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Morgan rides wave
into 4th tourney
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Tightening things up

Pentagon looks to improve classified information tracking in wake of leak

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

The Defense Department does not intend to scale back the number of its military and civilian employees with classified information access, but it plans to better track who is accessing what secrets, a Pentagon official said Wednesday.

A 45-day review of policies and procedures ordered in April by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin found most department officials with clearance are trustworthy, but policies meant to protect national secrets were interpreted differently across the vast, worldwide military organization.

Austin ordered the review in the wake of hundreds of classified documents being leaked to a private group of social media users. Airman 1st Class Jack Teixeira, a 21-year-old with the Massachusetts Air National Guard, is accused of leaking the military documents in a chatroom on Discord.

"The department relies on a culture of trust and accountability for those who are granted access to"

SEE LEAK ON PAGE 5

Russia launches cruise missile attack on Ukraine city of Lviv

By MSTYSLAV CHERNOV
Associated Press

LVIV, Ukraine — Russia fired cruise missiles Thursday at a western Ukraine city far from the front line of the war, killing at least five people in an apartment building in what officials said was the heaviest attack on civilian areas of Lviv since the Kremlin's forces invaded the country last year.

Emergency crews with search dogs went through the rubble of the building after the

nighttime attack destroyed the roof and the top two floors. At least 36 people were injured, according to authorities.

The youngest of the five people who died was 21 years old and the oldest was 95, according to Maksym Kozyskyi, the governor of Lviv province, said.

"This woman survived the Second World War but, unfortunately, she didn't survive" Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Kozyskyi said.

Debris and wrecked parked cars lined the street outside the building, which overlooks a small neighborhood park with swings and other playground equipment.

The last victim was pulled from the wreckage hours after the attack, and seven survivors were rescued, the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs said. About 180 people received psychological support following the attack.

Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadovyi said around

60 apartments and 50 cars in the area of strike were damaged. He announced two days of official mourning.

U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Bridget Brink described the attack as "vicious."

"Russia's repeated attacks on civilians are absolutely horrifying," she tweeted.

Ukraine's air force reported it intercepted seven of the 10 Kalibr cruise missiles that

SEE ATTACK ON PAGE 8

BUSINESS/WEATHER

EUROPE GAS PRICES								
Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel				
Germany	\$3.909	\$4.436	\$4.761	\$4.149	Azores	..	..	\$4.650
Change in price	-4.4 cents	-3.5 cents	-3.1 cents	-3.4 cents	Change in price	..	..	-3.1 cents
Netherlands	..	\$4.544	\$4.816	\$4.511	Turkey	..	..	\$4.449
Change in price	..	-7.1 cents	-7.1 cents	-7.9 cents	Change in price	..	..	\$4.421*
U.K.	..	\$4.372	\$4.697	\$4.085	Fuel prices are updated daily. These prices are effective July 7. The change in prices is from June 30.			
Change in price	..	-3.5 cents	-3.1 cents	-3.4 cents				

PACIFIC GAS PRICES								
Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel				
Japan	..	\$4.429	..	\$3.819	South Korea	\$3.599	..	\$4.449
Change in price	..	-3.0 cents	..	-3.0 cents	Change in price	-4.0 cents	..	-3.0 cents
Okinawa	\$3.579	..	..	\$3.819	Guam	\$3.589**	\$4.109	\$4.439
Change in price	-4.0 cents	..	..	-3.0 cents	Change in price	-4.0 cents	-4.0 cents	-3.0 cents
					*DieselEFD **Midgrade			
					Paccific prices for the week of July 7-13			

EXCHANGE RATES			
Military rates			
Euro costs (July 7)	\$1.06	Switzerland (Franc)	0.8977
British pound (July 7)	\$1.24	Thailand (Baht)	35.17
Japanese yen (July 7)	141.00	Turkey (NewLira)	26.0196
South Korean won (July 7)	1270.00	(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	
Commercial rates			
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770		
Britain (Pound)	1.2719		
Canada (Dollar)	1.3331		
China (Yuan)	7.2471		
Denmark (Krone)	6.8531		
Egypt (Pound)	30.8995		
Euro	0.9198		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8213		
Hungary (Forint)	353.42		
Israel (Shekel)	3.7056		
Japan (Yen)	144.51		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3074		
Norway (Krone)	10.7421		
Philippines (Peso)	55.65		
Poland (Zloty)	4.13		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7517		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3530		
South Korea (Won)	1309.76		
INTEREST RATES			
Prime rate	8.25		
Interest Rates Discount rate	5.75		
Federal funds market rate	5.08		
3-month bill	5.37		
30-year bond	3.93		

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MILITARY



U.S. Air Force

In this image from video, a Russian SU-35 flies near a U.S. Air Force MQ-9 Reaper drone on Wednesday over Syria.

US releases video of Russian jets harassing Reaper drones in Syria

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Russian fighter jets flew dangerously close to several U.S. drone aircraft over Syria on Wednesday, setting off flares and forcing the MQ-9 Reapers to take evasive maneuvers, the Air Force said. U.S. Air Forces Central released a video of the encounter, showing a Russian SU-35 fighter closing in on a Reaper, and later showed a number of the so-called parachute flares moving into the drone's flight path. The flares are attached to parachutes. Lt. Gen. Alex Grynkeiwich, commander of 9th Air Force in the Middle East, said three of the U.S. drones were operating over Syria after 10:30 a.m. local time, on a mission against the Islamic State

group which was not detailed, when three of the Russian aircraft "began harassing the drones." In a statement, Grynkeiwich said one of the Russian pilots moved their aircraft in front of a drone and engaged the SU-35's afterburner, which greatly increases its speed and air pressure. The jet blast from the afterburner can potentially damage the Reaper's electronics, and Grynkeiwich said it reduced the drone operator's ability to safely operate the aircraft. "Russian military aircraft engaged in unsafe and unprofessional behavior while interacting with U.S. aircraft in Syria," he said, adding that the actions threaten the safety of the U.S. and Russian forces. "We urge Russian forces in

Syria to cease this reckless behavior and adhere to the standards of behavior expected of a professional air force so we can resume our focus on the enduring defeat of ISIS." Army Gen. Erik Kurilla, head of U.S. Central Command, said in a statement that Russia's violation of ongoing efforts to clear the airspace over Syria "increases the risk of escalation or miscalculation." About 900 U.S. forces are deployed to Syria to work with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces battling the Islamic State militants there. No other details about the drone operation were provided, and it's not clear where over Syria the incidents took place.

AFRICOM: Claims of US casualties in Somalia false

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

No U.S. troops were injured in an attack Thursday on a convoy in Somalia, where American forces have been supporting the central government's battle against Islamic militants, according to U.S. Africa Command. Al-Shabab, which has been waging a decadeslong battle for control, claimed on the messaging app Telegram that it had inflicted casualties on U.S. troops on the outskirts of the southern coastal city of Kismayo. The claims of casualties "are not accurate," AFRICOM spokesperson Kelly Cahalan said Thursday in a statement. The convoy hit a roadside bomb Thursday morning near Kismayo, Cahalan said, adding that there also were no casualties among the Somali forces. Al-Shabab has a long history of baseless claims that it killed or injured U.S. troops. Still, the terrorist organization has occasionally struck U.S. forces and targets in Somalia and nearby areas. The highest-profile attack happened Jan. 5, 2020, when al-Shabab fighters overran an airfield in Kenya used by U.S. forces for operations in Somalia. The attack killed one U.S. soldier and two American contractors. Just three months earlier, al-

Shabab also launched an assault on U.S. troops based at Baledogle Military Airfield in Somalia. That attack, described by military officials as the largest on American troops in Somalia in 30 years, involved a truck bomb. The explosion blasted a 20-foot-deep crater along the perimeter of a U.S. military outpost. The ensuing battle resulted in the deaths of about a dozen al-Shabab fighters, as U.S. soldiers repelled the onslaught without any fatalities. The U.S. military mission in Somalia revolves around training and advising local forces fighting against al-Shabab. Several hundred U.S. troops operate in the country. The U.S. also carries out periodic airstrikes against terrorist targets there. Within the Defense Department and beyond, there is a running debate about the threat al-Shabab poses to the West and the merits of having the U.S. military involved in Somalia. In May 2022, the U.S. announced the return of special operations troops to Somalia, reversing a decision by President Donald Trump during the last days of his administration to pull 700 service members out of the country.

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Marine Corps stealth fighters travel to Australia for first time

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Four Marine Corps F-35C Lightning IIs flew from California to Australia last month, the first time the stealth jets made the 7,800-mile journey across the Pacific Ocean, according to the service. The aircraft from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314 departed Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., June 17, and arrived five days later at Royal Australian Air Force Base Williamtown in New South Wales, Australia, a June 24 release said. The aircraft, designed specifically for carrier operations, are in Australia ahead of the biennial Talisman Sabre drills, scheduled to draw about 30,000 personnel, mostly from the United States and Australia, from July 22 to Aug. 4. The Marine F-35Cs are Down



GADIEL ZARAGOZA/U.S. Marine Corps

F-35C Lightning II stealth fighters on their way to Australia prepare for aerial refueling over the Pacific Ocean, on June 17. Under for the first time, but Marine F-35Bs, capable of short take-offs and vertical landings, from Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, trained in Australia last summer. The F-35Cs made four stopovers on their flight south and were supported with cargo and personnel flying in a KC-130J Super Hercules from Marine Aerial Refuel-

er Transport Squadron 352, the Marines' release said. KC-135 Stratotankers from the 171st Air Refueling Wing, Pennsylvania Air National Guard, and 108th Air Refueling Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard, refueled the F-35s during the journey, according to the release. "The VMFA-314 Black Knights are beyond excited to bring the first land-based [1st Marine Expeditionary Force] fifth-generation stealth fighters all the way from California to Australia," squadron commander Lt. Col. Michael O'Brien said in the release. "Over the past year, we've trained in our own Marine Corps F-35Cs with the Royal Australian Air Force F-35As and E-7 Wedgetails in the U.S., and now it is time to train with our valued Allies on their side of the globe." The F-35s will work with Aus-

tralian forces at Williamtown through mid-July, the release said. Australia is in the latter stages of procuring its F-35A fleet and may buy more, retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Dan Leaf, a former deputy commander of U.S. Pacific Command, said by email Thursday. Australia's first F-35A squadron became operational in 2021 and the country's entire fleet of stealth jets is due to be operational this year, according to the RAAF's website. "But the investment by both countries in maximizing the combat capability — and thus, if potential adversaries are paying attention, deterrent power — is more important than numbers," Leaf said. "This is yet another example of like-minded nations, namely the U.S., its Allies and partners, drawn closer in security coopera-

tion by concerns about China's words and deeds and the tragic exemplar of Russia's invasion of Ukraine." Deployments such as the F-35C mission to Australia aren't simple, Grant Newsham, a senior researcher with the Japan Forum for Strategic Studies in Tokyo, said in an email the same day. "But one notes that Marine fighters have been making Trans-Pacific deployments for decades," he said. The F-35C trans-Pacific flight isn't a game-changer but it demonstrates America's broader military power, Newsham said. "Indeed, at least for a few years to come the U.S. still has a power projection advantage over the [Chinese military] and everyone else," he said. "China knows this of course and is working to close the gap."

PACIFIC

USS Washington flight deck OK'd ahead of return

BY ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

The USS George Washington has completed its flight deck certification, one of the last steps before the aircraft carrier returns to normal operations after a lengthy refit period in Virginia.

The ship and its air wing over three days in late June launched and recovered aircraft 247 times during day and night sorties as part of the qualification, according to a carrier news release on June 30. It also carried out hangar bay drills, nighttime flight deck training and simulated emergency exercises before returning to Naval Station Norfolk.

"Flight deck certification was our first opportunity for the air wing and the ship team to work together in support of the ship's fundamental mission, launching and recovering aircraft at sea," said Capt. Brad Converse, commander of Carrier Air Wing 1, in the news release.

The certification is required be-

fore the George Washington can embark its air wing for at-sea operations. It comes just a month after the carrier completed an extended, six-year maintenance period at Huntington Ingalls' Newport News Shipbuilding in Virginia.

The George Washington arrived in Virginia in August 2017 for scheduled maintenance, including its midlife nuclear refueling and overhaul. The maintenance period was scheduled to last just four years, but complications from the COVID-19 pandemic and other setbacks delayed it significantly.

The shipyard, which built the carrier in the 1980s, officially "re-delivered" the vessel into Navy hands on May 25 following three days of sea trials.

The George Washington also met several other "momentous" milestones last week, including a fuel certification and its first underway replenishment in six years, its commander, Capt. Brent



TYLER CROWLEY/U.S. Navy

An F/A-18E Super Hornet taxis on the flight deck of the USS George Washington in the Atlantic Ocean on June 23.

Gaut, said in the news release.

"As always, I am incredibly proud of our USS George Washington Warfighters, and the incredible support from the Carrier Air Wing One team," he said.

The ship is slated for more training and operation in coming months, preliminary preparations for the George Washington's upcoming homeport shift to Japan sometime next year.

The Navy on April 28 announced that the George Washington will return to Yokosuka Naval Base to replace the USS Ronald Reagan as the centerpiece of the U.S. 7th Fleet's carrier strike group. The George Washington

served as the 7th Fleet's lead ship from 2008 to 2015 and was relieved by the Ronald Reagan.

Once the George Washington arrives in Yokosuka, the Ronald Reagan will relocate to Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Wash., ending its eight-year tenure in Japan, just short of the 10-year limit for Navy ships deployed overseas.

Congress set the limit in the fiscal year 2019 Defense Department budget following the back-to-back collisions in 2017 of the destroyers USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain. Both had been based at Yokosuka more than a decade when they collided with commer-

cial vessels in separate incidents.

More than 240 Navy families moved to Yokosuka in the months ahead of the George Washington's arrival in 2008. When the Ronald Reagan replaced the George Washington, they swapped nearly two-thirds of their respective crews.

The base will have a better understanding of how many sailors and their families will be moving this time around as the transition period draws closer, base spokesman Randall Baucom told Stars and Stripes by phone Thursday.

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Airmen overheat during Okinawa change-of-command event

BY FRANK ANDREWS
Stars and Stripes

KADENA AIR BASE, Okinawa — The Okinawa summer heat took its toll on about 20 airmen who staggered or were pulled out of formation during the 18th Wing's change-of-command ceremony here Thursday morning.

Col. Nicholas Evans, an F-16 and F-35 pilot, took charge of the largest U.S. air wing and fighter base in the Western Pacific from Brig. Gen. David Eaglin, who goes next to the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command headquarters in Hawaii.

During his two-year tenure as wing commander, Eaglin grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic, which struck Okinawa's population particularly hard, the phase-out of aging F-15C/D Eagle fighters in favor of rotating squadrons of more advanced aircraft and the escalation of Chinese military activity in the seas west of the island.

Lt. Gen. Ricky Rupp, commander of U.S. Forces Japan and 5th Air Force, delivered the keynote address. The first airman overcome by the heat during the 40-minute, morning ceremony inside a hangar collapsed during Rupp's address.

"Only a few weeks ago, we saw

reporting of a dangerous [Chinese] intercept from U.S. aircraft in international air space," Rupp said, recalling a May 26 incident in which a Chinese fighter flew across the nose of an Air Force RC-135 surveillance plane.



Evans

"This is the reality our brave aircrew live every day," he said. Two minutes into Rupp's remarks, a female airman wobbled from the back of the formation, then collapsed as two other airmen lowered her to the hangar floor.

Over the next half-hour, more sweaty, pale airmen wobbled or were pulled from the formation by several Air Force personnel on the lookout for swaying airmen. Several stricken service members were escorted to a nearby air-conditioned bus to recover.

The morning temperature reached 90 degrees Fahrenheit and 64% humidity around 8:50 a.m., for a "feels like" temperature of 95, according to an Apple iPhone weather app.

Eaglin, an F-15 pilot, thanked the airmen of the 18th Wing before



FRANK ANDREWS/Stars and Stripes

An overheated airman loses her footing, Thursday, during the 18th Wing change-of-command ceremony at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa.

handing Evans control of the largest U.S. air power hub in the Pacific. About 7,000 airmen are stationed at Kadena, which has a total population of about 23,000 and squadrons of fighters, air refuelers, airborne command-and-control aircraft and helicopters, according to the base's website.

"Kadena holds an unrivaled key significance in the Pacific," Eaglin said. "The air base is a key location

for U.S. allies and partners serving as a power projection platform, ready to receive and deliver forces," he said.

Evans, previously the executive assistant to the commander of Pacific Air Forces at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, is new to Okinawa but has served 15 years in the Pacific over his 24-year career.

"Having worked in Pacific Air

Force the past few years, I know how much we rely on this base," Evans told airmen during the ceremony. "Your actions were pivotal through many critical events."

Evans' experience includes stints with fighter squadrons at Kunsan and Osan air bases in South Korea, and at Camp Smith and Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, both in Hawaii, according to his official Air Force biography. He is also a command pilot with more than 2,000 hours in the F-16 and F-35.

Nominated to brigadier general in January by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, Evans' promotion is on the list of approximately 250 military promotions held up in the Senate by Sen. Tommy Tuberville. The Alabama Republican objects to a Pentagon policy that pays transportation costs for troops traveling for abortions.

"At any overseas base, the most important relation is with local civic leaders," Evans said. "Airmen, when you see us, please stop us and say hello and what is going on with your life and work and any way we can help improve your quality of life."

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MILITARY

Gaspard takes command of 173rd Airborne in Italy

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

Command of the U.S. Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade changed hands Thursday during a ceremony at its headquarters in Vicenza, Italy.

Col. Joshua Gaspard, who two decades ago served with the 173rd as leader of a platoon that was part of the initial push into Iraq in 2003, replaced Col. Michael Kloepper.



FACEBOOK/173rd Airborne Brigade

Col. Joshua Gaspard takes the colors of the 173rd Airborne Brigade from Maj. Gen. Todd Wasmund on Thursday in Vicenza, Italy.

11, 2001, as a cadet.

"The terror attacks occurred just nine months before graduation, so it really changed the trajectory of my career in the Army, which was about to get started," he said.

His first wartime deployment came in March 2003, when he was part of an airborne assault in northern Iraq as a platoon leader. After that 12-month mission, he deployed to Afghanistan, again.

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Leak: DOD desires standardization

FROM PAGE 1

classified national security information, Austin wrote in a June 30 memorandum announcing the review's findings. "This review found that the overwhelming majority of [Defense Department] personnel with access to [classified national security information] are trustworthy, and that all DOD components demonstrate a broad commitment to security."

But the review also found security measures were lax in some organizations for access to specialized facilities where classified information is handled and electronic databases where sensitive data is stored, said a senior defense official. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to brief reporters on the review's findings.

A number of changes that Austin ordered in response to the review are designed to make standard the use of existing technological tools to monitor access to Sensitive Compartmented Information Facilities, or SCIFs, and track electronic devices entering and exiting those facilities. The review also recommended all parts of the Defense Department implement systems that track what classified information cleared individ-

uals are accessing via computer systems and install high-level security officials with specialties in classified information.

Those changes should help raise red flags to commanders and managers who see their personnel accessing information that they have no need to see.

"The recommendation is focused on ensuring that we have the right need to know processes and procedures ... to ensure that the information that is available on classified networks is accessed only by those with a need to know," the senior defense official said. "So, some of that is focused on how do we validate what documents are accessed online? What types of things do you have to have in your digital [credentials] to access certain products?"

Prosecutors in the case against Teixeira allege he used his high-level clearance and his access to a trove of secrets via his work in information technology to steal documents, including some about the Russian war in Ukraine, and post photos of them on the Discord social media platform. Court documents allege he was caught wrongly accessing classified information and admonished for his

actions, but prosecutors charged he continued to access information without a need to know after that incident.

Teixeira, who has remained jailed since his April arrest, has pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The senior defense official said Wednesday that the 45-day review was only loosely related to Teixeira's actions, and that other ongoing Air Force and Justice Department probes could lead to other recommendations about classified information protection.

The official said the Pentagon was not looking to slow the growing number of workers — service members and civilians — with security clearances.

Doing so, the official argued, risked inhibiting the kind of information that is gathered or shared across the department and with allies.

"The department is mindful of the need to balance information security with requirement to get the right information to the right people at the right time to enhance our national security," a Pentagon fact sheet on the review reads.

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MILITARY

Past PFAS spills at US air base reported

By SETH ROBSON
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Firefighting suppressant with toxic PFAS was spilled three times at the home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo between 2010 and 2012 but local authorities were informed only recently, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government said Wednesday.

The Kanto Defense Bureau — an arm of Japan's Ministry of Defense — alerted Tokyo officials about the spills on Tuesday, ac-

cording to a statement on the metro government's website. It does not say when the Air Force informed the bureau about the incidents.

PFAS — per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances — are commonly found in household products such as electronics, paint or water-repellent clothing, as well as fire extinguishing foam widely used at locations such as airports, factories and military bases, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

PFAS chemicals “break down

very slowly and can build up in people, animals and the environment over time,” according to the EPA. Current research shows high levels of exposure can lead to fertility issues, developmental effects, increased risks of cancers and other health concerns.

The Yokota spills occurred in January 2010 at a hangar and in October and November 2012 from a metal barrel and storage container, according to the metro government's statement.

U.S. officials told the defense bureau that they don't think chem-

icals escaped the base, the statement said.

The metro government “expressed regret” that it wasn't told of the spills soon after they happened and officials asked for more information from the Defense Ministry, according to the statement.

A spokesman for the base did not immediately respond to emailed questions about the leaks Thursday.

The fire suppression systems at Yokota that held PFAS are no longer in service as part of wider

effort to replace those systems with materials other than PFAS at U.S. air bases across Japan.

“All our PFAS systems have already been locked out so they can't be used,” Col. Andrew Roddan, commander of the base and its 374th Airlift Wing, told reporters on June 26.

Yokota will begin to replace that equipment during the next fiscal year, he said.

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Austin swears in new recruits as services struggle to meet goals

By MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

FORT MEADE, Md. — Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Wednesday told the crowd outside the Baltimore Military Entrance Processing Station to relax as he prepared to administer the oath of enlistment to 85 recruits under a blazing summer sun.

“Please, relax everyone,” he told the group. “Just relax. It's a little warm out here.”

Recruits had been waiting outside close to 30 minutes during a humid Maryland day, practicing where they would stand during Austin's speech and when they would raise their hand to join the military.

The recruits were sworn in across the service branches, with 67 joining the active-duty force and 18 signing up for the reserves, according to a Fort Meade official. In the active-duty recruits, 49 are in the Army, 13 in the Marine Corps and five in the Navy. Later Wednesday, the recruits were sent to their assigned bases for basic training.

The swearing-in of recruits comes as the military struggles to

attract enough new troops into the service.

The Army fell short of its most recent recruiting goal of 60,000 by more than 25%, signing up fewer than 45,000 new soldiers in 2022. This year, the Army's goal is 65,000 new soldiers.

The Air Force's active-duty target for 2023 is almost 27,000 new recruits — a number that leaders in the service have already said they won't reach. Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall during a panel discussion on June 22 said the Air Force would miss its active duty recruiting mark by about 10%.

The Navy barely met its active-duty enlistment goal last year, surpassing its target of 33,400 by 42 people. Its goal is to sign up almost 38,000 new sailors before the fiscal year ends Sept. 30, but service officials expect to miss that target.

Austin on Wednesday told the recruits during the oath ceremony that he entered the Army two years after the draft ended and served for 41 years until his retirement in 2016. He said he knows first-hand that recruits are considering whether to spend one term in the



PHOTOS BY CHAD J. MCNEELEY/Defense Department

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin congratulates new recruits at the Baltimore Military Entrance Processing Station after administering the oath of enlistment Wednesday at Fort Meade, Md.

military or make it a career. In either case, he applauded their commitment.

“America's all-volunteer force is the strongest military in human history. And the power of today's military is a testament to every American patriot who freely volunteers to keep our republic safe,” he said.

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Eighty-five recruits were sworn in by Austin on Wednesday.

Blue Star Families' annual survey on military life wrapping up soon

By JUAN KING
Stars and Stripes

Military families still have several days to take part in the largest annual survey of military life, which concludes Wednesday.

Blue Star Families, a national nonprofit organization, surveys military communities, including National Guard members and reservists, about issues affecting them, from financial hardship to child care.

Results of the Military Family Lifestyle Survey are routinely read by military leaders and politicians

in positions to make changes, Blue Star's senior director of applied research, Jessica Strong, told Stars and Stripes in an email June 17.

“This survey is an opportunity for the nation's military and Veteran families to voice the experiences within their communities and daily lives,” she said. “By collecting and analyzing results, we gain essential insights into the solutions that can address their concerns.”

Last year, approximately 48% of respondents cited spouse employment as the main issue affecting military families, Strong said.

About 26% of enlisted families faced food insecurity, according to the survey, while only 4% of officer family respondents were experiencing that issue.

“This year, in the current context of significant recruitment challenges, we're exploring the impact of these continued lifestyle challenges on families' well-being, willingness to remain in military service and to recommend military service to young family members, who are very often the future of our all-volunteer force,” Strong said.

Blue Star Families, established by military spouses in 2009, has poured approximately \$160 million worth of benefits into veterans and military families since that time, according to the organization. This year's study, the 14th by the nonprofit, began on May 24 and ends Monday.

The survey, according to Blue Star, is the largest and most comprehensive active-duty focused survey by an organization outside the military; more than 9,000 veterans take part worldwide and it reaches more than 1.5 million fam-

ily members yearly.

Blue Star partners with Syracuse University's D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families to get the survey out.

“We collect your voices and amplify them into collective action, shared with key decision-makers in government, in the military and in communities,” Strong said.

Those interested in the survey can access it at www.bluestarfam.org/survey2023.

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MILITARY

Guantanamo detainees describe scars from torture, future hopes

By EDITH M. LEDERER
Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS — At the U.S. detention center at Guantanamo Bay, the aging men known by their serial numbers arrived at the meeting shackled. Every single one told the visitor — for many the first independent person they had talked to in 20 years — “You came too late.”

But they still talked, about the scant contacts with their families, their many health problems, the psychological and physical scars of the torture and abuse they experienced, and their hopes of leaving and reuniting with loved ones.

For the first time since the facility in Cuba opened in 2002, a U.S. president had allowed a United Nations independent investigator, Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, to visit.

She said in an interview with The Associated Press that it’s true she came too late, because a total of 780 Muslim men were detained there following the 9/11 terrorist attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people, and today there are just 30 remaining.

The United Nations had tried for many years to send an independent investigator, but was turned down by the administrations of George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump.

Ní Aoláin praised President Joe Biden’s administration for allow-

ing “critical voices” into the facility. And she expressed hope other governments that have barred U.N. special investigators will follow Biden’s example.

The Belfast-born law professor said she believes the cross-section of “high-value” and “non-high value” detainees she met with — the Biden administration gave her free rein to talk to anyone — “recognized the importance of sitting in a room with me.”

“But I think there was a shared understanding that at this point, with only 30 of them left, while I can make recommendations and they will hopefully substantially change the day-to-day experience of these men, the vast majority of their lives was lived in a context where people like myself and the U.N. had no influence,” she said.

Ní Aoláin, concurrently a law professor at the University of Minnesota and at Queens University in Belfast, said she has visited many high-security prisons during her six years as a U.N. human rights investigator, including some built for those convicted of terrorism and related serious offenses.

But “there is really no population on Earth like this population that came to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in the circumstances in which they came, rendered across borders,” she said.

In her report issued June 26, Ní Aoláin said even though the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, were “crimes against humanity,” the treatment of the detainees at Guantanamo was unjustified. The vast majority were brought there without cause and had no relationship to the terrorist attacks, she wrote, adding that all of the men still alive suffer from psychological and physical trauma.

The Biden administration, which has said it wants to close the Guantanamo facility, said in a statement attached to the report that Ní Aoláin’s findings “are solely her own” and “the United States disagrees in significant respects with many factual and legal assertions” but it will carefully review her recommendations.

In last week’s interview with the AP, Ní Aoláin talked about what she saw on a personal level.

She said all U.S. personnel are required to address detainees by their internment serial number, not their name, which she called “dehumanizing.”

Ní Aoláin said she is especially concerned about three detainees who have not been charged and “live in a complete legal limbo,” which is “completely inconsistent with international law.” Of the others, 16 have been cleared to leave but haven’t found a country willing to take them and 11 still have cases pending before U.S. military commissions.

Ní Aoláin said force feeding has been an ongoing practice in response to their hunger strikes,



ALEX BRANDON/AP

Flags fly in front of the tents of Camp Justice in Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba, in 2019.

which along with suicidal ideas and self-harm “speak to the core finding of this report — which is the deep and profound despair of individuals who’ve been held without trial for 20 years, have not seen their family members, have had no access to the outside world” except their lawyers until she visited in February for four days.

Practices like using restraints cause added psychological distress for many of the detainees, she said.

For the report, Ní Aoláin also interviewed victims, survivors and families of those killed on 9/11, and she met with some of the 741 men who already had been released from Guantanamo, including approximately 150 resettled in 29 countries. The rest returned home, and 30 men have since died.

What the men still at Guantanamo and those who have been released need most, she said, “is torture rehabilitation — every single one — and the U.S. is a leader in torture rehabilitation.”

She welcomed Biden’s “extraordinary statement” on June 26, the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, reaffirming U.S. opposition “to all forms of inhumane treatment and our commitment to eliminating torture and assisting torture survivors as they heal and in their quests for justice.”

“That tells me ... there is a capacity to remedy here,” she said. Rehabilitation is critical for all torture victims, she said, but also “for ourselves, because that’s what democracies do. ... We look at our past, we take it onboard, and we address it, because democracies are self-correcting.”

Ní Aoláin called the communal meals and communal prayer for all detainees — which the U.S. emphasizes — very important.

“The men themselves are enormously important to each other in their rehabilitation,” she said. “There is an enormous bond of support and fraternity and care amongst these men for each other.”

NCO charged with murder in death of 2-year-old girl

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

A Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., operations sergeant was indicted on a murder charge last week in the death of a 2-year-old girl who was in the care of the soldier’s wife in their home, according to the Department of Justice.

Army Staff Sgt. Kevin Anthony Long, 40, was accused of physically assaulting the toddler in 2019 and causing blunt force injuries “as part of a pattern and practice of assault,” according to court documents unsealed last week. He is charged with murder in the first degree and making a false statement during the investigation.

A federal grand jury returned the indictment June 27, which was kept sealed until Long’s arrest Friday.

Long, the operations sergeant for Bravo Company of the 58th Trans-

portation Battalion, remains in federal custody pending a detention hearing Thursday, according to the U.S. Attorney’s Office in the Western District of Missouri. He was being held at Greene County jail in Springfield, according to online jail records.

The court documents do not name the child, but stated the crimes occurred Nov. 6, 2019, in Long’s home at Fort Leonard Wood where his wife ran a day care. Long’s wife did not have the required authorization to keep children in their home, said Dawn Arden, spokeswoman for Fort Leonard Wood. Long lied about knowing these requirements when asked about it by law enforcement officials on Nov. 22, 2019, which led to the second charge, according to the court documents.

Long has spent nearly 20 years in the Army with deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, according to his service record. His home of record is listed as River Rouge, Mich.



Long

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Attack: City is over 300 miles from front lines

FROM PAGE 1

Russia fired from the Black Sea toward the Lviv region and its namesake city — more than 500 miles away — around 1 a.m. Thursday.

The Kremlin’s forces have repeatedly hit civilian areas during the war, though Russian officials say they choose only targets of military value.

Lviv is near the western border with Poland and is more than 300 miles from the front lines of the war in eastern and southern Ukraine, where Kyiv’s counteroffensive to dislodge Russian forces is in its early stages.

Sadovyi, the mayor, addressed residents in a video message, saying the attack was the largest on Lviv’s civilian infrastructure since the beginning of last year’s invasion.

“Russians are hitting us. That’s how they love us. I’m sorry for those people who were killed. They were young. So sorry for them,” said Ganna Fedorenko, a local resident, holding her hands crossed on her chest. She received injuries on her face, and an adhesive plaster turned red with blood



A Ukrainian serviceman of the 10th Assault Brigade Edelweiss fires a D-30 cannon toward Russian positions at the front line, near Bakhmut, Donetsk region, Ukraine, on Wednesday.

LIBKOS/AP

on her right cheek. “This is terrible. They hit civilians.”

The Ministry of Internal Affairs said 64 people had to leave their

homes.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy promised “a response to the enemy. A tangible

one.”

He went later Thursday on an official trip to Bulgaria at the invitation of its new pro-Western government, with talks about weapon supplies and Ukraine’s NATO membership on the agenda.

Ukrainian air force updates about the missiles’ course during the night showed they flew to the Kyiv region first, then turned west toward Lviv.

Russia often changes the route of their missiles and drones to find weak spots in Ukraine’s air defenses.

In the early days of the war, Lviv served as a main transit point for millions of refugees from different parts of the country that crossed the border to Europe. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians from the east and south remained in the calmer and safer Lviv.

Like the rest of the country, Lviv suffered power outages when Russia fired hundreds missiles over the winter, aiming to destroy Ukraine’s energy system. However, the attacks in the city were not as frequent as in the capital Kyiv, and Thursday’s strike was a deep shock for many in the city.

Ukrainians shared messages of support on social media for Lviv residents.

Belarus: Wagner chief in Russia; Kremlin’s strategy under scrutiny

By ANNA FRANTS
Associated Press

MINSK, Belarus — The mercenary leader who led a short-lived mutiny against the Kremlin is in Russia and his troops are in their field camps, the president of Belarus said Thursday, raising new questions about the deal that ended the extraordinary challenge to President Vladimir Putin’s rule.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko’s claim could not be independently verified, and the Kremlin refused to comment on Yevgeny Prigozhin’s whereabouts. But Russian media have reported he was recently seen at his offices in St. Petersburg.

It was not clear if Prigozhin’s presence in Russia would violate the deal, which allowed the head of the Wagner Group military contractor to move to Belarus in exchange for ending the rebellion and a promise of amnesty for him and his troops. But the reports signaled that the agreement may have allowed him to finalize his affairs in Russia.

If that’s true, it could suggest the threat posed by Prigozhin has not yet been fully defused and that the Kremlin is treading carefully with him until it can figure out what to do with troops who may still be loyal to him. Putin has said that Wagner troops can join the Russian military, retire

from service or move to Belarus.

But much about the agreement, which was brokered by Lukashenko, remains murky.

Last week, Lukashenko said the mercenary leader was in Belarus, but on Thursday he told international reporters that Prigozhin was in St. Petersburg and could also travel to Moscow if he so wishes, while Wagner’s troops were in their camps. He did not specify the location of the camps, but Prigozhin’s mercenaries fought alongside Russian forces in eastern Ukraine before their revolt and also have bases on Russian territory.

He also said that Prigozhin has been given back the cash and weapons that were confiscated by Russian authorities.

Asked where Prigozhin is, Putin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov shrugged off the question, saying that the Kremlin has neither the desire nor the means to track his movements — but reaffirmed that the deal that ended the mutiny envisaged his move to Belarus.

Lukashenko said his government offered Wagner, which has sent troops around the world to fight for Russia’s interests, the use of Belarusian military camps but that the company had not made a final decision.

The Kremlin has played down



PRIGOZHIN PRESS SERVICE/AP

Head of Wagner Group Yevgeny Prigozhin stands in front of multiple bodies lying on the ground in an unknown location.

has become a symbol of Wagner after reports its troops used the tool to beat defectors to death.

Asked if Prigozhin and his mercenaries would eventually move to Belarus, Lukashenko answered evasively that it would depend on the decisions of the Wagner chief and the Russian government. The Belarusian leader said he doesn’t think the mercenaries’ presence in his country would lead to its destabilization and said any Wagner troops there would be required to sign a contract with Belarusian authorities that would outline conditions and limitations of their actions.

He dismissed suggestions that the mercenaries could attack Ukraine from Belarusian territory, which Russian troops used as a staging ground ahead of their invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Moscow has also maintained a military presence in Belarus.

The abortive rebellion represented the biggest threat to Putin in his more than two decades in power, exposing his weakness and eroding the Kremlin’s authority.

Lukashenko said he warned Prigozhin that he and his troops would be destroyed if they failed to make a quick deal to end their mutiny and that Belarus would send a brigade to help protect Moscow.

“It was necessary to nip it in the bud. It was very dangerous, as history shows,” Lukashenko said.

NATION



LOS ANGELES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE/AP

Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies arrest a couple in a grocery store parking lot in Lancaster, Calif. The sheriff's office has opened an investigation into two deputies' actions after a bystander's cellphone footage showed one of them tackling a woman while she filmed her husband being handcuffed.

LA County sheriff opens investigation into deputy tackling female arrestee

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles County sheriff says a bystander's cellphone footage showing a deputy violently tackling a woman while she filmed a man being handcuffed, then pepper-spraying her in the face, is "disturbing," and community groups on Wednesday called for the department's new chief to hold his agency accountable.

The June 24 incident in Lancaster follows cases that have drawn scrutiny to the department amid allegations of excessive use of force by deputies. It's also testing the reform efforts of the new sheriff, Robert Luna, a former Long Beach police chief who has vowed to overhaul the nation's largest sheriff's department since taking it over in December after defeating incumbent Alex Villanueva.

Both officers were pulled off field duty, Luna said during an afternoon news conference, and could face discipline ranging from letters of reprimand all the way up to dismissal if misconduct is found. He didn't identify the deputies.

Luna said he didn't learn about the encounter until six days after it occurred. The department released footage from the deputies' body-worn cameras on Monday.

Luna said he had seen the body-camera video as well as bystander video that spread on social media.

"It's disturbing. There's no ifs and buts about it," the sheriff said.

The Associated Press' efforts to reach the bystander Wednesday were not immediately successful.

The sheriff said his department has opened an investigation into the deputies' use of force and had notified the county's Civilian Oversight Commission and also federal monitors, who are overseeing reforms that the department agreed to in 2015.

The couple, whose names were not released, reportedly matched the descriptions of robbers targeting a grocery store in Lancaster, 45 miles northeast of Los Angeles, the sheriff's department said. The body-cam video shows the man sitting on a large rock outside the store and holding a cake before

deputies handcuff him as the woman stands a few feet away filming the encounter.

One deputy is seen tackling the woman to the ground. "Get on the ground!" he can be heard shouting as he pins her down with his knee on her neck and shoulder. "Stop or you'll get punched in the face!"

The woman is heard yelling "I can't breathe!" as the deputy is seen pepper-spraying her in the face. She screams, "I didn't do nothin'!" and the man repeatedly tells the other deputy that she has cancer.

At his news conference, Luna said the deputies were responding to a robbery in progress after receiving a 911 call from a store employee saying that two customers were assaulting "loss prevention employees."

The man was arrested and cited for resisting for delaying an officer, petty theft or attempted petty theft and interfering with a business, while the woman was cited for assaulting an officer and battery after assaulting loss prevention personnel, Luna said.

More seek jobless benefits, but labor market is resilient

BY MATT OTT
Associated Press

The number of Americans applying for jobless benefits rose last week, but remains at healthy levels despite the Federal Reserve's attempt to cool the labor market by raising interest rates.

U.S. applications for jobless claims rose by 12,000 to 248,000 for the week ending July 1, from 236,000 the previous week, the Labor Department reported Thursday.

The four-week moving average of claims, which evens out some of the week-to-week volatility, fell by 3,500 to 253,250.

Jobless claim applications are seen as a proxy for the number of layoffs in a given week.

For three weeks in late May and early June, jobless claims had appeared to reach a sustained, higher level, above 260,000. Even so, that increase may not have been enough for Fed officials to pivot from raising its main rate at its next meeting.

The U.S. economy has added jobs at a furious pace since more than 20 million jobs vanished when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in the spring of 2020. Americans have enjoyed unusual job security as companies have been reluctant to shed staff in a worker-friendly labor environment.

U.S. employers added a better-than-expected 339,000 jobs in May, surprising economists and painting a mostly encouraging picture of the labor market, even though the unemployment rate rose to a still-healthy 3.7%. Fed officials have said that the unemployment rate needs to rise well past 4% to bring inflation down.

The June jobs report, with a far more expansive set of labor data for the Fed to consider, is due out Friday. Analysts surveyed by FactSet expect the economy to have added about 205,000 jobs.

However, the payroll processor ADP on Thursday said its survey showed employers added 497,000 jobs in June, nearly twice as many as analysts were expecting. That sent markets lower before the bell on the perception that the odds of new rate hikes just went up when the Fed meets later this month.

For the most part, the U.S. economy has been resilient in the face of the Federal Reserve's aggressive rate-hiking campaign in its effort to extinguish persistent inflation not seen since the early 1980s. The rate hikes have slowly helped to suppress inflation, though perhaps not as quickly as the Fed had hoped.

Last week, the government said the U.S. economy grew at a 2% annual pace from January through March, much higher than the previous estimate of 1.3%. That, combined with a resilient labor market, will likely push Fed officials to go through with another rate hike or two before the end of the year as they continue to try to bring down stubborn inflation.

In June, Fed officials chose not to increase the central bank's benchmark borrowing rate for the first time in 15 months, though some said they expect to add another half-point to rates by the end of the year.

There have been a number high-profile layoffs recently, mostly in the technology sector, with many companies acknowledging they hired too many people during the pandemic.

The manufacturing sector has been contracting and the real estate sector has suffered because of higher interest rates. Three bank failures also have been blamed in part on higher interest rates.

Overall, 1.72 million people were collecting unemployment benefits the week that ended June 24, 13,000 fewer than the previous week.

Trump valet pleads not guilty in classified documents case

Associated Press

MIAMI — Donald Trump's valet, Walt Nauta, pleaded not guilty Thursday to charges that he helped the former president hide classified documents from federal authorities.

Nauta was charged alongside Trump in June in a 38-count indictment alleging the mishandling of classified documents. His arraignment was to have happened twice before, but he had struggled to retain a lawyer licensed in Florida and one appearance was postponed because of his travel troubles.

Ahead of his arraignment, Nauta hired Sasha Dadan, a criminal defense attorney and former public defender whose main law office is in Fort Pierce, where the judge who would be handling the trial is



Nauta

based. She appeared in court with Nauta, alongside his Washington lawyer, Stanley Woodward, who entered the not guilty plea on his behalf.

Nauta answered, "Yes, Your Honor," when he was asked whether he had reviewed the indictment during the brief court appearance.

He and his lawyers exited the courthouse after the arraignment and entered a Black Mercedes-Benz sedan without answering

questions from reporters.

Trump pleaded not guilty during his June 13 arraignment to charges including willful retention of national defense information. But Nauta's arraignment was postponed that day because of the lawyer situation and then was pushed back again last week when a flight from New Jersey he was to have taken was canceled.

The indictment filed by special counsel Jack Smith and his team of prosecutors accuses Nauta of

conspiring with Trump to conceal records that the former president had taken with him from the White House after his term ended in January 2021.

Prosecutors allege that Nauta, at the former president's direction, moved boxes of documents bearing classification markings so they would not be found by a Trump lawyer who was tasked with searching the home for classified records to be returned to the government.

US: Nearly half of faucets contain harmful chemicals

By JOHN FLESHER
Associated Press

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — Drinking water from nearly half of U.S. faucets likely contains “forever chemicals” that may cause cancer and other health problems, according to a government study released Wednesday.

The synthetic compounds known collectively as PFAS are contaminating drinking water to varying extents in large cities and small towns — and in private wells and public systems, the U.S. Geological Survey said.

Researchers described the study as the first nationwide effort to test for PFAS in tap water from private sources in addition to regulated ones. It builds on previous scientific findings that the chemicals are widespread, showing up in consumer products as diverse as nonstick pans, food packaging and water-resistant clothing and making their way into water supplies.

Because the USGS is a scientific research agency, the report makes no policy recommendations. But the information “can be used to evaluate risk of exposure and inform decisions about whether or not you want to treat your drinking water, get it tested or get more information from your state” about the situation locally, said lead author Kelly Smalling, a research hydrologist.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in March proposed the first federal drinking water limits on six forms of PFAS, or per- and polyfluorinated substances, which remain in the human body for years and don’t degrade in the environment. A final decision is expected later this year or in 2024.

But the government hasn’t prohibited companies using the chemicals from dumping them into public wastewater systems, said Scott Faber, a senior vice president of the Environmental

Working Group, an advocacy organization.

“We should be treating this problem where it begins, instead of putting up a stoplight after the accident,” he said. “We should be requiring polluters to treat their own wastes.”

The heaviest exposures were in cities and near potential sources of the compounds, particularly in the Eastern Seaboard; Great Lakes and Great Plains urban centers; and Central and Southern California. Many of the tests, mostly in rural areas, found no PFAS.

Based on the data, researchers estimated that at least one form of PFAS could be found in about 45% of tap water samples nationwide.

The study underscores that private well users should have their water tested for PFAS and consider installing filters, said Faber of the Environmental Working Group.

Ohio abortion rights backers submit 700k signatures for ballot initiative

Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Groups hoping to enshrine abortion rights in Ohio’s constitution delivered nearly double the number of signatures needed to place an amendment on the statewide ballot this fall, aiming to signal sweeping widespread support for an issue that still faces the threat of needing a significantly increased victory margin.

Ohioans United for Reproductive Rights said they dropped off more than 700,000 petition signatures on Wednesday to Republican Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose’s office in downtown Columbus. LaRose now will work with local election boards to determine that at least 413,446 signatures are valid, which would get the proposal onto the Nov. 7 ballot.

“Today, we take a huge step forward in the fight for abortion access and reproductive freedom for all, to ensure that Ohioans and

their families can make their own health care decisions without government interference,” Lauren Blauvelt and Kellie Copeland of Ohioans for Reproductive Freedom, a coalition member, said in a statement.

At a news conference, Copeland said the 422 boxes delivered “are filled with hope and love and dreams of freedom, of bodily autonomy, of health, of being able to say, ‘We decide what happens to us.’”

The ballot measure calls for the establishment of “a fundamental right to reproductive freedom” with “reasonable limits.” In language similar to a constitutional amendment that Michigan voters approved in November, it would require restrictions imposed past a fetus’ viability outside the womb, which is typically around the 24th week of pregnancy and was the standard under Roe v. Wade, to be based on evidence of patient

health and safety benefits.

The state’s formidable anti-abortion network has vowed a dogged and well-funded opposition campaign, which could take the price tag for the fight above \$70 million.

Protect Women Ohio, the opposition campaign, downplayed the huge number of signatures submitted, saying they were collected with help from paid signature-gatherers funded in part of the American Civil Liberties Union, which it described as “anti-parent.” Abortion foes contend that the Ohio amendment has the potential to trump the state’s abortion-related parental consent law, though the lawyers who wrote it deny the claim.

“The ACLU’s attempts to hijack Ohio’s constitution to further its own radical agenda would be pathetic if they weren’t so dangerous,” campaign press secretary Amy Natoce said in a statement.



SCOTT BRASS, TMX/AP

Eight people are trapped upside down on a roller coaster, Sunday, at the Crandon International Off Road Raceway in Crandon, Wis.

Wis. probes coaster after riders stuck upside down

Associated Press

CRANDON, Wis. — State officials are investigating how eight people became trapped upside down on a roller coaster — some of them for more than three hours — at a festival in Wisconsin.

The roller coaster’s cars got stuck near the top of a loop around 1:30 p.m. Sunday at the Crandon International Offroad Raceway. Rescue workers arrived to find eight passengers hanging upside down from their safety harnesses. Firefighters used ladder trucks to reach them, securing each one before releasing their over-the-shoulder safety bars, the Crandon Fire Department said.

It took nearly three and a half

hours to get all the passengers down. One person was taken to a hospital.

According to the fire department, a ride operator said something broke down mechanically on the coaster, which had been inspected by the state.

The state Department of Safety and Professional Services is responsible for reviewing plans for amusement parks and inspecting rides in Wisconsin. Spokesperson John Beard said in an email that the agency is investigating and dispatched an inspector on Monday to the scene in Crandon, a city of about 1,700 northwest of Green Bay. He had no further information on possible findings.

2 NJ firefighters die battling blaze deep in ship carrying 5,000 cars

Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — Two firefighters were killed battling a blaze that began when cars caught fire deep inside a cargo ship carrying 5,000 cars at a New Jersey port, Newark’s fire chief said

Thursday.

Responding firefighters found five to seven vehicles already on fire when they reached the 10th floor of the cargo ship at Port Newark around 9:30 p.m. Wednesday night. The blaze quickly ex-

tended to the 11th and 12th floors, and as firefighters were pushed back by the intense heat, two of them were lost, Fire Chief Rufus Jackson said at a news conference.

Firefighters weren’t initially

able to find their colleagues and outside rescue companies were called in. They were found and removed from the structure, but they died, Jackson said.

Augusto Acabou, 45, and Wayne Brooks, 49, were found and re-

moved from the structure, but unfortunately they lost their lives, Jackson said.

Shipboard firefighting is a unique skill and Newark firefighters don’t commonly face this kind of fire, Jackson said.

NATION

Methodist exodus fueled by LGBTQ+ policies

Associated Press

More than 6,000 United Methodist congregations — a fifth of the U.S. total — have now received permission to leave the denomination amid a schism over theology and the role of LGBTQ+ people in the nation's second-largest Protestant denomination.

Those figures emerge following the close of regular meetings in June for the denomination's regional bodies, known as annual conferences. The departures began with a trickle in 2019 — when the church created a four-year window of opportunity for U.S. congregations to depart over LGBTQ+-related issues — and cascaded to its highest level this year.

Church law forbids the marriage or ordination of "self-avowed, practicing homosexuals," but many conservatives have chosen to leave amid a growing defiance of those bans in many U.S. churches and conferences.

Many of the departing congregations are joining the Global Methodist Church, a denomination created last year by conservatives breaking from the UMC, while others are going independent or joining different denominations.

Some 6,182 congregations have received approval to disaffiliate since 2019, according to an unofficial tally by United Methodist

News Service, which has been tracking votes by annual conferences. That figure is 4,172 for this year alone, it reported.

Some annual conferences may approve more departures at special sessions later this year, according to the Rev. Jay Therrell, president of the Wesleyan Covenant Association, a conservative caucus that has advocated for the exiting churches. While most UMC congregations are remaining, many of the departing congregations are large, and denominational officials are bracing for significant budget cuts in 2024.

The numbers of exiting churches are higher than conservatives originally estimated, Therrell said.

Legal wrangles have largely been resolved over how much compensation the departing congregations must be paid for their property and other financial obligations.

"For the most part, bishops and other annual conference leaders have been very gracious, and I deeply appreciate that," Therrell said. "There have been some small exceptions to that, and those are unfortunate, but we're grateful that cooler and calmer heads have prevailed."

Bishop Thomas Bickerton, president of the UMC's Council of Bishops, said the departures were disappointing.

"I don't think any of us want to



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

A Pride rainbow flag flies with the U.S. flag at the Asbury United Methodist Church in Prairie Village, Kan., in 2019. As of last month, more than 6,000 United Methodist congregations have received permission to leave the denomination amid a schism over theology and the role of LGBTQ+ people in the Protestant denomination.

see any of our churches leave," he said. "We're called to be the body of Christ, we're called to be unified. There's never been a time when the church has not been without conflict, but there's been a way we've worked through that."

But for those who want "to go and live out their Christian faith in a new expression, we wish God's blessings on them," he said.

The split has been long in the making, mirroring controversies that have led to splits in other mainline Protestant denominations.

United Methodist legislative bodies, known as general conferences, have repeatedly reinforced bans on LGBTQ+ marriage and ordination, on the strength of coalitions of conservatives in U.S. and overseas churches.

But amid increased defiance of those bans in many U.S. churches, many conservatives decided to launch the separate Global Methodist Church, saying they believed the sexuality issues reflected deeper theological differences.

The departures have been par-

ticularly large in the South and Midwest, with states such as Texas, Alabama, Kentucky and Ohio each losing hundreds of congregations.

In some areas, United Methodists have designated "lighthouse" or similarly named congregations, with a mission for receiving members who wanted to stay United Methodists but whose churches were leaving. The GMC has begun planting new churches, including in areas where United Methodist congregations have remained in that denomination.

With these departures, progressives are expected to propose changing church law at the next General Conference in 2024 to allow for same-sex marriage and the ordination of LGBTQ+ people.

The United Methodist Church has about 6.5 million members in the United States and at least that many abroad, according to its website. The U.S. membership has been in steady decline, while the overseas membership has grown, particularly in Africa.

Therrell said there will be efforts at the 2024 General Conference to provide overseas churches a legal way to disaffiliate, similar to what U.S. congregations have had.

The GMC says about 3,000 churches so far have affiliated with the new denomination, with more expected.

Customers not buying companies' reward reductions

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Reward programs, including birthday freebies and discounts, have long been a way for brands to build loyalty and incentivize spending. But now some companies are becoming a bit more stingy — and customers are taking notice.

Last fall, for example, many balked at Dunkin's decision to stop offering a free drink on their birthday and instead give them triple loyalty points on their purchase. On June 1, Sephora started requiring a \$25 minimum purchase for online customers looking to claim a free gift and 250 loyalty points during their birthday month. And Red Robin added a dine-in only and \$4.99 minimum purchase requirement for customers to get their free birthday burger.

Changes to birthday rewards or redemption requirements aren't new. Starbucks, which gives its rewards members a free drink or food item for their birthdays, progressively limited the timeframe for redeeming that gift over the years — from 30 days, to one week, to four days and, finally, to just the date of your birthday in 2018.



MICHAEL DWYER/AP

Many customers balked at Dunkin's decision to stop offering a free drink on their birthday and instead offer triple loyalty points on their purchase.

Some experts say the cost of maintaining loyalty programs, as well as recent impacts of inflation and changes in consumer behavior since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, are among the reasons why companies may be pulling back.

"While we're assessing our own personal expenses, so are businesses," Marshal Cohen, chief industry adviser of Circana and retail expert, told The Associated Press. "Businesses have to look and say, 'Are these programs working? Are they working to full capacity? ... (And) is there another

way of doing this that wouldn't cost us as much money?'"

For Sephora customers enrolled in its Beauty Insider birthday rewards, for example, they can still claim their free gift in person with no minimum purchase. But it costs the company money to ship products sold online, noted Leora Lanz, assistant dean of academic affairs and assistant professor of practice at Boston University's School of Hospitality Administration.

Sephora did not immediately respond to The Associated Press' request for comment.

Despite consumer pushback, some chains have argued adjustments to rewards programs simply reflect how customers behave. In a statement to The Associated Press, Starbucks said it "found that the vast majority of members were using their birthday reward on their actual birthday."

Dunkin' argued that its new rewards program would give its customers more flexibility and a larger variety of food and drink options — and in a statement to The Associated Press last week, the company said the new program lets "members celebrate their birthday even longer,"

pointing to the three-day window within which customers can triple their loyalty points on birthday purchases.

Still, the announcement felt off-putting for many Dunkin' customers, who shared frustrations online. In the months following Dunkin's announcement, dozens of Twitter users have expressed disappointment over learning that the free birthday drink was gone. Some joked that they "no longer run on Dunkin'," a dig at the chain's slogan, and others suggested that they might take their future business elsewhere.

Consumers are likely to continue to see changes to birthday rewards and customer loyalty programs down the road, Cohen noted.

"The pie is getting smaller for a lot of these discretionary items," he said, pointing to persistent high costs of living that consumers are facing and the increased competition among businesses vying for those limited dollars. "You're going to see a lot of (companies) assess their programs to try to figure out how to drive business in a more profitable way."

It's possible this could mean a scaling back of more rewards programs. But there could also be an opposite effect, Julie Ramhold, consumer analyst with DealNews.com, said — noting that some retailers could offer "potentially better birthday rewards to encourage a return to spending on frivolous items."

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WORLD

Earth reaches unofficial record high temperature

Associated Press

Earth's average temperature on Wednesday remained at an unofficial record high set the day before, the latest grim milestone in a week that has seen series of climate-change-driven extremes.

The average global temperature was 62.9 degrees, according to the University of Maine's Climate Reanalyzer, a tool that uses satellite data and computer simulations to measure the world's condition. That matched a record set Tuesday, and came after a previous record of 62.6 degrees was set Monday.

While the figures are not an official government record, "this is showing us an indication of where we are right now," said National Oceanic and Atmospheric Admin-

istration chief scientist Sarah Kapnick. And NOAA indicated it will take the figures into consideration for its official record calculations.

Scientists generally use much longer measurements — months, years, decades — to track the Earth's warming, but the daily highs are an indication that climate change is reaching uncharted territory.

While some countries had colder weather than usual, high-temperature records were surpassed this week in Quebec and Peru.

In North Grenville, Ontario, the city turned ice hockey rinks into cooling centers as temperatures Wednesday hit 90 degrees Fahrenheit, with humidity making it making it feel like 100 degrees.

"I feel like we live in a tropical country right now," city spokeswoman Jill Sturdy said. "It just kind of hits you. The air is so thick."

Beijing reported nine straight days last week when the temperature exceeded 95 degrees and ordered a stop to all outdoor work Wednesday, as the temperature reached 106 degrees.

On Wednesday, 38 million Americans were under some kind of heat alert, Kapnick said.

Scientists have warned for months that 2023 could see record heat as human-caused climate change, driven largely by the burning of fossil fuels like coal, natural gas and oil, warmed the atmosphere. They also noted that La Nina, the natural cooling of the



RAMON ESPINOSA/AP

A pedestrian shades herself with an umbrella Wednesday in Havana.

ocean that had acted as a counter, was giving way to El Nino, the reverse phenomenon marked by warming oceans.

"A record like this is another piece of evidence for the now massively supported proposition that global warming is pushing us into a hotter future," said Stanford University climate scientist Chris

Field, who was not part of the calculations.

One of the largest contributors to this week's records is an exceptionally mild winter in the Antarctic, according to data from the Climate Reanalyzer. Parts of the continent and nearby ocean were 18-36 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than averages from 1979-2000.

Treasury Secretary Yellen visits China to help soothe relations

Associated Press

BEIJING — Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen plans to tell Chinese officials Washington wants healthy economic competition but will defend U.S. trade curbs imposed on security grounds and express concern about Beijing's export controls on metals used in semiconductors and solar panels, a senior Treasury official said Thursday.

Yellen was due to meet Friday with China's No. 2 leader, Premier Li Qiang, as part of efforts to revive relations that are at their lowest level in decades due to disputes over security, technology and other irritants. Treasury officials have said she wouldn't meet with Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

Washington doesn't support decoupling, or disconnecting U.S. and Chinese industries and markets and Yellen will reiterate that message, the Treasury official said. Businesspeople have warned that might harm innovation and growth as both governments tighten controls on trade in technology and other goods deemed sensitive.

Yellen planned to discuss "targeted action" by Washington on trade due to national security or human rights concerns, according to the official, who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity.

Her visit follows one by Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who met Xi last month in the highest-level U.S. visit to Beijing in five years. The two agreed to stabilize

relations but failed to agree on improving communications between their militaries.

China's government has been frustrated by U.S. curbs on Chinese access to advanced processor chips on security grounds. That threatens to delay or derail the ruling Communist Party's efforts to develop telecoms, artificial intelligence and other technologies.

Xi accused Washington in March of trying to hamper China's development.

Washington doesn't use security-related restrictions for economic benefit and considers national security "non-negotiable," the Treasury official said.

The United States wants "healthy economic competition" with China but considers some of Beijing's trade practices unfair, the official said. They said Yellen would detail those concerns in meetings with Chinese officials.

The official cited this week's announcement of Chinese export controls on gallium and germanium as an example of policies about which Washington wants more information. The announcement jolted South Korea and other countries whose industries use Chinese supplies of the metals.

Washington wants to "promote resilient supply chains" and guard against excessive reliance on suppliers in critical areas but doesn't consider that to be decoupling, the Treasury official said.



ALVARO BARRIENTOS/AP

Revellers fill the town hall square during the "Chupinazo" rocket, which marks the official opening of the 2023 San Fermin fiestas in Pamplona, Spain, on Thursday.

Firework blast begins San Fermin bull-running festival in Pamplona

Associated Press

PAMPLONA, Spain — Tens of thousands of people packed the town hall square in the northern Spanish city of Pamplona on Thursday to celebrate the traditional "chupinazo" firework blast that starts the San Fermin bull-running festival.

Nearly everyone, including many tourists, was dressed in the traditional garb of white trousers and shirt with red sash and neck-

erchief as they sang and shouted.

As the rocket was fired, many doused each other with red or sparkling wine.

The highlight of the nine-day festival is the early morning "encierros," or bull runs, starting on Friday, when thousands of daredevils race to avoid six bulls charging along a winding cobblestoned route to the city's bullring.

Spectators watch from balco-

nies and wooden barricades set up along the course. The spectacle is televised nationally.

The rest of each day is for eating, drinking, dancing and cultural entertainment.

The festival was made famous by Ernest Hemingway's 1926 novel "The Sun Also Rises."

The bulls used in the runs are killed by professional matadors in bullfights each afternoon in the city ring.

WEEKEND



Veteran explores cost of war in ‘Last Out’
Entertainment, Pages 16-17

A colorful new direction

Musician Jason Mraz putting a positive spin on reaching his mid-40s with ‘Mystical Magical Rhythmic Radical Ride’

Music, Pages 28-29



Shervin Lainez

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY

A window into new laptops

Lenovo and Israeli startup Sightful have different visions of how screens could work

BY CHRIS VELAZCO
The Washington Post

Laptops have gotten thinner, sleeker and more powerful over time, but the basics of their design have mostly stayed the same for decades. But recently, exceptions to that rule have become much more common.

This year, in particular, we’ve started to see a handful of fascinating machines that question some key assumptions — like the idea that your laptop only needs one screen, or any screens at all. But what’s it like to actually use some of these seemingly outlandish machines in real life?

If your standard laptop isn’t quite cutting it anymore, here’s what you should know about some of the strange designs angling to replace it:

Two screens: Lenovo Yoga Book 9i

When it’s closed, Lenovo’s \$2,000 Yoga Book 9i looks like any other svelte, modern laptop. But things get weird when you open it for the first time: Rather than a traditional keyboard and trackpad on its bottom half, you’ll find a glossy second screen.

You can type directly on that screen if you want — though I wouldn’t recommend it — or you can plop an included Bluetooth keyboard on top of it and use it like a more conventional laptop.

But where’s the fun in that? The real joy of using a machine like this comes when you prop it up with an included folding stand. Suddenly, you’ve got two full, 13-inch screens stacked on top of each other that you can fill with your web browser, Word documents, photo editing tools and whatever else you’ll need to get some work done. (Thankfully, Windows 11’s built-in app arranging tools make this a whole lot less awkward than it sounds.)

For multitaskers on the go who crave the flexibility that comes with multiple screens, the Yoga Book is mostly a pleasure.

I used it in that odd, towering configuration in a smattering of coffee shops around San Francisco while writing this story, and being able to rearrange loads of windows — including my notes, PDF documents and Adobe Lightroom — like I could on my convoluted, multi-screen home setup made work a breeze. And when it was time to pore through some long documents, I could flip the machine onto its side and see more of those files on the now-vertical screens.

Of course, there’s a catch — and kind of an ironic one, all things considered. The Yoga Book 9i may shine when it’s propped up as a multi-screen machine for productivity nuts, but using it like a more traditional laptop is kind of lousy.

When that Bluetooth keyboard is perching on the bottom screen, for example, it never feels fully locked in place. That means if you’ve ever used your laptop while reclining in a couch — like I often do — you’re probably going to see that keyboard slip out of place before long.

And while the Yoga Book is smart enough to display a virtual trackpad on that lower screen when the keyboard is positioned just right, that glossy finish means there’s a tendency for your finger to stick on the glass while you’re trying to move the cursor around. (The Yoga Book mercifully comes with a Bluetooth mouse, which you’ll want to use as often as possible.)

The Yoga Book isn’t the first dual-screen laptop like this we’ve seen before, but it’s by far the most polished and usable. I could see road warriors and productivity nuts getting a lot of use out of a machine like this, but for folks who aren’t willing to put up with its quirks, a lightweight second screen that plugs into their existing laptop may be the more rational way to go.

No screens: The Sightful Spacetop

All right, let’s forget about screens entirely — what if your next computer had a pair of smart glasses attached to it instead?

That’s the vision behind the \$2,000 Spacetop, a new “augmented reality laptop” from the Israeli startup Sightful. The idea is simple: When you sit down at a coffee shop or a hotel bar to catch up on your work, you slip on those glasses and peer at what the



CHRIS VELAZCO/The Washington Post

How many screens does your laptop really need? Lenovo makes a surprisingly convincing case for two with its Yoga Book 9i.

company claims is the equivalent of a 100-inch virtual screen. (No worries if you wear glasses — Sightful also offers prescription lens inserts so you won’t need to fumble for contact lenses.)

I first tried the Spacetop a few weeks before Apple unveiled its pricey Vision Pro headset and was honestly surprised by how quickly I fell into the flow.

Using the trackpad and typing on the keyboard while my eyes darted around multiple virtual app windows hanging in the air didn’t take much getting used to, and when it was time to re-engage with the real world, I found I could hold down a button to temporarily shut off my virtual view. Before long, I had re-created the exact screen configuration I use when I’m working at home, to the point where I felt like I could get through a day’s work without too much fuss.

This all sounds pretty neat, and it is, but comes with more than a few caveats.

For better or worse, the Spacetop is basically a giant Android phone with some augmented reality glasses permanently attached. (Seriously: It uses a processor we first saw in smartphones about 3½ years ago.) That means this machine comes with some serious limitations: It’s mostly meant to handle the kind of tasks you can perform in a web browser.

In other words, people who use their laptops for gaming or video editing need not apply. And even common tasks, like taking a video call, felt a little awkward — not because the Spacetop couldn’t handle it, but because the webcam points up at you from above the keyboard, giving your colleagues a great view of your nostrils.

And about that supposed “100-inch” virtual screen — it mostly works as advertised, but the augmented reality glasses (developed by a company called Xreal) offer a pretty narrow view of that space. Because of that, even though you can cram far more app windows into that virtual screen than you could onto a traditional laptop’s display, you can’t see much more than you normally would without having to crane your head to and fro.

Even if you think your daily work might be compatible with a machine like this, there’s a good chance you won’t get the chance to find out anytime soon. Sightful CEO and co-founder Tamir Berliner says the company is carefully vetting people who signed up for a spot on their early access waiting list to make sure their first batch of machines only wind up with people who may actually get some use out of them.

After a bit of playtime, I feel pretty convinced that smart glasses could convincingly replace a traditional laptop screen for some people — I’m just not convinced that Sightful’s first attempt is the machine I want to do it with.

Pro Hub Slim adds 7 ports to Apple M2 Macbooks

BY GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

Hubs are necessary: They are the only way to add ports and connections. But a common complaint is that they are big and bulky. That is where Satechi’s Pro Hub Slim shines.

It’s built with a plug-and-play design to connect directly to the side of the latest Apple M2 MacBooks and instantly adds seven essential ports. These include: 4K HDMI; a full-function USB 4 port good for up to 100-watt charging, up to 6K 60Hz display output and up to 40Gbps data transfer; two USB-A data ports enabling up to 10Gbps transfer speeds; one USB-C data port for up to 10Gbps transfer speed; and SD and microSD memory card readers.

The memory card slots can be read simultaneously; the USB-C does not support pass-through charging or video output.

The slim hub connects to the side dual USB-C ports on the laptop and doesn’t require a port cord. Satechi’s website lists the models that the Pro Hub Slim currently works with.

The outer body has a modern aluminum design and is available in space gray, silver and midnight.

Online: satechi.net; \$79.99

When you plan for your summer vacation, you should bring along the Mophie Powerstation Wireless Stand with MagSafe or the Powerstation Plus.

The Mophie Powerstation wireless stand with MagSafe (\$129.95) adjusts to hold the phone at a perfect angle in landscape or portrait mode. And while it’s on the stand, it’s charging simultaneously.

The 10,000 mAh internal battery supplies up to 20 watts of portable power and includes a fast-charging USB-C power delivery port. Both the wireless charging and the USB-C port can be used simultaneously.

A tripod socket can be attached to raise the stand. A USB-C to USB-C charging cable is included, but the USB-C to MagSafe puck cable is not. Overall, the Powerstation battery will supply about 39 hours of video playback.

The Mophie Powerstation Plus (\$79.95) is another excellent portable charger from the company. This one also has a 10,000 mAh internal battery, but what makes it different are the two built-in charging cables.

The Powerstation Plus has an integrated Apple Lightning cable on one side and a USB-C cable on the other. They can be used simultaneously to get up to 20 watts or separately to charge whatever devices fit.

The battery will provide up to 43 hours of video playback. And a four-light LED power indicator shows the current battery life and charging status.

Online: zagg.com

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

Battle, adapt and bend time

Upcoming Prince of Persia: The Lost Crown adds fighting features to Metroidvania genre

BY GIESON CACHO
Bay Area News Group

Although one Prince of Persia has been delayed, another one is closer to reality. Ubisoft revealed that a new entry is on the way, and this offering adds a Metroidvania twist. Titled Prince of Persia: The Lost Crown, it follows the exploits of Sargon, a fearless dual sword prodigy who is one of the Immortals tasked with rescuing the kidnapped Prince Ghassan who was taken to the cursed city of Mount Qaf.

In the short demo I played at the Ubisoft Forward event, I got a sense of the gameplay. Combat has a rhythm to it as players have a melee attack button and a ranged attack one. With a limited health bar, players can only take a few hits so knowing enemies' attack patterns and anticipating their strikes is important.

Digging into combat

They can dodge out of the way with a dash, but a better move is a parry, which players will need to time. If done correctly, players will build up their Athra's Glow meter for more powerful attacks. It takes a while to adjust to the combat. It's about striking when there's an opening, defending and judiciously using the bow and limited arrows. He also has a

chakram ("Xena" fans should know what that is.) that takes a while to charge up, but returns to players like a boomerang. Players can't button mash their way to greatness. They have to fight and adapt. One of the abilities that was unlocked was the Shadow of Simurgh that lets Sargon teleport back to a previous marker. It gives him another option for maneuverability and when combined with selectable perks tied to amulets, the teleporting return trip can damage foes. These elements lend The Lost Crown the feel of a fluid fighting game.

Traversal, platforming

The other major part of the gameplay is traversal. In the demo, Sargon doesn't have a double jump, but he does have other ways to get around. He can wall jump up to higher areas or grab on poles to swing up. One area of the demo highlighted some of the platforming players have to do. Swinging spiked cylinders create a dangerous obstacle, and players have to get around it via some Ori-style jumping and dashing. Ducking in the right spots also helped out. In another area, players will ascend to another part of Mount Qaf by hitting rifts that rewind time and lead to an enormous broken statue reforming. Again,



UBISOFT/TNS photos

Sargon is an agile character capable of wall jumps and leaps from poles in Prince of Persia: The Lost Crown.

it looks like The Lost Crown will have time-bending mechanics built into powers and level design.

The demo did a good job of giving players a taste of the basics. The Lost Crown has the bones of a good Metroidvania game though parts of the world were closed off. Trees act as save points. That's where players can refill health and also fill up on potions to heal. I started off with one, but a shop keeper had an additional potion but it required more in-game currency than I had. The currency are crystals that enemies drop or players can grab by shattering them in the environment.

The boss fight

Everything culminated in a boss fight against Jahandar, a manticore. He's a tough monster, and it's a good test of players' parrying abilities. That's key to taking the creature down. The reaction window is broad so players who can anticipate the attack will be fine. They can even parry its charge attack. The me-



Although it looks like an uneven matchup, Sargon has plenty of tricks that can help him defeat the manticore Jahandar in the boss fight.

tered abilities tied to Athra's Glow is key to survival after players use up the potion. At Level 2, players have access to a heal that's tied to a small area. As long as players are in the narrow healing zone, they can recover full health. The Level 1 attack move is a burst attack that automatically deals a combo against the monster. It takes patience and persistence to defeat Jahandar, but it's a satisfying experience. The last area to note is that The Lost Crown has a visual style comparable to anime. During the

battle, players will notice that the Athra Glow attacks seem inspired by the likes of "Dragon Ball Z" or "Naruto." It's a touch that shows off the artistic touch of the team. Prince of Persia: The Lost Crown is scheduled for release Jan. 18, 2024. It will launch on PC, PlayStation 5, PlayStation 4, Xbox Series X and Series S, Xbox One and the Nintendo Switch. The Switch version runs well at 60 frames per second. Online: ubisoft.com/en-us/game/prince-of-persia/the-lost-crown

The Crew Motorfest takes players on curated trip to Hawaii

BY GIESON CACHO
Bay Area News Group

When it comes to open-world driving games, The Crew always took second place to Forza Horizon. Although the former's map was larger by covering a condensed version of the United States, the visuals and content left something to be desired. It was a case of quantity over quality. For its next iteration, Ubisoft Ivory Tower is taking a cue from its rival and focusing on a smaller area. In this case, they're going to the Hawaiian island of Oahu. The move will remind fans of Test Drive Unlimited, a 2006 Atari-published game that was also inspired by the locale. The big difference between that title and this one is that there's more than a decade worth of gaming trends behind The Crew Motorfest. Ubisoft's racing title revolves around the concept of playlists. It's a curated set of races focused on particular themes and they're associated with distinct playstyles. With the Motorsports playlist, players race Formula 1 cars and they'll have to worry about pit stop strategy as their tires wear down. If they don't change them out, the rubber loses its grip and the vehicles turn squirrely. The Vintage Garage playlist takes player in vehicles from the 1950s and beyond. What's notable about this



UBISOFT/TNS

The Crew Motorfest takes place in Hawaii and focuses on a vehicle festival on the island.

experience is that the vehicles start off and handle as they would stock. That means players won't have GPS or other modern advancements that have now become standard. Even the music is era-appropriate. As players move through the decades, the vehicles acquire features such as ABS, and they'll gain more modern conveniences.

The Made in Japan playlist celebrates drifting, customization and other elements of the nation's car culture. The race I checked out had me going through the mountains and drifting on the switchbacks (a la Takumi on Mount Akina for you Initial D fans) while driving through the cityscape, the visuals were colored in neon. Meanwhile, the Lamborghini playlist zeroed on the supercars and gave players a history lesson on the brand. In the sample race, I played a bit of the road experience, and it resembled something you would find in Forza Horizon. The game even features different perspectives including a cockpit mode. Beyond that, The Crew Motorfest will have a free drive and online competitive activities. Players can even import their collection from previous games. It will also have post-launch support comparable to previous efforts. The game looks better than past efforts, and it shows promise. Perhaps, it goes to show that bigger isn't necessarily better, and that a smaller more focused game creates a better experience. Players can find out when The Crew Motorfest releases Sept. 14 on PlayStation 5, PlayStation 4, Xbox Series X and Series S, Xbox One and PC. Online: ubisoft.com/en-us/game/the-crew/motorfest

WEEKEND: MOVIES



MAX/AP

Shaun White appears in a scene from the documentary series “Shaun White: The Last Run.” The four-part series documenting White’s life and career is now streaming on MAX.

Snowboarding for money, not just fun

MAX docuseries focused on turning point in the sport when, following White, competitors leaned into bottom-line reality

BY EDDIE PELLIS
Associated Press

Years after their sport was hoisted onto the Olympic stage, the idea of riding for big money and gold medals still felt dirty, in a way, to most pro snowboarders. They were more focused on fun and friends than cash and prizes.

For every death-defying calculation Shaun White made over two decades of risk-taking on the halfpipe, his decision to push those riders into thinking differently about their role in the sport was as big a game changer as any.

A key part in the first episode of the documentary series “Shaun White: The Last Run,” which debuted Thursday on MAX, zeroes in on the exact moment White decided to try to make a living out of snowboarding instead of trying to make friends.

“We saw a future in this sport that others didn’t, and we wanted to prove them wrong,” says White, now 36, reflecting in the series on the turning-point moment, which came when he was 15. “I could potentially make what (my parents) were making for a whole year in one day.”

White took more than his fair share of grief for that decision, but the ensuing two decades proved him right.

By the end of the series, nobody much thinks twice about putting their life on the line for a gold medal. Ayumu Hirano, a 23-year-old who won one at the Beijing Olympics — where White finished fourth after his last run — is one of many who readily admit they wouldn’t be on that halfpipe were it not for the example White set.

“What’s beautiful in the doc is, in the end, it’s not all about the wins,” White told The Associated Press. “In the end, it’s about leaving behind a legacy in the sport. How it changed my life, how it changed my family’s life and hopefully, how it changed the sport.”

For those who paid attention to the three-time Olympic champion only every four years, the decisions he makes and the risks he takes throughout this four-part series will feel revelatory and as harrowing as they were in real time.

For those already familiar with the story, there’s a new chance to see the ups and downs — namely, the tough,



AP

Shaun White waves to the crowd after a run during the men’s snowboard halfpipe qualifying at the Winter Olympics, in Krasnaya Polyana, Russia, on Feb. 11, 2014. A key part in the documentary series zeroes in on the exact moment White decided to try to make a living out of snowboarding instead of trying to make friends.

sometimes life-changing and life-risking decisions hashed out in starting gates and ice tubs and hospital beds with his coaches, Bud Keene and, later, J.J. Thomas.

In addition to the years’ worth of home- and hand-held camera footage, there are fresh interviews with White’s mom and dad, Cathy and Roger, and his brother and sister, Kari and Jesse. They all got behind the idea of Shaun as the family business. The excursions to Mount Hood and Mammoth in the family’s retrofitted white van soon became flights across the world to watch their son and brother change the sport.

“Winning is your only friend,” Kari tells her brother in a 2021 phone call, as Shaun lies on a massage table, remembering a time when that was true but also feeling the changes that 20 years had exacted on his body and mind.

If there’s a main antagonist throughout this series, it is not another snowboarder, but rather the triple cork — the

massive and dangerous three-head-over-heels trick that Hirano used to win in China last year.

White had been toying with that trick in practice for eight years before someone finally landed it in a contest. We watch him do it well and not-so-well in dozens of plunges into airbags and foam pits. We watch him commit to it, then abandon it, then go back to it, all the while acknowledging that his career, and life, are the stakes if he loses his bearings on that trick — or any trick — while flying half-blind above a rock-hard halfpipe.

“That’s what the current riders were doing and that’s where we are today,” White said when asked why the series shines more light on the triple than the other groundbreaking tricks he invented. “And I thought it was important that they threw back to like, ‘Hey, look, I tried this ages ago.’ But the sport didn’t shift that way” when he was first trying it.

Eventually, though, it did.

The series switches between eras. Early in Episode 1, White sees Hirano and the other Japanese riders landing triples weeks before the Beijing Games, and there’s a sense he knows his perch at the top of the podium is in jeopardy.

And yet, to the very moment he reaches the starting gate for his final ride in Episode 4, it feels like there’s a chance he just might try the triple and pull it off. After all, he had taken similar chances before and walked away with gold.

There are no spoilers here. Everyone knows how this ends.

But before that, there were three gold medals and another fourth-place finish, each of which propelled White to a different level of fame, satisfaction, happiness or unhappiness. His career-ending fourth-place finish is not the point of this story.

Instead, it’s that White made it OK — maybe even commendable — for pro snowboarders to lean into the bottom-line reality of their livelihoods: Sure, pushing the envelope is great for its own sake. But there’s nothing wrong with getting rich and famous doing something you love, especially if you’re risking your life to do it.

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

Back to the raunch

‘Joy Ride,’ the directorial debut of ‘Crazy Rich Asians’ screenwriter Lim, a delightful mix of poignant, prurient

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

Adele Lim, screenwriter of “Crazy Rich Asians,” swings for the fences with her directorial debut, “Joy Ride,” and knocks it out of the park with this rowdy, raucous comedy about a search for identity and finding yourself in friendship. Hilariously daring, deeply moving and stereotype-busting in equal measure, “Joy Ride” is also the raunchiest movie most likely to make you shed a tear.

Broadway and “Emily in Paris” superstar Ashley Park plays Audrey, who was adopted from China as a baby by white American parents (Annie Mumolo and David Denham). She and her bestie Lolo (Sherry Cola) have been fast friends since the day her parents sought out the only Asian family on the playground, and the odd couple have been a fiercely loyal pair ever since: Audrey the uptight, high-achieving lawyer, Lolo the loutish layabout artist committed to her “body positive” mission statement.

The duo head to China for Audrey’s business trip, where she hopes to lock down an important business deal and make partner. Lolo’s along for the ride as her Chinese translator, but with Lolo around, anything can happen, including her BTS-obsessed cousin Deadeye (Sabrina Wu) tagging along for the ride. They’re also planning to meet up with Audrey’s

college friend Kat (Stephanie Hsu), now a massive Chinese movie and TV star. What could go wrong?

In the outrageously heightened world of “Joy Ride”—everything. The girls end up on a harrowing journey into rural China to find Audrey’s birth mother, tangling with a drug smuggler (Meredith Hagner), romping with a men’s basketball team and posing as a K-pop group along the way (which results in an international scandal). The situations in “Joy Ride” are so ridiculous that one must abandon any notions of real-world rationale in order to simply ride along with the movie’s funny and twisted internal logic.

It’s remarkable what Lim, and her co-writers Cherry Chevapravatdumrong and Teresa Hsiao, manage to achieve in just 95 minutes, and how they’re able to intermingle both the poignant and the prurient, thanks to their cast, who is up for anything and everything. Hsu, recently Oscar-nominated for her role in “Everything Everywhere All at Once,” demonstrates her gift for physical comedy, as well as her willingness to embrace every silly shenanigan Lim tosses in the direction of Kat, a woman desperately trying to maintain her prim celebrity image in spite of the chaos and temptation swirling around her.

In “Joy Ride,” Lim explores transnational adoptee identity and the Asian-American experience with specificity and



LIONSGATE/TNS

Sabrina Wu (Deadeye), Ashley Park (Audrey), Stephanie Hsu (Kat) and Sherry Cola (Lolo) go on a harrowing journey in rural China in “Joy Ride.”

humor, but she also doggedly chips away at insidious Asian and Asian-American stereotypes through bawdy body humor, throwing her heroines into transgressive situations in which they must adapt. Drug mule needs to hide the stash? No problem. Stuck in a hotel with a team of hot athletes for a night? Everyone’s getting theirs, in their own way. This is a foursome of distinct women with their own desires, issues and autonomy, as well as their own sexual agency and appetites. Nothing is taboo or off-limits in “Joy Ride,” and the quartet of actors take to these liberated roles with an energetic gusto.

Park and Hsu clearly shine on screen, but Cola and Wu hold their own, and add a unique tone that’s necessary for this

group’s multi-faceted dynamic. Wu brings a charming blend of puppyish energy and alien androgyny to the ever-surprising Deadeye, while Cola’s laidback, take-no-prisoners attitude proves to be the appropriate foil for the perfectionist Audrey.

On this wild ride, somehow Audrey manages to find what she’s been looking for — herself. And she finds it, not only in Asia, but in the person who has seen her for who she is all along: her best friend. It’s a touching message after this incredibly funny, and yes, shocking, journey. It would be a pleasure to watch these four get into another misadventure anytime.

“Joy Ride” is rated R for strong and crude sexual content, language, drug content and brief graphic nudity. Running time: 95 minutes. Now playing in select AAFES theaters.

‘The Lesson’ a spicy, tightly crafted literary thriller

By LINDSEY BAHR
Associated Press

The egos are as vast and thorny as the gardens on the lush estate of a prominent author in “The Lesson,” an entertaining and erudite chamber piece about a master, a tutor and a family after loss.

This is a story that, in different hands, could have easily turned maudlin or melodramatic, but director Alice Troughton, writer Alex MacKeith and composer Isobel Waller-Bridge opted instead for wry lightness within the construct of a slow-burn thriller. It’s as though “The Lesson,” and everyone involved, is winking at the audience through the serious material that lingers, intentionally, on the fine line between pretentious and provocative.

Daryl McCormack, of “Good Luck to You, Leo Grande” and “Bad Sisters,” plays Liam Sommers, an aspiring writer who has accepted a job tutoring the son of world-famous author J.M. Sinclair (Richard E. Grant), who also happens to be his literary idol. But the film begins with Liam on a fancy stage, being interviewed about his novel about a fading patriarch and a



BLEECKER STREET/AP

Richard E. Grant plays famous author J.M. Sinclair in “The Lesson.” Sinclair is the idol of writer Liam Sommers (Daryl McCormack), who is tutoring Sinclair’s son (Stephen McMillan) for entrance exams.

grief-stricken family that the moderator calls one of the most striking debuts of the year. The movie is a memory prompted by that very standard interview question: What was your inspiration?

Anyone in the business of asking artists questions about inspiration knows, on a certain level, that at best you’re only getting a very brief version of one person’s highly sanitized truth. At worst it’s just a plausible-sounding fabrication, safely

constructed in the rearview mirror. J.M. Sinclair, in the YouTube interviews that Liam watches on repeat, coyly speaks about how all great writers steal but he’s not one, you imagine, who would publicly own any thievery. He is as precious about the singularity of his works and his talent as, in his words, the average writers who attempt originality and “fail universally” and the good writers who have the “sense to borrow.” But it all helps to plant the seed that

you’re about to watch a literary heist unfold, though perhaps not the one you might expect.

The Sinclair family is the picture of upper-class posturing, with a household staff and a feigned formality fitting of someone who is always in control of the narrative, even at the dinner table in the company of only his son, Bertie (Stephen McMillan), and wife, Hélène (Julie Delpy). When he queues up Rachmaninoff as their dining music and Bertie protests, he challenges his son to give him three good reasons why — a snobbish test that only shuts down the conversation. It’s also quite the introduction to an author whom Liam has worshipped. Never meet your idols, etc., etc.

Liam is ostensibly there to help Bertie, a quiet and tortured Chalamet-type, prepare for entrance exams to study English literature at Oxford. But he has his own motives too — he’s writing a thesis about Sinclair and at work on his own book. Why would a family that insists on a nondisclosure agreement and utmost discretion hire someone with such a glaring conflict of interest? Well, that’s just one of

the many mysteries for the audience to navigate in this maze of secrets, shame and scandals, including the somewhat recent suicide of the eldest Sinclair boy who was, it’s suggested, a more promising writer than Bertie.

McCormack, Grant and Delpy are a deliriously captivating group to watch. Grant, so adept at comedy, is prickly and terrifying as this intellectual tyrant who is unafraid to crush anyone in his path with casual cruelty, as when he asks Liam for help because he’s “not a real writer.” And McCormack once again excels at playing a shrewd, underestimated outsider. Liam has a few Tom Ripley talents up his sleeve that he uses to his advantage at key moments.

As Liam says of Sinclair’s newest book, the third act in the film feels like a bit of a jarring departure from the fun escalating tension of the first two acts. But “The Lesson” is worth a watch as a tightly crafted film made by and for adults unafraid of some rhododendron metaphors and casual Tchaikovsky talk.

“The Lesson” is rated R for language and some sexual content. Running time 104 minutes.

WEEKEND: ENTERTAINMENT

Healing through stories

Retired Green Beret Scott Mann examines ‘holistic horror of war’ in film, play ‘Last Out’

By BRIAN McELHINEY
Stars and Stripes

Storytelling helped Army Lt. Col. Scott Mann deal with post-traumatic stress after serving in the Afghanistan War and retiring in 2012. A decade later, it’s helping him — and others — deal with the fallout of that war all over again.

In August 2021, as the Taliban took over Afghanistan and the U.S. scrambled to evacuate its allies and citizens, former Green Beret Mann was busy launching the film version of his play, “Last Out: Elegy of a Green Beret,” on Amazon. The play, written by and starring Mann, tells the story of a Green Beret who is trapped between his family obligations and his mission in Afghanistan as he struggles to ascend to the mythical warrior afterlife of Valhalla after getting hit with a roadside bomb.

Mann soon switched gears, founding Task Force Pineapple with other veterans to help more than 1,000 Afghan refugees escape Kabul.

“It was all-consuming until my wife had my best friends stage an intervention somewhere around October after the collapse, and I stepped away from it and got myself healthy again,” Mann said recently from his home in Tampa, Fla.

“I was not in a good place ... coming out of the Pineapple experience, and even writing the book (“Operation Pineapple Express,” published in 2022) because interviewing all of those folks that made it, those folks that didn’t, the veterans. I have interviewed just hundreds of veterans — iconic special operators — and watching them weep in front of me and telling me that they’re never gonna let their son join the Army, and just the moral injury that I felt and so many of my peers who fought this war for 20 years felt and the families. So there was a lot of just heaviness coming out of that.”

Around this time, Mann got a call from actor, musician and veterans advocate Gary Sinise. Sinise had seen the film version of “Last Out” through mutual friend and songwriter John Ondrasik, better known as soft-rock piano balladeer Five for Fighting.

“He was struggling, Scott, with ... what



Photos from The Heroes Journey

Scott Mann as Master Sgt. Danny Patton (left) and Lenny Bruce as Kenny Suggins perform a scene from “Last Out: Elegy of a Green Beret” in San Diego in May. The film version of Mann’s play is available on Amazon Prime Video.

“We had the sister of a Green Beret sergeant major, she stood up and she said, ‘You guys told me in two hours what my baby brother has been trying to tell me for five years.’”

Army Lt. Col. Scott Mann
on the impact of his play and film
“Last Out: Elegy of a Green Beret”

did we do and why did we do it, and he was losing friends who were committing suicide, and terrible different things were happening,” Sinise told Stars and Stripes in May. “Much like the guys back in Vietnam — the veterans that I met back in the ’80s who wrote a play called ‘Tracers’ because they were struggling with their own service and coming home from that war to a divided nation and a nation really in that had abandoned them. The healing play that they’d made was very, very positive for them, and Scott did the exact same thing.”

The partnership with the Gary Sinise Foundation has led to a summer tour for “Last Out” that kicked off with performances in San Diego and Phoenix, and continues through October with stops in Sioux Falls, S.D.; Franklin, Tenn.; Mil-



Cooper Mann and his father, Scott Mann, backstage at a show in San Diego in May. Cooper Mann plays the son of the main character in “Last Out.”

waukee; and Topeka, Kan. Along with a preview show at Sinise’s Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago — where Sinise presented the Vietnam-era play “Tracers” in the early ’80s — these are the first performances of the play since COVID, and more significantly, since the end of the war in Afghanistan.

“When Gary called me and said, ‘You know, Scott, this reminds me a lot of Vietnam,’ I was walking in the driveway ... and I just kind of fell apart on him,” Mann said. “And I’m like, ‘Gary, it is a lot like that. And if we don’t do something, we’re

on the front end of a mental-health tsunami.’ I mean, I told Congress this when I testified to the House Foreign Affairs Committee about Pineapple. I was like, you guys don’t understand; I mean, you’re talking about 73% of the Afghan War population feels betrayed. This is really bad, and on top of all, the suicide rate.

“So coming back to the play, when Gary brought that up, we both agreed that this was a preexisting asset that could be put into play right now to help veterans make

SEE HEALING ON PAGE 19

WEEKEND: ENTERTAINMENT



Photos from The Heroes Journey

The cast and crew of “Last Out: Elegy of a Green Beret” huddle before a show in San Diego in May. The play was written to benefit both veterans and civilians.

Healing: Play based on both Mann’s, his wife’s experiences

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meaning out of their lived experience while simultaneously showing politicians and civilians the impact.”

Mann wrote the play over several years and premiered it in Tampa in November 2018. At the time, Mann and his team of actors and crew — all veterans and military family members with little to no theater experience — “thought it was a one-time thing,” according to the play’s website. But audience reaction led Mann to mount a 16-city, 28,000-mile tour out of a U-Haul van in 2019 through his nonprofit, The Heroes Journey.

“Last Out” was originally developed as a one-man show with Mann starring as a career Green Beret, Master Sgt. Danny Patton. But as the story progressed, Mann knew he had to involve other characters — namely, Patton’s best friend and fellow Green Beret Kenny Suggins (portrayed by Lenny Bruce, also a former Green Beret who served in Afghanistan with Mann), wife Lynn (Heather Corrigan) and son Kaiden (Cooper Mann, Mann’s son).

While not directly autobiographical, much of the play is based on Mann’s own experiences. Suggins is based on Clifford Patterson, one of Mann’s closest friends who was killed on 9/11 at the Pentagon. And Lynn Patton takes inspiration from Mann’s wife, Monty Mann, and her experiences at home while Mann was in Afghanistan.

“I started asking my wife questions about what happened when I was gone, what happened when I was deployed, and at first she was resistant — almost agitated about it,” Mann said. “At this point I’d

been retired for seven years, and she’s like, ‘Why are you bringing this stuff up? I don’t want to talk about this.’ And there were times when we would kind of go at it. And then finally she told me, ‘Babe, I had to keep all this from you to keep you alive; I really don’t want to do this.’ And I said, ‘Well I think if we can put this out there, it’s going to validate what you and a lot of other family members did.’”

That seems to be exactly what has happened. Audiences, often made up of veterans and family members not just from the recent Middle East wars, but stretching back to Vietnam, Korea and World War II, participate in “talkbacks” at the end of the show, sharing their own experiences with Mann and each other.

“We had the sister of a Green Beret sergeant major, she stood up and she said, ‘You guys told me in two hours what my baby brother has been trying to tell me for five years,’ ” Mann said. “And so you see these families sitting together looking at the war from each other’s perspective, because the way the play works is the protagonist, Danny the Green Beret, he’s stuck between his living room and his fire base after being severely wounded, and so he can’t ascend. And so you see both, and the audience is affected by that in a very profound way because a lot of the home front stuff, no one really understands or knows.”

But the play also was written for civilians to help them understand “the holistic horror of war,” as Mann describes it.

“I’m a father of three boys. My oldest son a few years ago told me he was gonna join the Army and he wanted to be a Spe-



Scott Mann performs as Master Sgt. Danny Patton in “Last Out: Elegy of a Green Beret.” “My vision was that I could tell a story kind of like ‘It’s a Wonderful Life’ with body armor, in a way that the audience could really go for the ride and feel what it’s like to say goodbye to your wife at the airfield, to feel what it’s like to hold your buddy in your arms in his final moments because he did what you asked him to do,” Mann said.

cial Forces guy, and that just hit me right between the running lights,” Mann said. “Because at that point we were over there, we were in this war that — most people didn’t even know that we were there. ... I can’t tell you how many times people would say to me in airports, ‘We’re still in Afghanistan?’ And now my son’s gonna go fight a war that I didn’t finish. That for me became something that I felt like that had to be fixed, that had to be adjusted.

“... My vision was that I could tell a story kind of like ‘It’s a Wonderful Life’ with body armor, in a way that the audience could really go for the ride and feel what it’s like to say goodbye to your wife at the airfield, to feel what it’s like to hold your buddy in your arms in his final moments because he did what you asked him to do,” he continued. “The things that go with combat that most people don’t know.

To see a military spouse watch a news report with no dialogue in a scene, and just fall to her knees and scream — I mean, it rocks the civilians to the core.”

That mission seems even more important now with veterans struggling with how the Afghanistan War ended. Mann hopes to continue touring the show in partnership with the Gary Sinise Foundation, and plans to film the show in a live setting, a la the filmed version of “Hamilton.”

“The irony in all of this is that we’ve been telling stories — warrior storytelling — since we’ve been fighting wars,” Mann said. “I mean, if you look at most of Shakespeare’s plays, that’s what they do. And civil society has used storytelling as the primary way to bring veterans home from war, in every civil society on the planet, and we’ve lost that.”

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

The Habsburg allure of Vienna

In Vienna’s Hofburg Palace, ground zero of the Habsburg Empire, I’m particularly entertained by its butterfly house, a tropical wonderland on the Danube. In this community of royal butterflies, the trays serving up rotting slices of banana are the tavern. Flut-tery slackers lick the fermented banana juice as it beads, and then just hang out there in a stupor ... or fly in giddy loop-de-loops.

The rest of the Habsburg sights can fill an entire Vienna vacation. The lavish Imperial Apartments of the palace seem designed to give their royal resi-dents grandeur fit for a god. After all, in the age of divine monarchs, kings and emperors claimed that God himself had ordained them to rule with un-questioned authority.

The Habsburgs were one of a handful of royal families who ruled nearly all of Europe until World War I. Six centuries of Habsburgs ruled from Vienna, including Maria Theresa in the late 1700s. The original practitio-ner of “make love not war,” she

was famous for having 16 chil-dren and cleverly marrying many of them into the various royal families around Europe in order to expand her empire.

Exploring the Hofburg is a treat. It’s furnished as it was in the 19th century, during the reign of Maria Theresa’s great-great-grandson, Emperor Franz Josef, who ruled for 68 years —



Rick Steves

nearly to the end of the empire.

Walls between the palace rooms are wide enough to hide servants’ corridors. Big, ornate stoves, which servants fed from behind, heated the rooms. The decor is splendid Baroque. The dining room is set just as it would have been. Next to each name card was a menu listing the chef responsible for each dish. (Talk about pressure.) While the Hof-burg had tableware for 4,000, it would feed 3,000 on a typical day.

Franz Josef nurtured an image of being spartan and a very hard



DOMINIC ARIZONA BONUCELLI/Rick Steves' Europe

For several generations, the Habsburg family ruled from the mighty Hofburg Palace, in the heart of Vienna.

worker. His no-frills iron bed and portable washstand are on dis-play. (Still, it took a personal staff of 14 to make him feel properly cared for: three valets, two door-men, six manservants, and three chambermaids.) While he had a typical emperor’s share of mis-tresses, his dresser was well-stocked with portraits of his wife, the Empress Elisabeth (“Sisi”).

Elisabeth, Franz Josef’s myste-rious, narcissistic and beautiful wife, lived luxuriously in this palace — and a museum here is dedicated to her life story. Her main goal in life seems to have been preserving her public im-

age as a beauty. Peeking into her bathroom, you’ll see the finest copper tub of its day resting on the first linoleum floor in Vienna, installed in 1880. Sisi has been compared to Princess Diana because of her beauty, bitter-sweet life and tragic death — assassinated by an Italian anar-chist in 1898. When you visit Vienna, it’s easy to get caught up in her alluring legend.

While the Habsburgs have been out of power since the end of World War I, they maintain a hold on the Austrian spirit — as you feel when you visit their tombs in the Kaisergruft (empe-

rors’ crypt). Stepping inside, you’re surrounded by gray metal tombs festooned with Habsburg regalia. How the royals wanted to be remembered is reflected in their tombs. Franz Josef’s is an appropriately austere military tomb. Sisi always seems to get the most flowers.

The real legacy of the Habs-burgs is the magnificence of their city. Stepping outside, I look up and appreciate the brilliant, ornate skyline of Vienna.

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European swimming events provide exercise, bragging rights

When the temperature soars, the quickest path to relief from the heat can often be a dip in the nearest body of water. Those who enjoy swimming might wish to take part in some of these upcoming events promising iconic backdrops, camaraderie and bragging rights, with or without a healthy dose of competition.

Juoksengi, Sweden: Swim the Arctic Circle is an open-water swimming competition that takes place in a river that forms the border between Sweden and Finland. The chilly temperature of the Torne River, in Lapland, adds to the challenge of these two races staged in a village that’s home to some 300 residents. The 2,000-meter race, held in the daytime hours, starts at a beach north of the Arctic Circle and crosses the Finnish border be-fore returning to the finish at the Swedish shore. The 3,000-meter race starts from the Finnish shore just after midnight, crosses the Swedish-Finnish border, the Arctic Circle and a time zone, which allows all participants who complete the distance in under 55 minutes to claim they’ve completed the race the day before it began. Organizers recommend the use of wetsuits and safety buoys. The races, capped to a max of 150 swimmers per start, take place July 15. Entry fees are 1,200 Swedish Krona (\$111.35) for the 2,000-meter and 2,000 Swedish Krona for the 3,000-meter race. Online: swimac.eu/en



Karen Bradbury

Zurich, Switzerland: The annual Limmatschwimmen, or Limmat Swim, takes swimmers on a course along the river running through the heart of this pretty city. In order for the race to take place, the depth and temper-ature of the water must be within certain parameters, and the day must hold minimal risk of thunderstorms. Should these conditions not be met on Aug. 19, the race will be postponed until Aug. 26. Swim slots, capped at 4,500 par-ticipants, will be put up for sale online at 5 p.m. Aug. 16.



iStock

Many people enjoy swimming in summertime, but some folks take it the extra mile with open-water competition.

The cost of take part with one’s own dry-sack is 22 Swiss Francs, or about \$24.60. Online: limmatschwimmen.ch

Istanbul, Turkey: Taking part in the Bosphorus Cross-Continental Swim gives participants an unusual claim to fame: they can say they have swum from Asia to Europe. Once a year, shipping traffic in the normally bustling Istanbul Strait is brought to a halt, allowing thousands of strong open-water swimmers to traverse the body of water that connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara. The 6.5 km course starts from Kanlica on the Asian side of the Bosphorus and ends in Kuruçesme, on its European end. The race is so popular that the number of applicants greatly exceeds the approximately 2,200 spots available. The 35th edition of this sold-out race is slated for Aug. 20. More race information is at bogazici.olimpiyat.org.tr/en. Another possible route to participation is to apply through SwimTrek, a British travel agency.

Copenhagen, Denmark: Once a year in late summer, swimmers are allowed to swim in the usually off-limits canals of the Danish capital. On Aug. 25-26, the Danish

Swimming Federation hosts swims of various distances around the Parliament building. Events include the 2,000-meter Copenhagen Swim By Night, a social swimming event in which swimmers are equipped with LED lights on their swim buoys, slated for 8 p.m. Aug. 25. The races to be held Aug. 26 include 2,000-meter races, with sep-arate events for both elite and recreational swimmers and a 10,000-meter-long distance race, along with a relay race to be completed by teams of four. Those new to the sport of open-water swimming can also opt for a 1,000-meter course. The race is open to all swimmers age 15 or older. The cost of entry to the 2,000-meter individual recre-ational swim, for example, is 525 Danish Krone, or about \$77. Online: copenhagenswim.com/en

Porec, Croatia: The “Porecki delfin” is a swimming challenge open to all comers. Participants swim along a marked trail through the sea. As the trail hugs the coast, friends and family can follow and cheer on their swim-mers for most of the way. Distances include the 1,500-meter Bronze Dolphin, the 3,000-meter Silver Dolphin and the 5,000-meter Golden Dolphin. Participants may use aids including fins, masks, swimming boards and air mattresses. There are no age restrictions, although those under 14 must be accompanied. The challenge can be started between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Sept. 2. The 20-euro registration fee includes a hot meal, water, fruit, T-shirt and a medal. This can be paid online or from 8 a.m. on the day itself. Online: poreckidelfin.com/en

Montenegro: The distance of the Ultra Swim 33.3 is significant: its length reflects that of the English Channel. Following a successful test event held in September of 2022, the race makes up part of the newly-launched Ultra Swim 33.3 global series, set to kick off in Montenegro on Sept. 29. The race unfolds over four days. Participants can choose from solo, duo or four-person team formats. Participation cost starts at 1,350 euros, which includes accommodation. Online: ultraswim333.com

WEEKEND: TRAVEL



iStock

Tiny, separate beds are still widely accepted in Europe. Bigger, softer beds are most likely to be found in luxury hotels.

Why are European hotel beds so bad?

Americans seek comfort, but in many places overseas, tradition still dictates public accommodations

BY NATALIE B. COMPTON
The Washington Post

Seven days after Nicole Dunn got back home to California from her trip to France and England, she still hadn’t recovered. It wasn’t jet lag. It wasn’t the blues that hit after a vacation’s over, either.

Rather, it was another case of bad hotel bed, an affliction that plagues countless unsuspecting travelers in Europe. Dunn said her mattress at the Angel Islington Hilton Hotel in London was so firm, it didn’t just ruin her sleep, it left her in pain long after checkout.

“I’m on the way to the chiropractor,” Dunn said on a phone call from her car en route to her checkup. “I can still barely move.”

Coming from the United States, where you can expect a decent mattress without splurging on a luxury accommodation, Americans are routinely dismayed by their hotel beds across the pond. Old-world charm only goes so far when you end up trying to sleep on something lumpy, short, bunk, twin, or, as in Dunn’s case, “rock hard.”

Ben Pundole, the executive vice president of brand culture and experience for Public Hotels, said for the most part, hotel beds in Europe aren’t as comfortable as ones in the U.S. — at least not to American travelers. But they come with the territory. Hard beds, small beds, separate little beds are “very accepted in Europe, especially amongst, I would say, an older generation,” he said. “It’s a very different hotel sleeping culture.”

It’s not just a Europe problem. America’s preference for plush mattresses, box springs and fluffy pillows doesn’t translate well in many of the places we travel, from Japan with its traditional tatami mats and

firm “Western-style” options to the concrete bed bases of Mexico.

Two beds for the price of one

Hans Mast, a travel agent for Golden Rule Travel, remembers a morning on one of his group tours through Europe when an older client grabbed the bus microphone to share a story.

“He said, ‘I had quite the experience last night ... I leaned over to kiss my wife and ended up on the floor,’” Mast said.

The bed — to the surprise of the traveler — was made of two twin beds pushed together.

“That’s culturally very European,” said Pundole, who’s also the founder of the blog A Hotel Life.

Gareth Boyd, a former hotel owner who lives in Belfast, said the practice is rooted in tradition.

“Historically, many hotel rooms were designed for individual travelers or same-gender colleagues who would share a room but not a bed,” Boyd said.

The arrangement gave travelers a less-intimate sleeping arrangement, and “it has a lot more flexibility for hotels,” said Mast, as two twin beds can be separated to accommodate more configurations of travelers than a king bed can.

Pundole said it’s not much of an issue in England, but it’s particularly common in Germany, the Netherlands and Italy.

European travel expert Rick Steves said that Americans travelers should expect regional differences in bedding (although you may find some American-style pillows or extra bedding in the closet or at the front desk). For example, “Don’t be confused if your top sheet is ‘missing,’” Steves said in an email. “Especially in northern Europe, many hotels use covered duvets instead of a top sheet.”

“In France, some beds have pillows that are shaped like a wedge or a log,” Steves continued. “And in warm climates, you may only have a sheet, and no comforter.”

Prioritizing health over comfort

When Dunn told the front desk staff about her backbreaking mattress, the hotel employee was unapologetic.

That may be because firm mattresses have a reputation for being healthier, “and Europeans are notorious for taking health over comfort,” Mast said.

Boyd says European mattresses are typically firmer because of the preference for stronger back support, which some believe leads to a better night’s sleep. Pundole feels the same, both that sleeping on harder beds is better for you and that’s a cultural divide that separates Americans from Europeans.

“Americans like things plush and comfortable and I think Europeans are a little more practical and pragmatic,” Pundole said. “I think that reflects in even our kind of mattresses.”

‘It’s an issue’

For a trip to Rome in 2019, travel writer Jenn Rice booked a hotel on a “mega budget” knowing that it wouldn’t be Instagram-worthy, but at the bare minimum she assumed she’d fit on the bed. She was wrong. When Rice arrived, the photos of the room weren’t remotely close to what she’d seen online. While her reservation had been for a double, “it was a twin,” Rice remembered. “But like, smaller.”

Too tall for the bed at 5-foot-8, Rice had to open the window at the foot of her bed and stick her feet out in order to life flat.

“I cried,” she said. The next day, she abandoned ship and found a different hotel.

Alli Allen, a luxury travel adviser with Travel Edge, says she gets frustrated calls from clients in Europe about small beds.

“It’s an issue,” she said. “They tend to call all beds doubles there ... the wording is confusing.”

But space comes at a premium in Europe, which can dictate a hotel’s bed situation.

“The really nice luxury hotels have bigger rooms. ... They’re more apt to offer a king or two queens,” Allen said. Conversely, “most normal hotels, maybe a four-star, the rooms are small,” and need to have smaller beds accordingly, Allen added.

A good sleep can be costly

Dunn’s trip wasn’t all bad. Before she got to London for a work conference, she’d traveled to France to celebrate her 10-year anniversary with her husband, Val. In Paris, Dunn stayed at the five-star boutique Hôtel San Régis, and in Cannes, the recently renovated four-star Hôtel Croisette Beach Cannes MGallery. “Those hotels were fantastic,” Dunn said. “I slept like a baby.”

The moral of the story will come as a surprise to no one: To increase your chance of getting a better bed, stay in a better hotel.

Pundole said travelers should be aware that booking a two- to three-star hotel in Europe are more likely to get those traditional European bed experiences (twins, very firm). “Once you hit the lifestyle hotels or the five-star hotels, then it becomes like it is here in America,” he said.

Mast says staying at a big chain hotel may also help.

“Those international chains — like Hyatt, Marriott, IHG, Hilton — they do have international bed standards,” he said.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



A vintage photo displayed at the BUGA shows the U.S. Army's Spinelli Barracks, with its warehouses and military vehicles. The barracks became Spinelli Park nature preserve, home to this year's BUGA.

BUGA blooms from barracks

Former US Army facility in Mannheim hosting Germany's biannual national garden display

By Michael Abrams
Stars and Stripes

Where U.S. Army tanks, trucks, supplies and other gear once were repaired, shipped and stored, millions of flowers now bloom and thousands of trees grow.

Spinelli Barracks in Mannheim, Germany, has been transformed from a giant military logistics hub into the home of the Bundesgartenschau, or federal horticulture show.

Known as BUGA, the show takes place every two years in a different location. This year's is in Mannheim and runs until Oct. 8.

The barracks, named after Pfc. Dominic Spinelli, an Army medic killed in World War II, were turned over to the German government when the Americans left in 2012 after 64 years there.

The question was what to do with the more than 200-acre expanse of buildings, warehouses and motor pools. Besides building residential areas on its periphery, officials decided to leave most of it as a nature preserve and a fresh air corridor for the city — and in 2023, to hold the BUGA on its grounds.

Millions of plants and flower bulbs were put in the ground, along with 2,023 trees. A giant old warehouse, called the U-Halle because of its shape, was reconfigured to its steel girders and now houses BUGA exhibits and gastronomy.

The most impressive new structure in Spinelli Park is the Panoramasteg, or panorama walkway, a 143-foot-long footbridge that just ends hanging

On the QT

Directions: There is no public parking near the BUGA. Visitors arriving by car should park at the Maimarktgelände, where there is a park-and-ride stop. Plug Wilhelm-Varnholt-Allee into your navigation system and then follow the signs. If arriving by train at Mannheim's main station, a BUGA-Express takes you to the grounds. The ticket is included with admission.

Times: There are ticket desks at both Spinelli-Park and the Luisenpark. They are open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. The park stays open until sundown, longer when there is evening entertainment.

Costs: Admission is 28 euros for adults age 25 and up, 11 euros for young adults and free for children up to age 15. Two-day and season tickets are available. You can buy tickets online. Parking is 9.50 euros. The hybrid train costs 4 euros. You can get on and off at the stops while traveling one time around.

Food: Restaurants are spread through the park, including a food truck courtyard with burgers, pizza and Asian street food.

Information: Online: buga23.de. On sunny days, don't forget to bring sunscreen. There is very little shade at Spinelli Park.

Michael Abrams

over the Augewaesser, a small lake.

After the show concludes in October, it will be expanded over the lake to connect the nature preserve there with the park.

The entrance to the BUGA is on the site of what was once a motor pool. The U-Halle with its exhibits is behind it. Pass



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

The rose garden is one of many flower gardens at the Bundesgartenschau, or BUGA, in Mannheim, Germany. The federal horticulture show takes place every two years in a different location.



A display at the BUGA in Mannheim shows how covering a building's facade with plants can help to keep it cooler.

through or around it and you come to various gardens and tree nurseries.

Most of the trees planted for the show are to be replanted post-BUGA in other parts of Mannheim in need of shade.

Along with the flowers and the gardens, the focus of this year's BUGA is climate, environment, energy and food security. Among the exhibits is one on sustainable ways to grow herbs and vegetables. Another shows how covering a building's facade with plants can help to keep the building and the environment cooler.

But not everything is serious here. There are playgrounds, a disc golf area and a giant rope jungle gym that features a slide where you can glide from the top to the bottom.

Even with all these features, Spinelli Park is still a huge expanse of nature. Two towers offer great views of the grounds. If you get tired walking, a hybrid-powered train circles through the park, with stops at various spots along the way.

A cable car (to be dismantled after the show) takes visitors across the countryside and over



The Panoramasteg, or panorama walkway, seen from the BUGA cable car. After the BUGA ends Oct. 8, the 143-foot-long footbridge is to be expanded over the Augewaesser lake, to connect the nature preserve there with the one that was once the Spinelli Barracks.



Visitors walk through the plant show house in Luisenpark, the BUGA's second site. The hothouse was upgraded for the BUGA and features flora and fauna from South America.

the Neckar River to the BUGA's second site, the Luisenpark. Built for the 1975 Bundesgartenschau, it has been incorporated into this year's show. Its center has been remodeled and upgraded.

Visitors can walk through the plant show house, a hothouse that features flora and fauna from South America, or watch the park's Humboldt penguins swim in their new enclosure and birds fly through a giant aviary.

Beds of perennials, along with peonies, camellia, rhododen-

drons and fuchsias, add color to the park, and visitors can relax on one of the Luisenpark's grassy meadows.

The cable car ride back across the river offers a good view of the Spinelli Barracks buildings that escaped the wrecking ball.

The Bundesgartenschau has a lot to see, do and learn in a park named after a soldier who received a Silver Star for his bravery.

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WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING



Cafe Baennjerrueck, in the Baennjerrueck area of Kaiserslautern, Germany, has a retro interior complete with sea foam-colored booths and Kandinsky-esque ironwork dividers. Its large windows overlook a calm wooded area.

PHOTOS BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN/Stars and Stripes



Cafe Baennjerrueck

Address: Leipzigerstrasse 17, Kaiserslautern, Germany

Hours: Dine in: Friday, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Bakery shop for takeaway: Tuesday to Friday, 6 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturday, 7 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Closed Mondays.

Prices: French breakfast, 6.50 euros; "big hunger" breakfast, 14 euros; two eggs, 2.90 euros; two eggs with bacon, 4.50 euros; most cake slices between 2.50 and 4 euros. Cash payments only.

Information: +49 631 593 67, reservations recommended.



Owner Andrea Rohde says the cafe is finally starting to hit its stride after opening in 2020 and facing several setbacks.

A retro cafe with a relaxing atmosphere

Cafe Baennjerrueck on the outskirts of Kaiserslautern serves sufficiently filling and beautifully presented breakfasts, cakes

BY PHILLIP
WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

When I was young, my grandmother took my sister and me out to breakfast at least twice a month.

Grandma always ordered the same thing: two poached eggs. It prompted my sister to joke she could easily make the same dish at home for a fraction of the price. But those breakfasts were more about the overall experience than the food itself.

Cafe Baennjerrueck, on the outskirts of Kaiserslautern, Germany, reminds me a bit of the restaurants my family used to visit in the northern suburbs of Detroit. It specializes in cakes and breakfast items, most of which could easily be prepared at home.

But its ambiance, created in part by large windows that overlook a calm wooded area and a retro interior complete with sea foam-colored booths and Kandinsky-esque ironwork dividers, makes going out to eat there worthwhile.

I first visited Cafe Baennjerrueck on a Saturday and it was full of customers. A hum of German chatter and clinking coffee mugs filled the room. Many of



The French breakfast at Cafe Baennjerrueck consists of a croissant and a coffee or cappuccino.

the guests that day were regulars, I was later told.

American visitors will quickly notice the breakfast choices aren't as extensive as they are at the average restaurant stateside. Stacks of pancakes dripping with maple syrup or omelets served with hash browns and sausage links are nowhere to be found.

But what is on offer is sufficiently filling and beautifully presented. For those with a small appetite, the French breakfast consists of a cup of coffee or cappuccino and a croissant.

The pastry is light and buttery and comes with additional squares of butter and jam. The peach jam I had was full of flavor. The meal was served on a plate garnished with strawberries, kiwi, apricot, nuts, raisins



The "big hunger" breakfast at Cafe Baennjerrueck includes a charcuterie plate and breadbasket.

and two small pretzels.

The "big hunger" breakfast includes a colorful charcuterie plate and various types of bread, an ensemble that allows customers to make their own sandwiches.

Slices of cheese, turkey, roast beef and salami are included on the charcuterie plate, as are various vegetables like cucumbers, tomatoes, red peppers, lettuce and pickles, which are fresh and crisp. A hard-boiled egg is also thrown in.

The dish most reminiscent of breakfast fare at a U.S. restaurant is a helping of eggs, fried or scrambled, with American-style bacon.

The scrambled eggs served to me almost resembled an omelet. They had an excellent consistency,



The scrambled eggs at Cafe Baennjerrueck come with a healthy amount of chives that add flavor to the dish.

firm enough to where they weren't dried out, but also not watery. A generous pinch of chives boosted the taste.

They also came with cucumbers, red peppers and tomatoes on the side, and I used all of the fixings to build an egg sandwich on a pumpkin seed roll.

In addition to breakfast, many customers visit just to enjoy something sweet with tea or coffee in a relaxed atmosphere.

Sit-down service is offered only on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, but the cafe bakery sells cakes and other baked goods from a separate side entrance every day except Monday.

The eatery makes around 50 cakes a week, owner Andrea Rohde told me. Of the several I tried, the cinnamon cream cake,

or zimtrahmkuchen, was the best.

The cheesecake dusted with cinnamon was recommended to me by Rohde's nephew. It's not too sweet and the cinnamon is more of an aftertaste. The light texture made it even more enjoyable.

Coming in a close second was the cream cheese mandarin cake. This surprised me, as I'm usually not a big fan of fruity cakes. But the slightly tangy mandarins blended perfectly with the sweet creamy filling that sat between two layers of white sponge.

The Black Forest cherry cake packed a punch. I was warned it contains kirsch, a cherry brandy, but I wasn't expecting the alcohol element to be so strong. The cake was otherwise soft and fresh.

The item I appreciated the least was the gefullter kranz, which translates to "filled wreath." It's a dense, round cake that looks like it should be sweet, but it doesn't have much of a taste at all.

About a dozen other options are available at the cafe at any given time. I recommend going on the weekend and enjoying them at the restaurant.

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WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



PHOTOS BY JONATHAN SNYDER/Stars and Stripes

Otherwise known as Rabbit Island, Okuno-jima is home to a dark past. During World War II, it was used by Imperial Japan for research and development of chemical weapons.

Fuzzy bunnies and poison gas

Look into the checkered history of Japan’s Okuno-jima, also known as Rabbit Island

BY JONATHAN SNYDER
Stars and Stripes

An island east of Hiroshima is a place to make friends with a population of nearly 1,000 wild rabbits.

Otherwise known as Rabbit Island, Okuno-jima is home to a dark past. During World War II, this island was used by Imperial Japan for research and development of chemical weapons.

Many of the buildings remain, but as nature reclaims the place, it takes on the look of a scene from TV’s “The Last of Us.”

The island is accessible only by a short, 15-minute ferry ride. Bringing your vehicle is discouraged unless you plan to take a connecting ferry to Omishima.

I used Tadanoumi Port, which has a large, free parking lot for ferry passengers. A round-trip ferry ticket costs 740 yen, or about \$5.11, for adults and 380 yen for children.

Before you board, pay 200 yen for some rabbit food where tickets are purchased. It’s your last opportunity for rabbit food before reaching the island.

How the rabbits ended up there is unclear, though they may have been released to help detect poisonous gas leaks, according to the island’s website.



How the rabbits ended up on Okuno-jima is unclear, though they may have been released to help detect poisonous gas leaks, according to the island’s website.

Spend a full day on Rabbit Island if you really want to explore. A hotel and campgrounds are available for overnight stays. The hotel costs 15,200 yen a night; a camp site costs 3,600 yen. Advance reservations are recommended since it does book up during the busy summer season.

When you exit the ferry onto the island, a free shuttle bus will take you to the hotel, although anyone can ride.

I ended up renting an e-bike to get around the island much quicker and see more sights. A normal bicycle rented from the front desk at the hotel costs 600 yen for two hours; an e-bike costs 800 yen.

While on the island, make sure



Otherwise known as Rabbit Island, Okuno-jima is home to a dark past. During World War II, it was used by Imperial Japan for research and development of chemical weapons.

On the QT

Directions: 1-2-1 Tadanoumi Nakamachi, Takehara, Hiroshima 729-2316

Times: Ferries depart for Okuno-jima between 7:40 a.m. and 7:15 p.m. The schedule can vary throughout the year and on weekdays and weekends.

Costs: Free parking; round-trip ferry tickets are 740 yen for adults and 380 yen for children.

Food: Restaurant at the hotel offers breakfast and dinner buffets.

Information: Online: rabbit-island.info

Jonathan Snyder

to check out the Poison Gas Museum to learn about the island’s dark history. The museum is open daily from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and admission is 100 yen for adults and 50 yen for children.

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Many of the island’s World War II-era buildings remain, but as nature reclaims the place, it takes on the look of a postapocalyptic movie set.

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Familiar lineup

South Korea’s assembly line-format Cuchara takes a shot at American-style burritos, tacos

By DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

There are few things in life better than a good burrito or taco. Fortunately for people in South Korea, a restaurant called Cuchara serves burritos and tacos to satisfy some of their cravings.

Cuchara, or “spoon” in Spanish, operates in 10 locations on the peninsula, most of them in Seoul. The restaurant describes itself on its website as “a healthy Mexican brand that cooks fresh ingredients daily” and prides itself in offering more than a dozen toppings for your burrito.

Ordering is fairly simple: The menus come in Korean and English and most of the staff are bilingual.

Similar to the Chipotle Mexican Grill franchise in the United States, Cuchara serves diners through an assembly line that starts with a warmed tortilla or burrito bowl and continues onto a choice of white, brown or cauliflower rice and pinto or black beans.

Diners have several meat options: chicken, steak, shrimp, al pastor, carnitas, tofu and galbi, or thinly cut short ribs.

Other toppings include romaine lettuce, mild and hot sauces, tomato and corn salsas and cheese.

Tortilla chips are thrown in a

brown bag and come with salsa. If you opt to include guacamole with your chips for an extra 3,000 won, or \$2.30, you will be served with a heaping scoop of green deliciousness that would likely get your server in the U.S. fired for wasteful practice.

Drinks include assorted sodas on tap, bottled beer and Jarritos, a fruit-flavored soda from Mexico.

Inside the restaurant, loud hip-hop and jazz music from the speakers amplify the room’s urban ambiance.

Despite Cuchara’s obvious similarities with its American counterparts, its steak burrito fell short. The white rice, which was dry and somewhat brittle, lacked the taste of cilantro that ordinarily punctuates the taste buds. The small portion of steak was also cut into smaller pieces, leaving me to wonder if I had neglected to order meat.

Cuchara is a valiant effort in recreating the quick, dependable burrito and taco normally found in U.S. cities — but diners in South Korea will be disappointed if they expect the same taste as its American equivalent.

If you are desperately craving American-style burritos and tacos in South Korea, Cuchara should satisfy some of your needs.

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PHOTOS BY DAVID CHOI/Stars and Stripes

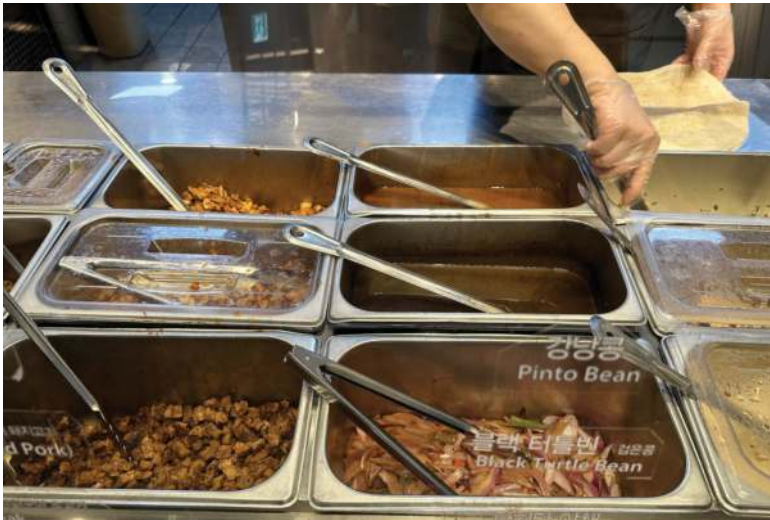
A steak burrito, a bottle of Mexican fruit-flavored Jarritos soda, chili sauce and a generous serving of guacamole from Cuchara in Suwon, South Korea.



Cuchara

Location: Ninth floor of the Galleria Department Store, Gwanggyo, Suwon. Nine other locations in Seoul and Seongnam.
Hours: 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday to Thursday; 10:30 a.m. 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday
Prices: Between 7,900 won and 20,000 won
Dress: Casual
Information: Online: cuchara.co.kr/about-cuchara

David Choi



Cuchara in South Korea serves diners through an assembly line that starts with a warmed tortilla or burrito bowl and continues onto a choice of white, brown, or cauliflower rice and pinto or black beans.

Where to store ketchup? The debate rages

By EMILY HEIL
The Washington Post

Today I discovered that I am married to a stranger.

I mentioned to my husband that I was writing about the debate over whether to store ketchup in the fridge or in the cupboard, and without missing a beat, the man I have lived with for the past 18 years said something so shocking that I was momentarily frozen as he drifted up the stairs apparently unaware of the bombshell that he had just dropped: “cupboard.”

Reader, with that one word, I now doubt that I actually know a single thing about this person. For years, “Eric” (if that really is his name) and I have stashed our bottle of Heinz on our fridge door like normal people. In all these long years, not once has he given me any clue that he believed it belonged on a pantry shelf. Who, I wondered as I watched him retreat, is this man, and what other secrets might he be hiding?

The depth of my stupefaction is at the center of a debate playing out on social media, prompted by what seemed to be a definitive ruling on the matter from ketchup giant Heinz. The Twitter account for the company’s U.K. branch last week tweeted its opinion. “FYI: Ketchup. goes. in. the. fridge!!!” Heinz declared.

Heinz’s American brand has previously said that its ketchup is shelf-stable because of its acidity (vinegar is the second-listed ingredient after tomatoes, which are themselves acidic) but nevertheless has advised users to keep it refrigerated after opening to “maintain product quality.” And the bottles bear the instructions: “For best results, refrigerate after opening.”

Still, because refrigeration is optional, people handle their red bottles differently, and social media erupted with the latest spasm of the long-simmering debate. Team Fridge seems to be larger — Heinz stoked its viral moment (its original tweet garnered 5 million views as Monday afternoon), following up with a (highly unscientific) poll showing 63 percent of respondents keep it cool, while 37 percent don’t.

Many in the pro-chill faction professed to be confused that there was another way. “People keep it out of the fridge? *gasp*” replied one.

Still, Team Cupboard was vocal. Many people pointed out that it isn’t sold out of the refrigerator case in the grocery (which isn’t a great argument, since mayo is also sold unchilled, and no one is debating where to store that condiment). “No it doesn’t,” one commenter responded to Heinz’s declaration. “You stick to production and I’ll deal with the consumption.”

The side has a celebrity in its midst, too. In 2019, rapper Cardi B revealed that she sees the condiment-storage choice to be a test of character. “People who put their ketchup in the fridge are not to be trusted,” she tweeted.

For many, it seemed to be merely about their long-standing habits, but some of the commenters focused on their preference for the temperature at which they like it served. “I will never understand Ketchup in the fridge people,” one wrote. “Why would I want to put cold ketchup on hot food?” Others, though, like the contrast that combination offers. “People on that poll keep saying why would you want cold ketchup on hot food & it’s honestly the best combination to me,” said another.

Of course, temperature isn’t the only thing about ketchup that’s controversial. There’s also division over whether the condiment belongs on hot dogs. The National Hot Dog and Sausage Council tried quelling that one by stating in its etiquette guide under its list of “don’ts,” “Use ketchup on your hot dog after the age of 18. Mustard, relish, onions, cheese and chili are acceptable.” The effort, of course, was unsuccessful — because if there’s anything people like more than dousing their food in ketchup, it’s a reason to bicker over low-stakes matters.



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WEEKEND: FOOD

A scoop of vanilla above the rest

Ranking 13 popular brands' versions for taste, texture

By Emily Heil
The Washington Post

Vanilla gets a bad rap. It's boring, the haters say. It's bland. The word is even used as a synonym for a kind of drab ordinariness that's definitely to be avoided in our colorful times. And so why would you opt for plain old vanilla ice cream when there's an ever-expanding dairy case stuffed with so many zany flavors and souped-up mix-ins?

Well, because it's about as versatile as you can get. It shines alongside pies (or crumbles or buckles or slumps) bursting with summer farmers market bounty. It's also a perfectly great (even company-worthy) dessert on its own, topped with whatever fruit you've got or a drizzle of syrup or honey — or nothing at all. Dull? More like classic, and for good reason.

With something as pared-down as vanilla ice cream, though, quality matters, and not all scoops are created equal. To help figure out which carton to grab from the grocery freezer, we rounded up the top-selling ice cream brands, using market data from Circa, a Chicago-based market research firm (its numbers came from grocery, drug, mass-market, convenience, military and select club, and dollar retailers, and covered the year that ended in May). Private label, or store brands, make up the top slot, so we picked several popular ones from national retail chains. Where we could, we opted for the "vanilla bean" flavor, figuring we were shooting for the most vanilla-y of each brand's respective lineup.

In a blind test, our panel of eight grabbed their spoons and started tasting, awarding each sample a score of 1 to 10 (meaning there's a maximum overall score of 80), taking into account the taste and texture of each. Here's the scoop:

12. Breyers Natural Vanilla
Score: 25

This was a personal heartbreaker for me: Growing up, we were Breyers People; it was accepted as gospel that the brand was superior to all others. Alas, it seems I have been living a lie all these years, as our tasters found this one to be "boring" and "sad." Several detected a slight after-taste that they couldn't put a finger on, and the consistency was described as "glacial" and "icy." (Price: \$5.99 / 48 ounces at Safeway / 12 cents per ounce)

11. Edy's Vanilla Bean
Score: 29

Our tasters thought this was over-whipped. "Too much air," complained one. "Foamy," said another. "#Staypuft,



PEGGY CORMARY/For The Washington Post

What's the best vanilla ice cream? One of these 13 popular brands rose to the top.

my friends," concurred a third. "But don't buy this stuff." And a pop fan invoked Ariana Grande with the ultimate dismissal: "Thank u, next!" (Price: \$4.99 / 48 ounces at Food Lion / 10 cents per ounce)

10. Halo Top Vanilla Bean
Score: 36

This relatively young brand has made big strides by positioning itself as a lower-calorie alternative that's actually OK to consume by the pint. Texture-adding ingredients like soluble corn fiber and vegetable glycerin are meant to make up for the smaller amount of cream, but they ended up creating an oil slick on tasters' palates. "It's a stick of unsalted frozen butter," one suggested. "It eats kind of fatty," thought another. A couple of tasters dug the creaminess, but many were turned off by the fake sugar vibes (there's erythritol and stevia leaf extract in there). One even sniffed out the impostor: "Halo Top, you've been made!" (Price: \$5.49 / 16 ounces at Target / 34 cents per ounce)

9. Blue Bunny Vanilla Bean
Score: 37

This sample had the opposite problem as Halo Top — tasters found it to be watery. "I want more dairy richness, TBH," lamented one. "Not as creamy as the others," agreed another. And the vanilla wasn't hitting the right notes, earning it comments such as "oddly minty?" "a little bubble-gummy at the end" and "like opening a bottle of vanilla extract — too strong and a bit astringent at the end." (Price: \$4.48 / 48 ounces at Walmart / 9 cents per ounce)

8. Turkey Hill Vanilla Bean
Score: 39

Of all the contestants, this was the most polarizing. Two tasters declared it to be their very favorite of the bunch, with one praising how strongly it tasted of milk and cream and another finding it to be "marshmallow-y but in a good way." But it got a lot of other pans, including from two people who gave it a 1, the lowest score possible. Chief among the complaints was

the distinct taste. "Noticeably different taste than the others — cotton candy?" asked one. "It's like birthday-cake ice cream," suggested another. "Cloying," one sniffed. Note: We sampled Turkey Hill's Vanilla Bean flavor; the photo accompanying this story mistakenly depicts the company's Original Vanilla variety. (Price: \$6.39 / 46 ounces at Wegmans / 14 cents per ounce)

7. (tie) Blue Bell Natural Vanilla Bean
Score: 40

More texture woes doomed this brand, with some people calling out a "chalky," "gritty" consistency. "Like an Oreo filling," noted one. Many found the flavor fainter than they prefer, despite the presence of bean flecks. "No taste — it's like whipped cream before you add the sugar and vanilla," in the words of one. (Price: \$8.32 / 64 ounces at Walmart / 13 cents per ounce)

7. (tie) Great Value Vanilla Bean (Walmart)
Score: 40

Oh hey, another brand that tasters thought needed to turn up the vanilla dial more than a few notches. No fewer than five tasters used the word "subtle" to describe its wan, whisper-not-a-shout flavor. One noted that it "held up" and didn't melt as fast as the other samples, which could be a plus for warm-weather alfresco dining, and a few liked the velvety mouthfeel. (Price: \$2.67 / 48 ounces at Walmart / 6 cents per ounce)

6. 365 Vanilla (Whole Foods)
Score: 42

In a sea of white, the daffodil hue made this sample stand out. Our panel agreed that it had a more custard-like or French vanilla energy than its more bean-forward brethren, with a few saying the yellow color was off-putting. They praised the buttery, creamy character and Goldilocks level of sugar ("sweet but not too sweet"). But a couple of tasters dinged it for (again) excessive subtlety. "I'd put it on a

flavorful cobbler or crumble, maybe," said one. (Price: \$5.99 / 48 ounces at Whole Foods / 12 cents per ounce)

5. Häagen-Daz Vanilla Bean
Score: 44

A knock against this one was that it seemed to melt more quickly than the others (a scan of the ingredients confirmed that there are no stabilizers in the mix), and so it seemed thin. One taster detected more ice crystals than in others, too. But on the plus side, they liked the preponderance of vanilla flecks ("very beany!"). (Price: \$5.99 / 14 ounces at Target / 43 cents per ounce)

4. Trader Joe's French Vanilla
Score: 46

Tasters pegged this butter-yellow sample as a French vanilla, and many liked its straightforward appeal that hit some nostalgia buttons. "It's what I think of as vanilla," said one. "Tastes like a Midwestern Fourth of July parade." A couple thought the flavor was more an imitation than the real deal and one wondered if it had been the victim of freezer burn, but this comment seemed to sum up the consensus: "acceptable in a middle-of-the road kind of way." (Price: \$4.49 / 32 ounces at Trader Joe's / 14 cents per ounce)

3. Tillamook Vanilla Bean
Score: 48

Several tasters agreed that this ice cream was more airy than rich, and a couple wished it packed more of a flavor punch. But it inched toward the top of the list by generally not offending anyone. "Could be a crowd pleaser," mused one. "Would be an easy milkshake foundation," suggested another. (Price: \$7.29 / 48 ounces at Safeway / 15 cents per ounce)

2. Kirkland Signature Super Premium Vanilla (Costco)
Score: 50

Finally, a scoop that got multiple thumbs up on both the taste and texture fronts. The panelists could have been describing luxury bedding with the adjectives they trotted out, like "luscious" and "satiny." And despite bearing no visible evidence of vanilla bean, unlike many of its competitors, this sample offered a depth of flavor that tasters appreciated. A few found the vanilla to have some complexity, with one saying it reminded them of rum and another caramel, though a couple found it a touch too sweet. (Price: \$18.65 / 2 64-ounce tubs at Costco / 15 cents per ounce)

1. Ben & Jerry's Vanilla
Score: 54

The Vermont brand might be best known for its outré flavors (I'm a lifelong Chunky Monkey devotee), but it turns out we shouldn't be sleeping on its quieter offerings. Tasters found that it checked all the right boxes, earning comments like "sweet but not saccharine. Just the right amount of vanilla" and "nicely balanced." It moved one taster to wax philosophical, dubbing it "a Platonic vanilla," while another cataloged a more visceral reaction: "The sweet dissolves into vanilla and makes me smile." (Price: \$6.99 / 16 ounces at Giant / 44 cents per ounce)

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE



PATRICK ORSAGOS/AP

Julia and Robert Jones exchange vows during their “Star Wars”-themed wedding in Akron, Ohio, on May 4. More couples are tossing tradition when it comes to what brides and grooms, and wedding guests, should wear.

Out-of-this-world wedding dress codes

Experts advise guests confused by couples’ nontraditional suggested attire to follow up, ask for clarity

BY LEANNE ITALIE
Associated Press

More couples are tossing tradition when it comes to what wedding guests should wear, to some befuddlement among invitees: “Space Disco Cowboy,” “Yacht Shabbat,” “Burning Man Formal”?

Maggie Long, 34, recently attended the nuptials of a close friend in a low-key Denver lounge. The suggested dress? “Dive Bar Semiformal.”

“I love a theme,” said Long, who lives in New York. “It’s fun that people aren’t taking weddings so seriously, but I had no idea what that meant.”

After exchanging thoughts for months with the officiant, who is also a friend, Long took her outfit idea — a strappy ultra-mini dress — to the bride. The bride deemed it a bit too “Kardashian cosplay.” Long finally settled on a slinky gold lamé number by Norma Kamali, and a great time was had.

“There were a lot of vintage jumpsuits. One of our friends went full 1960s with go-go boots and a bouffant. A lot of sequins were happening,” Long said.

Some couples are offering mood boards as a way to guide guests, including older ones. At the dive bar wedding, Long said plenty of older guests got into the spirit. One donned a rainbow tie-dye T-shirt, à la the Grateful Dead.

Other wedding guests have contended with “Tropical Formal,” “Snappy Casual” and “Garden Party Whimsical.”

Heading into the busy summer season for weddings and other special events, Indya Wright in Washington, D.C., has had enough.

She recently posted on Twitter: “These new age event dress codes are the bane of my existence. What happened to just ‘casual,’ ‘cocktail’ and ‘formal’? Now I gotta Google ‘After 5 Formal Festive Renaissance attire’ to figure out if you want me to give Great Gatsby or King Arthur & the



RIKKI GOTTHELF/AP

Bridesmaids Rikki Gotthelf, from left, Laura Macshane, center, and Zoe Cohen appear at a wedding in Austin, Texas, on March 30, 2019. The guest dress code was “Space Cowboy Disco.”

Knights of the Round Table.”

Wright, 35, remains frustrated. The wedding of a college classmate had a “smart, but not too smart casual” dress code.

Renée Strauss, co-founder and CEO of the destination wedding planning company Wedaways in Beverly Hills, Calif., said wacky dress codes come down to couples striving to make their nuptials custom and unique.

“The key is making sure there’s communication behind the dress code. Don’t just confuse guests,” she said.

When her company builds wedding websites for clients, it includes descriptions for dress codes like “Wine Country Chic,” urging couples to offer a broad enough palette for people to express themselves. “Tropical Formal,” for instance, could be long, flowing dresses in bright summer colors and linen suits with playful ties.

“Most guests have a lot of fun with it,” Strauss said.

Rikki Gotthelf, 32, in Los Angeles, attended a wedding recently and has three more this year. She was a bridesmaid for the “Space Disco Cowboy” nuptials of friends who shuttled their guests to an abandoned ghost town near Austin, Texas.

“We had these shiny intergalactic Batsheva prairie dresses. Mine was iridescent,” Gotthelf said. “Another wedding I went to was ‘Funky Formal.’”

For guidance, Gotthelf turned to Sophie Strauss, who bills herself as a “stylist for regular people.”

Strauss suggests following up with the couple if they haven’t made themselves clear.

“They won’t be offended,” she said. “They’re invested enough in how everyone looks to have put forth a kooky dress code.”

She implored guests staring down out-there dress codes to remember: “It’s not a costume. Unless, of course, it’s literally a costume party.”

Small adjustments may be enough, like wearing a regular suit but swapping out a dress shirt for one in an on-theme pattern.

“I had a client who had to do a ‘Fancy Ranch’ theme a few months ago and she was tempted to go buy a new outfit from head to toe,” she said. “But pairing some cowboy boots with a sundress or swapping a tie for a bolo tie goes a long way. And if you’re really into it you could add a cowboy hat. You don’t need to dress like Orville Peck to fit the theme, though if that’s your style, oh my god go for it!”

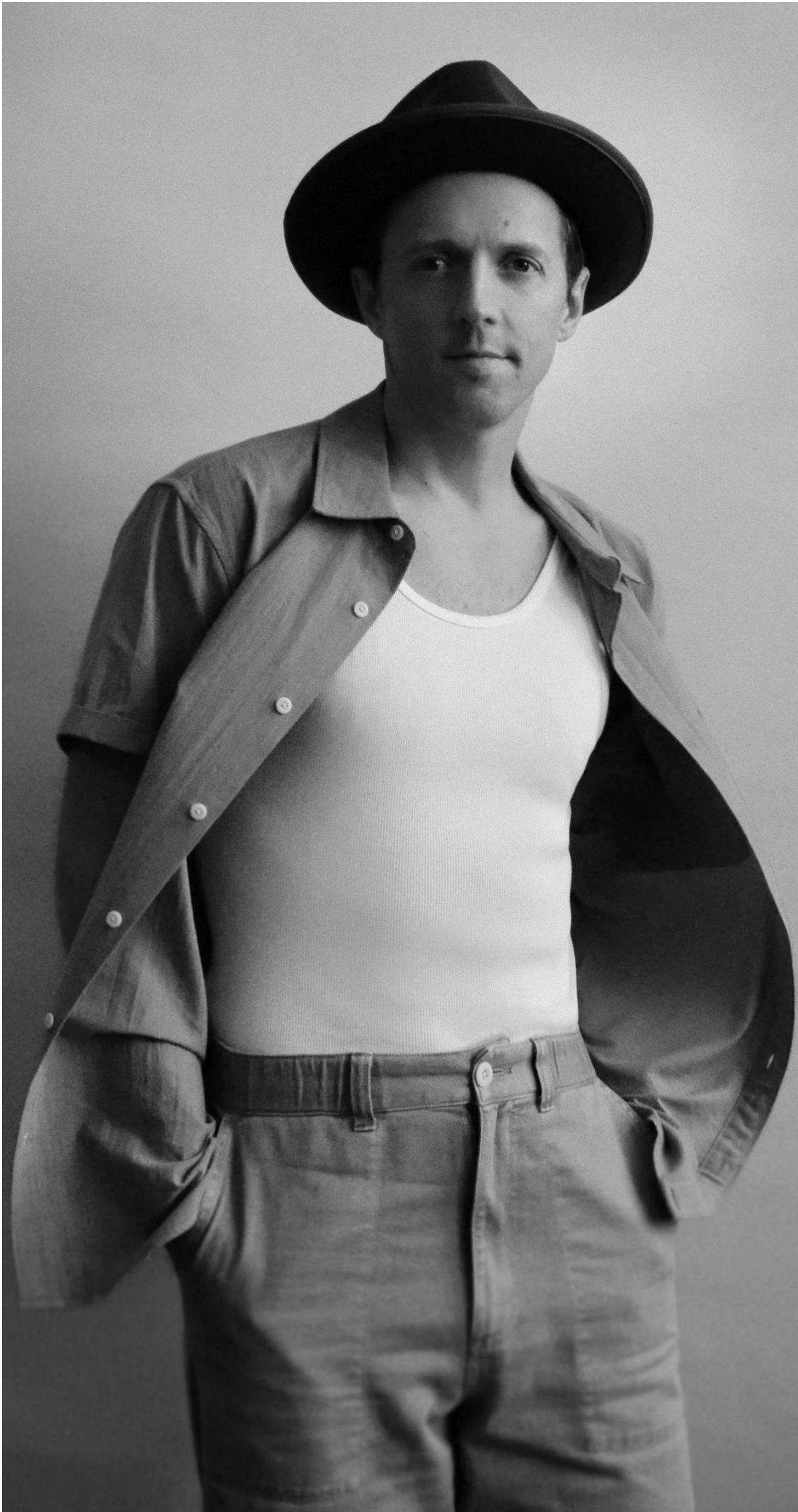
“Chic as F—k.” “Gay Garden Party.” “Black Tie Fabulous.” “Colorful Cocktail.” “Sparkle and Shine.” “Red Carpet Ready.” Jove Meyer, owner and creative director of an eponymous event planning company in Brooklyn, has handled all of the above in dress codes.

“As much as I love a fun and unique dress code, I always suggest couples clarify exactly what they mean with a descriptive sentence or two so there’s no guessing,” he said.

Brittney Drye, editor in chief of the wedding resource magazine Love Inc., said guests shouldn’t be reluctant to quiz the bridal couple about a puzzling dress code.

“We never want to bombard the couple,” she said, “but when they’re asking their guests to abide by a nontraditional dress code, they’re signing themselves up to be asked questions.”

WEEKEND: MUSIC



Floating in the middle

Mraz crafts dance album in response to singer hitting his 40s

By George Varga
The San Diego Union-Tribune

Now 46, multi-Grammy Award-winner Jason Mraz was born in 1977 — the same year Rock & Roll Hall of Famer Jerry Lee Lewis, then 42, released his melancholic country-music single “Middle Age Crazy.”

Almost no one listening to Mraz’s often buoyant new album, “Mystical Magical Rhythmical Radical Ride,” will be reminded of Lewis belting out such high-octane 1950s rock classics as “Great Balls of Fire” and “High School Confidential.” But there are clear thematic similarities between some of Mraz’s musically upbeat new album and the downbeat “Middle Age Crazy,” on which the now-deceased Lewis reflected: And today he’s forty years old, going on twenty / Don’t look for the gray in his hair / ‘Cause he ain’t got any.



“I thought I’d be done at 40,” said Mraz, who — six years later — has responded to middle-age with a surprise left turn.

Half the songs on “Mystical Magical Rhythmical Radical Ride” embrace dance-pop and vintage disco. They were inspired, in part, by such Mraz favorites as Chic, Michael Jackson, Donna Summer, The Bee Gees and Jamiroquai. More on that in a moment.

“When I was a little kid, I saw being in your 40s as old age,” Mraz recalled. “As a teen, my 20s were something to aspire to — 40 always seemed just out of reach. I thought I’d be done (with music) by then and the ideal life would be a family, kids and moving on.

“When you turn 40, it’s exciting. I celebrated my 40th birthday performing at the Hollywood Bowl. But when you turn 42, nobody cares.”

Not coincidentally, Mraz muses about having turned 42 in the lyrics to “Little Time,” a lilting ballad from his new album. In the same song, he also ponders what might happen “if I reach 65.”

The press materials accompanying “Mystical Magical Rhythmical Radical Ride” make several references to Mraz being in his 40s. Such pulsating, four-on-the-floor new songs as “Getting Started,” “I Feel Like Dancing” and “Feel Good Too” — the album’s opening three numbers —

SEE MRaz ON PAGE 29

Jason Mraz recently released “Mystical Magical Rhythmical Radical Ride.”

Shervin Lainez

WEEKEND: MUSIC

Mraz: Jackson among inspirations for latest album

FROM PAGE 28

sound like energetic odes to dancing the night away with youthful joy, if not outright abandon.

Or, as this usually sunny troubadour put it in a statement when “I Feel Like Dancing” was released as the album’s first single in February: “Songs appear out of a real necessity, and this song appeared as I struggled with identity and self-worth in my mid-40s.”

Mraz paused for thought when asked if he has undergone a midlife crisis.

“I don’t think I’ve had a midlife crisis just yet,” he replied. “But maybe I have — and I haven’t lived long enough past it to see that: ‘Oh, yeah, that was definitely a midlife crisis.’

“I have absolutely shaken things up, over and over, for myself. I can see that pattern reappearing throughout my life. And every time I do, I rediscover myself through the power of songwriting. And I think: ‘I’m OK.’”

‘A lot of vanity in my youth’

The pros and cons of aging can differ from person to person, as Mraz readily acknowledged.

Superficial concerns can fade. Wisdom can be gained from experience. But for a veteran artist who has been in the public eye for more than 20 years as music trends constantly change — sped-up songs on TikTok, anyone? — feeling secure about your position can be challenging.

“The older I get, certain worries and stresses just sort of fade away,” Mraz said. “I don’t stress as much about how I look or surface-level things, like fashion. As a young person, I cared about: ‘Do I fit in? How do I look?’ There was a lot of vanity in my youth.

“The cons, as you get older, are that I’m not really in the youth category anymore. Here I am, making a pop album and dance album. In music, those categories are dominated by young people, 18-28, and always have been.

“So, there’s this feeling of: ‘I’m not really in the little kid category any more — or the older group. I’m floating in the middle.’”

Middle age is not the only factor that inspired Mraz to write and record new songs specifically designed to encourage him — and his listeners — to party down and shake their collective booty.

He also credits his mother, June Tomes, for encouraging him to make an overtly pop-oriented album. Mraz wasn’t getting any younger, she noted, so he should do a pop album “before it’s too late.” He concurred. The liner notes for “Mystical Magical Rhythmical Radical Ride” dedicate the album to “Mama June.”

Speaking recently from his Oceanside, Calif., farm home, Mraz — who married Christina Carano in 2015 and recently announced their divorce — stressed that he specifically sought to make a pop album that embraced old-school music values.

“I always really wanted to make a dance-pop album, but not an electronic (dance) album that leaned on computer programs and drum machines,” he said.

“I wanted to make human dance music. So, sonically, that’s what our effort was. And thematically, I noticed that what was missing from my shows — year after year — was that I didn’t have enough up-tempo songs that could turn the show into a dance party for my audience and myself.

“How would I rate my dancing? Right



SHERVIN LAINEZ

Jason Mraz will soon take the up-tempo “Mystical Magical Rhythmical Radical Ride” on tour.

now, about 3 out of 10. But I want to be better. And that’s how a song like ‘I Feel Like Dancing’ finds its way through my subconscious and lands on the page. Because I try to generate experiences I haven’t had yet, or want to have, and songs can help.”

For at least half the selections on “Mystical Magical Rhythmical Radical Ride” — whose title comes from the lyrics to “Disco Sun,” a song on the album — Mraz takes a deep dive into the music of the 1970s and early 1980s. To cite one case in point, the slinky grooves, sleek instrumental work and deftly executed higher-register lead vocals on “I Feel Like Dancing” evoke the music of Boz Scaggs and Michael Jackson in their respective primes.

“Boz probably subconsciously — I’ve got a few of his records,” Mraz said.

“Michael? I definitely had his posters on my wall growing up. Probably the first song I ever danced to was something on his ‘Thriller’ album, when I was 4 or 5, and was asking my family what dancing was and where the beat was.

“So, yeah, Michael has always been an influence. But making this album, I didn’t really study those albums by him or Boz. I found myself listening to Nile Rodgers’ records with Chic, Giorgio Moroder’s ‘Flashdance’ soundtrack album, Donna Summer and The Bee Gees. I was trying to understand how great dance music was made.”

Nine of the 10 songs on “Mystical Magical Rhythmical Radical Ride” were co-written by Raining Jane, the four-woman Los Angeles band Mraz first collaborated with in 2007.

“There was a concerted effort to make this in tandem,” he said. “And I love giving Raining Jane credit, because they were in the studio with me, they were part of the writing process, and they will be on my summer tour.”

Mraz’s new album reunites him with Sweden’s Martin Terefe, whose recording production credits range from Train and Mary J. Blige to Yungblud and Coldplay.

Weed and mushrooms

Terefe produced Mraz’s 2008 album, “We Sing. We Dance. We Steal Things.” It in-

cludes two of Mraz’s biggest hits — “I’m Yours” and “Lucky” (the latter featuring Colbie Caillat) — and remains his biggest-selling release with sales of nearly 5 million.

Mraz has made five albums since then — including 2020’s reggae-inspired “Look for the Good” — and his sensitive singer-songwriter persona has remained intact. “Mystical Magical Rhythmical Radical Ride’s” well-balanced mix of thumping, unabashed dance-pop songs and earnest ballads could be just the right combination to propel him back to the upper reaches of the national sales charts.

“This is the first album since ‘We Sing. We Dance. We Steal Things.’ that feels the most like a sequel to that album,” Mraz said, “more so than anything I’ve made since then, because of how ...”

His voice trailed off.

“I don’t know,” he said a moment later. “I don’t know what to tell you. I’m just happy this album is out. It feels new and yet familiar, like something I would have done in 2008 but it happens to be in 2023.”

In the lyrics to his new song “Disco Sun,” Mraz favorably references “weed and ‘shrooms.” He provided a very specific response when asked what role weed and hallucinogenic mushrooms play in his creative process.

“I call them portals, if you will,” he said. “They are portals to another dimension, like opening a gate to a garden, like going to visit somewhere. So, a toke of weed or a dose of mushrooms will take you into another state for feeling things or seeing things I may have suppressed, things I need to atone for, relationships that need to be (improved).

“Weed and mushrooms will help me (address) some thoughts that need attention. And they’ll also — if I’m lucky going inside one of the portals on a dose of mushrooms or cannabis — will (enable me to) resonate with something I’m listening to. Or I’ll hear a melody I hadn’t heard before. And I’ll try to bring that back through the portal to a sober state.

“It’s nothing I rely on. But I enjoy experimenting with it as a portal, visiting a place to have an experience, like a museum or a magical garden.”



LINER NOTES

By Colin McGuire

Billboard Hot 100 No. 2: Luke Combs – ‘Fast Car’

Note: After spending some time fluctuating at the top of the chart, Morgan Wallen’s “Last Night” came in at No. 1 on the Hot 100 for the first week of the month. Because we wrote about that song in April, we figured we’d move on to what landed at No. 2 this week.

Combs isn’t the first to cover this poignant Tracy Chapman gem of a hit that turned 35 years old in April. He also won’t be the last. It’s a testament to Chapman’s prowess as a songwriter more than it is much anything else and if you don’t believe that at face value, just consider how relatable (if not heartbreaking) this starry-eyed tale of a tune is, no matter whose voice is behind it. In that sense, Combs does good by Chapman, staying loyal to its original incarnation, adding little to Chapman’s original outing right down to the middle of the song when Combs admirably doesn’t even compromise working in a market being a “checkout girl.”

The problem, much like the many who came before Combs, is that Chapman’s tenderness is lost in both translation and modernity. “Fast Car” is a great song for a lot of reasons, but one of them has always been Chapman’s understated vocal delivery — a wrinkle in the performance that nobody outside of the track’s author will ever be able to properly convey. Combs tries in the song’s early moments, but by the time things come full circle, it turns out to be just another grunt-y country radio rock song by just another grunt-y country radio rock guy.

Still, the core of the song is there, which means Combs could do a lot worse if he’s looking to cover late-’80s coffee house rock in the year 2023. “Fast Car” has aged like a fine wine through the years, proving its worth as a cautionary tale that highlights the struggles that go along with being a woman cycling through the throes of poverty.

In some ways, it might have been easier to think in 1988 that 35 years later, these issues would have been solved by now. Because they aren’t, Chapman’s vulnerability feels just a little more profound, even if someone else is singing her words. Combs doesn’t necessarily add a chapter to the novel, but at least he’s able to keep the story alive by telling it to a modern audience.

And that ought to count for something.

WEEKEND: BOOKS

Closer look at weird food science

‘Ultra-Processed People’ investigates how some manufactured ingredients harm consumers

By Dave Hage
Star Tribune

Readers who pick up “Ultra-Processed People” might experience a flicker of déjà vu, especially if they’ve seen “Super Size Me,” the wry 2004 documentary about McDonald’s and gluttony.

Both highlight the horrible way we eat today, both link processed food to serious illnesses and both feature a narrator who subjects himself to a 30-day diet of deplorable food to see if it wrecks his body.

If “Super Size Me” were an introduction, Chris van Tulleken’s book is the Ph.D. course. It goes deep on the history of eating, the biology of nutrition and addiction and the laboratory science that produced foods like

maltodextrin and xanthan gum. Despite the technical material, the book is highly readable and van Tulleken — physician, scientist and popular BBC personality — writes with the confidence of a doctor who has a reassuring bedside manner.

The book begins by explaining what he means by ultra-processed foods (UPFs). They are those side-of-food-packaging ingredients with incomprehensible names such as modified palm stearin or mono- and diglycerides. He explains how food scientists discovered they could break down certain fats and starches and recombine their molecules to create inexpensive substances with desirable qualities such as creaminess or crunchiness. These ingredients explain many of the creepy aspects

of processed food: milkshakes that never melt or margarine that requires no refrigeration. These, he says, aren’t foods but “industrially produced edible substances.”

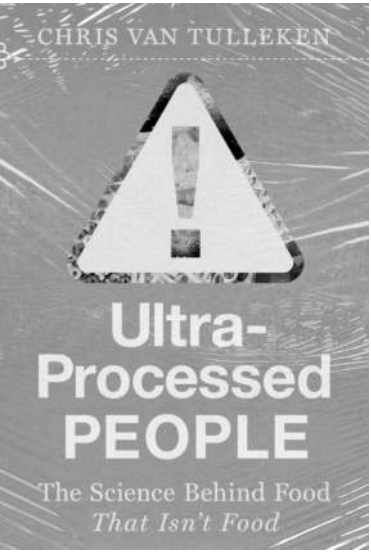
Van Tulleken argues that we have entered an unprecedented era of eating, one in which most of our calories come from foods that the planet — and our bodies — have never seen before.

Though a scientist at heart, van Tulleken isn’t afraid to take sides on some of the most controversial topics surrounding nutrition. He rejects the idea that obesity is a failure of willpower — he says it’s the only disease for which we blame the patient — noting that to believe that you would also have to believe that the entire developed world experienced a sudden failure of moral charac-

ter at the same time in the 1970s, when the obesity epidemic began. And he offers a stinging indictment of packaged-food companies, arguing that they knowingly created addictive, unhealthy foods for profit.

Van Tulleken systematically builds a case that UPFs aren’t just practical additives or cost-saving substitutes, but proven causes of diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, depression and irritable bowel syndrome. In two fascinating passages, he explains how UPFs short-circuit the body’s satiety response, causing us to keep eating even when we’re full, and interfere with the invaluable microbes of the gut.

To balance the science, van Tulleken weaves in charming anecdotes about eating breakfast



with his young daughters, one of whom gorges on five bowls of Cocoa Puffs, and recounts his own struggle to complete the 30-day diet. Without giving away the ending, let’s just say he discovers that the diet has corrupted almost every organ of his body.

Read his book and you’ll never read a food label quite the same way again.

‘President Garfield’

C.W. Goodyear

Writing a book about James Garfield is no easy task. The 20th president who served the second shortest amount of time in the White House is popularly known more for his assassination than what he did in office.

But in “President Garfield: From Radical to Unifier,” Goodyear admirably remedies that with a book that demonstrates the long shadow Garfield’s life and legacy has left our country.

The authoritative biography chronicles the life of a man who, in many ways, was one of the most well-spoken and intellectual men to hold the title of commander-in-chief. Every chapter opens with a different quote from Shakespeare that Garfield jotted down in his diary.

But Goodyear makes the case that Garfield’s strength didn’t come from showmanship or his speeches.

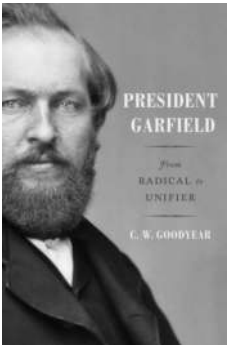
With much of the book understandably focusing on Garfield’s time in Congress, Goodyear portrays him as someone who “embraced undramatic efficiency in the driest fields of lawmaking imaginable.”

That approach was key in his role in Congress on Reconstruction and his advocacy for education, including as the father of the first Department of Education. The former college president was also a strong advocate for universal education as a solution to racial injustice.

Garfield’s short time in the White House still is given the attention it deserves, and that includes the story of his assassination. Goodyear describes in chilling detail the president’s killing as well as the medical blunders that contributed to his death.

Engagingly written and comprehensively researched, this biography is a welcome introduction to the statesman.

— Andrew DeMillo/AP



‘Dead Man’s Wake’

Paul Doiron

Maine Game Warden Mike Bowditch’s on-again, off-again romance with Stacey Stevens is definitely on again, the pair celebrating their engagement at a relative’s lake house when the night is interrupted by the roar of watercraft racing at illegally high speeds.

“Let it go, Mike,” Stacey says. “For me.” “OK,” he replies.

But then both hear a disturbing sound — not the screech of two boats colliding but rather the thump of a craft hitting something submerged in the water. They borrow their host’s party boat and venture out to investigate. Not long after, as they near acre-size Mouse Island, Stacy spots something skidding along in the current.

It’s a severed human arm.

So begins the 13th novel in Doiron’s fine series of mysteries featuring Bowditch.

By morning, the submerged body of a middle-aged man with a missing arm is recovered from the lake. Then another body, that of a 22-year-old woman, is pulled from the water, too.

The dead man is identified as Kipling Whitcomb, whose wealthy invalid wife Dianne owns Mouse Island. The dead woman is the latest in a string of young women Whitcomb has lured to his island love nest. When an autopsy confirms that the woman was strangled, what started off as an accident investigation expands into something larger.

As usual, Doiron creates an array of colorful, well-drawn characters and accurately portray investigative procedures — this time including the handling of underwater crime scenes. He spins his tale with enough twists and turns to keep readers guessing until the end.

— Bruce DeSilva/AP



‘Fireworks Every Night’

Beth Raymer

C.C.’s isn’t your typical rags-to-riches story. She remembers growing up in a single-wide with her older sister, stay-at-home mom and car-salesman dad. But she also remembers when they moved to Florida after everything in the car lot burned down — including their home — launching them into a comfortable middle-class life and a fresh start in a state her dad proudly brags has fireworks every night.

“Fireworks Every Night” is Raymer’s debut novel, but not her first book. Following her 2010 memoir “Lay the Favorite,” she borrows from her life to create a deeply personal story of a dysfunctional family.

Having grown up in West Palm Beach, Raymer puts her local knowledge to use as her protagonist — a resident of Loxahatchee, Fla. — rattles off the schools she plays basketball against, and how worn down or rich they are. She’s familiar with the Baker Act and who’s been institutionalized through its use.

In adulthood, C.C. is engaged to a well-educated and absurdly wealthy man — a far cry from the childhood in which she learns what it means to fight for survival. Hopping between the two timelines in stark juxtaposition, the full picture of C.C.’s life emerges.

A nature motif runs throughout the story, blurring the line between animal and human and calling into question what is “natural” in a world so unnaturally shaped by people. Animals play a quiet but pivotal role throughout, shaping Raymer’s engrossing novel into a bitter-sweet celebration of the scrappy Americans who are finding a way to survive even as the elite push humans and animals alike out of their habitats.

— Donna Edwards/AP



‘White House By the Sea’

Kate Storey

The history of the Kennedy family is so well-chronicled — from the modern Camelot legend surrounding John F. Kennedy’s presidency to the series of tragedies that marked the family throughout the 20th century — that it’s hard to imagine new ways to tell their story.

But Storey does just that in “White House By the Sea: A Century of the Kennedys at Hyannis Port” — revisiting the family’s history through their time at the famed Kennedy compound on Cape Cod.

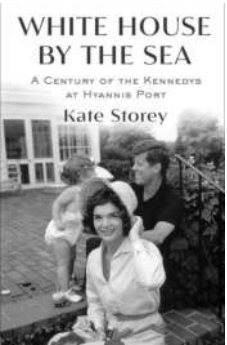
Storey, the senior features editor at Rolling Stone magazine, weaves a fascinating narrative about the Kennedy family using Hyannis Port as the backdrop. The book traces the family’s ties to the compound back to the 1920s, when Joseph Kennedy bought Malcolm Cottage, what became known as the Big House.

Many of the stories feel so familiar, from Joseph Kennedy Jr.’s death during World War II to John F. Kennedy Jr.’s fatal plane crash in 1999. The compound was also the setting for much happier occasions, including John F. Kennedy’s presidential acceptance speech and the wedding of Arnold Schwarzenegger and Maria Shriver.

Storey gives them a fresh look with new details and well-sourced reporting that opens up a traditionally private community — “what’s left of Camelot,” she writes.

Storey’s research gives the book a more intimate feel than many other histories of the Kennedy family, introducing figures that aren’t as well-known but played a key role in the family and its compound. Fittingly, it’s written in an accessible way that makes the book a welcome beach read.

— Andrew DeMillo/AP



WEEKEND: TELEVISION



AMAZON PRIME VIDEO/AP

Justina Machado and Alejandro Hernandez in “The Horror of Dolores Roach.” In the series, Machado’s Dolores opens a massage parlor in the same building as an empanada shop.

‘Sweeney Todd’ meets Washington Heights

Based on a play and podcast, ‘The Horror of Dolores Roach’ explores gentrification, cannibalism in Chicago neighborhood

By ALICIA RANCILIO
Associated Press

When Justina Machado returns home to her native Chicago, she barely recognizes it. Machado grew up in Chicago’s inner city, in the neighborhoods of Lincoln Park, Humboldt Park and Logan Square — all of which she says have been gentrified.

“You love the good restaurants, you love all this beauty, but you’re sad that your people get pushed out because who doesn’t want great restaurants and great places and safety? Who doesn’t want that? The problem is, a lot of my people get pushed out ... Taxes and property are like three times what you could buy in the ’80’s, ’90s and early 2000s. It’s sad to watch.”

Gentrification is also a catalyst for Machado’s new dark comedy series “The Horror of Dolores Roach,” now on Prime Video.

Machado plays Roach, a woman who has spent 16 years in prison on marijuana charges. When she gets released, the world around her looks completely different. Told she has “magic hands” as a masseuse in prison, Roach opens a massage parlor in the same building as an empanada shop. She has the best intentions and wants to live a normal life, until one day she has to use her special hands to save herself from a dangerous situation. The story unravels from there and those empanadas occasionally feature a mystery meat that patrons find delicious.

“Dolores says, ‘I’m just like you, if everything went wrong,’” Machado said. “You empathize with her. Part of the reason that you have compassion for her is because

you see this girl that gets 16 years of her life stolen for something that now you can buy in every corner with dispensaries. One day she’s just let out and she has nowhere to go. She has nobody. And that’s more of a common story than we like to think about because it’s too hurtful to think about what happens to someone after they get out of jail and they have to survive. You don’t want to think about those things.”

“The Horror of Dolores Roach” began as a one-woman play written by Aaron Mark and is inspired by the fictional story of “Sweeney Todd.”

“I was a playwright in (New York’s) Washington Heights. I lived there for 10 years,” Mark said. “I was watching the neighborhood gentrify at the speed of light and I felt like I was watching this neighborhood cannibalize itself. Really, That was the image. I felt like, ‘Oh, my God, I’m watching a community feed on itself.’ And that, sent me to ‘Sweeney Todd.’ I thought, ‘OK, there’s a cannibalism story to be set in this neighborhood. And what better cannibalism tale has our species ever produced than “Sweeney Todd”?”

Mark wrote the play as “a contemporary ‘Sweeney Todd’ set in Washington Heights” with Daphne Rubin-Vega in mind to play Roach. She agreed and the play was staged off Broadway in 2015. Mark then pitched the story for TV where, he says, “people thought I was out of my mind. I was laughed out of rooms.”

He then decided he had enough material to make a serialized podcast with Rubin-Vega and turned his focus to that. One month after the first season of the “Dolores Roach” podcast was released, Mark says there was a

bidding war for the TV rights. Mark is now a co-showrunner and co-executive producer on the series.

“In the casting process, we had a Zoom with Justina and she said to me, ‘I’m Dolores Roach. This is my part. What do I got to do?’ And I just remember thinking, ‘What do you have to do? We’d be lucky to have you.’ You put the camera on Justina’s face and innately we love her.”

Machado has appeared in many memorable roles including “Six Feet Under,” “Jane the Virgin” and the remake of “One Day at a Time,” but “Dolores Roach” is her first real lead role.

“I was in every scene and every shot because this is told through Dolores’ gaze. This is her P.O.V. So when Dolores walks out of the scene, the scene is over. If I wasn’t on set, I was in my trailer or in my apartment in Toronto learning lines, so it was a much different process. A lonelier process, to be quite honest,” Machado said.

Leaning into the madness of Dolores’ situation, though, was fun.

“It’s so fun to play something that is outrageous and out there. There’s no boundaries. There is no limit to what she does. It’s just the rawness in even the way she looks ... I mean, I didn’t love it so much when I saw it later,” said Machado with a laugh. “I was like, ‘Oh, God!’ But, everything was just free, Barely any makeup, just hair crazy, I loved it. It was very, very freeing.”

Adds Mark: “I like to say Dolores Roach is a serial killer who is not a sociopath. That is debatable, but that’s how I approach her. She’s me. She’s you. She’s relatable. She’s all of us.”

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS



ROGELIO V. SOLIS/AP

Handling the heat

Here's how to keep cool, stay safe during the hottest time of the year

By RIO YAMAT

The Associated Press

Scorching heat across the U.S. already has caused more than a dozen deaths in Texas alone and led to mounting misery for millions.

And the official end of summer is still months away. Here's a guide on how to keep cool and stay safe, wherever you are, in the punishing temperatures.

Why is extreme heat dangerous?

Heat kills more Americans than any other weather event, including tornadoes and flooding, even though most heat-related deaths are preventable through outreach and intervention, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

"Heat is the silent killer. No one thinks about it," said Ben Zaitchik, a professor and climate scientist at Johns Hopkins University whose research includes heat waves. "It's getting hotter just about everywhere. That means even without a particular weather phenomenon, we're seeing temperatures we aren't used to, and that in its own right is a risk."

The body normally cools itself by sweating, but extreme heat can interrupt your ability to do that, potentially leading to heat exhaustion or heat stroke, organ failure or death.

Older adults, young children and people with chronic illnesses like diabetes are most at risk. But that doesn't mean healthy people are immune, said Ashley Ward, director of the Heat Policy Innovation Hub at Duke University's Nicholas Institute for Energy, Environment and Sustainability.

The heat can have adverse effects on people who work or exercise outdoors, for example, and also homeless people or those without air conditioning.

What are signs of heat-related illness?

You might be experiencing a heat stroke if your body temperature reaches or surpasses 103 degrees. Other symptoms include nausea, headaches, thirst and a fast and strong heart rate.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says heat stroke is a medical emergency and recommends that people with symptoms call 911.

Symptoms of heat exhaustion include heavy sweating, muscle cramps, dizziness, vomiting and cold, pale or clammy skin. The CDC says you should seek treatment if such symptoms worsen or last more than an hour.

What if I don't have air conditioning?

Spending just a few hours in an air-conditioned space can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat, according to the CDC. So take advantage of public spaces with air conditioning, like libraries and shopping malls.

During the day, cover your windows, turn off the lights and avoid using the stove or oven. If you live in a dry area, hang wet towels to cool the room.

At night, if temperatures drop, keep your windows and shutters open.

Ward, the Duke researcher, said it's also important to think outside the box if you don't have air conditioning. After taking a cool bath or shower, for example, sit in front of a fan while your skin is still damp.

She also recommends soaking your feet above the ankles and arms above the elbows in cool water for 10-15 minutes.

If you only have one fan, Ward said, prioritize creating a cool sleeping space rather than common areas.

"This is when your body really recovers from heat

exposure during the day," she said.

What if I have to be outside?

Stay hydrated, and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink fluids.

Limit your sun exposure by staying in the shade or using an umbrella. Wear sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat or cap.

If you work outside and have access to cool water, consider soaking your shirt and repeating the process every hour or whenever it dries out, Ward said.

Homeless people should reach out to shelters for information on local resources, including temporary cooling centers.

Do I have to worry about burn injuries?

Doctors at Arizona and Nevada burn centers have warned of injuries from contact with superheated roads and other surfaces.

This can happen, for example, if you collapse from dehydration or heat stroke and can't get up off the hot ground.

But burns can also come from touching hot surfaces like leather seats or poolside concrete, so be careful when reaching for a metal door handle or a seat belt buckle and when getting out of a pool.

How do I keep my pets safe?

Schedule your outdoor walks for when it's coolest, like the early morning or evening, and protect your furry friends' paws with breathable shoes.

Keep pets inside if you can, and if they must go out, make sure they have access to shade.

"A doghouse by itself is not shade," Ward said. "That's an oven."

Never leave a pet in a hot car.

WEEKEND: FAMILY



iStock

Perfect parenting is a myth, and parents would be better off not trying to uphold that standard.

It's never too late to grow

You can unlearn unhealthy parenting habits that may be stifling development

By JENNIFER WALLACE
The Washington Post

For years, Vanessa Cornell's time and attention had been consumed by keeping up with the schedules and demands of five young children. She thought she was being a "good mom" by abandoning her own needs in order to solely focus on theirs, until she just couldn't do it anymore.

"It started out as a little voice that something was off until it got so loud that I couldn't ignore it anymore," she says. "I felt like I was sleepwalking through life. I was so unhappy, resentful and just hit a wall."

Parents spend a lot of time thinking about their children's development — but what about their own growth and development? There is a myth that once we reach adulthood, development flatlines. It's an assumption that can hold parents back from investing time and energy into their own growth and self-knowledge, ultimately impacting both their and their children's well-being.

Like the theoretical milestones of childhood, psychologists and sociologists find adulthood has its own developmental stages, what's known as early adulthood (ages 18-40), middle (ages 40-65) and later (ages 65-plus) adulthood. Legendary psychologist Erik Erikson described "middle adulthood" as a period of "generativity," a time of life where we want to make meaningful contributions to the world around us through parenting, work, or both. When we add value in this way, it makes us feel valued, too, creating a positive upward spiral of well-being.

However, when this time of potential growth is unrealized or blocked, adults can fall into what psychologists call "stagnation," leading to a deep sense of unhappiness, disconnection and even despair. Whether we grow or stagnate in midlife often has a lot to do with whether we've spent time unpacking our "psychological attics," reflecting on how our parents raised us, looking for patterns and defining moments that shaped who we are today, says Robin Stern, associate director of Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence.

In fact, Stern says, the 'pain points' inherent in parenting — the tug between priorities, worries about our kids' social and emotional lives, anxiety over their performance and future — can actually be powerful generators of adult development, if parents are willing to put in the work of exploring those uncomfortable feelings. Big emotional reactions are often influenced by something from our past, back to some unexamined issues. When you're having a big feeling about some-

thing, instead of suppressing it, mine it for data: What's familiar about this moment? What old feeling is this activating in me?

"Taking the time to explore those painful moments for information is what enables us to continue to grow," Stern says.

Cornell looked for clues: "Why was I choosing to always put myself last? Why did I need to appear like a selfless, perfect mom? What had I been taught as a child about being a 'good girl,' and how was that playing out today?" Growing up, Vanessa had internalized the idea that to be worthy of love and support, she needed to be perfect, productive and a top performer. She had carried those pressures to be perfect into her own parenting. Not only was perfectionism stifling her growth, if she didn't get a handle on it, she worried it would impact the relationship and connection she wanted with her kids.

"The most important thing parents can do to raise healthy, resilient young people is to show them they are worthy of being loved unconditionally, which can be really challenging for parents who were raised to believe they had to earn love and worthiness," says pediatrician Kenneth Ginsburg, author of "Congrats — You're Having a Teen!: Strengthen Your Family and Raise a Good Person." "To love our kids unconditionally also requires us to model that kind of unconditional self-acceptance ourselves, which can only come once we've taken inventory of how we were raised and to take the time to 'unlearn' some of the ways we were parented so we can broaden our own parenting approach."

Examining this isn't about throwing our parents or caretakers under the bus, but is about examining the foundations of so much that we take for granted in our lives, says Vienna Pharaon, a family therapist and author of the book "The Origins of You."

"How we were raised sets the foundation and framework for just about everything in our lives ... Some ideas and behaviors we will want to take with us into our own parenting, while other unhealthy patterns and limiting beliefs we will want to let go of," she says. "The more you resolve the pain from your past, the less you pass that pain to your children."

Not sure what you want to keep and let go of? Pharaon offers a helpful exercise. Imagine your children as adults, she says: "What's the story you want them to tell about their childhood? What do you wish, in your messy human self, their takeaways will be? Then, ask yourself if you are helping them to tell that story."

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Military medicine changes affect force's past, future

Making the turn into the unguarded Naval Clinic gate, I glance south at the long-abandoned buildings with crumbling soffits and vines invading their broken windows. The Naval Hospital closed in 1997, leaving the handsome brick buildings to ruin.

I make my way to the clinic on the medical campus. Near the entrance stands a neat line of new Navy recruits, garbed in regulation blue sweats, waiting for a government van to take them back to base.

Inside, I carry my ID card to the scanning machine. I grumble, seeing that the old machine I'd used since we'd PCSed here in 2013 was gone, replaced by a new model.

I hold my ID up to a lighted slot, but nothing happens. No bleep, no bloop, no nothing. After waving my ID around, I see another lighted slot a foot lower. I do a half plié squat to save my lower back from bending and hear, "BLEEP!"

The machine's screen asks me a series of questions before spitting out #F361. I take a seat and do a sudoku puzzle.

Across from me sits an old man wearing a cap emblazoned with "WWII Veteran." A young pharmacy tech walks out to personally explain his medications. Everyone else has to wait to be called to the windows. He deserves special treatment. The tech talks loudly to the WWII vet, who takes shaky notes. "You gotta go to college to figure this stuff out!" he jokes. Behind the WWII vet stand a dozen more new recruits in blue sweats, waiting for their numbers to be called.

The Navy's past and future rely on military medicine. I've relied on it, too, for three decades, but something seems fundamentally changed. Even with Tricare updates, Genesis systems and newfangled machines, military health care has become exponentially more frustrating and unresponsive.

While waiting, I recall my recent visit with my newly-assigned primary care manager at the clinic. I'd brought a list of my current health concerns and planned on asking my PCM to renew two expired referrals and assess pains I was having in my neck and back. Age 57 is no picnic.

First, the corpsman made a thorough record of my concerns. Then, my PCM entered the room, carrying only a pen and Post-It Notes. I assumed the corpsman had briefed her, but she stared blankly at me and said, "Why am I seeing you today, Mrs. Molinari?"

I rattle off my health concerns again. She thinks I'm a hypochondriac, I realized, then said, "I swear, I'm usually quite healthy, but I've been having a lot of joint and back pain lately."

"Hot compresses?" she suggested when I explained the pain in my neck. "A chiropractor?" she suggested when I explained my lower back pain, never writing anything on her Post-It Notes. It appeared that as far as those issues went, I was on my own.

Inevitably, my neck pain got worse, until it burned and radiated down my shoulders. A few weeks after my appointment, I felt a shooting pain in my left shoulder, which gradually got worse. "I'd better call my PCM," I thought.

"Appointments are at least three weeks out," the scheduler said. "Currently, she is the only provider available at this facility. If you can't wait, you'll have to go to Urgent Care in town to ask for referrals."

Refusing to use Urgent Care as my PCM, I booked an appointment at the Naval Clinic three weeks out. In the meantime, my daughter fashioned a sling out of a scarf to support my painful shoulder as if we were pioneers.

At the pharmacy, a second old man stares at the new-fangled ID scanner.

"What's wrong?!" the WWII vet bellows jovially to his comrade, "Having trouble with that machine? You gotta go to college to figure this stuff out!"

"Ticket #F361 at window number four," an automated voice commands, rescuing me from my melancholy.

Read more at themeatandpotatoesoflife.com and in Lisa's book, "The Meat and Potatoes of Life: My True Lit Com." Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

OPPOSITES ATTRACTING
BY JOHN WESTWIG / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

John Westwig is a software engineer in Seattle. He got into crosswords when he was very young, solving Games magazine on car trips with his family. Constructing came soon after. He sold his first puzzle to The Times in 2015, when he was 17. This is his eighth (and first Sunday). “Lots of friends do the Times puzzle,” he writes, “but most complain that mine are too hard.” — W.S.

- ACROSS
- 1 Tiny trunks

7 Party person

11 “Are you freaking kidding me?”

18 Rural greeting

20 Many a “Survivor” setting

21 Bit of doubling down from a parent

22 Event at a hot new club?

24 “I wish I were under four feet tall,” e.g.?

26 M.S.G. team, on scoreboards

27 Lot lot

29 Name found on a calendar

30 For whom the bell tolls

31 Tactical reductions in lighting, as during W.W. II

33 Sommelier’s superlative

35 Great garage-sale find

38 Career for a scammer?

40 Scissors’ sound

44 Muse of comedy and idyllic poetry

46 German “village”

47 Bubbly, in a way

49 Forwards

51 How Cassius looks to Caesar, in Shakespeare

53 Muscle relaxers

54 Dripping in jewelry, slangily

55 Real dope

57 Secret service member?

59 Choler

60 What’s said in passing?

61 Test subject

63 Repeated small role for Paul Rudd

66 Transcript fig.

67 Slinky?

69 That’s in Seine!

70 Six-winged biblical being

72 Famous drawing of a ship?

73 Theater rival of Regal and Cinemark

74 Double-helix material

75 Food fight sounds

76 Sight along a country road

78 Score on a clean sheet

79 Lead guitarist of Queen, who has a Ph.D. in astrophysics

82 Black humor

84 Kind of race that’s not quite a half-marathon

86 Kicks down the road

87 Kate of “House of Cards”

89 ____ Troi, character on “Star Trek: T.N.G.”

90 Kind of lily

91 Dinner date that makes a good story?

96 Richard Parker in “Life of Pi,” for one

97 Like much prized blue-and-white porcelain

99 Crab or lobster

101 Texter’s toodle-oo

103 “Bleeding Love” singer Lewis

105 1970 hit for Neil Diamond

106 Ad Council output, in brief

109 A kiss, a hug, a wave, the works?

112 Title of an essay by a hit man?

114 Weeks, in Oaxaca

115 Analogy words

116 Common pet name

117 Goes on and on and on

118 Bet bit

119 Work-from-home wear, informally

14 Considerably large, in Appalachian dialect

15 Rock’s ____ Brickell & New Bohemians

16 One of two for six of VIII?

17 Record

19 Leading

23 Thanksgiving table decoration

25 The first man ever created, in Maori lore

28 You might see one upside down on a bar

31 Broad valley

32 Still shot of a moving image, in tech-speak

34 “Grand slam” in showbiz

35 Relationship conditions, so to speak

36 New England vacation destination, familiarly

37 “Whoa there, Warren G.!”

39 That one will never have again

41 Compliment for a lexicographer?

42 Squid squirt

43 Family-friendly ratings

45 Coors of brewing fame

48 Making an impression?

50 What prices and hearts may do

52 Unclaimed area

53 Greetings

56 Certain government agent, informally

58 Friend group

62 Kapoor who played the game-show emcee in “Slumdog Millionaire”

63 Tried to engineer an advantage

64 Author who wrote “Weeds are flowers, too, once you get to know them”

65 Energy option

67 Touches on both sides

68 Still fighting

71 Cutting class in med school?

75 Old timer

77 Not quite enough

79 Some gas stations, in brief

80 Regret

81 Stop hiding behind?

83 Former Indigenous inhabitants of modern-day Buffalo

85 Word after Minute or meter

88 Chili variety that means “wide” in Spanish

92 Some of the wildlife in the 20,000-year-old paintings in Lascaux Cave

93 Hot

94 Go “poof!”

95 Increases

98 Good name for a political pundit?

100 Street clearers

101 Nickname for Atlanta

102 Resting place

104 Prefix in the names of many causes

106 Pocket at a restaurant

107 Bit of a fit

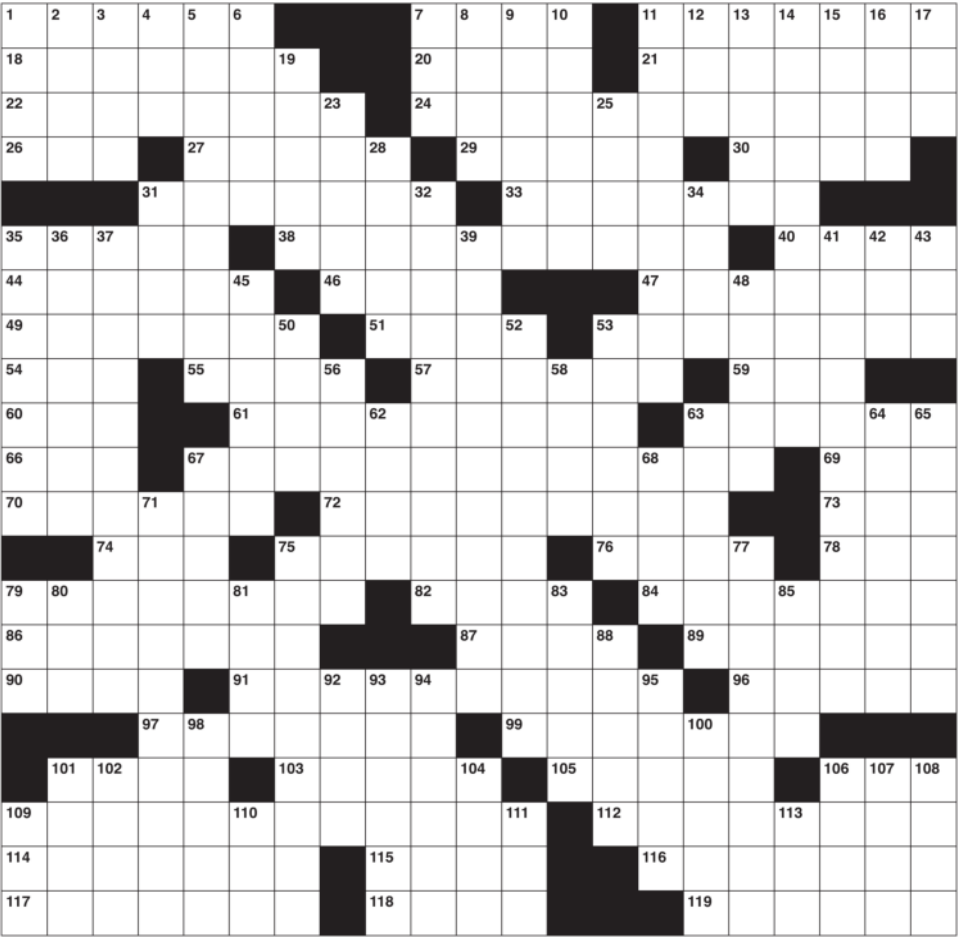
108 For-eh-ver

109 Publication co-founded in 1889 by Dow and Jones, in brief

110 Course number

111 Red grp.

113 Late ____



- 58 Friend group
- 62 Kapoor who played the game-show emcee in “Slumdog Millionaire”
- 63 Tried to engineer an advantage
- 64 Author who wrote “Weeds are flowers, too, once you get to know them”
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- 109 Publication co-founded in 1889 by Dow and Jones, in brief
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- 111 Red grp.
- 113 Late ____

GUNSTON STREET



“Gunston Street” is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE



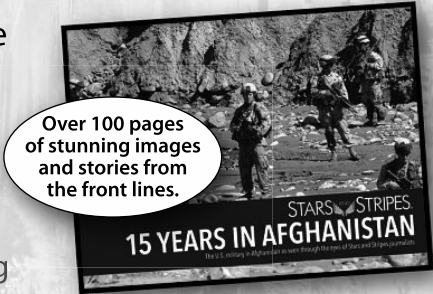
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FACES

Lethal and hilarious

Olyphant returns in Elmore Leonard-inspired ‘Justified: City Primeval’

By LUAINÉ LEE
Tribune News Service

Even though he’s been dead for 10 years, author Elmore Leonard is still intriguing audiences. His character, Raylan Givens, is due back July 18 when FX premieres “Justified: City Primeval.”

The eight-part series features Givens, the stalwart U.S. Marshal that Leonard first created in his book “Pronto.” The character appeared in three more stories with “Fire in the Hole,” adapted into TV’s popular “Justified,” which reigned for six seasons.

This time, the Stetson-clad hero finds himself in a new kind of badlands, Detroit.

“We were excited to embrace Detroit as a character in this piece,” said one of the show’s producers, Dave Andron. “Putting Raylan as a stranger in a strange land. And also, it’s the land of Elmore. ‘City Primeval: High Noon in Detroit’ is his first crime novel, and he really embraced Detroit.”

Leonard’s characters, like Raylan Givens, jump off the page full-fledged and always unique. In an interview shortly before he died in 2013, he explained his method: “I feel more comfortable using the character’s point of view rather than my own,” he said.

“The character looks out and he’s going to have an attitude about that smog or that sunset, and you’re gonna hear it. You’re gonna hear that attitude. If I describe it, you’re going to hear a mediocre description. I always write from a point of view,” he said.

Timothy Olyphant, who plays Givens, says he had no compunctions about returning to his latter-day hero. “Elmore Leonard and (writer/executive producer) Graham Yost gave us so much material to launch what I’ve always thought was potentially numerous stories,” says Olyphant. “I thought as long as we were still in the Elmore Leonard world and the Graham

Yost world that the two of them created, I just thought I’d love to be there for it.”

That Elmore Leonard world is both lethal and hilarious, often tickling the underbelly of society.

“I learned how to write by studying writers that I liked a lot,” Leonard said in the 2013 interview. “Hemingway, I studied him so closely until I realized that the structure, the flow of it, the prose itself, that when I’m parodied, I see Hemingway. But I didn’t share Hemingway’s attitude about life, about himself. I didn’t take everything that seriously. I saw a little more humor in life than he did. So I saw other others — John O’Hara, Steinbeck, Richard Bissell. His ‘7½ Cents’ became ‘Pajama Game.’ I read a couple of his books (and thought), ‘That’s the sound I want.’

“All the time, from the very beginning, I was very conscious of style,” Leonard said, “developing my own styles. The way you write most naturally, most effectively, THAT’S your style.”

Calling FX’s “Justified: City Primeval” a sequel or a spinoff is not exactly accurate. “We weren’t trying to recapture the show that we did,” says executive producer and director Michael Dinner.

“We were trying to recapture the tone, Elmore’s tone. And this is a book — ‘City Primeval’ is a book that we really loved the characters in the book. And we thought it would be interesting to pick up with Raylan and catapult him into this story and see him some years down the road where his road is lot shorter in front of him than the road behind.

“So, we felt we could take this story that we really liked a lot, and we could inject Raylan into it and tonally do a show that’s similar, but also let the show that we did grow up a little bit,” says Dinner. “We felt really good about that. We felt that what we’ve done is something that is true to the show, but not the same show. And we think it’s pretty entertaining.”



FX/TNS

Timothy Olyphant stars as Raylan Givens in “Justified: City Primeval.”

Alan Alda’s boots, dog tags from TV’s ‘M*A*S*H’ to be auctioned

By JAMIE STENGLE
Associated Press

The combat boots and dog tags that Alan Alda wore as wisecracking surgeon Hawkeye on the beloved television series “M*A*S*H” meant so much to him that when the show ended in 1983, he kept them.

But he’s now ready to let the pieces go, in service of another passion: his center dedicated to helping scientists and doctors communicate better. Heritage Auctions is offering up the worn boots and military identification tags on July 28 in Dallas.

Alda, 87, said he wore the boots and dog tags for the 11-season run of the show centering on a Korean War medical unit. Alda’s character, Benjamin Franklin “Hawkeye” Pierce, was a talented surgeon who helped ease the stress of working in a war zone with quick quips and practical jokes. When the show ended in 1983 with an episode written and directed by Alda, it attracted the largest U.S. audience for any TV show in history.

The boots and dog tags, given to him by the costume department, “made an impression on me every day that we shot the show,” said Alda, who won five Emmys for his work on the sitcom.

Over his long career, Alda has also been a writer and filmmaker, and has worked on Broadway and starred in movies. Currently, he hosts a podcast on communicating called “Clear+Vivid.”

“There’s an old belief among actors that when you put the shoes of the character on, it’s easier to believe you’re the character, and I think the boots had that effect on me,” Alda said.



Alda

After receiving the dog tags, Alda realized that they didn’t carry his character’s name, but the names of two men he thought had likely been real soldiers.

“I saw those names every day,” he said. “It was an interesting experience to put them on. I wasn’t dealing with props. I was dealing with something that put me in touch with real people.”

The dog tags carried the names of Hersie Davenport and Morriss D. Levine. Research conducted by the auction house revealed that both men were discharged from the Army in 1945. According to Heritage Auctions’ research, Davenport died in 1970. Levine, whose first name was misspelled on the dog tag with an extra ‘s,’ died in 1973.

Joshua Benesh, Heritage’s chief strategy officer, said the boots and dog tags have an “incredible” provenance since they have been with Alda ever since the series ended.

“It was pretty thrilling that what he chose to keep was something that endured with him episode after episode, season after sea-



LM OTERO/AP

Combat boots and dog tags worn by Alan Alda on the beloved television series “M*A*S*H” are up for auction July 28.

son, throughout the entire run of ‘M*A*S*H,’” Benesh said.

Alda said that auctioning the items off after all of these decades made sense to him. “I saw this as a chance to put them to work again,” he said.

The money raised from the auction will go to the Alan Alda Center for Communicat-ing Science at Stony Brook University in New York, a center he helped start to help scientists and doctors communicate better by applying improvisational exercises and communication strategies.

Alda, who announced in 2018 that he had Parkinson’s disease, said he uses some of the same acting skills to deal with the disease’s effects. The disease, he said, is “a little like improvisation: It gives you something you didn’t expect.” But, he said, “if you work on it, you get somewhere.”

Taylor Swift adds 14 new European tour dates

Taylor Swift announced Wednesday that she’s adding 14 new dates to next year’s European leg of The Eras Tour.

The new dates next May include an extra show each in Paris, Stockholm and Lisbon. The following month, Swift will perform an extra show in Lyon, France, before heading to the U.K. for an additional night each in Edinburgh, Liverpool and London. She’ll complete the British Isles with an extra night in Dublin, before celebrating the Fourth of July in Amsterdam.

Swift’s July 2024 will also feature an additional night in Milan, as well as two in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, about 35 miles northeast of Düsseldorf. In August, she added an extra night in Warsaw and Vienna. She then returns to London to complete the tour with three more nights.

Other news

■ **Meghan Trainor** has welcomed her second child with husband Daryl Sabara. The “All About That Bass” singer announced the July 1 arrival of another baby boy Tuesday on Instagram. The couple’s first son, Riley, was born in February 2021.

■ **Coco Lee**, a Hong Kong-born singer and songwriter who had a highly successful career in Asia, has died by suicide, her siblings said Wednesday. She was 48. The star had been suffering from depression for several years, Lee’s elder sisters Carol and Nancy Lee said on social media.

From wire reports

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Automotive 140

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Bizarro



Loose Parts



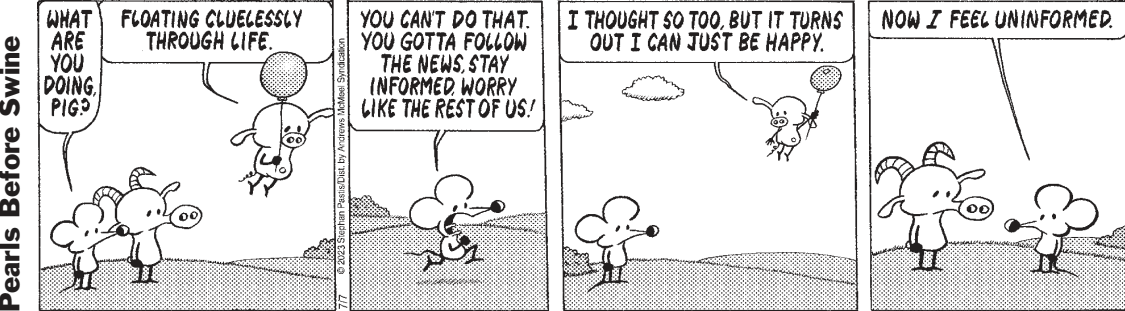
Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15			16						17			
18							19	20				
			21				22			23	24	25
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50						51				52		
53						54				55		

Frazz



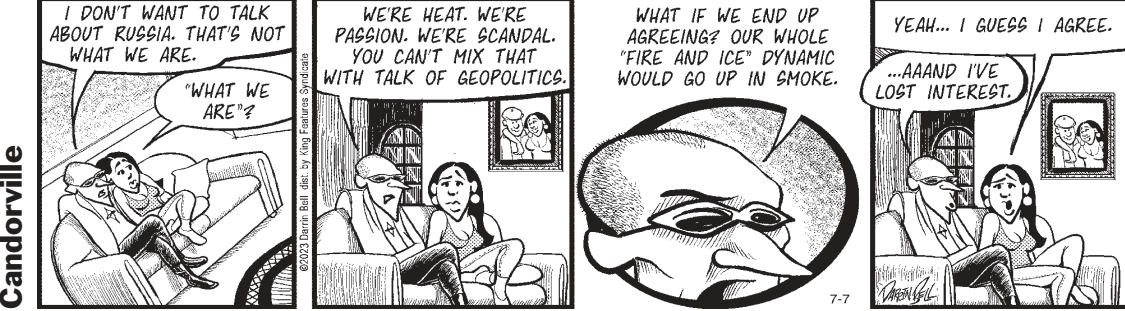
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



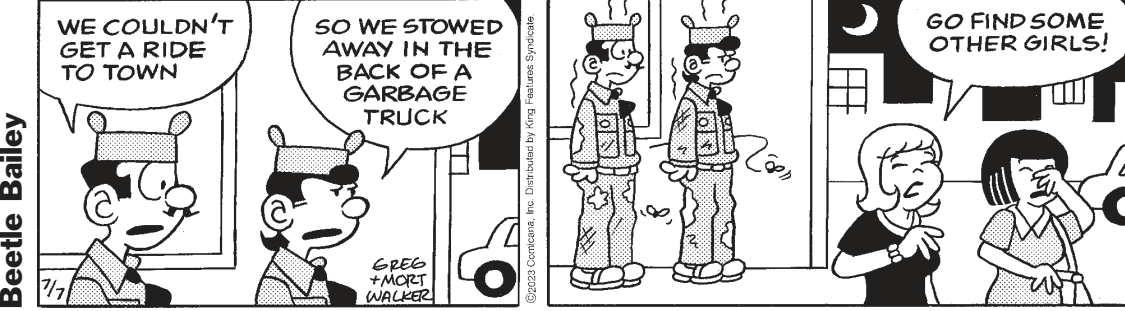
Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



- ACROSS**
1 PC program
4 Grand tale
8 Deep cut
12 Lucy of "Kill Bill"
13 Diner's card
14 Former mates
15 Flemish cartographer
17 Salamander
18 Narrow waterway
19 "Aladdin" monkey
21 Aviate
22 Sneezer's need
26 Minnesota's 10,000+
29 "— -hoo!"
30 UFO crew
31 Decorates with frosting
32 Sailor
33 Radar dot
34 Blunder
35 Annoy
36 Pilot portrayed by Tom Hanks
37 Romeo's city
39 "— Town"
40 Business mag
41 Ridiculous
45 German city
48 One who makes a will
50 Nonsense
51 Autobahn auto
52 Director DuVernay
53 Canonized Fr. women
- 54 Demolish, in Dover
55 Clothes line
DOWN
1 Charitable gift
2 Artist Mondrian
3 Kitten's sound
4 Online messages
5 Trivial
6 Daughter of Cadmus
7 Museum VIP
8 Category
9 Chopper
10 Stitch
11 DDE predecessor
16 Bistros
20 Life story
23 Vend
24 Gas co., for one
25 Catch sight of
26 "Ray Donovan" star Schreiber
27 Farmland unit
28 Actress Deborah
29 Tibetan bovine
32 Caterpillar product
33 Anatomical sac
35 Hostel
36 Nuanced
38 Cries from sties
39 Caravan stops
42 Nevada neighbor
43 Peregrinate
44 Apothecary measure
45 Small ammo
46 Chic no more
47 Away from SSW
49 Clean air org.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

L	O	A	D		C	H	A	I		P	C	S
A	N	N	O		H	U	N	S		R	I	O
P	E	A	R	T	A	R	T	S		E	A	U
D	I	G	S	U	P				U	P	F	O
					E	X			T	H	E	R
K	E	P	T			F	E	E		O	R	C
A	R	E				L	T	R			T	I
T	A	K	E			O	O	O		B	O	X
					O	L	S	E	N		O	R
C	L	E	F	T					S	C	O	R
H	G	T			P	L	O	T	T	W	I	S
I	B	E			A	S	E	A		N	C	A
P	T	A			T	U	R	N		S	H	U

7-7 CRYPTOQUIP

XKE ZUKH ZCTIFLUWR T

ECICBIUSC MQX IQLXMN T

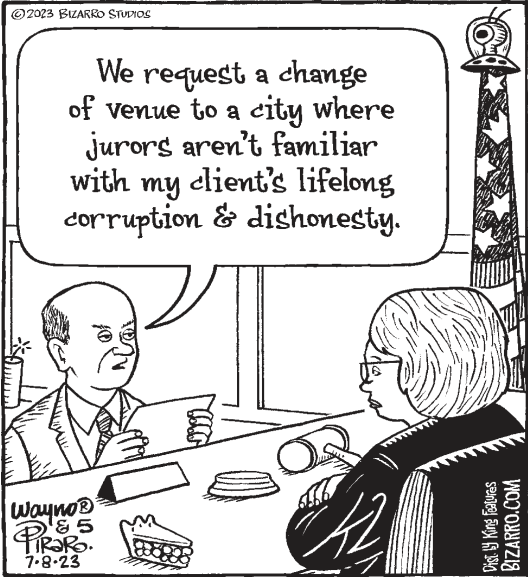
HTNNUSC ICHDCL ITWILFH:

“IQC ZLCWBQ BXWWUDIUXW.”

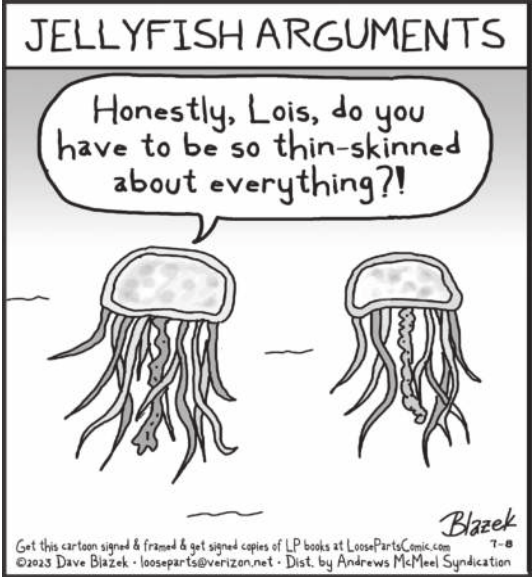
Yesterday’s Cryptoquip: IF A CHEF IS PRACTICING PREPARING A DISH USING A PUNGENT SALAD GREEN, IS IT A CRESS REHEARSAL?

Today’s Cryptoquip Clue: R equals G

Bizarro



Loose Parts



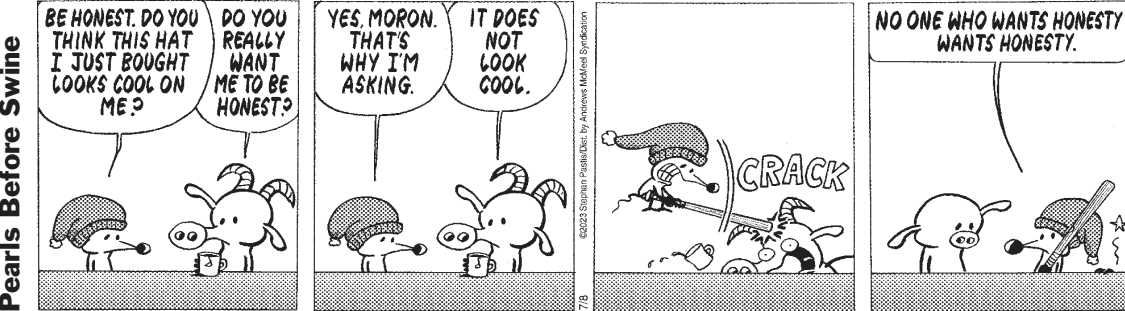
Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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14							15					
16					17	18				19		
			20	21			22	23				
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50			51				52	53				
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56							57					

Frazz



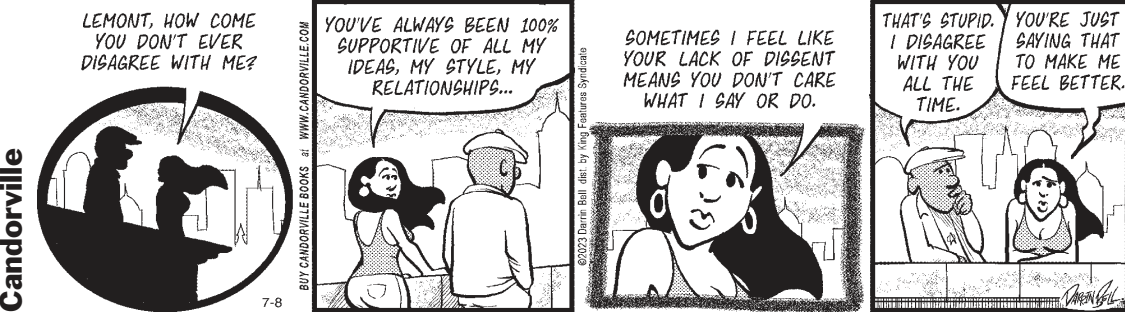
Pearls Before Swine



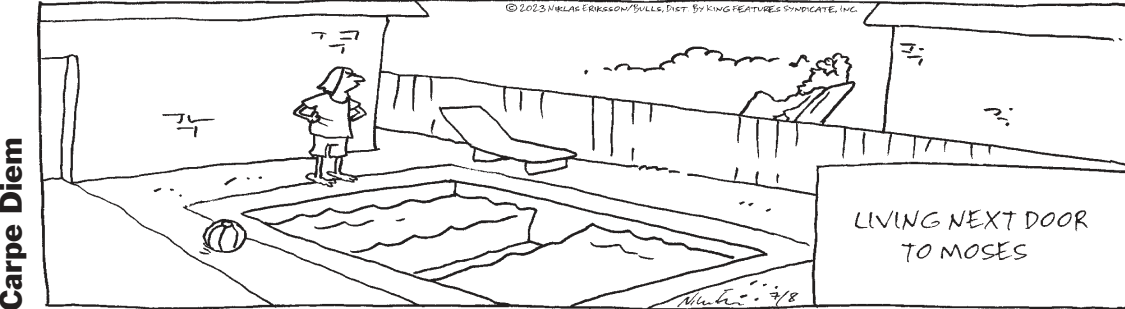
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



ACROSS

- 1 Churlish
- 6 One with a growing business?
- 12 Shepherd of "The Jamie Foxx Show"
- 13 Not off-key
- 14 Poseidon, for one
- 15 Be defeated by
- 16 Conference leader?
- 17 Scott in an 1857 case
- 19 Refusals
- 20 "Star Trek" officer
- 22 UFO pilots
- 24 Equi-
- 27 Bivouac shelter
- 29 Flower part
- 32 Getaway time in July, say
- 35 Nevada city
- 36 Foundered
- 37 Scale members
- 38 Little rascal
- 40 Jellystone bear
- 42 Ltr. holder
- 44 Cold War initials
- 46 Actress Tyne
- 50 Clooney of "Syriana"
- 52 Evening party
- 54 Chef Ina
- 55 Em, to Dorothy
- 56 Icy downpours

57 Dental exam images

- 26 Hardly a fussy eater?
- 28 Jazz combo instrument
- 30 Away from WSW
- 31 Rx writers
- 33 Soccer — (Abbr.)
- 34 Heart chart
- 39 Washington Sound
- 41 Menzel of "Frozen"
- 42 Flan ingredients
- 43 Patricia of "Hud"
- 45 D.C. VIPs
- 47 Bohemian
- 48 Maui souvenirs
- 49 "— -haw!" (oater cry)
- 51 Hwy.
- 53 Sharing word

DOWN

- 1 Clarified butter
- 2 Authentic
- 3 Implores
- 4 To and —
- 5 Hoedown musicians
- 6 Dossier
- 7 Battery part
- 8 ACLU concerns
- 9 Semisoft cheese
- 10 Within (Pref.)
- 11 Antique cars
- 12 Concorde, e.g.
- 18 Landing strips
- 21 Salt Lake athlete
- 23 "For shame!"
- 24 Medit. nation
- 25 Novelist Grafton

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	P	P	E	P	I	C		G	A	S	H
L	I	U		M	E	N	U		E	X	E
M	E	R	C	A	T	O	R		N	E	W
S	T	R	A	I	T			A	B	U	
			F	L	Y			T	I	S	S
L	A	K	E	S		Y	O		E	T	S
I	C	E	S		T	A	R		B	L	I
E	R		I	R	K			S	U	L	L
V	E	R	O	N	A			O			
			I	N	C			A	B	S	U
B	O	N	N			T	E	S	T	A	T
B	U	N	K			O	P	E	L		A
S	T	E	S			R	A	S	E		H

7-8

CRYPTOQUIP

LSIP R SGKI HBA SRO WBTI
K Z M G H O M W I B K S A Q I P
F B K K B P K M G A M Z I, L S R A F M I O
B A S R T I? W M Z A J Q B P I Z O.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: OLD FILM FEATURING
A DETECTIVE WHO THROWS A MASSIVE
TEMPER TANTRUM: "THE FRENCH CONNIPTION."
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals G



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OPINION

The US must wake up to rivalry in the Arctic

By KENNETH R. ROSEN
Special to The Washington Post

As far as U.S. policy goes, the Arctic is synonymous with Alaska. And that’s a growing problem. Climate change, military competition and the search for natural resources are turning the frozen north into a hotbed of global rivalry. The United States must start thinking bigger or risk being left behind.

Admittedly, the region is poorly defined, even among scientists and the eight Arctic Council members. Some propose a latitudinal boundary of 66.5 degrees north of the equator; others prefer a topographic boundary (the area to the north of wooded country) or a temperature boundary (median July temperature below 10 degrees Celsius). Based on my conversations with Arctic researchers in seven countries, as well as my travels in the Arctic, the U.S. government and military need a definition that includes far-north allies in a joint commitment to keep the Arctic free and peaceful.

Strategic rivals are moving quickly to dominate the region. Over the past decade, Russia has reopened and modernized upward of 50 Cold War-era bases along the necklace of its Arctic coastline of roughly 15,000 miles. China has invested in liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects in the Russian north. India has also invested in energy and mineral resources in the Arctic as its economy rapidly expands. One researcher who frequents the Arctic aboard U.S. Coast Guard icebreakers for scientific missions expressed shock “we weren’t paying more attention” to the region.

An updated National Strategy for the Arctic Region, released by the White House last autumn, was disappointing. Like its prede-

cessor from the Obama era, the strategy lacked concrete steps and actionable plans, while once again painting the Arctic as a remote and peculiar afterthought for the nation, home to poor infrastructure and lacking access to health care. And yet, there are signs of progress that might point the way to an effective, though belated, future strategy. In 2020, the State Department opened a consulate in Nuuk, Greenland; the same year, a U.S. coordinator for the Arctic region was appointed. In the past year, a diplomatic mission in Tromso, Norway, has opened, and two new positions have been created to focus on the region: an ambassador at large for the Arctic region at the State Department and a deputy assistant secretary of defense for Arctic and global resilience working at the Pentagon. The Northern Warfare Training Center in Alaska prepares twice as many troops than in years past. A \$600 million-plus project will create Alaska’s first deep-water port in Nome.

There is much more to be done. “I’ve been making the case for years on the need to establish greater American presence in the Arctic — vessels, personnel and ports — as America’s strategic rivals lay claim to this important region,” Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, said last year. The United States must also update its northernmost military facility, in Qaanaaq, Greenland, to take account of rising temperatures and thawing permafrost, which are damaging aircraft runways. It’s time to expand the U.S. fleet of icebreaker ships instead of relying on other nations’ fleets. Ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea would put the United States on equal footing with Russia and other nations staking claims to resources extending to the North Pole.

Further, the United States should shoulder the burden of integrated Arctic defense by filling gaps in surveillance, specifically in the North Atlantic between Greenland and Iceland and the United Kingdom. U.S. drones can keep an eye on remote arctic regions, while imagery from surveillance satellites is more widely shared with Arctic allies, rather than relying on infrastructure and equipment owned and operated by those allies who are already turning their defense strategies homeward. American forces should participate more regularly in NATO Arctic exercises. (American B-1 bombers and F-35s joined an exercise in the Nordic region for the first time in June.) The long-running dispute between the United States and Canada over the boundary of the Beaufort Sea — north of Alaska and Yukon — should be resolved in a display of good faith to enhance cooperation with Canada (another state whose Arctic policy is turning more inward) in modernizing the NORAD network of air defense systems. Such steps would illustrate a previously unseen U.S. commitment to being a cooperative, not passive, regional partner while expanding the vision of a more global Arctic.

Competition among great powers cannot be avoided, but it can be ignored. Despite the actions of our rivals, Washington has made only modest efforts to increase its Arctic footprint, both in Alaska and beyond. A longer and wider vision is required to meet overt and covert threats. That starts with the United States coming to understand that the Arctic is not just Alaska plus ice; it reaches across the northern flank and is a key to national security, global stability and climate resilience.

Kenneth R. Rosen is a journalist who is writing a book about a new cold war in the Arctic.

Why blocking student loan plan is healthy for politics

By JONAH GOLDBERG
Tribune Content Agency

Last week, the Supreme Court scuttled the Biden administration’s attempt to forgive more than \$400 billion in student loan debt.

As a matter of policy, broad-based student debt cancellation remains a terrible idea for a host of reasons.

While targeting relatively small debts held by lower income community college graduates is more defensible, sweeping student debt forgiveness is regressive, rewarding people with an asset—a college or graduate degree—who are better equipped to pay it off than other debt-burdened Americans. At a time when the government is still fighting inflation, it was “reckless” —in the words of Obama administration chief economist Jason Furman — to pump billions into the economy.

Finally, it’s counterproductive on its own terms. The debt payment moratorium, implemented by the Trump administration and extended by President Joe Biden, has led to more borrowing. According to a University of Chicago study summarized in The Economist, “the pause in student-loan payments caused borrowers to rack up more debt, not less.”

But if Democrats want to ignore economic reality and reward a key constituency by having other people pay their debts, they’re free to do so. There’s just one hitch. Congress needs to do it.

In 2021, Biden questioned how much authority he had to cancel student debt “by signing with a pen” and then-House Speaker Nan-

cy Pelosi said he didn’t have the authority to do that. But under intense pressure from the left of their party, they reversed course. They dislodged a ridiculous pretense under the 2003 HEROES Act and reversed the Department of Education’s standing opinion.

Fortunately, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutional separation of powers. Congress, not the president, has the power of the purse.

“If my fellow citizens want to go to Hell,” Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., famously said, “I will help them. It’s my job.”

Holmes’ reputation as a philosopher-jurist and civil libertarian has long been in need of a sharp revision. Holmes was a majoritarian, and because he was a jurist during the Progressive Era, his judicial restraint—a refusal to strike down government actions during a time of government expansion—was admired by those seeking to expand the government. But Holmes had a point. It’s not the Supreme Court’s job to stop politicians and the voters who elected them from making bad decisions so long as they don’t violate the Constitution in the process.

The problem is that after decades of the judicial and executive branches doing Congress’ job — often at the behest of a dysfunctional Congress unwilling or unable to live up to its responsibilities — judicial restraint is now seen as judicial activism. The court didn’t rule that student debt can’t be forgiven; it merely said that government has to do it right or don’t do it at all.

Whatever you think is the right policy on student debt, I think this is very good news for our politics. The accumulation of power in the presidency has fueled polarization by making presidential elections look like parliamentary elections in which new presidents have sweeping authority to do whatever they want. But our constitutional order is not designed for these kinds of zero-sum politics. The presidency is not equipped to legislate.

Executive orders can be reversed by the next executive. Because the bases of both parties don’t know or care about how policy ends are achieved, every new administration swings for the fences, trying to do as much as it can get away with, to the cheers of their partisans in Congress and media. And they’re soon swept from power as a result.

Hence the great paradox of American politics today: You can get what you want if you win more elections, but to win more elections you need to ask for less.

This cycle of overreach and correction was made possible by a Supreme Court that has long turned a blind eye to the separation of powers.

The shift toward better politics may have already begun. On Monday, Vice President Kamala Harris told NPR, “Look, we have three branches of government. The court took rights from the people of America. Congress can put those rights back in place. We cannot through executive action. Congress can.”

Jonah Goldberg is editor-in-chief of The Dispatch and the host of The Remnant podcast.

SCOREBOARD/NBA

PRO SOCCER

MLS						
EASTERN CONFERENCE						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Cincinnati	13	2	5	44	32	21
Nashville	11	5	5	38	30	16
New England	10	3	7	37	35	25
Columbus	10	6	5	35	42	29
Philadelphia	10	6	4	34	34	22
Orlando City	9	5	7	34	32	23
Atlanta	8	5	8	32	39	35
D.C. United	8	9	5	29	30	28
CF Montréal	8	10	2	26	20	28
Charlotte FC	6	8	7	25	28	36
NYCFC	5	7	10	25	23	27
New York	5	7	8	23	18	20
Chicago	5	7	8	23	26	31
Toronto FC	3	9	10	19	18	31
Inter Miami CF	5	13	2	17	20	31
WESTERN CONFERENCE						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Saint Louis SC	11	7	2	35	39	24
Seattle	9	7	5	32	25	18
LAFC	9	6	5	32	29	23
Real Salt Lake	8	7	6	30	26	31
FC Dallas	8	8	5	29	23	23
San Jose	7	7	7	28	25	28
Houston	8	9	3	27	24	26
Austin FC	7	8	5	26	25	28
Vancouver	6	6	7	25	30	26
Sporting KC	6	10	6	24	26	30
Minnesota	6	7	6	24	21	25
Portland	5	9	7	22	23	31
LA Galaxy	4	9	7	19	20	32
Colorado	2	10	8	14	14	29

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Tuesday, July 4

Columbus 2, Miami 2, tie
Orlando City 4, Toronto FC 0
D.C. United 1, FC Dallas 0
Portland at Colorado
Saint Louis City SC at LA Galaxy ppd.
LA Galaxy 2, Los Angeles FC 1

Wednesday's game

Charlotte FC 1, New York City FC 1, tie

Saturday's games

Cincinnati at Charlotte FC
New York City FC at Columbus
Miami at D.C. United
Atlanta at CF Montréal
New England at New York
Saint Louis City SC at Toronto FC
Nashville at Chicago
Sporting Kansas City at Houston
Austin FC at Minnesota
FC Dallas at Colorado
Orlando City at Real Salt Lake
Philadelphia at LA Galaxy
San Jose at Los Angeles FC
Seattle at Vancouver

Wednesday, July 12

Atlanta at New England
Cincinnati at New York
CF Montréal at Chicago
Minnesota at Houston
Real Salt Lake at Sporting Kansas City
Philadelphia at Nashville
Seattle at San Jose
Austin FC at Vancouver
Saint Louis City SC at Los Angeles FC

Saturday, July 15

Orlando City at Atlanta
Nashville at Cincinnati
Charlotte FC at CF Montréal
D.C. United at New England
New York City FC at Philadelphia
Sporting Kansas City at Austin FC
Toronto FC at Chicago
Los Angeles FC at Minnesota
Miami at Saint Louis City SC
Houston at Colorado
New York at Real Salt Lake
Columbus at Portland
FC Dallas at Seattle
LA Galaxy at Vancouver

NWSL						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
North Carolina	8	4	2	26	20	11
Portland	7	3	4	25	33	19
OL Reign	7	4	3	24	23	17
Washington	6	3	5	23	20	19
Gotham FC	6	4	4	22	15	13
San Diego	6	6	2	20	19	16
Houston	4	4	6	18	10	11
Louisville	3	4	7	16	17	15
Orlando	5	8	1	16	14	21
Kansas City	5	9	0	15	16	24
Angel City	3	6	5	14	16	22
Chicago	4	9	1	13	18	33

Note: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Friday's games

OL Reign at Orlando
Kansas City at Louisville
Chicago at Houston

Saturday's game

Washington at San Diego

Sunday's games

Portland at Gotham FC
North Carolina at Angel City

CYCLING

Tour de France

**Wednesday
Fifth Stage
101.2 miles from Pau to Laruns**
1. Jai Hindley, Australia, Bora-Hansgrohe/Ger, 3:57:07s.
2. Giulio Ciccone, Italy, LIDL-Trek/USA, :32s behind.
3. Felix Gall, Austria, AGZR Citroen Team, same time.
4. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe/Ger, same time.
5. Jonas Vingegaard, Denmark, Jumbo-Visma, :34.
6. Skjelmoose Mattias Jensen, Denmark, Lidl-Trek, 1:38 behind.
7. Daniel Felipe Martinez Poveda, Colombia, Ineos Grenadiers, same time.
8. Tadej Pogacar, Slovenia, UAE Team Emirates, same time.
9. David Gaudu, France, Groupama-FDJ/Fra, same time.
10. Carlos Rodriguez Cano, Spain, Ineos Grenadiers, same time.

Also

12. Sepp Kuss, United States, Jumbo-Visma, 1:38 behind.
22. Matteo Jorgenson, United States, Movistar Team, 1:57.
49. Kevin Vermaerke, United States, Team dsm-firmenich, 11:08.
56. G. Lawson Craddock, United States, Team Jayco-Alula, same time.
106. Neilson Powless, United States, EF Education-EasyPost, 22:24.
136. Quinn Simmons, United States, Lidl-Trek, 27:19.

Overall Standings

1. Jai Hindley, Australia, Bora-Hansgrohe, 22:15:12s.
2. Jonas Vingegaard, Denmark, Jumbo-Visma, :47s behind.
3. Giulio Ciccone, Italy, LIDL-Trek/USA, 1:03.
4. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe/Ger, 1:11.
5. Adam Yates, Great Britain, UAE Team Emirates, 1:34.
6. Tadej Pogacar, Slovenia, UAE Team Emirates, 1:40.
7. Simon Yates, Great Britain, Team Jayco-Alula, same time.
8. Skjelmoose Mattias Jensen, Denmark, Lidl-Trek, 1:56.
9. Carlos Rodriguez Cano, Spain, Ineos Grenadiers, same time.

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL

Major League Baseball

MLB — Suspended New York Yankees RHP Jimmy Cordero for the remainder of the 2023 season and post-season for violating joint domestic violence, sexual abuse and child abuse policy.

American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLAS — Selected the contracts of OF Colton Cowser and RHP Eduard Bazarido from Norfolk (IL). Optioned OF Ryan McKenna to Norfolk. Designated C Anthony Bemboom and RHP Chris Vallimont for assignment.

CHICAGO WHITE SOX — Agreed to terms with RHP Jordan Holloway on a minor league contract.

DETROIT TIGERS — Optioned RHP Garrett Hill to Toledo (IL). Reinstated LHP Eduardo Rodriguez from the 15-day IL.

HOUSTON ASTROS — Optioned LHP Parker Mushinski to Sugar land (PCL).

KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Recalled RHP Dylan Coleman from Omaha (IL). Placed RHP Zack Greinke on the 15-day IL.

LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Recalled RHP Zack Weiss from Salt Lake (PCL). Optioned RHP Gerardo Reyes to Salt lake.

MINNESOTA TWINS — Reinstated RHP Cole Sands from the 15-day IL. Optioned RHP Josh Winder to St. Paul (IL).

NEW YORK YANKEES — Recalled RHP Randy Vasquez from Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (IL). Placed RHP Jimmy Cordero on the restricted list. Optioned RHP Randy Vasquez to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre.

SEATTLE MARINERS — Selected the contract of LHP Tommy Milone from Tacoma (PCL). Optioned RHP Darren McCaughan to Tacoma. Transferred RHP Penn Murfee from the 15-day IL to the 60-day IL.

TAMPA BAY RAYS — Optioned LHP Jalen Beeks to Durham (IL). Recalled RHP Luis Patino from Durham.

National League

LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Sent RHP Ricky Vanasco outright to Oklahoma City (PCL). Recalled LHP Bryan Hudson from Oklahoma City. Optioned RHP Gavin Stone to Oklahoma City.

MIAMI MARLINS — Recalled SS Garrett Hampson from Jacksonville (IL).

MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Placed 1B Rowdy Tellez on the 10-day IL. Released LHP Thomas Pannone. Reinstated 3B Brian Anderson from the paternity list. Designated 3B Mike Brosseau for assignment. Selected the contract of RHP J.C. Mejia from Nashville (IL). Optioned LHP Clayton Andrews and RHP J.B. Bukauskas to Nashville. Recalled RHP Tyson Miller from Nashville.

PITTSBURGH PIRATES — Recalled RHP Yohan Ramirez from Indianapolis (IL). Optioned RHP Luis Ortiz to Indianapolis.

ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Placed RHP Adam Wainwright on the 15-day IL and C Andrew Knizner on the 10-day IL. Recalled C Ivan Herrera, RHP Dakota Hudson and LHP Zack Thompson from Memphis (IL). Optioned RHP James Naile to Memphis.

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Recalled OF Alex Call from Rochester (IL). Designated OF Derek Hill for assignment.

10. David Gaudu, France, Groupama-FDJ/Fra, same time.

Also

16. Sepp Kuss, United States, Jumbo-Visma, 3:15s behind.
46. Matteo Jorgenson, United States, Movistar Team, 23:12.

80. Neilson Powless, United States, EF Education-EasyPost, 36:20.

84. G. Lawson Craddock, United States, Team Jayco-Alula, 39:17.

91. Kevin Vermaerke, United States, Team dsm-firmenich, 43:32.

144. Quinn Simmons, United States, Trek Segafredo, 1:01:22.

Young Riders Standings

1. Tadej Pogacar, Slovenia, UAE Team Emirates, 22:16:52s.

2. Skjelmoose Mattias Jensen, Denmark, LIDL-Trek, :16s behind.

3. Carlos Rodriguez Cano, Spain, Ineos Grenadiers, same time.

4. Tom Pidcock, Great Britian, Ineos Grenadiers, :56.

5. Felix Gall, Austria, AGZR Citroen Team, 4:22.

6. Matthew Dinham, Australia, Team DSM-Firmenich, 16:46.

7. Mathieu Burgaudeau, France, TotalEnergies, 19:12.

8. Tobias Halland Johannessen, Norway, Uno-X Pro Cycling Team, 19:48.

9. Matteo Jorgenson, United States, Movistar Team, 21:32.

10. Maxim Van Gils, Belgium, Lotto DSTNY/BEL, 26:47.

Mountain Standings

1. Felix Gall, Austria, AGZR Citroen Team, 28 pts.

2. Giulio Ciccone, Italy, LIDL-Trek/USA, 19.

3. Jai Hindley, Australia, Bora-Hansgrohe/Ger, 18.

4. Neilson Powless, United States, EF Education-EasyPost, 18.

5. Daniel Felipe Martinez Poveda, Colombia, Ineos Grenadiers, 15.

6. Emanuel Buchmann, Germany, Bora-Hansgrohe/Ger, 14.

7. Kristis Neilands, Latvia, Israel-Primier Tech/ISR, 8.

8. Tadej Pogacar, Slovenia, UAE Team Emirates, 7.

9. Jonas Vingegaard, Denmark, Jumbo-Visma, 6.

10. Jack Haig, Australia, Bahrain Victorious/BRN, 5.

DEALS

BASKETBALL

National Basketball Association

BROOKLYN NETS — Signed F Jalen Wilson to a two-way contract.

DETROIT PISTONS — Signed G Marcus Sasser to a rookie contract.

NEW ORLEANS PELICANS — Waived G Garrett Temple.

SAN ANTONIO SPURS — Signed G Sir J'abari Rice to a two-way contract.

FOOTBALL

National Football League

MIAMI DOLPHINS — Signed CB Cam Smith.

HOCKEY

National Hockey League

BOSTON BRUINS — Signed C Jakub Lauko to a two-year contract.

BUFFALO SABRES — Signed D Kale Clague to a one-year, two-way contract.

DETROIT RED WINGS — Named Kris Draper assistant general manager and director of amateur scouting.

FLORIDA PANTHERS — Signed F Rasmus Asplund to a one-year, two-way contract.

MONTREAL CANADIENS — Signed D David Reinbacher to a three-year, entry-level contract.

NEW YORK ISLANDERS — Signed F Julien Gauthier to a two-year, contract and Fs Karson Kuhlman and Brian Pinho to one-year, two-way contracts.

PHILADELPHIA FLYERS — Signed D Ronnie Attard to a two-year contract.

WASHINGTON CAPITALS — Signed D Chase Priskie to a one-year, two-way contract.

WINNIPEG JETS — Signed G Domenic DiVincentiis to a three-year, entry-level contract.

SOCCER

Major League Soccer

ATLANTA UNITED — Acquired \$400,000 in general allocation money (GAM) and a 2023 internationals roster slot from Colorado Rapids in exchange for D Andrew Gutman.

D.C. UNITED — Acquired a 2024 second-round SuperDraft pick and a conditional \$50,000 in general allocation money from New England in exchange for the right of first refusal for M Ian Harkes.

LOS ANGELES FC — Acquired \$1,750,000 in general allocation money (GAM) from Montreal in exchange for F Kwadwo 'Mahala' Opoku.

NEW ENGLAND REVOLUTION — Signed M Ian Harkes to a one-year contract.

PHILADELPHIA UNION — Loaned M Brandan Craig to Austin FC though the end of the season in exchange for a 2024 third-round SuperDraft pick and up to \$125,000 in general allocation money (GAM).

SEATTLE SOUNDERS FC — Acquired \$150,000 in general allocation money (GAM) from Columbus in exchange for a 2023 international roster slot.

National Women's Soccer League

GOTHAM FC — Signed F Katie Stengel on loan from Liverpool FC through Sept. 3.

COLLEGE

RUTGERS — Named Jeanine Wasielewski assistant women's basketball coach.

TENNESSEE — Extended the contract of Ryan Ridder as head men's basketball coach.

PRO BASKETBALL

WNBA				
EASTERN CONFERENCE				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	12	4	.750	—
Connecticut	12	5	.706	½
Washington	9	7	.563	3
Atlanta	8	8	.500	4
Chicago	8	9	.471	4½
Indiana	5	12	.294	7½
WESTERN CONFERENCE				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Las Vegas	16	1	.941	—
Minnesota	8	9	.471	8
Dallas	8	9	.471	8
Los Angeles	7	11	.389	9½
Seattle	4	12	.250	11½
Phoenix	3	13	.188	12½

Tuesday's games

No games scheduled.

Wednesday's games

New York 99, Phoenix 95
Minnesota 90, Indiana 83
Las Vegas 89, Dallas 82
Atlanta 90, Los Angeles 79

Thursday's games

Seattle at Connecticut

Friday's games

Indiana at Washington
Atlanta at Chicago
Las Vegas at Dallas
Phoenix at Minnesota

Saturday's games

Seattle at New York

GOLF

World rankings

Through July 3

1.	Scottie Scheffler	12.16
2.	Jon Rahm	10.00
3.	Rory McIlroy	9.22
4.	Patrick Cantlay	7.41
5.	Viktor Hovland	6.55
6.	Xander Schauffele	6.35
7.	Cameron Smith	5.46
8.	Max Homa	5.24
9.	Matt Fitzpatrick	5.23
10.	Jordan Spieth	4.82
11.	Wyndham Clark	4.61
12.	Brooks Koepka	4.54
13.	Will Zalatoris	4.42
14.	Tony Finau	4.37
15.	Tyrell Hatton	4.31
16.	Sam Burns	4.28
17.	Keegan Bradley	4.24
18.	Collin Morikawa	4.15
19.	Cameron Young	4.12
20.	Justin Thomas	4.06
21.	Tommy Fleetwood	3.65
22.	Sungjae Im	3.62
23.	Rickie Fowler	3.56
24.	Kurt Kitayama	3.40
25.	Tom Kim	3.37
26.	Brian Harman	3.07
27.	Jason Day	3.05
28.	Justin Rose	2.99
29.	Russell Henley	2.91
30.	Shane Lowry	2.90
31.	Corey Connors	2.88
32.	Sahithi Theegala	2.88
33.	Hideki Matsuyama	2.88
34.	Denny McCarthy	2.77
35.	Si Woo Kim	2.68

AUTO RACING

NASCAR Cup points leaders

Through July 2

1.	Martin Truex Jr	591
2.	William Byron	582
3.	Ross Chastain	573
4.	Christopher Bell	570
5.	Kyle Busch	560
6.	Denny Hamlin	538
7.	Kevin Harvick	523
8.	Kyle Larson	521
9.	Ryan Blaney	506
10.	Joey Logano	491
11.	Chris Buescher	476
12.	Tyler Reddick	463
13.	Brad Keselowski	463
14.	Ricky Stenhouse Jr	418
15.	Bubba Wallace	387
16.	Ty Gibbs	378
17.	Daniel Suárez	372
18.	Michael McDowell	368
19.	AJ Allmendinger	354
20.	Alex Bowman	352
21.	Justin Haley	333
22.	Austin Cindric	333
23.	Corey LaJoie	331
24.	Chase Elliott	323
25.	Ryan Preece	312
26.	Todd Gilliland	299
27.	Aric Almirola	297

TRACK & FIELD/MLB



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

Anna Hall wins a heat in the women's heptathlon 200-meter run at the World Athletics Championships on last July in Eugene, Ore. Hall's energetic nature has made her a standout star in track and field.

Spirited Hall has world title on mind, record in sights

BY PAT GRAHAM
Associated Press

Heptathlete Anna Hall isn't one to hold back her emotions. Those grimaces or dances reveal her precise thoughts about a particular jump, throw or run.

She's an open book, too — with her journal. The reigning world bronze medalist encourages her coaches to scan her entries for insight into her workout mindset. (The doodles happen to be a nice bonus.)

The fun-loving, candy-chomping 22-year-old from Colorado who labels herself a "big goofball" is emerging as the next big name in track and field. She might even be the one to break Jackie Joyner-Kersey's nearly 35-year-old world heptathlon record.

"What I see are all the tools to rewrite the record books," Joyner-Kersey said in a phone interview on the eve of the U.S. championships that start Thursday at Hayward Field in Eugene, Ore. "You're seeing greatness in motion without even knowing the greatness is before you, because of her natural ability. When you see Anna compete, she competes with joy."

She may even have with her a package of Nerds Gummy Clusters, her candy of choice for an energy boost in between the seven events spread over two days of competition. She will for sure be clowning around with her coaches, family, fans in the stands and her

competitors.

Just Hall being Hall.

"I feel like the way that I compete in a multi-event is a little bit unorthodox," said Hall, whose pre-competition routine includes drinking grape juice for good luck. "I'm bouncing around between every event and dancing. I'm trying to be loose and just trying to enjoy it."

Each season, Hall scribbles goals on sticky notes and posts them all over her mirror. That way, they're constantly seen.

Last year, one of her goals was earning a podium spot at the world championships in Eugene. She did just that by taking home a bronze medal in the event won by Belgium's Nafissatou Thiam.

About this season's sticky-note goals on her mirror: "Top secret," she said.

But they're not too hard to decipher. Make the U.S. team for worlds — the top three earn spots — and she would be among the favorites next month in Budapest, Hungary. An American woman hasn't won the heptathlon title at worlds since Joyner-Kersey in 1993.

And yes, Joyner-Kersey's world record is very much on Hall's mind. Joyner-Kersey set the mark of 7,291 points in taking home gold at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. It's a performance Hall has watched over and over again.

Really, though, that's a quest for down the road. Hall's concentration is simply on her events Thurs-

day, which include 100 hurdles, high jump, shot put and the 200. Day 2 on Friday is the long jump, javelin and finally the 800, which is simultaneously her favorite and least favorite event.

"It's not so much about chasing a giant score," Hall explained. "We're just using this as a stepping stone so we can get right back to training for worlds."

Hall's in peak form, recording a career-best score of 6,988 points on May 28 in Götzis, Austria. That performance moved her to No. 5 on the women's all-time world list.

That performance was also enough to convince her team to put her plans for the 400-meter hurdles on hold, an event she was hoping to run at nationals.

"I love the hurdles but my coaches ultimately decided that we have a real shot at winning (at worlds)," explained Hall, whose father, David, was a quarterback at Michigan along with playing basketball and being a decathlete. "So it would be taking that for granted to not put all of our eggs in that basket and go for that."

In the stadium at worlds was Joyner-Kersey, who's gotten the chance to know Hall and her family. She believes gold is in Hall's future.

That world record, too.

"I've watched many multi-eventers over the years. But I have not seen one like Anna," Joyner-Kersey said. "There's no give-up in her. She reminds me of myself."

Reds enjoy winning behind De La Cruz

BY STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Elly De La Cruz walked through the clubhouse wearing a shirt with his face and nickname, "La Cocoa," on it. Sitting at his locker facing the rest of the room, Joey Votto joked to a nearby coach that he should let the kids play.

The kids are playing, all right, and the Cincinnati Reds are winning as a result.

Sparked by De La Cruz, the rookie sensation whose major league debut last month coincided with Cincinnati's season turning around, the Reds are rolling toward the All-Star break playing some of the best baseball in quite some time for the storied franchise. They're atop the NL Central and on pace to make the playoffs for just the second time in a decade, with a team full of young players who are having plenty of fun along the way.

"We have very good vibes going on," De La Cruz said through an interpreter. "It feels like everyone's united and everyone's just trying to help each other out."

It's working. The Reds are 20-6 since De La Cruz joined them on June 6.

The 6-foot-5, 200-pound dreadlocked 21-year-old from the Dominican Republic has brought smiles in the dugout and production on the field. Through his first 25 games, he is batting .308 and has driven in 13 runs, launched three home runs, stolen 10 bases and became Cincinnati's first player to hit for the cycle since 1989.

"Elly's playing great since he's been here, and that's helped us a lot," said David Bell, now in his fourth season as Reds manager. "We've definitely played well since Elly's been here."

It also helps that Votto, the 2010

NL MVP and longtime face of the franchise, returned on June 19 after missing the previous 10 months while recovering from surgery to repair his left biceps and rotator cuff. Now 39, Votto is feeling the best he has in well over a year.

He has had a tough time containing his joy.

"I've got a dirty little secret: I actually can't stand baseball, so every day is a nightmare for me," Votto deadpanned earlier this week after hitting a home run to snap a 0-for-21 slump in yet another win.

"I've been having a great time. Guys are young, energized, motivated. Winning, of course, but it has a lot to do with the personalities in the clubhouse. These guys are silly and talented and getting better."

Votto, who turns 40 in September, is by far Cincinnati's oldest player. De La Cruz is the youngest — one of 21 players on the 26-man roster who hadn't been born yet the last time the organization won the World Series in 1990.

Shortstop Matt McLain is 23, first-time All-Star closer Alexis Diaz and second baseman Jonathan India are 26 and center fielder TJ Friedl is 27. The mix has worked well.

"We're just having fun together, playing the game we love, playing with heart, playing with passion — that's our mentality," India said Tuesday after a third consecutive victory. "We just care about winning. We have one goal in mind: to make it to the end and win the ring."

The Reds haven't won a playoff series since 1995. Getting to and through October is now their goal.

"It's really been a fun time so far," Votto said. "And I think the good times are actually ahead of us."



PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

The Cincinnati Reds' Nick Senzel, right, celebrates with teammate Elly De La Cruz after driving in De La Cruz with a three-run home run against the Nationals on Tuesday in Washington.

MLB

Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Tampa Bay	57	32	.640	—
Baltimore	50	35	.588	5
New York	48	39	.552	8
Toronto	46	40	.535	9½
Boston	44	43	.506	12
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	45	43	.511	—
Cleveland	42	44	.488	2
Detroit	37	48	.435	6½
Chicago	37	50	.425	7½
Kansas City	25	62	.287	19½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Texas	51	36	.586	—
Houston	49	38	.563	2
Los Angeles	45	44	.506	7
Seattle	42	43	.494	8
Oakland	25	63	.284	26½
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	58	28	.674	—
Miami	51	37	.580	8
Philadelphia	46	39	.541	11½
New York	40	46	.465	18
Washington	34	52	.395	24
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cincinnati	48	39	.552	—
Milwaukee	46	41	.529	2
Chicago	40	45	.471	7
Pittsburgh	40	46	.465	7½
St. Louis	35	51	.407	12½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Arizona	50	37	.575	—
Los Angeles	48	38	.558	1½
San Francisco	47	40	.540	3
San Diego	41	46	.471	9
Colorado	33	55	.375	17½
Wednesday's games				
Houston 6, Colorado 4				
Oakland 12, Detroit 3				
Philadelphia 8, Tampa Bay 4				
Boston 4, Texas 2				
Minnesota 5, Kansas City 0				
Baltimore 6, N.Y. Yankees 3				
Atlanta 8, Cleveland 1				
San Diego 5, L.A. Angels 3				
San Francisco 2, Seattle 0				
Miami 10, St. Louis 9				
Cincinnati 9, Washington 2				
Chicago Cubs 4, Milwaukee 3				
N.Y. Mets 2, Arizona 1				
L.A. Dodgers 6, Pittsburgh 4				
Toronto at Chicago White Sox, ppd.				
Thursday's games				
Cincinnati at Washington				
Oakland at Detroit				
Chicago Cubs at Milwaukee				
Toronto at Chicago White Sox, 2				
Philadelphia at Tampa Bay				
St. Louis at Miami				
Baltimore at N.Y. Yankees				
Kansas City at Cleveland				
Texas at Boston				
Seattle at Houston				
N.Y. Mets at Arizona				
Pittsburgh at L.A. Dodgers				
Friday's games				
Philadelphia (Wheeler 7-4) at Miami (Alcantara 3-7)				
Atlanta (Morton 8-6) at Tampa Bay (Glasnow 2-2)				
Toronto (Manoah 1-7) at Detroit (TBD)				
Chicago Cubs (TBD) at N.Y. Yankees (TBD)				
Texas (TBD) at Washington (TBD)				
Kansas City (Lynch 2-3) at Cleveland (Civale 2-2)				
Oakland (TBD) at Boston (TBD)				
Baltimore (Irvin 1-3) at Minnesota (Ober 5-4)				
Seattle (Castillo 5-6) at Houston (Brown 6-5)				
St. Louis (Montgomery 6-7) at Chicago White Sox (TBD)				
Cincinnati (Abbott 4-0) at Milwaukee (Burnes 6-5)				
N.Y. Mets (Verlander 3-4) at San Diego (Darvish 5-6)				
Pittsburgh (TBD) at Arizona (TBD)				
L.A. Angels (Canning 6-3) at L.A. Dodgers (TBD)				
Colorado (TBD) at San Francisco (TBD)				
Calendar				
July 8 — Futures Game, Seattle.				
July 9-11 — Amateur draft, Seattle.				
July 10 — Home Run Derby, Seattle.				
July 11 — All-Star Game, Seattle.				
July 23 — Hall of Fame induction ceremonies, Cooperstown, N.Y.				

Pitch clock may equal better defense

By STEVE MEGARGEE
Associated Press

MILWAUKEE—The pitch clock may be bothering players as they step to the plate, but they like it a whole lot better once they put on their gloves and take the field.

While the rules changes put in place this year to speed up the pace of play have garnered plenty of attention for how they’ve affected hitters and pitchers, some players and managers have said the new guidelines are also positively impacting defense.

The pitch clock in particular—an idea meant to make it easier for fans to stay focused on the field—may be keeping fielders locked in, too.

“I think it’s helping defensively a lot, just because you don’t have the down time to really kind of walk around,” said Seattle Mariners second baseman Kolten Wong, a two-time Gold Glove winner. “You’re not cleaning dirt, you’re constantly back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. So, I’m a big fan of it.”

The pitch clock adopted this year—along with limits on infield shifts and several other rules—gives pitchers 15 seconds between deliveries if there are no baserunners and 20 seconds with someone aboard.

There’s no doubt that games are faster. The average game length of 2 hours, 40 minutes is the shortest since 1984. Games had lasted an average of at least 3 hours every year from 2012-22.

That change was expected. But some players and coaches said they’ve been pleasantly surprised by how it’s changed things on defense.

Milwaukee manager Craig Counsell, asked this season about left fielder Christian Yelich’s improving glove work, landed on the clock as a key contributor. After ranking



EMIL T. LIPPE/AP

The pitch clock ticks down in the top of the ninth between the Texas Rangers and Philadelphia Phillies in Arlington, Texas, on April 2. Some players and coaches feel the clock has helped defenders stay focused.

among the bottom 10 left fielders last year with minus-5 Outs Above Average, Yelich is third this season with 3 OAA, per Baseball Savant.

“It’s definitely not something I’d thought of, but I think it’s easier to play defense now the way the game is structured because it’s just faster-paced,” Counsell said. “That’s best for defenders. I don’t think hitters like it still, to be honest with you. And pitchers don’t like it. But I think it’s great for defenders.”

Counsell said the lengthy delays between pitches in previous seasons could make it tough for fielders to maintain their focus.

“It’s still your job, but (the slow pace) was making it really hard, I think especially for outfielders,” Counsell said.

Arizona Diamondbacks first ba-

seman Christian Walker indicated it was an issue for infielders as well.

“When you’ve been standing out there for 15-20 minutes and you get a ground ball hit at you, I know that’s been a challenge in the past, in long innings, staying locked in,” Walker said.

It’s hard to find empirical evidence to support or dispute the theory. The league-wide fielding percentage of .986 through Tuesday’s games is the highest in the sport’s history, but that may not be the best indicator. Fielding percentages have been rising steadily for decades thanks in part to improved field conditions and equipment, and last year’s fielding percentage was .985. The metric also relies on subjective decisions by official scorers and doesn’t factor for a player’s range.

It’s also hard to pull trends from advanced defensive metrics because of the limits placed on infield shifts between the 2022 and ’23 seasons.

That leaves it up to the notoriously unreliable eye test to determine whether there’s any difference.

“I don’t think I’ve necessarily noticed that,” New York Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. “My gut, or hearing you ask that question and knowing myself as a fielder, I would think it’s a good thing. You know, being able to keep it moving. I know we always liked a pitcher that worked fast, right? It felt like you were more on your toes, more alert. So I would think there’s something to that, but it’s not necessarily something that I’ve taken away from it so far.”

Robert, Alonso lead Home Run Derby field

Associated Press

CHICAGO — Chicago White Sox All-Star Luis Robert Jr. and two-time champion Pete Alonso of the New York Mets are set to participate in baseball’s Home Run Derby in Seattle on Monday.

Robert earned the top seed in an eight-player field announced Wednesday that includes Seattle’s Julio Rodríguez, 2018 American League MVP Mookie Betts, Toronto’s Vladimir Guerrero Jr., Tampa Bay’s Randy Arozarena, Texas’ Adolis García and Baltimore’s Adley Rutschman. Alonso, who won in 2019 and 2021, will try to join Ken Griffey Jr. (1994, 1998 and 1999) as the only three-time champions.

Robert will go against the eighth-seeded Rutschman (11 home runs) in the first round, with second seed Alonso facing the seventh-seeded Rodriguez



MATT MARTON/AP

The White Sox’s Luis Robert Jr. hits a three-run home run against the Toronto Blue Jays during the sixth inning Tuesday in Chicago.

(13). Third-seeded Betts (23) meets six seed Guerrero Jr. (13), and fourth-seeded García (21) faces five seed Arozarena (16).

The seeding was determined by home run totals through Tuesday. Tiebreakers went to the player with the most homers

since June 15.

“I’m pretty sure I’m going to feel very happy during those two days,” Robert said. “It’s going to be very special for me.”

Robert posted on Instagram hours before the official announcement that he would participate in the Home Run Derby. The Cuban outfielder was also selected to his first All-Star team.

“If he’s happy about it, I’m happy about it,” manager Pedro Grifol said. “It’s a great experience. I remember Salvy (Salvador Perez) doing it over there in Kansas City. He was pretty pumped about it, and he had a really good time.”

Robert and countrymen Arozarena and García are participating for the first time. They will try to join two-time champion Yoenis Céspedes as the only Cuba natives to win the Derby.

WIMBLEDON

All England Club trying to blend past, present

By Howard Fendrich
Associated Press

WIMBLEDON, England — Tennis fans in New York can gather to see live TV coverage of the last three days of Wimbledon at an outdoor watch party at Brooklyn Bridge Park from July 14-16, featuring the women’s final and the men’s semifinals and final. Online registration for 1,500 free tickets for each day ends Thursday; walk-ins will be allowed, too.

So much of that paragraph would have been incomprehensible to anyone around for the initial edition of the oldest Grand Slam tennis tournament in 1877, from the television broadcast to the trans-Atlantic appeal to the online element to, even, the participation of women in the competition: They were not allowed to play singles until 1884 or doubles until 1913.

The creation of “The Hill in New York” — touted as “a quintessential Wimbledon experience from afar,” replete with gin and tonics, strawberries and cream, fish and chips, tea and scones and, naturally, a merchandise shop with the same towels, hats and other official tournament paraphernalia sold at the actual competition site — is one of many ways in which the All England Club (full name: All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club) is setting one foot in the modern age, such as the retractable roofs on Centre Court and No. 1 Court that permitted play as rain fell Tuesday and Wednesday, while keeping another solidly rooted in its famous past.

“At Wimbledon, we’re always conscious of finding the balance between respecting our heritage and tradition,” Club chief executive Sally Bolton said, “alongside the pursuit of innovation and bringing in new audiences to share in the magic of The Championships.”

See? Even the way they refer to the two-week event by those two words is a nod to earlier times. As is the continued use of grass courts, the only major tournament to still do so (the U.S. Open and Australian Open have shifted from grass to hard courts; the French Open is played on red clay.) As is the use of “fortnight” to describe the two weeks.

And yet the fact that it is now a fully 14-day event is a nod to today. Until last year, Wimbledon’s schedule was spread over 13 days; the middle Sunday was set aside as a day of rest, used for play only in cases of extreme rain delays during Week 1 to make up a backlog of contests. Now those Sundays



ALASTAIR GRANT/AP

Victoria Azarenka plays during her first-round match on Monday at Wimbledon. One tweak this year was to the all-white clothing rule, which is often cited as part of Wimbledon’s historic charm but also was criticized by some female players.

will always have matches. That, like the New York event that began in 2022, is just one of the ways in which the All England Club is adapting to the present — and has its eyes on the future.

“We recognize that we’re a global event and we have audiences all over the world,” Bolton said in an interview. “But as we think about growth, there are certain countries where we think that there’s quite a bit more potential to grow that audience, and the U.S. is a great example of that.”

There is also the intent to expand the local footprint by using land from the golf club across the road to build a new arena and courts for qualifying rounds. Bolton said the hope is there will be a decision by local authorities on a planning application by the end of 2023, so work can begin to allow new courts to be ready in the late 2020s or early 2030s.

Gender equity has been a particular area of change.

One tweak this year was to the all-white clothing rule, which often is cited as part of Wimbledon’s historic charm but also was criticized by some female players for making them uncomfortable when they have their period. Now they are allowed to wear dark-colored undershorts.

“That was very much about recognizing that we want all athletes to have the best opportunity to focus on their performance,” Bolton said, “and to not have distractions. ... It wasn’t a difficult decision.”

Victoria Azarenka, a 33-year-old from Belarus who was twice the champion at the Australian Open and twice a semifinalist at the All England Club, appreciated the move.

“England is based a lot on tradition, and I think they try to hold on to it as much as possible, compared to other places. That’s what differentiates Wimbledon,” Azarenka said. “But the adjustment to the attire is more practical than sticking with the tradition, and it is the right step to help women feel a little more comfortable here. The rest of the white attire is something that makes Wimbledon special and a beautiful part of that. Tennis, in general, can use a bit of a change in rules.”

There are other ways in which Wimbledon has been doing that — albeit after taking longer than some wished.

In 2007, Wimbledon became the last of the four tennis majors to pay its women’s singles champion the same amount as its men’s singles champion. In 2019, Wimbledon chair umpires stopped referring to female players with “Miss” — or “Mrs.” for married women —



ALBERTO PEZZALI/AP

Andy Murray plays under a closed roof during his first-round match on Tuesday at Wimbledon. One of the ways the All England Club is adapting is by putting retractable roofs on two courts.

when announcing the winner of a game, a set or a match, and switched to saying only their last names, the way long done for men.

Last year, female champions were listed on the honor boards in a Centre Court hallway simply by their first initial and last name — the way the men’s title winners always have been — instead of preceded by “Miss” or “Mrs.” Until then, the entry for Chris Evert’s 1981 championship, for example, showed her name as “Mrs. J.M. Lloyd,” because she was married at the time to John Lloyd. For her titles in 1974 and 1976, before that marriage, she was listed as “Miss C.M. Evert.”

“Wimbledon, and all of the Grand Slams, are taking gender equity very seriously. There are different stages, and they still have different opinions and approaches to the subject. ... It maybe isn’t happening as fast as everyone would like to see in every place. But I think there are genuine efforts and I think they should be recognized for the efforts that are being made. And I think they’re being made for the right reasons,” said Steve Simon, the head of the WTA, the women’s pro tennis tour. “They’re being made because they think it’s right and they need to make these changes versus being forced into it. Because that’s the way you ultimately want it to happen.”

Bolton herself represents that sort of “very visible shift,” as she termed it.

She is the first female chief executive at the Club since the position was established 40 years ago. Denise Parnell has been appointed tournament referee as of next year, the first woman to hold that job in Wimbledon history. Another woman, Deborah Jevans, will take over as vice chairman of the Club after the current tournament ends.

“In many ways, it’s by accident that we’ve ended up with three women in those roles at the same time,” Bolton said, “but I think it is a reflection of the way in which the club is evolving and changing.”

Scoreboard

Thursday
At All England Club
London
Purse: £16,077,000
Surface: Grass
Seedings in parentheses
Men’s Singles
First Round

Alejandro Davidovich Fokina (31), Spain, def. Arthur Fils, France, 7-6 (3), 6-1, 6-2.
Botic Van de Zandschulp, Netherlands, def. Zhang Zhizhen, China, 2-6, 7-6 (3), 7-6 (6), 3-6, 6-2.
Alexander Zverev (19), Germany, def. Gijs Brouwer, Netherlands, 6-4, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5).

Second Round
Quentin Halys, France, def. Aleksandar Vukic, Australia, 6-3, 6-1, 6-4.
Alexander Bublik (23), Kazakhstan, def. Jeffrey John Wolf, United States, 6-3, 7-6 (5), 6-0.
Hubert Hurkacz (17), Poland, def. Jan Choinski, Britain, 6-4, 6-4, 7-6 (3).
Lorenzo Musetti (14), Italy, def. Jaume Munar, Spain, 6-4, 6-3, 6-1.
Maximilian Marterer, Germany, def. Michael Mmoh, United States, 7-5, 7-6 (5), 6-4.
Stan Wawrinka, Switzerland, def. Tomas Martin Etcheverry (29), Argentina, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2.
Andrey Rublev (7), Russia, def. Aslan Karatsev, Russia, 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-4, 7-5.
Jiri Lehecka, Czech Republic, def. Francisco Cerundolo (18), Argentina, 6-2, 6-2, 6-2.
Liam Broady, Britain, def. Casper Ruud (4), Norway, 6-4, 3-6, 4-6, 6-3, 6-0.
Denis Shapovalov (26), Canada, def. Gregoire Barrere, France, 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (7).
Daniel Elahi Galan, Colombia, def. Oscar Otte, Germany, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (3).
Tommy Paul (16), United States, def. Milos Raonic, Canada, 6-4, 7-6 (4), 6-7 (4), 6-4.

Women’s Singles
First Round
Anhelina Kalinina (26), Ukraine, def. Jessica Bouzas Maneiro, Spain, 6-4, 6-3.
Dalma Galfi, Hungary, def. Linda Noskova, Czech Republic, 6-7 (6), 6-2, 6-2.
Jule Niemeier, Germany, def. Karolina Muchova (16), Czech Republic, 6-4, 5-7, 6-1.
Bianca Andreescu, Canada, def. Anna Bondar, Hungary, 6-3, 3-6, 6-2.

Second Round
Sofia Kenin, United States, def. Wang Xinyu, China, 6-4, 6-3.
Elina Svitolina, Ukraine, def. Elise Mertens (28), Belgium, 6-1, 1-6, 6-1.
Lesia Tsurenko, Ukraine, def. Katerina Siniakova, Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-1.
Ana Bogdan, Romania, def. Alycia Parks, United States, 1-6, 6-3, 6-2.
Petra Martic (30), Croatia, def. Diane Parry, France, 4-6, 6-3, 6-3.
Mirra Andrejeva, Russia, def. Barbora Krejckova (10), Czech Republic, 6-3, 4-0, ret.
Victoria Azarenka (19), Belarus, def. Nadia Podoroska, Argentina, 6-3, 6-0.
Marketa Vondrousova, Czech Republic, def. Veronika Kudermetova (12), Russia, 6-3, 6-3.
Marie Bouzkova (32), Czech Republic, def. Anett Kontaveit, Estonia, 6-1, 6-2.
Elisabetta Cocciaretto, Italy, def. Rebecka Masarova, Spain, 6-3, 6-1.
Katie Boulter, Britain, def. Viktoriya Tomova, Bulgaria, 6-0, 3-6, 6-3.
Beatriz Haddad Maia (13), Brazil, def. Jaqueline Adina Cristian, Romania, 4-6, 6-2, 6-4.
Sorana Cirstea, Romania, def. Jelena Ostapenko (17), Latvia, 4-6, 7-6 (6), 6-4.
Caroline Garcia (5), France, def. Leylah Annie Fernandez, Canada, 3-6, 6-4, 7-6 (6).
Magda Linette (23), Poland, def. Barbora Strycova, Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-7 (6), 6-3.
Marketa Vondrousova, Czech Republic, def. Veronika Kudermetova (12), Russia, 6-3, 6-3.

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Aussie rules reject Kerr now Aussie face of Cup

By JOHN PYE
Associated Press

BRISBANE, Australia — When Sam Kerr was told she could no longer play for her chosen Australian rules team, she went searching for another kind of football.

A preteen reject from the home-grown game — because she wasn't allowed to play with the boys anymore — Kerr has become one of Australia's most recognizable athletes, and is the face of the first Women's World Cup in the Southern Hemisphere.

She's already on the cover of FIFA 23 and shares the top rating in the update released in time for the tournament in Australia and New Zealand.

Her somersaulting goal celebrations have become synonymous with the growth of women's soccer in Australia, where she's the country's all-time leading scorer in international soccer, and in the England-based Women's Super League, where she's a star for Chelsea's title-winning team in the league and FA Cup.

She saves the backflip mainly for the big occasions, and she's refined it since scoring her first international goal in 2010 against South Korea, when the execution wasn't quite as polished.

The fitter, faster and more experienced Kerr has incredible balance and poise at pace. She can launch powerful strikes from distance or use her deft touch and reflexes from close. She's strong in

the air and her headers make her a major threat in front of the net.

Kerr describes herself as an instinctual player: "I just play what I see, or play what I feel. And I think it's always evolving."

This will be Kerr's fourth World Cup, but by far her most important. A rare miss in a penalty shootout loss to Norway in the round of 16 in 2019 has given Kerr added motivation.

"I love being in (a place) where one or two moments can change the path, your career really," she said at Australia's squad announcement. "And I think this World Cup is one of those moments."

The 29-year-old striker wants to leave a legacy for younger players and strives for what Australians collectively know as a Cathy Freeman moment.

Freeman lit the cauldron to open the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and, carrying the full expectations of the host nation, went out the next week and won gold in the 400.

"I was only 7 years old and I understood," said Kerr, who watched on TV. "She walked into that stadium and every single person stopped to watch her."

When she leads the Matildas out for their Group B opener against Ireland on July 20, at the same stadium where Freeman triumphed, there'll be 80,000 in the venue and millions more Australians watching with great expectations.

The Matildas haven't pro-

gressed past the quarterfinals in seven previous trips to the World Cup but public hopes here are soaring.

"It would be the ultimate dream," Kerr said. "That's why I do what I do every day. That's why I sacrifice so much — to win a World Cup."

Moya Dodd, who played for the Matildas in the 1980s and 90s and later became one of the most influential women in world soccer as a member of FIFA's executive committee, said Kerr "was always good, but she's gone from good to lethal."

"If you asked anyone on the street to name an Australian footballer right now, they'd say Sam," Dodd added, highlighting the rising profile of the national women's team. "Ten years ago that would have been a stretch of the imagination."

Kerr's mother, Roxanne, said it might have been different if the local Aussie rules competition in Perth allowed girls to play in mixed teams with boys beyond the age of 12. Daniel Kerr, Sam's older brother, had a long professional career with West Coast Eagles in the Australian Football League. Her father, Roger, also played at an elite level.

When that career path appeared to close, the family convinced a 12-year-old Sam to give soccer a shot and it wasn't too long before a talent scout saw her play and invited her to practice with a



RICK RYCROFT/AP

Australia's Sam Kerr, left, picked up soccer only because she was told she could no longer play for her chosen Australian rules team. She has been a star at big clubs in the U.S. and Britain.

state representative team.

After politely declining the offer initially, Kerr changed her mind and her career took off at an astonishing pace — making her international debut for Australia as a 15-year-old winger with enormous potential.

Kerr has been a star at big clubs in the U.S. and Britain, has accumulated 120 international caps heading into the World Cup and, as captain and inspirational leader, represents the here and now of the Matildas.

Tom Sermanni, who was Matil-

das coach in Kerr's early days, described her as "just fearless."

"She encapsulates the Australian spirit — she's a fierce competitor but she looks like she's enjoying herself."

If there's laughing or mucking around, Kerr agreed, "I'm normally right in the middle."

But she's always alert at the business end.

As Kerr's longtime Matildas teammate, Arsenal forward Caitlin Foord, said: "She can do it all. We know we just have to find her in the box."

Pink hair and lethal left foot make Endo fan favorite

By STEPHEN WADE
Associated Press

TOKYO — Jun Endo grabs the attention right away.

First, it's the Japan winger's pink hair. Next, her quick moves, agility and the curling left-foot crosses. These have made her a fan favorite at California club Angel City FC.

Look for her to get similar attention when Japan opens in the Women's World Cup in Group C against Zambia. Spain and Costa Rica are also in the New Zealand-based group.

"She creates an expectation that something will happen when she has the ball," Japan coach Futoshi Ikeda told The Associated Press. "She is a player who is trying new things in search of her own development in the league in the United States."

Endo played on Japan's 2019 World Cup team, which was knocked out in the round of 16; a disappointment for a country that won the 2011 Women's World Cup



ASHLEY LANDIS/AP

Japan's Jun Endo will draw a lot of attention at the Women's World Cup more for her play on the field than her pink hair.

and was the runner-up in 2015.

In an interview with the AP, Endo described herself as "rookie" on that 2019 team.

"I picked up some minutes but I really didn't show as well as I wished," she said. "This time I feel I have to show more of the experience I have gained over four years. I want to be an example to

the younger players."

Endo said she has learned to express herself — on and off the field — playing two seasons with Angel City. She played previously in Japan's new WE League. She said it's more difficult to stick out in Japan, which often values conformity over creativity.

She may have been referring to an expression in Japanese that sums up the issue.

"Deru kugi wa utareru." Roughly translated, it means the nail that sticks up gets hammered down.

"When I came to Los Angeles and started looking, walking on the streets, I saw that freedom to be yourself without being looked at," Endo said. "Japanese society on the whole is not like that. That doesn't mean I disrespect anybody in a different culture, but I love expressing myself."

The hair and her untiring style of play turned her into a near-celebrity player in Los Angeles, which she said she didn't intend or foresee. The hair she said was

more of a fashion statement, but it transitioned to the soccer field.

"I simply like making changes and having fun. I'm into fashion, hairstyle," the 23-year-old Endo said. "I didn't think of myself when I arrived at Angel City as the Energizer-Bunny kind of player. But now I'm often told I play like I'm having fun, and I'm enjoying it."

"Compared with how I played in Japan, I am enjoying it more. But there is also something about becoming more mature and thinking how I can support my teammates as a leader."

Endo was a hit from the start. In Angel City's first game — a 2-1 victory over the North Carolina Courage — she had an assist and a goal.

Her only setback has been an injured left knee, which she said is almost back to full strength.

Endo's childhood was marred by upheaval. She grew up in northeastern Fukushima prefecture. She was a child in 2011 when a magnitude 9.0 earthquake, tsuna-

mi, and the meltdown of three nuclear reactors took the lives of thousands.

Her family lived inland and the impact was not as great, but she has said in interviews that she was not allowed to go outside for a year.

Endo repeated several times her growing confidence to express herself on the field. To take a chance, which she suggested Japan's women will have to do to compete. The Japanese are famous for their ball skills, but she said the team might need more aggression despite often being smaller than the opposition.

"Individual players have to pick up the intensity, have that added hunger to score goals or to win that 50-50 ball," she said. "Japan is slightly lacking that."

"Compared to Japanese in general, other players in other countries tend to take their chance and take a big swing at it. Not being afraid to take a shot or take a chance. Japan will need that."

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Putellas back in nick of time

Spain's goal scorer returns from injury

By JOSEPH WILSON
Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain — Alexia Putellas heads to the Women's World Cup after winning back-to-back Ballon d'Or awards and helping Barcelona win two of the last three Champions League titles.

Even so, her role on Spain's national team is in doubt. The 29-year-old midfielder with a knack for scoring has barely played for her club since recently returning from a leg injury that sidelined her for nearly 10 months.

Alexia was included on Spain's squad for the tournament beginning later this month in Australia and New Zealand. But it is not clear what part she will play on a team that has made huge strides in recent years. Alexia, who leads Spain with 100 appearances, has had a role in that boom by becoming only the second Spaniard, woman or man, to win the Ballon d'Or.

She was set to take the 2022 European Championship by storm, only for the anterior cruciate ligament in her left knee to rupture days before the tournament. She played her first game since that

injury in late April when Barcelona clinched the Spanish league title.

In total, she has made six appearances since her injury, all as a substitute, including in the Champions League final. She lifted the trophy as Barcelona's captain after her teammates pulled off a 3-2 comeback victory over Wolfsburg.

Spain coach Jorge Vilda praised Alexia when he announced his preliminary squad. But it was unclear if he thought he would get more from her playing as a starter or as a backup who could handle the pressure of the final minutes.

Alexia guided Barcelona to its first European Cup in 2021. The next season she led the Champions League in scoring with 11 goals but Barcelona lost in the final. This season, she was an observer until the final minutes of her club's triumphant Champions League campaign. If fully recovered, Alexia would be a formidable weapon for Spain thanks to her ability to join the attack, find spaces to shoot, and her superb strike from distance.

"We know that she is going to help us a lot, not just on the field, but also with her leadership and the respect she commands from the other players, her experience, her ability to know what is needed, and that talent she has to rise to



MARTIN MEISSNER/AP

FC Barcelona's Alexia Putellas attends a training session in Eindhoven, Netherlands, on June 2 ahead of the Women's Champions League final against VfL Wolfsburg. Putellas is on Spain's World Cup squad.

the challenge," Vilda said. "That is what we were missing in the last European Championship."

But Alexia is also returning to a team that has undergone an unwanted overhaul.

Relations deteriorated between several players and Vilda after Spain exited last year's European Championship in the quarterfinals. Fifteen players, including several Barcelona teammates of Alexia, said they would not continue to play for Vilda unless he improved his coaching methodology.

The federation interpreted the players' decision as an attempt to force the ousting of Vilda. The federation backed the coach firmly and left the rebels off the team.

Now, three of the 15, including

Barcelona playmaker Aitana Bonmatí, have been included after a behind-the-scenes reconciliation with Vilda.

The 12 still left off the squad include Patricia Guijarro, who scored twice in Barcelona's win over Wolfsburg.

Alexia was injured at the time of the split between the players and coach and was not among the 15 who refused to continue playing. She did show support for them in a message posted on social media. That, however, did not impede her return for Spain once she had healed.

Spain opens the World Cup against Costa Rica in Wellington on July 21. Japan and Zambia are also in Group C.

Alexia may also have to deal with off-field distractions — this time from her club.

Spanish radio Cadena SER recently reported that Barcelona would consider selling Alexia if they had a strong offer. Alexia, who is from a town near Barcelona and has one more year on her current deal, reportedly has no interest in leaving. The indebted club is burdened by a massive payroll for its men's team and is expected to try to shed some male players.

Barcelona told The Associated Press that it is in negotiations with Alexia to give her another contract and has no desire for her to leave. The club also said it has no plans to trim the budget for its women's team.

Dual: Trade to San Diego has revitalized Morgan's pro career

FROM PAGE 48

Having just turned 34, Morgan is busier than ever. She's adeptly juggling motherhood with pursuing another World Cup title while helping make the Wave a popular draw. She started a foundation to help girls and women on and off the field and is active around town, whether it's throwing out a ceremonial first pitch at a San Diego Padres game or helping to open a soccer store she's an investor in. She also helped lead the successful fight against the American governing body for equal pay and prize money.

Morgan, who is from the San Gabriel Valley east of Los Angeles, was traded from Orlando to the expansion Wave in December 2021. She was reunited with Wave President Jill Ellis, who coached the United States to World Cup titles in 2015 and 2019. Morgan was a fixture on both teams.

Morgan has helped elevate soc-



JULIO CORTEZ/AP

Forward Alex Morgan holds her daughter, Charlie, during an event with the U.S. women's national team. Morgan says she feels calmer heading into this World Cup and wants to represent mom athletes.

cer's popularity in San Diego as the Wave's marquee attraction. The Wave play at San Diego State's year-old 35,000-seat Snapdragon Stadium and set National Women's Soccer League attendance records of 30,854 for a home

opener, on March 25, and 26,215 for a playoff game last fall.

Sean Dreusike, 41, who is the spirit coordinator for the supporter group The Sirens, said Morgan has been his favorite player since she was an emerging star and

scored a key goal in qualifying for the 2011 World Cup. He'll travel to New Zealand to watch the Americans in this World Cup.

Dreusike said he was "stunned" when Morgan ended up in San Diego. He figured she'd play in LA, where her husband had played for the Galaxy.

"In Orlando, she was struggling there, and she came here and I was worried it might be like a little bit of a retirement home; you know, famous player, in San Diego, that whole thing," Dreusike said. "But she's been fantastic and in lot of ways is the heart and soul of the team."

Coach Casey Stoney called Morgan "an ultimate pro" and said she's more than just the focal point of the Wave's attack.

"As a player, as a leader, she's been huge," Stoney said. "As an ambassador in the community and what she gives back, even bigger. You know, people come to

most games to see her, to watch her, to meet her, and she's an incredible role model. We're very lucky as a club that we have her."

Morgan and Padres right-hander Joe Musgrove, a San Diego-area native, share a marketing representative. Wave and Padres players supported each other's playoff runs last fall.

"All the things that she's accomplished in the game of soccer alone has been a huge motivator for a lot of young girls," Musgrove said. "Obviously she has played at much more competitive and like crazier levels, but to come here and be that staple for those girls and give the community of San Diego a female figure to be a hero and follow, is awesome."

Said Morgan: "Well, bottom line is, I love this city. This is my city far after soccer as well. Just coming here and having the organization put so much trust in me has been great."

WOMEN’S WORLD CUP

Hegerberg looking to sate long career

By STEVE DOUGLAS
Associated Press

She has often been described as the Lionel Messi of women’s soccer because of her scoring feats.

Now Ada Hegerberg is looking to accomplish what the Argentinian great finally achieved a few months ago and win a World Cup to sate a largely unfulfilled international career.

A total of three goals across three major international tournaments for Norway doesn’t do justice to one of the greatest scorers in the history of the women’s game. Hegerberg, after all, has netted more goals in the Champions League — the highest stage in women’s soccer at club level — than any player, with 59. She became the record holder at the age of 24.

With Lyon, she’s a six-time Champions League winner, an eight-time French league winner and a six-time French Cup winner. She has a scoring average of more than a goal per game for Lyon, European soccer’s most decorated team.

Oh, and of course, she was the first female winner of the Ballon d’Or in 2018 at an award ceremony in Paris marred by a French DJ asking Hegerberg to twerk.

Yet when it comes to hardware through feats for her national team, Hegerberg’s cupboard is bare.

The closest she came to a trophy for Norway was at her first-ever senior international tournament — the European Championship in 2013 — when her team lost in the final to Germany.

Since then, it’s been a fairly sorry tale for a player who for many has transcended her national team. She has never competed at the Olympics, her only World Cup was in 2015 when Norway exited in the round of 16 and there was a group-stage elimination at the European Championship last year.

Hegerberg would have played in more major tournaments had she not decided to rule herself out of se-

lection for her national team for five years because of what she perceived to be a general disregard for women’s soccer in Norway at the time. The crux of her frustration was the uneven pace of progress and strategy in the women’s game. She was absent until 2022, when she opted to return ahead of that year’s European Championship — coinciding with the arrival of Lise Klaveness, her former Stabæk teammate, as president of the Norwegian soccer federation.

“I was able to have very honest discussions with the federation, firstly through Lise,” she said. “I am very glad to be able to come back with the team and get a new story started.”

A year later, Hegerberg is still attempting to make up for lost time in a Norway uniform — and after a frustrating domestic season, too.

Hegerberg, who spent 21 months out in 2020-21 because of an anterior cruciate ligament injury, was missing for another seven months this season because of an unspecified injury that was not widely reported.

Naturally, she scored a minute after coming off the bench in her comeback game, for Lyon at Montpellier, and ended the season with six goals in nine games in all competitions.

Scoring is never a problem for this most natural of finishers—even at the international level, she has 43 goals in 76 games since making her senior debut for Norway in 2011 at the age of 16.

And neither is making a stand for what she believes in. Only a few months ago, Hegerberg appeared in a video by human rights organization Amnesty, demanding compensation for the families of migrant workers who died while working at the men’s World Cup in Qatar.

“An extremely large responsibility is placed on footballers and it is tough, but that is the reality,” she said in the video. “I know I have a position to show my opinion on it.”



Alessandra Tarantino/AP

Norway’s Ada Hegerberg controls the ball during the Women’s Euro 2022 Group A match against England at Brighton & Hove Community Stadium in Brighton, England, last July.



Alvaro Barrientos/AP

Lyon team captain Wendie Renard celebrates after winning the Women’s Champions League final match against Wolfsburg at the Anoeta stadium in San Sebastian, Spain, on Aug. 30, 2020.

Renard determined to lead France to 1st major trophy

By JEROME PUGMIRE
Associated Press

CLAIREFONTAINE, France — Wendie Renard grew up in a place so remote that locals nicknamed it “The End of the World.”

By the end of the Women’s World Cup, the France captain hopes she’ll be raising aloft the major international trophy that has eluded the women’s national team.

The imposing central defender’s journey starts with a 10,540-mile trek to Australia, where France opens its campaign in Sydney on July 23 against Jamaica.

France’s men have won two World Cups and two European Championships — and reached three other major finals — but Les Bleues are underachievers. The women’s team lost its only World Cup semifinal 12 years ago to the United States.

“We have a lot of quality, but our honors list is blank,” Renard told The Associated Press in an interview at the team’s Clairefontaine training camp outside Paris. “There’s a long, long way to go. But the tougher it is, the better it is at the end.”

Despite boasting a team packed with players from ultra-successful French club side Lyon — the starting lineup for France’s opener at the 2019 World Cup had seven Lyon players — France has also only reached one European Championship semifinal, losing last year to Germany.

“Quite a lot of us have experience at the highest level and we need to use it,” Renard said. “The

hardest thing is saying, ‘I should have done this, I should have done that.’ By then it’s already too late.”

The tournament, co-hosted by New Zealand, kicks off on July 20, which is also when Renard turns 33.

She has played 144 internationals and scored 34 goals for France. With Lyon, Renard has won a record 16 league titles and a record eight Champions League trophies.

She’s long been considered one of the best players in women’s soccer, yet there’s a giant gap in Renard’s international résumé.

Renard has a chance to put that right, which back in February didn’t look like being the case.

Renard said she wouldn’t play at the World Cup after saying she no longer felt able to play for France. That decision came after years of tensions between then-coach Corinne Diacre and senior players, including Renard.

Striker Marie-Antoinette Kotto and forward Kadidiatou Diani also put their international careers on hold until significant changes were made.

Two weeks later, Diacre was fired and Hervé Renard was hired. He won the African Cup of Nations as coach of Zambia and Ivory Coast, and guided Saudi Arabia to an upset win over Argentina at the men’s World Cup last year.

He immediately eased tensions. Renard overturned her decision and 33-year-old midfielder Amandine Henry — who had not played for France for three years under Diacre — was recalled.

“He has an open-mindedness

and he doesn’t judge you. There’s a level of trust. He says things up front, which is very important. It’s honest and to your face,” Renard said about her new coach. “He said from the first day that his door is always open, that he wants our feedback: what we thought about the training session, if there’s anything we could have done more of. He says that we have a project in common.”

Renard, therefore, is among the designated leaders that other players can always approach. The others are striker Eugénie Le Sommer, Henry, Diani and midfielder Grace Geyoro.

When she put her international career on hold, Renard mentioned the need to protect her mental health, which is a priority subject under the new regime.

“The coach spoke about it with us. You have to help each teammate, you can’t leave anyone on the side,” Renard said. “If she’s coming into the dressing room in the morning, I know if she’s feeling well or not, if anything’s weighing on her mind.”

Renard hopes a strong World Cup performance will boost the women’s league back home. Interest waned after France hosted the 2019 edition.

“There was great exposure, there was a huge media impact. But we didn’t manage to surf that wave and we stagnated, or even regressed, whereas other nations made the most of it and structured their leagues,” she said. “We hope we can get the momentum back, all that we lost.”

SPORTS



New home in Dallas
Source: Mavs get Williams from Celtics as part of 3-team trade » **NBA, Page 41**



MARK ZALESKI, ABOVE, AND PHELAN M. EBENHACK, RIGHT/AP

Above: Alex Morgan is about to play in her fourth Women’s World Cup, but this time she’ll do it as one of three first-time mothers on the team. Right: Morgan’s husband, MLS player Servando Carrasco, holds daughter Charlie during a ceremony honoring his wife for her 200th appearance for the national team.

Dual role

Now a mom, Morgan riding Wave into fourth World Cup

BY BERNIE WILSON
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Her night’s work on the pitch finished, Alex Morgan walks into the post-match news conference in her San Diego Wave uniform, barefoot and with her left ankle still taped up, with 3-year-old daughter Charlie in tow.

Morgan veers from soccer superstar to mom and back to soccer superstar.

“Why is my tummy hurting?” Charlie interjects while Morgan is discussing the Women’s World Cup that begins this month in New Zealand and Australia. “I don’t know. Too many snacks,” her mother responds, pushing something out of her daughter’s reach, segueing between topics with the ease of taking a pass and putting the ball into the back of the net.

Motherhood will bring a new element for Morgan’s fourth World Cup appearance. The American star, who is married to MLS player and San Diego-area native Servando Carrasco, gave birth to Charlie on May 7, 2020, 10 months to the day after she and the United States won their second straight World Cup.

“I feel a little more calm going into my fourth one,” Morgan said,

explaining that she knows what it takes to make it all the way to the final match, to take care of the little things and “just enjoy each moment.”

“This is my first World Cup as a mom, so I just want to also just represent mom athletes and the accomplishments and strides we’ve been able to make in women’s soccer. I think it is amazing. I’m really excited for this,” she said.

Morgan and her American teammates will try to become the first country to win the Women’s World Cup three straight times. She’s not only one of the most-experienced veteran leaders, but also one of three first-time moms, along with Julie Ertz and Crystal Dunn.

“It’s pretty special just to have my daughter with me in the environment and with the national team. There’s going to be three moms on the roster, which is great,” Morgan said. “I think that we’ve just made strides in women’s soccer with the support that we’ve gotten from the federation, from our club teams, from coaches and sponsors. So, I think that that all allows us to be able to compete at the highest level.”

Alex Morgan
US forward

“There’s going to be three moms on the roster, which is great.”

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Pitch clock may be helping improve defense » **MLB, Page 43**

