependent bros haven't grown up much over the years, which has hampered their lives with their wives, medieval princesses Joanna (Jayma Mays) and Elizabeth (Erinn Hayes), evident

Carlin), who tasks them with performing a song that will unite reality and prevent the timeline from collapsing in on itself. With only a few hours, Bill and Ted harness their time-travel prowess to snatch the song from their future selves, and their journey through time will help them learn to unite their own realities with their families.

"Face the Music" has all the gravitas one might expect from a "Bill & Ted" movie, which is to say, almost none. It's fun to watch Winter (now a prolific director) and Reeves (now John Wick) step back into these roles, though the cognitive dissonance between sweet doofus Ted and the Rees we have come to know as a serious, laconic action star is a long leap.

Weaving and Lundy-Paine prove to be the breakouts of "Face the Music," nailing the mannerisms of their fathers. Their chunk of the story, traveling through time to scoop up the best musicians to back the Wyld

Stallions, could (or should) have been the whole movie. Another standout is Anthony Carrigan (who plays NoHo Hank on HBO's "Barry") as a deadly yet neurotic robot, chasing Bill and Ted through time as they track down their various future selves in search of their reality-uniting song. His white cue-ball head is a nod to William Sadler's incredible turn as Death in "Bogus Journey," and Sadler reprises his role here, as well as Hal Landon Jr. as Chief Logan and Amy Stoch as omnipresent stepmother Missy.

Bill and Ted bouncing through time means the narrative of these films are merely loose assortments of wacky bits and cameos, and "Face the Music" doesn't stray from that. While it doesn't quite gel cohesively, in this casual kickback with a pair of old pals, it's the dudes who remain excellent.

"Bill & Ted Face the Music" is rated PG-13 for some language. Running time: 88 minutes.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Europe



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Kastellaun Castle was first built in the 13th century. It was destroyed in the Palatine Succession War in 1698.

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

From Wiesbaden, take autobahn A643 to A60 towards Bingen, then A61 towards Koblenz. Exit at Rheinboellen and head towards Simmern and Hahn airport on highway B50. Exit at Ellern and head towards Wallbach and Kastellaun. About a 60-mile drive. From Kaiserslautern, take A6 to A63 to A61, head toward Koblenz, then follow the directions above. From Baumholder take A62 to Birkenfeld, then B269 to B327/B50 to Sohren/Baerenbach to L193 to B327 to Kastellaun.

TIMES

Anytime, best when the weather is nice. The regional history museum is open from noon to 5 p.m. Thursday to Sunday.

COSTS

The museum costs 2.50 euros for adults; 1 euro for children 10 to 18 years of age; kids under 10 get in free.

FOOD

There are a variety of restaurants and cafes in Kastellaun. The cafe on the market square is popular for breakfast and lunch. The castle tavern opens at 5 p.m. Thursday-Saturday and at 11 a.m. on Sunday.

INFORMATION

The town's German-only website is kastellaun.de.

— Michael Abrams

Site of a series of unfortunate events

Kastellaun castle's ruins tell story of disaster, destruction

BY MICHAEL ABRAMS
Stars and Stripes

The Hunsrueck region of Germany — an area of rolling hills between the Rhine, Moselle and Nahe rivers — has quite a bit to offer the traveler or adventurer.

There are numerous hiking and biking trails, quaint towns and stately castles and one of the longest pedestrian suspension bridges in Germany.

One of those old towns with impressive castle ruins is Kastellaun.

The castle was built in the mid-13th century by the counts of Sponheim.

Although they used it, only one of them, Simon II, actually lived there.

It was continuously expanded through the centuries and another nobleman, Eduard Fortunates of Baden, took up residence in 1595. Despite his name, he wasn't too fortunate, dying there in 1600, following a fall on the castle stairs.

The castle and town didn't fare too well either. During the Thirty Years War they were occupied by various factions, and plague ravaged its inhabitants. Finally, in 1698, the town and castle were destroyed by Louis XIV's French troops during the War of Palatine Succession.

In the early 19th century, the ruins were used as a quarry — you can still see some of its stones in the walls of many Kastellaun houses. In 1884, the town bought the castle and extensively restored it in the 1990s.

Romping around the ruins can be fun, and you can tell it must have once been quite imposing.

You can climb the renovated tower for a good view of the castle grounds, the town and the countryside.

The one building that has been thoroughly rebuilt hosts a tavern and the House of Regional History. A small museum is quite interesting, if you understand German. It traces local history from the Celts and Romans to the Middle Ages and to the end of the Cold War.

In the 1960s, Kastellaun was a focal point of the German peace movement because U.S. Pershing II missiles were to be stationed at a base nearby. The Cold War ended, the military left and for the past 25 years the grounds were the site of one of Germany's biggest Techno festivals, Nature One — canceled this year due to the coronavirus epidemic.

Back in town, there are several interesting things to see.

The Catholic church at the foot of the castle is only about 120 years old, but it's worth a peek inside for its sculptures. The Protestant church is much older, built in the 14th century. Like many old churches in parts of Germany, it was a Catholic church until the Reformation in the 16th century. From 1688 to 1894, both congregations used it.

A couple of houses along Marktstrasse are worth a gander as well. The Haus zum Schwanen is a beautiful late 16th-century half-timbered house with an ornate cast-



A view of Kastellaun Castle from the stairs that lead up to it from Vordere Eifelstrasse starting in Kastellaun's old town. While most of the castle is in ruins, the building with the colorful shutters houses a regional museum and a tavern.

iron sign featuring a swan hanging over the door.

Another building with a fascinating facade is Haus Colditz. Built early in the 19th century, it was remodeled toward the end of that century in a striking art nouveau style. Two life-size female figures adorn its facade. Today it houses the town's tourist information office.

On the marketplace stands an interesting statue: a goat, split in half. It's the Kastellauner Boeck. The town's citizens once had to pay an annual levy of two goats to a nobleman. In one famine year, they split

a goat in half and arranged it to a wagon to look like two animals, trying to fool the nobleman. The ruse failed, but the attempt has gone down in local lore.

There is a small stone monument on Eifelstrasse, marking where the town's synagogue once stood, before being destroyed by the Nazis in 1938. On the outskirts of town however, on Hasselbacher Strasse, the old Jewish cemetery still remains. According to the laws of the town, it had to be beyond the town limits.

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

A stop at York Minster, England's top church

As we've had to postpone our travels because of the pandemic, I believe a weekly dose of travel dreaming can be good medicine. Here's a reminder of the fun that awaits us in Europe at the other end of this crisis.

In York (the most interesting stop between London and Edinburgh), following Edwin, a vry and spry retired schoolteacher, on a walk around town. Edwin stays active leading town walks and giving private tours. Today, he's taking me to what he considers the finest church in England.

York is the most interesting town between London and Edinburgh for a reason. And Edwin is ready with an explanation: In the Victorian Age, most big cities embraced the Industrial Revolution, tearing down their walls and inviting the train tracks to run right through their center.

But the people of York kept their walls and repaired the train tracks to be built just outside the center. While less efficient at the time, this left the city a historic treasure cradled entirely within the surviving walls. Those York Victorians not only saved their wall, they also amped up its historic charm with a remodel, giving it fanciful crenellations and arrow slits.

With that, we step into York Minster, the pride of the city. It's one of the most magnificent churches in Britain and the largest Gothic church north of the Alps. Splashed with stained glass and graced with soaring ceilings, this dazzling church brilliantly shows that the High Middle Ages may have been dank, but they were far from dark.

Gothic architecture was a big improvement over Romanesque if you like light. Light is a key ingredient when creating a worshipful environment and, when it comes to "let there be light," it's all about stained glass windows.

The Minster is famous for its 15th-century stained glass, especially its Great East Window, which is the size of a tennis court. The window's fine details — far too tiny to see from the floor — were originally intended "for God's eyes only."



Rick Steves

But Edwin has opera glasses. He pulls them from his satchel so I can study the window as he guides me: A sweeping story is told in more than 300 panels of painted and stained glass, climaxing with the apocalypse. It's a medieval disaster movie — a blockbuster back in 1408 — showing the end of world in fire and flood and pestilence ... vivid scenes from the Book of Revelation. Angels trumpet disaster against blood-red skies. And there it is, the fifth panel up on the far-left side ... the devil giving power to the "Beast of the Apocalypse," a seven-headed, ten-crowned lion, just as it was written in the Bible. This must have terrified worshippers. This British masterpiece was unprecedented in its epic scale, created a hundred years before Michelangelo frescoed the story of the beginning and end of time at the Sistine Chapel in Rome. One of



DOMINIC ARIZONA BONICELLI/RickSteves.com

The English town of York preserved its quaint city center by keeping the train tracks outside of the main walls. This street leads to the town's pride and joy: York Minster.

the great art treasures of the Middle Ages, it's the work of one man: John Thornton of Coventry (who, I think, deserves a little of Michelangelo's fame).

The church also holds a full carillon of 35 bells, and holds weekly bell concerts.

Later that day I return for evensong, arriving early to get a prime seat. It's a spiritual Oz, with 40 boys singing psalms: a red-and-white-robed pillow of praise,

raised up by the powerful pipe organ.

As the boys sing and the organ plays, I ponder the towering Gothic arches — stone stacked by locals 700 years ago, still soaring like hands folded in prayer. I whisper, "Thank God for York. Amen."

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

Retrace the steps of passionate protesters of the past

On August 9, Belarusians headed to the polls, and in an election widely regarded as rigged, Alexander Lukashenko, head of state since 1994, was reelected for a sixth time. On the days that followed, tens of thousands of protesters in Belarus gathered in the country's capital of Minsk and other cities to protest the result and demand new, free and fair elections. These protests, the biggest the country has seen in many years, have been met with violent repression.

The streets of Belarus weren't the only ones to see protest in the COVID summer of 2020. The Black Lives Matter protests that kicked off in the U.S. in the wake of the killing of George Floyd at the hands of a policeman on May 25 spread to more than 60 countries. European cities including Bern, Berlin, Glasgow, London, Paris and Zurich saw thousands of protesters turn out to protest systemic racism. And in London protests have also roiled cities from Madrid to Munich.

Taking one's demands to the street is nothing new, and in fact dates back millennia. As you travel throughout Europe, there are plenty of spaces where you can spare a moment to think of those throughout time who raised their voices in union to confront a wrong and demand change. Today we will explore two places in Eastern Europe in which the people helped topple hideous commu-

nist regimes. Leipzig, Germany: The Nicolaikirche, an 800-year-old church in the center of Leipzig, was long a popular place for East German dissidents to meet and discuss politics. By the fall of 1989,



Karen Bradbury

these prayer meetings had evolved into a nationwide movement. On Oct. 9, Leipzig saw the country's largest protest yet, as some 70,000 peaceful demonstrators turned up despite warnings against doing so and the presence of thousands of armed anti-riot policemen. The gathering remained peaceful, and was instrumental in setting the stage for the fall of the Berlin Wall and the eventual reunification of Germany. On Oct. 9 each year, Leipzig celebrates its central role in the fall of communism with concerts, marches, exhibitions and a festival of light.

Today's visitors to Leipzig can learn about these happenings by visiting "Sites of the Peaceful Revolution," 20 steles around the city marking the original locations of the democratic upheavals of 1989-90. Photos and texts in both German or English provide context, and QR codes link to the "Leipzig '89" app, an audio guide



This statue of a worker in Gdansk, Poland's Solidarity Square is part of The Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers of 1970.

containing photos, documents and contemporary film material.

The Memorial Museum in the "Runde Ecke," formerly the seat of the district's state security administration, houses the permanent exhibition "STASI – Power and Banality," authentically illustrating the working methods of the GDR's secret service with displays of equipment for postal surveillance, a masking workshop and a replica of a cell. Online: leipzig.travel/en/culture/history/peaceful-revolution

Pact country to be officially recognized by the state was the Solidarnosc (Solidarity) trade union, founded in August of 1980 at the Lenin Shipyards in Gdansk. Under the leadership of Lech Walesa, this social movement used methods of civil resistance to advance the causes of workers' rights and demand social change. Despite government attempts to quash the union by imposing martial law and other tactics of repression, it continued to grow and entered into negotiations with the government that paved the way for the 1989 legislative

elections, the first pluralistic elections since 1947. Solidarity is widely considered to have played a central role in bringing an end to communist rule in the country.

Today's travelers can venture just north of the town center, to the Gdansk Shipyard, where, in August of 1980, the shipyard crane operator Anna Walentynowicz, a known dissident, was fired five months prior to her planned retirement. When hearing this news, Lech Walesa, an electrician who had already been fired for being an agitator, scaled the shipyard's walls to rally protesters.

The history of Solidarity and other oppositionist movements that stimulated democratic changes throughout Central and Eastern Europe can be discovered at the "Paths to Freedom" permanent exhibition in the European Solidarity Center, where photos, videos, maps, press clippings and biographical entries in both Polish and English take us back to these times. Another site worth visiting is The Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers, which commemorates the 42 people killed during strikes across northern Poland in protest of drastically increasing food prices in December 1970. This is considered the first monument to the victims of communist oppression to be erected in a communist country. Online: visitgdansk.com/en/corobic/gdansk-on-the-path-of-freedom_a,22

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Europe



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

A seasonal specialty, chanterelle mushrooms in an herbed cream sauce over dumplings are served at the Licht-Luft restaurant in Kaiserslautern, Germany.

Warm-weather dining

Gasthaus Licht-Luft in Kaiserslautern is a 'light, airy' setting to enjoy an alfresco meal

By MICHAEL ABRAMS
Stars and Stripes

One of my favorite things about the warm season in Germany, from spring to fall, is alfresco dining.

Sure, a romantic, cozy restaurant is fine, but eating and drinking outdoors, enjoying the weather and the food, is hard to beat.

That's especially true in these coronavirus times, where social distancing and aerosols are things to consider.

While on the hunt for a nice place to sit outside and relish the food, I came across Gasthaus Licht-Luft, right behind Kaiserslautern's Kleber Kaserne.

Licht-Luft means light-air, and the setting offers both, as the restaurant sits in a local community garden and once was the gardeners' clubhouse. It's not that big of a building, but from April to October, the focal point is its expansive beer garden behind it.

Most of the shade is from umbrellas, unlike the leafy shade at Quack, a restaurant next door. But on a recent



AFTER
HOURS
GERMANY

pasta and flammkuchen. And being in the Pfalz region of Germany, local specialties can't be missing from the menu.

Licht-Luft also offers weekly and seasonal specials. Since the dish was in season, we tried the chanterelle mushrooms in an herbed cream sauce over dumplings. It was delicious — the mushrooms tender, the sauce zesty and the dumplings light and moist.

The flammkuchen, a pizza-like dish with a thin flaky crust and sparse toppings, passed muster, and their vegetarian version — with mushrooms, peppers, tomatoes, onions and cheese — was perfect on a hot day.

hot, sunny August afternoon, it was quite comfortable.

Now, let's get to the food. It is mostly German-inspired, with schnitzels and steaks, but features some vegetarian dishes as well,

plus soups, salads, and being in the Pfalz region of Germany, local specialties can't be missing from the menu.

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GASTHAUS LICHT-LUFT

Location: Entersweilerstrasse 51, 67657 Kaiserslautern Behind Kleber Kaserne, near the restaurant Quack
Hours: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., daily
Dress: Casual
English menu: Yes
Prices: Starters and soup, 4.20 to 11.90 euros; main dishes, 9.10 to 22.90 euros

Information: Online: gasthaus-lichtluft.de. You need to wear a mask to your table and will be asked to fill out contact information.

To help with social distancing, you enter through the restaurant and exit through the garden.

— Michael Abrams



The Paelzer Worscht-Grumbeere is one of many specialties of the Pfalz region. It consists of fried potatoes with liver and blood sausages that have been removed from their casings.

We had to try a Pfalz specialty. Usually this would be liver dumplings, saumagen (pig's belly stuffed with pork and potatoes) or bratwurst, or a platter of all. Here at Licht-Luft they have a dish called Paelzer Worscht-Grumbeere, fried potatoes with liver and blood sausages that have been removed from their casings. Sounds a little strange, but it was very tasty, not unlike an American hash. Grumbeere is regional slang for potatoes, by the way.

You can wash this all down with wines from the Pfalz, mostly from nearby Freinsheim, or Eichbaum beer, which is not from the Pfalz, but from Mannheim, on the other side of the Rhine River.

They don't have dessert on the menu, but do offer various cakes and other sweets, as people also come for "Kaffee and Kuchen," the German afternoon ritual of having coffee and cake.

For an alfresco lunch or dinner, Gasthaus Licht-Luft is a nice place to be before winter comes and we have to worry more about what's in the air indoors again.

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Sweet, spicy wings are perfect for Labor Day celebration



LINDA GASSENHEIMER/TNS

Honey Spiced Chicken Wings and Potato Salad make a perfect Labor Day meal.

By LINDA GASSENHEIMER
Tribune News Service

These sweet and spicy chicken wings are baked in the oven and then crisped under the broiler. It's perfect for the upcoming holiday weekend or anytime. I separated the drumettes from the flats for easier serving.

Microwaving the potatoes for the potato salad shortens the cooking time and means there's no pot to wash. Make extra potato salad if you have time; it will keep a couple of days in the refrigerator and can be served with any meal.

HONEY SPICED CHICKEN WINGS

Ingredients
8 chicken wings, tips removed, drumettes and flats separated

3 tablespoons apricot jam
1½ tablespoons honey
¼ teaspoon hot pepper sauce

Directions
Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking tray with foil and place in oven as it preheats. Mix apricot jam, honey and hot pepper sauce together. Spoon over wings. When oven

is preheated, place wings on baking tray on the middle shelf in the oven and bake 10 minutes or until a meat thermometer reaches 165 degrees. Turn oven on to broil and crisp the chicken for 3 minutes. Watch to make sure they don't burn. Remove, serve and enjoy.
Yields 2 servings.

POTATO SALAD

Ingredients
¾ pound red potatoes
2 tablespoons distilled white vinegar
1½ tablespoons Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons canola oil

2 tablespoons warm water
¼ cup snipped chives
¼ cup diced celery
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions
Wash potatoes, do not peel and cut into ½- to ¾-inch pieces. Place in a microwave-safe bowl and microwave on high for 5 minutes. Test to see they are soft. Add another minute or two if needed. Mix vinegar, mustard, oil and warm water together. Add the chives and celery. Stir into the potatoes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve with the chicken wings.
Yields 2 servings.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Down, not out

Hope for the future of Edinburgh's canceled festivals remains high

By JILL LAWLESS
Associated Press

Francesca Moody is spending August the way she always does, in darkened rooms in Edinburgh, watching some of the best new theater and comedy the world has to offer.

All that's missing are the hundreds of thousands of other people who usually do the same in Scotland's capital. "It's strange to be in a city that you're so used to being saturated with culture and arts and people," Moody, a theater producer, said backstage at the city's shuttered Traverse Theatre.

Usually the venue is a hub for performances at the Edinburgh Fringe, the vast performance festival that helps turn the city into a global creative hub every summer — drawing crowds, generating buzz and filling the coffers of hoteliers, pub-owners, shopkeepers and tour guides.

Every summer except this one. The Fringe, the high-toned Edinburgh International Festival, the Edinburgh International Book Festival, the Art Festival and the city's bagpipe-swirling Military Tattoo were all casualties of the U.K.'s coronavirus lockdown. Their cancellation was a body blow to Britain's thriving creative economy, and to Edinburgh's booming tourism sector.

But there are glimmers of light in artists' and organizers' determination that the festivals will return — even if it's in a smaller, more digital form.

Moody knows all about the power of the Fringe. At the 2013 festival she produced "Fleabag," a one-woman show by Phoebe Waller-Bridge that went on to become an Emmy-winning TV series. She is trying to keep the festival's chemistry alive with the Shedinburgh Fringe, a series of theater and comedy shows performed in sheds erected on theater stages in Edinburgh and London and beamed to ticket-buying viewers around the world.

Moody, who watches the shows live in an otherwise empty theater, is trying to see the upside of this digital necessity.

"Prior to this, I think that the arts community was talking a lot about how we make our work digital," she said. "This has sort of galvanized that exploration. Which in the end, will be a good thing. Because the great thing about digital is that it democratizes the work. It makes it way more accessible."

Shedinburgh runs until Sept. 5, and the money raised will go to help artists attend the Fringe in 2021 — if it takes place.

"You kind of have to have faith in humanity's ability to get through these things and to find vaccines and to move on."

Shona McCarthy
Fringe chief executive

Digital offerings such as Shedinburgh provide some succor for artists and audiences, but little comfort for Edinburgh's tourism-dependent businesses.

Donald Enslie, chairman of the Edinburgh Tourism Action Group, said the city's annual income from tourism doubled between 2010 and 2020. Tourism bosses worried the city was over capacity. The pandemic brought that boom to a screeching halt: Lockdown has cost Edinburgh an estimated 1 billion pounds (\$1.3 billion) since March and put 20,000 jobs at risk. The number of people visiting central Edinburgh in May and June was down 90% from 2019.

Shops, restaurants, pubs and museums have begun welcoming visitors again as lockdown eases. But there is still ample space to stroll along the Royal Mile, the cobbled street that runs



PHOTOS BY DAVID CIESKIN/AP

A few tourists roam the normally busy Royal Mile on August 21 in Edinburgh, Scotland.

from craggy Edinburgh Castle to Holyrood Palace, Queen Elizabeth II's Edinburgh home. Usually in August it is crammed with tourists, buskers and performers thrusting leaflets advertising their shows into every available hand.

"It's terrible. We've got no guests," said Luca Vettori, owner of walking tour company Little Fish. "This time last year, we were having about 150 people a day" — many of them Americans from the cruise ships that, pandemic, regularly docked in Edinburgh.

Edinburgh has been synonymous with arts festivals since 1947, when the Edinburgh International Festival was founded to revive the war-weary city. The Fringe sprang up as a democratic alternative to the invitation-only main festival, and soon came to dwarf it in size. Last year, more than 3.1 million tickets were sold to almost 4,000 Fringe shows during the three-week event.

Anyone can perform at the Fringe if they pay a registration fee and find a venue. Over the decades, it has helped launch the careers of comedians including members of Monty Python, Stephen Fry, Hugh Laurie and Emma Thompson, and spawned hit stage shows including "Black Watch" and "Jerry Springer: The Opera."

Fringe chief executive Shona McCarthy said the decision to cancel for the first time in 73 years was "profoundly sad, because you knew the ripple effect it would have on so many other people."

"It's not just for the artists and the technicians and what happens on stages," she said. "It's the small graphic design companies, it's the poster design companies, it's the wee cafes and restaurants. The impact on this city is just enormous."

Artists and organizers have been resourceful in response. Some Fringe performers have put their shows online, and the festival has held Zoom gatherings to help retain some of the



A woman scans her smartphone outside the Fringe Shop on the Royal Mile on Aug. 21 in Edinburgh, Scotland.



Shona McCarthy, chief executive of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, stands along a normally busy Royal Mile on Aug. 21 in Edinburgh.

event's commercial and creative buzz. The International Festival also broadcast some productions online, and the book festival ran live-streamed talks by authors from around the world.

McCarthy says such digital offerings will play a bigger role in the Fringe's future, though "nothing but nothing will replace the live experience of Edinburgh in August."

"It's just not the same sitting in your own house with a laptop," she said.

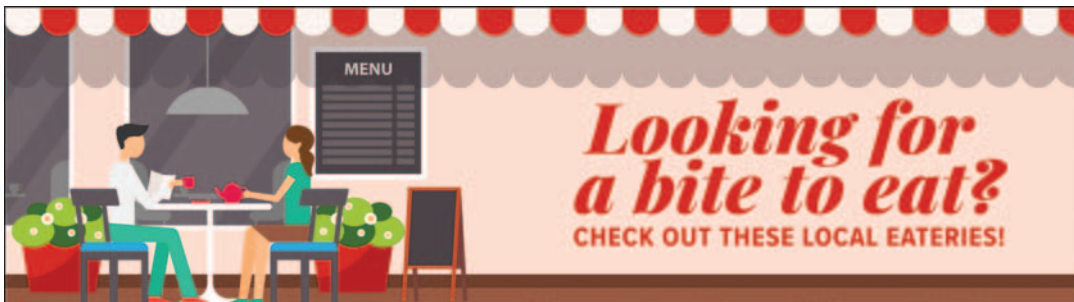
The fate of next year's festival is uncertain. McCarthy

said organizers' most optimistic scenario is "some level of return to normal," but with about 40% of the previous capacity because of social distancing requirements. "The worst-case scenario is a rerun of this year's empty stages."

"You kind of have to have faith in humanity's ability to get through these things and to find vaccines and to move on," she said. "Our role in the interim period is to keep the sense of what this festival is, and what it can be again, in the hearts and minds of both audiences and the artists and performers."



Adam Kashimiri gets ready for his online performance Aug. 21 at Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre, usually a hub of the Fringe Festival.



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WEEKEND: TRAVEL

No cruises? Time to get creative

Travelers stuck at home find innovative ways to re-create onboard vacation life

By KARA NEWMAN
Special to The Washington Post

Cruising enthusiasts Jen and Jonathan Sternfeld found an unusual coping mechanism during the coronavirus pandemic: a fake cruise. Each day, the couple from Schenectady, N.Y., would draw up a cruise "schedule" full of meals and activities to look forward to, including cocktails on the "Sunset Deck" (their front porch), tiki Tuesdays, movie nights and elaborate "chef's table" menus. As they posted photos of their "cruise" on social media, more and more friends — including me — began to follow along.

"All of us were collectively missing cruising," recalls Jen Sternfeld, who has been on 29 real-life cruises. (No. 30, a voyage to Spain and Portugal, was postponed to 2021.) Inspired by friends posting nostalgic throwback photos of previous cruises, "I just said we could do a virtual cruise by taking pictures at home."

As travel plans remain on pause for most Americans amid measures to stem the spread of the coronavirus, cruises seem particularly fraught. In July, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention extended a "No Sail Order" for cruise ships through at least the month of September. Some cruise lines, such as Cunard, have opted to pause cruises until at least November.

So what's an avid cruiser to do? Create fantasy cruises from the safety of home. While some would-be cruisers have specific destinations in mind, many are just seeking the escapism of the cruising experience.

Digital resources for these fanciful distractions abound, many supplied by cruise ship companies anxious to help keep future vacation bookings front of mind. Via Facebook, cruise line Royal Caribbean offers trivia games, Spotify playlists and ocean-themed "interactive quest" games for kids. Holland America launched a HAL@Home video series with concerts and cooking demos, while SilverSea's YouTube channel provides cocktail recipes.

The robust "Virtual of the Seas" itineraries posted by Royal Caribbean, which started in March as the lockdown began, helped inspire Jen Sternfeld, a private chef, to flex her cooking skills at home.

While others whipped up Dalgona coffee or baked sourdough loaves, she began to prepare and photograph multicourse "chef's table" meals and colorful tropical drinks, the latter often presented in souvenir glasses collected on previous cruises.

Every week or two, the "cruise" and its destination changed. Italian dishes served on the "Costa" line, for example, motivated Sternfeld to use the different types of pasta she'd stocked up on for quarantine. Her attention to detail soon expanded to include drawing up a detailed "cruise map" of their home and a daily itinerary, all posted on Facebook.

"My husband was working from home; we had no time constraints," she notes. "I'd change clothes and take a picture of myself against some wall in the house."

There's a cruise tradition of taking photos against the grand staircase in the atrium. ... I put on a gown and took a stairway picture."

More and more friends began to follow along and comment on a daily basis. "We were more connected that way," Sternfeld says.

Of course, that connection had its drawbacks. Since many of her husband's colleagues were among those following along on Facebook, "We had to be careful the bar didn't 'open' until my husband was officially off work for the day," she says and chuckles.

For Kirti Dwivedi, a Phoenix-based marketing consultant, a virtual cruise was a honeymoon to follow her virtual wedding, which took place in April via Zoom. In lieu of a planned trip to Hawaii and weary of sheltering in place during a lengthy Arizona heat wave, the couple road-tripped to a rental house in Anaheim, Calif. Their stay included a fancy "Captain's Table" dinner of truffled potatoes and steak. They broke out the formal wear and toasted with champagne.

"It was like a three-hour reprieve from everything crushing around us," Dwivedi says. "Even a small escape — the energy that goes into making it special or different is what we need right now."

And that escape had to take the form of a cruise, she insists. It represented the wedding proposal, which took place on a sunset "booze cruise" in Hawaii, as well as the scuttled honeymoon plans. "The

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29



Jonathan Sternfeld

Jen Sternfeld enjoys a glass of rose wine on the "promenade."

Set up a virtual cruise at home

Decide where to go: While there's nothing wrong with a cruise to nowhere, selecting an imagined destination can help inspire meal plans or daily activities. Kirti Dwivedi, for example, brought in fresh tropical fruit and coconut sorbet to evoke sense memories of Hawaii and "make it different from our everyday life."

Take advantage of resources: Whether online or in your home, there's no shortage of ways to inform and entertain a virtual journey. Jen Sternfeld, for example, turned to scrapbooks from previous trips, which included daily program guides, Cookbooks, cocktail books and online bartending tools provided recipe inspiration. Look on cruise ship sites and social media for mind-sharpeners like Sudoku and crossword puzzles; or Pinterest for scavenger hunts that can be adapted for around the home or neighborhood.

Share with your community: Everyone interviewed for this article described feedback from others as the most rewarding aspect of a faux journey. "Pictures are key," Larysa Bolde advises. "You can write as much as you want, but it's the pictures that draw people in."

Have fun: Like so much else during this pandemic, this is uncharted territory, so make it yours. "There's no rules," Dwivedi says. "You create the experience you want to, however you want to do it. It's not about what other people are going to think." Bolde sums it up, "Get creative, get silly, don't take yourself too seriously."

— Kara Newman



Kirti Dwivedi

Kirti Dwivedi, right, and her husband, Bobby Borszich, dress for dinner on their virtual honeymoon cruise.



Jen Sternfeld

Sharks in the "water" can be seen from the deck of Jen and Jonathan Sternfeld's at-home "cruise."



Eliot Bolde

Larysa Bolde enjoys an adult beverage in the hot tub on the "cruise ship" at her home.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

FROM PAGE 28

ocean is really special for us. There's something renewing about it," she says.

A sense of humor also goes along with virtual cruises. After her planned solo cruise to the Caribbean in March was canceled, Larysa Bolde, an X-ray technician and chiropractic assistant in Sterling Heights, Mich., was — like many — inspired by a viral video posted on Twitter of a septuagenarian Australian couple staying their own faux voyage, wearing white bathrobes, clinking wine glasses and propping up their bare feet in front of a flat-screen TV showing a video of a rolling seascape.

"I said, let's see if we can take this one step further," she recalls. "Instead of just one picture, build a whole story." She channeled her disappointment into a running thread on Cruise Critic, a cruise reviews site. While this is just one of many threads on the site dedicated to fantasy cruises, ranging from long, melancholy missives to sci-fi (one posted under the pseudonym twangster involves a "Star Trek"-style transporter to zip between continents), this one is lighthearted, a brief journey amid mangled towel animals and lounging pets in sunglasses.

"It was just pure enjoyment for me, the entertainment factor," Bolde says. And during the worst homebound days of the pandemic, unable to work, unable to travel, she found that the camaraderie from other people was a comfort.

"The virtual cruise helped me," she says. "It was just the feedback; they were telling me how clever I was. I enjoyed me. Some days you're just feeling down ... (but it made me realize), life isn't so bad right now."

While cruise No. 1 is a wrap, Bolde is planning cruise No. 2, which is to take place during a lakeside visit.

"Eventually, the real cruises will come back," she says. "In the meantime, we'll live vicariously through our imagination." However, even the slickest imaginations can bump up against limits.

After seven "sailings" taken over the course of nine weeks, "I ran out of steam in terms of the activities," Sternfeld laments. The names of the final cruises reflected her waning fervor: "Cruise of the Whatever," followed by "Tired of the Seas." So did the name of a dining room that specialized in seafood dishes: "Captain Apathy's."

Just like their real-life counterparts, virtual cruises aren't meant to last forever.



iStock

The Indonesian island of Bali is one of the popular foreign travel destinations that seem likely to ban foreign tourists until 2021.

Bali goodbye – for now

Indonesian island among those remaining off-limits to most foreigners

By SHANNON McMAHON
The Washington Post

Even as many nations begin to lift their coronavirus travel restrictions, vacationers considering a gamble on late-2020 trips abroad might want to reconsider — or at least make sure to book a very flexible ticket. Some destinations have recently made moves to extend their tourism shutdowns.

Bali's shift away from reopening this year, in favor of only domestic tourism, was announced last week. Other international destinations have signaled similar plans. Why? Travel experts say extended border closures may be a smart move for the survival of certain tourist-frequented destinations.

"As countries open and close again due to [COVID-19] cases ... these destinations might be thinking 'Let's just wait until the storm is over,'" said John Niser, director of the International School of Hospitality and Tourism Management (ISHTM) at Fairleigh Dickinson University. "Reopening and then closing again due to an outbreak ... it's totally unpredictable."

Nations that have reopened in 2020 only to return to limiting tourists in some way include the Bahamas, which closed its borders to Americans after coronavirus cases began to rise in July. (It later reopened with 14-day quarantines in place.) The government of Hungary, which has been open to E.U. tourists and citizens of some other low-risk countries, closed its borders on Sept. 1 amid a rise in cases.

Here's which destinations have signaled or outright announced they won't be allowing tourists until 2021.

Bali, Indonesia

The Indonesian island of Bali recently announced that, contrary to its previously planned reopening date of Sept. 11, it will not allow international tourists until 2021. Instead, the island is allowing only domestic travel in hopes of supporting the local economy while avoiding a rise in COVID-19 cases.

In its third phase of reopening protocol, Indonesia's tourism board announced in a news release that "Bali [will] not be able to open up to foreign tourists as previously planned" and will "extend the travel ban until at least the end of 2020." The Indonesian tourism board also noted that Bali's main airport, which is closed to international arrivals, is instead seeing thousands of domestic tourism arrivals per day.

Niser says that smaller tourism destinations may do primarily of small businesses have an added incentive to stay closed off: Small-business owners in tourist-frequented areas carry less debt than the big chains, so "it might be cheaper to stay closed."

Australia and New Zealand

Larger nations are also hinting that they are unlikely to reopen in 2020, with Qantas chief executive Alan Joyce recently telling investors that he predicts Australians will not be able to fly internationally until 2021, according to the New Zealand Herald. Australia and New Zealand officials have spoken about allowing a potential travel bubble between the two nations if COVID-19 levels remain controlled, but New Zealand is still imposing a complete ban on almost all visitors.

New Zealand's tourism board told The

Washington Post via email: "It is not known at this time when the border is likely to reopen, but the health and safety of New Zealanders will be at the forefront of any decision made by the New Zealand Government."

Australia's tourism minister Simon Birmingham said in April during an appearance on News Breakfast, an Australian morning program, that citizens shouldn't plan on being able to travel internationally come December. In August, he stressed on the same show that Australians should support the tourism industry by booking domestic stays and experiences.

Thailand

Thailand recently echoed the intention to delay reopening, with Chantana Kunjara Na Ayudhya of Thailand's tourism authority commenting in a webinar last month: "I see no signal from the government that the country will open this year."

The country has an October pilot program in place to allow some international tourists into Phuket, but only if the visitors agree to quarantine for two weeks upon arrival at a designated resort.

South Africa

Another large country that heavily depends on tourism, South Africa has the most COVID-19 cases in all of Africa, with 618,000 total cases. The peak of new daily cases hit in late July, after strict lockdowns and curfews imposed early in the pandemic were lifted in May. Sisa Ntshona, the chief executive of South African Tourism, told the BBC in July, "I don't foresee any international tourism happening within this calendar year."



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WEEKEND: TRAVEL



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What will air travel look like in a post-COVID world? No one's sure yet, but design firms are working on ways to improve on-board cleanliness and increase peace of mind.

New heights of cleanliness

Design firms propose changes to plane tech, seat configurations for post-COVID world

By SHANNON McMAHON
The Washington Post

As coronavirus cases continue to rise, it's clear that the standard plane cabin layouts we're used to aren't working in a pandemic. A face mask is less reassuring when you're sitting elbow-to-elbow with a stranger for an extended period of time, with many airlines no longer distancing passengers as the pandemic threatens their business model.

While some airlines continue the responsible-yet-costly move of blocking middle seats for travelers' safety, a redesigned cabin layout could mean they wouldn't have to. There has been an outpouring of design ideas since the pandemic began, from flipped middle seats and double-decker rows, to seat upholstery that changes color when sanitized.

Design firms proposing changes to the average plane cabin are tackling different aspects of the in-flight experience, with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines for social distancing and increased cleanings in mind.

"It's important to innovate while being mindful of the realities of the world we live in. We know, for instance, that keeping the middle seat free is not a viable economic model for airlines," says Anna Meyer, a spokesperson for London-based

design firm PriestmanGoode. "Equally, we know that screens between every seat does not present the best investment at this time. Nor will it suit all passengers, especially families or couples traveling together."

Some new seat designs are squarely focused on physically separating passengers, while others aim to implement new technologies that will make it easier to sanitize plane cabins and give passengers peace of mind.

Color-changing seats for business class

The most recent technology to make waves is PriestmanGoode's proposal for "Pure Skies" seating, which includes upholstery that changes color when sanitized with UV light, so that passengers know their seat is clean upon arrival. Once the seat is used again, it returns to its original color.

"Seat fabrics include photochromic and thermochromic inks that react to new cleaning methods like UVC and heat cleaning," PriestmanGoode's Meyer said of the material. The costly new technology is proposed only for business-class cabins, and will take "at least three years to develop and certify."

When could the design take shape in actual planes?

"While we can't comment on specifics, we've had interest from airlines, suppliers and seat vendors," Meyer said. "There is a clear consensus in the industry that change needs to happen, that the aviation industry is in a state of flux and that for the long-term health of the aviation business, we need to start developing new ideas."

Redesigned economy configurations

PriestmanGoode's vision for economy cabins includes some lower-tech solutions. To reduce the risks posed by high-touch surfaces, renderings propose removing touch-screen televisions in favor of mounts for passengers' own phones or tablets. They also propose removing seat-back pockets, along with redesigned seat shells without cushion seams in an effort to "eliminate dirt traps."

Seats are also staggered to separate single passengers from couples, and dividers are installed between every other row. Tray tables are removable and taken away when meals are cleared to avoid being used without cleaning. The seat-recline button is also contained within seat covering to avoid hard-to-clean gaps.

Double-decker cabins

Hoping for something a little more

socially distant than the standard three-deep rows? A proposed design from U.S. start-up Zephyr Aerospace aims to completely overhaul plane cabins into stacked lie-flat pods.

Echoing a double-decker bus, the layout is designed for premium-economy class and would prioritize both social distancing and comfort.

While lie-flat cabins might seem like a pipe dream for economy cabins, the start-up quickly surpassed its investment goals for production and notes on its website that Air New Zealand already employs lie-flat sleep pods in economy for long-haul flights.

Reversed middle seats and seat dividers

Somewhere between the streamlined-cabin concept and the double-decker revamp is Italy-based Aviointeriors' Janus Seat configuration, which reverses every middle seat and implements plastic dividers that snake from window to aisle and separate each passenger.

While it largely solves the problem of getting stuck with a middle seat by equalizing all three spots in the row, this layout isn't exactly ideal for families with small kids who can't sit alone. The design also raises the question of whether the seats would be able to recline.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

Reagan's role in Black Ops: Cold War primed to stir up controversy amid election season

By GENE PARK
The Washington Post

It's an election year, and once again we're hearing a lot about Ronald Reagan these days. Here he is, introduced in the Call of Duty: Black Ops series with the same grandeur and aplomb as actor Giancarlo Esposito's reveal in Far Cry 5.

Black Ops: Cold War is a direct sequel to one of the most celebrated single-player campaigns in the franchise, and this is shaping up to be the most story-heavy campaign in the entire 17-year history of the series.

Call of Duty series can mostly be appreciated as thrilling tales about the "boys on the ground" experience. For soldiers in war, it's the mission, not the politics, that matter. But with its historical inspirations and the game's utilization of President Reagan, the story featured in Cold War feels primed to stir up political controversy. And although the Call of Duty series has always dabbled in conspiracies, it's a core theme for the 2020 update at a time when conspiracy talk has dotted discussion around the upcoming U.S. presidential election.

Reagan activates the Black Ops team, including a mix of old and new characters, to uncover Perseus, an elusive Soviet agent who threatens the foundations of democracy. In real life, Perseus is believed to be a Soviet spy who breached the Manhattan Project and gave the U.S.S.R. America's nuclear secrets. The spy's identity was never learned. This game appears to be all about solving that puzzle and filling that gap in history.

"These conspiracy theories almost develop a life of their own, and in some ways, that allows us to add an edge of excitement to our fiction or narrative," said Dan Bunting, co-head at Treyarch. "And that was a big part of what we wanted to capture in this game, the zeitgeist of not only the original Black Ops but in the Cold War era, but also things that are happening today and making it relevant." A pre-event revealing the single-player campaign, Bunting and Cold War senior creative director Dan Vondrak of Raven Software showed off some exciting new changes in gameplay. Black Ops 4 famously didn't include a single-player campaign — the two studios seem to be making up for that with a story featuring a number of familiar characters, including returning Black Ops protagonists Alex Mason and Frank Woods.

Treyarch also seems to be picking up where Advanced Warfare left off when it comes to more open-ended, emergent gameplay. The 2014 game (which starred Kevin Spacey) saw a more open-narrow type of play, with the developers' single-player campaign a few open areas to navigate with traversal options like a grappling hook. We saw gameplay for Cold War in which the player infiltrates a Russian embassy undercover as a double agent, picking dialogue paths and non-traditional ways to navigate tense social situations or pick various objectives, all before descending into a classic Call of Duty shootout. Cold War seems to expand on this even more with branching story paths, promising multiple endings. Bunting would not say how many and also didn't want to promise a plethora of endings.

It's unclear how much politics will actually play in the story, but the early



Activision

In Cold War, the latest entry in the Call of Duty: Black Ops series, the single-player campaign returns as does more open-ended gameplay. It is also shaping up to be the most story-heavy campaign in the 17-year history of the series.

reveal and marketing campaign indicates such discussion may swirl around the game regardless of the developers' wishes. Reagan seems to be a prominent factor, and it's hard to ignore the fact his policies are still hotly debated, particularly by those on the left, and used to score political points today.

Just look at conservative PAC The Lincoln Project, which formed last year as an anti-Trump segment of the Republican Party, and how it continues to weave in Reagan's words with the current climate and upcoming election. The

“These conspiracy theories almost develop a life of their own, and in some ways, that allows us to add an edge of excitement to our fiction or narrative. And that was a big part of what we wanted to capture in this game, the zeitgeist of not only the original ‘Black Ops’ but in the Cold War era, but also things that are happening today and making it relevant.”

Dan Bunting
co-head at Treyarch

former Republican National Convention chairman Michael Steele just joined The Lincoln Project last week, and stated, “I stand where Reagan stood. Where do you stand?” Many of the replies on Twitter indicated that they are tired of mythologizing the most consequential Republican president in modern times and questioned his legacy. Meanwhile, President Donald Trump's son, Eric, also invoked Reagan's name in his speech last month at the Republican National Convention.

It's completely unknown outside the development studios of Treyarch and Raven Software where Cold War stands on Reagan or anything political. In a question-and-answer session with journalists, The Post asked them, “Given the real-world political climate and prominently featuring Reagan, what considerations do you have in portraying the longtime GOP standard bearer?” The question was submitted via an Activision-moderated chat, and when relayed to the developers it was paraphrased by a spokesman into,

“What considerations did you have in portraying not only Reagan but other real-world people that you engaged in?” The developers gave a general answer about watching “tons” of Reagan speeches and talking to people who were close to him, including former Cabinet members, to get his character right.

Given how the series has treated historical figures, Reagan's role in the story will likely be benign. The Black Ops series caused some controversy for the first game's portrayal of Fidel Castro, and Cuban state media called the game

ing clouds of controversy. The politics of Call of Duty mostly portray U.S. military interference in foreign policy with little details other than James Bond-an action and villainy. But even with all watered-down political posturing, war-based video games don't exist in a vacuum, and have appeared in Russian state media (mistakenly so, they say) to color the conflicts and unrest in Syria.

Infinity Ward, makers of 2019's Call of Duty: Modern Warfare, drew scrutiny for basing a setting in that game's campaign around an incident in which a military convoy was bombed by American forces. In the script for Modern Warfare, however, the Russians were responsible for the attack, angering gamers in that country, including a prominent streamer paid to promote the game.

Black Ops Cold War is already being touched by the current geopolitical climate. Publisher Activision reshoot the teaser trailer by removing the footage it used of Tiananmen Square after public outcry on Chinese social media channels. Chinese conglomerate Tencent also owns a 3% stake in Activision Blizzard, who got into hot water last year after banning professional Hearthstone players for expressing support for the Hong Kong protests. The move prompted critics to throw Cold War's slogan (“Know your history”) back at the game's maker.

The story may also point America in a different light altogether, as the plot is largely driven by a new, shadowy and charismatic character named Russell Adler, a CIA operative that the developers called “America's Monster.” His early 1980s Robert Redford swagger belies his true intentions and why he's so adamant in pushing Reagan toward a secretive intervention to find Perseus, whom members of the Cabinet believe to be a mere myth.

Based on what we saw, this is going to be the most explosive campaign yet for Call of Duty, which is actually saying a lot considering how much the series has rattched up the noise and fidelity. Time will tell what it actually has to say, if anything, about the zeitgeist of yesterday and today.

American propaganda. In the end, players assassinate a double of Castro, who died in 2016. It also invoked the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Benign or not, Reagan's inclusion in the game — as well as 1980s conspiracies about American-Soviet relations — are sure to generate commentary. YouTube personalities and essayists took a shine to the teaser trailer, which centered on Yuri Bezmenov, a Soviet defector who fled to the West and became a prominent lecturer against Soviet Communism and KGB tactics. These essays seem to overreach in tying the current political climate and the anti-police protests to Bezmenov's warning about allowing “all the schmucks to put a Big Brother government in Washington, D.C., who will promise loads of things, never mind if the promises are fulfilled or not.” It's unclear whether Bezmenov is a character in the story.

Without more context in the story, it's hard to debate the accuracy of these readings, but it's easy to see the gath-

WEEKEND: MUSIC



LEAVING LAS VEGAS

Brandon Flowers
and The Killers
broaden their horizons

By MIKAEL WOOD
Los Angeles Times

Decades later, Brandon Flowers can see that it was unusual: At an age when many of his adolescent friends were doing anything they could to rebel against their parents, the future Killers frontman was spending an increasing amount of time playing golf with his father. “Some of my most precious memories with him are on the course,” he recalled recently, sounding a little wistful over the phone from his home in Park City, Utah.

Flowers, 39, has been thinking about his dad as he’s started to play golf with his own sons — he and his wife, Tana, have three, ages 13, 11 and 9 — while the typically hard-touring Killers take an unexpected break from the road thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I’m making up for lost time with them,” he said. “I feel guilty because I haven’t hated quarantine.”

The Killers’ remaining full-time members, from left: Brandon Flowers and Ronnie Vannucci Jr.

Robert Ascroft

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

WEEKEND: TELEVISION

Battling for laughs

At this month's Emmys, expect 'Schitt's Creek' to win multiple awards for comedy

BY GLENN WHIPP
Los Angeles Times

“**T**he Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” earned 20 Emmy nominations this year, while “Schitt’s Creek” pulled in 15. All that voter love makes them the clear favorites in this year’s comedy races. Now Television Academy members will have to decide whether they prefer their comedy in hourlong, sumptuously produced episodes or 22-minute miniatures of traditional sitcom excellence.

Let’s take an early look at how the races might play out at the Sept. 20 ceremony.

Comedy series

“Curb Your Enthusiasm”

“Dead to Me”

“The Good Place”

“Insecure”

“The Kominsky Method”

“The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”

“Schitt’s Creek”

“What We Do in the Shadows”

Should win: “Schitt’s Creek”

Will win: “Schitt’s Creek”

“Maisel” won nearly everything for its first season and then took a backseat to “Fleabag” last year. The 20 nominations this year demonstrate that voters still enjoy the series three seasons into its run, though it’s interesting it didn’t turn up at all in the writing category. That’s a bit of a red flag, as the last time a show won the comedy series Emmy without a writing nomination was in 2006 when “The Office” prevailed for its second season. That omission, combined with the momentum that “Schitt’s Creek” has accrued as it has picked up viewers and acclaim over its six-year run, is reason enough to go with the feel-good program that has served as a balm in these trying times.

Lead actress, comedy

Christina Applegate, “Dead to Me”

Rachel Brosnahan, “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”

Linda Cardellini, “Dead to Me”

Catherine O’Hara, “Schitt’s Creek”

Issa Rae, “Insecure”

Tracee Ellis Ross, “black-ish”

Should win: O’Hara

Will win: O’Hara

O’Hara is, of course, a treasure, and she made the indomitable Moira Rose into an absolute legend. I would gladly watch any “Schitt’s Creek” episode again just to dip into O’Hara’s spectacular, peculiar pronunciation and the way Moira would drop arcane words into just about any conversation. Emmy voters have bedeviled us over the years, but they aren’t buffoons. O’Hara will win, and I’ll be positively gleeful when she does.



Pop TV

Johnny (Eugene Levy), Moira (Catherine O’Hara), David (Daniel Levy), Patrick (Noah Reid), Stevie (Emily Hampshire) and Alexis (Annie Murphy) appear in the series finale of “Schitt’s Creek.” The show is poised to win multiple comedy Emmys on Sept. 20.

Lead actor, comedy

Anthony Anderson, “black-ish”

Don Cheadle, “Black Monday”

Ted Danson, “The Good Place”

Michael Douglas, “The Kominsky Method”

Eugene Levy, “Schitt’s Creek”

Ramy Youssef, “Ramy”

Should win: Youssef

Will win: Youssef

I could see Levy winning this. He’s as loved as his cast mate and fellow “SCTV” alum O’Hara, and, like O’Hara, his only



Hulu

Ramy Youssef is likely to win an Emmy for his lead role on the comedy “Ramy.”

Emmys have come from writing on that cult sketch comedy series. But I’m guessing a lot of Emmy voters saw Youssef’s surprise win at the Golden Globes in January and enjoyed his disarming acceptance speech, during which he said that his mom was rooting for Michael Douglas and that nobody in the room had seen his show. “Everyone’s like, ‘Is this an editor?’” he joked. Youssef also earned a directing nomination for “Ramy,” and I think he’s going to win one of these Emmys. It’s a coin flip right now to know which one he’ll take.

Supporting actress, comedy

Alex Borstein, “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”

D’Arcy Carden, “The Good Place”

Betty Gilpin, “GLOW”

Marin Hinkle, “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”

Kate McKinnon, “Saturday Night Live”

Annie Murphy, “Schitt’s Creek”

Yvonne Orji, “Insecure”

Cecily Strong, “Saturday Night Live”

Should win: Orji

Will win: Borstein

Borstein won this Emmy for “Maisel’s” first and second seasons, and she’ll probably win



HBO

Yvonne Orji deserves an Emmy for her supporting role on the comedy “Insecure.”

again. Why not? The show is at its best whenever she’s front and center, which, honestly, didn’t happen enough this season. Murphy could pull off an upset and, if that happens, expect “Schitt’s Creek” to run the table. I’m partial to Orji, though, finally nominated for her excellent work opposite Rae in “Insecure.” Orji’s abilities as a comedian have never been in question (her sharp HBO stand-up special “Momma, I Made It” was one of the best things on television this

summer), and she brings an honesty to her “Insecure” character that will sometimes break your heart. There are a lot of talented women here, but, this year, I think she’s the standout.

Supporting actor, comedy

Mahershala Ali, “Ramy”

Alan Arkin, “The Kominsky Method”

Andre Braugher, “Brooklyn Nine-Nine”

Sterling K. Brown, “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”

William Jackson Harper, “The Good Place”

Daniel Levy, “Schitt’s Creek”

Tony Shalhoub, “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”

Keenan Thompson, “Saturday Night Live”

Should win: Levy

Will win: Levy

My analytical brain tells me it’s foolish to pick against Emmy favorite Shalhoub, who has won four times over the years, and two-time Oscar winner Ali. But voters nominated Levy in four categories — writing, directing, producing and acting. That’s a resounding endorsement. I can’t wait to see his facial expression when he wins.

Next week: LA Times reporter Glenn Whipp shares his drama category predictions.

WEEKEND: TELEVISION & DVD

NEW ON DVD

"First Cow": After being antagonized by the fur-trapping men he's traveling with for not being aggressive enough with procuring provisions, a gentle cook known as Cookie (John Magaro) befriends King-Lu (Orion Lee), a Chinese immigrant who's being pursued for killing a Russian man. And when Cookie stumbles upon the first cow to be brought to the territory, he uses its milk to make biscuits. King-Lu marvels at the treats and inspires the pair to begin selling them.

Based on the novel "The Half-Life" by Jonathan Raymond (who also co-wrote the screenplay), "First Cow" is not the Wild West we often see on screen. It's a deep meditation on the art of connection.

Also available on DVD:

"The Big Ugly": English mobsters aim to launder money via a West Virginia oil deal that goes awry.

"A Nice Girl Like You": After a breakup, an uptight violinist (Liam Neeson) makes a sexual bucket list.

"Bad Education": A student reporter (Geraldine Viswanathan) uncovers massive corruption at a Long Island school.

"Bull: Season Four": The CBS series returns as the doctor (Michael Keaton) gets ready to become a dad.

"Chicago P.D.: Season Seven": The NBC series' seventh season continues the investigation of Kelvin's (John C. McGinley) murder.

"Eighty Oak": A music manager (Rachel Parrish) encounters a guitar prodigy (Tommy Ragen) and believes he's the reincarnation of her deceased brother.

"Mr. Mercedes - Season 3": Hodges (Brendan Gleeson) is devastated by the death of writer John Rothstein (Bruce Dern) as the third season opens.

"Prodigal Son: The Complete First Season": Profiler Malcolm Bright (Tom Payne) must engage with his serial killer father (Michael Sheen) to help solve similar crimes.

"Retaliation": A demolition worker (Orlando Bloom) discovers the priest (James Millie) who abused him as a child.

"Supergirl: The Complete Fifth Season": Tension builds after Lena (Katie McGrath) discovers her true self (Viola Davis) alter ego in the fifth season of the CW's series.

"Supernatural: Man of Tomorrow": The animated film follows Daily Planet intern Clark Kent as he attempts to save his city.

"True History of the Kelly Gang": Based on a true story, the infamous 19th century Australian gang led by bushranger Ned Kelly (George MacKay) goes on the run.

"Vitalina Varela": After waiting decades for her ticket to Lisbon, a woman (Valeskaopoulos) finds out her recently deceased husband kept secrets from her. In Portuguese.

"Waiting for the Barbarians": A magistrate (Mark Rylance) butts heads with a cruel colonel (Johnny Depp) in this colonial drama.

— Katie Foran-McHale/TNS



CHRIS PIZZELLO, INVISION/AP

This year's Emmys broadcast, conducted entirely online because of the pandemic, likely won't contain the glitz and glamour of past ceremonies, such as this one in 2016. There are, however, benefits of hosting the show online such as shorter acceptance speeches.

No glitz, but potential glitches

The internet could make or break this month's Emmys, forced online due to COVID-19

BY LYNN ELBER
Associated Press

In a typical Hollywood awards show, it's the orchestra's task to nudge off winners whose acceptance speeches wander into overtime. In a virtual ceremony, the internet could give them an unintentional boost.

A balky online connection is among the pitfalls that may face this month's prime-time Emmy Awards, forced into socially distanced safety by the coronavirus pandemic.

Whether ABC and the ceremony's producers decide to gamble on mixing live and pre-taped elements remains to be seen, with planning for the Sept. 20 event hosted by Jimmy Kimmel under wraps.

The risks and rewards of going live are well known to Adam Sharp, head of the New York-based TV academy that administers Emmys for programs outside of prime-time series; those are under the auspices of the LA-based TV academy.

He has already soldiered through the daytime and sports Emmy ceremonies that were in the vanguard of an unprecedented awards season. The Aug. 11 sports awards tackled a challenging live presentation.

"We were at the mercy of the home internet gods," said Sharp, with presenters and nominees using desktop computers and tablets to take part in the online ceremony.

It came off without major glitches, but there "were certainly those who were cursing out their internet connections," said Sharp, president of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences that's presenting the Sept. 21 and 22 news and documentary Emmys online.

The Daytime Emmys took the cautious route in June, with hosts, presenters and even acceptance speeches pre-taped. Nomi-

nees were invited to submit videos to be aired if they won.

Sharp and Maury McIntyre, president of the Los Angeles-based Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, have discussed staging remote ceremonies minus the sizzle of red-carpet glamour and halls packed with celebrities.

McIntyre got a taste of orchestrating a live virtual event when the nominations were revealed last month, with host Leslie Jones in a studio and presenters Josh Gad, Tatiana Maslany, and Laverne Cox at home.

After fretting about dropped Wi-Fi connections during the brief online announcement, McIntyre recalled, he told Sharp he was surprised that his Emmy experiences to date hadn't led to an ulcer.

"I don't know how I'm going to live through the night," McIntyre said of the telecast that's handled by the network in consultation with the academy. The three-hour ceremony is meant as entertainment and a tribute to the past TV season's achievements.

Nominees got a sense of what's ahead in a letter from the producers, including Kimmel, that mixed cheerleading and cajoling. The goal, they wrote, is to ensure that the ceremony is "not compromised by this crazy moment in our lives."

"It's still going to be TV industry's biggest night out, but we'll come to you!" they wrote, promising to assemble a top-notch team of technicians, writers and others to "make you fab looking" with good cameras and lighting at home or another location of choice. Before COVID-19 hit, the Emmys were to have been held in the 7,100-seat Microsoft Theatre in downtown Los Angeles.

There is, however, overlap between real and virtual ceremonies — the split screen

that shows each nominee in a box, a la Zoom meetings or "The Brady Bunch" opening, as the choice is announced. In the online sports ceremony, the winner's square quickly expanded to fill the screen.

There are also advantages to going virtual, Sharp said, including shorter acceptance speeches.

"I don't know if that is because they (winners) are in their homes, and they're not looking out at a room of people and constantly being reminded of people they forgot to thank," he said.

An element that was rendered moot by a virtual ceremony provided another unexpected benefit: That glad-handing saunter or even sprint to the stage by each winner sucks up a lot of time.

"Anywhere between 15 and 22 minutes of our show is generally walking to the stage, or presenters walking from behind stage to the mic," McIntyre said.

That allowed for something more compelling for the Sports Emmys, as some presenters had space to conduct on-the-fly interviews.

When "What's My Name: Muhammad Ali Part I" was honored as best long documentary, a discussion ensued on how the boxing great and activist might reflect on the confluence of sports and today's Black Lives Matter protests.

Producers can work effectively within the constraints imposed on them by the virus, said Don Mischer, a veteran producer whose credits include the Oscars and Emmys. But it's the unscribed moments that count.

"If there's not a surprise winner, and there's not that poignant, tearful acceptance speech or the feeling that somebody's in a life-defining moment," Mischer said, "then no matter what you do, it's not going to work out as well as you hoped."

WEEKEND: HEALTH AND FITNESS

Breaking up is hard to do

Decisions to cancel gym, studio memberships during the pandemic causing mixed feelings

By ALLYSON CHIU

The Washington Post

It was just after 7 on a Sunday morning in July when Carly Saveraid decided it was time to send the email she had spent days mulling over. She fired up her computer, plugged in the address of her Denver health club, Endorphin, and composed a simple message. “Hi endorphin,” Saveraid, 25, typed. “Sadly I need to place my membership on hold.”

Guilt gnawed at Saveraid as she pressed “send.” She had just severed her connection to a community that had been a source of positivity in her life for roughly two years.

“It felt like I was letting down someone I cared about,” she said.

But the lingering guilt was still outweighed by her concern about contracting or transmitting the novel coronavirus.

“I’m not really questioning the decision at this point because there is such an unknown,” said Saveraid, who in pre-pandemic times went to the gym every morning before work and occasionally on the weekends. “And so I’m just kind of like, ‘All right. Better safe than sorry.’”

In America’s pandemic-afflicted reality, “better safe than sorry” is a mentality that has been adopted by many who once considered their gyms and studios second homes, and the communities they created there a second family. Making the choice to leave, even temporarily, is one that can weigh heavily.

“I feel really guilty that I’m not helping them out anymore,” Saveraid said of Endorphin, noting that she had for a while been paying her \$110 monthly fee even though she stopped going. “Financially it wasn’t something I could really keep doing anymore when I realized I didn’t want to go to in-person classes. It was like, OK, this was something I tried to do out of the goodness of my heart, but it’s an expensive commitment.”

Before the pandemic, Diana Wang, 29, could be found at her Los Angeles yoga studio multiple days a week, often making plans for coffee, tea or a walk with classmates before or after sessions.

“I got my workout in the class, but it was also kind of like a spiritual experience and a big source of connection and community,” Wang said. “What made me feel like it was home is the friendships that I’ve made.”

These days, Wang said, she is “very conflicted” about the prospect of returning once Los Angeles allows indoor group exercise again — a feeling she said she shares with some of the friends she has made in class.

“From moment to moment I will have different feelings about it,” she said. “I could see myself signing up and telling my friends that I usually go with that I may go this weekend if the option is there ... Or I might freak out the day of and be like, ‘No, no, no, this is not worth it.’”

Siena Vendlinski, 23 of Santa Barbara, Calif., describes this inner turmoil as a “conflict of mind and heart.”

When her CorePower Yoga studio reopened several months ago, she recalled watching from her house as people walked to class. It would be easy to join them, Vendlinski thought, and reconnect with staff and instructors she had grown close with in her years of daily classes. “I wanted to so badly,” she said. The classes were at “super reduced capacity” to ensure social distancing, and locker rooms had been closed off, Vendlinski said.

Yet she stayed home, opting for the studio’s live-streamed classes.

“If I get sick or I get somebody else sick and then the reason was because I listened to my compulsion telling me that I needed to go, that would feel bad and be dangerous,” she said. “And what if somebody died because I couldn’t control my compulsiveness?” A state mandate has since banned indoor classes in many California counties, so Vendlinski will be doing Zoom yoga for the foreseeable future.

For Orangethe regulars Jane Perlman and her husband, Marc, no amount of safeguards will be enough to assuage their concerns as long as coronavirus cases are still rising. “They’re using great precautions and things like that,” said Marc Perlman, 61. “But I’m just not comfortable yet.”

His wife has diabetes, he said, an underlying condition linked to severe coronavirus complications.

“It’s not worth risking coming down with it,” Jane Perlman, 56, said. “Even though I do really miss the camaraderie.”

The studio environment was “vibrant,” Marc Perlman said, a feeling that doesn’t quite translate online.

“The coaches were motivating,” he said. “The coaches are your friends. They help you succeed together, they ask you what your intentions are, they make you think.” And at the end of every class, there were high-fives all around.

“A lot of days, you really need it,” he said.

To support the studio and its instructors, Jane Perlman said, she continued to pay her monthly membership fee before ultimately deciding to pause it.

“We all tried to contribute to the employees, and some of us sent them gifts because we didn’t want them to lose their jobs and we don’t want the studio to close,” she said.

But for now, the Perlmans have found alternatives. “We’re walking a ton,” Marc Perlman said, and they recently bought a Peloton bike.

A Peloton now occupies space in Sharon Murray’s West Hartford, Conn., home, too — an “impulse buy” that serves as a constant reminder of her fractured indoor cycling group.

“Really nothing else would’ve brought us together except this gym,” said Murray, 51, who for years was a regular at her local fitness center. “It just is different families and different people, and all of a sudden you’re so excited to see them.”

Then, the coronavirus shattered her gym. Several weeks later, Murray was clicking “order” on the Peloton.

“I did it. I betrayed them all,” she said. “I always swore I never would [buy one] because of my community, but I never knew a pandemic could hit.”

She added: “I almost feel guilty admitting to them that I bought one and owing up to the fact that the group might break up. It kind of breaks my heart.”

Murray noted that “a gym loss is very minor in the big scheme of what people have lost throughout this from lives to jobs to security,” but that what many are really missing are the human connections those spaces provided.

Though she doesn’t see herself going back to class, she hopes she can maintain the friendships she found there. “I can try and keep in touch, but if you don’t have those bonding times of seeing each other and exchanging your experiences in real life, they really be as big a part of my life?” she said.

But as loyal Chicago SoulCyclers Brandon Krisko and Gabrielle DiBenedetto have discovered, going back in the middle of the pandemic may not be all that fulfilling, either.

“I was so happy to be back in that environment, and doing it again,” said Krisko, 23, who recently returned to a SoulCycle studio for the first time since the beginning of the shutdown. “But there’s also a sense of loss because it’s not the same as what we fell in love with.”

The normally packed class had only a handful of participants, spaced far apart. Masks had to stay on for the entire class. Even the instructor seemed less upbeat.

“It almost felt like a post-apocalyptic version of SoulCycle,” Krisko said.

Similarly, DiBenedetto, 25, tried an outdoor session while visiting family in Boston and found herself inside a giant tent in a parking lot in broad daylight, a far cry from the usual dimly lit studio.

“I’m glad that I did it, but it didn’t fill the cup that I felt like was getting filled by the classes before,” she said.

Rather than start up their regular classes again, the two friends have attempted to re-create the studio experience at home. For DiBenedetto, that involved buying a SoulCycle exercise bike, which came with a grapefruit-scented candle to match the studio’s signature smell.

Krisko has also incorporated candles into his home setup. Both try to exercise in semidarkness.

“My family judges me because I have two electronic candles that I put in front of me and they flicker while I’m working out,” Krisko said. “My parents are like, ‘Put those away. That’s not what those are for.’”



Carly Saveraid, 25, exercises in her yard in Denver.

Carly Saveraid

WEEKEND: FAMILY



TAKIYAH DUPAS, MARVEL STUDIOS, ANNALIE HOMES/MP

On Aug. 31, Gavyn Batiste, 7, of Lafayette, La., and 10-year-old twins Lenny and Bobby Homes of Meza, Ariz., pay tribute to actor Chadwick Boseman. (center, as T'Challa in "Black Panther") Boseman died Aug. 28 of cancer.

'Wakanda Forever'

Youth hold mock funerals for, pay respects to 'Black Panther' actor

BY LEANNE ITALLE
Associated Press

In their driveways or in their bedrooms, using little cardboard boxes or piles of backyard dirt, young fans of "Black Panther" star Chadwick Boseman paid their respects with lots of Wakanda salutes and mock funerals attended by action figures.

Soon after the shocking news of Boseman's death Aug. 28 at age 43, parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles began posting photos of funerals staged by kids for King T'Challa, the actor's lead character from the Marvel blockbuster. Some of those posts have been shared thousands of times amid an outpouring of grief from admirers of all ages who were unaware the actor had been battling colon cancer for four years.

Other young fans mourned in more private ways, watching "Black Panther" and "42" for the umpteenth time with their families in Boseman's honor.

To many kids, his passing was a life event, driven by the change-makers he portrayed but also by his heartfelt comments in awards speeches and interviews about the need for more opportunities for people of color.

Boseman's King T'Challa, ruler of the fictional African nation of Wakanda, was introduced in 2016's "Captain America: Civil War." His "Wakanda Forever" salute reverberated around the world after the release of "Black Panther" two years ago. The actor's turn as baseball great Jackie Robinson in "42" came out in 2013 and is now being discovered by younger fans.

Nick Cummings, 11, of Louisville, Ky., loves both films. He stumbled upon word of Boseman's death on TikTok, before his mother had broken the news.

"At first when I heard it, I didn't believe it," he said Monday. "I felt like a part of me got erased."

A little too old for action figure funerals, Nick, who is Black, donned his baseball jersey emblazoned with Robinson's "42" and had no plans to

take it off any time soon.

"Twins Lenny and Bobby Homes in Meza, Ariz., are 10. The year, Annalie, had no intention of telling the boys, who are Filipino American, about Boseman's death, but they found out on their own Sunday on YouTube. They went the funeral route, using a black car seat for their prong Black Panther.

Dad David Homes is a big Marvel enthusiast. He began schooling his sons in both the comics and films when they were little.

How many times have they seen "Black Panther"?

"A lot!" the two chimed in unison.

Of Boseman's death, Lenny said, "We were really sad. He was one of our favorite actors. When we heard, we were like, the Panther needs a funeral. He was a good king. He was very nice and kind, and he followed the rules."

Annalie said she wanted to shield the boys from the news because they lost a grandfather less than a month ago.

The twins have more than 100 action figures and their own YouTube channel. They gathered up 13 of their favorite characters for the funeral Sunday, including Thor, Black Widow, Rocket Raccoon, Hulk and Spider-Man. The toys' arms can't bend into the Wakanda salute, so the boys arranged them with arms extended, reaching out to T'Challa.

Djoser Burruss, 12, of San Diego took the news hard. One of his grandmothers died of the same type of cancer. Djoser, who is African American, posted a tribute to Boseman on Instagram: "R.I.P. Chadwick Boseman, the one and only Black Panther. We mourn your passing, but you will forever live in our hearts. Thank you for showing us what KINGs do."

In an interview Tuesday, Djoser added: "I saw it on my phone, and I was devastated. We kind of owe it to ourselves to be better every day because not every day is guaranteed, just like Chadwick, but he did so much in those four years."

His mother, Christina, said the family rereviewed "Black Panther" last weekend, along with videos of Boseman speaking out on behalf of

Black people to "soak up all of his energy and his wisdom."

Gavyn Batiste, 7, in Lafayette, La., has seen "Black Panther" a half dozen times. He invited Captain America, Thor and Hulk, among other Avengers, to the funeral he held. He also wrote a song for T'Challa that goes like this:

"Black Panther is gone. I don't know what to say. I never thought this would happen in my day. This is sad. I am mad. I don't know how to feel. It still feels unreal. Wakanda Forever!"

Sonya Antoine, Gavyn's mom, said the film offers Black children a "sense of hope, a sense of dreaming, and to just embrace who you are in your culture and what that culture can mean to you and your family."

Nick's mother, Deedee Cummings, writes children's books with diverse characters and knows how rare it is to find Afrocentric fare for children like the futuristic world in "Black Panther." She recalled how happy her son was to see the film in a theater with a neighbor when it first came out. Both wore Wakanda gear.

The family watched the movie again on TV after Boseman's death. Nick sat solemnly this time around.

"He never sits still," Deedee said. "This time he did."

Deedee thinks parents shouldn't keep the news of Boseman's death from their young kids.

"It's so important to acknowledge this loss to children, especially Black children," she said.

Susan Nicholas in Atlanta also writes for children. Her book, "The Death of Cupcake," is out in November and focuses on grief among kids. Boseman's death, she said, may be difficult for parents to discuss because they're reluctant to burst the larger-than-life bubble created in movies.

"But kids actually have insights that are quite profound," she said. "We can all elevate our perspectives around death to really heal from that. At the end of the day, those are human beings in those costumes and they succumb to death, too, even if Hollywood doesn't allow them to die."

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Military folks not immune to Mondays

"Oh for crimony's sake!" I spat when I realized the commissary was closed. After decades of military life, you'd think I'd remember that on Mondays, commissaries traditionally close for restocking. But there I was, once again, in the empty parking lot, my grocery list in hand.

As always, I turned a big donut and lightailed it out of there. Hunched low in my seat, I sheepishly exited the gate and headed to Aldi to stock up for the week ahead.

Aldi is interesting, with its weird copycat brands, gazillions of snack foods and interesting European items. Regardless, I prefer commissaries to all other grocery stores. Commissaries are my turf, where I belong.

After 27 years as a military spouse, I understand the layouts, products and customs, and am comforted by this familiarity. I relish the fact that we pay a dollar less per pound for deli meat. I like that those in uniform take priority. I take it in stride that the produce section is, at times, inconsistent, offering mushy nectarines and heaps of fresh corn one week, and green bananas and sprigs of cilantro the next. And I am only mildly perturbed that the meat coolers are sometimes completely out of boneless skinless chicken thighs for no apparent reason.

With all its advantages and aggravations, the commissary is home.

Approaching the Aldi entrance, I felt the pang of anxiety that usually stems from not knowing where to find the items on my grocery list in a cavernous civilian supermarket stocked with national brands, store brands, off brands, specialty brands and generic brands. I can easily feel lost and confused at our humongous local Stop & Shop, where the produce section is roughly the same square footage of our house. Sure, civilian supermarkets have everything, like pine nuts, smoked mackerel and pickled watermelon rind. But it isn't worth the plantar fasciitis flare-ups to push my cart up and down 20-some aisles in search of birthday candles.

Outside Aldi, I dug through my purse for my mask and a quarter, fishing both out of a linty corner that was also hiding a forgotten tube of Chapstick. After inserting the quarter in the card lock contraption, so European, I entered the relatively small store of only five short aisles. But I was still anxious, knowing I'd have to substitute many items on my list.

No Barlett pears, but plenty of Medjool dates. No almond milk coffee creamer, but lots of jalapeno cheese curds. No Wheat Chex, but a 10-count box of blueberry pancakes and sausage on a stick. No King of Hawaiian Rolls, but dozens of Deutsche Kueche Bavarian soft pretzels.

After filling my cart to the brim with bizarre food-stuffs, I headed to the checkout line, waiting behind floor tape to be called by the cashier. I glanced at my phone screen when suddenly, I heard a whistle. I looked up to see the cashier fanning her arms. There was no one behind me, but her fanned gestures implied that I'd better hurry it up, slowpoke.

I scrambled ahead and lobbed armfuls of food frantically onto the moving conveyor belt. While she scanned and beeped, I inserted my debit card and punched buttons. A few seconds later, the cashier's hand rap-rapped on the plexiglass enclosure. With all the scanning and beeping, I hadn't heard the ping telling me to remove my card. "All right already!" I was afraid to say out loud. I snatched the receipt from the cashier's outstretched hand and moved quickly to the self-bagging area, where my soul ached for commissary customs. I had only brought four bags to this bagless store — again, so European — which I packed to the point of bursting.

My organs nearly broke loose lifting the overfilled bags into my car, which gave me even more determination to retrieve a consolation prize for my substandard shopping experience. If it meant I had to walk a mile, I was going to return that cart and get my darned quarter back.

Perhaps next time I'll remember: Never go grocery shopping on Monday.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com
Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

BY BARBARA LIN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

ACROSS

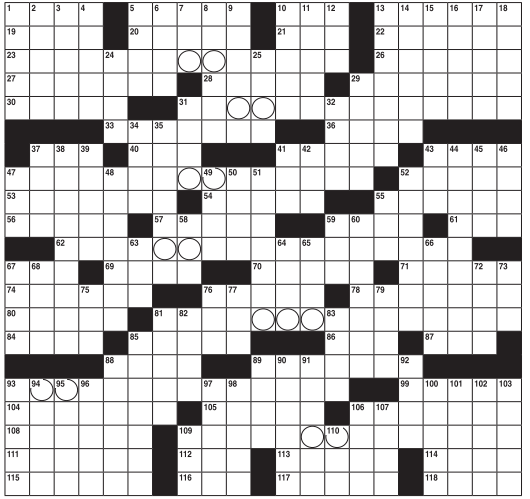
- 1 Enjoy the sun
5 Completely committed
10 One to whom you tell everything
13 Hit show with the series finale "One for the Road"
19 Predator of the Pacific Northwest
20 Grain (breakfast-bar brand)
21 Singer Carly ___ Jepson
22 "Give me a minute!"
23 Idiaraod, for one?
26 Intertwine
27 Show stoppers?
28 German "please"
29 Bronze that's not winning any awards?
30 Station
31 One driving kids around in a Subaru?
33 Backside to the Beatles' "Ticket to Ride"
36 Ginger, e.g.
37 Turn down
40 Longtime home for Terry Gross
41 Boasts
43 In the same family
47 Letting out all the stops to draw out the other instruments?

DOWN

- 52 Set on edge
53 Having the least give
54 Large in scope
55 It's sometimes covered in velvet
56 William who wrote "Shrek!"
57 Not on point
59 Slip of the fingers
61 Angsty genre
62 Cocaine and guns, in a Pacino movie?
67 What Consumer Reports lacks, unlike most other magazines
69 Buzz Lightyear and Woody, e.g.
70 Massive, in poetry
71 Whine connoisseurs?
74 Party symbol since 1870
76 "Is that really necessary?"
78 Jackson known as the "Queen of Gospel"
80 Sideshow
81 Troops who are worried about sun protection?
84 Like this clue
85 Basketball player, in old slang
86 Brain wave chart, for short
87 Like most prime numbers
88 All right
89 New York's iconic ___ Building
93 Give mom's mom the sink eye?

ACROSS

- 15 "Oklahoma!" aunt
16 Excel function that uses a calendar
17 Puerto ___
18 Medical tube
24 Teeny
25 GPS suggestions: Abbr.
29 What a left parenthesis suggests in an emoticon
31 Resolute
32 Suffix with switch
34 Wraps up
35 Big name in music streaming
37 "Fiddsticks!"
38 "So much for that"
39 Suffix with auto-
41 Middle: Abbr.
42 Where Simone Biles won four golds
43 Creative class
44 Crunchy green side dish
45 Part of an agenda
46 Infamous emperor
47 Tebreakers, briefly
48 Canceled out
49 Apple variety
50 A collar might hide it
51 Winters or Somers
52 Italian dumplings
55 Busy time at the I.R.S.: Abbr.
58 "One Mic" rapper
59 Non-U.S. M.L.B. team, on sports tickers
60 More scrumptious
63 Arundhati ___ winner of the 1997 Booker Prize



- 64 Inner: Prefix
65 What orchids may grow without
66 Lyre player of myth
67 Michelangelo's "The Creation of ___"
68 Peacenik
72 What might come down to the wire?
73 Opinion
75 Sorrento or Sedona
76 G.I. fare
77 Former Mideast grp.
79 It helps turn a pond green
81 Word-processing command
82 On tenterhooks, maybe
83 The "M" of MHz
85 Bar freebie
88 The A.P.'s Female Athlete of the Decade for the 2010s, familiarly
89 Trim
90 Trim
91 Dutch brewery
92 Car-sticker fig.
93 [Not again!]
94 Slowly, in music
95 Correct
96 Perez of "Do the Right Thing"
97 Nurse back to health
98 Mouths-puckering
100 Focus of "Ocean's Eleven"
101 How some bonds are sold
102 Irish novelist ___ Binchy
103 Bender
104 Gradual deterioration
107 Without much thought
109 ___ hook (rock climbing technique)
110 Big step for a start-up, in brief

GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

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OPINION

Trump promised a 350-ship fleet. China built one.

By JOSH ROGIN

The Washington Post

President Donald Trump has been publicly promising to build a 350-ship U.S. Navy since his 2016 campaign, and he's still campaigning on it. He will end his first term failing to achieve that goal. But according to the Pentagon, China did it — on Trump's watch.

In June, Trump called his drive to build up the number of U.S. Navy ships "one of my top national security priorities" and declared it a mission accomplished.

"It was a very good thing that we did," he said June 25 at the Fincantieri Marinette Marine terminal in Marinette, Wis. "Otherwise you wouldn't be building these ships right now. We ended what was a true disaster."

But according to the Pentagon's latest report on Chinese military power, released Tuesday, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is now "the largest navy in the world," with an overall battle force of about 350 ships and submarines, whereas the U.S. Navy has 293 ships. By the end of 2020, the Chinese navy will have 360 vessels — and the number is set to keep going up, said Chad Sbragia, deputy assistant defense secretary for China.

"There is certainly more to naval power than ship counts," he said in a call with reporters Tuesday. "This is a long-term challenge, and it's not only demarcated by a single metric of number of vessels."

That's true, but it was Trump who put the focus on the ship count in the first place. And he continues to mislead voters about it on the campaign trail. Trump often brags about spending more than \$2

trillion to replenish what he says was a U.S. military severely depleted under the Obama administration.

This claim is false: Trump is simply adding up the defense budgets during his presidency to get the \$2 trillion figure. It's not representative of new policies or programs he put in place. But the president often uses that number to (falsely) claim that the United States is on the road to his 350-ship Navy promise.

In 2017, Congress passed a law requiring the U.S. government to reach 355 Navy ships "as soon as practicable." (Trump sometimes says 350, sometimes 355.) But Trump's own budget proposals don't provide the funding for that. Expert consensus is that a 350-ship Navy is impossible at least until the 2050s.

The Chinese are also on a ship-building spree, the Pentagon report states. Their projects include submarines, surface combatants, amphibious warfare ships, aircraft carriers and auxiliary ships. But it's not just about their numbers. China is focusing on building larger, more capable naval platforms that will expand the reach of Chinese military power to all corners of the globe.

"In the near-term, the PLAN will have the capability to conduct long-range precision strikes against land targets from its submarine and surface combatants using land-attack cruise missiles, notably enhancing the PRC's global power projection capabilities," the report says.

There are several other troubling aspects of the Pentagon's new report. China is on track to double its strategic nuclear stockpile from its current level of about 200 warheads over the next decade, according to the report. The Trump administration

restoration was at hand.

Dynastic politics was the central issue in the campaign. To act as though you were the only one with a right to talk about it comes off as more than a little windy.

In the end, Massachusetts Democrats didn't really reject Kennedy or his family's long and distinguished legacy, both of which they still seem to like well enough. What they rejected was a garish, undisguised display of political entitlement.

Which is a good omen, perhaps, when you consider the dizzying transformation that's taken place on the other end of the political spectrum.

Four years ago, then-candidate Donald Trump introduced his coddled, self-certain children to the Republican convention in Cleveland. They mostly talked about how their dad built a skating rink, and how they played with toys in his office, and other claptrap meant to make him seem emotionally functional.

Last week, however, on the South Lawn of the White House, the infomercial masquerading as convention showed us just how much the party has evolved since then — and how much the Republican Party family really is. This was not a virtual gathering of Republicans; it was the celebration of the family-run subsidiary that has supplanted the GOP as we knew it.

No fewer than seven Trumps, Trump spouses and Trump significant others — not counting the president himself — spoke across the four nights of the convention. And, this time, their goal wasn't to humanize the family patriarch; it was mainly to attack his adversaries and extol the virtues of the president's nativism.

The most chilling of these speeches, however, was the most upbeat and annoying — the one given by Ivanka Trump, who used to design handbags but who now

has invited Beijing to join negotiations over strategic nuclear weapons underway between Washington and Moscow, but the Chinese government has declined to participate.

The PLA is also steadily expanding its already substantial arsenal of ground-based ballistic missiles of all ranges. The military balance between China and Taiwan across the Taiwan strait is increasingly tilting in Beijing's favor: The PLA Air Force, currently the largest in the region and third-largest in the world, is "rapidly catching up to Western air forces across a broad range of capabilities and competencies," the report states.

China's military is also expanding its presence on the continent. All over the world, with the goal of being able to credibly offensively threaten several countries, including the United States, Sbragia said.

"It is likely that China will aim to develop a military by mid-century that is equal to, and in many cases, superior to the United States military," Sbragia said. "The [Chinese Communist Party's] leaders believe that China's global activities including the PLA's growing global presence is necessary to create a favorable international environment for China's national rejuvenation."

Trump can't campaign on building a 350-ship Navy, at least not honestly. Chinese President Xi Jinping could, but he doesn't have to campaign, because he is ruler for life in a dictatorship who now boasts the largest navy in the world.

Josh Rogin is a political analyst for CNN.

What a loss by a Kennedy could mean for the Trumps

By MATT BAI

Special to The Washington Post

The outcome of Tuesday's Democratic primary in Massachusetts, in which incumbent Sen. Edward Markey held off a challenge from Rep. Joe Kennedy, was framed mostly as another victory for the party's leftist activists.

But it was also a resounding defeat for the notion that family brands matter more than party or ideology in American politics. And, for that reason, it couldn't possibly have come at a better time.

I don't know Joe Kennedy. I'm sure he's a smart and able public servant, like some of the other younger Kennedys I've known and can tell you about over the years.

But I can tell you that the funniest thing I've heard in politics in a long time — and believe me, we could all use the comic relief — was a comment that Robert F. Kennedy's grandson made when he conceded the race.

Thanking his extended family for all its support, he noted that the Kennedy name "was invoked far more often than I anticipated in this race."

Oh, come on.

That name was pretty much the only thing that made his challenge plausible, wasn't it? Why else would a 39-year-old congressman think he could unseat a long-serving, and far more famous, incumbent? I've had basically nothing by way of an ideological disagreement?

No one thought Kennedy ran because of his conviction that Markey had been in Washington for too long. (His uncle, Edward M. Kennedy, served in the Senate for nearly 47 years.) He ran because he didn't have a good enough grasp of the Kennedys' not to hold the seat. The time for

speaks about policy in prime time with the eerie poise of one who never for a moment questions her own place at the lectern.

Make no mistake: Donald Trump has his eye on what Joseph P. Kennedy Sr. built. The president means to hand off this side business to his young daughter and her supercilious husband, like just another casino or golf resort.

Trump always understood — it was probably the one thing he really understood better than anyone else — that political parties in America were now Potemkin villages, that they could easily be pushed over by celebrity name with a personal brand. He thinks he's finished the job.

But maybe he hasn't. In fact, maybe he's done the opposite. Maybe he's made us all a little more wary of famous names and dynastic designs.

The Kennedys aren't the Trumps, of course. One family's president famously articulated to ask what we could do for our country; the other seems preoccupied with what the world owes him.

But the underlying presumptuousness is the same. And if a perfectly likable Kennedy can test the boundaries of the family brand in the state where it's most powerful and lose, then perhaps there's a warning for the Trumps of Manhattan in their bid to acquire red-state America.

Maybe we're reaching our saturation point with government as inherited enterprise.

I hope so. Because the only thing we need less than celebrity politicians right now is the uncontrollable ambition of their entitled kids.

Matt Bai is a journalist, author and screenwriter. He spent more than a decade at The New York Times, where he was the chief political writer for the Sunday magazine and a columnist for the newspaper.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by the Associated Press and other stateside syndicates.

Portland protests have been allowed to spiral out of control

The Wall Street Journal

The violent protests of the last three months in Portland, Ore., escalated on Saturday night into a right-left confrontation that resulted in one man shot dead in the streets. This is what happens when political leaders fail to perform the most basic responsibility of government to protect innocent Americans.

The main failure here lies with Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler and Gov. Kate Brown, who have consistently indulged the rioters. Every night for more than 90 days, Black Lives Matter and antifa protesters have demonstrated in Portland. Many are peaceful, but some have repeatedly attacked police and burned buildings.

When President Donald Trump sent federal law enforcement agents to Portland this summer to protect federal buildings, the mayor and governor blamed Trump for the violent clashes. But when federal agents did not intervene, they were blamed against Portland police and property. Last Friday, Wheeler issued an open letter rejecting Trump's latest offer of federal help to restore order.

"We don't need your politics of division and demagoguery. Portlanders are onto you. We have already seen your reckless disregard for human life in your bungling response to the COVID pandemic. And we know you've reached the conclusion that images of violence or vandalism are your only ticket to reelection," Wheeler wrote.

Yet his city is the one burning and where someone has now been killed. Wheeler, Brown and state lawmakers have hamstrung police by limiting anti-riot tactics. At a Sunday press conference the Portland police chief said his department lacked the resources to separate the fighting factions, but the feckless Wheeler offered little more than a plea against violence and rhetoric about reform to address the problem.

That hasn't stopped Democrats from blaming Trump for the violence, as they did all day Sunday. Democrats spent their convention never mentioning the urban violence, but after the Kenosha, Wis., riots and the GOP convention, this has become a national liability. So they will move to blame Trump and claim that "his America" is causing it. As if Trump supporters belong to antifa and dominate U.S. cities.

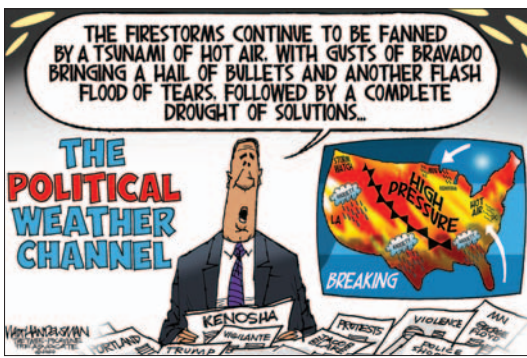
Trump should tell his supporters to stay away from Portland, Kenosha and other cities where rioters reign.

Nighttime rioters will move to the current urban violence, but it could become one result of the failure to control violence. Americans have watched for weeks as rioters burned and looted businesses that people spent a lifetime building. Yet mayors like Ted Wheeler have let it happen. Inevitably, average citizens will move to defend themselves if elected officials do not protect them. The proper place to do that is at the ballot box, however, not in the streets with guns.

Teen suspect in shootings shouldn't have been in Kenosha

Chicago Tribune

This much we can say with certainty: A 17-year-old visibly armed with a semi-automatic rifle in the thick of a violent protest is a powder keg by itself. Kyle Rittenhouse, of Antioch, Ill., has been arrested and charged with an armed connection with two deaths in Kenosha, Wis.



This much we also can say: The tragedy that unfolded was avoidable.

There was a heavy law enforcement presence in Kenosha late Tuesday and into Wednesday. There was a curfew in place. There were demonstrators defying the curfew, breaking glass with hammers, and setting buildings and vehicles on fire. And there were groups of armed citizens standing guard, at least some of whom were self-organized in what they called the Kenosha Guard. In the middle of it was Rittenhouse, eyes seen and mirrored on camera, rifle dangling near his side, speaking with confidence about his "job" and responsibilities. "People are getting injured. Our job is to protect this business," he said in footage compiled by *The New York Times*.

Another video posted on Twitter from the same area, which Shafer of *Business Week* called a "protegr" pull, shows what appeared to be a protester pulling a handgun out of his pants pocket and aiming it at cameras. Some people at the protests were peaceful. Some were armed and angry. That's a powder keg, too.

There's a lot we don't know about the shootings and their aftermath, whether Rittenhouse was in Kenosha on his own or belonged to a group. Wisconsin allows the open carry of weapons, which gives citizens the right to be armed in many public places. Kenosha County Sheriff David Beth said he was asked to deputize armed citizens to assist with law enforcement during the protests, to which he replied: "Oh hell no." Rightly.

But let's be clear: Individuals can arm themselves to protect private property in the state of Wisconsin. They can do it in Illinois, too, with proper registration. During on-and-off lockdowns and curfews, rounding communities this summer, some business owners and groups organized to staff off further looting. Illinois is not an open carry state, but it does allow concealed carry for gun owners who undergo training and background checks, a change in state law forced by Congress and carried out by a Democratic legislature.

According to one report, gun sales are up an estimated 72% nationally compared with this time last year. The *Washington Times* reported, a reflection of growing insecurity in safety across the country and in several demographic groups.

The problem with armed militias, though, should be an obvious one: They're not trained as law enforcement personnel and should have no role assisting police during a riot. Standing guard by invitation at a car dealership is different from patrolling a street. They are not trained and unable in emergency situations; the second is dangerous and irresponsible.

And that Rittenhouse, age 17, was there at all with a loaded weapon presented a grave risk to everyone. He was too young to open carry, according to the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. He was violating curfew. He was too inexperienced to act as armed

security. He reportedly had an infatuation with law enforcement but had no legitimate reason to be on the streets with a rifle.

And so: Just as we should expect legitimate, peaceful protesters in cities across the country to police themselves to assume some responsibility when rioters invade their midst and begin engaging violently with police — we should expect self-described militia organizations to obey the law, respect the role of law enforcement, police themselves — and assume some responsibility for rogue vigilantes who join their cause.

Plenty went wrong in Kenosha this week. The result has been tragic.

Virus unknowns make risk too great to play college football

The New York Times

For more than six months, many workers deemed essential have had to strap on face masks for shifts at meatpacking plants, Walgreens, grocery stores, hardware stores and restaurants. It is a necessary sacrifice for the nation's well-being. But at universities across the country, while scores of professors, staff and students start the academic year remotely to curb the spread of the coronavirus, another class of worker will be asked to strap on protective gear to do their job — without the face coverings: college football players.

Never has the inaccuracy of the term "student-athlete" been put in starker relief than in the misguided and dangerous attempt by the Big 12, Atlantic Coast Conference and Southeastern Conference to press forward with a nearly full season of football games beginning this month — as athletic climatologists are sent home for their safety. For many college competitors, but for football in particular, the demands of practice and travel can exceed those of a full-time job. The players do it all, however, for no pay — while schools, coaches, television networks and the conferences profit.

Never has the inaccuracy of the term been a way of life for millions of Americans. But the players — and make no mistake, the young people who play for these teams are workers, helping to generate billions in revenue collectively for their universities — are not essential in the middle of a pandemic that has already taken nearly 200,000 lives in the United States. The health and future of college players deserve far more consideration than they've gotten thus far from their coaches, their fans and the presidents of their universities.

The Big Ten and Pac-12 conferences, which have already postponed games, and the University of Michigan and the University of Southern California, last month decided to suspend their coming football seasons until it is prudent for players to return to a sport that is impossible to play while staying six feet apart.

Until there is such a thing as a socially distanced quarterback sack, the other

three so-called Power 5 conferences ought to follow suit.

President Donald Trump and a number of lawmakers, including Sens. Marco Rubio and Ben Sasse and Rep. Jim Jordan, have called for college football to return in the face of overwhelming evidence that doing so is a bad idea. The SEC's University of Alabama, for example, sent more than 500 students home for testing positive just days into the semester's start.

"The clear advice from our medical professionals made the choice obvious to us that we couldn't hold a football season," Larry Scott, the Pac-12 commissioner, said. "We have a responsibility to protect our students. We know what we don't know about the spread of the virus, we simply couldn't play football and look parents in the eye and say, 'We've got your kids' best interests in mind.'"

The excitement of the football season (not to mention countless other aspects of campus life) would be welcome after months of shelter-in-place orders. But with the U.S. death toll continuing to rise and infections exceeding 6 million, players and other students contracting the virus as a result of an ill-advised college football season is not a likelihood — it's a certainty.

Is NFL close to cutting ties with Washington team owner?

The Washington Post

Just when you think there is nothing more Washington Football Team owner Dan Snyder can do to debate what was once a winning, well-run and, yes, cherished sports franchise, there come disgusting new revelations. This time, it is the disclosure that the team's broadcast department secretly produced tawdry videos of outtakes of a cheerleader photo shoot, and that the NFL is considering Snyder for other male executives. The video — along with new allegations from more women who say they were exploited while working for the team and a customarily dismissive response from Snyder — underscores the need for the National Football League to undertake an investigation and take appropriate action.

An explosive article by Post reporters detailed how revealing shots of cheerleaders who had posed for calendars — what one team executive called "the good bits" — were spliced together without the woman's knowledge and later burned onto a DVD titled "For Executive Meetings." The Post, which previously reported allegations from 17 women about a pattern of sexual harassment at the organization, said 25 additional women have stepped forward with claims of being marginalized, discriminated against and sexually harassed. One woman alleged misconduct directly by Snyder — a claim he has denied along with any knowledge of the videos.

Team executives who were implicated in the Post's first report were either fired or abruptly retired. Snyder would a change in culture, retained a D.C. law firm to investigate the allegations and a D.C. attorney was brought on board Jason Wright, a former NFL player and business executive, as president of the team and local television, as well as Julie Donaldson to be the new senior vice president for media. The moves — along with Snyder's capitulation to the new allegations — were the right thing to do, were seen as steps in the right direction.

But if, as Snyder promised, there were going to be a new era of transparency and accountability, why did he decline to answer questions about the videos (which had been provided to reporters by former employees) and why did he say he was his first impulse after the article was published to label it a "hit job"? A subsequent statement from the team, calling the allegations "deeply distressing," was a clear attempt at damage control. The question the NFL and the other team owners need to ask, but long do they want to have to clean up for Snyder?

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The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market



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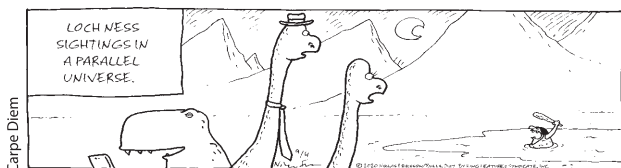
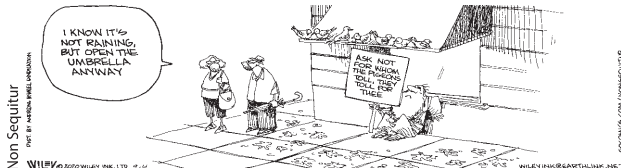
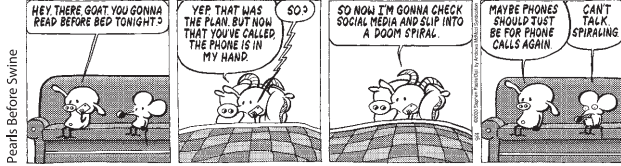
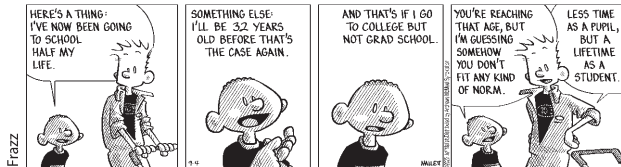


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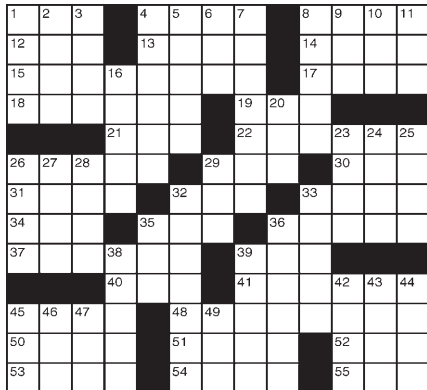
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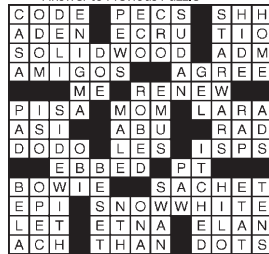


Eugene Sheffer Crossword



- ACROSS**
- Luau bowlful
 - Luminary
 - Rejuvenate
 - Samovar
 - Lighten
 - The Eternal City
 - Blue-penciled
 - Cameo stone
 - Parisian palace
 - Swelled head
 - Dime portrait
 - "Delicious!"
 - Western resort lake
 - Bumped into
 - Granada gold
 - Get wind of
 - "Way cool!"
 - Did laps
 - Internet address
 - Maui memento
 - Sea birds
 - Like some signature lines
 - Refusals
 - Large snake
 - Cling (to)
 - Jupiter's wife
 - Merlots and malbecs
 - Lay — the line
 - Roman 1007
 - Little rascal
 - Apportion
 - Fish story
 - Mafia boss
- DOWN**
- Chaste
 - Pitcher Hershiser
 - "500" race
 - Break away
 - Spud
 - Enzyme suffix
 - Visibly sleep-deprived
 - Whip craft?
 - Charged bit
 - "Little Women" woman
 - Gender
 - Regarding
 - Belly
 - Caterwaul
 - Russian river
 - May honorees
 - Dull sound of impact
 - Plane-related
 - Sentry's cry
 - tai (cocktail)
 - Soviet fighting force
 - Japanese fish dish
 - Zodiac cat
 - "Violet Clay" author Gail
 - Steak choice
 - Bottom
 - Oklahoma city
 - San —, Italy
 - "NFL Live" channel
 - Morrison of The Doors
 - Multipurpose truck
 - "Kidding!"
 - Actress Longoria

Answer to Previous Puzzle



9-4

CRYPTOQUIP

MAHYO CYFMUGI XUYK NYG
 VFIX QMAV XUIF NYG QYHU
 MHHIFCIC HUI TMKI TAUYYZ:
 HUI YZC AYZZIDI HOYN.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT SPECIAL LUGGAGE MIGHT PHOTOGRAPHERS USE WHEN TRAVELING WITH SEVERAL CAMERAS? SHOOT-CASES.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals H

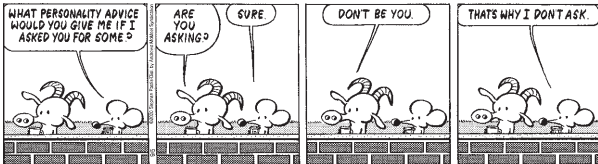
Frazz



Dilbert



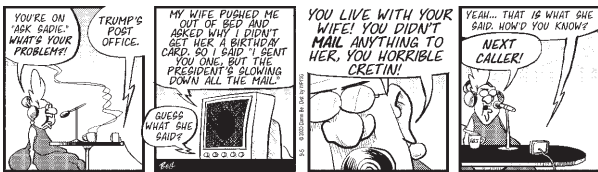
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



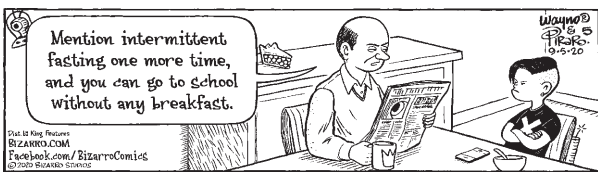
Carpe Diem



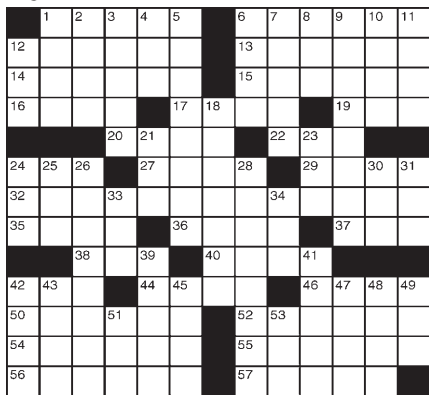
Beetle Bailey



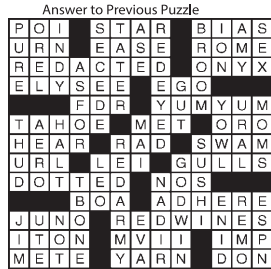
Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



- ACROSS
- 1 Summary
 - 6 Sets straight
 - 12 More beloved
 - 13 Light-related
 - 14 Home of St. Francis
 - 15 Sevilla's nation
 - 16 Eyed woe
 - 17 Roman 350
 - 19 Steal from
 - 20 Active person
 - 22 Timetable abbr.
 - 24 Moment
 - 27 Mark Harmon TV series
 - 29 Tennis score
 - 32 Brainchild of physicist Max Planck
 - 35 Madrid miss (Abbr.)
 - 36 Russian ruler
 - 37 "My word!"
 - 38 CBS logo
 - 40 River to the Seine
 - 42 "Life of Pi" director Lee
 - 44 German city
 - 46 "— grip!"
 - 50 Accepted, as work
 - 52 Slanted type
 - 54 "Misty" composer Garner
 - 55 "Forget it!"
- 56 "Help!"
- 57 Argon and neon
- 25 Where Lux, is "Jeopardy!" choice
- 28 Applying color to wood, perhaps
- 30 Fury
- 31 "Science Guy" Bill
- 33 Dissenting vote
- 34 Day divs.
- 39 Deadly virus
- 41 Quaint oath
- 42 "Up and —!"
- 43 "A Doll's House" heroine
- 45 Unicorn
- 47 Writer Wiesel
- 48 Twitches
- 49 Tennis feat
- 51 Decked in the ring
- 53 Ode title starter



9-5

CRYPTOQUIP

P O M F M Z X M Z I O K M G G N
 X I E E J G L J G J L M Z T P D F
 B K M T P Z N, P E V I S Z Y W J Y S J E I
 M K J G Q P I D J P Q W M Z M D V J.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: ACTOR DONAHUE WHOM YOU KNEW BACK WHEN YOU BOTH ATTENDED THE SAME SCHOOL: THE OLD COLLEGE TROY.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals B

NHL/US OPEN



JASON FRANSON, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Dallas Stars center Jason Dickinson, second from left, and Colorado Avalanche defenseman Ryan Graves, left, look for the puck as Avalanche goaltender Michael Hutchinson makes a save during the second period of Game 6 in their second-round playoff series Wednesday in Edmonton, Alberta.

Hutchinson helps Avs force Game 7

Associated Press

EDMONTON, Alberta — The biggest boost for the Colorado Avalanche in must-win game after must-win game comes from an unlikely source — their third-string goaltender.

Michael Hutchinson stopped 27 shots and the Avalanche beat the Dallas Stars 4-1 on Wednesday night to force a decisive Game 7 in their second-round playoff series.

The 30-year-old Hutchinson was back in net with starter Philipp Grubauer and backup Pavel Francouz both sidelined. It was just Hutchinson's second career NHL playoff start — and second win. He stymied the Stars all night after allowing an early goal.

"He's an easy guy to cheer for," Colorado coach Jared Bednar said. "For him to be able to step in and do what he's done for us the last couple games is nothing short of amazing. He deserves all the credit."

Rookie defenseman Cale Makar scored the go-ahead goal in the second period, while Nikita Zadorov and Mikko Rantanen also added goals. Nathan MacKinnon scored an empty-netter for the Avalanche, who staved off elimination for a second straight game tie the series at three wins apiece. Colorado has never won a postseason series when trailing 3-1.

Game 7 is Friday. "Our mindset's changed," Makar said. "Obviously, we're on the ropes and we have a team that's going to fight to the end here. The next one is a big one for us. It's going to be a fun one."

Miro Heiskanen scored for the Stars, while Anton Khudobin made 20 saves.

Both teams lost in Game 7 last season in the second round. Colorado is attempting to advance to the Western Conference finals for the first time since 2002. Dallas

No. 1 seed Pliskova falls

2016 runner-up bounced by Garcia in second round

By HOWARD FENDRICH
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Under normal circumstances, Karolina Pliskova would not have been seeded No. 1 at the U.S. Open and so, while a second-round loss certainly would have been disappointing to her, and noticed by others, it wouldn't have been as newsworthy.

But what's normal in 2020? With the women who are 1-2 in the rankings choosing to skip the trip to Flushing Meadows because of the pandemic, No. 3 Pliskova ascended to the top spot in the draw — and by Day 3, she was gone.

Pliskova, the 2016 runner-up at the U.S. Open, made her mood clear during a 6-1, 7-6 (2) loss to 50th-ranked Caroline Garcia on Wednesday by throwing a racket, then again afterward with a series of clipped responses at her news conference.

Pliskova fidgeted with the microphone. Sighed. Shrugged her shoulders. Rolled her eyes.

When a reporter offered possible explanations for the defeat — a new, faster surface on the courts, a lack of atmosphere because there are no spectators, the pressure of her high seeding — Pliskova replied: "Nothing from what you said."

Her reasoning for the result? "I didn't play good," Pliskova said, "so that's it."

When another member of the media said this back-and-forth must be boring to Pliskova, she said, "Yeah, a little bit. Did you see the match or no?" and soon after remarked, "I don't know if you understand tennis well enough."

At a first round that went more to form than ever — 29 of 32 seeded women won their opening matches, a U.S. Open record since the number of seeds was doubled from 16 in 2001 — the surprises started in the second round.

Three Americans turned in upsets of seeded women. Shelby Rogers, ranked 93rd, beat 11th-seeded Elena Rybakina 7-5, 6-1; Ann Li, who is ranked 128th, topped 13th-seeded Alison Riske 6-0, 6-3 in a matchup between two players from Pennsylvania; and Madison Brengle, ranked 84th, took out 19th-seeded Dayana Yastremska 6-2, 6-3.

Other seeded women who were eliminated: No. 12 Marketa Vondrousova, No. 31 Kristina Mladenovic, No. 31 Anastasiya Sevastova.

Mladenovic's loss was the wildest of them all. She led 6-1, 5-1, then later held four match points, but never was able to finish things off and ended up on the wrong end of a 1-6, 7-6 (2), 6-0 result against 102nd-ranked Varvara Gracheva. Two seeded men exited, too: No. 13 Cristian Garin and No. 24 Hubert Hurkacz.

Pliskova had chances to take the second set against Garcia, who had been 0-6 against top-five opponents at Grand Slam tourna-



SETH WENIG/AP

The Czech Republic's Karolina Pliskova reacts Wednesday after losing to France's Caroline Garcia during the second round of the U.S. Open in New York.

US Open scoreboard

Wednesday	
AT USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center	
New York	
Purse: \$21,625,000	
Second Round	
Men's Singles	
Seedings in parentheses:	
Adrian Panatta (5), France, def. Cristian Garin (13), Chile, 6-2, 6-1, 3-6, 4-6, 7-5, 6-2	
David Goffin (7), Belgium, def. Lloyd Harris (South Africa, 7-6 (6), 4-6, 6-1, 6-4, 6-4)	
Adrian Panatta (5), France, def. Jack Sock (United States, 7-5), 7-5, 6-2	
Alejandro Davidovich Fokina (Spain, def. Hubert Hurkacz (24), Poland, 6-4, 1-6, 6-2, 6-2	
Novak Djokovic (1), Serbia, def. Kyle Edmund (Britain, 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-4, 6-2	
Denis Shapovalov (12), Canada, def. Mitchell Krueger (United States, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2	
Cameron Norrie (Britain, def. Federico Coria (Argentina, 6-3, 6-4, 6-2	
Taylor Fritz (19), United States, def. Gilles Simon (France, 7-5, 6-3, 6-2	
Ricardas Berankis (Lithuania, def. Steve Johnson (United States, 7-5, 6-2, 1-6, 7-6 (1)	
Borna Coric (27), Croatia, def. Juan Ignacio Londero (Argentina, 7-5, 4-6, 6-7 (5), 6-2, 6-3	
Denis Shapovalov (12), Canada, def. Kevin Song (South Korea, 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-4, 6-2	
Women's Singles	
Second Round	
Aliaaksandra Sasnovich (Belarus, def. Petra Martic (Croatia, 6-2, 6-2	
Kristina Mladenovic (12), Czech Republic, def. Petra Martic (Croatia, 6-2, 6-2	
Angeleique Kerber (17), Germany, def. Anna-Lena Friedsam (Germany, 6-3, 7-6 (5)	
Varvara Gracheva (Russia, def. Kristina Mladenovic (30), France, 1-6, 7-6 (2), 6-0	
Petra Martic (6), Czech Republic, def. Katerina Siniakova (Czechia, 6-2, 6-2	
Yulia Putintseva (23), Kazakhstan, def. Vera Lako (Belarus, 6-4, 6-2	
Jennifer Brady (28), United States, def. Magda Linette (24), Poland, def. Danka Kovinic (Montenegro, 6-1, 6-7 (2), 7-6 (4)	
Caroline Garcia (52), France, def. Kirsten Flipkens (Belgium, 7-6 (1), 6-7 (3), 6-2	
Ann Li (United States, def. Alison Riske (13), United States, 6-0, 6-3	

NHL scoreboard

Stanley Cup playoffs

CONFERENCE SEMIFINALS (Best-of-seven; x if necessary)

WESTERN CONFERENCE
(6) N.Y. Islanders 3, (1) Philadelphia 2
N.Y. Islanders 4, Philadelphia 0
Philadelphia 4, N.Y. Islanders 3, OT
N.Y. Islanders 3, Philadelphia 1
N.Y. Islanders 3, Philadelphia 2
Philadelphia 4, N.Y. Islanders 3, OT
Thursday, Game 6

Eastern Conference
(2) Tampa Bay 4, (3) Boston 1
Boston 3, Tampa Bay 2
Tampa Bay 4, Boston 3, OT
Boston 7, Tampa Bay 1
Tampa Bay 3, Boston 1
Thursday, Game 7

WESTERN CONFERENCE
At Edmonton, Alberta
(1) Vegas 5, (6) Vancouver 2
Las Vegas 5, Vancouver 0
Vancouver 5, Las Vegas 2
Las Vegas 3, Vancouver 0
Vegas 5, Vancouver 3
Vancouver 2, Las Vegas 1
Thursday, Game 6

Friday, Game 7
(3) Dallas 3, (2) Colorado 3
Dallas 5, Colorado 2
Dallas 6, Dallas 4
Colorado 5, Dallas, ppd.
Dallas 5, Colorado 4
Wednesday, Game 6
Wednesday: Colorado 4, Dallas 1
Friday: Game 7 8PM Sports3, 3:45 a.m.
Saturday CET: 10:45 a.m. Saturday JKT1

Wednesday

Avalanche 4, Stars 1
Colorado 1 1 2-4
Dallas 0 0 0-1
First Period—1, Dallas, Heiskanen 5 (Gurikoff, Jarrold), 17:35; 2, Colorado, Zadorov (Najmestnikov), 19:28.
Second Period—3, Colorado, Markan 4 (Rantanen, Girard), 7:48.
Third Period—4, Colorado, Rantanen 4 (MacKinnon, Burakovsky), 32:1, 5, Colorado, MacKinnon 9, 17:14 (en), 13-7-4-24, Dallas 13-6-9-28.
Powerplay opportunities—Colorado 0 of 5; Dallas 0 of 5.
Goals—Colorado, Hutchinson 2-0 (28 shots); 27 saves; Dallas, Khudobin 7-5 (20 shots); 17-22.

last went in 2008. "We never thought it was going to be a sweep or an easy series," Stars forward Tyler Seguin said. "We always said it can go Game 6 or 7, and it's 7, so here we are."

This marked the first time in the high-scoring series the winning team didn't net at least five goals.

AUTO RACING/HORSE RACING

Pack chasing Harvick, Hamlin as playoffs open

Darlington is the first stop for championship

NCHARLOTTE, N.C. ASCAR's pandemic-plagued season has finally reached the playoffs, with 16 drivers chasing the Cup championship starting Sunday in South Carolina.

It brings the series full circle back to Darlington Raceway, where NASCAR resumed its season in May after a

10-week pause for the pandemic. The stock car series was one of the first major sports to return, with COVID-19 protocols and a relentless pace that got NASCAR back on schedule.

Kevin Harvick won that first race back at Darlington and three nights later it was Denny Hamlin in victory lane. The duo has not let off the gas since and returns to Darlington prepping for a head-to-head challenge for the championship.

Harvick won the regular-season title with seven victories, all after NASCAR resumed racing. Hamlin opened the year with his third Daytona 500 victory then won five more times. The rivals

have combined for 13 wins in 26 races and should easily slide into the Nov. 8 winner-take-all finale.

"Everybody else is racing for two spots and not four," said Greg Zipadelli, the competition director at Stewart-Haas Racing, Harvick's team. "I think those two guys are going to go and run head-to-head and win races and move on. The curious thing is which team driver will step up in the next 10 weeks and match what they've done?"

There are 14 other drivers in the playoff field and not one has come close to the consistency shown by Harvick and Hamlin. Brad Keselowski won three times for Team Penske after racing resumed, and the organization has two wins from Joey Logano and one from Ryan Blaney.

Hendrick Motorsports has four wins: Two from Chase Elliott and one each from Alex Bowman and William Byron, who raced his way into the playoffs with his first career victory last Saturday at Daytona.

The rest of the field is all over the map.

Cole Custer is the only rookie in the playoffs and earned his first career berth with a surprise win at Kentucky. Matt DiBenedetto is also making his first career play-



Kevin Harvick won the regular-season title with seven victories, all after NASCAR resumed racing.

RALPH FRESO/AP

In the Pits



by JENNA FRYER • AP

off appearance by pointing his way in at Daytona.

DiBenedetto gave Ford eight cars in the playoff field, well ahead of Chevrolet (five) and Toyota (three). The full four-car slates from SHR and Penske — DiBenedetto drives for Wood Brothers Racing, a Penske affiliate — all advanced as the Blue Oval brand took half the 16 slots.

"This is a big one making the playoffs for the Wood Brothers," DiBenedetto said. "This is very big, really special and I'm glad we'll be able to get to work and do the best we can the rest of the season."

Does he have a shot? Probably not.

But DiBenedetto is one of four drivers in the playoffs without a firm contract for 2021 and a strong performance could earn him an extension.

Clint Bowyer, Aric Almirola and Byron are the only three free agents in the field, but Zipadelli said Monday the team is working on retaining the same four-car lineup next year (Harvick, Custer, Almirola and Bowyer). Byron's win at Daytona likely earned him a Hendrick exten-

“I think those two (Harvick and Hamlin) are going to go and run head-to-head and win races and move on. The curious thing is which team driver will step up in the next 10 weeks and match what they've done?”

Greg Ziparelli

competition director at Stewart-Haas Racing

sion, which could be announced as early as this week.

None are considered true threats to advance through the championship round.

So who could challenge Harvick and Hamlin? Well, reigning series champion Kyle Busch has made it to the final four the last five consecutive years. But he's shockingly winless through 26 races and hasn't caught much of a break. He was wrecked while racing for the win at Daytona last week.

"Thought we had a shot to do that," he shrugged. "Still 2020." The dark horse could be 2017

champion Martin Truex Jr., who has made it to the final three consecutive years. Truex won seven races last year, has just one victory this season and has been outrun by teammate Hamlin.

But he's right there on the rear bumper of Harvick and Hamlin, and Truex hasn't finished lower than fourth in two months. If someone is a clear candidate to play spoiler to the favorites, it would be Truex and he's aware of his capability.

"I think everybody has forgotten about us and that's a cool spot to be in for us. We look forward to that," Truex said.



William Byron raced his way into the playoffs with his first career victory last Saturday at Daytona.

TERRY RENNA/AP

Louisville prepares for Kentucky Derby weekend minus fans

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — The fastest two minutes in sports will also be the quietest in Kentucky Derby history.

Churchill Downs scrapped plans last month for 23,000 physically distanced, masked fans to attend Saturday's rescheduled Triple Crown race due to the rise in coronavirus cases. It will be the first time spectators will not be allowed to attend the race.

That means no iconic scene of thoroughbreds rounding the first turn before packed grandstands beneath the Twin Spires. No

sea of women in big, colorful hats or men in bright suits, many sipping mint juleps with Kentucky's famous bourbon while cheering the Run For The Roses.

But the good news for Derby diehards is there will be a race.

The Derby has followed other sports and events in running without fans — including the Belmont Stakes in June — but the unusual scenario for the Triple Crown's marquee event has been hard for some to prep, including horsemen used to prepping horses for huge crowds.

"It's definitely not going to be your normal Derby," trainer and Louisville native

Brad Cox said. "It's always a weekend that we look forward to, actually the whole week with the lead-up."

"It's an amazing week, kind of like a festival of racing. Obviously, with no fans it will definitely be something we've never experienced before."

For a region that has dealt with social unrest and the pandemic this summer, the Derby's absence of fans is yet another blow. There have been more than three months of protests in Louisville calling for the arrests of police who shot and killed Breonna Taylor on March 13 in an early morning narcotics raid. No drugs were found. A

demonstration last week close to the historic track resulted in 64 arrests.

And there could be more protests this week.

In announcing the decision not to allow fans, Churchill Downs president/CEO Kevin Flanery acknowledged the city "is going through a lot right now" and "a lot of people" are hurting. He said the track wants to be involved in discussions about equality and justice and that the Derby has usually been a uniting event.

"Unfortunately, just given where everything is right now, we can't do that this year," Flanery added.

MLB/SPORTS BRIEFS

Mets' 'Franchise' Seaver dies at 75

Five-time 20-game winner, 1967 NL Rookie of the Year succumbs to COVID-19, dementia-related complications

By RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Tom Seaver transformed a franchise and created a city, setting enduring standards as he whipped his powerful right arm overhead for the Miracle Mets and dirtied his right knee atop major league mounds for two decades.

A consummate pro and pitching icon, he finished fulfilled after a career remembered with awe long after his final strikeout.

"It is the last beautiful flower in the perfect bouquet," Seaver said on the afternoon he was inducted into baseball's Hall of Fame.

Seaver, the galvanizing force who steered the New York Mets from National League laughing-stock to a stunning World Series title in 1969, has died. He was 75.

The Hall said Wednesday night that Seaver died Monday from complications of Lewy body dementia and COVID-19. Seaver spent his final years in Calistoga, Calif.

Seaver's family announced in March 2019 he had been diagnosed with dementia and had retired from public life. He continued working at Seaver Vineyards, founded by the three-time NL Cy Young Award winner and his wife, Nancy, in 2002 on 116 acres at Diamond Mountain in Northern California.

Seaver was diagnosed with Lyme disease in 1991, and it re-occurred in 2012 and led to Bell's Palsy and memory loss, the Daily News of New York reported in 2013.

"He will always be the heart and soul of the Mets, the standard which all Mets aspire to," Mike Piazza, a former Mets catcher and Hall of Famer, tweeted when Seaver's dementia diagnosis was announced.

Said ex-Mets closer and captain John Franco: "As a kid, you always wanted to be Tom Seaver."

Nicknamed Tom Terrific and The Franchise, the revered Seaver was a five-time 20-game winner and the 1967 NL Rookie of the Year. He went 311-205 with a 2.86 ERA, 3,640 strikeouts and 61 shutouts during an illustrious career that lasted from 1967-'86. He became a constant on magazine covers and a media presence, calling postseason games on NBC and ABC even while still an active player.

"He was simply the greatest Mets player of all-time and among the best to ever play the game," Mets owner Fred Wilpon and son Jeff, the team's chief operating officer, said in a statement.

Seaver was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1992 when he appeared on 425 of 430 ballots for a then-record 98.84%.

Seaver pitched for the Mets from 1967-'77, when he was traded to Cincinnati after a public spat with chairman M. Donald Grant over Seaver's desire for a new contract.

He threw his only no-hitter for the Reds in June 1978 against St. Louis and was traded back to New York after the 1982 season. But Mets general manager Frank Cashen blundered by leaving Seaver off his list of 26 protect-



MIKE GROLL/AP

National Baseball Hall of Famer Tom Seaver arrives for an induction ceremony in Cooperstown, N.Y., on July 26, 2015. Seaver died on Monday at age 75 from complications of Lewy body dementia and COVID-19. Seaver called his Hall of Fame induction "the last beautiful flower in the perfect bouquet."

ed players, and in January 1984 he was claimed by the Chicago White Sox as free agent compensation for losing pitcher Dennis Lamp to Toronto.

While pitching for the White Sox, Seaver got his 300th win at Yankee Stadium and did it in style with a six-hitter in a 4-1 victory. He finished his career with the 1986 Boston Red Sox team

that lost to the Mets in the World Series.

Supremely confident — and not necessarily modest about his extraordinary acumen on the mound — Seaver was a 12-time All-Star who led the major leagues with a 25-7 record in 1969 and a 1.76 ERA in 1971. A classic power pitcher with a drop-and-drive delivery that often dirtied the right

knee of his uniform pants, he won Cy Young Awards with New York in 1969, 1973 and 1975. The club retired his No. 41 in 1988, the first Mets player given the honor.

"From a team standpoint, winning the '69 world championship is something I'll remember most," Seaver said in 1992. "From an individual standpoint, my 300th win brought me the most joy."

Sports briefs

Two-time NBA MVP guard Nash hired as Nets coach

Associated Press

The Brooklyn Nets hired Steve Nash as their coach Thursday, putting the Hall of Fame point guard in charge of the team that hopes to have Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving together next season.

Nash, two-time MVP as the engineer of the high-scoring Phoenix Suns teams under Mike D'Antoni, had been a player development consultant with Golden State, where he worked with Durant.

Nash, two-time MVP as the engineer of the high-scoring Phoenix Suns teams under Mike D'Antoni, had been a player development consultant with Golden State, where he worked with Durant.

The Nets finished the season under Jacque Vaughn, who they said would remain on staff as Nash's lead assistant.

Vaughn finished up the season after the Nets surprisingly parted ways with Kenny Atkinson on March 7. He led Brooklyn to the seed No. 7 in the East.

Fournette planning to sign with Brady's Bucs

TAMPA, Fla. — Leonard Fournette intends to join the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, who are stockpiling playmakers to help Tom Brady be successful with his new team.

The former Jacksonville Jaguars running back tweeted an image of himself carrying a football and wearing a Bucs jersey

and helmet along with a pen-signing emoji and the message #GoBucs on Wednesday night.

The Bucs, who typically don't confirm player acquisitions until the team has a signed contract, had no comment.

Fournette, drafted fourth overall out of LSU in 2017, was released Monday by Jacksonville.

A's righty Mengden tests positive for coronavirus

OAKLAND, Calif. — Athletics right-hander Daniel Mengden has tested positive for the coronavirus and is asymptomatic.

The team had its three-game series at Seattle this week postponed as well as last Sunday's scheduled series finale at Houston, where the A's learned late

Saturday of one positive test. Oakland general manager David Forst said the A's left Houston in two groups, the second being those who had close contact — up to 15 minutes — with Mengden in the 48-hour window during which he tested positive.

The A's don't know how Mengden contracted the virus. There haven't been additional positives within the traveling party.

Preackness to run Oct. 3 without fans present

BALTIMORE — The Preackness Stakes will be run at Pimlico Race Course in Baltimore Oct. 3 without fans, making it a spectator-free sweep of the three Triple Crown races this year because of the global pandemic.

The Preackness follows the lead of the Belmont Stakes and Kentucky Derby in not allowing fans. The Belmont took place June 20 in New York without fans, as will the Kentucky Derby Saturday.

Lutsenko claims first Tour victory on Stage 6

MONT AIGOUAL, France — Kazakh rider Alexey Lutsenko won his first stage in his fifth Tour de France with a solo effort up Mont Aigoual on Thursday.

Among the overall contenders, there were no changes at the top. Briton Adam Yates kept the race leader's yellow jersey, still three seconds ahead of Primoz Roglic from Slovenia. Another Slovene, Tadej Pogacar, is still third, seven seconds behind Yates.

NAB SCOREBOARD

American League										Phillies 3, Nationals 0										Indians 5, Royals 0										
East Division					Washington					Philadelphia					Cleveland					Kansas City										
W	L	Pct	GB	IP	R	H	ER	BB	SO	W	L	Pct	GB	IP	R	H	ER	BB	SO	W	L	Pct	GB	IP	R	H	ER	BB	SO	
Tampa Bay	26	12	.684		Turner	5	4	0	0	McCottin	4	0	1	0	Cle.Hendz	4	0	0	0	Mirfield	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New York	19	16	.571	4.5	Soto	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Toronto	19	16	.543	5.0	Nedrick	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Minn.	15	24	.385	10.5	Cabrera	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Boston	15	25	.324	13.5	Reynolds	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Cleveland	16	22	.422		Suzuki	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Chicago	22	15	.594		Phelps	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Minnesota	17	20	.457	1.5	Garbica	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Detroit	17	20	.457	1.5	Robles	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Cincinnati	14	23	.379	9.0	Totals	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
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Houston	20	15	.571	2.0	Wheeler	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Seattle	15	22	.405	8.5	Phelps	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Texas	17	17	.500	3.0	Workman	5	4	5	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Los Angeles	15	25	.324	11.5	HBP—Wheeler (Eaton), T—250.						Cleveland					Kansas City														
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MLB

Extra effort: Betts, Smith rally Dodgers past Diamondbacks

By JOE REEDY
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Mookie Betts hit a tying homer in the ninth inning, Will Smith lined an RBI single in the 10th and the Los Angeles Dodgers rallied past the reeling Arizona Diamondbacks 3-2 Wednesday night.

The Dodgers — who lead the Majors with a 28-10 record — won their ninth in a row at home despite getting only four hits. Reigning NL MVP Cody Bellinger missed his second straight game due to a lat injury.

“We battled and stayed in the game,” said Betts, who is second in the NL with 12 home runs. “You have to play 27 outs, and sometimes more, like today. The most important thing is just putting pressure for all 27, and I think we did a decent job of that.”

After Arizona scored a run in the top of the 10th, Max Muncy began the bottom half as the automatic runner at second base and didn't need much time to score. He advanced to third on Chris Taylor's sacrifice bunt and continued home when Junior Guerra (1-1) threw wide of the bag, which also allowed Taylor to move to second.

One out later, Smith lined a single to left for the third walk-off hit of his career.

“I thought it was a really well-played baseball game,” Los Angeles manager Dave Roberts said. “I think we're so used to home runs and offense, but to get pitchers making pitches, and some defensive plays, low scoring where every pitcher, every base runner matters, I thought it was fun.”

The Dodgers had been held to one hit by three Diamondbacks pitchers for 8½ innings until Betts homered to center off Kevin Ginkel. Corey Seager followed with a

double off the left-field wall but was stranded.

Arizona took a 2-1 lead in the 10th when Daulton Varsho came home on a bases-loaded walk by Kenley Jansen (2-0) to Christian Walker.

Arizona manager Torey Lovullo said he practiced bunt defense and throws to third frequently in the three weeks of summer camp leading up to the season due to the new rules, which made this loss even more frustrating.

“We worked hard to put pressure on the bunter. We have to live and learn and wear it,” Lovullo said.

Walker homered and Zac Gallen allowed only one hit in seven-plus innings for the Diamondbacks, who have dropped four straight and 13 of their last 14.

The only hit Gallen allowed was on his first pitch when Betts lined a single to center. After the right-hander walked Smith with two outs in the second, he retired 16 consecutive Los Angeles players until Joe Pederson drew a walk to lead off the eighth.

Gallen, who struck out seven and walked two, has allowed three or fewer earned runs in all 23 of his big league starts. It also marks the eighth time in 10 games that the Diamondbacks' starters have given up two runs or fewer.

Walker homered to left center with one out in the sixth inning on a cutter down the heart of the plate from Caleb Ferguson. The first baseman is batting .387 (12-for-31) with five home runs and nine RBIs in his last 10 games at Dodger Stadium.

Walker Buehler pitched five scoreless innings in his first start since Aug. 21. The right-hander — who was on the injured list due to a blister — allowed only two hits and struck out six.



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

The Atlanta Braves' Adam Duvall smiles as he rounds the bases after his third home run of the game during the eighth inning of the Braves' 7-5 win at Boston on Wednesday.

Roundup

Duvall repeats Ozuna's 3-HR feat as Braves sweep Red Sox

Associated Press

BOSTON — Adam Duvall hit three home runs a night after teammate Marcell Ozuna become the first NL player ever to hit three homers in Fenway Park, and the East-leading Atlanta Braves beat the stumbling Boston Red Sox 7-5 Wednesday night to complete a three-game sweep.

Duvall hit a pair of two-run shots over the Green Monster and a solo blast to center for his five RBIs. Ozuna added a long, tiebreaking solo drive for the Braves, who entered the three-game set 0-12-3 in their last 15 series against the Red Sox.

It was Atlanta's first sweep in Boston since capturing a three-game set in 2002. Freddie Freeman had two hits to extend his hitting streak to 16 games.

Jackie Bradley Jr. hit a solo homer and J.D. Martinez had two hits and two RBIs for the Red Sox.

Ozuna's drive also cleared the Monster, sailing over a billboard and completely out of Fenway against Andrew Triggs (0-2) in the seventh. Duvall's third homer hit off a back wall near the bleachers after his second homer had tied it at 5 against Triggs an inning earlier.

Tyler Matzek (3-2) got four outs in relief for the victory. Mark Melancon struck out the side in the ninth for his eighth save in nine chances.

Indians 5, Royals 0: Triston McKenzie tossed six innings of three-hit ball to celebrate his 23rd birthday, and Tyler Naquin hit a pair of homers for the only runs of the game to lead Cleveland to a win at Kansas City.

McKenzie (2-0) needed just 81 pitches thanks to six strikeouts, no walks and some slick defense behind him.

Astros 2, Rangers 1: Michael Brantley hit a two-run homer early to back up a strong start from rookie Christian Javier and Houston held on to beat visiting Texas.

Brantley, who had a three-run shot in a loss on Tuesday night, connected off Kolby Allard (0-4) with one out in the first on his homer to the seats in right field to give the Astros an early lead.

Blue Jays 2, Marlins 1: Lourdes Gurriel homered and Hyun Jin Ryu pitched six solid innings to lead Toronto to a win at Miami.

After Marlins pitcher Sixto Sanchez got through the first four innings on 43 pitches, Gurriel snapped the rookie right-hander's 11-inning scoreless string with a two-run shot for a 2-0 lead in the fifth.

Reds 4, Cardinals 3: Joey Votto's single in the bottom of the ninth inning drove in Shogo Akiyama with the winning run for host Cincinnati.

Facing Giovanni Gallegos (1-1), Akiyama and Curt Casali walked with one out and Votto delivered a sharp line drive to right to send Akiyama sliding across the plate and extend his hitting streak to six games.

Phillies 3, Nationals 0: Zack Wheeler tossed three-hit ball over 6½ innings to outpitch Max Scherzer, Jay Bruce hit a solo homer and host Philadelphia beat Washington.

Neil Walker was 3-for-3 with two RBIs for the Phillies, who've won eight of nine and three in a row to go two games over .500 for the first time since they were 79-77 last Sept. 24.

Brewers 8, Tigers 5: Keston Hiura and Jace Peterson homered as host Milwaukee snapped Detroit's six-game winning streak.

Eric Sogard's sacrifice fly off Joe Jimenez (1-2) scored Justin Smoak with the go-ahead run in the seventh inning as the Brewers responded after falling behind 4-0. Peterson provided insurance with a pinch-hit, two-run shot in the eighth.

Mets 9, Orioles 4: Michael Conforto went 4-for-5 with a homer and five RBIs, Pete Alonso hit a lengthy solo shot and New York won at Baltimore to snap a five-game losing streak.

Conforto matched his career high in hits with a two-run homer in the first inning, RBI doubles in the fifth and seventh, and a run-scoring single in the eighth.

Rays 5, Yankees 2: Mike Brosseau got some revenge against New York, hitting two home runs as visiting Tampa Bay topped its AL East rival again.

Rockies 9, Giants 6: Garrett Hampson and Sam Hilliard homered and newcomer Kevin Pillar delivered a key triple as host Colorado bounced back from a battering, rallying to beat San Francisco.

Cubs 5, Pirates 2: Javier Baez hit a three-run home run and Kyle Hendricks pitched one run ball over six innings to lead Chicago to a win at Pittsburgh.

Twins 8, White Sox 1: Josh Donaldson returned from the injured list with two hits and two RBIs for host Minnesota.

Padres 11, Angels 4: Jason Castro hit a tiebreaking, two-run double against the team that traded him three days ago, and San Diego rallied for eight runs in the eighth inning to win at Los Angeles.



MARCO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

The Los Angeles Dodgers' Mookie Betts connects for a solo home run during the ninth inning of the team's 3-2, 10th-inning defeat of the Arizona Diamondbacks on Wednesday in Los Angeles.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



North Carolina's Trey Morrison entered preseason camp set to play nickelback, only to start working at free safety with the goal of being ready to play anywhere in the secondary on short notice.

CHRIS SEWARD/AP

It's all about versatility

Multiposition players boost options

By Aaron Beard
Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C.

North Carolina's Trey Morrison entered preseason camp set to play nickelback, only to start working at free safety with the goal of being ready to play anywhere in the secondary on short notice.

That's because the 18th-ranked Tar Heels, like many teams, are preparing for roster uncertainty sure to come amid the coronavirus pandemic. Positive tests, contact tracing and quarantines could abruptly alter any roster along with the injury risk that has long been part of the game.

Training players for multiple positions could help teams navigate through it all. "I think it's very important because you really know with football, you don't know what's going to happen," Morrison said. "You don't know if somebody's going to get injured or sick or anything with COVID right now. I think it's a great idea to just keep people ready so there's no beat missed."

That challenge faces the handful of leagues planning fall seasons, headlined by the Atlantic Coast, Big 12 and South-eastern conferences.

Teams could lose a starter with no warning after a positive test, along with teammates at the same position through contact tracing — which identifies individuals exposed through close contact — and quarantine. That's why many teams have players training at multiple positions to give them-

selves as many options as they can, such as Wake Forest coach Dave Clawson saying the Demon Deacons have given safeties reps at cornerback and linebacker.

As Clawson put it: "There's just a lot more what-ifs."

"I think it's something every coach in the country is thinking about right now," said Lincoln Riley, coach at No. 5 Oklahoma. "You always have contingency plans if the worst of the worst happens. Now the difference here is ... it's probably more possible than it's ever been — not probably, it is.

"In the past, (it's) what happens if two safeties get hurt during a game," Riley added. "Now it's what happens if I don't have a safety even available to play — period. The worst possible scenario is now way worse."

College teams have long used positional cross-training to improve depth or mask a lack of it throughout a two-deep depth chart. ACC Network analyst Eric Mac Lain, an offensive lineman on Clemson's national runner-up team in 2015, said its importance now is "at an all-time high."

"It's going to be interesting to see how teams prepare for it, if they're prepared for it and who kind of rises to the top," he said. "Because there's no doubt that we're going to have guys miss games. It's just a

matter of who and when."

Indeed, numerous schools have had to pause preseason workouts amid coronavirus concerns. That includes North Carolina State, which halted athletics activities due to a cluster and postponed its Sept. 12 football game at Virginia Tech for two weeks.

In the Big 12, Texas Tech has practiced without at least 20 players who tested positive and more being isolated, with coach Matt Wells saying the team had offensive linemen preparing for multiple spots up front. Riley said the Sooners recently had a position group sidelined except for one person through pre-screening testing, prompting "some on-the-job training" for players at different positions.

In the SEC, Auburn coach Gus Malzahn said the 11th-ranked Tigers limit positional cross-training to older players such as junior Smoke Monday, a likely starter at safety who is also working at cornerback.

"If you ask a young guy to play two positions, you're not going to build a foundation," Malzahn said. "He's not going to be his best at either one of them. The older guys that kind of understand the big picture, they're going to be able to play multiple positions."

Similarly, South Carolina junior cornerback Israel Mukuamu is working at safety with his 6-foot-4 frame, with coach Will Muschamp saying Mukuamu "can play anything."

"I definitely feel like I'm a corner, but I'm a guy that you can move me around," Mukuamu said. "I can go back to safety if I have to. It's good to show your versatility."



VASHA HUNT/AP

A likely starter at safety, Auburn's Smoke Monday is also working at cornerback.

Morrison said he feels the same way, noting it could eventually help the junior's chances of pursuing an NFL career. Tar Heels coach Mack Brown said the goal is for Morrison to learn five secondary spots along with his previous experience at cornerback. The team is also working linebacker and NFL prospect Chazz Surratt as a pass-rushing end.

"We feel that with cross-training, that will help us create depth if we have some injuries or you have some guys that are held out because of a positive test and you didn't know it until like Thursday, Friday morning (when) somebody tells you that a guy's out," Brown said. "You've got to be prepared to move forward."

AP sports writers Cliff Brunt in Oklahoma City; Stephen Hawkins in Dallas; Pete Iacobelli in Columbia, S.C.; and John Zener in Montgomery, Ala.; contributed to this report.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



MARK HUMPHREY/AP

An unidentified UAB player celebrates heating Middle Tennessee 27-25 in the Conference USA championship NCAA on Dec. 1 in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

C-USA preview

Footprint looms large this season

By STEPHEN HAWKINS
Associated Press

Conference USA has schools stretching over 10 states, from Texas eastward and then toward the north. The 14-team league is within the footprint of the SEC, Big 12 and ACC.

Like those Power Five leagues that play in the same region, C-USA is planning to be on the field this fall.

Still, things got shaken up even after C-USA decided to keep its original eight-game league schedule intact, and allow schools to play up to four non-conference games as normal.

Old Dominion decided last month to not play fall sports amid COVID-19, costing every C-USA team in the East Division and two in the West a conference game. There were also many games lost with the remaining Power Five conferences (Big Ten, Pac-12) and two Group of Five leagues (MAC, Mountain West) opting to shelve football this fall.

C-USA favorite UAB's season-opening home game Thursday night against Central Arkansas was to be played only about two weeks after being scheduled.

The Blazers secured the opening matchup with stipulations of paying for the hotel and pregame virus testing for the visitors.

"It was what it took to get the deal done," UAB coach Bill Clark said. "We said we were going to do what it takes to get a game."

The favorites

East Division: WKU lost to UCA in coach Tyson Helton's debut last season, but went 9-3 the rest of the way. The Hilltoppers finished with a four-game winning streak that included a 45-19 win at SEC team Arkansas and the First Responder Bowl over Western Michigan. FAU has won two of the last three C-USA titles, and Marshall was the only team last year to beat the Owls in league play. But neither FAU nor Marshall have returning starting quarterbacks.

West Division: Two-time defending division champ UAB has won 28 games overall since 2017, the most among C-USA teams since the program's return from a two-year hiatus. Clark has nine returning starters on offense, and nine more on defense.

American Athletic Conference preview

Will new coach impact Tigers?

By TERESA M. WALKER
Associated Press

Memphis wants to make sure it doesn't skip a beat with Ryan Silverfield now its third coach in six seasons.

The Tigers won their first American Athletic Conference championship last December only to lose Mike Norvell to Florida State four seasons after he replaced Justin Fuente. Silverfield replaced Norvell and coached Memphis to a 53-39 loss to Penn State in the Cotton Bowl.

"We're fortunate because I am a new head coach that's been in place now going on my fifth year where most of these guys know me," Silverfield said. "They know that the way I would do things, the way that we work and everything is going to be to have their best interests in mind. And that's the key to this whole thing."

The Tigers have lots of talent to defend their American championship. Silverfield has his quarterback and the top wide receiver back with both Brady White and Damonte Coxie deciding to return for their season seasons.

"Obviously Brady White and some of our veterans coming back will certainly make it easier for us in the field to have success because of the type of talent they are, but also the type of young man they are, having an understanding of our offense," Silverfield said.

The American will start conference play Sept. 19 with each team playing eight games on the dates originally scheduled. Each school can play nonconference games with opponents required to adhere to the AAC's protocols for testing and game operations.

Double-digit wins

Memphis is one of five American teams that won 10 or more games last season. Cincinnati posted its second straight 11-win season, going 11-3 with two of those losses to Memphis in the Tigers' home field. Navy went 11-2, while SMU and UCF

Sun Belt Conference preview

Appalachian State remains team to beat

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — Appalachian State and Louisiana-Lafayette have given the Sun Belt Conference a top-heavy look in recent seasons.

The rest of the 10-team league could be hard-pressed to change that in 2020.

While the Mountaineers are on their third head coach in three years, they're also coming off arguably the best season in program history, capping off their 13-1 2019 campaign with a convincing New Orleans Bowl triumph and No. 19 ranking in the final AP Top 25 poll last season.

Appalachian State also has quarterback Zac Thomas returning to lead a senior-led squad that has won 53 games since 2017 and both East Division crowns since the Sun Belt went to five-team divisions in 2018.

That should ease the transition for new head coach Shawn Clark, who took over after his predecessor, Elijah Drinkwitz, took the Missouri job.

Clark said he is fortunate as first year head coach "to have this much talent around that's played a lot of football."



MARK HUMPHREY/AP

Ryan Silverfield, left, takes over as head coach for defending American Athletic Conference champion Memphis. He'll still have quarterback Brady White, right.

went 10-3.

Cincinnati goes into the season as the highest-ranked team at No. 20 followed by UCF at No. 21. Memphis is just outside the Top 25 as the first team receiving votes.

Big arms

Shane Buechele is back for SMU after leading the conference with 302.2 yards passing. Better yet, he gets back one of his top receivers in 6-foot-4 Reggie Roberson Jr. His season ended in the eighth game by a foot injury that kept him from leaving early for the NFL Draft.

McKenzie Milton is practicing again with UCF in his recovery from the knee injury that nearly cost him his right leg in November 2018. UCF coach Josh Heupel

said how Milton's recovery continues will lead to a decision about this season or next season. If Milton isn't available this season, Heupel has Dillon Gabriel.

Gabriel turned in one of the best passing seasons in UCF history as a freshman, he started 12 games and helped the Golden Knights rank second nationally in total offense and eighth in passing, averaging 316.7 yards per game.

Big legs

Cincinnati has quarterback Desmond Ridder to help offset the loss of top rusher Michael Warren II who left early for the NFL. Ridder ran for 105 yards and three touchdowns, leading Cincinnati to a rout of Boston College in the Birmingham Bowl.

West.

Georgia Southern has been to two straight bowl games and returning QB Sha Werts will run an option offense that averaged better than 250 yards rushing last season.

Troy lost starting QB Kaleb Barker, but his replacement this season should benefit from an experienced and prolific receiving corps, along with the return of standout running back B.J. Smith from an injury that sidelined him much of 2019.

Hot seat

Making the jump from junior college to the Sun Belt hasn't gone smoothly for South Alabama coach Steve Campbell. The Jaguars have won just five games in two seasons and won only one league game last season.

Troy coach Chip Lindsey inherited a 10-win team and an experienced quarterback when Neal Brown left for West Virginia at the end of the 2018 season. But Lindsey's debut campaign fell short of expectations. The Trojans' win total dropped to five.

Other contenders

The Sun Belt preseason poll indicated that the league's coaches see Georgia Southern and Troy as Appalachian State's biggest challengers in the East and Arkansas State as a threat to the Cajuns in the

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



TOMMY GILLIGAN/AP

Navy's offense will have a different look with Dalen Morris, above, calling the signals. Morris is more adept at throwing than his predecessor, Malcolm Perry, which means the Midshipmen won't have to wait until third-and-10, or wait until falling behind to pass the football.

Navy preview

Midshipmen to rely on defense

By DAVID GINSBURG
Associated Press

A dominant defense and an efficient passing attack are qualities not normally associated with the Navy football team, which has long relied on its running game to win.

This season could be decidedly different.

With coach Ken Niumatalolo struggling to prepare his offense in the middle of a pandemic, Navy will be sporting a new look when it opens against Brigham Young on Monday.

Senior Dalen Morris takes over at quarterback for Malcolm Perry, who ran for 2,017 yards and 21 touchdowns last year as part of a triple-option attack that averaged a school-record 360.5 yards rushing per game.

Morris is quite adept at throwing downfield, which makes him a dual threat. No longer must Navy run on third-and-10, or wait until falling behind to pass the football.

"We're always a heavy run team, but with Dalen we feel like we're going to have some other things to give us a chance," Niumatalolo said.

But Morris is a work in progress, so for the first time in years the Midshipmen will depend on their defense to retain the Commander-In-Chief's Trophy and be a contender in the American Athletic Conference.

"We're counting on our defense to be our



Niumatalolo

strength," Niumatalolo said. "As we get our quarterback group going, we're going to rely on our defense a lot. I have total faith in the them."

Virus update

The Midshipmen got a late start at summer practice because of the influence by protocols incorporated to avoid the disease.

"My biggest concern has been COVID-19, how to practice with that," Niumatalolo said.

Shorter practices and safety issues have influenced the timing of the offense and slowed instruction in the basic skills of the game.

"There are going to probably be some places where we're lackluster. But it's the cards we've been dealt," Niumatalolo said. "If we're not as good blocking, and not as good at blocking, it is what it is. But I'd rather err on the side of safety,"

Option to the option

Morris came to camp buried on the depth chart, but it didn't take long for him to make an impression on the coaching staff.

"His play was so powerful you couldn't help but notice it. He threw the ball really well," Niumatalolo said. "You have to give credit to that young man. He could have sulked and complain and go into the tank."

Army preview

Knights look to bounce back

By JOHN KEKIS
Associated Press

Army coach Jeff Monken is stoked for the football season, no matter what the schedule looks like.

"If I was any better I'd have a twin," Monken joked. "I'm excited to be out here with my team. Our players are excited. They're looking forward to the football season."

The glee is understandable for the seventh-year coach. Football is a big deal at the academy, and almost all of Army's original schedule was wiped out by the pandemic. Dogged work by senior associate athletic director Bob Beretta lined up new opponents to save the season.

"We were prepared for the challenges that arose, remained in front of the events as they unfolded and were relentless in accomplishing the mission of delivering a full 12-game schedule," Beretta said. "We were forced to rebuild the schedule several times but are extremely pleased with the end product."

Army finished 5-8 last season after winning a school-record 11 games — and the coveted Commander-in-Chief's Trophy as top dog among the three service academies — the previous year. Injuries at quarterback quickly put a damper on the season when



Monken

standout senior Kelvin Hopkins Jr. and backup Jabari Laws were hurt early.

Hopkins never regained the form he displayed in 2018 in becoming the first player in West Point history to eclipse 1,000 yards both rushing and passing in a season.

Junior QB Christian Anderson, who made his first career start last December in a season-ending loss to Navy, has been tabbed as the starter this season with Laws, also a junior, as the backup, and Monken said a quarterback-by-committee effort is likely. Anderson rushed for 429 yards and four TDs and threw for 135 yards and another score in six games, while Laws rushed for 484 yards and passed for 311 and one TD in nine games. Both averaged 6.4 yards per carry, a good one. Wide Receiver Isaiah Alston is the lone freshman starter on offense.

Army's option attack averaged 37 points and 297.2 rushing yards per game last season behind workhorse fullbacks Sandot McCoy and junior Sionka, but efforts on third and fourth down

did not meet expectations. The Black Knights converted 45% of their third-down chances (76-for-158), the same mark as their opponents, and 67% (26-for-39) of their fourth-down tries. Time of possession, a key to the team's success, was 32:56.

McCoy, who averaged 4.3 yards per carry in rushing for 576 yards and 10 TDs, and junior Cade Barnard are expected to carry the backfield load this season.

Army opens the season at home on Saturday against Middle Tennessee State.

New trio of captains

The Black Knights have three new captains, all seniors, to assume the task of leading the team: McCoy, linebacker Amado West, and offensive lineman Mike Johnson.

"Those three have emerged as leaders starting since last January," Monken said. "The expectations that we have for this program and the standards that they've held their team to be at has been just exactly what we needed it to be."

Bye Bye Sooners

Gone from that original schedule is a home game against Oklahoma, which would have been the biggest in recent Michie Stadium history even without fans. Army took Oklahoma to overtime two years ago on the road before los-



MARCO GARCIA/AP

Army quarterback Christian Anderson, right, tries to get out of the grip of Hawaii linebacker Darius Muanua on Nov. 30 in Honolulu. Anderson was forced into the starting role late last season when starter Kelvin Hopkins was injured.

ing. The Sooners, ranked No. 5 in the Top 25 preseason poll, were scheduled to visit in late September before the coronavirus struck.

"That would have been an opportunity for us to play a really, really, really great program, but that's not going to alter our team in any way," McCoy said. "We're still going to prepare as if we're playing Oklahoma every weekend."

New defense

Army has a new defensive coordinator in Nate Woody, who brings a 3-4 scheme to the academy. Big holes to fill include those left by LB Cole Christiansen and DB Elijah Riley, who both

Morris said, "It felt like all my hard work wasn't in vain. That said, the job isn't finished. This is just the first box to check."

After going 11-2 last year behind Perry and the nation's best running attack, Navy is counting on Morris to lead a more diversified approach.

"Malcolm was a running back that threw the ball," Niumatalolo said. "Dalen is the type of spread quarterback that you see now in high school and college football who can throw. It allows us to open other parts of what we can do."

Diego leads the D

The key to the Navy defense is 6-foot-3, 240-pound linebacker Diego Fagot, who led the Midshipmen with 100 tackles last year as a sophomore.

"His football IQ is very high," Niumatalolo said. "We're expecting big things from Diego this year."

Fagot had seven tackles in the Liberty Bowl last year, helping Navy pull off a 20-17 upset of Kansas State.

"I'm just one little pawn in a big chess match," Fagot insisted. "My goal is to do my part to help the whole defense be successful."

Coaching counts

Despite fielding a team with players that must adhere to the strict rules of the Naval Academy, Niumatalolo has guided the Midshipmen to 10 winning seasons and taken them to 10 bowl games over his 12-year stint at the school.

Niumatalolo (98-60) has more wins than any coach in Navy history. More importantly, he's won nine games against arch-rival Army.

sioned as free agents with NFL teams.

"New defensive coordinator, new defense staff. That's a challenge for our guys on that side of the ball to learn the system, the terminology, assignments," Monken said. "We're working through it, but there's growing pains."

Virus update

The players returned to campus in June and West Point's approach to the new coronavirus has been stellar. Monken said no football athletes have tested positive since returning.

"We've at least proven that you can do that for weeks on end, do it the right way, and stay healthy," Monken said.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Season kicks off with plenty of uncertainties

By RALPH D. RUSSO
Associated Press

A most overused coaching cliché has never been so relevant as college football embarks on a season of COVID-19: Take it one day at a time.

With so much uncertainty, trying to figure how this will go is impossible. But there will be games, including a few this weekend, though the usual Labor Day grand opening has been scrapped.

The 2020 season will be a story about what was lost, what was salvaged and what was gained in reaction to all the disorder. This also could be the first of two over the next eight months.

It figures to be weird and worrisome. What we know and what's still to be determined:

Who is (and isn't) playing?

What is most commonly referred to as major college football (NCAA Division I Bowl Subdivision or FBS) is comprised of 130 teams and 10 conferences. Seventy-seven of those teams are scheduled to play throughout the fall, starting at various times in September. The other 53, including the entire Big Ten and Pac-12, have postponed their seasons and are hoping to make them up later. That means no. 2 Ohio State, No. 7 Penn State, No. 9 Oregon and six other teams that were ranked in the preseason AP Top 25.

Among the three other so-called Power Five Conferences, the Southeastern Conference (10 games for each team, starting Sept. 26), Atlantic Coast Conference (11 games, Sept. 12) and Big 12 (10 games, Sept. 12) have schedules in place. None will be playing each other. The SEC is playing no games out of conference. ACC and Big 12 teams will play one nonconference game at home.

All those compelling early season non-conference matchups and the traditional late-season, cross-conference rivalry games won't be played in 2020.

The American Athletic Conference, Con-



BYRN ANDERSON/AP

Fans rush the field after Auburn defeated Alabama in the 2017 Iron Bowl. The days of full stadiums are likely gone for this season because of COVID-19 protocols.

ference USA and Sun Belt are also playing, trying to get as close to a normal 12-game season as they can. Independents BYU and Army have practically rebuilt their schedules from scratch. Famously independent Notre Dame fixed its scheduling problem by joining the ACC for football this season only.

As for the players, a few dozen have already opted out, including some big stars such as LSU All-America receiver Ja'Marr Chase, Pitt defensive tackle Jaylen Twyman and Miami defensive end Gregory Rousseau.

COVID-19 Protocols

The ACC, Big 12 and SEC have all mandated coronavirus testing of players three times per week during the season and the other conferences are expected to do the same.

Positive tests will send players to isolation for at least 10 days and players deemed to be close contacts to those who test posi-

tive will be quarantined for 14 days.

During games, there will be masks worn on sidelines.

Some schools, such as North Carolina and Pittsburgh, will have no fans in attendance at their games, at least when the season starts. Many others will have reduced crowds, ranging from 20%-25% capacity, to start the season.

The pageantry of college football — the bands, cheerleaders and mascots — will mostly be missing this fall.

What happens when a player (or coach) tests positive?

Athletic directors, conference commissioners and even coaches have acknowledged they expect disruptions this season. The reason why Power Five leagues altered schedules was to provide more flexibility for postponements.

Positive tests leading to players and staff being isolated and quarantined have already contributed to three FBS games

being postponed, including North Carolina State at Virginia Tech, which was scheduled Sept. 12 but has been pushed back to Sept. 26.

How this works is difficult to predict. The Big 12 is trying to come up with a minimum number of players available that would require a team to play.

"As long as you have at least 53 players certified to play, and you've got at least the minimum number and every one of those positions comprising that 53, then you have to play," Iowa State athletic director Jamie Pollard said.

In Major League Baseball, one positive test has caused teams to postpone games to allow for additional testing and contact tracing. Will college football teams be that aggressive? How much practice time can a team miss and still play a game?

"That's assuming a lot of things go wrong and if they do, my answer to the question would be if you lose two or three days early in the week, you're hard-pressed to get your team ready," Notre Dame coach Brian Kelly said.

Championships and trophies?

The College Football Playoff is on for now. The semifinals are scheduled to be played Jan. 1 at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, and the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans. The national championship game is set for Jan. 11 in Miami Gardens, Florida.

(Yes, the Rose Bowl could be played on New Year's Day — even though the Big Ten and Pac-12 might not start their seasons until after that.)

Because schedules were adjusted and conference championship games could be played later into December than usual, the selection of the playoff teams was also pushed back to Dec. 20.

If anything resembling a full season can be played, rest assured the powers that be in college football will try to make a playoff happen. Hundreds of millions of dollars in television revenue are on the line.

SEC, ACC schedule changes will impact several programs

By STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

The debut season for Missouri coach Eli Drinkwitz got much more challenging when the Southeastern Conference adjusted its schedules this summer.

Missouri's original cross-division opponents in its SEC schedule were Arkansas and Mississippi State, which both finished below .500 last season. But when the SEC switched to a format in which each team will play 10 conference games, Missouri discovered it also would be hosting No. 3 Alabama and visiting defending national champion LSU.

If that weren't tough enough, the Alabama game also happens to mark the first game at Missouri for Drinkwitz, who spent last season at Appalachian State.

"It's a great challenge for our players and our team," Drinkwitz said. "We accept that challenge. I chose to coach at Mizzou because I wanted to coach against the best and challenge myself against the best. And our players chose to play in the SEC and play at Mizzou because they wanted that

"It's a great challenge for our players and our team."

Eli Drinkwitz

First-year Missouri coach on hosting Alabama and playing at LSU

same challenge."

As part of the schedule changes brought about by the coronavirus pandemic, SEC teams are only playing conference opponents this year and have canceled their planned nonconference games. Missouri's nonconference slate had included a trip to BYU and home games with Central Arkansas, Eastern Michigan and Louisiana-Lafayette.

Now five of Missouri's first seven games are against Top 25 opponents: 3 Alabama, No. 25 Tennessee, No. 6 LSU, No. 8 Florida and No. 4 Georgia.

Drinkwitz noted that playing all conference games made any potential schedule a major challenge. If Missouri hadn't been assigned to play LSU and Alabama in the Western Division, it would have instead faced two of

the following three teams: No. 11 Auburn, No. 13 Texas A&M and Mississippi.

"The other three options are pretty stinking good football teams too," Drinkwitz said. "It ain't like you're going to dodge somebody."

While the SEC switched to a 10-game schedule that includes only conference opponents, the Atlantic Coast Conference has an 11-game slate that includes 10 conference matchups and one nonconference game.

Missouri is one of several schools facing much tougher assignments under this new format. But a few teams also may have caught a break with the change in schedule formats. Here's a look at some teams whose schedules were clearly impacted, for better or worse.

ARKANSAS

Arkansas has gone winless in SEC competition each of the last two years and found out last month that it would now be facing Georgia and Florida — the two highest-ranked Eastern Division teams. That marks Arkansas' schedule indefinitely tougher even though its Sept. 12 trip to No. 10 Notre Dame was canceled.

KENTUCKY

The Wildcats' schedule got tougher last month when they added a road date with Alabama as well as a home game to Ole Miss. Kentucky won't play Louisville due to the SEC-only schedule, but its other three nonconference games would have been against Group of Five or Football Championship Subdivision programs: Eastern Michigan, Kent State and Eastern Illinois.

LSU

This is the rare SEC team whose schedule might have gotten easier by playing a conference-only game. The SEC opponents added to LSU's schedule last month were Missouri (6-6 last season) and Vanderbilt (3-9). LSU had to drop a scheduled home date with No. 14 Texas, though its other nonconference games would have been lackluster matchups with Rice, Nicholls

and Texas-San Antonio.

NORTH CAROLINA

The 18th-ranked Tar Heels added a home date with No. 10 Notre Dame, but their schedule might be easier than before. That's because they scrapped a trip to No. 21 Central Florida and a matchup with Auburn in Atlanta.

NOTRE DAME

The Fighting Irish dropped their independence status for a year and will play only ACC teams. Notre Dame has a home game with top-ranked Clemson, but that already was on the schedule. The Irish lose dates with No. 12 Wisconsin and No. 17 Southern California but add a ranked foe with a trip to North Carolina. Without the Wisconsin and USC games, Notre Dame's schedule looks a tad weaker.

TEXAS A&M

The Aggies had two Top 25 opponents added to their schedule when they drew No. 8 Florida and No. 25 Tennessee as cross-divisional foes. Playing only conference opponents strengthens Texas A&M's schedule because its planned nonconference foes weren't imposing. The Aggies called off nonconference home games with Colorado, North Texas, Abilene Christian and Fresno State.

SPORTS



Crunch time
Hutchinson, Avs stymie Stars
to force Game 7 » **Page 47**

MLB

Heart & Soul

Tom Seaver, Hall of Fame arm behind 1969's 'Miracle Mets,' dies at 75

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Tom Seaver, the galvanizing leader of the Miracle Mets 1969 championship team and a pitcher who personified the rise of expansion teams during an era of radical change for baseball, poses for a photo in March of 1968. Seaver died at age 75 on Aug. 31 from complications of Lewy body dementia and COVID-19.

AP photo



Army, Navy football teams looking forward to getting back on field » **Page 54**

Nets hire Hall of Fame point guard Steve Nash to be head coach » **Page 49**

