

**MOVIES:** Franchise favorites returning soon [Page 15](#)

**GAMES:** Narratives key in 2023 [Page 18](#)

**MUSIC:** A new feature, Liner Notes, debuts [Page 28](#)

# EUROPE & PACIFIC WEEKEND EDITION



**NFL**  
Packers' surge brings back memories of 2016  
[Back page](#)

# STARS AND STRIPES®

[stripes.com](http://stripes.com)

Volume 81 Edition 186 ©SS 2023

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 2023

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

\$1.00



Some 11 missiles, measuring about 40 feet long and carrying 1,600-pound warheads, struck Iraq's al Asad Air Base in a January 2020 attack, leaving impact craters up to 30 feet wide.

PATRICK SYLVERS/U.S. Army

## 'I thought about suicide'

Army medical unit veterans open up about 2020 Iranian missile attack at Iraqi air base

By J.P. LAWRENCE  
*Stars and Stripes*

Bad memories return to Army Sgt. 1st Class Andrea Hayden during the first week of the year, resurrecting the 2020 missile barrage on an Iraqi air base that almost ended her life.

Three years ago Sunday, Iranian ballistic missiles bombarded some

1,000 troops at al Asad Air Base, approximately 100 miles west of Baghdad.

No U.S. troops died in the attack, but for the more than 100 of them who would be diagnosed with traumatic brain injuries, the impact lingers.

[SEE ATTACK ON PAGE 4](#)



RONALD BELL/U.S. Army

Army Sgt. 1st Class Andrea Hayden, left, and retired Maj. Patrick Sylvers, right, receive the Purple Heart on Sept. 11, at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., for injuries sustained in a missile attack.

## Military parents to receive more parental leave under new act

By JONATHAN SNYDER  
*Stars and Stripes*

Military parents of newborns are entitled to up to four times more parental leave, depending on their roles, under the recently authorized National Defense Authorization Act.

Birth parents can now claim a maximum 18 weeks of nonchargeable leave, six more weeks than their previous benefit; non-birth parents are entitled to 12 weeks, up from three.

The new policy also allows service members to take parental leave in seven-day increments, if permitted by their commander.

"Commanders are encouraged to approve requests for incremental periods of parental leave," the policy states. "If the unit commander does not approve taking incremental parental leave, they must allow the member to take the full 12 weeks of parental leave in one continuous period."

President Joe Biden signed the fiscal 2023 NDAA, which funds the Department of Defense and other defense-related activities, on Dec. 23. The act allocates \$816.7 billion to the DOD.

For parental leave purposes, the act took effect Dec. 27; military parents are eligible for the expanded benefit if their children were born on or after that date, according to a news release Wednesday from the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Parents have one year from the birth of their child to exercise the expanded benefit.

Individual service branches have yet to issue their own specific guidance on parental leave in accordance with the new policy, which Chief Master Sgt. of the Air

[SEE LEAVE ON PAGE 4](#)

# BUSINESS/WEATHER

## EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	Azores	Change in price	Turkey	Change in price
Germany	\$3.605	\$4.082	\$4.410	\$4.965	..	..	\$4.299	..
Change in price	+13.2 cents	+10.7 cents	+10.3 cents	+4.6 cents	..	..	+10.3 cents	..
Netherlands	..	\$4.426	\$4.691	\$5.265	..	..	\$4.422	\$4.653*
Change in price	..	+16.1 cents	+16.1 cents	+0.6 cents	..	..	-29.3 cents	-20.3 cents
U.K.	..	\$4.018	\$4.346	\$4.901	..	..	..	..
Change in price	..	+10.7 cents	+10.3 cents	+4.6 cents	..	..	..	..

Fuel prices are updated daily. These prices are effective Jan. 6. The change in price is from Dec. 30.

## PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel	South Korea	Change in price	Guam	Change in price
Japan	..	\$4.079	..	\$4.629	\$3.299	..	\$3.279	..
Change in price	..	+11.0 cents	..	+4.0 cents	+14.0 cents	..	\$3.759	..
Okinawa	\$3.269	..	..	\$4.629	\$3.279	\$3.759	\$4.089	..
Change in price	+13.0 cents	..	..	+4.0 cents	+13.0 cents	+11.0 cents	+11.0 cents	..

\*DieselEFD \*\*Midgrade  
Pacific prices for the week of Jan. 6-12

## EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	Commercial rates	Interest Rates
South Korea (Won)	Bahrain (Dinar)	Prime rate
1276.32	0.3770	7.50
Switzerland (Franc)	Britain (Pound)	Interest Rates Discount rate
0.9359	1.1907	5.00
Thailand (Baht)	Canada (Dollar)	Federal funds market rate
34.10	1.3544	3.83
Turkey (NewLira)	China (Yuan)	3-month bill
18.7725	6.8813	4.52
	Denmark (Krone)	30-year bond
	7.0574	3.81
	Egypt (Pound)	
	27.0757	
	Euro	
	0.9488	
	Hong Kong (Dollar)	
	7.8131	
	Hungary (Forint)	
	376.86	
	Israel (Shekel)	
	3.5478	
	Japan (Yen)	
	133.75	
	Kuwait (Dinar)	
	0.3068	
	Norway (Krone)	
	10.2293	
	Philippines (Peso)	
	55.92	
	Poland (Zloty)	
	4.44	
	Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	
	3.7589	
	Singapore (Dollar)	
	1.3444	

## WEATHER OUTLOOK

### FRIDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



### FRIDAY IN EUROPE



### SATURDAY IN THE PACIFIC



## TODAY IN STRIPES

- Classified ..... 36
- Comics ..... 34,38-39
- Crossword ..... 34,38-39
- Faces ..... 35
- Opinion ..... 40
- Sports ..... 41-48

## STARS AND STRIPES

However you read us, wherever you need us.

Mobile • Online • Print

### EUROPE

**ADVERTISING**  
CustomerService@stripes.com | +49 (0) 0631.3615.9111  
DSN: 314.583.9111

### MIDDLE EAST

**ADVERTISING**  
CustomerService@stripes.com | +49 (0) 0631.3615.9111  
DSN: 314.583.9111

### PACIFIC

**ADVERTISING**  
PacificAdvertising@stripes.com | +81 (42) 552.2511  
DSN: 315.227.7310

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

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

Also available on mobile apps for Android and iOS.

## STARS AND STRIPES

Mobile • Online • Print

## MILITARY

# Pentagon suspends F-35 engine deliveries

BY DOUG G. WARE

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has temporarily called off engine deliveries for the F-35 Lightning II fighter jet after a crash last month at a military base in Texas, officials said Wednesday.

The F-35 Joint Program Office said an agreement was reached between defense officials and Pratt & Whitney, the maker of the engines, to suspend the deliveries pending the outcome of the crash investigation.

“Currently, acceptance of new engines has been suspended,” a JPO spokesperson said, adding the suspension began Dec. 27 — 12 days after the crash. “The length of the pause is currently to be determined, and it is hard to say how long it will last.”

An Air Force pilot was testing an F-35B for the Marine Corps at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth on Dec. 15 when the jet, which can take off and land vertically, encountered trouble while hovering above a runway.

The pilot slowly began to lose control and ejected safely after the plane sank toward the ground and bounced off the runway. The air-

craft ultimately came to rest just off the runway and appeared to be largely intact.

Naval Air Systems Command is investigating but has not yet given an indication of what caused the crash.

The statement from the F-35 Joint Program Office on Wednesday that it suspended engine deliveries for the fifth-generation fighter jet came just days after it grounded some F-35s due to the crash in Texas. The JPO is the military office that oversees life-cycle management of all three F-35 variants.

The length of the delivery blackout depends on what investigators find, the JPO spokesperson said.

“The root cause analysis and accident investigation need to be completed first,” the spokesperson said.

The F-35 uses only one engine in flight, the turbofan Pratt & Whitney F135. The F-35B uses the engine’s 600 model, which has a thrust vectoring nozzle that allows the flow of energy to be directed downward so the plane can hover and take off and land vertically. While the jet is hovering over the



JILL PICKETT/Arnold Engineering Development

**A Pratt & Whitney F135 engine undergoes testing at Arnold Air Force Base, Tenn. The F135 is the engine used to power the F-35 Lightning II.**

ground, the engine can produce more than 40,000 pounds of thrust.

The JPO said the suspension affects new deliveries of all variants of Pratt & Whitney’s F135 engine.

Lockheed Martin’s F-35 entered service in 2015. The Marines

fly the B variant, the one involved in the Texas crash, while the Air Force operates the A variant and the Navy uses the C variant.

The F-35 is the only U.S. military aircraft that uses the Pratt & Whitney F135 engine. Officials

have said, however, the new B-21 Raider bomber, which was unveiled last month, will use one similar to the F135 to keep maintenance costs down.

ware.doug@stripes.com

## Australia announces plans to buy HIMARS from US

BY SETH ROBSON

*Stars and Stripes*

Australia is buying the same type of U.S.-made long-range missile systems that have helped Ukrainian forces even the odds against invading Russians.

The Australian government announced plans Thursday to spend more than \$680 million to field surface-to-surface High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, launchers, missiles and training rockets by 2026.

“In the current strategic environment, it’s important the Australian Defence Force is equipped with high-end, targeted military capabilities,” Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Richard Marles said in the announcement.

Marles didn’t state how many systems Australia will acquire. However, in May the U.S. State Department approved a potential foreign military sale to Australia of 20 HIMARS and related equipment at an estimated cost of \$385 million.

The Australian announcement followed a HIMARS strike by Ukrainian forces on New Year’s Day that killed more than 80 Russian troops.

Australia is taking a proactive approach to defense and “HI-

MARS launchers will give our Defence Force the ability to deter conflict and protect our interests,” Marles said.

Australia has strengthened its alliances and military capabilities in recent years amid concerns about China’s rapid military buildup, occupation of disputed territory in the South China Sea and efforts to gain influence in the South Pacific.

For example, Australia joined the U.S. and United Kingdom in the AUKUS defense pact in September 2021.

HIMARS munitions have a range of up to 186 miles, which is expected to increase with technological advances, according to the Australian announcement.

Australian company CEA Technologies is delivering the Lockheed Martin-designed system that includes a radar to detect and respond to land, air and maritime threats, according to the announcement.

U.S. forces in the Indo-Pacific have trained regularly with HIMARS in recent years, including during the biennial Talisman Sabre drills in Australia in 2021.

In August, an Air Force Special Operations C-17 Globemaster III delivered a HIMARS launcher to an airfield on the Indonesian is-

land of Sumatra where troops drilled on the steps to rapidly fire the weapon.

Marines in October fired HIMARS launchers on the Philippines’ main island of Luzon and on Japan’s northern island of Hokkaido.

The Defense Department, which has sent 20 HIMARS to Ukraine to help battle Russian invaders, on Oct. 4 announced shipment of four more launchers.

Australia’s Defence Department has also contracted with Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace of Norway for the Naval Strike Missile, which will be employed on the Hobart-class destroyers and Anzac-class frigates from 2024, according to the Australian announcement.

Australian forces would most likely use the HIMARS in an expeditionary conflict where it would be airlifted into a theater, according to Paul Buchanan, a U.S. security expert based in New Zealand.

“It might be used against ships approaching Australian land positions, but the Australian navy has enough capability to ... interdict hostile ships on its own,” he said by email Thursday.

Australian HIMARS will be able to support U.S. Marine Corps



UJIAN GOSUN/U.S. Marine Corps

**A High Mobility Artillery Rocket System is used during training in 2021 in Queensland, Australia.**

littoral regiments defending islands and coastal areas in the Western Pacific, according to Ross Babbage, a former Australian assistant defense secretary.

“Strong allied support of this type has the potential to strengthen the deterrence and defense of regional neighbors and friends in ways they may not be able to provide themselves,” he said by email Thursday.

robson.seth@stripes.com  
Twitter: @SethRobson1

## DOD told to review use of ‘controlled unclassified’

*Bloomberg News*

Congress has given the Defense Department until the end of January to look into whether bureaucrats are overusing a document designation known as “Controlled Unclassified Information” to keep the public from learning about bad news.

The bill orders the Pentagon to report back in 30 days on policies concerning the CUI designation given that “there is concern that the extensive use of CUI will result in less transparency, accountability and congressional oversight.”

The Pentagon’s under secretary for intelligence issued a CUI policy in March 2020 that has drawn scrutiny from both Congress and the Defense Department’s inspector general.

Last March, the Senate Armed Services Committee questioned whether the designation was being abused to suppress public disclosures. The companion fiscal 2023 defense policy bill said the Pentagon’s “uneven application of CUI markings is particularly problematic for industry, which often receives little CUI training or guidance from the Government and is unsure of its responsibilities regarding this marking convention.”

## MILITARY

# Attack: Survivors recall recovery from base strike

## FROM PAGE 1

Hayden and another survivor of the attack, Patrick Sylvers, gave a series of interviews in which they talked about living with traumatic brain injuries.

"I got really depressed the first year because I felt like all the stuff that I worked for was gone," Sylvers said. "That was the only time in my life I thought about suicide."

He recalled having thoughts at the time of "I can't do anything anymore, I'm failing at everything I do, and I'm not used to that."

The repercussions also were significant for Hayden, who continues to struggle with her balance, often getting panic-inducing feelings of vertigo.

"It definitely affected my short-term memory," she said of the attack. "It took me probably a year to be able to have a normal conversation. I would forget what I was saying, like halfway through saying it."

When they wanted to avoid talking about especially painful topics in the interviews, they referred to their quotes in an Army statement last fall, when the two received Purple Hearts at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

Three years ago, Hayden served as a behavioral health specialist deployed to al Asad. She was part of a two-person team with Sylvers, a major and an Army psychologist.

Both were assigned to the 1972nd Medical Detachment (Combat and Operational Stress

Control), an Army Reserve unit based at Lewis-McChord.

On Jan. 7, 2020, Hayden and Sylvers were supposed to fly out from al Asad to join the rest of their unit in Kuwait for the trip home.

Troops on base received warnings to prepare for an attack by 11 p.m., Hayden and Sylvers recalled. The bunkers filled early that evening, Hayden said.

But by midnight, no strikes had come and troops grew restless. Some began leaving the bunkers, she recalled.

The missiles hit around 1:34 a.m., CNN reported in 2020. When the barrage began, Sylvers was outside his bunker. The 47-year-old remembers the people in the bunker saying they would close the door if they didn't hurry, so he ran inside.

Hayden said she couldn't see anything in the pitch-black darkness of the bunker. But the impact of the missiles smashing into the ground felt like an earthquake, she said.

The troops stumbled out of their bunkers at dawn. Some 11 missiles, measuring about 40 feet long and carrying 1,600-pound warheads, had struck the base, The Washington Post reported. The impact left craters up to 30 feet wide.

Sylvers recalls the extensive damage, including seeing half of a helicopter burning in the middle of a street.

Hayden emerged from the bunker and asked someone for a ciga-



Patrick Sylvers

**A bunker at al Asad Air Base in Iraq protected Army Sgt. 1st Class Andrea Hayden and Maj. Patrick Sylvers during an Iranian missile attack Jan. 8, 2020.**

rette. She remembers calling her family to tell them she was still alive and using a shattered bathroom that offered no privacy.

The two found their vehicle in the parking lot, somehow undamaged. They got it running and like many others at the base, they went back to work.

Pentagon officials emphasized that no service members had died in the barrage. A few days afterward, then-President Donald Trump said at a news conference that a few soldiers had headaches but not "very serious injuries," a New York Times report said.

That statement drew criticism from veterans advocates. Paul Rieckhoff, the founder of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, said at the time that the comments downplayed the severity of traumatic brain injuries.

TBI has been called one of the signature injuries of 20 years of war. The Pentagon says it's tracking 463,392 cases since 2000, according to the latest numbers from Aug. 10, 2022.

Troops at the base began showing symptoms of TBI over the next few days, Hayden and Sylvers said. The pair debriefed fellow survivors of the attack, sitting down and talking with them about what they were feeling.

Hayden recalls the dazed expression she saw on everyone's faces in those days, how their eyes seemed bigger than normal.

She herself began feeling stran-

gely, forgetting the names of people she had known for months. Sylvers remembers feeling like he needed to fight someone, his body tensing up.

The two flew into Kuwait after four days, the Army statement on the pair in September said.

When they arrived at the base's hospital for an evaluation, detachment sergeant Master Sgt. David Cantu examined them. He said it was evident that the two needed medical attention.

"These were not the same soldiers we sent forward," Cantu recalled in the Army statement.

After leaving the hospital in Kuwait, Hayden went for a walk, just to wind down. Then she began feeling dizzy, her heart racing. She needed to sit down on the side of the road.

"It was pretty obvious that something was not the way it should be," she said.

The three years since the attack have proved mentally and physically challenging for Sylvers and Hayden. Sylvers said he doesn't remember much from the year after the attack.

"The first year is kind of a whirlwind," he said.

But he does remember the chronic migraines, double vision and changes in his mood, appetite and sleep.

He had to quit his job at a Veterans Affairs primary care mental health unit and he lost a tenure-track teaching position at the Uni-

versity of Washington.

Sylvers had helped troops and veterans with their mental health, but he found himself unwilling to accept help from others.

Both of them said their therapy has helped them manage their conditions.

Sylvers medically retired from the Army Reserve in 2021. He got special glasses from Joint Base Lewis-McChord that help him with his vision.

He now works at a center that provides counseling to veterans with TBI and post-traumatic stress disorder. Sylvers said his experiences have allowed him to connect more deeply with the veterans he's helping.

On Sept. 11 last year, Sylvers reunited with Hayden, now 40, at the Purple Heart ceremony at Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

The two have texted each other since the attack for support, but the ceremony marked the first time they had met since coming home from their deployments.

Hayden now works from home as a data administrator for a utility company and still serves in the Army Reserve. On the first anniversary of the attack, she adopted a 4-year-old terrier named Ruby.

"That was a silver lining," Hayden said. "It's always good to remember that day as a good day, because I got her."

lawrence.jp@stripes.com  
Twitter: @jplawrence3



Andrea Hayden

**Army Sgt. 1st Class Andrea Hayden adopted a terrier named Ruby on the first anniversary of the Iranian missile attack on al Asad Air Base.**

# Leave: Parents have one year from birth of child to exercise benefit

## FROM PAGE 1

Force JoAnne Bass acknowledged Monday on her Facebook page.

"We've been pretty transparent in that we are waiting on guidance from OSD to drop," she said in re-

sponse to a comment on her post Monday. "Once that does, we are ready to push the service guidance. I understand the frustration ... as we've been pushing for this for awhile."

Birth parents, who previously

received six weeks of convalescent leave, are entitled to 12 more for 18 total, according to the DOD release. Their partners, the non-birth parents, are eligible for 12 weeks of non-chargeable leave following the birth or adoption of

their child, or for long-term foster care. No birth parent is designated in the event of an adoption or surrogate birth, for example.

Unit commanders are allowed some leeway in approving leave, according to the policy: "Unit

commanders must balance the needs of the unit with the needs of the member to maximize opportunity to use parental leave."

snyder.jonathan@stripes.com;  
Twitter: @Jon\_E\_Snyder

## MILITARY

# Greek, Turkish coast guards clash in eastern Aegean Sea

Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece — The crew of a Greek coast guard patrol boat fired warning shots early Thursday to deter a Turkish coast guard vessel that was trying to ram them in the eastern Aegean Sea, authorities in Athens said, as tensions between the two neighbors remain high.

Turkey's coast guard said its crew fired into the air in response, and added that the Greek vessel was chased away.

A Greek coast guard statement said that "the crew fired warning shots in a secure sector and the Turkish coast guard vessel withdrew" toward the Turkish coast. The coast guard said the shots were fired into the air.

The statement did not make any mention of injuries, or damage to either vessel, during the incident southeast of the Greek islet of Farmakonissi and, according to the Greek coast guard, 1.5 nautical miles inside Greece's territorial waters.

The Turkish coast guard of-

fered a different version of events, saying a Greek coast guard boat harassed Turkish fishing boats off the Turkish Aegean coastal resort of Didim, prompting Turkish authorities to dispatch a coast guard boat.

The Turkish boat drove the Greek boat away from the region, enabling the Turkish fishing boats to continue with their activities, it said.

According to the Turkish account, the Greek coast guard boat opened fire into the air while leaving the region, prompting the Turkish boat to respond in kind.

The incident comes as relations between Greece and Turkey, historic regional rivals and uneasy NATO allies, have been tenser than usual over the past three years.

The Greek coast guard said its vessel had been on a mission to identify three Turkish fishing boats in Greek waters off Farmakonissi. It said the Greek crew opened fire after "being harassed" by the Turkish coast

guard boat, which the statement said "carried out dangerous maneuvers with the intention of ramming" the Greek vessel.

The two countries, which have come to the brink of war three times since 1974, have decadesold disputes over Aegean Sea boundaries and the war-divided eastern Mediterranean island of Cyprus.

But relations have rapidly deteriorated in recent years, with migratory flows from Turkey and offshore gas prospecting in the eastern Mediterranean adding fuel to existing distrust and historic grievances between Greeks and Turks that stretch back for centuries.

Turkish officials are also accusing Greece of militarizing its eastern Aegean Sea islands, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has repeatedly alluded to invading Greece in recent months. Greece counters that it needs to defend its islands against a possible Turkish attack.

# US troops OK after rockets hit Syria base

Associated Press

BEIRUT — Two rockets struck a base housing American troops in eastern Syria on Wednesday without causing any human or material losses, the U.S. military said.

The morning attack on Mission Support Site Conoco came as Iran and its allies in the region marked the third anniversary of the killing of Iran's leading general and chief of the powerful Quds force, Qassem Soleimani, in a U.S. drone strike in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad.

No one claimed responsibility for the attack in eastern Syria, where it is not uncommon for bases housing U.S. troops to come under rocket fire or mortar attacks. Iran-backed militia are based nearby as are sleeper cells of the Islamic State group that was defeated in Syria in March 2019.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said the

rockets were fired by Arab tribesmen in the region who are armed by Iran.

"Attacks of this kind place Coalition Forces and the civilian populace at risk and undermine the hard-earned stability and security of Syria and the region," said Joe Buccino, spokesman for the U.S. Central Command, in a statement.

CENTCOM said members of the Kurdish-led and U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces visited the site from which the rockets originated, and found a third that was not fired.

The U.S.-backed Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces announced later Wednesday that they arrested a senior figure in ISIS, the militants' financial official from Deir el-Zour province. His arrest comes amid a dayslong campaign by the U.S.-backed force against ISIS sleeper cells in parts of northeastern Syria that have claimed responsibility for deadly attacks in recent weeks.

## Partner Up to Pay Down Credit Card Debt



Your accountability buddy has arrived! Get a **low intro APR** when you transfer a credit card balance to a Navy Federal *cashRewards*, **GO REWARDS®** or Platinum credit card. Let us help you shed debt!

**NAVY  
FEDERAL**  
Credit Union

ARMY  
MARINE CORPS  
NAVY  
AIR FORCE  
SPACE FORCE  
COAST GUARD  
VETERANS

Our Members Are the Mission

Transfer Today

Visit [navyfederal.org/BToffer](https://navyfederal.org/BToffer) to take advantage of these special offers.



## MILITARY

# IG finds lapses in vetting of foreign arrivals

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Somali soldier arrived in Texas for U.S. military training, failed his English language proficiency test soon thereafter, then skipped out.

But he made it into the United States without the required background check, the Defense Department's inspector general said in a new report. And his case wasn't a fluke.

Foreign troops bound for study in the U.S. have slipped through the vetting cracks, according to the IG inquiry, which found that military offices don't always follow regulations in clearing incoming personnel from abroad.

That failure could provide "unescorted access" to DOD facilities for people who seek to inflict harm on American service members or their families, according to the December report.

The IG also concluded in the case of the Somali soldier that proper vetting could have revealed indicators that would have stopped clearance for U.S. training in the first place.

Instead, he had to be declared AWOL after his arrival at the Defense Language Institute at Joint Base San Antonio, and the Department of Homeland Security was alerted.

The error occurred despite more stringent vetting rules, which were put in place after three U.S. sailors were killed by a Saudi air force member who was attending flight school at Naval Air Station Pensacola in Florida in 2019.

The IG's report looked at a small sample of 59 international military students, out of 1,573 who were approved for study between July 1, 2021, and Jan. 14, 2022.

The IG found that two of the 59 were issued orders without being

vetted. And DOD's screening center did not complete on-time continuous reviews for 54 of 57 students reviewed.

The failure stemmed from a lack of procedures for communicating when the continuous reviews were due, the IG said.

And because follow-up reviews were not done on time, there was also an increased risk that DOD would not detect behavior indicating a student had been radicalized during their time in the U.S., the IG said.

In the case of the Somali soldier, the issue was a failure by U.S. defense security cooperation officials to have background checks completed before issuing a travel order, the IG said.

The reason: U.S. security cooperation personnel were concerned that the prospective student would miss his scheduled class because of the lengthy process for obtaining a U.S. visa, the IG said.

The Somalia Security Cooperation Office chief told investigators his office was understaffed and didn't follow standard operating procedures at the time.

The IG report did not say what became of the Somali soldier or whether he had returned to his home country.

During its inquiry, the IG told defense officials that procedures were needed to ensure that orders could not be authorized until background checks were complete.

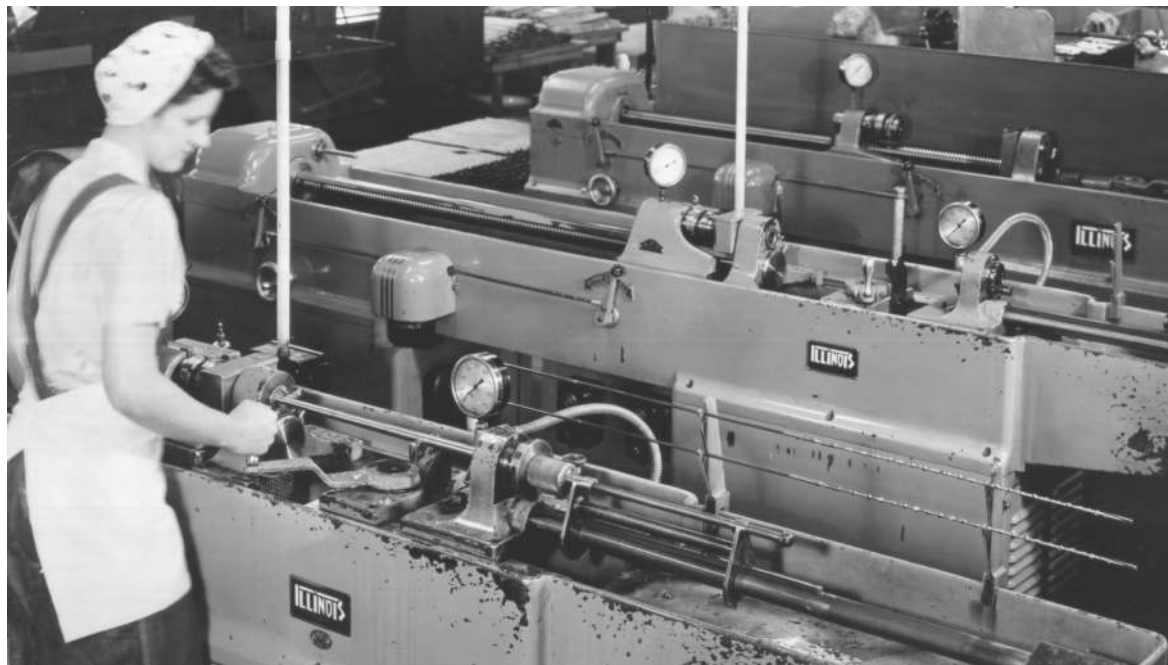
In October, the IG observed a demonstration of a new Defense Security Cooperation Agency system that allows officials to prevent the issuance of orders before vetting is completed. That system "was operating as intended," the report said.

About 20,000 foreign military service members train at U.S. military institutions annually, the IG said.

receive approximately \$400,000 in bribes from an Afghan company, the Justice Department said in a statement Wednesday.

In exchange, Clark helped to secure lucrative federal reconstruction contracts. He faces up to 10 years in prison and is scheduled to be sentenced April 12.

To legitimize large wire transfers, Clark set up bank accounts for fake companies in Georgia and



PAUL LEVESQUE/U.S. Army Sustainment Command

Many women worked in manufacturing at Rock Island Arsenal in Illinois during World War I and World War II.

## New WWII memorial will honor women working on home front

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — A new memorial honoring the contributions of women who helped keep the U.S. economically and socially afloat during World War II is set to be built in the nation's capital.

The monument will commemorate the estimated 18 million women who took over jobs traditionally held by men and worked as pilots, engineers, electricians, farmers, taxi drivers, letter carriers and code breakers while mostly men fought in Europe and the Pacific during World War II.

"It's long past time we recognize the contributions hardworking women made during World War II — they rolled up their sleeves and took whatever job was necessary to keep the country they loved moving forward," said Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-Ill., an Army veteran who served in the Iraq War.

Duckworth co-sponsored legislation authorizing the memorial alongside Sens. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., and Mike Braun, R-Ind., and D.C.'s nonvoting delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton. President Joe Biden signed the measure into law last month as

part of the annual government funding bill.

The nonprofit Women Who Worked on the Home Front Foundation, founded by Norton's constituent Raya Kenney, is raising money to fund the completion of the commemorative work, which will stand on federal land in or near Washington, D.C.

"Using media and social media as well as guided tours and podcasts the Memorial to the Women on the Home Front will explore not only the jobs these women took and the contributions they made but will increase focus on their lives and ours once the war concluded," the group states on its website.

The foundation also plans to capture live interviews of women who stepped into the workforce between 1941 and 1945, giving a voice to a wide range of women who contributed to the war effort through a variety of jobs.

"Rosie the Riveter is an iconic symbol of the women on the home front during World War II. Yet, many of the 'Rosies' themselves who held jobs that were not factory jobs are unaware that they are included in the Rosie the Riveter narrative; sadly then, their descendants likely don't know ei-

ther, and nor do the tens of thousands of children who come to Washington, D.C., to learn about our country's history through memorials and museums," the group states.

The only mention of this history on federal land is on a small plaque on the World War II Memorial on the National Mall. Other countries have built memorials dedicated to women who worked on the home front, according to the group.

"Women have largely been ignored in the memorials on federal land in the nation's capital," Norton said.

The memorial will seek to link the past with the present by recognizing the role "Rosies" played in expanding economic opportunities for future generations of women. The female workforce increased by 10% between 1941 and the end of World War II in 1945.

"We have a female vice president, the largest number of females in Congress, and females leading Fortune 500 companies more than we've ever had before. Without the women on the home front, we would not be where we are today," according to the Women Who Worked on the Home Front.

## Ex-contractor for US in Afghanistan pleads guilty to bribery scheme

By ALEXANDER RIEDEL  
*Stars and Stripes*

A former U.S. military contractor pleaded guilty this week to bribery and visa fraud in his management of millions of dollars worth of U.S.-funded reconstruction contracts in Afghanistan.

Orlando Clark, 57, of Smyrna, Ga., was accused of conspiring with an analyst at another American company in 2011 and 2012 to

filed invoices for a phony car exporting business, court documents show.

He used the bribe money for personal gain, including the purchase of two BMWs, according to prosecutors.

In addition, Clark admitted to accepting an unspecified amount in bribes in exchange for more than 10 letters of recommendation for visas on behalf of Afghan na-

tionals between 2015 and 2020.

He falsely claimed to have supervised the applicants' work as translators and without supporting knowledge vouched that the Afghans did not pose a threat to national security.

Clark's case is the latest in a series of investigations into contractor oversight in Afghanistan.

In 2021, a report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanis-

tan Reconstruction, or SIGAR, revealed a lack of oversight and accountability in the awarding of contracts during the 20-year-long U.S. war there.

Investigators found that contract work in Afghanistan frequently went unsupervised, leading to instances of waste, fraud and abuse, including construction of facilities that had to be repaired or completely rebuilt.

## EUROPE

# US closer to sending Bradleys to Ukraine

BY KAREN DEYOUNG  
AND DAN LAMOTHE  
*The Washington Post*

After months of resisting Kyiv's pleas for tanks to face increasingly dug-in Russian forces along the lengthy southern and eastern fronts, the United States and its allies are now poised to deliver a variety of armored fighting vehicles to Ukraine.

Asked Wednesday if U.S.-produced Bradley Fighting Vehicles were under consideration for transfer to Ukraine, President Joe Biden replied in the affirmative. A senior administration official said that Bradleys could be included in a package of weapons to be announced as soon as this week.

Earlier Wednesday, France said it would provide Ukraine with an unspecified number of light tanks.

The first supply of Western mobile armor is another major milestone in the escalating provision of advanced weaponry to Ukrainian forces, including heavy artillery and long-range precision rocket launchers. It comes just weeks after the Biden administration announced that it would supply Kyiv with a Patriot missile battery, the most sophisticated air defense weapon in the U.S. arsenal, to defend against waves of Russian missile and drone attacks on energy and civilian infrastructure far from the front line.

That line, where the Ukrainian military is engaged in a grueling fight for incremental gains against Russian ground forces, is spread for hundreds of miles along a north-south front in the eastern part of the country. U.S. officials have said the Ukrainians need the ability to conduct combined arms maneuvers, with armored vehicles allowing them to engage the enemy and move forward while under fire.

The United States assesses that "there will be continued fighting along that line ... for the foreseeable future," a second senior administration official said, with little expectation that combat will slow during the winter months. In a shift from training only small units to operate specific weapons systems, the allies are now pulling thousands of Ukrainian soldiers off the front lines for combined



BADERKHAN AHMAD/AP

**American soldiers drive a Bradley Fighting Vehicle during a joint exercise with Syrian Democratic Forces in northeastern Syria, in 2021. President Joe Biden said Wednesday that he's weighing sending Bradleys to help Ukraine combat Russia's ongoing invasion.**

maneuver training in Europe.

But until now, Ukraine's allies have rebuffed Kyiv, arguing that the Western armor is too logistically complicated to be useful.

Germany has repeatedly turned down Ukrainian requests for its Marder infantry fighting vehicles and Leopard 2 main battle tanks, largely on grounds that it didn't want to be the first to provide such weaponry.

Much of the West's hesitation to send advanced armaments has revolved around reluctance to provoke Russia to escalate the war. Decisions to send systems such as HIMARS, the U.S. precision rocket launchers that were first transferred last summer, have come as the situation on the battlefield "evolved," the second administration official said.

As expected, each advancement in arming Ukraine has brought charges from Russian President Vladimir Putin that NATO is actively fighting a war against Russia. But it is Moscow's brutality, especially attacks against civilians, that has made the West

more forward-leaning, administration officials counter.

"Let's just be crystal clear here," the second official said angrily. "Mr. Putin can claim all he wants that this is a war by the West," and he is fighting "essentially for [Russia's] security. ... We all know this is a bunch of BS. This is a Russian war of aggression on Ukraine."

"We are and will continue to provide them the kind of systems to defend themselves," this official said.

The decision to send armored combat vehicles comes just weeks after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urgently appealed for tanks during a lightning visit to Washington late last month. On Wednesday, in his nightly address to the Ukrainian people, Zelenskyy hailed the French announcement as "a clear signal to all our other partners: There is no rational reason why Ukraine has not yet been supplied with Western-style tanks. ... We must put an end to the Russian aggression this year exactly, and not post-

pone any of the defensive capabilities that can speed up the defeat of the terrorist state."

"Modern Western armored vehicles, Western-type tanks are just one of these key capabilities," Zelenskyy said.

The administration continues to rule out sending even larger Abrams battle tanks, which weigh 55 tons and rely on a turbine engine that guzzles fuel at a drastic rate, said the first official, one of several who spoke on the condition of anonymity about the sensitive issue.

The Bradley, while technically not a tank, would offer a significant upgrade for Ukrainian ground forces. Weighing about 28 tons, it travels on tank-like tracks and carries a three-person crew with room for up to six additional soldiers inside. The United States has thousands of the vehicles, and sending an unspecified number to Ukraine would not undercut U.S. inventories.

Named after Gen. Omar Bradley, a senior U.S. commander during World War II, the Bradley lacks the firepower of the 120 mm "main gun" cannon fitted on an Abrams. But it is equipped with heavy armor and an array of other weapons, including a 25 mm chain gun and M240 machine gun. It is designed to travel up to 35 mph, fast enough to keep up with the Abrams in American combat units.

France's plan to supply French-made AMX-10 RC light tanks was announced Wednesday after a phone call between Zelenskyy and French President Emmanuel Macron. It was not immediately clear how many tanks would be delivered, or when they would arrive.

The wheeled vehicles have been in service with the French military since 1981 and are being gradually decommissioned and replaced with an updated system. Primarily used for reconnaissance and transporting troops, its 105 mm gun is smaller than that of many tanks, but the vehicle is considered highly agile and maneuverable.

Also on Wednesday, Poland signed a \$1.4 billion deal to purchase a second tranche of U.S. Abrams tanks, replacing more than 300 Soviet-era tanks and armored personnel carriers sent to Ukraine last summer.

## Putin orders 36-hour holiday weekend cease-fire in Ukraine

BY ANDREW MELDRUM  
*Associated Press*

KYIV, Ukraine—Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday ordered his armed forces to observe a 36-hour cease-fire in Ukraine this weekend for the Russian Orthodox Christmas holiday, the first such sweeping truce move in the nearly 11-month-old war.

Putin did not appear to make his cease-fire order conditional on a Ukrainian agreement to follow suit, and it wasn't clear whether hostilities would actually halt on the 684-mile front line or elsewhere. Ukrainian officials have previously dismissed Russian peace moves as playing for time to regroup their forces and prepare for additional attacks.

At various points during the war that started on Feb. 24, Putin has ordered limited and local truces to allow evacuations of civilians or other humanitarian purposes. Thursday's order was the first time Putin directed his troops to observe a cease-fire throughout Ukraine.

"Based on the fact that a large number of citizens professing Orthodoxy live in the combat

areas, we call on the Ukrainian side to declare a cease-fire and give them the opportunity to attend services on Christmas Eve, as well as on the Day of the Nativity of Christ," according to Putin's order, addressed to Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and published on the Kremlin's website.

While not necessarily the final official word back from Kyiv, Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak tweeted that Russian forces "must leave the occupied territories — only then will it have a 'temporary truce.' Keep hypocrisy to yourself."

Putin acted on the suggestion of the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill, who proposed a truce from noon Friday through midnight Saturday Moscow time. The Russian Orthodox Church, which uses the ancient Julian calendar, celebrates Christmas on Jan. 7 — later than the Gregorian calendar — although some Christians in Ukraine also mark the holiday on that date.

Podolyak had earlier dismissed Kirill's call as "a cynical trap and an element of propagand-

da." President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had proposed a Russian troop withdrawal earlier, before Dec. 25, but Russia rejected it.

Kirill has previously justified the war as part of Russia's "metaphysical struggle" to prevent a liberal ideological encroachment from the West.

Independent political analyst Tatyana Stanovaya said Putin's cease-fire order is a logical step intended to make him look reasonable and interested in peace.

The move "fits well into Putin's logic, in which Russia is acting on the right side of history and fighting for justice," she said.

"We must not forget that in this war, Putin feels like a 'good guy,' doing good not only for himself and the 'brotherly nations,' but also for the world he's freeing from the 'hegemony' of the United States," Stanovaya, founder of the independent R.Politik think tank, wrote on Telegram.

On the rainy streets of Kyiv, some questioned the Russians' sincerity in discussing a truce.



LIBKOS/AP

**Local residents carry the body of a 20-year-old man killed in Russian shelling in Kherson, Ukraine, on Thursday.**

"Shall we believe Russians?" wondered Svitlana Zhereva after Kirill's proposal. "On the one hand they have given their blessing to the war and to kill, and on the other hand they want to present themselves as saints who are against blood-spilling. But they should be judged by their actions."

## NATION

## Stalemate still keeps McCarthy from post

BY LISA MASCARO  
AND FARNOUSH AMIRI  
*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Pressure mounting, the speaker's chair of the U.S. House sat empty for a third day Thursday, as Republican leader Kevin McCarthy failed anew on the seventh of an excruciating string of ballots to win enough votes from his party to seize the chamber's gavel.

One of McCarthy's steadfast critics, Rep. Matt Gaetz, of Florida, even cast his vote for Donald Trump, a symbolic gesture, but one that highlighted the former president's influence over the Republican Party.

The seventh vote for speaker turned out no different from the others, with McCarthy well short of the required majority.

McCarthy emerged from a morning meeting with colleagues at the Capitol determined to persuade Republican holdouts to end the stalemate that has blighted his new GOP majority.

Despite endless talks, signs of concessions and a public spectacle unlike any other in recent political memory, the path ahead remained highly uncertain. The day started as the other two have, with Republican allies nominating him for now a seventh time to be speaker.

Republican John James, of Michigan, put McCarthy's name up for a vote, with a nod to history.

"My family's gone from being slaves to the floor of the United States House of Representatives" in five generations, said James, a newly elected lawmaker to be, who is Black.

He said that while the House Republicans were "stuck" at the moment, McCarthy, who has failed to seize a majority to become speaker,

would ultimately win.

Democrat Hakeem Jeffries, of New York, was re-nominated by Democrats.

Republican Party holdouts again put forward the name of fellow Rep. Byron Donalds, of Florida, assuring the stalemate that increasingly carried undercurrents of race and politics would continue.

Donalds, who is Black, is seen as a future party leader and counterpoint to the Democratic leader, Jeffries, who is the first Black leader of a major political party in Congress, on track himself to become speaker someday.

"We could have elected the first Black speaker of the United States House," said conservative Republican Dan Bishop, of North Carolina, who re-nominated Donalds on Thursday.

Democrats jumped to their feet in applause, as Jeffries is, in fact, closest to the gavel with the most votes on every ballot so far.

What started as a political novelty, the first time in 100 years a nominee had not won the gavel on the first vote, has devolved into a bitter Republican Party feud and deepening potential crisis.

McCarthy is under growing pressure from restless Republicans, and Democrats, to find the votes he needs or step aside, so the House can open fully and get on with the business of governing. His right-flank detractors appear intent on waiting him out, as long as it takes.

"We're having good discussions and I think everyone wants to find a solution," McCarthy told reporters shortly before the House was prepared to gavel into session again.

House Chaplain Margaret Kibben opened the day's session, perhaps the last of the week, calling on

greater powers to "still the storms of dissent."

The House is essentially at a standstill as McCarthy has failed, one vote after another, to win the speaker's gavel in a grueling spectacle for all the world to see. The ballots have produced almost the same outcome, 20 conservative holdouts still refusing to support him and leaving him far short of the 218 typically needed to win the gavel.

In fact, McCarthy saw his support slipping to 201, as one fellow Republican switched to vote simply present.

"I think people need to work a little more," McCarthy said Wednesday as they prepared to adjourn for the night. "I don't think a vote tonight would make any difference. But a vote in the future could."

As the House resumed at noon Thursday it could be a long day. The new Republican majority was not expected to be in session on Friday, which is the anniversary of the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol. A prolonged and divisive speaker's fight would almost certainly underscore the fragility of American democracy after the attempted insurrection two years ago.

"All who serve in the House share a responsibility to bring dignity to this body," California Democrat Nancy Pelosi, the former speaker, said in a tweet.

Some Republicans appear to be growing uneasy with the way House Republicans have taken charge after the midterm election only to see the chamber upended over the speaker's race in their first days in the new majority.

Colorado Republican Ken Buck voted for McCarthy but said Wednesday that he told him "he needs to figure out how to make a



JABIN BOTSFORD/The Washington Post

Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., left, watches floor proceedings during the fourth round of voting for House speaker on Wednesday.

deal to move forward" or eventually step aside for someone else.

McCarthy has vowed to fight to the finish for the speaker's job in a battle that had thrown the new majority into tumult for the first days of the new Congress.

The right-flank conservatives, led by the Freedom Caucus and aligned with Trump, appeared emboldened by the standoff — even though Trump publicly backed McCarthy,

"This is actually an invigorating day for America," said Donalds, who was nominated three times by his conservative colleagues as an alternative. "There's a lot of members in the chamber who want to have serious conversations about how we can bring this all to a close and elect a speaker."

The disorganized start to the new

Congress pointed to difficulties ahead with Republicans now in control of the House, much the way that some past Republican speakers, including John Boehner, had trouble leading a rebellious right flank. The result: government shutdowns, standoffs and Boehner's early retirement.

To win support, McCarthy has already agreed to many of the demands of Freedom Caucus members, who have been agitating for rules changes and other concessions that give rank-and-file members more influence.

Not since 1923 had a speaker's election gone to multiple ballots. The longest fight for the gavel started in late 1855 and dragged on for two months, with 133 ballots, during debates over slavery in the run-up to the Civil War.

## Biden restricting Nicaraguans, Cubans and Haitians at border

BY COLLEEN LONG  
*Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The Biden administration on Thursday said it would immediately begin turning away Cubans, Haitians and Nicaraguans who cross the U.S.-Mexico border illegally, a major expansion of an existing effort to stop Venezuelans attempting to enter the U.S.

Instead, the administration will accept 30,000 people per month from the four nations for two years and offer the ability to legally work, as long as they come legally, have eligible sponsors and pass vetting and background checks. These four affected nations are among those for whom migrant border crossings have risen most sharply, with no easy way to quickly return migrants to their home countries.

It is a massive change to immigration rules, and it will stand even if the U.S. Supreme Court ends a Trump-era public health law that



FERNANDO LLANO / AP

Migrants stand in the cold weather around a campfire at a makeshift camp on the U.S.-Mexico border in Matamoros, Mexico, last month.

allows American authorities to turn away asylum seekers.

The new policy could result in 360,000 people from these four nations lawfully entering the U.S. in a year. But currently, far more people from those countries are attempting

to cross into the U.S. on foot. Migrants from those four countries were stopped 82,286 times in November alone.

The Biden administration has struggled to manage increasing numbers of migrants crossing the

U.S.-Mexico border and has been reluctant to take hard-line measures that would resemble those of the Trump administration. That's resulted in a barrage of criticism from Republicans who say the Democratic president is ineffective on border security.

Biden was to address the border changes in a speech later Thursday. He will travel to El Paso, Texas, this weekend, his first trip to the southern border as president, before a planned trip to Mexico City to meet with North American leaders on Monday.

Mexico has agreed to accept each month from the four countries up to 30,000 migrants who attempt to walk or swim across the U.S.-Mexico border, according to the White House.

Anyone coming to the U.S. is allowed to claim asylum, regardless of how they crossed the border. But the requirements for granting asy-

lum are narrow, and only about 30% of applications are granted. That has created a system in which migrants come between ports of entry and are allowed into the U.S. to wait out their cases. But there is a 2 million-case immigration court backlog, so cases often are not heard for years.

The only lasting way to change the system is through Congress, but a bipartisan effort in Congress on new immigration laws failed shortly before Republicans took the House majority.

Under then-President Donald Trump, the U.S. required asylum seekers to wait across the border in Mexico. But massive delays in the immigration system created long delays, leading to fetid, dangerous camps over the border where migrants were forced to wait. That system was ended under the Biden era, and the migrants who are returned now will not be eligible for asylum.

## NATION

# Huge storm hits Calif. with heavy rain, strong winds

By **OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ**  
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO—Damaging winds and heavy rains hit California on Thursday, knocking out power to tens of thousands, causing flash flooding, and leaving a child dead after a tree fell on a home.

Officials had ordered evacuations in a high-risk coastal area where mudslides killed 23 people in 2018 as the huge storm barreled into the state Wednesday. Authorities warned residents to hunker down at home in anticipation of flooded roads, toppled trees and other risks.

In Sonoma County, Occidental Volunteer Fire Chief Ronald Lunardi said a child believed to be under 2 years old died Wednesday night after a tree fell on a home, *The Press Democrat* reported.

The storm dumped rain in parts of the San Francisco Bay Area, where the region had been under flood warnings. In Southern California, the storm was expected to peak into early Thursday, with Santa Barbara and Ventura counties likely to see the most rain, forecasters said.

"We anticipate that this may be one of the most challenging and impactful series of storms to touch down in California in the last five years," said Nancy Ward, director

of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

San Francisco Mayor London Breed said at a news conference that the city was "preparing for a war." Crews cleared clogged storm drains, tried to move homeless people into shelters and passed out emergency supplies and ponchos to those who refused to go.

The city distributed so many sandbags to residents that supplies temporarily ran out.

Powerful winds gusting to 85 mph or more forced the cancellation of more than 70 flights at San Francisco International Airport and downed trees and power lines. Firefighters rescued a family after a tree fell onto their car. The fire department reported "large pieces of glass" fell off the Fox Plaza tower near the Civic Center, although no injuries were reported. It was "highly possible" the damage was wind-related, the department tweeted.

More than 180,000 homes and businesses were without power in California early Thursday, according to poweroutage.us.

The storm is the latest of three so-called atmospheric river storms in the last week to reach the drought-stricken state. California Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency to al-



SARAH REINGEWIRTZ, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER/AP

**A person uses a bag to shelter from the rain in downtown Los Angeles as a strong storm moves into Southern California on Wednesday.**

low for a quick response and to aid in cleanup from another powerful storm that hit just days earlier.

In Southern California, evacuations were ordered for those living in areas burned by three recent wildfires in Santa Barbara County, where heavy rain forecast for overnight could cause widespread flooding and unleash debris flows.

Elsewhere, a 45-mile stretch of the coastal Highway 1 running through Big Sur was closed Wednesday evening in anticipation of flooding and rock falls. Farther north, a 25-mile stretch of Highway 101 was closed due to several downed trees.

Drivers were urged to stay off the roads unless absolutely necessary, especially with heavy snow expected in the mountains.

Evacuation orders were in place in Santa Cruz County's Paradise Park along the swiftly moving San Lorenzo River, as well as in areas along the Pajaro River.



GODOFREDO A. VASQUEZ/AP

**The canopy of a gas station, toppled by strong winds, rests at an angle, Wednesday, in south San Francisco.**

Residents who fled wildfires in the Santa Cruz Mountains in 2020 packed their bags as the towns of Boulder Creek, Ben Lomond and Felton were all warned they

should be prepared to evacuate.

Sonoma County authorities issued an evacuation warning for a string of towns along the Russian River.

## Amid supply chain woes, auto sales drop to lowest since 2011

Associated Press

DETROIT — Shortages of computer chips and other parts continued to hobble the U.S. auto industry last year, contributing to vehicle sales dropping 8% from 2021 to their lowest level in more than a decade.

But there's good news for consumers in the gloomy numbers: Vehicle supplies on dealer lots are growing, albeit slowly, and automakers expect at least a small easing in prices this year as inventories grow.

Automakers reported Wednesday that they sold 13.9 million cars, trucks, SUVs and vans last year as the parts shortage limited factory output amid high demand for new vehicles. It was the lowest sales number since 2011 when the economy was recovering from the Great

Recession.

But sales were up slightly in the fourth quarter and inventories grew as parts supplies improved enough to increase production a little. Analysts are now expecting sales to grow by roughly 1 million to around 14.8 million this year as demand remains strong. But they'll still be far short of the normal 17 million per year before the pandemic.

With many models still in short supply, though, the average new vehicle price rose 2.5% in December to a record of just over \$46,000, according to J.D. Power.

There are signs, however, that prices may be starting to ebb a little as inventories expand.

Toyota, for instance, finished the year with just under 24,000 vehicles on Toyota and Lexus brand dealer

lots nationwide. That's up from about 19,000 at the end of 2021, but still far short of the 300,000 during normal years before the pandemic.

The improvement, although small, is allowing consumers to haggle a little on some slower-selling vehicles such as sedans, and even some luxury vehicles. But they're still getting top dollar for gas-electric hybrids and other more popular vehicles that are sold before they arrive on lots, said David Christ, general manager of the Toyota Division.

"They're coming in and saying, 'Hey, can I get a deal here?'" Christ said. "I do think that on some vehicles, not just in our brand, and across the industry, there has become a little more of a buyer's market where the customer can negotiate."

## Jobless aid applications fall to lowest in months

By **MATT OTT**  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans applying for jobless benefits fell to the lowest level in more than three months last week, reflecting a still-robust job market despite the Federal Reserve's efforts to cool the economy and bring down decades-high inflation.

Applications for unemployment aid for the week ending Dec. 31 fell by 19,000 to 204,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday.

The labor market is closely monitored by Fed policymakers, who raised interest rates seven times last year in a bid to slow job growth and bring down stubbornly high inflation. So far, there has been little indication that it has weakened the job market enough to for the Fed to alter its course in 2023.

Also Thursday morning, the payroll processing firm ADP reported that the U.S. economy gained 235,000 jobs, well above expectations.

U.S. futures dropped sharply on worries that a hot jobs market will mean the Fed will continue with aggressive rate hikes well into the new year.

The four-week moving average of claims, which evens out some of the week-to-week volatility, fell by 6,750 to 213,750.

Jobless claims are generally viewed as a proxy for layoffs, which have been relatively low since the pandemic wiped out roughly 20 million jobs in the spring of 2020.

About 1.69 million people were receiving jobless aid the week that ended Dec. 24, about 24,000 fewer than the week before.

## NATION

# Idaho suspect's DNA found at crime scene, police say

By REBECCA BOONE  
AND GENE JOHNSON  
Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — The DNA of the man accused of killing four University of Idaho students was found on a knife sheath at the crime scene, an investigator said in court documents unsealed Thursday.

The affidavit written by Moscow, Idaho Police Cpl. Brett Payne was made public just minutes before a court hearing began for the man accused in the Nov. 13 deaths, 28-year-old Bryan Kohberger. Kohberger arrived in Idaho late Wednesday on a law enforcement jet and was handed over to local authorities after his arrest last week in Pennsylvania.

He is charged with four counts of first-degree murder and felony burglary in the closely watched case that has grabbed the nation's attention and rocked the small college town on the Idaho-Washington border.

In another document released before the hearing, an investigator said that a woman who lived at the home where the students were killed awoke to the sound of crying

that night to find a masked man in black clothing who walked past her and toward a sliding glass door.

The unidentified housemate, who wasn't harmed in the attack, told authorities she opened her second-floor door at around 4 a.m. after hearing the crying. She then stood in "frozen shock" as the man, whom she didn't recognize, walked past her, the police investigator said. She then went back into her room and locked the door.

The public release of court documents shed some light on Latah County Prosecutor Bill Thompson's reasons for accusing Kohberger in the Nov. 13 stabbing deaths of Kaylee Goncalves, Madison Mogen, Xana Kernodle and Ethan Chapin and answer key questions about how authorities built a case against him.

Kohberger was arrested at his parents' home in eastern Pennsylvania last week and agreed to be extradited to Idaho.

His attorney in Pennsylvania, Monroe County chief public defender Jason LaBar, said Kohberger was eager to be exonerated and described him as "an ordinary guy."

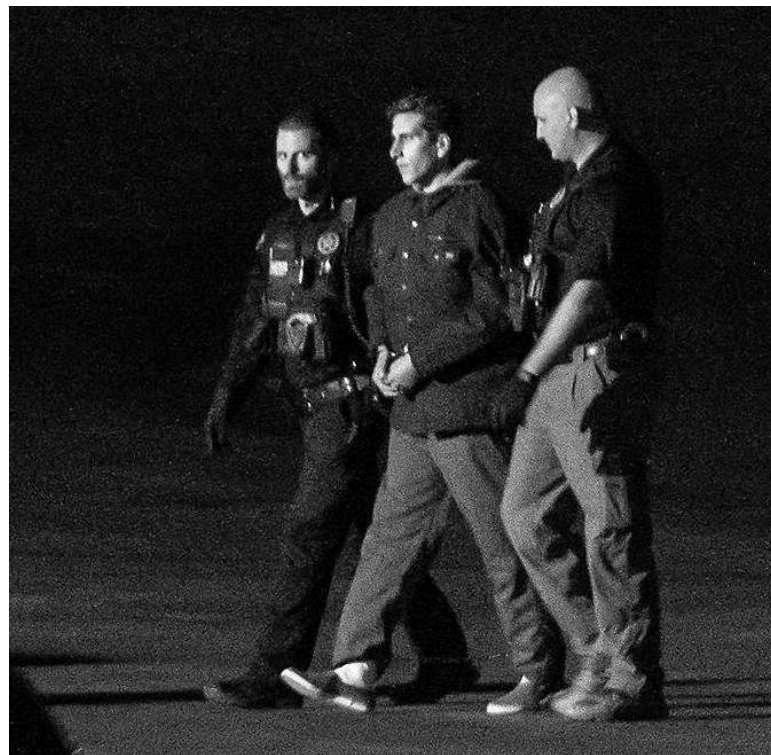
Police have released few details about the investigation and a magistrate judge has issued a sweeping gag order barring attorneys, law enforcement agencies and other officials from discussing the case.

The nighttime attack at the home near the University of Idaho campus spread fear in Moscow and the surrounding area, as authorities seemed stumped by the brutal stabbings. Investigators appeared to make a breakthrough, however, after searching for a white sedan that was seen around the time of the killings and analyzing DNA evidence collected from the crime scene.

Investigators have said they were still searching for a motive and the weapon used in the attack.

The bodies of Goncalves, 21, of Rathdrum, Idaho; Mogen, 21, of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; Kernodle, 20, of Post Falls, Idaho; and Chapin, 20, of Conway, Wash., were found Nov. 13 at the rental home where the women lived. Kernodle and Chapin were dating, and he had been visiting the house that night.

Latah County prosecutors have said they believe Kohberger broke



AUSTIN JOHNSON, LEWISTON (IDAHO) TRIBUNE/AP

**Bryan Kohberger is escorted after arriving at Washington's Pullman-Moscow Regional Airport on Thursday. Kohberger faces murder charges in the deaths of four University of Idaho students.**

into the victims' home intending to commit murder.

Although Moscow police have been tightlipped about the investigation, authorities last month asked the public for help finding a white sedan that was seen near the scene of the crime — specifically, a 2011-2013 Hyundai Elantra. Tips poured in and investigators soon an-

nounced they were sifting through a pool of around 20,000 potential vehicles.

Meanwhile, Kohberger apparently stayed in Pullman, Wash., through the end of the semester at WSU. Then he drove across country to his parents' home in Pennsylvania, accompanied by his father. They were in a white Elantra.

## 8 fatally shot in murder-suicide at home in Utah

Associated Press

ENOCH, Utah — A 42-year-old man killed seven family members, including five children, then killed himself, authorities said Thursday, and the man's wife had filed for divorce two weeks earlier.

Officials in the city of Enoch said Michael Haight, 42, killed his wife, mother-in-law and the couple's five children. Each of the victims appeared to have gunshot wounds, officials said.

Court records show the wife had filed for divorce on Dec. 21.

Police sent officers to check on the family Wednesday after family and friends contacted officials because they were worried and had not heard from the victims. Officers found the victims inside the home.

The children ranged in age from 4 to 17 and included three girls and two boys, authorities said. The other victims were Tausha Haight, 40, and her 78-year-old mother, Gail Earl.

Enoch is a small town of about 8,000 people located 245 miles south of Salt Lake City and about equally distant from Las Vegas.

The home where the victims were found was decorated with Christmas lights and located in a neighborhood of newly built single-family houses on a ridge overlooking the farming community of Enoch.

Enoch City Manager Rob Dotson said the community was sent reeling by news of the eight bodies and that the deceased were well-known in the town.

In most of Utah, the predominant religion is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, known widely as the Mormon church.

"Many of us have served with them in church, in



BEN B. BRAUN, THE (SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH) DESERET NEWS/AP

**A law enforcement official stands near the front door of the Enoch, Utah, home where eight family members were found dead from gunshot wounds, on Wednesday.**

the community and gone to school with these individuals," Dotson said Wednesday night. "This community at this time is hurting. They're feeling loss, they're feeling pain and they have a lot of questions."

The five children attended schools in the Iron County School District, officials said in a letter sent to parents.

Enoch is off Interstate 15 in rural Utah, just north of the city of Cedar City and about 80 miles west of Bryce Canyon National Park.

## College scam mastermind Rick Singer gets 3.5 years

Associated Press

BOSTON — The mastermind of the nationwide college admissions bribery scheme that ensnared celebrities, prominent businesspeople and other parents who used their wealth and privilege to buy their kids' way into top-tier schools was sentenced to 3½ years in prison Wednesday.

The punishment for Rick Singer, 62, is the longest sentence handed down in the sprawling scandal that embarrassed some of the nation's most prestigious universities and put a spotlight on the secretive admissions system already seen as rigged in favor of the rich.

Prosecutors had sought six years behind bars, noting Singer's extensive cooperation that helped authorities unravel the entire scheme. Singer began secretly working with investigators in 2018 and recorded hundreds of phone calls and meetings that helped authorities build the case against dozens of parents, athletic coaches and others arrested in March 2019.

Those sent to prison for participating in the scheme include "Full House" actor Lori Loughlin, her fashion designer husband Mossimo Giannulli, and "Des-

perate Housewives" star Felicity Huffman. Coaches from schools including Yale, Stanford, Georgetown and UCLA admitted to accepting bribes.

"The conduct in this case was something out of a Hollywood movie," Massachusetts U.S. Attorney Rachael Rollins told reporters after the sentencing.

Singer also was ordered to pay more than \$10 million in restitution to the IRS and forfeit millions more in money and assets to the government. He was ordered to report to prison in February.

Although Singer's cooperation helped authorities secure the convictions of a slew of defendants, prosecutors noted that he also admitted to obstructing the investigation by tipping off several of his clients who were under government scrutiny.

In seeking leniency for Singer, defense attorney Candice Fields told the judge that her client took great personal risk by wearing a wire to record meetings for investigators and "did whatever was necessary" to assist the government.



Singer

## NATION

## Internet goes berserk over Stanford 'language guide' for code writers

By ALDO TOLEDO  
Bay Area News Group

STANFORD, Calif. — From the internet to the national media to the holiday dinner table, much of the country has seemed to be up in arms in recent weeks over a newly discovered Stanford University "language guide" that discourages the use of words like "American," "survivor" and "freshman" — steps too far for many jaded by the culture wars.

At a time when politicians and the media continue their ongoing debate over critical race theory, LGBTQ discussions in schools and other cultural issues, liberals and conservatives appear to be on the same page about one thing: This Stanford "language guide" goes too far.

Written by the Elimination of Harmful Language Initiative at Stanford in partnership with People of Color in Technology and the Stanford CIO Council, the "language guide" is part of a multiphase, multiyear project that addresses harmful language — in information technology (IT) uses only — at the university. Its goal is to "eliminate many forms of harmful language, including racist, violent and biased language ... in Stanford websites and code."

"The purpose of this website is to educate people about the possible impact of the words we use," the guide's preface reads. "Language affects different people in different ways. We are not attempting to assign levels of harm to the terms on this site. We also are not attempting to address all informal uses of language."

The 13-page guide discourages the use of what it calls ableist, ageist, colonialist and culturally appropriative language among others, and urges code writers to avoid words from the obvious "retarded" and "spaz" to phrases that might seem more innocuous, like "brave," "American," "Hispanic," "cakewalk" and "homeless person."

Members of the committee that produced the guide could not be reached, but the guide itself gives context for why the language should not be used. For example, the word "prisoner" should be replaced with "person who is/was incarcerated" because "using person-first language helps to not define people by just one of their characteristics." That word specifically has been flagged by the prison abolitionist movement as a dirty one for similar reasons. But "American"?

In the guide, the IT writers suggest using "U.S. citizen" instead, partly because American "often refers to people from the United States only, thereby insinuating

the U.S. is the most important country in the Americas," ignoring the other 42 countries that make up the continent.

For many on social media, including Dr. Jay Bhattacharya — a professor at Stanford School of Medicine — the guide goes too far at times. He called it "really disappointing" on a recent "The Ingraham Angle" show on Fox News.

"It doesn't actually foster respect for people," he said. "It just makes people think what's gone wrong with great universities like Stanford."

Bhattacharya wasn't alone in his disdain for the "language guide"; dozens of other right-wing media accounts and commentators dug in on Stanford for publishing it. He got a quick reply from Twitter head Elon Musk, who said, "Stanford disapproves of saying you're proud to be an American? Whoa."

In a statement, Stanford Chief Information Officer Steven Gallagher said the university actually encourages the use of the word "American." He sought to distance the institution from the work of its IT experts.

The website "does not represent university policy," the statement says, and it also "does not represent mandates or requirements." The website was "created by and intended for discussion with the IT community at Stanford" and "provides 'suggested alternatives' for various terms and reasons why those terms could be problematic in certain uses." Its goal was always to "support an inclusive community."

"We have particularly heard concerns about the guide's treatment of the term 'American,'" the statement reads. "We understand and appreciate those concerns. To be very clear, not only is the use of the term 'American' not banned at Stanford, it is absolutely welcomed."

The statement also said "the guide for the university's IT community is undergoing continual review," and that "the spirit behind it, from the beginning, has been to be responsive to feedback and to consider adjustments based on that feedback."

University of Washington Computer Science Professor and author Pedro Domingos said in an interview that no university "should attempt to stipulate the language its members use."

"Many of the terms the guide considers harmful and their proposed replacements are frankly hilarious," Domingos said. "The way Stanford has handled the whole issue is an embarrassment."

## As legal pot grows, more kids sickened by edibles

By JONEL ALECCA  
Associated Press

The number of young kids, especially toddlers, who accidentally ate marijuana-laced treats rose sharply over five years as pot became legal in more places in the U.S., according to a study published Tuesday.

More than 7,000 confirmed cases of kids younger than 6 eating marijuana edibles were reported to the nation's poison control centers between 2017 and 2021, climbing from about 200 to more than 3,000 per year.

Nearly a quarter of the children wound up hospitalized, some seriously ill, according to a new analysis in the journal Pediatrics.

And those are just the reported cases, said Dr. Marit Tweet, a medical toxicologist with the Southern Illinois School of Medicine, who led the study.

Cases of kids eating pot products such as candies, chocolate and cookies have coincided with more states allowing medical and recreational cannabis use. Currently 37 states permit use of marijuana for medical purposes and 21 states regulate adult recreational use.

Tweet called for greater vigilance by parents and for more laws like those adopted by several states to make pot products — often packaged to look like kids' candies and snacks — less appealing and accessible to children.

"When it's in a candy form or



STEVE MARCUS/AP

Marijuana edibles are seen Wednesday at a dispensary in Las Vegas.

cookies, people don't think of it in the same way as household chemicals or other things a child could get into," she said. "But people should really be thinking of it as a medication."

Tweet and her colleagues analyzed reports to the National Poison Data System, which includes the nation's 55 regional poison control centers. More than half of the children were toddlers, ages 2 and 3, the study showed. More than 90% got the edibles at home.

"They're the ones starting to explore and to get up and move around," she said.

Of more than 7,000 reports, researchers were able to track the outcomes of nearly 5,000 cases. They found that nearly 600 kids, or about 8%, were admitted to critical care units, most often with depressed breathing or even coma. Nearly 15% were admitted to non-critical care units and more than a

third were seen in emergency rooms. Drowsiness, breathing problems, fast heart rate and vomiting were the most common symptoms.

The results are not surprising, said Dr. Brian Schultz, a pediatric emergency physician at Johns Hopkins Medicine in Baltimore. He previously worked at Children's National Hospital in Washington, where he and his colleagues treated kids who had eaten pot edibles "almost on a daily basis," he said.

Reports and hospitalizations rose during the last two years of the study, during the COVID-19 pandemic. More children were at home, with more opportunities to find pot treats, Tweet said. With marijuana more widely legal, parents may have felt less stigma seeking help from poison centers and health care providers, she added.

**Wherever you are, we can help prepare your taxes.**

Send your documents to our office. A tax pro will contact you with any questions and to let you know when your return is ready for approval. Review and approve your return online.

**BAMBERG**

+49 (0)951-7000899  
rosie.short@hrblock.com

**GRAFENWÖHR**

+49 (0)173-573-6112  
office62911@hrblock.com  
jorellano@hrblock.com

**VILSECK**

+49(0)9662-701339  
office62911@hrblock.com  
jorellano@hrblock.com



**MILITARY TAX EXPERTS**

QUESTIONS? CALL US. OPEN YEAR ROUND.  
ITIN ACCEPTANCE AGENT • EXPAT TAX SERVICE

hrblock.com

WORLD

# Beds run out at hospital in Beijing as COVID-19 spreads

Associated Press

BEIJING — Patients, mostly older people, lay on stretchers in hallways or took oxygen while sitting in wheelchairs as a COVID-19 outbreak stretched public health facilities' resources in China's capital Beijing, even after its reported peak.

The Chuiyangliu hospital in the city's east was packed Thursday with newly arrived patients. Beds ran out by midmorning, even as ambulances continued to bring more people in. Hard-pressed nurses and doctors rushed to take information and triage the most urgent cases.

The crush of people seeking hospital care follows China's abandonment of its most severe pandemic restrictions last month after nearly three years of lockdowns, travel bans and school closures that weighed heavily on the economy and prompted unusual street protests in a country that quashes political dissent.

The outbreak appears to have spread the fastest in densely populated cities first. Now, authorities are concerned as it reaches smaller towns and rural areas with weaker health care systems. Several local governments began asking people Thursday not to make

the trip home for the upcoming Lunar New Year holiday, signaling lingering worry around opening up.

Overseas, a growing number of governments are requiring virus tests for travelers from China, saying they are needed because the Chinese government is not sharing enough information on the outbreak. The European Union on Wednesday "strongly encouraged" its member states to impose pre-departure COVID-19 testing, though not all have done so.

Italy — the first place in Europe where the pandemic exacted a heavy toll in early 2020 — became



ANDY WONG/AP

An elderly patient receives an intravenous drip while using a ventilator Thursday in the hallway of the emergency ward at a hospital in Beijing.

the first EU member to require tests for passengers from China last week, and France and Spain followed with their own measures. That followed the imposition by the U.S. of a requirement for a neg-

ative test result within 48 hours of departure.

China has criticized the requirements and warned of countermeasures against countries imposing them.

## Faithful mourn Benedict XVI at funeral presided over by Pope Francis

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis joined tens of thousands of faithful in bidding farewell to Benedict XVI at a rare requiem Mass Thursday for a dead pope presided over by a living one, ending an unprecedented decade for the Catholic Church that was sparked by the German theologian's decision to retire.

Bells tolled and the crowd applauded as pallbearers carried Benedict's cypress coffin out of the fog-

shrouded St. Peter's Basilica and placed it before the altar in the square outside. Wearing the crimson vestments typical of papal funerals, Francis opened the service with a prayer and closed it by solemnly blessing the simple casket — decorated only with the former pope's coat of arms.

In between, Francis made only fleeting reference to Benedict in his homily, offering a meditation on Christ instead of a eulogy of his

predecessor's legacy before the casket was sealed and entombed in the basilica grotto.

Heads of state and royalty, clergy from around the world and thousands of regular people flocked to the subdued ceremony, despite Benedict's request for simplicity and official efforts to keep the first funeral for a pope emeritus in modern times low-key.

Many mourners hailed from Benedict's native Bavaria and donned

traditional dress, including boiled wool coats to guard against the morning chill.

"We came to pay homage to Benedict and wanted to be here today to say goodbye," said Raymond Mainar, who traveled from a small village east of Munich for the funeral. "He was a very good pope."

Ignoring exhortations for decorum at the end, some in the crowd held banners or shouted "Santo Subito!" — "Sainthood Now!" —

echoing the spontaneous chants that erupted during St. John Paul II's 2005 funeral.

The former Joseph Ratzinger, who died Dec. 31 at age 95, is considered one of the 20th century's greatest theologians and spent his lifetime upholding church doctrine. But he will go down in history for a singular, revolutionary act that changed the future of the papacy: He retired, the first pope in six centuries to do so.

**New**  
MINISTRY OPENING IN KAISERSLATERN AREA

OPEN HOUSE INTERNATIONAL. = (OHI)  
Contact Email [ohi7@myyahoo.com](mailto:ohi7@myyahoo.com)

**Start Up Meeting January, 2023**  
ALL are Welcome

**OHI Business Plan 1: Meeting JESUS**  
*John 3:16 (KJV)*  
*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

**OHI Business Plan 2: Growing in the Grace and the knowledge of GOD!**  
*2 Peter 3:18 (KJV)*  
*But grow in grace, and [in] the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him [be] glory both now and for ever. Amen.*

*Colossians 3:10 (KJV)*  
*And have put on the new [man], which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:*

**We believe in GODS building plan by the WORD and the HOLY SPIRIT**  
Pastor James Fleming ITS TIME, GODS TIME Contact Email [ohi7@myyahoo.com](mailto:ohi7@myyahoo.com)  
Looking forward to meeting YOU! Grace and Peace be unto YOU!

- Accident Repairs
- Body Work
- Maintenance
- Warranty - Work
- Damage Estimates
- Tax Free

**HONDA & ACURA**  
[www.honda-ecker.de](http://www.honda-ecker.de)  
hauptstuhl@honda-ecker.de  
Mon-Fri 0800 - 1700 • Sat 0900-1300

06372-4607 • Kaiserstr. 79, 66851 Hauptstuhl

**SEEKING A CAREER?**

HR Block is looking for full or part-time Tax Preparers for Naples and Sigonella military communities.

No previous experience required. We offer a comprehensive training program. For those with previous experience we offer refresher training.

Competitive compensation,  
Call Roy McGilvray at 334-998-5159 or email at [Roy.mcgilvray@hrblock.com](mailto:Roy.mcgilvray@hrblock.com) | [mcgilvrayroy@gmail.com](mailto:mcgilvrayroy@gmail.com)

# WEEKEND



A new music feature debuts

Page 28

# GREAT EXPECTATIONS

'Chevalier,' which tells the real-life story of a Black composer who rose to unlikely heights in 18th century French society, is among the most anticipated movies of 2023

'Magic Mike,' 'Mission: Impossible' and 'The Marvels' also among the films worth looking forward to, Page 15

Storylines are key selling points for the upcoming crop of video games, Page 18

Hanks, Prince Harry, Whitehead among new reads for the new year, Page 27

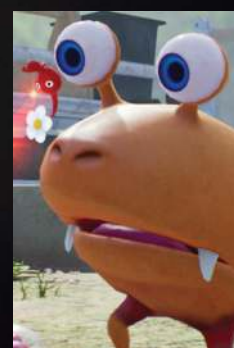
Kelvin Harrison Jr. stars in "Chevalier."  
20th Century Studios



"Oppenheimer"



"Barbie"



Pikmin 4



PRINCE HARRY

SPARE

## WEEKEND: GADGETS &amp; TECHNOLOGY

# Flush with germs, dirt

Engineers discover toilets release plume that reaches more than 5 feet above seat

BY CORINNE PURTILL  
Los Angeles Times

Engineers at the University of Colorado, Boulder, have confirmed what the germ-phobic among us have long suspected: The flush of a commercial toilet releases a Vesuvius-like cloud of tiny droplets and aerosol particles that reaches more than 5 feet above the seat.

Though invisible to the naked eye, when illuminated by green lasers, the plume appears like a burst of microscopic confetti thrown at the world's grossest party, one composed of tiny drops of water and whatever else might be in the bowl.

The research, published in December in the journal *Scientific Reports*, was strictly an exploration in fluid mechanics. The team flushed toilets containing only clean water, and did not investigate the infectiousness of any particles that might be in the plume.

But their tools confirmed that each flush reaches much farther beyond the bowl than most of us would like to believe.

"We all were astonished," said John Crimaldi, the study's lead author. "I said, 'Oh, my God — that's what happens?'"

Crimaldi is a professor of hydrology who specializes in fluid mechanics — specifically, how air and water transport other materials flowing along with it. He has looked at the ways ocean currents distribute sperm and eggs to fertilize corals, and how odor particles travel through the air to communicate information to animals.

He turned his attention to toilets at the urging of his Boulder colleague and co-author Karl Linden, an environmental engineer who studies the disinfectant properties of ultraviolet light.

While brainstorming the ideal

test case for a UV-based surface disinfectant, Linden's mind first had to go to some dirty places.

"Where do we get exposed to viruses, and where do we get exposed to pathogens?" Linden said. "And one of the thoughts I had was, 'Well, what's happening in toilets?'"

Linden was specifically picturing commercial toilets: the tankless, lidless workhorses found in public restroom stalls. Most public toilets in North America are outfitted with what's known as a flushometer-style valve, which relies on pressure rather than gravity to force water through the bowl.

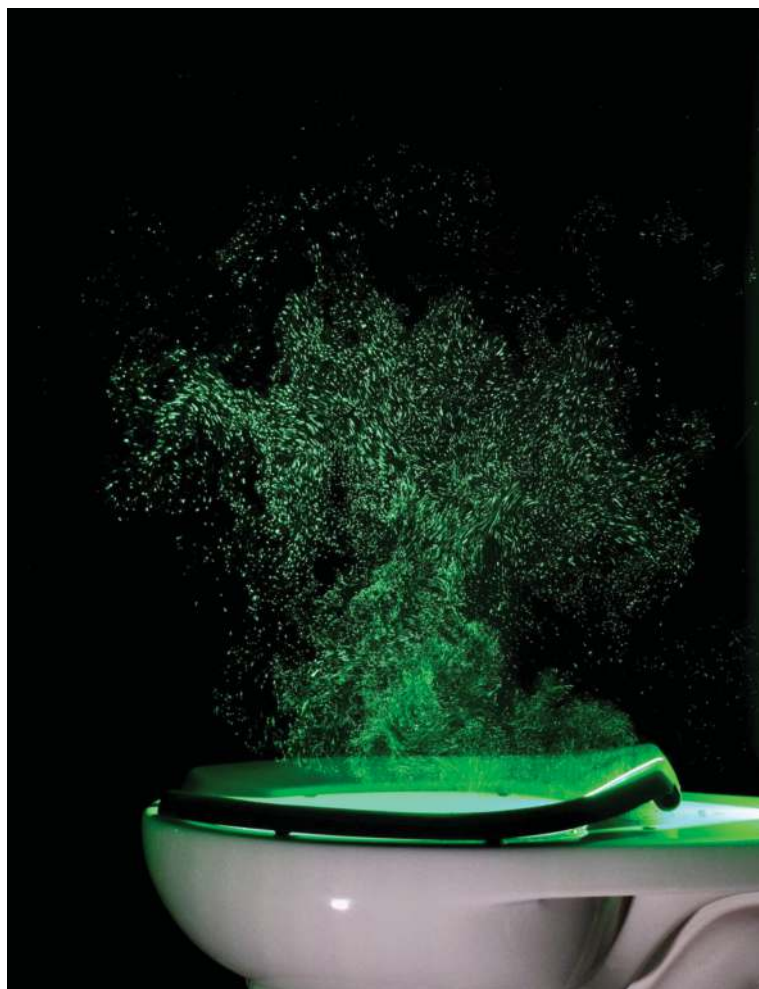
The result is a high-powered flush that leaves a fine cloud of water vapor in its wake — a smaller, less-cheerful version of the mist that rises above each log as it makes its final plunge down Disneyland's Splash Mountain.

Previous studies have confirmed that the surfaces around public toilets are often hotbeds of fecal bacteria. UV light could be an effective disinfectant, Linden thought — but first, he needed a better understanding of how microscopic pathogens move around the space.

He turned to Crimaldi, whose lab uses lasers to visualize fluid movements that would otherwise be imperceptible to the human eye. Crimaldi's fluid mechanics lab has an annual summer tradition of taking a week to tackle a bite-sized scientific challenge, without funding or any pressure to publish. The toilet question was a perfect fit.

"We said, 'Maybe nothing will come of it, or maybe we'll get something really cool,'" Crimaldi said.

Rather than cart their equipment to the closest bathroom, the team installed a working toilet in the lab on top of a metal frame that could be aligned with their



JOHN CRIMALDI, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, BOULDER/TNS

**A plume of tiny water droplets (aerosols) are ejected from a flushing commercial toilet. Normally invisible, they are illuminated here by intense laser light so that they can be photographed and measured.**

lasers. Then they calibrated the plumbing's water pressure to match that of a typical commercial restroom.

They knew their laser would make some aerosols visible. They were not prepared for the minor explosion that greeted them on first flush.

"It's like a volcano erupting," Crimaldi said. "Some of us were stunned into silence. Some of us were just laughing out of disbelief, and also kind of like, 'Oh, my God, we're really on to something here.'"

The team then trained a pulsed laser and a pair of scientific cameras on the spray to measure the speed of its individual water particles. A toilet flush doesn't have the velocity of a sneeze, which can send droplets spurting up to 100 miles per hour, or even a cough, whose droplets can travel up to 50 miles per hour.

Aerosols in the "surprisingly energetic and chaotic" plume reached a maximum velocity of 2 meters per second, or just under 4.5 miles per hour, the study authors reported. Yet once airborne, they took a while to settle back down. Nearly eight seconds after the flush, particles still hovered more than 5 feet above the rim of the bowl — well past nose level for most people. Many remained airborne for more than a minute.

"I certainly am much more inclined after seeing these videos to wear a mask in a public restroom than I might have been before," Crimaldi said.

Though the experiments were

conducted with toilets empty of all but clean water, Crimaldi strongly suspects that adding toilet paper and human waste to the mix only injects more chaos and energy into a flush.

"I have an intuitive sense that the presence of solids might exacerbate the problem because there's just additional things for the water to impinge on and to create more opportunities for this energetic mixing of fluids," he said.

Linden hopes to use this experiment as a starting point for future research that tracks the distance bacteria and other pathogens travel in these aerosol clouds, and how long they remain infectious.

Depending on those findings, "we can start thinking about, well, what interventions can we use?" he said. "What are some redesigns of a toilet that we might want to consider?"

Advocates of alternatives to flush toilets said the study strengthens the argument for seeking better methods of human waste disposal.

"This new study adds some dramatic visual evidence for yet another disadvantage of traditional Western toilets and our strong desire to flush and forget," said Bryn Nelson, a microbiologist and author of the book "Flush: The Remarkable Science of an Unlikely Treasure." "Many composting toilets use a vacuum flush and little to no water, so this could be another reason to consider the merits of these environmentally-friendly models."

## SnapGrip for iPhone offers DSLR grip, shutter

BY GREGG ELLMAN  
Tribune News Service

Shiftcam's SnapGrip creator kit is the best product I've seen to turn your MagSafe iPhone into an authentic camera. (Non-Mag-Safe phone owners can still use the SnapGrip with the included magnetic sticker.)

The kit includes the SnapGrip, which magnetically snaps to an iPhone's backside MagSafe connection. Inside the SnapGrip is a USB-C charging, 3,200 mAh battery that doubles the iPhone's battery life.

The ergonomic SnapGrip has a Digital Single-Lens Reflex (DSLR)-like shutter button, which connects to the iPhone's camera via Bluetooth. With the SnapGrip attached, it gives an iPhone the feel of a digital camera. Since it's attached magnetically, the grip can rotate 180 degrees in your hand for taking photos at any angle. The grip also has a flat bottom edge for sitting hands-free on surfaces.

But there's more: The kit includes a SnapPod magnetic handle to extend the camera for a perfect selfie and a magnetic tripod for using the camera on a timer. And lastly, there's a SnapLight magnetic LED ring light with four brightness levels.

The light can be clipped to the top of the phone and face the subject while using the front-facing camera. A small mirror is in the center of the light ring for last-minute hair and face checks.

Since all the accessories — the SnapGrip, handle and the LED light — are magnetic, they can be stacked for simultaneous use. You can also use the light away from the iPhone. The kit is available in five colors and a storage pouch is included.

Online: [shiftcam.com](https://www.shiftcam.com); \$129.99



SHIFTCAM/TNS

**The SnapGrip kit has a number of attachments, including a tripod.**

**"It's like a volcano erupting. Some of us were stunned into silence. Some of us were just laughing out of disbelief, and also kind of like, 'Oh, my God, we're really on to something here.'"**

John Crimaldi

hydrology professor, lead author of study published in *Scientific Reports*

## WEEKEND: MOVIES



Universal Studios

In Christopher Nolan's "Oppenheimer," Cillian Murphy plays the titular American physicist, the "father of the atomic bomb." The film is expected for release July 21.

# The most anticipated movies of 2023

By MOIRA MACDONALD  
*The Seattle Times*

**A** new year, a new list of reasons to eat popcorn. Here are some of the notable movies that will be gracing the multiplexes this year; note that movie release dates are subject to change.

## 'Magic Mike's Last Dance'

Those fond of Channing Tatum's particular brand of snake-hipped charm (check out how he hilariously stole "The Lost City" in 2022) won't want to miss Steven Soderbergh's final film in his male-entertainer (don't call them strippers) trilogy, as Tatum's Mike tries to train a new group of dancers for one last hurrah. (Feb. 10)

## 'Chevalier'

Costume drama alert! Kelvin Harrison Jr. plays Joseph Bologne, a real-life Black composer who rose to unlikely heights in 18th-century French society, including having a relationship with Marie Antoinette (Lucy Boynton). Stephen Williams, whose television work includes "Lost" and "Watchmen," directs. (April 7)

## 'Next Goal Wins'

I'd imagine Taika Waititi ("Thor: Ragnarok," "What We Do in the Shadows," "Reservation Dogs") might be pretty good at a sports comedy? This one follows the American Samoa soccer team, known as the world's worst after a 31-0 FIFA loss, as they take on a charismatic new coach (Michael Fassbender). (April 21)

## 'Are You There God? It's Me Margaret'

I grew up with this Judy Blume book; maybe you did



Searchlight Pictures

**'Chevalier'** tells the story of Black composer Joseph Bologne in 18th-century France. It's expected April 7.

too? It's finally a movie, with Abby Ryder Fortson (Cassie in the "Ant-Man" movies) as Margaret, Rachel McAdams as her mother and Kathy Bates as Grandma Sylvia. (April 28)

## 'Fast X'

Need I say anything other than this title? And that Helen Mirren AND Rita Moreno are in this one? This franchise always promises fast cars, slow talking and good fun. (May 19)

## 'The Little Mermaid'

Halle Bailey stars in this live-action version of the beloved animated Disney musical, with a supporting cast that sounds pretty swell: Melissa McCarthy, Javier Bardem, Daveed Diggs and Awkwafina. (May 26)

## 'Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse'

Miles Morales (voiced by Shameik Moore) returns for a long-awaited sequel to the acclaimed 2018 animated adventure "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse." Yes, the



Disney

**The live-action version of Disney's musical "The Little Mermaid" stars Halle Bailey as Ariel. Look for it May 26.**

title's a little boring, but the movie should be slick. (June 2)

## 'Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part One'

Speaking of slick, here we have the latest "Mission: Impossible" installment, apparently so full of plot and Tom-Cruise-trying-to-get-himself-killed that it had to be split into two parts. The usual suspects — Cruise, Simon Pegg, Hayley Atwell, Ving Rhames, Rebecca Ferguson, Vanessa Kirby — will all be on hand; Christopher McQuarrie directs. (July 14)

## 'Barbie'

OK, I've raised my eyebrows at this one too, but this is written and directed by Greta Gerwig ("Little Women," "Lady Bird"), so there's definitely a benefit-of-the-doubt factor. So yes, this is a movie based on the life of a famous

**SEE RELEASES ON PAGE 16**

## WEEKEND: MOVIES

## Some toys not meant to be played with

'M3GAN' a horror comedy about a doll with parenting skills

By KATIE WALSH  
Tribune News Service

Last fall, the internet witnessed a rare phenomenon: the meteoric, memeified rise of a brand-new star, catapulted into mononymic ubiquity thanks to a single 2½-minute movie trailer. But M3GAN isn't your average girl — she's a lifelike, powerful robotic doll equipped with machine-learning capabilities that makes a Tamagotchi look like child's play. "The Terminator" in an "Annabelle" wig, Chucky by way of "The Bad Seed," or the nasty little sister of "Ex Machina's" Ava, M3GAN is equipped with a searing side-eye and snappy clapbacks. You can run, but you definitely can't hide, so say hello to your newest horror movie obsession (and be prepared for the ensuing Halloween costumes) in the delightfully bonkers "M3GAN," from James Wan and Akela Cooper, the minds behind the delightfully bonkers "Malignant."

Gerard Johnstone is the director, and he smartly delivers Wan and Cooper's script with the treatment it deserves, as a straightforward horror flick that doesn't blink while simultaneously jabbing the audience in the



UNIVERSAL PICTURES/TNS

Allison Williams' Gemma, right, gives lifelike robotic doll M3GAN, center, to her niece Cady, left, played by Violet McGraw, after Cady's parents die in a car accident.

ribs. "M3GAN," more often than not, and indeed, right away, is a comedy before it's a horror movie, opening with a guffaw, teasing the audience with a laugh before a jarring smash to violence and trauma. The unique tone is anchored by star Allison Williams, who has surprisingly become one of our best horror leading ladies, bringing her signature brand of eerie camp to such films as "Get Out," "The Perfection" and now "M3GAN." Williams' skillful intentional

affectlessness renders her characters slippery, difficult to pin down into preordained binaries of good and evil.

In "M3GAN," Williams is a Dr. Frankenstein type, playing Gemma, a toy designer with a savant-like skill for robotics. She's toiling over a Purrpetual Petz prototype for her demanding boss at Funki Toys, David (a superb Ronny Chieng), when she receives the call that her sister and brother-in-law have died in an accident and she's to assume

guardianship of her niece, Cady (Violet McGraw). Career-oriented Gemma isn't quite sure how to connect with a kid, and so she revives her scrapped project, M3GAN (played physically by Amie Donald and voiced by Jenna Davis), as a sort of pal for her lonely, grieving niece.

It's alive! And she's spectacular, especially according to Cady, who quickly grows fond of the attentive M3GAN once they imprint on each other. Gemma rushes M3GAN and Cady into a

demo for David, and while blithely ignoring warnings from Cady's therapist about potential attachment issues, Gemma and Funki are soon planning an announcement to the public about the high-tech, high-dollar toy that just might replace an actual parent. But neither M3GAN nor Cady like to share their toys, and M3GAN's "learning protocol" is far more advanced, and unregulated, than Gemma anticipates.

"M3GAN" plays on the ideas that are brought up time and time again in techno horror — about our over-reliance on and misplaced trust in machines and technology, whether or not they move or speak with echoes of humanity. But "M3GAN" also introduces a new element to the mix: parenting horror. What kind of "learning protocols" are parents implanting in impressionable beings without fully understanding themselves?

The jump-scares in the fun, funny thrill ride that is "M3GAN" elicit more giggles than groans, but there are also intriguing connections being made on "M3GAN's" motherboard, behind the glossy surface. If HAL 9000 could see M3GAN — and her dance moves — now, he'd indeed be proud, and M3GAN has more than earned your trip to the theater, and her status in the meme folder.

'M3GAN' is rated PG-13 for violent content and terror, some strong language and a suggestive reference. Running time: 102 minutes.

## Releases: 'The Marvels' among expected sequels

FROM PAGE 15

fashion doll, played by Margot Robbie, with Ryan Gosling as Ken. We shall see! (July 21)

## 'Oppenheimer'

Not your typical summer-movie fare, but potentially fascinating: Christopher Nolan directs a biopic about American physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, who was known as the "father of the atomic bomb." Cillian Murphy plays the title role; also on hand are Florence Pugh, Robert Downey Jr., Gary Oldman and Rami Malek. (July 21)

## 'The Marvels'

Nia DaCosta ("Candyman") directs this sequel to 2019's "Captain Marvel," with Brie Larson, Teyonah Parris, Iman Vellani and Samuel L. Jackson. And I'm hoping for a triumphant return of Goose the Cat. (July 28)

## 'A Haunting in Venice'

Kenneth Branagh returns as Detective Hercule Poirot in his third Agatha Christie adaptation, this one taking place in post-World War II Venice and featuring Kelly Reilly, Michelle Yeoh, Tina Fey and Jamie Dornan. (Sept. 15)

## 'True Love'

Gareth Edwards, the director of "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story," returns with a science-fiction love story featuring John David Washington, Gemma Chan, Allison

Janney and Ken Watanabe. (Oct. 6)

## 'Dune: Part Two'

I know it feels like the last "Dune" was just a few weeks ago, but nonetheless here's the sequel, directed by Denis Villeneuve and featuring Timothée Chalamet, Zendaya, Rebecca Ferguson and Javier Bardem. (Nov. 3)

## 'Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget'

Thank you, universe, for recognizing that it's been a tough couple of years, and that we all need a new "Chicken Run" movie from the stop-motion wizards at Aardman Animations. David Fowler, Imelda Staunton and Bella Ramsey are among the voice talent. (Nov. 10)

## 'Wonka'

Do we need another "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" movie? Apparently we do! This one features Timothée Chalamet as the young Willy Wonka, with a supporting cast that includes Sally Hawkins, Keegan-Michael Key, Olivia Colman and Rowan Atkinson. (Dec. 15)

## 'The Color Purple'

First it was an acclaimed novel by Alice Walker, then it was a Steven Spielberg movie, then it was a hit Broadway musical, and now it's a movie of the musical, starring Fantasia, Colman Domingo, Taraji P. Henson and H.E.R. Spielberg, Quincy Jones and Oprah Winfrey are among the producers; Blitz Bazawule ("Black Is King") directs. (Dec. 20)



WARNER BROS. PICTURES/TNS

Greta Gerwig directs the live-action "Barbie," expected in theaters July 21. Margot Robbie stars as the titular doll.

## WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS



Netflix

From left, Robert Duvall, Christian Bale and Harry Melling investigate series of grisly 1830 murders in “The Pale Blue Eye,” based on the 2003 novel by Louis Bayard.

# A closer look at Poe

‘The Pale Blue Eye’ a smart murder mystery featuring young poet

By MICHAEL O’SULLIVAN  
The Washington Post

Writer-director Scott Cooper may be as perfect an interpreter as can be imagined for Netflix’s pulpy yet high-minded adaptation of “The Pale Blue Eye,” a well-received 2003 whodunit by novelist Louis Bayard about a series of grisly 1830 murders investigated by a retired police detective and his young assistant, Edgar Allan Poe. Coming off 2021’s “Antlers” — Cooper’s folk-horror tale adapted from a Nick Antosca short story about monsters, real and imagined — “Blue Eye” feels like the ideal chaser: a stylish and smart telling of what is at heart macabre malarkey.

Speaking of heart, the film gets straight down to business with the discovery of a corpse, minus that critical organ, on the campus of the U.S. Military Academy, where some might recall the real Poe was a cadet during the year in question. When the school’s brass recruit a local legend in law enforcement to look into the crime — the brooding, damaged ex-cop Augustus “Gus” Landor — Gus almost immediately gains the assistance of Edgar, a West Point student who shares the older man’s capacity for alcohol, predilection for melancholy and fascination with criminal psychology. Played, respectively, by Christian Bale and Harry Melling, the two sleuths — a kind of American Holmes and Watson — are soon on the case, as other victims, animal and human, turn up with their hearts cut out.

Both actors are enormous fun



Bale, left, and Melling bond over alcohol in “The Pale Blue Eye.”

to watch, for very different reasons. Bale, who previously worked with Cooper in “Out of the Furnace” and “Hostiles,” brings a methodical intensity to the character of Gus, who is plagued by demons, as movie detectives so often are. Edgar, on the other hand, is a morbid poet, albeit one whom Melling endows with an air that is both louche and impish. Melling’s scenery-chewing portrayal of the budding writer — and, here, amateur gumshoe — is one of the film’s chief delights. Aided by a wig and makeup, Melling also bears an uncanny physical resemblance to the writer, through his portrayal avoids cliché.

In supporting roles, Toby Jones, Timothy Spall, Gillian Anderson, Charlotte Gainsbourg and an almost unrecognizable Robert Duvall, playing an expert in the occult, are all reliably entertaining.

But there is at times a sense to the film that you are watching an

overdressed B-movie, especially as the plot veers more deeply into the territory of the supernatural — or at least as the workings of the world are imagined by some of the story’s more credulous characters. It has the whiff of a Poe story: unknowable and mysterious. Filtered through Bayard’s modern lens, it nevertheless retains an admirable residue of 19th-century flavor.

Where “The Pale Blue Eye” succeeds best is in the way it shows how Edgar — yet to become the writer of ghoulish, moody atmosphere and delicious morbidity we remember — got some of his enduring ideas about the coexistence of depravity and beauty. The movie only stumbles when it succumbs, here and there, to the more trivial tropes and jump scares of the contemporary thriller.

“The Pale Blue Eye” is rated R for violence, including rape, bloody images, brief strong language and mature thematic elements. Running time: 130 minutes. Now

## ‘Women Talking’ pays tribute to quiet strength

By MOIRA MACDONALD  
The Seattle Times

Miriam Toews’ 2018 novel “Women Talking” was inspired by a horrific real-life story: In a remote Mennonite colony in Bolivia, many girls and women were repeatedly and violently raped by men in the community, who would use an animal anesthetic to render the victims unconscious as they slept in their beds. The attacks, Toews wrote in an introduction to her book, were for years attributed to “ghosts and demons”; the women were accused of lying to get attention, or of letting their imaginations run wild. Toews’ novel, described by its author as “both a reaction through fiction to these true-life events, and an act of female imagination,” depicted not the violence but a subsequent meeting of the women while the men have gone away to town, as they discussed what they would do about what had happened.

Written for the screen and directed by Sarah Polley, “Women Talking” the movie, likewise, is exactly what its title tells us. Though Polley opens out the action a bit, it’s still primarily a long conversation taking place in a barn, in which some women argue for leaving and finding a new life somewhere else (they must leave, one says simply, because “we cannot stay”), others for staying and fighting, still others for staying and forgiving. Raised illiterate and in obedience, these women aren’t accustomed to thinking about what they want, and “Women Talking” simply lets us watch as they puzzle out a course of action. It’s a small group, just representatives from three families in the large community, with only one man present: gentle August (Ben Whishaw), the schoolteacher, who’s there to take minutes as the women cannot do so.

On its surface, “Women Talking” doesn’t seem particularly

cinematic, but Polley and the actors make it mesmerizing; pulling us into these women’s lives, moment by quiet moment. It’s shot in faded, slightly grayed colors, as if it was left out in the rain, with cinematographer Luc Montpellier finding beautiful afternoon light in the barn and surrounding fields. The look of the film is serenely lovely, in contrast to the horrors the women discuss — or, rather, they don’t. There’s little talk of the actual attacks (“there was no language for what happened,” says a young girl), but much discussion of forgiveness, of the logistics of leaving (would teenage sons go with them, or stay?), of what to do with the emotions they are feeling. You’re struck by how these women laugh together, by how safe they feel with the men away, within the community they have formed.

Polley, whose previous films include “Away from Her” and the evocative documentary “Stories We Tell,” in which she turns the camera on her own family, lets us take our time in getting to know these women, in sorting out the relationships and the alliances. Vivid characterizations emerge: Claire Foy’s fiery Salome, certain she can never forgive the violence done to her small daughter; Rooney Mara’s soft-voiced Ona, glowing like a ghost in the dim light; Jessie Buckley’s haunted Mariche, an abused women practically vibrating with anger; Frances McDormand’s quiet elder stateswoman Scarface Janz, whose set jaw indicates that she knows far more than she’s telling. They talk, we listen.

“Women Talking” is a powerful, moving tribute to quiet strength — and, unexpectedly, to hope.

“Women Talking” is rated for PG-13 for mature thematic content including sexual assault, bloody images and some strong language. Running time: 104 minutes.



UNITED ARTISTS, ENTERTAINMENT PICTURES, ZUMA PRESS/TNS

From left, Michelle McLeod as Mejal, Sheila McCarthy as Greta, Liv McNeil as Neitje, Jessie Buckley as Mariche, Claire Foy as Salome, Kate Hallett as Autje, Rooney Mara as Ona and Judith Ivey as Agata in “Women Talking.”

## WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom

Nintendo



Nintendo

Oxenfree II: Lost Signals



Nintendo

Another Crab's Treasure

## Lofty expectations

10 video games worth getting excited about in 2023

BY TODD MARTENS  
Los Angeles Times

When I think of the games I'm most curious about in 2023, one word comes to mind: story. Well, maybe two words: story and characters.

The modern video game era has been a showcase for interactive narratives, and it seems like the rest of the entertainment industry is starting to pay attention. Two of the most acclaimed animated series last year were ones inspired by League of Legends and Cyberpunk 2077, and in mid-January, HBO will launch a show based on The Last of Us.

But these examples just reinforce something game players have long known: some of the best stories in recent years are found in interactive media.

More so than competition, challenges or even puzzle solving, it's the video game stories I'm most looking forward to in 2023. Here are some on my short list.

**Colossal Cave****Release date:** Jan. 19**Platforms:** Xbox Series X/S, PlayStation 5, Nintendo Switch, PC, Meta Quest 2

To gamers of a certain age and disposition, the following words are as sacred as any Shakespeare: "You are standing at the end of a road before a small brick building. Around you is a forest. A small stream flows out of the building and down a gully." That is the opening text of William Crowther's Colossal Cave Adventure, credited as one of the earliest computer games and one that helped ignite the adventure game movement of the 1980s.

And now that game is being reimagined in a fantasy tale that promises head-scratching puzzles, humor and vividly drawn fantastical characters.

**Season: A Letter to the Future****Release date:** Jan. 31**Platforms:** PlayStation consoles, PC

A love letter to travel, solitude, meeting strangers, taking photographs and writing, Season: A Letter to the Future looks to be a thoughtful road trip adventure, one in which we bike ride through a vast, changing world. Patient and meditative, Season purports to be a game of collecting memories, those of the people we meet and even the nature that surrounds us. The world of Season looks familiar, but just off-kilter enough to create space for us to sit, play and contemplate.

**Star Wars Jedi: Survivor****Release date:** March 17**Platforms:** Xbox Series X/S, PlayStation 5, PC

Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order in 2019 relied heavily on old Star Wars standbys — cringe-inducing dialogue and a Jedi on a journey. We got to know Cal Kestis as he stumbled his way into a host of lesser-explored Star Wars mythologies. Survivor looks to darken things up a bit — and fine-tune some of the combat sequences — but if it continues to mix puzzles and the ability to use the Force,



Electronic Arts

Star Wars Jedi: Survivor

expect this to be an action adventure worth taking.

**The Legend of Zelda: Tears of the Kingdom****Release date:** May 12**Platform:** Nintendo Switch

Nintendo has kept much of Tears of the Kingdom under wraps, but what we've seen looks striking.

Early images show our hero Link soaring among the clouds, traversing a kingdom with floating mountains, giving us all new terrain to scale and explore. The Zelda lore is a bit convoluted and complex these days, but individual goals of each particular game are always clear. And this sequel to Breath of the Wild is so highly anticipated because the latter redefined how we approach open-world games, as it gave us an universe to wander rather than tasks to simply tick off.

**Star Trek: Resurgence****Release date:** TBA**Platforms:** Xbox Series X/S, PlayStation 5, PC

Set shortly after the events of "Star Trek: The Next Generation," Resurgence introduces us to a host of new Starfleet characters as they navigate interstellar diplomacy. Drama can escalate quickly, whether that's among gossiping crew members or trying to broker negotiations among multiple alien races. The game will follow a familiar formula — a third-person, dialogue-heavy game with light puzzles and multiple conversational branches. And that's just how I want my Trek, as attempts to emphasize action in the video game space have tended to not suit the brand well.

There are some familiar characters — Spock, for instance, has been shown in demos — and the game looks to

**SEE LOFTY ON PAGE 19**

## WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

# Greatest Generation returns to the battle

Company of Heroes 3 a wildly enjoyable, next-level WWII real-time strategy game coming next month

BY SAMUEL WEINSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

Company of Heroes 3 is a real-time strategy game, and I would place emphasis on strategy.

As with each generation of video games, the experience becomes that much more immersive and alters the course of the gameplay.

Details in graphics are no longer just for the eye's pleasure, but are meant to be advantageous in battle.

There are no generic audio tracks for this game; each soldier of each unit is unique. In other words, no aspect of the game has been overlooked. Every detail adds to the harmonious cacophony of war.

## Campaign

The campaign is wildly enjoyable and is inspired by historical events from World War II.

Action takes place across two different theaters, providing two storylines.

I tested the Italian campaign for this review. This campaign, inspired by the liberation of fascist Italy by allied forces, was a fascinating undertaking.

The gameplay incorporates various real-time strategy elements across the campaign and is constantly engaging. For example, one portion of the game is played on a large map of Italy to help visualize capturing the countryside. The action then moves into large cities for an up-close encounter with the enemy.

Conquering Italy requires thoughtful consultation with and appeasement of British and American generals under your command to gain access to specialized units. The recommendations that the gen-

erals provide for the campaign are historically inspired.

The units that are gained can then be used in real-time battles to defeat Nazis.

Each step of the campaign compounded the experience from the previous level to help secure the skill set required to finish.

The campaign also succeeds in getting you familiar with the game so that you can compete against other players, which is the game's final portion.

## Multiplayer

The multiplayer is ridiculously fun.

You have the choice of playing as Americans, British or the Nazis. Each faction has its own unique capabilities, making the first foundational step into multiplayer extremely consequential. To win, you have to conquer certain spaces and hold on to them for certain portions of time.

While the objective of the multiplayer sounds simple, it's a complex operation. It requires spawning specialized units by building unique structures to produce these units, while taking on the responsibility of a full-blown battle. It also demands a balancing act between fighting and producing troops to effectively counter your opponent.

As someone who has not played the previous iterations of the game, I thought that I would be hopelessly confused, but for anyone with real-time strategy experience, it should be easy to pick up.

## Verdict

Company of Heroes is truly a next-generation game. It's well thought out and crafted, with care put into the smallest details.



Relic Entertainment photos

The action in Company of Heroes 3 takes place across two different theaters: one inspired by the liberation of fascist Italy by allied forces, and a North African campaign.



I was particularly impressed by how the developers spent a great deal of time providing voices for individual units for the game to ensure that you, the player, recognize the importance of your units.

This was developed to help ensure that you would not treat units as disposable, which is often the case for real-time strategy games.

The game is also capable of allowing you to place your troops into buildings so you can use every part of the landscape

and for war, an addition to the game that I was thoroughly amazed by.

The controls were complex for a real-time strategy game because the controls are designed to focus on individual units and specific areas of the map.

If you're looking for a next generation real-time strategy game, you can definitely find it in Company of Heroes 3, coming in February.

**Platforms:** PC, Xbox, PlayStation 5  
**Online:** [companyofheroes.com](http://companyofheroes.com)

# Lofty: Stories will be a key element in 2023

FROM PAGE 18

highlight interpersonal drama.

## Hollow Knight: Silksong

**Release date:** TBA

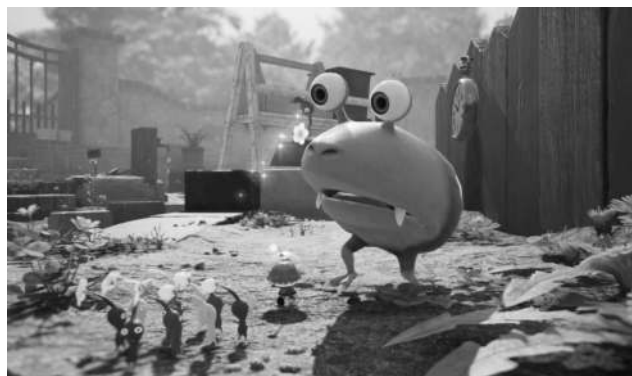
**Platforms:** Xbox Series X/S, PlayStation 5, Nintendo Switch, PC, Mac

The long-awaited sequel to the 2017 indie hit Hollow Knight, Silksong boasts new characters, new locations and a refreshed look. And what a look it is, as the hand-drawn and painterly style makes it look as if we're exploring a Gothic fairy tale. It's a world of bugs, but everything in Silksong looks a bit magical, from shaman-like slugs to glistening, glowing beehive-inspired fortresses. Like the first, expect a platforming action game with plenty of nooks to explore, towns to uncover and a host of friendly insect-inspired creatures to help us along the way.

## Oxenfree II: Lost Signals

**Release date:** TBA

**Platforms:** PlayStation consoles, Nintendo Switch, PC  
Southern California developer Night School Studio —



Nintendo

Pikmin 4 is adorable, but also full of complex strategy.

now a part of the Netflix empire — has focused its efforts on honing conversation in games, creating a relatively realistic dialogue system in which characters speak, interrupt one another and overlap with each other. The result: games that more closely merge the interactive medium with television. This sequel promises another set of mysteries to unravel via radio frequency.

## Disney Illusion Island

**Release date:** TBA

**Platform:** Nintendo Switch

Once every year or two, I revisit the vintage '90s Dis-

ney game Castle of Illusion, still a joyous storybook of a game all these years later. Disney Illusion Island, modeled after the latest Mickey Mouse shorts, looks to be the unofficial sequel I've long wanted. The game is bright, and looks to be full of mysterious libraries, candy-coated worlds and bewildering caverns.

## Pikmin 4

**Release date:** TBA

**Platform:** Nintendo Switch

All we've seen of Pikmin 4 is about 30 seconds — so we don't know much. But those 30 seconds were still pretty, as we saw a lovely, backyard-like nature setting. All of the franchise's cutesy-ness, though, sometimes makes one forget that Pikmin games are full of complex strategy — resource management at its most adorable.

## Another Crab's Treasure

**Release date:** TBA

**Platforms:** PC, Nintendo Switch

Trash shouldn't look as appealing to play with as it does in Another Crab's Treasure, an action adventure that also has some thoughts about climate change. We explore vast underwater vistas as a hermit crab on a quest to get back his shell. In the meantime, anything from old metal cans to discarded coffee mugs can double as a shell — and a shield. Combat is a central component, and the sea creature foes will encounter look tough to tackle, but fighting games with a thoughtful message are all too rare.

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## A shared romance with the City of Light

There's a spot in Paris that's an ideal place to share a box of macarons. Pulling the ribbon on a tiny box of them — gilded with tradition and the Parisian flair for good living — is the perfect start for a romantic afternoon with my favorite travel partner and my favorite city.

Nibbling our pastel confections — rose, lavender, peach and pistachio — we dangle our legs over the tip of an island that splits the Seine River, which splits the city. Ahead of us a series of bridges gracefully arch over the river as it recedes into the distance.

Paris is a city for walking, hand in hand, with just the right person. In a tiny park on the island, we tune in to the sound of pétanque balls cracking against each other and the cackle of old-timers wrapped up in the game. We share a Monet moment near a pond of water lilies, where children nudge toy boats along with sticks.

We celebrate the chance to become temporary Parisians — to not just blend in, but join in. We explore the city as cultural chameleons, relishing the novelties all around us (such as how poodles here actually sit on chairs at cafés). And as we watch

children practice their social skills in the sandbox at the Place des Vosges, we find comfort in the universalities.

We mimic the relaxed sidewalk dance of couples who are clearly as old as our parents and still in love — with each other and the city they call home. The friendly bustle along a market street reminds us that this vast city is really a collection of close-knit neighborhoods.



Rick Steves

Like locals do, we give market strawberries the sniff test and covet the countless goat cheeses spilling from a fromagerie onto sidewalk racks. We watch and listen, happy to go ignored, as chance meetings of friends are followed by sweet little popping sounds made by air kisses just beyond each cheek.

We stop at a café, and over a glass of wine, we ponder the countless love affairs that can be blamed on Paris. We draw up a list of past Parisian romantics — from Frédéric Chopin to Edith Piaf to Ernest Hemingway — and vow that we'd turn them all down for each other.

A dainty bird alights on an



CAMERON HEWITT/Rick Steves' Europe

A sunset stroll along the Seine River is one of Paris' most romantic experiences.

adjacent chair, taking a sweet break from her daily chores. She cocks her little head at us and blinks — as if reminding us of our goal in Paris: to hit pause on normal life, take time to reflect, and focus on simply being here. So when the crème brûlée comes, we prick our ears for the mouth-watering sound of our little spoons cracking through its roof before we devour it ... slowly.

After climbing the steps of Montmartre, we grab a perch at

the top. From here, we survey the city as it sprawls before us. We feel a kind of communion here. As we snuggle, so do strangers around us. They may be of different generations and nationalities, and speak a different language, but there's a oneness here — an intimacy of being surrounded by strangers carrying on their own love affairs with Paris.

As we look out over Europe's grandest skyline, the sun sets,

and the City of Light starts to turn itself on. District by district, neighborhoods are illuminated. At the top of the hour, as church bells ring, the Eiffel Tower twinkles like a constellation in the Paris sky.

We put our phones away, thankful we have nothing scheduled but time together.

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

## Frosty January weather brings cold, flaky activities to the fore

Once the holiday hubbub has subsided, it's all too easy to hunker down and not budge far from one's home for weeks on end. But that would be a shame, as winter weather and a cover of snow set the stage for unique activities and adventures across Europe. To take part in some of the season's most intriguing offerings, advance planning is essential.

## Snow sculptures

Grindelwald, Switzerland, is the postcard-perfect backdrop to the World Snow Festival, in which artists from around the world create fantastical shapes and figures from 10-foot-high blocks of snow. From 8 a.m.-5 p.m. daily Jan. 16-21, the teams of artists will work their blocks of snow into their interpretations of this year's theme, "tradition." The sculptures can be viewed at the Bärplatz, Eiger and Nordwandplatz, and entry is free. Online: [tinyurl.com/22jdmba4](http://tinyurl.com/22jdmba4)



Karen Bradbury

## Auto races on snow

Madonna di Campiglio, an upscale winter sports paradise in the lovely Dolomites mountain range of Italy, stages a Winter Marathon race for drivers of classic autos. The famed road race gets underway on Jan. 19 and finishes four days later. The town's Piazzale Brenta is the place to take in the sight of vintage Alfa Romeos, Jaguars, Porsches and other luxury makes between races and time trials. On Jan. 21, the cars race on the town's frozen lake. Entry is free. Online: [tinyurl.com/4tabfkjy](http://tinyurl.com/4tabfkjy)

## Sled dog races

Mush! Sled dog racing is a thing in Europe as well, and there are plenty of opportunities, snow cover permitting, to watch huskies and other hardy breeds pull sleds in teams of various sizes.



iStock

Through the end of February, various festivals and meetups for hot air balloonists take place throughout the Alps. Passengers can sign up for early-morning rides.

France's Alsace region hosts a dogsled racing event on Jan. 21. Some 70 teams of mushers and dogs will compete for the fastest times in the area surrounding the Station du Lac Blanc. The races begin at noon; entry costs 5 euros adults 2 euros for students and is free for those ages 14 and under. Online: [tinyurl.com/58w3kbhn](http://tinyurl.com/58w3kbhn)

The Orlické Hory, a range of mountains in northeastern Bohemia of the Czech Republic, is the site of the Šedivákv Long, or Czech Long Trail, 200 and 300 km races that take place Jan. 24-28. Some 100 mushers and 700 eager sled dogs compete in what's considered one of Europe's most challenging races. The race's start and end point is Jedlová. Online: [czechlongtrail.com](http://czechlongtrail.com)

## Hot air balloons

Frozen winter landscapes look even more spectacular from the basket of a hot air balloon. Through the end of

February, various festivals and meetups for balloonists take place throughout the Alps, and would-be passengers can sign up for rides, which take place in the early hours of the morning. Those on the ground can enjoy the sight of dozens of brightly colored orbs hovering above. Night ascents are also typically part of the festivities. Top places to experience balloon festivals include the Austrian resort towns of Filzmoos (Jan. 14-28) and Zell am See/Kaprun (Feb. 2-12). Online: [zellamsee-kaprun.com/en/events/balloonalps](http://zellamsee-kaprun.com/en/events/balloonalps)

## A thousand-year-old craft fair

The Aosta Valley in northwest Italy is a region known for its accomplished artisans, who display and sell their wares at the Sant'Orso Fair, held Jan. 30-31. Thousands of craftspeople descend upon Aosta's pretty historical center with their textiles, glass, ceramics, metalwork, carvings, baskets, furniture and other quality crafts. There's also a pavilion dedicated to the culinary specialties of the region, from salami and cheese, to honey, wines and liqueur. The term "La Veilla" refers to the street party that takes place Jan 30 starting at 7 p.m. Folk and choral groups perform. Online: [fieradisantorso.it](http://fieradisantorso.it)

## Sámi culture in Lapland

Each year in February, thousands of visitors brave icy temperatures to immerse themselves in the fascinating culture of the Sámi, an indigenous, traditionally nomadic people living in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The Jokkmokk Market, running Feb. 2-4 in the town of the same name in Swedish Lapland, celebrates a lifestyle that is traditionally centered around reindeer husbandry. Visitors can peruse quality crafts, sample local specialties, watch folk dancing, take dog sled rides and watch reindeer races. Opting to stay in private accommodation gives additional insight to the culture. Online: [jokkmokk-smarknad.se](http://jokkmokk-smarknad.se)

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL



iStock

Stockholm is a harbor city, laced with ferry routes and marinas. While Stockholmers like to spend winter outside, the city also has indoor museums.

The cold doesn't bother people in Sweden, known for cozy fires, mulled wine, snow sports and views of northern lights

BY STEVE HENDRIX  
The Washington Post

Some like it cold. While plenty of beach-bound travelers spend big to escape the seasonal chill, more than a few say: Winter? Brrrrrr-ing it! That was my family last December, so wistful for something frostier and fleecier than the Middle East climate where we lived that we opted for a Nordic winter break in Sweden. There we found winter enticements that got more intense — and cozier — as we climbed the latitudes. In the south, Stockholm offers Yule markets, hot wine and stunning museums. Kayaking in the Baltic archipelago is a literal icebreaker. And way up in Swedish Lapland, the northern lights glow over dog sleds and roaring fires.

“Swedish people like to be outdoors, even in the cold,” said Birgitta Palmér of Visit Stockholm. “We dress warmly, go for walks or to ski, and then you go into a cafe with your cheeks all red and get cozy.”

## Stockholm

This ancient port city puts itself in a winter mood with lots of little fires everywhere. Small blazes in sidewalk braziers flank the doors of cafes and shops, a wood-fire welcome into the great indoors of a culture that knows how to snuggle up for the dark months.

At noontime on a day soon after the winter solstice, the sun is barely above the treetops. Swedes make up for the truncated day by doubling down on fires and torches and floodlights. The funky and welcoming Hotel Hasselbacken, wrapped in plenty of holiday bulbs, glowed like a little Vegas in the middle of Royal Djurgården island, the city's harborside museum quarter.

“It's how we survive, all the candles and lights,” said Karin Pettersson, a lifelong Stockholmer and an editor at Sweden's biggest daily newspaper. We met near the city's central train station for “fika” — the Swedish quick break for coffee and ginger cookies. “April is pretty much our entire spring.”

Stockholm is a harbor city, laced with ferry routes and marinas. We took a boat ride to Gamla Stan, the city's expansive old quarter, and, after shopping for lamb-skin gloves and Moomin mugs, found excellent Italian food in a vaulted brick cellar.

There was more traditional Swedish fare grilling at Skansen, a vast outdoor

museum of culture and heritage. The scent of elk meat and fried chanterelles floated over stalls hawking lox and rosehip soup and pancakes fried with lingonberries. People cooked sausages over communal fires kept stoked for that purpose.

This is the hearty fuel that drives many out for the city's local winter sports, including cross-country skiing, snowshoe hiking and sledding, all within city limits. Ice skaters are everywhere, in city park rinks and on dozens of lakes; with the deeper freeze comes guided long-distance skate tours on the Baltic inlets.

If you're more the indoors type, a range of world-class and well-heated museums await: The Museum of Spirits is worth it for the gift shop alone. Laureate speeches stream at the Nobel Prize Museum, and earworm hits stream at the ABBA museum. Ship lovers have it best, between the Maritime Museum, the Viking Museum, the Museum of Wrecks and the spectacularly preserved Vasa, the towering 17-century warship that was raised intact from Stockholm harbor some 330 years after it flipped over and sank minutes into its first voyage.

## Vaxholm Island

We took the two-deck Cinderella north into the filigree of islands that separate Stockholm from the open Baltic. At Vaxholm Island, in the heart of the archipelago, it was a short trundle from the gang-plank to the dockside Waxholms Hotell, a

vintage art nouveau refuge with a spectacular view of the ancient Vaxholm fortress from its wraparound dining windows.

In the cold months, the village that is crammed with tourists in summer settles in for its long winter's nap. The local boutiques lining the high street are filled with thick woolens and lambskin gloves.

Annika Mattson, co-founder of Vaxholm Yogacenter, tells winter visitors to walk the winding lanes for a Scandinavian architecture tutorial: classic frame cottages all aglow, many of them, including Mattson's 17th-century house, painted in the distinctive red pigment known as falu.

“It's beautiful all year-round, but in winter, the tranquility comes,” Mattson said.

Two of us braved the cold to kayak through the semi-frozen waters. “The ice tells us where to go,” guide Andy Jurkowski said as we paddled through the channel that a kindly work boat had just plowed through the surface crust.

“This is where Andy asked me to marry him,” his wife, Milena, said at the entrance to a rocky inlet as we glided past dozens of sleeping summer homes. We ended the trip by falling, on purpose, into the icy water, braving a plunge between steaming stints in the couple's sauna.

Ashore, we met Linda Wahlström, and she invited us to the hilltop bed-and-breakfast she runs to warm up with a glass of glogg, the Swedish mulled wine, and some grilled Stockholmer sausages. She was delighted to hear about our baptism by the Baltic earlier in the day.

“Now you are Swedish,” she said, toasting us with glogg.

## Swedish Lapland

It took a flight to vault us 9 degrees north to Kiruna, just above the Arctic Circle, where serious winter is found. Those with an affinity for the extreme have long come here for the below-zero thrills of cross-country skiing and reindeer spotting in the daylong dark of the season. But increasing numbers of families flock from climates where winter is waning just to be in fail-safe snow.

“They want to experience the ‘Arctic lifestyle,’” said Hakan Stenlund of Swedish Lapland. “Of course, when it's below zero, sometimes it's enough to make a coffee on the fire and then go back in.”

Stenlund points visitors to a growing infrastructure of hotels and outfitters providing that fire coffee, along with the snowmobile safaris and dog-sled treks that are the top seasonal draws. He points the many aurora borealis seekers to the village of Abisko, known to boast some of the most dramatic, and reliable, northern light shows on the globe.

We opted for the place that put this region on the tourism map some three decades ago, the world's first Icehotel on the nearby Torne River. A blend of conventional hotel rooms and chambers sculpted from solid ice, the resort is a shrine to — and a hub of — deep winter.

Based for two nights in regular (“heated”) rooms, we ventured out for bracing hours, saved from the chill by explorer-grade snowsuits provided by the hotel. We plied snowmobiles over the frozen river and through the snowy woods, including one late-night tour under the green magnetic skies. Dogs pulled us for hours to a forest warming hut and back.

We sculpted figures from blocks of crystal-clear ice harvested from the Torne (my glistening winter's cap won a prize!) and hiked for Christmas Eve dinner at an 18th-century homestead. Next door was the Nutti Sámi Siida, an outdoor museum devoted to the local Indigenous culture.

Finally, we went hard freeze, spending our last night in the Icehotel proper. There are 24 ice rooms constructed of blocks cut fresh each winter and various suites sculpted by artists and mechanically frozen year-round, along with a bar and gallery. Ours was the fanciful “Midsummer Night's Dream” suite, with flowers entombed in the frozen walls, coffee table and bed.

It was frozen-pizza weather in there, but with a heated bathroom attached and an “expedition” sleeping bag provided, the coldest night of our lives was one of the coziest.

# WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



The large ponds in Parco delle Fonti di Torrate are essentially bogs at this time of year. They are, however, evidence of the natural springs that supply water to the water tower in the background and via pipes to communities in the area southeast of Aviano Air Base.



The park contains almost 200 acres of land near the hamlet of Torrate, Italy. It is designed to maintain the quality of springs that supply water to surrounding communities in the Italian regions of Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto.



The main paths through the park are well maintained and suitable for walkers, strollers, bikes and dogs on leashes. Visitors during the winter miss out on some of the color on display during other seasons, though they can often double down on the tranquility.



PHOTOS BY KENT HARRIS/Stars and Stripes

Despite what the name might imply, visitors to the Parco delle Fonti di Torrate don't see a large amount of water, at least during the winter. But the park serves its purpose of helping to protect the quality of the water pumped from springs to supply communities in the area.

## No liquid leisure, just peace, at this Italian park

BY KENT HARRIS  
*Stars and Stripes*

Several popular parks along Italy's Adriatic Sea coast not far from Aviano Air Base invite hordes of people to get wet by sliding into pools.

But there's a much different sort of park on the way there from Aviano that's also centered on water, and its architects would be horrified at the sight of bodies frolicking in their H2O. Fortunately, that's not really an option.

Parco delle Fonti di Torrate was crafted to help protect the natural springs near the hamlet of Torrate that supply drinking water to communities along the Friuli-Venezia Giulia border with Veneto.

Almost 200 acres were set aside as a natural preserve to prevent insecticides or other human-made pollutants from entering the groundwater.

So don't expect crowds. In fact, during a recent visit, it was entirely possible to walk around the 8 kilometers of walking and biking paths without encountering a single person.

There is some evidence of large-scale water gathering, with a pumphouse and a few large pipes around the park. And there is a hulking water tower near the parking lot. But aside from that, it's not a lot different from a few other parks in the area.

It has small ruins of former castles. It served as an estate for a wealthy family. And it caters to walkers and joggers with miles of well-maintained paths.

Winter might not be the best time to see wildlife in the park, but during my visit, I saw almost a dozen herons and a pair of cranes.

None of them were looking to let two-legged creatures get very close.

### Parco delle Fonti di Torrate

**Address:** Via Udine 1, Chions, Italy. The park is about a 20-minute drive southeast of Aviano Air Base. The easiest way is to take A28 to the Vilotta exit, travel along Via Maggio to the SP1 and look for a billboard at the entrance after about a mile.

**Cost:** Free admission and parking

**Hours:** The park is open 24 hours, though there's no lighting at night.

**Information:** [turismofvg.it](http://turismofvg.it)

Kent Harris

That appears to be just the way the birds — and the less frequent human visitors — prefer it anyway.

[harris.kent@stripes.com](mailto:harris.kent@stripes.com)  
[kharris4stripes](https://www.kentharris.com)

## WEEKEND: FOOD &amp; DINING



PHOTOS BY MATT WAGNER/Stars and Stripes

The rump steak at Restaurant MAX in Winnweiler, Germany, comes in four options: "Pfalzer" style with roasted onions, with homemade herb butter, with mushrooms and herb butter, and with the herb butter and grilled vegetables. The beef is from Argentina.



The sweet potato cream soup was a daily special on Dec. 17 at the Restaurant MAX. It hit the right spot on a cold, dreary evening, and made a case to become a regular menu item.



## Restaurant MAX

**Address:** Schlosstrasse 35, Winnweiler, Germany  
**Hours:** Thursday to Saturday, 5:30-11:30 p.m.; Sunday, 12-2 p.m. and 5:30-11 p.m.; Closed Monday through Wednesday.  
**Prices:** Starting at 5.90 euros for an appetizer to 25 euros for the most expensive steak meal. Cash and credit cards are accepted.  
**Menu:** Available in both English and German  
**Information:** +49 06302 609494; max-winnweiler.de

Matt Wagner

# Father knows best

## Dad's advice leads to fine meal in the village of Winnweiler

BY MATT WAGNER  
Stars and Stripes

One of the many things I have in common with my father is a particular palate. Both of us are picky eaters.

When I moved close to Kaiserslautern, Germany, in September, my dad drew on the knowledge of the surrounding area he gained during his military career and told me I could get a good steak in the town of Winnweiler.

But he couldn't remember the name of the restaurant he had in mind. After a quick Google search, I settled on Restaurant MAX, which had garnered high ratings in both English and German.

I don't know if it's the restaurant from my father's memory, but my choice did not disappoint.

Located in a former gym right next to the Jewish Museum of the North Pfalz, Restaurant MAX offers mostly traditional German



The chocolate soufflé is one of the many dessert items available. It comes with a fruit sauce, whipped cream and a scoop of ice cream.

dishes like cheese spaetzle and numerous versions of schnitzel.

It also has a few Italian options like a mozzarella, tomato and pesto appetizer and a pair of spaghetti meals.

What caught my attention was the steak, which I hadn't eaten in a while, and my father's story persuaded me to give it a shot.

I ordered the rump steak with

mushrooms and a homemade butter, and on the side came a salad and fries, one of five potato sides available with the dish.

While the thoroughness of cooked steaks can be an adventure in Germany, Restaurant MAX cooked mine medium, as ordered.

My father would have enjoyed the pepper on top of the meat,

although he probably still would have added more. To top it off, the melted butter added so much flavor that I didn't miss any steak sauce.

The worst part of the meal was the mushrooms' lack of taste. I fixed that problem by mixing in the leftover butter.

The salad came the way it normally does in Germany: with all the ingredients separated. As someone who doesn't like onions and tomatoes, I appreciated that I didn't have to perform surgery to remove those items from the dish.

Also, the little slices of radishes were a nice touch and didn't take over the salad with their harsh, crisp bitterness.

Before the steak arrived, I had a sweet potato cream soup that was on the daily menu for a Saturday in mid-December. It hit the spot on a very chilly evening. I am not sure whether the cooks are considering adding it to the main menu, but I would recommend that wholeheartedly.

For dessert, I stayed away from the traditional apple strudel that I normally choose this time of year, even though I did want it.

MAX has two French delicacies: crepes with a chocolate mousse and a chocolate soufflé in a fruit sauce with whipped cream and ice cream. I went for the latter option.

Once again, it was a great choice. The fruit sauce and soufflé mixed well together, with neither being overpowering. The sauce consisted of bits of strawberries, cherries, blueberries and some small, red berries that I didn't recognize, but that my colleagues say probably were currants.

According to the menu, the ice cream is supposed to be vanilla, but the scoop served to me was light brown and tasted like hazelnut, which I enjoyed immensely.

Overall, it was a great meal.

The restaurant has plenty of space to accommodate groups of any size, including outdoor seating and two levels indoors.

As a party of one, I stuck out like a sore thumb. So next time, I plan to look for other people to bring along. If my parents do visit, I will take my dad to Restaurant MAX to see if it's the eatery he remembers.

If not, we'll just create a new memory at a great place.

wagner.mathew@stripes.com  
Twitter:@MWagsStripes

## WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

# Agents, assemble

Avengers S.T.A.T.I.O.N. in Japan launches visitors into the Marvel Universe

BY JUAN KING  
*Stars and Stripes*

**F**or hardcore fans of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, a treat awaits you in Tokorozawa, a city in Saitama prefecture, north of Tokyo.

The Avengers S.T.A.T.I.O.N. exhibit is wowing visitors until Jan. 29 at the EJ Anime Museum within the Kadokawa Culture Museum, an architectural marvel of a building.

The exhibit was previously featured at Tokyo's Mori Arts Center Gallery in April, and Kyocera Museum of Art in Kyoto, Japan, in July. It's been around since its 2014 inception in New York City.

S.T.A.T.I.O.N. stands for Scientific Training And Tactical Intelligence Operative Network.

When I found out I could get an up-close and personal look at some of my favorite characters from the Marvel Universe, I quickly made plans. I ventured out on a Tuesday to the trendy entertainment complex of Tokorozawa Sakura Town. A train ride from Fussa Station in western Tokyo put me at Higashi-Tokorozawa Station within an hour. A 15-minute walk from there gets you to the building.

Entering the museum, I was met by an employee, who ushered me to the second-floor ticket counter. After paying the 2,400 yen admission, about \$16.50, I took the stairs to the third floor where the exhibit is located. Elevators are also available.

An employee took my ticket and recited, in Japanese, a few guidelines for conduct once inside, including photography. No selfie sticks, tripods, or flash and absolutely no video are allowed.

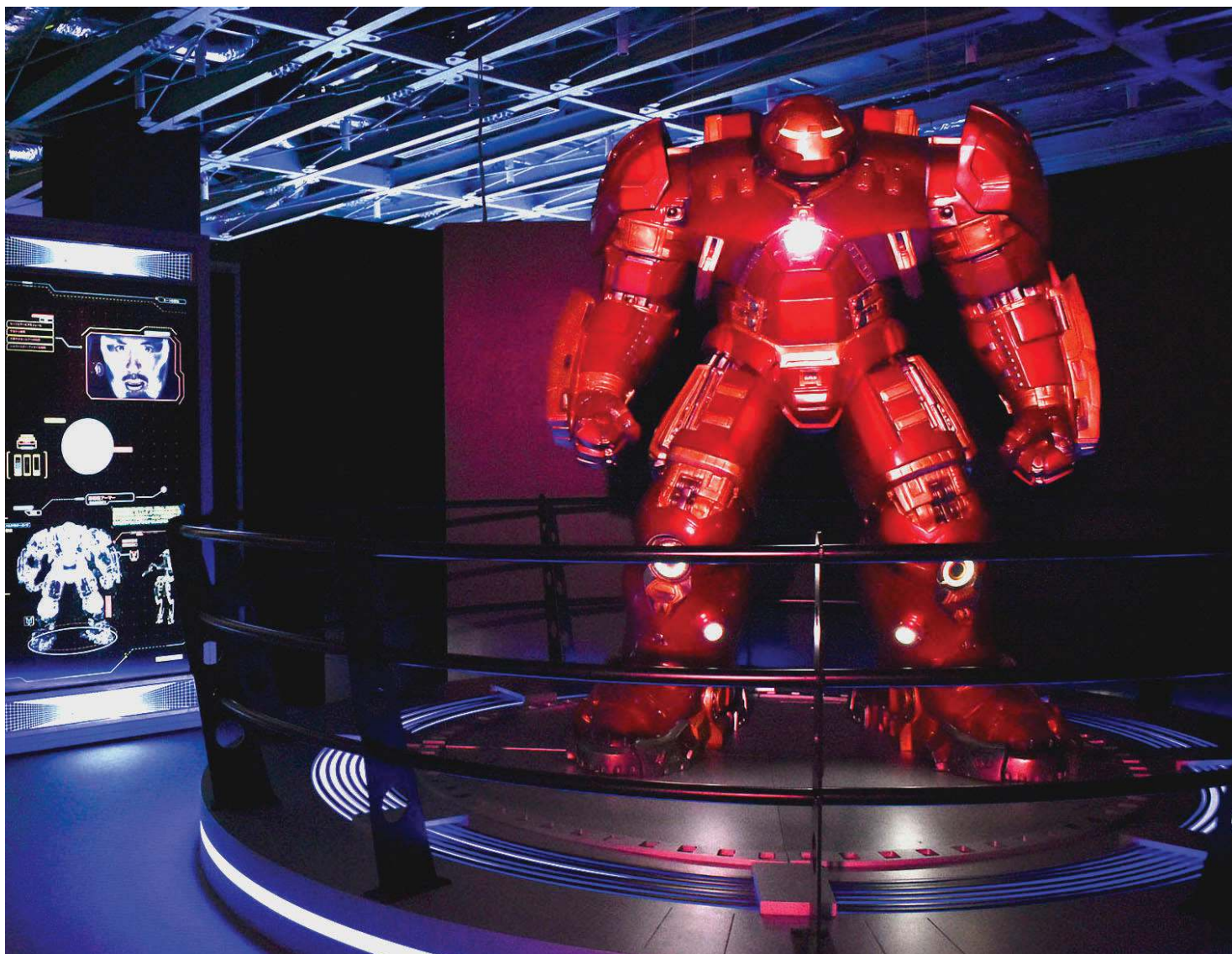
After that, I was led into a curtained room for a short Avengers-themed video briefing. It included multi-screen footage of scenes from the Avengers movies, and was presented by Agent Maria Hill, a member of S.H.I.E.L.D., or Strategic Homeland Intervention, Enforcement and Logistics Division, and a familiar face on all the Avengers films. Because this is the Avengers training facility, I felt I was being prepared for Avenger status.

At the end of the briefing, I was ushered into the exhibit areas. Each is sectioned off and numbered under "secure levels."

At secure level 1, a full-length figure of "Cap," or Captain America, stands to your right. His uniform is on display, along with video graphics of his statistics, exploits and a couple true-to-life models of his famous vibranium shield.

A replica of Cap's Harley-Davidson Street 750 motorcycle, featured in "Captain America: Winter Soldier," sits in this section. I asked another visitor to photograph me on the bike, which is allowed.

Moving on, I found an 8-foot-tall digital model of the Hulk, one of my favorite



PHOTOS BY JUAN KING/Stars and Stripes

**Marvel Cinematic Universe's Mark XLIV Iron Man Armor, known as the Hulkbuster armor, is one of many exhibits on display at the Avengers S.T.A.T.I.O.N. exhibit in Tokorozawa, Japan, until Jan. 29 at the EJ Anime Museum within the Kadokawa Culture Museum.**

## On the QT

**Location:** 3-31-3, Higashi-Tokorozawa Wada, Tokorozawa-shi, Saitama Prefecture, Japan, 359-0023

**Directions:** An hour train ride from Fussa Station to Higashi-Tokorozawa Station; 15-minute walk to the museum.

**Hours:** Open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, last entry at 5:30 p.m.; exhibit concludes Jan. 29. Costs: 2,400 yen, or about \$16.50 for adults; 1,900 yen, or about \$12.94 for junior high school and below; pre-school age children admitted free.

**Food:** No food allowed.

**Information:** Tickets can be purchased at the museum or online at [eplus.jp/avengers-exhibition](http://eplus.jp/avengers-exhibition). No re-entry allowed; no available ticket discounts for seniors or disabled; entry could be restricted if the venue reaches full capacity. online: [avengersstation.jp](http://avengersstation.jp)

Juan King

characters. Two large re-creations of his hands rest on a podium with an interactive video screen between them. Three modes allowed you to tap the screen to make the Hulk pose or do one of his signature moves.

An Iron Man interactive video is also available, allowing me to suit up in both his regular armor and the Hulkbuster armor to fight off enemies.

Further in, more of my favorites, including Black Panther, Black Widow and War Machine, had life-sized displays along with costumes, weapons and video footage from the Avenger movies.

A lineup of Iron Man's armor evolution; a giant display of the villainous Thanos and his Infinity Gauntlet in the Hall of Avengers; and Thor's Mjolnir, or hammer, are among other things visitors will see. Superhero fans will find all the hero



**Agent Maria Hill, a character common throughout the Marvel superhero movies, briefs visitors at the beginning and the end of the Avengers S.T.A.T.I.O.N. exhibit in Tokorozawa, Japan.**



**The Hulk stands on an interactive video display near re-creations of his hands.**



**Avengers superhero The Falcon, here in a video display, is one of many featured.**

king.juan@stripes.com  
@juanking\_17

## WEEKEND: FOOD &amp; DINING

**Player's Café**

**Location:** 2-chome-6-47 Chuo, Okinawa, 904-0004, or GPS 26.338912631326554, 127.80024262642046.

**Directions:** From Gate 2, Kadena Air Base, take a left at Koza Music Town onto Route 330. After just less than a half-mile, turn left on Park Avenue Dori. Player's Cafe is on the left. Parking lots are just past the restaurant on the right. Follow the signs.

**Hours:** Open 5 p.m. to 11 p.m. Wednesday through Monday.

**Prices:** Drinks range from soft drinks for 400 yen to a bottle of awamori for 3,000 yen. Food costs between 500 and 800 yen.

**Dress:** Casual

**Information:** Call 098-929-1169 or check online at [koza.tripshot-hotels.com](http://koza.tripshot-hotels.com).

Matthew M. Burke

**Player's Café in Okinawa city offers world-class atmosphere and delicious food and drinks.**

# Playing a part in revival

Café in central Okinawa's Koza a delicious, relaxing eatery option

By **MATTHEW M. BURKE**  
*Stars and Stripes*

**P**layer's Café is a classy yet unpretentious bar and restaurant in Koza, a formerly distressed area of central Okinawa.

The establishment offers food, drinks and lodging in an up-and-coming urban section of the island.

Patrons can relax in comfort and, on some nights, listen to live music surrounded by remnants of Koza's history, which is tied to American culture and Okinawan tradition.

Player's Café opened in 1999 in the area formerly known as Koza town, now officially part of Okinawa city. It's a short walk from the back gate to Kadena Air Base, familiar to service members as Gate 2 Street.

After World War II, bars and restaurants catering to Americans sprang up in the area as locals took to the American culture spilling off nearby bases. Jazz bands flooded the town, which existed from 1956 to 1974, soon giving way to rock acts like

Condition Green and Murasaki.

The area peaked during the Vietnam era when the island served as a way station for troops and equipment heading to Southeast Asia.

After the war, the boom times quelled as the U.S. consolidated its island bases and troop levels fell drastically. Starting in 2020, COVID-19 kept service members and their families and U.S. civilian employees confined to their homes and bases.

But the old Koza area has turned around in the past year. Young, hip entrepreneurs are back in business since Japan reopened for foreign tourists in 2022.

The shopping arcade off Gate 2 Street is buzzing. Park Avenue Dori, a strip mall connected to the arcade, is also seeing a revival, illuminated by the lights of the Player's Café's façade.

The café recently underwent an extensive remodel and upgrade with the addition of comfortable armchairs and bar stools, amplifiers, guitars and framed photos from Koza's past.



**AFTER  
HOURS  
OKINAWA**

The café is also the lounge and front-desk area for Tripshot Hotels Koza. Tripshot's 10 lofts are dotted along the street in recently renovated, previously vacant second-floor rooms.

The rooms are chic and inviting, appointed with warm woods, concrete and black panel chalkboards. But this new venture takes nothing away from the café.

Player's features a standard menu of drinks and cocktails, from ginger ale and mango juice for 400 yen, or just about \$3, to the house wine for 600 yen. Cocktails like rum and Coke or a Moscow mule cost 600 yen. Draft and bottled beer, Okinawan awamori, Japanese sake and whiskey are also available.

The food menu has changed over time and seems to be in flux at the moment, with only a few



PHOTOS BY MATTHEW M. BURKE/Stars and Stripes

**Player's Café's jerk chicken sandwich was juicy and spiced just right.**

classic items available on a night in late December. The kitchen offered spicy chicken for 780 yen, french fries and edamame for 500 yen each, and a small personal pizza for 800 yen.

For something a bit heavier, try the pork cutlet or Jamaican jerk chicken sandwiches with potato chips and cole slaw for 800 yen.

The cutlet sandwich was crispy with a light drizzle of pasta sauce. The jerk chicken spices tangoed with the mayonnaise dressing to light up the taste buds. The chicken was cooked perfectly, juicy and succulent.

Player's personal-sized pizza appeared store-bought but was

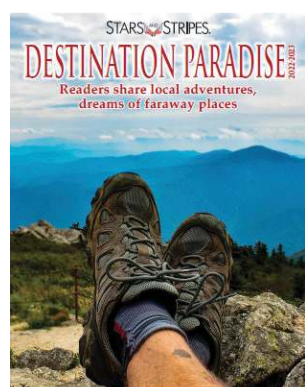
crispy and delicious just the same. Its overabundance of cheese stretched from mouth to slice with each bite.

The bartender's spumoni was colorful and blended perfectly, with nary a hint of alcohol.

Player's Café won't win a Michelin star for food anytime soon, but the food and drinks were delicious and worth the price of admission. The warmth and comfort of the space are world class.

Player's is the perfect place to meet friends, break bread, share a few laughs and celebrate the resurgence of a once-proud town.

[burke.matt@stripes.com](mailto:burke.matt@stripes.com)  
Twitter: @MatthewMBurke1



Take a trip across the Pacific and beyond with

# DESTINATION PARADISE

Pick up the magazine or get it online



STARS AND STRIPES

## WEEKEND: FOOD

# Chew on this

Gummy candy, increasingly popular in Japan, widening its appeal with a broader range of textures, tastes



The Japan News-Yomiuri photos

The chairperson of the Japan Gummy Association recommends using gummy candies to make lemonade cider, left, a beer cocktail, back, and caprese-style snacks.



Words, such as “hard” and “super elastic,” adorn the packages of gummy products. Chewing gummies with harder textures may help improve psychological comfort.

By MIWA UEHARA  
Japan News

Convenience stores and supermarkets have increasingly put a certain type of candy on their shelves: gummies. The word “gummy” evokes an image of a soft sweet for children, but other words, such as “hard” and “chewy,” have now become conspicuous on their packages.

The world’s first gummy product is said to have been created by the Haribo company, which is most famous for its bear-shaped candy, in Germany in the 1920s. Haribo gummies began to be imported to Japan in 1985.

Japan’s first domestically produced gummy candy is said to be the cola-flavored Colaup, launched in 1980 by Meiji Seika, which has since been incorporated into the Meiji Group. In 2021, annual sales of gummy products surpassed those of chewing gum for the first time.

At the Mega Don Quijote Shibuya main store, a flagship store of major discount store chain Don Quijote in Tokyo, about 300 kinds of gummy products fill the confectionery shelves, with signs reading, “Which do you prefer?” and “Hard vs Soft.” Many gummy products are adorned with words describing their texture, such as “high elasticity” and even “crunchy.”

“As the number of products has increased, offering a variety of tastes, colors and textures, gummy candies have grown more popular by attracting the attention of a wide range of people,” said a source at the retailer.

A 36-year-old gummy candy fan who provides information on gummy products on his blog, called “Blogummy,” said, “I like gummies that need to be bitten 10 to 15 times to chew through, as well as those that have strong resistance but the flavor slowly seeps out.”

The blogger has reviewed more than 450 gummy products so far. He said

the harder a gummy is, the more it helps him concentrate. When it’s time to get down to serious work, he puts his favorite hard-texture gummies into his mouth.

“I feel comfortable when chewing and gnawing on them,” he said. “I can’t do things without them when I also work remotely.”

Food companies are also applying their ingenuity to gummy innovation.

Tokyo-based Meiji analyzes the hardness of gummy candies using its own experimental equipment. In 2021, the company began displaying the hardness of gummies on a six-level scale on products’ packages. The higher the number, the harder the gummy is. The hardest, 5+, is said to be more than twice as chewy as the company’s Juicy Gummy signature product, which has a hardness factor of 2.

The 5+ products have been marketed with the slogan, “For when you are frustrated.” The hard gummies appear to play a role in helping people deal with the stresses of modern life.

In the spring last year, UHA Mikakuto, a confectioner based in Osaka, released a new product called Hagane (steel), in its Ninja Meshi gummy series. The product is

characterized by its hard, rubbery texture that is not easy to chew through.

“It’s popular mainly among men in their 20s and 30s. Some people buy the gummies in bulk, saying they are addictive,” a person at the company said.

## Chewy gummies fill a need

“For creatures with teeth, chewing is a fundamental need,” said Yuji Wada, a Ritsumeikan University professor specializing in psychology. “Humans have the nature of seeking stronger stimulation once they become accustomed to [a certain level of] it, so they may be attracted to harder gummy candies.”

Akio Nozawa, a professor of sensing engineering at Aoyama Gakuin University, said, “It is known that chewing increases blood flow to the brain and promotes the secretion of serotonin, called the ‘happy hormone.’”

According to Nozawa, some studies have shown that chewy gummies improved psychological comfort. “The synergistic effect with the comfort of good taste may have a positive impact both on the mind and physiology,” he said.

Chewing gum also requires chewing, but people have tended to shun gum since the novel coronavirus pandemic ushered in an era of universal mask-wearing, as gum is meant to be removed from the mouth for disposal. Instead, gummies have become popular.

“Chewing hard food is thought to improve saliva secretion and muscle

strength around the mouth,” said Ichiro Saito, a dentist and a former professor at Tsurumi University. “Demand [for gummies] might increase among people such as the elderly.”

## Gummies in drinks, snacks

Drinks and snacks made from gummies have also caused a buzz on the internet. The chairperson of the Japan Gummy Association recommended the following three ways to enjoy gummies:

■ Lemonade cider can be made by heating a small amount of lemon-flavored gummies in a microwave oven, then adding them to a glass with chopped gummies and soda water.

■ For adults, a beer cocktail, for which your favorite gummies are mixed with beer.

■ Snacks in a caprese style, made by rolling up pieces of prosciutto ham and skewering them with citrus-based gummies and cheese. They can also be garnished with tomatoes and olive oil.

“Gummy candies are easy to handle when used as if they were fruits. I want people to enjoy them with a free spirit,” the chairperson said.

“It is known that chewing increases blood flow to the brain and promotes the secretion of serotonin, called the ‘happy hormone.’”

Akio Nozawa  
professor at Aoyama Gakuin University

## WEEKEND: BOOKS



# Sherlock Holmes new to public domain

*The Associated Press*

**S**herlock Holmes is finally free to the American public in 2023.

The long-running contested copyright dispute over Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's tales of a whip-smart detective came to an end as the 1927 copyrights that expired Jan. 1 include Conan Doyle's last Sherlock Holmes work.

Alongside the short-story collection "The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes," books such as Virginia Woolf's "To The Lighthouse," Ernest Hemingway's "Men Without Women," William Faulkner's "Mosquitoes" and Agatha Christie's "The Big Four" — a Hercule Poirot mystery — became public domain as the calendar turned to 2023.

Once a work enters the public domain it can legally be shared, performed, reused, repurposed or sampled without permission or cost. The works from 1927 were originally supposed to be copyrighted for 75 years, but the 1998 Copyright Term Extension Act delayed opening them up for an additional 20 years.

"For the vast majority — probably 99% — of works from 1927, no copyright holder financially benefited from continued copyright. Yet they remained off limits, for no good reason," Jennifer Jenkins, director of Duke's Center for the Study of the Public Domain, wrote in a blog post heralding "Public Domain Day 2023."

That long U.S. copyright period meant many works that would now become available have long since been lost, because they were not profitable to maintain by the legal owners, but couldn't be used by others. On the Duke list are such "lost" films like Victor Fleming's "The Way of All Flesh" and Tod Browning's "London After Midnight."

1927 portended the silent film era's end with the release of the first "talkie" — a film with dialogue in it. That was "The Jazz Singer," the historic first feature-length film with synchronized dialogue also notorious for Al Jolson's blackface performance.

In addition to the Alan Crosland-directed film, other movies like "Wings" — directed by William A. Wellman and the "outstanding production" winner at the very first Oscars — and Fritz Lang's seminal science-fiction classic "Metropolis" enters the public domain.

Musical compositions — the music and lyrics found on sheet music, not the sound recordings — on the list include hits from Broadway musicals like "Funny Face" and jazz standards from the likes of legends like Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, in addition to Irving Berlin's "Puttin' on the Ritz" and "(I Scream You Scream, We All Scream for) Ice Cream" by Howard Johnson, Billy Moll and Robert A. King.

## Notable new additions

Duke's Center for the Public Domain lists notable books, movies and musical compositions new to the public domain — just a fraction of the thousands unleashed in 2023.

### BOOKS

"The Gangs of New York," by Herbert Asbury (original publication)

"Death Comes for the Archbishop," by Willa Cather

"The Big Four," by Agatha Christie

"The Tower Treasure," the first Hardy Boys mystery by the pseudonymous Franklin W. Dixon

"The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes," by Arthur Conan Doyle

"Copper Sun," by Countee Cullen

"Mosquitoes," by William Faulkner

"Men Without Women," by Ernest Hemingway

"Der Steppenwolf," by Herman Hesse (in German)

"Amerika," by Franz Kafka (in German)

"Now We Are Six," by A.A. Milne with illustrations from E.H. Shepard

"Le Temps retrouvé," by Marcel Proust (in French)

"Twilight Sleep," by Edith Wharton

"The Bridge of San Luis Rey," by Thornton Wilder

"To The Lighthouse," by Virginia Woolf

### MOVIES

"7th Heaven," directed by Frank Borzage

"The Battle of the Century," a Laurel and Hardy film directed by Clyde Bruckman

"The Kid Brother," directed by Ted Wilde

"The Jazz Singer," directed by Alan Crosland

"The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog," directed by Alfred Hitchcock

"Metropolis," directed by Fritz Lang

"Sunrise," directed by F.W. Murnau

"Upstream," directed by John Ford

"Wings," directed by William A. Wellman

### MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS

"Back Water Blues," "Preaching the Blues" and "Foolish Man Blues" (Bessie Smith)

"The Best Things in Life Are Free," from the musical "Good News" (George Gard "Buddy" De Sylva, Lew Brown, Ray Henderson)

"Billy Goat Stomp," "Hyena Stomp" and "Jungle Blues" (Ferdinand Joseph Morton)

"Black and Tan Fantasy" and "East St. Louis Toodle-O" (Bub Miley, Duke Ellington)

"Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" and "Ol' Man River," from the musical "Show Boat" (Oscar Hammerstein II, Jerome Kern)

"Diane" (Erno Rapee, Lew Pollack)

"Funny Face" and "'S Wonderful," from the musical "Funny Face" (Ira and George Gershwin)

"(I Scream You Scream, We All Scream for) Ice Cream" (Howard Johnson, Billy Moll, Robert A. King)

"Mississippi Mud" (Harry Barris, James Cavanaugh)

"My Blue Heaven" (George Whiting, Walter Donaldson)

"Potato Head Blues," "Gully Low Blues" (Louis Armstrong)

"Puttin' on the Ritz" (Irving Berlin)

"Rusty Pail Blues," "Sloppy Water Blues" and "Soothing Syrup Stomp" (Thomas Waller)

Duke's Center for the Public Domain/AP

# Titles in 2023 coming from Prince Harry, Whitehead, Hanks

By MOIRA MACDONALD  
*The Seattle Times*

Making a January list of "books to look forward to" is a hopeless task; there will be hundreds and hundreds of books out in the new year, each of them potentially thrilling to somebody. But here's a representative list of just a few that caught my eye. Here's hoping all of us find plenty of good reading in 2023!

**"Age of Vice," by Deepti Kapoor (now available)**

A ton of buzz surrounds this novel, already set for an FX television adaptation. Taking place in contemporary New Delhi, it's both crime drama and family saga, with a wealthy, corrupt family at its center.

**"Spare," by Prince Harry (Jan. 10)**

Let's hope that Harry hasn't blurted everything out in his Netflix series already.

**"Pat in the City: My Life of Fashion, Style, and Breaking All the Rules," by Patricia Field (Feb. 14)**

Now in her 70s, the influential costume designer behind "Sex and the City" and "The Devil Wears Prada" looks back on a lifetime of style.

**"Chain-Gang All-Stars," by Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah (April 4)**

From the bestselling author of "Friday Black," this dystopian novel examines the American prison system through the lens of a profit-raising program in which two female gladiators must fight for their freedom.

**"A Living Remedy," by Nicole Chung (April 4)**

The author of the elegant memoir "All You Can Ever Know" writes about the illness and death of her adoptive parents during the pandemic, and about class, inequality and grief.

**"Romantic Comedy," by Curtis Sittenfeld (April 4)**

The slyly funny Sittenfeld, whose previous novels include "Rodham" and "Eligible," spins a love story involving a late-night-TV sketch writer and a pop star.

**"The Wager: A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny and Murder," by David Grann (April 18)**

I couldn't put down Grann's "Killers of the Flower Moon" a few years back; now he's back with another potentially mesmerizing nonfiction saga — an 18th-century tale of shipwreck and survival.

**"Small Mercies," by Dennis Lehane (April 25)**

Lehane, whose mesmerizing crime novels have inspired numerous movies ("Mystic River," "Gone Baby Gone," "Shutter

Island"), is back with a stand-alone thriller set in 1974 in south Boston, where a young woman has gone missing and a young man is found dead.

**"The Making of Another Motion Picture Masterpiece," by Tom Hanks, illustrated by R. Sikoryak (May 9)**

Apparently the Oscar-winning actor is a pretty good writer, too? This novel is about the making of a superhero film and the comic books that inspired it — and includes a book-within-the-book bonus of three comics created by Hanks.

**"Yellowface," by R.F. Kuang (May 16)**

A new-author sensation isn't who she says she is — or the race she implies that she is — in this highly anticipated, timely novel from bestselling fantasy author Kuang.

**"King: A Life," by Jonathan Eig (May 16)**

Eig, author of "Ali: A Life" and "Luckiest Man: The Life and Death of Lou Gehrig," writes the first new major biography of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in decades — and the first to include recently declassified FBI files.

**"Sing Her Down," by Ivy Pochoda (May 23)**

I loved Pochoda's elegant, tough L.A. noir "These Women" two years ago. Her latest is described as a feminist Western thriller, in which two unexpectedly freed cellmates pursue each other — and the truth about their crimes.

**"Crook Manifesto," by Colson Whitehead (July 18)**

I hadn't realized that Whitehead's terrific 2021 heist novel, "Harlem Shuffle," was the first of a trilogy. The second, set in the early 1970s, continues the story of furniture store owner Ray Carney, who's determined to stay on the straight and narrow — but it's not easy.

**"Family Lore," by Elizabeth Acevedo (Aug. 1)**

Acevedo, who won the National Book Award for Young People's Literature with her novel "The Poet X," here makes her debut in fiction for adults with a family saga of Dominican American sisters, one of whom has the gift of knowing when people will die.

**"Learned by Heart," by Emma Donoghue (Aug. 29)**

The Irish-born Donoghue is perhaps best known for "Room," but her historical novels ("The Wonder," "Frog Music") are a joy. This one's set in the early 19th century in York, where two girls at boarding school fall dangerously in love.

## WEEKEND: MUSIC

## NEW FEATURE



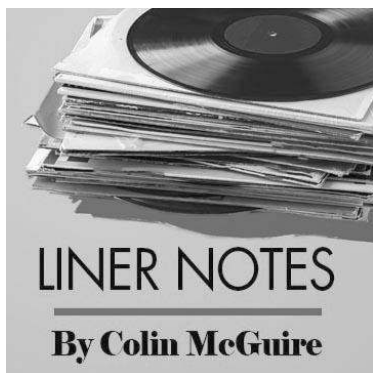
MICHAEL PUTLAND, GETTY IMAGES/TNS

Singer-songwriter Bill Withers performs on a British TV show in 1972. Stars and Stripes' Colin McGuire, who's debuting a new weekly music feature, regards Withers' "Use Me" as the best song ever written. He's interested in hearing about your choices, too.

# An introduction, and a few rules to live by

The best song ever written is Bill Withers' "Use Me." The best place to see a concert is any seat by the soundboard because (in theory, at least) that's where the show will sound the best due to the fact that it's where the sound guy resides. Never miss a tour from an artist who just released an album you adore because chances are, you'll never hear the majority of the songs from that album played live if you skip out on seeing said artist this time around.

These are only a handful of music rules by which I live. There are a million more, but those are for another day. For now, I thought I'd introduce myself, say hello and explain what is set to appear in this space for ... well, at least the foreseeable future. First, the basics. My name is Colin. I've been professionally writing about music for about 20 years and playing it for longer than that (if you count being a drummer as "playing music"). I've written for a bunch of magazines and websites and



I've even been lucky enough to cover some of music's most celebrated yearly events (countless festivals, South By Southwest, etc.).

Now that I find myself at Stars and Stripes, I'll be writing each week in this space about a plethora of things, including No. 1 songs, upcoming albums, worldwide tours, and everything in between for at least as long as the fine folks here allow me to do so. It is my belief that music is the ultimate unifying device. Of course, we debate songs, albums, careers, voices — the list goes on and on — but in most cases, we

do it without vitriol, without divide, without acrimony.

And that's a novel idea in a world increasingly filled with tunnel vision and nonacceptance. Music is fun, a medium designed to connect, to provide release. Even if you think that categorization is a bit too precious, you can't deny the power of your favorite song hitting the speakers after a long day of work, a particularly hurtful breakup or even the celebration of any of life's most important moments. Music moves us. That's why it's essential. That's why I love it.

So, it's nice to meet you, fantastic reader. I'll be hanging around these pages for a little while and hopefully, you'll come say hi. And if not ... well, maybe at least you'll think about pulling up Bill Withers on Spotify sometime in the near future ... or at least sit by the soundboard at the next show you attend ... or go see one of your favorite artists perform a brand-new album.

Because, regardless of whether you agreed, disagreed, liked, hated or didn't even care about a

single one of these words thus far, the only thing that matters is that it's all about the music, friends. Forever and always, it's all about the music.

## Hot 100 No. 1, Dec. 31 Mariah Carey – "All I Want For Christmas Is You"

Love it, hate it or ... *really* hate it, Mariah Carey's "All I Want For Christmas Is You" has only really ever deserved one superlative: undeniable. This Christmas season marked the fourth straight year the song reached the top spot on the Hot 100 and the distinction shouldn't go without notice if only because, well, nobody in the history of music has ever written a song with four separate runs on the top of this particular chart. And, in some ways, why not? It's as perfect a pop song that's been written since 1990 and because of its ubiquity in most every form of popular culture between the end of November and the first of January each year, it's hard not to respect how well the track has cracked the code of Timeless &

Accessible.

Plus, don't lie. The first two or three times you hear this thing blast through the Old Navy speakers at one of the 14 functioning malls in this world, your insides smile. Not only does it signify the beginning of the holiday season, but it also serves as a flashpoint for some of the best (and perhaps worst) memories that said holiday season brings. Love to hate it or hate to love it, "All I Want For Christmas Is You" has become the defining Christmas song of at least a generation, if not more.

"I don't want a lot for Christmas," Carey constantly asserts throughout her wintertime staple. For more people than most can count, this song has turned out to be the only gift that anyone ever needs each time the snow begins to fall and the decorations hit the trees. There's a special amount of brilliance in that level of longevity. For that, Carey deserves at least a life of Decembers without coal.

## WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

# How to make (almost) any bicycle electric

Startup pitches conversion kits as way to join the e-bike boom with minimal disruption, cost or carbon footprint

By IRA BOUDWAY

*Bloomberg*

A decade ago, I bought a single-speed bicycle in New York City for about \$300. I don't remember the brand, and the frame's lone decal has long since faded; when I moved to the suburbs a few years ago, the bike went into the garage for indefinite hibernation. But this October I wheeled it out with plans to execute an extreme makeover: Using a kit made by the London-based startup Swytch Bike, I would convert my rusty old bicycle into a motor-assisted electric ride.

Over the past few years, e-bikes have boomed in the U.S., driven by a pandemic spike in outdoor activities, a growing awareness of their utility as car-replacers and a maturing supply chain that's driving down costs. The average price tag on a commuter e-bike is now around \$2,600, and it's possible to get a decent one for less than \$1,000. But a decade ago, the e-bike was still mostly a curiosity, and roughly half the market was made of conversion kits, says Ed Benjamin, founder and chairman of the Light Electric Vehicle Association. For early adopters, upgrading an old bike was often cheaper and easier than buying a ready-built electric version.

"It used to be a big deal," Benjamin said. "That hasn't been the case now for probably 10 years because the complete bikes became such an attractive value."

The mainstreaming of e-bikes has largely relegated conversion kits to niche status, where they appeal mostly to daredevils interested in building quasi-motorcycles. But 5-year-old Swytch is hoping to tap into a much wider market: anybody with a bicycle. Before its kits sold out this fall, they started at \$500 for a 98-watt-hour battery version and ran to \$800 for a 180Wh battery. The company pitches conversion kits as a way to join the e-bike boom with minimal disruption, cost or carbon footprint.

"It's really easy to do," Swytch co-founder and CEO Oliver Montague said during an interview in October. "And it'll save you a lot of money."

As an engineering student at



IRA BOUDWAY/Bloomberg

**The author's bicycle, post-conversion to an e-bike with a Swytch kit. The author said converting his bike only took about an hour. According to Swytch co-founder and CEO Oliver Montague, using a conversion kit is cheaper and slightly better for the environment than buying an electric bike.**

Oxford University in 2012, Montague started a small business building and selling e-bikes and conversion kits online. Over time, he found himself stocking hundreds of different pieces of hardware made to work with different models and sizes of bikes.

"The problem that drove me to the first version of the Swytch kit prototype was just trying to simplify my online shop," he said. In 2017, Montague co-founded Swytch with his now-wife Hayley, 40, and chief technology officer Dmitro Khroma, 27. The company sold the first version of its kit through a crowdfunding campaign later that year.

As of 2022, Swytch has raised about \$6 million, mainly from angel investors. Montague says the company expects to ship around 30,000 units this year, with about 70 employees and a revenue of roughly \$20 million.

After providing Swytch with some basic information about my bike (wheel size, fork type, etc.), the company sent me a box containing a motorized wheel, a battery and miscellaneous other hardware, along with instructions for mounting it all on my bike. Swytch sent me both the smaller battery, which weighs

less than 2 pounds and is roughly the size of a fat smartphone, and the larger version, which weighs about a pound more and is closer to the size of a tablet.

Montague likes to say that anybody who can change a bicycle tire is qualified to use a Swytch kit, and his rule proved correct: I don't have much practice changing tires and couldn't quite complete the conversion solo. In trying to swap out the front wheel on my bike for Swytch's motorized one, I punctured my inner tube and had to make a trip to a bike shop.

But other than that bit of help, I managed to install the kit on my own. I bolted on Swytch's front wheel, which has a 250-watt motor in the hub; mounted the battery rack to my handlebars using a hex wrench; attached the stick-on pedal sensor to my bike's frame; zip-tied the corresponding magnetic disc to one pedal crank; mounted the controller on the handlebars; attached all the wires to the battery mount and zip-tied them all along the bike's frame.

Montague and Khroma then hopped on a video call to review my handiwork, something the typical customer can do with a

Swyth customer service agent. The overall approach is low-key: Montague suggested I re-tie some of the wire along the frame so it wouldn't catch on my pant legs, and commended my jerry-rigging of the ill-fitting display controller to sit loosely on top of my handlebars.

"It looks like you've done a pretty good job there," he said. "I think the way you've done it is the way I would have done it myself."

The setup took me about an hour, and while it's not especially pretty, it is simple. Between the zip ties and plastic parts, it also feels temporary — something Montague describes as a feature and not a bug. Everything in the Swytch kit comes off and on easily, and nothing prevents the bike from being ridden without power from the motor.

"With full-on electric bikes, if the battery's dead, you're never going to ride that thing," Montague said. "With a Swytch bike, if you take the battery off, it's still a bike. It weighs the same, rides the same, handles the same."

With the kit installed, riding my bike felt a lot like it did before — except a little easier and a little faster. The motor assistance

can be set to five levels and only operates while you pedal. It also cuts out when the bike reaches 15 miles per hour, a limit that can be set to 20 mph on bikes in the U.S. As a riding experience, it was better than my bike without the motor, but not as good as e-bikes I've tried in the past.

In large part, the value proposition of the Swytch kit depends on the bike that's being converted. If you already own a well-made bicycle, Swytch can probably give it an electric motor for less than you might spend on a high-quality e-bike. If your starter bike is just so-so, like mine, the kit will make it into a so-so e-bike, and you might be better off with one of the many purpose-built e-bikes on the market.

But the bolt-on approach, Swytch CTO Khroma argues, also comes with an environmental benefit.

"If you buy a brand new electric bike because you think it's a good thing for the environment, you're initially offsetting a bunch of that benefit by making a new bike from scratch," he says, "with lots of aluminum, lots of metal, lots of things that you shouldn't have had to buy."

There's a little bit of truth to that: In its 2021 sustainability report, bike manufacturer Trek estimated that manufacturing one of its models emits the equivalent of 175 kilograms of carbon dioxide on average, roughly equal to the emissions from a single tank of gas in a Ford Explorer. But while avoiding the production of a bike chassis does offer a marginal reduction in carbon footprint, more than half of the estimated emissions of e-bikes comes from the production and operation of their batteries. And any e-bike, converted or not, is many times more efficient than any car.

For the e-bike curious, especially those who like to tinker, what the Swytch kit does offer is a low-cost, low-commitment alternative to an off-the-shelf ride. It's a proposition that has proved especially popular in the U.S., which is fast eclipsing the U.K. as the company's top market, according to Montague. He attributes that to a strong do-it-yourself culture: "It's quite a fun little project to do."

**"With full-on electric bikes, if the battery's dead, you're never going to ride that thing. With a Swytch bike, if you take the battery off, it's still a bike. It weighs the same, rides the same, handles the same."**

Oliver Montague  
Swytch co-founder, CEO

## WEEKEND: TELEVISION

# Baptism by fire

Centineo's character in 'The Recruit' is too deep as lawyer-turned-spy

By ALICIA RANCILIO  
Associated Press

There's a moment in the new Netflix series "The Recruit," starring Noah Centineo, when his character, Owen, finds himself in the middle of a shootout.

As he ducks from a hail of bullets, Owen recognizes one of the people working for the other side as a woman he met in a bar. He momentarily forgets about the life-threatening situation at hand and gives a small wave of acknowledgment to her. The woman responds by shooting at him. How rude!

It's moments like these that make "The Recruit" an atypical CIA drama. Yes, Centineo's Owen is a CIA employee who finds himself in the field à la Jack Ryan, but instead of immediately knowing what to do and how to defend himself, this CIA employee is an attorney who is immediately in over his head.

"That's a differentiation between our show, 'The Recruit,' and many other spy genre shows and films," Centineo said. "Usually, the lead is an accomplished spy, you know, someone that is very experienced and very good at what they do." Owen, he says, is "fresh out of law school."

"The Recruit" is created by Alexi Hawley, the showrunner behind high-stakes, fish-out-of-water network TV shows "Castle" and "The Rookie," both starring Nathan Fillion.

"I have said from the beginning that the second he gets good at his job, I'm not interested," said Hawley of Owen.

Far from doltish, Owen is a confident lawyer, quick on his feet, and probably could be an accomplished spy, if that's what he was trained to do. The series begins on his first day on the job at the CIA where he's tasked with grunt work but discovers a credible blackmail threat against the agency by a former asset (played by Laura Haddock). His boss tells him to investigate, and Owen's baptism by fire begins.

"I love that Owen's constantly trying to take all the information that's being thrown at him and wield it as a weapon to keep himself alive, because if he wasn't as smart as he is, he would have been dead," Centineo said.

The role is a fitting one for the actor, who is best-known as the lovable jock Peter Kavinsky in the "To All the Boys" young adult film franchise starring Lana Condor. He most recently was seen in "Black Adam," starring Dwayne Johnson. Centineo excels at lovable, and while Owen is also charming, he's also more nuanced.



NETFLIX/AP photos

Noah Centineo plays Owen Hendricks, a CIA lawyer fresh out of law school who finds himself thrown into the field in "The Recruit."

**"I love that Owen's constantly trying to take all the information that's being thrown at him and wield it as a weapon to keep himself alive, because if he wasn't as smart as he is, he would have been dead."**

Noah Centineo  
Owen Hendricks in "The Recruit"

"It was centered around a 24-year-old guy, and how many of those kinds of actors are out there who mean something? And (Noah) is one of them," Hawley said. "So, of course, you're like, 'We're never going to get him. How are we going to get him? Like, he's so busy.' And, you know, ultimately he really responded to the script, and he dove in all the way. ... I knew he was great, but he was better than I ever could have imagined."

Centineo also signed on as an executive producer, giving him an education that he describes as a "masterclass."

"Actors are shielded from a lot of the minutiae, a lot of the problem-solving necessary, a lot of the behind-the-scenes escapades and mechanisms that occur to ensure that a project is filmed, edited and put forth. And for me, I wanted to be subsumed with it," Centineo said. "I wanted



On his first day at the CIA, Hendricks discovers a blackmail threat by a former asset, played by Laura Haddock, above, and is asked to investigate.

to know everything. I wanted to learn everything. I wanted to kind of soak in as much as I possibly could."

The eight-episode first season of "The Recruit" is now streaming on Netflix. And Centineo has already begun thinking about Owen's future challenges.

"I think I want to see him continue to get more and more comfortable, while also increasing the stakes and making the pond deeper and deeper because I think that's what this world can be like. Right behind one door lies another and ad nauseam. That's terrifying."

## WEEKEND: TELEVISION



DISCOVERY/AP

José Andrés, second from right, and family dine with friends at Pepe Muñoz's house in a scene from the Discovery+ television series "José Andrés and Family in Spain."

# Eating their way through Spain

Chef, restaurateur José Andrés takes his daughters on a food tour of his homeland in new Discovery+ series

BY MARK KENNEDY  
Associated Press

**O**n his new TV show, celebrated chef José Andrés goes into a restaurant kitchen in Spain and confronts a massive moray eel. Only one of them is leaving that kitchen intact.

Andrés oversees as cooks prepare the eel for its final flourish — deboned, sliced paper thin, dredged in three kinds of flour and then deep fried with cilantro.

"People of the world, I know you don't usually eat eel. But if you try it, you will love it," he says to the viewers. "Nothing can be more simple and more sophisticated at the same time."

That eel is part of just one delicious moment in Discovery+'s "José Andrés and Family in Spain," which follows the chef, restaurateur and humanitarian on a food tour through his homeland with his three American-raised daughters, Carlota, Inés and Lucia Andrés.

The ladies join their dad as they visit such places as Barcelona, Madrid, Andalusia, Valencia, the Canary Islands and Asturias, where he was born and where the food, he says, made him who he is. It's a travel show, a cooking show and a parenting show, all wrapped up in a celebration of Spain and proud fatherhood.

"I think going with my dad and going to all of these places was just so special because he's such a curious person," Carlota says in a recent interview with her dad at The Bazaar, the elder Andrés' rooftop bar at The Ritz-Carlton in New York. "That's the type of person that he is, and no trip is the same if he's not there."

Throughout is José's infectious and ebullient spirit, a whirlwind of passion for food and respect for where it came from. He cheers both the deconstructive brilliance of august restaurant El Bulli and also humble street food.

Tapas turns out to be a perfect reflection of his philosophy on eating — going from place to place eating many things, cold and hot, fish and meat and vegetables — and making it a celebration of ingredients, hard work and life.

"If I was the president of the world, I would make it



Discovery Inc.

José, Carlota and Inés Andrés in front of La Sagrada Familia in Barcelona on the new show.

mandatory that every person has to go around the world for a year of their lives — country to country, culture to culture, continent to continent. If we all did that, the world would be a magical place. That's what this show celebrates," he says.

In Barcelona, José and his daughters ride electric scooters around the city, popping into restaurants, markets and cafes as he bearhugs his old culinary friends, offering a delicious insider tour that involves tapas, red shrimp, sparkling wine and croquettes.

The elder Andrés — who has drawn attention to Spanish food and helped put a spotlight on humanitarian disasters with his World Central Kitchen — can hardly contain himself.

"He's already in the kitchen causing mayhem," one of his daughters comments.

In Andalusia, they drink the celebrated summer vegetable soup gazpacho and try various dishes, highlighting bluefin tuna, a local delicacy. They celebrate the North African influence on the region in dishes like ham and eggs with artichoke and with grilled lamb skewers.

"Happiness happens when you mix different people and different colors and different places all in one plate," José says on screen. In another moment, he offers this wonderful challenge: "Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you who you are."

There is flamenco dancing, and a trip to buy sweet treats baked by secretive, cloistered nuns — dubbed the family's "spiritual cookie moment." The daughters try their hand at making churros and later a shrimp fritter called Tortillitas de camarones. They milk goats, harvest salt from tide pools, paraglide and scuba dive for goose barnacles, known in Spain as percebes.

During it all, José is a hype man for Spanish cuisine, playfully arguing that surf and turf, pizza, open-faced sandwiches called tostas and beer were all concocted in his native land, and that Spanish versions of crème brûlée and prosciutto are vastly superior to other countries' versions. "Everything was invented in Spain!" he shouts.

"I think every culture needs to be proud of who they are and even chauvinistic about it. In my case, sometimes I take it to the extreme," he explains later. "Defend your own, defend what you know. In a way, you're celebrating everybody else."

Spicy potato dish patatas bravas, glasses of sangria and pyramids of royal pastries were all on the menu in Madrid, while Valencia offered the travelers the world's best paella.

"You think you've tasted the real thing — think again," the chef warns viewers.

The family hopes that the series will inspire other families to go out and explore, especially after the pandemic.

"Spain is the excuse," José says. "Sometimes we have the most exciting things in front of our eyes."

"You can go into the Chesapeake Bay and have an amazing moment of discovery. You can go to Virginia and discover the wine country of Virginia. Everybody thinks that you have to go to the most remote parts of your world. The excitement is not in the places. The excitement is within yourself."

## WEEKEND: HEALTH &amp; FITNESS

# Benefits of 'Dry January' long-lasting

Research shows sobriety challenges may help participants form new habits

By ANAHAD O'CONNOR  
*The Washington Post*

Every year, tens of thousands of people kick off the new year by taking part in a monthlong sobriety challenge known as "Dry January." The event is widely viewed as a temporary test of willpower — followed by a return to old drinking habits when the month ends. But according to research, that's often not what happens.

Studies show that people who participate in Dry January and other sobriety challenges frequently experience lasting benefits. Often, they drink less in the long run and make other sustained changes to their drinking habits that lead to striking improvements in their health and well-being.

So why does Dry January seem to have a lasting effect? A month of sobriety, while it can sound daunting, is not so long that it seems impossible. And yet, it is long enough that it provides opportunities to form new habits — like turning down alcohol in social settings, which in the long run can be empowering. And taking a break from alcohol can trigger immediate health benefits, like weight loss, better sleep and a boost to your mood and energy levels, which can reinforce the new habit.

Experiencing these improvements can motivate you to continue drinking less in the long run, said Richard de Visser, a psychologist at Brighton and Sussex Medical School in England who has studied what happens to people who participate in Dry January.

"It becomes a reinforcing message instead of a punishing message," he said. "Instead of public health people wagging their fingers and saying, 'Don't drink; it's bad for you,' people do it and say, 'I didn't realize how good I would feel.' They often don't realize how much stopping drinking will improve their sleep, or their concentration, or even just their levels of energy in the morning."

## From 'hazardous' to 'low risk'

In one study published in *BMJ Open*, a team of researchers in London and the United States recruited a group of 94 healthy men and women who were willing to give up alcohol for one month. They compared them to a similar control group of 47 people who continued drinking. Both groups consisted of people who were moderate to heavy drinkers, drinking on average about 2.5 drinks a day.

The researchers found that the people who gave up alcohol for one month had significant improvements in their metabolic health, despite making little or no changes to their diets, smoking or exercise levels. On average they lost about four and a half pounds, their blood pressure dropped and they had a "dramatic" reduction in their levels of insulin resistance, a marker for Type 2 diabetes risk. They also experienced sharp reductions in cancer-related growth factors — a particularly important finding, the researchers noted, because even low levels of alcohol consumption can increase the risk of many cancers. None of these improvements were seen in the control group.

The researchers followed up with the study participants six to eight months later to see how they were doing. The group that was abstinent for one month had maintained a "significant reduction" in their alcohol consumption, while the control group did not. Using a



iStock

**Taking a break from alcohol can trigger immediate health benefits, like weight loss, better sleep and a boost to your mood and energy levels, which can reinforce the new habit.**

screening tool that can identify problematic drinking behaviors, the researchers determined that the abstinence group's drinking habits had changed from "hazardous" to "low-risk," while the control group's habits stayed about the same.

## Saving money and better sleep

In a separate series of studies, de Visser and his colleagues followed thousands of Dry January participants to see if the challenge would lead to long-lasting changes. They found that in general, people who took part in Dry January were still drinking considerably less the following August.

On average, the number of days on which they drank fell from 4.3 days per week before the challenge to 3.3 days per week a half-year later. The amount that they drank on each occasion fell and they got drunk less frequently.

Before Dry January, they got drunk an average of 3.4 times per month. But by the following August that figure had fallen to 2.1 times per month.

Most people who take part in sobriety challenges return to drinking afterward. But many are surprised by the benefits they experience during their month of abstinence. De Visser and his colleagues found that most of the Dry January participants they studied reported saving money, sleeping better, losing weight and having more energy and a better ability to concentrate. Most also reported that they felt a sense of achievement and gained more control over their drinking. Even people who did not stay alcohol-free the entire month of January reported these benefits.

"The objective of Dry January is not long-term sobriety — it's long-term control," said Richard Piper, the CEO of Alcohol Change UK, a British nonprofit that started the monthlong challenge a decade ago. "It's about understanding your subconscious triggers, overcoming those and learning how good it is to not drink. It gives you the power of choice for the rest of the year."

## Try these tips

Not everyone tempers their relationship with alcohol after trying a monthlong sobriety challenge. In his studies, de Visser and his colleagues found that a small proportion of people who participate in Dry January — about 11% — experience a rebound effect where they end up consuming more alcohol in the months that follow.

These tend to be particularly heavy drinkers who are dependent on alcohol. For that reason, it's important that people who take part in these challenges recognize that they are not a silver bullet for everyone who wants to stop drinking. The Rethinking Drinking website has a list of helpful resources.

"If you do have a problematic pattern of drinking, you should talk to a health care professional and do it with some support, so you don't have a negative experience that makes it worse," de Visser said.

Last year, 130,000 people globally signed up to participate in Dry January. Here are some tips that could increase your odds of success:

- Do it with a friend. Sign up for it on the Alcohol Change UK website and download the free Try Dry app on your smartphone. In his studies, de Visser and his colleagues found that people were more likely to succeed at the challenge if they had social support or tracked their progress through the app. You can also sign up to get "coaching" emails from Alcohol Change UK that will cheer you on throughout January.

- The social support helps because it gives you a sense of belonging to a bigger thing," he said. "But there's also the practical aspect of people saying, 'Hey, try this if you're craving alcohol. Here's what I did that worked.'"

- Find a new favorite drink. Swapping an alcoholic beverage for a nonalcoholic one — like sparkling water with lemon or a splash of cranberry juice — could help you eliminate mindless drinking.

- "A lot of people drink by habit or default simply because it's what they're used to doing," Piper says.

- Manage your triggers. Instead of meeting your friend at a bar after work, suggest going to a movie, taking a long walk, or having dinner at a restaurant instead.

- Track how much money you save. The Try Dry app can motivate you by tracking all the money you didn't spend on drinks.

- Try the Dry(ish) January challenge. If going completely sober for the month of January is out of the question, then do something more attainable through Sunnyside, a mindful drinking program. Sunnyside has an app that allows you to create your own variation of Dry January, a.k.a. Dry(ish) January. You can set goals like not drinking on weekdays, or cutting your weekly alcohol consumption in half, and then track your progress. You can also use it year-round to track your alcohol intake and create healthier drinking habits.

## WEEKEND: FAMILY

# Still stuck in crisis mode

‘Tripledemic’ of illnesses means child care disruptions continue

BY HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH  
AND CLAIRE SAVAGE  
AP/Report for America

**F**orty-seven. That’s how many days of child care Kathryn Anne Edwards’ 3-year-old son has missed in the past year.

Respiratory syncytial virus, COVID-19 and two bouts of the dreaded preschool scourge of hand, foot and mouth disease struck one after another. The illnesses were so disruptive that the labor economist quit her full-time job at the Rand Corp., a think tank. She switched last month to independent contract work to give her more flexibility to care for her son and 4-month-old daughter.

In the first and even second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, multi-week quarantines and isolations were common for many Americans, especially children. But nine weeks of missed child care, nearly three years in?

“The rest of the world has moved on from the crisis that I’m still in,” said Edwards, who studies women’s issues. “That’s sometimes how it feels like to me.”

This fall and winter have upended life for working parents of little children, who thought the worst of the pandemic was behind them. The arrival of vaccines for younger children and the end of quarantines for COVID-19 exposure were supposed to bring relief.

Instead, families were treated to what some called a “triple-demic.” Flu, COVID-19 and RSV cases collided, stressing children’s hospitals and threatening the already imperiled child care system. Even parents of babies with less serious cases of COVID-19 have run into 10-day isolation rules that have taxed the patience of employers.

A record-high 104,000 people missed work in October because of child care problems, surpassing even early pandemic levels, Bureau of Labor Statistics data shows. Child care-related absences fell to 59,000 in November, but numbers still surpass typical pre-pandemic levels.

The instability has hurt many working parents’ finances. Most of those who missed work in October because of child care problems didn’t get paid, according to an analysis from the Center for American Progress, a left-leaning think tank.

Now, doctors are bracing for the number of sick children to rise after families gathered for the holidays.

“I think we’re going to have to be ready to do it all over again,” said Dr. Eric Biondi, director of pediatric hospital medicine at the Johns Hopkins Children’s Center in Maryland.

Illnesses among teachers and children have strained a child care system that’s already short-staffed.

“This is the worst year I’ve ever seen in my entire life,” said Shaunna Baillargeon, owner of Muddy Puddles Early Learning Program in Uxbridge, Mass. She faces “a constant battle of staff and children being sick with a different virus every day,” with no backups if a teacher calls in sick.

At the Washington, D.C., day care where Jana Williams teaches, illness has caused classroom shut-downs almost weekly since October. Her 19-month-old daughter is also enrolled there, coming down with the same viruses.

“It’s stressful,” she said before Christmas, when she was home with her sick toddler. “You want to stay home and care for your child. But then it’s like, you have to get to work.”



ERIN HOOLEY/AP

**Educator Tamisha Holifield spends time with her 2-year-old daughter, Rian, at Nichols Park in Chicago on Dec. 29. When Tamisha and Rian had COVID-19 in May, the toddler had to miss 15 days of child care.**

During the early months of the pandemic, women in the prime of their careers left the labor market at a rate far exceeding that of men. They were more likely to work in the service-oriented fields that were decimated, and they often were caring for children, Edwards said.

Women have since returned to the workforce, particularly women of color, said economist Diane Swonk of professional services firm KPMG.

But the participation of prime-age working women in the U.S. lags behind that of most industrialized nations, Swonk said. Advocates have long blamed the country’s lack of universal preschool and paid family leave.

Finding child care and heading back to work has proved far from simple. At the pandemic’s height, more than one-third of day care jobs were lost, Edwards said. Staffing hasn’t fully recovered. As of November, the country had 8% fewer child care workers than before the pandemic, Bureau of Labor Statistics data shows.

The strong labor market has driven up the cost to hire new workers. That means child care spots are pricey and hard to find. Even centers with openings may close when staff or kids are sick.

That babies and toddlers are prone to illnesses adds to the challenge. In the wake of COVID-19, day cares are more anxious about accepting a snotty toddler.

Isolation guidelines have hit parents of babies especially hard. While older preschoolers who have COVID-19 may return with masks after five days, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends children under 2 stay home for 10 days, or until they test negative twice, 48 hours apart.

One issue is masks aren’t recommended for the under-2 crowd. Their smaller airways mean wearing them can increase the risk of suffocation, according to Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Ohio.

Not all centers are adhering to the CDC’s guidance. But many are following it to the letter, or even going further.

When Chicago educator Tamisha Holifield and her daughter had COVID-19 in May, the toddler had to miss 15 days of child care. Bouts of colds have followed, in what Holifield described as a “constant whirlwind” of sickness that has been stressful both financially and emotionally.

“It’s a major inconvenience. But I’m a single parent, so I don’t have a choice. If I drop the ball, the game is over,” Holifield said.

## THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



# Sense of home elusive for military retirees

Waiting for the McQuaid’s Market cashier to check the price of an item, I watched as the familiar faces of local postal workers, construction workers and landscapers came in to grab something for lunch. In the adjoining checkout aisle, they chatted casually with the other cashier.

“Hey, [Jack, Betty, Dave] how’ve you been?” the young cashier said.

“Not bad, how ’bout yourself?” the customers replied.

I was envious.

Five years ago, my husband, Francis, retired from the Navy after 28 years on active duty and many PCS moves. We bought a house in a charming Rhode Island village, intending to finally put down roots and become part of the local community. We met neighbors, attended church, took part in special events and joined the Rotary Club, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Historical Society, Ladies Golf League (me) and Stiff Guy Yoga (Francis).

But, as I waited and watched in our village market that day, I realized that no one in the store knew who I was.

My mind wandered to my childhood hometown 500 miles away.

At age 8, I’d pedal my yellow Schwinn as fast as my stubby legs could propel me down Chestnut Street in my neighborhood. Just before the S-curve where the street joined North Seventh, I’d look for traffic. Seeing no cars, I’d whiz by the stop sign at top speed. I’d lift my hands from the handlebars and stand on the pedals.

With my arms raised, my knees locked and my sandy blonde pigtails aloft, I’d fly. I’d traverse the Chestnut Street S-curve with ease, using my weight to lean my yellow Schwinn left then right along the S-curve.

On my way home, I’d often stop at the Stankowitz’s maple tree. I’d climbed the tree a thousand times and had memorized the exact gestures needed to lift myself into its branches.

From my well-worn perch in the tree, I’d look over the familiar scene of my neighborhood domain. The Butterbaugh house where we’d suck on sour stalks of wild rhubarb. The school bus stop where kids ran amok every morning. The steep part of the sidewalk, where boys would jump the concrete stairs on bikes, skateboards and sleds. The Schok’s backyard where we played kick the can. The spooky Victorian house on North Ninth, where an old lady gave us lots of candy every Halloween.

Later, in my teen years, our family upgraded to a brick ranch on the outskirts of town. Too old for my yellow Schwinn, I’d drive my powder blue Volkswagen Beetle from our house to high school, church, Patti’s house, the mall and my babysitting job. By that time, I knew the streets like the back of my hand, chugging along self-assuredly between familiar streetlights and stop signs.

In that place — my hometown — I was never lost.

Watching the customers in McQuaid’s Market, I longed for that sense of groundedness I’d had during childhood, when I knew exactly where I was and was known by others. I wondered, can military retirees like us ever achieve the security that comes with being truly local?

“Hey, aren’t you Francis’ wife?” the cashier said, interrupting my thoughts. “We met in town over the summer.”

“Yes!” I burst out, so happy to be recognized. “I’m Lisa, nice to see you again!”

“I’m Matt, great to see you, too,” he said with a smile. We chatted for a minute or two while my cashier bagged my items and handed me a receipt.

On my way out the door, I waved and yelled a bit too enthusiastically, “Bye, Matt!”

“Bye, Lisa!” he called back.

I took a right on West Street out of the parking lot, feeling confident that I’d find my way home.

Read more at [themeatandpotatoesoflife.com](http://themeatandpotatoesoflife.com) and in Lisa’s book, “The Meat and Potatoes of Life: My True Lit Com.” Email: [meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com](mailto:meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com)

# WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

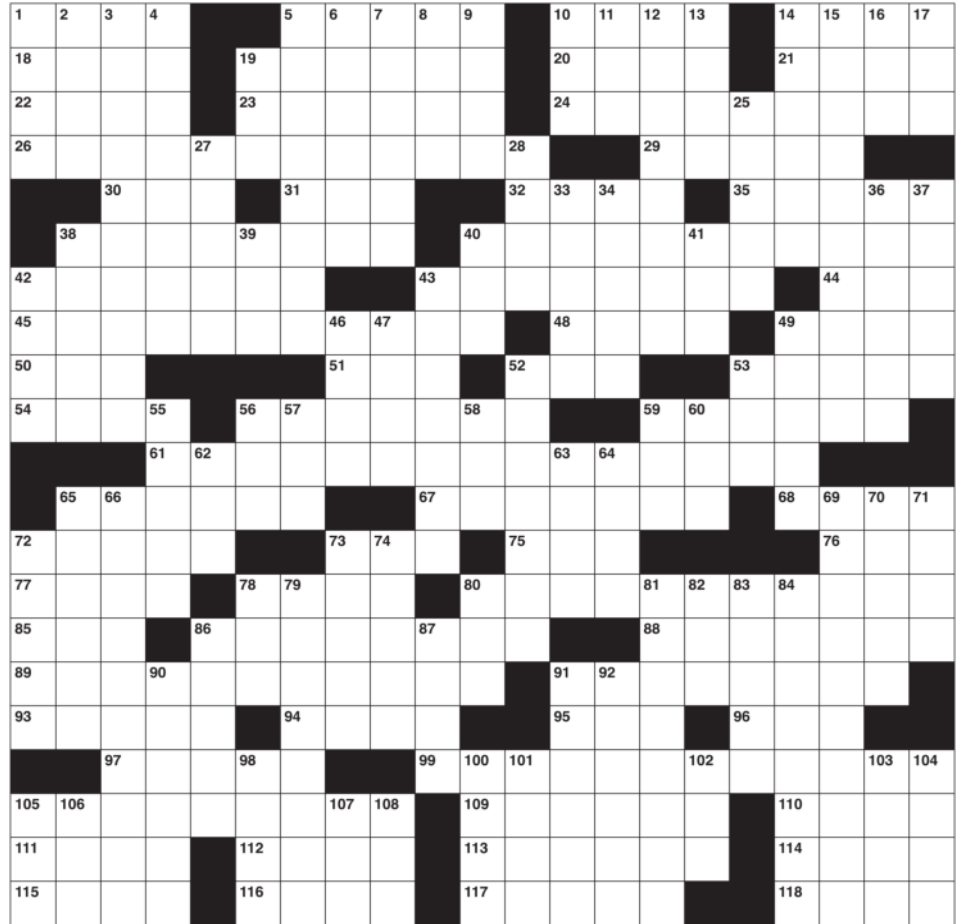
## NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

### NOVEL THINKING

BY JOHN MARTZ / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

John Martz is a cartoonist, an illustrator and a book designer in Toronto, Ontario, who specializes in picture books and graphic novels for kids. This is his first published crossword. He found that constructing it was akin to composing a page of comics. "The processes share a similar choreography of boxes and words and visual design." In the past he has created an end-of-year crossword for co-workers. This puzzle, coincidentally, grew out of last year's. — W. S.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Nickname of the Looney Tunes animator Ben Hardaway
  - 5 Occupied, as a desk
  - 10 Language of Lahore
  - 14 Cantankerous sort
  - 18 Siouan people
  - 19 1984 comedy in which Daryl Hannah plays a mermaid
  - 20 Takes a turn
  - 21 "Stop right there!"
  - 22 Rapper \_\_\_\_ Dogg
  - 23 Private address?
  - 24 "Little House on the Prairie," e.g.?
  - 26 "The Haunting of Hill House," e.g.?
  - 29 Grilled cornmeal cake popular in Latin America
  - 30 Singer Zadora
  - 31 No. in an email signature line
  - 32 The "A" of P.G.A.: Abbr.
  - 35 They're in it for the long haul
  - 38 Cocktail made with grenadine
  - 40 "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea," e.g.?
  - 42 One studying for a bar or bat mitzvah, usually
  - 43 Onboarding participants
  - 44 Wetland
  - 45 "Back to Treasure Island," e.g.?
  - 48 "Ideas worth spreading" offshoot
  - 49 Designers' degs.
  - 50 Ripen
  - 51 Grandmother: Ger.
  - 52 Prayer support?
  - 53 Ballerina's asset
  - 54 Slugger Sammy
  - 56 Justice \_\_\_\_ Brown Jackson
  - 59 Like a bialy
  - 61 "Crime and Punishment," e.g.?
  - 65 Make certain
  - 67 Running the show, so to speak
  - 68 Site of Vulcan's forge
  - 72 Vinaigrette vessel
  - 73 Bit of butter
  - 75 Suffix with block or stock
  - 76 \_\_\_\_ vivant
  - 77 Some family members, informally
  - 78 Apple feature not found in the Apple logo
  - 80 "If Beale Street Could Talk," e.g.?
  - 85 Some speaker systems, in brief
  - 86 They often have large dollar signs on them, in cartoons
  - 88 Stage name (and middle name) of Robyn Fenty
  - 89 "Fantastic Mr. Fox," e.g.?
  - 91 They run parallel in a grocery store
  - 93 14-time winner of the French Open
  - 94 Fortune
  - 95 Reddit Q. and A.
  - 96 Some campers, in brief
  - 97 Author Calvino
  - 99 "The Help," e.g.?
  - 105 "The Secret Life of Bees," e.g.?
  - 109 One hundred, in Honduras
  - 110 Sound from R2-D2
  - 111 Ice cream flavor with a crunch
  - 112 Straddling
  - 113 Purple-crayon-carrying boy of children's literature
  - 114 Spot for a trough
  - 115 Autodom's 88 or Toronado, once
  - 116 Letters before the ZIP code 10001
  - 117 Fresh
  - 118 Terrier type
- DOWN**
- 1 Hit it!
  - 2 Sundance Film Festival site
  - 3 Break down
  - 4 Uses X-ray vision on
  - 5 One side in the Battle of Thermopylae
  - 6 On the same team
  - 7 How guitars are strung
  - 8 Sparkling wine region
  - 9 Ergo
  - 10 "Nasty!"
  - 11 Hundred Acre Wood resident who sometimes falls into mouse holes while practicing jumping
  - 12 Issued an edict, say
  - 13 App developer's target
  - 14 Place of worship
  - 15 Cat breed with a shabby-sounding name
  - 16 Fermented brew
  - 17 Seoul singers
  - 19 Indy-to-Memphis dir.
  - 25 Toluca lucre
  - 27 Reserved, as seats
  - 28 Big affair
  - 33 One might have three parts, with or without its last letter
  - 34 Strength
  - 36 "Whatever"
  - 37 Pick up
  - 38 Spaghetti-sauce brand
  - 39 Chaired
  - 40 Word with small or deep
  - 41 Perturb
  - 42 Some spots for vaccines, in brief
  - 43 Buses and trains
  - 46 Film role played by a terrier named Terry
  - 47 Saudi Arabia neighbor
  - 49 Animal whose name comes from the Narragansett word for "twig-eater"
  - 52 Parts of A.T.M.s
  - 53 \_\_\_\_ chart
  - 55 Some recesses
  - 56 Wine cocktail
  - 57 Legal suffix
  - 58 Actress Aniston, familiarly
  - 59 I, to Claudius
  - 60 Prominent manufacturer of A.T.M.s
  - 62 Daily grind
  - 63 Mary \_\_\_\_, first lady's maiden name
  - 64 Large jug
  - 65 Grande who has broken 27 (and counting) Guinness world records for musical accomplishments
  - 66 Partly covered, in a way
  - 69 Cut with a letter opener?
  - 70 High times?
  - 71 "My Way" lyricist Paul
  - 72 Debate airt
  - 73 The Rose City, so nicknamed for its pink sandstone
  - 74 Bounds
  - 78 Sun, in Santiago
  - 79 Hit list
  - 80 I.R.S. employee: Abbr.
  - 81 Without direction
  - 82 [I know it's wrong]
  - 83 Snippy
  - 84 The creeps
  - 86 1980s-'90s legal drama
  - 87 All over again
  - 90 Passover servings
  - 91 \_\_\_\_ dozen
  - 92 Some acids, informally
  - 98 Student \_\_\_\_
  - 100 Phil \_\_\_\_, Joan Baez contemporary
  - 101 Antipiracy org.
  - 102 Role for George Burns, Morgan Freeman and Whoopi Goldberg
  - 103 Tax amount
  - 104 Pointer for an Olympian?
  - 105 Scare word
  - 106 Safari or Chrome address, in brief
  - 107 Slip into
  - 108 Catch sight of



- 60 Prominent manufacturer of A.T.M.s
- 62 Daily grind
- 63 Mary \_\_\_\_, first lady's maiden name
- 64 Large jug
- 65 Grande who has broken 27 (and counting) Guinness world records for musical accomplishments
- 66 Partly covered, in a way
- 69 Cut with a letter opener?
- 70 High times?
- 71 "My Way" lyricist Paul
- 72 Debate airt
- 73 The Rose City, so nicknamed for its pink sandstone
- 74 Bounds
- 78 Sun, in Santiago
- 79 Hit list
- 80 I.R.S. employee: Abbr.
- 81 Without direction
- 82 [I know it's wrong]
- 83 Snippy
- 84 The creeps
- 86 1980s-'90s legal drama
- 87 All over again
- 90 Passover servings
- 91 \_\_\_\_ dozen
- 92 Some acids, informally
- 98 Student \_\_\_\_
- 100 Phil \_\_\_\_, Joan Baez contemporary
- 101 Antipiracy org.
- 102 Role for George Burns, Morgan Freeman and Whoopi Goldberg
- 103 Tax amount
- 104 Pointer for an Olympian?
- 105 Scare word
- 106 Safari or Chrome address, in brief
- 107 Slip into
- 108 Catch sight of

## GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

## RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



The story of the U.S. military's role in Afghanistan, as seen through the eyes of Stars and Stripes journalists covering America's longest war.

Over 100 pages of stunning images and stories from the front lines.

Only **\$14.99** with Free Shipping

**ORDER NOW** at [www.stripesstore.com](http://www.stripesstore.com)

## FACES



MARVEL STUDIOS/TNS

Letitia Wright, star of “Black Panther: Wakanda Forever,” said it had always been the plan for her character, Shuri, to take on more responsibility. Chadwick Boseman’s death changed the timeline.

# Wright for the role

Actress had to be persuaded she was ready to be Black Panther

By MICHAEL ORDOÑA  
Los Angeles Times

Ryan Coogler’s 2018 “Black Panther,” starring Chadwick Boseman as King T’Challa, collected \$1.3 billion and the Marvel Cinematic Universe’s first best picture Oscar nomination. It was a bona fide cultural phenomenon. Two years later, the 43-year-old Boseman died unexpectedly of colon cancer. When the smoke cleared and the tears dried, Marvel decided not to recast T’Challa, that Boseman’s take on the role was too indelible, too beloved.

Enter Shuri.

Guyanese-British actress Letitia Wright had made a splash as T’Challa’s brilliant sister with the spicy attitude (perhaps the smartest character in the MCU) in three films. In the comics, Shuri eventually shared the Panther mantle — ironically, due to T’Challa’s serious illness — so the notion of her ascension wasn’t entirely alien. It just wasn’t supposed to happen yet.

“It was something that we always kind of touched on a little bit,” says Wright by phone. “I knew eventually Ryan’s plan was to possibly have Shuri being Black Panther alongside her brother and seeing the ways in which the sibling dynamic can really be explored onscreen.”

Turns out the person she casually calls her brother is Boseman, rather than T’Challa.

“I met Chad in 2016 when I was doing screen tests. I remember feeling in my belief system and my faith that if this was meant to happen, this man will be my brother. I remember walking in and connecting with him in a way that was really profound and I’d never had with someone I’d just met. So from that day onward, it was a real beautiful connection as siblings, really. If he was in London, he would text me and be like, ‘Hey, Little Sister, I need to lay eyes on you. Let’s go grab something to eat.’

“Yeah, that’s literally my brother. Processing his passing is something [the ‘Panther’ cast and crew are] still struggling with. It’s surreal for us to even be having this conversation about him not being here.”

When Coogler laid out for her how she would become the center of the franchise in “Black Panther: Wakanda Forever,” instead of it being something a

20-something actor could celebrate, “It was bitter because it wasn’t in the way I expected.” And then there was the responsibility of replacing a phenomenon.

She credits the support of the cast and crew — especially of Coogler and co-star Danai Gurira — with making that transition possible.

“Danai has an immense amount of strength. She’s been encouraging me for a very long time. She was one of the first people I spoke to when Chad passed, telling me that everything’s going to be OK.” And as for becoming Wakanda’s protector, Wright says Gurira told her, “I believe in you. I believe that Chad believes in you and that you can do it.”

Wright was no stranger to the responsibilities of carrying a project, but this one came with the extra challenge of “beating the impostor syndrome that I felt while doing it. Ryan had to beat that out of me very quickly with positive words: ‘There’s no one else that fits this right now. Trust the process; trust that this is meant for you.’”

So when was she sure she really could do the job? There was one scene with her ally M’Baku (Winston Duke) exploring why Shuri should become the Panther that provided Wright clarity, and one other ... during reshoots.

“It was a scene between myself and Namor [Teyonah Huerta] that we were fleshing out a little bit more, the ways in which Shuri’s confidence rose to the occasion: ‘I belong to one of the most powerful nations in the world ... so we should settle this in a peaceful manner.’

“It shows her growth and the way she was reflecting on the way her brother did everything, the way he carried himself. Watching and observing my brother and the way he carried his role as T’Challa — I [realized] I have what it takes as an artist, as an actress, to go to places people probably didn’t think I could with this character.”

She laughs when it’s pointed out this happened after principal photography had been completed.

“I mean, yeah yeah yeah. Hey man, it took me a while!

“I feel like I’m on a transformative journey and I’m happy I got to represent Shuri, to be a vessel for Shuri to process some pain, because that helped me as well. ... It’s been a beautiful experience.”

## Prince Harry claims William attacked him during argument

By JILL LAWLESS  
Associated Press

Prince Harry alleges in a much-anticipated new memoir that his brother Prince William lashed out and physically attacked him during a furious argument over the brothers’ deteriorating relationship, The Guardian reported Thursday.

The newspaper said it obtained an advance copy of the book, “Spare,” due to be published next week.

It said Harry recounts a 2019 argument at his Kensington Palace home, in which he says William called Harry’s wife, the former actress Meghan Markle, “difficult,” “rude” and “abrasive.” Harry claims William grabbed his brother by the collar and ripped his necklace before knocking him down, the newspaper said.

“I landed on the dog’s bowl, which cracked under my back, the pieces cutting into me,” the book is quoted as saying. “I lay there for a moment, dazed, then got to my feet and told him to get out.”

Harry says he had “scrapes and bruises” as a result of the tussle. William later apologized, the excerpt says.

Separately, celebrity website Page Six reported that the book alleges William and his now-wife Kate encouraged Harry to wear a Nazi uniform to a costume party in 2005. Harry has repeatedly apologized and called the decision one of the biggest mistakes of his life.

Neither Buckingham Palace, which represents King Charles III, nor William’s Kensington Palace office has commented on the claims.

The book, scheduled for release Tuesday, is the latest in a string of public revelations and accusations by Harry and Meghan that have shaken the royal family.

Harry, 38, and the American ac-



AP

Britain’s Prince William, left, and Prince Harry walk beside each other Sept. 10 in Windsor, England. Prince Harry has made a number of controversial claims in an upcoming memoir, “Spare.”

tress married at Windsor Castle in May 2018. Less than two years later, the couple quit royal duties and moved to California, citing what they saw as the media’s racist treatment of Meghan, who is biracial, and a lack of support from the palace.

Harry has recorded interviews with British broadcaster ITV and CBS in the United States to promote the book. Both are due to be broadcast Sunday.

In snippets released in advance, Harry told ITV that the royal household had cast him and Meghan as “villains” and “shown absolutely no willingness to reconcile.” He told CBS that the palace’s refusal to defend him and Meghan from attacks was a “betrayal.”

Palace officials have declined to comment on any of Meghan and Harry’s allegations.

The book also explains the reasons for its title, the Guardian said. It said Harry recounts the alleged words of his father to his mother, Princess Diana, on the day of his birth: “Wonderful! Now you’ve given me an heir and a spare — my work is done.”

Harry is fifth in line to the throne behind his brother and William’s three children.

## Family says missing rapper safe

Rapper Theophilus London has been found safe after disappearing for months, a relative announced Wednesday night.

“We have found Theo. He is safe and well,” the rapper’s cousin, Mikhail Noel, posted on Instagram. “At this time the family would love prayers and privacy. Thank you all!!!”

The post didn’t provide details of where London had been found, where he had been or why he hadn’t contacted his family, which filed a missing persons report with Los Angeles police last week and asked for the public’s help in finding him.

London’s family and friends had said they believed someone last spoke to the musician in July in Los Angeles.

London, 35, posted prolifically

on Instagram, but his last posts also came in July.

The rapper was born in Trinidad and Tobago and later raised in the Brooklyn borough of New York. He was nominated for a 2016 Grammy for best rap performance for a featured spot alongside Paul McCartney on Kanye West’s “All Day” and has frequently collaborated with the artist now known as Ye.

### Other news

■ British author Fay Weldon, known for her sharp wit and acerbic observations about women’s experiences and sexual politics in novels including “The Life and Loves of a She-Devil,” has died, her family said Wednesday. She was 91.

From wire reports

# STARS AND STRIPES<sup>®</sup>

## SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market



Transportation

944

### VEHICLE SHIPPING SERVICES

- International Shipping
- Import & Export
- Inland trucking (U.S. & Europe)
- Door to door pick-up/delivery service
- Customs clearance
- All Risk Marine Insurance
- Auto Insurance (Germany only)

For Further Information Please Contact

<b>Phone:</b>	GERMANY +49-(0)6134-2592730	UNITED KINGDOM +44-(0)1638-515714	U.S.A +1-972-602-1670 Ext. 1701
<b>Toll-free:</b>	0800-CARSHIP (Germany only)		+1-800-264-8167 (US only)
<b>E-Mail:</b>	info@transglobal-logistics.de	enquiries@carshipuk.co.uk	info@tgal.us
<b>WEB:</b>	www.transglobal-logistics.de	www.carshipuk.co.uk	www.tgal.us

For 2nd POV Shipments - Offices / Agencies near Military Installations



Are you in the picture?



Reading Stars and Stripes gives you a better handle on issues that affect you most.

*No one covers the bases the way we do.*

STARS AND STRIPES

Transportation

944

Ship Cars and Containers to and from the USA



OPENING HOURS: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mon - Fri  
0800-522-6274 or 800-WSA-SHIP (972-7447)

For a free rate request, please email: info@worldwide-ship.de  
Visit our Website: www.worldwide-ship.de

Off Duty? Amuse Yourself!



Concert, events, TV, movies, music, video games, celebrity antics...

Get entertained with...

STARS AND STRIPES

STARS AND STRIPES

# CLASSIFIED

	EUROPE	MIDDLE EAST	PACIFIC
Advertising	Doug Dougherty dougherty.doug@stripes.com +49(0) 631.3615.9000 DSN 314.583.9000	Doug Dougherty dougherty.doug@stripes.com +49(0) 631.3615.9000 DSN 314.583.9000	Ichiro Katayanagi PacificAdvertising@stripes.com DSN 227-7313, CML +81 (42) 552-2511 ext. 77313.
Circulation	Kevin Miller miller.kevin@stripes.com +49(0)631.3615.9136 DSN: 314.583.9136	Kevin Miller miller.kevin@stripes.com +49(0)631.3615.9136 DSN: 314.583.9136	Mari Mori CustomerHelp@stripes.com +81(3) 6385.7333 DSN 315.227.7333
Reader Letters	letters@stripes.com	letters@stripes.com	letters@stripes.com

## Classifieds EUROPE

For information on Commercial Rates: CIV: 0631-3615-9012 or DSN: 583-9012

Announcements 040

Automotive 140

### SCAM FADS

Classifieds scams can target both sellers and buyers with classified advertisements.

Be aware of the common red flags.

Some of the latest Scam fads are:

- Vehicle buyers wanting to buy sight unseen and have the vehicle shipped through an agent using paypal.
- People saying Free Dog (different breeds) for adoption.

### SELLER BEWARE

Individuals placing classified advertising should use discretion in concluding the sale of their property. Not all potential buyers are reputable or honest. Stars and Stripes suggests that you take precautions to ensure that potential buyers are reputable and will be able to fulfill the terms of the sale. Stars and Stripes is not liable for the contractual relationship between sellers and buyers of merchandise advertised in the newspaper or on the web site.



Want a better picture?

You'll get one – just by reading Stars and Stripes military news coverage.

*In print • Online at stripes.com • Mobile for Android, iPhone & iPad*

No one covers the bases the way we do.

STARS AND STRIPES

However you read us, wherever you need us.

Read STARS AND STRIPES online at

[www.stripes.com](http://www.stripes.com)

# BE THE BEST YOU IN 2023! JOIN OUR FACEBOOK LIVE WORKOUTS



JOIN EXCHANGE BE FIT AMBASSADOR ROY MONTEZ, AIR FORCE SENIOR MASTER SGT. SONJA BERRY AND ARMY CAPT. BRAD BUSH FOR CARDIO AND RESISTANCE-BASED FUNCTIONAL WORKOUTS ON FACEBOOK AT 11 A.M. CST EVERY MONDAY.



## MAKE 2023 YOUR YEAR TO BE FIT!



AAFES.MEDIA/BEFIT2023

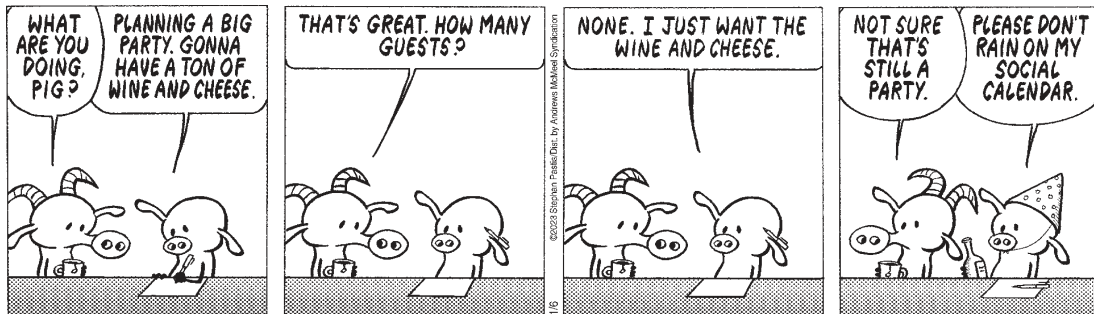
Frazz



Dilbert



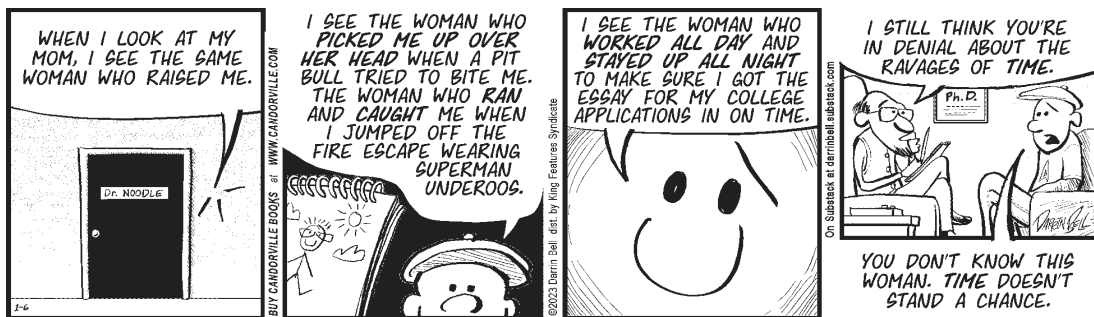
Pearls Before Swine



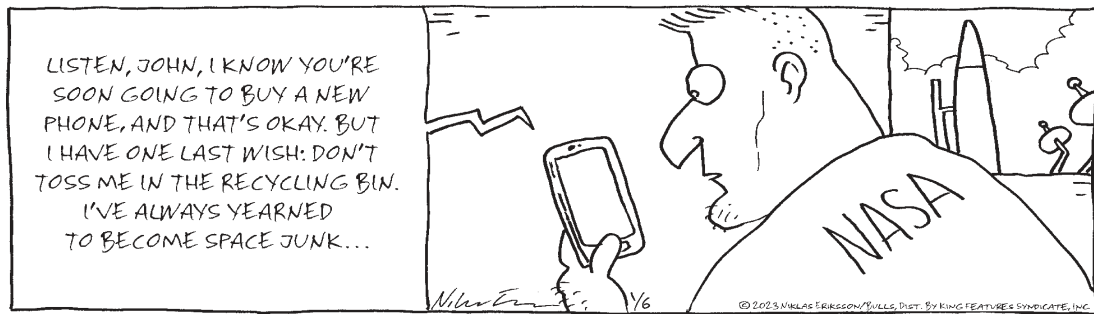
Non Sequitur



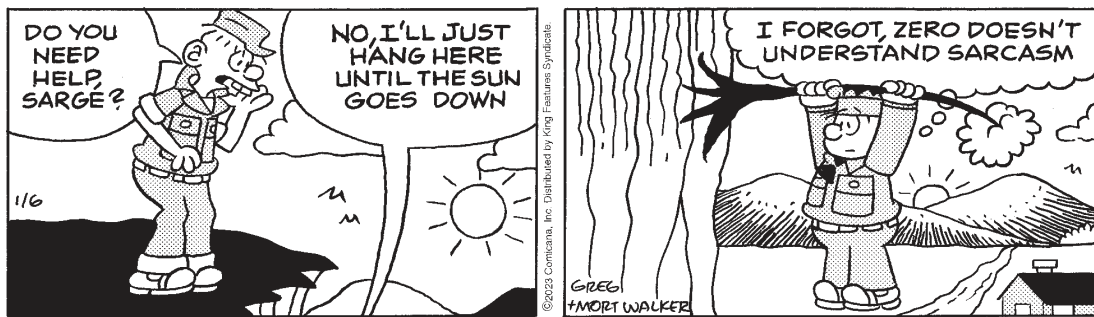
Candorville



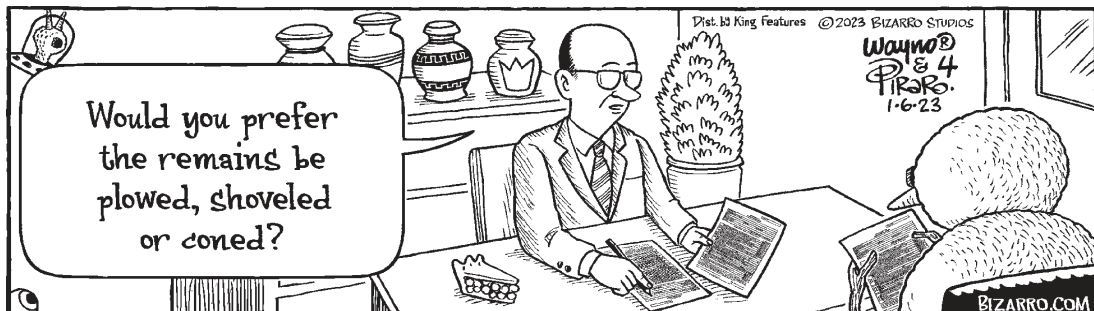
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



### Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14				
15				16				17				
18				19								
20			21		22				23	24	25	26
				27	28			29	30			
31	32	33						34				
35					36			37				
38					39	40			41	42	43	44
					45				46		47	
48	49	50	51								52	
53							54				55	
56							57				58	

#### ACROSS

- 1 Blunder
- 4 "Psst!"
- 7 Like a keg party smell
- 12 Sticky stuff
- 13 Flamenco cry
- 14 Stan's buddy
- 15 "Tasty!"
- 16 Trip for newlyweds
- 18 School org.
- 19 Chose
- 20 Till bills
- 22 Right angle
- 23 "Her" actress Rooney
- 27 Constitution letters
- 29 "This Is — Tap"
- 31 Serves wine
- 34 Rust, for one
- 35 Teen's deadline
- 37 "Gosh!"
- 38 Sis and bro
- 39 Big fuss
- 41 Sandwich shop
- 45 Tends texts
- 47 Auction action
- 48 Night lights?
- 52 Inseparable
- 53 Wash thoroughly
- 54 Scooted
- 55 Museum-funding org.
- 56 Attempts
- 57 NFL measures
- 58 Gen. parts

#### DOWN

- 1 Pharaoh's land
- 2 Mail carrier's beat
- 3 Numeral type
- 4 Jolly laugh
- 5 Runs off to wed
- 6 Streisand title role
- 7 "Cheers" barman Woody
- 8 Shade provider
- 9 "Evil Woman" gp.
- 10 Carnival city
- 11 Longing
- 17 Morays
- 21 Rides the waves
- 23 Blended
- 24 Singer DiFranco
- 25 "Awesome, dude!"
- 26 Hearty brew

28 Away from NNW

- 30 "Ulalume" writer
- 31 Mac rivals
- 32 French "yes"
- 33 City region, for short
- 36 Test the waters
- 37 Became irate
- 40 Journal
- 42 Durable wood
- 43 Cruise ship
- 44 Concepts
- 45 Recedes
- 46 Taxpayer IDs
- 48 Orig. texts
- 49 Halloween mo.
- 50 "... man — mouse?"
- 51 Central point

#### Answer to Previous Puzzle

H	A	M		T	E	A	M		L	A	S	T		
E	V	E		E	L	L	E		A	L	O	E		
M	E	S	Q	U	I	T	E		S	E	P	T		
			O	U	T			A	T	T	A	C	H	E
K	A	Z	O	O	S			S	A	G				
I	M	O		N	U	T		E	N	S	U	E		
L	O	I	S		R	E	F		A	U	N	T		
N	I	C	K	S		D	A	M		P	T	S		
				I	R	A		R	O	B	R	O	Y	
H	A	R	P	I	S	T		R	T	E				
A	P	O	P				C	O	S	T	U	M	E	S
N	A	V	E				O	R	C	A		E	R	E
D	R	E	D				T	O	I	L		S	A	W

1-6

#### CRYPTOQUIP

NLDO NJCIU JHG VDII DH  
 DSHJMPDI, FMGDO RGDM JR  
 CTKHF VJPWCOGM TLJMOVCO  
 VJPPDHUT? PDVMJ-WLJSKD.  
**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** CLASSIFIED SECTION OF A NEWSPAPER FOR PEOPLE LOOKING TO SELL SMALL MAGICAL STICKS: WAND ADS.  
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals G

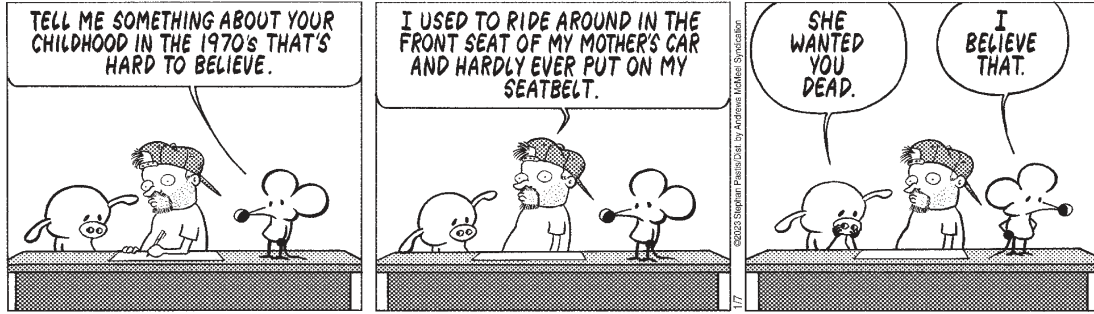
Frazz



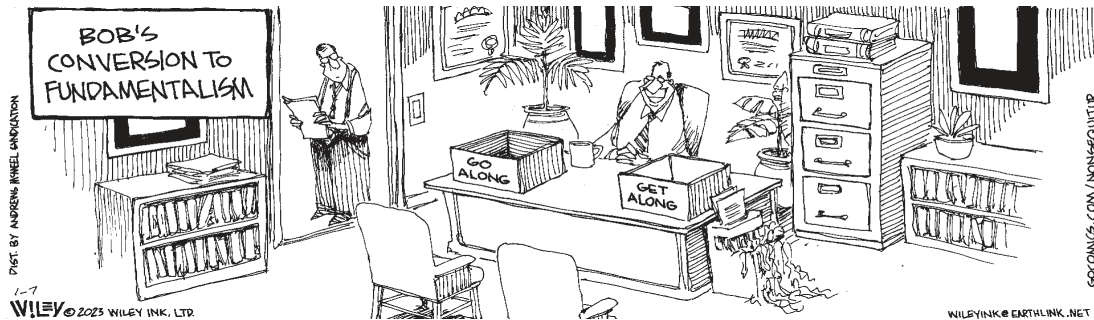
Dilbert



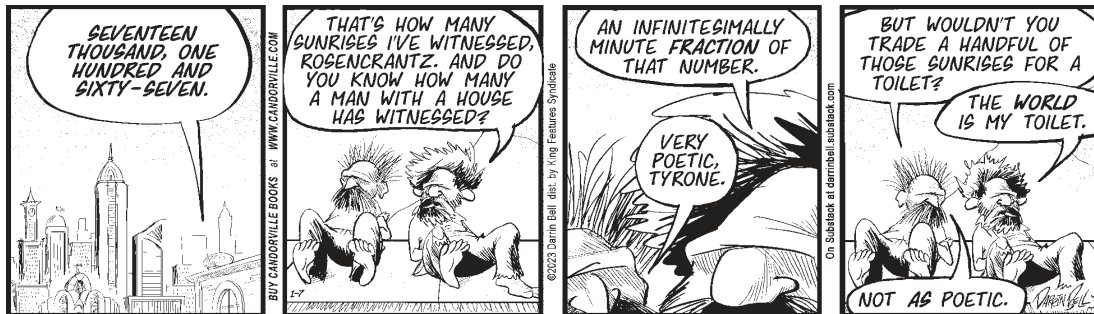
Pearls Before Swine



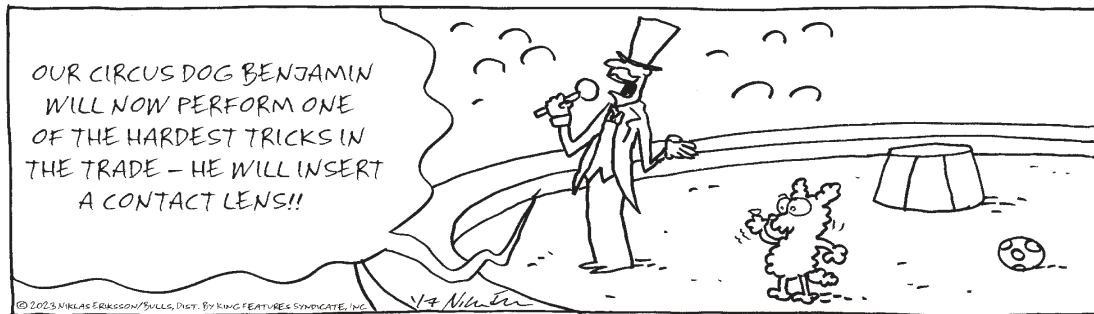
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



### Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15				16					17			
18			19						20			
			21				22					
23	24	25				26				27	28	29
30						31				32		
33				34					35			
			36				37					
38	39	40				41				42	43	44
45						46				47		
48						49				50		
51						52				53		

#### ACROSS

- 1 Chairman of China
- 4 Grate
- 8 Roller coaster cry
- 12 Swiss peak
- 13 Sheltered
- 14 Steer's place
- 15 Numbered rd.
- 16 — -do-well
- 17 Send forth
- 18 Fruits in jam recipes
- 21 Shack
- 22 Granola grain
- 23 Comforter cover
- 26 Layer
- 27 — polloi
- 30 Pinnacle
- 31 "Unstoppable" singer
- 32 Competed
- 33 Wrestling surface
- 34 "Hulk" director Lee
- 35 Chic again
- 36 Conceit
- 37 — Lingus
- 38 Close calls
- 45 Lotion additive
- 46 Author Austen
- 47 Nipper's co.
- 48 Apple desktop computer
- 49 It takes the cake
- 50 "La-la" lead-in
- 51 Harangue

- 52 Ernie's "Sesame Street" pal
- 53 NBC weekend show

- 24 "— Lazy River" Street" pal
- 25 Cat doc
- 26 Farm squaler
- 27 Smack
- 28 Poetic contraction

#### DOWN

- 1 Artist Chagall
- 2 Sax range
- 3 Ready for customers
- 4 Expired
- 5 Warning
- 6 Start a garden
- 7 Vine-covered passageway
- 8 Bread grain
- 9 Rope fiber
- 10 Writer Wiesel
- 11 911 responders
- 19 Cereal in party mix
- 20 Comic Romano
- 23 River blocker
- 24 "— Lazy River" Street" pal
- 25 Cat doc
- 26 Farm squaler
- 27 Smack
- 28 Poetic contraction
- 29 Chapel vow
- 31 Deception
- 32 Designer Wang
- 34 In the past
- 35 New
- 36 Upright
- 37 "Elf" actor Ed
- 38 "Monsoon Wedding" director Mira
- 39 — mater
- 40 Reddish horse
- 41 Roof overhang
- 42 Experts
- 43 Nobel Prize subj.
- 44 Satirist Mort

#### Answer to Previous Puzzle

E	R	R		H	E	Y		B	E	E	R	Y	
G	O	O		O	L	E		O	L	L	I	E	
Y	U	M		H	O	N	E	Y	M	O	O	N	
P	T	A		O	P	T	E	D					
T	E	N	S		E	L	L		M	A	R	A	
				U	S	S		S	P	I	N	A	L
P	O	U	R	S				O	X	I	D	E	
C	U	R	F	E	W		G	E	E				
S	I	B	S		A	D	O		D	E	L	I	
					E	D	I	T	S		B	I	D
M	O	O	N	B	E	A	M	S		O	N	E	
S	C	R	U	B		R	A	N		N	E	A	
S	T	A	B	S		Y	D	S		Y	R	S	

1-7

#### CRYPTOQUIP

WL O GZWPWMD AESMUZHOPWHU  
 XUZU PE MWSAUZUTN TEHU O  
 GYTTLWVDPUZ, XEYTF O PEZN  
 OFEZU O PEZUOFEZ?

**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** WHAT WOULD ONE CALL AN ABNORMAL, GREAT FEAR OF USING COMPUTER SHORTCUT COMMANDS? MACRO-PHOBIA.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals E

## STARS AND STRIPES.

## OPINION

## On New Year's resolutions, look to first president

Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher  
 Laura Law, Chief Operating Officer  
 Lt. Col. Marci Hoffman, Europe commander  
 John Rodriguez, Europe chief of staff  
 Lt. Col. Michael Kerschbaum, Pacific commander  
 Michael Ryan, Pacific chief of staff

## EDITORIAL

Terry Leonard, Editor  
 leonard.terry@stripes.com

Robert H. Reid, Senior Managing Editor  
 reid.robert@stripes.com

Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation  
 moores.sean@stripes.com

Ann Pinson, Digital Managing Editor  
 pinson.ann@stripes.com

## BUREAU STAFF

## Europe/Mideast

Erik Slavin, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief  
 slavin.erik@stripes.com  
 +49(0)631.3615.9350; DSN (314)583.9350

## Pacific

Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief  
 kidd.aaron@stripes.com  
 +81.42.552.2511 ext. 88380; DSN (315)227.7380

## Washington

Joseph Cacchioli, Washington Bureau Chief  
 cacchioli.joseph@stripes.com  
 (+1)(202)886-0033

Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News  
 bowers.brian@stripes.com

## CIRCULATION

## Mideast

Kevin R. Miller, Circulation Manager  
 miller.kevin@stripes.com  
 xsscirculation@stripes.com  
 +49(0)631.3615.9136; DSN (314)583-9136

## Europe

Karen Lewis, Community Engagement Manager  
 lewis.karen@stripes.com  
 memberservices@stripes.com  
 +49(0)631.3615.9090; DSN (314)583.9090

## Pacific

Mari Mori, customerhelp@stripes.com  
 +81-3 6385.3171; DSN (315)227.7333

## CONTACT US

## Washington

tel: (+1)202.886.0003  
 633 3rd St. NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20001-3050

## Reader letters

letters@stripes.com

## Additional contacts

stripes.com/contactus

## OMBUDSMAN

Ernie Gates

The Stars and Stripes ombudsman protects the free flow of news and information, reporting any attempts by the military or other authorities to undermine the newspaper's independence. The ombudsman also responds to concerns and questions from readers, and monitors coverage for fairness, accuracy, timeliness and balance. The ombudsman welcomes comments from readers, and can be contacted by email at ombudsman@stripes.com, or by phone at 202.886.0003.

Stars and Stripes (USPS 0417900) is published week-days (except Dec. 25 and Jan. 1) for 50 cents Monday through Thursday and for \$1 on Friday by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. Periodicals postage paid at San Francisco, CA. Postmaster: Send address changes to Pacific Stars and Stripes, Unit 45002, APO AP 96301-5002. This newspaper is authorized by the Department of Defense for members of the military services overseas. However, the contents of Stars and Stripes are unofficial, and are not to be considered as the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government. As a DOD newspaper, Stars and Stripes may be distributed through official channels and use appropriated funds for distribution to remote locations where overseas DOD personnel are located.

The appearance of advertising in this publication does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense or Stars and Stripes of the products or services advertised. Products or services advertised shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

© Stars and Stripes 2023

stripes.com

BY ADAM CARRINGTON

Chicago Tribune

As the calendar starts anew, so we seek to begin again. We make resolutions by which we can mitigate our vices and cultivate virtues either new or in need of renewal.

For our citizenship, we can find no better advice than that given by the father of our country, President George Washington. We have, in his own handwriting, a collection of more than 100 "Rules of Civility & Decent Behaviour In Company and Conversation." Similar lists originated well before Washington and were popular as part of young people's education in the Colonies.

Washington copied these rules as a teenager. Yet more than copying on paper, Washington took these rules to mind and to heart. Charles Moore, in an introduction to a 1926 publication of the list, noted: "These maxims were so fully exemplified in George Washington's life that biographers have regarded them as formative influences in the development of his character."

Some of his advice might not be easily translatable to our own interactions. We might not need to know to "spit not in the fire," for instance. Others, however, distill truths that remain invaluable for our current political discourse.

For one, Washington copied the counsel, "Be no flatterer." To be sure, while flattery is no stranger to politics, it has increasingly become one of the grossest elements of our present moment. We see demagogues tell the masses whatever they seem to wish to

hear. We witness others striving for power by tickling the ears of the most influential among us, praising them regardless of merit. And we see the tendency to conform to trendy opinion regardless of truth — itself a kind of flattery.

For another, Washington learned to "(show) not yourself glad at the misfortune of another though he were your enemy." As we flatter those we want as our friends or supporters, so we often display loathing of perceived foes. Our discourse has become so rancorous that many use the personal tragedies of opponents as fodder for mockery.

Along similar lines, Washington's rules advise: "When you see a crime punished, you may be inwardly pleased; but always (show) pity to the suffering offender." This perspective seeks to maintain the needed line between vengeance and authentic justice. The government should seek right but to do so calmly, deliberately and dispassionately. We have due process for defendants for this reason.

Washington also copied various counsels to respect both our equals and elders, whether that be in age or status. Especially in our online discourse, we hardly respect anyone. We must regain that decorum that sees the dignity in all.

One in his list says: "Undertake not to teach your equal in the art himself professes; it flavours of arrogancy." Yet we tend to become immediate experts on whatever social or political matter about which everyone is commenting. This point can take a particularly personal turn as well. Instead of writing articles on how to argue

with our parents, uncles or grandparents at holiday gatherings, we might consider how we can learn from them again.

Moreover, we learn from these rules when and how to speak about political matters in the advice, "In all causes of passion admit reason govern." Our politics often lets passion rule and calls doing so courageous. But such a response really shows a lack of self-government. Along these lines, Washington copied, "Use no reproachful language against anyone neither curse nor revile." That advice does not mean we should avoid stating our opinion and doing so forcefully.

These points also remind us of the link between argument and life. We should not critique an argument on which we, too, are blameworthy — "for example is more prevalent than precepts." Also, in not cursing or reviling, we shouldn't let our political discourse descend into the equivalent of tabloid gossip. "Be not hasty to believe flying reports to the disparagement of any," including political foes.

Washington's last rule provided a fitting ending to the characteristics displayed in the preceding list: "Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire call conscience." We should make the same commitment.

We must not let the worst passions, words and actions define us as individuals and as a people. In cultivating our conscience, we maintain our dedication to justice, to truth — and, yes — to civility.

Adam Carrington is an associate professor of politics at Hillsdale College in Hillsdale, Mich.

## Pope Francis has made key inroads on vital issues

BY ARTHUR I. CYR

Special to Stars and Stripes

"An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth ..." is a useful starting place for discussion of the influence of Pope Francis, who is proving to be a remarkably active and activist leader of the Roman Catholic Church. The Holidays are an excellent time for reflection.

To modern readers, the biblical quote (Exodus 21:24) seems brutal, but the Old Testament sentiment actually represented revolutionary progress. Ancient warfare involved unrestrained killing and pillaging. By contrast, this Hebrew law codified proportionality and limits. Historically and currently, the Vatican has played an important role in restraining warfare.

Two events in December underscore the importance of the Roman Catholic Church and also significant change in wider global societies.

On the morning of Dec. 31, former Pope Benedict XVI died. A highly respected German theologian, Benedict on becoming pope in 2005 was heralded by conservatives who saw him as a bulwark against currents of change. He denounced shocking sexual abuse in the church and excommunicated guilty priests, but was criticized for not acting earlier and his leadership style alienated many. In 2013, he resigned, the first pope to do so since 1415.

Additionally, in December a three-day conference in Rome of Catholic scholars discussed the importance of Catholic pro-

hibition of contraception. The event was inspired by questioning within the Vatican of the contemporary value of traditional doctrine. Pope Francis, Benedict's successor, is spurring discussion of change.

Francis' April 2016 letter on marriage reiterates commitment to traditional marriage, but also emphasizes tolerance for those who do not accept Catholic doctrine. That marks important if overdue change.

During the Cold War, Pope John Paul II provided historic leadership in foreign policy. He supported Solidarity, the successful trade union-based reform movement in his native Poland. That in turn contributed to the fall of the Soviet Union and satellite states.

Today, hunger and poverty have been significantly overcome for the great majority in industrialized nations, and political controversies now generally focus on other topics. Francis is encouraging reform on policies regarding capital punishment, environment and lifestyles.

The World Wars of the last century reconfirmed Catholic Church emphasis on restraint in war. Contemporary Catholic analysis of ethics and military strategy is spearheaded by influential leaders such as J. Bryan Hehir, a senior priest who has taught at both Georgetown and Harvard universities.

Hehir is currently the secretary for Health and Social Services at the Archdiocese of Boston. When sexual abuse by priests became public, with intense angry reaction, he bluntly and publicly criti-

cized his church for initially mishandling such crimes by priests.

During the Cold War, Hehir guided the U.S. Catholic Bishops' influential report on use of nuclear weapons. In 1983, the Catholic bishops of the United States declared formally and publicly that possession of nuclear weapons for deterrence is acceptable.

However, Pope Francis has opened the subject of nuclear weapons for fresh debate and made his own position clear. In September, he visited Kazakhstan and praised the decision of that nation's leaders to give up nuclear weapons. Francis did this with the backdrop of Russia President Vladimir Putin's raising the threat — quickly withdrawn — to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine.

Global human populations since World War II have experienced extraordinary positive developments; believers from earlier periods in history would consider them miraculous. Masses of humanity are moving into relatively comfortable lives. Democracy is spreading. Wealth gaps are growing in industrialized nations, but vast global abject poverty is slowly diminishing.

Today, relative security for Americans encourages self-preoccupation. Francis pursues fundamental concerns, of universal importance, with subtle but strong, sustained reform efforts. His leadership should be supported.

Arthur I. Cyr is author of "After the Cold War — American Foreign Policy, Europe and Asia."

# SCOREBOARD

## PRO FOOTBALL

### NFL AMERICAN CONFERENCE East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Buffalo	12	3	0	.800	420	263
Miami	8	8	0	.500	386	393
New England	8	8	0	.500	341	312
e-N.Y. Jets	7	9	0	.438	290	305

### South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Jacksonville	8	8	0	.500	384	334
Tennessee	7	9	0	.438	282	339
e-Indianapolis	4	11	1	.281	258	395
e-Houston	2	13	1	.156	257	389

### North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Cincinnati	11	4	0	.733	391	306
x-Baltimore	10	6	0	.625	334	288
Pittsburgh	8	8	0	.500	280	332
e-Cleveland	7	9	0	.438	347	353

### West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Kansas City	13	3	0	.813	465	356
x-L.A. Chargers	10	6	0	.625	363	353
e-Las Vegas	6	10	0	.375	382	387
e-Denver	4	12	0	.250	256	331

## NATIONAL CONFERENCE

### East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Philadelphia	13	3	0	.813	455	328
x-Dallas	12	4	0	.750	461	316
x-N.Y. Giants	9	6	1	.594	349	349
e-Washington	7	8	1	.469	295	337

### South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Tampa Bay	8	8	0	.500	296	328
e-New Orleans	7	9	0	.438	323	335
e-Atlanta	6	10	0	.375	335	369
e-Carolina	6	10	0	.375	337	367

### North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Minnesota	12	4	0	.750	395	414
Detroit	8	8	0	.500	433	411
Green Bay	8	8	0	.500	354	351
e-Chicago	3	13	0	.188	313	434

### West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-San Francisco	12	4	0	.750	412	264
Seattle	8	8	0	.500	388	385
e-L.A. Rams	5	11	0	.313	291	365
e-Arizona	4	12	0	.250	327	411

e-eliminated from playoffs  
x-clinched playoff spot  
y-clinched division

### Saturday's games

Kansas City at Las Vegas  
Tennessee at Jacksonville

### Sunday's games

Arizona at San Francisco  
Baltimore at Cincinnati  
Carolina at New Orleans  
Cleveland at Pittsburgh  
Dallas at Washington  
Detroit at Green Bay  
Houston at Indianapolis  
L.A. Chargers at Denver  
L.A. Rams at Seattle  
Minnesota at Chicago  
N.Y. Giants at Philadelphia  
N.Y. Jets at Miami  
New England at Buffalo  
Tampa Bay at Atlanta

## NFL Injury Report

**NEW YORK** — The National Football League injury report, as provided by the league (OUT: Player will not play; DOUBTFUL: Player is unlikely to play; QUESTIONABLE: Player is not certain to play; DNP: did not practice; LIMITED: limited participation; FULL: Full participation):

### Saturday

**KANSAS CITY CHIEFS at LAS VEGAS RAIDERS:** KANSAS CITY: DNP: K Harrison Butker (back). LIMITED: WR Mecole Hardman (pelvis), WR Skyy Moore (hand), CB L'Jarius Sneed (hip), G Joe Thuney (ankle). FULL: LB Nick Bolton (rib). **LAS VEGAS:** DNP: RB Josh Jacobs (NIR-personal). LIMITED: LB Darien Butler (concussion). FULL: WR Davante Adams (illness), LB Curtis Bolton (shin), P A.J. Cole (illness), QB Jarrett Stidham (right elbow), RB Zamir White (ankle).

**TENNESSEE TITANS at JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS:** TENNESSEE: DNP: CB Davontae Harris (hamstring), DE Tarell Basham (back). LIMITED: OLB Dylan Cole (ankle), CB Kristian Fulton (groin), S Amani Hooker (knee), OT Nicholas Petit-Frere (ankle), DE Jeffery Simmons (ankle), WR Treyton Burks (groin). FULL: DE Denico Autry (biceps), RB Derrick Henry (hip), DB Josh Thompson (concussion). **JACKSONVILLE:** DNP: LS Ross Maticcik (back). LIMITED: QB Trevor Lawrence (toe), DB Andrew Wingard (shoulder), OLB Travon Walker (ankle), G Brandon Scherff (abdomen/ankle), DE Foley Fatukasi (ankle), S Rayshawn Jenkins (shoulder).

## PRO HOCKEY

### NHL Eastern Conference Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Boston	37	29	4	4	62	140	83
Toronto	38	23	8	7	53	130	100
Tampa Bay	37	24	12	1	49	131	108
Buffalo	36	19	15	2	40	143	122
Detroit	36	16	13	7	39	111	122
Ottawa	38	18	17	3	39	116	116
Florida	39	17	18	4	38	129	134
Montreal	38	15	20	3	33	103	144

### Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Carolina	38	25	7	6	56	121	99
New Jersey	38	24	11	3	51	129	98
N.Y. Rangers	39	21	12	6	48	127	108
Washington	40	21	13	6	48	131	113
N.Y. Islanders	39	22	15	2	46	126	106
Pittsburgh	37	19	12	6	44	122	111
Philadelphia	38	14	17	7	35	102	125
Columbus	36	11	23	2	24	94	142

### Western Conference Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Dallas	40	23	11	6	52	139	109
Winnipeg	38	24	13	1	49	122	97
Minnesota	37	22	13	2	46	121	103
Colorado	36	19	14	3	41	107	104
St. Louis	38	18	17	3	39	120	140
Nashville	36	16	14	6	38	100	110
Arizona	36	13	18	5	31	105	133
Chicago	37	8	25	4	20	80	141

### Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vegas	40	26	12	2	54	134	113
Los Angeles	41	22	13	6	50	135	140
Seattle	36	20	12	4	44	126	117
Calgary	39	18	14	7	43	122	119
Edmonton	39	20	17	2	42	138	133
Vancouver	37	16	18	3	35	127	147
San Jose	39	12	20	7	31	120	146
Anaheim	39	11	24	4	26	90	158

**Note:** Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

### Tuesday's games

Ottawa 4, Columbus 0  
N.Y. Rangers 5, Carolina 3  
Florida 5, Arizona 3  
St. Louis 6, Toronto 5, SO  
Buffalo 5, Washington 4, OT  
Winnipeg 3, Calgary 2  
Nashville 6, Montreal 3  
Tampa Bay 4, Chicago 1  
Seattle 5, Edmonton 2  
N.Y. Islanders 6, Vancouver 2  
Los Angeles 3, Dallas 2

### Wednesday's games

New Jersey 5, Detroit 1  
Minnesota 5, Tampa Bay 1  
Anaheim 2, Dallas 0

### Thursday's games

Arizona at Philadelphia  
N.Y. Rangers at Montreal  
Nashville at Carolina  
Seattle at Toronto  
St. Louis at New Jersey  
Washington at Columbus  
N.Y. Islanders at Edmonton  
Colorado at Vancouver  
Pittsburgh at Vegas  
Boston at Los Angeles

### Friday's games

Florida at Detroit  
Nashville at Washington  
Tampa Bay at Winnipeg  
Arizona at Chicago  
N.Y. Islanders at Calgary  
San Jose at Anaheim

### Saturday's games

N.Y. Rangers at New Jersey  
Carolina at Columbus  
Detroit at Toronto  
Minnesota at Buffalo  
Seattle at Ottawa  
St. Louis at Montreal  
Colorado at Edmonton  
Los Angeles at Vegas  
Boston at San Jose

### Sunday's games

Vancouver at Winnipeg  
Florida at Dallas  
Columbus at Washington  
Calgary at Chicago  
Pittsburgh at Arizona  
St. Louis at Minnesota  
Toronto at Philadelphia  
Boston at Anaheim

## Scoring leaders

### Through Wednesday

	GP	G	A	PTS
Connor McDavid, EDM	39	33	40	73
Leon Draisaitl, EDM	37	21	37	58
Jason Robertson, DAL	40	26	29	55
Tage Thompson, BUF	36	30	25	55
Nikita Kucherov, TB	37	13	41	54
Erik Karlsson, SJ	39	13	40	53
David Pastrnak, BOS	37	25	25	50

## DEALS

### Wednesday's transactions

#### BASEBALL Major League Baseball American League

**BOSTON RED SOX** — Named Kyle Hudson first base coach and outfield instructor.  
**CLEVELAND GUARDIANS** — Agreed to terms with RHP Michael Kelly, CF Roman Quinn and C Cam Gallagher to minor league contracts.

#### National League

**MIAMI MARLINS** — Signed INF Jean Segura to a two-year contract with a club option third year.  
**MILWAUKEE BREWERS** — Acquired RHP Bryce Wilson from Pittsburgh in exchange for cash considerations. Designated RHP Trevor Kelley for assignment.  
**PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES** — Acquired RHP Erich Uelmen from Chicago Cubs in exchange for cash considerations.  
**WASHINGTON NATIONALS** — Agreed to terms with 1B Dominic Smith on a one-year contract. Designated RHP A.J. Alexy for assignment.

#### FOOTBALL National Football League

**ARIZONA CARDINALS** — Signed WRs Isaiah Coulter and Auden Tate to the practice squad. Released OL Koda Martin from the practice squad.  
**BALTIMORE RAVENS** — Designated DB Daryl Worley to return to practice from injured reserve.  
**BUFFALO BILLS** — Signed S Jared Mayden from the New York Jets practice squad. Released CB Xavier Rhodes.  
**CHICAGO BEARS** — Signed WR Equanimeous St. Brown to a one-year contract extension. Placed G Teven Jenkins, OT Michael Schofield III and CB Josh Blackwell on injured reserve. Signed LBS DeMarquis Gates and Terrell Lewis and DE Jalyn Holmes to the active roster.  
**DALLAS COWBOYS** — Released WR James Washington. Designated G Matt Farnick to return to practice from injured reserve. Placed S Juanyeh Thomas on the practice squad injured reserve.  
**DENVER BRONCOS** — Signed OTs George Moore and Hunter Thedford to the practice squad.  
**DETROIT LIONS** — Designated CB Chase Lucas to return to practice from injured reserve.  
**INDIANAPOLIS COLTS** — Placed CB Kenny Moore II on injured reserve. Signed DE Rashod Berry to the active roster.  
**KANSAS CITY CHIEFS** — Signed DL Daniel Wise to the practice squad. Released WR Bryan Edwards from the practice squad. Reinstated WR Mecole Hardman from injured reserve. Waived OT Geron Christian.

**MIAMI DOLPHINS** — Signed QB Mike Glennon to the practice squad.  
**MINNESOTA VIKINGS** — Designated DL Jonathan Bullard to return to practice from injured reserve.  
**NEW ORLEANS SAINTS** — Placed RB Dwayne Washington on injured reserve. Promoted WR Keith Kirkwood from the practice squad to the active roster. Signed OT Sage Doxtater to the practice squad. Reinstated G Drew Desjarais from the practice squad injured reserve. Placed G

Yasir durant on the practice squad injured reserve.

**PHILADELPHIA EAGLES** — Designated S C.J. Garner-Johnson and DE Robert Quinn to return to practice from injured reserve.

**PITTSBURGH STEELERS** — Designated CB William Jackson to return to practice from injured reserve.

**SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS** — Designated RB Elijah Mitchell to return to practice from injured reserve.

**SEATTLE SEAHAWKS** — Signed TE Tyler Mabry. Placed LB Jordyn Brooks on injured reserve.

**WASHINGTON COMMANDERS** — Placed LB De'Jon Harris on injured reserve. Promoted LB Nathan Gerry from the practice squad to the active roster. Signed LB Ferrod Gardner to the practice squad. Reinstated G Nolan Laufenberg from the practice squad injured reserve.

#### HOCKEY National Hockey League

**ANAHEIM DUCKS** — Recalled C Justin Kirkland from San Diego (AHL).  
**ARIZONA COYOTES** — Returned F Laurent Dauphin to Tucson (AHL).  
**CAROLINA HURRICANES** — Placed D Cavan Fitzgerald on waivers.

**CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS** — Recalled LWS Lukas Reichel and Brett Seney from Rockford (AHL).  
**DETROIT RED WINGS** — Assigned G Alex Nedeljkovic to Grand Rapids (AHL).  
**NEW YORK RANGERS** — Signed LW Jimmy Vesey to a two-year contract extension.

**ST. LOUIS BLUES** — Recalled D Steve Santini from Springfield (AHL).  
**SAN JOSE SHARKS** — Returned D Nick Cicek to San Jose (AHL).  
**VEGAS GOLDEN KNIGHTS** — Returned RW Jonas Rondbjerg and C Byron Froese to Henderson (AHL).  
**WINNIPEG JETS** — Reassigned C Jansen Harkins to Manitoba (AHL).

#### SOCCER Major League Soccer

**ATLANTA UNITED** — Announced it has mutually agreed to terminate the contract of M Emerson Hyndman. Recalled M Tyler Wolff from loan to Belgian side SK Beveren.

**AUSTIN FC** — Signed D Leo Vaisanen from IF Elfsborg (Swedish side) pending receipt of his international transfer certificate (ITC) and P-1 visa.

**FC CINCINNATI** — Signed M Alvaro Barreal to a one-year contract extension.  
**LOS ANGELES FC** — Signed D Aaron Long to a two-year contract.

**NEW ENGLAND REVOLUTION** — Announced the retirement of G Brad Knighton and named him Revolution Academy Under-17 head coach. **NEW YORK CITY FC** — Acquired the exchange discovery priority for D Mitja Ilenic from LA Galaxy through NK Domzale (Slovenian side) for \$50,000 in GAM and signed him pending receipt of his international transfer certificate (ITC) and P-1 visa.

**PHILADELPHIA UNION** — Signed M Daniel Gazdag to a three-year contract.

#### COLLEGE

**NAVY** — Named Grant Chesnut football offensive coordinator.

## COLLEGE BASKETBALL

### Wednesday's men's scores

**EAST**  
Duke 79, VCU 70  
Morgan St. 89, Goucher 52  
Providence 73, UConn 61  
Rhode Island 82, Fordham 79  
St. Bonaventure 73, George Mason 69  
UMass 90, Saint Louis 81  
Villanova 73, Georgetown 57

**SOUTH**  
Alabama A&M 75, MVSU 68  
Alabama St. 80, Ark.-Pine Bluff 66  
Campbell 63, Gardner-Webb 58  
Clemson 68, Virginia Tech 65  
Coll. of Charleston 92, NC A&T 79  
Davidson 80, Loyola Chicago 57  
Furman 97, The Citadel 72  
Georgia 76, Auburn 64  
Georgia Tech 76, Miami 70  
Longwood 79, Charleston Southern 74  
Murray St. 67, Bradley 58  
NC State 84, Duke 60  
Norfolk St. 85, Penn St.-Wilkes-Barre 60  
North Carolina 88, Wake Forest 79  
Richmond 73, George Washington 63  
SC-Upstate 65, Radford 60  
Samford 87, VMI 78  
Temple 68, South Florida 64  
Texas A&M 66, Florida 63  
Tulane 93, Tulsa 77  
UCF 64, East Carolina 61  
UNC-Asheville 76, High Point 72  
UNC-Greensboro 73, Chattanooga 61  
UNC-Wilmington 81, Elon 66  
W. Carolina 71, ETSU 60  
Winthrop 82, Presbyterian 72  
Wofford 53, Mercer 52

**MIDWEST**  
Belmont 77, Ill.-Chicago 71  
Butler 78, DePaul 70  
Dayton 76, Saint Joseph's 56  
Indiana St. 76, Illinois St. 67  
Michigan 79, Penn St. 69  
Missouri St. 85, Evansville 62  
N. Iowa 69, Valparaiso 67  
Northwestern 73, Illinois 60  
S. Illinois 53, Drake 49

**SOUTHWEST**  
Arkansas 74, Missouri 68  
Grambling St. 85, Texas Southern 72  
Iowa St. 63, Oklahoma 60  
Lindenwood (Mo.) 67, UALR 62  
Southern U. 66, Prairie View 62

Stephen F. Austin 69, New Mexico St. 60  
TCU 88, Baylor 87  
Texas A&M-CC 91, Incarnate Word 61

**FAR WEST**  
Nevada 80, Colorado St. 69

## COLLEGE BASKETBALL/COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## Georgetown: 'Frustrating time' under Ewing

BY HOWARD FENDRICH  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Georgetown coach Patrick Ewing's loss-filled stint at his alma mater was called a "challenging and frustrating time" by athletic director Lee Reed, who added Wednesday that "no one is more committed" to turning things around than the former star center.

Hours before the Hoyas set a Big East record by accumulating their 25th consecutive regular-season conference loss, 73-57 against visiting Villanova, Reed responded to a request for an interview from The Associated Press by issuing a statement that was emailed by a spokesperson.

"We recognize this is a challenging and frustrating time for the men's basketball team and our fans," said Reed, who also put out a comment about Ewing before a game about 10 months ago, although that one said the school was "committed" to sticking with him. "Coach Ewing understands that it is imperative to get the program back on track, and no one is more committed than he is to making that happen."

The defeat Wednesday night left Georgetown with a 5-11 overall record, 0-5 in conference play. Its previous outing was an 80-51 loss to Big East opponent Butler.

After the loss to Villanova, which Georgetown President Jack DeGioia attended, Ewing was

asked whether he was concerned about his future.

"I'm here to talk about the game. My future is my future," Ewing replied. "I'll be the head coach at Georgetown until the president or the board decides for me to move on. ... You know, a friend of mine sent me a quote today: 'It's not how many times you get knocked down; it's how many times you get up.' We got knocked down, so all we're going to do is keep on getting up."

Georgetown went 0-19 in the conference last season while going 6-25 overall, including a 21-game losing streak. The Hoyas also lost their final regular-season Big East game in 2020-21 before going on a surprising four-game run at Madison Square Garden in New York to claim the conference tournament title.

That allowed the team to make its lone NCAA Tournament appearance during Ewing's tenure; that season ended with a first-round loss to Colorado.

Ewing, who as a player helped Georgetown and coach John Thompson Jr. win the 1984 national championship and make two other appearances in NCAA finals, is in his sixth season since replacing Thompson's son, John Thompson III, as the school's coach.

Georgetown is 73-95 under Ewing (a .435 winning percentage), including 26-68 (.277) in the Big East.



JESSICA HILL/AP

Georgetown head coach Patrick Ewing talks with Georgetown's Akok Akok in the second half against Connecticut on Dec. 20 in Storrs, Conn. Connecticut won 84-73.

This is Ewing's first head coaching job at any level — he worked as an assistant in the NBA after his Hall of Fame playing career ended — and his roster has seen repeated turnover because of students transferring away from Georgetown.

Late last season, in March 2022, Reed put out a statement hours before a game against Seton Hall, acknowledging the "disappointment

of a difficult season," and saying: "In this ever evolving landscape of college athletics we are committed to Coach Ewing, and we are working with him to evaluate every aspect of the men's basketball program and to make the necessary changes for him to put us back on the path to success for next year."

Before the start of this season, Ewing overhauled his staff by re-

placing all three assistants and bringing in several transfer players, including leading scorer Primo Spears, who came over from Duquesne.

"I'm a very prideful person and Georgetown is a very prideful university," Ewing said at his post-game news conference Wednesday, "and we don't want to be associated with a losing streak, but it is what it is."

## FCS title tilt is battle of Dakotas: 'Tired of the Bison'

BY ERIC OLSON  
Associated Press

The tiny South Dakota town of Rosholt isn't all that far from the North Dakota state line and is a place where allegiances are split between the Jackrabbits and Bison year-round — and never more pronounced than this week.

The South Dakota State Jackrabbits from Brookings and North Dakota State Bison from Fargo will play for the Football Championship Subdivision title in Frisco, Texas, on Sunday. It's a match-up fans have been hoping for since the schools, separated by 189 miles, began their moves to Division I together in 2004.

Friends Lisa Braun and JoAnn Foltz sat at the same table during happy hour at the Corner Bar in Rosholt this week. Braun is Team Jackrabbit. Foltz is Team Bison.

Braun's son went to SDSU, and the recently retired physician's assistant used to drive across the state line to her job in Wahpeton.

"I was one of three SDSU fans at the clinic there having to put up with all the Bison fans for about 15 years," she said. Braun considers it a respectful rivalry but, speaking for fellow Jacks fans, said:



MICHAEL AINSWORTH/AP

South Dakota State fans cheer as they play Sam Houston State during the second half of the FCS Football Championship in Frisco, Texas, on May 16, 2021. Sam Houston went on to win 23-21.

"We're tired of the Bison always winning."

SDSU is a proud program that produced, among others, Pro Football Hall of Fame center Jim Langer and 24-year NFL kicker and career scoring leader Adam Vinatieri.

Still, the Jacks have been overshadowed for decades by the Bison, who were voted Division II

national champions three times in the 1960s, won five Division II playoff titles from 1983-90 and will be playing for their 10th FCS crown in 12 years.

Jason Mork of Sioux Falls, who attended SDSU and has gone to Jacks games for 50 years, said something just feels right about playing NDSU in the final.

"There would be nobody more

satisfying to beat," he said. "At the same time, there's probably nobody more horrible to lose to."

The game will mark the 114th time the teams have squared off since 1903, when the school then known as the North Dakota Agricultural College won 85-0. The Bison have won the last three FCS playoff meetings and hold a 63-45-5 lead in the series.

The gap has narrowed recently. SDSU has won the last three meetings, including a 23-21 come-from-behind victory in Fargo on Oct. 15.

NDSU (12-2), however, continues to be the standard bearer in the second tier of Division I football. The Bison beat Montana State last season for their latest championship, and their record is a gaudy 179-32 since they became full-fledged Division I members in 2008.

South Dakota State (13-1) made its only previous title game appearance in May 2021, losing to Sam Houston State in the COVID-19 season pushed back to spring. The Jacks are an impressive 124-56 in their FCS era, but remain the little brother in the dynamic with their neighbor to the north.

Watch parties will be held across the Dakotas, and the most ardent fans will make the long drive down Interstates 29 and 35 to see the game in person.

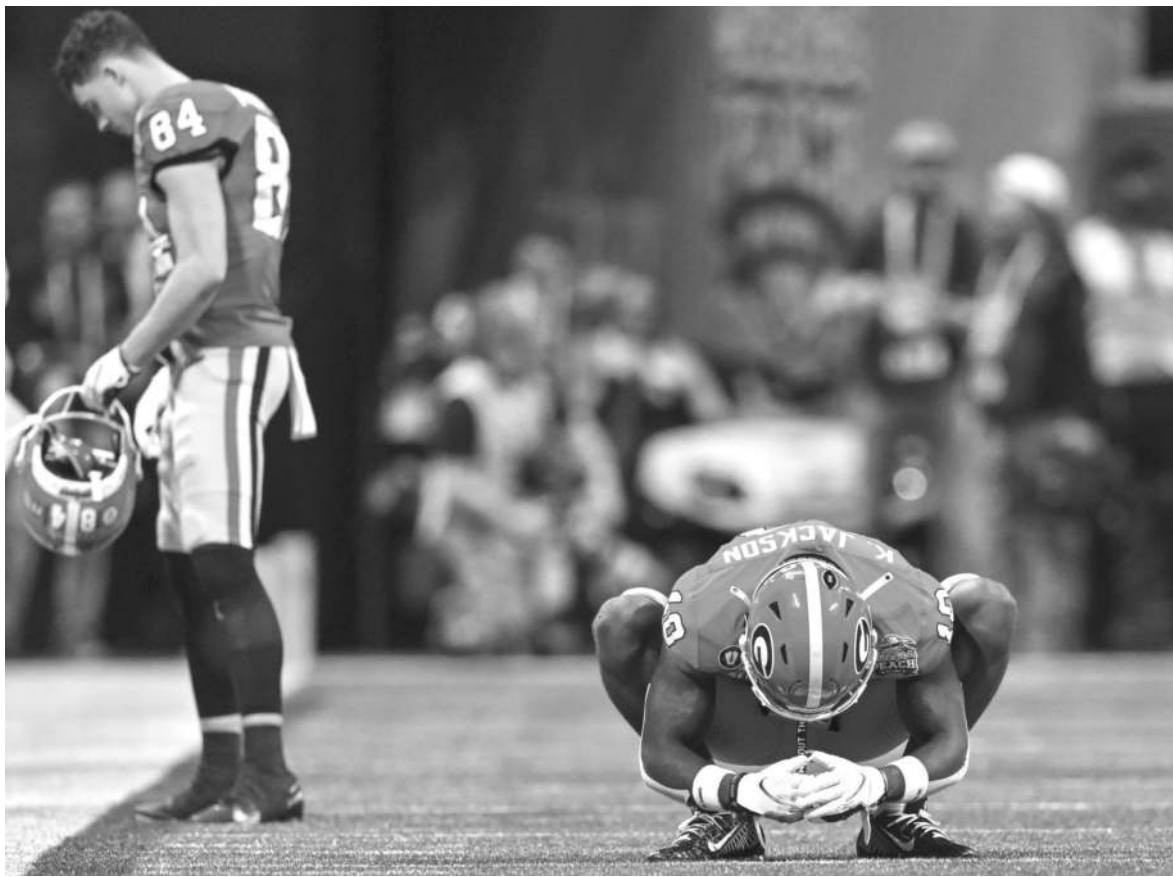
Bison backers are expected to outnumber Jacks fans at Toyota Stadium. Each school received 4,500 tickets to sell, and those were gone within hours. Many NDSU fans expect the Bison to reach the championship game every year and buy their tickets well in advance. The bottom price for a ticket on the secondary market was \$143 at midweek.

Adam Timmerman, a two-time Division II All-America offensive lineman for the Jacks in the early 1990s before his 12-year NFL career, said the matchup is especially meaningful to players of yesteryear.

Timmerman, who played on the 1993 SDSU team that ended a 16-game losing streak in the series, said the confidence coach John Stiegelmeier has instilled in his players and the fan base is palpable.

"We have aspired to be what North Dakota State has been," Timmerman said, "for a long time."

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYOFF



DANNY KARNIK/AP

Georgia linebacker Jamon Dumas-Johnson reacts to an Ohio State touchdown during the first half of the Peach Bowl semifinal playoff game Saturday in Atlanta.

# Georgia's proud defense looking to bounce back

BY CHARLES ODUM  
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Georgia's proud defense has allowed a combined 71 points in its two postseason games, including the 42-41 last-minute win over Ohio State in the College Football Playoff semifinal.

Even against stiff competition in the postseason, when higher-scoring games can be expected, that's a humbling and somewhat shocking development for No. 1 Georgia (14-0) as it heads into Monday night's national championship game against No. 3 TCU (13-1).

The Bulldogs, who led the nation in scoring defense while winning the last season's national championship and ranked second entering this postseason, aren't accustomed to giving up so many points.

"We didn't play our best game," defensive back Javon Bullard said. "But there's a whole lot we can fix ... communication and things like that, just the basic things like that, knowing your leverage, talking. I know we've got to talk better throughout the secondary."

Now come the Horned Frogs, who average 41.1 points per game to rank fifth in the nation following a 51-45 win over Michigan in the Fiesta Bowl semifinal.

Georgia coach Kirby Smart may be bracing for yet another shootout. He said he had no quick expla-

**CFP National Championship**  
**No. 3 TCU (13-1)**  
**vs. No. 1 Georgia (13-0)**  
AFN-Sports  
1:30 a.m. Tuesday CET  
9:30 a.m. Tuesday JKT

nation for the lack of defense in the CFP semifinals, which saw 179 points combined.

"I don't know how to pinpoint it," Smart said. "I don't know. Traditionally, the teams that are in these games, they're pretty good offensively. You'd like to say they're also pretty good defensively, but I think the studies and numbers indicate that as the season goes on and especially the semifinal and final games, scoring has to be going up."

Even after having five defensive players selected in the first round of last spring's NFL draft, Georgia's defense was strong again during the season. The Bulldogs allowed a combined 64 points in their first seven games; five games had 10 or fewer points allowed, including two shutouts.

Thanks to that, Georgia's defense still ranks near the top of the national leaders. After leading the nation with its average of 10.2 points allowed last season, Georgia ranks fifth at 14.8. Georgia is 11th with 304.6 yards allowed per game.

Georgia had to play several freshmen late against Ohio State.

Outside linebacker became a position of concern after Nolan Smith's season-ending pectoral injury against Florida on Oct. 29. The position took another hit against Ohio State when Chaz Chambliss needed help leaving the field with an apparent left knee injury.

Among freshmen who played on defense last week were starting safety Malaki Starks, defensive end Mykel Williams and linebacker Jalon Walker.

Smart said the freshmen "didn't actually do what they were supposed to do every play" and he hopes to have all his injured players back for TCU.

"We don't make excuses around here and talk about injuries and these problems, but we've had our fair share," Smart said. "And nobody feels sorry for us and don't want anybody to. But we have to get those guys ready to play at a higher level."

Georgia beat LSU 50-30 in the Southeastern Conference championship game, allowing 502 passing yards. Then Ohio State's C.J. Stroud passed for 348 yards and four touchdowns against the Bulldogs.

"We finished the job and did what we had to do," linebacker Smael Mondon said after the game. "We didn't play our best game and know we'll have to play a lot better. We have to go finish the drill."

## Title-seeking TCU used to being the underdogs

BY STEPHEN HAWKINS  
Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — Big right guard Wes Harris and his TCU teammates are hearing again just how big and physical their next opponent is and how much of an underdog they are against Georgia in the national championship game.

They heard a lot of the same things going into their College Football Playoff semifinal against Big Ten champion Michigan, which is sitting at home while the Horned Frogs (13-1) get ready to play the defending national champions Monday night.

"It just kind of lights a fire underneath you," Harris said Tuesday. "Definitely gave us a little bit of extra juice. We were tired of hearing about it ... and were able to make a statement to show we were a physical football team, too."

Immediately after their 51-45 win in the Fiesta Bowl on New Year's Eve, first-year Frogs coach Sonny Dykes said he felt they were the definitely the most physical team on the field. TCU had four sacks and outrushed Michigan 263 yards to 186, even after the Wolverines had a 54-yard run on the game's very first snap.

"We knew we were a physical team, and we got to show that during the game, and we've got to keep the same mindset," said defensive end Dylan Horton, who had all four of those sacks.

The Horned Frogs are listed as 13½-point underdogs against Georgia (14-0) in the championship game, according to Fanduel Sportsbook. They were 7½-point underdogs against Michigan.

Linebacker Dee Winters said the predictions were simply fuel for the team.

"Obviously being the underdog is something we're not unfamiliar with," added standout receiver Quentin Johnston. "So going to try to just keep moving like we did the rest of the season. And keep our heads to the ground and keep playing football."

TCU's only loss this season was in overtime to Kansas State in the Big 12 championship game after Heisman Trophy runner-up Max Duggan led them to 11 points in the final 7½ minutes of regulation to tie the game. The Frogs won five games in the regular season by coming from behind after halftime, including double-digit deficits in back-to-back games against Top 25 teams in October.

"The interesting thing was we felt like we've been a physical team all year. And I think those inside the football program certainly recognize that," Dykes said. "We felt like our success in the second half was because of that physical play, that mentality that we carried, really, all season. As the game went along, we felt like our guys got stronger and got more physical. And that's been, you know, pretty consistent really throughout the year."

Dykes sees a lot of similarities in Georgia and Michigan, though he believes the Bulldogs are more athletic, including their "typical SEC defensive ends" that are physical with great speed and skills.

"That's kind of the whole team," Dykes said. "It's just a very athletic football team, what you would expect from a defending national championship team and a team that's been No. 1 for most of the year."

Duggan said the Horned Frogs took about 24 hours to enjoy the victory over Michigan, but turned their attention to Georgia after returning Sunday to campus.

They know everyone is now wondering if they can be more physical than Georgia, and repeat what they did against then-undefeated Michigan.

"I don't see why not, man. I mean, shoot, it's a one game tournament," Harris said. "Everybody's got both feet and 10 toes down, and we're excited to go out there and just have another opportunity to play another game. This one just happens to be for a national championship."



ROSS D. FRANKLIN/AP

TCU wide receiver Quentin Johnston and head coach Sonny Dykes hold the trophy after the Fiesta Bowl on Saturday in Glendale, Ariz.

## NBA/SOCCER

## AROUND THE NBA

# Suns are on the brink, and not in a good way

BY TIM REYNOLDS  
Associated Press

Only 18 months ago, the Phoenix Suns were on the brink. They held a 2-0 lead over the Milwaukee Bucks in the NBA Finals. They were two wins away from the parade. Chris Paul was finally going to get his ring. Suns in Four was not just a stadium chant but a very real possibility.

The Suns are on the brink again now.

A very different brink.

A team that lost 18 games in the entirety of the 2021-22 regular season lost its 19th game of this regular season — with 43 games left to play — on Wednesday, a 90-88 loss at Cleveland that was their fourth straight defeat. That came on the heels of an embarrassing 102-83 loss to New York on Monday, the score making it seem closer than it really was. The game was really over with 4:30 left in the first half, the Knicks then holding a 52-20 lead.

Phoenix managed its fewest points since November 2018, a span of 372 games, including playoffs. The bigger issue was the lack of ... well, whatever has set the Suns apart over the last two-plus years.

"It's a mindboggling thing," Suns coach Monty Williams said. "It's happened too many times to this team."

In the past four weeks, the Suns are 4-12; only Charlotte, at 3-12 in that span, has been worse. In fairness, Phoenix is missing Devin Booker, who was playing at an All-NBA level and likely will be sidelined a few more weeks with a left groin strain. But it wasn't exactly going perfectly when Booker was healthy, either.

Some things have gone as expected, or better than expected, in the NBA so far this season. League-leading Boston hasn't missed a beat because of Ime Udoka's suspension and Joe Mazzulla taking over as interim coach. New Orleans and Memphis had high hopes after the way they finished last season; right now, they're both among the best in the Western Conference. Brooklyn, when there's no drama, has been as good as anyone in the NBA. Milwaukee, the team that beat the Suns in those 2021 NBA Finals, looks poised for a deep postseason run.

And then there's the surprises of the not-good variety. Phoenix is 20-19 with three games left until the season's midpoint. The Suns are in play-in tournament range and headed in the wrong direction. There's still time, sure, but efforts like Monday don't give much reason



BRANDON DILL/AP

**Suns guard Chris Paul reacts during a game against Memphis on Dec. 27. Phoenix has been among the best teams in the league for the past two seasons but has slumped this year, going 4-12 in the past month.**

for hope.

"I don't even know what's going on," Suns center Deandre Ayton said. "For me, I could tell you this: I'm not used to the no fight in us."

Championship windows usually don't close in an instant. It happened that way in Chicago in 1998 when Michael Jordan and Phil Jackson left the Bulls and the franchise started over after six titles in eight years. It could be argued it happened that way when LeBron James left Cleveland in 2010, Miami in 2014 and Cleveland again in 2018. What's more typical, though, is a team tends to age out, fall apart, see the locker room bonds start to fade or some combination thereof.

It might be all the above in Phoenix's case. There's an ownership change happening because of Robert Sarver's boorish behavior; Mat Ishbia could be in place within the next few weeks. Allegations of the franchise having a less-than-professional workplace environment have been detailed thoroughly by ESPN in recent months. But the dysfunction hadn't seemed to affect the locker room, until this year.

Jae Crowder — who has leadership skills that teammates from other stops in his NBA career rave about — has held out all season, remains under contract to the Suns on paper only and clearly is missed. Tension between Williams and past No. 1 overall pick Ayton was a storyline in the preseason. It's been a question mark since as well, but perception might not exactly mirror reality. A video shot from the stands of a Phoenix loss to Washington in December seemed to show Williams and Ayton getting heated dur-

ing a timeout, but what was really happening was Ayton was having a back-and-forth with teammate Mikal Bridges and Williams wanted them both to shut up.

"We were just going at each other," Bridges said. "I apologized to him."

Regardless, it wasn't a happy huddle. The Suns haven't had many of those in a while.

"Mentally and emotionally, I've got to get our guys stronger," Williams said.

Nobody over the last 2½ seasons has a better regular-season record than the Suns, and it isn't close — they've won 70% of their games in that span, Philadelphia has won 64% to be second on that list. But this current version of the Suns looks nothing like a contender.

They're 11-14 when Paul plays this season, 9-5 when he doesn't, which may or may not tell anything. Williams loves the way he plays and sees him as a valuable volunteer assistant coach as well.

"Last year, I felt like we won, but we didn't learn," Williams said. "I love winning, but I think it's a benefit to your program to continue to learn — and win. I think Chris understands that process better than most because he's been on both sides of it. So, a lot of the things that I'm pushing as the coach, I can see him in film study like 'Yep,' shaking his head, and when the guys see him doing that, it's better than me saying it."

"I think all of this is going to pay dividends for us, as we move forward," Williams said. "If we learn."

It's a big if. And it'll decide if the Suns' window is closed or not.



ANDRE PENNER/AP

**Gregg Berhalter is being investigated by the the U.S. Soccer Federation for an incident the coach said was a 1991 confrontation in which he kicked the woman who later became his wife.**

## Reynas reported Berhalter incident

BY RONALD BLUM  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The U.S. soccer team was plunged into public turmoil Wednesday when the family of former U.S. captain Claudio Reyna said it notified the U.S. Soccer Federation of a decades-old incident involving Gregg Berhalter and his wife in response to the coach's disparagement of Claudio's son, young star Gio Reyna.

Berhalter said Tuesday his 1991 behavior in which he kicked the woman who would become his wife was "shameful" and that he was "looking forward to continuing my conversations with U.S. Soccer about the future."

The U.S. Soccer Federation has commissioned an investigation by an outside law firm, along with the staff review of the team's performance over the four-year cycle. All of it leaves the program's leadership uncertain as the run-up begins to the 2026 World Cup, which the United States will co-host.

"Obviously this is a not a positive time for soccer in this country and for our men's national team," USSF president Cindy Parlow Cone said Wednesday during a news conference.

The controversy has become a messy public dispute involving Berhalter; Claudio Reyna, who was the best man at Berhalter's wedding; Danielle Egan Reyna, a former U.S. women's player; Rosalind Santana Berhalter, the coach's wife and Egan's college roommate; and Gio Reyna, the 20-year-old midfielder limited to 53 minutes by Berhalter at the 2022 World Cup.

For the time being, Anthony Hudson, a member of Berhalter's staff, will coach the team ahead of exhibitions against Serbia on Jan. 25 and Colombia three days later.

USFF sporting director Earnie Stewart, a former teammate of Reyna's and Berhalter's, has been delegated by Parlow Cone and the USSF board to make a coaching recommendation.

"Gregg Berhalter, until the inves-

tigation and the review takes place, is still under consideration for the head coach job," Stewart said.

The turmoil on the men's team follows a \$24 million settlement by the USSF last year of a discrimination lawsuit filed by American women players and an independent investigation that revealed systemic emotional abuse and sexual misconduct in the National Women's Soccer League.

The USSF announced Tuesday that Berhalter was under investigation. The coach, whose contract expired last month, simultaneously issued a statement saying a person contacted the USSF "saying that they had information about me that would 'take me down.'"

Danielle Reyna said she told Stewart of the 1991 incident on Dec. 11, five days after Berhalter made remarks at the HOW Institute for Society's Summit on Moral Leadership that did not cite a player by name but clearly were criticism of Gio Reyna. Excerpts were published in a newsletter by Charter Works, which said the remarks were "erroneously greenlit for publication."

"I wanted to let him know that I was absolutely outraged and devastated that Gio had been put in such a terrible position, and that I felt very personally betrayed by the actions of someone my family had considered a friend for decades," Danielle Reyna said in a statement Wednesday. "As part of that conversation, I told Earnie that I thought it was especially unfair that Gio, who had apologized for acting immaturity about his playing time, was still being dragged through the mud when Gregg had asked for and received forgiveness for doing something so much worse at the same age."

Berhalter and his wife Rosalind had "spoken openly" about the matter, the USSF said Tuesday, and Berhalter admitted to the kick.

Danielle Reyna maintained she never threatened to blackmail Berhalter and never asked that he be fired.

## NFL

# Chargers have backup plan with eye on Ravens

By **JOE REEDY**  
Associated Press

COSTA MESA, Calif. — Brandon Staley is approaching the final week of regular-season practices for the Los Angeles Chargers with a business as usual approach.

What happens in the three hours leading up to Sunday's game against the Denver Broncos, however, will have a lot of bearing on the Chargers' strategy.

The playoff-bound Bolts should know by kickoff if their game has any bearing on the AFC's fifth seed for the playoffs. The NFL made that a reality on Wednesday when it scheduled the Baltimore Ravens-Cincinnati Bengals game for 1 p.m. EST instead of 4:25 p.m. EST.

A Bengals win would not only give them the AFC North title, but it would assure the Chargers the fifth seed and the Ravens sixth seed regardless of what happens in Denver.

A Ravens victory, however, would mean the Chargers would also have to beat the Broncos to secure the fifth seed. Both teams would finish 11-6, but Los Angeles would win the tiebreaker by having a better conference record.

The fifth seed would face either Jacksonville or Tennessee in the first round.

"We're definitely going to prepare this week to try and go win this football game with the guys that we have on our team, the 48 guys that are going to be up," Staley said.

"You have to take the facts on



KYUSUNG GONG/AP

**Los Angeles Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert should be ready to play Sunday against Denver, but the Chargers will find out before kickoff if their game has any bearing on their playoff seeding.**

the ground, as they happen, to make your determinations. Once we find out about that game, we'll make the appropriate decisions moving forward, just take it case-by-case.

"Our approach this week is to go beat the Broncos and to play our best."

Staley likened this situation to when he was an assistant with the Chicago Bears in 2018. The Bears

and Rams were in a battle for the second seed going into the final game, but Los Angeles needed to lose for Chicago to gain a first-round bye.

Both games were going on at the same time, but once the Rams took a big lead, the Bears decided to sit some players in the second half with a playoff game the following week.

When asked if backups would

receive extra snaps in practice in case they see game action, Staley said they would not.

The Chargers pulled most of their starters early in the fourth quarter during last Sunday's 31-10 victory over the Los Angeles Rams. Quarterback Chase Daniel played two series after Justin Herbert was taken out.

Daniel is likely to see more time than that if Sunday's game has no

bearing on the Chargers' playoff seeding. Herbert was a full participant in Wednesday's practice but showed up on the injury report with a left shoulder issue. Staley attributed the listing to "just bumps and bruises from the game" and that Herbert would again be a full practice participant on Thursday.

When asked about transitioning to football this week after Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin suffered cardiac arrest during Monday night's game against the Cincinnati Bengals, Staley said it was important for his players and coaches to have the right amount of perspective and focus in both places.

Staley recruited Hamlin when he was a college assistant, while two members of his staff — defensive coordinator Renaldo Hill and receivers coach Chris Beatty — coached Hamlin for two years at the University of Pittsburgh. Staley added that Hill's wife, Tanaya, was Hamlin's academic advisor.

"I think that's why you have to have close football teams and close football organizations, so that you know what that right touch is," Staley said. "That's where our focus has been, defining the week — this is going to be our rhythm and routine, this is what we need to get accomplished and how we need to do it. Then, at the same time, once all that's done, then we also need to address what happened the other night, too. You can do all that at the same time."

## Thomas, Revis, Freeney picked as Hall of Fame finalists

By **JOSH DUBOW**  
Associated Press

Joe Thomas, Darrelle Revis and Dwight Freeney are finalists in their first year of eligibility for the Pro Football Hall of Fame's class of 2023.

The 15 modern-day players who will be considered later this month by the selection committee include returning finalists DeMarcus Ware, Patrick Willis, Zach Thomas and Andre Johnson.

Six other returning finalists were announced Wednesday with Jared Allen, Willie Anderson, Ronde Barber, Devin Hester, Torry Holt and Reggie Wayne getting back to this stage.

Defensive backs Albert Lewis and Darren Woodson made it to this stage for the first time with Lewis having reached the semifinal stage in 2013 and Woodson getting there six times.

A maximum of five modern-day players can be elected for enshrinement in August to the Canton, Ohio, hall. The inductees will be announced on Feb. 9 at NFL Honors, the prime-time TV program during which The Associat-



Thomas

ed Press reveals its individual award winners for the 2022 season.

The committee will also consider former Chargers and Cardinals coach Don Coryell in the coaching category and three senior candidates: Super Bowl V MVP Chuck Howley and All-Pro defenders Joe Klecko and Ken Riley.

Joe Thomas was one of the top tackles in the league over a durable 11-year career that saw him selected first-team All-Pro six times and second team two other times. He had a streak of 10,363 consecutive plays while playing for the Browns his entire career.

Revis, who also came out in the 2007 draft, moved around much more, spending time with the Jets, Tampa Bay, New England and Kansas City.

His best stretch came in New York where he was a first-team All-Pro from 2009-11 and finished second in Defensive Player of the



Revis

Year voting in 2009 when he repeatedly shut down top receivers by sending them to "Revis Island."

Revis spent one year in New England, helping the Patriots win the Super Bowl in the 2014 season.

Freeney spent most of his 16-year career in Indianapolis, where his speed off the edge and dominant spin move led to 125½ career sacks. He anchored a defense that complemented a high-powered offense led by Peyton Manning and helped the Colts win the Super Bowl following the 2006 season.

Ware, a four-time All-Pro, led the Cowboys in sacks for eight seasons, led the NFL in sacks twice, and won a Super Bowl with Denver following the 2015 season. He finished with 138 1/2 sacks and made the NFL's All-Decade Team of the 2000s.

Johnson twice made the All-Pro team during a strong time for wide receivers. He led the league in receptions and yards receiving



Freeney

twice. He finished his career with 1,062 receptions for 14,185 yards and 70 receiving touchdowns.

Two of his contemporaries, Holt and Wayne, also are in the finals. Holt was selected to NFL's All-Decade Team of the 2000s and won a Super Bowl with the 1999 Rams. Wayne retired as NFL's second all-time leading receiver in the postseason with 93 catches and won a Super Bowl with the Colts.

Zach Thomas and Willis were among the top linebackers of their time with each earning All-Pro honors five times.

Hester is the rare finalist who made his mark mostly on special teams. He opened the 2007 Super Bowl for Chicago with a 92-yard kickoff return for a touchdown, the only time in Super Bowl history that has occurred. An All-Pro three times, Hester was a member of the NFL's All-Decade Team of the 2010s and one of two return

specialists on the NFL 100 All-Time Team.

Anderson was considered one of the elite right tackles in the game for 13 pro seasons with Cincinnati and Baltimore, making three All-Pro squads.

Allen was a four-time All-Pro who led the NFL in sacks twice (2007, 2011) while playing for the Chiefs, Vikings, Bears and Panthers.

Barber was one of the league's stingiest cover cornerbacks during his 16 seasons in Tampa, where he also played some safety. A key to the Tampa-2 defensive scheme, Barber was a three-time All-Pro and a member of the NFL's All-Decade Team of the 2000s. He led the NFL with 10 interceptions in 2001 and won a Super Bowl the next season.

Woodson was a three-time All-Pro safety who helped Dallas win three Super Bowl titles in the 1990s.

Lewis was a star cornerback for 16 seasons with Kansas City and the Raiders with two All-Pro nods and 42 career interceptions.

## NFL

## INSIDE THE NUMBERS

# 3 look for rare trip from 2-6 to postseason

By **JOSH DUBOW**  
Associated Press

Falling into a 2-6 hole near the midpoint of a season is usually a recipe to look to the future for NFL teams, with only two teams ever climbing out of that hole to reach the postseason.

Headed into Week 18 of this season, three teams that lost six of their first eight games remain in the playoff hunt.

Jacksonville can clinch the AFC South with a victory over Tennessee or it could sneak in as a wild-card team with a loss and lots of help.

Detroit and Pittsburgh have more complicated paths, with the Lions needing a win and a Seattle loss to clinch the seventh seed in the NFC and the Steelers needing a win plus losses by Miami and New England to clinch the final wild-card spot in the AFC.

The addition of an extra playoff team in 2020 and a 17th game in 2021 made climbing out of a hole a bit easier than in the past, but it still is rather remarkable.

Before this season, 186 teams in the Super Bowl era started a season 2-6, with only Cincinnati in 1970 and Washington in 2020 making it to the postseason.

The Jaguars have gone on quite a roller-coaster ride, having lost five straight from Weeks 4-8 and then winning the last four games. A victory Saturday night against Tennessee would make Jacksonville the fifth team to get to the playoffs in a season with a both a winning and losing streak of at least five games. The last team to do it was Kansas City in 2015.

The Titans can also join that group win a win, having won five straight early in the season and then losing the last six games.

The only teams to make the playoffs in a season with a six-game losing streak are the 2020 Bears, the 2014 Panthers and the 1970 Bengals.

## Playoff newcomers

The Giants clinched their first playoff berth since 2016, assuring this will be the 33rd straight season with at least four new playoff teams.

New York joins Baltimore, the Los Angeles Chargers and Minnesota as teams that made the post-

**Tennessee Titans (7-9)**  
**at Jacksonville Jaguars (8-8)**  
AFN-Sports  
2:15 a.m. Sunday CET  
10:15 a.m. Sunday JKT

**Cleveland Browns (7-9)**  
**at Pittsburgh Steelers (8-8)**  
AFN-Atlantic  
7 p.m. Sunday CET  
3 a.m. Monday JKT

**Detroit Lions (8-8)**  
**at Green Bay Packers (8-8)**  
AFN-Sports  
2:15 a.m. Monday CET  
10:15 a.m. Monday JKT

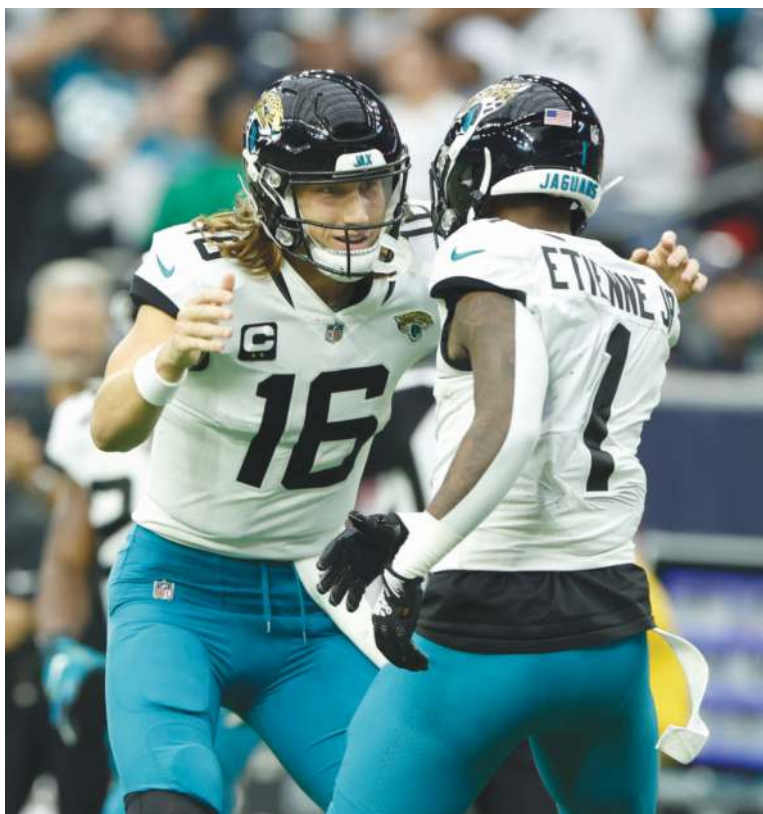
season a year after missing it. The last time there were fewer than four new playoff teams in a season was in 1989 when only three teams did it.

There's still a chance for three more teams to join the list, with Jacksonville having a shot at the AFC South or wild-card spots, Miami in contention for an AFC wild-card spot and Detroit and Seattle in the running for the seventh seed in the NFC.

## Sack party

The Philadelphia Eagles are closing in on the NFL's single-season sacks record.

The Eagles have recorded 68 sacks so far this season for the fourth-best total ever and can



MATT PATTERSON/AP

**Jaguars quarterback Trevor Lawrence, left, celebrates with Travis Etienne Jr. after Etienne's touchdown run on Sunday. The Jaguars lost five straight from Weeks 4-8 and then won their last four games.**

pass the record of 72 set by the 1984 Bears with five more in Week 18.

Philadelphia has had at least six sacks in the past five games for the longest streak by any team in the Super Bowl era.

The Eagles have spread out the sacks, with Haason Reddick leading the way with 16, followed by 11 each for Josh Sweat, Javon Hargrave and Brandon Graham. This is the first time since individual sacks became an official stat in 1982 that a team had four players reach double figures in the same season.

## Streaking

A few impressive streaks got extended in Week 17.

Tampa Bay's Mike Evans had 207 yards receiving to top the 1,000-yard mark for the ninth straight season. Evans is the first player to do that in his first nine seasons and joined Hall of Famers

Jerry Rice (11 straight) and Tim Brown (9 straight) as the only players to do it at any point in their careers.

Kansas City's Jerick McKinnon had a TD catch for the fifth straight game, becoming the first running back to do that since the merger.

New Orleans defensive end Cameron Jordan had three sacks to give him 8 1/2 on the season, marking the 11th straight year he has had at least seven.

The only players to do that since sacks became an official stat in 1982 are Reggie White (14 straight), Chris Doleman (13), John Randle (12), Derrick Thomas (11) and Robert Mathis (11).

Pittsburgh coach Mike Tomlin also kept alive his bid of never having a losing season, owning an 8-8 record headed into Week 18. If the Steelers don't lose Sunday to Cleveland, Tomlin will start his career with 16 straight seasons without a losing record.

The only other coaches with a streak that long are Tom Landry (21 seasons), Bill Belichick (19) and George Halas (16).

## Defensive scores

Kyle Dugger had another pick-6 for New England's high-scoring defense.

Dugger's 39-yard return against Miami gave the Patriots a defensive touchdown for the fourth straight game. The last team to do that in a single season was the 2002 Super Bowl champion Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Dugger has three TDs on the season, with a pick-6 in Week 15 against the Raiders and a fumble return TD in Week 5 against Detroit.

That's tied for the most defensive touchdowns in a season since Janoris Jenkins had four in 2012.

# Giants LB won't stop celebrating his sacks

By **TOM CANAVAN**  
Associated Press

**EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J.** — New York Giants rookie edge rusher Kayvon Thibodeaux isn't going to change his sack celebrations after taking criticism for doing snow angels next to injured Colts quarterback Nick Foles this past weekend.

Indianapolis Colts interim coach Jeff Saturday called the celebration "trash" given that Foles was in pain after sustaining a rib injury that forced him to leave the game.

Thibodeaux said after the game, a 38-10 win that got New York its first playoff berth since 2016, he didn't know Foles was hurt. He stopped his celebration when he realized it.

Saturday ripped him Monday. Thibodeaux said Wednesday he didn't know who Saturday was and didn't care.

"You don't play the game for anyone to get injured," the No. 5 overall pick in the draft said. "But I play defense. They brought me here to be a savage and to take over the game and impact the game. We preach impacting the game is affecting the quarterback. That is what I'm here to do."

Thibodeaux has picked up his game in recent week and his four sacks are third on the Giants. His biggest play of the season was a game-changing strip-sack of Washington quarterback Taylor Heinecke that he recovered for a touchdown in a crucial 20-12 win over the Commanders on Dec. 18.

"I play this game to be successful, and the only way I'm successful is if I take down quarterbacks," Thibodeaux said. "So that is what I get paid to do. That is what I did. And the celebrations are legal in football. I celebrated, and God willing he (Foles) continues to get better and recover."

The Giants (9-6-1) are locked into the No. 6 seed in the NFC and will play a wild-card game at either Minnesota or San Francisco.



PAUL SANCYA/AP

**Lions running back D'Andre Swift, left, celebrates his touchdown run with Josh Reynolds on Sunday. The Lions were 2-6 but can clinch the seventh seed in the NFC with a win and a Seattle loss.**



ADAM HUNGER/AP

**Giants rookie Kayvon Thibodeaux reacts during a game against the Colts on Sunday.**

## NFL



DAVID BECKER/AP

Las Vegas Raiders running back Josh Jacobs tries to evade tackles during the first half against the San Francisco 49ers on Sunday in Las Vegas. The 49ers won 37-34.

# Raiders' Jacobs shakes off injuries and piles up yards

BY MARK ANDERSON  
Associated Press

HENDERSON, Nev. — It's another game week, which means more questions about Raiders running back Josh Jacobs' injury status.

His availability, however, is seldom in question.

Jacobs has played through plenty of pain this season, and this week is coping with hip and oblique injuries as Las Vegas prepares to host the Kansas City Chiefs on Saturday.

Raiders coach Josh McDaniels said Wednesday that he would have to wait and see if Jacobs will be able to play against the Chiefs.

"We'll be smart with him obviously," McDaniels said. "I'm not sure how many more words I can find to describe what he's done — tough, dependable, prepared really hard every week. He's been durable. He's had the ball more than any other player on our team, clearly, and he's really done a great job of keeping himself healthy and available all season long even though he's been banged up a number of different times."

Jacobs usually meets with the media on Wednesdays, but was not at the Raiders' facility for personal reasons.

After Sunday's 37-34 loss to the San Francisco 49ers, Jacobs said he had a responsibility to do everything he could to be ready to play.

"Like I tell these guys, I wouldn't be able to look them in the eye if I know that I could play or give it everything I had and I don't do it," he said. "That's the type of person I am, and that's the type of respect that I have for them. So I lay it out

there every time I can."

That included against the 49ers. Jacobs injured his oblique on the game's first play from scrimmage and had to go the locker room. He returned in the second quarter and finished with 69 yards and a touchdown on 17 carries.

Nothing new there.

Jacobs entered the Nov. 27 game at Seattle questionable with a calf injury and wasn't cleared until shortly before kickoff. All he did was total 303 yards from scrimmage, including 229 yards rushing and two touchdowns.

Those TDs included an 86-yard burst up the middle for the touchdown in overtime of the 40-34 victory over the Seahawks.

He was listed as questionable again the following week against the Los Angeles Chargers, but rushed for 144 yards and a TD in the 27-20 victory.

"When you've got a guy like Josh that obviously has the pinkie and the calf he battled through... that's what I expect from him now after knowing who he is," wide receiver Davante Adams said. "It's not something you can expect from just anybody, though."

Even with all the injuries, Jacobs leads in the NFL with 1,608 yards rushing — 160 more than Cleveland's Nick Chubb.

Marcus Allen in 1985 was the last Raider to lead the league in rushing when he gained 1,759 yards. That is also the franchise high, so Jacobs has a shot at that record.

Not bad for a player whose fifth-year option wasn't picked up before the season. Jacobs has performed like someone playing for a

big contract, and his production has given the Raiders — and 31 other teams — something to think about.

The Raiders could put a franchise tag on Jacobs to make sure he stays in Las Vegas at least one more season. A franchise tag guarantees a player will make the average of the five highest-paid players at his position or 120% of his current salary. The move also restricts a player's mobility.

The contract situation will be one of the storylines to watch, and Jacobs knows it won't be the only one.

"The locker room's going to look a lot different next year," Jacobs said. "You don't know who's coming back and who's done with football and whatnot."

## Adams prefers to stay

When the Raiders benched Derek Carr last week for the final two games, some of the speculation turned to Adams' future. The two are good friends and former Fresno State teammates, and Adams made it known he wasn't happy to see Carr go.

The Raiders will likely move on from Carr, but Adams said Wednesday that his preference was to stick with the team he grew up cheering for.

"I wouldn't have ended up here originally if Derek wasn't here, but it doesn't necessarily mean that I won't be here in the event he's not here," Adams said. "My dream was to play for this team before he was a Raider. At this point, I want to try to make this thing work and continue on doing what I'm doing here."

# Packers: Green Bay relying on a different formula than in 2016

FROM PAGE 48

Dean Lowry.

"It definitely has some similarities, the course of the season, the way that it went," Cobb said. "For us to battle back and be in this situation and have an opportunity, that's all you can ask for."

Rodgers said back in 2016 he believed the Packers would "run the table" before they went on that streak. The four-time MVP quarterback didn't make a similar prediction this time, but said after the 41-17 victory over the Minnesota Vikings on Sunday that he had a good feeling the Packers would make a late run.

He recalled thinking when the Packers were 3-6 that if they could win just one of their next three games — home matchups with Dallas and Tennessee plus a trip to Philadelphia — they could win their final five games. Green Bay beat Dallas in overtime then lost the next two games, but has gone 4-0 since while plenty of other results involving other teams have fallen their way.

"There was something in there that had hope, but it was a fool's hope at the time I think," Rodgers said. "And so much had to happen, which is why, like I said Sunday night, I had to wrap my head around the scenarios and find a peace in that."

These Packers have relied on a different formula than that 2016 team.

Rodgers led the way in 2016 by throwing 15 touchdown passes without an interception in a six-game winning streak to end the regular season. He then threw six touchdown passes with only one interception in Green Bay's two playoff victories while throwing to a potent receiving group featuring Jordy Nelson, Davante Adams

and Cobb.

The 39-year-old Rodgers has been solid but unspectacular over the past four games — he has thrown only one touchdown pass in each of them — but Green Bay's defense has come on strong after underachieving for much of the season.

During their four-game winning streak, the Packers have forced the same number of turnovers (12) that they did through their first 12 games of the season.

"I'd like to be 15 and 0," Rodgers said. "That was a fun run. But those are different teams. Different players, different mindset, different scheme. I just need to be efficient. If I'm efficient and taking care of the football as best I can, making the right checks, I can still impact the game in a positive way."

Green Bay benefited from some subtle tweaks during this late surge. Packers coach Matt LaFleur said he tried to include more competitive periods in practice "just to try to heighten the intensity a little bit."

A fourth-quarter rally provided the spark.

One month ago, the Packers were 4-8 and trailing the lowly Chicago Bears 19-10 heading into the final period. The Packers rallied to win 28-19 and haven't looked back since. Rodgers called that moment the turning point.

"I just think it felt a little bit different in the locker room," Rodgers said. "There was maybe a deep exhale from everybody, and then we had the bye week. And the bye week allowed me to get healthy. I think it allowed us to mentally get some clarity and we came back, and for whatever reason, we had a different level of enjoyment and energy at practice."



MIKE ROEMER/AP

Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers celebrates after a touchdown run by teammate AJ Dillon during the second half against the Minnesota Vikings on Sunday in Green Bay, Wis.

# SPORTS



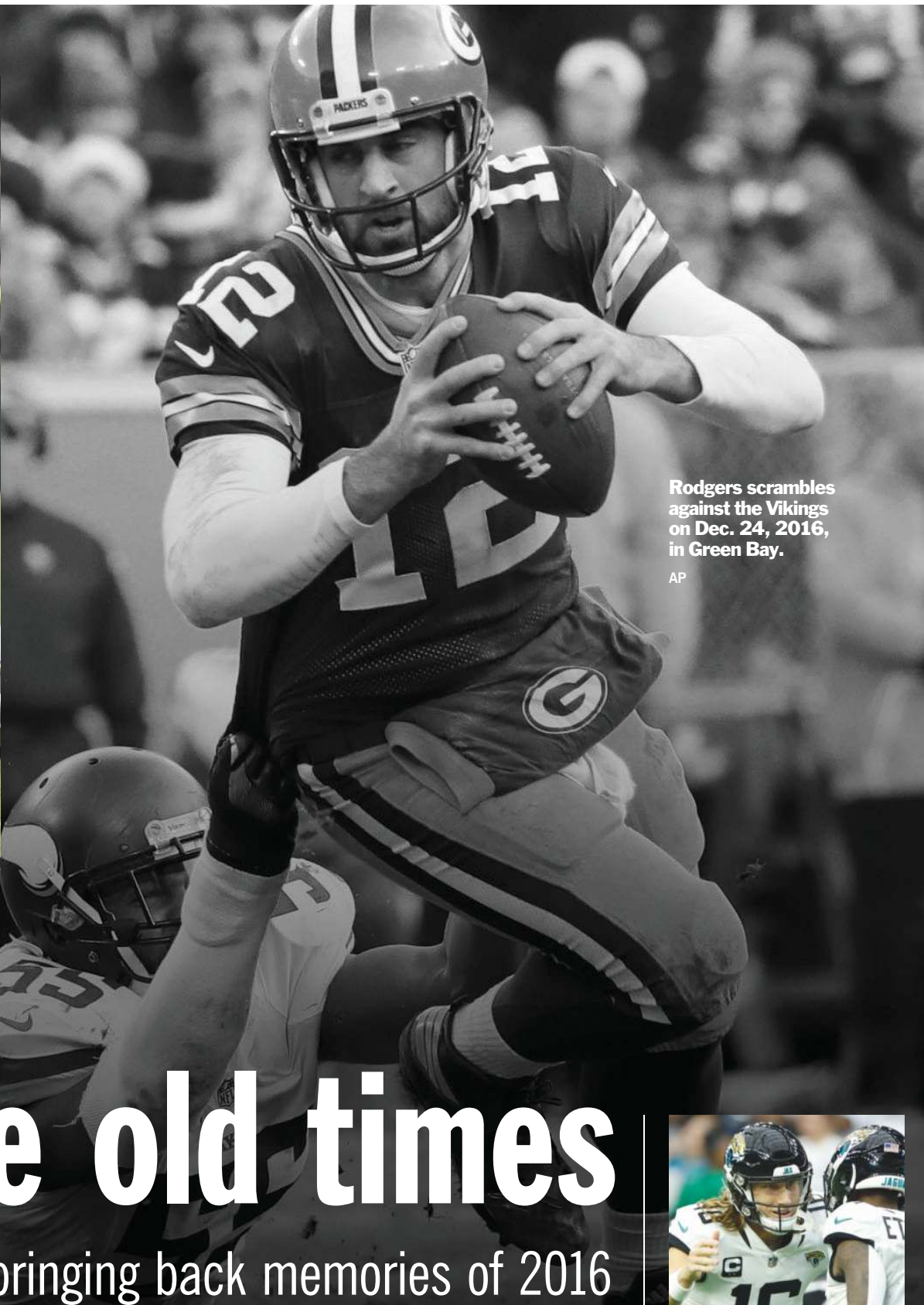
## Time to tighten up

Georgia looks to play better defense in CFP finale against TCU » Page 43



MORRY GASH/AP

Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers eludes Minnesota Vikings linebacker Brian Asamoah II on a 2-yard touchdown run during the second half Sunday in Green Bay, Wis.



Rodgers scrambles against the Vikings on Dec. 24, 2016, in Green Bay.

AP

NFL

# Seems like old times

## Packers' late-season surge bringing back memories of 2016

BY STEVE MEGARGEE  
Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Aaron Rodgers didn't make any bold proclamations about running the table this time around.

That said, the similarities between the Green Bay Packers' current turnaround and their remarkable run to the NFC championship game back in 2016 otherwise are too obvious to ignore.

After losing eight of their first 12 games, the Packers (8-8) have won four consecutive games and will reach the playoffs if they beat



Cobb

had some guys who'd been a part of winning some really big football games," Rodgers said. "This team has less of those guys. But I just think this team is a little bit more talented

the Detroit Lions (8-8) on Sunday night at Lambeau Field. That 2016 team rebounded from a 4-6 start to win eight in a row before losing to the Atlanta Falcons with a Super Bowl bid at stake.

"Now, that (2016) team

top to bottom. Definitely on the back end, the way our guys play in this defense, I think, guy-for-guy is probably a little bit better on that side of the ball. Offense is probably pretty similar. And then we have (kick returner) Keisean Nixon."

The current Packers who played on that 2016 team included Rodgers, offensive tackle David Bakhtiari, defensive tackle Kenny Clark, kicker Mason Crosby, wide receiver Randall Cobb and injured defensive lineman

SEE PACKERS ON PAGE 47



**INSIDE**  
3 teams look for rare trip from 2-6 start to playoffs  
Page 46

## 'Frustrating' time for Hoyas under Ewing » College basketball, Page 42

