Baghdad — A new watchtower rose over an American military base in northern Iraq, and cranes lifted hefty slabs of concrete to reinforce the barricades in beefed-up protections. The danger, soldiers there said, came not from the constellation of militant sleeper cells embedded in the landscape but further afield in Iran.

U.S. forces in Iraq have been on guard for retaliation by Iran or its Shiite militia allies since the U.S. killed Iran’s top general in Iraq with an airstrike in Baghdad last month. The Jan. 3 strike also fueled a wave of outrage among Iraq’s Shiite leadership and intensified demands that American troops leave the country.

Since then, Iraqi leaders have scaled back the saber-rattling rhetoric. But behind closed doors, the bitterness has poisoned the partnership. The government told the Iraqi military not to seek U.S. help in operations fighting Islamic State, two senior Iraqi military officials told The Associated Press — a sign that authorities are serious about rethinking the strategic relationship.

At stake are vital U.S.-provided weapons, military technologies and aircraft that have been key in countering the threat of ISIS militants trying to make a comeback in northern and western Iraq.
EXCHANGE RATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Unleaded</th>
<th>Super unleaded</th>
<th>Super plus</th>
<th>Diesel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>$2.718</td>
<td>$3.135</td>
<td>$3.368</td>
<td>$3.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in price</td>
<td>-5.1 cents</td>
<td>-3.3 cents</td>
<td>-3.4 cents</td>
<td>-5.4 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>$3.856</td>
<td>$4.926</td>
<td>$5.194</td>
<td>$5.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in price</td>
<td>-3.5 cents</td>
<td>-3.5 cents</td>
<td>-3.6 cents</td>
<td>-3.8 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>$3.045</td>
<td>$3.708</td>
<td>$3.129</td>
<td>$3.189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in price</td>
<td>-3.9 cents</td>
<td>-3.8 cents</td>
<td>-3.8 cents</td>
<td>-4.0 cents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PACIFIC GAS PRICES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Super E10</th>
<th>Super unleaded</th>
<th>Super plus</th>
<th>Diesel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Okinawa</td>
<td>$3.519**</td>
<td>$2.939</td>
<td>$3.189</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in price</td>
<td>-5.0 cents</td>
<td>-4.0 cents</td>
<td>-4.0 cents</td>
<td>-5.0 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>$3.179</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$3.009</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in price</td>
<td>-3.8 cents</td>
<td></td>
<td>-3.9 cents</td>
<td>-5.0 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>$3.816</td>
<td>$4.026</td>
<td>$3.984</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in price</td>
<td>-5.1 cents</td>
<td>-3.9 cents</td>
<td>-3.8 cents</td>
<td>-5.4 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>$2.718</td>
<td>$3.135</td>
<td>$3.368</td>
<td>$3.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in price</td>
<td>-5.0 cents</td>
<td>-4.0 cents</td>
<td>-4.0 cents</td>
<td>-5.0 cents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.S.</strong></td>
<td>$2.390</td>
<td>$2.559</td>
<td>$2.609</td>
<td>$2.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in price</td>
<td>-4.0 cents</td>
<td>-3.9 cents</td>
<td>-3.8 cents</td>
<td>-5.4 cents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INTEREST RATES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Prime rate</th>
<th>Discount rate</th>
<th>3-month bill</th>
<th>30-year bond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Weather Outlook**

**Friday in the Middle East**

**Friday in Europe**

**Saturday in the Pacific**

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.
A pair of B-52H Stratofortress bombers flew alongside Japanese and American fighters in a collective show of force Monday near Misawa Air Base in northeastern Japan.

The strategic bombers from Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, and Minot Air Force Base, N.D., trained with six Misawa-based 35th Fighter Wing aircraft to demonstrate U.S. capability to command, control and integrate operations as a unified bomber force.

Officials said in a statement Wednesday. “It’s something we’ve spent some serious time and energy on,” Thompson said. “There are a couple of really strong options on what we might be called and some pretty strong opinions. What we’d like to do is ensure we’ve thought as broadly as we can and consider what that ought to be before we land on it.”

Planners have sought guidance from the language department at the Air Force Academy, from the Defense Language Institute and have conducted crowd-sourcing with troops expected to transfer into the Space Force to determine what their service’s equivalent will be to soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen.

They have made a few determinations on what Space Force members will not be called. Thompson ruled out using terms “spacesmen” or “space cadets.” He declined to identify names that officials are considering.

It is just one aspect of many unknowns that remain in the development of the first new military service established since the Air Force’s creation in 1948. The service aims to be much smaller than the others, built almost exclusively of forces focused entirely on space operations. It will rely heavily on the Air Force to provide support troops, such as medical, logistics and security troops, Thompson said.

But it will still be months before the Space Force has actual troops. Now, about 16,000 personnel — about 3,400 Air Force officers, 6,200 enlisted airmen and 8,000 civilians — are assigned to the Space Force but remain a part of the Air Force.

To date, only one person has been officially transferred into the Space Force — the Chief of Space Operations Gen. Jay Raymond. But officials expect about 6,000 troops from the Air Force’s space operations to officially transfer into the new service by the end of 2020, according to the report provided to Congress on Monday and obtained by Stars and Stripes.

The officials expect Space Operations Gen. Jay Raymond to be the first member to officially transfer into the Space Force in fiscal year 2022.

The transfer process is somewhat complicated, and Thompson said it will take some time to sort it out to ensure it is done smoothly and “everyone gets paid,” once it is completed.

The report lays out the transfer process for troops who will join the Space Force: “To do so, those members will formally resign from their commissions or terminate their enlistment with the Air Force, Army, Navy, and re-commission or re-enlist into the Space Force,” the report states. “Planners are actively developing specific processes and conditions that must be met before beginning transfer processes.”

Thompson also said planners are deciding on criteria for how Space Force members will be judged for promotion, as airmen will compete with longtime members of the Army and the Navy, which use different criteria for advancing their troops.

While troops working in space operations, which includes space intelligence, space engineering, space communications, and space acquisition, among other jobs, will be expected to transfer into the Space Force, they will not be forced to do so, Thompson said. “As a general principle, if you are in space operations — officers or enlisted members — the attraction and the expectation is that you will transfer into the Space Force,” he said. “For those reasons, we will not be pushing you because there’s no other reasons we’ll have mechanisms in place.”

Graney seemed confident in Electric Boat’s ability to meet the project needs, with the right mindset and attention to detail for the work, it is doing more outreach to the growing supplier base to ensure quality, Graney said.

Because it will be challenging to hire the number of employees the company needs, with the right mindset and attention to detail for the work, it is doing more outreach to the growing supplier base to ensure quality, Graney said.

Graney said the company has grown in recent years, some attack submarines have been delivered to the Navy late and there was a welding issue in 2018 with a subcontractor.

Electric Boat is focused on the training of new employees and supervisors to emphasize the company’s culture, and reaching out to the growing supplier base to ensure quality, Graney said. Because it will be challenging to hire the number of employees the company needs, with the right mindset and attention to detail for the work, it is doing more outreach to the growing supplier base to ensure quality, Graney said.

Graney seemed confident in Electric Boat’s ability to meet the project needs, with the right mindset and attention to detail for the work, it is doing more outreach to the growing supplier base to ensure quality, Graney said.

“Failure is an option,” he said after the meeting. “We’re pushing this enterprise faster than it has been pushed in 40 years. And so it is absolutely the challenge of a lifetime for anybody who’s really involved with these programs.”

While Graney seemed confident in Electric Boat’s ability to meet the project needs, with the right mindset and attention to detail for the work, it is doing more outreach to the growing supplier base to ensure quality, Graney said.

“Failure is an option,” he said after the meeting. “We’re pushing this enterprise faster than it has been pushed in 40 years. And so it is absolutely the challenge of a lifetime for anybody who’s really involved with these programs.”

Democratic Gov. Gina Raimondo, who attended the meeting, promised to continue helping Electric Boat find the talent it needs for the state’s job training programs and partnerships with local schools. Rhode Island Democrat U.S. Reps. Jim Langevin and David Cicilline said they’d continue advocating for submarine funding in Congress.
Army veteran David Sewell, seen after surgery in 2013, said he was diagnosed that year with mesothelioma from asbestos. He believes he was exposed to asbestos during remediation work at Camp Walker, South Korea.

By Rose L. Thayer
Stars and Stripes

After accusing officials in charge of the military’s Exceptional Family Member Program of “happy talk,” but no action, Rep. Jackie Speier vowed Wednesday to bring them back to Capitol Hill every three months until they’ve met all the recommendations made by a government watchdog two years ago.

“We are going to be hawks on this,” said Speier, D-Calif., chairwoman of the subpanel on military personnel for the House Armed Services Committee.

Wednesday’s hearing was the first time in more than a decade that the committee had heard about the program, which is a mandatory enrollment program for service members who have a family member or family support member requiring specialized medical care, treatment programs or educational services.

While the program is meant to ensure that those service members receive duty assignments to locations where those special needs can be met, testimony from two military spouses with children in the program and three representatives from advocacy groups depicted that the program is falling in several ways. About 35,000 military family members are enrolled in the program, as of April 2019.

Army spouse Austin Carrigg described in her testimony how her husband was assigned to Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., and the couple was told that the services needed for her two children who are in the program would be available. Once they received the care, the family learned the wait list for some services was more than a year.

“When a baby is 3 months old, 18 months is a very long time to wait,” she said.

A 2018 Government Accountability Office report found that the Defense Department needs better oversight of the program and provided three recommendations. While the Defense Department allows each service branch to implement its own EFMP, there is no standardization or performance measurement structure, said Jackie Nowicki, director of K-12 education for GAO and the report’s author. Her testimony focused on the program and the variations in support between each service branch.

“DOD relies on each military service to implement its own policy on support for families with special needs,” she said. “In doing so, they also rely on each military service to determine the extent to which its assistance to families with special needs complies with this policy.”

Based on data in the report and testimony provided during the hearing, the Marine Corps model for EFMP was held up as the one that should be implemented across the other services. It provides many support services, including relocation services, special needs ceiling and has staff attend meetings to create education plans with area school systems.

Speier told Carolyn Stevens, director of the Defense Department’s Office of Military Family Readiness Policy, that doing so would “solve a lot of our problems,” because “they obviously get it.”

While the Marine Corps only has about 11,000 families enrolled in the program, it has its full-time staff members dedicated to it. Meanwhile, the Army has 119 employees for about 54,000 families.

The Marines provide families special education attorneys to help when public schools deny federally mandated services and also ensure that EFMP staff communicate with families in the program.

The military branch has a blanket communication requirement.

Engagement stories remained an important aspect to repairing the program for lawmakers as they grilled officials. Speier pledged to fix the program this year, beginning with town halls that would allow people from the overflow crowd in attendance for Wednesday’s hearing to share their own stories about EFMP.

“We are going to change this system so it’s responsive to the families,” she said. “Words don’t have any weight unless they are followed up with action. You can all say you’re here for families, but unless we’re going to show it with action, we’re not going to achieve that result.”

The ranking Republican on the subcommittee, Rep. Trent Kelly of Mississippi, agreed that families are the most important aspect of the program — not processes.

“What we’re talking about are people,” he said. “And we’re talking about those very most vulnerable people we should be helping. We shouldn’t be making it harder. We should be making it easier.”

Kelly then quizzed the six Defense Department and service branch officials to see whether they had personally spoken to a military family enrolled in the program in the last three months. Only Jennifer Stewart, manager of the Marine Corps’ EFMP had. Kelly also agreed with recommendations to get families placed on the wait list for services before they move to a new location and to grant additional pay to service members who choose to leave their families behind to take assignments that advance their careers, but in an area located too far from the treatments their special needs family members require.

These are “easy fixes,” he said.

thayer.rose@stripes.com
Twitter: @Rose_Lori
Aviano to receive more COLA, others less after survey

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — Aviano airmen got a boost in their living allowance this month, while most other service members in Italy will see theirs cut next month.

The adjustments in the cost-of-living allowance, the nontaxable payment designed to offset higher overseas prices of goods and services, ranges from a negligible amount to hundreds of dollars a month.

The increase began Feb.1 for Aviano-based troops. The decreases for troops in Gaeta, Sigonella, Livorno and Vicenza will be effective March 1, an Office of the Secretary of Defense memo stated.

Defense Department civilian post allowance, which is based on State Department data and calculated differently, is not affected.

Gaeta was hit hardest with a six-point decrease in the COLA index, followed by Vicenza, down four points, both because of “significant (price) decreases in the groceries, clothing, phone and transportation categories,” the memo said.

Aviano’s index increased two points, largely because of a cost increase in “the telephone/internet category.”

Livorno and Sigonella were each down two points. Ghedi and Naples had no change.

That survey is coupled with an annual market basket survey that prices about 120 goods and services bought off base. The prices are then compared with average U.S. costs for equivalent items.

If the overseas market basket cost is greater than the average U.S. cost, a COLA is paid.

“While decreases are not desired, all COLA changes ... are data-based and calculated using the same methodology,” the OSD memo stated.

Some Vicenza commissary shoppers said Thursday that they were unaware of the changes.

“IT’s going down?” said Michelle Ortiz, the base librarian.

“When are they going to tell us?” Abbey Halley said that she was unsure how much she and her staff sergeant husband were getting in their COLA, but that it sounded like the adjustment would cost them “a little chunk.”

Neither woman nor two others in the commissary had taken the Living Pattern Survey, which complied data that reduces the allowance, they said.

They said that in their experience, Italian groceries, clothes and other items’ prices hadn’t gone down. But all said that they shopped mostly on base because of the convenience.

“IT’s just easier,” said Georgia Emmons, a military spouse.

Officials with OSD and Command Navy Region Europe, Africa, Southwest Asia, the COLA Italy Allowance Coordinator, did not return emails and phone calls for comment, including on how many surveys were filled out.

The OSD memo said that “overall minimum sample sizes to statistically validate the survey results were attained.”

montgomery.nancy@stripes.com
Twitter:@montgomerynance
WASHINGTON — The Pentagon’s proposed budget for fiscal year 2021 is meant to ensure the Defense Department can compete militarily with its great-power competitors China and Russia, Defense Secretary Mark Esper told senior leaders in a memorandum.

The budget request, expected to be unveiled Monday, “supports irreversible implementation of the [2018] National Defense Strategy” by building a path to a more modern, combat-ready force, Esper wrote in a Jan. 27 memo. The memo was sent to the civilian secretaries of the Pentagon’s three military departments and their top deputies, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the four-star commanders of the 11 combatant commands.

Esper outlined four primary areas for those individuals to focus on during congressional testimony to defend the forthcoming budget request:

- It would invest heavily in increasing military combat readiness and modern weaponry needed against a near-peer adversary.
- It would strengthen and build military partnerships and alliances around the world.
- It would reform the Pentagon for “greater performance and accountability.”
- It would support troops and their families.

“Each component should ensure that those themes are incorporated into oral and written statements to our oversight committees,” Esper wrote in the memo, which was obtained by Stars and Stripes on Wednesday.

The Pentagon on Monday is expected to unveil its fiscal year 2021 budget proposal and the budgets for each of its military services as part of the White House’s budget proposal release. The overall budget is expected to be about $740 billion, which was agreed to last year by Congress as part of a two-year budget deal. The enacted Pentagon budget for fiscal year 2020 was about $730 billion.

The 2018 National Defense Strategy directs the Pentagon to prioritize power competition with rivals China and Russia over other global threats, including international terrorism — long the top focus of the U.S. military.

It outlines a need for modern weapons to deter aggression from those nations, which have spent heavily in recent years to build forces more capable of competing with American forces and closely watched U.S. tactics in the long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Esper wrote the forthcoming budget request would prioritize new spending to modernize the U.S. nuclear forces, seen as the country’s No. 1 deterrent. It would also focus on strengthening missile defense for the U.S. homeland.

The request includes funding for the expected build out of the Space Force, which was established in late 2019 with plans to grow to more than 10,000 troops through the next five years. It also funds efforts to create a “Joint Warfighting Concept,” meant to allow the military services and their weapons systems to work better together on the battlefield.

The request would divert funding from older “legacy” weapons systems that are being replaced by newer ones in order to better fund emerging technology, including hypersonic and directed energy weapons, artificial intelligence and autonomous platforms.

In the memo, Esper calls for growing American partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region critical to counter China’s growing economic and military influence across the globe. He also commits to “forming an enduring Middle East coalition.”

The proposed budget supports ongoing reviews and audits of the Defense Department to “free up time, money and manpower,” Esper wrote. It includes reforms to the so-called Pentagon Fourth Estate, organizations within the Defense Department not directly tied to the military departments. Esper wrote it would “constrain the growth” of the department’s non-warfighting agencies and activities to find savings “to put back into lethality.”

The 2021 budget proposal would also advocate for “robust pay” and benefits needed to attract and retain the best people for the military, Esper wrote. It would include improvements to the military’s drug and alcohol treatment programs and help to improve on-base child care. It also advocates support on-base child care and education programs for military spouses, he wrote.

Esper’s memo makes no mention of President Donald Trump’s border wall initiative. Last year, Trump moved about $7.2 billion from Pentagon accounts to and increased oversight of privatized, on-base military housing. It would also support on-base childcare facilities, drug and alcohol treatment programs and activities to find savings “to put back into lethality.”

The 2021 budget would include improvements to the military’s drug and alcohol treatment programs and help to improve on-base child care. It also advocates support on-base child care and education programs for military spouses, he wrote.

The Navy’s proposal indicates it was unable to add a second Virginia-class submarine, for a total of two, instead of the additional guided-missile destroyer. That move to swap the sub for the destroyer came after the Pentagon, under pressure from the Office of Management and Budget to bolster funding for the agency that manages nuclear weapons, shifted about $1.6 billion in proposed funding away from the submarine program for that effort, according to officials.

The overall request will help the Navy get marginally closer to Trump’s long-term goal of creating a 355-ship fleet. The service was pressed by the White House budget office in December to accelerate its ship-building plans to show it could achieve a fleet of that size “including manned and unmanned ships, by 2030.” That’s about four years earlier than the Navy’s public plan and more than 20 years earlier than a previous schedule.

Acting Navy Secretary Thomas Modly and Defense Secretary Mark Esper reached agreement on the new budget proposal, which came as Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman James Inhofe, an Oklahoma Republican, spearheaded a successful effort to boost funding for the National Nuclear Security Administration by about $2.5 billion to nearly $20 billion. To meet that goal, the Pentagon shifted about $1.6 billion of the proposed funds away from the submarine program. The remaining defense dollars were shifted from other areas.

The funding shift likely won’t sit well with Armed Services Democrats Jack Reed of Rhode Island, Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut and Tim Kaine of Virginia. The Virginia-class submarine is made jointly in Connecticut and Virginia by General Dynamics Electric Boat and Huntington Ingalls Industries Inc.

A significantly expanded naval fleet was a key campaign promise of Trump’s in 2016. The Navy’s proposal in December targeted a 287-ship fleet by fiscal year 2025 — the last year of a potential second Trump administration, according to the budget office. But that level, which included the decommissioning of 12 warships to save money, would be well below the long-term 308-ship target set by the Obama administration, the budget office said in a memo obtained by Bloomberg News.

The service currently has 293 deployable vessels.
Iraqi officers say full US withdrawal would bring a setback in military capabilities

FROM FRONT PAGE

Iraq. The prospect of losing that help is one reason why Iraqi politicians have cooled their demands for American forces to go immediately. Senior Iraqi military officials oppose a withdrawal.

“Of course, American presence is like the electricity network in a house,” said a brigadier general stationed in western Iraq, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to media. “If the light is turned off, the whole place goes dark.”

In the wake of the U.S. strike that killed Iran’s military commander, Iraq’s parliament passed a nonbinding resolution demanding the government force out the Americans. Tens of thousands marched in an anti-U.S. rally inspired by a radical cleric, while Iraq’s outgoing premier, Adel Abdel-Mahdi, openly stated that the troops must go.

American forces had to halt joint operations with the Iraqi military against ISIS after the strike, a pause that would last for three weeks. In the interim, the U.S. troops fortified bases against potential retaliation by Iran or Iraqi Shiite militias - like the new tower and beefed-up barricades at a base visited recently by the AP in the northern Iraqi city of Irbil.

About 5,200 U.S. soldiers are stationed in Iraqi bases to support local troops fighting ISIS militants, part of a larger international coalition invited by the Iraqi government in 2014. But since then, Western officials say Iraqi authorities have taken no concrete measures to hasten a withdrawal plan.

“I’d say with virtually all of the Shiite political party leaders there’s been behind closed doors and in private meetings a much more thoughtful approach on how they deal with this and a desire on their part to maintain a relationship and a coalition partnership that they regard as essential for Iraq,” said a U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

In a Cabinet session, Abdul-Mahdi said it was up to the next government to see through the parliament’s resolution. Prime Minister-designate Mohammed Allawi, a former communications minister, has not made his policy known.

Western diplomats were told that Iraq had formed a committee to study the issue of America’s troop presence in Iraq, but two Iraqi officials said there was no official sign off from Abdul-Mahdi formally creating such a committee. James Jeffrey, special envoy for the global coalition to defeat ISIS, said, speaking of the committee, “there has not been any real engagement,” in remarks to reporters in Washington on Jan. 23.

Washington has responded to Iraq’s requests to initiate troop withdrawals with blunt refusal, even threatening sanctions that could cripple Iraq’s economy.

Instead of directly pushing for U.S. withdrawal, Iraq’s government appears to be quietly distancing itself on the ground. Though the U.S. announced joint operations against ISIS had resumed, Iraq has been unclear. The Iraqi military announced the end of the pause on Jan. 30, but a military spokesman rescinded the claim in remarks to state television. It was not followed up with a clarification. On at least two occasions in January, U.S. officials said they expected the pause would be lifted immediately.

Two Iraqi military officials and a militia commander said this week that the government told its military not to seek assistance from the U.S.-led coalition in anti-ISIS operations and to minimize cooperation. The three spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the press.

“Until now, we have not asked the Americans to provide assistance, we rely on our capabilities to pursue [ISIS] elements. The presence of the Americans in the joint operations is only formal,” a senior military intelligence official told The Associated Press.

Another of the officials, a commander in Iraq’s elite U.S.-trained Counter-Terrorism Services in western Anbar province, said some training continues, but “as for military operations and carrying out operations, there is no support.”

No coalition airstrikes have been carried out against ISIS since the killing of Soleimani, said coalition spokesman Myles Caggins. In contrast, 45 strikes were conducted in Iraq in October, he said. November. “The Iraqis have not requested assistance with airstrikes in recent weeks while our operations are paused,” Caggins said.

U.S. Marine Gen. Frank McKenize, the top American commander in the Middle East on Tuesday with Iraqi leaders and acknowledged that joint military operations and training have been scaled back, although he said U.S. special operations forces are doing some missions with Iraqi commanders.

“We’re still in a period of turbulence. We’ve got a ways to go,” he said.

A full-scale U.S. withdrawal would bring a major setback in Iraqi capabilities to fight ISIS that Iraqi military officers acknowledge. The U.S. withdrew from the country in 2011, only for the Iraqi military to collapse in the face of the 2014 blitz by ISIS that overran the north and west. As a result, the government invited the Americans back.

“The Iraqi forces present in western Iraq need continuous air support and logistical support,” said the CTS official. “These are provided to us by coalition forces, especially the U.S. If they are taken out, we will be paralyzed.”

The battle against ISIS is becoming increasingly technologi
cal, and we don’t own any of these technologies. Only the Americans do,” said a senior army intelligence official.

The Iraqis also rely on U.S. military expertise to maintain their American-made F-16 fighter aircraft. Iraq’s Kurdish and the majority of Sunni factions oppose an American withdrawal. Many Sunnis consider the U.S. presence as a bulwark against both ISIS and Iranian power.

“If the Americans go out then we will be attacked by everyone, and by everyone I mean [ISIS], the government, the militias and the parties,” said Abu Ahmad, a grocery shop owner in the Old City of Mosul, which was overrun by ISIS in 2014. “It is the U.S. that keeps them away from swallow- ing Mosul.”
Report: Heavy forces better at deterring strife

BY JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Ground troops based overseas with tanks and artillery are better at preventing conflict than their light infantry counterparts, a study said after examining more than 70 years of military deployments to determine what best deters adversaries.

In its report — “Understanding the Deterrent Impact of U.S. Overseas Deployments” — the research group Rand Corp. also found that when the military surges forces toward a flashpoint, it’s more effective to break out.

“Despite these risks, the historical record suggests that very few crises escalate when the United States deploys forces to the crisis region… These effects are particularly strong for ground forces, where no crises escalated to major confrontation or war, and for air forces, where only one crisis has escalated,” the report said.

The clearest evidence for achieving deterrence was connected to “heavy ground forces,” which included armored units and those with air defense capabilities.

“The effects of these two types of forces were almost consistently positive, strongly statistically significant, and robust to multiple model specifications,” the report said.

There was less evidence to show that mobile, rotational forces deter as effectively. A possible reason is they “represent a lesser degree of high-level or long-term U.S. commitment or possibly because measuring their effects is more difficult,” the report said.

Light ground forces, which include airborne and special operations units stationed inside the borders of the ally or partner to be defended, could be counterproductive to deterrence, Rand said.

Those units were “associated with an increased likelihood of militarized disputes, including those of both lower and higher intensity, though not including war,” the report said.

Rand said more analysis is needed to understand why that could be the case, but one possibility is that light forces represent “a more rapidly deployable capability that provokes U.S. adversaries without representing sufficient capabilities to deter.”

The analysis also showed “little, if any, evidence for the deterrent impact of air and naval forces,” the report said.

“Because air and naval forces can be relatively easily redeployed between theaters, their presence represents a weaker signal of commitment,” Rand said. “Similarly, ground forces’ vulnerability when stationed overseas also represents a strong signal of resolve.”

The Rand report comes as the Pentagon is reviewing whether commands overseas are resource-dealt to deal with the military’s top priority of countering China and Russia, even as thousands of troops remain on alert in the Middle East amid tensions with Iran.

For decades, the value of basing large numbers of troops overseas has been a source of fierce debate among security analysts, policymakers and some lawmakers, who have questioned the costs of maintaining big bases abroad.

In military circles, the discussion centers on whether it’s better to rely on a rotational model that moves large numbers of U.S.-based troops back and forth overseas, or to instead support permanent bases.

Other analysts contend long-range strike capabilities are enough to deter aggressors.

---

Chico finds home with US troops in Poland

BY IMMANUEL JOHNSON
Stars and Stripes

BEMOWO PISKIE TRAINING AREA, Poland — Two years ago, he was a no-name stray who'd bark from a distance at American soldiers every time they'd step off this base in northeastern Poland.

Today, the friendly mongrel has a name, all of his shots, a place of his own, all the food he can eat and plenty of service members to pat and play with him.

“Chico always brings joy to the soldiers, and during every rotation there’s a different group that takes care of him,” said Gosia Sobolewska, a linguist who works with the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence mission that the U.S. troops are supporting.

Chico came into the lives of the U.S. soldiers at Bemowo Piskie around two years ago, said Cpl. Zachary Foote with the 3rd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment sniper section, supporting the EFP.

“We were taking part in a competition and as soon as we stepped off base, there was a little white dog in the distance barking. It looked like Chico from the movie ‘Friday,’” he said.

The mutt of indeterminate parentage now has a name. A personalized doghouse near one of the barracks soon followed.

The dog is allowed to enter the barracks and is recognized by higher leadership as a distinguished guest.

“I have heard from some of the soldiers that Chico reminds them of their own pets,” Sobolewska said.

He also helps soldiers maintain their fitness levels. “Whenever he sees someone running, he will run with them until they are done,” Foote said.

When the time comes for the sniper section to leave Bemowo Piskie, they’ll pass the torch for taking care of Chico to the incoming unit.

Around 700 U.S. troops began a six-month rotation at the Bemowo Piskie Training Area last month as part of a mission to strengthen NATO’s eastern flank and deter Russian aggression in Europe. The training area is in the village of Orzysz, about 50 miles from the Russian military enclave of Kaliningrad.

---

Man charged with hiring Marines to get immigrants

BY ALEX RIGGENS
The San Diego Union-Tribune

SAN DIEGO — Federal prosecutors have filed a conspiracy charge against a man accused of recruiting and paying Marines and other United States citizens to transport unauthorized immigrants throughout San Diego County shortly after they crossed from Mexico into the U.S.

The charge against Francisco Saul Rojas-Hernandez is connected with a scheme that entangled some two dozen Camp Pendleton Marines, at least 13 of whom left the Corps in the wake of human trafficking and drug accusations. Military prosecutors dropped most of the charges in the high-profile case late last year after a judge ruled the mass arrest of 16 Marines in front of their 800-person battalion last summer was unlawful.

Rojas-Hernandez is accused of conspiring with the Marines and others to transport the unauthorized immigrants within the U.S. “for financial gain,” according to a criminal complaint filed last month in U.S. District Court. NBC7 first reported the charge against Rojas-Hernandez on Wednesday.

An attorney for the defendant did not immediately respond Wednesday to a request for comment.

According to investigators, those two Marines said a man they knew as “Rojas” had paid them, “recruit- ed them and organized the smuggling operation,” according to a probable cause statement written by Katelyn Thompson with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service.

One of the Marines identified Rojas-Hernandez when shown a photo lineup, according to the document.

Over the next few months, Border Patrol agents arrested several Marines for allegedly picking up three unauthorized immigrants near Jacumba Hot Springs.

During questioning, those two Marines said a man they knew as “Rojas” had paid them, “recruit- ed them and organized the smuggling operation,” according to a probable cause statement written by Katelyn Thompson with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service.

One of the Marines identified Rojas-Hernandez when shown a photo lineup, according to the document.

Over the next few months, Border Patrol agents arrested several other U.S. citizens who gave the name “Rojas” when identifying those who had recruited and paid them to pick up unauthorized immigrants near the border, according to the statement. In some cases, those people also picked Rojas-Hernandez out of a photo lineup.
Ramp up raids net 8 ISIS members in Syria

By Chad Garland
Stars and Stripes

U.S.-backed forces in Syria captured eight Islamic State group fighters and affiliates, along with weapons, documents and military equipment, during a large-scale operation alongside American special operations troops last week, the military said Thursday.

The coalition and Syrian Democratic Forces have stepped up efforts to stop a potential ISIS resurgence in the country’s north-eastern provinces of Deir al-Zour and Hassakeh, conducting “multiple raids each week,” Special Operations Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve said in a statement.

The news came as U.S. Central Command warned that ISIS “remains cohesive,” with a war chest of hundreds of millions of dollars available to it following the October killing of ISIS founder Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

In last week’s clearance operation, hundreds of Kurdish-led SDF forces raided several compounds in Jan. 31 to isolate and capture an ISIS sleeper cell, the coalition said.

But first, they danced. A 19-second military video shows the troops kicked up and performing a motivational, pre-mission dance up,” said Army Capt. Charlie Boisner, a spokesman for the task force.

Footage also shows U.S. mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles alongside SDF armed trucks, and a bearded man in what looks like a U.S. uniform with an American flag patch interviewing a detainee.

Air Force Maj. Gen. Eric T. Hill, commander of the coalition’s special operations task force, credited the SDF with conducting “intelligence-driven operations” to take ISIS fighters off the battlefield and “keeping pressure on ISIS networks.”

“The defeat ISIS mission in Syria has proceeded uninterrupted in recent weeks,” Hill said in the statement.

About 500 American troops remain in Syria, mostly in the northeast, to help combat a potential ISIS resurgence. The U.S. troop presence is about half of what it was in October before the U.S. pulled out of northern areas near the border with Turkey in advance of a Turkish incursion.

That move did not significantly affect ISIS capabilities, CENTCOM officials told the Defense Department Inspector General in a report published this week.

Still, based on its online claims, the group appeared to increase its attacks from about 55 a month to 66 after the incursion, the Defense Intelligence Agency told the IG.

On Wednesday, Ambassador James F. Jeffrey, the U.S. special representative on Syria and envoy to the anti-ISIS coalition, pushed back on reports of increased ISIS activity, saying that despite a slight increase, “the attack levels remain ‘fairly low.’”

“We are not concerned beyond our normal level of concern about the need to defeat ISIS,” said Jeffrey, who last month said that 14,000 to 18,000 ISIS fighters remain.

Afghan media outlets protest curtailed info access

By Rahim Fazli
Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — An Afghan media watchdog urged the government on Wednesday to heed a demand for more media freedoms after local media outlets said in a statement that authorities were increasingly curtailing their access to information.

Sayed Ibrahim Afzali, the head of Integrity Watch Afghanistan, said that there is a good law in place guaranteeing the media’s ability to work and access information, but that the government has failed to provide enough funding and institutional support to implement it.

The joint media statement, unsealed at a protest rally in Kabul on Tuesday, comes against the backdrop of relentless violence across the country. Afghan forces, backed by United States allies, continue to fight the Taliban, who today control or hold sway over nearly half of Afghanistan.

The Taliban stage near-daily attacks targeting government forces and officials, as well as those seen loyal to the government, and scores of civilians get killed in the crossfire, as well as in anti-Taliban operations by the Afghan forces. The U.N. has called for all sides in the protracted conflict to take better care to avoid civilian casualties.

Meanwhile, the U.S. is engaged in on-again-off-again talks with the Taliban, led by U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, to find a negotiated end to Afghanistan’s 18-year war that would allow the U.S. to bring home about 13,000 American soldiers.

“Throughout my tenure as the chief information commissioner, I have witnessed the media’s access to information being restricted by key government institutions,” said Afzali. “Unfortunately, the trend continues.”

Abdul Majeed Khalvatgar, head of the Nai Supporting Open Media group, said that access to information has been worst in the last five years and that the situation is now critical.

Even as authorities concur that access to information remains a pervasive challenge for Afghani stan, they justify existing limitations by the persistent dangers and violence the country faces, and warn that a return of the Taliban regime could do away with many hard-won freedoms.

US conducts test of unarmed Minuteman 3 missile system

Associated Press

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. — An unarmed Minuteman 3 intercontinental ballistic missile was launched from California early Wednesday on a test flight to a target in the Pacific Ocean, the Air Force Global Strike Command said.

The missile blasted off at 12:33 a.m. from Vandenberg Air Force Base and its reusable vehicle traveled 4,200 miles to the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands as part of a developmental test, the command said from Barksdale Air Force Base, La.

Developmental tests use a spare missile from storage to validate flight worthiness of new or replacement components. That differs from test launches that use randomly selected operational missiles.

Modernization programs are essential to sustaining the aging Minuteman 3 weapon system, Col. Omar Colbert, the 576th Flight Test Squadron commander, said in a statement.

The launch was conducted from the 341st Missile Wing at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont., the 90th Missile Wing at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo., and the 91st Missile Wing at Minot Air Force Base, N.D.
Trump unleashes fury in wake of acquittal

Impeachment takeaways

By Matthew Daly and Erin Cunningham  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Republican-controlled Senate acquitted President Donald Trump on two impeachment charges Wednesday amid Republican complaints about what they called a rushed process and Democratic claims that Trump is a threat to democracy. The, three-week trial proceeded largely along partisan lines, with just one senator — Republican Mitt Romney of Utah breaking with his party.

Takeaways from just the third impeachment trial of a president in U.S. history:

Iron grip on GOP

Some Republican senators expressed reservations about Trump's conduct, some even went so far as to say that House Democrats successfully made their case against him. Nonetheless, Trump appeared nearly every inch of the East Room was packed with supporters. Among them: Republican senators who cast some of the votes to acquit him, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Rep. Chuck Grassley, several Cabinet members, including Attorney General William Barr

and Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, and staunch House allies including Reps. Jim Jordan, Devin Nunes and Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy.

Earlier, speaking from a stage where he was joined by congressional leaders, including Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who led the impeachment charge against him, Trump shattered the usual veneer of bipartisanship at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington.

“As everybody knows, my family, our great country and your president have been put through a terrible ordeal by some very dishonest and corrupt people,” Trump said at the annual event. His airing of grievances came hours before his East Room address.

“They have done everything possible to destroy us and they are doing this very badly,” he said, Trump, who triumphantly held up copies of two newspapers with banner “ACQUITTED” headlines as he took the stage.

His remarks were especially jarring and whiplash-inducing coming after a series of unbecoming speeches, including a keynote address by Arthur Brooks, a Harvard professor and president of a conservative think tank, who had bemoaned a “crisis of contempt and polarization” in the nation and urged those gathered to “love your enemies.”

“I don’t know if I agree with you,” Trump said as he took the microphone, and then he proceeded to demonstrate it.

“I don’t like people who use their faith as justification for doing what they know is wrong,” he said in an apparent reference to Utah Sen. Mitt Romney, a longtime Trump critic who voted for Trump's acquittal.

“Do not I like people who say ‘I pray for you’ when you know that is not so,” he said, in a reference to Pelosi, who has offered that message for the president when the two leaders have sparred publicly.

The House speaker shook her head at various points during Trump’s remarks, but did not appear to interact with Trump personally. Earlier she had offered a prayer for the poor and the persecuted.

She said later that Trump’s remarks were “so completely inappropriate, especially at a prayer breakfast.” She took particular issue with his swipe at Romney’s faith and said that yes, she does pray for the president.

His comments were a clear sign that the post-impeachment Trump is emboldened like never before as he barrels ahead in his reelection fight with a united Republican Party behind him.

And it stood in stark contrast to the apology offered by Bill Clinton in the aftermath of his own impeachment acquittal in 1999.

Clinton said then in a White House address: “I want to say again to the American people that they should all know I was wrong. I said and did to trigger these events and the great burden they have imposed on the Congress and on the American people.”

Not impeachable

Republicans voted to acquit Trump, but many wanted to be on record as frowning on his conduct. Perhaps the most prominent example was retiring Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, who voted against hearing from witnesses but called out Trump’s actions as “inappropriate.”

Other Republicans followed suit. Romney stood alone in his against witnesses or in favor of acquittal should not be interpreted as approval of his actions.

“I do not believe that the House has met its burden of showing that the president’s conduct — however flawed — warrants the extreme step of immediate removal from office,” said Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine.

“Our country is already too deeply divided and we should be working to heal wounds rather than create new ones. It is better to let the people decide,” added Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio.

Romney stands alone

In an unlikely twist, Romney, the GOP’s unsuccessful 2012 presidential nominee, was the only Republican senator to break ranks in the impeachment trial and favor removing Trump from office. The well-mannered patriarch Romney stood alone in his vote to oust a Republican president who seldom hides his contempt for the senator and the establishment Romney symbolizes.

Romney’s support for removing Trump on a charge of abuse of power also denied Trump’s campaign a frequent talking point of asserting that he had full support of Republicans in the House and Senate during a strictly partisan drive to remove him.

Romney voted to acquit Trump on the second article of impeachment, obstruction of Congress, joining his 52 GOP colleagues.

Romney, a Mormon, cited his religious faith and the significance of the impeachment oath taken by senators to render “impartial justice” on impeachment. “The grave question the Constitution tasks senators to answer is whether the president committed an act so extreme, so egregious, that it rises to the level of a high crime and misdemeanor,” Romney said in a floor speech. “Yes, he did.”

Let voters decide

Many senators who voted to acquit Trump said they were dis-appointed in his conduct or disapproved of it, but that it was up to voters to decide Trump’s fate in November.

Alexander said House prosecutors had proved the charges against the president, but said they didn’t rise to an impeachable offense.

“The question is whether the president did it,” but whether the Senate should decide whether to do about it, Alexander said last week in becoming the decisive vote against witnesses and doing nothing.

“I believe the Constitution provides that the people should make that decision in the presidential election.”

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, called the president’s acquittal “a personal and painful” but she said the proper response to Trump’s behavior was “not to disenfranchise nearly 63 million Americans” — who voted for Trump in 2016 — by removing him from the ballot.
DNC calls for ‘recanvass’ of Iowa results

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The chairman of the Democratic National Committee called on Thursday for a "recanvass" of the results of Monday's Iowa caucus, which was marred by technical problems and delays.

"Enough is enough," party leader Tom Perez wrote on Twitter. He said he was calling for the recanvass in order to "assure public confidence in the results." 

With 97% of precincts reporting, Pete Buttigieg, a former mayor of South Bend, Ind., and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders are nearly tied.

The technical glitches plaguing the first contest on the 2020 nominating calendar have made an already complicated candidate selection process even more complicated, forcing state officials to apologize and raising questions about Iowa's traditional prime spot in picking nominees.

The caucus crisis was an embarrassing twist after months of promoting Iowa as a chance for Democrats to set the tone for 2020 in a jumbled field. Instead, after a buildup that featured seven debates, nearly $1 billion spent nationwide and a year of political jockeying, caucus day ended with no winner and no official results.

Iowa marked the first contest in a primary season that will span all 50 states and several U.S. territories, ending with no winner and no official results.

The chaos surrounding the Iowa results comes as the race shifts to New Hampshire, which holds its primary next Tuesday. But it would be premature to write off Mr. Trump.

Much of the political world has been focused on the Iowa results as they seek to pull away from the crowded field.

The former mayor's relative inexperience and the senator's description of himself as a socialist.

In New Hampshire, Biden seeks to be ‘Comeback Kid’

Associated Press

SOMERSWORTH, N.H. — Joe Biden entered the Democratic presidential race as a relative unknown, the candidate with the longest resume, a network of establishment donors and a pitch that he could win the kind of voters who would want to defeat President Donald Trump.

Now, humbled by a disappoint ing showing in the Iowa caucuses, Biden is hoping for something quite different: that New Hampshire will make him the second coming of "the Comeback Kid."

New Hampshire is known for knocking down front-runners, usually with candidates carrying an insurgent torch, like Gary Hart in 1984, John McCain in 2000 and Bernie Sanders in 2016, instead of steadying a slipping candidate's fate. Hillary Clinton was an exception in 2008, but she lost the nomination to Barack Obama.

The former vice president made light of the Iowa results as he campaigned in New Hampshire on Tuesday. But he told voters in Somersworth on Wednesday that he wouldn't sugarcoat the impact of Iowa on his 2020 effort. He began to more aggressively criticize his rivals as he sought a reboot.

The campaign, he said, "took a gut punch," but it would be premature to write him off. "I’m not going anywhere," Biden said. "And I’m counting on New Hampshire. We’re going to come back." 

His word had echoes of Bill Clinton in 1992, when he de clared himself "the Comeback Kid" after finishing second to Democratic Sen. Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts.

Biden has a number of hurdles in New Hampshire if he wants to make a comeback a reality.

His campaign event Wednesday was only his fifth in the state since the start of the year. Last month, Biden had the fewest New Hampshire events of any of the candidates regarded as being in the top four in the race.

The 77-year-old Biden also hasn’t been making time in recent weeks for one of the traditions that New Hampshire voters are most fond of: taking questions from the audience in town hall settings.
Governors warn of Medicaid cuts from Trump rule

BY RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Governors of both major political parties are warning that a little-noticed rule proposed by President Donald Trump’s administration could lead to big cuts in Medicaid, reducing access to health care for low-income Americans.

The arcane fiscal accountability rule proposed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS, would tighten federal oversight and approval over complex financing strategies states have long used to help pay for their share of the $600 billion program. Also targeted are certain payments to hospitals that treat many low-income patients.

The rule, which was also closed last week amid a chorus of criticism from hospitals, nursing homes, insurers, doctors, and advocates for the poor.

Against the backdrop of an election year, governors are warning the administration of potentially dire consequences.

“States may be unable to adequately fund their Medicaid programs, which could lead to unintended consequences that would negatively impact Medicaid beneficiaries across the country,” wrote Govs. Kate Brown, D-Ore., and Charlie Baker, R-Mass., in official comments on behalf of National Governors Association.

But CMS administrator Seema Verma, who the administration says Congress could soon make law, said in a statement that the rule would “ensure proper accountability for states that use federal funds to support their Medicaid programs.”

The rule could lead to billions in decreased federal payments. Administration officials have said it could result in $9 billion in lost payments for three years.

States say they would have to seek broad tax increases, now rely on, governors would have to lead to better value and improved care for Medicaid beneficiaries. Under the proposed rule, “we are increasing transparency, integrity and clarity,” she said. An agency spokesman said the rule is not intended to reduce Medicaid payments.

The latest proposal could lead to cuts of $37 billion to $49 billion a year in total Medicaid spending, or 6% to 8% of program funds, according to a study by Manatt Health Consultants for the American Hospital Association. Payments to hospitals could be cut as much as 17%. A CMS spokesman said the agency doesn’t believe those estimates are credible. In the rule, CMS says that the fiscal impact of its plan is “unknown.” Critics say the agency did not do a full analysis.

If the federal government curtails financing methods states now rely on, governors would have to seek broad tax increases, cut payments to hospitals and doctors, reduce benefits, restrict eligibility, or some combination of such measures. States can set their own Medicaid policies with federal requirements.

The Trump administration says it is closely reviewing some 4,000 comments and will consider feedback before it decides on next steps. No timetable has been announced for a final decision.

Prosecutors rest case after Weinstein accuser returns

NEW YORK — Prosecutors in Harvey Weinstein’s rape trial rested their case Thursday after more than two weeks of testimony punctuated by harrowing accounts from six women who say he ignored pleas of “no, no, no!” and excused his behavior as a Hollywood norm.

“People rest, judge,” Assistant District Attorney Joan Illuzzi-Orbon said, moving the closely watched celebrity trial one step closer to verdict.

Now Weinstein’s lawyers will start calling witnesses of their own. They haven’t said whether Weinstein himself will testify. Doing so could bring big risks because cause prosecutors would be able to grill him about each of the allegations that jurors have already heard about in vivid detail.

Among the witnesses the defense is expected to call is a psychologist who specializes in human memory. The defense is looking to raise doubts about the women’s recollections of encounters that in some cases are more than a decade or two old.

Weinstein, 67, maintains that any sexual encounters were consensual.

The criminal charges at the trial in New York City are based on two allegations: that Weinstein raped a woman in March 2013 and that he forced oral sex on another woman in 2006.

The allegations against Weinstein helped fuel the #MeToo movement. If convicted, he could spend the rest of his life in prison.

Prosecutors ended their case after the last of the other accusers allowed to testify finished telling jurors about an encounter with the disgraced movie mogul in 2013.

Lauren Marie Young, a model from suburban Philadelphia, testified that Weinstein invited her to his Beverly Hills hotel room, lured her to the bathroom, stripped off his clothes, pulled down her dress and groped her breast.

Feds investigate Mississippi prisons conditions after string of deaths

BY MICHAEL BALSAMO AND EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS
Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. — The Justice Department has opened a civil rights investigation into the Mississippi prison system after a string of inmate deaths in the past few months, officials said Wednesday.

Federal prosecutors are looking into conditions at four state prisons after the deaths of at least 15 inmates since late December. The investigation is examining whether state corrections officials are adequately protecting prisoners from physical harm and will look into whether there are adequate health care and suicide prevention services.

The investigation of the Justice Department’s civil rights division will focus on conditions at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman, the South Mississippi Correctional Institution, the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility and the Wilkinson County Correctional Facility, the Justice Department said.

The Wilkinson facility holds state prisoners, and the state pays for care for Medicaid beneficiaries. Under the proposed rule, “we are increasing transparency, integrity and clarity,” she said. An agency spokesman said the rule is not intended to reduce Medicaid payments.

The investigation is examining whether state corrections officials are adequately protecting prisoners from physical harm and will look into whether there are adequate health care and suicide prevention services.

The investigation is examining whether state corrections officials are adequately protecting prisoners from physical harm and will look into whether there are adequate health care and suicide prevention services.
DEPOE BAY, Ore. — Tourists, nature lovers and amateur scientists are whipping out their cameras to document the effects of extreme high tides on shorelines from the United States to New Zealand, and by doing so are helping better predict what rising sea levels will mean for coastal communities around the world.

A network of volunteer photographers fans out around the globe during so-called king tides to capture how high the waterline gets and where the water goes. They then upload the images — many with geolocation data embedded — for use by scientists, policy makers and even city planners as they study and prepare for the effects of climate change.

Photos show where flooding occurs on specific roads, or give clues about whether it’s safe to build new housing, for example, near an eroding bluff.

“For us, the king tide offers a look at where the water will be in about 2050, about a foot to a foot and half above normal water levels,” said Skip Stiles, executive director of Wetlands Watch, a nonprofit that helped recruit 700 people to document a king tide in Norfolk, Va., for the first time in 2017.

The group’s efforts have since grown into a smartphone app that uses crowdsourcing to gather images and pinpoint flooding.

“What we’re finding is there’s a real appetite for this data. A lot of the localities here are putting together comprehensive plans for sea-level rise, and I’m getting calls from them saying, ‘Do you have data? Do you have photos?’ That’s what we’re going for.”

The first of these King Tide Projects involving the public began in 2009 in Australia. The idea has since spread to more than a dozen coastal states in the U.S., British Columbia, New Zealand, Mauritius and beyond.

King tides occur about twice a year in coastal areas worldwide when the sun and moon align to enhance the gravitational pull that produces normal, daily tides. These super-high tides came into sharp focus in January, when one arrived in Oregon on the same day as a major winter storm, creating 15- to 20-foot waves and a massive swell that sucked a man and his two young children out to sea. The woman who called 911 as the group’s efforts have since spread to more than a dozen coastal states in the U.S., British Columbia, New Zealand, Mauritius and beyond.

King tides occur about twice a year in coastal areas worldwide when the sun and moon align to enhance the gravitational pull that produces normal, daily tides. These super-high tides came into sharp focus in January, when one arrived in Oregon on the same day as a major winter storm, creating 15- to 20-foot waves and a massive swell that sucked a man and his two young children out to sea. The woman who called 911 as the group’s efforts have since spread to more than a dozen coastal states in the U.S., British Columbia, New Zealand, Mauritius and beyond.

King tides occur about twice a year in coastal areas worldwide when the sun and moon align to enhance the gravitational pull that produces normal, daily tides. These super-high tides came into sharp focus in January, when one arrived in Oregon on the same day as a major winter storm, creating 15- to 20-foot waves and a massive swell that sucked a man and his two young children out to sea. The woman who called 911 as the group’s efforts have since spread to more than a dozen coastal states in the U.S., British Columbia, New Zealand, Mauritius and beyond.

King tides occur about twice a year in coastal areas worldwide when the sun and moon align to enhance the gravitational pull that produces normal, daily tides. These super-high tides came into sharp focus in January, when one arrived in Oregon on the same day as a major winter storm, creating 15- to 20-foot waves and a massive swell that sucked a man and his two young children out to sea. The woman who called 911 as the group’s efforts have since spread to more than a dozen coastal states in the U.S., British Columbia, New Zealand, Mauritius and beyond.

King tides occur about twice a year in coastal areas worldwide when the sun and moon align to enhance the gravitational pull that produces normal, daily tides. These super-high tides came into sharp focus in January, when one arrived in Oregon on the same day as a major winter storm, creating 15- to 20-foot waves and a massive swell that sucked a man and his two young children out to sea. The woman who called 911 as the group’s efforts have since spread to more than a dozen coastal states in the U.S., British Columbia, New Zealand, Mauritius and beyond.

King tides occur about twice a year in coastal areas worldwide when the sun and moon align to enhance the gravitational pull that produces normal, daily tides. These super-high tides came into sharp focus in January, when one arrived in Oregon on the same day as a major winter storm, creating 15- to 20-foot waves and a massive swell that sucked a man and his two young children out to sea. The woman who called 911 as the group’s efforts have since spread to more than a dozen coastal states in the U.S., British Columbia, New Zealand, Mauritius and beyond.

King tides occur about twice a year in coastal areas worldwide when the sun and moon align to enhance the gravitational pull that produces normal, daily tides. These super-high tides came into sharp focus in January, when one arrived in Oregon on the same day as a major winter storm, creating 15- to 20-foot waves and a massive swell that sucked a man and his two young children out to sea. The woman who called 911 as the group’s efforts have since spread to more than a dozen coastal states in the U.S., British Columbia, New Zealand, Mauritius and beyond.

King tides occur about twice a year in coastal areas worldwide when the sun and moon align to enhance the gravitational pull that produces normal, daily tides. These super-high tides came into sharp focus in January, when one arrived in Oregon on the same day as a major winter storm, creating 15- to 20-foot waves and a massive swell that sucked a man and his two young children out to sea. The woman who called 911 as the group’s efforts have since spread to more than a dozen coastal states in the U.S., British Columbia, New Zealand, Mauritius and beyond.

King tides occur about twice a year in coastal areas worldwide when the sun and moon align to enhance the gravitational pull that produces normal, daily tides. These super-high tides came into sharp focus in January, when one arrived in Oregon on the same day as a major winter storm, creating 15- to 20-foot waves and a massive swell that sucked a man and his two young children out to sea. The woman who called 911 as the group’s efforts have since spread to more than a dozen coastal states in the U.S., British Columbia, New Zealand, Mauritius and beyond.

King tides occur about twice a year in coastal areas worldwide when the sun and moon align to enhance the gravitational pull that produces normal, daily tides. These super-high tides came into sharp focus in January, when one arrived in Oregon on the same day as a major winter storm, creating 15- to 20-foot waves and a massive swell that sucked a man and his two young children out to sea. The woman who called 911 as the group’s efforts have since spread to more than a dozen coastal states in the U.S., British Columbia, New Zealand, Mauritius and beyond.

King tides occur about twice a year in coastal areas worldwide when the sun and moon align to enhance the gravitational pull that produces normal, daily tides. These super-high tides came into sharp focus in January, when one arrived in Oregon on the same day as a major winter storm, creating 15- to 20-foot waves and a massive swell that sucked a man and his two young children out to sea. The woman who called 911 as the group’s efforts have since spread to more than a dozen coastal states in the U.S., British Columbia, New Zealand, Mauritius and beyond.

King tides occur about twice a year in coastal areas worldwide when the sun and moon align to enhance the gravitational pull that produces normal, daily tides. These super-high tides came into sharp focus in January, when one arrived in Oregon on the same day as a major winter storm, creating 15- to 20-foot waves and a massive swell that sucked a man and his two young children out to sea. The woman who called 911 as the group’s efforts have since spread to more than a dozen coastal states in the U.S., British Columbia, New Zealand, Mauritius and beyond.
US dairy farmers looking for any tech edge

By Ivan Moreno
Associated Press

PICKETT, Wis. — At Rosendale Dairy, each of the 9,000 cows has a microchip implanted in one of its ears that workers can scan with smartphones for up-to-the-minute information on how the animal is doing — everything from their nutrition to their health history to their productivity. Feed is calibrated to deliver a precise diet and machines handle the milking. In the fields, drones gather data that helps bump yields for the row crops grown to feed the animals.

Technology has played an important role in agriculture for years, but it’s become a life and death matter at dairy farms these days, as low milk prices have ratcheted up pressure on farmers to seek every possible efficiency to avoid joining the thousands of operations that have failed.

“I use 100 bags of seed on a field and I change the way I distribute the seed, I can yield more without a single extra dollar of input,” said Matt Wichman, Rosendale’s director of agronomy. Such tools “are becoming so economically viable that anybody that’s of a decent scale is adopting these,” Wichman said.

Technology can mean survival, but it involves a perilous gamble: Will the machines produce savings fast enough to recover the debt they incur?

“The last five years have really been treacherous,” said Randy Hallett, who has 85 cows in Casco, Wis., and has spent $33,000 on new milking equipment. He would invest more if his operation could afford it.

“I broke even, mostly,” Hallett said.

The dairy industry is caught in a vise between consumer trends and competition. Americans are buying less milk as changing tastes steer them to milk substitutes from soy and almonds, or to entirely different drinks like flavored water. Two big milk processors, Dean Foods and Borden Dairy Co., filed for bankruptcy protection in the past three months, undone by declining demand and also pressured by big competitors like Walmart, which opened its own milk processing plant in 2018.

And then there are milk prices.

After hitting a historic high in 2014 of more than $26 per 100 pounds on the strength of mass buying from China, the bottom fell out. When China stopped its milk-buying spree, there was always an oversupply from both American and European Union producers, said Mark Stephenson, director of dairy policy analysis at the University of Wisconsin.

Prices fell to $17.30 by the following year, and for producers, it’s been mostly misery ever since. Nationwide, the number of dairy farms dropped from 40,199 in 2017 to 37,468 in 2018.

In Wisconsin, a state that takes pride in its image as “America’s Dairyland,” the toll has been particularly severe. Though California produces more milk, Wisconsin has more dairy farms than any other state. And more than 1,600 of those have gone under in the past three years.

But there are reasons to believe that the worst might be over, said Jim Ostrom, a partner at Milk Source, the company that owns Rosendale.

In November, milk prices in Wisconsin rose to $22.40. Nationwide, they reached $21, finally above the $18 price point that Stephenson cited as a general benchmark for producers turning a profit.

With dairy prices outside of farmers’ control, they have to focus on controlling costs. That’s where technology comes in. A robotic milking parlor can handle 10 cows a minute and can sense when anudder is empty so that cows aren’t overmilked, which can harm their health. But a robotic milking system can run more than $200,000.

“It can be very difficult for a smaller farm to afford this technology because you need a larger operation to spread those expenses across,” said Liz Binswanger, an agriculture educator in Brown County for the University of Wisconsin extension office. She said she knows of one farm that went out of business because it couldn’t find enough workers and could not afford a robotic milking system.

Wisconsin leads the nation in farm bankruptcies with 45 Chapter 12 filings from July 2018 through June 2019, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation. Minnesota was not far behind with 31 during that time.

Because of debt, the cost of producing milk varies among farms. While some farmers can break even at a price of $18 per hundred pounds, others need $21 because of their debt load.

Sometimes the way to survive is to join forces with neighbors. Hallett shares some advanced machinery with a neighboring farmer, like a combine and planting equipment. And, fortunately, some technology isn’t expensive. Hallett’s cows carry the same microchips as Rosendale uses, so he can know from his office the milk weight for each cow and whether a particular cow had less milk that day. The chips cost about 12 cents per month per cow.

Hallett said that he wishes he could afford to update his cow stalls, but that getting credit from banks is difficult because they consider bigger operations less risky.

“Who do you think they’re going to work with to keep them afloat?” Hallett said.

The University of Wisconsin hopes to help with a project that would integrate all of the data that farms collect each day on cows’ production, feed and health, among other things.

Integrating the data and using artificial intelligence and machine learning “would be very helpful to farmers making the best decisions every single time,” in real time, said Victor Cabrenn, the professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who is leading the project. He’s collecting data from five farms now and expects to have the project completed in three years.

Farmers could tell whether to keep breeding an animal or let it go.

“I’d use it yesterday if I had it,” said Mitch Breunig, who is contributing data from his farm, Mystic Valley Dairy, where he has 460 cows.

He said that sometimes it’s weeks before he can pinpoint how much milk a cow produced on a particular day and how much it ate.

“I think it doesn’t matter what size your farm is, it’s information you need to know,” he said.

Cows are milked on a large carousel at the Rosendale Dairy in Pickett, Wis., where each of the 9,000 cows has a microchip implanted that workers can scan to track the animal’s nutrition, health history and productivity.
Cost, amount of use of VA Mission Act program still uncertain

By Nikki Wentling

WASHINGTON — Eight months into the new VA Mission Act, the VA repeated that the accounting for implementation has not been completed or at all. VA Inspector General Michael Missal said the secretary was wrong to characterize Goldstein's allegation as unsubstantiated. "Neither I nor my staff told you or anyone else at the department that the allegations were unsubstantiated," Missal wrote in a letter to Wilkie immediately after the Secretary's letter to Takano went public. "Reaching a decision to close the investigation with no criminal charges does not mean that the underlying allegation is unsubstantiated."

Takano in his own statement said Wilkie calling out of a congressional staffer was "shocking—and tone-deaf" and "outrageous" and an example illustrating how female veterans' concerns are often dismissed by the VA.

Wilkie's comments that he might take a second look at the case come amid a news report from Axios that VA Deputy Secretary James Byrne's firing Monday was due to the perceived botched Goldstein investigation.

Navy vet convicted for hiding mental health

By Steve Beynon

WASHINGTON — A Navy veteran was found guilty of concealing his depression disorder from the Federal Aviation Administration on pilot medical certification forms, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Nicholas Beyer, 34, of Discover Bay, Calif., was convicted on two counts of making false statements to the FAA and two counts of falsifying, concealing, or covering up material facts.

In civilian pilot medical certification applications submitted to the FAA in 2016 and 2018, Beyer lied about never being diagnosed with any mental health disorders, despite a major depressive disorder diagnosis from the Department of Veterans Affairs in 2016, for which he received disability pay. Beyer was also receiving disability compensation for knee and back injuries, which he did disclose.

Beyer's lawyer argued he concealed his depression because he felt the VA over-diagnosed him, court records show. However, the federal prosecutors said the medical forms, which are used to evaluate whether a pilot has credentials to fly, ask very clearly about mental health conditions — not a pilot's opinion on the diagnosis or how severe they personally believe the condition is.

Beyer faces up to five years in prison and a $250,000 fine, plus restitution for each violation. His sentencing hearing is scheduled for April 22.

VA chief wants to re-examine sexual assault claim

By Steve Beynon

WASHINGTON — Eight months after the Department of Veterans Affairs launched a new program to connect veterans with private-sector doctors, the agency doesn’t know how many appoint- ments have been completed or how much it’s costing taxpayers.

The VA Mission Act, a bipartisan measure intended to expand veterans’ access to private doctors, was the subject of a congressional hearing Wednesday. Members of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee quizzed VA officials for nearly two hours about the program’s cost, use and ongoing implementation.

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., said he was frustrated that the VA could not forecast the cost. Congress needs to know its funding requirements, he said, especially since President Donald Trump's budget proposal for the agency in fiscal 2021 is expected to be unveiled next week.

“Eight months into the new community care program, the VA has not provided — or cannot provide — the number of referrals that have become appointments,” Tester said. “And thus, I don’t see how we can figure out how many dollars are associated with those appointments and whether the usage is in line with what you estimated when this program was set up.”

Congress provided about $15 billion for community care in the VA’s latest budget. When Tester asked whether that would be enough for 2021, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said he personally believes the condition is.

Secretary David Shulkin went to Congress on three separate occasions in 2017 asking for more money to keep it viable.

“In general, veterans have to know our facility is one that we keep up to date,” Wilkie said. “We're going to make sure that we're working with our facilities to make sure that they are completed and at the program’s cost, use and going implementation.”

Wilkie scolded Goldstein and Takano, chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, for making “unsubstantiated claims.”

“We believe that VA is a safe place for all veterans to enter and receive care and services, but the unsubstantiated claims raised by you and your staff could deter our veterans from seeking the care they need and deserve,” Wilkie wrote in a letter to Takano in January.

VA Inspector General Michael Missal said the secretary was wrong to characterize Goldstein’s allegation as unsubstantiated.

“Neither I nor my staff told you or anyone else at the department that the allegations were unsubstantiated,” Missal wrote in a letter to Wilkie immediately after the Secretary’s letter to Takano went public. “Reaching a decision to close the investigation with no criminal charges does not mean that the underlying allegation is unsubstantiated.”

Takano in his own statement said Wilkie calling out of a congressional staffer was “shocking—and tone-deaf” and “outrageous” and an example illustrating how female veterans' concerns are often dismissed by the VA.

Wilkie’s comments that he might take a second look at the case come amid a news report from Axios that VA Deputy Secretary James Byrne’s firing Monday was due to the perceived botched Goldstein investigation.

Beyer, 34, of Discover Bay, Calif., was convicted on two counts of making false statements to the FAA and two counts of falsifying, concealing, or covering up material facts.

In civilian pilot medical certification applications submitted to the FAA in 2016 and 2018, Beyer lied about never being diagnosed with any mental health disorders, despite a major depressive disorder diagnosis from the Department of Veterans Affairs in 2016, for which he received disability pay. Beyer was also receiving disability compensation for knee and back injuries, which he did disclose.

Beyer’s lawyer argued he concealed his depression because he felt the VA over-diagnosed him, court records show. However, the federal prosecutors said the medical forms, which are used to evaluate whether a pilot has credentials to fly, ask very clearly about mental health conditions — not a pilot’s opinion on the diagnosis or how severe they personally believe the condition is.

Beyer faces up to five years in prison and a $250,000 fine, plus restitution for each violation. His sentencing hearing is scheduled for April 22.

Under the old Veterans Choice Program, which was replaced by the Mission Act, the VA repeatedly ran out of funding in its budget for community care. Then-VA Secretary David Shulkin went to Congress on three separate occasions in 2017 asking for more money to keep it viable.
Sores, lower numbers likely not lionfish’s end

BY JANET MCCONNAUGHEY
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — A new disease has caused open sores that can eat into the muscles of invasive lionfish and appears to have contributed to a abrupt drop in their numbers in the northern Gulf of Mexico, scientists reported Tuesday. But they hasten to say that it’s probably far from the end of the showy invader with long, venomous spines.

Lionfish may even be bouncing back already, said University of Florida doctoral student Holden Harris, lead author of the article published online in Scientific Reports. Numbers of the smallest lionfish taken by spearfishers were way down in 2018, indicating a possible reduction in spawning, but were rising late that year and in early 2019, he said.

“It’s too early, really, to say if that’ll become a full population recovery,” he said.

It’s an interesting development, said Matthew Johnston, a Nova Southeastern University researcher who has written scientific papers about invasive lionfish but had not known about the lesions or population changes.

“We’ve always been wondering if they’re ever going to reach their limit in certain locations,” he said. “To date, it seemed the populations just kept getting larger and larger.”

One reason lionfish are a problem outside of their native Indo-Pacific is that their hunting method was new to their adopted territory, so their prey hadn’t evolved countermeasures.

“They’re pretty much colonized the entire Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico and up the East Coast of the U.S. up to about Cape Hatteras,” Johnston said. “But it’s just about impossible to estimate how many there are. They’re found very deep and in lots of places we can’t look easily.”

Researchers measured the Gulf of Mexico changes in a number of ways besides the proportion of little lionfish in spearfishers’ totals. They analyzed videos taken by remotely operated underwater vehicles in a 7,700-square-mile area of the Gulf of Mexico that has been regularly surveyed for a wide variety of species since the BP oil spill in 2010. They looked at the weight of lionfish that landed in commercial fishing trips and at numbers of fish taken per reef in lionfishing contests. And by all of those measures, numbers fell in 2017 and 2018.

“The magnitudes of the declines were striking,” Harris said.

The densities shown in underwater vehicle footage dropped about 75%, said co-author William F. Patterson III, an associate professor of marine fisheries ecology at the University of Florida.

Commercial landings fell 52% from 2017 to 2018. And, though lionfish tournament catches rose each year, spearfishers had to hunt more reefs to find them.

One of the spearfishers who first brought the lesions to light said that lionfish numbers on his hunting grounds have stayed low, although the sores seem “pretty much nonexistent now.”

Alexander Q. Fogg, a study co-author and marine resources coordinator for the Okaloosa County, Fla., Board of County Commissioners, regularly catches lionfish to help control their numbers and to sell as food. He said that his diving partner, Josh Livingston of Dreadnought Charters, first noticed sick or injured lionfish off of artificial reefs near Destin, Fla., on Aug. 5, 2017.

“He said he noticed a lot of fish had wounds. I dismissed it,” Fogg recounted. But every dive that day brought up fish with lesions. Out of 503 lionfish, 201 had ulcers.

The University of Florida put a first report about the ulcers online in September 2018.

“We’re still trying to figure out what’s going on,” said Roy P.E. Yanong, of the Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory at the university’s program in fisheries and aquatic sciences. Tests for molds, bacteria and viruses didn’t indicate any likely culprit, he said.

One problem, he said, is that the sores were open to microorganisms in the water and en route to a lab. Finding fish in a very early stage of the process would probably help, but that itself has been a problem, he said.

Environmental factors could also be a major cause, Yanong said. Other possible causes could include physical trauma and parasite infection, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration spokeswoman Allison Garrett said.

“It could be a combination,” Johnston said. “They’re overcrowded, they’re competing for food... and the gene pool’s really shallow.”

Harris said that researchers had two big worries when reporting about the sores: that people might think lionfish were unsafe to eat, and that they might think that nature had ended the invasion.

“The densities have gone down in some places,” he said. “We don’t know if they’ll stay down.”

Zoo Miami welcomes pair of baby meerkats

Associated Press

MIAMI — Zoo Miami is welcoming two meerkat pups born Jan. 18 and that are being raised by their mother, an 8-year-old named Yam Yam.

The pups opened their eyes last week and have been exploring their habitat, gradually moving further and further away, Ron Magill, the zoo’s communications director, said in an email.

Meerkats are born blind and helpless, but zoo staff kept a hand-off approach to allow them to bond with their mother and three unrelated brothers in their habitat, gradually moving further and further away, Ron Magill, the zoo’s communications director, said in an email.

Meerkats are omnivores from the mongoose family and are found in desert and other arid environments of South Africa.
NATIONAL PIZZA DAY

FEBRUARY 9, 2020

ANY LARGE 12" PIZZA only $8.99

ALL TOPPINGS NO EXTRA CHARGE®
**FL** — Two men charged with drug trafficking could have done a better job hiding their wares than using a package labeled “Bag Full of Drugs,” Florida authorities said.

Ian Simmons and Joshua Reinhardt, both 34, were pulled over in Santa Rosa County after a trooper clocked them going 95 mph, according to a Florida Highway Patrol arrest report.

The trooper determined that Reinhardt was the subject of an active felony warrant for violation of probation in Orange County. He requested backup.

A Santa Rosa County Sheriff’s deputy arrived to assist, and a K-9 alerted to the presence of contraband in the vehicle, the arrest report said. Authorities found approximately 75 grams of methamphetamine, 1.36 kilograms of cocaine, 3.6 grams of fentanyl, 15 MDMA tablets and drug paraphernalia.

**MI** — A man was charged with stealing $697,000 from a scholarship fund for cadettes at one of Michigan’s most exclusive golf clubs, authorities said.

Problems were discovered last summer during a review of the Oakland Hills Cadette Scholarship Trust, the Oakland County sheriff’s office said.

Craig Maass, 60, was president of the trust. He was charged last week with six counts of embezzlement and remains in jail on a $700,000 bond.

**MI** — A performance arts center at Michigan State University removed dolls of prominent black figures that were hanging from a tree-like rack, said school officials, who added that they will provide racial bias training for employees.

University spokeswoman Emily Gerkin Guerrant apologized in a statement, adding that “people were hurt and offended” regardless of the intent of the display at the Wharton Center for Performing Arts.

**MI** — Two men performing for a Super Bowl party, a sheriff’s official said, made for a Super Bowl party, a sheriff’s official said.

The man also stole his employer’s digital projector, which contained his personal information, so the store’s owner does not even know the worker’s name, Hamden police said in a statement.

The man told investigators he used an app to view the store security cameras and noticed that the new employee had left.

The owner went to the store and determined that the worker had stolen lottery tickets, 89 boxes of cigarettes and money worth a total of more than $17,000.00.

**MI** — A Santa Rosa County Sheriff’s deputy arrived to assist, and a K-9 alerted to the presence of contraband in the vehicle, the arrest report said. Authorities found approximately 75 grams of methamphetamine, 1.36 kilograms of cocaine, 3.6 grams of fentanyl, 15 MDMA tablets and drug paraphernalia.

**Man accused of stealing from scholarship fund**

**MI** — A man was charged with stealing $697,000 from a scholarship fund for cadettes at one of Michigan’s most exclusive golf clubs, authorities said.

Problems were discovered last summer during a review of the Oakland Hills Cadette Scholarship Trust, the Oakland County sheriff’s office said.

Craig Maass, 60, was president of the trust. He was charged last week with six counts of embezzlement and remains in jail on a $700,000 bond.

**School removes dolls of black figures from racks**

**MAN** — Two men charged with drug trafficking could have done a better job hiding their wares than using a package labeled “Bag Full of Drugs,” Florida authorities said.

Ian Simmons and Joshua Reinhardt, both 34, were pulled over in Santa Rosa County after a trooper clocked them going 95 mph, according to a Florida Highway Patrol arrest report.

The trooper determined that Reinhardt was the subject of an active felony warrant for violation of probation in Orange County. He requested backup.

A Santa Rosa County Sheriff’s deputy arrived to assist, and a K-9 alerted to the presence of contraband in the vehicle, the arrest report said. Authorities found approximately 75 grams of methamphetamine, 1.36 kilograms of cocaine, 3.6 grams of fentanyl, 15 MDMA tablets and drug paraphernalia.

**Man accused of stealing from scholarship fund**

**MI** — A man was charged with stealing $697,000 from a scholarship fund for cadettes at one of Michigan’s most exclusive golf clubs, authorities said.

Problems were discovered last summer during a review of the Oakland Hills Cadette Scholarship Trust, the Oakland County sheriff’s office said.

Craig Maass, 60, was president of the trust. He was charged last week with six counts of embezzlement and remains in jail on a $700,000 bond.

**School removes dolls of black figures from racks**

**Here is the steeple**

Matt Hayden, left, of Hayden Precision Welding, directs Patrick Wilson and Nathaniel Krampe as they position a copper-plated 45-foot church steeple onto a truck flatbed after its removal from the bell tower at St. Martins Catholic Church in Owensboro, Ky. The steeple will be replaced with a 16-gauge high-polished stainless steel steeple in about two months, according to the Rev. Pat Bittel.

**Police: Man stole $17K in goods on solo shift**

**CT** — Police in Connecticut are trying to identify a man they say got a job at a gas station and proceeded to steal $17,000 worth of merchandise and cash on his first, and only, solo overnight shift before disappearing.

The man also stole his employer’s digital projector, which contained his personal information, so the store’s owner does not even know the worker’s name, Hamden police said in a statement.

The owner told investigators he used an app to view the store security cameras and noticed that the new employee had left.

The owner went to the store and determined that the worker had stolen lottery tickets, 89 boxes of cigarettes and money worth a total of more than $17,000.

**Man sues police, city for forced urinal licking**

**HI** — A homeless man is suing the Honolulu Police Department and the city after he said officers forced him to lick a urinal in a public restroom.

Samuel Ingall was seeking shelter in the restroom in January 2018 when one of the officers told him in an “aggressive tone” that the “only way he could avoid arrest was by licking the urinal in the bathroom,” the lawsuit said.

Another officer stood in the doorway, propping open the door, then closed it so they wouldn’t be caught on video, according to the lawsuit.

**Police: Man stole $17K in goods on solo shift**

**CT** — Police in Connecticut are trying to identify a man they say got a job at a gas station and proceeded to steal $17,000 worth of merchandise and cash on his first, and only, solo overnight shift before disappearing.

The man also stole his employer’s digital projector, which contained his personal information, so the store’s owner does not even know the worker’s name, Hamden police said in a statement.

The owner told investigators he used an app to view the store security cameras and noticed that the new employee had left.

The owner went to the store and determined that the worker had stolen lottery tickets, 89 boxes of cigarettes and money worth a total of more than $17,000.

**Man sues police, city for forced urinal licking**

**HI** — A homeless man is suing the Honolulu Police Department and the city after he said officers forced him to lick a urinal in a public restroom.

Samuel Ingall was seeking shelter in the restroom in January 2018 when one of the officers told him in an “aggressive tone” that the “only way he could avoid arrest was by licking the urinal in the bathroom,” the lawsuit said.

Another officer stood in the doorway, propping open the door, then closed it so they wouldn’t be caught on video, according to the lawsuit.

**From wire reports**
China opens 2nd hospital, deaths top 560

BY KEN MORITZU
Associated Press

BEIJING — China on Thursday finished building a second new hospital to isolate and treat patients of a virus that has killed more than 560 people and continues to spread, disrupting travel and people’s lives and fueling economic fears.

A first group of patients was expected to start testing a new antiviral drug, as China also moved people with milder symptoms into makeshift hospitals at sports centers, exhibition halls and other public spaces.

The health care system in the central city of Wuhan, where the outbreak was first detected in December, has been overwhelmed with the thousands of ill patients. A new, 1,500-bed hospital specially built for virus patients opened days after a 1,000-bed hospital with prefabricated wards and isolation rooms began taking patients.

Other treatment centers had tight rows of simple cots lining cavernous rooms. And Wuhan had another 132 quarantine sites with more than 12,500 beds, according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

Chinese health authorities reported 563 deaths and another sharp jump in the number of confirmed cases to 28,018. Outside mainland China, at least 260 cases have been confirmed, including two deaths in Hong Kong and the Philippines.

Hospital workers in Hong Kong demanded a shutdown of the border with the mainland were on strike for a fourth day. Hong Kong’s leader Carrie Lam announced a 14-day quarantine of all travelers entering Hong Kong from the mainland starting Saturday, but the government has refused to seal the border entirely.

A Hong Kong medical union warned that its 20,000 members could resign en masse if the city’s Hospital Authority refuses to speak with them over their demands. It estimated 7,000 were on strike and said those who were working were worried about their safety.

Xinhua said clinical trials for the antiviral drug Remdesivir have been approved and the first group of patients is expected to start taking the drug on Thursday. Word of the trials had boosted the stock price of the drug’s maker, American biotechnology company Gilead Sciences Inc.

Antivirals and other drugs can reduce the severity of the virus, but “so far, no antivirals have been proven effective,” said Thananik Plipat, a doctor and deputy director-general of Thailand’s Disease Control Department of the Health Ministry. He said there were a lot of unknowns, “but we have a lot of hope, as well.”

China’s National Health Commission said the number of infected patients who were “discharged and cured” stood at 1,153 as of Thursday. But milder cases have been seen in younger, healthier people. The new virus is in the coronavirus family that includes MERS and SARS, and it causes fever, cough and shortness of breath, and in severe cases, pneumonia.

China has strongly defended its epidemic control measures, including closing down several major cities in central Hubei province, where the outbreak has been concentrated. More than 50 million people have been confined to their homes, and towns and villages have enacted varying restrictions and other countries have severely restricted travel to and from China.

On the World Dream ship quarantined in Hong Kong, its 2,666 passengers were being screened because eight passengers on an earlier voyage had the virus.

Hong Kong officials said more than 5,000 passengers on three voyages beginning Jan. 19 may have been exposed.

Luxury cruise ends in quarantine

Associated Press

YOKOHAMA, Japan — David Abel’s 50th wedding anniversary luxury cruise began with him eating his fill and enjoying the sights of East Asia.

It’s ending with him quarantined in his cabin aboard the Diamond Princess for two extra weeks, eating a “lunch sandwich with some chicken inside” and watching 20 infected people escorted off the ship, heading for hospitals for treatment.

A medical worker in a protective suit walks by patients who have been diagnosed with the coronavirus as they settle in at a temporary hospital on Wednesday, in Wuhan in central China’s Hubei province.

A passenger stand outside on the balcony of the cruise ship Diamond Princess anchored at the Yokohama Port on Thursday, in Yokohama, near Tokyo.

China’s National Health Commission said the number of infected patients who were “discharged and cured” stood at 1,153 as of Thursday. But milder cases have been seen in younger, healthier people. The new virus is in the coronavirus family that includes MERS and SARS, and it causes fever, cough and shortness of breath, and in severe cases, pneumonia.

China has strongly defended its epidemic control measures, including closing down several major cities in central Hubei province, where the outbreak has been concentrated. More than 50 million people have been confined to their homes, and towns and villages have enacted varying restrictions and other countries have severely restricted travel to and from China.

On the World Dream ship quarantined in Hong Kong, its 2,666 passengers were being screened because eight passengers on an earlier voyage had the virus.

Hong Kong officials said more than 5,000 passengers on three voyages beginning Jan. 19 may have been exposed.

Luxury cruise ends in quarantine

Associated Press

YOKOHAMA, Japan — David Abel’s 50th wedding anniversary luxury cruise began with him eating his fill and enjoying the sights of East Asia.

It’s ending with him quarantined in his cabin aboard the Diamond Princess for two extra weeks, eating a “lunch sandwich with some chicken inside” and watching 20 infected people escorted off the ship, heading for hospitals for treatment.

A medical worker in a protective suit walks by patients who have been diagnosed with the coronavirus as they settle in at a temporary hospital on Wednesday, in Wuhan in central China’s Hubei province.

A passenger stand outside on the balcony of the cruise ship Diamond Princess anchored at the Yokohama Port on Thursday, in Yokohama, near Tokyo.

China’s National Health Commission said the number of infected patients who were “discharged and cured” stood at 1,153 as of Thursday. But milder cases have been seen in younger, healthier people. The new virus is in the coronavirus family that includes MERS and SARS, and it causes fever, cough and shortness of breath, and in severe cases, pneumonia.

China has strongly defended its epidemic control measures, including closing down several major cities in central Hubei province, where the outbreak has been concentrated. More than 50 million people have been confined to their homes, and towns and villages have enacted varying restrictions and other countries have severely restricted travel to and from China.

On the World Dream ship quarantined in Hong Kong, its 2,666 passengers were being screened because eight passengers on an earlier voyage had the virus.

Hong Kong officials said more than 5,000 passengers on three voyages beginning Jan. 19 may have been exposed.
Passengers cite fast descent in Istanbul crash

Associated Press

ISTANBUL — Passengers who lived through the crash landing in Istanbul that killed three people and left a Turkish plane crumpled into pieces say the plane’s descent felt unusually fast.

Engin Demir, who was injured in the crash, told NTV television that he really noticed the speed as the Boeing 737 operated by low-cost Pegasus Airline landed at Sabiha Gokcen Airport on Wednesday evening.

Coming in amid strong winds and heavy rain, the plane overshot the runway. It skidded about 165 to 200 feet before it dropped into a 98-foot high ditch, according to the city’s governor, Ali Yerlikaya.

The 11-year-old plane broke into three pieces, forcing passengers to squeeze out through cracks and climb out onto its damaged wings. In addition to the deaths, 180 people were injured, authorities said.

“With the speed, I think it was not able to stop. It all happened in 2-3 seconds,” Demir said from his hospital bed in Istanbul.

Demir said he was trapped for a while by plane debris falling from the luggage compartment.

“There were screams and shouting. I tried to calm people around me. Help soon arrived,” he said.

Another survivor, Alper Kulu, told the DHA news agency the flight was “abnormal from the start to the finish.”

“I was a very turbulent flight. The plane touched down with difficulty. It was very speedy compared to other flights,” he said, adding that “a ‘Welcome to Istanbul’ announcement was made after the wheels touched down.”

He said the plane suddenly swayed left and right, then dipped to the left to fall into the steep ditch. He said the plane flipped the seats in front of him completely around. He said he pressed to get out since he feared the plane could explode.

“There was panic and shouting. Everyone was calling for help. I got out of the plane on my own, with a broken arm, I (climbed) 30-40 meters. I heard announcements that the plane could explode,” he said.

The plane, carrying 177 passengers and six crew members from the western Turkish city of Izmir, included people from 12 countries. Yerlikaya, speaking early Thursday, said all the injured were stable but four had significant injuries. He did not elaborate.

The three dead were Turkish citizens.

Pegasus Airlines CEO Mehmet T. Nane told a press conference in Istanbul that the black boxes were retrieved and were being deciphered.

“It’s not easy to speak here when there are death damages, injuries,” Nane said, choking up. He said Pegasus will work to heal the wounds caused by the deadly landing.

High-speed train derailed in Italy

Associated Press

OSPEDALETTO LODIGIANO, Italy — A high-speed passenger train derailed in northern Italy before dawn Thursday and its detached engine slammed into a work train car on an adjacent track, ripped away part of a building wall and flipped around. Two train workers were killed and 28 people were injured, authorities said.

The state railway Freccia Rossa train went off the rails on the heavily used Milan-Bologna line about 5:30 a.m. while traveling at a speed of nearly 180 mph, Civil Protection chief Angelo Borrelli told state radio.

Girolamo Fabiano, a railroad police official, said work had been done during the night on the stretch of track where the derailment occurred. He said it was unclear if that was a factor in the crash.

The engine car derailed, detached completely and kept going,” Girolamo Fabiano, a railroad police official told state radio. “Then the second car derailed, ending up almost on its side.”

Cardona said it was fortunate that, due to the early hour, the train wasn’t crowded. Police said it had about 30 passengers.

NASA’s Koch, crewmates back from space

Associated Press

MOSCOW — NASA astronaut Christina Koch, who has spent nearly 11 months in orbit on the longest spaceflight by a woman, landed safely in Kazakhstan on Thursday along with two of her International Space Station crewmates.

The Soyuz capsule carrying Koch, along with station Commander Luca Parmitano of the European Space Agency and the Russian space agency Roscosmos’ Alexander Skvortsov, touched down southeast of Dzhezkazgan, Kazakhstan, at 3:12 p.m.

Koch wrapped up a 328-day mission on her first flight into space, providing researchers the opportunity to observe the effects of long-duration spaceflight on a woman. The study is important since NASA plans to return to the moon under the Artemis program and prepare for the human exploration of Mars.

Koch smiled and gave a thumbs-up as support crew helped her get out of the capsule and placed her in a chair for a quick post-flight check-up alongside her crewmates. Russian space officials said they were in good shape.

Koch, who grew up in Jack- sonville, N.C., and now lives near the Gulf of Mexico in Galveston, Texas, with her husband, Bob, told The Associated Press last month that taking part in the first all-female spacewalk was the highlight of her mission.

Koch said she and fellow NASA astronaut Jessica Meir appreciated that the Oct. 18 spacewalk “could serve as an inspiration for future space explorers.”

Parmitano and Skvortsov spent 261 days in space. After preliminary medical evaluations, the crew will be flown by Russian helicopters to the city of Karaganda in Kazakhstan. Koch and Parmitano will then board a NASA plane bound for Cologne, Germany, where Parmitano will be greeted by European space officials before Koch proceeds home to Houston.

Skvortsov will be flown to the Star City Cosmonaut Training Center outside Moscow.

Merkel condemns governor’s election with far-right help

Associated Press

BERLIN — Chancellor Angela Merkel condemned the election of a new German state governor in the eastern state of Thuringia as “inexcusable” the election of a new Germ-

...
And then there were

NINE

1917
JOKER
PARASITE
JOJO RABBIT
Little Women
FORD v FERRARI
THE IRISHMAN
Marriage Story
ONCE UPON A TIME ... IN HOLLYWOOD

Associated Press reporter Jake Coyle shares his picks — Pages 22-23
Making the case for each Best Picture nominee — Pages 24-26
The problem for multiple-category darling ‘Parasite’ — Page 27
WEEKEND: ACADEMY AWARDS PREVIEW

And the winners are ...

Ahead of the 92nd Academy Awards, Associated Press film writer Jake Coyle shares his predictions for a ceremony with a lot of locks, but the potential for a few surprises

BEST PICTURE


Will win: “Parasite”; Should win: “Parasite”

Should have been a contender: “The Last Black Man in San Francisco”

The last-arriving contender, Sam Mendes’ World War I film “1917,” has seemingly, fittingly run away with it. The top-prize winner of the Producers Guild, the Directors Guild and the BAFTAs, “1917” is the clear favorite. But I think Bong Joon-ho’s universally beloved “Parasite” could pull off an upset that would rank alongside the underdog win of “Moonlight” three years ago. Taking best ensemble from the

BEST ACTRESS


Will win: Renee Zellweger

Should win: Saoirse Ronan

Should have been a contender: Alfre Woodard, “Clemency”

Zellweger is already a winner for “Cold Mountain” in 2004. But her fragile yet powerhouse performance as Judy Garland in “Judy” is that irresistible thing: a comeback story. The part reverberates with Zellweger’s own history; she and Garland are both former American sweethearts. She’s a fine choice, but the verve and velocity of Ronan’s great performance in “Little Women” shouldn’t be overlooked. Formidable as this category is, it would have been better with Woodard’s fully inhabited, devastatingly still performance as a prison warden in the spare “Clemency.”

BEST ACTOR


Will win: Joaquin Phoenix

Should win: Adam Driver

Should have been a contender: Andre Holland, “High Flying Bird”

Best actor is the year’s most competitive category. The next five options — including Adam Sandler (“Uncut Gems”) and Eddie Murphy (“Dolemite Is My Name”) — are equally good. Phoenix has been the clear front-runner for some time, for his morose yet limber Joker. But Driver’s performance in “Marriage Story” is the real show-stopper here; a more nuanced and rewarding performance that culminates beautifully in song and tears. A shout-out also to Holland, whose guileful, fast-talking NBA agent in “High Flying Bird” felt like a thrilling fast break.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23
FROM PAGE 22

Best supporting actress


Will win: Laura Dern

Should win: Laura Dern

Should have been a contender: Zhao Shuzhen, “The Farewell”

Dern has won every precursor award ahead of the Oscars, and is poised to win her first Academy Award. That’s cause for celebration. Her fearsome divorce attorney in “Marriage Story,” is indefatigable, particularly her fabulous monologue on the double standards of modern marriage. But this category is also missing some worthy actresses, including Jennifer Lopez (“Hustlers”) and Shuzhen, who played the grandmother in Lulu Wang’s tender family drama “The Farewell.”

Best supporting actor


Will win: Brad Pitt

Should win: Brad Pitt

Should have been a contender: Wesley Snipes, “Dolemite Is My Name”

Nothing is more certain this year than Pitt’s win for “Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood,” a movie that perfectly showcases Pitt’s sly charisma. His march toward an award for his performance in “12 Years a Slave” was short-lived when the movie’s fellow nominees lost. So, he didn’t. And who did? Richard Pryor, who I just think was a genius,” Thelma Schoonmaker, the film editor on “Raging Bull,” recalled.

“And, so, he mangled my name. It was wonderful. He absolutely destroyed my name. And I was such a fan of his that when I went up on the stage, I grabbed his hand ... And I think he might have just recently been burned from freebasing. I don’t know. And I grabbed his hand and I just said, ‘Oh, my God. I’m such a huge fan of yours.’ I’d sort of forgotten.

And so that was a great, wonderful moment. However, I won, De Niro won, and we were waiting backstage for Marty. And he never came. He didn’t win. And that was possibly the worst night of my life.”

‘Russell Crowe said don’t cry if you get up there’

The 2003 Oscars were a family affair for Nicole Kidman, who brought her parents and daughter to the ceremony.

Denzel Washington announced the best actress category and when he called out her name, Kidman reached out to hug her mother first. Then she turned to her father and daughter seated in the second row.

“Russell Crowe said don’t cry if you get up there, and now I’m crying,” Kidman said before thanking “The Hours” filmmakers.

Asked about the moment last month, Kidman said she remembered “just sort of being in absolute shock, total shock. I was very young and, so, I was like kind of—like it was all swirling around me.”

“I remember my mom and my dad being there, and I just remember it as one of the greatest moments in my life.”

‘Denzel was my focal point’

When Jordan Peele won the best original screenplay Oscar in 2018, it was Kidman who called his name.

The audience immediately leapt from their seats, including fellow nominee Greta Gerwig. They remained standing as Peele accepted his trophy and began speaking.

“I remember getting on stage and looking down and people were standing, which was crazy. And right down the middle was Denzel Washington,” Peele said, noting that Washington was clapping enthusiastically.

“That’s like the craziest thing in the world. He’s, you know, he’s it. So, you know, that was—Denzel was my focal point.”
WEEKEND: ACADEMY AWARDS PREVIEW

Oscar love

Washington Post writers make their case for this year’s 9 best-picture candidates

‘Jojo Rabbit’

Fox Searchlight marketed “Jojo Rabbit” as an “anti-hate satire” — a disclaimer suggesting that the distributor expected some blowback. That’s understandable, given the film’s risky premise: the story of a Hitler Youth whose imaginary friend is, well, Adolf Hitler. Some festivalgoers in Toronto, where the film premiered in September, also anticipated controversy. But the resulting back-and-forth over whether the twee treatment worked was largely limited to critics and cinephiles, many of whom found the film, despite its edgy premise, to be quite tame in execution. After the initial buzz died down, “Jojo Rabbit” re-emerged as a talker when it landed multiple Oscar nominations in January, including best picture. But the feel-good flick is up against award season giants such as “Parasite,” “1917,” “Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood,” “Marriage Story,” and “ARMS.”

| Why it could win: |
| — Jojo Betzler, who wrote an adaptation of Christine Leunens’ book “Caging Skies.” |
| — Starring: Christine Leunens’ book “Caging Skies.” |
| — Directed by: Taika Waititi, who also co-wrote the screenplay. |

| Why it couldn’t win: |
| — “Jojo Rabbit” isn’t quite an underdog, but it isn’t a polarizing film. |
| — If Oscar voters decide to give “Jojo Rabbit” its due, it probably wouldn’t be “Jojo Rabbit.” The theme of divorce is about as universal as it gets, given the country’s divorce rate, and the stars at the center of the film certainly don’t hurt its chances. |

Synopsis:

Let’s break down “Parasite’s” chances.

| Why it could win: |
| — “Parasite” won the Toronto International Film Festival’s audience award when it premiered in September, an accolade often used to predict Oscar nominees. Of the past 12 festivals, 11 films that won TIFF’s audience award have also received best picture Oscar nominations; for “The Counterfeiters,” “12 Years a Slave,” “The King’s Speech” and “Slumdog Millionaire”) ended up winning. |
| — The feel-good nature of “Jojo Rabbit” also works in its favor, as the academy tends to embrace movies about people overcoming their differences. It could also be seen as the film that made supporting actress Johansson a double nominee, given that she was already guaranteed to land a nod for her leading role in Noah Baumbach’s “Marriage Story.” |

| Why it might not win: |
| — “1917” and “Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood” are the front-runners this year, as two very real and intense. |
| — Despite all the hype around “Roma” last year, Netflix has yet to win a best picture, and it’s unlikely that an intimate film like this will be the one to do it. |

Synopsis:

Parasite

“Parasite,” a deliciously dark and haunting dramedy from Korean director Bong Joon-ho, has become one of the most buzzed-about movies of the year since its U.S. release in October.

According to Box Office Mojo, “Parasite” has earned more than $129 million internationally and $31 million at the American box office, impressive for a foreign-language film. And now it has several Oscar nominations in January, including best picture (the only 11 other films have ever won best picture at the Screen Actors Guild Awards. That considerably boosted its chances for Oscar love come Sunday.

| Why it couldn’t win: |
| — Perhaps the biggest barrier for “Parasite” is a cultural and linguistic one: No foreign-language film has ever won best picture, although several have been nominated in years past. “Roma” in 2019 was considered the film to beat, “Green Book” took home the Oscar instead. |

Synopsis:

Parasite

Noah Baumbach managed to make a movie about a divorce that left viewers feeling ... good?

“Marriage Story,” on its surface, is a close-up look at one of life's most stressful events. But it’s also a showcase for some powerhouse acting, as the protagonists begin their separation at a simmer before things get very real and intense.

Usually we can go into Oscars season having a sense of how many people watched the best picture nominees. That’s more complicated this year, as two of the films were released by Netflix. So while “Marriage Story” did play in theaters, many more may have watched it on the streaming platform, which is notoriously opaque about its streaming data.

| Why it couldn’t win: |
| — The lack of acting nominations could also spoil d 00m for its chances (only 11 other films have ever won best picture without receiving nominations in any acting categories). In the end, Oscar voters may opt instead to give the best international film feature Oscar to “Parasite” and show best picture love to another movie. |

Synopsis:

Parasite

Non-Seoul in particular, but its themes about class, struggle and human dignity are universal. “Parasite” received no acting nominations, but it made history as the first foreign-language film to win best ensemble at the Screen Actors Guild Awards. That considerably boosted its chances for Oscar love come Sunday.

| Why it couldn’t win: |
| — “1917” and “Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood” are the front-runners this year, as two very real and intense. |

Synopsis:

Parasite

“Parasite,” a deliciously dark and haunting dramedy from Korean director Bong Joon-ho, has become one of the most buzzed-about movies of the year since its U.S. release in October.

According to Box Office Mojo, “Parasite” has earned more than $129 million internationally and $31 million at the American box office, impressive for a foreign-language film. And now it has several Oscar nominations in January, including best picture (the only 11 other films have ever won best picture at the Screen Actors Guild Awards. That considerably boosted its chances for Oscar love come Sunday.

| Why it couldn’t win: |
| — Perhaps the biggest barrier for “Parasite” is a cultural and linguistic one: No foreign-language film has ever won best picture, although several have been nominated in years past. “Roma” in 2019 was considered the film to beat, “Green Book” took home the Oscar instead. |

Synopsis:

Parasite

Noah Baumbach managed to make a movie about a divorce that left viewers feeling ... good?

“Marriage Story,” on its surface, is a close-up look at one of life's most stressful events. But it’s also a showcase for some powerhouse acting, as the protagonists begin their separation at a simmer before things get very real and intense.

Usually we can go into Oscars season having a sense of how many people watched the best picture nominees. That’s more complicated this year, as two of the films were released by Netflix. So while “Marriage Story” did play in theaters, many more may have watched it on the streaming platform, which is notoriously opaque about its streaming data.

| Why it couldn’t win: |
| — The lack of acting nominations could also spoil d 00m for its chances (only 11 other films have ever won best picture without receiving nominations in any acting categories). In the end, Oscar voters may opt instead to give the best international film feature Oscar to “Parasite” and show best picture love to another movie. |

Synopsis:

Parasite

Non-Seoul in particular, but its themes about class, struggle and human dignity are universal. “Parasite” received no acting nominations, but it made history as the first foreign-language film to win best ensemble at the Screen Actors Guild Awards. That considerably boosted its chances for Oscar love come Sunday.

| Why it couldn’t win: |
| — Perhaps the biggest barrier for “Parasite” is a cultural and linguistic one: No foreign-language film has ever won best picture, although several have been nominated in years past. “Roma” in 2019 was considered the film to beat, “Green Book” took home the Oscar instead. |

Synopsis:

Parasite

“Parasite,” a deliciously dark and haunting dramedy from Korean director Bong Joon-ho, has become one of the most buzzed-about movies of the year since its U.S. release in October.

According to Box Office Mojo, “Parasite” has earned more than $129 million internationally and $31 million at the American box office, impressive for a foreign-language film. And now it has several Oscar nominations in January, including best picture (the only 11 other films have ever won best picture at the Screen Actors Guild Awards. That considerably boosted its chances for Oscar love come Sunday.

| Why it couldn’t win: |
| — Perhaps the biggest barrier for “Parasite” is a cultural and linguistic one: No foreign-language film has ever won best picture, although several have been nominated in years past. “Roma” in 2019 was considered the film to beat, “Green Book” took home the Oscar instead. |

Synopsis:

Parasite

Non-Seoul in particular, but its themes about class, struggle and human dignity are universal. “Parasite” received no acting nominations, but it made history as the first foreign-language film to win best ensemble at the Screen Actors Guild Awards. That considerably boosted its chances for Oscar love come Sunday.

| Why it couldn’t win: |
| — Perhaps the biggest barrier for “Parasite” is a cultural and linguistic one: No foreign-language film has ever won best picture, although several have been nominated in years past. “Roma” in 2019 was considered the film to beat, “Green Book” took home the Oscar instead. |

Synopsis:

Parasite

Non-Seoul in particular, but its themes about class, struggle and human dignity are universal. “Parasite” received no acting nominations, but it made history as the first foreign-language film to win best ensemble at the Screen Actors Guild Awards. That considerably boosted its chances for Oscar love come Sunday.

| Why it couldn’t win: |
| — Perhaps the biggest barrier for “Parasite” is a cultural and linguistic one: No foreign-language film has ever won best picture, although several have been nominated in years past. “Roma” in 2019 was considered the film to beat, “Green Book” took home the Oscar instead. |

Synopsis:

Parasite

Non-Seoul in particular, but its themes about class, struggle and human dignity are universal. “Parasite” received no acting nominations, but it made history as the first foreign-language film to win best ensemble at the Screen Actors Guild Awards. That considerably boosted its chances for Oscar love come Sunday.

| Why it couldn’t win: |
| — Perhaps the biggest barrier for “Parasite” is a cultural and linguistic one: No foreign-language film has ever won best picture, although several have been nominated in years past. “Roma” in 2019 was considered the film to beat, “Green Book” took home the Oscar instead. |

Synopsis:

Parasite

Non-Seoul in particular, but its themes about class, struggle and human dignity are universal. “Parasite” received no acting nominations, but it made history as the first foreign-language film to win best ensemble at the Screen Actors Guild Awards. That considerably boosted its chances for Oscar love come Sunday.

| Why it couldn’t win: |
| — Perhaps the biggest barrier for “Parasite” is a cultural and linguistic one: No foreign-language film has ever won best picture, although several have been nominated in years past. “Roma” in 2019 was considered the film to beat, “Green Book” took home the Oscar instead. |

Synopsis:

Parasite

Non-Seoul in particular, but its themes about class, struggle and human dignity are universal. “Parasite” received no acting nominations, but it made history as the first foreign-language film to win best ensemble at the Screen Actors Guild Awards. That considerably boosted its chances for Oscar love come Sunday.

| Why it couldn’t win: |
| — Perhaps the biggest barrier for “Parasite” is a cultural and linguistic one: No foreign-language film has ever won best picture, although several have been nominated in years past. “Roma” in 2019 was considered the film to beat, “Green Book” took home the Oscar instead. |
**‘Ford v Ferrari’**

“Ford v Ferrari” has been heralded as a captivating sports drama, as a stellar buddy film starring Christian Bale and Matt Damon, and, for those reasons combined, as the premier dad movie this award season. It hasn’t, however, been described as a movie likely to win the Oscar for best picture. But the academy has surprised us before. “Ford v Ferrari” follows American automotive designer Carroll Shelby (Damon) and British driver Ken Miles (Bale) as they team up to design a racecar for Ford Motor, whose egotistical chief executive, Henry Ford II, is hellbent on beating Enzo Ferrari’s team at the 24 Hours of Le Mans race. It’s based on a true story, which the Oscars tend to love. So we ask: Is that enough?

Fasten those seat belts and join us as we take a closer look at the film’s chances.

Total nominations: Four (picture, film editing, sound editing and sound mixing).

Synopsis: Ford hires Shelby and Miles to design a car that will help it beat Ferrari at Le Mans. The men bond as they overcome obstacles, of both the mechanical and personal sort, on their journey to the climactic 1966 race.

Directed by: James Mangold, working with a script by Jez Butterworth, John-Henry Butterworth and Jason Keller.

Starring: Bale and Damon, with Tracy Letts and Jon Bernthal in supporting roles as Ford and Ford executive Lee Iacocca, respectively.

Why it could win: “Ford v Ferrari” isn’t just a thrilling movie. It’s also a sports drama that aims to go further by focusing on the heart and drive of its characters, particularly the friendship between Miles and Shelby. After seeing it at the Telluride Film Festival, Variety’s Peter Debruge noted that the genre’s best movies “aren’t so much about the sport as they are the personalities, and these two go big with their performances.”

Why it might not win: Though some best picture contenders — “Spotlight,” “Moonlight” and “The Shape of Water,” to name a few — have played at Telluride in recent years, “Ford v Ferrari” isn’t poised to join that list.

Whereas this might have been the sort of film to win best picture years ago, the academy seems more likely to go with Producers Guild Award winner “1917” or Golden Globe winner “Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood” this year. (The surprise win would be Screen Actors Guild Award winner “Parasite.”) “Ford v Ferrari” doesn’t have much to say about war, or about Hollywood in 1969. It does have a little to say about the evils of capitalism — Letts’ character is more of a Big Bad than anyone at Ferrari — but, on the whole, “Ford v Ferrari” is just fun.

— Sonia Rao

**‘Joker’**

“Joker” is easily the most divisive film nominated for best picture this year. Despite an onslaught of criticism about its realistic portrayal of extreme violence — at the hands of an angry white man — the thriller clearly found an audience. “Joker” captivated viewers on the festival circuit, winning the prestigious Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival. It also became the first R-rated film to surpass $1 billion at the global box office.

Though some best picture contenders have continued to win awards season, with “Joker” leading the nominations for the Oscars — and the ceremony’s U.K. equivalent, the BAFTA awards — the film’s fans have embraced its parallels with a world that feels increasingly fractured. As veteran film critic Sonny Bunch wrote recently, “Joker” has won hearts and minds around the globe because it so strikingly reflects the unsettled moment in which we live.

Why it might not win: While the academy has become more receptive to comics as source material in recent years, “Joker” may still take a hit for its association with the DC Comics universe (even as Phillips and comic-book fans insist it is not a comic-book movie). It also doesn’t help that “Joker” is up against Sam Mendes’ precisely the type of visually arresting war movie the academy tends to favor.

You can expect a slew of think pieces regardless of how “Joker” fares on Oscar night. And in that way, “Joker” has already won what the film’s troubled protagonist was after all along — our attention.

— Bethonie Butler

**‘Little Women’**

Although “Little Women” is nominated for six Academy Awards, the film has garnered more attention for a nomination it didn’t receive: Greta Gerwig was left off the best-director list. Given that there are only men in the category, the snub sparked a larger conversation about the shocking lack of recognition for female directors in Oscar history. Only five female directors have been nominated (including Gerwig for “Lady Bird” in 2018), and Kathryn Bigelow is the only woman who has ever won.

Critics and voters were pleased by Saoirse Ronan’s nod for lead actress for her role as Jo, the fearless March sister determined to be a writer, as well as newcomer Florence Pugh’s nomination for Amy, who had a more minor take on the divisive character from Louisa May Alcott’s original novel. The movie, released on Christmas Day, clearly connected with audiences, as it has made more than $95 million domestically and $148 million worldwide.

Here’s what you need to know about “Little Women’s” chances at the Oscars:

Total nominations: Six (picture, lead actress, supporting actress, adapted screenplay, costume design and original score).

Synopsis: Based on Alcott’s 1868 novel about four sisters coming of age in Civil War-era Massachusetts, Gerwig breathes new life into the story (which has been adapted many times over) with a version that jumps back and forth in time. The characters are all there, however, from Jo’s fraught relationship with Laurie to poor, sweet, doomed Beth.

Directed by: Greta Gerwig, who also adapted the screenplay.

Starring: Saoirse Ronan as Jo; Florence Pugh as Amy; Emma Watson as Meg; Eliza Scanlen as Beth; Timothee Chalamet as Laurie; Laura Dern as Marmee; Meryl Streep as Aunt March.

Why it could win: There’s a ton of goodwill for the movie, which received glowing reviews and left many viewers in tears, particularly readers with deeply nostalgic memories of the book from their younger years. It’s also the type of film that the academy typically loves: based on a novel; a period piece; a family drama; gorgeous costumes; the presence of Saoirse Ronan (this is her fourth acting nomination by age 25); and Meryl Streep.

The film’s nods to 1970s-era Martin Scorsese, the academy may embrace Phillips’ homage to an Oscar-winning director (who happens to be one of his competitors in this category).

“Joker” is a violent movie. Counterintuitively, that could help its chances for Oscar gold. The film’s fans have embraced its parallels with a world that feels increasingly fractured. As veteran film critic Sonny Bunch wrote recently, “Joker” has won hearts and minds around the globe because it so strikingly reflects the unsettled moment in which we live.

Why it might not win: While the academy has become more receptive to comics as source material in recent years, “Joker” may still take a hit for its association with the DC Comics universe (even as Phillips and comic-book fans insist it is not a comic-book movie). It also doesn’t help that “Joker” is up against Sam Mendes’ precisely the type of visually arresting war movie the academy tends to favor.

You can expect a slew of think pieces regardless of how “Joker” fares on Oscar night. And in that way, “Joker” has already won what the film’s troubled protagonist was after all along — our attention.

— Bethonie Butler

From top: Laura Dern, Saoirse Ronan, Eliza Scanlen, Emma Watson and Florence Pugh star in “Little Women.”

Why it might not win: It’s hasn’t seen the kind of buzz throughout award season that many other front-runners have — and in fact has been snubbed by some of the other major award shows. (Only Ronan and the score received nods at the Golden Globes, and it had zero nominations at the SAG Awards.) Plus, there are the disheartening reports that male voters clause about watching the movie... because it has the word “women” in the title.

— Emily Yahr

MORE NOMINEES ON PAGE 26
"1917"

From “The Hurt Locker” to “Platoon” to “Lawrence of Arabia,” war movies have a history of winning best picture (along with a glut of other awards) at the Oscars. That bodes pretty well for “1917,” the World War I epic directed by previous Oscar winner Sam Mendes and shot by cinematographer Roger Deakins, who is widely considered to be the best in the business. The two made the movie appear as if it was shot in a single take, earning a tremendous amount of praise from critics.

The movie also comes with a compelling backstory, complete with the sort of sentimentality the academy gobbles up: Mendes’ grandfather Alfred fought in World War I and would tell stories of his time serving. One of these tales found Alfred delivering a message across no man’s land, the area between the warring trenches. “That image stuck with me,” Mendes told The Washington Post. “And when I came to have the courage to sit down and write my own script, that was the story I felt compelled to tell.”

Total nominations: 10 (picture, director, score, original screenplay, cinematography, visual effects, sound mixing, sound editing, costume design, production design).

Synopsis: A young Irish American World War II vet and truck driver named Frank Sheeran (Robert De Niro) begins working for the Mafia as a hit man in the 1950s. He eventually becomes the personal bodyguard to Teamsters leader Hoffa and finds his loyalties split. Houses are painted.

Directed by: Sam Mendes

Starring: Dean-Charles Chapman as Lance Corporal Blake and George MacKay as Lance Corporal Schofield, with a supporting cast rounded out by Andrew Scott, Benedict Cumberbatch, Colin Firth, Mark Strong and Richard Madden.

Why it could win: The film didn’t receive a wide release until January, long after the other eight contenders began marinating in the public. Historically, that places it at something of a disadvantage, one that might be somewhat mitigated by the barrage of press preceding its initial, limited December release. It’s also been criticized for being more of a technical achievement than an emotional one, which could prove problematic, depending on how many voters agree with that statement.

— Travis M. Andrews

The Irishman

It’s fairly wild that when discussing legendary director Martin Scorsese’s newest movie, the first thing that springs to mind is Netflix. Yet here we are. Ever since the streaming service began creating original films, it’s desperately wanted an Oscar. What better way than financing an old master’s 3 ½-hour personal epic about the death of union leader Jimmy Hoffa? Cue “The Irishman.”

As with the service’s other Oscar contenders, the conversation will be about whether it’s a living legend and stars like Scorsese, Pesci, De Niro and Pacino might not prove sweet enough to quell their bitterness.

Why it could win: The movie ends with a quick but intense bout of pulp-y violence, the kind generally found in the sort of genre fare that hasn’t historically resonated with the academy. Such gore (along with a nearly comedic amount of strong language) isn’t uncommon in Tarantino films, but it’s also a major reason his movies have never been nominated for best picture. Still, “Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood” is arguably his warmest, most traditional film. Perhaps in this instance, nostalgia will outweigh the brutality.

— Travis M. Andrews

"Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood" is up for 10 Oscars.

Once Upon a Time in Hollywood

Quentin Tarantino doesn’t make traditional “Oscar movies.” His nine films to date are filled with violence, cursing, politically incorrect observations, more violence, more cursing and a good deal of pulp. Despite that, he’s won two Academy Awards for best original screenplay. And this year presents his best chance to finally nab the top prize with his sentimental ode to the industry, “Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood.”

The movie doesn’t just depict the Hollywood of the 1960s, it downright glamorizes it. One sequence finds us at the Playboy Mansion, decked out for a party, as Steve McQueen smokes a joint and slyly watches Sharon Tate dance. Our characters drive down the Sunset Strip, visit the Spahn Movie Ranch and dine at El Coyote. The whole thing is a shot glass full of nostalgia for anyone who’s spent time in Los Angeles, particularly during the latter half of last century. It doesn’t hurt that the movie is funny, well-crafted and, in a strange turn for the auteur, sweet.

— Travis M. Andrews

"Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" is up for 10 Oscars.
Dark horse

With 6 nominations, ‘Parasite’ is going to win (at least) one Oscar. Will it be the right one?

By Glenn Whipp
Los Angeles Times

Nearly two decades ago, DreamWorks was on a roll at the Oscars, winning two best picture trophies in a row — “American Beauty” and “Gladiator” — and believing it had another surefire nominee with the computer-animated hit “Shrek,” a film that studio co-founder Jeffrey Katzenberg loved so much that he premiered it in competition at Cannes, the first animated film since 1953’s “Peter Pan” to do so.

“Shrek” didn’t win the Palme d’Or. And it didn’t earn a nomination in the graphic category, either. But what if the kudos had been bestowed? Maybe a push at the boxes office, maybe a best picture nomination. Last year, the producers of Sony Pictures Animation’s hit “Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse” thought their movie was good enough to win. They were wrong.

Katzenberg was livid when “Shrek” failed to earn a best picture nomination. I told them they might have won. I told them, “If you really wanted to take it home, you should have made ‘Shrek’ a serious contender.”

“The Shrek” snub stung. But, in retrospect, it shouldn’t have been much of a surprise. It coincided with the same year that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences gave animated feature films their own Oscar. In 1999, Tim Burton’s “Tarzan” won Oscars for foreign-language feature, cinematography and director, but lost to “Toy Story 2” for best picture.

It makes you wonder how many people felt the same way last year when Alfonso Cuaron’s “Roma” won Oscars for foreign-language feature, cinematography and director, but lost to “Green Book” for best picture. Now, I know some voters who couldn’t get past the four-minute opening sequence of Yalitza Aparicio mopping the courtroom. But given Cuaron’s two key victories, it’s not a leap to imagine that it might have won best picture.

Every year, there’s talk of adding more Oscar categories. In 2018, the film academy announced plans to create an Oscar for “outstanding achievement in popular film” that would stand apart from the traditional best picture award. The popular film Oscar proved so unpopular that the idea was soon shelved.

This year, in the wake of the directors branch failing (again) to nominate women, the idea was floated that the Oscars should mirror the Directors Guild of America and create an award for best director of a first feature. The DGA’s 2020 first-timer class includes three women.

And while I understand the impulse to make Oscar voters expand their ideas about what constitutes an awards-worthy movie, I don’t think the solution is to create an award for best director of a first feature. The DGA’s 2020 first-timer class includes three women.

This year, in the wake of the directors branch failing (again) to nominate women, the idea was floated that the Oscars should mirror the Directors Guild of America and create an award for best director of a first feature. The DGA’s 2020 first-timer class includes three women.

And while I understand the impulse to make Oscar voters expand their ideas about what constitutes an awards-worthy movie, I don’t think the solution is to create an award for best director of a first feature. The DGA’s 2020 first-timer class includes three women.

The answer to pushing the Academy to make better choices isn’t more Oscar categories. It’s fewer. That way, maybe “Parasite’s” Bong could take the stage at the Dolby on Sunday not in the middle of the ceremony, but at the very end, when everyone’s paying attention.

The Korean-language film “Parasite” is nominated in six Academy Award categories, including best picture and director for Bong Joon-ho, top right.
Sweet but psycho

Harley Quinn and her girl gang are lovable in cheerful ‘Birds of Prey’

BY KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

The best thing to come out of 2016's much-derided DC antihero team-up “Suicide Squad” was Margot Robbie’s inspired take on Harley Quinn, the self-proclaimed “Joker’s girl” and quirky chaos clown. Robbie’s Quinn, with her colorful pigtails and baseball bat, instantly became an icon, a perennial Halloween costume, eclipsing even her lesser half, Jared Leto’s heavily tattooed Joker. But enough about him; the Joker is so 2019. 2020 is Harley Quinn’s year. And in the wake of her breakup, she’s back and better than ever with a brand-new girl gang in the brilliant, breakneck “Birds of Prey (And the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn).”

Director Cathy Yan soars with her stylish sophomore feature, which is colorful, campy and cheerfully brutal, a perfect reflection of Harley herself. Robbie, as usual, tucks into the role with a wide-eyed gusto that is equally childlike and unhinged. With her Betty Boop accent, wacky wardrobe and gymnastic facility with a bat, Harley is one lovable psychopath. It’s impossible not to root for her, even as she’s reducing chemical factories to clouds of rainbow-colored smoke, gleefully dropping hordes of police officers with shotgun blasts of glitter and demolishing bad guys with roller skate high kicks to the face. Robbie makes Harley a bedeviling, beguiling antiheroine, not just any old crazy ex-girlfriend.

“Birds of Prey” is also the cinematic introduction to the other birds in the flock, the beloved comic characters Black Canary (Jurnee Smollett-Bell), styled as a butt-kicking blaxploitation queen, and Huntress (Mary Elizabeth Winstead), a mysterious yet neurotic assassin out for vengeance. With renegade cop Renee Montoya (Rosie Perez) and precocious pickpocket Cassandra Cain (Ella Jay Basco), this is Harley’s new girl gang, who band together against the sinister Roman Sionis, aka Black Mask (Ewan McGregor). Although Harley typically prefers to commit crime than fight it, for these girls (and that guy), she’ll make an exception.

Christina Hodson’s script is a madcap, irreverent roller coaster ride, the story relayed in a loopy, looping, nonlinear fashion through Harley’s hyperactive storytelling style. She bounces back and forth through time, taking a few tangents to wax poetic about the beauty of a bodega bacon, egg and cheese sandwich (relatable), list each of her enemies and their grievances with her and relish in the memories of some of her best butt-kickings. She clearly sees herself as Gotham’s own “Atomic Blonde,” and the eye-popping fight choreography proves she is. The action sequences are breathtakingly balletic and bruising. If it seems like Harley could take John Wick in a fight, that’s because she can. “John Wick” director Chad Stahelski consulted on some of the fight sequences. Shot by Matthew Libatique, the action is crispy clean among all the sparkles, smoke and decaying carnival rides.

“Birds of Prey” is a circus for the senses, but the performances give the film its heart and humor. Every performer knows what movie they’re in, with Robbie’s winking, wild performance creating a safe space for experimentation. The wonderfully powerful Smollett-Bell is a breakout, but Ewan McGregor’s outlandishly campy turn as the sniveling Sionis is a hoot and a half, easily stealing the show. Yan has delivered a riotous rodeo that is “Kill Bill” meets “Coffy.” It’s a tribute to the cutest, kookiest clown in the comics, and a perfect distillation of her character: sweet, sour and sassy in all the right ways.

“Birds of Prey (And the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn)” is rated R for strong violence and language throughout, and some sexual and drug material. Running time: 109 minutes.

In “Birds of Prey (And the Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn),” the female superhero, played by Margot Robbie, gets her own spinoff.

Warner Bros. Pictures/AP
Better at the source

Have a drink at Pilsner Urquell, home of the original light beer

BY IMMANUEL JOHNSON
Stars and Stripes

The Czech Republic is known for its capital, Prague; King Wenceslas in the Christmas carol; tennis player Martina Navratilova, rising against communist rule in 1968; and, to some, including me, Pilsner Urquell lager.

“Urquell” is German for “original source,” and Pilsner Urquell is said to have inspired more than two-thirds of all beers labeled pilsner, pilsner or pilsener, according to the official Pilsner Urquell brochure.

Before pilsner, beer drinkers only had dark, heavy, cloudy beers to slake their thirst. When golden, clear, blonde pilsner was first brewed in 1842, its light taste quickly won followers in Europe and America, where it was widely duplicated, eventually giving rise to a popular U.S. brew known for its Clydesdale horse mascots and Super Bowl ads.

Pilsen is about 90 minutes east of Prague near the Radbuza River to the west of Grafenwoehr and Vilseck. Once there, head to the Pilsner Urquell brewery near the Kladuza River to sample a few beers and have a meal in the Na Spilce restaurant. When I went, the place was full of locals and tourists.

I started my meal off with a half-liter of craft Pilsner Urquell beer (left) is a good start to a meal of wild boar with rose hip sauce and bread dumplings (top right) and a slice of Sacher torte with a dollop of whipped cream (bottom right) in the Na Spilce restaurant in the brewery’s fermentation room in Pilsen, Czech Republic.

After opting to forgo the starters, which included goulash soup served in a breadcrust bowl or beef broth with liver dumplings, I went straight into a main course of wild boar with rose hip sauce — like sweet gravy with cranberries — served with bread dumplings. It exploded with flavor.

Other menu offerings included marinated pork ribs or a breaded pork cutlet with homemade potato salad, but I highly recommend the boar.

Dessert, on the other hand, was not so great. The Sacher torte — layered chocolate cake with a dollop of whipped cream — tasted as if it had been sitting out for part of the day. When someone told me that Sacher Torte, which takes its name from the Hotel Sacher in Vienna, where it was first made in 1832 — 10 years before pilsner was invented — is traditionally dry, I wondered if my slice was the original one.

The other two dessert options when I was at Na Spilce were pan-cakes with blueberry cream and apple strudel with nuts. My meal and beer cost just under $15, and the service was friendly and fast, giving me plenty of time afterward to check out the rest of what Pilsen has to offer.

As recipe writers, we tell people to “toast” their nuts. If you cook with nuts and seeds a lot, you have probably already figured out that the best way to toast them is in an oven. But if you are still toasting them on the stovetop, you will love the oven method. Not only do you get better results, it is also easier, and you don’t have to tend to it as much.

When I toast nuts, I place a sheet of parchment paper on a sheet pan and pour the nuts on top. I spread them out so that they are in a single layer and place them in a preheated 250-degree oven. This is a low temperature, but I find that the higher I set the temperature, the higher the chances of burning the nuts. I check them on after 5 minutes because smaller nuts take less time to toast than larger nuts, and I don’t want them to burn.

Most nuts take 8-10 minutes to toast, but often the smell of roasting nuts is a sign that they are done. It’s important to check them as soon as you smell them because they can burn before you know it! For maximum crunch, let the nuts cool before using them in your recipe.

Association Press

I sometimes joke and say that as a Southern cook, I use pecans like other chefs use salt and pepper. That is to say, on just about everything. I love pecans and every other nut because they add a crunchy texture and an earthy, sweet — nutty — flavor to food.

Most of the time, I lightly toast my nuts to enhance their flavor. And I’m not alone: Many recipes that call for nuts, also call for toasting the nuts because it makes such a difference in the overall flavor of the dish. Toasting or lightly roasting nuts removes all the raw green, slightly astringent flavors that you taste when they are uncooked. This is especially true with walnuts. Almonds, hazelnuts and pecans are crispy and lightly caramelized, and you can’t stop eating them when they are roasted — likewise peanuts.

Even seeds are so much better with a little heat to bring out their deeper, more nuanced flavors. Think sesame seeds, pine nuts, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds. The volatile oils are released and the seeds are lightly browned, making them taste so much more flavorful.

I learned to toast nuts from my mother, and she learned from her mother. You can’t stop eating them when they are toasted — likewise peanuts. Even seeds are so much better with a little heat to bring out their deeper, more nuanced flavors. Think sesame seeds, pine nuts, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds. The volatile oils are released and the seeds are lightly browned, making them taste so much more flavorful.

I learned to toast nuts from my mother, and she learned from her mother. You can’t stop eating them when they are toasted — likewise peanuts. Even seeds are so much better with a little heat to bring out their deeper, more nuanced flavors. Think sesame seeds, pine nuts, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds. The volatile oils are released and the seeds are lightly browned, making them taste so much more flavorful.

I learned to toast nuts from my mother, and she learned from her mother. You can’t stop eating them when they are toasted — likewise peanuts. Even seeds are so much better with a little heat to bring out their deeper, more nuanced flavors. Think sesame seeds, pine nuts, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds. The volatile oils are released and the seeds are lightly browned, making them taste so much more flavorful.

I learned to toast nuts from my mother, and she learned from her mother. You can’t stop eating them when they are toasted — likewise peanuts. Even seeds are so much better with a little heat to bring out their deeper, more nuanced flavors. Think sesame seeds, pine nuts, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds. The volatile oils are released and the seeds are lightly browned, making them taste so much more flavorful.

I learned to toast nuts from my mother, and she learned from her mother. You can’t stop eating them when they are toasted — likewise peanuts. Even seeds are so much better with a little heat to bring out their deeper, more nuanced flavors. Think sesame seeds, pine nuts, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds. The volatile oils are released and the seeds are lightly browned, making them taste so much more flavorful.

I learned to toast nuts from my mother, and she learned from her mother. You can’t stop eating them when they are toasted — likewise peanuts. Even seeds are so much better with a little heat to bring out their deeper, more nuanced flavors. Think sesame seeds, pine nuts, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds. The volatile oils are released and the seeds are lightly browned, making them taste so much more flavorful.

I learned to toast nuts from my mother, and she learned from her mother. You can’t stop eating them when they are toasted — likewise peanuts. Even seeds are so much better with a little heat to bring out their deeper, more nuanced flavors. Think sesame seeds, pine nuts, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds. The volatile oils are released and the seeds are lightly browned, making them taste so much more flavorful.

I learned to toast nuts from my mother, and she learned from her mother. You can’t stop eating them when they are toasted — likewise peanuts. Even seeds are so much better with a little heat to bring out their deeper, more nuanced flavors. Think sesame seeds, pine nuts, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds. The volatile oils are released and the seeds are lightly browned, making them taste so much more flavorful.

I learned to toast nuts from my mother, and she learned from her mother. You can’t stop eating them when they are toasted — likewise peanuts. Even seeds are so much better with a little heat to bring out their deeper, more nuanced flavors. Think sesame seeds, pine nuts, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds. The volatile oils are released and the seeds are lightly browned, making them taste so much more flavorful.

I learned to toast nuts from my mother, and she learned from her mother. You can’t stop eating them when they are toasted — likewise peanuts. Even seeds are so much better with a little heat to bring out their deeper, more nuanced flavors. Think sesame seeds, pine nuts, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds. The volatile oils are released and the seeds are lightly browned, making them taste so much more flavorful.

I learned to toast nuts from my mother, and she learned from her mother. You can’t stop eating them when they are toasted — likewise peanuts. Even seeds are so much better with a little heat to bring out their deeper, more nuanced flavors. Think sesame seeds, pine nuts, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds. The volatile oils are released and the seeds are lightly browned, making them taste so much more flavorful.
Memorializing the fallen
‘Stumbling stones’ embedded in Kaiserslautern sidewalks tell passersby of victims of Nazi regime

The next time you’re in Kaiserslautern, look down at the sidewalks.

Embedded in them are scores of small brass plaques that memorialize the millions of victims of the Nazi regime. When the sun hits them or Kaiserslautern’s ubiquitous winter rain collects on them, the plaques, called Stolpersteine, glisten and catch the eye. Stolpersteine means “stumbling stones,” and you’re meant to stumble over them with your gaze and read the text written on them. Each one measures around 4 x 4 inches and includes a person’s name, the year they were born, when, where and, often, how they died. Most start with the mention “Here lived” in German and are laid directly outside the last place the person lived of their own free will.

One cluster of the small memorials on Alleestrasse, just off Eisenbahnstrasse, stopped me in my tracks when I was out running a few weekends ago. The weather-worn Stolpersteine have lost a bit of their sheen, but their message still took my breath away. They memorialize the family of Dr. Paul Tuteur, a successful lawyer before the Nazis came to power. As many Jewish parents did in 1930s-era Germany, Tuteur and his wife Charlotte gave their two children to a family in Belgium for safekeeping in 1938, before they fled to England the following year. The parents tried to bring their daughter and son to England, but after the Nazi invaded Belgium in 1940, they lost contact with them.

The parents’ stones say “Ueberlebt,” German for survived, for Wilhelm Otto Dinges, who was conscripted into Nazi Germany’s forced labor program when he was 17 and out of work.

The next time you’re in a European city and you see something on the pavement glinting in the sun or shimmering under raindrops, look down. It may be a Stolperstein inviting you to stumble over it and linger for a moment to read its simple inscription, keeping alive the memory of one of the millions of victims of the Nazi regime. By Karin Zeitvogel

More Info

**Countries with Stolpersteine:** Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and Ukraine.

Online map showing where many of Kaiserslautern’s Stolpersteine are: tinyurl.com/qppvkuh

Biographies online of some of the people remembered on Stolpersteine in Kaiserslautern, currently in German only: tinyurl.com/wt3oey7

Calendar of Stolperstein layings in 2020: stolpersteine.eu/en/timetable

Gunther Demnig’s Stolperstein site: stolpersteine.eu

— Karin Zeitvogel

---

**Photos by Karin Zeitvogel/Stars and Stripes**
Carnival comes to Italy

February signals carnival time throughout much of Europe, and Italy’s no exception. Much of the country’s festivities play out over several weeks. Here are five highly regarded carnivals:

Acireale: This Baroque city in the Province of Catania is home to what’s widely considered one of the most evocative carnivals in all Sicily. Stunning paper-mache creations that change year on year mock politicians and other prominent figures, while other floats aim instead for beauty, taking advantage of flowers and lighting effects. Bands and folk dancing add to the atmosphere, and young visitors will enjoy the fun fair. Catch processions of floats moving through the city streets on Feb. 9, 16 or 23. Other carnival highlights include concerts and spectacles of light and sound on most weekends. Festivities close with additional fanfare Feb. 25. See the program at carnevaleacireale.it

Ivrea: Carnival celebrations in this city in the Piedmont Region north of Turin feature a static cast of historical characters. The carnival’s high point is its famed Battle of Oranges. This historical re-enactment of an uprising sees orange throwers, who are on foot, take on the forces representing the Napoleonic troops, who stand atop carts. Outsiders can take part in the citrus food fight as well. Battles take place Feb. 23-25. All visitors pay an admission fee on these days. Online: storicocarnevaleivrea.it

Madonna di Campiglio: The Habsburg Carnival re-creates the splendor of the Court of the Emperor Franz Josef and of Princess Sissi. Action plays out both downtown and on the surrounding ski slopes Feb. 23-28. Dates to mark are Feb. 24, when the court’s arrival in the town center is feted from 6 p.m.; Feb. 26, when the ski instructors of the town descend the slopes while holding lit torches aloft at 6:45 p.m.; and Feb. 27, when costumed characters take to the slopes. Online: tinyurl.com/vf3bk4q

Viareggio: The stars of Tuscany’s most famous carnival celebrations are the huge paper-mache caricatures lampooning politicians, celebrities and others. See them atop floats in one of the parades on the beachfront promenade on Feb. 9, 15, 20, 23 and 25. Fireworks follow on Feb. 20 and 25. Online: viareggio.ilcarnevale.com

Venice: The Carnevale di Venezia is best known for its costume contests and lively parties. Festivities this year run Feb. 8-25, highlights of which include the parade of beautifully costumed young ladies as part of the Festa della Marie from 2:30 p.m. Feb. 15; costume competitions held daily on the Piazza San Marco Feb. 16-23; The Flight of the Angel at noon on Feb. 16, and the Flight of the Lion at 5 p.m. Feb. 25. Online: carnevale.venezia.it
The Miyako Islands, a series of eight islands southwest of Okinawa, are a must see for anyone stationed in Okinawa or Japan.

PHOTOS BY AYA ICHIHASHI/Stars and Stripes

A gift from Mother Nature

Snow-white sandy beaches meet the deep blue sea at the Miyako Islands

BY AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

The snowy beaches of the Miyako Islands are a change to the beige-orange sand on the main island of Okinawa, and the sun reflected off the powdery white sand contrasts sharply with the blue ocean to compose a beautiful scene.

Three Miyako beaches are in Japan's top 10 on TripAdvisor Travelers Choice 2019. Yonahama beach, or Maehama for short, was voted No. 1. Its beach stretches for two miles; the water is crystal-clear layers of turquoise. I often spot happy couples there taking wedding day photos.

Miyako's beaches are amazing. Visiting the islands must be on your bucket list while you're stationed on Okinawa or in Japan.

The Miyakos are eight inhabited islands, five of which are connected by bridges. About 55,300 residents live on the islands, which are about 175 miles southeast of Naha, Okinawa. A 30-minute flight from Naha costs as little as 5,500 yen, about $50. Sunayama Beach ranked second in Japan on the TripAdvisor poll last year, and Aragusuku beach ranked 10th. I suggest women wear a bathing suit under a sundress and carry a few bottles of water and a towel, because you never know when you'll want to jump in the water in Miyako.

I usually get a rental car as soon as I get there because it is so convenient to drive around the islands. By the time I finish taking 100 photos or splashing in the water, I am ready for lunch. My recommendation is Doug's Burger.

It is amazing. I usually order a cheeseburger, which costs 1,030 yen ($9.40) with a drink, and delicious rosemary fried potatoes on the side (790 yen). So, I strongly recommend going on the Yahiji snorkeling tour boat. Yahiji coral reef is north of Ikema Island, about a 30-minute drive from the airport.

The reef stretches 10 miles north to south, about four miles east to west. Many shops offer a half-day or all-day tour departing from Hirara Port or Ikema Port. I usually go at least once while staying on Miyako.

Mother Nature offers so much on these islands. Don't miss out.

---

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS
Miyako is 175 miles southeast of Naha, Okinawa, and is a 30-minute flight from Naha airport.

TIMES
Open year-round.

COSTS
Airfare starts at $50, one way, with an early-purchase discount through JAL/JTA or ANA websites.

FOOD
Try Miyako soba (starts at 500 yen or $4.50) to see if you like Okinawa soba style. Bring enough cash to cover your stay.

INFORMATION
Online: en.miyako-guide.net

— Aya Ichihashi
Your travel insurance might not cover you for a coronavirus outbreak

By Catharine Hamm
Los Angeles Times

You were supposed to be going to China, but coronavirus has scared you and you want to cancel. “I have travel insurance,” you say to yourself. “No problem.” Not so fast. Even if you have travel insurance, you might not be covered.

The standard wisdom about travel insurance: It covers what has happened to you, not what might happen to you.

The World Health Organization on Jan. 30 declared it a public health emergency of international concern. And the U.S. Department of State has raised the threat level to 4 for China: Do not travel. “Travel to China is not recommended at this time due to the ongoing public health emergency,” the warning says.

The World Health Organization has declared the outbreak an international health emergency. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says there is no prevention for the type of coronavirus. Absent that, it suggests washing your hands and keeping them away from your eyes, nose and mouth; avoiding sick people; staying home if you’re unwell; covering your nose and mouth with a tissue if you sneeze; and making sure you disinfect anything you or people around you have touched.

Symptoms of coronavirus include fever, cough and shortness of breath, according to the CDC. You may experience those symptoms as soon as two days after you’re exposed and as long as two weeks later.

Your travel insurance might not cover you for a coronavirus outbreak (for coronavirus) under most standard travel insurance policies,” Kasara Barto of Squaremouth.com, a travel insurance comparison site, said. “Virus outbreaks do not fall under the standard cancellation reasons on travel insurance.”

But didn’t the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tell travelers they should avoid non-essential travel to China?

Yes, but in terms of insurance, Squaremouth noted, travelers “are not prevented from” going.

The World Health Organization has called the outbreak an international health emergency. Does that change the dynamics of insurance coverage?

No, insurance experts say, because now coronavirus is not unexpected. The risk is there and not a surprise.

What if my flight was canceled and I had prepaid, nonrefundable plans, such as hotels or day trips? Do I get money back?

Maybe. Many airlines are cutting back or canceling service in the face of this outbreak. (Some airlines are refunding money; others are giving a credit or waiving change fees.) Regardless, canceled service means other prepaid plans would fall by the wayside.

“Comprehensive travel insurance plans can cover prepaid, nonrefundable expenses such as hotels, tours, flights, etc.” Meghan Walsh, product manager for InsureMyTrip, said in an email.

What if I have insurance and get sick with coronavirus?

The good news about coverage in that case is bad news for you: If you contract coronavirus before you travel or while you’re traveling, your care probably will be covered if you have standard travel insurance. The key word is “probably.” Why probably?

Many insurers set a deadline — a date before which you might be covered, but after which you won’t be. In other words, if your insurer says you’re not covered if you bought your policy after a certain date, take that to heart.

That’s because coronavirus is now a “foreseen circumstance” — that is, people now know about it.

Is there anything I can do to be covered for a trip I wanted to make but now am not sure about?

There is one kind of travel insurance that can help: cancel-for-any-reason, or CFAR, insurance. It means what it says: If you decide you don’t want to risk (fill in the blank for anything that you consider problematic) or you just don’t think the trip sounds fun anymore, if you have CFAR, it should have you covered.

Is there another option?

Not really. “If your concern is canceling your trip due to fear of traveling and potentially contracting the coronavirus, then ... CFAR is the only way to protect your prepaid, non-refundable trip cost,” Walsh of InsureMyTrip said.

What else should I consider when contemplating a trip anywhere coronavirus is present?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says there is no prevention for this type of coronavirus. Absent that, it suggests washing your hands and keeping them away from your eyes, nose and mouth; avoiding sick people; staying home if you’re unwell; covering your nose and mouth with a tissue if you sneeze; and making sure you disinfect anything you or people around you have touched.

Symptoms of coronavirus include fever, cough and shortness of breath, according to the CDC. You may experience those symptoms as soon as two days after you’re exposed and as long as two weeks later.
Quarterback Patrick Mahomes, left, not only won the Super Bowl with the Chiefs last Sunday. He also showed that gracing the cover of Madden’s NFL video game doesn’t have to mean misfortune.

**Did Mahomes end the ‘Madden Curse’?**

BY ELISE FAVIS The Washington Post

The Madden Curse didn’t bear that name when it claimed its first victim. Shortly after gracing the European cover of Madden NFL 99, Garrison Hearst broke his ankle. In the years to come, Hearst would be followed by a slew of football players facing injuries and disappointing performances the season after appearing on the game franchise’s cover.

The trend of misfortune was spotted early by the former NFL wide receiver Marshall Faulk. He was a coauthor of the 1999 book *The Madden Jinx*, which used a headline that called it The Madden Jinx, instead of The Madden Curse, which is how it’s described throughout the piece. Ultimately, the Curse prevailed.

The piece ran in ESPN The Magazine in 2002, and it resonated with more readers than Roenigk could have ever imagined. Today, sports fans and gamers alike debate the Madden Curse, a phenomenon that has endured for two decades and claimed the likes of then-Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick, former Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb, and Seattle Seahawks running back Shaun Alexander.

The curse was a scourge that appeared to annually plague players until this year. Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes graced the cover of Madden 20. And his most impressive achievement, in a season in which he led three double-digit comebacks in the playoffs to win the Super Bowl last Sunday night, may have been beating the Curse. Mahomes became the second Madden cover athlete to win the Super Bowl, but when Rob Gronkowski won it with the Patriots in 2017, he missed the game with an injury.

But did Mahomes break the curse for good? Asked if she thinks the curse will continue despite Mahomes’ victorious play, Roenigk said “yes,” noting some players have doubted the associated injuries and statistical downturns before 2020. “I do think in some respects Drew Brees would be the first athlete I consider having broken the curse,” she said. “But also, yes, I do think the curse will continue.”

When Roenigk interviewed Faulk for her initial magazine story, she couldn’t have anticipated how Faulk’s career prospects would pivot after his appearance. The season of his cover appearance, Faulk suffered an ankle injury, hobbling off the field, and missing multiple games.

“I think I asked Marshall Faulk in it is, ‘Are you nervous about the Madden curse?’” Roenigk recalls. “And he says, ‘No way, you’re just trying to start something.’ And I guess I did.”
In a digital and increasingly paperless age, fans of paper planners remain enthusiastic and steadfast.

“There’s something comforting about using a planner. It’s very personal, and apart from the cacophony of screens,” says Jennie Tung, executive editor at Martha Stewart Living, adding that paper planners have “a retro appeal.”

“The act of writing things down by hand slows you down and makes you more mindful,” she says. “A paper planner becomes a personal record, and for some people it’s almost like a diary.”

Many paper planners today are so well-designed that they become a way to make a statement, she says. “They are beautifully designed objects that are a joy to hold and use,” she says.

And contrary to what one might imagine, many of the biggest fans of paper planners aren’t older people who grew up with them, but a younger generation embracing their comfortable vibe. According to Stephanie Fleming, co-founder of Me & My BIG Ideas, which makes The Happy Planner, “the age demographic is around 25 to the early 40s range, with a lot of movement toward college-age women.”

“I had imagined younger people preferring digital planners, but younger generations really want to slow down a bit,” Fleming says. “Having everything at their fingertips is not necessarily making people happy. There’s something about going back to basics.”

“A lot of people are looking for some digital detox,” she adds. Tung notes that paper planners now come in an array of designs and can be carried around all day. A few brands described as chic and well-designed by the pros at Martha Stewart Living include Smythson, Appointed and Sugar Paper, as well as the “bare bones but gets the job done” paper planners from Rollbahn.

All the planners offered by The Happy Planner feature encouraging words and positive messaging for those working toward health wellness, career or financial goals, for example.

And with their accompanying planner stickers and customizable extension packets, they can be a creative outlet akin to scrapbooking.

“A planner is not just about being a calendar. It’s about so much more than that,” Fleming says. “There’s the aspect of focus and creativity, in addition to productivity.”

She admits that “digital calendars are nice because they keep your desk uncluttered,” but adds, “people do engage more when they write things down.”

Paper planners range from minimalist versions costing a few dollars to fancy planners for over $100. And there’s always the option of using both digital and paper in some combination.

In the meantime, paper still has a place with many people trying to keep a complicated life in order.

Says Fleming: “When I sit down on a Sunday and plan my week in my planner, it’s registering things in a way it doesn’t if it’s on my phone or computer.”
Finneas:

The man behind Billie Eilish is more than just her brother; he’s also co-writer, producer

BY ALLISON STEWART
Special to The Washington Post

The December morning that Grammy nominations were announced, Finneas O’Connell woke up early. The 22-year-old had produced and co-written all the tracks on “When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?”, the full-length debut by his sister, Billie Eilish. That album helped establish Eilish, now 18, as one of pop’s brightest and biggest new stars in 2019, which also made Finneas one of the most sought-after producers. The idea that at least one of the siblings might be nominated for a Grammy award didn’t seem out of reach.

Billie Eilish, left, and her brother Finneas O’Connell perform Jan. 23 at the 2020 Spotify Best New Artist Party at The Lot Studios in West Hollywood, Calif.

Finneas wound up with six nominations, and Finneas with five, including album of the year, record and song of the year for the “Bad Guy” (written, co-wrote), and producer of the year (non-classical). They dominated the awards Jan. 26.

Finneas enlisted a manager he knew, and Eilish began talking to record labels. In many stories, this is where things would begin to break apart, where the prospect of money and fame could have ruined everything. If the O’Conells had been friends instead of siblings, they might have fallen out. A romantic couple might have broken up. But Finneas and Eilish, who grew up close and were still stuck living together, had almost no choice but to carry on as a team. Finneas accompanied Eilish to meetings, and they’d talk about it on the way home. They had a management team who was invested in their joint success, which helped. But if they’d had different representation, Finneas doesn’t even want to think about it.

That a team of A-list writers and producers was not brought in to oversee Finneas — or get rid of him entirely — is remarkable. In a darker timeline, Eilish, having used “Ocean Eyes” to get a label deal, would go off to make her debut album with Max Martin, while her brother, the musical Rubik’s Cube-solver, went back to uploading tracks to SoundCloud in his childhood bedroom. “In the alternate reality where I wasn’t involved at all, and I’d been, like, just sweating my way through, trying to have a music career for years! And then my sibling had one and I wasn’t involved at all? I think I’d be very tormented by it,” he says. “But the fact that we’ve had one in tandem makes a lot of sense.”

The man behind Billie Eilish

Finneas also did some acting, appearing in a 2013 film, “Life Inside Out,” opposite Baird (the movie’s co-writer), and also on “Modern Family.” He did four episodes of “Glee” during its final season, which he described as feeling like the new kid in class the week school let out. “I definitely felt like I’m part of the end of this seminal thing,” he recalled. “It’s so funny to be doing your fourth episode of a show and everybody’s weeping, and it’s like, their 130th episode.”

When Finneas was 18, he wrote a song for the Slightlys called “Ocean Eyes.” In that early incarnation, “it sounded a lot like Soundgarden,” he says. “It was a big, soaring electric guitar and drum record. It was the wrong outfit for that song.”

“Ocean Eyes” wound up being right for Billie. They worked on the track together — Finneas produced and sang it. In November 2015, in a co-writting Rubik’s Cube, and he solved it in three seconds,” Patrick says.

Afterward, he began to get serious about making music and eventually formed a band group called the Slightlys. They performed around town, made an EP and played a local Warped Tour date one summer after winning a battle of the bands contest. Finneas, who was 15, assumed that the show would be the highlight of his life. “Even that one day was so beat-stroke-y, and so hectic and stressful that I was like, ‘This thing I thought was my lifelong dream is not my dream at all,'” he recalls.

“Ocean Eyes” wound up being right for Billie. They worked on the track together — Finneas produced and sang it, Billie sang it. In November 2015, they posted the song, by then a disassembled, darkly evocative ballad, to SoundCloud and watched as it started to find an audience.

“Be a therapist for a couple hours. They don’t like going to some big studio and having them pretend to be a therapist for a couple hours. So by default, we always make the good stuff together.”

Finneas has been working on a full-length debut album of his own for what seems to him like forever. “Blood Harmony” was hard enough to put together, but an album has to be a statement of purpose, and it’s been slower going than he’d hoped.

He’ll be with Eilish when she tours the world this year, working on the album in his sparse moments. While it’s not something he takes for granted, the longer they work together, the more it feels to him like a partnership that could last. Eilish might take a bigger role in the production of her work going forward, he thinks. Everything else, they’ll figure out as they go along.

“It’s me being of service to whatever she needs,” he says. “Whenever duty calls, I say, ‘Yep. Let’s go.’”

Finneas also did some acting, appearing in a 2013 film, “Life Inside Out,” opposite Baird (the movie’s co-writer), and also on “Modern Family.” He did four episodes of “Glee” during its final season, which he described as feeling like the new kid in class the week school let out. “I definitely felt like I’m part of the end of this seminal thing,” he recalled. “It’s so funny to be doing your fourth episode of a show and everybody’s weeping, and it’s like, their 130th episode.”

When Finneas was 18, he wrote a song for the Slightlys called “Ocean Eyes.” In that early incarnation, “it sounded a lot like Soundgarden,” he says. “It was a big, soaring electric guitar and drum record. It was the wrong outfit for that song.”

“Ocean Eyes” wound up being right for Billie. They worked on the track together — Finneas produced and sang it. In November 2015, they posted the song, by then a disassembled, darkly evocative ballad, to SoundCloud and watched as it started to find an audience.

“Be a therapist for a couple hours. They don’t like going to some big studio and having them pretend to be a therapist for a couple hours. So by default, we always make the good stuff together.”

Finneas has been working on a full-length debut album of his own for what seems to him like forever. “Blood Harmony” was hard enough to put together, but an album has to be a statement of purpose, and it’s been slower going than he’d hoped.

He’ll be with Eilish when she tours the world this year, working on the album in his sparse moments. While it’s not something he takes for granted, the longer they work together, the more it feels to him like a partnership that could last. Eilish might take a bigger role in the production of her work going forward, he thinks. Everything else, they’ll figure out as they go along.

“It’s me being of service to whatever she needs,” he says. “Whenever duty calls, I say, ‘Yep. Let’s go.'"
**Weathering hearing loss**

**Huey Lewis’ heart beating on new album, Broadway musical**

**BY MARK KENNEDY**

Associated Press

T here’s mixed news when it comes to Huey Lewis these days. The good part is that the ‘80s hitmaker and his band have their first new album in 19 years and a jukebox stage musical. The bad news? He might not be able to hear all of it.

Lewis, whose band had a string of hit songs like “Girls on Film,” “ power of Love,” “I Want a New Drug,” “Hip to Be Square” and “Stuck with You.”

The album will transport fans to a time when Lewis was a 12-year-old kid in Kansas City, when he first fell in love with music. The good part is that the disease is causing him to lose his hearing, but the bad part is that he can’t hear all of the songs he’s recorded. The good part is that he can still hear the lyrics, but the bad part is that he can’t hear the music. The good part is that he can still hear himself, but the bad part is that he can’t hear his band. The good part is that he can still hear the audience, but the bad part is that he can’t hear their response.

Lewis isn’t letting the disease stop him from making music, with a new Huey Lewis & The News album called “Weather” out on Valentine’s Day and hopes for a Broadway run of the musical “The Heart of Rock & Roll.”

The opener, “While We’re Young,” shows Lewis ad- dicting to late middle-age, with the line, “Tell the kids we’ll be late / and we’ll need time to recuperate.”

“Do you write about what you’re my age? I mean, it’s got to be ’80s, right?” he says. “You can’t write about cars and girls anymore. You know what I mean?”

The album will transport fans to a time when Lewis and his band blazed up the charts with hits like “The Power of Love,” “I Want a New Drug,” “Hip to Be Square” and “Stuck with You.”

Lewis hopes fans will still hear those songs again when the jukebox musical “The Heart of Rock & Roll” finds its next stop. The show, which has an original story connected to Lewis, broke the record for highest gross per performance at San Diego’s Old Globe theater in 2018. Lewis hopes it gets to Broadway.

He’s had a hand in helping the music along, making sure the songs were handled properly. “I didn’t want them to be too cringe-worthy,” he says. Lewis tweaked the lyrics. Nelson never record- ed it, but Lewis still loved it so much he added it to “Weather.”

“When I finished writing it, I realized, ‘Oh my God. It’s my life story. It’s exactly my life story,’” he says. “It was one of the things that just came through me and I real- ized, ‘Oh my gosh. This came from somewhere deep.’”

Kesha

High Road (Kemosabe/RCA Records)

Kesha’s new album starts out on a portentous and soaring note with the singer on the opening song “Tonight” in full Broadway mode, belt- ing out “Take me out tooooonnniigliight.” But 40 seconds in, it dissolves into a messy club banger complete with random expletives, crowd screams, a lost phone and the singer high and drunk as she ready to hit the town. In other words, welcome back, Kesha.

“High Road” is Kesha at her wonder- fully anarchic, tipsey, profound and goofy best. Few artists can portray themselves as silly, airy party girls and then utterly subvert that very image, all in the same song.

“I don’t do that dance,” she warns us on the new album. “I only do my own dance.”

It wouldn’t be a Kesha record without funny recorded vi- gnettes — in one, the Spice Girls are gently mocked — or bizarre songs that are strangely addictive, like the utterly oddball, tuba-led “Potato Song” (Cuz I Want To). “That’s just the genre she can’t drop the zaniness and deliver a devastating emotional punch, as in “Father Daughter Dance,” a heartbreaking ode to living without a parent.

— Mark Kennedy

Associated Press

Dustbowl Revival

Is It You, Is It Me (Thirty Tigers)

Eclectic roots rockers Dustbowl Revival declare what they’re up to vividly on “Just One Song,” a cut from their new album, “Is It You, Is It Me.”

“I can turn it around, I can right a wrong, give me just one song,” intones lead singer Z. Lupetin with typically soul- ful, understated charm.

It’s practically a mission statement, a declaration of the purpose that animates the band’s fourth album from start to finish: Dustbowl Revival wants to cheer us up.

Then there are the more upbeat numbers, like “Just One Song” and the closer, “Let It Go.” It bears only a passing similarity to the “Frozen” anthem, and feels personal enough to stand on its own.

— Scott Stroud

Associated Press
Golden in Death

By Erin Arvedlund
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Before she lost her brother in Iraq in 2007, Ryan Manion had no experience of grief or loss. "I used to watch horrific news stories with a distant fascination," thinking the types of tragedies happened to other people, she said.

And then, on April 29, 2007; U.S. Marine Corps 1st Lt. Travis Manion died in combat in Afghanistan. "My brother’s death changed me," said the 40-year-old native of Doylestown, Pa. With her family behind her, The Travis Manion Foundation, run by her mother, Janet, was formed.

When her mother died of cancer in April 2012, Manion took over the foundation’s operation. She trained for and ran marathons to raise money to support it while trying to keep her identity as a “tough, capable, resilient woman. For a long time, I had lied to myself about how hard things were. In truth, she had begun having panic attacks, had become too terrified to drive, and wouldn’t venture more than 10 miles from the home she shared with her husband and children.

That Christmas, she retreated to her bedroom and began hyperventilating. It was then, she admit, she was not OK.

Finally, she sought the help of a therapist. The diagnosis — post-traumatic stress disorder — outraged her. To vent, she called Amy Looney Hef- fernan, who had been married to her brother’s best friend, Brendan Looney, a U.S. Navy Seal who died in combat in 2010.

Thus began many conversations between Manion and Hef-fernlan about grief, loss, and healing. They were joined by Heather Kelly, whose Marine husband, Robert Kelly, was killed in combat in 2010.

The women, who had met through the Trevor Manion Foundation, have co-authored a new book, “The Knock at the Door: Three Gold Star Families Bonded by Grief and Purpose” (Hachette), that describes the unique experience of losing a loved one to war.

“Amy, she’s very much a type-A personality,” said Manion. “I found it fascinating when she told me how, after she lost Brendan, she let herself grieve. A big wake-up call was when she was staying in her apartment with her two dogs, closed off from the world. She opened the bathroom in her house and she didn’t care.”

Heather Kelly was newly married when her Marine husband Robert was killed by an IED. She would often ask herself, “If you got hit by a bus on the highway today, would you care?”

For Manion, the initial years after los- ing her brother were “marked by endless, furious motion,” she said. “In many ways it served me. Until it didn’t.”

In retrospect, she said, “When my mom got sick, I still hadn’t dealt with the loss, attracting my mother. After she died, everything hit me like a freight train. It was incomprehensible to have to do that (grieve) again. I pushed away everything I was feeling.”

“What’s not talked about are the days and months and years that came after the death of a loved one. That’s when I had to process a lot of my grief. When I look back, I wouldn’t classify what was happen- ing in the first days and months after Travis was killed as ‘grieving.’ It was just processing and shock.”

Then everyone walks away, “and you say, ‘I have to deal with this now.’ But then my mom died.”

The PTSD “wasn’t easy for me to put in the book. I don’t take it lightly. After being upset initially, it helped me understand that I’m not necessarily comfortable showing my emotions. Others find it easier to talk to a therapist. I feel uncomfortable when people see me cry.”

Manion wants to the humanity and grief therapy she’s encountered with widows and family members of veterans through the Travis Manion Foundation. And helping others has given these women a new way to honor the fallen.

A Cold Trail

Robert Dugoni

A cold case pulls homicide detective Tracy Crosswhite into a deep look into her past in Dugoni’s latest mystery.

Crosswhite returns to the small town of Cedar Grove with her husband, Dan, and their new baby. The town holds a rough past for her. Crosswhite’s sister was murdered while they were both in high school. Tracy is supposed to relax with her child while her husband works on a legal matter involving a real estate deal in the town. Of course when a mystery comes calling, she can’t resist.

A reporter investigating a cold case from a few months prior to the death of Tracy’s sister is killed in a house fire. Forensics discovers arson and learns that she was dead before the fire started. The chief asks Tracy to investigate, and she soon discov- ers that the woman had uncov- ered some new leads.

Dugoni blends the best ele- ments of a classic small-town mystery with a legal thriller to craft a compelling tale. His char- acters and vivid setting drop the reader right into the emotional heart of the story.

The Good Killer

Harry Dolan

Ireland’s latest mystery.

The Good Killer expertly craft a compelling tale. His char- acters, major and minor. It’s impossi- ble not to fall for this love letter to a love letter that pulls you into the often sticky collage of how talent plus perseverance can equal a classic film.

The Big Goodbye

Sam Wasson

With great style and lyricism, Sam Wasson’s nonfiction account of the making of the neo-noir classic film “Chinatown” focuses on four of Tinseltown’s denizens on the cusp of realizing their California dreams when the Manson family unleashed its nightmare.

Screenwriter Robert Towne cast a nostalgic eye on the prewar L.A. of his youth as he conceived a detective story for his best friend, Jack Nicholson. The idea of a throwback mystery eventually captured the interest of Paramount’s brash produc- tion head, Robert Evans. In turn, Evans brought in his director from another hit, “Rosemary’s Baby.” Roman Polanski.

If the Oscar-winning “Chi- natown” is indeed “the best American film never written during the ‘70s,” Wasson does it justice by following Towne’s method of constructing finely detailed, lively backstories of all characters, major and minor. It’s impossi- ble not to fall for this love letter to a love letter that pulls you into the often sticky collage of how talent plus perseverance can equal a classic film.

Douglas K. Daniel
Associated Press

‘Knock at the Door’ explores PTSD, families

BY ERIN ARVEDLUND

A savvy FBI agent and a Hous- ton detective also are in pursuit. "The Good Killer" expertly delves into each character’s psyche, showing the humanity in each.

— Sophia Rosenbaum
Associated Press

— Jeff Ayers
Associated Press

— Ginny Greene
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

— Oline H. Cogdill
Associated Press

Friday, February 7, 2020

PAGE 38
NEW ON DVD

"Ford v Ferrari": It's 1963, and a livid Henry Ford II (Tracy Letts) demands new ideas from his employees, as the car manufacturer isn't what it used to be in stature. Ford Vice President Lee Iacocca (Jon Bernthal) pitches an idea to fuel the company into the racing world to increase sales, with a subsequent attempt to acquire the sleek and glamorous but broke Ferrari, the longtime winner of the 24 Hours of Le Mans race. A furious Enzo Ferrari (Remo Ruffalo) who heads to a remote (Leonardo DiCaprio and Mark Ruffalo) backs out of the deal after Iacocca says his team would not be allowed to participate in the race and instead sell to Fiat, further angering Ford. The CEO declares they'll build a car that will beat Ferrari and ford all. But although the film's title frames one rivalry, Ford's internal competition is its driving force. However, its stylish and gorgeous filmmaking from director James Mangold and cinematographer Phedon Papamichael, and the script by Jez Butterworth, John-Henry Butterworth and David Call, manage to provide a very human story amid all the metal. Also available on Blu.

"After She Walks": A grieving mother and daughter develop disturbing sleep issues after a tragic death. 

"Greener Grass": Two soccer moms (Jocelyn DeBoer and Dawn Luebbe) grapple with their relationships as they watch their sons play in this campy comedy.

"Hell on the Border": Ex-slave Reeves (David Gyasi) becomes the first black deputy U.S. marshal in Arkansas.

"Pompeii": In 79 BC, a single woman (Sibelle Knudsen) finds a slow-stopping red dress that carries a nefarious curse in this horror comedy.

"Line of Descent": Three brothers fight for control of their Delonte family's drug business: Fraser, Prem Chopra and Abhay Deol star.

"Snyder - The Final Season": The apocalypse looms in the fourth season of the AMC series based on the DC Comics title of the same name. The cast includes Dominic Cooper, Joseph Gilgun and Ruth Negga.

"Roma": In 1970s Mexico City, a domestic worker (Yalitza Aparicio) takes a trip with one of her bosses (Marina de Tavira) and her kids. In Spanish, Mixtec and other languages with English subtitles.

"At Home in the World": A man needed a "Joe Pesci type," they simply typecast him. 

"The Irishman": From its marathon screening at the New York Film Festival, where a panel moderator said to him, "I'm so happy to have you here," to Bob Gaudio. The three, of course, went on to found the iconic "The Four Seasons." Joe Pesci. After "8 Heads in a Duffel Bag" and "Gone Fishin,'" the man was done.

"It's my privilege" - Joe Pesci's return to the screen says a lot about why he acts upon a Time in America," "Man on Fire" and even "Home Alone" while continuing to work with Scorsese in such classics as "Goodfellas" and "Casino. Did he enjoy it, though? When the man won an Oscar for his work in "Goodfellas," he gave a speech that the award's history — apologizes to Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. It was five words. Not one of them was wasted. "It's my privilege. Thank you." Sure, he later said the short speech derived from the fact that he didn't expect to win, but it certainly seems like he might have been happier at Amici's.

The typing summoned back. He'd always played Mafia types, generally unhinged psychopaths who went from zero to murder in a second flat. That Italian Brooklyn accent. That kinetic energy. He packed up and moved to the Bronx to live with his blue-collar father, Angelo, forced showbiz upon him, and he was happy if none of this occurred. With good intentions, he always sounded resentful of his path. But truth is, Joe Pesci is literally big-screen stuff. It's his privilege to get to star in his Web series "Horace & Petc." The semiretired actor not only turned down the offer but told the comedian that he wanted to go out on a high note. And he was serious about it. Famously, back when Louis C.K. was beloved, the comedian attempted to get Joe Pesci watching a modern-day version of "Home Alone," though when "big scene" arrives we never actually see Joe Pesci. He didn't return in a major project until he could do something he felt was important at least until he was pestered enough. He reportedly turned down a role in "The Irishman" a whopping 40 times before De Niro persuaded him to join. "We're friends and he loves Marty and I said, 'Come on, this is it, let's do it, let's try and do it,'" De Niro told the Hollywood Reporter. "He understood, he loves Marty and wanted the experience of working with him again and me and Al." The "Irishman" is about growing older, perhaps growing irrelevant, and looking back at all of the choices that make up a life. It's about time and regret. Pesci gives a phenomenal performance as the aging mobster, who takes on man Frank Sheeran (De Niro) under his wing. Unlike the characters of his past, Pesci's Bufalino is a somewhat quiet, extraordinarily measured man. Business is business, but there's no personal score setting, no nonsense. After nearly a decade, Pesci returned with the most thoughtful, restrained performance of his career. So naturally, journalists would want to ask the actor about his time off-screen. But that certainly doesn't mean he wants to reflect on those years publicly. Perhaps a notable speech in the award's history — apologizes to Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. It was five words. Not one of them was wasted. "It's my privilege. Thank you." Sure, he later said the short speech derived from the fact that he didn't expect to win, but it certainly seems like he might have been happier at Amici's.

The typing summoned back. He'd always played Mafia types, generally unhinged psychopaths who went from zero to murder in a second flat. That Italian Brooklyn accent. That kinetic energy. He packed up and moved to the Bronx to live with his blue-collar father, Angelo, forced showbiz upon him, and he was happy if none of this occurred. With good intentions, he always sounded resentful of his path. But truth is, Joe Pesci is literally big-screen stuff. It's his privilege to get to star in his Web series "Horace & Petc." The semiretired actor not only turned down the offer but told the comedian that he wanted to go out on a high note. And he was serious about it. Famously, back when Louis C.K. was beloved, the comedian attempted to get Joe Pesci watching a modern-day version of "Home Alone," though when "big scene" arrives we never actually see Joe Pesci. He didn't return in a major project until he could do something he felt was important at least until he was pestered enough. He reportedly turned down a role in "The Irishman" a whopping 40 times before De Niro persuaded him to join. "We're friends and he loves Marty and I said, 'Come on, this is it, let's do it, let's try and do it,'" De Niro told the Hollywood Reporter. "He understood, he loves Marty and wanted the experience of working with him again and me and Al." The "Irishman" is about growing older, perhaps growing irrelevant, and looking back at all of the choices that make up a life. It's about time and regret. Pesci gives a phenomenal performance as the aging mobster, who takes on man Frank Sheeran (De Niro) under his wing. Unlike the characters of his past, Pesci's Bufalino is a somewhat quiet, extraordinarily measured man. Business is business, but there's no personal score setting, no nonsense. After nearly a decade, Pesci returned with the most thoughtful, restrained performance of his career. So naturally, journalists would want to ask the actor about his time off-screen. But that certainly doesn't mean he wants to reflect on those years publicly. Perhaps a notable speech in the award's history — apologizes to Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. It was five words. Not one of them was wasted. "It's my privilege. Thank you." Sure, he later said the short speech derived from the fact that he didn't expect to win, but it certainly seems like he might have been happier at Amici's.

The typing summoned back. He'd always played Mafia types, generally unhinged psychopaths who went from zero to murder in a second flat. That Italian Brooklyn accent. That kinetic energy. He packed up and moved to the Bronx to live with his blue-collar father, Angelo, forced showbiz upon him, and he was happy if none of this occurred. With good intentions, he always sounded resentful of his path. But truth is, Joe Pesci is literally big-screen stuff. It's his privilege to get to star in his Web series "Horace & Petc." The semiretired actor not only turned down the offer but told the comedian that he wanted to go out on a high note. And he was serious about it. Famously, back when Louis C.K. was beloved, the comedian attempted to get Joe Pesci watching a modern-day version of "Home Alone," though when "big scene" arrives we never actually see Joe Pesci. He didn't return in a major project until he could do something he felt was important at least until he was pestered enough. He reportedly turned down a role in "The Irishman" a whopping 40 times before De Niro persuaded him to join. "We're friends and he loves Marty and I said, 'Come on, this is it, let's do it, let's try and do it,'" De Niro told the Hollywood Reporter. "He understood, he loves Marty and wanted the experience of working with him again and me and Al." The "Irishman" is about growing older, perhaps growing irrelevant, and looking back at all of the choices that make up a life. It's about time and regret. Pesci gives a phenomenal performance as the aging mobster, who takes on man Frank Sheeran (De Niro) under his wing. Unlike the characters of his past, Pesci's Bufalino is a somewhat quiet, extraordinarily measured man. Business is business, but there's no personal score setting, no nonsense. After nearly a decade, Pesci returned with the most thoughtful, restrained performance of his career. So naturally, journalists would want to ask the actor about his time off-screen. But that certainly doesn't mean he wants to reflect on those years publicly. Perhaps a notable speech in the award's history — apologizes to Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. It was five words. Not one of them was wasted. "It's my privilege. Thank you." Sure, he later said the short speech derived from the fact that he didn't expect to win, but it certainly seems like he might have been happier at Amici's.

The typing summoned back. He'd always played Mafia types, generally unhinged psychopaths who went from zero to murder in a second flat. That Italian Brooklyn accent. That kinetic energy. He packed up and moved to the Bronx to live with his blue-collar father, Angelo, forced showbiz upon him, and he was happy if none of this occurred. With good intentions, he always sounded resentful of his path.
Rx for the underappreciated doctor

Patients with a dose of respect, understanding could make physicians’ jobs easier

BY EVE GLEICKSMAN
The Washington Post

W

as that a grin-and-bear-it response your doctor flashed when greeting you?

In what may be a well-kept professional secret, physicians dread encounters with about 15% of their patients. In 1973, the New England Journal of Medicine published what has become a classic on the subject: “Taking Care of the Hateful Patient.”

“Admitted or not,” wrote the author, psychiatrist James L. Groves, “the fact remains that a few patients kindle aversion, fear, despair, or even downright malice in their doctors.”

For physicians, these suck-the-life-out-of-you patients are needy, demanding and forever unhappy with their care.

“When one of their symptoms is relieved, another mysteriously appears in its place,” Groves writes about one variation of what British physicians call “heartsink patients.”

Low-level torture (death by a million little cuts),” write the authors of “Managing Difficult Interactions with Patients in Neurology Practices.” They may order the doctor to perform diagnostic tests, prescribe medications or make referrals, none of which are medically necessary, they say.

They have the attitude: “You bought it. It is my right.”

Take it down a notch to everyday thoughtlessness. One internist asking for confidentiality described a patient who called her office emergency line at 2:52 a.m. She returned the call immediately only to find he needed routine prescriptions. The kicker? His pharmacy didn’t open until 9 a.m.

“This happens fairly frequently,” she says. “Some patients seem to know they will get a callback right away if they call the emergency line instead of waiting for office hours when calls are screened by the front-desk staff.”

Doctors may pay the price for a disgruntled patient regardless of whether it is deserved. A patient can destroy a doctor’s reputation with bad reviews of the practice across the web. Another physician regretfully declined an interview for this article on the advice of lawyers; one of his patients is suing him now.

“IT takes extra effort,” says Jeffrey L. Jackson, an internist and professor of medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin, to deal with difficult patients. “I sit at my desk and gather my thoughts before I call them in.”

His research, however, shows that physicians practicing longer found fewer patients difficult because they had developed better interpersonal skills. But that still leaves patients with personality or somatic (feeling extreme anxiety about physical symptoms) disorders who defy any behavioral strategy, he says.

Engaged patients typically have the best outcomes, but not when the doctor has to take slow, deep breaths before seeing them. Doctors try to put personal feelings aside, but it’s hard to do when they feel overwhelmed or victimized, says Isabel Schuermeyer, a psychiatrist at Cleveland Clinic.

“As the physician’s exhaustion increases with each request, the care and well-being of the patient may no longer be the primary focus,” she writes.

Two companion studies in BMJ Quality and Safety concluded the same. Disruptive patient behavior led to errors when residents and medical trainees in the Netherlands were asked to diagnose symptoms after reading vignettes. Half of the vignettes contained neutral symptom descriptions and the rest included the same symptoms plus details about the patient behaving badly — yelling about the waiting time, for instance, or questioning the doctor’s competence. The doctors misdiagnosed the difficult patient from 6% more for simple symptoms to 42% more in complex cases.

Authors of the second study attributed the errors to “resource depletion.” Instead of devoting full attention to analyzing symptoms, their mental energy was diverted by the challenging behavior. The doctors were more likely to recall patients’ poor conduct than the clinical particulars when asked about the cases later. The effect of disruptive behavior would be much greater during an actual exam, the researchers say.

So how much can you challenge a physician without risking substandard care or becoming the hateful patient of medical journals?

“Patients should err on the side of being assertive. They are not there to please the physician,” says Joy L. Lee, assistant professor at Indiana University School of Medicine and researcher at Regenstrief Institute. But Lee, who has studied what makes some patients “favorites,” notes that being respectful and understanding a doctor’s limits will get your calls returned quicker.

The need do not win in health care, echoes San Francisco clinical psychologist Tamara McClintock Greenberg. At the same time, “It can be hard to know how much to push back when we don’t feel like we’re getting the care we need,” she writes in her book, “When Someone You Love Has a Chronic Illness.” This tends to matter most in the primary care setting where doctors are in shorter supply and can refer difficult patients to another physician.

To straddle the line, Greenberg tells patients to “adapt to the culture of medicine.” That means treating your appointment like a business meeting where the physician is the authority.

“Bring a list of no more than three items,” she recommends. “(Tell the doctor) ‘We have only 15 minutes but if we can cover this, it would mean a lot to me.’”

The trick is to be a squeaky wheel, but not require too much grease.

“Physicians also appreciate patients who keep emotions in check. No crying, venting, or soul-searching.”

“That’s what therapists are for,” says Greenberg, observing that many patients have unrealistic expectations about empathy from their physicians.

Being rude or complaining endlessly won’t get you far, either. Refrain from calling the office several times a day or after hours unless it is an emergency. Know that angry e-mails to the doctor or office staff members will go into your permanent medical record and brand you as “that patient” forever.

“In the hyperactive culture of medicine, doctors are not rewarded for good customer service,” Greenberg says. Thank your provider for seeing you or bringing food to the medical staff, she suggests. Being a jerk may not affect the level of care you receive, she says, “but if you want to hedge your bets, be kind.”

ILLUSTRATION BY NOGA AMI-RAV
If your child is depressed

Things you should know: first, you are not a failure

By Neha Chaudhary
Special to The Washington Post

A woman walked into an emergency room with her 13-year-old son, her lips pursed. He was there for a psychiatric evaluation following suicidal thoughts that he had voiced to his school counselor. After my evaluation of her son, I sat down with her to talk. She didn’t look pleased. “I hope you’re here to tell me you’re discharging him,” she said. “We have to get some soccer practice in today.”

“Actually, I’m here to tell you about your son’s depression,” I said to her gently. I told her he had been struggling for the past few months and that the past week had been especially tough.

What was hardest to tell her, however, was how far the depression had gotten. “For the past few days, he has been feeling like he doesn’t deserve to be alive,” I said. “I’d like to refer him for hospitalization to get more help in a safe setting, because what’s going on here doesn’t need to struggle this alone.

He had been all smiles and bravery. But at home, a permanent grimace was interrupted only by face-concealing coughing fits. “Achh... ungh... shhhhhoo,” Francis groaned and hunched himself over, breaths coming out in short, rapid bursts.

To explain this to the professionals may seem tough emotions involved. But just because your child is depressed doesn’t necessarily mean it’s a reflection or on your parenting ability.

Some parents struggle with feelings of guilt, and others feel helpless, distraught, scared or confused. Some might even feel relieved, knowing that it’s not them but something medical for which they can seek help.

Whatever the feelings may be, it’s critically important for parents to recognize them so that they don’t come out in ways that inadvertently harm the child or keep them from getting help.

Parents should be warned that emotions often do impair judgment and cloud decision-making. It’s best to anticipate this and leave the treatment decisions to the professionals.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 17 percent of kids ages 6 to 17 experience some sort of mental health disorder, and 50 percent of all mental illnesses start by age 14 (75 percent by age 24).

If your child is struggling, here’s what you need to know and how you can be most supportive in their time of need.

**Mental illness is just like any medical illness.** It can’t always be prevented, but it can be treated. The brain is an organ, just like any other in the body. Sometimes your kids are going to feel sick. And just as you would take your child to see a doctor to get treated for a broken arm, a seizure disorder or pneumonia, you can take them to see a doctor when things go wrong with their brains.

At the end of the day, a lot of illnesses are genetic, and no matter your family history, you may be carrying much you nurture your kid, sometimes the nature part — the genes will win. Sometimes no amount of parenting books, organic food or breaks from screen time will help.

And that’s OK. As long as you are able to acknowledge mental illness for what it is, you’ll be able to help address it sooner rather than later.

In fact, the sooner mental illness is addressed, the better.
FOOD ENGINEERING
BY ERIK AGARD / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

New York Times Crossword

Across
1 It got some "Xen" flavor in 2001
7 San Antonio pro
11 Atkins diet no-go
15 What's called a cud-chewing by Brits
18 Wage ___
19 Add to the team
20 ___ squash
21 One-named singer with the 2014 hit "Chandelier"
23 "Looks that can be difficult to pull off"
25 "It's 2 a.m. already?"
27 Half up front
28 Tikka masala go-with
29 Cravatite (toward)
31 Singer Moiissette
32 Actress de Amas of "Knives Out"
34 "How was ___ know?"
35 Place for speakers
37 Trig function
38 Data visual similar to histograms
41 "Swimming hazards in the ocean"
44 Crossword-loving detective on "Brooklyn Nine-Nine"
45 ___ Dhaba
46 Celebrations of lives, for short
48 Dance arrangements, familiarly
49 One making frequent pitching changes?
51 Back of the neck
52 It's spoken in Aberdeen
53 "Who ___ knows?"
54 Elderly
55 "I call dibs!"
56 "I'd be mad!"
59 Honor for a play
60 Place in the earth
62 South African currency
63 Operatic showpiece
64 "Man, that was cheap!"
66 "Holder of the single-game W.N.B.A. scoring record (53 points)
68 Something to do before a deal
69 Super in slang
70 Lisa who "ate no basil" in a palindrome
71 Misfits and such
72 Animal in a "Sound of Music" song
73 Big Super Bowl purchase
74 Easy as falling off
75 Nknamaka for a really thin guy
76 What Mercury and Venus lack
77 Religious observance that's also a pasta
78 "That ship has sailed"
79 Small- town
83 Cause of red eye
84 Ate
85 Regret
86 "Dinner choice"
88 "Something visually arresting"
91 Chief
92 Coin with 12 stars on one side
93 "Ancient greeting"
94 El Minirpoli, e.g.
95 Source of some South American wool
96 Get groceries, say
100 Sole
102 Film excerpt
105 "Depeche Mode," in word processing
107 "Disapper suddenly"
110 Long-handled tool
111 One with a truck record
112 Sport producer
113 Keys of some songs
114 Loan fig
115 Political worker
116 "A tickle food" per Emily Dickinson
117 Superlatively pleasant

Down
1 Children's playroom, often
2 Zen garden accessory
3 Running argument?
4 Plane in a box score
5 Hepworth or "soul"
6 ___ Mower College
7 Sword's place
8 Almost a score of Mozart compositions
9 Receptacle for ancient Greek votes
10 11-Down and such
11 Small states
12 Love
13 Follow of CD
14 La ___ "Tar Pits"
15 Donkeyish
16 Have a connection with
17 Horses
18 Org. behind 14 of the 15 most-watched TV broadcasts in U.S. history
24 Capital of the Indian state of Rajasthan
25 They help with printing and printing
30 Male line changes
31 Body of water greatly shrunk by 1960s Soviet irrigation
36 To the point
38 Howl
39 Opposite of the Latin "odi"
40 Busy as ___
41 Less green, say
42 Title woman in a No. 1 Beach Boys hit
43 Learns by ___
47 Score of zero, in slang
50 Inc.
52 Pollution panacea
54 People who would object to that clue because of it's pronunciation
57 Fishes
58 "Aussie" "insecure"
59 "How disastrous!"
60 "No way!"
61 Nonsense-stripping things
62 Sound a warning
63 Spanish month that synonyms to a zodiac sign
64 Bit of gum
65 ___ faire
66 Birds on Minnesota state quarters
67 Bad small
68 "Ugh!"
69 Select
70 "Out-wat!"
71 B-Side songs
72 Back-to-school time
78 "Well, that's that!"
79 Follow of 76-Down
80 Suffix with election
81 Skater's leap
82 Candy discard
83 Not to go
86 Ballroom dance from Cuba
87 Sent packing
88 Actress De Carlo of "The Munsters"
89 "Out-wat!"
90 ___ T.M.'s procedure
91 Tiny battery
92 Smoke
93 Welch form of John"
94 Goddess pictured with a solar disk above her
95 Excellent, in dated slang
96 Grade-school subj.
97 Shade of green
98 Muslim-American Iran

Gunston Street

"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and visit gunstonstreet.com.

Stars and Stripes: 15 Years in Afghanistan

The story of the U.S. military's role in Afghanistan, as seen through the eyes of Stars and Stripes journalists covering America's longest war.

Only $14.99 with Free Shipping

ORDER NOW at www.stripesstore.com

Over 100 pages of stunning images and stories from the front lines.
By Jake Coyle
Associated Press

Ljudmila Stefanov and Tamara Kotevska were in a hard-to-reach area of Northern Macedonia — about as far from the Oscars as possible — when they came upon the beekeeper who would be their subject in their acclaimed documentary “Honeyland.”

While working on a short video commissioned by a nature conservancy project, the filmmakers met Hatidze Muratova, a middle-aged woman who ekes out a hard existence harvesting honey with an assortment of honeybees from the golden age of movies who lived a scrabbling, solitary existence, harvesting honey with an assortment of honeybees and survived by tending to them.

Stefanov believes this elemental conflict is why their film has resonated. The neighbors — Hussein Sam, his wife and their seven children — aren’t exactly villains; they’re doing their best while saddled with debts and many mouths to feed.

“It shows how greediness works on a very basic level,” says Stefanov. “It’s a community of three people. It would be the same if you had thousands with an optimal livelihood and somebody came and said, ‘Hey, I will give you more.’ That sentence is the strongest reason why we are facing what we are today.

“What we found in this community is something that is everywhere in the world,” he adds.

It took an unusual amount of dedication to capture that community. Stefanov and Kotevska used an off-road vehicle to reach Muratova’s home and spent two-three days stretching stayed in tents nearby while shooting. In winter, it was too cold the stay the night. They spent three years filming and accumulated more than 400 hours of footage.

Most strikingly, Muratova often spoke Turkish, including in the scenes with her mother, a language that the Macedonian filmmakers don’t speak. They were often shooting purely from a visual standpoint.

“Honeyland,” which is currently streaming on Hulu and available to rent on Amazon, has tried to funnel some of its success back to its subjects. Jars of honey are for sale with proceeds going to Muratova and the Sam family.

‘Spartacus’ star Kirk Douglas dies at 103

BY DENNIS McLELLAN
Los Angeles Times

Kirk Douglas, the dimple-chinned screen icon who was known for bringing explosive, clenched-jawed intensity to a memorable array of heroes and heels in films such as “Spartacus” and “Champion,” died Wednesday in Los Angeles, surrounded by family, his son Michael Douglas said in a statement.

“The world he was a legend, an actor from the golden age of movies who lived well into his golden years, a humanitarian whose commitment to justice and the causes he believed in set a standard for all of us to aspire to,” Michael Douglas said on Instagram.

The stage-trained Douglas earned the first Oscar nomination of his long acting career playing one of the post-World War II era’s anathere: the ruthless ambitious boxer in the 1949 drama “Champion.”

Douglas later received Oscar nominations for his performances as an opportunistic movie mogul in the 1952 drama “The Bad and the Beautiful” and as an anti-slavery freedom fighter Midge Kelly in the 1960 Roman-Empire epic that starred Douglas as the gladiator-trained slave revolt leader.

In acknowledgment of a career that spanned more than 60 years and more than 80 films, Douglas was honored late in life with numerous major awards: The American Film Institute’s Life Achievement Award, a Kennedy Center Honor, a Screen Actors Guild Life Achievement Award and an honorary Oscar for his “50 years as a creative and moral force in the motion picture community.”

As a child, Douglas developed an early sense of the direction his life might take. “I have always wanted to be an actor,” he said in a 1988 autobiography. “I like a role that is stimulating, challenging, interesting to play. That’s why I’m often attracted to characters that aren’t likeable.”


Named after Douglas’ immigrant mother, the Bryna Co. produced a number of films in which Douglas starred, including director Stanley Kubrick’s landmark anti-war film, “Paths of Glory,” “The Vikings” and “Spartacus.”

As executive producer of “Spartacus,” Douglas helped end the Hollywood blacklist by giving blacklisted writer Dalton Trumbo screen credit under his own name for his work on the 1960 Roman-Empire epic that starred Douglas as the gladiator-trained slave revolt leader.

Among Douglas’ more than 20 film credits in the ’50s are “Young Man with a Horn,” “The Glass Menagerie,” “Ace in the Hole,” “Detective Story,” “The Juggler,” “20,000 Leagues Under the Sea” and “Gunfight at the O.K. Corral” (with frequent co-star Burt Lancaster).


Broadway before receiving a call from Hollywood for the 1946 melodrama “The Strange Love of Martha Ivers.”

Parts in a half-dozen films followed, and then came his Oscar-nominated starring role as ambitious fighter Midge Kelly in the 1949 drama “Champion.”

Among Douglas’ more than 20 film credits in the ’50s are “Young Man with a Horn,” “The Glass Menagerie,” “Ace in the Hole,” “Detective Story,” “The Juggler,” “20,000 Leagues Under the Sea” and “Gunfight at the O.K. Corral” (with frequent co-star Burt Lancaster).
Trump riding high, but it’s a long way to Election Day

By CARL P. LEUBSDORF
The Dallas Morning News

F or President Donald Trump seems unshaken this week by whatever自家 fellow Republicans especially exuberant at Tuesday night’s State of the Union speech. he former CEO who’s back in the news.

After all, Trump was just hours away from Senate acquittal on two impeachment charges. The president’s claim that he had continued economic strength, and buoyed by the miss Iowa’s Democrats made of Monday’s caucuses and the defeat there of the two spent months trying to destroy, Joe Biden.

In addition, Democratic turnout in Iowa failed to yield predicted levels, even if the elite, but weakly among older ones; Biden did those strong among younger voters. Buttigieg showed a breadth of support nowhere near the erstwhile front-runner could meet expectations, and a new Gallup poll shows him tied for third. This first test may come in the Feb. 19 debate in Nevada.

The day-long glide over counting Iowa’s results may have temporarily obscured Biden’s poor fourth-place finish. But finishing behind Sanders, Buttigieg and Sen. Elizabeth Warren in the New Hampshire primary, Buttigieg can match his Iowa showing there or anywhere else, which is still quite a feat in itself. Mayor of South Bend, Ind., who’s the son of the former South Bend, Ind., mayor did equally well across the spectrum. The son of the former South Bend, Ind., mayor did equally well across the spectrum.

But no previous address so cunningly adapted the ancient ritual of a formal speech to the visceral medium of television. A former TV star himself, Trump understands that people don’t just listen to what the president says. They can see the reaction in the room. He engineered the speech to force his opponents to react in potentially self-defeating ways.

Some examples. Rather than give the usual conservative lip service to school choice, Trump illustrated the issue by introducing a young African American girl in the gallery and announcing that she was getting a scholarship to attend her pre-K school. He introduced another girl, Nancy Pelosi, Calif., and her fellow Democrats do, applaud for the happy child and risk offending parents, school-teachers, or base, or sit on their hands and look like a bunch of Scrooges!

Some o n th e l e ft h a v e talked about im- p a c h ing Trump again. You have to wonder if they’re secretly on his payroll. Oddly enough, the Senate of the Iowa Democratic Party tossed a gasoline bomb. Their shocking inability to tabulate the results of Monday’s caucuses blew a giant hole in the party’s claims to hyper-compe- tence. Swing voters might be susceptible to the message that a party unable to count the votes is not to be trusted. Now Democrats may be encouraged to redesign the entire economy.

When, eventually, the votes are counted, Democrats are likely to find the outcome convincing in part thanks to the bumbling of Democrats to pro- duce an explosive campaign launch. There was the verdict on impeachment. No one believes it could have been as predictable as tomorrow’s sunrise — especially after House Democrats made the disastrous decision to halt their investi- gation and present a gaping incompleteness record to unwelcoming Senate Republicans. There is no way that a federal court orders for further evidence, the Democrats ur- gently explained. And then they frrett ed away at the record, presenting their articles of impeachment. The key verdict is one rendered by a chief of police’s opinion. According to the venerable Gallup Organization, Trump’s approval rating was a dismal 39 percent around the time news broke of his shady dealings with Ukraine. The last president below 40 percent at that point in his first term was Jimmy Carter, who was buried late by the end of the impeachment debacle, though, Trump was at 49 percent — the highest level of his presidency so far and an improvement at points higher than Barack Obama could claim in early February of his reelection year.

Some on the left have talked about im- p a c h ing Trump again. You have to wonder if they’re secretly on his payroll. Oddly enough, the Senate of the Iowa Democratic Party tossed a gasoline bomb. Their shocking inability to tabulate the results of Monday’s caucuses blew a giant hole in the party’s claims to hyper-compe- tence. Swing voters might be susceptible to the message that a party unable to count the votes is not to be trusted. Now Democrats may be encouraged to redesign the entire economy.

When, eventually, the votes are counted, Democrats are likely to find the outcome convincing in part thanks to the bumbling of Democrats to pro- duce an explosive campaign launch. There was the verdict on impeachment. No one believes it could have been as predictable as tomorrow’s sunrise — especially after House Democrats made the disastrous decision to halt their investi- gation and present a gaping incompleteness record to unwelcoming Senate Republicans. There is no way that a federal court orders for further evidence, the Democrats ur- gently explained. And then they frrett ed away at the record, presenting their articles of impeachment. The key verdict is one rendered by a chief of police’s opinion. According to the venerable Gallup Organization, Trump’s approval rating was a dismal 39 percent around the time news broke of his shady dealings with Ukraine. The last president below 40 percent at that point in his first term was Jimmy Carter, who was buried late by the end of the impeachment debacle, though, Trump was at 49 percent — the highest level of his presidency so far and an improvement at points higher than Barack Obama could claim in early February of his reelection year.

Some on the left have talked about im- p a c h ing Trump again. You have to wonder if they’re secretly on his payroll. Oddly enough, the Senate of the Iowa Democratic Party tossed a gasoline bomb. Their shocking inability to tabulate the results of Monday’s caucuses blew a giant hole in the party’s claims to hyper-compe- tence. Swing voters might be susceptible to the message that a party unable to count the votes is not to be trusted. Now Democrats may be encouraged to redesign the entire economy.

When, eventually, the votes are counted, Democrats are likely to find the outcome convincing in part thanks to the bumbling of Democrats to pro- duce an explosive campaign launch. There was the verdict on impeachment. No one believes it could have been as predictable as tomorrow’s sunrise — especially after House Democrats made the disastrous decision to halt their investi- gation and present a gaping incompleteness record to unwelcoming Senate Republicans. There is no way that a federal court orders for further evidence, the Democrats ur- gently explained. And then they frrett ed away at the record, presenting their articles of impeachment. The key verdict is one rendered by a chief of police’s opinion. According to the venerable Gallup Organization, Trump’s approval rating was a dismal 39 percent around the time news broke of his shady dealings with Ukraine. The last president below 40 percent at that point in his first term was Jimmy Carter, who was buried late by the end of the impeachment debacle, though, Trump was at 49 percent — the highest level of his presidency so far and an improvement at points higher than Barack Obama could claim in early February of his reelection year.

Some on the left have talked about im- p a c h ing Trump again. You have to wonder if they’re secretly on his payroll. Oddly enough, the Senate of the Iowa Democratic Party tossed a gasoline bomb. Their shocking inability to tabulate the results of Monday’s caucuses blew a giant hole in the party’s claims to hyper-compe- tence. Swing voters might be susceptible to the message that a party unable to count the votes is not to be trusted. Now Democrats may be encouraged to redesign the entire economy.

When, eventually, the votes are counted, Democrats are likely to find the outcome convincing in part thanks to the bumbling of Democrats to pro- duce an explosive campaign launch. There was the verdict on impeachment. No one believes it could have been as predictable as tomorrow’s sunrise — especially after House Democrats made the disastrous decision to halt their investi- gation and present a gaping incompleteness record to unwelcoming Senate Republicans. There is no way that a federal court orders for further evidence, the Democrats ur- urgent explained. And then they frrett ed away at the record, presenting their articles of impeachment. The key verdict is one rendered by a chief of police’s opinion. According to the venerable Gallup Organization, Trump’s approval rating was a dismal 39 percent around the time news broke of his shady dealings with Ukraine. The last president below 40 percent at that point in his first term was Jimmy Carter, who was buried late by the end of the impeachment debacle, though, Trump was at 49 percent — the highest level of his presidency so far and an improvement at points higher than Barack Obama could claim in early February of his reelection year.

Some on the left have talked about im- p a c h ing Trump again. You have to wonder if they’re secretly on his payroll. Oddly enough, the Senate of the Iowa Democratic Party tossed a gasoline bomb. Their shocking inability to tabulate the results of Monday’s caucuses blew a giant hole in the party’s claims to hyper-compe- tence. Swing voters might be susceptible to the message that a party unable to count the votes is not to be trusted. Now Democrats may be encouraged to redesign the entire economy.
Trump's address did little to defuse charged atmosphere

(Minneapolis) Star Tribune

Amid an impeachment effort meant to remove him from office and a re-election campaign meant to return him, President Donald Trump gave his third State of the Union address on Tuesday night.

The extraordinary circumstances were apparent in the setting. Over his left shoulder was the chair of the House Nancy Pelosi, who resisted impeachment until allegations demanded Congress do its constitutional duty. In front of him was his right flank: Republican lawmakers defending the president, including a House minority that voted unanimously not to impeach him and a Senate majority that acquitted the president the next day.

It was a night that laid bare the nation's deep partisan divide, with protesters not shaking Pelosi's hand and the speaker ending the evening by ripping up her copy of the address.

And it was hardly the combination of ingredients for the compromise, or even co-operation, that's needed for bipartisan action on key issues of the moment: the gridlock gripping Washington. But the president's next day.

But in a speech touted by the White House as “the great American comeback,” the president overstated the strength of the economy, repeated the theme of the country's relatively tepid economic growth. Just last week, the Congressional Budget Office said the GDP growth was 2.3%, its slowest since 2016 in an era Trump described in his inaugural Union speech.

The administration announced it was adding six more countries to the list of whose citizens face travel restrictions. The notable exception was that those nations were not sufficiently screening people who sought to come to America.

“Not only do we have a law that the courts have upheld, we have a law that the courts have upheld,” he said.

The president overstated the strength of the economy, including Sudan and Tanzania, as a means for poor countries to dump people they don’t want on their soil.

Adding ignorance to insult, Trump has consistently misrepresented the diversity lottery program, from which he is excluding Sudan and Tanzania, as a means for poor countries to dump people they don’t want on their soil. In fact, the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program is administered by the State Department to increase immigration from countries with low rates of immigration, and candidates must have at least the equivalent of a high school diploma or two years of work experience to qualify.

The veneer of process and rationale over the latest travel ban cannot conceal its fundamental malice.

Black History Month still needed, still appreciated

Valdosta (Ga.) Daily Times

Black History Month has a history of its own.

The commemorative month was founded more than 100 years ago. In 1915, 50 years after President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation that abolished slavery in America, Black History Month was created as a way to acknowledge black Americans. Attesting to all recognize all black Americans who achieved greatness in their field is impossible.

The contributions of Black Americans is as broad, as vast and as diverse as the nation. Some people still like to deride the need for a Black History Month. Why don’t we have a “white history month.”

History books and curriculum have largely been written by white people, and then re-written by white people. The White House has excluded the contributions of blacks, women and other minorities. Arguably, every month is White History Month.

So, Black History Month allows us to highlight the things we’ve learned. Some may say the month is too short to do justice to the contributions of black Americans, but it is a way to begin.

The story of America is the story of our neighbors and friends. They are the stories of our neighbors and friends. They are American stories.
**PHONE BOOTH**

DADDY TELL ME OK DRINK OR PLEASE?

NO...WHY...LET’S TRY
THIS ONE; A LITTLE
MORE, A KID AND A BEAR
WALK INTO A BAR...

NO...WHY...LET’S TRY
THIS ONE; A LITTLE
BOY PUTS HIS FATHER
ON THE SPOT... BUT HIS
FATHER IS PROBABLY
PERFORMANCE ANXIETY.

YOU KNOW YOU’re
GETTING FARSIGHTED
WHEN YOU START USING
A SELFIE STICK TO READ
YOUR PHONE...

QUIET, OTTO! FORGET ABOUT
YOUR LITTLE FOOT; FOR YOUR
RUNNED BUDDIES.

YOU REMEMBER
AT THIS HOUR?

DELIcate notes of
damp leaves
and newspaper.

Earthly, with a hint of
cinnamon.

Eugene Sheffer Crossword

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACROSS**

1. Shriver of tennis
2. Old map letters
3. More broad
4. Ms. Thurman
5. Mineral suffix
6. Worship
7. Box office purchases, slangly
8. 10th-related branch of medicine
9. Numerical prefix
10. “I’m okay with the hate.”
11. Before
12. Gardiner
13. Acid type
14. Proverb
15. Faction
16. Takes the wrong way?
17. Oscar de la —
18. “Hold on…”
19. Dog tags, e.g.
20. “I smell a rat.”
21. Lotion additive
22. German river
23. Baker’s treat
24. Humiliate
25. Corduroy feature
26. Church room
27. Spanish aunt
28. Dog food brand
29. Rushmore face
30. Bottle part
31. Brainy
32. Bikini half
33. Fortune-telling method
34. 52 Corn spike
35. Pillar
36. Short trip
37. Spining abbr.
38. Nasser’s successor

**DOWN**

1. Erected
2. Acid type
3. Proverb
4. Faction
5. Takes the wrong way?
6. Oscar de la —
7. “Hold on…”
8. Dog tags, e.g.
9. Speck
10. “I smell a rat.”
11. Lotion additive
12. German river
13. Baker’s treat
14. Humiliate
15. Corduroy feature
16. Church room
17. Spanish aunt
18. Dog food brand
19. Rushmore face
20. Bottle part
21. Brainy
22. Bikini half
23. Fortune-telling method
24. 52 Corn spike
25. Pillar
26. Short trip
27. Spining abbr.
28. Nasser’s successor

**Answer to Previous Puzzle**

JAG ATOM PABA OVA PASO IRAS GAS LIGHT VALE TEA AEROSIC SMEARS SALVATION WAY YET GEODE ARES AWE DUAL MARES ARP TM ART SNOOPS UTENSIL ARE TALC LAS VEGAS AXLE ERT ACH HIS DADS SEE

**CRYPTOQUIP**


Yesterday’s Cryptoquip: WELL-KNOWN SOUTH AMERICAN CITY NAMED AFTER THE GREEK GOD OF MUSIC AND POETRY: SAO APOLLO.

Today’s Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals L
**Eugene Sheffer Crossword**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACROSS**
1. Bit of wit
4. Computer brand
8. Atkins diet no-no
12. Japanese sash
13. Humdinger
14. Sheltered
15. Badminton barrier
16. Svelte
17. Auction
18. Utopian getaway
20. Chest-beating beast
21. “The Thinker” sculptor
23. “Top Hat” studio
27. Boy king
28. Punt’s piece
31. Casual shirt
32. Char
33. Scale amts.
34. Present location?
35. Arcade pioneer
36. Drink holder
37. Devious
38. Storytelling technique that may include flashbacks
45. Deserve
46. Jack Horner’s prize
47. Dig in
48. Battery fluid
49. One-named supermodel
50. Sternward
51. Say it isn’t so
52. Terse denial
53. Green shade

**DOWN**
1. Frogs’ hangout
2. Modern taxi alternative
3. Evening, in ads
4. “Gosford Park” director Robert
5. Bend in the road
6. Lamb alias
7. Barcadi—spiked dessert
8. Social group
9. Jai —
10. Move, in realtor lingo
11. “It’s — real!”
19. Desertlike
20. Mil. address
23. Tier
24. Choose
25 — Moines
26. Mardi Gras VIP
27. Earl Grey, for one
28. Former Mideast org.
29. Prefix with athlete
31. Tennis tactic
32. Eyelid woe
33. Vagrant
35. Graduates
36. Halloween bagful
37. Musher down
38. Out of play
39. Indy event
40. Ireland
41. Ticklish Muppet
42. Tide type
43. Sidewalk eater
44. Jazz singer
47. James

**Answer to Previous Puzzle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CRYPTOQUIP**

LE BTN MTOQFZLP ILDDHYFB
ZITND ZP LPEHYLTY IZPLJDHY
OZPNEZMDNYHY, ZYH BTN
YZLFLFW ZWZLJPD LD?

Yesterday’s Cryptoquip: NOT ALL OF THE FAMED ANCIENT DOCTOR’S WORK WAS REMARKABLE. REMEMBER HIPPOCRATES MEDIOCRITIES.

Today’s Cryptoquip Clue: D equals T

This conversation may be monitored or recorded for quality assurance purposes.
make your Valentine SMILE

with a Petals & Blooms floral arrangement today!

Valentine's Day ❤ Feb. 14
Welcome to the Neighborhood.

You rely on your military community when you’re far from home.

We get that.

Use our community sites to connect and share during your time overseas.

With base information, travel tips, restaurant reviews and even the score of your child’s high school basketball game, we’ve got you covered.

Visit one of our community sites today!

Stars & Stripes. Okinawa

Stars & Stripes. Korea

Stars & Stripes. Guam

Stars & Stripes. Japan

Stars & Stripes. Europe

Stay connected and hey, welcome to the neighborhood.
Unlimited Digital Access

INTRO OFFER!
FOUR WEEKS  Web + Mobile

When you subscribe to Stripes Digital Access...

Get exclusive access to innovative digital features, interactive articles, award-winning photography and more. Enjoy unlimited access to the Stripes.com website and our Stars and Stripes mobile apps, all for a low monthly or annual subscription.

Stars and Stripes content features

- Access to Stars and Stripes mobile apps
- Exclusive reports on military matters
- Coverage of all military branches
- Special features on current issues
- Veterans topics
- Retrospectives such as Vietnam at 50
- Archive Photo of the Day
- Unbiased, First Amendment protected reporting from U.S. military bases around the world.

Subscribe Today!
stripes.com/subscribe
Mobile apps with constantly updating news, featuring breaking news and stories from reporters at overseas bases. Unique galleries of images available nowhere else presented in an uncluttered interface and a responsive, intuitive design. One iOS app serves both phone and tablet devices.

In print, we serve military stationed overseas in contingency areas, Europe and Pacific. Daily editions focus on military news and include sports, comics and opinion. Available by mail delivery to any U.S. address.

Discover unique stories from reporters at bases around the world and embedded with downrange forces at Stripes.com, along with military news from every part of the country and photo galleries you’ll see nowhere else. DoDDs sports also gets good coverage online. If it concerns our U.S. forces, you’ll find it on our website.

UNBIASED NEWS WHATEVER WAY YOU WANT IT.
Get the news that matters to you, from the source you trust.

Daily Headlines | Veterans News | Military History | and more

Sign up now for Stars and Stripes FREE eNewsletters

stripes.com/newsletters
Go to the American Forces
Network website for the most up-to-date TV schedules.

---

**College basketball**

**Wednesday's men's scores**

**EAST**

Adelphi 96, American International 92, OT
Albany 117, Binghamton 95
Arcadia 95, Ave Maria 60
Baruch 84, Amherst 64
Bethany (WV) 53, Thiel 49
Boston College-W 101, Union (NY) 68
Bowie St. 69, Elizabeth City State 67
Brown 84, Emmanuel 64
Cairns 92, St. Elizabeth 77
Catholic 71, Mary's 67
Cent. Conn. St. 100, St. Mary's (Md.) 54
Colgate 86, Chestnut Hill 61
Connecticut 87, Ashland 63
Coppin St. 63, Chestnut Hill 51
Creighton 89, Manhattan 60
Drexel 73, Charleston 70
Erie 80, Niagara 69
Fairfield 79, Glenville St. 77
Gannon 74, Edinboro 47
Gonzaga 83, Saint Mary's (Calif.) 69
Grand Valley 77, Slippery Rock 69
Hampden-Sydney 79, Catholic (Ky.) 75
Hampton 82, Francis Marion 63
Heritage (Ga.) 87, Anderson (SC) 46
Huntingdon 69, Juniata 66
Iona 78, Southern Connecticut 57
Kutztown 85, Delaware 63
Le Moyne 75, St. Rose 75
Lincoln (Nebraska) 70, Southeastern 67
Loyola (Md.) 74, Holy Cross 66
Marymount 85, St. Louis 61
Mass. College of Liberal Arts 77, Amherst 70
Mass. State 69, Nichols 64
Mass. Wesleyan 81, Nazareth 68
Middlebury 72, Williams 63
Misericordia 70, Messiah 69
Molsheim (France) 67, Arcadia 63
Norwich 79, St. Benedict 65
North Central 85, Walsh (Ohio) 64
Old Dominion 71, Longwood 60
Old Westbury 79, Suny Maritime 76
Pace 81, Adelphi 70
Penn. State-Behrend 50, Alfred 61
Penn. State-Harrisburg 91, Lancaster 69
Pitt-Greentown 99, Penn St.-Altoona 79
Pitt-Johnstown 77, Penn State-Centre 60
Provost 75, Chesterton 73
Queen's (NY) 80, Edgewood 59
Randolph-Macon 83, Bridgewater (Va.) 69
Rhode Island 73, Shepherd 65
Rochester 70, Oakton 69
Rowan 97, Stockton 76
Salisbury (Md.) 101, Shepherd 79
Savannah State 87, Savannah 62
S.C. State 78, N.C. A&T 66
Seton Hall 78, Georgetown 71
Shippensburg 77, Slippery Rock 69
Skidmore 77, Rensselaer Polytech 70
Slingers 75, Springfield 64
S.M. U. 79, Texas Wesleyan (W) 60
S.R. U. 86, N.C. Central 74
S.C. State 77, N.C. Central 76
South Carolina 90, North Carolina A&T 64
Springfield 85, UMass 62
SUNY Geneseo 77, Geneseo 67
SUNY Maritime 109, Maritime 61
SUNY Potsdam 53, S. Connecticut 55
SUNY Old Westbury 83, Maritime 71
Fairfield 86, Mercy 71
Penn. St. Behrend 67, Alfred 65
Penn. St.-Harrisburg 90, Lancaster 63
Hunter 89, Medgar Evers 62
Purdue 104, Iowa 68
Oberlin 67, Ohio Wesleyan 60
Marietta 82, Capital 62
Missouri Western 81, Lincoln (Mo.) 71
Mississippi Valley State 87, Grambling 69
Moore 87, La Verne 64
Morgan State 78, Bucknell 63
Murray State 97, Tennessee 62
Montana Tech 89, Montana 70
Monmouth (IL) 72, Elmhurst 64
Macalester 81, Gettysburg 77
Montclair State 80, Lock Haven 71
Montana State 80, Delta State 69
Morgan State 96, Virginia State 74
N.C. A&T 84, N.C. Central 65
N.C. Central 78, S.C. State 76
N.C. Central 91, S.C. State 66
NC Wesleyan 78, Methodist 60
Norfolk State 72, Norfolk 60
Northwood 71, Mary Washington 69
Norwich 79, St. Benedict 65
Northern Illinois 84, Northern Michigan 63
North Carolina 90, Charleston Southern 71
Norwich 81, St. Benedict 65
Northwestern 70, St. John's 54
Ohio Wesleyan 77, Messiah 67
University of Sioux Falls 87, Dakota Wesleyan 66
Otterbein 79, Kenyon 69
Otterbein 79, Kenyon 69
Ottawa 98, Lake Forest 65
Owen 81, Milligan 76
Pittsburgh 99, Slippery Rock 69
Pitt-Johnstown 80, Penn State-Behrend 60
Pierson-Brookhaven 67, Converse 63
Pitt-Johnstown 88, Penn State-Behrend 60
Pitt-Johnstown 75, Penn State-Behrend 60
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 85, Penn State-Behrend 70
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behrend 71
Pitt-Johnstown 90, Penn State-Behren
Wrestling chief says sport is in prime position for growth

BY ERIC OLSON
Associated Press

With the Olympics six months away, the president of wrestling’s international governing body says the sport is on a solid foundation and positioned for growth.

Nenad Lalovic took over leadership of United World Wrestling seven years ago, shortly after the sport was targeted for elimination from the Olympics in 2020. Lalovic led the campaign to save wrestling and has overseen a modernization of the ancient sport.

Opportunities for women on and off the mat have increased. Technology has been embraced. Stars are being promoted like never before.

“Altogether we have had a huge impact on the development of our sport,” he said. “This is why we are really confident we are a very good part of the Olympic movement.”

The 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro featured engaged, large crowds and captivating performances by, among others, Abdulrashid “Russian Tank” Sadulaev, Americans Kyle Snyder and Helen Maroulis, and Cuban Greco-Roman star Mijain Lopez Nunez.

Lalovic said the sport’s turning point was the 2015 world championships in Las Vegas. The presentation was polished, fitting of a major international competition, with big video boards and other amenities for the fans and spacious warm-up areas, nutritious food, reliable transportation and top medical care for the wrestlers. That was in stark contrast to the previous year’s championships in Uzbekistan.

Prior to Lalovic’s arrival in 2013, the International Olympic Committee proposed kicking wrestling out of the games, alleging mismanagement and complacency by the sport’s governors.

There also was a lack of diversity in leadership at the international and national levels, and rules and scoring were hard to understand for casual fans and needed to be revised to encourage faster action.

Women’s wrestling, which entered the Olympics in 2004, will get the big stage in Tokyo. Japan is the dominant nation in women’s wrestling, having taken 11 of 18 gold medals in the last three Olympics. A women’s gold medal match will be featured to end six of the seven days of the tournament, assuring capacity crowds at the Makuhari Messe venue.

United World Wrestling and national federations have hosted forums to encourage women to become referees and coaches and to serve in leadership positions.

“When you speak about women’s wrestling, it is not less spectacular than men’s wrestling,” Lalovic said. “We have more countries coming in with women’s wrestling like China, Mongolia. India. In the beginning, the most successful were Scandinavian countries. Since then, Japan has invested a lot in that style and the result is visible, of course.”

A new computerized draw process will be used in Tokyo to set up the brackets. Lalovic said he has been pleased with a relatively new system for selecting referees just minutes before matches. The system takes into account the nationalities of referees and athletes and other factors, such as religion, in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

The sport’s exposure has increased because of video streaming and increased television coverage. In June, United World Wrestling and India-based Sporty Solutionz signed a six-year agreement to promote wrestling on the Indian subcontinent on broadcast and digital mediums.

UWW Ranking Series events, where wrestlers earn points that affect their world rankings, have been well-attended throughout the world and have helped top wrestlers build their brands, Lalovic said.

Lalovic said he is monitoring the fallout of the Russian doping scandal. The World Anti-Doping Agency last month banned Russia’s name and flag from the Olympics and other major events for four years as punishment for altering data on athlete blood tests. Russia is planning to appeal the sanctions at the Court of Arbitration for Sport in time for the Olympics.

Lalovic said UWW, like other sport federations, has put an emphasis on educating wrestlers about the risks of doping. He said doping cases involving wrestlers have declined since 2013. The frustration with doping, he said, is that there often are bad influences by the sport’s governors.

“We have the problem of the entourages you can’t understand while we are fighting against doping,” Lalovic said. “For the fight to be successful, we insist on education of the athletes first.”

Tokyo seeking to allay fears of virus’ impact

BY STEPHEN WADE
Associated Press

TOKYO — Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic organizers again tried on Thursday to allay fears that the 2020 Games could be postponed or canceled by the fast-spreading virus from China.

Tokyo Olympic CEO Toshiro Muto, who on Wednesday said he was “seriously worried” the virus could disrupt the Olympic and Paralympic Games, backedtracked a day later and was more cautious in a news conference with officials from the International Paralympic Committee.

“In order to avoid any misunderstanding, I would like to say that the Olympic and Paralympic Games will be held as scheduled,” Muto said, adding people need to remain “coolheaded.”

Craig Spence, the spokesman for the IPC, was even more direct with the Olympics opening in just under six months — and the Paralympics in just under seven.

“One thing I am noticing at the moment is fear is spreading quicker than the virus, and it is important that we quell that fear,” Spence said.

On Thursday, Japan confirmed 45 cases of the virus but no deaths have been reported. Tokyo Olympic officials said they have established a task force to focus on the virus and have been repeating for a week that the games will go ahead as planned.

Despite the assurances, questions keep coming with organizers saying they are referring to the World Health Organization for advice.

“We need to put things into perspective, and until the World Health Organization tells us otherwise, we will proceed with business as usual,” Spence said.

The Olympics open on July 24, and the Paralympics follow on Aug. 28. Both events are experiencing record ticket demand, which could begin to shift the longer the virus threatens summer Olympic certainty. It’s a similar story with hotel demand.

Toshiaki Endo, a vice president of the organizing committee, earlier in the week said organizers “are facing all sorts of problems including coronavirus infections, cyber security and transportation systems.”

Some Olympic and Paralympic qualifying events around the globe have been canceled or postponed by the virus outbreak.

Travel restrictions also complicate matters, particularly for China’s large Olympic and Paralympic delegations.

There is also the question of housing 11,000 Olympic athletes safely in the Athletes Village. The number is smaller for the Paralympics, but still in the thousands.

The Olympics have been canceled during wartime, and faced boycotts in 1980 and 1984. The event has grown rapidly in the decades since, driven by multi-billion dollar television contracts and billions more from sponsors.
Girls basketball

3 squads try to stay unbeaten

BY GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

Planning to be an undefeated team is a great way to not become one.

Expecting to win each time your team steps on the court, however? Now that’s a plan.

The Division I Stuttgart Panthers, the Division II Aviano Saints and the Division III Spangdahlem Sentinels have all arrived at this late juncture of the 2019-20 DODEA Europe girls basketball tournament without a loss, divisional or otherwise. And the coach of each team agrees on the best way to achieve that kind of success.

“An undefeated season can never be planned,” Spangdahlem coach Chris Howard said. “We just take what we learn each week from playing and try to get better at doing it against the competition.”

Aviano, having just knocked off one of its biggest divisional challengers in a weekend sweep of Naples, is thrilled to be alone atop the Division II standings.

“Having an undefeated record was never in the forefront of our focus this season. Ultimately making improvements from the previous season was our top priority,” Monique Jones said. “Being the team to beat is definitely an accomplishment.”

Even the Panthers, the three-time defending champions and the heavy favorite to prolong their reign this season, have avoided the topic throughout the winter.

“Having an undefeated season has never been a goal,” Stuttgart coach Robin Hess said. “We just take what we learn each week from playing and try to get better at doing it against the competition.”

But those unavoidable bouts of adversity can be overcome with the right attitude.

Jones and the Saints staff direct their athletes to “play as winners, command respect on the court, and play our game,” she said.

Howard’s Sentinels, meanwhile, have been faced with a string of injuries over the last few weeks that threatened to end their perfect start. But Spangdahlem turned those problems into opportunities as players seized the chance to expand their games.

“The players have had to work together to fill in or do more and work with different skill sets or just take over a different role in the offense or defense,” Howard said.

The Panthers have leaned on their championship pedigree to power through a dominant regular season in which they’ve won every game by double-digit margins.

“They set extremely high standards for themselves, so when they go out on the floor, they expect to win,” Hess said. “They are not cocky or conceited. They just expect nothing less from themselves.”

As successful as their seasons have been to date, a looming challenge faces each of DODEA Europe’s divisional frontrunners: transferring their momentum into the grueling European tournament.

Jones cited the challenge of preparing her team “mentally and physically” for the tournament’s packed schedule, which includes a grueling preliminary round followed by, if all goes well, season-defining semifinal and championship games.

Hess said the Panthers’ goal is to “stay focused” as they encounter more seasoned versions of the teams they’d already beaten in the regular season.

“They realize that everyone will have played everyone,” Hess said. “So teams will make adjustments when they play us, and we will make adjustments, as well.”

Above all, none of DODEA Europe’s current unbeaten teams expect their records to count for anything when the tournament gives every team in the brackets a fresh shot at a championship. In short, even a team that has had its fill of regular-season success has to enter the playoffs hungry for more.

“As we look to the tournament, can we continue to learn from each other?,” Howard said, “and maintain a flexibility to play the game at a winning level?”

Girls basketball

Weekend peek

Wrestling, basketball seasons reach stretch drive

BY GREGORY BROOME
Stars and Stripes

The final act of the 2019-20 DODEA Europe winter sports season began last weekend with the European championship meet in marksmanship. Now basketball and wrestling are in view of the finish line.

The regular season is over in wrestling, leaving only two weekends of season-defining postseason matches on the mats. This weekend holds the first stage in the form of three sectional meets spanning DODEA Europe’s geographic footprint. Division I power Ramstein begins its ongoing quest for a European team title in Brussels, where it will fill the northern brackets alongside the host Brigand and five other schools, including Division I Lakensheath and SHAPE and Division III Alconbury, AFNORTH and Baumholder.

Reigning large-school dynasty Stuttgart plays host to the central region’s sectional qualifier. Kaiserslautern and Wiesbaden will provide the Division I resistance while small schools Hohenfels and Spangdahlem continue their Division III rivalry.

Finally, Aviano plays host to a southern sectional that looks similar to the average regular-season meet with Naples, Sigonella, Vicenza and Spanish neighbor Rota on hand. Ankara and German Division I entry Vilseck, both of which have dropped in on Italian meets during the regular season, are set to visit again Saturday.

The DODEA Europe girls and boys basketball tournaments are still a week and a half away, but this weekend’s slates represents the last full weekend of regular-season action. A handful of matchups from Feb. 11 to 15 define the final path to the Feb. 19-22 tournaments.

As is DODEA Europe’s tradition, the latter stretch of the season will see most teams stay close to home for regional matchups before gathering in Germany for the postseason. Among the key matchups are an anticipated Division I boys rematch between Wiesbaden and Black Forest, a Division III girls showdown between contenders AFNORTH and Ansbach and the latest editions of the eternal Kaiserslautern-Ramstein rivalry.

Girls basketball

Girls basketball

Girls basketball

Girls basketball

Girls basketball

Girls basketball

Girls basketball

Girls basketball

Girls basketball

Girls basketball

Girls basketball

Girls basketball

Girls basketball

Girls basketball
DoE: Wolves, Warriors swapping Wiggins, Russell

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — In a swap of high scorers, the Minnesota Timberwolves acquired D’Angelo Russel on Thursday from the Golden State Warriors for Andrew Wiggins, according to a person with knowledge of the trade.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because the deal had yet to be finalized by the NBA with a few hours remaining before Thursday’s deadline. ESPN first reported the trade, which also includes additional players and draft picks.

Russell had been on Minnesota’s radar for months, a dynamic point guard in his fifth season in the league after going as the second overall pick in the 2015 draft.

The first choice that year was Timberwolves center Karl-Anthony Towns, a friend of Russell around whom the front office has been trying to rebuild the roster. Minnesota will be Russell’s fourth NBA team. He averaged 23.9 points per game for the injury-wrecked Warriors.

Wiggins, the first overall selection in the 2014 draft, never fulfilled his potential with the Wolves, a shooting and slashing wing with the athleticism and frame to dominate on the perimeter. He’s averaging 22.4 points this season.

Memphis shipping Igudola to Miami

MIAMI — A person familiar with the negotiations says Andre Igudala is headed to Miami after the Heat and Memphis Grizzlies agreed Wednesday night on his long-awaited trade.

As part of the deal, Igudala agreed to a two-year extension, with the second of those years being a team option, according to the person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the trade has not been finalized.

The person also said Miami and Memphis were still working to complete terms before the Far East tournaments it also serves as the final tune-up for Zama’s girls basketball team.

Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Much attention has been focused on Zama’s girls basketball team in the past year.

Well, what about the Trojans boys basketball team? The football team took its first Far East Division II title in six years, so, why not count the boys basketball team in the title mix?

At 9-5 this season entering this week’s DODEA Japan tournament at Yokota, the Trojan boys say they’re aiming for the same thing starting this week.

“We have our eyes on the prize,” first-year Trojans head coach William Guion said Tuesday, “as time goes on, he’ll be revered for doing this, not being a distraction to his teammates.”

iko’s Hana Robbins tries to shoot against Kinnick’s Madelyn Gallo. Both teams are playing in the DODEA Japan tournament.

ODEA Pacific weekend peek

Zama boys seek to equal girls’ success

BY DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Much attention has been focused on Zama’s girls basketball team in the past year.

Well, what about the Trojans boys basketball team? The football team took its first Far East Division II title in six years, so, why not count the boys basketball team in the title mix?

At 9-5 this season entering this week’s DODEA Japan tournament at Yokota, the Trojan boys say they’re aiming for the same thing starting this week.

“We have our eyes on the prize,” first-year Trojans head coach William Guion said Tuesday, “as time goes on, he’ll be revered for doing this, not being a distraction to his teammates.”

iko’s Hana Robbins tries to shoot against Kinnick’s Madelyn Gallo. Both teams are playing in the DODEA Japan tournament.

ODEA Pacific weekend peek

Zama boys seek to equal girls’ success

BY DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Much attention has been focused on Zama’s girls basketball team in the past year.

Well, what about the Trojans boys basketball team? The football team took its first Far East Division II title in six years, so, why not count the boys basketball team in the title mix?

At 9-5 this season entering this week’s DODEA Japan tournament at Yokota, the Trojan boys say they’re aiming for the same thing starting this week.

“We have our eyes on the prize,” first-year Trojans head coach William Guion said Tuesday, “as time goes on, he’ll be revered for doing this, not being a distraction to his teammates.”

iko’s Hana Robbins tries to shoot against Kinnick’s Madelyn Gallo. Both teams are playing in the DODEA Japan tournament.
Since assuming the starting role, Blue Jackets goaltender Elvis Merzlikkins is 12-2-0, including four shutouts.

**Blue Jackets climbing in Metro**

BY MITCH STACY

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Columbus Blue Jackets were tanking just two months ago. They were 11-14-4, had lost four in a row and timely goals were as scarce as winter sunshine in Columbus. Hopes for a fourth straight playoff appearance were slipping away. Coach John Tortorella was exasperated, and the organization was starting to look to developing next year.

Near the bottom of the Metropolitan Division and 11 points out of a playoff spot on Dec. 9, the Blue Jackets walloped the division-leading Washington Capitals 5-2. That started an 18-2-5 run that fans hoped of a potential playoff run.

The way it happened made the turnaround even more improbable.

The Blue Jackets were plagued by injuries in December and January, with as many as 10 regular players sidelined. Lines were patched together with players who started the season in Cleveland with the team’s AHL affiliate.

Then came more bad luck. Goaltender Joonas Korpisalo, who had gotten hot enough to be selected for the NHL All-Star Game, injured his left knee during a shoot-out with Chicago on Dec. 29. That set the stage for rookie Elvis Merzlikkins, who was 0-4-4 and exorcised on the bench.

Merzlikkins helped provide the fireworks on New Year’s Eve when he turned in a 36-save performance in a 4-3 win over Florida and former Blue Jackets star goal- ie Sergei Bobrovsky. Since assuming the starting role, he’s 12-2-0, including four shutouts, and has become a fan favorite.

The Blue Jackets returned from their NHL-mandated break by picking up three points in a road back-to-back and moved into third place in the rugged Metropolitan Division. Oliver Bjorkstrand, previously a steady presence but far from a star, is on a scoring tear.

“I think winning breeds confidence,” Columbus captain Nick Foligno said. “I think when you’re a team finding ways to win or at least feeling positive about your game, it’s amazing what that does for you. You don’t feel like you’re carrying a piano on your back and your confidence comes with that.”

Aside from Merzlikkins, rookies Emil Bemstrom, Eric Robinson and Vladislav Gavrikov have emerged as key contributors. So has 5-foot-5 NHL journeyman Nathan Gerbe, who since signing with Columbus in January 2018 had spent most of his time in Cleveland.

“That’s the most enjoyable part of coaching, when you’re developing people and you’re pushing and you’re tugging and you’re kicking and you’re hugging and you’re doing all the things to try to help people to perform,” said Tortorella, who is being talked about as a candidate for his third Jack Adams Award as coach of the year.

He keeps warning, though, that there is still much work to be done with this team.

“What happened is we won a few games and you think we have all the answers,” he told reporters recently. “We don’t have all the answers. This year is no different from any other. Every year brings different problems.”

**NHL scoreboard**

Eastern Conference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>GP</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>OT</th>
<th>Pts</th>
<th>GF</th>
<th>GA</th>
<th>+/-</th>
<th>PPO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampa Bay</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Islanders</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montreal</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Western Conference**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>GP</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>OT</th>
<th>Pts</th>
<th>GF</th>
<th>GA</th>
<th>+/-</th>
<th>PPO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Islanders</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nashville</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnipeg</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegas</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calgary</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaheim</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

**Managerial games**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teams</th>
<th>GP</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>OT</th>
<th>Pts</th>
<th>GF</th>
<th>GA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N.Y. Rangers, 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto, 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Saturday’s games**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teams</th>
<th>GP</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>OT</th>
<th>Pts</th>
<th>GF</th>
<th>GA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anaheim</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sunday’s games**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teams</th>
<th>GP</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>OT</th>
<th>Pts</th>
<th>GF</th>
<th>GA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anaheim</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Thursday’s games**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teams</th>
<th>GP</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>OT</th>
<th>Pts</th>
<th>GF</th>
<th>GA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anaheim</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Friday’s games**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teams</th>
<th>GP</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>OT</th>
<th>Pts</th>
<th>GF</th>
<th>GA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anaheim</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Regional games**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teams</th>
<th>GP</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>OT</th>
<th>Pts</th>
<th>GF</th>
<th>GA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anaheim</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Seattle's scouts focus on future

New franchise laying groundwork

By Tim Booth
Associated Press

JOHN Goodwin had the honor of being the first and it was a big day for him.

He was a pro scout representing a franchise without a nickname and nearly two years away from having a roster — with an arena still under construction — and walking into an NHL today for the first time on behalf of Seattle's expansion team.

"I got there about two hours before. They weren't even open yet, so I waited," Goodwin recalled.

By now, seeing the Seattle scouts show up in places like Toronto, Boston, Dallas, or Vancouver is about normal. They are part of the NHL landscape.

But when Goodwin or any of his counterparts show up, they are scouting a different game than their colleagues around the league.

While scouts from the other 31 franchises may be looking at another team's power play or the way it rotates its lines, Seattle's scouts are specifically looking at the players. How they play with the puck on their stick. How they interact with teammates on the bench. How they work on both ends of the ice.

Ultimately, they will use that information to make projections about how the players may fit on a team in less than two years.

"With what you're doing for an existing franchise, you're looking for perhaps a specific player in a specific role. Whereas now we're looking, I wouldn't say for specific players, but players with skills and abilities and characteristics that we want," said Dave Hunter, who is based in Boston.

So, as opposed to looking for a third-line left wing who is aggressive and can kill penalties, we're looking for a player that can skate, be creative, has a good hockey sense. It's not a specific role. Whereas I think with an existing franchise, a lot of times, not all the time, but a lot of times you're looking for specific players that will fill a role." Last week, Seattle's five pro scouts — who estimate they've seen hundreds of NHL and AHL games combined already — gathered just a couple of blocks away from where their team will drop the puck for the first time 20 months from now.

Less than a week later they were down to four after Ulf Samuelsson left to take a head coaching position in Sweden. But he was part of the group that met in Seattle along with Goodwin, Hunter, Stu Barnes and Cammi Granato.

They reviewed players. They talked about their reports and the kind of data being sought by a front office made up of GM Ron Francis, assistant GM Ricky Olczyk and director of hockey strategy and research Alexandra Mandrycky.

They also conducted a mock draft of the players they would like to see on the ice when Seattle plays that first game in October 2021.

Realistic? Absolutely not. But the exercise was a small reward for the work being done toward that expansion draft.

"It's going to be a really good learning curve for the guys that are kind of new to this and how everything works," Goodwin said.

Seattle's primary goal for the first year is building the database of information that existing franchises already have in hand. Some of that info is readily available, but there are specific things Seattle is looking to build into its player profiles tied in with Mandrycky's focus on analytics.

"We have a base of nothing right now when you talk about compiling data of NHL players, AHL players, amateur players," Mandrycky said in a September interview with the AP. "So a lot of the two years has to be spent making sure you have the right infrastructure in place so as we get to making decisions on the expansion draft and free agency, we can do that with as much education about the players as possible."

While most of the focus is on the NHL product, the scouts have also been tasked with watching AHL games. That reason is two-fold: there are plenty of younger players looking for a shot at the AHL level who could fit into Seattle's plans, and Seattle will have its own AHL franchise in Palm Springs, also beginning in 2021.

The goal by the time the expansion draft arrives is for the scouts to have seen more than 2,000 games combined, with reports from each one.

"How many people get a chance to be from almost not day one, but from the first group?" Goodwin said. "You don't get that opportunity very often in any sport."
Pac-10's running back Matt Bliss and tight end Aaron Hernandez out Wednesday on a big in-state recruiting day. The Ducks locked up most of their top 25 — Ohio State (No. 5), Georgia (11), Alabama (10), Clemson (10), LSU (9) and Oregon (8) signed 46 of those players. That year, 12 of the 29 five-stars signed with either Georgia (7) or Clemson (5).

There was one notable player who is leaving people guessing. Former Georgia quarterback and Jordan Burch committed to South Carolina during the early signing period, but never actually signed a national letter of intent.

At a signing day ceremony Wednesday at Hammon School in Columbia, S.C., Burch had only a Gamecocks hat. South Carolina coach Will Muschamp, whose son plays on the same high school team with Burch, was sitting just a few feet away.

Burch never made an announcement nor did any interviews, simply saying: "For the next three or four years I'll be with my friends." When South Carolina posted a list of 21 signees a few hours later, Burch's name was not among them.

Georgia leads conference: The Southeastern Conference dominated the recruiting landscape even more than usual this year. After it had signed five of the top eight classes, according to composite rankings, there were 31 five-stars in this year's class. Six schools signed 22 of those players. Clemson led the way with five top-10 classes, after finishing tied with Alabama and LSU, allowing one more school to break into a small group that landed the majority of the top available players. Signing day is typically about the school to break into a small group that has the majority of the five-stars and six schools.

Last year, seven schools signed at least five of the top 100 for a total of 48 players. Five more schools landed four top-100s.

For the second time in three seasons, 247 Sports crowned the recruiting champion, with Alabama and Clemson close behind.

According to 247 Sports' composite rankings, there were 31 five-stars in this year's class. Six schools signed 22 of those players. Clemson led the way with five of the top-10 classes, after finishing tied with Alabama and LSU, allowing one more school to break into a small group that landed the majority of the top available players. Signing day is typically about the school to break into a small group that has the majority of the five-stars and six schools.

Last year, seven schools signed at least five of the top 100 for a total of 48 players. Five more schools landed four top-100s.

For the second time in three seasons, 247 Sports crowned the recruiting champion, with Alabama and Clemson close behind.

According to 247 Sports' composite rankings, there were 31 five-stars in this year's class. Six schools signed 22 of those players. Clemson led the way with five of the top-10 classes, after finishing tied with Alabama and LSU, allowing one more school to break into a small group that landed the majority of the top available players. Signing day is typically about the school to break into a small group that has the majority of the five-stars and six schools.

Last year, seven schools signed at least five of the top 100 for a total of 48 players. Five more schools landed four top-100s.

For the second time in three seasons, 247 Sports crowned the recruiting champion, with Alabama and Clemson close behind.

According to 247 Sports' composite rankings, there were 31 five-stars in this year's class. Six schools signed 22 of those players. Clemson led the way with five of the top-10 classes, after finishing tied with Alabama and LSU, allowing one more school to break into a small group that landed the majority of the top available players. Signing day is typically about the school to break into a small group that has the majority of the five-stars and six schools.

Last year, seven schools signed at least five of the top 100 for a total of 48 players. Five more schools landed four top-100s.
No. 2-ranked Bulldogs feature six players from five countries

By Tim Booth
Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — Assistant coach Tommy Lloyd has been to so many countries looking for the best international talent during his 19 seasons on the Gonzaga staff. So many passport books filled. So many stamps.

“I had a cool one from Zimbabwe. They had a sticker and you had to pay $20 cash when you got in the country in U.S. dollars. That’s how crazy it was,” Lloyd said. “That’s going back 20 years or something.”

Today the travel is less extensive, a little less exotic for Lloyd. But the influence of international players on Gonzaga’s roster remains strong.

Going back to the days when Ronny Turiaf was one of the best players in the country, there’s always been a bit of an international flavor to the Bulldogs’ roster. Countries like Martinique, Brazil, Germany, Russia and France — to name a select few — have had some of their best end up playing in little Spokane, Wash., for the school with the funny-sounding name.

But this year, with the Zags ranked No. 2 in the country heading into this week’s games against Loyola Marymount and Saint Mary’s, takes the top spot. Six players from five different countries are on the roster. The dominant conversation inside the palatial locker room could be any mix of languages all bonded together by a game that has become far more international.

“This was kind of born out of necessity. We wanted to keep growing the program and we needed to recruit at a higher level,” Lloyd said. “Eastern Washington is a great place, but it’s not necessarily a hotbed for basketball talent. So we had to think outside the box, so we started investing time and resources and developing relationships overseas.”

Those relationships have yielded a bounty of stars. It’s started in the early 2000s with Turiaf, the gregarious forward from Martinique who has become an ambassador for the school in basketball circles. Other standouts like J.P. Batista (Brazil), Przemek Karnowski (Poland), Elias Harris (Germany), Domantas Sabonis (Lithuania) and Rui Hachimura (Japan) have also cycled through Spokane.

And that list doesn’t include the large number of Canadians like Robert Sacre, Kevin Pangos and Kelly Olynyk.

This year’s group includes leading scorer Filip Petrusev of Serbia. Starters Killian Tillie and Joel Ayayi make up the French contingent. Martynas Arlauskas (Lithuania), Pavel Zakharov (Russia) and Oumar Ballo (Mali) are on the Bulldogs bench.

Petrusev is averaging 17 points per game and had a career-high 31 points last week against Santa Clara. Ayayi has developed at Gonzaga by its success developing post players for the NBA, like Olynyk and Sabonis in recent years.

Ayayi first became aware of Gonzaga when Tillie committed to joining the Zags. The two are a couple of years apart but attended the same academy in France.

“I just knew it was in a small city up there in the cold,” Ayayi said pointing and laughing. “I’ve changed a lot of teams, and being the foreign kid and being accepted like this and just everybody welcoming me like this, it’s never happened,” said Petrusev, who grew up in Serbia before finishing his high school career playing in Florida. It was the quickest settle in for me. The guys made it look like I had been here a year before I came. I think the culture here — a lot of international guys so we can relate to each other — but the domestic guys understand us, too, and they do an amazing job of just bringing us into their culture.”

Petrusev was drawn to Gonzaga by its success developing post players for the NBA, like Olynyk and Sabonis in recent years.

“Just the lineage of international players, like they’re an outsider because in their own way, everybody’s kind of an outsider,” Lloyd said. “It goes to having a diverse locker room. We have so many different people from different cultures that it’s a really comfortable place and I don’t think anybody ever feels like they’re an outsider because in their own way, everybody’s kind of an outsider. That’s kind of what makes it work.”

Leading Gonzaga scorer Filip Petrusev, left, of Serbia celebrates with Martynas Arlauskas of Lithuania and teammates during a Jan. 30 game against Serbia celebrates with Martynas Arlauskas of Lithuania and teammates during a Jan. 30 game against Serbia.

No. 16 Michigan State (16-7)
No. 12 Seton Hall (17-5)
Saint Louis (17-5)
Virginia (14-6)

afn-atlantic
afn-sports2
afn-atlantic
afn-atlantic

No. 18 LSU (17-5)
afn-atlantic
No. 16 Michigan State (16-7)
afn-sports2
No. 12 Seton Hall (17-5)
afn-atlantic
Virginia (14-6)
afn-atlantic

6 p.m. Saturday CET
6 p.m. Saturday CET
8:30 p.m. Saturday CET

2 a.m. Sunday JKT
2 a.m. Sunday JKT
4:30 a.m. Sunday JKT
6 a.m. Sunday JKT

afn-atlantic
afn-atlantic
afn-atlantic

2 a.m. Sunday JKT
Phil Mickelson finished last season outside the top 50 golfers in the world for the first time in 26 years.

By Doug Ferguson
Associated Press

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif.—Optimism is never in short supply for Phil Mickelson, and it was especially high when he left the Monterey Peninsula last year with his 44th career PGA Tour victory and his fifth title in the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am.

He had the entire year ahead of him.

It didn’t turn out the way he imagined. “After I won last year, I knew I was going to go out and just crush the rest of the year,” Mickelson said Wednesday. “And the rest of the year crushed me.”

It wasn’t that he failed to win again — no shame in that after turning 49 and competing against an increasingly younger PGA Tour — he only cracked the top 20 one time, at the Masters.

The Presidents Cup, which dates to 1994, was played without him for the first time. And by the end of the year, he was out of the top 50 in the world for the first time in 26 years.

“I didn’t play up to my level of expectation, and it just kind of snowballed and got worse,” Mickelson said.

He returns to Pebble Beach with his optimism still strong. Mickelson has shied away from a previous guarantee of reaching 50 wins on the PGA Tour — he only cracked the top 20 one time, at the Masters.

The Presidents Cup, which dates to 1994, was played without him for the first time. And by the end of the year, he was out of the top 50 in the world for the first time in 26 years.

“I didn’t play up to my level of expectation, and it just kind of snowballed and got worse,” Mickelson said.

The Presidents Cup, which dates to 1994, was played without him for the first time. And by the end of the year, he was out of the top 50 in the world for the first time in 26 years.

“I didn’t play up to my level of expectation, and it just kind of snowballed and got worse,” Mickelson said.

He returns to Pebble Beach with his optimism still strong. Mickelson has shied away from a previous guarantee of reaching 50 wins on the PGA Tour — he only cracked the top 20 one time, at the Masters.

The Presidents Cup, which dates to 1994, was played without him for the first time. And by the end of the year, he was out of the top 50 in the world for the first time in 26 years.

“I didn’t play up to my level of expectation, and it just kind of snowballed and got worse,” Mickelson said.

He returns to Pebble Beach with his optimism still strong. Mickelson has shied away from a previous guarantee of reaching 50 wins on the PGA Tour — he only cracked the top 20 one time, at the Masters.

The Presidents Cup, which dates to 1994, was played without him for the first time. And by the end of the year, he was out of the top 50 in the world for the first time in 26 years.

“I didn’t play up to my level of expectation, and it just kind of snowballed and got worse,” Mickelson said.

He returns to Pebble Beach with his optimism still strong. Mickelson has shied away from a previous guarantee of reaching 50 wins on the PGA Tour — he only cracked the top 20 one time, at the Masters.

The Presidents Cup, which dates to 1994, was played without him for the first time. And by the end of the year, he was out of the top 50 in the world for the first time in 26 years.

“I didn’t play up to my level of expectation, and it just kind of snowballed and got worse,” Mickelson said.

He returns to Pebble Beach with his optimism still strong. Mickelson has shied away from a previous guarantee of reaching 50 wins on the PGA Tour — he only cracked the top 20 one time, at the Masters.

The Presidents Cup, which dates to 1994, was played without him for the first time. And by the end of the year, he was out of the top 50 in the world for the first time in 26 years.

“I didn’t play up to my level of expectation, and it just kind of snowballed and got worse,” Mickelson said.

He returns to Pebble Beach with his optimism still strong. Mickelson has shied away from a previous guarantee of reaching 50 wins on the PGA Tour — he only cracked the top 20 one time, at the Masters.

The Presidents Cup, which dates to 1994, was played without him for the first time. And by the end of the year, he was out of the top 50 in the world for the first time in 26 years.

“The worst thing that happened this week, with a forecast of sunshine, although temperatures will remain in the 50s. Players will take sun over a few extra layers for warmth rather than a rain suit.”

“When the sun shines, there’s no better place on the golfing planet to be,” Graeme McDowell said.

Three of the more intriguing players in the field all have Saudi connections — Mickelson, McDowell and Dustin Johnson.

McDowell won the Saudi International by two shots over Johnson, with Mickelson in third. All three are coming off a tour with the chance to make a run at the top of the world rankings.

The past of those two weeks was important at a lot of levels, just to get me back up the rankings, get me back in a couple of the WGC events — which is really important — the major championships, and get me back in the right direction again,” McDowell said.

“Ticked a lot of boxes and hopefully I can use it as a springboard to kick on for a big year, big season ahead.”

McDowell’s victory got him back into the top 50 in the world for the first time since 2015. Johnson is a two-time winner at Pebble Beach who is approaching the one-year anniversary of his last victory, an alarming development given a skill set that leads many players to believe he’s still the best in the game.

By Anne M. Peterson
Associated Press

CARSON, Calif.—Christine Sinclair says she’s sorry she hasn’t gotten back to all the well-wishers who reached out after she set the international goals record.

Canada’s veteran striker didn’t get much time to celebrate or reflect last week after she scored a pair of goals in an Olympic qualifying tournament match.

For Sinclair, there’s a bigger task at hand at the moment — leading Canada back to the Olympics.

Canada is among the teams that will play Friday in Carson, Calif., in the semifinals of the CONCACAF Women’s Olympic Qualifying tournament. Canada won its group and will face Costa Rica, while runner-up Mexico will face the defending World Cup champion U.S. team.

The winners Friday will earn the region’s two berths in this summer’s Tokyo Games. The championship match is Sunday.

Sinclair, 36, has 186 career goals, now an ongoing record after she passed American Abby Wambach’s previous mark (184) among men and women last week.

The accolades flooded in from an array of admirers, from Canada’s Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to former NBA guard Steve Nash to tennis great Billie Jean King. Nike designed a special pair of Canadian red soccer cleats, complete with maple leaf accents. FIFA President Gianni Infantino penned a congratulatory letter. And of course, Wambach sent Sinclair a video tribute.

“I still have people to get back to, I hope they understand. I’ll get back to them over the next couple of days,” she said. “A big thank you to everyone that reached out. I’ll get back to you, I promise.”

It was a lot of attention for the soft-spoken Sinclair, who famously prefers staying out of the spotlight.

Sinclair is probably America’s best-known non-U.S. women’s soccer player. She was on the University of Portland’s two NCAA championship teams and has played since 2013 for the Portland Thorns of the National Women’s Soccer League.

She’s widely known in Canada. She’s been a standout on the Canadian national team since 2000, when she led it with three goals in the annual Algarve Cup tournament in Portugal. She’s a veteran of five World Cups and three Olympics.

Canada surpassed expectations with a bronze medal at the 2012 London Games. Sinclair set a record with six goals in the tournament, including three goals in a heartbreaking 4-3 semifinal loss to the eventual gold medalist U.S., to win the tournament’s Golden Boot.

Four years later in Brazil, the Canadians captured the bronze again by defeating the home country. Afterward, it was revealed that Sinclair had lost her father just a few months before the tournament. Intensely private, she hadn’t spoken about it.

Canada was knocked out of last summer’s World Cup in the round of 16 after making the semifinals in 2015 — when Canada hosted the event.

Along the way, the goals kept coming.

“It was probably about two years ago when I thought, I’m healthy, the team’s doing really well, that I started to realize, ‘Wow this actually might happen — unless I go into a massive slump, which happens for a striker,’” she said after breaking Wambach’s record. “But yeah, I probably say about two years ago that it started to hit me that this was something that was possible and might happen.”

Canada’s Sinclair finds herself in the spotlight

Did You Know?

Steve Nash to tennis great Billie Jean King, Nike designed a special pair of Canadian red soccer cleats, complete with maple leaf accents. FIFA President Gianni Infantino penned a congratulatory letter. And of course, Wambach sent Sinclair a video tribute.

“I still have people to get back to, I hope they understand. I’ll get back to them over the next couple of days,” she said. “A big thank you to everyone that reached out. I’ll get back to you, I promise.”

It was a lot of attention for the soft-spoken Sinclair, who famously prefers staying out of the spotlight.

Sinclair is probably America’s best-known non-U.S. women’s soccer player. She was on the University of Portland’s two NCAA championship teams and has played since 2013 for the Portland Thorns of the National Women’s Soccer League.

She’s widely known in Canada. She’s been a standout on the Canadian national team since 2000, when she led it with three goals in the annual Algarve Cup tournament in Portugal. She’s a veteran of five World Cups and three Olympics.

Canada surpassed expectations with a bronze medal at the 2012 London Games. Sinclair set a record with six goals in the tournament, including three goals in a heartbreaking 4-3 semifinal loss to the eventual gold medalist U.S., to win the tournament’s Golden Boot.

Four years later in Brazil, the Canadians captured the bronze again by defeating the home country. Afterward, it was revealed that Sinclair had lost her father just a few months before the tournament. Intensely private, she hadn’t spoken about it.

Canada was knocked out of last summer’s World Cup in the round of 16 after making the semifinals in 2015 — when Canada hosted the event.

Along the way, the goals kept coming.

“It was probably about two years ago when I thought, I’m healthy, the team’s doing really well, that I started to realize, ‘Wow this actually might happen — unless I go into a massive slump, which happens for a striker,’” she said after breaking Wambach’s record. “But yeah, I probably say about two years ago that it started to hit me that this was something that was possible and might happen.”
AUTO RACING

Looming: ’20 schedule adjustments just the start

FROM BACK PAGE

 shifts: Phoenix will host the championship-deciding finale in November, Martinsville Speedway got both a night race and the penultimate playoff race, Daytona gave up its traditional July Fourth weekend to Indianapolis Motor Speedway (and will now host the final regular season race) and Pocono Raceway is going to host two Cup Series races in one weekend. NASCAR was able to make those changes despite five-year contracts that had given track owners stability. But fans have complained about the stale schedule and 2020 was NASCAR’s first chance to make even small changes. The contracts expire this year, and NASCAR will essentially have the ability to reconfigure the entire schedule for 2021. NASCAR, a private company owned by the France family, last year swallowed International Speedway Corp., giving Jim and his niece, Lesa France Kennedy, the power to do just about anything they want. “It makes a big difference,” Jim France said of the merger. “It gives us an opportunity to respond quicker to the changing environment out here with the economy and all the things that are going on that impact motorsports. It was a major big step that we needed to make probably for quite a while.” NASCAR this year will debut a new sponsorship model in which the elite Cup Series will not have a single entitlement partner. The Winston Cup/Nextel Cup/Sprint Cup/Monster Energy Cup will be just the Cup Series going forward, with “premier partners” Busch Beer, Coca-Cola, GEICO and Xfinity taking on large roles. As Jim France and Lesa France have found their footing, the stock car series has shown flexibility, too. After acknowledging the rules package was a bust at short tracks and road courses, NASCAR did an about-face and made changes for those specific venues. Adapting to it all will be Johnson, who said this year will be his last as a full-time NASCAR driver. His 19th season will be his last attempt to win a record eighth Cup championship, but Johnson said he has shaken off the pressure of chasing Richard Petty and Dale Earnhardt and plans to enjoy his time in the No. 48 Chevy. “I’ve been able to have some clarity and to really understand it on a deeper level,” said Johnson, now 44. “One thing that I’ve come to grips with and I’m enjoying letting go of is:”

Above: Christopher Bell, seen celebrating in Victory Lane after winning NASCAR Xfinity Series race in November, will be in a race for top Cup rookie alongside two-time Xfinity Series champ Tyler Reddick and Cole Custer. The trio competed for the Xfinity title the last two seasons.

Left: 2017 Cup champ Martin Truex Jr. is congratulated by team owner Joe Gibbs, right, in Victory Lane after winning a Cup Series race last spring, NASCAR’s season officially opens Sunday, Feb. 16, with the Daytona 500.

AP Photos

Garas, who lets him race sprint cars; move to Stewart-Haas Racing and drive for Tony Stewart, who may be even more lenient than Ganassi has been; or he can scale back the extracurricular racing and drive for Hendrick. Larson has won just six career Cup races, but is considered to be the best of NASCAR’s next generation and is only 27. His courtship and ultimate decision will likely impact all other major driver negotiations. It’s a full house at Joe Gibbs Racing, which put three Toyotas in the final four last season and returns its entire lineup, with Christopher Bell finally earning his promotion to the Cup Series in a satellite ride for Leavine Family Racing. It was the only place to put Larson’s sprint car-loving buddy, who was ready for the big leagues but stuck in Gibbs’ crowded system. Bell will be in a race for top Cup rookie alongside two-time Xfinity Series champion Tyler Reddick and Cole Custer. The trio raced each other for the Xfinity title the last two seasons. The race for the final four slots at Phoenix is wide open, assuming teams figure out how to match Gibbs on the track. Busch hasn’t missed a beat and spent a decent part of January in a sports car, making his debut at the prestigious Rolex 24 at Daytona in his own attempt to stay sharp. His push for title No. 3 begins with the Daytona 500, a race he has never won. Busch was second to teammate Denny Hamlin in last year’s 1-2-3 Gibbs sweep, and he very much wants to win the race himself.

Kyle Larson is considered the top free agent in this year’s pool and he likely has three options: He can stay with Chip Ganassi, who lets him race sprint cars; move to Stewart-Haas Racing and drive for Tony Stewart, who may be even more lenient than Ganassi has been; or he can scale back the extracurricular racing and drive for Hendrick. Larson has won just six career Cup races, but is considered to be the best of NASCAR’s next generation and is only 27. His courtship and ultimate decision will likely impact all other major driver negotiations. It’s a full house at Joe Gibbs Racing, which put three Toyotas in the final four last season and returns its entire lineup, with Christopher Bell finally earning his promotion to the Cup Series in a satellite ride for Leavine Family Racing. It was the only place to put Larson’s sprint car-loving buddy, who was ready for the big leagues but stuck in Gibbs’ crowded system. Bell will be in a race for top Cup rookie alongside two-time Xfinity Series champion Tyler Reddick and Cole Custer. The trio raced each other for the Xfinity title the last two seasons.

The race for the final four slots at Phoenix is wide open, assuming teams figure out how to match Gibbs on the track. Busch hasn’t missed a beat and spent a decent part of January in a sports car, making his debut at the prestigious Rolex 24 at Daytona in his own attempt to stay sharp. His push for title No. 3 begins with the Daytona 500, a race he has never won. Busch was second to teammate Denny Hamlin in last year’s 1-2-3 Gibbs sweep, and he very much wants to win the race himself.

Busch gets to show what he’s got starting Sunday with both an exhibition race and qualifying for the Daytona 500.

I feel like I’ve been a bit out of character and a bit focused on a number, a statistic—and I’ve never in my life been that way. I’ve never raced that way.” “I’m out there one final time,” he added. “This is just one final time, and it feels so good to be able to let go of that chasing part.”

The chase will be on for drivers hoping to fill Johnson’s seat at Hendrick Motorsports. Alex Bowman is also in a contract year driving Rick Hendrick’s No. 88, meaning two top seats at an elite team are in rare play. Among the drivers in a crowded free agent pool are former series champions Brad Keselowski and teammate Ryan Blaney, who were both involved in a major Team Penske offseason shakeup. Looking for a spark after failing to get any of its cars into the championship-deciding finale, Penske swapped the crew chiefs for all three of its drivers, two of whom are in contract years. “I personally needed to be challenged,” Keselowski said. “A lot of us were pretty comfortable and this certainly removes any feeling of comfort.” Kyle Larson has won just six career Cup races, but is considered to be the best of NASCAR’s next generation and is only 27. His courtship and ultimate decision will likely impact all other major driver negotiations. It’s a full house at Joe Gibbs Racing, which put three Toyotas in the final four last season and returns its entire lineup, with Christopher Bell finally earning his promotion to the Cup Series in a satellite ride for Leavine Family Racing. It was the only place to put Larson’s sprint car-loving buddy, who was ready for the big leagues but stuck in Gibbs’ crowded system. Bell will be in a race for top Cup rookie alongside two-time Xfinity Series champ Tyler Reddick and Cole Custer. The trio raced each other for the Xfinity title the last two seasons.

The race for the final four slots at Phoenix is wide open, assuming teams figure out how to match Gibbs on the track. Busch hasn’t missed a beat and spent a decent part of January in a sports car, making his debut at the prestigious Rolex 24 at Daytona in his own attempt to stay sharp. His push for title No. 3 begins with the Daytona 500, a race he has never won. Busch was second to teammate Denny Hamlin in last year’s 1-2-3 Gibbs sweep, and he very much wants to win the race himself.

The race for the final four slots at Phoenix is wide open, assuming teams figure out how to match Gibbs on the track. Busch hasn’t missed a beat and spent a decent part of January in a sports car, making his debut at the prestigious Rolex 24 at Daytona in his own attempt to stay sharp. His push for title No. 3 begins with the Daytona 500, a race he has never won. Busch was second to teammate Denny Hamlin in last year’s 1-2-3 Gibbs sweep, and he very much wants to win the race himself.

Busch gets to show what he’s got starting Sunday with both an exhibition race and qualifying for the Daytona 500.
T he sky isn’t falling — or at least it doesn’t feel that way — as NASCAR heads into the first of two seasons full of change.

In the three months since Kyle Busch won his second championship, NASCAR took its awards ceremony to Nashville, Tenn., and was eagerly embraced. The Hall of Fame ceremony last month focused on Joe Gibbs and his elite organization, which won a record 19 of 36 races last season as Busch earned Joe Gibbs Racing its fifth Cup Series title.

Drivers will return to the track at Daytona International Speedway on Saturday and the season-opening Daytona 500 is Feb. 16.

“We’re coming off of a very good year, I felt like last year, where we’re really getting some momentum back,” NASCAR Chairman Jim France said. “It’s exciting now, going into this coming year.”

Since replacing his nephew as head of the family business in August 2018, Jim France has been a steady guide for a series trying to stop a slide in every important metric. Attendance and television ratings may have finally bottomed out, but sponsorship dollars are as hard to find as ever and cost cutting is a major priority across the entire industry.

So the last full season for seven-time NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson is also the last year for the current race car. The “Next Gen” car is on schedule to race in 2021, and the project is expected to trim millions from team budgets because its smaller workforce.

Even before that, NASCAR for 2020 made long overdue tweaks to the schedule with a few seismic

SEE LOOMING ON PAGE 63

NASCAR

Looming change

2020 season will bring long overdue tweaks as Joe Gibbs Racing pursues another year of remarkable success

By Jenna Fryer  
Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.

The sky isn’t falling — or at least it doesn’t feel that way — as NASCAR heads into the first of two seasons full of change.

In the three months since Kyle Busch won his second championship, NASCAR took its awards ceremony to Nashville, Tenn., and was eagerly embraced. The Hall of Fame ceremony last month focused on Joe Gibbs and his elite organization, which won a record 19 of 36 races last season as Busch earned Joe Gibbs Racing its fifth Cup Series title.

Drivers will return to the track at Daytona International Speedway on Saturday and the season-opening Daytona 500 is Feb. 16.

“We’re coming off of a very good year, I felt like last year, where we’re really getting some momentum back,” NASCAR Chairman Jim France said. “It’s exciting now, going into this coming year.”

Since replacing his nephew as head of the family business in August 2018, Jim France has been a steady guide for a series trying to stop a slide in every important metric. Attendance and television ratings may have finally bottomed out, but sponsorship dollars are as hard to find as ever and cost cutting is a major priority across the entire industry.

So the last full season for seven-time NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson is also the last year for the current race car. The “Next Gen” car is on schedule to race in 2021, and the project is expected to trim millions from team budgets because its smaller workforce.

Even before that, NASCAR for 2020 made long overdue tweaks to the schedule with a few seismic

SEE LOOMING ON PAGE 63

Power programs load up on 5-star recruits » Page 60