

MLB PLAYOFFS: Kwan makes Guardians go from top **Page 48**

MUSIC: Loretta Lynn's legacy of honesty **Page 28**

GAMES: Mario, Rabbids make successful sequel **Page 15**

EUROPE
& PACIFIC
WEEKEND
EDITION

MOVIES
A month's worth
of scary films
Pages 16-17

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WAR IN UKRAINE

HEIDI LEVINE/For The Washington Post

Ukrainian Maj. Volodymyr Voloshyn watches a drone operator, Arthur, as he communicates with an artillery brigade to direct their fire in the Mykolaiv region in southern Ukraine on Wednesday. Ukrainian forces are tempering their jubilation despite recent gains.

A more strategic Russian retreat signals long fight ahead in Kherson

BY ISABELLE KHURSHUDYAN,
PAUL SONNE AND KAMILA HRABCHUK
The Washington Post

MYKOLAIV REGION, Ukraine — The drone operator ignored the occasional thunder of outgoing artillery in the distance and kept his eyes focused on the computer monitor in front of him, waiting for the burst of smoke to appear. His thumbs pushed the joystick left, then right, before moving to his cellphone screen to report where the artillery should aim next.

Some three miles from Ukraine's southern front line, U.S.-provided M777 howitz-

RELATED

Russian missiles slam into Ukrainian city near nuclear plant
Page 6

ers were pounding the Russian forces who were refusing to yield any more ground.

Another soldier, whose call sign is "Dobry," then informed his comrades in this Ukrainian special forces unit that their

drone wasn't the only one in the sky. He had just been told that a Russian Orlan reconnaissance UAV was headed this way, and if they were spotted, shelling would surely follow. The day before, the field behind this short trench line was littered with rockets. "That was especially for me," Dobry said with a grin.

His commander, Col. Roman Kostenko, now looked concerned. "Should we leave?" he asked, referring to himself and The Washington Post journalists he brought

SEE RETREAT ON PAGE 6

N. Korea escalates tensions

12 warplanes fly near South Korea after launch of two missiles into sea

BY DAVID CHOI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — North Korea flew a dozen warplanes Thursday near the border with South Korea, prompting the South to scramble more than 30 military aircraft in a dramatic escalation after a series of missile tests by the Communist regime.

The highly unusual moves took place hours after the North launched two ballistic missiles from Pyongyang into the East Sea, also known as the Sea of Japan, in the sixth round of tests in the past 12 days.

Following the missile tests, eight North Korean fighter jets and four bombers flew in formation and were believed to have conducted air-to-surface firing drills, South Korea's military told The Associated Press.

South Korea responded by scrambling 30 fighter jets and other military aircraft, the Ministry of National Defense said.

SEE TENSIONS ON PAGE 5



LEE JIN-MAN/AP

File footage of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is seen Thursday at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Pilot sues Southwest after colleague exposes himself

Associated Press
FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — A Southwest Airlines pilot is suing the company, her union and a former colleague who pleaded guilty

last year to dead-bolting the cockpit door during a flight and stripping naked in front of her. Christine Janning alleges that Southwest retaliated by ground-

ing her after she reported Michael Haak to the company and the FBI, that it kept him employed despite an alleged sexual misconduct and that managers disparaged her.

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Change in price	..	+12.0 cents	..	-6.0 cents	Change in price	+7.0 cents	..	+12.0 cents	-5.0 cents
Okinawa	\$3.849	\$4.899	Guam	\$3.859	\$4.449	\$4.789	..
Change in price	+7.0 cents	-6.0 cents	Change in price	+7.0 cents	+10.0 cents	+12.0 cents	..

*DieselEFD **Midgrade

For the week of Oct. 7-13

EXCHANGE RATES		
Military rates		
Euro costs (Oct. 7)	\$0.97	
Dollar buys (Oct. 7)	0.9856	
British pound (Oct. 7)	\$1.10	
Japanese yen (Oct. 7)	141.00	
South Korean won (Oct. 7)	1372.00	
Commercial rates		
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3773	
Britain (Pound)	1.1230	
Canada (Dollar)	1.3699	
China (Yuan)	7.1160	
Denmark (Krone)	7.5690	
Egypt (Pound)	19.6618	
Euro	1.0176	
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8500	
Hungary (Forint)	431.41	
Israel (Shekel)	3.5290	
Japan (Yen)	144.79	
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3099	
Norway (Krone)	10.6248	
Philippines (Peso)	58.81	
Poland (Zloty)	4.95	
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7588	
Singapore (Dollar)	1.4262	
South Korea (Won)	1409.44	
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9881	
Thailand (Baht)	37.39	
Turkey (NewLira)	18.5780	

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

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate6.25

Interest Rates Discount rate3.75

Federal funds market rate3.08

3-month bill3.40

30-year bond3.75

WEATHER OUTLOOK



TODAY

IN STRIPES

Classified 36,37

Comics 34,38,39

Crossword 34,38,39

Opinion 40

Sports 41-48

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EUROPE

CustomerService@stripes.com

+49 (0) 0631.3615.9111

DSN: 314.583.9111

MIDDLE EAST

CustomerService@stripes.com

+49 (0) 0631.3615.9111

DSN: 314.583.9111

PACIFIC

PacificAdvertising@stripes.com

+81 (42) 552.2511

DSN: 315.227.7310

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MILITARY

Troops back general who blasted news host

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

An investigative report that faulted a two-star general for publicly defending female troops following ridicule by a right-wing pundit has opened up the Army to blowback over its commitment to stand up for women in the ranks.

Maj. Gen. Patrick Donahoe, the former commander of the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, Ga., brought “negative publicity” to the Army in connection with his tweets directed at Fox News host Tucker Carlson and others, according to the Army report, which was obtained by Task and Purpose.

The controversy centered on Donahoe’s decision to take issue with Carlson over a March 2021 segment in which the Fox host described the U.S. military as becoming “more feminine” while China’s becomes “more masculine.”

Carlson complained about Pentagon efforts to make military service more appealing to women, such as changes to grooming standards that allow new hairstyles and the introduction of a flight suit for pregnant troops.

Donahoe was quick to respond, posting a video on Twitter in which he reenlisted a female staff sergeant at Fort Benning and wrote “just a reminder that @TuckerCarlson couldn’t be more wrong.” Several other Army leaders made similar remarks on Twitter.

The Army investigation, how-



BRYANT WINE/U.S. Army

Army Maj. Gen. Patrick Donahoe speaks at Clay National Guard Center in Marietta, Ga., on April 22, 2021.

ever, determined that the “national media coverage” that followed from Donahoe’s statements “brought a measurable amount of negative publicity to the Army, enough that (the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs) warned (the Secretary of the Army) of the fallout,” Task and Purpose reported.

The Army’s rebuke of Donahoe, which also included criticism of his public pushback on Twitter over COVID-19 vaccine

mandates in the military, has sparked an outcry in military circles.

On Thursday, the Army was among Twitter’s top trending topics, with many of the 235,000 tweets related to the Donahoe case.

For the Army, the situation comes as the service struggles to attract sufficient numbers of new recruits. Some critics say its failure to back Donahoe in his defense of female service members

could have a chilling effect.

“Army leadership is sending a very clear message: Pleasing gutless demagogues and loud mouthed extremists is more important than showing support for your brothers and sisters in arms,” wrote one popular military Twitter user who goes by Rising 1L Tom.

Another prominent military Twitter personality known as Lethality Jane made a similar observation: “Pretty depressing to con-

sider that the military I’ve spent over a decade of my life serving in is now considering whether to punish a General Officer for stating that my existence does not make a mockery of the Army.”

Thousands of such messages flooded the social media site.

The situation has delayed Donahoe’s planned retirement while the Army investigated. It’s not clear what punishment, if any, he faces.

“Even just the suggestion that the Army would punish MG Donahoe for doing exactly what we should expect of good leaders undermines nearly everything the Army preaches,” wrote Mother of Tanks, another military Twitter user.

But investigators said that Donahoe’s tweets to Carlson “exhibited poor judgment” and that the “subsequent media coverage drew national attention ... and it cast the Army in a negative light,” Task and Purpose reported.

The military has grappled for years with how leaders should engage with the public on social media sites like Twitter.

Donahoe was one of its earliest and most active practitioners. During a panel discussion in 2019 focused on social media use in the Army, Donahoe encouraged soldiers to be engaged.

“The richness of the discussion outweighs the risks,” he said at the time.

vandiver.john@stripes.com
Twitter: @john_vandiver

Poland,US in talks about nuke sharing

The Washington Post

Poland has spoken to the U.S. about sharing atomic weapons, President Andrzej Duda said, a provocative statement that comes as Western nations confront Russia over its invasion of Ukraine.

The U.S. and NATO have publicly stated that they have no plan to deploy nuclear weapons in countries that joined the alliance after the collapse of communism more than three decades ago. A White House official said they were unaware of the issue being raised and referred further questions to Poland’s government.

The Biden administration is seeking to walk a fine between supplying Ukraine with advanced weaponry while avoiding moves that would cause the Kremlin to further escalate the conflict. Poland, NATO’s largest member from the former Warsaw Pact, is one of the most vocal proponents of bolstering the alliance’s eastern

flank.

“The problem, first of all, is that we don’t have nuclear weapons,” Duda said in an interview with the Gazeta Polska newspaper published on Wednesday. “There is always a potential opportunity to participate in nuclear sharing.”

Nuclear sharing can comprise anything from offering escort or reconnaissance jets for a nuclear mission, or offering dual-capable aircraft available for nuclear roles to actually hosting an ally’s nuclear weapons. Allies such as Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands, Italy and Turkey host U.S. nuclear weapons on their soil, according to the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation.

A senior diplomat in Warsaw said Duda’s comments could potentially include any of those activities. The diplomat, who declined to be named because he wasn’t authorized to speak publicly on the matter, said hosting the



MICHAL DYJUK/AP

Polish President Andrzej Duda speaks at Poland’s Power Grid headquarters, June 2 in Konstancin-Jeziorna, Poland.

weapons would be in the security interest of Poland, the region and all of Europe.

The Polish president didn’t specify who he’d spoken with in the U.S. government. Hosting nuclear weapons would defy warnings from President Vladimir Putin that Russia will respond to any expansion of the alliance’s military capabilities in its former backyard.

Sweden, Turkey debate extraditions demands

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — A delegation from aspirant NATO member Sweden met with Turkish officials on Wednesday to discuss Ankara’s demands for the extradition of people it considers to be terrorists, Turkey’s state-run news agency reported.

Turkey had threatened to block Sweden and Finland’s bids to join the 30-member military alliance. It accused the two Nordic countries of ignoring Turkish security concerns, and insisted that they change their stance on Kurdish rebels and other groups that Turkey considers as terrorists. Ankara had also demanded that an arms embargo on Turkey be lifted.

NATO operates by consensus and the Nordic countries’ membership needs Turkey’s approval to go ahead.

Officials from Sweden and Turkey’s justice ministries be-

gan two days of talks to discuss the possible extradition of people with links to outlawed Kurdish groups or the network of an exiled cleric whom Ankara accuses of orchestrating a failed coup in 2016, the Anadolu Agency reported.

Last week, Sweden announced that it would lift an arms embargo it imposed on Ankara in 2019, following Turkey’s military operation against the Kurdish militia known as the YPG in Syria. The move was widely seen as a step aimed at securing Ankara’s approval.

Turkey’s parliament has yet to ratify Sweden and Finland’s NATO membership.

Once-neutral Finland and Sweden are abandoning what in Sweden’s case has been 200 years of military nonalignment, driven to join NATO’s mutual defense pact in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and its continuing war there.

MILITARY

US troops in Japan see COLA fall to zero

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Cost-of-living allowance cuts have left U.S. service members stationed in Japan with hundreds of dollars less to spend each pay period, amid a weak yen and rising prices for off-base goods and services.

Most service members in the country are no longer receiving COLA — a tax-free allowance to help offset the costs of living in expensive areas overseas — following changes announced by the State Department on Oct. 1.

COLA fell to zero this month for troops on Okinawa, home to more than a dozen U.S. bases and the lion's share of the 55,000 service members in Japan; at Yokosuka Naval Base, homeport of the U.S. 7th Fleet about 35 miles south of

Tokyo; and at Yokota Air Base, an airlift hub that serves as headquarters for U.S. Forces Japan.

An online COLA calculator provided by the Defense Department shows that a sergeant stationed at Yokota with six years' service and two dependents would have received more than \$600 in COLA last October. A captain with the same family size and length of service would have gotten more than \$800.

The cut comes as prices rise across Japan because of a weak yen and increased costs for energy, packaging and logistics. State broadcaster NHK reported Sunday that the cost of 6,700 food and beverage items, including processed meats, baby food and alcohol, would go up this month.

Prices of 20,665 items have or will be raised this year with an av-

erage increase of 14%, according to the report.

Gas prices at Army and Air Force Exchange Service stations are also on the rise. A gallon of premium sold for \$4.66 this week, but that's set to increase to \$4.80 on Saturday.

Staff Sgt. Jeriad Wood, 35, a member of the U.S. Air Force Band of the Pacific at Yokota, said he's noticed higher prices for things like gas, meat and dairy products bought locally as well as clothing he buys online.

"We still have to shop on base for some necessities that we can't buy on the Japanese economy," he told Stars and Stripes on Thursday.

The military in March and April surveyed troops about how and where they buy items. The results of the poll, conducted every three years, are used to calculate COLA.

By that time, the allowance had already fallen by 15% to 22% compared to 2021 rates.

COLA amounts can fluctuate as often as twice per month or every pay period, according to Army Maj. Charlie Dietz, a spokesman at the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

"This is done to ensure Service members' purchasing power is adjusted for currency fluctuations as frequently as possible," he told Stars and Stripes in an email Tuesday.

COLA is not a fixed amount and may adjust up or down based on the analysis of new cost-of-living data and/or currency fluctuations, Dietz said.

The dollar has strengthened significantly over the course of the year, soaring to a 24-year high of nearly 146 yen on Sept. 22. A dollar

bought 144.66 Japanese yen on Thursday, up from 111.47 yen a year ago.

"COLA fluctuations should be considered in household budgeting," Dietz said. "If average [U.S.] prices increase at a greater rate than [overseas] prices, Overseas COLA may decrease."

Overseas COLA varies based on duty location, pay grade and number of dependents, he added.

"Because rates vary by geographic location, when a member relocates to another ... area, COLA payments may change based on prices and shopping patterns in the local area," he said. "Members receive Overseas COLA only if the costs at their duty location exceed average [U.S.] costs."

robson.seth@stripes.com
Twitter: @SethRobson1

USAF regains control of its Facebook page after it was hacked

By JONATHAN SNYDER
Stars and Stripes

A hacker took control of the Air Force Officer Training School's official Facebook page this week, adding a profile picture of a man wearing socks with sandals, changing the page's status to "permanently closed" and deleting graduation photos.

Staff for the page — which has 22,000 followers and highlights airmen's progress in an eight-week course for becoming commissioned officers at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala. — regained control Tuesday morning.

"We're back! It's us! THANK YOU for your patience! We're working to get the deleted posts restored as well as 22-09/10's photos up," the page's administrator wrote that morning. "No more socks and sandals though ... sorry."

The footwear of the man in the photo became a hot topic on social media. One commenter pointed out to Reddit's r/AirForce community that the training school had been "hacked by a man wearing socks with thong split sandals." Another commenting on the school's Tuesday post pleaded for admins to "bring back sandal man."

The page is managed by cadres at the schoolhouse, Air University spokesman Philip Berube told Stars and Stripes by phone Wednesday. The training school did not respond to emailed questions that day.

The school's staff consists of full-time active-duty, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard members, including 106 officers, 42 enlisted and nine civilian personnel, as well as seven Air Force Reserve officers, according to the



A screenshot of the Air Force Officer Training School's official Facebook page after it was hacked Monday.

Air Force.

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force JoAnne Bass referenced the hack Wednesday in a Facebook post highlighting the importance

of cyber awareness.

"This is a great reminder to make sure your social media accounts are secured," she wrote, using a #socksand sandals hashtag.

"Glad to see USAF Officer Training School back on their feet."

snyder.jonathan@stripes.com
Twitter: @Jon_E_Snyder

Solomon Islands prime minister rules out China base in his country

Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia — The Solomon Islands prime minister assured Australia on Thursday that he would not "endanger his country" by allowing China to establish a naval base in the South Pacific.

Solomons Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare made his first visit to the Australian capital Canberra since his counterpart Anthony Albanese's center-left Labor Party came to power at elections in May.

"Prime minister, I reiterate

again that Solomon Islands will never be used for foreign military installations or institutions of foreign countries, because this will not be in the interest of Solomon Islands and its people," Sogavare told Albanese in front of reporters before their meeting began in Parliament House.

A bilateral security agreement between China and the Solomons signed early this year raised concerns of a Chinese naval base being established in the South Pacific. China has denied seeking a mil-

itary foothold in the Solomons.

"My government's legacy is to safeguard the future of Solomon Islands and its people, and not to endanger the country and its citizens or the security of any forum country," Sogavare added, referring to the Pacific Islands Forum, a bloc of 18 regional neighbors that includes Australia.

The pair released a joint statement after their meeting rather than hold a customary joint press conference. The leaders "reaffirmed mutual security commit-

ments and the Pacific family first approach to regional peace and security," the statement said.

Australia wants the Solomons to turn to its neighbors to support its security needs rather than China.

Australia already has a bilateral security treaty with the Solomons signed in 2017. It provides a legal basis for the rapid deployment of Australian police, troops and associated civilians in the event of a major security challenge. Australian police have been in the Solomons' capital Honiara since No-

vember to maintain peace after rioting.

Australia had led a force of Pacific Islands police and troops under the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands from 2003 to 2017. It included 2,300 police and troops from 17 nations, invited by the Solomons' government. The deployment successfully ended the conflict that killed 200 people.

In the five years of ethnic and civil unrest before RAMSI arrived, the Solomons was close to becoming a failed state.

MILITARY

Army activates new air defense unit in Germany

By PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

SEMBACH, Germany — The Army activated a new artillery brigade in Germany on Thursday that is focused on protecting U.S. and allied forces from potential aerial threats.

The 52nd Air Defense Artillery Brigade adds to the expanded American military presence in Europe, which was sparked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February and concerns of a potential spillover into NATO territory.

"It's certainly a deterrent knowing there's additional air defense forces activating in Europe because it's in our enemy's calculus when they're planning their next moves," Col. Bruce Bredlow, the brigade's commander, told Stars and Stripes at a ceremony at the Army base in the southwestern German village of Sembach.

President Joe Biden announced the new brigade in June at a NATO

summit in Spain, where the war in Ukraine topped the agenda. But planning for the unit began several years before the conflict, when military leaders identified gaps in U.S. air defense capabilities in Europe, Bredlow said.

The brigade headquarters will provide command and control for all Army air and missile defense forces in the U.S. European Command area of responsibility. It will report to the 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command.

"This strengthens the alliance and makes us all much safer," Brig. Gen. Maurice Barnett, commander of the 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command, said Thursday, adding that the events in Ukraine were a reminder of the importance of air missile defense.

"If your primary assets are obliterated by (tactical ballistic missiles) and cruise missiles, winning becomes increasingly difficult," Barnett said.

Since the unit became a one-star

command in 2019, the role of brigade headquarters has been filled on a rotational basis by Army National Guard air defense brigades from three states.

The new active-duty brigade brings with it more than twice as much manpower as the rotational brigades did, officials said. It will oversee battalions based in Baumholder and Ansbach in Germany, as well as others in Turkey and Israel.

The activation comes after Russian President Vladimir Putin last week announced plans to annex nearly a fifth of Ukraine and hinted at using nuclear weapons if Russia's territorial integrity were threatened.

The Kremlin has tried to frame Russia's adversary in the conflict as NATO rather than Ukraine, in light of the U.S.-led alliance's deliveries of weapons to the country and training of the Ukrainian military.

The U.S. has bolstered air, land,



Col. Bruce Bredlow speaks at Germany's Sembach Kaserne after assuming command of the 52nd Air Defense Artillery Brigade, which was activated Thursday.

maritime, cyber and space capabilities in Europe in response to the Ukraine crises and now has more than 100,000 service members deployed to the Continent, the largest number in nearly two decades and up from about 63,000 in 2013.

Barnett said U.S. air defense capabilities will greatly expand as the new unit grows.

"We will continue to grow here in Europe," Barnett said. "We're not done expanding our air defense capacity. We are not done modernizing our forces here in Germany. Today is an important step, but we are not done."

wellman.phillip@stripes.com
Twitter: @pwwellman

Tensions: N. Korea moves follow US carrier deployment

FROM PAGE 1

Although North Korea has sent military aircraft near the border before, the Yonhap news agency said it was probably the first time so many aircraft had been launched in such a provocative manner.

North Korea's recent missile tests have sharply escalated tension in the Korean Peninsula. The United States, South Korea and Japan have conducted joint exercises in response.

In Thursday's tests, the North's first missile flew roughly 217 miles at a peak altitude of 50 miles at Mach 5 speed, according to ministry estimates. The second flew roughly 497 miles at a peak altitude of 37 miles at Mach 6.

"Consecutive [North Korean] ballistic missile launches are a grave provocative act to harm not only the Korean Peninsula but also international peace and stability ... and we condemn this strongly and urge North Korea to stop it immediately," the ministry's text message said. "Our troops will maintain a firm readiness posture and are tracking and monitoring relevant moves in preparation for further [North Korean] provocations while working closely together with the U.S."

Thursday's launch was also announced in a tweet from the Japanese Prime Minister's Office. A separate message posted on the



South Korean Defense Ministry/AP
In this image taken from video, South Korean Air Force's F15K takes off Tuesday in South Korea.

office's English-language Twitter account said the projectile had "likely flown over Japan," but that tweet was soon deleted.

The country's defense minister, Yasukazu Hamada, told reporters that Japan immediately protested through the North's embassy in Beijing, strongly condemning the act.

"We will continue working on drastically strengthening our defense power while examining every possibility, including the capability to attack enemy bases," he said.

North Korea's foreign ministry said in a statement Thursday that the elevated tensions were caused by the Ronald Reagan Carrier

Strike Group's presence.

The launch comes one day after South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff announced that the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and its strike group would redeploy near South Korea's eastern coast following anti-submarine drills with the South Korean and Japanese navies.

The Joint Chiefs cited the "highly unusual" timing of North Korea's provocations, which included an intermediate-range ballistic missile test on Tuesday.

The IRBM, suspected by experts to be a Hwasong-12 that can theoretically reach the U.S. territory of Guam, flew over Japan's Aomori prefecture and prompted rare take-shelter warnings from the Japanese government and U.S. military. Aomori is home to Misawa Air Base, headquarters of the 35th Fighter Wing.

The launch, which marked the first time in five years that a North Korean missile flew over Japan, was described by Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno as an "extremely problematic act."

U.S. and South Korean jets on Tuesday afternoon dropped two Joint Direct Attack Munition, or JDAM, bombs on an island in response to the IRBM test. The next morning, the allies conducted a live-fire drill using the Army Tactical Missile System and launched several surface-to-surface mis-

siles toward the East Sea.

One of the missiles fired by South Korea failed and crashed inside of a military base. No injuries were reported, according to the South Korean military.

U.N. Assistant-Secretary-General Khaled Khiari on Wednesday condemned North Korea's launches and said it violated the group's Security Council resolutions.

"This launch risks triggering a significant escalation of tensions in the region and beyond," he said, according to a press release on Wednesday. "It is of serious concern that [North Korea] has again disregarded any consideration for international flight or maritime safety."

U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Linda Thomas-Greenfield said in a tweet Thursday that the Security Council was concluding a meeting on North Korea's launches when it heard of the latest test.

"Stop the reckless, provocative, and escalatory behavior and return to dialogue," she wrote.

North Korea has launched roughly 40 missiles so far this year, a record. The regime is also suspected by the U.S. and South Korea of having prepared to conduct a seventh nuclear test, its first since 2017.

Stars and Stripes reporter Hana Kusumoto and The Associated Press contributed to this report.
choi.david@stripes.com
Twitter: @choiboy

US conducts raid in Syria against ISIS

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

American troops launched an early morning raid against a militant leader in northeast Syria, U.S. Central Command said Thursday.

The attack targeted a senior Islamic State official, CENTCOM spokesman Col. Joseph Buccino said in an email, offering no further details.

The raid took place in Hassakeh province, Al Jazeera reported, citing interviews with villagers who said that three U.S. helicopters landed in the area after midnight.

Syrian state television said the raid killed one person, the Al Jazeera report said.

The man who was targeted had coordinated ISIS sleeper cells, Reuters reported Thursday.

About 1,000 American troops remain in Syria to train, advise and assist the Syrian Democratic Forces, primarily to ensure the defeat of ISIS, officials have said.

ISIS detainees and their families have remained in prisons in Syria since 2019, when the group suffered defeats that resulted in the loss of the large territories they once controlled.

lawrence.jp@stripes.com

EUROPE

Russian missiles hit city near nuclear plant

By Adam Schreck
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — Russia launched missiles that hit apartment buildings in the southern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia, a local official said Thursday, killing three people and wounding at least 12 in a region that houses Europe’s biggest nuclear power plant and which Moscow illegally annexed.

The two strikes, the first before dawn and another in the morning, damaged more than 40 buildings, local authorities said. The attacks came just hours after Ukraine’s president announced that the country’s military had retaken three more villages in another of

the four regions annexed by Russia, the latest battlefield reversal for Moscow.

The Zaporizhzhia region’s governor, Oleksandr Starukh wrote on Telegram that many people were rescued from the multistory buildings, including a 3-year-old girl who was taken to a hospital for treatment.

Photos provided by the Emergency Service of Ukraine showed rescuers scrambling through rubble in the wreckage of a building looking for survivors.

Starukh said of Russia: “The terrorist country has shown its beastly face by converting defense weapons into offensive weapons

and killing peacefully sleeping people.”

Zaporizhzhia is one of the regions of Ukraine that Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed as Russian territory in violation of international laws and is home to a nuclear plant that is under Russian occupation. The city of the same name remains under Ukrainian control.

The head of the U.N.’s atomic energy watchdog is expected to visit Kyiv this week to discuss the situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant after Putin signed a decree Wednesday declaring that Russia was taking over the six-reactor facility.

Ukraine’s Foreign Ministry called the move a criminal act and said it considered Putin’s decree “null and void.” The state nuclear operator, Energoatom, said it would continue to operate the plant.

Rafael Grossi, the director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, plans to discuss efforts to set up a secure protection zone around the facility, which has been damaged during Russia’s war in Ukraine and seen staff, including its director, abducted by Russian troops.

Grossi plans to travel to Moscow for talks with Russian officials after his stop in Ukraine.

In his nightly video address, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the Ukrainian army recaptured three more villages in the Kherson region. Novovoskrysenske, Novohryhorivka, and Petropavlivka are all situated northeast of Kherson.

Ukrainian forces are seizing back villages in Kherson in humiliating battlefield defeats for Russian forces that have badly dented the image of a powerful Russian military and added to the tensions surrounding an ill-planned mobilization. They have also fueled fighting among Kremlin insiders and left Putin increasingly cornered.

Retreat: Ukrainians digging in for long fight

FROM PAGE 1

with him. “Too late,” answered Arthur, the drone operator, still not taking his eyes off the screen in front of him.

A day after Ukrainian forces reclaimed more territory in the southern Kherson and Mykolaiv regions, the jubilation of a breakthrough at this part of the front line was tempered by anxiety over an expected hard fight ahead.

Kyiv’s military here has pushed the Russians back by dozens of miles in some spots after struggling to advance for months. But after Ukraine’s remarkably successful counteroffensive in the northeast Kharkiv region, soldiers stationed near the southern front cautioned that the situation remains tense. Kherson is too important, politically and militarily, for the Russians to retreat as messily as in Kharkiv, they said.

“This is not Kharkiv,” Kostenko said. “There, they left all of their ammunition and vehicles and fled. Here, we don’t even have many trophies. They just retreated from the fight, took everything with them to their new position and are digging in anew.”

What the Ukrainians have observed is an orderly Russian pull-back from some towns and villages in what could be preparation to tighten the front line around the city of Kherson, the lone regional capital Moscow’s forces have captured since their invasion began last February, and the neighboring town of Nova Kakhovka. It is home to a hydroelectric power plant that also controls a vital water supply to Crimea, which Russia illegally annexed in 2014. Seizing the plant and restoring the water flow, which Ukraine had cut off, was one of Russia’s top military

objectives in the early days of the invasion.

The Ukrainian advances come as the Russian force finds itself in an increasingly precarious position in and around Kherson. The city is situated on the only slice of territory the Russian military controls west of the Dnieper River. The land is flat, making it particularly difficult for Russia to defend.

The slice of occupied land is connected to the rest of Russian-controlled territory by two main crossings over the Dnieper — the Antonovsky Bridge in Kherson, which is badly damaged, and the Kakhovka hydroelectric dam, which is about 45 miles to the east and remains passable.

Russian forces risk getting cut off in Kherson — surrounded by Ukrainian forces on three sides and the river on the fourth — if the Ukrainians manage to advance close enough to the river to make it impassable.

“If the Ukrainian military is able to get artillery within range of the main bridges and river crossings, then the Russian position in general may become untenable,” said Michael Kofman, a military analyst at Virginia-based research group CNA.

Cautious military strategy would call for retreating over the river rather than bearing the risk of getting surrounded or besieged in Kherson. But the Russians are likely to fight to hold Kherson because it is the capital of a region that Russian President Vladimir Putin claims to have annexed.

The city and its environs would also serve as a helpful bridgehead on the western side of the river for the Russians, should they manage to reconstitute their combat power and go on the offensive seeking to capture the port cities of Myko-



HEIDI LEVINE/For The Washington Post

The remains of a Russian rocket lean against a shed Wednesday at a Ukrainian special forces base in the Mykolaiv region of Ukraine.

laiv and Odesa.

“We think it unlikely the Russian leadership would sanction a full pullout from Kherson for political reasons,” said a Western official who insisted on anonymity to brief reporters about sensitive security information. “So this situation in the south could become increasingly messy with, potentially, a more desperate Russian force with backs to the river.”

“It won’t be an easy rush through unconstrained territory,” the official added. “They will have a challenge there.”

So far, the Ukrainians have made the most progress pushing the Russians back northeast of Kherson. How fast the Russian front might collapse depends on whether the Russians have set up echelon defenses to fall back on between the front and the city.

Unlike in Kharkiv, where local militiamen and Russian national guardsmen were primarily manning a front that fell quickly, Russia has put more seasoned forces

— paratroopers and marines — in and around Kherson. They are tougher adversaries, but even those units now seem disjointed due to heavy casualties.

Capt. Andriy Pidlisnyy said his Ukrainian military unit in the Mykolaiv region recently captured a Russian prisoner who explained Moscow’s manpower problems like this: In the prisoner’s three-man tank crew, all three were from different units within Russia’s forces.

The prisoner, a paratrooper, was the driver. The commander, was a mercenary from the Wagner paramilitary outfit. And the gunner was mobilized from the occupied Luhansk region, which is under the control of Kremlin proxies.

“If even at the tank level they have such a hodgepodge from different units, then at the level where there is a company, battalion and brigade, it’s clear that there can be no normal coordination,” Pidlisnyy said.

Ukraine is now looking to take advantage of a key transition period for Russia, before the reinforcements from Putin’s recent mobilization arrive at the front. Near the recently liberated settlement of Davydiv Brid, there was a flurry of activity on the road Wednesday as Ukrainian forces moved pontoon bridges, self-propelled howitzers, and armored vehicles. Kostenko’s drone unit prepared homemade explosives in recycled soda cans to drop on fields around Davydiv Brid — an inventive demining tactic.

The Ukrainian counteroffensive, pressing on two fronts, is now moving so fast that even soldiers on the ground have trouble keeping up.

“Is Snihurivka ours already?” Kostenko asked his deputy, referring to a town in the Mykolaiv region that has been a stronghold for Russian forces since the early days of the war.

“Almost,” Maj. Volodymyr Voloshyn answered.

NATION

More Americans apply for jobless benefits

By MATT OTT
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More Americans filed for unemployment benefits last week, but the labor market remains strong even in the face of persistent inflation and a slowing overall U.S. economy.

Jobless claims for the week ending Oct. 1 rose by 29,000 to 219,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday. Last week's number was revised down by 3,000 to 190,000.

The four-week moving average inched up by 250 to 206,500..

The total number of Americans collecting unemployment aid rose by 15,000 to 1.36 million for the week ending Sept. 24.

Applications for jobless aid generally reflect layoffs, which have remained historically low since the initial purge of more than 20 million jobs at the start of the coronavirus pandemic in the spring of 2020.

Recent employment data has indicated that the job market may be cooling slightly, an important consideration for the Federal Reserve when it meets early next month to decide whether or not to raise its main lending rate again.

On Tuesday, the government reported that the number of available jobs in the U.S. plummeted in August compared with July as businesses grow less desperate for workers, a trend that could put a dent in chron-

ically high inflation.

Payroll processor ADP said Wednesday that businesses added 208,000 jobs in September, ahead of analysts' estimates of 200,000, but below the 250,000 that Wall Street expects the government to report in September jobs data coming Friday. The ADP survey does not always mirror the government's tally.

The Federal Reserve is aiming to bring down inflation by rapidly raising its key interest rate, which is currently in a range of 3% to 3.25%. A little more than six months ago, that rate was near zero. The sharp rate hikes have pushed mortgage rates up to 15-year highs, and made other borrowing cos-

tier. The Fed hopes that higher interest rates will slow borrowing and spending and push inflation closer to its traditional 2% target.

Fed officials are increasingly warning that the unemployment rate will likely have to rise as part of their fight against rising prices.

If it remains at or near its current 3.7%, most economists believe it would likely mean more rate hikes from the Fed.

Last week, the government reported that the U.S. economy shrank for the second straight quarter, but so far, that has done little to cool the job market, part of the Fed's inflation-fighting strategy.

Bodies of kidnapped family found in field

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A baby girl, her parents and uncle were found dead in a central California orchard two days after they were kidnapped at gunpoint from their business, police said.

“Our worst fears have been confirmed,” Merced County Sheriff Vern Warnke said at a Wednesday night news conference.

Warnke did not release any information about how and when police believe they were killed. He said the victims were close to each other when found by a farm worker in a remote area.

The grim announcement came after authorities earlier Wednesday released surveillance video of a man kidnapping 8-month-old Aroohi Dheri; her mother Jasleen Kaur, 27; father Jasdeep Singh, 36; and uncle Amandeep Singh, 39, on Monday.

Authorities said they were taken by a convicted robber who tried to kill himself a day after the kidnappings. Jesus Salgado, 48, was in critical condition when taken into custody but has been talking to police, Warnke said.

No motive for the kidnapping has been established, he said.

“There’s no words right now to describe the anger I feel and the senselessness of this incident,” Warnke said. “I said it earlier: There’s a special place in hell for this guy.”

Investigators, including crime lab technicians from the California Department of Justice, would be processing the crime scene through the night, Warnke said.

The four family members were taken from their business in Merced, a city of 86,000 people about 125 miles southeast of San Francisco in the San Joaquin Valley, California’s agricultural heartland.

Relatives of Salgado contacted authorities reporting that he had admitted to them he was involved with the kidnapping, Warnke told

KFSN-TV on Tuesday.

Efforts to reach Salgado’s family were unsuccessful Wednesday.

The video released earlier Wednesday showed the suspect first walking by the property before talking to one of the men.

Later, it shows him leading the men, who had their hands zip-tied behind their backs, into the

back seat of Amandeep Singh’s pickup truck.

The suspect then went back to the trailer that served as the business office and led Jasleen Kaur, who was carrying her baby in her arms, out and into the truck before the suspect then drove away.

Family members said nothing was stolen from the trucking company but that their relatives were all wearing jewelry.

Warnke had said that after the kidnappings, an ATM card belonging to one of the victims was used in Atwater, about 9 miles north of Merced.

Warnke said the kidnapper made no ransom demands.

“We have a whole family wiped out and for what? We don’t know yet,” he said.

Relatives of the victims had been notified of the deaths, the sheriff said.

“We’re hoping that they can now at least have some kind of closure,” Warnke said, adding: “It’s not the closure we were hoping for; it’s not the closure they were hoping for.”

Family members had earlier asked anyone who owns a convenience store or gas station in the area to check their surveillance cameras for images of the suspect or those missing. They said they were worried the baby wasn’t being fed because the family didn’t have any baby food with them at



Salgado



AP

Police said the bodies of from left, Jasleen Kaur, Jasdeep Singh and their daughter Aroohi Dheri, as well as relative Amandeep Singh, were found in a remote area in California on Wednesday, two days after they were kidnapped at gunpoint from their trucking company office.

the time of the kidnapping.

“Please help us out, come forward, so my family comes home safe,” Sukhdeep Singh, a brother of the victims, said, his voice breaking.

Salgado was previously convicted of first-degree robbery with the use of a firearm in Merced County, as well as attempted false imprisonment and an attempt to pre-

vent or dissuade a victim or witness. He was sentenced to 11 years in state prison in that case, according to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

He was released from prison in 2015 and discharged from parole three years later. He also has a conviction for possession of a controlled substance, the corrections agency said.

Court to again review ‘Dreamers’ program

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — A federal appeals court Wednesday ordered a lower court review of Biden administration revisions to a program preventing the deportation of hundreds of thousands of immigrants brought into the United States as children.

The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said a federal district judge in Texas should take another look at the program following the revisions adopted in August. The ruling leaves the future of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals up in the air, with current DACA recipients protected — for now — but new applicants barred.

President Joe Biden said in a statement that he was “disappointed” in the ruling, noting, “The court’s stay provides a temporary reprieve for DACA recipients but one thing remains clear: the lives of Dreamers remain in limbo.” People protected by DACA are commonly referred to as “Dreamers,” based on never-passed proposals in Congress called the DREAM Act.

The advocacy group Families Belong Together said in a statement, “It is beyond time for Congress and Biden to act on their promises.”

DACA was adopted by former President Barack Obama’s administration and has had a complicated ride through federal court challenges.

Texas-based U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen last year declared DACA illegal. He found that the program had not been subjected to public notice and comment periods required under the federal Administrative Procedures Act. But he left the program temporarily intact for those already benefiting from it, pending the appeal.

NATION

Records show Fetterman kept light work schedule

By Marc Levy
and Brian Slodysko
Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — In his campaign for a crucial U.S. Senate seat, Democrat John Fetterman takes credit for reinventing Pennsylvania’s lieutenant governor’s office, transforming it from a political pit stop into a “bully pulpit” from which he’s advanced progressive causes.

Records from Fetterman’s four years in office, however, offer a different portrait of his time in the \$179,000-a-year elected job. They show Fetterman typically kept a light work schedule and was often absent from state business, including presiding over the state Senate, which is one of his chief duties, according to an Associated Press review of his daily calendars and attendance records.

The review found that Fetterman’s daily schedule was blank during roughly one-third of workdays from January 2019, when he

first took office, to May of this year, when he suffered a serious stroke. Even on days where his schedule showed he was active, a typical work day for Fetterman lasted between four and five hours, the records show.

The findings, which focus entirely on his tenure before his stroke, are notable because Fetterman points to his time as lieutenant governor as a leading credential in his Senate campaign. As his bid for a seat that could swing the Senate majority becomes more competitive, some Democrats privately worry that Fetterman is proving a lackluster candidate and losing ground in the campaign.

Fetterman’s campaign didn’t explain the gaps in his schedule. In a statement, his spokesman, Joe Calvello, said that “this report is a misleading and inaccurate reflection of John’s actual schedule that totally fails to capture the breadth of his official work and his accom-

plishments.”

Fetterman didn’t respond to interview requests, but he said in a statement that he’s “shown I can have an impact beyond the prescribed power of a given office.”

“As lieutenant governor,” he said, “my record of showing up and shaking up this office has transformed the Board of Pardons, saved Pennsylvania millions in taxpayer dollars, and grown support in our state for defending LGBTQIA+ rights, weed legalization, union workers, and raising the minimum wage.”

The job of lieutenant governor is typically a stopover for politicians seeking higher office and often comes with limited duties. In Pennsylvania, the primary legal responsibilities for a lieutenant governor are presiding over Senate sessions, chairing the Board of Pardons and heading up the governor’s emergency management committee.

There’s no suggestion that Fet-



MARC LEVY/AP

Pennsylvania Lt. Gov. John Fetterman, right, is running for a U.S. Senate seat after serving with Gov. Tom Wolf since 2019.

terman’s absences prevented the state from conducting important business, and his formal calendars may not capture the full range of his activities.

Fetterman’s defenders say the pandemic sapped opportunities for him to take a more active role and note that Wolf did not call on him to take on a bigger workload.

In a statement, Wolf said Fetterman’s office has “limited responsibilities” but called him “a dedicated public servant who has supported my priorities over the past four years.”

Report: Mom of Walker’s child says he paid for her abortion

Associated Press

ATLANTA — A woman who said Herschel Walker paid for her 2009 abortion is the mother of one of his children, according to a new report Wednesday, undercutting the Georgia Republican Senate candidate’s claims that he didn’t know who she was.

The Daily Beast, which first reported Monday on the abortion, said it had agreed not to reveal details of the woman’s identity to protect her privacy. But Walker, who has expressed support for a national abortion ban without exceptions, vehemently denied the story, calling the abortion allegation a “flat-out lie,” threatening a lawsuit against the outlet he has yet to file and saying he had no idea who the woman might be.

So on Wednesday night, The Daily Beast revealed that the woman — who was not named — was so well known to Walker that, according to her, they conceived another child years after the abortion. She decided to continue on with the later pregnancy, though she noted that Walker, as he had during the earlier pregnancy, expressed that it wasn’t a convenient time for him, the outlet reported.

The Daily Beast said the Walker campaign declined to comment on Wednesday’s story.

Walker was scheduled to make a public appearance Thursday morning in Wadley, Ga., as part of his Unite Georgia Bus Stop tour across the state.

The latest reporting ensures that abortion will continue to be a central issue in the Georgia race, one of the most competitive Senate contests in the country. Walker and Democratic Sen. Raphael Warnock are locked in a tight contest that is key to the balance of power in the U.S. Senate.

It adds to a series of stories about the football legend’s past that have shaken Walker’s campaign. Walker has been accused of repeatedly threatening his ex-wife’s life, exaggerating claims of financial success and overstating his role in a for-profit program that is alleged to have preyed upon veterans and service members while defrauding the government.

Earlier this year, after a story by The Daily Beast, Walker acknowledged the existence of three children he had not previously talked about publicly.

The woman told The Daily



Walker

Beast for Wednesday’s story that Walker’s denial of the abortion was somewhat surprising to her.

“Sure, I was stunned, but I guess it also doesn’t shock me, that maybe there are just so many of us that he truly doesn’t remember,” the woman said. “But then again, if he really forgot about it, that says something, too.”

In The Daily Beast report published late Monday, the news outlet said it reviewed a receipt showing her payment for the procedure, along with a get-well card from Walker and her bank deposit records showing the image of a \$700 personal check from Walker dated five days after the abortion receipt.

During the Republican Senate primary, Walker openly backed a national ban on abortions with no exceptions for cases involving rape, incest or a woman’s health being at risk — particularly notable at a time when the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court precedent had been overturned and Democrats in Congress had been discussing codifying abortion rights into federal law.

“I’m for life,” Walker has said repeatedly as he campaigns. When asked about whether he’d allow for any exceptions, he has said there are “no excuses” for the procedure.

Liz Cheney: Arizona GOP candidates risk democracy

Associated Press

PHOENIX — Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney on Wednesday said the Republican candidates for Arizona governor and secretary of state pose a huge risk for democracy because both say they will refuse to certify election results if they don’t like the results.

Cheney, a prominent critic of former President Donald Trump and one of just 10 U.S. House Republicans who voted to impeach him after the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, made the comments at an event organized by the McCain Institute at Arizona State University.

Cheney also leveled broadsides as what she said was a growing “Putin wing” of the Republican Party who want America to withdraw from the world stage and refuse to defend freedom in other countries.

She has spent a lot of time thinking about Arizona and the upcoming elections here.

“In Arizona today you have a candidate for governor in Kari Lake, you have a candidate for Secretary of State in Mark Finchem, both of whom have said — this isn’t a surprise, it’s not a secret — they both said that they will only honor the results of an election if they agree with it,” Cheney told the audience filled with ASU students.

She said both looked at Trump’s 2020 loss in Arizona, and both know that it was carried out follow-

ing state law, and that there were counts, recounts, audits and court challenges that all went against Trump.

“They’ve looked at all of that, the law, the facts and the rulings, the courts, and they’ve said it doesn’t matter to them,” Cheney said. “And if you care about democracy, and you care about the survival of our republic, then you need to understand, we all have to understand, that we cannot give people power who have told us that they will not honor elections.”

Cheney, who is vice chair of the House committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on Congress and was trounced in Wyoming’s Republican primary as a result of her refusal to back Trump, spoke of what she believes is a wider threat to the nation from a Republican Party that is now fully in Trump’s control.

“The first thing that we have to understand is that we’ve never been where we are,” Cheney said. “We’ve never been in a phase, a place where we’re facing this kind of a threat. And that’s because we’re facing a threat from a former president who is attempting to unravel the republic.”



Cheney

NATION

Analysis: At least 66 US clinics have halted abortions

Associated Press

At least 66 clinics in 15 states have stopped providing abortions since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, according to an analysis released Thursday.

The number of clinics providing abortions in the 15 states dropped from 79 before the June 24 decision to 13 as of Oct. 2, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a research group that supports abortion rights.

All 13 of the remaining clinics are in Georgia. The other states have no providers offering abortions, though some of their clinics are offering care other than abortions.

Nationally, there were more than 800 abortion clinics in 2020, the institute said.

“Much more research will need

to be conducted to grasp the full extent of the chaos, confusion and harm that the U.S. Supreme Court has unleashed on people needing abortions, but the picture that is starting to emerge should alarm anyone who supports reproductive freedom and the right to bodily autonomy,” said Rachel Jones, a Guttmacher researcher.

The new report does not include data on hospitals and physician offices that provided abortion and stopped them after the court ruling, but Jones noted that clinics provide most U.S. abortions, including procedures and dispensing abortion medication. Recent Guttmacher data show just over half of U.S. abortions are done with medication.

States without abortion providers are concentrated in the South. In some of those places, many

women seeking abortions would need to travel so far that the journey will be impossible, Jones said.

Dr. Jeanne Corwin, who provides abortions in Indiana and Ohio, said clinic closures “will result in immeasurable harm to women’s physical health, mental health and financial health.”

In several states, access is under threat because bans were put on hold only temporarily by court injunctions. These include Indiana, Ohio and South Carolina, the analysis found.

“It is precarious from a medical standpoint and certainly from a business standpoint,” said Dr. Katie McHugh, an OB-GYN who provides abortions in Indiana. “It’s difficult to keep the doors open and the lights on when you don’t know if you’re going to be a felon tomorrow.”

Resident sues wood products company over Calif. wildfire

AP/Report for America

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A California man who lost his home in a wildfire last month has sued a wood products company at the center of the blaze, accusing it of failing to address the risk of a fire starting on its property.

The fire started near the Roseburg Forest Products Co. mill on Sept. 2 in the small town of Weed near the California-Oregon border. It eventually burned more than six square miles, destroyed 118 buildings and killed two people. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection is still investigating the cause of the fire.

The mill produces its own electricity from wood remnants, a process that produces hot ash that is then sprayed with water from a machine.

The company says it is investigating whether that machine, which it says is supplied by a third-party, failed to cool the ash enough, which could have started the fire.

Tuesday, lawyers for 61-year-old Robert Davies sued the company, saying it did not make sure the machine was adequately designed, inspected and maintained — making the shed where the ashes were stored “a tinderbox awaiting a spark.”

Instead of fixing the machine, the lawsuit says the company relied on its employees to put out fires, resulting in “a number of unreported fires at the facility.”

“It begs the question, what was done from a safety standpoint to be able to address these fires that had occurred by using the correct technology and systems that would not rely solely on humans to be able to intervene,” Frank Pitre, one of Davies’ lawyers, said during a press conference on Wednesday.

A spokesperson for the company declined to comment.

The company has set aside \$50 million to support victims of the fire, and so far it has compensated more than 300 people.

That included Davies, who received \$5,000. The lawsuit says this wasn’t enough to compensate him for the loss of his home of over 30 years and everything inside it.

Pitre said he doesn’t believe the fire was a freak accident, saying multiple fires occurred on the site leading up to the blaze, known as the Mill Fire, which began on Sept. 2.

He added the area was notorious for high winds during certain parts of the year.

Terry Anderlini, another lawyer representing Davies, said Wednesday that the fire should never have happened.

“We’re here to bring this forward and get to the truth of the matter,” Anderlini said.

Warmer temperatures and drier conditions as a result of climate change have sped up the cadence of wildfires in Western states, scientists say. Wildfires

have devastated communities in California, which, in the last five years, has seen the largest and most destructive fires in history.

The Mill Fire started less than a quarter mile from the Weed City Fire Department and burned for 11 days.

It prompted Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom to declare a state of emergency in Siskiyou County and resulted in federal grant money to fight the blaze and support residents.

Davies, who previously worked for an engineering company that contracted with the U.S. military, said he was in his home with his 25-year-old son when the fire started.

After hearing helicopters flying from above, Davies walked outside and saw smoke coming over a hill.

Within less than an hour, the smoke reached his house, he said.

Davies and his son left their home with laundry baskets and clothes.

Among the items left behind in Davies’ house were Disney collectibles he planned to will to his 36-year-old daughter.

Davies said his family moved to the house in the mountains at least in part to avoid crime in larger cities.

“In a way, it was kind of like a fairytale,” Davies said. “We never had to worry. And that’s all been stripped from, not only myself, but my children.”



DAVID ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Baker Jack Phillips, owner of Masterpiece Cakeshop in Lakewood, Colo., manages his shop in 2018 after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that his refusal to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple because of his religious beliefs did not violate Colorado's anti-discrimination law.

Baker fighting ruling over gender transition cake

Associated Press

DENVER — The Colorado baker who won a partial Supreme Court victory after refusing on religious grounds to make a gay couple’s wedding cake a decade ago is challenging a separate ruling he violated the state’s anti-discrimination law by refusing to make a cake celebrating a gender transition.

A lawyer for Jack Phillips on Wednesday urged Colorado’s appeals court — largely on procedural grounds — to overturn last year’s ruling in a lawsuit brought by a transgender woman.

The woman, Autumn Scardina, called Phillips’ suburban Denver cake shop in 2017 requesting a birthday cake that had blue frosting on the outside and was pink inside to celebrate her gender transition. At trial last year, Phillips, a Christian, testified he did not think someone could change genders and he would not celebrate “somebody who thinks that they can.”

Jake Warner, an attorney representing Phillips from the conservative Christian legal advocacy group Alliance Defending Freedom, said the ruling was wrong.

He said requiring Phillips to create a cake with a message contrary to his religious beliefs amounts to forcing him to say something he does not believe, violating his right to free speech.

Judge Timothy Schutz noted



Scardina

Phillips’ wife initially told Scardina the bakery could make the cake before Scardina volunteered that the design was meant to celebrate her gender transition.

One of Scardina’s lawyers, John McHugh, said Scardina did not ask the shop to endorse her idea, just sell her a cake that they would sell anyone else. He said whether or not Phillips sells a cake to someone cannot depend on what the client tells him when he is making the cake.

Both Scardina and Phillips spoke outside the court of larger issues involved. Scardina said the case was about the “dignity of LGBTQ Americans and Coloradans and the rule of law.”

Phillips said he was fighting for the rights of all Americans to live according to their consciences “without fear of punishment” by government.

In 2018, the Supreme Court ruled that the Colorado Civil Rights Commission had acted with anti-religious bias in enforcing the anti-discrimination law against Phillips after he refused to bake a cake celebrating the wedding of Charlie Craig and Dave Mullins in 2012. The justices called the commission unfairly dismissive of Phillips’ religious beliefs.

The high court did not rule then on the larger issue of whether a business can invoke religious objections to refuse service to LGBTQ people.

But it will get another chance when it hears a different case in coming months challenging Colorado’s anti-discrimination law.

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NATION

Russian launches from US for first time in 20 years

BY MARCIA DUNN
Associated Press
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — For the first time in 20 years, a Russian cosmonaut rocketed from the U.S. on Wednesday, launching to the International Space Station alongside NASA and Japanese astronauts despite tensions over the war in Ukraine.

“We’re so glad to do it together,” said Anna Kikina, Russia’s lone female cosmonaut, offering thanks in both English and Russian. “Spasibo!”

She was among the three newcomers on the flight, alongside Marine Col. Nicole Mann, the first Native American woman to orbit the world, and Navy Capt. Josh Cassada. They were joined by Japan Space Agency’s Koichi Wakata, who is making his fifth spaceflight. “Awesome!” radioed Mann. “That was a smooth ride uphill. You’ve got three rookies who are pretty happy to be floating in space right now.”

They’re due to arrive at the space station Thursday, 29 hours after departing from NASA’s Kennedy Space Center, and won’t be back on Earth until March. They’re replacing a U.S.-Italian crew that arrived in April.

Their SpaceX flight was delayed

by Hurricane Ian, which devastated parts of the state last week. The weather was ideal as the Falcon rocket blasted into a brilliant noon-time sky.

“I hope with this launch we will brighten up the skies over Florida a little bit for everyone,” Wakata said before the flight.

Kikina is the Russian Space Agency’s exchange for NASA’s Frank Rubio, who launched to the space station two weeks ago from Kazakhstan aboard a Soyuz rocket. He flew up with two cosmonauts.

The space agencies agreed over the summer to swap seats on their flights in order to ensure a continuous U.S. and Russian presence aboard the 260-mile-high outpost. The barter was authorized even as global hostilities mounted over Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in late February. The next crew exchange is in the spring.

In the meantime, Russia remains committed to the space station through at least 2024, Russia space official Sergei Krikalev assured reporters after liftoff. Russia wants to build its own station in orbit later this decade, but he said that will take time and until it’s ready, it makes sense to keep working with NASA.



SpaceX Crew5 Russian cosmonaut Anna Kikina reacts as she heads to Launch Pad 39-A at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., on Wednesday.



Barges idle while waiting for passage in the Mississippi River near Vicksburg, Miss., on Tuesday.

Barges grounded by low water halt Mississippi River traffic

BY JIM SALTER
Associated Press
The unusually low water level in the lower Mississippi River is causing barges to get stuck in mud and sand, disrupting river travel for shippers, recreational boaters and even passengers on a cruise line.

Lack of rainfall in recent weeks has left the Mississippi River approaching record low levels in some areas from Missouri south through Louisiana. The U.S. Coast Guard said at least eight “groundings” of barges have been reported in the past week, despite low-water restrictions on barge loads.

One of the groundings happened Friday between Louisiana and Mississippi, near Lake Providence, La. It halted river traffic in both directions for days “to clear the grounded barges from the channel and to deepen the channel via dredging to prevent future groundings,” U.S. Army Corps of Engineers spokesperson Sabrina Dalton said in an email.

As a result, dozens of tows and barges were lined up in both directions, waiting to get by. The stoppage also brought a halt to a

Viking cruise ship with about 350 passengers on board, said R. Thomas Berner, a Penn State professor emeritus of journalism and American studies, and one of the passengers.

The Viking ship was originally supposed to launch from New Orleans on Saturday, but the water there was so low that the launch was moved to Baton Rouge, La., Berner said.

By Tuesday, the ship was halted near Vicksburg, Miss., due to the backup caused by the grounding. It wasn’t near a dock so passengers couldn’t leave. The ship’s crew kept people entertained as much as possible with music, games and other activities.

“Some of us are taking naps,” Berner joked.

The stuck barges were freed midday Tuesday. Berner said the cruise ship restarted Tuesday night, but the restart didn’t last long: Viking told passengers in a letter Wednesday that the rest of the scheduled two-week trip was being called off, citing low water problems causing additional closures. Viking made arrangements to get passengers home and the

letter said they would get a full refund.

Nearly all of the Mississippi River basin, from Minnesota through Louisiana, has seen below-normal rainfall since late August. The basin from St. Louis south has been largely dry for three months, according to the National Weather Service.

The timing is bad because barges are busy carrying recently harvested corn and soybeans up and down the river.

Lucy Fletcher of the agricultural retailer AGRIServices of Brunswick, who serves on the board for the St. Louis-based trade association Inland Rivers, Ports & Terminals, said navigation woes on the Mississippi, Missouri and other major rivers have some shippers looking at other means of transportation.

“Can they divert to rail?” Fletcher asked. “Well, there’s not an abundance of rail availability. And usually people are booking their transportation for fall early in the season. So if they haven’t booked that freight already, you’re going to see people in dire straits.”

Kevin Spacey faces civil trial over sexual assault claims

Associated Press
NEW YORK — Kevin Spacey was in court Thursday to defend himself in a lawsuit filed by Anthony Rapp, the actor who in 2017 made the first in a string of sexual misconduct allegations that left the “House of Cards” star’s theater and filmmaking career in tatters.

Neither actor spoke to reporters as they arrived at a federal

courthouse in New York City for the start of the trial, which is expected to last less than two weeks.

The lawsuit is over an alleged encounter between the two men in 1986, when Rapp was a blossoming child actor and Spacey, then 26, was having a breakout moment on Broadway.

Rapp, who was 14 at the time, said the older actor invited him to

a party at his Manhattan apartment, then tried to seduce him in a bedroom after the other guests had left.

He said a drunk, swaying Spacey swept him up in his arms, like a groom carrying a bride, then laid him on a bed and climbed on top of him. Rapp said he quickly wriggled away and left, then kept quiet about what happened for three decades as both actors saw

their careers take off.

When Rapp told his story to BuzzFeed in 2017 as the #MeToo movement began to grip Hollywood, Spacey said he had no recollection of the incident, “but if I did behave then as he describes, I owe him the sincerest apology for what would have been deeply inappropriate drunken behavior.”

Since then, though, Spacey’s legal team has said the accusa-

tion is false. Rapp never attended the party, they said. And even if it had happened as Rapp described, they have argued, it wouldn’t constitute a sexual advance.

Jury selection for the trial begins Thursday, with opening statements to follow. Rapp wants compensation for mental and emotional suffering, medical expenses and loss of work.

WORLD

Dozens killed in rampage at Thai day care

Associated Press

BANGKOK — A former policeman facing a drug charge burst into a day care center in northeastern Thailand on Thursday, killing dozens of preschoolers and teachers before shooting more people as he fled in the deadliest rampage in the nation's history.

The assailant, who was fired from the force earlier this year, took his own life after killing his wife and child at home.

A witness said staff at the day care locked the door when they saw the assailant approaching with a gun, but he shot his way in. At least 36 people were killed in the attack in one of the poorest parts of Thailand,

according to police spokesman Archayon Kraithong.

"The teacher who died, she had a child in her arms," the witness, whose name wasn't given, told Thailand's Kom Chad Luek television. "I didn't think he would kill children, but he shot at the door and shot right through it."

A video taken by a first responder arriving at the scene of the single-story day care in the rural town of Nongbua Lamphu showed rescuers rushing in to the building past the shattered glass front door, with drops of blood visible on the ground.

In footage posted online after the attack, frantic family members could be heard weeping outside the

building, and one image showed the floor of a room smeared with blood where sleeping mats were scattered. Pictures of the alphabet and other colorful decorations adorned the walls.

Police identified the suspect as 34-year-old former police officer Panya Kamrap. Police Maj. Gen. Paisal Luesomboon told PPTV in an interview that he was fired from the force earlier this year because of the drug charge.

In a Facebook posting, Thai police chief Gen. Dumrongsak Kittiprapas said the man, who had been a sergeant, was due in court on Friday for a hearing in the case involving methamphetamine possession.



MUNGKORN SRIBOONREUNG RESCUE GROUP/AP

A distraught woman is comforted outside the site of an attack at a day care center Thursday in the town of Nongbua Lamphu, Thailand.

Annie Ernaux awarded Nobel Prize in literature

Associated Press

STOCKHOLM — French author Annie Ernaux, who has fearlessly mined her own biography to explore life in France since the 1940s, won this year's Nobel Prize in literature Thursday for work that illuminates murky corners of memory, family and society.

Ernaux's books probe deeply personal experiences and feelings — love, sex, abortion, shame — within a society split by gender and class divisions. The Swedish Academy said Ernaux, 82, was recognized for "the courage and clinical acuity" of books rooted in her background in a working-class family in the Normandy region of northwest France.

Anders Olsson, chairman of the Nobel literature committee, said Ernaux is "an extremely honest writer who is not afraid to confront the hard truths."

"She writes about things that no one else writes about, for instance her abortion, her jealousy, her experiences as an abandoned lover and so forth. I mean, really hard experiences," he told The Associated Press after the award announcement in Stockholm.



Ernaux

"And she gives words for these experiences that are very simple and striking. They are short books, but they are really moving."

One of France's most-garlanded authors and a prominent feminist voice, Ernaux said she was happy to have won the prize, which carries a cash award of 10 million Swedish kronor (nearly \$900,000) — but "not bowled over."

"I am very happy, I am proud. Voila, that's all," Ernaux said in brief remarks to journalists outside her home in Cergy, a town west of Paris that she has written about.

French President Emmanuel Macron tweeted: "Annie Ernaux has been writing for 50 years the novel of the collective and intimate memory of our country. Her voice is that of women's freedom, and the century's forgotten ones."

While Macron praised Ernaux for her Nobel, she has been unsparing with him. A supporter of left-wing causes for social justice, she has poured scorn on Macron's background in banking and said his first term as president failed to advance the cause of French women.

Ernaux is the first female French Nobel literature winner and just the 17th woman among the 119 Nobel literature laureates.

Nord Stream leaks caused by detonations

Bloomberg News

Detonations caused the recent ruptures of Russia's Nord Stream gas pipelines, with the evidence pointing to a deliberate act, according to Swedish investigators.

The completed preliminary investigation has "strengthened the suspicions of serious sabotage," the Swedish Security Service said in a statement on Thursday. Swedish investigators didn't give any indication of how the detonations occurred or who might be responsible.

Officials are analyzing evidence

collected at the site, which is located just outside the country's territorial waters, to see "whether someone can be served with suspicion and later prosecuted," Swedish Public Prosecutor Mats Ljungqvist said.

Two leaks in the pipelines, which cross the Baltic Sea to Germany, were disclosed in Sweden's exclusive economic area last week. Two other leaks are located in Denmark's zone, prompting investigations and increased security across the region's key energy infrastructure.

Denmark police are conducting

an investigation in its own exclusive economic zone.

The incident has sparked concerns that Russia may be responsible and could stage surreptitious attacks on vital energy links to trigger price increases as winter approaches. Several countries, including Germany, have already called the pipeline damage "sabotage," and Finland noted last week that only a state actor could be capable of acts on such a scale.

The Kremlin has denied it was responsible for the Nord Stream damage.

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WEEKEND



Mario + Rabbids
sequel a winner
Video games, Page 15

NIGHTS OF FRIGHTS

Gobble up this scream-worthy list of 31 terrifying titles
and Halloween treats from the past 31 years

Movies, Pages 16-17



iStock

WEEKEND: GADGETS & TECHNOLOGY



JEENAH MOON/Bloomberg

Vehicles in Manhattan take advantage of one of the borough’s 320 publicly accessible charging locations.

Gas-station deforestation

Manhattan’s EV-charging sites now outnumber gas stations 10 to 1

BY DAVID R BAKER
AND HADRIANA LOWENKRON
Bloomberg

Charging an electric car in Manhattan takes a little work — but it’s already much easier than finding a gas station.

The borough has about 320 publicly accessible charging locations, according to data from the U.S. Department of Energy, compared with just 29 remaining gas stations, according to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. In other words, Manhattan’s EV-charging sites now outnumber its gas stations more than 10 to one. Gas stations still dominate citywide — 697 across all five boroughs, versus about 520 charging sites — but there, too, the chargers are catching up.

“I don’t think you need to go far up the electric-vehicle adoption curve to see gas-station deforestation,” says Pasquale Romano, chief executive officer of ChargePoint Holdings, the country’s largest EV-charging company. “It’s a question of when.”

The most immediate reason for Manhattan’s gas-station scarcity has nothing to do with EVs. Land on the island is simply too valuable to waste on a business that’s minimally profitable and needs a convenience store or car wash to survive. One by one, the borough’s gas stations have been bulldozed to make way for condos and offices — a dynamic that’s been playing out for years in compact, pricey San Francisco, which now has 92 gas stations, according to the California Energy Commission, versus 139 EV charging sites.

But as New York City officials push to deploy more EV chargers across all five boroughs, Manhattan’s numbers will only grow more lopsided. And the location of those chargers illustrates a fundamental change that electric cars will bring: Future drivers can expect to do the bulk of their refueling at home or at work, not at a station.

A significant number of Manhattan’s public charging stations sit in parking garages, usually with several chargers at each site. Many sites have Tesla chargers that are designed strictly for that company’s cars (although other EVs can use Tesla’s lower-powered “destination” chargers with an adapter). All but a handful of the borough’s public chargers are “level 2” devices that take several hours to top off a car battery, rather than speedier “DC fast” chargers.

New York officials are eager for more curbside options — a city website extolling the benefits of curbside charging lists just 35 such locations in all five boroughs — but for now, locating a charger can take a little planning. Depending on the garage, chargers are either self-serve or valet, and some will give monthly customers priority access, while others are first-come, first-serve. Prices vary depending on the garage: Some offer a flat rate such as \$20 for a charge, in addition to the garage’s regular parking fee. Others levy an hourly charging fee — \$3 an hour, for example, or whatever fee is assessed by charger operators such as Blink Charging — in addition to the garage’s regular parking price. Still others only charge for the parking and give away the electricity as a perk. A recent weekday survey of six garages found most of the charging spots filled, and one broken charger.

Sherry Boschert of Lebanon, N.H., used the PlugShare app to find a refueling spot for her Tesla on a recent visit to the Upper West Side. She chose a valet garage a block from her hotel. All Boschert, 66, had to do was hand over the key fob and pay the regular parking fee — the electricity came free.

“Once you’re off of gasoline and you don’t have to go to those stinky, dirty, crowded gasoline stations, you don’t want to go back,” says Boschert, a long-time EV advocate. “And it costs a lot less.”

New York drivers haven’t exactly rushed to ditch gasoline. Fully electric cars and plug-in hybrids account for 8.9% of new passenger vehicles in the city this year, according to research firm Atlas Public Policy. That’s up from 6.6% last year but still well behind Los Angeles, where 13.8% of new cars this year run on electricity. It’s an issue for New York City officials, who hope to fight climate change by having 400,000 EVs on city streets by 2030 and 1.6 million by 2050, up from 24,000 now.

Even if Manhattan’s gas stations have been done in primarily by real estate prices, ChargePoint’s Romano says electric cars will put more pressure on gas station owners, particularly those dependent on selling fast food and car washes. Eventually, “range anxiety” — the fear of an EV running out of charge on the road — will be more applicable to owners of gas-powered vehicles.

“If no one’s visiting for gas, that means no one’s going to the convenience store,” Romano says. “It starts to slide, and it doesn’t take much to flip that business upside down.”

Streamer-friendly device wins for simple setup, great price

BY GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

Finding the right computer accessory — one that’s simple to set up, works correctly and does what you want it to do — isn’t always as easy as it seems.

IOGEAR’s new UpStream Game Capture Adapter with Party Chat for 4K streamers is that, and it costs less than its competitors. I’m not a gamer, so I enlisted my gamer friend for testing. His review was, “5 stars and especially for the price.”

The adapter is designed for streaming gamers using PS5 and Xbox to other platforms and social media. My friendly gamer stressed the ease of the setup on a PC, essentially a plug-and-play setup, assuming you have the additional hardware (gaming console, headphones, computer, etc.).

The Party Chat, which is something significant to gamers, was an area that got high praise for its simplicity and not having to add another piece of hardware.

The portable adapter is about the size of a deck of cards (1.7-by-0.9-by-0.66 inches) with a USB-C port, a pair of 3.5mm audio ports for a headset and a console gamepad, and an LED power indicator on the front. HDMI ports (output and input) are on the back.

Among the specifications supplied by IOGEAR for the UVC-based driver, the adapter lists support for 4K @30Hz, 1440p @60Hz, 1080p @120Hz capture, and 4K @60Hz HDR input and passthrough. It also supports up to 1440p @144Hz and 1080p @240Hz passthrough. Part Chat recording for game consoles is done without extra wires or adapters.

The computer system requirements are Windows 10 with UVC support or a Mac running OS X 10.2 or later with UVC support. A single USB-C to A cable is in-

cluded for connecting to an open port on your computer and bus-powered to the adapter. An HDMI and 3.5mm audio cable are also included; although there’s no volume control on the adapter, that’s easy to solve in other ways.

Online: iogear.com

Bonaok’s multifunctional **G50 karaoke microphone** takes road trips, happy hours and most other social events to a new level.

The handheld audio system is a portable karaoke machine with a microphone and a pair of 26-watt high-fidelity Bluetooth (5.0) speakers. They are built with an EQ chip and DSP technology for clear sound with adjusted treble and bass.

Using it is easy and is guaranteed hours of fun. The company around me might not be having as much fun as I am, but overall, it is a great system.

The Bonaok karaoke microphone can be connected to car speakers through the FM tuner on specific frequencies for road trips.

And if you want to sing along in duet mode, you’ll need another Bonaok karaoke microphone, and then you can use the duet function. With both mics on, double-click the power button on one of them, and they will be paired.

The Bonaok karaoke microphone is portable (5.43-by-3.94-by-12.4 inches) and comes with a hard travel case. Inside the karaoke microphone is a rechargeable multi-protect battery, which can be quickly charged with the USB port and included cables.

All the controls are easy to access on the speaker’s side, including indicators for volume, Bluetooth/FM frequency display, connections and power.

A battery power indicator is near the bottom of the microphone handle.

Online: bonaok.com; \$110.99



IOGEAR/TNS

The UpStream Game Capture Adapter is the size of a deck of cards.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

Mario + Rabbids is back

Sparks of Hope improves on Kingdom Battle’s combat system and its level design

By GIESON CACHO
Bay Area News Group

Mario + Rabbids: Kingdom Battle was one of those games that I never wanted to end. The surprisingly fantastic title from Ubisoft Milan and Ubisoft Paris put a whimsical and flexible bent on a strategy genre that was stubbornly rigid and punishing.

It was a breath of fresh air that adeptly combined the chaos sown by the Rabbids and the smart gameplay of Mario games into a project that worked cohesively on all fronts. Every encounter could be approached in different ways using novel combinations of characters and strategies.



For the sequel, Mario + Rabbids: Sparks of Hope, I wouldn't have blamed the teams for

wanting to keep the same mechanics while broadening the level and scenario design. The formula they came up with was straightforward, and had plenty of avenues to explore. Thankfully, the Ubisoft developers went in a different direction.

They kept many of the same concepts from the original. Combo of attacks is still there. Players can switch out among three team members at any time so they can layer movement and attacks. Players can dash to hurt enemies and run to an ally for a Team Jump to reach longer distances.

A more visceral game

The differences lie in the details. The developers removed the grid system and now give players free rein to move around within a character's set parameters. They can run however they want in that defined space, and they'll have one dash and one Team Jump to use along with two action points. The big caveat for this freedom is that an attack will end any chance of movement.

This new range of movement adds a more visceral element to Sparks of Hope as players no longer have to point and click different elements to see how their turn will go. They can tilt the controller sticks and see their characters scramble across the screen.

That dynamism flows to other elements of the campaign. Players will recognize more foes from the Mushroom Kingdom. Goombas will soldier forward and the best way for Mario and company to eliminate



Nintendo photos

Like in the original Mario + Rabbids game, players can switch out among three team members (from a total of nine heroes) at any time so they can layer movement and attacks.

them is to dash at them in a straight line. (Don't do what I did initially and try to fire at each individual one. That's a waste of a turn.)

Players will also find Bob-ombs that they can knock down with a dash and pick up to toss at foes. Players have to do it quickly because they will explode if left alone too long. This again creates a new element that adds a dash of real-time mechanics to the turn-based gameplay.

Changing levels and enemies

Another part of this equation comes in the form of level design: Sparks of Hope has levels that are less static and ones that are more likely to change. A switch brings up a new section of a stage that players will have to account for on the fly. Portals will whisk in new enemies to catch players off guard. The stages will keep players on their toes as Cursa (the new Big Bad of this entry) is spreading its Darkness energy around the galaxy, and Mario and company will have to find a way to clean it up and stop her.

These surprises amp up the difficulty slightly, and that means it's best for newcomers to have experience with the original game before jumping into this one. Sparks of Hope doesn't do as great a job teaching players the mechanics as the original.

The other big change comes in the characters and construction of the teams. The sequel gives Mario's crew and the Rabbids more defined roles. Mario is the all-rounder with an overwatch type technique that lets him strike at enemies as they move around the battlefield. He also wields two blasters. On the other hand, Rabbid Mario is a brawler that needs to be up close to attack. His technique is called the Counter Blow and allows him to attack enemies that hit him up close.

The wild card in all this are the Sparks, which are a combination of Rabbids and Lumas. They each have their own distinct abilities that augment a character. Because players can give a character up to two Sparks, they create more strategic depth as some will mesh better with the more defined roles of the characters.

The Sparks give an elemental boost to weapons or allow characters to be stealthy and remain undetected during ambushes.



In Mario + Rabbids: Sparks of Hope, the characters have more defined roles. Mario, for example, has an overwatch technique that lets him strike at enemies as they move around the battlefield. He also can wield two blasters.



Mario + Rabbids: Sparks of Hope levels are less static and more likely to change than the levels in Kingdom Battlefield. Portals and switches help keep players on their toes.

They can be powered up by feeding them Star Bits that enemies drop when defeated, improving their passive powerups such as damage boosts or physical protection.

When used with a teammate's special ability, Sparks open up more paths for damaging combos. For example, players can give Pyrostar to Luigi in order to burn enemies with his Sharpshooter bow. If players set Mario's Hero Sight ability beforehand, the scorched enemy could

run around and trigger Mario's overwatch ability, knocking the foe off the map.

With plenty of Lumas to pair with heroes, players will have more combinations than ever to test out. It's just the tip of the iceberg for Sparks of Hope, which is already shaping up to a strategy-game fan's dream that arrives on the Nintendo Switch on Oct. 20.

Platform: Nintendo Switch
Online: [ubisoft.com/en-us/game/mario-rabbids/sparks-of-hope](https://www.ubisoft.com/en-us/game/mario-rabbids/sparks-of-hope)

WEEKEND: MOVIES

A month's worth of monsters

A list of 31 key horror movies from the past 31 years worth watching

BY ADAM GRAHAM
The Detroit News

The air is crispy, the leaves are turning and jack-o'-lanterns are starting to show up on front porches. October has arrived, kiddos. Which means horror movie season is officially here. It's the best time of the year to sit back with a scary movie, or a whole lot of them, the jumpier the better. But without checking off the tried-and-true same-olds — "Halloween," "A Nightmare on Elm Street," etc. — we wanted to do a list of horror movies with some strict parameters: one defining horror movie per year for each of the last 31 years. One for each day of the month. Since we're a week into October, feel free to make it a truly spooky one by watching one film per night with a few weekends of double features. Some years are stronger than others, and some favorites didn't make the cut ("Cabin Fever," we are truly sorry!), but what follows is a very worthy and diverse list of three decades of killer movies.

'The Silence of the Lambs' (1991)

Hello, Clarice. The only best picture winner on this list — because it's the only horror movie to ever win top honors at the Oscars — Jonathan Demme's serial killer classic is such a prestigious affair that some don't consider it a horror movie at all. But it most definitely is one, and the fact that it's still giving people the willies all these years later is a testament to that. To see it once is to never forget it. Available on Paramount+.

'Candyman' (1992)

Look, it's probably a safe bet that nothing's going to happen if you say his name into a mirror five times, but who's willing to take the risk? "Candyman" spawned a couple of sequels as well as a somewhat muddled 2021 follow-up, but in this case it's best to stick with the original, which follows the urban legend of a spirit who kills anyone who speaks his name five times into a mirror, and which made Tony Todd a horror movie legend. Available on Peacock.

'The Nightmare Before Christmas' (1993)

"Horror" may be a stretch here, but it's definitely a Halloween movie, and it's long been considered a seasonal rite of passage. It follows Jack Skellington, the "Pumpkin King" of Halloween Town, who throws elaborate Halloween celebrations which are rendered beautifully in director Henry Selick's stop-motion animation. When people talk about celebrating Halloween on Christmas (or living like Jack and Sally), this is their reference point. Available on Disney+.

'The Crow' (1994)

We try not to talk about Devil's Night in Detroit anymore, but it was immortalized on screen in Alex Proyas' adaptation of the popular comic book, which follows a



DIMENSION FILMS/The Weinstein Company

Neve Campbell stars in the "Scream" horror franchise, which rewrote the rules for scary movies as soon as the first one came out in 1996.

murdered musician who comes back to life to avenge the death of his bride-to-be. Star Brandon Lee (son of Bruce) was accidentally killed during the film's production, which has only added to the lore surrounding the film, a mystique which is all its own. Available on Paramount+.

'Demon Knight' (1995)

Back in the '90s, HBO's "Tales from the Crypt" was a powerful enough brand that horror titles were released under its banner. "Demon Knight" was the first ("Bordello of Blood" would follow), and it traces the Collector (Billy Zane), who wants to initiate a world-ending apocalypse by attaining an ancient key from a hardened ex-soldier (William Sadler). It's campy, bloody fun, bookended by appearances by the Crypt Keeper himself. Available on Peacock.

'Scream' (1996)

The one that rewrote all the rules going forward. Wes Craven's "Scream" acknowledged all the slasher movie clichés that everyone already knew, but by putting them up on screen and playing them out through characters that had grown up seeing all the same movies the audience had, it created a through-the-looking-glass world where horror movies became self-aware. Beyond that, it stands on its own as a damn good horror movie. Available on Paramount+.

'Event Horizon' (1997)

"In space, no one can hear you scream." That was the tagline for 1979's "Alien," but it also applies to this slice of sci-fi horror insanity, about a spaceship that goes missing under mysterious conditions and eventually turns into something that resembles "The Shining" at zero gravity. Sam Neill returned to the "Jurassic Park" franchise earlier this year, but this is the one horror movie fans remember him for, and are still spooked out by. Available on Paramount+.

'Blade' (1998)

In the '90s, there was no Marvel Cinematic Universe. But there was "Blade," an adaptation of the Marvel comic, which follows the world's coolest vampire hunter, played by Wesley Snipes at his most badass. "Blade" is a throwback to when comic book movies weren't such serious business, and didn't have to prop up the entirety of Hollywood's bottom line. It's a gloriously bloody romp, with Stephen Dorff having a ball in the villain role. Available for rental.

'The Blair Witch Project' (1999)

You kinda had to be there, when the hype and the marketing had people believing what they were watching was real. We were so naive! But beyond the buzz, "The Blair Witch Project" is an important piece of the Hollywood puzzle, pioneering the "found footage" genre that became

a new mode of storytelling and a fresh way to mess with people's heads. And it's still pretty scary. Available on Amazon Prime Video, HBO Max, Hulu, Peacock and Paramount+.

'Final Destination' (2000)

It's like the board game "Mouse Trap" but in horror movie form, where one small action leads to another and suddenly someone is being impaled. (It's probably not what Rube Goldberg had in mind with his machines, but it's what we got.) "Final Destination" led to a series of sequels, best known for their elaborate death sequences (the car accident in "Final Destination 2" is a series high) and the creepy presence of Tony Todd. This one is how it all began. Available on Starz.

'Jeepers Creepers' (2001)

Freddy, Jason and Michael Myers were all running out of gas once the '00s got here, and it was time for some fresh blood in the horror game. Enter the Creeper, a demonic winged creature who pops up every 23rd spring to feed on humans for 23 days. Um, OK? "Jeepers Creepers" spawned a handful of follow-ups — including last month's "Jeepers Creepers: Reborn" — but ultimately never threatened the legacies of Freddy, Jason or Mr. Myers. Available for rental.

'The Ring' (2002)

The legend of a cursed videotape (remember VCRs?) flipped fans inside out when "The Ring" became a sensation upon its arrival 20 years ago. Starring Naomi Watts and Martin Henderson, "The Ring" traced the story of a mysterious tape that would kill whomever watched it seven days later. A remake of a Japanese horror title, it caused a wave of J-horror remakes, including "The Grudge," which entered the chat two years later. Available on Paramount+ and Shudder.

'House of 1000 Corpses' (2003)

Rob Zombie's debut film is his entire brain spilled onto the screen, and he pays homage to monster movies, slashers, haunted houses, the 1950s, cross-cuts, tourist traps, demented clowns, the 1960s, Slim Whitman, the 1970s, the very concept of evil and his wife, Sheri Moon Zombie. He'd go on to create the leaner, meaner and much more disturbing "The Devil's Rejects," but that movie removes all the campy fun he built in his original "House." Available on HBO Max.

'Saw' (2004)

Before the series became shorthand for dreary torture porn, the original "Saw" presented a rather ingenious concept: Two men awaken to find themselves chained to pipes inside a dingy basement, and the only way to free

SEE MONSTERS ON PAGE 17

WEEKEND: MOVIES

Monsters: List includes several franchise favorites

FROM PAGE 16

themselves involves a saw, and it's not quite as easy as cutting the chain. The series is still going — "Saw 10," yes, 10, lands next year — but for a clever good time, the original stands on its own, and still holds up. Available for rental.

'The Descent' (2005)

Anyone with a fear of enclosed spaces need not apply. "The Descent" follows a group of women on a spelunking adventure where they traverse some intensely tight spaces; it's enough to rack your nerves and trigger your claustrophobia fears, and that's before the cave-dwelling troll monsters even show up. A scary movie that is on the short list of movies that are really, truly scary. Available on Amazon Prime Video and Hulu.

'Slither' (2006)

James Gunn would later bring his love of nostalgia and his twisted sense of humor to the mega-budget "Guardians of the Galaxy" and "Suicide Squad" franchises, but his debut outing follows an alien parasite that infects a South Carolina town, and it plays out as a sicko homage to B-movie gore with Gunn willfully, gleefully pushing the limits of good taste. With Nathan Fillion, Elizabeth Banks and Michael Rooker. Available on Peacock.

'Paranormal Activity' (2007)

Picking up where "The Blair Witch Project" left off, "Paranormal Activity" also utilized low-budget visuals and smart marketing to trick people into thinking what they were watching was real. It worked, and a slew of sequels followed, but the domestic horror of the original, with its security cam-style presentation, best captured the fear that something strange and unexplained was happening inside your house. Available on Paramount+, Amazon Prime Video and Epix.

'The Strangers' (2008)

A couple is away for the weekend when they receive a knock on the door and someone asking if Tamra is home. Neither of their names is Tamra. So begins this terrifying nightmare, with a trio of masked crazies toying with the houseguests for no reason in particular, but simply because they can. It's their lack of motivation that makes this one so frightening, and the idea that horror could be lurking in the darkness, just because. Available for rental.

'Drag Me to Hell' (2009)

After cranking out three "Spider-Man" films (and setting the course for Hollywood for the next two decades), Sam Raimi went back to his "Evil Dead" roots and made an all-killer, no-filler horror ride that moves like a speed demon and never looks back. Alison Lohman is put through hell as a loan officer who denies an elderly woman an extension on her mortgage and pays the price, and Raimi proves that no one does horror quite like him. Available on Peacock.

'Insidious' (2010)

Director James Wan ("Saw") helms this supernatural haunted house thriller that led to three sequels, as well a fourth, due next year. Three years later, Wan re-teamed with his "Insidious" star Patrick



UNITED ARTISTS, ZUMA PRESS/TNS

"Jeepers Creepers," released in 2001, brought fresh blood to the horror genre.

Wilson and kicked off "The Conjuring" and its affiliated universe, which has spawned eight films. All horror roads lead through Wan, and "Insidious" set the template for much of what horror would look like for the next 10-plus years. Available on Netflix and Hulu.

'The Cabin in the Woods' (2011)

Like "Scream" before it, "The Cabin in the Woods" knows that horror viewers have seen it all before. So writer-director Drew Goddard (who co-wrote the screenplay with his "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" boss, Joss Whedon) offers up a house of mirrors and a commentary on horror movies and the buttons they push inside of us. It's a clever (maybe too clever?) journey that dines on its big "gotcha!" moment. Available for rental.

'Sinister' (2012)

Star Ethan Hawke and director Scott Derrickson, who also teamed up for this year's "The Black Phone," fortified their relationship on this twisted horror tale, which contains some certifiably disturbing scares in the form of old Super 8 movies. Hawke plays an author who goes too far in his quest to write his masterpiece, moving his family into a home where a horrific tragedy occurred years earlier, disrupting a pagan deity in the process. Whoops. Available on Peacock.

'The Purge' (2013)

What if for one night a year, all crime was legal? It's a simple premise, and it's rich enough that it has (so far) led to five films and a TV series. Ethan Hawke, again, leads the cast as a man trying to keep his family safe while chaos rages outdoors, in the government-sanctioned Purge, a way for citizens to blow off some steam by partaking in a single night of anarchy. The premise is better than the execution, but at least it's got great masks. Available on HBO Max.

'It Follows' (2014)

Writer-director David Robert Mitchell shot this unnerving horror thriller in and around Detroit. Maika Monroe plays a teenager who is beset with a curse after she has sex, and it's on her to pass it on to someone else, solidifying the long-standing ties between sex and death in horror



TNS

Tim Burton's 1993 "The Nightmare Before Christmas" is a more child-friendly addition to the Halloween movie list.

movies in an inventive, malevolent way. Available on Netflix.

'The Witch' (2015)

This folk-horror tale, the debut film from writer-director Robert Eggers ("The Lighthouse," "The Northman"), played the film festival circuit in 2015 before going wide in 2016. It marks the feature film debut of Anya Taylor-Joy, who stars as the daughter of settlers in New England in the 1630s whose baby is stolen by a witch. It strikes a wicked spell, all the more impressive by Eggers' commitment to period language, mood and detail. Available on Paramount+.

'Don't Breathe' (2016)

Detroit, again. A couple of reckless kids break into the wrong home when they try to rob a blind Gulf War veteran (Stephen Lang) expecting an easy score. Not so fast. Director Fede Alvarez, who also directed 2013's "Evil Dead" remake, ratchets up the scares of this fast-paced thrill ride, which sets its pieces in motion and lets them rip. Skip the 2021 sequel, but the original packs a serious punch. Available for rental.

'Get Out' (2017)

Jordan Peele's "social horror" experi-

ment nearly joined "Silence of the Lambs" in Best Picture winner territory (it was nominated, but lost to "The Shape of Water"), but it went on to make history in other ways. Chris (Daniel Kaluuya) goes off to visit the parents of his girlfriend (Allison Williams) for the weekend, and things go south from there. "Get Out" cleverly uses a horror playbook for social commentary, and makes its point loud and clear. Available for rental.

'Hereditary' (2018)

The great Toni Collette shines in writer-director Ari Aster's grim horror fable, about a family dealing with the unsettling secrets of their ancestry. Well, maybe shines isn't the right word; it's more like Collette rattles the screen and everything around her to their very foundations. "Hereditary" is the kind of movie that imprints itself on viewers' brains after one viewing, and going back for seconds is not for the faint of heart. Available on Paramount+ and Showtime.

'Doctor Sleep' (2019)

This sequel to "The Shining" stars Ewan McGregor as Danny Torrance, all grown up, and still dealing with that trip to the Overlook Hotel all those years ago. Based on Stephen King's 2013 novel, "Doctor Sleep" doesn't sound like a great idea, but writer-director Mike Flanagan — a King regular — fashions the film into a tale of trauma that stands on its own, right up until it plays a few too many of "The Shining's" greatest hits. Still, worth a watch. Available for rental.

'The Invisible Man' (2020)

How to update a horror classic for modern times and jaded audiences? Follow this blueprint. Writer-director Leigh Whannell — a key player in the "Saw" and "Insidious" franchises — brings the story into the #MeToo present, with themes of domestic and psychological abuse, alongside tech gurus run amok. Elisabeth Moss gives an intense, emotionally wrought performance that gives the movie the grounding in reality it needs. See it. Available for rental.

'Malignant' (2021)

James Wan, again, breaks off from his multiple film universes with this one-off that is truly bananas and needs to be seen to be believed. Annabelle Wallis is a pregnant woman who suffers intense physical abuse at the hands of her husband, and the pain from her mysterious past comes back to manifest itself in a wild way. Stick this one out, because you don't know where it's headed, and once you find out, you'll be glad you did. Available on HBO Max.

And as a bonus, here's one that's new this year:

'X' (2022)

A crew sets out to make a porno movie on a Texas ranch in the 1970s, and how were they to know the property owners are a bit, shall we say, off? Ti West pays homage to horror standbys such as "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre" in this campy, crazy thrill ride, which stars Mia Goth in a double role which she built on in "Pearl," a prequel to "X" which is currently in theaters and makes for a glorious double-feature companion. Available for rental.

WEEKEND: MOVIE REVIEWS

As bad as the smell of burning dollar bills

‘Amsterdam’ wastes incredible talent on dull story set prior to WWII

BY MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

The stars appear one after the other — a banquet of talent, a glut of inventiveness — and yet nothing clicks.

Welcome to “Amsterdam,” writer and director David O. Russell’s answer to the question: Can some of the top actors in the world manage to elevate poor material? The answer is a dull no. It becomes a slaughterhouse.

Just look at this lead cast: Christian Bale, Margot Robbie and John David Washington. Russell wastes them with pointless dialogue and tedious scenes.

Then imagine a second tier of roles with Alessandro Nivola, Anya Taylor-Joy, Chris Rock, Michael Shannon, Mike Myers, Taylor Swift, Zoe Saldana, Rami Malek and Robert De Niro. All are left powerless. They are in a charisma-removal machine.

Bale and Washington play World War I veterans and fierce friends — soldiers who crossed the racial divide in France — and Robbie plays an inventive nurse who treats them. This bonded trio stumbles onto a plot to overthrow the U.S. government while being framed for murder in 1930s New York.

It uses these fictional characters to explore a real event in the run-up to World War II in which a cabal of wealthy Amer-



20TH CENTURY STUDIOS/AP

Clockwise from left, Anya Taylor-Joy, Rami Malek, Christian Bale, Robert De Niro and Margot Robbie in a scene from “Amsterdam.”

ican businessmen conspired to overthrow President Franklin D. Roosevelt by duping a retired general popular among veterans into being their figurehead.

“Amsterdam” shifts from 1933 to 1918 as it fills out backstories and love affairs. After returning to the ’30s, Bale has become a kindly doctor and Washington’s character becomes a lawyer, both helping fellow vets. The nurse is strung out on prescription drugs.

But unable to find a tone — screwball, noir, whodunit, rom-com, satire or thriller — the film plods along at its own airless, internal pace, leaving most of the actors so befuddled it’s not always clear they know what they’re aiming at either.

It’s a film where no one seems to answer a direct question, gruesome autopsies are performed on camera followed by whimsically sung ditties, and a script that tries for the profound when it says things like people “follow the wrong God home.”

“This is so strange,” says the good doctor at one point. “What does it mean?” Don’t ask us.

“Amsterdam” reaches for something contemporary to say about race relations, concentration of wealth, veterans and fascism but ends up with a plodding, mannerist noise. This is what dollar bills must smell like burning. One starts to wonder if it was all a tax write-off.

Take Bale, who already reached his glass-eye limit on screen when he starred in “Big Short.” Somehow he agreed to another such role, this time with the eyeball popping out numerous times and spilling on the ground. He attacks his role with a weird “Columbo” thing going, tilting angularly and adopting a rich New York accent.

Washington and Robbie have apparently chosen to ignore Bale’s lead by acting as if they are in two separate and different movies — she plays a manic pixie artist who uses shrapnel to make sculptures and he makes his character stone-faced and passive. Everyone else seems to be badly mimicking old ’30s films. (Swift sings at one point but otherwise she is marooned and wooden.)

It’s not just the cast that is taken down: Emmanuel Lubezki, a celebrated director of photography who wowed with “Gravity” and “The Revenant,” turns in a film that seems very brown and undynamic.

Russell, the director of such taut dramas as “Three Kings” and “American Hustle,” has clearly vanished here. You can almost hear the collective rejoinder from the real city of Amsterdam: Why’d you do us dirty, man?

“Amsterdam” is rated R for brief violence and bloody images. Running time: 134 minutes. Now playing at select AAFES theaters.

‘Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile’ will melt even the most cold-blooded heart

BY THOMAS FLOYD
The Washington Post

The title character of “Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile” may be a cold-blooded reptile — in this case, one who sings — but never you worry: This family flick delivers enough pulse-quickenng ear-worms and warmth to melt even the iciest of hearts.

Not that Lyle himself, voiced by pop star Shawn Mendes in this blend of live action and computer animation, is anything but lovable. Following the child-be-friends-a-misunderstood-monster paradigm of “E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial” and “The Iron Giant,” “Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile” takes the bite out of its razor-toothed hero by imbuing him with expressive eyes, a sheepish demeanor and Mendes’ silky tenor. Although Lyle doesn’t talk — a trait carried over from Bernard Weber’s beloved picture book series, begun in 1962 with “The House on East 88th Street” — this version of the character does sing, even if his stage fright keeps the world from understanding the gentle soul beneath

his scaly exterior.

It’s a crafty conceit that allows screenwriter Will Davies to recast Lyle’s tale as a pop-rock musical by way of Benj Pasek and Justin Paul, the hit-churning songwriters behind “The Greatest Showman,” “Dear Evan Hansen” and “La La Land.” Here, they collaborate with Ari Afsar, Emily Gardner Xu Hall, Mark Sonnenblick and Jorjah Kwamé to compose original tunes worthy of that catchy catalogue. Among them: the soaring anthem “Top of the World,” the power ballad “Carried Away” and the charming duet “Take a Look at Us Now.”

That last song complements Mendes’ polished pipes with the rawer vocals of Javier Bardem, who plays down-and-out magician Hector P. Valenti with vaudevillian verve. Sporting a thick mustache and a thinning mop of hair, the endearingly eccentric character looks after Lyle in the attic of a Manhattan brownstone — that is, until the showman skips town and leaves the family that moves in to discover a repti-

lian housemate with a love of caviar and bubble baths.

Lyle’s companionship is a balm for tween Josh (Winslow Fegley), an anxious kid struggling to fit in at his new school, as the two outcasts bond over dumpster dives and rooftop dinners in the theater district. Lyle’s antics also teach Josh’s buttoned-up dad (the ever-dependable character actor Scoot McNairy) how to unleash his inner animal. Josh’s cookbook-author stepmom, played by Constance Wu, harmonizes with Mendes on “Rip Up the Recipe” to deliver a toe-tapping groove about learning to let loose.

Directors Will Speck and Josh Gordon strike a balance between earnestness and absurdity without getting lost in self-parody. It becomes clear what kind of movie we’re watching early on, when Mr. Grumps — a downstairs neighbor played by Brett Gelman with gleeful indignation — is introduced by that cartoonish name with deadpan earnestness. Yet there’s still room for meta-humor: As Josh tries to reassure his stepmom that Lyle



SONY PICTURES/Columbia Pictures

From left, Constance Wu, Winslow Fegley, Lyle the crocodile (voice of Shawn Mendes) and Javier Bardem in “Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile.”

isn’t violent, he blurts out, “He’s not like that — he wears a scarf.”

Davies’ script relies more on archetypes than on fully realized narrative arcs. But that’s a natural concession for a kid-friendly musical that clocks in at under two hours. And there’s not much that could have been done about the uncanniness of Mendes’ flowing vocals emerging from a crocodile’s angular snout. While the movie builds toward a climax that’s entirely predictable, as Hector reappears with dreams of turning Lyle into a star, its laudable call for compassion should still get through to the little ones.

Along the way, Speck and Gordon show off some filmmaking style, weaving the camera through Manhattan’s streets with whiz-bang proficiency. The directors also keep the laughs coming, thanks in no small part to Mr. Grumps’ fussy cat, a computer-generated creation that scratches the itch for silly sight gags. And they nod to the source material by having Wu’s character sketch Lyle in Waber’s illustration style. For the most part, though, the filmmakers succeed not by imitating, but by creating something entirely their own.

“Lyle, Lyle Crocodile” is rated PG for mild peril and thematic elements. Running time: 106 minutes. Now playing in select AAFES theaters.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Bleak and beautiful: Ireland's Aran Islands

Not long ago, I spent a day walking on Inishmore, one of the weather- and wave-beaten Aran Islands — which, on a blustery day, seem to gulp seawater off the west coast of Ireland. An elfish, black-clad farmer, determined to make the most of a break in the clouds, invites me to help him turn his hay. Drying in the breeze, it's destined to become a hearty salad for his cows.

The Aran Islands are a short flight or 40-minute ferry ride from the Rossaveel ferry port near Galway, the main town on Ireland's west coast. Three limestone islands make up the Aran Islands: Inishmore, Inishmaan and Inisheer. The "largest" is Inishmore — nine miles of land with one sleepy town, a few farming hamlets and a weather-beaten charm.

The other islands, Inishmaan and Inisheer, are even smaller, much less populated and less touristy. For most, the big island is quiet enough. Inishmore — and the Aran Islands as a whole — has only one real town, Kilronan. It's actually more like a village, with groups of backpackers washing ashore with the landing of each ferry.

The islands are still part of the Gaeltacht, where locals speak the Irish Gaelic language among themselves — but they happily speak English for their visitors.

There are fewer than 100 vehicles on Inishmore, and the majority of them seem to be minivans. A line of vans awaits the ferry's arrival, offering convenient island tours with stops at all the major sights for about 20 euros. Bike shops and a few men in pony carts sop up the remaining tourists, who often return from tours to browse through the few shops and enjoy a pint of Guinness on a picnic table outside a pub.



Rick Steves

The windswept landscape of all three islands is harsh and stony, separated from the sea by steep, rugged cliffs. But there's a stark beauty about these blustery islands and the simple lives its inhabitants eke out of a few inches of topsoil and a mean sea.

Like the rest of Ireland, Inishmore has a mysterious history. The island's famous Iron Age fortress, Dun Aengus, is the most impressive of its kind in all of Europe. Little is known about this 2,000-year-old Celtic fort. This stone fortress hangs spectacularly and precariously on the edge of a cliff 300 feet above the Atlantic. And there's no fence at all — only a sheer drop-off. (A minivan driver once told me that the fort was so popular with visitors that "we plan to build another 2,000-year-old



DOMINIC ARIZONA BONUCCELLI/Rick Steves' Europe

With a cap on the number of cars on the island, life moves a little more slowly on Inishmore, one of the three Aran Islands off the coast of Ireland.

ring fort next year.") While the next parish over may indeed be Boston, the crashing waves below seem to declare, "This is the end of the world."

Close to the western tip of the island is the "Seven Churches," a historic but visually unimpressive gathering of ruined chapels, monastic houses and fragments of a high cross dating from the 8th to the 11th centuries. Here, as throughout Inishmore, the land is dotted with reminders of the island's early Christianity. Some honor St. Enda, who established a monastery here and taught great monks who followed in his footsteps. These "Irish apostles" started Ireland's "Age of Saints and Scholars" (AD 500-900) — an Irish golden age of learning, literature and flourishing religious arts.

The stones of Inishmore tell this community's story. This tiny island is a maze of stone fences. Poor people cleared the stony land to make it arable. Turning my farmer friend's hay, I ponder how, with unrivaled colonial finesse, the British required Irish families to divide their land among all their sons. This doomed even the largest estates to fragmentation, shrinking lots to sizes just large enough to starve a family. Ultimately, of course, the land ended up in the possession of British absentee landlords. The tiny rock-fenced lots that carve up the treeless landscape still remind the farmers of the structural poverty that shaped their history.

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

Festivals of fear, frights invite foolish, fun-loving mortals to visit

Ghosts and ghouls, dressing up in costumes and colorful autumn décor— small wonder Halloween traditions have caught on in many parts of Europe. Here are just a few places to celebrate the season of screams and scares.

Czech Republic

Prague's Incheba Arena will host the city's first Halloween festival Oct. 28-29. **The Luna Festival** features live music, fire and dance shows, a costume contest, themed decorations, a pillow fight and a high-powered soundtrack served up by well-known DJs. Visitors can choose from single-day tickets or weekend passes; prices begin at 548 Czech koruna (about \$21.60) when bought on the website. Online: tinyurl.com/7pe54hyp



Karen Bradbury

Denmark

Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen opens its doors for Halloween-themed festivities Oct. 13-Nov. 6. By day, younger children will appreciate tame pranks, but as darkness falls, the thrills delivered by monsters and zombies become a bit more spine-tingling. All can appreciate the autumnal ambiance of one of the world's oldest amusement parks. The park's assortment of rides will be in full swing as well. Adult entry to the park costs 145 Danish Kroner on weekdays and 155 DKK on weekends. Tickets for children ages 3-7 go for 65 DKK. Online: tivoli.dk

England

The London Dungeon gets into the Halloween spirit with a haunted house-themed makeover. From Oct. 15-31, a new show offers examines some terrifying and unexplained happenings dating as far back as the 1850s. Adult ticket prices for the standard tour and show start at 28 pounds when booked online in advance. Online: tinyurl.com/yv77yma4



Michael Goehre

The Satzvey Castle in Mechernich, Germany, hosts Halloween parties on Oct. 29 and 31.

Italy

The village of Corinaldo in the Le Marche Region is known far and wide for its **Festa della Streghe**. Each year on Halloween itself and the weekend preceding it, the best assets of this sleepy medieval town are decked out to create an eerie, mysterious underworld. Street artists, a crafts market, a haunted tunnel and torchlight illuminations are among the features that have delighted visitors in past years. Online: facebook.com/lafestadelles-treghe

Germany

Europa-Park in Rust gets into the holiday action with its **Traumatica – Festival of Fear**. This horror-house like experience depicts a postapocalyptic world peopled with folk who will stop at nothing to instill panic in unsuspect-

ing visitors. The experience is offered on Friday and Saturday evenings through Nov. 12; tickets cost 28 euros and up. Online: traumatica.com/en

At Holiday Park in Hassloch, **Halloween Fright Nights** are back on the agenda. Visitors are welcomed to the amusement park on all Saturdays in October, as well as the night of Halloween itself. Five horror houses, music played by DJs, fun rides and a spectacular fireworks display are among the event's draws. The Scare Zones are recommended for visitors age 16 and up. Adult tickets go for 35.50 euros when purchased online in advance. Online: tinyurl.com/3psp7x8n

The moated 12th-century **Satzvey Castle** in Mechernich is a fitting venue for a lively party and scare-fest. On Oct. 29 and 31, brave visitors are promised spooky experiences from the moment they are greeted by an eerie ferryman and led into the courtyard, where they can experience a labyrinth of horror before watching the on-stage show and dancing to DJ music. The wearing of costumes is encouraged. Online ticket prices begin at 17 euros for adults and 11 euros for children. Online: burg-satzvey.de

Just south of Darmstadt lie the ruins of a medieval castle made famous by the story of **Frankenstein**, an ideal setting for a party conjured into life by American GIs back in the 1970s and still going strong. Zombies, monsters and other gruesome beings come frightfully near to all who dare enter into the various zones. The event takes place outdoors, so dressing warmly, costumed or not, is essential. The entrance fee includes all shows and attractions, as well as shuttle bus transfer from the parking lot to the castle high on the hill. From noon to 7 p.m. on Sunday afternoons, the Halloween festivities are geared to younger visitors. Regular, fast lane and VIP tickets are available at prices ranging from 33 to 111 euros. Entry on children's Sundays costs 20 euros. Online: frankenstein-halloween.de

WEEKEND: TRAVEL



PHOTOS BY MARY WINSTON NICKLIN/The Washington Post

Bicycles are ubiquitous in the bike-friendly city of Ghent, Belgium. Cycling culture is boosted by infrastructure and city incentives.

Belgium's unsung capital of cool

Ghent is a vibrant city grounded in history but also open to industry, change and social engagement

BY MARY WINSTON NICKLIN
Special to The Washington Post

The sun beat down on Ghent. It was the hottest day I could remember ever spending in Belgium, and it was a relief to be on the water. I paddled the canoe through the confluence of the Lys and Scheldt rivers. The voices of sunbathers carried from the quay, where moored houseboats bobbed beneath gabled houses and planters popping with pink flowers. But I didn't dwell on Ghent's undeniable charm. Instead, I watched the water ... until I saw it up ahead, partially submerged: a plastic bottle, riding the currents on its way to the North Sea. I extended my trash-grabber and snatched it.

Over the years, I keep returning to Belgium's second city. Once I made a pilgrimage to see a world-famous masterpiece, Van Eyck's "Adoration of the Mystic Lamb," also called the Ghent Altarpiece. (It's also known as the most stolen painting in history, but more on that later.) The city's energy was so irresistible that I'd returned to survey the happening restaurant scene with a friend from Brussels. On each successive trip, I've been amazed that Ghent — just about half an hour by train from Bruges and Brussels, and about an hour from Antwerp — isn't overrun with tourists. Most recently, I wanted to dive into Ghent's green ethos. Beyond its cool vibe, the city has been making waves for its sustainability initiatives and eco-minded tourism strategy.

So I boarded a boat by DOKano. The idea behind this nonprofit: Rent a canoe



Hans Marly of DOKano takes a break from paddling. The organization encourages people to explore Ghent's waterways and clean up trash.

for the price of a bucket of trash that you retrieve yourself from Ghent's waterways. (A donation is also welcome.) What started in 2017 as the brainchild of five parents at school pickup has morphed into an organization that's popular with both locals and visitors. DOKano also offers team-building outings and educational excursions with school groups, who are encouraged to sort the trash before nominating the "catch of the day." Some of the more curious finds? A toy monkey, sneakers and perfectly usable heart-shaped luggage.

"DOKano's mission is to take action with as many people as possible to create plastic-free waters," says co-founder Hans Marly. "The goal is to remove litter while raising public awareness of the problem."

The plight of plastic in our environment can be depressing. For me, going canoeing

with DOKano was a means of exploring the beautiful waterways while doing something proactive.

"Projects like this are positive for both tourists and locals and reflect the city's goals," says Deputy Mayor Bram Van Braeckvelt. "We aim to keep tourism in Ghent sustainable — to find a balance with the city's livability, to invest in projects that provide a return to the local community, to take measures to avoid overtourism in the future."

Ghent's vibrant spirit and political engagement stem from its history. The story is told with flair at STAM, the Ghent City Museum, whose very architecture — an amalgam of restored medieval cloisters and contemporary glass — reflects the modern city itself. Back around 630, a wandering French missionary named Amandus arrived to proselytize the local population, building a church that later became St. Bavo's Abbey. Ghent grew into a medieval powerhouse thanks to the cloth trade. In the oldest written description of Ghent (1154), geographer al-Sharif al-Idrisi waxed poetic in Arabic: "It is a beautiful, flourishing city with many state-ly homes and grand vistas. It possesses gardens, orchards and fields that provide a continual harvest."

In the Middle Ages, Ghent was the second-largest city in northern Europe after Paris. This prosperous trade hub even boasted its own army, with which it challenged the Counts of Flanders and Dukes of Burgundy. Over time, the creation of craft guilds — each demanding political participation — encouraged diplomacy

and the exchange of ideas.

"Ghent has always had a rebellious streak," says Luk Darras, a former Belgian ambassador who has lived here for 17 years, referring to an infamous 16th-century episode. Charles V, the future Holy Roman Emperor, was born in Ghent but later squashed a revolt, forcing the locals to parade through the streets wearing hangman's nooses around their necks in punishment. To this day, Ghentians are called "stroppendragers" (or noose bearers), and you can find a noose proudly depicted on a local beer label.

Today, the population numbers more than 265,000 people of about 160 nationalities, with approximately an additional 85,000 university students arriving each autumn.

"It brings an injection of youthful energy," says Mieke Thienpont, a professional guide and president of the Ghent Guides association.

"The city is very much alive," Darras says. "It's friendly and dynamic — open to industry and change — and also socially engaged."

Ghent's heritage is reason enough to travel here. There's the formidable Castle of the Counts, the 15th-century Great Butchers' Hall, the UNESCO-listed belfry lording over it all. Founded in 1235, the Beguinage of Our Lady at Huyen — also a UNESCO site — once housed religious women in a unique, self-sustaining community. Guildhalls with ornately sculpted facades flank the quays of Graslei and Korenlei. The Museum of Fine Arts

SEE GHENT ON PAGE 21

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Ghent: City particularly interested in sustainability and eco-tourism

FROM PAGE 20

(MSK), considered Belgium’s oldest museum, is celebrating its 225th anniversary with a rich program. And back to the aforementioned Ghent Altarpiece, of which Darras says is “the one painting you have to see in your life,” a visitor center inside St. Bavo’s Cathedral brings the newly restored work to life through an augmented-reality experience that’s an immersion in the Van Eyck brothers’ world.

But besides all this cultural wealth, it’s the energy and ambiance that keep luring me back. As I walked Ghent’s cobblestoned streets, I fed off the laughter from the busy cafes, the rush of commuting bikes, a flamenco concert at ENTR, where I nursed a local Lousberg beer. Admiring the city’s prolific street art, I met local legend Klaas Van der Linden as he painted a wall on Graffiti Street. His works are all over Ghent; for example, the astonishing “Lost at Sea” is an enormous self-portrait in exuberant color. He has a master’s degree in arts, though he learned spray-paint techniques on the streets, and his paintings are exhibited in shows across Europe. A crowd had gathered to snap photos, and Van der Linden was gregarious, inviting some passersby to check out his studio: a medieval cellar with vaulted ceilings that’s quintessentially Ghent.

It’s this authenticity that the city champions (and promotes through measures such as the “Walk Local” campaign, showing where famous residents hang out to entice visitors away from the city’s Instagrammable historical center).

“Ghent is so much more than just a selfie,” Van Braeckvelt says. “We invite people to bring their pajamas and stay overnight — to feel the city’s vibe like Ghentians.”

A playground for artists, Ghent is fertile ground for experimental ideas, particularly in sustainability. Most recently, the city’s tourism recovery plan, launched in 2021 with a green focus, was the result of diplomacy and compromise. To determine the future of tourism, local residents were engaged alongside business managers in citywide debates.

Other examples abound. The Ghent Light Plan was launched in 2007 as a means of illuminating the city’s monuments and buildings at night in a dazzling yet energy-efficient way. Cycling culture is pervasive, boosted by infrastructure (such as bike parking garages) and city incentives. A low-emission zone was established in January 2020 to keep polluting cars out of the city center. In fact, many locals have ditched their cars in exchange for bikes or community car-sharing services. Ghent was the first Belgian city to launch Fairbnb, the sustainable vacation rental platform that reinvests 50% of its revenue in local communities. But perhaps the biggest example of pioneering initiatives: In 2009, Ghent witnessed the launch of “Thursday Veggie Day,” now a global phenomenon that encourages people to skip meat for a day to help fight climate change. Ghent is today a vegetarian capital with a variety of restaurants.

“We couldn’t have launched anywhere else but Ghent,” says Paul Florizoone, who



MARY WINSTON NICKLIN/The Washington Post

A visitor center in St. Bavo’s Cathedral showcases the Ghent Altarpiece, or “The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb.”

founded the trendsetting Greenway brand 26 years ago. Before vegetarianism went mainstream, Greenway innovated with meat alternatives, and today, alongside its three restaurants in Belgium, it offers a range of retail products, such as sausage made from locally grown cauliflower and cordon bleu from celeriac. Newer to the scene is Epiphany’s Kitchen, a lively spot named Belgium’s best vegan restaurant by BE Vegan in 2021. You won’t find avocado toast on the menu. The dishes are the result of creative kitchen experimentation — such as the pizza crust made from crushed yuca root — which you can taste among flickering candles and a riot of flowers. Everything is made in-house.

“It was a success since the beginning, and I didn’t initially market it as vegan,” explains owner Epiphany Vanderhaeghen. “I wanted to invite people into my world to experience it.”

On my last night, I sat at the bar at Publiek, a Michelin-starred restaurant with a real cool factor. Chef Olly Ceulenaere is a champion of the Flemish terroir, reputed for exalting local products (whether that be endives, Bintje potatoes or North Sea fish) in refined cuisine that’s also accessible. Appetizing smells wafted from the open kitchen while I slurped an oyster topped with berry-infused granitas, washed down with a rhubarb and rasp-berry beer. The ambiance is fun and relaxed — the non-harried waiters open to chatting — and it struck me that, with its laid-back style, the restaurant captures the spirit of Ghent. Tipped off by the waiter, I tried the Dame Blanche, a dessert that’s not on the menu. It’s a seemingly simple classic: vanilla ice cream made fresh when you order, accompanied by warm choux pastry and cups of melted chocolate and whipped cream. But it’s sublime because of the quality of the ingredients.

“I want people to have a good time,” Ceulenaere says. “I run the restaurant to be a place where I would want to eat.”

It was late when I left the restaurant. But the buildings were aglow, the streets humming with cyclists on their way home from a night out. I resolved to return for one of the city’s epic festivals; during the Ghent Light Festival, the gilded dragon that’s perched atop the belfry even spits fire — a fitting mascot for such a spirited place.

A light rain began to fall as I followed De Reep, the same waterway I had earlier traversed by canoe. Then the skies above Ghent crackled with the electricity of a thunderstorm.



Money bags
Airlines seem to be getting stricter about carry-ons

By CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT
Special to The Washington Post

Keep an eye on your luggage. As air travel returns to pre-pandemic levels, airlines appear to be getting stricter about carry-on bags.

Brad Ritter has seen the confrontations: gate agents rigidly enforcing weight and size limits on cabin luggage — and making travelers fork over an extra fee to gate-check their bags rather than carrying them aboard.

“They are showing no mercy,” says Ritter, a TV consultant from Los Angeles.

A few weeks ago, he witnessed a gate agent stop a passenger from boarding with her carry-on. As Ritter boarded the plane, he saw the passenger out of the line, frantically shifting contents to other bags to make the carry-on lighter.

Why are airlines getting so strict about carry-on luggage? The reason isn’t higher fuel costs or lack of space — it’s money.

“Airlines are likely doubling down on this strategy to extract as much as they can from customers,” explains Jeff Galak, who teaches marketing at Carnegie Mellon University’s Tepper School of Business. “By being strict on what counts as a carry-on bag, they can move some free bags to paid ones.”

The industry sees a bright future in charging for carry-on luggage. Global baggage fees hit a record \$20.9 billion last year, according to a report from CarTrawler and IdeaWorks, a company that consults with travel companies on ancillary revenue.

For example, last year, for flights within Europe, Aer Lingus began requiring passengers to book a more expensive “carry-on bag with priority boarding” fare if they wanted to carry a regulation-size bag of up to 22 pounds on the aircraft. AirAsia now allows travelers to double its regular 15-pound carry-on limit — for a fee.

The revenue is substantial. American Airlines, for instance, generated baggage revenue of \$1.22 billion in 2021 and a record \$7.42 per passenger, according to IdeaWorks and CarTrawler. Spirit Airlines has one of the highest baggage

revenue rates globally: \$21.51 per passenger in 2021.

Which airlines are the strictest about carry-on luggage? And how do you keep yourself from spending an extra \$30 or \$60 per passenger on your next flight?

Almost every airline sees dollar signs when it comes to luggage. An IdeaWorks and CarTrawler study found that every major domestic airline except Southwest charged extra for checked luggage — and sometimes carry-on bags, too.

Historically, ultra-low-fare airlines have been the most aggressive with luggage fees. Spirit Airlines’ revenue from baggage has soared from \$28.9 million in 2007 to \$663.2 million in 2021. The report found that the biggest bump per person came in 2010, the year Spirit added a fee for large carry-on bags.

“There’s clearly an in-your-face monetization strategy occurring among airlines,” says Daniel Green, co-founder of travel insurance company Faye.

Green says many passengers think it’s preposterous to pay not only for checked bags but also carry-ons. And the added level of aggressiveness is off-putting. He suspects that airlines are trying to make up for revenue lost during the early days of the pandemic.

“No one is happy about it,” he adds.

Longtime airline industry observer William McGee says there’s no consistency in how airlines enforce their luggage policies. When flights aren’t full, crews typically look the other way when passengers bring large carry-on bags. But when every seat is occupied, they enforce the rules strictly.

“This explains why some passengers may experience carrying on a bag without any problem on one flight and then be stopped from carrying the same bag on a different flight,” says McGee, a senior fellow at the American Economic Liberties Project.

Tony Jilek, a former line maintenance supervisor and mechanic for Alaska Airlines, says charging for checked bags just means more passengers try to carry their bags on the plane.

When they can’t fit everything into the overhead compartment, “I’ve seen them rip the doors off the bins,” he says.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL



With the town hall tower and church steeples in the background, people walk across Wuerzburg, Germany's Alte Mainbrücke, the old stone bridge across the Main River, into the old town.

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes



A nymph gets ready to bite into an apple, one of many figures on a playful fountain on Sternplatz in downtown Wuerzburg, Germany.

On the QT

Directions: From Wiesbaden, it is a 90-mile drive on the A3 to Wuerzburg; from Stuttgart, take A81 and A3 for the just under 100-mile drive; it is about 120 miles from Grafenwoehr via A9 and A3. In town, follow signs for parking. Wuerzburg also has a busy main railway station, with trains arriving from, among other places, Frankfurt, Nuremberg and Stuttgart.

Costs: We parked in the Alte Mainbrücke garage for 1.60 euros per hour. It's a great place to start your visit, but parking places are very narrow and there is a height limit of 6.5 feet. The parking lot in front of the Residenz has no restrictions, and costs 2 euros per hour for the first two hours, then 1.50 euros for each additional hour.

Food: There are several restaurants in the center of town. The Ratskeller and the Weinstuben Juliusspital serve typical Franconian specialties.

Information: wuerzburg.de/en/visitors

A bridge to discovery

Wuerzburg dazzles with Franconian history, architecture and food

BY MICHAEL ABRAMS
Stars and Stripes

The German city of Wuerzburg has a palace, a fortress, a cathedral, plenty of churches and an imposing City Hall, but the real heart of this Franconian town is the old stone bridge spanning the Main River.

And the bridge is a good place to enter the city. After parking on the west bank of the Main, we strolled across the Alte Mainbrücke's cobblestone street.

The towers and steeples of Wuerzburg's old town rose in the distance welcoming us, but they would have to wait. Like other tourists, we couldn't just cross the bridge without stopping to take a closer look.

Construction on the bridge began in the late 15th century, replacing an older span, but it wasn't completed until 1703. It stands on eight arches and is about 58 feet wide and 607 feet long.

About two decades after its



The Residenz in Wuerzburg, Germany, as seen from the Court Gardens. A UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site, the palace was built between 1720 and 1744.

completion, the 12 Baroque stone statues that line the bridge were installed, six on each side. The statues are a mix of saints and

dignitaries.

While crossing the bridge, look back behind you to see Marienberg Fortress high atop a hill

overlooking the river and the city center. Built around 1200, it was once the seat of the prince-bishops of Wuerzburg. Today it hous-

es the Franconian Museum, boasting a Tilman Riemenschneider sculpture collection.

The first building of note after you cross the river is the rathaus, or city hall, with its sleek, 180-foot-tall tower. It also houses the Ratskeller, a popular restaurant that features Franconian specialties.

Wuerzburg is in the heart of Franconia, a region known for its hearty food and quality wines. Popular here are, among other things, the Franconian bratwurst — which is much like its better-known version from Nuremberg but bigger — carp and Schaeufele, a roasted pork shoulder.

We followed signs to the marktplatz, or marketplace, where we came to two beautiful buildings, the late Gothic Marienkapelle church and the Falkenhaus, a former priests' residence with an 18th century, ornate Rococo facade made of stucco.

SEE BRIDGE ON PAGE 23

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Glockencafe makes newcomers feel welcome

BY PHILLIP WALTER
WELLMAN
Stars and Stripes

It's Monday at Glockencafe in Kaiserslautern, Germany, and the place is packed for pizza night.

This is the day each week when the restaurant's thin pizzas with tasty homemade tomato sauce cost just 8 euros.

I first noticed Glockencafe on an evening weeks earlier while walking through the area, not far from the city's main train station. I peeked into the large, old windows and saw a painting of a nude woman — rather refined, not trashy — hanging on the dark green walls above wood paneling, illuminated by dangling ceiling lights that seemed straight from the 1920s.

I later learned that this is the smoking section. My two American colleagues wanted to sit there when we visited for the first time on a Sunday, even though none of us smoke.

We started our meal with one of the restaurant's signature fall dishes: cheese fondue made with a healthy dose of chardonnay. One of my colleagues thought the alcohol taste was overbearing but my other colleague and I enjoyed the tangy flavor and finished the entire pot.

Next, I had the spaghetti with garlic oil, peppers and chili, one of about a dozen vegetarian or vegan options on the menu. It was the best pasta dish I've had in Kaiserslautern to date.

My colleagues both had schnitzel: one plain with french fries, the other with a mushroom sauce and roasted potatoes. They both enjoyed their meals and were particularly impressed by the house salad dressing, so much so that I initially thought they were mocking me for being a vegetarian. But it turned out they just really enjoyed the dressing.

The restaurant was quiet that Sunday, but most days it's busy and reservations are recommended. On Thursdays, all ham-



PHOTOS BY PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN/Stars and Stripes

Fondue, one of Glockencafe's signature fall dishes, is made with chardonnay instead of traditional cherry brandy. The restaurant, located in Kaiserslautern, Germany, opened in 1981.



**AFTER
HOURS
GERMANY**

Glockencafe

Location: Glockenstrasse 34, Kaiserslautern, Germany

Hours: Sunday through Friday, 6 p.m. until late, usually around midnight, depending on how busy it is.

Cost: Pizzas range from 9.20 euros to 10.50 euros; schnitzels range from 13.80 euros to 15.50 euros; burgers range from 10.80 euros to 13 euros. The fondue is 11 euros.

Menu: German

Information: reservierung@glocken-cafe-kl.de; 0631-60384. glocken-cafe.business.site

burgers are sold with small beers called stubbies for 13 euros. And on Fridays, gin and tonics are sold for 5 euros from 10 p.m. until the bar closes, which usually happens around midnight. But it can happen before or after depending on demand.



The owner of Glockencafe, Steffi Dieter, said she enjoys the sense of comfort and community in the restaurant, which attracts regulars from all corners of Kaiserslautern society.

Live concerts also are held twice a month in the smoking section, which has a separate bar that opens during the performances.

"It's a little bit difficult with the neighbors upstairs," owner Steffi Dieter told me when I

returned to Glockencafe without my colleagues for a veggie pizza. "We are in a residential area, and if you make music, it's loud."

If the neighbors don't like it, Glockencafe will probably outlast them anyway. It opened in 1981 and celebrates its 42nd birthday

this month. Over the years, the establishment has attracted many regulars from all corners of Kaiserslautern society.

"From students to doctors to policemen, the community here is totally mixed," Dieter told me when describing what she likes best about the restaurant: the sense of community and comfort one feels there.

I would agree. While the food was excellent each time I visited, Glockencafe's ambiance is what will bring me back. This is a local place, but as an outsider you'll feel welcome. The large non-smoking section is just as cozy as the smoking section and feels almost as bohemian.

As I finished my veggie pizza, three loud bangs near the entrance made everyone turn their head. An acquaintance of Dieter's had fixed a door that hadn't been fully shutting when people left, allowing a small amount of cold fall air to pass through.

"Bravo! Bravo!" yelled three women who'd been drinking wine and tea at a table near mine. They begin to clap.

Once the celebration faded, I asked Dieter if Americans often come to Glockencafe.

"In the summer more American people come, but this time of year there are fewer," she said. "They like our schnitzel."

When I told her that both of my American colleagues had schnitzel when they came, she nodded knowingly.

Then I remembered the salad dressing, which I had for the first time that night with my pizza and also enjoyed, and would describe as a kind of Italian.

"We make it here, like everything," Dieter said, smiling. "And I describe it as nearly Thousand Island. But there are some special things in it that we don't talk about."

Understood, Ms. Dieter. Some salad dressing recipes are best kept secret.

wellman.phillip@stripes.com
Twitter: @pwwellman

Bridge: Wuerzburg known for baroque, rococo architecture

FROM PAGE 22

The tourist information office is inside. Stop in and get a sightseeing map. With it, you can follow a suggested walking tour or just choose the sights you want to see. We did the latter and strolled through the city's expansive pedestrian zone.

Wuerzburg is known for lavish baroque and rococo architecture. Among the sights we saw were the Augustiner church, the Neumuenster basilica and St. Killian's Cathedral.

The city's biggest baroque gem is the Residenz, the huge former palace of the prince-bishops. A UNESCO world cultural

heritage site, it was built between 1720 and 1744.

You can see the inside on a guided tour, but on this sunny day, we chose to wander through the beautiful Court Gardens, with their trees, flower beds and fountains.

Wuerzburg once had a large U.S. military population. Leighton Barracks, Faulenberg Kaserne and Skyline Housing are names many former 3rd Armored Division and 1st Infantry Division soldiers would recognize.

And many of their children were born at the Army hospital here. There's not much left of the military's presence, but judging

by how much English we heard downtown, it seems to still be popular with Americans.

We then strolled down to the river and walked along its banks back to the Alte Mainbruecke.

In the afternoon, it seemed as if the bridge had become an outdoor wine bar. A couple of shops and restaurants here sell wine by the glass. Tourists and residents alike mingled on the bridge, sipping good Franconian wine as the sun began to set behind Marienberg Fortress.

abrams.mike@stripes.com
Twitter: @stripes_photog



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

The ornate baroque facade of the Neumuenster basilica in Wuerzburg, Germany.

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS



The film archive displays original film posters, including this one for “Godzilla.”



A cutout of Matsunosuke Onoe, star of hundreds of Japanese films, welcomes visitors.

The National Film Archive of Japan in Tokyo is dedicated to the preservation and research of films. Its Akira Kurosawa exhibit runs until Nov. 27.

A filmmaker for the ages

Tokyo exhibit charts Japanese master Akira Kurosawa’s influence at National Film Archive

By Kelly Agee
Stars and Stripes

Try to identify this motion picture from the pitch the filmmaker may have made: “Lured by gold, two greedy peasants unknowingly escort a princess and her general across enemy lines.”

You’re correct if you guessed “Hidden Fortress,” a 1958 adventure classic directed by Akira Kurosawa. But you’re also correct if you said “Star Wars,” the 1977 blockbuster franchise inspired by “Hidden Fortress.”

Kurosawa’s films motivated a generation of American filmmakers who drew inspiration from his classics “Ran” and “Seven Samurai.” Film buffs can learn more until Nov. 27 about Kurosawa’s oeuvre at an exhibition of his screenwriting at the National Film Archive of Japan in Tokyo.

The archive is a national institution dedicated to the preservation and research of films. Japanese and foreign films and film-related materials are preserved and restored by the archive. It also holds film screenings, has a library of books, periodicals, films and film-

related material that is on display in its gallery and open to the public.

The seventh-floor exhibition room has permanent and temporary exhibits of film-related materials in Japanese, English, Chinese and Korean. It starts with the birth of film and goes through that history through posters, still photographs, devices and equipment for filmmaking, and the personal items that belonged to noted film personalities.

The gallery charts Japanese filmmaking from the 1910s through several eras, including the golden age of the 1920s, the wartime period, the spread of Japanese cinema in the 1960s and anime.

A life-sized cutout of Matsunosuke Onoe, “the first movie star of Japan” who starred in hundreds of Japanese films, stands in the gallery lobby.

There is also a biography of my favorite Japanese film star, Toshiro Mifune, who is best known for his 16-film collaboration with Kurosawa, starting with “Seven Samurai.”

The Kurosawa exhibit is in the Exhibition Gallery. Kurosawa is considered by some to be one of the best filmmakers of all time.

George Lucas, creator of the “Stars Wars” franchise, apparently thought so.

“The one thing I was really intrigued by was the fact that the story was told from the two lowest characters,” Lucas told the Criterion Collection while discussing “Hidden Fortress” in 2001. “I decided that would be a nice way to tell the ‘Star Wars’ story ... that was the strongest influence.”

Handwritten versions of Kurosawa’s popular scripts are on display — screenplays that never made it to the big screen, screenplays that were published overseas and screenplays he wrote for other directors who worked under the Japanese film giant Toho.

It’s interesting to see all the drafts that were written until the final version was ready to film.

There are also displays of original film posters, including the first American-run poster for “Seven Samurai.” Photography is prohibited in this part of the exhibit.

Japanese film lovers and fans of Kurosawa, this is the place for you.

agee.kelly@stripes.com
Twitter: @KellyA_Stripes

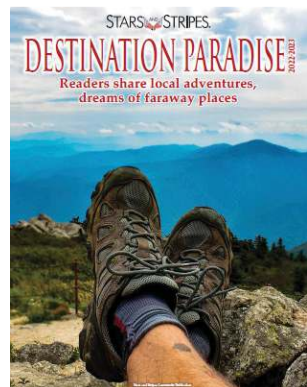


The National Film Archive of Japan is dedicated to film preservation and research.

National Film Archive of Japan

Location: 3-7-6 Kyobashi, Chuo City, Tokyo, 104-0031; Maison Shibuya building, 8th floor
Directions: A short walk from Kyobashi Station; follow the signs for the Ginza Gate and head out via exit 1.
Times: 11 a.m.-6:30 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday. Last admission at 6 p.m. Open until 8 p.m. on last Friday of the month. Closed on Mondays.
Price: 250 yen, adults; 130 yen, university and college students; free for seniors, disabled people with one companion and students under 18
Information: Online: www.nfaj.go.jp

Kelly Agee



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STARS AND STRIPES

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING



PHOTOS BY SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

The Home Made “One Mile” Damper, left, and kangaroo tartar from Phat Mango in Darwin, Australia.

Wild menu

Kangaroo, sometimes crocodile among the local ingredients at eatery in Australia

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

Australia's Northern Territory is a wild land with more than its fair share of dangerous creatures, including monster crocodiles that can have you for dinner.

Phat Mango in central Darwin gives diners a chance to be on the other end of the fork.

The eatery, started by English chef Martin Bouchier, serves food made only with Australian ingredients.

Phat stands for “Pretty Hot And Tempting,” and mangoes are plentiful in the Northern Territory.

The restaurant has a simple, uncluttered interior decorated with aboriginal art and a large, carved wooden crocodile looming over the bar.

They were serving crocodile meat at one stage and plan to put it back on the menu, according to Bouchier, but it wasn't available when Stars and Stripes stopped



The restaurant has a simple, uncluttered interior decorated with aboriginal art and a large, carved wooden crocodile over the bar.



AFTER
HOURS
AUSTRALIA

Phat Mango

Location: Corner of Knuckey Street and Austin Lane, Darwin, Australia

Directions: A short walk from the Mitchell Street bar district

Hours: 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., Tuesday through Thursday; noon to 11 p.m., Friday and Saturday

Prices: Small plates will run you \$7-\$13, Australian; Large plates are \$23-\$30.

Dress: Casual

Information: Online: phatmango.com.au

Seth Robson

by for lunch in late August.

We made do with the Home Made “One Mile” Damper, \$7.40, to start.

Damper is a kind of thick, homemade bread traditionally prepared by early European settlers in Australia. Phat Mango's version includes some whipped, smoked butter and

mango dukkha seasoning.

It was nothing special, but healthier than munching on chips.

The kangaroo tartar at \$12 is a dish you won't find many places outside of Australia. It includes red kangaroo loin with shallot cream, radish and focaccia. The meat didn't have a strong flavor, but it is, apparently, quite healthy.

The country has been harvesting wild kangaroos since the 1950s, according to the Australian Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

Around 3% of Australia's 50 million kangaroos are used for meat production each year. Only red kangaroos, eastern grey kangaroos, western grey kangaroos and common wallaroos are permitted for commercial harvesting for meat export, the department states on its website.

Phat Mango has plenty of other local fare such as Australian beef and barramundi fish.

You can wash it all down with Australian wine and beer.

robson.seth@stripes.com
Twitter: @SethRobson1

Baking spices used to enhance savory dishes

BY AARON HUTCHERSON
The Washington Post

As we enter what some call pumpkin spice season, baking spices — such as cinnamon, ginger, allspice, cloves, star anise, cardamom and nutmeg — are front of mind. Often associated with desserts in the United States and Europe — and sometimes overly perfumed edible and nonedible products hawked by corporations this time of year — these spices can do so much more. While they are integral to the iconic baked goods of fall, they are also capable of adding flavor and complexity to savory dishes.

Harking back to my classical French culinary training, I remember being told to add a pinch of nutmeg to dark leafy greens and bechamel sauce, which sometimes also includes cloves. You can also regularly find these spices in American barbecue (I love including cinnamon in my spice rubs), holiday ham or the regional classic Cincinnati chili, but that's about the extent of it in Western cuisines.

“Nowadays I feel like you see these warm spices everywhere in the world except in Western cuisine,” chef and television host Sohla El-Waylly said. “When you look at ancient recipes in Europe, they were putting cinnamon and saffron in meat exactly like the Persians were doing. It's interesting that we've gone away from that.”

In chatting with chef Jon Kung, he brought up a study on the principles of food pairing. While recipes from Western cuisines tend to contain ingredients that have similar flavors that build on top of each other, East Asian cuisines tend to “deal in opposites and conflicting characteristics in flavor,” Kung said, which is achieved in part by the use of warmings spices in savory dishes. (In addition to East Asian cuisines, warming spices in savory dishes can also be found in the cuisines of the Middle East and North Africa.)

When it comes to the balance of flavors, heat is another lever to consider using when working with these spices. “It is nice to have the balance of a little bit of



SCOTT SUCHMAN/For The Washington Post

A small amount of nutmeg can act as a pleasing seasoning base to bechamel sauce.

spice so it doesn't go too far into the sweet zone,” El-Waylly said.

Black cardamom and star anise would also show up in the her mother's kebabs, which El-Waylly now associates with grilled meats in South Asia and the Middle East. More broadly, it connects to grilling globally, such as with American barbecue or the use of allspice in Jamaican jerk chicken. For Kung, it comes down to the char achieved with these cooking methods. “Warming spices uplift the innately sweet notes already present in savory food,” Kung said.

Star anise is particularly great with beef because when combined with onions, it makes the dish taste meatier. “There is a compound in star anise that when it is cooked with onions, it releases a compound that tastes very much like beef,” Kung said.

Before adding a bunch of cloves to your dishes willy-nilly, keep in mind that these spices can be fairly potent — so use them judiciously. El-Waylly recommends using whole spices to dampen their power. “You get a little nice background of this warmth without being too overpowering,” she said. “It's a more delicate approach if you want to add it to seafood or a vegetable stew.” Whole cinnamon sticks are easy enough to fish out of finished dishes, and smaller items can go in a sachet of cheesecloth for easy removal.

Another route for dipping one's toe into the world of warming spices in savory applications is with spice blends, such as garam masala. “It is a really approachable, affordable way to try out these different spices without having to buy six different bottles of stuff,” El-Waylly said.

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STARS AND STRIPES

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL



Muslim women walk along the road in the Kaaba, Islam's most sacred site, in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The abayas, or the long flowing robes, are no longer required for foreign women visiting the country.

DREAMSTIME/TNS

A woman's perspective on Saudi Arabia

The Middle Eastern country does have some gender segregation, but it also has friendly people and historic landmarks

BY HOLLY JOHNSON
TravelPulse

Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the Middle East, and it's also one of the most mysterious. After all, most travelers were not allowed to visit for decades until 2019, the year the kingdom opened its doors to tourists from 49 countries around the world, including the United States.

This richly diverse country has also endured its share of controversies, as well as a reputation for treating women as second-class citizens who must cover their bodies (including their faces) from head to toe.

I have to say, I had plenty of preconceived notions about visiting Saudi Arabia before I hopped on my initial flight from Paris to Riyadh, the country's thriving capital. But, what it's really like to travel to Saudi Arabia is a lot different than what you might surmise based on the news — even for women.

I visited Saudi Arabia in late 2019 and would have gone back by now if not for the COVID-19 pandemic. I'm hoping to go again, and there are plenty of reasons why anyone should go if they have the chance.

People are friendly

I didn't know how it would feel being a very white, very blond woman surrounded by strangers that share a culture unlike my own. I even worried I would be treated harshly when I arrived, or that I would feel threatened or uneasy walking or dining out without a hijab or the long, flowing robe Saudi women wear.

However, my arrival served as an excellent reminder of something I already knew. People are people wherever you go, and Saudis are very much like everyone else around the world — happy, friendly and too busy with their own lives to worry about what you're doing.

As I visited Riyadh's striking hotels and landmarks, the winding streets of historic Jeddah, shopping malls and elsewhere, people smiled widely at me or didn't look at me at all. Random women showed me their Instagram accounts on their phones, and people in shops were eager to draw me in for a sale.

A stranger in an antique store insisted I take a ring with me as a gift for visiting his country, all while beaming with pride. Someone in Jeddah handed me a cold bottle of water in the sweltering heat for no reason at all.

At one point during the trip, I noticed my private messages on Twitter were absolutely blowing up. This shocked me at first until I took the time to read them.

While a few Saudis politely invited me to convert to Islam, dozens of others asked me to meet them for dinner or tea. I didn't feel comfortable doing so considering the circumstances, but it felt very real and genuine.

Abayas are optional for tourists

Speaking of the long flowing robes Saudi women wear, which are referred to as abayas, they are no longer required for foreign women visiting the country. Considering I visited Saudi Arabia on the day this news was shared in 2019, I brought an abaya with me but quickly packed it away in my luggage.

Women who visit today only need to meet the same dress code as men, which requires conservative attire and covered knees and shoulders. During my visit, I dressed as I normally do, wearing long dresses with light sweaters along with pants and tops. I never covered my head, and I never felt out of place.

Gender segregation is real, evolving

Gender segregation is probably the most noticeable cultural difference in Saudi Arabia, and it can be absolutely jarring. While the country has ended the use of separate restaurant entrances for men and women, the separation of sexes is still the norm even when not required.

As an example, men and women go through separate security lines in Saudi airports, and women are moved through last. I had a business-class flight home from Jeddah to New York City, which normally includes early boarding, but I was one of the last people on the plane. One of the hotels I stayed in also had a men-only pool and a men's spa, but no facilities like these for female guests.

This should change — and it is changing — in real time in Saudi Arabia. However, change takes time, and visitors should know they will encounter some gender segregation before they go.

Top 'undiscovered' landmarks

If you love traveling off the beaten path, Saudi Arabia is definitely the place to be. The old city center of Jeddah is captivating with its uniquely designed antique balconies,

ancient sidewalks and curated shops selling everything from spices to intricately detailed clothing. The Islamic call to prayer rings loudly in the streets here five times per day, and it takes your breath away to hear it in such a historic and extraordinary place. Meanwhile, the Kingdom Centre Tower in Riyadh is a sight to behold, and the views of the city from its skybridge are unbelievable.

Saudi Arabia is also brimming with UNESCO World Heritage sites, from the Al-Ahsa Oasis to the Al-Hijr Archaeological Site and the At-Turaif District in ad-Dir'iyah. These are all places you can see and experience before nearly anyone else you know gets there.

The dining is amazing (even sans booze)

While alcohol is illegal in Saudi Arabia, that has the potential to change in the future. Either way, the alcohol ban didn't impact my trip to Saudi Arabia at all, and you shouldn't let it ruin your trip, either.

Some restaurants I dined in featured extensive drink menus with mocktails that were both delicious and fun. In one case, a waiter brought a drink cart to our table before crafting the most delicious virgin smoked mojito I have ever tasted. It was much more than a drink; it was an entire show, and every drink he made required at least six or seven steps.

Food was fresh, delicious and varied throughout the country as well, and many of the cuisines offered fit in nicely with my pescatarian diet. I enjoyed Chinese and Lebanese food in the capital city of Riyadh, plus plenty of freshly prepared seafood along the country's coast. No matter what you like to eat, you will find it here.

The bottom line

Saudi Arabia is on a path toward rapid change, but it's also a conservative kingdom with deeply rooted beliefs and cultural traditions. Some of the events I experienced there were slightly off-putting, yet I didn't let them bother me or ruin my trip. I also learned a lot and gained a greater understanding of this part of the world, which is something you can't do unless you see it for yourself.

The fact is, visiting Saudi Arabia feels a lot like flying back in time to an entirely different universe with modern conveniences but Old World beliefs. I've never experienced anything else like it, and I cannot wait to visit again.

WEEKEND: BOOKS

Familiar author back in ferocious form

Old characters return in Turow's latest legal thriller 'Suspect,' about a cop accused of trading sex for promotions

By RICK KOGAN
Chicago Tribune

There is often comfort to be had in the familiar.

You can wear that old sweater. Grab a stool at your cozy corner tavern. Order the "usual" at your favorite restaurant. Call a friend from high school. Or you can pick up a book with the name Scott Turow on the cover.

Across the 440-some pages of his latest, "Suspect," you will find Turow in fine form. Comforting, yes, but also satisfyingly fresh and creative.

He has never been a flashy writer. As I have written before, "one of the admirable aspects of Turow's work is that he is no showoff. As literate

and smart as anyone in the writing biz, he is not given to fancy literary flourishes."

But he will make you turn a book's pages, so forceful is his plotting, so eye-popping its twists and surprises, and so colorful his characters. The star of this new novel is one we have met before.

Clarice "Pinky" Granum was in Turow's previous novel, the terrific "The Last Trial" in 2020. She was the granddaughter of one of Turow's great characters, lawyer Alejandro "Sandy" Stern, who has been there since that initial blockbuster, 1990s "Presumed Innocent," in which Stern defended Rusty Sabich, the prosecutor accused of committing a murder in a case he was overseeing.

His books have arrived in a steady stream ever since, with Stern in roles



VICTOR HILITSKI, CHICAGO TRIBUNE/TNS

Bestselling author Scott Turow in his home office in Evanston on Sept. 9.

large and small. Turow's 11 bestsellers together have sold more than 30 million copies and there are movie versions of "The Burden of Proof," "Innocent," "Presumed Innocent" and "Reversible Errors."

Turow has also found time and energy to have a successful career as a lawyer who not only, as an assistant U.S. attorney, was lead counsel in the Operation Grey-lord trial but later, in private practice, helped free an innocent man from death row and worked pro bono for years on wrongful convictions and capital punishment reform.

He has also written nonfiction books, served as president of the Author's Guild, occasionally plays music for charity with that band of famous novelists (Stephen King, Amy Tan and others) known as the

Rock Bottom Reminders and contributes op-ed pieces to a variety of publications.

Born in Chicago, raised in the northern suburbs and long living in Evanston, Ill., his novel-writing success has inspired a generation of attorneys to, so to speak, put pen to paper. Results have varied, with only a few finding Turow-like success and praise (John Grisham and David Ellis come most quickly to mind). As the Wall Street Journal has written, "Scott Turow set the gold standard for the modern legal thriller."

In "The Last Trial" Pinky was, after overcoming a drugged-out youth, working as a paralegal for her grandfather's law firm and "a frequently infuriating employee." Sandy's "love for his granddaughter exceeds his understanding," but

he still thinks that she "has a solid future as a private investigator."

In bringing her back in full color, Turow has created one of contemporary fiction's most complicatedly arresting characters, one not easy to adore but one impossible to ignore.

She's still quite a handful at 33, pierced and inked and working as a licensed private investigator for 52-year-old lawyer Rik Dudek, mostly on nickel-and-dime cases, bar fights and such.

Now, they've got a big one, handling the troubles for police chief Lucia Gomez-Barrera, who has been accused by three officers of trading sex for promotions.

Gomez-Barrera is a fascinating and finely drawn character and those three officers are a nasty bunch. Adding to this mix is a strange neighbor, mixed sexual signals from old lovers and new ones, scandals and crimes aplenty.

One can sense the fun Turow must have had writing this, returning to fictional Kindle County, which bears an unmistakable, welcome resemblance to Chicago and Cook County. He is comfortable there and knows the territory, a place that contains dark sides teeming with secrets and sins.

And it comes as a pleasant surprise to again see Sandy Stern. He's no longer practicing law and is in assisted living. But he has a lady friend and sees Pinky every week. He loves her and she loves him. As she tells us in "Suspect," "I'm not sure I believe in the afterlife or mediums, but somewhere in my inner fibers I'm sure he'll be showing up long after he's gone, when I really need him."

Here's hoping.

Actress Wu meditates on her mistakes in revealing memoir

By THOMAS FLOYD
The Washington Post

When Constance Wu muses in "Making a Scene" that "true self-awareness requires context," the 40-year-old actress is essentially posing the thesis of her illuminating new memoir. A gifted performer hounded by a diva reputation, Wu isn't afraid to portray herself as volatile,

cruel or conceited in enthralling essays that range from wistful recollections to uncomfortable confessions.

"It sounds annoying and attention-seeking," she writes about the faux argument she had with an old boyfriend in a crowded restaurant. "And it was." Remembering how her teenage self treated her younger sister, Wu admits she was "mean and controlling." Describing a misguided grudge she held against her "Fresh Off

the Boat" co-star Randall Park, Wu says, "Looking back, I cringe at my childish behavior."

But "Making a Scene" is less of a mea culpa than a meditation on those mistakes (though there is a chapter titled "An Apology"). That willingness to not just address her faults but grapple with them makes Wu's memoir all the richer. Throw in her talent for vivid scene setting, plus an understanding that reflections are nothing without introspection, and the "Crazy Rich Asians" star delivers a page-turner that amounts to much more than its headline-grabbing revelations.

When Wu does open up on her trauma, she finds purpose in the retelling. Her upsetting memory of being raped at age 22 by a man 14 years her senior becomes a nuanced interrogation of the "cool girl" and "good guy" clichés. Wu's accusation that she was sexually harassed by a "Fresh Off the Boat" producer and her instinct to let that behavior slide until the show was thriving be-

gets a conversation about Hollywood's toxic power dynamics.

"It's unfortunate that success was a precondition of basic human respect for an actress — but that was the reality I learned when I got a TV show," Wu writes. "It was unsettling and confusing."

As Wu indicated in a July statement on social media, the book also documents her 2019 suicide attempt amid the online backlash to tweets she sent ruing "Fresh Off the Boat's" renewal. Pried by a friend from the edge of her New York apartment's balcony, Wu clarifies that she never wanted to take her own life but still found herself awash in hopelessness.

While "Making a Scene" is light on laughs — and a few attempts at humor fall flat — the overarching experience isn't as harrowing as those chapters would imply. Much of Wu's story, rather, is driven by poignant memories of her varied flings and loves. Her lustful connection with Rob, the maitre d' at an

upscale New York restaurant where she waitressed, paints an all-too-relatable picture of a fiery romance that slowly loses steam. Wu's yearslong on-again, off-again dynamic with one boyfriend makes for an aching account of non-reciprocated romance. The twists and turns of a longtime friend-with-benefits relationship wouldn't be out of place in a rom-com.

Curiously, the catharsis of Wu connecting with her current partner — musician Ryan Kattner, with whom she welcomed a daughter in 2020 — never arrives, as Kattner is only mentioned in passing. She also saves the devastating tale of her separated parents for the final chapter, in which she details their troubled marriage and ugly divorce, all while thoughtfully recontextualizing their parenting within her own decision to become a mother.

Wu showcases a knack for mining meaning out of the slightest essays, about her teenage job at a quaint bakery, for example,

or her idiosyncratic affection for bunnies. She also writes about her formative forays into community theater with endearing enthusiasm. And Wu offers thoughtful observations about the pressures and prejudices of navigating Hollywood as an Asian American woman, particularly when it comes to countering cultural critiques of "Fresh Off the Boat."

At one point, when describing a confession to a friend in high school, Wu writes, "What a relief it was to share something bad about myself and still be loved!" Readers will decide whether that's the case with "Making a Scene," but if nothing else, she deserves credit for exposing herself to scrutiny. In a clever device, Wu writes out some particularly candid exchanges as scenes from a screenplay. It's a welcome break in structure for an actress who, by skipping over frivolous on-set anecdotes and leaning into messy admissions, puts her own spin on the Hollywood memoir script.



WEEKEND: MUSIC

APPRECIATION

A legacy built on honesty

Loretta Lynn's voice carried unflinching truth about love, motherhood, women's lives

BY MIKAEL WOOD
Los Angeles Times

Loretta Lynn had a voice made for telling the truth. High and flinty, with a bone-deep coal-country drawl that refused to fade even as she ascended to a queenly position in the Nashville star system, her singing sliced through polished arrangements like a sharpened blade. It could embody both the pain of betrayal and the thirst for revenge; it carried a longing for the comforts of home at the same time that it imagined ways to improve on the old days. And though she easily navigated tricky melodies — spare a thought for the countless karaoke DJs who've endured the mistreatment of "Louisiana Woman, Mississippi Man" — her delivery was always straightforward: Here's what happened, and don't blame me if you can't handle it. If Lynn, who died Tuesday at age 90, ever learned to soft-pedal an emotion, she never revealed it onstage or in the studio.

Indeed, honesty — about love, about motherhood, about the nature of women's lives in an era of shifting mores — was perhaps the defining quality of Lynn's half-century-long career as a country singer and songwriter eager to illuminate experiences too often hidden from view.

She pushed back against a husband's territorialism in "Don't Come Home A-Drinkin' (With Lovin' on Your Mind)," a No. 1 hit — her first of 16 — in 1967. She described the sexual freedom afforded by widely available birth control in "The Pill" and, not coincidentally, the stigma faced by divorced women in the mid-'70s in "Rated X." Her signature song, "Coal Miner's Daughter," rendered her rural

upbringing in starkly unembarrassed language — then led to a bestselling memoir and a Hollywood film adaptation starring Sissy Spacek in the Oscar-winning title role.

The forthrightness of Lynn's music turned a tale of would-be subjugation — married at 15, a mother by 16, ritually cheated on by the spouse who also acted as her manager — into one of female empowerment. Today we'd say she was taking control of her narrative, radically reframing its pressures and indignities to center her lived experience instead of those of the men around her.

She also found dark humor in the details of a patriarchal society: Songs like "You

Ain't Woman Enough (to Take My Man)" and "Fist City" threatened violence against the women competing with her for a man's attention. Yet in each you can hear Lynn's scorn for a system that props up dummies — "Not saying my baby's a saint / 'Cause he ain't," she sings in "Fist City" — as prized jewels to be fought over.

Lynn's success expanded a previously male-dominated country-music business — in 1972 she became the first woman to be named entertainer of the year by the Country Music Association — but it also helped bring country music into pop-cultural spaces that hadn't necessarily welcomed Nashville's finest. Lynn seemed to be everywhere in the late '70s and early

'80s: performing with the Muppets, singing at President Jimmy Carter's inauguration, duetting on TV with Frank Sinatra. The "Coal Miner's Daughter" movie pushed her further into the mainstream but didn't do a thing to diminish her what-you-see-is-what-you-get.

"I love running barefooted through the old cornfields, and I love that country ham," she famously sang in "You're Lookin' at Country," and there's simply nothing to do but stan a songwriter who uses a word as down-home as "ham" in her work.

Lynn's once-bustling recording career began to slow down in the '90s, just as a

SEE HONESTY ON PAGE 29



TNS

Loretta Lynn performs in California in 1972. Lynn, who spoke frankly of her experiences as a woman and mother in Appalachia on such hits as "Coal Miner's Daughter," "You Ain't Woman Enough" and "The Pill," died Oct. 4 at age 90.

WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS

Honesty:
Lynn’s influence
is still being felt

FROM PAGE 28
new generation of female country stars like Shania Twain and the Dixie Chicks were carrying on her happy embrace of taboo subject matter. But she made a high-profile comeback in 2004 with “Van Lear Rose,” an album she recorded with Jack White of the White Stripes, and she stayed on the road pretty consistently into her 80s, even if she didn’t always seem psyched to be there. I vividly remember a gig in the late 2000s where she kept handing off vocal duties to one of her bandmates while she sat on an ornate throne.
“Miss Loretta, I think the audience might like to hear you sing one,” the guy told her, which I suppose was true enough, though I for one was just as gratified by watching her not do something she didn’t want to do.
In 2016 Lynn released the first installment in a series of recordings she made with her daughter Patsy Lynn Russell and with Johnny Cash’s son, John Carter Cash — intimately arranged collections of oldies and new tunes not unlike those Johnny Cash made near the end of his life with producer Rick Rubin. Signs of her influence only continued to crop up in music by the likes of Miranda Lambert, who thanked Lynn on Twitter on Tuesday for having “blazed so many trails for all of us girls in country music,” and Brandi Carlile, who debuted her Highwomen supergroup during a tribute concert to Lynn in Nashville in 2019. (Her impact stretched beyond country music too: A couple of years ago, Vampire Weekend’s Ezra Koenig, of all



Loretta Lynn made a high-profile comeback in 2004 by recording the album “Van Lear Rose” with Jack White. Above, Lynn and White pose with their Grammy Awards for best country album and best country collaboration with vocals on Feb. 13, 2005, in Los Angeles.

people, told me he’d styled his and Danielle Haim’s duets on VW’s latest album after Lynn and Conway Twitty’s late-’70s “You’re the Reason Our Kids Are Ugly.”)
As these people could tell you, the reason Lynn’s music still

makes sense all these years later — the reason you can put on her first single, “I’m a Honky Tonk Girl,” and still get a little jolt from her pure, pleading vocals — is because there’s nothing phony in it. It was true then; it’s true now; it’ll be true tomorrow.

Celebrity tributes pour in for Loretta Lynn

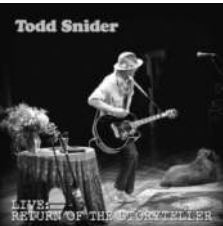
“Mama and Loretta Lynn were four years apart, Mama being the oldest. They always reminded me a lot of each other. Strong women, who loved their children and were fiercely loyal. Now they’re both in Heaven getting to visit and talk about how they were raised, how different country music is now from what it was when they were young. Sure makes me feel good that Mama went first so she could welcome Loretta into the hollers of heaven!”
— Reba McEntire, on Instagram
“We’ve been like sisters all these years we’ve been in Nashville and she was a wonderful human being, wonderful talent, had millions of fans and I’m one of them. I miss her dearly as we all will.”
— Dolly Parton, on Twitter
“Today is a sad day. The world lost a magnificent human being. Loretta Lynn was a great artist, a strong and resilient country music pioneer and a precious friend. I am heartbroken. I send my deepest sympathies to her wonderful family, her friends, and her loyal fans.”
— Sissy Spacek, in a statement

“It’s safe to say I wouldn’t even be making country music today if it weren’t for Loretta Lynn. She showed me up what it looked like to be a musician and a mama. Her writing was as real as the day is long. This one hurts on another level. I’ll miss her forever.”
— Margo Price, on Twitter
“She was an iconic legend and did things the way she wanted. I am so bless to call her friend. I miss u already Loretta. Love u. And rest now u angel.”
— Darius Rucker, on Twitter
“Celebrating the life of Loretta Lynn. One of my highest honors was being joined by her and George Jones on a song I wrote called “Country Music Has The Blues.” She handed me this wonderful gift on that day.”
— Billy Ray Cyrus tweeted, along with an image of a signed album Lynn gave him

From The Associated Press

Todd Snider

Live: Return of the Storyteller (Aimless Records/Thirty Tigers)
On Todd Snider’s new solo live album, some of his best riffs involve no notes.
The stoner troubadour and cosmic comic shares tales of the road, from tripping on a beach in California to a miscommunication meltdown in Montana. The latter cut lives up to its title: “Free Bird.” Reminiscences about several late friends include not one, not two, but three stories regarding John Prine. Snider also banters about Alan Greenspan, chasing songs, the downside of vintage clothing and the upside of living out his own kind of American dream.
It’s at times poignant and often very funny. While Snider deploys one-liners as hooks, there are songs, too, some decades old as he draws on a deep and varied catalog.
This live album deals a lot with death, and Snider weighs existential and spiritual matters while always looking for levity. The 95-minute set allows plenty of time to sum up his free-spirit philosophy: Everything in moderation, including moderation, life is a party or should be and every day is Friday night.
Recorded after Snider returned to touring following a pandemic hiatus, “Live: Return of the Storyteller” is a valuable snapshot of the peripatetic folkie’s enduring appeal, and a worthy follow-up to his excellent 2011 live set.
There’s more high hilarity to come.
“I’m just going to keep playing songs,” Snider says between tunes, “until I can’t do it.”
— Steven Wine
Associated Press



Corky Siegel’s Chamber Blues

MORE Different Voices (Dawnsery Records)
For more than half a century, Corky Siegel has brought new colors to the blues. “MORE Different Voices” is the latest endeavor by the composer/arranger to bridge musical genres and cultural divides, making the world slightly smaller and kinder.
Siegel has long favored classical flavors, and here he pairs his distinctive harmonica work with a string quartet, the result akin to a collaboration between Big Bill Broonzy and Borodin. Kalyan Pathak’s tabla and a parade of guests render stylistic boundaries even more elastic. Not everything works, and at least a couple of cuts run too long, but Siegel’s approach defies the notion the blues are formulaic.
“Hine Ma Tov Blues” quotes “Mannish Boy” while featuring a Jewish melody even more ancient. “Joyful Jambalaya” is an instrumental jam with skittering strings and a gonzo harp solo. Even the 12-bar blues becomes unpredictable on “Twisted” when the strings sound as though they might launch into Beethoven’s “Grosse Fugue.”
Throughout, Siegel keeps us guessing as to what will come next. Tracy Nelson sings a powerful rendition of her piano ballad “Down So Low,” and even 45 minutes into the album, it’s somehow a surprise when the classical strings enter.
They sound great. Tell Tchaikovsky the news.
— Steven Wine
Associated Press



Keith Jarrett

Bordeaux Concert (ECM Records)
When Keith Jarrett gently strikes the final note on the opening piece of “Bordeaux Concert,” 15 seconds pass before concertgoers begin to applaud, taking time to savor what they just heard.
New music from our greatest living jazz pianist, now 77, has always been something to relish, and even more so since he stopped performing in 2017 for health reasons.
“Bordeaux Concert” is the third show from Jarrett’s 2016 solo tour released by ECM, and it captures him in peak form. He fills a summer night in southwest France with an improvised 13-part, 78-minute suite that’s an astounding mix of intensity, introspection and invention.
Structure and pacing are a marvel as Jarrett’s on-the-spot composition swings between gorgeous lyricism and dissonant, distressed chromatic explorations that abandon tempo.
There are nods to Jarrett’s Hungarian roots and Bartók, to Debussy and Gershwin. For long stretches he’s at his most romantic and cinematic, as if he’s working out of a lost page from the Great American Songbook, and the music shimmers with beauty.
One yearning melody unfolds like an invitation to hum, and so Jarrett does. He likes what he’s hearing, and it’s easy to understand why.
— Steven Wine
Associated Press



WEEKEND: TELEVISION



“The Patient” is a psychological thriller about a therapist, Alan Strauss (Steve Carell, right), who’s held prisoner by a patient, Sam Fortner (Domhnall Gleeson), a serial killer.

FX

Falling into a new season of TV

Recommending 10 new and returning shows to watch as the leaves change color and the temperatures cool

BY INKOO KANG
The Washington Post

In the past year or so, the TV industry has undergone several seismic shifts.

Netflix lost at least half of its market value, forcing entertainment executives everywhere to question the conventional wisdom that streaming is the only ticket to the future. CNN+ launched and folded within a month. HBO Max, formerly considered by many to be the “best” streaming service, was swallowed up in scandal and uncertainty after an optics-blind corporate merger.

Somehow, network TV proved it’s not dead. And if television has irreparably poisoned and cheapened national politics, the televising of the Jan. 6 hearings may help vindicate the ubiquitous role that screens and images play in our lives.

Those shifts have trickled down to “Fall TV,” which has traditionally referred to the flood of new and returning shows on the broadcast networks around September. But with so many cable and streaming series premiering at the same time, it no longer makes sense to focus on those programs (especially when they’re called things like “So Help Me Todd”).

So here are my 10 recommendations for this “fall season.”



FX

Donald Glover as Earn Marks, Brian Tyree Henry as Alfred “Paper Boi” Miles in a scene from music dramedy “Atlanta.”

‘Abbott Elementary’

In a media landscape full of niche programming, creator-star Quinta Brunson aimed for mass appeal with her school-set mockumentary sitcom — and created a show with something for everyone. An earnest salute to teachers with a stacked cast and jokes for days, “Abbott Elementary” won three Emmys for its quietly innovative freshman year, including a richly deserved trophy for supporting actress Sheryl Lee Ralph. Though the network comedy pays tribute to its Philadelphia setting, there’s no question that it



ABC

Lecy Goranson and Laurie Metcalf are part of the ensemble cast of “The Conners,” which survived losing its leading lady.

conveys truths about the educational system across the country — and how instructors find the heart to care year after year. (Airs on ABC; streams on ABC.com and Hulu)

‘Atlanta’

After a wandering (and ultimately unsatisfying) third season, “Atlanta” has returned to its roots. The fourth and final season of Donald Glover’s existential yet larkish meditation on success and stuckness is off to an auspicious start, with music manager Earn (Glover) and his rapper client-cousin Paper Boi (Brian

Tyree Henry) disillusioned after, or by the process of, “making it.” The half-hour dramedy’s racial satire is as sharp as ever, as illustrated by a recent storyline that finds Paper Boi channeling his energies into finding the next white viral hip-hop star — in the estimation of cynical Black colleagues, the most readily monetizable kind of rap act. Since its launch in 2016, “Atlanta” has inspired countless copycats, but at its best, the FX series is still in a class of its own. (Airs on FX; streams on Hulu)

‘The Conners’

“The Conners” will never be as revolutionary as its mother series, “Roseanne,” was in its heyday. But jettisoning the face and original creative force of the franchise hasn’t made the occasionally daring multicam comedy, about a working-class Midwestern family forced back into a multigenerational housing arrangement, any less enjoyable. The series’ trademark sardonic humor — delivered by a first-rate comedy ensemble — is as consistent and vital as ever, as is the show’s keen interest in the ways that former generations’ routes to economic mobility have largely disappeared. (Airs on ABC; streams on ABC.com and Hulu)

SEE FALL ON PAGE 31

WEEKEND: TELEVISION

Fall: Picks include different kinds of comedies and dramas

FROM PAGE 30

‘House of the Dragon’

Sorry, it might be time to return to Westeros. To the holdouts: I understand the skepticism, especially after the godawful conclusion of “Game of Thrones.” The bumpy start to the prequel series, “House of the Dragon,” doesn’t help. But the Targaryen court drama shows much promise after its big time jump forward, which takes us to the medieval fantasy epic’s “present,” as a succession crisis threatens a civil war among the dragon-riding dynasty. And let’s face it: If you love TV as monoculture — as something that brings people together and gives us something to discuss (or argue about) with friends and strangers alike — there’s still nothing like George R.R. Martin’s visions of a cruel (and yet not entirely unrelatable) world in which women are too often reduced to their reproductive capabilities and the struggle for power assumed with too little consideration of the consequences. (Airs on HBO; streams on HBO Max)

‘Mo’

There’s no shortage of semi-autobiographical comedies, but “Mo,” from comedians Mo Amer and Ramy Youssef (“Ramy”), reminds us what the genre can accomplish when firing on all cylinders. Amer suffuses his titular protagonist with details from his own life: his trilingualism; his chatty easiness in a multicultural Houston and perpetual unease as a refugee waiting for years to be granted the right to work; his family’s unresolved traumas fleeing first Palestine, then an invaded Kuwait. (And yes, it’s funny!) Full of incidents and wrenching twists, “Mo” is never better as a portrait of a guy who crafted an armor of noncommittal affability to deal with the many frustrations in his life — and what happens when his loved ones realize they don’t know him as well as they’d been led to believe. (Streams on Netflix)

‘The Murdochs: Empire of Influence’

Thanks to “Succession,” the fate of Rupert Murdoch’s global empire after his death has become a cultural obsession. CNN’s six-part docuseries “The Murdochs” dramatizes the real-life soap opera that helped shape the HBO series, while providing an excellent (and often disturbing) overview of the Australian paterfamilias’ international sway. It’s a well-told yarn — and an even better explanation of how Murdoch has helped create our current media and political ecosphere. (Airs on CNN; available on demand via CNN.com)

‘The Patient’

A novel premise is only the first of the many boastworthy elements of FX on Hulu’s serial killer-cum-therapy drama. Starring Steve Carell as a psychotherapist forced to treat his captor, a compulsive murderer (played by Domhnall Gleeson) struggling to give up violence, the series dishes up distinctive characters and plenty of mordant wit. A cat-and-mouse game in which the mouse is already at the mer-



HBO

Matt Smith and Milly Alcock in “Game of Thrones” prequel “House of the Dragon.”

cy of the cat, the show continues to ratchet up the stakes for Carell’s counselor, who soon finds himself more sympathetic toward his capricious patient than he could have ever imagined. (Streams on Hulu)

‘Reservation Dogs’

FX on Hulu’s Native American comedy, about four teens and their impoverished but culturally rich Oklahoma small town, made a relatively quiet return this summer. But don’t let the muted response fool you; Season 2 is an undeniable improvement upon its predecessor, with its winsome young cast maturing into their performances and a streak of melancholy stemming from the core quartet’s dead friend, Daniel, serving as the emotional throughline. A standout funeral episode ironically injects the season with warmth, while chapters set at a group home and a prison, respectively, hint at the darker crevices into which the characters could fall when their community falters. (Streams on Hulu)

‘Sheng Wang: Sweet and Juicy’

It’s likely that no comedy special this year will be as remarkable as Jerrod Carmichael’s “Rothaniel.” But if you’re just looking for solid laughs — and maybe a new comedian to follow — Sheng Wang’s “Sweet and Juicy” is an outrageously fun hour, filled with clean jokes, writerly observations and more than a hint of a Texas drawl. Directed by Ali Wong, the special takes on familiar or mundane topics — aging, office work, buying pants at Costco — and gives them a loopy but relatable spin. It’s heartwarming to see someone so talented finally get the spotlight they deserve. (Streams on Netflix)

‘This Fool’

A gang-rehabilitation center for recent parolees is the unlikely — and rather inspired — setting for one of the year’s best comedies. Co-creator Chris Estrada’s overly sincere nonprofit dweeb, Julio, has his altruism questioned and his daily life turned upside down when his former gang-member cousin, Luis (Frankie Quiñones), is released from prison, joins the program and comes to live with him in Julio’s multigenerational childhood home in South Central Los Angeles. The episodes are full of affectionate satires of Mexican American culture and the non-profit world, while the budding bromance between the particular Julio and the free-wheeling Luis gives the series a much-welcome tenderness. (Streams on Hulu)



NETFLIX/AP

Abigail Cowen appears in a scene from “Fate: The Winx Saga” as fire fairy Bloom.

No magic, fairy dust

‘Winx Saga’ star, 24, says working in Hollywood not easy

BY ALICIA RANCILIO

Associated Press

Abigail Cowen, the star of Netflix’s popular teen series “Fate: The Winx Saga,” wants people to know that a life in showbiz may look glamorous and exciting, but it’s also filled with self-doubt and rejection. The 24-year-old is open about sleeping on a mattress on a floor in a small apartment and staying on friends’ couches until she landed a recurring role on “The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina” in 2018. Though she’s now the lead of “Winx,” Cowen says she still hears “no” a lot and believes that doesn’t stop until you’re a top box-office name.

In the Netflix series “Fate: The Winx Saga,” Abigail Cowen plays Bloom, a teenage fairy with recently-discovered powers. The second-season show has ranked on the streaming service’s Top 10 lists in several countries, finding its footing among similar teen dramas.

It’s a great gig with a passionate following that has taken Cowen to Ireland for filming and given her a steady job. Despite the success, she wants people to know that working in Hollywood is not easy or as magical as one might think.

Cowen admits to bouts of doubt where she asks herself, “Is this crazy? Is it going to work out? Is this actually going to be sustainable?” She also is forthright that regular rejection is common and she hears “no” a lot. “It never stops, I think, until you’re Brad Pitt or something.”

The fact that Cowen found her way to Hollywood could be as rare as discovering you’re actually a fairy. She grew up on a farm in the small town of Oviedo, Fla., where she says choosing to go into the entertainment business is “definitely not common.”

“I grew up in kind of the middle of nowhere. We had land and animals and stuff like that,” she said. “It wasn’t a neighborhood where you had your next-door neighbor that you go ride bikes with. I had my brother and we were like, ‘What do we do today? Let’s go create a story

outside and go use our imaginations.’ I fell in love with that and wanted to do it as a career.”

Cowen’s mom let her sign with an agent at age 12 who encouraged her to remain a kid in Florida and experience normal life before moving to Los Angeles.

“I got to go to high school and experience the stuff that Bloom is experiencing and draw from that, which I am very thankful for now,” she said.

When she did move to Los Angeles, Cowen said it took time for her to book a job that made her feel some security — a recurring role on “The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina” in 2018: “Leading up to that, I was living on a mattress on a floor in a little old apartment in North Hollywood with a roommate who literally slept next to me on another mattress on the floor, I also slept on friends’ couches. It was definitely a journey.”

In “Fate: The Winx Saga,” Cowen’s Bloom, a fire fairy, goes to school to learn how to handle her magical powers. While there, Bloom and her core four friends experience familiar themes such as friendship, love and rivalries.

The education of young people with special abilities, as in “Fate: The Winx Saga,” is a popular backdrop in storytelling. Harry Potter’s Hogwarts may be the most well-known school for magical arts, but there are also current plotlines. The upcoming spin-off of Amazon’s “The Boys” called “Gen V” will be set around a college for superheroes. In Peacock’s “Vampire Academy,” vampires and their guardians attend a special school called St. Vladimir Academy.

Cowen believes these shows, including “Fate: The Winx Saga,” resonate with viewers when the mythology is met with realism: “Even though we’re in a fantasy land, Brian Young, our showrunner, does a really good job of grounding it and bringing in real-life issues that a lot of young people face, that I faced growing up. Even my parents were like, ‘I could relate to that when I was younger. I could relate to that even now.’”

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS

BY EVE GLICKSMAN

Special to The Washington Post

The man had promised his betrothed daughter he would walk her down the aisle. So, at the recommendation of the doctor treating him for advanced lung cancer, the wedding date was moved up by two months.

“He was a man of his word,” says Charles von Gunten, the oncologist treating him. It took enormous energy for his bed-bound patient to dress for the occasion, held in a hospice facility, and accompany his daughter down the aisle in a wheelchair, von Gunten says.

That evening, after the reception, the father of the bride died.

You may have heard a version of this story before. A parent hangs on to life until a child arrives. Or against all medical odds, someone lives to see the birth of a grandchild. Or family members sit by the bedside for two days and the loved one dies when they step out for lunch.

Can people choose the moment they die?

Lizzy Miles, a hospice social worker in Columbus, Ohio, sees it all the time. Miles’ own great aunt died “the very second her chaplain walked in the room,” she said. Her great aunt, of strong faith, had been nonresponsive and inexplicably alive for days. In hindsight, the family believes she was waiting for the chaplain.

“All these things happen [often] enough that those who work in the field aren’t surprised,” says von Gunten, a pioneer of palliative medicine in the 1990s and editor in chief of the *Journal of Palliative Medicine*.

One theory is that a hormonal stimulus may enable us to hang on until a special event or loved one’s arrival. “What people will do for one another in the name of love is extraordinary,” von Gunten says. “I think of it as a gift when it happens.”

But there are limits. To be clear, no scientific evidence exists that we can control the moment we die. If we could will our death, there would be no right-to-die movement or legal battles over euthanasia.

Felice LePar, an oncologist with Alliance Cancer Specialists in the Philadelphia area, also believes that people may have some sway over the timing of their death. LePar cautions families that patients sometimes die quickly after deciding on hospice, despite no change in their medical condition.

“We can’t fully understand it,” she says. “Some people decide that they are just done living.” Other times, when reviewing lab tests, she wonders how a patient can still be alive.

“My rule of thumb is that when someone says ‘I think it’s soon,’ I listen,” von Gunten says. “They tend to know more than I do”



Choosing when we die

Stories of the dying holding on until a loved one reaches or leaves the room makes some wonder if we have control over our final moments

about when they’re dying.

Few scientific studies have explored our last moments of life. Protectiveness and respect for the deceased figure into that. Dying is seen as sacred across all cultures, and getting approval from ethical review boards for such studies is difficult, von Gunten says.

Questions about potential harm to participants and intrusiveness arise, Miles adds.

“Do we bother people while they’re dying, to ask questions?”

whom Caswell interviewed during her research believe we have some measure of control over death after watching many patients die after loved ones left the room.

“Hearing voices may be what was holding them on to life,” Caswell says. When the family leaves, they are able to relax and let go, she says.

Waiting to die until people leave can be a protective gesture to spare loved ones who might not cope well, Miles says.

behind than about themselves. They do what they think their family wants, she says, and do not want to be a burden.

That’s why standard advice often includes giving permission to a loved one to die. “That reassurance can help people on both sides let go in peace,” von Gunten says.

“‘You’ve done what you need to do. We’re all right,’” Caswell suggests as an example of what to say.

Miles sees it differently, however: “If it is fear that is keeping a patient lingering, telling them it’s okay to let go may put unnecessary pressure on them to go before they are ready.”

How much do people in a non-responsive state know about what’s going on around them? Researchers used electroencephalography to measure the brain response of dying hospice patients to voices and sounds, before and after they lost consciousness.

The study found evidence of the brain responding to sound stimuli, supporting the idea that patients may know when someone is in the room. The researchers could not confirm, however, whether the patients understood what they were hearing or were able to identify voices.

Hospice workers refrain from saying people are “unconscious,” preferring the term “nonrespon-

sive,” Miles writes on her blog. Even actively dying patients seem to have an awareness of what’s going on in the room, she says. Minute gestures — the fluttering of an eye, a swallow or a head turn — can be a response. One patient started breathing along with the music she put on, “almost like he was conducting,” she recalls.

I am convinced my father could hear me while dying despite his deep-sleep appearance. He squeezed my hand once and there was an upward head tilt when I said I’d take care of my mother. Then, a funny, bemused lift of the brow when I said I would write about him.

More convincingly, I had been updating my father regularly on my brother and sister-in-law’s journey to be there as I received word in texts — the flight delay, rental car line, traffic. Within 15 minutes of my brother’s arrival, my father died after holding on, nonresponsive, for 16 hours.

“It’s impossible to know, let alone prove or disprove,” says Sam Parnia, about whether we can influence our time of death. Parnia is an expert in the scientific study of cardiac arrest and death and associate professor of critical care medicine at New York University Grossman School of Medicine.

What Parnia is sure about from his research is that death is not a fixed moment and that it is not well understood. Parnia has studied thousands of testimonies from people who were resuscitated after being considered dead. They consistently described feeling conscious, lucid and aware of what was going on after their heart stopped.

“Calling the time of death when the heart stops beating and the body and brain stop functioning reflects social convention rather than the science of what is happening to the body biologically,” Parnia says. “Studies have shown categorically that our brain cells do not die for many hours after we die.”

Von Gunten advises people to behave around the dying the same as always — not being afraid they will break if you hold them, for example.

“You don’t have to keep children quiet and lights don’t have to be dimmed,” he says. “Whispering outside the door is the worst thing you can do if that person always wants to know everything.”

Ideally, the dying person will have talked to family and friends about their end-of-life wishes beforehand, Caswell says. Who do you want at your bedside, or do you prefer solitude? Do you want to listen to a cherished symphony during your last hours, or have someone read a favorite poem? It’s a hard conversation to have, but everyone benefits from that openness, Caswell says.

“It’s impossible to know, let alone prove or disprove.”

Sam Parnia

expert in the scientific study of cardiac arrest and death

she says. “This is a tender moment for people.”

Sociologist Glenys Caswell in Nottinghamshire, England, a self-described death studies scholar, has studied people who have died alone and stresses that it is not always sad.

“We all want different things in dying as we do in our living,” Caswell says. “Some [who are dying] don’t want people fussing over them or want to be alone when they aren’t feeling well. Others don’t want to distress their family.”

The hospice-at-home nurses

“It seems to happen most often when the patient is a parent,” she writes in one of her *Pallimed* blog posts. Her mother died when Miles took a short break to shower. The social worker says she felt guilty about that for years but learned to respect what seemed like her mother’s choice and personality. “Don’t project your own beliefs about what makes a good death,” Miles says she advises others who experience this.

LePar says people with a terminal illness often think more about the people they are leaving

WEEKEND: FAMILY



Is marital hatred normal?

Family therapist and author offers advice to help couples resolve conflict

By TARA PARKER-POPE
The Washington Post

Do you know what “normal marital hatred” is? If you’ve been married or in a long-term relationship, then you probably do. “I’ve been talking about this around the country for decades,” said Terrence Real, a bestselling author and family therapist who offers couples workshops. “Not one person has ever come backstage and said, ‘What do you mean by that?’ Everybody knows what it is.”

Even so, the idea that hating your romantic partner is “normal” may come as a bit of a shock to those who have idealized romantic relationships. One conversation with Real, and you will be cured of any notion that real life looks like a rom-com.

“No one acknowledges the underbelly of relationships,” said Real, author of “Us: Getting Past You & Me to Build a More Loving Relationship.” “Nobody acknowledges the darkness.”

Relationship experts have tried for years to unlock the mystery of how couples resolve conflict and learn to stay together.

Real said he thinks the real problem is that many couples turn conflict into a power struggle, and nobody wins.

“In normal circumstances, if you’re unhappy with me, that is not the time for me to talk to you about how unhappy I am with you,” he said. “Everybody gets that wrong.”

So here’s what you should know about normal marital hatred: It’s OK to hate your partner.

“There are going to be moments when you look at your partner, and at that moment, there is a part of you that just hates their guts,” Real said. “You’re trapped with this horrible human being. How did you wind up here? What I want to say is, ‘Welcome to marriage. Welcome to long-term relationships.’”

But don’t despair, he said. “The question is: Now what? How do I deal with it?”

■ **Stop idealizing relationships:** Real notes that we wrongly celebrate an idealized version of commitment, like that “cute couple” we see at a party who seem to have a perfect relationship.

“Just once at a cocktail party, I wish someone would say: There’s Harry and Shirley. For the first 20 years, they fought like cats and dogs. He actually left her for a year and took up with another woman. Then they managed to work on it and settled down, and now they’re pretty OK. Aren’t they adorable?”

■ **Normal marriages or long-term partnerships are not happy all the time:** After four decades of counseling couples, Real has seen that all relation-

ships follow a consistent cycle: harmony and closeness; disruption; repair and a return to closeness. “This pattern of closeness, disruption and returning to closeness can play out at the micro level 20 times in the course of one dinner conversation. It can also play out over the macro level over decades,” he said.

■ **Your relationship is an ecosystem:** Real said traditional therapy, which can teach us to assert ourselves, set the record straight, set boundaries and push back, can actually add to the dysfunction of marriages.

He knows people don’t always like to hear it, but it’s healthier to start thinking of your relationship as an ecosystem where any disruption hurts you just as much or worse than it affects your partner.

“Stop thinking like two individuals, and start thinking ecologically,” he said. “Your relationship is your biosphere. You’re not above it. You’re in it. You breathe it.”

Once you realize that it’s in your self-interest to help your partner feel better, it’s easier to de-escalate conflict. Save the constructive conversation for later, when you’re both open to listening, instead of in the middle of a fight.

“This is not the time to say, ‘Well, let me tell you about all my issues with you!’ Everybody gets that wrong,” Real said. “Put objective reality aside. Enter into your partner’s subjective experience with compassion and curiosity. Say, ‘I’m sorry you feel that. Is there anything I could say or do that would help you feel better?’”

Real said it can be a tough pill to swallow, especially when you think your partner is in the wrong. But helping your partner get to an emotionally better place is the best way to protect the ecosystem.

■ **Learn how to repair:** Real said successful couples learn how to talk to each other during and after conflict. Instead of saying, “Don’t talk to me like that,” Real suggests something closer to, “I want to hear what you have to say, so could you speak to me differently so I can hear it?”

“I want both partners to be fully voiced, but you have to do it skillfully,” he said. “People have to learn to speak up for themselves and be loving at the same time. Nobody knows how to do that.”

■ **Discover real intimacy:** Real said we all long for a perfect relationship. But real intimacy actually happens when we learn to accept the imperfections of our partner.

“That’s the character of couple-hood,” he said. “You’re clear about your partner’s imperfections, and you feel the pain and frustration of it, but you choose to love them anyway. That’s mature love.”

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



Navy steaming ahead through colorful history

Recently, my husband, Francis, mentored a young man attending Officer Candidate School at Naval Station Newport, R.I. He received his commission last month, and his parents invited Francis and me out to a celebratory dinner.

During the meal, Francis regaled the new ensign with stories from his early years in the Navy. “Oooh, honey!” I recalled excitedly, “what about the time your first commanding officer ordered you to be the Easter Bunny at the command picnic, and you refused!” Francis relayed the hilarious tale of receiving a much-deserved verbal pummeling from his Prowler squadron commander, expletives deleted.

Francis told about offering his furious Officer Candidate School drill sergeant lame excuses for his unpolished belt buckle, swimming through vats of soupy kitchen scraps for his “Wog Day” initiation onboard the USS Independence, and, thankfully, not being present at the ill-fated Tailhook conference with the rest of his squadron in 1991.

At times, Francis noticed looks of confusion or alarm on the faces of the ensign and his parents. “Oh, don’t worry,” Francis assured them, “that isn’t done in the Navy anymore.”

Francis and I realize that the Navy is a very old institution with a long and storied history.

Fortunately, I’m quite familiar with old.

I’m a resident of old Rhode Island, which became an original colony in 1636 and the 13th state in 1790. I live in an old village, in an old house built in 1891. My house is filled with old things, such as antiques I bought during overseas tours, the gooseneck rocking chair from the Salvation Army in which I rocked all three of our babies, and the ugly afghan crocheted by my husband’s Aunt Millie in 1972 that may still smell like her cigarettes.

And although I’m technically “middle-aged,” I feel older than dirt.

More to the point, the Navy turns 247 years old next week. Just like our town and our house and my rocker, the Navy has a long, unique history with both good times and bad.

In August of 1775, it was my old state that suggested the Continental Congress create a naval force. Rhode Island, which has more registered boats than residents, had established its own tiny navy with two armed vessels to defend local merchant ships. Rhode Island’s delegates to the Continental Congress called for a larger fleet “for the protection of these colonies, and for employing them in such a manner and places as will most effectively annoy our enemies. ...”

John Adams liked the plan. After much debate, the resolution finally passed on Oct. 13, 1775, establishing the Continental Navy. After the Revolutionary War, America’s first president, George Washington, signed the Naval Act of 1794 creating a permanent standing U.S. Navy.

Since then, Navy sailors have valiantly fought in every military conflict for the past 247 years.

Certainly, the Navy has had low moments, from the decline of Civil War “ironclads” in the 1890s and the Navy’s role in deploying the atomic bomb during WWII, to the Tailhook sexual harassment scandal in 1991 and the Fat Leonard bribery and corruption cases still being investigated today.

As I know all too well, everything old has its blemishes. Strength and endurance are attained through a willingness to change to meet new demands. Nearly 2½ centuries of remarkable achievements, growth and modernization have made our U.S. Navy the strongest and most respected seafaring military force in the world.

I am so grateful for the experiences, adventures, rewards and hardships our family had during Francis’ 28 years in the Navy. From our old porch, I sometimes hear the national anthem playing from the Navy base across the bay, and no matter how old I get, it still puts a lump in my throat.

Happy birthday, ol’ Navy. Wishing you many more years of fair winds and following seas.

WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

TAKE TWO

BY MEGHAN MORRIS / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

Meghan Morris is an appellate public defender in Denver, where she lives with her partner and twin kindergartners. She got into crosswords at the University of North Carolina, where she did them in *The Daily Tar Heel*. “I can’t promise that I never worked on a crossword in class,” she says, adding, “My college roommate recently reminded me that she and I would bemoan when the crossword was on the fold, because then it was hard to do discreetly.” — W.S.

ACROSS

1 Do some backup dancing?

6 Things with wires, often

10 Sweets

14 Musical whose name is an anagram of the members of a musical

18 “Here, take this”

20 Hit hard

21 Many a donor, for short

22 “You may disagree, but . . .,” to a texter

23 *What’s in your wallet

26 Actress ____ Flynn Boyle

27 Confidence-building mantra

28 Burdens with

29 Trimmer

30 Dash dial

31 Stretches of time

32 *Press junket

34 Country whose capital is named after an early U.S. president

37 Odd-numbered page, typically

39 Take in

40 Buzzing about

41 Bird watcher’s org., once

43 *Barbershop quartet

49 *Rocket scientist

53 Lines on which music is written

54 Opera whose title character is a singer

55 Complete

56 Hermanos de la madre

58 Like Legolas in “The Lord of the Rings”

60 Muscle used in a pull-up, informally

61 Word between “what” and “that”

63 R.&B.’s India. ____

65 Profit

68 *Security blankets

74 “Black Jeopardy!” for one

75 Apocalypse

76 Qantas hub, on luggage tags

77 Org. that merged with the 41-Across in the 1970s

78 Off-limits

82 Letters to ____ (rock group)

84 Cargo

87 Likely to offend, in brief

90 Author Ellison

92 *A drop in the bucket

95 *Ticketmaster

98 United hub, on luggage tags

99 Expected

100 League designation for the Durham Bulls and Salt Lake Bees

101 Cut choice

103 Power

106 *Ballet movements

111 Game of who, what and where

112 Ancestor of Methuselah

113 Is grating

114 Start of a literary series

116 Cottoned on (to)

120 ____ mater

121 Has no plan B . . . or, when parsed differently, what each of the starred clues does vis-à-vis its answer?

123 Having South Asian roots

124 Small table fare?

125 Summers on the Seine

126 Chorus section

127 Global brand of men’s dress shirts

128 Pair

129 Laura of “Big Little Lies”

130 Consulted for feedback about

11 John Legend’s “____ Me”

12 ____ Park, city west of Anaheim

13 Lifesaver, for short

14 Pico de gallo ingredient

15 Leave slack-jawed

16 Confuse

17 Doesn’t just increase

19 Faint pattern

24 Occupy

25 Weekend destination for an N.Y.C. getaway, maybe

29 Twitch, for instance

33 Fountain of youth?

34 Twitch problem

35 “The very ____!”

36 Power (up)

38 Like the head of a badminton racket

42 How you should “take me,” in a phrase

44 Modern reproductive tech inits.

45 Some votes in the Bundestag

46 Spanish 101 verb

47 Bitter

48 Major water source

50 Tool chain

51 Missouri county on the Arkansas border

52 Moved fast

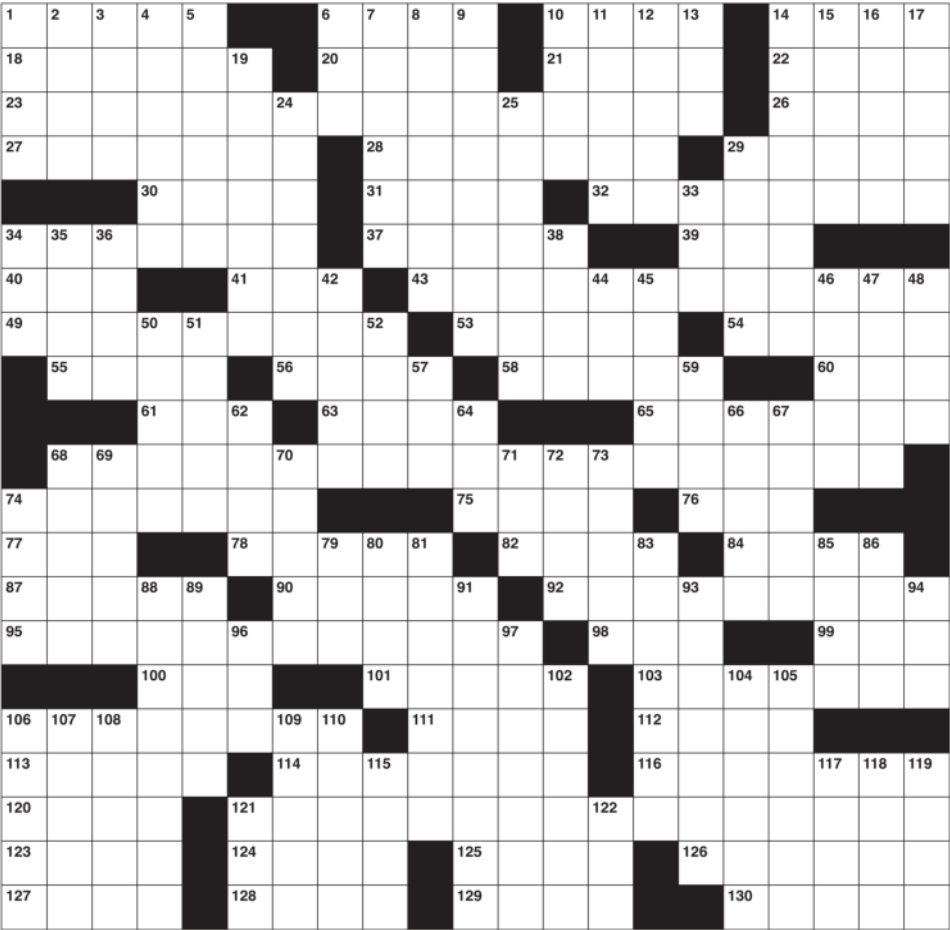
57 “Chandelier” singer, 2014

59 Suffix with bad, mad, sad and glad

62 Huff

64 Period in curling

66 “Schitt’s Creek” role for Sarah Levy



67 Title play character who never shows up

68 Open, as a gift

69 Bias

70 Maker of the E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial video game

71 “What’s up, ____?”

72 ____ sci

73 They’re heard in a chorus

74 Reasonable

79 Focus of many a law

80 German chancellor Scholz

81 Sir Isaac Newton work on the fundamentals of light

83 “Let’s begin our adventure!”

85 Opera that aptly premiered in Egypt

86 Good name for an archaeologist?

88 Idiot

89 Grumps

91 Excavated, with “out”

93 Give for a time

94 Jennifer Affleck ____ Lopez

96 It’s bad overseas

97 What the Beatles never did

102 With 104-Down, playground fixture

104 See 102-Down

105 One of South Africa’s official languages

106 Longtime Miami Heat great, to fans

107 Subleased

108 Playground comeback

109 Wood that sinks in water

110 “More or less”

115 Greenlit

117 Zero ____

118 Tesla, for one

119 Website with a Home Favorites page

121 Crumple (up)

122 QVC alternative

GUNSTON STREET



“Gunston Street” is drawn by Basil Zaviski. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and online at gunstonstreet.com.

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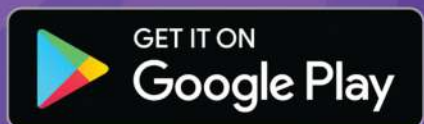
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Classifieds scams can target both sellers and buyers with classified advertisements.

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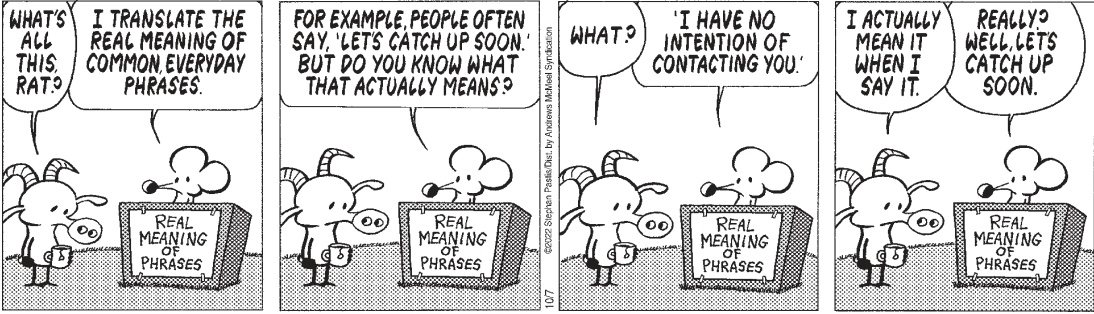
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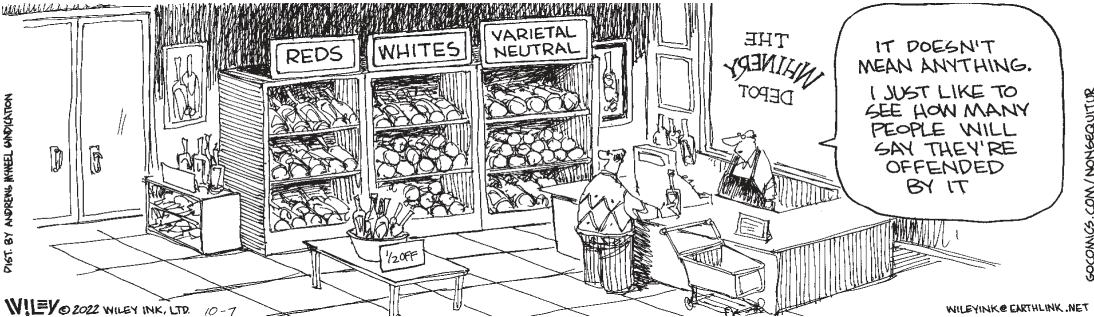
Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



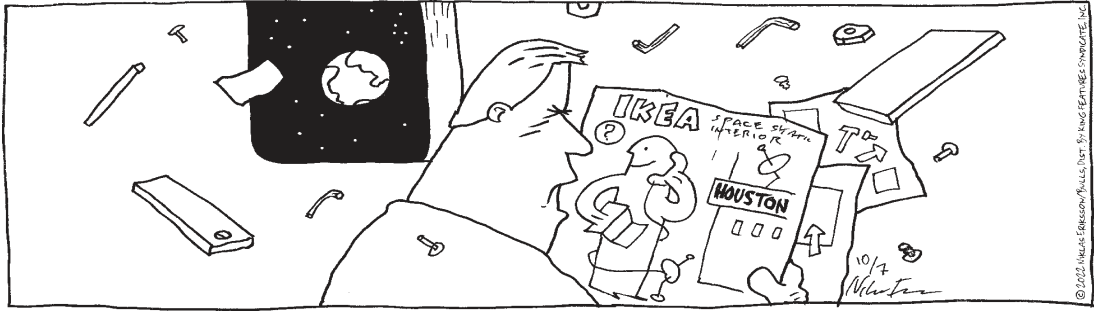
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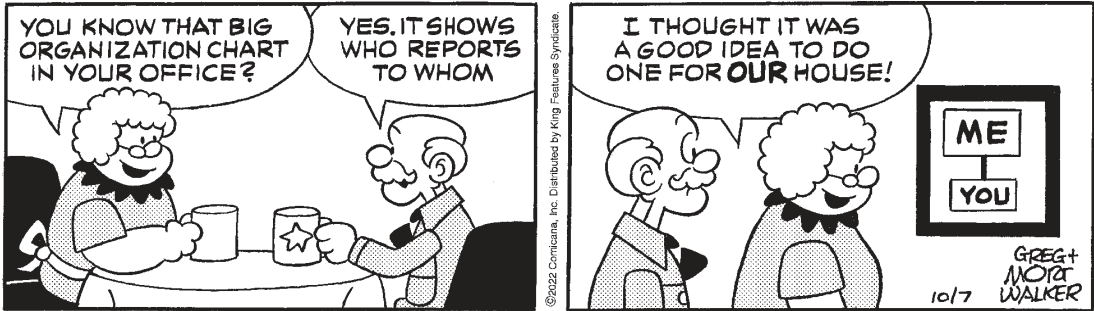
Candorville



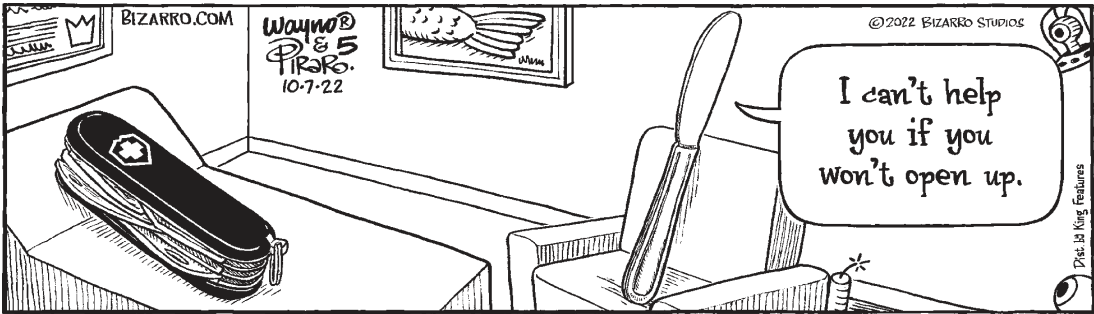
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15			16						17			
		18						19				
20	21					22	23					
24					25				26	27	28	
29				30					31			
32			33						34			
			35					36				
37	38	39					40					
41					42	43				44	45	
46					47					48		
49					50					51		

ACROSS

- 1 Ship's sail
4 Some TVs
8 Corned beef recipe
12 Terre Haute sch.
13 Greek vowel
14 Iso-
15 Flop
17 Pop's sister
18 Coated with gold
19 Is boastful
20 Forest clearing
22 Satiated
24 Partially mine
25 Screwdriver type
29 — Lanka
30 Warning
31 Compass dir.
32 Sailing challenge
34 Wound cover
35 Breaks down
36 Piles
37 Pink hue
40 Seniors' org.
41 Each
42 Unexpected gain
46 Story
47 Shoppe descriptor
48 24 horas
49 Building wings
50 Yale students

51 Conclude

23 Cooking fat

25 Move like a butterfly

DOWN

- 1 Skippy rival
2 "This — stickup!"
3 Sofia's land
4 Rummage (through)
5 Stallion-to-be
6 — standstill
7 Plopped down
8 Fireplace part
9 Water color?
10 Crooned
11 Chart toppers
16 Pot covers
19 Cigar remnant
20 "Holy cow!"
21 Entice
22 Secluded spots
26 Adventure
27 Now, in a memo
28 Society newbies
30 Missing GI
33 Curtains
34 Lowly worker
36 Devil's domain
37 Blanchett of "The Aviator"
38 Milky gem
39 Sandwich bread
40 "The King —"
42 Misery
43 Under the weather
44 Architect Maya
45 Young fellow

Answer to Previous Puzzle

O	P	E	D		B	A	M		N	O	A	H
R	I	D	E		U	N	O		A	U	D	I
E	L	E	V		G	I	L		A	T	M	S
M	E	N	I	A	L		O	R	C	S		
				S	N	E	A	K	A	P	E	E
E	M	B	E	D		S	A	G		L	E	E
R	E	A	D		S	K	I		B	L	O	T
A	O	K		C	E	E		D	I	S	C	O
S	W	E	E	P	S	W	E	E	K			
				S	P	A	S		C	R	I	S
C	H	A	I		I	D	O		N	O	E	L
T	A	L	C		O	Y	L		I	D	E	A
S	T	E	S		N	E	E		S	A	L	T

10-7

CRYPTOQUIP

E TYEDW-DXN SEYGXLU JH

ZMDPXDL, XWGTRX YJJL GF

SXYU ZJZMREY YGPAL DJN.

GL'F E HEWWGFA YEWGFA.

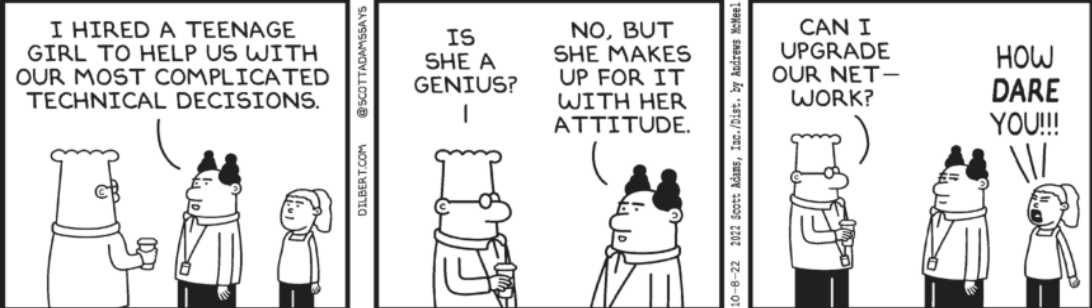
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I BOUGHT A SPECIALTY KITCHEN APPLIANCE TO COOK SPICY LOUISIANA SOUP. IT'S A GUMBO MACHINE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals N

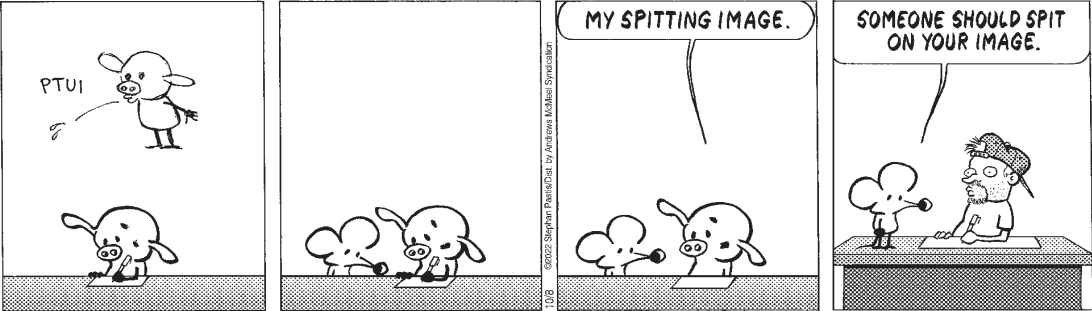
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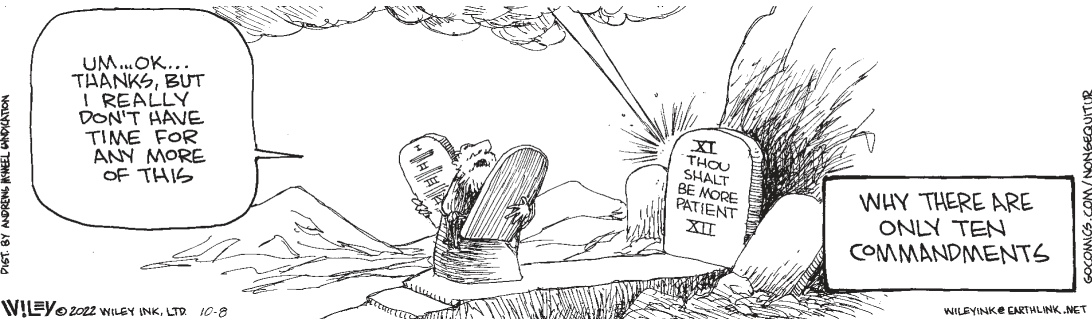
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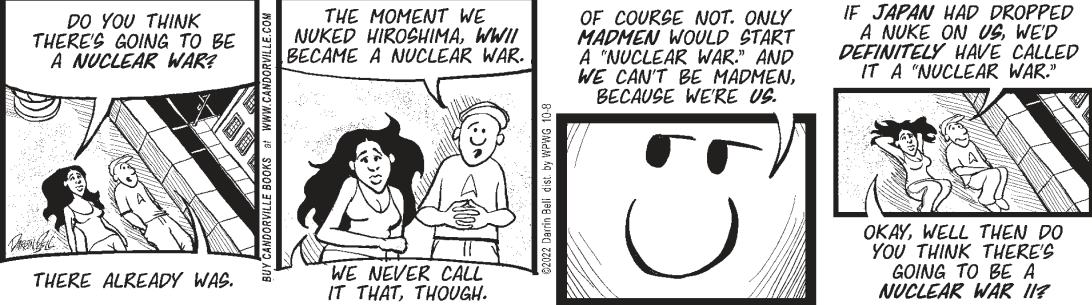
Pearls Before Swine



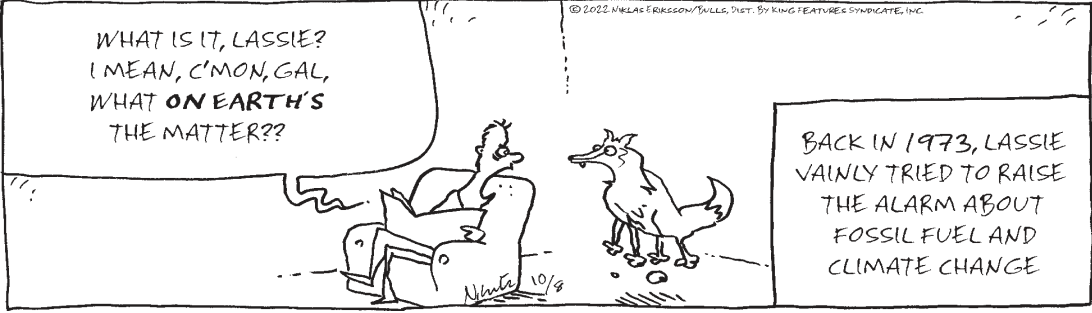
Non Sequitur



Candorville



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Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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15					16					17		
18					19				20			
			21	22			23	24				
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			37				38					
39	40	41			42	43			44	45	46	47
48					49				50			
51					52				53			
54					55				56			

- ACROSS
- 1 Sketch

5 Old name for France

9 Microwave

12 Top-of-the-line

13 Golden Rule preposition

14 "As I see it," in a text

15 Lady of Spain

16 Teen fave

17 Stannum

18 Out of control

19 Pool unit

20 Faction

21 Humorist

23 Follower (Suff.)

25 Cerebral

28 Car safety feature

32 Tree bumps

33 Unfettered

34 Closed tight

36 Outlaw

37 Summer in Paris

38 Flavor enhancer, for short

39 Aspic shaper

42 Pair

44 Now, in a memo

48 Rock producer Brian

49 TV's Griffin

50 Painter Magritte
- 51 Thesaurus wd.

52 DLI doubled

53 Partner

54 Chopper

55 Diminutive suffix

56 Dance move
- DOWN
- 1 Baby's father

2 Leeway

3 Part of A.D.

4 Easily swayed

5 Culpable

6 Forever — day

7 Perfect place

8 Texter's guffaw

9 Tubular pasta

10 During

11 Corn concoction

20 Coerces

22 Map feature
- 24 "The Da Vinci Code" monk

25 Small ammo

26 Wish undone

27 Coach

Parseghian

29 Physique

30 "— was saying ..."

31 Retrieve

35 Sense

36 Low-budget flick

39 Small plateau

40 Cameo stone

41 Single

43 Legal document

45 Plane reservation

46 Pot starter

47 Incubator noise

49 Bovary's title (Abbr.)

Answer to Previous Puzzle

J	I	B		R	C	A	S		H	A	S	H	
I	S	U		I	O	T	A		E	Q	U	I	
F	A	L	L	F	L	A	T		A	U	N	T	
		G	I	L	T				B	R	A	G	S
G	L	A	D	E		G	L	U	T				
O	U	R	S		F	L	A	T	H	E	A	D	
S	R	I		A	L	E	R	T		S	S	E	
H	E	A	D	W	I	N	D		S	C	A	B	
			R	O	T	S			H	E	A	P	S
C	O	R	A	L			A	A	R	P			
A	P	O	P		W	I	N	D	F	A	L	L	
T	A	L	E		O	L	D	E		D	I	A	
E	L	L	S		E	L	I	S		E	N	D	

10-8

CRYPTOQUIP

IBDSIBUU JSBL PFYDS LSLISHD

BUPBTD QDS YAS DXSWRZRW

Z RJASDD DTDJSL: JFS

XRJJDIQHEF XRUBJSD.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: A BRAND-NEW VARIETY OF PUNGENT, EDIBLE ROOT IS VERY POPULAR RIGHT NOW. IT'S A FADDISH RADISH.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals B



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EDITORIAL

Terry Leonard, Editor
leonard.terry@stripes.com

Robert H. Reid, Senior Managing Editor
reid.robert@stripes.com

Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation
moores.sean@stripes.com

Ann Pinson, Digital Managing Editor
pinson.ann@stripes.com

BUREAU STAFF

Europe/Mideast
Erik Slavin, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief
slavin.erik@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9350; DSN (314)583.9350

Pacific
Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief
kidd.aaron@stripes.com
+81.42.552.2511 ext. 88380; DSN (315)227.7380

Washington
Joseph Cacchioli, Washington Bureau Chief
cacchioli.joseph@stripes.com
(+1)(202)886-0033

Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
bowers.brian@stripes.com

CIRCULATION

Mideast
Kevin R. Miller, Circulation Manager
miller.kevin@stripes.com
xsscirculation@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9136; DSN (314)583-9136

Europe
Karen Lewis, Community Engagement Manager
lewis.karen@stripes.com
memberservices@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9090; DSN (314)583.9090

Pacific
Mari Mori, customerhelp@stripes.com
+81-3 6385.3171; DSN (315)227.7333

CONTACT US

Washington
tel.: (+1)202.886.0003
633 3rd St. NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20001-3050

Reader letters
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OPINION

How the war in Ukraine has remade Europe

BY DAVID IGNATIUS
The Washington Post

WARSAW, Poland
For Europe, Ukraine is the good war — a moment when brave Ukrainian patriots have partially rolled back a brutal Russian invasion and, in the process, reignited belief in the values of democracy and common defense.

As Ukrainian troops surged forward on the ground this week, European leaders who gathered at a conference here were heady with what many described as an impending Ukrainian triumph over Russian President Vladimir Putin and the lawless, autocratic system he represents.

The victory celebration is stirring but wildly premature. Many months of bloody fighting probably lie ahead, with the danger growing that Russia might use tactical nuclear weapons in an effort to stave off defeat. But politicians from across Europe seemed so galvanized by Ukraine’s recent battlefield success that many dismissed the dangers of Russian escalation and what could be a cold winter for an energy-short Europe.

We’ve been analyzing the war in Ukraine in military terms, but it also marks an extraordinary cultural shift for Europe. It was nearly two decades ago, amid bitter disagreements over the Iraq War, that Robert Kagan wrote that the differences over use of force had become so acute Americans seemed to be from Mars and Europeans from Venus.

Just three years ago, French President Emmanuel Macron pronounced that NATO was suffering “brain death.” With President Donald Trump fulminating about NATO, too, the trans-Atlantic alliance seemed to be collapsing on both sides of the ocean.

The war in Ukraine has largely reversed Europe’s phobia about the utility of military power — and the value of a strong alliance with the United States. To be sure, Europeans are wrapping themselves more in Ukraine’s blue and yellow flag than the red, white and blue. But it marks an enormous shift, not least because it’s shared by younger Europeans who have little memory of the Cold War but are repelled by the brutality of Putin’s authoritarian regime.

“Europe and the U.S. are closer than ever before,” said German Foreign Minister Anna-Lena Baerbock this week at the Warsaw Security Forum, expressing a view shared by many of the other speakers. “We were a bit late at the beginning of the war, but we shifted our course by 180 degrees when it comes to supporting Ukraine.” (The conference was co-sponsored by the German Marshall Fund, of which I’m a trustee.)

Just a year ago, Germany seemed to be betting that its economic security required good relations with Moscow and a steady flow of Russian energy. That benevolent attitude toward Russia has been shattered. “What we have seen now is the return of America as the essential factor in European security,” said Norbert Röttgen, a prominent German center-right politician who until last year chaired the foreign affairs committee of the German parliament.

The Warsaw gathering symbolized another reality of the new Europe: NATO’s center of gravity has moved east, toward Poland and the Baltic States, which are historic enemies of Russian power.

Polish President Andrzej Duda told a small gathering at the Belvedere Palace on Tuesday night that Ukraine’s defiant stand reminded

him of how the Polish army stopped the Russian Bolshevik army’s expansion west in 1919 and, in his words, changed the history of Europe. Outside the palace where he spoke stands an iconic statue of the general who commanded that Polish army, Marshal Józef Piłsudski.

These deep historical passions have been reignited by the war in Ukraine — and there’s a danger in seeing Russia exclusively through Polish or the Baltics’ eyes. But it’s clear that, as Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavský told the conference, “Central and Eastern Europe have a kind of leadership” in the war against Putin.

But at the same time, NATO’s gravitational center has also moved north, too, toward Finland and Sweden, two traditionally neutral nations that were so shocked by Putin’s invasion that they joined the alliance. As Anna Wieselnder, who heads the Stockholm Atlantic Council Office, reminded the group, the last time Sweden joined a European alliance was in Napoleon’s time, more than 200 years ago.

The most surprising theme of this gathering was the dismissal of Putin’s nuclear threats. Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said the saber-rattling was just “an attempt to frighten us.” Tactical nuclear weapons “will gain nothing militarily,” agreed Lithuania’s former foreign and defense minister Linas Linkevicius. Adm. Rob Bauer, a Norwegian who chairs the NATO military committee, said that despite Russian nuclear threats, “strategically, they have lost the war already.”

When triumphal talk is in the air, it pays to be skeptical. Wars don’t end easily or neatly. But the changes that the Ukraine conflict brought to the European mood seem real, and they could last for decades.

Claims that Britain is declining are old, wrong

BY GUY ORTOLANO
Special to The Washington Post

It’s been a tumultuous summer in the United Kingdom. A cascade of crises toppled former Prime Minister Boris Johnson in July. Inflation is soaring, the pound is plunging and the nation is bracing for a winter energy crisis. Brexit has not yielded the autonomy, efficiency or prosperity that its champions promised — but it might spur the undoing of the 315-year union between England and Scotland. Then, on Sept. 8, Queen Elizabeth II’s death marked the end, after 70 years, of a powerful symbol of stability.

U.S. correspondents, struggling to make sense of these developments, have arrived at a familiar diagnosis. Britain, they smirk, is suffering the consequences of its decline. In July, one prominent newspaper heralded “A Darkened Outlook for Britain.” A month later, the same outlet warned, “Crises Loom in UK.” Upon the queen’s death, it began asking, “Can the UK Remain United?” The implication was no — it could and would not.

This schadenfreude is not cold-eyed analysis but a tired cliché. Because while today’s challenges are certainly real, this diagnosis of decline is 150 years old. Of course, the U.K. no longer commands the raw power of a century ago. But “decline” is not a neutral characterization of economic and geopolitical changes. It implies something avoidable and regrettable, whereas these developments have been inevitable — and, in the case of the end of the British Empire, desirable.

The first round of “declinism” emerged in the 1870s. A half-century after Britain’s indus-

trialization, Germany and the United States began to catch up. Their development heralded the end of Britain’s singular hegemony, spurring commentators to diagnose a nation in decline. Yet, despite these melodramatic claims, it took another 70 years before the U.S. displaced Britain as the world’s global hegemon. Even then, growing American wealth made Britain no poorer, while the end of the British Empire — and British colonialism — was an odd thing to mourn.

A second round of declinism flourished in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Britain’s economy was actually growing faster than at any time in memory, but the rate of that growth lagged behind its European peers. While Germany had bombed British cities during World War II, the U.K. had avoided invasion or occupation, leaving it with less ground to make up than the devastated states of continental Europe. Weirdly, then, entering the 1960s Western Europe’s richest economy was simultaneously cast as the one suffering endemic decline.

A third round of declinism dominated the 1980s. During the previous decade, in Britain as elsewhere, a series of recessions had produced political challenges. Speaking to the electorate’s anxieties, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher promised to reverse Britain’s decline. In practice, this grandiose pledge meant the routine business of repudiating the priorities of the outgoing Labour government. Decline, for the Conservatives, served not as an economic analysis but as a political weapon.

While the specifics have differed each time, today’s declinism shares with its predecessors

one key assumption. Rather than understanding change as constant in a fluid world system, those trumpeting British decline imagine that things could go differently. Britain’s challenges have generally resulted from happenings elsewhere: U.S. and German industrialization during the 19th century; anti-colonial nationalism after World War II; international recession in the 1970s; a global pandemic today. But rather than offering a worldly understanding of worldly events, declinists fixate on a single country’s supposed errors instead.

In this way, though they imagine themselves differently, today’s declinists are no different from yesterday’s imperialists. They all believe that a medium-sized European country should be able to engineer its own fate. But few nations — even the United States — enjoy such autonomy. The normal life of nations sees them struggling to play the cards the wider world deals them. It just happens to be the case that, as today’s crises mount, those cards have lately included more Trumps than trumps.

England is an old country. Despite 150 years of announcements of its eclipse, today it is more prosperous and less imperial than a century ago. It is certainly true that Britain has experienced changes, faces real challenges and suffers under a government prone to turning both into crises. But every successive crisis is not evidence of national collapse.

The queen is dead. England is not.

Guy Ortolano teaches modern British history at New York University. He is currently a visiting professor of history at King’s College London.

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East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Buffalo	3	1	0	.750	114	58
Miami	3	1	0	.750	98	91
N.Y. Jets	2	2	0	.500	76	101
New England	1	3	0	.250	74	98

South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Jacksonville	2	2	0	.500	105	67
Tennessee	2	2	0	.500	75	101
Indianapolis	1	2	1	.375	57	85
Houston	0	3	1	.125	73	93

North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Baltimore	2	2	0	.500	119	100
Cincinnati	2	2	0	.500	91	70
Cleveland	2	2	0	.500	105	95
Pittsburgh	1	3	0	.250	74	90

West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Kansas City	3	1	0	.750	129	96
Denver	2	2	0	.500	66	68
L.A. Chargers	2	2	0	.500	92	108
Las Vegas	1	3	0	.250	96	100

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Philadelphia	4	0	0	1.000	115	71
Dallas	3	1	0	.750	71	62
N.Y. Giants	3	1	0	.750	76	71
Washington	1	3	0	.250	73	107

South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Atlanta	2	2	0	.500	103	101
Tampa Bay	2	2	0	.500	82	68
Carolina	1	3	0	.250	78	85
New Orleans	1	3	0	.250	76	96

North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Green Bay	3	1	0	.750	75	69
Minnesota	3	1	0	.750	86	80
Chicago	2	2	0	.500	64	77
Detroit	1	3	0	.250	140	141

West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Arizona	2	2	0	.500	88	103
L.A. Rams	2	2	0	.500	70	94
San Francisco	2	2	0	.500	71	46
Seattle	2	2	0	.500	95	115

Thursday's game
Indianapolis at Denver

Sunday's games
N.Y. Giants vs Green Bay at London
Atlanta at Tampa Bay
Chicago at Minnesota
Detroit at New England
Houston at Jacksonville
L.A. Chargers at Cleveland
Miami at N.Y. Jets
Pittsburgh at Buffalo
Seattle at New Orleans
Tennessee at Washington
San Francisco at Carolina
Dallas at L.A. Rams
Philadelphia at Arizona
Cincinnati at Baltimore

Monday's game
Las Vegas at Kansas City

Thursday, Oct. 13
Washington at Chicago

NFL Injury Report

NEW YORK — The National Football League injury report, as provided by the league (OUT: Player will not play; DOUBTFUL: Player is unlikely to play; QUESTIONABLE: Player is not certain to play; DNP:

did not practice; LIMITED: limited participation; FULL: Full participation):
Sunday

ATLANTA FALCONS at TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS — **ATLANTA:** DNP: P Bradley Pinion (NIR-personal matter), TE Kyle Pitts (hamstring). **TAMPA BAY:** DNP: QB Tom Brady (right shoulder, right finger), TE Cameron Brate (concussion), DT Akiem Hicks (foot), S Logan Ryan (foot), LIMITED: WR Russell Gage (hamstring), WR Chris Godwin (knee), WR Julio Jones (knee), WR Breshad Perriman (knee, hamstring), T Donovan Smith (elbow). FULL: CB Carlton Davis (shoulder).

CHICAGO BEARS at MINNESOTA VIKINGS — **CHICAGO:** DNP: S Dane Cruikshank (hamstring), CB Jaylon Johnson (quadricep), CB Jaylon Jones (illness), RB David Montgomery (ankle). LIMITED: LB Matthew Adams (hamstring), TE Ryan Griffin (achilles). **MINNESOTA:** LIMITED: CB Andrew Booth Jr. (quadricep), OLB Za'Darius Smith (knee). FULL: CB Cameron Dantzler Sr. (hip).

CINCINNATI BENGALS at BALTIMORE RAVENS — **CINCINNATI:** DNP: TE Devin Asiasi (ankle), OT La'el Collins (NIR-resting player). LIMITED: WR Tee Higgins (ankle), TE Hayden Hurst (groin), G Evan McPherson (groin). FULL: LB Germmaine Pratt (knee). **BALTIMORE:** DNP: WR Rashod Bateman (foot), DE Calais Campbell (NIR-resting player), RB J.U.K. Dobbins (chest), RB Justice Hill (hamstring), OLB Justin Houston (groin), CB Marcus Peters (NIR-resting player). LIMITED: OL Patrick Mekari (ankle). FULL: ILB Josh Bynes (hip), T Ronnie Stanley (ankle).

DALLAS COWBOYS at LOS ANGELES RAMS — **DALLAS:** DNP: TE Jake Ferguson (knee), CB Jourdan Lewis (groin), QB Dak Prescott (right thumb). LIMITED: DT Quinton Bohanna (neck, shoulder), S Donovan Wilson (ankle). FULL: WR Noah Brown (neck), S Malik Hooker (thumb), S Jayron Kearse (knee), G Connor McGovern (ankle), TE Dalton Schultz (knee). **LOS ANGELES RAMS:** DNP: C Brian Allen (knee), CB Decobie Durant (hamstring), S Jordan Fuller (hamstring), G Coleman Shelton (ankle). LIMITED: G David Edwards (concussion), CB David Long (groin), S Taylor Rapp (ribs).

DETROIT LIONS at NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — **DETROIT:** DNP: LB Chris Board (knee), C Evan Brown (ankle), WR Quintez Cephus (foot), WR D.J. Chark (ankle), DL John Cominsky (wrist), TE T.J. Hockenson (hip), C Frank Ragnow (foot), WR Josh Reynolds (ankle), WR Amon-Ra St. Brown (ankle), RB D'Andre Swift (shoulder/ankle). LIMITED: G Kayode Awoyika (hamstring), T Taylor Decker (knee), G Jonah Jackson (finger), T Matt Nelson (calf), K Austin Seibert (right groin). **NEW ENGLAND:** DNP: DL Lawrence Guy (shoulder), QB Brian Hoyer (concussion), DL DaMarcus Mitchell (concussion), TE Jonnu Smith (ankle). LIMITED: S Kyle Dugger (knee), QB Mac Jones (ankle), LB Raekwon McMillan (thumb), WR Jakobi Meyers (knee), CB Jalen Mills (hamstring), S Adrian Phillips (ribs), OT Isaiah Wynn (hip).

HOUSTON TEXANS at JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS — **HOUSTON:** LB Blake Cashman (concussion), T Austin Deculus (ankle), DE Jonathan Greenard (ankle), DT Kurt Hinish (illness), DE Jerry Hughes (NIR-resting player), TE Brevin Jordan (ankle), LB Christian Kirksey (NIR-resting player), WR Chris Moore (hip). LIMITED: DT Maliek Collins (knee), WR Brandin Cooks (NIR-resting player), CB Derek Stingley (elbow, shoulder). FULL: G Kenyon Green (knee), T Tytus Howard (ankle). **JACKSONVILLE:** DNP: DT Folorunso Fatukasi (quadricep). LIMITED: LB K'Lavon Chaisson (ankle), WR Zay Jones (ankle), G Cole Van Lanen (hamstring).

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS at CLEVELAND BROWNS — **LOS ANGELES CHARGERS:** DNP: WR Keenan Allen (hamstring). LIMITED: K Dustin Hopkins (right quadricep), WR Josh Palmer (ankle), MLB Kyle Van Noy (back). FULL: QB Justin Herbert (ribs), RB Zander Horvath (quadricep), NT Austin Johnson (shoulder), TE Tre McKittyu (quadricep), TE Donald Parham (hamstring). **CLEVELAND:** DNP: G Joel Bitonio (biceps/NIR-resting player), TE Harrison Bryant (illness), DE Jadeveon Clowney (ankle), WR Amari Cooper (NIR-resting player), TE David Njoku (knee/NIR-resting player). LIMITED: DT Taven Bryan (hamstring), DT Jordan Elliott (knee), DE Myles Garrett (shoulder, biceps), T Joe Haeg (concussion), LB Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah (groin), CB Denzel Ward (back, ribs). FULL: DE Isaiah Thomas (hand).

MIAMI DOLPHINS at NEW YORK JETS — **MIAMI:** DNP: T Terron Armstead (toe), TE Cethan Carter (concussion), DB Keion Crossen (glute/shoulder), CB Xavien Howard (groin), LB Melvin Ingram (NIR-rest-

ing player), OL Robert Jones (back), QB Tua Tagovailoa (concussion/back/ankle), WR Jaylen Waddle (groin). LIMITED: LB Jerome Baker (NIR-resting player), S Brandon Jones (chest), DL Zach Sieler (hand). FULL: TE Tanner Conner (knee), DT Raekwon Davis (knee), LB Trey Flowers (knee), T Greg Little (finger), TE Hunter Long (ankle), WR Cedrick Wilson (ribs/toe). **NEW YORK JETS:** DNP: T Max Mitchell (knee), LB Quincy Williams (ankle). LIMITED: RB Breece Hall (knee), LB Marcell Harris (neck), QB Zach Wilson (ankle).

NEW YORK GIANTS at GREEN BAY PACKERS — **NEW YORK GIANTS:** DNP: DB Cordale Flott (calf), WR Kenny Golladay (knee), WR Richie James (ankle), DB Julian Love (concussion), DL Henry Mondeaux (ankle), LB Azeez Ojulari (calf), QB Tyrod Taylor (concussion). LIMITED: QB Daniel Jones (ankle), DB Nick McCloud (hamstring), DB Fabian Moreau (foot), OL Evan Neal (neck), WR Wan'Dale Robinson (knee), WR Kadarius Toney (hamstring), DL Leonard Williams (knee). **GREEN BAY:** DNP: S Adrian Amos (concussion). LIMITED: CB Jaire Alexander (groin), T David Bakhtiari (knee), S Tariq Carpenter (abdomen), G/T Elgton Jenkins (knee), WR Allen Lazard (ankle), C/G Josh Myers (foot), DL Devonte Wyatt (quadricep).

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES at ARIZONA CARDINALS — **PHILADELPHIA:** DNP: K Jake Elliott (right ankle), LB Kyron Johnson (concussion), LB Patrick Johnson (concussion), CB Avonte Maddox (ankle), T Jordan Mailata (shoulder). LIMITED: RB Boston Scott (rib), G Isaac Seumalo (ankle). FULL: C Darius Slay (forearm). **ARIZONA:** DNP: T Kelvin Beachum (NIR-resting player), WR Marquise Brown (foot), TE Zach Ertz (NIR-resting player), G Max Garcia (toe), C Rodney Hudson (knee), DT Rashard Lawrence (hand), K Matt Prater (right hip), G Justin Pugh (elbow), LB Nick Vigil (hamstring), TE Maxx Williams (knee). LIMITED: LB Zaven Collins (shoulder), WR A.J. Green (knee), T D.J. Humphries (hamstring), LB Ezekiel Turner (ankle), DE J.J. Watt (calf).

PITTSBURGH STEELERS at BUFFALO BILLS — **PITTSBURGH:** DNP: S Terrell Edmunds (concussion), S Minkah Fitzpatrick (knee), CB Ahkello Witherspoon (hamstring). LIMITED: DT Cameron Heyward (ankle, elbow), CB Cameron Sutton (groin, hamstring), CB Levi Wallace (foot), DE Chris Wormley (ankle). **BUFFALO:** DNP: CB Christian Benford (hand), WR Jamison Crowder (ankle), LB Tremaine Edmunds (hamstring), DT DaQuan Jones (NIR-resting player), TE Dawson Knox (foot, hamstring), WR Jake Kumerow (ankle), WR Isaiah McKenzie (concussion), LB Von Miller (NIR-resting player), S Jordan Poyer (ribs), G Rodger Saffold (NIR-resting player). LIMITED: C Mitch Morse (elbow), T Justin Murray (foot), DT Ed Oliver (ankle), DT Jordan Phillips (hamstring). FULL: WR Gabe Davis (ankle), CB Cameron Lewis (forearm, knee).

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS at CAROLINA PANTHERS — **SAN FRANCISCO:** DNP LT Trent Williams (ankle), LT Colton McKivitz (knee), RB Ty Davis-Price (ankle), TE Tyler Kroft (knee), DL Arik Armsted (foot, ankle), DT Javon Kinlaw (knee), DB Tarvarius Moore (hamstring). LIMITED: TE Ross Dwelley (rib), zHauan Jennings (ankle). **CAROLINA:** DNP: RB Christian McCaffrey (NIR-resting player), WR Laviska Shenault (hamstring), CB Stanley Thomas-Oliver (thigh), S Xavier Woods (hamstring). DNP: RB Christian McCaffrey (NIR-resting player), WR Laviska Shenault (hamstring), CB Stanley Thomas-Oliver (thigh), S Xavier Woods (hamstring). LIMITED: DE Marquis Haynes (knee), LB Frankie Luvu (shoulder), LB Shaq Thompson (knee). FULL: TE Stephen Sullivan (back).

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS at NEW ORLEANS SAINTS — **SEATTLE:** No data reported. **NEW ORLEANS:** DNP: WR Michael Thomas (foot), G Calvin Throckmorton (ankle), DE Payton Turner (chest), CB P.J. Williams (quadricep), QB Jameis Winston (back, ankle). LIMITED: QB Taysom Hill (rib), RB Alvin Kamara (rib), WR Jarvis Landry (ankle), S Marcus Maye (rib), G Andrus Peat (concussion). FULL: DE Carl Granderson (eye).

TENNESSEE TITANS at WASHINGTON COMMANDERS — **TENNESSEE:** DNP: LB Olasunkanmi Adeniyi (neck), WR Treylon Burks (toe), LB Zach Cunningham (elbow), LB Bud Dupree (hip), LB Joseph Jones (knee). LIMITED: FB Tory Carter (neck), S Amani Hooker (concussion). FULL: S Ugochukwu Amadi (ankle). **WASHINGTON:** DNP: S Percy Butler (quadricep), T Samuel Cosmi (finger), WR Jahan Dotson (hamstring), LB Milo Effer (hamstring), WR Curtis Samuel (illness). LIMITED: T Charles Leno (shoulder), LB David Mayo (hamstring). FULL: CB William Jackson (back), DE Daniel Wise (ankle).

TENNIS

Astana Open
Wednesday
At National Tennis Center
Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan
Purse: \$1,900,000
Surface: Hardcourt indoor
Men's Singles
Round of 32
Emil Ruusuvuori, Finland, def. Marc-Andrea Huesler, Switzerland, 6-0, 6-2.
Marin Cilic (9), Croatia, def. Oscar Otte, Germany, 5-7, 7-6 (4), 6-2.
Novak Djokovic (4), Serbia, def. Cristian Garin, Chile, 6-1, 6-1.
Round of 16
Andrey Rublev (5), Russia, def. Zhang Zhizhen, China, 6-3, 6-2.
Roberto Bautista Agut, Spain, def. Pavel Kotov, Russia, 6-1, 7-6 (5).
Adrian Mannarino, France, def. David

Wednesday's transactions

BASEBALL Major League Baseball American League

BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Optioned RHP Elvin Rodriguez to Toledo (IL).

BOSTON RED SOX — Claimed RHP Easton McGee off waivers from Tampa Bay.

DETROIT LIONS — Optioned RHP Elvin Rodriguez to Toledo (IL).

LOS ANGELES ANGELS — Agreed to terms with field manager Phil Nevin on a one-year contract.

MINNESOTA TWINS — Recalled RHP Cole Sands from St. Paul (IL). Optioned RHP Siemeon Woods Richardson to St. Paul.

NEW YORK YANKEES — Optioned RHP Greg Weissert to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre (IL). Sent RHP Chi Chi Gonzalez outright to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre.

SEATTLE MARINERS — Recalled OF Taylor Trammel from Tacoma (CL). Placed OF Jesse Winker on the 10-day IL, retroactive to Oct. 3.

TAMPA BAY RAYS — Placed LHP Colin Poche on the 15-day IL. Recalled LHP Josh Fleming from Durham (IL).

TEXAS RANGERS — Optioned LHP Kolby Allard to Round Rock (PCL).

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Recalled RHPs Casey Lawrence and Trent Thornton from Buffalo (IL). Optioned RHP Mitch White for Buffalo. Reinstated RHP Nate Pearson from the 60-day IL. Recalled INF Vinny Capra from Buffalo and placed him on the 60-day IL.

National League
LOS ANGELES DODGERS — Recalled SS Jacob Amaya from Oklahoma City (IL) and placed him on the 60-day IL. Selected the contract of RHP Beau Burrows from Oklahoma City.

NEW YORK METS — Optioned RHP Stephen Nogosek to Syracuse (IL). Reinstated RHP Mychal Givens from the 15-day IL. Placed RHP Tylor Megill on the 15-day IL.

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES — Recalled LHP Michael Plassmeyer from Lehigh Valley (IL). Optioned RHP Chris Devenski and LHP Christopher Sanchez to Lehigh Valley.

ST. LOUIS CARDINALS — Reinstated RHP Jordan Hicks from the 15-day IL. Recalled LHP Matthew Liberatore from Memphis (IL). Optioned RHP Dakota Hudson and LHP JoJo Romero to Memphis.

SAN DIEGO PADRES — Placed RHP Mike Clevinger on the 15-day IL. Recalled RHP Nabil Crismatt from El Paso (PCL).

SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS — Placed OF Joc Pederson on the family medical emergency list. Recalled OF Heliot Ramos from Sacramento (PCL).

WASHINGTON NATIONALS — Optioned RHP Reed Garrett to Rochester (IL).

FOOTBALL National Football League

ARIZONA CARDINALS — Re-signed OL Koda Martin to the practice squad. Placed OL Lachavious Simmons on the practice squad injured reserve.

ATLANTA FALCONS — Designated CB Isaiah Oliver to return to practice from injured reserve. Signed DT Jaleel Johnson to the practice squad.

BALTIMORE RAVENS — Activated RB Gus Edwards from the physically unable to perform (PUP) list. Signed WR Bailey Gaither to the practice squad.

BUFFALO BILLS — Released WR Tavon Austin from the practice squad. Signed WR Jaquarii Roberson to the practice squad.

CAROLINA PANTHERS — Placed S Jeremy Chinn on injured reserve. Promoted S Juston Burris from the practice squad to the active roster. Re-signed S Kenny Robinson to the practice squad.

CHICAGO BEARS — Designated WR N'Keal Harry to return to practice from injured reserve. Placed LG Cody Whitehair on injured reserve.

CINCINNATI BENGALS — Designated DE Khlaid Kareem and CB Cam Taylor-Britt C to return to practice from injured reserve.

CLEVELAND BROWNS — Designated CB Greedy Williams to return to practice from injured reserve. Signed S Richard LeCounte III to the practice squad. Signed TE Pharoah Brown.

DALLAS COWBOYS — Promoted QB Will Grier from the practice squad to the active roster. Placed LS Jake McQuaide on injured reserve. Designated LB Damone Clark to return from th non-football injury (NFI) list. Signed LS Tucker Addington and LS Matt Overton to the practice squad.

DETROIT LIONS — Activated CB Jerry Jacobs and DE Josh Paschal from the physically unable to perform (PUP) list. Signed K Michael Badgley to the practice squad. Promoted WR Tom Kennedy from the practice squad to the active roster. Signed WR Brandon Zylstra to the practice squad.

HOUSTON TEXANS — Designated LB

Christian Harris to return to practice from injured reserve. Signed TE Nick Eubanks and WR Davion Davis to the practice squad.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS — Re-signed WR Dezmon Patmon to the practice squad.

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS — Signed WR Keelan Doss to the practice squad.

MIAMI DOLPHINS — Designated QB Clayton Fejedelem to return to practice from injured reserve.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS — Signed DL Khyliris Tonga off the Atlanta practice squad. Signed S Mike Brown to the practice squad. Designated WR Blake Proehl to return to practice from injured reserve. Waived LB Ryan Connelly.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS — Promoted OL Marcus Cannon from the practice squad to the active roster. Signed QB Garrett Gilbert and OL Sebastian Gutierrez to the practice squad. Designated WR Tyquan Thornton to return to practice from injured reserve.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS — Promoted TE J.P. Holtz from the practice squad to the active roster. Signed WR Kevin White and DB Bryce Thompson to the practice squad. Designated DT Malcolm Roach to return to practice from injured reserve.

NEW YORK GIANTS — Designated OL Nick Gates to return from the physically unable to perform (PUP) list. Signed OL Solomon Kindley to the practice squad. Released RB Antonio Williams from the practice squad.

NEW YORK JETS — Designated LT Duane Brown and DE Vinny Curry to return to practice from injured reserve.

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES — Designated OT Andre Dillard to return to practice from injured reserve. Signed K Cameron Dicker to the practice squad.

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS — Designated S Jimmie Ward and CB Jason Verrett to return to practice from injured reserve. Re-signed WR Sillie Snead to the practice squad.

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS — Designated DL L.J. Collier to return to practice from injured reserve. Signed C Joey Hunt to the practice squad. Released CB Quandre Mosely from the practice squad.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS — Announced WR Cole Beasley has retired effective immediately.

TENNESSEE TITANS — Designated LB Monty Rice to return to practice from injured reserve.

WASHINGTON COMMANDERS — Signed OT Christian DiLauro to the practice squad. Released DB Troy Apke from the practice squad.

HOCKEY National Hockey League

ANAHEIM DUCKS — Assigned G Lukas Dostal to San Diego (AHL).

BUFFALO SABRES — Waived C Sean Malone.

CAROLINA HURRICANES — Waived C Ryan Dzingel and D Max Lajoie. Placed LW Mackenzie MacEachern, RW Stelio Matthews and C Lane Pederson for the purpose of assigning to Chicago (AHL). Released D Grigori Dronov and G Pyotr Kochetkov.

COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS — Reassigned RW Kirill Marchenko to Cleveland (AHL). Released C Victor Rask from his professional tryout (PTO) contract.

MINNESOTA WILD — Assigned Fs Adam Beckman, Mitchell Chaffee and Nick Swaney and D Ryan O'Rourke to Iowa (AHL). Assigned D Carson Lambos to Winnipeg (WHL). Placed F Brandon Baddock and G Zane McIntyre on waivers for the purpose of assignment to Iowa.

MONTREAL CANADIENS — Signed D Logan Mailloux to a three-year, entry-level contract.

NEW YORK ISLANDERS — Waived Ds Parker Wotherspoon and Dennis Cholowski, G Cory Schneider, RW Hudson Fasching and LWs Arnaud Durandean and Andy Andreoff.

OTTAWA SENATORS — Reassigned G Mads Sogaard to Belleville (AHL).

PHILADELPHIA FLYERS — Waived C Adam Brooks and D Louis Belpedio. Placed LW Max Willman on waivers for the purpose of reassignment to Cleveland. Assigned D Cam York to Lehigh Valley (AHL).

WINNIPEG JETS — Recalled G Arvid Holm from Manitoba (AHL).

SOCCER Major League Soccer

MLS INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL — Denied FC Cincinnati's appeal of the red card issued to F Sergio Santos for violent conduct in a match on Oct. 1 against Chicago, so he is ineligible to play in the next match on Oct. 9.

NEW YORK RED BULLS — Signed D John Tolkin to a four-year contract through 2027.

PRO SOCCER

MLS schedule
Sunday, Oct. 2
New York City FC 2, Orlando City 1
Los Angeles FC 2, Portland 1
Sporting Kansas City 1, Seattle 0
Houston 2, Nashville 1
Wednesday's game
Miami 4, Orlando City 1
Sunday's games
New York City FC at Atlanta
New England at Chicago
Cincinnati at D.C. United
CF Montréal at Miami
Charlotte FC at New York
Columbus at Orlando City
Toronto FC at Philadelphia
Colorado at Austin FC
Sporting Kansas City at FC Dallas
LA Galaxy at Houston

Nashville at Los Angeles FC
Vancouver at Minnesota
Portland at Real Salt Lake
San Jose at Seattle

NWSL schedule
Friday, Sept. 30
North Carolina 0, San Diego 0, tie
Saturday, Oct. 1
Portland 3, Gotham FC 3, tie
Houston 2, Washington 1
Louisville 1, Kansas City 0
OL Reign 3, Orlando 0
Sunday, Oct. 2
Chicago 2, Angel City 0
Sunday, Oct. 16
Kansas City at Houston
Chicago at San Diego

Mackenzie McDonald, United States, 6-3, 6-7 (4), 6-2.

Pedro Martinez, Spain, def. Jaume Munar, Spain, 4-6, 6-3, 6-1.

Jasmin Open Tunisia
Wednesday
Monastir, Tunisia
Purse: \$251,750
Surface: Hardcourt outdoor
Women's Singles
Round of 16
Claire Liu, United States, def. Katerina Siniakova (7), Czech Republic, 7-5, 6-2.
Diane Parry, France, def. Lucrezia Stefanini, Italy, 6-3, 1-0, ret.
Alize Cornet (3), France, def. Harriet Dart, Britain, 6-3, 6-4.
Elise Mertens (5), Belgium, def. Despina Papamichail, Greece, 5-7, 6-1, 6-2.

What to know heading into hockey season

Who’s going to take home trophies and which team will hoist the Cup

BY LARRY LAGE,
JOHN WAWROW
AND STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

The NHL is back to normal with the regular season stretching from October through the middle of April before the two-month thrill ride that is the chase for the Stanley Cup.

Over that time, teams are scheduled to play a total of 1,312 games over 189 days, starting with Nashville and San Jose facing off Friday in the first of two games in Prague.

Play gets underway in North America on Tuesday when Tampa Bay visits the New York Rangers and Los Angeles hosts Vegas. The Colorado Avalanche begin their title defense and raise the franchise’s third Stanley Cup banner Wednesday before opening against Chicago.

There are two outdoor games: the Winter Classic at Fenway Park on Jan. 2 between Boston and Pittsburgh and the Stadium Series in Raleigh between Carolina and Washington on Feb. 18. The regular season is set to end April 13.

AP hockey writers Larry Lage, John Wawrow and Stephen Whyno get you ready for the season with a rundown of what to know:

What’s new

Ten teams have a new coach, and eight have a new starting goaltender. There are also ads on some, but not all, jerseys for the first time with the NHL following the NBA in seeking a new revenue stream.

“Just the way things are going in this generation,” Montreal captain Nick Suzuki said.

Games in Europe aren’t new, but they’re back for the first time since 2019. A month after the Predators and

Sharks in Czechia, Colorado and Columbus will play two games in Tampere, Finland, as part of the league’s Global Series.

Fans are also back, at least for now, in all 32 arenas across the U.S. and Canada in a welcome sign amid the pandemic.

On the hot seat

Nearly a third of the league having a new coach significantly cuts down the list of who might get fired before the end of the season. But a few seats are still getting warmer.

Lage: New Jersey coach Lindy Ruff. He is entering his third season that he may not finish if the team doesn’t show signs of improvement after consecutive seventh-place finishes.

Wawrow: D.J. Smith in Ottawa, following an offseason in which the Senators grabbed Claude Giroux, Alex DeBrincat and Cam Talbot in hopes of making the playoffs. And, yes, Ruff’s running out of time in New Jersey.

Whyno: It’s only the Kraken’s second season, but the leash could be short on Dave Hakstol in Seattle. Everyone’s on notice in Toronto, including Sheldon Keefe, but Maple Leafs’ shortcomings are more likely to be a result of goaltending than coaching.

Award picks

Hart Trophy (MVP)

Lage: Edmonton’s Connor McDavid. It’s hard to pick against the 25-year-old superstar, who won the award twice in six years and finished second last year, third once and fifth two times.

Wawrow: This is lining up as being a potentially big year for the New York Rangers, and Artemi Panarin is in position to play a leading role.

Whyno: A defenseman wins it for the first time since 2000 with Cale Makar raising his level even higher following a Norris Trophy season capped by playoff MVP honors for leading Colorado to the Stanley Cup.



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

Edmonton Oilers captain Connor McDavid, left, has been named NHL MVP twice in six years and finished second last year, third once and fifth two times. The Oilers are also contenders to win the Stanley Cup.

Vezina Trophy (top goaltender)

Lage: Carolina’s Frederik Andersen. The former Toronto goalie had a career-best 2.17 goals-against average last season, trailing only Vezina winner Igor Shesterkin, and ranked third in save percentage.

Wawrow: Calgary’s Jacob Markstrom finished second in the voting last year, thanks in part to playing in the NHL’s weakest division. The Pacific might be a little more competitive this year, but Markstrom should win out.

Whyno: Darcy Kuemper has been statistically one of the best goaltenders in the NHL for several years and will get more credit for keeping that up with Washington than Colorado, playing 60-plus games and backstopping the Capitals to the playoffs.

Norris Trophy (top defenseman)

Lage: Makar becomes the first player to win the Norris consecutively since Detroit’s Nicklas Lidstrom’s three in a row from 2006-08.

Wawrow: Why not stick with the front-runner: Makar edging out the Rangers’ Adam Fox.

Whyno: Makar. Enough said.

Calder Trophy (top rookie)

Lage: Buffalo defenseman Owen Power. The No. 1 pick from the 2021 NHL Draft will get plenty of ice time to show what he can do, giving him lots of chances to impress voters.

Wawrow: Power and Anaheim forward Mason McTavish both got a head start on their NHL careers to close last season. The slight edge goes to McTavish.

Whyno: Another head-start rookie, Seattle’s Matty Beniers, dazzles in the Pacific Northwest to beat out Power and McTavish.

Who makes the playoffs

Eastern Conference

Lage: Florida, Toronto, Tampa Bay, Carolina, N.Y. Rangers, Pittsburgh, Boston, N.Y. Islanders.

Wawrow: Florida, Toronto, Tampa Bay, N.Y. Rangers, Carolina, Columbus, Detroit, Buffalo.

Whyno: Atlantic: Tampa Bay, Florida, Boston, Carolina, Washington, N.Y. Rangers, Pittsburgh, Ottawa.

Western Conference

Lage: Colorado, Minnesota, St. Louis, Calgary, Edmonton, Los Angeles, Vegas, Dallas.

Wawrow: Colorado, Minnesota, Nashville, Edmonton, Calgary, Los Angeles, Anaheim, Winnipeg.

Whyno: Colorado, St. Louis, Minnesota, Edmonton, Vegas, Vancouver, Dallas, Nashville.

Who wins the Stanley Cup

Lage: Tampa Bay over Colorado, hoisting the Stanley Cup for the third time in four consecutive trips to the final, this one a rematch of last year with the opposite result.

Wawrow: Edmonton beats the Rangers.

Whyno: Thanks in part to new goalie Jack Campbell, Connor McDavid finally gets his championship with Edmonton, winning it all against Carolina in a rematch of the 2006 final.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Ottawa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tampa Bay	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Detroit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Boston	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Buffalo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Toronto	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Florida	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Montreal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
N.Y. Islanders	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Philadelphia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N.Y. Rangers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pittsburgh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Washington	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Columbus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carolina	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Western Conference

Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Nashville	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Winnipeg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Colorado	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Minnesota	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chicago	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dallas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
St. Louis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arizona	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Pacific Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Vancouver	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Los Angeles	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Calgary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Edmonton	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anaheim	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vegas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
San Jose	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Seattle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Friday’s game

San Jose vs. Nashville at Prague

Saturday’s game

Nashville vs. San Jose at Prague

Sunday’s games

No games scheduled

Monday’s games

No games scheduled

Tuesday’s games

Tampa Bay at N.Y. Rangers
Vegas at Los Angeles



PHILAN M. EBENHACK/AP

Colorado Avalanche center Nathan MacKinnon lifts the Stanley Cup on June 26 in Tampa, Fla. The Avalanche begin defense of their title Wednesday at home against Chicago.

NFL/AUTO RACING/MLB

Rams' Stafford battling through sacks, TD drought

By GREG BEACHAM
Associated Press
THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. — Matthew Stafford has been one of the NFL's most durable quarterbacks over the past dozen years of his career despite getting sacked a whopping 444 times in his 14 seasons in the league.

The past 16 sacks have happened in the Los Angeles Rams' first four games of the new season, but Stafford doesn't think there's any reason to be worried about his health — even on a short week of preparation before playing behind a patchwork offensive line against the Dallas Cowboys' impressive pass rush.

That's because in Stafford's experience, hits and injuries are mad-deningly unconnected.

"Every NFL game presents its own challenge when it comes to bumps and bruises," Stafford said Wednesday. "You never know how it's going to shake out. There's games where I feel like I never get touched, but one thing rolls you up and hurts you. And other games where you get hit more often and you feel decent coming out of it. I feel good (now). I just do everything I can to get myself ready."

Only Carson Wentz has been sacked more times this season than Stafford, who has also gone two

straight weeks without throwing a touchdown pass. He threw for at least one score in each of his first 23 games with the Rams (2-2), who bet their franchise's future on him in their trade with Detroit early last year.

The bet already paid off splendidly with last season's Super Bowl title, but if the Rams have any hope of a repeat, they probably need to keep Stafford upright and unbothered more often — particularly against elite teams such as Buffalo and San Francisco, who accounted for 14 of those 16 sacks.

"A couple of those were just mental errors that are uncharacteristic for our (blockers) to make," coach Sean McVay said. "We want to try to minimize the amount of times that our quarterback is getting hit. The way that both those games have kind of unfolded, that is not ideal. That is something that we take a lot of pride in, and we've got to be able to clean it up."

Stafford was pressured 22 times by San Francisco, according to the NFL's Next Gen stats. That's the most pressures against any quarterback in a game this season, and it's tied for the second-most pressures allowed by the Rams since 2014.

Stafford was pressured at least



JED JACOBSON/AP

49ers defensive end Nick Bosa sacks Rams quarterback Matthew Stafford on Monday. He has been sacked 16 times this season.

23% of the time in all four of the Rams' games this season. At least the pressures haven't damaged his completion rate, which sits at a career-high 70.7%.

Injuries and turnover on the Rams' offensive line likely are more responsible for Stafford's burgeoning sack total than anything the quarterback himself is doing, but that will be of little comfort with Micah Parsons, DeMarcus Lawrence and Dante Fowler bearing down on him Sunday.

Los Angeles might face the Cowboys on Sunday with three preseason third-stringers starting across the interior line to cover for the definite absences of center Brian Allen (knee) and right guard Coleman Shelton (high ankle sprain), along with the possible absence of left guard David Edwards (concussion). The Rams' depth is stretched

with backups Tremayne Anchrum and Logan Bruss also sidelined for the season.

Stafford also leads the NFL this season with six interceptions after sharing the league lead with 17 last season. His pick-6 in the fourth quarter against San Francisco ensured the Rams' 24-9 defeat and capped a difficult day for the offense, which managed just 3.5 yards per play.

But Stafford says he feels great despite the elbow injury that affected his entire offseason preparation.

"I try to find ways to look at the film as objectively as I can," Stafford said. "I say, 'OK, can I get the ball out quicker here? Can we do this and get us into this play?' I look internally more than anything. I know those guys up front are fighting and doing everything they can to keep guys off me."

KC fires manager Matheny

By DAVE SKRETTA
Associated Press
KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Manager Mike Matheny and pitching coach Cal Eldred were fired by the Kansas City Royals on Wednesday night, shortly after the struggling franchise finished the season 65-97 with a listless 9-2 loss to the Cleveland Guardians.

The Royals had exercised their option on Matheny's contract for 2023 during spring training, when the club hoped it was turning the corner from also-ran to contender. But plagued by poor pitching, struggles from young position players and a lackluster group of veterans, the Royals were largely out of playoff contention by the middle of summer.

The disappointing on-field product led owner John Sherman last month to fire longtime front office executive Dayton Moore, the architect of back-to-back American League champions and the 2015 World Series title team. He was replaced by one of his longtime understudies, J.J. Picollo, who made the decision to fire Matheny hours after the season ended.

"Managing the Royals has been a true privilege," Matheny said in a statement. "I'm thankful to so many, primarily Dayton Moore, and the coaches and players I've worked with. I would like to thank Mr. John Sherman and the ownership group for the opportunity to manage their team, and everyone involved in this great organization."

"I came to the Royals knowing it was an organization of excellence and care, and was shown that care every single day. Royals fans should be excited about this group of players, and I look forward to watching them continue to grow."

Matheny spent parts of seven seasons managing the St. Louis Cardinals, finishing each with a winning record and winning the National League pennant in 2013. But after his firing midway through 2018, he was hired by the Royals in an advisory role, and then tapped to succeed longtime manager Ned Yost when he retired before the 2020 season.

Put in charge of a rebuild in the works, Matheny went 26-34 during a COVID-19-shortened first season, then appeared to show progress last season, when the Royals ushered forward a slew of young prospects and finished 74-88.

The expectation was another step forward this season, but the Royals instead spent September fighting off 100 losses.

Matheny finished 165-219 during his time with the Royals.

Harvick fined for alleged Next Gen infractions

By JENNA FRYER
Associated Press
CONCORD, N.C. — NASCAR on Wednesday levied a heavy fine against Kevin Harvick, one of the most outspoken drivers about safety concerns on the Next Gen car, for alleged modifications found on his Ford at Talladega Superspeedway.

NASCAR docked both Harvick and Stewart-Haas Racing 100 points each, fined crew chief Rodney Childers \$100,000 and suspended Childers for the next four races. NASCAR said the penalties were for "modification of a single source supplied part."

"Seems strange..." Harvick tweeted minutes before the penalty was announced.

NASCAR has a reputation for making things difficult for teams that for various reasons the sanctioning body finds out of line. Harvick's rants last week about the safety of the Next Gen car may have been why the No. 4 Ford was selected to be taken from Talladega to its North Carolina R&D Center for a deeper inspection.



JOHN RAOUX/AP

NASCAR has levied a heavy fine against Kevin Harvick for alleged modifications found on his Ford.

NASCAR maintains that the selection of cars for postrace inspection at the R&D Center is done randomly. Competitors believe there's nothing random about the process.

"Shocking," Childers sarcastically replied to NASCAR's tweet announcing the penalty.

NASCAR President Steve Phelps, after speaking on a Women in Motorsports panel at Charlotte Motor Speedway, said there was nothing punitive in the penalty to

the No. 4 team.

"I would say that's ridiculous. No one has a vendetta against Kevin Harvick or Rodney, at all, or anyone at Stewart-Haas Racing," Phelps said. "Our guys are very good. They are going to look at (an infraction). Look at it again. Look at it a third time to make sure there's a penalty and the penalty is right. If the four team thinks that's not right, they will file an appeal."

Phelps said he did know what part SHR allegedly modified. Asked by The Associated Press if it was possible that Childers, who was crew chief Sunday in his 600th Cup race, modified the stiff rear clip under scrutiny in an attempt to soften it, Phelps said that was not the part in question.

The Next Gen has been under increased scrutiny the since the playoffs began in September with four consecutive races in which the car had issues. From car fires (Harvick's caught fire in the playoff opener), parts failures and tire failures, the Next Gen struggled to hold up in playoff competition.

But the bigger issue was the stiffness in the rear of the car, which has contributed to concussions for both Alex Bowman and Kurt Busch. Bowman is out for a second consecutive week and Busch will miss his 12th straight race on Sunday. Cody Shane Ware also will sit out Sunday's race at Charlotte Motor Speedway because of a broken foot he suffered in a crash two races ago — meaning three drivers will miss a race because of injuries for the first time in at least two decades.

Chase Elliott, NASCAR's most popular driver, has accused NASCAR of taking a step backward in safety because of the stiffness of the car. Because one of the goals of the Next Gen was to reduce costs, the new car is extremely stiff in order to withstand crashes and reduce the size of the fleets that teams need for a 38-race season.

NASCAR on Wednesday was scheduled to crash-test computer models of changes that potentially can be made to the rear of the car to help redistribute the energy away from the driver during a crash.

MLB PLAYOFFS

Top: Kwan has hovered near .300 most of season

FROM PAGE 48

fensive play in Arizona, it became obvious to the Guardians he was ready.

He went 10-for-15 with seven walks in his first five games while reaching base 18 times in that stretch, becoming the first player since 1901 to get three or more hits in each of his first five games.

“We saw him really good out of the gate,” Royals manager Mike Matheny said. “We couldn’t get him out.”

Kwan has barely slowed in the past six months. Aside for a statistical dip in May, when he batted .173, he’s hovered around .300 all season while pestering pitchers at the plate, making Gold Glove-caliber plays, and embodying Cleveland’s small-ball offensive ethos.

The Guardians don’t hit many home runs. They don’t strike out, either. Their approach is to make contact, put the ball in play, advance runners and do whatever it takes to score one more run than the opposition.

It’s a simple approach, how the game was once played. Kwan loves how the Guardians have become throwbacks in a swing-from-the-heels era.

“It’s cool,” Kwan said when asked to recap his surprising breakout. “It’s refreshing to see that my form of baseball is able to work in the bigs because a lot of it is slug (slugging percentage), extra-base hits.

”I’m just trying to get on base for the guy after me, so it’s refreshing to see that that kind of baseball is succeeding in this time.”

Kwan’s first-year fame didn’t come without failure. And in his case, immense struggle.

He got off to such a poor start at Oregon State — “I was really bad” — that the Los Gatos, Calif., native nearly quit. Kwan was so overwhelmed by self-doubt and “random thoughts” that his heart raced and vision blurred while hitting. It nearly crushed him.

“I had low self-esteem at that time, too,” he said. “So I was thinking, I’m being exposed, now I know that the real deal is.”



The Cleveland Guardians’ Steven Kwan celebrates with teammates after hitting a grand slam against the Texas Rangers on Sept. 25.

DID YOU KNOW?

Cleveland Guardians leadoff hitter Steven Kwan went 10-for-15 with seven walks in his first five games, reaching base 18 times and becoming the first player since 1901 to get three or more hits in each of his first five games.

SOURCE: Associated Press

One of his college coaches introduced him to meditation and some breathing techniques, which allow him to channel both negative and positive thoughts, accept them and stay present.

It’s hard to imagine Kwan once being rattled. He’s the exact opposite now — Zen-like with a bat in his hands. He’s among the hardest in baseball to strike out, adept at fouling off pitches to stay alive. Earlier this season, he battled Seattle’s Luis Castillo for 12 pitches to start the game.

“I can only imagine what that feels like,” said Guardians pitcher Triston McKenzie, Kwan’s locker neighbor. “As a starter, you’re trying to set the tone for a game and you have this guy, just a non-stop tough at-bat and you’re trying to put him away. You’re trying to even get him to put the ball in play and it goes on forever.

“Mentally, it’s draining. For Steven, it’s just him staying with his approach.”

Kwan ranks among MLB leaders in advanced statistical categories like whiff percentage, chase rate, outs above average and more.

He didn’t swing and miss at his first 116 pitches, the most to begin a career since at least 2000.

The Guardians have marveled at what Kwan has been able to do for six months. Now the rest of baseball gets to see what he can do on October’s stage.

“He deserves it,” manager Terry Francona said of the attention. “It’s not easy being the leadoff hitter on a team that’s trying to win in your first year. That’s a lot of responsibility. He’s been terrific.

“And the best part about it is he’s probably a better kid.”



San Diego Padres starting pitcher Joe Musgrove threw the first no-hitter in franchise history on April 9, 2021.

GREGORY BULL/AP

Musgrove wants a ring with hometown Padres

By BERNIE WILSON
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO
Joe Musgrove took a moment away from the mayhem of the clubhouse celebration after the San Diego Padres clinched a playoff spot to reflect on where his career has been and where he wants it to go.

The big right-hander will forever be remembered as the hometown kid who threw the first no-hitter in franchise history, in just his second start with the Padres. He pitched in his first All-Star Game this year and then signed a \$100 million, five-year contract.

Musgrove helped the Padres clinch an NL wild-card spot, just the seventh playoff berth in the franchise’s mostly forgettable 54-year history. His ultimate goal is winning another World Series ring that he would consider more legitimate than the one he won with the scandal-tinged Houston Astros in 2017.

“It’s a been a long time since we’ve been in this spot,” said Musgrove, who grew up cheering for the Padres and his favorite player, 2007 NL Cy Young Award winner Jake Peavy, whose No. 44 he now wears. “It’s pretty crazy how it all worked out. I end up back here in a year where we’ve got a team like we have to make it this far.”

The no-hitter at Texas on April 9, 2021, burnished his name in franchise lore and endeared him to the long-suffering fan base. It also netted him free beer for life from Ballast Point Brewing Co. and his own beer, No-No Joe Double IPA from Resident Brewing, which was in plentiful supply during Sunday’s clubhouse celebration.

Scoreboard

Playoffs
x-if necessary WILD CARD SERIES (Best-of-three) American League Cleveland vs. Tampa Bay Friday: Tampa Bay (McClanahan 12-8) at Cleveland (Bieber 13-8), AFN-Sports, 6 p.m. Friday CET; 1 a.m. Saturday JKT Saturday: Tampa Bay (TBD) at Cleveland (McKenzie 11-11), AFN-Sports, 6 p.m. Saturday CET; 1 a.m. Sunday JKT x-Sunday: at Cleveland, AFN-Sports, 11 p.m. Sunday CET; 6 a.m. Monday JKT (joined in progress) Toronto vs. Seattle Friday: Seattle (Castillo 8-6) at Toronto (Manoah 16-7), AFN-Sports, 11 p.m. Friday CET; 6 a.m. Saturday JKT Saturday: at Toronto, AFN-Sports, 11 p.m. Saturday CET; 6 a.m. Sunday JKT x-Sunday: at Toronto, AFN-Sports, 8 p.m. Sunday CET; 3 a.m. Monday JKT National League St. Louis vs. Philadelphia Friday: Philadelphia (Wheeler 12-7) at St. Louis (Mikolas 12-13 or Quintana 6-7), AFN-Sports2, 8 p.m. Friday CET; 3 a.m. Saturday JKT Saturday: at St. Louis, AFN-Atlantic, 2:30 a.m. Sunday CET; 9:30 a.m. Sunday JKT x-Sunday: at St. Louis, AFN-Atlantic, 2:30 a.m. Monday CET; 9:30 a.m. Monday JKT New York vs. San Diego Friday: San Diego (Darvish 16-8) at New York (Scherzer 11-5), AFN-Sports, 2 a.m. Saturday CET; 9 a.m. Saturday JKT Saturday: at New York, AFN-Sports, 1:30 a.m. Sunday CET; 8:30 a.m. Sunday JKT x-Sunday: at New York, AFN-Sports, 1:30 a.m. Monday CET; 8:30 a.m. Monday JKT

“After the no-hitter, that moment was massive for me, for the city, for everybody, but that’s not what I want to be remembered by,” Musgrove said. “I want to be one of the guys that help bring a championship to the city, especially my own hometown.”

Musgrove’s baseball journey has come full circle since he pitched at Grossmont High in suburban El Cajon, where his parents, Mark and Diane, still live.

Musgrove had signed a letter of intent to play for Tony Gwynn at San Diego State. But after the Toronto Blue Jays took him with the 46th pick in the 2011 draft, he

signed for a \$500,000 bonus. That allowed him to help with household expenses and buy back his parents’ house from a family friend who had stepped in to help them avoid foreclosure.

He was traded to the Astros and made his big league debut in 2016. He got the win in relief in Game 5 of the 2017 World Series, which he commemorated on a vanity license plate on the Range Rover he bought his parents. He was traded to Pittsburgh and then acquired by the Padres in January 2021.

Mark Musgrove cheered for the Padres as a kid and still remembers many of the players from the expansion 1969 team. Now he, Diane and other family members watch Joe’s starts from seats on the third-base side of Petco Park.

“Number one, it’s good having him home,” Mark Musgrove said. “It’s like going to watch him play in any other venue while he was growing up. He enjoys being here. He really enjoys San Diego as a home and a place where he can ply his trade. The fit’s perfect.”

Musgrove (10-7, 2.93 ERA, 184 strikeouts) is just the 13th Padres pitcher to have 30 starts, 10 wins and a sub-3.00 ERA.

He knows he has a rare opportunity via his five-year contract to try to win a World Series with his hometown team. He tries to distance himself from the 2017 title with the Astros because of the sign-stealing scandal.

“I still don’t feel great about wearing that ring around or telling people that I was a World Series champion on that team,” he said. “I want one that feels earned and that was a true championship. So that’s the goal.”

MLB

Arraez, McNeil win batting titles

BY RONALD BLUM
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Minnesota’s Luis Arraez got a Louis Vuitton roller bag from Carlos Correa. The New York Mets’ Jeff McNeil is being gifted a car by Francisco Lindor.

Winning batting titles on the final day of the season was rewarding.

“I couldn’t sleep last night, just thinking and thinking about it,” Arraez said after edging the New York Yankees’ Aaron Judge on Wednesday to become American League batting champion. “I’m living a dream right now. This is amazing for me because I worked hard for this.”

Arraez finished with a .316 average after going 1-for-1 with a pair of walks against the Chicago

White Sox, the lowest average for an AL batting champion since Boston’s Carl Yastrzemski at .301 in 1968. Correa gave him the luxury luggage on Wednesday.

“He sets an example for us,” Arraez said. “He’s a leader, and I love that guy a lot.”

Judge was held out by Yankees manager Aaron Boone, a day after hitting his AL record 62nd home run to break the mark Roger Maris set in 1961. Judge missed out on a Triple Crown.

McNeil made it first-time batting champions in both leagues, his .326 average one point ahead of the Los Angeles Dodgers’ Freddie Freeman.

McNeil sat out until the eighth inning of the regular-season finale against Washington and did not have a plate appearance. Needing to go 4-for-4 to catch McNeil, Freeman doubled and homered in his first two at-bats against Colorado.

“You get a little bit nervous,” McNeil said. “Four hits is normal for him.”

Freeman’s flyout to the warning track in center field in the fifth ended his hopes on a 3-for-4 afternoon.

“One of my goals in baseball is to win a batting title,” said McNeil, who topped .300 three times before slumping to .251 last year. “I wanted to get back to who I am.”

Lindor couldn’t recall the what prompted his auto promise.

“It’s rare when McNeil is up-

set,” Lindor said. “And I just said, ‘If you win the batting title, I’ll get you a car.’ So, yeah. It was a long time ago. Everybody has to make sure I haven’t forgot, and everybody’s making sure I buy him a car. I will get him a car. I didn’t specify what car it was.”

Said McNeil: “Hopefully it’s something pretty cool.”

The overall major league batting average of .243 was the lowest since the record bottom of .237 in 1968, the last season before the pitcher’s mound was lowered. MLB will ban defensive shifts starting next year, a move likely to help hitters.

In a season that highlighted baseball’s haves and have-nots, four teams finished with 100 wins, tying the record set in 2019: the Dodgers (111), Houston (106), Atlanta and the New York Mets (101 each). In addition, the Yankees won 99 before losing their final two.

The Dodgers had the most wins in the NL since the 1906 Chicago Cubs went 116-36.

Four teams had 100 or more losses for only the fourth time after 2002, 2019 and 2021: Washington (107), Oakland (102), Pittsburgh and Cincinnati (100 each).

Judge hit an AL record 62 homers, breaking Roger Maris’ mark from 1961, and Philadelphia’s Kyle Schwarber topped the NL with 46. The 16-homer gap between first and second in the major leagues



BRETT DAVIS/AP

The Mets’ Jeff McNeil won the NL batting title. His .326 average was one point ahead of the Dodgers’ Freddie Freeman.

Scoreboard

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-New York	99	63	.611	—
y-Toronto	92	70	.568	7
y-Tampa Bay	86	76	.531	13
Baltimore	83	79	.512	16
Boston	78	84	.481	21
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Cleveland	92	70	.568	—
Chicago	81	81	.500	11
Minnesota	78	84	.481	14
Detroit	66	96	.407	26
Kansas City	65	97	.401	27
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Houston	106	56	.654	—
y-Seattle	90	72	.556	16
Los Angeles	73	89	.451	33
Texas	68	94	.420	38
Oakland	60	102	.370	46
National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Atlanta	101	61	.623	—
y-New York	101	61	.623	—
y-Philadelphia	87	75	.537	14
Miami	69	93	.426	32
Washington	55	107	.340	46
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-St. Louis	93	69	.574	—
Milwaukee	86	76	.531	7
Chicago	74	88	.457	19
Cincinnati	62	100	.383	31
Pittsburgh	62	100	.383	31
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Los Angeles	111	51	.685	—
y-San Diego	89	73	.549	22
San Francisco	81	81	.500	30
Arizona	74	88	.457	37
Colorado	68	94	.420	43
x-clinched division y-clinched wild card				
Wednesday's games				
Baltimore 5, Toronto 4, 1st game Toronto 5, Baltimore 1, 2nd game Oakland 3, L.A. Angels 2 Cleveland 9, Kansas City 3 Texas 4, N.Y. Yankees 2 Minnesota 10, Chicago White Sox 1 Seattle 5, Detroit 4 Houston 3, Philadelphia 2 Boston 6, Tampa Bay 3 Pittsburgh 5, St. Louis 3 Arizona 4, Milwaukee 2 N.Y. Mets 9, Washington 2 Houston 3, Philadelphia 2 L.A. Dodgers 6, Colorado 1 San Francisco 8, San Diego 1 Chicago Cubs 15, Cincinnati 2 Miami 12, Atlanta 9				



NICK CAMMETT/AP

The Twins’ Luis Arraez finished with the lowest average for an American League batting champion since 1968. He hit .316.

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Unsung transfers boost Big 12 leaders

By ERIC OLSON
Associated Press

Adrian Martinez, Dillon Gabriel, Quinn Ewers and JT Daniels understandably topped the preseason lists of players transferring to Big 12 schools. They're quarterbacks, after all.

While Kansas State's Martinez might be the conference's most celebrated transfer after the first month of the season, it's been lesser-known transfers who have been big difference-makers for the surprise teams at the top of the Big 12 standings.

When No. 17 TCU (4-0, 1-0 Big 12) visits No. 19 Kansas (5-0, 2-0) on Saturday, a combined eight starters and several key backups will be first-year players for the Horned Frogs and Jayhawks after having played at other schools.

At TCU, linebacker Johnny Hodges (Navy) and strong safety Mark Perry (Colorado) are the team's top two tacklers and cornerback Josh Newton (Louisiana-Monroe) is tied for third in the conference in passes defended. Tight end Jared Wiley (Texas) has two touchdown catches and center Alan Ali (SMU) has not allowed a sack in 132 pass-protection snaps.

At Kansas, defensive end Lonnie Phelps (Miami, Ohio) is second in the Big 12 and tied for sixth nationally with five sacks, linebacker Craig Young (Ohio State) is the third-leading tackler and left guard Dominick Puni (Central Missouri) is the highest-graded pass blocker, according to Pro Football Focus.

Phelps has had no problem tran-



GARETH PATTERSON/AP

Tight end Jared Wiley came to TCU from Texas. He has two TD catches this season.

sitioning to a Power Five team after making the All-Mid-American Conference second team last year.

The move to TCU has proved to be a welcome change for Hodges, who said the stringent academic and military training regimen at Navy along with football obligations made his daily schedule "insane."

Hodges leads the Horned Frogs with 25 tackles, three for loss and 1.5 sacks. He made a season-high 10 stops against Oklahoma.

"I just feel like I'm a different player than I was when I was at Navy," Hodges said. "I'm 20-25 pounds heavier, faster, stronger, more confident. Everyone wants to win. Everyone's having a good time. We have fun at practice. I'm much more loose and having much more fun than I had in the past couple of years."

The change of scenery also has rejuvenated Martinez, who strug-



COLIN E. BRALEY/AP

Kansas linebacker Craig Young, a transfer from Ohio State, is the third-leading tackler for the Jayhawks.

gled with uneven performances and turnovers in four losing seasons at Nebraska.

Martinez said he had been tentative in early games and got a pep talks from coach Chris Klieman and offensive coordinator Collin Klein after a 17-10 home loss to Tulane.

"They challenged me, and I felt like I needed that," Martinez said. "And their vote of confidence was huge, not only from them but from my teammates."

Other top transfers:

Baylor: NT Jaxon Player (Tulsa), one of only three transfers, has started one of five games and split time with Siaki Ika. He has eight tackles, four for loss.

Iowa State: LB Colby Reeder (Delaware) is second on the team with 23 tackles and is one of two Big 12 line-

backers with two interceptions. He also has a team-best five quarterback hurries.

Oklahoma State: OL Jason Brooks (Vanderbilt), one of three transfers, has settled in as the No. 2 right tackle and has allowed no sacks or hurries in 67 pass-protection snaps, according to PFF.

Texas: CB Ryan Watts (Ohio State) gets the nod over QB Ewers (Ohio State), who has missed the last three games with a clavicle injury. Watts has started all five games and made 22 tackles and broken up three passes.

Texas Tech: OL Monroe Mills (Oklahoma State) has started all five games at right tackle and allowed no sacks. He was on the field for 103 of 106 plays against Houston and all 102 plays against Texas, not counting extra-point and field-goal attempts.

Kansas' Leipold downplays links to Wisconsin

By DAVE SKRETTA
Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — The long-suffering football fans at Kansas mostly thought it flattering when Nebraska fired Scott Frost and rumors began that the Huskers would be interested in hiring the Jayhawks' Lance Leipold as their next coach.

When Wisconsin fired its coach this week? The feeling wasn't so much flattery as fear.

Leipold was born in the small town of Jefferson, about a 40-minute drive from Camp Randall Stadium in Madison, and he's about as Wisconsin as summer sausage and cheese. Leipold played college football at Wisconsin-Whitewater, the Division III school where he later got his coaching start and won six national championships as a head coach. He also spent three seasons working for Barry Alvarez in the early 1990s as a graduate assistant with the Badgers.

So while the ties between Leipold and Nebraska were tenuous at best — he coached at tiny NAIA school Doane and the since-disbanded program at Nebraska-Omaha — the links Leipold has to Wisconsin run deep.

"We're happy here. We have no plans on going anywhere," Leipold said Tuesday, when asked by The Associated Press about the interest he's generated with the first 5-0 start at Kansas since 2009 — the one that has the Jayhawks ranked No. 19 as they head into this weekend's game of un-



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

Coach Lance Leipold said he is happy in Kansas, but that doesn't mean there isn't going to be plenty of interest in him.

beatens against No. 17 TCU.

"Anything else is rumors," Leipold continued. "Some of these things are happening while we're in the film room — I didn't even know some of the stuff Sunday until later in the evening, when I'm getting all these text messages. I had no idea."

He's referring to Wisconsin firing Paul Chryst, who was born in Madison and played quarterback for the Badgers before getting into coaching at Division III Wisconsin-Platteville and elsewhere before returning to Madison to take on the head coaching job in 2015.

Chryst was fired Sunday and replaced by de-

fensive coordinator Jim Leonhard, a former Wisconsin star who will serve the rest of the season as interim coach.

Kansas will do everything it can to keep Leipold, whom it plucked from Buffalo on the heels of the failed Les Miles experiment in Lawrence. Leipold was rewarded with a one-year extension in May despite having won just two games last season.

As part of that extension, the average annual value of the 58-year-old's contract was bumped to \$2.6 million. He's still the lowest-paid Big 12 coach by a wide margin.

But Kansas is seizing on the momentum of a program more accustomed to 10-loss seasons than ones in which it wins five games. ESPN is bringing "College GameDay" to Lawrence for the first time Saturday, when the school aims for a third consecutive sellout.

Season ticket sales are rising faster than at any point in recent memory. The school also is pushing ambitious plans to replace Memorial Stadium, which dates to the 1920s, as well as building a hotel, conference center and other amenities that would create a new "front door" to the entire campus.

"What does this all mean? It means a lot for this program as far as where we're at and how we're viewed now," Leipold said of all the attention this week. "It means a lot to this athletic department and this university and this campus."

Scoreboard

Schedule
Friday's games
EAST
Nebraska (2-3) at Rutgers (3-2)
Harvard (2-1) at Cornell (2-1)
SOUTH
Houston (2-3) at Memphis (4-1)
FAR WEST
UNLV (4-1) at San Jose St. (3-1)
Colorado St. (0-4) at Nevada (2-3)
Saturday's games
EAST
Dartmouth (1-2) at Yale (2-1)
Fordham (4-1) at Lehigh (1-4)
Purdue (3-2) at Maryland (4-1)
Gardner-Webb (1-4) at Robert Morris (0-4)
Princeton (3-0) at Lafayette (2-3)
Brown (1-2) at CCSU (0-5)
S. Connecticut (0-0) at Bryant (1-4)
Wagner (0-4) at Columbia (2-1)
Norfolk St. (0-5) at Morgan St. (2-2)
Albany (NY) (1-3) at Monmouth (NJ) (3-2)
Merrimack (3-2) at Duquesne (1-4)
Penn (3-0) at Georgetown (1-4)
Stony Brook (0-4) at New Hampshire (3-2)
Liberty (4-1) at UMass (1-4)
Tulsa (2-3) at Navy (1-3)
Virginia Tech (2-3) at Pittsburgh (3-2)
Holy Cross (5-0) vs. Bucknell (0-4) at Worcester, Mass.
Clemson (5-0) at Boston College (2-3)
SOUTH
Missouri (2-3) at Florida (3-2)
Tennessee (4-0) at LSU (4-1)
Valparaiso (2-2) at Presbyterian (1-4)
Louisville (2-3) at Virginia (2-3)
Arkansas (3-2) at Mississippi St. (4-1)
Wofford (0-5) at Samford (4-1)
Marist (1-3) at Stetson (3-1)
ETSU (2-3) at VMI (1-3)
Towson (2-3) at Elon (4-1)
Florida A&M (3-2) at SC State (1-3)
Georgia Southern (3-2) at Georgia St. (1-4)
Maine (0-4) at Hampton (3-1)
Grambling St. (1-4) at Alabama A&M (1-4)
Furman (3-2) at The Citadel (1-3)
UT Martin (3-2) at Murray St. (0-5)
Jackson St. (4-0) at Alabama St. (3-2)
Auburn (3-2) at Georgia (5-0)
Middle Tennessee (3-2) at UAB (2-2)
Delaware (5-0) at William & Mary (4-1)
East Carolina (3-2) at Tulane (4-1)
North Carolina (4-1) at Miami (2-2)
Duke (4-1) at Georgia Tech (2-3)
W. Carolina (3-2) at Mercer (4-1)
Mississippi (5-0) at Vanderbilt (3-2)
Charleston Southern (0-4) at Campbell (2-2)
Texas A&M Commerce (2-2) at SE Louisiana (3-2)
North Alabama (1-3) at Kennesaw St. (1-3)
Bethune-Cookman (1-3) at Tennessee St. (0-4)
UConn (2-4) at FIU (2-2)
UTEP (3-3) at Louisiana Tech (1-3)
Alcorn St. (2-2) at MVSU (0-5)
Southern Miss. (2-2) at Troy (3-2)
South Carolina (3-2) at Kentucky (4-1)
Army (1-3) at Wake Forest (4-1)
Texas A&M (3-2) at Alabama (5-0)
Florida St. (4-1) at NC State (4-1)
Coastal Carolina (5-0) at Louisiana-Monroe (2-3)
MIDWEST
TCU (4-0) at Kansas (5-0)
E. Michigan (3-2) at W. Michigan (2-3)
Buffalo (2-3) at Bowling Green (2-3)
Michigan (5-0) at Indiana (3-2)
N. Dakota St. (4-1) at Indiana St. (1-3)
Dayton (3-1) at Butler (2-2)
Akron (1-4) at Ohio (2-3)
San Diego (1-3) at Drake (0-5)
Davidson (4-1) at St. Thomas (Minn.) (3-1)
South Florida (1-4) at Cincinnati (4-1)
S. Illinois (3-2) at Missouri St. (2-3)
Northwestern St. (2-3) at E. Illinois (1-3)
Tennessee Tech (1-3) at SE Missouri (4-1)
South Dakota (1-3) at S. Dakota St. (4-1)
Wisconsin (2-3) at Northwestern (1-4)
Ball St. (2-3) at Cent. Michigan (1-4)
Kent St. (2-3) at Miami (Ohio) (2-3)
Toledo (3-2) at N. Illinois (1-4)
Ohio St. (5-0) at Michigan St. (2-3)
Illinois St. (2-2) at N. Iowa (2-3)
North Dakota (3-2) at Youngstown St. (2-2)
Kansas St. (4-1) at Iowa St. (3-2)
Iowa (3-2) at Illinois (4-1)
Notre Dame (2-2) vs. BYU (4-1) at Las Vegas
SOUTHWEST
Oklahoma (3-2) vs. Texas (3-2) at Dallas
Texas Southern (1-4) at Ark.-Pine Bluff (2-3)
Texas Tech (3-2) at Oklahoma St. (4-0)
Southern U. (2-2) at Prairie View (3-2)
Lindenwood (Mo.) (2-2) at Cent. Arkansas (2-3)
Lamar (0-5) at Incarnate Word (4-1)
W. Kentucky (3-2) at UTSA (3-2)
Abilene Christian (4-1) at Stephen F. Austin (2-3)
James Madison (4-0) at Arkansas St. (2-3)
Nicholls (0-5) at Houston Baptist (2-2)
Appalachian St. (3-2) at Texas State (2-3)
FAR WEST
Utah (4-1) at UCLA (5-0)
Washington (4-1) at Arizona St. (1-4)
Cal Poly (1-3) at N. Arizona (1-4)
Idaho St. (0-5) at Montana St. (4-1)
Lincoln University (CA) (0-2) at Portland St. (1-3)
Wyoming (3-3) at New Mexico (2-3)
Air Force (4-1) at Utah St. (1-4)
Washington St. (4-1) at Southern Cal (5-0)
E. Washington (1-3) at Weber St. (4-0)
Tarleton St. (3-1) at S. Utah (3-2)
N. Colorado (2-3) at Sacramento St. (4-0)
Oregon (4-1) at Arizona (3-2)
Fresno St. (1-3) at Boise St. (3-2)
Hawaii (1-4) at San Diego St. (2-3)
Oregon St. (3-2) at Stanford (1-3)

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

A&M looks to rev up its offense

BY KRISTIE RIEKEN
Associated Press

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Texas A&M's offense has sputtered all season, remaining stagnant despite a quarterback change.

As the Aggies prepare to visit top-ranked Alabama on Saturday, coach Jimbo Fisher is adamant that they can turn things around if every player simply makes a commitment to doing things right on every play.

"Football's the ultimate team game," he said. "It's all 11 at all times to play and do well."

Texas A&M was expected to compete for the SEC title entering the season, but a loss to Appalachian State in Week 2 and a mistake-filled blowout loss at Mississippi State last week has dropped the team out of The AP Top 25 poll and has it searching for answers on how to get on track.

Fisher constantly preaches about the importance of creating good practice habits that will translate into games. He said the lack of execution hasn't come from a poor effort and he believes the team's hard work will pay off soon.

"We haven't been perfect yet," Fisher said. "It hasn't all clicked yet. We have to keep working at it and we have to give them the confidence and we have to give them the knowledge and educate them and coach them well to make sure they're in the right space and doing the right thing consistently in practice to allow it to go into the game."

The Aggies rank last in the SEC and 105th in the nation in total offense with just 335 yards a game. They are also scoring the fewest points in the conference at just 21.8, a total that is 108th in the country.

Things could get even tougher this week when they face Alabama, which ranks fourth in nation by allowing just 236.4 yards a game.

Texas A&M started the season with Haynes King at quarterback, but he was benched after the loss to the Mountaineers and replaced with LSU transfer Max Johnson. But so far, the switch hasn't done anything to get the offense going.

Johnson lost a fumble — one of four turnovers against the Bulldogs — before injuring his hand late in the fourth quarter, and his status for Saturday's game is in question. King had a tough time filling in for him after the injury. He had a touchdown run soon after he came in, but threw two interceptions after that, including one that was returned for a touchdown.

Despite his performance, Fisher raved about King's attitude and how well he's dealt with the benching.

"He has been a tremendous, tremendous human being, handling the situation as well as any human can ever be expected to," Fisher said. "And he actually was a benefit and a help to Max on the information and things that are going on."

While much of the criticism for Texas A&M's offensive woes has been directed at the quarterback, a bigger problem might be the subpar play of the offensive line. It's an inexperienced group that includes three sophomores and a freshman.

The unit has improved since the beginning of the season, but still has plenty of work to do if the Aggies expect to compete with the Crimson Tide this weekend.



PHOTOS BY WADE PAYNE/AP

Tennessee players celebrate with fans after a 38-33 win against Florida on Sept. 24 in Knoxville, Tenn. It was only the Volunteers' second win in that rivalry series over the last 18 years.

Rested Vols now face true test

BY TERESA M. WALKER
Associated Press

Neyland Stadium is selling out again and fans already are trying to plan how to paint a visiting stadium orange and white to cap Tennessee's regular season.

That's how good things are going for eighth-ranked Tennessee in coach Josh Heupel's second season.

The true test of just how good these Volunteers might be this season starts Saturday at No. 25 LSU.

Then they host No. 1 Alabama. There's a final break from the usual Southeastern Conference juggernaut against UT Martin before hosting No. 13 Kentucky and then a trip to Athens to play defending national champ and No. 2 Georgia.

At a university where the men's basketball team won the SEC Tournament title in March, women's basketball reached their first Sweet 16 since 2016 and the baseball team spent much of the season ranked No. 1, it's about time the football program started pulling its weight around campus.

Heupel says success is breeding more success across the board.

"The passion of our fan base is obviously felt by our football program, but it is felt by everybody," Heupel said. "There is a ton of excitement that surrounds Knoxville, the state of Tennessee and Vol Nation. ... When it's going good, your logo is in front of everybody all year long, 365 days out of the year."

Being ranked at all, let alone in the top 10, didn't seem possible in late January 2021. Heupel had just been hired shortly after the university chancellor announced she fired his predecessor and nine others over "shocking" recruiting violations. The Vols went 16-19 in Jeremy Pruitt's three seasons.

"The energy is different than when I first got here inside of the building," Heupel said. "You can feel that, and it is because of the atmosphere that has been created across all sports."



Quarterback Hendon Hooker is running the nation's top offense with 559.2 yards per game and the fourth-best scoring unit with 48.4 points a game.

Tennessee is 10-6 since Heupel took over, and he is the first coach since the AP Top 25 started in 1936 to beat a top-20 team on the road in each of his first two seasons.

Helping Heupel get the Vols back on the track has been quarterback Hendon Hooker, a player Heupel persuaded to stick around after transferring from Virginia Tech. Hooker threw for 31 touchdowns with

**No. 8 Tennessee (4-0)
at No. 25 LSU (4-1)
AFN-Sports2
6 p.m. Saturday CET
1 a.m. Sunday JKT**

three interceptions and 2,945 yards last season.

Now Hooker is running the nation's top offense with 559.2 yards per game and the fourth-best scoring unit putting up 48.4 points a game. He is averaging 298.2 yards passing per game with eight TDs and no interceptions with three TD runs this season.

He threw for 349 yards and two TDs and ran for 112 yards more with another score in Tennessee's 38-33 victory over then-No. 20 Florida on Sept. 24, only the Vols' second win in that series in 18 years. Heupel says there's room for Hooker to grow more.

"Sometimes it looks easy because we are playing at a really high level," Heupel said. "It is not easy, and he is just in so much command of what we are doing. He understands the why behind everything, and that is a big part of it."

How big a leap Tennessee makes in Heupel's second season depends heavily on a defense that is giving up 407 yards per game. The Vols' scoring defense has been better, allowing just 19 points a game in a stat padded with two wins over Mid-American Conference teams.

Heupel said the Vols know what they need to do better, starting with tackling, assignments and simply knowing what they're supposed to do.

The Vols are coming off an open date, when they worked on those issues and healed ahead of the meat of their SEC slate.

"To see how it's changed from when I first got here to what it is now is just crazy," defensive lineman Omari Thomas said. "It's something we want to just keep doing, honestly, and get better and better every week."

SPORTS

Tough slate awaits Tennessee

Surging Vols face ranked teams 4 of next 5 weeks » College football, Page 47



MLB PLAYOFFS

Taking it from the top



Steven Kwan was a longshot to make Cleveland's opening-day roster in spring training. He's been the Guardians' leadoff hitter since making his debut on April 8.

RON SCHWANE/AP

Since becoming leadoff hitter, Kwan has made Guardians go

By TOM WITHERS
Associated Press

BEFORE stepping into the batter's box, rookie outfielder Steven Kwan squats for a moment, much the way his idol, Ichiro Suzuki, did.

The ritual centers Kwan, allowing Cleveland's pesky leadoff hitter to move on to what's next — getting on base or in a pitcher's head.

Then, like the Japanese superstar, Kwan holds his hands close to his body and still — with his bat perpendicular — before swinging at a pitch or watching it pass.

He's gotten it right more often than anyone expected this season — just like the surprising Guardians.

To explain Cleveland's unexpected 2022 rise, start with Kwan.

Everything starts with him. "It's amazing," Tampa Bay manager Kevin Cash said during his team's three-game series in Cleveland last week. "He's right in the thick of everything they do."

From the moment he made his major league debut in Kansas City on April 8, getting a hit and walking twice, Kwan has set the tone this season for the AL Central champion Guardians, baseball's youngest team, which continues its surprising run into the playoffs at home Friday against the Rays in the wild-card round.

The 25-year-old Kwan seemingly came out of nowhere. So have the Guardians.

Kwan was a longshot to make Cleveland's opening-day roster in spring training. But with every tough at-bat, base hit and solid de-

SEE TOP ON PAGE 44



DAVID BANKS/AP

Guardians manager Terry Francona, left, having fun with Kwan after a victory over the Chicago White Sox, says Kwan accepted a lot of responsibility when he became the leadoff hitter in his first season.

INSIDE

Twins' Arraez, Mets' McNeil take batting titles; Judge misses out on Triple Crown
Page 45

Some things to know as NHL season begins » Page 42

